



Nudrat Javed¹ & Muhammad Sabboor Hussain²

¹PhD Scholar, Department of English, GC Women University Sialkot, Pakistan

²Professor, Department of English, University of Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<p>Social Media, Memes, Diseased Cognition, Victim Blaming, Victim Silencing, Choices</p>	<p>The social media memes on rape and harassment victim in Pakistan create verbal and semiotic sexual violence for the victims along with their online supporters. Online misogyny is online abuse against women and girls that is rooted in a hatred and mistrust of women which seeks to silence the victims of rape and harassment, further reinforce gender inequalities. This research explored the role of linguistic and semiotic choices made by social media users to create social media memes serving victim blaming, victim silencing and revealing the diseased cognitive structures of such netizens (internet users) in the virtual world. The research is based on five social media memes on the most talked about cases of rape and harassment in the online world. The researcher selected those rape and harassment cases on which there were at least 25-50 memes. The present study data was taken from Facebook and Twitter in the form of screen shots of the memes. The data was analyzed at two level Micro-Discourse Analysis and Macro-Discourse Analysis. The research findings explored the triangular relationship between linguistic, social and cognitive structures. Thus, the social media memes revealed the cognitive structures of the meme creators through their linguistic as well as semiotic choices.</p>
<p>ARTICLE HISTORY</p> <p>Date of Submission: 20-07-2024 Date of Acceptance: 29-08-2024 Date of Publication: 03-09-2024</p>	<p> 2024 Journal of Social Sciences Development</p>
<p>Corresponding Author</p>	<p>Nudrat Javed</p>
<p>Email:</p>	<p>njskt5@gmail.com</p>
<p>DOI</p>	<p>https://doi.org/10.53664/JSSD/03-03-2024-06-64-77</p>

INTRODUCTION

The modern world today is occupied by a digital world with so many innovations, technologies and means of communication. Today, constructing, reconstructing and deconstructing public narratives and perceptions is in fashion. Creating memes, sharing them and commenting on them is the daily routine of the social media users (Shahid, Irfan & Abbas, 2021). The social media memes on serious social issues have a great impact on cognition and public image of social media users. Social media

memes on rape victims reveal how diverse linguistic and semiotic resources are used, amalgamated and channelized in virtual world. Images are content carriers like language. Images are replete with many potential meanings which are governed by vivid and patterned grammar structures that can be applied to decode multiple meaning dimensions (Hussein & Fattah, 2020). Social media daises have boomed in recent years, alongside technological advancement that have perceived growth and affordability of mobile devices that permit almost pervasive online connection for people in virtual world. Social media platforms are regularly exploited for communication from the mundane to extraordinary, to offer support and solidarity, and to blame and victimize (Locke, Lawthom & Lyons, 2018).

The advancement in social media platforms is not simply increasingly allowing access 24/7 to an embroiled online and offline world but also has implications upon the perceptions, public narrative building and effecting the cognitive patterns of social media users. Whilst social media is neither utopian nor dystopian in practice, extensive misogynist online content merely re-inscribes gender in a specific way and reinforces gendered, classed and racialized power relations. The social media content helps to build public narratives on serious social issues like rape & harassment. The present research explores triangular relationship between linguistic structures, cognitive structures and social structures. Multimodal Discourse Analysis by Kress & Van Leeuwen helps to understand the meaning perspectives communicated over social media memes which are amalgamations of text, video, images (still and moving), emoticons etc. The term 'meme' was coined by Richard Dawkins in 1976 to define small units of the cultural transformation that are analogous to genes. While for many years the concept was firmly discussed in academia and beyond, it has recently become an essential part of netizen vernacular, invoked daily by plentiful internet users (Davison, 2012; Milner, 2012; Shifman, 2013a).

Memes carry cultural realities and perceptions. People in this technologically advanced era use memes from internet to ventilate their thoughts, emotions and perspectives. Memes perform either function of entertainment or a specific purpose that is culture-bound (Zubaidah & Ardelia, 2018). The memes have some deep meaning dimensions that cannot be perceived by the viewers without the contextual and cultural understanding of memes. Sexual violence is an international problem that has physical, mental, sexual and reproductive consequences (Ratnasari, Sumartias & Romli, 2021). It is not new research to explore rape culture and it is an issue that engages scholars, activists and organizations but the present research finds clear research gaps. The research is novel in the sense that it explores the triangular relationship between the creation of the social media memes in Pakistani culture by utilizing the linguistic and semiotic resources and revealing certain cognitive patterns. The present study highlights why social media users use certain semiotic and linguistic resources to create memes, circulate memes and comments on the memes which are on the rape and harassment victims. The research shown cultural dimensions that are responsible for building these cognitive structures.

How these cognitive structures create online sexual violence, victim blaming, victim silencing and power play. Some social media memes that support victims of sexual harassment & rape by raising their sad plights for justice. The issue is: that memes with negative connotations have more affects

and magnitude the cognition of the social media users as compared to those memes having positive connotations. The research on discursive construction of rape in news reports from the perspective of critical linguistics identifies vilifying rape and its perpetrators through classification, empathy-evoking construal of sexually assaulted victims' experience, and sexual offenders as blame-shifters as ideological constructs emphasized by discursive strategies. The Nigerian press media has largely promoted an androcentric order in the reporting of rape cases, to detriment of rape victims (Akano & Afolabi, 2024). The research explores the negative role of press media in portraying rape victim in newspaper about role of print media based on newspapers, investigated manipulation strategy of Pakistani media coverage by using 'deletion' from macrostructure for promoting victim blaming in rape cases. The present study finds gap in unveiling the triangular relationship of linguistic, social and cognitive structure in constructing semiotic and linguistic sexual violence for sexually harassed and assaulted victims.

Problem Statement

Sexually assault victims are often quietened and traumatized due to social pressure. This research showed the importance of social media as a place to magnify marginalized voices although threat of victim blaming and public shaming. These are mostly linked with social media memes on serious social issues. Social media memes create online sexual violence and victim blaming. The discourse production in this way adds more agony to situation and harm public image of victims of rape and harassment along with their online supporters in virtual world. The linguistic and semiotic resources are used in social media memes and there is great congruency amid these resources which help to build public narrative about victims. These memes serve as way to silence the sad plight of rape and harassment victims along with their online supporters for justice. The need is to do rigorous research in this area and expose diseased cognitive patterns of media users who do online victim blaming & create rape myths. The role of social structures of social media users are responsible to create their linguistic and cognitive structures. This triangular relationship about social media memes on rape and harassment victims explores new communicative strategies in construction of verbal and sexual violence for victims.

Research Questions

1. How linguistic and semiotic resources are utilized in social media memes & how congruency between them create meaning perspectives?
2. How do social media memes create the online sexual violence as well as the victim blaming?
3. How has the phenomenon of sexual violence been negotiated, articulated and represented in the social media memes?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rape is a serious social issue and an act of violence and is a sexual attack is unwanted interaction that may involve reproductive organs or any other part of victim's body. Rape may be committed against any gender or person of any age (Human Diseases & Conditions Forum, 2018). In 1979, the Pakistan Judicial system approved the 'Hudood Ordinance'. According to this Ordinance all types of extra-marital sex affairs including rape are prohibited and considered a crime in contradiction to the State (Bivens & Hasinoff, 2018). Section 375 of the Pakistani Penal Code defined 'Rape' as a

crime committed by a man against a woman and the law should punish the culprit of rape not only of the female victims but also transgender (DAWN, 2015). The laws regarding Rape and Sexual Harassment are strict in Pakistan but Law and enforcement agencies fail to stop or lessen rape cases in Pakistan. The agony of the situation is further increased by social media users who create social media memes to mock and silence rape victims by blaming them for rapes and creating rape jokes. Social media memes create rape myths and over such semiotic and linguistic display makes public narratives about victims of rape and sexual harassment. Social media memes are a common way of communicating in the virtual world. The social media users often use memes to reply each other on different social sites.

The research conducted by Grundlingh (2018) states memes have certain communicative purposes. Memes act as Speech Acts where different linguistic and semiotic choices made by internet users are context-oriented and culture-bound (Grundlingh, 2018). Varghese (2018) states: The media ethics and the social responsibility have always been essential but never so much as today in this technologically advanced era. Knowledge is power and it is in the wrong hands now-a-days. Social media users can create havoc for victimized. The communication revolution has ushered in within a lifetime, the computer-operated gadgets and the internet which in turn has paved the way for Web can create an instant world that has contracted in space and time. Rape is generally underreported crime, with its victims feeling silenced by shame, stigma, fear of rapist and fear of not being believed. It is stated that 3 out of 4 sexual assaults go unreported (National Crime Victimization Survey, 2010-2016, 2017). Rape is unique in that it defames victim, rather than committer. Rape is stigmatizing in cultures with strong social customs & taboos about sex and sexuality. A rape victim may be viewed by society as being spoiled. Victims in such cultures tend to suffer isolation, fear being disowned by friends & family, are prohibited from marrying, or divorced if already married (Ahmad, Nadarajan, & Bahari, 2020).

The social norms of a society condition the social behavior of its inhabitants. The society shapes the cognitive patterns of the people. The communicative affordances of the participatory web in virtual world have released the latest and multifarious conduits for explosion of hate. In particular, women navigating the virtual world seem to be the target of an uneven amount of hostility. The research on online Digital Discourse explores the contexts, approaches and conceptual interactions around research regarding online misogyny within the latest communicative paradigm of the social media communication (Khosravi, 2017a: 582). The paper explores the core principle that online misogyny is palpably and characteristically a discourse. Further, the field is envisaged at the intersection of digital media scholarship, discourse theorization and critical feminist explications. In recent times online hate has been approached from a range of punitive perspectives but has only been partly mapped at interface of meaning-making and new mediation technologies evolving and used in the modern world (Khosravi & Esposito, 2018). The research about women representation in the social media meme discourse explored that woman are represented in negative manners on Pakistani Facebook pages. Further, memes maintain the Stereotypical representation of women (Shahid, Irfan & Abbas, 2021).

Multimodal discourse is the kind of discourse based on more than a single mode (Fairclough, 2001; Kress, 2009). In this technologically advanced world, multimodal discourse is becoming gradually

important due to the ubiquitous occurrence on internet, which cartels several modes, such as image, text, picture, music and video for communication. The term multimodal refers to the combination and integration of different modes, for example the linguistic resources and semiotic options. In this regard, this combination forms a given discourse or a kind of discourse which is called multimodal Discourse (Leeuwen, 2015). In other words, the picture-text combination is the kind of multimodal discourse which is a mixture of two modes, namely, picture and text. The results of the study exposed that the news media consciously uses 'deletion' as one of four elements of macrostructure to screen the truth in reporting the rape cases (Zaman, 2023). It is common media Practice in Pakistan as the above-shared researches revealed to shift the blame from perpetrator to the victims and build a public narrative based on victim blaming and victim silencing. In this connection, present research is based on the social media memes therefore, the study has applied Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) to investigate narrative construction on the rape victims through social media memes in Pakistan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study followed a qualitative research design. The reason for choosing the qualitative research design was to analyze social media memes regarding rape and harassment victims in details with contextual parameters. Qualitative Research focuses on in-depth analysis by focusing on gaining an in-depth understanding of people's experiences, perspectives, and behaviors, rather than simply quantifying them. The research used purposive homogeneous sampling. The research is based on 05 social media memes and tweets on rape and harassment cases in Pakistan from the year 2018-2021. The data of the present research was based on screen shots of social media memes. The social media platforms selected to get memes were Facebook & Twitter. The filter that was applied in selecting the social media memes was: only those social media memes were selected on which at least 25-50 memes were created.

The data of present study the general principles to draw the multimodal element existed in social media memes including utterance, image, sound, color, gesture and space to catch entire meaning and message delivered by the meme creator The whole multimodal semiotic systems were analyzed by following Multimodal Discourse Analysis by Kress and Leeuwen (2006). Kress and Leeuwen (2006) propose a concept of the semiotic landscape that displays the significance of the context in making meaning of visual modes. This has specific features, historical background or background, boundaries and landmarks. They emphasize that the place of visual communication in the given community or society cannot be understood without being in the context of the range or public communication modes, forms available in society & well as their uses and evaluations. At this point of discourse perspectives and analysis, three dimensions of present research are important to discuss in thus study. In this connection, these includes power dimension, memetic dimension and socio-cognitive dimension

Social media memes were analyzed at 2 levels, Firstly, which semiotic resources were utilized and how they made meaning by focusing on the color, construction of the image, lay outs, music, text, linguistic items surrounding the image. At 2nd Level how these semiotic resources were responsible for unveiling the cognitive structures of the social media meme creators through their linguistic and

semiotic choices. Further, the analysis of the current study followed micro-discourse analysis and macro-discourse analysis. In this regard, the micro-discourse analysis was based on the linguistic analysis and semiotic analysis & macro-discourse analysis was based on power play, manipulation, construction of the verbal and semiotic sexual violence among with victim blaming in the broader social context.

DATA ANALYSIS

Memos on Lahore-Sialkot Motorway Rape Case

Meme# 1



Linguistic Analysis

The first meme about Lahore Motorway Rape case. The case got massive attention from netizens and they created a lot of social media memes and tweets in support of rape victim and to mock & criticize victim. The above-shared meme circulated on both Facebook and Twitter. The caption of meme was in Urdu language

جب لاہور مولویہ پر آپکی
گالی کا پتھرول ختم ہو جائے

'When your car fuel finishes at Lahore Motorway.'

The caption includes a conditional sentence. It was based on dependent clause. The use of Proper noun to highlight the area of rape that was 'Lahore Motorway' was a way to target the victim and threaten the other women. The mood of the meme was Declarative and taunting style. There was an element of humor. Adding humor increases value of social media memes and lessens the severity of the issue. Using the name of rape area was intentional on the part of the meme creator. The meme showed no sympathy and care for rape victim. The linguistic choices by the meme creator exposed the hidden aim of the meme that was to silence the victims and her other online supporters. It further unveiled lexical implicature that showed a warning for other females. The memes exposed negative connotations of the meme. Motorway here in the meme was a symbol of rape, threat, lawlessness and warning for the women gender. The meme creator used epistemic modality, the mood of the meme is indicative and imperative. The meme creator used an implied style of harassing women through conceptual metaphors.

Semiotic Analysis

The semiotic choices made by the meme creator in the first meme regarding Lahore Motorway Case were situational, apt and showed great congruency between the textual or linguistic structures. The image in the meme is of a Middle-aged woman in Pakistani Attire, wearing black dupatta (scarf)

Javed & Hussain ... Narrative Building Through

with shocking expressions on her face. The head of the woman is upwards and has wide bulging eyes fully opened, grey and black color prevailed in the background, other passengers were not visible, scene of local bus and night view, and all these semiotic choices were intentional on the part of the meme creator. The use of grey and black colors signified grey and black areas of Pakistani society. Black color further signified the lawlessness in the country and hopelessness regarding rape cases and the increase in these cases. The shock and fear on the woman face signified women are not safe in the country.

The woman targeted in the Pakistani society exposed Patriarchal mindset of the people. Women are not just raped but targeted as well through production of online discourse which is misogynistic and target women's gender. The vague image of other passengers in the local bus signified the role of society which remained silent on women targeting, victim blaming and slut shaming. In addition to this, there was an implicature that women are not safe without their male partners, fathers and other male members. In this linking, instead of sympathizing with the said victim, the meme creator threatened Pakistani women with rape and harassment. There was semiotic and verbal construction of sexual violence. The image is below the cation which shows the targeting style of the meme creator. Thus, he added a caption and to support the caption and he added an image that supports the caption.

Meme# 2



Linguistic Analysis

The above-shared tweet is based on interrogative sentences. The repetition of question word 'why' was intentional on the part of social media user. The tweet writer mixed the codes. Urdu words and phrases like 'izzat lutna', and 'insaaf'. There is code-switching from English to Urdu like: 'kya insaaf se us maa ki izzat wapis aye gi?' (Will the provision of justice return the dignity of that mother?) The style of Tweet show code-mixing and code-switching. This is casual and frequent style of Pakistani Social media users. The use of Urdu word 'izzat' thrice in the tweet revealed the cognitive pattern of the social media user that she highlighted the Patriarchal mindset of society that victim has to face this societal attitude, victims are considered as losing their dignity & identity of being respectable in the society in case of rape. The Victims instead of getting support and raise their voice for justice only show pity for victims which lessen their plight for justice. Instead of blaming rapists or calling them with names, society punishes victims by making them low esteemed & deprive of respectable social status.

The tweet is based on simple, compound and complex sentences. No capitalization further revealed casual language usage by the meme writer. Mostly the words used in tweet reveal the hopelessness

on the part of social media users who are disappointed from Pakistani Society. The use of cohesive devices like 'rather' builds the link of textual structures. The impression of tweet is pessimistic. The cognitive patterns of social media user were revealed through her selection of linguistic choices she made. The tweet highlighted patriarchal mind set of society with silencing rape victims with their negative commentary on victim. Victim in society is made low esteemed. Words like 'izzat lutna', and 'izzat khatam hona' disappoint and against show negative connotation and hopelessness. The social media identity of tweet writer is symbolic. She named social media handle 'Candle Jenner' further she added eternally burnt. This highlighted women situation in the country and how women are treated in society.

Semiotic Analysis

In this context, the tweet has no images except the DP of the social media user who is in the modern attire.

Meme# 3



Linguistic Analysis

The meme was generated and circulated in rape context. The meme is based on the captions above and there are images of women and a minor girl below. The first caption which is based on the simple sentence is not bold and without punctuation i.e. 'Age is just number kid'. Further below this caption, there's another caption i.e. 'Girls and their excuses to not have sex smh'. Further images have caption below like: 'I have headache', 'Babe i'm sick', 'Dad i'm only 8' and in the last image 'sorry sweetie, i'm on my periods'. In all the images with captions. The personal pronoun 'I' is not capitalized which the women used for themselves. This is intentional on part of meme creator as women have no right to use their will, choice and consent in society. Women in patriarchal society have no right to say no. The cognitive patterns of the meme creator are revealed over linguistic and semiotic choices made by meme creator.

The meme creator put the caption above the image to reveal his ideology, perception and thought but where the women speak for themselves are made low by putting the captions below the images. This reveals the treatment of women in the society. Women are less privileged and their decisions are not valued. Women can't say to not have sex or rape. The caption with the image of a minor who got sexually abused by her father was mocked and criticized by the meme creator. Even during the menstrual cycle women can't say no to sex to their male partner. The meme is misogynist and expose

Javed & Hussain ... Narrative Building Through

victim silencing and victim blaming. The images with the caption signify Women as trivial, not to be believed, don't have right to choose for themselves, can make decision and are further blamed for everything.

Semiotic Analysis

The meme creator used captions with the images. The use of White, grey and pink color signifies a womanish touch in meme. Women gesturing different situations for not having sex was criticized by meme creator. Further a minor who was sexually abused by her father considered wrong. The captions where meme creator's thoughts were exposed were put on the upper place and above the image as male in Pakistani society are considered superior. In this linking, the women's opinions are below the image and considered as excuses by the meme creator. The 1st caption 'Age is just the number kid' revealed diseased cognitive patterns of the meme creator who equalize rape as sex with the partner. Therefore, it revealed the mindset of the meme creator as women are for sex and have no choice.

Meme#4



Linguistic Analysis

The meme is about a 7-year minor's rape and murder case. The meme creator used code-switching. The memes include images with the captions. The first caption is in Urdu 'meri nani pari nay ghr ko chali' (My little fairy went to a new house). After this another caption under the first caption is 'GIRLS SERVICE RATE' all letters in this caption are capitalized intentionally. There are images of two adult girls in modern or Western attire and the minor rape victim 'Zainab' along with their rates for providing sexual pleasure. The rate of minor is the CocoMo, a bisconies packet. The language of the meme is directly targeting women gender. The meme creator makes fun of the rape victim by setting the price of rape of a minor girl. Further girls in modern attire are presented as prostitutes. A rape victim is compared with the prostitute. It further signifies that woman in other countries even prostitutes have high rates of providing sex services but in Pakistan one can have it free of cost in case of Rape.

Consequently, capitalizing on the service rates of girls by the meme creator reveal the diseased sick cognitive patterns as women have no dignity and choice. According to the meme creator, women are to provide sex services. Further the murder of the minor is exhibited as going to new house. There is no sympathy for the rape victim who was later murdered. The mood of the meme was indicative,

Javed & Hussain ... Narrative Building Through

there was conceptual metaphor and the modality of the meme is Epistemic. In this regard, there is the use of adjective phrases. The language is situation oriented and it's to mock the female gender and rape victim. The linguistic display revealed the misogynist mindset of the meme creator. In patriarchal society, the women are easy targets of blaming, silencing and making responsible for whatever bad happens to them. The indicative mood exposes male gender can say anything about the female gender.

Semiotic Analysis

The meme creator used white and pink as prominent colors. The pink color symbolizes women or girlish look, the white color for the background of images, adult girls with fair complexion showing Western women. One woman with black hair, another woman with blonde hair and there's a minor of 7 year with pink jacket. The minor has a smile on her face exhibiting innocence of the baby. The other 2 adult girls wearing bold and revealing dresses and minor is fully covered. The dress of the adult girls in picture made responsible for rape of minor as they are financially affordable to the rapist or other men who want to have sexual pleasure from women. Captions like 'GIRLS SERVIVE RATE' with all letter capital is intentional and trivialize women gender. The image of the sex or price of minor which is CocoMo ridicules the rape victims in Pakistan. It signifies lawlessness in country. There's verbal and semiotic construction of sexual violence. This is a way to do victim blaming and victim silencing.

Meme# 5



Semiotic Analysis

The meme is about Minar-E-Pakistan Harassment case. The incident was about harassing a Tick-Toker who was harassed by more than 400 men. After harassment she was trolled on social media and people started making fun of her. The above meme which was shared on Twitter exposed the patriarchal mindset of Pakistani society who blame women attire, profession and behavior when something bad happens to them. In this meme the meme creator compared 2 pictures of the victim of harassment, in the first picture on left side: she is in modern attire and in second picture which was taken after public harassment of victim where she narrated incident to journalists. In second picture

Javed & Hussain ... Narrative Building Through

she is wearing Pakistani cultural dress i.e., shalwar kameez & dupatta on her head. The comparative strategy by meme creator was to make fun of harassment victim, criticizing her first modern attire is according to the meme creator was reason of her harassment. Wearing modern or Western dresses, being a Tick-Toker or a social media person interacting with males on social media gives license to other men to harass her or not to believe her. The dupatta on head in Pakistani society signifies a good girl and without Pakistani attire and dupatta on the head is not considered a good or pious girl. Such semiotic display and comparative technique by social media user exposed Patriarchal mindset of society.

Linguistic Analysis

The image is below the text. Text of the meme is a caption.



There's the caption under first caption. There is use of words with negative connotations for victim of sexual harassment like 'pranksters', 'prank', 'publicity stunt' and 'fooled'. The use of the hash tag is a social media discourse practice to highlight the issue or names. The use of adjectives with negative meanings is intentional on part of meme creator. Using hash-tags for place of harassment, the victim and her supporters are to ridicule victim and her supporters. The comparison of pictures with dates and captions above images signifies victim blaming and victim silencing. The meme creator called victim of harassment as prankster & another person who commented on picture as for publicity stunt. The use of hash tags with name of victim and her supporters (journalists) was a way to silence victim & her supporters. The mood of meme is declarative and funny. There's gender targeting and making fun of the victim.

CONCLUSION

The Social Media Memes on Rape and harassment victims exposed the diseased cognitive patterns of social media users through linguistic and semiotic choices. The choice of linguistic items revealed such social media users have no respect for female gender. The use of words like prankster for victim of sexual harassment. Further to fix the rate of girls for providing sexual pleasure were derogatory remarks and exposed gender targeting. The social media users mentioned 'CocoMo' as the rate of rape of a minor in Pakistan. He compared the minor rape victim who was murdered after rape was ridiculed by the meme creator over caption of meme 'meri nani pari nai ghr ko chali' (My little fairy went to a new home). Implicitly, grave was decided as new house for rape victim by the social media meme creator. The rape was compared to offer sexual pleasure by prostitutes. The use of images as in the great congruency with textual structures. The images speak what the words imply & images authenticate captions or linguistic structures. Sexual violence is created over verbal and semiotic resources in memes.

Memes regarding Lahore motorway rape case were implicitly victim blaming and victim silencing. The reasons given by the females for not having sex due to some medical or health reasons were considered lame excuses and reasons for rapes of other females and minor girls. The Woman who raised her voice on social media and her sad plight for justice was ridiculed and further considered a publicity stunt in case of Minar-E-Pakistan sexual harassment case. The phenomenon of sexual violence has been negotiated, articulated and represented in social media memes over linguistic & semiotic choices and congruency amid them. People use textual structures according to their social scenario and cognitive structures. Pakistan is a male dominated society where male is measured to speak for women even, if women raise their voices for themselves, they are considered pranksters or liars as in meme# 5. The rape victims are treated as they lost their dignity, identity and self-respect. The meme#2 encapsulates the true emotions of victims along with the general emotions of the society. Calling 'izzat ka lutna', 'izat lut gye' for victims of rape are derogatory and serve the purpose of victim silencing.

Some social media memes support the victims of rape and sexual harassment but the magnitude of negative memes and memes with the negative connotations is more as compared to the memes with positive connotations. This study highlights the significance of accounting for multimodal charisma of social media use. It makes use of the multimodal method to explore and account for all linguistic and semiotic resources for meaning-making available in online setting. Specifically, the research argues for the use of the concepts of proximity, intensity, coherence and truth value to be used for exploring social media discourse. As these cross-modal concepts allow for a systematic analysis of style-work as manifested in multimodal social media texts. In this linking, the research study also contributes to multimodal approaches to the communication and Discourse Analysis. The linguistic and semiotic display in the social media memes upon the rape and harassment cases revealed the manipulation and strategies of the manipulation to build public narratives regarding rape and harassment victims.

In meme# 5 Victim of sexual harassment are presented in such a way to create the disbelief among the social media users. In this regard, there is semantic manipulation of the linguistic resources as calling 'Prankster' to the victim. Further semiotic resources are manipulated as well by comparing the pictures of the victim before and after harassment and making fun of her attire. The use of words like 'izzat lut gye', and 'izzat lootna' further add to silence the victims. These were discouraging and derogatory remarks which are mostly used for the victims of rape highlighted by the meme creator in meme# 2. The implied meaning of such comments is a way to show the lost dignity of the victims in the society. Pakistan is a Patriarchal society where shared social cognition conditions the public narratives. Fear is used as a tool in such societies to threaten the victims when the perpetrators are from the male gender. The above-analyzed memes exposed the gendered language and power play through the creation of verbal and semiotic sexual violence in social media memes on the issue of rape and harassment.

Research Implications

The present study explores the semiotic and linguistic dimensions of the discourse in creating social media memes about rape and harassment victims in Pakistan. The investigation of this study opens

new vistas of research implications and this research would act as beneficiary for future research endeavor. The research serves the drive of social awareness to both social media users to be careful in online discourse and how their language becomes the source victim blaming and victim silencing for those who are already sufferers. Such discourse production adds fuel to fire to existing problem and it would help an eye opener for policy-makers to make more strict policies regarding the use of social media. Such meme creators should be banned for a lifetime who create verbal and semiotic sexual violence over their memes. This study may serve as a good source of analyzing new discourse patterns are multi-modes for the language teacher and linguists in discourse study and how much net lingo (internet language) affects academic English & Urdu. The study would help Psychologists as well in analyzing the diseased cognitive patterns of social media users and criminals. The study would also motivate future researchers to unveil new discourse strategies regarding social media and social cognition.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, S., Nadarajan, S., & Bahari, A. S. (2020). Silencing of Rape: Treatment of Rape Events and Rape Victims by Media and Fiction. *The Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 5 (1), 197–216.
- Davison P (2012) The language of internet memes. In: Mandiberg M (ed.) *The Social Media Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 120–136.
- Etee, N. J. (2020). The Portrayal of Women in Facebook Memes. *Global Journal of Human Social Sciences*, 20 (7), 18–32.
- Fowler, R., Hodge, R. Kress, G. G., & Trew, T. I. (1979). *The Language and Control*, London: Routledge.
- Grundlingh, L. (2018). Memes as speech acts. *Social Semiotics Journal of Routledge by Taylor and Francis*, 28 (2), 147–168.
- Human Diseases & Conditions Forum. (2018). The Rape. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3pb7cLZ>.
- Hussein, A. S., & Fattah, S. A.-R. (2020). A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Visual Images in UNCHR Report on Displaced Iraqis. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt*, 12 (4), 297–316.
- Khosravi, M., & Esposito, E. (2018). The Online Hate, Digital Discourse and Critique: Exploring Digitally-Meditated Discursive Practices Gender-Based Hostility. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* (Special issue on Narrating hostility, challenging hostile narratives).
- Locke, A., Lawthom, R., & Lyons, A. (2018). Social media platforms as complex and contradictory spaces for feminisms: Visibility, opportunity, power, resistance and activism. *Feminism and Psychology Journal by Sage*.
- Milosavljevic, I. (2020). The Phenomenon of Internet Memes as a Manifestation of Communication of Visual Society -Research of the Popular and the Most Common Types. *Media Studies and Applied Ethics*.
- Rightler-McDaniel, L., & Hendrickson, E. M. (2014). Hoes and hashtags: constructions of gender and race in trending topics. *Social Semiotics*, 24, 175–190.
- Salam, R. (2021). Men will be men? Masculinities on display in the Facebook communication practices of Pakistani men. *International Journal for Masculinity Studies*, 1875640, Pages 38–56.

- Shahid, A., Irfan, D. H., & Abbas, Q. (2021). Exploring Women Representation in Meme Discourse: A Multimodal. *Journal of Development and Social Sciences* Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Memes from Pakistani Facebook Pages.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2015b). The Context. In K. Tracey, C. Ilie, & T. Sandel (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of language and social interaction* (pp. 198–213). Boston: Wiley.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2018). Socio-cognitive Discourse Studies. Van Dijk, T. A. (2018). Socio-cognitive Discourse Studies. In J. Richardson & J. Flowerdew (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse studies* (pp. 26–43). Abingdon: *Routledge*.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2018). Socio-cognitive Discourse Studies. In J. Richardson & J. Flowerdew (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of critical discourse studies* (pp. 26–43). Abingdon: Routledge.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Multidisciplinary Critical Discourse Analysis: A plea for diversity. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 95–120). London: Sage.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2012b). Discourse and knowledge. In J. Gee (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 587–603). Abingdon: *Routledge*.
- Wardhaugh, R. (2006). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics* (5th edition). Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Zubaidah, N., & Ardelia, I. (2018). A Discourse Analysis of Memes. *Getsempena English Education Journal*, 5(2), 58–64.
- Zaman, M. (2023). The Manipulation of Pakistani News Media Using Deletion in News Reports of Rape Cases. ResearchGate.
- Akano, R. D., & Afolabi, A. A. (2024). Extending the rape narrative: A corpus-assisted discourse analysis of the construction of rape in selected Nigerian dailies. *Legon Journal of the Humanities*, 35 (1), 164–191.
- Locke, A., Lawthom, R., & Lyons, A. (2018). Social media platforms as complex and contradictory spaces for feminisms: Visibility, opportunity, power, resistance and activism. *Feminism and Psychology Journal*, 28 (1), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353517753973>.
- Ratnasari, E., Sumartias, S., & Romli, R. (2021). Social media, digital activism, and online gender-based violence in Indonesia. *Nyimak: Journal of Communication*, 5(1), 97–116.
- Bivens, R., & Hasinoff, A. (2018). Rape: is there an app for that? An empirical analysis of the features of anti-rape apps. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21: 1050–1067.