

Appraisal Analysis of Verbal Discourse of Educationists Regarding Honour Killing

Maria Khan¹

Abstract

Honour killing is probably one of the most significant socio-cultural issues in Pakistan, which is based on patriarchal attitudes and cultural concept of family honour. Extensive research is already available on cultural, legal, and social aspects of honour killing. However, limited research is available on how conceptions regarding honour killing are reproduced or challenged within the education sector. Thereby using appraisal theory and appraisal model current study aims to explore the conceptions regarding honour killing in the verbal discourse of educationists in Pakistan. The findings of the study show that the use of emotive vocabulary is common to show sympathy to the victims, condemnation of violence, and a conflict between cultural sensitivity and moral outrage. Judgmental vocabulary is mostly employed to morally judge perpetrators, households and cultural patterns, some educationists label honour killing a cowardly, unjustified or inhuman act, and a few replicates culturally engrained concepts of honour and decency. Regarding the aspect of “Graduation”, participants sharpen their judgments by using lexical choices of high force (e.g., “extremely brutal, deeply rooted”), which is creating the sense of further seriousness of the problem and foregrounding the urgency of the situation; softening tactics are in effect at other moments when speakers are afraid to openly go against the common cultural values. The study concludes that the discourse of educationists is both an expression of opposition to honour-based violence and a trace of transformative conceptions.

Keywords: Honour Killing, appraisal, conceptions, emotive, judgmental, graduation

Introduction

Having its origins in patriarchal values and cultural traditions, honour killing is a severe social issue where crimes of violence are justified by honour of family

¹Department of English Linguistics and Literature, COMSATS University, Islamabad – Pakistan

at the cost of lives of innocent people. The number of studies that could be conducted in the search of ideas about the ideologies on honour killing within the education sector of Pakistan is minimal. This research would examine the conception associated with honour killing in the speech of the educationists in Pakistan.

Known to be a kind of gender-based violence made up by patriarchal traditions, honour killing is one of the serious social problems in Pakistan, where women become the objects of such kind of violence because of a presumed offence of breaking family or community honour. Even though legal acts have been established to reduce such activities, social-cultural norms and ingrained gender biases are still likely to promote the cycle of violence. The issues of the honour killing in the education sphere constitute a topic that contributes to the development of perceptions, the shaping of attitudes and supports or irrefutably reinforce these harmful norms. But little research has been done to investigate how educationists talk, and theorize about this issue, in particular through their use of language, and this is potentially a rich source of information on ideological stances. The knowledge of such discourse is key to facilitating gender-sensitive learning conditions that question violence-supporting beliefs (Gill, 2014).

Review of the Literature

Honour killings in Pakistan were broadly studied as a phenomenon deeply rooted in cultural and patriarchal traditions. Students emphasize that those acts of violence are frequently justified thru notions of family honour and societal expectancies, with ladies disproportionately focused for perceived transgressions (Shahid, Awan, & Rana, 2024). The literature highlights that such killings are not only social practices but also are reinforced via community pressures that prioritize collective popularity over person rights. This intersection of culture and violence underscores how ingrained norms perpetuate honour-based crimes, making them proof against easy felony interventions.

Despite the presence of legal provisions in the Pakistan Penal Code, including sections specially addressing honour killings, enforcement remains weak because of loopholes, social pressures, and systemic inefficiencies (Irfan, 2009; Shahid et al., 2024). Human rights activists which include Asma Jahangir have long criticized the leniency afforded to perpetrators, pointing to a justice machine in which familial forgiveness and societal complicity regularly undermine duty. Ayesha Jalal's evaluation of patriarchal power systems further reinforces that these systemic

failures are compounded by gender inequalities, leaving ladies especially susceptible (Jamal, 2015). For this reason, the felony framework, though gift, is unable to effectively dismantle the cultural and familial networks that preserve such violence.

Honour killings in Pakistan constitute a complex phenomenon fashioned by way of cultural traditions, patriarchal structures, and entrenched societal expectations. Scholars always argue that these killings, frequently focused on women, are justified through distorted notions of own family honour and disgrace, where any perceived transgression is seen as a danger to collective respect (Shahid, Awan, & Rana, 2024). This practice underscores the deep-rooted impact of traditional norms, as nearly one thousand ladies reportedly lose their lives each 12 months to such violence, reflecting how way of life and violence stay dangerously intertwined within the social cloth.

The judicial system in Pakistan presents express provisions below the Pakistan Penal Code to cope with honour killings, especially underneath Sections 299, 302, and 311, which criminalize murder and outline punishments even when the act is committed by very close relatives or family members. Still the enforcement of these legal guidelines stays deeply mistaken. Activists like Jahangir spotlight the prevalence of legal loopholes and ambiguities that allow perpetrators to escape harsh sentences, regularly through familial pardons or societal strain on victims' households to forgive (Irfan, 2009). This failure demonstrates that whilst the legislative framework exists, its practical application is hindered by cultural complicity and institutional weaknesses.

The patriarchal underpinnings of Pakistani society in addition exacerbate the hassle, as ladies disproportionately undergo the brunt of honour-associated violence. Ayesha Jalal has explored the dynamics of strength or power relation that exists inside circle of relatives and community systems, displaying how they preserve cycles of manipulation and victimization, thereby limiting women's access to justice (Jamal, 2015). Similarly, Kamran Asdar Ali emphasizes that discriminatory gender norms perpetuate systemic inequalities, making women inclined now not most effective to violence but also to social ostracism after they speak against entrenched traditions (Ali, 2012). These insights highlight that honour killings aren't simply man or woman acts of violence however are emblematic of broader gendered energy struggles inside society.

Recent scholarship additionally emphasizes the need for reforms that cross past felony amendments, pointing to the importance of societal awareness. Hina Jilani

has underscored the need of attention campaigns and interventions that questions dangerous norms at the grassroots stage, while comparative views by using Begikhani and Hague (2015) show that honour-based totally violence isn't unique to Pakistan but requires context-particular strategies for significant trade. Moreover, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy (2016) draws attention to the intersectionality of religion, faith, and schooling, noting that these factors growth vulnerabilities and have to be taken into consideration in designing interventions. Taken collectively, the literature shows that combating honour killings calls for a holistic approach that addresses legal shortcomings at the same time as additionally enticing with cultural and social structures to make certain long-term transformation (Shahid et al., 2024).

Language is not an impartial medium but a tool for constructing, legitimizing, or resisting ideologies. Essential discourse argue that power relations are embedded in linguistic choices, making discourse central to know how social problems are represented (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2006). In Pakistan, research on discourse around honour killings show how narratives frequently oscillate among condemning the practice and justifying it beneath cultural or religious pretexts (Ali, 2012). Educationists, as influential social actors, may also reproduce winning ideologies that sustain gender inequality or instead project those narratives by promoting human rights perspectives. Examining their language therefore permits researchers to find the ideological positions they tackle honour-primarily based violence.

To research such evaluative stances, appraisal idea offers a sturdy framework. Advanced within systemic practical linguistics, appraisal principle makes a specialty of how speakers and writers' explicit mind-set (emotions, judgments, and appreciation), manage engagement (alignment with or resistance to different voices), and alter graduation (depth of evaluation) (Martin & White, 2005). Several researches have carried out appraisal analysis to media discourse, political speeches, and school room interactions, demonstrating its effectiveness in figuring out how language conveys stance and beliefs (White, 2012; Hood, 2010). Making use of this framework to educationists' verbal discourse on honour killing can screen how they position themselves morally, culturally, and socially in relation to this sensitive issue.

The appraisal framework, developed with the aid of Martin and White (2005), gives a systematic manner of reading how language negotiates meanings, especially in phrases of assessment, solidarity, and positioning within discourse. This attitude shifts the focus faraway from grammar as merely a hard and fast of rules and as an

alternative perspectives' language as a useful resource for meaning-making in context (Martin & Rose, 2008). by foregrounding interpersonal meanings, the framework enables researchers to discover how authors align or misalign with ability readers, emphasizing that assessment isn't simply private expression however a dialogic negotiation of team spirit (Martin, 2000). This aligns with Bakhtin's view of language as inherently dialogic and Halliday's belief of language as both shaping and being shaped with the aid of social context (Halliday, 1978).

Within this model, appraisal is organized into three major structures: mindset, commencement, and engagement (Martin & White, 2005). Attitude covers have an effect on, judgment, and appreciation, permitting analysis of feelings, moral reviews, and aesthetic valuations. These evaluative resources can be explicitly inscribed or implicitly evoked, with judgments and appreciations understood as institutionalized styles of affect (Martin, 2003). Commencement refers to the scaling of meanings, either intensifying or downplaying them, even as engagement addresses how voices and views are located in terms of others in discourse, distinguishing between monoglossic and heteroglossic orientations (White, 2000, 2003). Collectively, these structures allow analysts to trace evaluative prosodies throughout texts and genres, highlighting now not simply grammatical paperwork however the rhetorical effects of assessment as texts unfold.

Since its creation, the framework has been multiplied via corpus linguistics and multimodal strategies. For example, Bednarik (2008, 2009) verified how corpus-based totally studies can systematize attitudinal lexis and discover covert affect as an intermediate category between opinion and emotion. Her work indicates that corpus evidence can display evaluative styles left out in only qualitative research. In addition, Hood (2010) prolonged the system of commencement to educational writing, displaying how writers invoke attitudes indirectly through scaling strategies that foster alignment with readers. Such contributions highlight both the adaptability and the methodological demanding situations of the framework, especially in identifying implicit reviews.

Martin and White's Appraisal Theory has remained a powerful tool for analyzing evaluative language across disciplines. Firouzi and Farahzad (2025) conducted a systematic review of 57 studies applying Appraisal Theory in translation studies, revealing a consistent emphasis on appreciation and judgment resources, particularly in Chinese-English literary and journalistic texts. Their work underscores the model's adaptability in cross-cultural linguistic analysis.

Arshad, Rehmani, and Qasim (2025) applied Appraisal Theory to ministerial speeches from India and Pakistan following the May 7th conflict. Their analysis revealed divergent uses of judgment and engagement resources, with Indian ministers emphasizing moral legitimacy and Pakistani ministers focusing on victimization. This study illustrates how evaluative language construct's national identity and political narratives.

Sujatna and Kuswoyo (2023) explored attitudinal resources in Indonesian EFL students' oral presentations. They found that students predominantly used appreciation to evaluate texts and ideas, with limited use of judgment. The study suggests that explicit instruction in evaluative language could enhance rhetorical sophistication in academic contexts.

Although there is much research on honour killings from cultural, felony, and sociological perspectives, and a growing body of literature making use of appraisal principle to numerous sorts of discourse, little scholarship has mixed these domains. Mainly, there is an absence of research that specialize in how educationists in Pakistan articulate their views on honour killings through evaluative language. This gap makes the existing research noteworthy, as it now not simple contributes to sociolinguistic discourse through studying ideological positioning however also extends the application of appraisal principle into the domain of gender-primarily based violence. By using bridging those fields, the study gives new insights into how instructional discourse reflects, resists, or reshapes societal attitudes closer to honour killing.

Honour killing remains a critical issue in Pakistan where culturally sanctioned violence against women is justified in the name of preserving family Honour. Despite that there is limited research in exploring the conceptions regarding honour killing in education sector of Pakistan. Thereby the current study aims to explore the conceptions regarding honour killing in the verbal discourse of educationists in Pakistan.

The current study is an addition to the socio linguistic discourse. This study can help identifying the hidden conceptions, beliefs, and attitudes embedded in the Language of educationists. In the light of findings, this study can guide the development of Training programs and awareness campaigns for educators to promote gender equality and human rights in an academic setting.

Methodology

The chapter introduces the methodological structure to be used to investigate the conceptions incorporated into the verbal discourse of educationists about honour killing in Pakistan. Considering the sensitivity and socio-cultural complexity of the phenomenon of honour killing, a qualitative design has been used to get the sensitivities, value-laden and ideological aspects of the language usage of the participants. The research methodology aims to match the interpretive and critical aims of the study with analytical systematic processes based on the Appraisal Theory (Martin and White, 2005) that is a model within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

❖ Research design

The research design is qualitative in nature and therefore most appropriate in the investigation of ideological grounds and linguistic patterns that arise in the natural occurring discourses. Qualitative design enables the researcher to participate in an interpretive process and pick out patterns of assessment, stance as well as affective positioning in the verbal discourse of educationists. Moreover, this design allows conducting discourse-sensitive analysis that helps the researcher explore the words of participants at the various levels, such as emotional, ethical, and ideological. The approach is consistent with the critical discourse studies (Fairclough, 2013), which tends to treat discourse as something that is influenced and influences social realities.

❖ Population

The study population comprised 30 educationists from three universities of Islamabad which are under the government in Pakistan. The reason why educationists were selected is that they serve two functions as educators and social commentators who shape the attitudes of society towards moral and cultural problems. Their discussion especially comes in handy in explaining how conceptions regarding honour killing are formulated, justified or challenged in the realms of education and intellectual circles.

❖ Sampling Technique

The authors used purposive convenience sampling, according to which the participants can be selected among those who are aware of the phenomenon under study and can offer deep, meaningful information (Palinkas et al., 2015). The

purposive sample meant that respondents had considerable exposure to the discourse on education, gender issues and gender-related discussions as well as socio-cultural issues that dominated the Pakistani society.

Theoretical Framework

Appraisal Theory of Richard S. Lazarus (1966, 1991) and Appraisal Model of Language by White and Martin (2005) are conceptually similar but work in different fields of study psychology and linguistics respectively. Even though the two theories exist in different domains, they are united by one point of view, namely, the belief that emotions and evaluations play a major role in human meaning-making and communication.

The psychology Appraisal Theory by Lazarus is the cognitively based evaluation of situations that result in the generation of an emotional response by individuals. Likewise, the Appraisal Model created by White and Martin (originally by J.R. Martin and P.R.R. White, 2005), which is part of the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework, is the model of how evaluation and emotion are coded in language in terms of discourse.

In other words:

- Lazarus is concerned with the emotions people experience and how they interpret events.
- White and Martin are concerned with the way those feelings and interpretations are linguistically expressed.

Therefore, the Appraisal Model of linguistics puts the psychological theory of Lazarus into language the inner emotional appraisals are translated into the linguistic patterns of affect, judgment, and appreciation. The study is based on the Appraisal Theory which has been formulated in the context of the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Appraisal Theory builds upon the model presented by Halliday (1994) of the social semiotic system of language by examining how speakers and writers show attitudes, are associated or dissociated with others, and enhance discourse meanings. It is an efficient method of analysis of how ideological positions are coded into language.

Analytical Model

The analysis was done through Appraisal Analysis of the interview transcripts that concentrated on the process of identifying and interpreting the evaluative

expressions. In accordance with Martin and White (2005) each transcript was coded according to the occurrence of Affect, Judgment, and Graduation.

Appraisal Model, a model that was developed by Martin and White (2005) and in the context of Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) is aimed at analyzing how language speakers and writers depict, negotiate and accommodate with evaluative meanings in discourse. It is centered on the linguistic resources that people employ to express their emotional, judgmental, and evaluative attitudes, to relate to or dispute other voices and to intensify or subdue their position.

The Analytical model consists of three subsystems, Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation which deal with a different yet related aspect of evaluative meaning.

❖ **Attitude**

Attitude is a language system that conveys the sentiments of people, their values and judgment about phenomena, behaviors and things. It is the emotional and moral position of the speaker/writer and how ideologies and social norms are entrenched in speech. Attitude is further subdivided into three subcategories namely Affect, Judgment and Appreciation.

❖ **Affect**

Affect is concerned with the display of feelings - the way people feel about others, occurrences or circumstances. Such emotional reactions may be either positive or negative e.g., happiness/sadness, confidence/fear, satisfaction/dissatisfaction or admiration/disgust (Martin and White, 2005). An example is in the discussion of honour killing where statements such as I feel very sad when things like this happen, or it gives the impression of shame to our society, or is a moral awkwardness and the expression of feelings are empathetic, condemnatory, or morally uncomfortable. They not only demonstrate feelings of speakers but also their reasons, which reveal more profound social values.

❖ **Judgment**

Judgment deals with the analysis of behavior and character of people based on social norms and moral values. It represents moral judgments on the side of speakers, the way they assess actions as either right or wrong, brave and cowardly, just or unjust.

Concept of judgment is thus also closely connected with ideological and cultural constructs of morality. It reveals the position of speakers in reference to the norms

of the society, which frequently discloses gendered, religious, or patriarchal ideologies.

❖ **Appreciation**

Appreciation is a form of assessment of things, processes or phenomena that pay more attention to aesthetic, social or functional terms than to moral ones. It involves a language that evaluates ideas, texts, events, or social practices as good/bad, valuable/worthless and admirable/ disgraceful.

Within the discourse of honour killing a discourse, an educationist may say that our education system is not dealing with such issues appropriately and may be seen to be negatively appreciative of the institutional reaction. Appreciation therefore assists in exposing judgments about systems, institutions, or cultural practices, which usually have an ideological implicit meaning.

Overall, the Attitude system allows one to understand that the emotional, ethical, and evaluative reactions of people are indicative of larger social conception and structure of values.

❖ **Engagement**

Engagement deals with the way the speakers or writers place them in relation to other voices, points of view or potential alternative points of view in discourse. It is indicative of the dialogic language, that is, the way in which utterances foresee, recognize or reject the presence of other opinions (Bakhtin, 1981; Martin and White, 2005).

The interpersonal negotiation of stance is thereby mapped and it shows whether the discourse is monoglossic (single-voiced) or heteroglossic (many-voiced). Monoglossic utterances offer only one, undisputed point of view and no other can have a different view. An example is: honour killing is a crime and should be punished. By saying this, one puts dialogic space to rest and makes a strong statement.

Instead, heteroglossic utterances recognize or give space to alternative voices or opinions. As an example: "Honour killing signifies family honour, but I believe it is a kind of violence according to some people. This acknowledges other views, but puts the evaluative place of the speaker.

Analysis

The interviews criticize the honour killing highly through the application of attitudinal and judgmental resources. The first sentence of the opening is “Honour killing is one of the most painful and unjust acts in our society”, which immediately creates the tone of a very negative evaluation. The emotional term “painful” conveys the feeling of emotion, and simultaneously the negative word “unjust” conveys the unethical judgment. The sentence is monoglossic, because it is conveyed as the ultimate truth, with no other voices and no room of compromise. Interviewee refers the honour killing as cold-blooded murder so the choice of the word “cold-blooded murder”, further enhances the negative assessment and appreciation, where emotive words are used to criticize the action without holding back. This represents a right-based and transformative conception. It stands for honour killing as an unquestionable moral and social evil, an act that should be condemned universally, since it is very destructive to the basic structure of society and the fundamental human rights of the victim.

Subsequently, the interviewee continues with an explanation of reasons through judgmental vocabulary: “families believe that they are preserving their respect in the eyes of the society but they are losing their humanity”. The term “saving their respect” indicates the heteroglossic recognition of the point of view of families, it is soon offset by the monoglossic proclamation of the fact that they are losing their humanity, that is absolute and powerful. Here, negative judgment (losing humanity) is contrasted with the positive appreciation of the real values of life- love, patience, respect and forgiveness. The positive values are scaled by listing, emphasizing on what should be upheld by the families as opposed to the negative act of honour killing. The analogy establishes a moral polarity that enhances the ideological position of the speaker.

This reflects humanistic and egalitarian conception. It argues that moral and humanitarian considerations must prevail over the pressures of cultures and society and asserts the importance of upholding the universal human ethics as infinitely more important than societal conformity or culture. This conception makes the intrinsic value of each human life and dignity at the top of all principles. It is egalitarian in its insistence that these universal ethics are applicable to all, regardless of gender, status or cultural background, without exception of any custom that violates this basic premise in favor of a truly humanistic global ethic.

Interviewee also discusses the challenges faced by the society while getting rid of this issue. The challenges of eradication of honour killing are presented with heavy reliance on judgement. Phrases such as "changing people's ways of thinking isn't always easy" and "these ridicule ideas have been passed down from numerous generations" shows the problem and intensity of the issue. Negative judgment is directed at the institutions of the law via the use of the phrase, 'weak legal enforcement' and social attitude in 'people place their reputation over humanity.' The expression "not easy" is a downscaled evaluation of the challenge, which contrasts with the upscaled declaratives that follow, for example, "the biggest challenge is the social mindset." This combination of upscaling and downscaling allows the interviewee to convey a sense of difficulty, as well as a sense of urgency. This reflects a deterministic and implicitly transformative conception. It argues that longstanding cultural practices and institutional weakness are the biggest obstacles to ethical reform and hence has faith in a form of social determinism that seeks to trace failures in the present to deep-rooted societal inertias.

Interviewee uses religious authority to denounce honour killing. The declaration "Honour killing can never be justified not in our culture not in our religion" is highly monoglossic with the use of the word "never" and intensified by repetition ("not in our culture not in our religion"), thus upscaling the rejection. The Quranic reference "killing one man or woman is like killing the entire humanity" presents a high-value moral framework in terms of an incontrovertible reality. Religion is considered as a valuable appreciation positive, whilst those who abuse it are condemned by negative judgement: "they're doing this sin just to cover their very own pride." The emotionally-charged words "sin" and "pride" add further such condemnation to the ethical stance. This reflects a humanistic and right-based conception with a spiritual dimension. It argues that moral and spiritual values are against honour killing without second thought as fundamentally ethical behavior is based on a divine and inherent humanistic reality.

Categorical statement "honour killing should not exist in our society". This is a monoglossic utterance in the form of declarative clause, so that it leaves no room for alternative perspectives as to its truth, and puts the position of the speaker across as indisputable truth. The repetition of "I think" foregrounds a personal involvement, and is also a marker of heteroglossia since it signals subjectivity, but it still leaves little space for opposition-the declarative structure of the sentences still leaves little space for opposition. Negative judgmental appraisal is clearly evident in interviewee comment "it is a bad act and it should not be there in society" assertive

emotive words such as "bad" and "should not be there", both of which represent negative appreciation of the practice, delegitimizing honour killing as unacceptable. The use of emotive vocabulary like "bad" reinforce the affect by showing the speaker's moral disgust. This is an expression of a Moral Universalist and Right-Based Conception. It is explicitly based on universal ethics, so there is an absolute moral condemnation against violence. This conception rejects any sort of normalization of violence, in the name of claiming that the sanctity of life is a non-negotiable truth that transcends any custom of local custom. The stance represents a Reformist Conception which emphasizes more on rationality and the inherent value of human life rather than on cultural extremism or ancient traditions. Its core is a universal moral code which applies to all, and which defends fundamental human rights.

In interviews taken the speaker is also defining causes through judgmental vocabulary, attributing honour killing to "lack of education" and "lack of Islamic knowledge." These are couched in terms of deficiencies, which signify negative appreciation of ignorance as socially regressive. The judgmental vocabulary comes through with descriptions of perpetrators as 'not well educated' which might suggest incapacity, lack of moral grounding. The utterance "if people know how Islam condemns the act of killing, they can never think of killing someone" is a heteroglossic conditional clause, which creates space of alternative possibilities (that education and religious awareness can prevent the practice), but also identifies the speaker's position with Islamic moral authority. The emphasis on "never" serves as a graduation upscaling, making the rejection of killing more severe by introducing it as an impossibility under true knowledge of religion. The personal pronoun "they" places the blame on the perpetrators, while "people" generalizes the blame across the whole society. This reflects an Educational and Progressive-Religious Conception. This view of ignorance as the cause of moral corruption and authentic religious knowledge as the path to obtaining peace and ethical behavior.

The phrase our culture thinks it's okay to kill someone is a negative judgment of propriety criticizing cultural norms of legitimization of murder. The use of "our" collectivizes responsibility and implicates the broader community and not individual isolated people. The declarative clause "which is wrong" is monoglossic as it closes down space for cultural justification. This part includes a Collectivist Criticism and Social-Reformist Conception. It demands a look within the society and criticizes the complacency in the cultural climate and normalization of violence.

In the subsequent section, the statement "people are reluctant to speak on this issue" provides a clue of judgment of capacity, criticizing society's inability to deal with sensitive issues. The rhetorical question "if someone is not discussing how can we expect to solve it" opens the way for a heteroglossic engagement, as it creates room for reflection but ultimately directs the reader to the speaker's position. The use of "very difficult" and "reluctant" indicate the negative appreciation of social silence and stagnation, graduation is visible in "reluctant" as a softener, not a total refusal, which implies a reservation of hesitance, thus partially reducing the criticism level. This reflects an Inclusive and Progressive Conception based on open dialogue and social responsibility. It values communication and awareness as an instrument for transformation, insisting the problems of society have to be brought out in the light.

To reinforce their moral judgements of honour killing, educationists always resort to graduation forces and grammatical constructions where they intensify or increase the intensity or scope of meaning to reinforce their moral judgements. Majority of these graduation devices are used to elevate condemnation and therefore, the moral angle looks definite and emotionally heavy. For example, participants said, "It is absolutely wrong and totally against Islam", "Honour killing is one of the most cruel and unacceptable in our society", the use of maximizing intensifiers like "absolutely wrong, completely against Islam, totally unacceptable" is demonstration of moral absolutist, right based conception. This turns the moral opinion into fact, eliminating the chances of developing any discursive structures that encourage honour killing.

Along with intensifiers, graduation devices of scope and frequency also help to exaggerate the perceived magnitude of the problem by educationists. As an illustration the following is a statement of one respondent, which contains the use of Iterative and pervasive constructions like: "it is happening again and again, in different parts, it is spread like a disease", and it is creating moral and emotional urgency on the whole which is reflective of Catastrophic, crisis-oriented conception. These words of language broaden the phenomenon of an isolated case to a national crisis, which allows one to understand the emotional and moral appeal of which speakers treat this question.

The discussion is based on rhythmical repetition as a complete presentation and description of the moral judgment and emotional intensity. Ordinary instances as the interviews have shown are the are negative evaluative expressions like "No reason, no culture, no justification". The repetition of no threefold, not only enhances the convincing rhythm, but also creates the impression of moral fulfilment

following such repetition, any other opinion that would justify honour killing is nullified and has no room. This is Advocacy-based, collective conception, the use of repetition and listing causes interpretive ambiguity to be removed and creates an impression of total moral closure.

When the interviewee says "many families within the community deal with honour killing as a private matter," the usage of "many" acts as a graduation resource, increasing the scale of the problem. The transformative and egalitarian conception is clearly reflected in this paragraph with a feminist attitude. It focuses on the oppression of gender and directly blames families for maintaining the patriarchal norms to which women's behavior is wrongly related to family honour, revealing the systemic injustice.

Strong negative assessment is there with graduation force 'an absolutely terrible reality' finding honour killing to be morally reprehensible. The use of intensification through "absolutely" indicates Graduation (force) intensifying the condemnation. This makes the speaker seem to be totally against the practice, morally, and sets up an evaluative position of outrage and disapproval. Furthermore, the phrase "received cover from our social fabric" resembles Appreciation (valuation) as the speaker criticizes the cultural structures which normalize honour killings. By placing blame on the "social fabric," the discourse takes the blame away from individual persons and places it on a collective societal mentality.

This reflects a Social-Reformist and Inclusive Conception. It condemns collective cultural complicity with violence, therefore shifting the focus of the issue from individual pathology to moral responsibility at the societal level - a hallmark of Social-Reformist thought. This conception favors the ethics of universalism in that it takes the view that human rights, which are universal in character, transcend specific cultural boundaries, and the principles of collective responsibility for the traditional and isolating norms of social conduct. It is an Inclusive Conception in its insisting that all members of the society, the perpetrators and not perpetrators, must be held accountable for creating an environment where such violence occurs and prevented by calling for a broad, systemic ethical upgrade.

"Honestly to me honor killing is one of the darkest realities of our society." The darkest is a form of intensified graduation (force upscaling), which is used to emphasize by exaggerating the degree of negativity to emphasize the severity of the practice. The use of "darkest realities" is an appreciation (negative valuation) that characterizes honor killing as a destructive social phenomenon and not just an act.

This expresses a Humanist and Right Based Conception. It strongly supports the sanctity of life and the inviolability of human dignity which is the absolute core of a Humanist Conception.

Graduation forces are used throughout the interview to scale the intensity of condemnation and the urgency of the issue. Intensifiers like "never," "completely," "absolutely right," "so rampantly" to supersede the discourse into honor killing not as an occasional misdeed but as a persistent and intolerable social crime. The phrase "in any sort of circumstances" heightens categorical rejection, excluding all possible exceptions. At the same time, graduation also pops up in the form of hedging, such as in "some sort of vigilante," which downscales force while still emphasizing the presence of coercive social actors. Repetitions such as "generation to generation" and "every single thing" help to broaden the scope and magnitude of criticism and present the problem as one that is very deeply entrenched. These graduation resources ensure that not only is the condemnation firm, but also urgent and multiplies the seriousness of honor killing and the need for systemic reform.

This is a reflection of Transformative and Catastrophic Conception. The wide use of upscaling ("so rampantly," "completely," "never") and the categorical rejection in "any sort of circumstances" makes the issue an absolute moral and social catastrophe, in line with a Catastrophic Conception. The magnification of the scope and persistence of the problem ("generation to generation," "every single thing") creates an urgent mandate for fundamental, Transformative change.

Findings

Responding to research question number one, it is found that the emotive vocabulary in the verbal discourse of educationists is a powerful tool to invoke moral disgust, empathy and condemnation of the act of honour killing. Words such as "painful," "unjust," "cold-blooded murder," and "ego" communicate strong affect, expressing deep emotional rejection and moral outrage. These lexical choices function to humanize the victims and dehumanize the perpetrators, which creates a clear moral divide of the right and wrong. Through such vocabulary, educationists infuse their speech with emotional intensity, which is all appealing to both the heart and conscience of the audience. This affective stance also seeks to create a sense of social and ethical awareness, and calls for collective introspection and change. In essence, emotive vocabulary changes the discourse from a detached social critique to an action in morality and humanitarianism: the call for empathy and reform.

This finding is the reflection of a Humanistic and Right-Based Conception. The main purpose of the emotive language is to trigger the feeling of empathy and to define the inherent dignity and right to life of the victims ("humanize the victims"). By evoking "moral disgust" and "condemnation", the discourse focuses on the universal ethical violation of the act, which is the cornerstone of a Humanistic Conception. Simultaneously the emphasis on "unjust" acts and the moral divide focuses the issue on the violation of fundamental rights, which makes the issue compatible with a Right-Based Conception.

It is found that the discourse of educationists draws heavily on emotive vocabulary to build up the moral disgust and put the audience on an emotional platform against honour killing. Words like "very bad," "cruel," "condemn us," "matter of shame" and "very cruel act" work as affect, making us feel sad, angry, and morally repulsed. These terms make the issue personal, moving from dispassionate criticism and placing the speaker in the position of being emotionally invested in decrying the practice. Emotive vocabulary also acts as a persuasion tool, to appeal to common feelings of fear ("condemn us") and moral conscience ("peace and harmony") for greater solidarity. The use of the concept of honour killing as a practice that is not only socially unacceptable, but also emotionally unbearable, enables the speakers to mobilize affective intensity to delegitimize this practice and strengthen its rejection in the moral and cultural discourse.

This finding is a reflection of Humanistic and Catastrophic Conception. The consistent application of negatively charged emotive language to make the violence "emotionally unbearable" is a central strategy of a Humanistic Conception, and is intended to summon universal empathy and moral revulsion. The amplification of condemnation and the use of extreme terms, such as "very cruel act," fit with a Catastrophic Conception, the severity of the problem as a profound moral disaster, to be immediately and absolutely rejected.

Responding to research question number two, it is found that the judgmental vocabulary in the discourse does operate as a moral evaluative mechanism categorizing behaviors, attitudes and systems as either just or unjust, moral or immoral. Terms like "unjust," "losing their humanity," "weak legal enforcement," "placing reputation over humanity," "doing it just to cover their pride" are examples of negative judgment resources. They make explicit condemnations of both the individuals who commit honour killings and the systems of society that uphold honour killings.

This finding is indicative of an Egalitarian and Transformative Conception. The discourse uses negative judgment condemning not only individual action, but also condemning the "societal systems" and "weak legal enforcement" that endorse the violence, suggesting that there needs to be systemic change, which is the key component of a Transformative Conception.

It is found that the namely the use of Judgmental vocabulary, this is consistently used to judge both perpetrators and the wider society. Phrases such as "not well educated," "our culture thinks it's okay to kill someone," and "families take up cruel steps" are examples of negative judgment about capacity and propriety that describe actors as ignorant, immoral, and unable to reason ethically. By doing so the discourse subjects honour killing not to the status of an unfortunate accident but to the status of a willful violation of morality and justice. At the same time, judgment is not limited to individuals, but to societal complicity: "people are reluctant to speak" and "our society is responsible . . . to some extent." This is a collective judgment, which expands the scope of responsibility and represents a systemic failure of morality: honour killing is a moral failure. Thus, judgmental vocabulary plays its role both on the micro level (raising the condemnation of perpetrators) and on the macro level (criticizing the norms that work within society), reinforcing the position that the practice is indefensible.

This finding is in line with an Educational and Social Justice Conception. The negative judgment done on actors being "not well educated" or holding "extreme ideologies" is a direct point to an Educational Conception, with ignorance and lack of enlightenment being viewed as a moral failing that must be corrected through learning and reform. Extension of the judgment to complicity and collective responsibility of the society ("our society is responsible") is a defining feature of a Social Justice Conception, which insists on structural accountability for system failures (ethical).

Responding to research question number three, it is found that the graduation forces are used to magnify the intensity, frequency, and scope of evaluation, in order to build the persuasiveness of the discourse. Educationists tactically use the tools of graduation resources, especially force and scope, to escalate their moral denunciation of honour killing and make it an undisputed negatively depreciated act. By use of maximizing intensifiers like absolutely wrong, completely against Islam, totally unbearable, etc., participants are turning personal morality positions into objective moral facts thus removing the discursive space of justification or relativization. Recurrent and broad phrases like repeating and reoccurring and

happening in other regions of Pakistan continue to magnify the problem not as a limited occurrence but as an epidemic in a country. The rhythmic repetition of such phrases as No reason, no culture, no justification helps to reinforce the moral closure and augment the persuasive effect, as it denies all the other possible opinions. All these linguistic features represent the moral absolutist, advocacy based, crisis-oriented conception that enhances the intensity of emotions and makes honour killing substantially indefensible.

As well, there is a feminist, social-reformist, and transformative orientation of the discourse where the responsibility is transferred not to individual perpetrators but to the wider structures of society. The application of negative assessment language like an absolutely terrible reality shows the further amplification of negative assessment whereas mentioning honour killing is covered with help of our social fabric where complicity is assigned to the deep-rooted cultural norms. Educationists create the problem by prefiguring structural injustice and androcentric cultures, as an element of shared moral bankruptcy, as opposed to individual deviance. This broad-based concept highlights the rights of human beings globally and collective responsibility that it is the duty of both the perpetrators and the general community to facilitate such violence. In general, the results indicate that the discourse of educationists condemns and also demands an all-encompassing ethical and social change in order to eradicate the systems of culture that perpetuate honour killing.

Conclusion

The present research was designed to investigate the ideas that the verbal discourse of educationists in Pakistan harbors about honour killing in terms of appraisal analysis. The study finds that educationists talk about honour killing which reflects condemnatory, moral, reformist and advocacy-based conceptions through evaluating emotive vocabulary, expressions of judgement and graduation materials. The high frequency of words of strongly negative affect indicates the emotional disapproval and moral outrage, whereas the vocabulary of judgment shows the ethical positions, accountability, and the attribution of social blame. Furthermore, the usage of graduation forces such as the intensive and superlative forms contributes to the severity and intensity of the act making it more acceptable as a severe moral and social crime. In general, the analysis of the data revealed that the discourse of educationists is not neutral, but an active one, as it frames honour killing as socially unfair, ethically indefensible, and culturally problematic practice and, therefore, it adds to the transformative and reformist narrative in the educational field.

References

- Arshad, N., Rehmani, A., & Qasim, H. M. (2025). Evaluative language in Indo-Pak conflict: An appraisal theory analysis of ministerial speeches. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT)*
- Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Firouzi, R., & Farahzad, F. (2025). A systematic review of appraisal theoretical research in translation studies published between 2017 and 2024. *Iranian Journal of Translation Studies*
- Gill, A. K., Strange, C., & Roberts, K. (Eds.). (2014). *'Honour' Killing and Violence: Theory, Policy and Practice*. Arnold
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An introduction to functional grammar* (2nd ed.). Edward Arnold.
- Hood, S. (2010). *Appraising research: Evaluation in academic writing*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lazarus, R. S. (1966). *Psychological stress and the coping process*. McGraw-Hill.
- Lazarus, R. S. (1991). *Emotion and adaptation*. Oxford University Press.
- Lazarus, R. S. (1999). *Stress and emotion: A new synthesis*. Springer.
- Martin, J. R., & White, P. R. R. (2005). *The language of evaluation: Appraisal in English*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*
- Sujatna, E. T. S., Kuswoyo, H., Zalmansyah, A., Lestari, D., Abidin, Z., & Mulyadi, M. (2026). Students' engagement resources in university EFL oral academic presentation: An appraisal approach. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 13, Article 48.
- Shahid, A., Awan, M. H., & Rana, F. A. (2024). Honour killings in Pakistan: Legal perspectives and reforms. *Qlantic Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(1), 134-140.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2015). Critical discourse analysis. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, & H. E. Hamilton (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (2nd ed., pp. 466-485). John Wiley & Sons.

Article Information:

<i>Received</i>	26-Mar-2026
<i>Revised</i>	13-May-2026
<i>Accepted</i>	18-Jun-2026
<i>Published</i>	30-Jun-2026

Declarations:

Author's Contribution:

- **Conceptualization, and intellectual revisions.**
- **Data collection, interpretation, and drafting of manuscript**
- The author agrees 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

Correspondence:

Maria Khan

mariaakhann2001@gamil.com
