

DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP RHETORIC DURING FLOOD CRISIS IN PAKISTAN IN 2025

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ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on how Pakistani political leaders discursively promote national identity during the 2025 flood crisis. Precisely, the main aim of this study to find the linguistic strategies used in leadership speech and to examine how these strategies promote unity, solidarity, and collective national perception. This research uses a qualitative research design and applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the theoretical and methodological framework. The study mainly uses Fairclough's three-dimensional model of discourse and van Dijk's ideological approach for data analysis. These frameworks allow the analysis of language at textual, discursive, and social levels to discover the relationship between language, ideology, and power. The data for this research contains public speeches, official statements, and press conference remarks from key Pakistani political leaders during the 2025 flood crisis. These texts were collected through purposive sampling from official government sources and reliable news media. The analysis concentrated on linguistic features such as pronoun usage, metaphors, evaluative language, emotional appeals, and narratives of unity. The findings expose that political leaders often employed inclusive pronouns, metaphors of struggle and rebuilding, and emotionally charged language to promote a shared national identity. The flood crisis was outlined as a "national tragedy" and a "test of unity," which encouraged collective duty and solidarity among citizens. The study highlights the important role of political discourse in shaping national identity and legitimizing leadership during crisis situations. These findings contribute to the understanding of how language functions as a tool of power, ideology, and nation-building in disaster communication.

Keywords: CDA, political language, Pakistan floods 2025, national identity, rhetoric, ideology.

1. INTRODUCTION

National identity is not a fixed or naturally occurring phenomenon; relatively, it is continuously created, negotiated, and imitated through discourse. Researchers such as Benedict Anderson conceptualize the nation as an "imagined community," designed and continued through shared narratives and symbolic representations (Anderson, 1983). Similarly, Stuart Hall claims that identity is a process of becoming rather than being, formed through representation

and discourse (Hall, 1996). In times of national crisis, this process becomes mainly visible, as political leaders assemble language strategically to frame occasions, allot responsibility, and strengthen collective belonging. Political discourse plays a vital role in shaping how citizens observe the state, its institutions, and their place within it. According to Teun A. van Dijk, discourse is a crucial site where power and ideology are ratified and imitated (Van Dijk, 1998). Leadership rhetoric

during emergencies is not just informational; it is performative and ideological. Through speeches, press conferences, and public statements, leaders create narratives of unity, resilience, and national solidarity. These narratives often depend on discursive strategies such as inclusive pronouns (“we,” “our nation”), positive self-representation, emotional appeals, and the construction of “us versus them” contradictions. Such strategies assist to legitimize authority, manage public perception, and strengthen national awareness during periods of ambiguity.

Climate-related tragedies provide a chiefly significant context for investigating these dynamics. Pakistan has experienced frequent and devastating floods over the past decades, including the disastrous 2010 Pakistan floods and consequent climate-induced disasters. The 2025 flood crisis once again uncovered structural vulnerabilities while concurrently creating a discursive space for political leaders to coherent visions of nationhood, resilience, and collective responsibility (Al Jazeera, 2025; Dawn News, 2025). In times when billions are displaced and infrastructures downfall, leadership rhetoric becomes central to re-establishing public confidence and declaring governmental legitimacy. As Norman Fairclough emphasizes, discourse does not just reflect social realities; it dynamically shapes them by constructing certain versions of events and social relations (Fairclough, 1995).

From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, crisis communication is extremely ideological. CDA understandings language as a social practice rooted within power relations. It examines how linguistic choices imitate dominance, inequality, and ideological situations. In the context of national disasters, discourse can be used to foreground unity while backgrounding political responsibility, or to frame catastrophes as collective prosecutions rather than governance failures. Reports from organizations such as the World Health Organization highlight that large-scale floods in Pakistan construct humanitarian and health emergencies that require corresponding national responses (World Health Organization, 2025). Government reports also highlight the rising role of climate change in increasing such disasters (Government of Pakistan, 2025). In spite of the increasing body of research on nationalism and political discourse, limited scholarly attention has been rewarded to Pakistani leadership rhetoric

during climate-related emergencies, mainly from a CDA perspective. Most prevailing studies emphasis on security discourse, electoral campaigns, or post-conflict nationalism. There remains a significant gap in understanding how environmental disasters are discursively framed and how such framing contributes to the construction of national identity in Pakistan. The 2025 flood crisis therefore provides an appropriate and relevant case study to discover these issues (Arab News, 2025; Business Recorder, 2025).

This study aims to observe how national identity was discursively constructed in leadership rhetoric during Pakistan’s 2025 flood disaster. By analyzing selected political speeches, official statements, and media briefings, the research detects the linguistic and rhetorical strategies used to encourage unity, resilience, and collective belonging. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk, the study discovers how disaster discourse functions ideologically to legitimize authority, uphold power relations, and shape public perception. Eventually, this study contributes to broader discussions on language, power, and nation-building by demonstrating how emergencies become discursive opportunities for the reinforcement of national identity. It prominent how political language functions not only as a means of disaster management but also as a strategic tool in the ongoing construction of the nation.

1.1 Research Objectives:

To identify the linguistics and discursive strategies used to construct rhetoric unity and solidarity.

To examine how linguistic choices in political leaders’ discourse contribute to the construction of national identity and foster a shared sense of unity and solidarity among citizens during the crisis.

Research Questions:

What linguistics and discursive strategies have been employed by the Pakistani political leaders to construct their identities?

How do these linguistic choices contribute to the construction of national identity and the alignment of citizens with a shared sense of unity and solidarity during the crisis?

Literature Review

In discourse studies, mainly within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the link between

language, power, and ideology has remained an essential concern. CDA interpret discourse as a form of social practice that both reflects and creates social realities. According to Norman Fairclough (1995), discourse contributes to the construction and reproduction of identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge. Political discourse, consequently, becomes a confidential site for the cooperation and legitimation of ideological meanings. During national crises such as natural disasters, political discourse gains intensified importance because it shapes public opinion, collective emotions, and perceptions of national identity and state authority.

National identity is not a fixed or essential category; rather, it is discursively constructed and continuously reproduced through language, symbols, and narratives. Benedict Anderson (1983) famously conceptualizes the nation as an “imagined community,” sustained through shared stories and symbolic representations. Complementing this view, Stuart Hall (1996) argues that identity is a process of “becoming” rather than “being,” constantly shaped through representation. Political leaders play a crucial role in this process by articulating shared values, collective memories, and national aspirations. Research by Ruth Wodak et al. (2009) demonstrates that leadership discourse frequently employs inclusive language, historical references, and moral evaluations to define who belongs to the nation and what the nation represents. Through these discursive practices, national identity is framed as natural, unified, and morally justified, while internal differences and structural inequalities are often minimized.

CDA scholars such as Fairclough (1995) and Teun A. van Dijk (2006) emphasize that political discourse is inherently ideological. Fairclough’s three-dimensional model—text, discursive practice, and social practice—provides a comprehensive framework for linking linguistic choices to broader socio-political structures. At the textual level, features such as pronoun usage, modality, metaphor, and evaluative language construct relationships of power and solidarity. At the level of discursive practice, attention is paid to how texts are produced, distributed, and interpreted within specific institutional contexts. At the broader level of social practice, discourse is analyzed in relation to existing power structures and ideological formations. Van Dijk’s ideological framework

further explains how discourse constructs in-groups and out-groups through strategies of positive self-representation and negative other-representation, reinforcing dominant group identities while marginalizing alternative voices. The ideological role of political discourse becomes particularly visible in crisis situations. Research on crisis management by Arjen Boin et al. (2009) suggests that leaders strategically frame crises as collective challenges requiring unity, sacrifice, and resilience. Such framing often relies on metaphors of battle, rebuilding, and recovery, transforming crisis into narratives of national testing and regeneration. Similarly, Lilie Chouliaraki (2006) says that mediated representations of misery create emotional communities, positioning political leaders as sympathetic guardians while influencing public responses to catastrophe. In this way, catastrophes are not just natural occurrences but discursive procedures through which governance legitimacy and national character are symbolically strengthened.

A developing body of CDA research has observed how national identity is recreated during wars, epidemics, and economic crises. Ruth Wodak (2015) reveals that crises are commonly utilized for nation-building purposes, with leaders highlighting attachment and common destiny while suppressing opposition or unconventional interpretations. Even when disasters excessively affect marginalized people, inclusive pronouns such as “we” and “our nation” are used to create a sense of equal shared experience. These linguistic strategies substitute ideological unity while potentially covering systemic injustices or governance disappointments. Scholars have also emphasized the significance of context in influencing political discourse. Michel Foucault (1972) claims that discourse is rooted within broader systems of knowledge and power, meaning that what can be said—and how it can be said—is organized by official forces. In countries facing frequent environmental tragedies, discourse surrounding such events becomes entangled with national development descriptions, international relief politics, and climate justice discussions. Thus, leadership rhetoric during crisis does not operate in seclusion but within complex socio-political and global contexts.

Despite the growing literature on political discourse and catastrophe communication, much of the existing research attentions on Western contexts. Comparatively limited attention has been

rewarded to leadership rhetoric in the Global South, where natural disasters interconnect with political variability, economic inequality, and governance challenges. In Pakistan, where floods have frequently caused humanitarian and infrastructural crises, political discourse plays a chiefly important role in affecting public trust and national awareness. Prior studies on Pakistani political communication have shown how nationalist descriptions, religious allegory, and moral framing are used to organize public support and legitimize authority (Mahboob, 2009; Rashid, 2018). However, comprehensive CDA based studies of leadership rhetoric during natural tragedies—especially floods—remain unusual.

The flood disaster of 2025 offers a serious context for investigating how language is employed to build solidarity, resilience, and moral strength while instantaneously strengthening political legitimacy. In line with Fairclough's and van Dijk's frameworks, this research uses a multilevel approach, examining textual features such as pronouns, modality, metaphors, and emotional appeals; investigating discursive practices related to the production and dissemination of discourses; and positioning these discourses within broader social and organized power structures. By doing so, the research identifies a significant gap in the literature and advances understanding of how disaster discourse in Pakistan functions as a mechanism of ideological reproduction and nation-building. In sum, while substantial scholarship has explored CDA, nationalism, and crisis rhetoric, limited research has specifically investigated how Pakistani political leaders discursively construct national identity during climate-related catastrophes. The present study contributes to this underexplored area by observing leadership rhetoric during the 2025 flood crisis, representing how language functions not merely as a tool of communication but as a tool of power, legitimacy, and national identity construction.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research approach based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to observe how national identity was created in the speeches of Pakistani political leaders during the 2025 flood crisis. A qualitative method is appropriate because the study emphasizes on understanding meanings, language use, and

hidden ideologies instead of measuring numbers or statistics. CDA is specifically appropriate because it outlooks language as a social practice that forms and is shaped by power, politics, and society. According to Norman Fairclough (1995), language does not merely describe truth; it helps construct social identities and power relations. This study primarily uses Fairclough's three-dimensional model and Teun A. van Dijk's (2006) ideological framework as analytical tools. These models explain how political language works at different stages and how it supports certain ideas and power structures.

3.1 Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

Fairclough's model (1995) describes that discourse should be considered at three connected levels: text, discursive practice, and social practice.

At the **text level**, this research looks thoroughly at the language used in political speeches. It examines pronouns such as "we" and "our nation," modal verbs like "must" and "will," word choices, metaphors, emotional expressions, and evaluative language. These features help show how leaders formed a sense of unity, encouraged solidarity, and presented themselves as responsible and resilient.

At the **discursive practice level**, the study observes how the speeches were formed and shared. This includes observing where the speeches were delivered (for example, national television addresses or press conferences) and how they were spread through media platforms. This level helps understand how public received and interpreted these messages during the flood disaster.

At the **social practice level**, the study associates the speeches to the broader political and social context of Pakistan. It discovers how the language used during the emergency supported national unity, strengthened leadership authority, and reproduced existing power structures in society.

3.2 Van Dijk's Ideological Framework

To support this analysis, the research also uses van Dijk's (2006) ideological framework. Van Dijk clarifies that political discourse frequently makes a clear difference between "us" and "them." Leaders commonly present themselves and the nation in a positive way (positive self-representation) while avoiding responsibility or criticism. In this study, van Dijk's concepts help analyze how political leaders presented the flood crisis as a shared national challenge and how they used language to

promote unity and moral strength while protecting their political image.

3.3 Data Collection

The data for this study consist of public speeches, press conferences, and official statements formed by major Pakistani political leaders during the 2025 flood crisis. These speeches were together from official government websites, verified social media accounts, and reliable news channels to ensure correctness and authenticity. A purposive sampling method was used. This means that only speeches directly related to the flood disaster, national unity, relief efforts, and shared responsibility were selected. The focus was on texts that obviously discussed the disaster and addressed the nation. The selected speeches were carefully read and examined. Special attention was given to pronouns, modal verbs, word choices, metaphors, emotional language, and strategies that produced a sense of “we” as a nation. The purpose was to comprehend how national identity was created, how unity was encouraged, and how political authority was defensible during the crisis. Since the study uses publicly accessible speeches and official statements, there are no issues related to consent or confidentiality. The research remains academically unbiased and focuses on analyzing language patterns rather than complaining any political party or individual.

Data Analysis

The analysis uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to look at how political leaders constructed narratives about responsibility, reclamation, and national identity in awaken of the Pakistan floods in 2025. Using Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice this section examines the linguistic and ideological strategies that formed public understanding of the disaster.

Shehbaz Sharif (Prime Minister)

“This devastating flood is not the tragedy of one province; it is a national tragedy. We stand united as one nation with our brothers and sisters affected by this disaster. The federal government will spare no effort until every displaced family is rehabilitated. We will rebuild Pakistan stronger, more resilient, and better prepared for future challenges. Together, we will overcome this test of our national spirit”.

1.1 Analysis through Fairclough Three-Dimensional model (1995)

The speech of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is analysed on bases of Fairclough three-dimensional model (1995).

Description (Textual level)

Speech of Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in 2025 on flood crisis is replete with linguistic features which help in framing national identity.

Inclusive Pronouns

The frequent use of “we,” “our,” and “together” constructs a **shared national identity**. By using these pronouns Shehbaz Sharif position the government and citizens as part of the same community facing the catastrophe together.

National Framing

The phrase “**national tragedy**” redefines the flood from a regional or provincial tragedy to a **collective national experience**. This linguistic strategy reduces regional divisions and underlines the unity of the state.

Familial Metaphor

The phrase “**brothers and sisters**” symbolically represents citizens as members of a **national family**, strengthening emotional solidarity and compassion among Pakistanis.

Lexical Choices

His lexical choices play an important role in constructing national unity and solidarity. Words like “**united,**” “**rebuild,**” “**resilient,**” and “**national spirit**” emphasize the idea of strength, resilience, and collective accountability—key elements in the creation of national identity during disasters.

Interpretation

The second stage of analysis involves the understanding of how the linguistic features mentioned above reflect the social and political ideologies embedded in the selected speech. The speech functions as **crisis communication meant at strengthening national unity**. Political leaders often use catastrophes as moments to **reinforce shared identity and solidarity**. By highlighting unity and national resilience, the discourse inspires citizens to interpret the disaster as a **shared**

national challenge instead of regional problem. The speech also reveals common patterns in political discourse where leaders **activate national identity to promote cooperation, support government action, and maintain public spirit.**

Explanation

The last stage of CDA analysis examines how discourse reflects broader socio-political realities in Pakistan, where **provincial divisions and regional discriminations can form public perceptions of national unity.** By calling the flood as a **“national tragedy,”** the speech goes to surpass these divisions and promote a **common Pakistani identity.** This description supports the idea that the nation must act cooperatively in response to disasters. Moreover, the promise to **“rebuild Pakistan stronger”** connects disaster retrieval with the broader national plan of development and resilience, awarding the state as a protector of national prosperity.

1.2 Analysis through Van Dijk’s Ideological Model

According to **Van Dijk’s ideological model,** discourse often highlights **positive representation of “Us”** and solidarity within the citizens.

Construction of “Us”

The speech builds a unified **national in-group** comprising of all Pakistanis. The use of **“one nation”** and **“our national spirit”** stresses collective belonging and mutual identity.

Positive Self-Representation

The government is depicted as accountable and dedicated through statements such as **“the federal government will spare no effort.”** This strengthens reliance in national leader.

Emotional Solidarity

By calling to affected citizens as **“brothers and sisters,”** the speech promotes sympathy and reinforces emotional connections within the national community.

Absence of Division

Especially, the speech **prevents emphasizing provincial or political differences,** instead highlighting unity and cooperation. This supports Van Dijk’s concept of discourse encouraging **in-group association.**

Asif Ali Zardari (President of Pakistan)

“At this difficult time, the entire nation must demonstrate unity, patience, and compassion. Our strength lies in our solidarity. The people of Pakistan have always risen above adversity, and once again we will show the world that we are a resilient nation. We must put aside political differences and focus on serving those who are suffering.”

Analysis through Fairclough’s Three-Dimensional Model

2.1 Textual Analysis (Description)

At the textual level, the speech uses **linguistic strategies that encourage national unity and shared identity.**

Inclusive Pronouns

The repetitive use of **“our,” “we,”** and **“the entire nation”** constructs a **communal national identity.** These pronouns position common peoples, political leaders, and institutions as part of the same national community.

Lexical Choices

Words like **“unity,” “patience,” “compassion,” “solidarity,”** and **“resilient nation”** highlight moral values connected with national identity. These terms describe the Pakistani nation as **strong, cooperative, and empathetic** throughout difficult times.

Positive National Representation

The expression **“the people of Pakistan have always risen above adversity”** creates a historical description of **national resilience,** depicting Pakistanis as capable of overwhelming disasters.

Imperative Tone

The statement **“We must put aside political differences”** uses modal obligation to inspire cooperation among political leaders. This discursive strategy encourages **national interest over political fight.**

2.2 Discursive Practice

At the discursive level, the statement functions as **disaster rhetoric intended at strengthening social cohesion.** Political leaders often highlight **collective identity and shared accountability** during national emergencies. By influence citizens and political leaders to set aside conflict, the speech frames the crisis as a **moment demanding national**

unity and cooperation. The statement also constructs a narrative in which Pakistan must **show resilience to the global community**, proposing that national identity is partly formed by **how the nation presents itself globally**.

Social Practice

At the broader social level, the speech mirrors Pakistan's **political and social context**, where political separations and regional differences can influence national responses to catastrophes. By highlighting unity and solidarity, the speech attempts to **transcend political and ideological divisions**. The call to prioritize humanitarian support over political disagreement reinforces the idea that **national welfare should take precedence over partisan interests**. Thus, the speech contributes to the **reproduction of a collective national identity centered on resilience, compassion, and unity**.

2.2 Analysis through Van Dijk's Ideological Framework

According to Van Dijk's ideological model, discourse often creates **positive representations of the in-group ("Us")**.

Positive Representation of the Nation

The statement represents Pakistanis as **strong, compassionate, and united**, highlighting positive national appearances.

In-Group Solidarity

The phrase **"our strength lies in our solidarity"** emphasize cooperation as an important feature of the national community.

De-emphasis of Internal Conflict

By encouraging leaders to **"put aside political differences,"** the speech reduces internal divisions and highlights the importance of **cooperative national action**.

Zardari Bilawal Bhutto

"The climate crisis has hit Pakistan once again, but we refuse to be defined by disaster. We are a nation of courage and determination. Our youth, our volunteers, and our institutions are standing shoulder to shoulder in relief operations. This is the time for unity, not division. Together, we will rebuild homes, restore livelihoods, and protect our vulnerable communities."

3.1 Analysis through Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

Textual Analysis (Description)

In the first level of Fairclough model, the speech has constructed the national identity through **strategic linguistic features and symbolic expressions of solidarity**.

Collective Pronouns

The constant use of **"we"** and **"our"** stresses **collective national belonging**. These pronouns include citizens, institutions, and leadership within a shared national framework.

Positive National Representation

The phrase **"a nation of courage and determination"** represents Pakistan as resistant and capable of challenging crises. This positive description strengthens national pride and solidarity.

Lexical Choices

Words like **"unity," "together," "rebuild," "restore," and "protect"** highlight themes of teamwork, reform, and accountability toward helpless groups.

Metaphorical Expression

The phrase **"standing shoulder to shoulder"** metaphorically signifies **collective action and unity**, suggesting that different sectors of society are united in countering the crisis.

Discursive Practice (Interpretation)

At the discursive level, the speech presents the **climate crisis as both a national test and a chance for collective utilization**. The speech highlights the involvement of **youth, volunteers, and organizations**, which widens the depiction of the national community beyond the establishment. This strategy builds national identity as **inclusive and participatory**, where everyone contributes to crisis reaction. Additionally, the call for **"unity, not division"** shows that political or social fights should be set away in favor of national harmony.

Social Practice (Explanation)

At the social level, the speech reflects Pakistan's broader **political and conservational context**, where climate tragedies commonly challenge governance and social strength. By connecting the crisis to **climate change**, the speech places Pakistan

within a **global environmental description**, while highlighting national resilience and determination. The assurance to **rebuild homes and restore maintenances** also links national identity with the state's accountability to protect vulnerable communities and encourage recovery.

3.2 Analysis through Van Dijk's Ideological Framework

According to Van Dijk's ideological framework, speech often highlights **positive in-group representation**.

Positive National Identity

The description of Pakistan as "**a nation of courage and determination**" emphasize positive national appearances and strengthens shared pride.

Emphasis on Collective Action

The phrase "**youth, volunteers, and institutions standing shoulder to shoulder**" portrays the nation as supportive and united in answering to crises.

Maryam Nawaz (CM of Punjab)

"The people affected by floods are not alone. The government and the people of Punjab stand with them in this hour of need. We are mobilizing every available resource to ensure immediate relief and long-term rehabilitation. Our duty is to serve humanity beyond political lines. Pakistan's strength is its people, and together we will rise again."

4.1 Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

Textual Level

Maryam Nawaz's speech is emotionally dedicated and people-centred. When she states affected people are "not alone," she constructs a sense of care and emotional support. The speech uses **inclusive language** like "we," "our," and "together," which builds a sense of **shared national identity and solidarity**. Expressions like "**stand with them,**" "**serve humanity,**" and "**Pakistan's strength is its people**" emphasizes empathy, unity, and spirit.

Discursive Practice

The statement purposes as **crisis communication**, aiming to encourage citizens that the government and society are cohesive in supporting flood

sufferers. It encourages collaboration between the **state and the public** in relief and recovery efforts.

Social Practice

At the broader level, the speech supports the idea that **national unity and philanthropic service are vital values of Pakistani identity**, particularly during natural disasters.

4.2 Van Dijk's Ideological Model

According to Van Dijk's ideological framework, the speech highlights **positive representation of the national in-group ("us")**. The government and citizens are represented as **supportive, sympathetic, and responsible**, while political separations are diminished through the phrase "**beyond political lines.**" This reinforces the description of **collective national solidarity**. Overall, her discourse makes an image of a helpful, united, and people-driven nation.

Ali Amin Gandapur

"Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has suffered greatly, but our people are brave and resilient. This disaster is a test of our unity and faith. We call upon all institutions and citizens to join hands in relief efforts. By working together as one nation, we can turn this crisis into an opportunity for rebuilding stronger communities."

5.1 Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

Description

Ali Amin Gandapur calls the flood as a "test of our unity and faith." The expression "test" is a metaphor that presents the catastrophe as a trial meant to reinforce the nation. It proposes that suffering will prove the country's power. By saying the people "brave and resilient," he uses positive evocative language that shapes national pride

Discursive Practice

The speech purposes as **activating rhetoric**, inspiring cooperation among **organizations and citizens**. By influence people to "join hands," the discourse encourages communal contribution in relief and recovery efforts.

Social Practice

At the broader social level, the discourse supports the idea that **national unity and collective spirit are important values of Pakistani society**, particularly during crises.

Van Dijk's Ideological Model

According to Van Dijk's framework, the speech highlights **positive in-group representation**. Pakistanis are described as **brave, resistant, and supportive**, while the crisis is bordered as a **common national challenge** that can be overwhelmed through unity and collective accomplishment. Overall, the speeches of Pakistani political leaders during the 2025 flood disaster show that language plays an influential role in constructing national unity. Through the usage of inclusive words like "we" and "our," emotional languages, and metaphors such as "test" and "rebuilding," leaders portray the disaster as a common national trial rather than a regional problem. They create Pakistan as resilient, spirited, and united, while also presenting themselves as accountable and helpful leaders. In simple terms, the flood crisis becomes not merely a natural disaster but also a moment for reinforcing national identity and unity.

Discussions and Findings

This study observed how Pakistani political leaders built national identity during the 2025 flood crisis with the help of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), mainly Fairclough's three-dimensional model and van Dijk's ideological framework. The findings show that political discourse during the crisis was not merely informative but also ideological and nation-building in nature. Primary, in relative to the literature, the findings strongly support Fairclough's (1995) idea that discourse is a social practice that forms social realities. The speeches did more than define the flood; they actively created a unified national identity. Leaders outlined the disaster as a "national tragedy" instead of a regional issue. This aligns with Anderson's (1983) idea of the nation as an imagined community, where language helps nation feel connected even if they are geographically detached from the crisis.

At the textual level (Fairclough's first dimension), the analysis revealed heavy use of inclusive pronouns such as "we," "our," and "together." These linguistic choices eliminated distance between leaders and peoples and shaped a sense of shared accountability. Metaphors such as "test of national spirit," "standing shoulder to shoulder," and "rebuilding stronger" framed the crisis as a test that could reinforce the nation. Evaluative words like "brave," "resilient," and "determined" built a

positive national self-image. At the level of discursive practice (second dimension), the speeches followed a clear narrative pattern: acknowledgment of disaster, importance on unity, promise of government action, and ray of hope. This frequent structure suggests a strategic pattern in disaster communication. Leaders did not present the flood only as devastation; instead, they formed it into a story of shared struggle and reclamation.

At the level of social practice (third dimension), the speeches revealed broader power relations and ideological objectives. According to van Dijk (2006), political discourse often constructs positive self-representation and encourages in-group unity. The speeches highlighted national unity while reducing political differences. Says to "put aside political divisions" temporarily eliminated partisan clash and positioned leaders as accountable protectors of the nation. This reinforces political legitimacy during disaster. The findings also attach with earlier studies discussed in the literature review, mostly research showing that disasters are often used as occasions for nation-building (Wodak, 2015; Boin et al., 2009). The 2025 flood was bordered as a "test" and an "opportunity to rebuild stronger," which converted a natural disaster into a symbolic moment of national unity. Even though tragedies often disturb different social groups unfairly, the speeches presented the nation as correspondingly united and cooperatively resilient. This supports CDA's argument that discourse can occasionally hide interior inequities while emphasizing ideological unity.

Furthermore, the stress on emotional language – such as references to "brothers and sisters" and "suffering families" – shaped a family-like image of the nation. This sensitive framing supported solidarity and discarded social distance. It also strengthened moral accountability, promising citizens to see relief efforts as a common national duty. Overall, the discussion illustrates that the 2025 flood speeches operated as tools of ideological imitation and identity production. With the help of pronouns, metaphors, evaluative language, and unity narratives, political leaders formed a powerful image of Pakistan as unified, resistant, and morally strong. At the same time, they strengthened their own leadership roles as defenders and managers of the nation. In conclusion, this research confirms that political discourse during natural disasters plays an

important role in creating national identity and legitimizing power. The 2025 flood crisis was not only a philanthropic emergency but also a conversational moment in which language was used strategically to reinforce unity, solidarity, and national attachment.

Conclusion

This study sets out to observe how Pakistani political leadership discursively created national identity during the 2025 flood crisis through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Drawing on Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model and Teun A. van Dijk's ideological framework, the analysis shows that leadership rhetoric during the crisis operated not merely as a means of information distribution but also as a powerful instrument for shaping shared identity, unity, and ideological positioning (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1998).

The findings reveal that national identity was thoroughly constructed through inclusive pronoun usage, strong modality, nomination strategies, emotional appeals, and collective crisis outlining. These linguistic strategies portray the nation as unified, resilient, and morally strong while positioning political leaders as accountable and defensive figures. By framing the flood as a collective national challenge, leadership discourse encouraged solidarity and collective concern, effectively assembling public support during a period of ambiguity and vulnerability. Such strategies associated with previous studies showing that political leaders often use speeches to create descriptions of unity and common national purpose during emergencies (Wodak, 2015). At the same time, the study highpoints how such discursive practices contributed to the legitimation of political power and the imitation of prevailing nationalist ideologies. The stress on unity and resilience inclined to background structural discriminations, regional inequalities, and questions of responsibility related to disaster preparation and governance. This finding supports CDA's central concept that discourse not only mirrors social realities but actively forms them in ways that serve specific power interests (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 2006).

The study adds to the growing body of literature on political discourse, nationalism, and crisis communication, mainly within the circumstance of the Global South. By concentrating on

Pakistan's 2025 flood crisis, it fills an important gap in CDA research on catastrophe-related leadership rhetoric in South Asian contexts. The findings also align with broader scholarship on nationalism which outlooks national identity as discursively constructed through collective descriptions and symbolic demonstrations (Anderson, 1983; Hall, 1996). Despite its contributions, the study is restricted by its qualitative scope and emphasis on selected leadership discourses. Future research may benefit from comparative analyses across different political actors, media platforms, or disaster contexts, as well as the inclusion of public responses to leadership rhetoric. Such studies could more illuminate the dynamic association between discourse, power, and national identity in times of crisis.

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