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HATE SPEECH IN PAKISTANI POLITICS: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

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The political instability and polarization in Pakistan signify the need for research to address hate speech in political discourse and to foster a more inclusive and democratic political culture. The primary objectives of this study were to analyze the current state of hate speech in political discourse and propose actionable steps to mitigate its impact. The study employed Fairclough's (2018) approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as dialectical reasoning, using it as a theoretical framework to examine the hateful speeches and statements made by prominent politicians. The analysis, structured around critique, explanation, and action, scrutinizes the adversarial rhetoric, derogatory vocabularies, and interdiscursive strategies used by political leaders. Data was collected from news reports and social media covering speeches made by key figures from Pakistan's three main political parties: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan People's Party (PPP), and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), during the period from April 2022 to June 2024. This period, marked by the no-confidence vote against then-Prime Minister Imran Khan, exemplifies the heightened political polarisation in the country. The findings reveal that politicians from all three parties engaged in the use of hateful and abusive language, significantly contributing to the already fragile state of democracy. It was also revealed that political discourse in Pakistan is heavily shaped by religious, nationalist, and populist rhetoric, which fuels hostility and further undermines democratic processes. The study advocates for constructive deliberation and a reframing of political discourse among party leaders to address and reverse the deteriorating situation.

Keywords: Democracy, Scrutinizes, Interdiscursivity, Political, Nationalist.

Introduction

Hate speech is defined as any form of communication that disparages a person or a group of individuals for their belonging to some specific community based on race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, or gender (Scott, 2015, p. 10). Hate speech, for example, constitutes threatening or insulting behavior and targeting minorities because of their religion, nationality, or sexuality among other characteristics. The interpretation and consequences of hate speech vary globally due to different societal and cultural standards. One of the examples of hate speech today is the speech we commonly find in digital spaces. For instance, Hietanen & Eddebo (2022) examined various forms of harmful speeches that were present on different online platforms and concluded that hate speech could lead to violence and discrimination (pp. 20-22). The scenario of hate speech in Pakistan is a significant challenge due to Pakistan's complex political landscape. Pakistan's politics often get influenced by civilian democratic government and military rule. This dynamic nature of politics makes it difficult to deal with radicalization and hate speech among different political parties. The phenomenon of hate speech has permeated from those with strong political affiliations to ordinary party members. Pakistan's youth role in politics has changed a lot, which results in more emphasis on the young generation to ramp up their political campaigns and gain more political benefits. Social media functions as a significant instrument in the political sphere. On one hand, it has motivated youth to engage in political activities and has provided the younger generation with the freedom to express their thoughts openly, thereby fostering their interest in politics (Bukhari, 2023, pp. 34-35). On the other hand, it has also led to a notable increase in hate speech among politicians and their supporters, resulting in frequent offensive rhetoric directed against their opponents. For instance, the effects of the movement of no-

confidence against Imran Khan, the founder of PTI, in online political discussions on Twitter how the spreading of hate and aggressive content on the internet creates a loop of the never-ending polarised political atmosphere (Jahan & Alvi, 2023, pp.10-15).

Problem Statement

Hate speech has become a significant issue in Pakistani political discourse, particularly on social media platforms, where supporters of various political parties frequently resort to name-calling, abuse, and threats. For example, PML-N supporters are often derogatorily referred to as "*patwaris*"—a term suggesting that they are corrupt, akin to low-ranking clerks responsible for maintaining land records. Similarly, PTI supporters are labeled as "*youths*", a pejorative derived from the word "youth," as the majority of PTI supporters are young people. This discourse of hate is not confined to party supporters, who may act emotionally and with little regard for the consequences of spreading such rhetoric. Political leaders also contribute to the toxic environment by using informal, offensive, and derogatory language against their opponents. The current political climate in Pakistan has exacerbated this issue. Many PTI leaders are imprisoned following the May 9, 2023, riots, and the government has been accused of lacking public mandate after allegations of election rigging on February 8, 2024. Therefore, this study employs Norman Fairclough's dialectical reasoning approach to critically analyze hate speech in Pakistani political discourse, providing insight into this pressing problem.

Research Significance

This study is highly significant within the context of Pakistan's volatile political landscape, where hate speech has become a critical issue that erodes democratic values and societal cohesion. The research employs Fairclough's most recent approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)—dialectical reasoning—which is a notable theoretical

framework from one of the most widely cited scholars in critical discourse studies. This framework is applied to analyze the political hate speech used by the country's three major political parties—PML-N, PPP, and PTI—that together command over 90% of the political arena. By examining how adversarial and derogatory language fuels hostility and deepens political polarisation, the study reveals the destabilizing effects such rhetoric has on democratic processes. The findings could play a crucial role in guiding policymakers, political leaders, and civil society organizations in addressing the harmful consequences of hate speech within political discourse. The study provides critical insights that may help mitigate the polarisation and foster a more constructive and inclusive political environment.

Source: [Anti-Defamation League \(ADL\) \(2021\)](#)

Research Questions

i. How does Fairclough's dialectical reasoning approach (2018) facilitate a critical analysis of the selected discourse?



ii. How have specific vocabularies been employed to generate hatred towards political opponents in the selected discourse?

iii. What actionable strategies can be proposed to mitigate the impact of hate speech and promote constructive political discourse in the current context?

Literature Review

Conceptualization of Hate Speech

Hate speech is a multifaceted phenomenon that intersects with various socio-political dimensions. To effectively comprehend and

analyze hate speech, it is essential to explore its conceptualization. In some instances, individuals may unknowingly propagate hatred through their speech, while others may perceive the crossing of certain boundaries as constituting hate speech. The assessment of what constitutes hate speech can thus vary significantly from person to person ([MacAvaney et al., 2019](#)). To clarify the concept of hate speech, [Papcunová et al. \(2021\)](#) proposed three distinct definitions. The first is the legal definition, which focuses on speech or activities that are illegal and target specific groups based on differences in ethnicity, race, gender, or religion. The second is the lexical definition, which pertains to speech containing words that directly and unequivocally cause harm to a particular group. The third is the scientific definition, which suggests that certain expressions transcend their literal meanings and result in societal and individual harm. This scientific perspective incorporates sociological, philosophical, psychological, and economic considerations of hate speech ([Papcunová et al., 2021, pp. 3-5](#)). Hate speech, as defined by [Seller \(2016\)](#), is a form of expression that serves no purpose other than to incite malice, resentment, and hatred towards minority groups (p. 30). In contemporary political discourse, hate speech has become a critical issue. As Sellar notes, even a few words can provoke significant reactions, alter opinions and perspectives, and evoke a wide range of emotions ([2016, p. 4](#)). [Gelber \(2019\)](#) further argues that hate speech should be capable of eliciting chaotic emotions, although hate itself need not be the central element of its definition (pp. 6-8). Harm-based definitions of hate speech include the perspective of harm in terms of discrimination or linguistic violence, which can undermine an individual's ability to participate in democratic discourse ([Gelber, 2017](#)). The harm associated with hate speech can vary depending on its form. According to [Oktaviani & Nur Alam \(2022\)](#), there are three types of hate speech: insult, blasphemy, and

unpleasant actions. An insult involves humiliating a person and attacking their honor and reputation to shame them, such as using derogatory terms like "stupid." Blasphemy, though less common, is particularly damaging and involves mocking individuals by comparing them to animals, with expressions like "donkey" or "pig." Another form of blasphemy, referred to as "bangle banget lu!" equates individuals with corpses. Unpleasant actions constitute another category of hate speech, wherein individuals are harassed or their feelings hurt simply because they do not conform to the expectations of the person causing the harm (Oktaviani & Nur Alam, 2022, pp. 95-97). The *Pyramid of Hate* (ADL, 2021) illustrates bias, hate, and oppression in society, showing how attitudes and behaviors can escalate from simple bias to the systematic annihilation of individuals or groups. It highlights the danger of unchecked bias and how it can lead to discrimination, injustice, and violence.

Studies on Hate Speech Analysis

Hate speech has emerged as a critical issue in both global and local contexts, with significant implications for societal harmony and political discourse. In Pakistan, the analysis of hate speech is particularly relevant due to the nation's complex socio-political environment, which is marked by ethnic, religious, and political tensions. One of the prominent methodologies in hate speech analysis is corpus-based analysis, which involves examining large collections of texts to identify patterns and trends in language use. A study by Khan et al. (2022) utilized text-mining and LDA topic modeling to analyze Pakistan's speeches at the UN General Assembly between 1970 and 2018. The study provides valuable insights into how hate speech and political discourse are intertwined in Pakistan's international communications, revealing the underlying concerns that shape the country's narrative on the global stage. Similarly, Davidson et al. (2017) focused on the automated detection of

hate speech on social media, an increasingly relevant area given the widespread use of platforms like Twitter and Facebook in Pakistan. This study's relevance to Pakistan lies in the growing concern over the role of social media in amplifying hate speech, particularly in the context of political and religious tensions. In Pakistan, social media platforms have become key arenas for political discourse, but they also facilitate the spread of hate speech. Gao et al. (2020) examined the impact of social media exposure on mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak, finding a strong correlation between frequent social media use and increased levels of anxiety and depression. Although not specifically focused on hate speech, this study underscores the broader psychological impacts of online discourse, including the potential harm caused by exposure to hate speech. Understanding hate speech in Pakistan also requires consideration of the cultural and political contexts in which it occurs. Charteris-Black and Charteris-Black (2011) explored the use of metaphors in political discourse, revealing how language can be used to frame issues in ways that either promote or combat hate speech. The study emphasized the persuasive power of metaphors in shaping public perception and opinion, which is particularly relevant in a country like Pakistan, where political rhetoric often employs religious and nationalistic metaphors.

Critical Analysis of Hate Speech in Pakistan

Pakistan is home to diverse ethnicities, races, and religions, making it a fertile ground for the spread of hate speech. While freedom of speech is a democratic right, this right is often misused to spread division and hatred. Hazenbroek (2012) notes the fine line between free speech and blunt, harmful expression. Despite Pakistan's democracy, now seen as part of its culture rather than just a process, hate speech persists. It permeates parliamentary discussions, and political rallies, and has become a feature of the rivalry between major

political parties such as the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan People's Party (PPP), and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Their inflammatory rhetoric fuels political instability, raising concerns about the increasing hate content in political discourse. Several studies have explored hate speech in Pakistan. [Hassan et al. \(2020\)](#) examined hate speech during the electoral process, highlighting the use of insulting and humiliating comments by politicians and their supporters. [Shah et al. \(2021\)](#) focused on hate speech in Pakistani mosques, uncovering prejudiced language in religious institutions. Similarly, [Salam-Salmaoui and Salam \(2023\)](#) studied hateful tweets by political figures on social media, particularly Twitter. Research by [Rafique et al. \(2024\)](#) highlighted the prevalence of hate speech among students, while [Akbar & Safdar \(2024\)](#) looked at discrimination and hate speech in online political discourse. These studies have covered hate speech in various contexts—ethnic, religious, online, and academic. However, a gap remains in the research: there is little focus on the offline hate speeches of Pakistani political figures published in newspapers. Many speeches given in parliament or at rallies reflect the animosity between politicians.

Research Methodology

Critical Discourse Analysis as Research Methodology

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has emerged as a research method that aims to examine how language is used in real-life situations and its relationship with the social context ([Fairclough, 2013](#)). CDA focuses on how language is employed to create dominance, inequality, and social power. This approach not only highlights instances of injustice and social inequality but also suggests ways to resist and challenge these power structures ([Mayor & Bietti, 2017](#)). Integrating various forms of CDA provides a diverse range of sources to analyze the relationship between language and power in society. Unlike other analytical methods that

solely focus on power asymmetries, exploitation, and structural inequalities, CDA evaluates the content and form of discourse, including language, grammar, and visual representation. ([Armayanti, 2019](#)). The methodological steps involved in CDA generally include data collection, description, interpretation, and explanation. Researchers explain how they collected the data, provide a description of the collected information, and utilize theoretical frameworks to interpret and explain the findings ([Lin, 2014](#)). Unlike purely linguistic analysis, CDA goes beyond language rules and aims to analyze how discourse is used to achieve specific objectives, such as evoking emotions or persuading people. CDA examines both larger conversations and smaller chunks of discourse, relating them to the broader perspective ([Widuna, 2018](#)).

Data Collection

[Turner \(2022\)](#) argues that merely collecting data is insufficient in discourse analysis, as the focus of such studies often extends beyond basic analytical requirements to the deeper meanings embedded within the data. Our study involved gathering data from various news reports that covered different speeches and social media talks of prominent Pakistani politicians. Recognizing that most of these speeches were delivered in Urdu, and to avoid potential challenges in translation—since the researchers, while proficient in English, were not translation experts—we extracted the exact words of the speakers as quoted in these newspapers. To maintain accuracy, we preferred to use the exact language quoted in the newspapers. The selection of this discourse was purposeful, with specific vocabulary being targeted through searches in Google search bar and reports for various newspapers, encompassing some of the most prominent Pakistani news outlets, such as *Dawn* ([dawn.com](#)), *The Express Tribune* ([tribune.com.pk](#)), *The News International* ([thenews.com.pk](#)), *Pakistan Today* ([pakistantoday.com.pk](#)), *The Nation*

(nation.com.pk) *Daily Times* (dailytimes.com.pk) among others were added.

Sample Selection

The study focused on speeches and statements made by eight prominent leaders from three major political parties: PML-N, PPP, and PTI. These leaders held key positions within their parties, including chairpersons like Imran Khan, Nawaz Sharif, and Bilawal Bhutto, along with others in top roles such as Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Marriyum Aurangzeb. Data collection centered around the period of the no-confidence vote against Prime Minister Imran Khan on April 9, 2022, a significant event marking the first successful vote of no-confidence against a sitting Prime Minister in Pakistan's history. The study's timeframe extended from April 2022 to June 2024, covering developments in political discourse during this period. The rationale for this selection was the historic nature of Imran Khan's removal and the rise of social media, which amplified the spread of both real and fake news. This event, and the accompanying media coverage, contributed to widespread polarisation, further entangling political leaders in a divisive atmosphere.

Data Analysis Procedure

We analyzed the data using Fairclough's (2018) approach to CDA, specifically his concept of dialectical reasoning, further elaborated in his interview with Scholz (Fairclough & Scholz, 2020). This approach is the culmination of his extensive work over several years (e.g., Fairclough, 1989, 1993, 1996, 2001, 2005, 2010, 2013). The analysis followed the steps outlined by Fairclough.

Critique

Fairclough (1996) asserts that CDA often carries explicit political commitments. It goes beyond the surface meaning of discourse to critique the power dynamics at play. Accordingly, this study critiques the political hate discourse in Pakistan, focusing on a) deliberation and argumentation, b) vocabularies, and c) interdiscursive and

semiotic/linguistic analysis. Practical argumentation is key to demonstrating how the analysis justifies or challenges certain actions. Fairclough (2018) also highlights that vocabulary, the specific language choices used, shapes our understanding of reality. Furthermore, interdiscursivity combines various genres, discourses, and styles, conveying institutional and social meaning within a single text (Wu, 2011).

Explanation

The next step in Fairclough's dialectical reasoning is explanation—understanding how discourse functions in the current context and proposing actions to address it. Explanation involves analyzing dialectical relations. Fairclough (2016) identifies three levels of social reality: social structures, practices, and events. Social practices encompass fields, organizations, and institutions, mediating between events and structures. Fairclough argues that dialectical analysis examines the relationship between semiosis (spoken, written, and multimodal discourse) and other social elements, such as the order of discourse.

Action

Fairclough (2018) presents CDA as critique, explanation, and action. He argues that while critique alone cannot change reality, it can help facilitate political change by understanding it. CDA identifies and sometimes advocates actions for improvement, viewing discourse, identity, and representation as part of action. He emphasizes that while CDA and politics are connected, they remain distinct. CDA contributes to deliberation, but decisions and actions belong to political processes. However, CDA reveals how deliberation influences decision-making and opens possibilities for change by reshaping debates.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Critique

Fairclough (1996) asserts that CDA aims to uncover the power dynamics embedded in discourse, particularly in political contexts. This critique examines the political hate discourse in

Pakistan, focusing on deliberation and argumentation, vocabularies, and interdiscursive and semiotic/linguistic analysis, and compares it with findings from other contexts.

Deliberation and Argumentation

Deliberation in political discourse ideally involves reasoned arguments that justify or challenge actions. However, in the Pakistani political context, the discourse often deviates into hate speech and personal attacks, which is consistent with findings from other studies in South Asia. For example, [Mehboob & Alvi \(2021\)](#) highlight that hate speech on social media, particularly against women, often takes the form of derogatory and demeaning language that delegitimizes their presence in the public sphere. This parallels the political discourse in Pakistan, where statements like Marriyum Aurangzeb's "tongue of the one talking about Pakistan breaking apart will break into pieces" exemplify violent rhetoric aimed at silencing opposition rather than fostering debate. Imran Khan's statement, "We will dig graves of those who looted Pakistan and destroyed its economy," employs violent imagery to depict political opponents as existential threats. This rhetoric echoes the findings of [Abid et al. \(2021\)](#), who observed that sectarian hate speech on Facebook often frames religious out-groups as enemies of the state, thereby justifying violence against them. The comparison highlights how both online and offline discourses in Pakistan are saturated with adversarial and dehumanizing rhetoric, hindering constructive political dialogue. For instance, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari frequently engaged in inflammatory language during National Assembly sessions. He referred to former Prime Minister Imran Khan as "prime minister-select" and labeled him the leader of "donkeys" and "living corpses." On another occasion, Zardari pointedly remarked, "Our guns are aimed at you," directed at Khan. Data suggests that hate speech permeates the

political discourse of all three major parties, PTI, PML-N, and PPP.

Vocabularies

[Fairclough \(2018\)](#) emphasizes the role of vocabularies in shaping our understanding of reality. The choice of words in political discourse is not merely descriptive but is a means of exerting power and control. In the Pakistani political context, derogatory terms such as "*Fitna Khan*" (mischief-maker Khan) for Imran Khan, used by Maryam Nawaz, or "boot polisher" and "Cherry blossom" for Shahbaz Sharif, by Imran Khan, serve to demean and dehumanize opponents. This use of language aligns with the findings of [Al-Utbi \(2019\)](#), who argues that hate speech often relies on pejorative vocabularies that reduce complex social issues to simplistic binaries, thereby perpetuating division and conflict. Similarly, Bilawal Bhutto referred to the May 9 incident as a "coup," blaming PTI for attempting to overthrow the government. Additionally, he claimed that Mr. Khan is "weeping" in jail and "groveling at his feet" (desperately pleading), which once again reflects inflammatory language. Such remarks only fuel tension between political parties rather than fostering appropriate discourse. Furthermore, the use of religiously charged terms in political discourse in Pakistan, such as referring to opponents as "*fitna*" (chaos or mischief), reflects a broader pattern of using religious language to mobilize political support. This strategy is not unique to Pakistan; [George \(2015\)](#) discusses how religious rhetoric in South Asia is often employed to incite hate and violence against religious minorities, with significant consequences for social cohesion.

Interdiscursivity and Semiotic/Linguistic Analysis

Interdiscursivity, the blending of different genres and discourses within a single text, is a powerful tool in political discourse. In Pakistan, politicians frequently combine religious, nationalist, and populist discourses to shape public opinion and reinforce their political

agendas. This blending of discourses creates a complex landscape where language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a strategic instrument of power and control. For instance, Imran Khan's statement, "No person can be neutral. Neutral (army) are animals," merges religious and military discourses to question the impartiality of the army, an institution deeply intertwined with Pakistani politics. This statement not only challenges the military's neutrality but also employs derogatory language to undermine the authority of an institution that holds significant power in the country. Such rhetoric exemplifies how political leaders manipulate language to galvanize their supporters and delegitimize their opponents. Moreover, it is common practice among politicians to use extremist terminology when referring to their adversaries. For example, Shehbaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz have described Imran Khan and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party using phrases such as "*milk dushman anasir*" (enemies of the state), "*Tehreek-e-Intishar*" (movement of chaos), and "*intehapasandi tola*" (extremist group). By equating their political rivals with terrorists and enemies of the state, these politicians employ a strategy that not only demonizes the opposition but also appeals to nationalist sentiments among their supporters. Another notable example of interdiscursivity can be observed in the speeches of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). During various political rallies, he has employed a blend of religious rhetoric and populist language, often framing his political opponents in a negative light. This language creates a narrative that positions the PPP as the defender of democracy against a supposedly illegitimate government. Additionally, his use of religious terms when discussing political issues reflects a strategy to connect with a conservative electorate that values religious sentiments. [Abid et al. \(2021\)](#) found that sectarian content on social media often combines religious, political, and

nationalist discourses to incite hatred against specific religious groups. Similarly, [Mehboob & Alvi \(2021\)](#) observe that hate speech against women on Twitter frequently blends gendered and political discourses, framing women who participate in politics as violating traditional gender norms. For instance, women politicians like Maryam Nawaz and Shireen Mazari have faced online vitriol that not only attacks their political stances but also targets their gender, reflecting deeply ingrained societal biases. In both cases, interdiscursivity serves to amplify hate speech by drawing on multiple sources of authority and legitimacy, making the discourse more persuasive and harder to challenge. Furthermore, the blending of discourses often leads to a toxic political environment, where constructive dialogue is overshadowed by personal attacks and inflammatory language. By merging various discourses, politicians not only galvanize their support bases but also create a divisive political landscape that impedes constructive engagement and fosters an environment of hate and intolerance.

Explanation

Following [Fairclough's \(2016\)](#) framework, this section examines the dialectical relations between discourse and social structures, practices, and events in the context of Pakistani politics, and compares these with other contexts where hate speech is prevalent.

Social Structures, Practices, and Events

Political discourse in Pakistan is deeply embedded in the country's social structures, which include a history of military involvement in politics, religious conservatism, and regionalism. These structures shape the practices and events that define political discourse. The frequent use of military metaphors and references to religious morality reflects the central role these institutions play in Pakistani society. For example, Nawaz Sharif's criticism of the military's role in politics, as in his statement, "Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, you packed up our government," highlights the enduring influence of the military in shaping

political outcomes. This interrelation between discourse and social structures is also evident in other South Asian contexts. [George \(2015\)](#) discusses how hate speech in the region often draws on historical tensions and existing social hierarchies to legitimize violence against marginalized groups. In Pakistan, the intertwining of religious and nationalist discourses with political hate speech further entrenches these social divisions, making it difficult to challenge the status quo. The pervasive use of conspiracy theories in Pakistani political discourse, as seen in Marriyum Aurangzeb's statement, "It is not Imran Khan speaking, but foreign funding," reflects a broader pattern of distrust and paranoia in the political sphere. This phenomenon is not unique to Pakistan; [Al-Utbi \(2019\)](#) notes that hate speech in other contexts often relies on conspiracy theories to delegitimize opponents and justify aggression.

Action

[Fairclough \(2018\)](#) argues that CDA should not only critique and explain but also propose actions for social change. In the context of political hate discourse in Pakistan, several actions can be proposed to address the issues identified in this study and comparable studies.

Promoting Constructive Deliberation

One of the main challenges identified in this analysis is the lack of constructive deliberation in political discourse. To counter this, it is essential to encourage political leaders and the media to focus on substantive policy discussions rather than personal attacks. Educational institutions and civil society organizations can play a critical role in promoting critical thinking and debate skills, helping the public engage with political discourse on a more analytical level. As [Abid et al. \(2021\)](#) suggest, promoting digital literacy could also mitigate the impact of online hate speech by enabling users to critically evaluate the content they encounter on social media.

Reframing Political Vocabulary

Reframing the political vocabulary used in public discourse is another crucial step toward reducing hate speech. Media campaigns and educational programs could focus on promoting a more respectful and civil language in political debates. This approach could draw on successful initiatives from other contexts, such as the work of [George \(2015\)](#), who highlights the role of regulatory frameworks in managing online hate speech in South Asia. Implementing similar measures in Pakistan could help shift the political culture towards more respectful discourse.

Addressing Interdiscursivity

Addressing the interdiscursivity in political discourse requires a concerted effort to separate religious and nationalist discourses from political debates. Promoting a more secular and inclusive political culture could help reduce the use of religious language to justify hate speech. Civil society organizations and international partners could collaborate on campaigns that promote tolerance and pluralism, drawing on successful examples from other regions. For instance, the strategies discussed by [Mehboob & Alvi \(2021\)](#) for countering gendered hate speech could be adapted to address other forms of hate speech in the Pakistani context.

Conclusion

This extended analysis, using Fairclough's dialectical reasoning approach, has examined the political hate discourse in Pakistan and compared it with findings from other studies on hate speech in South Asia. The critique highlighted the adversarial rhetoric, derogatory vocabularies, and interdiscursive strategies that dominate political discourse in Pakistan, while the explanation connected these practices to broader social structures and events. The proposed actions aim to foster a more constructive and respectful political culture, drawing on lessons from other contexts to address the pervasive issue of hate speech in Pakistan. By promoting deliberation, reframing political vocabulary, and addressing

interdiscursivity, these efforts could contribute to a more democratic and inclusive political process.

Recommendations

To address the pervasive issue of hate speech in Pakistani political discourse, several measures are recommended. Firstly, promoting civil discourse is crucial, encouraging political leaders and the media to focus on substantive policy discussions rather than personal attacks. Educational institutions and civil society should play an active role in fostering critical thinking and debate skills among the public, allowing for more constructive engagement. Additionally, reframing political vocabulary through media campaigns and educational initiatives can help promote respectful and civil language in political debates, while regulatory frameworks should be introduced to curb hate speech, especially on social media platforms. Lastly, addressing the blending of religious and nationalist discourses in political debates by fostering a more secular and inclusive political culture is essential.

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