

Systemic Functional Interpretation of Transitivity Templates in News Reports

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Abstract

In Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) transitivity analysis is used, in particular, as a yardstick to measure the lexical differences accurately. It is generally observed that lexical differences, whether generated consciously or unconsciously, while reporting the news in the newspapers create diversified influence on the readers' minds. The present research is an attempt to bring out these lexical differences to figure out the transitivity templates and underscore the manner of engagement maintained by the news reporters/agencies in terms of their neutrality or objectivity. It has been done, additionally, to gauge the validity of the SFL and Transitivity System Network (TSN). The news reports of suicide attacks that occurred in Pakistan during 2009-2015 have been analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Semantic value of different syntagmatic and paradigmatic choices of Process and Participant Types reveals the unique communicative significance of the reported news stories. The research reveals dominance of Material Process Types in daily *Dawn* and the Verbal Process Types in *The News International* and *The New York Times*. Examination of Participant Types unveils the dominance of Sayer (Participant Type) in the two Pakistani newspapers. The comparison of animate Participant Types reveals that *The New York Times* texts comprise the highest number of Sayers. In all the three newspapers, the comparison of the transitivity roles associated with Verbal and Material Processes (say, Sayer, Receiver, Actor, Goal, etc.) barring Verbiage indicates that Goal takes the second highest position. The comparison of Material related participants (say, Actor, Goal) indicates the predominance of Goal, thus reflecting the predominance of passivity. The frequency profile of different process types led to figure out the subjectivity and/or objectivity of the news reporters.

Keyword: *lexical differences, transitivity, process types, participant types, subjectivity, neutrality.*

1. Introduction

Present study aims at systemic functional interpretation of the transitivity templates (patterns) used in the news reports in print media. For this purpose, two English language newspapers published in Pakistan i.e., *Dawn* and *The News International* and the one in United States of America (henceforth USA) i.e., *The New York Times* were selected as sample. The newspapers while reporting the suicide attacks that occurred in Pakistan during 2009-2015 follow varying transitivity templates by choosing different process types, participant types, roles for the participants, number of processes and participants as well as the ways of combining processes and participants (Berry, 1977).

1.1. Statement of Problem

After 9/11, the incidents of terrorism in Pakistan, including suicide attacks/remote control blasts targeting military installations, mosques/madaris of Muslims as well as the sacred places of other religious minorities, police lines, educational institutions, different religio-political personages and the critics of such extremist militants increased manifold. These incidents of terrorism in general and suicide attacks in particular are reported in different English language newspapers of national stature i.e., *Dawn*, *The Express Tribune*, etc., as well as international stature i.e., *The News International* (Pakistani), *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Los Angeles Times*, etc. with their characteristic transitivity templates reflecting a sharp contrast with each other both in syntagmatic and paradigmatic choices of lexis (words), phrases, clauses, sentences, etc. Such characteristic construction of transitivity templates is motivated by respective policies and/or agendas of the newspapers and provides the readers with “a particular way of looking at experience” (Halliday, 1971). The (un)consciously featured transitivity templates were observed in the above-mentioned newspapers and thereby multiple layers of meanings yielded through choices along the syntagmatic (X-axis) and paradigmatic (Y-axis) axes were explored. The characteristic planes, details and thoroughness operated in SFL for transitivity templates made interpretations more purposeful, and less prejudiced.

1.2. Objectives of Study

1. To underscore the variations in language of the newspaper reports on suicide attacks in Pakistan through transitivity templates.
2. To analyze the effect of producing characteristic transitivity structures on the projection of particular realities.
3. To probe the type of engagement newspaper agencies reflected in their reporting on the incidents in terms of their level of subjectivity and/or objectivity.

1.3. Research Questions

Following research questions have been formulated to keep the study focused:

1. How do transitivity templates differ in different newspapers?
 - a) How do the selected newspapers mutually differ on the basis of the types of processes and participants followed in news reports of suicide attacks?
 - b) How do the transitivity templates in different newspapers differ in terms of the number of processes and participants?
 - c) What different ways of combining processes and participants have been used by each of the selected newspapers?
2. To what extent do the selected texts reflect the objectivity and/or subjectivity of the reporters or the newspaper agencies?

2. Literature Review

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was developed by Halliday (1978, 1985, 1994) out of the London School of Linguistics under the influence of J. R. Firth's (1890, 1960) theory of language (Butler, 1985, pp. 1-13; Robins, 1967, pp. 213-220; Sampson, 1980, pp. 212-235) and aided by other systemicists (Eggins, 1994; Martin, 1985, 1992; Martin & Rose, 2003; Matthiessen, 1995; Thompson, 1996, etc.). It carries two of the notions of Firth's theory a) system and structure and b) a "multi-structural and polysystemic" approach to language (as cited in Palmer, 1968, p. 200). His notions of system and structure are based on the structuralist notions of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations; paradigmatic relations (first used by Hjelmslev, 1959, p. 152) being a development of Saussure's psychologically oriented associative relations (Saussure, 1983, pp. 121-125). However, in contrast to Saussure, Firth did not regard these notions as being applicable to the language as a whole.

Firth's theory regards system and structure as complementary where a structure is formed by elements in syntagmatic relation at a particular level of analysis, while a system is made up of the mutually exclusive paradigmatic options that come into play at a particular place in a structure (as cited in Palmer, 1968, p. 103). Besides, his approach is both "polysystemic", i.e., it involves a "plurality of systems" and "multi-structural" (as cited in Palmer, 1968, p. 200), i.e., integration of two or more co-existing structures.

Analogous to Ogden and Richards who consider meaning as relations in a hidden mental process (Firth, 1957, p. 19), Firth extended Malinowski's (1923) opinion of meaning as "function in context" to integrate linguistic contexts. Therefore, linguistic meaning in its entirety was thus seen as a "complex of contextual relations".

Retaining Firth's influence in the multifaceted and wide-ranging approach to meaning, SFL gives prime importance to meaning, about the resources that are available in a language that allow us to say and do meaningful things. It is about the lexicogrammatical resources that allow us to make meanings.

Matthiessen has worked across many areas of linguistics, but has specialized, theoretically, in the modelling of language from the Systemic Functional Linguistics, included in Systemic Functional Grammar. He focuses on how to construe a linguistic/semiotic approach to cognition without invoking pre-linguistic mental fictions in *Construing Experience through Meaning: A Language Based Approach to Cognition*, the book which he co-authored with Michael Halliday. He has been described as the "de-facto cartographer" of systemic Functional Grammar. Halliday acknowledges Matthiessen's work in extending the description of grammar from the systemic functional perspective via his contributions to the Penman project.

Being influenced by Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, Gleason's Stratificational Linguistics, Hasan's Text Semantics, Martin developed Discourse Semantic Theory which describes the organization of

texts with respect to three metafunctions of language - interpersonal, ideational and textual. Interpersonal discourse systems include negotiation by which speakers enact exchanges in dialogue and appraisal by which speakers and writers negotiate their attitudes. Ideational systems include ideation by which they construe their experience as activities involving people and things, and conjunction which connects events and organizes texts in logical sequences. Textual systems include identification by which the identities of people, things and places are introduced and tracked through discourse and periodicity which organizes discourse in waves of information at the scales of the text, phase (paragraph) and clause.

While working with Halliday on Linguistics and English Teaching, Hudson (1939) developed a general theory of language structure called Word Grammar, which is called Lexicogrammar in Halliday's terms. He also worked to build bridges between academic linguistics and teaching of language in UK schools.

Hasan (1996), following the account of language developed by Halliday, considers language as "social semiotic" which is a point of departure for Systemic Functional Linguistics. Hasan (2005) argues that meanings are the very artifact of language pertaining to our experience of the world around us and inside us. Since relevant context is a "semiotic construct", she argues that it should be "within the descriptive orbit of linguistics".

3. Methodology

The researcher adopted a combination of quantitative and qualitative model of research in order to achieve the objectives of study. Detail of the theoretical backdrop and the methods used to carry out this study has been provided hereinafter.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

In order to achieve objectives of this study, the operational framework of Transitivity System Network (TSN) propounded by Halliday in his Systemic Functional approach has been employed to analyze the selected texts. A brief introduction of SFL and TSN is given in the ensuing part.

3.1.1. Halliday's SFL

SFL studies a language in its functional context. It focuses on the semantic and functional value of words (lexis), phrases, clauses, sentences and texts within immediate situational as well as wider sociocultural contexts. It sees language use as a motivated selection from the networks (sets) of paradigmatically related linguistic units and their syntagmatic organization. Particular meanings are effected through the selection and organization of linguistic units and, in the process, three metafunctions (i.e., ideational, interpersonal and textual) are characterized. The choices along the syntagmatic (X-axis) and paradigmatic (Y-axis) axes augment or lessen the impact of act performed by the participant (s), say Actor or extended to the participant, say Goal.

3.1.2. Metafunctions

Taking the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes of language together, we can say that language is “meaning potential” (Halliday, 1994; Morley, 1985), “a strategic, meaning making resource” (Eggs, 1994; Schleppegrell, 2004) that yields various dimensions of meanings named as metafunctions by Halliday (1994). In SFL, metafunctions are categorized into following three kinds:

- (1) **Ideational** which are linked with construing experience. They answer questions such as what is going on, including who’s doing what to whom, where, when, why & how and the logical relation of one going-on to another.
- (2) **Interpersonal** which are connected with negotiating social relations. How people interact including the feelings they try to express and/or share.
- (3) **Textual** which are concerned with information flow i.e., the ways in which ideational and interpersonal meanings are shared by the speaker/writer and listener/reader in terms of organizational structure of the message.

3.1.3. Systems in Ideational Metafunctions

The three types of metafunctions have their systems in a language. The ideational metafunctions are branched out in Transitivity, Voice and Polarity. Out of these three systems, current study relies on Transitivity System Network (TSN) for analysis of the selected texts. TSN is configured of three components: process (verb), participant (subject, object) and circumstance (adverb) (Halliday, 1994).

In SFG (Systemic Functional Grammar), verbal group of the traditional grammar is named as Process. In TSN, Process is the basic component which is related to our inner and outer experiences, that is, in the world within or without us. Process Types provide choices between Material, Mental, Relational, Verbal, Behavioral and Existential.

Material processes indicate the choices between actions and events related to the experiences going on in the world around us. Actions further offer choices between intentional and involuntary. They are typically physical actions like kicking, digging, playing, catching, cooking, swimming, hitting, flowing, walking, throwing, springing, scratching, slitting, and so on. Berry names such process as physical processes (Berry, 1977).

The participants associated with the Material Processes are Actor and Goal: the former is represented as the doer of the action (Actor) and the latter is the one which is affected by or which is what the process is done to or being done upon (Goal), or the element the process is extended to (Berry, 1977) or directed at (Thompson, 1996).

Mental Process refers to what we experience as going on inside ourselves, in the world of consciousness and imagination. It is a kind of replay of the outer experiences, recording it, reacting to it and partly a separate awareness of our states of being. Mental processes provide the

choices between perception, affection and cognition. Perception is related to seeing and hearing, Affection is linked with liking and fearing and Cognition is associated with thinking, knowing and understanding.

The participants associated with the Mental Processes are Senser and Phenomenon. Conscious beings, who see, think or feel, are included in the Senser whereas Phenomenon includes which is seen, thought or felt. For example, in “they saw Nadir, Sarfraz, Tayab, Saifullah and 2 unknown people”, ‘they’ is the Senser and ‘Nadir, Sarfraz, Tayab, Saifullah and 2 unknown people’ is phenomenon.

The third component, which relates one experience to another is the **Relational Process**. The English system operates with three main types - intensive, circumstantial and possessive - in two distinct modes, Attributive and Identifying.

Attributive Relational Processes carry two participants: Carrier and Attribute. For example, ‘Sughra Bibi, 50’ is Carrier and ‘alone’ is Attribute in “Sughra Bibi . . . was alone”. Similarly, in “. . . the relations between the couple remain strained”, ‘the relations between the couple’ is Carrier and ‘strained’ is the Attribute.

Relational Identifying Processes carry Identified and Identifier as the participants. They are also called Value and Token: the element which is more general is the Value whereas the element which is a specific embodiment of the Value is called Token. For example, in “Hina owns the bicycle”, ‘Hina’ is Identified (Token) and ‘the bicycle’ is Identifier (Value). In “The bicycle is Hina’s”, ‘bicycle’ is Identified (Token) and ‘Hina’s’ is Identifier (Value).

Behavioral processes represent outer manifestations of inner workings, the acting out of processes of consciousness and physiological states like staring, breathing, smiling, dreaming and coughing. These processes share the characteristics of Material and Mental Processes, therefore, they are manifested on the borderline of both the processes.

Verbal Processes stand for the processes of expression; they are related to speaking. They replicate the symbolic relationships constructed in human consciousness and enacted in the form of language like saying and meaning. For instance, said, told, described, claimed, reported, exchanged (...words), repeated, alleged, directed, argued, informed, etc. They share the characteristics of both Mental and Relational Processes. At times, the process is not literally Verbal; it still represents a type of expression or indication.

The main participant in Verbal Processes is the Sayer, who performs, speaks, expresses or indicates. For example, in “Police said”, “The reporter added”, ‘police’ and ‘the reporter’ are Sayers. In addition to the Sayer, three more participant functions are accommodated in the Verbal Process: Receiver, Verbiage and Target. Receiver is the one to whom the saying is directed. For example, ‘him’, ‘your teacher’ and ‘the police’ in “tell him the whole truth”, “did you repeat that to your teacher?” and “describe

to the

police the whole incident” are the Receivers. Verbiage is the content of what is said or the name of the saying. ‘The flat’ in “Can you describe the flat for me” and ‘a question’ in “Let me ask you a question?” indicate Verbiages in the sentences. The Target is the entity that is targeted by the process of saying. ‘Him’ and ‘my intelligence’ in “She always appreciated him to her friends” and “Please don’t insult my intelligence” are the examples.

Existential processes convey the existence of an entity or something that happens. For example, “There was a guinea-pig”, “There seems to be a problem”, etc. In these sentences, the word ‘there’ does not have any experiential meaning; its function is merely to avoid the need for or the possibility of a second participant in the clause. They share the characteristics of Relational and Material Processes.

Existential Processes carry only one participant - Existent, which represents the object or event that is being said to exist. For example, ‘a storm’ and ‘an old woman’ in “There was a storm” and “There was an old woman” are the examples of Existent.

3.2. Sample

The sampling technique adopted for the collection of news reports was maximum variation sampling (also known as heterogeneous sampling) from the category of purposive sampling. For this study, a sample of maximum 30 news reports (making 90 texts) of suicide attacks that occurred in Pakistan during 2009-2015 from three English Language Newspapers - *Dawn*, *The News International* and *New York Times* was collected. The time period i.e., from 2009 to 2015 was chosen on the basis of significantly higher frequency of suicide attacks (68.17%) as compared to the number of incidents (31.83 %) that occurred in the previous septennial timeframe, i.e., from 2002 to 2008. The selection of newspapers was motivated by a general observation of the distinctive use of transitivity patterns by the newspapers. The three newspapers, thus selected, provided a sharp contrast in their choice of transitivity patterns. In this way, the combination of *Dawn* and *The News International* provided a sound basis for language variations in Pakistani English language newspapers. Analogous to the foregoing, the transitivity patterns used by *The New York Times* provided a sharp contrast to the other two. Out of these three newspapers, two - *Dawn* and *The News International* - are published in Pakistan, whereas *The New York Times* is published in United States of America. The data was collected from the official websites of the newspaper agencies where the final updated version of each news item was available. These versions were updated till the last addition of bits in the news on the very day of occurrence and reporting contained the thoroughly deliberated account of the newspaper agency.

3.3. Research Design and Methods

This study is based on descriptive research design. Triangulation has been followed in selection of methods of investigation. Quantitative as well as qualitative techniques have been used for data collection, analysis

and interpretation. In keeping with the objectives of the study, the text marked

with transitivity components was navigated through the navigation bar to accurately calculate the frequencies of processes and participants and analyzed these components through selected features of t-testing (Percentages). To analyze the data qualitatively, the language variations emanating from news reports of the incidents of suicide attacks in Pakistan published in Pakistani Newspapers were compared with those of the international newspaper.

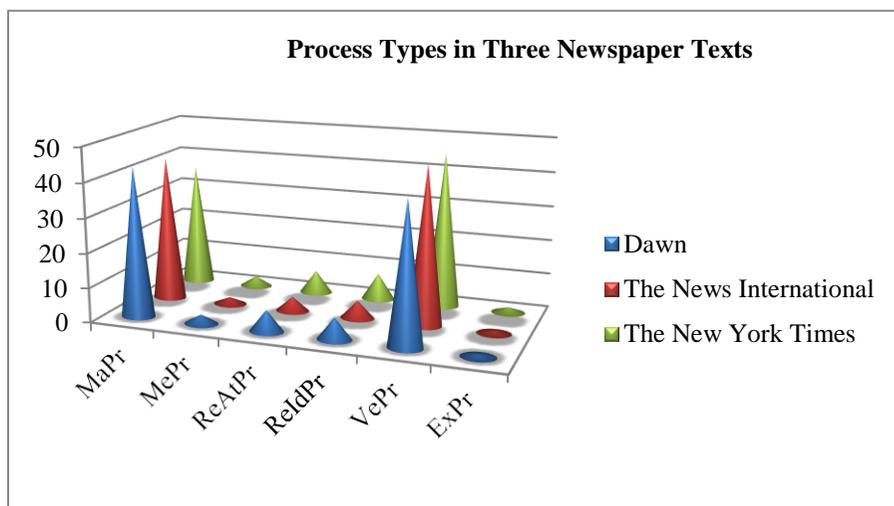
4. Data Analysis

The newspaper corpus containing the news reports of suicide attacks in Pakistan was analyzed both quantitatively & qualitatively and the language variations and meaning making were studied through Hallidayan Transitivity System Network. For this purpose, the role of linguistic choices in reporting was investigated. Moreover, the semantic value of the choices of Process and Participant Types, their order and frequency were also analyzed. In qualitative analysis, the researcher attempted to find out the differences in linguistic choices amongst the Process Types, choices between the voices, and the fronting of themes from the headlines of all the news stories. The subjectivity and objectivity were gauged on the basis of relative frequencies of Material, Mental and Verbal Processes.

4.1. Quantitative Analysis

4.1.1. Analysis of Process Types

In order to pursue the research objectives, the process types marked in each news story were totaled and percentage of each process type in the news reports of the three newspapers with respect to total number of processes was calculated. The percentage of each Process Type calculated from the separately analyzed stories from *Dawn*, *The News International* and *The New York Times* are represented in graphical form



below:-

Fig. 1 Process Types in Newspaper Texts

In order to explore the number of Process Types, the frequency trends of each Process Type within each news text were examined and discussed.

4.1.2. Process Types in *Dawn*

In daily *Dawn*, the most frequent process type is Material Process with a frequency of 43.48% and the second in frequency is Verbal carrying 40.73%. Mental and Existential Processes are the lowest in occurrence. The percentage of Mental Processes is 2.65 whereas the percentage of the Existential Processes is 0.67. Relational Attributive and Relational Identifying Processes have almost same frequency, that is, 6.18% and 6.29% respectively. The rest of the processes like Behavioral are totally missing in the *Dawn* texts. This indicates that *Dawn* construes the world more in terms of actions and happenings with Goal at its center. Verbal Processes carried out by the Police officials are the second most frequent. The dominant Process in *Dawn* is Material Process and amongst its related Participants, the Goal is dominant whereas overall dominant Participant is Sayer. It indicates that in *Dawn* texts, Sayer is more pronounced than the Participant Type related to Material Process - the Goal.

4.1.3. Process Types in *The News International*

Contrary to *Dawn*, the dominant process in *The News International* is Verbal Process with 45.73% frequency which explicitly shows that the agency has greater number of such narrators who focus more on narrating what happened instead of presenting the world in terms of actions and happenings or depicting the facts as they are. The dominance of Verbal Processes indicates the inclination of news agency towards quoting the other sources and refraining from giving any opinion/comment about the incident. This technique also implies a way of reflecting objectivity. The newspaper does not pass any evaluative statement, rather it narrates whatever the others
- the witnesses/survivors of the scene or the officials said.

Material Processes stand second with an average of 42.23%, which reflect the reporter's interest in describing the facts as they are. There is a slight difference (of 3.5) between the frequencies of Verbal and Material Processes. Both of them are much higher than the Relational Identifying, Relational Attributive, Mental and Existential Processes. The percentage of Relational Identifying Processes is 5.11%, Relational Attributive is 4.16% and Mental Processes is 1.97%. The Existential Processes are the lowest in frequency with a percentage of 0.80. Behavioral Processes are totally missing in the texts published in *The News International*.

4.1.4. Process Types in *The New York Times*

Analogous to the frequency trend in *The News International*, the dominant process type in *The New York Times* is Verbal Processes carrying the percentage of 45.21%, which is significantly higher than the Material Processes with the frequency of 35.95. The higher frequency of Verbal Processes indicates that narration is focused more on narrating the incidents than presenting them as actions or factual happenings. The

dominance of Verbal Processes indicates the inclination of news agency towards quoting

the other sources instead of giving an evaluative account of the incidents as personal experience. This technique also reflects the tilt towards objectivity. The analysis of the Verbal Processes and the corresponding Participant type is significant to comment on the value of actions and happenings. Contrary to the frequency gap between Verbal and Material in *The News International*, the gap between the frequencies of two processes in *The New York Times* is higher.

Relational Processes carry the third position as in *Dawn* and *The News International*. Relational Identifying Processes have the frequency of 7.69% whereas Relational Attributive Processes have the frequency of 6.59%. The Existential processes are the lowest in number with a frequency of 1.57%. Behavioral Processes are totally missing in the *The New York Times* texts.

4.1.5. Analysis of the Participant Types

To map out the overall impact of the role assigned to different participants by different newspapers, Participant Types from all the texts were calculated. Different Participant Types have been totaled and their percentages have been calculated with respect to total number and represented in the graphical form below:

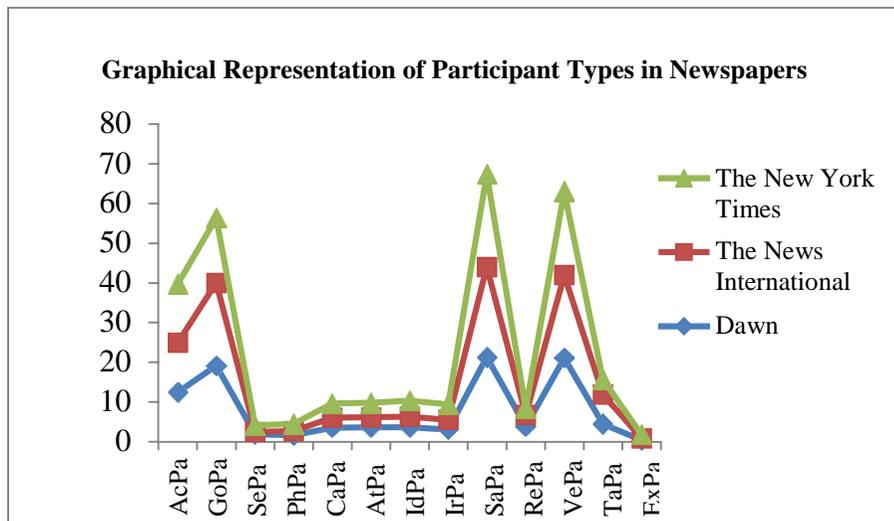


Fig. 2 Participant Types in Different Newspapers

To note the impact of the Processes, the reporters of each newspaper used in their reports while narrating the news stories, the frequency trend of each Participant Type within each text was observed and discussed with respect to each newspaper. The discussion is as follows:-

4.1.6. Participant Types in Dawn

In *Dawn*, the most frequent Participant Type is Sayer with percentages of 21.32, followed by 21.09% of Verbiage which indicate that the Participant Types related to Verbal Processes are predominant in *Dawn* texts. The significant predominance of Sayer reflects that in the

texts most of the

statements are quoted and mostly the Sayers are in guise of Officials. Therefore, Sayer sounds to be more pronounced as compared to the Material-Process-related Participant Type. This indicates that most of the Verbal Processes in *Dawn* texts are in Active Voice and have the Agent very much present there whereas in case of Material Process the *Dawn* texts lack in Active Voice with the pronounced Material-related-Participant Type, that is, Goal. Target and Receiver carry the frequency of 4.41% and 3.80% respectively. If transitivity roles of second participants associated with Verbal and Material Processes (say, Receiver & Goal etc.) are taken into account, Goal takes the highest position with percentage of 19.16. While comparing both the participants related to Material Process, the Goal (19.16%) takes lead of 6.75 from the percentage of Actor which is 12.41% in *Dawn* texts. The greater number of Goal indicates the predominance of passivity. Comparison of Senser and Phenomenon reflects the dominance of Senser (1.87%) with a slight rise from Phenomenon (1.59%). The associated participants of Relational Processes including Carrier (CaPa), Attribute (AtPa), Identified (IdPa) and Identifier (IrPa) have almost same percentages as 3.57, 3.63, 3.63, and 3.06 respectively. Behavers are missing in the *Dawn* texts.

4.1.7. Participant Types in *The News International*

Analogous to *Dawn*, the most frequent Participant Types is Sayer followed by Verbiage. The percentage of Sayer is 22.76 and that of Verbiage is

20.93. The highest ratio of Participant Types related to Verbal Processes indicates their predominance in *The News International* texts. The significant predominance of Sayer reflects that in the texts most of the statements are quoted and mostly the Sayers are in guise of Officials. Target and Receiver carry the frequency of 7.52% and 2.97% respectively. If transitivity roles associated with Verbal and Material Processes (say, Sayer, Receiver, Actor, Goal etc.) are taken into account, Goal takes the second highest position with percentage of 20.89. While comparing both the participants related to Material Process, the Goal (20.89%) takes lead of 8.33 from Actor which is 12.56% in *Dawn* texts. The greater number of Goal indicates the predominance of passivity. Comparison of Senser and Phenomenon reflects the dominance of Phenomenon (1.14% with a slight rise from Senser (0.61%). The associated participants of Relational Processes including Carrier (CaPa), Attribute (AtPa), Identified (IdPa) and Identifier (IrPa) have almost same percentages as 2.52, 2.52, 2.68 and 2.48 respectively. Behavers are missing in the *The News International* texts.

4.1.8. Participant Types in *The New York Times*

Analogous to the Pakistani newspapers, the most frequent Participant Type is Sayer carrying percentage of 23.36 in *The New York Times* texts. The texts predominantly contain quoted statements and the Sayers are in guise of Official. Target and Receiver carry the frequency of 3.70% and 1.6% respectively. If second participants of the transitivity associated with Verbal and Material Processes (say, Receiver &

Goal) are taken into account, Goal takes the highest position with percentage of 16.3. While comparing both the participants related to Material Process, the frequency of Goal

(16.3%) is 1.59% which is higher than that of Actor bearing percentage of 14.71 in *The New York Times* texts. The greater number of Goal indicates the predominance of passivity. Comparison of Senser and Phenomenon reflects the dominance of Senser (1.76%) as compared to Phenomenon (1.6%), which is contrary to the *Dawn* and analogous to *The News International* with respect to Mental Processes. The associated participants of Relational Processes including Carrier (CaPa), Attribute (AtPa), Identified (IdPa) and Identifier (IrPa) have almost same percentages as 3.53, 3.61, 4.03 & 3.87 respectively. Behavers are missing in *The New York Times* texts.

4.2. Qualitative Analysis

In the analysis, the texts from three newspapers, *Dawn*, *The News International* and *The New York Times* were marked as 'A', 'B' and 'C' respectively. In qualitative analysis, the headlines of all the news stories were analyzed to figure out the differences in linguistic choices amongst the Process Types, choices between the voices, and the fronting of themes. Then, the subjectivity and objectivity were gauged through already calculated frequencies of Material, Mental and Verbal Processes.

4.2.1. Differences in Headlines of the Newspapers

The headlines of the news stories were separately analyzed through the linguistic choices of Process Types, Voice and Theme.

4.2.2. Processes

The analysis of the headlines reveals that the headlines of *Dawn* contain Material as well as Verbal Processes (root word 'claim') whereas the headlines of both *The News International* and *The New York Times* have only Material Processes.

The headlines of all the three newspapers have only one root word common which is 'kill'. The headlines of both the Pakistani newspapers (*Dawn* and *The News International*) have three words common, which are 'kill', 'injure' and 'die'. Other than these commonalities, the varieties of 'target', 'attack', 'claim', 'toll', 'strike', 'shake', 'rise', 'attack' and 'lose' with different tense forms create an impact of specificity. For instance, use of target in following three of the headlines of *Dawn* texts marks the significance of specifying the buildings/figure of religio-political repute.

2 A ISI building targeted in Multan; eight killed

9 A Attackers target Lahore's Ahmadi worshippers; 70 dead

12 A Blast in Charsadda targets Fazl's convoy; 12 killed

The usage of word 'claim' in the following three headlines indicates the acknowledgement of the attack or confirmation of the number of deaths.

13 A Terror strike in Hangu claims 28 lives

14 A Taliban claim attack on Minhas base; nine militants killed

16 A TTP claims responsibility for attack on Bannu police station

The use of word 'toll' as a Material Process in one of the headlines of *Dawn* texts emphasizes the higher number of deaths.

5 A Lakki Marwat suicide attack toll now 91

Corresponding to the usage of toll, the word 'rise' also marks the higher number of deaths.

19 A Suicide blast at Mardan funeral; death toll rises to 34

The usage of word 'shake' indicates the intensity and quantum of loss caused by simultaneous multiple blasts in Lahore.

7 A Multiple terror blasts shake Lahore

The usage of 'lose' reflects that the *Dawn* intends to highlight the value of the minister be it owing to his political stature or his services in the interest of safeguarding the country against the terrorists.

28 A Punjab loses minister in terrorist attack

The daily *Dawn* texts have more variety of lexical items (root words). *The News International* and *The New York Times* have less variety of vocabulary items (root words).

In *Dawn*, the root word 'kill' has been used in three different forms as 'kill', 'kills' and 'killed'. Corresponding to the same, *The New York Times* texts have varieties of 'kill', 'kills' whereas both the texts differ in the third variety which is 'killed' in *Dawn*, and 'are killed' in *The New York Times* texts. Further probing into the usage of 'killed' in the headlines of both the newspapers revealed that in the headlines of *Dawn* texts, 'killed' had been used with the preceding omission of helping verb (are/were).

In *The New York Times*, the usage of 'fail' in the following headlines differentiates the success or failure of the terrorists.

3 C Pakistani Army's Victories Fail to Halt Taliban's Blows

12 C Suicide Attack on politician in Pakistan fails again

The usage of 'takes' with the Goal 'heavy toll' marks the numerical value of the dead.

5 C Bomb Takes Heavy Toll at Pakistan Sports Event

The usage of 'rams' in the following headlines indicates the devastating effects of the suicide bombing.

6 C Suicide Bomber Rams a Pakistan Building

4.2.3. Voice

To study the order of Participant Types or to be more precise, the syntactical choices, the Voice and Theme of all the headlines were studied.

The headlines of *The News International* texts have predominantly Passive Voice structure whereas the headlines of the *The New York Times* texts have predominantly Active Voice structure. In headlines of *Dawn* texts, there is no significant difference between the frequency of the Active and the Passive Voices of the processes. However, most of the Passives are agentless.

All Passive Voice structures of *Dawn* and *The News International* texts are agentless (have no Actor) whereas the following two Passive Voice structure of *The New York Times* texts have agents.

8 C U.S. Consulate in Pakistan Attacked by Militants (Actor)

13 C Pakistani Town Struck by Suicide Bombing

However, the two structures reported in 8 C and 13 C differ. The sentence 8 C has explicit animate Actor 'Militants', and 13 C contains a happening, i.e., suicide bombing has been exploited in place of an agent.

The Passive Voice structures of all the three newspapers are in Past tense except the following headlines in *The New York Times* texts.

16 C Several Are Killed in Attack on Pakistan Police Post

Most of the Active Voice structures in all the three newspapers have Present tense.

The Auxiliary Verb requisite for the Passive Voice is missing in most of the Passive Voice Processes given in the headlines of all the newspaper texts but they cast an impression of passivity.

4.2.4. Theme

The theme in all Passive Voice structures in *Dawn* headlines is Goal depicted in numeric form except the following:-

2 A ISI building targeted in Multan...

25 A Another Imambargah attacked by terrorists

The themes in the Active Voice structures of *Dawn* headlines are 'rampaging militants', 'suicide attack', 'Lakki Marwat suicide attack', 'terrorists', 'multiple terror blasts', 'militants', 'attackers', 'suicide bomber', 'blast in Charsadda', 'terror strike in Hangu', 'Taliban', 'TTP', 'militants', 'pro- govt elder among five', 'two guards' and 'Punjab', which indicate that themes of most of the Active Voice headlines of *Dawn* texts contain either miscreants or the happening of terrorism except 'pro-govt elder among five' in '(20 A) Pro-govt elder among five killed in blast', 'two guards' in (27 A) 'Two guards die in suicide attack' and 'Punjab' in (28 A) 'Punjab loses minister in terrorist attack'. The foregoing exceptions have Affectees in the role of Actor.

The themes in the headlines of *The News International* texts are predominantly numeric highlighting the number of killed and injured. In that, most of the Passive Voice structures have numeric themes except the following:-

10 B Children, women among 21 killed in Kohat blast

19 B MPA among 28 killed in Mardan funeral blast

21 B Suicide attack at Taliban commander headquarters, 13 killed

28 B Punjab home minister, 20 others killed in suicide hit

In the above-mentioned exceptions, three sentences (10 B, 19 B and 28 B) specify the persona of political stature or the general public who were killed in the suicide attack. Only one Passive Voice headline begins with the act (event) of suicide attack. There is no significant difference between the numeric themes and the content themes in the Active Voice structures in the headlines of *The News International* texts. The headlines other than content themes are as follows:-

- 4 B Karachi burns after attack on Ashura procession
- 17 B TTP attack kills 5 at Peshawar airport
- 22 B Fazl escapes suicide attack
- 24 B Explosion outside Police Lines, Lahore leaves 5 dead

In headlines of *The New York Times* texts, most of the structures are Active Voice having either Miscreants such as Militants (04), Suicide Bomber (04), Attackers, Bomber, Pakistani Taliban (02) or the activity of the terrorism such as Twin Attacks, Bomb, Twin Suicide Attacks, Suicide Bomb, Suicide Attack on politician in Pakistan, Roadside Bomb, Pakistan: Suicide Attack, Violence in Pakistan, Explosion, Suicide Attacks on Pakistan Churches, Suicide Bombing, Shooting, Blast, Suicide Attack as themes. In the latter case, Pakistani Army's Victories is an exception.

The headlines of *The New York Times* texts have following Passive Voice structures:-

- 8 C U.S. Consulate in Pakistan Attacked by Militants
- 13 C Pakistani Town Struck by Suicide Bombing
- 16 C Several Are Killed in Attack on Pakistan Police Post

Two of these Passive Voice structures have targeted places as theme whereas only one has numeric theme tentatively specifying the numbers as 'several'.

4.2.5. Objectivity versus Subjectivity

Hallidyan Transitivity System Network is the tool to determine the objectivity in the corpus. The most significant element of the Transitivity - Process Type - serves as a gauge to work out how objective a particular text, and/or newspaper agency is.

4.2.6. Objectivity through the Gauge of Material Processes

Material Processes indicate that the newspaper construes the world in terms of reality, in terms of actions and happenings, i.e., what is actually going on in the world. They represent the facts as they are and therefore reflect objectivity. Higher number of Material Processes indicates more objectivity; it reveals that reporter/correspondent has depicted the events he was sure about and has endorsed the confirmed facts. On the scale of objectivity, the newspapers follow this sequence: *Dawn*, *The News International* and *The New York Times*. It reflects that both the Pakistani newspapers are more objective as compared to the American newspaper.

4.2.7. Subjectivity through the Gauge of Mental Processes

Another gauge to measure subjectivity (reversed objectivity) is Mental Process which interprets the world in terms of feelings, emotions and cognition. The higher the number of Mental Processes, the more Subjective the text is. On the scale of subjectivity, the newspapers follow this sequence: *The New York Times*, *Dawn* and *The News International*. It reflects that the American newspaper (*The New York Times*) is more subjective as compared to both the Pakistani newspapers. The objectivity calculated from the Material Processes can be triangulated by reversing the subjectivity order obtained from Mental Processes. When subjectivity sequence of the scale was reversed, it commensurated with the one obtained from the Material Processes.

4.2.8. Objectivity through the Gauge of Verbal Processes

Objectivity in the newspapers is very much dependent on the sources which provide information about the occurrence or the event. In the news reports, either the sources speak themselves or they quote others who are very much present at the place of occurrence. Through the lens of Transitivity, such reporting is revealed through the Verbal Processes. The more the other Sayers are involved in the news report, the more objective the text is. The number of Verbal Processes reveal the sequence of newspapers as *The News International*, *The New York Times* and *Dawn*.

5. Findings

1. Material Processes are dominant in *Dawn*, whereas in *The News International* and *The New York Times*, Verbal Processes are dominant.
2. Examination of Participant Type indicates that the most frequent Participant Type is Sayer in the two Pakistani newspapers, whereas in *The New York Times*, Verbiage is more frequent than Sayer. The comparison of animate Participant Types reveals that *The New York Times* texts comprise the highest number of Sayers.
3. In all the three newspapers, the comparison of the transitivity roles associated with Verbal and Material Processes (say, Sayer, Receiver, Actor, Goal etc) barring Verbiage indicates that Goal takes second highest position. The comparison of Material related participants (say, Actor, Goal) indicates the predominance of Goal reflecting the predominance of passivity.
4. Unlike other newspapers, *Dawn* has Material as dominant Process whereas the dominant Participant is Sayer because most of the participants of the Sayer are pronounced.
5. The comparison of Sayers and Receivers shows the highest number of Sayers in *The News International* whereas the frequency of Receivers is the second highest in *The News International*. The daily *Dawn* texts have the highest number of Receivers but the lowest number of Sayers. *The New York Times* texts have the second highest position with reference to the frequency of Sayer whereas the same texts have the lowest number of Receivers.

6. In daily *Dawn* texts, Sayer is more pronounced as compared to the Material-Process-related Participant Type. This also indicates that most of the Verbal Processes in *Dawn* texts are in Active Voice and have the Agent very much present whereas in case of Material Process, the *Dawn* texts lack in Active Voice with the pronounced Material-related-Participant Type, that is, Goal.

7. The analysis of the headlines reveals that the headlines of *Dawn* contain Material as well as Verbal Processes (root word 'claim') whereas the headlines of both *The News International* and *The New York Times* have only Material Processes. The headlines of all the three newspapers have only one root word common which is 'kill'. The headlines of both the Pakistani newspapers (*Dawn* and *The News International*) have three words common, which are 'kill', 'injure' and 'die'. Beside these commonalities, the varieties of 'target', 'attack', 'claim', 'toll', 'strike', 'shake', 'rise', 'attack' and 'lose' with different tense forms create an impact of specificity.

8. The headlines of *The News International* texts have predominantly Passive Voice structure whereas the headlines of the *The New York Times* texts have predominantly Active Voice structure. In headlines of *Dawn* texts, there is no significant difference between the frequency of the Active and the Passive Voices of the processes. However, most of the Passives are agentless. All Passive Voice structures in the headlines of the three newspapers are agentless (have no Actor) except two of the *The New York Times*. The Passive Voice structures of all the three newspapers headlines are in Past tense except a few in the *The New York Times*. The Auxiliary Verb requisite for the Passive Voice is missing in most of the Passive Voice Processes given in the headlines of all the newspaper texts but they cast an impression of passivity. Most of the Active Voice structures in all the three newspapers have Present tense. Goal in numeric form has been used as the theme in all the Passive Voice structures of *Dawn* headlines except two (2 A & 25 A).

9. The themes in the headlines of *The News International* texts are predominantly numeric highlighting the number of killed and injured. In that, most of the Passive Voice structures have numeric themes except a few (10 B), (19 B), (21 B), (28 B). Out of the foregoing exceptions, (10 B), (19 B) and (28 B) specify the persona of political stature or the general public who were killed in the suicide attack. Only one of the Passive Voice headlines begins with the act (event) of suicide attack. There is no significant difference between the numeric themes and the content themes in the Active Voice structures in the headlines of *The News International* texts. The headlines other than content themes are (4 B), (17 B), (22 B) and (24 B).

10. On the scale of objectivity, the calculation of Material Processes reveals that both the Pakistani newspapers are more objective as compared to the American newspaper. On the scale of subjectivity, the calculation of Mental Processes reveals that the American newspaper (*The New York Times*) is more subjective as compared to both the Pakistani newspapers. The reverse of the foregoing substantiates the objectivity of the Pakistani newspapers.

6. Conclusion

The research was undertaken with an aim to analyze the linguistic variations exploited in the news reports of suicide attacks that occurred in Pakistan. The analysis revealed that the transitivity templates varying with respect to lexical choices, voice and fronting of themes highlight the news reporters'/agencies' intentional or unintentional selection to cast diversified impact on the readers' minds. Similarly, these choices represent them as objective or subjective from different angles with different degrees. The findings indicated that both the Pakistani newspapers had reflected different transitivity patterns as compared to the American newspaper. They differ in the frequency of different process types and participant types, paradigmatic and syntagmatic choices and their order at syntactic level. The findings also revealed that the Pakistani newspapers were more objective as they had higher number of Material Processes and lesser number of Mental Processes. The foregoing fact, in turn, reflects American newspaper as more concerned with endorsing personal involvement through the processes of perception, cognition and affectation.

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