A Corpus Analysis of Hate Speech in Pakistani Political Discourse on Twitter

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Abstract

This paper is a corpus-based quantitative study on language change that has arisen during national political events, such as the no-confidence movement against Imran Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan. This event, including many others, has given rise to the hate speech in Pakistani community online. In this paper, language change is discussed in terms of hate speech, collocation patterns, frequency of words (Nouns, Adjectives), N-Grams and Urdu hate speech words. A certain political time period is selected to make a comparison of the use of language and explore whether any variations have transpired during the political upheavals. These dynamics are explored because the frequency of hate speech words may suggest that how much aggressive the online political discourse has become. Moreover, it may also suggest that what kind of image is presented to the rest of the world through such usage of words. To find out the case, a data of 50,000 tweets was gathered using Tweetarchivist.com. This data was analyzed through sketch engine. The major findings from the research, reported in this paper, show that many of the tweets, through their collocations and frequency, contain hate speech elements which convey a negative image of the country across the globe.

Keywords: Hate Speech, Language change, Collocation patterns, Frequency Patterns, Tweets

1. Introduction

The language we speak is closely connected with our thought process. The hypothesis of linguistic relativity by Sapir and Whorf suggests that language determines thought and that linguistic categories limit and determine cognitive categories. (Hussein, 2012). Social life is pervaded by language. It is used not only for the cultural transmission but also helps us knowing the contents of people's mind. Language is concerned with many phenomenon of social psychology: personal identity, social perception, attitude change, social interaction, social bias etc.

At the same time, the elements of social life establish an essential part of the way language is used. Any communicative interchange is located in a societal setting that limits the linguistic forms people use. How these people describe the societal situation, their observations of what others think, know and believe, and the claims they make about their own and others' identities will affect the form and content of their acts of speaking.

At an additional level of investigation, speech acts can be viewed as acts intended to accomplish some specific aim using verbal means. Utterances can be the speech acts that may be recognized in terms of their proposed purposes—requests, questions, etc. (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1985). In many cases, the grammatical forms do not determine any speech act that is represented by an utterance. "Can you help me?" and "Can you drive an automatic car?" are interrogative utterances, but the speech acts they constitute are different. Both of these interrogative utterances can be answered in "Yes" but saying "yes" for the former may become defective as the former utterance is not a question but a request. Hence language governs our thought process. We use language to explain new thoughts and comment on the existing ones. These thoughts are sometimes aggressive and include hate words popularly known as *Hate Speech*. Such *Hate Speech* gradually develops into a habits. The language we speak, affects our habits or helps in formation of new habits.

Lally, Jaarsveld, Potts, & Wardle (2010) explain habit as behaviours that are recurrent in constant setting, begin to continue more proficiently and with less thought as control of the behavior transfers to prompts in the environment that trigger an involuntary reaction. An American professor links the language with habits and behavior. His study suggests that English language is the cause for the terribly little savings rate in English speaking countries. "The language affects how you form healthy habits – from diet and exercise to how much money you will save for retirement". (Chen, 2013). In the same way language affects so many other habits of human beings. In the contemporary environment, the language breeds aggression in one's habits. Content available on online media and blogs is recurrently and purposely aggressive and offensive. Moreover, racist, sexist and chauvinist etc. language is frequently used, which refers to a group's identity: outstanding the bounds of dignity in order to attain attention. (Bernstein, Monroy-Hernández, Harry, André, Panovich, & Vargas, 2011; Boyd, 2010). Such aggressive comments by these groups may be the result of some vent or catharsis. (Christopherson, 2007). People talk to each other in aggressive manners in many situations. No debate ends without inclusion of aggression. The driving force behind such direct aggression is to damage the next person's self-respect or social standing (Lagerspetz et al., 1988). People are often involved in such defaming and aggressive debates on social media, print media and electronic media. Such media aggression brings a hazard to public healthiness. Moreover, it leads to an escalation in real-world aggression and violence (Huesmann & Taylor, 2006). Use of taunts and sarcastic language also results in aggression. One develops the habit of aggression in response to the sarcastic language. Kalaba (2014) severly criticises the sarcastic language on Serbian entertainment media on the basis that the use of sarcastic language led to violence and aggression among people. Aitchison (1981) says that words keep acquiring new meanings and new pronunciations. Hence the language too keeps evolving with time and neologisms often gives birth to aggressive behavior. For example, the slogan "tabdeeli" (a change) was vehemently and sarcastically used by the opposition party to let down the third major political party of Pakistan.

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People in fact tend to have an idea as to how language works in the setting and context, they are living in. Reason (2008) asserts that the language reflects social values and codes of the society in which we live. Chen (2013) proves that language affects our behavior. Hence language breeds aggression in behavior. Pfeffer, Zorbach & Carley (2014) are of the view that in online fire storms, huge sums of evaluation, abusive and offensive comments against an individual, group or organization maybe designed by, and broadcasted via, millions of people within no time. Such hateful and abusive propaganda then becomes a part of their habit and character.

Some political parties on media have developed a habit to use the aggressive use of language. They, in their comments, interviews and especially in debates, start their conversation in aggressive manner which affects the opponent in a way that he only defends himself and doesn't get any chance to attack. If the leader of a party makes and aggressive use of language, his team and his followers do develop the same in their language. This change is not limited to their language. The same change gradually becomes a part of their behaviour which may prove that aggressive language used on media affects the behaviour of the people to a great extent. The idiom "shut up call" is a common example of such attitude. Using any media (social, electronic or print), people tend to give shut up call to others to ensure that others don't behave in the same offensive way again. If this shut up call is successful, they use it on various occasions thus becoming habitual of such aggressive language and behavior.

Using such hate speech elements, Pakistan has already been labeled as extremist country. (Khan, 2013). Not only the native of Pakistan feel the hate speech in political discourse but also the rest of the globe seems to share the same idea. This presents a negative image of Pakistan in the world which is gradually increasing as more and more people are using social media and expressing their hatred for one another. (Gillani, 2021). Unfortunately, this hate speech goes unchecked because of the freedom of speech online and people misuse this right by denouncing their own country. Media is also playing a massive role in developing the hate speech culture among people for the sake of ratings. Haque, (2014) has presented the causes and effects of this hate speech in his voluminous article. He is of the view that this kind of speech is libeling the country as an extremist and aggressive state.

The current study intends to explore the use of hate speech by Pakistanis on Twitter. The aggressive language used by people on media, especially by the politicians, not only affects their own behaviour but also may bring aggression to their followers. Their aggressive language may gradually become their character. A study indicates that number of people using various media, especially the social media is escalating (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008), and this may have a negative effect on societal competences and behaviour and bring unrest and chaos. This aggressive behaviour is not only limited to the rhetoric of the leaders but also to the common people discussing politics favouring two or more different political parties. Hence the study wants to find out as to what extent the people of Pakistan use hate speech and how it is contributing to negative image of Pakistan rest of the globe.

This research has two fold significance. This not only aims at the indicating the aggressive behavior of the people on media, but also focuses on the people presenting a negative role of the country throught their hate speech. This will create an awareness in general public to avoid copying the language and style of the people appearing on media. Now a days, the political leaders appear on television programs and deliver hateful and aggressive speeches; they give aggressive comments in newspaper; and they use social media (mostly Twitter and Facebook) to share their aggressive and hateful ideas against their opponent. This study intends to create consciousness among the leaders and their followers so that such behavior may be avoided for their own good.

Previously the effects of violent rhetoric on the political violence are discussed by (Kalmoe, 2010) in his research. Kalmoe (2010) mentioned the generation of the political violence because of the political rhetoric. The current study fills the gap and tries to look into the fact whether such hate speech is present in Pakistani political discourse or not. Moreover, there has been no work on hate speech in political discourse in Pakistan, hence this research opens unique results in unique setting.

The current study intends to find out the role of Pakistanis in using hate speech on social media (Twitter). It also wants to find out the resutl of this hate speech in defaming the honour of Pakistan across the globe. Similarly the current study explores the research questions as to how is the Pakistani community contributing to the political tweets? ; Are these tweets aggressive in nature and contain hate speech? ; What image is this contribution conveying to the rest of the world?.

2. Research Methodology

Kalmoe (2010) in his research selected the speech contents and ad text by the major political figures and calculated the frequecny of the aggressive and mild political rhetoric. Hence the researcher will select a data of 50,000 tweets gathered though Tweetarchivist.com. to find out the frequency of hate speech words. (Nouns, Adjectives, Collocation of words, N-grams and Urdu hate speech words). Following Byrnes (2002) with reference to his work on aggression, Sketch Engine will be used to find out collocations and frequency of hate words in the language of tweets by the Pakistanis. All the literatre community is included in population who uses Twitter and is interested in political discourse online. Using Tweetsarchivist.com, a sample of 50,000 tweets were gathered after the fall of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan. The study is delimited to the political dicosurse of Pakistani community on Twitter on the above mentioned scenario.

3. Analysis of the Data

Table 1 clearly suggests that hate speech is vividly exhibited through tweets by Pakistani community. Here we should keep in mind that we are talking about literate people of Pakistan because the illiterate class doesn't use Twitter. Twitter is primarily used by those who have serious political bent of mind and who can understand basic English. Hence our literate fraction of the

society is presenting extremely disastrous image of Pakistan. If we look into the frequency of hate speech then 5270 times the word *Pakistan* is used with hate speech. Similarly #Pakistan with hash-tag is used 1957 times and Pakistanis is used 702 times.

Table 1: Frequency of the Words (Hate Speech) Connected with Country's Name

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Pakistan	5,270	Enemy	705
#Pakistan	1957	Fake	701
Liars	1500	Outnumbered	701
Pakistanis	702	False	700
Intrigue	905	Shameful	691
Corruption	900	Dishonest	680
Turncoat	892	Conspiracy	678
Against	861	Remove	501
Hoarse	849	Wrong	445
Crushed	820	Trickery	350
Flasehood	776	Thieves	14

Frequency of Hate Speech
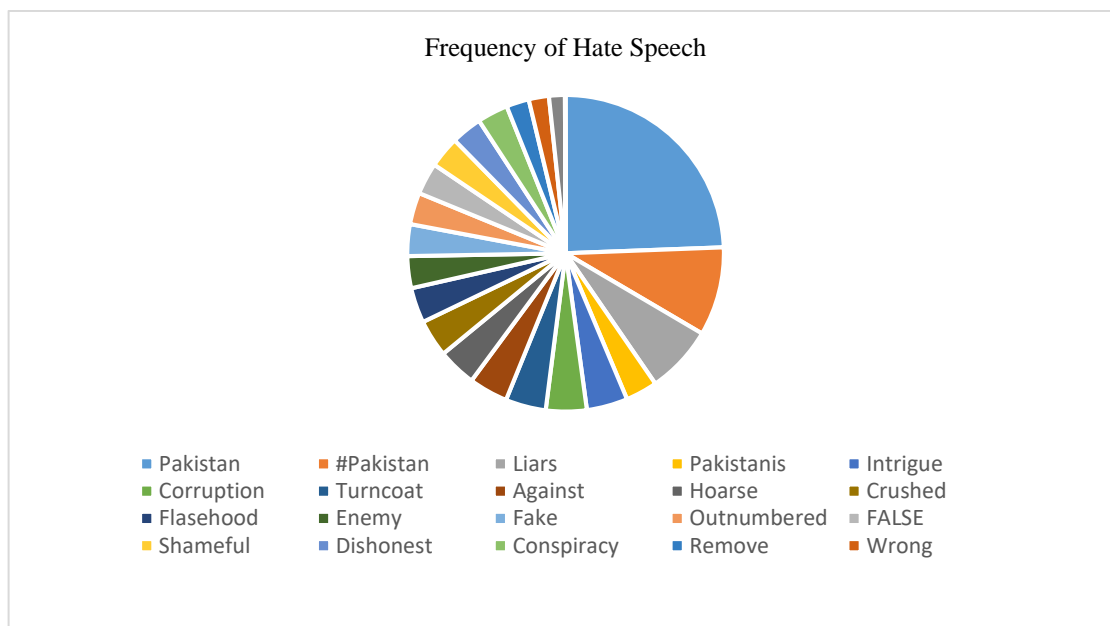
Table 2: Frequency of the Nouns (Hate Speech)

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Pakistan	5,270	Enemy	705
#Pakistan	1957	Shame	701
Corruption	915	Rude	698
Pakistanis	702	False	694
Turncoat	892	Cruel	691
Stupidity	881	Dishonesty	684
Jealousy	872	Materialism	678
Hate	862	Removal	501
Wrath	859	Hatred	445
Anger	825	Trick	350
Flasehood	786	Thieves	14

It suggests that aggressive and abusive talk is associated with country's name which is defaming the image. Moreover, words like *Intrigue, Corruption Turncoat, Against, Hoarse, Crushed, Flasehood* etc. are massively used in data which depict the increasing hate speech in Pakistani community. Hatred is perceptible in words like *Enemy, Fake, Outnumbered, False, Shameful, Dishonest, Conspiracy, Remove, Wrong, Trickery* and *Thieves*. The data is replete with such words which unmistakably express the thought patterns of the community online.

Table 2 visibly reflects that hate speech is intensely unveiled through nouns used in tweets by Pakistani community. It implies that violent and foul talk is linked with the most frequently used noun, Pakistan, which is slandering the image of country. The pie chart reflects the use of the word *Paksitan* and the connotations which are used alongwith are utterly negative.

Twitter is a global social media which is used across the globe. All the people from rest of the world, interested in Pakistani politics, must have read such hate speech and may have developed a negative image for our countr. Moreover, words like *Rude, False, Cruel, Dishonesty, Thieves, Jealousy, Hate* etc. which are immensely used in data, portray the snowballing hate speech in tweets of Pakistani community.
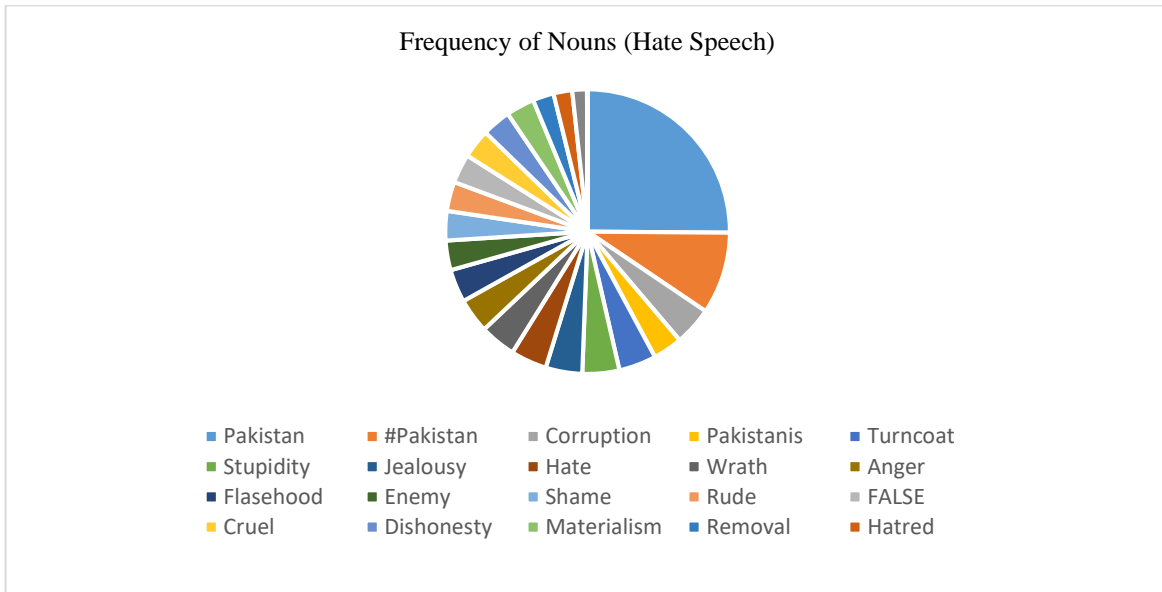
Frequency of Nouns (Hate Speech)

Legend: Pakistan, #Pakistan, Corruption, Pakistanis, Turncoat, Stupidity, Jealousy, Hate, Wrath, Anger, Flasehood, Enemy, Shame, Rude, FALSE, Cruel, Dishonesty, Materialism, Removal, Hatred

Table 3: Frequency of the Adjectives Linked with Hate Speech

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Hoarse	849	Unconstitutional	29
Foreign	738	Beggar PM	20
Jealous	720	Western	19
Corrupt	716	Ditry	16
False	700	Dead	14
Shameful	691	Terrorist	13
Fake	705	Disastrous	12
Ignorant	849	Wrong	12
Hypocrisy	820	Fraud	10

Frequency

Categories: Hoarse, Foreign, Jealous, Corrput, Flase, Shameful, Fake, Ignorant, Hypocrisy — Frequency
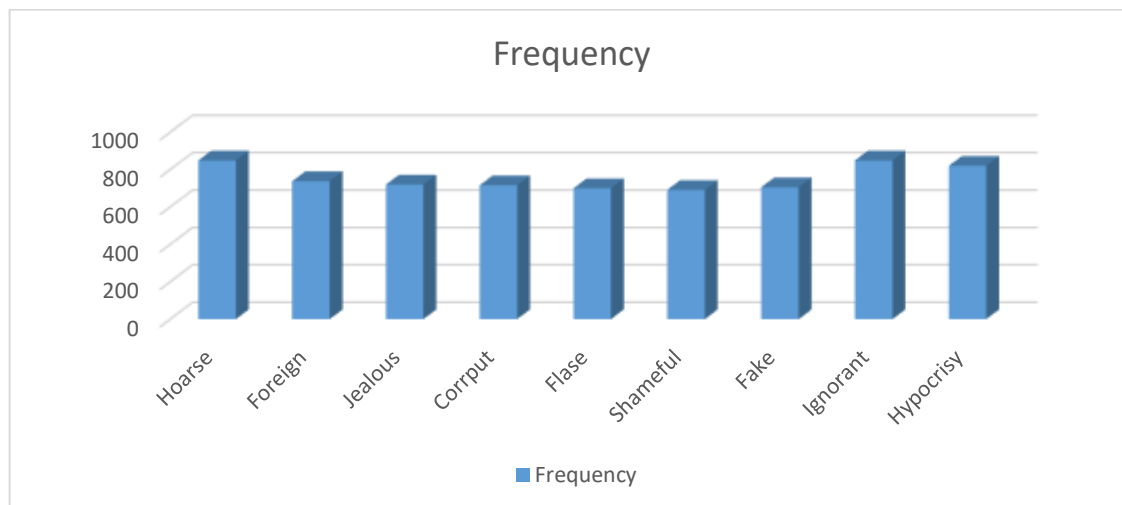
Table 3 visibly reflects that hate speech is penetratingly exposed through adjective used in tweets by Pakistani online community. It infers that vicious and filthy conversation includes mounting number of hate speech adjectives either used for an individual or a political party. Such speech unquestionably doesn't deliver a constructive persona of Pakistan.

Table 4: Collocation of Hate Speech with Pakistan

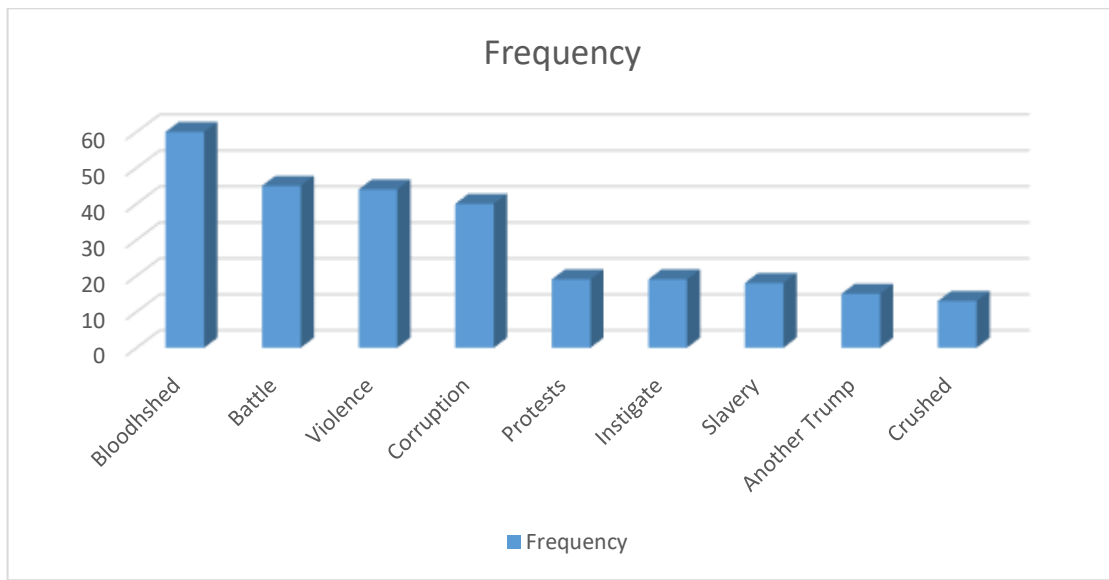|	Collocations with *Pakistan*	Percentage
1	Bloodhshed	60
2	Battle	45
3	Violence	44
4	Corruption	40
5	Protests	19
6	Instigate	19
7	Slavery	18
8	Another Trump	15
9	Crushed	13

Table 4 evidently mirrors that hate speech, in collocation of word *Pakistan*, is powerfully visible through the given data. It infers that words like *Bloodhshed, Battle, Violence, Corruption, Protests, Instigate, Slavery, Crushed* etc. related with Pakistan are undeniably not positive.

Table 5: Major Hate Speech Words in Urdu Language

	Urdu Words	Frequency
1	حق وباطل کےمابین فرق	3500
2	حکومت گرانے کی غیرملکی سازش	3060
3	حکومت گرانے	3005
4	چینلز کی ماں پریگننٹ	2818
5	سازشیں شروع ہوئی ہیں	2802
6	ضمیروں کی شرمناک منڈیاں	2400
7	سندھ بھی ختم کروں گا	2088
8	آسمان سر پر اٹھا رکھا	1595
9	لوٹا بن گیا	1590

Table 5 manifestly expresses that hate speech, not only in English but also in Urdu, is vehemently vivid through the data set. People have used abusive and derogative use of language in their national language. The use of national language for such violent words is a disgrace for the country.

Table 6 manifestly expresses contiguous sequence of n items from a given sample of text or speech. Data is delimited to 2 N-grams to have clear results. These N-grams express the opinion that even a layman can sense violence and hatred from the shown

selection of words. This will categorically ripen in the minds of others that people of Pakistan are not a calm nation and that their writings show their voilent thinking.
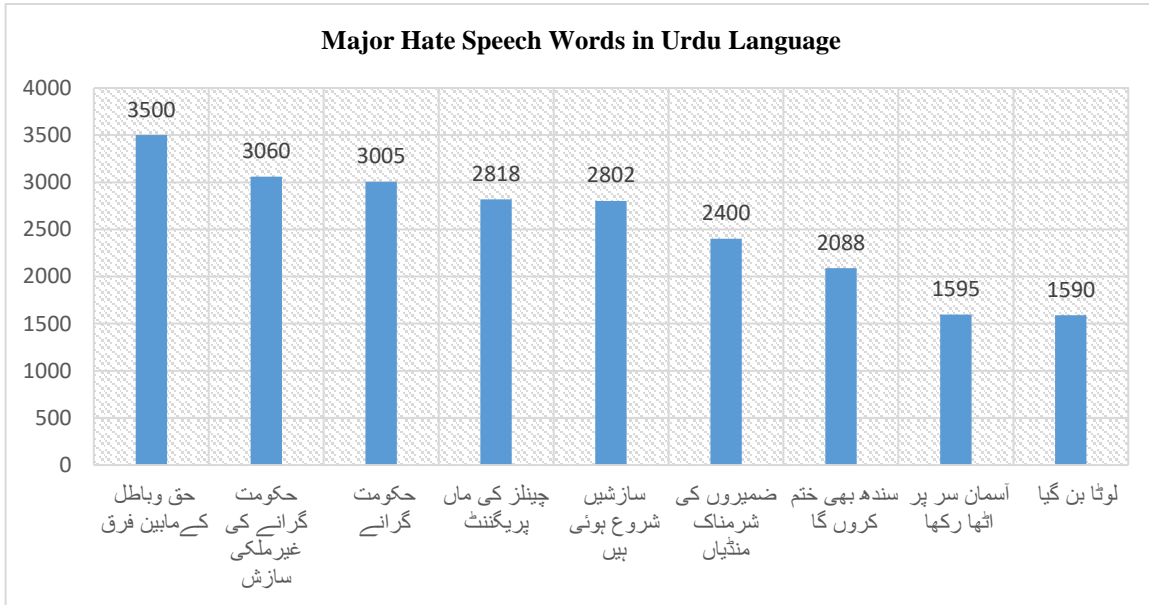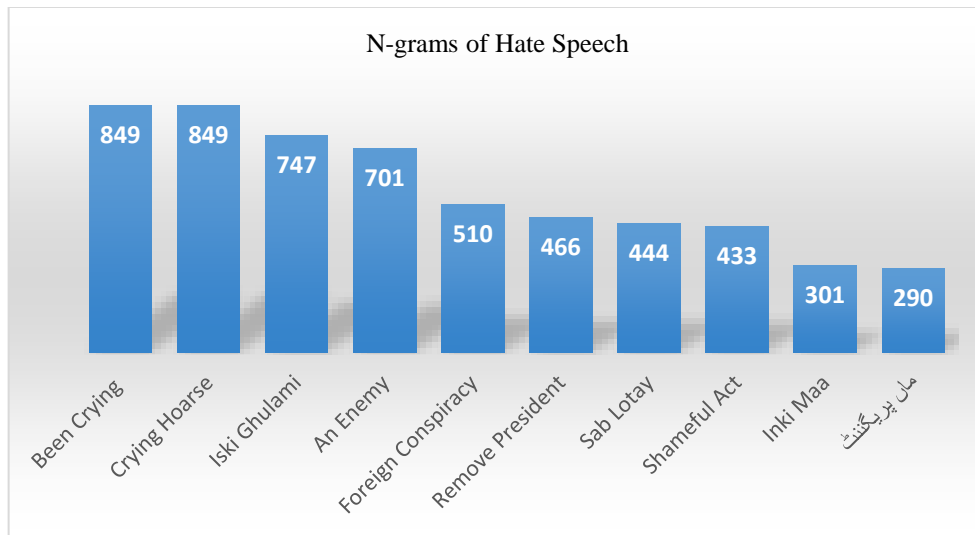

Major Hate Speech Words in Urdu Language

Urdu phrase	Value
حق وباطل کےمابین فرق	3500
حکومت گرانے کی غیرملکی سازش	3060
حکومت گرانے	3005
چینلز کی ماں پریگننٹ	2818
سازشیں شروع ہوئی ہیں	2802
ضمیروں کی شرمناک منڈیاں	2400
سندھ بھی ختم کروں گا	2088
آسمان سر پر اٹھا رکھا	1595
لوٹا بن گیا	1590

Table 6: N-grams of Hate Speech

	Collocations with Pakistan	Percentage
1	Been Crying	849
2	Crying Hoarse	849
3	Iski Ghulami	747
4	An Enemy	701
5	Foreign Conspiracy	510
6	Remove President	466
7	Sab Lotay	444
8	Shameful Act	433
9	Inki Maa	301
10	ماں پریگننٹ	290

N-grams of Hate Speech

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4. Discussion

Notorious representation of a country is only because of the behaviours and attitudes of the people. Although any individual — even one who facvours any political leader or party when committing violence — may have manifold intentions for such

behaviour. Kalmoe & Nathan (2014) believe that some sense of the problem can be traced by studies that show correlations between increase in hostile political rhetoric and violence. Using political voilence online at times becomes an unconscious habit that develops aggression. Incendiary rhetoric from political leaders against their political opponents, minority groups, and other targets is often quickly magnified. Similarly the supporters also use the language of the leader or language to protect their leaders forgetting the fact that they are contributing to the fact that their country is notriously represented by them.

In subsequent days, hate speech has increased to a great extent. The data is only from 50000 tweets (Urdu and English) but that doesn't meant it is the only data acquired from the tweets. There could be many other dimensions as well which are not shown here because the analysis was delimited to the currect factors included in this research.

A study of violence in Sweden by Wahlström et al. (2021found that hateful speech spurs negative emotions toward the target community among listeners, and another study by William et al. (2022) found that exposure to politicians' violent rhetoric increases support for political violence among those surveyed. In Germany, another study by Muller & Schwarz (2018) found that increases in anti-refugee sentiments on Facebook led to increases in violence against refugees: When Facebook had an outage, or when different events dominated the news, violence fell. This voilene not only defames the people but also deteriorates the image of the country.

5. Conclusion

From the literature review, data results and the above discussions, we can sum up stating that Pakistani community, while fighting a battle of abusive words for their leaders, is notoriously representing Pakistan. The image received by the global community from all such keyboard-war is not a positive one. This research aimed at exploring the affect of abusive and hate speech in destroying the reputation of country which is proved through data. Massive examples are found from data which may make anyone think acorss the globe that Pakistan has extremist mindset in it. The people of Pakistan are full of anger and aggression. This thing also contributes to so many other factors which include visits of foreign deligations, tourism, sports and friendly visits. Pakistan has already paid a huge price fighting the terrorist elements and developing the trust of foreign community but this kind of hate speech may hinder in the peace process.

Moreover, the political leaders of the nation should also look into the fact that by winning their own wars and reputation, sometimes, they lose the intergrity of the nation and its global image. They should use good language despite differences so that their followers have a good precedent of their speech. If done, this thing can bring peace to the online world. Global peace and international relationsdepend on national peace and patience. Tolerance is required at this stage and our leaders should exhibit the tolerant attitude so that people can follow their example.

Furthermore, there should be some checks on online discourse. These checks can also be auto-generated or manually controlled. Our leaders should keep an eye on re-tweets to their post. Similarly, their should be an option to discard or delimit hate speech. It is better to save the country's name than saving one's own skin and it all depends on every one of us who are contributing to discourse online. With diligent efforts, we can bring peace and harmony in the current environment of fuss and chaos ; else we will be labled as extermist for good.

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