



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Academic Words in Discourse News: A Corpus Based Study Of  
Pakistani English Newspaper**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study addressed two research questions regarding academic words used in the Corpus of Pakistani English Newspaper Articles (COPENA). Firstly it asked about the frequently used words in the corpus of Pakistani English Newspaper, Secondly it was asked, to what extent authors or editor use Academic words in newspaper as compared with Coxhead 570 (AWL). Total corpus was 414435 running words taken from online Newspaper; E. dawn and The Nation. The computer software ANTCONC was used to find out the frequency and percentage of words frequently occurred in COPENA. Another tool WORDSMITH was used to find out the frequency of AWL (Academic word list) in COPENA. The result revealed that words in the AWL covered 2.58% of the total words in the corpus, and frequency and percentage of words in COPENA are clearly presented in the table. It was also revealed from the result that almost all the AWL is present in COPENA with high frequency. So the result indicated that newspaper articles might be highly beneficial for learning a language and academic achievement.

**KEYWORDS** Academic Words, AW, COPENA, Learning Language, Vocabulary

**Introduction**

Vocabulary has vital role in communication. The requirement of successful language learning is the mastering of vocabulary skills. Vocabulary is a block of words within a language that are familiar to some extent to learners or students in that very language. It is simply defined as "All of the words in a language" is known as vocabulary, whether known to a person or not, almost 47,156 terms that are no longer in use and 171,476 words with full entries are included in the second edition of the Oxford English Dictionary. While (Grolier, 2001) states that the vocabulary has grown from 650,000 to 750,000 words. Similarly, Oxford University Press David claim that there are 616,500 words in a dictionary. The number of English words has increased from 50,000 to 60,000 in Old English to approximately a million today. As there are a large number of vocabularies to be learned, vocabulary must be taught through meet an approach to achieve and to communicate in each language through the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Different researcher and linguist show different methodology to learn vocabulary. Stahl & Fairbanks stated that Provide evidence that educating students 350 words per year could enhance learning by 10% to 30%. Further, there are many ways to learn vocabulary that is reading more and more, words learns in cluster, use of picture description ex cetera. So, the learners should learn vocabulary in a huge number as they can learn. At first, students learn primary vocabulary in high school. Next, they study specific vocabulary at college or university, so called English for Academic Purposes (EAP). In order to be successful in learning English, learners for Academic Purposes (EAP) need to know general vocabularies, general EAP vocabularies (Academic Word List), and specific vocabularies for use in their academic areas

in education such as physics, chemistry, English, technology, politics, law, music, mathematics and science, knowledge of some low-frequent words vocabulary building skills including the uses of prefixes, suffixes and roots to produce words.

It is also essential to learn information about word families such as antonyms, synonyms, polysemy, hyponymy etc, vocabulary learning techniques including dictionary use; ways of dealing with meaning and learning of new words and unknown Words. Many efforts have been made to define academic vocabulary precisely. Many people think that academic vocabulary is more difficult than that in general English. The (Academic Word List) is a list of academic words devised by Averil Coxhead, New Zealand researcher. She makes a corpus of 570 family words from 3.5 million rounds about words in total. She then analyzed them to see which words were used most frequently. The 570 words families on the AWL are thought to be significant for students preparing for an academic study. If learners study and use them actively, they will be able to use English academic words more successfully. Though there are many ways, but newspaper plays a vital role in building vocabulary in a language, because new words come across in an article by means of different scholar writing piece and their articles published in newspaper in editorial portion.

Academic vocabulary includes words used in academic dialogues and text books, it does not include words students used in daily conversation but academic vocabulary relates to other familiar words students do use. Let suppose instead of word "buy" the academic word would be "purchase". Academic vocabulary is the word used to define the vocabulary that students may encounter in course but is not typically used in conversation. Fundamentally, it is the language used in education. Students need to be familiar with academic vocabulary words in order to comprehend text books and other literary works. For example, academic terms such as purpose and hence error is common in various academic disciplines. However, some academic terms can be used as jargon for specific text genres. Academic vocabulary for a particular field is sometimes considered a specialized vocabulary for that field. For example, some words from the Academic Vocabulary List such as Function, State, System, Analysis, and Outcome are commonly used in academic material. These words used perhaps more frequently in technical texts than in other texts and have been defined as items in the technical words.

### **Academic Words**

Academic words are a stock of words which appear at the high level of frequency in English academic texts. The list, compiled by Averil Coxhead, contains 570 word families from a corpus of 3,500,000 running words of written academic texts.

### **Words Type**

Words types are words of different word forms. A word which is repeated several times is counted only once.

### **Words Tokens**

Word tokens refer to the total number of word forms that occur in a text. If each word appears more than once in a text, it is counted each time it is used.

### **Corpus**

A corpus refers to a large body or a collection of samples of texts which is in the form of writing held on a computer database. In this study, the corpus was created by taking Pakistani English newspaper articles as E.DAWN AND THE NATION. It comprised 408,916 words in Dawn news and The Nation collectively (see in methodology how the researcher created the corpus of Pakistani English newspaper articles).

## Literature Review

Vocabulary Learning Kamil and Hiebert (in press) define vocabulary as knowledge of words and word meanings, and they further comment that vocabulary is very complex. In general, English language learners recognize that vocabulary is one of the key elements to communicate in speaking, reading, writing and listening. (Baumanm, Edwards, Font, & kameenui) Point out that the extent of vocabulary learning relates strongly to overall academic success. (Stanovich, 1986)notes that “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.” This means that to be able to develop vocabulary in communication in English, the learners have to learn a lot of it. Vocabulary learning has the following characteristics: they are incidental, receptive and productive (RPV), incremental, and depth learning. With regard to the first characteristic so called incidental vocabulary learning, Grass (1999) defines it as the aftereffects of the activity that ignores the active involvement of the learners. (Rod, 1996) also criticizes that incidental learning occurs with unconscious learning. Many scholars are of the view that certain number of words that are common are memorized or learned, however; the rest of the vocabulary is acquired unintentionally (Huckin &Coady 1999). (Paribakht & Wesche, 1999) define incidental learning as what takes place when learners focuon comprehending meaning rather than on the explicit goal of learning new words. Grass (1999) claim that incidental learning is the one that focuses on understanding meaning of the words. It does not take into consideration the goal of learning new words. Concerning the second characteristic, vocabulary learning includes the receptive and productive capacities of the learners. Receptive vocabulary refers to such stock of words that are understood by the readers when they are either reading or listening to them. Productive vocabulary refers as learners can use vocabulary correctly when they are producing oral or written language and such vocabulary is known as productive vocabulary. Learners have to develop competency in both of the skills so that they can communicate effectively.

This study has been carried out in accordance with the issues related to pronunciation and reading comprehension of the Pakistani students at different educational levels. According to a research study “*An investigation into the reading comprehension problems faced by the Pakistani students at university level*” it has been observed that many of the Pakistani students face different types of problems while interpreting a newspaper’s vocabulary that leads to certain core issues in comprehending the target message. (Gul. N et al 2022)

Academic words carry a crucial role in learning methodologies of the speakers. The new words of vocabulary are often not in accordance with the speaking patterns that exist in the minds of the readers. A study shows that building up new vocabulary demands its perfect and accurate pronunciation and fluency as well. The fluency of the speakers is also dependent on exact reading of the new words that often appear in daily newspapers. (Ishtiaq. M et al 2022)

## Research on Academic Vocabulary

English as Second language learners who are from non-native speaking countries have difficulty in understanding what they read. A major cause of this difficulty is that they don’t know the meaning of novice words, specifically words that are included in the content area of textbooks. Limited vocabulary prevents students from comprehending a text (Cynthia and Johnson, 2004). L1 and L2 students who have different ways to produce language and vary of schemas of mental lexicon can lead to socio-cultural variations in the acquiring language and use of vocabulary. Corson (1997) supports systems of thought which influence learners in learning language. He quotes that Western categories of thought are rooted in the history of Western schools. For example, they categorize fields of studies according to medicine, geography, linguistics, and psychology which has varies than in many other cultures. This complex separation also extends into areas of Western thoughts that

influence their academic systems and give them advantages to develop their culture of literacy. For instance, many readers who encounter academic words often ignore them. Factors which influence language learners to reach their academic goals are firstly, backgrounds of people affecting the use of academic words; secondly, systems of thought and the root of learners' history having power over cultures; thirdly, ability to identify academic words; and fourthly, understanding academic words by analogy.

A number of researchers have studied academic vocabulary in different genres to investigate what high frequency words are in each field. In order to know academic vocabulary in vocabulary learning, it is very beneficial to find out and study what have been done previously in the related field. The previous research is presented as follows: (Para, 2004) has studied high frequency words in civil engineering research articles. A total of 126 research articles were used as data in this study and he found that there were 10% academic words in the engineering research articles by using the AWL in the Coxhead's framework (Naprakorn, 2005) has studied the percentage and the top 50 academic words in a corpus of political reports. The corpus of 122,811 running words from The Nation was analyzed against the AWL of 570 words by using the Concordance program. He found that there were 5.7% academic words in the political corpus and the top 50 words in AWL were clearly political- related words. Similarly, (Dejtisak, 2006) has studied the percentage and the top 50 words in a corpus of sport news. The corpus of 102,050 running words from The Nation was analyzed against the AWL of 570 words by using the Concordance program. She found that there was 1.79% academic words in the sport corpus and the top 50 words in AWL were clearly related to the field of sport news. In conclusion, previous studies are beneficial guidelines for this research. Findings from previous research showed the following results. First, 10% of AWL were found in civil engineering research articles. Second, 5.7 % of AWL were found in a corpus of political reports. Third, 1.79% were found in a corpus of sport news. Recently (Coxhead, 2000) developed the above list of academic terms. Its frequency accounts for about 10% of tokens in academic texts. Coxhead (2000) created a corpus of her 3.5 million running words selected from various journals and college textbooks for his four majors: art, economics, law, and natural sciences. The AWL list, containing 3,112 individual entries, does not include words from the 2,000 most common word families in English and West's (1953) GSL. Subject-specific scientific term lists or academic-specific vocabulary repertoires have been produced in various fields. Kwary & Artha created and tested a word list called the Social Sciences Academic Article Word List. Chen and Ge found that only 292 of 570 AWL word families occur frequently in medical research papers, and 179 AWL elements do not or rarely occur in the corpus.

A linguistic critique on the word pattern as investigated at many levels shows that the discourse vocabulary and the academic words used in various newspapers are often times hard to pronounce and interpret for many naïve listeners and readers. The reasons behind this core issue is that of lack occurrence of these words in the given contexts. . (Afaq. M et al 2022)

Watson and Tod created a list of opaque words for an engineering English course at a Thai university and compared the meaning of the word in context with the main meanings of online dictionaries commonly used by students.

## **Material and Methods**

This study aimed at finding out the Academic words in English newspaper, for this purpose following methodology was adopted:

### **Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework of the study is discourse in English newspaper. Words have so many form and meaning. The meaning of the word depends upon the context of the

entire discourse. The newspaper has pivotal role to enhance the vocabulary of the language. There is one important aspect that is English newspaper has updated and current words which make the learner update in a language. The present study aimed is to find out frequent words in newspaper and also all those academic words which appear in newspaper, it will compare with Coxhead's AWL (Academic word list). The study was quantitative in nature, descriptive and analytical in nature. The population of this study comprised all the English newspapers published and read in Pakistan. As sample of the study the researcher took only two newspapers for this study. The newspaper included Dawn and The Nation.

### Sampling

The researcher used systematic sampling for the sample of the study. The newspaper was selected on the basis of highly circulated, and top two English newspapers of Pakistan were selected for this study.

Total Newspaper Articles: 60

**Table 1**

### Description of the articles from Newspaper

Newspaper	Week	Months	Total Articles
E.DAWN	Ist week of the month	January, April, August, December	32
The NATION	Ist week of the month	January, April, August, December	28

### Data Collection

One whole section of newspaper was selected that is editorial page. It was the section where different writers and columnist write about the current scenario of the country and international affairs. The context of the article were different, according to the times and situation.

### Data Analysis

The corpus was analyzed through the computer software; **Antconc**. This is a more modern version of the program with many additional features and is available on Laurence Anthony's website (Nation, 2014). This tool generates lexical statistics and frequency information for a corpus of text loaded into the program. For the overall result of the corpus the researcher used **wordsmith** for calculating tokens, types in the corpus and their frequency.

### The Corpus

The Academic word list was built from the English newspaper, which may represent all the disciplines. Two newspapers were selected and that is E.DAWN AND THE NATION. Both were available in internet. First of all the researcher individually collected corpus from newspaper, first opened the article, copy it and paste in word, each time the way was used after that the, the collected corpus was shifted to plain text, because the computer software need to be provided plain text. There were total 60 articles from January to December, 4 months gap between them, each month first two week editorial page were selected. The total corpus was 415435.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 2**  
**Content words frequently used in corpus of Pakistani English newspaper**

#	COPENA	f	%	#	COPENA	f	%	#	COPENA	f	%
1	Government	1323	6	35	Employees	45	0.2	69	Transformation	21	0.09
2	Country	696	3.15	36	Heart	45	0.2	70	Duties	19	0.08
3	Political	679	3.08	37	Initiatives	45	0.2	71	Economically	19	0.08
4	Prime	349	1.59	38	Alliance	42	0.19	72	Employers	19	0.08
5	However	347	1.57	39	Alternatives	42	0.19	73	Engineering	19	0.08
6	International	346	1.56	40	Amongst	42	0.19	74	Securities	18	0.08
7	Women	306	1.38	41	Caused	41	0.18	75	Segment	18	0.08
8	Rights	305	1.38	42	Communication	41	0.18	76	Send	18	0.08
9	Development	238	1.07	43	Conduct	41	0.18	77	Sentence	18	0.08
10	Education	235	1.06	44	Prevent	39	0.17	78	globally	17	0.07
11	Per	185	0.83	45	Promote	39	0.17	79	Globe	17	0.07
12	Constitution	184	0.84	46	Protests	39	0.17	80	Greed	17	0.07
13	Different	184	0.84	47	Ongoing	36	0.16	81	Precisely	17	0.07
14	Private	154	0.69	48	Ordinance	36	0.16	82	Premises	16	0.07
15	Though	154	0.69	49	Priority	36	0.16	83	Previous	16	0.07
16	Control	153	0.69	50	Prior	36	0.16	84	Priorities	16	0.07
17	Corruption	122	0.55	51	Command	33	0.14	85	Preserve	15	0.06
18	Project	122	0.55	52	Comprehensive	33	0.14	86	Prevalent	15	0.06
19	Building	90	0.4	53	Conducted	33	0.14	87	Problematic	15	0.06
20	Found	90	0.4	54	Informal	32	0.14	88	Tragedy	13	0.05
21	Hand	90	0.4	55	Joint	32	0.14	89	Transform	13	0.05
22	Provided	90	0.4	56	Larger	32	0.14	90	Geostrategic	12	0.05
23	British	75	0.34	57	Revolutions	30	0.13	91	Governing	12	0.05
24	Challenges	75	0.34	58	Rupees	30	0.13	92	Scrapping	10	0.04
25	Companies	75	0.34	59	Secret	30	0.13	93	Restored	8	0.03
26	Valley	62	0.28	60	Prisons	28	0.12	94	Weapons	7	0.03
27	Wrong	62	0.28	61	Proved	28	0.12	95	Weakness	7	0.03
28	Agreement	61	0.27	62	Raising	28	0.12	96	Wounds	7	0.04
29	Therefore	58	0.26	63	range	26	0.11	97	Accounting	6	0.02
30	Events	58	0.26	64	Regulatory	26	0.11	98	Abundantly	5	0.02
31	Expected	58	0.26	65	Resulting	26	0.11	99	Wrath	5	0.02
32	Facilities	58	0.26	66	Television	21	0.09	100	Abuzz	3	0.01
33	Improve	55	0.24	67	Theories	21	0.09				
34	Inflation	55	0.24	68	Totally	21	0.09				

The above listed words are content words in the corpus of COPENA. These are the content words which occurred frequently in corpus of Pakistani English newspaper. For instance the words GOVERNMENT (1323), POLITICAL (679), CONSTITUTION (184), CHALLENGES (75), INFLATION (55) etc. The word Government occur 1323 frequency in the corpus of COPENA with 6% in the corpus. Likewise the word constitution occurred 184 times in the corpus with 0.8% in the COPENA.

In order to answer the second research question of the study, following are the frequency of **ACADEMIC WORDLIST BY COXHEAD (AWL)** in the corpus of Pakistani English Newspaper Articles (COPENA). Those academic words which occur with frequency of 50 times or more than that are highlighted in the below table.

**Table 3**  
**A list of top 200 most frequently used Academic Words in COPENA**

#	Word	f	#	Word	f	#	Word	f	#	Word	f
1	Prime	349	51	Technology	67	101	Scenario	35	151	Credit	24
2	Military	314	52	Vision	67	102	Trend	34	152	Decline	24
3	Policy	308	53	Regime	65	103	Comprehensive	33	153	Design	24
4	Media	303	54	Infrastructure	62	104	Outcome	33	154	Drama	24
5	Economy	267	55	Involve	62	105	Scheme	33	155	Generate	24
6	Issue	234	56	Internal	60	106	Secure	33	156	Guideline	24
7	Process	223	57	Welfare	60	107	Concept	32	157	Neutral	24
8	Region	200	58	Positive	59	108	Factor	32	158	Radical	24
9	Sector	177	59	Research	58	109	Function	32	159	Resource	24
10	Despite	167	60	Section	56	110	implement	32	160	Assemble	23
11	Legal	167	61	Context	55	111	Obvious	32	161	Core	23
12	Community	165	62	Gender	54	112	Option	32	162	Country	23
13	Role	149	63	Currency	53	113	Release	32	163	Cycle	23

14	Major	136	64	Generation	53	114	Structure	32	164	Integrity	23
15	Area	132	65	Individual	53	115	Via	32	165	Logic	23
16	Status	129	66	Fund	52	116	Crucial	31	166	Medium	23
17	Project	122	67	Instance	51	117	Perspective	31	167	Widespread	23
18	Federal	118	68	Ethnic	49	118	Technical	31	168	Appropriate	22
19	Labour	113	69	Hence	47	119	Adequate	30	169	Contribute	22
20	Culture	103	70	Relevant	47	120	Professional	30	170	Document	22
21	Period	102	71	Task	47	121	Require	30	171	Highlight	22
22	Environmental	101	72	Maintain	46	122	Revolution	30	172	Index	22
23	Data	98	73	Somewhat	46	123	Shift	30	173	Index	22
24	Nuclear	97	74	Tragic	46	124	Theory	30	174	Pursue	22
25	Team	96	75	Physical	44	125	Liberal	29	175	Remove	22
26	Available	94	76	Seek	44	126	objective	29	176	Scope	22
27	Acknowledge	92	77	Achieve	43	127	Source	29	177	Sphere	22
28	Approach	92	78	Ministry	43	128	Unique	29	178	Classic	21
29	Fundamental	92	79	Overall	43	129	Vehicle	29	179	Diverse	21
30	Similar	92	80	Percent	43	130	Final	28	180	Enable	21
31	Found	90	81	Resolve	43	131	Image	28	181	Expand	21
32	Commission	88	82	Transport	43	132	image	28	182	Foundation	21
33	Access	86	83	Alternative	42	133	Normal	28	183	Justify	21
34	Previous	85	84	Primary	42	134	Sufficient	28	184	Cable	20
35	Job	83	85	Conduct	41	135	Constant	27	185	Clause	20
36	Focus	82	86	Decade	40	136	Export	27	186	Contrast	20
37	Strategy	82	87	Couple	39	137	Minimum	27	187	Element	20
38	Conflict	81	88	Promote	39	138	Principle	27	188	Enormous	20
39	Create	81	89	Whereas	39	139	Route	27	189	Indicate	20
40	Domestic	81	90	Benefit	38	140	Annual	26	190	Nevertheless	20
41	External	81	91	Ideology	38	141	Evident	26	191	Authority	19
42	Debit	79	92	Series	37	142	Grant	26	192	Phenomenon	19
43	Significance	78	93	Ongoing	36	143	Institute	26	193	Soul	19
44	Challenge	77	94	Prior	36	144	Range	26	194	Tradition	19
45	Capacity	76	95	Priority	36	145	Contract	25	195	Visible	19
46	Energy	74	96	Complex	35	146	Mechanism	25	196	Adapt	18
47	Revenue	71	97	Establish	35	147	Notwithstanding	25	197	Aid	18
48	Finance	70	98	Framework	35	148	Survey	25	198	Contemporary	18
49	Impact	69	99	Intelligence	35	149	Circumstances	24	199	Display	18
50	Income	67	100	Medical	35	150	Controversy	24	200	Eliminate	18

## Findings

On the basis of the data analysis of the study, the following are the main findings of the study.

1. The findings of the research question 1 are highly insightful. The first research a question was about knowing the most frequently used words in Pakistani English newspaper articles. The study found out that there are a number of words that are most frequently used in Pakistani English newspaper articles. There were total 22052 word type which occur with high frequency but most of the highly frequent words were functional words that is why ,they were excluded from the result and presented those contents words which are highly frequent in the COPENA Some of the example of such words are:

Government (f:1323,6%),political(f:679,3.08%),Country(f: 696,3.15%),Women (f: 306,1.38%),development(fr:238,1.07%),education(f:235,1.06%),corruption (fr:122,0.55%)etc

2. Findings in response to the second research question are also enlightening. The second research questions aimed at exploring the extent to which the authors/editors of the articles make use of the academic words most frequently as compared to Coxhead Academic Wordlist. After analysis of the data, it was found that 570 Academic wordlist by Coxhead , each words are used by authors/editors very frequently .Some are more frequently and some are less . Some of example such highly frequently words used by editors are following

Military(f:314),Nuclear(f:97),Internal(f:60),Involve(f:60),Issue(f:234),Job(f:83), labor(f:113),Region(f:200), prime(f:349)etc.

## **Conclusion**

It is concluded that English newspaper has the vital role in vocabulary learning, it is inferred from the above study that most of Academic words by Coxhead were frequently occurred in COPENA (Corpus of Pakistani English Newspaper articles).The converge of the AWL in COPENA WAS 2.8%.

## **Recommendations**

Science changed the shape of the world, dictionary makers or lexicographers were compiled dictionary with a very hard work, but in present era, computer may helpful in this sense, it require just skill to utilize it, time consuming and easy way to work in a few seconds. World is going on research on corpus study, many researchers found special field vocabulary, like medical vocabulary, Agriculture vocabulary, civil engineering vocabulary and many more, the researcher found frequently content words occur in newspaper and also Academic words frequency in COPENA. So it is recommended for other researcher to study in the field of corpus, researcher may find out the core vocabulary in politics section, business section and entertainment section in newspaper.



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