

HYBRID LEGALITY IN PRACTICE: REGISTER, JUDICIAL AUTHORITY, AND IMPARTIALITY IN SELECTED PAKISTANI LEGAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

This study explores the stylistic features of legal discourse in Pakistani criminal law, specifically through a register analysis of Supreme Court verdicts. The use of special vocabulary, sentence constructions and style of writing has been seen to make the legal language complex, rigid and closed-ended. Such complications in Pakistan impact transparency and accessibility since most of the English-written legal texts in the country are dominated by the Islamic and British traditions of law. The paper analyses the role of language in the formation of legal authority, the impartiality of the court, and the clarity of interpretation in Supreme Court of Pakistan decisions. The theoretical framework is premised on the stylistic and register analysis model by Halliday (1978) and Fairclough (1995), which aids in explaining how the social context and legal role influence language. The qualitative analysis focuses on the review of 12 verdicts of the English Supreme Court that can be regarded as the best examples of formal legal language in Pakistan because of their judicial authority and thoroughness. The selection of these judgements was due to the reason that they represent the most institutionalised and formal legal language in Pakistan. The results indicate that epistemic certainties, depersonalised agents, and integrations of verdicts into a network of intertextual precedents can be predicted by stylistic choices as a means of supporting the validity of judicial rulings. The research paper adds to the analysis of legal discourse through illustrating the use of register as an authority-making mechanism in postcolonial legal settings. The paper finds that the stylistic devices used are no longer ornamental but functional: they convey legal meaning, organise judicial reasoning, and promote the interpretation clarity of complex legal terms.

Key Words: *Modality, Judicial Reasoning, Legal Framing, Archaic Language, and Enumerative Legal Structures.*

Introduction

The stylistic peculiarities of legal discourses are vital in comprehending the role of language in the legal field to produce a meaning, establish the authority, and imply the power relations. In this paper, the stylistic peculiarities of the Pakistani legal discourse are examined through the prism of a stylistic and register analysis. Linguists have been interested in legal discourse in Pakistan, where little research has been done on the stylistic aspects of such discourse through a register-based framework. The Pakistani legal system is a phenomenon that is shaped under the influence of Islamic law and the British traditions of colonisation, implying that this area offers a fascinating example of stylistic analysis (Ali and Rehman, 2021).

Latin terminology has been inherited by the English language that is used in Pakistan. According to Crystal (1997), Latin was a major influence on English. Britain tried to break free from the foreign influence of Latin in the eighteenth century, but use of such norms in contemporary British and colonial legal discourse is common with acronyms (Alabi, 2003). The linguistic theory suggests that codes, phrases, or special expressions in registers are found in the common language of the social groups (Aarts et al., 2011). Registers are language

varieties that are associated with particular situational characteristics and communicative goals that typically exhibit linguistic similarities (Biber et al., 2002). Register denotes differences in use of language with respect to context, such as subject matter (field), social roles and relationships of the participants (tenor), form of communication (mode), and communicative purpose (function). It establishes the ways in which language is altered to suit different social situations.

The present research was aimed at analysing the role of register configuration, legal bilingualism, and stylistic strategies in the criminal judgements of the Pakistani Supreme Court as the means of power, legitimacy, and epistemic control. The results of a thorough examination of appellate decision-making based on a Hallidayan register framework and an institutional discourse theory have proven that the issue of judicial authority in Pakistan is not only an institutional one, but it is also created and renewed through the use of structured and repetitive stylistic and structural decisions.

The main issue discussed in the paper is finding stylistic tools in the legal practice and understanding their importance and purpose in simplifying language that is often incomprehensible in the decisions of the court. The issue of this study is that it is not clear how the language serves as a device of meaning-making and power in criminal sentences by the Supreme Court, which is difficult to understand even for ordinary readers. Although there is a considerable amount of literature regarding legal language in the Western world, there is a lack of studies covering the style part of legal communication in non-Western legal systems, namely, in the case of Pakistan.

Literature Review

Latin was the language of formal records and statutes from 1066 until English supplanted it in the Proceedings in Courts of Justice Act of 1730 (Khan & Khan, 2015). The impact of Latin is evident in various terms and expressions, including 'ad hoc', 'de facto', bona fide, inter alia, and ultra vires, which are still utilised in legal writing. The legal system and its associated language in Pakistan are legacies of the British colonial era. Legislation in parliament and its judicial application have predominantly been executed by local experts utilising English as their second language. Their endeavours persist as a continuous struggle to achieve equilibrium between the dichotomies of clarity (the avoidance of ambiguity) and accessibility (ease of understanding) for society in Pakistan while drawing upon the unfamiliar colonial foundations of the English language and the legal system they adhere to. The language used in writing legal verdicts is often debated, largely because of its style.

The legal language has been characterised as being very formal and tightly organised. It is reliant on the usage of special words and complex structures of the sentences to permit accuracy and clarity. As Tiersma (2000) emphasises, its formality, complicated sentence construction that is a frequent characteristic of legal language, and specialised lexis. They are these characteristics that are meant to minimise ambiguity and make legal documents and proceedings be read in a single manner. It is also this formality which can cause such obstacles to accessibility to the laypersons since the technicality of legal language can make it opaque to those who are not part of the profession of law (Ibid).

Bhatia (1993) remarks about the nature of legal texts, statutes and case law, which employ definite stylistic conventions to create authority and express legal norms. In analysing legal language, Bhatia notes that the language tends to use passive voice, nominalisation and long sentences to get a point across in order to stress objectivity and formality (Bhatia, 1993). This method of style assists in sustaining a tone of authority but might also serve to create the impression of legal texts being inaccessible. In the meantime, the lack of clarity and vagueness

is not necessarily accidental. Cotterill (2003) argues that legal verdicts tend to use ambiguous text language in order to have some flexibility in interpretation and application.

The correlation between the legal language and the justice is a vital field of study. Gibbons (2003) discusses the effect of the stylistic nature of legal language on the dispensation of justice. Although the purpose of the use of formal and complex language is to be precise, it may marginalise those people who are not legal experts. Such a gap may have an impact on fair access to justice, especially for persons struggling to afford an attorney or who do not know the lingo of the law (Ibid).

With digital technologies, a new set of dimensions of legal language study has been opened. Mertz (2007) explores the role of technology in the application and meaning of legal language through legal information systems and online legal databases. Technology can be used to access legal information, but it is a challenge to ensure the accuracy and readability of legal discourse that exists in digital form (Ibid). Recent works show that there is a renewed interest in incorporating stylistic analysis into empirical studies of law in order to get a better insight into the study of legal language. Sarangi and Slembrouck (2008) insist on an interdisciplinary method, which integrates linguistic analysis with legal theory in order to solve the problems of legal discourse.

'Legalese' refers to a technical vocabulary that is only employed within the legal system and is used to express the ideas, principles, and traditions about the law. It is also able to convey the legal concepts and principles using the specific language of the field as well as using specialist vocabulary (Olson, 2003). Formality and strict observance of old linguistic formations are the most common characteristics of Lexalese. Words, phrases and forms of language have the remnants of the preceding linguistic tradition (Cornu, 2007). Tiersma (2008) argues that legal languages are shaped by their speakers' location, political system, and historical background.

A significant body of research has focused on the stylistic features of legal discourse (Shafqat et al., 2022; Saleem et al., 2019; Ahmad et al., 2019; Khan & Khan, 2015; Ahmad et al., 2015), but this study set out to examine how register configuration, legal bilingualism, and stylistic strategies in Pakistani Supreme Court criminal judgements function as mechanisms of authority, legitimacy, and epistemic control.

Saleem et al. (2019) revealed that the English language is much valued in Pakistani courts because of its ability to provide certainty and facilitate petitioners in attaining the intended objective of the rule of law. As it highlights how a text is written to indicate its comprehensibility, stylistic analysis is also useful for understanding the judgements from a linguistic standpoint (Ahmad et al. 2019). Khan and Khan (2015) examined the distinctive characteristics of the style used in legal documentation. Ahmad et al. (2015) uncovered the intricate linguistic components of the 'Muslim Family Laws Ordinance 1961' using stylistic analysis. Abohadi (2019) focused on the lexico-grammatical features of legal language development. Shafqat, Memon, and Khan (2022) contributed to the understanding of the specific legal traditions in different regions. Ariani et al. (2014) remark that the main way that linguists and lawyers communicate is through forensic linguistics, in which linguists offer professional analysis of legal language in situations where the language is ambiguous or contested.

Literary and non-literary stylistics are sometimes distinguished, and this distinction typically relates to the frequently studied texts. Jeffries and McIntyre (2025) remark that "In principle, there is no restriction whatsoever on the kinds of text that may be subjected to stylistic analysis" (p. 9). Therefore, stylistics as discourse goes beyond simply characterising linguistic patterns; it explores how language is used to construct, negotiate, and convey power,

authority, and ideology. Every literary or non-literary text is viewed as a discourse with social context and communication goals. Legal discourse is a prime example of institutional language where style performs power, especially when it comes to legalese (Olson, 2003) used in court rulings. Style analysis can show how linguistic decisions, such as lexical density, modality, nominalisation, passivation, or archaic diction, construct judicial authority, enforce objectivity, and control accessibility of legal meaning by treating legal texts as discourse.

As evidenced by the growth of sub-disciplines where stylistic techniques are enhanced and made possible by theories of discourse, culture, and society, modern stylistics is positively flourishing, like “feminist stylistics, cognitive stylistics and discourse stylistics” (Simpson, 2025, p. 2). He argued that “it is fair to say that contemporary stylistics ultimately looks towards language as discourse: that is, towards a text’s status as discourse” (ibid, p. 8).

The current paper discusses the language of the law in the context of stylistics as discourse, which makes the analysis of style applicable to the sphere of institutional and professional texts. According to this approach, language is a socially and ideologically embedded practice in which the dialectic implementation of style assumes communicative and authoritative roles (Simpson, 2025; Jeffries and McIntyre, 2025). In judicial discourse stylistic analysis reveals the role of lexical density, modality, and syntactic and rhetorical means in determining the ease of access to and authoritative power of legal meaning. Legal texts, in other words, are not merely conduits of law but also institutional power and buy-in constructions of discourse. Although the past few years have seen a surge in the number of researches on legal discourse in Pakistan, there is a clear gap in literature concerning the stylistic qualities of legal texts in terms of register analysis and in terms of considering legal texts as discourse.

Research questions

1. How does register configuration (field, tenor, and mode) in Pakistani Supreme Court criminal verdicts linguistically construct judicial authority and institutional impartiality?
2. How does legal bilingualism within appellate judgements contribute to the discursive management of legitimacy in a hybrid legal system?
3. How do register and stylistic strategies function as epistemic gatekeeping in the validation of legal truth?

Methodology

The qualitative method necessitates an extensive topic analysis (Creswell, 2003). This qualitative research examines legal discourse and does not employ numerical or quantitative data. The present study approaches legal language through the framework of stylistics as discourse, which extends stylistic analysis beyond literary texts to institutional and professional domains. The study’s theoretical framework is based on the stylistic analysis of legal documents in terms of lexical features and register analysis, as proposed by Halliday (1978). Using the register notion, this study examines the stylistic elements of legal discourse in Pakistani Supreme Court rulings. This register analysis pertains to the opinion and expounds upon his examination of situational register analysis, the linguistic attributes of register analysis, functional analysis, and the analysis of conventions combining linguistic and situational characteristics (Biber & Finegan, 1994).

There are two types of data: primary and secondary. The primary data consists of first-hand information (Gay et al., 2012), and other researchers have already compiled secondary data or second-hand data or information (Galvan & Galvan, 2017). The study utilises secondary data consisting of verdicts. The text of these verdicts is obtained from the official Supreme Court archives available online. The selection is based on the availability of the texts and their relevance to the research question, using relevance

sampling (Krippendorff, 2018) related to criminal law. This study examines the language of a total of 12 purposively selected Supreme Court verdicts from 2016 to 2025. The researchers made utmost efforts to ensure the texts are complete and accurately represent the judicial language used in legal discourse.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of Verdicts (1-4)

In the verdicts reviewed, the register setup is a very formal institutional discourse with technical lexis, syntactic density and impersonal constructions. It is a branch of criminal adjudication, which encompasses evidentiary review and appellate review; the tenor of the field is asymmetrical, with the judiciary acting as epistemic ruler over litigants and witnesses; and the mode of the field is written, monologic, archival and constructed to be permanent and to have continued, doctrinal existence. The lack of personal pronouns, conversational elements, and the use of the subjective position are also constants, which indicate an impersonal institutional voice. The linguistic objectification of individual agency and foreground institutional process is linguistically repressed in such phrases as the appellant, the prosecution, and the conviction was maintained. Impersonality in institutional discourse, as Fairclough (1995) puts it, acts as a legitimisation strategy: since the reduction of overt subjectivity is involved, the discourse makes the authority appear neutral and procedural, but not personal. This stylistic detachment performs what Bhatia (2004) identifies as the conventionalised authority of the legal genre. The judgements do not merely communicate decisions; they enact the authority of the court through the very form of their linguistic organisation.

Table 1: Stylistic Features

S No	Stylistic Features	Examples/ Functions
01	Formality and Lexical Density	<p><i>“Leave to appeal was granted, inter alia, to examine the entire evidence...”</i></p> <p><i>“Condonation of delay, ocular account, impugned judgment) outweigh verbs, enhancing abstraction and formality”</i>. (Verdict 1)</p>
02	Modality, Tone and Judicial Authority	<p>Deontic modality (duty/obligation): <i>“It was the duty of the Superintendent Jail...”</i>, <i>“The technicalities should not hamper the court of justice...”</i></p> <p>Epistemic modality (degree of certainty): <i>“We are convinced to decide this appeal on merit...”</i>, <i>“It can safely be concluded...”</i> (Verdict 1)</p> <p>Assertive (deontic): <i>must, is required to prove, is settled</i> (Verdict 2)</p> <p><i>“Must,” “shall,” “are reflected,” “is guilty,” and “therefore his conviction was maintained.”</i> (Verdict 3)</p> <p>Epistemic modality: <i>“could be, may not be, must be, ought to be, shall, etc.</i></p> <p>Deontic modality: <i>“shall remain intact, must be mentioned, ought to be exercised, must be considered...”</i> (Verdict 4)</p>
03	Nominalisation	<p><i>“Conviction and sentence”, “filing appeal”, “condonation of delay”</i> (Verdict 1)</p> <p><i>“Impugned judgments, conviction, testimony, identification accuracy</i> (Verdict 2)</p>
04	Use of Legal Bilingualisms	<p><i>“Qatl-e-Amd” “Mst. (Mst. Kausar Bibi)” “Tazir”</i> (Verdict 1)</p>

05	Repetitive Parallel Structures	<i>“Husband of..., father of..., brother of...” “Firing at..., as a result..., then resorted to firing at...” (Verdict 1)</i>
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One of the most obvious things that are common in the verdicts is the use of modality. The deontic markers reflect the obligation and the necessity of the law, which makes interpretive reasoning prescriptive authority. These modal constructions are in line with high-value modality that is described by Halliday (2014) as a sign of certainty and institutional command and not tentative judgement. At the same time, judicial caution is applied through epistemic modality, especially in the management of evidence. The words, it appears, it is evident and beyond reasonable doubt, are a systematic weighing of the probability and conviction. This interdependence of epistemic and deontic modality provides the court with the chance to provide its justification as provisional and decisive. These modal options not only clarify legal argumentation, but they also stabilise interpretation linguistically. The final decisions of the judiciary are presented as the logical conclusions of the rational evaluation but not feelings. In such a manner, modality is a discursive process that converts the interpretation of law into a determination.

The process of nominalisation is omnipresent in the verdicts in question, with dynamic actions being turned into abstract ones (conviction, evaluation, testimony, determination). This grammar technique reduces the prominence of human actors within the transitivity structures and the focus of individuals on the activities of institutions in SFL (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). The text supports the perception of the results as the product of legal reason, not of judicial discretion, by erasing obtrusive agentively. Nominalisation is thus a method of depersonalisation, which is used to render law an autonomous process rather than a human process to enhance its institutional legitimacy.

The words used in this decision and the language used will be attached in table 2.

Table 2: Lexical Choices & Diction

S No	Feature	Examples
01	Elevated and Archaic Vocabulary	Use of words such as <i>“forthwith”, “inasmuch as”, “therefore”, “wherein”, “hereby”, “thereof”, etc.</i> , reflects archaism and formality. (Verdict 1) <i>“forthwith”, “impugned”</i> (Verdict 2) <i>“Stricto sensu”</i> <i>“Falsus in uno, Falsus in omnibus”</i> (Verdict 3)
02	Evaluative adjectives and collocations	<i>“Brutal and ruthless act”, “premeditated and carried out in cold blood”, “inspiring confidence”, “natural and reliable witnesses”</i> (Verdict 3)
02	Forensic and medico-legal terms	<i>“Antemortem injuries, post mortem reports, PMR (Post Mortem Report)”</i> . (Verdict 3)

The verdicts are full of specialised legal terms in their lexical field. This type of lexical preciseness grounds the judgments in the professional register of law and limits interpretive vagueness. According to Gibbons (2003), technical legal language does not only provide a clear semantic meaning but also establishes a border between professional and lay meaning. This border strengthens the authority of an institution, placing the legal meaning in a unique epistemological space.

Moreover, due to the presence of Latin maxims, the modern reasoning is put into a transhistorical context of law. It is through continuity that this traditionalism in lexis exists, and personal judgments become a continuous tradition of jurisprudence. Interdiscursivity is brought into the legal text through the incorporation of empirical citation, a reference to research in the field of psychology that is published in peer-reviewed journals. By balancing the reasoning of the judiciary with the authority of science, the court reaches further into empiricism than the doctrine of its epistemic legitimacy. Such an intertextual approach contributes to the rational nature of judicial analysis and improves the sense of objectivity of the evidence that citizens have in mind.

The syntactic features of the verdicts are outlined through the occurrence of the long-compound-complex sentences, embedded clauses and stratified subordination. This syntactic density enables one to have several evidentiary and legal considerations incorporated in the individual cohesive units. Similar to the hierarchical structure of legal reasoning, such complexity of the structure reflects itself therein. Logical connectors lead the reader to a deductive flow which promotes the transparency of the argument and consistency. Enumerative structures divide reasoning into smaller manageable units in order to increase clarity among thick legal argumentation. Although complicated syntax can make a text less legible to a layperson, this leads to precision and minimised ambiguity, which are the primary goals of court language. It is due to the systematic elaboration of argumentation that the impressions of systematic and reasonable adjudication are created.

Listing clauses and enumerative structures are signs of structured reasoning. Transitional markers and discourse markers help the reader to be led through the argumentation of the law.

Table 3: Discourse Markers & Coherence Devices

S No	Feature	Examples
01	Enumerative and Logical Connectors	<p><i>“Firstly,” “However,” “Accordingly,” “Thus,” “Even otherwise,” “In view of,” “Whereas,” “It may be noted,” “Coupled with”.</i> (Verdict 1)</p> <p>Additive: <i>furthermore, also</i></p> <p>Causal: <i>hence, therefore, in the light of</i></p> <p>Contrastive: <i>however, but</i></p> <p>Concessive: <i>although, even though</i> (Verdict 2)</p> <p><i>“Now coming to the present case,” “in addition,” “however,” and “therefore”</i></p> <p><i>“Firstly,” “Secondly,” “Lastly,”</i> (Verdict 3)</p> <p><i>“...grave and sudden provocation, or the age of the offender i.e., youthful tendencies of impulsiveness or acting under the influence...”</i></p> <p><i>“First, second, third, and listing clauses like i.e., clause a, clause b, clause c”</i></p>
02	Discourse Markers	<p><i>“At this point, So therefore, we also observed, In light of the foregoing”</i> (Verdict 3)</p> <p><i>“However, as already noted, therefore, inter alia, in this context”</i></p> <p><i>“Likewise,” “However,” “Moreover,” “Consequently,” “Therefore,”</i></p> <p><i>“In our opinion,” “As already noted...”</i> (Verdict 4)</p>

Stylistic Devices (Rhetorical and Figurative Language) employed in supreme court verdict are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Stylistic Devices (Rhetorical and Figurative Language)

S No	Features	Description
01	Parallelism	<p><i>"...day, date, time and place of occurrence, mode and manner of occurrence, kind of weapon..."</i> (Verdict 1)</p> <p><i>"Concrete, cogent, trustworthy," "not artificial, imaginary or exaggerated, Brutal and ruthless act"</i> (Verdict 3)</p> <p><i>"...mitigating factors and extenuating circumstances..."</i> (Verdict 4)</p>
02	Repetition	<p><i>Repeated references to "the appellant," "the complainant," "the deceased," etc.</i></p> <p><i>Repetition of terms like "ocular account," "circumstantial evidence," and "post-mortem," anchors key legal points.</i> (Verdict 1)</p> <p><i>"distance", "vision", and "accuracy"</i> (Verdict 2)</p> <p><i>"Facts and circumstances... facts and circumstances...", "sentence... sentence..."</i>⁴</p>
03	Anaphora	<i>"That... that... that..."</i> (Verdict 1)
04	Hyperbole	<p><i>"The appeal... is hopelessly time barred."</i> (Verdict 1)</p> <p><i>"Nothing... could be extracted... except minor discrepancies of trivial nature."</i> (Verdict 1)</p> <p><i>"Too far-fetched to be accepted by a prudent mind."</i> (Verdict 2)</p> <p><i>"They accused is the favorite child of the law,"</i> (Verdict 3)</p> <p><i>"Proved beyond any shadow of doubt"</i></p> <p><i>"...grave and serious miscarriage of justice..."</i> (Verdict 4)</p>
05	Antithesis	<p><i>"...nothing favourable to the appellant or adverse to the prosecution..."</i> (Verdict 1)</p> <p><i>"The claim of the witnesses is not only a tall claim, but also one that is too far-fetched..."</i> creates rhetorical contrast. (Verdict 2)</p> <p><i>"Not artificial, imaginary or exaggerated...not belong to a weak and vacillating mind,"</i> (Verdict 3)</p> <p><i>"A single mitigating circumstance would be sufficient to put on guard the court not to award the penalty of death."</i></p> <p><i>"The mere fact that the court... would not be a sufficient reason..."</i> (Verdict 4)</p>
06	Alliteration	<p><i>"Promptly lodged FIR for committing murder of his wife, minor daughter and brother..."</i> (Verdict 1)</p> <p><i>"Concrete, cogent, compelling."</i> (Verdict 3)</p>
07	Metaphor	<i>"Claim... accepted only with a grain of salt."</i> (Verdict 2)
08	Idiom	<i>"To sift the grain out of the chaff"</i> (Verdict 3)

Even though the discourse of the judiciary tradition is predominantly about formality, the verdict uses various rhetorical and figurative tools that can make it more convincing and formally sound. The symbolic sense of the word is applicable to represent the judgmental power of the law court and that is, the power to eliminate acceptable evidence and inadmissible testimony. Parallelism, antithesis and controlled hyperbole are not emotive appeal devices but they are cognitive reinforcement devices. Such stylistic devices arise evaluative focus and hold

together decorum. This moderation in rhetoric is consistent with persuasive rationality (Bhatia, 2004) in legal confrontation: the persuasion is not carried out by an appeal to emotions but rather by the organized thinking supported by stylistic discipline. Contrast is brought out through antithesis to the antithetical statements that are logical and enhance justice in adjudication. Alliteration is used occasionally to make the text sound more fluent and coherent, to make legal language a bit less dense. These devices help to make things clear, emphasize and have rhetorical authority, which allows the verdict to explain its argument in an impactful way, preserving the sense of judicial solemnity and dispassionate tone.

Together field specific technicality, hierarchical tenor and written institutional mode results in a performative register of legitimacy. The judgments do not just articulate judicial power, but they implement it in the use of controlled lexical decision, moderated modality, syntactic stratification, and intertextual confirmation. Discourse-analytically, language, in this case, is a tool of institutional ideology. It makes law logical, objective and epistemologically high. The stylistic and register decisions taken together make the judicial reasoning more a textual representation of the power of the state, and the credibility of the criminal justice system is supported.

Analysis of Verdicts (5-8)

These verdicts in their written form document as well as execute the functions of institutional self-identification. The cohesion is maintained with the help of conditional clauses, referential chains connecting the provisions of the constitution with the principles of the judiciary, and definite logical connectors. These machines generate argumentative transparency and support the necessity of legal inferences. The logically consistently progressive progress of thought is parallel to the chain of command that ensures that the text is not perceived as a perspective but as an ideology that has to be accepted. Any decision is also placed under the line of jurisprudential authority through intertextual allusion to past judicial precedents and laws. This interdiscursivity constitutes the institutional continuity (Fairclough, 1995): the authority is determined not only by the decision that is made at the moment but also by the relation to the precedent. Textual citation here is a legitimacy mechanism.

Register analysis indicates a standardised format of the verdicts: a discipline (criminal adjudication and evidentiary evaluation), an asymmetrical tenor (institutional power over litigants and the general population), and a written form which is supposed to be archivally permanent. Use of forensic and medico-legal words also helps in balancing judicial thought with empirical confirmation to enhance the epistemic authority of the court. Evidence is not simply narrated it is coded in a linguistic code of verification within an institution.

The tenor is the embodiment of institutional imbalance. Judicial subjectivity is repressed by third-person references, passive forms and the guarded lack of first-person pronouns. The frequent use of deontic modality puts the court in the obligation position. Judicial reasoning is not presented as an interpretive possibility but presented as a normative command. In all these judgements, modality serves as a key judicial rule. It is important to note that modality is not only grammatical, but it also structures power relations. The court has the power to impose itself without any proclamation by securing obligation into language. Syntactically, governance is attained.

Table 5: Stylistic Features (5-8)

S No	Stylistic Features	Examples
01	Modality, Tone and	“It appears that...,” “must be examined,” “is required to...” “Is required,” “shall act in aid,” “is bound to obey” (Verdict 5)

	Judicial Authority	<p><i>“Must,” “should,” “could,” “may,” “is evident,” “has sought leave,” “is necessary,” (Verdict 6)</i></p> <p>Obligation and necessity: <i>“must be done,” “shall be maintained,” “is mandatory,” “is required,” “is presumed”</i></p> <p>Possibility and caution: <i>“may be acquitted,” “should have proved,” “can be presumed,” “should be investigated” (Verdict 7)</i></p> <p><i>Learned, concurrence, reliance, adjudged, jurisprudence, proposition, inherent. can, could, may, must. “...does not arise,” “...could not be extracted,” “may be placed on...,” “must have moved.” “Ought not to prompt the court to reject evidence.” (Verdict 8)</i></p>
02	Nominalisation	<p><i>“Consideration,” “identification,” “investigation,” “examination,” (Verdict 6)</i></p>
03	Formality and Lexical Density	<p><i>concurring, plausible, admissible, reliability, consistency, acquittal, substantive, corroborated, testimony. (Verdict 8)</i></p>
04	Use of Legal Bilingualisms	<p><i>Qatl-e-Amd (murder with intent), (Verdict 8)</i></p>

Syntactic stratification of verdicts is immense whereby there is the use of compound-complex structure and embedded clauses. There are two functions of this synthetic density. Firstly, it is more specific, since it represents a method of harmonizing the detail of evidence and procedure. Secondly, it slows down interpretive development, enhancing deliberative power. Complexity in this case is strategic: this is reflective of the stratification of legal decision-making and portrays the judiciary as being able to process multidimensional information. Passive constructions are also a contribution to this architecture. The subordination of the agency of actors is imposed by the text because it predetermines action and emphasizes the continuity of procedures. What results is the verdict, in which justice is system-oriented and not individual-oriented.

Table 6: Lexical Choices & Diction

S No	Feature	Examples
01	Elevated and Archaic Vocabulary	<p><i>“Therefore,” “hereby,” “therein,” “forthwith,” “aforementioned”.</i> (Verdict 5)</p> <p><i>“Vide,” “hereby,” and “thereof,” “deposed” (Verdict 6)</i></p> <p><i>“Communi observantia non est recedendum” (Verdict 7)</i></p> <p><i>Vide, herein, thereof. (Verdict 8)</i></p>
02	Police / Forensic and Legal Terminology	<p><i>“FIR (First Information Report), autopsy report, blood-stained earth, empties, calibre, Forensic Science Laboratory, Chemical Examiner, Serologist”</i></p> <p><i>“Test identification parade, charge framing, examination on oath, statement under Section 342 Cr.P.C.” (Verdict 6)</i></p> <p><i>“FIR,” “Cr.P.C.,” “complainant,” “appellate jurisdiction,” “evidence,” “cross-examination,” “conviction,” “sentence,” “appeal.” (Verdict 7)</i></p> <p><i>Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), Cr.P.C (Code of Criminal Procedure), Sections 302(b), 382-B., Learned counsel, reliance is placed on, material aspects, basic fabric of the case, Court has held. (Verdict 8)</i></p>

Judicial sentences serve as a good example of the intertextuality of the Pakistani judicial discourse. All decisions are imbued with statutory instrumentation and precedent cases. This intertextuality creates a recursion of genres (Bhatia, 2004): personal opinions acquire the powers of a jurisprudential tradition. Using Latin maxims, the discourse is further placed in the transhistorical law tradition, which adds weight and continuity. By matching the current thinking with the current law, the court strengthens its constitutional superiority and institutional independence.

Table 7: Syntax (Sentence Structure)

S No	Feature	Examples
01	Complex, Embedded Structures	<i>"In response to the notice issued to the Additional Registrar (Judicial) of this Court, requiring an explanation..."</i> (Verdict 5)
02	Statutory references	<i>"Control of Narcotic Substances Act, 1997," "Qanun-e-Shahadat Order, 1984," "Police Rules, 1934."</i> Evidentiary terms: <i>"documentary evidence," "oral testimony," "secondary evidence," "forensic examination," "safe custody."</i> (Verdict 7)

Discourse markers and coherence devices, enumerative and logical connectors organise argumentation and legal reasoning into sequential, digestible parts. Legal discourse cohesion was achieved through anaphoric references, e.g., *"the aforementioned cases," "they said Committees"*.

Table 8: Discourse Markers and Coherence Devices

S No	Feature	Examples
01	Discourse Markers	<i>"Subsequently," "therefore," "even otherwise," "accordingly," "in support of this contention"</i> (Verdict 5) <i>"Hence," "after," "therefore," "similarly," "however," "accordingly," "in view of," "whereas," and "so"</i> (Verdict 7) <i>Hence, accordingly, even otherwise, particularly, even, therefore, thus, notably</i> (Verdict 8)
02	Enumerative and Logical Connectors	Additive connectors: <i>"and," "as well as," "besides," "further,"</i> Contrastive markers: <i>"however," "nevertheless," "although,"</i> Causal connectors: <i>"therefore," "thus,"</i> Temporal markers: <i>"after," "on the same day," "subsequent to,"</i> Enumerative markers: <i>"(a), (b), (c)," "first," "second,"</i> (Verdict 6) <i>Roman numerals and bullet points (e.g., paragraphs 5 and 8)</i> (Verdict 7) <i>"Day, date, time and place of occurrence," "ocular account and medical evidence," "contradiction or discrepancy," "quantity but quality," "minor discrepancies of trivial nature."</i> (Verdict 8)

Despite the fact that objectivity is the most important feature of judicial discourse, the use of controlled rhetorical devices (parallelism, anaphora, and antithesis) in verdicts is aimed at making the arguments more understandable. An example is the failure to prove beyond reasonable doubt and the achieved guilt speaking in advance of the logical point of acquittal and conviction. The antithetical constructions are the portrayals of the kind of evaluation

balancing which is present in criminal adjudication. Both thematic-based focus and procedural integrity are strengthened by repetition of key phrases of evidence. These rhetorical devices are of a moderate kind and hidden behind formality. The appeal is grounded in adamant logic rather than the emotional appeal, since it corresponds to the institutional requirements of being neutral.

Table 9: Stylistic Devices (Rhetorical and Figurative Language)

S No	Feature	Examples
01	Repetition	<i>“Act of 1997,” “safe custody,” “prosecution failed to prove,”</i> (Verdict 7)
02	Antithesis	<i>“The prosecution has failed to prove its case beyond reasonable doubt” vs. “the prosecution has successfully established the petitioner’s guilt.”</i> (Verdict 7) <i>“Interested witnesses should be disbelieved or disinterested witnesses be believed.”</i> (Verdict 8)
03	Anaphora	<i>“No reason and circumstance... No major contradiction or discrepancy... No prudent person...”</i> (Verdict 8)

Analysis of Verdicts (9-12)

The use of polysyllabic words, the difficult structure of the sentences, and the use of the impersonal form of the third person, as well as the absence of shortenings and colloquialisms, help to maintain the formal tone of the judgement. The unemotional wording highlights the position of the court as an institutional determiner, keeping the ruling out of personal opinion. It maintains that the constructive power and impartiality of criminal determinations made in the Pakistani Supreme Court are not merely determined by the utterance of legal findings but by the linguistic performance of an institutional power through (i) a specialised and hybrid subject that invokes both statutory English and Islamic jurisprudential vocabulary, (ii) an asymmetrical tenor, which is performed through impersonality and modal governance and (iii) a formal written mode that transforms reasoning into binding precedents. These texts put power as an institution, meaning as defined by Fairclough (1995) in the sense that they give judgment as a procedure as inevitably so, rather than as a preference.

The concentration of lexis and the specialization of these verdicts are high: the statutory terms are mixed with the Islamic jurisprudential terms such as *'Zina' and 'Taazir'*. It is not a decorative bilingualism; it is an indexing by jurisdiction. Through the integration of Islamic legal categories in the text of the verdicts in the English language, the Court linguistically carries out the hybrid legal order in Pakistan, making it an expert in both of the doctrinal domains. Field is translated into register terms by specialised vocabulary that does not only describe the case facts but also the normative parameters in which the factual conditions of the case may be legally understood (Halliday, 1978).

Notably, the introduction of Islamic lexis is not simply fulfilling the cultural specificity, but it is also a mediation value for practitioners between procedural modernity and moral-religious normativity and thereby enhances the interpretive influence of the Court among the different parties. This is consistent with Gibbons (2003) point that legal registers establish semantic boundaries that control who is allowed to interpret law without mediation; in this case, hybridity is an expansion of this boundary that establishes the legitimacy of the Court in the constitutional/statutory law and in the Islamically inflected legal categories. The outcome is a discipline that at once projects technical prowess and a socio-legal echo chamber – an exceptionally high-stakes role in adjudication involving rape/abduction reclassification as *Zina* (Verdict 11) and categories of discretionary punishment such as *Ta'azir* (Verdict 12).

Patterned in verdicts, labelling and systematic de-individualisation of tenor are patterned. Linguistic distancing forms the hierarchical relationship where the court is the predominant epistemic institution and litigants/witnesses are subjected to the status of objects of estimation. This kind of impersonality is not just a stylistic norm but an institutional means of doing impartiality.

These judgements are based on moderated epistemic modality and deontic modality, thus balancing the legal prudence and the obligation of authority. There is also power within the modality of an institutional discourse: what is allowed by law, what is mandatory, and what is not. Through this, modal patterns in Verdict 10 (conviction), (acquittal), (submission), (examination-in-chief) and Verdict 11 (shifts in charge framing and evidentiary constraints) are not only the ways of organising the reasoning but also the way of regulating the interpretive horizon that the reader possesses.

The elements of the core grammar of institutional neutrality are nominalisation and passive voice. Nominalisation universalises acts into legal entities, which allows the Court to consider the disputed events as procedural entities in a rational system (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). Passivity paralyses the agency and terminates the focus on the actors' actions and consequences – an established practice of framing decisions as systems and not by individuals (Tiersma, 2000). Such a grammar generates what could be termed 'procedural objectivity': a literary style where judgements of the law are seen as the product of legal processes as opposed to human ones.

Table 10: Stylistic Features

S No	Stylistic Features	Examples/ Functions
01	Modality, Tone and Judicial Authority	<p>“Shall apply” (expressing mandatory procedure), “Could not be imposed” (indicating impossibility), “Must not withdraw the complaint” (obligation), “May constitute conclusive proof” (possibility), “Is liable to the hadd punishment” (legal necessity). (Verdict 9) “Shall,” “must,” “has,” “have,” “is,” “was” “It is observed,” “it may be observed,” “it is difficult to accept,” “we are of the firm opinion,” “shall not meet legal and scientific requirements,” “cannot by itself form the sole basis of conviction,” “cannot be read in isolation,” “does not establish the identity,” “is not sustainable in the eyes of law.” (Verdict 10) “He was also directed to pay compensation...”, “Benefit of Section 382-B Cr.P.C. was extended...” (obligation and permission). “It is noteworthy that...”, “It is evident from the perusal...” “We have come to this irresistible conclusion...” (Verdict 11) “We are not convinced,” “possibility of...”, “may be,” “must be,” “could not be altogether ruled out” “Sentence may be reduced,” “must be accepted as a whole,” “is to be considered,” (Verdict 12)</p>
02	Use of Legal Bilingualisms	<p>Shariat, Qazf, Hadd, Li'an, Ta'zir, Imprecation, Muhsan, Zina, Hudood, Qanun-e-Shahadat, tazkiyat-al-shuhud, qazf, li'an. (Verdict 9) Zina (an Islamic legal term for unlawful sexual intercourse) (Verdict 11) Ta'azir (Verdict 12)</p>

03	Nominalisation	<i>“Conviction,” “acquittal,” “submission,” “examination-in-chief,”</i> (Verdict 10)
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The Latinisation in Verdict 12 (inter alia, *ibid.*, *de novo*, *qua*, *accepted in toto*) exerts a certain form of institutional power; the Court positions itself as part of a transnational legal tradition, indicating that it is in continuation with the world common law of legal scholarship. These terms act as abridged accuracy tools and as signs of knowledgeability to make the judgement more valid in an elite professional interpretive society (Bhatia, 2004). In this case, linguistic traditionalism is in complement to Islamic legal embedding, which results in the creation of a stratified legitimacy: the Court is at once embedded in local moral-legal categories and exposed to the global legal register.

Amici curiae (*amicus curiae*) is a Latin legal term which means: friends of the court. These Latinisms are indicative of formality and instability of tradition (Latin terms are a characteristic of classical legal texts). It is also a sign of Intertextuality. They associate national jurisprudence with international jurisprudence. In addition, Latin gives rhetorical authority and legal eminence to argument in law. It is also a classic display of the specialised language of law, which can be attributed to making it sound technical and impersonal. Juridical terms and archaism impose the project of authority and associate the style of judgement with historical legal tradition.

Table 11: Lexical Choices and Diction

S No	Feature	Examples
01	Formal, Technical, and Legal Lexis	<i>Allegation, Appellate, Jurisdiction, Cognizant, Admittedly, Consequently, Sustained, Withdrawn, Mechanism, Proceedings.</i> (Verdict 9) <i>“Petitioner,” “Respondent,” “convicted,” “sentence,” “acquitted,” “ocular testimony,” “cross-examination,” “impugned judgment,” “corroborative evidence,” “appellate jurisdiction,” “benefit of doubt,” “charge framed,” “matrimonial dispute,” “Section 302(b) PPC”</i> (Verdict 10) Substantive law terms: <i>“Convicted,” “sentenced,” “appellant,” “accused,” “petitioner,” “respondent,” “FIR,” “PPC”</i> (Pakistan Penal Code), <i>“Cr.P.C.”</i> (Criminal Procedure Code), Evidentiary terms: <i>“ocular account,” “medico-legal report,” “DNA test,” “cross-examination,” and “acquitted.”</i> (Verdict 11)
02	Elevated and Archaic Vocabulary	<i>Amicus Curiae, aforesaid,” “wherein,” “hereunder,” “therefore,” “notwithstanding”</i> (Verdict 9) <i>“Hereinafter,” “whereas,” “aforesaid,” “thereof,” “pursuance,” “vide judgment,” and “insofar.”</i> (Verdict 10) <i>“Thereof,” “hereunder,” and “perusal,” “moot point.”</i> (Verdict 11) <i>“inter alia,” “ibid,” “de novo,” “qua”</i> (Verdict 12)
03	Legal Terminology	<i>Petitioner, Respondent, Acquitted, Impugned, Jurists, Presumption of legitimacy,</i> (Verdict 9) Procedural terms: <i>FIR (First Information Report), Cr.P.C. (Criminal Procedure Code), cross-examination, acquitted, convict, sentence, trial court, appellate jurisdiction.</i> (Verdict 11)

There is frequently coordination (through the use of conjunctions such as *and*, *nor*, *but*) and subordination (through relative clauses, adverbial clauses), which enables one to intertwine

several legal facts or arguments. The ruling uses complicated prepositional statements typical of the formal English language, particularly in the legal world. The court ruling is characterized by the high frequency of using complex prepositions to create precision, formality and cohesion in the legal reasoning of the verdict. Such clauses as in accordance with, at the presence of, in the offence of, at the Police Station, with their assistance, are cohesive devices which result in coherent relations of place, manner, cause, circumstance. These constructions represent the procedural and evidential quality of legal language, in which precision in context and reference is crucial. Such prepositional structures are repeatedly used to make the text more grammatically dense and more informative and enable the presentation of a complex legal concept in a systematic way.

The text uses a variety of discourse markers to sequence information and structure argumentation.

Table 12: Discourse Markers and Coherence Devices

S No	Feature	Examples
01	Discourse Markers	<p>Additive: <i>and, also, furthermore,</i> Contrastive: <i>however, but, on the other hand,</i> Conclusive: <i>therefore, consequently, hence,</i> Exemplification: <i>namely, such as,</i> Temporal: <i>before, after, during</i> (Verdict 9) <i>“However,” “therefore,” “hence,” “consequently,” “furthermore,” “insofar as,” “upon conclusion,” “at this juncture,” “in the instant case,” “accordingly,” “on the same day,”</i> (Verdict 10) Additive: <i>“Moreover,” “It is further noteworthy”</i> (Verdict 11) Contrastive: <i>“However,” “Although,”</i> Causal/conclusive: <i>“Therefore,” “Consequently,” “In the light of above,” “Hence”</i> (Verdict 11) <i>“However,” “conversely,” “accordingly,” “thus,” “in view of,” “moreover”</i> (Verdict 12)</p>

As demonstrated in the analysis, register features are not neutral descriptions of the writing of law but governance mechanisms. The specialised hybrid field indexes the dual law basis of Pakistan; de-personalised role relations and modal authority realize tenor, textual permanence, precedency, and interpretive closure is guaranteed by mode.

Conclusion

The results indicate that the concept of legal bilingualism in Pakistan serves as a management instrument in addressing the issue of legitimacy in the hybrid legal system in the country. The Supreme Court does not only appear as a watchdog of the Constitution but also appears to be a decoder of religious legality. In this regard, legal bilingualism can be viewed as the means of enhancing institutional credibility. Being based on the constitutional and religious registers, the Court extends the symbolic scope of its discourse in a multi-layered socio-political situation. The reasoning of constitutionalism acquires the depth of doctrine, whereas the language of religion is placed in the context of the order of the procedures of modern law.

Notably, the paper demonstrates that register and stylistic features are epistemic gatekeeping mechanisms. The Court does not simply evaluate pieces of evidence but identifies the pieces of evidence that are considered legitimate in law. The technical vocabulary places emphasis on forensic and statutory evidence, whereas forensic and statutory evidence are handled with caution by the use of modality in expressing certainty and doubt when assessing

testimony. The nominalisation, passive structures redirect the focus on actors and emphasize processes and institutional logic and offer decisions as procedural, not personal.

By making these linguistic choices, the Court selects among competing versions of the truth and endorses certain versions of the truth. The knowledge of the law can be legitimate only when it is articulated into the authorized book of evidences and dogmatic consistency. Personal accounts, colloquialism, and arguments that are not included in the codified systems are mostly involved out of the epistemic space of the judgement. Through this, language acts as a controller of knowledge. It influences admissibility, constrained interpretation and stabilizes meaning within legal boundaries of law. Judicial talk is not a mere reflection of truth, but it is something that creates and authorises the truth within the institutional boundaries.

Combined, the results prove that criminal verdicts of the Pakistani Supreme Court reflect the way of how the language of law is used as a system of administration. The authority set is determined by the configuration of register, the legitimacy is reinforced by the bilingual hybridity, and the knowledge is structured and controlled with the help of the stylistic strategies. Power, objectivity, and constitutional superiority are not abstract properties existing beyond the text, but they are practiced with the help of purposeful and disciplined linguistic decisions.

This research paper enhances the knowledge of legal discourse by classifying register as a tool of institutional power as opposed to a stylistic device. It also provides an empirically based explanation of the criminal register of the Pakistani Supreme Court, conceptualises legal bilingualism as a legitimacy resource in hybrid legal regimes, and redefines judicial impartiality as a resource that is gained thru grammar and vocabulary. In the last analysis, the language of the Supreme Court does not merely communicate justice, but it also does and legitimises justice. Judicial discourse transforms interpretation into institutional truth through accuracy, structural discipline and reference to doctrine through intertextual means.

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