

## **Framing the Kashmir Issue: The Pragmatics of the Media Coverage of Lockdown in Kashmir**

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### **Abstract**

*Media can achieve the communicative purpose of news reports, influence minds, and change ideologies. Media is highlighting the current serious situation in Kashmir caused by the suspension of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution due to which India imposed lockdown and house arrest and threatened the residents of Kashmir. Therefore, the present pragmatic study was conducted to understand the role played by media in representing the Kashmir issue. To understand the intended meaning of the authors, Searle's Speech Act Theory has been applied to the headlines published by Al Jazeera, The Dawn, The Gaurdian, The Economic Times, and The News. Results reveal that most of the headlines are assertive (40%) which implies that they aim at either uncovering the events or informing the reader about the events occurring in Kashmir, while the number of directive speech acts was the lowest (4%) which shows that the headlines are not guiding, directing, or educating the readers. Access to Kashmir should be granted to global media in order to provide an unbiased and in-depth analysis that will help the UN and human rights organizations in aiding Kashmiris.*

**Keywords:** pragmatics, speech act theory, media silence, Kashmir issue, Indian Curfew, framing, lockdown

### **Introduction**

Our lives have been significantly influenced by the media. In this regard broadcasters and media rely heavily on news coverage and the headlines or articles are built and skewed to achieve their aims. Audience exposure to mass media, particularly news media, results in effects such as information, persuasion, agenda setting, and framing (Tewksbury & Schenfele, 2008). Individuals' views, activities, and topics are shaped and changed by the media. Scholars argue that since people rely on the media for news and facts, they (the media) play a critical role in people's cognition and perceptions of different conflicts among states, groups, or individuals, as well as other international issues. The use of vocabulary is essential for achieving the desired result of drawing readers' attention to specific topics. Editors' opinions and perspectives on policy topics are reflected in their work. The pragmatic analysis of media presentation can reveal a lot of people's beliefs and perceptions. In this case, a pragmatic

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analysis of news headlines and articles may be a useful tool for illustrating intended meanings of presenters (Rawan & Rahman, 2020).

Pragmatics which can be defined as the study of the practical aspects of human action and thought. It is the study of the use of discourse markers, linguistic signs, words, and sentences in actual situations. Pragmatics, a branch of linguistics, studies how speech interacts with its surroundings. Speech act theory, conversational implications, talk in interaction, and other aspects of language activity are all examples of pragmatics in philosophy, history, linguistics, and anthropology. It discusses how meaning is formed and draws on implied meanings beyond the literal sense of an expression. It considers language as an expressive tool, as well as what authors mean when they use it and how we express and understand each other. Thomas (2014) states that, “the negotiation of meaning between speaker and audience, the context of the utterance and the possible meaning of an utterance are taken into account by pragmatics” (p. 22).

According to Chilwa (2007), pragmatic representations are based on the author’s motives and play an important role in the media. Language is a tool for communicating and expressing information, but it’s also important to understand how it’s used to shape perceptions (Beard, 2000, p.18; Ayeomoni & Akinkuolere, 2012). People can perform an action by saying something. Through speech acts, the speaker can convey physical action merely through words and phrases. The conveyed utterances are paramount to the actions performed” (Van Dijk, 1979, p. 447- 456). According to Mey (2001), “pragmatics as a study of how human beings use their language in communication, bases itself on the study of those premises and determines how they affect and effect the use of human language” (p. 6). As human interaction patterns include the use of speech acts, recognizing the type of expression used will help the audience deduce something that the presenter does not clearly share.

Pakistan and its neighbor India have been fighting over Kashmir as we can recall (Amir et al., 2020). Where both countries have fought war three times over the issue, the situation can turn violent again, and another war is not entirely out of the question (Figure 1). Various struggles against Indian occupation of Kashmir have been made since partition. The Kashmir has seen major revolts and upheavals in 1953, 1964, 1988-2000, 2010, and 2016. Since the Indian Security Council has been unable to resolve the Kashmir conflict, India has committed a human rights violation. According to reports, “nearly 100,000 people were killed and 1000 people vanished during the 1989 disturbances”, Kashmir has been a major source of concern for regional and international security due the ongoing insurgency (Hussain et al., 2019 & 2009). Over the last ten years,

1040 civilians and 318 military personnel have died as a result of truce violations in the Line of Control (Hayat, 2018). In 2016, separatist commander Burhan Wani was assassinated, sparking a wave of violence against Kashmiri civilians. Despite the curfew, protesters were out in the streets protesting his death, which culminated in the killing of “36 civilians” while leaving 1500 injured just 6 days after his funeral” (BBC, 2019). About “75 Kashmiris died and more than 5000 were seriously injured” over the next four months. Security forces used non-lethal pellet weapons which resulted in severe eye injuries in nearly 1300 Kashmiris including infants (BBC, 2019).

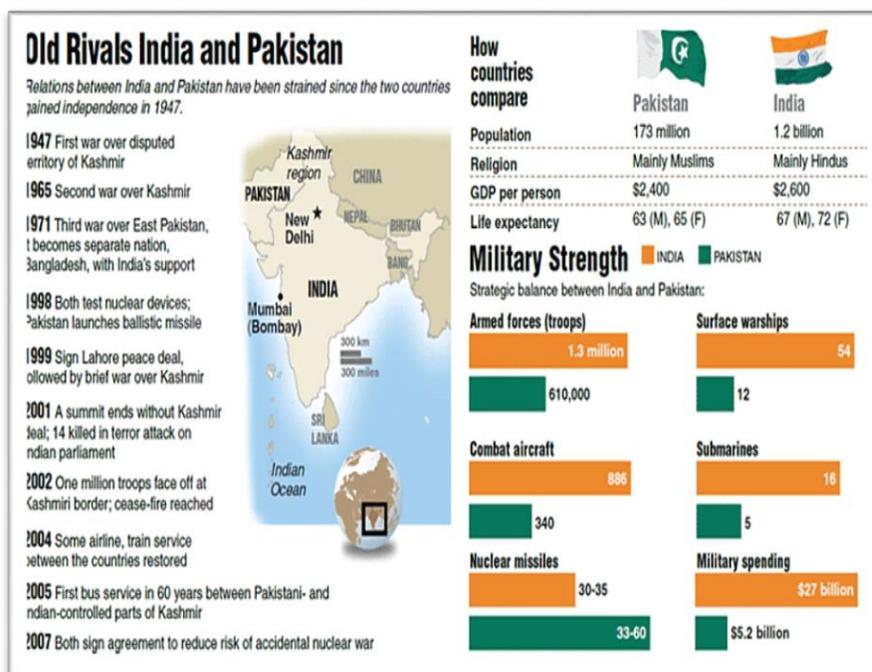


Figure 1. A brief history of Kashmir between Pakistan and India (Source: Macro Ops, 2016; Amir et al., 2020)

The prevalent situation in Kashmir has again been crucial for two years. The Indian occupied Kashmir has been locked up since 5 August 2019, when the Modi-led Indian Government declared the repeal of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution which granted Jammu and Kashmir separate status. The Indian ruling classes have transformed the Kashmir Valley, predominantly Srinagar, into a military garrison by deploying Indian

troops and paramilitary personnel in every corner to stop protests against the move. People are regularly breaking the curfew and other prohibitions and organizing protests to demonstrate their disdain of the Indian occupation and their contemptible move (Junaid, 2020; Amir et al., 2020). Not only it's a situation of war in Kashmir, but the sword of Damocles is hovering over India and Pakistan as well.

The establishment of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in Jammu & Kashmir between 1940 and 1944 laid the groundwork for the Hindu doctrine to be implemented. With the rise of the BJP to power, Prime Minister Narendra Modi repealed 'Article 370' on August 5, 2019 to exclude Kashmir from its privileged status. The so-called 'Masterstroke of Modi' aims to reduce the Muslim population to a minority. The move triggered widespread protests in the region, resulting in the imposition of a long-term curfew and the suspension of basic human rights in the state (Farooq & Javaid, 2020, p. 1-8).

Nazakat (2012), a journalist based in New Delhi, stated that the obvious absence of expert objectivity needs attention when India's political case on Kashmir appears to be ethically inadequate. He expressed that even the effect on Kashmir, and the burden of curfews causing outrageous difficulty to Kashmiri individuals for quite a long time, regularly go unreported. "This includes the simmering dissent and anger of the Kashmiris against the Indian government. Indian media coverage of Kashmir generally tends to solely blame Pakistan for the unrest in the state. Although Pakistan is widely known to be arming the insurgents and promoting a separatist movement in the Kashmir valley, the situation was not entirely created by Pakistan. India has its share of the blame for the humanitarian crises in Kashmir" (Nazakat, 2012, p. 69-74).

In October 2015, a senior Indian journalist Shekhar Gupta said that India's media had never been honest to Kashmir as the "reality of the situation was considered against the public interests" (Gupta, 2015). Gupta had been editor-in-chief of The Indian Express newspaper for almost 19 years, and so his statement was widely covered by the local media in Kashmir. It was the first time a high-ranking journalist had made such an observation (Khalid, 2016). Khalid (2016) recommends the use of the radio and vernacular dailies, the most common modes of media in rural Kashmir, and that he stresses the importance of bringing the editors on board to let the "good stories" about the military spread. "Media manipulation or spreading the message of "hope", "peace", "development" and "employment opportunities" under the military regime, and the destruction of these very elements by the insurgents are to be conveyed to the larger masses through the media" (Khalid, 2016).

While analyzing 423 reports on Kashmir in India's three leading newspapers, including *Times of India*, *The Hindu* and *The Indian Express*, Joseph (2020) found that 78 percent of such reports relied on government sources (pp. 41-55). Teresa Joseph reported that although human rights violations committed by Indian forces are ignored by the Indian press, the Indian press highlights the killings of minorities in Kashmir, such as Sikhs and Hindus, allegedly by rebel groups. Joseph underlines the point that newspapers cover such stories prominently, but they also publish human interest stories saying that minorities have become victims of 'rebel groups', supported and funded from Pakistan. Indian media reports and narrates the situation partially, consequently, true picture of Kashmir is largely untold thus creating the ideological divide between Kashmir and India. Such practices in conflict coverage have contributed to the growing sense of alienation among Kashmiris. Other than making an ideal popular sentiment, this story has additionally helped the Indian state to pull off enormous basic liberties infringement, submitted by its powers, to guarantee that the Kashmir continues to suffer Indian occupation. Danish and Riaz (2022) studied the semiotic representation of Indo-Pak relations in the Google Ad and found that the representation deemphasizes the bloodshed, loss, animosity, and Indian atrocities in Kashmir spanning over decades.

However, more studies are needed on the pragmatics of headlines. The current research, therefore, is proposed to investigate intended meanings behind the vocabulary used in news headlines reporting the Kashmir crisis. The examination of the language used in these documents is intended to take place within the framework of the speech act theory.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Media representation and conflicts have been found to have a close relationship because conflicts may be escalated or de-escalated using mass media (Chebii, 2015; Alimba, 2020). With this possible escalatory/de-escalatory position of the media in conflict situations in mind, the current study analyzes media coverage of the Kashmir conflict in the news websites having broad viewership. The researchers needed to know how the media views and portrays the Kashmir issue. The research also sought to determine whether the plight of Kashmiri people is adequately illustrated by the media or not.

The following research question, which will help understand if media has actively or passively represented the lockdown in Kashmir, has been investigated:

1. Which speech acts have been used in news headlines published by *Al Jazeera*, *The Dawn*, *The Gaudian*, *The Economic Times*, and *The News* about Indian imposed lockdown in Kashmir to represent the lockdown?

## Research Methodology

### *Research Design*

This study involves an analysis of the headlines selected from five news websites i.e., *Al Jazeera*, *The Dawn*, *The Guardian*, *The Economic Times* and *The News* covering the Kashmir issue from August 2019 to August 2020. The goal of this research article is to understand the media structures used in the representation of the Kashmir conflict, the historical context to this dispute and the existence and implications of the international media frameworks. Pragmatics suggests how vocabulary is employed in a contrasting way in particular contexts. The current study emphasizes the use of speech acts in specific situations and the formation of various perceptions about the Kashmir issue through speech acts in popular news websites. This section basically explores the current Kashmir situation in the sense of its media coverage and representation. After a thorough analysis of the literature, the researchers applied Searle's (1979) Speech Act Theory. The data collection and analysis procedures have been tabulated below:

**Table 1.**  
*Data Collection and Analysis Procedures.*

Time Period	News Media	No. of Selected News Articles	Pragmatic Analysis
August 2019 to August 2020	<i>Al Jazeera</i>	5	Speech Acts suggested by Searle (1979) Assertive Commissive Directive Expressive Declarative
	<i>The Dawn</i>	7	
	<i>The Guardian</i>	4	
	<i>The Economic Times</i>	5	
	<i>The News</i>	4	

### *Theoretical Framework*

Goffman's (1974) framing theory suggests that people view what's going on in the world by their primary framework. Goffman (1974) concluded that framing determines the situation that gives rise to the implications and shape of practices. In this activity, media, controlled by profit-driven corporate interests, which include vested interests of the ruling class, were often seen to engage very willingly, relying heavily and

uncritically on elite intelligence outlets (Herman, 1996). This hypothesis is very important to the present research since various media frame the issue of Kashmir in a different color. What is made invisible through framing in the media discourse, deemphasizes the reality, affects the visibility of the reality, and often puts the victims at a losing end (Riaz, 2021).

#### *Austin's Speech Act Theory*

Speech act theory was proposed after a progression of talks on a similar theme by J. L. Austin in 1962. Austin's work was broadened and enhanced by numerous scholars, for example, Leech (1983), Searle (1969), and Levinson (1983 & 1987) (Kartika & Aziz, 2021). Austin (1962, p. 3-6) differentiated between talking and getting things done. He clarified that not all the sentences are basically articulations rather they incorporate orders, questions, clarifications and wishes which are made by the individuals in various specific settings. Austin (1962) stated that illocutionary act is the act of doing something. Then, according to Searle (1979), illocutionary act is divided into five categories. These are representatives, directives, commissive, declarative, and expressive (Rahayu et al., 2018).

He said that there is the idea of reaction to other groups' practices, fortunes, and articulations (Bhaskar, 2013). He presumed that speech act is a type of speech that passes on a message or order.

#### *Contribution of Searle to the Speech Act Theory*

Searle (1979) suggested that the basic unit of linguistic communication is speech act. It can be a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a sound, it should fulfill the task of expressing the intention of the user. Understanding the user's intention can lead to complete understanding of the speech act. Searle and Vanderveken (1985) said that the negligible or fundamental units of human etymological correspondence are the illocutionary acts. These acts incorporate inquiries, conciliatory sentiments, orders, articulations, and guarantees. The speech acts are characterized into the following five classifications: Assertives, Directives, Commissives, Declaratives and Expressives (Searle, 1979). In this study, Searle's speech acts (1979) are analyzed as this study aims at analyzing the intended meaning in the selected discourse. It aims at exploring which speech acts have been employed more frequently, in an effort to highlight if, considering the severity of human right violations in Kashmir, the headlines are informative or directive.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data were collected by using different terminology of quest for subjects such as Kashmir, Kashmir Issue, Kashmir Crisis, Kashmir dispute, Kashmir regime, Kashmir Article 370, Kashmir Indo-Pak from news websites and newspapers by web searches from August 2019 to August 2020. The study is delimited to 25 news articles selected from five news websites that published those articles from August 2019 to August 2020. Those websites which have a broad viewership and that have documented the recent Kashmir crisis very well were chosen. The text of those articles on the Kashmir issue has been examined to find as to what type of speech acts the editors or authors have used. It would also show the explanation behind what they are seeking specifically to express in their rhetoric to the public. Since the partition, the Kashmir question has been a serious subject, but today, due to the current situation caused by the suspension of Article 370 (curfew) of the Indian Constitution in Kashmir, it has become a delicate one, as if the Indian move were legal. Media selected for the data collection were:

- Al Jazeera (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/>)
- The Dawn (<https://www.dawn.com/news/>)
- The Guardian (<https://www.theguardian.com/>)
- The Economic Times (<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/>)
- The News (<https://www.thenews.com.pk/>)

Gathered information was organized in Microsoft Word and Excel and assessed utilizing prescient instruments or rate and frequency method. The interpretation of the information under analysis is of two kinds: qualitative and quantitative. The interpretation is accomplished via the hypothetical technique mentioned above. It assists in uncovering what sort of articulation is being controlled in news features. The above is intended to help the finishes of the previous investigation factually. This is accomplished via a percentage estimation. It is a descriptive analysis that combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

### **Results**

The study documents the nature and treatment of Kashmir curfew portrayed by the leading news websites. Results revealed that all famous news websites published most of their headlines with significantly greater number of positive frames for the struggle of Kashmir movement and the activities and events happening in the Indian occupied Kashmir. The number of news stories, columns, and editorials with negative frames for Kashmir issue was very little or negligible in these news media. Table 2 given below displays the pragmatic review of news statements based on the form of speech act used in the selected media discourse.

**Table 2***Pragmatic Analysis of the News Statement Based on Speech Acts*

S. No.	News Statement	News Media	Type of speech
	Curfew imposed across Kashmir ahead of first commemoration of denial of Article 370. Be that as it may, health related crises and development of staff on COVID-19 obligation with pass/legitimate cards will be excluded from the limitations, the order said.	<i>Economic times</i>	Assertive
	Limitations have been in a few pieces of Kashmir as a careful step for keeping up lawfulness in the Valley, authorities said.	<i>Economic times</i>	Commissive
	Kashmir stayed nervous on Sunday as specialists ventured up security sending at essential establishments and touchy regions.	<i>Economic times</i>	Expressive
	Imran Khan, "More than 200 writers from all significant public print and electronic media and global media, including BBC, Washington Post, New York Times, Foreign Policy, AP, AFP, Reuters, DW, Al Jazeera, and so on, have been announcing openly including numerous who are incredulous of the public authority".	<i>Economic times</i>	Declarative
	Pakistan was endeavoring to redirect consideration from its own dread record, remembering its shameless help to assailants for J&K," a senior authority of the state govt said in an articulation.	<i>Economic times</i>	Assertive
	The most recent clampdown in involved Kashmir by the Indian government that began on August 5, 2019 finishes one year today, with life a long way from typical for 12.5 million Kashmiris.	<i>Dawn</i>	Assertive

As the year passed and global tension built to reestablish opportunities, Indian specialists guaranteed they had ‘facilitated’ a few limitations, for example, lifting detours and reestablishing landlines and some cell phone administrations.	<i>Dawn</i>	Commissive
Security activities against Kashmiri contenders have quickened, putting 2020 on course to be probably the bloodiest year, have 229 killings during in excess of 100 military tasks since January. It additionally observed 55 web closures and the devastation of 48 structures, the report by the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society said.	<i>Dawn</i>	Declarative
A request was documented in India’s top court testing the lockdown by resistance Congress party activist Tehseen Poonawalla, looking for prompt lifting of check in time and different limitations, including obstructing of telephone lines, web and news stations in Kashmir. He additionally looked for the quick arrival of Kashmiri pioneers who have been kept, including Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti.	<i>Dawn</i>	Assertive
Indian police utilized nerve gas and pellets to retaliate at any rate 10,000 individuals fighting Delhi’s withdrawal of unique rights for Jammu and Kashmir in its fundamental city of Srinagar	<i>Dawn</i>	Assertive
“They (police) assaulted us from different sides,” another observer said.	<i>Dawn</i>	Assertive
Pakistan observes ‘Kashmir Solidarity Day’, ‘Black Day’	<i>Dawn</i>	Assertive
A curfew has been enforced across Indian Kashmir only two days before	<i>Guardian</i>	Declarative

the principal commemoration of Delhi's cancellation of the fretful district's status

The curfew will be authorized on Tuesday and Wednesday, Choudhary said in an administration request.

*Guardian*    Commissive

'Humiliating to the core': how India turned a Kashmir hotel into a jail

*Guardian*    Expressive

As per local media reports, a few detainees have been flown out of Kashmir to penitentiaries in Lucknow, Bareilly and Agra. It is conceivable that individuals are being held under the Public Safety Act, a disputable law that permits specialists to detain somebody for as long as two years without charge or preliminary.

*Guardian*    Commissive

In a proclamation, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) said that six of their men were harmed after obscure equipped renegades heaved a projectile in Karan Nagar territory of Srinagar.

*Aljazeera*    Expressive

At least 32 activists of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) have started a yearning strike at a demonstration fight in the town of Jaskool in Pakistan-managed Kashmir, about 10km from the Line of Control (LoC) that partitions Indian and Pakistan-directed Kashmir, a JKLF representative said.

*Aljazeera*    Directive

"The most recent hearing in the US House of Representatives is opportune and shows the world network's proceeded with worry over the unsatisfactory circumstance in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the need to address it earnestly," the statement said.

*Aljazeera*    Commissive

Modi: Kashmir circumstance will regulate in 4 months	<i>Aljazeera</i>	Assertive
Khan said that great many Kashmiris would “not acknowledge” Delhi’s choice to disavow Article 370 and would emerge as an opponent of it once the time limit was lifted.	<i>Aljazeera</i>	Declarative
The European Parliament’s (EP) Committee on Foreign Affairs on Monday requested that India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi promptly lift check in time in involved Kashmir, Geo News revealed.	<i>The news</i>	Commissive
Kashmir is a worldwide question: UN	<i>The news</i>	Declarative
Khan said Modi, similar to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, was electioneering dependent on “dread and patriot feeling”.	<i>The news</i>	Assertive
Observers said Indian security powers shot pellets and poisonous gas shells at quiet grieverers to separate the get-together in Kashmir.	<i>The news</i>	Assertive

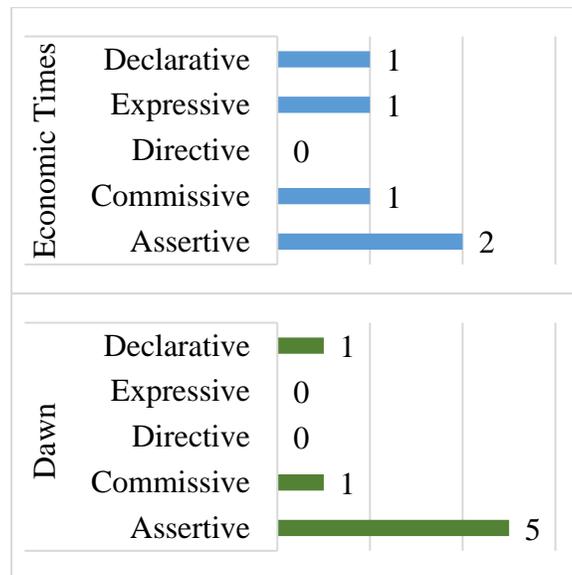
The different types of speeches the press releases of *Al Jazeera*, *The Dawn*, *The Guardian*, *The Economic Times* and *The News*, and their frequencies are listed in Table 3 and are illustrated in Figure 2.

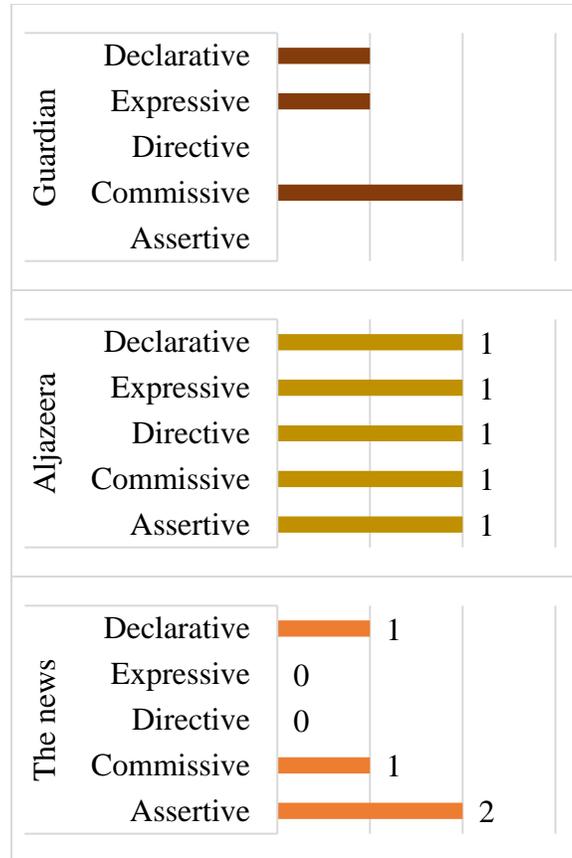
**Table 3**

*Types of Speech Acts and Their Frequency of Use in the Selected Media*

<i>Discourse</i>		
News Media	Type of Speech Act	Frequency
The Economic Times	Assertive	2
	Commissive	1
	Directive	0
	Expressive	1
	Declarative	1
The Dawn	Assertive	5
	Commissive	1
	Directive	0

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The Guardian	Expressive	0
	Declarative	1
	Assertive	0
	Commissive	2
	Directive	0
Al Jazeera	Expressive	1
	Declarative	1
	Assertive	1
	Commissive	1
	Directive	1
The News	Expressive	1
	Declarative	1
	Assertive	2
	Commissive	1
	Directive	0
Total	Expressive	0
	Declarative	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>



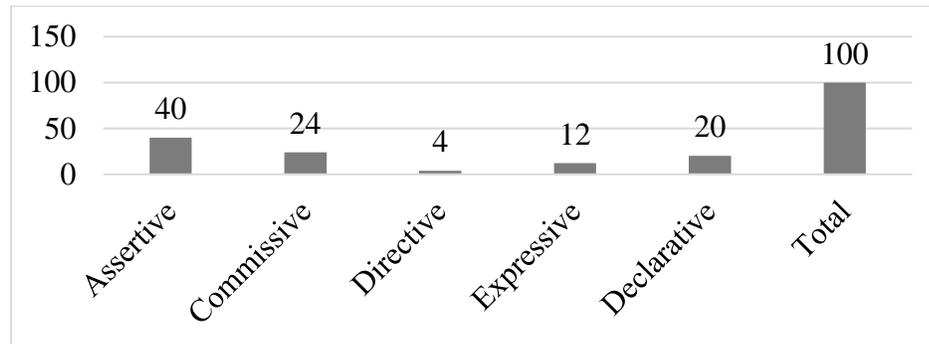


**Figure 2. Types of Speech Acts and their Frequency of Use in the Selected News Media**

The analysis shows that assertive speech acts have the highest frequency (40%) of the speech acts utilized, trailed by commissive speech acts (24%) (Figure 3 and Table 4). Rawan and Rahman (2020) found that 11 stories (9%) *The News* were assertive speech acts. By far, most of assertive speech acts utilized in the arbitrarily chosen news explanations of Al Jazeera, The Dawn, The Guardian, The Economic Times, and The News have the illocutionary power of either ‘advising’ the reader about the occupation of Kashmir or ‘uncovering’ a few facts in the news stories. In this way, as per the method employed, these acts will be considered to signify ‘uncover’ or ‘report’. The outcomes reveal that the fundamental capacity of features is to report or uncover the oppression of Kashmiris by India.

**Table 4***Percentage and Frequency of Various Speech Acts*

Speech Act	Percentage	Frequency
Assertive	40	10
Commissive	24	6
Directive	4	1
Expressive	12	3
Declarative	20	5
Total		25

**Figure 3.** *Percentage of Various Speech Acts in Media Discourse*

Assertives are trailed by commissives through which the language user is resolved to satisfy some future action or refuse taking any. Assertives also represent various themes in the features. It appears that the most widely recognized themes uncovered in this classification are about the check in time in Kashmir by the Indian government. Analysis shows least level of directive speech acts for example 4%. This might be because of the possibility that editors of the features are not in a situation to coordinate others through requests or orders. Directives are utilized by speaker to get someone else to do something. Expressives are used to communicate the emotions related to a specific act. In current analysis, expressive acts were found with a frequency of 3 (12%). Such articulations focus on the feelings of Kashmiris. Declarative sentences having a frequency of 5 (20%) are primarily and most frequently used for speech acts such as asserting, claiming, stating, but also accusing, criticizing, promising, and guaranteeing. Interestingly enough, all the performative sentences are also of the declarative type. These acts are generally doled out to show the dedication of some political pioneers or substances to certain future actions which are for the sake of Kashmir issue.

The current study's findings, which show a high percentage of assertive speech acts followed by commissive and directive speech acts, are consistent with those of Bose (2010), Patel (2005), Rawan and Rahman (2020), who assumed that Kashmir would not be given proper and fair representation by both national and international media. The statements given by foreign media were mainly neutral because they disregarded the facts. The national media will focus on India and Pakistan while neglecting Kashmiris, i.e., a singular perspective rather than a diverse perspective (not limited to India and Pakistan only). Bose (2010) found the similar tendency in coverage of the 1999 Kargil conflict and the 2008 Mumbai attacks. According to Rawan and Rahman (2020), the local media in Pakistan and India focuses on their own governments rather than embracing the ideas and opinions of others. Tejas Patel (2004) found support for their leaders' official positions, whether political or military, in his study. Such media coverage just overlooks the true portrayal of the Kashmir conflict or recent lockdown in Kashmir. This pragmatic analysis suggests that Kashmiris have less opportunities to express their issues in the mass media coverage based on singular or neutral approaches and perspectives.

### Conclusion

As a result of the suspension of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, the situation in Kashmir is a matter of critical concern. Kashmiri residents were threatened by the enforced lockout and house arrest. Due to Indian violence, the Kashmiri community has often suffered security violations. The results of the current research show that the news covered by *Al Jazeera*, *The Dawn*, *The Guardian*, *The Economic Times* and *The News* are assertive and aim at reporting the reader about the violence in Kashmir. The curfew in Kashmir by the Indian government is the most common subject dealt with in this category. Research indicates the lowest percentage of directive speech acts because editors of news media are not in a position to guide others because they don't have access. Expressive speech acts, used to communicate the emotions linked to a certain act, suggest that the emotions of Kashmiris are given little consideration in media discourse. Most of the speech acts are assigned to demonstrate the commitment of certain political leaders or institutions to certain future actions concerning Kashmir issue.

It is concluded that the pragmatic analysis of speech acts in news media statements can be an important way of revealing the implied meaning because it affects the beliefs of readers or audience about certain matters. Applying speech act theory to the selected headlines unveils that the media has mostly been reporting or presenting the issue, but not

dictating, directing, educating, or guiding the readers on the Indian lockdown in Kashmir. While it is ethically sound for the media channels to present information in an unbiased, neutral, and assertive tone, raising voice in a strong manner for any and every community suffering from severe oppression and violation is paramount.

### *Recommendations*

Based on the findings, the following recommendations can be made:

- From the perspective of ethical journalism and for the sake of regional security, it is strongly recommended that the Kashmir conflict be represented with all of the grave concerns and a constructive spin, so that international peace-building institutions can come up with an inclusive initiative based on the true picture of the depth of the crisis and address the issue for greater regional benefits.
- It is also strongly supported that India should provide access to various international media channels to provide an overview of the situation in the Indian Occupied and Locked Down Kashmir. Access could help the UN and humanitarian organizations to give the much-needed aid to the victims, particularly, the thousands of widows, orphans, differently abled persons, and children in Indian occupied Kashmir.

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