

THEMATIC STRUCTURE IN PAKISTANI NEWSPAPER HEADLINES: AN SFL ANALYSIS OF US–IRAN 2026 CONFLICT NEWS IN DAWN AND THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE**Mah Noor**

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Abstract

The present study examines the use of thematic structures in the US–Iran conflict headlines published between March and May 2026 in Dawn and The Express Tribune newspapers, using the framework of Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly Textual Meta-function. The study is based on the identification of the Themes used in the selected headlines, comparing the thematic patterns followed by the two newspapers and finally analyzing how these patterns help to present the visions of the ideologies involved in conflict reporting. A qualitative design was used in the research for analysis. The data consisted of 100 headlines (50 from Dawn and 50 from The Express Tribune), collected from published reports between March and May 2026. The results indicated that both newspapers used mostly unmarked topical Themes, emphasizing political figures like Iran, Trump, the United States, and Pakistan. The main way Dawn depicted the conflict was in terms of diplomacy and mediation, along with humanitarian issues, and it utilized more contextualized headline structures. On the other hand, The Express Tribune emphasized the military escalation and the dramatic sides of the conflict by using simple and action-based constructions. Thematic organization is found to be a textual mechanism and an ideological strategy that directs the interpretation of international conflict discourse by readers.

Keywords: SFL, theme–rheme, newspaper headlines, textual metafunction, US–Iran conflict

1. Introduction**1.1 Background of the Study**

Language is an essential part of the building of the media discourse, as in the reporting of political conflicts and international events. Newspapers are not just the record of facts, but they can help to create the meaning that readers might get from events because of linguistic and ideological decisions made in their construction. In the field of news production, the role of the headline is especially important as it is the first point of contact with an event and is crucial for shaping readers' understanding of the news text. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) state that language is a social semiotic system, where the organization of the text helps to create meaning. In SFL, the idea of thematic structure is used for explaining how information is organized in a clause, in terms of Theme and Rheme. The Theme is the first part of the message, the Rheme is the part that follows the Theme and develops it or expands the information that is introduced in the Theme. Thematic selections can highlight specific subjects of the story, events in the story, or perspectives within the story, and can thus direct readers to interpretations of the story. Thematic structure analysis is an important field in media discourse analysis because it provides insights into how news organizations shape reality and ideology through their language. Contrary to the random selection of themes, scholars such as Eggins (2004) and Bloor (2013) argue that the selection of themes is determined by the communicative task of the text producer and their ideology. Thematic organization is even more important in newspaper headlines, as these are more compressed linguistic units, where each lexical and grammatical

choice has a meaning. The order of the presentation of Themes in headlines can be used to highlight political players, to stress actions, or to undermine agency, and thus shape the public perception of events.

The international media gave the US–Iran conflict a lot of attention in the time frame covered in this study. In the present work, the linguistic representation of this coverage in the headlines of the Pakistani English newspapers is investigated because of its geopolitical, economic and diplomatic significance. These tensions between both countries did not impact only the Middle East, but also on political stability, energy markets, and international alliances. The war was widely reported in the Pakistani media, as Pakistan has diplomatic and strategic ties with both countries. This led to the prominence of Pakistani newspapers as a place of representation and interpretation of the conflict. The linguistic analysis of headlines is significant here as it is likely to influence readers' perceptions prior to reading a whole news article.

Dawn and The Express Tribune are two influential English newspapers in English in Pakistan that cover political and international news. Both newspapers report the same events, yet they have different styles of editing, priorities of their institutions and discourse practices. Dawn is usually more formal and analytical, while The Express Tribune is more compact and business-like. Such differences can affect the way international conflicts are reported in the newspapers, the way they are organized and the way they are reported in the headlines. Hence, a comparison of the thematic structure of these newspapers can be helpful to understand the US–Iran conflict in Pakistani media linguistically.

1.2 Research Gap

There are several scholars who have used SFL as it relates to the study of media discourse for the investigation of ideologies and text organization. Some researchers have used SFL as a tool to study media discourse in investigating ideologies and text organization. Fries (1995) pointed out that thematic patterns play a role in the overall coherence and communication of the text. Likewise, Wang (2010) showed that the thematic selection in news discourse allows for the identification of the ideological positioning and affects readers' interpretation of political events. In the Pakistani context, the representation of political actors and critical discourse analysis has been the main focus of research on newspaper discourse, and there have been relatively few studies on thematic structure in newspaper headlines. Furthermore, research on Pakistani newspapers in English has also not examined them using Halliday's metafunction of the text in its previous studies. This suggests that there is a great gap in the present literature.

Another major shortcoming relates to the context of the US–Iran conflict reported between March and May 2026. The conflict is recent and politically sensitive; hence, relatively little scholarly work has been done to explore the linguistic representation of the conflict in Pakistani newspapers. The majority of the studies available on the subject are concerned with the political speeches, editorials, or news reports in general, rather than headlines concerning international conflicts. Moreover, there is a lack of studies that have focused on the topical, interpersonal and textual Themes in Pakistani media discourse. These thematic categories play different roles in structuring and making sense of information in a text, as Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) state. When looking at newspaper headlines, therefore, one can gain insights into the processes of ideologically framing and meaning-making in the reporting of conflict.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

A problem that arises in this study is the apparent objectivity and neutrality of the newspaper headlines, which can actually be ideologically oriented and institutional perspectives are found in the theme of the newspaper. Readers often skim headlines for information and thematic groupings of headlines can shape the interpretation of the article before it is read in full. These hidden strategies in texts can go undetected if there is no linguistic analysis. Hence, this study aims to analyze the extent to which the thematic structure is used in the headlines of Dawn and

The Express Tribune for the representation of the US–Iran conflict between March and May 2026

1.4 Research Objectives

- i. To find out which type of thematic structure is used in headlines reporting the US–Iran conflict in newspapers Dawn and The Express Tribune between March and May 2026
- ii. To examine the use of themes in the selected headlines in the three media discussed: topical, interpersonal and textual.
- iii. To make a comparative analysis of the thematic patterns used in coverage of the conflict by Dawn and The Express Tribune.
- iv. To analyze the contribution of thematic options to the ideological representation in newspapers headlines.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. Which kinds of thematic structures are employed in the headlines of Dawn and The Express Tribune reporting the US–Iran conflict between March and May 2026?
- ii. How are topical, interpersonal and textual Themes achieved in the selected newspaper headlines?
- iii. How do Dawn and The Express Tribune differ in their thematic organization of headlines?
- iv. What role do the themes of the choices play in the representation of the ideological relations between Pakistani newspaper coverage of the US–Iran conflict?

1.6 Significance of Study

The importance of this study lies in the fact that it adds to the body of literature in the field of media discourse analysis that uses Halliday's SFL approach in analyzing the headlines of Pakistani newspapers. It also offers a comparative analysis of the way two key English newspapers structure information, and builds ideological meanings in conflict reporting. Furthermore, the study reveals the importance of the use of thematic analysis in understanding the relation of language, media and ideology.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory, suggested by Halliday. SFL sees language as a social and functional phenomenon where language choices are influenced by context, purpose and ideology (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). While formal linguistic theories tend to concentrate on the grammatical structure of language, SFL emphasizes language in action in social interaction, rather than its structure. Halliday's explanation of language's three metafunctions is as follows: Ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational metafunction refers to experiences and events, the interpersonal metafunction refers to the relationship between the speaker and listener, and the textual metafunction refers to the organization of discourse into meaningful and coherent messages (Eggins, 2004).

This study, in particular, concentrates on the textual metafunction, analyzed by way of thematic structure. Based on the work of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), Theme is the element that is in the first position of the clause, which is the starting point of the message, and the Rheme is the rest of the information that will develop Theme. Thematic structure is important as it demonstrates the way the information in the text is organized, as well as how the reader should interpret it. Choices made in the media can highlight some aspects of the theme, marginalize agency, or reinforce specific events, all of which are part of the ideological meaning.

Halliday also distinguishes between topical and interpersonal Theme and textual Theme. Topical Theme expresses the experiential content of the clause, and is required, while Interpersonal Theme expresses attitudes, modality, or interactional meaning. Textual Themes are used to link clauses and provide cohesion in discourse (Bloor & Bloor, 2013). Thematic

choices are even more relevant in newspaper headlines, where language is very condensed and thus the even smallest decision in the use of grammar can have an impact on the reader's interpretation of the political situation and social actors.

The difference between marked and unmarked Themes is also applicable to this research. Unmarked Themes are themes that have the typical structure of a clause, while marked Themes are when another constituent is focused on for emphasis (Eggins, 2004). In the world of journalism, marked Themes can also be used to suggest urgency, conflict, or political figures. Thus, thematic analysis offers a useful approach to analyzing the news headlines, as it enables an understanding of how news headlines structure information and represent ideologies.

In recent linguistic studies, SFL has been recognized for its use in the discourse of the media. SFL has been applied to the discourse of the media in many linguistic studies. In the eyes of scholars, the media texts are never completely neutral, as the meaning of language is always linked to the institutional and ideological positions (Fairclough, 1995). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is concerned with ideology and power structures within discourse, while SFL provides researchers with more detailed grammatical tools to determine the construction of meaning at the clause level. For this study, Halliday's thematic framework is used as it is a systematic approach to analyzing the linguistic representation of the US–Iran conflict in Pakistani newspapers through the headlines.

2.2 Survey of Literature

Thematic structure has attracted much research interest in various types of discourse, such as academic discourse, political discourse, news discourse, or discourse in news headlines. Initial research focused on Theme and its function in shaping and supporting the coherence and interpretation of text. Thematic progression has been suggested by Fries (1995) to play a crucial role in the reader's processing and understanding of information in a text. His work laid the groundwork for subsequent research focused on thematic organization in media discourse and ideological representation.

Thematic analysis has been a popular method of analysis in political discourse studies to explore the process through which leaders develop authority-building and national identity-building strategies. Wang (2010) investigated Obama's speeches and identified multiple themes that were prominent, used with a purpose to emphasize unity, nationalism, and political legitimacy. Likewise, Rashidi and Souzandehfar (2010) have studied newspaper editorials and shown that thematic structures can frequently provide evidence of concealment of ideology in seemingly objective texts. The present findings indicate that Theme selection is not just a grammatical phenomenon, but also a discursive strategy that is related to power and representation.

More recently, thematic analysis has been applied to media communication. For instance, Nur and Hadi (2020) studied the thematic structure of online news headlines and identified that topical Themes were mainly employed to highlight political actors and events related to conflict. Similarly, Alhumsi and Alghazo (2021) analyzed the thematic patterns of Arabic and English news headlines and found that media outlets use themes in a strategic manner to create a framing for ideas. The studies show that thematic organization still plays a crucial role in today's news discourse.

Compressed textual structures have been emphasized in the analysis of newspaper headlines. Dor (2003) suggested that headlines act as "relevance optimizers" and lead readers to the interpretation of the news they prefer. In news coverage of conflict, the state actor, military operations, or political impact is often the main focus of the news, with little consideration given to other voices. At the same time, Taiwo (2007) noted that the ideology may also be manifested in the choice of words in the headlines, as well as in the information structure. These sorts of results suggest that headlines are not only descriptive of news events; they are also discursive instruments that are influential in defining a public understanding of news.

In Asia, a number of studies have examined the structure of themes and framing of political issues in the media. According to Chen (2018), the political alignment and institutional perspective were achieved by the use of textual and topical Themes in Chinese newspaper headlines. In another research, Putri et al. (2022) found that thematic selection affects the coherence of the text and the interpretation made by readers in online political news. The studies confirm that the nature of a thematic structure is related to the ideological representation of a journalistic discourse.

In the Pakistani context, the main areas of discourse studies have been media framing, political representation and Critical Discourse Analysis. Issues such as representation of foreign policy, polarization of opinion and terrorism have been explored in Pakistani newspapers. Most of these studies, however, stress lexical selection, transitivity, or rhetorical strategies in thematic organization. Research applying Halliday's textual metafunction specifically to the newspaper headlines of Pakistan is still underdeveloped. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) provides a robust framework for investigating how interpersonal meanings are negotiated to establish authority and influence in digital domains. Within the realm of political discourse, Muneeb et al. (2025) utilized Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework to demonstrate how Pakistani politicians strategically employ evaluative language—specifically resources of attitude, engagement, and graduation—to construct their identities, discredit opponents, and sway public opinion. Similarly, in the context of digital healthcare, Javed et al. (2025) applied Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) model of mood and modality to reveal that online medical consultations are far from egalitarian. Their findings indicate that doctors leverage imperatives and high-modality expressions to assert dominance and control the communicative trajectory, whereas patients' reliance on interrogatives and low-modality forms reflects institutional deference. Together, these studies illustrate that digital platforms do not merely facilitate information exchange; rather, they serve as potent sites where linguistic choices are weaponized to reinforce hierarchical structures, whether in governance or medicine.

Further, comparative studies of the major Pakistani English newspapers, like Dawn and The Express Tribune, have not been conducted in the existing literature. While the two newspapers are influential in shaping public opinion, there have been very few studies to compare the linguistic strategies systematically in international conflicts reporting. Previous work tends to be concerned with national political issues or the general ideological context rather than the organization of informational content in thematic structures.

Another concern relates to the lack of recent geopolitical conflicts. The US–Iran conflict reported between March and May 2026 is a current international dispute which has caught the radar of the media, but little academic study has been conducted on the linguistic representation of this conflict in Pakistani newspapers. The majority of the studies on conflict discourse are from the perspective of Western media or for the earlier international conflicts. The study of the topical, interpersonal, textual, marked, and unmarked Themes in Pakistani conflict reporting is thus under-explored.

Furthermore, recent studies reveal a growing interest in the application of SFL and media discourse analysis. For instance, Ahmed and Mahmood (2023) studied South Asian political news and suggested that thematic organization can directly impact the ideological framing and positioning of the audience. Likewise, Rahman and Ali (2024) examined thematic progression in online Pakistani news, and their results indicated that the textual Themes have a significant contribution in providing coherence and highlighting institutional perspectives for readers. The following contemporary research shows that thematic analysis remains applicable for the analysis of contemporary media discourses.

The present study has several important contributions to make to the literature. First, it is designed around Halliday's SFL model, which is used specifically in newspaper headlines, an area that has not yet been studied in Pakistan's media discourse field. This study is based

directly on the thematic structure in the role of a linguistic mechanism in the process of meaning making, as opposed to the previous studies that have used Critical Discourse Analysis or framing theory.

Secondly, it has made a comparative analysis of two influential Pakistani English newspapers, Dawn and The Express Tribune. The study emphasizes differences in thematic presentation, textual organization, and ideological representation by comparing their thematic patterns. This comparative dimension adds to the comprehension of the distinct ways the Pakistani newspapers shape international political discourse.

Third, the study takes up a fresh issue in the geopolitics realm, which is the US–Iran conflict between March and May 2026. This conflict has received little scholarly attention, so the study brings new empirical insights into the South Asian media's representation of international conflict in South Asian journalism.

Lastly, the study illustrates the ability of thematic analysis in identifying subtle ideological meanings within the newspaper headlines. The research explores how information structure influences readers' interpretation of political events by examining the topical, interpersonal, text and marked/unmarked Themes. The study makes a contribution to the discourses of SFL-based discourse analysis as well as to the larger discourses on media ideology, journalism and political discourse.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study is classified as qualitative research used in the framework of Systemic functional linguistics (SFL). The study uses textual analysis to explore the thematic structure of newspaper headlines on the US–Iran conflict reported between March and May 2026 in two major English newspapers in Pakistan: Dawn and The Express Tribune. A qualitative approach is used because the study is an exploratory study of how the language choices in media texts create meaning, organize information and indicate ideology. Qualitative discourse analysis is the most appropriate methodological approach because it offers a means of analysis that is not limited to numerical measurement but involves interpretation and contextual understanding.

This study is descriptive and comparative. Descriptive as it describes and explains the categories of Themes in newspaper headlines: topical, interpersonal, and textual. Comparative is because it highlights similarities and differences between Dawn and The Express Tribune in their thematic organization and presentation of the US–Iran conflict.

The research is based on Halliday's model of SFL; in this case, the framework for the textual metafunction and the thematic structure of the text proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). This framework allows the researcher to examine the location of Themes in headlines and the ideological effect of their use and how they help to form the coherence of a text.

3.2 Data Collection

The data for this study consist of newspaper headlines related to the US–Iran conflict reported between March and May 2026, collected from the online editions of Dawn and The Express Tribune. Selection of these newspapers has been made based on their importance in shaping public opinion about the international political events in Pakistan, and being the most influential English-language newspapers in Pakistan.

The purposive sampling method was used to collect the data. Purposive sampling was used because the study is specifically targeting headlines related to the US–Iran conflict and the texts should be directly related to the study's objectives. Only headlines that explicitly refer to military energy, diplomatic relations, ceasefire negotiations, political reactions, sanctions, and regional implications of the conflict were chosen.

Timeframe for data collection includes the primary reporting period for the US–Iran conflict from March -2026 to May 2026. Headlines for this period were scribbled from the official websites of both newspapers. Consistent with the fact that all headlines, irrelevant reports,

opinion titles and advertisements were omitted, as were all news items that were not related to the conflict.

For analysis, 100 headlines were selected: 50 headlines from Dawn and 50 from The Express Tribune. In this analysis, all the headlines were taken from published editions of Dawn and The Express Tribune from the period of the study. The headlines are reproduced as they appeared in the newspapers and are only included for linguistic analysis. The fact that they are included does not mean that the factual claims in the headlines are endorsed. This was supposed to be a manageable sample size and suitable for detailed qualitative thematic analysis. The news headlines were stored in a structured form to enable systematic analysis and comparison: publication date, newspaper source, and news headline text.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

The main data of analysis for this study is the newspaper headlines. The headlines are analyzed as independent text units for theme analysis. Typically, headlines are elliptical and summary, so the analysis will concentrate on the first element as Theme and the rest as Rheme.

The study also focuses on the following themes: Topical Themes, Interpersonal Themes, Textual Themes, Marked Themes, and Unmarked Themes. The categories are analyzed within the framework of Halliday's SFL. The data were analyzed based on Halliday's model of thematic structure in SFL. The analysis was carried out in several steps to make sure that the chosen headlines were interpreted systematically.

Step 1: Collection and Organization of Headlines

Initially, the selected headlines were gathered and then sorted into different categories based on the nature of the newspaper source (Dawn, The Express Tribune). The Theme and the Rheme are identified.

Step 2: Identification of Theme and Rheme

In the second stage, each headline was divided into Theme and Rheme. The Theme was defined as the element in the first position of the clause, as the starting point of the message. The rest of the clause was determined to be the Rheme.

Step 3: Classification of Themes

Themes were then categorized following Halliday's framework into the following categories: The experiential element of the clause is called Topical Theme, Interpersonal Theme elements that convey attitude, modality, or interaction, and Textual Theme conjunctions/Linking elements creating cohesion.

The researcher also considered the marked/unmarked status of Themes. When the Theme was grammatically the same as the grammatical structure of the clause, it was classified as unmarked. Other constituents (adverbial phrases, circumstances, etc.) that were put in the initial position for emphasis were marked.

Step 4: Comparative Analysis

The researcher thematically classified the headlines of Dawn and The Express Tribune and analyzed them for similarities and differences in the thematic patterns. The comparison was made on the following aspects: Theme types, the politicization of actors in the foreground. Create and use marked and unmarked Themes. Themes and sub-themes are ideological implications of theme selections. This step was useful in uncovering the linguistic coverage of the US–Iran conflict in these newspapers.

Step 5: Interpretation of Findings

The thematic patterns were then interpreted in relation to media discourse, ideology and representation of conflict in the final step. The researcher analyzed the role thematic organization played in structuring the political actors and narratives of conflict and directing the reader's comprehension of events.

The results were interpreted in relation to the results of previous studies on SFL and media discourse, in an attempt to make a link between the linguistic structure and the ideological meaning.

3.4 Data Presentation

The data analyzed are presented descriptively and tabularly for clarity and systematic interpretation. This presentation of the findings contains:

1. Thematic Classification

Thematic classification is found in tables. Tables are used to show: Selected headlines, Recognized themes and rhemes, Types of Themes, and Newspaper sources. These tables are useful in arranging data in a systematic manner and provide ease in comparison between newspapers.

2. Descriptive Explanation

Detailed descriptive explanations are included after each table to interpret the themes found in the headlines. The explanations explain how certain thematic decisions emphasize certain actors, events, or ideologies.

3. Comparative Discussion

There is a comparative discussion section that draws attention to similarities and differences between Dawn and The Express Tribune. This section describes the different ways in which each newspaper formats headlines and the reasons for this difference, in terms of institutional interests or ideologies.

3.5 Reliability and Validity

For reliability, the analysis is done according to the thematic structure that Halliday had developed in his work throughout the study. The analysis of all headlines is based on the same criteria used to define Theme, Rheme, and thematic categories.

Validity is achieved by using data that is real and from credible newspapers in Pakistan and directly dealing with headlines that are related to the research objectives. The theoretical framework and analytical procedures are also supported by existing SLF literature, thereby enhancing the academic credibility of the study.

3.6 The Ethics and Authenticity of Data

This study's dataset is limited to the newspaper headlines published in online editions of Dawn and The Express Tribune during the period of the study. Every headline was retrieved from the two newspapers' official websites, where the news is publicly available. For each headline, the date of publication was noted, and the original headlines were reproduced exactly as they appeared, to capture the linguistic characteristics of the headlines for analysis. The Appendix provides information on the collected headlines as well as the newspaper sources and dates of publication to ensure transparency and traceability. The data is all open and can be verified from the online archives of the newspapers. The study has been conducted on publicly available textual material and does not involve human participants, interviews, surveys, or personal data and therefore formal ethical approval was not required. The researcher did not fabricate, modify, or produce any data and all headlines were sourced from published news and were only analyzed for academic purposes. Throughout the study, adequate sources are cited from newspapers and scholarly sources, following academic practice.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Analysis of Thematic Structures in Dawn Headlines

Thematic analysis of Dawn headlines reveals that the newspaper extensively used topical Themes to highlight the political actors like Iran, the USA, Trump, Pakistan and institutions in the region. Most headlines used unmarked topical Themes in which the grammatical subject was at the thematic position. But Themes were also often marked to highlight situations of conflict, diplomatic talks, and geopolitical tensions as seen in Dawn's work. The analysis also shows that Dawn used a more diplomatic and interpretative style when it covered the US–Iran

conflict compared to its counterparts. There were not only updates on the military side of things, but a lot of headlines were about uncertainty, mediation, ceasefire negotiations and geopolitical consequences.

4.1.1 Unmarked Topical Themes in Dawn Headlines

The majority of Dawn headlines employed unmarked topical Themes. Here, the grammatical Subject was in the initial position and served the role of Theme in these headlines.

Table 1

Unmarked Topical Themes in Dawn Headlines

Headline	Theme	Rheme	Theme Type
Iran hits back, targets Israel, US bases	Iran	hits back, targets Israel, US bases	Unmarked Topical Theme
Pakistan offers to help with Iran–US talks	Pakistan	offers to help with Iran–US talks	Unmarked Topical Theme
Iran vows to keep Hormuz Strait blocked as long as war continues	Iran	vows to keep Hormuz Strait blocked as long as war continues	Unmarked Topical Theme
Trump warns of strike on Iran’s Kharg Island if no deal soon	Trump	warns of strike on Iran’s Kharg Island if no deal soon	Unmarked Topical Theme
World urges restraint as US, Iran stick to guns	World	urges restraint as US, Iran stick to guns	Unmarked Topical Theme

Repeated instances of unmarked topical Themes indicate that Dawn favored the presentation of the major actors, or ‘Topicalize’, in the main clause. The thematic position is the thematic role of Iran, Trump, Pakistan, and the US. There is a recurring theme in the frequency of “Iran” being mentioned as the theme, indicating that Iran remained as the main protagonist in the conflict story. But Dawn was not only a military player but also a political and diplomatic player when it came to Iran. For instance, Authorities in Iran have stated that the ball belongs to the United States, either in terms of war or diplomacy. The Rheme shifts the reader’s focus from the military escalation to the diplomatic option in this headline, with the Theme “Iran” giving the spotlight to Iranian agency. This means there is an “even” distribution of the discourse of conflict. Likewise, Pakistan was often featured in news reports that centered around mediation issues: Pakistan under the spotlight as US, Iran open ‘backchannel’ Islamabad has offered to host US–Iran climb down effort.” These thematic selections highlight Pakistan’s diplomatic engagement and build Pakistan as a more active mediator than a passive observer in the region.

4.1.2 Marked Themes in Dawn Headlines

Dawn also used a number of marked Themes, where circumstantial elements were present in thematic position in front of the grammatical subject.

Table 2

Marked Themes in Dawn Headlines

Headline	Theme	Theme Type
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While raining bombs, Trump wants to pick new Iran leader	While raining bombs	Marked Topical Theme
Battered by US–Israeli strikes, Iran claims control of Hormuz strait	Battered by US–Israeli strikes	Marked Topical Theme
No headway as Iran, US remain entrenched	No headway	Marked Topical Theme
No let-up in US–Israeli strikes on Iran despite peace push	No let-up in US–Israeli strikes on Iran	Marked Topical Theme
Diplomatic flurry as US–Iran truce deadline nears	Diplomatic flurry	Marked Topical Theme

The inclusion of marked Themes in Dawn headlines suggests a style of reporting that is interpretive and contextual. These headlines do not highlight an actor but rather a circumstance or condition, or geopolitical situation. For example, while dropping bombs on Iran, Trump seeks to appoint a new Iranian leader.” The context of the violence is emphasized in the circumstantial Theme “While raining bombs”, followed by the introduction of Trump as an actor. By establishing this thematic order, the destruction becomes foregrounded before the political intention. Similarly, Iran says it has control of the Hormuz Strait after being battered by US–Israeli strikes. The theme highlighted is Iran's victimization, followed by the strategic response of Iran. The headline thus simultaneously creates Iran's damaged and resistant nature. These are thematic structures that influence the interpretation of the readers before the introduction of the main clause actor, making them an important part of the representation of ideas.

4.1.3 Textual Themes in Dawn Headlines

There were several examples of textual Kodes in Dawn headlines, for example, conjunctions and linking expressions.

Table 3

Textual Themes in Dawn Headlines

Headline	Theme
Iran unbowed as Trump warns of ‘hitting hard.’	As
War escalates as US strikes Iran’s energy lifeline	As
Pakistan in the limelight as US, Iran ‘open backchannel.’	As
Diplomatic flurry as US–Iran truce deadline nears	As

The repeated use of “as” suggests that there are simultaneous political and military developments, which are connected with the text. These structures provide continuity of narrative and imply geopolitical processes. Dawn often used textual Themes to create cause/effect and simultaneous-event relationships, instead of single military events.

4.1.4 Ideological Representation in Dawn Headlines

Dawn's news headlines show thematic ideologies with some clear patterns. A. Foregrounding Diplomacy Dawn often raised issues of diplomacy, mediation and negotiation. Examples include: Pakistan expresses willingness to assist Iran and the U.S. in talks. The US–Iran climb–

down effort is being offered by Islamabad for hosting. US, Iran discuss steps toward future as talks enter third round. If the Iran deal is finalized, Trump will consider a trip to Islamabad, he said. These thematic selections are a way of framing diplomacy as a main story element in the war. Pakistan was repeatedly highlighted in the diplomatic headlines thematically. In this portrayal, Pakistan's image was highlighted as a regional peace broker. Examples include: "Pakistan pushes diplomatic track, US-Iran hit 'stall-mate'" Established a 'Pakistan in the limelight as US, Iran 'open backchannel'. This is a thematic foregrounding and is part of a positive national representation. Focus on Geopolitical Uncertainty, the uncertainty and instability were a common theme in Dawn's. Examples include: "Trump's flitting stance on Iran war fuels uncertainty," "Khamenei's assassination brings world to precipice of chaos," and "World urges restraint as US, Iran stick to guns". This kind of headline puts geopolitical fear up front instead of military victory. There were a number of headlines highlighting destruction, casualties and economic instability. Examples include: "Iranians defiant even as relentless bombing leaves over 1,200 dead," "Oil rain falls on Tehran after apocalyptic strikes on refineries," and "Iran war costs soar past \$29bn as truce teeters". These thematic options help to shape the humanitarian discourse.

4.2 Analysis of Thematic Structures in The Express Tribune Headlines

Thematic analysis of the headlines in The Express Tribune reveals a relatively straightforward, dramatic, and military reporting style. Military actors, retaliation, destruction, and strategic confrontation were all emphasized in the newspaper.

4.2.1 Unmarked Topical Themes in The Express Tribune Headlines

Table 4

Unmarked Topical Themes in The Express Tribune Headlines

Headline	Theme	Rheme	Theme Type
Iran Confirms Supreme Leader Khamenei is Dead After US, Israeli Attacks	Iran	Confirms Supreme Leader Khamenei is Dead After US, Israeli Attacks	Unmarked Topical Theme
Trump Warns of Massive Retaliation After Israel Strikes Iran's South Pars Gas Field	Trump	Warns of Massive Retaliation After Israel Strikes Iran's South Pars Gas Field	Unmarked Topical Theme
Iran Fires Missiles at Dubai, Abu Dhabi	Iran	Fires Missiles at Dubai, Abu Dhabi	Unmarked Topical Theme
US Forces Fire on Iranian Tankers Attempting to Evade Hormuz Blockade	US Forces	Fire on Iranian Tankers Attempting to Evade Hormuz Blockade	Unmarked Topical Theme
Trump Demands 'Unconditional Surrender' from Iran as War Enters Week Two	Trump	Demands 'Unconditional Surrender' from Iran as War Enters Week Two	Unmarked Topical Theme

The Express Tribune used a lot of unmarked topical Themes where the political actors and military institutions were given the first spot.

4.2.2 Marked Themes in The Express Tribune Headlines

Table 5

Marked Themes in The Express Tribune Headlines

Headlines	Theme	Rheme	Theme Type
At Least 17 US Sites Damaged in Iran Strikes, NYT Analysis Shows	At least 17 US sites	damaged in Iran strikes	Marked Topical Theme
As Trump Claims Victory, Iran Emerges Bruised but Powerful	As Trump claims victory	Iran emerges bruised but powerful	Marked Textual Theme

The analysis of marked topical Themes in the selected headlines from The Express Tribune shows that there is a consistent discourse pattern, in which circumstantial and evaluative elements are systematically placed in the clause-initial position, thus changing the reader's point of entry into the message.

4.2.3 Textual Themes in The Express Tribune Headlines

Table 6

Textual Themes in The Express Tribune Headlines

Headline	Theme
As Trump Claims Victory, Iran Emerges Bruised but Powerful	As

The analysis of the selected headline from The Express Tribune, namely 'As', is used as a conjunctive textual element that creates a relation of simultaneity between two unfolding geopolitical events in the clause structure of the headline.

4.4.4 Ideological Representation in The Express Tribune Headlines

The thematic arrangement of The Express Tribune's headlines creates a more immediacy-based, impact-oriented ideology of the US–Iran conflict. Marked and unmarked topical Themes highlight political actors, military operations and material effects, thereby placing a special focus on escalation, confrontation, and instability. Actors, like the United States, Iran, and Trump, are strategically placed in thematic positions, which helps to personalize and dramatize geopolitical events, in which political agency is very salient and conflict dynamics are presented as direct and continuous.

In addition, the damage, strikes, retaliation, and strategic responses are thematically foregrounded, so that the distance between the events and their effects decreases and a discourse of ongoing escalation is created. SFL-wise, this is a highly action-oriented and ideationally dense thematic structure, in which the emphasis is laid on immediacy and event-driven narration, rather than on contextual mediation. The ideological impact that this produces is one of urgency and instability, in which the conflict is linguistically described as an imminent and ongoing crisis instead of a political process.

5. Discussion

5.1 Discussion of Key Findings

The main purpose of the present study was to examine thematic structures in the 100 news headlines about the conflict between the United States and Iran from Dawn and The Express Tribune newspapers between March and May 2026. The results indicated that both newspapers were mainly using topical Themes during the reporting of conflict-related events, especially unmarked topical Themes. There were, however, key differences in the thematic organization, foregrounding, and ideological representation. The analysis proved that both newspapers strategically positioned the actors of the political realm, the actions of the military, diplomatic

negotiations, and the developments in the region in the Theme position. The thematic position of Iran, Trump, and the United States, along with references to Hormuz, was occupied frequently, which is why they were communicated in a way that emphasized their thematic presence. The first important result of the study is that in both newspapers, the headlines were dominated by unmarked topical Themes. This means that the newspapers showed a preference for the direct actor-oriented discourse structures in which the Theme of the discourse was identified as the grammatical subject. The informational clarity and directness of communication come from unmarked topical Themes as described by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The use of such Themes in selected headlines indicates that the coverage of conflict often involves foregrounding of actors and actions. But it was also clear from the findings that there are thematic differences and ideological orientations between the two newspapers. Dawn frequently foregrounded: diplomacy, mediation, geopolitical uncertainty, humanitarian consequences, and peace negotiations. The Express Tribune, on the other hand, put greater emphasis on: military escalation, retaliation, and strategic confrontation. Conflict developments are dramatic and occur.

Dramatic and conflict developments are occurring. This difference is not just an insignificant one, as it shows that thematic structures are not neutral grammatical options, but rather part and parcel of the ideological framing and meaning-making. For instance, Dawn often employed contextualized and interpretive thematic structures like: "In the midst of bombing Iraq, Trump is choosing a new Iranian leader." In this headline, the marked Theme "While raining bombs" brings violence and destruction to the fore and then introduces political agency. This thematic organization leads readers to think about political actions in the context of humanitarian suffering and military devastation.

In contrast, the direct action-oriented thematic structures were used on a regular basis by The Express Tribune, including the following: "Trump Calls for 'Unconditional Surrender' from Iran". This headline focuses on confrontation and political aggression by directly positioning the theme in relation to the actors. Therefore, the findings indicate that The Express Tribune had a more immediate, dramatic, and militarized discourse strategy while Dawn had a more interpretive and contextualized one. Another significant discovery is that of the representation of Pakistan. The newspapers gave prominent coverage to Pakistan in the mediation-related news headlines repeatedly. Pakistan made headlines in many diplomatic news stories, which was:

Pakistan has offered to assist Iran and the United States in their dialogue efforts. Pakistan pursues a diplomatic route as the US–Iran reach 'stalemate'. Pakistan Shares Ceasefire Framework to End US–Iran War. This is a consistent thematic positioning that helped to promote positive national self-representation. Linguistically, Pakistan was made up of: mediator, peacemaker, negotiator, a powerful, influential regional player. The result shows that thematic organization is also a means of building a National image in media discourse. The research also showed that Dawn used Marked Themes more than the Express Tribune. Marked Themes were those in which circumstantial or contextual elements were in the thematic position in front of the grammatical subject. Examples include: "Battered by US–Israeli strikes, Iran claims control of Hormuz strait" and "Diplomatic flurry as US–Iran truce deadline nears". There is a tendency to contextualize and frame in terms of interpretation as seen from the relatively higher use of marked Themes in Dawn. These buildings prompt readers to engage with events in a wider geopolitical or humanitarian framework, rather than in terms of specific military operations.

The Express Tribune, on the other hand, had more direct unmarked Themes, which led to the creation of urgency, immediacy, dramatic intensity, and action-centered reporting. Thus, the results confirm the hypothesis that thematic structures play an important role in the organization and interpretation of conflict narratives in newspaper discourse.

5.2 Relationship of Findings with Previous Research

A review of the literature indicated that the previous research aligned with this study's findings. The results of the present study confirm that Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) presented Theme as the starting point of the message, which is important to organize the meaning of the text. As shown in the selected headlines, themes were strategically positioned to highlight actors, actions, and ideology in the presentation of conflict news.

Based on the findings of Thêu, T. T. K. (2021), which revealed that the topical theme is widely used to highlight political and social actors in news headlines of English and Vietnamese newspapers, the dominant presence of topical themes in the present study can also be concluded.

Also, the results corroborate Hussein and Ahmed's (2021) hypothesis that thematic organization has a great impact on the coherence, information management and ideological focus of journalistic writing. This study shows that thematic positioning helps readers interpret the text because it highlights particular actors and developments.

This finding also aligns with the findings of Karim, Sharif, and Ashraf (2021), who opined that the headlines of newspapers in Pakistan are used to frame public discourse about politics in a linguistic way. The current study is an elaboration of this argument, as it specifically shows in the current study how Theme–Rheme organization helps to create an ideological framing within conflict discourse.

The depiction of Pakistan as a mediator is also in line with the earlier studies, which indicate that newspapers tend to use discourse strategies to shape positive national identity. The national image construction in the linguistic organization of the news headlines is manifested in the news headlines related to mediation processes.

Besides, the results lend weight to the argument of Nickl, Moussaïd, and Lorenz-Spreen (2025) that today's news headlines strive to grab readers' attention and evoke emotion. The Express Tribune is especially characterized by its dramatic and militarized thematic structures, which exemplify the tendency toward an increased media framing.

The present study, however, builds on previous studies by adding new insights. The majority of previous research has been on the following:

- Transitivity analysis,
- Critical discourse analysis,
- Lexical features or
- Stylistic patterns.

There were fewer studies that discussed thematic structure in the newspaper headlines of Pakistan with regard to international conflicts. Hence, this study makes a new contribution in the field of conflict reporting by employing Halliday's textual metafunction to compare it in the context of Pakistani English newspapers.

5.3 Claims of the Study

The present study has several significant claims about the structures of themes in newspaper discourse. The first is that the study argues that thematic organization is not just a grammatical structure, but also an ideological structure. Second, the study asserts that the theme selection of different newspapers builds different conflict narratives even in reports on the same international event. Thematic emphasis, narrative framing and ideology were all different between Dawn and The Express Tribune. Third, the study asserts that the marked and unmarked Themes have different contributions to the representation of the media. Marked Themes give a contextualized and interpretive framing, while unmarked Themes give an immediacy and directness. Fourth, the study asserts that the newspaper headlines are a part of the construction of the national image. The constant presence of Pakistan in diplomatic and mediation-related news headlines created the image of Pakistan as a peacemaker and influential regional player. Lastly, the study asserts that the thematic analysis approach of SFL is an

appropriate method for analyzing the representation of ideology in newspaper discourse because the thematic structure shows the pattern of foregrounding, agency, and communicative emphasis.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The present study has some limitations. For the first time, the study limited itself to two English-language newspapers in Pakistan, namely: Dawn, The Express Tribune, and Other Pakistani newspapers like The News International or Daily Times were not considered. Hence, the results are not representative of the media discourse in Pakistan. Second, the study examined just the headlines and not the full news articles. While headlines are ideologically significant, analyzing a full news article might provide deeper insight into discourse construction. Third, only Systemic Functional Linguistics' textual meta-function was studied. Other metafunctions, such as Ideational metafunction, Interpersonal metafunction, and Transitivity analysis, have not been explored in depth. Last, the study focused solely on English-language newspaper discourse. Thematic and ideological patterns can be quite different in Urdu-language newspapers.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

From the results and limitations of the present study, the following recommendations are made for future studies.

- Future researchers should take more newspapers to get more comparative results about the Pakistani media discourse, and should also study the full text of the news rather than news headlines to explore the use of thematic structures in extended discourse.
- Transitivity analysis, appraisal theory, modality analysis, or Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can be applied along with thematic analysis to acquire multidimensional information of media ideology.
- Further research can be done on the differences in the representation of English and Urdu newspaper headlines in terms of linguistic and ideological differences between languages.
- A quantitative corpus-based analysis can also be used in addition to SFL analysis to enhance the statistical reliability and to identify larger discourse patterns.

Conclusion

The present study explored the thematic structures of the headlines on the US–Iran conflict between March and May 2026, published in Dawn and The Express Tribune, using the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). One hundred headlines were analyzed for the aim of identifying the Theme types, for comparing thematic patterns and for investigating the ideological representation in the reporting of conflict. The findings showed that the majority of the newspapers used unmarked topical Themes, which means that they preferred to use direct actor-centered discourse. However, The Express Tribune had a direct and action-oriented thematic organization, emphasizing military escalation, retaliation, and dramatic events in conflict, while Dawn had a more contextualized and interpretive thematic organization, emphasizing diplomacy, mediation, humanitarian concerns, and geopolitical uncertainty. The study also found that The Express Tribune used more immediate and militaristic constructions, which emphasized crisis and urgency, while Dawn used more marked Themes, which meant more contextual framing. The other significant discovery was the recurring theme of Pakistan's role as a mediator and peacemaker in both newspapers. The overall results suggest that thematic structures are functioning as both grammatical and ideological resources in the shape of conflicts and political agency in newspaper discourse.

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Appendix

Table 7

Dawn headlines	Date of publication	The Express Tribune	Date of publication
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Iran hits back, targets Israel, US bases	Published March 1st, 2026	Iran Confirms Supreme Leader Khamenei is Dead After US, Israeli Attacks	Published March 1st, 2026
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<u>Khamenei's assassination brings world to precipice of chaos</u>	Published March 2, 2026	Iran and the US-Israel War Objectives	Published March 4, 2026
<u>Trump's flitting stance on Iran war fuels uncertainty</u>	Published March 3, 2026	Iran War Threatens a Prolonged Hit to Global Energy Markets	Published March 7, 2026
<u>Pakistan offers to help with Iran-US talks</u>	Published March 4, 2026	At Least 17 US Sites Damaged in Iran Strikes, NYT Analysis Shows	Published March 11, 2026
<u>Battered by US-Israeli strikes, Iran claims control of Hormuz strait</u>	Published March 5, 2026	US War on Iran and Its Larger Consequences for Region	Published March 16, 2026
<u>While raining bombs, Trump wants to pick new Iran leader</u>	Published March 6, 2026	Trump Warns of Massive Retaliation After Israel Strikes Iran's South Pars Gas Field	Published March 19, 2026
<u>Tehran disputes 'drone war' claims as Gulf states reel from attacks</u>	Published March 6, 2026	Iran Minister Says US, Israeli Strikes Caused 'Heavy Damage' to Water and Energy Infrastructure	Published March 22, 2026
<u>Iranians defiant even as relentless bombing leaves over 1,200 dead</u>	Published March 7, 2026	Iran Still Weighing US Proposal Despite Negative Initial Response, Senior Iranian Official Says	Published March 25, 2026
<u>Iran unbowed as Trump warns of 'hitting hard'</u>	Published March 8, 2026	Iran Warns of Strikes on US-Linked Universities in Region After Campus Bombings	Published March 29, 2026

<u>'Oil rain' falls on Tehran after apocalyptic strikes on refineries</u>	Published March 9, 2026	Middle East Conflict Widens as Houthis Hit Israel; US Prepares for Possible Ground War	Published March 29, 2026
<u>Iran vows to keep Hormuz strait blocked as long as war continues</u>	Published March 11, 2026	US Says Coming Days in Iran War Will Be Decisive; Urges Tehran to Make a Deal	Published March 31, 2026
<u>Attacks on commercial ships in Strait of Hormuz leave world on edge</u>	Published March 12, 2026	US Eyes a Swift End to War as Fresh Attacks Hit Gulf States and Iran	Published April 1, 2026
<u>Iran leaders defy bombs by taking to Tehran streets</u>	Published March 14, 2026	Trump Defends Handling of War on Iran; Says US Military Close to Completing Its Mission	Published April 2, 2026
<u>War escalates as US strikes Iran's energy lifeline</u>	Published March 15, 2026	Pakistan Shares Ceasefire Framework to End US-Iran War: Source Says	Published April 6, 2026
<u>Iran warns other nations to stay away as US looks to expand war</u>	Published March 16, 2026	US, Iran Agree to Pakistan-Brokered Two-Week Ceasefire with Reopening of Strait of Hormuz	Published April 8, 2026
<u>Trump bid to rope Nato into Iran war doesn't find takers</u>	Published March 17, 2026	'US Will Work Closely with Iran,' Trump Says After Pakistan-Brokered Ceasefire	Published April 8, 2026
<u>US rushes \$16bn arms to Gulf after Iran warns of 'zero restraint'</u>	Published March 20, 2026	World Leaders Praise Pakistan After US-Iran Ceasefire Deal	Published April 8, 2026

<u>Pakistan in the limelight as US, Iran 'open backchannel'</u>	Published March 24, 2026	How Pakistan Brokered a Two-Week Ceasefire Deal Between US and Iran	Published April 8, 2026
<u>Islamabad offers to host US-Iran climbdown effort</u>	Published March 25, 2026	As Trump Claims Victory, Iran Emerges Bruised but Powerful with Leverage Over Hormuz	Published April 9, 2026
<u>No headway as Iran, US remain entrenched</u>	Published March 26, 2026	Trump Thanks Pakistan for Hosting Talks; Announces US Navy Blockade of Hormuz	Published April 12, 2026
<u>No let-up in US-Israeli strikes on Iran despite peace push</u>	Published March 27, 2026	Oil Tankers Steer Clear of Hormuz Ahead of US Blockade Implementation	Published April 13, 2026
<u>Dar hints at US, Iran talks as quad pushes peace off-ramp</u>	Published March 30, 2026	Trump Weighing Limited Iran Strikes Alongside Hormuz Blockade After Islamabad Talks Fail: WSJ	Published April 14, 2026
<u>Trump warns of strike on Iran's Kharg Island if no deal soon</u>	Published March 31, 2026	US Shuts Down Iran's Maritime Trade Despite Optimism for More Talks	Published April 15, 2026
<u>Trump in spotlight as ceasefire talk heats up overnight</u>	Published April 2, 2026	US, Iran May Resume War Talks This Week Despite Port Blockade	Published April 15, 2026
<u>US blows up key Iranian bridge, steel plants</u>	Published April 3, 2026	Iran-US Talks Turn to Interim Deal Amid Rifts Over Nuclear Work, Iranian Sources Say	Published April 16, 2026

<u>Another US jet shot down as Iran war escalates</u> <u>Trump's own party lawmakers split over Iran policy</u>	Published April 4, 2026 Published April 9, 2026	Pakistan Says Iran-US 'Agreement is Reachable'	Published April 16, 2026
<u>US, Iran explore path forward as talks go into third round</u>	Published April 12, 2026	Iran Reimposes Control Over Strait of Hormuz as Ships Report Gunfire	Published April 18, 2026
<u>Iran 'will not bow to any threats', Ghalibaf declares</u>	Published April 13, 2026	Iran Reviews Proposals as Trump Says 'Very Good Talks Going On'	Published April 18, 2026
<u>Trump hints at Islamabad trip if Iran deal is finalised</u>	Published April 17, 2026	Trump Sees 'Good News' on Iran; Still Threatens Renewed Strikes	Published April 18, 2026
<u>Hormuz 'fully open' but US keeps Iran blockade intact</u>	Published April 18, 2026	Trump Extends Ceasefire at Pakistan's Request Until Iran Submits 'Unified Proposal'	Published April 21, 2026
<u>Iran again chokes Hormuz over 'breach of truce'</u>	Published April 19, 2026	Iran Tightens Control of Hormuz After US Calls Off Renewed Attacks	Published April 22, 2026
<u>Assault on vessel overshadows preparation for round two of US-Iran dialogue</u>	Published April 20, 2026	Pakistan Working Silently to Find 'New Formula' to Break US-Iran Deadlock: Sources	Published April 30, 2026
<u>Diplomatic flurry as US-Iran truce deadline nears</u>	Published April 21, 2026	US and Iran Explore Short-Term Deal to End Fighting; Draft Framework Being Prepared	Published May 6, 2026

<u>World urges restraint as US, Iran stick to guns</u>	Published April 22, 2026	Trump Says Ceasefire Still Holds After Fighting Between US and Iran Flares in Hormuz	Published May 8, 2026
<u>Trump extends ceasefire on Pakistan's request</u>	Published April 22, 2026	US Forces Fire on Iranian Tankers Attempting to Evade Hormuz Blockade	Published May 8, 2026
<u>US optimistic about Iran talks 'this week'</u>	Published April 23, 2026	US, Iran No Closer to Ending War Despite Month-Long Ceasefire	Published May 10, 2026
<u>US calls off Pakistan trip as Iran replies to proposals</u>	Published April 26, 2026	Pakistan to Continue Peace Mediation with 'No Immediate Danger' of Renewed US-Iran War	Published May 11, 2026
<u>Trump opts for talks with Iran over the phone</u>	Published April 27, 2026	Pakistan to Continue Mediation Despite Hard Postures from Both US and Iran	Published May 11, 2026
<u>Russia backs Iran as peace efforts with US remain stalled</u>	Published April 28, 2026	China Lauds Pakistan's Mediation Role in US-Iran Talks; Stresses Durable Ceasefire	Published May 12, 2026
<u>US turns down Iranian proposal to end war</u>	Published April 30, 2026	Trump Threatens 'A Whole Civilisation Will Die Tonight' if Iran Does Not Open Hormuz	Published April 7, 2026
<u>Mojtaba defiant as Trump claims Iran wants a deal</u>	Published May 1, 2026	Trump Says Iran Ceasefire on 'Life Support' as Naval Clashes Continue	Published May 9, 2026

<u>US 'still not satisfied' after Tehran conveys another offer.</u>	Published May 2, 2026	Iran Ceasefire Extended as a Favour to Pakistan's 'Terrific People' — Trump	Published May 15, 2026
<u>Iran says ball in US court on war or diplomacy.</u>	Published May 3, 2026	US Intercepts Iranian Tankers Under Blockade; Tehran Warns of 'New Surprises'	Published April 22, 2026
<u>Trump keeps strike option open amid doubts over Iran proposal</u>	Published May 4, 2026	Iran Fires Missiles at Dubai, Abu Dhabi; Gulf States Declare Emergencies	Published April 4, 2026
<u>US, Iran send positive signals on possible deal</u>	Published May 7, 2026	Trump Warns Iran: Open Hormuz or Face 'Consequences Far Greater' Than Anything Seen	Published March 19, 2026
<u>World awaits Tehran's response to US proposal</u>	Published May 8, 2026	Iranian Security Chief Ali Larijani, Basij Commander Killed in Targeted US Strike	Published March 17, 2026
<u>US awaits Iran reply even as navies clash in Hormuz</u>	Published May 9, 2026	Trump Demands 'Unconditional Surrender' from Iran as War Enters Week Two	Published March 6, 2026
<u>Trump rejects 'unacceptable' Iranian terms for ending war</u>	Published May 11, 2026	US Senate Blocks Move to Halt Trump's War Powers as Iran Fires Fresh Missiles	Published March 5, 2026



<u>Pakistan pushes diplomatic track as US, Iran hit 'stall'-mate</u> <u>Iran war costs soar past \$29bn as truce teeters</u>	Published May 12, 2026	Iran Says It Will Retaliate Against US Assets Worldwide After Khamenei Killing	Published March 3, 2026
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