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Linguistic Polarization Through Social Media: A Study of Pakistani Social Media and Politics

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Abstract

Pakistani society has been deeply impacted by the waves of ethnic integration and national identity from its inception. Traditional societal divisions persist along racial, religious, linguistic, and provincial lines. However societal divisions along political lines have become even more pronounced as a result of political events in the previous decade. Pakistani nationalism and statehood are being eroded by disturbing features of the current tendency toward incorporating violence into our political conduct and cultural practices. Using hate speech to eliminate opponents and incite a wave of rage and violence in Pakistani social media and streets is easier said than done, according to the study. In addition to the already dire state of our society's access to healthcare, education, and jobs, this has further divided and degraded us. A relentless pursuit of power dilutes our nation's principles and character. Using a thematic analysis and a socio-cognitive method, this essay delves into the political speeches of various politicians from Pakistan to uncover the increasing patterns of hate speech and polarization.

Keywords: ethnic integration, hate speech, Polarization,

Introduction

Politically speaking, hate speech is defined as statements that mainly aim to create hatred against a certain group of people. Many factors, including gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, tradition, lifestyle, and religious views, contribute to this agitation. Thus, any statement, symbol, or piece of evidence that an individual approaches or sees with the aim to sow fear and incite violence may be considered hate speech. It is expected that individuals

would behave rationally as activists. However, one needs to be guided, shaped, and integrated by the words, ideas, and views of another while articulating their thinking. Therefore, this is seen as a typical occurrence, and many individuals from different religious, ethnic, and caste backgrounds are bound together (Gupta, 2021). An examination of Imran Khan's and Maryam Nawaz's political statements on societal division and hatred is presented in this study.

People in our culture are wary of "Us and Them" groups due to harmful polarization (Saleem, 2021). As a result, our social relationships are weakening, and intolerance and divisions are spreading. Our party allegiance defines our social identity. The latest fads in our political system for dealing with opponents include using hate speech and unusual words. Additionally, religion is being used as a weapon, and accusations, charges, and accusing others without due process are fuelling societal division and hatred (Niazi, 2012). In this technologically advanced era, where innovations have permeated every part of our society, the digital media era has greatly influenced many things, including politics (Ramzan et al., 2023; Akram & Abdelrady, 2023; Abdelrady & Akram, 2022).

According to Akram et al. (2021), there have been advantages and disadvantages to the introduction of technology. Digital media has affected Pakistani politics, as it has helped spread political scepticism and revived hate speech (Ramzan et al., 2023; 2020). Some people, known as "keyboard warriors," are taking to social media to trash-talk officials from the other party's personal life. In contrast, political leaders often resort to abusive language and threats of violence when addressing each other and other party followers. But politicians can't utilize anonymous social media accounts to harass or threaten others because of their public personas. According to Hendriks et al. (2016), politicians are treated as actors on social media; their performances are expected to adhere to the script that has been given to them.

Purpose of the study
The main goal of the study is to find out which words and phrases are used in political talks that spread hate and division since online debate is thought to be well-thought-out. Also, everyone uses social media, especially YouTube, all the time, and nothing can stop it from changing the way they talk or what they believe. A lot of the time, politicians use social media like YouTube to control the flow of political information and get their fans involved by making negative comments about their opponents. This affects those followers. The researcher wants to look into how political talks affect people who support a certain party and how using insulting language against the other party affects those supporters and makes society more divided.

Research objective
This study intends
1   To investigate the influence of hate speech on followers,
2   To highlight the function of political speeches in promoting division within society.

Research question
The research in hand is based on answering the following questions
1   What is the influence of political hate speeches on society?
2   What is the impact of their language choice on the polarization of society?

Significance of the study

This study aims to shed light on the strategies employed by politicians to manipulate and shape public beliefs, with the goal of enhancing public understanding. In addition, this study aims to provide a better understanding of the actions of politicians and how they manipulate the public for personal gain, particularly in a country where literacy rates are low, such as Pakistan. In addition, critical discourse analysis is a subject that spans multiple disciplines and can be advantageous in the field of education, especially for individuals who are not familiar with CDA. This study will provide valuable insights into the socio-cognitive approach proposed by Van Dijk for analysing and comprehending political discourse, particularly the impact of a powerful leader's language on the cognitive system. Furthermore, exploring sociopolitical theories can shed light on the intricate connection between discourse and society.

Delimitations of the Study

This study focuses on the analysis of linguistic polarization in society, specifically through a case study of speeches given by PTI and PMLN politicians. Due to time constraints, the study will only provide a thematic analysis of one speech from each individual.

Review of Literature

"The term "polarization" is often used to characterize the widespread and harsh prejudice that exists in our society towards certain groups of people because of their race, nationality, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. According to the Council of Europe's Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, "hate speech" includes vocal and nonverbal expressions that promote racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and other types of bigotry. Hate speech encompasses all forms of communication, verbal and nonverbal alike that promote bigotry and hatred towards a certain racial, ethnic, or political group. While hate speech is purposefully designed to accomplish certain goals, free speech is essential for cultivating a truly democratic and varied society. Consequently, most industrialized democracies have a provision on free speech that specifically prohibits hate speech.

The media's responsibility to report on bias, power conflicts, and other issues in order to foster an impartial political process is central to political communication. Reading and analysing political speeches is a primary aim. Political communication theory delves into the ways in which political institutions use mass media to spread information and persuasive messages to the public. This procedure is vital to ensure that these institutions are answerable to the people (Hassan et al., 2022). The capacity to convince and win over the people is vital in democratic political campaigns, and the quest for power and language plays a pivotal role in doing just that. People and political parties use persuasive language to spread their views throughout political campaigns. It is challenging to promote agreement, discourse, or content moderation in the digital media environment due to the ease with which divisive speech can propagate. Politicians' use of social media and the new media function of these platforms are interconnected in multiple ways. It only takes a stray fact to become a weapon in the promotion of an ideology. These sites have become the go-to for official remarks from today's leaders, regardless of party (Jose et al., 2022).

There existed a long void in European and international case law pertaining to hate speech.

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The term has evolved to mean hate speech that threatens social harmony, which is an important point to remember. Notably, the first-ever explicit definition of hate speech was provided by the Council of Europe, an international agency. In an effort to curb hate speech, one global group is making great strides. This activity is carried out with great care, incorporating a wide range of tasks aimed at keeping tabs on the phenomena and setting benchmarks to further the aims of the many treaties. As said by Omlate in 2019. A deepening of political mistrust in Pakistani politics in the era of modern digital media has accompanied a rise in hate speech. On social media, some enjoy trash-talking the private lives of politicians from the opposing party. Politicians, on the other hand, frequently insult one another and act abusively against party members who favour the other side (Shafiq, 2021).

Methods and Materials

Theoretical background
Case studies of Imran Khan's and Maryam Nawaz's statements delivered on Pakistani social media groups provide light on the phenomena of societal polarization and hatred. This study is based on the seminal socio-cognitive works of Kecskés (2014) and Van Dijk (1998). Thinking, knowing, remembering, judging, and solving problems are all parts of cognition, which is the mental process of gaining and processing knowledge. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim that linguistic information affects cognition and thought, which is explained by the social cognitive approach, which elucidates the basic ideas of cognitive linguistics. In his discussion of the importance of "presupposition," Van Dijk (1998) argues that people's language use is constantly influenced by their preconceived notions, goals, and the way society perceives information, attitudes, ideologies, laws, and values. According to Laurita and Spreng (2017), people's biases toward language emerge from their interactions with and exposure to their social environments. Furthermore, political rhetoric and the discursive aspects of politics are studied through the analysis of political speeches. This analysis reveals the purposeful use of language to impact public opinion and mold it according to particular objectives.

Data Collection
Maryam Nawaz's and Imran Khan's speeches served as the main data used in the analysis. Political discourse and realistic representation of politicians' ideologies were the deciding factors in the selection of YouTube videos and comments. A great deal of the aggressiveness, bigotry, and societal polarisation that we see today originates on social media.

Sampling
The leaders of two main political parties in Pakistan, Maryam Nawaz and Imran Khan were culled from YouTube footage of political speeches (PTI and PMLN, respectively). These individuals were chosen due to their significant role in representing their party's ideology on both social media and mainstream media.
Speech by Imran Khan in Gujranwala on November 1, 2022. Maryam Nawaz delivered a speech on September 8, 2022 in Chishtian. However, these two parties have been chosen for their significant role and contribution in shaping the Pakistani government. They enjoy

immense popularity among the masses.

Ethical Considerations
After giving it some thought, we decided to use the videos of the chosen politicians and their comments as data. All YouTube users have easy access to the recordings of these well-known public figures. Further, to avoid any possible bias stemming from political views when assessing the data, the researcher used the social cognitive approach, a well-known theoretical framework, to remain objective during data collecting. No particular person or political group was intended to be endorsed or condemned by the study.

Data Analysis
This study examined two political speeches from YouTube, along with the accompanying comments, in order to analyse the various expressions used by politicians to convey or provoke feelings of hatred, anger, and polarization toward their opponents, policies, and supporters. The majority of the chosen comments were in Urdu; thus, they were initially transcribed in Roman English. An analysis of speeches and comments was conducted using the qualitative research method, specifically employing the social cognitive approach. The analysis method used by Ritchie et al. (2013) was implemented, and a set of examples were coded to examine the expressions of hate, conflict, and polarization among politicians. The coding scheme was developed using an inductive approach, where the categories and themes emerging from the selected texts were observed.

Findings and Analysis
Analysis of the portrayal of hate and polarization in the speeches of Imran Khan and Maryam Nawaz Sharif
Here, we address the original research question. The data analysis of speeches and comments has revealed four themes. Conflict, emotional blackmail, accusations, and symbolic hate are all part of these themes. With the use of statistics, I have examined each topic and shown how political leaders appeal to the public's emotions. Furthermore, the effects of Van Dijk's social cognitive method are shown in the comments that are placed under the videos. There is hostility and division in society when politicians' intentions coincide with the views voiced by their followers.
Part 1 presents the transcript of Imran Khan's speech on November 1st in Gujranwala.
We need to engage in a legal battle. Since our competition is based on criminals and the money is involved, it becomes a legal battle between the accused and the jury, who are financially motivated. Offensive comments Conflict or clash
Sana Ullah's eloquence, the crimes of Nawaz and Shabaz Sharif, and the illness of Asif Zardari are all factors that have led to their downfall. Derogatory comments: There is no god but Allah. God grants us freedom, but no oppressor, tyrant, murderer like Sana Ullah, or criminal like Zardari will ever make our nation bow down before them. There is no god but Allah. God, unjust, Pharaoh, organized crime Discussion involving religious beliefs and resorting to personal insults.
Anyone who attempts to control these thieves will be humiliated and destroyed. We are not the kind of people who make decisions in closed rooms. Today, this thief got an NRO and then

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turned into a thief again after getting an NRO. Chour, Zalil, Tabah Rude and disrespectful comments

The system of injustice in Pakistan is undeniable. Only small-time thieves are caught, while the big-time criminals remain elusive. Chour, dako, zulam Accusations

The public has become aware that anyone attempting to confine this fame in a bottle will be swept away in the sea of public opinion. The bottle of dawn, the ocean of the people Manipulating the minds of the general population Manipulative tactics used to manipulate others through emotional manipulation.

Shahbaz Sharif is asking for money like beggars in the world. The reason behind this is a hadith that was said 1500 years ago by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It states that a nation that puts small thieves in jail and lets big robbers go free will be destroyed. Bikario, chour, dakao Generalizations based on stereotypes Accusation. The cheerful blossom is requesting a share in this world. The cherry blossom represents a beautiful and delicate flower while disrespecting one's opponent or engaging in bullying behaviour is both unkind and inappropriate. Intense animosity is expressed through symbolism. Conflict or clash as a result of offensive and disrespectful comments made by leaders of PTI and N League, political party workers at the grassroots level are engaging in confrontations, leading to societal conflict. The clash of opinions is escalating quickly, leading to a concerning rise in intolerance among different religious groups. This phenomenon is resulting in the rise of sectarian biases and religious divisions, which in turn has a detrimental impact on the overall peace and harmony within society. The choice of words used by Imran Khan in his speeches, like "juraim paisha log," "qatial," "mujrum," and "firhoon," conveys the collective idea that his political ideology is just. His choice of words clearly reflects his rhetoric of hate and strife. Speakers who use slurs like "chour," "Zalil," and "firhoon Dako" are trying to sway public opinion. Similarly, he puts himself above other politicians by calling them "Dako and chour," implying that the people would be oblivious to their plot to incite hatred against him.

Emotional blackmailing
People from subcontinents are often characterized as being highly emotional and sentimental. Powerful individuals, politicians, and religious organizations frequently manipulate the emotions of the general public to achieve their objectives. Ordinary individuals frequently risk their economic and social standing, and sometimes even their lives, in order to participate in corrupt activities and achieve political objectives. These situations frequently undermine law and order and disrupt societal peace.

Accusation
The exchange of accusations and disrespectful comments between political leaders is inciting feelings of hatred within society. These circumstances are creating a tense atmosphere characterized by hatred and division. Are these unfavourable impressions of the opposing parties based on their real stances on issues? One measure of political polarisation is the degree to which the public views the two main political parties as fundamentally different from one another in terms of ideology and policy (Ploger, 2019). Keep in mind that real political polarisation is different from this idea. Many people believe that the two major political parties are ideologically similar and equally radical, according to certain studies

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(Pronin et al., 2002; Robinson et al., 1995; Sherman et al., 2003). This hypothesis is known as false polarization. The utilization of party rhetoric by party elites, along with the partisan media that amplifies their message, contributes to the division of perceptions, especially among their supporters.

Part 2 presents the speech delivered by Maryam Nawaz on 8th September in Chishtian, focusing on text, codes, Categories and its main themes;

1. It is unfortunate that the Muslim League is being compared to a person who is not only wicked but also lowly. I am unaware of the environment in which this individual was raised. Using derogatory and offensive language to insult and express hatred towards one's opponent is highly inappropriate and disrespectful.

2. It is challenging for me to tolerate looking at the face of a person whose speech is also of low quality. I have to talk about that person. Shakal, Ghatia Inappropriate language

3. If Maryam Nawaz was not the daughter of Nawaz Sharif, who raised her daughter with moral values, then remember Imran Khan, you wouldn't find a place to hide in Pakistan, let alone in this world. Ethical values, the place of silence Presenting oneself as the most morally upright individual

4. It is quite astonishing how a person who keeps the women of his household as property can have the audacity to accuse someone else (like putting diamond rings on iron fingers and signing documents). Stealing, moral courage, accusation Inappropriate Comments Polarization is a phenomenon that occurs when there is a division or separation between two opposing groups or individuals. There has been a lot of research and analysis into this complicated idea from many different fields of study. Many academics have argued on the reasons for and effects of polarisation.

I have concluded that this is a divisive and destructive situation, causing immense harm to Pakistan. It is imperative to address this issue with utmost seriousness and urgency. Fitna Khan, Intishar, Tabahi, Intishar Khan

6. Jub nam rayasity Madinah la laita hy apni napak zuban se, aur jub maike ke agay khara hota hy, bazari logo ke tarha jumly kasta hy. Is ko sharam ni atti. Napak Zuban, Bazari Jumly Kasna , Sharam Unethical remarks Hatred and rage

7. Imran khan na siasatdan hy, na is ke jamat siyasi hy, balky ye badmashoo, ubashoo aur ghundoo ka guru hy. Jo paiso ke khatiar mulk ko tabah kernay ke liye launch kiya gaya hy Badmah, Ubash, Ghunda Abusive and offensive remarks

8. Dushman quwatoo ke nazar is per kyu parhi, kyu wo is ka track record janty hain, is ke shakil ko pehchanty hain, un ko pata hy ye paisay ke liye kush bi kary ga. Dushman Quwat, Track Record, Paisay Ke Liye Kush Bi

9. Aj kal army chief ke takarari per isy takleef hy, koi is pouchy tumhara takarar merit pe howa tha jo tum merit ke bat kerty ho. Tumhary liye RTS ko band kerna perha, Nawaz Sharif ko jail bejna perha. Army Chief Takarari, Takleef, RTS Accusation Criticizing institutions

10. Judges ko damkiyan daita hy. Khatoon judge zeba ko name ke ker damki daita hy. Pakistan main ye riwaj ni dalna ke gali do aur faisla lo. Damkiyan, Gali Dena

Disgusting Language
Targeted assault Language proficiency lacking The army commanders' performance is suffering, and the judge's personal and professional talents are under strain due to insults

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directed at army personnel and foul language directed toward the court. Due to these factors, courts frequently make unjust decisions, which hinder the pursuit of justice. This further dampens young people's motivation to pursue careers in these fields. All around us, these hurtful comments can be seen in everyday life, and young people are disrespecting adults and social rules. People's thinking changed because of these hurtful comments and hate toward the institution. Before, our institutions were seen as holy, and no one was allowed to talk about them. But now, the way most people think has changed because of their leader's political views and opinions. Comments from the people show that social cognitive change is happening.

Hate Language

Figurative language leads to violence and prejudice. The shocking result of hate is that it causes a lot of disagreement in society. At the moment, this kind of symbolic hate is becoming normal. People who support Maryam Nawaz and Imran Khan are upset by parts of their speeches like "Chitan, Gatian, and Firhoon." It's clear from the comments on both talks that the leaders' ideas and secret political goals are shown in how their fans respond.

Part 3: Three thoughts on the talks of both Maryam Nawaz and Imran Khan Codes for text Types of Themes Thoughts on the speech by Imran Khan

1. Rana Jahannam mai jalsay ki qiyadat kregyn Jahannam Main Qiyaqdqt Insulting remarks Hate and Polarization
2. Qurb e qayamat ko iqtadar pe jangy hongi , ye aaj wahee ho rahaa hay Qurb E Qayamat , Jang Fight for power
3. Fitana I azeem Fitna Derogatory remarks
4. Koi is ki bat ka sir pair nhi jo ye baty ker reha hy koi bhi muslman Allah kay siva kisi k agy nhi jhukta ager vo kisi k agy jhuky ga to uska Iman jay ga Muslman, Allah Ke Siwa Jhukta Nahi Hy Provoking Religious sentiments
5. Is chor ke bakwas sun ker kan puk gay hain Bakwas, Offensive remarks
6. Is chor ko sharam ni atti , beghairat hy ye Naizi Sharam, beghairat Abusive language
7. Bakao media lanat ho duniya news per galat reporting ker rha hy. Bakao media, lanat,
8. Niazi mulk dushman hy Mulk dushman Accusation Comments below Maryam Nawaz's speech

1. It is understandable that Maryam seeks solace with her father, given the circumstances. LOL Expressing emotions with a parental figure and hurtful comments an intense emotion of anger and animosity
2. Wah Bai wah... Maza agaya... Maryam Giraaj zabardast... Pakistan: Zindabad...!!! Giraaj
3. Chour chour choar. Chour machayyy Shoar Chour, Machayy Shoar
4. Iss mulk ki tabahi pe Nawaz Sharif ka naam hy Tabai Humiliation
5. lotyy kahan hain hazri lag rahi hai
6. Speech ka aghaaz hi Nawaz Sharif ke sheroon se Kya gya... Nawaz to Baghoorha aur Mafruuur Geedarh hy to Geedhron ke Lashkar main Sheer kya kr rhy hain? hhhhhh Jhuuti awrat 7. Aisa lagta hy muhterma jalty taway per khari hy Loty Baghoora, Mafruur Jalta Tawa Disrespect
8. Khoty youthiey murda bad Khoty
9. Is jangli ki tarbiat mansehrah kay jangloon main hoi ha isnay Lahore ki aik aurat ko shadi

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sy pehlay Jangli
10. Budmaash chorni Bey shurm fraudi orat Budmash, Chourni, Bey Sharam
11. Educated Toola Giraj wali Aurat ke jalse main aaa ke Sun rhy hain...
Teri awaaz Meri awaaaz Giraaaj main Maryam aur Safdar Nawaz...
12. Is aurat ki zindagi may sukoon nahi he Imran phobia hogaya he isay yahi saza he tmhari
13. Sara Tabar chour hy
14. Imran Khan fitna khan ya such hai Giraj Wali Aurat Imran phobia Sara Tabar, chour Fitna

Derogatory comments Polarization and humiliation
The occurrence of physical or mental mistreatment is leading to public embarrassment for leaders, impacting their reputation and self-esteem. This sense of humiliation is passed down to leaders at the second and third levels of the organization. All of these factors contribute to political and societal unrest. The political polarization in Pakistan has had a significant impact on the social fabric of the country. It is becoming more challenging to witness the constant display of uncompromising and discourteous behavior in society through the speeches of these two political leaders. The current polarization in society is characterized by a significant divergence of political perspectives and a consequential erosion of trust among individuals holding these differing views. Such circumstances may result in societal and political fragmentation and, in some cases, even escalate into acts of violence. This phenomenon can result in individuals becoming more deeply rooted in their convictions and less inclined to consider alternative perspectives. These findings have significant implications, suggesting that our current understanding of political polarization is shaped, at least in part, by the lack of civility we experience online and the resulting anger it provokes. Given the increasing amount of impolite discourse on the internet, it is imperative for scholars to thoroughly examine the consequences of such behaviour from a range of viewpoints. Research has shown that hate comments can have detrimental effects on the mental and physical health of individuals belonging to the targeted group(Lee-Won et al., 2017).
Research on political communication suggests that online incivility plays a role in fostering divergent viewpoints on a particular issue (Anderson et al., 2014). In addition, the latest research indicates that hate comments have the potential to influence perceptions of polarization by evoking negative emotions.

Conclusion
Finally, since its establishment, Pakistani society has witnessed substantial ethnic integration and the emergence of a national identity. Disparities in religion, race, language, and province are still very much present in today's culture. Political events of the last decade, however, have brought a new viewpoint, resulting in ideological differences in society. Looking at political leaders' remarks and speeches, it's clear that they are making people hate each other and divide society by pointing fingers. According to the data, various groups experience varying degrees of hostility, which in turn fosters the development of distinct identities and a sense of political dominance. The political ramifications for nation-building and democracy can be substantial when the intergroup projection of cultural and political pluralism results in confrontations, hate speech, and the reinforcement of stereotypes. Here, disrespectful language is used to strengthen group bonds while people outside the group are ignored. This

study expands on the socio-cognitive framework put out by van Dijk (1998) and Kecskés (2014) to examine how cultural influences and word choice influence hate speech. Additionally, research proves that preconceptions and hate speech are influenced by cultural characteristics that are part of a complex web of individual, behavioural, and environmental factors (Kecskés, 2014).

Knowledge, beliefs, collective ideals, and personal preferences are all part of this. Political speeches can express underlying hatred and typically contain numerous layers of meaning. The statistics presented here shed light on the potential drawbacks of plain language by employing a socio-cognitive method. According to the research, political discourse taking place online is characterized by carefully crafted language. Analysing how HS was expressed in political discourse was made easier with the socio-cognitive method. A closer look at the selected comments' grammar and vocabulary helped to expose the unspoken truths of e-political debate. Politicians are required to state the party's principles, and the words they use reveal a lot about their mental health and worldview.

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