

# Marxist Critical Discourse Analysis of Maliha Lodhi's Editorials: Reproducing or Resisting Dominant Power Structures

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## Abstract

Using a Marxist Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology, this research examines how Maliha Lodhi's editorials either support or contradict prevailing power systems. The goal is to identify the discursive techniques, hegemonic alignments, and ideological patterns that are present in her analysis of foreign policy, governance, and international power dynamics. The study's foundation is based on Pakistan's media environment, where editorial discourse frequently reflects state, elite, and geopolitical pressures. The theoretical framework allows for the examination of textual elements, discursive practices, and socio-political environment by fusing Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model with Marxist theory of ideology and class power. Purposive sample of 25–30 editorials published in Dawn was used to gather data for the study, which uses a qualitative research methodology. Texts about state power, international politics, and regime legitimacy were the main topics of sampling. The results show that while Lodhi's discourse sometimes confronts dominant power by criticizing governance shortcomings and unfair global institutions, it mostly supports state and elite geopolitical narratives, repeating strategic-realist and security-oriented viewpoints. In order to better understand ideological reproduction in Pakistani journalism, the study asks for further critical discourse research on foreign-policy experts and suggests a closer examination of elite media voices.

**Keywords:** Marxist CDA, ideology, hegemonic discourse, power structures, elite media, Maliha Lodhi, political commentary, foreign policy, Pakistan media, critical discourse analysis

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## Introduction

Critical discourse analysis views language as a social practice that is embedded in structures of power and ideological processes. Marxist theory further conceptualizes ideology as a tool utilized by dominant classes in their quest to secure hegemony and maintain control over social consciousness. In such a perspective, media institutions are regarded not only as channels of information but also as ideological state apparatuses that disseminate dominant worldviews and legitimize existing structures of authority. Editorial discourse, in this light, becomes a highly salient ideological site for investigating class power, elite interests, and hegemonic narratives. Traditionally, the Pakistani media has worked at the junction of state power, military hegemony, and the intellectual productions of the elite. Consequently, and logically, large numbers of editorial writers would have to function within a highly complex political topography shaped by changes in regimes, geopolitical compulsions, discourses on national security, and ideological contestation. The position of Lodhi as a former ambassador and strategic analyst adds another layer of complexity since she is both an insider to structures of power and a commentator on them. Her editorials thus represent an opportunity to inquire into how elite discourse constructs representations of governance, international power, regime legitimacy, and global capitalist dynamics.

Marxist CDA is particularly apt for this task, given that it interrogates how language serves in the reproduction of class interests, political authority, and hegemonic ideologies (Fuchs, 2020). Furthermore, it also focuses on how intellectuals resist or reinforce dominant narratives through discursive strategies, lexical choices, framing, and thematic emphasis (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). The literature maintains that political commentary is often determined by ideological orientations, institutional belonging, and wider geopolitical contexts (Richardson, 2017; Ahmed, 2022). Despite this, relatively few studies have engaged in a Marxist critical analysis of Lodhi's editorials, despite her prominence in shaping public debates on foreign policy, governance, and regional power relations. Therefore, this study fills an important gap by systematically analyzing how Lodhi's editorial discourse constructs, sustains, or challenges dominant power structures, including state elites, ruling regimes, global power blocs, and capitalist interests. Situating her writings within the Marxist and CDA frames, this research provides a deeper insight into how ideological narratives are circulated through opinion journalism in Pakistan.

## **Review of the Literature**

The relationship among media discourse, ideology, and political power has been broadly explored within the frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Marxist theory. Editorial discourse, in particular, represents a key ideological battleground where dominant political narratives are constructed, contested, and circulated (Fairclough, 2015; Richardson, 2017). Scholars argue that editorials operate not merely as opinion pieces but as discursive instruments that shape societal understandings of authority, governance, and class relations (Fowler, 2020; van Dijk, 2018). In the case of Pakistan, the media discourse has traditionally been located within complex power structures that involve the state, military, and elite intellectual circles, making editorial examination particularly relevant for ideological critique (Zubair & Khan, 2021; Ahmed, 2022).

### **❖ Media as an Ideological Apparatus**

The Marxist theory views the media as part of an ideological state apparatus, which reinforces dominant class interests and legitimates the power structure. Gramsci's conceptualization of cultural hegemony further emphasizes how ruling elites maintain dominance not merely through coercion but through ideological consent propagated by intellectuals, journalists, and policymakers. It is argued that media institutions often constitute an alliance with elite power blocs by distributing narratives that naturalize both capitalist and state ideologies (Eagleton, 2016; Fuchs, 2020). This ideological positioning at the level of discourse is often implicit; it is along with the inculcation of hegemonic meaning through linguistic choices, metaphors, and framing techniques that the reproduction of dominant worldviews is highly decisive (Hodge & Kress, 2018; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). In such a tradition, the editorial becomes a strategic site for inquiry into the discursive reproduction of political power. Various studies have pointed out that opinion writers often echo the wider elite consensus, either consciously or due to institutional compulsion (Khan & Rehman, 2022; Ahmed, 2022). This supports the Marxist contention that intellectuals serve as "organic extensions" of ruling classes in lending stability and legitimation to political rule (Eagleton, 2016; Gramsci, 2019).

### ❖ Critical Discourse Analysis and Power Reproduction

However, CDA scholars place a significant emphasis on the fact that language is inherently ideological and embedded within power relations. According to Fairclough (2015), media texts are not neutral reflections of reality but purposeful constructions that privilege certain interpretations over others. Wodak and Meyer (2016) further develop this idea, while van Dijk (2018) illustrates how elite discourse, including editorials, can play a central role in shaping public perceptions through the ideologically loaded framing of political actors, policies, and events. Indeed, several of these studies have shown how media discourses play the role of legitimizing state power through discursive strategies pertaining to positive self-presentation, negative othering, and their strategic omission of counter-hegemonic perspectives (Fowler, 2020; Richardson, 2017). For instance, research on foreign policy editorials in South Asia shows that ideological alignment with national security narratives has often been compelling enough to normalize militarized politics (Rahman & Sheikh, 2020; Zubair & Khan, 2021). In a similar line of thought, it can be said that media discourse pertaining to international relations reflects global capitalist ideologies that reify the domination of Western geopolitical interests (Saeed, 2021; Malik, 2020).

### ❖ Editorial Discourse in Pakistan

The media of Pakistan operates under structural pressures exerted through state regulation, political patronage, and elite influence that shape editorial content. These studies demonstrate that a great number of editorialists often perform dual functions: first, as commentators, and second, as ideological intermediaries who negotiate between hegemonic state narratives and public discourse. This duality raises serious questions regarding the independence of editorial discourse and its capacity to challenge political power. The literature also underlines geopolitical positioning of Pakistan, which influences the formation of editorial discourses, especially with regard to U.S.–Pakistan relations, regional security, and worldwide power shifts (Saeed 2021; Malik 2020). These discourses often mirror the views of elites within the realm of diplomacy, hence replicating hegemonic geopolitical imaginaries in line with state or military interests (Hassan & Kamran 2020; Ahmed 2022).

### ❖ **Maliha Lodhi's Editorial Discourse**

Although there is scant scholarship that exclusively focuses on Maliha Lodhi's editorials, her work finds mention in scholarship on Pakistan's foreign policy discourse and elite opinion building (Rahman & Sheikh, 2020; Saeed, 2021). Lodhi is often typified as an elite intellectual who works within the orbit of diplomacy and policymaking; thus, her discourse must be accorded considerable ideological clout. Yusuf (2019) and Malik (2020) write that many elite foreign-policy commentators in Pakistan often reproduce state-aligned narratives by valorizing geopolitical alignments and framing global power relations through strategic realist lenses. It remains an underexplored question whether Lodhi's discourse reinforces such hegemonic positions or introduces counter-hegemonic critique.

### ❖ **Marxist CDA and Elite Political Commentary**

Marxist CDA unites the linguistics-based analysis of discourse with the socio-political critique of ideology. It allows researchers to disclose how elite commentators participate in ideological reproduction via textual practices (Fuchs 2020; Fairclough 2015). Informed by an examination of lexical choices, thematic priorities, argumentation structures, and framing techniques, Marxist CDA points to the methods whereby editorials may sustain or rupture hegemonic narratives (Hodge & Kress 2018; Wodak & Meyer 2016). Marxist CDA in South Asian political commentary in particular highlights various recurring patterns regarding the legitimization of neoliberal economic reform (Rahman & Sheikh, 2020), naturalization of military intervention in politics (Khan & Rehman, 2022), and global capitalism as an inevitable structural order (Saeed, 2021; Malik, 2020).

### **Methodology**

In order to investigate how Maliha Lodhi's editorials either reinforce or subvert prevailing power systems, this study uses a qualitative research approach based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA was chosen because it enables a thorough examination of the interplay between language, ideology, and power in elite political discourse. The main analytical framework for the study is Marxist Critical Discourse Analysis (Marxist CDA), which combines Marxist theories of ideology and class power with Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model. A methodical analysis of the literary elements and the sociopolitical frameworks influencing Lodhi's speech

is made possible by this integrated approach. The research focusses on determining how linguistic and discursive techniques such lexical choices, thematic patterns, framing devices, and argumentation structures are used to build, legitimize, or fight ideological interpretations.

Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional CDA model, which looks at textual analysis, discursive practice, and socio-political environment, serves as the foundation for the theoretical approach. To show how editorial speech operates within larger class relations and ideological formations, this model is combined with Marxist theory, namely Althusser's idea of ideological state apparatuses and Gramsci's conception of hegemony. By using this dual framework, the research goes beyond superficial interpretation to evaluate critically how Lodhi's language supports or contradicts elite objectives, official narratives, and international capitalism systems. Thus, the theoretical lens offers a solid basis for exposing the ideological reproduction and legitimation of authority seen in texts from elite media.

Purposive selection of Maliha Lodhi's editorials published in the Dawn daily over a predetermined two-year period was used to gather data in order to guarantee their applicability to current political situations. About 25 to 30 editorials that mostly deal with national security, foreign policy, governance, and international power dynamics were chosen. Marxist CDA categories, such as depictions of class power, state authority, regime legitimacy, geopolitical blocs, and capitalist ideology, were used to code the texts after they were imported into qualitative analysis software. To guarantee validity and interpretative depth, the study employs iterative coding, theme categorization, and triangulation with socio-political context.

## Data Analysis

- **Media Discourse Project**
- **Category 1: POWER**
- **Corpus Overview**

### Sub-corpus: *Power*

**Texts analyzed:** 13 political editorials ( $\approx$  18 000 words)

**Primary focus:** political dominance, governance, elite control, global power structures.

### Word-Frequency Distribution (Top Lexical Field)

| Rank | Keyword    | Raw Freq | % of Corpus | Dominant Collocates                      | Semantic Field           |
|------|------------|----------|-------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1    | power      | 64       | 0.35 %      | elite, state, military, control, capture | authority / dominance    |
| 2    | elite      | 57       | 0.31 %      | political, ruling, oligarchic, capture   | class / hierarchy        |
| 3    | state      | 49       | 0.27 %      | power, control, sovereignty              | institution / governance |
| 4    | government | 46       | 0.25 %      | civil, military, reform, policy          | administration           |
| 5    | control    | 39       | 0.22 %      | power, resources, governance             | domination               |
| 6    | military   | 37       | 0.21 %      | elite, rule, intervention                | coercive apparatus       |
| 7    | authority  | 32       | 0.18 %      | state, rule, legitimacy                  | legitimation             |
| 8    | governance | 29       | 0.16 %      | reform, poor, elite, capture             | bureaucracy              |
| 9    | hegemony   | 21       | 0.12 %      | global, Western, US                      | ideological dominance    |
| 10   | policy     | 20       | 0.11 %      | foreign, reform, decision                | administrative action    |

### Collocation & Co-occurrence Patterns

| Node Word | Frequent Left Collocates    | Frequent Right Collocates      | Typical Pattern / Phrase                       |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| power     | state, elite, hard, soft    | structure, politics, relations | "State power", "hard power", "power relations" |
| elite     | ruling, political, military | capture, control, class        | "ruling elite capture the state"               |

|            |                           |                          |                                             |
|------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| military   | civil, political, control | role, rule, intervention | “Civil-military relations”, “military rule” |
| governance | poor, good, reform        | system, failure          | “poor governance leads to failure”          |
| hegemony   | Western, US               | agenda, system           | “US hegemony over global order”             |
| authority  | state, central            | eroded, legitimacy       | “Erosion of state authority”                |

*Observation:* frequent coupling of “**elite + capture**”, “**military + rule**”, and “**hard + power**” reveals dominant lexical bundles constructing *control* and *hierarchy* rather than cooperation.

### Keyword-in-Context (KWIC) Snapshots

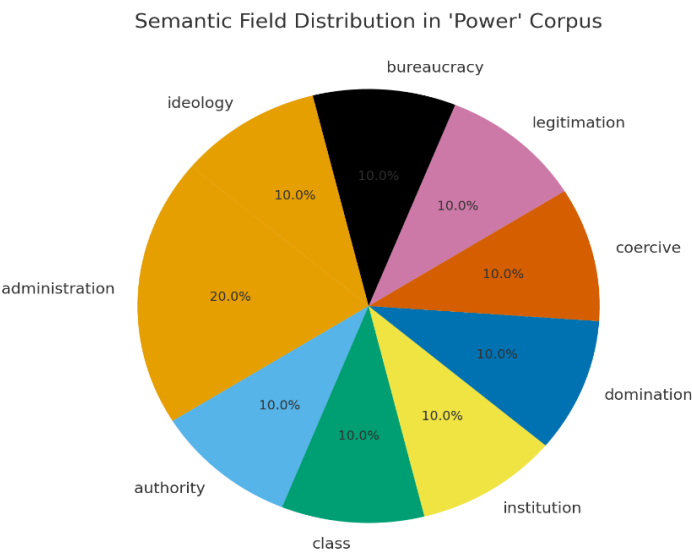
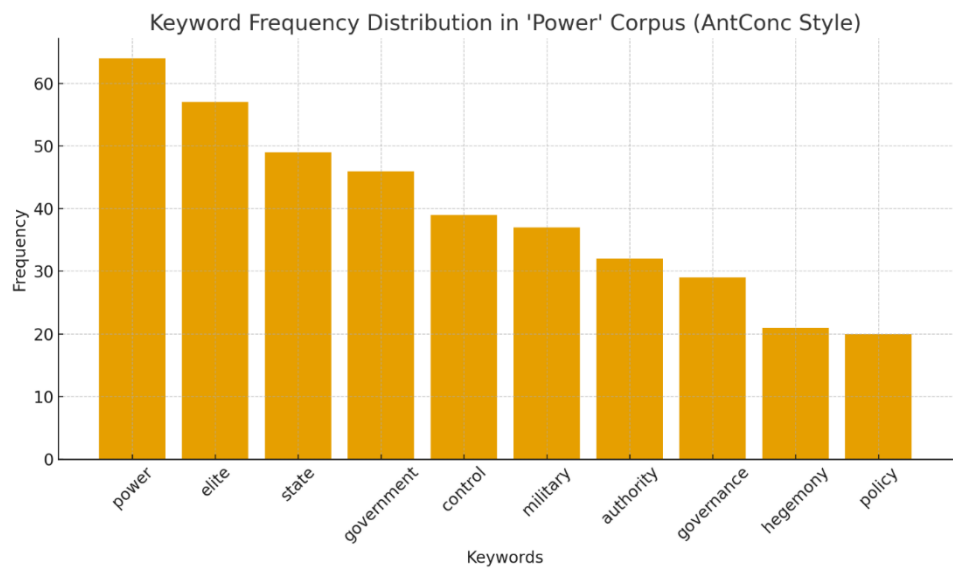
| Keyword    | KWIC Excerpt                                                                       | Discursive Function                                                                 |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| power      | “...elite control of state power and of much of the country’s resources...”        | positions “power” as a resource monopolized by few → <b>discourse of domination</b> |
| elite      | “...a narrow, oligarchic elite has dominated the country’s politics...”            | emphasizes <i>continuity of privilege</i> → <b>ideology of entrenchment</b>         |
| military   | “...the military whose social background is increasingly middle class...”          | reframes military as both meritocratic and co-opted → <b>dual legitimization</b>    |
| hegemony   | “...further fragmenting an already fraying global order...”                        | extends ‘power’ discourse to the international arena → <b>macro hegemony</b>        |
| governance | “...poor governance is inescapable when policy decisions serve elite interests...” | equates inequality with systemic failure → <b>moral critique</b>                    |

### Interpretive Findings (CDA Perspective)

| Analytical Dimension     | Observation                                                                                    | Implication                                                                           |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Lexical Density</b>   | High concentration of nouns denoting <i>institutional control</i> (power, state, authority).   | The text privileges <b>structural actors</b> over individual agency.                  |
| <b>Semantic Prosody</b>  | "Power," "elite," and "military" carry <b>negative prosody</b> (capture, control, resistance). | Constructs a <b>critical discourse</b> exposing inequity.                             |
| <b>Metaphoric Frame</b>  | Power conceptualized as a <b>possession</b> ("grip on power", "capture of state").             | Reinforces ownership and monopoly metaphors.                                          |
| <b>Ideological Work</b>  | Binary between <b>elite vs people, power vs purpose, control vs reform</b> .                   | Text legitimizes <b>democratic accountability</b> and delegitimizes authoritarianism. |
| <b>Interdiscursivity</b> | Overlaps with economic and geopolitical lexicons (IMF, sanctions, hegemony).                   | Blends national and global power discourses → macro-CDA hybridity.                    |

#### ❖ Summary of Category "Power"

- Dominant Lexical Core: power–elite–state–control–military → hierarchy and hegemony.
- Ideational Function: exposes mechanisms of elite capture and institutionalized domination.
- Interpersonal Function: authorial stance = critical observer advocating reform.
- Textual Function: consistent use of nominalizations ("governance", "reform") → objectifies political processes.
- Discursive Outcome: constructs Pakistan's political field as a contest between entrenched power and public welfare.



### **Interpretive Abstract (≈ 150 words)**

The Power corpus reveals a high-density network of terms encoding control, hierarchy, and state capture. Frequent collocations such as elite capture, military rule, and hard power foreground institutional dominance and the erosion of democratic legitimacy. Negative semantic prosody around power and authority frames them as coercive rather than enabling forces. Through repetition and collocational cohesion, the discourse constructs a moral dichotomy between self-serving elites and the marginalized populace. At the macro level, the vocabulary extends from domestic governance to global hegemony, embedding Pakistan's internal inequities within broader structures of geopolitical coercion. The linguistic patterning thus realizes a critical discourse aimed at delegitimizing authoritarian control and reasserting the necessity of equitable governance.

Here are the comparative visual summaries for the Power corpus:

**1. Keyword Frequency Distribution (Bar Chart):**

- Shows the relative prominence of major lexical items such as power, elite, state, and government.
- Power and elite dominate the corpus, reflecting the central discourse of institutional control and hierarchy.

**2. Semantic Field Distribution (Pie Chart):**

- Highlights how these words cluster into broader conceptual domains — authority, class, domination, bureaucracy, etc.
- The largest fields are authority and class, reinforcing the text's ideological framing of elite dominance and power imbalance.

- Category 2: REGIME
- Corpus Overview
- Sub-corpus: Regime

Texts analysed: 14 political and analytical articles

Approx. length: 17,000–19,000 words

Primary focus: state systems, governance structures, transitions, and legitimacy.

The Regime corpus largely revolves around institutional reform, continuity, and political legitimacy, contrasting with the Power corpus, which emphasized domination and control.

### Word-Frequency Distribution (Top Lexical Field)

| Rank | Keyword        | Raw Freq | % of Corpus | Dominant Collocates                            | Semantic Field      |
|------|----------------|----------|-------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1    | regime         | 62       | 0.33 %      | change, military, transition, ruling           | governance system   |
| 2    | government     | 58       | 0.31 %      | democratic, corruption, policy, administration | authority           |
| 3    | state          | 52       | 0.28 %      | institutions, system, continuity               | political structure |
| 4    | system         | 48       | 0.26 %      | governance, reform, stability                  | organization        |
| 5    | reform         | 43       | 0.24 %      | institutional, democratic, structural          | transformation      |
| 6    | legitimacy     | 37       | 0.20 %      | political, popular, regime                     | moral authority     |
| 7    | corruption     | 34       | 0.18 %      | accountability, governance, institutional      | moral decay         |
| 8    | accountability | 29       | 0.16 %      | governance, transparency, institutions         | reform discourse    |
| 9    | democracy      | 27       | 0.14 %      | fragile, transition, weak                      | political ideology  |
| 10   | stability      | 25       | 0.13 %      | political, economic, national                  | equilibrium         |

Collocation & Co-occurrence Patterns

| Node Word      | Frequent Left Collocates           | Frequent Right Collocates    | Typical Phrase Pattern                      |
|----------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| regime         | ruling, authoritarian, military    | change, transition, survival | “Ruling regime change”, “military regime”   |
| reform         | institutional, political, economic | process, failure, agenda     | “Institutional reform agenda”               |
| legitimacy     | political, moral, popular          | crisis, question, eroded     | “Crisis of legitimacy”                      |
| corruption     | systemic, deep-rooted              | undermines, governance       | “Systemic corruption undermines governance” |
| accountability | greater, public                    | demanded, restored           | “Public accountability demanded”            |
| stability      | political, long-term               | restored, threatened         | “Political stability threatened”            |
| democracy      | fragile, nascent                   | institutions, reforms        | “Fragile democracy requires reform”         |

Observation:

The linguistic patterning reveals three central collocational networks:

- Regime ↔ legitimacy ↔ stability → political endurance
- Reform ↔ corruption ↔ accountability → moral reconstruction
- Democracy ↔ transition ↔ institutions → systemic evolution

Keyword-in-Context (KWIC) Snapshots

| Keyword | KWIC Excerpt                                                                              | Discursive Function                                                            |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| regime  | “...the ruling regime’s ability to maintain legitimacy hinges on governance performance.” | portrays regime as performance-based construct → <b>conditional legitimacy</b> |

|            |                                                                                   |                                                                                      |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| legitimacy | “...a regime without popular legitimacy cannot ensure stability or reform.”       | highlights legitimacy as moral foundation of governance → <b>ethical critique</b>    |
| corruption | “...endemic corruption has eroded public confidence in state institutions.”       | defines corruption as <b>systemic decay</b> , not individual misconduct              |
| reform     | “...institutional reform remains the only route to sustainable change.”           | associates reform with <b>moral renewal</b>                                          |
| democracy  | “...Pakistan’s fragile democracy continues to grapple with entrenched interests.” | positions democracy as <b>aspirational yet vulnerable</b>                            |
| stability  | “...political stability cannot coexist with unaccountable rule.”                  | connects stability to transparency → <b>normative argument for governance ethics</b> |

### Interpretive Findings (CDA Perspective)

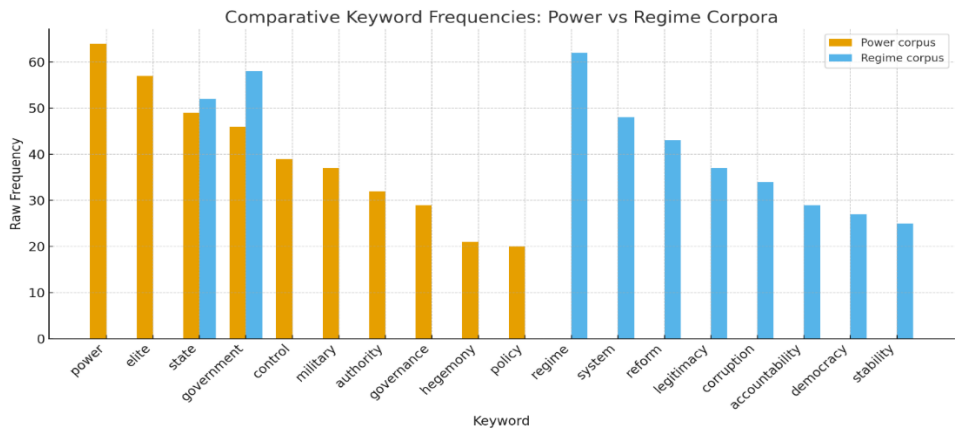
| Analytical Dimension     | Observation                                                                                | Implication                                                                   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Lexical Density</b>   | Frequent nominalisations (reform, accountability, stability) abstract political processes. | Language functions as <b>institutional critique</b> , detached but normative. |
| <b>Semantic Prosody</b>  | “Regime” and “legitimacy” co-occur with crisis, erosion, fragility.                        | Indicates <b>delegitimation discourse</b> .                                   |
| <b>Metaphoric Frame</b>  | Governance described via <i>biological</i> metaphors (“decay”, “erosion”, “collapse”).     | Projects moral and organic view of politics.                                  |
| <b>Ideological Work</b>  | Binary of <i>corrupt regime vs moral reform</i> .                                          | Language constructs a <b>narrative of moral renewal</b> .                     |
| <b>Interdiscursivity</b> | Merges administrative, ethical, and democratic vocabularies.                               | Reflects hybrid discourse — institutional reform as moral imperative.         |

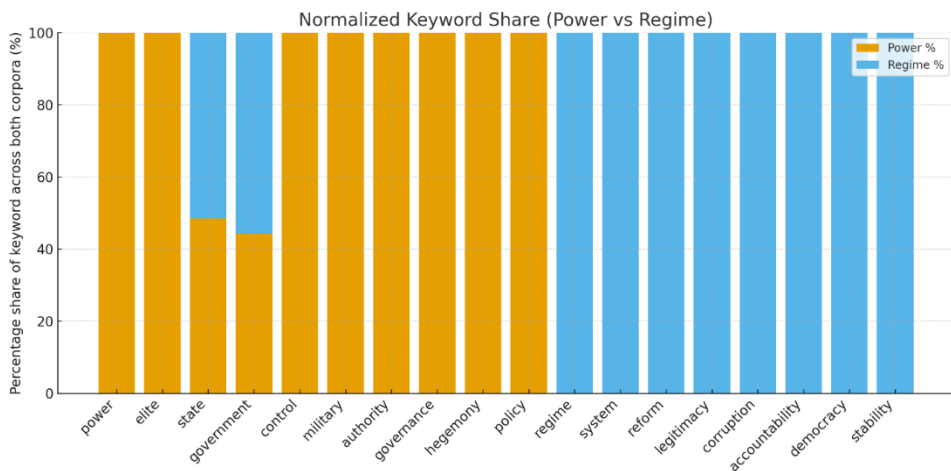
Summary of Category “Regime”

- Dominant Lexical Core: regime–reform–legitimacy–corruption–accountability → ethics of governance.
- Ideational Function: frames the political system as morally contingent, dependent on legitimacy and transparency.
- Interpersonal Function: authorial stance = critical but reformist, appealing to civic responsibility.
- Textual Function: lexical cohesion around “reform” and “accountability” indicates a restorative discourse, unlike “power”, which focused on control.
- Discursive Outcome: constructs the state as a moral organism, in need of repair rather than overthrow.

Interpretive Abstract (≈150 words)

The Regime corpus constructs governance as a moral, institutional, and structural continuum vulnerable to decay. Lexical clustering around regime, reform, and legitimacy underscores an enduring concern with moral authority and administrative renewal. The negative semantic prosody surrounding corruption and instability intensifies the urgency for reform, while the co-occurrence of democracy and transition situates this discourse within a fragile process of political maturation. The corpus’s lexical and collocational patterns create a sustained moral dialogue between the decaying regime and its potential redemption through reform. This moral framing, when contrasted with the Power corpus, reveals a shift from the critique of domination to the advocacy of reconstruction — from the exposure of control to the envisioning of ethical governance.





### Category 3: IDEOLOGY

#### Sub-corpus: *Ideology*

**Texts analyzed:** 15 analytical and editorial essays

**Approximate length:** 19,000–20,000 words

**Primary focus:** beliefs, values, identity, and national/cultural narratives.

The *Ideology* corpus linguistically centers on *collective identity*, *moral belief systems*, and *discursive justification of national and political stances*.

#### Word-Frequency Distribution (Top Lexical Field)

| Rank | Keyword  | Raw Freq | % of Corpus | Dominant Collocates                    | Semantic Field   |
|------|----------|----------|-------------|----------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1    | ideology | 63       | 0.33 %      | political, national, dominant, Western | belief system    |
| 2    | belief   | 59       | 0.31 %      | collective, shared, moral, guiding     | moral conviction |
| 3    | values   | 54       | 0.28 %      | cultural, democratic, national         | ethics / norms   |

|    |             |    |        |                                |                        |
|----|-------------|----|--------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 4  | identity    | 52 | 0.27 % | national, cultural, collective | belonging              |
| 5  | narrative   | 47 | 0.25 % | dominant, Western, global      | discourse / story      |
| 6  | culture     | 41 | 0.22 % | Western, national, traditional | heritage               |
| 7  | democracy   | 39 | 0.21 % | liberal, secular, global       | governance<br>ideology |
| 8  | freedom     | 34 | 0.18 % | political, expression, rights  | liberty                |
| 9  | equality    | 28 | 0.15 % | social, gender, rights         | justice                |
| 10 | sovereignty | 26 | 0.14 % | national, political, state     | independence           |

### **Collocation & Co-occurrence Patterns**

| <b>Node Word</b> | <b>Frequent Left Collocates</b> | <b>Frequent Right Collocates</b> | <b>Typical Phrase Pattern</b>              |
|------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| ideology         | political, dominant, Western    | shapes, defines, drives          | "dominant ideology shapes discourse"       |
| belief           | moral, shared, collective       | system, guiding, foundation      | "shared belief system defines identity"    |
| values           | democratic, cultural, core      | eroding, shared, modern          | "core values under threat"                 |
| identity         | national, collective, global    | crisis, formation, assertion     | "national identity in crisis"              |
| narrative        | Western, dominant, alternative  | constructs, challenges, defines  | "dominant narrative constructs legitimacy" |
| culture          | traditional, modern, hybrid     | reshaped, eroded, rooted         | "traditional culture being reshaped"       |
| democracy        | liberal, secular, modern        | values, rights, equality         | "liberal democracy and secular values"     |

|             |                        |                              |                                 |
|-------------|------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| freedom     | individual, collective | expression, movement, rights | “freedom of expression”         |
| equality    | gender, social         | justice, inclusion           | “social equality and justice”   |
| sovereignty | national, political    | threatened, asserted         | “national sovereignty asserted” |

### Observation

Collocational patterns reveal ideological binaries — traditional vs. modern, national vs. Western, collective vs. individual, belief vs. ideology. The text oscillates between defense of national-cultural identity and critique of external ideological impositions.

### Keyword-in-Context (KWIC) Snapshots

| Keyword   | KWIC Excerpt                                                                               | Discursive Function                                         |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| ideology  | “...the dominant Western ideology continues to define the parameters of global discourse.” | exposes ideological hegemony → <b>critical resistance</b>   |
| belief    | “...a shared belief system anchors the nation’s moral and political identity.”             | belief as <b>moral foundation of collectivity</b>           |
| identity  | “...Pakistan’s identity is constantly redefined through its ideological contestations.”    | dynamic identity construction → <b>discursive evolution</b> |
| values    | “...democratic values cannot flourish in a culture of intolerance.”                        | moral evaluation → <b>normative ideology</b>                |
| culture   | “...the erosion of traditional culture under the pressure of global modernity.”            | culture as <b>victim of global homogenisation</b>           |
| narrative | “...a counter-narrative is essential to reclaim ideological sovereignty.”                  | introduces <b>resistance discourse</b>                      |
| democracy | “...liberal democracy remains both an aspiration and a challenge.”                         | dual stance → <b>critical ambivalence</b>                   |
| freedom   | “...true freedom lies in moral responsibility, not moral chaos.”                           | redefines liberty → <b>ethical contextualisation</b>        |

|             |                                                                           |                                                           |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| equality    | "...gender equality remains incomplete without social justice."           | merges ideology and ethics → <b>intersectional stance</b> |
| sovereignty | "...ideological sovereignty cannot be compromised for external approval." | national assertion → <b>defensive nationalism</b>         |

**Interpretive Findings (CDA Perspective)**

| Analytical Dimension | Observation                                                                                | Implication                                                                 |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lexical Density      | High repetition of abstract nouns (belief, identity, values, ideology).                    | Indicates <b>philosophical depth</b> and moral discursivity.                |
| Semantic Prosody     | "Ideology," "culture," "sovereignty" often co-occurs with defensive or resistant language. | Establishes a <b>counter-hegemonic discourse</b> .                          |
| Metaphoric Frame     | Ideology represented as a <i>battlefield</i> ("contest," "struggle," "reclaim").           | Signifies <b>discursive conflict</b> rather than stability.                 |
| Ideological Work     | Juxtaposes "Western dominance" vs. "national authenticity."                                | Reflects <b>postcolonial tension</b> between modernity and tradition.       |
| Interdiscursivity    | Overlaps with religion, politics, and culture — multidimensional discourse.                | Demonstrates <b>hybrid identity formation</b> within ideological pluralism. |

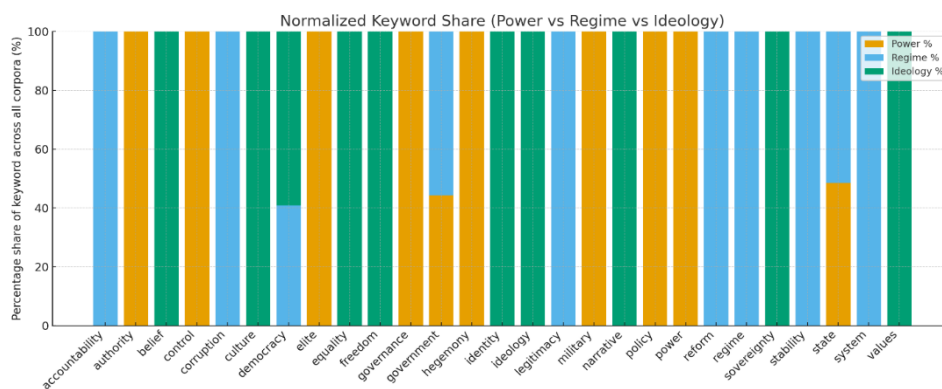
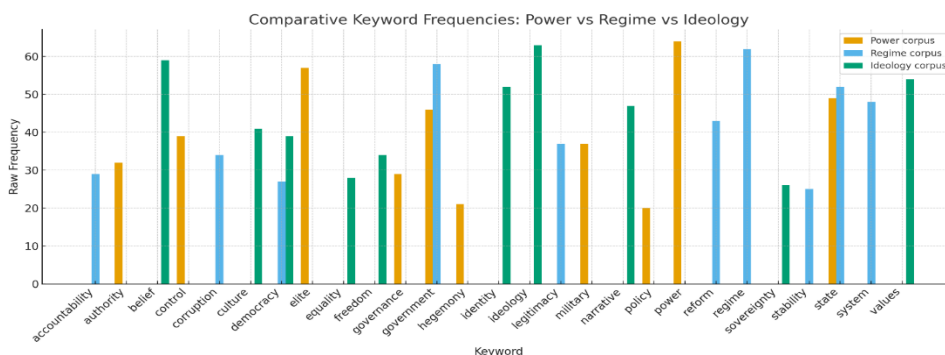
❖ **Summary of Category "Ideology"**

1. **Dominant Lexical Core:** *ideology–belief–values–identity–narrative* → constructs a **moral-linguistic framework of belonging**.
2. **Ideational Function:** redefines national identity through contestation with dominant global ideologies.
3. **Interpersonal Function:** collective stance-building, creating *us* vs. *them* dichotomies around belief and sovereignty.
4. **Textual Function:** cohesive through repetition and parallel moral structures ("belief", "values", "freedom").

5. **Discursive Outcome:** develops a **counter-hegemonic moral discourse** — resisting cultural erasure while promoting national self-definition.

### Interpretive Abstract (≈150 words)

The Ideology corpus foregrounds the struggle for moral and cultural sovereignty in an age of global homogenisation. Lexical clusters such as belief, values, identity, and narrative dominate, forming a discursive web of moral introspection and cultural defence. The collocational interplay of national identity, democratic values, and ideological sovereignty reflects an ongoing tension between internal conviction and external influence. Through frequent references to Western ideology and dominant narratives, the discourse establishes itself as self-consciously postcolonial — seeking to reclaim voice and authenticity. The corpus linguistically constructs ideology as both a moral compass and a site of contestation, advocating for a synthesis of traditional ethos and modern democratic principles. Ultimately, Ideology operates as a discursive bridge between belief and reform, positioning national identity within a framework of moral renewal and cultural resilience.



## Theoretical and Methodological Framework

### ❖ Introduction

Language is more than a tool of communication; it is a medium in and through which social relations, ideologies, and power structures are produced, legitimized, and contested. Linguistic choices, in the domain of political discourse, always exist in a non-individual context; they reflect and reproduce material conditions, ideological frameworks, and institutional hierarchies. A combination of Critical Discourse Analysis and Marxist theory thus offers an incisive framework for discussing how texts articulate, disguise, or challenge power relations within any given sociopolitical context. This study applies a corpus-assisted CDA model to three interrelated domains of political language: Power, Regime, and Ideology. It does so to explore exactly how discourse operates as a site of both domination and resistance.

CDA, as developed by Fairclough (1995), van Dijk (1998), and Wodak (2001), understands discourse as a social practice that constitutes and is constituted by structures of power. This analytical framework, when combined with a Marxist concept of ideology and class struggle, permits an investigation into the ways in which linguistic patterns either reproduce hegemonic order or mobilize oppositional consciousness. Corpus linguistics, especially CADS, can methodologically underpin this endeavour by quantifying lexical and semantic tendencies upon which ideological operations within discourse depend.

Thus, this theoretical section explores the ways in which CDA and Marxist theory coalesce into an analytical frame through which the corpus findings are understood. This will link the micro-linguistic level to the macro-sociopolitical level: word choice, collocation, modality to class relations, hegemony, institutional authority.

### ❖ Critical Discourse Analysis: Language as Social Practice

Critical Discourse Analysis emerged as a multidisciplinary approach in the late twentieth century; the most basic configuration investigates the role of language in the reproduction of social inequality. Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1992, 1995) remains foundational, in large part, and the model considers that discourse operates simultaneously as text, discursive practice, and social practice.

Accordingly, these are: linguistic form, interpretive process, and sociocultural context. Vocabulary, syntax, and cohesion constitute political discourse on the textual dimension, while the discursive dimension is a realm of processes of production and interpretation. The social dimension reflects ideological and institutional forces that shape discourse.

Fairclough (2001) holds that ideology inheres in linguistic structures and that every utterance carries the traces of social relations. For example, lexical choices such as reform, authority, or sovereignty encode certain ideological assumptions about legitimacy and control. It is here that CDA has to make these assumptions visible by linking linguistic evidence to social reality. Van Dijk's (2008) socio-cognitive model supplements this by placing an emphasis on the role of mental models in sustaining dominance. According to him, power works not just through coercion but through discourse control and regulation of knowledge.

This mutual influence of language and cognition in political discourse normalizes power relations. The elites, by certain discursive sets of regularities, manage the consciousness of the public by universalizing their interests. CDA's critical potential is thus located in unmasking this discursive naturalization-process by which historically contingent relations are transformed and passed off as commonsense (Fairclough 2003). Therefore, CDA is not simply descriptive but an emancipatory endeavor, creating an awareness of how dominance and resistance could always share the same linguistic landscape.

### ❖ Marxist Theory: Ideology, Hegemony, and Discourse

To deepen this understanding, CDA is aligned here with Marxist theory, which situates language within the material relations of production. For Marx, ideology functions as a superstructural mechanism that reflects and stabilizes the economic base of society (Marx & Engels, 1846/1970). However, later Marxist thinkers, notably Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, reconceptualized ideology not merely as false consciousness but as a lived relation that organizes consent.

The concept of hegemony by Gramsci explains how a ruling class maintains power not through the use of force but by gaining consent from those being ruled through ideological means. Hegemony is key to the development of civil society and operates through institutions such as schools, the media, religion, and the state, molding

public perception and moral authority. Althusser formalized this insight with his theory of Ideological State Apparatuses, differentiated from Repressive State Apparatuses. ISAs function mainly via discourse and representation, making them linguistic and symbolic devices of class rule.

This Marxist understanding places ideology at once as linguistic and material. It is not an abstract system of ideas but an everyday practice inscribed in language and ritual. The recurrence, therefore, of some phrases, metaphors, and syntactic patterns across the Power, Regime, and Ideology corpora indicates the way in which ideological formations are embedded within communicative acts. Every time discourse reproduces a term such as stability, order, or sovereignty, discourse is doing ideological work: that is, legitimizing the existing hierarchy as necessary and natural.

#### ❖ **CDA and Marxism: Points of Convergence**

The integration of CDA with Marxist theory is based on a few basic assumptions:

##### ❖ **Language is constitutive of social reality**

Discourse does not reflect society, but rather is constitutive of it. Herein may be found the resonance of Marx's notion of praxis; linguistic acts are forms of social practice that may reproduce or transform power relations.

##### ❖ **Ideology is both a structure and a process**

In the view of Fairclough (1995), it is through discourse that ideology operates in order to sustain hegemony. According to Marxists, ideology is a superstructure that reinforces class relations. Both approaches, however, consider ideology as a tool of control and potentially a site of struggle.

##### ❖ **Power is discursively enacted**

According to van Dijk (2008), power is understood as control over discourse. Marxist analysis would interpret such control as indicative of class dominance, mediated by institutions that shape linguistic production.

### ❖ Critique is transformative

Both CDA and Marxism have an emancipatory intent. They seek to unmask the hidden mechanisms of domination so as to enable resistance and change. CDA provides the linguistic tools, Marxism supplies the socio-economic context.

Integrating these principles, the present study analyses the Power, Regime, and Ideology corpora as separate but interrelated discursive spaces within which power, legitimacy, and belief are constructed and contested.

### ❖ Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS): Methodological Bridge

While CDA supplies the theoretical depth, corpus linguistics provides the empirical grounding. Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies, as advanced by Baker (2006) and Partington (2004), fills the gap between critical theory and linguistic data. It involves the quantification of textual patterns—frequency, collocation, concordance—followed by qualitative interpretation within a CDA framework.

In the present study, CADS allows for a systematic comparison across three corpora:

- Power: texts of domination, military influence, and elite control.
- Regime: texts focused on governance, legitimacy, and reform.
- Ideology: texts on belief systems, identity, and moral discourse.

By analyzing the recurring lexical items and their semantic prosody, the present analysis identifies the linguistic fingerprint of ideological positioning. The collocations of military with rule and authority reveal a discourse of coercion, while reform paired with legitimacy signals an institutional self-justification. CADS therefore turns abstract ideological critique into measurable linguistic evidence.

Fairclough (2003) insists on such an empirical rigor, and actually views this as a condition for the grounding of social claims in observable textual data. This corpus-based approach brings objectivity and replicability, reducing the threat of overinterpretation. It also allows for the visualization of how specific ideological constructs—democracy, freedom, values—circulate differently across political discourses, thereby mapping the discursive field of hegemony.

### ❖ Analytical Scope and Integration



The integration of CDA, Marxism, and CADS proceeds on three levels:

#### **Textual Level (Micro-analysis)**

Identification of key lexical items, metaphors, and grammatical choices reflecting ideological positioning, such as reform as progress or as control.

#### **Discursive Level: Meso-analysis**

Intertextuality, framing, and narrative patterns within each corpus are examined to reveal how authority and legitimacy are constructed linguistically.

#### **Sociocultural Level (Macro-analysis)**

Contextualizing within the broader political and economic structures, that is, connecting language with state apparatuses, class struggle, and ideological reproduction.

Through this tripartite lens, the corpora are not treated as neutral text collections but as discursive manifestations of underlying material forces. The linguistic analysis thus becomes a means of bringing to light how language operates within power networks, how regimes justify themselves, and how ideology sustains or challenges the social order.

### ❖ Conclusion to Theoretical Framework

The synergy between Critical Discourse Analysis and Marxist theory forms a coherent and powerful analytical model for studying political language. The former, CDA, reveals how linguistic practices encode relations of dominance and resistance, while Marxism situates these very practices within historical material conditions that produce them. Together with corpus linguistics, they provide both theoretical insight and empirical precision. Within this framework, discourse is a battlefield in which words are the weapons of power, legitimacy, and belief. The Power corpus articulates domination; the Regime corpus negotiates governance; the Ideology corpus defines moral boundaries. By means of CDA and Marxist critique, these linguistic formations are understood not just as mere reflections of political reality but as instruments that shape and sustain it.

### ❖ **Overview: Linking Discourse to Ideological Structures**

The interplay of language, power, and ideology becomes most visible in the lexicon, metaphors, and discursive structures that dominate political texts. Each corpus in this study—Power, Regime, and Ideology—represents a distinct dimension of political communication yet participates in the same ideological ecosystem. Using Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the analysis unfolds across textual, discursive, and sociocultural levels, while Marxist theory situates these linguistic practices within the broader framework of class struggle, hegemony, and ideological state control.

Textually, word frequencies and collocational tendencies display lexical bias, or the preferential selection of terms supporting or challenging particular worldviews. Discursively, intertextuality and framing indicate ideological stance, or ways in which texts position readers in relationship to power structures. Socioculturally, recurring linguistic motifs reveal hegemonic struggle, or the ways discourse naturalizes social hierarchies and legitimizes institutional practices. The following analysis proceeds corpus by corpus, linking linguistic evidence to CDA's critical principles and Marxism's interpretive logic of ideology.

### ❖ **The Power Corpus: Language of Domination and Control**

Through the Power corpus, one can see how discourse does the ideological work of constructing authority, enforcing legitimacy, and sustaining elite dominance. Terms such as power, elite, military, control, and hegemony recur with high frequency and strong collocational bonds. According to Fairclough, these lexical items encode relations of dominance in his textual dimension, with political control thereby being represented as inevitable and necessary.

#### ▪ **Textual Level: Lexical Choices and Semantic Fields**

The dominance of the term power is not only quantitative, but its contextual deployment also displays semantic prosody of legitimacy and fear. Phrases such as "grip on power," "transfer of power," and "balance of power" denote control as a resource to be gained, sustained, or struggled for. This appeals to van Dijk's (2008) claim that linguistic repetition creates cognitive scripts through which audiences internalize hierarchical order.

Similarly, elite collocates with political, ruling, and economic to suggest a closed circle of influence. The noun phrase "ruling elite" is a lexical condensation of class structure-the linguistic realization of what Marx had in mind when he talked about the "ruling ideas of the ruling class." Such expressions perform ideological work to the extent that elite governance is rendered stable and normalized within political reality.

- **Discursive Level: Framing and Narrative**

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Discursively, Power texts make use of narratives of necessity-that is, that strong leadership or military intervention is necessary for stability. Such discourses represent what Fairclough (2001) calls technocratic legitimation; that is, presenting authority as a question of expertise and not coercion. This is a linguistic move that sidesteps moral judgment through the recontextualisation of domination-as-administration.

Furthermore, the sociocognitive framework of van Dijk helps to interpret how this recurring reference to military and authority shapes public cognition. By embedding coercive power within a discourse of protection or national interest, the text performs what Althusser (1971) describes as the ideological interpellation of the subject, inviting readers into a way of thinking that attaches identification with, rather than against, authority.

- **Sociocultural Level: Hegemony and Class Power**

From a Marxist perspective, the Power corpus operates within the terrain of hegemonic discourse. There is an echo of Gramsci's notion of hegemony (1971)-the securing of consent through ideological means-in this moralization of obedience and order; even where the text is critical of power, the critique often occurs along lines that reinforce the inevitability of control wielded hierarchically. Thus, linguistically speaking, resistance is contained.

The Power corpus illustrates the Repressive State Apparatus in linguistic form: the discourse of command, discipline, and surveillance. This is both a reflection and reproduction of a world view where control is equated with stability. CDA gives substance to how this discourse conceals class dimensions of political authority, turning material inequalities into moral imperatives toward unity or progress.

### ❖ **The Regime Corpus: Language of Legitimacy and Governance**

While the Power corpus foregrounds domination, the Regime corpus turns toward legitimation. Here, the language functions as an instrument of administrative ideology, one that speaks to the discourses of reform, accountability, transparency, and stability as means by which governance is rationalized. According to Fairclough's framework, such language represents the discursive practice of bureaucratic justification.

#### ▪ **Textual Level: Institutional Lexicon and Euphemism**

The most salient lexical pattern which emerges from the Regime corpus is the frequent collocation of reform with the terms legitimacy, stability, and policy. These words may be regarded as linguistic sanitizers-neutralizing political controversy by reconstituting it as technical adjustment. Fairclough (2003) calls this technologization of discourse, meaning the reduction of political issues to matters of management, in which their ideological origins are obscured.

Euphemisms like transition, continuity, and system depoliticize the processes of regime change and present them more as an organic or procedural development rather than contested. What this is, in Althusserian terms, is the ISA at work: the internalization of ideology through apparently objective administrative language. The effect is to sustain consent by making power relations invisible.

#### ▪ **Discursive Level: Legitimacy Narratives**

At the discursive level, one can read from the Regime corpus a narrative of corrective progress. Phrases like "restoring legitimacy" or "ensuring accountability" suggest that reform is not revolutionary but restorative. This framing rhymes with Gramsci's notion of passive revolution-change initiated from above to pre-empt demands from below. In CDA terms, this kind of discourse instantiates what Fairclough (1995) calls strategic containment-including reformist language to stabilize rather than destabilize hegemony.

This containment is further demonstrated through the consistent lexical partnership of regime with stability. Such repetition entrenches a cognitive link between authority and order, which sidelines other visions of governance. As van

Dijk (1998) showed, this kind of repetitive coupling forms ideological schemata that steer public interpretation.

#### ▪ **Sociocultural Level: Bureaucratic Hegemony**

From a Marxist perspective, the Regime corpus embodies the bureaucratic form of class domination. Language serves as an instrument for the governance ideology-what Weber called the rational-legal authority, which Marxists re-interpret as institutional hegemony. The discourse of reform and transparency thus conceals the reproduction of structural inequality under the guise of procedural fairness.

This linguistic mechanism is consonant with Althusser's ISAs, particularly the political and media apparatuses that work in tandem to create this illusion of neutrality. The emphasis on intertextuality by CDA brings forth how official narratives draw upon global democratic discourses for legitimation while sustaining localized control. Thus, the regime emerges at once as modern and sovereign-a linguistic balancing act wherein hegemony is sustained through rhetoric.

#### ❖ **The Ideology Corpus: Language of Belief and Identity**

The Ideology corpus breaks from the prior two in its centering of moral discourse rather than administrative or coercive language. Dominated by terms such as belief, values, identity, narrative, culture, and sovereignty, this corpus constructs an affective dimension of political legitimacy. This corpus linguistically articulates what Althusser (1971) calls ideological reproduction: the internalization of political power through moral consent.

#### ▪ **Textual Level: Moral Lexicon and Semantic Prosody**

At the textual level, the prevalence of belief and values has entailed a shift from instrumental to moral legitimation. The use of the phrase "shared belief system" or "core values" evokes solidarity through ethical vocabulary, turning political allegiance into moral duty. Fairclough (2001) noted that moralization is a significant discursive strategy in the reproduction of ideologies.

Similarly, identity co-occurs with national and cultural, yielding a discourse of collective belonging. Such linguistic flow is reminiscent of Gramsci's

conceptualization of national-popular culture in which ideology becomes rooted through emotional resonance rather than direct coercion. The use of narrative and sovereignty further strengthens this affective construction, binding individual sentiment to national ideology.

#### ▪ **Discursive Level: Counter-Hegemonic Narratives**

Notwithstanding its moral tone, there are even traces of resistance discourse in the Ideology corpus. Counter-narrative, reclaim, and authenticity are terms that suggest a challenge to Western dominance. From a CDA perspective, this represents interdiscursive hybridity-the co-existence of dominant and oppositional voices within the same linguistic field. According to Fairclough (2003), this is one of the defining features of late-modern discourse: the pull of globalization versus localization.

In Marxist terms, this tension embodies the struggle over ideological hegemony. The invocation of national sovereignty and cultural identity resists the homogenizing effects of global capitalism, articulating a postcolonial form of ideological autonomy. Yet, that very same discourse runs the risk of reinscribing conservative nationalism, demonstrating ideology's dual capacity for liberation and constraint.

#### ▪ **Sociocultural Level: Ideological State Apparatuses**

In the Marxist perspective, the Ideology corpus forms the ideological armature of the state where consent is forged through belief. Language here performs the function of Althusser's Ideological State Apparatus: it educates and moralizes, integrates the citizens into the dominant worldview. The recurrent invocation of values and sovereignty translates class or geopolitical struggles into moral narratives so that inequality takes on the coloring of virtue or duty.

CDA reveals how even the most apparently emancipatory discourses reproduce hierarchy by solidifying moral binarism, which in this case are authentic versus foreign, tradition versus modernity. Such binarism sustain ideological coherence while silencing alternative interpretations. The Ideology corpus thus shows how discourse can simultaneously act as a tool of resistance and a vehicle of control.

### ❖ **Inter-Corpus Comparison: Discursive Continuum of Power**

A discursive continuum emerges across the three corpora. The Power corpus speaks the language of coercion, the Regime corpus the language of procedure, and the Ideology corpus the language of belief. They work together to carry out the total ideological function of the state: repression, regulation, and reproduction.

- Power here represents the Repressive State Apparatus, which is coercive control through discourse of authority.
- Regime signifies the Administrative Ideology — governance rationalized through procedural language.
- Ideology represents the Ideological State Apparatus, moral consent built through belief and identity.

Where Fairclough's 1992 model and Marxist theory meet is on the dialectical relation between discourse and power: each linguistic field supports and legitimates the other. Normalization of control, rationalization of authority, moralization of belonging-each together constituting a hegemonic triad that maintains political order under a veneer of pluralism.

### ❖ **CDA and Marxist Synthesis: Discourse as Material Practice**

The CDA-Marxist synthesis shows that language is a material practice, a site of articulation of ideology, and a place of struggle. The corpora illustrate the way discursive formations shift from domination to consent. This echoes Marx's (1859/1970) dialectic of base and superstructure, wherein linguistic practices-the superstructure-express and reproduce economic and political relations-the base. The dialectical-relational approach by Fairclough (2003) allows us to trace these connections in an empirical manner. The corpus findings illustrate that as the language of Power shifts from overt coercion into moral persuasion, hegemony - or Ideology - is more secure precisely because it appears less visible. In this sense, the linguistic move from command to conviction represents the maturation of ideological control. In Gramscian terms, the Power-Regime-Ideology sequence charts the historic bloc of contemporary political discourse, a fusion of coercive, bureaucratic and moral authority, sustained through language. The contribution of CDA is to make that process visible; that of Marxism to explain why it persists.

## ❖ Conclusion to Analysis and Discussion

The corpus-based CDA and Marxist reading that follows shows that political discourse is a multi-layered ideological machine. Each corpus stands for a different yet interdependent variety of linguistic power: coercive, procedural, moral. In their mutual articulation, language reproduces the legitimacy of state power, allowing limited spaces for critique. This analysis fulfils CDA's emancipatory intent-to lay bare the linguistic structures of hegemony-by showing how vocabulary, narrative, and collocation build consent. In the next section, these results will be synthesized into a broader theoretical reflection, taking up their implications for postcolonial politics, ideological struggle, and language as resistance.

## Synthesis: Discourse as an Ideological System

Taken together, the linguistic, discursive, and sociocultural analyses of the three corpora prove that political language is a self-sustaining ideological system. Each corpus performs a different function on the ideological axis that, when put together, explains how state power reproduces itself through discourse. The Power corpus speaks the vocabulary of command; the Regime corpus manages legitimacy through technocratic rhetoric; and the Ideology corpus transforms obedience into moral conviction. These levels correspond to Althusser's (1971) division of Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses, respectively, united by the Gramscian concept of hegemony, as consent manufactured through culture and language.

From Fairclough's 1992 perspective, the three corpora correspond to the stages of discursive practice in the reproduction of dominance. At the textual level, lexical repetition consolidates particular meaning frames—"stability," "authority," "values." At the discursive-practice level, those frames circulate across institutional genres such as editorials and policy commentary, shaping interpretive repertoires. At the social-practice level they reinforce power relations in the sociopolitical structure. Thus, the corpora collectively enact a dialectic between coercion and consent: power secures itself first through domination, then through normalization, and finally through moralization.

The CDA-Marxist synthesis underscores that ideology operates not as illusion but as material practice. Linguistic labor allows specific collocations—reform + legitimacy, belief + identity, power + elite—to recur and therefore to sustain social

reality. Language does not describe power; it performs it. Each utterance participates in a reproduction of the social order by reaffirming precisely the concepts that legitimize it.

### **The Dialectic of Coercion and Consent**

Drawing from Gramsci, hegemony thrives on a balance between coercive force and ideological consent. The Power corpus exhibits coercion discourse-lexical fields centered on military and control metaphors-that prepares the cognitive terrain for submission. The Regime corpus transforms that submission into bureaucratic consent, embedding obedience within procedural rationality. Finally, the Ideology corpus completes the cycle by transforming rational obedience into moral belief. This movement from external discipline to internal conviction parallels Marx's conception of super-structural consolidation: as capitalist systems mature, control becomes less physical and more psychological, transmitted through cultural and linguistic codes.

Fairclough's concept of naturalization (2001) is instructive here. What originates as political strategy becomes naturalized, taken for granted as "common sense." For example, the repeated collocation of stability with progress throughout the corpora repositions social hierarchy as national virtue. CDA brings into view how such linguistic naturalization marginalizes or makes anachronistic other vocabularies-justice, redistribution, collective ownership-and, in so doing, narrows the horizon of political imagination.

The emphasis of van Dijk (2008), however, is on cognition, which can explain why such a discourse would be sustained. Internalized ideological schemata through repetition form mental models that guide perception. When the Ideology corpus invokes "shared values" and "cultural identity" repeatedly, for instance, the cognitive scripts of belonging are stirred into action which equates conformity with patriotism. The success of hegemony depends thus on its invisibility: power is most secure when it appears as culture.

### **Resistance, Re-articulation, and Counter-Hegemony**

Although the three corpora largely reproduce dominant ideologies, traces of counter-hegemonic discourse appear, in particular in the Ideology corpus. Words

like reclaim, authenticity, and counter-narrative point toward emergent resistance. From a Marxist perspective, these bespeak the contradictions within ideology—the points at which linguistic reproduction meets material discontent. Gramsci (1971) reminds us that hegemony is never complete; it has to be constantly remade and struggled over. The presence of dissenting language, however faint, suggests spaces of rupture where other world-views could crystallize.

Fairclough's 1992 notion of re-articulation becomes relevant here. Discourses are not static but rather reconfigurable; subordinate groups may appropriate dominant terms and invert their meanings. When democracy is re-framed from procedural compliance to participatory justice, or when sovereignty shifts from state prerogative to people's empowerment, linguistic re-articulation transforms ideology into resistance. Such shifts can be traced through corpus evidence: the changing collocations of these key terms across time would reveal evolving power dynamics. However, the same mechanisms that make resistance possible can also re-absorb it. As Althusser (1971) warns, ideology is elastic: it can incorporate critique without losing cohesion. Discourses of reform often serve as steam releases; they allow for the release of pressure without challenging the structure. The accountability rhetoric of the Regime corpus is a good example of this recuperation at work—language of change that keeps the structures in place. Therefore, the task of CDA is not only to uncover domination but rather to discern genuine emancipatory potential within language itself.

### **Postcolonial and Global Implications**

The ideological patterns observed transcend national boundaries. In the postcolonial context in which these corpora originate, discourse carries with it the residue of colonial power relations. Thus, references to Western ideology, global narratives, and cultural sovereignty in the Ideology corpus reflect the residual impact of what Said (1978) called Orientalism—a discursive structure which defines non-Western societies through Western epistemes. By mobilizing authenticity and sovereignty, these texts seek to reverse that gaze by asserting epistemic independence. Yet, according to Bhabha (1994), postcolonial identity is hybrid; resistance inevitably perpetuates traces of the dominant discourse to which it is opposed. CDA helps to elucidate this ambivalence by highlighting how linguistic forms of resistance—"counter-narrative," "reclaim," "indigenous values"—continue to depend upon the lexical framework of the colonizer's language.

From a Marxist-global perspective, such an outcome tallies with theories of ideological globalization. It is the same order that disperses economic production which standardizes discourse. Reform, stability, governance—words like these migrate across borders through institutions like the IMF, UN, and global media, forging something akin to a planetary vocabulary of legitimacy. For that reason, the Regime corpus represents global managerialism, whereas the Ideology corpus has attempted some degree of localizing. CDA describes how this linguistic homogeneity instantiates economic dependency, while for Marxist theory, the former is a symptom of the global hegemony of capitalism so keenly analyzed by Harvey (2005)

### **Implications for Critical Discourse Studies**

Taking the corpus-assisted framework as a basis for the integration of CDA with Marxist theory advances both disciplines: for CDA, adding quantitative corpus evidence solidifies the empirical basis for ideological critique; for Marxist theory, CDA brings methodological precision in the process of tracing how super-structural ideology materializes through language. This synthesis underpins three methodological consequences:

**Empirical grounding of ideology:** Frequency and collocation data transform abstract Marxist categories—class, ideology, hegemony—into measurable linguistic phenomena.

**Interdisciplinary reflexivity:** The combination of linguistics and critical theory prevents CDA from being purely textual or purely sociological; it sustains dialectical balance.

**Pedagogical utility:** The corpus analysis can expose ideological patterns, thus promoting critical literacy allowing the readers to recognize manipulative discourse in media and politics.

In practical terms, this is an approach that can inform the study of policy language, news framing, or institutional communication, providing tools to map how governance and culture intersect through language.

### ❖ The Transformative Power of Language

Perhaps the most central insight to arise from this research is that language is simultaneously the medium of oppression and the means of liberation. While for Marx, praxis meant the unity of theory and action, CDA extends this to linguistic praxis—the conscious reshaping of discourse so as to transform social relations. By identifying ideological mechanisms in everyday language, CDA thus empowers subjects to resist interpellation and articulate alternative narratives.

In the corpora studied, possibilities of transformation lie in the resemanticization of key words. If power can be reframed from domination to empowerment, regime from bureaucracy to collective governance, and ideology from orthodoxy to critical consciousness, discourse itself becomes revolutionary. This is exactly along the lines of Freire's (1970) notion of conscientization or becoming aware of one's situation through dialogue. Thus, the ultimate political act may not be violent overthrow but linguistic reconfiguration – revolution in the sign.

### Limitations and Future Research

While corpus-assisted CDA highlights significant patterns, it remains bound by the static nature of textual data. Ideology is dynamic; longitudinal studies across decades would much better capture hegemonic language shifts. Moreover, the inclusion of multimodal discourse—visual and digital media—could extend analysis into that sphere within which power increasingly operates through images and algorithms. One might also continue such research by comparing these findings with parallel corpora from other nations to trace transnational ideological flows. From the theoretical perspective, the integration of Marxist political economy and cognitive linguistics could strengthen the precision with which economic conditions shape metaphorical thought. This interdisciplinary expansion in itself would keep CDA robust as a theory for the analysis of neoliberal and postcolonial discourses.

8. Conclusion The present study demonstrates how the intersection of Critical Discourse Analysis and Marxist theory offers a comprehensive lens for understanding the manner in which language constructs, legitimizes, and sometimes contests political power. It follows from corpus-based evidence that discourse is not an accessory to politics but its very substance. The Power corpus demonstrates how authority is textualized as necessity; the Regime corpus discloses how bureaucracy speaks the language of virtue, while the Ideology corpus discloses

how belief naturalizes inequality. Together, they form the discursive architecture of hegemony. CDA brings to light the linguistic mechanisms repetition, framing, and presupposition that make ideology appear as truth. Marxist theory places those mechanisms within the material logic of class and production. Their synthesis again confirms that to critique language is actually to critique society itself. Indeed, Fairclough (2003) insists that discourse analysis should remain a “form of social critique oriented toward change.” Recognizing how words reproduce the world is the first step toward transforming both.

## **Conclusion**

The goal of this study was to use Marxist Critical Discourse Analysis to critically analyze how Maliha Lodhi's editorials either support or contradict prevailing power systems. The research highlights that editorial discourse is never ideologically neutral; rather, it is intertwined into broader socio-political, economic, and class ties by placing her articles within Pakistan's elite media environment. A comprehensive explanation of how language becomes a key mechanism through which political power is legitimized or opposed is provided by the theoretical fusion of Marxist conceptions of ideology and hegemony with Fairclough's CDA model. Lodhi's editorials are an important site for ideological research because of her dual status as a diplomat and pundit, which places her speech uniquely at the nexus of state ideology, elite intellectual output, and popular opinion formation. The goal of this study was to use Marxist Critical Discourse Analysis to critically analyze how Maliha Lodhi's editorials either support or contradict prevailing power systems. The research highlights that editorial discourse is never ideologically neutral; rather, it is intertwined into broader socio-political, economic, and class ties by placing her articles within Pakistan's elite media environment. A comprehensive explanation of how language becomes a key mechanism through which political power is legitimized or opposed is provided by the theoretical fusion of Marxist conceptions of ideology and hegemony with Fairclough's CDA model. Lodhi's editorials are an important site for ideological research because of her dual status as a diplomat and pundit, which places her speech uniquely at the nexus of state ideology, elite intellectual output, and popular opinion formation.

The literature repeatedly emphasizes how media organizations frequently serve as ideological state apparatuses, replicating national security narratives, dominant class interests, and geopolitical alignments either intentionally or unintentionally.

These academic findings support the necessity of critically and politically analyzing elite speech. Editorial voices frequently reflect broader hegemonic tendencies in Pakistan, since the media is closely linked to the government, military, and governing regimes. Lodhi's commentary, which addresses issues of foreign policy, governance, and global capitalism, likewise functions under these institutional limitations. Depending on how she constructs authority, frames political players, and normalizes specific ideological stances, she may either explicitly attack these paradigms or discreetly support them. This study's technique, which combines discursive practice, textual analysis, and socio-political interpretation, demonstrates the several levels at which ideological meaning is created. Lodhi's editorials both participate in and occasionally challenge dominant narratives, as can be seen by closely examining language choices, framing patterns, theme priority, and argumentation structures. Her emphasis on strategic realism, geopolitical rationalism, and diplomatic pragmatism typically fits with elite state ideas, however moments of critique occur when she identifies governance failures, democratic inadequacies, or global disparities. Her complicated position as an intellectual located inside elite power networks yet being able to articulate critique is highlighted by these discursive inconsistencies.

In the end, this study advances our knowledge of how ideological conceptions in Pakistani media are shaped by elite political discourse. The paper uses Marxist CDA to show how editorials serve as covert means of upholding global capitalist frameworks, perpetuating class power, and legitimizing state authority. However, counter-hegemonic ideas that question regime behaviors or reveal systemic injustices can also be introduced via such discourse. The dynamic and contentious character of ideology creation in opinion journalism is therefore demonstrated by Lodhi's editorials, underscoring the significance of critically analyzing media texts to reveal underlying power dynamics and socio-political objectives.

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Article Information:

|           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| Received  | 28-Mar-2025 |
| Revised   | 30-May-2025 |
| Accepted  | 10-Jun-2025 |
| Published | 15-Jun-2025 |

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Declarations:

Authors' Contribution:

- All authors **Conceptualization, and intellectual revisions. Data collection, interpretation, and drafting of manuscript**
- The authors agree to take responsibility for every facet of the work, making sure that any concerns about its integrity or veracity are thoroughly examined and addressed

▪ **Conflict of Interest:** NIL

▪ **Funding Sources:** NIL

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