



Abstract: *Media Discourse explores the interactions occurring on broadcast platforms and is pivotal in global news dissemination. It also can propagate divergent viewpoints aligned with prevailing power structures. A comprehensive approach involving qualitative and quantitative methods addressed these aspects. Fairclough's Sociocultural Approach of Critical Discourse Analysis was applied for a critical qualitative examination, while a questionnaire was developed for quantitative analysis. The qualitative analysis involved three stages: characterization, understanding the relationship between message and communication, and elucidating the connection between communication and social context. Specifically, "USA Today" and "Dawn" were selected as representatives of American and Pakistani newspapers, respectively. For the quantitative phase, a random sample of 50 respondents completed the questionnaire, and the data were analyzed using SPSS software. The findings revealed discernible differences in the writing tone between the two newspapers, both contributing to the propagation of Islamophobia. Respondents exhibited a mix of positive and negative reactions to the questionnaire, reflecting varied perspectives on the media discourse under scrutiny.*

Key Words: Critical Discourse Analysis, Islamophobia, Pakistani and American Newspaper

Introduction

Researchers who have encountered significant difficulties in many disciplines use the theme of Critical Discourse Analysis. The studies of CDA have been established as a form of research since the 1980s in the field of social sciences. CDA is an issue-based multidisciplinary approach, each with a different hypothetical model, methodology, and research platform. Griffin discusses Fairclough's Sociocultural Approach to CDA. It distinguishes between discursive and non-discursive communication aspects and focuses on how discourse creates and alters the world. This demonstrates how powerful people's texts, such as those of governments, can mimic various worldviews (Patel, 2020). Van Dijk's Social Science Perspective Following Fairclough's critical approach, Van Dijk's social science approach views language as a form of social culture. However, the focus is not on speaking practice. As moderator, Van Dijk examines the social perception between text and society. He says that the CDA must consider the different social perceptions social organizations share. According to him, social cognition is "a social representation shared by social structures, groups, and relationships, as well as mental functions such as understanding, thinking and speaking, cognition and learning." Wodak, like Fairclough and Van Dijk, sees speech as a cultural medium in his Discursive-Historical Approach. As a result, Wodak believes that to comprehend and explain the subject of the study, it is necessary to combine various theories and approaches. "All discourse is historical, and so can only be understood by reference to the context," says CDA's basic concept" (Kress, 2008).

Today's general population relies on various sources of information, such as print and electronic media, to keep up with world events, particularly national and international politics, security, and events.

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▪ **To Cite:** Saifullah, F., Ahmad, A., Tahseen, H., & Siddique, N. (2024). Islamophobia and Media Discourse: A Critique of American and Pakistani Newspaper Article's Discourses. *Qlantic Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 5(4), 56-64. <https://doi.org/10.55737/qjssh.130457568>

That is why active media is required to inform people about global political and social movements. On the other hand, a review of the mainstream literature discloses that the media frame public sentiment while protecting private interests. Specific ideas are dispersed to the community in the name of accurate information. According to Fairclough, media discourse has paradoxical intellectual frameworks that are not always disentangled but differ in configuration (Hassan, [2018](#)).

Islamophobia is an artificial fear or stigma created by the current structure of the Euro and the structure of international power. It addresses the perceived or actual threat to Muslims by continuing to widen economic, political, social, and cultural diversity in light of the need to use violence as a tool to achieve the "movement" of targeted communities. (Muslims or another community) Islamophobia restores and reinforces the structure of global racism, which perpetuates and expands the diversity of resources. Critical Race Theory is a term far from new and has recently gained popularity. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the term "Islamophobia" has become a buzzword. Today, there is a notion that the "West" and "Islam" are at odds and that neither side is prepared to collaborate or comprehend the other's viewpoint.

On the other hand, some people appear to find it impossible to be Muslim and live in the West. The notion that Islam is a tyrannical and forsaken faith has become commonplace. (Raj, [2016](#))

Literature Review

Critical Discourse analysis is a procedure that enables us to assess the meaning of a language in a particular situation related to society and culture. Critical discourse analysis' common objective is to investigate the complex relationships between discourse practice and text and how they are linked to broader events or ideologies; in other words, how discourse is related to societal and cultural ideas. So, the words, language in use, and communication should be studied in their social and cultural contexts. Discourse is a broader term that can be used to understand how people communicate. Discourse is, actually, an active relation to the reality.

The impact of the media on the modern world is undeniable, as discourse plays an essential role in influencing society's beliefs. The critical analysis of public opinion concerning Pakistan's federal budget and headlines about beliefs is constantly reshaped by media outlets. The media discourse is complex. In any society, the media is essential. The purpose of journalism, according to Richardson, is to "help citizens in better understanding their lives and stances in the world." The media can influence how trust is established and maintained." (Arshad, [2021](#)).

The hidden power is emphasized in media discourse. This is the most important aspect of analyzing stereotypical views and media contributing to one's perception of reality. The writers of the publications and the audience are separated. While patterns in news articles determine the concealed power of media discourse, we are discussing manipulative power. The governing class of society deliberately manipulates media production, so language is a tool for shaping reality. (Sutkuté, [2019](#))

Negative, contradicting, and/or deceptive disclosures about issues impacting Islam, Muslims, or Arabs are referred to as Islamophobia in the media. The extent to which Islamophobia has been studied in the media has become the subject of academic and policy debate. Islamophobia has been defined as "the intense rejection or fear of Islam, especially as a political force; Hostility or Prejudice towards Muslims," and the extent to which Islamophobia has been studied in the media has become the subject of academic and policy debate. Religions, Muslim terrorism, the portrayal of Islam and its adherents as violent or archaic, and Muslim exclusion from political and scholarly debate, including media responses to the Islamophobia debate, the seriousness and impact of Islamophobic rhetoric, which in practice constitutes Islamophobia, and the political motivations behind the Islamophobia debate. (Wikipedia, [2019](#))

Research Questions

Following are the research questions which have been answered in the research:

1. What type of linguistic Elements do American and Pakistani newspapers use while writing about Islamophobia?
2. What is the people's response when they are asked about Islamophobic experiences?



Methodology

This research involved qualitative and quantitative approaches. Fairclough's Sociocultural Approaches were employed for qualitative analysis, and a questionnaire was developed for quantitative analysis. Data was collected from secondary and primary resources. Secondary data was collected from many documents available online and from pieces of newspaper. The news was from an American newspaper, "USA Today" and a Pakistani newspaper, "Dawn"; both were online. Primary data was collected by distributing a questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed with the advice of the researcher's supervisor. The questions the questionnaire consisted of were selected from existing surveys on Islamophobia. The citations for the surveys are as follows (Amina the Muslim Women resource center, [2020](#)). The study population is not a specific group of people. Random people of different nationalities were filling out the questionnaire. The researcher contacted people of different nationalities, like Pakistanis, Americans, Nigerians, and Ukrainians, through social media like "Instagram," "Facebook," and "WhatsApp." The questionnaire was distributed in the form of "Google Forms" through the above-mentioned social media platforms.

Data Analysis Procedure

Fairclough's Sociocultural Approach to CDA analyzed the qualitative data. The analysis of the newspaper discourses was done at the micro-level as well as macro-level. At the micro-level, linguistic elements of the text were being analyzed, and at the macro-level, the relationship between the linguistic aspects and the society was being explored. For this purpose, we selected news from online newspapers "USA Today" and "Dawn." The number of news I selected was equal from both the newspapers. On the micro-level, the following things were examined: Word choice, the usage of active and passive voice, and the use of contractions, which are all critical considerations. Nominalization is a technique for expressing something abstract—mood selections, modality or polarity options, and cohesion devices.

The quantitative data was analyzed by "SPSS Software". Each option in every question of the questionnaire was given a code. For example, "1" for the first option, "2" for the second option and "3" for the third option.

Data Analysis

Fairclough (1989) developed a critical discourse analysis model to examine language as discussion and social skills, as well as how language, ideology, and identity are intertwined (CDA). According to Fairclough (1995), this model comprises three-dimensional discourse concepts and provides a three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis. Fairclough suggests three phases to explain it:

1. Text which can be written or spoken
2. Speech practice (production and interpretation of texts)
3. socio-cultural practice

In addition, it also suggests that there is a debate about sociocultural practices at various stages on personal, institutional, and societal levels is divided into three stages:

- **Description:** Examine the text's linguistic structure.
- **Interpretation:** The relationship between the text and the controversial production and interpretation processes is discussed.
- **Explanation:** examines the relationship between processes (production and interpretation) and social circumstances. (Fairclough, [2013](#))

The analysis has been divided into two main parts: micro-level analysis and macro-level analysis. The Macro-level analysis includes the sociocultural and discursive practices that describe the social and cultural events happening around the communicative events and the processes involved in producing and understanding the text.

Micro-Level Analysis (Textual Analysis)

At micro-level analysis or in the text analysis of the news circulated by both the concerned newspapers, the structure of the text was identified.

The following table shows the news from these two newspapers.

Usa today	Dawn
Pakistan acquits Christian Woman sentenced to die for blasphemy. (October 31, 2018).	Supreme Court acquits Asia Bibi, orders immediate release (October 30, 2018)
DHAKA, Bangladesh_ Around 10,000 people in Bangladesh rallied in the South Asian nation's capital on Tuesday to protest France's president and his staunch support of secular laws that deem caricatures depicting the Prophet Muhammad as protected under freedom of speech. (October 27, 2020)	DHAKA: Activists and supporters of the Islami Andolon party hold a massive rally on Tuesday against the French president's remarks about the blasphemous sketches. (October 28, 2020)
Karnataka state's High Court upholds ban on Hijab in Schools and Colleges (March 15, 2022)	India court upholds Karnataka state's ban on hijab, says it is not essential to Islam (March 15, 2022)

Word's Choice in "USA Today"

The total number of words used in the news circulated by USA Today is 9, where the longest word occurring is "Christian". Words like "Pakistan", "Christian", "sentenced", and "blasphemy" are the high-frequency words.

Mood: The mood of this news is neither positive nor negative. It is a neutral kind of news.

In the second news article, the total number of words used by the newspaper is 40—the longest word used is Bangladesh. Words like "DHAKA", "Around", "rallied", "Capital", and "deem" are high-frequency words.

Mood: This news is also a neutral kind of news.

In the third news, the total number of words used is 12. The longest word used is Karnataka. Words like "Karnataka state's", "Court upholds", and "Schools" are high-frequency words.

Mood: The news is also a neutral kind of news according to the sentiments.

Word's Choice in Dawn

"Dawn" has used positive terminology like "Court orders immediate release." The total number of words used by Dawn in the news is 8. The longest word used is immediate. Words like "Supreme," "Asia Bibi," "Immediate," and "release" are high-frequency words.

Mood: The mood of the news circulated by Dawn is positive

In the second news, the total word used is 22. The longest word is "president". The words like "Islami," "against," "about," "blasphemous," and "sketches" are high-frequency words.

Mood: The sentiments of the news are neutral.

In the third news, the total words used are 15. The longest word used is "Karnataka". The high-frequency words are "India's," "court," "Karnataka," "hijab," and "Islam." The sentiment of the news is positive and negative at the same time.

Mood: Its mood is positive for the non-Muslims who are against hijab and negative for the Muslims who support hijab.

The Use of Active and Passive Voice

The selected news circulated by both newspapers contains sentences in active speech, not passive speech.

Use of Nominalization

The use of the word "Blasphemy" (which is a noun) by "USA Today" instead of using its verb and adjective "blaspheme" and "blasphemous," respectively, is the use of nominalization of the news presented by the newspaper. Similarly, in "Dawn," again, the word "blasphemous" is used, which is a nominalization of the word "blasphemy."

Choices of Modality or Polarity

The choice of modality could not be found in the selected text of the news from both newspapers. There



was no use of modal verbs like must, can, could, might, etc.

The Cohesion Devices

The cohesive devices used by the newspaper "USA Today" "France's president and his staunch support of secular laws...." "His" is a pronoun and a cohesive device used for "France's president." In "Dawn," no cohesive devices were used.

Macro-Level Analysis

Discourse Practice

Discourse practice or text production analyses the processes of creating online newspaper news or headlines. For this purpose, two online newspapers were selected, "USA TODAY" and "DAWN".

Both newspapers broadcasted the first news article on the same issue but in a different tone. In "USA Today," the news is somewhat Islamophobic because it informed the people that Pakistan's court gave the order of sentence to death for the Christian woman (Asia Bibi) for her blasphemous speech. On the other hand, "Dawn" just passed the news of the release of Asia Bibi by the high court without using any negative terminology like "USA Today." In the second news, both newspapers again circulated the same news but with different tones. "Dawn" directly accused France's president of being responsible for blasphemy, but "USA Today" made its tone mild or soft towards the French president. "USA Today" again created Islamophobic content. In the third news article, which is circulated by both newspapers on the same issue of hijab in India, USA Today again uses a mild tone, informing readers that Karnataka upholds the ban on hijab. Still, Dawn also told the remarks made by the court on the hijab issue, which is "hijab is not essential to Islam." This shows that Dawn broadcasts real and direct news without hiding anything.

Sociocultural Practice

The September 11 attacks were the deadliest terrorist assaults in history, following a series of kidnappings and suicide bombings against 19 members of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) in 2001. The terrorist attacks in New York and Washington resulted in numerous deaths and devastation and prompted the United States to step up its counter-terrorism efforts. In New York, 2,750 people died, 184 at the Pentagon and 40 in Pennsylvania (one of the hijacked planes crashed while trying to exit an airliner). The 9/11 plot demonstrated that Al-Qaeda is a worldwide organization. Meetings in Malaysia, seminars in the United States, gathering together conspiracy leaders in Hamburg, Germany, providing money from Dubai, and joining the International Organization of Suicide Firefighters have all contributed to the globalization of the framework. Al-Qaeda leaders then oversaw operations in Afghanistan. The critical elements of the 9/11 conspiracy were created in Hamburg. Four key Hamburg Cell pilots and designers, including leader Mohammed Atta, who led the 9/11 attacks, were identified on a train carrying Islamist militants to Germany in 1999. He discusses jihad with them in the Russian Republic of Chechnya. The activist contacted an al-Qaeda agent in Hamburg, who said it was challenging to reach Chechnya because several travelers had been arrested in Georgia. He advised them to go to Afghanistan. (Bergen, 2018).

The socio-cultural background has an influence on the newspapers to write about the events indicating Islamophobia. In the news mentioned above, one can see a clear distinction in how the USA today is mild towards non-Muslims and shows a negative picture of a Muslim country. Pakistan acquits Christian Woman sentenced to die for blasphemy (USA Today: October 31, 2018) and DHAKA, Bangladesh_ Around 10,000 people in Bangladesh rallied in the South Asian nation's capital on Tuesday to protest France's president and his staunch support of secular laws that deem caricatures depicting the Prophet Muhammad as protected under freedom of speech (USA Today: October 27, 2020) shows USA Today's biases towards non-Muslims. Suppose the news about the same event from Dawn is taken. In that case, it shows the biases towards Muslims, like the Supreme Court acquits Asia Bibi, orders immediate release (Dawn: October 30, 2018) and DHAKA: Activists and supporters of the IslamiAndolon party hold a massive rally on Tuesday against the French president's remarks about the blasphemous sketches (Dawn: October 28, 2020) show biases towards Muslims, it is not depicting the negative picture of non-Muslims through wording.

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative approach involved a Google Forms questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 14 Multiple-choice questions. Each Question had three options. The respondents had to select one option according to their understanding of the question.

1. The analysis shows that females were more active in filling out the questionnaire than males.

Table 1

What gender do you identify with?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	19	38.0	38.0	38.0
Valid Female	31	62.0	62.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

2. Results have shown that 45 out of 50 questionnaire respondents are between 16 to 25 years of age, and 5 are between 26 to 34 years of age.

Table 2

How old are you?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 16-25	45	90.0	90.0	90.0
Valid 26-34	5	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

3. According to the results, 46 out of 50 respondents are Muslims, 3 are Christians, and only one respondent did not prefer to mention his/her religion.

Table 3

What is your religion?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Christian	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
Valid Muslim	46	92.0	92.0	98.0
Valid Prefer not to mention	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

4. In answer to the 4th question about prejudice towards Muslims, 21 respondents out of 50 said "Yes", 12 responded "No," and the rest of the respondents answered, "Maybe".

Table 4

Do you believe that people have a reason to hold prejudices towards those from an Islamic background?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	21	42.0	42.0	42.0
Valid No	12	24.0	24.0	66.0
Valid Maybe	17	34.0	34.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

5. When the people were asked about the severity of Islamophobia, 5 out of 50 respondents said it is low; 24 said it is medium, and 21 said it is high.

**Table 5**

How would you rate the current severity of Islamophobia?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Low	5	10.0	10.0	10.0
Medium	24	48.0	48.0	58.0
High	21	42.0	42.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

6. When people were asked about their experience of witnessing hate towards Muslims, 9 out of 50 respondents said they had witnessed it; 28 respondents said they had not witnessed it, and 13 were not sure about it.

Table 6

In the last two years, have you experienced or witnessed any form of hate or mistreatment because of being a Muslim?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	9	18.0	18.0	18.0
No	28	56.0	56.0	74.0
Not sure	13	26.0	26.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

7. When asked by the respondents if they had witnessed the Islamophobic incident happen to someone else then, 19 out of 50 respondents said "Yes"; 27 responded "No," and five responded that they were not sure about it.

Table 7

Did you witness any such incident happen to someone else?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	18	36.0	36.0	36.0
No	27	54.0	54.0	90.0
Not Sure	5	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

8. In response to the question, where did the respondents witness an Islamophobic incident? 7 out of 50 respondents responded they witnessed an Islamophobic incident at shopping centers; 13 said they witnessed the incident in the streets, and 30 respondents responded that they did not experience this type of incident.

Table 8

If yes, where did you witness this incident?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Shopping center	7	14.0	14.0	14.0
The street	13	26.0	26.0	40.0
No, I did not witness	30	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

9. When asked whether they had reported the incident, 7 respondents responded "Yes"; 40 responded "No" and 3 responded that they were unsure about it.

Table 9

Did you report this incident?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	7	14.0	14.0	14.0
Valid No	40	80.0	80.0	94.0
Valid Not sure	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

10. When people were asked, “Who is responsible for the increase in Islamophobia?” 19 respondents responded that Muslims are responsible for it, 25 respondents responded that non-Muslims are responsible for it, while six responded they are not sure.

Table 10

Who do you think is responsible for the increase in Islamophobia?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Muslims	19	38.0	38.0	38.0
Valid Non-Muslims	25	50.0	50.0	88.0
Valid Not sure	6	12.0	12.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

11. When the people were asked whether they could trust Muslims or not? 11 out of 50 respondents responded "Yes," 32 of the respondents responded "No," and 7 of the respondents responded "Maybe."

Table 11

Are the Muslims not trustworthy?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	11	22.0	22.0	22.0
Valid No	32	64.0	64.0	86.0
Valid Maybe	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

12. In response to the question of whether Muslims attract more attention due to their aggressive behavior? 20 out of 50 respondents responded "Yes,"; 20 respondents responded "No," and ten respondents responded "Maybe."

Table 12

Do Muslims attract more attention due to their aggressive behavior?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	20	40.0	40.0	40.0
Valid No	20	40.0	40.0	80.0
Valid Maybe	10	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

13. In a question about whether Muslims are the economic and social burden for their country? 6 out of 50 respondents responded “Yes”; 39 out of 50 respondents responded “No,” and 5 respondents responded “Maybe”.

**Table 13**

Are Muslims a social and economic burden for your country?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	6	12.0	12.0	12.0
No	39	78.0	78.0	90.0
Maybe	5	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

14. When the people were asked about whether the Muslims are planning to Islamize the West, In response to this question, 20 out of 50 respondents responded "Yes"; 12 respondents responded "No," and 18 respondents responded, "Maybe."

Table 14

Are the Muslims Planning to Islamize the West step by step?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	20	40.0	40.0	40.0
No	12	24.0	24.0	64.0
Maybe	18	36.0	36.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Conclusion

My investigation indicates that, although journalists are expected to maintain impartiality and uphold professional values such as honesty and objectivity, scrutiny of the language reveals hidden meanings and ideas. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has illuminated that despite the intention to deliver neutral news, both newspapers adversely affect people's minds. While not all news articles contribute to this, certain pieces can instigate feelings of animosity among both Muslims and non-Muslims. Regarding the questionnaire's findings, it can be asserted that the questions were not biased but were direct inquiries addressing the issue straightforwardly. The questionnaire results suggest that Islamophobia has increased, and people are conscious of it, with media playing a significant role in its dissemination.

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