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**Constructing Conflict through Words: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Lexical Framing and Agency in Global Media Coverage of the 2025 India–Pakistan Air Clash**

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**Abstract**

*This study critically analyzes how the ten big media houses discursively produced India-Pakistan air clash in 2025 using the tools of language. This study is interested in the text level in Fairclough's (1992, 1995) Three-Dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model. Three aspects of language are analysed: the lexical structuring of conflict intensity and legitimacy; metaphoric or rhetorical structuring of the conflict; syntactic features such as passivisation, modals and hedging. The 10 news articles selected for the week were from CNN, Al Jazeera, Reuters, The New York Times, TRT Global, The Washington Post, The Guardian, Bloomberg, Asia Times and Middle East Eye. The analysis of data was carried out using a self-designed analytical framework based on the works of Fairclough (1995), Charteris-Black (2004), van Dijk (1998), and van Leeuwen (2008) which focused on the textual level. The analysis shows that Pakistan military used words like 'act of war,' 'retaliation,' and 'battlefield achievement' in all the sources to dramatize the war and build the agency of Pakistan military as powerful and technologically sound. The conflict was brought into the spotlight of a symbolic East–West ideological struggle through a series of dramatic metaphors, like 'ticking flashpoint,' 'dogfight,' and 'arms race. The passive voice was used to depict military operations in Pakistan, whereas the Indian agency was camouflaged using passive voice and institutional silence. Hedging and modality were used as tools that reflect a superficial neutrality of journalists and allowed to subtly influence perceptions of legitimacy and responsibility. The findings validate Fairclough's claim that there is no neutral language in the media, which is ideologically and politically formed and determined by power.*

**Keywords:** *India–Pakistan conflict, Critical Discourse Analysis, international media, lexical choices, metaphors, modality, passive voice, Fairclough's model, war reporting, geopolitical framing*

**1. Introduction**

Media don't just report on conflict, they create conflict. During wartime, there is a definition of aggressor and defender, of aggressor and sufferer, which is determined by language. A clash of air forces between India and Pakistan in 2025 came into the limelight of the international media after the two countries claimed an 'Indian' Rafale was shot down and a 'Pakistani' J-10C fighter had been shot down. The words used to portray this event were not just an accurate description of reality; they were a powerful tool that helped to define international public opinion on legitimacy, power, and blame, given the major geopolitical implications of the conflict and the fact that both countries are also nuclear.

Using the textual level of Fairclough's (1992, 1995) Three-Dimensional CDA model, this study analyzes the ten influential news outlets in terms of their coverage of the air clash. Fairclough (1995) states that media language is not neutral, rather it is influenced by institutional power and is always in support of or against dominant ideologies. This is particularly the case when reporting conflict, as words like 'retaliation' and 'terrorist infrastructure' do not simply describe things, but justify certain political and military stances (Richardson, 2017). Audiences can work through events as emotionally and symbolically charged as factual reporting through the use of metaphors like 'ticking flashpoint' and 'nuclear flashpoint' (Charteris-Black, 2004). The media can use syntactic devices like passivization and hedging to obscure and/or suggest agency, while presenting them with opportunities to either align or diverge from contentious or sensitive claims (Fowler, 2013; van Dijk, 1998).

Previous research has done extensive analysis on the Indian and Pakistani national media's framing of bilateral conflict focusing on the Pulwama attack in 2019 and the air strikes at Balakot in 2019 (Din & Qadri, 2021; Wasim et al., 2023a; Safi et al., 2020). Yet, research on the role of international (non-partisan, non-South Asian) media about such conflicts is scant. Most of the previous studies also focus on individual linguistic aspects (e.g., headlines, vocabulary), neglecting the combined analysis of lexical, metaphorical and syntactic features. This study is filling in these gaps. It works on a rich multi-source corpus of international news, employing a detailed framework for textual level analysis which combines all three dimensions of language. In political and media discourse analysis, recent research has focused on the role of language and framing in the building of an ideological discourse in conflicts. Ashraf et al. (2025) illustrated how the discourse of J.D. Vance, Donald Trump, and Volodymyr Zelenskyy strategically frames power relations, dependency, and moral legitimacy in the Ukraine conflict; Ashraf et al. (2024) pointed to how political rhetoric creates narratives of peace, victory, and security in wartime discourse. Likewise, Maqsood, Shahid and Khan (2026) have identified the role of fake news, AI-generated content and ideology framing by the Indian television media in the Indo-Pak escalation of 2025 to strengthen Indian nationalism, militarism and enemy-othering. The present research, *Constructing Conflict through Words: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Lexical Framing and Agency in Global Media Coverage of the 2025 India-Pakistan Air Clash*, builds upon this research by examining the global media coverage of the 2025 India-Pakistan Air clash through a critical discourse analysis of lexical choices and agency attribution in order to interpret the nature of conflict, legitimacy, and responsibility.

The study also fills a gap in the literature regarding a theme. The air clash of 2025 was not only a battle of the air and a battle between Chinese and Western-made military technology, it also signalled a much wider East-West geopolitical competition. This dimension is reflected in media coverage of the conflict in South Asia as an important transformation in the way that the conflict is now narrated in the global sphere, no longer as a regional conflict, but as a "performance" of world-level ideological and technological combat. This change has deep implications for the perception of legitimacy, credibility of the military and national identity of international audiences.

The paper is organised as follows. It first presents the problem statement, the significance and the research questions, followed by a review of the literature in five thematic areas. The methodology section explains the method used in collecting the data, analytical framework and the procedure for analyzing the data. Finally, ten tables of CDAs for each source are analysed separately, followed by a cross-cutting synthesis. The discussion addresses all the research questions and links the results with the theory and literature. The end provides a summary of the findings and limitations of the study.

## 2. Problem Statement

In today's politically charged and media-saturated world, foreign news media can be a pivotal means of public perception of armed conflicts. The 2025 India-Pakistan air battle, which involved the downing of an aircraft and respective claims of national retaliation, was not just a military operation, but also a media spectacle that was created by 'selective language'. While there has been a considerable amount of research on war discourse and critical media studies, the focused examination of how global news outlets represent South Asian military conflicts, by way of a coordinated use of lexical choices, metaphorical imagery and syntactic strategies that assign or obscure agency, is still relatively under-researched. This is especially significant in the context of the symbolic qualities of sophisticated weaponry, national identity and the new alignments of power between East and West in these stories. If we do not examine the media's linguistic structures and mechanisms for the legitimate, dramatizing and ideological validation of violence, we will have only partial and uncritical knowledge of the discourse on regional wars in the world.

## 3. Research Questions

This study is guided by three research questions:

1. How do international media outlets use specific lexical items, evaluative adjectives, military jargon, and emotive nouns to construct the intensity and legitimacy of the 2025 India–Pakistan air conflict?
2. What types of metaphors and rhetorical imagery are employed in international media reports to frame the air combat, and how do these metaphors contribute to the dramatization or de-escalation of the conflict narrative?
3. How do syntactic structures, passivization, modality, and hedging—function in international media texts to obscure or assign agency and responsibility in the depiction of air combat events?

## 4. Theoretical Framework

This study follows the footprints of Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis of Fairclough (1992, 1995, 2013). This model looks at text level (words, grammar and structure), discursive practice (lang. production and circulation) and social practice (texts and other ideology, power and social context). The present study concentrates on the textual level as it is consistent with the nature of the data: ten published news articles which can be viewed in full as completed media texts.

Media texts are not objective (Fairclough 2001) as they have content which has been influenced by power relations and ideology. Words like 'act of war', 'surgical strikes' and 'terrorist camp' in a news report not only create meaning about the events, they also produce them. This function is highly pertinent in the context of conflict reporting, as language can either de-escalate or escalate conflict; identify moral blame and establish understandings between parties. This argument is directly relevant for the 2025 coverage as words like 'retaliation' and 'battlefield achievement' shaped audience's perceptions about who was right, who was strong, and what type of battle was being waged.

There are three more theoretical resources that supplement Fairclough's work. Charteris-Black (2004) offers a methodical approach to analysing metaphors, demonstrating that metaphors in the media deliver symbolic and ideological messages in addition to literal ones, and that 'nuclear flashpoint' is not just literal, but also emotionally and politically charged. The analytical dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' in the ideological discourse, which is directly relevant to the binary opposition between India versus Pakistan, East versus West, aggressor versus defender in

the corpus, is a contribution by Van Dijk (1998). One way of analyzing the ideological implications of grammar in the expression of power in media texts, as Van Leeuwen (2008) proposes.

**Table 1:** Textual-Level Analytical Framework for CDA Analysis

Component	Description	Purpose in the Study
Lexical Choices	Examining strong, emotional, or military-related words (e.g., barrage, dogfight, retaliate, act of war).	To understand how word choice constructs conflict intensity or supports one side.
Metaphors	Identifying figurative language used to describe war (e.g., fog of war, ticking flashpoint, crossroads).	To explore how metaphor gives symbolic or emotional meaning to events.
Modality and Hedging	Analyzing use of modal verbs and cautious language (e.g., may have, reportedly, not yet confirmed).	To detect how media shows certainty or uncertainty; reflects neutrality or bias.
Voice and Agency	Studying active vs. passive constructions (e.g., 'Pakistan claims it shot down jets' vs. 'Jets were shot down').	To see which actor is given control or blame, and how agency is assigned or hidden.

Note. Framework synthesised from Fairclough (1995), Charteris-Black (2004), van Dijk (1998), and van Leeuwen (2008).

## 5. Literature Review

### 5.1 National Media Framing of Indo-Pakistan Conflicts

Previous CDA studies on the discourse of conflict in South Asia are mainly centered on the national media. During the Pulwama crisis, Wasim, Ahmed and Joiya (2023b) analysed the newspaper headlines in India using Fairclough's model and found that certain terms like 'terrorist', 'attack' and 'surgical strike' made the crisis 'one sided' and 'unambiguous'. Likewise, Badshah et al (2023) studied the Pakistani and Indian newspapers' editorials using van Dijk's Ideological Square to examine the conflict of ideologies. Such research is good, but constrained to national media. They do not delve into how non-South Asian international services address such events or what effect technological framing might have or how they build stories across platforms. This analytical and geographical gap is addressed in the current study which examines ten outlets in the world.

Barclay and Jan (2025) analyzed hypercoverage of the Pulwama attack in Indian media while Jan and Barclay (2023) scrutinized 686 headlines from the Indian media in a span of 10 days in February 2019. Both of these studies validated the idea that the 2019 crisis resulted in strong, ideologically polarized reporting and both focus on reporting about a single past crisis. The 2025 air clash is not the same and has a more global connection with the Chinese military technology, direct jet combat and transnational media. The time lag resulting from previous research is compensated by this.

### 5.2 Political Discourse and War Reporting

There are several studies that are not on the hard news that is available to ordinary readers but rather focus on elite discourse, namely editorials and political speeches. Umer et al. (n.d.) analyzed print media editorials of Pakistan and India to investigate the nuclear discourse in these newspapers. Safi et al. (2020) and Yasmin (2024) examined speeches to illustrate the linguistic justification of war in the speeches of leaders. Both Safi et al. (2020) and Yasmin (2024) discussed about speeches and how to linguistically justify wars in the speeches of leaders. To find ideological differences between two speeches delivered by Imran Khan and Narendra Modi at the UNGA, Farhan, Shahbaz and Khan (2021) compared the speeches. These works are genre-

restricted, in that they bring light to the ways in which the language of the elite is used to create a political legitimacy. The major contribution of the present study is in analyzing hard news correspondent perspective on front pages of international newspapers as they directly influence the public perception of mass media.

### **5.3 Lexical and Ideological Representation in Headlines**

Bukhari and Jarrar (2018) and Wasim, Ahmed and Habib (2023a) showed that using nationalistic language and the presence of evaluative words (which happen to be strong) in Indian and Pakistani headlines, respectively, plays an important role in creating an ideological positioning. While these studies shed light on the role of lexical items in the nationalistic discourse, they mainly overlook issues concerning grammar, syntactic voice and modality. The present study constitutes a methodological contribution by investigating the differences between passive and active voice, the differences between modality and hedging as analytical categories in order to gain a better understanding of the ways agency and responsibility are attributed or deconstructed when reporting on war.

### **5.4 Global and Western Media Perspectives**

The issues of media framing and international media in South Asian conflicts have been given scant research attention. Note that Qureshi et al. (2024) and Safi and Ozad (n.d.) concentrated on the newspapers of Pakistan and India, respectively, rather than on global newspapers. However, Mohi-ud-Din, Rasul, and Munir (2021) looked at the editorials printed in newspapers from the USA but didn't focus on 2025's air conflict instead they covered the general issues of terrorism and the South Asian region. In the present study, this perspective gap is filled by systematically studying the portrayal of India and Pakistan by global outlets like CNN, Reuters, Bloomberg, Al Jazeera and others, their framing, their agency and their use of technical terms like 'Rafale' or 'Chinese-made J-10C' as indicators of geopolitical alignments.

### **5.5 Empirical Gaps and Discourse of Technology**

Feyyaz and Bari (2024) provided a theoretically rich account of the impact of double standards and colonialism on the South Asian terrorism discourse in the international discourse, but failed to include an analysis of real news reports. They were hindered by this empirical gap. Although Mahmood et al. (2025) studied the India–Pakistan water dispute framing in the global press through comparative methods, they did not look into the military or technological aspect of the India–Pakistan 2025 conflict. It was not an in-depth study of the use of military jargon or technological comparisons by international journalists or the framing of the war with words like 'nuclear flashpoint' and 'air supremacy' by Ali (2024) and Witt (2023). The present study aims to fill the gap with the following two aspects. Firstly, the study uses authentic texts from international news for CDA, and secondly, narrows the focus of the study in order to address the empirical gap by examining the discursive category of military technology.

## **6. Methodology**

### **6.1 Research Design**

The approach used in this study was a qualitative-interpretive research and the analytical method used was the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA was chosen because it provides insights into the ways in which media texts are not neutral, but constructed through the ideology and power of the media. The study only observes the textual level of Fairclough's three dimensional model as the data are only news texts published. This limitation is similar to the methodological choices made by the other studies like Yasmin (2024), Wasim et al. (2023a), Mohi-ud-Din et al. (2021).

## 6.2 Data Collection and Corpus

The corpus included ten news articles from international newspapers, including five from news agencies, which were published during the first five days following the claim of Pakistan's first successful drone-downing of Indian fighter jets, between 6th May and 10th May, 2025. CNN, Al Jazeera, Reuters, The New York Times, TRT Global, The Washington Post, The Guardian, Bloomberg, Asia Times and Middle East Eye were the sources for the articles retrieved. The purpose of this sampling was to find sources that fall within three specific criteria: (a) they were relevant to the air clash, military action and diplomatic reaction; (b) they represented international readers in various geographical and ideological perspectives; (c) there was sufficient lexical description of military action, drone and air-to-air combat, and references to Chinese or Western defence technology. In qualitative CDA this sampling method is analogous to that suggested by Bryman (2016) to choose information-rich cases.

## 6.3 Analytical Framework

A self-designed textual-level framework was created and synthesized from the framework of Fairclough (1995) and extended from Machin and Mayr (2023) to analyse the data. The framework covers lexical choices, including the presence of emotive, evaluative and military register language; metaphors and figurative language, which have symbolic and ideological interpretations (Charteris-Black, 2004); modality and hedging, examining how 'epistemic positioning' is formed using modal verbs and cautious attributions (Fairclough, 2001; van Dijk, 1998); and voice and agency, in which the analysis of the active versus passive voice construction reveals the grammatical assignment or obscuration of the responsibility and power of the subject (van Leeuwen, 2008). The four categories are shown in Table 1.

## 6.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The articles were read several times to be familiar with them in an analytical way. A coding sheet was used to mark up and classify the patterns of language in the four analytical dimensions. The coding process was based on the suggested 6-step thematic CDA coding framework for text-based media analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006). All the articles were analysed separately and then patterns were looked for across the articles to identify systemic discursive strategies. This method is similar to those employed recently in the analysis of war discourse by Yasmin (2024) in her study of war legitimization in civil-military discourse in South Asia, Mohi-ud-Din et al. (2021) in their study of US media bias through the use of the passive voice and metaphor tracking, and Witt (2023) in her analyses of state alignments and media discourse in Western contexts.

## 6.5 Ethical Considerations

This research study did not have any human participants. The texts that were analysed were all publically available. The study was carried out in accordance with the principles of the academic integrity and ethical principles of non-invasive textual study (British Educational Research Association [BERA] 2019).

## 7. Data Analysis

Below are the text level CDAs for the ten international media articles. The four category system (Table 1) is used to analyse each article. A source-specific analysis of the patterns of lexical framing, metaphorical dramatization, and syntactic agency assignment can then be followed by a cross-cutting synthesis (Section 7.11) that will identify patterns of lexical framing, metaphorical dramatization and syntactic agency assignment that are present throughout the entire corpus.

7.1 CNN (May 6, 2025)

Table 2: Textual-Level CDA Analysis of CNN Article (May 6, 2025)

Component	Text Examples	Analysis
Lexical Choices	"deep strikes," "massacre," "act of war," "retaliation," "escalation," "chaotic scenes," "terrorist infrastructure," "tit-for-tat hostilities," "focused, measured and non-escalatory"	Militarized and evaluative vocabulary dramatizes the conflict, positioning it as a severe and growing confrontation. The terms frame both states as locked in high-stakes power maneuvers.
Metaphors	"Massacre fallout," "Operation Sindoor," "ticking flashpoint," "on the brink of conflict," "chaotic scenes," "historical flashpoint"	These metaphors transform the conflict into a symbolic and emotional event. 'Operation Sindoor' references Hindu tradition, embedding cultural-national identity into a military act.
Modality & Hedging	"CNN cannot independently verify," "reportedly," "not immediately clear," "claims," "said"	Modal verbs and hedging phrases indicate epistemic distancing, reflecting journalistic caution and avoiding full endorsement of either side's narrative.
Voice and Agency	Passive: "An aircraft had crashed," "shells hit houses," "at least eight people had been killed"; Active: "Pakistan claimed it had shot down..."	Agency is often obscured through passive voice, which depersonalizes acts of violence. Active voice is used for Pakistani claims, emphasizing Pakistani agency.

Note. Text examples drawn directly from the CNN article published May 6, 2025.

The air clash is presented as a serious and increasing conflict by CNN using militaristic and evaluative language. Words like 'act of war,' 'retaliation,' and 'massacre' give the 'legitimacy' of the emotions and of moral correctness to the actions of both states, thus making the fight seem harsh and legitimate. The conflict is symbolic and cultural; the use of metaphors such as 'ticking flashpoint' and 'Operation Sindoor' (Hindu tradition) does just that. The use of passive voice ('an aircraft had crashed', 'shells hit houses') and hedging ('reportedly', 'claims') gives rise to ambiguity, but also gives the impression of neutrality. This helps the outlet to report extreme events without naming a direct cause. Active attributions of Pakistani claims ('Pakistan claimed it had shot down...') help to create Pakistan as the more active player in the discourse.

7.2 Al Jazeera (May 8, 2025)

Table 3: Textual-Level CDA Analysis of Al Jazeera Article (May 8, 2025)

Component	Text Examples	Analysis
Lexical Choices	"blackout," "escalate tensions," "barrage," "chaotic," "endangering civilian safety," "strategic restraint," "naked aggression"	Militarized and evaluative vocabulary dramatizes the conflict. Pakistan is depicted as exercising restraint; India is framed as the aggressor, constructing a clear power asymmetry.
Metaphors	"terrifying uncertainty," "escalation on the ground," "at a crossroads," "naked aggression"	'At a crossroads' implies a pivotal historical moment. 'Naked aggression' conveys unprovoked hostility, heightening the perceived gravity and immediacy of the situation.
Modality & Hedging	"reportedly," "allegedly," "claims," "unconfirmed"	Hedging phrases indicate epistemic distancing. The outlet maintains objectivity while acknowledging uncertainty inherent in rapidly evolving conflict situations.
Voice and Agency	Passive: "air strikes have reportedly hit," "Rafale shot down," "electricity blackout... was lifted"; Active: "Pakistan downed 25 Indian drones," "Pakistani military has accused India"	Passive voice obscures agency and depersonalizes violence. Active voice in Pakistani claims positions Pakistan as responsive rather than provocative, influencing perceptions of culpability.

Note. Text examples drawn directly from the Al Jazeera article published May 8, 2025.

Al Jazeera's political rhetoric is emotionally charged with words such as 'barrage,' 'chaotic' and 'naked aggression,' effectively increasing the level of the conflict and giving Pakistan a far more measured and calmer voice than India in a political discussion. The lexical contrast establishes a binary moral structure. Language like 'at a crossroads' and 'terrifying uncertainty' evoke the metaphor of crisis which serves to carry the meaning of the conflict beyond the military exchange to include the psychological and political implications. Hedging markers (reportedly, allegedly) and passive constructions (air strikes reportedly hit), although maintaining a journalistic coldness at the surface, allow Pakistan to maintain clear and visible agency (Pakistan downed 25 Indian drones). This grammatical imbalance places Pakistan in the active and defensive posture while India seems to be in a vague or non-committal position.

7.3 Reuters

Table 4: Textual-Level CDA Analysis of Reuters Article

Component	Text Examples	Analysis
Lexical Choices	"Shot down," "top Chinese-made," "air-to-air missiles," "successful strikes," "advanced weapons," "scrutinized," "generation 4.5," "leading edge"	Vocabulary highlights technological competition. Phrases like 'top Chinese-made' and 'generation 4.5' emphasize military superiority. 'Scrutinized' and 'leading edge' elevate the event into a benchmark for global air combat capability.
Metaphors	"Milestone," "closely eyeing," "nuclear flashpoint," "air warfare communities," "ground truth"	'Milestone' portrays the event as historically significant; 'nuclear flashpoint' dramatizes the context. 'Ground truth' metaphorically frames warfare as a data-driven contest beyond physical combat.
Modality & Hedging	"High confidence," "too early to draw firm conclusions," "not possible to judge anything," "we know so little"	Hedging signals epistemic caution and protects the report from asserting unverified claims. Modality introduces uncertainty while lending weight to official voices, particularly U.S. sources.
Voice and Agency	Active: "Pakistan used Chinese-made J-10," "Pakistan says it downed five"; Passive: "India has not acknowledged," "Rafale was shot down"	Active voice attributes clear agency to Pakistan's military. India's silence is presented passively, creating asymmetry. The U.S. and Reuters function as external validators lending international weight to Pakistani claims.

Note. Text examples drawn directly from the Reuters article on the 2025 air clash.

How to battle each other in the airspace is not the main thing being discussed by Reuters. The use of specialized terms such as 'top Chinese-made,' 'generation 4.5,' 'leading edge' make the event a standard for the world's air combat capabilities, especially for China and Western air combat systems. Metaphors like 'milestone', 'nuclear flashpoint' and 'ground truth' frame the event as historically and strategically significant, implying that the entire world is observing the competition of these defence systems, their performance. This helps to frame the conflict as less than a two-sided military clash and more of a proxy war. Syntactically, it is Active voice with Pakistan receiving agency ('Pakistan used Chinese-made J-10') and Passive voice with India not acknowledging ('India has not responded'). this is done to create a sense of asymmetry. The phrases used for hedging ('too early to draw firm conclusions' etc.) signal epistemic caution, and the U.S. sources serve to validate the Pakistani claims as external validators, giving them implicit credibility.

7.4 The New York Times

Table 5: Textual-Level CDA Analysis of The New York Times Article

Component	Text Examples	Analysis
Lexical Choices	"went down," "boil over," "retaliation," "terrorist attack," "tensions," "downed by missiles," "air-to-air," "surface-to-air," "twin-engine"	The article uses neutral and fact-based lexical choices but incorporates militarized vocabulary like 'retaliation' and 'terrorist attack,' framing the conflict within security and warfare narratives.
Metaphors	"boil over" (for rising tensions); "forward edge of the spear" (cited from Foreign Policy)	Metaphors are restrained but effective in implying escalation and aggressive posturing. 'Boil over' emotionally charges the political context without overt dramatization.
Modality & Hedging	"appears to," "could have been," "likely," "not yet clear," "unable to independently verify," "claims"	Strong hedging and modal verbs signal epistemic caution. The article avoids certainties, underscoring journalistic responsibility and distancing itself from unverified narratives.
Voice and Agency	Passive: "Indian aircraft went down," "could have been downed," "debris identified"; Active: "Pakistan...claims it shot down five planes"	Passive constructions blur agency and responsibility. Active voice used for Pakistani claims subtly amplifies Pakistani assertions while diminishing India's discursive agency.

Note. Text examples drawn directly from The New York Times article on the 2025 air clash.

The New York Times interprets most regulated and technical. There are military register words ('twin-engine,' 'air-to-air,' 'surface-to-air') and words coded to conflict ('retaliation,' 'terrorist attack') that establish and shape a security narrative of events. Metaphors are kept in check: the phrase 'boil over' suggests that things are getting worse, but it does not sensationalize it. Passively formed clauses (e.g. 'aircraft went down,' 'could have been downed') imply that the responsibility and agency have been blurred, and Pakistani actions are often reported in the active voice ('Pakistan claims it shot down'). This grammatical structure strengthens statements made by the Pakistanis, while weakening the discursive power of the Indians. Epistemic hedging ('likely,' 'could have been,' 'not yet clear') allows journalists to remain neutral in presenting the information and helps guard them against committing to unverified claims. When combined with the other one, the NYT avoids any kind of bias, but builds the perception of legitimacy, responsibility, and agency in the process through cumulative grammatical and lexical structure.

7.5 TRT Global

Table 6: Textual-Level CDA Analysis of TRT Global Article

Component	Text Examples	Analysis
Lexical Choices	"shot down," "sophisticated," "overnight clashes," "missile strikes," "cross-border exchanges," "suffer the consequences," "nation of courageous people"	The vocabulary constructs a dramatic confrontational narrative. 'Suffer the consequences' projects military dominance; 'nation of courageous people' invokes patriotic valor and reinforces a heroic image of Pakistan.
Metaphors	"Reply from our side," "planes of our attackers and enemies," "fight until the last drop of their blood," "new stakes," "volatile frontier"	These metaphors frame the conflict as a moral and existential battle. 'Until the last drop of their blood' dramatizes sacrifice. 'Volatile frontier' suggests a fragile, tension-laden situation.
Modality & Hedging	"allegedly," "independent experts cautioned," "may also have been," "needs investigation," "report cited three officials," "has not responded," "swiftly blamed"	While Pakistani claims are actively reported, caveats like 'needs investigation' and 'allegedly' distance the outlet from fully endorsing unverified claims, reflecting a cautious stance.
Voice and Agency	Active: "Pakistan shot down," "Sharif said," "they destroyed," "India exercised its right"; Passive: "Images posted online showed," "debris bearing French labels"	Pakistan is foregrounded as the active agent through repeated subject-verb structures, emphasizing military effectiveness. Indian actions are framed through passive constructions, reducing agency and signaling a reactive posture.

Note. Text examples drawn directly from the TRT Global article on the 2025 air clash.

TRT Global presents the conflict in a manner that is morally just and highly emotional, and Pakistan's military triumph. The use of words such as 'shot down' and 'missile strikes' denotes the military supremacy, whereas 'nation of courageous people' gives a heroic and patriotic image about Pakistan. This is an emotional lexical register which differentiates TRT from Reuters and Bloomberg which are technically orientated. Metaphors like 'fight till the last drop of their blood' and 'volatile frontier' allow one to interpret what the Pakistanis are doing as a good fight for a good cause, not as an act of military aggression. In terms of syntax, Pakistan always plays an active role as the grammatical subject ('Pakistan shot down'), thereby establishing the military's strength and legitimacy. In contrast, India gets its voice reduced through passive constructions. The hedging language, in which the words 'allegedly' and 'needs investigation' are used, keeps the news at a safe distance, but doesn't take away the pro-Pakistani emotional tone.

7.6 The Washington Post

Table 7: Textual-Level CDA Analysis of The Washington Post Article

Component	Text Examples	Analysis
Lexical Choices	"spiked tensions," "act of war," "shot down," "attack aircraft," "retaliation," "massacre," "aerial skirmish," "missile strikes," "information warfare," "precision attacks"	Vocabulary dramatizes escalation while projecting strategic precision. 'Spiked tensions' and 'act of war' highlight crisis severity; 'precision strikes' adds a tone of calculated military professionalism, particularly in India's portrayal.
Metaphors	"clash," "aerial skirmish," "dogfight," "face-off," "missile barrage," "flooded with disinformation," "information warfare," "test of Chinese tech"	'Test of Chinese tech' frames the battle as a performance evaluation of weapon systems. 'Information warfare' metaphorically shifts the battleground into the media and perception sphere, underscoring narrative control as part of modern conflict.
Modality & Hedging	"Claims...have differed," "appears to have," "not possible to judge," "suggesting," "raising the likelihood," "unclear whether," "plausible," "if accurate," "possibly"	Consistent hedging reflects epistemic distancing and acknowledges verification difficulties in a conflict complicated by propaganda and lack of direct evidence.
Voice and Agency	Active: "Pakistan says it shot down," "Sharif repeated the claim," "India sent multiple drones"; Passive: "claims have differed," "debris from three has been found," "missiles were fired"	Active voice reinforces Pakistan and India as military actors. Passive voice obscures agency in moments of ambiguity, reflecting media efforts to remain objective amid conflicting narratives.

Note. Text examples drawn directly from The Washington Post article on the 2025 air clash.

The Washington Post depicts the battle as a military event and as a symbolic event to the world. Lexical structure of the words used creates an impression of India's actions being sophisticated and that of Pakistan being assertive with the military jargon used ('act of war,' 'missile strikes') and strategic precision ('precision attacks,' 'focused and measured'). A trope of 'test of Chinese tech' is explicitly providing the meaning of the conflict on the global arena of military technology performance. The implications of the term 'information warfare' is that the war continues to be fought in the media and perception domain. The agency of the active-voice Pakistan says it shot down is balanced by passive construction for contested claims, missiles were fired, revealing a complicated pattern of partial neutrality. It is important to maintain epistemic distance, which is achieved by consistent hedging ('possibly', 'unclear whether' and 'if accurate'). The use of certain military equipment terms such as 'J-10C,' 'Rafale,' 'Israeli drones' serves to underscore its technical aspects and to underscore its international nature.

7.7 The Guardian

Table 8: Textual-Level CDA Analysis of The Guardian Article

Component	Text Examples	Analysis
Lexical Choices	"drone strikes," "explosions," "missile strikes," "retaliate," "act of war," "fiery projectiles," "barrage," "blackout," "terrifying," "tit-for-tat," "grossly exaggerated," "information warfare"	Militarized and emotionally charged vocabulary creates a vivid and tense narrative. Lexical choices like 'barrage' and 'blackout' heighten the perception of chaos, while 'act of war' and 'retaliate' suggest state-level strategic responses.
Metaphors	"Tit-for-tat allegations," "fiery objects launching," "it looked like fireworks," "the barrage was so intense," "truth is the first casualty"	'Fireworks' frames violence in strangely aesthetic terms; 'truth is the first casualty' criticizes the disinformation war. 'Tit-for-tat' suggests an entrenched cycle of blame without deeper resolution.
Modality & Hedging	"Pakistan has been accused," "India claimed," "witnesses said," "allegedly," "probably drones," "may have been," "unconfirmed reports"	Frequent hedging and attribution create space for ambiguity, reflecting epistemic instability of wartime reporting where narratives are contested and truth is difficult to verify.
Voice and Agency	India: "India accused," "India claimed," "Indian military alleged"; Pakistan: "Pakistan denied," "Pakistani army said"; Passive: "Explosions were heard," "images were shared," "people were injured"	Active voice is more frequently attributed to Indian authorities, giving India more discursive dominance. Passive constructions remove direct agency around casualties and destruction, softening impact and diffusing blame.

Note. Text examples drawn directly from The Guardian article on the 2025 air clash.

Militaristic language is used alongside emotive language to make an impact and to create a vivid and emotional impression of the conflict in The Guardian. Words like 'drone strikes,' 'barrage,' 'blackout,' and 'terrifying' further add to the feeling of civilians being in danger and social disorder. Importantly, The Guardian adds the reflexive lens of 'information warfare' and 'truth is the first casualty' recognizing that the media narrative itself is a battle that is being fought. This is a self-critical aspect which sets The Guardian apart from other sources. The image of 'fireworks' frames violence in a way that makes it seem like something beautiful and artful; 'tit-for-tat' suggests that there is no deeper political resolution to the conflict, and makes it look like one is necessary. In terms of syntactically active voice, the Indian authorities are more often than not described in active voice ('India accused', 'India claimed'), which results in more discursive prominence being given to India than is found in most other sources. The agency of the most significant events is removed, diffusing responsibility, in passive constructions ('explosions were heard,' 'people were injured'). The use of hedging ('may have been,' 'allegedly') ensures epistemic caution is conveyed.

7.8 Bloomberg

Table 9: Textual-Level CDA Analysis of Bloomberg Article

Component	Text Examples	Analysis
Lexical Choices	"military strikes," "retaliate," "shot down," "precise and restrained," "deepest breach," "battlefield achievement," "escalate tensions," "clash," "tit-for-tat," "act of terrorism"	Language combines militarized and diplomatic registers. 'Retaliate,' 'shot down,' and 'clash' emphasize direct conflict, while 'restrained,' 'precise,' and 'non-escalatory' signal strategic control, balancing aggression with responsibility.
Metaphors	"Tit-for-tat," "deepest breach," "field-tested," "surpassed," "queuing up orders," "reply from our side," "retaliate with parity"	'Field-tested' frames warfare as a proving ground for Chinese technology; 'retaliate with parity' conceptualizes conflict as a balancing act. 'Tit-for-tat' portrays the military exchange as reactive, downplaying deliberate escalation.
Modality & Hedging	"India's government hasn't officially confirmed," "without providing evidence," "could address concerns," "if Pakistan's successful strikes were true," "may also have been shot down," "what is known"	Extensive hedging maintains neutrality. Modal verbs and speculative phrases allow reporting of significant claims while distancing the outlet from full endorsement through attribution to third parties.
Voice and Agency	Active (Pakistan): "Pakistan said...," "Dar told parliament...," "Pakistan's army said...," "Pakistan claimed..."; Passive (India): "India's government hasn't confirmed," "Indian jets...were destroyed," "aircraft were shot down"	Agency is granted more clearly to Pakistan, portraying it as an assertive actor. India's role is often described in passive terms, constructing asymmetrical agency that subtly reinforces Pakistan's assertiveness.

Note. Text examples drawn directly from the Bloomberg article on the 2025 air clash.

Bloomberg depicts the confrontation as an actual military battle and a “batting it out on the international defence scene.” The use of both military and diplomatic jargon—'shot down,' 'retaliate,' and 'precise,' 'restrained'—takes a dual perspective to portray Pakistan as aggressive and yet calibrated. The term, 'battlefield achievement', is an evaluative term which affirms the strategic value of Pakistan's military operation. The term 'field-tested' and 'retaliate with parity' change the nature of the air clash into one between Chinese and Western weapons systems, and insert the fight into a wider East–West technological competition. Bloomberg has the most regular agency of an active voice in the corpus ('Pakistan said...,' 'Dar told parliament...,' 'Pakistan's army said...'), while India's agency is mostly passive ('Indian government hasn't confirmed,' 'Indian jets...were destroyed'). The extensive hedging ('if true,' 'may have been,' 'if Pakistan's successful strikes were true') creates a surface neutrality while the attribution of the claims to third parties, namely to Pakistani officials and Bloomberg Intelligence analysts, lends weight to the outlet's interpretive framing.

7.9 Asia Times

Table 10: Textual-Level CDA Analysis of Asia Times Article

Component	Text Examples	Analysis
Lexical Choices	"bad news," "crippling," "destroyed," "fired," "shot down," "technological advantage," "falling behind"	Strongly evaluative and militarized vocabulary dramatizes India's losses and reinforces the impression of technological inferiority and strategic failure. Lexical items project a narrative of defeat for India and rising strength for China and Pakistan.
Metaphors	"Firefight," "live testbed," "air supremacy," "bad news for NATO"	Metaphorical phrases frame the conflict as symbolic of global power realignment and a battlefield for technological dominance. 'Firefight' evokes intense battle even though the engagement was beyond visual range, dramatizing the encounter.
Modality & Hedging	"Apparently," "assumed," "quite possibly," "nothing is known," "may be"	Hedging expresses epistemic caution while presenting strong claims. These modal phrases allow speculation on technological superiority without taking full journalistic responsibility for confirmation.
Voice and Agency	Active: "Pakistan fired," "J-10 jet launched," "India has lost"; Passive: "was destroyed," "were shot down," "has been recovered"	Pakistan's actions are emphasized with active verbs, enhancing agency and success. Indian losses are reported through passive constructions, de-emphasizing agency and reinforcing the image of India as a losing party.

Note. Text examples drawn directly from the Asia Times article on the 2025 air clash.

In that respect, the technological framing is most explicitly pro-Chinese in the corpus, as is the case in Asia Times. In that sense, the framing is most obviously pro-Chinese in Asia Times and in the rest of the corpus in the area of technology. Lexical items such as 'crippling,' 'falling behind,' 'technological advantage' make India appear strategically weaker than China, creating a sense of the former's military technology's dominance. This presentation is clear and politically correct where others are either ambiguous or politically incorrect. The conflict is not confined to South Asia anymore, but is being shifted to the world's only remaining military alliance of NATO, with the terms 'live testbed', 'air supremacy' and 'bad news for NATO' suggesting that a clash over the air would have ramifications for the rest of the world. Syntactically, the loss of Pakistan is never mentioned and is always expressed in the active voice ('Pakistan lost,' 'Pakistan was bombed'), whilst the loss of India is invariably in the passive voice ('was destroyed,' 'jets were shot down'). The hedging phrases 'apparently,' 'may be,' 'quite possibly' introduce a minimum of epistemic distancing and enable the author to imagine technological superiority without being too definite, as the ideas are not verified.

**7.10 Middle East Eye**

**Table 11:** Textual-Level CDA Analysis of Middle East Eye Article

<b>Component</b>	<b>Text Examples</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
<i>Lexical Choices</i>	"breakthrough," "prized Rafale," "downed," "longest dogfights in history," "battlefield achievement," "carefully watched," "global standing"	Militarized and evaluative vocabulary presents the event as both symbolic and strategically important. 'Breakthrough' and 'achievement' frame the J-10C's success as a milestone, suggesting a shift in air power and defense hierarchies.
<i>Metaphors</i>	"Battlefield achievement," "match-up," "arms race," "dogfight," "global standing," "prized jet"	Metaphors construct the conflict as a technological and geopolitical contest emphasizing symbolic victory. Describing Rafale as 'prized' enhances the emotional and ideological stakes of its reported defeat.
<i>Modality &amp; Hedging</i>	"at least one," "according to," "has been described as," "confirmed," "denied or refused to comment," "evidence of"	Modal verbs and hedging introduce cautious reporting. While claims are made assertively by Pakistan, journalistic neutrality is preserved through attribution and indirect speech.
<i>Voice and Agency</i>	Active: "Pakistan used the Chinese jets," "Pakistan shot down," "US officials confirmed," "France may have to address..."; Passive (India): silence or denial	Active voice grants agency to Pakistan and its military technology, portraying it as assertive and capable. Indian silence or denial is passively constructed, implying evasiveness and loss of strategic control.

*Note.* Text examples drawn directly from the Middle East Eye article on the 2025 air clash.

Middle East Eye puts the air clash in the context of military technology and geopolitical power that is both international and global. The term 'breakthrough' and 'prized Rafale' and 'battlefield achievement' places the event not in the region or as a regional incident but as a game-changer in military balance of the world. By calling the Rafale 'prized' the reports of its defeat gain a symbolic dimension—a dimension of emotion and ideology, as well as technical. The conflict is given a larger-than-life dimension by the use of metaphors like 'dogfight' and 'arms race' as well as 'match-up' which frames it as a contest between the East (China–Pakistan) and the West (India–France) and becomes a part of a broader ideological competition. Syntactically, Pakistan has always been the one that is active, the one that uses the Chinese jets, the one that shoots down, etc., while India is either passive, in the form of 'Pakistan used the Chinese jets', or unuttered, as in 'Pakistan shot down'. The hedging elements ('at least one,' 'according to,' 'has been described as') leave room for doubt and the validation from U.S. officials ('US officials confirmed') reinforces Pakistani claims in authoritative external attribution.

**7.11 Cross-Cutting Synthesis**

The analysis from all ten sources uncovers six common discursive structures that, as a whole, form the ideological framework of international war journalism in the 2025 conflict. The patterns are summarized in table 12.

**Table 12:** Cross-Cutting Discursive Patterns Across Ten International Media Sources

<b>Discursive Pattern</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Key Function</b>
<i>Technological Framing</i>	Reuters, Bloomberg, Asia Times, Middle East Eye	Military hardware labels ('Rafale,' 'J-10C,' 'PL-15,' 'generation 4.5') construct a performance-based narrative of Chinese weapons as superior to Western systems.
<i>Symbolic Nationalism</i>	TRT, CNN, The Guardian	Military lexicon combined with national and religious symbolism ('Operation Sindoor,' 'nation of courageous people') emotionally loads the discourse, embedding identity in conflict.
<i>Globalized Conflict Narrative</i>	Asia Times, Washington Post, Middle East Eye	The conflict is repositioned beyond South Asia as a proxy contest between global power blocs, altering the battle from firepower to a competition of geopolitical alliances.
<i>Asymmetric Agency Assignment</i>	Bloomberg, TRT, Al Jazeera, Asia Times	Pakistan is consistently constructed as the active agent through active-voice attribution; India's role is reduced through passive constructions, hedging, and institutional silence.
<i>Epistemic Distancing</i>	CNN, NYT, The Guardian, Washington Post	Hedging phrases ('reportedly,' 'allegedly,' 'unconfirmed') and modal verbs ('may,' 'could') create journalistic caution, enabling outlets to circulate contested claims without full endorsement.
<i>Ideological Dramatization</i>	All ten sources	Metaphors such as 'ticking flashpoint,' 'dogfight,' 'arms race,' and 'information warfare' transform local military events into ideologically charged global spectacles.

*Note. Patterns identified through cross-source analysis of Tables 2–11.*

The six patterns show that the international media coverage of the 2025 air clash was not a "neutral" report of military actions. The language of the production was a structured discursive text that medially structured, on both a lexical, metaphorical and syntactical level, global perceptions of legitimacy, agency and geopolitical alignment.

**8. Discussion**

**8.1 Lexical Construction of Conflict Intensity and Legitimacy**

In the construction of the India-Pakistan air clash in 2025, international media consistently utilized certain lexical items to depict it as an important, legitimate, and internationally significant conflict. The term militarized and evaluative language (like 'act of war,' 'retaliation,' 'massacre,' or 'battlefield achievement') was used in all 10 outlets, but in differing ways. CNN and Al Jazeera emphasized the chaos and urgency of the conflict with powerful, emotional nouns ('chaotic scenes,' 'terrifying uncertainty'). The Pakistani military action was given a 'sanitized' legitimacy by the use of evaluative terms in Bloomberg and Asia Times, such as 'battlefield achievement' and 'technological advantage. TRT Global mixed military terms with nationalistic terms ('nation of courageous people') to form an emotional military frame.

Similarly, these findings align with Wasim et al. (2023b) who found that emotive and nationalistic language is utilized to construct the ideological positioning in the context of South Asian conflicts reporting and Badshah et al. (2023) who found that emotive and nationalistic language is also utilized to construct the ideological positioning in the context of Pakistan-Iran conflicts reporting.

The present research corroborates the above results, and demonstrates that the same process is in play in globally diverse media, but with varying ideological approaches. Fairclough's 1995 argument for the power-shaping of media language and the ideological alignment of language choices is explicitly supported: the types of words used in all ten sources did not depict events neutrally, but rather were used to shape moral and political positions on legitimacy of and responsibility for events.

### **8.2 Metaphorical and Rhetorical Framing**

The function of the metaphors in the 10 sources could be divided into two main ones, namely dramatization and globalization. In conclusion, it could be said that there were two main functions of the metaphors in the 10 sources which were dramatization and globalization. Conflict metaphors ('ticking flashpoint', 'dogfight', 'barrage') were used to dramatize military events and make them appealing to the viewer. As a result of the positioning of the conflict as a South Asian dispute to a proxy war between the world power blocs, globalization was provided through the use of technological and geopolitical metaphors ('test of Chinese tech,' 'arms race,' 'field-tested,' 'bad news for NATO').

The role of metaphor found here is in line with Charteris-Black's (2004) claim that metaphors in political and media language send a symbolic and ideological message beyond their literal message. The metaphor ticking flash point is not only a metaphor for build-up of tension, it triggers an emotional pattern of an imminent explosion and disaster. The metaphor 'field-tested' not only defines military capabilities, but also characterizes the whole conflict as a showcase of Chinese military technology in the international arms trade. A shift from a nationalist perspective to a technological perspective of conflict has emerged in this narrative which is a key discursive change from previous South Asian conflict reporting (Din & Qadri, 2021; Safi et al., 2020) and captures the new geopolitical nature of the conflict of 2025.

### **8.3 Syntactic Structures and Agency Assignment**

There is an ideologically significant pattern in the syntactic analysis and it is consistent throughout the corpus. The military operations are mostly presented in the active voice presentation, giving Pakistan agency, visibility and clarity: 'Pakistan shot down,' 'Pakistan used Chinese-made J-10,' 'Pakistan downed 25 Indian drones. In contrast, India's own voice is usually missing in a passive construction ('Rafale was shot down,' 'aircraft went down,' 'India's government has not confirmed') or institutional silence and non-response. This syntactic imbalance creates a hyperactive Pakistani subject within the conflict narrative and leaves India as the passive, ambiguous, or ineffective object in the story, irrespective of the fact that Pakistan has actually won the battle or not.

This finding clearly supports the argument by van Leeuwen (2008) that grammatical agency is a fundamental ideological choice in media discourse – who is active and who is passive in the media discourse of the construction of events shows who is powerful and has initiative. Although the syntactic function of the two languages was still retained (Pakistani/passive, Indian/active), the use of hedging and modality (e.g. reportedly, allegedly, may have been, could) across most outlets achieved a surface journalistic neutrality. The epistemic prudence at the lexical level and the positioning of the author at the syntactic level is a highly complex discursive move that deserves to be studied in future CDA research of war journalism.

## **9. Findings**

In this study, the text level CDA framework proposed by Fairclough (1992, 1995) was adopted and complemented by Charteris-Black (2004), van Dijk (1998) and van Leeuwen (2008) to analyze and interpret ten news articles from the international press concerning the 2025 air clash between India and Pakistan. Summary of three main results. To answer RQ1, the international

media employed evaluative, militarized and emotive language to define the conflict as legitimate, serious and world-wide important. The same types of lexemes were used in all 10 sources but their ideology was determined by the medium of publication: Military jargon, emotive nouns, and evaluative adjectives were all used to legitimize Pakistani aggression; calculative and precise uses of the lexemes were used to construct India's actions as calculated and precise; and the chaos and civilian cost of the conflict were emphasized by evaluative adjectives. The one thing that was the same was that there was no neutral reporting; all the sources used language that has an ideological weight.

Secondly, according to RQ2, two main types of metaphor were found. Conflict metaphors ('ticking flashpoint,' 'dogfight,' 'barrage') created the emotional urgency and dramatized the event. The language of the techno-geopolitical metaphors ('test of Chinese tech,' 'arms race,' 'field-tested') redirected the struggle as a symbolic one between East and West military systems as a global entity. This second type of metaphor is underrepresented in previous South Asian conflict discourse studies and presents a new level of international media's reporting on South Asian military affairs.

Third, in response to RQ3, a regular syntactic asymmetry was identified; while virtually every source depicted Pakistani military operations in the active voice, Indian agency was systematically depoliticized, hedging, institutional silence, and active voice obfuscation. This was true even from sources that were generally epistemic cautious by using hedges. The grammatical assignment of agency was therefore a disguised ideological process within the discursive surface to the neutral journalistic discourse.

## 10. Conclusion

This study critically analyzed the lexical, metaphoric and syntactic language strategies of the ten major international news sources in the construction of 2025 India-Pakistan air clash from the perspective of the textual level of Fairclough's CDA model. The analysis shows that this coverage was not neutral, in other words, that there was no neutrality in the language used in the media. All of these elements of evaluative vocabulary, symbolic metaphors, and grammatical agency choices collectively created a global conflict narrative that pushed Pakistan's image as the decisive and technologically viable and morally active actor, and India's as ambiguous, passive, and evasive. The conflict was described both as a regional military battle, and as a proxy war between China's military and the Western military systems, showcasing the new geopolitical realities of the 2025 conflict, and an important departure from the way South Asian conflicts have been globally described.

The study validates Fairclough's (1995) initial argument that the media text is ideologically constructed, and that the language choices reflect the power relations. It takes this argument empirically to an international sample of news from various global news outlets and a new thematic field – the discourse of technological military competition as a discourse of geopolitical legitimacy. Table 12 contains the cross-source synthesis, which summarizes the six recurring patterns of discourses in a structured fashion for future research to compare other conflicts in conflict discourse. There are some limitations of this study. It remains at the textual level of CDA and fails to discuss discursive practice (the production, editing and sourcing of the articles) and social practice (the political economy of each outlet). The corpus is restricted to 10 articles in English; the coverage of other languages/ regional sources might indicate other framing strategies. This framework could be expanded in future studies to social media conflict discourse, reception analysis and how audiences are interpreting the discourse that have been identified here, or a longitudinal study of the evolution of South Asian conflict discourse since 2019 (Pulwama) till 2025 (air clash).

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