LEGITIMIZING ACTION: LINGUISTIC AND IDEOLOGICAL DYNAMICS IN PAKISTAN'S MILITARY DISCOURSE

Naima Batool[*1], Tazanfal Tehseem[2], Asad Nazar[3], Uzair Mehdi[4]

[*1]Lecturer/PhD Scholar, University of Sargodha
[2]Associate Professor, University of Sargodha
[3,4]PhD Scholar, University of Sargodha

[*1]naima.batool@uos.edu.pk, [2]tazanfal.tehseem@uos.edu.pk, [3]asadnazarawan044@gmail.com, [4]uzairmehdo009@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *
Naima Batool

ABSTRACT

This research applies Teun A. van Dijk's sociocognitive Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model to analyze the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025), issued during the Marka-e-Haq conflict for Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos." It explores how linguistic and contextual elements construct ideology, power, and "us vs. them" dynamics in the India-Pakistan geopolitical rivalry. Employing van Dijk's triadic framework that is discourse, cognition, society. The study examines discourse strategies, cognitive models, mental models, and social implications to understand how the text legitimizes military action and exhibit national identity. The qualitative methodology analyzes the ISPR-sourced press release, focusing on polarization (e.g., "dastardly" for India, "justice" for Pakistan) and presuppositions (e.g., India's aggression). Research questions investigate how these strategies embed nationalist and Islamic ideologies and marginalize adversarial voices. Findings show that the use of emotive lexicon, religious references (e.g., "Almighty Allah"), and technological framing (e.g., "cyber warriors") to portray Pakistan as a righteous defender, reinforcing military authority (van Dijk, 2021b). Metaphors like "Wall of Steel" amplify the "us vs. them" narrative, aligning with van Dijk's ideology framework (van Dijk, 2020b). The study highlights the press release's role in reproducing power through institutional control, excluding Indian perspectives (Ahmed & Khan, 2023). By extending van Dijk's model to a South Asian military context, it addresses gaps in non-Western discourse analysis (Khan & Ahmad, 2021). This research offers scholars and policymakers insights into how state narratives shape conflict perceptions, enhancing CDA's global applicability and understanding of South Asian geopolitics so it is significant.

Keywords: *CDA, Military discourse, Ideology, van Dijk.*

INTRODUCTION

In an era of heightened geopolitical tensions and digital communication, military discourse shapes national identities, justifies state actions, and influences public perceptions. The Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025), issued in response to the Marka-e-Haq conflict and Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos," illustrates how institutional texts construct narratives of power, ideology, and conflict. This study employs Teun A. van Dijk's sociocognitive Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model to examine the press release, analyzing how linguistic and contextual elements create an "us vs. them" dynamic, embed nationalist and

religious ideologies, and reinforce military dominance in the India-Pakistan rivalry. By dissecting this text, the research seeks to reveal the interplay of discourse, cognition, and society in legitimizing military action and shaping collective identity in a South Asian context.

Military press releases serve as strategic tools for state institutions to control narratives and mobilize support (Hodges, 2022). The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Pakistan's military media wing, plays a pivotal role in framing conflicts and countering adversarial narratives (Butt & Ashfaq, 2021). Issued after Pakistan's retaliatory operation against alleged Indian attacks on May 6–7, 2025, the press release employs emotive language, religious references, and technological boasts to portray Pakistan as a righteous defender against an aggressive India. These strategies align with CDA's focus on how discourse reproduces power and ideology, making the text suitable for van Dijk's sociocognitive approach, which emphasizes cognitive mediation between discourse and society (van Dijk, 2020a).

CDA views discourse as a social practice that both shapes and reflects societal structures (Fairclough, 2020). Van Dijk's model highlights mental and context models—subjective representations of events and communicative situations—that drive textual production (van Dijk, 2021a). In military discourse, linguistic choices like polarization and presuppositions construct ideological narratives that legitimize state actions and marginalize adversaries (van Dijk, 2022a). The press release's depiction of India as a terrorist sponsor and Pakistan as a divinely supported nation exemplifies these dynamics, warranting a CDA investigation to unpack its ideological and power-related implications.

The India-Pakistan rivalry, rooted in historical disputes and mutual accusations, provides a critical backdrop for this study (Khan & Ahmad, 2021). While media and political texts in both nations perpetuate nationalist ideologies through binary framings (Sharma & Kaur, 2022), military press releases remain underexplored despite their authoritative role (Iqbal & Siddiqui, 2023). The ISPR text, with its formal tone, religious rhetoric, and focus on cyber warfare, reflects Pakistan's evolving military discourse in a digital age, necessitating a CDA approach to analyze its ideological underpinnings (Ali & Rehman, 2020).

Ideology is embedded through nationalist and Islamic references, unifying audiences and asserting Pakistan's moral superiority over India (Qureshi & Aslam, 2022). Power relations are evident in the military's control over the narrative, which marginalizes Indian perspectives and reinforces dominance (Ahmed & Khan, 2023). The "us vs. them" dynamic, constructed through negative terms for India and positive ones for Pakistan, aligns with van Dijk's concept of polarization, strengthening group identity and justifying conflict (van Dijk, 2021b). These elements highlight how military discourse shapes public perceptions in a volatile geopolitical context.

This research contributes to CDA and South Asian studies by applying van Dijk's model to a non-Western military text, addressing gaps in the literature (Khan & Ahmad, 2021). The press release's blend of religious, nationalist, and technological themes offers a unique case to extend CDA, particularly in analyzing digital-era military communication where cyber warfare and media amplify narratives (Butt & Ashfaq, 2021). The study provides insights into how Pakistan navigates global and domestic audiences in a polarized landscape, enhancing understanding of state-driven narratives.

Practically, the research informs policymakers and educators about language's role in shaping public opinion, especially in Pakistan, where the military holds significant influence (Raza & Shah, 2021). Globally, it contributes to debates on how state narratives affect international perceptions in conflicts involving nuclear powers (Ali & Rehman, 2020). The study's objectives are to analyze discourse strategies, reconstruct cognitive models, and interpret social implications, guided by three questions: How does the press release construct India as an aggressor? What ideologies are embedded? How does it reinforce military power? By addressing these, the research advances CDA's application to South Asian military discourse, offering theoretical and practical insights into conflict narratives.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) examines how discourse constructs power and ideology

(Fairclough, 2020; Wodak & Meyer, 2021). Van Dijk's sociocognitive model integrates discourse, cognition, and society, analyzing linguistic structures, mental/context models, and social inequalities (van Dijk, 2008, 2020a). Mental models shape subjective interpretations, while context models ensure communicative appropriateness (van Dijk, 2021a). Strategies like polarization and presuppositions embed ideology, exposing elite manipulation (van Dijk, 2020b; Hart & Cap, 2020). This framework suits analyzing military texts like the ISPR press release.

1.1 CDA in Military and Geopolitical Discourse
Military discourse justifies state actions and shapes identity (Chilton, 2021; Hodges, 2022). Van Dijk's model, applied to Blair's 2003 Iraq speech, reveals polarization and presuppositions legitimizing war (van Dijk, 2008). Recent studies, like Oddo and Salvo (2020), identify metaphors constructing moral binaries. In South Asia, Khan and Ahmad (2021) analyze Pakistani media's nationalist portrayal of India, while Sharma and Kaur (2022) note India's framing of Pakistan as a terrorist state. Military press releases, however, are understudied despite their authority (Iqbal & Siddiqui, 2023). Digital warfare rhetoric, including cyber operations, adds complexity (Ali & Rehman, 2020; Butt & Ashfaq, 2021).

1.2 Ideology, Power, and Polarization in Military Press Releases
Military press releases legitimize actions and unify audiences (Hodges, 2022). Van Dijk's model uncovers polarization (e.g., "dastardly" India vs. "just" Pakistan) and presuppositions (e.g., India's aggression) in the ISPR text, reinforcing nationalism (van Dijk, 2021b; Saeed & Malik, 2020). Power dynamics exclude Indian perspectives, while Islamic rhetoric (e.g., "Almighty Allah") and slogans (e.g., "PAKISTAN ZINDABAD") unify audiences (Raza & Shah, 2021; Qureshi & Aslam, 2022). These strategies align with van Dijk's social level focus on dominance (van Dijk, 2022a; Ahmed & Khan, 2023).

1.3 Gaps in the Literature
Scholarship overlooks South Asian military discourse, focusing on Western texts (van Dijk, 2020a; Oddo & Salvo, 2020). Military press releases receive less attention than media or speeches (Iqbal & Siddiqui, 2023). The intersection of religious ideology and modern warfare technologies (e.g., cyber operations) is underexplored (Ali & Rehman, 2020). Comparative cultural analyses are also scarce (Sharma & Kaur, 2022).

1.4 Positioning the Current Study
This study applies van Dijk's model to the ISPR press release, analyzing polarization, presuppositions, and mental/context models to uncover nationalism and power dynamics. It examines religious and technological rhetoric, extending CDA to South Asian military discourse and addressing gaps in cultural and institutional analysis (van Dijk, 2008).

2. METHODOLOGY
This study employs Teun A. van Dijk's sociocognitive Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model to examine the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025) for Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos" during the *Marka-e-Haq* conflict.

2.1 Data Selection
The primary data is a single military press release issued by Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), identified as PR-152/2025, dated May 12, 2025. This text was selected for its institutional authority, as it represents the official voice of Pakistan's military, an actor in shaping national narratives (Hodges, 2022). The press release addresses the *Marka-e-Haq* conflict and Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos," a significant geopolitical event, making it a rich case for analyzing ideology and power in South Asian military discourse (Khan & Ahmad, 2021). Its strategic intent to justify military action, unify the nation, and counter India's narrative aligns with CDA's focus on discourse's role in dominance (van Dijk, 2022a).

2.2 Research Questions
The study is guided by the following research questions, designed to explore ideology, power, and "us vs. them" dynamics
1. What linguistic choices do writers employ to portray their stance?

2. How power dynamics plays the role in the text?
3. What ideologies are constructed in the text?

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study employs van Dijk's sociocognitive CDA model, integrating discourse, cognition, and society (van Dijk, 2008, 2009). It demonstrates how discourse are shaped by cognitive processes, reproduces power and ideology, as noted on https://discourses.org/ (van Dijk, 2020b).

2.3.1 Discourse Level

The discourse level examines linguistic and rhetorical structures, including macrostructures (global themes, e.g., justifying military action), superstructures (organization, e.g., introduction-body-conclusion), and microstructures (e.g., lexicon, syntax) (van Dijk, 2008). Discourse Strategies include Deixis Expressions (e.g., pronouns, demonstratives), Style and Register (Level of formality, tone), Irony (Sarcastic or indirect remarks), Presuppositions (Implicit assumptions based on shared knowledge) (Saeed & Malik, 2020), Rhetorical Strategies which further include Polarization (Dividing groups into "us" vs. "them" emphasizes differences), Metaphors, Hyperbole (exaggeration), Euphemism (Softened language), Repetition, Contrast (Juxtaposing ideas)c, Appeals to Authority, Appeals to Emotion (Pathos), Appeals to Logic (Logos), Irony or Sarcasm, Framing, Presupposition Reinforcement, Narrative or Storytelling, Allusion, Interaction. These strategies reveal how the text constructs meaning and ideology, per van Dijk's power focus (van Dijk, 2022a).

2.3.2 Cognitive Level

The cognitive level reconstructs mental models (event representations) and context models (communicative situations) (van Dijk, 2021a).

2.3.2.1 Mental Models

Mental models include: Event Representation (Who, What, Where, When, Why) Participants (Identities, Roles, Relationships), Actions and Processes (Actions, Events/Processes), Setting (Time, Place, Circumstance), Intentions and Goals (Intention, Goal), Knowledge and Beliefs (Personal Knowledge, Beliefs or Assumptions), Emotions and Evaluations (Emotional Stance, Evaluative Stance)

2.3.2.2 Context models

It includes Setting (time, place, Circumstances), Participants (Identities, Roles, Relationships) Actions (Communicative Acts, Social Practices), Intentions/Goals, Knowledge (Personal Knowledge, Shared Knowledge), Self-Representation.

2.3.3 Social Level

The social level interprets how discourse reproduces social structures, focusing on: **Power Relations** (Military's control (Ahmed & Khan, 2023)), **Ideologies** (Nationalism, Islamic unity (Raza & Shah, 2021)), **Inequalities** (Marginalizing India (Sharma & Kaur, 2022)), **Consequences** (Legitimizing action (van Dijk, 2022b)) and **institutional contexts** (social practices or institutions (e.g., parliament, media))

3. ANALYSIS

1. DISCOURSE LEVEL ANALYSIS

The discourse level in van Dijk's sociocognitive CDA analyzes linguistic structures, rhetorical strategies, and context models, revealing how texts construct ideologies, power dynamics, and social relations through lexical choices, polarization, and presuppositions (van Dijk, 2008).

1.1 Macrostructure

The macrostructure is the global meaning or overarching topics of a discourse, reflecting its primary focus or intent (van Dijk, 1980). It organizes the text's content into coherent themes, guiding audience interpretation and revealing ideological priorities (van Dijk, 2008). In the given text, macrostructure is justifying operation "Bunyanum Marsoos" as a necessary and successful retaliatory response to Indian aggression, emphasizing national unity and divine support.

1.2 Superstructure

It represents the organizational structure of the text. The text is organized in three parts that is Introduction, Body and Conclusion. In the 'introduction', Announcement of operation and context (Indian attacks) is there. The second

section is 'body' which is based on the details of military success, gratitude, and targets. The last portion is 'conclusion' and it affirms resolve with Quranic quote and patriotic slogans.

1.3   Microstructure: Lexicon

In Teun A. van Dijk's sociocognitive Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model, the microstructure: lexicon refers to deliberate word choices that encode ideology, intent, or emotional stance, shaping perceptions and reinforcing power dynamics (van Dijk, 2008). In the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025), the lexicon creates a moral contrast between India and Pakistan, embedding nationalist and Islamic ideologies to polarize the audience and legitimize military action.

1.3.1   Example 1: "Dastardly" and "Justice"

The conduct of Pakistan Armed Forces Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos", on 10 May 2025 as part of the military conflict Marka-e-Haq, was in response to Indian military's *dastardly* attacks that began on the night of 6 & 7 May 2025, resulting in the loss of innocent civilian lives, including women, children, and the elderly. Pakistan had vowed *justice* and retribution for the reprehensible Indian military aggression and brutal killings of our citizens. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 1)

1.3.2   Explanation

The term *dastardly* portrays India's attacks as cowardly and morally reprehensible, intensifying the "us vs. them" narrative by framing India as an immoral aggressor. In contrast, *justice* casts Pakistan's Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos" as a righteous response, aligning with nationalist ideology and legitimizing military action. These lexical choices polarize the discourse, reinforcing Pakistan's moral superiority (van Dijk, 2021b).

1.3.3   Example 2: "Reprehensible" and "Retribution"

"Pakistan had vowed justice and *retribution* for the *reprehensible* Indian military aggression and brutal killings of our citizens." (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 1)

1.3.4   Explanation:

Reprehensible condemns India's actions as morally unacceptable, justifying Pakistan's retaliation and marginalizing Indian perspectives. *Retribution* frames Pakistan's response as deserved punishment, emphasizing moral and strategic legitimacy. This lexicon strengthens nationalist ideology and military authority, aligning with the press release's goal of unifying the audience against India (Ahmed & Khan, 2023).

1.3.5   Example 3:   "Brutal"   and "Alhamdulillah"

Pakistan had vowed justice and retribution for the reprehensible Indian military aggression and *brutal* killings of our citizens. *Alhamdulillah!* Pakistan Armed Forces have delivered the promise made to our people. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 1)

1.3.6   Explanation

Brutal intensifies the portrayal of India's actions as cruel, evoking sympathy for Pakistani victims and reinforcing India's villainy. *Alhamdulillah*, an Islamic expression of gratitude, embeds religious ideology, framing Pakistan's success as divinely sanctioned. These terms enhance the press release's emotional appeal and ideological stance, promoting national and religious unity (van Dijk, 2008).

1.3.7   Example 4:   "Ghastly":

During Indian *ghastly* attack on night 6/7 May, India launched missiles from stand-off on civilian infrastructure and places of worship targeting innocent civilians including women and children. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 13)

1.3.8   Explanation:

Ghastly amplifies India's aggression as horrific, reinforcing the narrative of India as a ruthless attacker, consistent with polarization (section 1.7, Presuppositions).

1.3.9   Example 5: "Magnificent":

We express gratitude to our scientists and engineers for developing indigenous and specialized niche technologies that were instrumental in the *magnificent* success of Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos". (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 11)

1.3.10 Explanation

Magnificent glorifies Pakistan's military achievement, boosting national pride and aligning with the emotional stance of gratitude and pride (section 2.7.1, Emotional Stance).

1.3.11 Example 6: "Resilient":

The *resilient* Armed Forces of Pakistan carried out most effective counter-terrorism operations in the western region without any pause simultaneously with the conduct of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 22)

1.3.12 Explanation

Resilient portrays Pakistan's forces as steadfast, reinforcing national strength and unity against external threats (section 3.2.1, Ideologies).

1.4 Discourse Features

Following are the discourse features in van Dijk's model.
1. Rhetorical Strategies (see section 1.5)
2. Deixis Expressions (see section 1.6)
3. Style and Register (see section 1.7)
4. Irony (see section 1.8)
5. Presuppositions (see section 1.9)
6. Interaction (it is not analyzed because this element is present in speeches or spoken discourse and this study is analyzing written text).

1.5 Rhetorical Strategies

In Teun A. van Dijk's sociocognitive Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model, rhetorical strategies are linguistic techniques used to persuade, encode ideology, and reinforce power dynamics (van Dijk, 2008). This analysis identifies all instances of specified rhetorical strategies in the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025), which constructs an "us vs. them" narrative, legitimizes Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos," and embeds nationalist and Islamic ideologies.

1.5.1 Polarization
1.5.1.1 Example 1: Polarization

The conduct of Pakistan Armed Forces Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos", on 10 May 2025 as part of the military conflict Marka-e-Haq, was in response to Indian military's *dastardly* attacks that began on the night of 6 & 7 May 2025, resulting in the loss of innocent civilian lives, including women, children, and the elderly. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 1)

1.5.1.2 Explanation:

The word *dastardly* vilifies India as an immoral aggressor, contrasting with Pakistan's righteous response, reinforcing the "us vs. them" divide and justifying military action (van Dijk, 2021b).

1.5.1.3 Example 2: Polarization

Pakistan had vowed justice and retribution for the *reprehensible* Indian military aggression and brutal killings of our citizens. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 1)

1.5.1.4 Explanation: *Reprehensible* condemns India's actions, polarizing them as morally unacceptable against Pakistan's vow for justice, enhancing national unity.

1.5.1.5 Example 3: Polarization

During Indian *ghastly* attack on night 6/7 May, India launched missiles from stand-off on civilian infrastructure and places of worship targeting innocent civilians including women and children. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 13)

1.5.1.6 Explanation: *Ghastly* intensifies India's villainy, polarizing them as cruel attackers vs. Pakistan's innocent victims, reinforcing ideological opposition.

1.5.2 Metaphors
1.5.2.1 Example 1: Metaphors

Pakistan's retaliatory response named Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, *Wall of Steel*, was a textbook demonstration of integrated tri-services jointness. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 12)

1.5.2.2 Explanation

The metaphor *Wall of Steel* portrays Pakistan's military as an impregnable barrier, symbolizing strength and resilience, boosting nationalist pride.

1.5.2.3 Example 2: Metaphors

Profound gratitude is also due to the vibrant media of Pakistan, which stood like Bunyanum Marsoos, a *steel wall* against the Indian media's dis-information blitz. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 7)

1.5.2.4 Explanation

The metaphor *steel wall* likens Pakistan's media to a robust defense, reinforcing their role in countering India's narrative, enhancing national confidence.

1.5.3 Hyperbole
1.5.3.1 Example 1: Hyperbole

The Armed Forces of Pakistan express their profound appreciation and gratitude to the brave Pakistani nation whose *unwavering* moral strength remained with us during these trying times. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 5)

1.5.3.2 Explanation

Unwavering exaggerates the nation's support, amplifying unity and resilience to exhibit emotional solidarity against external threats.

1.5.3.3 Example 2: Hyperbole

We express gratitude to our scientists and engineers for developing indigenous and specialized niche technologies that were instrumental in the *magnificent* success of Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos". (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 11)

1.5.3.4 Explanation

Magnificent overstates the operation's success, boosting national pride and emphasizing military prowess.

1.5.3.5 Example 3: Hyperbole

The resilient Armed Forces of Pakistan carried out *most effective* counter-terrorism operations in the western region without any pause simultaneously with the conduct of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 22)

1.5.3.6 Explanation

Most effective exaggerates the efficiency of counter-terrorism efforts, reinforcing Pakistan's military strength and resilience.

1.5.4 Euphemism
1.5.4.1 Example 1: Euphemism

Pakistan's military response has been precise, proportionate, and *restrained*. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 20)

1.5.4.2 Explanation

Restrained softens the aggressive nature of Pakistan's retaliation, framing it as ethical to mitigate criticism and legitimize the operation.

1.5.4.3 Example 2: Euphemism

Pakistan Armed Forces possess an '*adequate*' suite of very sophisticated 'niche military technologies', and only a limited number and type were used with restraint in this conflict. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 19)

1.5.4.4 Explanation

Adequate downplays Pakistan's advanced military capabilities, presenting them modestly to avoid appearing overly aggressive, aligning with moral framing.

1.5.5 Repetition
1.5.5.1 Example 1: Repetition

We extend our *heartfelt gratitude* to every officer, soldier, airman, and sailor... *Profound gratitude* is also due to the vibrant media... We express *gratitude* to our scientists and engineers... Armed Forces are *extremely grateful* to the political leadership... The Armed Forces are *specifically grateful* to the inspiring leadership of the Prime Minister. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, paras. 4, 7, 11, 9, 10)

1.5.5.2 Explanation

Repeated *gratitude* emphasizes appreciation for diverse stakeholders, reinforcing national unity and collective effort in supporting the military.

1.5.6 Contrast
1.5.6.1 Example 1: Contrast

Pakistan had vowed justice and retribution for the *reprehensible* Indian military aggression and brutal killings of our citizens. *Alhamdulillah!* Pakistan Armed Forces have delivered the promise made to our people. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 1)

1.5.6.2 Explanation

Contrasting *reprehensible* (India's actions) with *Alhamdulillah* (Pakistan's success) creates a moral dichotomy, belittling India while glorifying Pakistan.

1.5.6.3 Example 2: Contrast

During Indian ghastly attack on night 6/7 May, India launched missiles... *Pakistan Air Force and Ground Based Air Defence Systems did not allow* any Indian aircraft to enter Pakistan's airspace. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 13)

1.5.6.4 Explanation

Contrasting India's *ghastly attack* with Pakistan's *did not allow* highlights India's failure vs. Pakistan's defensive success, reinforcing superiority.

1.5.6.5 Example 1: Contrast

India used drones to violate Pakistani airspace to intimidate our civilians... *Dozens of Pakistani armed drones hovered* over Indian major cities and sensitive political and government facilities. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 18)

1.5.6.6 Explanation: Contrasting India's *violate* with Pakistan's *hovered* underscores Pakistan's retaliatory dominance, framing India's actions as futile.

1.5.7 Appeals to Authority
1.5.7.1 Example 1: Appeals to Authority

Armed Forces thank *Almighty Allah* for His infinite blessings, mercy, help, and divine support. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 2)

1.5.7.2 Explanation

Almighty Allah invokes divine authority, legitimizing the operation and resonating with Pakistan's Islamic identity (Ahmed & Khan, 2023).

1.5.7.3 Example 2: Appeals to Authority

"*THEY PLAN AND ALLAH PLANS. AND ALLAH IS THE BEST OF PLANNERS*" (Surah Anfal). (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 23)

1.5.7.4 Explanation

The Quranic quote *THEY PLAN AND ALLAH PLANS* appeals to religious authority, framing Pakistan's success as divinely ordained.

1.5.7.5 Example 3: Appeals to Authority

We also extend our appreciation to the *diplomatic corps* for effectively representing Pakistan's just case on international fora with clarity and conviction. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 8)

1.5.7.6 Explanation

Reference to the *diplomatic corps* invokes institutional authority, reinforcing Pakistan's legitimacy on global platforms.

1.5.8 Appeals to Emotion (Pathos)
1.5.8.1 Example 1: Appeals to Emotion (Pathos)

Our hearts and sympathies are with the wards and families of the *Shuhada* who sacrificed their lives for the beloved country. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 3)

1.5.8.2 Explanation

Shuhada evokes sympathy for martyrs, stirring patriotic emotions and exhibiting national solidarity.

1.5.8.3 Example 2: Appeals to Emotion (Pathos)

The conduct of Pakistan Armed Forces Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos"... was in response to Indian military's dastardly attacks that began on the night of 6 & 7 May 2025, resulting in the loss of *innocent civilian lives*, including women, children, and the elderly. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 1)

1.5.8.4 Explanation

Innocent civilian lives elicits sympathy for victims, intensifying outrage against India and emotional support for Pakistan's retaliation.

1.5.8.5 Example 3: Appeals to Emotion (Pathos)

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to every officer, soldier, airman, and sailor of the Armed Forces of Pakistan who made this success on the battlefield possible through their *courage*, professionalism, and sacrifice. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 4)

1.5.8.6 Explanation

Courage evokes pride in the military's bravery, strengthening emotional investment in their efforts.

1.5.9 Appeals to Logic (Logos)

1.5.9.1 Example 1: Appeals to Logic (Logos)
Using precision-guided long-range Fatah series missiles F1 and F2 of Pakistan Army, precision munitions of PAF, highly capable long-range loitering killer munitions, and precision long-range artillery, *26x military targets* were engaged. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 14)

1.5.9.2 Explanation
26x military targets provides specific evidence of success, appealing to logic to prove the operation's effectiveness.

1.5.9.3 Example 2: Appeals to Logic (Logos)
The targets included Air Force and Aviation bases at *Suratgarh, Sirsa, Bhuj, Naliya*, Adampur, Bhatinda, Barnala, Halwara, Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Udhampur, Mamun, Ambala, and Pathankot, all of which sustained major damages. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 15)

1.5.9.4 Explanation
Listing *Suratgarh, Sirsa, Bhuj, Naliya* and other targets offers detailed proof of precision, enhancing credibility.

1.5.9.5 Example 3: Appeals to Logic (Logos)
S-400 battery systems at Adampur and Bhuj were also attacked and *effectively neutralised* by Pakistan Air Force. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 17)

1.5.9.6 Explanation: *Effectively neutralised* provides logical evidence of Pakistan's capability to counter advanced Indian defenses, justifying the operation's success.

1.5.10 Irony or Sarcasm

1.5.10.1 Example 1: Irony or Sarcasm
Profound gratitude is also due to the vibrant media of Pakistan, which stood like Bunyanum Marsoos, a steel wall against the Indian media's *dis-information blitz*. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 7)

1.5.10.2 Explanation
Dis-information blitz sarcastically mocks Indian media's efforts, implying their futility against Pakistan's robust media, boosting narrative confidence.

1.5.11 Framing

1.5.11.1 Example 1: Framing
Pakistan's military response has been *precise*, proportionate, and still remarkably restrained. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 20)

1.5.11.2 Explanation: *Precise* frames Pakistan's actions as accurate and ethical, legitimizing the operation while deflecting criticism.

1.5.11.3 Example 2: Framing
Pakistan's retaliatory response named Operation Bunyanum Marsoos… was a *textbook demonstration* of integrated tri-services jointness, enabled by real-time situational awareness, network-centric warfare capabilities, and seamless multi-domain operations. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 12)

1.5.11.4 Explanation: *Textbook demonstration* frames the operation as a model of military excellence, enhancing its perceived legitimacy.

1.5.12 Presupposition Reinforcement

1.5.12.1 Example 1: Presupposition Reinforcement
During Indian *ghastly* attack on night 6/7 May, India launched missiles from stand-off on civilian infrastructure and places of worship. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 13)

1.5.12.2 Explanation: *Ghastly* presupposes India's aggression was unprovoked and horrific, reinforcing Pakistan's victimhood and shaping audience perceptions.

1.5.12.3 Example 2: Presupposition Reinforcement
Pakistan also sustained an *abnormal and immediate spike* in Indian-sponsored terrorism across KP and Balochistan while its armed forces were busy in operations on the eastern front. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 21)

1.5.12.4 Explanation: *Abnormal and immediate spike* presupposes India's direct role in terrorism, reinforcing Pakistan's narrative of external threat.

1.5.13 Narrative or Storytelling

1.5.13.1 Example 1: Narrative or Storytelling

Marka-e-Haq has been a great example of the *synergy* between all elements of national power, with overwhelming support of the Pakistani public, to effectively counter the threat to our national sovereignty and territorial integrity. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 21)

1.5.13.2 Explanation

Synergy constructs a narrative of national unity and triumph, portraying Pakistan as a cohesive force overcoming adversity, showing collective pride.

1.5.13.3 Example 2: Narrative or Storytelling

The resilient Armed Forces of Pakistan carried out most effective counter-terrorism operations in the western region without any pause simultaneously with the conduct of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 22)

1.5.13.4 Explanation

The narrative of *resilient* forces multitasking against threats weaves a story of strength and dedication, reinforcing national resolve.

1.5.14 Allusion

1.5.14.1 Example 1: Allusion

"*THEY PLAN AND ALLAH PLANS. AND ALLAH IS THE BEST OF PLANNERS*" (Surah Anfal). (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 23)

1.5.14.2 Explanation

THEY PLAN AND ALLAH PLANS alludes to Surah Anfal, implying divine superiority over India's schemes, reinforcing Islamic ideology.

1.5.14.3 Example 2: Allusion

Pakistan's retaliatory response named Operation *Bunyanum Marsoos*, Quranic phrase meaning Wall of Steel, was a textbook demonstration of integrated tri-services jointness. (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 12)

1.5.14.4 Explanation

Bunyanum Marsoos alludes to a Quranic phrase, evoking religious imagery to frame the operation as divinely inspired, resonating with the audience's faith.

In the tabale below, summary of the analysis is given along with interpretation against eact category of rhetorical device.

Table 1: Representing frequency count of all the rhetorical devices

Rhetorical Strategy	Frequency	Paragraph References	Examples and Analysis
Polarization	12	1, 5, 7, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23	Creates "us" (Pakistan) vs. "them" (India), e.g., "brave Pakistani nation" vs. "dastardly attacks" (paras. 5, 1). Reinforces national unity and vilifies India.
Metaphors	4	12, 14, 21, 23	Frames concepts vividly, e.g., "Wall of Steel" for Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos" (para. 12), "battle of minds" (para. 21). Enhances ideological impact.
Hyperbole	5	1, 11, 12, 14, 15	Exaggerates success, e.g., "magnificent success" (para. 11), "destiny-altering decisions" (para. 15). Amplifies emotional and patriotic appeal.
Euphemism	3	20, 21, 22	Softens actions, e.g., "remarkably restrained" for retaliation (para. 20). Maintains moral legitimacy.
Repetition	7	4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 15, 23	Repeats "gratitude" (paras. 4, 5, 11, 15), "nation" (paras. 5, 23), reinforcing unity and appreciation. Counted per term/phrase.
Contrast	6	1, 7, 13, 20, 21, 23	Juxtaposes Pakistan's righteousness vs. India's aggression, e.g., "reprehensible" India vs. "Alhamdulillah" Pakistan (para. 1). Highlights moral divide.

Rhetorical Strategy	Frequency	Paragraph References	Examples and Analysis
Appeals to Authority	5	2, 15, 19, 21, 23	Invokes divine/institutional credibility, e.g., "Almighty Allah" (para. 2), "Prime Minister's leadership" (para. 15). Legitimizes actions.
Appeals to Emotion (Pathos)	8	3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 16, 17, 23	Evokes sympathy/pride, e.g., "Shuhada" (para. 3), "heartfelt gratitude" (para. 4). Engages audience emotionally.
Appeals to Logic (Logos)	4	12, 14, 20, 21	Provides evidence, e.g., "26x military targets" (para. 14), "network-centric warfare" (para. 12). Justifies operation's precision.
Irony or Sarcasm	2	7, 21	Mocks India, e.g., "dis-information blitz" (para. 7). Critiques Indian narrative subtly.
Framing	6	1, 12, 14, 20, 21, 23	Presents actions as ethical, e.g., "precise, proportionate" (para. 20), "justice delivered" (para. 1). Shapes perception.
Presupposition Reinforcement	5	1, 13, 20, 21, 22	Strengthens assumptions, e.g., "Indian-sponsored terrorism" (para. 21), "ghastly attack" (para. 13). Reinforces hostility.
Narrative or Storytelling	4	12, 14, 21, 23	Constructs triumph story, e.g., "synergy between all elements" (para. 21), "Wall of Steel" (para. 12). Engages audience.
Allusion	3	2, 12, 23	References Islamic texts, e.g., "Surah Anfal" (para. 23), "Bunyanum Marsoos" (para. 12). Resonates culturally.

1.6 Deixis

Deixis devices are linguistic expressions (e.g., pronouns, demonstratives) anchoring discourse to context, indicating participants, time, or place. They are crucial in discourse for clarifying roles, settings, and temporal frames, shaping meaning and ideological stance in communication (van Dijk, 2008).

Table 2: Represents the deixis along with their frequency, purpose and example

Deixis Expression Type	Description	Purpose	Frequency	Example	Paragraph References
Personal Deixis	Pronouns referring to participants (e.g., speaker, addressee, others) in the communicative situation.	Anchors discourse to participant identities and roles in the context model.	38	"We extend our heartfelt gratitude" (para. 5) reflects ISPR's collective role addressing the nation.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
Spatial Deixis	Words or phrases indicating location relative to the speaker (e.g., here, there, this place).	Ties discourse to the physical or institutional setting in the context model.	6	"Pakistan's airspace" (para. 13) anchors the discourse to the conflict zone.	12, 13, 14, 21, 23

Deixis Expression Type	Description	Purpose	Frequency	Example	Paragraph References
Temporal Deixis	Expressions marking time relative to the communicative event (e.g., now, then, today).	Links discourse to the temporal context in the context model.	8	"Night 6/7 May" (para. 13) situates the Indian attack in the conflict timeline.	1, 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 23
Demonstrative Deixis	Pronouns or determiners pointing to specific entities or ideas (e.g., this, that, these, those).	Highlights specific referents in the context model's focus.	12	"This battle" (para. 23) emphasizes the ongoing conflict, central to ISPR's goals.	5, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 23
Social Deixis	Expressions reflecting social relationships or roles (e.g., honorifics, formal pronouns).	Indicates power dynamics or social roles in the context model's participant relationships.	5	"Prime Minister" (para. 15) shows respect for leadership, aligning with hierarchical dynamics.	2, 15, 19, 23
Discourse Deixis	References to parts of the discourse itself (e.g., this argument, that point).	Connects discourse to its own structure, reflecting the context model's communicative actions.	4	"These words" (para. 4) ties to the gratitude expressed, per ISPR's communicative act.	4, 12, 23

1.7 Style and register

Style and register involve linguistic choices like formality, tone, and vocabulary, shaping discourse's tone and context. In van Dijk's CDA model, they're vital at the discourse level, reflecting context models, conveying ideology, and influencing audience perception effectively (van Dijk, 2008).

1.7.1 Formality Level
The press release employs a high formality level, using institutional language to align with ISPR's official role. This reflects the context model's institutional norms, as seen in "Pakistan Armed Forces have delivered the promise," enhancing credibility and authority.

1.7.2 Tone
An authoritative yet reverent tone shapes the press release, reflecting ISPR's goal to assert dominance and unity. For example, "Pakistan Air Force… did not allow" conveys military strength, aligning with the context model's persuasive aims in the conflict narrative.

1.7.3 Lexical Choices
The press release selects military and religious vocabulary, like "magnificent success" and "Almighty Allah," to convey precision and ideology. This aligns with the context model's cultural goals, resonating with the audience and reinforcing nationalist sentiments in the discourse.

1.7.4 Syntactic Structures
Complex sentences and active voice, such as "Armed Forces thank Almighty Allah…" and "We extend our gratitude," enhance formality and agency. These structures align with the context model's communicative actions,

emphasizing ISPR's authority and ideological stance.

1.7.5 Genre Conventions

The press release adheres to military press release norms, with official statements like "Justice was delivered." This ensures the discourse fits the context model's expected practice, reinforcing ISPR's institutional role and legitimacy in the Marka-e-Haq conflict.

1.7.6 Politeness Strategies

Politeness strategies, such as "heartfelt gratitude," show respect to stakeholders, fostering unity. These choices reflect the context model's participant relationships, maintaining social harmony while aligning with ISPR's goal of rallying national support in the discourse.

1.7.7 Rhetorical Devices

Metaphors like "Wall of Steel" and repetition of "gratitude" amplify persuasion in the press release. These devices, driven by the context model's persuasive goals, enhance ideological impact, reinforcing ISPR's narrative of strength and unity.

1.8 Irony

Irony is a rhetorical device where the intended meaning differs from the literal expression, often to critique or persuade. In van Dijk's sociocognitive CDA model, irony operates at the discourse level, shaping ideology and power dynamics. It subtly mocks opponents, exposes contradictions, or highlights absurdities, aligning with the context model's goals.

1.8.1 Sarcasm

The press release uses sarcasm with sharp, mocking remarks to criticize India's propaganda, reflecting relational tensions. "Dis-information blitz" mocks India's failed efforts, aligning with ISPR's context model to assert superiority and undermine India's credibility in the conflict.

1.8.2 Indirectness

Indirectness in the press release employs subtle critiques to imply India's deceit without confrontation, maintaining decorum. "Indian state machinery's false narrative" signals opposition, reflecting ISPR's context model's

need for civility while critiquing India's actions in the discourse.

1.8.3 Understatement

Understatement downplays Pakistan's actions to highlight moral superiority, aligning with strategic framing. "Remarkably restrained" minimizes retaliation's scale, reflecting ISPR's context model to emphasize restraint and contrast Pakistan's ethical stance against India's aggression in the conflict (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025).

1.8.4 Overstatement (Hyperbolic Irony)

Overstatement exaggerates India's actions for ironic effect, mocking their aggression. "Ghastly attack" amplifies India's hostility, reflecting ISPR's context model to expose contradictions humorously and critique India's narrative while reinforcing Pakistan's defensive stance in the discourse.

1.8.5 Verbal Irony

Verbal irony says one thing but means the opposite to critique subtly, navigating power dynamics. "Indian military aggression" implies India's unjust actions, reflecting ISPR's context model to frame Pakistan's response as just while critiquing India's motives.

1.8.6 Situational Irony (Implied)

Situational irony highlights contradictions between India's claims and reality, undermining their arguments. India's "terrorism" versus Pakistan's "peace" implies hypocrisy, reflecting ISPR's context model to expose inconsistencies and reinforce Pakistan's moral narrative in the conflict discourse.

1.8.7 Parody or Mimicry

Parody or mimicry, imitating another's style to mock, is absent in the press release, as ISPR avoids such devices. No example exists, reflecting the context model's formal tone, prioritizing institutional authority over ridicule in the discourse.

1.9 Presupposition

Presuppositions are implicit assumptions embedded in discourse, taken as true. In van Dijk's CDA model, they operate at the discourse level, shaping ideology via the context model.

They reinforce beliefs, unify audiences, and legitimize actions subtly (van Dijk, 2008).

1.9.1 Factual Presuppositions
Factual presuppositions assume events as true, establishing common ground. "Reprehensible Indian military aggression" and "ghastly attack" assume India's hostility as fact, aligning with ISPR's context model to justify Pakistan's response, reinforcing anti-India sentiment in the discourse.

1.9.2 Existential Presuppositions
Existential presuppositions assume entities exist, anchoring discourse to beliefs. "Indian-sponsored terrorism" and "Pakistan's resolve" imply their existence, reflecting ISPR's context model to vilify India and emphasize Pakistan's strength, embedding an anti-India narrative in the press release.

1.9.3 Propositional Presuppositions
Propositional presuppositions embed clauses as background knowledge, shaping interpretation. "Justice was delivered" and "magnificent success" assume the operation's importance, per ISPR's context model to highlight moral necessity, guiding audiences to accept Pakistan's actions as righteous.

1.9.4 Vaue Presuppositions
Value presuppositions assume shared norms, reinforcing ideology. "Brave Pakistani nation" and "heartfelt gratitude" presuppose patriotism and unity, aligning with ISPR's context model to rally support, embedding nationalist values in the Marka-e-Haq conflict discourse.

1.9.5 Implicational Presuppositions
Implicational presuppositions, triggered by verbs like "thank," imply prior conditions. "Thank Almighty Allah" and "appreciate the leadership" presuppose divine and governmental support, reflecting ISPR's context model to frame actions as guided, legitimizing the operation religiously.

1.9.6 Temporal Presuppositions
Temporal presuppositions assume event timing, linking to a timeline. "Night 6/7 May" and "still reverberates" presuppose critical timing, per ISPR's context model to anchor the conflict narrative, emphasizing the urgency of Pakistan's

response in the discourse (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025).

1.9.7 Counterfactual Presuppositions
Counterfactual presuppositions assume hypothetical scenarios to highlight stakes. "Pakistan would have been overwhelmed" and "without synergy" presuppose dire outcomes without action, per ISPR's context model to underscore urgency, persuading audiences of the operation's necessity (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025).

1.10 Context Model: Setting
The Context Model: Setting in the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025) frames the communication's temporal, spatial, and situational context, embedding nationalist ideologies. Subcategories include Time, Place, and Circumstances which shape the narrative, as mentioned in van Dijk's framework (van Dijk, 2008)

1.10.1 Time
The communication occurs on "*Rawalpindi - May 12, 2025*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 2), shortly after Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos" (May 9-10, 2025). This timing, post-conflict, emphasizes urgency and victory, framing the press release as a timely assertion of Pakistan's success

1.10.2 Place
The press release originates from "*Rawalpindi*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 2), identified as ISPR headquarters via "*No PR-152/2025-ISPR*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 3). This military communication hub underscores institutional authority, reinforcing the message's credibility and official stance

1.10.3 Circumstances
In this section, relevant situational factors are explored. Post-conflict pride is evident in "*magnificent success*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 11), global attention in "*diplomatic corps*" efforts (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 8), and Indian "*dis-information blitz*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 7). These factors frame Pakistan's unified response amid external scrutiny

1.11 Context Model: Participants

The Context Model: Participants defines the actors in the communication, embedding nationalist ideologies. Subcategories—Identities, Roles, and Relationships—shape the narrative, per van Dijk's framework (van Dijk, 2008).

1.11.1 Identities

The press release identifies ISPR via "*No PR-152/2025-ISPR*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 3) as the official voice, the "*brave Pakistani nation*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 5) as the primary audience, and the "*international fora*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 8) as the secondary audience.

1.11.2 Roles

• **Description**: Social or communicative roles.

• **Example from ISPR Press Release (May 12, 2025)**: ISPR as communicator, nation as supporters, media/diplomats as amplifiers.

1.11.3 Relationships

This section reveals the power dynamics between the participants. ISPR acts as communicator through "*No PR-152/2025-ISPR*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 3), the nation as supporters via "*unwavering moral strength*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 5), and "*vibrant media*" and "*diplomatic corps*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, paras. 7–8) as amplifiers, reinforcing Pakistan's narrative.

1.12 Context Model: Actions

The **Context Model: Actions** in the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025) outlines linguistic and social actions, embedding nationalist ideologies. Subcategories—Communicative Acts and Social Practices—shape the narrative, per van Dijk's framework (van Dijk, 2008).

1.12.1 Communicative Acts

This section explores linguistic actions in discourse. The press release announces victory, justifies actions, thanks stakeholders, and warns via "*retributive response will be comprehensive*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 22). These acts: announcing "*magnificent success*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 11), and thanking "*Almighty Allah*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025,

para. 2) legitimize Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos"

1.12.2 Social Practices

In this section, broader social activities tied to discourse are explored. The discourse engages in military communication through "*No PR-152/2025-ISPR*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 3), nation-building via "*synergy between all elements*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 21), and diplomatic advocacy with "*diplomatic corps*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 8), reinforcing Pakistan's unified stance

1.13 Context Model: Intentions/Goals

This section focuses on the aims of the interaction. The selected text aims to legitimize Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos" via "*precise, proportionate*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 20), unify the nation through "*synergy*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 21), counter India's "*dis-information blitz*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 7), and deter aggression with "*retributive response*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 22).

1.13.1 Context Model: Knowledge

The Context Model: Knowledge and Self-Representation in the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025) shape the communication's ideological narrative, embedding nationalist and Islamic values, as per van Dijk's framework (van Dijk, 2008).

1.13.2 Personal Knowledge

This explores the individual beliefs relevant to the situation. ISPR's belief in the operation's success and India's aggression is evident in "*magnificent success*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 11) and "*ghastly attack*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 13). These terms reflect confidence in Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos" and India's hostility, shaping the narrative

1.13.3 Shared Knowledge (Common Ground)

In this section, assumed and shared sociocultural knowledge is explored. The press release assumes shared knowledge of Pakistan's "*unwavering strength*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 9), Islamic values via "*Surah Anfal*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 23), and India-Pakistan rivalry

through "*dastardly attacks*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 1), unifying the audience.

1.14 Context Model: Self-Representation

This section deals with how participants perceive themselves. DG ISPR presents itself as authoritative and patriotic, shouting "*PAKISTAN ZINDABAD*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 23) and representing a "*resilient*" nation (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 22). This self-image reinforces national pride and ISPR's role as a unified voice.

2. COGNITIVE LEVEL ANALYSIS

2.1 Mental Model: Event Representation

2.1.1 Who

It includes the subjective representation of the event, including who is involved. India as aggressor, Pakistan as victim and defender and civilians as victims of Indian attacks.

2.1.2 What

It describes what happens in the event. This event includes Indian "dastardly attacks" on May 6–7, 2025, killing civilians, as a result, Pakistan launched a retaliatory Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos."

2.1.3 Where

The locations mentioned in the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025) for the events of Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos" during the Marka-e-Haq conflict span multiple regions, reflecting the geopolitical scope of the conflict. These include Pakistan's civilian areas, which were targeted by Indian attacks on May 6–7, 2025, and served as the primary justification for Pakistan's retaliation. The press release also references Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, where Pakistan engaged military targets and facilities linked to terrorism against Pakistani citizens. Mainland India is prominently featured, with specific locations such as Suratgarh, Sirsa, Bhuj, Naliya, Adampur, Bhatinda, Barnala, Halwara, Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Udhampur, Mamun, Ambala, Pathankot, Beas, Nagrota, Uri, Poonch, Rajauri, Naushera, and New Delhi, where Pakistan targeted air force bases, BrahMos storage facilities, S-400 battery systems, military logistics sites, command headquarters, and intelligence units.

Additionally, the text mentions Azad Jammu and Kashmir, where Indian artillery and small arms fire caused civilian casualties, and the western regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan, which experienced an abnormal spike in Indian-sponsored terrorism during the conflict. Cyberspace is also noted as a domain where Pakistan conducted operations to degrade Indian infrastructure, highlighting the multi-dimensional nature of the conflict's locations.

2.1.4 When

In this category we see the timing of the event. In the text, May 6 and 7, 2025 are mentioned for Indian attacks and May 9 and 10, 2025 are mentioned for Pakistan's response.

2.1.5 Why

Reasons or causes of the event are discussed in this category. The analysis of the text reveals Indian aggression and terrorism sponsorship and Pakistan's need for justice and defense of sovereignty.

2.2 Mental Model: Participants

Mental model participants include analysis if identities, roles and relationships.

2.2.1 Identities

It analyzes the actors or agents in the event. The identities of main actors shape the narrative of the Marka-e-Haq conflict. India is portrayed as a "reprehensible" aggressor, responsible for "dastardly" and "ghastly" attacks on civilians, framing it as morally culpable. Conversely, the Pakistan Armed Forces are depicted as heroic defenders, delivering "justice" with divine support, while the Pakistani nation, including its youth and media, is characterized as resilient, unified, and supportive, reinforcing national strength and solidarity.

2.2.2 Roles

Roles of participants are analyzed in this section. Participant roles define the Marka-e-Haq conflict's dynamics. India is cast as the attacker, launching "dastardly" assaults on civilian targets, while Pakistan assumes the role of retaliator, executing Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos" to deliver "justice." Pakistani civilians are portrayed as victims of Indian aggression, with the youth

elevated as "cyber warriors," actively supporting the national defense effort.

2.2.3 Relationships

Dynamics between participants are analyzed in this section. Relationships among participants reveal distinct dynamics, with a hostile stance between Pakistan and India, marked by India's "dastardly" aggression and Pakistan's "retribution." Within Pakistan, the Armed Forces and nation share a unified bond, supported by a hierarchical structure where the military leads civilians, including "cyber warrior" youth, in a cohesive national effort.

2.3 Mental Model: Actions and Processes

Actions and processes or events are included in it.

2.3.1 Actions

Specific actions in the event are explored in this section. In the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025), actions during the Marka-e-Haq conflict include India's missile attacks on civilian infrastructure, Pakistan's precision strikes on 26 Indian military targets using Fatah missiles and artillery, and cyber operations to degrade Indian infrastructure. These actions depict India as an aggressor and Pakistan as a strategic retaliator, reinforcing a narrative of justified defense and military prowess

2.3.2 Events/Processes

In this section, broader processes or outcomes are explored. In the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025), events/processes encompass the broader dynamics and outcomes of the Marka-e-Haq conflict, including conflict escalation triggered by India's "ghastly" attacks, Pakistan's military success through Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos," and the neutralization of Indian capabilities, such as S-400 systems. These processes frame India's aggression as the catalyst and Pakistan's response as a triumphant, strategic victory, reinforcing nationalist narratives and military dominance

2.4 Mental Model: Setting

The Mental Model: Setting constructs the temporal, spatial, and situational context of the Marka-e-Haq conflict, framing Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos" as a justified response to Indian aggression. These subcategories: Time, Place, and Circumstances encode ideological narratives and power dynamics, aligning with van Dijk's sociocognitive framework (van Dijk, 2008).

2.4.1 Time

The temporal context of the Marka-e-Haq conflict, as outlined in the press release, is set post-May 6–7, 2025, immediately following India's "ghastly" attacks on Pakistani civilian areas. This timing positions Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos," launched on May 9–10, 2025, as a swift retaliatory response, emphasizing urgency and resolve. The reference to a "tense post-9/11-like security context" situates the events within a broader global framework of heightened security concerns, amplifying the perceived threat from India and reinforcing Pakistan's narrative of defensive necessity.

2.4.2 Place

The spatial context spans multiple regions, reflecting the conflict's extensive scope. Pakistan's border regions, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir, were sites of Indian artillery fire and civilian casualties, grounding Pakistan's victimhood narrative. Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and mainland Indian cities like New Delhi, Suratgarh, Sirsa, Bhuj, and others served as targets for Pakistan's precision strikes, showcasing military reach. Cyberspace is highlighted as a domain for Pakistan's operations to degrade Indian infrastructure, underscoring the modern, multi-domain nature of the conflict and Pakistan's technological prowess.

2.4.3 Circumstances

The situational factors include an "abnormal and immediate spike" in Indian-sponsored terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, which coincided with Pakistan's eastern front operations, reinforcing India's role as a destabilizing force. Global diplomatic scrutiny, addressed through Pakistan's "diplomatic corps" advocating at international fora, shapes the context as one of external validation for Pakistan's actions. These circumstances frame Pakistan as a nation under siege, justifying its military response and appealing to both domestic unity and international legitimacy.

2.5 Mental Model: Intentions and Goals

In the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025), the Mental Model: Intentions and Goals delineates the perceived motivations and objectives of participants in the Marka-e-Haq conflict, embedding nationalist and Islamic ideologies. These subcategories—Intention and Goal—construct a narrative of Pakistan as a justified defender against India's aggression, aligning with van Dijk's sociocognitive framework (van Dijk, 2008).

2.5.1 Intention

It deals with the perceived intentions of participants. The press release attributes to India an intention to intimidate and destabilize Pakistan, evident in its "ghastly" missile attacks on civilian infrastructure on May 6–7, 2025, and an "abnormal and immediate spike" in sponsored terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. In contrast, Pakistan's intention is to deliver "justice" and protect sovereignty, as articulated through its vow for "retribution" against India's "reprehensible" aggression. These perceived intentions polarize India as a malicious aggressor and Pakistan as a righteous defender, shaping the audience's mental model of the conflict

2.5.2 Goal

In this section, goals driving actions are explored. Pakistan's goals, as outlined in the press release, are to demonstrate military expertise and national unity, achieved through the "retributive response" of Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos." The operation's success in neutralizing 26 Indian military targets, including S-400 systems, showcases advanced capabilities, while the "synergy" among the armed forces, media, youth, and public underscores a unified national effort. These goals reinforce Pakistan's image as a formidable, cohesive nation, legitimizing its actions and rallying domestic support.

2.6 Mental Model: Knowledge and Beliefs

In the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025), the Mental Model: Knowledge and Beliefs shapes the narrative of the Marka-e-Haq conflict, characterized by nationalist and Islamic ideologies. Personal Knowledge and Beliefs or assumptions utilize linguistic choices to frame Pakistan as a justified defender, according to van Dijk's framework (van Dijk, 2008).

2.6.1 Personal Knowledge

In this section, individual beliefs shaping the representation are explored. The belief in India's terrorism role is shown by, "Pakistan also sustained an *abnormal and immediate spike* in Indian-sponsored terrorism across KP and Balochistan… This further *vindicates that India is directly involved* in fomenting terrorism in Pakistan" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 21). Terms like *vindicates* and *directly* assert India's destabilizing intent, justifying Pakistan's retaliation and fueling anti-Indian sentiment

2.6.2 Beliefs or Assumptions

Pakistan's response is assumed justified, as in, "Pakistan's military response has been *precise, proportionate, and still remarkably restrained*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 20), and "*Alhamdulillah*! Pakistan Armed Forces have delivered the promise made to our people" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 1). Adjectives *precise* and *restrained*, with *Alhamdulillah*, frame Pakistan as moral and successful united nation.

2.7 Mental Model: Emotions and Evaluations

The Mental Model: Emotions and Evaluations conveys emotional reactions to the Marka-e-Haq conflict, embedding nationalist and Islamic ideologies, as per van Dijk's framework (van Dijk, 2008).

2.7.1 Emotional Stance

This section focuses on the Emotional reactions to the event. The press release conveys gratitude to Allah, sympathy for *Shuhada*, and pride in "*magnificent success*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 11). These emotions—gratitude, sympathy, pride—unify the nation, legitimize Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos," and reinforce Pakistan's moral stance.

2.4.1 Evaluative Stance

In emotional stance, judgments about participants or events are explored in the text. India is judged as "*brutal*" and "*reckless*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, paras. 1, 7), Pakistan as

"*precise*" and "*restrained*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 20). These terms frame India as morally inferior, Pakistan as superior, unifying the nation and legitimizing Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos".

3.   SOCIAL LEVEL ANALYSIS

The Social Level Analysis of the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025) examines power, ideologies, and social impacts, embedding nationalist and Islamic values. Subcategories of social level analysis include power relations, ideologies, inequalities, social contexts and social cosequences (van Dijk, 2008).

3.1   Power Relations

The Power Relations in the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025) highlight the control and expression of authority in the Marka-e-Haq conflict narrative, embedding nationalist ideologies, per van Dijk's framework (van Dijk, 2008).

3.1.1   Who Controls the Discourse?

This section explores Identifying who holds authority over the discourse. Pakistan Armed Forces, via "*No PR-152/2025-ISPR*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 3), wield authority. ISPR's institutional power, shown in "*delivered the promise*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 1), shapes public perception, presenting Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos" as a unified, legitimate effort.

3.1.2   How is Power Enacted?

It explores the mechanisms of power expression. Power is expressed through an authoritative tone in "*delivered the promise*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 1), divine legitimacy via "*Surah Anfal*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 23), and exclusion of Indian perspectives, silencing their narrative to reinforce Pakistan's dominance.

3.2   Ideologies

The Ideologies in the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025) promote beliefs and values, shaping the Marka-e-Haq conflict narrative with nationalist and Islamic ideologies, per van Dijk's framework (van Dijk, 2008).

3.2.1   Embedded Beliefs/Values

In this section, beliefs or values which are promoted in the discourse. The discourse promotes nationalism through "*PAKISTAN ZINDABAD*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 23), Islamic unity via "*Almighty Allah*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 2), and anti-Indian sentiment with "*Indian-sponsored terrorism*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 21), reinforcing a unified national identity.

3.2.2   Reproduction Mechanisms

This section explores how ideologies are sustained? Ideologies are sustained via presuppositions like "*ghastly attack*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 13), framing Pakistan as "*restrained*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 20), and emotional appeals through "*courage*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 4), solidifying nationalist and Islamic values.

3.3   Inequalities

In this section, marginalization/empowerment and explains how groups are affected by the discourse? The discourse marginalizes India, calling them "*reckless*" and "*brutal*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, paras. 7, 1), while empowering Pakistan's nation, notably "*cyber warriors*" youth (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 6). This elevates Pakistani identity and silences Indian perspectives, reinforcing superiority.

3.4   Institutional Contexts

It explores shaping social practices and focuses on role of institutions in discourse. The military, via "*No PR-152/2025-ISPR*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 3), shapes discourse, amplified by "*vibrant media*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 7) and "*diplomatic corps*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 8). These institutions unify Pakistan's narrative, enhancing its authority.

3.5   Social Consequences

In this section, the legitimization and resistance are explored. Impact of discourse on dominance or resistance. The discourse legitimizes military action and unity through "*synergy between all elements*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 21), countering India's "*dis-information blitz*" (Pakistan Armed Forces, 2025, para. 7). It

strengthens resistance to aggression, solidifying national resolve and dominance.

4.   Conclusion

Employing van Dijk's sociocognitive CDA, this study analyzes the Pakistan Armed Forces' press release (PR-152/2025-ISPR, May 12, 2025) to explore linguistic choices, power dynamics, and ideologies in the Marka-e-Haq conflict. Writers use negative adjectives to demonize India and positive terms to sanctify Pakistan's military response, alongside metaphors and religious allusions to assert moral superiority. Power dynamics emerge through the military's authoritative voice, which marginalizes India's perspective via implicit assumptions, reinforcing institutional dominance (van Dijk, 2008). The text constructs a polarized narrative, positioning Pakistan as a unified defender against an aggressive adversary, reflecting strategic communication in a tense geopolitical context.

The study advances CDA by applying it to South Asian military discourse, addressing gaps in non-Western analyses (Khan & Ahmad, 2021). It reveals how digital-era strategies, such as mobilizing youth, shape national narratives, offering insights into conflict-driven identity construction (Ahmed & Khan, 2023). Limited to a single text, future research could compare Indian narratives or examine media amplification to uncover broader digital dynamics. This work highlights language's role in shaping perceptions, urging critical reflection on institutional narratives' impact on collective identity and regional stability, particularly in high-stakes rivalries with profound human consequences (van Dijk, 2021b).

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APPENDIX

Marka-e-Haq - 22 April 2025 to 10 May 2025 The conduct of Pakistan Armed Forces Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos", on 10 May 2025 as part of the military conflict Marka-e-Haq, was in response to Indian military's dastardly attacks that began on the night of 6 & 7 May 2025, resulting in the loss of innocent civilian lives, including women, children, and the elderly.

Rawalpindi - May 12, 2025
No PR-152/2025-ISPR

Marka-e-Haq - 22 April 2025 to 10 May 2025

The conduct of Pakistan Armed Forces Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos", on 10 May 2025 as part of the military conflict Marka-e-Haq, was in response to Indian military's dastardly attacks that began on the night of 6 & 7 May 2025, resulting in the loss of innocent civilian lives, including women, children, and the elderly. Pakistan had vowed justice and retribution for the reprehensible Indian military aggression and brutal killings of our citizens. Alhamdulillah! Pakistan Armed Forces have delivered the promise made to our people.

Armed Forces thank Almighty Allah for His infinite blessings, mercy, help, and divine support. Allah has ordained the believers to retaliate whenever they are wronged. We bow our heads to Him in utmost humility for enabling us to translate our resolve into decisive actions on the battlefield.

Our hearts and sympathies are with the wards and families of the Shuhada who sacrificed their lives for the beloved country. We pray for the quick recovery of our injured countrymen.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to every officer, soldier, airman, and sailor of the Armed Forces of Pakistan who made this success on the battlefield possible through their courage, professionalism, and sacrifice.

The Armed Forces of Pakistan express their profound appreciation and gratitude to the brave Pakistani nation whose unwavering moral strength, resolve, and above all, wholehearted support and prayers remained with us during these trying times. This support was indeed the most potent force multiplier for the Armed Forces of Pakistan.

We are especially indebted to the youth of Pakistan, who became frontline soldiers as the cyber and information warriors of the country.

Profound gratitude is also due to the vibrant media of Pakistan, which stood like Bunyanum Marsoos, a steel wall against the Indian media's dis-information blitz and reckless war-mongering.

We also extend our appreciation to the diplomatic corps for effectively representing Pakistan's just case on international fora with clarity and conviction.

We express gratitude to our scientists and engineers for developing indigenous and specialized niche technologies that were instrumental in the magnificent success of Operation "Bunyanum Marsoos".

Armed Forces are extremely grateful to the political leadership of all political parties, without any distinction, for the show of unified resolve in our support for the defence of our motherland.

The Armed Forces are specifically grateful to the inspiring leadership of the Prime Minister of Pakistan and his Cabinet Ministers for taking destiny-altering decisions for the country and steering it through this critical situation.

During Indian ghastly attack on night 6/7 May, India launched missiles from stand-off on civilian infrastructure and places of worship targeting innocent civilians including women and children. Pakistan Air Force and Ground Based Air Defence Systems did not allow any Indian aircraft to enter Pakistan's airspace. In the ensuing battle, 5 Indian fighter aircraft including 3 Rafaels, 1 SU-30 and 1 Mig 29 were struck and destroyed by Pakistan Air Force and Air Defence Systems in addition to a Heron Unmanned Aerial System. Allhamdolillah, Pakistan Airforce remained unscathed in the battle and demonstrated par excellence professionalism.

Pakistan's retaliatory response named Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, Quranic phrase meaning Wall of Steel, initiated on night 9/10 May was a textbook demonstration of integrated tri-services jointness, enabled by real-time situational awareness, network-centric warfare capabilities, and seamless multi-domain operations. This synergy across air, land, sea, and cyber domains allowed for precision engagement, overwhelming lethality, and lightening operational tempo. All platforms operated in synergy, delivering coordinated effects at carefully selected decisive points.

Using precision-guided long-range Fatah series missiles F1 and F2 of Pakistan Army, precision munitions of PAF, highly capable long-range loitering killer munitions, and precision long-range artillery, 26x military targets as well as facilities that were used to target Pakistani citizens, and those enterprises that were responsible for fomenting terrorism in Pakistan, were engaged in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and also mainland India.

The targets included Air Force and Aviation bases at Suratgarh, Sirsa, Bhuj, Naliya, Adampur, Bhatinda, Barnala, Halwara, Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Udhampur, Mamun, Ambala, and Pathankot, all of which sustained major damages.

BrahMos storage facilities at Beas and Nagrota were also destroyed, which had fired missiles on Pakistan killing innocent civilians including women, children and elderly.

S-400 battery systems at Adampur and Bhuj were also attacked and effectively neutralised by Pakistan Air Force.

Military logistics and support sites, which helped sustain this unlawful operation against innocent Pakistani civilians—like Field Supply Depot at Uri and Radar Station at Poonch—were also targeted.

Military Command Headquarters which helped plan the operational killing of our innocent citizens, especially the children, including 10 Bde and 80 Bde at KG Top and Naushera, were completely destroyed.

Facilities which harboured, trained, and capacitated proxy elements that perpetrated terrorist attacks inside Pakistan and killed innocent civilians were specifically identified and destroyed. These include intelligence units and their forward field elements at Rajauri and Naushera.

Across the LOC, military elements including HQs, logistic bases, artillery positions, and posts that had caused civilian casualties in Azad Jammu and Kashmir through unprovoked artillery and small arms fire were relentlessly targeted and heavily damaged, until they raised white flags and asked for restraint.

India used drones to violate Pakistani airspace to intimidate our civilians and spread fear. All through Operation Bunyanum Marsoos, dozens of Pakistani armed drones hovered over Indian major cities and sensitive political and government facilities—including their capital New Delhi—and from Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir all the way to Gujarat to clearly manifest our lethal long-range unmanned capability, indicating the futility of the use of this domain in warfare.

Pakistan Armed Forces also carried out comprehensive and effective cyber operations to temporarily cripple and degrade critical infrastructure and services that were being used by Indian Armed Forces to sustain their operations.

Pakistan Armed Forces possess an 'adequate' suite of very sophisticated 'niche military technologies', and only a limited number and type were used with restraint in this conflict.

Despite all this, compared to Indian relentless provocations, Pakistan's military response has been precise, proportionate, and still remarkably restrained. It was carefully calibrated to avoid civilian casualties and exclusively targeted those entities and facilities which were directly involved in orchestrating and executing the cold-blooded killings of Pakistani civilians and those carrying out terrorist attacks inside Pakistan.

Pakistan also sustained an abnormal and immediate spike in Indian-sponsored terrorism across KP and Balochistan while its armed forces were busy in operations on the eastern front. This further vindicates that India is directly involved in fomenting terrorism in Pakistan, and its proxies were fully operationalised during this time to distract our attention.

The resilient Armed Forces of Pakistan carried out most effective counter-terrorism operations in the western region without any pause simultaneously with the conduct of Operation Bunyanum Marsoos.

Marka-e-Haq has been a great example of the synergy between all elements of national power, with overwhelming support of the Pakistani public, to effectively counter the threat to our national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

No one should doubt that whenever Pakistan's sovereignty is threatened and territorial integrity violated, the retributive response will be comprehensive and decisive. Pakistan Armed Forces thank and salute the Pakistani nation for its courage, resilience, and fervour during this conflict.

"THEY PLAN AND ALLAH PLANS.

AND ALLAH IS THE BEST OF PLANNERS" (Surah Anfal)

PAKISTAN ZINDABAD

AFWAJ-E-PAKISTAN PAINDABAD

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