

# A Corpus-Based Study of Hedges and Boosters in Transgender Representation in Pakistani Newspapers Articles

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## Abstract

This paper focuses on newspaper discourse on transgender portrayal by analyzing hedges and boosters accompanied by Fairclough's (1995) Three-Dimensional Model. Hedges and boosters are directly related to the construction of certainty and uncertainty in discourse. Based on Pakistani newspaper articles from Dawn and The News, the research looked for common patterns of the linguistic formations of transgender and discursive ideologies. Hedges such as 'may' and 'could' potentially reduce discourses as they progress and indicate social ambiguity, whereas boosters like 'must' and 'clear' could support demands for rights. The study found that Dawn used hedges such as 'may' and 'could' 86 times, whereas The News used them 101 times, indicating a cautious tone. In contrast, boosters like 'must' and 'clear' appeared 35 times in Dawn and only 23 times in The News, showing different levels of assertiveness. This dual approach reflects distinct editorial stances on transgender discourse in Pakistani media. The analysis showed that it is possible to advance understanding of how the media influences the perceptions of society and the applicability of an approach to the construction of equality-minded discourses. Future studies should expand the media contexts so that less is left unknown about how minorities are depicted.

**Keywords:** Corpus-based, Discourse analysis, Hedges and boosters, Transgender

## Introduction

**M**edia portrayal plays a significant part in reinforcing or changing the perception of the society towards different groups of society. In the recent past, transgender representation has received a spike in both global and national media discourses. In contributing to how audiences made sense of social issues,

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media outlets tended to adopt particular linguistic resources, and consequently, how media portrayed transgender individuals is already inscribed with societal prejudice. This paper focuses on how hedges and boosters as two important interactional markers are used to represent transgender in Pakistani newspaper articles with the help of a corpus-based critical discourse analysis.

In addition, hedges are used to introduce some degree of indeterminacy, politeness, or a way of avoiding confrontation because of conflicting beliefs with others (Holmes, 1995). On the other hand, other words called 'booster' increase the ratio of the effect of statements like the words 'definitely' and 'absolutely' (Holmes, 1995; Talbot, 2010). Such markers are imperative in determining approaches to matters such as gender, which may be sensitive in a society. For that reason, hedges can minimize transgender concerns, representing social tension or uncertainty, and at the same time, boosters can reclaim a better or empowering message (Holmes 1995, Fairclough 2003). Media hedging and boosting, when used frequently, discloses a great deal about the ruling paradigm orientation regarding their impact in the area of social sciences, mainly when it comes to stigmatized or marginalized groups.

In Pakistan, transgender identity and rights remain rather politically sensitive, and media blogs are among the only powerful platforms that capture social discourses. The article as a genre represents a valuable sample of a public form of discursive practice that allows both mainstream and insurgent discourses to meet actively; therefore, it seems to be an appropriate object of analysis in the context of media representations. In contrast to the format and influence of much academic research on media, articles offer an informal yet charged form of media representation that can unveil more subtle prejudice. It is with such hedges and boosters in these blogs that there might be a particular and valuable understanding of how media construes the referent objects, particularly about how the culture perceives transgenderism and the potential consequences pertinent to these conceptions.

Thus, combining the framework of the corpus-based critical discourse analysis, this paper identifies the frequency and use of hedging and boosting in Pakistani newspaper blogs to discuss transgender issues. Using both quantitative analysis of linguistic features and qualitative interpretations of the findings by Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model (2003), this research seeks to understand how language scripts transgender identities and how language constructs the wider social discourses of gender and power. More precisely, this research aims to identify how

the article's authors employ hedges and boosters to either perpetuate or subvert the existing stereotypical perceptions of transgender in Pakistan.

#### ❖ **Transgender discourse**

Transgender talk involves how and what is said about transgender, or how they are portrayed in any given culture or social domain, at any given point in time. It encompasses an understanding of how language use, visual representations, and choice of words help in the creation of biological sex dissidents. Research has also revealed that most of the media portrayals of transsexuals are biased and distorted starting from the time the press took an interest in the transsexual phenomena, and the bias seems to have continued to the present day in the press and media and may have an impact on the perception that the transsexuals create about themselves. It is examined that the issues concerning the transgender community in Pakistan as the mainstream media portrays them in a very stereotype and provides them with limited roles. The representation of Transgender characters in media has increased, but they are still depicted in a negative stereotypic manner. This discourse is especially important in attempting to comprehend the function of the mass media in terms of constructing cultural conceptions of gendered sex and arguing for representational accuracy, honesty, and consideration of the Trans\* individual. Robson and Nicholls (2019) said that when examining attitudes, it is important to include both context and substance. Additionally, it is necessary to address covert forms of prejudice, which may help guide future transphobia assessments and anti-prejudice initiatives in media representation of transgender.

#### ❖ **Media representation of transgender in Pakistan**

The transgender community uses the media as a forum to highlight their struggles, advocate for their rights, and raise awareness of problems they encounter. By debunking the prejudices and preconceptions that have long left transgender people helpless, the media can change public opinion through news stories, documentaries, and interviews (Zakria et. al, 2023). The media of Pakistan particularly has an influential role in the portrayal of transgender. Transgender people are portrayed differently in newspaper articles. It can only be expected that it perpetuates the narrow-mindedness that has been the traditional view of the outside world regarding the lives of transgender people. Despite the stated improvements in the representation of transgender people, mainstream media still has a way to go, focusing on problems such as the experience of prejudice and ostracism rather than telling the audience about the new trans person. To enhance the visibility of people

in society and their acceptance there has to be a change in the portrayal of marginalized individuals in popular culture media. It would be of great benefit for Pakistani audiences to see transgender in various and productive roles to facilitate change in perceptions and social acceptance of transgender. Better characterizations of the subject can reveal the strengths, personality, and accomplishments of the transgender population, which will help to create more tolerance.

Social representation of transgender individuals in the Pakistani context may be stereotyped. Transgender people may be struggling and marginalized by the media. The purpose of this current research is to analyze the employment of hedges and boosters in articles on transgender discourse in Pakistani newspapers thus identifying how these writing features either minimize or maximize the discussion on transgender. Through a corpus analysis combined with critical discourse analysis, there is a need to identify how media language both represents and enacts social power relations. By so doing, CDA makes it possible to assess the ideological function of language use and to examine how some representations may reinforce or resist hegemonic understandings of the lives of transgender. The results will help to identify media discourses about the topic and the way that they may influence people's attitudes toward transgender issues in Pakistan, as well as to learn about the possibilities of media discourses for supporting or contesting the dominant discourse about transgender.

This research has implications because it examines the two most crucial features of language about Pakistani society's attitudes toward transgender. Transgender are considered a marginalized group in Pakistan (Saeed, 2024). Thus, demonstrating the usage of the hedges and boosters in the discourse of transgender, the study gives a way to how language perpetuates or subverts stereotypes. By investigating Critical Discourse Analysis their findings let readers understand the hidden ideologies within the media portrayals. The comprehension of these linguistic strategies extends the awareness of how media influences community perceptions and performs a role in the discourse about gender, power, and gender integration in Pakistan's media domain.

## Review of the Literature

Stryker and Blackston (2023) said transgender discourse is one of the most investigated area from the angle of linguistics. However, particularly in the Pakistani context, the research-based inquiries are limited (Zahra & Abbas, 2024). The dominant societal discourse on gender often reflects the entrenched attitudes of a male- and female-centered society towards transgender individuals. Language plays a critical role in this dynamic, with specific expressions reflecting their societal status especially when it comes to media discourse. The expressions used in media for transgender can have both positive and negative effects on the lives of transgender. Media narratives mainly aim to highlight transgender individuals for different experiences of their lives, sometimes showing them marginalized and sometimes advocating for their rights and addressing their challenges. This study investigates hedges and boosters employed by Pakistani newspaper writers to convey societal attitudes toward transgender people. Using a combination of corpus-based methods and critical discourse analysis, it examines how these narratives shape the representation of transgender individuals within Pakistan.

Talking about the South-Asia Media discourse, Ahmad et al. (2022) conducted a study on the media discourse of Kartarpur corridor between Pakistan and India. Newspapers are important because they help shape what people think by explaining what is going on. The data was collected from Dawn and The News International in Pakistan, and The Times of India and Hindustan Times in India. The researchers looked at articles from August 2018 to March 2020 using the Lexus Nexus Library. They integrated corpus-based methodology for the analysis of the data and analyzed the language. Ittefaq et al. (2021) shed light on the media representation of marginalized people especially Christians. From the analyzed data, it has been noted that these people are totally marginalized and not given proper representation in the media. Shaukat et al. (2024) argue that meta-discourse markers are utilized in TED talks. This study looks into how male and female speakers use certain language features, like attitude markers, boosters, engagement markers, hedges, and self-mentions, in Pakistani TED Talks. Basically, the researchers wanted to find these language things, see how often they are used, figure out what they do, and then see if there are any differences between how men and women use them.

In addition to theoretical background, Van Dijk (2008) is of the opinion that what the media presents has a real impact on how power works in society. It can either

make stereotypes deeper or go against what most people think. This idea fits with what our study found when we looked at how Pakistani newspapers (Dawn and The News) talk about transgender people, paying attention to how they soften or strengthen their statements. This study's results match what Van Dijk said in 2008: the media really molds how power works in society. When 'The News' uses cautious language, it looks like they are trying to stay neutral and not cause problems, which helps keep things the way they are. On the other hand, Dawn uses strong words, hinting that they are trying to change stereotypes and support transgender rights. So, the words used in the media can either keep things as they are in Pakistani society or change.

To give an insight on corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis, Zottola (2021) in the book *transgender Identities in the Press: A Corpus-based Discourse Analysis* explains that corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis can be used to investigate how print media in the UK and Canada represent transgender identities. It explores semantic categories, identity labels, and how press language shapes public understanding. This could provide methodological insights for this corpus-based study. Khattak and Gulzar (2023) also discussed that corpus-based methodologies are useful in exploring linguistic strategies in discourse. It gives an empirical touch to the study of finding expressions and then it also can be integrated with critical discourse analysis. Robson & Nicholls (2021) said that studies focusing on perceptions of Transgender persons have been established to be scarce in literature. Most of the research in the area is quantitative, and few qualitative researches focused either on transgender experience or only on people having experience with transgender people. Therefore, this study particularly focuses on transgender discourse in newspaper articles by employing both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Moreover, the work of Torma (2018) seeks to analyze how transgender people are portrayed in two popular British newspapers, The Daily Mail and The Guardian, employing two research methods – corpus linguistic methods. It was an important study regarding the identification of political interests and power relationships as disclosed by distributional and critical discourse analysis. So here is a methodological symbiosis that combines the numerical characteristics of corpus linguistics, primarily, collocations and concordance lines, to the qualitative analysis of CDA. To a very great extent, this study owes its existence to Baker (2014) who utilized to use collocation and concordance line analysis to determine what

semantic prosodies there are around gay men in The Daily Mail. The author opines that “homophobic practices reside in discourses” and that “language analysis is thus a method of ascertaining the extent.” to which a society is homophobic, as well as offering a view into the character of such homophobia”. These statements can be equally applied to transgender stigma and prejudice against people and transphobia, and therefore this is the major reason for this line of research. So far, there is a gap in the literature regarding the portrayal of transgender people in the print media of Pakistan as well.

Furthermore, Akerlund (2018) examines how transgender people are depicted in the Swedish mainstream media by conducting topic modeling on 15,901 newspaper articles and critical discourse analysis of the identified topics published between 2000 and 2017. Discrimination and marginalization of Transgender persons were further seen through the generally insensitive language used and through descriptions of transgender persons as being deviant. The author also shows how media deployed knowledge claims to marginalize, erase specific narratives. Thus, also works that sought to help Trans people read them in a way that enforced heteronormativity due to the insistence on the two genders only. This work raises awareness of how media while presenting some forms of transgender representations, maintains other hegemonic power structures play.

In addition, Ramash and Ng (2023) discussed that opinion article writers must ensure that their thoughts are coherent and that the language they use builds a connection with readers. To achieve their persuasive objectives and persuade their audience, they must be knowledgeable about the topic being discussed. Because they are more likely to persuade their readers with their ideas, opinion writers who use strong persuasive writing strategies are thought to draw in more readers. This genre needs to be explored linguistically. It is also said that Gender differences have been a popular area of study for decades, and the recent surge in interest in the prevalent phenomenon of metadiscourse has made it a major area of study in discourse analysis and corpus-based analyses (Alsubhi, 2016).

Therefore, scholarly investigation on transgender and media representation has advanced globally. The specific linguistic strategies used to portray transgender individuals in Pakistani newspapers remain unexplored from a few angles. Most studies have focused on media narratives in Western contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how hedges and boosters are employed in Pakistani media to shape

transgender identities. Additionally, little attention has been given to how these meta-discourse markers influence societal attitudes or challenge prevailing ideologies. This study addresses the gap by examining the role of hedges and boosters in constructing transgender identities and its broader ideological implications in two main Pakistani newspaper discourses.

## Methodology

### ❖ Research method

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and corpus-based analysis are used in this study. The researcher has examined the language used for the representation of transgender people in Pakistan. The data was collected from 'Dawn' and 'The News', two mainstream Pakistani newspapers. Two newspapers Dawn and The News are selected as a source of primary data. The selection of Dawn and The News is based on their widespread readership and influence in Pakistani journalism. While Dawn is recognized for its progressive stance, The News reaches a broader, mainstream audience. Articles were randomly selected from 2020-2022 to ensure a balanced representation of linguistic trends across time, avoiding bias from temporary media events. In the present study, meta-discourse markers are described by collecting data based on Hyland's (2005) model and using AntConc software the approach utilized a quantitative method of corpus analysis model using AntConc software and a qualitative approach by integrating Fairclough (1995) model. This kind of research employs a dual-method perspective of the manner, in which language and societal perceptions intertwine giving a broad picture of transgender representation within the Pakistani media domain.

### ❖ Data collection and sampling

With the development of information technology, e-newspaper articles are an accessible and constructive platform for people worldwide to exchange views and ideas on multiple issues (Maritim, 2022). The sample of the present research was derived from Dawn and The News, which are daily Pakistani e-newspapers. The selection focused on explicitly transgender-related articles, which may over represent strong opinions rather than neutral reports to achieve the objectives of this research, a set of articles were gathered from these newspaper's archives from January 2020 to December 2022. The selected period includes significant legal and social debates on transgender rights in Pakistan, providing a relevant linguistic context (e.g., the Transgender Persons Act, 2018 debates). Each newspaper's

electronic archive was reviewed and 50 articles were identified. The reason for selecting these newspapers and websites is based on the readership and reliability of the news. A specialized corpus of blogs has been created about transgender discourse. A total of 50 articles were collected from each newspaper archive, but later on, only 30 were selected as a random sample from each blog to build a corpus. 50 articles were initially selected to ensure diversity, but a final sample of 30 was chosen based on close relevance to transgender discourse. The different ways Dawn and The News use boosters and hedges might come from Dawn's more liberal views, not how everyone else feels. The News seems more balanced, maybe because that is what its readers want.

## **Theoretical Framework**

For the analysis of the patterns of organization of the text, this paper employs Hyland's (2005) Meta-discourse model, which focuses on the use of meta-discourse markers such as hedges and boosters to mediate interaction between writers and readers. This study is all about hedges and boosters because they clearly show how cautious or certain people are when writing in newspapers. Things like attitude markers, engagement markers, and self-mentions play a role in creating discourse, but they do not directly show any linguistic division in media reporting. Such an integrated approach allows not only for the numeric comparison of data but also for the analysis of the qualitative aspects of the participation of transsexual subjects in Pakistani media. Besides the corpus analysis approach, the study draws from Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis model that is used to analyze the relationship between the text and the wider social and power relations. This study applied Fairclough's three-dimensional model in the critical analysis of how linguistic choices are used. As Nur and Widodo (2022) said the combination of interactional markers and critical discourse analysis makes the analysis more comprehensive and valid. Therefore, this paper argues that using both these theoretical models, one can explore the complexities of numerical and non-numerical characteristics of linguistic patterns as well as their sociocultural relationships and effects in understanding this phenomenon of how Pakistani media represents 'transgender'.

**Table 1:*****Interactional Meta-discourse Model based on Hyland, 2005***

S.no	Interactional Meta-discourse
1	Hedges- indicate the writer's decision to recognize other voices, viewpoints or possibilities and be open to negotiation with the reader,
2	Boosters- allow the writer to anticipate and preclude alternative, conflicting arguments by expressing certainty instead of doubt.
3	Attitude Markers- indicate the writer's opinion or assessment of a proposition.
4	Self-mention refers to explicit authorial presence in the text and gives information about his/ her character and stance.
5	Engagement markers- explicitly address readers to draw them into the discourse.

In this research, we are only concerned with Hedges and Boosters from the above Hyland's model.

❖ **Hedges**

Lakoff (1972) has given the definition of hedges as "words whose job is to make things more or less fuzzy". Hedges are utilized to decrease the certainty in a writer's view. They make judgments less effective. Propositions become weak when a writer uses hedges.

❖ **Boosters**

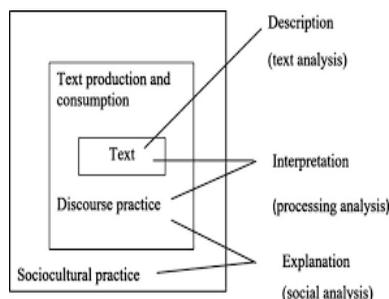
These are the textual components that add strength to writers' opinions. It adds clarity. The proposition becomes stronger. It emphasizes the writer's point of view. Silver (2003) calls it a device used for argumentation and a strong proposition by the writer.

**Table 2:**

*List of Hedges, Boosters, Attitude Markers, Self-mentions and Engagement markers*

<b>Hedges</b>	<b>Boosters</b>
<p>About, apparent(ly), approximately, almost, appear, argue,</p> <p>assume, around,</p> <p>broadly,</p> <p>certain amount, claim, could, doubt(ful), essentially, estimate, fairly, feel, felt,</p> <p>frequently, generally,</p> <p>guess, indicate,</p> <p>in my opinion, mostly, likely, mainly, maybe, may, perhaps.</p> <p>Plausibly, possible, Postulate, Probable, quite rather, relatively seem, should somewhat., sometimes, suggest, suppose, would, tend to, typical(ly), uncertain, unclear, usually, unlikely, will, suspect</p>	<p>Actually, always, believe, believed, believes, beyond doubt, certain, certainly, clear, clearly, conclusively, decidedly, definite, definitely, demonstrate, demonstrated, demonstrates, doubtless, establish, established, evident, evidently, find, finds, found, in fact, incontestable, incontrovertible, incontrovertibly, indeed, indisputable, indisputably, know, known, must, (possibility), never, no doubt, obvious, obviously, of course, prove, proved, proves, realize, realized, realizes, really, show, showed, shown, shows, sure, surely, think, thinks, thought, truly, true, undeniable, undeniably, undisputedly, undoubtedly, without doubt</p>

**Image 1:**  
**Fairclough's 1995 Model**



## Analysis and discussion

This chapter focuses on the corpus-based interactional markers analysis of the portrayal of transgender people in Dawn and The News: two newspapers in Pakistan. This research utilized a corpus-based analytical approach towards hedges and boosters and used Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model to analyze their ideological and socio-cultural features. Al-Subhi (2023) said that meta-discourse elements concerning discourse analysis bring useful insights into research. The discussion correlates with the research objectives and follows the identified guidelines considering the role of the hedges and boosters on the construction of the transgender identity within the media and their general impact on society.

### ❖ Commonly used hedges in Dawn and The News

Hedges are linguistic devices that express vagueness in communication, commonly used to tone down what is being said or offer another opinion. In the analysis of hedges in both Dawn and The News, patterns depicting the editorial choice of language in the two newspapers and their respective sociocultural background stand out.

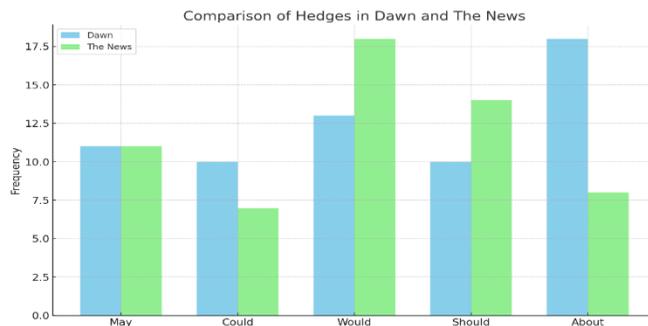
**Table 3: List of Hedges in Dawn and The News**

S.no.	Hedge ( <i>Dawn</i> )	Frequency	Hedge ( <i>The News</i> )	Frequency
1	About	18	About	08
2	Almost	03	Around	02
3	Around	04	Certain	01
4	Could	10	Claim	01

5	Feel	02	Could	07
6	Felt	01	Essentially	01
7	Likely	01	Feel	01
8	May	11	Felt	01
9	Perhaps	01	Most	08
10	Should	10	Mainly	01
11	Sometimes	01	May be	05
12	Would	13	May	11
13	Uncertain	01	Possible	05
14	Unclear	01	Rather	02
15	Will	20	Relatively	01
16			Should	14
17			Sometimes	01
18			Would	18
19			Will	13
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>19</b>
			<b>101</b>	

The above table no. 3 shows that hedges such as may, could, about, and would are among the most frequently used in both newspapers. In Dawn, hedges like may (frequency: 11) and could (frequency: 10) are employed more often compared to The News, where should (frequency: 14) and would (frequency: 18) are more prevalent. This leads to the analysis that the tone used in the language of Dawn articles is somewhat conservative but not repressive, which seems to reflect its editorial approach to social topics. On the other hand, The News is far more practical, while also employing hedges to express recommendations or likely repercussions.

**Chart 1:**



### Example

“As far as preventing more deaths is concerned, the government may consider the community’s demand that the state become” (Dawn)

“the Person having feelings in their mind about their gender may also recognize as transgender. Every Transgender person shall have” (The News)

“begging, dancing and prostitution to make a living. The madrassah could help trans people assimilate into mainstream society, Islamabad Deputy” (Dawn)

“with women and children under Article 25 of the Constitution, they could be further protected as any negative discrimination against them” (The News)

“youngest of five siblings. “One of them told me he would have a problem getting his kids married off if” (Dawn)

“at the F-11, looks very satisfied. “When we begged, someone would give us a few rupees, while most people would” (The News)

“amendments against the law, but added that the transgender community should be given their rights as equal citizens” (Dawn)

“give transgender persons a respectable place in society. The government should take steps to increase the economic status of transgender” (The News)

### ❖ Interpretation using Fairclough’s model

#### • Textual analysis

The high density of hedges identified in Dawn points to an important aspect of their journalistic approach that underlies the carefully calibrated approach to transgender presentation. The use of such mild verbs as ‘may’ and ‘could’ makes the overall tone of the claims less confrontational to challenge the thoughts readers might have regarding the issue at the same time. In this respect, The News employs soft modalities of language, for instance, ‘would’ and ‘should’ that reflect an editorialist approach that ensures the reader will consider actionable solutions to the representation of transgender.

- **Discursive practice**

Discursive practices are viewed as the key concept of discourse theory and the major tool through which linguists can work investigating language relations with society and a person (Bilá & Ivanova, 2020). In this case, hedges show how the newspapers tried to avoid confrontation with their readership in the sensitive issue of transgender presentation. Thus, being oriented to the readers mindful of societal issues, Dawn uses the linguistic means of hedging to encourage critique. The News being a large circulation, general interest publication employs hedges to give operating advice whilst keeping out of politics. The editorial decisions thus reveal how media organizations build storylines in a bid to suit their presupposed reader audience.

- **Social practice**

The careful use of hedges accords with social restrictions when defining the issues affecting the transgender community. This linguistic strategy reflects not only the language itself but the culture of Pakistan as well, as people tend to avoid speaking about systemic discrimination. The linguistic differences between Dawn and The News explore how Pakistani society slowly evolves and hedges are used as a way to deal with controversy in the Pakistani context.

- ❖ **Commonly used boosters in Dawn and The News**

According to Hyland’s model, boosters convey certainty and confidence in language. It serves as a tool to strengthen arguments and emphasize key points in a discourse. In this paper, the analysis revealed that Dawn used boosters like ‘clear’, ‘must’, and ‘always’ more frequently, while The News employs boosters like ‘clear’ and ‘know’, in greater number than others.

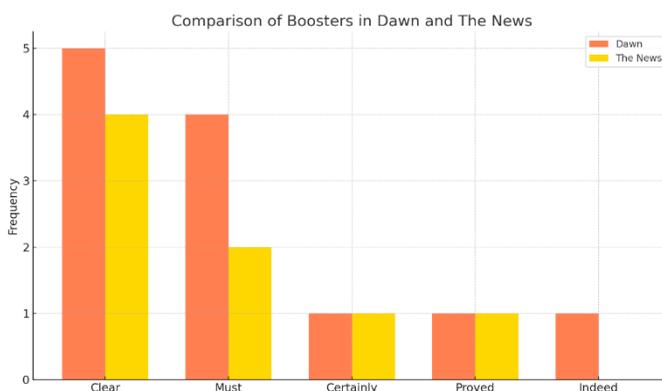
**Table 4: List of Boosters in Dawn and The News**

S.no.	Booster (Dawn)	Frequency	Booster (The News)	Frequency
1	Always	06	Actually	02
2	Believes	01	Believe	01
3	Believe	01	Certainly	01
4	Certainly	01	Clear	04
5	Clear	05	Clearly	01
6	Clearly	01	Established	01

7	Establish	01	Fact	02
8	Established	01	Know	04
9	Find	02	Must	02
10	Found	05	Prove	01
11	Indeed	01	Proved	01
12	Known	01	Really	01
13	Must	04	Think	01
14	Proved	01	True	01
15	Show	03		
16	Shows	01		
17	Shown	01		
18	Sure	01		
19	Thought	01		
20	True	01		
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>

In the above table no.4 above, the analyzed data in both corpora indicates that Dawn demonstrates a stronger reliance on boosters with a total frequency of 20, while The News used a total frequency of 14 only. Boosters as an interactional marker in Dawn often emphasized the problems faced by transgender individuals in Pakistan, framing these issues as undeniable facts. In contrast, The News adopts a subtler approach in the usage of boosters in their articles.

## Chart 2



## Examples

“recent surge in murders and violent attacks is also a clear indicator that the matter is low on the provincial” (Dawn)

“being, I strongly condemn these inhuman incidents. Let’s be clear that transgender equality is the civil rights issue of our” (The News)

“doing so wrongly will be banished by her family and must get divorced if married. Even then, her family may” (Dawn)

“if someone files a gender change request in NADRA, they must undergo a medical test first. The bill has given” (The News)

“attempts at greater inclusion of the trans community are certainly commendable, it is clear that legislation alone is not” (Dawn)

“that in order to address the problems faced by certainly a section, it is important to know their grievances first” (The News)

“are vulnerable to violence against them, which has several times proved fatal. They number among the most marginalized communities in” (Dawn)

“since British colonization in the subcontinent, but Transgender Persons Act, 2018 proved to be a path-breaking initiative for this part” (The News)

#### ❖ **Interpretation using Fairclough’s model**

##### • **Textual analysis**

The boosters such as ‘clear’ and ‘must’ employed in Dawn are in an excessive manner as compared to others. It highlights its tone for the rights of transgender people in Pakistan. They convey their arguments as unassailable and put the newspaper in the foreground of advocates of the social justice cause. However, The News uses boosters more rarely, and this is explained by the careful approach to making claims in a politically managed tone. From the analysis, their linguistic choices explain their priorities and approach towards the representation of transgender.

##### • **Discursive practice**

From the comparison of both newspapers, the number of boosters varies in both. The inclusion of boosters has revealed the editorial practices of both newspapers. It has made it clear how these two newspapers have approached transgender

representation in articles. Acting as a call to action and creating awareness is the goal of Dawn and therefore the use of words of certainty on the other hand The News is more moderate in its approach to appeal to wider niches. The linguistic analysis has shown how media influences public opinion with boosters as tools to reaffirm the editorial direction.

- **Social practice**

From the angle of social practice, the analysis of boosters in language has shown that they portray the shifting of cultural acceptance of the issues in a specific society. Thus, framing certainty, media stories try to overcome the prejudice people have inside themselves. Yet the limited employment of boosters in The News points to the constant conflict between the processes of enlightenment and the norms upheld by a society, which defines the media's role concerning culture transformation in a society like Pakistan.

To conclude, this research found that there is a significant difference in the two newspapers' use of hedges and boosters. It might be due to their distinctive editorial policies and maybe the reader's expectations. They have preferably used hedges and boosters in their articles. Frequencies vary in both newspapers. In light of the analysis, linguistic choices were further disclosed through Fairclough's 3-dimensional framework, which explains how such linguistic decisions play out advocacy and conservatism over transgender people in media discourse. Therefore, understanding positive societal changes requires assertive and balanced narratives for society in newspapers and open advocacy is needed for transgender representation in Pakistan.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, this paper analyzed hedges and boosters: two interactional markers from Hyland's model (2005) about the representation of transgender in Pakistani newspapers Dawn and The News through corpus analysis and Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis. It is said that media discourse can bring more knowledge to the desk if its meta-discourse structure is explored (Schunz, 2022). The results contribute to the understanding of how language resources influence social perceptions and reproduce more extensive knowledge about a specific topic in a society. The study showed that Dawn makes

less use of hedges such as for a more tentative orientation, whereas The News uses 'should; and 'would' for a more pragmatic approach. Linguistically, the following strategies emphasize the representation of transgender in Pakistani media, from two different perspectives with the societal attitude towards transgender concerns in society. These linguistic choices are further linked within ideological and social practices which shows how print media serve to reshape people's perceptions. In the light of this study, future studies should analyze how social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, YouTube, etc.) portray transgender individuals, as digital discourse may differ from print media. A longitudinal study is recommended which could examine whether shifts in political climate or legal changes alter media discourse over time or not. Newspapers discourse also needs rules that should formulate strategies about certain issues. They Newspapers should not try to make stories sound more exciting than they actually are. Presenting facts in an accurate manner is mandatory. It would be good for future studies to look at how Pakistani TV and online media along with newspapers show transgender people, since these sources usually reach more people than newspapers. Also, researchers should investigate the language in more depth about such sensitive issue.

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