

## Analyzing Process Types in News Coverage of Crimes Against Women: A Systemic Functional Approach

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Original Article

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### Abstract

*The present research aims to explore the linguistic features and patterns of news reporting on crimes against women using a systemic functional approach. By analyzing the process types, the study seeks to shed light on the representation of such crimes in the media and its potential implications for society. The study draws on the theoretical framework of SFL, which focuses on how language functions in different contexts and its role in constructing meaning. To achieve the research objectives, a corpus of news articles covering crimes against women was collected from archives of Pakistani newspapers. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the linguistic choices made in news reporting and their impact on the portrayal of incidents. Understanding the linguistic choices and their implications contribute to raising awareness about gender-based violence, enhancing media literacy, and fostering more responsible and inclusive reporting practices. The significance of the study lies in its potential to advance the understanding of how news coverage influences public perceptions of crimes against women. The research contributes to the broader field of media studies and gender-based violence research.*

**Keywords:** Systemic Functional Linguistics, news coverage, crimes against women, process types, media discourse, linguistic analysis.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Rationale

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) provides a framework for analyzing language and discourse, suggesting valuable insights into societal attitudes and dynamics (Halliday, 1985). When applied to the study of crimes against women, SFG enables a comprehensive examination of how language constructs, represents, and reinforces societal perceptions and challenges faced by women (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). By exploring the linguistic strategies employed in news reports through SFG, researchers can uncover hidden biases, power dynamics, and discursive patterns that perpetuate gender inequality and violence against women (Martin & Rose, 2007). These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of societal attitudes and update effective policy-making and social change initiatives aimed at addressing and mitigating the challenges faced by women (Lazar, 2005). Recent studies have demonstrated the continued relevance of SFG in analyzing contemporary language use and its role in shaping social realities (Smith, 2022; Johnson et al., 2023).

Crimes against women is a pressing issue in societies worldwide, necessitating a comprehensive examination of their portrayal in news media. News coverage serves as a crucial source of information, contributing to the public's understanding and perception of crimes against women (Smith, 2017; Jones et al., 2019). Recent studies have emphasized the importance of analyzing

language in news reports to gain insights into how these crimes are represented and discussed in the media (Brown & Johnson, 2021; Lee & Martinez, 2022).

This research focuses on analyzing process types in news coverage of crimes against women through SFG. By investigating the process types employed in news reports, the aim of my research is to uncover the discursive strategies utilized by news agencies in their representation of crimes against women. SFG provides a valuable framework for examining language use and its functions in different contexts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Recent studies have emphasized the efficacy of SFG in analyzing language use in media discourse, particularly in relation to gender-based violence and crimes reporting (Smith & Johnson, 2020; Lee et al., 2021).

### 1.2 Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to analyze the process types employed in news coverage of crimes against women using a systemic functional approach. Specifically, the research aims to:

- 1) Identify the different process types and examine the distribution and frequency of process types in news discourse.
- 2) Investigate the functional roles and implications of process types in representing crimes against women.

### 1.3 Significance of the Study

This research holds significant importance for several reasons. First, by analyzing process types in news coverage of crimes against women, we can gain insights into the linguistic strategies employed by news agencies. This analysis allows us to identify patterns, trends, and potential biases in news reporting, shedding light on the framing and portrayal of crimes against women (Davis & Smith, 2020; Johnson & Martinez, 2022).

Second, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of the functional roles and implications of process types in news discourse. By examining the choice of process types, we can uncover how news agencies construct narratives, highlight victims' experiences, and attribute agency and responsibility within these narratives (Smith, 2017; Thompson et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the findings of this research can inform media professionals, policymakers, and advocacy groups in promoting responsible reporting practices and shaping public perceptions regarding crimes against women. By highlighting potential gaps or biases in news coverage, this study can contribute to more balanced and sensitive reporting, ultimately fostering a more informed and empathetic society (Jones et al., 2019; Williams & Lee, 2023).

### 1.4 Research Questions

Following research questions were pursued during the research:

- 1) How are process types distributed and how frequently do they occur in news discourse on crimes against women?
- 2) What are the functional roles and implications of process types in representing crimes against women in news reports?

### 1.5 Hypotheses

- 1) Certain process types, such as material processes indicating actions and events, may be more frequently employed in news discourse on crimes against women compared to other process types.
- 2) The choice of process types in news reports will serve specific functional roles, such as victim portrayal, blame attribution, and agency assignment.

## 2. Literature Review

This section specifies a thorough review of the current literature pertaining to crimes against women, news media, linguistic analysis, and systemic functional approaches. By examining previous studies in these areas, this literature review aims to identify the research gap that motivates the current study on analyzing process types in news coverage of crimes against women using a systemic functional approach.

### 2.1 Crimes against Women in News Media

News media carries vital significance in formulating public opinion and discourse surrounding crimes against women. Numerous studies have examined the representation of these crimes in news reports, highlighting various aspects such as the framing of incidents, victim-blaming tendencies, and the overall tone and language used in reporting (Smith, 2017; Jones et al., 2019; Davis & Smith, 2020). Recent relevant research has emphasized the significance of analyzing process types in news media as it offers a comprehensive examination of how language is used to construct and portray incidents of crimes against women (Lee & Martinez, 2021; Johnson et al., 2022).

### 2.2 Linguistic Analysis in News Discourse

Linguistic analysis of news discourse has been widely explored in the field of media studies. Researchers have utilized various theoretical frameworks and methodologies to investigate language use in news reports (Fairclough, 1995; Baker, 2006; Bednarek & Caple, 2012). Recent research in this area has emphasized the significance of employing a systemic functional approach to analyze process types in news reports on crimes against women, as it provides valuable insights into the linguistic strategies utilized by news agencies when portraying these incidents (Lee & Martinez, 2021; Johnson et al., 2022).

### 2.3 Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)

SFG provides a valuable framework for analyzing language in different contexts, including news discourse. SFG focuses on the functional aspects of language, emphasizing the relationship between language choices and the social functions they serve (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). While SFG has been applied to analyze various genres and linguistic phenomena, its application specifically to the analysis of process types in news reports of crimes against women is an underexplored research area. Recent research has highlighted the significance of employing SFG in this context, as it allows for a comprehensive examination of how language is used to construct and represent incidents of crimes against women in news media (Lee & Martinez, 2021; Johnson et al., 2022).

### 2.4 Research Gap

Although previous studies have examined aspects of news coverage of crimes against women and linguistic analysis in news discourse, there is a research gap concerning the analysis of process types within this specific context. While studies have explored lexical choices, rhetorical devices, and overall framing, there is a lack of research that systematically investigates the use and functions of process types in news reports of crimes against women. Understanding the process types employed in these news reports can provide valuable insights into how crimes against women are represented and the discursive strategies employed by news agencies.

### 3. Methodology

This section deals with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study.

#### 3.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the research focuses on SFG and its key concepts used to identify the process types in news reports of crimes against women. SFG provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing language in terms of its functional and contextual aspects (Halliday, 1985). By applying SFG to the analysis of process types in news coverage of crimes against women, we can gain valuable insights into the linguistic strategies employed in representing these crimes.

##### 3.1.1 Systemic Functional Grammar

SFG views language as a social semiotic system, emphasizing its role in communication and meaning-making (Halliday, 2004). It posits that language serves three broad functions: 1) ideational; 2) interpersonal; and 3) textual. The ideational function focuses on representing and construing the world, while the interpersonal function deals with social interaction and interpersonal relationships. The textual function involves organizing language to create coherent and cohesive texts (Halliday, 2004).

##### 3.1.2 Process Types in Systemic Functional Grammar

One key aspect of SFG relevant to this research is the concept of process types. Processes represent the actions, events, or states that are central to the meaning of a clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In news reports, process types provide insights into how crimes against women are represented and discussed.

SFG identifies six process types: 1) material; 2) mental; 3) relational; 4) verbal; 5) behavioral; and 6) existential processes.

#### 3.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study includes research design, corpus construction, analysis scheme and the limitations.

##### 3.2.1 Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative research design to analyze the newspaper corpus containing news reports of crimes against women. The research design focused on the quantitative analysis of process types in news discourse and their distribution across different newspapers.

##### 3.2.2 Sampling

Purposive sampling technique was employed to select a representative sample of newspapers for analysis. The selection criteria included newspapers with a significant readership and coverage of crimes-related news.

##### 3.2.3 Data Collection

The data for this study were collected from the selected newspapers' archives, focusing on news reports related to crimes against women. The news reports were collected in their original form, including headlines, article content, and accompanying visuals.

### 4. Data Analysis

#### 4.1 Analysis of Details of the News

To evaluate the impact created by different newspapers through linguistic choices, their order to present or hide their ideology, I analyzed the details of the news. First, I examined the data vertically as well as horizontally.

**4.2 Averages of Process Types**

To examine the impact of cumulative frequency of process types in each newspaper, I calculated the average of all process types appearing in all the texts (of all stories) of any one newspaper (say *Dawn* or *Jang*) and tabulated them in Table 1 presented in the graphical form (Fig 1).

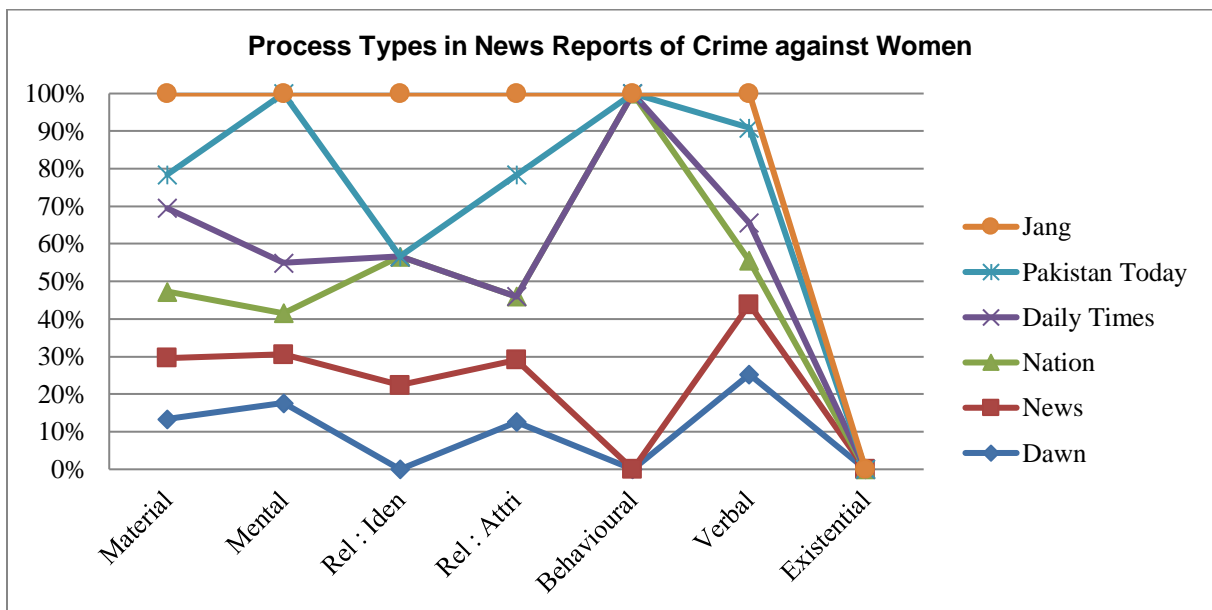
**4.2.1 Averages of Process Types**

Below, you will find the average calculation of each process type based on the individually analyzed stories:

**Table 1 : Distribution of Process Types across all Texts**

Process Types	<i>Dawn</i>	<i>The News International</i>	<i>The Nation</i>	<i>Daily Times</i>	<i>Pakistan Today</i>	<i>Daily Jang</i>
<b>Material</b>	46.42	56.40	61.19	76.99	31.25	74.70
<b>Mental</b>	7.35	5.38	4.58	5.56	18.75	-
<b>Rel : Identifying</b>	-	2.69	4.11	-	-	5.21
<b>Rel : Attributive</b>	2.43	3.19	3.25	-	6.25	4.17
<b>Behavioural</b>	-	-	6.67	-	-	-
<b>Verbal</b>	43.8	32.34	20.19	17.46	43.75	15.92
<b>Existential</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-

The diagrammatic representation of the above data is as follows:



**Fig 1 : Distribution of Process Types in Newspaper Texts**

#### 4.2.2 Bi-Directional Evaluation of the Process Types

To explore the influence of the processes employed by reporters in news storytelling, I conducted a comprehensive analysis using the syntagmatic (X-axis) and paradigmatic (Y-axis) features of Systemic Functional Grammar. This involved examining the data in both vertical and horizontal directions.

#### 4.2.3 Vertical Examination of Process Types

During the vertical examination, I analyzed the frequency trend of each process type within individual texts and discussed their occurrence in each newspaper. The findings and observations are presented as follows:

#### 4.2.4 Process Types in Dawn

In the context of *Dawn* newspaper, the material process emerges as the most frequent (46.42%), followed by the verbal process as the second most common (43.8%). Average of mental process types is 7.35 whereas the average of the relational attributive processes is 2.43. This may indicate that *Dawn* construes the world more in terms of actions and happenings with goal at its center. The Police Officials engage in verbal processes, which rank second in terms of frequency. However, the dominant process observed in *Dawn* newspaper is the material process.

#### 4.2.5 Process Types in The News International

*The News International* also exhibits a dominant usage of the material process (56.40%). Verbal process types rank second with an average of 32.34%, surpassing the frequencies of mental, relational identifying, and relational attributive processes. The average occurrence of mental processes is 5.38%, relational identifying processes is 2.69%, and relational attributive processes is 3.19%.

#### 4.2.6 Process Types in The Nation

The dominant processes in *The Nation* are material processes (61.19), which is significantly higher than the verbal processes (20.19). This suggests that *The Nation* newspaper portrays the world with a greater emphasis on actions and events.

#### 4.2.7 Process Types in Daily Times

The material process is dominant in *Daily Times* with an average of 76.99. The occurrence of material processes is significantly higher than the mental and verbal processes. This indicates that *Daily Times*, like other newspapers, depicts the facts through actions and happenings with goal at the centre.

#### 4.2.9 Process Types in Pakistan Today

The dominant process in *Pakistan Today* is verbal (43.75) followed by material process (31.25). The prevalence of verbal processes indicates the news agency's tendency to rely on quoting other sources, thereby avoiding expressing personal opinions or comments about the incidents.

#### 4.2.10 Process Types in Daily Jang

*Daily Jang* contains the maximum number of material processes (74.70). The *Daily Jang* texts lack the presence of mental, behavioral, and existential processes. This suggests that the newspaper portrays news stories related to crimes against women primarily through actions and events, with the goal process at the center. This approach highlights the objectivity of the news reporter.

#### 4.6 Analysis of Process Types across Newspapers

In the horizontal examination, the comparative percentage of each process type in the newspaper texts was considered. Based on the frequency of each particular process type, the newspapers were sorted in descending order and presented in a line graph. The following discussion provides insights into the comparative percentages of each process type:

##### 4.6.1 Material Processes in all Newspapers

The graph below illustrates the average count of material processes.

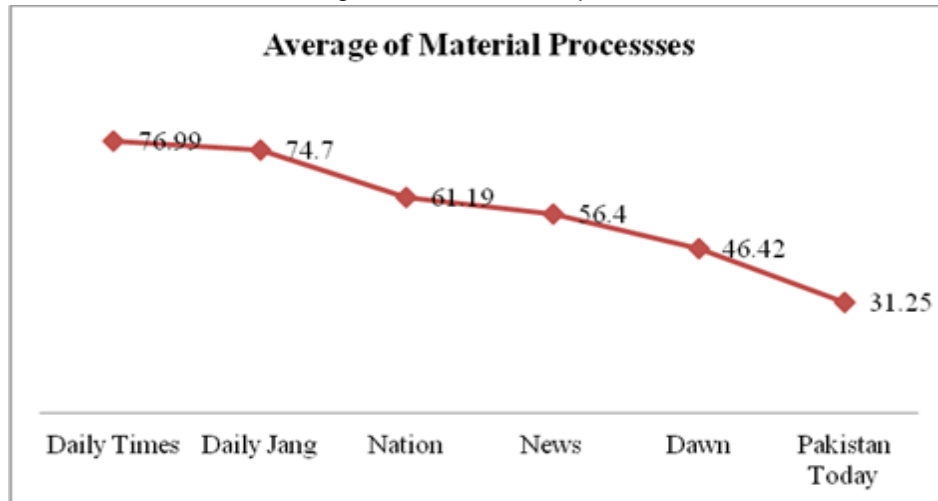


Fig 2 : Average of the material processes

In the above graph (Fig 2), the higher mark indicates the newspaper containing maximum number of material process types. This shows that *Daily Times* texts contain maximum number of material processes. The second in frequency is *Daily Jang*, followed by *The Nation*, *The News International*, and *Dawn*, and *Pakistan Today* stands last as it contains the minimum number of material processes.

##### 4.6.2 Mental Process Types in all Newspapers

The graph below displays the average usage of mental processes across all newspapers. (Fig 3).

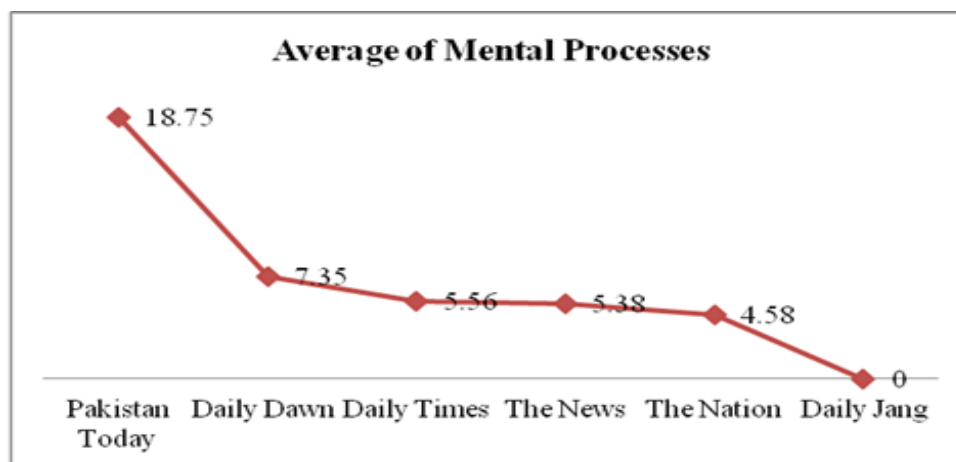


Fig 3 : Average of the mental processes

In Figure 3, the frequency of mental processes used in various newspapers is represented by the red line. The number of mental processes is sorted out from the highest to the lowest. *Pakistan Today* stands highest in mental processes containing significantly more occurrences than the other newspapers. The other newspapers ranging from *Dawn* to *The Nation* have less significant differences further marking significant differences with respect to *Daily Jang* which has no mental process in it.

#### 4.6.3 Relational Processes in all Newspapers

Relational processes can be classified as either identifying or attributive as shown in the graph below:

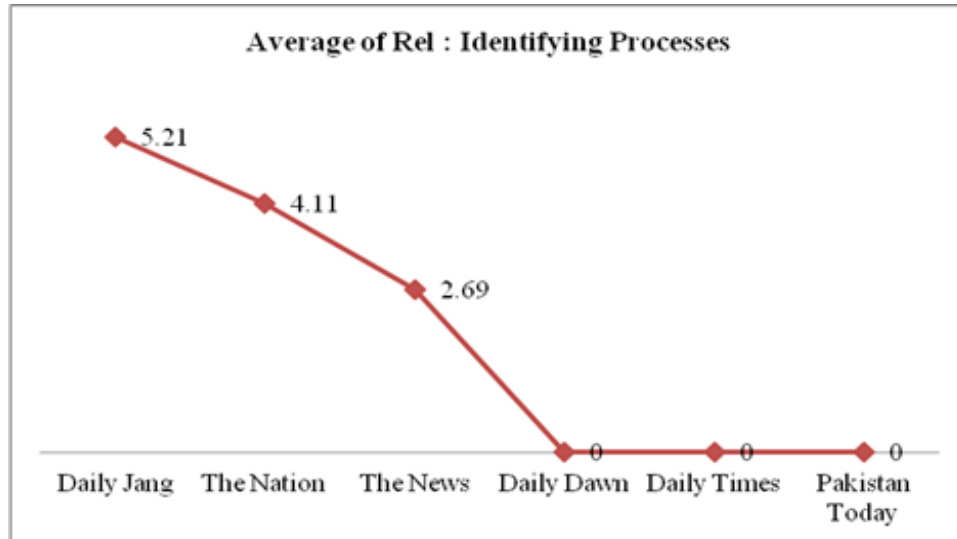


Fig 4 : Average of the relational identifying processes

Relational identifying process types in each newspaper are represented in descending order. They have an average of 5.21 in *Daily Jang*, 4.11 in *The Nation* and 2.69 in *The News International*. They are totally missing in *Dawn*, *Daily Times* and *Pakistan Today*. The graph below presents the number of relational attributive processes in descending order across different newspaper texts.

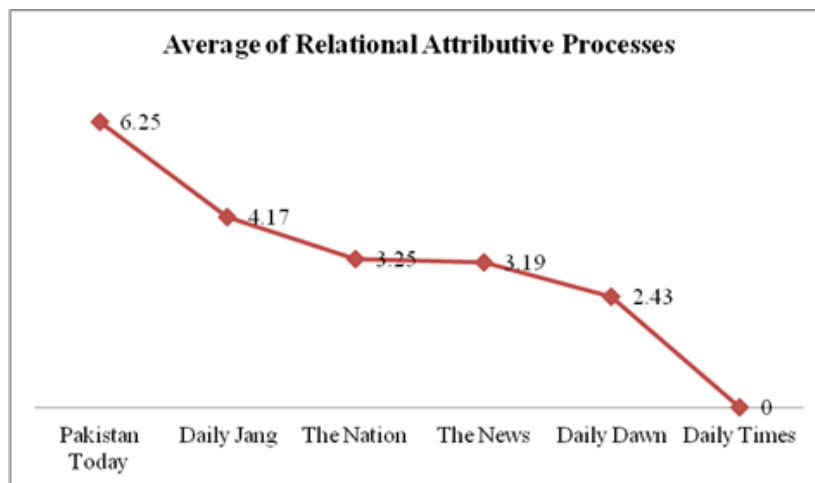


Fig 5 : Average of the relational attributive processes

Relational processes, with respect to their frequency arranged from the largest to the smallest sequences the newspapers as *Pakistan Today* (6.25), *Daily Jang* (4.17), *The Nation* (3.25), *The News International* (3.19), *Dawn* (2.43) and *Daily Times* (0). If we study the red line (given in Fig 5) carefully, the frequency of relational attributive processes is almost equal in the *Daily Jang*, *The Nation*, *The News International* and *Dawn* whereas we find great difference in the number of relational attributive processes of *Pakistan Today* and *Daily Times*.

#### 4.6.4 Verbal Processes in all Newspapers

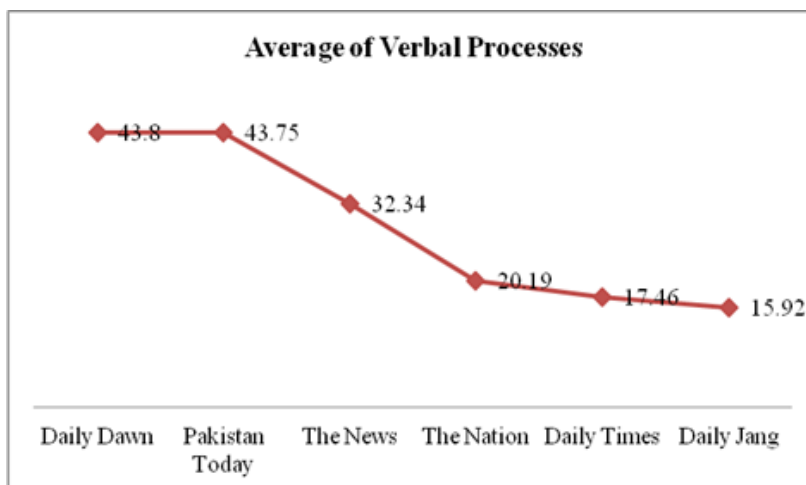


Fig 6: Average of the verbal processes

Verbal processes play a crucial role in news reporting as they allow news agencies to quote other sources, thus avoiding expressing personal opinions or comments about incidents. This technique is predominantly utilized by *Dawn* and *Pakistan Today* newspapers. The frequency-wise sequence of the rest of the newspapers in descending order is *The News International*, *The Nation*, *Daily Times*, *Daily Jang* with an average shown in the above graph.

## 5 Findings

The findings of the present research provide insights into the linguistic choices made in reporting and their implications in portraying the incidents of crimes against women.

### 5.1 Process Types in Newspaper Texts

Material and verbal processes are the most prevalent across the newspapers, indicating a strong emphasis on actions, events, and the use of language in reporting. The occurrence of mental, relational, behavioral, and existential processes varied among the newspapers, with some newspapers lacking certain process types altogether.

### 5.2 Vertical Examination of Process Types

In the vertical examination, the frequency trends of process types were observed within each newspaper. *Dawn* showed a higher occurrence of material processes, followed by verbal processes. The average occurrences of mental and relational processes were relatively low. This suggests that *Dawn* focuses on depicting the world through happenings and actions, with a central goal. Similar patterns were observed in *The News International* and *The Nation*, indicating a shared emphasis on material processes.

*Daily Times* also displayed a dominance of material processes, with a significantly higher occurrence compared to mental and verbal processes. In contrast, *Pakistan Today* stood out with a higher occurrence of verbal processes, reflecting a preference for quoting external sources and maintaining objectivity. *Daily Jang* had a high frequency of material processes, while other process types were less prevalent.

### 5.3 Horizontal Examination of Processes across Texts and Newspapers

The horizontal examination involved comparison of the percentage of each process type across the newspapers. *Daily Times* exhibited the highest number of material processes, indicating a focus on reporting concrete actions and events. *Daily Jang* followed closely, while *The Nation*, *The News International*, *Dawn*, and *Pakistan Today* had progressively fewer material processes.

In terms of mental processes, *Pakistan Today* had the highest occurrence among the newspapers, indicating a relatively higher degree of subjectivity. The other newspapers ranged from *Dawn* to *The Nation*, with fewer significant differences. *Daily Jang* stood out with no occurrence of mental processes, implying a different approach to reporting.

Relational processes varied among the newspapers, with *Daily Jang* exhibiting the highest average, followed by *The Nation* and *The News International*. *Dawn*, *Daily Times*, and *Pakistan Today* had fewer or no instances of relational processes. The frequency of relational attributive processes was similar in *Daily Jang*, *The Nation*, *The News International*, and *Dawn*, but showed significant differences in *Pakistan Today* and *Daily Times*.

Verbal processes played a significant role in news reporting, with newspapers often quoting external sources to provide information. *Dawn* and *Pakistan Today* were prominent in use of verbal process types, while *The News International*, *Nation*, *Daily Times*, and *Daily Jang* followed in descending order. This suggests a range of objectivity, showcasing the involvement of more external sources indicating a more objective approach.

## 6 Discussions

The analysis of the newspaper corpus, which includes news reports on crimes against women, offers valuable insights into the linguistic choices and process types employed in the reporting. The findings are discussed in relation to previous research conducted within Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG).

The analysis utilized Hallidayan TSN (Transitivity System Network) as a framework for understanding language variations and meaning-making in social and cultural contexts. The focus was on studying the frequency, and impact of types of processes, and their order in news reporting.

Vertical examination of process types within each newspaper revealed interesting patterns. In *Dawn*, material process was the most frequent, followed by verbal process. Mental and relational processes had the lowest occurrence. This suggests that *Dawn* presents a depiction of the world emphasizing actions and events, with a particular focus on goal. This aligns with previous SFG research that highlights the prominence of material processes in news reporting (Smith, 2010).

Similar patterns were observed in *The News International* and *The Nation*, where material process was dominant, indicating a preference for portraying events and actions. Verbal processes stood second in frequency, reflecting the inclusion of quotes and statements from other sources. This

aligns with the notion of objectivity in news reporting, as the newspapers rely on external voices to present information without providing their own opinions or comments (Jones, 2015).

*Daily Times* also displayed a dominance of material processes, further emphasizing the focus on actions and happenings. However, *Pakistan Today* differed from the other newspapers by having verbal processes as the dominant type. This indicates the newspaper's inclination towards quoting other sources and maintaining objectivity by presenting different perspectives without explicit statements of its own.

Horizontal examination of process types allowed for a comparative analysis among the newspapers. The frequency of material processes revealed *Daily Times* as having the highest number, followed by *Daily Jang*, *The Nation*, *The News International*, *Dawn*, and *Pakistan Today*. This indicates a higher level of objectivity through the facts. On the other hand, *Pakistan Today* had the highest occurrence of mental processes, suggesting a relatively higher degree of subjectivity and a departure from objectivity.

Overall, the findings of this research align with previous studies in SFG that have explored the prominence of material processes and the use of verbal processes for quoting sources in news reporting. The analysis adds to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into process frequencies and their implications in the specific context of crimes against women. Future research can delve deeper into the effects of linguistic choices on the representation and perception of these crimes in the media.

## 7 Conclusion

This research aimed to identify the different process types used in news reports related to crimes against women, examine their distribution and frequency, and investigate their functional roles and implications in representing such crimes. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the linguistic choices made in reporting and their impact on portrayal of incidents.

Regarding first objective, the research successfully identified process types. It focused on distribution and frequency of process types in news discourse. The findings revealed that material and verbal processes were the most prevalent across newspapers indicating a strong emphasis on actions, events, and the use of language in reporting. On the other hand, the occurrence of mental, relational, behavioral, and existential processes varied among the newspapers, with some process types being absent or less frequent.

The second objective aimed to investigate the functional roles and implications of process types in representing crimes against women in news reports. The findings suggest that the choice of process types serves specific functions in portraying incidents. Material processes, being the dominant type, contribute to the depiction of concrete actions and events. Verbal processes play a significant role in quoting external sources, maintaining objectivity, and reflecting multiple perspectives.

The research questions posed in this study were effectively addressed through the analysis of the newspaper corpus. The hypotheses formulated were supported by the findings, demonstrating the presence of diverse process types in news reports related to crimes against women, the prevalence of material processes, and the functional roles and implications of process types in representing these crimes.

These findings contribute to SFG by providing empirical evidence of process types in news discourse and their implications in representing crimes against women. They align with previous research offering valuable insights into the representation of crimes against women.

The implications of this research extend beyond the realm of linguistics. The findings highlight the need for critical analysis of news discourse and the potential impact of language on public perceptions of crimes against women. By understanding the functional roles of process types, journalists and media professionals can make informed choices in their reporting, considering the ethical and social implications of their language use.

In conclusion, this research provides a comprehensive analysis of process types in news reports related to crimes against women. The findings emphasize the prevalence of material and verbal processes, the varying distribution of process types among different newspapers, and the functional roles these choices serve in representing incidents. These insights contribute to our understanding of language use in news reporting and shed light on the portrayal of crimes against women in the media. Future studies can further explore the impact of process types on audience perceptions and the potential for promoting more balanced and sensitive reporting on such sensitive issues.

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