

“TOPICALIZATION IN URDU LANGUAGE IN PRINT MEDIA OR DIGITAL MEDIA”

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Abstract

This research delves into the phenomenon of topicalization in Urdu language discourse, particularly within the domains of print and digital media. Topicalization, a syntactic strategy involving the fronting of elements within a sentence for emphasis or focus, holds significant implications for discourse organization and information delivery. Through a meticulous analysis of a corpus comprising texts from both print and digital media sources, this study aims to unveil the prevalence, functions, and variations of topicalization in Urdu communication. Employing a blend of qualitative methodology, the research investigates how journalists strategically utilize topicalization to construct narratives, convey emphasis, and engage audiences. By scrutinizing linguistic features and discourse patterns, insights emerge regarding the types of elements commonly topicalized, the contexts in which this phenomenon occurs, and its impact on discourse coherence and reader comprehension. Moreover, the study explores potential disparities in the dynamics of topicalization between traditional print media and the dynamic landscape of digital media platforms, considering the influence of social media, online news outlets, and multimedia content. By elucidating these dynamics, this research not only enriches our understanding of Urdu language structure and communication strategies but also offers valuable insights into the evolving nature of language use in contemporary media environments. The findings contribute to a deeper appreciation of the intricate interplay between language structure, communication strategies, and media platforms in the context of Urdu language usage, providing essential knowledge for linguists, media professionals, and anyone interested in the nuanced complexities of language in the digital age.

Introduction

Language, as a tool for communication, constantly adapts and evolves to meet the demands of its users and the contexts in which it is employed. Within the realm of Urdu language discourse, a phenomenon known as topicalization plays a pivotal role in shaping narratives, emphasizing key points, and engaging audiences. This introduction sets the stage for an in-depth exploration of topicalization in Urdu language discourse, with a particular focus on its manifestations within print and digital media.

Topicalization, defined as the syntactic strategy involving the fronting of elements within a sentence for emphasis or focus, serves as a fundamental aspect of Urdu language structure. It is a linguistic tool that enables speakers and writers to highlight specific information, convey nuances of meaning, and structure discourse effectively. In the context of Urdu communication, which boasts a rich literary tradition and a diverse range of media platforms, topicalization emerges as a crucial mechanism for orchestrating narratives and delivering information in a compelling manner.

The significance of topicalization in Urdu language discourse lies in its profound implications for discourse organization and information delivery. By strategically fronting elements within sentences, writers and speakers can draw attention to key concepts, foreground important

details, and guide the reader or listener through the flow of information. Through a meticulous analysis of a corpus comprising texts from both print and digital media sources, this research endeavors to unveil the prevalence, functions, and variations of topicalization in Urdu communication.

This study employs a blend of qualitative methodology to investigate how journalists strategically utilize topicalization to construct narratives, convey emphasis, and engage audiences in the Urdu media landscape. By scrutinizing linguistic features and discourse patterns, insights emerge regarding the types of elements commonly topicalized, the contexts in which this phenomenon occurs, and its impact on discourse coherence and reader comprehension.

Moreover, this research delves into potential disparities in the dynamics of topicalization between traditional print media and the dynamic landscape of digital media platforms. In an era characterized by the proliferation of social media, online news outlets, and multimedia content, the ways in which Urdu language discourse is crafted and consumed have undergone significant transformations. By exploring the influence of these digital platforms on the utilization of topicalization, this study seeks to shed light on the evolving nature of language use in contemporary media environments.

By elucidating these dynamics, this research not only enriches our understanding of Urdu language structure and communication strategies but also offers valuable insights into the evolving nature of language use in contemporary media environments. The findings contribute to a deeper appreciation of the intricate interplay between language structure, communication strategies, and media platforms in the context of Urdu language usage, providing essential knowledge for linguists, media professionals, and anyone interested in the nuanced complexities of language in the digital age. Through this exploration, we embark on a journey to unravel the intricacies of topicalization in Urdu language discourse, illuminating its role as a dynamic and indispensable tool for communication in the modern world.

Research Questions

- What are the prevalent functions and variations of topicalization in Urdu language discourse across print and digital media sources?
- How do journalists strategically employ topicalization to construct narratives, convey emphasis, and engage audiences within the Urdu media landscape?

Research Objectives

- To unveil the prevalence, functions, and variations of topicalization in Urdu communication within the domains of print and digital media.
- To understand how journalists strategically utilize topicalization to construct narratives, convey emphasis, and engage audiences in the Urdu media landscape.

Literature review

- Journalists have increasingly utilized digital media alongside traditional platforms for news dissemination, prompting significant changes in news production practices. This shift has intensified due to the rapid growth of digital technologies, causing traditional media to undergo substantial transformations in response to fragmented audiences and revenue sources. Journalistic practices in both print and digital media have been influenced by time constraints and evolving news cycles, necessitating a higher output in an environment of immediacy. The impact of these transformations on journalistic roles and norms, and how journalists adapt to changing audience demands across different media platforms, is a topic of ongoing theoretical debate. While previous studies have examined differences in journalistic values and practices across media

types, less attention has been given to how these differences affect journalistic role performance. The study inquires to address the gap by investigating whether significant differences exist in the performance of professional roles in print and online news, and if so, whether these differences are primarily influenced by the media platform or other organizational and story-level variables, such as audience orientation and thematic beat. Through a comparative analysis, this study seeks to determine the extent to which the affordances of specific media platforms contribute to understanding journalistic role performance in the context of convergence and technological development. (Claudia Mellado, 2018)

- Since the mid-1980s, researchers have been intrigued by the innovation and evolution of computer-mediated communication (CMC) language itself. Initially, studies often adopted a scattered approach, examining data from various sources, particularly focusing on single modes such as email or Internet Relay Chat (IRC). These early endeavors constituted the 'first wave' of CMC linguistics scholarship, primarily concerned with understanding the impact of digital technologies on language. A significant methodological challenge faced by researchers has been determining what to compare interactive written discourse with. While some suggested non-digital vernacular writing as a benchmark, others favored large corpora of written or spoken language. However, the predominant approach has been to juxtapose features of spoken and written language based on situational and linguistic parameters, idealizing typical aspects of both. The key dimensions of innovation in digital written language encompass orality, compensation, and economy, observed across various languages and countries. These themes include elements like conceptual orality, compensatory devices such as emoticons, and linguistic economy strategies. Additionally, researchers have noted discourse strategies for new CMC modes and genres, addressing changes in salutation conventions, textual cohesion, and means of resolving misunderstandings. More recent studies challenge popular perceptions by revealing lower frequencies of typical 'netspeak' features, highlighting the continuity between digital writing and earlier forms of vernacular writing. (Androutsopoulos, n.d.)

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative methodology to investigate topicalization in Urdu language discourse within the realms of print and digital media. A corpus comprising texts from both traditional print media and digital sources will be meticulously analyzed to unveil the prevalence, functions, and variations of topicalization in Urdu communication. Through a blend of qualitative analysis techniques, including scrutinizing linguistic features and discourse patterns, this study aims to understand how journalists strategically utilize topicalization to construct narratives, convey emphasis, and engage audiences in the Urdu media landscape. Additionally, the research explores potential disparities in the dynamics of topicalization between traditional print media and digital media platforms, considering the influence of social media, online news outlets, and multimedia content. By elucidating these dynamics, this research enriches understanding of Urdu language structure, communication strategies, and the evolving nature of language use in contemporary media environments. The findings contribute essential knowledge for linguists, media professionals, and individuals interested in comprehending the nuances of language in the digital age, providing insights into the intricate interplay between language, communication strategies, and media platforms in Urdu language usage.

Discussion & Findings

The exploration of topicalization in Urdu language discourse unveils a rich landscape of linguistic strategies employed across print and digital media platforms. As this study delves into the prevalence, functions, and variations of topicalization, it becomes evident that Urdu communication, deeply rooted in a diverse literary tradition, intricately employs this syntactic strategy to shape narratives and engage audiences. Through a meticulous analysis of a corpus spanning both traditional print media and the dynamic realm of digital platforms, the research highlights the strategic utilization of topicalization by journalists to convey emphasis and construct coherent narratives. Moreover, the investigation into potential disparities between traditional print media and digital platforms sheds light on the evolving nature of language use in contemporary media environments. This discussion sets the stage for a detailed analysis of linguistic features and discourse patterns, providing essential insights into the intricate interplay between language structure, communication strategies, and media platforms within Urdu language discourse.



Figure 1

The usage of Topicalization can be seen in figure 1, an older newspaper of Jang. The political tenure where the doom hit upon with Fatima Jinnah's death is evidently expressed on the Front Page of the paper. With a major headline of her burial to the minor details of timings of funeral in a rather smaller scale, everything has been mentioned on the front page. However, topicalization can be evidently seen in the right middle part of the paper with the maximum font size so that attention of the readers can be grabbed. The name of the political person is brought to the case of Fronting in the same headline that states

محترمہ فاطمہ جناح کو آج مزار قائد کے احاطہ میں سپرد خاک کیا جائے گا

For sure this was the biggest political loss and the grief is expressed in every corner of the paper. Looking at the very first line of the paper, right next to the logo of the paper, it is being written that,

"محترمہ فاطمہ جناح کی وفات سے ملت پاکستان عظیم منارہ نُور سے محروم ہو گئی"
Again, the words "وفات" is brought to the front of the sentence as it was the topic for that specific day.



Figure 2

In figure 2 of the newspaper the headline states: "سیاسی ٹیمپریچر بڑھنے لگا"

The writer has utilized a rather indirect and metaphorical way of describing the topic for the day. The word "سیاسی" is brought to the front so that the overall gist of the related news can be grasped. The context is explained by the use of the phrase "ٹیمپریچر بڑھنے لگا" which shows that there is heat in the ongoing political events of the country. Using such techniques, for sure increases the curiosity of the readers and that makes them read more.

Moreover, the larger fonts catch the attention affectively. The minor but related details are given below the headline in rather a smaller font. The reason of course being that readers have already developed the interest to read through the headline and moving towards they are going to read in smaller fonts too.



Figure 3

The register figure 3 is digital news headlines. The limited space and the limited time for the news bulletin that is channelled, is an overall challenge for making headlines that are not only catchy but also shorter. So that, within a limited time scale every news can be broadcasted successfully.

This news headline has the topicalization for the political person Maryam Nawaz.

The news headline states:

"مریم نواز کی اے آر وائی نیوز کو ایک بار پھر دھمکی"

The name of the related politician is brought to the front for the ultimate depth effect. The phrase "ایک بار پھر" clearly conveys the news that the action has been done multiple times. Due to the shorter space and time limitation, ultimate details are not mentioned. However, certain words are being highlighted with red color so that viewers can be attentive of the news that is being delivered.



Figure 4

This specific news headline states that: "عوام 8 فروری کو ن لیگی سیاست دہن کر دے گی"

The word "عوام" clearly demonstrates the target audience of the statement. The date that is mentioned gives the hint about the overall context of Elections 2024. Both of these things are brought to the front intentionally to highlight the importance of the nation for elections.

The phrase "ن لیگی سیاست" is written in the middle that connects it to the overall message of the speaker. The ultimate action is explained in the last "دفن کر دے گی".

The news headline is displayed right in the middle of the screen with maximum font size that again generates the depth effect for the viewers.



Figure 5

In this "Ummat" newspaper, headline states "حماس نے اسرائیل کو دن میں تارے دیکھا دیے".

This headline is about the on-going war between Israel and Palestine. The event took place on October 7, 2023 where Hamas (Palestinians freedom fighters) attacked Israel.

In it "دن میں تارے دیکھا دیے" is used by the journalist/writer to hype up the situation. He uses proverbial phrase to catch readers attention. It further explains that this time it is Hamas who are more dominant.

The word "حماس" and "اسرائیل" are brought to front to show that this event took place between these two countries. Larger font is used for headline and minor details are given above and below the headline.

To grab readers' attention, an Islamic touch is also given to the headline where writer mentions Al-Aqsa operation. These are the techniques used by journalists to explain the context as Al-Aqsa is situated in Palestine so the readers who are unfamiliar with Hamas (Freedom fighters) can easily match it with Palestine as opposed ones are Israeli forces. Mentioning death tolls and destruction they caused is highlighting an intense-condition going on between both countries.



Figure 6

In figure 6 the headline, “باغی کی ایک اور بغاوت” this term is used as a side headline to refer to a candidate “Javed Hashimi”. It highlights the event which took place among two political parties where one of the members of PMLN joins PTI.

It states, “عمران نے نواز شریف سے ہاشمی جیت لیا”, the usage of جیت لیا shows a competition of two parties where one is declared as winner if only a specific candidate withdraws from one political party to join other. Writers use such phrases to intensify the situation as this isn't about two parties but two different mindsets of people.

In headline, fronting of one-party leader “Imran Khan” shows that he is the one who is leading and dominating opposition party.

Below mentioned lines are the statements given by the candidate whom joined other party. One line statement shows how his narratives changed and his selection of words is quite decent and satisfactory. Bold headline, draws readers attention towards it whereas, side headline is bit controversial as declaring member as traitor or rebellious one can hurt public sentiment.

The above analysis of the selected data consists of different news headlines of print and digital media from different newspapers such as Jang, Ummat, dunya , Ary and much more. The main purpose of this study was to highlight the importance of topicalization in the media source as it can be used for different purposes. Our native language, Urdu serves as prominent language to curl the ideas and words in an exquisite manner. Being traditionally and culturally associated with this language, the usage and moulding of words to manipulate and circularise public thoughts is a highlighted technique adopted by journalists. Journalists by constructing words and sentences tends to construct public narratives. A technique of topicalization, helps them to put emphasis on important subjects and font-bold also stresses over the words. What role digital plays is that, in today's world the broadcasting details are the ones one which we rely, it's an accessible source for us, so all narratives they feed us leaves an impact on us or in other terms influence or controls us.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research on topicalization in Urdu language discourse across print and digital media platforms reveals the intricate relationship between language structure, communication strategies, and media platforms. Through meticulous textual analysis, the study uncovers the prevalence, functions, and variations of topicalization, showcasing its importance in shaping narratives and captivating audiences. The deliberate use of topicalization by journalists to emphasize points and create coherent stories is crucial in both traditional print media and the dynamic digital landscape. Examining disparities between these platforms highlights the evolving nature of language in today's media landscape, heavily influenced by social media, online news outlets, and multimedia content. This research emphasizes the significance of understanding language use in media discourse, offering valuable insights for linguists, media professionals, and those interested in navigating language complexities in the digital era. Ultimately, it enhances our comprehension of Urdu language structure and communication techniques, emphasizing the indispensable role of topicalization in effective communication today.

Bibliography

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