



Speech Oriented Discourse in Written Genre: A Multidimensional Analysis

Sadia Ali¹, Ahsan Bashir², Muhammad Ali³, Maryam Aleem⁴

¹ King Saud University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Email: sali7ta.c@ksu.edu.sa

² Assistant Professor of English, University of Education, Lower Mall Campus, Lahore, Pakistan.
Email: ahsan.bashir@ue.edu.pk

³ Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Email: maattar@uqu.edu.sa

⁴ University Law College, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. Email: maryam.law@pu.edu.pk

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: April 17, 2022

Revised: May 10, 2022

Accepted: May 10, 2022

Available Online: May 15, 2022

Keywords:

Multidimensional Analysis

Pakistani Press Reportage

Popularization

South Asian Englishes

Speech-oriented Discourse

Funding:

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

ABSTRACT

This study analyses the South Asian varieties of English in comparison with British English and explores if newspaper reportage has been influenced by popularization. The objective of the study is to find the differences and similarities among all the eight South Asian Englishes and British English with a special focus on speech-oriented discourse. To achieve this objective, the study follows Biber (2006) multidimensional analysis as a theoretical framework. The present study uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. The results indicate a considerable difference between the press reportage of Pakistan and that of other South Asian countries. Further, Pakistani press reportage is the most speech-oriented among all the South Asian countries and Britain in producing discourse.

© 2022 The Authors, Published by iRASD. This is an Open Access article under the [Creative Common Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

Corresponding Author's Email: ahsan.bashir@ue.edu.pk

1. Introduction

Over the years, language undergoes changes. During the last two centuries, English written registers have developed incorporating increased lexical and grammatical features connected with conversation as they are influenced by economy and popularization. Popularization has more influence on popular written registers like fiction resulting in an increased use of colloquial features while economy impacts the specialist informational registers like academic writing with an increased reliance on economy features such as phrasal discourse (Nevalainen & Traugott, 2016). So far as the communicative purpose is concerned, the news reportage of most of the countries is highly informational (S. Ali, 2020). Keeping in view the audience/readers, like fiction, the newspapers of most of the countries use colloquial features such as verbs, verb phrases, modals, etc. However, over a period of time, news reportage has become a more popular register acquiring more oral characteristics (Biber & Finegan, 2001).

Pakistani variety of English, with an influence from indigenous languages and local cultures, is considered to be a distinct variety of English. Although there is a significant body of research on newspapers (M. Ali & Sheeraz, 2019; Asghar, Mahmood, & Asghar, 2018; Shakir & Deuber, 2018, 2019) which compares Pakistani English with British and American English. However, these studies lack the comparison of Pakistani English with other varieties of English, particularly the ones used in South Asia so that it can be established as a distinguished and independent variety of English.

Further, with the emergence of new media including YouTube, news channels, Twitter, etc, a tendency towards oral style using more colloquial features is quite expected. This study analyses the South Asian varieties of English and aims to explore if newspaper reportage, which is a written register, has been influenced by popularization.

2. Literature Review

The term South Asian English (SAE) refers to Englishes spoken in the South Asian countries of Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. South Asian countries except Bhutan, Afghanistan, and Nepal remained a part of a British colony but British English has a deep impact on the languages of these countries as well. Gargesh (2019) found that following the initial contact between the British and the South Asians, two types of English emerged in the subcontinent. The first was the language of the Eurasians of India and Sri Lanka, while the second included various pidgin varieties used in the subcontinent.

English in South Asian countries has remained the focus of attention for researchers for years. For example, using the South Asian English (SAVE) corpus, Mukherjee and Bernaish (2015) looked at the lexico-grammatical structure of words linked with so-called 'cultural' words. The study was conducted on Indian, Sri Lankan, and Pakistani Englishes. The research is restricted to noun-verb collocations associated with cultural terms. The keywords are government, terror and religion. Gries and Bernaisch (2016) researched six South Asian countries by using the SAVE corpus. The dative alternation with give was the subject of their research. The methodology for the analysis is multi-factorial Prediction and Deviation Analysis with Regression (MuPDAR). The study examined the elements that influence construction decisions. It concluded that in terms of using the dative alternation, India was considered to be the linguistic hub of English in South Asia.

Sridhar (1996) also used the SAVE corpus to describe the grammar of South Asian English. He investigated the usage of the invariant reflexive 'itself' for emphasis. He further discussed that in South Asian Englishes, the words 'only' and 'subject-verb number conflict' had a very restricted function.

Most researchers consider the multidimensional (MD) approach to be the most authentic and comprehensive approach among other approaches (Ervin-Tripp, 1972; Halliday & Matthiessen, 1985; Hymes, 1974). A lot of work has been done on different varieties of English using MD (1988) approach. Some studies also used MD (2006) approach to explore new dimensions. Shakir and Deuber (2018), for example, made a comparison between four computer-mediated conversation registers (comments, Facebook status updates, tweets and Facebook groups) and spoken conversation of Pakistani and U.S. English. They analysed the data by using Biber's MD analysis framework on three dimensions – Interactive vs. Descriptive Explanatory Discourse, Expression of Stance and Informational Focus vs. 1st Person Narrative.

Scientific disciplines also remained the focus of researchers. Some studies were conducted using Biber (1988) dimensions. Moskowich and Crespo (2012) analysed Astronomy texts using Biber (1988) fourth dimension which he labelled as Overt Expression of Argumentation. They also applied Biber's fifth dimension (Abstract versus no abstract style) to study the scientific texts written by women writers.

Some researchers consider South Asian Englishes as a separate variety of English. For example, M. Ali and Sheeraz (2019) study on South Asian Englishes located the differences and similarities among South Asian Englishes. The results indicated that the newspaper discourse used in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh is different from each other. Another study conducted by Görlach (2008) made a comparison between Indian and British English. The results indicated that Indian English was a separate variety. The study also located the reasons behind its distinctiveness. The findings showed that there were unusual lexical collocations, unexpected uses of prepositions, and lack of concord in Indian newspapers.

The scope of all the above-mentioned studies is quite limited in terms of studying the linguistic differences in selected countries from South Asia. However, the present study will find the differences and similarities among all the eight South Asian Englishes with a special focus on speech-oriented discourse.

3. Methodology

The study follows Biber (2006) multidimensional analysis as a theoretical framework. It study uses both quantitative and qualitative methods. It is quantitative because it uses different statistical tools to provide authentic results. It is qualitative as it presents the functional interpretation of the statistical results. There were certain steps for quantitative analysis: the first step was the identification of the texts, the second step was cleaning the text files and changing them into machine-readable form and the third step was normalising the counts.

It further used statistical techniques like conducting factor analysis. Factor solution was based upon 150+ linguistic features. The last step was ANOVA to explore the linguistic differences between the newspaper reportage of South Asian countries. Press reportage of South Asian countries, i.e., Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka was selected for comparison. 5184 text files were compiled as a corpus for this study.

4. Analysis

Certain linguistic features work together to produce Speech-oriented discourse. These features in the order of weight are *that* complement clause controlled by a communication verb (1.17), public verbs (0.98), verbs-communication (0.97), that-complement clause controlled by verb (0.94), that deletion (0.61), communication verbs in other contexts (0.56), nouns-group/ institution (0.3), and verbs-activity (-0.55). In producing speech-oriented discourse that complement clause controlled by a communication verb, public verbs and verbs-communication show quite large loading. That deletion, communication verbs in other contexts and nouns-group/institution show slightly fewer loadings than other linguistic features. Clauses controlled by communication verb depict communicative functions of discourse. In addition to these, private verbs are primarily speech act verbs (Biber, 1988) and 'they express private thoughts, attitudes and emotions' (Westin, 2002) while activity verbs express action.

The results indicate that there is a marked difference between the discourse production of South Asian countries and Britain. The results also show that all the countries produce speech-oriented discourse. Pakistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Bangladesh and India are more speech-oriented, while Nepal and Afghanistan are less speech-oriented than Britain. Pakistan shows the maximum difference from Britain, while India is only slightly different from Britain in producing speech-oriented discourse. Indian press reportage shows similarity with British press reportage in producing speech-oriented discourse and this similarity, along with other social, cultural, educational and functional factors, might be associated with the fact that English has remained a (co-)official language since 1947.

In figure 1 the bars above point zero indicate the difference in the press reportage of the countries that are more speech-oriented than Britain and the bars below point zero indicate the difference in the press reportage of the countries that are less speech-oriented than Britain. On this dimension, all the countries produce speech-oriented discourse. However, Pakistan shows the most prominent differences (1.38) from Britain in producing speech-oriented discourse. Sri Lanka and the Maldives show the second-highest difference (0.86) from Britain in producing speech-oriented discourse. It is surprising that in Sri Lanka, where there are native English speech communities (Burger community) alongside the larger communities of L2 speakers of English (Hundt & Gut, 2012), the English should be close to British English, but the results show a considerable difference between Sri Lankan and British press reportage. The differences can be relocated by considering cultural, political and geographical differences.

Maldives, with a difference of 0.83, is dissimilar from Britain in speech-oriented discourse production. Further, Afghanistan (- 0.15) and India (0.07) show the least differences from Britain and Bhutan (0.46) while Bangladesh (0.26) show fewer differences from Britain.

Among other linguistic features, communication verbs and public verbs together perform a function of producing speech-oriented discourse. Communication verbs depict communicative functions of a discourse (Biber, 1988). Figure 2 indicates a marked difference in the use of communication and public verbs between Pakistani press reportage (which shows the highest difference from Britain) and British press reportage.

Figure 1: Linguistic variations across South Asian and British press reportage on new D2

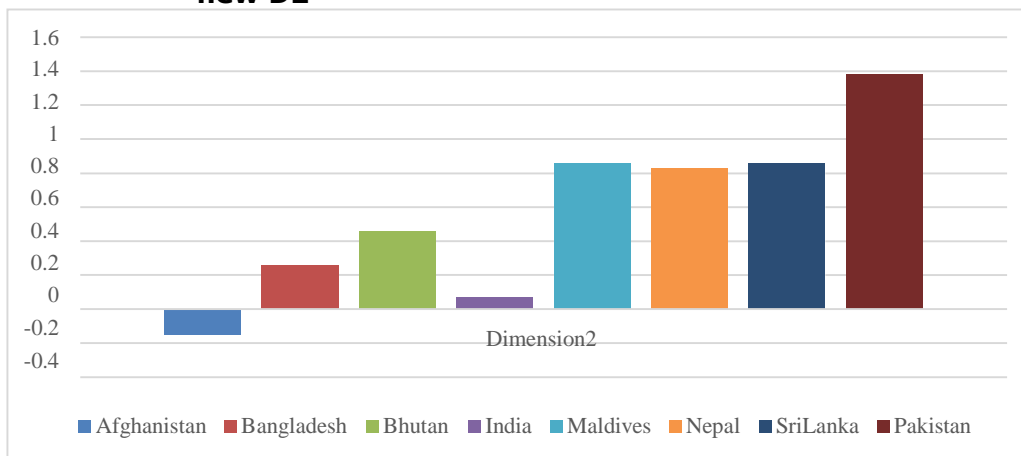
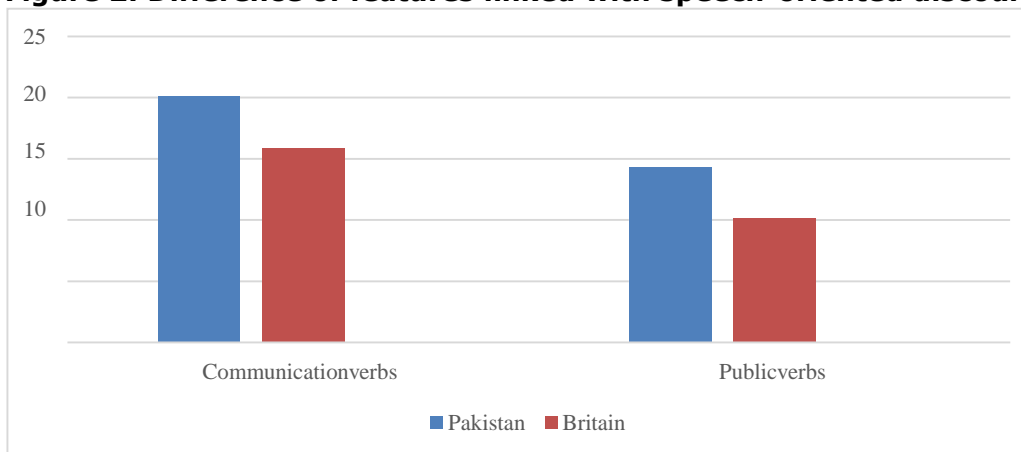


Figure 2: Difference of features linked with speech-oriented discourse



The mean normalised frequency of communication verbs is considerably high in Pakistani-press reportage. It is 20.11 in Pakistani press reportage and 15.91 in British press reportage. Likewise, the normalised frequencies of Pakistan (14.36) and Britain (10.14) show a significant difference in the use of public verbs.

Speech-oriented discourse is characterised by the frequent occurrences of public verbs, communication verbs and nouns-groups/institutions. The above discussion indicates that Pakistan shows the most prominent differences from Britain in producing speech-oriented discourse.

Pakistani press produces the highest speech-oriented discourse. In the following excerpt, taken from the Pakistani newspaper, *Dawn*, the italicised words are examples of speech-oriented discourse.

Authorities arrested 51-year-old Adam Purint on, who allegedly *told* the men "get out of my country" before opening fire, according to the daily. Purint on was apprehended late Wednesday at a *restaurant*, after *claiming* he had killed o Middle Easterners, according to the Star. (CSPCRDT3)

In the above - given text sample, linguistic features like public verbs (*claiming*), communication verb (*told*) and nouns-groups/ institutions (*authorities* and *restaurant*) highlight the dense presence of speech-oriented discourse.

In the following example, taken from the British newspaper, *Daily Mail*, public verb (*claimed* and *confirmed*), communication verb (*said*, *state* and *speak*) and nouns groups/institutions (*airport*) are the examples of linguistic features that produce speech – oriented discourse.

She *claimed* she repeatedly *said* her name at least five times but the phone conversation escalated into fury. The woman *said* the machine repeatedly *said*: 'I'm sorry, I couldn't understand you. Please *state* your full name. For example, John Smith'. The woman *claimed* she tried to *speak* as clearly as possible but on a Monday morning, she *confirmed* she was at the *airport* waiting to board her flight. (CSBRCDMT1)

The example from *Dawn* contains 4 words that produce speech-oriented discourse. Their normalised frequency is 95/1000. On the other hand, the excerpt from *Daily Mail* contains 6 words that produce speech-oriented discourse. The normalised frequency (counted out of 1000 words) of the occurrences of these linguistic features is 85/1000. Although both the countries show speech-oriented discourse in their press reportage, Pakistan shows more speech-oriented discourse than Britain. The comparison of the above-given examples shows that there is frequent use of public and communication verbs in the excerpt taken from Pakistani newspaper in comparison with the example taken from the British newspaper. The above discussion summarises that all the South Asian countries show marked differences from Britain, particularly, Pakistani press reportage is markedly different from British press reportage in producing speech-oriented discourse.

The above discussion indicates that Pakistani press reportage is significantly different from other South Asian countries, particularly from Nepal in speech-oriented discourse production. The excerpts from Pakistani, Nepali and Maldivian press reportage, given below, will further elaborate on this point. The following example has been taken from the Pakistani newspaper, *Dawn*.

Barrister Ameeruddin *told* the bench that CCTV footage of the alleged incident *aired* by media was edited. Justice Shamsi *observed* that the court would *decide* the matter after hearing both sides. The judge *adjourned* hearing till Feb 9 and sought appearance of vice chairmen of the bar councils. (CSPOTNT27)

In the above-given excerpt of 48 words, 10 per cent of the words produce speech-oriented discourse. Another text sample has been taken from the Nepali newspaper, *Kathmandu Post*, to draw a comparison.

"While going through the articles and editorial, it was found that they were very much related to court verdicts and rulings. Since court rulings ultimately go to the public domain, publication of these materials does no amount to contempt of court," the bench *observed* while closing the two cases that have been in the court for the last two and a half years. (CSNPOKPT1)

In the above-given excerpt of 63 words, 2 per cent of the words are found producing speech-oriented discourse. This percentage is far less than the percentage found in the example from the Pakistani newspaper. The next example has been taken from the Maldivian newspaper, *Mihaaru*.

"This is not about Syria and Iraq, it's about a trans-regional threat," General Joe Dunford, who *chairs* the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *told* a Washington audience last week. "In this particular case, we're *talking* about ISIS, but it's also Al-Qaeda and other groups that present a trans-regional threat." (CSMPOMT51)

In the excerpt of 48 words from the Maldives, 3 per cent of words are found producing speech-oriented discourse. The frequency of the linguistic features in the above-given example from Pakistani, Nepali and Maldivian newspapers confirms the results provided in figure 1. The frequencies of the linguistic features that produce speech-oriented discourse in Pakistani press reportage is considerably higher in comparison with Nepali and Maldivian press reportage. The results indicate that Pakistan is significantly different from other South Asian countries in producing speech-oriented discourse.

5. Conclusion

The study has compared Pakistani English with other South Asian Englishes with a special focus on Speech-oriented discourse production. The results indicate a considerable difference between the press reportage of Pakistan and other South Asian countries. Pakistani press reportage is more speech-oriented than the press reportage of Britain and all the South Asian countries in producing discourse. There are multiple factors including historical and functional differences between South Asian Englishes which contribute to the linguistic variation across varieties of English in South Asia (Hundt & Gut, 2012). It has been observed that Pakistani press reportage is influenced by popularization the most as it is the most speech-oriented among other South Asian countries.

Acknowledgement

We are thankful to the staff at Biber's Lab for assisting in tagging the data from North Arizona University, USA.

References

- Ali, M., & Sheeraz, M. (2019). Diachronic variations in Pakistani English newspaper editorials: A case study. *NUML Journal of Critical Inquiry*, 16(2), 1-20.
- Ali, S. (2020). *Multidimensional Corpus Based Analysis of Newspaper Reportage: A Comparative Study of Pakistani, other South Asian, and British Newspapers*. (Doctoral dissertation), Air University, Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Asghar, S. A., Mahmood, M. A., & Asghar, Z. M. (2018). A multidimensional analysis of Pakistani legal English. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 8(5), 215-229. doi:<https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v8n5p215>
- Biber, D. (1988). *Variation across speech and writing*. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Biber, D. (2006). Stance in spoken and written university registers. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 5(2), 97-116. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2006.05.001>
- Biber, D., & Finegan, E. (2001). Diachronic relations among speech-based and written registers in English. In *Variation in English: Multi-dimensional studies* (pp. 66-83): Routledge.
- Ervin-Tripp, S. (1972). On sociolinguistic rules: Alternation and co-occurrence. In R. W. Holt (Ed.), *Directions in sociolinguistics* (Vol. 2, pp. 213-250).
- Gargesh, R. (2019). South Asian Englishes. In *The handbook of world Englishes* (2nd ed., pp. 105-134): John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Görlach, M. (2008). Text types and the history of English. In *Text Types and the History of English*: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Gries, S. T., & Bernaisch, T. (2016). Exploring epicentres empirically: focus on South Asian Englishes. *English World-Wide*, 37(1), 1-25. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1075/eww.37.1.01gri>
- Halliday, M., & Matthiessen, C. (1985). An introduction to functional grammar. *Australian Rev. Appl. Linguist*, 10(2), 163-181.
- Hundt, M., & Gut, U. (2012). *Mapping unity and diversity world-wide: Corpus-based studies of New Englishes*: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Hymes, D. (1974). Ways of speaking. Explorations in the ethnography of speaking. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 45, 433-451. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511611810.029>
- Moskowich, I., & Crespo, B. (2012). *Astronomy 'playne and simple': The writing of science between 1700 and 1900*: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Mukherjee, J., & Bernaisch, T. (2015). Cultural keywords in context. In *Grammatical change in English world-wide* (pp. 411-435): John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Nevalainen, T., & Traugott, E. C. (2016). *The Oxford handbook of the history of English*: Oxford University Press.
- Shakir, M., & Deuber, D. (2018). A multidimensional study of interactive registers in Pakistani and US English. *World Englishes*, 37(4), 607-623. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12352>
- Shakir, M., & Deuber, D. (2019). A multidimensional analysis of Pakistani and US English blogs and columns. *English World-Wide*, 40(1), 1-23. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1075/eww.00020.sha>
- Sridhar, S. N. (1996). Toward a syntax of South Asian English: Defining the lectal range. In *South Asian English: Structure, Use, and Users* (pp. 41-55): University of Illinois Press.

Westin, I. (2002). Features marking personal involvement. In *Language Change in English Newspaper Editorials* (pp. 19-63): Brill Rodopi.