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Media Portrayal and Perpetuation of Rape Myths: A Systemic Functional Linguistics Analysis of Noor Mukaddam's Case in Pakistani Print Media

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Article Info	Abstract
musarat.yasmin@uog.edu.pk **Keywords:** Violence against women, Transitivity analysis, rape myths	Sexual violence against women has been the focus of research across the globe for decades. Intimate partner violence is one special kind that carries patriarchal socio-cultural beliefs with it governing and perpetuating such form(s) of sexual violence. Women become the victims of rape, torture, mental trauma and even murder. This paper studies sexual violence against women with special reference to Noor Mukaddam's case and its portrayal in Pakistani print media. Noor was the daughter of a Pakistani ex-diplomat whom Zahir Jaffar, her friend, brutally tortured and beheaded afterwards on 20th July 2021. 'Transitivity analysis' and 'Appraisal' features of the selected news reports with the help of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) reveal that the print media sometimes misreport the news of sexual violence that may easily go in the favor of the involved perpetrators. Such misreporting may discursively perpetuate rape myths and wrong beliefs having no sound logic. Objective news reporting may help focus on the 'real issue' without decentralizing the attention from the crime to the sensational elements.

Introduction

Violence against women is a matter of serious concern for researchers, social scientists, psychologists, and Government and non-governmental organizations across the world. For Young et al. (2000), sexual violence may include unwanted and forbidden verbal, physical, coercive and sexual advances and sexual events. Rose (1986), on the other hand, defines sexual assault as any form of sexual contact that takes place without the consensus of the other partner and that may violate the other person's control and power over their body. Intimate partner violence is one pertinent form of sexual violence that needs special consideration in developing nations of the world. Even in this advanced age of information technology, print media has its importance and place in challenging patriarchal views and beliefs regarding gender issues. This becomes more sensitive when it comes to the intimate relationship. Traditions and social values play a significant role in promoting patriarchal views regarding such issues. This paper discusses intimate partner violence concerning the reporting of sexual violence as reported in widely read Pakistani English newspapers. Pakistan has a rich history of culture with influences from religion and colonized past (Yasmin et al. 2021; Safdar & Yasmin, 2021; Akram & Yasmin, 2023). Noor Mukadam was the daughter of a Pakistani Ex-diplomat, Shaukat Muqadam. In this high-profile case, the murderer Zahir Jaffer tortured, raped and beheaded the girl in the capital city of Pakistan which happens to be one of the most secure regions of the country. Given the context of the case, the aim is to make an in-depth analysis of the reporting of the case as reported in the first month after the incident (21 July 2021 to 21 August 2021) in four highly circulated Pakistani English newspapers over two months.

Sexual violence as reported in the media not only reflects collective social thinking but also informs us how the people take it up as a serious gender issue. The prime objective of the study is to critically analyze the media's reporting on sexual crimes and its role in the propagation of objective truth. The purpose is to critically analyze how the reporters use different linguistic expressions to sensationalize the news rather than reporting the plain facts. The incorporation of the sensational elements eventually catches the attention of the readers but that may also distort the objective facts. The insensitiveness on the part of the reporters mutilates sexual violence against women in Pakistan that may go in the favor of the perpetrators.

Keeping in mind Wodak's (2001) model of data selection, the exact wording of the included newspapers is taken into consideration to validate the analysis. The sentences are taken and quoted in full (starting with the capital letter and ending with the full stops). No smaller sentences, part of the sentences or phrases are included to avoid partiality in the analysis. To analyze the sensational elements and impact of the news reports, Halliday's SFL provides ample help which primarily examines the function the language plays under certain situations. Moreover, transitivity analysis provides an understanding of the inherent sensational elements that affect meaning. This meaning is driven by the transitivity process that affects the participants involved in the process. As Halliday (2004) remarks, "Transitivity is the system of the clause, affecting not only the verb serving as a process but also participants and circumstance".

Literature Review

Sexual violence against women is not a new area of study. Countless studies have been made across the globe to study such forms of violence. The scholars have used numerous approaches to study sexual violence against women. Critical discourse analysts, for example, believe that language and society are interdependent on one another (Bayley et al., 2013: 74) and language can help us to understand the discursive social practices through discovering "relationships of causality between discursive practices, events and texts, and wider social and cultural contexts and examin [ing] how these practices, events and texts arise and are ideologically shaped by power relations" (Fairclough, 1993: 135). The most common type of rape trial analyzed from a CDA perspective has compared how the victim and accused produce different versions of the events (Capps & Ochs, 1985; Ehrlich, 2001), revealing how rape victims recurrently fail to describe their experience as rape (Bartley, 2018; Kahn et al. 1994) or illustrated how the perpetrator and victim are portrayed by others outside of the courtroom (Clark, 1992) or by those involved in the case (Ehrlich, 2001).

Various perspectives have added remarkable contributions to the field of discourse studies. Lazar, for example, notes that feminist critical discourse studies not only examine how taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively played out, but they recognize that textual strategies "have material and phenomenological consequences for women and men in specific communities" (2007, 142): she terms this methodological approach "feminist analytical activism" (145). Lazar's approach to feminist critical discourse analysis is premised on the concept that gender is an ideological structure, "discursively produced as well as (counter)-resisted in a variety of ways through textual representations of gendered social practices" (2007, 149). Then many factors like gender, class, race and culture are "most often treated in mainstream liberal discourse as vestiges of bias or domination" (Connell, 1997; Crenshaw, 1994:93). The researchers (Aijmer and Abbink 2000; Das et al. 2000; Schmidt and Schroeder 2001) believe that the violence and suffering in the society has shifted the attention towards the crimes and their analysis. Moreover, the different types of structural violence have also been focused on actually exposing harsh social issues like social injustice, sexual abuse and economic deficit (Farmer et al., 2006).

Carll (2003) believes that the news media plays a critical role in shaping public opinion towards any matter of serious concern. The framing of news can strongly influence individual, social, political and policy responses towards people and events (Entman, 1993: Entman, 2007; Flood and Peace, 2009; Easteal et al., 2015). Great emphasis has been laid upon the fact that the media can play an active and positive role in the stoppage of SVAW (Simon and Morgan, 2017), it is believed that the contents of the news quite often misrepresent the issue of sexual violence. Sexual violence can be prevented in countless ways through understanding the perpetuation of social constructions regarding sexual violence but very few media news reports do promote such understanding. The research shows that the media reports show sexual violence through episodic framing or 'event-based' reporting thereby making an atomistic event detached from the social fabric (Bullock, 2010; Gillespie et al., 2013; Carlyle, 2008; Richards et al., 2011; Morgan and Politoff, 2012). Such kind of news reporting only highlights the events of sexual violence as discrete and detached events attributing the responsibility to the individuals rather than to the whole social set-up and showing it to be an individualistic rather than a societal problem (Scheufele, 1999; Scheufele, 2000).

Reporting of sexual violence is of pivotal importance as every act of rape and sexual violence is not newsworthy. Media knowingly overlooks such incidents that do not afford sensation and drama (Meyers 1997). Scholars like Berrington & Jones 2010; Lahav 2008; and Lemish 2007 have criticized the media's voyeuristic manner of reportage involving intimate detail of the reported event that readily catches the attention of the readers. Such reporting style involves expressions that cover yellow journalism (Shoham, 2009).

Sexual violence is expected to be greater in cultures where women are objectified and considered inferior to men (Delay and Noland, 2001). According to a careful estimation, about 67% to 84% of cases of sexual abuse may not be reported to the authorities (Greefield, 1997) because of the sensitive nature of the issue (Watts and Zimmerson, 2002)

which makes it very difficult to collect strict data and the severity of the problem. Ward and Inserto (1990) believe that the unreported cases of sexual violence may be much more in Asian countries where great value is ascribed to the virginity of the women and the respect and honor of the women are associated with the respect of the family. Kumari (1995) found a very bitter reality in India where women are not given better treatment than cows. They have no control and authority over their sexuality. A rural Indian woman cannot marry the man of their own choice rather their fate and future are in the hands of the man; firstly, her father and then her husband. She has no right or privilege to decide her matters. So in an Indian society, men play an important role in the life of women like they do in any other patriarchal and traditional societies. Karla and Bhugra (2013) note that the cultural undertones are very crucial that shaping the emotions and feelings of the victim of sexual violence.

Sunderland et al. (2019) note that the misconceptions about sexual violence and the rape myths are usually implied in print media news stories. The news reports do not clearly say that violence against women is non-existent but it is usually accepted in some cultures where it is tolerated to some extent or the responsibility is placed both on the victims and the perpetrators. They believe that we can identify with the help of a series of questions to determine what are the misunderstandings and rape myths against women that cause violence and make them at least partially responsible for the acts of sexual crimes.

There are six different types of processes as summarized in the following table:

Table 1: Types of transitivity processes

Process type	Category	Participants (direct)	Participants (indirect)
Material	Doing something	Goal/ actor	Recipient
Mental	Related to ideas (thinking)	Phenomenon, Senser	Prompter
Verbal	Saying	Sayer	Receiver
Behavioral	Behaving	Behaver	Behavior
Relational	Being/attributing	Carrier	Attributor/beneficiary
Existential	Existing/forms of be	Existent	-

The transitivity process involves participants and the Circumstances. The processes in transitivity analysis are simply the key verbs used to construe news reporting. The verbs are largely responsible for construing states and/or actions. The participants are the important characters involved in the incidents of sexual crimes. The Circumstances are other important elements that provide crucial information regarding the construing of said states and actions. The linguistic analysis is made with the help of above mentioned Transitivity processes when applicable to the context of the news texts.

The Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005) focuses on the writer's feelings towards the participants and the actions involved in the process. It deals with the evaluative aspect of language that not only transmits information but also reflects the feelings of the writer towards the participants involved. It also measures how language creates feelings, opinions and reactions towards people. This research generally speaks about all three aspects of appraisal involving Attitude, Engagement and Graduation but pays central attention to the key concepts of Attitude in the evaluative portion. The category of Attitude involves the subjective evaluation of the subject. It is further divided into

three components namely Affect, Judgment and Appreciation. These three elements analyze the emotional impact, the examination of human behavior and the evaluation of the impact of the events and associated phenomena respectively.

Table 2: Appraisal framework and its key components

Affect	**Judgement**	**Appreciation**
Measures the emotional impact	Measures the human behavior of participants	Measures the impact of events and aesthetic preferences

Research Design and Methodology

This study is primarily qualitative and the data are gathered from the news stories published on the famous rape and murder case of Noor Mukadam. The discussions are subjective, but they are also supported by the evidence provided by the transitivity system and Appraisal features. The study falls into the realm of explanatory research that goes a step further from descriptive and exploratory research. It addresses the "why" and "how" types of questions on the given subject. It focuses on the reporting of the rape and murder of a Pakistani ex-diplomat's daughter and addresses how reporters report the news stories related to this high-profile case and what expressions and linguistic choices they make to provoke thrill and sensation. Four largely circulated and widely read Daily Pakistani English Newspapers namely, Dawn, The News, Express Tribune and The Nation are taken up for the analysis of the news stories published in these newspapers over the first month of the incident. Keeping the transitivity system and Appraisal framework as the central analytical tools and borrowing a critical approach from Fairclough;'s model of CDA, the analysis is made to see how the reporters sensationalize the news. The news stories are taken, explained with Transitivity processes and the Appraisal framework and interpreted to bring forth the sensational elements of the stories that may tell the readers more than the real event.

Table 3. Daily Circulation of Newspapers and their Estimated Readership (https://www.4imn.com/pk/)

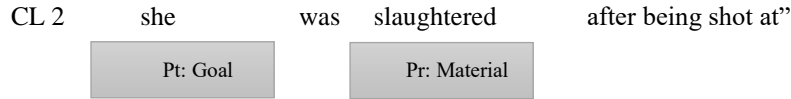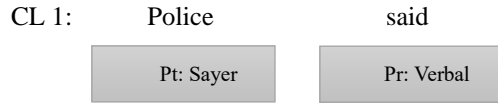| Sr#	Newspapers	Daily Circulation	Estimated Readership
1	Dawn	100,000 to 200,000	400,000 to 800,000
2	The News	100,000 to 200,000	400,000 to 800,000
3	Express Tribune	50,000 to 100,000	200,000 to 400,000
4	Nation	25,000 to 50,000	100,000 to 200,000

Discussion and Analysis

News reporting on the subject matter of sexual violence affects and is affected by social practices. The news reporting on sexual abuse is a very serious matter of concern as it is usually replete with sensational verbose. Reporting the dreadful part of the crime is the most sensational way that compel the audience to develop an interest in seeing what happened to the victim(s). The instances are focused on where selected newspapers sensationalize the news event to evoke thrill and dramatize such events of sexual violence.

The main characters of the story are;

i) Noor Mukadam: Noor Mukadam was a young girl of 28. She was the daughter of a Pakistani Ex-diplomat Shaukat Mukadam. She was Zahir's close childhood friend.

ii) Zahir Jaffer: Zahir was a close childhood friend of Noor Mukadam. He was a US national. He was about to go back to America when he called Noor Mukadam into his house for a farewell call.

iii) Shaukat Mukadam: Shaukat was an ex-ambassador and had close family terms with Zahir Jaffer's family.

- **Police said she was slaughtered after being shot at" (Dawn, July 21, 2021)**

CL 1:   Police   said

| Pt: Sayer | Pr: Verbal |

CL 2   she   was   slaughtered   after being shot at"
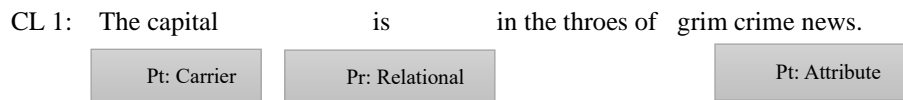
| Pt: Goal | Pr: Material |

The material process "slaughtered" is highly sensational and adds more dramatic appeal to the incident. Transitivity is all about the relationship between the participants. The police as an institution hold the power and must be trustworthy. It is not the police that create sensation but the news itself which is reported by the reporter. It is in the hands of the reporter how the news is conveyed. The same news could have been reported without mentioning the name of the police "she was slaughtered after being shot at" which becomes a material process with altogether different meanings and dimensions. By using the verbal process (in place of the material process) the reporter, firstly, attaches worthiness to the news as it is said by the police, and secondly, the use of the neutral verbal process 'said' shows that he agrees and believes the words of the police but detaches himself from the incident at the same time. All the responsibility whether right or wrong, true or false is to be attached to the police and not the reporter or the newspaper.

The second important thing is that 'she' is also the Target being evaluated by the police and not the murderer. The murderer is not even mentioned. The 'saying' circles around the murdered girl when and how she was murdered but does not include the murderer. Moreover, the choice of words is very crucial. The word "slaughtered" is used with a religious connotation of sacrifice and religious obligation. Was Noor a goat sacrificed in the honor of some religious rite or was she a real human being whom the killer killed and beheaded? "Slaughtering" is an obligatory Islamic rite celebrated to commemorate the sacrifice of Prophets Ibrahim and Ismail. The quoted statement gives an impression as if the killer was performing some religious obligation which is not the case.

In terms of Appraisal, the news is sensational while the effect of the statement is negative and creates a sense of fear sadness and pity for the murdered girl. The action of killing provokes anger and despise towards the murderer.

- **The capital is in the throes of grim crime news (The Nation, July 24, 2021).**

CL 1:   The capital   is   in the throes of   grim crime news.

| Pt: Carrier | Pr: Relational | Pt: Attribute |

This is an attributive relational process in which 'the capital (city of Islamabad) is the Carrier while 'crime news' is the Attribute. The capital relates to the city of Islamabad being one of the most prominent cities in the country while its state is in grim crime news and tells us about its destiny suffered by grim crime news. The intensive circumstantial relational clause is used to sensationally link Islamabad with 'grim crime news'. This creates alarm. What can we expect of other cities if the capital is facing such crimes?

In terms of Appraisal, the noun phrase 'throes' creates feelings of unhappiness while 'grim crime news' creates a strong impact on the readers.

Relational processes construe the state rather than the action. The news text does not tell us anything about the main event but about the condition of the capital city of Pakistan. It creates a sensation as it is not the fault of the city of Islamabad being the capital or such kind of event taking place there. Making the capital more prominent before telling anything about the incident catches the attention as it is harder to believe that the grim crime news can even take place in one of the safest cities. It creates a picture in the minds of the readers; if the capital is not free from the crimes how can the other cities be free from them? The word 'throes' means the pangs or spasms of pain which create sensation. The use of the relational process, here, means something outstanding that must be given attention to before heading forward with the real news whatsoever. It paves the way towards catching the attention of the readers as they

would ultimately be interested in knowing why and how the capital is in pangs. The capital city of Islamabad, one can argue, is just a venue of the crime that has nothing to do with the gruesome murder of the girl at the hand of her boyfriend. Relating it to the throes and grim crime news creates sensation and does not tell us any objective fact about the 'grim crime(s)' at all. Then there is the grim crime news that has caused the city to be in throes. It then shifts the attention to those uninviting crimes that have caused the city to suffer. The purpose of talking about the city in such a way is to create doubts in the minds of the readers that no one is safe even in Islamabad.

- **… news about the gruesome murder of Noor Mukadam, 27, has shaken the city and the rest of the country.**

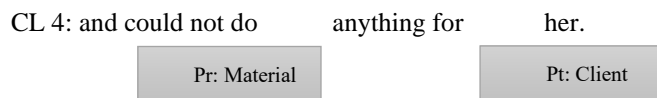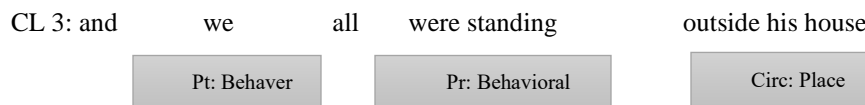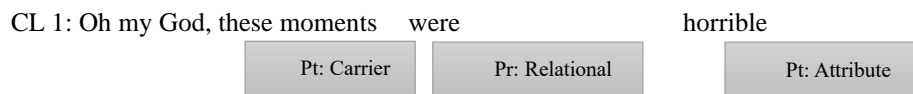 **(The Nation, July 24, 2021)**

CL 1: News about the gruesome murder of Noor Mukadam, 27,   has shaken

Pr: Phenomenon		Pr: Mental

the city and the rest of the country.

Pt: Sensor

The use of emotive mental process evokes sensation as the impact is felt by the city of Islamabad and the country which are merely the places. They have been shaken as if by some disastrous earthquake. The news of the murder has nothing to do specifically with the city of Islamabad but to create sensation. The Circumstance of matter tells us what the news was about. Noor Mukadam, 27, tells us that the girl was in the prime of her youth and it was very bad that her friend mercilessly murdered her. The use of an emotive mental process rightly serves the purpose as it is directly concerned with emotion and inner feelings. The murder of a young innocent girl creates sensation and eventually catches the attention of the readers.

In terms of Appraisal, the emotional affect is created with the use of the mental process 'has shaken' that affects the thinking process of the readers while the product is evaluated as the gruesome murder of Noor Mukadam provokes a strong reaction.

- **Oh my God, these moments were horrible because Zahir was detaining Noor in the room and we all were standing outside his house and could not do anything for her (The Nation, July 24, 2021).**

CL 1: Oh my God, these moments   were   horrible

Pt: Carrier	Pr: Relational	Pt: Attribute

CL 2: because   Zahir   was detaining   Noor   in the room

Pt: Actor	Pr: Material	Pt: Goal	Circ: Place

CL 3: and   we   all   were standing   outside his house

Pt: Behaver	Pr: Behavioral	Circ: Place

CL 4: and could not do   anything for   her.

Pr: Material	Pt: Client

The relational process in the first clause describes the state of awe and terror where the people could do nothing except be silent onlookers as they were not expecting him to murder his friend. The relational process construes states rather than the action. Those moments were horrible as no one was in a position to stop Zahir from committing murder.

They were doing nothing but hoping against hope that those moments would pass without causing much damage but they could do nothing to lessen the horror of those moments. So the relational act as the background. The behavioral process in the third clause also adds up to the fear and terror that the people were experiencing as they were unable to do anything to save the girl. Lastly, their act of standing outside the house is a behavioral one as they were just standing outside the house almost as if they were part of the background themselves. They had no access to either Zahir or Noor and they were not in a position to save her. All this provides no solution to the cause but adds terror and sensation to the event.

The reporter quotes the above statement of the injured employee of Therapy Works (an organization where Zahir Jaffer worked) that created horror. Interestingly, the reporter does not question him whether they had informed the Police or not. Had they informed the Police in time, the life of the poor victim could have been saved. Everyone had their mobile phones with them but no one contacted the police. They rather wait for the killer to murder her? The reporting is sometimes unconsciously made in a way that promotes patriarchy and spreads sensation and horror. The victimized could not do anything just like the way the onlookers could not do anything for Noor. This could also mean that we have nothing to do but submit ourselves to the powerful and admit that nothing can be done for the victimized.

There was not even a single person on the spot who could save the life of the unfortunate girl including 'the common friend(s)' and the security staff. It is surprising to note what the security guard was doing there. The security was perhaps meant to secure the inmates from outsiders only. Why did the guards not save the life of the girl who was barely trying to save her life from the murderer? Perhaps they could only save one thing- the life of the victimized girl or their job. And they opted for the second. The same was done by the common friend who was witnessing the whole series of events. The girl was left unsecured at the hands of the murderer and the guards kept the watch on the gates to let others not enter the house to save the life of the girl. All these things together add up to the terror and bad luck of the girl. All this coupled with the use of relational and Behavioral processes contrasts with Zahir's action of detaining and murdering the girl. The use of the interjection 'Oh my God' adds to the terror felt by the onlookers and the news readers alike.

In terms of Appraisal, the news text leaves the emotional impact of fear and awe on the readers as the process of detaining the victim and murdering her mercilessly also produces a negative reaction towards the whole event.

- **"He also asked us if we could lend him pliers," said a common friend of Noor while talking to The Nation. He said it took 10 minutes to kill and behead Noor by Zahir Jaffar" (The News, July 24, 2021)**

CL 1:   He   also   asked   us
| Pt: Sayer | | Pr: Verbal | Pt: Receiver |

CL 2: if   we   could lend   him   pliers,"
| Pt: Actor | Pr: Material | Pt: Recipient | Pt: Goal |

CL 3:   said   a common friend of   Noor
| Pr: Verbal | | Pt: Sayer |

CL 4: while   talking to   The Nation
| Pr: Verbal | Pt: Receiver |

CL 5:   He   said
| Pt: Sayer | Pr: Verbal |

CL 6:   it   took   10 minutes
| Pt: Carrier | Pr: Relational | Pt: Attribute |

to kill and behead Noor by Zahir Jaffar"

The use of the verbal process is very important. In the first sentence, it is the common friend who narrates what happened. Assigning the role of Sayer to a common friend is to attach credibility to the news as he was there witnessing the whole action. The fear and sensation are embedded in the content of his saying where Zahir demands pliers to impose some really painful injury on Noor. His statement tells us the workings of the mind of the accused at that point. This statement is shocking and compels the readers to ponder what he was asking the pliers for.

Again, the reporter has reported the incident in the words of a common friend who tells him how long it took to kill and bead Noor. How could a friend murder and behead a close friend and what could be the reasons for doing such a fanatic murder? It compels us to think that it was a cold-blood murder at the hands of a close friend. Zahir's asking for pliers from his friends tells us about his anticipated action. His behavior at that point in time was abnormal. The dreadful process of killing and beheading took 10 minutes. It is simply barbaric. She would have struggled not only to convince him not to kill her but also struggled physically to save her life but of no use as there wasn't anybody to help her save her life. He along with other common friends was standing there almost like the background. Was he a common friend who waited for ten minutes to let him give time and ease to humiliate, murder and behead the girl? Could they not call the police to save the life of their common friend? The police station was within touching distance and the residence was located in Islamabad's posh area where such kind of incident could have easily been avoided.

In terms of Appraisal, the modalization 'could lend' refers to the propriety of the common friends to facilitate murder.

- **The post-mortem report was released on Friday, stating that she was beheaded after being murdered in Islamabad" (Express Tribune, 27th July 2021).**

CL 1: The post-mortem report   was   released   on Friday,

Pt: Carrier		Pt: Attribute

CL 2:   stating

Pr: Verbal

CL 3: that   she   was beheaded   after being murdered in Islamabad"

Pt: Goal	Pr: Material

Firstly, the reporter uses the attributive relational process to talk about the release of the post-mortem report. The relational processes construe states rather than the action. The release of the post-mortem report works as the background of the incident as the contents of the saying are dependent and conditional upon this report. Secondly, the reporter uses the verbal process "stating" as declarative indicating the authoritative position of the postmortem report; the report being an official document worthy to be trusted and believed. Only the postmortem report can be stated with authority and not any other ordinary document. Importantly, it is the news reporter that informs us about the postmortem report and the body of the report so the first source of information conveying the statement of the postmortem report is the news story that becomes important in the information sharing process. It is this post-mortem report in the form of an official document that declares that the death was not because of a beheading rather the murder was committed first and then she was beheaded. In this way, it creates fear and sensation.

Again, it is highly sensational that the reporter foregrounds the victim and the cruel action of murder and beheading. Although the report shows the anger and frustration of the killer who was so desperate but the reporter puts the Actor-the murderer in the background. It not only distances the murderer but also spreads sensation as the focus of the news reporting is the victim, murder and bloodshed. On the other hand, it was confirmed that the suspect had also raped the unfortunate victim but the post-mortem report does not say anything about the rape. It is again up to the reporter whether he has subtracted this information from the postmortem report or the report does not state that at all. If the postmortem report does not say anything about the rape, it is incomplete and if the report does not report the whole body of the report, it makes it insensitiveness on the part of the reporter as he does not convey the whole real story and only creates sensation. The report distances the criminal through passivization not stating that the suspect had raped the victim before murdering and beheading her.

In terms of Appraisal, the behavior of the killer is inhuman and abnormal and in no way justifiable.

- **She was brutally tortured and finally beheaded (The News, 28ᵗʰ July 2021)**

CL 1:   She   was brutally tortured and finally beheaded

Pt: Goal	Pr: Material

The focus of the reporting is the Goal and the material action. The material process tells us what happened to the girl but sensation is created through the choice of strong vocabulary. The action becomes more horrible with 'beheading'. It creates horrible pictorial imagery in the minds of the news readers. The Goal (she) is actually what attracts the focus of attention as she is the one who received all brutality and torture. The Goal being the woman attracts more sensation as Pakistani society might not be considered as impartial to the men and women like those of some of the advanced countries of the world. The use of passive verbs "tortured and beheaded" is very poignant to tell the agony, pain and torture of the murdered girl. Then the deletion of the agent is also not without a purpose. The focus of the news story is the victim and the injuries and not the agent. It might be the journalistic style of news reporting but this also gives the readers an impression as if the news reporter didn't know who the killer was.

In terms of Appraisal, 'brutally tortured' arouses strong emotions of disinclination and despise. Moreover, the act of brutally torturing and beheading also points to negative judgment and tenacity of the killer's action.

- **Noor Mukadam's throat was sliced with a sharp-edged weapon and her head was severed from the body (The News, August 13, 2021).**

CL 1: Noor Mukadam's throat   was sliced   with a sharp-edged weapon

Pt: Goal	Pr: Material

CL 2: and   her head   was severed   from the body.

Pt: Goal	Pr: Material

The material processes 'sliced' and 'severed' tell the horrible story of intimidating action. The circumstance of means adds fuel to the fire. On one hand, the imagery is very powerful and reminds us of some professional butcher slicing and severing different parts of some animal to sell the meat. On the other hand, the whole series of action is made to look like a horrible scene from a horror movie. The choice of words is so sensational that presents a dramatic plot where the readers cannot live without imagining the picture of the girl's throat being sliced and severed from the body. The coordinate conjunction 'and' also plays a vital role as it not only joins two independent clauses in a compound sentence but also represents the element of addition. The murderer is also made to disappear from the scene foregrounding the atrocious action of murder and distancing the Actor.

In terms of Appraisal, the act of murdering and severing the head refers to the killer's (ab)normality thus creating strong sensational feelings.

- **The killer tortured her with a knuckle duster before slaughtering her to death (The News, August 13, 2021)**

CL 1:   The killer   tortured   her   with a knuckle duster

Pt: Actor	Pr: Material	Pt: Goal

before   slaughtering   her   to death

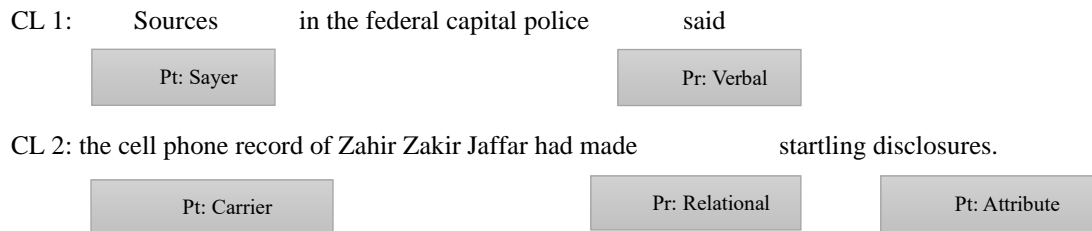| Pr: Material	Pt: Goal

The reporter uses the material process to report what the killer did to the murdered girl. Strong vocabulary like 'killer', 'tortured', 'knuckle duster' and 'slaughtering' creates sensation. The use of material process foregrounds the

killer performing the active role of the torturer. It also gives the reporter the command to narrate the story as if he had been witnessing the whole action of bloodshed in front of his eyes. This makes it more sensational as no passive verb is used to exclude dramatic action. Conversely, the reporter does not use the verbal process to indicate that it was said by the police or the resources as that could not have left that powerful impact as the action material process has created. The story of fierce action of torture and bloodshed makes the text highly sensational and 'newsworthy'.

In terms of Appraisal, the act of torturing (with knuckle duster) and slaughtering refers to the killer's (ab)normality and adds dramatic detailing thus creating strong sensational feelings.

- **Sources in the federal capital police said the cell phone record of Zahir Zakir Jaffar had made startling disclosures (The News, August 13, 2021).**

CL 1:   Sources   in the federal capital police   said

Pt: Sayer		Pr: Verbal

CL 2: the cell phone record of Zahir Zakir Jaffar had made   startling disclosures.

Pt: Carrier	Pr: Relational	Pt: Attribute

In the first place, it is the Sayer that incites sensation. It is not the Federal Capital Police but the sources of the newspaper in the Federal Capital Police. It is the expertise of the reporter that he managed to get access to some untold facts yet hidden from the world. 'The sources' adds mystery and suspense to the report. The statement creates excitement on the part of the news readers and they anxiously wait for the startling revelation. It compels the readers to believe that the next news report on the incident might provide information about those "startling revelation". The use of the neutral verbal process 'said' establishes an interesting relationship between the speaker and the reporter. It poses no conflicting stance rather it shows that he believes it to be true whatever was said. It tells us how much the sources are informative, reliable, powerful and trustworthy. It also indicates that the reporter also believes and associates himself with the sources, the sources being reliable and powerful. The reporter could have used "claimed" instead of 'said' which could have created doubts in the minds of the readers about the news and the trustworthiness of the news.

Then the cell phone record is very confidential data. The sources have easy access to that data as the person and his belongings are under the custody of the police. The past perfect tense indicates that the police have already got access to the 'startling disclosure' and they could be waiting for the right time to expose them publically. Lastly, the Attribute itself is highly sensational and gruesome. It revokes voyeuristic suspense and compels the readers to go on to read the news to know the disclosure.

Sensationalization is one important aspect of news reporting that eventually catches the attention of the news readers. The reporter plays a vital role in such reporting as he is the one who can modify the news in the way he likes. The use of material processes, for example, is the most appropriate process that can portray the action. In this case of intimate partner violence, the actor is the most important participant in the process but it is the reporter who can foreground the Goal of the process with the help of passive structure and can take the actor in the background. Although the meaning does not change, it can drastically influence the projection of the event. In this section, the reporter has frequently used the material processes and the verbal processes in the main clauses. This means that the reporter uses the material process to talk about the horrible action of murdering and beheading. He uses the verbal processes to detach himself from the event and to shift the responsibility of the saying onto some other person. Moreover, the verbal processes are also used to attach credibility to the saying.
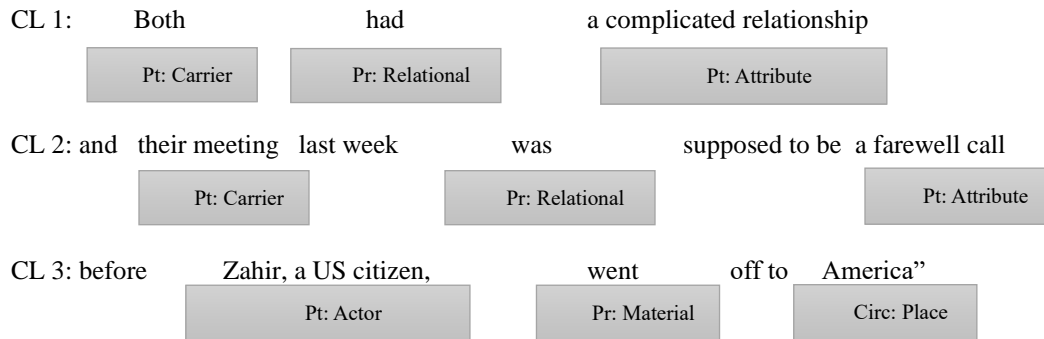
Relational processes are used thrice and mental processes for once. Both relational and mental processes construe states rather than the action. They can be very helpful in depicting the horrible condition of the participants. In contrast to the material and verbal processes, relational and mental processes are smaller in numbers. They are used when the reporter wants to talk about the situations and events and not the actions. In this case, for example, the relational processes are used to describe the current state of the city and the physical state of the participants. To sum up, it can be said that the use of material processes is the most appropriate process to describe the bloody action that can help the reporter achieve the desired result of sensationalism. The verbal process shifts the responsibility of the saying onto the Sayer and not on to the reporter but it is the content of the saying that becomes more important as it may involve the material action verbs that spread sensation. In contrast, the use of relational and mental processes is minimal in

number as the reporter wants to highlight the action rather than the state of events. Lastly, the circumstances may also sensationalize the news more than the Actor and the Goal in the material processes. Circumstance of manner, for example, can tell us how the woman was murdered and beheaded. So the choice of the Circumstance is also of vital importance as it adds additional thrill and spice to the news reporting.

Victim blaming is a very common feature of news reporting in the case of sexual abuse and the Noor Mukadam case is no exception. There are instances when the reporter blames the woman and the Circumstance for the murder.

In terms of Appraisal, the expression 'startling revelations' creates strong feelings of insecurity and surprise and so adds up to the dramatic and sensational feelings.
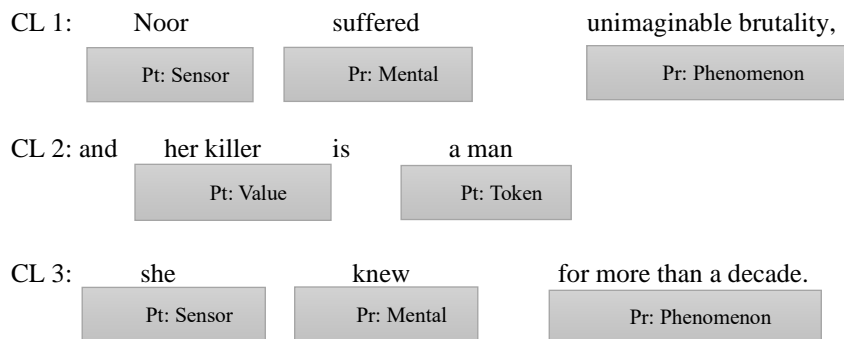
- **Both had a complicated relationship and their meeting last week was supposed to be a farewell call before Zahir, a US citizen, went off to America (The Nation, July 24, 2021).**

CL 1:   Both   had   a complicated relationship

| Pt: Carrier | Pr: Relational | Pt: Attribute |

CL 2: and   their meeting   last week   was   supposed to be a farewell call

| Pt: Carrier | Pr: Relational | Pt: Attribute |

CL 3: before   Zahir, a US citizen,   went   off to   America"

| Pt: Actor | Pr: Material | Circ: Place |

The attributive relational process is used here to report about the complicated relationship. It is the Carrier 'both' that equally blames the 'complicated relationship' on the murderer and the girl. Since the relational clause is used to construe the state rather than the action, it is presented as a background. It also indicates the state of confusion on the part of the woman who was probably in love with the man. This was the confusion that let her go to him to see off him before she could take any decisive position to marry him or not. Then it is 'their meeting' that makes them equal crime partners. The pronoun 'their' represents the element of inclusivity thereby making the woman also responsible for what happened to her. Zahir wanted to meet her which was a farewell call but Noor could not see that he was trapping her to take some revenge. When she knew that Zahir was going through some 'complications' she should have not gone there to meet him without taking some solid preventive measures.

In terms of Appraisal, the reporter mentions and evaluates the composition of their affiliation which also makes the woman responsible for her wrong decision to go there to say goodbye. She could not realize that her friend was not and she was herself going into the mouth of death and it was her fault.

- **Noor suffered unimaginable brutality, and her killer is a man she knew for more than a decade (Dawn July 24, 2021).**

CL 1:   Noor   suffered   unimaginable brutality,

| Pt: Sensor | Pr: Mental | Pr: Phenomenon |

CL 2: and   her killer   is   a man

| Pt: Value | Pt: Token |

CL 3:   she   knew   for more than a decade.

| Pt: Sensor | Pr: Mental | Pr: Phenomenon |

The reporter uses the mental process to state the mental suffering of the woman. It not only construes her mental state but also sets the background. The identifying clause identifies the killer but importantly it is the role of the woman

as the Sensor that puts the whole blame onto the woman. The structure of news reporting is very well manipulated. The use of a mental cognitive process in the first clause sparks sensation. The identifying clause identifies the killer by describing the state of the man. But it is a mental cognitive process that does victim blaming. The sensor is the most important participant in mental processes and consigning the woman the role of the sensor blames her for the consequences. We are told that the killer is the man that Noor has known for more than a decade. This means that Noor was unable to recognize the beast in the garb of sheep. She could not recognize the man in ten years of friendship thereby causing death and destruction to her. She was the only one who was to decide whether the killer was her friend or not. She spent ten long years with the man just to get killed once they had a clash of interests.

In terms of Appraisal, the reporting produces a negative Affect that evokes unhappiness but their relationship and the wrong judgment on the part of the woman blame her for the consequences she had to face because of her fault.

- **"The alleged killer is a son of a leading businessman of the country," police said. (News, 21ˢᵗ July 2021).**

CL 1: The alleged killer   is a son of a leading businessman of the country,"

Pt: Token		Pt: value

CL 2:   police   said.

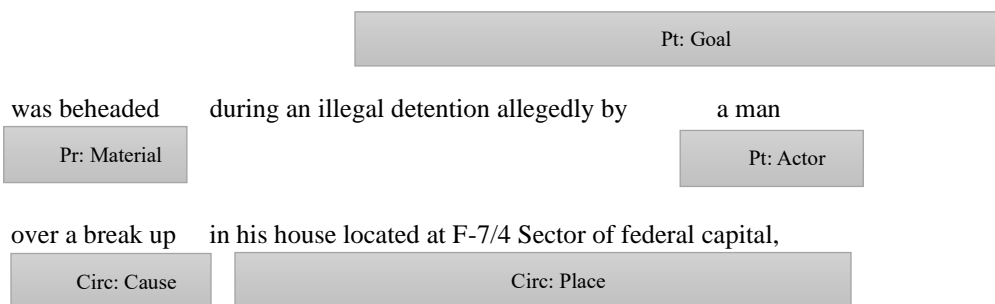| Pt: Sayer	Pr: Verbal

The verbal process 'said' is an informative. It firstly makes us believe that the police are a powerful source of information as they are in the position to tell us what happened. The information about the accused killer being the son of a leading businessman becomes more significant as it indicates that the police might also be in awe and reluctant to take some immediate action against him. We are told about the societal position of the murderer that has nothing to do with the case. A murderer is only the murderer and not the son of the leading businessman. Saying so, it only distances the criminal as they talk about the wealth and societal position of the murderer's family which does not leave a good impression on the mind of the news readers. The only thing we come to know about him is that; he was the son of a leading businessman'. We are provoked to consider whether being the son of a leading businessman could be the only identity of the killer. If it is so, the statement suggests that the killer was not an "ordinary" man but the son of a business tycoon who should not be treated 'ordinarily'. The statement compels the readers to think whether the murder of the girl has anything to do with the social status of the murderer except distancing him. Lastly, the use of a neutral verbal process speaks about the relationship between the reporter and the speaker. It is the reporter who published the news. If the reporter does not challenge the statement, he is also the Sayer of the statement and equally responsible for distancing the killer.

In terms of Appraisal, the Sayer values the status of the killer more than anything else which distances him from his crime.

- **In a barbaric incident, the 28-year-old daughter of a former Pakistani diplomat was beheaded during an illegal detention allegedly by a man over a break up in his house located at F-7/4 Sector of federal capital, informed sources on Friday (The Nation, July 24, 2021)**

CL 1: In a barbaric incident, the 28-year-old daughter of a former Pakistani diplomat

Pt: Goal

was beheaded   during an illegal detention allegedly by   a man

Pr: Material		Pt: Actor

over a break up   in his house located at F-7/4 Sector of federal capital,

Circ: Cause	Circ: Place

CL 2:   informed   sources   on Friday.

Pr: Material	Pt: Sayer	Circ: Time

First of all, it is the use of the material process in the content of the saying that highly sensationalizes the news. The Circumstance of place and time also adds more spice and drama. This sensationalization is quite different as it contrasts with the insensitiveness. Four different aspects make the reporting insensitive. The Goal of the material process is foregrounded while the Actor is put in the background with the help of passive voice. It not only distances the murderer but also makes it insensitive on the part of the reporter as he highlights the woman and her suffering and not the killer and the act of killing. The sources of the newspaper do inform us about every bit of detail about the woman but do not inform us anything about the murderer and his identity whatsoever. She was the daughter of an ex-diplomat but who was the murderer and why did he murder the girl? Four days have gone by and Nation does not mention the name of the 'alleged' murderer. It seems as if the media knows every bit of information about the victim of sexual violence but does not know anything about the perpetrator except 'a man'. The Circumstance of manner and the Circumstance of cause also make it insensitive as the murder is still 'alleged' and the cause of murder is just the 'break up'. Such reporting reflects the fate of such a high-profile case and also points out the fate of all those cases that have never been given any media coverage.

In terms of Appraisal, 'barbaric incident' creates disinclination but using the passive voice 'was beheaded' backgrounds the killer distancing him and making the approach insensitive.

Conclusion

Sexual violence against women is a grave matter of concern that demands an active understanding of the problems related to reporting on such a serious matter of social disquiet. It is the reporter who is to decide what states and actions to be construed depending upon the demand of the situation. The reporters add thrill, sensation and drama to achieve this goal. Material processes sensationalize the news not only to spread sensation but also to 'sell' the news. By doing so, the reporters do not even care to stick to the objective facts which may easily distort the attention of the readers from the crucial facts to the sensational and voyeuristic elements. Reporting on incidents of sexual violence is done in such a way that creates sensation more than reporting the objective facts related to the incidents. This involves suspense, drama, thrill and voyeuristic sensation that focuses on the sensational elements of the news reporting more than the factual details. This might be a strategy to attract the attention of the readers but this blurs the mental faculty of the readers and they start being played with 'the words'. Victim blaming, then, is a phenomenon in which the responsibility for the crime and suffering is put on the victims. It involves associating the causes of the suffering towards the actions, choices and decisions of the victims. Denying the perpetrators' responsibility for the crime is a kind of coping mechanism that believes that avoiding certain behaviors and actions under certain conditions and circumstances can prevent targeted harm. The use of appropriate language with a considerate approach in such reporting can make a difference. Moreover, linguists and social scientists need to come forward and perform their active role in the identification of problems of victimized women and raise their voices at appropriate forums. This research can be taken as a yardstick for future research in the field of CDA that can help us demystify hidden objectives and unearth social inequalities that exist in different forms in our society. This research has special consideration for researchers ambitious to do something for developing countries like Pakistan India and other Asian countries.

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