

Tweetology: A Political Discourse Analysis of the Tweets and Insights from Pakistani Tweeter Users

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Abstract

This study aims to find out the role of web blogging sites in shaping people's attitudes. The role of social media platforms such as Twitter in the construction and maintenance of ideology cannot be simply overlooked. This study delineates to Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model to analyse the data. The data has been collected from social networking sites (SNS). Tweeter allows the people to participate online in sensitive and critical matters. These websites are more convenient and accessible modes of communication. Celebrities, politicians, power brokers, and intellectuals all utilize it. CDA is conducting research on the course they produce. The purpose of this research is to look at the influence of these places on the sociopolitical views of the people who live in that area. It has a significant effect on the formation of Pakistani ideology; it also demonstrates Pakistani ideological perspectives on China and the Pak-China relationship on an international level.

Keywords: china Pakistan economic corridor, socio-economic, tweeter, social media websites, socio-political.

Introduction

Current study aims at investigating tweetology of tweeter posts of popular Pakistani figure “Asim Saleem Bajwa”. He is a retired Pakistani three star general and served as a chairman of CPEC, “China Pakistan Economic Corridor”. General Bajwa has 3.1 million followers on tweeter. He occupy one of the most prominent positions in power holding institutions, along with the politics of Pakistan. In present study 5 tweets of Mr. Bajwa are selected from august 2021. The sample was selected through purposive-non probability sampling. These tweets are related to one of most important international project CPEC. This project is not only to improve lives of people of china and Pakistan through economic development but it is also a framework of regional connectivity. This includes Iran, Afghanistan and central regions.

This descriptive study aims at to investigate the impact of web blogging sites in shaping peoples ideology towards specific issue. Role of social media platforms like tweeter in constructing and maintaining ideology. To analyze the discourse this study employs three dimensional model presented by Fairclough, 1995. Social networking sites are source of data collection (SNS). Tweeter allows online participation of public in sensitive and important issues.

These websites are faster and reachable ways of communication. A lot of work is done in respect to CDA on these websites, specially tweeter. It is widely used by celebrities, politicians, power holders, and intellectuals. The course they produce is matter of research for CDA. This study aims to investigate the impact of these sites in reshaping socio-political ideologies of the people of that specific area. It has a great impact on creating Pakistani ideology, it also shows Pakistani ideological perspective towards China and Pak-china relationship on international level.

Research problem and relevance for the present study

Current study was aimed to investigate political discourse of key tweeter users and citizens of Pakistan. The study sought to identify discursive trends in Twitter debate. The primary goal of this study was to investigate the ideological patterns that lead public figures to select the themes for generating discursive arguments; and to calculate the spirit of democratic participation of people in the discourse that takes shape on the microblogging site Twitter. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects have played a critical role in propelling Pakistan's economy to the next stage of growth, made possible by the excellent leadership of Lt Gen (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa, who just stepped down as CPEC Authority chairman. In November 2019, Bajwa was named as the CPEC Authority's chief executive officer for a four-year term. During his voluntary service at the authority, he worked tirelessly to not only expedite the implementation of CPEC projects, but he also played a crucial role in further developing cordial ties between Beijing and Islamabad. He developed a one-window system to expedite CPEC projects and enticed additional Chinese investment worth billions of dollars into Pakistan. He deserves credit for broadening the scope of CPEC. He worked nonstop for Pakistan's socioeconomic growth. During his tenure as chief of the authority, he made CPEC a global success story without using state resources. He turned on the Matiari gearbox line. During his tenure, three more collaborative working groups were established. While greeting the new SAPM on CPEC matters, the Chinese envoy praised Bajwa's assistance to the megaproject.

Literature Review and Background of the Study

The use of tweeter is becoming common worldwide. Its role in political discussion also increased from regional and local state elections to national elections and international affairs. From politician to common man (Bruns & Burgess, 2011). People are free to express them selves on these social media platforms in matters of public affairs and have freedom of expression whether it is positive or negative concern. With the advancement in technology too many different sites are developed. People are more aware in constructing their ideology and choice of leader they support. They follow their ideal politicians and figures on social media platforms is the main source of propagating the political beliefs. Despite of a lot of websites, people do not blindly follow everything on internet rather they cross check the information (biju, 2016). It is crucial to analyze logical argumentation behavior like, the way tweeter users react, respond, criticize and comment on the personal views of their favorite people from different fields. These sites are hub for production of ideology in public discussion and discourse. Living in dynamic and weird societies, social networking sites are one of the most eminent facilities that advocate the role of SNS, as production of online discourse. It also involves public participation in important political issues.

Tweeter as a Micro blogging site

With the increase in mobile users, the number of facebook and tweeter users increase tremendously. The power of social media platforms like tweeter and facebook was proved during US election campaigns. It also discuss the tweeter activities of politicians around the world (Rajput, 2014; El-Den, Adikhari, & Adikhari, 2017). Tweeter is the most preferred site by the celebrities, public figures, intellectuals, authors, scientists, philosophers, actors and politicians (Dahlgren, 2012). Tweets are best to share personal opinion with live community. Short post of tweeter are called “tweets”. That are limited to the 140 characters. According to a study Americans are the most active users social media sites, almost 20% are contributing by commenting and questioning. It has two networks of political communication, retweet network and mention network (Conover et al., 2011). Fairclough defined discourse as the language used in communication that could be in any form, novel, film, music, political speeches etc. Language has three functions in discourse in society (Fairclough, 1995).

1. “identity”, construction; words are defined and retextualized. They do not have meaning of their own rather took their meaning from running discourse.
2. “relational” building relations: this is the participant’s relationship .
3. “ideational” constituting meanings and knowledge: Fairclough is of the view that discourse bring change in socio-political sphere of society.

A study “ political discourse among key tweeter users: the case of sajak city” by Hsu, Park, and Park (2013) was conducted during the time of political unrest to access the political discourse, content analysis, cluster and series analysis methods were employed. A study shows that tweeter provide real time useful discourse for political communication. Another study conducted in Netherlands “twitter links between politicians and journalists” by Verweij (2012), says that tweeter network have under lying structure that is more than one expect from single list of followers and following. This suggest the vast tweeter network and communication of individual to the huge world around him. Last but not least, a study conducted under the title of “modeling Indian general elections: sentiment analysis of political tweeter data” by Singhal, Agrawal, and Mittal (2015). This study the role of tweeter in promotion of political discourse about Indian general election of 2014.

Research Gap

Due to a lack of relevant literature and a study of the available literature, it was clear that research studies on Political Discourse on Twitter in Pakistan the Pakistani context had not been performed with the explicit goal of exploring the role of Twitter as a public sphere. How Twitter can be used to increase democratic engagement of people in debates and discussions about how they run their own (public) affairs. Thus, the current study appears to be appropriate for critically analysing political dialogue among Pakistani public figures and the general public (twitter followers of key tweeter users) on the microblogging site Twitter.

Research Objectives

- To investigate the function of Twitter in constructing positive image of Pakistan on national and international level

- To analyse how positive image is constructed through SNS by public figures

Research questions

- How tweeter is helpful in creating a positive image of Pakistan on national and international level?
- How public figures construct positive image on social networking sites ?

Research Methodology

Fairclough's 3D model is used as a theoretical framework. CDA framework is used to do ideological analysis(Last Name, Year).

- a. Research design: descriptive research design is applied
 - b. Sample and sampling technique: purposive non probability sampling is done and 5 tweets are selected from the tweeter.
 - c. Population: social networking sites, SNS.
 - d. Instrument: CDA and 3d model by Fairclough
- Textual analysis: In this study that generates intelligible sentences, the usage of vocabulary, phrases, and clauses were to be analysed.
 - Discursive practice: Fairclough defined this as the practise or process of producing and absorbing texts (writing, speech, or visual image) by discourse participants.
 - Social practice: A discourse's texts and discursive practises were to be analysed in the contexts of social practises and communicative events. According to Fairclough (1995), texts cannot be analysed in isolation; rather, they must be assessed in the context in which they were employed.

Data Analysis and Findings

The Purposive-Non Probability Sampling technique was employed in the selection of Twitter as a Social Networking Site (SNS) to analyse the online conversation between key tweeter users of Pakistan and the general public. Purposive sampling was used to select five tweets from Lt Gen (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa with special reference to CPEC.

Tweets selected for study: 5 tweets were selected for the study from July 2021.

Tweet 1: work on 884 MW suki kinari, run of the river, hydropower project is in full swing. Investment \$1.9 Bn. Progress 66%.

Tweet 2: Long live Pak- China all weather and time tested friendship. We will always stand together, surmount challenges and rise to new heights.

Tweet 3: Great meeting Excellency; Nothing can dent our resolve to grow together and realise our goals

Tweet 4: Our Northern areas' potential to be unlocked in line with PM's decision. Productive meeting with CM GB. Identified projects in Power, agri/fishery value chain, infrastructure upgrade(roads/airports),integrated tourist zones, connectivity under cpec.

Tweet 5: On Agriculture prospects with farmers of area Close to Khunjrab Pass-Gilgit Baltistan).Agri, livestock&fishery has potential but challenges too, working to address them under CPEC. Discussing crops&yields.

Hashtag used: #CPECmakingProgress is used in all these tweets.

1 Context: socio political and economic, suki kinari hydropower project in sponsored by Chinese state company and is constructed as early harvest part of CPEC. Probable intension behind this tweet: in this tweet the progress of CPEC project in seen. Full information with facts and figures shows the progress of the project. Use of word full swing shows passion towards progress and development of the progress and his dedication towards betterment of Pakistan. Hashtag used throughout also shows positive intentions.

2 context: socio-political, China–Pakistan Economic Corridor

Probable intension behind this tweet: in this tweet Bajwa used words like long live, all weather and time, always, rise to new heights, this shows the strong bond between the two countries that is growing day by day. This is probably message for international powers that cannot break the tie and the progress of the project CPEC is on the way which is the collaboration of both China and Pakistan.

3 context: eco-political, 10th JCC meeting (joint Cooperation Committee).

Probable intension behind this tweet: hashtag used for this tweet is #CPECmovingforward. Choice of words that Mr.Bajwa made shows the success of meeting regarding CPEC program. The two power involved in the progress of the project are china and Pakistan and the tie between the two is unbreakable, it also has hidden message for international powers that we will grow together.

4 context: eco-political, GB lies at the door of CPEC program that will bring long term benefits for the region.

Probable intension behind this tweet: northern areas are very important for the CPEC project due to their geographical location. The use of words like potential to be unlock, infrastructure upgrade, tourist zone, shows the importance of CPEC in progress of GB. Our northern areas are very beautiful and they have that potential to catch the tourist's attention from all over the word and for that they need better infrastructure. Progress of GB will bring tremendous change in economy of Pakistan in result of tourism.

5 context: eco-political, progress of GB under CPEC program.

Probable intension behind this tweet: CPEC is well known international project of Pakistan with our friend country china. Our northern areas will directly get benefits from the project. Live-stock, fishery, crops etc these are the potentials of GB that needs some assistance to grow further, not only tourism but crops and other sources will help our country to grow economically. Use of word challenges shows that it will not be that easy it needs dedication and hard work and depends on the success of the CPEC project.

The selected tweets are from tweets of one of the most important figure in power dynamics in politics of Pakistan, a three star general and chairman of Pakistan's mega project CPEC. This project aims to connect Pakistan's Gawadar port to china's northwestern region, through network of railways, highways and pipelines. Our northern areas are at the door of the project and on an ideal location for tourism that will result in increase in economy and progress of Pakistan. These tweets also shows the international politics and agendas when he says we will grow

together and ever and always friendship, all weather and all time, choice of words builds our national agenda that is portrayed internationally.

Findings of the Study

In this study selected tweets are related to the one of most important mega projects of Pakistan that has economic and socio-political benefits. Current study shows how a positive image is constructed through social media websites by key figures of society. Fairclough's 3D model is used to analyse the discourse. According to Fairclough (1995), text cannot be seen in isolation rather it is seen through its context. Pakistan's image in past few decades was totally destroyed. It was seen as a terrorist country on international level. It not only destroyed and damaged our image worldwide but also lost tourism. Tourism is one of the excellent source of economic growth. Our northern areas are very beautiful they are called Switzerland of Pakistan, they need infrastructure to attract tourists throughout the world and needs social media to break that negative image of Pakistan. CPEC is an opportunity to get all these benefits. The main concern of our study is to analyse discourse produced on SNS especially on tweeter with special reference to the Asim Saleem Bajwa. How identity is constructed through discourse. Data analysed shows how a positive image is constructed. This shows that Pakistan is making progress and is safe for tourism. Different areas are getting benefits with CPEC. Gilgit baltistan is on the door of china pakitan economic corridor.

Discursive practice: tweeter is a social media website that is open for public. On all these tweets people make their comments and discuss the progress of the project. They show interest in the progress of the project. Positive comments are seen in the tweets. It shows publics' interest and awareness of the current national and international economic and political situation.

Conclusion

The current study attempts to investigate the tweetology of prominent Pakistani figure "Asim Saleem Bajwa's" tweeter postings. He is a former Pakistani three-star general who served as the head of the "China Pakistan Economic Corridor" (CPEC). General Bajwa has 3.1 million Twitter followers. He has one of the most significant roles in power-holding institutions, as well as in Pakistani politics. Mr. Bajwa's tweets from August 2021 are chosen for this investigation. Purposive-nonprobability sampling was used to choose the sample. These tweets are about CPEC, one of the most major worldwide projects. This project not only aims to better the lives of Chinese and Pakistani citizens via economic growth, but it also serves as a regional connection framework. This comprises Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. In present study mr bajwas tweets are analysed. This study shows how social media websites are used for different purposes. It is not only used to construct image but also build ideologies and create discursive discourse. These discourses build our identities as a nation and shows our stance in international politics. Selected data shows Pakistan's stance on friendship with china. There are hidden meaning also to international powers. General Bajwa is one of the most powerful figures in power holding institutions in Pakistan. His stance is actually Pakistan's stance on national and international issues. CPEC has a great importance for Pakistan and china. A lot of powers are working against

the project and selected tweets give hidden messages also, like, always stand together, surmount challenges, and nothing can dent our resolve to grow together.

In this study a positive image of Pakistan is constructed through tweets. People participate in comments and show their interest in the progress of Pakistan. It will break all negative images about Pakistan being backward country. It shows economic growth and our stance in international politics. It will not only make an image but is also beneficial for the public of Pakistan. For the economic growth of the masses. This study shows how these social media platforms are used by the popular people to construct and reconstruct ideologies and how a discursive practice is done through these websites. Discourse produced on these SNS is open for discussion. Through internet world become global village and discourse produced here is assessable to all around the world and the messages are conveyed directly and so the responses.

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