Ecolinguistic Analysis of Environmental News Articles of English Newspapers Based in Pakistan (2024)

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of environmental metaphors in shaping public perception and enhancing engagement with ecological issues in Pakistani media. Metaphors play a critical role in framing complex environmental concepts in relatable ways, yet limited research has been conducted in the context of Pakistani English newspapers (Hussain et al., 2025). Using a qualitative approach, the researcher analyzed environmental news articles from five major newspapers including *Dawn, The Express Tribune, The News International, The Nation, and Pakistan Observer* and collected data systematically throughout 2024. Data were thematically arranged into ten categories, and Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) and Ecolinguistic Analysis were applied to uncover cognitive and cultural frames. The researcher found that crisis-driven metaphors effectively highlight urgency, while optimistic metaphors inspire hope and action, creating a balanced narrative. These metaphors enhance readability and engagement by making abstract ecological issues tangible and emotionally resonant, appealing to a wide range of audiences. The study concludes that environmental metaphors are essential for fostering public awareness, empathy, and sustainable behaviors. It is recommended that journalists undergo training in ecolinguistic techniques to better employ metaphorical framing, while media

organizations collaborate with environmental researchers to create culturally relevant narratives. Policymakers and educators should also utilize metaphorical language to promote environmental awareness and inspire actionable change among the public.

Keywords: Ecolinguistics, environmental metaphors, media discourse, Pakistani English newspapers, cognitive framing, public perception, sustainability communication, journalism, cultural communication, public perception, policy advocacy, environmental literacy, media communication

1. Genesis of the Study

Environmental challenges are among the most pressing global issues of the 21st century, necessitating effective communication strategies to raise awareness and inspire action. Nowadays, the world's population is particularly acutely faced with such environmental problems as air pollution, ozone layer depletion, acid rain, greenhouse effect, soil pollution, pollution of the world's oceans and overpopulation (Semenova, 2020). The media plays a pivotal role in this regard, particularly newspapers, which serve as a vital source of information for the public. Metaphors, as integral components of linguistic expression, are powerful tools in shaping how people perceive and engage with environmental issues. By embedding abstract ideas within familiar, relatable concepts, metaphors help bridge the gap between complex environmental phenomena and readers' everyday experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). Metaphor enables the wordy expression characteristic of informal, spoken discourses to be reorganized into the cohesive and abstracted expression valued in academic texts (McGrath & Liardét, 2025; Hussain et al., 2023).

Ecolinguistics, an interdisciplinary field that investigates the relationship between language and the environment, provides a valuable framework for this research. Rooted in the premise that language influences thought and action, ecolinguistics examines how linguistic choices reflect, reinforce, or challenge societal attitudes toward the environment (Stibbe, 2015). It is auto-suggestive, insofar as it indicates the combination of 'ecology' and 'linguistics'. Thus, apparently though, Ecolinguistics is a branch of linguistics dealing with ecology (Dash, 2019). In the context of Pakistan, environmental challenges such as climate changes, freshwater scarcity, deforestation, and fresh water pollution have significant socio-economic implications (Qasim et al., 2014).

Analyzing media discourse through an ecolinguistic lens uncovers how language shapes public understanding and response to environmental issues in Pakistan (Qusien & Robbins, 2024).

Metaphors define different cultures. Each culture has its own particular set of metaphors which may help the readers (from some alien culture) understand history, norms, rituals and ceremonies of that particular culture (Nazeer et al., 2024). These metaphors act as semiotic symbols for that culture. (Gohar et al., 2019). Metaphors are not just embellishments of language; they are cognitive tools that shape thought and affect perception. For example, metaphorical phrases such as "Mother Earth," "battling climate change," and "global warming is a ticking time bomb" present environmental issues that elicit emotional reactions and moral assessments (Charteris-Black, 2011). Pakistan is a linguistically diverse country, with varying levels of environmental awareness among readers, which calls for a nuanced approach to environmental reporting (Jamil & Appiah-Adjei, 2024; Syed et al., 2023).

This study uses the year 2024 as that is the most timely and relevant, with the possibility of major environmental events and policies shaping much of the media presence. Given the deepening need for global action around climate change, and Pakistan's ongoing susceptibility to environmental disasters, newspapers during this time period are likely to have adopted diverse strategies of rhetorical engagement in order to inform and persuade their readership (Mahmood et al., 2014). The present study answers two research questions regarding the 2024 Pakistani English newspapers: What type of environmental metaphors did they use? How do metaphors make environmental news more readable and engaging for readers?

Metaphor can be harnessed as a fundamental feature of environmental journalism, to ground and provoke a critical sensibility in readers in a process of creating meaning out of immediate sensory experience and the wider cosmos of nature. Previous research has shown metaphors to be powerful tools for rendering abstract environmental phenomena accessible and memorable (Morrison, 2019). Yet there is little research exploring how such metaphors work in the particular socio-cultural and linguistic context of Pakistan. Such lacunae emphasize the necessity of the current study, which does not only explore the linguistic characteristics of environmental metaphors but also analyzes their ideologically loaded and culturally specific implications.

1.1. Problem Statement

Environmental metaphor serves as an important tool for public awareness and comprehension of environmental problems (Khan & Nawaz, 2015). However, there is little research on how these metaphors are used in Pakistani English newspapers to communicate environmental concerns and their impact on readers. This is especially important for Pakistan, where environmental problems are increasing. Understanding how newspapers use these metaphors can help assess their influence and develop strategies to make environmental news more effective. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the types of environmental metaphors used in Pakistani English newspapers in 2024 and their effect on reader engagement and understanding.

1.2.   Research Objectives

- To identify and categorize the predominant ecological metaphors employed in Pakistan based English-language newspapers during 2024, analyzing their thematic and rhetorical functions in shaping environmental discourse.

- To analyze how metaphorical constructs (like personification, analogy, symbolism etc) enhance the accessibility of complex environmental issues for diverse readerships and evaluate the role of metaphor-driven emotional resonance (like urgency, hope, crisis etc) in fostering reader engagement with environmental journalism.

- To investigate the alignment of these metaphors with global environmental narratives versus localized socio-cultural and ecological contexts in Pakistan.

- To determine the implications of metaphor usage for public perception, policy advocacy, and environmental literacy in media communication.

1.3.   Research Questions

This research study answers the following research questions:

1. What are the predominant ecological metaphors employed in Pakistani English-language newspapers to frame environmental discourse during 2024?

2. How do metaphorical constructs amplify reader engagement by enhancing the accessibility and emotional resonance of environmental journalism?

1.4.   Significance of the Study

This research holds transformative potential as it pioneers an interdisciplinary bridge between linguistics, media studies, and environmental communication fields often examined in isolation.

By rigorously validating the power of language as a driver of public ecological consciousness, the study illuminates how strategic linguistic choices, particularly metaphors, shape societal engagement with sustainability crises. Focusing on Pakistani English newspapers, it offers a nuanced exploration of how media framing in a linguistically hybrid, culturally diverse context can amplify or obscure ecological urgency.

The study uniquely advances ecolinguistics by foregrounding the sociopolitical and cultural dynamics of metaphor usage in a developing nation like Pakistan, where environmental narratives intersect with postcolonial identity, economic priorities, and global climate discourse. Beyond theory, its findings equip journalists with actionable frameworks to craft resonant narratives, empower policymakers to leverage language for advocacy, and enable educators to design curricula that foster ecological literacy. Ultimately, this work transcends academic contribution—it catalyzes a paradigm shift toward linguistically informed strategies for cultivating ecological consciousness and mobilizing collective action in an era of planetary crisis.

## 2.	Literature Review

Cognitive linguistics has explored a belief that our thought and communication that are stimulated by metaphors, since they can ground the complexities of abstract notions in the terms of more tangible experiences. Metaphors are not merely a matter of language; they are central to the way human beings think, allowing us to understand one realm of experience in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). This meta-framing of ideas is relevant in and of itself, but even more so with environmental conversation that quite literally needs to be very visualised in this ecology-centric day and age. Environmental metaphors serve as "cognitive bridges" that can translate scientific terminology into relatable imagery that communicates to a broad spectrum of audiences (Morrison, 2019). Such metaphors do more than communicate information; they evoke emotions and thereby shape attitudes — making them a concern for researchers in ecolinguistics and environmental communication.

Moreover, Ecolinguistics on the other hand, acts as an interdisciplinary field that studies the ties between language, society, and the environment, paying attention to how linguistic choices both reflect and shape ecological awareness. According to Stibbe (2015), ecolinguistics can reveal the assumption and bias behind the narratives we tell about the environment, and metaphor analysis

enables us to access the language's hidden ideological workings. For example, such metaphors as "nature's balance," "carbon footprint" and "climate crisis" encompass complex environmental phenomena while also carrying particular values and assumptions. Deconstructing these metaphors, makes it possible to challenge the dominant cultural discourses about the environment and draw conclusions about their implications for public engagement and policy (Shabbir et al., 2021). Translation and communication of scientific environmental literature in multilingual, multicultural settings like Pakistan are not merely problems of translation between two languages but configured in a complicated socio-political field that shapes the visibility of a scientific discourse of ecology and the everyday ecological experience.

Extensive research on metaphor use in environmental journalism has highlighted its effectiveness in enhancing readability and engagement. More than a cognitive tool to understand a complex information, metaphors are expected to provide a rhetorical flavor of the information which leads to the increase of persuasiveness and memorability of the information being presented (Charteris-Black, 2011; Nazeer et al., 2024). In the specific case of environmental news, metaphors like "planetary boundaries," "global warming as a ticking time bomb" and "floods as nature's wrath" leverage culturally salient imagery to instill urgency and action. Using samples of environmental metaphors, Semino (2008) to highlight how metaphorical framing can shape public attitudes toward environmental issues, war and catastrophes often invoke these because of their ability to agitate perceptions of threatening immediacy. Arunachalam and Chandy (2001) list some effective metaphors used in social marketing, but the cultural context in which they are used is relevant to their effectiveness (Hassan, 2018), so studies localized to the specific linguistic and socio-cultural environments seem pertinent (Hassan, 2018).

This is especially true in the context of Pakistan, where socio-political and cultural dynamics significantly influence the media's framing of environmental topics. Given the context of Pakistan as a developing nation with limited resources, which translates into low levels of environmental literacy and prioritization (Ahmed et al., 2024), environmental journalism must look for solutions for their shortcomings. Nonetheless, newspapers are still one of the keys to raising awareness and promoting public discussion on ecological issues. Previous studies related to Pakistani media have shown the use of metaphorical language to frame national and global issues including terrorism,

economic development, and social change (Rana et al., 2024). Little research has been done on metaphors used in environmental reporting, which leaves a gap that the current study aims to fill (Rizwan, 2014). This study addresses the research gap by analyzing environmental metaphors in Pakistani English newspapers. It examines linguistic strategies used to raise eco-consciousness among readers.

One of the relevant theoretical frameworks for this study is critical discourse analysis (CDA), which emphasizes the way language constructs and perpetuates power relations and ideologies. According to Fairclough (2013), media discourse is a reflection and a shaper of societal values and thus a rich site to explore the relationship between language and ideology. For example, the underlying meaning of environmental metaphors become visible by using CDA exposing discourses, ideologies and power relationships behind any particular use of language. For example, nature framed as a victim or an enemy can generate sympathy or a fight-condition response, and impact how readers relate to environmental issues and their agency]] and role in ameliorating them. This analytical perspective parallels the objectives of ecolinguistics, which aims to promote sustainable and inclusive narratives by scrutinizing language use critically (Abbas & Rasheed, 2024).

For environmental communication, metaphor analysis holds significance beyond the academic setting; it has practical implications for journalism, education, and policy making. "Metaphors are extremely pervasive in language. They provide a powerful manner of making abstract concepts explicit" (Michael, 2010). Morrison (2019) shows research evidence, suggesting that moving from literal language to metaphorical language can greatly increase public understanding of environmental phenomena, the adaptation of the language to the context makes it more relatable and actionable. For instance, "climate change as a fever" interprets the scientific construct of global warming in a more digestible fashion through personification while also conveying urgency and the need for action. In the Pakistani context too, metaphors based on familiar cultural and religious imagery (e.g., "stewardship of the Earth" or "nature's trust") can be more meaningful for readers and incite collective action (Habib & Zahra, 2024). The use of metaphors in Pakistani English newspapers promote effective environmental communication in accordance with the linguistic and cultural structure of Pakistan (Naureen & Janjua, 2024). "Metaphorical language may make it

possible for people to convey what would otherwise be difficult or impossible to express as metaphors were used, they seemed to be particularly evident in descriptions of intense feeling states" (Ortony & Fainsilber, 1987).

The literature on metaphors highlights their central role in environmental discourse and their power to shape public understanding and actions. So why do we need localized research for studying environmental metaphors? Through investigating the Pakistani context, this study adds to the literature of ecolinguistics and environmental communication, a significant gap that to date has received little attention, and also its findings could cater to the improvement of the impact of environmental journalism (Ali et al., 2024). The study's analysis of metaphors in Pakistani English newspapers, published in 2024, highlights the role of language in nurturing ecological consciousness and creating sustainable futures.

3.   Methodology

This is a qualitative study. In this study, the researcher tried to conduct ecolinguistic analysis of metaphors used in different English newspapers of Pakistan during the year 2024. To conduct this research study, the researcher selected five (5) English newspapers including *Dawn, The Express Tribune, The News International, The Nation* and *Pakistan Observer*. The newspapers were selected purposefully as the researcher needs those newspapers whom data is available online to gather environmental news articles. The researcher further divided the journals and months in the whole year to collect data as it was very difficult to gather data of all newspapers for a whole year for 365 days. The researcher then compiled all environment related news articles. The news articles were gathered from the official websites of these newspapers. The researcher gather data related environmental news according to the following criteria:

Table 1

Newspapers and Periods of Data Collection

Sr. No.	Newspaper Name	Period of Data Collection	Sample / Issues Studied	Themes/ Slants (10 Categories)

1	Dawn	Jan. 01, 2024 to Mar. 15, 2024	74	*Nature as a Living Entity, Pollution and Environmental Degradation, Climate Change, Natural Disasters, Conservation and Sustainability, Economic and Political Framing, Water and Resources, Biodiversity, Human and Environmental Relationship and General Environmental Imagery*
2	The Express Tribune	Mar. 16, 2024 to May 31, 2024	75	
3	The News International	Jun. 01, 2024 to Aug. 15, 2024	76	
4	The Nation	Aug. 16, 2024 to Oct. 31, 2024	76	
5	Pakistan Observer	Nov. 01, 2024 to Dec. 31, 2024	61	

The researchers made/ identified ten categories/ themes including *Nature as a Living Entity, Pollution and Environmental Degradation, Climate Change, Natural Disasters, Conservation and Sustainability, Economic and Political Framing, Water* and *Resources, Biodiversity, Human and Environmental Relationship and General Environmental Imagery* from the collected data and *Thematic Coding* (Gibbs, 2007) technique and *Metaphor Identification Procedure* (Group, 2007) were used to identify metaphors in the data. Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) developed by Charteris-Black (2004) was used to uncover underlying cognitive and cultural frames. Further, *Ecolinguistic Analysis* (Haugen, 2001) was conducted by using these metaphors and underlying cognitive and cultural frames.

4. Data Analysis Results

This study conducts an ecolinguistic analysis of environmental news articles published in Pakistani English newspapers in 2024. It examines how environmental metaphors convey complex ecological issues and enhance reader engagement and comprehension. Articles from *Dawn, The Express Tribune, The News International, The Nation,* and *Pakistan Observer* are analyzed to

explore the cognitive and cultural frames underlying these metaphors. The study employs qualitative methods, including Thematic Coding (Gibbs, 2007) and the Metaphor Identification Procedure (Group, 2007) to systematically identify metaphors. Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black, 2004) is used to uncover their cognitive and cultural significance, while an ecolinguistic lens (Haugen, 2001) contextualizes their broader implications for human-environment relationships. This framework offers a comprehensive understanding of linguistic and ecological narratives in environmental news discourse.

4.1. Thematic Categories and Metaphor Analysis

Here, you can read a detailed breakdown of these metaphors, organized into ten themes in environmental news articles. I'm going to take you through each theme, why they exist, and what specific aspects of human-environment interaction, ecological concerns, and cultural attitudes they reflect. The analysis uses Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) to interrogate cognitive and cultural frames as well as the consequences of such metaphors in terms of readability and engagement.

4.1.1. Nature as a Living Entity

This theme depicts nature as a living, breathing organism with a nurturing, life-giving quality. It is also portrayed as fragile. These metaphors elicit empathy and a sense of responsibility in the reader.

- **Metaphors Found:** "The lungs of the Earth" (for forests), "Mother Earth" (the planet as nurturing), "The heartbeat of the planet" (for ecosystems), "Ailing Earth" (environmental degradation), "The Earth is bleeding" (damage to the planet from deforestation or pollution).
- **CMA Interpretation:** These metaphors anthropomorphize the Earth, positioning it as a living organism with a direct symbiosis with life on it. They also underscore the urgent need for conservation and restoration.
- **Effect:** Such personifying metaphors immerse the reader in these topics so vividly that they evoke relatability and a sense of urgency.

4.1.2. Environmental Destruction and Pollution

This theme explores the negative impact of human existence through strong imagery, illustrating the severity of pollution and its effects on the environment.

- **Metaphors Included:** "A ticking time bomb" (pollution or climate change), "Choking under the weight of waste" (pollution), "A sewer of toxins" (polluted rivers or air), "Drowning in plastic" (plastic pollution), "A garbage avalanche" (waste management issues).
- **CMA Interpretation:** These metaphors depict pollution as a growing and imminent threat, emphasizing the urgency of immediate action. The imagery of choking and drowning symbolizes the suffocating effects of unchecked waste.
- **Impact:** Using such extreme visual imagery captures readers' attention and powerfully conveys the scale of environmental destruction.

4.1.3. Climate Change

Metaphors in this category frame the climate change crisis in both global and personal contexts, often through extreme imagery.

- **Metaphors Identified:** "Global warming is a wildfire" (escalation), "The greenhouse gas blanket" (trapping heat), "A melting pot" (melting glaciers), "The climate crisis is a silent killer" (slow but dangerous), "Rising tides of change" (gradual but costly impacts).
- **CMA Interpretation:** These metaphors portray climate change as an uncontrollable force, emphasizing its destructive power. The term "silent killer" underscores its insidious nature, while the "greenhouse gas blanket" simplifies complex scientific concepts for easier understanding.
- **Effect:** These metaphors make abstract climate issues feel more tangible and relatable, increasing reader engagement.

4.1.4. Natural Disasters

This theme reflects the devastation of natural catastrophes, often presented as nature's revenge for environmental transgressions.

- **Metaphors Found:** "Nature's fury unleashed" (floods, storms), "The wrath of the Earth" (disasters as punishment), "A tsunami of destruction" (impact of disasters), "Earthquake tremors as warnings" (nature reacting to human actions), "The storm is brewing" (impending disaster).

- **CMA Interpretation:** These metaphors characterize disasters as both a warning and a consequence of environmental negligence, depicting nature as a powerful, reactive force.

- **Impact:** By framing disasters as nature's response to human actions, these metaphors encourage reflection on human responsibility and the need for sustainable practices.

4.1.5. Conservation and Sustainability

This category emphasizes proactive efforts to protect and preserve the environment, often using agricultural and transformative imagery.

- **Metaphors Identified:** "Guardians of the Earth" (activists), "Sowing seeds of change" (sustainability efforts), "Harvesting the fruits of conservation" (positive outcomes), "A green revolution" (sustainability movement), "Turning over a new (green) leaf" (adopting eco-friendly behaviors).

- **CMA Interpretation:** These metaphors frame conservation as a deliberate, nurturing process, likening it to growth and renewal. The focus on guardianship highlights human agency in environmental protection.

- **Impact:** These metaphors inspire hope and motivate readers to participate in sustainability efforts by presenting achievable, positive outcomes.

4.1.6. Economic and Political Framing

This theme integrates environmental issues with economic and political considerations, emphasizing the stakes and responsibilities of various stakeholders.

- **Metaphors Identified:** "The cost of inaction" (failure to address issues), "A race against time" (urgency), "Carbon footprint" (human impact), "Greenwashing" (false eco-friendliness), "The eco-tax burden" (environmental policies).

- **CMA Interpretation:** These metaphors contextualize environmental concerns within the frameworks of accountability and urgency, appealing to policymakers and the public.

- **Impact:** By linking environmental issues with economic and political implications, these metaphors drive home the message of shared responsibility and the need for systemic change.

4.1.7. Water and Resources

This theme highlights the scarcity and value of natural resources, particularly water, and the need for sustainable resource management.

- **Metaphors Identified:** "The well is running dry" (scarcity), "A river of life" (importance of water), "Draining the Earth's reserves" (overuse), "An ocean of opportunity" (renewable resources), "Ripples of hope" (impactful actions).
- **CMA Interpretation:** These metaphors emphasize the finite nature of resources and the need for careful management, while also highlighting opportunities for positive change.
- **Impact:** The focus on scarcity and opportunity resonates with readers, encouraging sustainable practices.

4.1.8. Biodiversity

This category underscores the interdependence of species and ecosystems, highlighting the consequences of biodiversity loss.

- **Metaphors Identified:** "A web of life" (ecosystem interdependence), "Breaking the chain of life" (loss of biodiversity), "A garden of extinction" (species extinction), "The canary in the coal mine" (danger signals), "Pollinators are the engine of life" (importance of insects).
- **CMA Interpretation:** These metaphors depict biodiversity as fragile yet essential, with the potential for far-reaching consequences if disrupted.
- **Impact:** By illustrating interconnectedness, these metaphors foster an understanding of the importance of protecting ecosystems.

4.1.9. Human and Environmental Relationship

This theme explores the dynamic and often precarious relationship between humans and nature.

- Metaphors Identified: "Walking a tightrope with nature" (balance), "Living in nature's shadow" (dependence), "Nature bites back" (repercussions), "Borrowing from the future" (unsustainable practices), "Paying the environmental price" (consequences).

- CMA Interpretation: These metaphors frame human-environment interactions as delicate and often unsustainable, emphasizing the long-term costs of neglect.

- Impact: These metaphors provoke reflection on ethical and sustainable behaviors, appealing to readers' sense of responsibility.

4.1.10. General Environmental Imagery

This theme includes metaphors that broadly encapsulate environmental concerns and aspirations.

- **Metaphors Identified:** "A glasshouse of fragility" (ecosystem balance), "The seeds of destruction" (causes of degradation), "Building a greener tomorrow" (sustainability efforts), "A desert of despair" (loss of arable land), "The icy grip of extinction" (polar habitat loss).

- **CMA Interpretation:** These metaphors capture the fragility of ecosystems and the potential for positive change, encouraging proactive efforts.

- **Impact:** The evocative imagery broadens readers' understanding of environmental issues, motivating collective action.

The metaphors not only enhance readability and engagement but also serve as powerful tools for raising awareness and fostering environmental stewardship.

4.2.   Cross-Thematic Insights

It is important to note that the correspondence between thematic categories shows significant overlaps and interconnections, capturing the intertwined nature of environmental metaphors. To illustrate, "Pollution and Environmental Degradation" employs metaphors such as "choking under the weight of waste" and "a ticking time bomb," describing in clear and jarring terms the destructive effects of environmental negligence. These metaphors come together with "Conservation and Sustainability," where images of hope like "sowing seeds of change" and "harvesting the fruits of conservation," offering possible solutions. Combined these themes create a narrative of both the urgent need to rectify for the poor decisions of the past and a more positive(toned) call to action for readers to adopt green practices.

The recurring cognitive and cultural frames appeared cross-cutting across all the themes, reflecting coalescent perceptions of society towards the environment. One overarching frame in

"Nature as a Living Entity" is personification, exemplified in metaphors such as "Mother Earth," "the Earth is bleeding," and "ailing Earth." That anthropomorphism of nature resurfaces in "Human and Environmental Relationship" with metaphors like "nature bites back" and "walking a tightrope with nature." These expressions frame the Earth as a nurturer yet a resolver, evoking human responsibility and empathy for the Earth. Describing nature as an active agent reinforces the ecolinguistic story of interaction humans hold in the equilibrium of the environment.

A second repeating frame is the depiction of environmental crises as near and disastrous. This framing is apparent in "Climate Change," with metaphors such as "global warming is a wildfire" and "rising tides of change," and in "Natural Disasters," with phrases like "a tsunami of destruction" and "the storm is brewing." These metaphors fit with "Pollution and Environmental Degradation," where phrases like "a ticking time bomb" and "drowning in plastic" heighten the sense of urgency to take action. All together these metaphors create an apocalyptic vision of doom with the intent to incite the reader by illuminating the irreversible nature of said doom if no action is taken.

Economic and political dimensions also constitute a recurrent cultural frame, especially within "Economic and Political Framing." Metaphors such as "the cost of inaction" and "the eco-tax burden" highlight the financial and policy-related consequences of Environmental neglect. These track with "Conservation and Sustainability," in which metaphors like "turning over a new (green) leaf" imply a larger cultural and economic pivot to more eco-friendly practices. This thematic interplay underscores the need for environmental issues to permeate societal and political sense-making processes, as well as the transformative demands necessary to effectively address ecological challenges.

The overlapping of thematics also uncovers the spillover effects of environmental challenges. Concrete metaphors in "Water and Resources," like "the well is running dry" connects to "Biodiversity," where breaking "the chain of life" highlights the interconnectedness of ecosystems. As with "a desert of despair" from the section "General Environmental Imagery" and "drowning in plastic" from "Pollution and Environmental Degradation," both of which conjure vivid imagery of environmental fragility and degradation. These continuous thematic links highlight the urgency of sustainable practices and the consequences of resource exploitation.

These cross-thematic insights illustrate how metaphors work together to develop shared narratives. These metaphors function to deepen both reader engagement and comprehension on ecological matters by weaving together threads of immediacy, compassion for others and accountability to take actions to prevent a tragedy. In a similar vein, this discourse would echo with the ecolinguistic powerful principle of considering language as a taxis to enable sustainable human-environment relationships, also suggesting an epistemological coherence in addressing environmental issues.

4.3. Ecolinguistic Implications

The metaphors identified within the ten thematic categories are illustrative of our understanding in terms of the human-environment relationship, ecological awareness and cultural attitudes that are dominant. They note how language influences our perception of environmental issues, as well as our solutions to them. Metaphors like "Mother Earth" and "the Earth is bleeding" from the theme "Nature as a Living Entity" treat the planet as a person, argumentative but imperiled. Such attributions foster empathy and responsibility, emphasizing the idea that humans have a moral responsibility to care for the environment. It resonated with the metaphors "walking a tightrope with nature" and "nature bites back" from "Human and Environmental Relationship," which highlight the delicate balance needed in the relationship between human activity and ecological stability while advocating for peaceful coexistence.

Ecological consciousness is dialed up even more through vivid, urgent imagery in metaphors like "a ticking time bomb" and "choking under the weight of waste" from "Pollution and Environmental Degradation." These phrases convey an urgency and a crisis, similar to other metaphors like "global warming is a wildfire" and "a tsunami of destruction" in "Climate Change" and "Natural Disasters," respectively. Although effective at conveying the gravity of environmental problems, these metaphors also mirror a primarily fear-based narrative that can easily lead to despair rather than action. This raises an important issue in ecolinguistics: the tension between awareness raising and hope building in the service of sustainability.

You can also see cultural attitudes reflected in metaphors that cast environmental problems in economic and political terms. (fifth paragraph) For example, "the cost of inaction" and "the eco-tax burden" from "Economic and Political Framing" highlight the concrete repercussions of

ignoring environmental concerns, which would speak to a pragmatic mindset. In contrast, optimistic metaphors such as "sowing seeds of change" and "turning over a new (green) leaf" are examples taken from "Conservation and Sustainability," which encourage a positive, future-oriented response through collective responsibility and proactive behavior. They are examples of positive frames that echo ecolinguistic principles on sustainability, motivating us to work towards a greener future.

Yet some metaphorical devices may risk reinscribing human-centered knowledge systems that place human beings at the very center of ecological narratives. Phrases like "harvesting the fruits of conservation" and "pollinators are the engine of life" frame nature mainly in terms of its usefulness to humans, which might undercut attempts to engender intrinsic ecological value. This anthropocentrism is more damaging than other holistic metaphors, like "a web of life" and "a river of life", which focus on the interconnectedness and interdependence of existence and other living beings.

The analyzed metaphors represent aspects of ecolinguistic discourse that are more or less constructive, and more or less limiting in terms of our ability to imagine a way forward. Indeed, many are motivated by a desire to promote ecological awareness and sustainability, yet others risk the propagation of fear or anthropocentric biases. A critical ecolinguistic lens can be useful for sharpening the environmental narrative because calls to action can only be meaningful inasmuch as they are understood. Ecolinguistic discourse can thus be a pivotal area within the whole of language towards shaping a language of hope, interconnectedness and shared responsibility and addressing global environmental challenges.

4.4. Findings

The overuse of crisis-charged metaphors including "a ticking time bomb" and "global warming is a wildfire" mirrors a shared cultural narrative of alarm and dread surrounding environmental decline. Common sense thrives in such and presents a starting point, a view of things which had been ignored and which makes it very easy to expand on the available ideas and wrap them in poetical fabric. This is in line with the ecolinguistic objective of having our use of language catalyse behavioral change, and engendering a sense of collective responsibility.

On the flip side of descriptive metaphors, optimistic metaphors like "sowing seeds of change" or "harvesting the fruits of conservation" from the theme "Conservation and Sustainability," contrasted with the front page of an outdated newspaper provides a counter-narrative of exploration-hope and possibility. These are metaphorical descriptions that promote proactive acquisition and emphasize the benefits of sustainable practices. This sense of alarmism and hope creates an inspiring rhetoric around the climate emergency that paves the way for not only urgent action but also structural environmental governance moving forward.

The second part of the analysis addresses the impact of the economical and politica aspects of the environmental discourse. Terms like "cost of inaction" and "eco-tax burden" place ecological challenges into wider societal and systemic frameworks. These metaphors make a framing of environmental challenges as moral imperatives and pragmatic concerns to wide-ranging groups, including the policy and business community and the public.

Metaphors reflect a mix of local and global perspectives at the cultural level. Such personifications as "Mother Earth" resonate across the world, but others, such as "drowning in plastic" and "a garbage avalanche," speak most to challenges in Pakistan specifically, like waste disposal and pollution. It shows how figuration is localized for different cultural and regional context in studies on the environment.

4.5.   Discussion

This research highlights how metaphors serve not merely as rhetorical devices but as vital tools for translating scientific concepts into public discourse, particularly within environmental sustainability. By constructing cognitive and emotional bridges, metaphors transform abstract ecological crises such as climate change or biodiversity loss into relatable, visceral narratives. For instance, phrases like "the Earth is bleeding" or "a tsunami of destruction" transcend mere attention-grabbing; they evoke empathy, crystallize urgency, and catalyze behavioral shifts by personalizing distant or complex issues. This underscores the dual power of metaphors: they simplify technical realities while amplifying emotional stakes, making sustainability challenges both comprehensible and compelling for audiences.

Reflecting an ecolinguistic view, these metaphors demonstrate how language helps shape worldviews about the environment (Stibbe, 2016; Winner, 1986). For example,

anthropomorphizing nature corresponds to an integrated worldview where the human and environmental are fundamentally interdependent. This part of her method is so important regarding an anthropocentric point of view, eager to tell beautiful stories about itself however too keen to overlook its painful intricacies.

But the study also points out potential downsides of metaphorical framing. The first 10 days gave way to a crisis-driven set of metaphors that generated urgency in an audience that seemed at times helpless, if not fatalistic. Metaphors that are associated with economic or political frames may similarly distance readers who see environmental issues as virtuous or spiritual concerns. The appropriateness of bombastic metaphors cues up metaphors popular in the arts and metaphorical framing arising through direct conversations with diverse, intergenerational audiences.

The analysis suggests that environmental metaphors are not just figures of speech but play a central role in framing how communities interpret, discuss, and respond to ecological challenges. By analyzing the cognitive and cultural frames behind these metaphors, this study contributes not only to the literature on metaphor in ecological contexts, but also to ecologically-oriented linguistics in general, showcasing how the power of the word can be harnessed to work towards sustaining our lifeworld. It also helps journalists, educators, and policymakers consider how to strategically employ metaphor to promote public engagement and collective action on environmental issues

5.   Conclusion

Hence referring to research questions where RQ1 was "What are the predominant ecological metaphors employed in Pakistani English-language newspapers to frame environmental discourse during 2024? this article found that Pakistani newspapers used a broad spectrum of environmental metaphors falling under 10 categories of broad themes, suggesting the complex and multidimensional nature of ecological crises. These include: nature personification, pollution and degradation, climate change, natural disasters, conservation interventions, economic and political framing, resource use, biodiversity, human-environment interactions, and generalized environmental imagery. These examples like "Mother Earth" or "the lungs of the Earth" or "a ticking time bomb" personify nature, emphasize urgency and highlight the interconnectedness of ecosystems. These metaphors tend to come from cognitive and cultural frames that induce an

ecological narrative in which nature is portrayed as both nurturing and fragile. These metaphors draw on colorful, relatable imagery that demystifies complex environmental themes and provides a narrative scaffolding that engages readers' emotions and cultural cognition.

With regards to RQ2; How do metaphorical constructs amplify reader engagement by enhancing the accessibility and emotional resonance of environmental journalism? metaphors are a really important tool to make environmental news more readable and engaging for our audience because they represent the abstract ecological concepts we talk about throughout our coverage as something that is concrete and emotionally resonant for readers. Through personification, vivid imagery and relatable frames, all of these metaphors "the Earth is bleeding," "walking a tightrope with nature" build empathy, accountability and a sense of urgency regarding climate change. To go further, metaphors, like "sowing seeds of change" and "turning over a new use (green) leaf," inspire hope and induce action by presenting realizable outcomes. Also, the study shows that through metaphors the texts tell two stories of crisis and optimism, which hook the readers and encourage them to engage with the risk in order to create a global awareness also with sustainable behaviors. Such an ecolinguistic approach stresses the potential of language as an instrument to create perceptions, to promote collective action and ultimately to enhance our understanding or human-environment relations.

5.1.   Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it is suggested that the reporting on environmental issues by environmental journalists in Pakistani English newspapers and editors, purposefully include metaphors capable of evoking empathy, urgency, and actionable awareness. Journalists should be trained in ecolinguistics techniques to understand how to frame their stories in terms of metaphor, what the cognitive and cultural meanings of meme development is, and how metaphors may be applied to their writing to address the simplicity of complexity in ecological challenges. Finally, media collaborators and environmental scientists may work together in order to create compelling culture-based metaphors that resonate more deeply and meaningfully with article readers. Metaphorical language can also be useful for educating the public and awareness campaigns geared toward promoting the adoption of sustainable behaviors and collective action by policymakers and educators

5.2.   Implications

This research contributes characteristically to the fields of ecolinguistics, journalism and environmental communication. The findings highlight the transformative power of language by showing how metaphors shape the public's understanding of ecological difficulties, which can affect how people relate to the natural world. Metaphors have been the bridge for the gap between the scientific journals and the residents of the world; scientists are actually human beings; most residents are actually human beings, whose mental innerworld share, in the material, from the palm earths метров for their atoms. Additionally, this work underscores the importance of using culturally-framed metaphors to enhance reader engagement through ecological narratives, thus providing much-needed support for effective advocacy and policymaking during eco-crises.

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