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Framing through Weather Reports: A Corpus-Assisted Ecolinguistic Analysis

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Abstract: *This study investigates how weather reports frame ecological events and risks, applying the "Framing" story from Stibbe's (2015) Stories We Live By framework to examine the linguistic construction of environmental meaning. A corpus of 300 weather reports was collected from five prominent news agencies—CNN, DW, BBC, Al Jazeera, and GNN (Pakistan)— spanning the period December, 2023– February, 2024. Using a qualitative ecolinguistic methodology supplemented by AntConc (4.3.1) for lexical support, the analysis reveals a prevailing trend of catastrophic, militaristic, and crisis-oriented framing across both international and national sources. Phrases like "trail of destruction" (CNN), "whiteout conditions" (BBC), and "cyclone bears down" (Al Jazeera) demonstrate how weather is depicted as an external, hostile force, promoting fear and urgency rather than systemic ecological understanding. DW frequently employs risk framing (e.g., "extreme weather has killed almost 800,000 people"), emphasizing long-term loss but omitting environmental drivers. GNN, by contrast, utilizes disaster-alert framing embedded in bureaucratic or institutional language ("alert issued," "powerful spell"), constructing nature as a looming threat to national stability. Anthropocentric perspectives dominate, framing weather events as disruptions to human life and infrastructure, while ecological interdependence and causality remain largely backgrounded or erased. The study concludes that dominant framing patterns in weather discourse contribute to destructive ecological stories, reinforcing a worldview of control, separation, and reaction, rather than one of ecological awareness and responsibility.*

Introduction

This is the language that environmental communication cannot afford to use in the times of increasing environmental misfortunes and climate aberrations, because the description is formative more than a description. Language of news is essentially important to define climate related phenomena in the mind of people and weather reports are one of the most frequently used media texts that are hardly ever analyzed. Such reports are thus viewed as objective and apolitical, but this aspect bears deep ideological implications. The language of weather can make the ecological bonds between the human and the natural world either unclear or visible because of certain linguistic expressions, including framing,

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metaphor, evaluation, and salience (Stibbe, 2021; Augé, 2023).

The climate crisis has joined the list of the most acute problems of the 21st century, and therefore, there is increasingly more importance paid to the ways the environmental problems are reported on in the sphere of its communication. However, despite the scale of environment news regarding disasters like wildfires, floods, as well as hurricanes, the most standard environmental language that most people will come across on a regular basis is the daily weather report. Although they are a common practice, weather reporting cannot be thought of as ideologically impartial as they are, in fact, discursive texts by default, discursively constituting the given relations between humans and nature by favoring a certain choice of words, and frequently situating environmental processes or phenomena in light of dominant social values and beliefs (Boykoff, 2011; Stibbe, 2021).

The present paper examines the linguistic construction provided by weather reports of ecological narratives attributed to framing, relying on the ecolinguistic notion of the *stories we live by* Arran Stibbe (2015, 2021). Although Stibbe typifies six convergent forms of narrative discursively and cognitively: framing, metaphor, evaluation, identity, salience, and erasure, narrowing the scope of analysis to one of them framing in the study focuses on its status as a cognitive and discursive technique of producing perception is based. It examines how weather events are linguistically framed across five news outlets: CNN (USA), BBC (UK), DW (Germany), Al Jazeera (Qatar), and GNN (Pakistan). These media organizations represent both global and regional contexts, allowing for a comparative analysis of how weather is construed in diverse cultural and geopolitical settings.

Framing refers to the selective emphasis and omission of information that guides public interpretation (Entman, 1993; Lakoff, 2010). In environmental discourse, framing has a powerful role in shaping how individuals conceptualize nature—either as a threat, a resource, or a living system. According to Lakoff (2014);

> "Frames are mental structures that shape how we see the world. As a result, they shape the goals we seek, the plans we make, the way we act, and what counts as a good or bad outcome of our actions." (p. xi)

Stibbe (2021) states that the concepts of frame, framing and reframing derive from a number of academic disciplines including artificial intelligence (Minsky, 1995), sociology (Goffman, 1974), and cognitive science (Lakoff, 2014).

The research is based on the appropriateness of linguistic frames in daily weather forecasting in the construction of ecological meaning especially focusing on whether these discourses further the anthropocentric views of the world or the ecosophical views based on interdependence and care. In the past the approach to framing has frequently been found in climate journalism or political rhetoric (Boykoff & Boykoff, 2007; Carvalho, 2007), but there has been little focus on coverage in general meteorology which, because of its everyday quality, might perceptually normalize certain ideologies in the natural world. Fixated on the concept of framing, therefore, this study adds to the body of work by ecolinguistic scholars, who request us to be more critical of the ways in which language offers us a window into ecological imagination.

The importance of the current study is that it combines the use of the corpus-assisted tools with qualitative analysis in ecolinguistics and offers an insight on the way in which language in weather reports organises the understanding of the population by means of framing. Using the framework of Stibbe (2015, 2021) of the stories we live by, or story of framing, this study finds how weather language, perceived as neutral on a daily basis, is one way of institutionally creating the meanings about nature and risk. Frames of crisis, war, or institutional control are activated by such terms as: trail of destruction,

emergency declared cold wave alert, and tropical cyclone bear down. Such options raise human susceptibility and short-range implications and very often exclude larger environmental circumstances or underlying causes like climate change.

In a comparative specialist analysis of five international and national news outlets (CNN, BBC, DW, Al Jazeera, and GNN), the researchers determine an overriding fixed pattern of destructive and ambivalent framings. These are liable to externalize nature as an enemy or to dis-integrate weather phenomena within the process of systemic ecologies. Instead of analyzing the metaphoric or even assessing layers of discourse, only the role of frame devices as ideological signifiers are examined in this paper which determines the discourse of necessity, responsibility and response. By so doing, the study makes an addition to the ecolinguistics literature in the sense that it helps exemplify the ways in which even short routine genres of news take part in the building of environmental worldview and shaping of the attitudes of people toward nature.

Overall, the topic of this research answers the underrepresented issue concerning the role of everyday weather language in the building of the environmental worldviews. It will reveal the tacit ideologies in everyday reporting and will assess their consequences to ecological thinking and also will provide information on how the media can promote more responsible environmental communication. This paper examines 300 weather reports across five global and regional news experiences to offer a strong, cross-cultural take on the discursive ecology of weather and to other studies in ecolinguistics to help us bring language back to the way of values of sustainability and justice.

Literature Review

As Entman (1993) provides, framing means emphasizing some elements of a perceived reality in order to encourage specific interpretations of it or what needs to be done about it. Stibbe (2015, 2021) includes in his six elements of his so-called stories that we live by a framing; there, it is a mental and discursive tool that has a role to play in the organization and meaning of environmental phenomena in discourse. Informing or concealing elements of the concept of ecological consciousness, frames may promote or obstruct ecological consciousness by either elevating or deactivating specific discourses. Discourse on natural disasters is not neutral but strategically constructs identity and conviction stories that legitimize particular ideological positions (Saleem et al., 2025d).

Framing climate events within environmental communications results in the understanding that they are disasters, manmade phenomena or effects of greater ecological imbalance. Lakoff (2010) believes that the predominant climate frames like fight, threat or cost tend to induce short-run adversarial actions but remains silent about the frame of interdependence, responsibility or stewardship. This observation is particularly instrumental in weather reporting, which is usually formulaic and alarmist without providing an ecological context to the long-term implications.

Hauser and Fleming (2021) are convincing in the explanation of the potential of employing disaster-related framings such as a conception of these events as the wrath of Mother Nature to increase the level of emotionality but not the constructive environmental interaction. These frames trigger fear yet tend to alienate people to ecological systems and their ability to act within ecological systems. This echoes Stibbe (2021) who has raised her concern that not all the environmental frames depict textbooks of destructive stories which externalize nature and the focus is only on the risk to human presence or the controlling institutions.

Globally, the reports reveal that media tend to spin climatic and environmental phenomena in terms of disaster, security and economy. A longitudinal study of European media provided by McGee and

Penning-Rowsell (2022), demonstrated that the most frequent frames were harmfully influenced and scientific explanation. Nevertheless, audience alienation or fatalism may be achieved by such emphasis on the disaster and abstract science. Likewise, we can say that according to O'Neill and Nicholson-Cole (2009) that fear-based framing i.e. apocalyptic stories might lead to anxiety but on the long-term they diminish participation and self-efficacy. According to Badullovich et al. (2020), framing issues strategically, e.g., in terms of a public health or national security threat, can raise the receptivity of the population; however, positions on political orientation and cultural background define the success of such a frame. Hirsbrunner (2024) extend this sentiment by demonstrating that the ideologic foundations of proposed climate frames differ among countries, with some portraying a need to alter individual behaviors, whereas others advocate systems or institutional responsibility.

Climate and disaster framing studies have become increased in the South Asian region especially in Pakistan. A study conducted by Javed, Sultan, and Siddiqua (2024) compared the coverage of climate rules in two of the most prominent Pakistani newspapers, written in English language: Daily Dawn and The Express Tribune; the authors identified the divergent framings in the coverage of the climate issue: Dawn used the frame of a scientific approach and global issues, whereas The Express Tribune resorted to political and human-interest stories. Climate change discourse in *Dawn* is predominantly human-centered, prioritizing economic and social impacts over ecological concerns. This anthropocentric framing marginalizes eco-centric perspectives and limits holistic environmental understanding (Saleem et al., 2025a; Saleem et al., 2025c).

In their crisis communication research on the 2022 floods in Pakistan, Gul et al. (2024) concluded that the governmental agencies and the media inclined themselves to the crisis communication framing of victimization and depiction of the affected populations as powerless and requiring saving, but seldom includes any systemic criticism or ecological responsibility. The weather reports are based on erasure accounts that strategically whitewash through ecological harm, thus making anthropocentric accounts of climatic occurrences a normal state of affairs (Saleem & Khan, 2025b).

This type of framing is consistent with the concept of ecolinguistics presented by Stibbe (2015, 2021) as destructive stories that consolidate the concept of nature as outside human systems and turn the discourse about the environment into patterns of disaster and reaction. As a significant point, Augé (2024) claims that climate narratives can be redefined to focus on care, interdependence, and systemic thinking by moving away from adversarial and militaristic frames, which are predominant in everyday othering and reporting. According to Saleem et al. (2025e), the media ecology of the CNN weather coverage shapes the way environmental problems are viewed, cementing the dominant discourses and restricting ecologically-oriented views.

The literature reveals that while framing is essential to how environmental and weather phenomena are communicated, the dominant narratives often fall short of fostering long-term ecological awareness. Especially in the case of weather reporting, which receives less scholarly scrutiny than climate journalism or political discourse; there is a need to evaluate how repetitive framings—such as catastrophe, victimhood, or heroism—contribute to either reinforcing anthropocentric ideologies or enabling ecocentric transitions.

In a cross-national study, Schäfer et al. (2023) examined climate coverage in European media and revealed that they are mostly covered through risk and conflict frames, whereby little ecological resilience or indigenous knowledge are presented. On the same lines, Carvalho (2007) pointed out that frames in climate communication are highly related to ideological cultures; economy or security-based frames tend to obscure the frames of ecological justice and sustainability. Specifically, in the South Asian

situation, Pakistani newspapers were mostly subscribing to disaster, economic, and crisis frames, and do not as often subscribe to structural or ecological orientations. What their study emphasises is the urgent necessity to escape in reactive reporting. Faraz and Saleem (2024a) also claim that, more than often, the media in Pakistan bring in foreign metaphors and frames of crisis of the western kind. This leads to the discourse that is not representative of the local ecological factors, priorities or the resilience of the community.

Moreover, the study by Johnstone and Stickles (2024) demonstrates the phenomenon of climate doomism articulated in digital climate communication since apocalyptic frames decrease the perceived capabilities of people and cause apathy. This underscores the importance of framing choices in shaping public climate engagement and policy discourse. This study contributes to the growing call for framing-sensitive ecolinguistic analysis by examining how five major news outlets—BBC, CNN, DW, GNN, and Al Jazeera—construct weather events through distinct frames. Drawing on Stibbe's (2015) ecolinguistic framework, this paper critically investigates whether these frames align with beneficial, ambivalent, or destructive environmental stories, and how they influence ecological awareness in both global and Pakistani contexts.

Methodology

This paper is qualitative research in the field of ecolinguistics, relying upon a framework of Stories We Live By (Stibbe, 2015, 2021), and a particular element of narrative, that is, framing. Framing is perceived as a language and cognition process where some elements of reality are foregrounded whilst other concepts are backgrounded to influence a wider understanding of environmental challenges by the population (Entman, 1993; Lakoff, 2010). The purposive sample was a sample of 300 weather reports on five major news sources (Al Jazeera, BBC, CNN, DW, and GNN) during the time frame (January 2023-February 2024). These sources have been selected to demonstrate a global-local media spectrum to offer comparative understanding in terms of international and regional environmental discourses.

To clean the data, it was curated manually to eliminate irrelevant records and to provide thematic consistency. Although the initial phase was conducted with the help of AntConc (Anthony, 2024), which allowed finding high-frequency lexical items and framing collocates (e.g., "threat, destruction, alert, etc.), the subsequent analysis was performed based on the concept of qualitative content coding. The linguistic framing devices in every report (a lexical choice, syntactic structures, metaphor constructions, etc.) were examined to demonstrate the hidden ecological or anthropocentric views of the world.

The analysis process followed an inductive coding strategy, whereby emergent patterns of framing were interpreted in light of Stibbe's ecolinguistic criteria for identifying destructive, ambivalent, or beneficial ecological stories. This methodological orientation emphasizes interpretive depth rather than quantitative frequency, prioritizing ideological critique and ecological.

Data Analysis

1. Framing Analysis of Cable News Network

The disastrous framing of CNN is inclined to be a utilization of spectacle, which is visual or linguistic dramatization that supports newsworthiness standards above eco-complexity. Moreover, the persisting frame in CNN weather coverage produces nature as hostile, which further justifies the institutional action, i.e., declaring the state of emergency and conducting rescue operations, but marginalizes the effectiveness of the preventive ecological policy or adaptive behavior of the indigenous population.

Contrary to the positive narratives, Stibbe (2021) explains them as stimulating the feeling of empathy, connection, and stewardship of the environment; catastrophic framing ends up relegating nature to a

source of danger. It generates emotional saturation in the absence of grounded social commentary; hence, as much as it makes a case of urgency, it makes it through the lack of ecological sense and moral involvement.

Linguistically speaking, the lexical repertoire of CNN entails the heavy use of intensifiers, including deadly, devastating, and record-breaking, and of human impacts, including families displaced and power outages that afflict millions of people. This trend suits salience of disasters, Entman (1993) explains—defining what is emotionally salient and forgetting the depth of the problem and how to solve it. CNN's weather reporting—based on the data provided—functions less as an ecological narrative and more as a media spectacle, shaped by a framing logic that favors dramatization over nuance. Within the Stibbean model, it falls squarely within the destructive discourse category, which must be challenged by ecolinguistic inquiry seeking to reframe nature not as a foe, but as a coexisting system requiring understanding, respect, and restoration (see table 1).

Table 1

Framing Lexical Items in CNN Weather Reports

Lexical Item / Phrase	Framing Type	Discursive Implication
"Trail of destruction"	Catastrophic Framing	Nature as violent and destructive; evokes fear and urgency
"Deadly storm system"	Crisis Framing	Centers mortality; constructs nature as fatal, intensifying emotional impact
"Wall of dust and debris"	War/Impact Metaphor Framing	Nature as an aggressive invader; promotes defensive orientation
"Tornado outbreak"	Disaster Framing	Frames nature as chaotic and unpredictable; a series of assaults rather than natural variation
"States of emergency declared"	Institutional Response Frame	Constructs weather as institutional crisis requiring control, intervention, and authority
"Millions without power"	Vulnerability Framing	Focuses on human helplessness and dependence
"Massive flooding cripples region"	Infrastructural Framing	Nature as an overwhelming force disrupting human systems
"Residents forced to flee"	Victimization Framing	Emphasizes human suffering; nature as hostile entity displacing people
"Widespread devastation"	Emotional Amplification Frame	Signals large-scale catastrophe, driving anxiety and a sense of helplessness
"Record-breaking temperatures"	Extremity Framing	Emphasizes the abnormal or unprecedented; contributes to alarm and urgency

All these framing devices create a story about fear, chaos, and helplessness, which is in line with the idea of destructive stories proposed by Stibbe. Through the emphasis on catastrophe, disruption, and emergency, the reports of CNN tend to alienate nature and move the environment discourse to disaster-related events, instead of being involved with ecological systems or sustainable futures.

2. Framing Analysis of Deutsche Welle

The international broadcaster of Germany, Deutsche Welle (DW) uses a very statistical and institutional framing when reporting about extreme weather. Instead of being purely based on the dramatic wording or the emotional metaphors, DW frames are often characterized by the data-based wording, where the focus is put on risk, magnitude, and historical outlook. This is in line with risk communication frameworks as well as a threat to decontextualization of ecological stories. The weather coverage by DW utilizes a range of risk-based and institutional frames with the framework primarily being based on quantification, mortality, and response by the state. A very anthropocentric framing is given, which focuses on:

- Human impact (e.g., casualties, displacement, destruction) over environmental systems.
- Spectacle and urgency, using statistical or hyperbolic language to command attention.
- Institutional narratives that position governments or emergency services as agents of order.

It is possible to note, however, some ecocentric tendencies, including in terms such as climate-linked events and decades of inaction, which tend to cause a causal effect of systemic human actions (see table 2). These instances coincide with the evaluation and the salience stories presented by Stibbe, which implies a partial transition to critical ecological consciousness.

DW supported the technocratic vision of the world wherein nature is to be measured, reported upon and controlled. This elicits what Carvalho (2007) terms as technocratic rationality where environmental crises are presented in expert-led discourses. In this story, the audience tends to emerge as mere receivers of ill news, but not as members of the ecological action.

Besides, the constant use of such phrases as record-breaking, highest on record, and historic losses suggests that there is a growing crisis but little emotional or ecological background is given. Hauser and Fleming (2021) note that the use of data-intensive discourse, which is not emotional in nature, can kill public engagement and make the problem seem remote or unreachable. The reports of DW have a possibility to presuppose a national identity as opposed to planetary ecological solidarity.

Table 2

Framing Lexical Items in DW Weather Reports

Lexical Item / Phrase	Framing Type	Discursive Implication
"Extreme weather has killed almost 800,000 people"	Risk/Mortality Framing	Emphasizes long-term human vulnerability; appeals to fear and quantifies loss
"Record-breaking droughts"	Extremity Framing	Highlights exceptional severity; dramatizes climate variability
"Catastrophic flooding in parts of Europe"	Catastrophic Framing	Constructs nature as a destructive force with wide-reaching consequences
"Emergency crews deployed"	Institutional Response Framing	Suggests state control and reaction; weather framed as requiring military-like intervention
"Weather-related disasters have tripled"	Trend Framing	Presents disasters as escalating; invokes urgency through statistical accumulation
"Fatal heatwaves across	Mortality Framing	Reinforces the human cost of climate; nature

Germany and France"		framed as life-threatening
"Desperate communities cut off by floods"	Isolation/Victimhood Framing	Highlights helplessness and separation; constructs people as passive victims
"Climate-linked events increasing rapidly"	Attributional Framing	Connects environmental phenomena to climate change; introduces systemic awareness
"Decades of inaction led to this point"	Accountability Framing	Invites structural critique; counters purely natural framing
"Lethal weather pattern returns"	Recurrence Framing	Suggests cyclical and predictable danger; constructs weather as a repeating threat

DW's weather reports are data-heavy, expert-driven, and marked by risk-based framing. Nature is not metaphorically violent as in CNN or BBC; rather, it is statistically devastating, and requires policy intervention. While this approach may cultivate trust in institutions, it simultaneously downplays emotional and ecological empathy.

3. Framing Analysis of G News Network Weather Reports

The weather reports of GNN are characterized by a high level of institutional and disaster-oriented framing, which often appeals to official warnings, government intervention, and religious background. GNN, unlike BBC or CNN, focuses its framing on warnings, obedience to their citizens, and cultural practices broken by weather (see table 3). These phrases were used;

- "Powerful western spell alert issued in Balochistan"
- "WASA teams on high alert amid drainage concerns"
- "Moon not sighted due to cloud cover"
- "Rainfall disrupts Sehri in parts of Punjab"
- "All staff directed to remain on duty"

This is a framing language that is multi-faceted:

- Disaster warning language (e.g. spell alert issued),
- Religious-cultural framing (e.g. Sehri breakage, visibility of the moon),
- Government preparedness message (e.g., 'teams on duty).

This way of framing stresses obedience and compliance and the citizenry is represented as objects of commands given by the state or religious guidelines. It places weather as a social and logistical burden, in strengthening hierarchical institutional narratives besides the ecological agency. As an example, such statements as:

- "Citizens advised to stay indoors due to strong winds" or
- "Rescue teams have been deployed"

GNN's weather reporting employs a compliance-focused institutional framing enriched by religious and civic touch points. Nature is treated as an inconvenience to human routines rather than a system of which humans are a part. The absence of ecological causality, climate references, or environmental stewardship language signals alignment with destructive and anthropocentric narratives.

Table 3

Framing Lexical Items in GNN Weather Reports

Lexical Item / Phrase	Framing Type	Discursive Implication
"Western system has entered Balochistan"	Invasion/Disaster Alert Framing	Nature framed as an approaching external force; militaristic overtones

"Powerful spell alert issued"	Institutional Warning Framing	Reinforces authority and central control over nature through technical warnings
"Rain expected to lash Karachi"	Violent Weather Framing	Nature portrayed as aggressive; dramatizes weather beyond physical conditions
"WASA teams on high alert"	Readiness/Response Framing	Focuses on human institutional reaction, not root ecological causes
"Severe cold wave grips upper regions"	Anthropocentric Discomfort Framing	Centers bodily experience; nature is threatening due to its effect on human comfort
"Temperature likely to drop significantly"	Sensory Alert Framing	Weather conditions are newsworthy in terms of human experience of discomfort
"Dry spell continues to affect crops"	Economic Impact Framing	Environment valued primarily for agricultural productivity; ecological relationships erased
"Balochistan's snowfall disrupts movement"	Mobility Disruption Framing	Nature as a barrier to development or progress; environmental systems seen as inconvenient
"Alert issued by PMD to remain indoors"	Governmentality Framing	Constructs citizens as passive responders; compliance and risk management emphasized
"Dense fog blankets roads"	Visibility Crisis Framing	Visual metaphor of blindness; nature obstructs human systems of order and control

GNN's weather reporting employs predominantly catastrophic, command-oriented, and anthropocentric frames, shaped by several tendencies:

- Personification of nature as a hostile or interfering agent ("lashes", "grips", "enters").
- Framing weather as a public safety crisis, emphasizing alerts, disruption, and institutional control (PMD, WASA).
- Economic valuation of the environment, where rainfall and temperature shifts are framed in terms of agricultural threat and human comfort.

Such framing reflects a destructive discourse, as defined by Stibbe (2015), where the environment is cast either as a hostile other or economic resource, rather than an interconnected living system.

There is little ecological framing or connection to broader environmental systems, such as climate change, ecological degradation, or biodiversity loss. Instead, GNN primarily focuses on:

- Short-term consequences (e.g., weather inconvenience, agriculture, institutional response).
- Omission of systemic issues, which reflects erasure of climate complexity and structural responsibility.

Faraz et al. (2024b) demonstrate that CPEC-related discourse is linguistically structured to privilege economic growth, while ecological concerns are systematically backgrounded within development narratives.

4. Framing Analysis of British Broadcasting Corporation

BBC's weather reports demonstrate a distinct pattern of crisis-oriented and control-centered framing. These narratives construct nature as a dangerous disruptor, one that endangers lives and demands institutional response. For instance, phrases such as:

- "Whiteout conditions expected"
- "Storm Ciarán wreaks havoc"

- "Treacherous and icy roads"
- "Amber warning issued"
- "Severe blizzard to grip Britain"

These expressions reveal a risk and survival framing. Nature is cast as a volatile and often violent entity. In "Storm Ciarán wreaks havoc," the storm is anthropomorphized—given the capacity to intentionally "wreak" damage. Similarly, "whiteout" and "blizzard" are not only meteorological phenomena but are described as agents of disorientation and threat.

Such framing aligns with what Stibbe (2015) identifies as destructive stories—discourses that portray nature as adversarial, promoting an anthropocentric worldview. The frequent pairing of meteorological events with terms like *"life-threatening," "grip," "freeze,"* or *"risk"* enhances this narrative of conflict and control. It further constructs weather not as a natural continuum but as an event-based emergency—a disturbance to the human-centered norm. Moreover, BBC's reports are characterized by governmental and institutional framing. Terms such as:

- "Amber warning issued by Met Office"
- "Flood alert extended"
- "Emergency travel advisory in place"

BBC weather reports predominantly use catastrophic, survivalist, and institutional frames that emphasize human risk, visibility loss, and dependence on control systems. Nature is not framed as a co-participant in ecological balance, but rather as a hostile or spectacular anomaly to be endured or countered. While effective for quick alerts, these framings fail to connect audiences to the deeper ecological systems at play, thus missing an opportunity to cultivate ecological awareness, responsibility, or resilience.

Table 4

Framing Lexical Items in BBC Weather Reports

Lexical Item / Phrase	Framing Type	Discursive Implication
"Whiteout conditions expected"	Crisis/Disruption Framing	Signals an overwhelming natural event, framing it as hazardous and paralyzing
"Treacherous travel conditions"	Danger Framing	Casts nature as deceitful and threatening to human safety and mobility
"Severe weather alert issued"	Institutional Framing	Highlights official response; situates weather as a manageable threat via authority
"Life-threatening blizzard"	Catastrophic Framing	Depicts nature as a lethal force; amplifies emotional urgency
"Bitter cold gripping the UK"	Aggressive Nature Framing	Personifies weather as having control or agency; implies domination
"Gusts up to 90mph"	Extreme Measurement Framing	Emphasizes speed and force to evoke a sense of alarm and awe
"Danger to life warning"	Victimhood Framing	Focuses on human vulnerability; positions people as endangered by external forces
"Motorists urged to stay off roads"	Preventative Risk Framing	Centers human safety; reinforces need for institutional or behavioral response
"Heavy snow disrupting flights"	Economic/Infrastructure Framing	Highlights nature as disruptive to technological and transport systems
"Schools shut across	Societal Disruption Framing	Indicates the breadth of impact; portrays

BBC's weather discourse frames nature through a lens of danger, disruption, and institutional control. The framing constructs a clear anthropocentric narrative, characterized by:

- Nature as a disruptor of societal normalcy and daily routine.
- Emphasis on human vulnerability, safety, and institutional responses (e.g., alerts, closures).
- Reinforcement of reactionary attitudes rather than proactive ecological engagement.

This aligns with Stibbe's (2015) description of destructive stories, where nature is seen as an external force acting upon humans—often threatening or inconvenient. The language tends to obscure root causes like climate change and limits ecological salience, focusing instead on short-term consequences and response.

5. Framing Analysis of Al Jazeera

Al Jazeera's weather discourse consistently uses war-like, adversarial, and strategic metaphors, constructing nature as an external aggressor or force to resist. This framing is emotionally charged, dramatizing the weather as a threat to national stability, urban functionality, or human safety. The phrases include:

- "Tropical Cyclone Alfred bears down"
- "Storm lashes coastal areas"
- "Weather system barrels through southern regions"
- "Torrential rains leave trail of disruption"

These terms activate catastrophic, militaristic, and attack-oriented frames, positioning nature as an adversary. In the context of Stibbe's framing story, such language highlights destructive narratives, where nature is constructed as a violent agent and humans are either victims or passive respondents. The term "bears down" is not meteorologically neutral—it evokes a military advance, suggesting intentionality and strategic threat. This aligns with the "war metaphor" observed in previous climate discourse studies (Flusberg et al., 2017), where language of assault, invasion, and defense dominates the media portrayal of ecological processes.

There is little engagement with ecological processes, long-term causality (e.g., climate change), or solutions beyond immediate disaster response. As such, the reports reflect a reactive, anthropocentric narrative, consistent with Stibbe's (2021) categorization of a destructive story that "externalizes" nature and omits systems thinking. These geographies covered under the Al Jazeera reports are Middle East, South Asia, Africa and hence the pan-regionary tone of urgency. The range is nonetheless seldom substantiated through contextual ecological contextualization. To use one of the examples, a report on monsoon rains in Pakistan sounds like one on a hurricane in Mozambique and is not based on the culturally specific discourse about the environment, but on the universality of the fear language.

This meshes with the results of a recent survey conducted, who found that media in the Global South tends to recycle Global North disaster frames, bringing in frames of environmental struggle that are never locally available or, at least, lack local mediation through indigenous metaphors of resilience or adaptation (Faraz & Saleem, 2024a). The war and crisis, invasion, and metaphors are destroyed and anthropocentric in the approach of Al Jazeera. Such discourses though effective in getting attention lead to a danger of emotional exhaustion, short-term thinking and ecological amnesia. To Stibbe, this is aiding back a kind of a story we live by that conceals sustainability as well as system thinking, thus requiring critical thinking and framing that triggers on ecology congruence and vitality.

Table 5

Framing Lexical Items in Al Jazeera Weather Reports

Lexical Item / Phrase	Framing Type	Discursive Implication
"Winds of up to 120km/h lash coast"	Violent Nature Framing	Depicts weather as physically aggressive, strengthening conflict narrative
"Battered coastal towns"	Conflict/Erosion Framing	Emphasizes impact and vulnerability; implies nature is damaging settlements
"Emergency declared"	Institutional Crisis Framing	Institutionalizes nature as a hazard, reinforcing need for governmental intervention
"Rare cyclone event"	Exceptionality Framing	Suggests unpredictability; positions event as outlier rather than symptom of broader change
"Urged to evacuate homes"	Victimhood/Protection Frame	Centers human vulnerability and state's protective role; nature is external and hostile

The language choices in Al Jazeera's weather coverage reflect a militarized and reactive framing, where natural phenomena are cast as external enemies and humans are victims or responders. This discourse:

- Encourages fear-based rather than solution-based ecological engagement.
- Reinforces anthropocentric narratives, where the environment is a threat to be avoided or controlled.
- Aligns with Stibbe's destructive discourse, as it omits systemic ecological thinking and mutual interdependence.

Such framing may momentarily grab attention but ultimately contributes to a worldview where ecological processes are seen primarily through the lens of threat, crisis, and resistance, rather than as interconnected systems requiring understanding and care.

Discussion

Weather events were represented in the form of crisis and disaster throughout all media sources. The recurrent usage of words such as trail of destruction and devastated communities by CNN is an illustration of catastrophic framing as the weather has been inferred as an unpredictable element that causes damage. This correlates to what Stibbe (2015) refers to as a destructive story, which sets apart humans and nature and, instead of promoting systemic phenomena and ecological practices, advocates fear-based inaction. They also did so through words and phrases such as the abovementioned along with other expressions used by BBC often creating the sense of urgency and danger rather than associating any phenomenon to long-term environmental trends and/or anthropogenic influence on climate variability.

Militaristic framing by Al Jazeera also included the use of such lexical material as Cyclone Zelia bears down and storm lashes coastal areas. Such metaphor-laden structures personify the weather, changing wind into an enemy who has to be fought or avoided. Although this kind of framing can be effective in raising a sense of urgency it tends to support the idea of dualisms- between human and nature forces instead of those who are reliant or co-exist with each other. The frames are not like rhetorical flourishes as Lakoff (2010) observes, but rather they are mental models that limit the approach to issues as well as how they are understood. Media metaphors of war are in the wider trend where war-like metaphors

about nature make nature a battleground, silencing stories of nature in harmony or as something that is to be taken care of.

In its turn, DW was more similar to the risk and accountability framing as it dwelled on such long-term data as the one that extreme weather has killed almost 800,000 people. This method seems more reasonable and more fact-driven, but nonetheless, it remains largely focused on human vulnerability and statistical seriousness, without considering the causative factors of such phenomena on a systemic or environmental level. The outcome is a story of threat and defeat that does not invite thoughtful or positive action towards the problem of climate change.

In GNN, the national voice of Pakistan, there was an integration of institutional alert framing, as well as meteorological detachment. Messages such as powerful western spell alert issued in Balochistan or WASA teams directed to respond reiterate a framing in which human institutions are the main controllers of the world, and weather is externalized as an uncontrollable risk. This supports a technocratic and reactive paradigm, whereby the communication of climate is only done through alerts and advisories but lacking ecological thought or training. This kind of framing would be what Stibbe (2021) terms erasure in framing, in which some aspects of a dimension, such as climate responsibility or systemic change, are omitted within the discourse.

Crucially, all outlets framed weather events as external, urgent, and disruptive, rarely integrating ecological causality or interdependence. None of the analyzed reports highlighted nature as a system in crisis or emphasized human-nature symbiosis. Instead, the anthropocentric positioning prevailed— nature was framed as either a threat to be managed (GNN, CNN), a violent aggressor (Al Jazeera), or a context for suffering and heroism (BBC, DW).

This framing tendency supports previous studies of other researchers such as Boykoff and Boykoff (2007), which also found out that media houses tend to follow the established rules that emphasized dramatization and personalization instead of contextualizing the situation using scientific rules. In addition, Carvalho (2007) believed that media discourses influence the perception of the masses, as well as the moral location of humans in the environmental systems. The prevailing framing options in this research depict a further argument of clinging to reactive and crisis-focused discourses instead of discourses of systemic perception, ecological care, or climate resilience.

Although changes were noticeable, either the cumulative data that DW evolved, or the minimal mention of institutional coordination in Al Jazeera, they were external and did not redirect nature as an ecological actor and human beings as stewards. In this respect, the overall narrative has been that of fear, control, and institutional response, and once again, this only reinforces the dualism between us and nature that Stibbe (2015) warns against.

Findings

The analysis revealed that that the framing of weather news created in global and Pakistani media houses always utilizes catastrophic, crisis and adversarial frames, which influence the perception of the audience about events in the environment as a challenge rather than as ecological interactions.

- CNN predominantly employed *catastrophic framing* with phrases such as "trail of destruction" and "devastated communities," portraying weather as an aggressive, external force that evokes fear and urgency.
- BBC relied on *crisis framing*, using terms like "whiteout conditions" and "life-threatening blizzard," constructing nature as a dangerous disruptor to daily human life and infrastructure.
- DW adopted a *risk and mortality frame*, focusing on quantifiable losses (e.g., "extreme weather has killed 800,000 people"), which emphasized vulnerability but often lacked ecological context.

- Al Jazeera frequently used *militaristic framing*, with terms like "bears down" and "tropical cyclone," reinforcing metaphors of attack and conflict, presenting nature as a hostile adversary.
- GNN, the only Pakistani outlet studied, demonstrated *disaster alert framing*, emphasizing government-issued warnings (e.g., "powerful western spell alert") that reflect institutional control and public compliance, but rarely engage with underlying environmental causes.

Ecocentric frames were infrequent in any source. The natural world was externalised, dramatised, or anthropomorphised, climatic change, environmental justice and sustainability were systematically pushed to the back or deleted. This has been an expression of the dominance of destructive discourses, to Stibbe, that excludes the systemic knowledge and interdependence between humans and ecosystems.

Conclusion

This study examined how major international and national news outlets—CNN, BBC, DW, Al Jazeera, and GNN—employ framing in their weather reports to construct narratives about nature, climate, and human vulnerability. Using the ecolinguistic theory, developed by Stibbe (2015) that postulates that people tell each other stories that shape the world, the analysis revealed that the ways to frame weather events are mainly catastrophic, militaristic, or institutional, which supports the anthropocentric worldview that externalizes nature and promotes the short-term reactive vision.

These frames tend to focus on the dramatization that weather is an enemy or a disaster to be dealt with, as opposed to presenting the ecological systems as a type of community that requires gradual care. This catastrophic formulations by CNN, crisis rhetoric of BBC, mortality-based statistic by DW, institutional alerts by GNN, or war rhetoric of Al Jazeera, are all aimed at increasing fear and urgency as a way to wash away structural causes such as climate change, environmental depreciation or policy malfunctioning. Consequently, the hegemonic discourse is what Stibbe (2015) would label as a destructive discourse or, in other words, what covers ecological responsibility and represses more ecocentric relations.

This ubiquitous trend has practical connotations. The attitudes that people hold, political will, and policies preferences are created by media framing. As long as nature is framed continuously as a force to be reckoned with and not as a common system under duress, there is weakened ecological imagination. Some form of climate literacy and ecological justice will be unrealized unless efforts are made to reframe weather discourse to an interdependent, care-supported, and systemic understanding of the world.

Media houses can abandon the fear-based narrative and adopt helpful storytelling or a narrative that celebrates resilience, the root causes and empowerment of the nature and community. This question ought to be explored in greater detail in future studies to cross genres and periods and regional discourses so as to make further discoveries on how language may hold us back and limit radical futures, as well as on how it may open up possibilities to secure long-term futures.

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