

## **Boosters as Hyperbole in Pakistani English Newspaper Editorials: A Corpus Based Study**

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### **Abstract**

Hyperbole is obvious and intentional exaggeration which is usually created by using the feature of boosters. In the present corpus based study, booster as hyperbole has been studied in the Pakistani English newspaper editorials. The purpose of this study is to calculate the frequency of this feature i.e. boosters in Pakistani English newspapers editorials and to find out its uses in terms of the effects on the readers of these editorials. For this two popular newspapers were used in this research and two hundred and fifty editorials from each of them has been used in this corpus based study. An assistance from Hyland's 2005 model has been taken and the software used to conduct this research is Antconc 3.5.9 to calculate the frequency of one word, two words and last but not the least three words boosters. The findings of this study of boosters as hyperbole in Pakistani English newspaper editorials suggested that one word boosters were most frequent and then three words booster (although less in number) ranked second in frequency and at last there were two words boosters. Moreover, regarding their use, it was seen that writers use boosters to create a hyperbolic effect and influence their readers. To put in a nutshell, it was decent study which can form the base of further studies on number of different researches and students can also learn from it that how to use this feature of booster to create exaggerating and influencing effects on the audience.

***Keywords: boosters as hyperbole, Pakistani English newspapers, editorials, Corpus-based study,***

### **Introduction**

Editorials are a distinctive format and are the only place in a newspaper where the opinions of a paper as an organization are explicitly represented. Newspapers and the journalists who write editorials play a powerful role in constructing political debate in the public sphere. Boosters are auxiliary device for increasing force, power, pressure, or effectiveness. Hyperbole is when you use language to exaggerate what you meant or emphasize a point. It's often used to make something sound much bigger and better than it actually is or to make something sound much more dramatic. Hyperbole is a figure of speech. This device thus can create crucial difference in the perception of

the reader. That is why with the aim to find frequency of boosters in Pakistani newspaper editorials and their different uses this study has been conducted using Hyland model and Antconc as a tool, on five hundred articles from two most read newspapers (250 each). To conclude, the future implications are vast regarding it and more features which play part in changing the perception of the audience or influencing them, can be studied. However, the limitations of this study is that more features could have been studied using in this particular data of Pakistani English newspaper editorials.

### **Research Questions**

How frequently does boosters occur in Pakistani English newspaper editorials?

What is the function performed by boosters in Pakistani English newspaper editorials?

### **Literature Review**

In linguistics, a feature is any characteristic used to classify a phoneme or word. These are often binary or unary conditions which act as constraints in various forms of linguistic analysis. In this regard there are several studies that has been focusing various linguistic features including the one we are focused on. For instance Abbas and Shahzad (2018) and Akhter, Siddique and Qasim (2019) have studied metadiscourse features. Another feature i. e. hyperbole have been discussed in different corpus based studies by Takimoto (2015), Shen and Wang (2019), Claridge (2010), Burgers, Brugman, Renardel, Lavalette and Steen (2016). Another group of corpus based studies focused on hedges and boosters e.g. Aziz, Kamran and Ali (2022), Al-Ghouri and Al-Kayed (2019), Taymaz (2021), Serholt (2012), Abid And Zahra (2018), Rashid, Ali and Abbas (2020), Akbas and Hardman (2018). Bonyadi and Samuel (2013), Mahmood, Obaid and Shakir (2014) have discussed rhetorical devices in their studies. Alshaar (2017), Sadi and Ghani (2019) have discussed amplifier in their research articles. Also number of studies have discussed Hyperbole in relation with metaphors i.e. Khan, Aslam and Adil (2018), Batool, Majeed and Zahra (2019). But the present corpus based study will be investigating boosters as hyperbole in Pakistani English newspaper editorials.

It could be described as a reason for which the study or the research has been conducted. So there are number of previous researches with different aims of study. For instance, Aziz, Kamran, and ali (2022), al-Ghoweri and Al-Kayed (2019), Taymaz (2021), Serholt (2012), and CanoMora (2003) had the purpose of finding the frequency of hedges and boosters and to examine their different uses. Other studies by Bonyadi and Samuel (2013), Khan, Aslam and Adil (2018) show similar purposes which are exploring newspaper and analyzing its language on the rhetorical bases. Another set of purpose which was finding out the frequent use of hyperbole and its kinds was studied by Mora (2009), Carstan and Wearing (2015), Batool, Majeed and Zahra (2019) and Claridge (2010). Alshaar (2017) and Xiao and Tao (2007) had a purpose of exploring frequent use of amplifiers in American and British English respectively. Akhtar, Saddique and Qasim (2019) and Mahmood, Javed and Mahmood (2017) had the purpose to investigate the metadiscoursal

features' frequency and their types. This present study has the purpose to explore boosters to see how writers of newspaper editorial influence the thinking of audience.

Research questions in any article help hold an aim of the study and in the previous research articles number of research questions have been used in order to conduct the study i.e. questions like what are the similarities and differences among hedges and boosters and how frequently hedges and boosters have been used, have been explored by researchers like Aziz, Kamran, and ali (2022), al-Ghoweri and Al-Kayed (2019), Taymaz (2021), Serholt (2012), and CanoMora (2003). Other set of studies on rhetorical devices by Bonyadi and Samuel (2013), Khan, Aslam and Adil (2018) presented the questions like how frequently and how many different types of rhetorical devices are being used in newspaper and its headlines. Mora (2009), Carstan and Wearing (2015), Batool, Majeed and Zahra (2019) and Claridge (2010) explores the question of how and with which features hyperbole or exaggeration is created. Moreover, questions on amplifiers i.e. how frequently amplifiers are used in different discourses and what are their effects, are explored by Alshaar (2017) and Xiao and Tao (2007). The present research will propose the questions like: How frequently Boosters are used as hyperbole in newspaper editorials and what is the effect of boosters in newspaper editorials on the readers.

Research methodology is a systematic approach to collect and evaluate data in the research process. The previous studies that have been used as a literature review of this present study have mostly used corpus-based methodology. The present research is also a corpus based study of boosters as hyperbole in Pakistani English newspaper editorials.

The results section should state the findings of the research arranged in a logical sequence without bias or interpretation. For instance, Aziz, Kamran, and ali (2022), al-Ghoweri and Al-Kayed (2019), Taymaz (2021), Serholt (2012), and CanoMora (2003) studied hedges and boosters and their studies presented similar results like hedges were more frequently used and they represented consciousness in speaking style and that more hedges appeared in the introduction section. Alshaar (2017) and Xiao and Tao (2007) who explored amplifiers in their research articles presented almost similar results e.g. amplifiers appeared more frequently in some registers for examples they were more frequent in speeches than in writings and also gradual increase in use was sensed with the increase in education level. Mora (2009), Carstan and Wearing (2015), Batool, Majeed and Zahra (2019) and Claridge (2010) who studied hyperbole, also had similar findings which were hyperbole does create ambiguity and that it does had effects.

Akhtar, Saddique and Qasim (2019) investigated letters to editors in Pakistani English Newspaper to carry out a corpus based study on the metadiscourse features and to see how editors acts towards the MFs and what functions does these MFs performed . For this research thirty letters were were used and Hyland's model (2005) was applied to carry out a quantitative analysis using AntConc.3.4.4.0. The findings of this study suggested that by using MFs frequently the attention was more towards the matter and the relationship among readers and editors was developed. Thus it can be said that frequent use of MFs shows more persuasiveness and effectiveness in the text

which in this case were letters. But more features could have been explored using other genres of the newspaper to get more vast and valid results.

According to McCarthy and Carter (2014) in their article ‘‘There’s millions of them’’: hyperbole in everyday conversation, they were to find the hyperbole and its interactive nature in everyday conversations through the corpus analysis of journals comprising of five million words, by Antconc performing both quantitative and qualitative study. It emphasizes the types of interpersonal meanings and also the context of exaggeration. The findings of this research proposed that the interactive nature of hyperbole is crucial for its proper comprehension. However, there was a flaw which is that this study had a very small amount of the spoken corpora for everyday conversation and so the results of this study can not be generalized easily.

On the other hand in Indonesia a Takimoto presented his corpus based study to find out that how frequently and with what functions do boosters and hedges are used in academic text based on fifty-plus articles from eight disciplines, using the principles of Hyland’s study, through Antconc 3.4.3. Quantitative findings showed that hedges were more frequently used than the boosters. It was summed up that learners ought to learn proper use of boosters too. Still more could be added into the studies about the use of these two features.

Apparently the most recent corpus based study in Pakistan has been carried out by Aziz, Kamran and Ali in 2022 about the hedges and boosters in Benazir Bhutto’s thirteen speeches to investigate the types and pragmatic functions of the chosen features using Antconc. Hyland’s theories formed the base of this study and the quantitative results showed that more hedges (i.e. ‘‘could’’ appeared 35 times) were used which in return shows speaker’s consciousness. Though these findings can not be generalized since they are based on speeches of only one political figure. We can say that frequency of hedges and boosters should be calculated from more than one political leaders for better understanding of pragmatic meanings of these features.

Al-Ghoweri and Al-Kayed (2019) attempted to find the frequency of hedges and boosters in sixty economic newspaper articles in two languages i.e. English and Jordanian Arabic to carry out a comparison and named it a comparative study, since these features were among the most used ones in this genre. They performed a manual analysis using the research model of Hyland (2005) and Salager-Meyer (1997) and the quantitative results showed that the language does play a role to some extent because there were some features which were distinct in English (e.g. used more amplifiers) articles and others in Jordanian Arabic articles e.g. used more emphatics. There is a flaw in this study that two languages that were being compared seemed to be far different from each other even though the genre was similar this resulted in ambiguity in results. It is suggested that to find the function of a linguistic feature which can be generalized, authentic material should be collected.

Another corpus based study was carried out in China by Shen and Wang on the English news discourse based on 10,808 words to make people better comprehend the relation among

metaphor and hyperbole using the POS tagger and the quantitative results proposed that there was more use of metaphors than of hyperbole and both combined form a new feature which performed a different function than either of them perform individually. What so ever these results can not be applied because this study used two theories i.e. Conceptual metaphor theory and Relevance theory but both were contradicting. It is concluded that language learners will have a better in sight of relationship among both if the research model applied is authentic enough to get required findings.

On the other hand Khan, Aslam and Aadil (2018) in Pakistan also worked on Pakistani English Newspaper Editorials ( 36 in total) to investigate the use of rhetoric devices in them quantitatively and qualitatively using SPSS program and came out that for persuading the audience particular rhetoric devices were being used (e.g. parallelism, antithesis, similie, metonymy, hyperbole, metaphor, neologism and rhetorical questions). Since no research model has been used the generalization of the results is not possible .

Another similar research has been conducted in Iran by Bonyadi and Samuel (2013) on two Newspaper Editorials' headlines, exploring the types of rhetoric strategies using the mixed approach, revealing that there were indeed some similarities and differences among the Iranian and American newspaper editorial headlines and writers subjective attitude towards it. In my view a very little detail have been provided about the function of the rhetoric devices and the findings of this research can not be generalized because no methodology and research model has been concerned in it.

Regarding Newspaper Editorials a critical discourse study has been conducted by Mahmood, Obaid and Shakir (2014) but the feature they took under observation was figurative language using the Richardson model which was for the newspaper analysis . They took four newspapers to see how this feature helped in demonstrating the ideas or whether it is used for a particular cause and how it is used in manipulating the reader. By using the MD for mix approach, it was proposed that four different figures of speech were mainly used to describe the ideas but they had no particular agenda. Non the less very limited amount of information is provided in this study regarding the figures of speech this may be due to the absence any research model .

Claridge in United kingdom conducted a corpus based study with quantitative and qualitative analysis on Hyperbole/exaggeration (2010) which focused on the terms used for exaggeration and the function they perform. For this purpose the data was collected from number of different sources i.e. spoken and written data from BNC and everyday conversations, TV shows, German and English newspaper and political speeches etc. The results suggested that basic (domain preserved) and metaphorical (switches domain) are the two forms of hyperbole. The main flaw of this study was that it did not had any research model thus we can not all agree on the proposed classification of hyperbole.

### **3)Research Methodology:**

#### **3.1: Model of the study:**

In this corpus based study, about boosters in Pakistani English newspaper and editorials in particular, Hyland's 2005 model has been utilized. Though this model has two extensions but we are significantly drawn towards using the interactional metadiscourse feature i.e. boosters. Present research have extracted a list of boosters from this model for the purpose of analysis.

### 3.2: Corpus collection:

This research has been conducted on a corpus based on 500 Pakistani English newspaper editorials 250 each from two popular newspaper Dawn and The News. Also these has been collected from their websites. This was two million plus words in total.

### 3.3: Source of Data:

These editorials has been retrieved from online websites of two of the most convincing newspapers i.e. [www.dawn.com/authors/2677/editorial](http://www.dawn.com/authors/2677/editorial) and [www.thenews.com.pk/print/category/editorial](http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/category/editorial) .

### 4) Data Analysis:

For analyzing this data and to investigate the frequency of boosters in Pakistani English newspaper editorials and their function in editorials as hyperbole, the software that has been used is Antconc 3.5.9. also the is was the demand of the present work to explore the linguistic feature of booster in the data for the better comprehension of the use of boosters in Pakistani English newspaper editorials. The Hyland's model is dealing with this matter in this study and to find out the results. The list of the boosters, which was extracted from the Akhter, N., Siddique, A. R., & Qasim, H. M. (2019) study of metadiscourse, has been used.

Boosters Always Never I believe Obvious Certainly Obviously Certainty Of course 2

Clearly Prove Essential Show In fact Sure The fact that True Indeed Won't Know Should Must

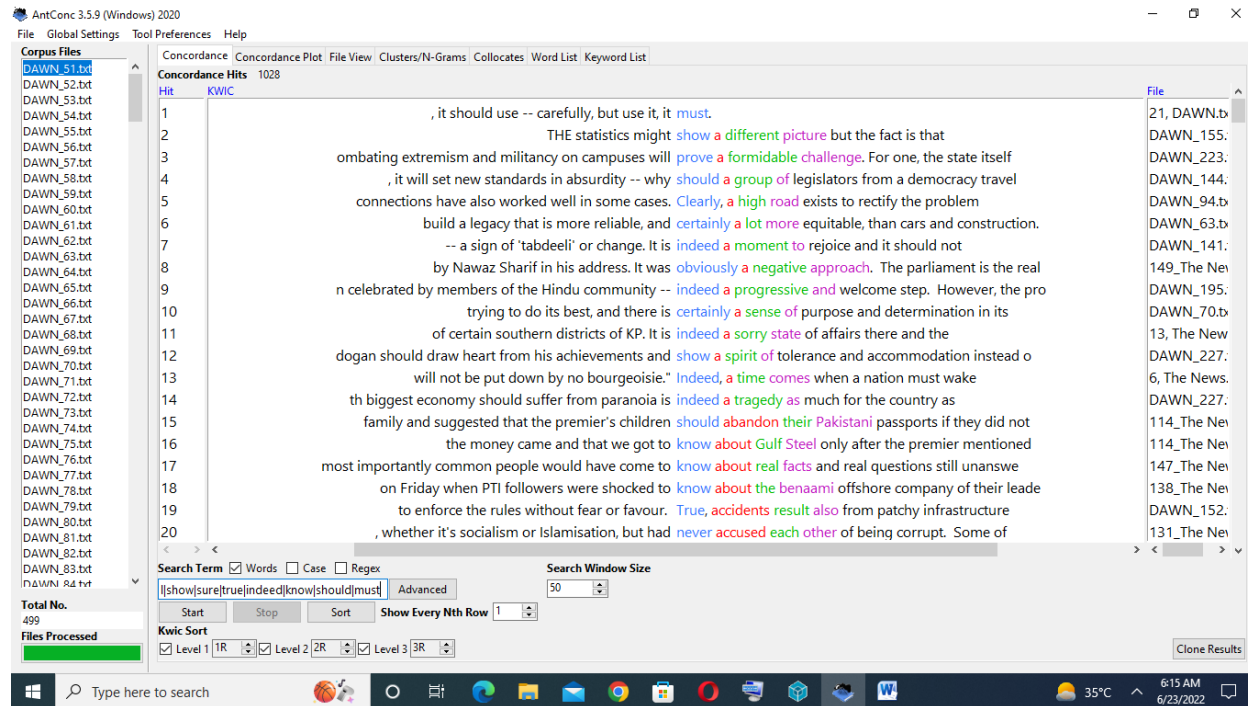
This list is then further divided into one-word, two-word and three-word expressions to get vivid results. E.g. Boosters (1 word expressions): Always|Never|Obvious|Certainly|Obviously|Certainty|Clearly|Prove|Essential|Show|Sure|True|Indeed|Know|Should|Must,

Boosters (2 word expressions): In fact|I believe|won't|of course and last but not the least Boosters (3 word expressions): The fact that. One thing to note here is that expressions have slants i.e. | and this for combining the words into one particular category so more could be searched by one click only at the software being used here i.e. Antconc 3.5.9.

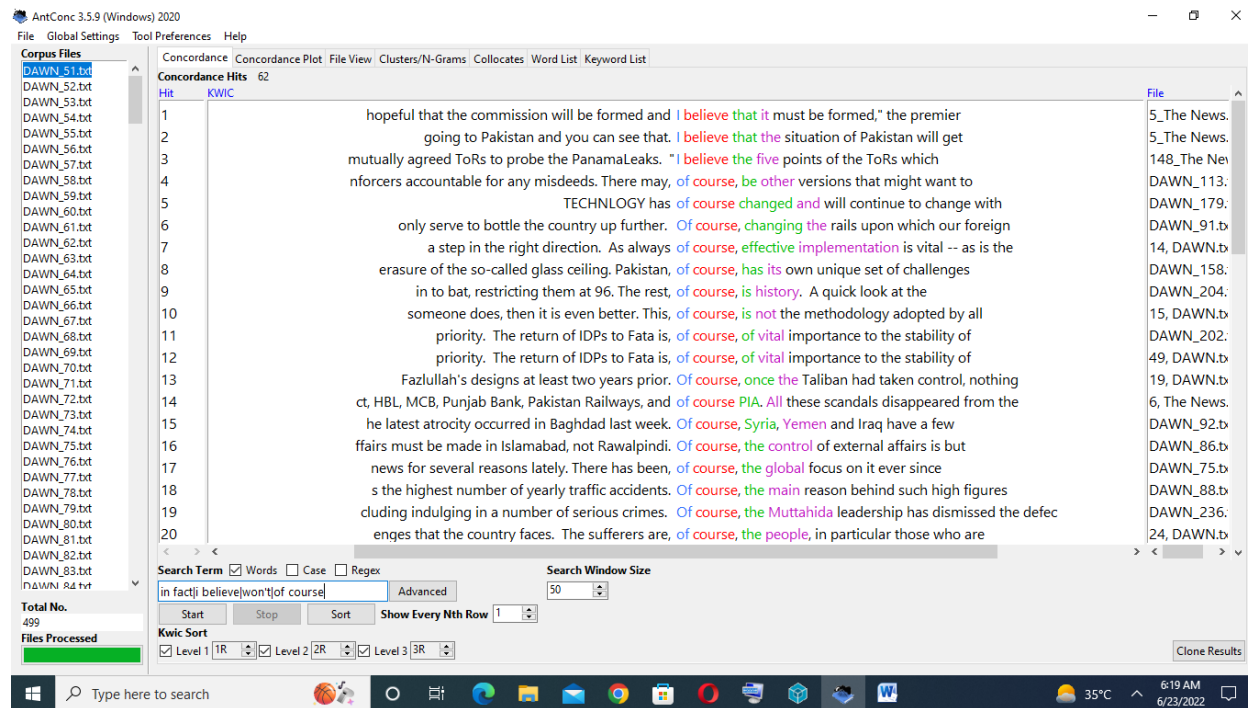
### 5) Results and Discussion:

The numerical findings of the frequencies of one word, two words and three words expressions and have been provided in this portion of the present corpus based study. However, the results do

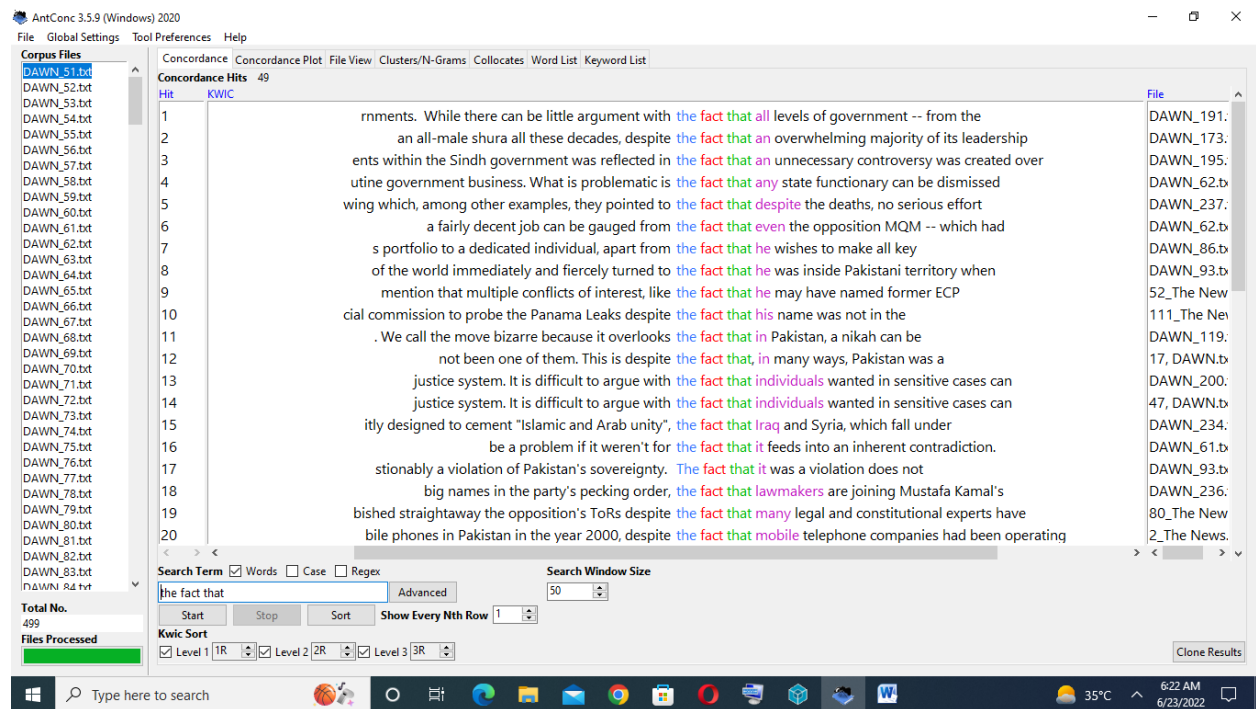
not provide the numerical frequencies since booster words are investigated as combined expressions. For example following is the snapshot of frequency of one word boosters.



It can be extracted that one word boosters are used 1028 times in two million words whereas the total word type is almost 1500. Next is the frequency of two-word boosters, their frequency is fairly less than the one-word boosters i.e. 62 times.



The worth mentioning fact is that there was only 1 three-word booster expression (the fact that) not to talk about expressions higher then that. Although it has been used more then the two-word boosters i.e. 49 times.



**Discussion:**

Hyperbole is used to draw emphasis through extreme exaggeration. Hyperbole is not meant to be taken literally, but rather understood as a means of communicating something in particular. One way of achieving is through the frequent use of boosters. In Dawn-154 txt. Example can be seen, “The PML-N has the right, *in fact* it is its right”. Another way this is used is to emphasize a point. Exaggeration makes it clear how much a person believes in a statement. Hyperbole can be used to great effect when employed judiciously—there’s a difference between using a hyperbolic figure of speech and misleading your reader. Hyperbole is effective when the audience understands that you are employing hyperbole. For instance example TN-txt can be seen, “the time will come *indeed* when the nation will wake up from its slumber”.

**Conclusion:**

In this research article the feature booster have been investigated regarding how does it create hyperbolic effect in Pakistani English newspaper editorials. The question about boosters’ frequency and its use has been studied and it can be concluded that one word boosters were used in high frequency which created the effect of exaggeration and having a particular sort of effect on the audience of Pakistani English newspaper editorials. Thus it can be concluded from this research that boosters are used in fair amount by the writers of Pakistani English newspaper editorials to create a dramatic effect and to influence their audience. Furthermore it has been extracted from



the current study that how hyperbole can be created using different boosters and how students can learn the use of boosters to make something bigger and better when actually it is not. In future several researches can be conducted using this research article and more features can be explored in this particular genre on Pakistani English newspaper editorials.

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