

**AFGHAN, AMERICAN AND PAKISTANI
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ON AFGHAN
PEACE PROCESS: A COMPARATIVE
ANALYSIS OF TEXTUAL
META FUNCTION**

BY

AATIKAH HAMEED MALIK



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES

ISLAMABAD

December, 2024

**AFGHAN, AMERICAN AND PAKISTANI NEWSPAPER
ARTICLES ON AFGHAN PEACE PROCESS:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TEXTUAL
META FUNCTION**

By

AATIKAH HAMEED MALIK

BS (Hons), National University of Modern Languages Islamabad, 2020

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY
In English**

To

FACULTY OF ARTS & HUMANITIES



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES, ISLAMABAD

© Aatikah Hameed Malik, 2024



FACULTY OF ARTS & HUMANITIES
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES

THESIS AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read the following thesis, examined the defense, are satisfied with the overall exam performance, and recommend the thesis to the Faculty of Arts & Humanities for acceptance:

Thesis Title: Afghan, American and Pakistani Newspaper Articles on Afghan Peace Process: A Comparative Analysis of Textual Meta Function

Submitted by: Aatikah Hameed Malik

Registration No: 96-MPhil/Eling/S21

Dr. Azhar Habib
Name of Supervisor

Signature of Supervisor

Dr. Farheen Ahmed Hashmi
Name of Head (GS)

Signature of Head (GS)

Prof. Dr. Arshad Mahmood
Name of Dean (FAH)

Signature of Dean (FAH)

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan
Name of Pro-Rector (Academics)

Signature of Pro Rector (Academics)

Date

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, Aatikah Hameed Malik

Daughter of Masood Ul Hameed Malik

Registration # 96-MPhil/Eling/S21

Discipline English Linguistics

Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Afghan, American and Pakistani Newspaper Articles on Afghan Peace Process: A Comparative Analysis of Textual Meta Function** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it will not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

Signature of the Candidate

Aatikah Hameed Malik
Name of the Candidate

Date

ABSTRACT

Title: Afghan, American and Pakistani Newspaper Articles on Afghan Peace Process: A Comparative Analysis of Textual Meta Function

Language serves a variety of functions termed as Meta Functions and the speaker's knowledge of his language surpasses the structural boundaries. The present research analyses comparatively the newspaper articles from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA, about the Afghan Peace Process, from the lens of Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan and its modifications by Halliday and Matthiessen. The researcher attempts to highlight and analyze the significant shift in the presentation of a particular stance through language. The linguistic academia is not much inclined towards such comparative analysis, that states the projection of stance through language, using the Textual Meta Function as framework. The selection and progression of the theme and rheme of the clause is on the part of the authors or the speakers according to Halliday and Matthiessen and they use the language resource with the aid of the devices of lexical and grammatical cohesion to perform the communicative function and present the text as a unified whole. The researcher has found that the authors of these newspaper articles vary as far as the selection and progression patterns of the theme and rheme of the clauses are concerned. The patterns of information through theme and rheme communicate a particular stance that is, the Afghan newspapers foreground the miseries and sufferings of Afghans in the wake of decades of war. Similarly, the articles from the USA highlight the importance of peace deal which will facilitate the withdrawal of the US and allies from Afghanistan in the context of US general election. The articles from Pakistan project the need of implementation of the clauses of the deal and the urgency of intra Afghan negotiations, moreover the Pakistani authors also highlight the prospects for Pakistan in the context of the deal. In addition to theme and rheme, the devices of lexical and grammatical cohesion also aid in the projection of that particular stance. The communicative function of the language has been performed by the authors from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA in a unique and diversified manner that projects their particular stance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM	ii
AUTHOR’S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
DEDICATION	x
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.2 Objectives of the Study.....	3
1.3 Research Questions.....	4
1.4 Significance of the Study.....	4
1.5 Delimitations of the Study.....	5
1.6 Limitations of the Study.....	5
1.7 Organization of the Study.....	5
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
2.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics.....	7
2.2 Meta Functions of Language.....	8
2.2.1 Ideational Meta Function.....	10
2.2.2 Interpersonal Meta Function.....	11
2.2.3 Textual Meta Function.....	14
2.3 Meta Function in Newspapers.....	17
2.3.1 Analysis of Meta Function in the Newspapers Worldwide.....	17
2.3.2 Analysis of Meta Function in Pakistani Newspapers.....	19
2.3.3 Comparative Analysis of Newspapers.....	20
2.4 Analysis of Afghan Peace Process.....	21
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	23
3.1 Research Design	23
3.2 Research Method.....	24
3.3 Population of the Study.....	24
3.4 Research Sample.....	25

3.5 Data Collection Procedure.....	25
3.6 Data Analysis Procedure.....	26
3.7 Theoretical Framework.....	26
4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....	30
4.1 Afghanistan.....	30
4.1.1 <i>Afghanistan Times</i>	30
4.1.2 <i>The Kabul Times</i>	53
4.2 The USA.....	70
4.2.1 <i>The New York Times</i>	70
4.2.2 <i>USA Today</i>	93
4.3 Pakistan.....	115
4.3.1 <i>The NEWS</i>	115
4.3.2 <i>DAWN</i>	135
4.4 Discussion.....	151
5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION.....	157
REFERENCES.....	167
APPENDIX.....	174

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-12: <i>The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power</i> by Ayesha Khurram.....	31
Table 13-18: <i>Leaving? Take all of your belongings with you</i> by Rangin Dadfar Spanta.....	39
Table 19-24 <i>Ceasefire, A Prerequisite for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan</i> by Wali Muhammad Alizai.....	45
Table 25-28: <i>Some Afghan Sentiments About Peace Through Media</i> by Dr. Royeen.....	49
Table 29-33: <i>Troop pullout a catastrophe without international assurance</i> by M. W. Qasemi.....	53
Table 34-39: <i>Afghan women’s concerns should be addressed in peace talks,</i> by Lailuma Noori.....	57
Table 40-46: <i>Recent peace deal from the youth perspective</i> by Ajmal Hajizada.....	62
Table 47-52: <i>For lasting peace in Afghanistan, the process needs inclusion</i> by Gandahara.....	66
Table 53-62: <i>Trump Gives Conditional Go Ahead on Peace Deal with Taliban</i> by Mashal and Jakes.....	71
Table 63-67: <i>What to Know About the Afghan Peace Talks</i> by Zucchini and Gibbons-Neff.....	77
Table 68-73: <i>Afghan Peace Talks Begin This Week. Here’s What to Know</i> by Mujeeb Mashal.....	82
Table 74-79: <i>Is this Afghan peace or just a way out</i> by David E. Sanger.....	88
Table 80-84: <i>Taliban begin first-ever peace talks after decades of war</i> by Kathy Gannon and Aya Batrawy.....	93
Table 85-90: <i>Donald Trump expresses optimism about peace deal with Taliban</i> <i>in Afghanistan</i> by David Jackson.....	98
Table 91-95: <i>What a good Afghan peace deal will look like</i> by Saad Mohseni and Michael O’Hanlon.....	103
Table 96-102: <i>Historic peace deal in Afghanistan reached with Taliban, allowing</i> <i>withdrawal of US troops</i> by Brook & Shesgreen.....	108

Table 103-107: <i>An Afghan Perspective</i> authored by Murtaza Shibli.....	115
Table 108-112: <i>Cracks in the deal</i> by Malik Muhammad Ashraf.....	120
Table 113-117: <i>Withdrawal from Afghanistan</i> by Abdul Sattar.....	125
Table 118-123: <i>Peace too far</i> by Iftekhar A Khan.....	130
Table 124-128: <i>Troubled Afghan Peace Process</i> by Maleeha Lodhi.....	135
Table 129-133: <i>Violence and the Afghan Peace Talks</i> by Zahid Hussain.....	139
Table 134-138: <i>Afghan Peace Prospects</i> is authored by Maleeha Lodhi.....	143
Table 139-143: <i>US-Afghan Peace Deal</i> by Kinanah Shahbaz.....	147
Table 144: Comparison of Afghan, American and Pakistani Newspapers.....	154

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very thankful to Allah Almighty for the countless blessings He has bestowed on me and has blessed me with the abilities to complete this degree and research in time.

I owe special thanks to my parents, who have been a constant support throughout my educational career.

I owe special thanks to Prof. Dr. Arshad Mahmood, Dean Faculty of Arts and Humanities, and Dr. Farheen Ahmed Hashmi, Head Department of English (GS) for their cooperation in this entire process. I am highly obliged to my supervisor, Dr. Azhar Habib, for guidance and encouragement throughout this research. His expertise and constructive feedback have been instrumental in shaping this research. I am very grateful to the faculty of department of English for their guidance and support. I owe special thanks to my friends and colleagues who have been a source of motivation throughout this degree.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my parents, who have been a constant support throughout my life. I owe special thanks to them, for it was their unwavering commitment and support that helped me achieve every milestone.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Linguistic Meta Function has its origin in Functional linguistics mainly the systemic one. The Meta Function of language is basically a set of rules which serve the purpose of understanding the meaning of text. Language is not a mere cluster of words rather it is a whole system which works to lay forward a comprehensive and meaningful representation of the idea in addition to communicating information. Precisely the language is multifunctional. According to Halliday (1994), the language serves three important Functions mainly, Ideational, Textual, and Interpersonal. The Ideational function has its ground in the natural world around us, where the language serves as its representative. The Interpersonal function serves the purpose of social exchanges through language while Textual Function is relevant to the verbal world, where the languages serve the purpose of meaning making.

These three Meta Functions, the Ideational, the Interpersonal, and the Textual work together in individual utterances/clauses and play a significant role in presenting the phenomena as a unified whole. Halliday views language as a semiotic system that emphasizes that the language carries meaning that performs function and fulfils variety of purposes through interactions. The Meta functions offer a way to interpret that how the language we speak and use in our communications operates on various levels. Owing to the relevance of Halliday's framework in the study of language that performs myriads of functions, the researchers from the field of linguistics regard this framework to be of significant importance in modern researchers on language and the analysis of its multiple functions. The framework is particularly relevant in the analysis of language in variety of contexts. One such area is the text of newspapers that present news and phenomena in a variety of ways through language. The present research analyses the Textual Meta Function in the Afghan, American and Pakistani newspaper articles about the phenomenon of Afghan Peace Process. Afghan Peace Process is the series of talks between the US and the Afghan Taliban after decades of war in Afghanistan. These talks are followed by a series of intra Afghan negotiations that are the talks between the stakeholders of Afghanistan. The present study analyses the Textual Meta Function of language that identifies itself within clause as a message. This Function organizes the messages in ways that indicate how they fit in with other messages around them and with the wider context of situation.

Precisely the Textual Meta Function is concerned with creating relevance between the parts of what is being said or written and between the text and the context of situation as according to Halliday, it breathes life into the language and gives it its sense of realness, cohesion, and texture (Halliday, 1976). The Textual Meta Function studies the clause in terms of theme that initiates any clause and is followed by a rheme that is the exposition of the theme. It also works in terms of the given information and new information respectively. Moreover, within the same Meta Function the lexicogrammatical cohesion is of significant importance as it brings the text together as a whole. All these aspects of Textual Meta Function tend to work together and present the clause as a message.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), the choice of theme and rheme and the employment of cohesive devices is on the part of the speaker, that is the speaker, or the writer chooses the theme and rheme for the clause, thus presenting a particular stance through language. The theme is that element of a clause or sentence which the speaker selects in order to ground what he wants to say. It basically originates the message. Theme initiates the clause, sets the scene and places it in relation to the text, that unfolds in the rheme. Rheme is the part of a clause or a sentence, where the theme develops. The researcher analyses the same phenomenon in the contemporary newspaper articles about Afghan Peace Process where the researcher studies the newspaper articles from the three countries that are Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA. The linguistic academia has analyzed different types of texts from a wide range of perspectives. The text of newspapers is also a type of discourse that performs the communicative Function where its clauses serve as messages.

As Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) believe that the language resource can be used in a variety of ways by the authors, thus the language of newspaper also serves a wide range of Functions. The phenomenon of Afghan Peace Process has been in the top stories in the newspapers across the globe particularly those of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA. The present study analyses the same phenomenon from the perspective of Textual Meta Function, where the researcher aims at tracing and analysing the selection and progression patterns of theme and rheme as well as the analysis of lexical and grammatical cohesion. Moreover, the researcher aims at tracing the diverse stance projected through the language of these newspaper articles.

1.1 The Statement of Problem

The language we speak and use for communicating our thoughts serves a variety of Functions as it is a whole system which adapts itself according to the need and demand of the situation. Michael Halliday believes the language to be a semiotic system, which has the potential of meaning as it is a systemic source of it (Halliday, 1985). Several researchers have analysed the language from different perspectives to trace the meaning that can be Textual, Ideational, or Interpersonal. The linguistic academia is not much inclined towards the comparative analysis of the newspaper articles from different countries, from the lens of Textual Meta Function of Halliday (1985). Afghan Peace Process is a recent phenomenon that has been in the top stories of newspapers across the world. Owing to the direct influence of this peace process on these countries, the Afghan, Pakistani, and American journalists have written insightful articles about it. The language of newspapers is unique and diversified which influences the presentation of certain phenomena to a greater extent, hence such comparative analysis becomes imperative when it comes to the analysis of language about a particular issue as language performs the function of projecting stances and shaping perceptions. The present research aims at analysing the Textual Meta Function in the language of Afghan, American and Pakistani newspaper articles about the phenomena of Afghan Peace Process. Through this comparative study the researcher aims to analyse the projection of diverse stance through the language of these newspapers.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The present research aims:

- To compare the selection and progression patterns of theme and rheme in the newspaper articles about Afghan Peace Process in the leading newspapers of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA.
- To trace and analyse the strategies used by the authors of these newspaper articles to achieve lexical and grammatical cohesion presenting the text as a unified whole.
- To highlight and analyse the diverse stance about Afghan Peace Process projected by the authors of these newspapers.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How do the newspaper articles from Pakistan, Afghanistan and the USA vary in the selection and progression patterns of theme and rheme while presenting the scenario of Afghan Peace Process?
2. How do these journalists integrate the aspects of lexical and grammatical cohesion, while presenting the phenomenon of Afghan Peace Process as a unified whole?
3. To what extent the textual aspects of Halliday's Meta Functions aid these authors in the presentation of a particular stance through language?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Meta Function is about the content matter of the language and the purpose it serves. Following the Systemic approach, theorists like Michael Halliday regard the function of language to be of three major categories mainly, Ideational, Textual, and Interpersonal. It is believed that all three Meta Functions work as a whole system to serve the purpose of communication. Halliday asserts that the Ideational Function of language serves as representative of ideas, the Interpersonal serves the purpose of communication while Textual Meta Function conveys the message through the language used as text. Several researchers have studied these Meta Functions in a variety of texts. Linguistic academia is not much inclined towards the comparative analysis of newspapers from different countries as far as the Textual Meta Function of Halliday is concerned. Halliday and Hassan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) assert that, the theme and rheme of a clause along with the choice of given and new information is on the part of the speaker or the author. The theme and rheme structure along with the lexicogrammatical cohesion not only presents the clause as a message and performs the communicative function but also aids in achieving the desired results on the part of listeners and the readers. Such comparative analysis of Textual Meta Function in newspapers is of grave importance as it not only foregrounds the communicative function of the language of newspapers but also indicates the variations in the manifestation of a phenomenon and projection of a particular stance using language. The present research is significant in the same regard as the researcher analyses the Textual Meta Function of language in newspaper articles about Afghan Peace Process, which is a recent phenomenon. Here the researcher analyses comparatively the newspaper articles from the leading newspapers of Afghanistan,

Pakistan, and the USA. Such comparative analysis of a recent phenomenon from the lens of Textual Meta Function gives an insight into the presentation of a variety of perspectives of this phenomenon and projection of stance through language, it will pave way for further research in this domain.

1.5 Delimitations of the Study

The present research aims at working within the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics, presented by Halliday and Hassan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Halliday has proposed three Meta Functions of language namely, Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual. The present research is delimited to the study of the Textual Meta Function of language, where the researcher traces this Meta Function in the newspaper articles from Afghanistan, America, and Pakistan. In addition, the researcher analyses two leading newspapers from each country, while studying four articles from each newspaper. The researcher only analyses the articles about Afghan Peace Process published between August 2019 and September 2021. The researcher analyses the articles from *Afghanistan Times* and *The Kabul Times* which are the leading newspapers of Afghanistan. In addition, the American Newspapers for this study are, *The New York Times* and *USA Today*. Lastly, the sample newspapers from Pakistan are *The News* and *Dawn* newspaper.

1.6 Limitations of the Study:

The present research analyses the textual meta function in the newspaper articles from Pakistan, Afghanistan and the USA where the sample of the research is restricted to two newspapers from each country and four opinion articles from each newspaper, that count as 24 articles in total. This is a limitation of the present study, as owing to the time constraint, the researcher has limited the research to the analysis of 24 articles which impacts the generalization of the present research. It is recommended that the future researchers may analyse a larger number of opinion articles so that the results may be generalised on a broader scale.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The first chapter of present research presents an introduction of the research. The chapter mentions the research objectives, questions, problem statement, significance, and delimitations. The second chapter reviews the literature around the topic of the research. The third chapter elucidates the methodology of the present research with specific elaboration of the theoretical framework. The chapter also

elaborates the research sample and the procedures of data collection as well as data analysis. The fourth chapter analyses the data in detail in line with the framework of the study. The last chapter gives the findings of the research and concludes the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter of the study offers a detailed review of the existing literature relevant to the framework and the area of research. The chapter also elucidates important concept of the theoretical framework that is Halliday's (1985) Meta Functions that fall under Systemic Functional Linguistics. The first part of this chapter focuses on the SFL and its aspects, followed by the review of the existing literature and research in the field. The next part focuses on the three Meta Functions, followed by the review of existing studies. Moreover, this chapter analyses the discourse of English newspapers and reviews the studies in this context. The chapter also probes into the phenomenon of Afghan Peace Process and the studies carried out around this phenomenon. The review of existing studies aids in the identification of the research gap, hence, provides justification of the significance of the present research.

Language as a system is quite complex and with changing times, the trends in the field of linguistics have experienced a remarkable change. When it comes to the ultimate purpose of a language, it is always communication. The language serves the function of projecting the meaning across in order to accomplish social interaction. This view about the Function of language aligns with the concepts of Systemic Functional Linguistics, proposed by Michael Halliday in 1960s. According to Michael Halliday (1994), a language evolves in response to the specific demands of the society in which it is used. The nature of the language is closely related to the functions it has to serve.

2.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics

The theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed by Michael Halliday in early 1960s, propagates that the language is multifunctional. The basic concern of SFL is to establish "a relationship between language and social structure" (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 10). The structure of language aids in performing its function that is its ultimate purpose. Ignatius Tri Endarto (2017) highlights the functional aspect of language within SFL and states that the notion of SFL is quite different and unique as compared to the traditional linguists. The traditionalist regarded grammar as a separate entity from the meaning. Contrary to this the proponents of SFL regard the language as a unified system where form and meaning are driven by the communicative goals of the speaker and the context.

2.2 Meta Functions of Language

Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional grammar revolves around the basic concepts of language, a prominent concept is that of meta function. The clause is considered as a unit where meanings of three kinds are combined. Halliday (1985) asserts that the language we use performs three meta functions that are ideational, textual and interpersonal meta function. Research by Hoang Van Van (2021) that was conducted and published in Vietnam throws light on the linguistic Meta Functions and their aspects. The author of the thesis explores the components of Halliday's framework of Meta Functions within the context of Systemic Functional Linguistics, wherein the researcher analyses the framework for its interpretation of meaning of a particular text within its context. The research comprises of five major sections, where the first section is focused on the introduction of the research and the framework. The second section of this paper focuses on the concept of the linguistic Functions in the non-Systemic models and from the perspective of formal models of grammatical analysis, wherein the researcher has contrasted the formal approach with the Functional approach of analysing the language. The third section of this dissertation analyses in detail the Functional approach to analyse the language by exploring in detail the notions of Halliday's Meta Functions. This descriptive qualitative analysis of the theory gives an insight to the framework by highlighting the Functional aspect of language. It explores the idea that the Meta Functions of language are a fundamental property of language which interpret the meaning of language in its social context. In order to highlight the significance of this framework the fourth section of this thesis analyses two Vietnamese poems from the lens of the three Meta Functions by Halliday. The last section of this dissertation provides an insight into the significance of Halliday's Meta Functions. The study highlights the notion that the language we speak or communicate in the form of text is a whole system of Functions which in terms of Halliday and Hasan are referred to as the Meta Functions. This thesis has explored the notion of language as a system which performs several Functions as is not detached from its social context. The descriptive research has contrasted contemporary models of linguistic analysis with the SFL model while giving examples from Vietnamese. The researcher has contextualized the theory in the Vietnamese text and speech while the text from other languages and from the diverse genres has not been discussed from the lens of Halliday's framework.

The language being an important aspect of everyday life evolves and develops in response to needs and demands of the social setting where it is being used. Precisely, its nature is significantly influenced by the Function it serves. Justin Bakuuro (2017) has written a comprehensive article about the Meta Functions of language particularly those described by Halliday. The major objective of this study was to help the students as well as the linguists, comprehend the key aspects of Halliday's Meta Functions broadly his Systemic Functional Grammar. The researcher has carried out an in-depth study of individual Meta Functions and has laid forward a comprehensive and simplified analysis of these Meta Functions. His analysis of Textual Meta Function sheds light on the idea of Theme and Rheme in the clause and their relationship. In addition, his description of Interpersonal Meta Function highlights entities like mood and residue. Last but not the least he has simplified the Ideational Meta Function where the language is used as a mode to reflect the experiences of the world. The researcher has here again shed light on the three components of clause under this Meta Function. Precisely, the article has comprehensively simplified these Meta Functions in line with the ideas of Halliday. The research is descriptive in nature and has presented an overall comprehensive and descriptive analysis of the framework without using any specific sample.

Research by Hafiz Ahmad Bilal (2012) using Halliday's framework within Systemic Functional Linguistics was conducted in the University of Sargodha, where the researcher has carried out the stylistic analysis of a short story *Thank You Maam*. The researcher has traced the text of this story from the lens of Halliday's Meta Functions. By conducting a qualitative analysis of the short story, the researcher has traced all three Meta Functions proposed by Halliday. The researcher has found that such linguistic examinations are helpful in comprehension of linguistic structure as well as the underlying meanings. This study has focused more on Ideational aspect, while less weightage has been given to Interpersonal and Textual aspects of language as this article has presented lesser examples of the last two aspects. Precisely this research was limited to a fictional work which was a short story. There is always a need of extensive research about the language of other texts, which are least discussed for example the language of newspapers. The present research will focus on the comparative analysis of non-conventional texts which are newspaper articles from Pakistani, Afghan and American newspapers particularly about the topic of Afghan Peace Process, where the framework for the study is Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985,

1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The researcher aims at analysing the diversity of stance projected through language in the presentation of the same phenomena that is Afghan Peace Process.

2.2.1 Ideational Meta Function

One of Halliday's Meta Functions referred to as Ideational Function holds significant importance across linguistic academia. Mahya Alaei and Saeideh Ahangari (2016), from Iran have traced the same in the phenomenal work by Joseph Conrad, known as "*Heart of Darkness*". The researchers have analysed the grammatical and lexical strategies throughout the text to figure out the Ideational Function. This qualitative study uses the clause as the unit for linguistic analysis. The researchers have scrutinized the text, tracing categories that convey ideology or opinion. The research has analysed the processes which underlie the manifestation of opinions and ideologies in the sample. The ideological implication of imperialism has been paid heed by the researcher, which has been expressed using variety of linguistic structures. This research is again analysis of a work of fiction where the researchers have limited their study to Ideational Function. In addition, they have only traced this Function in the first part of the sample novel. The sample of this research being a work of fiction drives one to move a way ahead of research in fiction and move towards unique non-fictional linguistic samples like newspapers.

As Halliday believes that the linguistic choices of an author are influenced and shaped by social scenarios and author's perception of them, so the researchers regard this Meta Function with grave significance. Similar research which has used Halliday's Meta Functions as a framework of study emerged from a Singaporean university by Farzaneh Haratyan (2011). The researcher of this study has traced the semantic, social, and Functional load of Halliday's Meta Functions. The researcher of this study has probed deep into the three Meta Functions. His study is the manifestation of Ideational Function which expresses the author's experience of the world and its phenomenon within the setting of the place as well as time. Similarly, the author gives an insight into the Interpersonal Function which is the manifestation of social roles and social interactions. Last but not the least, the researcher has probed into the Textual Meta Function which is embodiment of theme as well as rheme and binds the text through cohesion and coherence. This study offers a comprehensive description of Meta

Functions within the Systemic Functional Linguistics. As this study is an overall description, it is a type of an analysis and not applied research.

The analysis of Meta Functions across certain sermon texts grabbed the attention of some scholars, Magdalena Ngongo, Mesakh Dethan, and Hermyn B. Hyna (2018), who have then studied the language of sermons from this perspective. The researchers here probed into thirty-eight different sermon texts. The approach that has been used in this study is again the Systemic Functional one. The research was descriptive and qualitative in nature. The researchers of this study have analysed the Ideational Meta Function in transitivity system, which was related to the associated circumstances, process, and participants as according to Halliday, transitivity is referred to as the system of clause which influence the clause as well as circumstances and participants. This highlighted that, material processes were used quite frequently while exclamatory ones were not focused owing to the nature of the texts. In addition, the researchers have analysed the Interpersonal Meta Function in mood, which stated that declarative one was more often used in these sermons. While the themes of these sermons were traced for the analysis of Textual Meta Function. This highlighted that the use of topical theme was quite frequent which tells that the speakers of these sermons focused the main idea or the message through the use of these topical.

This comprehensive analysis has probed into a unique type of texts that are religious sermons. The researchers have analysed the Meta Functions in the sermons text hence limiting this research to a single subject alone, leaving various other subjects to be interpreted by this theory. The present research aims at analysing comparatively the Textual Meta Functions in the newspaper articles from leading newspapers of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and USA, wherein the researcher will probe into the newspaper articles related to Afghan Peace Process.

2.2.2 Interpersonal Meta Function

Power relations is a concept that has been traced by many researchers within the field of Systemic Functional linguistics. As language performs a variety of Functions, its Interpersonal Meta Function sheds light on the role of language where it holds an interaction between the listener and the speaker. A study by Pasakara Chueasuai (2017) carried out on the power relations within the Interpersonal Meta Function highlights and analyses the novel 'Fifty Shades of Grey' and its Thai translation. The study focuses on the conversation between the two characters of the

novel which manifests their power relations. The researcher has applied this framework of SFL as a tool of analysis to trace the power exercised through language by one participant of the communication over the other participant. By doing a quantitative as well as qualitative Textual analysis of the text the researcher has traced the original text and its translated version for the analysis of mood that refers to the type of text or language and its role. In addition, the tenor of the language that manifests the relationship of communicators has been analysed along with the field of communication that highlights the topic.

The researcher has found that the declarative and imperative types of clauses have been used to manifest the power relations in the original text as well as the Thai translation of the novel where the imperative clause is the one that is frequently used to exercise the power. Moreover, the study has found that the translated version of the novel manifests variations as far as the meaning is concerned in terms of power relations and its demonstrations, the researcher adds that this difference of meaning in the translated version is because of the unique properties of Thai language. This descriptive research has shed light on all aspects of Interpersonal Meta Function and has traced this Function in the original text as well as its translation. The study was limited to the analysis of a work of fiction, and it focused on Interpersonal Meta Function alone.

The framework of Systemic Functional grammar is one of its kind as it traces the language for its sociological aspects. Instead of reinforcing the formal Function of language, this theory manifests the idea that the language exists in a proper social context where its elements work together to present the scenario as a unified whole as it works as a recourse of meaning creation. A dissertation authored by Dr Hala Khalid Najim (2019) serves as research of modality and mood system where the data for analysis is a political discourse. The study has traced the speech of the prime minister of Iraq, Dr Haider Al-Abadi, in an attempt to inquire the mood system. The dissertation also sheds light on the manifestation of Interpersonal Meta Function in the communication between the audience and the speaker. Moreover, the ways of expressing the modality have also been traced by the author. The study is unique of its kind as the sample text is in Arabic language which gives a new dimension to the studies conducted using the theory of SFL. The research is descriptive study where the researcher has done the mixed analysis of the sample that is the speech by the prime minister of Iraq. The framework of study is Halliday's model of Meta Function where

this study is only based on the Interpersonal Meta Function tracing the mood and modality in the sample discourse. The researcher has come to the point that speech is dominated by the declarative clauses while the imperative clauses are shown second in position. It has been highlighted that the indicative mood is much preferred in a political text. Moreover, future tense has been used to express firm determination. The study recommends the use of declarative clauses to convince the audience through speech. Although the research is a very comprehensive one, but its major focus was the Interpersonal Meta Function and its aspects like mood and modality. The framework by Halliday is a comprehensive one which gives the researchers many dimensions for research.

Speeches are a type of discourse that delivers one's viewpoint to the audience. The discourse of speeches serves a variety of Functions including persuasion and providing information using language to get favours, among others. This type of discourse has been analysed from several perspectives, a similar study by Fariha Saghir, Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Qasim and Dr. Masroor Sibtain (2020) on the speech of Martin Luther King Jr. that has been conducted on his speech 'I Have a Dream' traces the linguistic features within the speech using the aspects of Interpersonal analysis. This analysis focuses on the modality, mood and the use of personal pronouns along with other lexical features. This research, which is quantitative analysis of speech reveals that throughout the speech the speaker has used the declarative mood in order to convey the notion of freedom. At some points in the speech the speaker has also used the imperative mood in an attempt to motivate the audience for freedom movement. The study highlights the use of pronouns in first person, that is 'I' in order to establish a connection between the speaker and the audience. In addition, the researcher has observed the parallel wording in the sample that works to impact the audience as the speaker is reinforcing the idea by repeating it. The researcher has also found that the use of 'will' and 'must' has played a significant role throughout the speech as 'will' implies the hope of the speaker while 'must' signifies the emphasis on the need of acting for freedom. The study was focused on the discourse of speech and the tool of analysis was Interpersonal Meta Function alone.

Works of fiction have been analysed from variety of perspectives and one such perspective or framework is Halliday's Meta Functions. Research by Khatereh Yatandoost and Mehrangiz Anvarhagigi (2020) came forward from an Iranian University where the researchers have probed into an English translation of a famous

Persian fiction, *Boof-e-Koor* translated as, *The Blind Owl*. Researchers have analysed this translated version under the model of Michael Halliday. The major focus of the study is the analysis of the established style of discourse in the translation of this fiction. The research was qualitative as well as analytic and interpretative, where the sentence was the unit of analysis. By using Hallidayan model the researcher has compared the source text with the translated version of it and has laid forward a comprehensive analysis of the discourse style of both. The researcher has probed into the field, tenor as well as the mood in both the versions. The researcher has presented that the field of discourse in the source is same as that of the translated version. While Tenor of translated version has addressed all non-Persian people, contrary to the source which has addressed Iranian people alone. The comprehensive study has focused on a translated version of a Persian fiction. Least work has been done as far as the non-conventional text especially that of newspapers is concerned. The present research focuses on the comparative analysis of newspaper articles from Pakistan, Afghanistan and USA under the Textual Meta Function of Michael Halliday. The articles will be particularly around the discussion about Afghan Peace Process. The present study analyses the diversity of stance projected through language in the presentation of the phenomena of Afghan Peace Process.

2.2.3 Textual Meta Function

With the surge of globalization and increasing trends of inclusiveness, learning an international language has always been imperative. These trends have inclined Thai people towards learning English language and this inclination showed a spark when ASEAN was launched. Thai English language learners are usually referred to as the students, learning English as a foreign language. The most significant problem faced by these students while learning this foreign language is writing. Keeping in view this issue and the developments in this regard research was carried out by Sudrutai Arunsirot (2013), where the researcher has traced the writings of Thai learners by using the tool of Textual Meta Function by Halliday, where highlighting and examining the difficulties in writing faced by Thai students learning English has been the focus of the study. The study has used the documentation method where the researcher has examined the writing composition by 114 Thai students learning English. The researcher has examined the writings for two major aspects in order to identify the problems in the writings. The first one is thematic selection patterns and the other one

is the progression patterns. The study revealed that these Thai students face five major issues in the writings in terms of the progression and selection patterns of the theme and rheme in their writings. The first problem is in terms of empty theme, secondly the issue of introducing a brand-new theme neglecting the context and this results in the incoherent text.

Thirdly, the study revealed an overuse of progression where same theme is repeated again and again and there is not any relevant development as far as its rheme is concerned. The fourth problem that has been observed through this study is the frequent use of an empty rheme. Lastly, the problem of inadequate and incorrect use of connectors has been observed in these writings. This comprehensive study has catered the writing problems faced by the second language learners from Thailand using Halliday's Textual Meta Function as framework. The research was focused on a single country and the sample text was the manuscripts of Thai students, the Textual Meta Function by Halliday shows broader dimensions in terms of research and analysis as variety of texts can be analysed from this perspective.

Language is a varied entity which makes use of variety of form and types. Once such language is the language of poetry, which uses the figurative language which is unique in nature and appeals to the readers. A Nigerian researcher Ebi Yeibo (2012) came forward with an analysis of this figurative language of poetry where he has traced the stylistic Functions in the same which is significantly crucial as far as the comprehensive interpretation and description of the idiolect of poet is concerned. The researcher has analysed Bekederemo's poetry as a sample. Here again, the researcher has used Halliday's model which specifies his Meta Functions of language that are namely Interpersonal, Ideational, and the Textual. The study highlights and analyses the literary devices as rhetorical devices, Metaphor, imagery, humour among others, to trace and foreground the meaning of the text. This analysis of a creative language has been done in close relation with the context of situation and Textual Function. The focus of the research has been on the Functional dimension of language. The researcher has used Halliday's Functions as a model where he has focused not only on the structure but also on the Function of language. Although the research has made use of all Meta Functions but has majorly focused on the Textual one. These poems when analysed from the lens of Halliday's framework and with reference to the situational context as well as Textual Function, the researcher has found that the figurative devices are an

essential component of poetry which have significantly played the role of making the language of poetry meaningful and aesthetic.

To bridge the significant gap that exist between the theory and its practice, a researcher Bonifacio Cunanan (2001) from Philippine wrote a dissertation. The same Meta Functions from the Systemic Functional linguistics of Halliday have been used as the research methodology. The researcher has traced this Hallidayan model in a short story which is Afro-American. Here again clause is the unit of linguistic analysis from the lens of Halliday's Meta Functions and the research is descriptive as well as qualitative in nature. While tracing the Textual matter Function the clause has been taken as the messages where the significant focus of analysis has been the theme as well as rheme. This part of analysis highlights the prominent and foregrounded aspects in the text. In addition, while analysing the Interpersonal Meta Function, the clauses have been considered as exchanges and the researcher has analysed the verbal structures and the processes involved with reference to their modality, polarity and finiteness. Lastly, Ideational Meta Function has been analysed where the clauses are considered as representatives.

Here again the categorization of verbal processes is mental, material, verbal, behavioural, existential, and relational. Furthermore, the researcher has characterized circumstances as well as participants in accordance with their transitive and cognitive equivalence. This dissertation has worked as an interface between the literary criticism and linguistic analysis providing an approach for the filtering of information and an unbiased interpretation of stance as well as the narration, contributing to a better comprehension of the fiction. This dissertation manifests a comprehensive description and application of Hallidayan framework, the research was limited to a fictional work where the researcher has analysed a short story. There are a wide range of linguistic data and variety of aspects of this theory which need to be traced and analysed, one such significant gap is that there has been least focus on the study of non-conventional texts like that of newspapers. In addition, the linguists are not much inclined towards the comparative analysis of newspaper articles from different countries as far as the framework of Halliday is concerned. The present research is substantially significant in this regard as it is moving towards the study of non-conventional discourse samples that are newspapers from the perspective of Halliday's Textual Meta Function. Precisely the present research will fill this gap and will trace and comparatively analyse the Textual Meta Functions in the newspaper articles from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the

USA, particularly about the topic of Afghan Peace Process. Moreover, Afghan Peace Process is a recent phenomenon which has grabbed the interest of journalists across the world in general and of these countries in particular, where the journalists from these countries have written insightful articles about it each projecting their own stance. The researcher aims at analysing the diversity in the projection of this stance through language. Hence a comparative analysis of articles about it from the newspapers of three different countries was imperative as far as Hallidayan framework is concerned. This research will give a new dimension to the linguistic researchers in this domain.

2.3 Meta Function in Newspapers

Newspapers perform the communicative purpose through language. The language of newspapers is multifunctional like the language of other discourses. It performs its Function in a wider perspective that is much greater than communicating a piece of information. As Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) believe that the writers or the speakers use the language resource to perform the desired Function through language as the choice of theme and rheme is on their part which they present with the aid of cohesive devices. It is imperative to analyse the text of newspapers from the lens of Meta Functions proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

2.3.1 Analysis of Meta Function in the Newspapers Worldwide

When it comes to the analysis of the text of newspapers, several researches have been carried out across the globe from a variety of perspectives. Aldi Alexander Vinchristo (2022) carried out research on the newspaper editorials of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, a newspaper published in Sydney. The researcher has analysed the Interpersonal Meta Function within the appraisal theory as framework, where the researcher has analysed the mood in the language of the sample newspaper through the lens of Morris, Bylsma, and Rottenberg (2009); Sheppes et al. (2014). Moreover, the study has analysed Modalization by Divers (1999) and Friedman (2005), and Attitude from the perspective of Cattani et al. (2005) under appraisal theory. This study has investigated these Meta Functions in the business news in terms of attitude, modality and mood. The researcher has found that, the number of interrogative clauses is significantly higher than the declarative clauses. Moreover, the positive clauses in terms of showing probability have been used more often than the negative clauses and appreciation clauses have been used more frequently than the judgement ones.

Wada et al. (2019) conducted a study which analysed the newspaper headlines of the Nigerian newspapers from the lens of the Meta Functions. The research has focused on the construction of these headlines and how these Meta Functions guide the technicalities of these headlines. This descriptive research has found that the headlines of the Nigerian newspapers do not make use of references and conjunction, which are the devices of cohesion within the Textual Meta Function. Moreover, the researchers assert that all three Meta Function play a significant role in the construction of the headlines in Nigerian newspapers. The focus of the study is headlines, and the researcher has analysed the newspapers from Nigeria alone.

Hidayah et al. (2023) have analysed the education related news in the Indonesian newspapers from the lens of Meta Function for the identification and analysis of topical, Textual and Interpersonal themes. The qualitative analysis has found that the topical themes are more significant in these newspapers as compared to the Interpersonal themes. The topical themes communicate the information through simple structure; thus, the Indonesian authors tend to use this theme quite often. Madjdi and Nurcahyo (2014) analysed the Indonesian newspapers to examine the importance of the context of situation influencing the language and its use. The framework of the study is Systemic Functional Linguistics, and this research has focused on the Ideational meaning in the newspaper headlines of the Jakarta Newspaper.

Hutabarat et al. (2020) analysed the newspapers for the COVID-19 related news. The qualitative study has been carried out from the lens of Ideational Meta Function by Halliday (1985) under Systemic Functional Linguistics. The researcher has traced the process types, circumstances and the participants in the clauses related to COVID-19. The study has found that the dominant type of process is material, similarly the actor is the dominant participant and extent circumstance is the dominant circumstance. The review of the above-mentioned studies reveal that insignificant work has been done when it comes to the analysis of Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) in the language of newspapers, particularly the comparative analysis of the newspapers from different countries. The present research is significant in this regard as it analyses comparatively the newspaper articles from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA about Afghan Peace Process using the framework of Textual Meta Function. The present study analyses comparatively these newspapers for the projection of stance through language.

2.3.2 Analysis of Meta Function in Pakistani Newspapers

Research using the discourse of newspapers as a sample was conducted by Saira Asad, Siti Noor Fazelah Binti Mohd Noor and Lutfan Bin Jaes (2019), where the researchers have tried to probe into the language of Pakistani newspapers to trace and analyse the linguistic representation of 100 days of PTI. The theoretical framework for this analysis is Critical Discourse Analysis by Norman Fairclough and a few aspects from Ideational Meta Function proposed by Michael Halliday. Consequent to the mediatization of politics, the political actors and their speeches are presented through the ideological lens of newspapers. The study has probed the language of Pakistani newspapers to figure out the hidden meaning behind the text, in order to analyse the linguistic representation of the performance of this very political party. The sample newspapers for this study are Dawn and The News newspapers, where the researchers have collected the relevant data from the online websites of these newspapers.

This qualitative research has analysed the language of both newspapers for the same phenomenon and has come to the conclusion that, Dawn as an independent newspaper has represented the news in hard news by quoting the actual happenings and sayings. In comparison The News has come up with previous government's performance with a more positive representation of their achievements as compared to 100 days of PTI performance. It is quite evident from this research that language plays a significant role in the presentation of a phenomenon and the construction of meaning. This research was delimited to the study of two newspapers and has traced these newspapers from the perspective of Fairclough as a major theoretical framework while Halliday's framework has not been focused to a significant extent as the researchers have only analysed Ideational Function.

Raza et al. (2020) has analysed the Pakistani newspaper editorials for the frame markers under Interpersonal model proposed by Hyland (2005). The research has found that the sample Pakistani newspapers use frame markers to a greater extent in an attempt to contextually create the meaning in the minds. Meerab and Siddique (2022) analysed the English newspaper editorials from Pakistan from the lens of Hyland (2005). The study has examined these editorials for the frequency of boosters used as hyperbole which is an obvious exaggeration. It has been found that the authors use the boosters comprising of a single word quite often. Moreover, these boosters tend to influence and engage the readers.

Ekhteyar and Umrani (2021) analysed the English newspapers of Pakistan for the analysis of transitivity under the Ideational Meta Function by Halliday in an attempt to examine the discursive features and the constructions based on ideology. The study analyses the articles about CPEC and evaluates the economical aspect of the CPEC. The study reveals that through the use of linguistic devices, the presentation of CPEC in the Pakistani print media is as a subject with significant importance in economical perspective. The studies on the text of newspapers from Pakistan have been done from a wide range of perspectives using different models, less heed has been paid to the analysis of newspapers from the Textual Meta Functions of Halliday (1985). Moreover, the text of Pakistani newspapers has not been compared with the English newspapers from other countries from the perspective of Textual Meta Function by Halliday (1985).

2.3.3 Comparative Analysis of Newspapers

A comparison of two or more entities which is carried side by side in an attempt to highlight the similarities and difference between both is referred to as comparative analysis. Several texts and subjects have been under comparison as far as the field of linguistics is concerned. The discourse of newspapers is also of significant importance when it comes to comparative analysis. Ghani et al. (2022) carried out a comparative analysis between the newspaper editorials from Pakistan and UK about the pandemic of COVID-19. The framework of this quantitative study is Ideational Meta Function by Halliday under SFL. The study reveals the variation in the construction of ideology in these editorials regarding COVID 19. Moreover, it reveals that material process that shows the process of happening is the highest among all transitivity processes examined in these editorials.

Spina (2013) analysed comparatively the online and printed newspapers in Italy. The researcher has analysed the news as a mode of conversation from the perspective of Interpersonal Meta Function of Halliday (1985). The study evaluates the variation in the online and printed news performing the role as a conversation between the reader and the writer. Aurangzeb et al. (2021) conducted a comparative analysis of newspaper headlines about Panama leaks from English and Urdu newspapers of Pakistan. This qualitative study uses the theoretical model of Anabela Carvehlo (2008) and analyses the headlines at two levels that are contextual and Textual level. The study reveals that the headlines don't project the opinion of public and there is disparity in the presentation of the event by English and Urdu newspapers.

Zhang et al. (2020) conducted a comparative study of newspaper headlines in ASEAN countries, China, USA and the UK. The study analyses the construction of news headlines and its relation with the linguistic factors mainly parts of speech and the frequency of the most common words. The results show variation in the use of parts of speech and the most common vocabulary and its frequency that manifest itself as the country changes. Jalilifar (2010) conducted a contrastive analysis of English newspaper headlines published in native contexts and non-native ones. The researcher conducted a syntactic and stylistic analysis of newspaper headlines of *Tehran Times* and *New York Times* from the lens of Haixin's (2003) model where the results revealed the syntactic and stylistic differences evident in the headlines of both newspapers. Moreover, the second part of the research has analysed the translations of these headlines which revealed that the participants faced difficulty in translating the headlines of *New York Times* as compared to that of the *Tehran Times* owing to the contextual implication in the comprehension of the language.

The comparative studies of English newspapers have been carried out from a range of perspectives, least work has been done as far as the Meta Function of language by Halliday (1985) are concerned. The comparative analysis of the newspapers from different countries from the lens of Halliday's (1985) Textual Meta Function is of significant importance. The present study aims to fill this gap and analyses comparatively the newspaper articles about Afghan Peace Process from three countries that are Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA. The study examines the text of these newspapers to analyse the diversity in the projection of stance through language.

2.4 Analysis of Afghan Peace Process

Afghan Peace Process refers towards the efforts to bring peace in Afghanistan through negotiations between the US and the Afghan Taliban, followed by the dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban. The series of negotiations started in 2018 where the USA appointed Zalmay Khalilzad as their representative in the negotiations with the Taliban. After series of talks, a deal was signed on 29th February 2020 between the US and Afghan Taliban which followed persistent talks between the parties of the deal. This peace process has been studied from a wide range of perspectives. Albonia (2022) conducted an analysis of Afghan newspapers to examine the linguistic representation of the Afghan Taliban presented before the power change and the same after it. The study has used Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse

Analysis and reveals the variation in the linguistic representation of the subject under discussion. Sohail and Ali (2021) analysed the coverage of this peace process in the Pakistani print media. The research uses Galtung's (1985; 2003) peace journalism approach and Goffman's framing (1974) as the framework of study. The research reveal that the war frames dominated these newspapers as compared to the peace frames and the journalism is more war oriented.

Khan (2023) examines the depiction of this peace process in the print media of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA through semantic prosody. While using the Stubbs' (1996) model of prosody, the researcher examines the point of view of each newspaper. The study reveals that these newspapers portray the same issue differently depending upon their interests. Saeed et al. (2021) analysed the print media of Afghanistan for photographs related to war and peace. The analysis is based on the approaches of journalism about war and peace. The findings reveal portrayal of war and peace through photographs in the context of the peace process. Moreover, it has been found that the peace photographs have been presented more frequently than the war photographs which manifest the optimistic approach towards the peace process and its prospects. Among the range of studies in the context of Afghan Peace Process, the linguistic academia didn't show much inclination towards the comparative analysis of this phenomenon in the newspapers from the lens of Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The research is significant as the text of newspapers play an important role in the projection of any phenomenon. It is on the part of the writer who makes specific linguistic choices and chooses the theme and rheme to present a specific stance through newspaper articles. The present research fills this significant gap and analyses comparatively the articles from the newspapers of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA from the perspective of Textual Meta Function. The comparative study analyses the text of these newspapers to highlight and analyse the diversity in the projection of stance using the language resource.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter elaborates the methodology of the present research where the researcher discusses the research design, the method of the present research, research sample, theoretical framework for the study, data collection methods and data analysis procedures. The chapter gives a detailed explanation of the framework for the present study where the researcher elaborates all important aspects of the framework that serve as the lens for the present study. The chapter elaborates the design of the study and sheds light on the collection of data with significant explanation of the methods of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The research design for present research is such that, the researcher has done a qualitative descriptive study of the sample text, where the unit of analysis is clause. A descriptive qualitative design involves collection and analysis of data in the form of words or sentences. This method does not use numerical data and allows the researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of a certain phenomenon. It involves a detailed description and analysis of data under study using language. While doing an in-depth qualitative analysis of the text, the researcher tries to analyse the Textual Meta Function of language in the newspaper articles about Afghan Peace Process. This analysis focuses on selection and progression of theme and rheme patterns along with the study of lexical and grammatical cohesion within the discourse of newspaper articles which perform the role in presenting the clauses as messages. In addition, the researcher highlights and analyses the variation in theme, rheme and cohesion patterns in the newspaper articles of three different countries and the way it is used by these authors in order to project their stance. This study analyses comparatively this Meta Function in the newspaper articles from three different countries that are Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the USA. The researcher has taken two newspapers from each country where four articles have been collected from each newspaper that are opinion articles. The selection of the opinion articles is based on the degree of relevance to the topic that is Afghan peace process. The sample newspapers from Afghanistan are *Afghanistan Times* and *The Kabul Times* owing to their large readership and ease of access to everyone. The sample newspapers from the USA are *The New York Times* and *USA Today* and those from Pakistan are *The News* and *Dawn* newspaper. The selection of newspapers is based

on their wide readership and popularity. The time frame for the sampling is between August 2019 and September 2021, which comprises of two years. It is the time when Afghan peace negotiations were going on and the parties of the deal were engaged in the series of talks that are the talks of the Afghan parties with the US and later intra Afghan dialogue.

3.2 Research Method

The research is descriptive content analysis as the researcher studies the text of newspapers from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the USA about the phenomenon of Afghan Peace Process in the light of Halliday's framework. The researcher traces and analyses the text of these newspaper from the lens of Textual Meta Function proposed by Halliday. This analysis is carried out by tracing and analysing the choice of theme and rheme and the patterns of their progression. Moreover, the study analyses cohesive devices in the text of these newspapers which present the text as a unified message. In addition to this the researcher analyses comparatively the diversity in the patterns of theme, rheme and the lexical and grammatical cohesion and the way these are manipulated in order to present a specified stance through language.

3.3 Population of the Study

As the present research is based on descriptive qualitative analysis, so the meticulous selection of the population of the study is significant as the results need to be generalized for the broader population. The population for the present study is the opinion articles from the newspapers of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA published during the course of Afghan Peace talks, where the sample time frame is from August 2019 till September 2021. The research is based on the qualitative analysis of the sample text which has been done manually, the researcher has selected four articles from each newspaper that become 24 articles in total. Precisely, the population of present study is opinion articles from *Afghanistan Times*, *The Kabul Times*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The News* and *Dawn* newspapers published during the course of peace talks referred to as Afghan Peace Process. The study analyses 4 articles from each newspaper, which collectively become 24 articles. These 24 opinion articles constitute the population of the present study that provide the targeted and relevant data for the analysis.

3.4 Research Sample

The samples for this study are newspaper articles from the newspapers of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the USA, where the researcher has taken two newspapers from each country as sample of the study. The researcher analyses the articles from *Afghanistan Times* and *The Kabul Times* which are the leading newspapers of Afghanistan. In addition, the American Newspapers for this study are, *The New York Times* and *USA Today*. Lastly, the sample newspapers from Pakistan are *The News* and *Dawn* newspaper. These newspapers have been selected owing to their wide readership and popularity. The researcher has done selective sampling by choosing the articles about Afghan Peace Process published between August 2019 and September 2021. The selected time frame is the period when the peace negotiations between the Afghan Taliban, Afghan government and the US were taking place in full swing and these newspapers were publishing analysis-based articles on the topic. Keeping the time constraint in mind, the researcher has studied four articles from each newspaper as sample of the study. The selection of the articles is based on the relevance to the Afghan peace process, where the selected articles are the most relevant ones which have been published during the sample time frame. The sample articles are the opinion articles from each newspaper under study.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The study is based on the qualitative analysis of the text of the newspapers where the researcher has taken two newspapers from each country that are Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA. The selection of newspapers is based on the readership and popularity. As far as the procedure of data collection is concerned the researcher has taken four opinion articles from the official websites of each newspaper. The newspapers under the present study are renowned newspapers in the respective countries and the official websites are up to date and offer an open access to the readers. The official websites of the newspapers show the archive folder that comprises of the newspapers from previous years. The researcher of the present study has collected the relevant articles from the archive of each newspaper. The collection of articles is based on the relevance to the topic and the publication within the sample time frame that is from August 2019 till September 2021. The key words such as Afghan Peace Process, Afghan Peace Deal, among others have been used for searching the relevant articles. After collection of the relevant articles as sample, the researcher has collected the

clauses for the analysis under the theoretical framework. The sampling of the clauses is such that the researcher has taken the most relevant clauses which are in line with the main theme and reflect the stance of the author.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The present study is based on the descriptive qualitative analysis of the sample text that is newspaper articles about Afghan Peace Process from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA. The procedure of data analysis is such that, the researcher has collected sample articles from the six newspapers that are *Afghanistan Times* and *The Kabul Times* which are the leading newspapers of Afghanistan. In addition, the American Newspapers for this study are, *The New York Times* and *USA Today*. Lastly, the sample newspapers from Pakistan are *The News* and *Dawn* newspaper. The researcher has further collected sample clauses from these articles, as the unit of analysis for the present research is clause. The selection of clauses is based on the relevance to the main topic that is Afghan Peace Process and the depiction of stance of the author. The researcher has done content analysis of these clauses from the lens of Halliday's (1985) Textual Meta Function of language under the broader framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Firstly, the researcher of the present study analyses the selection of theme and rheme of the clause by the author which is followed by the analysis of the progression pattern of the same theme and rheme. Moreover, the analysis focuses on the foregrounding and backgrounding of aspects in the clauses through the presentation of given and new information in the form of theme and rheme of the clause. Secondly, the study analyses the lexical and grammatical cohesion of the sample clause which presents it in unification with the text and the context. Furthermore, the researcher analyses the clause for the projection of stance through language where the theme, rheme and the cohesive devices work in unity to present an idea or a particular stance. After analysis of the individual clauses of articles from each country's newspapers, the researcher has compared the same aspects and the findings in the articles from the newspapers of three countries that are Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA to draw the conclusion.

3.7 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for present study is Halliday's model of Meta Function of language which has its origin in Systemic Functional Linguistics. Among the three Meta Functions proposed by Michael Halliday, the researcher of present study

is focusing on Textual Meta Function alone which has been presented by Michael Halliday in 1985 in his book “An Introduction to Functional Grammar”, and its modifications by Halliday and Hasan in later years. Within Textual Meta Function, the researcher aims at analysing the selection and progression patterns of theme and rheme. In addition to this, the researcher aims at tracing the aspects of lexical and grammatical cohesion presented by Halliday and co-authored by Ruqaiya Hasan, in the book *Cohesion in English* originally published in 1976. The same phenomenon has been discussed by Halliday in 1985 and later revised in the 4th edition of his book *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, published in 2014. Within the linguistic academia, the formal approach to analyse language prevails widely but Michael Halliday (1970, 1973, 1975, 1978) believes this approach to be inadequate when it comes to the intended purpose that the speaker aims to achieve through language. He asserts that the speaker’s knowledge of his language surpasses the boundaries of the structure. The speaker tends to use the resources of his language in order to perform variety of Functions. When a person says something, he wants to achieve a communicative purpose or perform a Function. Every linguistic utterance does a variety of things at once, which emphasizes the idea that an adult’s language is multifunctional (Halliday and Hasan, 1989). These Functions of language are referred to as Meta Functions broadly categorized into three types that are Ideational, Textual and Interpersonal.

The Ideational Meta Function consists of two components, the logical component and the experiential one. The experiential Meta Function serves as the resource people draw on to interpret the happenings of the world. This experience is of the physical world as well as that of the inner world of their beliefs, consciousness, feelings and reflections. Our language acts as a resource for the interpretation of classes of qualities, quantities, things, doings and happenings, that imply participants and circumstances. These resources in the form of language help people to construct complex scenarios into groups and those groups into clauses. On the other hand, the logical Function is the resource people draw on to interpret and formulate relations of events and phenomena. The Interpersonal Meta Function serves as a resource, people use to form and maintain social relations that is for expressing social roles including the role of communication.

The third Function is referred to as Textual Meta Function which is the lens of analysis for the present research. It is the resource people use to construct the

situationally relevant texts or discourse. It enables people to differentiate between a unified text from a random set of sentences or clauses. The Textual Meta Function deals with the clause as a message. When language is used in a social context speakers of that language decide about the given and new information. Moreover, speakers or writers also indicate the departure point of any text, referred to as the theme and the exposition of that departure that is called rheme, defined and elaborated by Halliday and Hasan (1985) within the Textual Meta Function of language. The theme is that element of a clause or sentence which the speaker selects in order to ground what he wants to say. It basically originates the message. Theme initiates the clause, sets the scene and places it in relation to the text, that unfolds in the rheme. Rheme is the part of a clause or a sentence, where the theme develops.

It is to say that the writers and the speakers choose the theme and rheme they desire and according to (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014) this structure of theme and rheme relates to the information structure in SFL which is related to the components referring to the information that has been Given and the other component of the New information. This Given and New information may vary in such a way that the given information may extend and continue in more than one clause, while at the same time these units of the given and new information align with the theme and rheme respectively. It is the speaker or the writer who decides the structure of theme and rheme as well as the information structure of the given and new. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) infer that within any scenario or context, the speaker or the writer may exploit the whole system in order to produce a variety of effects on listener or the reader. Precisely, they say that the people play with the language structures and manipulate this system. This system of theme and rheme in relation to the given and new information may be manipulated to achieve the desired results.

An aspect of the Textual Meta Function sheds light on the relation of various parts of discourse, that is, it deals with the cohesion and coherence of the text which is concerned with the concept that how the various parts of discourse relate to each other coherently. This system of lexicogrammatical cohesion has been discussed by Halliday and Hasan in the work *Cohesion in English* in 1976. The components of lexical and grammatical cohesion presented in this book were later modified in 1985 and in 2014 by Halliday and Matthiessen. This part of framework creates relevance between the parts of what is said and between the text and the context of the situation. Precisely, this Meta Function breathes life into the language and gives it a sense of realness, texture

and cohesion. (Halliday and Hasan, 1985, 1989). Cohesion is broadly divided into lexical and grammatical. Conjunction, reference, substitution and ellipsis fall in the category of grammatical cohesion. The cohesive devices of collocation, repetition, synonym and hyponym fall within the lexical cohesion.

Conjunction establishes a link between the clauses, while reference establishes a connection between elements that are the things and the facts. Reference is categorized as anaphoric, cataphoric and exophoric, where anaphoric one refers backwards in the text or speech, cataphoric one refers towards the reference in the upcoming clauses. While exophoric reference points outward from the speech or the text. While reference creates connections between elements, the cohesive devices of ellipsis and substitution operate at another level that is of 'wording'. Ellipsis leaves out the words or parts of a clause, which can be inferred from the previous text, in order to create cohesion in the discourse. The other category of cohesion mentioned as lexical cohesion occurs as a result of lexical choices that are through the use of synonym, substituting a word with another word carrying a similar meaning, or through the use of hyponym in which a term refers to a subcategory of a general class. Moreover, collocation and repetition are also used as instances of lexical cohesion. (Halliday, Hasan & Matthiessen, 1976, 1985, 2014).

The researcher analyses the Textual Meta Function in sample newspaper articles where the unit of analysis is clause. The researcher traces this Meta Function while analysing the selection and progression patterns of theme and rheme. In addition, the researcher analyses the cohesion patterns that are grammatical as well as lexical within the language of these newspapers. From the lens of Halliday's Textual Meta Function, the researcher is analysing the diversity in the projection of same phenomenon by newspapers from different countries as according to Halliday and Matthiessen (1985, 2014) the language structures of theme, rheme and given and new information along with the use of cohesive devices are chosen by the authors and the speakers in order to achieve desired results. The researcher aims at analysing comparatively, newspapers from three different countries that are Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the analysis and discussion of the data from three countries that are Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA. The data is in the form of articles from the leading newspapers of these countries, where the unit of analysis is clause. The first section of this chapter analyses the sample newspapers from Afghanistan that are *Afghanistan Times* and *The Kabul Times*. The next second section analyses the articles from Pakistani newspapers that are *THE NEWS* and *DAWN* newspapers. The third section analyses the articles from the popular newspapers from the USA that are *New York Times* and *USA Today*. The last section of this chapter discusses and compares the articles from the three countries. The framework of analysis is the Textual Meta Function proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

4.1 Afghanistan

The first country under discussion is Afghanistan, the researcher has chosen two newspapers from Afghanistan as a sample. The two newspapers, *Afghanistan Times* and *Kabul Times* are the leading newspapers of Afghanistan. These newspapers attract a wide range of readers and influence the public to a greater extent. The researcher analyses these two newspapers from the lens of Textual Meta Function.

4.1.1 Afghanistan Times

The present research analyses Textual Meta Functions in the newspaper articles from three countries that are Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA. The researcher analyses the choice of theme and rheme and the pattern of their progression in shaping a stance. Moreover, the researcher also analyses the lexical and grammatical cohesion that not only present the text as unified whole but also aid in shaping a scenario and developing a perspective. The first article under discussion, *The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power* authored by Ayesha Khurram, is from *Afghanistan Times*, a leading newspaper of Afghanistan.

Table 1

Clause 1: *The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power* by Ayesha Khurram

Complete article has been attached as Article 1 in the appendix A.

Theme	Rheme
“After 18 months of talks” (Khurram, 2020, para. 1).	“and nearly two decades of war” (Khurram, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information	New Information
Exophoric Reference	Exophoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion.

The very first clause of the article develops the scenario by serving as a topic sentence where the researcher mentions the time frame of peace talks. The first part serves to be the theme of this clause as it is the departure point, as identified by Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), where the author foregrounds the prolonged talks in the context of anticipated peace in Afghanistan. The reference of the peace talks is an external one termed as exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The author tries to establish a point of view in this context as the theme reaches its exposition in the form of rheme. In order to connect the rheme of the clause with the preceding theme the author uses a coordinating conjunction “and” (Khurram, 2020), as a device of grammatical cohesion. This conjunction connects the two ideas that are the 18 months of peace talks and the new information, “two decades of war” (Khurram, 2020), which preceded these talks. Here the reader comes to get a glimpse of the backdrop of the whole scenario of Afghan peace process and the destruction the Afghans have faced in the form of decades of war.

The coordinating conjunction serving as a cohesive device here, performs the Textual Meta Function of language and presents the background and the current scenario as a unified whole in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). In addition, the rheme of this clause is also an exophoric reference as the author mentions the two decades of war which is a reference outside of this text that is the reference towards the past scenario. This exophoric reference also adds to grammatical cohesion of the text and aids the theme and rheme in developing a scenario and foregrounding a stance for the readers of this Afghan

newspaper. Here the writer propagates the idea that there has been a lot of destruction and suffering in the backdrop of this peace deal.

Table 2

Clause 2: *The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power* by Ayesha Khurram

Theme	Rheme
“An historic deal” (Khurram, 2020, para. 1).	“was signed between United States and Taliban on February 29 th 2020” (Khurram, 2020, para. 1).
New Information	Grammatical Cohesion (Conjunction)

As the rheme of the clause 1 closes on the mention of war, the very next clause gives us a new information and another theme develops, where the researcher mentions the deal as an historic one. This expression of “An historic deal” (Khurram, 2020), tells a lot about the stance of an Afghan author as this was the fruit of their patience. The readers can get an idea about the suffering from the Textual Function performed by the previous clause where the author of this newspaper has foregrounded the war in the backdrop of the peace deal and the lexical and grammatical cohesion, as discussed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), has presented both ideas as a whole. The theme of this clause develops in the form of rheme where the reader is given new information about the parties of the peace deal that are the US and the Afghan Taliban. The two parties of the deal have been connected using a coordinating conjunction “and” (Khurram, 2020), that is a device of grammatical cohesion and performs the Textual Meta Function.

Table 3

Clause 3: *The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power* by Ayesha Khurram

Theme	Rheme
“which provide” (Khurram, 2020, para. 1).	“a glimmer of hope” (Khurram, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information, Anaphoric Reference	New Information

The theme of this clause is the given information and starts with an anaphoric reference, as identified by Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), towards the previous clauses by using the word “which”

(Khurram, 2020). This word “which” (Khurram, 2020), is referred to as substitution, a device of lexical cohesion, as it substitutes the peace deal mentioned in the previous clause. Substitution serves the purpose of cohesion in the text, here the author has substituted the peace deal with “which” (Khurram, 2020) in order to connect the clauses and present the text as a unit. This theme develops as a rheme and sheds light on the stance of the journalist where she mentions that this peace deal is a ray of hope for the people of Afghanistan. As Halliday (1985) regards the rheme as the exposition of the theme, here the journalist has also developed her stance and the anaphoric reference of peace deal reaches its exposition in the second part of the clause and foregrounds the importance of the deal for innocent Afghans. The reader gets an idea that the deal is a ray of hope for every Afghan owing to the sufferings endured by them in the past decades. It is very evident that the Afghan journalist has highlighted the deal in the background of a broader picture of Afghan war.

Table 4

Clause 4: *The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power* by Ayesha Khurram

Theme	Rheme
“that the long and brutal war in Afghanistan” (Khurram, 2020, para. 1).	“may finally be getting to an end” (Khurram, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information, Anaphoric Reference	Conjunction, New Information

The same stance continues as the researcher moves to the next clause. The theme of this clause sheds light on the given information, the war on terror in Afghanistan, by starting the clause with the cohesive devices. The use of lexical and grammatical cohesion connects this theme with the rheme of the previous one and creates relevance in the discourse in addition to manifesting a particular stance, as identified by Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). In the above-mentioned clause, “that” (Khurram, 2020) is used as an anaphoric reference as it connects the idea of hope with the following scenario that an Afghan expects from the deal as the writer mentions that it may end the long war that has already brought massive destruction. The theme stating the given information about the war that it was brutal and played havoc on lives of Afghans clearly tells the Afghan side of the story as

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) mention that the writers or speakers can play with the theme and rheme and manifest their stance. The theme of the clause under discussion develops into rheme and sheds light on the hope each Afghan has from the deal that this war may end.

Table 5

Clause 5: *The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power* by Ayesha Khurram

Theme	Rheme
“that there could be a potential settlement and solution” (Khurram, 2020, para. 1).	“to the longest and deadliest war in the modern history of Afghanistan” (Khurram, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information	New Information
Anaphoric Reference and Conjunction	Conjunction

The above-mentioned clause initiates as a nominal clause where the theme presents us the given information by connecting the hope of solution and settlement with the background of the peace deal mentioned in the preceding clauses. Here again the theme of the clause begins with “that” (Khurram, 2020), which serves the purpose of grammatical cohesion and connect the theme with the theme and rheme of the previous clauses. It aids in creating relevance between parts of the text as Halliday (1985) asserts that the cohesive devices create relevance among the parts of discourse. The theme of the clause reaches exposition when the author gives us some new information in the form of rheme, where she foregrounds and reinforces the idea that the war in Afghanistan was the deadliest and the longest one in the history. The use of a coordinating conjunction ‘and’ in the phrase “longest and deadliest” (Khurram, 2020), ensures grammatical cohesion and reinforces the stance of the author. Moreover, this phrase also serves the purpose of lexical cohesion as it is an example of the cohesive device of collocation. Collocation aids in establishing a firm stance and reinforcing it. This clause once again manifests a presentation of pro Afghan scenario, as the selection of theme and rheme through the mentioning of the hope for settlement, the progression pattern of the given and new information, along with the cohesive devices of collocation and grammatical cohesion, which relate this clause to the previous ones, reinforce the stance of hope that the brutal war may end.

Table 6

Clause 6: *The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power* by Ayesha Khurram

Theme	Rheme
“but the following events proved that” (Khurram, 2020, para. 1).	“the hope for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan might turn to be just another false dawn” (Khurram, 2020, para. 1).
Conjunction and Exophoric Reference, Given Information	Cataphoric Reference, New Information

This clause develops its beginning by the use of a coordinating conjunction “but” (Khurram, 2020) which not only connects the ideas but gives the reader hint about the possibilities and prospects for Afghans, consequent to this deal. The theme of the clause gives the readers an exophoric reference, when the journalist mentions “the following events” (Khurram, 2020). This reference serves the Function of grammatical cohesion and connects the scenario presented in the article with an outside reference. Here the author has hinted about the issues in Afghanistan in the context of the peace deal that are the intra Afghan conflicts that are expected to surface as soon as the US exits. The rheme of the same clause tells the reader that owing to these conflicts the hopes from this peace deal might fade away, this is also a reference towards the latter clauses, termed as cataphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). By foregrounding the idea of conflicts in the theme and developing the rheme with the mention of hopelessness as a consequence, the author wants to project the idea that the peace deal is not only about hopes and promising future for Afghans but there is more to the picture. Here again the clause serves the Textual Function and communicates a stance from the perspective of an Afghan, in addition to presenting the text as whole.

Table 7

Clause 7: *The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power* by Ayesha Khurram

Theme	Rheme
“The ongoing political crisis among Afghan leaders” (Khurram, 2020, para. 2).	“caused by the parallel inauguration on March 9th...” (Khurram, 2020, para. 2).
Exophoric Reference, New Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information

This clause states the details of the idea of the anticipated problems consequent to the peace deal mentioned earlier. The theme foregrounds the foremost anticipated issue that is the political crisis that might upsurge after the US exits. This new information unfolds within the rheme of the clause, which highlights the reason of the political crisis by giving an exophoric reference of “inauguration on March 9th” (Khurram, 2020). This clause again presents the phenomenon of peace deal from the lens of an Afghan and the language used clearly performs its Textual Function presenting the concept as a unified idea and projecting the stance of the journalist.

Table 8

Clause 8: *The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power* by Ayesha Khurram

Theme	Rheme
“Pre-conditions” (Khurram, 2020, para. 2).	“that block the path towards intra-Afghan negotiations” (Khurram, 2020, para. 2).
Exophoric Reference	Anaphoric reference

By starting the clause with an exophoric reference that is “pre-conditions” (Khurram, 2020), which is an external reference, mentioning the political turmoil and distress in the internal politics of Afghanistan. The author of the article under discussion mentions these pre-conditions as a theme of the clause which unfolds in the rheme where the author connects the two scenarios and theme reaches its exposition where the researcher mentions that the internal politics of Afghanistan and its troubles resulted in a blockade in the intra-Afghan talks and the solution. While analysing the progression pattern of the theme and rheme of this clause, one gets the idea that the Afghan journalist is not only talking about the peace deal and its prospects but she is also foregrounding a bigger picture in this scenario by mentioning the problems within the politics of Afghanistan that are expected to surface right after the US and its allies leave the country and its politics. Moreover, within the rheme of the clause the grammatical cohesion plays the role and through the use of “that”, the author connects the rheme with the theme of this clause as well as with the previous one by using an anaphoric reference. “Intra-Afghan negotiations” (Khurram, 2020). This serves as a cohesive device, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and

Matthiessen (2014), as it refers back to the talks and issues within the politics of Afghanistan that has been identified and elaborated in the preceding clauses.

Table 9

Clause 9: *The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power* by Ayesha Khurram

Theme	Rheme
“and the global outbreak” (Khurram, 2020, para. 2).	“of COVID-19” (Khurram, 2020, para. 2).
Grammatical Cohesion (Conjunction)	Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

The theme of this clause starts with an instance of grammatical cohesion through the use of a coordinating conjunction “and” (Khurram, 2020). This conjunction not only connects this clause with the previous one and establishes cohesive unity but also aids in initiating another piece of information in the same context. The theme of the clause foregrounds another important aspect in the backdrop of hindrance in intra-Afghan talks or negotiations. This idea reaches its exposition, and the reader comes to know about a new information that is the “outbreak of COVID-19” (Khurram, 2020). This new information serves as an external reference termed as exophoric reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), which unfolds in the form of rheme and tells the readers about another major cause of delay in the Afghan Peace Process.

Table 10

Clause 10: *The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power* by Ayesha Khurram

Theme	Rheme
“that” (Khurram, 2020, para. 2).	“eclipsed the Afghan Peace Process” (Khurram, 2020, para. 2).
Grammatical Cohesion (Conjunction), Anaphoric Reference	Anaphoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

The new information in the rheme of the preceding clause becomes the given information in the theme of this clause. Here “that” (Khurram, 2020) aids in the grammatical cohesion and continues the preceding phenomenon of COVID-19 and its

role in haltering the peace deal. This theme with its given information unfolds the new information in the rheme of the clause where the author foregrounds that the COVID-19 “eclipsed the Afghan Peace Process” (Khurram, 2020). The above-mentioned clause serves as an anaphoric reference too. Here again the Afghan author foregrounds the issues and hindrances in the peace deal. Throughout these clauses one can also observe the instances of lexical cohesion for example the writer repeatedly talks about the hindrances in the peace deal between US and Afghans.

Table 11

Clause 11: *The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power* by Ayesha Khurram

Theme	Rheme
“are testimonies” (Khurram, 2020, para. 2).	“that the US-Taliban agreement is dead in arrival” (Khurram, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference	(Grammatical Cohesion)
Given Information	New Information

The theme of the clause starts with a given information related to the issues which served as a hindrance in the deal. The clause starts with an instance of lexical cohesion referred to as ellipsis in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The clause starts with “are” (Khurram, 2020), instead of any subject in the form of a noun or a relative pronoun. This ellipsis of the subject aids in cohesion and establishes a logical connection between the issues that eclipsed the deal and the present concept, which the author states in this clause. It highlights that the hindrances and issues surfaced in the previous clauses are testimonies of the idea that this agreement seems dead and the hopes for Afghans are bare minimum in these circumstances. The theme of the clause refers towards the hindrances using the term “testimony” (Khurram, 2020), which is an anaphoric reference and a given information in this clause. This given information unfolds the new idea in the rheme and foregrounds the fears and doubts every Afghan has in the context of the peace deal and the hindrances surfacing in its way. The stance of Afghans has once again been projected through the unfolding of theme and rheme and the cohesion within and between the clauses.

Table 12

Clause 12 and 13: *The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power* by Ayesha Khurram.

Theme	Rheme
“Afghans” (Khurram, 2020, para. 10).	“were guaranteed security, protection and prosperity” (Khurram, 2020, para. 10).
Given Information, Anaphoric Reference	New Information, Grammatical Cohesion
“none of which” (Khurram, 2020, para. 10).	“truly materialized in the US Taliban agreement.” (Khurram, 2020, para. 10).
Given Information	New Information
Substitution and Anaphoric Reference	Anaphoric Reference

This clause concludes with the same stance where the theme has been materialized to foreground the given subject i-e “Afghans” (Khurram, 2020), which is an anaphoric reference, to refer backwards in the text and present the stance of an Afghan with cohesive unity. The rheme share the new information about the promises made with Afghans in the light of the peace process that they will be guaranteed security and prosperity. The nominal theme of the subsequent clause, “none of which” (Khurram, 2020), works as an anaphoric reference and substitutes the guarantees given to Afghans listed in the preceding clause. This theme not only strengthens the writer’s stance but also adds to the cohesion. The rheme of the same clause foregrounds the new information about the idea that these guarantees and securities were never materialized in the US-Taliban agreement. The next article from Afghanistan Times is titled as *Leaving? Take all of your belongings with you* by Rangin Dadfar Spanta. The title itself gives the readers a glimpse of the pattern of upcoming clauses and the stance projected in them.

Table 13

Clause 1 and 2: *Leaving? Take all of your belongings with you* by Rangin Dadfar Spanta.

Complete article has been attached as article 2 in the appendix A.

Theme	Rheme
“Donald Trump” (Spanta, 2019, para. 1).	“stated that Afghanistan is terrorism laboratory” (Spanta, 2019, para. 1).

Theme	Rheme
“The US” (Spanta, 2019, para. 1).	“will keep its intelligence mission active in the country” (Spanta, 2019, para. 1).
Given Information, Exophoric Reference	New Information, Exophoric Reference

The theme of the first clause nominates the subject of the clause that is “Donald Trump” (Spanta, 2019), which is an exophoric reference too as it refers to the president of the USA that is an external reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme talks about his statement where he refers towards the Afghan land as a terrorism laboratory. Subsequent to this idea the next theme again puts forward the given information by mentioning the subject that is the US and the rheme connects the whole idea and gives forward a statement mentioning that the US, which is an anaphoric reference towards the preceding cause, will continue its intelligence activities in Afghanistan. The theme and rheme of these independent clauses perform the Function of establishing a foregrounded information with an external reference to the statement by the then President of the USA, termed as exophoric reference. The Afghan author presents the patterns of information and his stance on this statement through the following patterns of theme with its given information and rheme stating the new information.

Table 14

Clause 3 and 4: *Leaving? Take all of your belongings with you* by Rangin Dadfar Spanta.

Theme	Rheme
“No invitation” (Spanta, 2019, para 2).	was ever sent by the people of Afghanistan for the US to wage a war” (Spanta, 2019, para 2).
Anaphoric Reference, New Information	Anaphoric Reference, New Information
“The US” (Spanta, 2019, para 2).	“was attacked by Al-Qaida in 2001” (Spanta, 2019).

The theme of this clause is nominal in nature, in terms of Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). It refers back to the stay of the US in Afghanistan, thus also works as an anaphoric reference. The complete justification of theme unfolds

in the form of rheme when the author states that the US was never invited to wage a war in Afghanistan. This part of the clause unfolds the new information for the readers that the US waged this war on Afghanistan and the people of Afghanistan never wanted it. Through the unfolding of new information from the idea of the previous information, the author projects the stance of an Afghan here again whose life has been crippled because of this war. The new information of this clause aligns with the preceding clauses as it refers back to them, hence an anaphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme also presents a cataphoric reference towards the next clause that mentions the 9-11 attacks by “Al-Qaida in 2001”. This rheme foregrounds the background of the US waging a war in Afghanistan, hence reinforcing the idea of the first clause that the Afghans didn’t invite the foreign forces rather it was these terrorist attacks that resulted in decades long war in Afghanistan.

Table 15

Clause 5 and 6: *Leaving? Take all of your belongings with you* by Rangin Dadfar Spanta.

Theme	Rheme
“Most of our political elite” (Spanta, 2019, para. 4).	“supported the military presence of the US in Afghanistan” (Spanta, 2019, para. 4).
Exophoric Reference	Anaphoric reference
“This” (Spanta, 2019, para. 4).	“was based on an illusion” (Spanta, 2019, para. 4).
Substitution and Anaphoric Reference	Cataphoric Reference

The same stance continues in the subsequent clauses. The present clause gives an exophoric reference, mentioning the political elite of Afghanistan, which has not been identified earlier in the same article. The rheme presents the new information about the Afghan political elite that some of them are in the favour of US military presence in Afghanistan. This topic of military presence is again an anaphoric reference towards the previous clause, thus aiding in establishing a logical connection between the previous idea about the US continuing its military presence and the present idea that

this stance of the US is supported by some people in Afghanistan. The stance of an Afghan author surfaces again in the upcoming clause.

The theme of the clause 5 begins with “this” (Spanta, 2019), a substitution of the idea that some politicians support the US military presence, this is also an anaphoric reference. Here again the substitution and an explicit anaphoric reference, creates grammatical cohesion between the ideas. The rheme foregrounds the stance of the author and sheds light on the new information in relation to the anaphoric reference in the theme. The author reinforces the idea that the politicians who favour the continued military presence of the US are mistaken to a greater extent and their hopes are based on an illusion. This clause reiterates the stance that Afghans no longer want the presence of foreign forces in the country.

Table 16

Clause 7 and 8: *Leaving? Take all of your belongings with you* by Rangin Dadfar Spanta.

Theme	Rheme
“The illusion” (Spanta, 2019, para. 4).	“was maybe we can create a state based on rule of law” (Spanta, 2019, para. 4).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	New Information
“and we can do it” (Spanta, 2019, para. 4).	“with the US and its allies” (Spanta, 2019, para. 4).
Coordinating Conjunction, Anaphoric Reference	Coordinating Conjunction, Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information.

This clause, through its theme refers back to the previous idea of illusion using an anaphoric reference. The theme is again based on the given information and a pattern of new information unfolds in the rheme through the cohesive unity of the given information. The author yet again projects his stance stating the details of illusion that such politicians believe that through the inclusion of foreign forces, they can ensure the rule of the law.

The next theme in this order sheds light on the same idea of establishing rule of law with the help of foreign forces, thus the author links this clause with the preceding one using a coordinating conjunction “and” (Spanta, 2019) along with an anaphoric

reference using the pronoun “it” (Spanta, 2019) in the theme, which refers towards the rule of law in Afghanistan. The theme here again is based on the given information, and it unfolds another set of new information stating that the rule of law discussed in the preceding clauses will be ensured “with the US and its allies” (Spanta, 2019), that refers towards the “illusion” (Spanta, 2019) discussed in the preceding clause. Here “and” (Spanta, 2019) is again a conjunction adding to the cohesion and connecting two parties i-e the US and allies. Allies is an exophoric reference as it is referring towards the information outside this text in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), thus reinforcing cohesive unity and author’s stance.

Table 17

Clause 9 and 10: *Leaving? Take all of your belongings with you* by Rangin Dadfar Spanta.

Theme	Rheme
“widespread corruption, a war-dependent economy, opium and bribery” (Spanta, 2019, para. 6).	“formed a new aristocratic puppet class in Afghanistan” (Spanta, 2019, para. 6).
New Information, Conjunction	Coordinating New Information
“and added them” (Spanta, 2019, para. 6).	“to pre-existing corruption” (Spanta, 2019, para. 6).
Grammatical Reference	Cohesion, Anaphoric New Information

The nominal theme of the above-mentioned clause sheds light on the implications of the war on the land and people of Afghanistan thus presenting before us a set of new information. Here author lists the consequences, and the cohesion is ensured using the punctuation marks as well as coordinating conjunction “and” (Spanta, 2019). This set of new information continues in the rheme that this corruption, bribery along with other issues created a new aristocratic class in Afghanistan that turned out to be a mere puppet in the hands of the foreigners.

The very next clause starts with a conjunction “and” (Spanta, 2019), thus creating grammatical connection with the previous idea of formation of a new class in

Afghanistan. The theme has an anaphoric reference “them” (Spanta, 2019), which refers back to the aristocratic class thus theme states the given information and creates cohesion between the two clauses. The rheme yet again foregrounds author’s stance, where he mentions that these puppet aristocrats added to the corruption in Afghanistan. Through the pattern of information in these clauses the author wants to highlight his stance that the people who want the inclusion of foreign forces are mere puppets in the hands of the foreigners and they never contributed for the betterment of Afghanistan.

Table 18

Clause 11: *Leaving? Take all of your belongings with you* by Rangin Dadfar Spanta.

Theme	Rheme
“The presence of US intelligence services and troops” (Spanta, 2019, para. 21).	“will ensure neither the security of this country nor a just and patriotic government based on law and justice” (Spanta, 2019, para. 21).
Grammatical Cohesion	Grammatical Cohesion, Conjunctions
Given Information, Anaphoric Reference	New Information

This clause begins with an anaphoric reference in its theme where the continuing presence of US troops in Afghanistan has been mentioned by the author in relation to the previous context, thus the theme is a set of given information in this case. There is also an instance of grammatical cohesion that is the use of a conjunction, “US intelligence services and troops” (Spanta, 2019). The subsequent rheme foregrounds the stance of an Afghan journalist as through the pattern of new information, this part of the clause clearly states that such presence of foreign troops will never ensure the prosperity of the country. Here this idea has been reinforced by the use of conjunctions like “neither” (Spanta, 2019) and “nor” (Spanta, 2019). These devices have created cohesion between two ideas and have presented the scenario, from the lens of an Afghan, as a unified set of ideas. The next article under discussion from the *Afghanistan Times* is titled, as *Ceasefire, A Prerequisite for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan* by Wali Muhammad Alizai.

Table 19

Clause 1 and 2: *Ceasefire, A Prerequisite for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan* by Wali Muhammad Alizai.

Complete article has been attached as article 3 in the appendix A.

Theme	Rheme
“Peace” (Alizai, 2020, para. 1).	“is a grave desire” (Alizai, 2020, para. 1).
“in a conflict-ridden Afghanistan” (Alizai, 2020, para. 1).	“after four decades long ruinous war” (Alizai, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information	Exophoric Reference
Exophoric Reference	Grammatical Cohesion

The first clause under discussion, from this article foregrounds the theme as a given information by mentioning the idea of the peace. This given information leads to a set of new information in the clause where the journalist regards this theme as, “a grave desire” (Alizai, 2020) of the people of Afghanistan. This idea continues and foregrounds the reality where the author states that Afghanistan has been under conflict. The theme of the second clause is the given information and an exophoric reference towards the conflict in Afghanistan. The rheme of the clause takes the help of grammatical cohesion and unifies the idea by stating the long period of this war that is “four decades” (Alizai, 2020). Both these clauses unfold the scenario, and the pattern of information effectively communicates the stance of an Afghan that they have been trapped in a disastrous war and all they need now is peace and prosperity.

Table 20

Clause 3 and 4: *Ceasefire, A Prerequisite for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan* by Wali Muhammad Alizai.

Theme	Rheme
“US-Taliban peace talks” (Alizai, 2020, para. 1).	“would pave path for the prevalence of everlasting peace in the country” (Alizai, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information, Exophoric Reference	New Information, Anaphoric Reference
Theme	Rheme

“Which will ensure” (Alizai, 2020, para. 1).	“stability, development, education and protection of women rights in the country” (Alizai, 2020, para. 1).
Substitution, Anaphoric Reference	New Information

This clause presents to the readers a way towards this peace that serve as the supporting details for the author. The theme mentions the negotiations between both the parties, which is a given information and an anaphoric reference towards the peace process. The rheme unfolds and presents the new information that strengthens the author’s stance that the peace talks are a way towards the anticipated peace. Here again the subject of peace talks is an anaphoric reference towards the preceding clauses that aids in presentation of the scenario and a particular stance.

The clause 4 starts with lexical cohesion i-e substitution, where “which” (Alizai, 2020) is substituted for the peace talks, thus serving as an anaphoric reference and the given information as well. The author talks about the peace talks in the theme and the surety provided by these talks in the rheme of the same clause. The rheme lists the benefits of the deal as the new information in the clause, and foregrounds the idea that education, stability and protection of the rights of women is among the leading outcomes of the peace in Afghanistan. Precisely, throughout the clause, the stance of peace in Afghanistan has been given significant space.

Table 21

Clause 5 and 6: *Ceasefire, A Prerequisite for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan* by Wali Muhammad Alizai.

Theme	Rheme
“Taliban” (Alizai, 2020, para. 2).	“are carrying on peace negotiations with US” (Alizai, 2020, para. 2).
“But are reluctant” (Alizai, 2020, para. 2).	“to sit with the Afghan government, which is main party to the conflict” (Alizai, 2020, para. 2).
Given Information	New Information
Grammatical Cohesion	Substitution

This theme talks about one party of the deal as given information and foregrounds it as a single subject. The journalist unfolds within the rheme that the subject in the theme is a part of the talks with the US. Through this clause and the pattern of the subsequent clause, the author aims to foreground the significance of intra Afghan talks as according to his stance, peace can't be imposed by the outsiders. The second clause in line, starts with a coordinating conjunction "but" (Alizai, 2020), which aids in strengthening the presentation of stance by creating grammatical cohesion. There is an instance of ellipsis in the same theme, as the author has omitted the pronoun from this part of the clause, that is "But are reluctant" (Alizai, 2020). This is again serving the same purpose of presenting a particular and a unified stance. The author unfolds in the rheme that the Afghan Taliban are not ready to sit with the Afghan government although it is a main party in this whole scenario. Same as theme, the instance of substitution also evident in the rheme, where "which" (Alizai, 2020) is substituted for the Afghan government, thus adds to the grammatical cohesion.

Table 22

Clause 7 and 8: *Ceasefire, A Prerequisite for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan* by Wali Muhammad Alizai.

Theme	Rheme
"In order to" (Alizai, 2020, para. 3).	"reach a viable peace agreement" (Alizai, 2020, para. 3).
Anaphoric Reference	Given Information
"Taliban ought to" (Alizai, 2020, para. 3).	"negotiate directly with the Afghan state to discover their own route to solution" (Alizai, 2020, para. 3).
Given Information, Anaphoric Reference	New Information

The theme and rheme of this clause work as an anaphoric reference, by mentioning the "peace agreement" (Alizai, 2020) and sets the ground for the new information in the next clause. The theme of this clause again foregrounds an important party of the deal, that is Taliban, as a given information and anaphoric reference thus referring towards the subject of the preceding clauses. The rheme reveals and strengthens the stance of an Afghan through the presentation of the new

information that the only way to ensure stability in Afghanistan is through intra Afghan peace talks along with the deal with the external parties.

Table 23

Clause 9: *Ceasefire, A Prerequisite for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan* by Wali Muhammad Alizai.

Theme	Rheme
“The first and essential step” (Alizai, 2020, para. 4).	“is to put an end to violence, hostility and bitterness” (Alizai, 2020, para. 4).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	New Information

Here the theme is a given information and talks about the initial step towards peace between the parties in Afghanistan. This is an anaphoric reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as well as it refers towards the idea of the talks between the government and the Afghan Taliban. The rheme reveals the new information and sheds light on the theme by stating that it is imperative to end the bitterness, hostility and violence that reinforces the stance of an Afghan journalist that highlights the steps towards peace and prosperity in the country.

Table 24

Clause 10: *Ceasefire, A Prerequisite for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan* by Wali Muhammad Alizai.

Theme	Rheme
“Non-violent coexistence and trust building” (Alizai, 2020, para. 6).	“would lead Afghan society and the Taliban toward empathy” (Alizai, 2020, para. 6).
Grammatical Cohesion, Anaphoric Reference	Grammatical Cohesion, Coordinating Conjunction
Given Information	New Information

This clause further highlights the stance projected in the preceding clause by the use of anaphoric reference and the device of grammatical cohesion that is “and” (Alizai, 2020). This theme as a given information states that non-violence and trust building,

between the Afghan entities, are among the paramount measures that are required for the peace in Afghanistan. The rheme presents the new information in this sequence and states that this trust building will pave way towards an empathetic society. The rheme also makes use of grammatical cohesion through the use of conjunction “and” (Alizai, 2020). This pattern of theme and rheme, throughout the above-mentioned clauses, aided by cohesive devices reinforces the stance of an Afghan. The author foregrounds the idea that stability in Afghanistan solely lies in the hands of Afghans themselves and not the outsiders.

The country under discussion is Afghanistan and an article from its leading newspaper that is “*Afghanistan Times*”, the article is titled as *Some Afghan Sentiments About Peace Through Media* by Dr. Mateen Royeen.

Table 25

Clause 1, 2 and 3: *Some Afghan Sentiments About Peace Through Media* by Dr. Mateen Royeen.

Complete article has been attached as article 3 in the appendix A.

Theme	Rheme
“Peace” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).	“is the top priority of the Afghan people” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).
Exophoric Reference	Exophoric Reference
“This” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).	“is a good opportunity for peace” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).
Grammatical Cohesion, Exophoric Reference	Anaphoric Reference
“and the Afghans” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).	“will find its way out of the current situation” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).
Grammatical Cohesion, Repetition, Given Information	New Information, Exophoric Reference

The theme of the first clause foregrounds the most significant stance projected throughout the Afghan print media that is hopes for the peace in Afghanistan. The mentioning of “peace” (Royeen, 2020), as the theme of the first clause gives the readers and exophoric reference that is an external reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). This exophoric reference

refers towards the anticipated peace in the context of the decades of war in Afghanistan. The rheme of the same clause sheds light on the aspect of peace and mentions that it is of significant importance for Afghans. The second theme gives another exophoric reference. “This” (Royeen, 2020), refers towards the Afghan Peace Process, and the rheme sheds light on the anticipation from this peace process, as the rheme regards it an opportunity. The third clause begins the theme with a coordinating conjunction “and” that serves the purpose of grammatical cohesion and links the present clause with the preceding one. Moreover, the theme foregrounds the subject of discussion that is “the Afghans”. This is an instance of repetition that adds to the cohesion of the discourse and reinforces the stance even further. The rheme sheds light on an important aspect that the Afghans will be able to find a way out of the chaotic situation. The exophoric references along with the selection patterns of theme and rheme foreground the stance of an Afghan which considers the Afghan Peace as an opportunity for peace and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Table 26

Clause 4 and 5: *Some Afghan Sentiments About Peace Through Media* by Dr. Mateen Royeen.

Theme	Rheme
“Unfortunately, the Afghan leadership” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).	“is trying to kill time” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).
Repetition, Given Information	New Information
“and the Taliban” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).	“have no desire to talk with the Afghan Government” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).
Grammatical Cohesion, Exophoric Reference	New Information

This clause begins its theme with an instance of repetition that mentions the Afghans once again, hence adding to the lexical cohesion of the discourse and communicating the same stance. The theme begins with the given information that mentions the Afghan leadership and the rheme highlights the idea that they are killing time as far as intra Afghan dialogues are concerned. The new information of the rheme develops into the next theme as the theme of the fifth clause begins with a coordinating conjunction “and” (Royeen, 2020), that connects these two clauses and continues to project the same idea that the stakeholders in Afghanistan are wasting time, and they are not taking measures in the context of the intra Afghan dialogue. The theme of the

fifth clause gives an exophoric reference of the Afghan Taliban which is an external reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme highlights the scenario that the Taliban are not willing to engage in the talks with the Afghan government, which is another set of new information. The patterns of information in unison with the cohesive devices communicate the same stance that the peace is of significant importance and all the stakeholders in Afghanistan must take it seriously.

Table 27

Clause 6, 7 and 8: *Some Afghan Sentiments about Peace Through Media* by Dr. Mateen Royeen.

Theme	Rheme
“There is a need” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).	“for the third option to explore peace” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).
Given Information	New Information, Cataphoric Reference
“and this” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).	“belongs to different segments of the Afghan society” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).
Grammatical Cohesion, Anaphoric Reference,	Exophoric Reference, New Information
“Who” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).	“are capable of negotiating peace” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).
Grammatical Cohesion, Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	New Information

The present clause begins with the given information in the context of the point of strained relations between the Afghan government and the Taliban amidst the need of intra Afghan dialogue as a part of Afghan Peace Process. This clause mentions that there is a need of a third party to negotiate the peace. The rheme of the sixth clause is a cataphoric reference that is an upcoming reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The seventh clause begins its theme with an anaphoric reference that refers towards the preceding clauses. It is the given information, it connects with the preceding theme using a coordinating conjunction “and”, the rheme sheds light on this piece of information and reveals that this third party belongs to various segments of society. The next theme mentions the subject of discussion, that is a need of another party, as “who” (Royeen, 2020). This

theme serves as anaphoric reference and connects the present clause with the preceding one. The given information of the theme gives rise to the new information in the rheme that mentions that the third party must be capable of negotiating the peace. Here again the peace has been foregrounded once again as the prominent stance and the sole objective.

Table 28

Clause 9, 10 and 11: *Some Afghan Sentiments about Peace Through Media* by Dr. Mateen Royeen.

Theme	Rheme
“The Afghan Peace” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).	“is beyond Afghan personalities” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).
Repetition, Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	New Information
“It” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).	“is a national discussion about the principles of democracy, constitution and freedom of the press” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	New Information
“That” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).	“should be maintained” (Royeen, 2020, para. 4).
Grammatical Cohesion, Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	New Information

The theme of this clause begins with an anaphoric reference once again that continues the stance of the preceding clause and foregrounds the phenomenon of peace in Afghanistan here again. The given information of the theme mentions the peace in Afghanistan and the new information of the rheme highlights the stance that, it is far beyond these stakeholders. The theme of the tenth clause mentions the given information using the pronoun “it” (Royeen, 2020), as an anaphoric reference, that reinforces the stance even further. The new information of the rheme mentions that this whole peace process is significant for the discussions about the constitution and democracy, among many other important aspects that are important for the country. The

last clause begins the theme with anaphoric reference as the given information. The new information in the rheme completes the idea reiterated in the preceding clauses that is about the democracy and rule of law in the country that it must be maintained. The article under discussion reinforces the stance of an Afghan once again and manifests the importance of intra Afghan dialogue in the country. The author reinforces the stance that the Peace Process is an opportunity for Afghanistan and all the stake holders must engage in a dialogue and work in harmony for the betterment of the country.

4.1.2 *Kabul Times*

Table 29

Clause 1 and 2: *Troop pullout a catastrophe without international assurance* by M. W. Qasemi.

Complete article by M.W. Qasemi has been attached as article 1 in the appendix B.

Theme	Rheme
“Afghans” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 1).	“need international assurance for a security” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 1).
Given Information	New Information
“and permanent stability” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 1).	“after peace agreement is signed with Taliban” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 1).
Grammatical Cohesion, Coordinating Conjunction	Grammatical Cohesion, Cataphoric Reference

The article under discussion is from an Afghan Newspaper titled as Kabul Times. The present clause starts with the given information as theme where there is a clear mention of the subject under discussion that is the Afghans. This given information establishes the ground and the author sheds light on the rheme in order to foreground what these people anticipate from the deal, where the deal has not been mentioned in this clause, thus rheme here again serves as a cataphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The new information in the rheme tells that Afghans require assurance from the negotiators in the context of the peace deal. This idea is the new information in the clause which unfolds in the subsequent theme and rheme. The next theme starts with a coordinating conjunction “and” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 1) which connects this theme that mentions the stability with the previous clause and establishes cohesion. The rheme concludes the context and now the whole idea is a unified whole as it mentions the

peace agreement and its parties. Here the rheme of this clause in relation to those of previous clauses foreground the idea that permanent stability and peace is a prerequisite for a stable Afghanistan.

Table 30

Clause 3 and 4: *Troop pullout a catastrophe without international assurance* by M. W. Qasemi.

Theme	Rheme
“If peace” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3).	“came to Afghanistan” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3).
Anaphoric Reference, Given	Given Information
“Through the ongoing talks” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3).	“between the US and the Taliban” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3).
Grammatical cohesion, Exophoric Reference	Coordinating Conjunction

This clause starts with the anaphoric reference which is a given information. The author mentions the peace in the country which links this clause with the previous one. Both theme and the rheme of this clause establishes a scenario by stating the given information that is anticipation about the peace in Afghanistan. The next theme gives the readers an exophoric reference as it mentions the ongoing peace talks, a reference outside of this text in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Moreover, by starting the theme with a conjunction “through” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3), the author creates relevance between the ideas mentioned in the two clauses. The rheme clarifies the two major parties of the deal yet again that are the Afghan Taliban and the USA. While mentioning the parties of the deal, the author here again uses a coordinating conjunction, and which creates cohesion. The overall pattern of information, with the devices of cohesion present before the reader a unified scenario of the peace deal and the anticipated outcome of it.

Table 31

Clause 5 and 6: *Troop pullout a catastrophe without international assurance* by M. W. Qasemi.

Theme	Rheme
“Then there is a need” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3).	“for a third strong side” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3).
Given Information	New Information
“To guarantee” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3).	“The content of the deals in the long future” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information

This theme refers towards the given information serving as an anaphoric reference as it is in the context of the previous conditional clause about the signing of the deal. The theme talks about the need which has been elaborated in the rheme where the author gives us a new information mentioning the need of a third party. The theme of the next clause continues the same idea, thus serving as an anaphoric reference and given information. The theme gives the reader a hint about the role of the third party which has to guarantee the contents, and the clauses of the deal as elaborated in the rheme. The reference of the contents is an exophoric one as it’s an external reference, thus a new information in the text. This alignment and presentation of exophoric and anaphoric reference gives the reader an insight into the stance of an Afghan author who emphasizes the importance of a long-term guarantee about the contents of this deal.

Table 32

Clause 7 and 8: *Troop pullout a catastrophe without international assurance* by M. W. Qasemi.

Theme	Rheme
“And assure” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3).	“the people of Afghanistan” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3).
Coordinating Conjunction, Given Information	New Information
“That they would never be witnessing” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3).	“bloodshed, targeted assassinations, and high profile killing” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3).

Substitution,	Grammatical Cohesion
Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information

This theme of the seventh clause starts with a coordinating conjunction “and” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3), which connects with the previous idea of the surety from the deal. Thus, the theme is given information in this clause. The grammatical cohesion and presentation of given information gives rise to the new information of the rheme that tells the readers that this guarantee from the deal is significant for the people of Afghanistan, the foregrounded subject in the rheme. The next clause begins the theme with an instance of substitution in the form of the pronoun “they” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3), used instead of “the people of Afghanistan” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 3). This ensures the cohesion in the discourse and foregrounds the stance of an Afghan even further. The theme serves as the given information that gives rise to the new information in the rheme that elaborates and foregrounds the bloodshed and violence in Afghanistan in the form of an exophoric reference, the author highlights that the Afghans need a surety that they would never witness the same violence again. The rheme elaborates the expectations these Afghans have from the deal. By using the devices of grammatical cohesion by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The author lists the issues these people have already faced in the wake of the war in their region. This enlisting thus works as an exophoric reference, an external reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), referring towards the conditions in Afghanistan in the scenario of conflict and war. This new information foregrounds the author’s idea that Afghans want peace and prosperity, and they need a guarantee from a third party that the violence will not return in Afghanistan.

Table 33

Clause 9 and 10: *Troop pullout a catastrophe without international assurance* by M. W. Qasemi.

Theme	Rheme
“The war weary Afghans” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 13).	“are waiting impatiently, for an end to war” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 13).
Repetition, Anaphoric Reference	Anaphoric Reference, New Information

“and the outcome of” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 13).	“the months of negotiations between the US and the Taliban peace negotiators” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 13).
Grammatical Cohesion, Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The ninth clause begins with an instance of repetition and an anaphoric reference, a previous reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as it mentions the Afghans once again and their concerns regarding the prolonged war in the country. The rheme foregrounds the idea that they are eagerly waiting for an end to this war in Afghanistan. The reference of war is again an anaphoric reference which aligns with the new information of the eagerness of Afghans as far as an end to the war is concerned. The next clause begins with conjunction, a device within the Textual Meta Function that serves the purpose of grammatical cohesion in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The theme lays forwards the given information, mentioning the “outcome” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 13). The rheme gives an external reference of the Afghan Peace Process as it mentions “the months of negotiations” (Qasemi, 2019, para. 13). This is an exophoric reference once again in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), that not only ensures cohesion but also aids in the projection of the stance that the Afghans want an end to the war, and they are waiting for the outcome of these prolonged talks. The next article under discussion is from the *Kabul Times* titled, *Afghan women’s concerns should be addressed in peace talks*, by Lailuma Noori.

Table 34

Clause 1 and 2: *Afghan women’s concerns should be addressed in peace talks*, by Lailuma Noori.

Complete article has been attached as article 2 in the appendix B.

Theme	Rheme
“Since US Taliban talks” (Noori, 2020, para. 3).	“began more than a year ago” (Noori, 2020, para. 3).
Given Information	Given Information, Exophoric Reference

“Female activist in Kabul and other provinces of the country” (Noori, 2020, para. 3).	“have mobilized to ensure women’s voices are included in the negotiations” (Noori, 2020, para. 3).
Exophoric Reference	Anaphoric Reference
New Information	New Information

The theme of the present clause foregrounds the subject of the discussion that is the peace talks between the US and the Afghan Taliban, thus a given information in the clause. The same idea is elaborated and further highlighted in the rheme which sheds light on the timeline by giving an exophoric reference that the talks began a year ago. This clause begins with the theme which mentions the subject under discussion in this article that are women. The author presents before the readers a set of new information in the form of the theme. She talks about the female activists in the country who are active for the rights of the Afghan women. This is an exophoric reference, in order to foreground the idea of women rights and to build the ground for the activities in this regard. The rheme continues with this set of new information and foregrounds these struggles by the women rights organisations that have been initiated to ensure the women’s voice in these talks and negotiations. Through this anaphoric reference of the women rights activism the author has foregrounded the importance of this inclusion in the Afghan peace talks.

Table 35

Clause 3: *Afghan women’s concerns should be addressed in peace talks*, by Lailuma Noori.

Theme	Rheme
“However, significant less attention” (Noori, 2020, para. 3).	“is paid to the composition of women’s representation” (Noori, 2020, para. 3).
Grammatical Cohesion	Exophoric Reference, New Information

By initiating the theme using a device of grammatical cohesion that is “however” (Noori, 2020), the author connects the ideas of the two clauses and lays ground for the upcoming new information. The clause tells the reader about the less attention that has been given to the voice of a female in these peace talks. The rheme

foregrounds the stance once again and gives an exophoric reference mentioning that no attention has been paid as far as women's representation is concerned. The author has highlighted the stance of an Afghan women, through this set of new information and the use of references pointing towards the peace deal and its representatives.

Table 36

Clause 4 and 5: *Afghan women's concerns should be addressed in peace talks*, by Lailuma Noori.

Theme	Rheme
"In Afghanistan's patriarchal society" (Noori, 2020, para. 6).	"women's rights are often restricted by social norms" (Noori, 2020, para. 6).
Exophoric Reference	Exophoric Reference
"but there is" (Noori, 2020, para. 6).	"hope" (Noori, 2020, para. 6).
Grammatical Cohesion	Anaphoric Reference

The theme of this clause talks about the Afghan social order and the patriarchy over there. Thus, this theme serves as an exophoric reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), highlighting the social order of Afghanistan that is an external reference. The rheme further elaborates the idea of an Afghan journalist where the author sheds light on the patriarchal society of Afghanistan which backgrounds the rights of the women. The next clause talks about the hope that Afghan woman has in this regard. The theme of the clause starts with a coordinating conjunction that ensures the grammatical cohesion and further strengthens the stance. The rheme foregrounds the hope which is an anaphoric reference as it is referring back towards the idea of exploitation of women rights. The hope has been foregrounded in this clause by the Afghan journalist which tells about its importance in the scenario of a patriarchal society.

Table 37

Clause 6 and 7: *Afghan women's concerns should be addressed in peace talks*, by Lailuma Noori.

Theme	Rheme
"Women" (Noori, 2020, para. 6).	"have turned toward education" (Noori, 2020, para. 6).
Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference

“Women’s role” (Noori, 2020, para. 6).	“is increasing day by day” (Noori, 2020, para. 6).
Given Information	New Information

The theme of this clause foregrounds the Afghan women once again which is a given information and an anaphoric reference, referring towards the previous clauses. This unifies the text and strengthens the stance of an Afghan woman. The rheme presents before us a set of new information, and an exophoric reference, where the author mentions the changing trends in Afghan society where the women have started to get education. The next clause is in continuity with the previous idea as it presents the given information while foregrounding the women’s role, the rheme highlights the changing trends and presents the new information that the role of women is not the same as it was in the previous decades. It is increasing with every passing day.

Table 38

Clause 8 and 9: *Afghan women’s concerns should be addressed in peace talks*, by Lailuma Noori.

Theme	Rheme
“It” (Noori, 2020, para. 8).	“would require a peace deal” (Noori, 2020, para. 8).
Substitution, Given Information	Given Information, Anaphoric Reference
“That compels the Taliban” (Noori, 2020, para. 8).	“to respect these freedoms” (Noori, 2020, para. 8).

The clause begins with a substitution, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), where “it” (Noori, 2020, para. 8) has replaced the women’s role thus presenting the given information as the theme of this clause. This device of lexical cohesion not only connects the idea of women rights but also foregrounds its importance. The rheme talks about these rights and freedoms to be a substantive part of the deal in order to contextualise it in the Afghan social order. The rheme is again an anaphoric reference towards the deal between the US and Afghans that has been talked about in the preceding clauses.

The next clause again starts its theme with a substitution “that” (Noori, 2020, para. 8), which is referring towards the women rights to become a part of the contents

of the deal. The theme foregrounds another side of the story where the author mentions the insecurities of an Afghan women which they have with respect to their freedoms. Thus, the clause gives us the information about the agreement compelling Afghan Taliban to respect their rights and freedoms. The mention of freedoms in the rheme is again an anaphoric reference that substantiates the stance of an Afghan journalist.

Table 39

Clause 10 and 11: *Afghan women's concerns should be addressed in peace talks*, by Lailuma Noori.

Theme	Rheme
“It is important” (Noori, 2020, para. 9).	“to focus on women’s right to participate in the process” (Noori, 2020, para. 9).
Given Information, Substitution	Given Information, Anaphoric Reference
“have their rights” (Noori, 2020, para. 9).	“protected in any agreement” (Noori, 2020, para. 9).
Ellipsis, Anaphoric Reference	Anaphoric Reference, Repetition

The beginning of the clause with the pronoun “it” (Noori, 2020, para. 9), which is a substitution, which has substituted the rights of Afghan women and those becoming a part of the peace deal. The theme through its given information highlights the importance of what has been elaborated in the rheme. The rheme foregrounds the thought of an Afghan woman who wants to become a part of the peace deal. The rheme also presents before the readers an anaphoric reference that is mentioning women rights and also giving us some new information that is their right to participate in the peace process.

The last clause further elaborates the importance this participation holds. The theme begins with an instance of lexical cohesion that is ellipsis in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as the author has purposely omitted the subject of the clause by starting it with the verb. This not only connects this clause with the previous subject but also strengthens the significance of this whole idea. The theme here again mentions the rights of women which is an anaphoric reference. The rheme concludes the scenario and tells the reader that this participation is significant in order to protect the rights of the women in this deal. The last clause yet again repeats the terminologies of agreement and creates unity and

lexical cohesion within the discourse which strengthens and foregrounds the stance of an Afghan woman who wants her rights and freedoms to be safeguarded. The following article, *Recent peace deal from the youth perspective* by Ajmal Hajizada gives us an insight into the perspective of an Afghan youth.

Table 40

Clause 1 and 2: *Recent peace deal from the youth perspective* by Ajmal Hajizada.

Complete article has been attached as article 3 in the appendix B.

Theme	Rheme
“As a part of” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 1).	“young generation of Afghanistan” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 1).
Nominal theme, Given Information	Given Information
“And as an eyewitness” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 1).	“of the past 18 years” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 1).
Grammatical Cohesion, Coordinating Conjunction	Exophoric Reference New Information

The theme of this clause initiates the discussion as the author regards himself as a part of the youth. The rheme further elaborates the idea and establishes an introduction of the discussion. The second clause in line initiates with a coordinating conjunction thus ensuring grammatical cohesion. The rheme and theme of this clause serve as exophoric reference which mentions the eighteen years of war and youth being an eyewitness to it, thus presenting before the readers some new information in the form of this clause.

Table 41

Clause 3: *Recent peace deal from the youth perspective* by Ajmal Hajizada.

Theme	Rheme
“We, especially the young generation” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 1).	“have suffered the most in our academic as well as in our social lives” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 1).
Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

This clause initiates with an anaphoric reference of a given information in the theme. The author has emphasised the subject by repeating it in the theme using noun

in apposition. The rheme discloses the new information about the sufferings Afghan students have endured in their academics and social settings. This reference of suffering is an exophoric reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), which links a Textual idea with an external one. This adds to the cohesion of the text and aids in the presentation of a stance.

Table 42

Clause 4: *Recent peace deal from the youth perspective* by Ajmal Hajizada.

Theme	Rheme
“If peace prevails in its true sense” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 1).	“we will be the beneficiaries of this deal” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 1).
Cataphoric Reference	New Information, Cataphoric Reference

The clause under discussion is a hope in this scenario, where the journalist lays forward a cataphoric reference in the form of the theme, which is an upcoming reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). This conditional clause completes its sense in the rheme where the author foregrounds his hopes from the deal that they anticipate to be the beneficiaries of the peace deal. This new information is a cataphoric reference which tells the readers about the prospects the youth anticipate once the deal is signed, and the peace prevails.

Table 43

Clause 5: *Recent peace deal from the youth perspective* by Ajmal Hajizada.

Theme	Rheme
“Afghanistan” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 2).	is an enriched land in terms of natural resources” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 2).
Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information.

This clause starts with a dominant theme as a subject of the discussion. The mentioning of Afghanistan is a given information in this regard, which has been highlighted in the rheme. The author foregrounds the enriched land of Afghanistan which has splendid resources but owing to war everything has become barren and futile. The rheme mentioning the resources and land of Afghanistan is an exophoric reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen

(2014), thus a new set of information in this scenario which has been presented in alignment with the given information in the theme of the same clause.

Table 44

Clause 6: *Recent peace deal from the youth perspective* by Ajmal Hajizada.

Theme	Rheme
“Once peace prevails” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 2).	“its access and ease on its export will provide Afghanistan a new image, a new hope” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference	Substitution, Cataphoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

Prevalence of peace being discussed in the previous clauses becomes an anaphoric reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), for the present clause, thus initiates its theme. The given information within the theme talks about the prevalence of peace that is conditional to the deal. The rheme concludes the idea by using a substitution where a pronoun “its” replaces the subject that was peace in the previous clauses. This part of the clause gives us a set of new information that tells the readers that peace will bring ease to the export, hence showing a positive and hopeful attitude of the author in the context of this deal.

Table 45

Clause 7: *Recent peace deal from the youth perspective* by Ajmal Hajizada.

Theme	Rheme
“And a new sunshine with lots of joy and hope” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 2).	“which is a still desire for the people of Afghanistan” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 2).
Coordinating Conjunction, Grammatical Cohesion	Substitution, Lexical Cohesion
Given Information	New Information

The use of a coordinating conjunction “and” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 2), plays an important role as it connects it the previous idea of hope from the peace deal. The author lists within the theme the hope of joy and a sunshine that expresses his positive attitude towards the future. The theme manifests the given information as it is the continuation

of the previous clause where the author starts to list the hopes. The rheme lays forward the new information by initiating with an instance of substitution that is “which” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 2) for the joy and hope that people of Afghanistan anticipate as a desire in their hearts. This substitution further adds to the cohesion in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

Table 46

Clause 8 and 9: *Recent peace deal from the youth perspective* by Ajmal Hajizada.

Theme	Rheme
“The small business opportunities” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 5).	“will be provided to both men and women of the country” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 5).
New Information	Grammatical Cohesion, New Information
“Thus, a stable Afghanistan”	“will be on the rise domestically” (Hajizada, 2020, para. 5).
Grammatical Cohesion	New Information

This clause sheds light on the details of the prospects that the peace deal will bring in the future. Here the author presents before us a set of new information, where the theme of the first clause mentions the small businesses and the rheme elaborates its importance in the lives of men and women. The cohesion has been achieved using the coordinating conjunction. Similarly in the next clause the author starts the theme with a concluding remark which again serves the purpose of grammatical cohesion while the author mentions the idea of stable Afghanistan. The rheme foregrounds this idea and presents information about the domestic rise of Afghanistan in response to peace and prosperity in the country, once the deal is concluded. Precisely the whole article gives us an insight into the perspective of an Afghan youth who is optimistic and is expecting peace, prosperity and development for his country. The next article titled, *For lasting peace in Afghanistan, the process needs inclusion* by Gandahara, from Kabul Times talks about the need of inclusion in the peace process.

Table 47

Clause 1 and 2: *For lasting peace in Afghanistan, the process needs inclusion by Gandahara.*

Complete article has been attached as article 4 in the appendix B.

Theme	Rheme
“The long-awaited intra-Afghan talks” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 1).	“have been lauded by observers and participants alike” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 1).
Exophoric Reference	Exophoric Reference, New Information
“As a significant step	toward ending a war” (Gandahara, 2020).
Grammatical Cohesion, Lexical Cohesion	Exophoric Reference

The clause under discussion presents before the readers, an exophoric reference that is an external reference, which talks about the peace talks being appreciated by the participants and the observers. The theme of the clause is a nominal one that sets the ground by mentioning the subject while the rheme clearly demonstrates the new information and presents the idea that everyone is lauding the deal. The second clause connects with the previous one using “as” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 1), a coordinating conjunction that aids in the grammatical cohesion. The journalist regards the peace deal as an important step, over here the subject has not been mentioned, which is an example of ellipsis, in order to create lexical cohesion in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme completes the idea and establishes coherent unity by mentioning that the deal would end the long war that is an exophoric reference once again pointing outside of the text under discussion.

Table 48

Clause 3: *For lasting peace in Afghanistan, the process needs inclusion by Gandahara.*

Theme	Rheme
“That has claimed” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 1).	“tens of thousands of Afghan lives and injured countless more” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 1).
Substitution,	Grammatical Cohesion
Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The author has initiated the theme of this clause by substituting the “war” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 1) mentioned in the previous clause with “that” (Gandahara, 2020). This serves the purpose of lexical cohesion by connecting two ideas. The theme serves as a given information where the author refers back towards the previous discussion and connects it with the present clause by mentioning the repercussions of the war. The rheme presents new set of information where the author foregrounds the stance of an Afghan once again, who has suffered a lot in the context of this war. There is an exophoric reference of the casualties and injuries as a result of this war which tell us the Afghan side of the story. The rheme also includes coordinating conjunction “and” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 1), that has been used to ensure grammatical cohesion.

Table 49

Clause 4 and 5: *For lasting peace in Afghanistan, the process needs inclusion by Gandahara.*

Theme	Rheme
“In a process” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 2).	“where women’s rights in particular are crucially on the line” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 2).
Given Information, Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference, New Information
“Only four of the negotiators	are women” (Gandahara, 2020).
Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference	Anaphoric Reference

This clause foregrounds the rights of women and the importance of their inclusion in the peace talks. The theme presents given information where the author gives us an anaphoric reference while mentioning the process, hence referring back to the peace process. The rheme gives an exophoric reference and a new information in the clause about the women rights being a major concern in Afghanistan.

The next clause further solidifies this stance by using an anaphoric as well as exophoric reference in the theme. The theme is a blend of both these references as it connects with the previous discussion about the women rights and at the same time gives an external reference of the number of women included in this peace process. The rheme completes the clause by mentioning the subject of the discussion that is woman. The presentation of given and new information and the references aid in establishing a firm stance that supports the inclusion of more Afghan women in the process.

Table 50

Clause 6 and 7: *For lasting peace in Afghanistan, the process needs inclusion by Gandahara.*

Theme	Rheme
“Afghans citizens” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 6).	“are demanding the opportunity to shape the peace process” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 6).
Given Information, Anaphoric Reference	New Information
“There has been” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 6).	“a significant and countrywide mobilization by people from all walks of life” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 6).
Given Information	Cataphoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion, New Information.

The theme of this clause is a given information and an anaphoric reference which mentions the Afghan citizens thus foregrounding them as important players in this whole scenario. The rheme completes the clause using a set of new information about Afghans that they want to be an inclusive part of the peace process. The next clause continues with the same idea and mentions the given information in the theme which connect with the previous idea of Afghan citizens. The rheme talks about the mobilization of these people who are from different walks of life. This rheme is a new information presented with a cataphoric reference, and the reader clearly understands the whole idea because of the grammatical cohesion that connects the ideas of the present and the succeeding clause.

Table 51

Clause 8 and 9: *For lasting peace in Afghanistan, the process needs inclusion by Gandahara.*

Theme	Rheme
“Who” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 6).	“want to be heard” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 6).
Substitution, Anaphoric Reference Given Information	New Information

“Their simple demand is that” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 6).	“they have a say in determining their future” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 6).
Anaphoric Reference	Anaphoric Reference, New Information

The rheme in the previous clause mentioning the mobilization of Afghans becomes the theme in the present clause. The author uses a device of lexical cohesion that is substitution and replaces the subject, Afghan people, with “who” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 6). This serves the role of anaphoric reference, creates cohesion between the clauses. The rheme foregrounds the new information that is the actual demand of Afghans and the reason behind their concern in the previous clauses. The author mentions that an Afghan wants to have his significant voice in this process.

The theme of the next clause is again an anaphoric reference and a given information that connects with the previous one. The theme establishes a context for narrating their demand in the rheme. The rheme foregrounds the demand and wish of an Afghan by presenting the new information that they want their voice to be heard as it is important that they become a part of what is going to be a decision for their future. This new information is cohesive in its essence as it connects with the previous idea of having a voice in the negotiations using an anaphoric reference, another device of cohesion, among others in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

Table 52

Clause 10: *For lasting peace in Afghanistan, the process needs inclusion* by Gandahara.

Theme	Rheme
“In a process” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 6).	“that has so far taken place outside of their country” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 6).
Given Information	New Information, Exophoric Reference, substitution.

This clause solidifies the stance of a journalist from Kabul times and serves to be a voice of all Afghans. The theme presents given information by referring back towards the Afghan Peace Process. The rheme reveals the new information that this

whole process was taking place outside of Afghanistan thus presenting before the readers a major stance of an Afghan who wants his voice to be heard in this deal.

This set of information in the rheme starts with “that” (Gandahara, 2020, para. 6) which is a substitution for the peace process. Moreover, the information is an exophoric reference which aids in cohesion and strengthens the stance further. Precisely this Afghan newspaper clearly demonstrates the importance of inclusion of Afghans in the deal as it is their sole right to be heard. The above-mentioned articles have been taken from the leading newspapers of Afghanistan that clearly manifest the Textual Meta Function of language in an attempt to project the stance of Afghanistan.

As Halliday (1985) believes that the speakers of the language achieve the communicative Function using the resources of language. The articles from Afghanistan project the stance of the country and the language serving its Textual Meta Function aid the authors in this process. The selection and progression patterns of the theme and rheme are on the part of the author according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The Afghan authors have foregrounded the ideas about the violence and bloodshed in Afghanistan in the wake of war. The foregrounded parts in the theme and rheme project the importance of the deal as a hope towards peace in Afghanistan. The patterns of given and new information in cohesion with the foregrounded ideas in the rheme and theme clearly manifest that the Afghan authors tend to use the language resource in order to project their stance and communicate their side of story. The language of the Afghan newspapers performs its Textual Meta Function to shape a particular stance about the Afghan side of the story. Moreover, the use of the linguistic devices perform the communicative role within Textual Meta Function in such a way that, it focuses on the Afghan people and their sufferings. In addition to this, the foregrounded patterns of information highlight the hopes from the peace deal that every Afghan anticipates. The devices of cohesion and coherence serve the same purpose and foreground the ideas about the impacts of the war in Afghanistan on general public and their hopes and demands from the peace deal.

4.2 The USA

4.2.1 New York Times

When one comes to analyse the newspaper articles from the USA, a significant shift in the presentation of scenario is quite evident. The presentation of given and new information and the cohesion patterns along with the theme and rheme is quite unique

and different from that of Afghan newspapers. The first article under analysis is titled as, *Trump Gives Conditional Go Ahead on Peace Deal with Taliban* by Mashal and Jakes, published in 2020.

Table 53

Clause 1: *Trump Gives Conditional Go Ahead on Peace Deal with Taliban* by Mashal and Jakes.

Complete article has been attached as article 1 in the appendix C.

Theme	Rheme
“President Trump” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 1).	“has conditionally approved a peace deal with the Taliban (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 1).
Nominal Theme	Cataphoric reference
Given Information	New Information

The article under discussion is from an American newspaper that is *New York Times*. The theme of the first clause foregrounds the then president of the USA and establishes the ground for the new information that has been presented in the rheme. The rheme mentions a cataphoric reference, an upcoming reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), about the conditional approval of the peace deal by the president. The rheme foregrounds the idea of conditional approval of the deal. This information not only allows the readers to understand the context but also tells about the inclination of the authors and the stance they are going to take.

Table 54

Clause 2: *Trump Gives Conditional Go Ahead on Peace Deal with Taliban* by Mashal and Jakes.

Theme	Rheme
“That would” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 1).	“withdraw the last American troops from the country” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 1).
Substitution, Anaphoric reference	Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

This theme starts with a substitution “that” (Mashal and Jakes, 2020), which is also an anaphoric reference that aims at pointing towards the conditional peace deal mentioned in the preceding clause. The given information unfolds the new details in the rheme of the same clause and the readers come to know about the relation of the conditional approval of the deal with the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. This is also an exophoric reference as the presence and withdrawal of foreign troops in Afghanistan is an external reference that aids in the cohesive unity along with substitution and anaphoric reference as identified by Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

Table 55

Clause 3: *Trump Gives Conditional Go Ahead on Peace Deal with Taliban* by Mashal and Jakes.

Theme	Rheme
“But the deal” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 2).	“will only be signed” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 2).
Grammatical cohesion, Anaphoric Reference	Cataphoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

The next clause starts with a coordinating conjunction “but” (Mashal and Jakes, 2020), which connects the deal with the previous idea of conditionality, thus serving as an anaphoric reference in addition to ensuring grammatical cohesion. The given information in the theme that mentions the deal continues in the rheme when the readers are presented with a cataphoric reference, a reference towards the upcoming clause, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), that points towards the conditions for the deal.

Table 56

Clause 4: *Trump Gives Conditional Go Ahead on Peace Deal with Taliban* by Mashal and Jakes.

Theme	Rheme
“If the Taliban” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 2).	“prove their commitment to a durable reduction of violence over a test period of

	about seven days” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 2).
Given Information	New Information, Exophoric Reference

This clause sheds light on the actual condition that the then president of the USA laid forward. The theme is an if clause which serves as a given information mentioning the subject of the discussion in this clause, the other party of the deal, that is Afghan Taliban. The rheme yet again foregrounds the stance of an American journalist who lays stress on the reduction in violence over a period of seven days. This is again an exophoric reference which refers towards the external discourse in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The same stress on the conditions of the deal continues in the following clauses.

Table 57

Clause 5 and 6: *Trump Gives Conditional Go Ahead on Peace Deal with Taliban* by Mashal and Jakes.

Theme	Rheme
“If the Taliban” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 2).	“do end hostilities” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 2).
“And a deal” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 2).	“is signed” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 2).
Grammatical cohesion	Anaphoric reference
Given Information	New Information

The same idea is very much evident in the above-mentioned clauses where the theme and rheme of the first clause talks about the ending of the hostilities by the Taliban which has been presented by the use of the if clause. The next clause starts with a coordinating conjunction which connects the condition about ending the hostilities with the idea of signing the deal thus ensuring cohesion. The given information presented in the theme develops as new information in the rheme and the author foregrounds the signing of the deal which also works as an anaphoric reference. Both these clauses tell a lot about the stance of the journalist which is different from that of

Afghan newspapers. The heed has been given to the conditions that govern the deal and the importance this deal holds.

Table 58

Clause 7: *Trump Gives Conditional Go Ahead on Peace Deal with Taliban* by Mashal and Jakes.

Theme	Rheme
“The United States” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 2).	“would then begin a gradual withdrawal of American troops” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	New Information

The theme of this clause is an anaphoric reference which refers to the subject mentioned earlier that is the United States thus presenting before the readers a set of given information which develops in the rheme. The rheme foregrounds the withdrawal of the US troops from the lands of Afghanistan that is linked to the previous reference about the reduction in violence. This clause contextualises itself in the context established in the preceding clauses hence maintaining the Textual unity in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

Table 59

Clause 8: *Trump Gives Conditional Go Ahead on Peace Deal with Taliban* by Mashal and Jakes.

Theme	Rheme
“American negotiators, led by the veteran diplomat Zalmay Khalilzad..” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 12).	“trying to persuade the Taliban to come to terms” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 12).
Nominal Theme, Exophoric Reference	New Information, Exophoric Reference

The present clause initiates the point of discussion using a nominal theme which foregrounds and highlights the American negotiators. The theme gives an exophoric reference of the head of the American negotiators who is Zalmay Khalilzad. This is an external reference which contextualises itself as the clause progresses in the form of

rheme. The rheme highlights that Khalilzad, being the representative of the US negotiators, is putting efforts to convince the Afghan Taliban to agree to the terms of the deal. The rheme is a set of new information that connects with the previous reference along with giving us an external reference of negotiations with the Taliban.

Table 60

Clause 9: *Trump Gives Conditional Go Ahead on Peace Deal with Taliban* by Mashal and Jakes.

Theme	Rheme
“The most recent sticking point” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 12).	“had been an American demand for the Taliban to significantly reduce their attacks across the country” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 12).
Given Information	Repetition, New Information

This clause talks about the important conditions of the deal. The theme presents the given information that mentions the recent point of demand which serves as a nominal theme in terms of Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme foregrounds the important condition laid forward by the US for concluding a deal which serves as a new information in the clause. The rheme sheds light on the demand of the reduction of attacks by the Taliban that were prevalent across the country. The rheme also manifests an instance of repetition as this condition about the reduction in violence has been mentioned in the preceding clauses as well. Repetition also serves the purpose of lexical cohesion and presents the text as a unified whole in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

Table 61

Clause 10: *Trump Gives Conditional Go Ahead on Peace Deal with Taliban* by Mashal and Jakes.

Theme	Rheme
“The Taliban” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 12).	“have signaled their willingness to sit down with the Afghan government and other leaders” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 12).
Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

The rheme of the previous clause has become the theme of this one. The theme here is an anaphoric reference and a Repetition of the given information about the Afghan Taliban that has been mentioned in the preceding clauses time and again. This ensures the cohesion in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme presents the new information in the context which is an external reference termed as an exophoric reference. The rheme mentioning the willingness of Afghan Taliban relates to the given details and thus a coherent text has been presented where the new information of the rheme aligns cohesively with the given information of the theme.

Table 62

Clause 11: *Trump Gives Conditional Go Ahead on Peace Deal with Taliban* by Mashal and Jakes.

Theme	Rheme
“To discuss” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 12).	“the political future of the country — but only after the Americans agree to leave the country” (Mashal & Jakes, 2020, para. 12).
Given Information	New Information
Cataphoric Reference	Grammatical Cohesion

This clause concludes the idea of the previous clause, and the theme is a given information as it has been presented in relation to the previous discussion about the willingness of the Taliban leaders to sit with the parties of the peace deal. At the same time the theme is a cataphoric reference as it is a reference towards the upcoming text that has been presented in the rheme. This adds to the cohesion as the new information in the rheme talks about the pre-condition set forth by the Afghan Taliban that will decide the future of the intra Afghan talks. This rheme mentions that Afghan Taliban want the US to leave the country in order to begin with the intra Afghan negotiations. This new information in the rheme contextualises itself in the text, thus presents us with a coherent discourse. The next article under discussion, titled *What to Know About the Afghan Peace Talks* is the second one from the New York Times that gives us an insight into the Afghan Peace talks from the lens of an American journalist.

Table 63

Clause 1 and 2: *What to Know About the Afghan Peace Talks* by Zucchini and Gibbons-Neff.

Complete article has been attached as article 2 in the appendix C.

Theme	Rheme
“After four decades of grinding combat in Afghanistan” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 1).	“peace negotiations between the Afghan government” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 1).
“and the Taliban” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 1).	“have raised at least a possibility” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 1).
Exophoric Reference	Grammatical cohesion, Cataphoric Reference

The patterns of information and the word play using the cohesive devices is as such that the first clause begins with an external reference. The theme clearly indicates an information that is not a part of the text under discussion. The authors give the readers a hint of the four decades of Afghan war as the theme of the clause 1, and an exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme adds to the idea of the theme and presents the new information with a glimpse of an upcoming reference which is termed as cataphoric reference. The rheme of the first clause mentions the peace negotiations between the government and the other party that is the Taliban, which initiates the next clause as its theme. The rheme of the second clause informs the readers that the peace negotiations have raised a possibility. Here the mention of possibility is a cataphoric reference which adds to the lexical cohesion of the text as it refers to the latter clauses. Moreover, the use of “and” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 1), between the parties of the deal mentioned in the rheme and the following theme performs the role of creating relevance and grammatical cohesion.

Table 64

Clause 3: *What to Know About the Afghan Peace Talks* by Zucchini and Gibbons-Neff.

Theme	Rheme
“That the long cycle of violence” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 1).	“might someday end” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 1).
Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference	New Information

This clause continues with the previous idea where the grammatical cohesion plays the role and connects the two references together. The use of “that” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 1) connects the external reference of “the long cycle of violence” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 1) with the previous clause which talks about the idea of possibilities as a result of the peace deal. The rheme presents another set of new information that gives us the details of the theme and foregrounds the idea that this violence and suffering will come to an end someday. The pattern of this clause creates relevance in the broader context of the previous clause, hence the whole idea of the peace deal bringing peace and an end to violence has been presented in unity.

Table 65

Clause 4, 5 and 6: *What to Know About the Afghan Peace Talks* by Zucchini and Gibbons-Neff.

Theme	Rheme
“While the two sides” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 2).	“met in Doha, Qatar.” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information
“Bloodletting on battlefields and in Afghan cities” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 2).	“surged” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 2)

Grammatical Cohesion, New Information	New Information
“The Biden administration says” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 4).	“the Taliban has not honored its pledges to reduce violence” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 4).
Exophoric Reference	Anaphoric Reference

The theme of the present clause initiates with an anaphoric reference that mentions the parties of the intra Afghan talks mentioned in the preceding clauses. It connects the idea of the parties at the meeting with the general idea of the anticipated prospects in the background of this peace deal. The rheme thus adds a set of the new information that is about the meeting being held in Qatar. This clause is in relation to the preceding discussion of the peace deal. The next theme ensures grammatical cohesion as it presents another set of information about the conflict and war in the Afghan regions while the peace talks continue. This theme tells about the grounds of conflict and the author connects both by using “and” (Zucchini and Gibbons-Neff, 2021), while mentioning the battlefields and the Afghan cities. The rheme foregrounds the idea that the violence has surged again.

The theme of the clause 6 talks about the then administration in the USA that is the Biden government. This part of the clause as its theme serves as an external reference and foregrounds the stance of an American newspaper as the rheme highlights what this administration says about the terms of the deal and the pledges associated with it. The rheme foregrounds the idea that the Afghan Taliban have not paid heed to the pledges of the deal. This idea in the rheme establishes its coherent unity in the background of the preceding clause which mentions the unrest and violence in the Afghan cities. The stance of the American newspaper surfaces once again where it mentions the reason of violence in the Afghan land even in the backdrop of peace negotiations. This aspect of the violence has not been identified in the Afghan newspapers.

Table 66

Clause 7, 8 and 9: *What to Know About the Afghan Peace Talks* by Zucchini and Gibbons-Neff.

Theme	Rheme
“The Taliban said” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 7).	“they had honoured all commitments under the agreement” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 7).
Given Information	New Information, Anaphoric Reference.
“The statement” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 8).	“accused the Afghan government” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 8).
Anaphoric Reference, Repetition	Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information
“of violating” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 8).	“the agreement” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 8).
Anaphoric Reference	Anaphoric Reference

The rheme of the preceding clause that is the clause no. 06, becomes the theme of the clause 07, which mentions the Afghan Taliban in terms of the given information. What they said has been foregrounded in the rheme of the same as the new information. The rheme gives the readers an anaphoric reference by mentioning the agreement, this is also an instance of repetition which ensures grammatical as well as lexical cohesion within the discourse. The statement in the rheme becomes the theme in the next clause which is a repetition and a reference towards the preceding idea hence contributing to the lexical and grammatical cohesion. The rheme of clause 08 mentions that accusations have been laid upon the Afghan government by the Taliban, the details of accusation have been foregrounded in the next clause that is clause 09. The theme of this clause begins the same subject that is accusation of violence and the rheme mentions the accusation, that the government is violating the agreement. This clause presents anaphoric reference in terms of mentioning the violation of the agreement that is a reference towards the previous clause in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985,

1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), which adds to the cohesive unity. These clauses have been presented in harmony with each other and the cohesion within the idea has been ensured using the cohesive devices that are repetition and references in the text. The present clauses reflect the same stance initiated in the preceding clauses that is about the violence and bloodletting in the country amidst the peace talks in Doha. The author highlights that the Afghan stake holders which include Afghan Taliban, the government and other political sections are engaged in violence, which may damage the peace process.

Table 67

Clause 10, 11 and 12: *What to Know About the Afghan Peace Talks* by Zucchini and Gibbons-Neff.

Theme	Rheme
“But the agreement” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 9).	“also envisions Afghan negotiations” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 9).
“resulting in” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 9).	“a lasting cease-fire” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 9).
Grammatical Cohesion Given Information	Exophoric Reference New Information
“And a government” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 9).	“representing all Afghans” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 9).
Grammatical Cohesion, Conjunction	Anaphoric Reference

This clause 10 starts with a coordinating conjunction “but” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 9), that initiates the theme of the clause. This coordinating conjunction links the present theme with the rheme of the preceding clause 09, hence establishing a connection between the two. The theme of the 10th and 11th clause foregrounds the agreement that is an instance of repetition once again. The rheme of both these clauses shed light on the prospects and hopes from the agreement that it will ensure cease-fire in the country, here the rheme is also an external reference towards the intra Afghan negotiations. The next clause also starts with the grammatical cohesive device that is conjunction “and” (Zucchini & Gibbons-Neff, 2021, para. 9), which connects the idea of cease-fire mentioned in the preceding rheme with the formation of

government mentioned in the present theme. The rheme further sheds light on the concept of an inclusive government as it gives an anaphoric reference of all Afghans. These clauses once again manifest the stance projected by the American newspaper article that highlights the deal and foregrounds its importance through the patterns of theme, rheme and cohesion. The following article under discussion is titled as *Afghan Peace Talks Begin This Week. Here's What to Know* authored by Mujeeb Mashal.

Table 68

Clause 1, 2, 3 and 4: *Afghan Peace Talks Begin This Week. Here's What to Know* by Mujeeb Mashal. Complete article has been attached as article 3 in the appendix C.

Theme	Rheme
“The release” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).	“of 5,000 Taliban prisoners” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).
“held” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).	“by the government..” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).
Exophoric Reference	Exophoric Reference
“Opened the way” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).	“for the breakthrough” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference	Cataphoric Reference
“After months of” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).	“Delay and recrimination” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).
Grammatical cohesion, Given Information	Grammatical cohesion, Exophoric Reference, New Information

The theme and rheme of the first clause under discussion begin with an external reference termed as exophoric reference by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). This reference of the “release of 5000 Taliban prisoners” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2), is a reference towards an information that is not a part of this text, hence this reference serves the purpose of grammatical cohesion. The second clause mentions the details of these prisoners that they were in the custody of the government. This is again a set of new information, yet another exophoric reference. The theme of the third clause foregrounds the new set of information in the same context which begins the idea of opening the way that serves as anaphoric reference, a reference towards the preceding clause in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985,

1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme gives a cataphoric reference, an upcoming reference, it completes the idea of opening the way and mentions the “breakthrough” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2). This clause conveys the whole idea about opening a way towards breakthrough, which has been mentioned in coherence with the idea of release of the prisoners highlighted in the rheme of the first clause. The fourth clause strengthens the idea projected by an American newspaper that mentions the information about the prolonged delay. Here “After months of” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2) is a nominal theme while the use of collocation that is “delay and recrimination” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2) in the rheme adds to the complete meaning in addition to creating lexical cohesion. In the above-mentioned clauses, the delay in the negotiations has been highlighted and the first step that mentions the prisoner release has been brought to the spotlight by the author of the article from the USA.

Table 69

Clause 5 and 6: *Afghan Peace Talks Begin This Week. Here’s What to Know* by Mujeeb Mashal.

Theme	Rheme
“The prisoner release” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).	“was agreed to by the United States” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Grammatical cohesion, New Information
“In its historic deal” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).	“with the Taliban in February” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).
Cataphoric Reference	Grammatical Cohesion, Exophoric Reference

The fifth clause foregrounds the actions of the USA in the context of the negotiations and the peace deal. The theme begins with an anaphoric reference that is about the release of the prisoners and thus a given information. The rheme foregrounds the agreement of the prisoner release between the United States and the Afghan Taliban. The origin of the rheme has been highlighted in the subsequent theme that is the theme of the sixth clause, where the American journalist foregrounds the peace deal by terming it as an historic one. Moreover, the journalist talks about the deal as “its historic deal” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2), in order to emphasise its importance and the role of US in it. This is also a cataphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985,

1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as the details have been mentioned in the upcoming part of the same clause that is in the rheme. The rheme mentions the other party of the deal, which has been mentioned by creating grammatical cohesion. Moreover, the signing of the deal in February is also an external reference. The clause foregrounds one party that is the US and backgrounds the other by manipulating the pattern of the theme and rheme along with the pattern of cohesion.

Table 70

Clause 7: *Afghan Peace Talks Begin This Week. Here's What to Know* by Mujeeb Mashal.

Theme	Rheme
“At talks in which” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).	“the Afghan government was not present” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference,	Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

The theme of this clause begins with an anaphoric reference as the clause begins with the phrase “at talks” (Mashal, 2020, para. 2). There is an instance of ellipsis as well in the same clause in order to refer back to the clause of agreement, the same has not been mentioned in this clause on purpose. This adds to the cohesion of the discourse in addition to communicating the stance of an American journalist. The theme here is the given information and the rheme presents the complete idea in the form of the new information. The author mentions that the Afghan government was not present in those talks when the prisoner release was agreed to by the United States. This is an exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), which refers to the information outside of this text. Both theme and the rheme in unison once again foregrounds the USA as the given and new information tells about the absence of the Afghan government from the talks, although their presence was of significant importance. The inclination of the author is quite evident throughout these clauses where the role of US in negotiating the deal has been highlighted and the importance of the deal has been foregrounded more than any other aspect.

Table 71

Clause 8 and 9: *Afghan Peace Talks Begin This Week. Here's What to Know* by Mujeeb Mashal.

Theme	Rheme
“Now, finding a compromise” (Mashal, 2020, para. 3).	“Between the Taliban and the government” (Mashal, 2020, para. 3).
Cataphoric Reference	Grammatical cohesion, Repetition
“On issues of power sharing and civil liberties, including the role of women and minorities” (Mashal, 2020, para. 3).	“Will be no easy task” (Mashal, 2020, para. 3).
Exophoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion	New Information.

This clause begins with the adverb of time that is “now” (Mashal, 2020, para. 3), which has also been used to refer back to the previous discourse thus ensures cohesion once again. Moreover, the theme adds to the unity by mentioning the phrase “a compromise” (Mashal, 2020, para. 3), that is a cataphoric reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as it refers to the upcoming discussion. The rheme connects both parts of the clause by beginning with a subordinating conjunction “between” (Mashal, 2020, para. 3), in order to mention both the parties of the discussion.

The ninth clause talks about the topics of the discussion by giving the external reference that is exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). While the author mentions the issues that need discussion i-e those of power sharing and the rights of the people, the author uses coordinating conjunction “and” (Mashal, 2020, para. 3), in order to establish the cohesive unity between the topics of discussion. The rheme gives us the new information as a prominent part of the clause where the author mentions that negotiating all these issues will not be easy. This clause not only adds to the coherent unity of the text but also gives an insight into the ideas of an American journalist, who mentions that the intra Afghan negotiations are not going to be easy and he adds that the agreement between both parties will be a difficult task to uphold.

Table 72

Clause 9 and 10: *Afghan Peace Talks Begin This Week. Here's What to Know* by Mujeeb Mashal.

Theme	Rheme
“Each side” (Mashal, 2020, para. 15).	“Knows that the country, stuck in a divided and hostile region” (Mashal, 2020, para. 15).
Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion
“could face” (Mashal, 2020, para. 15).	“a dangerous new crisis” (Mashal, 2020, para. 15).
Given Information	New Information

The theme of this clause is an anaphoric reference in itself as it has been used to refer back towards the two parties under discussion in the previous clauses. The author presents given information as “each side” (Mashal, 2020), which refers towards the Afghan government and the other party that is the Afghan Taliban. This reference adds to the cohesive unity of the discourse and also strengthens the stance of the American newspaper which wants to highlight the importance and the need of solution in the form of productive intra Afghan negotiations which, according to the newspaper under discussion, seem to be an illusion.

The rheme of the same clause presents the readers with some new information which begins with the verb that connects with the subject of the theme, hence creating relevance. The rheme is an external reference in addition to a new information as it talks about the divided and hostile regions of Afghanistan which is a new reference from an external source termed as exophoric reference by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The tenth clause mentions that these issues might push the country into a new crisis. The theme of this clause serves as the given information. The new information of the rheme which mentions the expected crisis, has been presented in connection with the given information of the theme makes the idea cohesive yet again. Moreover, it adds to the meaning of the text and highlights the same discourse which projects the futility of intra Afghan negotiations.

Table 73

Clause 11 and 12: *Afghan Peace Talks Begin This Week. Here's What to Know* by Mujeeb Mashal.

Theme	Rheme
“If the United States” (Mashal, 2020, para. 15).	“Pulls out its last troops” (Mashal, 2020, para. 15).
Anaphoric Reference, Repetition	Repetition
“Before a settlement” (Mashal, 2020, para. 15).	“Is finalized” (Mashal, 2020, para. 15).
Grammatical cohesion	Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

The present clause under discussion is a conditional clause which also adds to the cohesive unity through its lexical as well as grammatical items. The theme of this clause comprises of if clause, which serves as a reference towards the preceding idea. The rheme mentions the subject that is the USA, once again. The same subject has been mentioned time and again in the preceding clauses. The repetition being a device of lexical cohesion adds to the cohesive unity and aids in the protection of a particular stance through discourse. The rheme mentions the result clause that connects with the theme and completes the idea initiated in the theme by the American journalist who wants to highlight the significance of American presence in Afghanistan. The rheme talks about the pulling out of the American troops from the region which is again a repetition and adds to the cohesion of the text.

The next clause in line strengthens and completes the whole idea as its theme starts with the lexical item “before” (Mashal, 2020, para. 15), that connects this clause with the previous one thus presenting the given information and creating relevance between the two ideas. The rheme gives us the new information in this context where the American journalist foregrounds the whole idea in order to mention the significance of the USA in settling the conflict. The theme and the rheme in unison highlight the idea that if the US troops leave before a proper settlement the conflict may sever. Throughout this article the author foregrounds and justifies the presence of the states in the region and its importance in settling the dispute. Moreover, the author also highlights and foregrounds the conflicts in the context of the intra Afghan negotiations.

All this foregrounding and the projection of stance has been presented with cohesive unity and the manipulation of the language resource. The next article under discussion titles, *Is this Afghan peace or just a way out* by David E. Sanger that was published in *New York Times* talks about the same scenario of the Afghan peace process.

Table 74

Clause 1 and 2: *Is this Afghan peace or just a way out* by David E. Sanger.

Complete article has been attached as article 4 in the appendix C.

Theme	Rheme
“President Trump” (Sanger, 2020, para. 1).	“has left no doubt” (Sanger, 2020, para. 1).
“That his first priority in Afghanistan” (Sanger, 2020, para. 1).	“Is a peace” (Sanger, 2020, para. 1).
Grammatical Cohesion, Given Information	New Information

The theme is a prominent one that foregrounds the subject of the clause that is Donald Trump, the then presented of the USA. By initiating the clause with this subject, the author projects the scenario from the lens of an American. The rheme of the clause clarifies the idea and tells the reader that the president is quite sure about something. The idea of surety is incomplete in the present clause, but it completes itself in the upcoming clause, hence this strategy adds to the grammatical cohesion of the discourse. The second clause begins with an instance of grammatical cohesion, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), that is the use of “that” (Sanger, 2020, para. 1), in order to connect two ideas. The theme can be regarded as a given information as it comprises of anaphoric reference that connects it with the previous idea. Moreover, it also presents a cataphoric reference of a new information that has been presented in the rheme of the same clause. The author mentions the significant priority as an upcoming reference in the theme and that priority has been foregrounded in the rheme, where the journalist reveals it to the readers that it is about peace in the country that is Afghanistan.

Table 75

Clause 3 and 4: *Is this Afghan peace or just a way out* by David E. Sanger.

Theme	Rheme
“Three successive American president” (Sanger, 2020, para. 6).	“Have promised victory in Afghanistan” (Sanger, 2020, para. 6).
“Each experienced failures” (Sanger, 2020, para. 6).	“of political will, and on the battlefield” (Sanger, 2020, para. 6).
Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference, New Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The third clause under discussion presents before the readers a series of exophoric references in terms of the new information in the discourse. The first external reference, that is an exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), is in the theme of the first clause that refers towards the successive presidents of the USA. Here the reader can figure out the inclination of the American journalist while presenting the scenarios of the Afghan peace deal. The author has foregrounded the presidents of the USA in the present clause. The rheme reveals that all of the three presidents of America “have promised victory in Afghanistan” (Sanger, 2020, para. 6). Here again this information has been presented in cohesive unity with the theme of the previous clause and creates grammatical relevance with the theme of the upcoming one.

The theme of the next clause begins with a previous reference once again termed as anaphoric reference. The word “each” (Sanger, 2020, para. 6) is an instance of substitution in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). “Each” has been substituted for the successive presidents of the USA, a reference in the preceding clause. The theme also gives an exophoric reference that reveals that these presidents experienced failures in Afghanistan. The rheme foregrounds and sheds light on the nature of these failures hence presenting another exophoric reference. Both these clauses present the idea in cohesive unity using the devices of cohesion. In addition to ensuring cohesion these devices tell a lot about the stance of the American journalist. The journalist of the present article foregrounds the policies and the political decision of the USA in Afghanistan.

Table 76

Clause 5: *Is this Afghan peace or just a way out* by David E. Sanger.

Theme	Rheme
“Mr. Trump has long lamented” (Sanger, 2020, para. 10).	“The cost of endless wars,” (Sanger, 2020, para. 10).
Repetition, Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference, Anaphoric Reference

The present clause begins with an example of lexical cohesion where the device of repetition has been used in terms of the subject of discussion. The author has mentioned the president of the USA once again, thus foregrounding this subject in the theme of the clause. The theme is a nominal one which talks about the idea that the then president laments the cost of the war in Afghanistan. What has been lamented is presented in the rheme, hence ensuring cohesion. The rheme is again an exophoric reference as the author mentions the idea that is not a part of the text under discussion. This not only adds to the cohesion but also foregrounds the inclination of the American journalist. The author highlights the idea of the loss suffered by the USA. The whole clause foregrounds the stance of the American newspaper, and the devices of lexical and grammatical cohesion here play a significant role in presenting that inclination and a particular stance as a whole.

Table 77

Clause 6: *Is this Afghan peace or just a way out* by David E. Sanger.

Theme	Rheme
“And by the time he” (Sanger, 2020, para. 10).	“took up direct negotiations with the Taliban” (Sanger, 2020, para. 10).
Grammatical Cohesion, Anaphoric Reference, Substitution, Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information Given

The clause begins in the context of the preceding clauses. The theme initiates by the coordinating conjunction “and” (Sanger, 2020) which establishes the grammatical cohesion between the present clause and the preceding one in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

Moreover, there is an instance of substitution in the theme as “he” (Sanger, 2020) is used instead of the subject under discussion that is Trump. This substitution adds to the cohesion, and along with the anaphoric references become the given information for the clause under discussion. The rheme completes the idea mentioned in the theme by stating the new information of the clause that is the start of the negotiations. This is an exophoric reference as it is referring towards the external information about the start of the negotiations. Both theme and the rheme in unison add to the stance projected in the preceding clauses as this clause is a dependent one presented in cohesion with the preceding clauses.

Table 78

Clause 7: *Is this Afghan peace or just a way out* by David E. Sanger.

Theme	Rheme
“He knew American voters were interested” (Sanger, 2020, para. 10).	“mostly in one thing” (Sanger, 2020, para. 10).
Anaphoric Reference, Substitution	Cataphoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

Here again the clause begins with an instance of substitution in the form of the pronoun “He” which has substituted the then president of the USA. This substitution adds to the grammatical cohesion of the text by presenting the given Information that connects the present clause with the discussion of the American participation in the war in Afghanistan. The rheme tells the details of the idea mentioned in the theme that is about the expectations of the American voters. The rheme of the present clause presents us the glimpse of the new information about the demands of the voters but it is incomplete and refers to the upcoming details thus presenting a cataphoric reference in the following clause. Both anaphoric and cataphoric reference of the theme and the rheme ensures the coherence and presents the ideas with unity, foregrounding the stance of the American newspaper article, that highlights the hopes and expectations of the American voters from the Afghan Peace Process.

Table 79

Clause 8 and 9: *Is this Afghan peace or just a way out* by David E. Sanger.

Theme	Rheme
“Ending participation” (Sanger, 2020, para. 10).	“in a war” (Sanger, 2020, para. 10).
New Information	Anaphoric Reference, Repetition
“That” (Sanger, 2020, para. 10).	“has now dragged on for more than 18 years” (Sanger, 2020, para. 10).
Substitution, Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

This clause reveals the new information about the expectations of the American voters in relation to the previous clause. The theme foregrounds the decision of ending participation and the rheme mentions the subject that is “war” (Sanger, 2020, para. 10). The rheme thus gives an anaphoric reference once again and the subject under discussion has also been repeated yet again in order to create relevance and highlight the idea in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Moreover, the next clause begins with “that” (Sanger, 2020, para. 10), which is again an instance of substitution thus a previous reference towards the war in Afghanistan. The theme is thus a given information that repeats the ideas of the preceding clauses. The rheme foregrounds and highlights the new information that sheds light on the stance of the newspaper, about the prolonged period of this war that is “18 years” (Sanger, 2020, para. 10). Precisely the author highlights the expectations of the American voters from their leaders that they want an end to the war in Afghanistan. The inclination of the author towards the significance of the political decision and the expectations of the American voters is quite evident throughout the above-mentioned clauses.

4.2.2 USA TODAY

Table 80

Clause 1, 2 and 3: *Taliban begin first-ever peace talks after decades of war* by Kathy Gannon and Aya Batrawy.

Complete article has been attached as article 1 in the appendix D.

Theme	Rheme
“The discussions are important” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 3).	“In the search for lasting peace” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 3).
Given Information, Cataphoric Reference	New Information, Grammatical Cohesion, Exophoric Reference
“That” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 3).	“will also provide” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 3).
Given Information, Anaphoric Reference	New Information, Cataphoric Reference
“an exit” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 3).	“for U.S. and NATO troops after nearly 19 years” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 3).
New Information	Exophoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion, New Information

The article under discussion, titled, *Taliban begin first-ever peace talks after decades of war* by Kathy Gannon and Aya Batrawy is from another newspaper from the USA that is the *USA Today*. The clause under discussion begins the theme that mentions the discussions about the peace in Afghanistan. Here the word discussion refers towards the intra Afghan negotiations that is a cataphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). This reference towards the intra Afghan talks that has been mentioned in the upcoming clauses lays stress on the importance of the intra Afghan negotiations in the backdrop of the peace in Afghanistan. The same idea has been further highlighted and elaborated in the rheme of the same clause that informs the readers that the talks between the Taliban and the Afghan stake holders are of significant importance for the peace in the country. The next clause begins with an anaphoric reference “that” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para.

3), which refers towards the intra Afghan talks mentioned in the preceding clause, hence serving as a given information in addition to creating grammatical cohesion. The idea initiated in the theme elaborates further through the new information of the rheme that gives a cataphoric reference, an upcoming reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989), as it mentions the prospective outcome of the peace talks. The stance of the American newspaper surfaces once again as the third clause under discussion talks about the prospects of the talks by mentioning that this will aid in the exit of the foreign troops that are the troops of the US and its allies, from Afghanistan. This is the new information in the clause, and it has been presented in grammatical cohesion with its theme and the rheme connects with the previous clauses through references. The use of the references and the pattern of information presents the unified idea and projects a particular stance in terms of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Throughout the above-mentioned clauses, the foregrounded stance is regarding the prospects of the peace talks and its significance.

Table 81

Clause 4: *Taliban begin first-ever peace talks after decades of war* by Kathy Gannon and Aya Batrawy.

Theme	Rheme
“The sides” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4).	“will try to tackle tough issues” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4).
Exophoric Reference	Cataphoric Reference
New Information	New Information

The theme of the present clause begins with an exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The author mentions “the sides” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4), which refers towards all stake holders in Afghanistan who are parties in the intra Afghan negotiations. This external reference contextualizes the idea of the intra Afghan talks by presenting the new information, mentioning the parties of the deal. This external reference in line with the new information ensures the cohesive unity of the text. The rheme further elaborates the idea which gives another set of the new information that tells the readers that the parties of the talks “will try to tackle tough issues” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4), which is a cataphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The issues which these talks between the stake holders in Afghanistan will talk about have been mentioned in the upcoming clauses that not only creates cohesion but also foreground the idea that these talks hold significant importance in terms of peace in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of foreign troops.

Table 82

Clause 5: *Taliban begin first-ever peace talks after decades of war* by Kathy Gannon and Aya Batrawy.

Theme	Rheme
“This” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4).	“Includes the terms of a permanent cease-fire” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4).
Anaphoric Reference, Substitution	Cataphoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

The cataphoric reference in the previous clause elaborates in this clause by the aid of cohesive devices. The theme begins with a previous reference, named as anaphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), where the author substitutes “this” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4) for the “tough issues” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4) mentioned in the preceding clause. Substitution is a device of lexical cohesion highlighted by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 2014). This substitution becomes the given information in the present clause and gives rise to the new information in the rheme of the same clause. The rheme reveals and foregrounds the details of the issues which have been highlighted again and again in the preceding clauses in terms of references and substitution. The rheme tells the readers that the issues that need to be sorted through intra Afghan talks are related to the cease fire and permanent peace in Afghanistan. The terms have not been mentioned yet again which highlights another cataphoric reference in the rheme of this clause which refers towards the upcoming clauses. The repetitive patterns of the references add to the relevance, grammatical cohesion as well as lexical cohesion. All these aspects project the particular stance of the American newspaper article that highlights the need for, and importance of the intra-Afghan talks.

Table 83

Clause 6 and 7: *Taliban begin first-ever peace talks after decades of war* by Kathy Gannon and Aya Batrawy.

Theme	Rheme
“The rights” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4).	“of women and minorities” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4).
“And the disarming”	“of tens of thousands of Taliban fighters and militias loyal to warlords” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4).
Grammatical cohesion, Conjunction	Exophoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion
Given Information, Anaphoric Reference	New Information

The above-mentioned clauses continue the projection of the same stance using language wherein the first theme begins the given information and mentions the rights, that develops and foregrounds the rights of the women in the rheme as new information. The succeeding clause connects with the previous one using a coordinating conjunction “and” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4), a device of grammatical cohesion by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The subject of this theme mentions the “disarming” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4), and the rheme highlights that it is the disarming of the Taliban fighters that is an anaphoric reference towards the “tough issues” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 4), which need to be tackled through the peace process. This rheme also manifests an exophoric reference that is an external reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as it mentions the Taliban fighters and their associations. Through these clauses from the American newspaper, the foregrounded sets of information in the theme and rheme is about the motive of the Afghan Peace process that aims to tackle the issues in Afghanistan. The next article under analysis titled as, *Donald Trump expresses optimism about peace deal with Taliban in Afghanistan* by David Jackson, is from an American newspaper that is the USA Today.

Table 84

Clause 8, 9, 10 and 11: *Taliban begin first-ever peace talks after decades of war* by Kathy Gannon and Aya Batrawy.

Theme	Rheme
“The intra-Afghan negotiations” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 11).	“were laid out in a peace deal” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 11).
Exophoric Reference	Repetition, Cataphoric Reference
“Washington signed” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 11).	“with the Taliban on Feb. 29” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 11).
Substitution	Exophoric Reference, New Information
“At that time” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 11).	“the deal was touted” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 11).
“as Afghanistan’s best chance” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 11).	“at peace in 40 years of war” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 11).
Given Information, Cohesion	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The theme of the eighth clause mentions the much-needed dialogue between the Afghan parties as an external reference termed as exophoric reference by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme of the same clause foregrounds that these negotiations “were laid out” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 11), in the deal, which serves as a cataphoric reference as the details of its signing have been revealed in the upcoming clauses. The ninth clause mentions the prominent negotiator of the deal that is Washington, serving as an instance of substitution for the USA. Substitution ensures the grammatical cohesion in terms of by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme gives an exophoric reference as it highlights the details about the signing of the deal that it was signed on 29th February 2020. This clause foregrounds the USA as the main negotiator of the deal through the theme of the clause.

The tenth clause sheds light on the same deal in alignment with the given information of the ninth clause and states that it is lauded for a significant reason that has been revealed in the next clause. The last clause begins with “as” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 11) that serves the purpose of grammatical cohesion. The theme with its given information regards the deal as Afghanistan’s best chance and the

exophoric reference of the rheme highlights that the best chance is regarding the peace after “40 years of war” (Gannon & Batrawy, 2020, para. 11). These clauses once again foreground the significance of the deal and highlights the US as the prominent negotiator of this deal that would bring peace in Afghanistan.

Table 85

Clause 1 and 2: *Donald Trump expresses optimism about peace deal with Taliban in Afghanistan* by David Jackson.

Complete article has been attached as article 2 in the appendix D.

Theme	Rheme
“President Donald Trump” (Jackson, 2020, para. 1).	“Confirmed Sunday” (Jackson, 2020, para. 1).
“He” (Jackson, 2020, para. 1).	“Would sign a peace agreement with the Taliban in Afghanistan” (Jackson, 2020, para. 1).
Anaphoric Reference, Substitution	New Information

The first clause begins with the mention of the then president of the United States that is “Donald Trump” (Jackson, 2020, para. 1). The president has been foregrounded as the theme of the clause that has been highlighted and given importance, hence communicates the inclination and the stance of the newspaper. The rheme reveals the details within the theme and the readers come to know that the president confirmed something on Sunday. The subject in the rheme has been ellipted with an aim to create cohesion and hence presented as a cataphoric reference by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), which has been revealed in the subsequent clause. The next clause clarifies the whole concept for the readers where the theme establishes cohesive unity through an anaphoric reference towards the subject of discussion that is Donald Trump, the then president of the United States of America. The theme here also shows an instance of substitution as a pronoun “he” (Jackson, 2020), has substituted the noun. The rheme tells the readers about the new information that tells that the American President would sign a peace deal with the Afghan Taliban. Here again the subject, who has been mentioned as the initiating body of the peace deal, is the then President of the USA. This shows us the foregrounding and the inclination of the newspaper towards a particular side.

Table 86

Clause 3: *Donald Trump expresses optimism about peace deal with Taliban in Afghanistan* by David Jackson.

Theme	Rheme
“If negotiators” (Jackson, 2020, para. 1).	“Can work out the final details” (Jackson, 2020, para. 1).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	New Information, Exophoric Reference

This clause continues the same idea and tells the readers about the deal and the agreement. The theme yet again begins with an anaphoric reference that mentions the term negotiators in order to refer back towards the parties of the deal, that are the USA and the Afghan Taliban, mentioned in the preceding clause. The theme of the present clause thus presents the given information in cohesive unity with the previous idea that not only unifies the text but also adds to the stance initiated in the preceding clauses. Moreover, the theme begins with a conditional clause and the result clause has been mentioned as the rheme. The rheme mentions the details of the conditional clause that is about the negotiating parties working out the details. The rheme here is a new information in this clause and presents itself in cohesive unity with the theme. In addition, it is also an exophoric reference that is it refers towards the details of the negotiations that are not a part of this text, on the other hand it is a reference towards the external information. This type of reference as a grammatical cohesive device by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), adds to the cohesion of the discourse.

Table 87

Clause 4: *Donald Trump expresses optimism about peace deal with Taliban in Afghanistan* by David Jackson.

Theme	Rheme
“A U.S.-led coalition” (Jackson, 2020, para. 7).	“invaded Afghanistan a month after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001” (Jackson, 2020, para. 7).
Exophoric Reference	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The theme of this clause begins with an exophoric reference that refers towards the allies of the USA in this war. The theme talks about the coalition which was led by the USA but the countries who became a part of it have not been mentioned throughout this text, which is why this reference is referred to as an exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). This external reference creates grammatical cohesion and adds to the cohesive unity on the whole. The rheme yet again gives the readers another set of new information that has been presented in alignment with the theme. The rheme tells the readers that this coalition invaded Afghanistan, “after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001” (Jackson, 2020, para. 7). The rheme is an external reference once again as it refers to the incident that has not been mentioned in this text and refers towards the external data. This combination of the theme and the rheme in alignment with the references aids in the cohesion of the whole text and presents the stance of the American newspaper which tells the readers the reason behind the war in Afghanistan.

Table 88

Clause 5: *Donald Trump expresses optimism about peace deal with Taliban in Afghanistan* by David Jackson.

Theme	Rheme
“It” (Jackson, 2020, para. 7).	“Quickly toppled the Taliban government” (Jackson, 2020, para. 7).
Substitution, Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

This clause begins with the pronoun “it” (Jackson, 2020, para. 7), within the theme which is an anaphoric reference towards the previous clause as it refers towards the coalition. Thus, the theme of the present clause presents an instance of substitution as a grammatical cohesive device according to Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The theme presents the given information in cohesion with the previous clauses. The rheme reveals the new information that this coalition “toppled the Taliban government” (Jackson, 2020, para. 7). The rheme is an exophoric reference once again as it presents the information about the actions that followed, when US led coalition invaded the region. The information presented in the rheme is an external one, thus a reference towards the information out of the present

text. This adds to the cohesive unity of the ideas and conveys more about the stance projected by the newspaper that highlights the background of the war in Afghanistan.

Table 89

Clause 6 and 7: *Donald Trump expresses optimism about peace deal with Taliban in Afghanistan* by David Jackson.

Theme	Rheme
“That” (Jackson, 2020, para. 7).	“Had sheltered the 9/11 plotters” (Jackson, 2020, para. 7).
Anaphoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion	Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference
“But violence” (Jackson, 2020, para. 7).	“Has raged in the country in the years since” (Jackson, 2020, para. 7).
Grammatical Cohesion	Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

The theme of the present clause establishes grammatical cohesion by the help of substitution as it substitutes the Taliban government with “that” (Jackson, 2020, para. 7). In addition to this, the theme is also an anaphoric reference towards the preceding clause that reveals and refers back towards the same subject that is the Afghan Taliban government. The given information of the theme gives rise to the new information in the rheme that reveals the reason of the toppling of this government. The rheme manifests an anaphoric as well as exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). It is an anaphoric reference as it reveals the details in the context of the preceding ideas. While at the same time it is an exophoric reference as it refers towards the new and external information about the Taliban government that they had provided shelter to the plotters of the 9/11 incident. The seventh clause in the sequence begins with a coordinating conjunction “but” (Jackson, 2020, para. 7), which ensures grammatical cohesion and also connects the present clause with the previous one. The theme presents the given information and mentions the subject that is violence, the details of which have been revealed in the rheme. The rheme presents the new information as well as an exophoric reference, about the violence in Afghanistan, it reveals that the violence was raged in the country in the years since the attacks of 9/11.

Table 90

Clause 8 and 9: *Donald Trump expresses optimism about peace deal with Taliban in Afghanistan* by David Jackson.

Theme	Rheme
“More than 2,400 U.S. troops” (Jackson, 2020, para. 8).	“Have been killed in Afghanistan” (Jackson, 2020, para. 8).
“And more than 20,000” (Jackson, 2020, para. 8).	“Have been wounded in the fighting” (Jackson, 2020, para. 8).
Grammatical Reference	Cohesion, Anaphoric Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

The clause under discussion talks about the repercussions of the war in Afghanistan. The theme of the eighth clause gives its details in the context of a previous reference, where the author mentions the number of the US troops. This reference is termed as an anaphoric one in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The details and the new information about the troops have been revealed in the rheme of the same clause where the author mentions that these troops were killed in the war in Afghanistan. The next clause in the sequence talks about the wounded soldiers in the same conflict. The theme of this clause begins with a coordinating conjunction “and” (Jackson, 2020, para. 8), which connects it with the previous clause and established cohesive unity as mentioned by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme reveals the numbers and the rheme talks about the new information about this number that is about their injuries in the war. The rheme of both these clauses can also be termed as exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as both the rhemes reveal sets of information which refers towards the external incidents. Through these patterns the newspaper clearly projects the stance of the USA where it demonstrates the reasons of the war in Afghanistan in addition to projecting the casualties and the wounded people from the foreign troops. The above-mentioned clauses through its patters of information and the devices of cohesion, demonstrate the American side of the story and less heed has been paid to the damages this war has done to the land of Afghanistan and its people. The following article under discussion, *What a good Afghan peace deal will look like*

by Saad Mohseni and Michael O’Hanlon, has been taken from the USA Today, written by Saad Mohseni and Michael O’ Hanlon.

Table 91

Clause 1 and 2: *What a good Afghan peace deal will look like* by Saad Mohseni and Michael O’Hanlon.

Complete article has been attached as article 3 in the appendix D.

Theme	Rheme
“The first part of a deal” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 2).	“That could eventually bring peace to Afghanistan” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 2).
Cataphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference
“And GIs” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 2).	“Home to America, may be close” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 2).
Grammatical Cohesion	Grammatical Cohesion
Given Information	New Information

The first clause initiates by mentioning the deal, where the theme gives a cataphoric reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as it mentions the peace deal, the details of which are in the latter clauses. This adds to the cohesive unity of the text. The rheme presents the new information and an exophoric reference that this deal would bring peace in Afghanistan. The information in the rheme refers towards the external information about the clauses of the deal that will aid the peace and prosperity in the region. The next clause begins with a coordinating conjunction “and” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 2), which serves the purpose of grammatical cohesion in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme and the rheme of this clause talk about the return of GIs to the USA. The rheme reveals that this return along with the peace in the region may be around the corner in the wake of the peace in Afghanistan. Both these clauses foreground the stance of the American newspaper that mentions the significance of the deal in the context of the withdrawal of the foreign forces from Afghanistan along with bringing peace and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Table 92

Clause 3: *What a good Afghan peace deal will look like* by Saad Mohseni and Michael O’Hanlon.

Theme	Rheme
“Negotiated by” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 2).	“Afghan-born U.S. diplomat Zalmay Khalilzad as well as the Taliban” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference, Information, Ellipsis	Given Grammatical cohesion, New Information

This clause begins with an instance of ellipsis in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), which omits the subject with an aim to ensure cohesive unity and establish relevance between the clauses. The theme begins with the verb and the subject has been omitted on purpose. The theme thus presents the given information as anaphoric reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as it refers back to the peace deal mentioned in the previous clause. The theme gives rise to the rheme which reveals the details of the negotiators of the deal. The rheme comprises of the new information and mentions the negotiators that are the diplomat Khalilzad and the Afghan Taliban. Here again, the grammatical cohesion has been ensured using the coordinating conjunction. The information patterns demonstrate the inclination of the American newspaper as, while mentioning the negotiators it mentions the US diplomat first and the other party later.

Table 93

Clause 4 and 5: *What a good Afghan peace deal will look like* by Saad Mohseni and Michael O’Hanlon.

Theme	Rheme
“It” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 2).	“Would begin with a week-long reduction in violence nationwide” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 2).
“It” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 2).	“would also include...U.S. drawdown, from about 14,000 American troops to 8,600” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 2).

Substitution, Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

These clauses initiate their themes in cohesive unity with the preceding clauses as the theme of both clauses comprise of the pronoun “it” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 2), which is an instance of substitution as well as an anaphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The pronoun “it” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 2), substitutes and refers back towards the peace deal mentioned in the preceding clauses, hence both the themes present the given information for the readers. The rheme reveal the new information, with external references termed as exophoric reference by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989). The external reference in the rheme of the fourth clause reveals the reduction in violence in the region, while the rheme of the fifth clause, reveals the drawdown of the US troops and the reduction in its number. The information patterns in the rheme clearly refers towards the external information. Both these clauses demonstrate the repercussions of the deal and its outcome through the devices of Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

Table 94

Clause 6, 7 and 8: *What a good Afghan peace deal will look like* by Saad Mohseni and Michael O’Hanlon.

Theme	Rheme
“The general goals of phase two” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3).	“Would reportedly include a complete, or at least nearly complete, U.S./NATO troop departure” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	New Information
“As well as a real Afghan power-sharing agreement” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3).	“between the Taliban” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3).
“and a broad team” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3).	“including the current government as well as other supporters of a republican, constitutional Afghanistan” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3).

Grammatical Information,	Cohesion, Cataphoric Reference	New Conjunction,	Grammatical cohesion, New Information.	Subordinating
-----------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------	---	---------------

The present clause begins its theme with an anaphoric reference, by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), which is a reference in the context of the preceding information that is, it is referring towards the peace agreement between the US and the Afghan Taliban. The theme mentions the goals of the phase two, here phase two is referring towards the phases of the peace deal. The theme here again serves as the given information, and it gives rise to the new information within the rheme that is the about the goals of the phase two in terms of the foreign troops withdrawal from Afghanistan. The seventh clause begins with an instance of conjunction that serves the purpose of grammatical cohesion. The author uses “as well as” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3), in order to connect this clause with the previous one. Moreover, the theme mentions a set of new information where the author reveals another goal of the second phase of the peace process that is the power sharing agreement between the Afghan stakeholders. This is a cataphoric reference too in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989), as the details of the power sharing agreement have been revealed in the rheme. The rheme talks about the parties who will be a part of the power sharing deal. The author begins to mention the stakeholders using subordinating conjunction “between” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3). The rheme of the seventh clause mentions one of the stake holders that continues in the succeeding theme through the use of “and” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3) as a coordinating conjunction, which aids in the grammatical cohesion of the text and ensures the cohesive unity in the discourse. The rheme of the eighth clause sheds light on the other stakeholders. These patterns of the information along with the linguistic devices of cohesion project the scenario from the lens of an American journalist and from the above-mentioned clauses the stance of a negotiator has been projected who is trying to bring the country to peace after decades of war.

Table 95

Clause 9, 10 and 11: *What a good Afghan peace deal will look like* by Saad Mohseni and Michael O’Hanlon.

Theme	Rheme
“This” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3).	“Will be a daunting proposition” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3).
Anaphoric Reference, Substitution	Cataphoric Reference
“At a time when Afghanistan’s government, as well as the Taliban both” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3).	“Consider themselves in the driver’s seat” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3).
Anaphoric Reference, Repetition	Exophoric Reference
“In terms of” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3).	“legitimacy and power” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3).
Anaphoric Reference, Repetition	Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

The present clause begins yet again with an anaphoric reference where the theme comprises of the word “this” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3), which is a substitution as well as an anaphoric reference proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). “This” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3) refers towards the idea of the power sharing agreement between the Afghan stake holders that has been mentioned in the previous clause. Moreover, “this” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3) has also substituted the same subject. The rheme reveals the new information about the same clause and regards it to be “a daunting proposition” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3), which is a cataphoric reference as it refers towards the concepts of the latter clauses. Moreover, the rheme also reveals the stance of the American newspaper as by using the references and the substitution, the author has projected an idea that how difficult this power sharing could be when looked at from the perspective of the negotiators. The tenth clause again begins with an anaphoric reference where the first phrase of the theme “at a time” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3) refers back towards the preceding rheme. Moreover, there is an instance of repetition in the theme through the mentioning of the Afghanistan government and the Taliban. The repetition is another device of lexical cohesion proposed by Halliday

and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme yet again reveals the new information about these parties that both of them “consider themselves in the driver’s seat” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para. 3). This new information is also an external reference, referring towards the broader picture of the political situation of Afghanistan, which is a device of grammatical cohesion termed as exophoric reference by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

The last clause clarifies the complete idea where the given information of the theme serves as an anaphoric reference towards the preceding clauses and the new information by the aid of coordinating conjunction reveals that both the stake holders of Afghanistan consider themselves in power in terms of “legitimacy and power” (Mohseni & Hanlon, 2020, para 3). Precisely the whole article projects the stance of the newspaper from the USA who is looking at the whole political situation from the lens of a negotiator who mentions a picture of the internal political struggles of Afghanistan as well as shows inclination towards the clauses of the deal which will allow the withdrawal of the foreign troops from the land of Afghanistan. This projection has been achieved by using the tools of Textual Meta Function proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976-1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The next article under discussion, *Historic peace deal in Afghanistan reached with Taliban, allowing withdrawal of US troops* by Tom Vanden Brook and Deirdre Shesgreen is another sample article from the USA Today.

Table 96

Clause 1 and 2: *Historic peace deal in Afghanistan reached with Taliban, allowing withdrawal of US troops* by Tom Vanden Brook and Deirdre Shesgreen.

Complete article has been attached as article 4 in the appendix D.

Theme	Rheme
“U.S. and Taliban negotiators” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1).	“signed a historic agreement” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1).
“That” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1).	“Could end 19 years of war in Afghanistan” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1).
Grammatical Cohesion, Substitution	Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

The first clause begins the theme by mentioning the parties of the peace deal, which have been mentioned using a coordinating conjunction “and” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1). The theme initiates by mentioning the US first and Taliban negotiators afterwards, this shows slight foregrounding of one party as the theme initiates. The rheme reveals the new information which mentions that both the parties signed the historic agreement. The second clause begins with “that” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1), which serves as the theme of the clause and also an anaphoric reference towards the preceding clause in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Moreover, the same theme is also an instance of substitution, another device of grammatical cohesion proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as it substitutes the peace deal mentioned in the rheme of the preceding clause. Hence the preceding rheme gives rise to this theme. The theme develops into rheme, and the author reveals new information about the same subject that the peace deal will end 20 years of the war in Afghanistan. This rheme is an exophoric reference as it refers towards the information which is not a part of this text. The patterns of information reveal the stance of the author from USA, who foregrounds the importance of the peace deal in the context of decades of war in Afghanistan.

Table 97

Clause 3 and 4: *Historic peace deal in Afghanistan reached with Taliban, allowing withdrawal of US troops* by Tom Vanden Brook and Deirdre Shesgreen.

Theme	Rheme
“And allow” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1).	“President Donald Trump” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1).
“To begin” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1).	“the promised withdrawal of American troops” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1).
Grammatical Cohesion	Cataphoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

This clause begins with a coordinating conjunction “and” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1), which serves the purpose of grammatical cohesion in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The theme

mentions the given information in cohesion with the previous information through the use of “and” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1), a device of grammatical cohesion. The rheme of this clause mentions the subject of discussion as new information in the clause that is the then president of the USA. The fourth clause begins its theme by mentioning that the deal will allow the president “to begin” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1), the withdrawal of the troops from Afghanistan that has been mentioned as the new information in the rheme. The rheme tells the detail about the idea initiated in the theme as it mentions that this deal will begin the withdrawal of the American forces from Afghanistan. The rheme mentions the phrase, “promised withdrawal” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 1), which is a cataphoric reference, an upcoming reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). This reference is towards the clauses of the deal, mentioned in the succeeding clauses. The clause shows the stance of an American author too where rheme foregrounds the importance and need of the withdrawal of the foreign forces from Afghanistan.

Table 98

Clause 5 and 6: *Historic peace deal in Afghanistan reached with Taliban, allowing withdrawal of US troops* by Tom Vanden Brook and Deirdre Shesgreen.

Theme	Rheme
“The four-page pact” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 2).	“Spells out a timetable for the United States” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference and substitution, Cataphoric Reference	Cataphoric Reference
“To withdraw” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 2).	“its 13,000 troops from Afghanistan” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 2).
Repetition, Given Information	New Information, Exophoric Reference

The theme of the present clause begins with a reference that is both anaphoric as well as cataphoric in nature, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). It is anaphoric as it mentions the pact which refers towards the agreement, moreover this word also substitutes the term agreement thus serves the purpose of lexical cohesion as well as the grammatical cohesion. The same theme is also a cataphoric reference as it refers towards the details that are a part of the

latter clauses. The rheme reveals the new information about the pact that it lays forward a timetable. Here again the “timetable” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 2), is a cataphoric reference as it refers towards the fore coming clauses. The next clause mentions the withdrawal of the troops once again which is called repetition by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), this repetition adds to the cohesion in the discourse and aids in the projection of the stance. The rheme mentions the new information in the form of an external reference that is an exophoric reference by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Here the rheme mentions the withdrawal of 13000 troops from Afghanistan. The inclination towards this withdrawal was quite evident in the preceding clauses and the repetition of the same shows the stance of the author in this regard, where the withdrawal has been foregrounded using the devices of cohesion.

Table 99

Clause 7 and 8: *Historic peace deal in Afghanistan reached with Taliban, allowing withdrawal of US troops* by Tom Vanden Brook and Deirdre Shesgreen.

Theme	Rheme
“In exchange, the Taliban” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 2).	“agreed to sever its ties with al- Qaida” v
Anaphoric Reference	Cataphoric Reference
“The terrorist group” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 2).	“That launched the 9/11 attacks against the U.S” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The present clause begins its theme with the phrase “in exchange” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 2), which serves as an anaphoric reference towards the preceding clause that reveals the withdrawal of the troops from Afghanistan. The rheme reveals the new information about the Afghan Taliban about what they have agreed to in exchange. The rheme is a cataphoric reference too as it mentions the clause of the deal that the Afghan Taliban will “sever its ties will Al-Qaida” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 2). This rheme develops the next theme which reveals the information about the preceding subject. The theme and the rheme of the next clause reveal before the readers the reason behind the war in Afghanistan as it mentions an exophoric reference

of the incident of 9/11. Both these clauses give the readers an insight into the background of this two decades of war and reveals for the readers the reason behind the beginning of this decades long war.

Table 100

Clause 9 and 10: *Historic peace deal in Afghanistan reached with Taliban, allowing withdrawal of US troops* by Tom Vanden Brook and Deirdre Shesgreen.

Theme	Rheme
“The agreement” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4).	“Sets the stage for further negotiations” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4).
Repetition, Given Information	Cataphoric Reference, New Information
“Between” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4).	“Afghanistan’s government and the Taliban” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4).
Anaphoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion	Grammatical Cohesion, Conjunction
Given Information	New Information

The theme of the present clause again comprises of the given information where there is a repetition of the “agreement” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4) which refers towards the peace deal between the US and the Afghan Taliban, hence it is also termed as an anaphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme unfolds and foregrounds the new information in the form of a cataphoric reference, where the author mentions that this agreement will pave way for further negotiations. The reference is a cataphoric one in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as the details of the negotiations have been revealed in the latter clauses. The theme and rheme of the tenth clause reveal this cataphoric reference, where the theme comprises of a subordinating conjunction “between” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4), which adds to the grammatical cohesion as proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme foregrounds the parties of the intra Afghan negotiations that are the Afghan government and the Taliban. Both the parties have been mentioned in cohesion with the previous clauses using the conjunction as well as references towards the previous discourse. These clauses

reiterate the same stance once again that foregrounds the significance of the peace deal in the context of peace and stability in Afghanistan and the role of the USA in negotiating the peace deal.

Table 101

Clause 11: *Historic peace deal in Afghanistan reached with Taliban, allowing withdrawal of US troops* by Tom Vanden Brook and Deirdre Shesgreen.

Theme	Rheme
“American officials hope” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4).	“those talks will lead to a power-sharing deal” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4).
Repetition, Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Anaphoric Reference, New Information

The theme of the present clause mentions the “American Officials” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4), once again which is called the lexical cohesive device of repetition in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). This theme is also an example of an anaphoric reference as it refers towards the previous clauses. The given information of the theme gives rise to the rheme. The rheme foregrounds the new information and contextualizes it within the previous clauses using an anaphoric reference as it mentions “talks” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4), which refers towards the intra Afghan talks. Moreover, the theme reveals the new information that these talks will ensure a power sharing deal. This clause communicates the hopes of the American officials from the intra Afghan talks that after the withdrawal, there would be “a power sharing deal” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4) in the country.

Table 102

Clause 12 and 13: *Historic peace deal in Afghanistan reached with Taliban, allowing withdrawal of US troops* by Tom Vanden Brook and Deirdre Shesgreen.

Theme	Rheme
“A permanent end” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4).	“to the bloody conflict” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4).
Anaphoric Reference	Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference

“And a full withdrawal” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4).	“of American forces” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4).
--	---

Grammatical Cohesion, Anaphoric Reference, Repetition	Anaphoric Reference, New Information
--	--------------------------------------

The theme and rheme of this clause continue in the same context where both serve as anaphoric references in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as both mention the previous references that are about the two decades of the conflict and war in the region. The same phrase of “the bloody conflict” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4) is also an exophoric reference as it refers towards the decades of war in Afghanistan and the destruction and blood shed it has accompanied. The next clause begins with a coordinating conjunction “and” (Brook & Shesgreen, 2020, para. 4) which connects this clause with the previous one. In addition, it mentions the withdrawal once again which is used as lexical device of cohesion as the same has been repeated again and again throughout the article. The rheme foregrounds the American forces and both the theme and rheme of this clause serve as an anaphoric reference along with repetition of the previous idea of the withdrawal. This clause manifests the stance of an American journalist, who wants to highlight the withdrawal of the foreign forces from Afghanistan as one of the major goals of the peace deal along with bringing peace and prosperity in Afghanistan through intra Afghan negotiations.

The articles from the newspapers of USA perform the Textual Meta Function of language in an attempt to project their stance and present the scenario from their lens and perspective. Contrary to the Afghan newspapers the foregrounded idea in the theme and rheme of the clauses were about the withdrawal of the American forces from Afghanistan along with the settlement between the warring parties in the country. The patterns of information clearly manifest the inclination of the author, and the speakers or writers of that language manipulate the system in order to perform the communicative function, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (1985, 2014). The cohesive devices that have been used throughout these articles aid the authors in performing the same Meta Function and foregrounding the idea about the importance of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan after a peaceful settlement and the impacts of this deal on the American voters. Moreover, the theme and rheme patterns foreground

the role of the US in negotiating the deal. The patterns of information also highlight the casualties of the US soldiers as a result of this war. Less heed has been paid to the damages this war has brought to the general public of Afghanistan who have suffered as a result of this war.

4.3 Pakistan

4.3.1 *THE NEWS*

Contrary to the stance projected in the American and Afghan newspapers, the language of the newspapers from Pakistan performs a Meta Function that projects the stance of Pakistan using the same language resource that are the devices of the Textual Meta Function of language. The first newspaper under discussion is The NEWS, a renowned newspaper of Pakistan and the article under discussion, titled *An Afghan Perspective* authored by Murtaza Shibli.

Table 103

Clause 1 and 2: *An Afghan Perspective* authored by Murtaza Shibli.

Complete article has been attached as article 1 in the appendix E.

Theme	Rheme
“As the US” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1).	“is trying to wind up” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1)
Coordinating Conjunction, Grammatical Cohesion, Exophoric Reference	Cataphoric Reference
“Its longest-ever war in Afghanistan” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1).	“by entering into a peace agreement with the Taliban” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1).
Exophoric Reference, Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The present clause begins its theme with a coordinating conjunction “as” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1), which ensures the grammatical cohesion and links the present clause with the broader context of the Afghan Peace deal. This coordinating conjunction refers towards the exophoric reference of the Afghan Peace Process, which is a reference towards the external information in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme gives the new information in line with the theme that is a cataphoric reference towards the next clause. The rheme gives an idea about the winding up of the longest war which is mentioned in the next theme. The theme of the second clause is an exophoric reference towards the two

decades of war in Afghanistan, the theme mentions the war as longest, but the detail is an external reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976-1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The given information in the theme gives rise to the new information of the rheme. The rheme mentions that the longest war will end by negotiating a peace deal with Afghan Taliban. This is again an exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), as it refers towards the external information of the peace deal. The outlook of these initial clauses shows the stance of a Pakistani author that seems to be of a third party looking at the peace process from another perspective.

Table 104

Clause 3 and 4: *An Afghan Perspective* authored by Murtaza Shibli.

Theme	Rheme
“There” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1)	“are voices within India sounding alarm” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1).
Cataphoric Reference	New Information, Cataphoric Reference
“That it would” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1).	“strengthen Pakistan in the region” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information, Substitution, Anaphoric Reference	New Information, Exophoric Reference

The theme of the present clause comprises of “there” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1), which initiates the clause, sets the context and gives the readers an upcoming reference that is a reference towards the latter part of the text. “There” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1) is a cataphoric reference, by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), in this clause as it refers towards the voices in India which have been mentioned in the latter part of the same clause. The rheme presents the new information where the author highlights that, some voices in India are sounding alarm. This phrase “sounding alarm” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1) is again a cataphoric reference as the writer reveals and foregrounds the details in the succeeding clause. The fourth clause initiates the theme by using “that” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1), which connects the two clauses and ensures the cohesive unity and also regards it, an anaphoric reference. Moreover, theme includes a pronoun “it” that substitutes the subject of peace agreement mentioned in the initial clauses of the article under discussion. Substitution is a

grammatical cohesive device under the Textual Meta Function proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976).

All these cohesive devices regard the information presented in the theme as the given. The rheme lays forward the new information about the same concept and completes the idea by mentioning that the peace deal will “strengthen Pakistan in the region” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1), the idea that is proposed by Indians. This new information is yet again an exophoric reference as it uses the word “region” (Shibli, 2020, para. 1), which refers towards the politics and geo strategic scenario of Pakistan and its neighbouring countries. This reference along with others add to the cohesive unity of the text. Both these clauses present the stance of a Pakistani journalist as they are talking about the same peace deal from a completely different perspective through the inclination and the foregrounding of ideas within theme and rheme and the devices of cohesion. The readers have been given an insight into the whole scenario from the lens of Pakistan and what implications and the future prospects the deal could bring for Pakistan.

Table 105

Clause 5: *An Afghan Perspective* authored by Murtaza Shibli.

Theme	Rheme
“The Kashmir issue and the public rebellion of Kahmiris” (Shibli, 2020, para. 2).	“Are far older than the ongoing Afghan crisis of the last three decades” (Shibli, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion, New Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The theme of the present clause is an anaphoric as well as exophoric reference at the same time in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Moreover, it uses a coordinating conjunction “and” while mentioning the two concepts in order to create cohesion as proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme mentions the Kashmir issue and “the public rebellion of Kashmiris” (Shibli, 2020, para. 2). Both these phrases are anaphoric references in such a way that they refer towards the preceding clauses about the concerns of India regarding Pakistan in the wake of this peace agreement. Moreover, the same phrase is

also an exophoric reference as the Kashmir issue and the rebellion of the people is a reference towards an external source that is towards the geo-political tensions between India and Pakistan. The rheme clarifies the scenario and foregrounds the stance of a Pakistani journalist who highlights that this issue is much older than the Afghan issue. The rheme is again an exophoric reference as it refers towards the history of the Kashmir issue. The new information of the theme and rheme clearly manifests the inclination of a Pakistani author.

Table 106

Clause 6 and 7: *An Afghan Perspective* authored by Murtaza Shibli.

Theme	Rheme
“In the past, despite Pakistan’s attempts” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3).	to bring around the Afghan groups” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3).
Exophoric Reference	Exophoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion
“to support and supplement” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3).	“its position on certain issues” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3).
Anaphoric Reference, Substitution, Given Information	Exophoric reference, New Information.

The same stance and foregrounding continue in this theme as the author highlights his stance by using an exophoric reference once again in the theme. The theme begins with the phrase “in the past” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3) and mentions “Pakistan’s attempts” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3) to state the same idea. The rheme clarifies the theme and mentions another external reference highlighting the attempts of Pakistan to bring the Afghan groups to support Pakistan in terms of “its position” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3) which has been elaborated in the next clause. This theme is an anaphoric reference as it refers towards the previous clause in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme sheds light on the position of Pakistan. Moreover “its” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3) is a substitution for Pakistan. The rheme develops and mentions “certain issues” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3), which is an exophoric reference once again and a foregrounded new information. These certain issues are related to the geopolitical conflicts between Pakistan and its neighbours. Here

again the foregrounded ideas in the theme and rheme are the issues and conflicts related to Pakistan, hence manifesting the stance of a Pakistani author.

Table 107

Clause 8 and 9: *An Afghan Perspective* authored by Murtaza Shibli.

Theme	Rheme
“Afghans” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3).	“have shown resilience and autonomous character” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3).
Given Information, Repetition	Grammatical Cohesion, Anaphoric Reference
“And never remained wedded” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3).	“To Pakistan’s narrative or position towards India or Kashmir” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3).
Grammatical Cohesion, Exophoric Reference	Repetition, Exophoric Reference

The theme of this clause begins with the noun “Afghans” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3), which is an instance of repetition and an anaphoric reference in terms of the idea, that it links with the previous subject about supporting Pakistan on certain issues. The rheme foregrounds the idea that Afghans have been resilient when it comes to supporting Pakistan on certain issues. The complete idea is understood in the context of the preceding clause through grammatical cohesion. The author has highlighted this resilient and autonomous character of Afghans as rheme which shows his stance. The ninth clause begins with a coordinating conjunction “and” (Shibli, 2020, para. 3), that connects the two clauses and creates cohesive unity. Both the theme and rheme of this clause comprise of exophoric reference towards the idea that Pakistan never got any support from Afghans on the issue of Kashmir. This is an external reference which has been foregrounded in the rheme and projects the idea, initiated earlier that the proposition about this peace deal about strengthening Pakistan in the region is wrong. The cohesive unity of all the clauses manifests the same stance of Pakistan with the aid of internal as well as external references. The following article under discussion is *Cracks in the deal* by Malik Muhammad Ashraf published in the renowned newspaper from Pakistan that is *THE NEWS*.

Table 108

Clause 1 and 2: *Cracks in the deal* by Malik Muhammad Ashraf.

Complete article has been attached as article 2 in the appendix E.

Theme	Rheme
“Agreements” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 2).	“are only the first step in that direction” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 2).
Given Information	New Information, Cataphoric Reference
“The most important aspect” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 2).	“is the implementation of the agreement” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 2).
Given Information	Repetition, New Information

This clause begins with the idea of the agreements regarding any conflict. The theme mentions the term agreement in a generalized manner in order to establish the cohesive unity and foreground the subject of discussion that is implementation of the agreement, in the latter clauses. The rheme highlights the stance of the author once again by mentioning that the agreement is just a step “in that direction”. “that direction” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 2) is a cataphoric reference that is a reference in the latter clauses in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). “Direction” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 2) refers towards the conflict whose solution has been sought in the form of agreement. The second clause in the sequence highlights the stance by concluding the statement about the most important aspect of the agreement that is the implementation. The rheme of this clause foregrounds the significance of implementation. This foregrounding manifests the stance of a Pakistani journalist who is more inclined towards the implementation of the peace agreement.

Table 109

Clause 3, 4, 5 and 6: *Cracks in the deal* by Malik Muhammad Ashraf.

Theme	Rheme
“Afghan President Ashraf Ghani” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 3).	“made a mind blowing statement” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 3).
“That the Afghan government” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 3).	“had made no commitment to free Taliban prisoners” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 3).
Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference

“As included” (Ashraf, 2020, “in the US-Taliban deal” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 3).
para. 3).

Grammatical Cohesion, Cataphoric Reference, New Information
Given Information

“But that it could however be “in the ensuing intra-Afghan talks” (Ashraf, 2020,
discussed” (Ashraf, 2020, para. para. 3).
3).

Coordinating Conjunction, Exophoric Reference, New Information
Substitution, Given Information

The third clause makes the general discussion of the agreement more specifically, as it begins with the mention of the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani as the theme of the clause. The clause mentions that he made statement. The word “statement” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 3) within the rheme is a cataphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as it refers towards the upcoming clauses. The next clause begins with “that” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 3), which adds to the grammatical cohesion. The theme mentions “the Afghan government” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 3), that is an anaphoric reference once again and a substitution too, as it substitutes the president. The rheme reveals the statement completely that they didn’t make any commitment “to free the Taliban prisoners” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 3). The rheme is a new information and an exophoric reference towards the clauses of the agreement about the release of the prisoners.

The fifth clause in this sequence begins with “as”, which is a coordinating conjunction and connects this clause with the previous one. Its rheme is the new information and it reveals the agreement that has been referred to earlier, which is “the US Taliban deal” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 3). This rheme is cataphoric reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as it refers towards the details of the latter clauses. The next clause begins with a coordinating conjunction “but” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 3), which connects the two clauses. Moreover, the theme is the given information which is referring towards preceding clauses while mentioning the same subject of the prisoner release using the device of substitution proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The pronoun “it” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 3) substitutes the prisoner release, which adds to the cohesive unity of the text.

The final rheme gives the readers a new information, which is an exophoric reference as it mentions the “intra-Afghan talks” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 3) which is a reference towards the data outside this text, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976).

Table 110

7 and 8: *Cracks in the deal* by Malik Muhammad Ashraf.

Theme	Rheme
“The US” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7).	“Couldn’t have included the clause regarding the exchange of prisoners” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7).
Given Information	Reference, New Information
“Without obtaining the consent of” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7).	“The Afghan President” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7).
Cataphoric Reference	Repetition, Anaphoric Reference

The present clause mentions the US once again and the theme serves as the given information which develops in the rheme and foregrounds the new information that mentions that there is lesser possibility that the US included the clause about the prisoner exchange on its own that is an anaphoric reference, a reference in the preceding clause in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The eighth clause reveals the complete idea that the clause could not be included without the consent of the then President of Afghanistan. The rheme of this clause manifests an anaphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as it mentions the phrase “the Afghan President” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7), which is a previous reference and also repetition, another device of lexical cohesion proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The rheme of both these clauses foreground the same stance of the Pakistani journalist about the significance of the implementation of the peace deal and its clauses.

Table 111

Clause 9 and 10: *Cracks in the deal* by Malik Muhammad Ashraf.

Theme	Rheme
“If they didn’t” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7).	“then it was a grave mistake on their part” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7).
Anaphoric Reference, Substitution, Given Information	Anaphoric Reference, New Information
“And if President Ghani” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7).	“has backtracked after agreeing with the US” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7).
Grammatical Cohesion, Repetition, Given Information	New Information, Anaphoric Reference

The present clause initiates its theme with the anaphoric reference that refers towards the previous clause in many ways. Moreover, it consists of the pronoun “they” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7) which substitutes the USA. The theme and rheme refer towards the clause of the peace deal about the prisoner release and its inclusion in the agreement with the consent of the Afghan government. The rheme of the same clause highlights and strengthens the stance of a Pakistani journalist who foregrounds the idea within the rheme that if the US diplomat didn’t consult the Afghan government regarding the clause of prisoner release, then it was “a grave mistake on their part” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7). This rheme gives rise to the next theme which begins with a coordinating conjunction “and” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7), hence connects two clauses. The theme of the tenth clause is a conditional clause and a given information that shows repetition by mentioning the President of Afghanistan to add cohesion to the discourse in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme is the result clause which presents the new information that aligns with the upcoming theme. The rheme mentions the possibility of the President backing off from the agreement. The idea continues in the following clauses when this information becomes the given information of the following theme.

Table 112

Clause 11 and 12: *Cracks in the deal* by Malik Muhammad Ashraf.

Theme	Rheme
“For inclusion of that clause” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7).	“In the agreement” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7).
Anaphoric Reference, substitution	Repetition
“Then he” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7).	“Has played the role of spoiler” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7).
Substitution, Given Information	New information, Exophoric Reference

The present theme begins in cohesion with the preceding rheme. The theme is an anaphoric reference as it refers towards the clause of the prisoner release in the Afghan Peace Deal, a reference proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). Moreover, the phrase “that clause” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7), also demonstrates an instance of substitution, another device of grammatical cohesion, proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). Here this phrase substitutes the clause of prisoner release mentioned in the preceding clauses. The rheme highlights the agreement once again which is also an example of repetition, a device of grammatical cohesion proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme of the next clause is the given information which comprises of a substitution in the form of a pronoun “he” (Ashraf, 2020, para. 7). It substitutes the President of Afghanistan; thus, theme also serves as an anaphoric reference towards preceding clauses. The rheme presents and highlight the new information through an exophoric reference, where the author regards the role of the President in that case to be of a spoiler. The rheme foregrounds the stance of the journalist once again, where he reiterates the idea through the information patterns that if the clauses of the agreement were not well negotiated or if any party has stepped back, in both cases, the agreement will not bear the desired fruit. The next article has been taken from *The NEWS* newspaper titled, *Withdrawal from Afghanistan* by Abdul Sattar.

Table 113

Clause 1, 2 and 3: *Withdrawal from Afghanistan* by Abdul Sattar.

Complete article has been attached as article 3 in the appendix E.

Theme	Rheme
“The Euphoria” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1).	“Created in the aftermath of the Taliban-US peace deal” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1).
Cataphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference
“Seems to be” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1).	“Dying down” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1).
“Before it” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1).	“Could even be implemented” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information, Anaphoric Reference	New Information, Cataphoric Reference

The theme begins with a cataphoric reference which is an upcoming reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The theme mentions the terms “euphoria” (Sattar, 2020), the details of which are in the upcoming clause thus the theme is referring forward in order to create the cohesive unity. The rheme gives an exophoric reference in terms of mentioning the peace deal signed between the US and the Taliban. It is reference towards the external information in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The next two clauses manifest instances of anaphoric reference that is a previous reference, in the theme and cataphoric reference that is an upcoming reference in the rheme identified within Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The themes comprise of the given information which refers backwards towards the peace deal mentioned in the first clause. Moreover, the theme of the third clause comprises of a substitution that is “it” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1), which refers towards the peace deal once again. The rheme gives the new information as it completes the idea that the deal seems to be dying before its implementation. This is a cataphoric reference in a way that it refers towards the details and the information in the latter clauses. Both these clauses manifest the inclination and stance of Pakistani journalist too, as he wants to foreground the fact in the rheme that the peace deal is dying down before implementation.

Table 114

Clause 4 and 5: *Withdrawal from Afghanistan* by Abdul Sattar.

Theme	Rheme
“The ruthless attacks” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1).	“of the Taliban in the last few days” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1).
Exophoric reference	Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference.
“And the counter strikes by America” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1).	“Indicate that the ominous shadow of war will not subside any time soon” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1).
Grammatical Cohesion, Exophoric Reference, Given Information	Anaphoric Reference, New Information

The theme of the present clause mentions the attacks which is an external reference, an exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme reveals and foregrounds that these attacks are by the Taliban. The foregrounding of this idea in the rheme is an anaphoric reference that is a previous reference as it mentions the attacks in the context of the preceding stance about the deal dying out. Moreover, the same theme is also an exophoric reference as it mentions the news of the attacks by the Taliban in Afghanistan which is a reference towards the external source of information in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The fifth clause begins its theme with a coordinating conjunction “and” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1), which connects it with the preceding clause and stance projected by the newspaper that is about the non-implementation of the peace deal. The theme mentions “the counter strikes by America” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1), as an exophoric reference towards an external source of information that has been presented in cohesive unity with the preceding clause through the coordinating conjunction “and” (Sattar, 2020, para. 1). The rheme gives the readers, a new information and foregrounds the stance of the Pakistani newspaper that is about the ominous shadow of this war in Afghanistan that does not seem to be subsiding in the wake of all these incidents. This also serves as an anaphoric reference as it refers towards the stance of the non-implementation of the peace agreement.

Table 115

Clause 6 and 7: *Withdrawal from Afghanistan* by Abdul Sattar.

Theme	Rheme
“Trump” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).	“Made it very clear” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference, Repetition	Cataphoric Reference, Substitution
“That” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).	“The sole super power could not prop up the Kabul government forever” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).
Given Information	New Information

The theme and rheme of the present clause comprise of an instance of cataphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The mention of the President of the US refers towards the discussion about him in the latter clauses and the same has also been repeated time and again. The rheme is a cataphoric reference and contains an instance of substitution too as a cohesive device of grammatical cohesion in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The rheme says that the then President of the USA “made it very clear” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2), which is a reference towards the succeeding clause. Moreover, the pronoun “it” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2) substitutes the idea highlighted in the rheme of the next clause that is about the USA not supporting the Afghan government forever. The rheme of the sixth clause develops the given information of the theme of the seventh clause which is “that” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2), serving the purpose of grammatical cohesion and referring backwards, hence an anaphoric reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The rheme foregrounds the same stance, in the form of its discussion about the statement of the then president of the USA that foregrounds the concern about the withdrawal of the foreign forces in the wake of the failing clauses of the peace agreement.

Table 116

Clause 8 and 9: *Withdrawal from Afghanistan* by Abdul Sattar.

Theme	Rheme
“He” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).	“Told reporters on Friday” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).
Substitution, Anaphoric Reference	Cataphoric Reference
“That”	“Countries have to take care of themselves” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	New Information

This clause begins with a pronoun “he” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2), as its theme which is an anaphoric towards Donald Trump, the then president of the USA mentioned in the theme of the preceding clauses of the same article. This theme is also an instance of substitution, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as “he” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2), substitutes Donald Trump. The rheme of the same clause is a cataphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), as it tells the readers that the President gave a statement on Friday but the details of the same are in the upcoming clauses. The theme of the ninth clause serves to be the given information as it uses “that” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2), as a grammatical device of anaphoric reference, referring towards the preceding data in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The rheme foregrounds the actual statement that is the new information in the clause and strengthens the stance of the Pakistani journalist even further who has been foregrounding the idea about the sudden withdrawal of the foreign troops without the actual implementation of the clauses of the peace deal.

Table 117

Clause 10, 11, 12 and 13: *Withdrawal from Afghanistan* by Abdul Sattar.

Theme	Rheme
“It” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).	“Seems Washington does not want to be interested in Afghan Affairs any longer” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).
Cataphoric Reference	Anaphoric Reference, Substitution

“And President Trump” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).	“Has a dogged determination to live up to his electoral promise” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference	Anaphoric and Cataphoric Reference
“Of bringing back” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).	“The troops from Afghanistan” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference	Anaphoric Reference
“To appease” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).	“His voters” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2).
Exophoric Reference	Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference
Given Information	New Information

The clause begins its theme with a cataphoric reference within Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976) that is “it” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2) and the details of which are revealed in the rheme of the same clause. The rheme aligns and shows cohesion with the preceding clauses where it mentions the proposition about the less interest of the US in the affairs of Afghanistan. This rheme manifests a previous reference as anaphoric reference and an instance of substitution too by mentioning “Washington” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2) instead of the USA. The discussion as reference towards the previous statement by the President and the substitution adds to the grammatical cohesion and the cohesive unity of the text as proposed in the Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

The eleventh theme begins with the mention of the President Trump once again which is an anaphoric reference towards the preceding clause. The given information of the rheme gives rise to the new information of the rheme, where the author foregrounds the electoral promise of the president Trump. The theme is again a cataphoric reference as it refers towards the promise mentioned in the latter clauses. The same theme also refers towards the preceding clauses and foregrounds the preceding subject highlighted by the journalist about the withdrawal of the foreign forces from Afghanistan.

The twelfth theme mentions the phrase “bringing back” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2), which is an anaphoric reference towards the preceding theme mentioning the promise. The rheme of the same clause completes the idea and reveals the new information that

the promise is about the withdrawal of the troops from Afghanistan. The theme of the next clause mentions the verb “appease” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2), and the rheme foregrounds the subject that are the American “voters” (Sattar, 2020, para. 2). Both theme and rheme of this clause are exophoric reference towards the elections in the US and the political promises by the American politicians. The theme here is the given information that gives rise to the new information in the rheme that foregrounds the same idea that the withdrawal of the troops is a promise made by the president to appease his voters for the upcoming elections. The foregrounded patterns of information throughout the article project the stance of a Pakistani journalist who wants to project the view of an outsider who is witnessing the loopholes in the implementation of the peace deal and subsequent issues in Afghanistan’s affairs. The next article under discussion titled *Peace too far* by Iftekhar A Khan, published in *The NEWS*, a renowned newspaper from Pakistan.

Table 118

Clause 1: *Peace too far* by Iftekhar A Khan.

Complete article has been attached as article 4 in the appendix E.

Theme	Rheme
“The peace agreement between the US and the Taliban” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).	“Signed on February 29 went up in gun smoke sooner than expected” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information	Cataphoric Reference, New Information

The theme begins with the peace agreement between the US and the Taliban, the subject under discussion. The given information in the theme comprises of a coordinating conjunction “and” (Khan, 2020, para. 1) that connects the two parties of the deal. The rheme foregrounds the crucial information about the peace deal that serves as a cataphoric reference too, that is an upcoming reference in terms of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The author foregrounds that the deal signed in February “went up in gun smoke” (Khan, 2020, para. 1), that is the new information about the subject and the reason behind its going into vain are mentioned in the latter clauses. This reference adds to the cohesive unity of the text and foregrounds the stance projected in the rheme.

Table 119

Clause 2 and 3: *Peace too far* by Iftekhhar A Khan.

Theme	Rheme
“Afghan President Ashraf Ghani” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).	“declined to release 5000 Taliban prisoners” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information	Anaphoric Reference, New Information
“Who” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).	“Were to be set free according to the agreement” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information, Grammatical Cohesion	Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference, New Information

The theme of the present clause begins in cohesive unity with the preceding idea about the issues with the implementation of the peace agreement. The given information of the theme gives rise to the new information of the rheme that foregrounds the action of the Afghan president in the wake of the peace agreement. The author foregrounds the new information about the negation by the president to release the Taliban prisoners. This is an anaphoric reference towards the preceding rheme which mentioned the peace deal going up in smoke. This previous reference is called anaphoric in Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme of the third clause is the given information which mentions the demonstrative pronoun “who” (Khan, 2020, para. 1), that refers towards the Taliban prisoners mentioned in the rheme of the preceding clause and adds to the grammatical cohesion. The rheme reveals the new information which foregrounds the clause of the peace agreement that decided the release of the prisoners. Such reference is anaphoric as well as exophoric. It refers towards the preceding idea of the release of the Taliban prisoners. Moreover, it also gives an external reference towards the clauses of the peace deal. The foregrounded rhemes of both these clauses project the stance of the Pakistani newspaper journalist who wants to shed light on the non-implementation of the peace deal and the flawed decisions by the parties of the deal that are hampering the peace process.

Table 120

Clause 4 and 5: *Peace too far* by Iftekhhar A Khan.

Theme	Rheme
“In return, Taliban fighters” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).	“attacked government forces” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).
Anaphoric Reference, given Information	New Information, Cataphoric Reference
“Killing Twenty soldiers and policemen” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).	“in Helmand province” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).
Anaphoric Reference, New Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The fourth clause begins with the phrase “in return” (Khan, 2020, para. 1), that serves as an anaphoric reference that is a previous reference by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The theme mentions the subject of discussion that is the Taliban fighters. The rheme of the same clause foregrounds the new information that these fighters attacked the Afghan forces. The foregrounded rheme strengthens the stance of the journalist who wants to highlight the implications of this non implementation of the peace agreement. The rheme refers towards the upcoming clause thus termed as a cataphoric reference within Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme of the next clause continues the same subject and presents new information about the killing of the soldiers and police men. The theme begins with a verb and mentions the details of the attack thus referring towards the preceding information. The rheme gives the new information and exophoric reference that mentions that the killing occurred in Helmand, a province in Afghanistan, which is a reference towards external source of information in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976).

Table 121

Clause 6 and 7: *Peace too far* by Iftekhhar A Khan.

Theme	Rheme
“And US forces” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).	“retaliated by launching airstrikes” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).
Grammatical Cohesion, Given Information	Anaphoric and Cataphoric Reference, New Information

“To defend” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).	“the Afghan national army” (Khan, 2020, para. 1).
Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The theme of the present clause begins with a coordinating conjunction “and” (Khan, 2020, para. 1), which ensures grammatical cohesion and connects this clause with the previous one. The given information of the theme mentions the subject under discussion that is the US forces. The rheme foregrounds their action that is an anaphoric as well as a cataphoric reference as it mentions the retaliation by the US forces which refers towards the attacks by the Taliban highlighted in the rheme of the preceding clauses. The same is a cataphoric reference as the details have been foregrounded in the rheme of the next clause. The seventh clause gives a previous reference in the theme that links the strike with the action of defending. The rheme reveals that the strikes by the US was to defend the Afghan army. This is an exophoric reference and a set of new information in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), as it refers towards the external information about the Afghan army.

Table 122

Clause 8 and 9: *Peace too far* by Iftekhhar A Khan.

Theme	Rheme
“Taliban” (Khan, 2020, para. 7).	“have already claimed” Khan, 2020, para. 7).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Cataphoric Reference, New Information
“That they have the right to” (Khan, 2020, para. 7).	“rule over Afghanistan” (Khan, 2020, para. 7).
Grammatical cohesion, Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The theme of the present clause is an anaphoric reference and a given information as it repeats the subject that is Afghan Taliban once again. The rheme mentions their claim which is a new information and a cataphoric reference, the details of which are in the next clause, as proposed within Cataphoric reference by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The next clause begins with “that” (Khan, 2020, para. 7), which

connects the two clauses and ensures cohesive unity. The theme mentions the initial part of the claim that serves the purpose of anaphoric reference mentioning that the Afghan Taliban “have the right” (Khan, 2020, para. 7). The details of this have been highlighted in the rheme as an exophoric reference where the author mentions that the Taliban consider it their right to rule the country that is Afghanistan. It is a new set of information and an external reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976) that not only adds to the cohesive unity but also projects the same stance initiated earlier that the peace agreement seems useless in the context of all these conflicts that have surfaced right after signing the peace deal.

Table 123

Clause 10 and 11: *Peace too far* by Iftekhhar A Khan.

Theme	Rheme
“The scene in Afghanistan” (Khan, 2020, para. 8).	“could return to one of the usual infighting” (Khan, 2020, para. 8).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information
“And struggle for power” (Khan, 2020, para. 8).	“among various tribes” (Khan, 2020, para. 8).
Grammatical Cohesion, Information	Given New Information, Exophoric reference

The theme of this clause mentions a previous reference as the author uses the phrase mentioning the “scene in Afghanistan” (Khan, 2020, para. 8). This is an anaphoric reference as all these scenes have been foregrounded in the theme and the rheme of the preceding clauses, hence regarding it as given information. The rheme foregrounds the new information with an external reference that these conflicts will take Afghanistan into the “usual infighting” (Khan, 2020, para. 8), that is an exophoric reference towards the political conflicts in Afghanistan. The last clause establishes grammatical cohesion by initiating the clause with “and” (Khan, 2020, para. 8), a coordinating conjunction as a device of grammatical cohesion by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme mentions the struggle for achieving the power as the given information and the author foregrounds the rheme with its new information and reveals an exophoric reference that mentions the power struggle between the Afghan tribes, which is a reference towards external information that aids in cohesive unity and

strengthens the same stance of the Pakistani journalist. The foregrounded ideas throughout the above-mentioned clauses have been about the conflicts, political struggles for the powers and the never-ending strikes by the Taliban and the retaliation by the US forces, clearly manifest the idea projected by the Pakistani journalist that all these issues are sabotaging the spirit of the peace agreement.

4.3.2 The *DAWN* NEWSPAPER

Table 124

Clause 1 and 2: *Troubled Afghan Peace Process* by Maleeha Lodhi.

Complete article has been attached as article 1 in the appendix F.

Theme	Rheme
“A widely asked question about Afghanistan today” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).	“is whether COVID-19 would slow down” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information
“Or accelerate” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).	“its tenuous peace process” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).
Grammatical Cohesion, Anaphoric Reference	New Information

The present article under discussion titled *Troubled Afghan Peace Process* is from another renowned newspaper from Pakistan that is *DAWN* newspaper. The article is by Maleeha Lodhi that has been written in the wake of the Afghan Peace Process. The first clause under discussion comprises of the given information that mentions a reference of the most asked question about Afghanistan. The rheme sheds light on a part of that question that reveals the new information with an external reference of “Covid-19” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1), that is an exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The rheme questions and foregrounds the proposition about slowing down the process. This rheme develops the theme of the next clause that begins with a coordinating conjunction, thus ensures cohesive unity and projects the same stance, as presented in the preceding rheme, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme and rheme of this clause mention the other proposition that is about accelerating the peace process. The clause serves as an anaphoric reference which refers towards the preceding reference of the COVID 19. Precisely the rheme of both these clauses have

highlighted the question that whether the pandemic has accelerated or halted the peace process.

Table 125

Clause 3: *Troubled Afghan Peace Process* by Maleeha Lodhi.

Theme	Rheme
“The simple answer is that” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).	“the stalled process has little to do with the pandemic” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information, Anaphoric Reference	Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference, substitution, New Information

The present clause begins its theme with given information and presents an anaphoric reference, “that simple answer” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1), that is a reference towards the preceding question about the covid-19 affecting the peace process. This anaphoric reference aids in cohesive unity in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The rheme foregrounds the new information that uses many devices of cohesion within Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The rheme foregrounds the stance of the Pakistani author using an anaphoric as well as an exophoric reference. It mentions the “stalled process” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1), that is a reference towards the external source of information that no significant progress is evident in the peace process. Moreover, there is a reference towards the Covid-19 which is a reference in the preceding clause. In addition to this the Covid-19 has been substituted with “pandemic” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1) in the rheme of this clause which adds to the cohesive unity.

Table 126

Clause 4, 5 and 6: *Troubled Afghan Peace Process* by Maleeha Lodhi.

“And everything to do with” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).	“the clashing interests of Afghan parties” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).
Grammatical Cohesion, Cataphoric Reference	New Information, Exophoric Reference
“And their inability” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1)	“to break the persisting deadlock” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1)

“On initiating” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).	“the intra-Afghan negotiations” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).
Given Information, Grammatical Cohesion	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The theme of the fourth clause begins with a coordinating conjunction “and” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1), that connects the present theme with the rheme of the preceding clauses. The theme sheds light on the real reason behind the deadlock and refers towards the details in the upcoming reference that is cataphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The rheme foregrounds the conflicts in the interest of Afghan parties as one of the reasons behind the stalling process. This is also an exophoric reference that is a reference towards the outer source in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme of the next two clauses serves as the given information and refer backwards towards the question of the reasons behind the stalling peace process. The rheme foregrounds the new information and gives another exophoric reference and mentions a significant reason behind the stalled peace process that is the inability to initiate the intra-Afghan negotiations that is an important aspect of the peace deal. The rhemes of these clauses project the stance, by foregrounding the idea, that the pandemic is not the significant reason behind the deadlock, rather internal conflicts are stalling the peace process.

Table 127

Clause 7 and 8: *Troubled Afghan Peace Process* by Maleeha Lodhi.

Theme	Rheme
“The uncertain situation in Afghanistan” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 12).	“poses severe dilemmas for Pakistan” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 12).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information
“While aiding” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 12).	“the peace process in whatever way it can” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 12).
Exophoric Reference	Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference, Substitution

The theme of the seventh clause is an anaphoric reference as it mentions “the uncertain situation in Afghanistan” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 12), which refers towards the

uncertainty mentioned in the preceding clauses. The rheme foregrounds the new information about the “dilemmas” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 12), this uncertainty may pose for Pakistan, this manifests the stance of a Pakistani too. The detail about these dilemmas is an exophoric reference, within Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976), that is an external reference towards the uncertain situation in Afghanistan and its effects on the neighbouring Pakistan. The theme of the next clause begins with “while” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 12), which connects the two clauses, ensures grammatical cohesion and projects the same stance as that of preceding rheme mentioning the dilemmas for the country. This theme and rheme of the eighth clause is again an exophoric reference as it mentions that Pakistan is aiding the process of peace in Afghanistan in many ways. This is a reference towards the external information as proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The rheme also refers backwards towards the Afghan Peace Process.

Table 128

Clause 9, 10 and 11: *Troubled Afghan Peace Process* by Maleeha Lodhi.

Theme	Rheme
“Islamabad” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 12).	“must envisage” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 12).
Substitution, Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Cataphoric Reference, New Information
“And be ready to deal with” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 12).	“a range of scenarios” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 12).
“That” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 12).	“may emerge” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 12).
Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The theme of the present clause comprises of substitution that is also an anaphoric reference and refers towards the given information. It is substitution in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), as it replaces Pakistan with “Islamabad” (Lodhi, 2020), the capital of Pakistan in order to refer back to the same but with a purpose of adding to the cohesive unity and foregrounding the inclination and the stance of the journalist. The rheme gives an upcoming reference, a reference towards the later clauses as it mentions that the country must envision the future happenings. The theme of the tenth clause begins with “and” (Lodhi, 2020), a device of grammatical cohesion within the Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and

Matthiessen (2014). The later part of the theme mentions that Pakistan needs to be ready, and the details are a part of the rheme that mentions that Islamabad must be ready to deal with “a range of scenarios” (Lodhi, 2020). The last two clauses give an exophoric reference towards the idea that variety of scenarios might be expected by Pakistan in the context of the uncertainty in Afghanistan. The last two rhemes foreground the same stance projected earlier that the haltering of the peace process is the result of the political uncertainty in Afghanistan and a deadlock in the intra-Afghan talks. Moreover, the Pakistani author foregrounds that this uncertainty will cause a range of scenarios with implications on Pakistan, being a neighbouring country of Afghanistan. The article under discussion titled, *Violence and the Afghan Peace Talks* is also from *Dawn* Newspaper. The article is authored by Zahid Hussain in 2021.

Table 129

Clause 1, 2 and 3: *Violence and the Afghan Peace Talks* by Zahid Hussain.

Complete article has been attached as article 2 in the appendix F.

Theme	Rheme
“The two women judges” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1).	“shot dead in Kabul last Sunday” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1).
Cataphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference, New Information
“Were the latest victims” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1).	“of the targeted killings” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1).
“That” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1).	“have swept Afghanistan amid the virtually stalemated peace talks between the government in Kabul and the Afghan Taliban” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Exophoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion, New Information

The first clause gives a cataphoric reference in its theme which mentions the two female judges in Afghanistan, as an upcoming reference, in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The rheme foregrounds the new information about their killing in Kabul which gives the readers, an external reference towards the news of this incident and its details. The second and third clause mention the themes as the given information that serve to be anaphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). Both the themes

mention that they are the latest victims, a reference towards the preceding clauses mentioning their killing. The rheme foreground the scenario that these targeted killings took place at a time when there is a deadlock in the peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. The information about the stalemated peace talks is also an external reference, called exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The foregrounded new information that is about the deadlock in the talks and the violence in the country, communicates the inclination and the stance of the Pakistani journalist which foregrounds the idea that the violence in the country is surfacing once again and there is no significant progress in the peace talks.

Table 130

Clause 4, 5, and 6: *Violence and the Afghan Peace Talks* by Zahid Hussain.

Theme	Rheme
“The latest cycle of violence” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1).	“raises questions about the prospects of peace” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1).
“returning to” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1).	“the war torn country” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1).
Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference	Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference
“As the American withdrawal” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1).	“seems imminent” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1).
Exophoric Reference, Given Information	New Information

The themes of the fourth and fifth clauses give previous reference to the readers and presents the information about the latest violence in the country. The themes of both clauses are anaphoric as well as exophoric reference at the same time. These are anaphoric reference in terms of referring towards the incident of the two judges mentioned in the preceding clause. The same is exophoric reference in terms of the phrase “cycle of violence” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1), which refers towards the similar incidents taking place in the country. Both these references ensure the cohesive unity in the text. The rheme of both these clauses foreground the aspect which highlights that these cycles of violence raise questions about the future prospects of peace in Afghanistan. The fourth theme is an anaphoric reference towards the preceding incidents of violence. The fifth rheme mentions the Afghanistan to be “a war-torn country” (Hussain, 2021, para. 1) which is a reference towards the external source of

information highlighting the decades of war in Afghanistan that is an exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989). The next clause mentions the American withdrawal as the theme which is again an exophoric reference towards the peace deal and its clauses about the American withdrawal from Afghanistan. The rheme gives the new information that the withdrawal seems imminent now. The foregrounded information in the rheme projects the stance of the Pakistani newspaper journalist, which highlights that such violence is affecting the prospects of peace in the war-torn country.

Table 131

Clause 7 and 8: *Violence and the Afghan Peace Talks* by Zahid Hussain.

Theme	Rheme
“The killing..” (Hussain, 2021, para. 10).	“of the two female judges came..” (Hussain, 2021, para. 10).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Anaphoric Reference, Given Information
“As the Afghan government representative and the Taliban” (Hussain, 2021, para. 10).	“resumed peace talks in Doha” (Hussain, 2021, para. 10).
Grammatical Cohesion, Repetition, Given Information	Anaphoric Reference, New Information

The theme and rheme of the seventh clause give anaphoric reference with the given information as it mentions the killing of the female judges in Afghanistan, a reference towards the first clause of the present article. The eighth clause begins with a coordinating conjunction “as” (Hussain, 2021, para. 10), which connects the two ideas that are the recent killings and the resumption of the peace talks. The theme mentions the parties of the intra-Afghan talks and the rheme unfolds the new information about the resumption of the talks. The rheme of the eighth clause refers backwards towards the Afghan Peace talks mentioned in the preceding clauses. The foregrounding of the information patterns in the theme and rheme manifest the idea that such violent activities may hamper the peace process and never set any good example in the scenario of negotiations between the parties of the conflict.

Table 132

Clause 9: *Violence and the Afghan Peace Talks* by Zahid Hussain.

Theme	Rheme
“But there..” (Hussain, 2021, para. 11).	“has not been any significant progress made in the latest round of talks” (Hussain, 2021, para. 11).
Grammatical Cohesion, Information	Given Anaphoric Reference, New Information,

The theme of this clause initiates with a coordinating conjunction, “but” (Hussain, 2021, para. 11), that connects it with the preceding clause about the resumption of the peace talks in Doha. The given information of the present theme develops the new information within rheme which also comprises of an anaphoric reference that ensures the cohesive unity between this new information about the insignificant progress in the peace process with the preceding information about its resumption.

Table 133

Clause 10, 11, 12 and 13: *Violence and the Afghan Peace Talks* by Zahid Hussain.

Theme	Rheme
“While the Afghan government” (Hussain, 2021, para. 11).	“insists on a reduction in violence” (Hussain, 2021, para. 11).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	New Information
“The insurgents” (Hussain, 2021, para. 11).	“demand the release of the group’s remaining jailed fighters” (Hussain, 2021, para. 11).
Anaphoric Reference	Exophoric Reference
“Reaching a consensus” (Hussain, 2021, para. 11).	“will not be easy” (Hussain, 2021, para. 11).
“As both sides” (Hussain, 2021, para. 11).	“are sticking to their respective positions” (Hussain, 2021, para. 11).
Grammatical Cohesion, Reference, Given Information	Anaphoric Exophoric Reference, New Information

The theme of the tenth clause refers towards the previous information while mentioning the Afghan government as subject once again, a reference termed as anaphoric by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The rheme reveals and foregrounds the new information about the Afghan government that says that it “insists on a reduction in violence” (Hussain, 2021, para. 11). The theme of the eleventh clause mentions “the insurgent” (Hussain, 2021, para. 11), as the subject, which refers towards the Afghan Taliban, a reference towards the preceding clauses. The rheme gives an exophoric reference by mentioning the demand by the Taliban in the context of the peace deal that is about the release of the Taliban prisoners. This is an external reference towards the clause of the deal regarding the prisoner release, hence an exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The last two clauses sum up the whole idea and highlights the stance, that the peace process is not achieving its goal because of the lack of consensus between the parties involved in the process. The theme of the last clauses serves as the given information referring towards the preceding clauses as it mentions the subject of reaching consensus. The rheme foregrounds the idea and projects the stance about the disagreement and the firm position to which both parties are sticking which is causing the violence and a deadlock in the deal. The next article titled; *Afghan Peace Prospects* is authored by Maleeha Lodhi in the renowned newspaper of Pakistan that is *DAWN*.

Table 134

Clause 1 and 2: *Afghan Peace Prospects* is authored by Maleeha Lodhi.

Complete article has been attached as article 3 in the appendix F.

Theme	Rheme
“Will the peace process between Afghanistan’s warring parties” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).	“be put at risk” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).
Exophoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion	Cataphoric Reference
“By the Pentagon’s recent announcement that” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).	“more US troops will be withdrawn ahead of schedule” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The first clause under discussion poses a question with an exophoric reference and uses the grammatical cohesion to serve the purpose of cohesive unity. The exophoric reference is in terms of the question about the peace process which is a reference towards the peace process between the US and the Afghan Taliban, the phase two of which is followed by intra-Afghan negotiations. The rheme foregrounds the concern of the author that questions, if the peace process between the parties in Afghanistan be at risk. The risk is a cataphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976) that is a reference towards the latter part of the discourse. The second clause comprises of the anaphoric and exophoric reference in cohesive unity with the given and new information in the theme and rheme. The theme mentions that there was a recent announcement by the Pentagon which refers backwards towards the information about the peace process. The rheme foregrounds the new information that reveals the reference mentioned earlier that is the USA aims to withdraw more US troops from Afghanistan.

Table 135

Clause 3: *Afghan Peace Prospects* is authored by Maleeha Lodhi.

Theme	Rheme
“Factors other than troop levels” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).	“are more significant for the future of peace talks” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1).
Cataphoric and Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Anaphoric Reference, New Information

The theme of the present clause begins with an anaphoric reference by mentioning the “troop levels” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 1), that refers towards the preceding clause about the decision of the US about decreasing the troops. The theme foregrounds the factors which is a cataphoric reference that is a reference towards the latter causes. The rheme foregrounds the idea by referring backwards towards the subject that is peace talks, that is an anaphoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). This rheme sheds light on the stance of the Pakistani author too that other factors are more significantly responsible for peace in Afghanistan.

Table 136

Clause 4 and 5: *Afghan Peace Prospects* is authored by Maleeha Lodhi.

Theme	Rheme
“The key to Afghanistan’s future is..” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 3).	“whether the intra-Afghan dialogue can make enough progress towards a settlement, including a ceasefire” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 3).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information
“Before all international forces” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 3).	“leave Afghanistan” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 3).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Anaphoric Reference, New Information

The present clauses refer towards the preceding clauses by mentioning the Afghanistan’s future which is an anaphoric reference towards the risks about the future of the country mentioned in the first clause. The given information in the rheme gives a glimpse of the subject of the discussion by mentioning “the key” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 3) to the future. The rheme foregrounds an important factor about the peace in Afghanistan that also manifests and highlights the stance that is about the question of intra-Afghan negotiations making enough progress. The “intra-Afghan dialogue” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 3), is an exophoric reference towards the external source of information in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The fifth clause mentions the frame of events within which settlement and ceasefire should take place. The theme and rheme of this clause mention it to be, before all the foreign troops leave Afghanistan. This is also an anaphoric reference as this information refers back towards the preceding clauses about the withdrawal of the troops from Afghanistan.

Table: 137

Clause 6, 7 and 8: *Afghan Peace Prospects* is authored by Maleeha Lodhi.

Theme	Rheme
“While Pakistan” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6).	“has repeatedly called for a responsible US-troop pull out..” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6).
Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information

“Officials” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6).	“were never surprised” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6).
“Nor worried” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6).	“about the latest development” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6).
Anaphoric and Exophoric Reference, Given Information	Anaphoric Reference, New Information

This clause manifests the given information in the rheme that mentions the subject of the discussion that is Pakistan. The rheme highlights its take on the whole process of peace in Afghanistan that this withdrawal of the troops must be a responsible move. The new information of the rheme is an exophoric reference that refers towards the external information about the stance of Pakistan regarding the US troops pull out from Afghanistan. Seventh and eighth clause establishes the cohesive unity using anaphoric reference towards preceding clauses in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme of the seventh clause mentions the subject as the “officials” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6), which refers towards the Pakistani officials. The theme and rheme of the next clause foreground the idea that they are not surprised by the recent developments. The reference of the recent developments in the eighth rheme refers back towards the decision about the withdrawal of the remaining US troops from Afghanistan. The foregrounded information in the rheme reinforces the same stance, projected earlier that withdrawal will not significantly affect the peace process rather, intra-Afghan negotiations will which are not showing significant progress.

Table 138

Clause 9, 10 and 11: *Afghan Peace Prospects* is authored by Maleeha Lodhi.

Theme	Rheme
“And believe this” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6).	“might even encourage Washington to step up” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6).
Grammatical Cohesion, Substitution, Anaphoric Reference	Anaphoric Reference
“And impart more urgency” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6).	“to diplomatic efforts” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6).

“To goad the Afghan parties” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6). “into accelerating progress in substantive negotiations” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6).

Grammatical Cohesion, Anaphoric Reference, New Information
Reference, Given Information

The theme of the ninth clause manifest anaphoric reference towards the information in the preceding clauses about the troops withdrawal with an instance of substitution too in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme begins with a coordinating conjunction “and” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6), that connects the two clauses moreover it uses the word “this” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6), instead of the troops withdrawal which is an instance of substitution. The rheme foregrounds the idea that this will encourage Washington which is again an anaphoric reference towards their decision of troops withdrawal. The last two clauses reinforce the stance that this decision of withdrawal will encourage the US to continue its diplomatic efforts and accelerate the progress in the intra Afghan negotiations. The stance has been projected using a series of anaphoric reference and devices of grammatical cohesion in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The tenth theme mentions the idea of imparting urgency, and the rheme mentions the diplomatic efforts, both working in cohesion with the preceding reference of the intra-Afghan talks. Similarly, the last theme mentions the subject that are the “Afghan parties” (Lodhi, 2020, para. 6), an anaphoric as well as exophoric reference towards the parties of the intra-Afghan talks. The rheme reinforces the stance by completing the idea that these diplomatic efforts in the scenario of the withdrawal will accelerate the peace process. The following article under discussion titled, *US-Afghan Peace Deal* by Kinanah Shahbaz is another one from the Dawn newspaper in Pakistan.

Table 139

Clause 1 and 2: *US-Afghan Peace Deal* by Kinanah Shahbaz.

Complete article has been attached as article 4 in the appendix F.

Theme	Rheme
“The agreement” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 1).	“signed between the US and the Taliban” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 1).
Cataphoric Reference, Given Information	Grammatical Cohesion, New Information

“Is the first step towards” (Shahbaz, “peace in Afghanistan” (Shahbaz, 2020, 2020, para. 1). para. 1).

Anaphoric Reference, Given Information Exophoric Reference, New Information

The first clause begins its theme with the given information in the form of a cataphoric reference, an upcoming reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme mentions “the agreement” (Shahbaz, 2020), a reference towards the Afghan peace agreement. The rheme of the same clause takes the aid of grammatical cohesive using the coordinating conjunction “and” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 1), in order to highlight the parties of the agreement. The second theme refers backwards once again through an anaphoric reference that manifests the idea that this deal is the first step towards the peace in Afghanistan, an exophoric reference in the rheme of the same clause. Such reference guides the readers towards the external information as proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The theme and rheme of these clauses show the inclination of the author towards the key to peace in Afghanistan that is the peace deal. This has been projected through the patterns of information in cohesion with the references.

Table 140

Clause 3 and 4: *US-Afghan Peace Deal* by Kinanah Shahbaz.

Theme	Rheme
“Pakistan’s role in the matter” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 1).	“Proves Pakistan’s desire to have peace not only in Afghanistan” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 1).
“But..” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 1).	“The entire region” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 1).
Anaphoric Reference, Substitution, Given Information	Exophoric Reference, New Information

The present clauses continue the stance in cohesion with the preceding references. The theme of the third clause mentions Pakistan’s role as the subject which is an anaphoric reference towards the preceding clause. Moreover, there is an instance of substitution as “the matter” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 1), substitutes the Afghan Peace

Process that aids in the cohesive unity of the text and the pattern of information as proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme of the fourth clause begins with a coordinating conjunction “but” that connects both ideas. The rhemes of both these clauses clearly manifest the stance of a Pakistani author through the pattern of new information and exophoric reference. It mentions that Pakistan desires to have peace in the whole region. Here the phrase “the entire region” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 1), in the rheme of the fourth clause is an exophoric reference that is an external reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), that refers towards the entire geographical region surrounding Afghanistan which faces implications as a result of the unrest in Afghanistan.

Table 141

Clause 5, 6 and 7: *US-Afghan Peace Deal* by Kinanah Shahbaz.

Theme	Rheme
“However, the question arises” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2).	“To what extent the peace in Afghanistan will help our country’s internal situation” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2).
Grammatical Cohesion, Given Information	Exophoric Reference, Substitution, New Information
“The real game” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2).	“May begin now” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2).
“That the Taliban” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2).	“Must come to terms with the Afghan government” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2).
Given Information, Reference	Cataphoric Exophoric Reference, New Information

The fifth clause begins its theme using “however” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2), that serves the purpose of grammatical cohesion. The given information of the theme mentions the subject of discussion that is about a question that arises in the mind of the people. The rheme gives an exophoric reference that is an external reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). Over here, it is a reference towards the “internal situation” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2), of the country. Here country is referring towards Pakistan, which is another instance of substitution by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The rheme foregrounds the stance of Pakistan through these references, that how the peace

in Afghanistan will aid in the internal situations in the country. The next two clauses talk about the other phase of the peace agreement that is intra-Afghan talks. The themes mention the same to be “the real game” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2), which is an upcoming reference in the rheme of the seventh clause, termed as Cataphoric Reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The seventh theme mentions the subject that is “the Taliban” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2), and the rheme foregrounds the idea that the Taliban “must come to terms” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2) with the government in Afghanistan in order to accelerate the peace process, a reference towards the Afghan government is again an exophoric one in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976), which is aiding in the grammatical cohesion and presents the idea as a unified whole.

Table 142

Clause 8 and 9: *US-Afghan Peace Deal* by Kinanah Shahbaz.

Theme	Rheme
“Since many among the Taliban” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2).	“Do not acknowledge the minorities and women rights” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference, Given Information	Exophoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion, New Information
“This...” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2).	“May be unacceptable to other and more powerful quarters” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2).
Anaphoric Reference, Substitution	Exophoric Reference, Grammatical Cohesion

The eighth clause uses an anaphoric reference that refers backwards towards the preceding subject that is Afghan Taliban. The given information in the theme develops into the new information of the rheme that presents itself in cohesion with the exophoric reference that is an external reference towards the non-acknowledgement of the rights of the women and minorities by the Taliban in Afghanistan. This rheme develops the theme of the next clause that uses an instance of substitution in order to continue the same idea and refer back towards the previous discussion about the rights. In this theme, “this” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2), substitutes the preceding rheme and gives an anaphoric reference towards the preceding clause about the rights in Afghanistan. The rheme gives the new information about the theme that this may not be acceptable by other quarters

in the country. Here again other quarters in the country is a reference towards external scenario hence exophoric reference in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976).

Table 143

Clause 10: *US-Afghan Peace Deal* by Kinanah Shahbaz.

Theme	Rheme
“And may give rise..” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2).	“To new conflicts” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2).
Grammatical Cohesion, Given Information	Exophoric Reference New Information

The last clause begins with “and” (Shahbaz, 2020, para. 2), a coordinating conjunction serving the purpose of grammatical cohesion as proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The theme and rheme of the last clause reveal that this will give rise to the new conflicts in the country, which is an anaphoric reference once again, referring towards the conflicts in Afghanistan as a result of sabotaging the rights of the minorities and women. The foregrounded ideas throughout the rhemes of the above-mentioned causes clearly manifest the stance that the peace in Afghanistan relies on the intra-Afghan talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

When one analyses the newspapers from Pakistan, the Meta Functions of the language perform quite different communicative role contrary to the other two countries. Within the Textual Meta Function, the researcher has analysed the patterns of information in terms of given and new as well as the foregrounded ideas within the theme and the rheme. These patterns of information have been used quite differently by the Pakistani authors as the foregrounded information reveals the stance that is of a third party. The authors foreground the importance of intra-afghan negotiations and a clear settlement of the solution throughout these articles. Moreover, the authors also use the language resource in order to talk about the impact of the peace agreement on Pakistan, the immediate neighbour of Afghanistan. The patterns of cohesion also serve the same purpose and foreground the same stance which is quite different from that of Afghanistan and the USA.

4.4 Discussion

The framework for the study is Textual Meta Function of language by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and its modification by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014),

within Systemic Functional Linguistics. The proponents of this theory believe that the speakers or the writers use the language to perform the communicative role, and the Textual Meta Function of language communicates the clauses as messages through the aid of its devices of cohesion and the patterns of the given and new information. The present research has analysed the newspaper articles from three different countries, published around the topic of the Afghan Peace Process. The researcher has gone through 8 articles from each country sampling two newspapers from each country.

As far as the comparative analysis of these newspapers is concerned in light of Textual Meta Function of Halliday and Hassan (1976) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), the newspapers from Afghanistan discuss the peace deal and the scenarios in its context and use the language resource to clearly show inclination towards the pain and sufferings of the innocent Afghans and the hopes this deal brings for them using the devices of the same Textual Meta Function. Contrary to this, the newspapers from the USA, use the language resource in terms of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), in order to foreground a completely different stance. The information patterns highlight the significance of the peace deal in the wake of decades of war. Moreover, the patterns of the theme and rheme show inclination towards the need for and importance of the withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan in the context of the general elections in the US. In addition, the patterns of the new and given information manifest the hopes American voters have from the peace deal.

The foregrounded ideas in the clauses through the theme and rheme within the Textual Meta Function highlight the American casualties in the war and less heed has been paid to the Afghan casualties. The newspapers from Pakistan use the same language resource performing the Textual Meta Function in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) and project the stance of Pakistan. The foregrounded patterns of information within theme and rheme, which take the aid of the devices of lexical and grammatical cohesion perform the Meta Function of language and project the stance of Pakistani newspapers that incline towards the need of urgency in the intra-Afghan negotiations and a need for a proper settlement before the foreign forces leave the country. The patterns of information have been presented differently in the Pakistani newspapers which show clear stance which is different from that of Afghanistan and the USA. Moreover, the same aspects of Textual Meta Functions foreground the information that shows the impacts this deal will have on Pakistan as a neighbouring country of Afghanistan.

The present research has compared the newspaper articles from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA using the framework of Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). Previously, several researchers have carried out studies on a variety of texts from a wide range of perspectives. Some researchers analysed the language of newspapers that are Aldi Alexander Vinchristo (2022) analysed the newspaper from Sydney from the lens of appraisal theory, Hidayah et al. (2023), Wada et al. (2019), and Madjdi and Nurcahyo (2014) analysed the newspapers from Indonesia and Nigeria respectively using the framework of Systemic Functional linguistics. Over here the focus of analysis is individual countries and not a comparative analysis. Moreover, Raza et al. (2020) and Meerab and Siddique (2022) have analysed the newspaper editorials from the lens of Hyland (2005). Less heed has been paid to the comparative analysis of English newspapers from different countries from the perspective of Textual Meta Function by Halliday (1985). The present research has filled this gap and analysed comparatively the newspaper articles from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA using the framework of Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

Table 144

Comparative Analysis of the Afghan, American and Pakistani Newspapers.

Strategies	<i>Afghanistan Times, Kabul Times</i>	<i>USA Today, Newyork Times</i>	<i>The NEWS, DAWN</i>
Theme/ Rheme	Theme initiates by highlighting Afghanistan and rheme foregrounds the sufferings of Afghans.	Theme foregrounds US signing the peace deal and its significance. Rheme manifest its withdrawal from the region as a result of this deal.	Theme states the concerns of Pakistan regarding stalled intra-Afghan talks. Rheme sheds light on the concerns of Pakistan regarding the impact of uncertainty in Afghanistan on Pakistan.
Cohesion	Devices of grammatical and lexical cohesion like conjunction, substitution, references among others aid the authors in projecting the miseries of Afghans.	Grammatical and lexical cohesion work in alignment with the patterns of theme and rheme and project the significance of peace deal and the withdrawal of the foreign forces.	Cohesive devices aid in highlighting the uncertainty in Afghanistan due to stalled intra-Afghan talks. The references and repetition refer towards the concerns of Pakistan in this scenario.
Projection of Stance	Articles from the Afghan newspapers project the stance of an Afghan, foregrounding their miseries and the optimistic	The sample articles from the US newspapers foreground the US negotiating peace deal as a	Pakistani newspapers highlight the need of intra-Afghan settlement.

anticipation they have from the peace talks.	significant move towards a peaceful settlement. The patterns of information highlight the withdrawal of the US forces from the region as the American voters hope in the context of US general elections.	Shed light on the prospects for Pakistan in this scenario.
---	---	---

The researcher has found that, the language of the newspaper articles from these three countries have performed the communicative purpose in a unique and diversified manner. The clauses presented as messages have been composed differently in terms of the selection of theme and rheme and the patterns of their progression. The articles from Afghanistan project the stance of an Afghan, foregrounding their miseries and the optimistic anticipation they have from the peace talks. The clauses in the articles of the US newspapers show a different selection and progression in terms of theme and rheme patterns and the integration of the cohesive devices.

The stance projected in these newspapers vary from the other sample countries that is, the newspapers from the USA foreground the US negotiating the peace deal as a significant move towards a peaceful settlement. Moreover, these newspapers highlight the withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan as a result of settlement. Through the patterns of information, the American authors also pay heed to the hopes of American voters from the deal in the context of general elections in the USA. The stance projected in the articles from the leading newspapers of Pakistan under analysis project a completely different stance. The same aspects of Textual Meta Function have been used in a unique way. The patterns of information through theme and rheme with the aid of cohesive devices highlight the importance of the peace deal and the need of its implementation. Moreover, these authors foreground the significance of intra Afghan talks. The Pakistani authors also highlight the prospects for Pakistan in the context of

Afghan Peace Process. Precisely, the newspaper articles from Pakistan, Afghanistan and the USA vary in terms of the patterns of theme and rheme and integrate the cohesive devices in a diversified manner in an attempt to project their own stance.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The present research has analysed the newspaper articles from the three countries, which are Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA, which have been involved in the Afghan Peace Process and the authors from these three countries have published many articles in this scenario. The present research has taken two newspapers from each country as a sample where four articles from each newspaper have been analysed through qualitative method. The researcher has used the Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) as a framework for this study where the unit of analysis is clause. Under the lens of Textual Meta Function, the researcher has analysed the selection and progression patterns of theme and rheme and the communicative Function performed by them. Moreover, the researcher has also traced and analysed the patterns of given and new information and the devices of lexical and grammatical cohesion and their diversified use by the authors of these newspapers, in attempt to project a particular stance.

Firstly, the researcher has analysed the two newspapers from Afghanistan that are, *Afghanistan Times* and *The Kabul Times*, where four articles from each newspaper have been examined. Secondly, the researcher has analysed the newspapers from the USA that are *The New York Times* and the *USA Today*, where four articles have been examined from each of these two. Lastly, the author has analysed the newspapers from Pakistan that are *The NEWS* and *DAWN* newspapers. As a result of the comparative analysis of these articles, the researcher has found a significant shift in the projection of stance by the three newspapers in the light of the Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

5.1 Findings in Response to Research Question No. 01

The first question of the present research is about the variation in the selection and progression patterns of theme and rheme in the presentation of the scenario of the Afghan Peace Process. The researcher has analysed the articles from three countries individually and has done a comparison which states this variation in the patterns of theme and rheme.

5.1.1 The Patterns of Theme and Rheme in Afghan Newspaper Articles

Through the analysis of the newspaper articles for the selection and progression of theme and rheme, from the first country that is Afghanistan, the researcher has found that:

- The selection of the theme and rheme is quite unique as the given information in the theme of the clauses initiates with the inclination towards Afghanistan and the rheme with its new information foregrounds the part of the clause that relates the most to the subject initiated in the theme that is Afghanistan.
- Moreover, the foregrounded information in the rheme of the clauses is about the sufferings of the innocent Afghans.
- The selection of theme and rheme is about the Afghans, their sufferings, the damage, this war has done to their country and the hopes they have from the whole peace process.

5.1.2 The Patterns of Theme and Rheme in the Newspaper Articles from the USA

While analysing the newspapers from the second country that is the USA a different yet unique selection and progression of theme and rheme has been observed by the researcher.

- Both the newspapers from USA manifest the selection of the theme in such a way that the clauses commence with the subject of the US signing the deal with the Afghan Taliban and the significance of this deal.
- The patterns of the rheme manifest the part of clauses about the US withdrawal as a result of this peace deal.
- The researcher has found that the theme and rheme in both the newspapers of the USA have been selected in such a way that the commencement of information and the exposition is about the US playing the role in negotiating the deal and the imminent withdrawal of its troops as a result of the settlement in Afghanistan.
- In addition, the progression patterns of theme and rheme are such that the discussion of the deal progresses into the foregrounded information about the hopes of the American voters from the deal, who want an immediate withdrawal from Afghanistan.

5.1.3 The Patterns of Theme and Rheme in Newspaper Articles from Pakistan

Apart from the newspaper articles from Afghanistan and the USA, the researcher has also analysed the selection and progression patterns of theme and rheme in the newspaper articles from the two leading newspapers of Pakistan.

- The researcher has found that the selection and progression patterns equally vary in the newspaper articles from Pakistan.
- The selection of theme is such that the subject commences with the concern of Pakistan and the theme reaches its exposition as rheme talks about the stalled intra-Afghan talks.
- Moreover, the researcher has found that the authors of the newspaper articles from Pakistan have selected the theme with the mentioning of Pakistan.
- The theme progresses into rheme that is about the impacts, this uncertainty in Afghanistan, as a result of stalled peace, will have on Pakistan.

5.1.4 Comparison of the Findings in Response to Research Question 01

As a result of the analysis of theme and rheme patterns in the individual articles from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA, the research has found that these patterns vary with the countries.

- The articles from Afghan newspapers select the theme and rheme that mention the Afghans, their miseries and the hopes they have from the deal.
- Contrary to this the articles from the USA, commence the theme with the US facilitating the deal and the rheme highlights the imminent withdrawal of its forces which aligns with the hopes of the American voters.
- Last but not the least the patterns of theme and rheme in the articles from Pakistani newspapers vary from the other two countries. It has been found that the theme commences with the concerns of Pakistan, which foregrounds the rheme highlighting the stalled intra Afghan negotiations. Moreover, the patterns of theme and rheme mention the implications, of stalled talks between the Afghan parties, on Pakistan.
- Hence, the researcher has found that the selection of the theme and rheme is quite different in the newspapers from three different countries.

5.2 Findings in Response to the Research Question No. 02

The second question of the present research is about the use of the devices of lexical and grammatical cohesion under the Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The researcher has analysed the newspapers from three countries that are Afghanistan, the USA and Pakistan for the use of the devices of lexical and grammatical cohesion in order to present the phenomenon of Afghan Peace Process as a unified whole. The researcher has found that the devices of lexical and grammatical cohesion have been used in a diversified way by the authors of these newspapers from different countries.

5.2.1 Cohesion in the Afghan Newspapers

As far as the patterns of cohesion in the articles from Afghan newspapers is concerned, it has been found that, the authors of the articles from Afghanistan use the same devices of grammatical cohesion that are substitution, reference, and conjunction among others in alignment with their own selection and progression patterns of the theme and rheme.

- The same device, that is conjunction, has been used in order to project the selected theme and rheme with the foregrounded information about the miseries and sufferings of Afghans, presenting the phenomenon as a unified whole.
- Moreover, the researcher has found that the anaphoric, exophoric and cataphoric references have been used in the Afghan newspapers in alignment with the selection of the preceding theme and rheme that refer back towards the same selected information about the Afghans and their hopes from the peace process.

5.2.2 Cohesion in the Newspapers from USA

While analysing the articles from the USA for the use of these devices that is of lexical and grammatical cohesion, the researcher has found that the same devices have been used in a different way that is they aid in establishing the cohesive unity of the theme and rheme that have been selected by the American authors.

- The study has revealed that the conjunction connects the theme with rheme that manifest the selected information about the US negotiating the deal with the Afghans.
- Moreover, these cohesive devices align with the progression patterns of the rheme and connect the rheme with the succeeding theme that has been selected to manifest the need of the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan.

- The references also align with the theme and rheme patterns and refer forwards or backwards towards the information about the US withdrawal from Afghanistan as a result of a settlement. Hence, the devices of lexical and grammatical cohesion have been used in a different manner by the US authors in the presentation of the phenomenon of Afghan Peace Process.

5.2.3 Cohesion in the Newspapers from Pakistan

As far as the newspaper articles from Pakistan are concerned, the researcher has found that the use of these devices of lexical and grammatical cohesion vary to a greater extent.

- The references and substitution have been used to refer towards uncertainty in Afghanistan and Pakistan's concerns in the scenario of the stalled talks between all parties of Afghanistan.
- It has been found that other devices that are conjunction, repetition and ellipsis, among others have also been used in alignment with the same selection and progress patterns that foreground the concerns of Pakistan regarding uncertainty in Afghanistan and its impact on Pakistan.

Precisely it can be stated that the cohesive devices within the Textual Meta Function are of significant importance when it comes to the presentation of an idea as a unified whole. The authors from the three countries that are Afghanistan, USA and Pakistan have integrated the cohesive devices in an attempt to project the phenomenon as a unified whole. It has been found that this integration varies with the countries under discussion and the authors from respective countries align the cohesive devices with the selected patterns of theme and rheme which aids in the projection of their own stance.

5.3 Findings in Response to the Research Question No. 03

The third question of the present research is about the aspects within the Textual Meta Functions by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), aiding the authors of these newspapers in the projection of particular stance.

- The researcher has found that the language resource has been used by the authors of these newspapers in an attempt to foreground and project their particular stance.

- The researcher has observed a significant difference in the use of the language in terms of selection and progression patterns of theme and rheme and the strategies of lexical and grammatical cohesion.
- It has been found that the authors from different countries manipulate these aspects to project a particular stance.

5.3.1 Stance in the Afghan Newspapers

While analysing the newspaper articles from Afghanistan, the researcher has found that the Afghan authors use the language resource to project their own side of the story.

- They foreground the information in the rheme that highlights the sufferings of Afghans in the wake of these decades of war.
- Moreover, the progression patterns of theme and rheme project the same stance that is the stance of an innocent Afghan, affected by the war and his hopes from the peace deal.
- The devices of lexical and grammatical cohesion aid the authors in the same projection which is quite different from that of Pakistan and the USA.

5.3.2 Stance in the US Newspapers

As far as the articles from the USA are concerned the researcher has found that the language resource in terms of the aspects of the Textual Meta Function by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) have been used in a diversified manner and project a completely different stance from that of the Afghan newspapers.

- The theme and rheme highlight the idea about the US withdrawal from Afghanistan to be of significant importance in the scenario of the US general elections, that they want to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Afghan issue before leaving.
- It has been found that the theme and rheme progresses with the aid of the devices of lexical and grammatical cohesion and these devices also aid in the projection of the same stance in the theme and rheme that foregrounds the idea about the US, negotiating the deal with the Afghan Taliban, and other terms of the deal about the plan of troops withdrawal.

- The researcher has found that this stance has been projected through the patterns of information in the theme and rheme that aligns with the new and given information patterns with the help of lexical and grammatical cohesion.

5.3.3 Stance in the Newspapers from Pakistan

Lastly, the newspapers from Pakistan show a completely different stance. The researcher has found that these aspects of Textual Meta Functions manifest a completely different scenario as:

- The theme and the rheme foreground the ideas surrounding Pakistan.
- The patterns of information in terms of given and new show the inclination towards the need for a peaceful settlement between the Afghan parties, who are unable to negotiate the intra-Afghan deal.
- The theme and rheme have been selected in such a way that they highlight the same stance that is regarding the importance of intra-Afghan deal.
- It has been found that the theme foregrounds the idea that mentions the need of intra-Afghan settlement.
- In addition to this the foregrounded information in the rheme also sheds light on the prospects for Pakistan in the scenario of Afghan Peace Process.
- The researcher has found that, in addition to the patterns of theme and rheme, the devices of lexical and grammatical cohesion by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), also serve the same purpose and aid in projecting the stance of a Pakistani in the leading newspapers of Pakistan.

5.3.4 Comparison of the Findings in Response to Research Question 03

It can be stated that, the language of these newspapers from Afghanistan, USA and Pakistan have performed the communicative function with the clauses serving as a message in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). The language resource has been used by the authors of the respective newspaper articles in a variety of ways to project a diversified stance.

- It has been found that, the articles from Afghan newspapers project the miseries and sufferings of Afghans and highlight the prospects of the deal in the context of hopes of peace and prosperity in the country.
- Contrary to this the newspaper articles from the USA project the stance of US facilitating the deal with the Taliban and the successful withdrawal of the

foreign troops from Afghanistan as per the hopes of American voters in the context of the general elections in the USA.

- The stance projected in the newspaper articles from Pakistan is equally different from the other two countries as the authors of these articles highlight the significance of intra Afghan talks and a peaceful settlement before the withdrawal of foreign troops. The Pakistani newspapers also highlight the prospects of the deal for Pakistan that varies from the stance projected by the Afghan and American newspapers.

5.4 Conclusion

Precisely, it can be stated that the language is the resource speakers or writers use which surpasses the boundaries of the structure and can be manipulated in variety of ways in order to project different stance and opinions. The present research has found that the newspaper articles from Pakistan, Afghanistan and the USA perform the communicative Function of the language, where the clauses serve as messages, that is the Textual Meta Function in terms of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). This communicative Function has been performed in a variety of ways and the aspects of Textual Meta Function have been used in different ways to project a particular stance through language. The articles from the Afghan newspapers project the Afghan miseries and sufferings where the patterns of information foreground their hopes from the peace talks. Contrarily, the articles from the USA show inclination towards the importance of deal in the context of their withdrawal from Afghanistan as a result of peaceful settlement between the Afghan parties. In the same way, the newspaper articles from Pakistan project the stance that shows inclination towards the importance of the peace process for Pakistan as well as the significance of a peaceful settlement between Afghan parties with the focus on the intra-Afghan talks. The researcher has found that the articles published in the newspapers of different countries, that are Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA, around the scenario of Afghan Peace Process project a variety of stance and show a range of inclinations in terms of their patterns of information with the aid of the cohesive devices as proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

5.5 Implications

The present study is significant in many ways and the findings and analysis will impact the research on the language and the functions performed by it. The implications of the present study are stated as under:

- The research can shed light on the variation of language use across social groups, communities and cultures, projecting different world views and ideologies.
- The analysis of language use in the leading newspapers, uncovers the power dynamics and biases in the projection of any phenomenon.
- The study reiterates the idea that language shapes perceptions and constructs identities.

5.6 Recommendations

Owing to the time constraint, the present research was delimited to the comparative analysis of three countries that are Afghanistan, Pakistan and the USA. Moreover, the researcher has taken two English newspapers from each country, sampling four articles from each newspaper. The analysis has been done from the perspective of Textual Meta Function by Halliday. There is always a need of extensive research.

- The future researchers can analyse the same Meta Function in an attempt to conduct a comparative analysis of the newspapers in different languages to trace the variation in the Meta Function and the diversity in the projection of stance through it.
- Moreover, a wide range of texts from different countries can be taken to conduct the comparative analysis from the perspective of Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985, 1989) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).
- The same meta function can be used to analyse political speeches focusing on the diversity in the presentation of ideas.
- In addition to this, the researchers can also use Halliday's framework to analyse language and social identity focusing on the use of language by individuals and communities to construct a social or cultural identity.
- The future researchers can use Halliday's framework to compare the human language with the language of AI systems in order to shed light on the broader

functions performed by the language and to study the patterns that aid the AI systems in mimicking human language.

REFERENCES

- Alaei, M., & Ahangari, S. (2016). A study of ideational meta function in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: A critical discourse analysis. *English Language Teaching*, 9(4).
- Albonia, A. (2022). *The linguistic representation of the Taliban in the Afghani newspaper, comparison between before and after the power change* [Master's thesis]. <https://www.divaportal.org/smash/get/diva2:1721992/FULLTEXT02/>
- Alizai, W. M. (2020, January 25). Ceasefire, a prerequisite for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan. *Afghanistan Times*. <https://www.afghanistantimes.af/ceasefire-a-prerequisite-for-a-sustainable-peace-in-afghanistan-2/>
- Arunsirot, S. (2013). An analysis of textual meta function in Thai EFL students. *Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language)*, 7(2), 160-174.
- Ashraf, M. M. (2020, March 6). Cracks in the deal. *THE NEWS*. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/624406-cracks-in-the-deal/>
- Aurangzaib, Rana, A. K., Zeeshan, A., & Naqvi, A. H. (2021). A comparative discourse analysis of Pakistani English and Urdu newspapers' headlines. *PalArch's Journal of Archeology of Egypt/ Egyptology*, 18(4), 6699-6711. <file:///C:/Users/Administrator/Documents/7324-Article%20Text-14350-1-10-20210327.pdf>
- Bakuuro, J. (2017). Demystifying Halliday's meta functions of language. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 5(2), 211-217.
URL: <https://doi.org/10.15640/ijll.v5n2a21/>
- Bilal, H. A. (2012). Analysis Of Thank You M'am: Halliday's meta functions. *Academic Research International*, 2(1).
- Brook, T. V., & Shesgreen, D. (2020, February 29). Historic peace deal in Afghanistan reached with Taliban, allowing withdrawal of US troops. *USA TODAY*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2020/02/29/u-s-taliban-sign-deal-peace-talks-begin-u-s-troops-withdraw/4738736002>
- Cunanan, B. (2001). Using meta functions in a stylistic analysis of point of view in an Afro-American short story.

- Chueasuai, P. (2017). The interpersonal meta function and translation of power relations: A case study of fifty shades of grey. *MANUSYA: Journal of Humanities*, (23).
- Ekhteyar, A., & Umrani, T. (2021). CPEC in Pakistani print media: transitivity analysis of English newspapers' articles. *Progressive Research Journal of Arts & Humanities*, 3(1), 157-170.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351335729_CPEC_in_Pakistani_Print_Media_Transitivity_Analysis_of_English_Newspapers'_Articles/
- Gandahara. (2020, October 7). For lasting peace in Afghanistan, the process needs inclusion. *The Kabul Times*. <https://thekabultimes.com/for-lasting-peace-in-afghanistan-the-process-needs-inclusion/>
- Gannon, K., & Batrawy, A. (2020, September 12). Afghanistan, Taliban begin first-ever peace talks after decades of war. *USA TODAY*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2020/09/12/afghanistan-taliban-peace-negotiations-qatar/5777823002/>
- Ghani, F., Saleem, T., Majeed, S., Batool, R., & Aslam, M. (2022). A corpus-based comparative ideational meta-functional analysis of Pakistani English and UK English newspaper editorials on COVID-19. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2022.2114619/>
- Hajizada, A. (2020, April 19). Recent peace deal from the youth perspective. *The Kabul Times*. <https://thekabultimes.com/recent-peace-deal-from-the-youth-perspective/>
- Halliday, M., & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Halliday, M., & Hasan, R. (2013). *Cohesion in English* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://www.academia.edu/23141930/Cohesion_in_English_Halliday_and_Hasan/
- Halliday, M., & Matthiessen, C. (2014). *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar* (4th ed.). Routledge. https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/4651874/mod_resource/content/1/Intro%20to%20FG.pdf/
- Hameed, H. T. (2008). Cohesion in texts: a discourse analysis of news article in a magazine. *AL-Faith Journal*, 37.

- Haratyan, F. (2011). Halliday's SFL and social meaning. *IPEDR*, 17.
- Hidayah, S. N., Wihadi, M., & Rahmatunisa, W. (2023). Textual meta function analysis about education news text on selected national online newspapers. *Journal of English Language and Pedagogy*, 6(2).
https://www.academia.edu/106357097/Textual_MetaFunction_Analysis_about_Education_News_Text_on_Selected_National_Online_Newspapers/
- Hussain, Z. (2021, January 20). Violence & Afghan peace talks. *DAWN*.
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1602489/>
- Hutabarat, E., Herman, H., Silalahi, D. E., & . R Sihombing, P. S. (2020). An analysis of ideational meta function on news Jakarta post about some good Covid-19 related news. *VELES Voice of English Language Education Society*, 4(2), 142-151. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346398253_An_Analysis_of_Ideational_MetaFunction_on_News_Jakarta_Post_about_Some_Good_Covid_19_Related_News/
- Jackson, D. (2020, February 23). Donald Trump expresses optimism about peace deal with Taliban in Afghanistan. *USA TODAY*.
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2020/02/23/donald-trump-afghan-peace-deal-taliban/4850018002/>
- Jalilifar, A. (2010). A contrastive discourse analysis of English newspaper headlines: Facing syntactic challenges in translation. *Teaching English Language Journal*, 4(1),49-68.
https://www.teljournal.org/article_66131_95ad9ceff16631672ef1e9ce0617589a.pdf/
- Khan, I. A. (2020, March 14). Peace too far. *THE NEWS*.
<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/628820-peace-too-far/>
- Khan, J. (2023). *Depiction of Afghan peace process through semantic prosody: A corpus-based critical study of print media discourse* [Master's thesis]. <https://norr.numl.edu.pk/repository/listing/content/detail/1922/>
- Khurram, A. (2020, March 23). The peace puzzle and the arrogance of power. *Afghanistan Times*. <https://www.afghanistantimes.af/the-peace-puzzle-and-the-arrogance-of-power/>

- Linguistic representation of 100 days of Pakistan Tehreek – E – Insaaf in online Pakistani newspapers: A critical discourse analysis & Systematic Functional linguistic perspective. (2019).
International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology, 8(5C), 1200-1207. <https://doi.org/10.35940/ijeat.e1170.0585c19/>
- Lodhi, M. (2020, May 4). Troubled Afghan peace process. *DAWN*.
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1554404/troubled-afghan-peace-process/>
- Lodhi, M. (2020, November 30). Afghan peace prospects. *DAWN*.
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1593189/>
- Madjdi, A. H., & Nurcahyo, A. D. (2014). Recognizing the meta-function of news item. *Staf Pengajar Fakultas KIP UMK*, 7(1).
<https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/23225-EN-recognizing-the-Meta-Function-of-news-item.pdf/>
- Mashal, M. (2020, October 28). Afghan peace talks begin this week. Here's what to know. *THE NEW YORK TIMES*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/10/world/asia/afghanistan-peace-talks-taliban.html/>
- Mashal, M., & Jakes, L. (2020, February 11). Trump gives conditional go ahead on peace deal with Taliban, officials say. *The Kabul Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/11/world/asia/afghanistan-taliban-peace-deal.html/>
- Matthiessen, C., & Halliday, M. A. (1989). Introduction to functional grammar. *Language*, 65(4), 862. <https://doi.org/10.2307/414947/>
- Meerab, & Siddique, A. R. (2022). Boosters as hyperbole in Pakistani English newspaper editorials: A corpus based study. *Journal Of Social Sciences*, 13(1), 13-23. <https://jss.gcuf.edu.pk/index.php/jss/article/view/62/>
- Meyer, C. F., Halliday, M. A., & Hasan, R. (1987). Language, context, and text: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21(2), 353.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3586740/>
- Mohseni, S., & Hanlon, M. O. (2020, February 21). What a good Afghan peace deal will look like. *USA TODAY*.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/02/21/afghan-peace-deals-components-taliban-trump-zalmay-khalilzad-column/4806960002/>

- Najim, H. K. (2019). A systemic analysis of mood and modality in a political text. *ADAB AL-RAFIDAYN*, 76, 1-24. <https://radab.mosuljournals.com/>
- Ngongo, M., Dethan, M., & Hyna, H. (2018). Meta function meaning realization in lexicogrammar of sermon texts on 'language and cultural month', Kupang town: A systemic functional linguistic approach. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research (ASSEHR)*, 228.
- Noori, L. (2020, February 19). Afghan women's concerns should be addressed in peace talks. *The Kabul Times*. <https://thekabultimes.com/afghan-womens-concerns-should-be-addressed-in-peace-talks-2/>
- Qasemi, M. W. (2019, August 31). Troop pullout a catastrophe without international assurance. *The Kabul Times*.
<https://thekabultimes.com/troop-pullout-a-catastrophe-without-international-assurance/>
- Qazizada, B. (2020, February 22). 18-year 'violence or jihad'? *Afghanistan Times*. <https://www.afghanistantimes.af/18-year-violence-or-jihad/>
- Raza, A., Ahmad, M., & Ahmad, S. S. (2020). Frame markers as metadiscoursal features in Pakistani English newspapers' editorials: A corpus-based study. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 4(3), 81-94. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344250718_Frame_Markers_as_Metadiscoursal_Features_in_Pakistani_English_Newspapers'_Editorials_A_Corpus-Based_Study/
- Saeed, A., Rahman, S. I., & Mahmoodi, M. Q. (2021). Analysis of war and peace related photographs in Afghanistan print media. *Journal of Peace, Development and Communication*, 5(1), 41-53. <https://doi.org/10.36968/JPDC-V05-I01-04/>
- Saghir, F., Qasim, H. M., & Sibtain, M. (2020). I have a dream: An interpersonal meta function analysis of Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech. *Ilkogretim Online*, 19(4), 6999-7014. <http://ilkogretim-online.org/>
- Sanger, D. E. (2020, February 29). After 18 years, Is this Afghan peace, or just a way out? *THE NEW YORK TIMES*.

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/29/world/asia/trump-taliban.html/>
- Sattar, A. (2020, March 11). Withdrawal from Afghanistan. *THE NEWS*.
<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/627457-withdrawal-from-afghanistan/>
- Shahbaz, K. (2020, March 4). US-Afghan peace deal. *DAWN*.
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1538260/>
- Shibli, M. (2020, January 26). An Afghan perspective. *THE NEWS*. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/604093-an-afghan-perspective/>
- Sohail, R. B., & Ali, A. (2021). Framing Afghan peace process in elite press of Pakistan. *Harf-o-Sukhan*, 5(4), 596-607.
<file:///C:/Users/Administrator/Documents/535-Article%20Text-1047-1-1020220726.pdf>
- Spanta, R. D. (2019, August 23). Leaving? Take all of your belongings with you. *AFGHANISTAN TIMES*. <https://www.afghanistantimes.af/leaving-take-all-of-your-belongings-with-you/>
- Spina, S. (2013). News as a conversation. A comparative analysis of the language of online and printed news in Italy. *Recherches en communication*, 40, 47-66. <https://doi.org/10.14428/rec.v40i40.49203/>
- Van, H. V. (2021). Meta functions of language in Systemic Functional Linguistics: A framework for the interpretation of meaning of text in social context. *Vnu Journal Of Foreign Studies*, 37(4).
- Vinchristo, A. A. (2022). Interpersonal meta function analysis of editorial discourse in business-related issues using English Systemic Linguistics. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(1), 44-57. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1341630.pdf>
- WADA, R. S., WAPPA, J. P., & BITRUS, I. (2019). An analysis of the meta-functions of language of selected Nigerian newspaper headlines. *International Journal of English Literature and Culture*, 7(4), 79-84.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338392677_An_Analysis_of_the_Meta-Functions_of_Language_of_Selected_Nigerian_Newspaper_Headlines/
- Yatandoost, K., & Anvarhagigi, M. (2020). An analysis of discourse style in English translation of Hedayat's fiction, *Boof-e-Koor*, under Hallidayan

- model. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 5(4), 1199-1204. <https://ijels.com/>
- Yeibo, E. (2012). Figurative language and stylistic function in J. P. Clark-Bekederemo's poetry. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 3(1), 180-187.
- Zhang, Y., Lu, X., Fu, Y., & Jiang, S. (2020). A comparative linguistic analysis of English news headlines in China, USA, UK, and ASEAN countries. *International Journal of Computational Science and Engineering*, 23(3). <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJCSE.2020.111436/>
- Zucchini, D., & Neff, T. G. (2021, January 1). What to know about the Afghan peace talks. *The Kabul Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/01/world/asia/afghanistan-peace-talks.html/>

APPENDIX A AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan Times

Article 1

Title: *The Peace Puzzle and the Arrogance of Power* by Aisha Khurram

After 18 months of talks and nearly two decades of war an historic deal was signed between United States and Taliban on Feb-29th-2020 which provided a glimmer of hope that the long and brutal war in Afghanistan may finally be getting to an end and that there could be a potential settlement or solution to the longest and deadliest war in the modern history of Afghanistan, but the following events proved that the hope for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan might turn to be just another false dawn.

The ongoing political crisis among Afghan leaders caused by the parallel inauguration in March 9th, pre-conditions that block the path towards intra-Afghan negotiation and the global outbreak of COVID-19 that eclipsed the Afghan peace process are testimonies that the US-Taliban agreement is dead in arrival.

Theoretically America's war in Afghanistan is polarized between victory for which there's no strategy and withdrawal for which there's no clear policy, but one thing is for sure that the war between US and Taliban is a Guerilla warfare as Henry Kissinger defines it as a war that is all about losers and winners not about compromises. "In Guerilla warfare, the conventional army loses if it does not win and the Guerilla wins if it does not lose" – Henry Kissinger

With the sign of US-Taliban agreement and the unclear prospect of intra-Afghan negotiation Taliban might win by not losing the war.

Now it seems like Trump's potential success in the 2020 presidential election is in making promises of peace and the immediate drawdown of US troops while creating public delusions and shifting the shape of conflict by leaving the responsibility of the war to the Afghan people and the fractious Afghan government in Kabul.

This might be a huge foreign policy success for the incumbent president of United States to drawdown US troops before the 2020 US elections, but we hope that it doesn't turn out to be a historic failure for the Afghan people who paid a heavy price for an infamous and pointless war for nearly two decades.

With the start of New Year 1399 on the first day of Nawroz an occasion of happiness and celebration of springtime, Afghan people started the first day of Nawroz

with grief and mourning for the loss of at least 25 ANDSF soldiers that have been attacked by Taliban in Zabul province.

What is the end that justify this brutality? And how we are supposed to save Afghanistan if we destroy it in a meaningless war against each other?

In 2001 Afghans were guaranteed security, protection and prosperity none of which truly materialized in the US-Taliban agreement, the nation's most significant challenges are being ignored and many major problems remain untouched such as the ongoing political turmoil, intra Afghan negotiation and Taliban who still insist on using the term of Islamic emirate of Afghanistan in agreements.

Now the question rises, if practically nothing is to be left of the government and our nation than what is there to be saved for what?

Amidst all the uncertainties and roadblocks on the path towards a sustainable peace, the ongoing political crisis among political elites in the government is adding insult to injury.

It's not the right time for our political leaders to play the game of thrones and exercise their power for the sake of personal interests,

While our frustrated generation hopes for a relaxation of tension and expect a united stance from their political leaders more than ever before, the arrogance of power make them concerned that the whole peace efforts might be doomed.

All parties to the conflict in particular Taliban need to realize that this is an unwinnable and zero sum game and the minute they realize that a military solution is out of question they will find us ready to reciprocate

While the tectonic plates of our country is shifting towards a new direction Afghan Youth find themselves at crossroad and In the wake of renewed violence the way ahead for the younger generation of Afghanistan is by no means certain.

Although we as bystanders in this big theater feel paralyzed by the sense of powerlessness in the face of political turmoil and old system of conflict resolution but it's time for us to display courage in daring not only to imagine but to act upon the conviction of what is right and build towards what we believe otherwise we may be the next generation that leave a fractured Afghanistan than the one we inherited.

Those of us who oppose the war need to raise our voices and make the leaders follow because the new generation of Afghanistan would not pay any price or bear any burden that its elders might dictate anymore.

It's time to remind ourselves despite all the differences just how much we share common hopes and common dreams that pull us together as Afghans, we are not only subjects to blind and impersonal forces but we can shape our individual and collective destiny by simply being united, faithful and optimistic to strategically build towards what we believe.

Published in *Afghanistan Times*, March 23, 2020.

ARTICLE 2

Leaving? Take All of Your Belongings With You by Rangin Dadfar Spanta.

Donald Trump, The President of the United States of America, stated that “Afghanistan is terrorism’s laboratory”. The US will, however, keep its intelligence mission active in the country, even after it withdraws its troops, in order to continue combating terrorist threats. Numerous points about this statement require further consideration:

No invitation was ever sent by the people of Afghanistan for the US to wage a war here; much less a long, grueling war here. The US was attacked by Al-Qaida in 2001, but the forces of Al-Qaida were supported during the USSR invasion in Afghanistan by the US government. A large number of American citizens were, regrettably, killed during the 9/11 attacks. But these were the actions of Arab fundamentalists who, incidentally, were trained by the US, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and their allies. None of the 9/11 attackers were Afghan.

- After this mass murder of American citizens by Al-Qaida terrorists, a trend of expressing solidarity with the US and unity against terrorism gained traction. Chapter 7 of The United Nations Security Council Charter facilitated a legal intervention by the US and its allies in Afghanistan. The US has since been involved in a bloody, fruitless, and tiresome war in Afghanistan. This war has been the source of destruction, injustice, and unrest. It is the result of bad U.S. strategy for “Grand Middle East” and South East Asia and changes in the approach of the US for the region.
- Most of our political elite supported the military presence of the US in Afghanistan. This was based on an illusion. The illusion was “maybe we can create a state based on rule of law; that can have proper infrastructure and an ability to grow financially, and we can do it with the US and its allies’ support.” Now, after around two decades, this wish has proven to be an illusion. This wish for Afghanistan proved to be unlike previous experiences in Germany, Japan, or South Korea. A reductionist analysis

suggests the US's poor policies in Afghanistan, its leniency towards Pakistan, and the inefficiency of Afghan politicians and an inability of Afghan society to accept liberalism are the reasons for failure of the "Afghan dream." Nominal democracy has failed in Afghanistan, because the reality is that we cannot establish a proper democracy unless it is led by democrats and democratic struggle.

- The US centered its War on Terror in Afghanistan from its inception. It limited its anti-terror operations to Afghanistan's boundaries. The US trained its sights on Afghanistan, but Pakistan, as the country of origin for terrorism, escaped. The United States has provided Pakistan's army and intelligence service-invasion and conspiracy theory machines- with billions of dollars of aid. It considers them strategic allies, rather than placing the munder sanctions. Terrorism's backbone, far from being reprimanded, received funding instead. Pakistan has, therefore, been able to strengthen and re-equip its military and intelligence service. The US's leniency towards Pakistan has failed, and it is now being forced to withdraw. The US is leaving Afghanistan, however we may phrase it, in the same manner they left Vietnam. This might even be generous. The Vietcong was a national movement, and after overthrowing the US puppets, replaced them with redeemers. But in Afghanistan's case, grassroots movements and patriotic forces will not be the ones governing. The US, unlike in Vietnam, will have lost a "Dirty War"^[1] to the Taliban.
- Widespread corruption, a war-dependent economy, opium, and bribery formed a new aristocratic puppet class in Afghanistan, and added them to pre-existing corruption. Everybody knows the puppets of western countries, their contractors, technocrats, corrupted politicians and racist forces, in coordination with their international supporters, formed a new construct for our society. This new construct separated people from the state and turned politics into a game of dealing with day to day issues. This fact, and the frequent fraud in elections, engendered widespread banality in social discourse and the media, to the detriment of Afghanistan's people.
- This situation, and a continuation of Pakistan's interventions, reinforced the Taliban and their crime and criminal network. They have been able to seize control of more of the country, or at least dysfunctional government units, as a result.
- Afghans are tired of this dirty war. However, the United States, Russia, Iran, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, and some other countries have, however, turned the Taliban into an honorable negotiating party in diplomatic stages. This situation was further

buttressed by the fact that the Taliban have, in recent times, captured more villages and occupied more districts amid a deterioration of government control.

- Peace talks with the Taliban have been ongoing since September 2018. It is an irrefutable fact that these talks are a Taliban-US only matter, despite the United States Special envoy, Dr. Khalilzad, trying to include Afghan politicians in the process. Two points are top priority of the negotiating agenda: a commitment to not let Afghanistan become a terror center again, and a timeline for the withdrawal of foreign military forces from Afghanistan. Reports are that both parties are now agreed upon over these points and, we are on the eve of formally seeing the agreement.
- The United States' position as the world's sole superpower is ending amid a failure of its unilateralist policies towards this country and others – policies that were exhibited by the invasion of other countries around the world – a failure in the “Great Middle East”, and the rising of powers of Russia and China. The US cannot play the role of world policeman anymore. Trump has acknowledged this in many of his speeches. Even if the US invades Iran, this slide cannot be reversed.

It is an obvious fact that regional competitors like Iran and international contenders like, China, Russia, and even the European Union do not collaborate with the US anymore. Iran, Russia, and China are competing openly with the US in Afghanistan and other countries. The Asia-Pacific will be the center of international competitions in the Twenty First Century, as even American experts acknowledge. Countries in this region will not be safe from wars and proxy wars initiated by the US, and Afghanistan, for its geo-political importance, surely will not be safe.

Some aspects of this competition are clearly visible in dealings between Iran, Russia, and the Taliban. We can also apply the same analysis to the competition between the presidential election candidates favored by Russia in Afghanistan's upcoming election against the US supported nominee even though these nominees can change their supporters at any instance, because they are not attached to any moral, political or ethical high grounds.

There are other games going on, in addition to the aforementioned competitors in Afghanistan. Pakistan considers all of India's actions in Afghanistan as threat to itself, even India's educational scholarships to Afghans. It uses India's presence to justify its covertly aggressive Afghan strategy. India, similarly, worries about Pakistan's actions in Afghanistan. Pakistan has, at the end of the day, initiated proxy war in Afghanistan. Iran also considers the US presence in Afghanistan to be a threat

to its own national security. The US and its allies, for their part, are not reluctant to use their presence in Afghanistan against Iran, should their relationship with it worsen. Saudi Arabian “Wahhabism” is in a huge war with Iranian “Shi’ism” in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia wants to destabilize the eastern borders of Iran. Russia sees the presence of ISIS as national security threat, and a threat against central Asia. Russia also insists the US is responsible for bringing ISIS here in order to threaten the Russian Federation and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Leaders of the Russia claim this without hesitation. The author of this paper has, after all, heard these concerns in high level meetings. China is deeply concerned about eastern Turkistan, where they believe terrorists receive support from the US and its allies as a proxy against China. All the facts suggest that instead of collaboration, there is a big multilateral Proxy war going on in Afghanistan, and the primary victims of this war are Afghan citizens.

Considering these enormous geopolitical considerations, should the US wish to maintain a military and intelligence presence in Afghanistan, Washington would broker an open or closed agreement with the Taliban and Pakistan. Abandoning Afghanistan to a war between Afghans will only exacerbate these international rivalries. Peace and prosperity will evade Afghanistan and the flames of war will rise higher and higher if the US chooses not to do the right thing.

Although the war of the past eighteen years has always been painted as a religious or ideological war, I cannot over-emphasize its other causes. The war-dependent economy, opium, and interventions, for example. These causes can easily turn into the beginnings of a proxy war. So we should not fool ourselves into thinking that we can have a sustainable peace if we agree to have both the Taliban in power, and a continued US military presence here.

Afghanistan is home to rare earth mines that have strategic importance in the modern technological era. If the private shadow economy acknowledge government weaknesses, then it will be up to the private mining companies that will exploit these mines. Even privatizing the war in Afghanistan by relying on American Private Security War companies, amid U.S. intelligence and military presence, will not bring peace, and also the competition for capturing these resources will accelerate the collapse of the state.

I know some may claim that with the US’s withdrawal would also go the achievements of the last 2 decades. National security forces will be weakened, and

the government will not be able to mobilize the budget for operation. The story of the 1990s will be repeated again. I admit this could happen. But the situation will, no doubt, be even worse with the continued presence of US troops. I am confident the conflict will be bloodier, and the war will continue to be even more destructive, with the US's involvement. We will not achieve proper independence, so long as the US remains, and even the degree of independence we currently enjoy will be called into question.

- The presence of US intelligence services and troops will ensure neither the security of this country nor a just and patriotic government based on law and justice. These services will, no doubt, support the Taliban and will continue to take sides with Pakistan, as they did with Saudi Arabia and other conservatives Arab countries.

Finally, as the United States decide to leave, it would be better to leave here responsibly; leave here and take all your belongings and your consultants, who think this country is their horse's pasture, with you. Go, and let our children get rid of the ones who think they have signed the concession of human knowledge, the ones who speak a mixture of English, Farsi, and Pashtu. Go, and take with you your puppets who are addicted to bribery; take your burglars; the racists; the liars; the forgers, and your spies. Move, and let us be here, we do not ask for your favor, do not harm us.

There is a story of Alexander the Great. Once, when he went to visit Diogenes, he found him sun-bathing, Alexander asked if he could do him a favor, Diogenes told him go away and let the sun fold on my skin.

Or as Khalil Ravadi once said:

Shame on me!

Curse on me!

If I ask you something

My only request is give birth control pills to political prostitutes as well

And let not idiots to propagate

Mobilizing for a legitimate resistance against this situation and a democratic campaign to achieve independence seems the only way to overcome these challenges and start anew.

The idiom "dirty war" has been used in different contexts. It is mostly used to illustrate the wars between drug cartels in Mexico and Latin America. So this idiom is different from unjust war, the idiom has been used by redeemers and liberation warriors

to condemn the invaders. I use this idiom “dirty war” to describe the very specific war that is going on in Afghanistan, the war that is beyond redemption. This war by the Taliban is not against foreign occupation and it is not a liberation war of any sort. Neither is it a war by the United States for securing peace, or supporting a legal government. There is war, there is blood, and Afghans don’t know why.

Published in *Afghanistan Times*, 23rd August, 2019.

ARTICLE 3

Title: *Ceasefire, A Prerequisite for a Sustainable Peace in Afghanistan* by Wali Muhammad Alizai

Peace is a grave desire in a conflict-ridden Afghanistan after four-decades-long ruinous war. It now seems that the U.S.-Taliban peace talks would pave path for the prevalence of everlasting peace in the country, which will ensure stability, development, education and protection of women rights in the country. After the prevalence of everlasting peace, Afghanistan, once notorious safe-heaven for international terrorists, will fame for economic activities and regional connectivity, but Taliban are the principal hindrance in achieving this sacred goal.

Ironically, Taliban are carrying on peace negotiations with U.S. and ready for ceasefire with U.S. troops in Afghanistan, but are reluctant to sit with the Afghan government, which is main party to the conflict.

In the U.S.-Taliban negotiations, Taliban should be convinced that peace can not be imposed on the country from outside. For in order to reach a viable peace-agreement, Taliban ought to negotiate directly with the Afghan State to discover their own route to solution.

En route to effective solution, the first and essential step is to put an end to violence, hostility and bitterness. Once it is ensured, it should be succeeded by calls for comprehensive ceasefire in the country. Taliban’s proposed “reduction in violence” is not a sustainable end for the grievances of the Afghan nation. Since unstable Afghanistan satisfies the interest of few regional actors, all this should hurriedly be worked on as any plotted incident can sabotage the peace process & can intensify violence at any moment. Taliban, therefore, should be rational, as well as cautious.

In due course the ceasefire will resultantly build trust between the Afghan nation and Afghan state, and the Taliban. As the latter are widely considered proxies of neighboring countries and hostile to women rights, education and progress in Afghan

society. The ordinary Taliban fighters consider the elected Afghan government as client regime of U.S., which is threat to Islamic practices.

Non-violent coexistence will help skeptical sides to diminish their suspicions and to build confidence on each other that neither side will turn hostile violently against the other.

Meanwhile, Non-violent coexistence and trust-building would lead Afghan society and the Taliban toward empathy. Both sides would understand each other's emotions, sufferings and states of minds.

To announce ceasefire, Taliban ought to be free from neighboring countries' influence alongside top-Taliban leadership having firm command on their foot soldiers on the battle ground. Neighboring countries' influence on Taliban's decisions is diminishing their already downscale support among Afghans gradually. They should avail this opportunity of peace-talks to persist their existence in Afghan society; Otherwise, their patrons are getting engulfed in troubles by international community and they will ultimately lose their patronage.

Published in *Afghanistan Times*, January 25th, 2020.

ARTICLE 4

Title: *Some Afghan Sentiments About Peace Through Media* by Dr. Matin Royeen

On February 29, the United States unilaterally signed a peace agreement with the Taliban. Under this agreement, the United States will withdraw its troops from Afghanistan and Taliban will sever ties with Al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations and will not allow any terror activities against the United States and its allies from this region. Also, as part of this agreement, the intra-Afghan dialogue and ceasefire discussions are supposed to follow after the release of 5000 Taliban prisoners by the Afghan Government and the release of 1000 Afghan prisoners by Taliban. So far, over 4000 Taliban prisoners have been freed by the Afghan Government and the impasse on release of the rest of Taliban has created more tension and increased violence by both parties.

Both the significance and the complexity of the intra-Afghan dialogue will have a defining impact towards a viable peace providing that all participants and the decision makers consider the national interest of the Afghan people as the top priority.

I have tried to capture views/sentiments of several Afghans (from inside and outside Afghanistan) who have appeared on an Afghan television as guest panelists regarding

peace. I hope this information will be useful for the readers. I have summarized/categorized the sentiments in Italics.

Regarding Peace:

- *Peace is the top priority of the Afghan people. This is a good opportunity for peace and the Afghans will find its way out of the current situation and become a trusted nation.*
- *Dr. Ghani should allow Dr. Abdullah to lead the peace process.*
- *Unfortunately, the Afghan leadership is trying to kill time and the Taliban have no desire to talk with the Afghan Government.*
- *There is a need for the third option to explore peace and this belongs to different segments of the Afghan society who are capable of negotiating peace.*
- *The Afghan Peace is beyond Afghan personalities. It is a national discussion about the principles of democracy, constitution and freedom of the press that should be maintained.*

Regarding the Afghan Government:

- *Dr. Ghani has some plans for the future of the country. Not sure how realistic his goals are. He is emphasizing the Republic and Democracy. Neither Democracy nor Elections have worked well so far.*
- *Dr. Ghani is trying to extend 5 years of his government and this is selfish. If Dr. Ghani is using some crimes as an excuse for not releasing the rest of the Taliban prisoners, then what about the crimes committed by Mujahedin in Kabul between 1992-1996?*
- *There is no common language and coordination in the government. The National Security Advisor is saying one thing, the Foreign Minister is saying something else and the High Council for Peace is missing. The politicians are also scattered in different directions. All of these factors weaken the position of Afghanistan in peace negotiations.*

Unfortunately, the politicians are more concerned about their own personal interests than peace.

- *The Government still does not have a complete cabinet after several months. If the Government is part of the corruption, how can people have trust?*
- *Because Afghanistan lacks economic independence, it does not have political sovereignty. There is a need for mass movement in Afghanistan to speak up.*

- *Both Drs. Ghani and Abdullah should engage the political parties and demonstrate to the US, our neighbors and the Taliban that Afghanistan is capable of working together as united people without outside pressures. The technocrats can join those who care for their country.*
- *Some leaders have stolen a lot from this country and their children are living abroad.*
- *The fraudulent elections buried democracy in Afghanistan.*
- *The Afghan Government does not have a political agenda towards peace.*

Regarding the United States:

- *There is an election in the USA and President Trump would like to use the Afghan peace as a political success for his re-election bid.*
- *After the peace process, the US has some economic plans in Afghanistan too.*
The United States wants to safeguard its interest in the region in the areas of terrorism and drugs.
- *Iran, Russia and China have problems with the United States.*
- *Eventually, both Pompeo and Khalilzad will be held accountable by the US Congress if peace is not achieved.*
- *Khalilzad wants to give the power to the Taliban. So far, his agreements with Taliban have not brought peace, The Taliban have increased their attacks.*
- *Peace is an American project.*
- *The United States will get out of the Afghan scene and will enroll/insert Pakistan again in the Afghan affairs.*
- *The United States should end its double political game.*
- *The Trump administration has not been successful strategically in Afghanistan.*

Regarding The Taliban.

- *The majority of Taliban are Afghans too.*
- *They are not a single cohesive group. Recently, they have brought some changes in Doha where they have added the military wing leadership to the Qatar Political team.*
- *The Taliban will not accept the current leadership in Afghanistan.*
- *Besides fighting, I have not heard anything from Taliban about peace for the country.*
- *Along with the politically motivated Taliban, some have joined fighting because they receive salaries while others are engaged in drugs and other criminal activities.*
- *Taliban are not an independent group.*

Regarding The Neighboring Countries:

- *Both Russia and Iran support the Taliban. ISIS is a big problem in the area. Pakistan is a political Islamist society. The United States will always pay attention to this country, especially with the possibility of a nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan.*
- *Pakistan wants peace in Afghanistan so it will maintain its interest through the Taliban, but India is afraid of this scenario. India is worried that after peace in Afghanistan, the terrorists will target Kashmir and create problems.*
- *Russia, Iran and China can play a very important role in the Afghan peace process.*

Regarding The Intra-Afghan Peace Dialogue:

- *There is a need for a temporary government with participation of some prominent Afghans.*
- *Violence has increased by both sides (the government and the Taliban) which will make the intra-Afghan dialogue more challenging.*
- *There is no goodwill between the Taliban and the Afghan Government.*

Conclusion: I sincerely hope that the temporary cease fire during Eid-al Adha and the complete release of the prisoners by both parties will generate goodwill and build confidence towards the next phase of the intra-Afghan dialogue towards peace. The Afghan people have suffered too much for too long. Their hearts are broken, their minds are confused and their hopes are dashed. There is a need for **Trust Building** at this crucial moment. A six months **Cease Fire** will be the answer for all prayers. **This is the most humane and Islamic way.**

Dr. Matin Royeen is an Afghan-American educator.

Published in *Afghanistan Times*, 2nd August, 2020.

APPENDIX B

The Kabul Times

ARTICLE 1

Title: *Troop Pullout A Catastrophe Without International Assurance* by M. W. Qasemi

Afghans need international assurance for a security and permanent stability after peace agreement is signed with Taliban.

International troops' withdrawal and Afghan forces annihilation are not issues on which the Taliban peace negotiators are insisting to be discussed in their talks with the US as no one still trusts in them and the future they are claiming to build in joint cooperation with the Afghans politicians still in power.

Also, if peace came to Afghanistan, through the ongoing talks between the US and the Taliban, then there is a need for a third strong side to guarantee the content of the deals in the long future and assure the people of Afghanistan that they would never be witnessing bloodshed, targeted assassinations and high profile killing by the groups or other linked terrorist circles.

The US President Donald Trump has recently said that he will reduce the number of his troops from 14,000 to 8,600 after the Taliban peace negotiators persisted for complete withdrawal of the American and other NATO forces from Afghanistan in their talks with the US Special Representative for Afghanistan reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad in Doha over the past several months.

"We're going down to 8,600 [troops] and then we'll make a determination from there as to what happens," Fox News, a US popular news source cited Trump as saying.

Even if the US wanted to pull out troops from Afghanistan, it will keep its presence by leaving part of its troops in the country, something making the Afghans optimistic about a stable future in their country.

He offered an assurance that the US will keep presence in Afghanistan, however he confirmed that the peace negotiators were working on troops drawdown in the country.

"We're not fighting a war over there—we're just policemen," Trump said as negotiators from the US and the Taliban approaching to a final peace deal under which US forces would leave the country, when he was assured by the Taliban that Afghanistan would not return to a safe haven for other terrorist networks.

"We have to watch Afghanistan," Trump assured.

A day earlier, the NATO Senior Civilian Representative for Afghanistan, Nicolas Kay, also said that international forces will remain in Afghanistan even after the peace agreement signed with the Taliban peace negotiators, in order to support the Afghan national defence and security forces.

“Let me assure you very very clearly, NATO is not leaving, NATO is committed to staying and supporting Afghan national defence and security forces,” Mr. Kay said. Not only the US, but also the entire Afghans need to be assured that Afghanistan will remain safe from the potential terrorist groups are standby, when the peace agreement is signed with the Taliban.

Since the start of the peace negotiation between the US and the Taliban, the war weary Afghans are waiting impatiently, for an end to war and the outcome of the months of negotiations between the US and the Taliban peace negotiators.

Disagreement between the US and the Taliban negotiators on a permanent ceasefire and the modality of foreign troops withdrawal from Afghanistan have prolonged talks between the two sides that enabled anti-government militants to resort to destructive activities.

Tens of people, mostly civilians, including women and children, were killed or injured, when suicide bombers from The Taliban and Deash outfits blew their explosives packed vests or conducted vehicle-borne explosive ordnances in various parts of the country, particularly in the capital Kabul.

On the other hand, there is no need of interim government as we have legitimate system and any anti-government groups want to enter peace talks, they can negotiate with it.

But, the most important thing that the Afghans are waiting for, is ceasefire and both sides should initially agree on ceasefire to avoid so much killing and bloodshed.

Published in *The Kabul Times*, August 31st, 2019.

ARTICLE 2

Title: *Afghan women's concerns should be addressed in peace talks* by Lailuma Noori

It's been nearly a year since U.S.-Taliban talks renewed hope that a broader Afghan peace process could set the country on the path to end its decades of conflict. Now, as the U.S. and Taliban are potentially on the cusp of a deal, the stakes for Afghan women are particularly high. They fear that their hard-won rights might be a casualty of peace deal, returning the country back to the draconian Taliban era.

In recent years, Afghan women have begun anxiously monitoring news reports for threats to their safety from a new source: a peace deal with the Taliban. The Trump Administration's launch of negotiations with the Taliban, last year, startled many women in Afghanistan. For more than ten months, talks in Doha, Qatar, took place behind closed doors, women were largely excluded, forced to watch the news each night for snippets and rumored details regarding their future.

Since the U.S.-Taliban talks began more than a year ago, female activists in Kabul and other provinces of the country and their international supporters have mobilized to ensure women's voices are included in the negotiations. However, significant less attention is paid to the composition of women's representation.

Women have not experienced the same gains across the country and thus have different experiences and views on peace, extremism, constitutional rights and their broader place in society. It's largely been in Kabul and other major urban centers where women's rights have advanced most.

Although the government has appointed women in key positions in different ministries and independent organs, but still they fear of their progress if Taliban join the peace process. Afghan government and President Ghani in particular have time and again assured women that their rights would be preserved in the talks and that no one would be allowed to undermine their role and the achievements made so far.

In Afghanistan's patriarchal society, women's rights are often restricted by social norms that privilege men over women. Strict limitations on their public role, and unfair expectations at home, have restricted women to a small sphere in Afghan politics and decision-making. Not surprisingly, a lack of education and security concerns rank high among hurdles that women must overcome before engaging openly and widely in Afghan society. But there is hope. Women have turned toward education, especially the new generation. Women's role is increasing day by day, which makes them more powerful in the community and workplace.

Meanwhile the Taliban leaders have time and again assert that they are not the same group that flogged and stoned women in the nineteen-nineties. They say the Taliban no longer opposes female education. But many Afghans suspect the group is simply paying lip service to the international community. In the country's conservative rural areas, it would take a colossal shift in culture for the Taliban and for rural men to accept the freedoms that women in cities currently enjoy.

At least, it would require a peace deal that compels the Taliban to respect these freedoms. Without Afghan women at the table, such terms are unlikely to make it into any peace deal. Although Afghan government has assured that women would be included when the intra-Afghan talks began, but more efforts needed to increase their role and support their freedom when signing the deal with a group that are know for violence against women and gender discrimination.

To preserve women's gains and block Islamist groups from imposing their view of women's rights, Afghans negotiating with the Taliban, as well as the international community, must take seriously the red lines set down by Afghan women. It is important to focus simultaneously on women's right to participate in the process; have their rights protected in any agreement; and ensure that adequate institutional mechanisms and resources are available to implement and uphold the terms of an agreement.

Women's rights groups and NGOs have played a pivotal role in providing legal, social, economic, educational, health and psychological services to millions of Afghan men and women. A peace agreement must explicitly allow these groups to continue operating without restriction; their staff must be further empowered and protected from persecution and unjust treatment in the name of Sharia or local traditions.

If an end to the conflict is the genuine goal of the warring parties and their backers, they will respond to women's demands and place women at the center, not the margins, of their efforts.

Published in *The Kabul Times*, February 19th, 2020.

ARTICLE 3

Title: *Recent peace deal from the youth perspective* by Ajmal Hajizada

As part of young generation of Afghanistan and as an eyewitness of the past 18 years, we, especially the young generation, have suffered the most in our academic as well as in our social lives. We used to have these thoughts in our minds before leaving our homes every morning for school, whether we will return home safely or will be blown up in any suicidal or bomb attack. If peace prevails in its true sense, we will be the beneficiaries of this deal.

So, as a part of the young generation, we are delighted for our tomorrow with a new sunshine in our lives. Now the question is: Where do I see the attention of

the youth in the next 10 years after the deal? Let's analyse it with an optimistic point of view. Afghanistan is an enriched land in terms of natural resources. Once peace prevails, its access and ease on its export will provide Afghanistan a new image, a new hope and a new sunrise with lots of joy and hope which is still a desire for the people of Afghanistan.

Whenever we name it, the word "Talibanization" involuntarily comes to our mind. It will change into a new economic Hub, into a new faith of development for the people of Afghanistan and it's deep positive impact will not only be on Afghanistan but it will also be on its neighbouring countries, particularly Pakistan as it is an easy passage to central Asia is connected with Afghanistan so it will not be only advantageous for Afghanistan the neighbours will get its economic and security benefits as well.

The constructive role played by Pakistan in the recent pledge between the US AND Afghan Taliban demonstrates the primacy of this pact that how much convincingness it will beget on Pakistan, a bounty juncture for Pakistan is that relatively then their security distress and economic interest it will bestow a chance in returning of 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees virtually the identical figure of unrecorded as well back to their homes that would be effective in Pakistan's thrift and at the same time for Afghanistan as well many of them have been graduated from Pakistani universities. Their aptitudes will be valuable and productive in Afghanistan's administration and in their private realms, and if we imagine a peaceful Afghanistan from the perspective of tourism, Afghanistan will ensue as touristic contentment, with its naturally glamorous touring niches and some historical areas as well the best criterion could be "Bamyan" for Historical place and Nuristan for its natural beauty. This will assist in rebuilding an entirely different flank of Afghanistan to the world, While if we discern it from a cynical point of view, it's laceration will not only destabilise Afghanistan once again ,but also, this and the next generations of Afghanistan will endure and will have the fear of bomb blasting, suicide attacks in their hearts while leaving their homes for their schooling and daily routine lives once again. Another entire generation will be on the backdoor for virtually another 20 years, and its unfavourable consequences will be as broad as its positive consequences on its neighbouring countries and rest of the globe as well.

Whether it's about their economic skepticism or their security concerns, they will equally be induced as Afghanistan. As a youth, what will be my domestic and

foreign strategy in the blend of Afghan Taliban and the Afghan government? As far as domestic policy is concerned, the small business opportunities will be provided to both men and women of the country with the help of the private sectors and foreign investments as it will be a new business hub and it will have an enormous probability for the foreign investors to invest in a developing Afghanistan. Thus a stable Afghanistan will be on the rise domestically. We will have a big concern on the implication of our foreign policy because in my foreign policy, I would maintain the balance attitudes and policy towards all neighbouring and non- neighbouring countries for the growth of a faithful harmony, a distinct foreign policy will be constructed with Pakistan that will consist of economic policy and cricket diplomacy. In economic policy by bringing in an MOU between both countries where Pakistani manufacturers will be provided with free land, tax relaxation, and a favourable rebate on their exports.

Furthermore, it will be a huge opportunity to those Pakistani firms which retain a strong hold on its export from Pakistan to central Asia. It will cost them less in transportation, and in-return Afghanistan will demand ease for the transportation of their goods to India via Wahga Border. In cricket diplomacy, we all know about the cricket craze between two nations, an MOU will be signed between ACB(Afghanistan Cricket Board) and PCB(Pakistan Cricket Board) that will work on the domestic level by sending the players to play domestic leagues in both the countries. Hence, the private sectors will be the windfalls in various forms and the widespread community, and it will have a powerful impact on the relationship between the two nations.

Published in *The Kabul Times*, April 19th, 2020.

ARTICLE 4

Title: *For Lasting Peace In Afghanistan, The Process Needs Inclusion* by Gandahara

The long-awaited intra-Afghan talks that began in Doha earlier this month have been lauded by observers and participants alike as a significant step toward ending a war that has claimed tens of thousands of Afghan lives and injured countless more. While the process to get to these negotiations has been fraught with difficulty, Afghans — particularly the millions directly affected by decades of war — are watching the negotiations closely in the hope they will bring an end to violence while preserving the hard-won progress made over the past two decades.

The negotiations involve 41 people, representing both the Afghan government and the Taliban, who must consider the interests and voices of 37 million civilians. In a process where women's rights in particular are crucially on the line, only four of the negotiators are women. Since the U.S.-Taliban agreement was reached in February 2020, much lip service has been paid for an inclusive intra-Afghan process that accounts for the interests and voices of the country's diverse population.

While Afghans have welcomed and participated in nationwide polls and forums, to date there has been no structured pathway to bring their ideas and interests directly to the negotiating table. Only such a pathway can ensure the talks do not devolve into a pie-cutting exercise where the agenda is reduced to allocating positions of power to elite and armed actors, further incentivizing violence as a means for power. Holding the negotiators accountable to the 95 percent of Afghan citizens who are victims and not perpetrators of violence is the optimal route to addressing grievances and minimizing the marginalization that contributes to new dynamics and cycles of violence.

In recent years, there has been a sweeping consensus acknowledging that processes designed to be inclusive of women, civil society, youth, cultural, business, and other excluded parties are critical for reaching a lasting and just peace — a desire shared by the majority of the Afghan people. The evidence reveals that while peace agreements are fragile and imperfect, the processes that remain exclusive and elite-driven only lead to new forms of conflict and violence.

Colombia's hard-won peace agreement is a case in point. It took several years, with numerous stops and starts and the inclusion of thousands of Colombian citizens at different levels of the talks, to reach an agreement that would end armed conflict, begin to address injustices suffered by all sides, and create a political pathway to resolving their differences. Even if the Colombian agreement remains fragile, reaching it was a remarkable achievement that led to a successful phase of demobilization and disarmament.

Afghan citizens are demanding the opportunity to shape the peace process. Since the announcement of the talks in February 2019, there has been a significant and countrywide mobilization by people from all walks of life who want to be heard despite increased levels of violence and targeted assassinations. Broadly, their simple demand is that they have a say in determining their future in a process that has so far taken place outside of their country and has been driven by geopolitical interests.

As an example of a recent significant step toward ensuring its interests are represented at the table, Afghan civil society created the Afghanistan Mechanism for Inclusive Peace (AMIP), an open, independent, accessible platform that brings together existing and new initiatives, research, and data from across the country to ensure maximum access and reach in the negotiations. This mechanism is designed, run, and backed by dozens of civil society groups and actors across the country working as a coalition to bring the voices of urban and rural Afghans to the negotiating table.

AMIP held a national summit on September 10 organized by its civil society partners representing diverse sectors and communities to mark the start of the intra-Afghan peace negotiations in Doha. The summit brought together over 500 participants from 34 provinces whose recommendations were enshrined in a petition and signed by all participants, stating: “We, the representatives of civil society and media throughout Afghanistan, demand a permanent cease-fire, protection of the achievements of the past 19 years, access to justice, ensuring the rights of all people including minorities and victims of war, protection of access to information, freedom of expression, and media.” The Afghan discourse about peace is also influenced and shaped by the country’s leaders, activities, a vibrant press, and competing interest groups. Since the announcement of the U.S.-Taliban talks in February 2019, civil society groups across the country have mobilized to have their voices heard. From the Afghan Women’s Network to the Helmand Peace Marchers to organizations seeking to place victims of war at the heart of the negotiations, one thing is clear: The people of Afghanistan want to be heard.

The long war in Afghanistan is multidimensional, and intra-Afghan talks will be complex, lengthy and difficult, with tough agenda items that must be considered. This is why we must ensure the inclusion of the desires and demands for this historic moment of the Afghan people, who have made it clear they want to live in peace. Let us not squander the chance by excluding the very people whose lives most depend on it.

Published in *The Kabul Times*, October 7th, 2020.

APPENDIX C

The New York Times

ARTICLE 1

Title: *Trump Gives Conditional Go Ahead on Peace Deal With Taliban, Officials Say*
by Mujib Mashal and Lara Jakes

KABUL, Afghanistan — More than 18 years after the United States invaded Afghanistan, President Trump has conditionally approved a peace deal with the Taliban that would withdraw the last American troops from the country, potentially beginning the end of America’s longest war, according to Afghan and American officials.

But the deal will only be signed if the Taliban prove their commitment to a durable reduction of violence over a test period of about seven days later this month. If the Taliban do end hostilities and a deal is signed, the United States would then begin a gradual withdrawal of American troops, and direct negotiations would start between the Taliban and Afghan leaders over the future of their country.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo informed Afghanistan’s top leaders in separate phone calls on Tuesday that Mr. Trump had given tentative approval to this approach, according to a senior Afghan official briefed on one of the calls.

A senior American official aware of the developments also confirmed Mr. Trump had given his preliminary approval for a deal on Monday, dependent on a cessation of violence, the same day he visited Dover Air Force Base to receive the remains of the latest American fatalities in the war, which has killed tens of thousands of Afghans and more than 3,500 American and coalition troops since the United States drove the Taliban from power in 2001.

A senior Taliban official informed of the negotiations said there were now “positive movements,” but declined to discuss details because the group’s internal deliberations were continuing.

While the move could mark a significant moment in Mr. Trump’s pledge to end what he has described as “endless wars,” the talks have long remained fragile and previously broke down just as a signing was near.

After nearly a year of negotiations, the two sides were on verge of a similar deal last September. Mr. Trump suddenly called off the talks, citing a Taliban attack that killed an American and NATO soldier and nearly a dozen Afghans. But officials said

it was largely because Mr. Trump's grand gesture of inviting the Taliban to Camp David to finalize the deal fell apart.

After that, it took months of trust-building work, including a prisoner swap, to get back to the negotiating table.

The deal's details — including the timeline of the troop withdrawal and how much of the agreement had changed since the two sides were on verge of a signing last September — remained tightly guarded.

“This is a welcoming development and I am pleased that our principal position on peace thus far has begun to yield fruitful results,” President Ashraf Ghani said in a statement announcing his call with Secretary Pompeo. “Our primary objective is to end the senseless bloodshed.”

Mr. Ghani said Mr. Pompeo had informed him of “notable progress made in the ongoing peace talks” and of the “Taliban's proposal with regards to bringing a significant and enduring reduction in violence.”

Abdullah Abdullah, the Afghan government's chief executive who had also received a call, said Mr. Pompeo had “expressed optimism that a reduction in violence and progress with current talks could lead to an agreement.”

For the past month, American negotiators, led by the veteran diplomat Zalmay Khalilzad, have been camped out in the Gulf state of Qatar, trying to persuade the Taliban to come to terms.

The most recent sticking point had been an American demand for the Taliban to significantly reduce their attacks across the country during the signing and after — when the peace process moves to its next stage. The Taliban have signaled their willingness to sit down with the Afghan government and other leaders to discuss the political future of the country — but only after the Americans agree to leave the country.

Aboard Air Force One on the way to the ceremony on Monday at Dover Air Force Base, Mr. Trump discussed his Afghanistan strategy with a small group of aides and supporters, including Ivanka Trump, his daughter, and Senator Rand Paul, a Republican of Kentucky who is among the Senate's most staunch voices against keeping American troops in Afghanistan.

“I absolutely believe his sentiment is an overall desire not to be involved in a war,” Mr. Paul said in an interview in his office on Tuesday, adding that the president had witnessed a “very emotional” event in Dover the evening before.

Mr. Paul added that while he believed the president wanted to ultimately issue a green light for troop withdrawal, he was skeptical about the amount of support he would receive from his other close allies in Congress.

“We’re dominated by people who want unlimited checks to the military and never-ending intervention,” Mr. Paul said.

Published in *The New York Times*, March 4th, 2020.

ARTICLE 2

Title: *What to Know About the Afghan Peace Talks* by David Zucchino and Thomas Gibbons-Neff

KABUL, Afghanistan — After four decades of grinding combat in Afghanistan, peace negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban have raised at least a possibility that the long cycle of violence might someday end.

But that milestone is a long way off. The most recent round of discussions, which began in September, were riddled with bureaucratic hang ups and months long debates over minor issues.

And though those talks resulted in an agreement on the principles and procedures that will guide the next round of peace negotiations, they came with a price. While the two sides met in Doha, Qatar, bloodletting on battlefields and in Afghan cities surged.

The talks resumed in early January, after a brief recess, but they have been stalled by a diplomatic stalemate amid escalating violence. Both sides are waiting for President Biden to decide whether to keep the remaining 2,500 U.S. forces in Afghanistan beyond the May 1 withdrawal deadline outlined in the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement.

The Biden administration, which is reviewing that deal, says the Taliban has not honored its pledges to reduce violence and to publicly cut ties with Al Qaeda and the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan.

“Without them meeting their commitments to renounce terrorism and to stop the violent attacks against the Afghan National Security Forces, it’s very hard to see a specific way forward for the negotiated settlement,” John F. Kirby, the Pentagon spokesman, said at a news briefing in January. “But we’re still committed to that.”

Indeed, the Taliban have been ramping up for the group's annual spring and summer fighting season, forcing beleaguered government forces to abandon some outposts while pummeling government bases outside several major cities.

In a lengthy statement released Feb. 13, the Taliban said they had honored all commitments under the agreement, but did not directly address the pledge to sever ties with terrorist groups. The statement accused the Afghan government of violating the agreement and engaging in "warmongering and provocative rhetoric."

But the agreement also envisions Afghan negotiations resulting in a lasting cease-fire and a government representing all Afghans.

Published in The New York Times, February 15th, 2021.

ARTICLE 3

Title: *Afghan Peace Talks Begin This Week. Here's What to Know* by Mujib Mashal

KABUL, Afghanistan — Peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government are expected to begin on Saturday in Doha, Qatar, officials announced on Thursday, in a historic negotiation between the two sides after nearly two decades of bitter war.

The release of 5,000 Taliban prisoners held by the government opened the way for the breakthrough, after months of delay and recrimination. The prisoner release was agreed to by the United States in its historic deal with the Taliban in February, at talks in which the Afghan government was not present. Under that agreement, the Americans also promised a phased withdrawal of their remaining troops in exchange for guarantees that the insurgents would reduce their attacks and no longer permit the country to serve as a haven for terrorists.

Now, finding a compromise between the Taliban and the government on issues of power sharing and civil liberties, including the role of women and minorities, will be no easy task, and it will be made more difficult by years of bloodshed and grievances.

In Washington, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who will be in Qatar for the talks, said on Thursday that the opportunity for peace "must not be squandered."

At the White House, President Trump called the opening of talks "a result of a bold diplomatic effort on the part of my administration in recent months and years."

"The United States will play an important role in bringing the parties together to end the decades-long war," Mr. Trump said. "It's been going on for almost 20 years — long before I got involved, I can tell you that."

Here is where things stand.

American forces are leaving Afghanistan on schedule.

The agreement reached between the United States and the Taliban in February called for withdrawing all of the roughly 12,000 American troops remaining in the country over 14 months. President Trump has repeatedly expressed his desire to get American troops out of Afghanistan. Under the deal struck between the U.S. and the Taliban, the United States would bring home about 3,400 troops within 135 days of the signing of peace deal and shutter five military bases.

In return, the Taliban agreed to an effective cease-fire with the U.S. coalition. The insurgents said they would not attack American targets on their way out, and the United States agreed to stop attacking Taliban fighters except in rare cases, in which their Afghan allies were under severe pressure.

Both sides said the terms of the first 135-day phase had been honored, but the Taliban is anxious that the United States will not fully withdraw by early next year. While some American officials have expressed concerns about trusting the Taliban, none has yet suggested significantly changing the withdrawal schedule.

Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., the chief of the U.S. Central Command, said on Wednesday that by November the American military presence in Afghanistan will be reduced to 4,500.

Negotiations over power sharing will be complicated.

As difficult as it has been to get the Taliban and the government to the negotiating table, coming to an agreement will be even more complicated.

Finding a sustainable compromise between two clashing visions of government — a strict Islamic theocracy and a democratic republic — will be no easy task, and it will be made more difficult by decades of bloodshed and grievances between the two sides. The Afghan government's priority will be to secure a lasting cease-fire while the talks take place, something the Taliban have agreed to as a first item on the agenda. But getting the insurgents to let go of violence, their main leverage, will be no easy task.

There is distance between the sides on other issues including the shape of a future power-sharing government, women's rights, and how to potentially integrate thousands of Taliban fighters into the security forces.

More than 100 current and former leaders worldwide have written a letter urging the negotiators to preserve equality for women as outlined in the Afghan

Constitution, and to agree to a system that could surrender foreign aid to the country if their rights are violated by future governments. “An oppressive Afghanistan will not be stable, safe or prosperous,” the letter says.

In the meantime, the clock is ticking. Each side knows that the country, stuck in a divided and hostile region, could face a dangerous new crisis if the United States pulls out its last troops before a settlement is finalized.

At the talks: a presidential contender, a religious scholar and 5 women

The negotiating team of the Afghan republic consists of a mix of government officials and opposition figures, overseen by the perennial presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah.

The team includes five women among its 21 members, including Fawzia Koofi, a former member of Parliament who recently survived an assassination attempt and will be arriving at the table with her hand in a cast. Masoom Stanekzai, the chief negotiator, has been a longtime confidant of President Ashraf Ghani and most recently served as Mr. Ghani’s intelligence chief.

The Taliban team will include some of the delegation that negotiated the deal with the United States, and a notable change: As chief negotiator, the insurgents have put forward Mawlawi Abdul Hakim Haqqani, a religious scholar who has led the Taliban’s network of local courts in recent years. Mawlawi Haqqani is seen as carrying deep influence within the Taliban ranks, having served as instructor to many of their leaders in Islamic seminaries.

Overseeing the process will still be Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Taliban’s deputy supreme leader, who signed the deal with the United States on behalf of the insurgents. Many on both sides will bring histories of personal loss to the table. Mr. Stanekzai was wounded in a bombing that killed Afghanistan’s former top peace envoy, Burhanuddin Rabbani. Mawlawi Haqqani lost his brother and son in an explosion targeting a mosque in the Pakistani city of Quetta, where much of the Taliban leadership operates from.

U.S. officials are wary of Taliban promises to keep terrorists out of Afghanistan.

As part of their agreement with the Americans, the Taliban committed to preventing terrorist groups from using Afghanistan as a base of operations.

The mechanism for monitoring each side’s adherence to the agreement includes a joint office in Doha. It’s unclear, however, how that office evaluates the Taliban’s ties to Al

Qaeda and other terror groups, but senior U.S. military leaders have said they are not satisfied so far.

Consecutive reports to the United Nations Security Council by a monitoring team, including one report this month, have said that a large number of foreign fighters — including Pakistanis, Arabs and Central Asians — affiliated with Al Qaeda and other regional terror groups still have cover in Afghanistan under the umbrella of the Taliban. The Taliban have disputed those reports.

Taliban attacks on the Afghan forces have been unabated.

Even as direct confrontations between the U.S. and the Taliban have decreased, the insurgents have ramped up their attacks on the Afghan government's forces.

In the past, Afghan forces were heavily reliant on the U.S. air support, but that help has been limited since the U.S. and the Taliban reached their deal in February.

More than 3,500 Afghan troops have been killed and nearly 6,800 others wounded in the five months since the U.S. and Taliban signed their deal, President Ghani said in late July. Some officials say the death toll is much higher. In the same period, nearly 800 Afghan civilians have been reported killed and more than 1,600 wounded.

Published in *The New York Times*, October 28th, 2020.

ARTICLE 4

Title: *After 18 Years, Is This Afghan Peace, or Just a Way Out?* by David E. Sanger

President Trump has left no doubt that his first priority in Afghanistan is a peace treaty that would enable him to claim that he is fulfilling his vow to withdraw American troops.

But a parade of his former national security aides say he is far less interested in an actual Afghan peace.

And that creates an enormous risk for Mr. Trump and for Afghanistan: that, like President Richard M. Nixon's peace deal with North Vietnam in January 1973, the accord signed Saturday will speed an American exit and do little to stabilize an allied government. In the case of Vietnam, it took two years for the "decent interval," in Henry A. Kissinger's famous phrase, to expire and for the South Vietnamese government to be overrun.

"Trump would not be the first president to exaggerate the meaning of a truce in an election year," said Joseph Nye, an emeritus professor at Harvard whose newest book,

“Do Morals Matter? Presidents and Foreign Policy From F.D.R. to Trump,” examines the Vietnam precedent.

In the heat of the 1972 election, Mr. Nye notes, “Nixon made great claims about an imminent peace in Vietnam,” and it was only after his re-election — and his resignation — that the image of a frantic helicopter evacuation from Saigon came to mark the failure of a long, costly American experiment.

Afghanistan in 2020, of course, is driven by a different dynamic than Vietnam a half-century ago. But there are haunting echoes.

Three successive American presidents have promised victory in Afghanistan, even if they each defined it differently. Each experienced failures of political will, and on the battlefield.

President George W. Bush began the Afghan war to hunt down Osama Bin Laden in the months after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Yet he soon turned his attention to Iraq and, despite denials by the White House at the time, bled resources from the Afghan effort to fuel his next war.

President Barack Obama called Iraq a strategic mistake, but pledged that America would not lose the “good war” in Afghanistan. Yet his brief “surge” failed to strike a decisive blow.

Strategy was soon turned over to a small group inside his White House that was aptly nicknamed the “Afghan Good Enough” committee.

Mr. Trump has long lamented the cost of “endless wars,” and by the time he took up direct negotiations with the Taliban, he knew American voters were interested mostly in one thing: ending participation in a war that has now dragged on for more

than 18 years, its objectives always shifting

When historians look back at the moment, they may well conclude that Washington ended up much like other great powers that entered Afghanistan’s rugged mountains and punishing deserts: frustrated, immobilized, no longer willing to bear the huge costs. The British retreated in 1842 after suffering 4,500 killed, amid massacres that preceded the invention of the roadside bomb. They gave up their sovereignty over the country in 1919, in another retreat that heralded the beginning of the unwinding of an empire.

The Soviet Union abandoned its decade-long effort to control the country in 1989, months before the fall of the Berlin Wall marked the collapse of the Communist

superpower. That led to the chaos and power vacuums that Bin Laden exploited, and that the United States vowed it would never again allow to fester.

The American-led attack began on Oct. 7, 2001, with the name “Operation Enduring Freedom.” Mr. Bush, in an address to the nation from the Treaty Room of the White House, promised to “win this conflict by the patient accumulation of successes, by meeting a series of challenges with determination and will and purpose.”

After the destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center, a plane that hit the Pentagon and another that crashed in a field in Pennsylvania, the country was behind him. While a few warned of the dangers of entering the “graveyard of empires,” it seemed more a war of retribution and justice seeking than an effort at nation building. Yet inevitably, mission creep set in.

After Bin Laden was hunted down in Pakistan in May 2011, and with Al Qaeda a much-diminished threat, politicians struggled to explain what American troops were fighting to accomplish. More than 2,400 service members have died in combat since the invasion, according to the website icasualties.org. Neither Mr. Obama nor Mr. Trump could make a plausible case that after nearly two decades the United States had much of a role to play other than prop up a weak democracy.

For a while, at least, that role seems likely to continue.

The accord signed on Saturday — with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo overseeing the moment but not actually signing it himself — will initially bring down American troop levels to about 8,600 from about 12,000 now. That is almost exactly where they were three years ago, at the end of Mr. Obama’s term. That is the minimum number of Special Operations forces, intelligence officers and support and security personnel that the Pentagon and C.I.A. believe are necessary to hold the capital, Kabul, battle militants of the Islamic State and advise an Afghan military that remains, at best, a fractured, inconsistent fighting force after close to two decades of training and billions of dollars in American and NATO investment.

If the Afghan government can reach its own accord with the Taliban — in a so-called intra-Afghan process that is now supposed to begin — the American troop levels may drop further, officials say. But just as the South Vietnamese were not part of the Paris peace talks a half-century ago, the Afghan government, whose survival is at stake, was excluded from the long negotiations with the Taliban.

That explains why President Ashraf Ghani was so suspicious, and often furious, with the negotiating process — and made clear during the Munich Security Conference this year that he had little confidence that the next step in the accord would come to pass.

It was telling that he was not at the signing ceremony in Doha, Qatar; instead, Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper was dispatched to Kabul for a separate ceremony with Mr. Ghani and the secretary general of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to signal the allied support of the government. The only party missing was the Taliban, whose leaders on Friday refused to meet with an informal Afghan negotiating team.

The purpose of the Kabul ceremony was to reassure Mr. Ghani that the American and NATO troops would not go anywhere until the Afghan government and the Taliban reach their own accord. But the Afghans have reason to fear they will be abandoned.

“One risk here is that the president wakes up one morning and decides that he is just going to pull out the rest of the American troops,” said Douglas E. Lute, a former Army general who served first as Mr. Bush’s coordinator on Afghanistan for the National Security Council and then stayed on for several years in a similar role for Mr. Obama before becoming American ambassador to NATO.

“The odds of this breaking down, or coming to gridlock, are significant,” Mr. Lute said in an interview. “And if the Americans truly left, there’s reason to be concerned” that the Taliban could ultimately take Kabul, just as the North Vietnamese took Saigon.

It is exactly that concern that led more than 20 Republicans and Democrats to send a letter this week to Mr. Pompeo and Mr. Esper warning that “the Taliban is not a de facto counterterrorism partner, and pretending that they are ignores their longtime jihadist mission and actions.” It added, “They have never publicly renounced Al Qaeda or turned over Al Qaeda leaders living in their safe havens,” or “apologized for harboring the terrorists who carried out the September 11 attacks.”

Of course, breaking the link between the Taliban and Al Qaeda was the first objective of the war, before many others were piled on. Those ranged from assuring that Afghan girls could attend school, to building a model democracy for the region, to pledging that the new Afghan government could defend itself. For years, such ambitions were the subjects of regular speeches by American presidents and cabinet members before Congress and at West Point.

Mr. Trump, in contrast, talks about only one objective: getting out. He senses, accurately, that most of the American public is with him. They can no longer explain what the United States is trying to accomplish, or reconcile the fact that the youngest

American troops being sent to Afghanistan these days were born after the attack on the United States that precipitated the war.

“Trump is probably more interested in getting a deal that allows him to start drawing down before Election Day than he is in the parameters of this deal,” said Stephen Tankel, who worked on Afghan issues at both the Pentagon and the House of Representatives.

He added: “It’s unclear what the plan is for the 8,600 remaining U.S. troops if the Afghan peace process falters and conditions don’t improve. But this shouldn’t negate the opportunity the deal creates for an Afghan peace process.”

In fact, there has been little public discussion about the exact conditions the deal sets. There are reportedly a series of not-so-secret annexes to the agreement that allow both Special Operations forces and the C.I.A. to retain a presence in the country. But even Congress appears in the dark. The letter from lawmakers noted that Mr. Pompeo “rightfully fought for the disclosure of secret side deals with Iran” when Mr. Obama was president, and insisted that the public deserves to know the details of this accord. Mr. Trump, however, has made clear he is not particularly interested in those. Afghanistan has gone from being the urgent “good war” that America must win to the longstanding burden that, like the British, the Soviets and a series of others, it now seeks to unload.

Published in *The New York Times*, February 29th, 2020.

APPENDIX D

USA TODAY

ARTICLE 1

Title: *Afghanistan, Taliban Begin First-Ever Peace Talks After Decades Of War* by Kathy Gannon and Aya Batrawy

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Afghanistan's warring sides started negotiations on Saturday for the first time aimed at ending decades of war, bringing together delegates appointed by the Afghan government and the Taliban.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo attended the opening ceremony, which was held in Qatar where the meetings will take place. It's the latest in a flurry of diplomatic activity by the Trump administration ahead of the U.S. presidential election in November.

The discussions are important in the search for lasting peace that will also provide an exit for U.S. and NATO troops after nearly 19 years.

The sides will try to tackle tough issues. This includes the terms of a permanent cease-fire, the rights of women and minorities and the disarming of tens of thousands of Taliban fighters and militias loyal to warlords, some of them aligned with the government.

The talks in Doha follow the U.S.-brokered recognition of Israel by two Gulf nations — Bahrain on Friday and the United Arab Emirates earlier this month.

The Afghan sides are also expected to discuss constitutional changes, and power sharing.

Even seemingly mundane issues like the flag and the name of the country — the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan or as the Taliban's administration had been known, when it ruled, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan — could find their way on to the negotiation table and roil tempers.

Among the government-appointed negotiators are four women, who vow to preserve women's rights in any power-sharing deal with the fundamentalist Taliban. This includes the right to work, education and participation in political life — all denied women when the Taliban ruled Afghanistan for five years. The Taliban were ousted in 2001 by a U.S.-led coalition for harboring Osama bin Laden, the architect of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on America.

There are no women on the Taliban's negotiation team, led by their chief justice Abdul Hakim.

Pompeo has said he expected the discussions to be contentious.

Washington's peace envoy for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad said Friday that launching the talks is an important achievement, but that "there are difficulties, significant challenges on the way to reaching agreement."

"This is a test for both sides, for the Taliban and the government," he said. "Can they reach an agreement despite differences, in terms of their visions for the future of Afghanistan? "

The intra-Afghan negotiations were laid out in a peace deal Washington signed with the Taliban on Feb. 29. At that time the deal was touted as Afghanistan's best chance at peace in 40 years of war.

The talks were originally expected to begin within weeks of the Feb. 29 signing.

But delays disrupted the timeline from the outset. The Afghan government balked at releasing 5,000 Taliban prisoners, which was stipulated in the deal as a sign of good faith ahead of the negotiations. The Taliban were required to release 1,000 government and military personnel in their custody.

Political turmoil in Kabul further delayed talks as Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his rival in controversial presidential polls the year before, Abdullah Abdullah, squabbled over who won, with both declaring victory.

Abdullah was named to head the High Council for National Reconciliation overseeing the peace talks as part of a power-sharing agreement to end the bickering.

The Taliban's refusal to reduce the violence further hindered the start of talks.

While Washington ramped up pressure to get the intra-Afghan negotiations started, the deal they signed with the Taliban to withdraw completely from Afghanistan does not hinge on the success of the talks.

Washington's withdrawal is contingent on the Taliban honoring commitments to fight terrorist groups, in particular the Islamic State affiliate in Afghanistan, and ensure that Afghanistan cannot again be used to attack America or its allies.

Washington has refused to give specific of the guarantees citing security reasons, but the withdrawal of U.S. troops has already begun. President Donald Trump has said that by November, about 4,000 soldiers will be in Afghanistan, down from 13,000 when the deal was signed in February.

“Washington’s goals are very simple: It wants intra-Afghan talks happening as soon as possible, because these give the White House political cover for an imminent withdrawal,” said Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Washington-based Wilson Center’s Asia program.

“Trump likely wants a peace deal before the election, so that he can garner political benefits galore and pitch himself as a Nobel Peace Prize candidate. But presumably even he realizes it’s wildly unrealistic to expect a deal so soon. These types of negotiations tend to be measured in years, not weeks.”

Published in *USA TODAY*, September 12th, 2020.

ARTICLE 2

Title: *Donald Trump expresses optimism about peace deal with Taliban in Afghanistan*

by David Jackson.

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump confirmed Sunday he would sign a peace agreement with the Taliban in Afghanistan if negotiators can work out the final details.

A frequent critic of U.S. military activity in Afghanistan, Trump told reporters at the White House: "We've been over there 19 years. We think they want to make a deal. We want to make a deal."

Earlier this month, the Trump administration reached an initial agreement with the Taliban for a reduction in the deadly attacks, a precursor to a hoped-for Afghanistan peace deal and a significant withdrawal of U.S. troops.

That initial deal hinges on what officials called "a seven-day reduction in violence" that is reportedly ongoing.

During the negotiations, a government watchdog group reported that the Trump administration is racing through peace talks while neglecting to address a key aspect of Afghanistan's instability: Opium production.

Speaking to reporters as he left the White House on a trip to India, Trump exuded optimism and said "I think it's going to work out" with the Taliban.

"They're tired of fighting," Trump said.

A U.S.-led coalition invaded Afghanistan a month after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. It quickly toppled the Taliban government that had sheltered the 9/11 plotters, but violence has raged in the country in the years since.

More than 2,400 U.S. troops have been killed in Afghanistan, and more than 20,000 have been wounded in the fighting. Last year, the Pentagon estimated the cost to taxpayers for the war there at \$737 billion.

Some 13,000 U.S. troops remain in Afghanistan, their mission split between training Afghan security forces and conducting counter-terrorism missions.

Published in *USA TODAY*, February 23rd, 2020.

ARTICLE 3

Title: *What a good Afghan peace deal will look like* by Saad Mohseni and Michael O'Hanlon

Could it really be that the war in Afghanistan, now nearly two decades old for Americans and more than four decades old for Afghans themselves, may be coming to a close?

Reportedly, the first part of a deal that could eventually bring peace to Afghanistan, and GIs home to America, may be close. Negotiated by Afghan-born U.S. diplomat Zalmay Khalilzad, as well as the Taliban, it would begin with a week-long reduction in violence nationwide — not a ceasefire proper, but a temporary cessation of large-scale attacks. It would also include an irreversible (and already ongoing) U.S. drawdown, from about 14,000 American troops to 8,600. For their part, beyond the ceasefire, the Taliban would have to sever links to al Qaeda and affiliates — even though one such affiliate, the Haqqani network, is an instrumental part of their current leadership. So these steps would require some real decisions and changes, even though they would not end the war or bring all American troops home.

Thus, a second phase of a peace accord would be essential. This time, America's role would be secondary to that of Afghans on both sides of the conflict. The general goals of phase two would reportedly include a complete, or at least nearly complete, U.S./NATO troop departure, as well as a real Afghan power-sharing agreement between the Taliban and a broad team including the current government as well as other supporters of what might be called a republican, constitutional Afghanistan. This phase would also feature, naturally and necessarily, an end to the violence. This will be a daunting proposition at a time when Afghanistan's government, as well as the Taliban both, consider themselves in the driver's seat in terms of legitimacy and power — and when they have not found a way even to talk to each other yet.

Published in *USA TODAY*, February 21st, 2020.

ARTICLE 4

Title: *Historic peace deal in Afghanistan reached with Taliban, allowing withdrawal of US troops* by Tom Vanden Brook and Deirdre Shesgreen.

WASHINGTON – U.S. and Taliban negotiators signed a historic agreement Saturday in Qatar that could end 19 years of war in Afghanistan and allow President Donald Trump to begin the promised withdrawal of American troops.

The four-page pact spells out a timetable for the United States to withdraw its 13,000 troops from Afghanistan; in exchange, the Taliban agreed to sever its ties with al-Qaida, the terrorist group that launched the 9/11 attacks against the U.S.

“Everybody’s tired of war,” Trump told reporters at the White House. “It’s been a very long journey. It’s been a hard journey for everybody.”

The agreement sets the stage for further negotiations between Afghanistan's government and the Taliban, a militant Islamist group that once ruled Afghanistan and provided safe haven to Osama bin Laden. American officials hope those talks will lead to a power-sharing deal, a permanent end to the bloody conflict and a full withdrawal of American forces.

But a permanent peace – and an end to America's longest war – rests on a commitment by the Taliban, a fractious insurgency, to end its deadly attacks on U.S. forces and to renounce its ties to al-Qaida.

"If the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan live up to these commitments, we will have a powerful path forward to end the war in Afghanistan and bring our troops home," the president said in a statement released ahead of Saturday's signing ceremony in Doha.

Zalmay Khalilzad, the top U.S. negotiator for Afghanistan, signed the pact as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo looked on. In remarks at the ceremony, Pompeo said the deal was based on the reality that the conflict was militarily unwinnable without a massive deployment of additional U.S. forces. The Taliban also saw the war as a lost cause, he noted.

"This is a hopeful moment, but it's only the beginning," Pompeo said. “There's a great deal of hard work ahead.”

In the coming weeks, the United States will begin a phased withdrawal from Afghanistan, reducing its forces from 13,000 troops to 8,600. Pompeo said the

remaining U.S. troops will serve as leverage to ensure the Taliban lives up to its promises.

In Kabul, Defense Secretary Mark Esper echoed that message – saying the withdrawal of U.S. and coalition troops would be based on the Taliban reining in its fighters.

"Should the Taliban fail to honor their commitments, they will forfeit their chance to sit with fellow Afghans and deliberate on the future of their country. Moreover, the United States would not hesitate to nullify the agreement," Esper said in prepared remarks.

If the Taliban fulfills its commitments to renounce al-Qaida and begin intra-Afghan talks, the U.S. agreed to a withdrawal of all remaining American forces from Afghanistan within 10 months. The U.S. also agreed to immediately facilitate a controversial prisoner exchange, under which up to 5,000 Taliban prisoners held by the Afghan government could be released. The Taliban would free as many as 1,000 prisoners, as demanded by the Afghan government.

Trump said he expected withdrawals to begin immediately.

"If bad things happen, we'll go back," Trump said. "We'll go back with a force like nobody's ever seen."

The president, speaking at a news conference primarily focused on the coronavirus, announced he would soon be meeting with Taliban leaders. He declined to provide additional information about where or when that meeting would take place.

The U.S.-Taliban deal, crafted during painstaking, on-again-off-again negotiations that began in 2018, was finalized after seven days of reduced violence, a confidence-building measure both sides undertook as a prerequisite to signing an agreement.

Saturday's announcement comes with many caveats. In September, negotiators hailed a breakthrough in talks only to see hope for peace dissipate and violence continue. A withdrawal of American troops also would likely take several months.

"It's not like ... this will bring flowers and roses and doves overnight," said a senior administration official, who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity.

The next step will be even more challenging: getting the Taliban and the Afghan government – bitter opponents with sharply divergent views about the future of their country – to reach a peace agreement in a country riven by tribal factions, devastated by war and overrun with criminal and terrorist elements.

Those talks are expected to begin in Oslo, Norway, within 10 days, but neither side has designated negotiators yet. And the Afghan government, backed by the U.S., is in the midst of a political crisis, with two leaders proclaiming victory in the country's September election.

The reduction in violence is supposed to continue as the intra-Afghan talks proceed, and the U.S. is hoping to secure a full cease-fire in Afghanistan as one of the first elements of those talks.

Some Republicans warned against signing the deal, arguing that the Taliban is a terrorist group that cannot be trusted to live up to any commitments. Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., said the agreement would jeopardize America's national security and compared it to the Obama-era Iran nuclear deal.

"Releasing thousands of Taliban fighters, lifting sanctions on international terrorists, and agreeing to withdraw all U.S. forces in exchange for promises from the Taliban ... would be reminiscent of the worst aspects of the Obama Iran nuclear deal," Cheney said in a statement Saturday.

But others, including a top former Obama administration official, hailed the agreement as a remarkable step forward.

"No agreement is perfect, and the U.S.-Taliban deal is no exception," said Robert Malley, who was a senior White House adviser on the Middle East under President Barack Obama.

"But it represents the most hopeful step to end a war that has lasted two decades and taken countless American and especially Afghan lives. It ought to be celebrated, bolstered and built upon to reach a genuine intra-Afghan peace," said Malley, now president and CEO of the International Crisis Group, a nonpartisan organization focused on preventing conflict.

Previewing the agreement last week, Pompeo seemed to concede the peace deal was not a resounding victory but rather a practical way to extricate American troops from what has been a costly war.

"We have to be realistic. We're proud of our gains, but our generals have determined that this war is unlikely to be won militarily without tremendous additional resources," he told reporters Tuesday in Washington. "All sides are tired of fighting. ... We should seize the moment."

Pompeo refused to say what, if any, red lines the U.S. would set in the intra-Afghan negotiations that are set to begin in early March. The U.S. will participate in those

talks in a supportive role, but Pompeo said it will be led by Afghans and the U.S. will not require any guarantees for women's rights or other democratic reforms.

Still, Afghan civil society and women's groups will be part of the negotiations, said a second administration official, who also spoke to reporters on the condition of anonymity. It will be a "very high priority for us" to protect women's rights, the official said.

"We aren't without influence in the process going forward. The United States is still a major presence in Afghanistan," this official said. "There's all sorts of ways that we and others will be able to help defend the rights of women in Afghanistan, and certainly, that would be very much" in the interest of the United States.

Before the 2001 U.S. invasion, the Taliban subjected women and girls to ruthless violence and oppression. Women could not work or study; they could not leave their homes without a man; and they could be flogged for showing even an inch of skin under required full-body veils, known as burqas.

Afghan women have seen enormous gains after the 2001 international intervention, with many schools now open to girls and some women allowed to work and be involved in the political process. But many fear those changes will not be preserved in the intra-Afghan negotiations.

Meanwhile, the country remains violent and divided. On Feb. 8, two Army Special Forces soldiers were killed in Afghanistan. Insurgent attacks that caused casualties in the last quarter of 2019 were at the highest level since recording began in 2010, according to a report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

The inspector general also found fault with the administration's lack of a strategy to deal with narcotics, which generate cash the Taliban uses to pay fighters and buy weapons and bombs.

Taliban insurgents retain control over large portions of the countryside, while the government primarily holds sway in large cities like Kabul, the capital. Extremist groups linked to ISIS, or the Islamic State, another terrorist group, remain active in rural areas.

In addition, the U.S. conducted more airstrikes in Afghanistan in 2019 than in any other year of the war, including 2011, the year of peak U.S. involvement with 100,000 troops on the ground.

There are about 13,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Their mission is split between training Afghan security forces and conducting counterterrorism missions.

Pompeo acknowledged that talks could fail to achieve a permanent peace.

"Factions will undoubtedly emerge to want to spoil our good work," Pompeo said Saturday. "We must call them out and reject their schemes."

U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan followed the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks orchestrated by bin Laden, who operated in Afghanistan under the Taliban's rule. Airstrikes backed a small contingent of U.S. commandos and troops who helped local forces topple the Taliban. Removed from government, the Taliban mounted an increasingly deadly insurgency.

More than 2,400 U.S. troops have been killed there, and more than 20,000 have been wounded in the fighting. Last year, the Pentagon estimated the cost to taxpayers for the war at \$737 billion.

Trump announced during a visit to Afghanistan on Thanksgiving that peace talks had resumed after a brief hiatus last year.

"The Taliban wants to make a deal – we'll see if they make a deal. If they do, they do, and if they don't, they don't. That's fine," Trump told reporters traveling with him.

Published in *USA TODAY*, February 29th, 2020.

APPENDIX E

THE NEWS

ARTICLE 1

Title: An Afghan perspective by Murtaza Shibli

As the US is trying to wind up its longest-ever war in Afghanistan by entering into a peace agreement with the Taliban, there are voices within India sounding alarm that it would strengthen Pakistan in the region.

Some of them are even claiming that this would fuel Islamic extremism and what they call terrorism; a claim even advanced by some fringe Kashmir groups for reasons largely unknown. Such a prospect is faulty in a sense that the Kashmir issue and the public rebellion of Kashmiris are far older than the on-going Afghan crisis of the last three-decades. Besides, it takes a patronising view of Afghans and undermines the notion of their agency.

In the past, despite Pakistan's attempts to bring around the Afghan groups to support or supplement its position on certain issues, Afghans have shown resilience and autonomous character and never remained wedded to Pakistan's narrative or position towards India or Kashmir.

In a recent conversation with a senior Afghan leader from the Hizb-e-Islami, it was clear that the Afghan leadership, including from groups that were traditionally seen close to Pakistan, want to pursue their own independent policy in the region irrespective of the Pakistani position on issues like Kashmir.

Dr Fazlul Hadi Wazeen is one of the senior leaders of the Hizb-e-Islami, headed by former Afghan premier and mujahidin leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Before the rise of the Taliban, Hizb-e-Islami was the largest political and mujahideen organisation of the Afghans and remains a potent political force.

In the recently concluded presidential elections Wazeen contested for the post of first vice president for his party while Hekmatyar was the presidential candidate. He has remained an active member of his party since his student days and participated in the anti-Soviet struggle. In addition to his combat role, he edited two Arabic publications for his party – a monthly and a weekly newspaper – mainly catering to an Arab audience. He also oversaw the development of school curriculum in the areas held by the Islamist fighters.

After the Soviet withdrawal, he joined the government but as the internecine fighting turned into a full-fledged civil war he withdrew and took refuge in academics. He taught at various universities in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In the recent past, he worked as a senior advisor for education for the Kabul government.

Last year he left the job to participate in the elections. Wazeen is a PhD in Islamic Studies, and was educated in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He has travelled widely in various countries in Europe, South Asia and the Middle East. Last year, he spent two weeks in New Delhi to attend a workshop on education. He was impressed by the progress and development of the Indian capital city and fascinated by the Metro rail system. Here's a Q&A I conducted with him:

Q: How do you view the Kashmir problem?

A: Our position is that all the conflicts in the region or internationally should be solved peacefully. It could be resolved in the light of the UN resolutions, regional mechanisms, bilateral agreements, and the will of the people through a peaceful and mutually acceptable way. Kashmiris should be given their right to self-determination which is a very important and basic human right. Imposing unilateral solutions would not solve anything. The non-resolution of Kashmir is endangering the peace and security of the whole world. We are frightened that if this problem remains unsolved, it could lead to a very destructive war that could create a humanitarian disaster beyond the borders of these countries. As Afghans, we are very worried because we have seen the destructions of war. Therefore, we hope and want a peaceful Kashmir as it is necessary for peace in the region.

Q: In the early 1990s, when the pro-freedom insurgency in Kashmir started, it was rumoured that militants from the Hizb-e-Islami were coming in aid of the locals. Has your position changed now?

A: There is no truth in such allegations. Hizb-e-Islami and even other mujahideen groups are committed that our jihad would remain limited to Afghanistan. Nobody wants to export it to anywhere else. Since our jihad against the Soviets, no organisation has actively pursued a policy to send our fighters elsewhere. The focus of our resistance has remained within Afghanistan and it shall remain so.

Q: Some within India are against the US withdrawal from Afghanistan as they see it as a dangerous development.

A; Peace in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of the US forces are in the interest of the whole region. Nobody should be worried about this as we plan to have good relations

with everyone. It would create chances for intra-Afghan dialogue and economic development.

Besides, no country would allow foreign forces on its soil as it is not acceptable to the people. As long as the foreign forces remain in Afghanistan they would fuel instability and remain a trigger for war. The Americans are saying themselves that they cannot win this war and even President Trump has acknowledged this publicly. However, we want that the withdrawal must be orderly and in accordance with a definitive timetable.

Q: There is clamour in India that if the Taliban come back to power, they will come to Kashmir and create problems for India.

A: If such stories are appearing in the media, one would not be that worried. But if think tanks are advancing such a conjecture, it is extremely sad. Our position is that Afghanistan will not pose danger to any country. We are a peaceful country and want to remain in peace with every country. We want to have mutually peaceful and respectful relations with India, Pakistan, Iran and other countries.

However, we will not allow anyone to interfere in our internal matters. If there is no interference into the Afghan affairs, the country could prove a very good neighbour. A peaceful Afghanistan, a stable Afghanistan and a prosperous Afghanistan is in the benefit of everyone in the region. Peace in Afghanistan will benefit everyone – it will enhance the chances of mutually beneficial trade and development – and help in defeating radicalism from the region.

Published in *The NEWS*, January 26th, 2020.

ARTICLE 2

Title: *Cracks in the deal* by Malik Muhammad Ashraf

While commenting on the news regarding a prospective peace deal between the US and Taliban, I had on February 26 termed the development a positive outcome of the protracted dialogue between the two, maintaining that it had surely raised the hope of peace in war-ravaged Afghanistan.

I had, however, also cautioned that: “Reaching agreements on resolving conflicts, as is evident by history, does not necessarily guarantee peaceful end to them. Agreements are only the first step in that direction. The most important aspect is the implementation of the agreement”. The developments after the signing of the agreement confirm that assertion.

Regrettably, the ink of the agreement signed between US and Taliban had hardly dried when Afghan President Ashraf Ghani made a mind-boggling statement that the Afghan government had made no commitment to free Taliban prisoners as included in the US-Taliban deal, but that it could however be discussed in the ensuing intra-Afghan talks. Reacting to this contention, the Taliban took the position that they would not engage in dialogue with the Afghan government as per agreement unless the Afghan government honoured the commitment given by the US in the signed deal.

The stalemate on the issue has spurred a string of attacks on the Afghan security forces by the Taliban in which 20 Afghan soldiers and policemen are reported to have been killed. This happened shortly after US President Donald Trump stated that he had a very good chat with the political chief of the Taliban.

The US also launched an airstrike against the Taliban, which according to a tweet by the spokesman of the US forces targeted the Taliban fighters attacking Afghan forces checkpoint in the Helmand province. Although the US has tried to downplay these occurrences by maintaining that the Taliban are sticking to the agreement and the peace accord has not been threatened, many analysts fear that the emerging situation has surely cast a pall of gloom on the prospects of the deal being implemented as easily as envisaged.

The refusal regarding prisoners swap by the Afghan president is really very perplexing in view of the fact that Zalmay Khalilzad who was negotiating the deal with the Taliban met several times with the Afghan president during the talks process with the purpose of taking him into confidence on the progress of the talks. He also met him before he went to Doha to sign the deal.

The US could not have included the clause regarding exchange of prisoners without obtaining the consent of the Afghan president. If they did not then it was a grave mistake on their part to take things for granted. And if President Ghani has backtracked after agreeing with the US for inclusion of that clause in the agreement, then he has played the role of spoiler which can have very severe repercussions and even scuttle the progress made so far to extricate Afghanistan out of the decades old conflict it has suffered.

President Ghani made yet another untenable statement while addressing a gathering in the Nangarhar province asking the Taliban to break ties with Pakistan if they wanted the release of their prisoners. He reportedly said that “If the Taliban have

set release of their prisoners as a condition for intra-Afghan dialogue talks, we also have conditions; they should tell me when they are going to break ties with Pakistan”.

It is pertinent to point out that on the day when the US and Taliban signed the deal he also inked an agreement with the US in Kabul. Speaking on the occasion, among other things he also appreciated Pakistan for its facilitating role that culminated in the US-Taliban deal. Taking a somersault on that only a day after the signing of the agreement is absolutely untenable.

He probably does not understand that Pakistan’s role was not only crucial in facilitating the US-Taliban talks but was also indispensable for promoting the intra-Afghan dialogue. The situation makes it incumbent upon the US to launch damage-control efforts so as to salvage the deal by engaging with the Afghan government to iron out the kinks that are threatening the progress in the peace process.

Pakistan and Afghanistan are neighbours and their political, economic and security interests are inextricably linked. There is no way this geographical reality can be changed. In this regard, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was right on the money when referring to the statements of Afghan leaders during his discourse in the Senate. He said that Pakistan and Afghanistan are neighbours and cannot remain indifferent to one another, and that the peace and stability of either side is of mutual benefit and interest. He also made it clear that Pakistan was never a part of the deal and its role always has been and will always be of facilitator and not guarantor and that Kabul should have no concern about it.

It is an irrefutable reality that Pakistan has made sincere and relentless efforts to facilitate the dialogue between the US and Taliban, and without the country’s efforts the signing of the deal between them could not have been possible. The deal has provided a springboard for achieving a perennial peace in Afghan through successful intra-Afghan dialogue. It has created a historic opportunity for the Afghan government and the Taliban to end the conflict and they owe it to the Afghan people to provide them a peaceful environment and make collective efforts to rebuild the country that has seen unparalleled death and destruction over the four decades, which has also affected neighbouring countries in varying degrees.

Firming up a consensus on the future of Afghanistan through intra-Afghan dialogue is a test of the ability of the Afghan leaders to rise to the occasion and orchestrate a way forward. Whether they will be able to grab this opportunity will depend on removal of mutual mistrust and willingness to work together casting off the

past hangovers. No doubt it will be an arduous undertaking but given the will nothing is impossible.

President Trump has given a commitment to the American people to pull out of Afghanistan and the fulfilment of that promise could be crucial to his chances of re-election. He seems committed to doing that and allowing the Afghan leaders to sort things out between themselves. The Afghan leaders must not forget that he has also hinted on different occasions to affect the pull-out from Afghanistan with or without a deal. Now that a deal has been struck between the US and the Taliban it is incumbent upon the Afghan leaders to take the process to its logical end, failing which the country could fall once again into never-ending turmoil.

Published in *The NEWS*, March 6th, 2020.

ARTICLE 3

Title: *Withdrawal from Afghanistan* by Abdul Sattar

The euphoria created in the aftermath of the Taliban-US peace deal seems to be dying down before it could even be implemented. The ruthless attacks of the Taliban in the last few days and the counter-strikes by America indicate that the ominous shadows of war will not subside anytime soon. It seems the hapless Afghans will continue to suffer because of the recalcitrance of the extremists and political machinations of the Afghan government.

The recent statement of President Donald Trump questioning the deployment of the US troops for so long has created a spectre of chaos. Trump made it very clear that the sole superpower could not prop up the Kabul government forever, questioning how long Washington could keep its troops there. Every line of his statement is very meaningful. He told reporters on Friday that countries have to take care of themselves. "You can only hold someone's hand for so long." It seems Washington does not want to be interested in Afghan affairs any longer and President Trump has a dogged determination to live up to his electoral promise of bringing back the troops from Afghanistan to appease his voters. He did not hide his intention and said, "We can't be there for the next 20 years. We've been there for 20 years and we've been protecting the country but we can't be there for the next – eventually, they're going to have to protect themselves."

It is ironic that the US first destroys the state infrastructure in a third world country and then leaves the mess to be cleared by its people. It is not only

Afghanistan where the state apparatus was dismantled after a foreign intervention but Iraq, Libya and Syria also suffered because of this external interference. When the US got involved in Afghan affairs after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Afghans had some sort of state apparatus. The country had a functioning army and other organs of state. But the blanket support of the West and the US for the mujahideen led to the destruction of this state apparatus. The long civil war weakened its organs, pushing the country towards the fratricide that remains unabated even today.

The specter of intensity in this internecine war is haunting the Afghans now. There is a strong possibility that the country will descend into chaos once the US troops leave the the war-torn state. Afghanistan is brimming with sectarian, ethnic and religious fault lines which are exploited by regional powers and neighbouring states. In the past, this exploitation not only led to several bloodbaths but also spawned the Taliban movement that established a brutal theocracy, affecting not only the Afghans but Pakistanis and other nations as well.

The cloistered group of militants offered refuge to all types of militants whose sole aim was to create a medieval global Islamic empire – but in the process they lost even the tiny caliphate that they had set up after earning the ire of the international community. The Taliban still consider themselves the legitimate rulers of Afghanistan. They seem to have a dogged determination to restore their emirates which flies in the face of their claims that they want an inclusive government in the conflict-ridden country. There is no indication that they have given up subscribing to their retrogressive views. Many believe that, despite all promises of having transformed or changed, the Taliban are still hardline in its approach towards women, education and democracy. They still seem to be planning to take over the country by force. And this is something even President Trump believes could happen after the withdrawal of the US troops.

So, what might happen if the Taliban attempt to seize power? It will certainly push the country towards a fierce civil war, dragging many states into it. The northerners and liberal Afghans would never tolerate a Taliban-led government. They would go to any extent to battle it. For the people in the north, the Taliban are seeking to subjugate other ethnic entities of the country, especially the Tajik and Uzbek. The Shiite Hazara and other sects view it as a radical Sunni group. For the liberal Afghans the Taliban should be consigned to the relics of history. They might fiercely defend the gains that the women and other marginalised sections of society may have made under occupation. Pakhtun nationalists dub the Taliban as stooges of foreign powers that are bent on

destroying their own country. Therefore, any move to capture power on the part of the Taliban would fiercely be resisted. Ethnic, religious and sectarian minorities have bitter memories of the Taliban's rule. For them even the possibility of the Taliban's rule poses an existential threat.

This means that a new political, sectarian and ethnic alignment could be made in case of a Taliban attempt to take over the state. The northern allies and non-Pakhtun would look to New Delhi and other regional powers for help while the Taliban would bank on Islamabad and Arab states. But any civil unrest in the neighbouring country poses a number of challenges for Islamabad, which is likely to witness an influx of migrants. The previous policy regarding the Taliban in the 1990s boomeranged on Pakistan.

One of the ways to prevent more proxy battles in Afghanistan is pragmatism. All factions in the war-torn country should rise above their petty interests, forging unity in their ranks. They should invest all their energies in making this deal a success. Inflexibility on the part of the Afghan government and other stakeholders will only ignite the old animosities that harmed Afghans in unimaginable ways. The Taliban must realise that they cannot take over the country by force. Even if they capture an area, they cannot hold onto it in the absence of air power, which they lack.

The Afghan government and its Western allies can defeat any capture of territories with the help of superior air power. The Taliban had occupied Kunduz and some other parts of the country in recent years but had to withdraw after the US used air strikes. This means that neither can the Afghan government claim a lasting victory nor can the Taliban restore the old Emirates in present-day Afghanistan. The only solution lies in holding fair and transparent elections and renouncing violence. Washington must help achieve these two objectives before it departs from the country it destroyed. Its current withdrawal plan without a concrete mechanism to thwart a possible civil war will only push the region towards a conflagration.

Published in *The NEWS*, March 11th, 2020.

ARTICLE 4

Title: *Peace too far* by Iftekhhar A Khan

The peace agreement between the US and the Taliban signed on February 29 went up in gun smoke sooner than expected. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani declined to release 5000 Taliban prisoners who were to be set free according to the agreement. In return,

Taliban fighters attacked government forces, killing twenty soldiers and policemen in Helmand province. And US forces retaliated by launching airstrikes to defend the Afghan national army – a scenario all too familiar.

As if killing soldiers and policemen soon after a peace deal was not enough, a carnage took place at a rally of the Hazara ethnic group, killing 32 and wounding many others. The rally included Abdullah Abdullah who had contested the Afghan election last September against President Ghani and had lost. Following our politics as good neighbours, Abdullah refused to accept the election result and lambasted the government for rigging the election.

More interestingly, Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah held separate inauguration ceremonies to claim presidency. When both ceremonies were in progress, huge blasts took place forcing many among the audience to run for cover. Instead of negotiating peace terms for a US withdrawal from Afghanistan, the two presidential claimants involved themselves in a bitter struggle for power. This must leave the Taliban or various factions of Afghan fighters, whatever one may like to call them, confused. Clearly, all layers of society from top to bottom are at war with one another.

However, Afghanistan has always been easy for foreign invaders to march into but difficult to pull out from. The British first rode into it more than a century and a half ago, the Russians rolled in on tanks in 1979 and stayed there until 1989. The good Americans parachuted about a decade later. They're now struggling to extricate themselves.

A Pashtun friend sent a cartoon carried by a foreign English newspaper. In it, an Afghan fighter clutches the hand of an American wearing an old-style star-spangled vertical hat typical of Uncle Sam. Cringing and drawing backwards, the American pleads, "Please let me go now. It's enough I think". Unmoved, the Afghan seems to say, "Not so soon, the game has not yet ended. It was your beginning but it won't be your end".

Historically, Afghanistan is a land of tenacious fighters. It's surprising why the US decided to withdraw its troops in phases, reducing them from 13000 to 8600 in about four months and remaining troops to pull out in 14 months. Also, it's unfathomable why leave about 6000 troops behind on its bases. How would such a small contingent safeguard US interests in Afghanistan when coalition forces of about 1,42,000 could not in about 19 years?

There seems no hope for any peace agreement to hold between the US and the Taliban on the present terms. The Taliban have already claimed that they have the right to rule over Afghanistan. They also hold sway over a large part of the landscape compared with the government's writ limited to Kabul and a few other cities. Whether other countries like it or not, large swathes of Afghans will not tolerate living under a government propped up by the US.

Without foreign support, the Afghan national army may not be able to sustain itself. Its soldiers might desert en masse to join their tribes. The scene in Afghanistan could return to one of usual infighting and struggle for power among various tribes.

Published in *The NEWS*, March 14th, 2020.

APPENDIX F

DAWN

Article 1

Title: *Troubled Afghan Peace Process* by Maleeha Lodhi

A WIDELY asked question about Afghanistan today is whether Covid-19 would slow down or accelerate its tenuous peace process. The simple answer is that the stalled process has little to do with the pandemic and everything to do with the clashing interests of Afghan parties and their inability to break the persisting deadlock on initiating an intra-Afghan dialogue.

What the coronavirus outbreak has not done so far is to significantly affect the phased US withdrawal from Afghanistan. It may even be an additional incentive for Washington to stick to its drawdown plan irrespective of progress towards an intra-Afghan dialogue that can produce a negotiated end to the country's long war. Indications are that the US drawdown from Afghanistan is proceeding as pledged in the US-Taliban agreement reached in Doha in February; American troops are supposed to reduce to 8,600 by this summer. Some reports suggest that some bases are already being cleared with US forces departing.

Meanwhile, top American diplomats have continued to urge the Afghan parties — the government and the Taliban — to show flexibility to break the stalemate over the prisoner swap, the principal obstacle to starting intra-Afghan negotiations. Under the Doha agreement both sides had to release a specific number of detainees in their custody — 5,000 held by Kabul and 1,000 in Taliban custody. On the completion of this, an intra-Afghan process was to begin about eight weeks ago. This never happened. *US election year makes bringing troops home top priority.*

So far around 550 prisoners have been released by the Afghan government and 112 by the Taliban. The rest of the exchange has come to a halt over disagreements about its terms. The Taliban say that the release of all detainees on their list is a precondition for intra-Afghan peace talks. They accuse Kabul of deliberate delay and demand the immediate release of detainees because of Covid-19.

On his part, President Ashraf Ghani insists on a reduction in violence before he frees more prisoners. He says he is willing to initially free only 1,500 but in a gradual way. This has been construed by many as a machination by Ghani to use the issue —

his principal bargaining leverage at this point — to drag out the whole process. This view is reinforced by his efforts to also enlist certain regional powers who have little interest in seeing the Doha process succeed.

One regional state is in fact seeking a parallel peace process. The Taliban have continued to argue that any ceasefire has to be a part and not a precursor to intra-Afghan negotiations.

US diplomatic efforts to overcome the impasse has seen engagement at the highest level by Washington. President Donald Trump's recent phone call to the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's late March visit to Kabul all reflect these endeavours. So was a visit last month to Pakistan and the meeting with army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa by US special representative Zalmay Khalilzad and Gen Austin Miller, US and Nato forces commander in Afghanistan.

With violence on the uptick in Afghanistan, the aim of the parleys in Rawalpindi was to seek Pakistan's help on different aspects of the peace process including a reduction of violence in line with Pakistan's commitment to a political solution of the Afghan conflict. Intensification of fighting in Afghanistan and rejection by the Taliban of calls for a Ramazan ceasefire has sent worried American officials scurrying to try to prevent the Taliban's stepped-up attacks on Afghan National Security Forces from further weakening them. The Taliban's intensified attacks are aimed at mounting military pressure to strengthen their negotiating hand in intra-Afghan talks while hoping that this can precipitate the ANSF's collapse or its ethnic fragmentation.

This strategy has been met by escalation in US-backed ANSF attacks on the Taliban. This has prompted accusations from the Taliban that the US, by attacking non-combat areas, is not abiding by the Feb 29 deal. A recently released UN report voices grave concern about the surge in violence in March and the consequent rise in civilian casualties.

The US diplomatic effort is now focused on persuading the Taliban to settle for the release of 2,000 prisoners (rather than 5,000) by Ghani, and not wait for the full swap so that intra-Afghan negotiations can begin. The aim has been for the process to start in early May. This seems an ambitious goal given the wide gap and opposing interests of the two Afghan parties.

The dispute over the prisoner issue is more than just that. It reflects both sides' unwillingness to concede anything significant to each other and portends the formidable difficulties that lie ahead even if this is resolved.

Although the main impediment to the peace process is the impasse over the prisoner exchange, the tussle between President Ghani and Dr Abdullah Abdullah is also clouding prospects. US threats to suspend aid have been accompanied by attempts at reconciliation between the two rival claimants to the Afghan presidency. The EU has also warned of future funding being affected if the feud isn't ended. Despite some encouraging signs, the two have yet to agree on a power-sharing plan to give Abdullah the executive position and authority he seeks, which Ghani has so far been reluctant to do.

US efforts to expedite the peace process are obviously driven by President Trump's clear and oft-stated desire to end America's long involvement in a war that has cost so much in blood and treasure. Being election year in the US, for him bringing troops home will be prioritised over trying to fix a troubled peace process if it doesn't make any headway. Already there are credible news reports that Trump is getting more impatient and wants to speed up the drawdown.

The uncertain situation in Afghanistan poses severe dilemmas for Pakistan. While aiding the peace process in whatever way it can, Islamabad must envisage and be ready to deal with a range of scenarios that may emerge. It should also, in the interim, intensify its political and diplomatic outreach to all Afghan groups — a lesson that should be learnt from Pakistan's history of troubled relations with Afghanistan.

Published in *DAWN*, May 4th, 2020.

ARTICLE 2

Title: *Violence & Afghan Peace Talks* by Zahid Hussain

THE two women judges shot dead in Kabul last Sunday were the latest victims of the targeted killings that have swept Afghanistan amid the virtually stalemated peace talks between the government in Kabul and the Afghan Taliban. Those killed in the last few months in what is described as a systematic massacre include journalists, human rights activists, and members of civil society. The latest cycle of violence raises questions about the prospect of peace returning to the war-torn country as the American withdrawal seems imminent.

The incidence of high-profile murders has significantly increased with the further reduction of American troops. It has intensified the factional battle inside Afghanistan. Last week, the Pentagon announced it had cut troop levels in Afghanistan to 2,500. It is the lowest number of American troops since the start of the war two decades ago.

Some analysts see the targeted killings as a throwback to the late 1980s when several members of the Afghan intelligentsia in exile were killed in the fratricidal conflict among various Afghan Mujahedeen groups following the withdrawal of the Soviet forces.

Many of those killed in recent weeks have actively been campaigning against rampant violence and rising human rights violations. High-profile women like the two female judges are particularly vulnerable to this systematic move to eliminate the new generation of Afghan intelligentsia.

An increasing number of Afghan government and security officials have also been targeted. According to the *New York Times*, at least 136 civilians and 168 security officials were killed in targeted attacks in 2020. This represents a shift from targeted attacks on high-profile officials by the insurgents to civil rights activists, media persons and opinion makers.

Curiously, no group has claimed responsibility for the killings but the footprints are too obvious. Although the Taliban have denied they were involved in the attacks they remain the prime suspect. President Ashraf Ghani has accused the Taliban of launching an “illegitimate war and hostility”.

But other insurgent groups such as the militant Islamic State group and Afghan factions opposed to the ongoing peace process are also believed to be involved in the killings aimed at spreading terror and silencing dissenting voices. There have also been allegations of involvement of elements within the Afghan government in the attacks in order to settle scores with rivals.

This relatively new pattern of targeted killings cannot be seen in isolation. There has been a marked rise in violence after the historic Doha peace accord between the US and the Taliban in February last year that has raised the possibility of an end to the long war in Afghanistan. The latest wave of violence has taken a huge toll on the civilian population.

A recent report of the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction shows there has been up to a 43 per cent rise in civilian casualties after

the February agreement. It is not just the Taliban but Afghan security forces too that have been responsible for the attacks causing civilian deaths. The escalating violence has also cast a long shadow over peace efforts.

The killing of the two female judges came as the Afghan government representatives and the Taliban resumed peace talks in Doha after a 20-day break to discuss the future political set-up in the country. In the previous round, the two sides had reached an agreement on a framework for structured talks. The agreement on procedure cleared the way for the two sides to turn their focus on a political roadmap and a long-term nationwide ceasefire.

But there has not been any significant progress made in the latest round of talks. The two sides have different sets of priorities for the talks to proceed. While the Afghan government insists on a reduction in violence, the insurgents demand the release of the group's remaining jailed fighters, along with the removal of Taliban leaders from the UN blacklist. Reaching a consensus will not be easy as both sides are sticking to their respective positions.

Meanwhile, the absence of several senior members of the Taliban negotiating team when the Doha meetings resumed earlier this month seems to have contributed to the deadlock. The absentees include the deputy head of the Taliban team Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar who reportedly stayed back in Pakistan after an official visit.

The political transition in Washington also seems to be a factor in the slow progress on the intra-Afghan dialogue. Both sides apparently wanted to see what the contours of the new administration's Afghan policy would be like. Although there is no likelihood of any major shift in US policy, some elements in the Afghan government still have hopes that the Joe Biden administration would review the plan for a complete withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's Second Vice President Sarwar Danish has joined some Afghan lawmakers in urging President-elect Biden to review the peace agreement with the Taliban in order to increase pressure on the insurgents. While there is no possibility of any reversal in the US plan for a complete withdrawal of troops, the new administration may increase the pressure on both the Taliban and the government in Kabul to move back from their respective rigid positions. Pakistan will also be under more pressure from the Biden administration to persuade the Taliban to agree to a long-term ceasefire. It also remains to be seen who the new administration will appoint as special US envoy for the Afghan peace process in place of Zalmay Khalilzad. It will be hard to replace

him. He is of Afghan origin and has a personal rapport with the Taliban. He helped reach the Doha agreement. Although his relationship with President Ghani has not been a comfortable one, he got along with Pakistan's civil and military leadership. The main task for the new envoy would be to help break the existing deadlock in the intra-Afghan peace talks as well as get the Taliban to agree on a viable political solution. But with the rising level of violence, prospects of peace in Afghanistan remain bleak.

Published in *DAWN*, January 20th, 2021.

ARTICLE 3

Title: *Afghan Peace Prospects* by Maleeha Lodhi

WILL the peace process between Afghanistan's warring parties be put at risk by the Pentagon's recent announcements that more US troops will be withdrawn ahead of schedule? Not really. Factors other than troop levels are more significant for the future of peace talks. In any case, troop levels have progressively been going down since the Doha agreement of February between the US and the Taliban. The drawdown of another 2,000 troops, planned by mid-January, will likely have limited impact on the situation especially as the US will still retain air power and maintain a CT capability.

Also, several thousand Nato-led international forces are present to train, advise and assist Afghan forces and aim to leave when 'conditions allow'. Above all, international leverage will now shift from military to economic means — the military option being all but exhausted.

Nevertheless, the key to Afghanistan's future is whether the intra-Afghan dialogue can make enough progress towards a settlement, including a ceasefire, before all international forces leave Afghanistan and global interest wanes. The intra-Afghan process that began in September as a consequence of the Doha accord faces imposing challenges. Delays in its initiation were due to wrangles between Kabul and the Taliban over prisoner exchanges. Once these disagreements were resolved the dialogue got underway in Qatar. Talks are now reported to be nearing agreement over procedures and terms of reference (TORs) for negotiations. This will open the way to talks on substantive issues including a ceasefire. The US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's visit to Doha and meeting with the Taliban's chief negotiator Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar was aimed at accelerating the peace talks following the Pentagon announcement.

Not everyone agrees that a speedier pullout of troops will have marginal effect. After 2,000 are pulled out in January — under the Doha accord this was to happen in May 2021 — about 2,500 American troops will be left in Afghanistan. Some media reports indicate how several US allies have been “rattled” by this decision, which obviously seeks to make good President Donald Trump’s pledge to bring American soldiers home before he leaves office. The chairman of Afghanistan’s High Council for National Reconciliation, Abdullah Abdullah, said while he respected this decision “it has come too soon”. Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg cautioned that the “price for leaving too soon or in an uncoordinated way could be very high”.

Some Congressional Republicans and American analysts fear that this accelerated exit would toughen the Taliban’s negotiating position. For their part, the Taliban have welcomed the US announcement as a “good step” that would help bring an end to the war.

While Pakistan has repeatedly called for a “responsible US troop pullout”, officials were neither surprised nor worried about the latest development and believe this might even encourage Washington to step up and impart more urgency to diplomatic efforts to goad the Afghan parties into accelerating progress in substantive negotiations.

The incoming administration of Joe Biden is not likely to change course on the military drawdown especially as this has now gone so far ahead. Moreover, the president-elect has in the past not favoured continued military engagement in Afghanistan and instead urged an end to “forever wars”. There is speculation that his administration might slow down the pullout of remaining US forces in deference to the view of many defence officials and Nato allies. This too is unlikely to make an appreciable difference to the on-ground situation in Afghanistan. A key question is how early and substantively the Biden administration focuses on the Afghan issue given its heavy domestic agenda and other more pressing foreign policy priorities.

The current uptick in violence in Afghanistan is worrisome for all stakeholders including the country’s neighbours. This figured prominently in talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan when Prime Minister Imran Khan recently visited Kabul. Some intensification of violence was expected as the Afghan parties seek to expand areas under their control to strengthen their negotiating hand. But this does not explain the pattern of increased violence. There is a puzzling aspect to some of the urban violence and terrorist attacks which raises the question of whether this is being orchestrated by

internal and external spoilers who are loath to see the talks make headway. True or not, the spike in violence is creating an extremely fraught environment and adding to the uncertainty that clouds the peace talks. However, once TORs are formally agreed the next phase of talks is expected to focus on the reduction of violence — crucial to create an atmosphere of trust and calm for the arduous negotiations that lie ahead.

Meanwhile, a pledging conference for Afghanistan that took place recently in Geneva, co-hosted by the UN and Finland, and attended mostly virtually by 100 countries and international organisations, saw the US, EU and other donors commit around \$3 billion for Afghanistan next year and \$12bn over the next four years. What was significant was that pledges were conditioned on tangible progress in peace talks and a ceasefire although the EU also made assistance contingent on the ‘preservation of human rights gains’. A top US official announced that while it was pledging \$600 million for 2021, only half would come now “with the remaining available as progress in the peace process is reviewed”. Pompeo was more direct: “The choices made in peace negotiations will affect the size and scope of future international support and assistance.”

This underlines that the international community’s economic leverage will be more important in the months ahead than other means to influence the negotiating parties into making progress. Both Kabul and the Taliban see continuance of international assistance as necessary as they know that without funds state collapse is threatened. Even though international influence will diminish over time economic incentives rather than coercive pressure will be the likely vehicle to influence the peace process.

Pakistan, Afghanistan’s other neighbours and the international community have obvious if varying stakes in the country’s peaceful future and will try to assist in whatever way they can. But it is up to the Afghan parties to make the difficult compromises needed to secure a peace settlement. Afghanistan’s destiny can only be determined by Afghans themselves.

Published in *Dawn*, November 30th, 2020.

ARTICLE 4

Title: *US-Afghan Peace Deal* by Kinanah Shahbaz

THE agreement signed between the US and Afghan Taliban is the first step toward peace in Afghanistan. Islamabad’s role in the matter proves Pakistan’s desire to have peace not only in Afghanistan but the entire region.

However, the question arises to what extent the peace in Afghanistan will help our country's internal situation. The real game may begin now that the Taliban must come to terms with the Afghan government. Since many among the Taliban do not acknowledge the minorities and women's rights, this may be unacceptable to other and more powerful quarters and may give rise to new conflicts.

Ultimately, Pakistan has to prepare itself to tackle these obstacles to ensure peace and political stability in the region.

Published in *Dawn*, March 4th 2020.