

"A CORPUS-BASED STUDY OF DISCOURSE MARKERS IN PAKISTANI PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA DURING ELECTION PERIODS AND POLITICAL MANIFESTOS"

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the use of discourse markers in Pakistani media texts, focusing specifically on election campaigns and political party manifestos. AntConc software was utilized to analyze a specific corpus of newspaper articles to ascertain the frequency of distinct discourse markers, their positioning within the text, and their functional roles within the reading context. Seven principal categories of speech markers were examined as part of the investigation. The categories included additive, adversative, causal, temporal, elaborative, topic management, and conclusion markers. The study's results demonstrate that additive markers, like "and" and "also," are the most prevalent. This illustrates how political texts frequently employ and bolster their claims. Moreover, antagonistic markers such as "but" and "however" are commonly employed, reflecting the contentious and often contradictory essence of political discourse. Causal markers, like "because," "therefore," and "so," indicate the presentation of justifications and reasons, whereas temporal markers, such as "first," "then," and "finally," facilitate the organization of narratives and arguments. Elaborative markers (e.g., "for example" and "in fact"), subject management markers (e.g., "well" and "now"), and conclusion markers (e.g., "in conclusion" and "overall") are crucial in guiding readers effectively through explanations and summaries, even though their usage is infrequent. Collectively, these discourse indicators illustrate how Pakistani media texts' structure coherence, persuasion, and ideological positioning throughout electoral seasons. This renders intricate political arguments comprehensible and persuasive to the audience.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a potent weapon for creating ideology, identity, and the social reality that people experience in addition to being a means of using language. Media sources are crucial in constructing political narratives and persuading the public during election campaigns. Using discourse markers is one approach to accomplish this. However, consequently, moreover,

and on the other hand are some examples of these markers that aid readers or listeners in understanding how ideas relate to one another and flow through a text. These "sequentially dependent elements that encapsulate units of discourse" are referred to as discourse markers by Schiffrin (1987). When used, these signals are meant to improve the coherence of

communication. According to Fraser (1999), these words "signal a relationship between the interpretation of the segment they introduce and the prior discourse." The terms can also be defined this way. These definitions stress that, particularly in the context of political discourse and media-generated information, discourse markers serve as tools for meaning construction that communicate stance, emphasis, and persuasive strategies in addition to serving as connections.

The use of language by the media to influence public opinion has been examined by numerous scholars specializing in discourse and media studies. In his study "Analyzing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis," Richardson (2007) highlighted how newspapers use particular linguistic components, including discourse markers, to create political ideas and sway reader opinions. With a focus on how writers employ discourse markers to engage readers, organize arguments, and develop an authorial perspective, Hyland (2005) investigated the use of meta-discourse in academic writing. Despite coming from academics, Hyland's method offers a useful framework for analyzing the crucial role that discourse markers play in stories created by the media. This study examines the Pakistani media in its entirety and is based on the work of previous academics. Persuasive and contrastive language markers are typically used more frequently during election seasons to draw attention to political tensions and party objectives.

Discourse markers have been the subject of a plethora of recent research that highlights their significance in political communication and media analysis. Because they manage listeners' expectations and link ideas, discourse markers are crucial for persuasion, according to Alami (2015), who studied their use in political speeches. Also, Jalilifar and Alipour (2017) found that editorials in newspapers use specific language markers to steer readers and bolster ideological claims. In light of these results, it is clear that discourse markers in media texts must be carefully examined, especially during highly charged and consequential events like elections. Election campaigns in Pakistan are greatly impacted by the media, which shapes narratives, builds political identities, and changes voter opinions. However, there is a dearth of corpus-based studies that examine the use of discourse markers in election-related media

coverage in Pakistan. With an emphasis on discourse markers, this study seeks to investigate the linguistic tactics employed by Pakistani print and broadcast media to shape political discourse during election times. The impact of media language on ideological stances, polarization, and persuasiveness will be explained by the study.

Significance of Research

This study's goal of identifying the linguistic techniques used by Pakistani media on election days is a major factor in its significance. This study clarifies how media discourse is structured, highlighting how it shapes public opinion, establishes ideologies, and develops stories. By concentrating on discourse markers, this might be accomplished. Additionally, by providing quantitative insights into media language that are frequently disregarded, it would contribute to the expanding corpus of research in Pakistan. Furthermore, because the findings show how language may be used as a persuasive tool in important political circumstances, they may be useful to linguists and communication scholars.

Research Questions

1. What are the most frequently used discourse markers in Pakistani media discourse during election days?
2. How are discourse markers distributed across different types of media texts (e.g., news reports, editorials, talk show transcripts)?
3. What do the patterns of discourse marker use reveal about the persuasive and ideological strategies of Pakistani media during elections?

Literature Review

Discourse markers (DMs) have been extensively researched in corpus linguistics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis for quite some time. Words and phrases that serve as discourse markers help to keep a conversation organized, make it easier to understand, and connect different parts of the topic. The foundation for current research was laid by Schiffrin's (1987) seminal book, *Discourse Markers*. How she defines discourse markers was as "sequentially dependent elements which bracket units of talk." According to her, discourse markers are crucial for the coherence of spoken interaction because they link

utterances and highlight linkages between concepts. To broaden the scope of this idea, Fraser (1999) defined discourse markers as sentences that show how the interpretation of the new segment relates to the prior speech and emphasized their pragmatic purposes. Insights from this foundational research demonstrate that discourse markers shape meaning and position via pragmatic and structural means.

The use of discourse markers to other types of written discourse, such as academic and media texts, was further broadened by researchers. Hyland (2005) conducted metadiscourse study into academic writing that included an examination of the usage of interactive tools like discourse markers. He showed how writers utilize discourse markers to situate themselves in relation to their claims, create coherence, and guide readers. Despite the scholarly nature of Hyland's work, his approach sheds light on the role of discourse markers in persuasive and argumentative writings, including media discourse. One of the linguistic techniques used by newspapers to shape public opinion and construct ideologies is discourse markers, according to Richardson's (2007) book *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. His findings suggest that journalists' ideological leanings and biases can be revealed through linguistic markers. Research on political and media discourse reveals that discourse markers play an essential role in concept framing and persuasion. Discourse markers indicate where the audience's attention is directed, connect concepts, and impact what the audience thinks, according to Alami (2015), who studied political speeches. This provides more evidence that discourse markers are crucial to the success of political communication. According to a corpus-based study of newspaper editorials conducted by Jalilifar and Alipour (2017), discourse markers are intentionally employed to guide readers, bolster claims, and influence ideological perspectives. Their research demonstrates that writers intentionally employ discourse markers such as contrastive, additive, and causal markers to convey their aim to convince.

The usage of discourse markers in media discourses varies among languages and genres, according to research. Discourse markers are useful for teaching in native and non-native settings, according to Fung and Carter's 2007 study of spoken English corpora.

According to their research, discourse markers are culturally dependent and alter depending on the context of communication. speech markers are commonly employed in Spanish media speech to evaluate and emphasize ideological bias, according to Martinez (2004). Discourse markers, according to these results, do not serve as universal features but rather as representations of particular institutional, political, and cultural actions.

Discourse markers in political and media speech have been the subject of much study in other parts of the globe, but surprisingly little in Pakistan. Instead of concentrating on critical discourse analysis of political speeches—evaluating metaphors, presuppositions, and ideologies—researchers in Pakistan have mostly disregarded the importance of discourse markers. Because of the importance of the media in Pakistan in influencing voter sentiment during elections, a corpus-based study of speech markers can help fill this knowledge gap by providing qualitative and quantitative data. Both the discipline of discourse analysis and comparative studies of media discourse will benefit from this type of research.

Discourse markers are terms and phrases that connect ideas and facilitate the organization of dialogue. They fulfill this role when utilized. Although they do not contribute novel insights to the discourse, they aid in clarifying the connections between the phrases and the concepts. Fraser (1999) posits that they demonstrate relationships among various segments of the speech, whereas Schiffrin (1987) argues that they enhance the coherence of the presentation. Words like as "however," "because," "so," and "well" serve to express contrast, logic, consequence, or hesitation without modifying the substance of a statement.

Types of discourse markers can be grouped according to their functions.

- **Additive markers** such as *and*, *also*, and *moreover* are used when adding more information.
- **Adversative or contrastive markers** like *but*, *however*, and *although* show opposition or difference between two ideas.

- **Causal markers** such as *so, therefore, and because* indicate cause-and-effect relationships.
- **Temporal or sequential markers** like *first, then, and finally* show order or time sequence.
- **Elaborative markers**, such as *for example, in fact, and that is*, clarify or illustrate a point.
- **Topic management markers** like *well, okay, and you know* are often used in spoken discourse to change the subject or manage turns.

Conclusion markers

such as *in conclusion, overall, and to sum up*, signal closure or summary.

Discourse markers are essential for ensuring cohesive and comprehensible communication. These signposts facilitate the construction of interpretation, the management of conversational turns, and the establishment of linkages between ideas. Their intentional use in media and political discourse facilitates audience manipulation and the portrayal of ideas in a particular manner. On election day, if we examine Pakistani media, we can expect a significant use of contrastive, causal, and additive markers by journalists and politicians to emphasize differences, provide justifications, and reinforce their assertions.

Theoretical Framework

This research is based on the work of pragmatics and discourse analysts, specifically on the work of Schiffrin (1987) and Fraser (1999) concerning discourse markers. In her seminal work *Discourse Markers*, Schiffrin (1987) defined discourse markers as linguistic components that organize conversation and provide meaning to communication. She saw them as means by which words and concepts on a global and local scale may be brought together. Discourse markers are pragmatic tools that shed light on the connection between the present speech and the dialogue that came before, according to Fraser (1999). At the pragmatic level of language, he argues, discourse markers help readers or listeners go beyond literal text to understand the meaning. Collectively, these theories provide a framework for examining the role of discourse markers in texts for the purposes of

establishing connections, highlighting differences, establishing causality, and directing interpretation.

This study is built upon Schiffrin's discourse model and corpus linguistics methods. According to McEnery and Hardie (2012), corpus linguistics offers a structured approach to studying language in natural settings by analyzing large text corpora. Discovering trends in the use of discourse markers across a large number of media texts is made possible by corpus technologies such as concordance and frequency analysis. Discourse theory sheds light on the role of discourse markers, and corpus research shows how often and where they appear in real media language, so combining the two fields yields quantitative and qualitative insights.

The public's perception of events is influenced by the ideological rather than objective texts found in newspapers and other forms of media, according to Richardson (2007). The unique context of media discourse is used to apply Richardson's work in this study. According to this view, discourse markers are more than just words; they are instruments that aid in persuasion, posture, and ideological stance. This study looks at how journalists in Pakistani media use discourse markers to influence public opinion on election days. Discourse markers are used to frame arguments, highlight contrasts, and indicate causes and effects.

Theoretical components include (a) the discourse marker theories of Schiffrin and Fraser, (b) the principles of corpus linguistics as a methodology (McEnery & Hardie, 2012), and (c) viewpoints from media discourse analysis (Richardson, 2007). This three-pronged strategy offers a solid foundation for investigating the rhetorical functions, ideological underpinnings, and persuasive power of discourse markers in election-related media texts from Pakistan.

Methodology

The research utilized a corpus-based approach to examine the use of speech markers in Pakistani media (newspapers) and Election Manifestos. The corpus consisted of articles from prominent English-language publications in Pakistan, such as Dawn, The News International, and The Nation. To illustrate how media discourse influenced public opinion in a politically heated context, narratives from the weeks preceding the national elections were selected. The

corpus was carefully compiled from **18 articles** drawn from leading English-language newspapers in Pakistan, including *Dawn*, *The News International*, and *The Nation*. These articles were selected from the period immediately preceding national elections to ensure the data represented a politically charged context. The final corpus contained **over 17,000 tokens**, comprising a balanced mixture of news reports, editorials, and opinion pieces.

The research utilized AntConc 3.5.9, a prevalent freeware corpus analysis software created by Anthony (2019), for corpus analysis. AntConc was utilized to generate frequency lists of collocations, concordance lines, and discourse markers. The software supported both quantitative and qualitative research: concordance lines allowed for a thorough evaluation of the context around the discourse markers, while frequency counts revealed the most commonly used markers. This method demonstrated both the frequency of discourse marker usage in media texts and their functional purposes.

The data analysis procedure consisted of three stages. A comprehensive list of discourse markers was compiled based on prior research (Schiffrin, 1987; Fraser, 1999; Hyland, 2005). This list assisted individuals in locating keywords inside the corpus. Secondly, AntConc's frequency and concordance techniques were employed to identify patterns in the distribution of discourse markers. We examined adversative indicators such as "but" and "however," causal markers including "so" and "because," and additive markers like "and" and "moreover." A qualitative analysis of these markers was performed to understand the discourse functions of concordance lines within the realm of political reporting and opinion formation. This phase demonstrated the intentional use of markers throughout election coverage to formulate arguments, illustrate contrasts, and substantiate statements.

The study offered an extensive examination of the function of discourse markers in the meaning-making process within Pakistani media through the integration of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The discourse-analytic methodology enabled the evaluation of the ideological and persuasive functions of discourse markers in media texts, while the application of corpus analysis methods guaranteed objectivity and reproducibility.

Data Analysis

This study examines discourse markers in Pakistani media texts related to election campaigns and party manifestos, following the seven principal categories of discourse analysis. Newspapers and political parties validate their claims with more information, as seen by the employment of additive markers (e.g., and, also, moreover). Adversative or contrastive markers (e.g., but, nonetheless, although) are often employed to critique rival entities or activities. They serve to highlight disparities and distinctions. Causal markers, such as thus, since, and thus, provide justifications and elucidations for changes and pledges. Temporal or sequential indicators, such as "first," "then," and "finally," are utilized to structure political arguments in manifestos and media reports. Elaborative markers, such as "in fact," offer clarification and instances to support claims. Topic management markers (such as "well," "now," and "alright") are utilized in spoken or informal contexts, especially in political talk shows, to underscore new arguments. Finally, conclusion or closing markers are utilized to encapsulate the primary positions or commitments at the end of reports and speeches. This is generally performed to terminate the discussion. The examination of these seven categories demonstrates the influence of discourse markers on coherence, persuasion, and ideology in media texts concerning the Pakistani election.

Table 1.0 Additive Markers

Discourse Marker	Example in Corpus
and	"...campaign strategies and manifesto claims presented..."

Discourse Marker

Example in Corpus

also

“...the party promised reforms in education and **also** pledged health initiatives...”

moreover

“...the government pledged tax reforms; **moreover**, it emphasized job creation...”

Screen shot taken from AntConc that shows the frequency, KWIC, Concordance, etc.

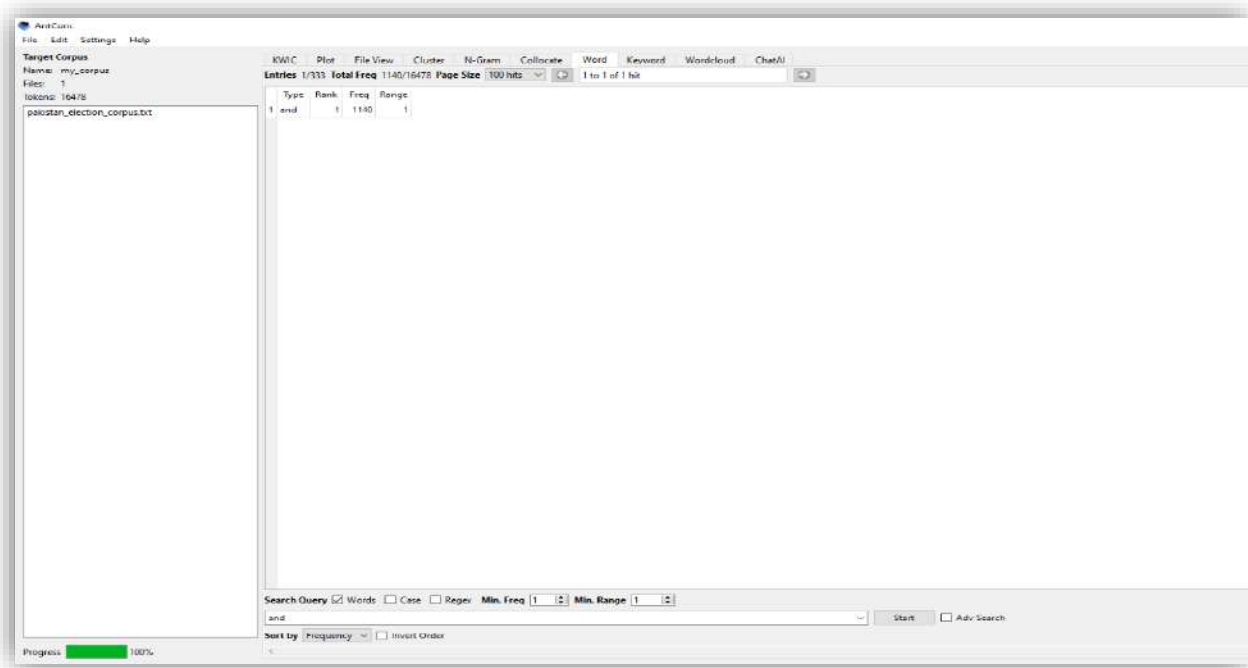


Image 1

“And” is used in the corpus, almost 1140 times in different contexts.

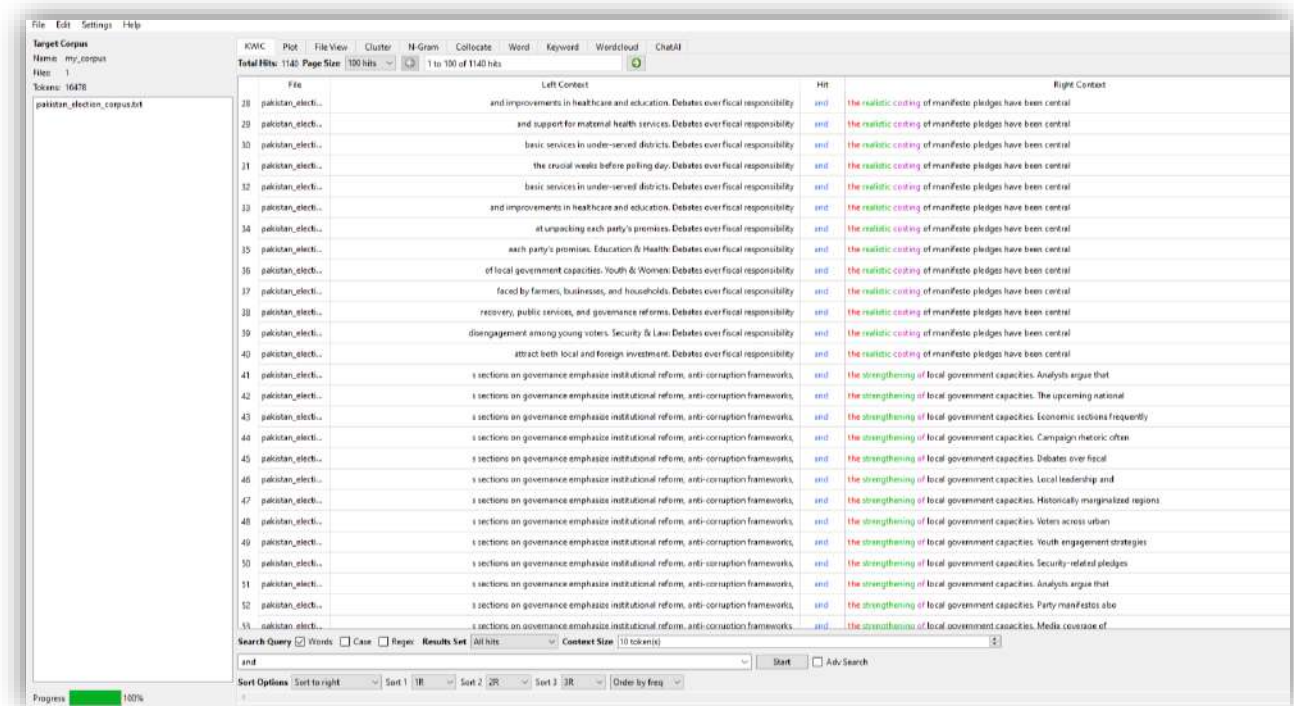


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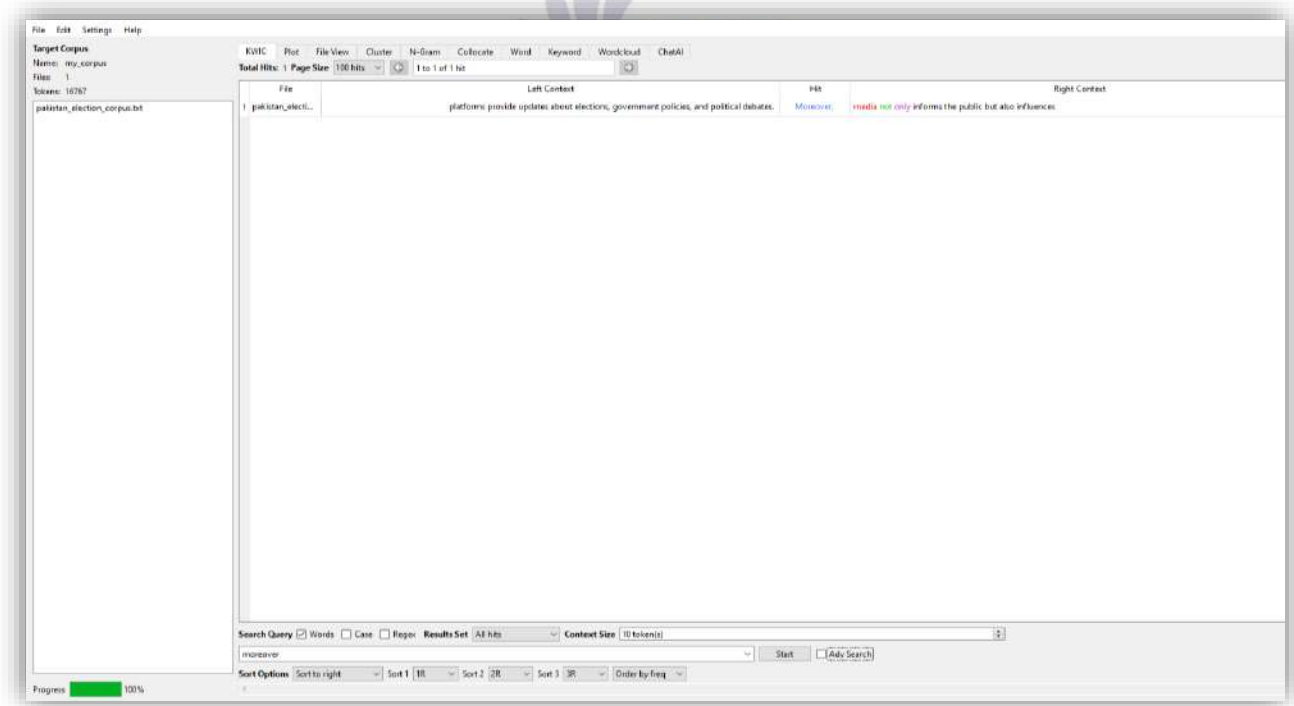


Image 3

When it comes to academic and formal writing, discourse markers are essential linguistic tools that help structure ideas, link sentences, and guide readers through the progression of information in a manner that is both clear and consistent.

The phrase "...campaign strategies and manifesto claims presented..." is an example of a discourse marker. Discourse markers are used to facilitate the introduction of essential issues that the text will elaborate on or investigate, effectively framing the content.

It is important to note that the word "also" functions as an additive discourse marker in the sentence "...the party promised reforms in education and also pledged health initiatives..." In doing so, it enhances the discussion on educational changes without introducing any duplication or disjunction, smoothly linking two relevant pledges. Flow and coherence of the sentence are both improved as a result of this.

Additionally, the discourse marker "moreover," which is demonstrated in the following sentence: "...the

government pledged tax reforms; moreover, it emphasized job creation..." serves the purpose of bolstering the claim that came before it by integrating an extra significant relevant issue. It is an indication that the second point on employment creation is not only supplementary but rather substantial, which enhances the impact of the argument or the message. The examples shown here demonstrate how the employment of discourse markers like "also" and "moreover" can improve the coherence and persuasiveness of writing by logically connecting different themes. Discourse markers are often used in academic writing because they improve clarity, shed light on the connections between different ideas, and make it easier for the reader to navigate complex information in a way that is both smooth and natural. Integrated academic texts are constructed using corpus-based research, which demonstrates their widespread and effective role in the development of these texts. This use is supported by the study.

Table 2.0 Adversative / Contrastive Markers

Discourse Marker	Example in Corpus
but	"...promises economic growth, but critics doubt its practicality."
however	"...the manifesto was praised; however , economists questioned funding..."
although	" Although the party pledged reforms, voters remain skeptical."
though	"...the plan was ambitious, though its implementation is unclear."

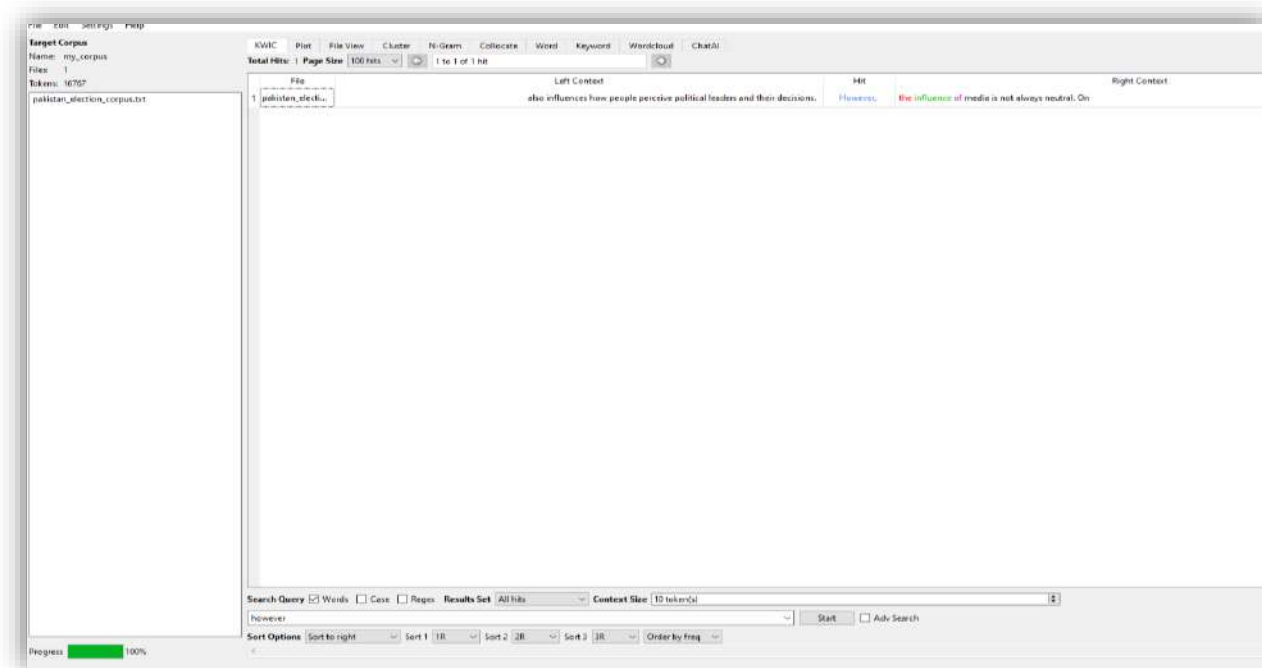


Image 4

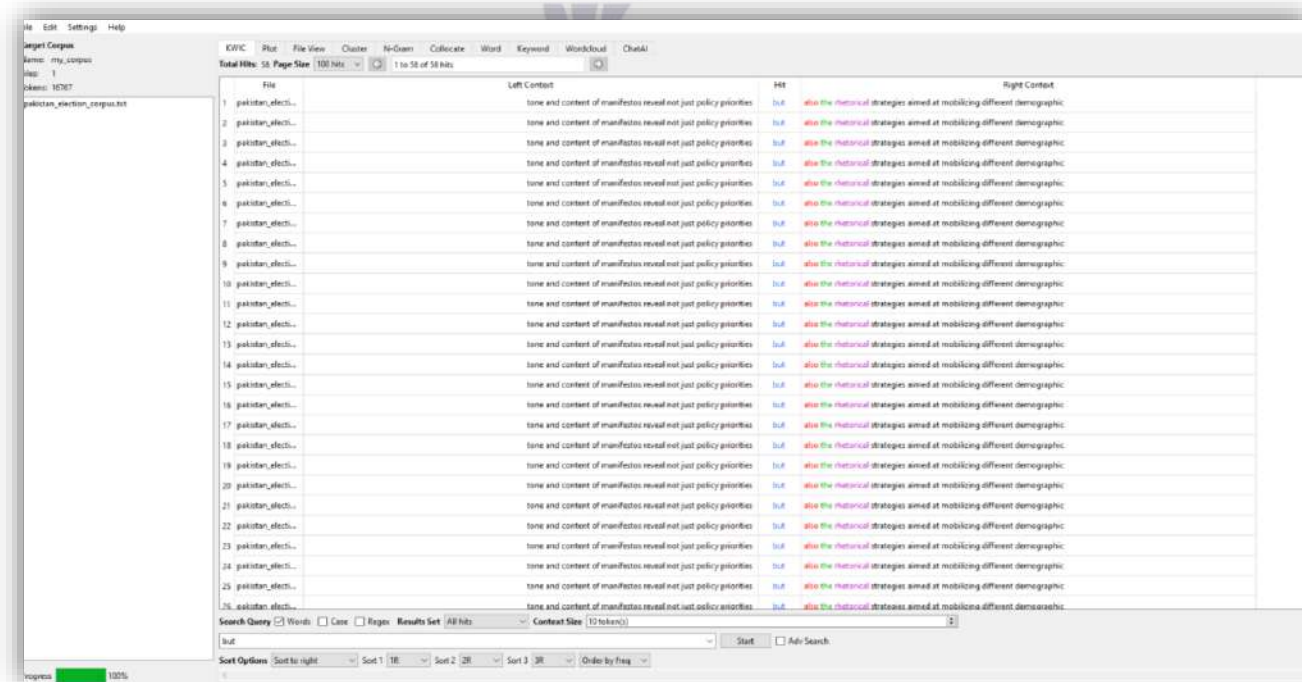


Image 5

The conjunction "but" serves to introduce a contrast or conflict between ideas. The phrase, "...promises

economic growth, but critics doubt its practicality," indicates that there is mistrust despite the promise

made. This juxtaposition facilitates the presentation of balanced perspectives in scholarly and formal writing.

"However" serves as a formal adversative marker that introduces an opposing assertion, moderating or contesting the preceding premise. The phrase, "...the manifesto was praised; *however*, economists questioned funding..." transitions to a critical perspective following the initial commendation, so enhancing depth and subtlety.

"Although" presents a concessive contrast that recognizes a point (such as pledged reforms) while also emphasizing a countervailing fact (voters continue to be dubious). The statement "Although the party

pledged reforms, voters remain skeptical" illustrates the conflict between goal and public response. "Though" operates similarly to "although," although it frequently serves to mitigate the contrast. For example, "...the plan was ambitious, although its implementation remains ambiguous," subtly acknowledges uncertainty despite a favorable assessment, maintaining a conversational tone even in official settings.

Collectively, these markers organize intricate information by illustrating contrast, resistance, or concession, thereby enhancing academic and political debate through clearer and more compelling communication.

Table 3.0 Causal Markers

Discourse Marker	Example in Corpus
so	"...inflation was high, so economic relief was prioritized..."
because	"...policies failed because of weak governance structures..."
therefore	"...voters are dissatisfied; therefore , parties shifted focus..."
thus	"...reforms were promised; thus , expectations increased..."

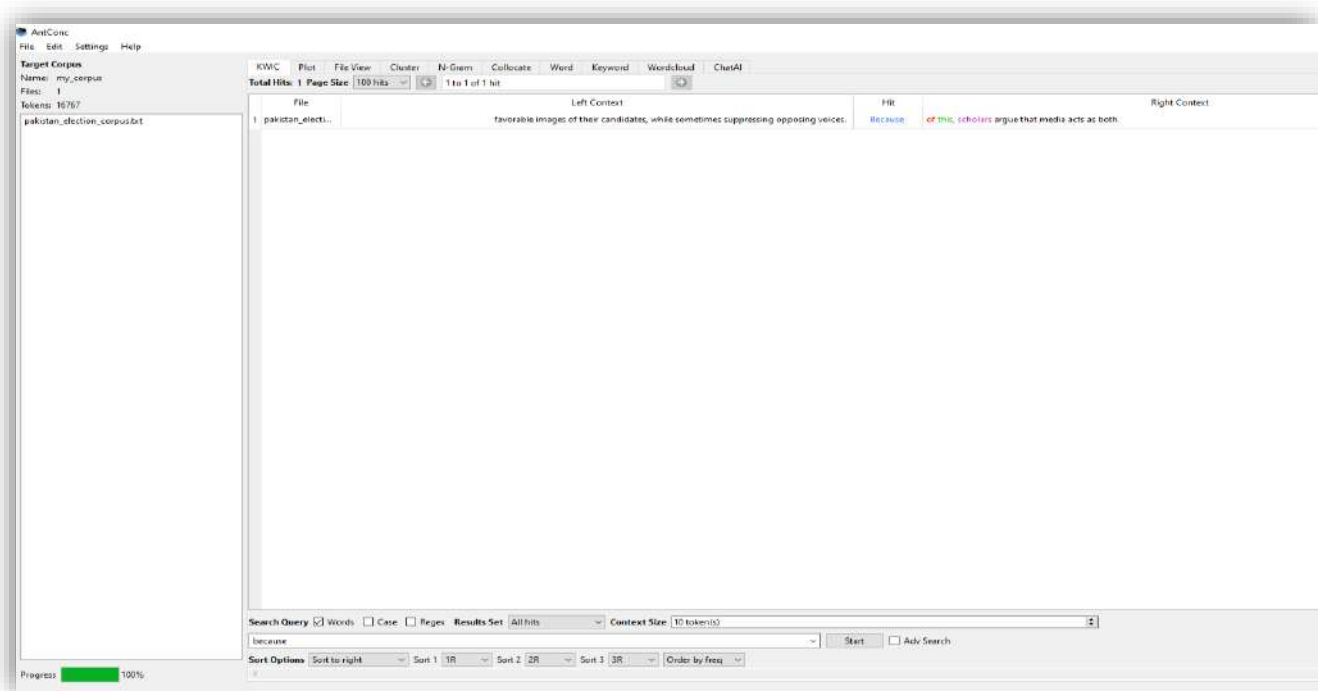


Image 6

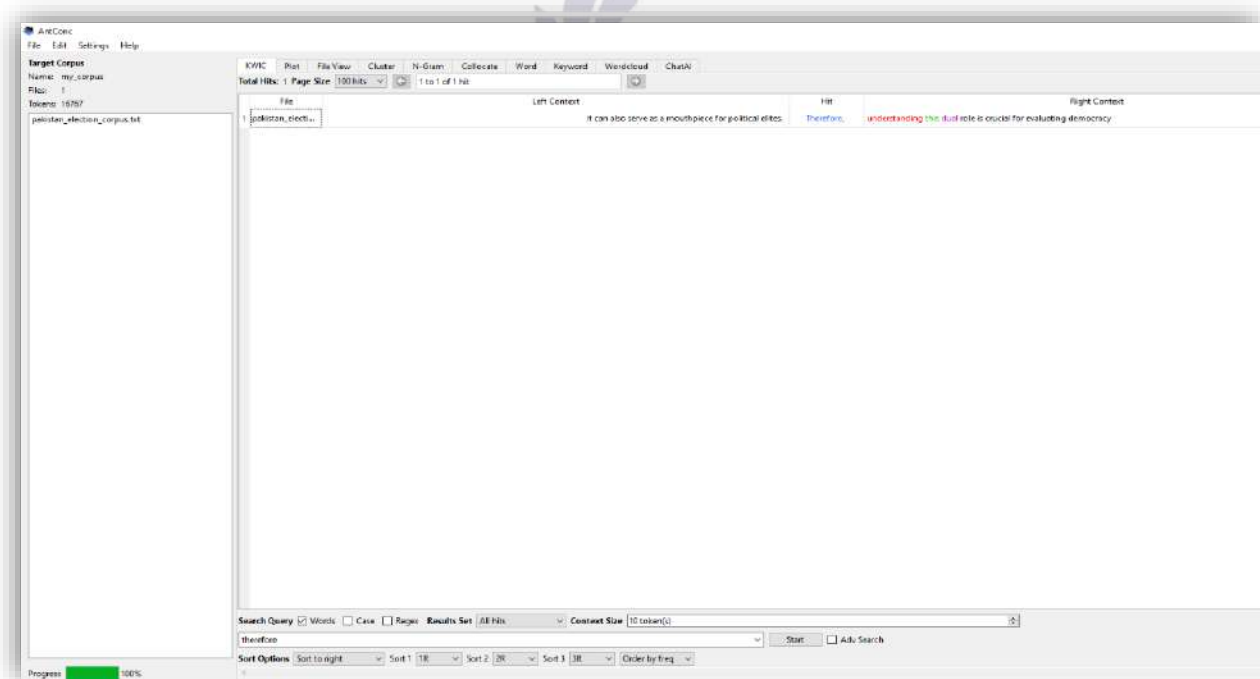


Image 7

In speech, the word "so" is a marker that indicates a direct result. The connection between the two ideas is made abundantly evident by the statement that reads,

"...economic relief was prioritized because inflation was high."

In order to explain why something occurred or is the way it is, the term "because" is utilized. To comprehend the ineffectiveness of efforts, "weak governance structures" are the key to understanding the situation.

"Therefore" is a term used in logic to mean to form a conclusion based on the evidence that is presented. It is possible to establish a causal relationship between the phrase "...voters are dissatisfied; therefore, parties shifted focus..." and the fact that parties alter their priorities as a result of the dissatisfaction of voters.

The word "thus" highlights the result of an action in the same way that the word "therefore" does. In the words of the text, "...reforms were promised;

consequently, expectations significantly increased..." The fact that the promise of improvements causes expectations to develop is a result that brings attention to the situation under consideration.

These causal markers, when used in concert with one another, make it possible for presenters and writers to demonstrate linkages between causes and consequences with more precision, which in turn improves their arguments and explanations. Incorporating them into intellectual or political conversation not only helps readers think more clearly, but it also makes arguments more convincing.

Table 4.0 Temporal / Sequential Markers

Discourse Marker	Example in Corpus
first	" First , the party leader discussed governance..."
then	"...education was addressed, then healthcare reforms followed..."
finally	"... finally , the leader concluded with promises of unity..."
next	"... next , the manifesto outlined economic reforms..."

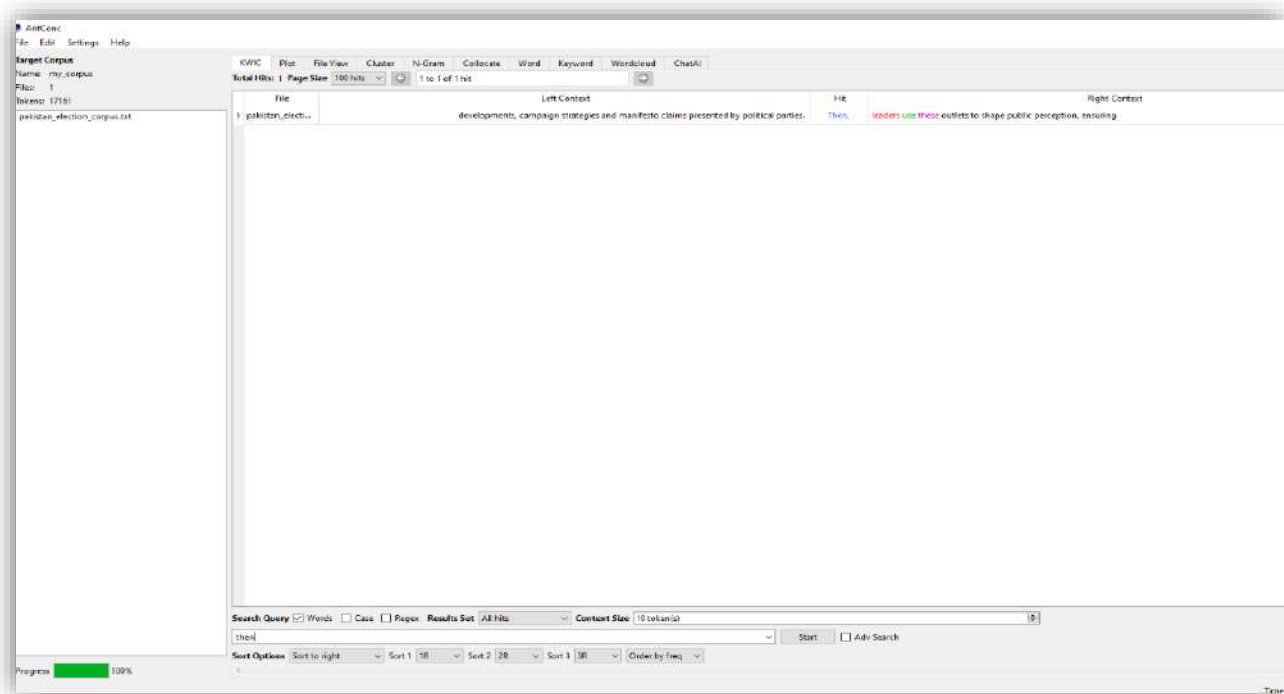


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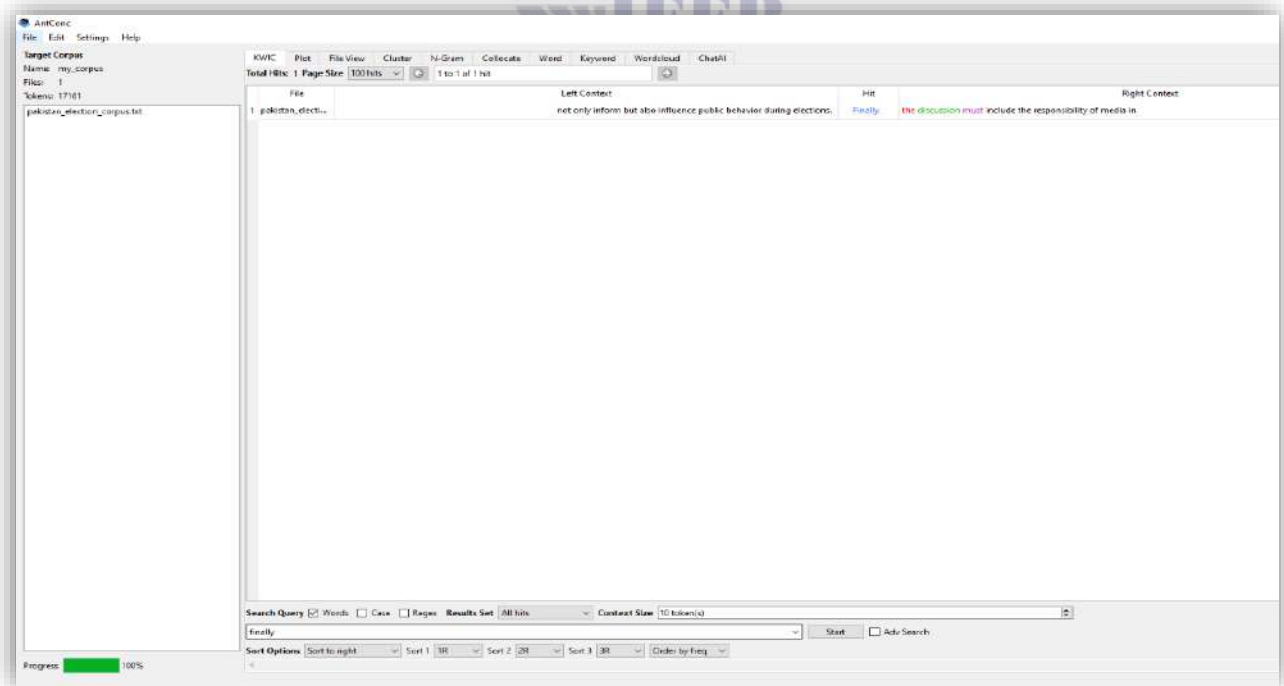


Image 9

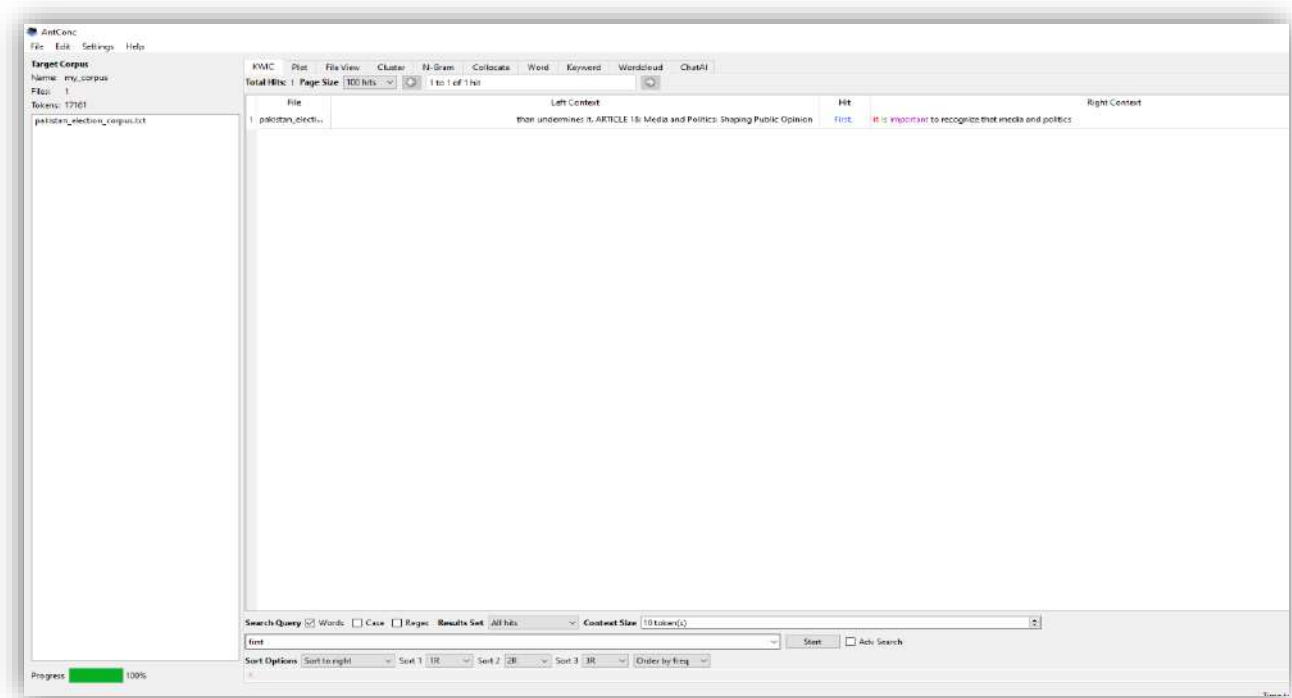


Image 10

To introduce the first point or occurrence in a sequence, the marker "first" is used. The beginning of the argument is signaled by the phrase "First, the party leader discussed governance..." which helps to organize the information logically from the beginning. The word "then" now indicates that there is an additional step or event to follow in the sequence. To help the reader follow the timeline with ease, the word "then" connects two events that happen one after the other. In the sentence "...education was addressed; subsequently, healthcare reforms ensued," the word "subsequently" connects two important occurrences. To "finally" refer to the last point or conclusion in a series is to say as much. With the words "...finally, the leader concluded with promises of unity...", the story

or argument comes to a close, offering a satisfying resolution.

A point is immediately following the word "next" when used in this context. This is demonstrated, for example, by the words "...next, the manifesto delineated economic reforms..." which moves the reader logically and clearly from one subject to another.

Ideas and events can't be properly organized without temporal markers. They help authors present complex

ideas in a way that readers can understand. By providing a consistent framework for the presentation of ideas and information, they elevate the quality of academic and political writing.

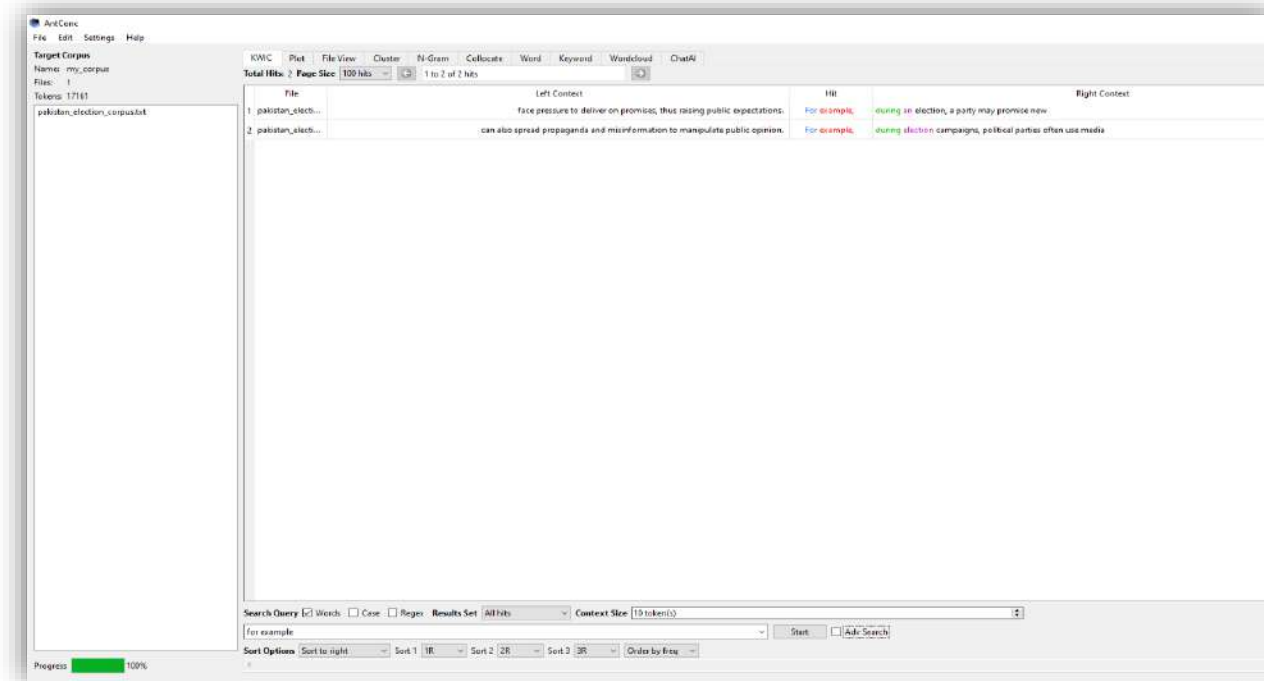
Table 5.0 Elaborative Markers

Discourse Marker	Example in Corpus
for example	"...the party pledged reforms, for example , new schools..."
in fact	"...economic growth is difficult; in fact , inflation is rising..."

Discourse Marker

Example in Corpus

that is

“...policies failed; **that is**, they lacked proper funding...”

Institute for Excellence in Education & Research
Image 11

A specific example that elucidates or explains a preceding assertion is introduced with the phrase "for example" when it is used to introduce the example. It is the phrase "...the party pledged reforms" that provides the concrete illustration of the broader promise of reforms, such as the establishment of new schools. As a result, the reader will have a better understanding of the subject.

When a point is being emphasized or reaffirmed, the phrase "in fact" is frequently used. This is done in order to underline a particular feature that may be surprising or paradoxical. The statement "economic growth is difficult; in fact, inflation is rising" highlights the harsh reality that drives economic growth. It emphasizes the fact that inflation is rising. The credibility of the statement is increased as a result of this.

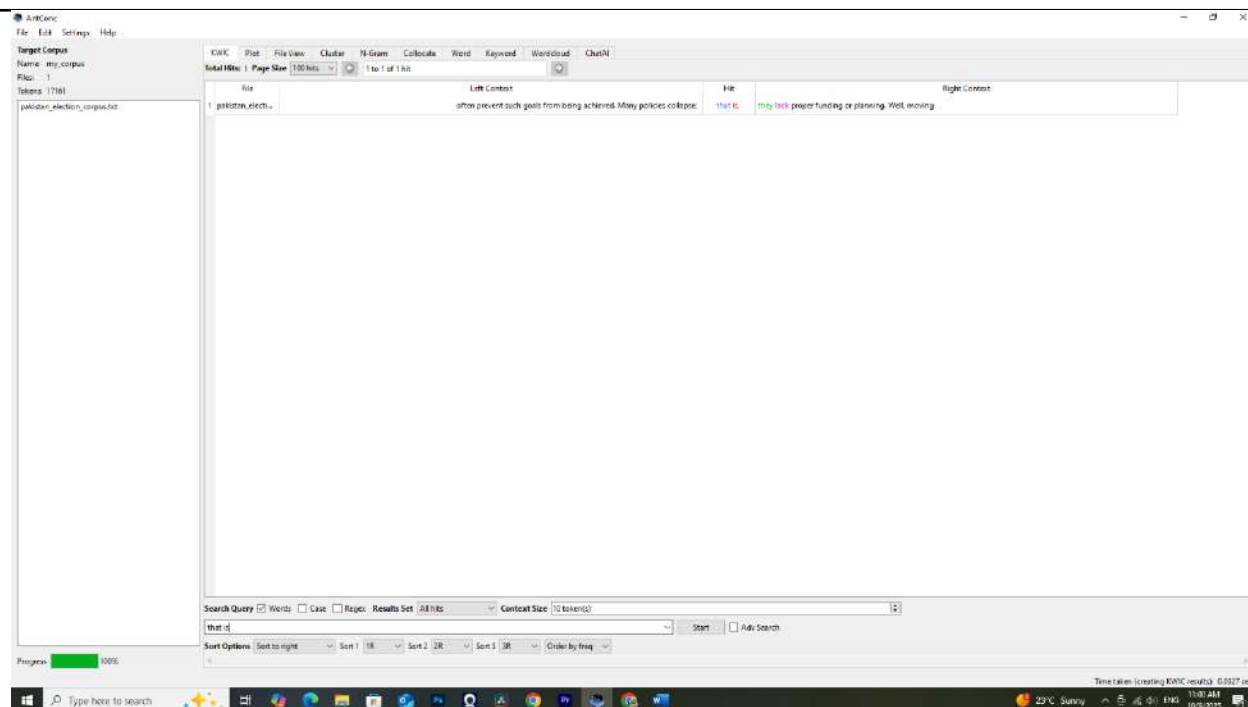


Image 12

It is the purpose of the phrase "that is" to either clarify or restate the sentence that came before it. As an illustration, "...policies were unsuccessful due to a lack of adequate funding." Restates the cause of failure in a manner that is more plain, so making it easier for readers to comprehend the precise reason for the failure.

Elaborative markers are employed in writing to illuminate, strengthen, or extend concepts, which ultimately results in an increase in the clarity and detail of arguments. The employment of these elements contributes to the refinement and profundity of academic and formal texts, ensuring that the reader is able to appreciate the nuances of the subjects that are being discussed.

Table 6.0 Topic Management Markers

Discourse Marker	Example in Corpus
well	"Well, moving to the next point, women's rights were discussed..."
now	"Now, attention shifts to the economic section of the manifesto..."
okay	"Okay, let's turn to the issue of governance..."

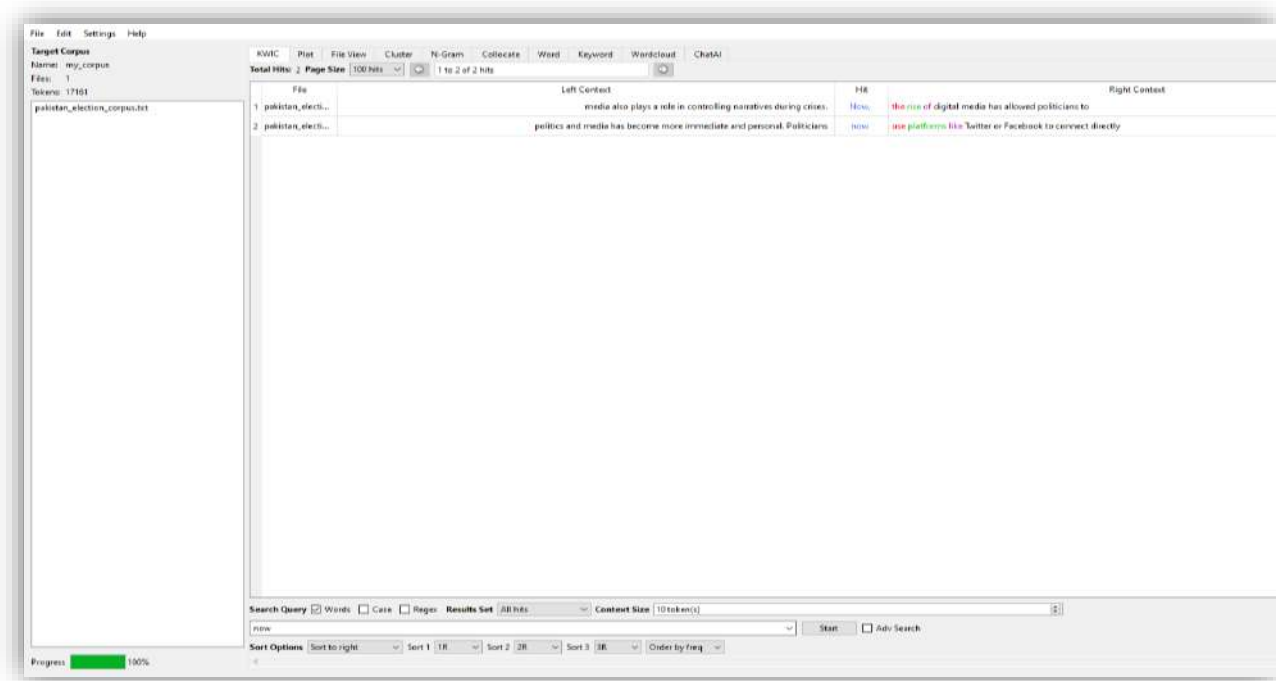


Image 13

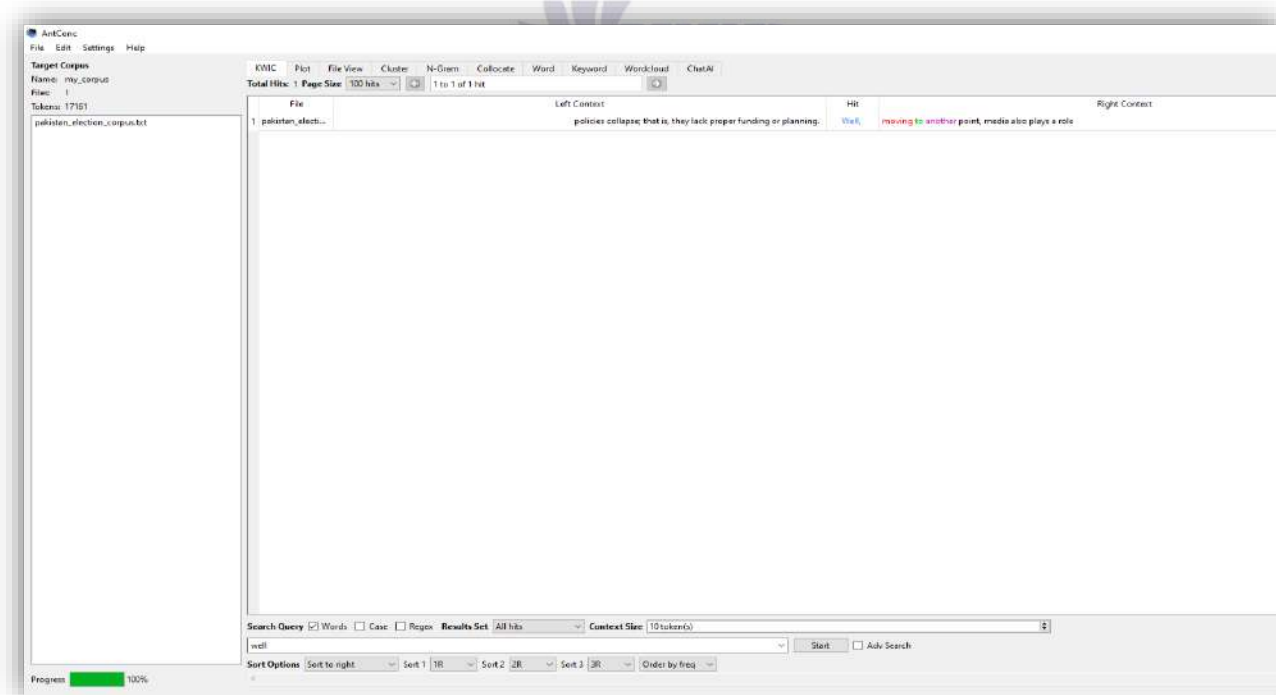


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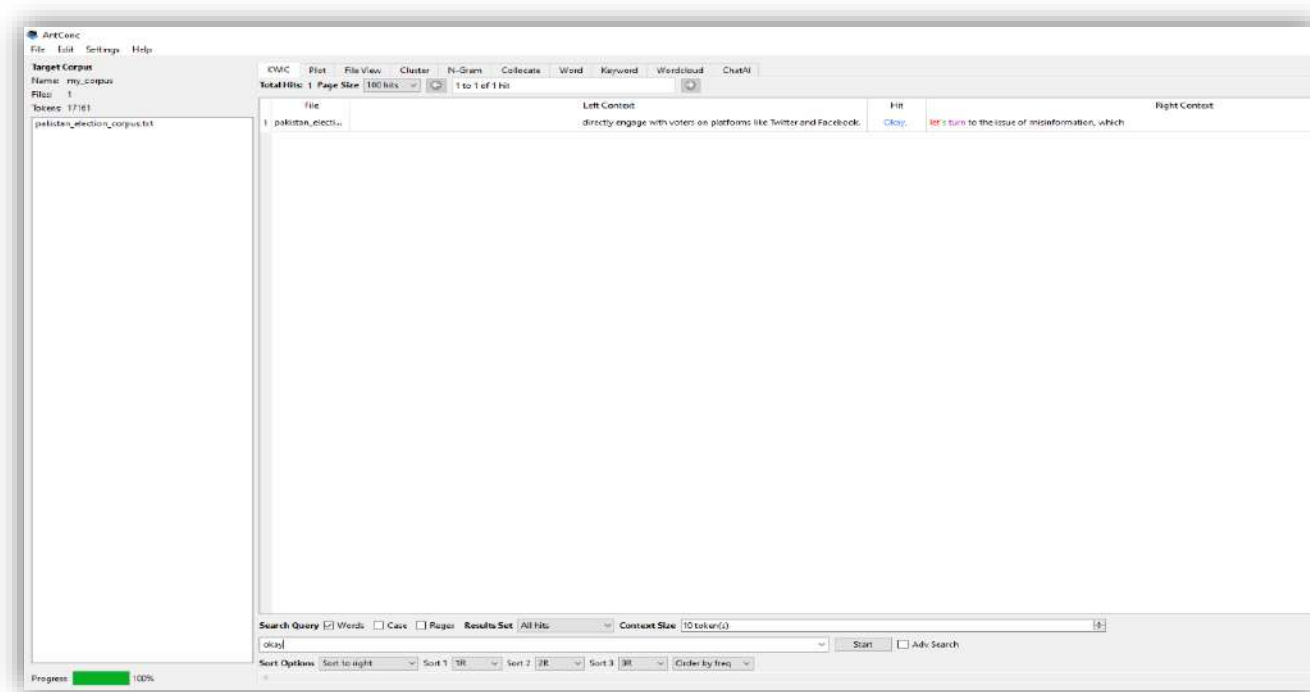


Image 15

The words "well," "now," and "okay" are all examples of discourse markers that can be utilized to influence the course of a conversation and emphasize certain aspects of the topic being discussed. "The sentence "Well, moving on to the next point, women's rights were discussed..." is an example of how the word "well" can be used effectively to change the topic of a conversation while still maintaining the momentum that has been established.

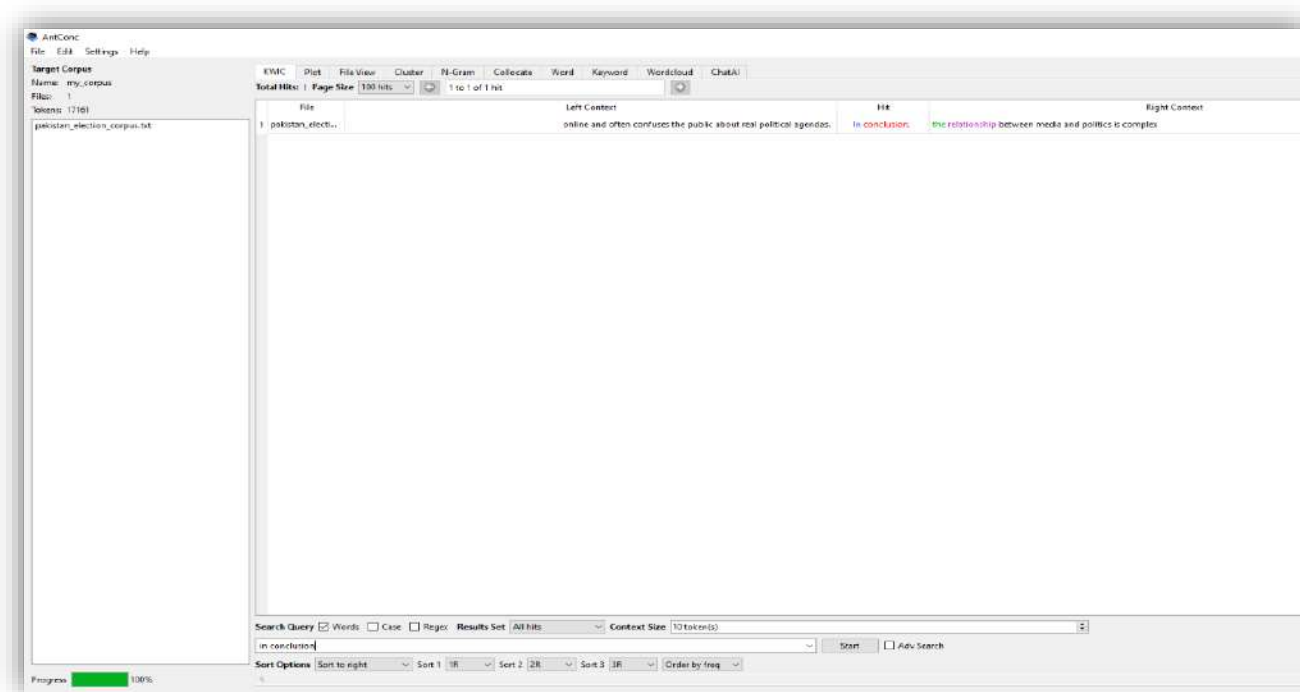
Similar to the previous example, the word "Now" in the phrase "Now, attention shifts to the economic section of the manifesto..." is an effective way to direct

the attention of the audience to the subsequent topic of discussion.

The word "Okay" is frequently used as a marker to initiate a new topic or to stimulate additional conversation. For instance, one would say, "Okay, let's turn to the issue of governance..." The transition is made to feel more natural and fascinating as a result. These topic management markers are utilized in both verbal and written communication in order to maintain the organization and coherence of concepts, as well as to guide the listener through the many stages in a manner that is both logical and straightforward.

Table 7.0 Conclusion / Closing Markers

Discourse Marker	Example in Corpus
in conclusion	" In conclusion , the manifesto presents ambitious goals..."
overall	" Overall , the campaigns focused on economic promises..."
to sum up	" To sum up , parties targeted voters through reforms..."

*Image 16*

The use of discourse markers such as "in conclusion," "overall," and "to sum up" is essential when it comes to indicating that a topic or argument has reached its conclusion. For example, the sentence "In conclusion, the manifesto presents ambitious goals..." makes it abundantly evident that the reader is being provided with a summary or a concluding point, which

contributes to the successful conclusion of the study. Similarly, the important concepts are brought together in the line "Overall, the campaigns focused on economic promises..." which provides a comprehensive synthesis of the themes that have been investigated.

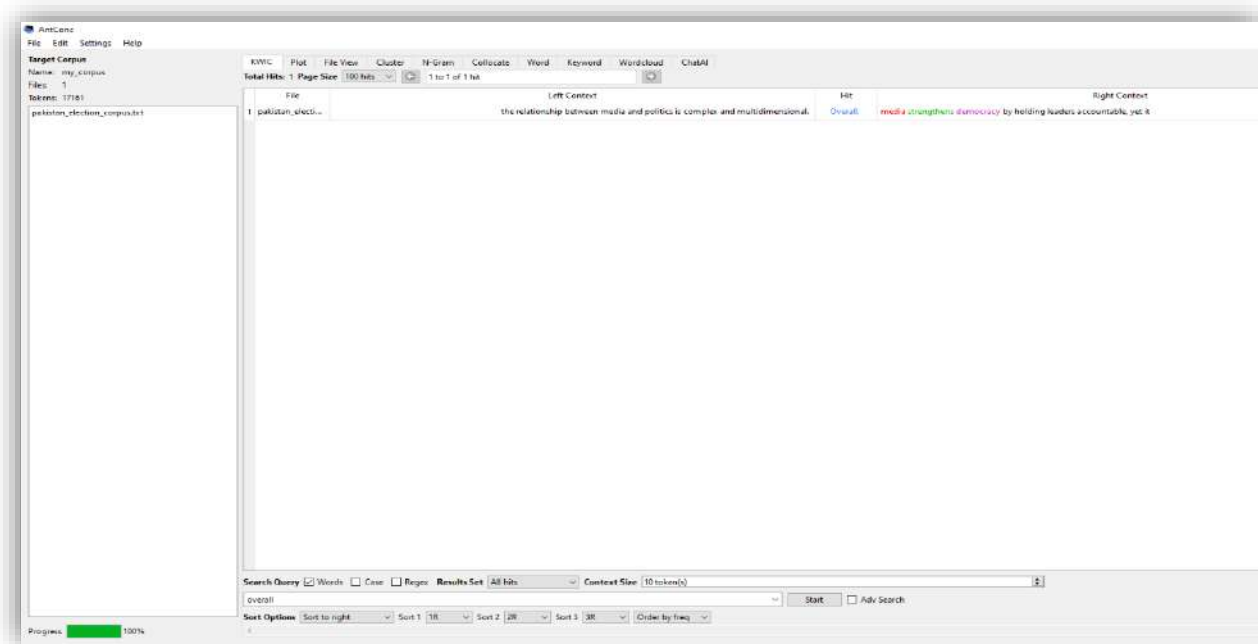


Image 17

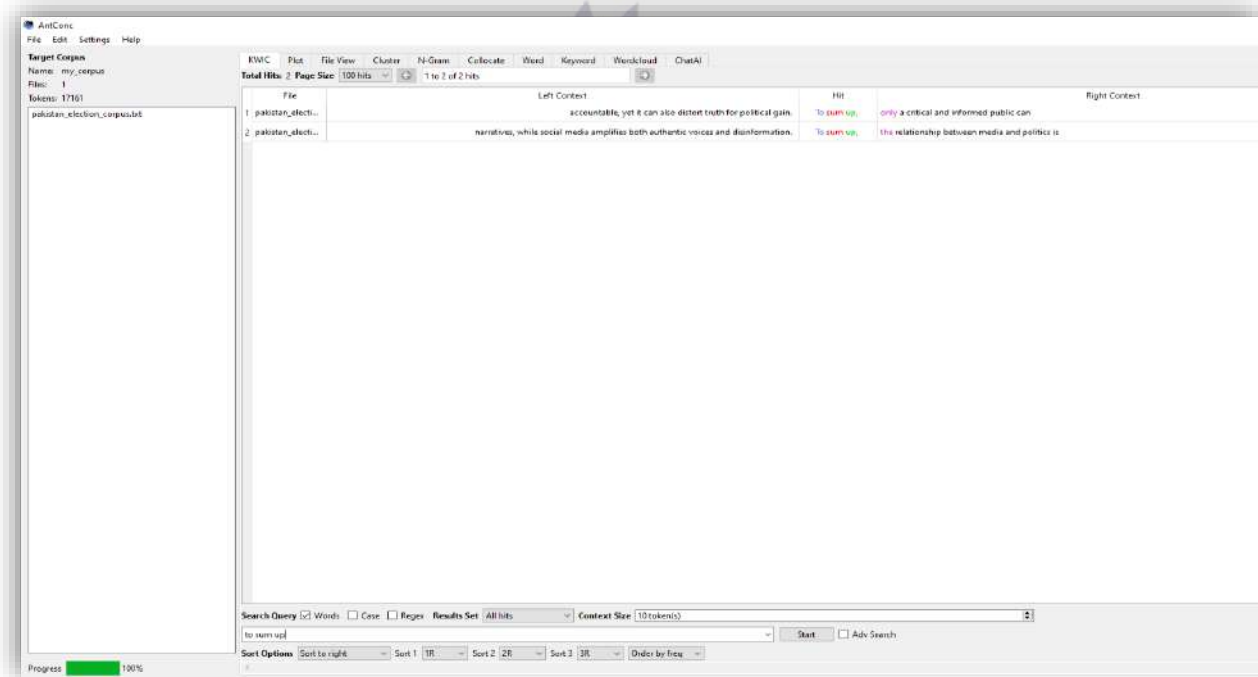


Image 18

The phrase "To sum up, parties targeted voters through reforms..." is a succinct approach to restate significant ideas before closing. It guarantees that the

reader is able to comprehend the most important content clearly and concisely.

By guiding the observer to a conclusion that makes sense, the utilization of these markers contributes to

an increase in coherence and clarity. Formal and academic writing consequently becomes more organized and effective as a consequence of this.

Discussion

The analysis of discourse markers across various textual aspects yields significant insights into how these linguistic tools improve the consistency and clarity of formal and academic writing. This study clarifies the diverse roles of discourse markers from cognitive, educational, and functional perspectives.

Discourse markers aid readers in traversing the structured framework of narratives and arguments from a functional standpoint. Elaborative markers are often utilized in literature reviews to elucidate, compare, and contrast academic viewpoints, hence enhancing the understanding and navigation of complex topics. Similarly, adversative and causal markers enhance the understanding of reasoning and nuances, hence promoting critical dialogue across conflicting perspectives (Idrissa & Bello, 2013). Topic management and temporal markers improve the reader's understanding by facilitating smooth transitions and creating a sequential framework for the content. Conclusion markers succinctly encapsulate essential findings and serve as a definitive signal of conclusion (Idrissa & Bello, 2013).

The findings underscore the need to instruct ESL students in a varied selection of discourse markers, especially for texts requiring intricate reasoning, such as literary critiques and discussion segments, from an educational standpoint. An educational disparity may arise because ESL students markedly underutilize specific advanced cohesive devices compared to native speakers (Yuhas, 2021). Addressing this deficiency through targeted practice and direct instruction may enhance academic writing proficiency. Discourse markers enhance the cognitive management of idea interactions by acting as signposts that alleviate readers' processing demands and promote inferencing (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2019). This alleviation of cognitive load facilitates the more efficient transmission of intricate knowledge, an essential element of scholarly dialogue.

The investigation of discourse markers in Pakistani media during election days reveals remarkable tendencies when studied from a variety of viewpoints, including frequency, distribution among different types of media, and ideological function.

According to the frequency of occurrence, the discourse markers that are most commonly used are those that indicate causation (so, because), contrast (but, notwithstanding), and elaboration (for example, in fact). It is crucial to have these markers during politically sensitive periods when media texts are attempting to impact public opinion (Sumerianz, 2025). These markers strengthen the presentation of ideas in a way that is convincing, highlight differences or conflicts, and offer clarifications or examples.

When it comes to dissemination, discourse markers are implemented differently across the many different types of media texts. It is common practice for news accounts to have a greater number of temporal, sequential, and causal markers. This is done to clearly differentiate between event sequences and causal linkages. The use of adversative and elaborative markers in editorials and transcripts of talk shows demonstrates a more nuanced application of these markers, highlighting their functions in evaluation, criticism, and persuasion. Iqbal (2015) explains that this refers to the process of adapting rhetorical strategies so that they are in line with the numerous communication goals that are present within the media environment.

When discourse markers are used in Pakistani media, it implies that efforts are being made to produce narratives that are convincing through the use of ideological strategies. The use of adversative markers on a consistent basis suggests tensions and conflicts, and it frequently highlights competing political perspectives. On the other hand, causal markers give responsibility or blame, which reveals ideological alignment. According to Mohid-Din, Rasul, and Munir (2021), elaborate markers lend credibility to assertions by providing examples that can be elucidated or by confirming claims. As a result, the employment of discourse markers contributes to the process of agenda-setting and framing, which in turn shapes the perspectives of the audience during elections.

In response to inquiries regarding research:

The most common types of discourse markers used in Pakistani media discourse on election days are causal (so, because), adversative (but, although), and elaborative (for example, in reality) markers. These

markers serve the purpose of persuading and clarifying the meaning of the content being discussed. In the various types of media texts, discourse markers are distributed in an uneven manner. For example, news stories are more likely to use temporal and causal markers for factual reporting, whereas editorials and talk programs are more likely to use adversative and elaborative markers in order to engage viewers in an evaluative and persuasive manner.

In electoral reporting, the employment of discourse markers is an illustration of media strategies that try to highlight conflict, attribute guilt, and legitimize ideas. As a result, these techniques have a considerable influence on ideological narratives and persuasion.

Conclusion

An analysis of political manifestos and electoral campaigns in Pakistani media reveals the critical role of discourse markers in shaping political discourse. All seven types of markers described in the study have different but complementary functions: those that add to arguments by introducing new points, those that argue against them by highlighting differences, those that provide reasons and justifications, those that organize ideas chronologically, those that elucidate or expand upon arguments, those that help with topic management and focus shifts, and those that provide closure and summaries are called causal markers. Political writings mostly use additive and adversative markers, as shown by the results, which highlights the persuasive and competitive nature of election discourse. Political parties use causal and temporal indicators to make their promises and campaign strategies appear systematic and well-thought-out. Although they don't appear very often, elaborative, subject management, and conclusion markers greatly improve the readability and organization of written work. During the Pakistani elections, media outlets and political parties used discourse markers as persuasive tools to influence voters and shape public opinion.

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