

# Unraveling The Ecological Perspective Of Green Discourse: A Critical Study Of Newspaper Articles

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## Abstracts

*The present study aims to examine the language of newspaper articles within the purpose to explore the constructive meanings of green discourse<sup>1</sup> employed in those articles from an ecological perspective. However, the main objective of this study has been to trace the language features that the speaker used to highlight the importance of green environment. Fairclough's (1995) notion of critical discourse analysis has been applied as the framework of this study. Meanwhile, the sample has been comprised of ten articles chosen by making the use of purposive sampling. The findings revealed that newspaper articles play an important role in shaping the attitude of the people towards environment by making them aware of the impact which climate change may have on their lives.*

**Key Words:** *Eco-linguistics, critical discourse analysis, newspaper articles, and print media.*

## Introductions

Environmental degradation has drawn the attention of academia and other research fields including linguistics to spread ecological awareness and to address environmental issues. Thus, Eco-linguistic being a sub-branch of linguistics has realized its responsibility to play a positive role in addressing and resolving environmental issues through education (Iqbal and Ali, 2018). It gives an understanding of the ideas and discourse developed by humans about the natural environment and proposes the idea that the lexical items used by humans can positively or negatively affect the mindset of their people (Fatima and Arslan, 2023). Eco-linguistics determines to develop such theories that can explore the interrelationship of language and environment involving surrounding humans highlighting various problems such as climate change, conversation, and destruction of ecology (Kumar, 2019). Similarly, the discourse about the environmental setting is known as "Green Discourse". It can be found in print and electronic media such as magazines, newspapers, radio, television, etc.

Hence, critical discourse analysis has always been perceived as an approach to systemic knowledge raised from the tradition of critical linguistic analysis. It attempts to give an explanation of the text being studied by a dominant group of people who have a tendency to achieve their particular purposes or wants through language. Thus, CDA helps to analyze and

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understand the social problems existing in a particular society by highlighting the relationship between ideologies and power dynamics embedded in a text.

Critical discourse analysis places emphasis on the way text and discourse perpetuate, oppose, and abuse social authority, the fight for supremacy, and inequities that are present in many political and social contexts. Due to their definite stance, critical discourse analysts conduct dissident research to comprehend, expose, and combat social inequalities. (Dijk, 2011b, pp. 2-4).

Critical discourse analysis grants us this chance to nurture our critical thinking and our social perception for the investigation. Therefore, the significant and major aim of basic talk examination is to enable us to analyze, discover, and search out the veiled parts of discourse. In political discourse, politicians frequently use words that function as a medium to pass on the ideologies of one particular group or nation to the other.

Thus, the present study is based on exploring the ecological perspectives of green content in Pakistani newspapers. Through this research, the researcher has made an attempt to dig out what sort of language features are being used in our print media to construct the meanings of green discourse. The study is based on the following questions;

1. What language features have been employed in these articles to construct the meanings of green discourse?
2. What functions do these language features play to convey the target meanings to the readers?

## **Literature Review**

Sabeen (2023) explored the metaphorical language of newspaper articles related to green discourse. The main objective of this study was to figure out how the metaphorical language of newspapers can shape or affect our conceptualization of the physical environment. Stibbe's model was applied by the researcher as the framework of this study. Meanwhile, the source of data was comprised of three newspapers that were namely Dawn, The News International, and The Express Tribune. Hence, the findings revealed that metaphorical language plays the pivotal role of an instrument through which people's perception of the environment is being shaped to affect their decision-making abilities and policies and ultimately their course of action.

Acha (2022) did a discourse analysis of the anthropocentrism of Cameroonian newspapers with the purpose of investigating ecologically oppressive or abusive beliefs and ideologies being emphasized by Cameroonian newspapers. The study was quantitative in nature and the data was taken from thirty-five newspaper articles. Eco-critical discourse analysis was used as the framework, while, the data was analyzed by using the descriptive statistical method. Hence, the results showed that the Cameroonian press was determined to make use of multiple language patterns to manipulate the processes and aftermath of environmental decline.

Qi and Hu (2022) examined the PowerPoint slides in an English classroom with the aim of exploring their ecological perspective. The study was quantitative and the major objective was to investigate the fact how language can be used as a meaning-construction tool. A particular sample of 160 slides was selected by applying the purposive sampling technique and the findings revealed that the values of the participants embedded in those slides were being conveyed through inter-semiotic resources and those values were also found in accordance with the ecosophy of harmony that suggested the coexistence among man, society and nature.

Iqbal and Ali (2020) investigated the ecological perspective of English language textbooks under the lens of critical discourse analysis. The source of the data was comprised of the textbooks that were designed by the Sindh Textbook Foundation and were being taught to grades 6 to 10 in the public schools of Sindh. EDA approach was applied as the framework of the study and the findings showed the need for an immediate evaluation of the ecological perspective of ELT textbooks to ensure the incorporation of positive ecological or green discourse to bring a positive environmental change in society through education.

### **Methodology**

The research is qualitative and descriptive. Kumar (2012) defined qualitative research in these words: the most flexible approach of inquiry that has the potential to enable the researcher to get in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation. Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis has been employed as the framework of this research study. Meanwhile, the researcher selected a particular sample of ten articles related to green discourse from three national and international newspapers by applying purposive sampling. According to Kumar (2012), purposive samplings are always preferred in qualitative research because they facilitate the researchers to go for the data they think can be the true representative of the entire population. However, the data has been analyzed by making the use of textual analysis method.

### **Analysis**

#### **Text # 1**

##### **The theme of Environmental Degradation:**

“In one end of the country, we are fast losing our coastline to seawater intrusion, .....Climate-induced migration has already made Pakistan one of the most urbanized countries in South Asia.”

These lines depict the magnitude of the socioeconomic and environmental issues that arise due to climate change in Pakistan. Phrases in the lines like “fast melting glaciers” and “fast losing coastline” depict the environmental degradation in Pakistan. The deteriorating ecosystem is causing a permanent decline in the level of water on the one side and the escalating level of water due to the rapid thawing of the glaciers on the other hand is shrinking the livelihood options and causing a big threat to the residents of the people near the coastlines. Moreover, words in the lines such as ‘fast’, ‘erratic’, ‘increasing’, ‘unpredictable’, and ‘swelling’ reflect the severity and capriciousness of the situation. Extreme changing weather conditions have made our agriculture system vulnerable and the countermeasures taken by the agriculture department seem to be inadequate. Due to the environment change, the livelihood options for the people living near the seashores have also shrunk which results in their migration to the already overcrowded cities. In the lines terms such as ‘food insecurity’ and ‘forcing people to migrate’ emphasize taking immediate action before the situation deteriorates further.

#### **Text # 2**

##### **The theme of Climate Change**

“Environmentalists have long been cautioning that the phenomenon of rapid global warming is .....are already receding at a fast pace because of rising temperatures”.

These lines depict the immediacy to take instant measures to tackle the water problems caused by the rapid climate change and global warming in Pakistan. Phrases ‘soon going to cause’ and already receding’ indicate that this issue is not new in the country but has been discarded for a long time in spite of the environmentalists’ recommendations. Now this situation is seriously escalating and resulting in a serious drought of water in the region. Pakistan’s placement among the ‘10 most affected countries list’ depicts how highly Pakistan is susceptible to the effects of environmental change. The phrase ‘rapid global warming is soon going to cause severe water scarcity’ implies that the continuous increase in temperature results in the recession of water resources. The mention of Himalayan and Karakoram glaciers as ‘major sources of water’ indicates how our important resources are being affected due to climate change. Moreover, extreme weather conditions are causing rapid alterations in the lives of the people. To cope with these environmental issues there is an urgent need that all the countries should join hands with each other and control this worsening situation.

### **Text # 3**

#### **Impact of Environmental Change on Agriculture**

“The impact can be direct (physical damage to crops, .....lost capacities, and increased costs”).

This text emphasizes the wide-ranging and ubiquitous effects of environmental issues and their impact on the society and economy. The direct’ and ‘indirect’ categorization of the impacts of climate change clarifies the complexity of the issue. An increase in temperature due to global warming results in extensive harm to the agricultural system to which the livelihood of the vast majority is attached. Heat waves directly impact trees, animals, crops, and indirectly our economic system through the decrease in production and the loss of performance which in turn creates a shortage of basic goods and a rise in prices. When the largest contributing sector in any country’s GDP collapses the whole system downfalls. So, this causes not only visible damage but also has long-term consequences for any country.

### **Text # 4**

#### **Role of Environmental Change in the exacerbation of health problems:**

“Seasonal allergies, such as pollen, .....carbon emissions aggravate respiratory ailments.”

This passage depicts how health issues are aggravated due to climate change. The phrase ‘fuelled by carbon emissions’ depicts the cause-and-effect relationship in which carbon gas from industries and vehicles deteriorates the air quality and in the monsoon season when people are already suffering from various allergies this climate change adds fuel to the fire. Words used in the lines like ‘erratic’, ‘fuelled’, and ‘poor’ emphasize the weather conditions that are getting worse and more severe. In order to curb emissions and revamp community health there is a need to understand that it is humans who are responsible for carbon emissions and polluting the air quality. There is an urgent need to find out the root cause of this problem because the health and environment are interlinked with each other.

### **Text # 5**

#### **Sustainable development**

“Today our planet is going through an unprecedented and monumental climate change crisis and businesses .....governance (ESG) programmes that also demonstrate their commitment to effective risk management and long-term resiliency.”

These lines emphasize the severity of the climate situation and the need to take immediate measures to tackle the problem. In these lines ‘unpredicted’ ‘monumental’ and ‘no longer’ words are used to depict the intensity of the situation. It is essential to maintain a balance between social integration, economic development, and as well as environmental preservation. The sentence ‘business can no longer ignore the role that they have played in contributing to it’ emphasizes both the positive and negative impacts of business corporations on society and on the environment by providing economic resources to the people but on the other hand disregarding their responsibilities. The phrase ‘companies need to be cognizant’ motivates business corporations to take initiatives to improve environmental conditions. For this purpose, it is essential to compel companies to take a look at their ESG (Environmental, social, Governmental) programs and improve them in such a way that they can fulfill present needs without jeopardizing the capabilities of future generations. Their ESG will not only increase their profit but also help mitigate the harm they do to the environment and society in the form of gas emissions and plastic waste.

#### **Text # 6**

##### **Government initiative to improve environmental condition**

“Since 2018, Pakistan’s fight against climate change has picked up the “Green Growth Agenda” the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami project .....goal of planting ten billion trees by 2023.”

These lines represent government initiatives to combat climate change issues. To improve the environmental condition government has changed its priorities and made substantial alterations in the pattern of policy. Phrases like ‘discernable shift’ and ‘green growth agenda’ describes governments accelerating efforts. The government used a multifaceted strategy in which it assured that natural resources should keep producing both economic and environmental benefits that are essential to human well-being. Moreover, through the involvement of central and administrative units, the government took a flagship initiative to plant 10 billion trees by 2023, and words like ‘aim’ ‘ambitious’ and ‘replicate success’ describe its positive intentions. In these lines, language is employed in such a way that it presents environmental projects as realistic and urgent, with an optimistic approach to climate change mitigation and sustainable development.

#### **Text # 7**

##### **Environmental change through educating children**

“Environment experts on Friday called for providing climate change education to .....but should also be about changing students’ behaviors for environment conservation and cleaning.”

These lines portray the importance of environmental education for sustainable development and advocating for future generations with good environmental citizenship. The term ‘called for climate change education’ emphasizes the dire need to incorporate climate-based education into children’s curriculum. Environment experts suggest educating children from their school-age so, their minds and attitudes can be shaped from the very start. Phrases like ‘future leaders’

and ‘could contribute greatly’ underscore the long-term effects and the importance of providing children with climate change education. Words like ‘greatly’ and ‘contribute’ suggest that it will not only increase their knowledge but will also bring forth positive outcomes in the form of pollution mitigation and improving the state of the natural environment. The term ‘teachers jobs’ shows the responsibility of the teachers in shaping their students’ attitudes so they can continue with this perception and can play their role in environment-friendly activities. Moreover, other used term like ‘school children’, ‘teachers’, and ‘students’ suggests that it is the shared responsibility of all the educational fields linked to people to play their role for the betterment of the climate situation.

#### **Text # 8**

##### **Effects of environmental degradation on Pakistan’s future**

“A World Bank report, Pakistan’s Hotspots — The Impact of Temperature and Precipitation Changes on Living Standards, ..... lives in locations that will become ‘moderate hotspots’ by 2050 under the carbon-intensive scenario”.

These lines highlight the significance of environment-friendly practices and prophylactic measures through raising awareness about the negative impacts of climate change on their prosperity. Pakistan’s temperature is increasing drastically due to climate change and carbon gas emissions which will increase "2.5°C" to "3.0°C" by 2050. Extreme climate change directly affects the lives of people and according to the report by 2050 living places of 49 million will be turned extremely hot and phrase ‘moderate hotspots’ describes the impact of climate change on places. To mitigate the environmental issues and greenhouse gas emissions there is a need to take strict actions. The language used in these lines encourages people to take immediate action to improve environmental conditions.

#### **Text # 9**

##### **Government’s commitment to environmental issues:**

“Green Pakistan, a key initiative of the federal government to combat the climate change, desertification, and reverse deforestation has received ..... key projects for the promotion of forestry, wildlife, environment and biodiversity resources in all provinces of Pakistan for well-being of people.”

These lines throw light on the proactive efforts of the government to tackle the issue of deforestation which is increasing 1.63% annually. The term ‘the budget 2023-2024’ allocation refers to government efforts to deal with the desertification issue and to make the environment better. The government holds the Ministry of Climate Change Division responsible for improving environmental health and protecting biological resources. The term ‘aimed at strengthening the forestry and wildlife resources’ refers to the outcomes of the government’s initiative. Ecological systems and human societies are interconnected with each other because it is the sustainable environment that makes human well-being possible. The term ‘all the provinces of Pakistan’ refers to governmental projects that aim not only to improve the quality of life of people living in federal areas but also to promote social equity nationwide.

#### **Text # 10**

### **The theme of global protest for climate justice**

"Both Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari.....Both leaders have told the world in clear terms that Pakistan is going through the worst climate ..... and needs help to deal with this crisis. In his maiden speech at the UNGA on September 23, PM Shehbaz Sharif made .....to global warming and yet face its worst consequences."

These lines throw light on national leaders' global appeal for international solidarity to minimize the severity of the climate crisis. The phrase 'little contribution to global warming' describes that despite the fact it contributes only 0.9% to global warming Pakistan is among the top 10 countries listed which are most affected by climate change. Terms like 'climate injustice', 'victim', and 'worst climate catastrophe' describe the severe conditions of climate. In Pakistan, almost 33 million are affected by severe heat waves, flooding, and soil erosion which is due to the rapid change in climate conditions. Words like 'the world', 'international community', and 'world leaders' emphasize on the thing to cope with this situation there is a need for the international community should understand the unjust sufferings of the Pakistani community and should support to tackle the problem.

### **Findings and Discussion:**

The study was conducted to find out the linguistic devices that have been used in the newspapers to construct the meaning of green discourse and from the analysis; it became clear that newspapers use a wide range of linguistic devices such as fast melting glaciers, fast losing coastline, soon going to cause, already receding, rapid global warming, fuelled by carbon emissions, green growth agenda, discernable shift, School children as future leaders, since 2018, till 2050, 2.5°C, 3.0°C and 49 million people, businesses can no longer ignore, companies need to be cognizant, and teachers' jobs should not be limited, the international community, world leaders and Ten billion tree Tsunami. Further, the second question of the research was to trace the functions of the language features they play to convey the target meaning to the readers, where the researcher found that these language features function to generate a sense of urgency through the elucidation of various climate change effects, establish the validity of the data through the description of international organizations, emphasize the ramifications of various actions, prompt a sense of shared responsibility, elicit emphatic thinking among the international community, extend conventional roles through making teachers active participants, and stimulation of thinking about long term consequences of actions.

### **Conclusion:**

The study has successfully revealed the ecological perspective of green discourse through the use of newspaper articles. This concludes that reading newspaper articles makes readers aware of how environmental changes affect society and people's quality of life. It also instills a sense of responsibility in them by making them aware of the consequences of their activities. Moreover, these articles depict government efforts to cope with the climate change issue through the initiation of various greenery programs, raising this issue on international level and extending teachers' roles for developing future generation's attitudes and beliefs towards the environment.

### **Future Recommendations:**

1. The researchers can conduct a comparative study on green discourse in newspapers from countries that have similar social and environmental contexts.
2. It will provide ground for the researchers to know the impact of newspaper articles related to green discourse on public understanding and behavior.
3. Researchers can compare the influence of newspaper articles with other social media platforms on the construction of discourse narratives and people's awareness.

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