



## **Lexical Landscape of Climate Change Discourse in Bangladeshi National Newspapers: A Corpus Linguistic Analysis**

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### **ABSTRACT**

As climate vulnerability intensifies and environmental debates become increasingly politicized, Bangladeshi national newspapers assume a pivotal role as discursive arenas where climate change is articulated through the socio-political idioms of the nation-state. To investigate how this articulation takes shape, the study applies corpus linguistic methods to a purposefully compiled dataset comprising nearly 350 opinion essays and news reports, amounting to approximately 400,000 tokens, published across three leading Bangla dailies between 2020 and 2025. The analysis reveals a hybridized discursive framework in which scientific credibility is interwoven with emotive resonance, temporal urgency, and developmental-nationalist logic. Rather than foregrounding global mitigation policies, newspapers localize the discourse centering lived vulnerability, infrastructural resilience, and collective agency to foster a participatory, if elite-mediated, climate consciousness. Keyword and concordance patterns further expose an economic framing that underscores aid dependency, financial risk, and global injustice, while simultaneously promoting Bangladesh as a resilient, technologically optimistic, and morally authoritative actor. The discourse privileges policy and academic voices, often marginalizing grassroots and ecological perspectives in favor of narratives that align with neoliberal development agendas. Ultimately, the study argues that Bangladeshi media reconfigures climate change as both an existential peril and a developmental opportunity functioning less as neutral chroniclers and more as discursive architects of a climate-resilient nationalism embedded in global political ecologies.

*Keywords: climate change, corpus linguistics, developmental nationalism, environmental communication, media discourse*

## Introduction

Climate change is no longer a distant threat confined to scientific projections; it is an ongoing, multifaceted crisis unfolding globally. Its impacts are increasingly visible in extreme weather events, rising sea levels, biodiversity loss, and social dislocations. But beyond melting glaciers and surging temperatures, there lies another, subtler realm in which the climate crisis is shaped and understood: the realm of language. Language is not merely a passive medium through which knowledge is transmitted, it is an active agent that shapes perception, constructs reality, and governs public discourse (Fairclough, 2013). In this context, the way climate change is linguistically constructed in the media, for instance what is said, what is omitted, which metaphors are employed, and whose voices are amplified, plays a crucial role in framing public understanding, political urgency, and policy responses.

In nations, particularly vulnerable to climate change, such as Bangladesh, this linguistic framing becomes even more critical. Bangladesh is routinely described as “ground zero” for climate-related threats, a country at the nexus of environmental precarity and socio-economic vulnerability (Huq & Rabbani, 2011). While global reports highlight its susceptibility to floods, cyclones, salinity intrusion, and displacement, the way these risks are communicated within national boundaries, particularly through mainstream news media, has received limited scholarly attention. Yet, the media holds immense sway in shaping the contours of national climate discourse.

Newspapers, especially in countries where digital access is stratified by class, serve as important mediators of knowledge. In Bangladesh, national Bangla dailies such as *The Prothom Alo*, *The Daily Janakantha*, and *The Daily Ittefaq* remain central to the information landscape. They function not only as news providers but arenas where social problems get arbitrated, political narratives get crafted, and scientific facts get transformed into mass media consumptions. Hence, the reporting on climate change by the Bangladeshi newspapers cannot merely reflect global environmental issues; it is framed within the specific context of Bangladeshi politics, donor politics, development discourse, and nationalism. Climate change discourse in Bangladesh is complex, given the country’s status as both highly affected by and

actively engaged in climate issues. Analyzing the vocabulary, word frequency, and patterns in this discourse can reveal underlying cultural and ideological perspectives. To gain these insights, a corpus-based approach is essential.

A burgeoning, albeit diffuse, body of literature exists on the communication of climate change in Bangladesh. This literature, however, predominantly addresses issues of communication and awareness strategy development (Kabir et al. 2016). Again, a corpus-based, linguistically oriented analysis of reporting on environmental issues by media outlets from Bangladesh is virtually non-existent. This absence is not trivial. As climate discourse increasingly becomes a site of ideological contestation, between development and environment, between vulnerability and resilience, between science and politics, the need for methodologically rigorous, linguistically grounded analysis becomes urgent. Thus, without understanding how climate change is talked about in the Bangladeshi press, we risk misunderstanding how it is thought about by its citizens, policymakers, and civil society actors. Therefore, this study undertakes a systematic exploration of the lexical landscape of climate change discourse as represented in *The Prothom Alo*, *The Daily Janakantha*, and *The Daily Ittefaq*, three leading Bangladeshi national newspapers, by analyzing a corpus constructed from op-ed articles and news reports published over a five-year period.

## Literature Review

The discourse on climate change has been extensively analyzed across various media and corporate contexts, yet regional perspectives, particularly from countries like Bangladesh, remain underexplored. The study of Collins (2015) utilized semantic annotation tools like WMatrix to analyze online user comments on climate change in *The Guardian*, identifying key semantic domains such as "science", "weather", and "evaluation". Whereas this research concentrates on the function of online media in establishing public debate, it overlooks how national newspapers in climate-risk countries may frame climate change differently, more specifically on the matter of urgency and local effect. Likewise, Nhung (2018) used critical discourse analysis (CDA) in comparing developing and developed nations' coverage in *The Independent* and *The New York Times*, where a binary is revealed in which the developed world

is portrayed as unwilling actors and the developing world is depicted as relying on outside assistance. This study emphasizes Western media's ideological biases but fails to discuss how national media in developing nations may deconstruct or reinforce such discourses. Nonetheless, Kapranov (2016) examined the application of discourse markers in BP and Shell's corporate discourses, showing how linguistic elements like "and" and "as" create authoritative and formal discourses regarding climate change. Although this research offers an insight into corporate framing practices, it does not examine how media in nations such as Bangladesh that are existentially susceptible to climate change may use lexical choices to prioritize vulnerability, adaptation, or responsibility.

Research on media discourse of climate change has proliferated, especially within the framework of how lexical choice influences public opinion and policy priorities. An analysis of tweets by Spanish politicians (Ghoraba, 2023) revealed that there are certain words framing climate change as a "villain" and human beings as "saviors". War metaphors and the magic of language to affect individuals were revealed in the research. Similarly, Awal's (2025) content analysis on English secondary-level textbooks used in Bangladesh reveals that climate change and renewable energy are dominating keywords, which restricts students' ecological literacy. This confirms Zhou's (2021) intuition that ecolinguistics offers a mediating platform between nature and language use to facilitate the smoothness of sustainability speech.

Meanwhile, corpus linguistic research on climate change communication is gaining popularity. Fatima and Arslan (2023) have done an eco-linguistic examination of the Pakistan's DAWN newspaper with the aim of finding a stark lack of concern for environmental issues in political and economic discourse. Their corpus analysis showed that extremely common words are social issues such as power and economy, while environmental vocabulary was scarce. This role of media legitimized ideologies and excluded environmental issues. Ghosh and Boykoff (2018) contrasted Indian vernacular and English-language reporting on climate change, which identified local versus elite frames. The findings explained how Bengali media built socio-economic exposures, while English media emphasized biodiversity and

international debate, thus illustrating how climate discourse is framed within linguistic and cultural contexts.

Bangladeshi national press lexis of climate change can be explained by reference to three trailblazing investigations into the language use, media framing, and sociolinguistic accommodation in South Asian contexts. Firstly, Ikram et al. (2024) use CDA to investigate the ideological framing of Bangladesh's political crisis in international print media, and how language such as polarity, metaphor, and labeling construct narratives (e.g., "autocrat" vs. "freedom fighters"). Against this backdrop, Ali and Abdulhaleem (2023) have used Biber's Multidimensional Analysis to explore the lexico-grammar of crime reporting in South Asian Englishes, including Bangladesh. The study identified typical linguistic variation in the Bangladeshi media outlets, such as informational and explicit discourse involving nominalizations and phrasal coordination. While their focus was on the reporting of crime, their method, corpus linguistics with register analysis is a helpful model for an analysis of climate change communication. Mokal and Halim's (2023) corpus-based analysis of Pakistani English newspapers demonstrates, secondly, how lexico-semantic variation ("Jihadi outfits", "lota culture") reflects local socio-cultural identities. This parallels Bangladesh's possible lexical innovations in climate language, in which "monga" (famine) or "char lands" (riverine islands) can have localized connotations. Last but not least, Mostafa and Jamila's (2024) investigation of Bangladeshi social media neologisms (e.g., "selfie" as সেলফি) provides an example of how international terms are incorporated into Bangla script, showing technological and cultural changes. Their lexico-semantic methodology, with frequency analysis through WebCorp, provides a research guide to monitoring climate neologisms (e.g., "climate refugee" in জলবায়ু শরণার্থী) in the media.

The study of lexical patterns in media discourse has also been at the heart of public language usage research, especially under crisis conditions. Orts and Vargas-Sierra (2022) investigated *The Guardian* and *El País* newspaper coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) techniques in order to demonstrate how governments employed lexical manipulation, utilizing fear-based implicatures, epistemic

asymmetry, and ontological metaphors, to shape behavior. The research presents evidence on the crucial role of media in enforcing authority via words related to limitations and crisis-motivated rhetoric; however, positive words (e.g., "support", "trust") were rarely used. Abbas's (2021) cross-national research into Iraqi and Jordanian COVID-19 coverage similarly identifies a correlation between politicized media framings and the subsequent distortion of public perception. These studies indicate influence regarding word choice in shaping ideological narratives amidst times of crisis.

A sophisticated conceptualization of climate rhetoric demands comparative and context-sensitive studies. Huang and Che (2024) illustrate the ideological foundations underlying Chinese and US news accounts of climate, showing how national identity is reasserted through lexis and modality in news stories. Their use of Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model and synthesis of corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis (CDA) offers a fruitful approach to investigating linguistic features characteristic of national ideologies. However, research on climate change discourse in South Asian contexts like Bangladesh remains sparse. This study addresses that gap by applying similar analytical tools to Bangladeshi newspapers, contextualizing the local media's lexical landscape within global paradigms, thereby contributing to a more inclusive understanding of climate change communication.

The theoretical framework for this study situates the research within the intersection of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL), using frequency, keyness, and concordance as primary tools to explore the lexical landscape of climate change discourse in Bangladeshi national newspapers. To illustrate, corpus linguistics is not merely a methodology but a paradigm shift in the way linguistic phenomena are studied. It employs computational tools to uncover patterns in large text corpora, supporting both inductive discovery and deductive hypothesis testing (McEnery & Hardie, 2012). Unlike introspective or anecdotal analyses, corpus-based studies ground linguistic inquiry in empirical evidence.

To anchor this investigation in meaning and power, CL is coupled with Critical Discourse Analysis. Discourse posits that language is a social practice imbued with ideology,

and texts are sites where power relations are enacted (Fairclough, 1995). Media discourse in particular reflects and shapes public perceptions through its framing of issues like climate change. Dijk (1998) underscores that ideological square operation, what is emphasized or suppressed in discourse, can be revealed through patterns of word choice, thematic emphasis, and attribution. Hence, a corpus-based analysis can complement CDA by exposing recurrent lexical items that reflect dominant ideologies, silences, or biases in climate discourse.

Frequency analysis is foundational in corpus linguistics and offers insights into the salience of linguistic items. According to Biber et al. (1998), high-frequency words are central to understanding the lexical norms of a discourse community. In this study, frequency analysis identifies top ten dominant lexical items and assesses their ideological, and cultural implications in the society. Importantly, frequency is not just a quantitative count but a sociolinguistic signal. High frequency may indicate a reactive frame, while low frequency may point to an adaptive, solution-oriented narrative. While frequency reveals what is common, keyness reveals what is remarkably frequent in a given corpus compared to a reference corpus. Keyness analysis helps in identifying terms that are statistically overused in climate change texts relative to general newspaper content, thereby isolating discourse-specific vocabulary. In this study, keyness analysis not only maps specialized vocabulary but also detects emerging or neglected climate narratives in Bangladeshi media.

While frequency and keyness provide quantitative overviews, concordance analysis allows researchers to examine how words are contextualized in their immediate textual environment. Concordancing involves retrieving all instances of a word (or phrase) along with its surrounding words, enabling the analysis of collocations, semantic prosody, and ideological framing (Hunston, 2022). In climate discourse, such contextual insights are essential to understand whether newspapers present climate change as a catastrophe, a development challenge, or a moral obligation. As Stubbs (2002) emphasizes, concordance analysis bridges the gap between surface patterns and deeper semantic structures. The lexicon “জলবায়ু” (climate) is chosen for the concordance analysis of this study. Therefore, the

corpus linguistic approach, in this study, is appropriate not only to uncover linguistic patterns but also to highlight the media's role in shaping environmental knowledge and action.

## Methods

This study employed a purposive textual sampling strategy to investigate the linguistic construction of climate change discourse in Bangla-language media. The data were sourced from three of the most prominent Bangla newspapers in Bangladesh, namely the *Prothom Alo*, *The Daily Janakantha*, and *The Daily Ittefaq*, selected on the basis of their national circulation, editorial influence, and sustained publication of both op-ed articles and news reports. These platforms were chosen to ensure both breadth and depth of discourse, capturing formal reporting alongside interpretive, opinion-driven narratives. The temporal scope of data collection extended from 1 January 2020 to 31 May 2025, a critical period marked by intensified global and regional dialogues surrounding environmental sustainability, policy shifts, and climate resilience. In this case, articles were queried with the Bangla keyword “জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন” (“climate change”), which also acted as a thematically targeted filter for semantic appropriateness of retrieved texts.

The initial collection yielded a large volume of content, which was then filtered out to produce a cleaned-up corpus consisting of 337 articles amounting to about four hundred thousand tokens (399903) of natural language text. The corpus was cleaned manually to remove unwanted content like commercials, editorials outside the scope of climate, non-climate mentions, and duplicate entries. This was done not just to provide textual clarity but also to preserve analytical precision in the process of corpus-based analysis. After the data cleaning process, the corpus was uploaded to Sketch Engine, a cutting-edge corpus analysis tool. To calculate comparative baseline lexical salience, the research used the reference corpus titled Bengali Web 2021 in order to gather standardized figures for Bangla lexical usage.

The analysis was organized into three main procedures: first, frequency analysis was done to get the top ten most frequent lexical items, offering a window into prevailing semantic fields; second, keyness analysis was done to find the top ten statistically key words that rendered the climate discourse corpus distinct from the general Bangla corpus,

uncovering thematic density and uniqueness of language used; and third, concordance analysis was conducted on the lemma “জলবায়ু” (“climate”), following its collocational pattern and discursive presence in sentences and narrative forms. Together, they enabled a comprehensive linguistic mapping of the manner in which climate change is discursively framed, prioritized, and contested in Bangla media, offering an empirical basis for understanding the socio-political and rhetorical contours of environmental communication in the country.

Result and Discussion

A corpus-based linguistic examination of Bangladeshi national newspaper coverage on climate change reveals a systematically constructed lexicon that foregrounds environmental concerns within the frame of national priorities.

Frequency Analysis

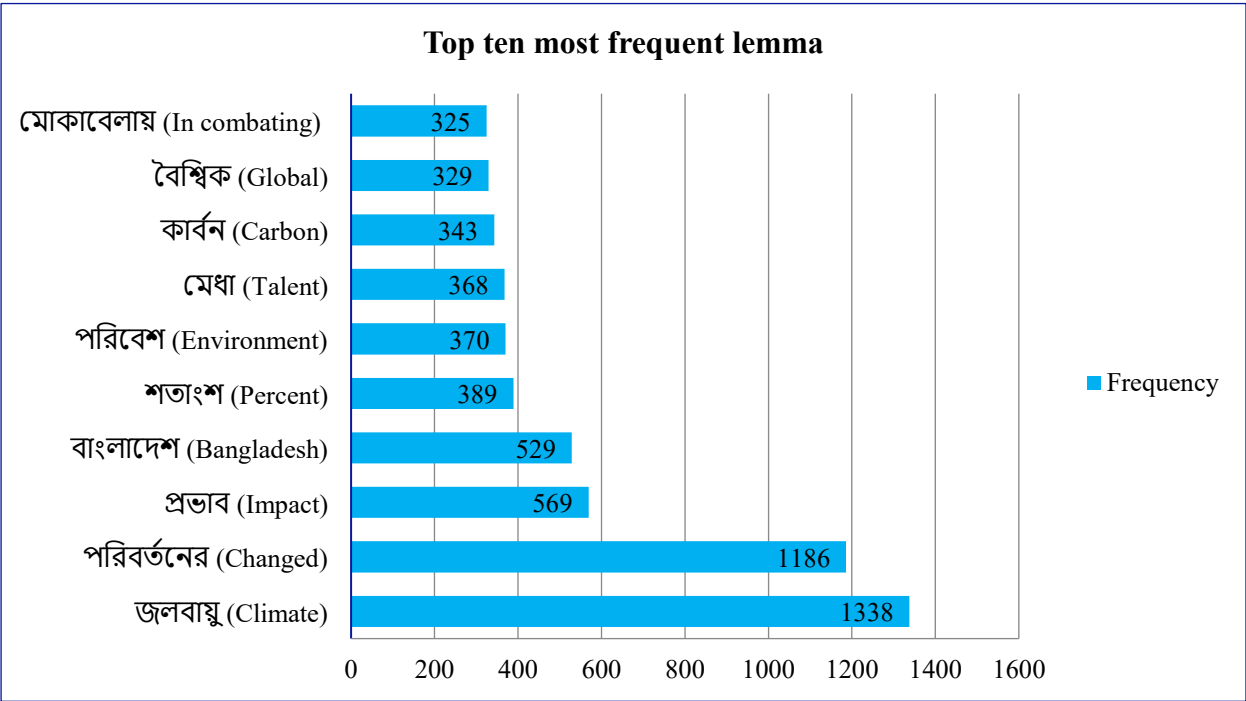


Figure 1  
Top ten most frequent lemma

Among the most frequent terms, "climate" emerges as the most dominant lexical item, occurring 1,338 times. This prominence indicates a strong thematic centering around the concept of climate as the primary subject of the discourse. The term "changed", appearing 1,186 times, clearly suggests that these articles consistently refer to "climate change" as a combined noun phrase. This common collocation is in line with previous linguistic tendencies in global climate discourse study (Carvalho, 2007), in which "climate" and "change" constituted the linguistic core of media framing. In the Bangladeshi setting, the recurrent evocation of this term most probably signifies a discursive normalization of climate change as an omnipresent environmental reality.

Most strikingly, the third most common term, "impact", with a frequency of 569, points to a discourse permeated with the consequences and effects of climate change-induced changes instead of mitigation measures or global policy-making processes. This finding concurs with Huq and Ayers (2007), who asserted that the climate change discourse in Bangladesh concentrates more on vulnerability and adaptation outcomes because of the nation's geographical as well as socio-economic susceptibility to climate impacts. Complementing this, "Bangladesh" and "environment" appear 529 and 370 times respectively indicating a localized and environment-focused discourse. The repetitive reference to the country strengthens the observation that climate change discourse within the country is strongly rooted in national self-image and conception as victim and stakeholder. In addition, the repetition of "percent" which appears 389 times indicates strong focus on numerical representation and data validity. The predominance of percentages herein signifies a rhetorical strategy for conveying objectivity and scientific accuracy. Climate news in the statistical source has a tendency to be utilized for the legitimization of claims and instigating a perception of urgency. Statistics in Bangladeshi newspapers can play the critical function of convincing individuals of the actual impacts of climate change, thereby elevating public awareness and concern.

Another notable observation is the comparatively high incidence of the term "talent", which appears 368 times. At first sight, this lexical element appears incongruous in an

environmental text. Nevertheless, its frequency is probably indicative of a metaphorical application, where “talent” is used to represent human capital, innovation, and adaptability, the characteristics that are perceived as required to counter climate-related adversity. This discursive shift to intellectual or emotional appeal prioritizes the motivational framing employed in media for climate action. In the case of Bangladesh, the mention of “talent” can be utilized as a rhetorical tool for highlighting national competence and collective intelligence as embedded within climate resilience initiatives. Closely associated with this is the phrase “in combating”, appearing 325 times, which is a discursive indicator of agency and action. This frequency recognizes a movement away from vulnerability discourse in favor of active agency. Instead of simply portraying Bangladesh as a passive victim of climate change, these data portray the country as a participant in climate change mitigation. On the one hand, developing countries previously were presented in the media discourse as passive and powerless. On the other hand, recent coverage reveals a significant departure from this narrative. Because Schäfer and Painter (2020) claim that media coverage progressively depicts the Global South as an active participant who has started shaping mitigation and adaptation processes. This signals a reconfiguration of media agendas and a redistribution of agency in global climate discourse.

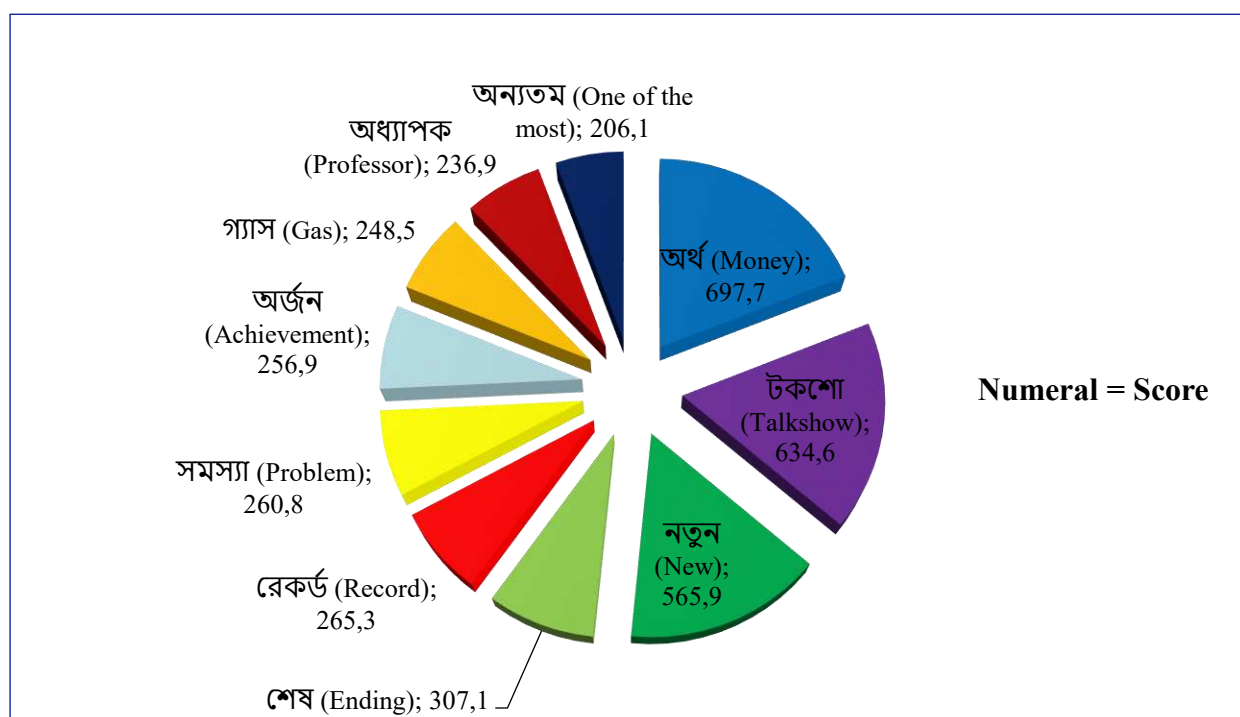
In Bangladeshi national dailies, the lexical choices like “carbon” (343) and “global” (329) appear frequently but remain overshadowed by locally framed environmental terms. This strategic narration reflects recognition of environmental issues as transboundary, yet with priorities rooted in local concerns, contrasting Western media’s stronger emphasis on carbon discourse, global summits, and UNFCCC negotiations.

The Bangladeshi media’s climate discourse is best seen as hybrid: it mirrors global narratives through scientific terms like “carbon”, “global”, and “percent”, yet reframes them within a national context that asserts impact, agency, and authority. This twofold function is especially suited to the Bangladeshi situation, where the urgency of climate change effects demands national response with a need for engagement in international discussion.

This strategy has several implications. For media practitioners, it highlights the challenge of balancing scientific credibility and cultural popularity. Terms such as “Talent” and “in combating” indicate that journalists are already adopting new rhetorical devices to render climate messaging more accessible and interesting. For communication policymakers, the prevalence of “impact”-focused terminology requires public communication to persist in presenting climate change as an experiential, rather than purely scientific, reality. Since a single term, phrase, or even syntactic structure may articulate a different discourse (Baker, 2006), the heavy reliance on percentages happens to suggest that policymakers and NGOs utilize multimodal statistics, and quantified risks to explicitly engage the public. While outlets from Western world emphasize policy tools and global solutions, the national newspapers of Bangladeshi exclusively foreground adaptation, resilience, and nationhood. This localization strategy may be a reflection of underlying epistemic structures in Bangladeshi society, where climate change is not a future danger but an existential emergency that cannot be separated from development, migration, and survival.

By presenting climate change as a national challenge addressed with resilience and creativity, these newspapers redefine citizenship and duty, thereby fostering an emergent ecological public sphere. Social change in this context occurs incrementally, shaped by routine meaning-making, calibrated responses to urgency, and appeals to established norms. Furthermore, by translating abstract climate threats into familiar local terms, newspapers localize global crises and position the nation-state as both stage and actor in the climate discourse. Through these strategies, newspapers influence power relations among the state, citizens, and the environment. Their language choices play a central role in reshaping how Bangladesh positions itself within the global climate crisis. This narrative both reflects societal anxieties and outlines potential pathways for transformation.

## Keyness Analysis



**Figure 2**

Top 10 keywords in reference to Bengali Web 2021 corpus

The most striking keyword in the corpus is “Money”, with a normalized score of 697.7, substantially higher than the rest. This underscores the strong economic framing of climate discourse in Bangladeshi media. This indicates that Bangladeshi media predominantly links climate vulnerability to financial loss, funding requirements, and international aid negotiations. The keyword “money” appearing most frequently suggests a discourse heavily focused on the economic consequences and negotiations around climate change rather than on ecological or scientific dimensions. Such economic centrality contrasts with more mitigation- or adaptation-centered narratives found in Western media. For example, Collins and Nerlich (2015) found that UK newspapers often framed climate change through risk communication and individual behavioral responsibility. The Bangladeshi press, by contrast, centers collective vulnerability and resource deficits, reflecting a dependence on external climate finance and aid-based climate justice discourses.

The second-highest keyword, "Talkshow" with a score of 634.6, suggests that climate change has been a popular theme in media panel discussions and televised dialogues. This emphasis on mediated discussions likely reflects the popularization and politicization of the topic in Bangladesh. This implies that newspaper reporting in Bangladesh often blurs boundaries between journalistic neutrality and performative debate, especially in the coverage of humanitarian or political crises. Moreover, the high frequency of "talkshow" indicates the discursive democratization of climate knowledge where experts, politicians, and the public engage in televised dialogues. However, this also hints at discursive superficiality, as such platforms often prioritize drama over depth, specifically, NGO-led climate adaptation discourses in the country.

The prominence of the word "New" (565.9) and "Ending" (307.1) indicates a transitional narrative structure. This can be called temporal framing, where newspapers chronicle shifts from disaster to recovery, from ignorance to awareness, and from old policies to new strategies. The high presence of "new" suggests a focus on technological innovation, policy reform, and fresh environmental challenges, aligning with emerging modernization narratives. In contrast, "ending" denotes a sense of urgency or finality, likely referring to vanishing ecological resources, expiry of environmental treaties, or fatalistic representations of climate futures. These lexemes reveal how temporal binaries (beginning vs. ending, old vs. new) are linguistically deployed to frame climate change as a defining moment in national history.

The keyword "Record" (265.3) signals the data-driven aspect of climate discourse. In the analyzed texts, "record" may refer to temperature extremes, cyclone intensities, or unprecedented flooding, as well as carbon emissions and economic damage. The recurrence of this term underlines the quantification of climate change, where Bangladeshi newspapers often employ numerical intensification to dramatize environmental events. Furthermore, the term "record" resonates with Baker and McEnery's (2005) observation that corpora help identify discursive tendencies toward hyperbole or precision. Therefore, in Bangladesh's case, "record" seems to serve both: it dramatizes disasters and simultaneously legitimizes the discourse through reference to empirical benchmarks.

"Problem" (260.8) represents a broad but critical keyword, suggesting a general discourse of crisis, dysfunction, and intractability. The recurrence of this word denotes a problem-oriented narrative structure, consistent with the disaster nationalism genre, wherein national identity is consolidated through shared environmental suffering. This term's generic nature, however, points to discursive vagueness. While "problem" signals distress, its frequent usage may contribute to linguistic dilution, where repetitive general terms lose analytical precision. This suggests that Bangladeshi newspapers use vague signifiers like "problem" or "challenge" without engaging in detailed policy critique.

Conversely, "Achievement" (256.9) provides a counter-narrative of resiliency, innovation, and national success in adaptation or diplomacy. The token presents positive framing that could be alluding to Bangladesh's international acclaim for climate negotiations or effective local mitigation action. The result is an exception to the prevailing victimhood narrative for Global South countries. This ambivalent, positive and negative, lexical field exists together to convey hope while considering the adversity. In the Bangladeshi context, "achievement" is probably serving the same purpose: providing rhetorical counterweight and national pride in the face of widespread climate vulnerability.

The term "Gas" (248.5) points to a central theme of energy rhetoric within climate discourses. It could indicate that gas exploration and energy costs are habitually implicated in climate policy and popular interest in Bangladesh. The frequent appearance of "gas" indicates material reliance on fossil fuels alongside political struggles around subsidy reform and energy equity. This keyword is also critical in linking climate discourse with industrial lobbying, international investment, and domestic policy friction. Compared to global climate discourse, which more frequently mention "coal" and "renewable energy", Bangladeshi newspapers appear particularly preoccupied with "gas," indicating a resource-specific environmental lexicon.

The appearance of "Professor" (236.9) reveals an effort to legitimize narratives through academic authority. In corpus linguistics, such terms are considered intertextual devices that enhance rhetorical ethos by embedding expert opinions. This aligns with observations by Bøe

(2021), who found that “scientist” was common collocate in climate reporting in *The Guardian*, used to anchor complex claims in perceived objectivity. In Bangladeshi newspapers, the prevalence of “professor” suggests a reliance on university academics to comment on technical or theoretical dimensions of climate change. However, this may also reflect limited institutional diversity, where academic voices dominate due to the relative absence of independent think tanks or civic science communicators.

Lastly, “One of the most” (206.1) serves as a linguistic intensifier, contributing to emotive amplification and evaluative framing. This term is likely collocated with superlative structures (e.g., “one of the most vulnerable,” “one of the worst cyclones”) and thus plays a crucial discursive role in heightening urgency. Its recurrence is symptomatic of alarmist or catastrophizing discourses, consistent with the climate emergency rhetoric increasingly popular in Bangladeshi press. Even as they receive publicity, these intensifiers may also cause discursive inflation or emotional exhaustion. All must thus be careful not to overdo rhetorical intensification without policy justification.

To understand the attitudes and ideologies of the Bangladeshi outlets, we have to know the political and economic state of the country. These media institutions cannot operate independently because they are influenced by the state authority, corporate power, socio-cultural norms, and so on. During this study period, purely ecological issues are hardly addressed in their reporting of these media outlets. Instead, they covered global warming in terms of economic opportunities, international relief, or even green diplomacy. This may lead to assume that the country’s ecological struggles are ways of getting international attention and support.

Furthermore, Scientific and academic voices, mostly from elite urban institutions (“Professor”), are foregrounded, while grassroots perspectives are marginalized. This perpetuates a top-down flow of information, where expert discourse is privileged, and vernacular knowledge systems are filtered or appropriated through institutional lenses. As a result, the media performs a gatekeeping role in environmental knowledge, shaping public

understanding in ways that align more closely with national policy goals and international development frameworks than with everyday lived experiences.

Therefore, journalism becomes instrumental. On the one hand, they are operated as state's mouth piece to spread state's global agendas rather than being functioned as a space for oppositional civic discourse. In this context, these newspapers depict the nation simultaneously as a scapegoat of global carbon emission as well as a self-capable development agent. These hybrid narratives warn of the environmental disaster and imply the economic opportunities that may come to light from this concerning issue reinforcing hegemonic ideology where the victimhood can be turned into commodification to gain sympathy, aid, and political advantages.

### Concordance Analysis

**Table 1**

Top ten concordances for the lemma "জলবায়ু (Climate)"

| Left Context                                                                                                                                                         | KWIC                 | Right Context                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| মরা কয়লাভিত্তিক বিদ্যুৎ কেন্দ্র করিছ কেন?</s><s>‘<br>স্মার্ট বাংলাদেশ ও (Why are you still pursuing dead<br>coal-based power plants?’ ‘Smart Bangladesh and)        | জলবায়ু<br>(Climate) | পরিবর্তনজনিত ঝুঁকি হ্রাস’ সেমিনার অনুষ্ঠিত হয়েছে<br>এক্সিকিউটিভ হলে ইনি (He became the executive at<br>the seminar titled ‘Smart Bangladesh and Climate<br>Change-Induced Risks)              |
| ইঞ্জিনিয়ার্স (আইইইই) বাংলাদেশ সেকশনের উদ্যোগ<br>‘স্মার্ট বাংলাদেশ ও... (Under the initiative of engineers<br>(IEEE) Bangladesh Section, ‘Smart Bangladesh and...)   | জলবায়ু<br>(Climate) | পরিবর্তনজনিত ঝুঁকি হ্রাস’ সেমিনার অনুষ্ঠিত<br>হয়েছে।</s><s> সেমিনারে (The seminar titled ‘Smart<br>Bangladesh and Climate Change-Induced Risks’ was<br>held. In the seminar)                  |
| বলেন প্রযুক্তি-অন্তর্ভুক্তিমূলক সমাজ গড়ে তুলতে হবে<br>।</s><s>বৈশ্বিক (He said, to build an inclusive<br>society through technology. Global ...)                    | জলবায়ু<br>(Climate) | পরিবর্তনজনিত ক্ষতি নিরসনে আগামী দিনে সোলার<br>এনার্জি বা প্রাকৃতিক (To mitigate climate change-<br>induced losses, in the coming days we must rely on<br>solar energy or natural alternatives) |
| আইইবি’র সাধারণ সম্পাদক প্রকৌশলী মঞ্জুরুল<br>হক মঞ্জুরুল বলেন, (Engineer Manjurul Haque Manju,<br>the General Secretary of IEB, said...)                              | জলবায়ু<br>(Climate) | পরিবর্তনের সমস্যা সারা বিশ্বের সমস্যা। এই সমস্যা<br>সমাধান করতে অতি (The problem of climate change<br>is a global issue. To solve this problem, it is<br>extremely...)                         |
| বন করতে হবে।</s><s> অধ্যাপক ড.</s><s>সিলিয়া<br>শাহনাজ বলেন, (We must engage in afforestation.”<br>“Professor Dr. Silya Shahnaz said,)                               | জলবায়ু<br>(Climate) | পরিবর্তনের ফলে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত দেশের তালিকায়<br>বাংলাদেশের অবস্থান একদম উপরের (Bangladesh<br>ranks right at the top among the countries most<br>affected by the impacts of climate change.)       |
| বন ও ব্যবহারে আমাদের স্মার্ট হতে<br>হবে।</s><s>প্রযুক্তিকে ব্যবহার করেই (We must<br>become smart through forestation and greening.”<br>“Only by using technology...) | জলবায়ু<br>(Climate) | পরিবর্তনের ক্ষতি মোকাবিলা করতে<br>হবে।</s><s>আইইইই বাংলাদেশ (We must tackle the<br>damages caused.” “IEEE Bangladesh...)                                                                       |

|                                                                                                                                                                                  |                   |                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| স্মারক প্রদান করা হয়।</s><s>‘ সাম্প্রতিক বিপর্যয়ের জন্য (A commemorative token was presented.” “Due to the recent disaster...)                                                 | জলবায়ু (Climate) | পরিবর্তন দায়ী জলবায়ু পরিবর্তনের কারণেই জুলাই মাসে ইউরোপে (Climate change is responsible—due to climate change, in the month of July, Western Europe...)   |
| করা হয়।</s><s>‘ সাম্প্রতিক বিপর্যয়ের জন্য জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন দায়ী (It was done.” “Climate change is responsible for the recent disaster...)                                     | জলবায়ু (Climate) | পরিবর্তনের কারণেই জুলাই মাসে ইউরোপে চরম বিপর্যয় দেখা গেছে (Due to climate change, Western Europe experienced severe disasters in the month of July.)       |
| উদ্যোগ চলছে।</s><s>এমন প্রেক্ষাপটে প্রশ্ন উঠেছে: এমন ঘটনার জন্য (Initiatives are underway.” “In such a context, the question has arisen: who is responsible for such incidents?) | জলবায়ু (Climate) | পরিবর্তন কতটা দায়ী?</s><s> গবেষণা চালানো হয়েছিল।</s><s>এর (How responsible is change?” “Research was conducted.” “Based on this...)                       |
| তথ্য-উপাত্তের উপর ভিত্তি করে গবেষকরা মানুষের কার্যকলাপের কারণে (Based on the data and evidence, researchers have attributed it to human activities.)                             | জলবায়ু (Climate) | পরিবর্তনকেই এমন বিপর্যয়ের জন্য দায়ী করেছেন।</s><s>‘ বাল্যবিবাহ (They have held climate change solely responsible for such disasters.” “Child marriage...) |

A recurring pattern in the corpus is the association of climate change discourse with phrases such as “Smart Bangladesh” and “technology-driven society”. The alignment of environmental vulnerability with technologically driven nationalism reveals a strategic narrative in which the climate crisis is not only a threat but an opportunity for national modernization. For instance, one concordance line reads:

“Why are you still pursuing dead coal-based power plants?” ‘Smart Bangladesh and Climate Change-Induced Risks’ seminar...

This framing reflects a techno-optimistic ideology, positioning Bangladesh as a proactive, modernizing state. This discursive strategy implies that in Bangladeshi media, climate change is frequently instrumentalized to project a competent, progressive image of the government on global platforms. The co-occurrence of “climate change” with “Smart Bangladesh” further emphasizes a techno-developmental meta-narrative. Alternatively, this excerpt exemplifies the newspapers’ positioning as critical yet nationalistic watchdogs. On the surface, the headline appears to critique outdated energy policies, particularly the continued investment in coal. However, the juxtaposition of the critique with a state-led seminar on “Smart Bangladesh” signals a dual agenda. On one hand, the newspaper projects its autonomy by questioning policy choices; on the other, it amplifies government narratives about modernization and technological advancement. This discursive strategy aligns with development journalism, wherein critique is acceptable only when wrapped in constructive

patriotism. The newspaper's interest lies in aligning with state goals while preserving its image of civic responsibility.

The semantic field of climate change carries positive connotations of existential threat and loss. Phrases such as "mitigating loss" and "severe disaster" imply crisis rhetoric. For example:

To mitigate climate change-induced losses, in the coming days we must rely on solar energy or natural alternatives.

This is an expression of a developmentalist agenda veiled in environmental discourse. The advancement of "solar energy" and "natural alternatives" indicates a discursive alignment with state-sanctioned renewable energy policy. In espousing specific mitigation strategies, newspapers are not merely disseminating information but endorsing state policy and legitimizing its environmental governance model. This has a dual objective: one, of projecting an image of Bangladesh as a climate-resilient country; and two, of fostering acceptance of techno-centric development agendas, which are usually driven by foreign investment and aid. In doing so, newspapers act as intermediaries of state narratives, instrumentalizing climate discourse to sustain public support for infrastructural investments in renewable technologies. Therefore, this study asserts that disaster framing dominates climate coverage in Bangladeshi newspapers, with stories focusing on damage, vulnerability, and helplessness. The recurrence of loss-related lexemes indicates a strong risk-oriented framing, characteristic of developing nations' media that often narrate climate change as externally induced suffering, that positions Western nations as the agent.

The statement "Bangladesh ranks right at the top among affected countries" constructs a rhetoric of victimhood. By positioning Bangladesh as a frontline nation, the discourse invites international moral accountability. As "the concordance lines indicates an awareness of the well-worn paths of language use" (Partington et al., 2013, p. 280), this linguistic pattern illustrates that Bangladeshi media frequently articulate climate change through South–North asymmetries, often invoking vulnerability to demand global justice.

Concordance patterns such as:

Based on the data and evidence, researchers have attributed it to human activities...  
climate change has been held responsible for such disasters.

illustrate explicit anthropogenic attribution. The text places humans not nature at the heart of causality, which is indicative of scientifically literate climate discourse. This discursive shift refers to that scientific accuracy increasingly infiltrates media texts via corpus-assisted communicative framing. In broader context, this concordance clearly reflects the newspaper's strategic alignment with scientific rationalism, portraying climate change as a direct consequence of human behavior. The repeated reference to "data", "evidence", and "researchers" suggests an agenda that seeks to legitimize environmental awareness through empiricism. The likely intention here is twofold: first, to educate the public in a developing country context where scientific literacy may still be emerging; and second, to delegate moral accountability, urging both policymakers and citizens to re-evaluate unsustainable practices. This type of discourse positions the newspaper not as a passive chronicler of disasters, but as an active agent of environmental enlightenment, leveraging the authority of science to shape national behavior and political accountability. It also insulates the media from blame by showcasing its role as a conveyor of "neutral" knowledge, while actually steering public sentiment towards a progressive and eco-conscious worldview.

The repetition of phrases like "smart Bangladesh" and "technology-based" suggests lexical borrowing and adaptation. These are not traditional Bangla words but transliterated imports shaped by contemporary policy discourses. Thus, one can argue that media hybridize English lexical items in South Asian contexts to attain communicative economy and modernity signaling. Since Fulton (2005) states that "in a world dominated by print and electronic media, our sense of reality is increasingly structured by narrative" (p. 1), therefore, by mixing Bangla idioms with English words, newspapers create a style that speaks to city elites but also connects with wider readers. This mix promotes both climate awareness and linguistic hybridity as persuasive tools. Because, linking climate action with the idea of a "Smart Bangladesh" blurs the line between environmental concern and national development,

making state-led modernization seem natural. Here, "the 'reality' we are shown is itself constructed" (Fulton, 2005, p. 6). The coverage also shows how closely media and government work together, with journalism used to back policies and present climate action as a high-tech, hopeful future. This mirrors the argument Herman and Chomsky (1988) made in their propaganda model. Moreover, beyond gaining local support, the aim is to show Bangladesh as forward-looking in global debates. This blending of local and global language helps newspapers mobilize people at home while gaining credibility abroad. Thus, this "denotative level is also connotative, persuading us that we need to change in order to match up to the reality around us" (Fulton, 2005, p. 6).

Phrases like "we must engage in afforestation... must tackle the damages caused, we must rely on solar energy or natural alternatives", have strong modal constructions such as "must engage", "must tackle", and "must rely on". Here, prescriptive modes signal an indicator of moral necessity; that is, they imply moral imperatives instead of voluntary policy proposals. The recurrence of these forms signifies a performative function for discourse signaling agency and commitment, although the patterns are lexical rather than policy based. The newspapers adopt an authoritative and normative stance here using imperative modal constructions which call for civic participation. These do not serve as descriptions but instead shout from the rooftops, pleading to be acted upon with embedded moral obligations. This prescriptive writing reveals media suggests a strategic orientation: to foster climate-responsible citizens and partner with government initiatives aimed towards sustainable development. "News reporting mythologizes, and therefore normalizes, the existence of universal truths and an objective reality that can be retrieved and represented without ideological mediation" (Fulton, 2005, p. 7). Consequently, far from featuring the public as victims or spectators, these texts remake them as agents of change charged with building a "smart" and "green" Bangladesh. This parallels with Boykoff's (2011) claim that mass people "rely upon media representations to help interpret and make sense of the many complexities relating to climate science and governance" (p. i ). The media thus act as cultural intermediaries, translating policy ideals into consumable public demands. Because "A dynamic mix of influences shapes what

becomes climate 'news' or 'information'" (Boykoff, 2011, p. i ). As a result, this also allows them to assert editorial control over national consciousness-formation, re-establishing the press as a norm-setting institution and not merely a spectator. The use of "must" indicates an editorial voice that is moralizing and pedagogic framing public behavior not through threat, but responsibility and optimism because "corpus linguistics were involved in lexicography and grammar, aiming to discover and quantify patterns in ever-larger corpora" (Mautner, 2018, p. 250).

A further interesting development is the incorporation of climate change discussion into wider social justice and sustainable development narratives. These are:

"To build an inclusive society through technology..."

"We must become smart through forestation and greening"

Fulton (2005) asserts that "narrative in the media becomes simply a way of selling something" (p. 3). In Bangladesh, the way climate change is discussed by the outlets is rarely separated from bigger national questions such as development, social inclusion, and even the project of nation-building itself. This way media spread their agendas. "Since audience sectors are defined and distinguished on the basis of their assumed VALS (values and lifestyle), narratives have to display and reinforce the same sets of VALS as the desired audience" (Fulton, 2005, p. 4). Hence, media reports, as found in the corpus, often connect climate policy to those wider issues, turning it into a story of collective progress rather than a narrow technical debate. In doing so, newspapers try to make environmental concerns relevant to groups that might otherwise feel left out of elite policy discussions—for instance, rural populations, young people, and marginalized communities, because "there is nothing natural or universal about narrative" (Fulton, 2005, p. 1). Instead of only talking about glaciers melting or abstract global warming, the news often frames the matter around work opportunities, fairness, and the country's shared future. This approach seems especially effective in Bangladesh, where people are generally more responsive to messages about development than to faraway threats. As Fulton (2005) argues that "it is historically and culturally positioned to turn information and events into structures that are already meaningful to their audiences"

(p. 1), newspapers seem to recognize this and deliberately align climate policy with the national aspiration for development. By doing so, they reposition environmental questions at the center of collective prosperity and reaffirm their own role as agents of social and civic transformation, using language as a cognitive scaffold for shared experience (Fowler, 1991).

## Conclusion

To conclude, the lexical landscape of climate change discourse in Bangladeshi national newspapers are depicted in such a strategic way that stretches beyond the environmental sphere. Based on an examination of news reports and opinion pieces from three major Bangla outlets, this study asserts that the issue is framed not merely as an ecological threat but equally as something intertwined with politics, economic development, and national identity. This mirrors the propaganda model which “suggests that the “societal purpose” of the media is to inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state” (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. 298). In this framing, the country’s future is imagined as inseparable from how it responds to climate challenges.

However, this paper recognizes its limitations. Firstly, the time period (2020–2025) is a dynamic but limited slice of Bangladesh’s changing climate discourse, which may not be able to provide a picture of historical trends and newly unfolding changes. Secondly, the research was limited to just three leading national dailies, which might fail to reflect the range of editorial ideologies, local perspectives, or bottom-up narratives. Third, the research only considered written texts and not richer multimodal genres like infographic and visual media that are also implicated in making meaning in journalism practice. Therefore, future study should focuses on these issues.

Ultimately, this study highlights that climate narrative in Bangladesh is not ideologically neutral or lexically arbitrary. Instead, as Lukin (2019) so aptly puts it, “language is always ideological, and ideology depends on language” (p. 16). The media, through lexical and narrative means, plays a role in the constitution of a reality in which national aggrievement is described as resilience and global peripherality is reimagined as moral high

ground. As Liao (2012) and Bhatia (2005) argue in different but complementary ways, strategic narratives and linguistic colonization are important tools of ideological projection and identity-construction. Therefore, these outlets transcend mere narration in their coverage of environmental crisis rather they actively architect aspirational modernity by channeling urgency, diplomacy, and development into a coherent vision of sustainable nationhood.

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