laid by their ancestors. She said that BRI, a vision of President Xi Jinping, would significance of CPEC, which is part of BRI, Abbasi said that projects under the initiative order to inform member states of the BRI about the specifics of transport projects, as part of the Belt and Road Impact (BRI), adding that the project would result in 93CPEC became the flagship project of the BRI, aimed at providing new opportunities to the China\x92s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aims to modernise, secure, and link various South Asia for Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Best Bank for Infrastructure /Project Fin South Asia for Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Best Bank for Infrastructure /Project Fin time will tell whether the CPEC, the BRI and China\x92s plans to realign two countries. \x93We need to guard BRI and CPEC against the growing negativity of two countries. \x93We need to guard BRI and CPEC against the growing negativity of others are contemplating joining it yet both BRI and CPEC are being denigrated by some if the developing countries, would rather sabotage BRI and CPEC through subversion, terror attacks an 93Facts-Based Construction of Narratives on BRI and CPEC\x94, where media persons from 93Facts-Based Construction of Narratives on BRI and CPEC\x94, where media persons from , economic, development, political aspects of the BRI and the CPEC and its impact on

MEDIA & COMMUNICATION STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Examining Pakistani news media discourses about China–Pakistan Economic Corridor: A corpus-based critical discourse analysis

Muhammad Afzaal, Kaibao Hu, Muhammad Ilyas Chishti and Zahid Khan

Cogent Social Sciences (2019), 5: 1683940
Examining Pakistani news media discourses about China–Pakistan Economic Corridor: A corpus-based critical discourse analysis

Muhammad Afzaal1*, Kaibao Hu1, Muhammad Ilyas Chishti2 and Zahid Khan3

Abstract: The paper examines the construction of China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) through corpus-based critical discourse analysis of news in the Pakistani press. Overall, Pakistani newspapers show China as a slogan of “brotherhood” and a stereotype of China’s relationship as an “ironic bond” between China and Pakistan. The analysis reveals that a bulk of friendly and positive discourses about China have been constructed in the Pakistani media reports. The role of discourses pertinent to the ideological construction of image of China’s mega economic project Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and CPEC is discussed. However, a deeper insight into the lexical choices of newspapers also suggests that plenty of intricacies and sensitivities are existent in issues pertaining to CPEC and BRI.
1. Introduction

This study examines the ways in which discourse about China is ideologically constructed by Pakistani news media, with specific reference to China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This study draws on the corpus-based critical discourse methodology in order to investigate how China’s huge economic project manifests itself through the purview of newspaper discourses in Pakistan. Richardson while elaborating the basic role of CDA argued that CDA creates a bridge between the language and society, construction of social perspectives and social issues (Richardson, 2006, p. 26). It has been suggested by researchers that the media—television, the press, and online resources—play a central role in communicating to the public what happens in the world. In those cases in which audiences do not possess direct knowledge or experience of what is happening, they become particularly reliant upon the media to inform them (Happer & Philo, 2013). As shown in many studies such as Baker (2010), Richardson (2006), Van Dijk (1998) CDA has enabled scholars to reveal the hidden ideological motive behind the discourse constructed by media. Corpus-based discourse analysis entails the requisite insight to analyze the discourse of media to provide the hidden stance of the diverse writers. Baker (2010, p. 20) claims that corpus linguistics offers the best tactic to analyze the incremental consequences of discourse. It unlocks the bolt of ambiguities and creates the open picture of the text to mediate what is right and what is wrong. Baker et al. (2008, p. 13) asserts that the language use in our society strengthens the discourses in many of the ways, and the discourse analyst identifies the parameters how language is used while using different strategies to reveal the enigma of discourses (Baker et al., 2008). Wodak and Meyer (2009, p. 33) refer to CDA as “discourse analysis with an attitude”, although the lines between DA and CDA are sometimes rather blurred (Flowerdew, 2008). Van Dijk (2007, p. 63–85) cited in Wodak and Meyer (2009) expounds the concept of CDA and highlights that CDA does not have a one framework for the analysis rather there are conceptual and many theoretical frameworks embedded in it (Motion & Doolin, 2007). He (Baker, 2006) further proposes two major functions of CDA, i.e. “how do(more) powerful groups control discourse” and “how such discourse does control the mind and action of(less). Using corpora in discourse analysis powerful groups, and what are the social consequences of such control, such as social inequality? (Baker, 2006). Van Dijk (2015) argues that “many of the interaction aspect of discourse are closely related to the grammar, semantics, pragmatics, and other dimensions of discourse” (Van Dijk, 2015). Biber and Jones (2005) promoted the authenticity of merging Corpus Linguistics with CDA. Corpus Linguistics has contributed a great deal in the analysis of texts with CDA. It helps researcher to identify the patterns, lexical items and collocations of frequently occurring patterns at small scale analysis. Such language patterns can help to illuminate the existence of discourses that may otherwise be unobserved (Biber, Conrad, & Reppen, 1998). Baker (2010) further elaborates in his book as;

Spoken, written or computer-mediated texts in contexts such as advertising and the media, politics, the workplace or private settings in order to carry out discourse analysis (or CDA), which focuses on identifying the ways that language is used to construct a particular representation of the world in relation to ideologies, attitudes or power relations. A range of linguistic features (lexical choice, representation of agency, implicated etc.) might be examined. Some researchers in this field utilize argumentation theory, examining how various topoi (strategies used to construct an argument) or fallacies (flawed components of an argument) are used in order to argue a position. Baker (2010)

As discussed earlier, the CPEC—the newest scheme of two-sided economic cooperation, with the gigantic venture of $46 billion energy and infrastructure expansion in Pakistan—is measured as the best economic game changer for the economy of Pakistan. The aim of the mega project is to have a direct connection from Kashgar to Gwadar, Pakistan, as a doorway to the Central Asian states, Arab
states, Africa, and Europe. Chinese President showed through his first speech in his first visit to Pakistan as “when I was young, I heard many touching stories about Pakistan and the friendship between our two countries. To name just a few, I learned that the Pakistani people were working hard to build their beautiful country, and that Pakistan opened an air corridor for China to reach out to the world and supported China in restoring its lawful seat in the United Nations. The stories have left me with a deep impression. I look forward to my upcoming state visit to Pakistan.

2. China–Pakistan Economic Corridor

As briefly mentioned above, CPEC is the joint mega-venture between China and Pakistan, which is based on the future’s benefits of economic stability in the region through the collaboration of economic, cultural and business trades. Since the inaugural of CPEC publically, it has not been recognized by other countries such as India, US and some of the European countries. China shares a border with India and Pakistan but the mutual relationship between China and Pakistan gives a rise to many controversies between Pakistan, India and China as well. India is looking at this project as a part of political and military alliance against her, and US sees China as an economic rival.

The CPEC is the flagship project of One Belt One Road (OBOR) publicized in March 2015 by China’s National and Reform Committee (NDRC). China has pledged an investment of $46 billion. The corridor will connect China’s Kashgar region to Pakistan’s Gwadar port. The CPEC also includes number of other connectivity projects such as rail links, roads, IT parks, energy projects, etc. The project will be completed within 15 years, starting from 2015. CPEC is hugely significant for Pakistan and China. Its importance can only be analyzed by considering its spatial, temporal and geostrategic setting. CPEC, often called as a “game changer,” is destined to change the whole region into a more viable economy. Thus, it is important for Pakistan to ensure its timely completion and implementation. It is often regarded as the game-changing project for Pakistan. As it has also incorporated numerous infra-structural projects; a 2700 km of highway from Gwadar to Kashgar, several motorways, up gradation of Karakoram Highway, are just to name a few. Also, this connectivity will benefit the neighboring countries which can later join the project. For this reason, and to boost commerce along the corridor, many Economic Zones have been established. However, the most immediate relief to the energy starved nation would come in terms of power generation, which will grow to 10,000 Megawatts including present power supply capacity of 16,000 MW; all under the auspices of the “CPEC”.

China and Pakistan friendship is known as “all weather friendship” with regard to strong bilateral trade and economic cooperation. Pakistan and China have enjoyed friendly relations since the very beginning of their diplomatic ties; still it is important to think about the aspects such as political and economic ones that can have an impact on long-term CPEC implementation. These aspects include politics and policies of Pakistan and economic outlook of Pakistan. Politics in Pakistan, currently, suggests that all political parties are on one page on CPEC and are looking forward to its successful completion. Apart from Baloch nationalists, five of Pakistan’s regional parties want to continue constructive bilateral relations with China. Pakistan Army also wants good relations with China, because of their military and economic cooperation. Every government formed in Pakistan show their Chinese friends, willingness in terms of frequent, high-level diplomatic engagements to further strengthen their relations. Same is also true about the bilateral exchanges of the high level military officials.

CPEC will primarily serve as an initiative giving rise to the regional connectivity; it will also serve China’s energy and trade needs. It includes several economic zones, roads, and railway links along the corridor which will further increase commerce and economic cooperation. The project might involve Afghanistan and India in future, which could also along with economic cooperation, lead to regional peace and harmony. Both the sides, Gwadar in Pakistan, whereas, Chabahar in Iran, suffer from immense security challenges mainly at the hands of nationalists. If the proxy warfare in the region by India, Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan is not stopped, the security implications for the region may get worsened resulting in the impediments in the development projects. Pakistan blames India for supporting insurgents in its territory, whereas Iran blames the porous border along Pakistan and the free movements through it. However, some of them believe that Chabahar can start functioning prior
to Gwadar, because Iran can easily tackle insurgency on their side; Pakistan will be occupied in countering insurgency in future. In the subcontinent, the regional alliances will get strengthened largely depending on their relation with the CPEC in terms of enhancing the regional trade. The conflicts of others with Pakistan will have little or no effect on the construction of the CPEC and Gwadar. However, only time can tell, whether an economic coordination and cooperation will be achieved in the region by involving Afghanistan and India, as was originally planned.

China and Pakistan have been the trading partners since 1963. The bilateral trade between the two countries was further strengthened by the “Free Trade Agreement”. The agreement was signed in the year 2006, and since then the trade has increased manifold; statistics suggest an increase of around 124%. Where, in terms of exports, China’s share increased by only 1% as compared to Pakistan’s 400%; 10% of the Pakistan’s total exports, in the fiscal year 2013–14, were made to China. The CPEC is the finest example of mutual economic cooperation, between the two countries. CPEC stretches from Kashgar to Gwadar. First envisioned by the Chinese PM “Li Keqiang “in 2013. It has since then continuously, achieved countless milestones. China and Pakistan will mutually benefit from CPEC, as Gwadar port will reduce the distance by 12,000 km that is covered for the oil supplies, to the Chinese ports; for this reason, the Gwadar port is going through a large-scale modification. First, this paper discusses the basis for the topic by shedding some light on CPEC at large, including Pakistan’s relations with China, including these nations’ economic stalemates, to highlight the reasons leading to the emergence of this venture. Also, this paper shows the importance of CPEC for Pakistan for future economic development and prosperity in the country. Moreover, the research shows the current interior and local order to classify the critical issues that may negatively impact the successful operation of the project. Using the findings to deduce possible implications, this paper provides the projection of CPEC as a game changer in Pakistani newspapers to deal with potential impairments in the application of the project.

3. Research design: corpus-based CDA

This study is set to analyze the discourses of Pakistani English newspapers in a theoretical framework of corpus-based CDA. The study uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches for the analysis of the data. CDA supports in recognizing relation among ideology and society. It has diverse implications and various understandings, particularly, it classifies the societal issues and deals in social problems. Fairclough (2009, p.163) asserts that “CDA is critical because it elaborates the social inequalities or “social wrongs of the day” (Fairclough, 2009). He further classifies three analytical dimension of CDA such as “text, discursive practice, and social practice”. These three modes work in different dimensions. The first dimension entails of linguistic analysis of text which includes vocabulary, grammar, and semantics etc. moreover, word frequency or lexical items used in text reveals the patterns or ideological construction of various perspectives in discourse. Whereas, discursive practice reveals the process of production of texts and its implications (Fairclough, 2013). However, corpus linguistics has brought a revolutionary change in identifying concordances, frequencies and collocations of text which has facilitated textual analysis great deal. Moreover, Richardson (2006, p.75) argued that discursive practice creates a bridge between the text and social practice (Richardson, 2006). Corpus-based approach is different from CDA because CL present analysis of the recurrent patterns in discourses, collocational description and analyzes the concordances of some of keywords for quantitative analysis. Baker et al. (2008) advocated the integration of various approaches for better investigation of discursive practices of discourses in society.

This paper seeks theoretical and methodological insights from Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework, with the integration of corpus-based approach to examine the discourses of Pakistani English newspapers published after the official commencement of CPEC venture in Pakistan. Launch of the enormous project created countless questions in media within Pakistan as well as in other Asian and Western countries. Fairclough’s model is found helpful in analyzing perspective used in Pakistani newspapers about China’s stance over CPEC as a game changer project in Pakistan. Corpus-based tool is also applied in finding the frequencies of keywords such as CPEC, game changer, BRI. OBOR, development, infrastructure, and Pak–China friendship. Some of the

Afzaal et al., Cogent Social Sciences (2019), 5: 1683940
https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1683940
metaphors were also identified for instance, “deeper than oceans, higher than Himalayas, iron brothers,” etc.

CPEC is a game changer not only for Pakistan but also for the entire region. However, it is confronted with multiple challenges pertaining to regional stability, internal security and political impediments which hamper its smooth implementations. This study has been conducted in pursuit of the following two research questions:

1. What Pakistani stance on CPEC can be identified through corpus-based discourse analysis of news in Pakistani media?
2. How do Pakistani media represent CPEC in newspaper discourse?

4. Data
The newspaper texts were collected from the official websites of selected English newspapers, The Dawn, The Tribune, and The News from Pakistan. The news articles, reviews, and main news containing the words CPEC, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Deeper than ocean, Flagship trade, etc., were published between 2015 and 2018 in selected English newspapers in Pakistan. The whole corpus comprises 304,901 tokens. Analysis of data entails two sections. First section deals with the analysis of frequency of some of the keywords analyzed in light of CDA perspective to classify CPEC perspective in English Newspapers, economic viewpoint and second section deals with corpus-based concordances of designated keywords using AntConc 3.4 version used in different context in newspapers. The Dawn, The Tribune, and The News are oldest newspapers and have been publishing since 1947. These newspapers were chosen because of their extensive reporting on diverse national and international news, reviews, and articles. These papers have the larger readership than other papers in Pakistan. They are distributed in offices, educational institutes and government offices at large scale. Their readership at large scale and popularity among the readers prompted the researchers to select them for the study.

5. Analysis and results
Corpus tool AntCon version 3.4.1 was used for the quantitative analysis of the data. AntConc generates wordlist, Keyword in Context (KWIC) and concordances for linguistic analysis. Keywords in a text can be examined; Concord, Keywords, and Wordlist are its three main functions, specifically designed to allow researchers to conduct linguistic analysis. This study mainly makes use of the Concord function, which allows researchers to generate collocates. However, analysis comprises concordances, collocations of hyperbolic expressions and keywords in context, and the construction of CPEC image as a “game changer” in Pakistani English newspapers. For in-depth analysis, extracts of speeches and articles were selected on the basis of the theme of the study.

Table 1 shows countries appeared in the corpus of 304901. Result shows the repeatedly occurring all neighboring countries such as Pakistan, India, Iran, Afghanistan, and China. The most occurring pattern exposed as “China” collocates with Pakistan because of friendly relations and economic trade and influence of Pakistan China friendship. “China” occurs in the corpus with some of the neighboring countries also such as with India 558, Pakistan 5462. However, the projection of China in newspaper discourse seems positive which is visible through the number of occurrence in the entire corpus. China shares a border with Pakistan and India but India seems a security threat for China. The maximum occurrence is of Pakistan which reveals that data was compiled from Pakistani newspaper discourse, shows a perspective of Pakistan about China in particular and CPEC in general. Tension between Pakistan and India may provide a negative picture of China's mega project. Moreover, Table 1 shows that country “China” revealed a robust collocation with “Pakistan”. Occurrences of China–Pakistan is 1126, whereas China–India is 126 which shows a bright intensions of China toward Pakistan. However, China shares a close border with Pakistan as well.
6. China–Pakistan alliance

Collocate list of China with Pakistan reveals the political relation of China with Pakistan. Pakistan shares a long history of wars, conflicts and different cultural and ideological differences with India. India considers China’s relation with Pakistan a greater alliance against India. This section analyzes the extracts from discourses of Chinese and Pakistani leaders in addressing. CPEC and Pak–China friendship, selected from Dawn and The News Official Websites. The main focus of extract depends on the keywords like friendship between China and Pakistan, BRI, OBOR, and CPEC.

China–Pakistan friendship is the finest example around the globe targeting mutual cooperation of social, economic, defense perceptive, diplomatic, and cultural spheres which are visible though the official discourses of top state leaders of both countries. Chinese President Xi visited Pakistan and addressed in Parliament and shared his intense feelings:

Pakistan is the first foreign country I visit this year. Although this is my first visit to your country, Pakistan is not at all unfamiliar to me. As an old Chinese saying goes, “Meeting a good friend for the first time is like having a reunion with an old friend.” This is exactly how I feel during my visit to Pakistan. When I was young, I heard a lot from the elder generation about life and scenery in Pakistan and the moving stories of friendship between China and Pakistan. So I have long been fascinated by Pakistan. The moment we arrived in your beautiful country, my colleagues and I have been overwhelmed by your warm hospitality. It is just like coming to the home of dear brothers (http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1257158.shtml).

These terminologies show the heartfelt profound feelings of President Xi for Pakistan bond and China’s positive attitude toward China. Words such as “a good friend”, “reunion”, “old friend”, “fascinated by Pakistan” and home of dear brothers’ show a countless compassion toward Pakistan and brace the mutual understanding of both the states. In return, discourse of Pakistani Prime minister also shows the mutual respect and strong friendship, e.g., “iron brothers”.

In addition, in an International Expo in China, President Xi focuses on the phrase “all weather friendship” in a conversation to Prime Minister of Pakistan. For instance, “President Xi told PM Khan that he valued both countries’ relations, and reaffirmed their “all-weather” friendship (Richardson, 2006) which divulges the clichés of both the leaders for friendship between both countries. Diplomatic relations have been elevated due to these poetic description of mutual ties and given a birth to long-lasting relationship as Xi’s phrase “all weather” friendship. In another example from an extract from Dawn, Chinese leader’s visit in 2013 described as “the tree of China-Pakistan friendship ... is now exuberant with abundant fruits, Dawn 2013. Moreover, this relationship grows further when President Xi shows his willingness in working with Pakistan in order to make the strategic partnership stronger between both states to avoid western challenges and influences. Following extract displays strong resolve of Xi in making China-Pakistan ties more economic and solid. For instance, “I attach great importance to China-Pakistan relations and am willing to work together with the prime minister to strengthen the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic partnership and build a new era of China-Pakistan destiny,” Xi said (https://www.dawn.com/news/1443081).

| Countries       | Frequency |
|-----------------|-----------|
| China           | 3948      |
| Pakistan        | 5462      |
| India           | 558       |
| Iran            | 129       |
| Afghanistan     | 267       |

Table 1. Countries appeared in collocate list of news corpus of China–Pakistan Economic Corridor

Afzaal et al., Cogent Social Sciences (2019), 5: 1683940
https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1683940
This drives further in enlightening the bond, and may well be expounded in a graceful hyperbolic Chinese axiom: “Strong wind reveals the strength of grass, and genuine gold stands the test of fire.” We will never forget that Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognize New China and the first Islamic country to enter into diplomatic relations with China (17). Expressions such as “strength of grasses,” “genuine gold,” “never forget,” etc. make the impression more trustworthy and positive in accepting an ironic bond between two states. On the other hand, Prime minister of Pakistan accepts the trustworthy relationship with China and assures the mutual ties in more hyperbolic discourse, e.g. “At the Great Hall of the People in the Chinese capital, Sharif said in his welcome remarks “reminds me of the saying, our friendship is higher than the Himalayas and deeper than the deepest sea in the world, and sweeter than honey”. This shows a positive image of China in Pakistan and Chinese officials and people accept it to the core. While responding to the welcoming gesture Li assures: “I greatly appreciate your great warmth and deep affection for the people of China”. However, this “all weather friendship” has evoked India’s concerns. For instance, US lawmaker alarms India as “India has every reason to be alarmed by the Pakistan-China alliance, which has emerged as a threat to their neighbors and democracy in the region.” a top US lawmaker said. (https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-has-every-reason-to-be-alarmed-by-pak-china-alliance-us-lawmaker/articleshow/65146697.cms).

Figure 1 displays the occurrences of special keywords correlated to CPEC in the designated newspapers of Pakistan. Keywords such as China, Pakistan, CPEC, BRI, and OBOR and Economic appear most as they constitute, CPEC. Words such as infrastructure, economic, and initiative, highlight the importance of CPEC in Pakistan which is indicative of the fact that CPEC is only an economic cooperation between the two states for the benefits of both the countries. BRI, reflects the one road that bridges the distance between China and Pakistan and connects China to other Asian countries. China’s interest in connecting the world through BRI reflects that the maxim of mutual cooperation of countries is beneficial for all countries. Huge investment for a long time usually shows the Chinese ancestor’s quotes once incorporated in Xi’s speech “A long journey can be covered only by taking one step at a time”.

7. Concordance lines
Concordances show the recurring patterns in the corpus more particularly the interesting lines which are indicative of the specific purpose of the used lexical choices. Firstly, the concordance of word “CPEC” hit 2957 times out of 304,901 words of total news corpus. Moreover, the contextual analysis of CPEC word is also searched and anaphoric references to CPEC are also included in the analysis. Secondly, “China” hit 698 concordance lines, the most recurrent and significant frequent pattern in the corpus. Moreover, “China”, “Pakistan”, “nation” are nouns presented through various adjectival recurring patterns show positive ideology of CPEC and China’s image in Pakistan.
In the analysis, keyword CPEC reveals that China–Pakistan are presented as the best iron friends at economic, cultural and social fronts. The CPEC provides an unrestricted access to broader regional integration, at least in the field of trade, commerce and economy. However, another way of showing friendship between China and Pakistan in the News Corpus provides a pre-modification quantification which is as follows:

8. Concordances of China–Pakistan Economic Corridor in the news corpus
The concordance of CPEC shows keen interest in promoting the economic relations between the two states. Corpus of three years reveals that CPEC has a very positive impact in Pakistan and people love to travel each other’s place too often for business trips. Keyword analysis of CPEC in the discourses of Pakistani newspapers shows the urgency of China–Pakistan relations. CPEC has become the economic kernel for which leaders of both the states have struggled hard in sharing mutual understanding both at national and international levels. The importance of CPEC is visible through the stance of government of both states by incorporating CPEC in their budgets. China has included CPEC budget into their 13th five-year plan whereas Pakistan has taken initiative in allocating a substantive sum in her annual budget which has promoted the trust among both the states. Concordance 1 shows the quantification of term CPEC positively portrayed in the news corpus of Pakistan.

8.1. Concordance 1: a snapshot concordance of China–Pakistan Economic Corridor in Pakistani news corpus
China–Pakistan is found one of the recurrent patterns in the concordance lines which no doubt states the friendly relations of Pakistan with China. According to Fairclough (1989), media has the power and purpose behind the recurrent use of certain discourses specifically “a single text cannot affect the audience, repetition in particular ways may in order to create a stronger effect fulfils their demands”. Baker (2010) also points out to the key strategy of media by asserting that the mode of repetition is the strongest key strategy of media which is more influential and powerful. The following plot gives a concrete picture of significance of CPEC in Pakistani Discourses.

8.2. Concordance plot 1: a snapshot of concordance plot of CPEC in news corpus
CPEC provides the two countries with an opportunity to reinforce their bilateral stalemates in the sectors of trade and commerce. The following example shows the intensity of bilateral relations between the countries. It is of a supreme significance for Pakistan and China as it may prove to be a great force ensuring stability in the areas. CPEC has the ability to fetch long-term investment, harmony and opulence in the area because of its striking geographical position.

8.3. Concordance 2: a snapshot of a concordance “game changer” where recurring patterns shows China–Pakistan Economic Corridor as a game changer mega project in Pakistani English newspapers
During his visit, Xi stated, “this will be my first trip to Pakistan, but I feel as if I am going to visit the home of my own brother” (20), thus amplifying the friendly relations between both countries. The occurrence of phrase “all-weather” suggests that Pakistan has a greater inclination to friendship with China and this seems more consistent as likened to US or any other economic power of the world. De Cillia, Reisigl, and Wodak (1999, p. 155–157) remark that national individualities are built through the discourses within the state, and discourses are replicated and spread in the specific manner and in a particular context (De Cillia et al., 1999). Moreover, in terms of CDA, Reisigl (2008), opines that the identities are constructed through the political aims and channels to balance their political power and influence the society.

8.4. Concordance 3: a snap of concordance of Pakistan China friendship in Pakistani news corpus
The occurrences of Pak–China friendship reveal that Pakistan considers China her time tested and a powerful alliance in defense especially in economic and diplomatic relations. Pakistan has been facing an international counter for this relations with China referred to as “smother the barbarian with love”, more particularly with US concerns over Pak–China economic trade relations. The study finds that economic trade is the real need of Pakistan to make its economy more stable and...
Chinese assistance may enhance the success rate of increasing GDP of Pakistan. The occurrence of phrase “all-weather” suggests that Pakistan has a greater inclination to friendship with China and this seems more consistent as likened to US or any other economic power of the world. The recurring phrases in the corpus such as “a matter of pride”, “a pillar of peace”, “all round cooperation”, “friendship and strategic partnership” reveal a positive connotation which creates a positive influence of Pakistan China friendship in the region and world. Such linguistic choices manifest in selection of phrases, specific adjectives and visualization of positive images of friendship help the media to portray the picture to attract their readership.

8.5. Concordance 4: a snapshot of concordance of hyperbolic expression, “all weather” cooperation in the news corpus

Occurrences of hyperbolic expressions in the news corpus show a deep understanding of both the states. Concordance of “all weather cooperation” reveals the positive intentions of China and Pakistan in terms of bilateral relationship even with or without economic trade. Pakistan China relations have been prolonged and considered to be ‘Higher than Himalayas and deeper than ocean’. This metaphor shows the intensity of friendly relations that has converted into brotherhood ties as a role model for the world. Analysis showed that CPEC not only has tightened the economic and friendly stalemates but also has given stimulus to mutual respect, cultural bonds for sovereignty and integrity of territories. The occurrence of Pak-China friendship reveals strengthened friendship between both the states. However, Indian influence is violent toward Pak-China rosy alliance. Hussain (Dawn, 2 November 2017) reports that then Planning Minister Mr. Ahsan Iqbal has finally confirmed that the CPEC Long-Term Plan (LTP) is about to be finalized on November 21 at the seventh Joint Cooperation Committee to be held in Islamabad. Some might recall that details from the LTP in question were published in Dawn in May, and the same minister had reacted sharply at the time saying that the details are factually incorrect and the real plan will be made public once it has been finalized. Raza (Dawn, 5 December 2017) (https://www.dawn.com/news/1361230).

8.6. Concordance 5: a snapshot of concordance of hyperbolic expressions “deeper than ocean” in the news corpus

Concordance of hyperbolic recurrent pattern reveals the political or friendly relation of Pakistan and China. 1126 instances out of entire occurrences in the corpus show the pattern and a positive image of this mega project in newspapers. The occurrences of hyperbolic jargons in Pakistani newspaper discourse reveal warmth in relation between both the countries. “All weather friendship” is a slogan used by Pakistani leaders in their speeches which reveals that every government including military powers are in favor of a friendly unending relations with China. Concordances of “deeper than ocean” show a strong pattern, which indicates a strong relation between China and Pakistan. These two countries are most frequently associated with economic business. As deeper analysis, number of adjectives appeared to the left side of “deeper” such as “bilateral, relationship”, “friendship”, “bigger than mountain” to describe China–Pakistan ties and strong relationship or motivation to complete this mega project. Out of 1126 concordance lines of hyperbolic expressions, 89% reveal the positive influence of CPEC in Pakistan and words used with these poetic jargons such as “deeper friendship”, “taller than mountain”, “success” and “higher than mountains” show a deep intensity of friendship and their future goals for the development of economy, infrastructure and a substantive increase in GDP rate for both the countries.

8.7. Concordance 6: a snapshot of concordance of Belt And Road Initiative and China–Pakistan Economic Corridor in Pakistani English newspapers

Concordance 7 shows the inspiration and future perspective of BRI in English newspapers of Pakistan. Concordance lines show the emphasis of both the states on the persistence of CPEC asserting that BRI is a foremost development project which includes CPEC as a token of flagship between two brother countries. Concordances of BRI are indicative of the fact that BRI is only an investment plan for positive initiative to bring an economic restructuring in both countries. However it also highpoints the role of media in emphasizing the elements of sabotage of BRI through foreign elements structured in Pakistan. Words such as “modernize”, “infrastructure”, “new opportunities” and “vision” show positive...
connotations pertaining to CPEC. In addition, concordance of recurring pattern e.g. “guard”, “media reporting”, “construction of narrative” reveal that this mega project is under the international threat which can be manipulated through the construction of media discourses. Media plays a vital role in manipulating any agenda through the discursive practices of discourse. Van Dijk (1998, 2006) argues that these strategies and moves at various levels of discourse are hardly surprising because they implement the usual ideological square of discursive group polarization (de/emphasize good/bad things of Us/Them) one finds in all ideological discourse (Van Dijk, 1998). Moreover, he further asserts that political manipulation includes ideological perspective and attitude which reflects their purpose.

8.8. Concordance 7: a snapshot of concordances of China–Pakistan Economic Corridor as “trade activities” in the news corpus
Concordances of words “trade activities”, show the major focus of CPEC on trade which will bring about an economic development. The major agenda of this mega project is concentrated only to trade activities which is a major point of concern for foreign elements. Although the ever changing regional dynamics can have an impact on the completion of CPEC, both Pakistan and China are determined to make the project a great success due to its enormous benefits for the region in general and for the two countries in particular. Many analysts argue that the accommodating attitudes of all the regional countries can help build the regional cooperation, and the CPEC thus can promote regional peace, stability and growth through regional integration. Many of these words are used in President Xi’s speech in Pakistan. Xi’s stance is to make the region more stable which includes infrastructure, economy, and education fields. The word ‘peaceful development showcases China’s soft image in the discourse that China desires amity in the region. In one of the speeches, Xi accentuates on the stance that China loves peace and BRI is the first remarkable initiative to bring a financial success within Asia. In addition, the concordance lines show a major purpose of CPEC in the region which is exclusively confined to economic trade and benefits by cooperation and has nothing to do with military alliance. However, India and other western powers are taking this project as China’s counter narrative against the sovereignty of India.

8.9. Concordance 8: a snapshot of concordance lines of “threat” to China–Pakistan Economic Corridor in the news corpus
Concordance 8 shows a threat which is visible through the discursive choices of linguistic items in the corpus. For instance, phrases like “threat to global peace”, “threat to regional security”, “threat to completion of project”, reveal an international threat against the economic project between China and Pakistan. Trump administration has informed Congress that it too believes that CPEC passes through a disputed territory—originally an Indian claim aimed at thwarting the development plan. Van Dijk (1998, p. 273) claims that “a precise negative view may be highlighted by a catchy metaphor from a negative conceptual domain, […] by comparisons of the same type, or by hyperboles describing their negative characteristics” (emphasis added). Concordance lines “threat” in the corpus indicate the danger to the mega project. Phrases like “possible terrorist threat”, “pressing threat to domestic security”, “generate threat to its project” indicate India’s negative concerns for the implementation of this project. According to Carruthers (2000), media is the focal front employed for creating the enemy images amongst the people or states. So, the western media is portraying a negative image of CPEC by misrepresenting friendship between China and Pakistan as a political and belligerent alliance.

Summing up the entire argument, it may well be concluded that the recurrent patterns, lexical choices, and hyperbolic expressions in the entire corpus reveal that the construction of CPEC by Pakistani media is positive and both the states are determined for timely completion of the project to get the maximum benefits.

9. Conclusion
The study is an endeavor to investigate the diverse perspectives of CPEC conveyed through Pakistani newspapers in Pakistan. China’s relation with Pakistan has steadily advanced in all fields in the past 70 years since the two countries created diplomatic channels; the fields involve trade and investment. However, the change in the local and worldwide protocol has enhanced the level of proximity between the two nations to a great extent. They have
exponentially increased their economic cooperation, thus their economic bonds conform to the local and international reliance in trade and commerce. This argument justifies the means when we collect texts for the study. The newspaper data contains articles, editorials, and opinions by various different authors and these authors belong to a different class in a society. The CPEC corpus contains the coherent data pertinent to CPEC and some of the keywords such as ‘game changer, higher than Himalayas, deeper than oceans, economy, etc. The focus was on the occurrences of these keywords and the contextual relevance and construction of image of “game changer” in Pakistan. The identified some keywords which shows the positive perception of CPEC and it’s a trivial issue for a few countries. Concordances such as “China” occurred in the CPEC corpus revealing the fact that CPEC is an economic project based on the cultural, economic and infrastructural transformation rather than any other hidden motives. In addition, CPEC corpus reveals many linguistic strategies referring CPEC as the only mega project which will change the economic condition of Pakistan.

The projects worth huge amount of $46 billion provides the requisite pedestal to deal with regional issues, more particularly energy needs, infrastructure, communication and to avail the foreign investment in the country. Despite the economic benefits of CPEC, Pakistan and China have been facing international and local factors. US and India’s concerns, instability in the neighboring countries such as Afghanistan, Pak-India controversies, and influence of terrorism are the stumbling blocks which impede the functioning of this mega venture. Pakistan and China need to sit together, devise mechanism to tackle these national and international challenges for the successful completion of CPEC. Apart from the encounters they are confronted with, Pakistan and China appear to be determined to successfully accomplish this mega-venture to get maximum benefits for economic boost in both the countries. Moreover, CPEC has managed to attract people in Pakistan at various fronts especially people are showing keen interest in teaching Mandarin to their children. As regards the implementation of the language at the school level, Chinese Mandarin courses have been introduced for under-graduates at university level in Pakistan. PakistanChina friendship has acquired the heights of glory and become an example for the entire world, especially monumental strides taken in completion Gwadar port with Xingjian has strengthened this friendship. In addition, Chinese are known for using aphoristic style in their discourses which is apparent in Xi’s speech in Pakistan: “it seems it’s homecoming for me”. Results showed an exceptionally positive attitude of Pakistani discourse toward popularity of friendly relations with China.

On the contrary, the occurrences of India reveal a negative influence of terror attacks over the friendly relations between the two states. van Dijk (1987, p. 58) argues while elaborating the discursive practices of discourses as, “they are different, they do not adapt, they are involved in negative acts and they threaten our socio-economic interests”. China’s economic influence in Asia through Pakistan has never been appreciated by western powers, US in particular and India in general. On the contrary, the image of Pakistan in China is significantly lower as compared to US or other countries because of current wave of terrorism in Pakistan and attacks on Chinese people and consulate in Pakistan. Whereas, concordances of time tested friendship reveal that Pakistan advocates that China has continuously been engaged in supporting Pakistan in crunch times while on the contrary the same was not reciprocated by US despite the fact that Pakistan has waged US war against Taliban. Keeping a suspicious eye on Pakistan, US wants Pakistan to be a friend while China has always showed a clear-cut agenda extending unconditional support for Pakistan at international forums. The positive impact of China–Pakistan strengthened relations may well be witnessed in education sector where tendency to study in China has grown in recent years. Over 12,000 students have been studying in China through cultural exchange programs and scholarships awarded by Chinese government. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Pakistani and Chinese universities have further fortified the already existing bilateral relations.

After having conducted an extensive corpus-based analysis pertaining to Pakistan news media discourse on CPEC, the researchers concluded that a very positive representation of China was witnessed within the entire discourse where China was projected as a reliable
comrade. This catchphrase has got admiration around the globe. Trade, travel, cultural ventures and higher education have received exponential growth owing to this strengthen comradeship.

**Funding**
This work was supported by the Institute of Corpus Studies and Applications Shanghai International Studies University, Shanghai, China (CN).

**Author details**
Muhammad Afzaal 1
E-mail: Muhammad.afzaal1185@gmail.com
Kaibao Hu 1
E-mail: kihu@sjtu.edu.cn
Muhammad Ilyas Chishti 2
E-mail: ilias_chishti2007@yahoo.com
Zahid Khan 3
E-mail: mzahidshu@gmail.com

1 Institute of Corpus Studies and Applications Shanghai International Studies University, Shanghai, China.
2 SNS, National University of Sciences and Technology Islamabad Pakistan, Pakistan.
3 Center for Global Studies, College of Liberal Arts, Shanghai University, Shanghai, China.

**Cover Image**
Source: Author.

**Citation information**
Cite this article as: Examining Pakistani news media discourses about China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: A corpus-based critical discourse analysis, Muhammad Afzaal, Kaibao Hu, Muhammad Ilyas Chishti & Zahid Khan, Cogent Social Sciences (2019), 5: 1683940.

**References**
Baker, P. (2006). *Using corpora in discourse analysis*. New York, NY: A&C Black.
Baker, P. (2010). *Sociolinguistics and Corpus Linguistics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., Kosarovinik, M., Krzyzanowski, M., McEnery, T., & Wodak, R. (2008). A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press. *Discourse & Society*, 19(3), 273–306. doi:10.1177/1461445606072110
Reisigl, M. (2008). Analyzing political rhetoric. *Qualitative discourse analysis in the social sciences*, 96–120.
Richardson, J. (2006). Analysing newspapers: An approach from critical discourse analysis. USA: Polgrave.

**Source**
Source: Dawn News. Retrieved from https://www.dawn.com/news/1443081
Concordance 1

one of the early harvest projects of CPEC, a flagship project of One Belt-One Road, said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of the Belt and Road initiative, achieves common and shared development. He termed CPEC a flagship project of Belt and Road, achievement common and shared development. He termed CPEC a flagship project of Belt and Road, achievement common and shared development.

Plot 1

Concordance 2

Corridor (PCEC) has been rightly termed a game changer. A careful cost-benefit analysis is needed to understand the role of CPEC in Pakistan's economic development. The CPEC, as argued, will bring long-term benefits to Pakistan and the region. The key parameters should be additional investment in the CPEC project, which will lift millions out of poverty. Chinese officials have described the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as a game changer.
Concordance 3

at the Pakistan ... Shujat says Pak-China friendship a matter of pride Pakistan Today. The relations a model of good-neighbourliness and friendship, a pillar of regional peace and stability. relations a model of good-neighbourliness and friendship, a pillar of regional peace and stability. As a result, Pakistan-China friendship raised the increasingly unwavering Pakistan-China friendship. Amidst the warm applause, Xi Jinping spoke highly of China-Pakistan all-weather friendship and all-round cooperation, and stressed, as it aptly defines the all-weather friendship and all-round cooperation between China organised a conference on Pakistan-Romania Friendship and Centennial Celebrations of Romania. friends, iron brothers and trusted partners. The friendship and cooperation between China and Pakistan, friends, iron brothers and trusted partners. The friendship and cooperation between China and Pakistan, to pursue win-win cooperation and enhance friendship and cooperation with other countries. I goals is to have a treaty of friendship and free trade with India. & Pakistan, the working of all Pakistan China Friendship Association (APCFA) for enhancing socio.

Concordance 4

... project committee ahead of crucial visit to China. *Pakistan achieves diplomatic success at U ina-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (2006), and the China-Pakistan Agreement on Trade and Services (20 dialogue, both sides spoke highly of the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative p of the two countries and elevate the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative p agreed that we should further strengthen the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative p sector. The two sides agreed on strengthening China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative p of the two countries and elevate the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative p agreed that we should further strengthen the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative p sector. The two sides agreed on strengthening China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative p join hands with you to upgrade the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative p with the Pakistani side to further promote China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative p the speech, Xi Jinping spoke highly of China-Pakistan all-weather friendship and all-roun session of the 4th Trilateral Dialogue between China, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Chinese envoy session of the 4th Trilateral Dialogue between China, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Chinese envoy "on behalf of the 1.3 billion people of China. *Pakistan and China\'s struggles have because of a renowned book \(93The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia\'s New Geopolitics,\) recent book by Andrew Small \(93The China-Pakistan Axis\) \(94\) makes clear, economic int that still have immense relevance, including the China-Pakistan Bilateral Investment Treaty (1989),
Concordance 5

though, otherwise it will continue to slide deeper and deeper into unsustainable debt and rema
economic giants has further intensified to get deeper control. This has made Lagarde, the managin
it will continue to slide deeper and deeper into unsustainable debt and remain at the
it will continue to slide deeper and deeper into unsustainable debt and remain at the
the eastern Himalayas last summer had a deeper meaning for regional perceptions than we im
issue to most people, but it has deeper meanings, some of which could border on
external sector. But more troubling are the deeper ramifications. How much of this gap is
Pak-China friendship is higher than mountains, deeper than ocean and sweeter than honey: PM
Pak-China friendship is higher than mountains, deeper than ocean and sweeter than honey: PM
Pakistan as both Pak-China friendship was deeper than ocean and higher than Himalaya, he
to Pakistan showed strong bilateral relations and deeper ocean brother hood in the field
improve Pak-China ties and friendship as deeper than ocean: CM Marri - China's
the entire world. The Taller Than Mountain, Deeper Than Ocean Friendship - Notes on a China-
win-win model of international cooperation and deeper than ocean provides new opportunities for e
vow to make CPEC a success and deeper than ocean ties between two states will
. China-Pak relations are higher than mountain, deeper than ocean.>
92 Higher than the
two nations as. Higher than mountains. deeper than Ocean and Xi Jinping further

Concordance 6

laid by their ancestors. She said that BRI, a vision of President Xi Jinping, would
significance of CPEC, which is part of BRI. Abbasi said that projects under the initiativ
order to inform member states of the BRI about the specifics of transport projects, as
part of the Belt and Road Impact (BRI), adding that the project would result in
93 CPEC became the flagship project of the BRI aimed at providing new opportunities to the
China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aims to modernise, secure, and link various
South Asia for Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Best Bank for Infrastructure / Project Fin
South Asia for Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Best Bank for Infrastructure / Project Fin
time will tell whether the CPEC, the BRI and China's plans to realign
two countries. We need to guard BRI and CPEC against the growing negativity of
two countries. We need to guard BRI and CPEC against the growing negativity of
others are contemplating joining it yet both BRI and CPEC are being denigrated by some
f the developing countries, would rather sabotage BRI and CPEC through subversion, terror attacks an
93 Facts-Based Construction of Narratives on BRI and CPEC, where media persons from
93 Facts-Based Construction of Narratives on BRI and CPEC, where media persons from
, economic, development, political aspects of the BRI and the CPEC and its impact on
Concordance 7

Sust Dry Port, no visible increase in trade activities at the land route was witnessed. Calling Pakistan a natural hub for regional trade activities due to its location at the 93Pakistan is a natural hub for regional trade activities due to its location at the Calling Pakistan a natural hub for regional trade activities due to its location at the of the country by accelerating commercial and trade activities, Hyderabad-Sukkur 292 km long. Officials on both sides claim that the trade activities on the same route would continue. Officials on both sides claim that the trade activities on the same route would continue. The western route of CPEC is open for trade activities, one cannot say that the CPEC western route of CPEC is open for trade activities, one cannot say that the CPEC ns-national initiatives for boosting cross-border trade activities, Qureshi said that the China-Pak kick off business activities on CPEC routes. Trade activities will be more visible when the kick off business activities on CPEC routes. Trade activities will be more visible when the It will act as a hub of trade activity for China. There are educational as on CPEC projects. On November 1, 2016, the first trade activity under the CPEC began with over 100 on CPEC projects. On November 1, 2016, the first trade activity under the CPEC began with over 100 or to maintain comparative advantage in foreign trade. Advertisement These SPS and TBT measures ma. As per the Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement, Afghan goods can be transited acr

Concordances 8

aimed at disruption of the sole emerging threat to a Washington global order, one that rules out that the project was a threat to anyone \(95\) Defends Pakistan against US served the \(95\) Political instability can be a threat to CPEC, says Ahsan DAWN.com LAHORE: served the \(95\) Political instability can be a threat to CPEC, says Ahsan DAWN.com LAHORE: it regards it as the most pressing threat to domestic security. The issue has dominant non-proliferation regime and believed that the threat to global peace could only be addressed non-proliferation regime and believed that the threat to global peace could only be addressed 2017, it raised concern over a possible terrorist threat to its ambassador in Islamabad from the the concern of BRICS leadership about the threat to regional security from militant groups, violence in the region are a great threat to the regional peace and security. The in North-Eastern states of India generate threat to this project completion. It must be that be possible if China was a threat\(94\) he asked, arguing that China and
