**Discourse of Hate Speech on Social Media in Pakistan: A Critical Multimodal Discourse Analysis**

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The current study deals with the digital political discourse (produced on social media) and focuses on how language is used for (re)construction and (re)presentation of political identities and how hatred is spread while (re)constructing these identities. Social Media systems such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram have become indispensable in people’s lives nowadays as they allow internet users to freely express their opinions and ideas. Despite its facilitation in sharing information, marketing the products, and educational purposes, social media has also brought some challenges. One of the most disturbing challenges in the use of social media is the distribution of hate speech online, especially through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. In this research, the Twitter posts of the politicians which allegedly contain hate speech are collected and analyzed using Fairclough’s Discourse Theory, Van Dijk’s Ideological Square and Kress and Van Leuven’s Multimodal Discourse Analysis to see the production and distribution of hate based content via text and images or political memes. The data which consists of text as well visuals is collected from Twitter during January till April 2019. The objectives of the present study are to see how users’ ideologies are embedded in language and social constructs are developed to promote ideology, intolerance, inequality and racism etc. (political agenda) and to offer a broader understanding of the phenomenon and providing directions for the prevention of the improper use of social media. This study is significant as it identifies the contemporary trends in digital political communication, and investigates that how political actors manipulate social media networking sites for political campaigns and agenda settings. The findings reveal that the users (politicians in the context of present study) use comparison (positive us, negative them), accusation, insult, sarcasm, humour (Mocking)/ comedy leading to insult, quoting (others’ quotes were cut and cited to fulfill one’s own desire) and intertextuality to spread hate based messages. Similarly the political memes are analysed at representational level given Kress & Van Leeuwen, to see the role of colours, background objects and other objects (that accompany the subjects in the picture) to enhance the meaning & political agenda of the user.

**Keywords: Political Hate Speech, Twitter, Ideological Square, Political Identities**

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