



Competing Narratives of the Pakistan–India Military Conflict: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Ideology, Power, and Representation in *Dawn* and *Al Jazeera* Headlines

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ABSTRACT

This study applies Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to ten verified news headlines drawn from Dawn, a Pakistani English-language newspaper, and Al Jazeera, an internationally oriented broadcaster based in Qatar. All ten headlines cover the Pakistan-India military conflict of May 2025, locally designated in Pakistan as Marka-i-Haq (Battle of Truth) and internationally known as the Operation Sindoor crisis. Analysis reveals that Dawn's headlines consistently employ religiously charged vocabulary, categorical modality, and military-institutional sourcing to construct Pakistani deaths as sacred martyrdoms and Indian military action as criminal aggression. Al Jazeera's headlines, by contrast, deploy neutral vocabulary, epistemic hedges, and multi-sourced attribution to construct the conflict as a contested event resisting moral closure. Each headline is individually analyzed to ensure full corpus coverage. The study argues that these differences arise not from isolated editorial choices but from the structural conditions of each outlet's production context, audience orientation, and institutional positioning. Future research could broaden the scope by examining multilingual and cross-national media corpora and by adopting a longitudinal perspective to better understand how ideological framing and representations of conflict evolve over time.

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Introduction

India launched Operation Sindoor on 7 May 2025 in its initial strike against nine targets spread across six locations in Pakistan and the Pakistan-administered Kashmir. According to India, the operation was a reaction to the terror attacks at Pahalgam where gunmen shot 26 people in Kashmir under Indian administration. Pakistan rejected the claims of India, saying that civilians were hit in the strike in residential areas. According to Pakistan, at least 40 civilians died in addition to 11 military personnel. Operation Bunyanum Marsoos marked the reaction of Pakistan, which resulted in four days of missiles, drones and air combat between two nuclear powers that ended up in a ceasefire mediated by America on 10 May 2025.

In addition to the actual military conflict, there was another very significant war of narratives waged via the media. Dawn is Pakistan's oldest and most respected newspaper published in English. It referred to the death of Pakistan's citizens as the death of martyrs, called the acts of India cowardly and devious, and stated that Pakistan's military action was a worthy and heroic deed. Al Jazeera is a television channel from Qatar that operates internationally. It referred to the deaths of people reported killed, cited all casualties from named institutions, and made no judgment on the terminology used by either state in describing the conflict. The differences in the choice of vocabulary are not accidental. The current study makes use of the three-dimensional

framework by Fairclough for critical discourse analysis and evaluates ten confirmed newspaper headlines, including four from Dawn and six from Al Jazeera, for their linguistic construction of ideological representations of the Pakistan-India military conflict that occurred in May 2025. This is done by analyzing each headline according to Fairclough's framework which includes textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. The objective of the study is to explain how ideology, power relations, and social actors are represented in language in times of armed conflict.

The importance of this study lies in three counts. First, it fills the research gap which is already documented. An exhaustive search of the databases Scopus, Google Scholar and ProQuest carried out in May 2026 with the keywords "Critical Discourse Analysis," "Dawn," "Al Jazeera," "Pakistan-India conflict 2025," and "Operation Sindoor" failed to find any previous research study which used Fairclough's theoretical model in analyzing this particular event and this particular combination of newspapers. Second, the study shows how a singular lexically marked contrast—martyred and people reported killed—actually encapsulates completely opposing ideological perspectives, with the former elevating Islamic nationalistic rhetoric by sanctifying the casualties while the latter is a scientific statement of facts in the most epistemically cautious language. Finally, the choice of the Dawn-Al Jazeera comparative framework has value in methodology due to its ability to pit a nation-specific newspaper from South Asia against an international broadcaster, thus ideologically contrasting each other to reveal how conflict discourse emerges. The research attempts to achieve four goals. Firstly, to undertake an analysis of each selected news headline in terms of Fairclough's triadic model, covering all texts within the selected corpora. Secondly, to conduct a comparative analysis of the way Dawn and Al Jazeera linguistically construct different ideological perspectives on the same conflict. Thirdly, to explore the role of power dynamics, authority, and biases in both discourses via linguistic practices. Finally, to contextualize the discourses under consideration socio-politically and culturally. Accordingly, the present study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How do *Dawn* and *Al Jazeera* construct the selected conflict linguistically and ideologically through textual, discursive, and socio-cultural practices, as explained in Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model?
2. How do power relations, authority, ideological positioning, and the wider socio-political and cultural contexts influence the representation of the selected conflict in the news headlines of *Dawn* and *Al Jazeera*?

Literature Review

In line with Fairclough's (1989, 1992, 1995) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the role of language is not simply to refer to reality but also to construct it socially. The focus of CDA is on the way language constructs and challenges relations of power, ideology and identity. According to Fairclough (1992, p. 63): "texts cannot be considered to be ideologically innocent – every linguistic choice, made both positively through what one says and negatively in what one leaves unsaid, involves a particular social stance." CDA therefore lends itself well to media analysis, where choices in vocabulary, sources quoted, and framing of events all carry ideological ramifications. The Three-Dimensional Model put forth by Fairclough (1992) is an analysis of discourse carried out in three dimensions. In the first dimension called Textual, analysis involves looking into the linguistic features of the text like vocabulary, grammar, modality, transitivity, evaluations, and representation. In the Discursive Practice dimension, analysis involves analyzing the processes of text production, text circulation, and reception. At the Social Practice level, analysis attempts to contextualize the discourse in the larger ideological, political, and cultural context. It looks into the question of how the language serves the society and for whom. These three dimensions are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, the choice of language made in the first dimension is a reflection of societal conditions prevailing then.

According to Richardson (2007), one of the examples that show how newspaper language creates ideological meaning through seemingly everyday practice with evaluative implications is the following. Bell (1991) argues that the organization of news language occurs on the basis of institutional source hierarchy so that official views are organized into the news language through objectivation. The use of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation has been shown by Van Dijk (1998) to be the strategies used in constructing the nationalist conflict discourse. According to Van Dijk, among the techniques that are used in this construction process there are evaluation, transitivity, and passivity. Zayani (2005) has called Al Jazeera a counter-hegemonic broadcaster in its struggle against Western and regional state discourses without any mention of new nationalism.

Methodology

Research Design

In the present study, the theoretical framework of the qualitative research methodology is being used which includes Critical Discourse Analysis. With qualitative research, one is able to closely analyze each and every newspaper headline individually and the ideology that is associated with the selection of words, grammar, and rhetorical devices in them. In the present research design, there is a comparison between Pakistani and international news discourse in order to identify the differences which would not have been found without comparison.

Newspaper Selection Criteria

Dawn (Pakistani source)

The paper was founded in 1941 by Mohammad Ali Jinnah and is printed by Dawn Media Group. It is the oldest English newspaper in Pakistan and has widespread popularity even beyond Pakistan. Dawn follows the principle of liberal nationalism in its editorials and is the paper of record of the country. As far as the May 2025 crisis is concerned, Dawn mostly depended upon press releases by ISPR and speeches by Parliament.

Al Jazeera (International source)

Al Jazeera English, which was established in 1996 through funding by the Qatari government, is able to maintain its editorial freedom and the viewpoint of the Global South. The coverage of its stories about conflicts was based on reporters based in both Islamabad and New Delhi, as well as on independent commentators and views of the civilians in Kashmir. It is not at fault for viewing Pakistan within the context of counterterrorism of the West.

Data Collection and Corpus Size

Headlines have been collected by searching the websites of dawn.com and aljazeera.com using key terms such as Pakistan-India conflict, Operation Sindoor, civilian death, civilian martyrdom, and India's hostile behavior. The timeframe for the collection of these headlines is between 7 May and 29 May 2025. Every single headline was checked for its authenticity by matching it with its respective URL of publication. If any headline had a sub-headline that made up the whole headline when published in its original form, then both were included in Table 1. Those headlines having anything to do with logistics and none of the operations/casualties have been excluded from the analysis. There are ten headlines in total, four from Dawn and six from Al Jazeera.

Table 1

Corpus of News Headlines Selected from Dawn and Al Jazeera Covering the Pakistan-India Military Conflict (May 2025)

Code	Source	Date	Headline
H1	Dawn	7 May 2025	India launches devious attacks in dead of night; Pakistan delivers befitting response <i>(civilian areas, mosques, and residential neighbourhoods deliberately targeted)</i>
H2	Dawn	7 May 2025	Pakistan downs 5 Indian jets as retaliation for late-night strikes at 6 sites: officials <i>(DG ISPR says 31 people slain, 57 injured; political leadership condemn cowardly act)</i>
H3	Dawn	10 May 2025	Pakistan rattles India with firm response as patience runs out <i>(launches retaliatory strikes at military installations after three days of restraint; six martyred in Gujrat amid LoC shelling)</i>
H4	Dawn	13 May 2025	11 soldiers martyred, 78 wounded while defending Pakistan in Indian attack: ISPR <i>(40 civilians including 7 women and 15 children martyred in India's unprovoked and reprehensible dastardly attacks)</i>

Code	Source	Date	Headline
H5	Al Jazeera	7 May 2025	Pakistan vows retaliation after India launches air strikes (<i>at least 26 people reported killed overnight in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, according to Pakistani military</i>)
H6	Al Jazeera	10 May 2025	India and Pakistan agree ceasefire: What does it mean? (<i>More than 60 people reported killed since India launched missiles under 'Operation Sindoor', which it said targeted 'terrorist camps'</i>)
H7	Al Jazeera	10 May 2025	Explosions, violations reported after India and Pakistan agree ceasefire (<i>days of military escalation, deadly cross-border attacks, accusations and counter-accusations raised acute concerns about all-out war</i>)
H8	Al Jazeera	14 May 2025	Did Pakistan shoot down five Indian fighter jets? What we know (<i>four days after ceasefire, key differences between battlefield claims remain unresolved; both sides making competing assertions</i>)
H9	Al Jazeera	15 May 2025	India and Pakistan trade accusations of nuclear weapons mismanagement (<i>Modi says India will not be deterred by nuclear blackmail; Pakistan rejects statements as provocative and inflammatory</i>)
H10	Al Jazeera	29 May 2025	Pakistan pitches 'responsible' image as diplomatic war with India heats up (<i>ceasefire holds as both sides claim victory; analysts say neither side holds a clear upper hand</i>)

Analytical Procedure

Headlines are analyzed one by one using all the three elements of Fairclough's model. In the textual element, there is an analysis of vocabulary, evaluation, modality, and transitivity in the texts of headlines. In the discourse practices element, there is an analysis of institutional production, sources, audience, and intertextuality in each headline. Finally, in the social practices element, there is an analysis of the socio-political ideological context of headlines. After analyzing the headlines individually, the researcher will conduct a comparative synthesis in order to achieve the comparative objectives of the research. A one-by-one approach will enable a comprehensive analysis of all the items of the corpus. This will solve the problem that arises in thematic analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation

The following sections provide individual analysis of each headline, followed by a comparative synthesis. Quotations from headlines are placed in inverted commas and referenced by headline number throughout.

Headline H1: Constructing India as the Aggressor and Pakistan as the Legitimate Defender

Source: Dawn (7 May 2025)

Headline:

"India launches devious attacks in dead of night; Pakistan delivers befitting response (civilian areas, mosques, and residential neighbourhoods deliberately targeted)."

The most important choice of vocabulary in the headline is that of devious to describe India's military attacks. The meaning of devious in the English language does not connote military aggression, but implies immorality and deceitfulness. The use of the term to describe the attack makes India's military action immoral instead of strategic. This is because the use of devious brings into geopolitical discussions the idea of betrayal which applies to individual behavior in personal interactions. The addition of

“in dead of night” further reinforces the above construction since night attacks imply cowardice and dishonesty. This use of the semicolon- sperated sentence construction in this headline creates an ideological equilibrium. First, India is attributed the role of the criminal who executes cunning attacks. Second, Pakistan receives the role of a hero who responds to it in an appropriate manner. The term “befitting” is analytically significant because it does not denote just proportional or adequate, but appropriate action, which India's actions morally deserved; thus, Pakistan's response was justified. The mode is categorical all through: India strikes, and Pakistan strikes back. No qualifying, attributing or alternative reading is provided here. Transitivity analysis reveals that India is the grammatical agent of a harmful action process, while Pakistan is the agent of a beneficial response process. Such consistent attribution of agency results in an encoding of the perpetrator-defender storyline into the headline grammar.

The headline appeared in the print and online versions of Dawn on 7 May 2025 and was reproduced in the online version on 6 May 2026 in connection with the Dawn coverage of the event to mark its anniversary, evidenced by the URL dawn.com/news/1997431. The context of production involves ISPR briefings and official statements made within hours of the attacks. The target audience for the headline is the English-speaking readership of Pakistan in Dawn who are addressed in terms of their dual roles of being the object of attacks and fighting bravely against them. The relationship with the state/military discourse is clearly manifest interdiscursivity, as the phrase befitting response was frequently employed by the government at that time (Fairclough, 1992). In terms of social practices, this headline practices the positive self presentation and negative other presentation theory postulated by Van Dijk (1998) where India is cunning and cowardly and Pakistan is proper and heroic. This is a two-sided presentation that makes it easier for one to accept the state/military discourses as truths.

Headline H2: Constructing Military Superiority and Moral Legitimacy

Source: *Dawn* (7 May 2025)

Headline:

"Pakistan downs 5 Indian jets as retaliation for late-night strikes at 6 sites: officials [DG ISPR says 31 people slain, 57 injured; political leadership condemn cowardly act]."

In the primary headline Pakistan downs 5 Indian jets, Pakistan takes up the role of grammatical subject of the material action process. The verb down has been used precisely and is transitive in nature, making Pakistan a successful military actor who has neutralized the threat by successfully carrying out the action. As retaliation defines the action of Pakistan in a reactive way and not as one involving aggression. It is clearly mentioned that the military action taken by Pakistan is a justified one against Indian action. In addition to this, there are two ideological strategies in the sub-headline. First, the DG ISPR is used as the epistemic source behind the casualty statistics, as the military institution becomes the voice behind the headline itself. Second, the use of the word "cowardly" to describe how the political leadership views India's actions is not military but moral. The modality of the headline is certain: Pakistan Downs is asserted as a fact. In the sub-headline, it is the political leadership that describes the act as cowardly.

It is significant to observe the use of the word “slain” in DG ISPR where it says 31 people were slain. This word is the past participle of the word “slay,” which is loaded linguistically and religiously with the notion of unjustifiable murder. In comparison to the word killed, slain is more emotional. Production is dependent largely on ISPR as the main source. The casualty count, military claims, and depiction by India can be found in ISPR press releases. The readers are cast in the role of a national collective with both military pride and national mourning. Intertextually, the headline extends the perpetrator-defender narrative that is found in H1. The use of the ISPR for the military assertions as well as the morality judgment shows how Fairclough (1995) uses the concept of inscription of social relations of production in texts (Iqbal et al., 2026). The ISPR is not an autonomous source of journalism but a communications branch of the military institution. With the use of the ISPR's language as news reporting by Dawn, the military institutional authority can be incorporated in the discourse of the media, which makes it factual in its nature. This fulfills the role of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971).

Headline H5: Framing Retaliation and Humanitarian Consequences

Source: Al Jazeera

Date: 7 May 2025

Headline

"Pakistan vows retaliation after India launches air strikes [at least 26 people reported killed overnight in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, according to Pakistani military]"

The vocabulary of this headline represents an epistemic hedge to the extreme degree. Firstly, the structure of the phrase at least 26 people reported killed includes three different epistemic hedges: the use of the word at least indicates that the number might be even greater; the choice of the word people shows no commitment to any categorization; and the use of the word reported emphasizes that there is the difference between the source of the claim and the truth of the claim. The structure of the phrase according to Pakistani military explicitly highlights the source of the information.

The statement Pakistan vows retaliation portrays Pakistan's reaction to be that of will and determination as opposed to that of coercion. Vows implies deliberation and choice on behalf of Pakistan in its imminent military response. India launches air strikes places India in the grammatical role of the agent but uses a neutral term such as launches in describing military action. The entire modality is evidential in nature rather than being categorical. This headline appeared as breaking news on 7 May 2025 when the full extent of the conflict had yet to be realized. The conditions under which this headline was produced involved an absolute need for haste coupled with an absolute need for caution. Since it is based exclusively on information supplied by military sources within Pakistan, Al Jazeera has written a headline that provides crucial information while simultaneously keeping itself at arm's length from both sides of the conflict's narrative. The target audience is a world-wide English-speaking audience following a developing crisis, which needs a discourse that will provide information without any presupposition of vested interest in the outcome. Al Jazeera presents itself as an analytical authority that communicates claims rather than making decisions between them because of its evidential hedges. This is the balanced professional philosophy (Richardson, 2007; Saleem and Yasmin, 2024). But, as Van Dijk (1998) points out, balance is ideological in and of itself: portraying Pakistani military figures as claims that need to be attributed conveys more skepticism toward them than Dawn's categorical replication of the same data.

Headline H6: Framing Ceasefire Through Conflict Recontextualization

Source: Al Jazeera

Date: 10 May 2025

Headline

"India and Pakistan agree ceasefire: What does it mean? [More than 60 people reported killed since India launched missiles under 'Operation Sindoor', which it said targeted 'terrorist camps' in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir]"

This headline engages in a number of linguistic acts that are significant to analysis. The primary headline, "India and Pakistan agree ceasefire," employs a grammatically symmetrical structure that presents both nations as co-agents of a constructive cooperation. In stark contrast, Dawn's transitivity patterns constantly attribute heroic agency to Pakistan and criminal agency to India (Iqbal et al., 2026; Saleem et al., 2026). What does it mean? is the question. presents Al Jazeera as a source of analysis that encourages interpretation rather than imposing preconceived notions. The phrase "targeted terrorist camps" in the subheadline refers to India's description of its own operation within attributed reported remarks. This is a crucial intertextual move: Al Jazeera refuses to support the term "terrorist camps" as an impartial description of the locations hit by putting India's assertion within reported speech. The phrase's scare-quote effect serves the same distancing purpose as explicit quotation marks, indicating that this is India's self-characterization rather than Al Jazeera's analytical conclusion.

The publication of this headline on the day of the ceasefire implies that the end of the conflict was analyzed. The question 'What does it mean?' suggests the need for analysis of the situation and not for emotions. India's description of the operation is utilized but not its justification, the terrorists' camps. On the level of social practice, the headline poses a challenge to the hegemonic self-representation of India as a counter-terrorism agent that attacks only legitimate targets. By mentioning the terrorist camps categorisation of India's own statement (which it made), Al Jazeera makes room in the discourse for the other story from

Pakistan, i.e., that of the civilians being attacked, without necessarily backing either of them. This is what Zayani (2005) describes as the counter-hegemonic nature of Al Jazeera.

Headline H7: Framing the Fragility of Ceasefire Through Continued Violence

Source: Al Jazeera

Date: 10 May 2025

Headline

"Explosions, violations reported after India and Pakistan agree ceasefire [days of military escalation, deadly cross-border attacks, accusations and counter-accusations raised acute concerns about all-out war]"

The violation of ceasefire passive constructions places the verb in the passive voice without identifying the agent responsible for the violations of the ceasefire, thereby attributing the responsibility of ceasefire violations equally to both sides instead of just one side. This is an example of agent deletion (Fairclough, 1992) whereby the choice of grammar is such that it does not identify who committed the act. The word "violations" is technically correct because it uses legal terminology. The use of the phrase "accusations and counter-accusations" by the sub-headline creates a symmetrical discursive field regarding the dispute by not giving any of the two sides epistemic privilege. The use of the adjective "acute" to modify the concerns about the outbreak of total war raises the analytical concern without imputing blame to either side for the development of the situation into one that could easily escalate into full-blown war. The modality employed here is evidential.

The headline was posted on the night of 10 May 2025, shortly after the ceasefire announcement when violations were being reported by both sides simultaneously. The production environment dictated that Al Jazeera demonstrate the precariousness of the truce without assigning any blame on either side while the facts are not yet confirmed. The audience in this case is the global audience seeking an analytical judgment of whether the truce would last. In terms of intertextuality, the headline refers to the larger trend of symmetrical attribution of conflict claims made by both sides, seen in H5, H6, and H7. From the social practice perspective, the omission of the violating party in the news reports shows an ideological decision made by Al Jazeera that opts for journalistic precaution over coherence in the story. With such an omission, Al Jazeera does not contribute towards the development of rival narratives about who is breaching the ceasefire agreement between the two states; this was an important move because India and Pakistan at that time were each accusing the other of such a breach. The practice illustrates the ideology of objectivity defined by Fairclough (1992).

Comparative Synthesis

Together, the four headlines from Dawn and the six headlines from Al Jazeera portray two totally different ideological constructions of the same conflict. There are three fundamental ideological positions which constitute Dawn's corpus. Firstly, Pakistani casualties are sacrosanct; use of words like "martyred" implies that the death of civilians and military personnel in Pakistan has been sanctified in the context of Islam as righteous sacrifice and thereby, the action by India has been seen not only as a national but also as a religious offense. Secondly, Indian military action is criminal; use of words like *devious*, *cowardly*, *unprovoked*, *reprehensible* and *dastardly* imply that Indian strikes have been criminal in nature rather than being strategic.

The ideological basis for the Al Jazeera corpus is quite different. In the first place, everything is treated provisionally, with the regular use of *reported*, *according to*, *Pakistan said*, *India claims*, and *analysts say* serving to position everything as institutional claims which need to be checked out rather than accepted as factual (Khalid et al. 2026; Iqbal and Saleem, 2026). In the second place, neither side is privileged over the other; symmetrical constructions, such as *India and Pakistan trade accusations* and *both sides claim victory*, decline to treat the narratives from either state as more valid. Finally, the official narratives are open to challenge, with *scare quotes* used around *responsible* in H10, *interrogative modality* in H8, and *meta-commentary* in H6 about India's new normal narrative.

Power is exercised within the Dawn headlines through the inscription of social relations of production into texts as described by Fairclough (1995). The newspaper draws upon statements in press releases and statements of the government to inscribe military institutions' power into news language, thereby presenting state-supported narratives as objective news reports. In addition, power is also exercised in the naturalisation (Gramsci, 1971) of particular ideological positions as common sense. By the time the reader is finished reading all four headlines in Dawn, the Pakistani state-military narrative - the martyrs, the cowardly India, and heroic Pakistan will have been completely naturalised.

Power in Al Jazeera is mediated by the ideological power of analytical distance. In the way that Al Jazeera keeps a clear distinction between its voice and the claims being made by institutions, it situates itself above the claims being analyzed as an authority on the matter. As noted by Van Dijk (1998), however, the semblance of balance itself is an ideological one that serves particular institutional interests. While the symmetry in the claims of India and Pakistan on Al Jazeera might be a fair portrayal of evidence, it runs the risk of false equivalency between the original attack and the countermeasures. Language used by Dawn contributes to shaping perceptions through a combination of religious lexicon, evaluative adjectives, and modal categories. The readers come across "martyred" civilians, cunning India, patient Pakistan, and valorous army, respectively. Such a cumulative construction leads to the formation of what is referred to by Anderson (1983) as imagined national community.

The language used by Al Jazeera influences the perception of the reader through the accumulation of epistemic hedges, attributed statements, interrogative modals, and analysis frames which make the reader an analyst of the different arguments provided. The reader who goes through the six headlines provided by Al Jazeera comes across temporary death claims, mutual accusations of ceasefire violations, unanswered questions on military results, increasing nuclear threats on both sides, and Pakistan trying to manage its image while denying victory to either side.

Conclusion

The results have been established by conducting both individual and comparative analysis of ten confirmed headlines, which show that Dawn and Al Jazeera create a completely distinct ideological representation of the military clash between Pakistan and India in May 2025. In the conclusion of the analysis, it was evident that the contrast in the choice of vocabulary for representing people who died either "martyred" or "people reported killed" is not stylistic, but ideological. By using "martyred," Dawn gives its readers an understanding of the event as an act of sacrificial death in accordance with Islam and, thus, sanctifies the victims, demonizes the aggressor, and makes the retaliation an absolute duty. In all three dimensions of the Fairclough model, Dawn's headlines create an ideologically closed moral universe where India is sly, cowardly, and criminal, while Pakistan is patient, heroic, and eventually wins. The headlines in Al Jazeera are analytically open because all statements are open to question, and no victory goes uncontested, nor does any narrative offered by officials pass uncriticized. This is not because of the decision-making process of each news agency but because of their specific structural position.

Three key ideological distinctions are made. First, the use of violence: Dawn frames Pakistan's military actions as divinely inspired, ethically sound, and legitimate, whereas India's is framed as a crime and thus illegitimate. Al Jazeera uses symmetrical attribution of the two countries' actions and will not take sides on whether or not the actions are legitimate. Second, the framing of victims: Dawn frames the deaths of the Pakistani people as sacred sacrifices which demand action from the rest of the nation for their sakes; Al Jazeera frames the deaths as humanitarian facts that must be independently verified. Third, the ideology of knowledge: Dawn treats the narrative of Pakistan's state and military as fact; Al Jazeera treats all claims as institutional assertions.

This analysis clearly illustrates the core theory of Fairclough that discourse constructs rather than just mirror power relations. In Dawn headlines, Pakistan's state/military power is reproduced by rendering its version of events an objective reality through various lexical and grammatical devices as well as sourcing that are ideologically-loaded but cannot be seen to be such because they have been so thoroughly internalized in the discourse-making practice. Discursive power of Al Jazeera is exercised through its institutional power of analytical distance as the only credible analytic voice among many states' voices in the arena. Further research can be conducted by extending the scope of the corpus to include Urdu newspapers in Pakistan, since their ideologies may vary widely from the international Dawn newspaper. It will be instructive to conduct a longitudinal study of how the martyr/killed differentiation develops throughout the crisis news and the anniversary news coverage. The research should also consider the ideology of silence, that is, finding out who is not being represented in these articles – for example, the Kashmiris, who are victims of both countries. A comparative three-way analysis of the media coverage of the Indian and international media along with the Pakistani media should be done to have a better understanding of the ideological background of South Asian conflict communication.

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