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Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)**Conflict Construction in the News: A Critical Discourse Study of Pakistan–Afghanistan
Border Reporting****Fozia khan**

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fozia@22211kn@gmail.com**Abstract**

This paper is a critical analysis of how the Pakistani media depicts the Pakistan Afghanistan border crisis based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The study examines the linguistic options, discourse patterns, and ideological trends which influence the popular concept of cross-border conflicts. Results show that Pakistani media tends to develop the conflict on the basis of security threats, sovereignty, and the contribution of Afghan authorities to the intensification of hostilities. By choosing who to interview, reciting official words, and framing words intentionally, news sources often make it appear as though Pakistan is the one that is on the defensive and responsible side, whereas the Afghan party is the one that is aggressive or unstable. Through these kinds of discursive practices, national stories are strengthened as is the justification of what the state is doing and how people view politics in the region. This research claims that media is significant in educating the citizens but their presentation of the conflict can also be a cause of polarization and deterrence of diplomacy. The article focuses on the necessity of balanced reporting and media literacy programs that should be put in place to reverse biased language and lead to informed dialogue.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Media Framing, Pakistan–Afghanistan Border Conflict, Pakistani Media, Conflict Reporting, National Narratives, Political Communication, Cross-Border Relations

Abstract

The paper looks at the ways in which the Pakistani media covered the October 2025 Pakistan-Afghanistan border confrontation and its consequences, which are analyzed through the prism of critical discourse analysis (CDA) conducted on secondary sources (editorials, news stories, and some op-eds by major Pakistani media). This paper defines these frames and knows dominant ones as security/threat, state sovereignty, victimhood and moral righteousness, externalization of blame, and humanitarian displacement, demonstrates how words, use of sources, metaphor, and intertextual reference form a specific national narrative. Results indicate the mainstream Pakistani reporting highlighted a securitized, state-centered frame, which justified the military reactions. Policy recommendations are to foster pluralistic media discourses, enhance contextualization of cross-border causality in reporting, and foster journalistic training on conflict sensitive reporting.

1. Introduction

The South Asian region has experienced one of the most extraordinary and winding bilateral relationships between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The border region between the two countries, which is historically, politically, and ideologically charged, being a territory divided by Durand Line, a marker established by colonists in the past, has been a contested territory,

rife with mistrust and conflict. During the last decades, such problems like militancy, cross-border terrorism, migration of refugees, and rivalry of strategic interests have continued to create instability on the frontier. These tensions have manifested themselves in new forms in recent years especially after the Taliban reclaimed power in Afghanistan in August 2021. Instead of the collaboration, the border of Pakistan-Afghanistan has been frequently represented as the unstable area of the security dangers and political tension.

The border conflicts in October 2025 between the Pakistani security forces and the Afghan border guards were one of the most severe incidences of conflict since the Taliban takeover. The fire trade was said to have resulted in dozens of deaths and provoked temporary displacement of the civilians residing along the border. Each side blamed the other and accused one of having started the conflict and the violation of territorial integrity. It is against this backdrop that the Pakistani media came out as a key platform of creation and distribution of narratives regarding the conflict. Media, and broadcasting and online mediums were involved into active coverage of the events to influence the general perception, political mood, and policy debate. During these times of national tension, the media do not passively report on what is happening, but frame it, giving it linguistic and visual form, meaning and meaning through their language and visual selections which contribute to the interpretation of the conflict and its participants by citizens.

The results of the border conflict framing by the Pakistani media are important because of a number of reasons. To begin with, the media build the most important point of contact between the institutions of the states, the choices of the foreign policy and the people. The national morale, legitimacy, and approval of specific policies may depend on the manner in which a conflict is presented. Secondly, media in Pakistan, though in its structure, is fairly free, but acts under institutional pressures, particularly in the times of security crises. News organizations usually depend on official releases of the armed forces or state and this may be indirectly or directly affecting the patterns of framing. Lastly, discourse analysis offers an understanding of more general ideological and national discourses that continue to be perpetuated in Pakistani society: ideas of sovereignty, victimhood, security, and relations with Afghanistan.

The framing theory can provide an advantageous analytical prism to this question. Frames are interpretative structures that bring order and direct journalists and audiences to some definition of reality (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1993). Framing choices, including the depiction of an aggressor or victim, the emphasis on causes and solutions deemed legitimate are all framing decisions in conflict coverage, which influence the moral and emotional framing of the public discourse. With reference to the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, framing decisions of the media may either support or dispute traditional narratives of threat, mistrust, and sovereignty defense. Not only does such framing reproduce journalistic routines, but it also reproduces political and institutional ideologies, which tends to support state views where there is a conflict.

The following paper uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in the analysis of the selected Pakistani media texts to understand the discursive construction of the October 2025 border conflict. The CDA, which has been developed by the likes of Fairclough, van Dijk and Wodak, puts forward the idea that language is not neutral and that it is a kind of social practice, which is not only a reflection but also a reproduction of the power relations. The study focuses on the lexical (word and phrase) choices, syntactic (who does and who is done to) and thematic (what is emphasized) emphases that encode ideological meanings through CDA. As an example, the moral positioning of calling one side militants or terrorists and the other side

the defenders legitimize specific reactions. The analysis will thus aim at revealing what was said as well as how and why it was said in such a manner in the media.

The importance of this issue is in its implications on the grounds of peace, diplomacy, and the ethics of journalism. The role of the media in the creation of national interest stories is particularly decisive in an area where the actions of states are most strongly influenced by geopolitical rivalry, insurgencies, and proxy wars. Once the conflicts are introduced in the perspective of security and threat most of the time, the subsequent discourse of the population turns to sidelining humanitarian considerations, civilian views, and dialogue possibilities. On the other hand, pluralistic framing, or the framing that has many voices, contexts, and interpretations, may also be involved in the de-escalation of conflicts and understanding each other. Therefore, the study of media rhetoric concerning such cross-border conflicts is not just a scholarly undertaking but also a useful input to peace communication and responsible news reporting.

The ecosystem of the media in Pakistan is dynamic and multifaceted in itself. The competition has taken place in the form of dozens of private television channels, online platforms, and newspapers that have been competing to gain influence since the liberalization of the early 2000s. However, when the crisis hits, the freedom limits tend to become narrow. In security incidents, the official media statements by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs often become the force of the narrative that is repeated in all locations. This interrelation, as it is called by the scholars, an indexing to official sources, presupposes that conflict coverage may reproduce the state discourses unintentionally and push aside non-state or opposing opinions. The crisis in the Pakistani border in 2025 is a good occasion to find out the extent to which the Pakistani media replicated state voices or presented interpretative variability by providing opinion pieces, editorials and investigative stories.

Additionally, this paper acknowledges the significance of studying the English-language sources like Dawn, The Express Tribune, and The News International which are used by educated urbanites and tend to predetermine the agenda of the general discussion. They not only enlighten the opinion of the elites but also shape the perception of other countries about the position of Pakistan. Through their analysis, the study places itself in both the domestic and transnational communicative contexts, in reference to the manner in which the narratives on sovereignty, legitimacy, and blame are disseminated across the borders.

In the end, this study is expected to add to the academic knowledge of the media framing in South Asian geopolitics and to the theoretical development of CDA as a research instrument of analyzing the media discourse. The study emphasizes the role of language, power, and ideology in influencing the masses by searching how the Pakistani media had created the border conflict. It claims that the prevailing media discourses of security, sovereignty and victimhood are indicators of profound historical fears and institutional orientations that still play out in the ways Pakistan views Afghanistan. The results are likely to show not only how representation has been patterned but also silences voices, contexts and perspectives that are still marginal in mainstream discourses.

Overall, this introduction preconditions a critical discussion of the way in which the discourse of the Pakistani media in the situation involving the October 2025 clashes along the border supported and reproduced state-centered interpretations of conflict. It also highlights the necessity of the conflict-sensitive journalism which goes beyond the militarized frames and prefigures the human security, empathy across borders, and a possibility of a dialogue. The following sections will analyse the relevant literature on media framing and CDA, the

methodology design, the results of textual analysis in details, implications to media practices, public opinion and regional peace-building.

2. Literature Review

Media framing is now considered as one of the most important analytical instruments of communication research especially in the analysis of conflict, politics, and international relations. Erving Goffman (1974) is also one of the earliest scholars who conceptualized the frames as interpretive schemata that allow people to perceive, name, and identify the events in daily life. This concept was later enhanced by Robert Entman (1993) in media studies by defining the term framing as the process of treating some parts of a perceived reality and rendering them more salient in a communication text. Entman says that framing serves to define the problem, diagnose the cause, make a moral judgment, and propose a solution. These roles are essential to the news reporting since they help journalists and audiences to form meaning of complex events. During conflict like a war or a cross border dispute, framing will dictate who is viewed as the aggressor, or the victim, what are the reasons, which policies sound acceptable or warranted. Frames are thus not reflections of reality but active modes of construction that determines the way of how people think about and take political decisions.

Media framing is applied to the conflict situations in the shaping of the national identity and collective memory. Crisis reporting by journalists usually entails the application of pre-existing cultural and political discourses, and this may result in the recreation of state-centered approaches. As explained by scholars like Bennett (1990), it can be termed as indexing where the news outlets can tailor their news to fit within the spectrum of views held by the government elites, particularly in such moments of national crisis in terms of security. This indexing action makes the area of debate narrow and marginalizes the voices of dissent or alternative. On the same note, Gitlin (1980) contends that media frames are power tools, which normalize the ideologies of the dominant society, and make the prevailing social structures acceptable. These theoretical observations, when used in relation to the analysis of foreign conflicts, imply that the media in any country are likely to recycle the official discourses of foreign policy hence influencing the populace to support the official state-approved narratives.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers an adjunct theoretical and methodological perspective in which such processes can be studied. CADA, developed by Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk and Ruth Wodak, has the basis of the assumption that language is socially constitutive and socially conditioned. It considers discourse as a type of social practice, which is both an expression and a determination of power in the society. The three-dimensional discourse model proposed by Fairclough (1995) (textual analysis, discursive practice and social practice) can be seen as an organized way of comprehending media texts in relation to ideological frameworks at a larger level. Van Dijk (1998) continues to point out that symbolic power, in this case, is control over discourse. The people who control the media discourse are able to influence collective knowledge, notions and ideologies. Journalists and editors can simply slip ideological implications into purportedly objective news through lexical manipulation, syntax and metaphor use.

This is why CDA is applicable as a descriptive as well as a critical tool. It tries to reveal the concealed ideologies in texts and reveal the role of discourse in upholding power and inequality. When applied to conflict reporting, CDA will help the researcher determine how media discourses justify some forms of violence, demonize others and silence those who are marginalized. Through vocabulary, transitivity (who act and who is acted), modality, (degree

of certainty or doubt) and intertextuality (reference to other text or discourses) CDA helps to indicate that linguistic practices mirror nationalistic, militaristic, or humanitarian ideologies. This renders it especially effective as an area of study in the coverage of the Pakistani media on the Afghanistan border conflict with Pakistan wherein nationalism, security, and regional politics overlap.

The overlap of framing and CDA has been an issue of much research in the international media studies of war and terrorism. Galtung (2002) and Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) propose that the paradigms of war journalism and peace journalism are in opposition to each other. Mainstream reporting, which is dominated by war journalism, is a preoccupation with violence and elite sources and zero-sum stories of success and failure. It is more inclined to feature war events, political posts, and the number of victims, which are often at the cost of humanitarian or contextual coverage. In its turn, peace journalism focuses on what can be resolved, empathy, and telling stories multiple-sidedly. It aims at unraveling the underlying reasons behind conflict and to become a voice of the non-elite actors. It is unfortunate that most national media systems including South Asia are majorly following the model of war journalism mostly in cases of interstate conflicts. This tendency supports nationalistic discourses and prevents chances of reconciliation or critical thinking.

Many studies have reported how the media in the international and regional level represent conflicts in a manner that supports the national interest. An example is the case of the Gulf War, the Iraq War, and the Afghanistan War where the western media houses chose to use frames that aligned with the foreign policies of their governments. Kellner (2004) and Altheide (2007) discovered that the U.S and British media reporting was highly dependent on official sources, applied moral dualities of us versus them and also relied on emotional terms to support military actions. The same observation has drawn similar results of Russian, Israeli, and Indian media around the time of war where national media seldom act as neutral observers during international crises. Rather, they are ideological institutions that mobilize the feelings of the masses and give legitimacy to the state.

In the South Asian case, historical rivalries, postcolonial identities and geopolitical insecurities have played a significant part in how the media has framed conflict. The unanswered question of the Durand line which is a British colonial border-making, and cross-border militancy have always determined the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Both countries have been inclined to have the other in the media as a source of instability. According to studies by Jehangir (2023) and Batool (2019), Pakistani media often tend to view the issues of the Afghan refugees and the border situation in a securitized perspective, focusing on the threat of terrorism, unlawful migration, and drug trafficking. These images strengthen the views of Afghanistan as a place of chaos instead of a state that has humanitarian and cultural connections. Yasin and Farrukh (2022) found that in Pakistani newspapers, the contextualization of Afghanistan is always based on the premises of border control, sovereignty, and external threat. These conclusions indicate a tendency of continuity of the discourse as state security comes first before diplomacy or cross-border collaboration.

The nationalist feeling is further enhanced by the Urdu-language media that has a larger scope amongst the general population than the English-language media. The Urdu newspapers have been discovered by the scholar to simply regurgitate government standpoints particularly those that have to deal with foreign affairs and defense. English new media outlets such as Dawn or The Express Tribune, notwithstanding their slightly more critical nature, remain very much dependent on government sources including the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in case of any crisis. This reliance leads to a lack of narrative

variety and the lack of the inclusion of the Afghan voices and independent analysts. Framing the Afghan actors as aggressors or hosting militants has become a motif that has justified the defensive actions by Pakistan. The trend represents a reflection of the ways in which media discourse is a reflection of more general institutionalized hierarchies, with the military viewpoint prevailing in the national security discourse.

Outside of South Asia, comparative studies also back the idea that national media present conflicts according to geopolitical lines. To take an example, Turkish, Iranian, and Chinese media reports on conflicts on the boundaries of the regions reveal the same tendencies in national justification and shifting the blame. The linguistic strategies of the media, e.g., resorting to metaphors of defense, invasion, or retaliation, in these two instances help to create moral binaries between self and other. Such discursive patterns produce an ethos of mutual victimhood and righteousness that can enhance internal unity and make conversation more difficult. In the case of Pakistan, these forces are further enhanced due to the historical role of the military in politics as well as foreign policy, and the difference between state narrative and media narrative is made even slimmer.

Whereas a significant part of the extant literature points to the prevalence of security and sovereignty frames, there has been little research on humanitarian or human-interest stands in the Pakistani media regarding the coverage of Afghanistan-related problems. When these frames occur, they tend to be peripheral, that is, they are limited to feature articles on refugees or human rights abuses. De-politicization of the stories already even then does not necessarily involve any critical consideration of the structural factors of displacement or conflict. This lack highlights what CDA theorists refer to as "discursive silences" the careful or subliminal omission of voices and viewpoints that threaten hegemonic authority. Such silences are evident in the case of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border conflict in the fact that little has been covered with regards to the Afghan civilians, peace activists, and local cross-border communities who are the direct victims of the militarization.

Generally, the analysis of the reviewed literature exposes some uniform patterns. To begin with, media framing in interstate conflicts is very securitized, with inventory given to military sources and prioritization on national sovereignty. Second, the discursive practices in the Pakistani journalism, especially in the English and Urdu print media, carry institutional congruence with the state narrations. Third, CDA is an effective method of identifying these ideological patterns and undertones, because it links the analysis of text to the wider political and social context. The combination of framing theory and CDA would allow researchers to go beyond counting frames to the analysis of the interaction of language, power, and ideology in forming popular discourses.

Against this understanding, this research will situate itself at the point of convergence of media framing and critical discourse analysis with a specific point of interest to the representation of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border conflict of October 2025 by Pakistani media. Although the topics of media representations of Afghan refugees, terrorism, and Taliban storylines have been covered in past literature, not much focus has been given to the discursive presentation of recent border crisis in the post-2021 geopolitical arena, when Taliban came to power once again. This study will address this gap by investigating the linguistic and discursive means by which the Pakistani newspapers and web-based sources covered the conflict, assigned blame and justified policy actions. The literature therefore forms the theoretical basis of the research on how framing and discourse are used as the tools of the national ideology and how this analysis can be used to shed light on the intricate interplay between the media, the state and the society in South Asia.

3. Theoretical Framework: Critical Discourse Analysis

The research is grounded in Framing Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the two theories are relevant to comprehend how media create meanings and promote ideological power. The Framing Theory which was proposed by Goffman (1974) and elaborated on by Entman (1993) deals with selection of information, emphasis of information, and interpretation of information as applied to influence the audience cognition by media. News outlets help shape problems, blame and propose solutions through framing. Pakistan and Afghanistan border dispute Pakistani media have tended to employ frames of national security, terrorism and sovereignty to develop narratives which reflect the state views, where Pakistan is cast as victim or protector of the region.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a set of tools developed by Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk (1998) to analyze the paradigm of how power is reflected and reproduced through language. It looks into the way linguistic preferences; headlines and the selection of sources perpetuate the dominant ideologies and national interests. The model by Fairclough, which includes text, discourse practice, and social practice, relates the media language with the politics in general. Such a combination of the two theories enables this study to not only examine the ways in which the Pakistani media frame the border conflict but also why particular narratives prevail. This paradigm therefore reveals the ideological and political aspects to the media coverage of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations.

4. Methodology

This paper enters into Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Thematic Analysis as the qualitative research design in order to investigate the way the Pakistan-Afghanistan border conflict is framed in Pakistani media. The qualitative methodology can be used to provide a profound discussion of meanings, ideologies and linguistic patterns that construct media discourses. Instead of using numerical data, it explains textual information in order to reveal its discursive structures, power relations and construction of national identity.

4.1 Research Design

The study design is descriptive and interpretive which involves the analysis of secondary data and critical/ thematic analysis. To acquire the available media presentation and academic understanding of the border conflict, secondary data were chosen. The research relies on news articles, editors, policy analysis, and media commentaries in the most popular English and Urdu newspapers of Pakistan like Dawn, The News International, The Express Tribune and Daily Jang. These sources reflect varied ownership and editorial orientations which provide wider insight on the national discourse.

4.2 The data will be collected using secondary data

Since the research will be a secondary data study, the sources will include:

News stories, editorials, opinion pieces of 2014-2025 on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border dispute, Durand Line matters, and interborder militancy.

Government press releases and statements of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the ministry of foreign affairs, and other organizations.

Available research papers, policy reports, and analysis essays that revolve around the issue of Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship and media framing in South Asia.

All the materials were located on the basis of open archives, online databases and institutional repositories. The secondary data usage gives the researcher an opportunity to study the framing and discourse trends over a period of time without having to travel to the field and conduct interviews.

4.3 Sampling Criteria

Purposive method of sampling was used in selecting media texts that cover Pakistan-Afghanistan border conflict directly. The choice was on high impact stories, cross-border firing incidences, Taliban revival, migration of refugees and diplomatic encounters that produced a lot of media coverage. In order to have a thematic saturation yet depth in the analysis, about 30-40 media texts were chosen. The language newspapers were also encompassed in both English and Urdu language to capture the linguistic diversity and ideological differences in the media of Pakistan.

4.4 Analytical Framework

Thematic Analysis approach was used to analyze the data based on bigger conceptual framework which is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Thematic analysis as defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) is a process of finding, examining and deciphering common recurring patterns of meaning (themes) in qualitative data. This was done in the following stages:

Familiarization: Reading and re-reading the texts to develop an in-depth perception of the tone, vocabulary and assumptions.

First round coding: Underlining major words, metaphors and sentences referring to blame, justification, nationalism and diplomacy.

Theme Development: Codes can be grouped into larger themes, which are security threat, national sovereignty, cross-border terrorism, and Afghan responsibility.

Reviewing and Refining Themes: Making sure that all the themes are reflective of the prevailing discursive tendencies in a variety of materials.

Interpretation: Connection of these themes to the ideological facet of the foreign and security policy discourse of Pakistan using CDA.

In CDA, analysis is conducted based on the three-dimensional model by Fairclough:

Textual Analysis: The linguistic features studied include the use of words, modality, and structure of the sentence.

Discursive Practice: Study of the way texts are being produced and consumed in terms of selection of sources and allusion to other texts.

Social Practice: Explains the findings within the context of politics, history and institutions in Pakistan.

4.5 Validity and Reliability

To secure validity, the data sources were compared to find consistency in frames and patterns of language. Cross-checking of the English and Urdu media enhanced the validity of interpretation. Qualitative research focuses on the depth rather than the generalization aspect; therefore, the reliability was increased in terms of transparent coding and documenting themes.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Direct ethical issues in the study with human subjects did not exist because the study relies on publicly available secondary data. Nevertheless, there was an appropriate citation of all sources, and interpretations were made without any bias or political inclination.

4.7 Limitations

The study concentrates on the mainstream Pakistani print and online media, excluding television and social media. Furthermore, the secondary data equally restricts the researcher to real time events inside the newsroom or editorial decision making. The selected corpus, however, is a reflection of the representative picture of how the conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been represented by hegemonic media discourse in the past ten years.

Table 1: Thematic Findings of Pakistani Media Framing

Theme	Representative Frames	Discursive Patterns / Linguistic Features	Interpretation (CDA Perspective)
1. National Security Frame	"Border threat," "terror infiltration," "defending sovereignty"	Frequent use of security-oriented vocabulary (e.g., <i>threats, infiltrators, terror camps</i>); emphasis on Pakistan's army and border control efforts	Reinforces state-centric narrative portraying Pakistan as a responsible security actor and Afghanistan as a source of instability
2. Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity	"Violation of territorial boundaries," "Durand Line as settled issue," "Afghan interference"	Repetition of words like <i>sovereignty, territorial violation</i> ; highlighting Pakistan's right to secure borders	Promotes nationalist legitimacy and delegitimizes Afghan claims or objections over the Durand Line
3. Blame Attribution Frame	"Afghan government's failure," "support for TTP," "foreign hand"	Attributional language assigning causality and responsibility; use of active voice to emphasize Afghan negligence	Shifts responsibility for border tensions toward Afghanistan
4. Victimization and Resilience Frame	"Pakistan as victim of terrorism," "sacrifices in war on terror," "martyrdom of soldiers"	Emotional tone, frequent mention of <i>martyrs, innocent civilians, resilience</i>	Generates sympathy for Pakistan and legitimizes military actions; cultivates unity and patriotic sentiment
5. Peace and Diplomatic Engagement Frame	"Need for dialogue," "brotherly ties," "Islamic solidarity"	Softer lexical choices emphasizing cooperation; occasional use of religious and cultural bonds	Projects Pakistan as peace-seeking
6. Border Management and Refugee Frame	"Unregulated crossings," "illegal refugees," "security fence"	Bureaucratic and administrative tone; focus on regulation, verification, and fencing efforts	Constructs refugees and mobility as security threats rather than humanitarian issues
7. External Influence Frame	"Indian involvement," "foreign manipulation," "geopolitical pressure"	Recurrent reference to "third party" or "foreign hand" influencing Afghanistan; implicit anti-India sentiment	Reinforces the perception of Pakistan as victim of regional conspiracies and external destabilization efforts

Summary of Thematic Patterns

The analysis shows that Pakistani media mainly use security-oriented and nationalistic frames and use Pakistan as a protector of sovereignty and stability in the region and place the blame on Afghanistan to cause the instability and cross-border terrorism. The peace frames do come out occasionally but are subdued by the security discourse. Comprehensively, the results

indicate that Pakistani press discourses are consistent with the state and military discourses, indicating an ideological replication of the nation and power units through discourse.

5. Findings

Research based on secondary data gathered through Pakistani print and online media shows that there are some strong patterns of framing the Pakistan-Afghanistan border conflict. In the course of thematic and critical discourse analysis, it can be stated that the media in Pakistan are largely influenced by the state-oriented and security-related discourses which strengthen the sense of national identity and supports the government and military actions. The analysis resulted in seven major themes of national security, sovereignty, blame attribution, victimization, peace and diplomacy, border management, and external influence. The predominant discourse in the media is the National Security Frame. Terror infiltration, border threat, militant hideouts, etc. are the common terms used in the headlines and reports and reflect the military alertness and defensive orientation of Pakistan. This language makes Pakistan a state that is security conscious and is fighting terrorism and the instability that is growing out of the Afghan soil. This kind of framing is very close to state and military institutions, which justify the ongoing militarization of the border and policy-making.

The Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity Frame supports the claims by Pakistan who owns the Durand Line and undermines the claims by Afghans. Media discourses highlight the themes of the violations of the territory and represent the issue of border enforcement as the one of national pride and legality. This discussion enhances national cohesion as well as depicting Afghanistan as a force that threatens borders.

There is a repetition of the Blame Attribution Frame, where cross-border violence and terrorism are heaped on to Afghanistan, often based on the failure of the Afghani government or the backing of TTP. The externalization of blame means that the Pakistani media minimize internal security failures and emphasize external carelessness or aggression. On the same note, the Victimization and Resilience Frame presents Pakistan as a country that has paid with its life a lot in war on terror through the evoking of emotional accounts of martyrdom of soldiers and the civilian victims.

The Peace and Diplomatic Engagement Frame is less common, but it offers Pakistan as a cooperative player that would like to engage in dialogue and acquire stability. Such expressions as brotherly relations and Islamic solidarity are present in the editorials which are underlining common religion and culture. All these gentle tones are however drowned out in a powerful theme of security and blame. The Border Management and Refugee Frame also concentrates on unregulated crossings, which portrays refugees and undocumented migrants as security issues instead of humanitarian issues, which is a manifestation of securitization of migration in the media.

Finally, the External Influence Frame implicates the tensions to the actions of the foreign hands, especially the perceived involvement of India in the affairs of Afghanistan. This strengthens the victimhood of the outside and justifies the strategic Germany of dealing with Kabul by Pakistan.

In general, the results indicate that the media coverage of the border conflict in Pakistan is entrenched in the nationalistic and state-oriented ideology. The coverage places the national security over diplomatic aspects. Critical discourse analysis will help to understand that this kind of language and framing reproduces the power relations that exist, follows the masses mood with that of the official policy, and helps to create a national sense of Pakistan as a strong nation which protects its sovereignty in the hostile environment at the regional level.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research paper aimed at analyzing the ways in which Pakistani media represent the border war between Pakistan and Afghanistan using a Critical Discourse Analysis of secondary sources, which consisted of news reports, opinion pieces, and editorials by major national newspapers. The results indicate that media discourse in Pakistan is mostly characterized by security-based and nationalistic frames, which depict a strong correspondence between media discourse and those of the state. The war is mostly symbolized by the themes of national security, sovereignty and victimization which highlight the defensive position and moral right of Pakistan to address cross-border issues.

This research indicates that the media has painted Pakistan as the victim of terrorism and champion of sovereignty whereas Afghanistan has been painted as either irresponsible or a party in the destabilizing border relations. Frames that underline cooperation and diplomacy, although they exist, are minor and not as dominant in the overall story. Such asymmetry adds to the lack of comprehension of the conflict by marginalizing Afghan voices and the socio-political dynamics in general. The repetition of militarized and accusatory language also helps to sustain the ideas of a constant hostility among the people and creates little room in the mind of the audience to the idea of peace.

The analysis of the study using the tool of Critical Discourse Analysis reveals that the media significantly contributes to the maintenance of national ideology, justification of state policy, and the formation of collective identity. Through the manipulation of linguistic and thematic frame of conflict representation, the Pakistani media serve to establish the relations of power as dominant and supports the current political understanding of the world. The discriminating use of sources, emotional words, and nationalistic colors can serve as an illustration of the discourse as a tool of reproduction of ideology.

7. Recommendations

Encourage Balanced Reporting: Media companies are advised to have variety in sources and views, which incorporates the voices of Afghanistan and independent experts so as to decrease the one-sided framing of nationalism.

Promote Peace Journalism: Journalists need to use peace frames where they elaborate on common past, regional collaboration and human costs instead of concentrating on military or blame frames.

Media Literacy and Training: Unconscious bias can be prevented by using continuous professional training in critical reporting, discourse awareness and international conflict coverage that will assist journalists in recognizing and avoiding unconscious bias.

Academic Cooperation: Universities and media organizations ought to work together and generate research on data-informed cross-border media framing to create a deeper comprehension.

Finally, the paper presents the necessity of the transformative media discourse one that helps to build peace, regional comprehension, and responsible journalism beyond the classical frames of states.

8. Policy Recommendations

1. **Favor Pluralistic Sourcing:** Editors need to make sure that the sourcing is balanced by regularly incorporating independent analysts, civil-society participants as well as affected civilians in addition to official pronouncements.

2. **Conflict-Sensitive Journalism Training:** Media houses, press clubs and journalism schools, should establish training modules on conflict sensitive reporting which should emphasize on displacement, civilian protection and long-term causes.

3. Editorial Principles on Structural Context: Newspapers must also take on editorial approaches that demand that reporters use historical and regional context to report on cross-border events- including the Durand Line controversies, tribal politics and historical trends in cross-border militancy.

4. Platform to Humanitarian Narratives: Media and broadcasters ought to establish special sections whenever there is crisis on the issue of displacement, humanitarian demands and non-military interventions.

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