

Environmental Sustainability: An Ecological Discourse Analysis to Explore Framing Pattern in the Dawn News Editorials

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ABSTRACT

This current study aims to conduct an ecological discourse analysis to examine the role of language in framing public perceptions, opinions and actions concerning environmental sustainability in the Pakistani Dawn news editorials. This study investigates the critical impacts of language in framing environmental discourses with special focus on Dawn News Editorials how trigger words are employed in order to draw human constructive attention towards environmental equilibrium. The purposive sampling technique is employed for data collection, while this study followed a qualitative research method in order to examine the role of trigger words and their impacts on human mental model regarding ecological sustainability. Theoretical framework is developed by in cooperating Stibbe's Framing technique and Goffman's Frame Analysis theory (1974) in order to present a comprehensive analysis in ecological context. The integrated framework is employed for analysis because it is the most appropriate model to give the answers of this study. The findings of this study revealed that language is influential instrument that offered multiple strategic tools like framing which has the potential to change the mental models of public by raising awareness about ecological urgency and motivated human actions to maintain ecosystem. Hence, this study concluded that The Dawn editorials strategically used ecological framing devices in to climax urgent environmental sustainability issues, through the reflection of environmental narratives that strongly demanded public actions and revised policies.



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development in 21st century became alarming in terms of ecological sustainability which drew researcher's attentions towards ecosystem through media discourses, policy documents and TV channels. The Dawn is one of the most significant modes of English

Language newspapers that offered a unique framework to examine how environmental issues are framed and presented by creating awareness among the readers. As the Cotter (2015) argued that the role of media is not merely social depiction but it actively shapes and reshapes certain realities around the society. Likewise, Carvalho (2008) stated that media is a complex interplay that played a significant role in the building of social realities by framing particular issues and predominantly the opinion and viewpoints of people are influenced by framing patterns. Furthermore, Hansen (2010) contributed that framing patterns are the particular words that sketched the attention of the people regarding environmental problems and enological urgency, he further argued that media through the use of strategic words not only framed issues but specifically, addressed certain issues through the effective discursive strategies (Hansen,2010). Similarly, in this study the significant discursive strategy is faming that how framing affect and manipulate the public's opinion and perceptions against ecological issues. Nisbet, (2009) claimed that it served in language as an economic opportunity that is employed in discourse in order to frame and highlight the sustainable practices, renewal of the sources of energy and the encouragement of green business and technologies regarding the sustainability of environment. Hart & Feldman (2016) further elaborated that the use of framing in discourse does not only influence the mental models of public but it may directed to the governmental policies and used to point out ecological solutions regarding ecosystem (Hart &Feldman 2016).

Moreover, the study on environmental discourse has gained much prominence in academic and in research field by offering a unique platform in which a researcher is enable to analyze a complex interplay in terms of language, ideology and environment. This study aims to analyze discourse in ecological context to unveil predominated framing patterns through lexical items in the print media discourse. Conversely, ecological discourse analysis is helpful in bringing out the environmental issues into limelight by shaping and manipulating public perceptions, attitudes and understanding towards the environment.

Research Questions

- i) What are the significant trigger words used in the Dawn news editorials to convey environmental stories to encourage ecological sustainability?
- ii) Which framing patterns are dominantly used in the Dawn news editorials to impart awareness and understanding through distinct stories?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ecolinguistics is deeply rooted with ecology that was first indicated by a German biologist Haeckel in 1866 (LeVasseur, 2014). It is an interdisciplinary branch that has been formally introduced by Michael Halliday in 1990s. Stibbe (2015) stated that it is is an extended branch of sociolinguistics that started to be used into ecological context including all living and non- living species (Stibbe, 2015). Earlier, this term was used as a metaphor of ecology in relation to language uses but now this approach has been altered in a new way and broadened its realm in academia and in research, and on the basis of its wider scope Steffensen and Fill divided ecolinguistics into four major parts: linguistics ecology, natural ecology, cognitive and sociocultural ecology in linguistics (Steffensen and Fill 2013). On the other hand, Hajer(1995) who is mainly interested in the field of ecological discourse analysis (EDA). He presented the concept of ecological modernization by arguing that print media discourse can be used to legitimize new policies, new governance and in shaping the public perceptions on environmental

issues through language. Similarly, Halliday's *New Ways of Meanings: The challenge to applied linguistics* in which Halliday tried to build a connection between language and ecology with his deep environmental consideration. He challenged the severity of environmental issues through the use of language by giving a critical view on economic growth. For example: *growth is good, many are better instead few, more is better than less, big is better than small, grow is better than shrink* which is leading towards a continuous environmental and minimizing natural resources. Meanwhile, this stance of Halliday has broadened the linguistic field into multidimensional discipline and it is assisting to explore the threatening environmental issues by integrating the language tools into ecological settings (Halliday, 2001). Same as Nettle and Romaine argued that globalization influenced the local languages and it has damaged the traditional and cultural practices relevant to environment protection that can only be sustained through the awareness of regional discourses (Harrison, 2007).

Furthermore, Dryzek (2022) argued that language played a powerful role in the formation and deliverance of ecological meaning and to address environmental issues which further frames understanding and perceptions of people regarding environmental issues and its sustainability. However, ecological discourse is deeply rooted with the critical aspect of language use and environmental sociology. Therefore, language deploys a platform to frame pattern that further can be used to legitimize environmental policies and governance (Philips, 1996). Furthermore, Nisbet & Myers (2007) argued that environmental discourse has close association with ecological discourse analysis (EDA) especially in conveying beliefs, perception and ideologies on environmental issues. As Hajer (1995) pointed out that in order to uncover certain framing structure the researchers have to analyze texts, speeches and policy documents to explore that various actors as political bodies, activists and environmentalists who used certain frames existed in their minds to put forward their agendas in the shape of opinions and perceptions and actions (Hajer, 1995). Additionally, contributed by Fairclough that power is a crucial and dynamic component in discourse used to reveal '*how language is used*' to create and maintain power relations in order to manipulate public perceptions, opinions and frames (Fairclough, 2013).

Another study of Abram (1996) *The Spell of the Sensuous: 'Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World'* argued that language is an analytical tool used by individuals to construct their perceptions that are embedded in their culture which led them to build an equilibrium ecosphere. That is why; ecolinguistics promotes the stance of ecosophy that has the principle to protect the natural surroundings by bringing harmony or equilibrium on the earth planet (Abraham, 2016). Thus, this is used as analytical tool in order to examine the environmental texts in relation to eco structure through various frames (Derni, 2008). In this analytical framework, environmental text is analyzed so that the hidden stories and environmental motives can be brought into the limelight. This would rather be a favorable way to attain equilibrium in ecosystem through ideological framing (Harré et al., 1999).

Similarly, Stibbe (2015) referred framing as cognitive structure exists in the minds of people that influence the ways in which individuals think and interact through linguistics choices in their physical environment. He further argued that these cognitive structures involved in the exploration of resisting stories and provide solutions through the use of lexical choices. So, there are various linguistics tools and application used for ecological analysis. These linguistic applications are applied on environmental discourse in order to reveal the hidden motives and favorable actions in relation to environment. Furthermore, Guattari (2005) also emphasized that

all human practices are interconnected through an interactional interplay as mental ecology, social and environmental ecology. He emphasized of the newness in human practices and the novel ways of thinking process, feelings, attitudes and actions that can only be imparted through collectiveness (Genosko, 2009). As, Moussaoui in his study (2014) explained that ecological practices must be relevant to impart knowledge practically instead of planting oral skills among learners regarding the accomplishment of Ecojustice sustainability. Thus, the moral behavior of individuals towards the protection of ecosphere is to legitimize new policies and programs for environmental sustainability (Muhlhausler, 2003).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This current study is descriptive and exploratory in nature. Qualitative method is used for this study in order to analyze the deeper roots of language in relation to ecology. For analysis purpose triangulation research framework is developed by mixing Stibbe's Framing technique and Goffman's Frame Analysis theory (1974). The two approaches are incorporated into one framework in order to provide a comprehensive understanding at lexical level *trigger words* and thought pattern *framing* are integrated to attain environmental goals. Dawn news editorials selected for analysis while the technique of sampling is purposive.

Data Collection

The data was collected for analysis purpose were the English Dawn news editorials published in Pakistan newspaper 'Dawn' between the year (2021- 2023). The purposive sampling technique is selected for data collection because it is the most obvious and appropriate method in the qualitative researches. However, the Selected 'Dawn' editorials are given below:

- i) *Smog Season, Published on November 27th, 2023*
- ii) *Air Pollution Cuts Life Span In Pakistan, Published 30 August 2023*
- iii) *Beat Plastic Pollution, Published June 5, 2023*
- iv) *Hope for Nature, Published December 31, 2022*
- v) *Environment in Danger, Published June 5, 2021*

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is developed by integrating the method of framing by Stibbe (2015) '*how words integrate to form ecological stories*' and Frame Analysis theory by Goffman (1974) '*how lexical frames employed, influenced and interact into a broader social and political context*' in order to shape human understanding and to construct realities.

Framing Technique by Stibbe (2015)

It focused that how linguistics items are used in language to form stories in ecological setting. As Stibbe (2015) stated that '*framing is a story exists in the minds of individuals from a distinct one area of life (a frame) to structure how another area of life is conceptualized.*'

Frame Analysis Goffman

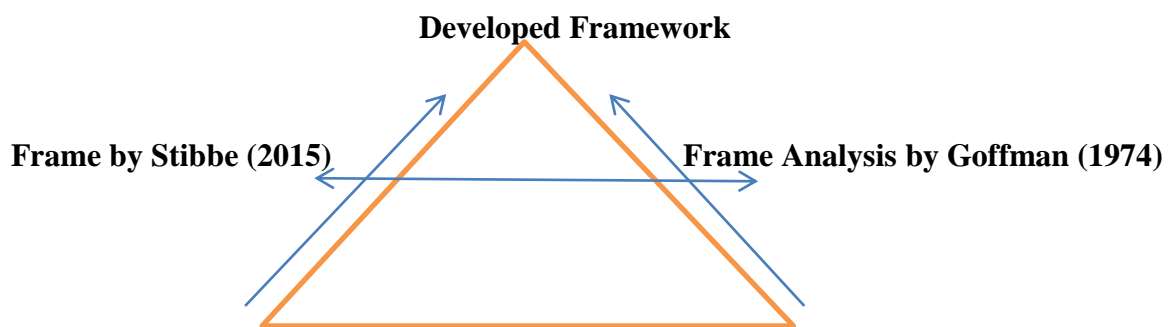
In this theory Goffman (1974) emphasized that frames are used for interpretations, and these frames are a set of mental representation of concepts and theoretical viewpoints that people at individual level use to form a sense about their experiences. So, according to Goffman (1974) these frames assist individuals to organize and explain societal events in order to explain their actions. There are two types of frames:

Natural Frames. Referred as the occurrences of events in the physical world without human interruption

Social Frames: termed the events or occurrences which can be influenced and controlled by humans.

Integrated Framework Objective

The objective to develop an incorporated theoretical framework is to provide a comprehensive lens and deep insight that how linguistics choices are used to frame ecological stories; how these issues are further addressed, interpreted and acted in society in term of natural and social frames.



DATA ANALYSIS

The Dawn news editorials are analyzed by using two approaches in order to present a comprehensive view that how lexemes are used to frame ecological stories (source and target frames) and how these stories are further interpreted and understood through natural and social frames. The first part of the analysis presented by using Stibbe (2105) framing technique in which particular words are used to create source and target frames in order to address ecological stories while the second part of the analysis showed that how these particular frames are used for ecological interpretations and explanation by using multiple frames in the socio-political context.

Framing Technique

Some triggers words are identified in Dawn editorials and given in the blow table that these trigger words are used to intensify environmental stories through different frames regarding sustainable measures. Two types of frames are analyzed as sources frames and target frames:

Table: 1

| Editoria | Editorial -2 | Editorial -3 | Editorial-4 | Editorial-5 |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1-1 | | | | |
| Severity indicator | Life expectancy" | Devastating | Renewable | Biodiversity |
| and Urgency | Global Epicenter | Harmful Chemical | Carbon footprint | Global food waste |
| Make believe data | Serge | Marine life | Green gas | Damage fund |
| Toxic Air | Rising wildfires | Plastic dependency | | UN-led multilateralism |
| Smog Season | Life expectancy | Water war | | |

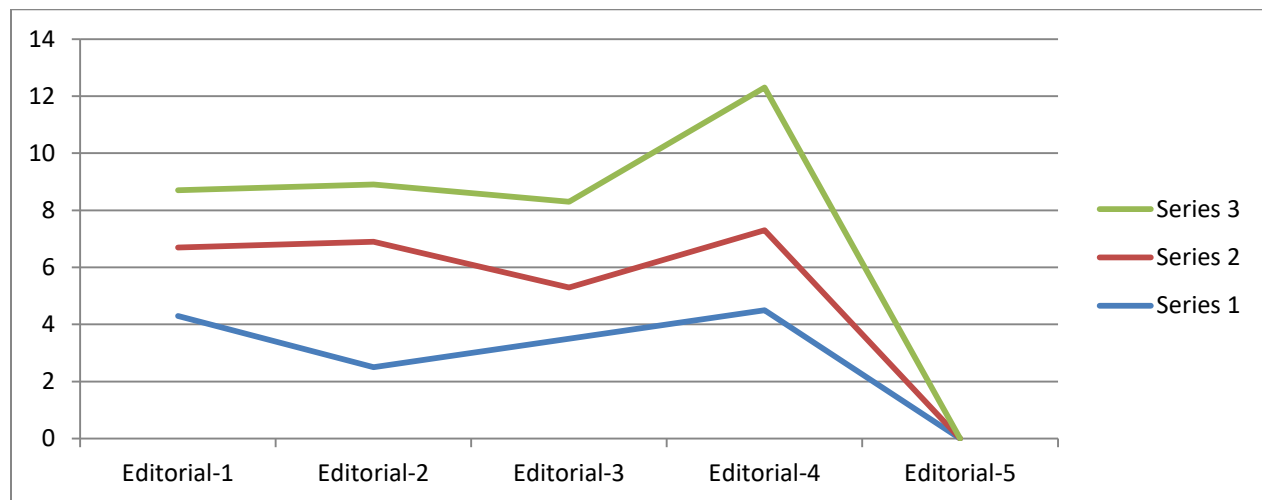
Table: 2

| Editorial-1 | Editorial -2 | Editorial-3 | Editorial-4 | Editorial -5 |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| contamination, alarming environmental condition, pollution | Low health rate, health risks | Degradation, destruction and environmental pollution | New ways of living life, recycling, less consumption | Life on earth, Degration of environment life in danger |
| Destruction, severity , life in danger | World problem, need serious step at large scale | Plastic harmful substances Dangerous for use | Consequences, , use of developed techniques, method of less energy consumption | Overuse of goods, scarcity of natural resources |
| No appropriate measures, inactiveness, lack of practicality | Destructive life span, heavy pollution | Minimal natural resources, water pollution | | classicism, globalization |
| health problems, pollution and diseases | Species' extinction, deforestation | Sea life, destruction for water species, risks of life | | Global serious concentration, awareness, policies and implementation |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| severe pollution | Low health rate, health risks | Daily use substance Heavy environmental problem, |
| Polluted air, dangerous for species | Global issue serious step at large scale | |
| Heavy contamination, alarming | Destructive life span, heavy pollution | |

Target Frames and Source Frame are shown in the below:

Graph:1



The Dawn news editorials are analyzed by using the framing technique given by Aran Stibbe (2015) in which source and target frame are identified as indicated in the Table (i) and Table (ii).

The purpose of the identification of particular frames is to investigate particular stories in ecological context, and to examine that how linguistic choices are incorporated in the construction of environmental frames. However, the above graph presents a comprehensive understating of the categorical representation of frames through the *series-i, ii and iii*. The series (i) in the green color shows the species alive on the earth; series (ii) reflects that life cycle on earth at risk while (iii) series indicated that trigger words built particular frames in order to show that linguistic items are embedded in the environmental discourse to explore ecological crisis.

Frame Analysis Theory

The second part of the analysis is presented in order to show that how ecological issues are interpreted by using certain frames in the social context.

Editorial -01

By using Goffman's theory (1974) the issue of air pollution is particularly framed as *smog* in this editorial, and various natural issues are addressed and attempted to offer multi-layered understanding by employing natural and social frames in social settings.

Representation of Natural and Social Frames

In this editorial social and natural frames are interpreted to present the severity of air pollution. Initially, it is seen that air pollution is interpreted in terms of natural frame as *smog* or '*seasonal object*', but the gradual analysis revealed complex social frames where human activities and actions are frequently involved in the production extreme air pollution as industrialization, fossil flues burning and emission of various gases.

A source frame *make-believe data* is used in the editorial that is much relevant to the Goffman concept of *Fabrication* in order to target create a truth action frame regarding the ecosystem protection. However, this frame is interpreted in ecological discourse to show the impacts of human activities on the environment. Moreover, in this editorial multiple environmental problems are framed in natural and social settings and at the same time various solutions also suggested in ecological context. The broader aspect of Goffman Frame analysis theory (1974) is positioned the multiple source frames as *toxic air* and *water war* to target environment and health problems in order to interpret that industrialization is the fundamental reason concerning ecological crisis.

Management Frames

Furthermore, *management frames* are analyzed by comparing the governmental capacities with Chinese policies on environment regarding the adjustment of growing development. Finally, in the editorial '*future frames*' are analyzed that are used to bring a big change in the environment which can only be created through balancing and moderating relationship between human being and environment.

Editorial 02

In this editorial the occurrence of climate change is interpreted through the concept of social frames by Goffman (1974) that helped to address the complexities and inconsistencies of Pakistani policies governance and approach towards environment.

Positive Framing

Positive framing is aroused at the beginning point of the editorial by the ex-Prime Minister of Imran Khan where he spoke about environmental crisis. He addressed that it is not right to be called that climate change is only a global issue but it is national too. He emphasized on the initiatives like *10-Billion Tree Tsunami* and the *Ecosystem Restoration Fund*. Here, the social frames are recognized because it suggested that action plan by the government in a positive way that is aligned with the theoretical aspect of Goffman theory that how certain frames are employed to shape opinions and understanding in the social or physical environment.

Negative Framing

On the other hand, negative framing is analyzed in the dawn news editorial; where the ecological issues are highlighted in the light of Goffman theory's aspect of social frames. As the gradual analysis provided a deep understanding towards the emission of carbon, fossil fuel's burning, industrialization and growing consumption are continuously heading towards the breakdown of ecosphere that are the results of humans involvement. Moreover, the government has failed in the projection of legitimized policies within the time. Thus, there is need to develop consistent frames in order to meet the challenges and threats especially into ecological context.

New Consistent Frames

After the analysis, it is observed that that policy maker suggested some new practical consistent applications must be introduced to meet the ecological crisis collectively. The policy decision makers framed the ecological issues as carbon emission, industrialization and misuse of natural resources in order to overcome environmental issues and to promote sustainable development. The concept of consistent ecological frames is directly aligned to Goffman (1974) idea of '*frame management*' where emphasized on the consistency of effective frame management to meet the ecological challenges.

Editorials-03

In the third editorial, it is seen that the issue of air pollution is framed at national and global level and reflected the various perceptions of people regarding the environmental catastrophic condition. According to Goffman (1974) theory the multiple frames influenced by the public responses and are interpreted regarding environmental issues.

Primary Framing Function

In the beginning of the editorial the natural frames are primarily employed to present the issue of air pollution with the indication of severe health problems. Initially, it is addressed as a natural phenomenon but the gradual analysis revealed that human interruption is responsible of environmental crisis including air pollution. According to Goffman (1974) natural frames are directly tied to the social framing. Similarly, after the analysis; it is seen that air pollution is assumed as '*natural frame*' but later it is addressed by decision makers as '*social frame*'

Life in Danger

In this editorial the ecological issues regarding living species are framed and alarmed that life expectancy is falling to the lowest range on earth. Moreover, the severe public health issues are framed and suggested some precautionary frames to save the eco life.

Comparative Framing

In this editorial, a comparative framing is designed in order to compare the severity and urgency related to ecological issues. Likewise, Pakistan is compared with other countries such as U.S and China to frame the wide globally environmental alarming situation while emphasizing of the severity of air pollution in Pakistan.

Ecological Viewpoint

The ecological viewpoint that is observed throughout the editorial is that air pollution is targeted on the basis of natural and social frames based on Goffman (1974) theory. It is analyzed that air pollution is a severe ecological issue but interconnected directly to the activities and actions of the human body. Therefore, from ecological perspective, it is emphasized to create the balanced applications and measures to protect the life on earth.

Sustainable Development Goals

The word *sustainable development* is used frequently in the editorial to impart awareness among people at national and global level. This framing can use to promote the particular measures in ecological context. However, by comparing with other global countries is to raise the voice against the misuse of environmental resources, and to draw attention that Pakistan is not the only country that is facing ecological crisis but globally the lives of people are in danger due to environmental disasters.

Editorial 04

In this editorial, a major issue of plastic pollution is framed in order to represent that environment is rapidly damaging due to the direct and indirect involvement of human being. Thus, the multiple ecological issues are framed in this editorial and at the same time the multi-layered suggestions are forwarded by the policy makers to save earth planet. The natural and social frames are analyzed by using the Goffman's (1974) Frame analysis theory.

Natural Framing

In the beginning of the editorial, the environmental plastic pollution is addressed that is badly affecting and damaging sea life, human life, eco life including water pollution, human health issues, economic and aesthetic aspect of environmental life is framed. According to Goffman theory, initially the frame analysis is based on the natural ecological blocks while later the frames revealed the loss of biodiversity around the physical settings.

Social Framing

It is explored that the production of plastic substance is directly tied to the business aspect of human life. Here, the social frames are constructed to highlight the human involvement in making the environment polluted. According to Goffman (1974) the social frames are used to address the human action, activities and reaction and are employed to shape their experiences through their opinions, perceptions and understandings.

Ecological Framing

In this editorial the environmental pollution is framed in various ways such as marine life, human life, and ecosystem these all are interconnected to a complex environmental interplay. Through the social and natural ecological framing it is highlighted that plastic pollution has critical impacts on the environment; therefore, human is focused that human object is the responsible of ecological issues and at the same time the contributor for saving interconnected system of life.

Editorial 05

The eco analysis of this editorial has shown that biodiversity and climate change is ecologically framed to address the environmental severity. Similarly, the loss of biodiversity and arise of climate change is reflected through the attitude, perceptions and actions of public in terms of Goffman theory.

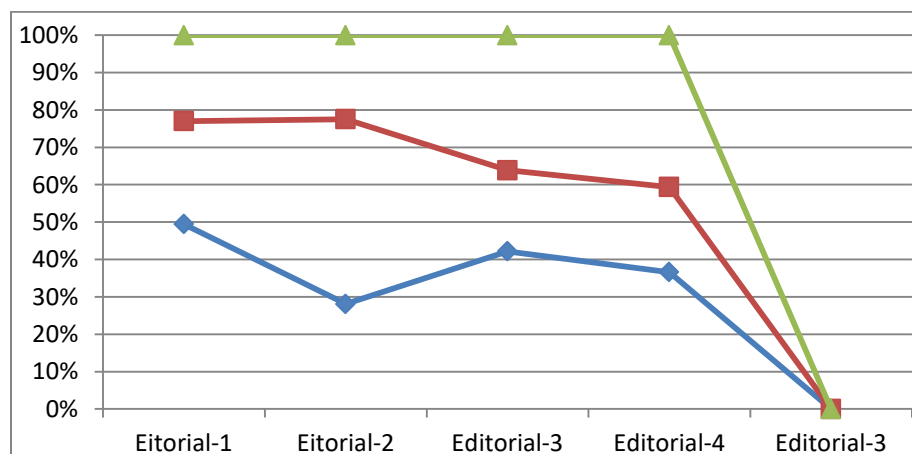
Natural and Social Framing

The environmental problem of biodiversity and climate change are indicated as natural occurred phenomenon and strongly interconnected to human actions. According to the theoretical concepts of Goffman (1974) Frame Analysis revealed that all the natural and social ecological issues are interrelated and having same impacts to one another. Likewise, human life and environment are interconnected and the results of natural disastrous elements reflect the ultimate actions of human body. Similarly, these natural framed environmental issues are addressed by the policy makes in the social setting. Thus, to frame the social ecological problems natural ecological framing pattern are frequently used to shape public perception, events and actions.

Future Framing

Finally, the frames created in the editorial to fight against the ecological crisis as biodiversity and climate change need the global concentration and multilateral cooperation in order to bring equilibrium on earth sphere. Therefore, the objective of future framing in the editorial is to convey a sense of determination and the need for continued momentum in national and international efforts. Therefore, the collective efforts incorporate social and natural ecological frame patterns to address the environmental crisis and critical responses of people. However, the given diagram presented a comprehensive view that how sources frames are used to target environmental problems through the process of interpretation.

Graph: 2



The above mentioned graph showed the representation of frames is given in the form of three series red, green and blue, red is used to show alarming environmental crisis, green for earth species and blue for sustainable measures. As, the red series reflect danger on earth due to the rapidly growing pollutant substances in the environment The red line showed that the ecological

issues created a huge gap between living species and the sustainable measure due to the lack of practicality. Similarly, the green line reflected the whole species on the earth while the blue line in the graph indicates the frames collectively are used the socio- political interpretation through frames towards the ecological issues and measure to maintain equilibrium.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study has been designed to explore ecological issues through fame patterns in the Dawn news editorials by using an incorporated research framework. A two way analysis is conducted in order to bring out the ecological realities through linguistics choices and through interpretation of the various frames in the social environment. The findings of this study revealed that language is the most influential tool used to frame environmental issue by adopting various lexical items and to explain these items are realistically involved to explain ecological realities through the multi-layered framing pattern. These framing pattern are frequently employed in the media, policy makers and environmental discourse. In response to my first research question it is analyzed that there are various lexical choices are employed to create ecological stories through framing pattern as *severity indicator, life expectancy, devastating, renewable, biodiversity, global food waste; toxic air and water war* are used to intensify ecological stories. On the other hand, in response to my second research question, it is analyzed that in the environmental discourse there are multiple dominant frames are used to give interpretation on ecological issues. The various frames are interpreted as *natural frames, social frames, management frames, comparative frames, ecological key frames and future frames* that these dominated frames are strongly tied in the ways of interacting humans towards explaining environmental issues. At the same time the dominant frames are used to reveal the social cognition that how people interact towards natural environmental issues and environmental protection. Moreover, the results of this study are similar with the study of Cox (2013) according to him, the framing patterns found in The Dawn News revealed larger socio-political impacts on the ecological presentation through the influential tool of language.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the conclusion of this study revealed that there are various significant triggers words are framed in The Dawn editorials to highlight the ecological crisis and problems and to bring awareness among readers through the public platform. Similarly, the Dawn editorials provided a unique outline by employing framing devices in order to bring ecological sustainability and equilibrium in the environment. This study explored that environmental discourse offered a continuum to necessitate the immediate and collective efforts in order to address the acute consequences about the loss of biodiversity and Eco structure. Thus, the Dawn editorials tried to create awareness and presses for governmental and collaborative solutions through human practicality. Additionally, these discourse often connected to environmental sustainability regarding economic and social health by suggesting a holistic approach to ecological challenges. Consequently, this study tried to highlight the crucial role of media discourse in influencing the mental models of locality while in driving the environmental agenda towards harmonic future directions.

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