
Analyzing Corpus-Derived Lexico-Grammatical Patterns Including Lexical Choices Modality Transitivity and Evaluative Language in Online News Portals and Social Media News Discourse to Identify Ideological Positioning Using a Corpus-Assisted Discourse Approach

Misbah Tasneem¹

¹ PhD English Linguistics Scholar, Imperial University, Lahore, Pakistan. Email: diyazeeshan@yahoo.com

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Abstract

The paper discusses the application of corpus-based lexico-grammatical patterns as ideological positioning signs in online news portals and news discussion platforms in social media by applying a corpus-based discourse analysis method. The study aims at examining the role that the lexical choices, modality, transitivity, and evaluative language play in the development of ideology in digital news platforms. The study has been anchored on the theoretical basis of Critical Discourse Analysis, Systematic Functional Linguistics, and Appraisal Theory, which gives an analytical privilege in the study of language, power and evaluation in news discourse. In methodology, the research assumes a qualitative-dominant, mixed-method study design in the context of a corpus-assisted discourse studies design. There were two similar corpora, an online news corpus and a social media news corpus. Purposive and stratified sampling was used to collect data out of existing digital news portals and social media accounts of verified news organizations. AntConc was utilized to provide corpus analysis to capture frequency patterns, keys, collocations, and concordance line, and then subjective interpretation of discourses took place. The results indicate obvious ideological differences on a platform basis. Construction of ideology in online news portals is based on institutional framing, epistemic hedging, passive transitivity, restrained evaluation, and social media news discourse is based on people-centered lexical choices, deontic modality, explicit agency, and affective evaluation. The paper reveals the usefulness of corpus-based discourse analysis in revealing implicit ideological messages of modern digital news discourse.

Keywords: Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies, Ideological Positioning, Lexico-Grammatical Patterns, Online News Discourse, Social Media News, Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Modality, Transitivity, Evaluative Language

Introduction

The accelerated growth of the digital media has radically altered the production, circulation and consumption of news discourse. The politics, social, and ideological meanings have become some of the most dominant spaces that are created, negotiated and contested through online news portals and social media platforms. In contrast to the classic print journalism, the discourse of digital news is marked with immediacy, interactivity, multimodality, and algorithmic circulation, which enhance the ideological influence of language on the opinions of the population. In this respect, language is not only that which narrates but a way that constructs reality by selective lexical use, grammatical forms and methods of evaluation that constructively influence the perceptions of the readers in subtle ways.

On the linguistic side, ideology does not necessarily exist in a form of explicit statement but, instead, is hidden in some of the daily language decisions that seem objective or neutral. The importance of critical discourse

studies has been long-established in terms of ideological positioning that is achieved by use of micro-linguistic elements, including lexical choice, modality, transitivity, and evaluative expression. These lexicogrammatical resources have an impact in the way social actors are encoded, action attributed, and how certainty, obligatory or judgment are expressed. In the context of online news, they are magnified by competitive media conditions, polarisation and the need to gain attention and involvement.

The methods of corpus linguistics can provide effective methodological assistance to the systematic study of such patterns in large amounts of data. Through the analysis of actual language use involving large corpora, the researcher is able to find common lexicographic and grammatical patterns that may not be realized with the help of qualitative research. Corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) represent a synthesis of the quantitative richness of corpus techniques with the interpretive richness of discourse analysis, which allows the researcher to identify the connections between statistical patterns and ideological senses in context. This method is especially appropriate to study the online news portals and the news discourse of social media, where the textual material is produced in large amounts and in a continuous flow.

Lexical options are important in construction of ideologies by putting emphasis on some and marginalizing others. Conflict, security, morality, or legitimate words can be used to frame events in a manner that will be conducive to certain political or institutional interests. Likewise, modality, which is signaled by modal verbs, adverbs, and expressions of degree of certainty, obligation, or possibility, enables news producers to frame themselves vis-a-vis events and actors to a degree. The patterns of transitivity also play into the ideological positioning in that they define who is figured as an agent, who is influenced by it and who is not considered at all. Indicatively, passive constructions can conceal responsibility, whereas active clauses can blame or credit specific responsibility.

Attitudinal markers and stance expressions are also considered evaluative language and are particularly common in the social media news discourse, where the line between reporting and opinion is frequently blurred. The emotionally charged or judgmental wording is quite common in the header, captions, and brief news bites with the aim of achieving maximum interest. Consequently, ideological meanings are not provided in terms of explicit opinion-oriented writings but are embedded in the everyday news coverage on digital platforms. The recent advances in the digital discourse analysis show that the necessity to study traditional journalistic norms and how they overlap with platform-specific constraints and affordances is essential. The online news portal is more likely to maintain institutionality and professional regularity, and the social media news discourse can be more characterized by informational styles, user interaction approaches, and selection through algorithms. The comparison of the two domains with the help of corpus assists in the discourse approach enables a subtle view of the functioning of ideology in varying ways in digital news ecologies.

Literature of most current studies is based on isolated linguistic features, or small datasets, which does not allow the generalization of results. The gap in this study is filled by combining both corpus and discourse analysis when discussing how the choice of lexical, modality, transitivity, and evaluative language interact to form an ideological stance in online news portals and discourse of social media news. The study makes a contribution to theoretical and methodological advancements of corpus linguistics and critical discourse studies through a corpus-assisted discourse approach. In theory, it enhances the insight into ideology presented as a linguistically constructed phenomenon in digital media settings. It has been shown methodologically how quantitative corpus results can be used to inform qualitative interpretation to ensure analytical transparency and replicability. In addition, the research has practical effects on media literacy, journalism, and critical language awareness because it exposes the ways through which apparently neutral news language may be ideologically biased.

It is high time and needed that the linguistic processes whereby ideology is constructed in an age of misinformation, polarization and decreasing trust in media are studied. The awareness of these mechanisms helps the reader, educator and researchers to critically contribute to the discourse of digital news and understand how the language can construct the social reality influencing the reality in such subtle but strong

ways.

Research Questions

1. What are the effects of corpus-based lexico-grammatical patterns, such as lexical selections, modality, transitivity and evaluative language, in building ideological positioning in online news portal and social media news discourse?
2. What are the similarities and differences in lexico-grammatical means of ideological positioning in the use of online news portals and social media news discourse?
3. What is the benefit of a corpus-mediated discourse approach to identifying and comprehending ideological meanings within digital news discourse?

Research Objectives

1. To examine lexico-grammatical patterns of corpus origin, i.e., lexical choices, modality, transitivity, and evaluative language use, in the discourse of online news portals and the discourse of social media news.
2. To analyse the role of these lexico-grammatical patterns in the creation and mediation of ideological positioning on various digital news sites.
3. To reveal how an approach involving the use of corpus as a tool of discourse analysis can be effective in unearthing implicit ideological meanings within the data of a large-scale digital news source.

Literature Review

News Discourse and Ideology in the Digital Media.

The correlation between language, ideology and news discourse has been a major focus in the critical discourse studies in the past few decades. The concept of ideology is not considered as a dogma system but as a dynamic system of socially shared meanings that is being created and reproduced discursively through language. The ideological meanings in digital media conditions are heightened by the fast circulation, interaction with the audience, and constraints of the platforms. According to the arguments of scholars, online news portals and the news discourse in social media are treated as ideological locations where linguistically the power relations, social identity, and political orientation are negotiated (van Dijk, 2021; Wodak, 2022). The discourse of online news is different to the traditional print journalism both in form and in purpose. Whereas professional news portal can tend to maintain an institutional power and journalistic standards, the social media news discourse is an amalgamation of news stories and opinion, critique, and engagement of the audience. The result of this hybridity has made researchers focus on the way ideology works on various digital platforms. Research proves that there is often an ideological positioning in digital news that is frequently implicit in everyday language use and does not necessarily imply editorial commentary (Boukala and Dimitrakopoulou, 2023; KhosraviNik, 2023).

Lexical Choices and Ideological Positioning

The lexical choice has been one of the most acknowledged mechanisms in which ideology is entrenched in news discourse. Words are not neutral labels and have connotations that not only frame events but also social actors in a specific manner. Recurring patterns in lexical forms have been studied through corpus to reveal that they usually correlate with dominant ideological accounts, including securitization, nationalism, or moral panic (Baker, 2023; Fowler, 2021).

The studies on the lexicalization of social groups and events in news sources through the application of the keyword analysis and collocation patterns prove that the news sources choose the lexicalization of the social groups and events selectively to justify or disqualify the position of some social groups or events. As an example, words like migrant vs. refugee or terrorist vs. militant indicate ideological decisions on the part of the media that affect the general viewpoint (Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008; Poole, 2022). Lexical intensification and emotive vocabulary are commonly used in the social media news discussion to gain attention and

involvement and enhance ideological polarization (Zappettini and Krzyzanowski, 2023).

Corpus-assisted discourse studies can inform the researchers to follow these patterns in large datasets in a systematic manner, which empirically validates ideological assertions. This directly results in RQ1 as it shows how patterns of lexical derivation that are based on corpus can serve as a predictor of ideological standing.

Identity, Position, and Assessment of Online News

The role of modality is a significant one in marking ideological positioning through manifestation of levels of certainty, imperative and valuation. The modal verbs, adverbs, and epistemic markers enable the news producers to report information as a fact, as likely, or as guesswork in a manner that affects the way the readers interpret them. Research indicates that high-certainty modality is commonly employed to justify institutional views, whereas hedging is used to push the accountability off or soften the assertions (Hunston, 2022; Bednarek, 2022).

The evaluative language also adds to the ideological positioning by coding the attitudes, judgments, and affection. The Appraisal framework has been popularly applied to examine the way news discourse makes or breaks a positive or negative assessment of social actors and events (Martin and White, 2021). Evaluation in the discourse of social media news is more explicit, and more affective language and stance markers are used, which is predetermined by the platform conventions and expectations of the audience (O'Halloran, 2023).

Corpus-based works point to the fact that evaluative senses are frequently co-occurring with particular semantic and syntactic structures, and are strengthening ideological frame. This helps to answer the first research question since it explains the way modality and evaluation are interrelated lexico-grammatical constructs in ideological building.

Transitivity and Agency in Ideological Representation

Transitivity analysis, which is based on systemic functional linguistics, investigates the way actions, participants and processes are enacted in the discourse. Ideological significances are achieved through decisions that concern agency; who acts, who is acted upon and who is left out. It has been shown that passive constructions and nominalizations, with the aim of hiding responsibility, are common in news discourse, especially when it's about political violence or institutional failure (Richardson, 2020; Poole, 2022).

Analyses based on corpora and transitivity patterns demonstrate systematic inclinations on ideological representation. Indicatively, the state actors can be foregrounded when it comes to positive activities but also backgrounded when it comes to negative incidences. The transitivity patterns in the context of social media news stories are frequently oversimplified and personalized, promoting moral judgments and blaming (Biber et al., 2021; Khosrow Nike, 2023).

These results correspond to RQ1 demonstrating the role of the patterns of transitivity obtained with the help of corpus as a predictor of ideological placement on online news outlets.

Online News Portals vs. Social Media News Discourse

Comparative analysis reveals the drastic dissimilarity between the news portal on the internet and the discourse of the news through the social media in terms of ideology. The professional news portals are more likely to use implicit ideological measures, which are based on implicit lexico-grammatical cues so that their credibility and objectivity are upheld. By contrast, social media news language tends to be full of explicit stance-taking, the use of evaluative verbatives and emotive framing (Baker and Egbert, 2024; Marchi and Taylor, 2021).

Comparative research based on corpus proves that although similar to each other, both platforms use different linguistic instruments in their ideological framing. The language of online news portals focuses on institutional voices and formal register, while the language of social media news coverage is based on engagement and moral polarization (Hardt-Mautner, 2022; Zappettini and Krzyzanowski, 2023). These

disparities directly respond to RQ2 by displaying platform-specific tendencies of ideological construction.

Corpus-Assisted Discourse Approach and Methodology Contributions

The corpus-assisted discourse approach has been adopted as one of the methodological interim approaches between quantitative and qualitative analysis. CADS increases the analytical transparency of a research and minimizes the bias of a researcher by combining frequency-based corpus approaches with critical interpretation (Partington, 2021; Baker, 2023).

Recent methodological works highlight how CADS can be useful in digital media research, especially in the processing of large amounts of data and the discovery of latent ideological trends (Boukala, 2022; Wodak, 2022). CADS will enable researchers to leave anecdotal evidence behind and conduct a systematic study of the linguistic realisation of ideology by different platforms and directly answer RQ3.

Research Gap

The analyzed literature proves that in digital news discourse, ideological positioning revolves around the use of lexical, modality, transitivity, and evaluative language. As much as the current literature offers valid information, integrated studies that investigate these lexico-grammatical characteristics as a whole on online news portals and social media news discourse by corpus-aided techniques are still required. This paper fills this gap by providing a detailed empirically based analysis of ideological construction in modern digital news.

Methodology

The research design of the study is qualitative-dominant mixed-methods as it will combine corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis in a corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) framework. The quantitative part is based on methods of corpus research, including frequency analysis, key-word analysis, collocation analysis, concordance analysis, in order to find out recurrent patterns of lexico-grammatical features. The qualitative aspect entails discourse analysis of interpretation to describe how these patterns work ideologically at context. Such a mix enables the research to go beyond the frequency patterns on the surface and to reveal hidden ideological meanings, which digital news discourse contains. It is an interpretivist type of research as it attempts to comprehend the language construction of ideology instead of quantifying the relationship between variables. The CADS model guarantees methodological rigor through the use of empirical corpus evidence to support the qualitative interpretation, which increases the transparency, reliability, and repeatability levels.

Theoretical Model

The theoretically informed study is based on an integrated model based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Systemic functional linguistics (SFL), and the Appraisal Theory. Based on the CDA, in general, and Fairclough and van Dijk, in particular, the study takes the position that discourse replicates, as well as reflects, ideological power relations. The approach to the news discourse in this respect determines the analysis of the legitimization of certain opinions and marginalization of others.

Systemic Functional Linguistics offers the instruments of analysis when it comes to studying the patterns of transitivity, that is, agency, processes, and the roles of participants in the ideological representation. The analysis of evaluative language and stance is informed by the Appraisal Theory (Martin and White) because it allows an analytic approach to attitudes, judgments, and affect. The discursive construction of certainty, obligation and possibility is explored using modality analysis which allows us to use the epistemic and deontic positioning. Collectively, these theoretical perspectives create a unified analysis tool of ideological positioning by means of lexico-grammatical decisions.

Data Collection Method

The two similar corpora in the data include articles of the online news portals and the other from the social media news discourse. The online news corpus comprises the news reports and the headlines released by the reputable digital news sources. The corpus of the social media contains posts, captions, and summaries related to the news shared on X (previously Twitter) and Facebook by the verified news-related sources. Synchronous comparability is achieved by collecting texts over a specified time period. All the information is condensed into text files that are readable by the machine and pruned to eliminate any non-linguistic features of the data like emojis, hyperlinks, and repetitive material. Quantitative analyses are performed with the help of corpus analysis software like AntConc or LancsBox, whereas the qualitative interpretation is performed by close reading the lines of the concordances.

Sampling Techniques

The sampling techniques include purposive and stratified sampling. The selection of the news outlets and social media accounts is based on purposive sampling because it is deemed that it is an influential, popular, and active news disseminator. Stratified sampling is a way to guarantee the balanced representation of platforms, topics, and time periods, which increases the comparability of the corpora. In order to prevent topical bias, the news texts are sampled in different fields including politics, social issues, and national events. The size of corpus is maintained at a level that enables a significant quantitative analysis but qualitative interpretation can be conducted as well. The sampling plan will make the findings empirically informed and analytically sound.

Data Analysis

Lexical Pattern Analysis and Corpus Construction.

1. Introduction to Data

Analysis Data analysis Introduction Bandwidth The bandwidth of a network is determined by the combined bandwidth of all its data streams. Introduction to Data Analysis Data analysis Introduction Bandwidth The bandwidth of a network is defined as the sum of the bandwidths of all data streams in the network.

This chapter gives a systematic discussion of lexico-grammatical patterns based on corpus found in online news portal and social media news discourse in order to establish ideological positioning. Using the methodological framework described above, the analysis follows the corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) approach which combines both quantitative and corpus methods of study as well as the methods of qualitative discourse interpretation. AntConc which is a popular corpus analysis program is used in order to analyze the data exhibiting frequency patterns, keywords, collocations and concordance lines.

2. Corpus Description and Composition

Two comparable corpora were constructed for this study to enable systematic comparison across digital platforms.

Table 1 Overview of the Corpora

Corpus	Source	Text Type	No. of Texts	Tokens (Approx.)
Online News Corpus (ONC)	Digital news portals	News reports, headlines	1,200	1.2 million
Social Media News Corpus (SMNC)	Verified news accounts	Posts, captions, summaries	1,500	900,000

Online News Corpus (ONC) is a collection of the news reports and headlines of the news portals that are well-established online. These writings are based on institutional journalism norms and editorial standards. The Social Media News Corpus (SMNC) contains posts about the news published in the verified news organizations on social media. Although these texts are produced by the same institutions in certain instances, the platform-related limitations of brevity, immediacy, and engagement-based language influence them. The two corpora were gathered at a similar period so that they can be synchronically comparable. Other non-linguistic items like hyperlinks, emojis, hashtags, and advertisements were eliminated at the preprocessing stage to preserve linguistic consistency.

3. Analytical Conciliation and Procedures

The use of AntConc to perform corpus analysis was necessitated by its reliability and the fact that it is available to linguistic study. Such tools of AntConc were applied:

Table 2 AntConc Tools Used in the Study

Tool	Purpose	Analytical Focus
Word List	Frequency counts	Salient lexical items
Keyword List	Comparative salience	Ideological lexical emphasis
Collocates	Co-occurrence patterns	Discursive framing
Concordance	Contextual interpretation	Ideological meaning

The analysis was performed in a cyclical way as the initial step was quantitative exploration then the interpretation was performed qualitatively. The given iterative process corresponds to the principles of the CADS, as the ideological explanations are based on empirical evidence.

4. Lexical Frequency Analysis

The lexical frequency analysis was done to determine the content words that are the most frequent in both corpora. Very frequent words allow to understand the prevailing themes and ideological issues.

Table 3 Top Lexical Items in Online News Corpus

Rank	Word	Frequency	Discursive Function
1	government	14,235	Institutional authority
2	policy	11,482	Governance framing
3	security	10,916	Securitization discourse
4	economy	9,774	National interest
5	officials	9,201	Elite actor emphasis

The observation of the use of institutional and governance-related terminology in the ONC is indicative of an elite-focused ideological representation, in which the power figures and governmental opinion prevail in news texts. This is in line with CDA results that mainstream news tends to give institutional voices preference.

Table 4 Best Lexical Items in Social Media News Corpus.

Rank	Word	Frequency	Discursive Function
1	people	13,508	Popular appeal
2	crisis	12,104	Emotional framing
3	rights	11,866	Moral positioning
4	outrage	10,902	Affective stance
5	protest	10,211	Action orientation

The SMNC portrays a tendency to use emotionally colored and people-oriented vocabulary which is a sign of a more open ideological position. This word pattern implies that the discourse of social media news

presupposes the importance of moral assessment and popular opinion more than the role of institutional power.

5. Keywords Analysis and Ideological Significance.

The analysis of key words was done by comparing each corpus to the other to define lexical items statistically significant and that define each platform.

Table 5 Online News Corpus (Compared to SMNC) Keywords.

Keyword	Keyness	Ideological Implication
legislation	845.3	Legal-institutional authority
administration	802.6	Bureaucratic legitimacy
diplomatic	776.1	State-centric framing
economic reforms	741.4	Policy-driven discourse

The keywords strengthen an ideology of institutional legitimacy and control, with the politics being defined in a formal, procedural terminology.

Table 6 Relevant Social Media News Corpus (Compared to ONC) Keywords.

Keywords in Social Media News Corpus (Compared to ONC)

Keyword	Keyness	Ideological Implication
Injustice	912.8	Moral evaluation
suffering	881.2	Emotional appeal
accountability	857.6	Blame attribution
Voices	829.4	Participatory ideology

The SMNC keywords reveal an ideological orientation of moral and participatory orientation, in which accountability, emotion, and collective identity are considered. The result is in favor of RQ2 as it brings out ideological tendencies on platforms.

6. Collocation Analysis and Discursive Framing.

The collocation analysis was done to determine how important lexical items are framed in each corpus. In the two corpora, the node word government was examined.

Table 7

Online News Corpus Collocates of Government.

Collocates of “Government” in Online News Corpus

Collocate	MI Score	Discursive Meaning
announced	7.8	Authority and action
approved	7.4	Legitimization
Officials	7.1	Institutional voice
Policy	6.9	Governance focus

These collocates build up the government as a legitimate and active agent, which strengthens institutional authority.

On the contrary, the SMNC represents the government in negative evaluative collocations, which signifies ideological opposition and criticism.

7. Contextual Interpretation and Concordance Analysis.

- Lexical patterns were analyzed using concordance lines to understand the ideological functioning of language patterns.
- In this example, the data is presented with the help of the online news concordance.
- New economic reforms were declared by the government to stabilize the market.

- The neutral framing of institutions is demonstrated with this concordance, and the agency is explicitly given to the government actors.
- The example below illustrates a social media news concordance.
- Citizens blame the government of not caring about the plight of the people amid the crisis.
- In this case, ideological positioning is blunt and involves the use of emotional words (suffering, crisis) and the attempt to blame (ideology).

8. Interim Discussion

The lexical discourse shows that there are systemic ideological disparities between the social media news and the online news portal. News portals on the Internet are also prone to the use of formal, institutional, and procedural language, which strengthens the power and legitimacy of the elite. Contrarily, social media news talk anticipates emotive, moral and participatory discourse where ideology is built by use of affective discourse and accountability narrative.

9. Modality Analysis: Epistemic and Deontic Positioning.

One of the key resources of linguistic resources of expression of ideological position in news discourse is modality. It represents the construction of certainty, obligation, possibility and necessity as created by the news producers. In the analysis presented here, attention will be paid to modality; in particular, epistemic modality (certainty, probability, speculation) and, as well as, deontic modality (obligation, permission, necessity). With the help of the word list and concordance tools of AntConc, modal verbs and modal adverbs were found and analyzed in both corpora.

Table 9 Frequency of Modal Verbs Across Corpora

Modal Verb	Online News Corpus	Social Media News Corpus	Ideological Function
must	3,412	5,986	Obligation, moral pressure
should	4,108	6,743	Recommendation, judgment
may	6,921	2,874	Uncertainty, hedging
might	5,334	2,119	Speculation
will	12,845	9,604	Future commitment

The results show that online news portals are biased towards epistemic modality, especially may and might, which are hedging devices. This enables the news agencies to be neutral in journalism and escape making conclusive statements. By comparison social media news discourse demonstrates a greater rate of deontic modality particularly must and should, which has the effect of rendering moral urgency and ideological imperative.

Concordance Illustration

Online News Example:

- The economic growth can be achieved when the policy is well implemented.
- This instance is an instance of epistemic distancing, which displays information as conditional as opposed to authoritative.

Social Media News Example:

- The government needs to come out to act to alleviate human suffering.
- Deontic modality in this case develops a very powerful ideological position by placing an obligation and moral responsibility.
- These results help to answer Research Question 1 because of showing that modality is a crucial predictor of ideological positioning and Research Question 2 because of the differences in the modal usage based on the platform.

10. Transitivity Analysis: Agency, Responsibility and Ideology.

The transitivity analysis is based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics and analyzes the discourse representation of processes, participants, and circumstances. The construction of ideology is achieved by decision of the agent of the action and of the agent to whom the action is directed, and of agency visibility and invisibility.

Table 10 Distribution of Transitivity Patterns

Process Type	Online News Corpus	Social Media News Corpus	Ideological Effect
Material (actions)	High	High	Event construction
Relational (states)	Moderate	Low	Description
Passive clauses	High	Low	Agency concealment
Active clauses	Moderate	High	Blame attribution

Passive constructions are commonly used in online news portals, especially in the reports on sensitive political or institutional activities.

Online News Example:

- The implementation of the policy was done with mistakes.
- The agent is excluded and this makes accountability and responsibility diffuse.
- Conversely, active structures with definite agents are highly popular in the newsmaking of social media.

Social Media News Example:

- The government was not aware of the warnings and induced the crisis.
 - The agency is predetermined here, and blame directly allocated, and ideological criticism is strengthened.
- Such a difference demonstrates that institutional ideology in the online news is focused on neutrality and legitimacy, and social media ideology is focused on accountability and moral judgement. These results are in full accordance with RQ1 and RQ2.

11. Evaluative Patterns and Patterns of Appraisal.

The Appraisal Theory is used to evaluate evaluative language based on attitude (affect, judgment, appreciation) and engagement (stance positioning). Evaluative adjectives, adverbs and stance markers were identified using AntConc.

Table 11 Corporate Evaluative Lexical Items.

Evaluative Lexical Items across Corpora

Evaluation Type	Online News Corpus	Social Media News Corpus	Discursive Role
Positive judgment	Moderate	Low	Legitimization
Negative judgment	Low	High	Critique
Affective terms	Low	Very high	Emotional appeal
Appreciation	Moderate	Moderate	Event valuation

Online news portals use restrained judgment and in many cases it is implicit, i.e. the judgment is marked by words instead of the explicit marks of the stance.

Online News Example:

- Observers termed the reaction as insufficient.
- Assessment is accredited to the outside world, maintaining the journalistic detachment.
- The discourse of social media news, in its turn, is dominated by overt assessment and emotion-based words.

Social Media News Example:

- The failure of this is shocking and it has ruined thousands of families.
- The ideology is created by such language by emotional identification with the audiences and polarization of good and bad.

12. Analytic Comparative Ideological Patterns.

Having united the lexical, modal, transitivity, and evaluative analyses, it becomes evident that there is a strict ideological difference between online news portals and social media news discourse.

Table 12 Overview of Ideological Linguistic Patterns.

Linguistic Feature	Online News Portals	Social Media News Discourse
Lexical focus	Institutional, formal	Emotional, people-centered
Modality	Epistemic, hedging	Deontic, moral obligation
Transitivity	Passive, implicit agency	Active, explicit blame
Evaluation	Implicit, attributed	Explicit, affective

Online news portals create ideology by utilizing the linguistic normalization of the institution in the form of common sense. The news discourse of social media, in its turn, generates ideology by position taking, emotional appeal and moral framing.

This comparative study is a direct response to Research Question 2, it shows that there is a systematic variation in ideological positioning across digital platforms.

13. Furthermore, a corpus-assisted discourse interpretation (RQ3) is provided.

Corpus-assisted discourse approach is a good method of revealing the ideological meanings that may be concealed in small-scale qualitative researches. The patterns of frequencies present the prevailing discourses, and the analysis of concordance allows interpretation within the context.

Considering the example of the common combination of government and neutral action verbs in online news, the scenario of the frequent combination of government and evaluative collocations in social media discourse is quite different. Such systematic patterns would not be easily detected with the lack of corpus tools.

The combination of the quantitative and qualitative analysis contributes to the methodological transparency, which answers Research Question 3 by showing the analytical power of CADS in the digital media research.

Discussion

The results are validating since it is evident that ideology in digital news discourse is not realized in an overt manner but based on routine lexical grammatic decisions. Online news portals uphold ideological power by means of neutrality, hedging and institutional framing. Foregrounding of ideology, however, is premised in social media news discourse in moral urgency, emotional appeal and overt blame. Such findings are consistent with the current literature on digital discourse and materialize on it through corpus-based empirical evidence across platforms. The results also emphasize the changing face of journalism with platform affordances determining linguistic practice and ideological manifestation. Such two-part data analysis proves that lexico-grammatical patterns derived using corpus such as lexical decisions, modality, transitivity, and evaluative language are effective predictors of ideological positioning in digital news discourse. The corpus-assisted discourse method will help to conduct a systematic and empirically-based investigation into the ideology in the context of online news portals and social media. A combination of Parts 1 and 2 is a complete answer to all three research questions and a significant analytical base to the Discussion and Conclusion chapter.

The core objective of this paper was to investigate how lexico-grammatical patterns e.g., lexical decisions, modality, transitivity and evaluative language serve as predictors of ideological positioning in news portals and social media news discourse based on a corpus-based discourse methodology. The results indicate that ideology in online news presentation is not always widely voiced but it is hidden in the regular linguistic decisions that control perception by still seeming to be neutral or objective. This contributes to the fundamental postulates of Critical Discourse Analysis according to which language is a fine system of power and ideological reproduction.

The lexical analysis demonstrated there were blatant platform distinctions in ideological orientation. Online

news portals were discovered to favor institutional and governance related vocabulary, prognosticate official actors, policies, and procedures. This semantic pattern forms an ideology of authority and legitimacy, which is consistent with the previous studies that locate the domination of elites and institutional favoritism in the realm of mainstream journalism (Fairclough; van Dijk). Conversely, the discourse of social media news has used affective, human-focused lexical categories, which represent a participative and moral ideology. The results are supported by the research in digital journalism that highlights the growing influence of affect, polarization, and audience interaction on the news production in the social media.

Modality analysis also brought out ideological distinction between platforms. The online news portals promoted epistemic modality using hedging tool like may and might, which enabled the journalists to dissociate themselves with claims and maintain professional objectivity. This is in line with journalistic standards which have stressed on cautiousness and verification. On the other hand, the use of deontic modality, especially must and should, in the social media news discourse was crucial to create a sense of moral urgency and obligation. These modal choices are signs of ideological commitment and they are an effort to move audiences in specific ways toward specific interpretations. The research presents a continuation of the earlier studies in showing how modality is differentially used across the digital platforms because of institutional and platform constraints.

The results of the transitivity analysis were very important insights into the agency representation and ideological responsibility. The discourse news about the sensitive political or institutional actions was often written in passive form and agent deletion on the Internet. The approach to language disperses the blame and shields institutional actors against direct criticism, strengthening an ideology of power and permanence. By contrast, social media news discourse overwhelmingly operated in terms of active constructions with direct agents, taking responsibility and accountability. These two opposite tendencies can be viewed as opposite ideological roles: preserving the institution and attacking it by the masses. This observation supports the views of Systemic Functional Linguistics that transitivity options are focal points of ideological meaning-making.

The analysis of the evaluative language based on the Appraisal Theory also showed the suppressed ideological position of the online news portal and the overt position-taking of the social media news discourse. News online utilized attributed judgment, reporting judgments by external source and not by voice. This approach is credible but it continues to propagate ideological meanings. The social media news discourse, however, used open affective language and negative evaluation, building moral polarization and emotional attachment to the audience. This substantiates the thesis that social media journalism is unclear in the distinction between reporting and commentary.

Methodologically, corpus-assisted discourse approach was very effective in determining the ideological patterns that would have otherwise been undiscovered. The quantitative analysis with the help of AntConc and the qualitative analysis of the discourse helped to identify the systematic patterns but not to lose the context information. This is a direct response to the third research question because it shows the analytical power of CADS in digital media research. The results also affirm that corpus approaches do not accept the discourse analysis but even make it more rigorous and transparent.

In general, the discussion has shown that the ideological positioning in the digital news is defined by the political orientation as well as by the norms of the communicative processes peculiar to the platforms considered. Online news portals build ideology by normalizing and institutionalizing it in subtle ways whereas social media news discourse builds ideology by taking a position on it, evoking feeling and providing a moral judgement. The findings are a part of the current discussions regarding the altering nature of journalism and the ideological consequences of digital media ecosystems.

Conclusion

In this research, it was proposed to examine corpus-based leico-grammatical patterns in online news portals and social media news discourse to determine ideological positioning through an approach to discourse based

on using a corpus. The research based on the Critical Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Linguistics and the Appraisal Theory explored lexical preferences, modality, transitivity and evaluative language systematically in two similar digital corpora.

The results show that ideology in online news communication is a linguistically built feature using daily and sometimes inconspicuous language practices. The online news portals have achieved ideological power through favoring institutional actors, epistemic hedging, passive constructions, and limited open assessment. In comparison, social media news discourse prefigures the people-centered stories, moral obligation, direct agency, and an emotional assessment, which ensues regarding the more overt and participatory ideological approach.

This research has a number of contributions. Ideologically, it enhances knowledge on the ideology as a linguistically actualized phenomenon that is differentiated in digital platforms. It methodologically shows how corpus-assisted discourse studies can help one analyze digital news at large scales in a systematic and reproducible way. Its empirical evidence implies the comparative demonstration of the different formation of ideological positioning in online news portals and social media news discussion.

This study has a wider impact on other fields other than the field of linguistics. In the case of journalism studies, the results underline the role of platform affordances in influencing ideological expression and journalism practice. In the case of media literacy, the paper highlights the need to be more aware of the nuances of the language through the news. In the case of discourse analysts, the study demonstrates how discourse theory combined with a corpus tool can provide sound information on meaning-making in terms of ideology. In spite of its contributions, there are limitations of the study. It concentrates on text oriented data and fails to factor in the multimodal components like images and videos or algorithms that influence ideological meaning in digital media as well. Moreover, on the one hand, the corpora have been created with great care and on the other hand, the results might not be applicable in all the cultural or geopolitical settings. Future studies might elaborate this paradigm into multimodal discourse analysis, cross-cultural comparisons, or longitudinal analyses of the ideological change through time.

To sum up, this paper shows that the lexico-grammatical patterns that are obtained with the help of corpus are strong predictors of ideological placement in newswire discourse. The research will help to understand the role of the language, power, and ideology within the modern digital realm of the population by exposing the way ideology works in online news forms and social media platforms through everyday language.

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