

## A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE 2025 PAKISTAN FLOODS

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines how national and international English newspapers construct awareness of environmental change during the 2025 Pakistan floods through linguistic and discursive strategies. Based on the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework of Fairclough (1995), the study provides an analysis of the chosen articles of Pakistani Dawn, The News International, and Express Tribune and international (Reuters/AP, The New York Times and The Washington Post) newspapers. This textual analysis is based on textual attributes (vocabulary, modality, transitivity, and metaphors), and discursive and socio-cultural practices. The evidence suggests that the main frames of national newspapers present floods in terms of political, developmental, and governance-based narratives, focusing on institutional responses and local responsibility. International newspapers, on the contrary, frame the floods in the context of a global climatic crisis narrative, revealing vulnerability, humanitarian issues, and climate injustice. Comparative analysis shows that there is a lot of difference in terms of ideology in the Global South and Global North media representations. The research adds to the discussion on media and environmental communication by showing how language influences the general perception of climate-related disasters.*

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Climate Change, Floods in Pakistan, Media Representation, Environmental Discourse

### Introduction

Environmental disasters are not purely natural events but also social events that are produced by discourse in language and media (Chen & Ramzan, 2024; Ma et al., 2024, 2025). In contemporary society, disasters are often mediated through representations, and newspapers are important places where meanings of environmental disasters are constructed. According to Norman Fairclough (1995), discourse is a social practice that produces social realities and inculcates power relationships and ideological beliefs into language (Ahmad et al., 2022). This means that newspaper coverage not only represents disasters but impacts understandings of causes, responsibility and response through the selective choice of words, metaphors, modality and framing (Nawaz et al., 2022, 2021), which affect public consciousness and political discourses about environmental change (Carvalho, 2007; Boykoff, 2011). Pakistan, a climate-vulnerable country in the Global South, experiences environmental disasters like floods, heatwaves and droughts regularly. The Pakistan floods of 2025 are one such climatic disaster that resulted in extensive damage, displacement and socio-economic challenges. They not only highlight the physical consequences, but also the role of media representations. Disasters are represented in newspapers either as natural, inevitable events or as a result of climate change, political mismanagement and global inequalities. These framings are not value-free and depend on institutional agendas, ideological leanings, and socio-political factors (Eide and Kunelius, 2012). English newspapers are key in influencing national and global understandings of environmental disasters. Local newspapers like Dawn, The Express Tribune and The News International tend to focus on local realities, political processes and political responses, generating discourse about governance and adaptation. On the other hand, international

newspapers like The New York Times, The Washington Post, and Reuters/AP adopt more global approaches to environmental disasters, framing crises through global perspectives of climate change, humanitarian concerns, and environmental risk. This difference is part of the structural differences between the Global South and Global North media (Javaid & Ramzan, 2026), where local political agendas meet global climate change and ideological framings (Boykoff, 2009; Jayaram, 2024).

While previous studies on climate change communication have predominantly relied on content and thematic analysis, emphasising framing and awareness, there are few studies that explore the language and ideology of climate concerns through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). But there is a need for research exploring the linguistic and ideological aspects of disaster representation using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In Pakistan, existing studies have predominantly focused on humanitarian implications and responses, rather than how language shapes underlying meanings related to responsibility, power and climate causality (Amjad et al., 2021; Hussain et al., 2024; Muzaffar et al., 2024). Similarly, there is a lack of comparative CDA studies between national and international media with respect to recent disasters like the 2025 floods. To fill this research gap, this study adopts Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the representations of environmental change in selected national and international English newspapers. Through a textual analysis of lexical choice, transitivity, modality, and metaphor, as well as discursive and socio-cultural practices, the study discerns ideological themes in the media discourse. This comparative study shows the effects of different media contexts on the framing of environmental crisis, vulnerability and responsibility. Such studies add to the fields of Critical Discourse Analysis, environmental communication and media studies by showing the role of media in shaping public perceptions of climate disasters. It also considers the influence of global power dynamics and institutions on national and global framings of disaster, and the importance of balanced reporting in the media during environmental emergencies.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do national and international English newspapers use textual modes to construct awareness of environmental change during the 2025 Pakistan floods?
2. What are the similarities and differences between national and international newspapers in their textual representation of environmental change during the 2025 floods in Pakistan?

### **Literature Review**

The discourse of climate change and environmental disasters in the media is increasingly attracting attention, particularly as it relates to public and policy responses via language use. Research indicates that media texts not only report events but also build meanings through discourse. A landmark study in the US by Maxwell Boykoff (2009) examined newspaper coverage of climate change. This study used qualitative content and discourse analysis to demonstrate that values such as objectivity misrepresented scientific evidence, and therefore influenced public views. In Europe, Anabela Carvalho (2007) conducted a discourse analysis of ideological cultures in the reporting of climate change and found that media representations are heavily influenced by political and economic factors, contributing to the ideological nature of environmental discourse. In the Global South, especially in South Asia, there are specific trends in climate and disaster reporting. A recent study in Pakistan, Sadia Hussain et al. (2024), reviewed the deficit in climate change coverage with a mixed-method approach of content and discourse analysis. It revealed that media in Pakistan frequently focus on the short-term effects of disasters rather than long-term climatic factors and adaptation policies. Likewise, Erum Muzaffar et al. (2024) conducted a qualitative content analysis of Pakistani print media

coverage of the 2022 Sindh floods, revealing that flooding was often presented as a natural disaster rather than an environmental problem caused by mismanagement and climate change, constraining public awareness of underlying causes. Other articles stress the role of discourse. Rubina Bibi (2024), using Critical Discourse Analysis in Pakistan, examined climate discourse and revealed environmental issues were frequently framed as abstract, making them more likely to be devalued. Similarly, Imran Kamboh et al. (2023) examined the ethical aspects of media coverage through a discourse analysis. They found that Pakistani media often favour political over ethical issues such as climate justice and equity, and tend to exclude vulnerable communities from media narratives. Comparative media research also reveals representations in both Global North and Global South. In a study in Nepal, Laxmi Sharma, Prakash Lamsal and Ramesh Upadhyaya (2024) used Critical Discourse Analysis to analyse climate discourse and revealed that the South Asian media tends to emphasise vulnerability and moral responsibility more than policy narratives in climate change reporting. On the other hand, Boykoff (2009) noted that media in the West tend to take episodic approaches that emphasise short-term impacts rather than root causes. This finding is supported by Deepak Jayaram's (2024) study from India using qualitative discourse analysis, which showed that climate change in the international media is increasingly framed in political and security discourses, in line with global geopolitical concerns.

Other Pakistan-based ecolinguistic research contributes to this knowledge. Ayesha Habib and Sana Zahra (2024) used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and ecolinguistic methods to analyse media reports about flood events in Pakistan. They observed media primarily emphasised human factors and ignored environmental consequences, reinforcing anthropocentric perspectives. Similarly, Sadia Naureen and Rabia Janjua (2024) analysed editorials in Dawn newspaper and found environmental debates to be abstract and policy oriented, thus limiting environmental public space. In general, the literature examined suggests that while there are many studies on media discourse regarding climate change and disasters, most use thematic or content analysis approaches, which provide little insight into language and discourse. Additionally, very few studies have employed comparative Critical Discourse Analysis of national and international newspapers in the context of recent events like the Pakistan floods in 2025. This suggests that comparative studies using CDA approaches are needed. This study builds on existing approaches and outcomes to address this gap by analysing linguistic and ideological perspectives on the floods through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in national and international newspapers. The studies reviewed in this article not only offer theoretical support but also validate the choice of CDA as an appropriate and efficient approach to analyse environmental discourse.

### Methodology

In this research, a qualitative research design based on the **interpretivist** paradigm is used to investigate how environmental change is discursively produced in the newspaper account of 2025 Pakistan floods. The study uses the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the main method of analysis, relying on the three-dimensional model of discourse analysis provided by Norman Fairclough (1995), which examines discourse on the text level, discursive practice level and social practice level. In such a way, it becomes possible to pursue the systematic study of the influence of language on the expression and construction of ideological meaning, power relations, and social realities of media discourse.

The data in this paper is comprised of chosen articles in English language on newspapers in both domestic (Dawn, The express tribune, The News International) and foreign sources (The New York Times, The Washington Post, Reuters/AP). Articles that are specifically relevant to the research objectives (related to the 2025 Pakistan floods) were selected by using a purposive



sampling technique. The chosen texts were gathered in the official online archives and categorized into two corpora: national and international newspapers. The textual elements analyzed are the major features of the text, such as vocabulary, modality, transitivity and metaphor, to reveal the way of meanings construction. The analysis of the sourcing patterns, intertextuality, and framing strategies occurs at the discursive level, whereas the social practice level puts the discourse in a broader context of socio-political and climate life. This research approach allows for a comparative study of the ways in which different media systems construct narratives of the creation of environmental awareness and disasters, ensuring the depth of analysis and interpretative rigour.

### **Analysis**

#### **PART I: Analysis of National Newspapers (Pakistan)**

##### **Textual Analysis**

At the textual level, the flood crisis in 2025 in Pakistan is depicted by the local media using frames of governance, politics, and humanitarianism. In an analysis of several selected articles in the Dawn, The Express Tribune, and The News International newspapers, there emerge recurrent linguistic choices that refer to the disaster using such frames as “relief,” “rehabilitation,” “compensation,” and “assistance.” This corresponds with the findings of Hussain et al. (2024). Another linguistic feature is the transitivity that shows a representation where governmental agencies play the active part of agents of action while the victims are portrayed as passive receivers. For instance, statements such as “the government has issued a compensation plan” and “authorities are operating in flood-stricken regions” place the agencies in the subject position as the active agents of action. The above linguistic feature is in line with the ideas put forward by Norman Fairclough (1995). He argued that transitivity performs an ideological function since grammatical structures reproduce social hierarchies. In contrast, victims are constructed in passive voices, for example, “homes were destroyed,” “lives were lost,” and “crops were ruined.” These linguistic features create uncertainty and naturalize the occurrence of the event as if it is an expected development. Such findings have also been presented by Muzaffar et al. (2024). They revealed that the floods are presented as natural disasters in Pakistani news media to minimize conversations about environmental factors.

The use of modality creates certainty, which reinforces the authority in national discourse. Linguistic features, such as “relief will be given,” “the government is fully prepared,” and “funds have been allocated” show certainty, thus creating a sense of security. The lack of hesitation or uncertainty implies high levels of effectiveness in disaster management. According to Fairclough (1995), high levels of modality are characteristic of institutional discourse to reinforce authorities' positions and reduce challenges. Political discourse can be identified through metaphorical language used in national newspapers. Phrases such as “war of words,” “politicising the catastrophe,” and “development does not stall” create metaphors related to conflict and progress in the context of a disaster. Therefore, the focus is shifted from environmental causes to political narratives, especially when talking about the government's performance. As Carvalho (2007) pointed out, metaphors in media discourse significantly influence how readers perceive issues. In summary, through textual analysis, it is apparent that the flood disaster has been represented more in terms of governance rather than environmental issues or climate change. It is important to note that there exists a wider pattern in the Pakistani press where coverage emphasizes governance over environmental concerns (Hussain et al., 2024).

### **Discursive Practice**

At the discursive practice level, the national newspaper coverage of the 2025 floods is marked by the predominance of official and elite voices. The analysis indicates a high dependency on the words of the government officials, ministers, and institutional representatives, and voices of the affected communities are not present much. It is characterized by a hierarchical form of communication whereby the information is controlled by the people in charge. According to Kamboh et al. (2023), it is a common trend in Pakistan whereby most media houses depend on top-level sources for their news. The institutional legitimacy is also enhanced by the intertextual aspect of the discourse. References to past floods, including those of 2010 and 2022, are often used in national newspapers and give the impression that it is a continuation and history repeats itself. These sources are used to make floods seem like routine occurrences and as a result, make them seem less urgent as climate crises. Intertextuality is important in defining discourse in that it connects events occurring now with those in the past in such a way that floods are not novel environmental crises but rather national crises that are normal (Fairclough, 1995). The ideological trends of the framing strategies of the national discourse also become evident. The floods are commonly presented as a humanitarian crisis that needs to be relieved and rehabilitated as soon as possible, yet this presentation is often intertwined with political stories. As an example, the discussion also has the aspects of political fight, with various parties taking the disaster as a chance to establish control or to criticize the opponent. This is in line with the results of Raza et al. (2025) who contends that disaster reporting in Pakistan tends to swing between a humanitarian issue and a political one.

Again, another significant element of discursive practice is the incorporation of development stories in reporting disasters. Allusions to standing infrastructure developments, residential plans and economic programs are employed to create an impression of sturdiness and advancement. This is one of the strategies that are used to legitimize the performance of the government by showing continuity even during crisis. Naureen and Janjua (2024) point out that this discourse of policy can make the general population less tied to the realities of environmental vulnerability by prioritizing abstract development objectives. Moreover, there is no scientific or environmental discourse to be mentioned. In contrast to international media, national newspapers do not often present the views of experts and explanations of climate change in detail. This lack of knowledge adds to a poor comprehension of structural causes of floods and strengthens the short-term responsiveness. The same study by Bibi (2024) also revealed that Pakistani media tends to focus on climate change as a remote or peripheral problem when reporting on disasters, instead of being a key determinant in such stories. Overall, the discursive actions of national newspapers imply the institutional preoccupations and political processes, creating a discourse that gives prominence to the governance, legitimacy and development and subordinates the environmental and community viewpoint.

### **Socio-Cultural Practice**

At the socio-cultural level, the discourse of the national newspapers mirrors the wider ideological and political order of Pakistani society. The development of the disaster response as a place of political legitimacy is one of the most evident aspects. The state as the main crisis management agent is supported with the help of government actions which are represented as evidence of efficiency, competence, and authority. This is in line with the understanding of discourse as social practice presented by Fairclough (1995) that language serves to reproduce institutional power and recreate dominant ideologies. Another important element is the politicization of the disaster discourse. The floods are frequently portrayed in the national newspapers in the context of political rivalry, with various parties trying to win popular opinion by showing their efforts at responding to them, or attacking others. This is a mirror image of the overall political culture in Pakistan, in which the disaster management is intertwined with

the matters of governance and accountability. According to Kampoh et al. (2023), this politicization may obscure ethical aspects and restrain critical thinking on environmental matters.

The ideology of development is also influential in the formation of the discourse. The emphasis on infrastructure projects, home programs and economic recovery form a discourse of power and progress. This is in line with the views of modernization where modernization is seen as a solution to environmental vulnerability (Abdelrady et al., 2025, 2026). However, this can mask problems such as poor planning and climate change adaptation. According to Habib and Zahra (2024), this kind of discourse usually concentrates on human-related problems and neglects environmental issues, hence promoting anthropocentrism. The second socio-cultural aspect is the under-representation of the climate change. Floods are highly linked with the change in climatic conditions, but the media discourse on climate change is rarely dominant in national newspapers. Instead, focus is drawn to the short-term impacts and responses. This is in line with the broader underrepresentation of climate change in the Pakistan media (Hussain et al., 2024). The absence of climate stories means that the public may not be as informed about long-term environmental threats and may have less informed policy debates. Finally, the discourse shows marginalisation of vulnerable communities. The affected communities are primarily described as victims, rather than agents. It fortifies the power structure, while also limiting the diversity of voices in the media discourse. The elite voices in Pakistani media, as Khuhro et al. (2020) emphasize, limits the representation of the grassroots experiences, thus limiting the range of the people's knowledge. Comprehensively, the socio-cultural analysis indicates that the discourse on the 2025 Pakistan floods in the national newspapers is influenced by the political, institutional, and developmental ideologies. Although it is a significant part of information sharing and mobilizing response, it also mirrors and recreates power relations, which affect the perception and response of environmental crises.

## **PART II: Analysis of International Newspapers**

### **Textual Analysis**

The international newspapers construct the disaster using quite a different set of language elements. The analysis of news articles from The New York Times, The Washington Post, and Reuters/AP reveals a tendency towards using vocabulary such as "climate crisis," "extreme weather," "catastrophic flooding," and "humanitarian emergency." In other words, this type of vocabulary places the event in the context of global climate changes and humanitarian emergencies. Thus, these lexical units correlate with the results obtained by Maxwell Boykoff (2009) who revealed that the international media tend to construct environmental events within global climate discourses. Furthermore, it is important to note that the transitivity patterns used by international reporters place Pakistan rather than a governmental actor at the position of an actor of the event. For example, such phrases as "Pakistan has been devastated by unprecedented floods" or "millions have been displaced" are quite typical for international discourse. On the contrary, governmental agents are rarely introduced into the text, and the ones that perform the action in question are generalized to some extent ("climate change," "global warming," and so forth). As was noted by Norman Fairclough (1995), such constructions can be explained by the nature of ideological positioning.

Modality in international newspapers exhibits a predictive and probabilistic nature. For instance, phrases like "floods will continue to increase," "the effects of climate will be amplified," and "future catastrophes might occur often" indicate a prospective outlook. Unlike national newspapers, the modality in international newspapers is based on probability rather than certainty. Words such as might, could, and likely reflect the deliberate, cautious tone of climate discourse (Boykoff, 2011). These words also stress the need to address climate concerns because of what is expected of the environment in the future. The metaphoric

language used in news reports worldwide extends the scope of floods to a planetary level. Examples include expressions such as "climate frontline," "climate catastrophe," and "environmental tipping point." These metaphors associate Pakistan with global climate vulnerability and not just destruction. As mentioned by Carvalho (2007), media discourse understands current events through an ideological perspective. According to the ideological perspective, floods indicate planetary vulnerability to climate change instead of destruction in the immediate environment. Overall, floods become the main result of climate change and the environmental crisis according to international news reports. The linguistic representation of floods differs significantly from the national discourse on environmental change.

### **Discursive Practice**

At the level of discursive practice, international newspaper coverage demonstrates a strong reliance on global institutional voices and expert knowledge. Often the representatives of international organizations like the United Nations, climate scientists, and humanitarian organizations are used as sources. This is contrary to the preeminence of political actors in national newspapers. The incorporation of the expert voice indicates the knowledge-based discourse that values the scientific explanation and global responsibility. According to Boykoff (2009), Western media tends to incorporate scientific authority into its reporting of climate and in this way legitimize environmental narratives. Intertextuality of international discourse is defined in terms of allusions to international climate reports, past trends of emissions and past global environmental disasters. Articles frequently attribute the 2025 Pakistan flooding to other larger trends like global warming, melting glaciers and rising rates of extreme weather conditions. This network of intertextuality places the floods in a global narrative of climate change. Fairclough (1995) argues that these intertextual relations play a vital role in meaning construction since they enable media texts to tap into well-established discourses and support certain interpretations. The framing approaches of international newspapers are largely based on the humanitarian crisis and climate injustice. The floods are portrayed as a massive crisis that impacts the life of millions of people, with the focus on displacement, food insecurity, and the destruction of infrastructure. Meanwhile, the discussion frequently indicates the unequal effect of climate change on the developing world. This is consistent with Sharma et al. (2024) who, in their study based in Nepal, applying Critical Discourse Analysis, were able to discover that South Asian disasters are often encoded through the prism of vulnerability and moral responsibility in the global media.

The other significant characteristic is the framing of accountability on the international level. The international media tend to hold the industrialized countries and global emission patterns to blame as opposed to the domestic governance that is covered by the national newspapers. This is a move towards a localized blame to a systemic criticism. A study by Jayaram (2024) in India also revealed that international discourse is becoming more and more linked to climate events and global political and economic systems, with the need to focus on the issue of inequality and responsibility. Moreover, the discussion is highly humanitarian in nature, with accounts of misery and perseverance frequently featured. There are reports of displaced families, ruined livelihoods and the need to provide urgent relief to move the pity and rally the international community. Although this strategy is effective in creating awareness, it might also make complex environmental problems more simplified by emphasizing on the direct effect on human beings. This effect is not new since Muzaffar et al. (2024) report that the media discussion of floods tends to focus more on emotion than on structural consideration. To conclude, global institutional structures, scientific agency, and humanitarian discourses influence the discursive activities of international newspapers. Such practices help to build the floods as a larger climate crisis and focus on global connectedness and accountability (Mehr-Un-Nisa & Pillai, 2025).

### **Socio-Cultural Practice**

At the socio-cultural level, international newspaper discourse reflects broader global power relations and ideological structures associated with climate change and environmental communication. Among the most striking ones is the depiction of Pakistan as a weak and climatic nation. The nation is often placed in the frontline of climate change, being exposed to environmental hazards even though it plays a small role in global emissions. This framing fits the narratives of global climate justice, which accentuate the imbalanced allocation of environmental stressors among developed and developing nations (Sharma et al., 2024). It can also be attributed to the attitude of the Global North media in which developing nations are usually depicted as victims in need of international help. Although this kind of framing makes people more aware of vulnerability, it may also strengthen dependency discourses and restrict the agency of the affected countries. Fairclough (1995) believes that discourse plays a central role in reproducing social inequalities and in this regard, the representation of Pakistan as a passive victim could serve to reinforce the hierarchies of power in the world. The other notable socio-cultural dimension is the focus on climate change as a world crisis. International newspapers constantly associate the floods with the larger process of environmental change, thus establishing the disaster as a component of a larger problem and not an event on its own. This is an indication of a drift towards planetary environmental awareness in which local catastrophes are viewed in the framework of planetary transformation. Boykoff (2011) argues that such framing is necessary to promote climate awareness, as it helps relate individual events to more significant trends of environmental change. Framing is crucial in enhancing climate consciousness since it creates links between particular incidents and changes in the larger environment. The discourse also considers global accountability and collaboration. Given that floods are a consequence of industrialization and carbon emissions, there is a tendency for international media coverage to focus on the involvement of developed countries in climate change. It is consistent with eco-linguistics' stance, which underscores the need for discourse to consider environmental interdependence and accountability (Habib and Zahra, 2024). However, the global perspective could overlook internal challenges such as governance concerns.

Moreover, the socio-cultural analysis shows that there is a high humanitarian orientation of international discourse. The emphasis on misery, displacement, and assistance represents the interests of the international humanitarian community and the global community. Although this is a useful strategy in garnering support, it can also simplify complicated socio-environmental problems into simplistic stories of the crisis and response. According to Carvalho (2007), media discourse can be characterized by institutional and ideological interests, which in the case are humanitarian advocacy and global policy agendas. Lastly, the manner in which environmental disasters are reported in international newspapers is an indication of wider patterns in international communication whereby media discourse is a negotiating space of issues of climate justice, inequality, and sustainability. The floods are not merely built as a national tragedy but as a global warning to further strengthen the need to work on climate change on an international level. To sum up, the discourse of international newspapers has socio-cultural practices that demonstrate the interaction between media image, power mechanism of the world, and environmental ideology. The way the 2025 Pakistan floods have been framed as a humanitarian crisis influenced by climate, indicates the interests of the Global North media, but it also creates global awareness about the environmental change.

### **PART III: Comparative Analysis**

#### **Textual Comparison: Linguistic Construction of Disaster**

A comparative analysis of textual characteristics between the national and international papers shows that there is a major difference in the linguistic construction of the 2025 floods of

Pakistan. Despite both types of papers using emotionally laden language for describing the disaster and its effects on humanity, the lexical perspective of both differs in focus and ideological content. The national papers mainly use vocabulary such as “relief,” “compensation,” “rehabilitation,” and “government response,” which makes this event a part of political and administrative discourse. International papers, on the other hand, use terms such as “climate crisis” and “environmental catastrophe.” The differences observed in the vocabulary show different models of interpretations. The discourse of the nation shows a quick response and political performance, whereas the international discourse highlights environmental phenomena and their global implications. This finding lends credence to the theory proposed by Carvalho (2007), which holds that vocabulary in the media is not neutral but carries ideologies, influencing interpretation of intricate issues, such as climate change. Another difference observed in the discourse of the nation and the international newspapers pertained to transitivity, which showed different positions regarding the origin of agency. For instance, in national newspapers, governmental organizations were portrayed as agents using phrases such as “the government has announced relief measures.” However, in international newspapers, Pakistan was viewed as the one who was affected by floods using phrases such as “Pakistan has been devastated by floods.” In this case, agency was attributed to non-human entities such as “climate change” and “extreme weather.” As per Norman Fairclough (1995), these differences in grammar demonstrate ideological attitudes. However, there is a difference in the usage of modality. In the case of national newspapers, their modality is very strong and uses constructions such as “will ensure,” “is committed,” and “has provided.” These constructions are characteristic of a strong modality.

Therefore, they would suit the institutional language where the legitimacy of authority needs to be provided. International newspapers tend to use probabilistic modality and constructions such as “may,” “likely,” and “expected.” Boykoff (2011) states that the use of such modality is characteristic of climate language because it shows uncertainty and, at the same time, risk. Finally, there is a difference in the metaphorical descriptions of the flood. Metaphorical constructions used by national newspapers refer to political issues. This is because national papers employ such constructions as “war of words” and “politicising the crisis.” The metaphors used by international papers are “frontline of climate change” and “climate catastrophe.” Thus, the textual analysis demonstrates that while both kinds of press give an account of the seriousness of the flood, their interpretation of the event differs due to the differences in language. Indeed, national discourse centers on the ideas of politics and governance, while international one on the concept of climate change.

### **Discursive Comparison: Framing and Representation**

The difference between national and international newspapers is more visible in the level of discourse practice in sourcing, intertextuality and framing. The national newspapers are heavily reliant on political and official sources such as government officials, ministers and representatives. This domination of elite sources is evidence of a top-down mode of communication where there is elite-mediation of information. On the other hand, international newspapers have drawn more diverse sources, such as climate scientists, international and human agency organizations hence a more varied discourse is available (Cook, 2012). This difference in sourcing has implications for the disaster discourse. The Pakistani newspapers are more likely to frame the flooding as a governance issue, which is primarily focused on the response, policy and accountability. This is in line with the findings of Kamboh et al. (2023), who have discovered that the Pakistani media outlets are inclined to report on political events for their environmental news. In contrast, the international media describes the floods as a humanitarian and climate crisis, emphasising vulnerability, displacement and international responsibility. Similarly, in their case study of Nepal, Sharma et al. (2024) have also found

that the international media tend to frame environmental disasters in moral responsibility and global inequality. Intertextuality is also different in the two corpora. The national newspapers refer to past floods in Pakistan, such as the ones in 2010 and 2022, creating a sense of recurrence and continuity. This reinforces the normalcy of floods. On the other hand, international newspapers use international inter-textual references, such as global climate change, international negotiations and other global disasters. These narratives place the 2025 floods in a global environmental change, thus opening the field of interpretation.

The other main difference is the framing of accountability. The national discourse is focused on national responsibility, which is often centred on the government's performance and political issues. The international discourse, on the other hand, shifts the accent in such a way that the roots of the floods are linked to climate change and industrial pollution. This is in line with the observation of Jayaram (2024), who states that the international media are increasingly connecting the environment to the geopolitical and economic contexts. Although there are these differences, certain similarities can be observed. Both national and international newspapers highlight the extent of devastation and human loss, with descriptive language to express a sense of urgency and impact (Puspita & Pranoto, 2021). This common ground encapsulates the universal communicative role of disaster reporting, which is informative and involves audiences. The basic framing and interpretive approach is however quite different and this results in a variation in the presentation of the same event. In conclusion, the discursive comparison indicates that institutional contexts and media systems influence the discursive construction of disasters. National and international newspapers have a different focus based on the audience expectations and ideological orientation of their audience; national newspapers give a preference to political and administrative viewpoint whereas international newspapers give preference to the humanitarian and environmental one.

#### **Socio-Cultural Comparison: Ideology and Power Relations**

On the socio-cultural level, the comparative analysis shows more profound differences in the ideology of the national and international newspaper discourse, especially regarding the power, responsibility and environmental awareness. The floods are framed by national newspapers in the context of ideology of political legitimacy and development, in which the state is the key player in the management of the crisis. This is indicative of a larger socio-political processes in Pakistan whereby governance and institutional performance are central issues in the public debate. Such representations, as Fairclough (1995) believes, are signs that discourse reproduces existing power structures and legitimizes authority. As opposed to this, the floods are placed into a worldwide context of climate change and environmental injustice by international newspapers. The image of Pakistan as a vulnerable country that faces the consequences of climate change more than it contributes to the overall global emissions is oftentimes depicted. This is consistent with climate justice discourses that highlight the unbalanced allocation of environmental hazards among developed and developing nations (Sharma et al., 2024). Nevertheless, this portrayal is also a Global North understandable, where the developing countries are usually portrayed as inactive victims who require outside help. The difference between these views brings out the differences in ideological orientation. The national discourse is focused on self reliance, governance and development making up a story of resilience and institutional competence. Conversely, international discourse focuses on vulnerability, humanitarian need, and international responsibility, and the disaster is put in the context of a wider environmental crisis. Such variations demonstrate the influence that social-cultural situations and expectations exert on media discourse (Tariq et al., 2019).

The other significant point of the comparison is the idea of the scientific description of climate change. Climate change is implicit or marginalised in national newspapers, but more focus is given to the short-term effects and reactions. This is part of a larger trend in Pakistani media

where environmental concerns are not necessarily a key point of discussion (Hussain et al., 2024). Conversely, the international press comes out clearly to attribute the floods to climate change whereby the incident is used as a case in point of global environmental change. This disparity has serious implications in terms of public awareness since the audience perceives the reasons and effects of environmental disasters. Furthermore, the comparative analysis demonstrates the use of discourse in the construction of international power relations. The international media can, through the way they represent Pakistan as a weak and vulnerable nation, reinforce inequalities and power hierarchies. On the other hand, the national media, focusing on political and governance issues, may not sufficiently address more global structural issues related to climate change and environmental sustainability. Media discourse is a representation and reproduction of ideological structures that shape the understanding of social and environmental issues (as suggested by Carvalho (2007)). In conclusion, the socio-cultural analysis indicates that the national and international newspapers construct national and international discourse of the 2025 Pakistan floods, depending on their ideologies and institutional backgrounds. The national discourse, for example, focuses on political empowerment and development, while the international discourse on vulnerability and responsibility. These differences show the importance of Critical Discourse Analysis in the process of identifying the complex dynamics between language, power and ideology in the media discourse of environmental disasters (KhosraviNik, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

The present study set out to examine how national and international English newspapers construct awareness of environmental change during the 2025 Pakistan floods through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. The results prove that media discourse is not neutral but is ideologically determined by linguistic choices, discursive practices, and the socio-cultural conditions in general. In both corpora, the floods are always portrayed as a serious humanitarian disaster characterized by destruction, displacement, and loss. Nevertheless, there are notable differences in the manner in which these realities are created by the national and international newspaper. On the textual level, the national newspapers use mostly administrative and political terms constructing the floods as a governance issue in need of an institutional reaction. The government is portrayed as a proactive agent, and the influence of communities is mostly portrayed as a passive recipient of aid through the patterns of transitivity. Conversely, international news outlets employ climate-focused and humanitarian discourse, placing the floods into a bigger environmental crisis that takes place around the world. Here, Pakistan is often being portrayed as a weak state subject to the influence of abstract forces like climate change, as an expression of the new agency of the local institutions to global processes. These results are in line with the argument of Norman Fairclough (1995) that discourse creates social realities using linguistic and ideological processes. In the discursive practice level, national newspapers focus on the sources of authority and political leaders in significant numbers, reinforcing the institutional power and giving priority to the governance narrative. The international newspapers, however, feature a broader audience, experts and international organizations, thus putting the floods into a globalized context of climate change and humanitarian issue. This sourcing difference helps to produce opposing frames: political and developmental in the national discourse and environmental and humanitarian in international discourse.

The socio-cultural analysis also reveals underlying ideological differences. In the national discourse, political legitimacy, development philosophy and domestic policy preference are reflected and this might leave climate change as a minor issue. In contrast, the global discourse emphasises global inequalities, climate justice and vulnerability, and places Pakistan in a broader context of Global South victimhoods. While this brings attention to the climate change

impacts, it could also reinforce victimhood and helplessness. In conclusion, the paper stresses that reporting environmental disasters is part of the power structures and ideology. National and international newspapers construct different realities of the same event and this influences the audience's view of responsibility, cause and solutions. The findings are important for the field of Critical Discourse Analysis and environmental communication as they demonstrate the impact of language on the process of raising climate awareness. Pragmatically, the findings suggest that more ecologically sound and balanced reporting, which includes the view on local responsibility and global environment, is required.

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