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Toward a Shared Language of Domestic Violence
Aile İçi Şiddetin Ortak Diline Doğru

Fatma Yuvayapan 0000-0002-7924-0933
Kahramanmaraş Sütçü Imam University

ABSTRACT

Domestic violence referring to a range of violent, coercive, and controlling behaviors perpetrated mostly by men against women in the context of family or intimate relationships is a deep-rooted social problem with devastating impacts. A lack of shared understanding of domestic violence is a barrier to preventing this social problem in the global world. Thus, a clear terminology of domestic violence is essential to frame what is understood as domestic violence. Based on the fact that language is a central focus of establishing a shared understanding of domestic violence, the present corpus-based study intends to identify the common words of domestic violence and their collocations in the international news. Frequency-based and collocation window approaches were used for the identification process. In total, 45 common words of domestic violence about participants, locations, type, and social and legal aspects were found, which confirmed one of the properties of a shared language. A limited variety of common collocations of these words were observed in the data. New understandings of the dynamics of domestic violence may be revealed through further studies concentrating on linguistic variations of the issue in relation to gender, culture, and sector.

Introduction

Domestic violence can be defined as patterns of abusive behaviors such as physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions used to gain power over intimate people in families or relationships. Taking many forms, it affects many people regardless of age, gender, socio-economic and cultural background. In the vast majority of cases, victims are mostly children and women and many of the perpetrators are male. Hence, domestic violence is a gendered pattern of behavior, rooted in systemic gender inequality in many cultures. The United Nations (1993) declared that domestic violence especially against women is a hindrance to the management of equality and social peace. This threat to women is rooted in historically unequal power relations between men and women, leading to the domination of men and the subordinate role of women.

In every corner of the world domestic violence is a growing social problem. According to a report published by the World Health Organization, 1 in 3 women experience domestic violence globally (Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018), resulting in increasing attention. World

Health Organization (2024) reported that most of the domestic violence is related to intimate partner violence. Throughout the world, almost one-third (27%) of women aged 15-49 years who have been in a relationship accept exposure to some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partners.

Domestic violence against women is a historical phenomenon. Zamba et al. (2022) summarize the history of the concept. During the Roman era, women were considered the property of their husbands. In the 15th century, husbands had the right to punish their wives for their behavior. In the 1960s, domestic violence against women became a reality due to the media. In some states, violence towards women was banned. At the end of the 1970s, with the Women's Movement, an awareness of domestic violence in many societies began and domestic violence was labeled as a crime by the Criminal Justice System of the USA. Since the 1980s, legislation has been enacted in many countries to prevent domestic violence.

Both cultural and international news agencies have played an important role in reporting domestic violence events, increasing public awareness of the issue and shaping state policies. Thus, media reporting of this issue is an increasing concern of several studies centering on the representation of domestic violence in different cultural contexts such as Italian (Rolle et al., 2020). In the American context, newspaper coverage of domestic violence (Maxwell et al., 2000) was examined, and incident-focused reporting was found to be more common than socially focused reporting in domestic violence news. From a different perspective of race, Enck-Wanzer (2009) concentrated on the racism against African-Americans and claimed that black male bodies were portrayed as the site of criminal rage and gendered violence was seen as appropriate for hegemonic (white) masculinity. Meluzzi et al. (2021) examined the construal of argument structure constructions in Italian newspapers to portray gender-based violence and found that the perpetrators were assigned less responsibility through the use of the passive and nominal constructions in the newspapers. In a recent study, Storer et al. (2024) analyzed the representations of safety within newspapers' reporting of domestic violence amid the Covid pandemic.

The rhetorical and linguistic features of domestic violence in the news have also received attention in the literature. Media coverage of domestic violence was investigated from a diachronic perspective in another study conducted by Ryan et al. (2006, p. 209). They found significant changes in the coverage like "increased labeling of the murder of intimates as domestic violence and doubled usage of advocates as sources." Domestic violence murders were framed as unpredictable private tragedies, but recently, they have been the reflections of an important social problem warranting public intervention. Gillespie et al. (2013, p. 237) analyzed the framing of stories about domestic violence in the news and found four types of framing: "a commonplace frame, an isolated incident frame, a frame that blames the criminal justice system, and a victim-blaming frame." Santaemilia and Maruenda (2014) examined the linguistic evaluation of gender violence victims in Spanish contemporary newspapers and observed objectification and institutionalization of victims in the news. Utilizing a discourse analysis approach, Dmitrieva and Glukhova (2022) focused on the themes of domestic violence in English and social institutes' attitudes towards the issue. They reported that the use of language influenced people's cognitive boundaries, thinking processes, value acceptance, and beliefs and views on domestic violence.

The reality of domestic violence in many societies has influenced languages, leading to the emergence of many words and phrases such as collocations and lexical bundles. As English is accepted as the lingua franca of the global world, any lexical changes related to the socially sensitive topics in English receive the attention of linguists, and the concept of domestic violence is not an exception. However, there seems to be little agreement on the shared language of domestic violence. Williams and Stebbins (2023) highlight the difficulties with the language used to identify and recognize domestic violence acts by victims and perpetrators. Basically, victims may not find the

correct words and expressions to express their experiences as a coercive exposure. Service providers, especially in different sectors, struggle to communicate appropriately in cases of domestic violence. Police and the courts usually consider violent acts in families as a series of isolated incidents rather than a form of abusive behavior over an intimate partner. Such a construction of domestic violence acts referring to a time-specific loss of control reduces the responsibility attributed to the perpetrator.

Apparently, the linguistic framing of domestic violence is essential to enhance a deeper understanding of domestic violence events and to construct a shared language. As such, the present study seeks to examine the common words of domestic violence and their collocations in the international media discourse in English. The reason for the selection of this discourse is that in contemporary international media discourse, domestic violence is a major topic of interest, shaping the perceptions of individuals and implementing policies. Besides, collocations, common strings of words conveying more than the sum of their meanings, are significant linguistic means of the English language, which reflect the attitude of global societies towards certain issues, which is domestic violence in the present case. It is hoped that the study will contribute to the understanding of a shared language of domestic violence. As Easteal et al. (2012, p. 326) state, "Our language filters what we want to see, or choose to see, and by doing so it influences what we communicate to others." The following research questions shape the essence of this study:

What words of domestic violence occur most frequently in the international news?

What collocations of domestic violence occur most frequently in the international news?

Methodology

This corpus-based study examines the emerging words of domestic violence and their collocations in the context of international media discourse using a mixed-method approach.

Data Collection

The corpus for this study was made up of 412,320 words on international news agencies covering the period January 2024 to October 2024. There was a total of 128 news items about domestic violence. These news items were identified as particular as they concerned the real stories of domestic violence occurring throughout the world. The news items about the adoption of law, protests, or the speech of authorities on domestic violence were excluded. The key search terms were *domestic abuse* and *domestic violence*.

All the news items making up the corpus were sourced from the websites of six international news agencies. Firstly, a Google search was done to decide the top ten international news agencies. After the identification of the agencies, each of them was checked to verify whether they published news about domestic violence. Some of them did not include such news so they were excluded from the study. The reason for using international news agencies is that the present study is associated with the global language of domestic abuse, so the data needed to be composed of the news at the international level. After that, all the online news items between the mentioned periods were manually examined by each international news agency. When the news items were related to the real stories of domestic abuse occurring throughout the world, they were added to the related subcorpora as a UTF8 file to make them compatible with the concordance tool. All of the news items utilized were also coded with a metadata format including title and date. All the news items from a specific international news agency were compiled as a subcorpora. At the end of this process, six subcorpora were complied. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of the subcorpora including the word counts and their percentages in the corpus, as well as the news agencies utilized. The BBC, one of the world's largest news agencies, broadcasts news in the UK and around the world. The subcorpus consisted of 344,189 word counts, which is 83% of the corpus. Operating in the USA, CNN is another

multinational news agency. In our data, the news taken from CNN had 17,377 words and comprised 4% of the corpus. Reuters, one of the largest international news agencies in Germany, comprised 2% of the corpus with 9,539 words. Founded in the Middle East, Aljazeera had 15,793 words, constituting 4%. Another American news agency, AP Press, comprised 5% of the corpus with 18,604 word counts. Xinhua, a state international news agency in China, had 6,818 words, which is 2% of the corpus.

Table 1. The corpus

News Agency	News Agency Description	Word Counts	%
BBC	The world's largest broadcast news organization broadcasting news and current affairs in the UK and around the world	344,189	83
CNN	A multinational news website located in the US	17,377	4
Reuters	A British news agency operating in about 200 locations worldwide writing in 16 languages.	9,539	2
Aljazeera	The first global English-language news channel to be headquartered in the Middle East	15,793	4
AP Press	An American news agency that operates in 94 countries	18,604	5
Xinhua	The state news agency in China has 181 bureaus globally and publishes news in multiple languages	6,818	2

Data Analysis

Based on real-language data, corpus analysis is one of the prerequisites of language description. Vaughan and O'Keffee (2026) state that corpus linguistics includes the use of computers to quickly search and analyze databases of real language called corpora and they can consist of any systematic series of written or transcribed spoken language. As for Flowerdew (1998), one of the most common analyses used in corpus-based studies is the collocability of language – the employment of certain lexical items in naturally occurring discourse with certain grammatical patterning. In such analysis, concordancing is the most widely used approach as Condrad (2002) claims. Concordance lists show all occurrences of certain words or patterns in data.

Bednarek and Caple (2014) suggest the possible stages in the corpus linguistic analysis of new values including the analysis of frequency, parts of speech, proximity, novelty, word senses, keyness, and collocates. Based on their suggestions, this study aims to find out the most common words related to domestic violence and their collocates. The term collocation in this study accounts for both lexical and grammatical collocations. Lexical collocations "involve two items belonging to open (non-finite) classes, for instance, a verb and a noun or an adjective and a noun" while grammatical collocations "involve one element from an open class and an element from a closed class" such as a preposition (Fontenelle, 1994, p. 4). For instance, the verb "depend" grammatically collocates with "on" and the verb "make" may collocate with "a claim" as a lexical collocation.

Different approaches for the classification of collocations have been noted in the literature. Frequency-based approach delves into quantitative evidence about word co-occurrence in corpora whereas the phraseological approach draws on maintaining the semantic relationship between two (or more) words (Gablasova et al., 2017). The study adopted the frequency-based approach to label the common words of domestic violence. When identifying the collocations of domestic violence, the collocation window approach was utilized to determine the adjacent combinations of the words of domestic violence within a specified window span (2L 2R, in our case). The first step of the

analysis was to identify the most common words of domestic violence in the corpus. The present analysis was done simply by running word analysis through Antconc (2024), a free online software for corpus linguistics analysis. This enabled the scanning of the corpus for the most frequent words. Words that occurred more than 50 times in the corpus were considered to be common. There were 44 words meeting the criterion.

The second step of the analysis was to label the collocates of the words of domestic violence that have more than 50 occurrences. The graphcoll function of LancsBox X 5.0.3, a free online corpus linguistics analysis tool available at https://lancsbox.lancs.ac.uk/ was used to find the collocates of the most common words with a span from the left (2L) and to the right (2R) with a minimum frequency count of 30 as Biber (1993) suggests. In previous studies, the cut-off points for the MI value showed variations concerning the cut-off points (3, 4, 5, and 6) To illustrate, in his study of collocation networks related to swearing in English, McEnery (2006) used Mutual Information (MI) with a cut-off point of 3 and a span of +/- 5 words around collocation nodes in his data. In our case, the cut-off point of the MI value was decided at 5 and above for collocate identification. As Brezina et al. (2025) state, the MI value is a measure of strength used in corpus studies.

A total of 45 common words were analyzed to find collocates of them through the GraphColl function of LancsBox X 5.0.3. Based on the criteria mentioned, a collocation table for the most common collocations of family violence was prepared. The Log-Dice value, the type of the collocations, and the syntactic pattern of each collocation were also mentioned in the table. Log-Dice value indicates "the tendency of two words to co-occur relative to the frequency of these words in the corpus" (Gablasova et al., 2027, p. 164) and the highest Log-Dice value is 14.00 in LancsBox X 5.0.3. The collocations were further explained in detail in the context of domestic violence through the extracts taken from the corpus.

Findings and Discussion

The first aim of the present study was to identify the most common words associated with domestic violence in international news. Utilizing AntConc's (2024) word function, the most frequent words in the corpus were identified, and those related to domestic violence were manually extracted. Words with more than 50 occurrences were recognized as the common words of domestic violence, as shown in Table 2. A total of 44 words were identified as common words of domestic violence in the corpus.

Table 2. The most common words for domestic violence in the international news

Word	Frequency	Word	Frequency
police	411	guilty	70
woman	380	assault	68
violence	248	judge	68
court	240	killed	67
victim	202	accused	66
domestic	217	sexual	62
man	184	arrested	59
abuse	165	behavior	59
child	160	wife	59
home	152	evidence	58

family	133	former	55
case	122	husband	55
partner	117	ex	54
relationship	105	charges	53
murder	96	died	52
trial	94	justice	52
death	87	support	52
officer	80	attack	51
rape	79	hospital	50
help	76	prison	50
house	76	statement	50
daughter	73		
mother	73		

A quick analysis of the table reveals that most of the common words were the referent nouns pertinent to domestic violence incidents. These words are meaningful to highlight as they represent the conceptualization of the participants engaged in domestic violence, which was a sign of shared language. *Police (411), woman (380), victim (202), man (184), child (160), officer (80), daughter (73), mother (73), judge (68), wife (59) former (55), husband (55),* and *ex (54)* represented the participants involved in the domestic violence acts. In other words, they were the human referents in the corpus. The high frequency of words like *woman, mother, daughter,* and *wife*, underscores the central role of women as the key referents of domestic violence. As Krantz and Garcia-Moreno (2004, p. 818) claims, violence against women which refers to "a multitude of abuses directed at women and girls over the life span" is a notable public health problem and human rights violation of worldwide. They further explain the typology of violence towards women which is examined under two categories in terms of who commits the violent acts and the nature of the violent acts. As explained in the following paragraphs, the question of who commits the violent acts is quite clear, which is proven by the high frequencies of three words - *man, husband, and ex.*

Additionally, the *victim* often referred to women and children subjected to domestic violence, as shown in the extracts below. *Child*, which was another identical referent, usually appeared as *the death of a child* in the corpus*,* which displayed the deadly results of domestic violence on children. As Mulhivil and Vicky (2024, p. 4) claim, "male perpetration and female and child victimization are the common paradigm" in the context of gender-based violence, which is illustrated in the following corpus examples:

  (1) She added that "there is also the additional grotesque feeling of injustice where you are actually the **victim**…
  (2) Reforms aimed at reducing the number of deaths in Scotland from domestic abuse "can save lives," says the mother of **a teenage victim**.
  (3) A **woman** who was abused by her **ex-husband** has said his behavior escalated in the days before he broke into her home at night.
  (4) … denies causing or allowing the death of a **child** and child cruelty.

Man, husband, and *ex* labeled perpetrators of domestic violence in the data. The word *former* was frequently used in a similar context. In all the sentences below, it is clear that the perpetrators had

a dominant role in domestic violence. Based on the taxonomy explained by Krantz and Garcia-Moreno (2004), the type of violence in our analysis was usually physical and sexual.

(5) In May 2022, her **ex-husband** broke into her house at night and attacked her, along with new partner.
(6) A French woman who was raped by unknown men over 10 years after being drugged to sleep by her **husband**....
(7) A woman told police she was being stalked by **a man** who was later accused of murdering her...
(8) Man jailed for defrauding his **former** partner.

Police, *judge*, and *officer* referred to individuals addressing domestic violence within the legal framework. These words highlighted the roles of law enforcement and the judiciary in responding to domestic violence. *Police* and *officer* were frequently depicted as the first responders in domestic violence situations, emphasizing their pivotal role in ensuring immediate safety and initiating investigations*. Judge,* on the other hand, represented the judicial process and law enforcement mechanisms that seek to hold perpetrators accountable and deliver justice to victims. The significance of these roles is further illustrated in the following examples:

(9) **Police** said he continued to harass his partner once she found the strength to end the relationship.
(10) ... after hearing evidence from various experts **the judge** ruled that he was capable of following the process.

Violence (248), domestic (217) abuse (165), and *relationship (105)* formed the core framework of domestic violence as depicted in the corpus. These terms collectively highlighted the essence of the issue, serving as pivotal descriptors of the phenomenon. *Violence* (11) is a broad term that encapsulates the physical, emotional, and psychological harm inflicted on victims, while *domestic* situates the context within family or intimate relationships, emphasizing the close and personal nature of these acts. *Abuse* (13) extends the scope to include non-physical forms of harm, such as coercion, intimidation, and control. These words not only appeared as the frequent words used in reporting such events but also underlined the pervasive and multifaceted nature of domestic violence. Their interconnectedness in the corpus emphasized the need for comprehensive interventions that address the physical, emotional, and systemic dimensions of the issue. *Relationship* (14)*,* referring to a specific interaction between two people, is another word to be highlighted. Analyzing the following examples of the word, it is possible to come to a conclusion that domestic violence goes beyond family contexts, and in many relationships, violence towards the intimate partner is customary. Seemingly, the term *domestic violence* has become synonymous with Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) which refers to "all acts that a person carries out to hurt another with whom he/she is/was in a relationship, such as between husband and wife or boyfriend and girlfriend" (Ademiluka, 2018, p. 342).

(11) We want to send a strong message that **violence against women and girls** should not and will not be tolerated.
(12) She was a survivor of **domestic violence**.
(13) She said it was difficult to calculate the number of victims of **domestic abuse** and coercive control because many cases were not reported.
(14) ..., who was in a **relationship** with one of Katie's sisters, initially told police she had tried to take her own life

Dmitrieva and Glukhova, (2022) argue that the term *domestic*, as opposed to *family*, conveys a more symbolic and significant understanding of the issue, minimizing its family context. In this study, however, *domestic violence* and *domestic abuse* served as general terms encompassing all forms of

coercive behavior towards intimate partners and family members. Mulhivil and Vicky (2024) state that the term *abuse* includes all the ways that perpetrators may seek to hurt, threaten, and control their victims even if they are not visible and tangible. They further mention that the English language tends to associate abuse with children. However, in the present study, *abuse* predominantly referred to women.

The words *home (152), house* (76), and *hospital (50)* depicted the physical locations where domestic violence incidents were often unfolded. These settings proved the unsettling reality that violence often occurred in spaces traditionally considered safe havens. Warrington (2001) who concentrates on the geography of women violence states that there is a type of migration including women and children who run away from their homes due to domestic violence. Women mostly encounter domestic violence in the home and this place becomes the major site for domestic violence. As seen in example 15 and 16, the recurrence of *home* and *house* as frequent terms highlighted the betrayal of trust and intimacy within personal and family spaces, which should ideally provide security and comfort. This betrayal was particularly striking, as it reflected a deep violation of environments meant to foster love and protection. The term *hospital* (17) further emphasized the grave consequences of such incidents, marking it as a site where physical injuries were treated, and the long-term impacts of abuse were often addressed. These physical locations symbolized the far-reaching disruption caused by domestic violence, challenging societal assumptions about safety and the sanctity of personal spaces, as illustrated below:

(15) A suspect in is custody after six people were found dead at **a home** in the Barrhaven suburb of Ottawa…

(16) …, who was due to turn two this month, died at **a house** in Windmill Court.

(17) In another incident, she described needing to go to **the hospital** after he "strangled" her during a holiday to Spain.

The words *court (240), case (122), trial (94), guilty (70), arrested (59), accused (66), evidence (58), charges (53), prison (50),* and *statement (50), murder (96), death (87), killed (67), died (52)* were the identical lexical items utilized to manifest the discussion of the issue in the context of the law and "represented the process of criminalization of the intimate partner abuse cases" (Dmitrieva & Glukhova, 2022, p. 60). *Guilty, murder, arrested, accused, charges,* and *prison* contextualized the results of the violence regarding perpetrators, while *death, killed,* and *died* were among the most serious and physical outcomes of domestic violence maintained in the law context. Besides, they were the indications of the gendered nature of domestic violence: women as objects and men using violence. As the following examples confirm, these words supported a nuanced understanding of the shared language of domestic violence about the role of men and women as the referents;

(18) A former nursery worker **accused** of murdering her two-year-old daughter wept in court as she went on trial.

(19) … he pleaded guilty to **charges** of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, assault, and making a threat to kill.

(20) … was **killed** in her home in March 2021 as part of a double killing.

Domestic violence occurs in many different forms. In our analysis, *rape (79), assault (68) sexual (62),* and *behavior (59)* were associated with the types of physical domestic violence. *Rape* which can be shortly defined as unwanted sexual behavior seemed to be the most pervasive type of domestic violence in the data. It causes both physical and psychological damage, which ruins the embodied self of the victim. The word *behavior* broadly referred to violent actions as seen in (21). *Assault –* usually conducted by a male partner- is a form of punishment toward an intimate partner who has committed an offense. These findings were not in line with Adily et al. (2021), who examined domestic violence narratives in police reports and found that the most common abuse types were

non-physical. This is corroborated by the following sentences:

(21) … was jailed for a minimum of 23 years for murder and other offenses, including coercive **behavior.**

(22) Along with two other women, they accuse him of **rape** and sexual **assault**.

(23) … was accused of **sexual assault** dating back to 1991 by multiple women.

Domestic violence may affect anyone regardless of gender, age, or societal boundaries, necessitating increased awareness and preventive measures. The words *help* (76), *justice* (52), and *support* (52) highlighted the social aspects of domestic violence, emphasizing the need for victim assistance and systemic change. They referred to women as objects, which is a property of gender-based language. Women were phrased as being affected by violence and needing help and support from others. *Help* (24) reflected the immediate and ongoing interventions required to address the needs of survivors, ranging from emotional support to financial aid and legal representation. *Justice* (26) emphasized the importance of holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring that victims receive fair treatment within the legal system, fostering trust in judicial processes. By the same token, *support* signified the broader societal commitment to creating a network of services and policies that not only respond to but also prevent domestic violence, such as shelters, counseling services, and community awareness programs as illustrated in (27 and 28). Together, these terms illustrate the multifaceted approach needed to combat domestic violence effectively.

(24) The local community raised thousands of pounds to **help** the young girl.

(25) Her friends tried to **help** her but she was pronounced dead a short time later.

(26) We condemn such acts and call for **justice**.

(27) Lorraine told me she wanted to see better **support** for victims.

(28) "Our long-term plan for housing will **support** the delivery of more homes,

The second step of the analysis was to establish the collocations of the words of domestic violence having more than 50 frequency counts. The Graphcoll analysis of LancsBox 5.0.3 tool was run to create the collocation networks of the words of domestic violence in the corpus. Each common word was searched for its collocates and the ones having 30 or above occurrences were considered to be the common collocates of the domestic violence. The cut-off MI value was decided at 5 and above for this analysis. There were only five collocations in the corpus meeting these criteria. Table 3 displays the strongest collocations of domestic violence in this analysis. Although 44 common words were found in the first step of the analysis, their collocations were limited. *Domestic violence* and *domestic abuse* were the most identical collocates with occurrences of 108 and 72, respectively. Both of them were lexical collocations with a syntactic pattern of noun + noun. The other three collocations were grammatical collocations and appeared in the noun + preposition syntactical pattern. *Violence against* (F= 40), *relationship with* (F=30), and *accused of* (F= 59) had high MI values.

Table 3. The most common collocation of domestic violence in international news

collocate	F	Log Dice	MI	Type	Pattern
domestic violence	108	7,3	13	Lexical	noun+noun
domestic abuse	72	7,2	12,6	Lexical	noun+noun
violence against	40	6,8	11,9	Grammatical	noun+prep
relationship with	30	5,4	10,7	Grammatical	noun+prep
accused of	59	5,3	10,2	Grammatical	noun+prep

As illustrated in the below examples, *domestic violence* and *domestic abuse* were the most prevalent collocations in the corpus, which is consistent with Dmitrieva and Glukhova (2022), who found that these two collocations were the most common expressions of domestic violence during the feminist movement after 2008. The frequent use of these two collocations signifies that domestic violence has been recognized as a social problem that not only occurs at home or in marriages but also in dating relationships. It goes beyond physical acts of violence to psychological and financial abusive acts. Mulhivil and Vicky (2024) explain that the prefix "domestic" can be an indication of violence by co-habiting partners occurring at home. Instead, *domestic violence* refers to all intimate partners such as dating relationships.

(29) A defense barrister told the court that Spence witnessed and was the victim of **domestic violence** during his childhood and "is a man who needs help and assistance as much as he needs punishment."

(30) Because her daughter was too young to be classed as a victim of **domestic violence** her death will instead be filed for statistical reasons as a knife crime… It also means the focus is on the weapon used rather than the build-up, which has all the warning signs of **domestic abuse.**

(31) This case highlights that **domestic abuse** is not just physical or sexual, it includes abusive behaviors or financial abuse.

The collocation *violence against women* was observed 40 times in the corpus, all of which appeared as *violence against women and girls.* This may indicate a dramatic social reality. Most of the time, the victim is a woman and the perpetrator is a man. José and Maruenda (2014, p. 4) claim that *violence against women* is a widespread expression of domestic violence. It refers to "a performance of an aggressive, hegemonic, heteronormative masculinity. Seemingly, this collocation conveys the construction of sexual inequality based on the so-called men's power and control over women, as can be illustrated in (32);

(32) There is no greater crisis in our community than **violence against** <u>women and girls</u>, and it's partly a cultural thing that we've not yet got to grips with."

The portrayal of having a relationship with an intimate partner is shown in the examples 33, 34, and 35. A negative viewpoint was explicitly conveyed in those examples through the use of certain lexical items such as *sexual, abusive,* and *domestic.* It is probable that such negative expressions provide a fine-grained subjective construction of domestic violence cases in the news.

(33) …she had also been in an abusive **relationship with** a man who wanted her to hand over all her earnings to him.

(34) But the officer, according to the findings of a disciplinary panel, had a "deliberate" and "predatory" plan to have a sexual **relationship with** her.

(35) The man is believed to have been in a domestic **relationship with** the victim.

The grammatical collocation *-accused of-* denoted the state of perpetrators that has not been proven to be true in the law context, which may be a rhetorical act of objectivity in the news. As Bergstra and Düwell (2021, p. 7) explain, the collocation conveys that "it is not obvious that the accused must have 'done' something." Thus, it is assumed that one can only talk about an accusation if the matter is under investigation or contested, as illustrated in the following examples:

(36) A former nursery worker **accused of** murdering her two-year-old daughter wept in court as she went on trial.

(37) DiGiorgio is **accused of** drugging and sexually assaulting the women between May 2019 and November 2021.

Overall, the present study was designed to examine the common words of domestic violence and

their collocations to understand how the concept was maintained through a shared language in the international news. The common words were categorized under five headings: participants, locations, types of violence, and reflections of domestic violence in the law context and social aspects of the issue. These words are quite significant since they contribute to forming public attitudes towards the issue of domestic violence and its devastating results. Besides, they shape a new semantic category in English lexicology, which affects individuals' and societies' awareness, empathy, and understanding of domestic violence. Thanks to international news, individuals' mindsets are changing and developing new perspectives on domestic violence problems throughout the world. Although many words were observed to be prevalent in the corpus, their collocations were quite rare. The reality of domestic violence has been accepted as an important social problem in the 20th century. Hence, the lexical framing of the issue does not seem to be complete.

Conclusion

Domestic violence is a universal problem, influencing women at all levels of society. It is a complex problem that has been resistant in all cultures over the centuries. However, since the 20th century, a new conceptualization of domestic violence has been constructed. One of the complexities of this new conceptualization, leading to failures in recognizing domestic violence acts, is to define and talk about domestic violence through the lens of victims and perpetrators. Hence, a common language has become essential to create a shared understanding of domestic violence in many contexts. This paper explores how linguistics can contribute to the creation of the shared language of domestic violence with particular attention to common words and collocations of these words. A corpus consisting of domestic violence news in the international news agencies was complied. The reason behind the choice of international news is that agencies play a pivotal role in influencing the way domestic violence is recognized across society, so the language used in the news is crucial to framing the issue. The corpus included 412,320 words extracted from the international news agencies news items covering the period January 2024 to October 2024.

The study adopted frequency-based approach to identify the common words of domestic violence. For the recognition of collocations of domestic violence, the collocation window approach was utilized within a specified window span (2L - 2R). Frequency analysis was run through Antconc (2024) and words appearing more than 50 times in the corpus were considered to be common. The graphcoll function of LancsBox X 5.0.3 enabled us to find the collocations of the most common words with a span from the left (2L) and to the right (2R) and with a minimum occurrence of 30. The cut-off point of the MI value was decided at 5 and above for the collocate identification. Based on the criteria, a total of 44 common words were found and categorized under specific headings. Most of the common words were the referent nouns associated with the participants of domestic violence - *police* and *women* in our analysis. Regarding the type, *rape* was observed frequently in the corpus and *home* was the most mentioned location where domestic violence events took place. The lexicons reflecting social and legal aspects of the issue were also pervasive. Two words *court* and *help* emphasized these aspects in the present study. These common words were the indicators of a shared language of domestic violence. However, the collocations of the common words of domestic violence were seen with a limited variety.

Language conveys real-world understandings, behaviors, and practices through its role in constructing discourses. When the construction of vocabulary in relation to domestic violence is completed, a big picture of the issue, including the establishment of mutual understanding, shared language and definitions appears. The current study revealed the common words of domestic violence in the international news. These findings provide important insights into the construal of a shared language of domestic violence, which may help linguists and journalists to employ a common language of domestic language. For the prevention of domestic violence, it is important for

linguists and especially journalists to grapple with the role that they play an important role in the dissemination and maintenance of domestic violence events.

Additional research, including larger corpora from different public and academic discourses such as news, columns, and articles is needed to better establish the language of domestic violence. Further study would also follow a diachronic approach to examine the construction of new words of domestic violence. To develop a full picture of domestic violence lexicology, additional studies may focus on the lexical properties of domestic violence in cross-linguistic contexts since each context has its own linguistic and cultural conventions to present and maintain domestic violence issues.

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