

THE LINGUISTIC CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER IDEOLOGY AND STANCE-TAKING: A CORPUS-ASSISTED ANALYSIS OF PAKISTANI BROADCAST DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a corpus-assisted sociolinguistic analysis of the public media discourse of Pakistani screenwriter Khalil-ur-Rehman Qamar, examining how language choices construct, evaluate, and reinforce gender ideology. Utilizing a specialized spoken dataset of his Broadcast Discourse Corpus comprising transcribed televised and digital interviews, the research integrates quantitative corpus linguistic techniques with qualitative thematic analysis. Corpus analysis software (AntConc) was employed to extract frequency profiles, keyword lists, and collocation networks centered on gender-related node words (e.g., woman, feminism, rights, loyalty, Aurat March). These quantitative outputs served as empirical anchors for Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic framework. The analysis reveals five primary macro-thematic domains: (1) Discursive Delegitimization and Antagonistic Othering, (2) Moral Panic and Cultural Preservation Stance, (3) Structural and Institutional Threat Construction, (4) Patriarchal Protectionism and Moral Regulation, and (5) Positive Self-Presentation. Concordance line analysis demonstrates a consistent reliance on pejorative stance-taking, evaluative lexical choices, and gender-asymmetric moral imperatives. By uniting quantitative corpus metrics with thematic discourse analysis, this study demonstrates how televised rhetoric actively shapes ideological positions and reproduces traditional power dynamics within contemporary Pakistani media.

Keywords: Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA), Stance-Taking, Gender Ideology, Media Rhetoric, AntConc, Braun and Clarke.

1. INTRODUCTION

Feminism and gender advocacy in Pakistan have experienced significant discursive shifts over the past decade. A key driver of this contemporary debate is the *Aurat March* (Women's March), an annual public rally organized on International Women's Day across major cities. Unlike earlier reformist movements that operated primarily within socio-legal and institutional frameworks, modern public gender discourse in Pakistan frequently targets private and domestic spheres, raising questions regarding bodily autonomy, consent, and cultural norms which are most prominently epitomized by slogans such as "*Mera Jism Meri Marzi*" (My Body, My Choice).

Simultaneously, broadcast media and digital platforms have emerged as primary arenas where gender ideologies are negotiated, contested, and polarized. Within this media ecology, prominent public figures utilize televised talk shows and digital interviews to articulate ideological stances. The rhetoric surrounding gender equity is frequently framed through competing cultural paradigms: modern rights-based advocacy versus traditional socio-religious conservatism. Understanding how language is operationalized in these broadcast spaces is critical to evaluating how public media constructs societal attitudes toward gender roles and institutional power.

Problem Statement

In contemporary Pakistani media, televised and digital talk shows have become primary arenas for constructing and contesting gender ideologies. While public figures and media personalities frequently shape societal attitudes toward women's rights, gender roles, and social movements like Aurat March, their rhetoric often relies on deeply embedded patriarchal stances and ideologically loaded language. However, existing linguistic research on gender discourse in South Asia predominantly relies on traditional qualitative text analysis or critical discourse approaches, which often face criticism for selective data sampling and subjective researcher bias.

Although public rhetoric such as that of screenwriter Khalil-ur-Rehman Qamar sparks widespread social debate and media commentary, there remains a distinct empirical gap in systematic, corpus-driven sociolinguistic research investigating how these gendered stances are linguistically structured. Relying solely on qualitative observations fails to account for the systematic lexical patterns, frequency distribution, and collocational networks that sustain patriarchal rhetoric across multiple broadcasts. Without combining quantitative corpus metrics with qualitative thematic interpretation, it is difficult to empirically map the exact linguistic mechanisms through which televised speech constructs anti-feminist rhetoric, evaluates female morality, and enforces traditional power dynamics.

To address this gap, this study employs a Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA) framework. By integrating quantitative corpus techniques (such as keyword profiling and collocation analysis via AntConc) with Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic framework, this research provides an empirically grounded, systematic investigation into how broadcasted media discourse constructs gender ideology and shapes public rhetoric in Pakistan.

1.1 Research Objectives

1. To identify the statistically significant keywords and collocational networks surrounding gender-related node words within a specialized broadcast corpus using AntConc.
2. To map and categorize the dominant thematic domains within the speaker's broadcast rhetoric by grounding Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework in corpus concordance data.
3. To evaluate the underlying gender ideologies, stance-taking strategies, and power dynamics embedded in the speaker's language choices through systematic discourse analysis.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the keywords, and collocational patterns associated with gender-related node words in the *Khalil-ur-Rehman Qamar Broadcast Discourse Corpus*?
2. What primary macro-thematic domains emerge when corpus outputs are systematically categorized via Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework?

3. How do specific lexical choices, evaluative stances, and concordance lines construct and reinforce traditional gender ideologies and patriarchal authority in broadcast media?

2. Theoretical Framework: Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA):

This study is based on following established methodological models:

1. **Corpus Linguistics (Baker, 2006; Partington, 2004)** to analyse quantitative data via Frequencies, Keywords & Collocations
2. **Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)** for qualitative mapping of themes
3. **Stance-Taking & Ideological Analysis (Du Bois, 2007; Van Dijk, 1993)** to evaluates positioning, moral regulation, and positive self-presentation

By anchoring qualitative interpretation in quantitative corpus patterns, CADA allows the researcher to establish that specific themes (e.g., pejorative evaluation, conspiracy framing) are empirically prevalent across the dataset rather than isolated occurrences.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study utilizes a mixed-method, corpus-assisted sociolinguistic design. Quantitative corpus tools (AntConc 4.x) are applied to extract statistical linguistic evidence including frequency distributions, keyword lists, collocational spans, and Key Word in Context (KWIC) concordance lines. These outputs are then qualitative analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic model.

3.2 Corpus Construction and Data Sampling

The *Khalil-ur-Rehman Qamar Broadcast Discourse Corpus* was compiled from high definition video recordings of televised and digital talk show interviews aired between 2019 and 2021.

1. **Sampling Criteria:** Media appearances specifically centered on debates regarding *Aurat March*, modern feminism, social rights, and traditional family structures.
2. **Primary Sources Included:** Broadcast interviews hosted on national television networks and prominent digital channels (e.g., BOL TV, UrduPoint, News On).
3. **Transcription Protocol:** Audio tracks were extracted and transcribed in English text files. Non-linguistic noise was stripped, while spoken discourse markers were standardized for software compatibility.

Table 3.2: Corpus Specifications

Corpus Parameter	Details / Specifications
Corpus Designation	Corpus was designed using 25 programmes broadcasted between

	May,2021 and December,2021.
Data Mode	Spoken Broadcast Discourse (Transcribed / Standardized)
Primary Media Outlets	BOL TV, UrduPoint, News On
Core Target Node Words	<i>Aurat March, Feminism, Women, Slogans, Loyalty, Rights</i>
Software Analytical Tools	AntConc (Version 4.0+)

The corpus analysis followed three structured phases:

1. **Quantitative Profiling:** Generating keyword frequency distributions and identifying collocates within a window span of words around core gender node words.
2. **Concordance Line Extraction (KWIC):** Extracting concordance lines to analyze the immediate syntactic and semantic environment of target terms.
3. **Thematic Coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006):** Executing the six analytical phases: familiarization, initial coding, searching for candidate themes, reviewing thematic consistency against the corpus, defining themes, and producing the report.

4: FINDINGS AND DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS

4.1 Corpus-Assisted Coding and Thematic Matrix

Through the integration of corpus collocation metrics and thematic coding, the raw speech data were structured into five distinct macro-discursive constructs.

Table 4.1: Corpus-Assisted Thematic Analysis Matrix

Target Node Words	Corpus Codes & Collocational Extracts	Sub-Themes	Macro-Discursive Constructs
Aurat March / Feminists	"hired and funded" "funded planned women on payroll" "someone else's agenda", "ulterior motives" "unlucky and miserable women" "erratic and screwed"	Transactional Delegation Pejorative Othering	Discursive Delegitimization & Antagonistic Framing

	"Bhairya aurtein" "nasoor ke tarah" "ullu ke pathiyan"		
Slogans / Activism	"inglorious infusion in country" "absurd slogans" "fouled slogans based on obscenity" "flame which is burning dupattas of respected women" "filth" / "desecrate our language"	Cultural & Moral Contamination Desecration of Traditional Symbols	Moral Panic & Cultural Preservation Stance
State / Society	"edge of destruction" "virtuous women suppressed psychologically" "misleading our girls" "Islamic country" "poor democracy"	Societal Vulnerability Anti-Systemic Threat Framing	Institutional Threat Construction
Loyalty & Morality	"Never forgive Disloyalty of women" "When men commit sin a house is destroyed; when women commit sin, a whole generation is destroyed" "Women are the protectors of"	Gender-Asymmetric Morality Protectionist Imperatives	Patriarchal Protectionism & Moral Regulation

	generations"		
Self / Identity	"fighting for women" "always wrote for women rights" "women are my pride" "agree with provision of rights"	Benevolent Patriarch Persona Selective Rights Advocacy	Positive Self-Presentation

4.2 Detailed Analysis of Macro-Themes

4.2.1 Macro-Theme 1: Discursive Delegitimization and Antagonistic Framing

The corpus analysis demonstrates that node words associated with organized feminism (*Aurat March, feminists*) display a strong negative semantic prosody. The speaker relies on two main discursive strategies: *transactional delegation* and *pejorative pathologization*.

A. Transactional Delegation (Conspiracy Framing) Collocation profiling reveals that terms representing feminist activists consistently co-occur with financial and mercenary verbs (e.g., *funded, hired, payroll*).

"These unlucky and miserable women... are hired basically... there are some women who would never understand it because they are funded, planned women on payroll." (BOL TV / News On, 2021)

Discourse Analysis: By collocating organic activism with transactional terms ("*hired*", "*payroll*"), the speaker strips local women of agency. Feminist advocacy is framed not as a response to systemic gender inequality, but as a foreign-funded conspiracy designed to subvert domestic culture ("*someone else's agenda*").

B. Pejorative Pathologization and Dehumanizing Metaphors The speaker frequently employs gender-exclusive pejoratives and medicalized metaphors to evaluate non-conforming women.

"There are 'Bhairya' [wolfish] women who ate the society like a 'Nasoor' [cancerous ulcer]... collect their data to find who these erratic and screwed women are." (BOL TV / News On, 2021)

Discourse Analysis: The use of animalistic pejoratives ("*Bhairya*") and disease metaphors ("*nasoor*") serves to dehumanize target individuals. Rather than engaging

with socio-legal arguments, the rhetoric pathologizes female dissent as a moral and psychological pathology requiring state intervention and social suppression.

Sample corpus Concordance Lines for Node Word: [Aurat March / Feminists]

- 01 ...these miserable women involved in [AURAT MARCH] are completely hired and funded...
02 ...they continuously come out to make [FUN OF] our socio-cultural norms...
03 ...there are wolfish women who act as [NASOOR] and destroy our family setup...

4.2.2 Macro-Theme 2: Moral Panic and Cultural Preservation Stance

Public advocacy tools, specifically protest slogans, are framed within the corpus as markers of cultural contamination.

*"What was the need to bring such fouled slogans based on obscenity... it is a flame which is burning the dupattas of our respected women."
(BOL TV / UrduPoint, 2021)*

Discourse Analysis: The speaker constructs a binary between "virtuous/respected women" and "feminist activists". By utilizing combustion metaphors ("*a flame burning the dupattas*"), traditional symbols of modesty (*dupatta*) are portrayed as under active destruction. This rhetorical strategy induces moral panic, rallying public support around traditional cultural preservation.

4.2.3 Macro-Theme 3: Patriarchal Protectionism and Moral Regulation

The dataset exhibits a distinct gender asymmetry regarding moral conduct, fidelity, and domestic authority.

"Forgive all of her sins, but never forgive disloyalty... When men commit sin, a house is destroyed, but when women commit sin, a whole generation is destroyed." (UrduPoint, 2021)

Discourse Analysis: The concordance output illustrates a strict double standard in the evaluation of personal morality. Male transgressions are framed as localized or individual ("a house is destroyed"), whereas female transgressions are magnified as existential societal threats ("a whole generation is destroyed"). By positioning women as the sole "protectors of generations," the discourse justifies moral regulation and punitive authority over female behavior.

4.2.4 Macro Theme 4: Positive Self-Presentation (The Benevolent Patriarch)

In alignment with Teun van Dijk's (1993) *Ideological Square* model (emphasizing 'Our' good properties vs. 'Their' bad properties), the speaker balances aggressive rhetoric toward feminists with positive self-representation.

"I always wrote for women's rights my whole life... women are my pride... I am that person who agrees with provision of women's rights."
(UrduPoint / News On, 2021)

Discourse Analysis: Through self-legitimizing assertions ("*women are my pride*"), the speaker projects a benevolent, protective persona. This strategy creates a ideological distinction between *authentic* (tradition-compliant) women's rights and *inauthentic* (modern/feminist) activism, allowing the speaker to oppose feminist movements while claiming to champion female welfare.

5. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

By uniting quantitative corpus metrics with qualitative thematic analysis, this study reveals the systematic discursive mechanisms through which public broadcast media reinforces traditional gender hierarchies in Pakistan. Rather than representing isolated emotional outbursts, the speaker's rhetoric operates as a coherent ideological framework. When evaluated against Van Dijk's (1993) Critical Discourse model, the discourse relies heavily on **Polarized Group Alignment**:

In-Group (Traditional/Virtuous Archetype): Associated with modesty (*dupatta*), domestic endurance ("*managing in halal money*"), and absolute fidelity ("*wafa*").

Out-Group (Feminist/Activist Archetype): Associated with external corruption ("*hired and funded*"), moral degradation ("*obscenity*", "*filth*"), and psychological dysfunction ("*erratic and screwed*").

A critical sociolinguistic finding extracted from the Key Word in Context (KWIC) concordance analysis is the stark gender-asymmetric evaluation of moral transgression. While male transgressions are linguistically minimized as localized individual failures ("*a house is destroyed*"), female non-conformity or disloyalty is rhetorically amplified into a catastrophic existential crisis ("*a whole generation is destroyed*"). By positioning women as the sole custodians of generational purity and national integrity, the discourse establishes an unequal burden of societal accountability. This structural asymmetry provides the necessary rhetorical justification for paternalistic surveillance and punitive moral regulation over female autonomy. The speaker's stance-taking relies heavily on affective, high-intensity metaphorization specifically combustion and contagion tropes ("*a flame burning the dupattas*", "*cancerous ulcer*"). By framing protest slogans such as "*Mera Jism Meri Marzi*" not as legal demands for physical safety and bodily autonomy, but as active threats to traditional modesty and religious identity, the rhetoric deliberately induces societal moral panic. This tactic compels the audience to adopt a defensive posture, perceiving socio-legal gender reform as an attack on cultural survival.

Furthermore, the corpus analysis confirms that language choice in broadcast interviews functions as an instrument of social regulation. By framing female autonomy as an existential threat to the state ("*edge of destruction*") and religious

identity ("*Islamic country*"), the rhetoric leverages cultural anxieties to delegitimize demands for structural gender reform.

5.2 Conclusion

This study demonstrates the utility of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA) in evaluating media language. Grounding thematic findings in frequency profiles and concordance lines provides an empirical basis for analyzing stance-taking, pejorative language, and gender ideology. The findings indicate that broadcast media in Pakistan frequently provides unchecked platforms for rhetoric that pathologizes gender reform, enforces asymmetric moral standards, and polarizes public discourse. To address these structural issues, regulatory bodies like the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) must implement stricter broadcasting guidelines that distinguish adversarial debate from targeted pejorative speech, media networks should enforce mandatory editorial oversight on live broadcasts to prevent the monetization of outrage, and future sociolinguistic research should expand CADA frameworks to multi-speaker comparative corpora to analyze audience reception across digital platforms.

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