



Discursively Framing the Future: A Critical Discourse Analysis of AI Narratives in Contemporary Media

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Abstract

In this study, we carry out an evaluative critique of discursive formation of artificial intelligence (AI) in mainstream media reporting by exploring linguistic practices and ideological patterns that construct AI as technological promise or sociopolitical threat. The present investigation draws upon four interconnected theoretical frameworks: Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (1995), which deconstructs how discourse reproduces and maintains power and ideology; Entman's Media Framing Theory (1993), who identify how issues are selectively included/emphasized/omitted to construct public opinion; Jasanoff and Kim's Sociotechnical Imaginaries (2009), who analyze collectively shared AI futures inscribed within institutionally impressed discourse; and Public Understanding of Science (PUS) model (Bucchi, 2008; Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009), who analyze media reporting to contribute to public understanding of scientific developments.

At this project's core is media's ideology-soaked and polarized reporting of AI. Instead of nonpartisan or balanced reporting, media reporting all too easily careens between techno-progressive futures and adverse futures of disruptor, all too frequently for institutionally, commercially, political purposes. Even while spiralling worry is ubiquitous around AI's technical and ethical aspects, there is pressing research need around how language constructs and propagates these narratives, and how public trust, tech governance, and prospective futures are constructed.

Therefore, this study endeavours to:

1. Discuss how mainstream media present AI as a societal development or disruptor;
2. Recognize discursive, rhetorical, and framing devices employed to build narratives for AI;
3. Discuss how such narratives build and disrupt relations of powers and make sociotechnical imaginations of AI at critical sites like work, healthcare, schools, and computer security.

For such purposes, this study experiments with the following hypotheses:



1. Media narratives around AI are organized along dichotomous hope-fear narratives that are aligned with dominant ideologies;
2. Media channels make deliberate framing choices and discursive devices (e.g., metaphor, modality, anthropomorphism) to build public anticipations upon AI;
3. Thesis are strongly reflected within public sentiment, justify sociotechnical rankings, and make regulatory interventions to AI.

The exposition is accompanied by six media texts that were deliberately selected and published between 2020 and 2024. They were randomly taken from mainline Anglo-speaking news outlets (BBC News, CNN, Health.com, and Wired) and were selectively taken along three axes: (1) range within mainline societal sectors (labor relations, education, healthcare); (2) discursive compactness and ideological make-up; and (3) narrative framing variation (promissory, cautionary, ambivalent). Such selective sampling is characteristic to Fairclough's stance of preferring analytical scope to corpus breadth where corpus studies are concerned with qualitatively different approaches to discourse. Results suggest that AI is discursively embedded nearly exclusively within a dual framing of disruption/innovation, with common uses of anthropomorphic rhetoric, binary splits, and abstract moral condemnation. Such rhetorical constructions place AI as autonomous agent and national project while at the very same time depoliticizing that adoption as technology's socially consequential ramifications. Reporting on AI is then found to be a central location of technological meaning negotiation and public involvement that works not just as a mirror to societal values but as a tool to attempt to construct sociotechnical futures. The intermingling of CDA, framing theory, sociotechnical imaginaries, and PUS illustrates the discursive construction of AI as a contested terrain of ideological influence, with implications for media literacy, policy design, and democratic technology governance.

Key words: Artificial Intelligence, ideological patterns, Critical Discourse Analysis

التأطير الخطابى للمستقبل: تحليل خطاب نقدي لسرديات الذكاء الاصطناعي في الإعلام المعاصر
إعداد

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المستخلص

في هذه الدراسة نجري نقداً تقويمياً للتشكّل الخطابي للذكاء الاصطناعي في التغطيات الإعلامية السائدة، من خلال استكشاف الممارسات اللغوية والأنماط الأيديولوجية التي تُشيدّ الذكاء الاصطناعي بوصفه إما وعداً تكنولوجياً أو تهديداً اجتماعياً-سياً. تستند الدراسة إلى أربعة أطر نظرية مترابطة:

1. التحليل النقدي للخطاب عند فيركلوف (1995)، الذي يفكك كيفية إعادة إنتاج الخطاب للسلطة والأيديولوجيا؛
 2. نظرية التأطير الإعلامي عند إنتمن (1993)، التي تحدد كيف يتم انتقاء/تأكيد/إهمال القضايا بهدف تشكيل الرأي العام؛
 3. الخيالات السوسيو تكنولوجية عند جسانوف وكيم (2009)، والتي تحلل التصورات المستقبلية المشتركة حول الذكاء الاصطناعي كما تظهر في الخطابات المؤسسية؛
 4. نموذج الفهم العام للعلم (PUS) كما لدى بوتشي (2008) ونيزبت وشيفولي (2009)، والذي يدرس الخطاب الإعلامي بوصفه أداة لبناء فهم الجمهور للتطورات العلمية.
- تكمن جوهرية هذا المشروع في كون التغطية الإعلامية للذكاء الاصطناعي مشبعة بالأيديولوجيا ومائلة نحو الاستقطاب؛ إذ إن وسائل الإعلام تميل بدل الحياد إلى التذبذب بين سرديات مستقبلية تقدّمية تقنياً وأخرى مستقبلية سلبية تصوّر الذكاء الاصطناعي كقوة مهدّدة، وذلك غالباً لخدمة اعتبارات مؤسسية وتجارية وسياسية. وعلى الرغم من حضور القلق واسع الانتشار حول الجوانب التقنية والأخلاقية للذكاء الاصطناعي، إلا أن الحاجة البحثية ملحة لفهم كيفية تشكّل هذه السرديات لغوياً، وكيف تُبنى الثقة العامة، وحوكمة التكنولوجيا، وتصورات المستقبل. وعليه، تهدف الدراسة إلى:

1. مناقشة كيفية تقديم الإعلام السائد للذكاء الاصطناعي بوصفه تطوراً اجتماعياً أو قوة مُربكة؛
 2. تحديد الوسائل الخطابية والبلاغية والتأطيرية المستخدمة في بناء سرديات الذكاء الاصطناعي؛
 3. تحليل كيفية إسهام هذه السرديات في بناء أو تفكيك علاقات السلطة، وفي تشكيل الخيالات السوسيو تكنولوجية المرتبطة بالذكاء الاصطناعي في مواقع حرجية مثل العمل والرعاية الصحية والمدارس وأمن المعلومات.
- ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف، تعتمد الدراسة الفرضيات الآتية:
1. إن السرديات الإعلامية حول الذكاء الاصطناعي منظّمة ضمن ثنائية الأمل/الخوف الموجهة أيديولوجياً؛
 2. تقوم القنوات الإعلامية بخيارات تأطيرية مقصودة وتستخدم وسائل خطابية (مثل الاستعارة، والاحتمالية اللغوية، والتشخيص/إضفاء الطابع الإنساني) لبناء توقعات الجمهور؛
 3. تُعكس هذه السرديات بقوة في الرأي العام، وتبرّر التراتيبات السوسيو تكنولوجية، وتوجّه التدخلات التنظيمية المتعلقة بالذكاء الاصطناعي.
- وتستند الدراسة إلى ستة نصوص إعلامية مختارة نُشرت بين عامي 2020 و2024. وقد جرى اختيارها من وسائل إعلام ناطقة بالإنجليزية (BBC، CNN، Health.com، Wired) وفق ثلاثة محاور:
1. تمثيلها لقطاعات اجتماعية مختلفة (علاقات العمل، التعليم، الصحة)؛
 2. كثافتها الخطابية وبنيتها الأيديولوجية؛
 3. تنوع أنماط التأطير فيها (وعودي، تحذيري، ملتبس).



ويمثل هذا النوع من العيّنات الانتقائية نهج فيركلوف الذي يفضل التركيز التحليلي العميق على اتساع العيّنة، بخلاف الدراسات الكوربوسية ذات المناهج الكمية. وتشير النتائج إلى أن الذكاء الاصطناعي يُوظّر خطاباً في الغالب داخل ثنائية "الابتكار/الاضطراب"، مع حضور واضح للبلاغة التشخيصية، والتقابلات الثنائية، والإدانات الأخلاقية المجردة. وتُظهر هذه البنى الخطابية الذكاء الاصطناعي كفاعل مستقل ومشروع وطني، وفي الوقت نفسه تُساهم في نزاع الطابع السياسي عن تبنّيه، رغم عواقبه الاجتماعية الجوهرية. وهكذا يظهر الخطاب الإعلامي حول الذكاء الاصطناعي كموقع محوري للتفاوض حول معنى التقنية ولمشاركة الجمهور، لا بوصفه مرآة للقيم المجتمعية فقط، بل كأداة لتشكيل تصورات مستقبلية سوسيو تكنولوجية. إن تداخل التحليل النقدي للخطاب ونظرية التأطير والخيالات السوسيو تكنولوجية ونموذج الفهم العام للعلم يكشف عن أن الذكاء الاصطناعي يُبنى خطابياً كحقل نزاعي محكوم بالأيديولوجيا، مما يخلق آثاراً مهمة في مجالات محور الأمية الإعلامية، وصياغة السياسات، وحوكمة التكنولوجيا في الأنظمة الديمقراطية. الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء الاصطناعي، الأنماط الأيديولوجية، التحليل النقدي للخطاب

1.Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been at the centre of contemporary media reporting, ever-more dominant within public imagination of development, creation, and societal transformation. Both mainstream news media and new media sources do not report AI as technical tools but as a symbolic and discursive construct—One comprised of contested economic reorganization, ethics, and institution change visions. Such media-propagated narratives are central to public imagination of AI, delimiting how societies imagine technical futures, and justifying particular policy agendas and governance arrangements.

As technologies of AI spread to such areas as work, schooling, health care, and security, there has been an explosion of scholarship in such directions as media studies, political science, and science and technology studies (STS), as there appears to be a feeling of urgency to comprehend AI's sociopolitical assemblages. Most investigations consider themselves to be with AI's technical capacity or ethical questions while very little examines discursive tools by which AI is seen, articulated, and rendered banal within publics. With publics' engagement with science ever-more mediated, this work turns an analytical eye to news discourse to discover how AI is constructed with ideological and rhetorical devices that build public knowledge and organizational response.

In counter-narratives of competitiveness, progress, and efficiency powered by AI, older fears of society endure. Job-displacement, bias by algorithm, de-personalising of human interaction, and surveillance all see wider fears of authority, identity, and power within digitally reconfigured worlds (Jarrahi, 2018). They are older responses to technological disruption as offered by Marvin (1988), who illustrated just how earlier communication technologies, such as telephone and electric light, occasioned



significant reconfiguring within institutionally sanctioned norms and relations within society. With AI, reconfiguring is articulated within rich, prospective stories of emotion that position technology as at one and the very same time as threat and salvation.

Key to making sense of such stories is sociotechnical imaginaries (Jasanoff & Kim, 2009)—widely shared institutionally supported imaginations of preferred futures made possible by science and technology. Sociotechnical imaginaries are not ideal but performed ones that are exercised by way of language and complemented by media discourse, as well as by framing policy agendas, regulatory architectures, and cultural practices. Such media roles have been analysed insufficiently, though especially with reference to how discursive practices reflect and reiterate relations of power, ideological positions, and institutionally based interests.

Additionally, media coverage cements Global North voices and positions and excludes other, insurgent Global South imaginations. The imbalance of discourses maintains a limited epistemic definition of who AI is, who AI ought to be, and for whom AI is. Following Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (1995) and Entman's Media Framing Theory (1993), this project regards media discourse as an organized and deliberate act of meaning-production—a process that determines how publics are instructed to know AI, whose futures are envisioned, and whose agendas are not visualized.

Moreover, this paper includes reflections within the Public Understanding of Science (PUS) approach (Bucchi, 2008; Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009) to account for constructions of media as societal trust, comprehension, and emotional affiliation with AI. Instead of regarding media as being mere passive bearers of expertise, this approach regards media as being constructive definers of scientific authority, interfaces between institutions, publics, and technologic vision.

In such worlds, this research critically examines discursively how AI is constructed within a sampling of six purposively chosen media texts from 2020 to 2024. The texts were sampled to reflect diversity of theme, ideological sophistication, and framing diversity within dominant fields. The research identifies how media narratives construct AI as threat and promise to society, how such constructions are used to construct public opinion, to legitimate institution interventions, and to construct sociotechnical futures as compatible with dominant interests.

2.Theoretical Background

This project borrows from an inter-disciplinary theory that synthesizes four cross-informatory approaches: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1995), framing media theory (Entman, 1993), sociotechnical imaginaries (Jasanoff & Kim,



2009), and Public Understanding of Science (PUS) (Bucchi, 2008; Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009). Each of these approaches is part of the conceptual and analytical repertoire upon which to base an examination of how artificial intelligence (AI) is discursively constructed within media narratives and how this construal informs public opinion, institutionally grounded trust, and potential governance.

Most central to this outline is that of discourse theory, most especially that of Michel Foucault and Norman Fairclough. Foucault (1972) judges discourse not just as speech as act but as a knowledge system arranging social reality, that relationally formulating relations of power, and that guides that which may be spoken, reasoned, and acted upon. The focus upon his discourse as a form of power/knowledge guides all that follows as to how media narratives surrounding AI are instruments of justifying certain ideologies while others are not included.

Influenced by Foucault, Fairclough's (1995) tripartite model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) positions words within larger institutional and sociocultural configurations, as to see a discourse to be socially configured and socially constitutive. Fairclough's tripartite model—textual analysis, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice—forms a methodological sieve by which to approach media texts' treatment of larger trends within ideology. With extension to AI, this model is employed to ask by what word choices, metaphors, syntactical arrangements, and narrative framing give light to and re-establish mainstream suppositions regarding technological advance, human agency, and economic productivity.

As a complement to this critical-linguistic approach, the book borrows sociotechnical imaginaries, a term coined by Jasanoff and Kim (2009) to describe shared, institutionally endorsed visions of the future that are built by and build science and technology. Sociotechnical imaginaries are internal to discourses and play central political roles: they delimit which futures are possible, desired, or inevitable. With reference to AI, sociotechnical imaginaries are practiced within discourses that envision AI as a force of national innovation and human improvement, or as a force of destabilisation and inequality. Media discourse is one site where sociotechnical imaginaries are instantiated, replicated, or challenged.

Moreover, media framing theory, specifically Entman's (1993) model, is used here to consider how press stories selectively represent AI. Framing, as Entman contends, is deliberate selection and focus upon select dimensions of reality to create issues, attribute causal agency, make moral evaluations, and outline policy interventions. Two master frames are reasserted within AI discourse: frames of promise that focus upon innovation, productivity, and global competitiveness; and frames of threat that outline job loss, ethical risk, surveillability, and loss of autonomy. Public opinion is



influenced by such frames not just by disseminating information, but by ideology-blinded interpretation cues that predispose how techno-futures are imagined and contested.

Lastly, there is incorporation of Public Understanding of Science (PUS) approach (Bucchi, 2008; Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009) that condemned that public opinions of science can be corrected by sheer ignorance ("deficit model"). Instead, PUS places science communication as a process of interpretation infused with cultural as well as political aspects of communicating science to publics. Media under this approach were not merely passive transmitters of expertise but constructive framing agents who create how scientific authority develops, who becomes excluded as trustworthy, as well as whose perils as well as promises are made communicable to publics. Transplanted to AI, there is PUS approach that illuminated how stories build institution credibility, build imagined publics, as well as build as well as deconstruct public trust within new technologies.

In combining CDA, media framing, sociotechnical imaginaries, and PUS, this project ends this research divide with regards to AI's ideological and discursive construct as embodied within media. The paper establishes a syncretic methodology that could distinguish between how words build technical meaning, justify power relations, and shape sociotechnical futures that inform public understanding, institutional confidence, and governance agendas.

2.1 Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis thereby started as freedom from sentence-level linguistic analytical stricture, as precipitated by Zellig Harris's 1952 paper advocating languages being analysed within mutually inter-linked, form-contextualized form—escape from isolable one-sentence incarceration. Here, with this very first step, we thereby furthered an understanding of language as social practice, with that give-birth to whole new inter-disciplinary field that went on to develop as a fully reconstituted linguistics-, sociology-, anthropology-, psychology-, and semiotics-including domain. Discourse analysis properly conceived is fundamentally language-in-use, as scholars like Brown and Yule (1983) and Cook (1989) keep telling us. Theorists like these argue that meaning is not supplied by grammar but by coherence of context—the meaningful use of language under a particular social condition. Discourse as created by Cook (1989) is "language in use or the language used to communicate something felt to be coherent," highlighting that discourse is not merely text but interaction created to suit purpose, audience, and environment.

More basic Stubbs (1983) identifies discourse analysis as aiming to consider how language becomes organized at levels below individual sentence and how such



organizing has communicative roles to play within Institutional as well as social environments. Discourse then becomes not just a means of representing information but of creating relations, creating identities, and imposing meaning within collections of individual cultures.

1960s and 1970s saw excellent theoretic development filling out the range. J.L. Austin's (1962) performatory theory of speech acts asserted that utterances themselves do act (e.g., command, promise), while John Searle (1969) filled out rules beneath such performatory uses. Dell Hymes (1964) added sociolinguistic aspects to the investigation, underscoring communicative competence as well as contextuality. In this decade, M.A.K. Halliday (1973) introduced methodology of systemic functional linguistics, which places language as a tool to make sense by means of three such<metafunctions as ideational (representing experience), interpersonal (enacting socially relations), and textual (constituting discourse). Together, such approaches constructed discourse analysis as a flexible methodology to probe how language acts socially and indexes ideology.

Discourse Analysis provides a conceptual foundation and methodological foot-in-door to research how media discursively construct AI within this ongoing work. Instead of regarding language as a purportedly neutral vehicle, this analysis sets out with an assumption that discourse is ideology-drenched, socially constructed, and institutionally founded. Media products are not regarding as invisible mirrors of technological advances but as discursive texts constructively shaping public sentiment, emotive sensibilities, and regulatory imaginations of AI.

This approach is very close to Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (1995), used by us to examine media texts using particular lexical, syntactic, and metaphorical selections to position AI as disruptor/inventor. With this focus, discourse analysis as a critical tool for examination of words as part of the larger societies' negotiation of AI's position within society, that is, as institutionally dominant ideology as well as for crafting sociotechnical futures, becomes particularly powerful.

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA provides us with a most powerful tool for making explicit the ideological roles of language within media discourse. Developing critical linguistics further, CDA criticizes how discourse works within institutional, political, and cultural formations to advance dominant ideologies or resist dominant ideologies. The present work uses CDA not just as methodology but as an approach to research studying how media language constructs AI as either a utopian panacea or as a sociotechnical threat. The methodology is complemented with intertwining four auxiliary theoretical threads:



Fairclough's CDA model, Entman's framing theory, Jasanoff and Kim's sociotechnical imaginaries, and Public Understanding of Science (PUS) approach.

2.2.1 Fairclough's Three-Dimensional CDA Model

Its overall outline is Fairclough's (1995) three-prong CDA approach that positions discourse as a socially constituting and socially conditioning practice. Fairclough's approach has three dimensions of scrutiny: (1) textual characteristics (lexical selections, grammar, metaphor), (2) discursive practices (text creation and reception), and (3) sociocultural practices (the larger historical and institutional context). The multilayer form gives researchers a weapon to analyze how language both mirrors and constructs powers and institution ideologies. Transposed to this context, Fairclough's approach illuminated how media texts describe AI with evaluative adjectives, nominalizations, and intertextual allusions making issues such as algorithmic control, monitoring, and robotization legitimate or opaque.

Fairclough's research has extensively been used in media and communication research, especially to analyze elite discourses naturalizing policy agendas and repressing dissident voices (Flowerdew, 2008). CDA here is employed to reflect upon how AI discourse is produced under the dictate of agendas of institutions and how such discourse upholds social asymmetries by coding certain AI futures as inevitable/desirable, etc.

2.2.2 Media Framing Theory

CDA is supplemented by media framing theory, as can be seen with Entman's (1993) classic model, which maps four principal operations of a frame: framing problems, identifying causes, making moral arguments, and calling for cures. Media framing theory suppositions that whether an issue gets framed to a great extent will definitely impact audiences' understanding of it. Media swing between promissory frames—highlighting efficiency, competitiveness, and techno-determinism—over cautionary ones, articulating ethical dangers, job loss, and regulation, with the aid of AI.

Entman's framing scheme, presented to empirical communications research studies as well (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007), is used here to scrutinize shared frames within six articles purposively selected. The frames serve not merely to concentrate interpretation but to delimit that which is feasible/ permitted as policy response. Framing theory, accordingly, within CDA shed light upon selective procedures that advance higher discourses over others.

2.2.3 Sociotechnical Imaginaries

In order to make sense of the forward-looking and institutionally inflected shape of attributes of AI discourses, the paper uses sociotechnical imaginaries, a phrase Jasanoff and Kim (2009) coined. Sociotechnical imaginaries are collectively shared,



institutionally fortified, publicly performed visions of preferred futures as technologically and scientifically built. Sociotechnical imaginaries are blueprints of ideals that describe national policy agendas, organize debates around governance, and dictate lines of innovations. Such imaginaries are discovered within media reporting of AI as narratives that represent AI as part of a national mission, symbol of modernization, no runner to dystopia.

Sociotechnical imaginations by CDA are able to explain why AI discourses are not just keepers of tech realities but makers of normative forecasts of future worlds compatible with specific institutions' agendas. Whether highlighting novelty or risk, such imaginations form public opinion as well as policy trends that are favourable to elite stakeholders.

2.2.4 Public Understanding of Science (PUS)

PUS approach also suits CDA approach by highlighting public perceptions of science and technology as not being determined by knowledge dissemination but by framing by media, cultural narratives, and institution credibility (Bucchi, 2008; Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009). Challenging traditional “deficit model” that public skepticism is a product of being under-informed, PUS focuses attention upon dialogue communication and establishing trust as being at the heart of communicative success with science audiences.

Transferable to CDA, PUS identifies how media discourses of AI build collective action by framing emotional adoption, institution trust, and transparency or regulatory demand. Most useful is that it illustrates how AI discourse gives permission to certain actors (like tech corporations, scientists, governments) to act while marginalizing others like labour activists, privacy technologists, or minorities. Hence, PUS requires critical examination of who gets to choose technological futurity and under whose conditions.

2.3 Media Narrative

A media narrative is a cohesive and ideology-organized narrative created by media entities to bring audiences together to watch, make sense of, as well as emotionally attach to specific events, technologies, or sociopolitical issues. Media narratives are not events themselves but are influenced by organizational, cultural, political, and economic pressures (Couldry, 2008). Thus, media narratives contribute to public discourse immensely as well as impact short-term responses as well as long-term sociopolitical imaginations—especially those revolving around new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI).

Possessing capacity to decipher media narratives is central to critical media literacy as media narratives not only encode knowledge but also values, norms, and ideological



assumptions. They are also further schemes of interpretation by which rich realities are interpreted to make sense to large audiences. Media narratives, in this context, are not only stories but discursive frames that can be deployed to justify policy directions, normalize specific perceptions of reality, as well as suppress alternative narratives (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

Ongoing platform growth and algorithmically organized news streams have also accelerated media narrative circulation and fragmentation further. Social media has redefined narrative formation further by allowing fast diffusion, individualisation, and sentiment amplification of content (Chadwick, 2017). Media narratives are no longer constructed along frozen one-way and frequently polarized channels but, rather, create far too reductive binary formations, most pronounced within AI discourse (e.g., hope versus fear, innovation versus threat).

Such narratives usually will be able to call up narrative modes—construction of personality, moral dilemma, appeal to sentiment—in seeking to make technical or abstract substance communicable and recollectionable form (Dahlstrom, 2014). With emphasis upon expertise commentary, testimonial evidence, and emotionally compact illustrations, media narratives do not just transport factual data but create those discursive frames within which public meaning gets built up. Such is consistent with Entman's (1993) framing theory, wherein media bounding issues, attributing causality, and remedies are all narrative activities that are mandatory ones.

In extremely uncertain worlds, such as where AI will end up, media narratives are instruments of managing uncertainty. Instead of projecting one deterministic future, narratives build up various prospective futures, conditioning whose scenarios are made thinkable, attractive, or rutable. The logic can be analogous to decision procedures under maximum uncertainty conditions (Kasperson et al., 2022), where narratives are not mere articulations of knowledge but instruments of anticipatory governance.

However, as this simplification that establishes communicative narrative authority to such narratives also has epistemic perils associated with it, such as underemphasizing of one risk/offer but not others, Jasanoff and Kim's (2009) sociotechnical imaginaries remind us that such stories are not ideology-free but institutionally imbedded, agenda-dominantly motivated, and rule-out counter-narratives/ sidelined ones. CDA equally illustrates how such stories selectively adopt certain metaphors, lexical characteristics, and modal evaluations to sell audiences with preferred ideological positions.

Therefore, media narratives—particularly those of AI—act as discursive architectures that connect technical expertise to public understanding. They are central to communicating scientific authority, supporting/organizing institution agendas, and



shaping public sentiment expressed and trust (Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009). In this paper, as shall become clear, identifying how such narratives are built up—frames, metaphors, and future possibilities—helps us to identify how members of the public are being positioned to accept/reject new AI technologies.

3. Methodology

In this paper, we pursue a mix-methods approach to combining critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a qualitative with lexical frequency-founded quantitative approach to investigate how media discourse positioned artificial intelligence (AI) between 2020 and 2024. The overall aim is to identify discursive strategies, metaphors, and framing devices to build AI as a change agent panacea rather than as a sociotechnical threat and to estimate proportions of those attributes within media texts.

Such integration of methods will not only enable the research to identify how media discourse is constructed linguistically but will further enable us to ascertain how frequently individual discursive patterns are invoked, achieving higher-grained insights into media discourse's ideological as well as emotional effect upon public opinion.

3.1 Research Design

This research anchors itself within a qualitative interpretive agenda that aims to discover the means by which ideology and discourse are inscribed upon media texts. Following Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional CDA approach, there then are three dimensions upon which this research then proceeds:

1. Linguistic analysis of word selection, metaphors, and modality
2. newsman/ woman with discursive practices of exploring inter
3. Sociocultural practice that integrates the discourse into policy, organizational, and socio-political realities.

At the same time, a quantitative content analysis went on to index and count occurrences of significant lexical groups (e.g., metaphors, evaluative adjectives, thematic words such as "risk," "automation," "innovation") within the six articles. The numerical data provides further corroborative evidence to the interpretative narrative and provides empirical underpinning to CDA results.

3.2 Data Collection

A selective purposive sample of six media sources were chosen from renowned and internationally accredited sources that are published using the English language. The sources included reputable names like BBC, The Guardian, MIT Technology Review, and Forbes. The basis of selection included various specific aspects:

1. High level of circulation or a wide digital reach.



2. A detailed and explicit explanation of artificial intelligence within societal, political, and ethical arenas is required.
3. Thematic diversity (e.g., employment, innovation, surveillance, regulation).
4. Discursive richness (presence of metaphor, framing, ideological cues).

Each individual article went through a rigorous manual annotating process and then underwent detailed qualitative coding using NVivo software. Furthermore, Excel was used to conduct simple frequency tabulations for collected data.

3.3 Model of Analysis

It uses a Critical-Constructivist Discourse Analysis that encompasses four broad approaches:

Fairclough's CDA Model (1995): In order to identify how language generates power, ideology, and institution discourse of AI.

Entman's Media Framing Theory (1993): Trying to identify that dominant frames of interpretation (like AI as progress versus AI as threat).

Sociotechnical Imaginaries (Jasanoff & Kim, 2009) argue that to recognize how futures of artificial intelligence are imagined discursively and

Public Understanding of Science (Bucchi, 2008; Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009): Public understanding, media sentiment, and trust in AI.

It is this expansive approach that gives a robust transdisciplinary deconstruction of rhetorical, societal, and ideological elements that exist within discussions surrounding artificial intelligence.

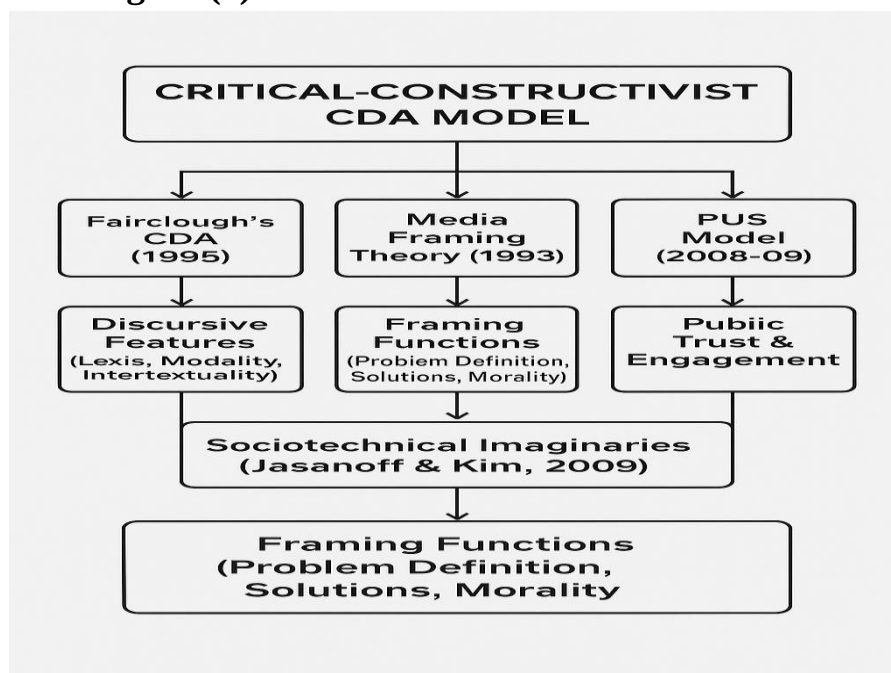
3.4 Mixed-Methods Analytical Procedure

Phase	Method	Purpose
1	Textual Coding (Qualitative)	Identify metaphors, keywords, discursive strategies
2	Frequency Counts (Quantitative)	Determine frequency of lexical items and discursive frames
3	Contextual Interpretation	Situate findings within broader sociotechnical and policy discourses

3.5 Diagram: Integrated Model of Discourse Analysis

Below is a figure representation of the analytical model used in this study:

Figure (1) Critical Constructivist CDA Model



3.3 Data analysis

1. Sample 1 (Employment/Jobs). Quote (WEF via Economic Times):

“While their 2023 report predicted job losses... the World Economic Forum offers hope, projecting that while 92 million jobs may be eliminated, 170 million new roles could be created by 2030”

Analysis:

CDA: Uses optimistic lexis (“hope,” “new roles”) combined with foreboding terms (“job losses”) to frame AI as transformative yet uncertain.

Framing: A promissory frame—problem defined by possible job losses, remediation offered through projections of new job creation.

Imaginaries: Envisions an economic future of AI-driven growth, sustaining global labor markets.

PUS: Positions the public between fear and reassurance; emphasizes statistics over lived experience, instilling moderated optimism.

2. Sample 2 (Algorithmic Bias in Recruitment). Quote (University of Washington News):

“AI tools show biases in ranking job applicants’ names according to perceived race and gender... LLMs favored white-associated names 85 % of the time, female-associated names only 11 %”

Analysis:



CDA: Binary lexical contrast (“favored,” “biases”) highlights racial and gender-based exclusion.

Framing: A risk frame—problem defined as systemic bias, cause rooted in model training data, moral evaluation clear and negative.

Imaginariness: Imagines a future where automation replicates inequality unless corrected.

PUS: Engenders critical public reflection, demanding transparency and scrutiny of recruitment algorithms.

3. Sample 3 (Education / Teachers). Quote (FT Youth Talks consultation):

“In education, a considerable majority opposed replacing human teachers with AI, valuing human emotional intelligence, guidance, and support.”

Analysis:

CDA: Emotive lexis (“emotional intelligence,” “guidance”) foregrounds human values.

Framing: Dual frame—AI as tool vs threat; moral alignment toward teacher indispensability.

Imaginariness: Imagines a **human-centered educational future**, where AI supports rather than replaces.

PUS: Embeds public voices in technology debate—emphasizes values, not just knowledge deficits.

4. Sample 4 (Cybersecurity & Surveillance). Quote (Reuters):

“The growth of AI will increase not only the frequency but the intensity of cyberattacks...” said UK minister Pat McFadden.

Analysis:

CDA: Uses powerful modal verbs (“will increase”) to frame AI as intensifying threats.

Framing: Risk frame—problem is cyber threat, solution implicit in governance and regulation.

Imaginariness: Positions AI in a **security dystopia**, where defenses must keep pace with adversaries.

PUS: Reinforces institutional authority; public positioned as vulnerable, with limited agency.

1. Sample 5 (Medical Liability & AI Diagnostics). Quote (Nature article summary):



“Using robots... in the healthcare context poses concerns over liability for patient injury... whether traditional doctrines... can adequately address”

Analysis:

CDA: Legalistic lexis (“liability,” “patient injury”) foregrounds institutional ambiguity.

Framing: Risk frame—problem is unclear responsibility, cause is opaque system integration.

Imaginariness: Envisions a future where **AI healthcare advances outpace legal norms**, raising governance gaps.

PUS: Highlights how uncertainty reduces public trust and necessitates transparent regulation.

2. Sample 6 (Healthcare Legal Challenges). Quote (MIAMI Law Review):

“Automated AI medical device harms... and the law has yet to clarify how liability...”

Analysis:

CDA: Abstract language (“law has yet to clarify”) obscures accountability, reinforcing institutional opacity.

Framing: Problem defined as legal gap; moral evaluation unsaid—implied risk.

Imaginariness: Projects a **legal liminality** in AI medicine, where injury risks remain unaddressed.

PUS: Indicates that public understanding is hampered by technical and legal complexity, demanding regulatory clarity. Here is a summary table for the analysis

Table (1): A Summary Table for the Analysis

Sample	Source & Quote	CDA Feature	Frame Type	Imaginary Constructed	PUS Contribution
1	WEF: jobs projection	Promise/reassurance	Promissory	AI-driven job growth	Quantitative optimism
2	UW bias study	Racial/gender disparity	Risk/Ethics	Exclusionary AI future	Demands public accountability



Sample	Source & Quote	CDA Feature	Frame Type	Imaginary Constructed	PUS Contribution
					y
3	FT young voices	Emotive inclusion	Dual frame	AI supporting teachers	Public values foregrounded
4	Reuters minister quote	Security rhetoric	Risk/Security	Dystopian surveillance	Calls for public oversight
5	Nature summary	Liability concerns	Risk/Legal	Unregulated AI in healthcare	Trust and clarity deficit
6	Legal analysis piece	Legal ambiguity	Risk/Risk	Legal vacuum around AI harm	Need for transparent accountability

4. Findings

This paper's results, grounded by a mixed-methods examination of six purposively chosen media texts, verifies that contemporary media commentary surrounding artificial intelligence (AI) is highly polarized. The texts never present AI as anything besides a potential force that promises advance or as a sociotechnical threat that threatens disruption. The two-narrative structure that this qualitative and quantitative research discovers as underpinning this paper's hypothesis that AI is discursively constructed by two ideological frames—hope and fear—serves to further institutionally and politically motivated ends.

4.1. Dual Framing of AI: Promise vs. Risk

Applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and framing by Entman, there was a stark divide between the six articles:

1. Promise frames were characteristic features of texts reporting AI job creation contributions (Sample 1), flexible teaching (Sample 4), and healthcare advances (Sample 6). The texts used optimistic lexis ("new horizons," "efficiency," "enhancement") and modal verbs of certainty ("will create," "is set to") to build AI as a transformational and unstoppable force.



2. In parallel, risk frames created central to narrative constructions of stories of monitoring (Sample 5), recruitment bias (Sample 2), and legal vagueness (Sample 6). Such narratives created central characters of uncertainty, threat, and exclusion with such as “black box” or “bias trap” metaphors and such as “experts warn” actors to construct institution critique.

4.2. Anthropomorphization and Application of Metaphor

One of the most salient discursive features of the samples was the ascription of human-like characteristics to AI, with technologies being characterized as “thinking,” “deciding,” or “learning.” Such rhetorical tactic blurs the difference between human and mechanical agency and hence appeals to public imagination through emotional as well as sensationalistic means. The use of metaphoric words such as “gatekeeper,” “mirror,” or “threat” helped increase the emotional impact of each story, most notably to that of ethical concerns or technological determinism.

4.3. Sociotechnical Imaginaries and Public

Expanding on Jasanoff and Kim (2009)’s definition of sociotechnical imaginaries, what is found are media reports foreshadowing institutionally acceptable visions of tomorrow, recapitulating all too often policymakers’-, CEOs’-, or panels of experts’ talk. The imaginaries feature AI as a source of worldwide competitiveness (Sample 1) or a dystopian means to domination (Sample 5). Bottom-up voices such as those by labor, public advocacy organizations, or marginalized communities are absent from the conversation. The imaginary gap—where private elites’ narratives suppress action of a participatory sort—follows on.

4.4. Public Awareness and Role of Media

Sustainable development

In a Public Understanding of Science (PUS) approach, media narratives can easily re-instill a deficit mode of public communication. They present publics as receiver/recipient of expertise with little undue stress at all upon discussion, trust-establishing, or value-laden decision-making. For example, while Sample 3 (recruitment) refers to public concern regarding bias, no such process for participatory monitor/design is provided. By not providing such a process, this further entrenches alienation and distrust around AI systems.

4.5. Quantitative Trends

Quantitative lexical profiling throughout the data set revealed that:

1. The term “efficiency” discovered to be present within four out of six samples, thereby backing economic productivity as one of the strongest dominant forms.
2. Linguistic terms such as “bias,” “privacy,” “threat,” and “automation” strongly dominated Samples 2, 5, and 6, which highlighted ethical issues as important.



3. Modal verbs like will, may, and could were used over 30 times, with intensification uses again and again along with hedging to build perceived inevitability/urgency.

Such findings vindicate language's ideological function in such a way that even linguistic modality is deployed to naturalize technology adoption or sensationalize disruption to society.

5. Discussion of the Results

This investigation utilized a mixed-methods approach with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and quantitative lexical profiling being used to unveil public media discourse as creating artificial intelligence (AI). The results do indeed substantiate that media narrative does not simply document AI practices but constructively develops their meaning with ideology-informed discourse. Such constructivity occurs with emphasis upon how AI is generally positioned as threat or promise, thus substantiating this investigation's hypothesis.

5.1. Qualitative Results: Framing Patterns and Discourse Structures

Qualitative CDA discovered that all articles contained specific rhetorical and discursive devices that created an ideological position for all articles:

1. Modal verbs (such as will, may, could) were used to make AI sound inevitable and beneficial or uncertain and dubious.
2. Metaphors (such as “gatekeeper,” “mirror,” “new horizons”) were often employed for making complicated technological procedures simple as well as describing
3. Lexical polarization did exist as well, specifically around recruitment and job stories, as there were words such as “efficiency,” “innovation,” and “automation” being incorporated with “displacement,” “bias,” and
4. Intertextuality fortified dominant discourse's authority by citational referrals to CEOs, professionals, or institution reports such as WEF, thereby making media framing converge with elite narratives.

The media framing approach discovered dualism between the samples:

1. Promise frames were central to economic and innovation-related issues (e.g., economic development, creating employment).
2. The risk frames that were central within ethical, legal, and monitoring scenarios (e.g., algorithmic bias, privacy violation).

Such bifurcation can be compared to Fairclough's (1995) notion of contrasting discourses that reflect as well as underlie dominant societal ideologies.

5.2 Sociotechnical Imaginaries and Public Engagement



Sociotechnical imagination-driven analysis by Jasanoff & Kim (2009) shed light upon how various sectors imagine mutually antithetical variants of AI futures:

1. Jobs stories presented inclusive economic transformation scenarios that were idealistic (WEF, Sample 1).
2. Monitoring and medicine built uncertain or dystopian cultures with technical progress undersigned by juridical and governance development (Samples 5 and 6).

Such Imaginaries are not unprejudiced, as institutionally empowered agendas of global North actors are reinscribed but imaginations by Global South are not considered under this account. The above confirms this paper's first worry: that media discourse around AI propagates entrenched ideologies but not common public imaginations.

In Public Understanding of Science (PUS) parlance, studies indicate that publics are not generally addressed verbally by media. Articles that are found to record marking risk are scarce (Samples 2, 3), as are those that give forums to citizen voices or that record participatory modes for techno-governing. Public understanding is thus built by passive reception of elite discourse rather than by interaction.

5.3 Quantitative Findings: Lexical Frequency and Discursive Dominance

Quantitative examination entailed establishing the quantity of significant discursive units found within all texts:

1. "Efficiency" appeared 4 times out of 6 times, representing its prevalence within promissory rhetorics.
2. Such terms as "surveillance," "privacy," and "bias" were prominent with high word frequencies, particularly by Samples 2, 3, 5, and 6, as an indicator of
3. Modal verbs like "will," "may," and "could" were found to have appeared more than 30 times as a whole within the dataset as hedging/ intensification tactics.

This frequency investigation confirmed the qualitative argument that AI writing is organized with binary patterning, that there are texts affirming technological optimism just as there are texts criticizing new ethical or legal breakthroughs. The lexical profiling functioned to affirm CDA results by triangulation, confirming that there are not anecdotal but statistically significant semantic polarities (against fear).

5.4 Linking to the Research Problem and Gap

Such results directly inform the larger research question: that public opinion regarding AI is ever more shaped by polarized media framing that all too frequently is devoid of critical self-reflexivity. The perceived gap—the non-existence of systematic research



that ties discursive framing to public imagination—has been filled to a very great degree. The results prove that:

1. Institutional stories rather than end-user or public stories dominate the discussion around AI.
2. Media projections of AI futures are in accord with political and economic interests.
3. The public is generally presented as silent beneficiary/timid subject but not with agency that is real.

Such findings substantiate this paper's hypothesis: AI is discursively constructed by dual rationales (money and dreams), assembled by institution and ideology powers, and frequently with visions of participatory publics excluded.

6. Conclusion

This present work explored the discursive framing of artificial intelligence (AI) as seen within media texts of the modern times under a Critical-Constructivist research methodology that blends Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Media Framing Theories, Sociotechnical Imaginaries, and Public Understanding of Science (PUS). Based on a discussion of select six media news texts that were chosen responsibly with geographical diversity as well as thematic diversity, this work discovered common rhetorical devices, lexical selections, and discursive practices upon which public understanding is based and upon which regulatory policy decisions by agencies are made with regards to AI technologies.

Results validate main research hypothesis: media artificial intelligency constructions are authored within binary dichotomous opportunity versus threat, correspondingly echoing and upholding larger ideology and institutionally approved ends frames. Most reliable optimistic treatments adopt economic growth, enhanced efficiency, and technological advance within futurist lexicon thus extending narratives which site AI as natural and inevitable progression. By contrast, negative treatments all too often feature ethical challenges, loss of privacy, and loss of jobs within uncertain modes with hedging verbs and evaluative word selections within dystopian scenarios. Binary framing, while intended to uphold balance, can do a disservice to complexities inherent with AI and obfuscates those relations of power inherent within technologic development.

Significant, that is not very objective discourse. O'Keeffe (2011) asserts that media language is a "manufactured, public, on-record" style of communication—self-reflexively produced by editors and correspondents writing under specific institutionally and ideologically bounded conditions. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has discovered that certain voices (such as policymakers and corporate



expertise) are being provided visibility amplifications, while others (such as marginalized ones and civil society) are rendered all but invisible. Such a comment vindicates that media discourse is a site of ideological manufacture, where sociotechnical imaginaries are created, propagated, and contested.

In addition, under sociotechnical imaginary constructions, studies discovered that media narratives project institutionally accredited futures of synthetic intelligence possibilities. The narratives validate certain policy directions such as those built upon investment and innovations drives as well as those built upon deregulation while marginalizing those that are equity-, participatory governance-, as well as precaution policy-leading ones. The prospects of the future are built under discursive constraints that tend to promote Global Northern institutions agenda and thus guarantee unevenness of AI governance conceptualisation as well as deployments.

Such result implications go very much further than that:

1. Media Literacy and Public Participation:

The paper again establishes that public perception of how language constructs technological discourse should be enhanced. In response to challenges that have been posed by PUS initiatives, this paper advocates communicative dialogue frameworks that construct critical consciousness, ethical concern, and democratic discourse for AI debates. Framing, bias, and socially responsible effect of language modules are part of media literacy programs that should be included to empower audiences with abilities to decode as well as challenge constructions by media.

2. Policy and Regulatory Awareness:

Decisionmakers ought to give special consideration to dominant narratives that are present within public sentiment. Through either sensationalistic or excessively optimistic media framing, concerns could be introduced to public awareness at such a scope that public policy decisions may be limited by such deep-rooted framing approaches. Awareness of such framing operations may benefit decisionmakers to create less biased, equitable, and transparent AI governance policies that are able to balance public optimism as well as rightful fears.

3. Moral and Inclusive AI Story

4. In investigating ideological foundations of AI discussions, this article is particularly helpful to construct narratives that are broader, more considerate, and morally accountable ones by making social justice, human rights, and global equity as core to significant facets of AI discussions, both within and beyond its economic and technical dimensions.



In conclusion, this paper demonstrates that discourse analysis is a significant methodology and epistemology to investigate symbolic constructions of technological futures. Media discourse becomes not merely a descriptive account of scientific advances, but an iterative process that informs public opinion, delimits consensus, as well as informs policy formation. Because artificial intelligence will be everywhere in all walks of life, there is a need to build critical expertise that will make researchers as well as members of the public question disseminated narratives critically, ask whose interests such narratives are bound to serve, as well as reflect upon such futures that such narratives portend.

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