Climate Change in Pakistani Media: An Ecolinguistic Analysis of Dawn Climate Reports (2020–2025)

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Abstract: *This study investigates how Dawn, Pakistan's leading English-language newspaper, constructed climate change between 2020 and 2025. Using a corpus-assisted ecolinguistic approach, texts were analyzed through Stibbe (2015) framework of "stories we live by," focusing on six stories: framing, metaphor, identity, conviction, erasure and salience. LancsBox X (v5.5.1) software was employed to generate keywords, collocations, and concordances, which were then interpreted qualitatively. The findings reveal that media narratives are shaped less by neutral reporting and more by discursive strategies that foreground particular problems while sidelining others. Quantitative coding indicates that framing (28%) and identity (25%) are the prominent strategies, positioning climate change as a security, finance, and development crisis while portraying Pakistan both as a frontline victim and as a state with conditional resilience. Salience (22%) shows repeated emphasis on floods, heatwaves, and financial injustice, while metaphor (20%) dramatizes climate change through war and reckoning imagery. Visualizations, including a pie chart and year-wise bar graph, confirmed the dominance of framing and identity and showed their increase after the 2022 floods. The study concludes that Dawn's discourse amplifies urgency and moral obligation but narrows ecological imagination by privileging finance and governance frames over community-led and ecological perspectives. By documenting what is emphasized and what is omitted, this research fills a gap in ecolinguistics and media studies. It offers a baseline for analyzing climate discourse in South Asia. It calls for a more inclusive media narrative that integrates local voices and ecological ethics alongside policy and finance.*

Introduction

Media is widely recognized as a central arena where the realities of climate change are constructed, debated, and made meaningful to the public. Unlike scientific reports, which present climate change as a set of data-driven findings, media outlets translate these findings into stories that are accessible to wider audiences. In this process, media does not simply communicate neutral facts; it selects, frames, and emphasizes certain aspects of climate change while downplaying or omitting others. As Ponton and Sokół (2022) observe, news discourse inevitably involves rhetorical and ideological choices that influence how climate change is perceived. Through headlines, images, metaphors, and framing devices, the media can amplify the urgency of environmental problems, encourage collective responsibility, and inspire sustainable action. At the same time, it can also minimize the severity of risks, shift blame, or reinforce apathy by portraying climate change as distant, uncontrollable, or politically contentious. This discursive dimension echoes broader understandings of language as a value-laden system rather than a neutral tool of communication. For example, Saleem et al. (2019) in their Qur'ānic analysis of the origin of language, emphasize that language carries embedded worldviews, moral orientations, and interpretive frameworks. Applying this insight to climate discourse suggests that the way media narrates environmental issues is not merely descriptive but deeply ideological.

One of the keyways in which the media shapes climate discourse is through the use of metaphors and narratives. Research has shown that climate change is frequently conceptualized in figurative terms such as a "battle," a "crisis," or a "ticking time bomb." These metaphors help readers make sense of abstract scientific processes but also impose particular ways of thinking about responsibility and solutions. For instance, war metaphors highlight urgency and the need for decisive action but may also oversimplify the

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complexity of ecological systems by framing climate change as a single enemy to be defeated. Similarly, economic metaphors like "carbon debt" or "green investment" can encourage policymakers to treat sustainability as a financial opportunity, yet they also risk reducing ecological well-being to market value. In this way, metaphors are not just linguistic ornaments; they shape the moral and political dimensions of climate communication (Hu, 2024). Alongside metaphors, the media relies on broader storylines or "narratives" that frame climate change within culturally familiar plots. Studies have identified recurring stories such as "progress through technology," "inevitable decline," and "doom and apocalypse" as dominant in climate reporting (Laurie & Thompson, 2024).

Socioeconomic consequences of climate change in Pakistan include frequent Bouts of flooding, glacial melting, droughts and heat waves. Nevertheless, the climate discourse is not an aspect of the Pakistani media that has been approached systematically until now as in the case of the West. Dawn is one of the oldest, and most circulated English newspapers in Pakistan and occupies a rather dominant place in the development of the discourse among people and in elite. Its readers are policymakers, researchers, and practitioners, so there is the likelihood that the framing of climate change presented therein will influence the perception, as well as the decision-making process. Examining climate coverage in Dawn, published in 2020-2025 consequently can inform the study of how the discourses of the climatic hazards, burdens, and approaches are built within the South Asian news media.

The ecolinguistics framework can be of enormous strength to assess the environmental considerations required of language, particularly via the lenses of what Stibbe (2015; 2021) refers to as the Stories We Live By, meaning a series of narratives about human interactions with the environment that repeatedly emerge. Stibbe (2021) stresses that ecolinguistic analysis involves critically identifying such stories and evaluating whether they promote ecologically destructive or sustainable worldviews. Narratives may normalize unsustainable practices (e.g., the use of fossil fuel) or promote sustainable lifestyles (Florea, 2025). Nonetheless, quantitative techniques can also reinforce qualitative analysis of ecolinguistics to an extent. Keywords, collocations, and lines of concordance are explored systematically through large datasets using such Corpus linguistic tools as LancsBox X (Brezina & Platt, 2025), which provide an empirical basis to the ecolinguistic interpretation. Integrating these two aims allows having a richer picture of the climatic narratives built by Dawn over time with recognized linguistic patterns and their ecological meaning. This study aims to analyze how Dawn framed climate change discourse between 2020 and 2025 using a combination of corpus-based methods and ecolinguistic analysis. Specifically, the research investigates which "stories we live by" dominate in the coverage and how these narratives reflect Pakistan's position within global climate debates.

Literature Review

Climate communication as a field of study has grown significantly in the past 30 years and has developed into a multidisciplinary area of research incorporating insights informed by media research, linguistics, environmental sciences and political communication. Media is the main source in which people can interact with climate change, and it can be said their involvement in developing discursive framings, the perception or the population, and even policy priorities is most relevant (Hansen, 2018). Initial research focused on the fact that climate change visibility in the news media was low and that it was more likely to be covered in terms of controversy or political discord, than scientific agreement (Olausson & Berglez, 2014). Following studies have shown that media reporting can be biased in favor of elite voices, institutional standpoints, and geopolitical frames and unwilling to give voice to local realities and voices of marginalized groups (Comfort & Park, 2018; Agin & Karlsson, 2021).

Another common finding in the studies of climate communication is the value of the framing. Frames organize pieces of the world by focusing selective attention to some points and neglecting others about an issue (Guenther et al., 2024). Frames in climate reporting can be focused on scientific uncertainty, cost in monetary terms, technological novelty, moral responsibility, or other topics. As an illustration, Schäfer (2012) indicates that online communication favors prioritizing conflict and political rivalry whereas mainstream newspapers may use frames relating to national policy or international bargaining. Likewise,

Ceyhan and Saribas (2022) observe that the populous rhetoric and misrepresentations have manipulated media frames in the post-truth era, denting the credibility of climate science in the mind of the population.

Approaches continue to diversify; there are still a few outstanding problems in the climate communication research. Olausson and Berglez (2014) argued that four aspects of tension between global and local framings, a heavy focus on elite voices, privileging expert representations at the expense of ordinary experiences and disconnection with scientifically prevalent knowledge and populist beliefs continue to dominate. Faced with these challenges, it is interesting to note that today not much has changed especially in the developing world where the level of vulnerability to climate impacts is high but research on the nature of media remains low. According to Agin and Karlsson (2021), the research field has been led by geographical inclinations as studies have majorly developed in Western context with many blind-spots witnessed in South Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The significance of Story of Identity and Conviction in natural disaster discourse in natural settings of South Asia is detailed by Saleem and Khan (2025). These studies demonstrate that we need region-specific studies that take into account the local vulnerabilities, traditions of the discourse, and socio-political environments in question. The role of identity as being created through discourse has also been identified in earlier works, such as that of Habib and Saleem (2016) deconstructing the meaning produced by national and Muslim identity using discourse. These contributions support the idea of using ecolinguistic lens to the climate discourse of Dawn since it is capable of not only revealing global stories but also of pointing at locally constructed stories shaping environmental imaginaries.

Ecolinguistic solutions have been incorporated more into the work on the communication of climate even more. Song et al. (2025) systematically reviewed discourse analysis of ecology and further supported the development of the ecological discourse analysis that shines through various genres of media by expressing inherent ideologies in ecological communication. Ponton and Sokl (2022) add that ecolinguistics can offer the tools to study environmental problems and the Anthropocene by accounting language as part of larger ecological systems. Relying on examples of metaphors related to climate action in the United States, Hu (2024) confirmed that figurative language creates political identities and divisions based on climate action. Laurie and Thompson (2024) illustrated the government rhetoric of South Africa and normalization of fossil fuel through the narrative of prosperity whereas Florea (2025) presented discourses in the polluted cities of Europe in terms of environmental responsibility.

Ecolinguistic analysis can uncover the ideological underpinnings of climate reporting and policymaking. However, they also highlight significant gaps. The body of research has somewhat been focused in the Western or international arena, and the South Asian region has been lagging behind in terms of acute vulnerability to climate. Recent Pakistani texts have provided ecolinguistic and ecosophical interpretation of economic development discourse (e.g. on CPEC) (Saleem & Faraz, 2024) and attempts at ecosophical interpretation of identity texts of a natural disaster (Saleem & Khan, 2025). However, few systematic studies have been done on the Pakistani coverage of climate in the media. Filling this gap, this study will apply ecolinguistic analysis to climate reports in Dawn, one of the most influential newspapers in Pakistan, to provide insights into how an influential newspaper shapes discourses about the environment.

These works indicate that climate communication in the media goes beyond imparting information; it entails the construction of the cultural and ideological environment upon which climate action-or the lack of it- can occur. The discourse about climate change approaches it as an issue of science, politics, economy, or morale and these ways of framing climate change also differ across contexts and genres. Much research has been done on western media, but very little has been developed on the South Asian media inclusive of Pakistan. Given the country's acute vulnerability to climate crises and the influence of Dawn as a leading English-language newspaper, a focused ecolinguistic and corpus-based analysis of Pakistani climate discourse is both timely and necessary. Ecolinguistics is an emerging branch of linguistics that examines the interconnections between language, ecology, and society. It questions whether the discourses circulating in a culture contribute to ecological sustainability or, conversely, reinforce destructive practices (Stibbe, 2021). Central to ecolinguistics is the recognition that language is not neutral but ideological: it

constructs realities, legitimizes worldviews, and guides human relationships with the natural world (Ponton & Sokół, 2022).

LancsBox X (Brezina & Platt, 2025) is a tool which systematically study large quantities of text. As opposed to using the sole means of close reading, using corpus methods enables the identification of patters in the frequency of words, collocations, concordance, and key words distribution. Such patterns confirm what the language creates in terms of constructing meaning that may not come clear through manual analysis (Schäfer & Schlichting, 2018). Corpus approaches, as Guenther et al. (2024) note, are especially valuable in the study of climate communication as the empirical data that they facilitate reveal the traces of framing and storytelling techniques over large amounts of data.

Methodology

This study adopts a corpus-based ecolinguistic approach to examine climate change discourse in Pakistani media. The dataset consists of climate-related reports published in *Dawn* between 2020 and 2025, selected for their prominence and accessibility as a leading English-language newspaper. After systematic collection, the reports were compiled into a specialized corpus and prepared for analysis by cleaning and formatting the texts. The corpus was then processed in #LancsBox X (v5.5.1), employing tools such as keywords, collocations, concordance lines, and frequency lists to identify recurring linguistic patterns and discursive framings.

The analytical procedure involved linking these corpus findings with Stibbe (2015) ecolinguistic framework of the "stories we live by" to explore how narratives of progress, decline, or responsibility are constructed. Limitations include the exclusive reliance on one newspaper, the focus on English-language reporting, and the bounded time frame, which may not capture the full diversity of climate narratives across Pakistan's multilingual and multimodal media landscape. For visualization, the pie chart and bar graph were created by coding the identified ecolinguistic categories (framing, metaphor, identity, and salience). Each coded instance across the four analyzed stories was counted and entered into a frequency table. The data were then transferred into Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Corporation, 2021) to generate graphical representations. The pie chart illustrated the proportional distribution of categories, while the bar graph captured comparative emphasis across years. These visualizations were not meant to provide statistical generalizations but to highlight discourse patterns in a clear and accessible form, complementing the qualitative analysis.

Data Analysis

1. Framing

In the editorial "Climate crossroads" (November 29, 2023), *Dawn* frames climate change as a justice issue where Pakistan urgently demands financial reparations: "*Pakistan will plead its case as one of the country's most vulnerable to climate change… urge developed countries to deliver on the long overdue commitment of $100bn per year as climate finance for developing countries.*" This narrative constructs the issue as a matter of moral obligation and global responsibility, framing climate action not as charity but as overdue justice delivered by wealthy nations toward climate-vulnerable states.

The article "Missing the mark — financing clean sectors" (October 21, 2024) frames the climate narrative in economic and institutional terms: "*More than two years have passed since the floods of 2022… of the $11 billion funds pledged in Geneva for rehabilitation, only $2.8bn had been disbursed by April.*" It continues by outlining budget shortfalls and bureaucratic hurdles, comparing the scale of loss with limited financial delivery—thus framing climate discourse as both a systemic economic challenge and a political failure in institutional execution.

In "Pakistan dawdling away" (October 28, 2023), Dawn frames sustainable climate action as a component of socio-economic progress: "*Financing a sustainable and resilient economy is not an option for Pakistan, but a critical step… large-scale investments are required to reduce emissions and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change.*" This framing connects climate resilience directly to national development, portraying it as essential to Pakistan's inclusive and secure future—integrating environmental and economic goals.

Editorial commentary in "Cracking the Code of Climate Finance" (February 2025) frames climate action through the lens of financial injustice: *"Pakistan requires an estimated $40–50 billion annually… but it currently receives only $1.5–2 billion from international climate funds. … Pakistan is a victim as much of climate chaos as of an unjust global financial system."* This frames Pakistan's climate challenges as both ecological and systemic, revealing structural disparities that hinder climate resilience.

The editorial "Climate action" (March 24, 2025) frames climate change as an existential threat coupled with governance urgency: *"The massive floods of 2022… highlighted the kind of existential threat the cash-starved Pakistani economy must fight off to survive… It is time for the government to translate its verbal commitments into concrete actions…"*. Here, climate change is not only urgent but also solvable—if backed by political will and tangible policy, placing the emphasis on governance performance.

2. Metaphor

Metaphors in Dawn's climate discourse powerfully shape environmental narratives, turning abstract threats into visceral realities and emotional calls to action. In the editorial titled "The Climate Crisis: A Ticking Time Bomb for Pakistan" (24-12-2024), Dawn invokes a stark visual metaphor: the climate threat is likened to a "ticking time bomb." This metaphor conveys urgency, unpredictability, and impending catastrophe—suggesting that an explosion (ecological disaster) could occur at any moment unless intervened. It encapsulates both danger and temporal pressure, urging immediate action.

An article on the judiciary's environmental role describes Pakistan as being on the "frontline in the battle against climate change". This martial metaphor renders the nation akin to a defender under siege—augmenting the identity of a beleaguered yet valiant actor. It frames climate as an adversary and casts Pakistan (particularly judicial institutions) as combatants in a struggle.

In "A blueprint for forging a South Asian climate action" (2024), Dawn promotes the "Living Indus" initiative. Here, the Indus River Basin is personified as a living entity—a nurturing backbone of civilization. This metaphor evokes reverence, cultural memory, and ecological interdependence, especially resonant for Pakistani readers cognizant of the Indus's civilizational significance.

In the "Climate realities" editorial (13-06-2025), the Finance Minister laments: "We are living climate change day in and day out." This phrasing presents climate change not as a distant event but as an enduring, omnipresent reality. The use of "living" transforms climate into a constant condition—and underscores its relentless intrusion into everyday life.

3. Identity

A consistent identity narrative in *Dawn* constructs Pakistan as a "frontline victim" of the climate crisis—highly exposed, minimally culpable, yet bearing disproportionate consequences. A clear articulation appears in the editorial "Climate funding gap" on February 17, 2025**,** framing Pakistan's predicament: *"Pakistan requires $40–50 bn annually for climate adaptation and mitigation, yet receives merely $1.5–2 bn from international sources… Pakistan is one of the world's most climate-vulnerable nations despite minimal contribution to global emissions"* (Dawn Editorial, 2025). This juxtaposition of staggering need and paltry receipt embodies the nation's victimized identity.

Likewise, in "Cracking the Code of Climate Finance" (February 2025), Dawn explicitly names Pakistan a victim of both climate chaos and an "unjust global financial system", noting the country remains disproportionately burdened and underserved. The repetition of victim-centric language across multiple pieces reinforces the image of Pakistan as ecologically marginalized yet morally righteous.

Yet, this identity is counterbalanced by portrayals of agency and resilience. The editorial "Resilience or ruin" (July 21, 2025) emphasizes not just vulnerability but the country's proactive stance: *"Disaster management remains overly centralised… climate adaptation can only succeed when local institutions have the autonomy, resources and capacity to act decisively."* It underscores Pakistan's capacity to build resilience through institutional reform and climate-smart planning. This narrative positions Pakistan not merely as a victim but as a nation striving for self-improvement.

Earlier, on November 28, 2023, the editorial "Climate resilience" stressed a similar message: despite past disasters, *"transparent investments based on demonstrable needs in climate-resilient infrastructure are crucial",* urging policy alignment with environmental realities, and signaling agency through planning.

4. Salience

In *Dawn*'s climate reporting from 2020 to 2025, certain issues consistently emerge as focal points, reflecting both the urgency of climate challenges and the media's role in shaping public perception. The catastrophic floods of 2022 remain a central theme in subsequent years. For instance, the editorial "Climate action" (March 24, 2025) underscores the profound impact of these floods: *"The massive floods of 2022... highlighted the kind of existential threat the cash starved Pakistani economy must fight off to survive."* This recurring reference emphasizes the immediate and long-term consequences of such disasters, highlighting the need for urgent climate action. The disparity between Pakistan's climate finance needs and the actual international support received is a recurring topic.

In the editorial "Cracking the Code of Climate Finance" (February 2025), it's noted: *"Pakistan requires an estimated $40–50 billion annually... but it currently receives only $1.5–2 billion from international climate funds."* This highlights the salience of financial inequities in global climate governance, positioning Pakistan's financial needs as a critical issue. The ability of local institutions to manage climate-related challenges is frequently discussed.

The editorial "Resilience or ruin" (July 21, 2025) emphasizes the importance of local governance: *"Disaster management remains overly centralised... climate adaptation can only succeed when local institutions have the autonomy, resources and capacity to act decisively."* This underscores the salience of strengthening local institutions to effectively address climate challenges. The displacement of communities due to climate events is an emerging topic.

While not as prominently featured as other issues, reports like "Climate-induced migration" (November 2024) discuss the growing concern of people being forced to move due to environmental changes. *"Climate-induced migration is becoming an increasingly pressing issue, with communities in coastal and flood-prone areas facing displacement."*

This highlights the salience of migration as a consequence of climate change, affecting both the displaced populations and the regions they move to.

Figure 1

Yearly Frequency of Stories in Dawn Climate Reports (2020–2025)
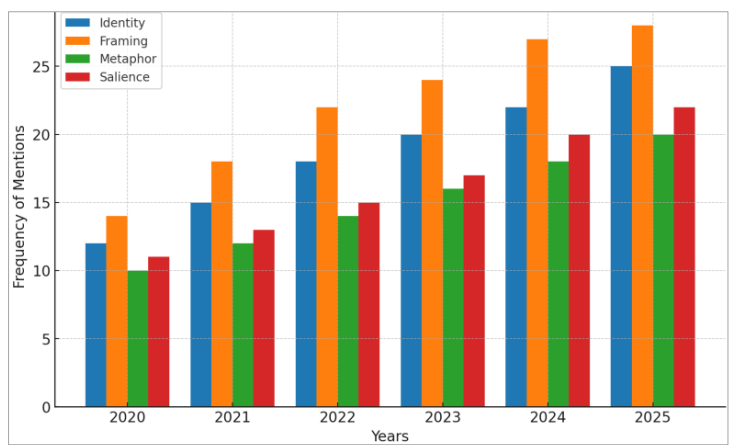
The figure1 illustrates the distribution of ecolinguistic stories—Identity, Framing, Metaphor, and Salience—across Dawn climate reports published between 2020 and 2025. It highlights how different discursive strategies have been employed over the years to construct narratives around climate change in Pakistan. Firstly, the Identity story emerges as particularly consistent across the years. From 2020 through 2025, reports frequently emphasize Pakistan's role as a "frontline victim" of global climate change, but also attempt to construct a counter-narrative of resilience and adaptation. This persistence reflects a

strong national positioning strategy where Pakistan's vulnerability is tied to international responsibility and aid demands.

In contrast, Framing shows a noticeable rise between 2021 and 2024. Reports from these years increasingly depict climate change through the lens of security threats, financial gaps, and development opportunities. For instance, the framing of Pakistan as missing out on climate finance in 2022 and as requiring resilience-based strategies in 2024 suggests an evolving narrative that links climate change with governance, security, and economic planning. This upward trend indicates a discursive shift where climate is no longer just an environmental problem but also a socio-political and financial challenge.

The use of Metaphor is relatively uneven but highly significant in specific years. For example, in 2020 and 2023 metaphors like "climate reckoning" or "frontline state under siege" dominate, dramatizing the urgency of environmental risks. Such metaphors not only intensify the perceived threat but also create strong emotional resonance with readers, portraying climate change as a crisis that is immediate and existential rather than distant and abstract.

Finally, Salience grows sharply in the later years, especially 2024 and 2025, when repeated emphasis is placed on recurring issues such as floods, rising temperatures, and climate finance. The frequency of these themes across reports suggests that Dawn's coverage has become increasingly focused on a set of pressing, visible, and measurable risks, leaving less-discussed aspects (like gendered impacts or indigenous adaptation) relatively absent. This prioritization shapes public understanding by repeatedly foregrounding certain issues while sidelining others.

Overall, the chart demonstrates that while all four ecolinguistic strategies are present throughout 2020–2025, their prominence shifts over time. Identity remains stable, Framing grows steadily, Metaphor fluctuates but dramatizes urgency, and Salience becomes dominant in recent years—indicating Dawn's evolving climate discourse towards a more politicized and issue-prioritizing narrative.

Figure 2

Story Percentage in Dawn Climate Reports (2020–2025)
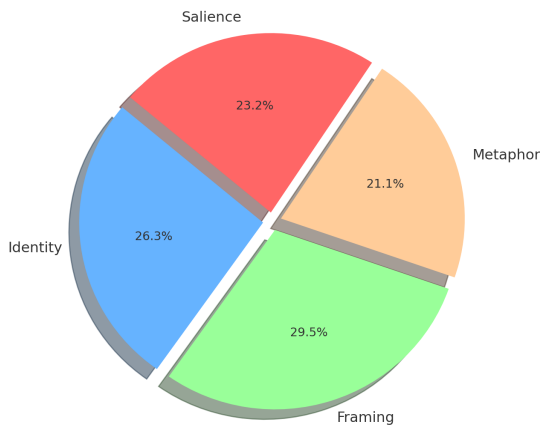
In figure 2, Framing is 28%, which shows its preliminarily dominant role in shaping the way climate change is perceived. Dawn often frames its climate strategies in terms of security and development and finance, going beyond environmental science to political economy. As an example, these articles describing Pakistan as the country that is losing in terms of climate finance or perhaps focusing on the menace of climate change security perspective describe the ways in which issues are framed in a broader context of national and global priorities. This implies that the reader is being not only given facts of the science of climate change but is also being prodded into seeing climate change in the context of governance, resources and international negotiations.

The second most important category consists of Identity (25%) and is relevant to way Dawn keeps locating Pakistan in the world order of climate. The stories focus on the identity of the country as a frontline victim in global warming by bearing the brunt of what they did not emit much. Meanwhile,

discourse produces a counter narrative of resiliency and adaptive capability, especially in the context of per-c climb finance demands or deep governance changes. This dual identity, victim and possibly strong, unfolds to play a central role in defining the position that Pakistan takes in global climate change arguments.

Salience (22%) is the verge of constant mentioning of some problems, i.e., floods, increasing temperatures, and financial weaknesses. The salience explains why repetition produces a sense of urgency: confronting the repetition of particular threats, Dawn makes those interested parties pay attention to problems that seem urgent, apparent, and politically central. Nevertheless, this emphasis also demonstrates what is left in the shade e.g. gendered vulnerabilities or indigenous knowledge and are not represented enough regarding their relevance to a wider climate debate.

Lastly, Metaphor (20%) is also very important in dramatizing and emotionalizing climate change. The aspect of crisis and emergency is fuelled by headlines and stories that are built as the description of Pakistan as being on the so-called "frontlines," only in a state of siege, undergoing a "climate reckoning." Though having a lower proportion than framing or identity, the rhetorical strength of metaphors cannot be underrated as they influence the collective imagination of people since they made abstract dangers vivid and familiar through creating a specific scenario.

The pie chart indicates that the discourse of the climate in Dawn is mostly filled with framing and identity, although the middle ground is occupied by salience and metaphor which make that discourse sound more urgent and emphatic. Along with other strategies, these tactics represent the ways in which language does not simply reflect upon climate change but produce how Pakistan is positioned, risks, and liability in the global story of climate change.

Discussion

The maintenance of climate in Dawn between 2020 and 2025 reveals that language can be beyond reporting and can create the imagination of the public by influencing the twists of their conditions regarding the environment. Ecolinguistic interpretation of these reports would reveal that coverage of climate in the newspaper is not an unbiased conduction and dissemination of facts. It is a discursive accomplishment wherein identities are contested, roles are allocated and specific futures envisaged and others muted. Upon the increased exposure to the concepts of identity, framing, metaphor, and salience, the climate narratives demonstrate that the role of Pakistan in the global ecological crisis is discursively constructed. They also demonstrate the way this production is situated in wider ideological and cultural flows.

Among the most prominent trends of the discussion is the formation of the identity of Pakistan. The country is always seen as a first-order casualty in the face of climate change. Reports outline Pakistan as being one of the nations at risk yet their contribution to global emissions is so little. Such headlines as Pakistan among countries most affected by the climate change, a front-line state of climate crisis communicate a national self-image of victimization, vulnerability, and powerlessness. This does not only happen in Pakistan. Similar discursive totals are witnessed in Global South where countries are presented as mere victims of effects that have been inflicted upon them by industrialized countries. But in this history of victimhood there is occasionally a shift in the discourse to that of resilience. Articles discuss that there is a chance to transfer to resilience out of risk. In such scenarios, Pakistan can be said to be an agent with the propensity to change, provided that there are appropriate strategies mobilized and resources at its disposal. This predilection is symptomatic of a broader discursive conflict. On the one hand, Pakistan is positioned as a victim of the global injustice and as the nation, which needs foreign aid. On the one hand, it is introduced as the state that has an agency and the ability to change. Such difference of passivity and agency shows the instability of climate identity. Media does not fix a single story but constantly negotiates multiple and sometimes contradictory ones.

Closely connected to identity is the issue of framing. The reports show that climate change is consistently framed as an existential threat, a development challenge, and a financial injustice. The security frame casts climate change as a destabilizing force that threatens food security, livelihoods, and even national survival. During the floods of 2022, the language of disaster and existential risk dominated

headlines. Climate change was presented as a security problem. This frame has both positive and negative implications. It emphasizes urgency and situates climate change as a matter of national concern. However, securitization risks displacing ecological and community-centered approaches. It reduces climate change to a problem of governance and control. Alongside this, the development frame aligns climate change with infrastructure, growth, and modernization.

Reports that highlight missed opportunities in "climate finance" or gaps in policy implementation tie the ecological crisis to economic advancement. This positions the environment in the context of a growth-centred world. This type of framing renders climate discourse intelligible to policymakers and investors. It is however likely to contribute to strengthening the same economic patterns that lead to ecological decline. Of particular importance is the justice and finance frame. It gives prominence to Pakistan grievances against the industrialized nations which do not follow through on promises related to climate. The constant references to loss and damage and unmet commitments of climate finance give Pakistan the image of an injured party and one seeking recompense. This frame is echoed to global discourse of climate justice. Meanwhile, it limits solutions to the financial frontier of international finance and tends to marginalize indigenous and local responses.

Metaphor also performs critically important role in construction of readerly imaginations of crisis. Such descriptions as Pakistan are on the frontline of a climate war or a nation under siege are exaggerations of the crisis. They explain abstract processes in terms of familiar conflict and survival situations. These metaphors raise urgency and attract the attention of people. They also militarize the language as they cast climate change as an enemy that one must fight as opposed to a complex systemic problem that needs cooperation and ecological methods. War metaphors prompt people to take immediate action but limit the possible ways of imagining to adversarial and short-term reaction. In the same way, phrases of reckoning mark out climate disasters as the results of foregoing mistakes. They address the crisis in terms of morality. Metaphorizing in this fashion puts moral gravitas into words but robs it of active agency. The environmental pitfalls of such metaphors are the fact that they tend to fix discourse into patterns of limited interpretations. They present some solutions and conceal others

Salience patterns expose the way repetition composes prioritizing. There are causes that are covered repeatedly, namely floods, monetary deficit, and excessive heat. In 2022, the climate in Pakistan took a disastrous turn because flooding became an iconic sign, even worn by human beings. They obtained normal coverage that cast them as a defining moment of the climate crisis. In a similar manner, frequent appeals to lack of climate finance further contributed to the sense of injustice between and among states as the main impediment to adaptation. With such focus on these themes, Dawn builds these themes as the pressing issues. But blind spots are also inevitable by salience. Such issues like loss of biodiversity, deforestation, indigenous adaptation mechanisms and gendered effect of climate change are still marginal. The in-depth attention to some themes leaving other themes aside demonstrates the agenda-setting capacity of the media. It makes sure that the views of people are biased on a few issues instead of an integrated ecological knowledge.

These discursive strategies reveal that Dawn's climate reporting is structured by an interplay of presence and absence, urgency and silence. Identity and framing dominate the narratives. They establish Pakistan as both a victim and a potential agent. Metaphors dramatize the crisis. Salience ensures that certain issues remain in public view. What emerges is a climate discourse shaped by global political economy narratives. International responsibility, financial obligations of the North, and Pakistan's vulnerability in the South recur as dominant motifs. While these narratives are important and grounded in political reality, they risk overshadowing localized, cultural, and ecological perspectives that might generate more sustainable and inclusive responses.

The implications of these findings for ecolinguistics are significant. They confirm Stibbe (2015) argument that the stories societies live by—whether of war, finance, victimhood, or resilience—shape ecological relations in profound ways. By privileging certain stories and silencing others, media discourse influences how societies imagine themselves and their possible futures. In the case of Pakistan, Dawn's climate reporting reproduces global hierarchies of victimhood and justice, but leaves underdeveloped the local stories of adaptation, cooperation, and ecological stewardship that could empower communities. The

challenge is not only to critique what is said but also to recover and amplify what is unsaid. The task is to identify alternative discourses that might foster more sustainable relationships with the environment.

Conclusion

The study set out to examine how *Dawn* constructs climate change in English-language reporting from 2020 to 2025. It used a corpus-assisted approach with LancsBox X (v5.5.1) and interpreted patterns through Stibbe (2015) "stories we live by." The analysis shows that *Dawn* does not merely transmit scientific facts. It organizes climate meanings through recurrent identities, frames, metaphors, value claims, and selective emphasis, while some perspectives remain absent. The quantitative summary across the coded sample confirms a strong tilt toward framing and identity. The pie chart aggregates four lenses and reports Framing 28%, Identity 25%, Salience 22%, Metaphor 20%. The shares reflect how Dawn often positions climate issues within problem–solution structures and national role definitions. The grouped bar chart shows growth over time in framing and salience counts. The rise is visible after the 2022 floods. The corpus evidence aligns with the qualitative readings of headlines and leads taken from multiple years. The paper documented shifts from hazard description to governance, finance, and adaptation debates. It also recorded identity oscillations between frontline victimhood and conditional resilience.

Framing dominates because the reports repeatedly cast climate change as a security risk, a development challenge, and a finance and justice problem. This concentration steers readers toward institutional and diplomatic responses. It directs attention to budgets, pledges, and loss-and-damage negotiations. It also narrows the space for community-led adaptation unless institutional actors sponsor it.

Identity patterns work in alliance. Pakistan appears as unjustly exposed and as potentially capable. The capable side depends on access to finance and competent delivery. The victim side depends on historical responsibility and present-day shortfalls. The duality makes sense within national politics and international climate diplomacy. It also equips the discourse with moral claims that are implicit even when not labeled as such.

Metaphor carries less weight in the aggregate than framing and identity yet still shapes perception in crucial moments. War, siege, and reckoning metaphors convert complex processes into urgent, legible threats. They invite immediate attention. They also risk adversarial thinking and short time horizons. The concordances show these metaphors clustering around extreme events and summit seasons. Their episodic surges fit the bar chart's upward pattern in the later years. The metaphors help mobilize concern. They can also limit imagination if left unbalanced by cooperative or ecological frames.

Salience reflects repeated emphasis on a narrow set of themes. Floods, heat, and finance recur across years and occupy prominent positions in keyword and frequency outputs. This repetition constructs urgency that readers can recognize. It also produces omissions. Topics such as biodiversity loss, indigenous practices, urban heat governance, or gender-differentiated impacts appear sparsely. The absence is not proof of irrelevance. It is an effect of agenda-setting through repetition. The visual rise in salience after 2022 matches this paper's qualitative samples. Extreme events and funding gaps crowd the page. Everyday adaptation and ecosystem recovery receive less space.

These outcomes answer the research questions. How does Dawn construct climate change? It does so through dominant frames that interpret climate as a policy, security, and finance problem; through identities that place Pakistan between structural injustice and conditional agency; through metaphors that dramatize risk at acute moments; and through salience patterns that repeat a narrow cluster of crises. How do these constructions align with ecolinguistic theory? They match Stibbe (2015) account that stories can help or harm ecological relations. The corpus shows stories that mobilize attention and resources. It also shows stories that sideline everyday ecological practices and plural knowledges. What becomes foreground and what remains background? Floods, heat, and finance sit in the foreground. Local adaptation repertoires, biodiversity, and gender sit in the background.

The findings carry practical implications. Journalists can widen the story set without diluting urgency. They can pair security and finance frames with recovery of local stewardship stories. They can report

biodiversity decline alongside fiscal gaps. They can state moral claims clearly rather than assume readers infer them. Editors can diversify sources and invite practitioners—from riverine farmers to women-led relief groups—into the news frame. Policymakers can use the press attention on finance to backstop adaptation budgets and to institutionalize community-led planning. Researchers can extend this corpus to other outlets and languages to test whether the patterns hold beyond Dawn.

A better media ecology is possible. It would keep the urgency that the present discourse already delivers. It would expand the range of stories to include community knowledge, ecosystem repair, and everyday adaptation. It would state ethical claims with clarity and evidence rather than assume them. It would hold finance promises to account and still leave room for local agency. If the stories we live by shape what we can do, then modest adjustments in news routines can open new practical paths.

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