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THE JOURNALIST'S OBJECTIVITY ON BARACK OBAMA'S INDIA MUSLIMS RIGHTS

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this research is to explore the level of objectivity by journalists in their reporting. The journalist's objectivity can be determined through the utilization of engagement, one of the appraisal systems developed by Martin and Rose (2007). Engagement, namely the source of attitude, deals with the source of the discourse by scheming the resources and the writer or speaker's opinion through two main types of engagement, heterogloss and monogloss. Heterogloss and monogloss serve as great tools for evaluating the data analysis. The data that the researchers collected is from BBC News about Obama's opinion on Muslim rights in India. Qualitative methodology is used for this research. The researchers read the online newspaper and separated each sentence to be grouped according to those two types. The findings showed that almost the entire data is classified as heterogloss. It can be concluded that the majority of the article's contents are from external sources. The journalist focused and took on the figures' opinions on the issue.

Keywords: appraisal, engagement, news, objectivity, subjectivity

Introduction

India is home to approximately 200 million Muslims, constituting one of the world's largest Muslim populations. However, in this predominantly Hindu nation, Muslims remain a minority and have faced persistent challenges such as systemic discrimination, prejudice, and violence, despite constitutional safeguards (Maizland, 2022). Adak (2021) noted India's seemingly inflexible laws concerning minorities. It is disheartening to observe that despite the significant Muslim population since India's inception, the majority Hindu community continues to adopt a condescending attitude towards them. This issue has not only gained attention within India but has also become a global concern, especially in Western societies.

Delling (2004) emphasizes an issue commonly highlighted in Western media, particularly regarding Muslim women in more secular societies. Muslim societies are often accused of discriminating against women, despite a contrary historical narrative in Islam. Additionally, Delling argues that the Qur'an, the holy book for Muslims, aimed to improve the status of women in prehistoric Arabia, preventing the killing of baby girls and granting them legal rights, such as inheritance, and the

ability to manage property and seek divorce for reasonable reasons. However, gender-biased regulations persist in some Islamic countries, reflecting a historical context that predominantly favored men. This has led to a global phenomenon where individuals with differing beliefs, particularly Muslims, face disrespect and discrimination. Throughout the years, news reports by journalists have consistently highlighted instances of such encounters.

Journalists fully recognize the crucial role of the press in serving society, particularly in promoting the common good (Tahat, Tahat, Alhammad, & Qublan, 2020). They emphasize that the press plays a vital role in interpreting facts, issues, and events, with a primary focus on mobilizing people and setting the agenda for society. By directing people toward information on human rights, social justice, or environmental issues, journalists aim to exert a positive influence on society (Lough & McIntyre, 2018). Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize that this arrangement does not ensure a complete absence of value or hidden messages within the media. Journalists subtly shape the audience's interpretations by attributing sources, influencing whether the audience aligns or disaligns with the journalist's attitudinal position. Simultaneously, Mahamed, Omar, and Krauss (2021) contend that journalists should create content adhering to journalistic standards, objectively evaluating situations, and taking a stance based on factual evidence. Journalists must be cognizant of potential outcomes, whether positive or negative, considering how news is crafted, and whether it adheres to objectivity or leans towards subjectivity. In this context, appraisal systems are deemed the most effective tool for comprehensive analysis.

In conducting this study with the appraisal systems, the researchers focus exclusively on the engagement branch to observe the objectivity of journalists' arguments in the BBC online newspaper. Political news often reflects the journalist's intended message for the public, whether persuasive, argumentative, or descriptive. The use of appraisal to analyze the news is due to one of the appraisal system's branches, which is engagement. Engagement focuses on examining data through two categories: "heterogloss," derived from external sources, and "monogloss," reliant solely on the author. This study concludes that monogloss represents subjectivity, while heterogloss reflects objectivity, employing the appraisal system proposed by Martin and Rose (2007).

Previous studies addressing similar issues employed similar methods and data sources. Thahara, Gunawan, Samad, Weda and Rahman (2019), focusing on political news, utilized the appraisal system by Martin and White (2005) and found that 47.82% of their data exhibited appreciation, 30.43% reflected effect, and 21.74% conveyed judgment, with monogloss dominating the sources of attitude. In agreement, Asad, Noor, Indah, and Jaes (2021) emphasized the value of citing external sources as authoritative references, employing the same data and method while adding Critical Discourse Analysis by Norman Fairclough (1995). Their findings highlighted indirectly invoked attitudes through evaluative groundwork, explicitly explained in the quoted text, with the 'Appraiser' serving as a central social actor. Furthermore, Cahyono, Dwi, and Sumarlam (2021) conducted a study using the appraisal system by Martin and White (2005) to find out the ideology and also the power of the online newspaper. The findings reveal the presence of three appraisal elements, specifically engagement. In this current study, the researchers

analyze the writer's perspectives in news texts, utilizing Martin and Rose (2007) by analyzing the perspectives of the writer.

Appraisal

Appraisal involves the assessment of various aspects within a text, such as the attitudes being conveyed, the intensity of emotions expressed, and the sources employed to establish values and align readers, as stated by Martin and Rose (2007). They added that Appraisal, as a system of interpersonal meanings, serves as a tool for negotiating our social connections, allowing us to communicate our feelings towards individuals and matters to the audience. Meanwhile, Martin and White (2005) pointed out that appraisal emphasizes the means of assessing negotiable attitudes and the intensity of affect in discourse, as well as the means used by writers or speakers to present their views and to frame and align readers and hypothetical listeners. In other words, what appraisal essentially explores is how speakers and writers often make judgments about people, other writers/speakers, and their statements, material objects, events, and situations. In that case, the writer or speaker should have a thorough knowledge of the subject matter before expressing the message, because the audience can assess and analyze the aspects mentioned above

Engagement

Martin and White (2005) stated that engagement pertains to the sourcing of attitudes and the interplay of voices surrounding opinions in discourse. They also explained that engagement involves the utilization of resources such as projection, modality, polarity, concession, and different remarks adverbials to position the speaker or writer about the value position being advocated and about potential responses to that value position. In the meantime, Martin and Rose (2007) expressed that engagement, which is an exploration of attitudes' sources, dives into the methods through which projecting source, modality, and concession have the potential to incorporate a diverse array of perspectives into a written composition. Furthermore, the primary decision at hand revolves around opting for a singular voice, commonly referred to as monogloss, or embracing multiple voices, known as heterogloss.

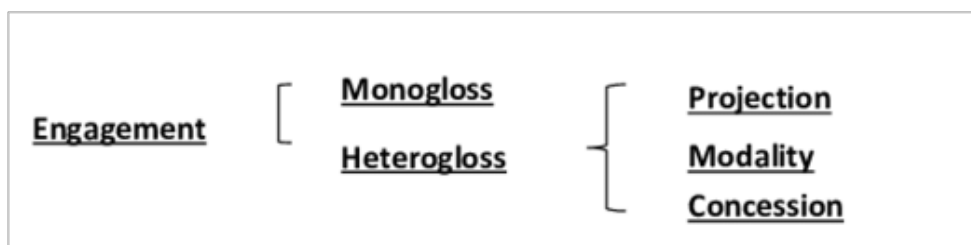


Figure 1. Engagement framework (Martin and Rose, 2007)

Appraisal, with its engagement system, is focused on the interpersonal dimension of meaning, while the other SFL branches are centered on the textual dimension of meaning (Rahman, 2018). The engagement system represents the viewpoints of researchers who conduct a study, concerning others' opinions or discussions in the same field.

Politics

According to Leftwich (2004), politics encompasses the actions leading to significant binding decisions and the institutions responsible for making those decisions. Essentially, politics influences the decisions made by a nation's government, shaping the policies of each country. Politics is also inherently linked to the decisions and actions of a government, which, in turn, impacts the lives of its citizens. Various fields, including economics, education, healthcare, social welfare, and environmental policies, are influenced by politics (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2002). This suggests that individuals can develop different habits each year due to the dynamic nature of political existence.

Journalist

Journalists play a pivotal role in providing insights into various aspects of human life through their reports, commonly known as daily news, as stated by (Deuze, 2005). He added that the purpose is to benefit society by keeping the public informed, examining the use of power, fostering democratic discussions, and, through these means, contributing to the progress of political, economic, social, and cultural aspects. Crafting a news report requires journalists to adhere to principles of accuracy and honesty in presenting the details of an incident (Knight, Geuze, & Gerlis, 2008). In conclusion, journalists serve as conduits of information, offering a comprehensive view of the multifaceted aspects of human existence. While navigating through diverse topics, this research focuses specifically on unraveling the complexities inherent in governmental politics. The study zooms in on the detailed landscape of government politics, aiming to uncover the nuances and challenges in this critical area.

Method

This study employs a qualitative method, chosen for its objectivity in acquiring a thorough comprehension of social phenomena within authentic settings (Ugwu & Eze, 2023). The use of this method is essential as the research involves gathering and analyzing non-numerical data. The data source for this study is purposively selected political news, specifically the BBC news article titled "Barack Obama: Row in India over Former US President's remarks on Muslim rights." The News was released on June 26, 2023. The news is crafted in response to a recent CNN interview with Barack Obama that has provoked displeasure among leaders in the Indian government, and this interview took place on June 23. The focus of the news is Obama's viewpoint regarding the treatment of Muslims as a minority in India, alongside the unfavorable responses and reactions from India's ruling party leaders concerning this issue.

To get the data, the researchers obtain purposive sampling by searching the news on Google. The news was taken from the official website, BBC (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-66016432>). In analyzing the data, the researchers employed the Appraisal framework proposed by Martin and Rose (2007). The researchers limited this study by focusing on one system of appraisal, namely, engagement.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The analysis findings offer captivating insights into linguistic engagement across diverse categories. Heterogloss stands out as the predominant form, covering 79.4% of the data. One of the heterogloss categories, projecting source, appears most with 65 percent. Concession contributes 8% of instances and concession is the lowest with 6.4%, representing instances of surrendering a perspective and expressing degrees of necessity or possibility. This category signifies the use of varied languages or speech forms, reflecting a rich linguistic framework. Meanwhile, monogloss follows at 20.6%, far less than heterogloss, indicating moments where a single language or speech form is employed. Notably, the analysis did not uncover any instances of names for ‘speech acts’ which is one of the projecting source elements. These results provide valuable perspectives on the subtle details of language use and expression within the examined context.

Table 1. The Analyzed Data

	Engagement	Recurrence	Percentage
Heteroglossia	Projecting Source	41	65%
	Concession	5	8.1%
	Modality	4	6.3%
Monogloss		13	20.6%
Total		63	100,0%

Heteroglossia

Heterogloss aspects, as mentioned previously, are projecting source, modality, and concession. Dive deeper into projecting source, it is composed of projecting clauses, projecting within clauses, scare quotes, and names for ‘speech acts’.

1. Projecting Source

Projecting source refers to the act of quoting or reporting what someone said, including the use of speech marks for direct quotations. By using projection, it can bring in more viewpoints for evaluation. The projection process can be used repeatedly, providing an opportunity for a thorough exploration of the sources underlying the information being presented in a multifaceted way, where we can utilize it to delve into the origins of various information sources.

	Data	Appraising	Appraised	Engagement type:
1	"How should a president engage with those kinds of leaders, either in the naming of them or in the dealing with them?" she asked.	asked	She	Heteroglossia: Projecting Source (Projecting clause)
2	However, there were also protests against his government, which was led by the Hindu nationalist BJP.	which	protest	Heteroglossia: Projecting Source (projecting within clause)
3	Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa	"Hussain	Biswa	Heteroglossia: Scare

Data	Appraising	Appraised	Engagement type:
Sarma tweeted that there were many "Hussain Obama in India itself" who needed to be taken care of.	Obama in India itself"	Sarma	quote

It can be seen from the table above that the finding of datum 1 is classified as engagement: heterogloss: projecting source. It is indicated by the use of the projecting clause ‘she asked’ which means that she was commenting on Obama’s statement about Muslims in India by asking a rhetorical question. Meanwhile, datum 2 is identified with the lexis ‘which’ functions as appraising item. It describes that the use of the relative adjective ‘which’ tends to explain the protest on which is led by the Hindu nationalist BJP. The last datum presented in the table above is gained from a tweet by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. It reveals that the journalist presents his argument using a scare quote, “Hussain Obama in India itself” which indicates that the people of India protect minority rights in India, especially Muslims. The journalist describes these people as good as Obama who loves peace and justice.

2. Concession

Concession, also known as counterexpectancy, involves keeping an eye on expectations. This monitoring is a common feature found in Engagement, it usually indicates using conjunctions, which play roles in expressing time, contrast, and causes. it is used to signal that the speaker countering an expectation that the speaker's created for the hearer. At any point in a text, readers expect what is likely to follow, and the speaker sees it as their role to challenge or contradict those expectations.

Data	Appraising	Appraised	Engagement type:
4 She went on to say that India wanted good relations with the US but "there too we get remarks about religious tolerance in India".	But	India wanted good relations with the US	Heteroglossia: Concession
5 Mr. Sarma's tweet mentioning Mr. Obama's middle name was a way of "twisting" his remarks into ones "made by a Muslim" even though the former president does not practice Islam.	Even though	“Made by a Muslim”	Heteroglossia: Concession

In datum 4, the journalist initially conveys that the Indian Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, referred to as "she," stated that India desires positive relations with the United States. However, the journalist countered that the issue of religious tolerance in India is being brought up in the United States as well. The concessive element comes with the word "but". In datum 5, the journalist considered that Mr. Sarma's tweet, which mentions Mr. Obama's middle name, is a tactic to manipulate the meaning of Obama's remarks. Mr. Obama's middle name, Hussein, is associated with a name with significance in Islamic history. It was exploited to misrepresent his remarks, making them appear as if the remarks were made by a Muslim despite

of the former president does not practice the religion. The concession is introduced by the phrase "even though" signals a contradiction.

3. Modality

Modality is an alternative method for incorporating additional perspectives into a text. Modality, according to Halliday (1994), is a way that language expresses certainty or necessity that creates a range of meanings between saying "yes" and "no." He mentioned that it includes how sure someone is about something or how necessary or desirable it is. Essentially, it helps people express their feelings and opinions in language.

	Data	Appraising	Appraised	Engagement type:
6	Mr. Obama said in an interview last week that India may "start pulling apart" if minority rights weren't protected.	May	India	Heteroglossia: Modality
7	People commenting on India's minority rights should "also think about how many Muslim countries they have attacked".	should	People	Heteroglossia: Modality

In datum 6, the term "may" contains a sense of possibility or likelihood. It reflects the perspective on the situation, conveying a degree of uncertainty or speculative nature regarding the outcome in the future. The journalist indicates that according to Mr. Obama, there is a potential scenario where India can start pulling apart. This use of modality gives a subtle detail to the statement, suggesting a hypothetical consequence if minority rights are not safeguarded. Datum 7 employs the modality "should", implying a recommendation or suggestion. In this context, the journalist conveys an expectation for moral advice directed at individuals criticizing or expressing concerns about India's minority rights. The suggestion is that these individuals should consider that their own country, the United States, has a history of military actions in Muslim-majority countries."

Monogloss:

Monogloss is defined as a "single voice". It refers to a situation where the source of an attitude in a piece of writing is solely the author, as the writer's voice dominates the discourse without incorporating diverse viewpoints or external influences.

	Data	Appraising	Appraised	Engagement type:
8	Mr Obama's full name is Barack Hussein Obama II.	Mr Obama's full name	Obama's	Monogloss
9	Leaders of India's governing party have criticized former US President Barack Obama for his recent remarks on Muslims in the country.	criticized	Leaders of India's	Monogloss

In datum 8, it is monogloss due to the widely known fact that the name of a popular figure is familiar to the public. In this instance, the journalist mentioned

Barack Obama's full name, a straightforward fact already known to the public, and quoting someone is deemed unnecessary. Datum 9, represents the journalist's singular perspective attributed to the leaders of India's governing party who are criticizing former US President Barack Obama. In this case, there is no explicit inclusion of diverse voices, the statement purely conveys a specific viewpoint without presenting alternative opinions.

Discussion

The data analysis provides a comprehensive exploration of appraisal system, engagement, revealing a predominant presence of heterogloss over monogloss. It is proven by Cahyono, Dwi, and Sumarlam (2021) that the predominant type of engagement in the data is monogloss, representing the voices of the tribe as they discuss their displacement from their land. Furthermore, the result of this study is relevant to the study conducted by Thahara, Gunawan, Samad, Weda, and Rahman (2019), that in "Prabowo's Anger During 212 Reunion: Appraisal System of CNN Indonesia News Text", where the source of attitude was dominated by monogloss. It was demonstrated that CNN Indonesia News cited statements made by Prabowo to enhance the credibility of their news report. Based on the findings, projecting source in heteroglossia occurs dominantly, indicating that the source mostly comes from the direct quoting of phrases or clauses from other people. It is evident from the data that the news comprises numerous reports from government figures. This encompasses a range of insights, including their responses in interviews and comments on social media, namely Twitter. The incorporation of modality, which adds nuances of certainty, possibility, or necessity, provides a nuanced and comprehensive perspective. Additionally, the use of concession, which involves acknowledging counter-expectations or contrasting viewpoints, contributes to a more balanced and persuasive discourse. To conclude, the data demonstrates a high level of objectivity in the process of writing. On the other hand, the level of subjectivity is significantly lower. This study clarifies the one conducted by Asad, Noor, Indah, and Jaes (2021). Despite incorporating an additional method, Critical Discourse Analysis, it was determined that this context was explicitly elaborated upon in the quoted texts, demonstrating that the data contains numerous quoted texts, indicating a high level of objectivity in the content. It is obvious because of the journalist's suggestion that there are not many monogloss aspects used by him. The journalist conveys a few subjectively written statements, such as straightforward information and specific viewpoints of their own. The result of this study comprehends to Ziliwu, Nurlela, and Perangin-angin, (2020) that the primary use of the data favors a heteroglossic system over a monoglossic system when conveying the speaker's perspective. Even though every individual, including journalists, may have implicit biases, the journalist intended to minimize taking a side from their perspective. The journalist presented information in a manner that is as neutral and unbiased as possible due to the crucial issue. Somehow, the readers will also play a crucial role in critically evaluating news sources and being aware of potential biases once they read the news.

Conclusion

The journalist is objective in writing the news, as evidenced by the predominant use of heterogloss. This means that the journalist heavily relied on

external sources, shaping the narrative based on various perspectives rather than expressing a singular viewpoint (monogloss). This observation aligns with the idea that the journalist focused on presenting a diverse range of opinions, particularly those of figures relevant to the issue. The research underscores the role of journalists in shaping public opinion and addressing social issues, as emphasized by scholars. It also highlights the importance of understanding the sources of information and the potential impact on the objectivity of journalistic content. While the study focused on a specific news article, it is essential to acknowledge the broader context of media portrayal. However, the implications of such reporting on public perception and the potential influence of external sources on journalistic objectivity remain areas for further exploration.

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