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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Language of Control and Criminality: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Narcotics FIRs Filed in Lahore

Iram Sagheer ^a

Corresponding Author: Irum Sagheer; eyumbhatti91@gmail.com

Abstract: Initial legal records known as ‘First Information Reports’ (FIRs) are administrative documents of the state that comprise and perpetuate narratives of criminality, morality, and deviant behaviour. Holding significant institutional power, these FIRs initiate criminal investigations in Pakistan. The study critically analyses drug-related FIRs filed in Lahore by drawing on Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model, Van Dijk's ideological square, and Halliday's systemic-functional linguistics as its theoretical lenses. It discloses how discursive features like modality, transitivity, lexical choice, and narrative structure include and legitimise institutional, gender, and class-based discrimination. Using purposive sampling, the researcher has selected six FIRs filed between 2020 and 2025 from various police stations. The findings reveal that drug FIRs over-prosecute specific communities by employing derogatory labels and passive constructions that obscure police actions. In addition, religious and moralising discourses legitimise legal sanctions, characterising drug use not only as a legal but also a moral violation. Class-based differences are also evident, as well-off suspects are being linguistically normalised, and marginalised suspects are being demonised. Furthermore, the study highlights how FIRs function as ideological texts that accept social hierarchies and state power through legal neutrality. The research also aims to guide reforms in legal discourse and raise awareness of the linguistic biases rooted within Pakistan's criminal justice system.

Keywords: Legal Discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis, First Information Report, Linguistic Bias, Institutional Power, Ideological Construction, Class and Gender Representation

Introduction

First Information Reports (FIRs) have high institutional authority to shape judicial ideologies and judgments against the target of crime by individuals. They are based on discursive resources which are prevalent in global policy and legal discourse, especially within South Asian judicial systems. Existing literature on drug FIRs has shown how these reports inappropriately criminalise subaltern groups through specific, targeted lexical choices and narratives which not only maximise stigma but also legitimise state power (Guha & Spivak, 1988; Rasul & Irshad, 2008). FIRs filed in Lahore reflect as well as perpetuate the power dynamics ingrained in the city's policing strategies, i.e., discourse that encodes social deviance and institutional power (Abbas, 2011). This makes CDA particularly suitable for analysing textual elements such as modality, lexical choices, and narrative functions, thereby shedding light on the forms of criminal acts and expression of authority. This exposes FIRs as enacting ideological resources as they actively participate in the construction of societal knowledge around deviance, morality and justice (Khan & Mahmood, 2024).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) looks at how language acts and constructs power, ideology, and social inequality below the surface sense to detect underlying bias and textual power conferred by texts, especially in FIRs, where such legal texts not only report incidents but construct accounts of crime, justice, and morality itself (Fairclough, 2013). CDA argues that FIRs reinforce social hierarchies and state authority by employing

^a PhD Scholar, Riphah Institute of Languages & Literature, Riphah International University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

linguistic strategies like modality, lexical selection, and narrative construction. The study employs qualitative-descriptive approach using CDA as a tool. They achieve this by justifying police actions and, as a result, criminalise marginalised individuals in the society. These narratives reproduce discriminatory state practices in narcotics cases, where terms like drug menace or peddler certainly mask the identities of marginalised communities. They also present them as deviant in ways that shape both public opinion and legal action (EHAB et al., 2024).

The power of CDA lies in linking micro-level language use to macro-level power relations which in turn are strategically masked under a veneer of legality (Zia, 2017). It happens especially in FIRs produced in Lahore, where such texts function as instruments of social control, determining who is labelled a “criminal” and who can be permitted to go on being socially legitimate, challenging the presumed neutrality of legal texts and exposing their role in legitimising dominant ideologies and power relations in the criminal justice system (van Dijk, 1993). After implementing CDA of FIRs, we can look at how each discipline functions as an instrument of power: modal lexis like “must” organises institutional power; selective listing like “criminal” instead of “accused” constructs negatively; transitivity patterns construct blame through foregrounding and backgrounding participants; and nominalisation hides answerability by rendering activity abstract (Bhatia, 2014).

Although several studies analyse crime reporting and legal discourses in Pakistan, very few focus on the linguistic aspect of narcotics FIRs through CDA about class, gender, and moral ideologies. The study examines how language reflects and reinforces institutional ideologies, and how such discourse enables certain inequalities to manifest, serving to uphold dominant power relations of Lahore's criminal justice system. By analysing Pakistan's narcotics FIRs, the research contributes to the global field of legal discourse intersecting with broader concerns of forensic linguistics, state power, and discursive justice (Coulthard et al., 2016). FIRs in drug cases go beyond their declared role as procedural records. Their construction depends on assumptions of guilt and state power. Some previous work has examined sociopolitical and cultural meaning-making in Pakistan. But limited attention is paid to how the language is used in such reports, especially in the Pakistani context. This research addresses this gap by studying the morphology of narcotics FIRs filed in Lahore. It will investigate how language intersects with power and ideology to shape the representation of crime and justice.

Research Questions

- How do FIRs narratively construct criminality and state power in narcotics cases in Lahore?
- How is modality employed to assert legal authority and construct factual legitimacy?
- In what ways do FIRs reinforce or challenge hegemonic social values related to policing, morality, and drugs?

Literature Review

FIRs are a specific form of institutional and legal discourse. This specific legal register is formal, heavy, and bureaucratic that serves as a primary site where institutional authority is built through language. We can uncover how the law's underlying power dynamics and ideologies are reinforced (Cotterill, 2003) by analysing this linguistic precision. These power relations can be exposed through CDA which are often embedded in professional neutrality. Even the way a report is sequenced can embed certain assumptions while pretending to be objective. Alnuzailli et al. (2024) proposed that the FIRs carry out a discursive task. These include narratives that are shaped, authority is delegated, and social norms are quietly negotiated. So, CDA helps us see how words that appear calm or standard are actually reconstructing the ideas of guilt and validity. This research emphasises that it is important to use simple language especially when reporting on legal matters. This will increase public awareness and facilitate access to justice. If we can bridge the gap between everyday common sense and complex legal discourse, this work makes a significant contribution to

the fields of forensics and socio-linguistics (EHAB et al., 2024). These patterns are evident in FIRs filed in socio-political stratified contexts, i.e., Lahore.

FIRs in Lahore typically use old-fashioned, bureaucratic sentences. For example, “It is hereby reported that...” is used to narrate step by step the display of power. The lexical choices often hide deeper social biases that can mislead the entire legal process (Khan, 2019). For example, word choice between such words as “known addict” and “suspect” can inscribe prejudice on the class, caste, or communal ground. This is how discursive language demonises the marginalised group and depicts them as inherently unorthodox and conceals the structural explanations of drug consumption. This aligns with Fairclough's (2013) argument that language functions to neutralise and reproduce power hierarchies (Fairclough, 2013). Police power within institutions is also evident in FIRs in Lahore, partially through domineering language. Government officials, such as police officials, can construct criminality and moral deviance through what they say. This is normally innocuous and instantiates hegemonic ideologies which circumscribe criminality, poverty, and drug addiction. It also alludes to Erving Goffman's (1963) theory of stigma, in which specific words or labels can “staining” a person's identity, thereby legitimating exclusion from society or criminal sanction. (Goffman, 2009).

Similarly, gendered FIR reporting also indicates socially embedded prejudices. Rasul and Irshad (2008) tested gendered talk in crime reporting and claimed that women are discursively framed as passive victims and men as active offenders (Rasul & Irshad, 2008). Similarly, women's activity is legitimised in FIR discourse as an in-home matter of honour or vulnerability. Even in recent FIRs, phrases such as “brought dishonour to the family” continue to appear, to address female suspects, despite digitisation reforms aimed at eliminating such gendered tropes (Yasmin, 2021). All these findings necessitate gender-sensitive CDA analysis to enable follow-up studies of the structural inequalities embedded in legal language.

While police reports in Pakistan use bureaucratic Urdu or legalese, a similar rigidity is found in English police discourse, as Cvetkovic notes that the reports are hard to read because of their overly formal tone, marked by legalese, nominalisations, and the passive voice. Pronominal adverbs, reflexive pronouns, and archaic forms are commonly employed, according to the study which is based on a corpus of British and Irish police records. The researcher points out that despite the intended accuracy, these traits result in rigid and sometimes unclear communication. By placing police discourse within the wider legal register, we can see the clear institutional limitations at play (Ćetković, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The analysis is based on CDA's three core models which allow for the study of massive social structures of sentences.

1. The first model applied to the study of FIRs' language is through *Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework*. It has a deep understanding of language on three levels. It starts with the textual analysis which deals with grammar and vocabulary, then moves to the discursive part where we can study how the text is produced and shared. The last stage looks at the sociocultural aspect that describes the broader social norms and power structures (Fairclough, 2013; Sagheer et al., 2024).
2. *Van Dijk's Ideological Square* model is used to analyse the FIRs critically and to address the “us vs. them” mentality often found in legal documents. It focuses on the legal narratives that emphasise the positive traits of the in-group and cast out-groups in a negative light (Khurshid & Janjua, 2022; Van Dijk, 1998). In an FIR, this reveals implicit biases that might otherwise look like neutral reporting.
3. The researcher has used *SFL* to examine transitivity and modality (Halliday, 1967; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013). It will explore the degree of certainty in a language.

These frameworks together show that an FIR is an ideological text that shapes how we perceive crime, morality and antisocial behaviour. The research focuses on uncovering the hidden prejudices within these documents and it shows how discourse maintains social hierarchies in the justice system.

Research Methodology

By using CDA as a tool, the research adopts a qualitative-descriptive approach. It analyses how language both creates and shapes institutional authority and criminal identity in the FIR. It examines narcotics-related FIRs filed in Lahore, as they inform how both accused individuals and the police are depicted by these documents.

Sampling Technique and Data Collection

A non-probability sampling is used to represent diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. These are purposive, criterion, and maximum variation sampling where the data set comprises six FIRs from 2020 to 2025. It spans a wide variety of narcotics offenses, including manufacture, dealing, and possession. It is derived from publicly available FIRs based on police reports.

Instruments

The study uses manual methods to analyse words and the meaning of drugs in FIRs including:

- **Modality:** Examining words of certainty, obligation, or agreement to expose power relations.
- **Lexical Fields:** Identification of frequent terms related to crime, power, and deviance language in an attempt to uncover the underlying structured opinion or bias.
- **Narrative Structure:** Analysing how events are arranged, the roles allocated to different actors (like victims or delinquents), and the storytelling techniques used to disclose patterns.
- **Evaluative/Affective Language:** Identification of critical or affective terminology in an attempt to uncover ideological or societal prejudice.

Thematic and ideological mapping is also used to understand the discourses of class, gender and morality that shifts throughout the texts of FIRs.

Data Analysis

The analysis of these narcotics-related FIRs follows a three-stage CDA process.

- The first step involved a deep analysis of text that includes action verbs, naming strategies, and agent roles. It also deals with modality that will help us to learn about the consistent patterns present in FIR constructing narratives of victimhood and expert witnesses.
- The second phase analyses the text that actually produces the concept of a narcotics crime. This phase explains the various linguistic choices that come together to build a specific, institutional version of reality.
- The third phase addresses the FIRs' language which appears authentic or aligns with Lahore's social ideology and values. It takes class, gender, and moral views into consideration to connect the language use with broader social relations of domination and moves towards drugs.

CDA of Narcotics FIR (Lahore)

Case 1

Ichra Police Station (Time and Date: 5:25 AM, 24-4-2025)

We can see the power of the state in the report's first line. When the officer writes, "In service of the state, it is submitted," he's embedding the entire event within institutional legitimacy. The way the people are voiced here is in direct contrast. The officer appears a reliable narrator, but the "accused, Zeenat Tabassum, whom lawyers say they treat as a passive object. The text turns her into an object of action, when it says the (apprehended). She is defined by the police discovery without any direct representation or quotation from her. Also, the modality within this FIR presents the institutional narrative as an undeniable truth. The assertions like (a large quantity of drugs is present; if raided immediately, they can be caught) 'کافی مقدار میں' move beyond mere suspicion. They function as high-certainty declarations that convert an instinct into a presumed fact. The text relies on imperative forms that give it a prosecutorial feel, both inevitable and necessary. For example, the phrase (taken into custody by the police) "بذریعہ پولیس فرد قبضہ میں لے لیا گیا" frames the narrative as it is their bureaucratic duty. This makes the subjective nature of the search objective.

Under the narrative structure theme, sentences such as “معہ ہمرائیاں، ریڈنگ پارٹی تشکیل دے کر موقع پر پہنچی” reveal the presentation of the state as a strict, orderly force. In contrast, “ایک عورت کو قابو کر لیا” reveals the presentation of the accused as passive and speechless. The chronological phrasing “مورخہ 22/04/2025 بوقت 05:25 صبح” enhances the procedural exactness. Lexical choices such as “CNSA 1997-91330، فرد لیبارٹری، ڈارک براون چرس، بیلا سائر 5500” express legal and scientific professionalism, while records such as “ایک عورت، بزریعہ ”گرام” use vivid description to build the visual appearance of guilt. Gendered terms such as “لیڈی پولیس زینت دختر” signify the occurrence of the emphasis on the female identity of the accused.

The ideological position within the FIR shows biases regarding class and gender. The repetitive focus on the procedural details involving lady police officers suggest that a woman breaking the law is viewed not just as a criminal, but as a “social freak”. There is a clear ideological discomfort with female deviance. It implies that it is more morally offensive than male criminality. The lexical choices build a discourse of state power. The technical precision is evident in terms like (recovery) ”برآمد،” (body search) ”جامہ تلاشی” and (sample for chemical analysis) ”نمونہ برائے تجزیہ کیمیائی”. The lines also emphasize on the gender of the accused as they read عورت لیڈی پولیس جامہ تلاشی بزریعہ لیڈی پولیس. This rhetorical insistence on calling the suspect “female” undermines her role in society and diminishes her as a human being, both outside of the context of how she adds to society and outside the parameters of gender.

Case 2

Anarkali Bazaar Police Station (Date: 07-11-2023)

In the Anarkali case, the police officer takes on a very active, heroic role. The report follows a linear, procedural construction of a raiding party, journey to the location, and apprehension of a “suspicious person”. All of these details place the officer in a position of virtue and duty. The suspect enters only after the police activity has been fully formulated and expressed in passive voice. He is not addressed, and his account of the incident is not recorded. The time markers, such as “07/11/2023 1:00 AM کو ”پر” add administrative background to the report, once again substantiating the police account. The defendant is negatively portrayed through actions done to him; he is stopped, searched, and found in possession. Thus, becoming an object mute in the state discourse.

Assertive modality in FIR drives the sequence of events towards responsibility and certainty. Such actions are neither interrogative nor hesitant, but imperative and firm. Phrases like “فوراً مشتبہ شخص کو روکا” and “اس ”پر فرد جرم عائد کی گئی” express an epistemic attitude of absolute certainty. The language used in this FIR makes a suspected crime look like a proven fact. For example, instead of saying that the police chose to arrest someone, phrases like “ملزم کو گرفتار کیا گیا” make it sound like an unavoidable legal duty. This tone makes the state’s power seem perfect and unquestionable. The FIR does not directly state that the accused is poor, but it uses hidden markers to imply it. The person in the report is never given a voice and is only named as ملزم (the accused). This shows that he has no history or feelings and is simply considered as an object of the crime. This is an example of Van Dijk’s ideological square, in which the state is presented as the factual norm, and the accused is the immoral other.

There is a big difference in how the state and the accused are described within these FIRs. The state is considered active when phrases like (along with companions, formed a raiding party and reached the location) ”معہ ہمرائیاں، ریڈنگ پارٹی تشکیل دے کر موقع پر پہنچی” are used. The police is portrayed as organised and powerful. The report uses very specific details to look credible, for example, exact times and technical terms, like “07/11/2023 1:00 AM کو ”پر” (on 07/11/2023 at 1:00 AM) and “مقدار 520 گرام” and “A1 پارسل نمبر”.

Case 3

Naseerabad Police Station (Date: 18-02-2025)

The FIR creates a legal reality, e.g., the phrase “مذکورہ کے خلاف تحریر استغاثہ مرقوم کیا گیا ہے” translated as “a written complaint has been registered against the said individual,” is an official act that makes the police’s version of the story the truth before a judge even sees it. This makes it harder for the accused to be seen as

innocent. the crime is shown as a proven fact in the report. The report uses repetitive, formal phrases like, “بظور وجہ ثبوت قبضہ میں لیا گیا,” meaning “narcotics were taken into police custody,” “منتشیات قبضہ پولیس میں لی گئیں,” “سے سیل کر کے AA سرہمہر اسمی.” These are not just for record keeping but they tried to show that the police followed every rule perfectly. This act makes the FIR look like a flawless piece of state justice that cannot be questioned.

The FIR claims that the suspect had a calculated intent behind his actions. The police are not just reporting facts but assigning a criminal motive to the accused by stating “مخصوص گاہکوں کو منتشیات دینے کے لیے” translated as “he was waiting to deliver drugs to specific customers”. They write it down as a fact and force the court to start the trial with the assumption that the person was already planning a crime. The use of exact times and dates like “18-02-2025, 10:20 AM 10:40” “AM وقوعہ کی اطلاع” کو کارروائی عمل میں لائی “گئی”, creates an image of perfect professionalism. This creates no opportunity for the defense to argue that there were mistakes or delays. It makes the police account seem so accurate that any doubt feels impossible. The accused is described only by his father’s name, caste and address, e.g., “ولد نور احمد، قوم بھٹی، سکھہ بستی چراغ”. This affects his identity, where he will be noticeable through a social category. The FIR places him in a marginalised social group and focuses on his caste and location. This act ignores any personal or economic reasons that might explain his situation.

The evidence of objective and indisputable can be seen in technical details like “لیکچر کانٹا” “51/51 گرام” “نمونہ برائے تجزیہ کیمیائی”. However, this language often ignores the fact that the suspect’s guilt has not been legally proven yet. The FIR lists specific objects like “موٹر سائیکل نمبر ”, “سفید قمیص”, “نوکیا 110 موبائل فون”. The state’s version of authenticity is evident in these details.

CASE 4

Shahdara Town Police Station (Time and Date: 3:00 AM, 3-8-2023)

Beginning with an official tone and a formal greeting to the SHO, the FIR creates a professional impression. It includes phrase like “!صاحب تھانہ شاہدرہ ٹاؤن لاہور السلام وعلیکم SHO بخدمت جناب” and “...بیکار سرکار معروض ہونکہ” that frame the police’s actions as a direct extension of state power. This report is written with technical language and renders the ability to challenge the state’s authority impossible. The suspect was arrested prior to his mention in the story. This renders him a passive character, but the police are still legally subjective. Expressions such as “...СТВУЕТ... سرکار معروضہ” create an impression of law enforcement actions as mere extensions of state machinery. The accused is referred to by his CNIC number and home address, such as “شناختی کارڈ نمبر...، سکھہ بلال نگر شاہدرہ ٹاؤن”. This formality depersonalizes it and emphasizes only the power of state to surveil and document its citizens.

Statements like “فروری ریڈ کیا جائے تو پکڑا جا سکتا ہے” remove any doubt. this sentences introduces a series of necessary and logical steps. By presenting the story this way, the FIR eliminates the grey areas that make the arrest look like an unavoidable legal duty. The report uses specific verbs to describe a sequence of official tasks. For example, “الگ الگ پارسل تیار کر کے”, “برآمد ہوئی”, and “تحریر”, “استغاثہ ارسال ہے”, these words make the process seem self-evident and legally perfect. The tone implies that every single step was planned by law and cannot be challenged. Even uncertain information like “مخبر خاص”, is written in a formal way that looks like a legitimate legal fact.

This case does not focus on gender, but it uses language that targets social class. By specifically mentioning “سکھہ بلال نگر شاہدرہ ٹاؤن لاہور” Shahdara Town, which is a working-class area, the FIR links a specific location and class to criminal behaviour. The focus on technical details like vehicle number and driver details “گاڑی نمبر ”, “ٹرائیور اکرم”, highlights the machine-like nature of the state. On the other hand, the accused remains a voiceless object being moved through a bureaucratic system. The FIR is filled with legal jargon and technical terms, like “بلسلسلہ گشت و تلاشی بد رویہ کان و منتشیات فروشان”, “CNSA 9(1) 3C”, and “فرد قبضہ پولیس میں لیے”, and “جامہ تلاشی”, “برآمد ہوئی”, and “گئے”. The phrase “منتشیات فروش” injects social stigma into the description of the accused. This language adds a layer of moral judgment while staying within a professional tone. Terms like like “برآمد ہوئی”, “جامہ تلاشی”, and “گئے”

“ارتکاب جرم” create a neutral mask that hides any emotional interpretation. Furthermore, exact measurements like “گرام 1560” and “گرام برائے نمونہ تجزیہ کیمیائی 711” give the report a scientific feel. It can influence a judge to accept the police account as the objective truth. These technical descriptions in the FIR may bias a judge towards believing that the evidence was gathered with perfect procedural compliance.

The suspect’s motives, feelings or circumstances of the suspect were not discussed. The FIR states that he committed a crime by keeping hashish for sale “چرس برائے فروخت اپنے قبضے میں رکھ کر ارتکاب جرم کیا ہے”. The accused is presented as a figure of objective guilt defined by legal process in an emotionless tone. The use of procedural terms like “بدست اشتیاق” and “پارسل سر بمبر”، “بطور وجہ ثبوت” makes the story feel impersonal and transform it into a formal legal document.

Case 5

Johar Town Police Station (Date: 19-04-2025)

The FIR begins with official-sounding terms like case IDs and “تصدیقی کوڈ” authentication codes. This would indicate it is an official and serious document. The FIR enumerates the actions in a strict order, i.e. for reporting the crime, seizing evidence and analysing samples. The report looks professional and detailed as it works with exact times and locations like (“19-04-2025 03:40 AM”) and “جوہر ٹاؤن”. This move ignores entirely the side of the accused. For instance, the report describes the arrest using passive voice “ملزم کو قبضے میں لے لیا”. This language abstracts the given police officer from this specific sentence context. It presents the arrest as a legal act rather than a decision made by an officer. Do not question the police, that FIR already provides a second line of defense against questioning: “صحیح طریقے لے ریکارڈ کیا گیا” (duly recorded), such phrases make sure that all is well even before we ask where and how; they place all authority on the side of the police.

FIR itself is a state power laminated with bureaucratic tags (“ملزم”، “فرد جرم”) that confuses the identity of individual. These labels and the attention to particular working-class republics as Johar Town. It perpetuates the stereotype of certain neighbourhoods being synonymous with crime.

The report tries to sound neutral and fair by including long legal titles like (“THE CONTROL OF NARCOTIC SUBSTANCES ACT, 1997 - 9-(2)4”) and technical codes (“LEG/625”, “C/5677”). The identity of the accused is based on the labels used for him as “ملزم” (accused) or “فرد جرم” (criminal individual). It makes the suspect look guilty before the trial even starts. The report follows a pattern in which the state is always the good and rational side. On the other hand, the accused is the bad and deviant side. Phrase like “ناجائز قبضہ” (illicit possession) immediately frames the person as a criminal. This is a good example of Van Dijk’s ideological square, i.e., the police’s actions are described as “معیاری طریقہ کار” (standard procedure), while the accused is dehumanised by suppressing his voice, name and background.

Case 6

Raiwind Police Station

In this report, the police are framed as proactive and morally superior figures. The report starting with a detailed description of routine patrolling “عام گشت کے دوران” and swift response on a “مصدقہ اطلاع” (authenticated tip). It builds a narrative where police are depicted as proactive protectors against an undercover threat of drug smuggling. The suspect is set up as being a member of an unnamed broader network “ایک مرد جس نے اپنا نام بتایا” and is immediately reduced to being a drug courier. The organisation emphasises procedural progress from suspicion through pursuit, search, recovery, and case registration. Also, modality is used on a large scale to convey certainty. Phrases like “مصدقہ اطلاع ملی”، “چیک کیا گیا” and “برآمد ہوئی” make the police version unquestionable fact. The narrative uses passive voice to illustrate routine procedure, i.e., “مقدمہ درج کر کے تفتیش شروع کر دی گئی”, making the subjectivity or voice of the accused unnecessary. The use of the phrase “درخواست پر کارروائی عمل میں لائی گئی” suggests institutional passiveness in language, but conceals aggressive pursuit in deeds (chasing, searching, arresting). The suspect is male, unnamed, and unidentified as another “drug mule.” This shows ideological construction presents working-class individuals as swallows.

Words like “میزان”, “موٹر سائیکل”, “پلاسٹک بیگ”, “پروٹن”, and “1400 گرام” are duplicated and employed technically. The word “1400 گرام” is used in the report as scientific language. The motorcar and license number are provided with legal precision. This shifts attention from the suspect's details to physical evidence. The accused is not greeted with honorifics. Instead, the identity comes down to mobile number and CNIC which imposes objectification and criminalisation framing. The phrase “ملزم کو موقع پر قابو پا کر” indirectly implies possible resistance or flight, but it is unexplained. The focus on drugs as material, quantifiable objects (e.g., “1400 گرام”) as opposed to their social effects (addiction or harm to society) shows a decontextualised criminal discourse, procedural and material only.

Table 1*Linguistic Features Summary*

Linguistic Feature	Implementation in FIRs	Discursive Effect
High-Certainty Modality	Phrases like “مصدقہ اطلاع” (authenticated tip) and “فوری ریڈ” (immediate raid)	It turns a police officer's subjectivity into an undisputed legal fact.
Passive Transitivity	Use of “فرد قبضہ میں لیا گیا” (was taken into custody)	It hides police agencies, framing arrests as their duties instead of subjective choices made by an officer
Scientific Lexis	Specific weights (e.g., “5500 گرام”) and CNSA 1997 legal citations	It uses technical language to make the report more official and scientific, which helps distance the legal process from human behaviour
Spatial/ Class Coding	Mentioning addresses like Shahdara Town or Multan Road	It ties criminal behaviour to working-class geography, reinforcing class-based deviance

Conclusion

An analysis of these FIRs from Lahore portrays that they are different from neutral records of facts. They actually work as performative texts that use specific language to build a case against the accused before it is even presented in courts. Using Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the researcher has found a deep connection between micro-textual elements and macro-sociocultural norms. An example is the shift from the active voice (the accused sold drugs) to the passive voice (narcotics were recovered). The FIR is designed to protect police conduct from being questioned. By using technical jargon like “Control of Narcotics Substances Act” or “forensic analysis”, the report creates an air of scientific objectivity. However, this is often ruined by the use of stigmatising labels like “peddler” or “addict”. These terms specifically target women and low-income individuals. By linking poverty to criminal behaviour through location markers like (e.g., “Shahdara Town”), the FIR uses Van Dijk's ideological square to create a legal reality that courts accept without question. It ignores the idea that a person is innocent until proven guilty. This research shows that the FIR is a tool used to legitimise state power.

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