



Contents lists available <http://www.kinnaird.edu.pk/>

**Journal of Research & Reviews in Social Sciences Pakistan**

Journal homepage: <http://journal.kinnaird.edu.pk>



## THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL MEDIA AS TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN

Shaista shahzadi<sup>1\*</sup> and Muhammad Hanif<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>COMSATS, Lahore

<sup>1</sup>COMSATS, Vehari

### Article Info

\*Corresponding Author

Email Id:

[shahzadi.shaista@yahoo.com](mailto:shahzadi.shaista@yahoo.com)

### Keywords

English, Social Media, Sustainable, development, masses

### Abstract

Twitter, Facebook, and other social media has taken a front seat to other, more traditional ways of sharing information. This paper considers the social media as a major source and vehicle for development through choice and use of English as a medium. Pakistan, a former British colony has taken English, not as a foreign language but as a second language and so fits the bill as the language of wider communication (LWC). This paper shows how English can be used effectively in the social media for communication to encourage the populace into participate in national development by analyzing the posts through critical discourse analysis, through the adoption of the language intelligible to majority of the people, who use social media. The paper considers English as an ideal language for the masses to use in social media for sustainable development, as it is the international language. Through the use of English in social media not only make the masses familiar to the language but also introduce them to the trends and development of their nation.

### Introduction:

We cannot separate language and society from each other because they are interconnected. We cannot underestimate the relationship between the two. Language works as an oil for the society because it lubricates activities within a society, Chomsky (1957). It is extremely important tool which helps man to do effective communication because language reflects the mind of a person, his hidden thoughts.

The English language has taken the position of an official language in Pakistan. After many years of independence Pakistan, a former British colony use English as a medium of instruction in higher education, in government offices, by armed forces. Moreover, the constitution of Pakistan is also in English. Thus, we cannot deny the importance of English in Pakistan which is also increasing day by day. In this research this English language used in Social media shall be analyzed by applying the technique of Discourse analysis. We can call the term

discourse simply as 'text & talk' (Van Dijk, 1997). The language of official speeches we hear, every day and the language we use in our day to day conversation is a form of discourse. It is due to this reason the term discourse is one of the terms in linguistics which is used in broader sense but not explained properly. (Schiffrin, 1994 & Mills, 2004). When we study discourse in any academic field we call it 'discourse analyses. It is a term first used by Zellig Harris, in 1952 (Paltridge, 2006). According to him it is a method by which we do analysis of speeches and writings.

Social Networking sites (SNS) are quite popular among the masses in the world and people of Pakistan being part of the world are also into SNS. According to the Global Statcounter's report (Feb 2018), 91.92% people of Pakistan are on Facebook, 4.32% using YouTube, 1.64% use Twitter and 0.37% use Instagram. According to Aurora report published in February 2018, 31 million people of Pakistan are active users of Social Media.

Let us now explore the term “Development” before going to the term Sustainable development. Firstly, Ajibade take “development” as a positive step towards the better as compare to the present social, economic and political condition of the area. According to the definition given by Wikipedia, Sustainable development is a systematic use of the resources in order to meet the needs of the present by not compromising the future. This term was first used by Brundtland commission. In 1987, the United Nation World Commission on Environment and Development (WECD) used this term in a report “Our common future” and defined it as “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations. Pakistan being a member of UN is interested in the Sustainable development which means making decisions to work on the economic growth, protecting environment without creating problems for the future generation. The English language plays a key role to sustainable development in Pakistan through social media. According to UN, there are 17 main goals of SD but in this paper only some of the goals shall be analyzed promoted in English language by social media. These goals include

1. Quality education
2. Gender equality
3. Peace, justice and strong institutions.

### **Delimitation**

The delimitation of this research is only some of the randomly selected main goals of Sustainable development shall be searched by Pakistani social media users in English language.

### **Literature Review**

#### **CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

In order to study how language exercise its power in a society, we do critical discourse analysis which is a type of discourse analysis. However, there is no direct relation between power and critical discourse analysis but it is an academic field which deals with the ways discourse structures occur together and reproduce the relation between power and dominance in a society (Van Dijk,2001) .CDA mainly deals with discourse and the people of the society. We have to know about the identification of people and how they act, think and speak (Taiwo, 2007). However, the link between discourse and society is the not directly proportional rather it depends on the cognitive process. People use their cognitive abilities to analyse discourse and it is because of it the people can produce discourse (Savitri

Gadavani, 2002). Van Dijk (2009) proposed that Cognitive process acts like a translator to the society as well as help the society to produce discourse. Van Dijk (2001) summarized the aims of CDA as follows:

- a) CDA point out issues related to society and politics.
- b) It not only tell us the structure of discourse but analyze discourse in the form of a power.
- c) CDA and DA interpret discourse differently.
- d) CDA tells us that how discourse structure effect the society. That is why we used CDA’s framework to analyze the speeches in this research.

However, CDA has no clear cut framework that is why the researcher has used the 3D framework of Fairclough and theory of ideology of Van Dijk. Fairclough theory is three dimensional i.e. text, sociocultural practices and discursive practice (Fairclough, 1995). The relationship between these three is shown in the figure below

All these three dimensions are linked with each other. Fairclough (1995) proposed brief definition of these three dimensions as follows:

- a) Text can be written or oral.
- b) Discourse practices is the process of production and consumption of text.
- c) Social practice is the involvement of social environment in the discourse.

Ifeyinwa Obiegbo(2015) did research on the importance of English language and Sustainable development in Nigeria, in which he concluded that English Language plays an important role in the education and National unity of the people of Nigeria by applying critical discourse analysis of different national events.

Lie huang (2015) did research by applying discourse analysis on application of social media marketing for community sustainable Development in which he explored that social media disseminates the knowledge of a community in large and give a light to the people to freely express their views and spread their word by social media for the betterment of the country.

In a report by Terri Wiland(2009) published in International Institute for Sustainable development, it was explored that there are two types of sites, personal and professional sits and these professional sites enabled the government to spread their word by these sites and be in contact with the people at the grass root level and convey

their ideas directly. Thus makes a strong connection between the government and the people.

#### **Methodology**

In this paper, Both English language and social media as a tool for sustainable development shall be explored by Stratified random sampling, selecting the posts from different social networks from January 2018-March 2018, which suits the selected goals of Sustainable development. The language of the posts shall be analyzed by Critical Discourse analysis. Permission has been taken from the admins of the pages through which data has been taken.

#### **Discussion**

##### **1.**

**“If you are looking for a Change then here you go!!!Sign the petition, coz our daughters are worth it! Your sign matters!**

**PS Social media is a big platform to start a revolution! Use it well!!!”**

**(Facebook) (8<sup>th</sup> January)**

According to 3D method of Fairclough, text can be written and oral and in this case the text is written. This post was posted on FB and the hashtag #justiceforzainab went viral on all social media's like fb, twitter etc. Thus, according to one of the selected goal of Sustainable development equality, justice and strong institutions, English language is used social media's to demand for justice for Zainab and by going viral it compiled the government to take strong action against this. The phrase “sign the petition” in the post means that the case emerged due to the involvement of people which is according to 3D method of Fairclough the social interpretation. Next is the phrase ‘YOUR SIGN MATTERS’ push people to believe in their votes because there votes matters. This is also the discursive practice through which words or language is pushing people to stand for this.

Through these lines the goal of sustainable development “equality, justice and strong institution” is being achieved by realizing people their worth and their importance by using English language so that they stand for themselves.

**#Justiceforzainab (Twitter) (10<sup>th</sup> January )**

This was the hashtag which went viral on tweeter as well, which created awareness among people of Pakistan and pushed them to stand for it. Which according to 3D model of Fairclough answers the discursive practice of the text.

##### **2.**

**"You cannot do things in an old manner. You have to give out-of-box solution"**

**Improve quality of Education not just number of institutions. (5<sup>th</sup> February) (Facebook)**

According to 3D model of Fairclough, in these lines a quote written first to tell the audience that it is understood that this world is a new world so the need to learn things according to the requirements of the present world should be accordingly. So the phrase Improve the quality of education fulfills one of the goals of the sustainable development that is to give quality education. The phrase quality education also went viral on different social Medias and many of the government employees started talking about quality education on social media which created awareness among the masses about quality education.

**#Qualityeducation (15<sup>th</sup> February) (Twitter)**

This hashtag went viral on twitter in Pakistan which is written in English language and spread by social media to the people in Pakistan to fulfill one of the goal of sustainable development goals.

##### **3.**

**#Womenequalityday #Genderequality #womenempowerment (8thMarch) (Twitter)**

These are the few hashtags went viral on twitter in Pakistan by using English language to fulfil one of the goals of sustainable development.

**A women is like a tea bag you can't judge how strong she is until put in a hot water. Happy women's day. (8<sup>th</sup> March) (Facebook)**

In this post first the importance of a women is shown then at the end happy women's day is wished which shows that through social media people are spreading the concept of equality of genders which is also one of the goals of sustainable goals.

#### **Conclusion**

Hence,By all the examples and analysis above, it shall be concluded that English is a second language for people of Pakistan but due to the increase usage of social media in Pakistan people are using this language more and more and in a very constructive way like by spreading the awareness of rights, equality etc. and encouraged the masses to participate in the national development of the country, which are also the goal of sustainable development as well.

#### **References**

- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media Discourse*. Cambridge: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1998). *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and Power*. 2nd edition. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London: Routledge.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1997). *Communicating Racism: Ethnic Prejudice in Thought and Talk*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- United Nations General Assembly, "United Nations Millennium Declaration," Resolution 55/2, United Nations A/RES/55/2, 18 September 2000, page x.
- Akeredolu-Ale and Alimi, M. M. (2000). Linguistic Dilemma of Second Language Learners: Implications English language Teaching. *Research in African Languages and Linguistics (RALL)* 6, 67-80.
- Dalha, L. (2005). Language and Multimedia Technology: Analysis on Computer Application and the Internet. Nigeria. *Journal of Science, Technology and Environmental Education (NIJOSTEE)*, 1(1), 267-278.
- Directorate for Social Mobilization (1987). Report of the Political Bureau: Pildat:Pakistan