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CONSTRUCTING NATIONAL IDENTITY THROUGH FLOOD CRISIS REPORTING: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PAKISTANI PRINT AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Fatima Iftikhar
PhD Scholar , SET (Language instructor),Federal Directorate of Education (FDE)
Email: fatimaktk.fi@gmail.com
Umm-e-Rooman Yaqoob
PhD Scholar, Lecturer,Department of English ,Fazaia Bilquis College of Education for Women, PAF Nur Khan base, Rawalpindi
Email: manooct93@gmail.com

Abstract
The study examines discursive mapping of Pakistani national identity combining print and online news of flood crisis reporting in the English language. This paper will utilize Critical Discourse Analysis and apply the Three-Dimensional Model by Fairclough and his concepts of the Socio-Cognitive Approach by van Dijk, the Discourse-Historical Analysis by Wodak, and the Systemic Functional Linguistics by Halliday to examine how the twelve websites, Dawn, The Express Tribune, The News International, ARY News, and Geo News, reported on the floods. The discussion shows the manner in which media discourse naturalizes political leadership, narrates the victimhood in the climate, legitimizes the authority of the state and creates a sense of a cohesive national identity based on the representation of crises. Results indicate that flood reporting serves as an ideological mechanism which establishes Pakistan as a climate-affected victim and the co-existence of the efficacy of state and leadership roles in the process, thus strengthening specific power dynamics and socio-political hierarchies in the national imaginary.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, National Identity, Media Discourse, Pakistan Floods, Climate Justice, Leadership Representation.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

The 2022 monsoon floods have been the most severe environmental catastrophe in the history of Pakistan that has been faced by 33,000,000 citizens and inflicted economic damages valued at more than US30 billion (Ministry of Climate Change, 2025). Such floods are not only natural disasters but simple socio-political events in which the narratives of national identity, state legitimacy, collective suffering, and climate injustice are being produced and reproduced on a continuous basis through media talk. The expression of such crises in Pakistani English-language media is a critical point of analysis of the process of constructing, sustaining, and disputing national identity by discursive means.

This study examines the way in which Pakistani print and online media generate national identity in flood crisis news coverage by studying the linguistic, discursive, cognitive, and historical aspects of media discourse. Based on the CDA as a theoretical framework and methodological approach, language is viewed as a type of social practice, which is entrenched in the relations of power, ideology, and institutional control (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008). The media discussion on floods is especially topical due to the fact that the situation of crisis heightens the construction of collective identities and the process of ideological naturalisation (Wodak, 2001).

This study is important as it helps to comprehend the functioning of media discourse as a legitimising political power, shaping the national subjectivities, and naturalising specific ideological systems at the time of crisis. The study is a contribution to the gap in scholarship related to the Global South in media, by specifically examining the use of English-language media to elucidate the formative role of the elite discourse in the construction of national

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consciousness through language choices, narrative construction and multiple modal representations.

1.1 Research Objectives

The main aim of the given research is to critically discuss how national identity is constructed by Pakistani print and digital media as a result of covering flood crisis by looking at linguistic, discursive, cognitive, and historical aspects of media discourse. In particular, this research will attempt to:

1. Examine the linguistic strategies that have been used in the flood crisis reporting to reflect the national identity.
2. Explore the construction of politics and state response discursively.
3. Analyze ideological senses of lexical options, grammatical patterns, and narratives.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions in this study are as follows:

1. What are the linguistic representations of Pakistani English print and digital media on flood crises?
2. In what ways can the national identity be built based on the images of leadership, the state reaction, and the shared suffering?
3. What does it mean ideologically that is enshrined in lexical items, grammatical forms and methods of narration?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Media, Crisis and National Identity

In the process of building and sustaining national identities, media discourse is dominant especially in times of crisis when collective identities are put into such perspective and need to be strengthened (Anderson, 1983; Billig, 1995). As the existing research on media representations of natural disasters shows, crisis reporting cannot be described as purely informational but does have ideological attributes since it is used to place actors, assign blame, and narrate stories of community suffering and recovery (Pantti et al., 2012). Research into the nature of media coverage of disasters demonstrates that the discourse of the media has a naturalizing effect on specific social orders, a legitimizing effect on political power, and generates affective attachments to the nation-state (Tierney et al., 2006).

There is a paucity of literature on the media depiction of environmental crisis in the Pakistani context although the country is getting more susceptible to the effects of climate change. The current literature has discussed the media reportage of the 2010 floods (Cottle, 2014) but has not sufficiently examined how these messages form the concept of national identity through the use of language and discursive processes. This gap in the research is relevant due to the status of Pakistan as one of the most climate-sensitive countries on the planet, contributing to the global greenhouse gas emissions less than one percent, yet experiencing disproportionate effects of climate change (Climate Risk Index, 2025).

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis and Media Studies

The Critical Discourse Analysis has become a powerful tool that can be used to analyse how power relations, ideologies, and social inequalities are created and recreated through the use of language (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak and Meyer, 2009). The approaches of CDA consider discourse as socially constitutive, i.e., the use of language constructs and is construed by social structures, relations of power, and cultural practices (Fairclough, 2003). They are analysed through media discourse analysis in CDA frameworks, showing how texts in the news naturalise ideological positions, how they construct social actors in specific manners and how they contribute to the hegemonic processes (Richardson, 2007). Empirical studies that have used CDA to study the communication of disaster show that media representations have a

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systematic privileging of some forms of voice to the disadvantage of others, and create hierarchies of victimhood, and recreate dominant ideological regimes (Pantti et al., 2012). The analysis of the Pakistani media discourse has revealed the tendencies of the elite hegemony, state-centered discourses, and inadequate coverage of the marginalised groups (Yousaf, 2015). Nevertheless, the extensive linguistic study of the discourse of flood crisis is not yet advanced in the Pakistani media studies.

2.3 Climate Justice and Discourse

The chosen discussion on climate justice and climate discourse attests to the advantages of a broader, interdisciplinary approach to climate change, which needs to be reflected in the educational program of social sciences. The climate justice discourse is more likely to refer to environmental catastrophes as an expression of worldwide inequality, historical responsibility, and unequal exposure (Sultana, 2022). Climate justice framing has been tactically used by Pakistan to talk about politics and the media as a victim of the Global North emissions, which provoke climate change in the country (Rehman, 2022). Empirical research on the discourse of climate in third world nations demonstrates that the narrative of victimhood is dual as it elicits receiving support on the international level and shifts the pressure off the domestic governance failure (Veland et al., 2018). Therefore, media texts must be critically analyzed to determine their negotiation of international advocacy on the basis of domestic responsibility.

2.4 Digital News Discourse Multimodality

The rise of digital news stories also implies the necessity to concentrate on the multimodal analysis of discourses, i. e. the research that explores how meaning is created due to the combination of verbal text, visualization, audio narration, and digital affordances (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). In digital news videos, complex semiotic resources are used which create meaning based on visual framing, camera angles, music, and editorial decisions, not to mention verbal language (Bednarek and Caple, 2017). The study of Pakistani online news sources shows that they have an impact on society and politics to a large extent; however, multimodal analysis of crisis coverage is not systematized.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

This paper combines three main Critical Discourse Analysis frameworks and Systemic Functional Linguistics to provide detailed tools of analysis in different aspects of media discourse.

3.1 The Three-Dimensional Model Fairclough (1995)

The conceptualisation of discourse analysis as proposed by Fairclough has three dimensions that are related with one another: text, discursive practice and social practice. On the textual level, linguistic aspects of vocabulary usage, grammar, textual cohesion and organisation are analysed. Discursive practice analyses processes of text production distribution and consumption, such as intertextuality and interdiscursivity. Social practice puts discourse into context as a part of wider social organization, relationships of power and ideological constructions (Fairclough, 1995). The model allows a methodical analysis of the ways linguistic decisions in flood coverage reproduce and reproduce specific social orders, the way in which media institutions produce discourse about crisis, and the relationship between flood coverage and power structures in the Pakistani society. The three dimensions are dialectically connected which means that textual characteristics are both reflexive and constructive of discursive and social practices.

3.2 Socio-Cognitive Model of van Dijk (2008)

In his method, Van Dijk puts more focus on cognitive aspect of the discourse, examining the mediating role of mental models, social cognitions and ideologies between social structures and discourse structures (van Dijk, 2008). This paradigm analyses how we build the ideological

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worldviews by using the ideological square: highlighting our good properties and their bad properties and down-emphasising our bad properties and their good properties.

The description of in-group and out-group representation by Van Dijk is especially useful in researching how the discourse of flood builds a sense of collective national identity in contrast to other nations on the global scale. When applied to the coverage of Pakistani floods, this framework shows how the discourse of media creates cognitive models of Pakistan as a victim of climate change, the international community as morally obligatory, domestic leadership as a hero, and populations impacted by floods as strong national citizens. These mental models determine popular cognition and political opportunities besides naturalising particular ideological paradigms.

3.3 Discourse-historical Approach (DHA) of Wodak

The DHA by Wodak focuses more on the setting of the discourse in the historical contexts and the analysis of the relation of the current discursive events to the historical trends and projections (Wodak, 2001). Analysis of DHA deals with discursive strategies, such as nomination (how actors are linguistically formed), predication (what attributes are attributed to actors), argumentation (what justifications are made), perspective (by whom are narratives told), and intensification/mitigation (how propositions are reinforced or diluted).

The DHA comes in specifically handy when analysing Pakistani flood discourse in that it allows one to study how current crisis coverage relies on past flood narratives (2010, 2022), the larger climate change discourse, postcolonial discourse to international responsibility, and national development discourses. With this historical contextualisation, it is possible to see continuities and breakages in the way environmental crises are discursively formed through time.

3.4 Halliday Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Halliday SFL provides specific linguistic analyses of how language establishes meanings in three metafunctions, ideational (as a way of representing experience), interpersonal (of acting in a social relationship) and textual (of organising information) (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). Transitivity analysis as an ideational metafunction shows who does what to whom which in turn promotes agency, responsibility and causal patterns. The interpersonal metafunction is the modality analysis of the certainty, obligation and authority being linguistically constructed.

Transitivity analysis in the analysis of flood coverage defines the presence of floods as natural actors, the presence or absence of government actors as active agents and the presence or absence of the affected populations as passive victims or resilient agents. The modality analysis reveals the processes by which media texts establish authority and epistemic confidence on statements about the causes of floods, and their duties and responses. The conceptual frameworks of the research were integrated, and they will serve as the basis for the study's literature review.

3.5 Integrated Conceptual Framework

The conceptual frameworks of the research were also integrated which will be used in the literature review of the research study. This study forms a comprehensive conceptual framework that reveals the manner in which flood crisis coverage is a national identity building mechanism that goes through various processes interacting with each other. Discourse of floods is created by media institutions through the application of specific ideological frameworks and professional standards. This discussion uses certain linguistic strategies (examined using SFL) to make representations of crisis, leadership and national community.

Through these representations, cognitive models (to be analysed using van Dijk) are activated positioning Pakistan at the centre of global climate justice discourse at the cost of justifying domestic power structures. Discursive effects of flood reporting (which is analysed in

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Fairclough) is related to bigger historical tendencies in crisis narrative (which are analysed in Wodak) and present socio-political conditions. In these ways, the discourse within the media makes natural the specific constructions of national identity that are marked by victimhood of climate, the legitimacy of the state, the collective endurance and the assertion of the moral rights of international assistance. The combined framework allows examining thoroughly the interaction of various aspects of the discourse, which forms and re-forms national identity in time of crisis.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The current paper has chosen a qualitative and interpretive research design based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The design will enable a thorough study of a few pieces of media texts, rather than a quantitative analysis of large corpora, therefore, allowing a firm study on the linguistic, discursive, and ideological aspects of flood-crisis news. The interpretive paradigm recognizes the constructive role of the researcher in the production of analytical information, and strictly adheres to systematic procedures to maintain the methodological rigor and transparency.

4.2 Data Sources and Selection

4.2.1 Print Media Sample

Three articles were taken in English languages newspapers of leading Pakistani dailies:

1. Dawn PM Shehbaz urges IMF to factor flood impact in coming review of Pak economy (24 September 2025)

Source: https://www.dawn.com/news/amp/1944307

In the article, emphasis is put on how the government responded to the flood at the international level, and it focuses on the economic effects and participation in international financial institutions by Dawn.

2. The Express Tribune "PM bats new reservoirs to avoid future floods (29 August 2025)

Source: https://tribune.com.pk/story/2563867/pm-bats-new-reservoirs-to-prevent-future-floods

This article is a good example of discussing executive leadership reaction and communication about infrastructure planning.

3. News International 2022 floods caused over 30bn losses, NA told (6 May 2025)

Source: https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1308834-2022-floods-caused-over-30bn-losses-na-told

The article represents the discourse of the parliament in the subject of the effects of climate change and the effects of floods.

4.2.2 Digital Media Sample

Two Pakistani television news segments were selected and included in the digital news:

1. ARY News ARY News reporting on flood relief efforts with a focus on directives of Prime Minister and military action as reported in Wikipedia coverage of the 2022 Pakistan floods.
2. Live coverage of flood damage survey and relief planning and reaction of the August-September 2025 Pakistan floods, broadcast by Geo News, at https://www.geo.tv/liveblog/live-updates-on-pakistan-floods.

These samples of digital media are representative of typical trends in covering the flood news, such as portraying the reaction of the government, the presence of the leadership in the impacted areas, and management of the relief operation.

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4.3 Sampling Strategy

An analytically rich text sampling strategy, based on purposive, criterion sampling, was used to select texts that presuppose important areas of national identity construction. The criteria of selection included:

1. Target flood response, governance, leadership or national impact.
2. Political leadership or state action explicitly or foregrounded.
3. Inclusion of evaluative language, clear argumentation or identity-creating speech.
4. Pakistan-international relationship representation.
5. Access to full texts in order to study linguistics in detail.

This method is consistent with qualitative CDA methodology which does not emphasize statistical representativeness but analytical depth (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). The chosen texts offer a wide range of representations in terms of the media type, newspaper articles and digital news bits, and timeframe, covering the events of the 2022 floods to the 2025 events, thus making discursive patterns and variations easy to study.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

Since the research involves only publicly available media materials, it does not present extensive direct ethical issues as far as the protection of participants is concerned. However, the study was directed by a number of ethical principles:

1. Representation: The analysis is aware of the fact that media representations are not reflections of the lived experiences of the flood-affected populations but rather represent a set of specific versions of reality, which perform certain ideological tasks.
2. Critical Stance: In the course of analytical rigor, the study takes the form of reflexivity where the researcher is aware of positionality and interpretive frames.
3. Contextualisation: The texts of media are set in larger socio-political contexts as opposed to being decontextualized so that they can be analysed in purely linguistic terms.
4. Responsible Scholarship: The findings are given in a manner that adds to the knowledge of the power of media without being sensational or oversimplified.

4.5 Limitations

The following limitations of this research are noted:

1. Sample Size: The purposive sample of five media texts allows in depth analysis but limits the generalisation to all the Pakistani coverage of floods.
2. Language Focus: The English-language media analysis does not cover Urdu and regional languages, which can forge national identity in different ways.
3. Type of media: Mainstream news media focus only does not include social media discussion, alternative media, and non-journalistic writing.
4. Timeframe: The study considers coverage between the period of 2022 and 2025, with the main target being recent floods thus restricting the scope of history.
5. Availability of Digital Content: Access to transcripts and multimodal tools of detailed analysis of the video was not complete in the case of digital media samples.

Nevertheless, the study has provided a number of valuable insights concerning the discursive creation of the national identity by crisis reporting and creates a context of further, more comprehensive research.

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Chapter 5: Analysis

5.1 Lexical Analysis: Building Victimhood of Climate

Lexical choices in the sampled corpus reflectively represent Pakistan as a victim of climate that disproportionately affects environmental effects of change caused by the world. In the Dawn news, the speech of Prime Minister Shehbaz uses assessive language like unprecedented damage and at the same time highlights that Pakistan has an insignificant contribution to the total carbon footprint, that puts Pakistan in the top ten countries that face the risk of climate change. This contrast of speech characteristics creates a specific victimhood identity with quantitative images that both imply innocence and pain at the same time. All the readings analyzed are saturated with the semantic field of vulnerability.

The Express Tribune article makes use of phrases such as, calamity hit, people who are affected and flood-affected areas thus putting Pakistani citizens at the receiving end of disaster manufactured externally. Reiteration of the word victims in the parliamentary report of The News International supports this position of subject, and the factual authority of suffering is determined by the exact monetisation of losses.

Lexical modifiers like catastrophic and devasting used with floods produce the semantic prosody of an external uncontrollable force, whereas the repetitive phrase of Pakistan as being a negligible contributor to the problem - repeated in several texts - serves as a refrain naturalising the climate injustice narrative. Instead, leadership lexis creates authoritative actors. Shehbaz is lexically associated with directional and authoritative verbs, such as urges, directs, orders, chairs, oversees, etc., which results in reforming political leadership as an agentic actor in response to crisis, and at the same time, legitimising action by showing initiative.

The headline of the Express Tribune article titled PM bats for new reservoirs uses a cricketing metaphor that is well-known to the Pakistani cultural context and as such, it has the affordability of colloquial accessibility, but the strategic planning orientation also has an indication of its approach to strategic planning. There are unique lexical treatment of international actors. The IMF and the World Bank have institutional nomenclature to represent them, and a corresponding verb to provide and support, but the bestowals are conditionalized with words suggesting inadequacy - shortfall, only, mere fraction. This framing makes international aid both always and insufficient, thus disadvantaging Pakistan as a victim of global climate governance, but left alone.

5.2 Grammatical Analysis: Agency and Responsibility

Transitivity analysis shows the systematic patterns of grammatical structure of agency and responsibility. The majority of the descriptions of floods are material in nature, where floods are presented as actor-agents in the form of constructions like floods have displaced, floods destroyed and floods caused damage. This grammaticalization of floods depicts floods as independent agents that confuses the anthropogenic role towards vulnerability. On the other hand, accounts of governmental reaction are characterized by a significant change in direction towards agentive construction. Instead, leadership is predetermined as the grammatical subject of material processes: “Prime Minister Shehbaz ordered and directed and government formed and Ministries invented frameworks.

This methodical agent-shifting creates a distinct narrative contrast of natural disaster agency and governmental response agency, which places the state as an active party in defending against foreign perils. Passive voice is used in a strategic manner when speaking about the victims of the sufferings: people have been displaced, houses were destroyed, 33 million were affected. These passivity erase agency and so naturalize suffering as an unavoidable result, not the fruits of social weakness/powerlessness or governance failures. According to the Express Tribune article, there were over 1,000 field clinics established, without nominating the agency,

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with the use of nominalisation which backgrounds actions by the government, but foregrounds the presence of the services.

The analysis of modality explains the grammatical form of certainty and obligation. The certifiers of certainty are concentrated on flood effects, e.g., will have severe negative effect, could be worse than 2022, etc. thus making a claim of epistemic power over damage estimates. The deontic indicators of duty are focused on governmental reactions: must be strengthened even more, needs the attention of the whole world, should find mechanisms. This modal distribution places the crisis response as a moral imperative and validates the governmental authority by fulfilling duties. Reported speech is widely used in the parliamentary speech of the News International: The ministry said, the officials mentioned, and the ministry told the National Assembly. This syntactic manoeuvre produces a layer of institutional authority several times and assigns the claims to the official sources, thus making governmental framing a factual and not perspectival one.

5.3 Discursive Level: Voice and Representation

Hierarchy of representation patterns are observed when the amplified and silenced voices are analyzed. In all texts, political leaders are heard; Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is explicitly quoted or his words are reported in every article and the executive power takes the position of the main crisis narrator. Secondary voices are held by provincial Chief Ministers, federal ministers and NDMA officials which create an institutional chorus that supports a state-centric discourse. The voices of international institutions are manifested in the reported statements by the officials of World Bank, IMF and UN, but they mostly confirm the statements of governments and do not present unbiased evaluation.

Dawn refers to the words of IMF Managing Director Georgieva who expresses sympathy to all the affected people and praises PM Shehbaz dedication of effort in seeking sound macro-economic policies, how the voices of international institution confirm the leadership of the domestic. There is an absence of first-hand voices of people who suffered floods. Flood victims are not allowed to speak but to be discussed when they come. Express Tribune reports on the aid to the people who are impacted by the floods in the country though does not provide any direct quotes of those who are affected.

The News International scores effects on millions but does not give any voices of people who suffered loss, displacement, or pain. Such a systematic exclusion forms the populations under influence as an object of governmental interests, as opposed to individuals with independent views on the causes, experiences, or reactions to the crisis. This set up of hierarchical voice structures strengthens power geometries. Elite political and institutional actors still have a voice position to determine crisis, assign cause and prescribe action and marginalized populations continue to be voiceless object in the discourse of the elite.

These trends replicate the social hierarchies in existence and naturalise the elite opinions as whole truth. There is added authority of technical and bureaucratic voices. In the Express Tribune coverage, NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik provides detailed technical briefs on measuring water-flow, rescue efforts, and logistics of relief packages. This is the voice of technocracy which is expressing administrative reasonability and governmental expertise and putting the state apparatus in the role of scientifically advanced responders.

5.4 Ideological Level: Power, Legitimacy, and National Identity

The discussion explored in this paper shows that there is compatibility of various ideological functions. It is mainly the practice of building and naturalizing the legitimizing political leadership under crisis conditions. By making governmental actors seem active, competent, and ethically committed responders, media discourses give legitimate authority to dominant power structures. The recurrent presentation of Prime Minister Shehbaz as the key figure brings the foreground of executive power toward the foreground of the national sovereignty and the

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effectiveness of the diplomatic process where his interactions with foreign leaders, including the IMF Managing Director and the World Bank President, are executed visually and discursively.

All the texts are filled with the ideology of climate injustice that places Pakistan in the role of an innocent victim and a moral bandit of the worldwide resources. This ideological frame has two functions: on the one hand, it creates a powerful advocacy story that requires international climate finance and loss-and-damage compensation; on the other hand, it distracts attention to domestic governance failures, infrastructural gaps and social vulnerabilities that increase the impact of floods. The constant mentioning of the less than one percent contribution that Pakistan did in emissions is a morality shield against criticism of the national inability to adapt to climate change. Resilience ideology is represented through the symbols of national suffering and national reaction. The representation of the government officials, the military and the citizens working together despite the hard conditions in the Express Tribune creates a national unity narrative. This resilience discourse serves to naturalize suffering as a chance to form character and conceal structural inequalities in vulnerability to floods and recovery possibilities.

The image of the national solidarity in times of crisis temporarily suspends the political struggles and strengthens the national unity. The state-centric ideology pervades coverage through systematic favouritism of governmental views, opinions and activities. Media discourses make it appear as a matter of course that the state apparatuses are the proper and efficient actors in the event of crisis, and non-state actors, such as community organisations, civil society, and victims, are almost entirely invisible. This state biasness replicates the power hierarchies and limits the imaginative capability of the response frameworks other than the existing ones. The ideology of development and modernization is seen through coverage of the Express Tribune on the demands of the Prime Minister Shehbaz to build new reservoirs and infrastructural development. Such technocratic discourse represents the large-scale infrastructure projects as the automatic solution to the vulnerability to floods thus naturalising forms of development but conceals the interests served by the projects and the environmental or social costs they entail.

5.5 Comparison: Discourse between Print and Digital Media

A thorough multimodal analysis of media content on the digital video was hampered due to access restrictions, a comparative analysis of the digital media representations which were available, however, indicate salient differences to print discourse. Digital news information employs visual registers, which create emotional immediacy and intensity that is not possible with print text. The affective dimensions of national crisis, which can only be presented through photographs of flooded landscapes, displaced populations, and the leadership visit to the affected areas, is created by using the photographic means. The live-blog coverage of Geo News describes the ability of the digital platform to enable information to be updated and aggregated in real-time and create an image of persistence of the crisis situation and the governmental attention.

Live blogging is essentially iterative in form and does not have the narrative coherence of the print article, creating a more fragmented but more up-to-date portrayal of events as they unfold. Online news sources increase the awareness of the leadership by providing photo and video coverage of the Prime Minister visits to the floods, the chairing of meetings, and statements. This visual image creates an embodied representation of leadership that heightens the effects of legitimacy other than textual reporting. The symbolic force of the performative leadership presence of locales of affliction is constituted of the strong symbolic assertion of state devotion and executive participation.

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Multimodal layering is also made possible by digital platforms, whereby written text on the screen, voice-over narration, and visual content intersect to support specific messages. As an example, a voice-over of governmental relief action and shots of helicopters carrying supplies and soldiers giving aid produce the effects of synergetic meaning that naturalize the competence of the military and governments. However, the discursive frameworks that are common in both print and digital media include dominant elite discourse, framing climate victimhood, supporting governmental power, and dismissing the views of the affected groups. Although the modes of presentation can affect the ways in which the said patterns are realized, their fundamental ideological works are not affected.

5.6 Continuities and People and Culture in the Present

The discourse-historical approach by Wodak can be used to explain how the modern flood discourse recreates and re-revises the patterns of the historical past; and at the same time, it is also a reaction to particular contextual factors. The mention of the 2010 floods is present throughout the readings of interest, placing the present deluges in a context of recurring victimisation that brings up trends in suffering that require long-term international intervention. This contextualisation of history builds legitimacy of a continued demand of climate finance and creates an impression of a crisis that is bound to continue to be viewed as a normal feature of the Pakistani national experience. The modern political situations have a considerable impact on the discourse production.

The coverage under focus developed when the coalition government under the PML -N was formed after ousting the PTI government, creating an increased political sensitivity in terms of the expression of the efficacy of government. The media focus on the activism of Prime Minister Shehbaz, Pakistan-focused international relations, and organization of relief efforts are used to create the political legitimacy of the existing government, and implicit counterparts to the previous administration (even though the partisan attacks were quite explicit in the coverage of the crisis under analysis). The fact that Dawn posted the article about the IMF interest in PM in the month of September 2025 is related to current economic crisis and IMF program conditions in Pakistan.

Discourse of floods is mangled up with economic stabilization discourse, placing the effects of climate as a complicating element in economic recovery and building up governmental effectiveness in both the crisis management and economic diplomacy fronts. The climate injustice narrative has underlining frameworks in terms of historical discourses of post-colonial inequality and marginalization of the Global South. The recurring theme of the duty of developed nations to emit reinforces more ancient histories of development discourse, debt relations and North/South power imbalances. The modern discourse on floods mobilizes these historical frames and adjusts them to the context of the climate change, constructing ideologically compelling scripts that can be heard at various levels of time.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 National Identity in Victimhood of Climate

It is shown in the analysis that the Pakistani media creates a systemic discourse of national identity that makes it central with the discourse of climate victimhood in its core. This victim identity is not simply descriptive; it is ideologically active to perform several functions at once. It gives moral authority to the state of Pakistan in issues of international advocacy, therefore, making the state right to claim compensation, debt relief, and development aid by historically responsible states. This moral format relies on the already existing frameworks of historical injustice developed in post-colonial studies but with reference to the modern context of the climate crisis. However, the climate-victim framing also diverts the focus on domestic governance failures, infrastructural breakdowns, and disproportional vulnerabilities of the Pakistani society.

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Representing floods, in the first place, as externally induced climate catastrophe and not as a result of poor urban planning, deforestation, infrastructural decay, or social inequalities, the media argument exonerates the responsible elites on the one hand of avoidable misery. The systematic silencing of the voices of the affected populations is a factor that prevents alternative discourses that could shed light on failures or structural injustices of governments. The identity of the victim that is propagated through media discourse is highly selective. A unified victim of the Pakistan is a description instead of a differentiated society where flood vulnerability is having immense discrepancies based on class, sex, ethnicity and regional line. Although poor rural population and urban slum residents and ostracized groups are the most acutely affected, media framing offers un-differentiated victimhood of the country which hides these disparities. This homogenizing discourse has nation-building purposes, because it creates a sense of shared identity based on shared suffering and at the same time suppresses internal hierarchies and divisions. 6.2 Leadership Legitimation in the Period of Crisis. The crises create a platform of political leadership to prove their competence, decisiveness, and moral commitment enhancing their legitimacy claims. The media discourse under analysis takes an active part in this process of legitimation by means of systemic representation of leadership action, authority, and effectiveness. Through the representation of the Prime Minister as the key crisis manager who is using their governmental and military resources, media discourse legitimizes the executive power and creates a discourse where the political power is protecting and providential to the vulnerable members of society.

This legitimation works in various ways of discourse. First, the sheer amount of leadership representation will produce visibility that will create executive centrality. Second, active grammar construction makes leadership act as agentic agents who take decisive action. Third, the digital representations through visuals create a body presence that strengthens the leadership authority. Fourth, the contrast between an external crisis and an internal reaction places leadership as a protective barrier to threat. Nevertheless, this discourse of legitimation discloses contradictions and tensions at the same time. The imbalance of the lack of the domestic response capacity is implicitly recognized in media attention to the coordination of leadership and international interaction. The mention of slow international aid and poor resources creates a story of a leadership effectiveness limited and hindered by forces outside of the control of the government. This plan justifies status quo leaders (they can do everything they can under the circumstances) as well as justifies poor results (caused by constraints they cannot do the best).

The role of the military in flood response that is so prominent under all coverage supports specific formations of power in the Pakistani state machinery. The military is the main operator of relief measures and the leadership of civilians, the political orientation and coordination it offers internationally. This civil-military separation of crisis response work naturalises the central place of the military in governance, as well as makes armed forces the ultimate arbiter of the national security, as it is understood in broad terms, which covers an environmental catastrophe.

6.2 Media as Ideological Apparatus

The current study proves that media is a kind of an ideological machine generating, spreading, and naturalizing certain worldviews, power relations and social hierarchies. Media discourse does not only report the flood events but it also actively creates meanings about the disasters, responsibility, response and national identity. In their systematic linguistic and discursive decisions, media texts give preference to elite views and marginalize those of subalterns, justify the status quo, and naturalize specific explanatory models. Media ideological work works best when it is naturalized through which the socially constructed meanings manifested as mere descriptions of reality.

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Whenever media texts are accepted as regular, the governmental leaders as the main actors, the affected populations as mere victims, floods as external, and climate injustice as the main explanation, such constructions will be seen as common sense instead of ideological frames that serve certain interests. This ideological role is influenced by professional norms and institutional situations in the Pakistani journalism field. Reliance on formal sources of information, relationships of access between journalists and political elites, the business pressures of sensationalism over analytical complexity, and the under-investment of resources in investigative journalism, are all factors that lead to the systematic privilege of elite voices and governmental opinions. In addition, the use of nationalist framing, in which any form of criticism of governmental action in the situation of crises is considered unpatriotic also limits the freedom of journalism.

6.3 Digital Affordances and Multimodal Meaning-Making

Even though the scope of the digital media analysis in this study was limited by the access control, the evidence that can be gathered reveals how the multimodal affordances of digital platforms allow forming specific meaning-making opportunities. The visual and audio modalities paired with the textual ones allow layered and reinforcing messages, which build more complex and emotionally appeasing stories than those conveyed via print texts. The visual representation has especially strong effects. Pictures of submerged scenery set the magnitude and magnitude of catastrophe which cannot be described by written word. Photographed embodied presence and performed concern would build legitimacy claims in that photographs of leadership visiting affected areas build.

The visual evidence of the reaction by the government is presented through video footage of the military helicopters and rescue operations and the spectacular imagery confirms the power of states and their technological abilities. The affordances of digital platforms in terms of real-time updating and accumulation create the feeling of an ongoing crisis and constant governmental reaction. Live blogs and breaking-news styles build a sense of immediacy and urgency without restricting it to a specific point of information addition and revision as events progress.

The temporal structure is essentially opposed to the retrospective narrative sense of coherence of print media, giving rise to more fragmented but more instantaneous sense of crisis. However, notwithstanding these differences in modalities, essential patterns of ideologies are shared by print and digital media. Both the platforms give priority to elite voices, legitimize state power, create the identity of the victim, and marginalize other voices. The difference in modality creates differences in execution as opposed to basic differences in ideological functioning.

6.4 Implications to Climate Governance and Justice

The discursive patterns discovered in the present study have substantial consequences in terms of climate governance and justice in the country of Pakistan and in the wider context. The climate victimhood creation is creating persuasive narratives of advocacy that underline the need to have international climate finance and loss and damages compensation and debt relief. Such assertions make ethical sense and are psychologically significant to vulnerable countries who suffer (and will suffer) an excessive burden of the climatic consequences. Nevertheless, there is a risk of distorting domestic climate responsibilities, disaster preparedness and vulnerability reduction as well in climate victim discourse.

The incentivity towards domestic action might be reduced when floods are described as the effects of external climate alteration instead of the results of domestic measures in terms of investing in infrastructure, urbanization, social welfare, and equality. The media discourse which features emphasis on international duty and causal outside factors systematically and exclusion of analysis of domestic policy failure may unintentionally sabotage the advocacy of better domestic government. In addition, the tendency to emphasize government and elite

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actors in climate rhetoric will probably put to the periphery community-based adaptation efforts, localized knowledge systems, and grassroots resilience-making initiatives.

When climate response in media is structured as largely a government policy and global financial issue, there can be no place to develop alternative strategies. Inhibiting the media discourse of affected populations systematically is an important question of justice. The victims of flood effects are transformed into voiceless objects of elite interest as opposed to active subjects having knowledge, views and agency. The reproduction of such epistemic injustices enhances material vulnerabilities, which deprive the dehumanized communities of knowledge producers in terms of disasters experiences and response requirements.

6.5 Reflections on Methodology

This study shows the importance of the integrated critical discourse analysis (CDA) practices involving the application of a combination of theoretical frameworks and analytical techniques. The three-dimensional model that Fairclough developed gave a systematic approach to the analysis at the textual, discursive, and social level. The socio-cognitive approach by Van Dijk enlightened ideological functions and the formation of mental models. The discourse-historical analysis presented by Wodak enabled contextualization in wider contexts in time, and social trends. The systemic functional linguistics developed by Halliday provided detailed linguist means of analyzing grammatical meaning-making.

The combination of these frameworks produced analytical richness not achievable by any single method, and coherence by virtue of the common devotion to the study of relationships between language and power of CDA. Such integration of methods, however, was analytically labour intensive and was difficult to present the findings in a coherent way. Future studies can come up with smoother integrative models without losing the depth of analysis.

The constraints that it experienced when accessing and analysing digital video content demonstrated that there are methodological issues in multimodal discourse analysis. Further studies will require the creation of new analytical tools and protocols that are tailored to systematic multimodal analysis as well as taking into account practical and ethical concerns associated with the way it is possible to access, store, and analyze video material.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The current research reveals the ways in which Pakistani print and digital media establish a national identity by the reporting of the flood-crisis by systematically applying linguistic and discursive strategies that reveal Pakistan as a victim of climate, justification of the authority of political leadership, expression of the narratives of resilience as a community, and the incorporation of specific ideological frames into the media discourse. By incorporating various theoretical approaches and applying them through extensive Critical Discourse Analysis, this study has illuminated complicated processes through which media discourse constructs and recreates particular sets of power, identity, and meanings as an ideological machine.

The discussion revealed a number of major trends: The selection of lexis helps to create a vision of victimhood in the climate and at the same time underline the moral innocence and unfair treatment of Pakistan. Grammatical constructions have placed floods and floods as external forces, but when the governmental leadership is represented, it is an active competent responder. The voice distributions favour the elite views at the expense of the voices of the affected. Ideological systems naturalise state-based crisis reactions and shift the focus away on domestically founded failure of governance. Further, these patterns are enhanced by the multimodal affordances of digital media which include visual and affective registers that cannot be provided in a print text.

These discursive patterns are used in various ideological functions at the same time. They produce powerful advocacy stories that support international climate finance and compensation of loss and damage. They also rationalise the current political power by portraying leadership

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as active crisis resolution agents. They create one national identity based on victimhood and, as such, internal disparities are lost. They naturalise specific sets of explanations of disasters and exclude other sets of understanding. Lastly, they reproduce the hierarchical relations of power in which elite knowledge and voices are privileged and subaltern views are sidelined.

Nevertheless, tensions and contradictions in media discourse are also demonstrated in this research study. The discussion of the insufficiency of international responses and resource availability implicitly accepts insufficiencies of the domestic realm, even as it develops narratives based on governments working well. The systematic emphasis on elite actors makes the political leadership more visible and at the same time makes the government reliant on outside aid more noticeable. The creation of collective identity of victims brings about strong collective histories, but it stifles internal differences and struggles.

7.1 Contributions

The research contributes to the scholarship in a number of ways. First, it develops the Critical Discourse Analysis application in Global South statuses by providing a comprehensive linguistic analysis of creating the national identity in crises of environment in Pakistan through its media discourse. Second, it adds to the body of research in the field of media and disaster communication through illustrating systemic trends in crisis reporting that can perform ideological roles beyond information provision. Third, it provides an understanding of the discourse of climate justice, as it demonstrates how the victimhood narratives can be both an advocacy instrument and a deflection strategy. Fourth, it establishes a comprehensive methodological approach that integrates various approaches to CDA and Systemic Functional Linguistics, respectively, thus providing effective tools to be used in the future in the study of media discourse.

7.2 Future Research Directions

1. Enlarged Corpus Analysis: Future studies need to consider more comprehensive corpora of flood coverage across longer durations, which would allow one to point out continuous trends and changes.
2. Multilingual Analysis: A study of the coverage of Urdu and regional languages will help understand the way national identity is constructed differently in a language context and among audience groups.
3. Alternative media analysis: The analysis of social media discourse, community media, and alternative news sources will reveal counter-narratives and opposing readings that appear in neither mainstream media coverage nor notorious ones.

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