



Discourse Analysis Of Twitter Handles For Senate Elections In Pakistan

Sadaf Shah Afridi

MS graduate Studies,
International Islamic university.
sadafafri779@gmail.com

Dr. Ayesha Sadaf

Lecturer,
International Islamic university, Islamabad.
ayesha.sadaf@iiu.edu.pk

Abstract

Social media has become a latest source of political communication, through which politicians address the electorate directly with the public. Twitter is one of the most popular social media tools in recent years. The discourse of politicians on Twitter requires attention towards linguistic strategies to uncover the figurative language. For this purpose, political parties (PPP, PMLN, & PTI) are chosen to explore the figurative language in their tweets through the Van Dijk model of CDA. The researchers have analyzed the tweets of Politicians, to find the way they used figurative language to build their agenda regarding Senate elections 2021. The study of the tweets revealed that the politicians commonly make use of figurative language in the form of metaphors, modalities, and lexical choices. Each figure of speech has its significance in making and describing the narratives of political parties.

Keywords: Social media, political communication, Twitter, Election

Introduction

The Senate is the upper house of Parliament in Pakistan that consists of 100 seats and has equal representation from each province. Senators are elected by the members of their provincial assembly. There are 23 seats in Senate for each Province. Among which 14 are general seats, 4 seats are for technocrats, 4 for women, and 1 seat for Non-Muslim (Javaid & Ahmed, 2018).

Federal Capital also has its representation in Senate. There are 4 seats of the Federal capital, in which 2 seats are general, 1 seat is for women and 1 is for technocrat. They all are elected by the members of their respective Provincial assembly. The members of the house are elected for 6 years. While one-half of the house members are retiring after every 3 years.



The Senate election involves only our elected representatives. The elections of the upper house are based on the system of Single Transferable Vote (STV). To be a contender it is necessary to be a Pakistani citizen of 30 years or above.

The main role of the Senate is to bring national cohesion and to alleviate the fears of the province which does not have a majority in the National assembly. The National assembly and Senate both work together in order to legislate, except for money bills.

Pakistan's Senate History

Initially, the constitution of 1973 has established Senate with a total number of 45 members. The first elected Chairman of the Senate was Habibullah Khan Marwat, he remained Chairman till 1977. Also in 1977, the total strength of the Senate was raised to 63 members. But in the same year, General Zia ul Haq has imposed Martial Law in Pakistan. The martial law regime took hold of all state institutions till 1985. Then in 1985, the elections were held for Senate and the total strength of members was raised from 63 to 87. At that time Ghulam Ishaq Khan was elected as the Chairman of the Senate who has served as the chairman till 1988. In 1988, Wasim Sajjad was elected as the 3rd Chairman Senate of Pakistan, he remained chairman till 1999. In 1999, General Pervez Musharraf took over the government and suspended the Senate and National assembly. The number of Senate seats was increased to 100 in the Musharraf regime. Then in 2003, the re-election of Senate was held in which Mohammad Mian Soomro was elected as the 4th Chairman of the Senate. He served as the chairman of the Senate till 2009. Finally, after the 18th amendment to the 1973 constitution in 2010, 4 more seats were included in the Senate. The four seats were reserved for the minorities, one from each province. Thus the Senate of Pakistan now has a total strength of 104 members (Khan, 2017).

In 2009, Farooq Naeek was elected as the Chairman of Senate who worked till 2012. In the same year, Nayyer Bukhari was elected as the 6th Chairman of the Senate who remained chairman till 2015. Then in 2015 Raza Rabbani was elected as the Chairman and after him, Mir Sadiq Sanjarani was elected as the 8th Chairman of the Senate in 2018. Mir Sadiq Sanjarani was re-elected as Chairman of the Senate in 2021. He is the first-ever chairman Senate from Baluchistan.

Political Participation

Pakistan is a country that has multiple political parties. At the start, there were two main parties in Pakistan, PMLN (Pakistan Muslim League



N) and PPP (Pakistan People's Party). But after the 2013 general elections, Pakistan has witnessed a trend of the third party as PTI (Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf) won 33 out of 342 seats. And Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf emerged as the third-largest party in the National Assembly (Xiang & Ali, 2020).

In the 2018 general elections, PTI won the elections and it was the first time in Pakistan's history that there was a second consecutive democratic transfer. But just after the win of PTI in elections, the opposition blamed the Army has supported Imran Khan in the pre-election period. The issue was also highlighted by the mass media. Blame generating and negative messages are important components of election campaigns and the modern political system (R.Weaver, 1986).

Problem Statement

It is observed that Twitter has been integrated as a tool by Politicians to strategize communication (Dewi et.al, 2020). It is also used by Politicians in order to accuse other Politicians and praise their selves and their political party. So, this study aims to explore the discourse of twitter handles by political actors on Senate elections 2021 to find the way they used figurative language regarding Senate elections 2021.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is mentioned below.

To investigate the discourses built by political actors of leading political parties via Twitter regarding senate elections.

Research Questions

The research questions of present study are as under.

RQ1: Whether and to what extent Political parties used Twitter for the propagation of their manifesto regarding Senate Elections 2021.

RQ2: What kind of figurative language in the form of metaphors, lexical choices, and modalities has been used in tweets by political parties regarding Senate Elections 2021.

RQ3: To what extent figurative language build narrative regarding Senate Elections 2021.

Significance of the Study

The study will greatly contribute in the literature of political blame game. The study will be helpful for the media scholars in terms of understanding blame shifting among politicians especially during the elections. The study



gives insights into the context that how leading Politicians do tweets and responds to tweets during Senate elections in order to build their narrative.

Literature Review

Chief Election Commissioner has the responsibility to conduct the election of the Senate. He has to make all the arrangements for the election in Senate, according to article 59 of the constitution (Zafar & Pilkjaer, 2007). The upper house of the Parliament serves as a platform for the smaller units that enable them to take part in the Federal policymaking (Mushtaq, 2017).

In the Federal States, the Senate is advantageous in many aspects. The Senate ensures the representation of all the federating units under the rule of parity representation. There is a concentration of legislative authority in one chamber so that may lead to constitutional absolute power. Therefore, there is a second chamber that makes both houses keep check on one another. In Pakistan, Provincial assemblies have to elect the senators in accordance with the single transferable vote on the basis of proportional representation. Under this system, the candidates have to get the vote of the provincial assemblies in proportion to the total strength of the assembly. In the case of the Punjab assembly, which has 240 members, a candidate of Senate election must get 13 votes from the Punjab assembly in order to be elected. On the other hand in the Baluchistan assembly, a candidate has to secure only one vote in order to be elected (Mahmood, 2015).

Twitter

Social media is an umbrella that covers all technology-based media that helps in collaboration and interaction. Social media enables its users to share their ideas, opinions, and experiences (Lattimore, 2010). Twitter is one of the most popular social media tools in recent years. Twitter allows its users to share their take on current happening through 140 characters. The unique characteristic of Twitter is its relative inclusion of ideas from different people. Twitter gives its users the ability to follow the tweets outside their network through a hashtag, it enables the users to see the tweets of news media and political actors (McGregor et al., 2017).

Politicians give high attention to Twitter because it gives them a platform to communicate with the public. It has become a most important micro-blogging site for Politicians. Twitter is a tool for Politicians which enables them to engage in direct communication with their supporters (Lassen and Brown 2011).

According to Golbeck et.al (2010), Many Politicians regularly use Twitter to voice their opinions about any event, and their tweets can be seen



as a way of self-promotion. Politicians do tweets to react to the current scenario and also to criticize other Politicians. Almost all Politicians have their Twitter handle through which the Politicians are in touch with their potential voters.

Twitter is a distinctive social media platform because of its collaborative nature. Due to this nature, the Politicians have more interactive agenda-setting with their supporters. Twitter is a very good social media platform for breaking a story within minutes which is difficult on traditional media like Newspaper (Soedarsono et al., 2020).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis of this study lies in the Critical Discourse Analysis. The Critical Discourse Analysis has emerged in the 1990s with the work of three scholars Teun van Dijk, Ruth Wodak, and Norman Fairclough who have made great contributions in this field through their seminal work. The current study follows the Van Dijk model of Critical Discourse Analysis. It primarily deals with the discourses of injustice, power abuse, social inequalities and to uncover the power relations. Oppression and prejudices are reproduced in daily life through media and political discourses that are controlled by the elite.

Critical Discourse Analysis is an approach that deals with the relationship between society and language. It is an interdisciplinary approach of the Discourse Analysis that studies the ways in which ideology and identity are produced in political and social contexts through language (Van Dijk, 2001).

Conceptual Framework

Figurative language is the key concepts that are studied in the current research. Figurative language is also called "ornaments of language". It is a type of language that varies from the literal language. Figurative language does not directly mean what it says instead it forces the reader to make an image in their mind in order to understand the writer's point. Simply, it is parallel to the literal language because figurative language carries an underlying meaning (Arifah, 2016).

Research Design

The researchers have taken the three aspects to study related to figurative language. Figurative language broken down into Metaphors, Lexical choices, and Modalities used to analyze text.

1) Metaphors



A metaphor makes a person interpret one concept in terms of another concept. It is a way of making communication more efficient (Thibodeau et al., 2018). It is a comparative analysis that uses rhetorical images in order to help the audience to understand. However, metaphors do not make direct comparisons.

According to Lakoff & Mark (1980), a metaphor is just a piece of text that links two or more domains. The metaphor does not refer to something existing in the text, nor does it give a literal connection between two words or concepts simply metaphors are not intended to be literal.

2) Lexical Choices

Lexical choice means the selection and variation of words that a person uses to describe an individual or an event. These are the words that express the content and also represent the intentions and ideology of the speaker (Stede, 1993).

3) Modality

Modality concerns the attitude of the writer towards the world and confidence towards the proposal being presented (Lillian, 2008). Modality is classified into a range of linguistic forms: including modal auxiliary verbs shall, might, may, could, should; adverbs such as probability, certainty, ability, and adjectives such as unfortunate and necessary (Fowler, 1985). Modalities modify the propositions and the addition of modalities in language changes the way the events are represented.

The modality is a phenomenon in which a situation is represented as reality in a non-factual world. Here non-factual world does not mean the world is different from the real world instead of a possible world that is not interpreted as the factual world (Declerck, 2011).

Data Collection

The data for the research purpose is collected from Twitter. The official accounts of the Politicians are selected. The researchers have only focused on the three leading political parties of Pakistan including Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI), Pakistan People's Party (PPP), and Pakistan Muslim League N (PMLN). Further, the leaders are Marium Nawaz, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Shibli Faraz are selected. The researchers have selected Shibli Faraz instead of Imran Khan because at the time of data collection, Imran Khan was the head of the state.

Time Frame

On 11th February, the Election Commission of Pakistan had announced the polling day of Senate elections 2021. According to that



Pakistan Senate elections 2021, were due on 3rd March. Before and after that Politicians got a hot topic to discuss, almost every day Politicians did tweets in order to share their opinion on the Senate elections. This study aims to analyze these tweets and to find out how they use Twitter to propagate their manifesto. So the time frame selected for the study is from 1st February 2021 to 30th April 2021. The researcher has taken a census because of the fewer data available.

Results And Analysis

RQ1: Whether and to what extent Political parties used Twitter for the propagation of their manifesto regarding Senate Elections 2021.

Pakistan People's party has used Twitter for the propagation of their viewpoint on Senate elections 2021. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari tweeted 4 times regarding senate elections.

Pakistan Muslim League N has used Twitter effectively to propagate their manifesto regarding the Senate Elections 2021. Marium Nawaz tweeted 15 times to share her ideology regarding senate elections.

Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf has used Twitter to propagate their manifesto regarding senate elections. Shibli Faraz who was the Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting and also the Senator has tweeted 13 times to share the viewpoint of PTI on Senate elections 2021.

RQ2: What kind of figurative language in the form of metaphors, lexical choices, and modalities have been used in tweets by political parties regarding Senate Elections 2021.

The total number of tweets by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari are four. No metaphors and modal verbs are found in tweet no1. The tweet no 1 includes one lexical choice. The lexicon used by Bilawal Bhutto is the best revenge, that democracy is the best revenge. The tweet no 2 includes one metaphor. "Is Kaptaan scared of elections?" Bilawal Bhutto used the word Kaptaan instead of Prime Minister, it shows that he does not consider him as head of the state that's why he used the metaphorical term Kaptaan for him. Imran Khan was the Captain of the Pakistan Cricket team that's another reason that politicians call him Kaptaan.

No modal verbs are found in tweet no 2. With reference to tweet no 2 "Is Kaptaan scared of elections?". Bilawal Bhutto here used the word scared of elections for Prime Minister Imran Khan. It clearly shows that Bilawal Bhutto is Provoking PM to resign from his position and asking him to hold the new general elections as his party has lost the senate seat.



No metaphors and modal verbs found in tweet no 3. In tweet no 3 Bilawal tweeted Senate vote banditry is unacceptable. Here Bilawal Bhutto has used the word banditry which suggests that Votes are forcefully taken. In Senate elections, the presiding officer has rejected the seven votes which were casted in favor of PDM. According to the presiding officer the votes were rejected because they were stamped in front of the names of two candidates. And in response to those rejected votes, Bilawal Bhutto has used the word "banditry".

In tweet no 4, Bilawal Bhutto has used one metaphor. "Now government admits inflation is skyrocketing because of its failed policies". Here "Skyrocketing" is the metaphor used for the high rate of inflation by the PTI government. It describes that because of some policies made by the PTI government, Pakistan is facing such a high inflation rate. Here Bilawal Bhutto is criticizing the PTI government.

Modality is the emphasis on the words by the use of modal verbs and modality is important to signal the association of the writer (Hakam, 2009). In the line "PTIMF minister needed to be elected to continue in post, and senate defeat made that impossible". Here needed to, is the modal word that suggests that the PTIMF minister have to win the senate seat in order to continue his work as a minister. Here Bilawal Bhutto has taunted PTI because PPP Chairman believes that the PTI government is serving the IMF's (International Monetary Fund) interest. They believed that the federal budget was dictated by the IMF. That's why here he used the word "needed to" which means that the PTI minister had to win the senate seat to continue to serve the IMF but senate defeat made that impossible.

Inline "Now government admits inflation is skyrocketing because of its failed policies". Here the word "admits" is showing certainty and would be counted in a modality.

"Now government admits inflation is skyrocketing because of its failed policies". Here the use of the word "failed policies" suggests that PPP believes that PTI is not able to make effective policies, because of which Pakistan is facing such a high rate of inflation.

The total numbers of tweets of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) are 15 tweets were from Marium Nawaz.

In tweet no1, Marium Nawaz has used one metaphor. Here sit in the box refers to the decision made by the Supreme Court regarding the Senate elections. For Senate elections, the Supreme Court has stated that the polls should be conducted through secret ballot and ECP is bound to print traceable ballot papers by putting bar code on the ballot paper in order to



avoid any corrupt practice. So here Marium Nawaz has used the term Sit in the box yourself in a sarcastic way. No modal verbs are found in tweet no1. With reference to tweet no1 "Whether you put a bar code on the ballot paper or sit in the box yourself, those who are preparing to vote against you are more afraid of the anger of the public than of you, as a result of your anti-public policy in three years". There are three lexicons in this tweet. Here Marium Nawaz has used the word "afraid" for the party members of PTI, that PTI members are more afraid of public anger than your anger. So it suggests that some members have decided to vote for the PDM instead of PTI.

In the same tweet, Marium Nawaz has used the term "anti-public policy" for PTI. The term refers that Imran Khan's policies were against of public. Here Marium Nawaz could use the word 'unsuccessful policies' instead of the term "anti-public policy" which shows that she believes that Imran Khan is making policies that are not in favor of the common public.

"Supporting you is animosity towards the country and the public, the burden of which public are refusing to bear". Here Marium Nawaz has used the word "animosity" that suggests that supporting PTI is equal to the hostility towards Pakistan and its people. That's why some of PTI's members are not supporting PTI in the senate elections.

In tweet no2, Marium Nawaz has used one metaphor that is "cat on hot brick" which refers to the anxiousness and nervousness of the PTI towards senate elections. The PTI stated that there should be the use of technology in senate elections for fair elections. About which Marium Nawaz tweeted that they are nervous that's why they are demanding technology use in the elections.

In tweet no2 "will" is used to predict that neither the Result Transmission System nor the Daska rigging technology will be helpful for PTI in Senate elections. Early this year, there were elections in Daska, here Daska rigging technology suggests that Marium Nawaz believes that PTI has manipulated and controlled the Daska elections.

In tweet no2, Marium Nawaz has used three lexicons. Here vote-rigging, malicious references, and conspiracy ordinances refer to the PTI's government which has attempted to change the process of senate elections from the secret ballot to the open ballot. First, the PTI government attempted to change the process through a failed constitutional amendment this year and then through a presidential ordinance. But the Supreme Court gave the verdict that the constitution of Pakistan was clear that there should be a secret ballot for all elections. So cherishing the verdict of Supreme Court Marium Nawaz in this tweet used the words vote-rigging, malicious



references, and conspiracy ordinances that are a clear indication that she believes that Imran Khan is manipulating the elections.

In tweet no3, Marium Nawaz has used metaphor "Vote thief leave the chair". It has been like a slogan of PMLN for the PTI government throughout the elections. It suggests that they believe PTI as vote stealers.

No modal verbs found in tweet no3. With reference to tweet no3, The fake mandate was taken away by the people's representatives. The tweet no3 has the first lexicon as the "fake mandate" that defines that Marium Nawaz does not consider PTI as the fair governing party. The statement suggests that PTI's own members are not willing to give a vote to PTI.

"Despite the pressure of a flour thief, sugar thief, electricity thief, vote thief, and public criminal, Imran Khan was refused to get a vote by their own people". In this tweet, Marium Nawaz has used the words like "thief" and "public criminal" for Imran Khan. The words flour thief, sugar thief, electricity thief, and public criminal used by Marium Nawaz refer to the high inflation rate in Pakistan. The word public criminal is used here where she can use the term "accountable to the public". It depicts the hard feelings of Marium Nawaz for Imran Khan. She also mentioned that despite the pressure of PTI, PTI's own members are not willing to give the vote to PTI. That indicates that there are some members of PTI who have decided to vote for the PDM in senate elections.

Then, after mentioning Imran Khan as a public criminal she used the word "occupy" for Imran Khan for living in Prime Minister House. "You no longer have the right to occupy the Prime Minister's House". The word occupy is used here where Marium Nawaz can use the word like "live" for that. It shows that Marium Nawaz believes that Imran Khan has forcefully taken the PM House.

The tweet no4 has the metaphor, "Bow down and sell" which means that PML N members refused to sell their votes to PTI by believing in Nawaz sharif.

No modal verbs found in tweet no4. In tweet no4, Maryum Nawaz has used the lexicon "Congratulations" three times, firstly to congratulate the Yousuf Raza Gillani for winning the Senate elections then to congratulate the PDM and then congratulated the members of PML N. She also used another lexicon "Well done" for the PML N members for casting vote for the PDM candidate.

No metaphors are found in tweet no5. With reference to tweet no5, "Counterfeiting will not work anymore". Here Marium Nawaz used the modal verb "will" to indicate that bogus claims will not work for PTI in the future.



With reference to tweet no5, "The people of Daska took revenge for the theft of votes in 2018 and today the people's representatives took revenge for snatching the election of the Chairman Senate". Here Marium Nawaz has used three lexicons "revenge", "theft" and "snatching". That indicates that the word choice of Maryum Nawaz explained the 2018 general elections, in which Imran Khan won those elections were also corrupt (according to her). Here the word "revenge" is used for the winning of Yusuf Raza Gillani that PDM members took revenge from Imran Khan by voting for PDM candidate in Senate elections.

In tweet no5, Maryum Nawaz has used the word "Intimidated", that PTI has tried to scare the PDM members but they refused to get scared. It suggests that Maryum Nawaz is blaming PTI, that they have blackmailed PDM members for supporting PDM candidates.

She also used the word "Counterfeiting" for PTI that refers that bogus claims and tricks that will not work for PTI in the future.

In tweet no6, "Sword of De-seat" is a metaphor used as a connotation of fear for the PTI. The modal verb used in tweet no6 is will not, that in the sentence means that Marium Nawaz believes that Imran Khan is pressurizing National Assembly members for vote.

In tweet no6, there are three lexicons "Threats" "Scaremongering" and "Spare". Here threats and scaremongering refer to the condition of PTI after the results of Chairman Senate elections. After the surprising defeat in Senate elections, Imran Khan announced that he will seek a vote of confidence from parliament. So here the words "Threats" and "Scaremongering" are suggesting that asking for the vote of confidence is like threatening the parliamentarians.

"And the demand is that you trust me or I will not spare". Here "Spare" is the lexicon used by Marium Nawaz that refers that Imran Khan is forcefully taking a vote of confidence from the Parliamentarians.

In tweet no7, Lose your mind is the metaphor used for Imran Khan because he asked for the vote of confidence from Parliamentarians in order to show that he still enjoys the parliamentary majority.

Another metaphor "Like Lions" is used by Marium Nawaz for PML N members. The metaphor is used for heroism. An animal name is used for a person who has the specific characteristic; "lion" can be used to admire a person for his bravery (Rouhi & Mahand, 2011). Here Marium Nawaz has associated PML N members with the lion for their strength and bravery in fighting against PTI.

No modal verbs found in tweet no7. In tweet no7, the lexicon is used is "Humiliating defeats" for PTI. In Senate elections 2021, PTI suffered a



defeat on one of their key candidates. So here "Humiliating defeats" refers to the loss of a high-profile seat in Senate elections.

There are two other lexicons "Vote Thieves" and "Thugs" used by Marium Nawaz. She considers Imran Khan as a vote thief and a thug because after losing the high-profile seat Imran Khan asked for a fresh vote of confidence from parliament. So it suggests that for her, the vote of confidence is like seeking votes through corrupt practices.

In tweet no8, no metaphors and modal verbs are found. There is only one lexicon found in tweet no8 that is "Evidence". The word evidence means is testimony or a procedure in which an action is proved or disapproved and it includes all legal means but it does not include mere arguments (Siddiqua, 1994). The use of the word Evidence here suggests that PTI is pressurizing the parliamentarians to not cast vote for the PDM candidate and PML N has proof of that.

With reference to tweet no9, "PMLN is so much on their senses that even nominated candidate of PMLN". "On their senses" is the metaphor used in this tweet. For Senate elections, Imran Khan nominated Mirza Muhammad Afridi for the seat of Deputy Chairman of Senate. After this announcement, PMLN members revealed that Mirza Muhammad Afridi belongs to PMLN according to the records of the Election Commission of Pakistan. So in response to that Marium Nawaz tweeted that PMLN is so much on the senses of PTI that they ended up nominating PMLN candidate. Here "On their senses" refers to that PTI is so much obsessed by PMLN that even nominated the candidate of PMLN. No modal verbs and lexicons found in tweet no9.

In tweet no10, "Rub its nose" is the metaphor used for the PTI as PTI has not nominated its own party member for the post of Chairman Senate and Deputy Chairman Senate. Here Marium Nawaz has used the metaphor "Rub its nose" for PTI for obeying the establishment of Pakistan, it suggests that Marium Nawaz considers that the nominations for these key seats are given by the establishment and Imran Khan is a mere puppet.

No modal verbs found in tweet no 10. "Political status" and "Establishment" are the two lexicons found in tweet no10. The first lexicon refers to the non-political behavior of PTI as despite being the majority party in the Parliament, PTI has nominated the Ex Fata Senator and Balochistan Senator. So here Marium Nawaz used the term "Political status" as the inability of the PTI in nominating its own party members.

The word "Establishment" here refers to the involvement of the authorities in Senate elections. A system that consists of defense authorities, senior military officers, and secret agencies is called an establishment (Barech, 2020).



With reference to tweet no11, "A habitual, certified vote thief every time finds a new way to steal votes but is caught red-handed". Here the metaphor used is "Certified vote thief" which is used for Imran Khan. In Senate elections, some PDM members had found the spy cameras in the polling booth established in the Parliament for the voting of Chairman of Senate and Deputy Chairman of Senate. The elections became scandalous after the blame of the opposition party on the government and the opposition demanded the probe into the issue. So here Marium Nawaz used "Certified vote thief" as a metaphor for Imran Khan as she considers that his party had installed those spy cameras. Marium Nawaz could use word like "illegal act" or "against the constitution" but she used the metaphor "certified vote thief" which clearly shows that she believes that in every election Imran Khan do corruption and it also shows her hate towards him.

The second metaphor is "Voting at Gunpoint" for the PTI party members. Here the metaphor suggests that PTI was forcing its members to vote for their candidate and in order to keep track of them, PTI officials have installed hidden cameras in the polling booth.

The third metaphor is "Historic Humiliation" which is used for PTI as a consequence of the act of installing cameras. As the issue was covered by national media as well as by international media and got the hype. So here this metaphor suggests that the act of installing cameras became a reason of humiliation for PTI as it is against the constitution of Pakistan to put spy cameras in the polling booth.

No modal verbs found in tweet no11. The lexicon found in tweet no11 is "Habitual" which refers to the issue of installing cameras in the polling booth. The lexicon suggests that Imran Khan always does corrupt acts in the elections. "Caught Red-handed" is the second lexicon that suggests that every time Imran Khan does corrupt acts but this time he has been caught red-handed as some of the opposition members have found the hidden cameras installed in the polling booth established in the Parliament.

The third lexicon is "Spy" which is used for the PTI for keeping an eye on its own party members. It indicates that Marium Nawaz considers that PTI is not sure of its party members so they have installed the cameras in order to keep a check on them. The choice of words here clearly indicates that Marium Nawaz considers Imran Khan as some criminal.

The metaphor used in tweet no12, is "Daska fog" which refers to the Daska elections the word fog here suggests that there was confusion or corruption in the Daska elections. Here Marium Nawaz used the word Daska that after the Daska elections the PTI has even lost the last battle which is Senate elections.



The second metaphor which is used in this tweet is "Piece of junk" which refers to the ordinance made by Imran Khan. Earlier this year PTI tried to change the process of Senate elections through the Presidential ordinance. Basically, an ordinance is a piece of legislation made by the president. But Marium Nawaz termed that "piece of legislation" as a "piece of junk". According to Marium Webster "Piece of junk" means something that is of poor quality so it suggests that Marium Nawaz considers that ordinance as something worthless.

The third metaphor is "Shame on you". The word "shame" refers to the concept involving negative emotions, misfortune, and bad morals (Tissari, 2006). So it suggests that Marium Nawaz believes that Imran Khan should be ashamed of himself for installing spy cameras in Senate elections. "Vote stealers leave the chair" has been like a slogan of PMLN for the PTI government throughout the elections. It suggests that they believe PTI are vote stealers.

No modal verbs found in tweet no12. "Robbed the senate" is the first lexicon used in tweet no12 that refers to the PTI. In Senate elections 2021, the results suggested that the PDM candidate Yusuf Raza Gillani has won the key seat of the Senate. After the surprising electoral defeat, Prime Minister Imran Khan announced that I will take the vote of confidence from the parliament in order to show that he still have the majority. And with the fairly obvious outcomes, PM Imran Khan won the vote of confidence. So here Marium Nawaz termed that vote of confidence is equal to robbing the senate.

"Pratfall" is the second lexicon that refers to the decision of the Supreme Court regarding Senate elections. Prime Minister Imran Khan attempted to change the process of senate elections from the secret ballot to the open ballot. But the Supreme Court gave the verdict that the country's constitution was clear that there should be a secret ballot for all elections so there will be secret balloting in Senate polls. So the Marium Nawaz here termed that verdict as a blow for the Imran Khan.

"Left no stone unturned" is the metaphor found in tweet no13. The metaphor "to leave no stone unturned" is traced back to the ancient Greek story of the Battle of Plataea. There was a rumor that a Persian commander had buried a treasure by his tent before he was being killed. So the people make every effort to find out that treasure they even purchased the fields and began digging but all of no use then they seek guidance from priests who asked them "to leave no stone unturned" which means to make every possible effort to find out (Dove, 2012). So here Marium Nawaz used the metaphor for the establishment of Pakistan that they make every effort to select the PTI but they failed.



"Your baby is drowning" is the second metaphor used in this tweet. The word "baby" refers to the PTI and it suggests that establishment is supporting the PTI throughout all elections.

No modal verbs found in tweet no13. With reference to tweet no13, "The selectors gave so much support, left no stone unturned, risked their jobs and image but defeat after defeat, embarrassment after embarrassment". The first lexicon is "Selectors" which refers to the Military of Pakistan. It suggests that Marium Nawaz believes that Army is backing the PTI and interfering in the Politics. She could use the word "Military" directly but she used the word "selectors" which indicates that she believes that in every election they play the role of the selectors.

"Save the Military" is the second lexicon used in this tweet. This lexicon clearly indicates that the first lexicon was about the Military. Here "Save the Military" refers to the involvement of the army in politics. It suggests that Army has to refrain from interfering in politics to maintain its "Sanctity". Otherwise, it will compromise the image of the Military of Pakistan. In a roundabout way, Marium Nawaz is saying that by supporting PTI, Army is damaging its image.

No metaphors and modal verbs found in tweet no14. "Sooner or later" is the lexicon found in tweet no14, that suggests that eventually, Yusuf Raza Gillani will win. Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani was re-elected for the post of Chairman of Senate by securing 48 votes while Mohammad Yousuf Raza Gillani lost the election because his seven votes were rejected. Later the PDM announced that they will challenge the rejected votes in the Electoral Tribunal. So Marium Nawaz used the lexicon "Sooner or later" which shows that she is confident about Yousuf Raza Gillani that he will certainly win.

The metaphor used in tweet no15 is "State of Madina". After being elected as PM, Imran Khan has promised to develop Pakistan into the welfare state of Madina. It has even become the slogan of PTI. The second metaphor used in this tweet is "Inflation storm" which refers to the high inflation rate in the PTI government.

There are two modal verbs found in tweet no15. The first one is "May have" which is used to define that PTI has forgotten that it is not the state of Madina. Then the second modal verb is "Would have" which connects with the first modal verb. That defines that if it was the state of Madina then the government of PTI would have ended by now.

With reference to tweet no15, "Instructive end" is the first lexicon found. It refers to the PTI that suggests that if Pakistan was the State of Madinah then the PTI government would have been fallen. Because Imran Khan promised to develop the welfare state where the state protects the well-being of the



citizen whereas in Pakistan instead of giving relief to the citizens the government is continuously increasing the rates of necessities.

"Theft" is the second lexicon that is used four times in this tweet. It refers to the PTI that they are the thieves of sugar, gas, electricity, and vote. Marium Nawaz could use the words like "mismanagement of electricity" but she used the word "theft" which indicates her anger towards the government.

The third lexicon is "Incompetence" which is used for the PTI government. It suggests that because of the inefficient policies of Imran Khan Pakistan marks the highest inflation rate. And as Imran Khan always uses the word "state of Madina", so here Marium Nawaz referring to that state of Madina used the word "Jihad". That increasing the rates of necessities and making incompetent policies they call it Jihad.

While analyzing the tweets from PTI, important thing to mention that Imran Khan is the chairman of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf and was also serving as the Prime Minister of Pakistan during data collection of present study. That's why the researchers have considered the tweets of Shibli Faraz. He was the Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting and also the Senator.

There were total 13 tweets from PTI on Senate elections and analyzed below.

In tweet no1, metaphors and modal verbs are not found. The first lexicon in tweet no1 is "Tainted politics" which is used for the claim of Asif Ali Zardari. Before the Senate elections, Asif Ali Zardari had said that Yusuf Raza Gillani will win the Senate polls. In response to that Shibli Faraz tweeted that despite being the minority in the parliament Asif Ali Zardari is claiming the win of Yusuf Raza Gillani. So Shibli Faraz termed his claim as corrupt politics it suggests that it is only possible if they bribe the people to cast vote for Yusuf Raza Gillani in senate elections.

The second lexicon is "Two parties" which is purely used for the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League N (PMLN). These both are the popular political parties of Pakistan. The word "two parties" is used to refer that if politics becomes disgraceful in Pakistan it is just because of the PPP and PMLN. Here Shibli Faraz has put all the blame on these two parties for the corrupt practices in Pakistani politics. The third lexicon is "Charter" which is also used for the PMLN and PPP in the same context. It suggests that PPP and PMLN in the name of Democracy are doing corrupt practices.

In tweet no2, metaphor and modal verbs are not found. With reference to tweet no2, "Political Hypocrisy" is the lexicon used for the opposition parties. It suggests that all opposition parties are dishonest and biased in politics. It refers to the issue of the process of Senate elections, in which PTI



was trying for open ballot elections while PDM was in favor of secret ballots. And surprisingly Election Commission also supported PDM's stance on this issue as it was according to the constitution of Pakistan. So opposition praised ECP for its stance regarding the Senate election process and for which Shibli Faraz called that political hypocrisy.

The second lexicon is the "Hallmark of the opposition" that is used in the same context. Here it suggests that the opposition does not stick to its word and always changes its opinion regarding the same issue. It suggests that they change opinion according to their interest and now it has become their identity

In tweet no3, no metaphors are found. The only modal verb in tweet no3 is "Will not" which means that it's confirmed that Imran Khan will never back down from his goal and will fulfill it in all circumstances. It shows that Imran Khan is determined to get what he wants.

The lexicon in tweet no3 is "Corrupt system" which is used for the opposition. For the senate elections 2021, there were two opinions regarding the process of Senate elections. The government was in favor of an open ballot while the PDM which is the coalition of opposition parties was in favor of a secret ballot. So there was a blame game on Twitter between PTI and PDM. Here referring to that Shibli Faraz has used the word "Corrupt system" that opposition parties are always involved in corrupt practices it refers that PDM is supporting secret ballots so that they can bribe the elected representatives to cast vote for the PDM candidate.

In tweet no4, metaphors and modal verbs are not found. There are two lexicons in tweet no4, "Supporter of the rigid system" and "Barrier to transparency" both are used in the same context. The lexicon "Supporter of the rigid system" is used for the opposition it suggests that the opposition is supporting the old method of the secret ballot for their motive to do corrupt practices in elections. The second lexicon is "Barrier to transparency" is also used for the opposition that suggests that the opposition does not want transparency in elections that is why creating problems.

The words choice of Shibli Faraz is accusing. He accused PDM of all the problems before the senate elections.

With reference to tweet no5, "Who set up markets" is the only metaphor used. It refers to the Pakistan Democratic Movement that means that PDM is involved in illegal activities of buying votes. It suggests that the opposition is bribing other members to cast votes for the PDM candidate in senate elections. The only metaphor in this tweet is "Will" which is used as a possibility that the technology will help in conducting fair elections. It suggests that PTI is in favor of technology to be sued in senate elections.



In tweet no5, there are two lexicons used "Traders" and "Dealers of conscience". The lexicon "Traders" is used for PDM that suggests that PDM is involved in corrupt practices in order to win the Senate elections. Here Shibli Faraz is referring to the verdict of the Supreme Court(SC) in which SC upholds secret balloting in senate polls and also, in its verdict, maintained that the votes will be identifiable for the Election Commission of Pakistan. It indicates that PTI considers the SC decision in its favor as the ECP would be able to investigate the allegations of horse-trading. The second lexicon is "Dealers of conscience" which in the sentence means that PDM is bribing politicians. It refers that PDM is using money in order to win the elections but now it is a bad day as the Supreme Court has given the verdict that the votes will be identifiable to the Election Commission of Pakistan.

In tweet no6, metaphors, modal verbs and lexicons are not found.

In tweet no7, two metaphors are found. "Franchise of corruption" is used for the PPP and PMLN, this metaphor means that both parties are purely corrupt. It suggests that PPP and PMLN are doing politics for their personal interest which is making money by looting people. The second metaphor in this tweet is "License of looting" which is used in the same context it suggests that PPP and PMLN are doing corruption and the nation knows about it so now it is upon the public that whether they will give them another opportunity of corruption by electing them or they will end their dirty politics. The word "License" is used herein in a sarcastic way.

"Will not" is the only modal verb used in tweet no7 that means that it's confirmed that the nation will never accept Maryam Nawaz and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as part of Pakistan's politics because of their corrupt background.

With reference to tweet no7, "Hereditary politicians" is the lexicon that is used for the PMLN and PPP as they are the political parties whose generations have been in politics. So here it is purely referring to Maryam Nawaz and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The lexicon is used negatively as it suggests that they are destroying Pakistan's politics by bringing their corrupt family members into politics. The second lexicon "Impose" is used in the same context that suggests that PPP and PMLN are forcefully imposing their children on the people of Pakistan. The third lexicon is "Looting business" which suggests that these both parties are involving their children in politics so that they can continue the process of corruption after them. Here Shibli Faraz has used the demonizing language.

In tweet no8, no metaphors found. The only modal verb in tweet no8 is "Would" which is used for Maryam Nawaz and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. That if they were that much capable then they would not have just occupied



the leadership instead they would have joined the parties as the common people do.

With reference to tweet no8, "Best revenge" is the lexicon used for Maryam Nawaz and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari it suggests that they are damaging the democracy in Pakistan by using the word "democracy" for their personal interests. It refers that they are taking personal revenge in the name of democracy. "Buy people's conscience" is the second lexicon that refers to the senate elections. In Senate elections 2021, PTI accused PDM of buying votes from the elected representatives. So here Shibli Faraz is referring to that, that PDM is bribing politicians and buying the votes from them in order to win the Senate elections. So here "buying people's conscience" means buying the votes.

The lexicon "Occupied" is used for Maryam Nawaz and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. That means that they both have just taken over the leadership without doing any struggle in politics. It suggests that Shibli Faraz believes that first they should have joined the party as a worker and then after a struggle they should have been promoted to the leadership. As leadership is a very important part of any political party. Here Shibli Faraz has also questioned their abilities by saying that if they were capable enough they would have joined the party as workers.

In tweet no9, no metaphors found. "Would" is the only modal verb in tweet no9 that is used for Nawaz Sharif that if he believes in the honor of votes he would be in Pakistan. For the past few years, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has been living in England for health issues and has not visited Pakistan. So it suggests that Shibli Faraz believes that Nawaz Sharif does not respect vote that's why he has not come to Pakistan.

With reference to tweet no9, "Benefactor" is the lexicon used for Molana Fazal ur Rehman. It suggests that after PPP and PMLN, now JUIF is preparing someone to be a part of politics. The lexicon "Throne" is used in the same context that Fazal ur Rehman is preparing his dearest supporter for the leadership of the Jamiat e Ulamae Islam (F). Here "Throne" is used sarcastically.

"Robbed the Nation" and "Hereditary Politicians" are the lexicons used for PPP and PMLN. As these, both parties have been in government many times so it suggests that being in government they have used the national treasury for their personal interests. It refers that PPP and PML N are corrupt political parties who are just stealing the money of Pakistan's citizens.\

The lexicon "Hereditary politicians" is used for the Marium Nawaz and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari that suggests that they are looting the nation from generation to generation. The words choice of Shibli Faraz is blaming.



"War" as a metaphor is used in tweet no10 that means that Imran Khan will take every possible step in order to fight with the corrupt people. Here Shibli Faraz is referring to the PDM that they are doing illegal practices in Senate elections. "Will" is the modal verb used in tweet no10 that shows the certainty of the victory of Sadiq Sanjrani. The PTI has nominated Sadiq Sanjrani for the Chairman Senate seat so Shibli Faraz is showing certainty that PTI will support Sadiq Sanjrani in all circumstances.

With reference to tweet no10, "Harming democracy" is the lexicon used for the PDM that suggests that they are damaging the democracy by doing corrupt practices. It also suggests that PDM is involved in bribing the people in order to get the maximum senate vote which is completely illegal. "Immoral tactics" and "Undemocratic tactics" are used for the PDM that refers to their campaign regarding senate elections. It suggests that PDM is doing all illegal activities of bribing and manipulating the politicians to get the high numbers of the vote in senate elections. Here Shibli Faraz has portrayed Imran Khan as a hero that Imran Khan will save the country from these corrupt politicians.

In tweet no11, metaphors and modal verbs are not found. The only lexicon in tweet no11 is "Ex FATA PTI member". The use of "Ex Fata" here shows that Shibli Faraz wants to know people that instead of selecting PTI members from main cities they have selected a member from FATA. FATA has been merged with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the last three years so there was no need of writing Ex-FATA. So it suggests that Shibli Faraz has used this lexicon so that the people of Tribal areas would praise the PTI.

In tweet no12, metaphors and modal verbs are not found. "Sinister plan" is the lexicon used in tweet no12 that refers to the scandal of hidden cameras in the polling booth. In Senate elections, there were spy cameras found in the pooling booth established in the hall of the parliament. So here Shibli Faraz is referring to that issue that suggests that the spy cameras were installed by PDM to keep a check on the PDM members. The word choice here is quite demonizing as Shibli Faraz could use words like "Illegal".

"Criminal tactics" is the second lexicon in this tweet that refers to the PDM. In senate elections, PDM won the key seat from PTI who is governing party. So despite being the majority PTI faced the surprising defeat so here Shibli Faraz referring to that used the lexicon "criminal tactics". It suggests that by doing illegal practices PDM made it possible to win the senate seat. As they couldn't win because they are the minority.

"Loot and plunder" is the lexicon used for the PDM. It suggests that Shibli Faraz believes that PDM is a corrupt movement and they are involved in illegal activities. Here Shibli Faraz challenged the PDM that now the era of corruption has ended and they would be no longer able to ransack the



country. The lexicons "Loot and plunder" are synonyms that give the same meaning so the use of two synonyms indicates that Shibli Faraz is emphasizing the statement the PDM is looting country. The repetition of the same idea by using different words is mainly used to emphasize the idea (Al-Masumi, 2017).

In tweet no13, no metaphors and modal verbs are found. With reference to tweet no13, "Reiterated" is the lexicon that suggests that the Supreme Court wants to have a fair election and that's why has been repeated many times to the Election Commission of Pakistan to hold free and fair elections. "Constitutional responsibility" is the second lexicon used for the Election Commission of Pakistan. It refers that Election Commission is not doing its job properly for fair senate elections. Shibli Faraz in a roundabout way saying that the Supreme Court wants fair elections but ECP is not taking it seriously despite having the constitutional responsibility of holding free and fair elections.

RQ3: To what extent does figurative language build narrative regarding Senate Elections 2021.

Pakistan People's party has used different lexical terms, metaphors, and modal verbs for Senate elections 2021. It depicts that after the victory of Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani the PPP seemed quite confident as Bilawal used the metaphor "Kaptan" for Imran Khan and also used the lexical term "scared of elections" which indicates that Bilawal was reminding the Prime Minister of his promise in which he said that if they lose the Islamabad senate seat he would resign. Here "Scared of elections" is used sarcastically. In Bilawal Bhutto's tweets, he has put focus on Imran Khan's past promises which shows that Imran Khan fakes the promises and he is not trustworthy.

In Senate Chairman Elections the sarcasm changed into accusation. Bilawal Bhutto used the lexical term "Banditry" for the Chairman Senate elections which indicates that he was not satisfied with the elections for which he blamed the Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf for their corrupt practices.

Bilawal Bhutto has also criticized the government for the "Skyrocketing" inflation rate. Bilawal Bhutto expressed his concerns by saying that the inflation rate is high in Pakistan due to the "Failed policies" of government. He has used the tweets to bring the focus on PTI's position on various issues including the economy and high inflation rate and also on PTI's inabilities to tackle these problems.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has used two modal verbs firstly as a suggestion that PTI has to win the senate elections in order to obey the orders of the IMF. And secondly used as a certainty.



Murtaza Wahab gave his opinion through tactful use of language in which he blamed senate elections as "Selection". The lexicons used by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Murtaza Wahab reflects Pakistan people's party's political ideology. The overall narrative built by the Pakistan people's party depicted that, Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf is not capable enough of governing a country, because of their failed policies Pakistan is facing several issues and the government is also influencing the senate elections.

Overall PPP has used sarcasm and blame in their tweets. So the figurative language in the form of blame and accusation has built the narrative of PPP regarding the senate elections 2021.

Pakistan Muslim League-N has used many figures of speech for Senate elections 2021. Different metaphors, modalities, and lexical choices have been used by Marium Nawaz as well as by Marium Aurangzeb in order to build their narrative. By using different metaphors and lexical choices for senate elections, PMLN has criticized the government but however, modalities have been used as a possibility and prediction that Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf will no longer be the governing party of Pakistan.

Marium Nawaz the leader of PMLN has used a variety of metaphors and lexical choices to share PMLN's political ideology. She used figurative language as a tool to criticize the government for its failed policies. She also predicted that some of the PTI members will not support PTI as they are afraid of the anger of the public and supporting PTI is like "animosity" towards the country. She used the metaphor "Cat on hot brick mourning" for PTI that refers that PTI was nervous and that's why asked for the use of technology in Senate elections. She has used lexicons "vote-rigging, malicious references, and conspiracy ordinances" for Imran Khan which shows her anger towards the Imran Khan. The metaphor "Vote thief leave the chair" was used by Marium Nawaz that became the slogan of PMLN for senate elections. It refers that PTI as a corrupt government that steals votes.

Praising words in the form of figurative language was used for the PMLN and PDM members. The metaphor "Like Lions" was used by Marium Nawaz for PML N members. The metaphor is used for heroism. She used the lexicons "Congratulations" and "Well-done" for the PMLN and PDM.

The words choice of Marium Nawaz used demonizing language for the Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf. They mainly targeted Prime Minister Imran Khan and accused him of being selected and damaging the country. They blamed Imran Khan for corrupt practices by using figurative language. Mostly the lexicons used were "vote thief", "selected", "Unsuccessful Individual", "Thieves", "Habitual" and "Thugs" which indicates the hostility



of PMLN towards PTI. Overall accusing and blaming words were used by PMLN for the PTI.

PTI has used different metaphors, modal verbs, and lexicons to build its narrative regarding senate elections. Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) has different kinds of discourses as Shibli Faraz has defended alleged blames came from the Pakistan Democratic Movement by using the lexicon "Political hypocrisy" and "Hallmark of the opposition".

He has used the lexicon "Corrupt system" for the opposition that suggesting that the opposition is the supporter of corruption. Shibli Faraz's discourse depicted that, he has a negative opinion about the PDM as he has used the lexicons "Supporter of the rigid system" and "Barrier to transparency" for the opposition. He has also used a variety of metaphors in his tweets. He used the metaphor "Franchise of corruption" for PPP and PMLN which means they are purely corrupt. By criticizing both parties Shibli Faraz has used the metaphor "License of looting" that is used in the same context. "War" as a metaphor used for PDM that Imran Khan has declared war; it shows aggression of PTI towards the opposition.

Shibli Faraz has used figurative language in his discourse to criticize the opposition parties, especially PMLN and PPP. In his tweets, he has personally attacked the PPP and PMLN by using lexicons "Hereditary politicians", "Looting business" and "Two parties". He has used different modalities as a certainty and as a suggestion for the opposition. He has used a variety of Figures of speech in his tweets however there was one tweet in which metaphors, modality, and lexical choices were not found.

The discourse of Shibli Faraz was based on accusation and blame on opposition parties and he has used demonizing language especially for PPP and PMLN. By using a variety of metaphors, modalities, and lexicons, a narrative that is built by the PTI is that PDM is a corrupt movement that is a supporter of a rigid system and is a barrier to transparency and that will affect the senate elections.

Discussion & Conclusion:

In senate elections 2021, the political parties changed the tradition by making an 11 party alliance. The opposition of Pakistan formed a multi-party alliance against the government of Pakistan and named that Pakistan Democratic Movement. So the battle was between the PDM and PTI.

Political Parties used Twitter effectively to propagate their ideology regarding the senate elections. The study of the tweets of three political parties of Pakistan revealed that the politicians commonly make use of figurative language in the form of metaphors, modalities, and lexical choices in their tweets. Each figure of speech has its own significance in



making and describing the narratives of political parties. There have been frequency differences found among all the figures of speech.

The Pakistan People's Party is found to have criticism on the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. The tweets of PPP suggested that they consider PTI as a failed government that is not able to run the country properly. Bilawal Bhutto accused PTI of following the orders of IMF (International Monetary Funds) and called them the reason for the high inflation rate in Pakistan. He also accused the government of manipulating the results of senate elections for which PPP used the lexicon "banditry". PPP in their tweets criticized the government by using demonizing language. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari used these negative strategies to show the incapability of Imran Khan and his government to meet the required standards of governance. This is carried out by pointing toward how damaging this PTI government is toward democracy and nation. A mastery of lexical choices and metaphors is displayed by the politicians when presenting others in a bad light. The impact of these messages is boosted by avoiding literal language and using metaphors (Masroor et al., 2019).

PMLN discourse has started by explaining Imran Khan's idea of bar code on ballot papers in a sarcastic way that whether they put a bar code or "sit in the box" those who have decided will vote against them. As PMLN is also the part of Pakistan Democratic Movement so they followed the same approach of criticism towards the government. With more numbers modalities, metaphors, and lexical choices that are negatively connoted, PMLN's discourse is all about the failure of government. In tweets, Marium Nawaz directly blamed Imran Khan and his government for the high inflation rate and used the negative lexicon "Thief" for him for not being able to win the Senate elections. As Pakistan Tehreek-e- Insaf (PTI) candidate Abdul Hafiz Sheikh got defeated by Yusuf Raza Gillani a nominee of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). After the surprising defeat of PTI over the prestigious seat of Islamabad the PMLN started to blame PTI sarcastically. And that resulted in an interesting series of tweets by the leaders of opposition and PTI.

PMLN has repeatedly indirectly alleged that the military is supporting the PTI in senate elections. They also used the metaphor "Rub its nose" for PTI while addressing the military it suggests that Imran Khan-led government is obeying the orders of the military and the PTI government is a mere puppet. PMLN has mainly used accusing and blaming words for the PTI. They demonized the PTI government and used heroic language for the PDM. The politicians show themselves as the best candidates by indicating that they had not betrayed the country in any way (Mirti & Christopher, 2017).



PMLN has used their narratives as a powerful tool of framing the senate elections 2021. They also make a hashtag for senate elections that is "Vote chor kursi chor" (Urdu word: Trans: Vote stealers leave the chair). In a similar study, it has been identified that hashtags are helpful in instantly shaping the perceptions of people about the political party (Masroor et al., 2019).

In the blame game on Twitter over senate elections the PTI government also took part to propagate their manifesto regarding the senate elections. Shibli Faraz has started with the blame on Zardari that how he can predict that Yusuf Raza Gillani will win the Senate elections. He started demonizing the PPP by considering it the ground for corruption. It continued the agenda of using demonizing and blaming language for the PDM. He blamed PPP and PMLN for being the corrupt political parties and also blamed them for imposing their children on the Pakistani people.

Shibli Faraz has used the lexicons mostly for the PPP and PMLN in order to warn them or to criticize them. Modality is also used at multiple stages as a certainty or as a suggestion for the opposition. Metaphors were also found in the tweets of Shibli Faraz. He named PMLN and PTI as hereditary politicians for imposing their family members on Pakistan. Nowadays the politics of Pakistan are turning out to be more like a family lineage (Masroor et al., 2019).

By analyzing the tweets of PTI it was found that the PTI was pro-judiciary. However, the government was not happy with the decisions of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding the senate elections as they used the lexicon "constitutional responsibility" for the ECP regarding the senate elections 2021.

Mihas (2005) investigated the use of non-literal language in the presidential campaign discourse of 2004. Through the application of the textual tradition of Foucauldian research in the analysis the researcher find out that non-literal figures are like 'loaded weapons' and Metaphoric discourse structures and deep conceptual metaphors function as a 'manipulator veil'.

JUIF has called PTI a "fascist mob" that suggests that PTI doesn't believe in democratic principles and lacks a decent and polite way of doing politics. The lexicon is used to project the PTI as not capable of doing government. The overall narrative was based on the allegations against the PTI government.

In the wake of senate elections, an intensified political activity especially on Twitter was found among the political elites of Pakistan. There was a series of tweets for the game of political survival between the opposition parties and the governing party. All political parties showcase



dominance in their tweets and their words choice expresses their embedded political ideologies regarding the senate elections. Having the access to a platform like Twitter which is considered a great platform for politicians to directly communicate with the people, each party tried to bring the good image of their party and the bad image of others. Mostly the tweets were following the strategy of showcasing others as corrupt and disloyal to Pakistan. And for that purpose, the politicians used figurative language in the form of lexicons, modal verbs, and metaphors.

There was a slight difference in the political discourse with the emergence of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). As among the selected political parties for the study, 3 political parties were part of the PDM so their tweets were mostly similar to each other as they were following the same agenda of the PDM. While the governing party PTI was blaming the opposition but at the same time was also defending itself. Opposition and government both crafted the tweets in the form of a revelation to the public of the hideous crimes of others. Both have tried to defame each other by making allegations.

The tweets by political parties also show the crucial aspect of political discourse that is the "blame game". It has been found that to propagate the manifesto regarding senate elections each party was blaming the government and the government was blaming the opposition for the corrupt practices. They not only target each other for their government tenure but also the corruption in the senate elections. It has been identified that PDM makes allegations towards the PTI government for influencing the senate elections while the PTI accused PDM of bribing the elected representatives. Both the government and opposition were ready to blame each other if the results were not according to their expectations or there is any issue regarding the senate elections. Like the issue of hidden cameras in senate elections; every political party found it as an opportunity to blame the other political parties. Everyone was using the strategy to prove that whatever the wrongs have been done are because of the other politicians. Mostly the politicians used nationalism to support their arguments rather than the facts and figures.

PPP, PML N, have the same narrative regarding the senate elections. They all were praising their nominee for senate elections while criticizing the government. They used a certain figure of speech that indicates that they are against the government because of their inability to run a country and they are against the evil of corruption. It shows that they believe that political party members who are not able to run a country properly don't deserve to be senators.



It has been identified that some political parties were pro-military and judiciary while some were not. PMLN's tweets indicated that they are against the military as in one of the tweets they used the metaphor 'rub its nose in front of the establishment' for Imran Khan it suggests that PMLN believes that PTI is obeying the orders of the military in order to make them happy. PMLN also mentioned that PTI is calling agencies to back them in senate elections it suggests that PMLN believes that the military is also influencing the senate elections. In one of the tweets, they also mentioned that 'save the military' suggests that the military is supporting the PTI government and that will damage the sanctity of the army. Similarly, the JUIF also has the same narrative about the military as they tweeted that there is 'institutional interference' that suggests that the military is interfering in the senate elections.

The senate elections were marred with many controversies. Like the issue of horse-trading in Senate elections, the issue of minority win, and the scandal of hidden cameras in the polling booth of senate elections. The leading political actors made use of Twitter strategically in order to propagate their narrative regarding senate elections. They start blaming others as a looter, criminals, and disloyal with an underlying message that their party members are more capable to be elected as senators. The government was blaming the opposition for horse-trading while the opposition was blaming the government for bribing their members. Similarly, on the issue of hidden cameras opposition and government, both were accusing each other. Every political party tried to make senate elections more scandalous by blaming each other.

Based on the results generated, the study concludes that the leading political actors used Twitter to propagate their narratives. Analysis of the data revealed that the politicians use figurative language in order to present their selves as a well-wisher of the public while accusing others. The analysis of the tweets showed that no political actor was ready to accept their failure instead they were playing a blame game in order to clean their image for the senate elections.

The results showed that lexicons and metaphors were the most used figure of speech by politicians. The results of the study also showed that figurative language was used to criticize the opponents and to boast that how best fitted they are for the senate elections. Thus the conclusion drawn from this study is that political parties in Pakistan use figurative language as a tool to blame the other political parties which results in the blame game. This study can help future researchers who aim to explore figurative language used in Pakistani political tweets and may provide them with a design to analyze the discourse of politicians who criticize others and claim



to be different. It is necessary to explore the relationship between the political discourses and the blame game. Hence further research is recommended to explore the growing political nature of Twitter for blame game and political gains. For future research further data from varied contexts can be collected to uncover the political strategies under the changed situations such as during the national crisis or after that

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