



# Linguistic Variation in Pakistani and British Crime Press Reportage: A Multidimensional Analysis

## Research Article

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## Abstract

The present study investigates linguistic variation in the crime press reportage of Pakistani and British print media using Douglas Biber's (1988) Multidimensional (MD) analytical framework. The central research question examines the extent to which Pakistani crime press coverage differs linguistically from British crime press coverage across Biber's five textual dimensions: Dimension 1 (Involved vs. Informative), Dimension 2 (Narrative vs. Non-Narrative), Dimension 3 (Explicit vs. Situation-Dependent), Dimension 4 (Overt vs. Covert Expression), and Dimension 5 (Abstract vs. Non-Abstract). A balanced corpus of 1,000 texts was compiled from five leading Pakistani and five leading British newspapers published between September and November 2017, yielding a total of 324,086 words. Texts were tagged and scored using Biber's 1988 tagger software, and mean dimension scores were calculated for each corpus. The findings reveal that Pakistani crime press reportage is significantly more informative (D1: -21.74), less narrative (D2: +1.98), more explicit (D3: +5.97), more covert (D4: -3.09), and more abstract (D5: +4.31) than British crime press coverage (D1: -13.18; D2: +3.25; D3: +2.99; D4: -2.61; D5: +2.52). These differences are attributed to cross-cultural divergences, the post-colonial linguistic context of Pakistani English, and differing



readership demands. The study establishes Pakistani English crime press reporting as a distinct sub-register within the broader framework of World Englishes.

**Keywords:** Pakistani English, British English, crime press reportage, multidimensional analysis, register variation, Biber (1988), linguistic variation, World Englishes, corpus linguistics

## 1. Introduction

The English language has evolved from a tribal language into a global medium of communication, giving rise to numerous new varieties as it expanded from its native Britain to diverse regions of the world. In Pakistan, English has undergone significant change, incorporating different words, grammatical structures, and local expressions that differ considerably from those used in native English-speaking regions. With the development of the concept of language variation, the study of linguistic differences among registers has grown increasingly important for describing the diverse varieties of English. As Ferguson (1983) emphasized, variations in language structure occur due to its use in different contexts of human activity, resulting in various registers.

The present study explores linguistic variation in the crime press reportage of Pakistani and British print media. Register variation, in which language structure varies in accordance with occasions of use, is, as Biber (1988) observed, all-pervasive in human language. Registers are understood as linguistic variants connected to various contexts and objectives, distinguished from social dialects by differences in themes, contexts, and purposes. Research on the rhetorical and generic structure of news is expanding in Pakistan, but prior approaches have not relied on extensive corpora, have evaluated discrete linguistic features in isolation, and have not employed appropriate statistical metrics to present empirical findings. All of these restrictions can be addressed by using the register variation approach of corpus methodology.

Biber (1988) introduced the crucial concept of the co-occurrence of several linguistic elements in register studies and proposed multidimensional analysis as a suitable technique to identify variance in various registers. With the creation of the MD technique by Biber in the 1988 study, significant advances have taken place in the study and application of register analysis. Previous research on Pakistani crime press reporting has concentrated on its linguistic, grammatical, and gender-based features, but no comprehensive MD-based comparative study of Pakistani and British crime press reportage has been undertaken. The current study fills this gap, contributing original empirical findings to the field of World Englishes and register variation research.

This study is guided by the following principal research questions: (1) To what extent does Pakistani crime press coverage differ linguistically from British crime press coverage across Biber's (1988) five textual dimensions? (2) How do the mean dimension scores of the Pakistani crime press reportage corpus compare to those of Biber's (1988) original press reportage corpus? (3) What intra-corpus variation exists among the five selected Pakistani newspapers in their linguistic profiles of crime press coverage?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 World Englishes and Language Variation**

Among the languages of the world, English is one of the most significant, serving as a global *lingua franca* and facilitating communication between people from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Kachru's widely recognized three-circle model (1992) offers a useful framework for understanding the global distribution of World Englishes. The model categorizes English-speaking countries into three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, which includes native English-speaking countries such as the United Kingdom; the Outer Circle, comprising countries with a colonial history of English usage such as Pakistan; and the Expanding Circle, consisting of countries where English is learned as a foreign language. The Outer Circle varieties, often termed New Englishes, demonstrate clear linguistic innovations and departures from British English norms across multiple levels, including pronunciation, lexicon, grammar, and discourse, reflecting the process of nativization (Kachru, 1992).

Crystal (1997) estimated that there are 320 to 380 million speakers in the Inner Circle, 150 to 300 million in the Outer Circle, and up to 1,000 million in the Expanding Circle. Kachru (1996) noted that there are currently at least four non-native English speakers for every native speaker, underscoring the global significance of Outer Circle varieties such as Pakistani English. Trudgill (1991) also argued that as a language spreads geographically, the number of its dialects multiplies, as every variety is subject to ongoing change, further validating the study of emerging varieties such as Pakistani English as autonomous linguistic systems.

### **2.2 Pakistani English**

Pakistani English, locally termed *Paklish*, began as a result of English imperial supremacy and was first recognized as a separate variant of World Englishes between 1970 and 1980. Pakistani English is distinct from other varieties, with a separate vocabulary, style, and genre. Due to its distinct syntax, accent, and pronunciation, it is regarded as a non-native variation. Nonetheless, Pakistani English is part of the Outer Circle of World Englishes since it is spoken as a second language in Pakistan. With more than 27% of the population able to comprehend and use English as a second language, Pakistan has the third-largest population of English speakers worldwide (Kachru, 1992).

Baumgardner (1993) found that several vocabulary items from Standard English are employed in Pakistani speakers' everyday speech, alongside indigenous morphemes that are commonly employed in daily language. With the support of these distinct characteristics, Pakistani English asserts its status as an autonomous variation. Mahboob (2004) further documented the morphological and syntactic uniqueness of Pakistani English, demonstrating systematic departures from British English norms at the sentence level, particularly in newspaper contexts where the writing is shaped by local editorial conventions.

### **2.3 Register Variation and Multidimensional Analysis**

The concept of multidimensional analysis emerged as a significant methodological advancement in the study of register variation within corpus linguistics and sociolinguistics. At the core of the

multidimensional approach lies the assumption that different types of texts exhibit both linguistic and functional variation. Biber (1988) argued strongly that register analysis must go beyond the study of individual features and instead focus on sets of co-occurring linguistic elements, as linguistic variation cannot be fully understood unless the relationships between features are examined within a broader analytical framework. The MD framework recognizes that linguistic variation is inherently multifaceted, treating variation as a matter of degree rather than category.

The MD framework identifies textual dimensions as clusters of linguistic features that systematically co-occur across texts, reflecting shared communicative functions. Biber (1988) derived five primary textual dimensions from factor analysis of 67 linguistic features in a large reference corpus of spoken and written British English. Biber and Conrad (2009) later elaborated that multidimensional approaches allow for the simultaneous examination of various linguistic features, providing a richer and more nuanced understanding of how language functions within specific sub-genres. Statistical techniques, specifically factor analysis and the computation of dimension scores, are used to identify patterns of co-occurrence and to determine the relative importance of different linguistic features, enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings.

## **2.4 Previous Studies on Pakistani Print Media Language**

Numerous studies have examined Pakistani print media language from various angles. Anwar and Talaat (2011) sought to analyze the language of Pakistani newspapers and demonstrated that Pakistani newspaper language differs greatly from British newspaper language due to certain distinctive linguistic characteristics. Uzair et al. (2012) examined lexical innovations in Pakistani English newspapers, demonstrating that Pakistani newspapers actively generate and employ nativized vocabulary. Muhabat et al. (2015) studied hyphenated lexemes in Pakistani journalistic English, establishing clear patterns of lexical creativity that distinguish Pakistani journalistic writing from British equivalents. However, the majority of these corpus-based studies concentrated on specific linguistic traits in isolation.

Ahmad (2016) conducted a pioneering study using Biber's multidimensional framework on Pakistani political press coverage and demonstrated significant linguistic differences between Pakistani and British press registers. His study confirmed that Pakistani political press reporting is substantially more informative and less narrative than British equivalents, establishing the applicability of the MD framework to Pakistani English newspaper genres. Alvi (2016) and Urooj and Shafqat (2016) similarly investigated multifaceted dimensions of Pakistani editorial language, corroborating the finding that Pakistani English press registers exhibit systematic and measurable linguistic variation from their British counterparts. The present study builds upon these foundations by focusing specifically on the crime press reportage sub-register.

## **3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology**

### **3.1 Biber's Multidimensional Framework**

The theoretical foundation of the present study is Biber's (1988) multidimensional analysis. Biber proposed this approach in his groundbreaking study, "Variation Across Speech and Writing," in which he subjected a large corpus of spoken and written English to factor analysis of 67 linguistic

features. The result was a set of five dimensions, each representing a continuum of linguistic variation defined by a cluster of co-occurring features with shared communicative functions. Dimension 1 (Involved vs. Informative Production) contrasts texts rich in private verbs, hedges, first-person pronouns, and questions (involved) with texts rich in nouns, prepositions, and attributive adjectives (informative). Dimension 2 (Narrative vs. Non-Narrative Concerns) distinguishes texts with frequent past tense verbs and personal pronouns (narrative) from those lacking these features. Dimension 3 (Explicit vs. Situation-Dependent Reference) identifies texts that rely on nominalizations, WH-clauses, and perfect aspect verbs to elaborate referential meaning explicitly, as opposed to texts that rely on contextual inference. Dimension 4 (Overt Expression of Persuasion) captures the degree to which texts employ infinitives, modals of possibility, and modals of necessity to express the speaker's stance toward events or to persuade the reader. Dimension 5 (Abstract vs. Non-Abstract Style) is defined by the frequency of passive constructions, agentless passives, and by-passives, which reduce the salience of agents and impart an abstract, formal quality to the text.

Dimension scores for each text are calculated by summing the normalized frequencies of positively loading features and subtracting the normalized frequencies of negatively loading features for each dimension. Higher positive scores on a given dimension indicate greater expression of the positive pole of that dimension, while lower negative scores indicate expression of the negative pole. These scores allow for systematic quantitative comparison across corpora.

### 3.2 Corpus Design and Data Collection

The present study is corpus-based and employs a balanced design to facilitate comparative analysis. Five major newspapers from Pakistan and five from Britain were selected, drawing from multiple cities within each country to ensure geographical representativeness within each national corpus. From each newspaper, 100 texts were selected from the crime press reportage category, all with a minimum word count of 150 words, gathered from online sources between September 1 and November 30, 2017. This yielded 500 texts from Pakistani print media and 500 texts from British print media. Table 1 below presents the full corpus composition.

Table 1: Corpus Composition: Texts and Word Counts per Newspaper

Newspaper	Country	City	Texts	Words
Daily Times	Pakistan	Islamabad	100	30,105
Dawn News	Pakistan	Lahore	100	30,266
Express Tribune	Pakistan	Quetta	100	30,280
The Nation	Pakistan	Karachi	100	30,045
The News International	Pakistan	Peshawar	100	31,642
Daily Express	UK	London	100	32,713
Daily Mail	UK	Manchester	100	36,765
Daily Mirror	UK	Bristol	100	33,072
Daily Telegraph	UK	Birmingham	100	37,902
The Guardian	UK	Liverpool	100	30,306
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>1,000</b>	<b>324,086</b>

*Source: Compiled from Pakistani and British print media, September–November 2017.*

The Pakistani crime news corpus amounts to 152,338 words, while the British news corpus amounts to 170,758 words, yielding a total corpus of 324,086 words. The corpus was subsequently converted from MS Word format into plain text (Notepad) format for compatibility with Biber's (1988) tagger software. This conversion increased the Pakistani corpus to 153,338 tokens in the tagging environment, accounting for minor tokenization differences, while the British corpus remained at 170,758 tokens.

### 3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

Biber's 1988 tagger software was employed to automatically assign part-of-speech tags and extract raw counts of all 67 linguistic features for each text in the corpus. The tagger processes each word in the corpus and assigns tags that identify its grammatical class and functional category. The following represents a sample of the tagger's output for a news text:

*What ^wdt+who+++ = What | stops ^nns++++ = stops | us ^pp1o+pp1+++ = us | to ^to++++ = to | build ^vbi++++ = build | big ^jj+atrb+++ = big | reservoirs ^nns++++ = reservoirs (Biber 1988 tagger output, sample news text)*

Following tagging, raw feature counts were normalized per 1,000 words to allow comparison across texts of different lengths. Dimension scores were then calculated for each text by applying the feature weights identified in Biber's (1988) original factor analysis. Mean dimension scores were computed for each corpus (Pakistani, British) and for each individual newspaper. Three analytical stages were followed: (1) tagging of the British and Pakistani news corpus; (2) computation of raw counts validated against Biber's 1988 MD analysis benchmarks; and (3) comparison of mean dimension scores across corpora, with graphical and tabular representation. Table 2 below summarizes the co-occurring linguistic features associated with each dimension and their approximate mean frequencies in each corpus.

Table 2: Co-occurring Linguistic Features per Textual Dimension

Dimension	Key Co-occurring Features	Pakistani Mean Freq.	British Mean Freq.
<b>D1 (Informative)</b>	Nouns, Prepositions, Attributive Adjectives	~355	~310
<b>D2 (Narrative)</b>	Past Tense Verbs, Personal Pronouns	~42	~65
<b>D3 (Explicit)</b>	Nominalizations, WH-Clauses, Perfect Verbs	~87	~52
<b>D4 (Covert)</b>	Infinitives, Modals of Possibility, Modals of Necessity	~11	~9
<b>D5 (Abstract)</b>	Passives, Agentless Passives, By-Passives	~21	~14

*Note: Frequency values represent approximate mean per 1,000 words as derived from Biber (1988) tagger output. Exact normalized frequencies vary across individual newspaper texts.*

## 4. Results

This chapter presents the quantitative findings of the multidimensional analysis of the 1,000-text, 324,086-word corpus of Pakistani and British crime press reportage, organized by textual dimension. Results are presented in three parts: (4.1) a direct comparison of Pakistani and British
















corpora across all five dimensions; (4.2) a comparison of the Pakistani corpus with Biber's (1988) reference press reportage norms; and (4.3) an internal comparison of all ten individual newspapers. Table 3 below provides an overview of all mean dimension scores.

Table 3: Summary of Mean Dimension Scores: Pakistani, British, and Biber (1988) Press Reportage Corpora

Dimension	Pakistani Corpus	British Corpus	Biber's (1988) Corpus	Direction of Difference
<b>D1: Involved vs Informative</b>	<b>-21.74</b>	-13.18	-15.1	Pak more informative
<b>D2: Narrative vs Non-Narrative</b>	<b>1.98</b>	3.25	0.4	Brit more narrative
<b>D3: Explicit vs Situation-Dep.</b>	<b>5.97</b>	2.99	-0.3	Pak more explicit
<b>D4: Overt vs Covert Expression</b>	<b>-3.09</b>	-2.61	-0.7	Pak more covert
<b>D5: Abstract vs Non-Abstract</b>	<b>4.31</b>	2.52	0.6	Pak more abstract

Note: Scores derived from Biber (1988) tagger analysis applied to the 324,086-word corpus. Biber (1988) reference scores are from press reportage genre norms in the original MD study.

Figure 1: Mean Dimension Scores: Pakistani vs. British Crime Press Reportage Corpora

	D1 Informative	D2 Narrative	D3 Explicit	D4 Covert	D5 Abstract
<b>Pakistani Corpus</b>	-21.74 	+1.98 	+5.97 	-3.09 	+4.31 
<b>British Corpus</b>	-13.18 	+3.25 	+2.99 	-2.61 	+2.52 
<b>Biber's (1988)</b>	-15.10 	+0.40 	-0.30 	-0.70 	+0.60 

Note: Green bars (►) = positive scores; Red bars (◄) = negative scores; bar length proportional to magnitude.

#### 4.1 Dimension 1: Involved vs. Informative Production

Dimension 1 contrasts informative and involved aspects of discourse. Positive scores indicate involved discourse (first-person pronouns, hedges, questions), while negative scores indicate informative discourse (nouns, prepositions, attributive adjectives).

Pakistani crime press reportage registers a mean score of -21.74, and British crime press reportage registers a mean score of -13.18 on Dimension 1. Both corpora fall in the negative (informative) range, indicating that both are informationally oriented. However, Pakistani crime reporting is substantially more informative, with a difference of 8.56 score units between the two corpora. The higher magnitude of the negative score for Pakistani data demonstrates that Pakistani crime news texts are denser in informational features.

Examination of the co-occurring linguistic features confirms the dimension scores. Pakistani criminal press reporting registers substantially higher mean frequencies of nouns, prepositions, and attributive adjectives per 1,000 words than British crime press reportage. These three feature clusters are the primary positive-loading features on Dimension 1's informative pole, and their

elevated frequencies in Pakistani texts collectively drive the corpus-level dimension score further into negative territory.

#### **4.2 Dimension 2: Narrative vs. Non-Narrative Concerns**

Dimension 2 contrasts narrative and non-narrative discourse. Positive scores indicate narrative features (past tense verbs, personal pronouns), while low positive or negative scores indicate non-narrative, factual discourse.

Pakistani crime press reportage registers a mean score of +1.98, and British crime press reportage registers a mean score of +3.25. Both corpora produce positive scores, indicating that both contain narrative features. However, British crime reporting is more narrative, with a difference of 1.27 score units. The higher scores in British data reflect more frequent use of past tense verbs and personal pronouns in crime news texts.

Mean frequencies of past tense verbs and personal pronouns in British crime texts are notably higher than in Pakistani crime texts, directly accounting for the higher D2 scores. Pakistani crime news texts employ past tense forms and personal references less frequently, resulting in a less chronological, less storytelling-oriented style of crime reporting.

#### **4.3 Dimension 3: Explicit vs. Situation-Dependent Reference**

Dimension 3 contrasts explicit and situation-dependent discourse. Positive scores indicate explicit reference (nominalizations, WH-clauses, perfect aspect), while negative scores indicate situation-dependent discourse that relies on shared contextual knowledge.

Pakistani crime press reportage registers a mean score of +5.97, and British crime press reportage registers a mean score of +2.99. Both corpora fall in the positive (explicit) range. However, Pakistani crime reporting is substantially more explicit, with a difference of 2.98 score units. This finding indicates that Pakistani crime news texts provide more elaborate, self-contained reference structures, supplying full definitional and contextual information within the text itself.

The co-occurring features of nominalizations, WH-clauses, and perfect aspect verbs all appear at higher mean frequencies in Pakistani crime texts than in British crime texts, collectively producing the higher D3 score. Pakistani crime reporting consistently uses nominalized forms, complex WH-constructions, and perfect tense structures to elaborate meaning explicitly.

#### **4.4 Dimension 4: Overt Expression of Persuasion**

Dimension 4 captures the presence of overt persuasive or stance-marking features. Negative scores indicate covert, non-argumentative discourse (fewer infinitives, modals of possibility, modals of necessity), while values closer to zero indicate relatively more overt, argumentative expression.

Pakistani crime press reportage registers a mean score of -3.09, and British crime press reportage registers a mean score of -2.61. Both corpora fall in the negative (covert) range. Pakistani crime reporting is more covert, with a difference of 0.48 score units. This finding indicates that Pakistani crime news texts tend to present information without overt editorial stance-marking or persuasive framing.

The co-occurring features of infinitives, modals of possibility, and modals of necessity appear at similar but slightly higher frequencies in British crime texts than in Pakistani crime texts. The small magnitude of the difference on this dimension suggests that both corpora use these features sparingly, consistent with the generally objective and non-argumentative nature of news press reportage (Bell, 1991).

#### **4.5 Dimension 5: Abstract vs. Non-Abstract Style**

Dimension 5 contrasts abstract and non-abstract discourse. Positive scores indicate abstract style (passives, agentless passives, by-passives), while lower positive scores indicate more agent-foregrounding, direct style.

Pakistani crime press reportage registers a mean score of +4.31, and British crime press reportage registers a mean score of +2.52 on Dimension 5. Both corpora fall in the positive (abstract) range. However, Pakistani crime reporting is substantially more abstract, with a difference of 1.79 score units. This finding indicates that Pakistani crime news texts use passive constructions more extensively, reducing the salience of agents and imparting a more formal, abstract quality to the reporting.

Mean frequencies of passives, agentless passives, and by-passives are all higher in Pakistani crime texts than in British crime texts, directly producing the higher D5 score. Agentless passives are particularly frequent in Pakistani crime reporting, resulting in constructions that omit the agent of the action entirely.

#### **4.6 Comparison with Biber's (1988) Press Reportage Norms**

Biber's (1988) original multidimensional analysis reported reference mean scores for a press reportage corpus drawn from British print media: D1 = -15.10; D2 = +0.40; D3 = -0.30; D4 = -0.70; D5 = +0.60. Comparison of the present study's findings with these norms reveals important differences.

On Dimension 1, the Pakistani crime corpus (-21.74) is more informative than Biber's press reportage norm (-15.10) and also more informative than the British crime corpus (-13.18). This indicates that Pakistani crime press reporting is even more informationally dense than canonical British press reporting. On Dimension 2, the Pakistani crime corpus (+1.98) is considerably more narrative than Biber's norm (+0.40), suggesting that crime coverage involves more temporal sequencing and personal reference than general press reporting. On Dimension 3, both the Pakistani (+5.97) and British (+2.99) crime corpora are substantially more explicit than Biber's norm (-0.30), which falls in the situation-dependent range, suggesting that crime reporting as a genre requires more explicit referential elaboration than general press reporting. On Dimensions 4 and 5, the Pakistani crime corpus is more covert (-3.09 vs. -0.70) and more abstract (+4.31 vs. +0.60) than Biber's norms, indicating that Pakistani crime reporting is a highly specialized sub-register with distinctive linguistic characteristics.

Figure 2: Pakistani Crime Corpus vs. Biber (1988) Press Reportage: All Five Dimensions

	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
<b>Pakistani Crime Corpus</b>	-21.74	+1.98	+5.97	-3.09	+4.31
<b>Biber's (1988) Press Reportage</b>	-15.10	+0.40	-0.30	-0.70	+0.60

Note: Green bars (▶) = positive scores; Red bars (◀) = negative scores; bar length proportional to magnitude.

## 4.7 Individual Newspaper Comparisons

### 4.7.1 Pakistani Newspapers

Table 4 above and the analysis below present mean dimension scores for the five Pakistani newspapers. On Dimension 1, all five newspapers register strongly negative (informative) scores, confirming the corpus-level finding. The Nation (Karachi) produces the highest degree of informational content (-25.21), followed by Express Tribune (-23.48) and The News International (-23.24). Daily Times (Islamabad) and Dawn News (Lahore) register lower informative scores (-17.33 and -19.45 respectively), suggesting that these two newspapers offer proportionally less informationally dense crime texts, possibly because their readership, located in the capital and a major provincial city, is more accustomed to contextual inference.

On Dimension 2, Express Tribune (Quetta) registers the highest narrative score among Pakistani newspapers (3.29), followed by Daily Times (2.38). The Nation (1.21) and The News International (1.14) produce the lowest narrative scores among Pakistani newspapers, indicating that their crime texts are the least storytelling-oriented. On Dimension 3, Daily Times (6.72) and The Nation (6.42) produce the most explicit discourse, while Dawn News (5.42) produces the least explicit among the five. On Dimension 4, The Nation (-3.87) and Express Tribune (-3.62) exhibit the most covert discourse. On Dimension 5, Express Tribune (5.02) and Dawn News (4.61) are the most abstract, while The News International (3.54) is the least abstract.

Table 4: Mean Dimension Scores for Five Pakistani Newspapers

Newspaper	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	Words
Daily Times (Islamabad)	-17.33	2.38	6.72	-2.54	4.02	30,105
Dawn News (Lahore)	-19.45	1.9	5.42	-2.19	4.61	30,266
Express Tribune (Quetta)	-23.48	3.29	5.74	-3.62	5.02	30,280
The Nation (Karachi)	-25.21	1.21	6.42	-3.87	4.33	30,045
The News International (Peshawar)	-23.24	1.14	5.54	-3.24	3.54	31,642

Note: D1=Involved vs Informative; D2=Narrative; D3=Explicit; D4=Overt Expression; D5=Abstract.

Figure 3: D1 Mean Scores: Five Pakistani Newspapers

	Daily Times	Dawn News	Express Tribune	The Nation	The News Intl
D1 Informative	-17.33	-19.45	-23.48	-25.21	-23.24

Note: Green bars (☐) = positive scores; Red bars (☐) = negative scores; bar length proportional to magnitude.

#### 4.7.2 British Newspapers

Table 5 above and the analysis below present mean dimension scores for the five British newspapers. On Dimension 1, all five British newspapers register less negative (more involved) scores than any of the Pakistani newspapers. The Guardian (Liverpool) produces the most involved discourse (-14.21), followed by Daily Mail (-13.88) and Daily Express (-13.54). Daily Telegraph (Birmingham) registers the least negative (most involved) score at -11.44, indicating it produces the most engaged, reader-oriented crime texts among British newspapers.

On Dimension 2, Daily Telegraph (3.77) and Daily Mail (3.66) produce the most narrative British crime texts, followed by The Guardian (3.41). Daily Express (2.66) produces the least narrative British crime texts. On Dimension 3, Daily Telegraph (4.26) and Daily Mirror (3.48) are the most explicit British newspapers, while Daily Mail (1.57) is the most situation-dependent. On Dimension 4, Daily Mail (-3.55) and The Guardian (-3.04) are the most covert British newspapers, while Daily Telegraph (-1.88) is the least covert. On Dimension 5, Daily Telegraph (3.08) is the most abstract British newspaper, while Daily Express (2.03) is the least abstract.

Table 5: Mean Dimension Scores for Five British Newspapers

Newspaper	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	Words
Daily Express (London)	-13.54	2.66	2.85	-2.06	2.03	32,713
Daily Mail (Manchester)	-13.88	3.66	1.57	-3.55	2.36	36,765
Daily Mirror (Bristol)	-12.81	2.84	3.48	-2.63	2.38	33,072
Daily Telegraph (Birmingham)	-11.44	3.77	4.26	-1.88	3.08	37,902
The Guardian (Liverpool)	-14.21	3.41	2.8	-3.04	2.7	30,306

Note: D1=Involved vs Informative; D2=Narrative; D3=Explicit; D4=Overt Expression; D5=Abstract.

Figure 4: D2 Narrative Scores: British vs. Pakistani Newspapers (Grouped)

	Daily Times	Dawn	Expr.T rib	Natio n	News Intl	D.Ex press	D.Mai l	D.Mi rror	D.Teleg r.	Guardia n
D2 Nar rative	+2.38	+1.90	+3.29	+1.21	+1.14	+2.66	+3.66	+2.84	+3.77	+3.41

Note: Green bars (►) = positive scores; Red bars (◄) = negative scores; bar length proportional to magnitude.

## 5. Discussion

This chapter interprets the quantitative findings presented in Chapter 4 in light of the theoretical framework and the body of prior research reviewed in Chapter 2. Each textual dimension is discussed in relation to textual examples drawn from the corpus, functional explanations grounded in the communicative purposes of crime press reporting, and comparisons with the findings of previous studies. The overarching argument is that the systematic linguistic differences between Pakistani and British crime press reportage reflect cross-cultural, post-colonial, and market-driven factors that shape language use in print media.

### 5.1 Dimension 1: Informativeness and Involvement in Crime Discourse

The finding that Pakistani crime press reportage is substantially more informative than British crime press reportage (D1: -21.74 vs. -13.18) is consistent with the predictions of the register variation framework. Pakistani English, as a non-native variety operating in a context where English competes with Urdu and regional languages for readership, must maximize informational density in order to communicate efficiently with a linguistically diverse audience. As Biber and Conrad (2009) observed, texts that serve informational purposes rely on the nominal style, characterized by dense packing of nouns, prepositions, and attributive adjectives, to convey large amounts of propositional content in compact structures.

The following example from The Nation newspaper illustrates the degree of noun density that characterizes Pakistani crime press reporting. Nouns are underlined for visibility:

*ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday directed the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to file its reply by Thursday on a plea filed by Pakistan People's Party's (PPP) former federal minister for petroleum. (The Nation, Pakistan, nouns underlined)*

In this brief extract, the sentence contains ten distinct nominal units: Supreme Court, National Accountability Bureau (NAB), reply, Thursday, plea, Pakistan People's Party (PPP), federal minister, petroleum, Monday, Islamabad. Each nominal phrase contributes a distinct unit of propositional information, creating a text that is lexically dense and syntactically compact. This nominal density is the direct linguistic correlate of the high informative dimension score.

In contrast, the following example from the Daily Mirror illustrates the involved style of British crime reporting:

*A Florida man has been charged with murder after his girlfriend told the authorities that the 29-year-old kicked her three-year-old daughter in the head. (Daily Mirror, UK)*

This extract employs personal reference (his girlfriend, her three-year-old daughter), relational constructions (has been charged, told), and a temporal-narrative structure that foregrounds human agents and their actions. The text is less nominally dense and more interpersonally engaging, consistent with the involved pole of Dimension 1. These differences are not accidental; they reflect the editorial choices of news organizations that serve different readerships with different expectations.

These findings are consistent with those of Ahmad (2016), whose multidimensional analysis of Pakistani political press coverage found a mean D1 score of -18.3 for Pakistani political columns, confirming that informational density is a pervasive feature of Pakistani English press registers across multiple news categories. The present findings extend this pattern to the crime press reportage genre. Anwar and Talaat (2011) similarly noted that Pakistani newspaper language tends toward greater lexical density than British equivalents, explaining this as a consequence of the educational and professional context in which Pakistani English journalism is produced. Razi (2014) found that Pakistani English-language newspapers blend informational and evaluative functions, but under the constraints of the crime reporting genre, the informational function clearly dominates.

The cross-cultural interpretation of this finding draws on Kachru's (1992) nativization thesis. Pakistani English, as an Outer Circle variety, has developed conventions for crime reporting that differ systematically from Inner Circle norms, reflecting the local communicative context. Pakistani readers of English-language newspapers tend to be highly educated, second-language users of English who expect information to be delivered efficiently and explicitly, without relying on cultural presuppositions that may not be universally shared. This expectation drives news organizations to prioritize informational density. As Barnhurst (2005) observed, newspaper market competitiveness forces publications to offer news text from local perspectives, and in the Pakistani context, this means maximizing the informational content of crime reports.

## 5.2 Dimension 2: Narrative Construction of Crime Events

The finding that British crime press reportage is more narrative than Pakistani crime press reportage (D2: +3.25 vs. +1.98) reflects fundamental differences in how crime events are constructed and presented for the reader in the two media systems. Narrative discourse, characterized by past tense verbs and personal pronouns, foregrounds the temporal sequencing of events and the roles of human participants. As Labov and Waletzky (1967) identified, narrative has a universal structure involving orientation, complication, and resolution, and crime reporting in particular lends itself to narrative framing because crime events are inherently sequential (action → consequence → response).

The following example from The Daily Telegraph illustrates the narrative style of British crime reporting, with past tense verbs highlighted:

*Oscar Pistorius' former lover re-emerged to support the "broken" former Paralympian as he was jailed for the murder. (The Daily Telegraph, UK — past verbs highlighted)*

In this extract, the temporal narrative is constructed through the sequential use of past tense verbs (re-emerged, was jailed) and personal pronouns (his, he), which position the events in a chronological sequence centered on human agents. The reader is drawn into a story with recognizable participants and a clear timeline, consistent with the involved, narrative style identified by Biber (1988).

By contrast, the following example from Daily Times (Pakistan) illustrates the less narrative style of Pakistani crime reporting:

*In a crackdown on illegal housing societies, the town planning and metropolitan wings of the Lahore Development Authority demolished boundary walls. (Daily Times, Pakistan)*

This example presents the event as a bureaucratic action rather than a narrative sequence, with the agents (town planning and metropolitan wings of the Lahore Development Authority) nominalized and embedded within a complex noun phrase. The temporal dimension is reduced to a single clause, and personal pronouns are absent. The text conveys the facts of the event without constructing a story around it, resulting in a less narrative score. This contrast is consistent with the post-colonial observation that Pakistani English journalism tends to adopt a more formal, institutionalized style of reporting compared to British journalism's preference for human-interest framing (Fowler, 1991).

In terms of internal Pakistani variation, Express Tribune (Quetta) produces the most narrative Pakistani crime texts (D2: 3.29), a score comparable to the most narrative British newspapers, suggesting that Express Tribune's editorial style is more oriented toward Western journalistic conventions. This finding aligns with the observation that Express Tribune is an internationally affiliated publication with a style closer to global English journalistic norms (Mahboob, 2004). The Nation and The News International, by contrast, produce the least narrative Pakistani crime texts (D2: 1.21 and 1.14 respectively), consistent with a more formal, institutional reporting register.

Bell (1991) and Fowler (1991) both noted that British press reporting relies heavily on narrative framing to engage readers emotionally and maintain readership. British crime reporting, in particular, uses the conventions of narrative journalism to create stories with identifiable protagonists, conflicts, and resolutions, which sustain reader interest and drive newspaper sales. Pakistani crime journalism, by contrast, appears to serve a different communicative function, providing factual records of criminal events for an audience that expects informational rather than narrative content. This functional divergence is the underlying explanation for the D2 difference between the two corpora.

### 5.3 Dimension 3: Explicitness and Referential Elaboration

The finding that Pakistani crime reporting is substantially more explicit than British crime reporting (D3: +5.97 vs. +2.99) is one of the most distinctive results of this study, and also the finding that most clearly differentiates the Pakistani crime press corpus from Biber's (1988) general press reportage norms (D3: -0.30). The explicitly reference-elaborating style of Pakistani crime reporting is reflected in the high frequencies of nominalizations, WH-clauses, and perfect aspect verbs in the Pakistani corpus.

Nominalizations are a key marker of explicit discourse because they allow complex propositional content, including entire actions, states, and processes, to be packaged into noun phrases that can

then serve as arguments, modifiers, or complements. Consider the following example from *The Nation*, in which explicit features are highlighted:

*Americans used more health services and spent more on prescription drugs in 2013, reversing a recent trend, though greater use of cheaper generic drugs helped control spending, according to a report. (The Nation, Pakistan — explicit features highlighted)*

This extract employs several nominalized forms (health services, prescription drugs, use, spending, control) and a WH-type adverbial structure (reversing a recent trend) that explicitly encodes the relationship between the events described. The information is entirely self-contained; a reader with no prior knowledge of the topic can fully understand the propositional content without relying on contextual knowledge. This is the hallmark of explicit, elaborated discourse.

The finding that Biber's (1988) press reportage norm falls below zero on D3 (-0.30, situation-dependent range) while the Pakistani crime corpus is strongly explicit (+5.97) suggests that Pakistani crime press reporting has developed an unusually high degree of referential elaboration compared to canonical British press reporting. This can be explained by the post-colonial context: Pakistani English operates in a multilingual, multi-cultural environment in which the shared contextual knowledge that British writers can assume among their readership cannot be taken for granted. News organizations and writers are therefore compelled by the sociolinguistic context to render information fully explicit. As Hassan and Halliday (1976) demonstrated, the ability to differentiate between endophoric and exophoric references is related to the degree of explicitness in a text; Pakistani crime reporting systematically favors endophoric (text-internal) reference over exophoric (context-dependent) reference.

Shabbir (2013), in a discourse analysis of editorials in *Dawn* and the *Hindustan Times*, found that *Dawn's* editorial writing exhibits a higher degree of formal elaboration than its Indian counterpart, attributing this to the academic and educational pressures that shape Pakistani English writing. The present findings extend this observation to the crime press reportage genre, suggesting that explicitness is a systemic feature of Pakistani English print media across genres.

#### 5.4 Dimension 4: Covert Expression and Editorial Stance

The finding that Pakistani crime press reporting is more covert than British crime reporting (D4: -3.09 vs. -2.61) indicates that Pakistani crime journalism is less overtly evaluative or persuasive, presenting information in a more neutral, stance-minimized manner. This finding is consistent with the informative orientation of Pakistani crime reporting identified on Dimension 1, texts that prioritize the delivery of facts over editorial stance are likely to be both informationally dense and covertly expressed.

The co-occurring features of Dimension 4, infinitives, modals of possibility, and modals of necessity, are used to mark the speaker's evaluation of the advisability, possibility, or necessity of events and actions. When these features are used sparingly, the resulting discourse is less explicitly evaluative. Consider the following example from *The Nation*, Pakistan, in which modal features are identifiable:

*After a massive year on the international scene, trendsetter Abbas Hasan starts 2014 off with a bang! After being named 'The Next Big Thing' by MTV India... (The Nation, Pakistan)*

While this example uses an evaluative construction (trendsetter, starts off with a bang), it does so through descriptive noun phrases rather than modal expressions of advisability or necessity. The text avoids explicit stance-marking through modals, reflecting the covert dimension of Pakistani crime press discourse. This is consistent with the observation that Pakistani newspaper writing tends to employ a formal register that minimizes the personal stance of the writer, presenting events as objective facts rather than as matters for editorial judgment.

It is noteworthy that both the Pakistani and British crime corpora, as well as Biber's (1988) press reportage norm, fall in the negative (covert) range on D4. This confirms that press reporting as a genre tends toward objectivity and a minimization of overt editorial stance, consistent with the journalistic norms of objectivity documented by Bell (1991) and Fowler (1991). The Pakistani corpus's more extreme covert score (-3.09 vs. -2.61) indicates an even stronger adherence to this norm, which can be attributed to the formal educational context and post-colonial journalistic traditions that inform Pakistani English newspaper writing.

### 5.5 Dimension 5: Abstractness, Passivization, and Agent Deletion

The finding that Pakistani crime reporting is substantially more abstract than British crime reporting (D5: +4.31 vs. +2.52) reflects systematic differences in how agency is represented in crime news texts. Abstract discourse, marked by high frequencies of passive constructions, agentless passives, and by-passives, reduces the prominence of agents, the individuals responsible for actions, and foregrounds the actions or states themselves. This has important functional and ideological implications for crime reporting (van Dijk, 1998).

The following example from *The Nation*, Pakistan, illustrates the abstract passive style of Pakistani crime reporting, with passive constructions highlighted:

*Some unknown people gunned down two persons and injured three at Pedak in the outskirts on Tuesday morning here, Local TV reported. Levies Force confirmed. (The Nation, Pakistan)*

While this example uses an active construction in the first clause, the second clause (Levies Force confirmed) exemplifies the minimalist, agent-backgrounding style of Pakistani crime reporting, where the source of information is identified without elaboration of the action. More characteristic agentless passive constructions in the Pakistani corpus include forms such as "were arrested," "was sentenced," "have been charged" without explicit by-phrases, which leave the agent, typically the state, the police, or the courts, unstated. This reflects what Thompson (1982) and Weiner and Labov (1983) identified as the functional motivation for passivization: to foreground the affected participant and background the agent.

In the crime press reporting context, agentless passives serve several communicative functions. They allow news writers to report on criminal events without directly naming the agents of action, either because the agent is unknown, because naming the agent is legally sensitive, or because the focus of the report is on the victim or the outcome rather than the perpetrator. Pakistani crime reporting's higher D5 score suggests that these considerations apply with greater frequency or intensity in the Pakistani context. This may be related to the legal and political environment in which Pakistani journalism operates: concerns about defamation, political sensitivity, or the early stages of an investigation may discourage the explicit naming of agents, driving the use of agentless passive constructions.

Van Dijk (1998) noted that passivization in news discourse often reflects ideological choices about whose agency is foregrounded and whose is suppressed. Fairclough (1995) similarly argued that the grammatical choices of news organizations encode implicit evaluations of events and participants. The higher frequency of passives in Pakistani crime reporting may thus reflect not only stylistic preferences but also institutional and legal constraints on attribution in Pakistani journalism. This interpretation is supported by Rehman and Eijaz (2015), whose study of Pakistani media coverage found that Pakistani English newspapers exercise considerable caution in attributing criminal actions to named individuals in ongoing investigations.

British crime reporting, while also using passive constructions, does so less extensively (D5: +2.52). British newspapers tend to rely more on active constructions and direct attribution, consistent with the more narrative, agent-foregrounding style identified on Dimension 2. The Daily Telegraph (3.08) is the most abstract British newspaper, suggesting that its more formal, institutional reporting style incorporates more passive constructions, while Daily Express (2.03) is the least abstract, reflecting a more tabloid-style active reporting register.

### **5.6 Register Identity of Pakistani Crime Press Reportage**

Taken together, the findings across all five dimensions establish Pakistani crime press reportage as a distinct linguistic sub-register with a coherent and internally consistent profile. The register is characterized by high informational density (D1), relatively low narrative involvement (D2), high referential explicitness (D3), covert editorial stance (D4), and high abstractness through passivization (D5). This profile is systematically different from both British crime press reportage and Biber's (1988) general press reportage norms.

Biber (1988) argued that register identity is defined not by individual features but by the co-occurrence of multiple features that serve shared communicative functions. The Pakistani crime press register's distinctive profile, combining features of informative, explicit, covert, and abstract discourse, reflects the functional demands of a journalism that must communicate complex legal and institutional information to a diverse, multilingual readership without relying on shared contextual knowledge, personal engagement strategies, or explicit editorial stance-marking. This functional profile is uniquely suited to the Pakistani English journalistic context and constitutes strong evidence that Pakistani English crime press reporting is an autonomous sub-register within the broader system of Pakistani English.

This interpretation is consistent with Kachru's (1992) nativization thesis, which predicts that Outer Circle English varieties will develop their own functional norms adapted to local communicative contexts. It also supports Schneider's (2007) postcolonial English model, which identifies the institutionalization of local linguistic norms as a key stage in the development of postcolonial English varieties. The present study demonstrates that Pakistani English crime press reporting has reached a stage of linguistic institutionalization at which its register features are systematic, measurable, and clearly distinguishable from those of British English crime press reporting.

## **6. Conclusion**

The present study has conducted a comprehensive multidimensional analysis of a 324,086-word corpus of Pakistani and British crime press reportage, applying Biber's (1988) five textual dimensions to a balanced sample of 1,000 texts drawn from ten leading newspapers in both

countries. The findings demonstrate that Pakistani crime press reportage differs systematically and significantly from British crime press reportage across all five textual dimensions: Pakistani crime reporting is more informative (D1: -21.74 vs. -13.18), less narrative (D2: +1.98 vs. +3.25), more explicit (D3: +5.97 vs. +2.99), more covert (D4: -3.09 vs. -2.61), and more abstract (D5: +4.31 vs. +2.52). These differences are not random; they form a coherent register profile that reflects the functional demands of Pakistani English crime journalism.

Comparison with Biber's (1988) original press reportage norms reveals that Pakistani crime press reporting is even more informationally dense, more explicit, more covert, and more abstract than canonical British press reporting, confirming that it constitutes a distinctive sub-register of Pakistani English that has developed its own functional norms independently of British English journalistic conventions. The internal comparison of individual newspapers reveals that while all five Pakistani newspapers share the general register profile described above, there is notable variation among them, with *The Nation* (Karachi) being the most informative and covert, *Express Tribune* (Quetta) being the most narrative, and *Daily Times* (Islamabad) being the most explicit.

The theoretical implications of these findings are significant. They provide strong empirical support for Kachru's (1992) claim that Outer Circle English varieties develop their own register norms adapted to local communicative contexts. They also support Schneider's (2007) postcolonial English model and extend the MD analytical tradition into a new genre and a new variety of English. Methodologically, the study confirms the applicability of Biber's (1988) MD framework to non-native English varieties, demonstrating that the framework can reveal systematic linguistic variation in World Englishes that would not be visible to studies focused on individual features in isolation.

Future research may build on these findings by exploring additional press genres such as sports and political reporting, incorporating digital and social media, or examining how evolving journalistic practices continue to influence language use in Pakistani crime reporting. Diachronic analyses could illuminate how Pakistani crime press reporting has shifted over time. Comparative studies with other Outer Circle varieties, such as Indian English or Nigerian English, would further illuminate the relationship between post-colonial context and register development in World Englishes.

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