MEGA INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Journal of Arts and Linguistics Studies
ISSN Print 2959-0957 ISSN Online 2959-0965
Volume 4 Issue 7 2026
Pages 461-479
Open Access

Conceptual Metaphors of Climate Change and Environmental Degradation in Pakistani English Print Media: A Cognitive Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis

Publication Details
Paper Received:
May 08, 2026
Paper Accepted:
July 22, 2026
Paper Published:
July 25, 2026

Hina Ajmi
English Lecturer at Raiwind Law College, Lahore. & PhD English Scholar, Department of English, Imperial College of Business Studies, Lahore. Email: hinaajmi1@gmail.com
Dr. Muhammad Siddique
Head of English Department, Imperial College of Business Studies (ICBS), Lahore, Pakistan. Email: ms3007763003@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9383-3324
Iqra Anam
PhD English Scholar, Department of English, Imperial College of Business Studies, Lahore. Email: iqraanam707@gmail.com
Abdul Ghaffar
PhD English Scholar, Department of English, Imperial College of Business Studies, Lahore. Email: aghaffar.mul@gmail.com

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.71281/jals.v4i7.726

Abstract
This study examines conceptual metaphors of climate change and environmental degradation in Pakistani English print media through a Cognitive Ecolinguistic Discourse Analysis. Given Pakistan's acute climate vulnerability and the limited linguistic research on its media discourse, this research aims to identify metaphors, classify their source domains, uncover ideological meanings, and evaluate ecological orientation within newspaper coverage. The study is grounded theoretically in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), integrated with Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black, 2004) and Stibbe's (2015) ecolinguistic framework distinguishing destructive, ambivalent, and beneficial discourse. Data were collected through purposive documentary analysis of digitally archived articles from three newspapers, Dawn, The Express Tribune, and The Nation, from a population of approximately 300 climate-related articles (100 per newspaper), from which 90 articles (30 per newspaper) were purposively sampled based on metaphorical density and thematic relevance. The Metaphor Identification Procedure served as the primary analytical tool. Findings reveal four dominant source domains—war, disease, journey, and personification—constructing Pakistan as a climate-vulnerable victim while invoking justice and civilisational

continuity. The discourse was predominantly ambivalent, with beneficial framings emerging mainly through nature personification.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor, Ecolinguistics, Climate Change, Pakistani Print Media, Discourse Analysis, Critical Metaphor Analysis, Cognitive Linguistics, Environmental Degradation, Ideology, Media Framing.

Published by MIARD. Copyright: © the author(s). This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY NC) license (https:// creativecommons.org/licenses/by/ 4.0/).

1. Introduction

Climate change has become one of the greatest challenges faced by the world today and language is a critical part of the way societies think, negotiate and react to environmental crises. The cognitive linguists have always maintained that abstract concepts like climate change are not normally conceived literally, but instead are conceptualized through mapping familiar source domains onto complex target domains (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). This cognitive aspect becomes particularly important in the media, where the use of metaphor impacts on public perception, emotions and policy attitudes regarding ecological degradation.

1.1. Climate Change and Environmental Discourse in Pakistan

Pakistan continues to be one of the most climate change vulnerable countries in the world and is often subjected to floods, glacial melt, droughts, and heatwaves (Nazeer et al., 2025). Despite this vulnerability, the systematic study of print media's construction of environmental crisis in Pakistani English is quite limited in comparison to the scholarship on the construction of environmental crisis in the Western print media (Nazeer et al., 2025). The dominant discursive position in constructing elite and public perception of ecological issues in the newspapers is occupied by Dawn, Express Tribune and The Nation (Nazeer et al., 2025).

1.2. Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Cognitive Ecolinguistics

The theory of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) is the cognitive foundation for the current research, which suggests that metaphor is not only decorative but essential to the way that people think (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Ecolinguistics builds on this framework by exploring the potential of linguistic choices to either maintain a degrading relationship between humans and nature, or create a more ecological relationality. (Stibbe, 2015) In this framework, climate communication is often told in stories that include crisis, war and inevitable decline, and that influence the collective ecological imagination.

1.3. Print Media as a Place for Ecological Meaning-Constructing

The representation of ideology does not occur in a neutral manner in the media but is actively created (Van Dijk, 2008; Fairclough, 2013). The metaphorical framing devices used, like personifying climate change as a 'fever' or an 'enemy' make abstract environmental science digestible and also instills an urgent sense and a moral responsibility (Habib & Zahra, 2024; Naureen & Janjua, 2024). Religious and indigenous themes through culturally resonant metaphors like stewardship of the Earth, further contextualizes global ecological issues within the Pakistani cultural cognition (Habib & Zahra, 2024).

1.4. Statement of the Problem

In spite of the various critical studies on environmental reporting conducted in Pakistan recently (Nazeer et al., 2025), very little effort has tried to systematically examine the cognitive-metaphorical architecture of climate discourse through an integrated cognitive ecolinguistic approach in multiple English newspapers and time spans (Nawaz et al., 2026). This gap needs to be explored in more depth.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

1) To identify conceptual metaphors used for climate change in Pakistani English print media.

2) To classify metaphor source domains linked to environmental degradation.
3) To examine ideological framings embedded within these metaphors.
4) To evaluate ecological versus destructive discourse patterns present.

1.6. Research Questions

1) What conceptual metaphors represent climate change in Pakistani English newspapers?
2) Which source domains dominate environmental degradation framing?
3) What ideological meanings do these metaphors construct?
4) Do discourse patterns reflect ecological or destructive worldviews?

1.7. Rationale of the Study

The purpose of the study is to create a sense of urgency and explain the rationale behind them.

The study also fills a significant gap in cognitive-ecolinguistic media research in the context of Pakistan where context and climate issues are sensitive, and does a systematic analysis of metaphorical framing of English print journalism to provide insights for journalists, policy makers, and environmental communicators in search of more ecologically responsible discourse practices.

1.8. Limitations/Delimitations

The limitation of this study is that it is only limited to English language Pakistani newspapers (Dawn, The Express Tribune, and The Nation) within the given time frame. It has been limited to Urdu-language press, broadcast and social media, reducing its generalizability across the Pakistani multilingual and multimodal environmental communication landscape.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Background on Conceptual Metaphor Theory

In the conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), metaphors were not considered as a rhetorical tool but as a basic cognitive process that allows the structuring of abstract experiences through concrete source domains. This cognitive-linguistic basis was elaborated by Evans and Green (2006), who proposed that meaning-making is embodied-to-be-grounded in the "how" of everyday physical experiences. Deignan (2005) has gone a step further in this extension of CMT, adding corpus-based approaches, which enable researchers to follow up on systematic patterns of metaphoric usage in large text banks, rather than on isolated instances.

2.2. Critical Metaphor Analysis and Climate Discourse

Charteris-Black (2004) proposed Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) which is a combination of cognitive linguistics and critical discourse analysis to uncover the ideological functions of metaphors in their choice. From this, Al-Shboul (2023) examined political discourse in the U.S. and showed how climate metaphors create a metaphor opposition, with positive or negative entailments that can persuade the public to take action or withhold it. Likewise, a corpus-based analysis of Moroccan climate policy discourse revealed motion- and journey-based metaphors that carry neoliberal orientations in national discourses on climate policy.

2.3. Pattern in World Climate Metaphor Research

Comparative research shows common rhetorical patterns for communicating about climate change. Analysis of key environmental outlets revealed dominant conceptualizations including that of global warming as disease, war, fire and moral punishment, which were associated with various emotional and moral reactions. Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011) showed experimentally that metaphorical framing has a significant impact on reasoning and policy preference, and Flusberg et al. (2017) found that emotionally-laden metaphors exacerbate the sense of urgency in response to environmental threats. Girvan (2017) used the concept of

an ecolinguistic evaluation in climate news from Australia, demonstrating the potential for either destabilisation or reinforcement of anthropocentric worldviews through the selection of metaphor.

2.4. Discourse Metaphors and Narrative Framing

In addition to the isolated conceptual metaphor, there have been studies exploring the phenomenon of ‘discourse metaphors', which are ‘dominant conceptualizing devices’ (Zinken, Hellsten, & Nerlich, 2008; Nerlich & Koteyko, 2009) during certain historical periods. It is also noted that other narrative patterns (progress, decline, and apocalypse) have been identified as prevailing arc in the way that climate change is rendered in journalistic narratives (Laurie & Thompson, 2024). There is also multimodal research that has explored the interaction of visual and verbal metaphors in environmental advertising discourse (Hidalgo-Downing & O'Dowd, 2023).

2.5. Ecolinguistics and Ecological Discourse Analysis

Stibbe (2015) redefined ecolinguistics as a discipline based on ethics for assessing the benefits and/or dangers of human–nature relationships through discourse. Previously, Fill and Mühlhäusler (2001) defined the ecosociological turn in linguistics and Halliday (1990) proposed that grammatical elements could be responsible for environmental crisis by hiding ecological consequences within language.

2.6. Pakistani Media and Climate Discourse

In Pakistan, there are now some emerging scholarships that have started to tackle this void. In the context of critical discourse analysis, Nazeer et al. (2025) analyzed the newspaper articles published in Dawn, The Nation and The Express Tribune and found that the newspapers used crisis-driven and hope-oriented metaphors to influence readers' perspectives. Naureen and Janjua (2024) pointed out that the use of metaphor is in tune with the linguistic and cultural architecture of Pakistan,

while Habib and Zahra (2024) noted religiously rich metaphors like "stewardship of the Earth. Next, Nawaz et al. (2026) explored the ideological framing of newspaper headlines, verifying the importance of metaphor in building ecological meaning in the rhetorical framework of the elite Pakistani media.

2.7. Research Gaps

1) Little systematic research has been conducted that locates conceptual metaphors across multiple newspapers in Pakistan. Scarce research identifies particular source domains of the environmental degradation metaphors in this context.
2) In contrast to the studies of Western climate and Moroccan discourse, Pakistani climate discourse studies are less explored in terms of their ideological meaning.
3) Few studies have been conducted to analyze the discourse patterns of print media in Pakistan which are more conducive or conducive to ecologically damaging. In this study, these integrated gaps are solved by using an integrated cognitive ecolinguistic discourse analysis.

3. Methodology

The study uses Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) which is a method used in Critical Discourse Analysis (Charteris-Black, 2004) as research method and combines both cognitive linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. In a dual way, it helps to identify “metaphors” and also reveals the ideological and cultural themes in Pakistani environmental journalism, which answer all four research questions: the identification of metaphors, the source domains, the ideology and the ecological orientation.

The conceptual underpinning for analyzing the data is Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and the Metaphor Identification Procedure (Pragglejaz Group, 2007) is used for systematic extraction of the metaphors. The

cognitive ecolinguistic orientation of the study will be further encapsulated in the classification of metaphors into ecologically beneficial, ambivalent and destructive as elaborated by Stibbe (2015).

Purposive documentary analysis will be used to collect data from newspaper articles taken from the digital archive. The news reports, editorials, and opinion pieces published in the official newspapers focusing on environmental and climate change will be downloaded and then screened manually, prior to the metaphor coding, for climate-change and environmental-degradation content.

The articles on climate change and environmental degradation were collected from three prominent English daily newspapers from Pakistan: Dawn, Express Tribune, and The Nation, spanning two years (2023–2025). Total accessible population is estimated at about 300 relevant articles (100 papers per newspaper) for the categories of floods, heatwaves, droughts and environmental policy coverage.

Articles will be selected through purposive sampling technique with the explicit metaphorical language with the topics of climate change. A sample of 90 articles (30 from each newspaper) will be drawn from the total of 300 articles, with the articles being drawn on the basis of being relevant to the topics targeted, of having a high density of metaphoric terms and of being linked with their significance of being published.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Introduction to Analytical Process

The qualitative data analysis of conceptual metaphors identified in the sample corpus of 90 articles selected from three newspapers, Dawn (2023–2025 and contiguous coverage) is presented in this chapter, along with the adjoining coverage. According to Metaphor Identification Procedure (Pragglejaz Group, 2007), the whole text of each of the articles was read and lexical items that convey

metaphorical mapping between the abstract target domain ('climate change') and the concrete source domain ('disease', 'war', 'travel', etc.) were manually marked and coded. The analysis is conducted in four different phases corresponding to the four research questions: Research Question 1 (RQ1): Identification of the metaphor, Research Question 2 (RQ2): Classification of the source domain, Research Question 3 (RQ3): Ideological interpretation using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, and Research Question 4 (RQ4): Ecolinguistic evaluation of the metaphor within Stibbe's framework of destructive, ambivalent and beneficial effects. To ensure that the metaphorical language of the newspapers is not paraphrased, the selected newspaper excerpts are in inverted commas.

4.2. Metaphor Identification

In the first analytical phase, metaphorical statements on climate change and environmental degradation were systematically extracted. Overall, climate change was not discussed in objective or scientific terms in the sampled articles, but journalists, editorial writers and editors outright invoked source domains that evoke emotion. A Dawn editorial titled The Climate Crisis: A Ticking Time Bomb for Pakistan, for example, made reference to a ticking time bomb, which refers to an inevitable, unavoidable disaster. Likewise, when it comes to repeating disasters, another article in the Dawn was titled “A dangerous new era” and did not call climate change a “short-term weather event.”

Afflictions and endurance were also common metaphors. The government official's quote in the 'Climate realities' editorial, "living climate change day in and day out" is an example of conflating climate change as an external event and a lived reality. The same pattern is found in the Express Tribune, where a single op-ed termed Pakistan as being “under a climate assault” while another made its argument “Our climate gauntlet and the world's empty promises,” attributing the annual heat wave–flood cycle as a punishing ordeal for Pakistan that it should have

to endure. These expressions indicate that the print media in Pakistan systematically use embodied high intensity metaphoric frames to convey an abstract scientific concept to its reader in order to make it cognitively and emotionally accessible to them, which addresses.

4.3. Source Domain Classification

The second stage categorized recognized metaphors based on the source domain of the metaphor. Four predominant themes were revealed: war and conflict, disease and affliction, journey and movement and personification of nature. The Tribune, for example, used the war metaphor such that Pakistan is "under a climate assault" and a climate change article in an older op-ed titled "Climate change is the common enemy of Pakistan and India." Disease-based metaphors were also found in the expressions that considered climate impacts as side effects of an underlying health problem for the nation, and were very similar to the "ticking time bomb" expressions, which combine the two elements of violence and inevitability.

The "climate gauntlet" framing, as one example of a journey and motion metaphor, compares the annual heatwave-to-flood cycle to a dangerous course that "must be crossed". Dating back to the same report, "A nation on the edge", also highlighted spatial precarity; implying that Pakistan is at a critical threshold. Non-human entities were personified as living, historic entities in personification metaphors, such as a Dawn story about the Indus Basin civilization as a living entity, or a description of glacial regions as the "climate ground zero," which re-spatialized the nation's disaster narrative.

Table 1: Conceptual Metaphor Categories Identified in Pakistani English Print Media

Source Domain	Conceptual Metaphor	Sample Expression	Newspaper
War/Conflict	CLIMATE CHANGE IS AN ENEMY	"under a climate assault"	The Express Tribune
War/Conflict	CLIMATE CHANGE IS A SHARED ADVERSARY	"common enemy of Pakistan and India"	The Express Tribune
Disease/Explosive Affliction	CLIMATE CHANGE IS A TICKING BOMB	"a ticking time bomb"	Dawn
Journey/Motion	CLIMATE CYCLE IS AN ORDEAL	"our climate gauntlet"	The Express Tribune
Journey/Motion	NATION IS AT A THRESHOLD	"a nation on the edge"	The Express Tribune
Personification	RIVER IS A LIVING ANCESTOR	Indus personified as civilisational lifeline	Dawn
Existential/Epochal	CLIMATE CHANGE IS A NEW ERA	"a dangerous new era"	Dawn
Spatial Reorientation	REGION IS ORIGIN POINT	"climate ground zero"	Dawn

This classification shows that the print media in Pakistan, in English, have a limited but rich lexicon of source domains, particularly focusing on urgency, threat, and endurance over neutral or purely descriptive language.

4.4. Ideological Interpretation

The third stage was a Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black, 2004) which analyzed the ideological work that these metaphors did. The war and attack metaphors invariably position Pakistan as the passive victim of an outside actor,

almost a sentient entity, a rhetorically means to both mouth condemnations of the failure to govern its own affairs and to express a desire to secure international solidarity and climate finance. This is echoed by explicit references to climate change as a "crisis of justice, not just a climate crisis," the words of a federal minister quoted in The Express Tribune, which shifts the conversation from climate as an environmental hazard to a geopolitical injustice claim that requires a payout from the source of high emissions.

By contrast, personification metaphors serve other conceptual functions—they draw upon cultural memory, civilisational continuity, and make environmental protection an extension of national identity, rather than an outside constraint. The language of the glacial zones as the country's "climate ground zero" also shifts the focus of vulnerability from the floodplain to the glacial zone, implicitly challenging the foundations of climate change policies that are still based on the floodplain paradigm. Threshold metaphors like “a nation on the brink” do serve a mobilizing purpose and create a sense that a window of opportunity is closing for intervention, and implicitly call on state institutions to stop collapse. Overall, these results indicate that Pakistani English print media not only represents a discourse of climate change, but also shapes ideological stances regarding who is responsible for what, what is just, and how this can be achieved, answering.

4.5. Ecolinguistic Evaluation

The fourth analytical phase used the ecolinguistic classification by Stibbe (2015), which categorizes each metaphor into one of three groups: destructive, ambivalent, or beneficial.The fourth analytical phase consisted of applying the classification of metaphors as either destructive, ambivalent, or beneficial, as proposed by Stibbe (2015) and derived from his Ecolinguistic Framework. War and assault metaphors were categorized as ambivalent, as they were effective in conveying urgency, but

could also potentially assign responsibility to nature, thus deflecting blame from human systems and taking responsibility for ecological problems out of the human sphere. Alike the disease and bomb metaphors were ambiguous in that they created fear, but provided little positive guidance for adaptive responses.

Framing the Indus as a living ancestral entity, and using personification metaphors, were considered beneficial as it promoted the ecological interdependence, cultural reverence, and long-term custodial thinking, consistent with the principles of ecological sustainability, of "stories we live by" (Stibbe, 2015). Ambi-valent-to-beneficial metaphors like "a dangerous new era" or "a nation on the edge" were determined in context, and could either be used to stifle audiences' hearts or stir up policy interest.

Table 2: Ecolinguistic Classification of Metaphor Categories (Stibbe, 2015)

Metaphor Category	**Ecolinguistic Classification**	**Interpretive Rationale**
War/Assault metaphors	Ambivalent	Conveys urgency but frames nature as adversary, obscuring human causation
Disease/Bomb metaphors	Ambivalent	Generates alarm; lacks constructive adaptive orientation
Personification (River as ancestor)	Beneficial	Fosters ecological reverence and civilisational stewardship
Threshold/Epochal metaphors	Ambivalent-to-Beneficial	Can mobilise action or induce fatalism depending on framing
Justice-oriented framing	Beneficial	Reorients discourse toward equity and structural accountability

This phase shows that Pakistani English print media discourse is predominantly ambivalent with positive ecological stories being reported less frequently but with high potential to change public ecological consciousness.

4.6. Cross-Newspaper Comparison

There are slight differences, but there are significant differences, between the three newspapers that were sampled. As with its long-form and policy-oriented editorial style, dawnieys generally used metaphors that evoke epochal and personification imagery such as climate change and civilizational continuity and historical memory. The Express Tribune used more war, ordeal, and threshold metaphors, which demonstrates a register that is more urgent and crisis-oriented, and is designed to elicit immediate political attention. The same basic theme emerged from both newspapers: Pakistan is the victim of a global crisis and has suffered disproportionately from climate change, and is entitled to climate justice. It indicates that in the Pakistani English print media, whatever differences exists in the style and the metaphorical expression, there is a common elite climate discourse.

The data analysis shows that limited but powerful conceptual metaphors for building the notion of climate change are generated from the war, disease, journey, and personification source domains in the Pakistani English print media. These metaphors carry a considerable amount of ideological meaning, they either blame, invoke justice claims or urge urgency. The overall ambivalence of discourse persists in an ecologically oriented manner, with a few frames that are positive, and are grounded in cultural personification of natural phenomena like the Indus River. All the above findings support the study's core argument that metaphor serves as a potent cognitive and ideological tool that contributes to the understanding, emotions and actions of Pakistani readers towards climate change and environmental degradation.

5. Findings

The findings from the data analysis are presented in four main themes, corresponding to the four research questions. First, Pakistani English print media

consistently discursively frames its representation of climate change in terms of emotive and descriptive language rather than a scientific description. The high intensity source domains used to make the abstract environmental processes cognitively accessible – such as "a ticking time bomb," "under a climate assault," "our climate gauntlet" – confirm the importance of conceptual metaphor as a fundamental meaning-making device in this discourse context.

Second, the metaphorical repertoire is organized in 4 dominant source domains: war/conflict, disease/affliction, journey/motion, and personification of nature. The war-based framings focus on the climate change as an enemy, the disease-based framing focuses on vulnerability and inevitability, the journey-based framing focuses on resilience through constant cycles of disaster, and the personification framing (in particular depicting the Indus as a living ancestral force) focuses on continuity and cultural reverence. The narrow but powerful repertoire indicates that Pakistani journalists tend to fall for an emotionally charged rather than information-only frames.

Third, significant ideological labor is done by these metaphors. The use of war and assault metaphors is a discursive re-allocation of the focus from the shortcomings of domestic governance and deflects the discussion away from the problem of 'climate justice' and reinforces international claims for climate justice, such as the blatant rephrasing of the issue as a 'crisis of justice, not merely a climate crisis'. Personification and epochal metaphors, on the other hand, galvanize the sense of national identity and cultural memory, and shift the emphasis from environmental stewardship as an external obligation to a part of Pakistani civilisational continuity.

Fourth, a discourse analysis based on the Stibbe (2015) framework reveals that the discourse is overall ambivalent: it is urging the audience to take action, yet the war and disease metaphors might also lead to fatalism and away from

anthropogenic causality. Although less common, there are meaningful appearances of beneficial framings in personification metaphors that create a sense of ecological reverence and thinking long-term. Further, cross newspaper comparison shows that Dawn adopts the perspective of epochal and personification framing as per its policy oriented editorial style, while Express Tribune adopts the language of war and ordeal metaphors which is more mobilisation driven, yet both newspapers share the common framing of Pakistan as a victim of climate change (with disproportionate impact) who deserves accountability from the international community for their emissions.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the cognitive ecolinguistic discourse analysis of climate change and environmental degradation in the Pakistani English print media using the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Critical Metaphor Analysis and Stibbe's framework of evaluation for a cognitive ecolinguistic approach. The research explored the four strong metaphor source domains of war, disease, journey, and personification that define the knowledge about an abstract and scientifically complex phenomenon, namely a pandemic in public imagination as conveyed in the sample articles taken from Dawn, The Express Tribune and The Nation newspapers, selected in a purposive sample.

The results indicate that metaphor in climate journalism is not a rhetorical device; rather, it is a cognitive and ideational process in the writer's mind. By emphatically narrating environmental crisis through terms like “ticking time bomb”, “climate assault” and “climate gauntlet”, Pakistani English newspapers create an emotional engagement with the crisis and the context of a particular ideology that positions Pakistan as a victim nation, the world as an unjust one, and the responsibility of the nation's citizens as that of civilisational duty. The study also shows that the language used in this discourse is very ambivalent: the urgency

and alarm overcomes the potential for a more comprehensive, ecological reorientation, although there are a few positive linkages to personification, particularly of the Indus River, that shows the media's power to foster greater ecological consciousness when it relies on culturally resonant, reverence-based images.

The results contribute to the existing body of ecolinguistic research that has mainly been conducted in Western and Anglophone media environments by providing evidence on the ways in which an environmental meaning is constructed in a non-Western, and climate-vulnerable, country's English-language media. It fills a real gap in the study of media-linguistics in Pakistan as it presents a comprehensive cognitive-ecolinguistic approach which goes beyond the mere thematic content analysis to the systematic interpretation of metaphor. It also shows that a meaningful contribution can be made to the climate communication agenda by analyzing the media content.

Finally, the present study confirms that language is not only a mirror of climate change but plays an active role in the construction of its perception, emotion and response of the Pakistani society. The narratives circulating in the English print media are not just a matter of semantics or words, they have a direct impact on public mobilization, policy accountability, and ecological resilience in the face of the growing climate vulnerability of Pakistan.

7. Recommendations

1) Journalists should be mindful of the fact that the use of war, disease etc. metaphors in news reporting is driven by urgency, but there is a need for solution-oriented, ecologically beneficial framing, which should not be fatalistic.

2) Journalists need to be trained in ecolinguistic consciousness and sensitivity to minimize the anthropocentric and destructive ways of communicating in the media.
3) Culturally relevant metaphors (such as personifying the river) should be used by policy makers to reinforce public environmental stewardship.
4) Future researchers should use this framework for broadcast and Urdu language media for comparative analysis.
5) Editorial boards should embrace a constructive framing of the climate that reflects justice over just an alarmist one.

References

Al-Shboul, O. K. (2023). *The politics of climate change metaphors in the U.S. discourse: Conceptual metaphor theory and analysis from an ecolinguistics and critical discourse analysis perspective*. Springer.

Charteris-Black, J. (2004). *Corpus approaches to critical metaphor analysis*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Deignan, A. (2005). *Metaphor and corpus linguistics*. John Benjamins.

Evans, V., & Green, M. (2006). *Cognitive linguistics: An introduction*. Edinburgh University Press.

Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Fill, A., & Mühlhäusler, P. (Eds.). (2001). *The ecolinguistics reader: Language, ecology and environment*. Continuum.

Flusberg, S. J., Matlock, T., & Thibodeau, P. H. (2017). Metaphors for the war on climate change. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 32(1), 1–18.

Girvan, R. (2017). Ecolinguistic evaluation of metaphorical framing in Australian climate news. *Language Sciences*, 62, 101–112.

Habib, S., & Zahra, T. (2024). Cultural and religious metaphors in Pakistani climate communication. *Journal of Language and Environment*, 6(2), 45–58.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1990). New ways of meaning: The challenge to applied linguistics. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 6, 7–36.

Hidalgo-Downing, L., & O'Dowd, N. (2023). Multimodal metaphor in green advertising discourse. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 14(5), 1–15.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.

Laurie, E., & Thompson, R. (2024). Narrative framing in climate reporting: Progress, decline, and apocalypse. *Environmental Communication Journal*, 18(3), 210–227.

Naureen, S., & Janjua, F. (2024). Metaphor and cultural resonance in Pakistani environmental journalism. *Pakistan Journal of Linguistics*, 15(1), 88–104.

Nawaz, S., Hassan, I., & Abid, K. (2026). Ideological framing and ecolinguistic construction of climate change in Pakistani English newspaper discourse. *Advance Social Science Archive Journal*, 5(2), 1731–1746.

Nazeer, I., Alam, R., Rehman, S., & Yasir, W. (2025). Print media representation of climate change: A critical discourse analysis of environmental news coverage in Pakistan. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 9(1), 112–130.

Nerlich, B., & Koteyko, N. (2009). Compounds, creativity and complexity in climate change communication. *Global Environmental Change*, 19(3), 345–353.

Stibbe, A. (2015). *Ecolinguistics: Language, ecology and the stories we live by*. Routledge.

Thibodeau, P. H., & Boroditsky, L. (2011). Metaphors we think with: The role of metaphor in reasoning. *PLOS ONE*, 6(2), e16782.

Zinken, J., Hellsten, I., & Nerlich, B. (2008). Discourse metaphors. In R. M. Frank, R. Dirven, T. Ziemke, & E. Bernárdez (Eds.), *Body, language and mind* (Vol. 2, pp. 363–385). Mouton de Gruyter.