BLOGGING: A GATEWAY TO HYPER FREEDOM FOR PAKISTANI FEMALES

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to reveal how the weblogs, through their multifunctional roles, offer female bloggers a platform to raise their voices and also help them in creating their own world by interrelating their cyber world with others in the same premises. It has focused on presenting the virtual spaces as power blocks where females can enjoy their hyper freedom to liberate themselves from the constraints of the real world i.e. freedom to share opinions, disclose identities, raise voice etc. in the real world. The data for the study has been obtained from four non-diasporic Pakistani female bloggers. Fairclough's (1989) discourse as text was applied to explore and investigate the linguistic content of the weblogs to trace the projection of hyper freedom by Pakistani female bloggers. The results reveal that the selection of themes and the use of vocabulary divulge those aspects of the society which are not overtly discussed. Blogging should be acknowledged as a space which enables the Pakistani females exercise hyper-freedom achieved through discursive linguistic means in the domain of social space.

Keywords: weblogs, Pakistani females, textual analysis, hyper freedom

1. Introduction

Weblogs offer a platform to people where they can freely share their opinions, feelings and emotions and establish and maintain social systems. The quest for unique identity formation and then its projection leads them to exercise hyper freedom which can be achieved by utilizing different social media sites. In this regard, in the present era, people from every sphere of life are interested in creating their own blogs to make themselves a part of virtual world and hence become a part of a new online space which is different from their actual space. Haung (2021) proclaims that people not only present themselves freely on the internet rather they reconstruct their identity to form a new online identity that is sometimes partly and other times completely different from their offline identity.

Weblogs have been a part of the cyber discourse for a considerable period of time and the technology used in their development and expansion is even older than these weblogs. Blogging has developed very gradually and as a social phenomenon it has gained widespread popularity in the last few years. It has turned into a noteworthy cultural and social movement which has not only substituted journalistic field but also provided opportunity for self-publishing (Chapman, 2011). This notion of 'self-publishing' encourages the Pakistani female bloggers to share the content which not only makes them prominent and publishable but also distinct from others.

It is not the technology which differentiates weblogs from other online social websites but it is the authorship which these weblogs shape and the practice they preach which make these weblogs special and distinctive. Blogging is such a practice which demands its author to get connected to the "processes, discourses and communities" (Wrede, 2003, p. 2). Through blog writing, the link between online communities gets increased with every connection made by the author. However, this connection is not only with other bloggers but it also includes intrapersonal connection, the author's connection with the self (ibid). The weblogs differ from other social websites in terms of their production and reception. Belonging to a non-dominant group, Pakistani females face the paradox of freedom i.e. real and unreal, and some of them try to resolve it through blog writing. The selection of vocabulary and themes help female bloggers to produce and exercise their freedom in a virtual world which otherwise may not become possible.

Jones (2011) discusses speed as an important characteristic of internet discourse by referring to Gurak (1997) who takes speed as something which "encourages an oral and casual style, but it also encourages redundant and repetitive postings" (p. 25). This can be true of the posts on Twitter which comes so frequently that at times there seems to be repetition of the same posts and so they become redundant very soon. Blogs, however, seem to be far from this repetition and redundancy as bloggers do not write on the same topic/news again and again rather bloggers try to explore a new topic each time they write a new blog or they extend the previous discussion to expand the interpretative dimensions of the topic.

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Wilson (2005) considers weblogs as a tool for empowerment for those who remain unheard in the society. He specifically talks about females who get the support of other bloggers and society through comments and opinions posted on their blogs. These blogs are mostly in narrative form and reflect the author's personality.

Research Question

This study is an endeavor to get an answer to the following question:

- How does blogging appear to be a gateway to hyper freedom for Pakistani female bloggers?

2. Literature Review

The word 'hyper', as per Oxford dictionary, has been derived from the Greek word 'huper' which means 'over' or 'beyond'. This word has been used quite frequently e.g. hyper-alert, hyperacid, hyperbole, hypercalcemia, hyperemia, hyper-immunize etc. In the world of virtual space this word 'hyper' has a particular connotation. It is used to reflect the link between different things e.g. text to hypertext, link to hyperlink, which emphasize that the text in cyber space is not merely a text but it also interlinks different texts and refers to "extensive cross-referencing" (Oxford Dictionary). Best (1994) uses the word with regard to the digital world as a "hyper-reality" which is "no… social or real world… only a semiotically self-referring 'hyper reality'" (pp. 41-42). This notion of 'hyper-reality' has been employed by Baudrillard too when he asserts that whatever is telecast on television is not real but hyper-real as the actual reality of anything on TV does not exist for its viewers; they do not see the reality on TV rather they see something 'beyond' that reality i.e. hyper-reality (Spracklen, 2015).

Castells (2000) defines 'hypertext' as a medium which links different media together and is a combination of different networks of communication (Spracklen, 2015). So, it indicates that in the virtual world the word 'hyper' has been used to point out something which is beyond its actual reality in the digital world. This research study also investigates how Pakistani female bloggers enjoy hyper-freedom, the freedom which is beyond the freedom in actual world and which is actually a combination of freedom in different spaces i.e. personal and social, offline and online. The linguistic analysis of the blogs adds to the past researches which lack the perspective highlighted through discursive strategies in this study.

The term 'hyper reality', as used by Baudrillard (1994), has a different connotation as compared to the term 'hyper freedom' used in the current research. Baudrillard links his idea of hyper reality with the idea of 'simulacrum' which he considers as something that could, in fact, replace reality with all its embodiments. He refers to this contemporary world as a simulacrum which substitutes reality by proposing false images to the extent that there remains hardly any difference between the real and the imaginary.

Baudrillard (1994) further elaborates this notion by offering three orders of simulation. At the first place he talks about the truth, the actual reality which has a faithful representation but it is artificial e.g. realist paintings, maps. They represent the reality as it is but they are man-made. At the second level this reality exists but the distinction between real and unreal starts blurring as the reality is represented in distorted form; in some situations, the representation actually gets parallel to reality. The third order is the reversed form where the reality has no existence and the representation antecedes the real. In fact, the reality is produced by the representation which Baudrillard refers to as "hyper reality" which does not have any semblance of reality. Baudrillard considers this third level as a dominant way to understand and experience the world. Foucault's (1975) prisons conceal the fact that the society itself has become a prison and the people outside the prison also have no freedom so, there lies no difference between those in prison and those who are out of prison. Baudrillard also refers to Disneyland which hides the facts about real America. This imaginary world is represented to make us believe that the unreal is actually real.

In this contemporary life, according to Baudrillard (1994), this notion of 'hyper reality' can be seen in the virtual world where selves are created and remoulded which are rarely linked to the real world self. He asserts that virtual chat rooms, dialogue groups and the news channels which keep us up-to-date all the time make it evident that in today's world representation is more significant than what is being represented i.e. reality. The present study deviates from this notion of 'hyper reality' while exploring 'hyper freedom' for Pakistani female bloggers as 'hyper freedom' in virtual world is not the freedom which is in conflict with the freedom in real world rather it refers to the freedom which females want to relish in online spaces. This freedom empowers the females to enjoy that liberty which they cannot enjoy in the real life due to political, social or family constraints. This 'hyper freedom' does not distort the freedom in real life rather it strengthens that freedom.

3. Research Methodology

This research has investigated how blogging helps female bloggers construct their own space which can be more real for them (hyper-real) than the real world they all live in. It is more real as it enables them to exercise that

freedom which they cannot feel and exert in the real world i.e. their blogs reflect those hidden aspects of their personalities which they cannot reveal in the real world. For the analysis of blogs, Fairclough's model of textual analysis has been considered and the discourses have been further scrutinized on the basis of themes, topics, stylistics, and vocabulary and text structure (Fairclough, 1989).

The model has scrutinized how the bloggers use blogs as a means to share their personal experiences and raise voices for person specific issues (which may differ from blogger to blogger) which helps them reveal their different identities offering them another world to exercise hyper freedom. Fairclough's 3D model has helped to evaluate the linguistic aspect of the blogs to trace the notion of hyper freedom. Discourse as text analyses the linguistic features of the text and does not incorporate their social and discursive implications in detail; however, they cannot be separated from the analysis.

The blogs have investigated how females use the blogging genre as a means to catharsis, to share whatever comes to their mind without the fear of being misunderstood or judged harshly. The study has also explored how the hyper-freedom generates a counter discourse which empowers Pakistani females against social norms and practices.

3.1. Data Collection

The data for this study was collected from 4 Pakistani female bloggers who were non-diasporic and have been into this field for at least two years and had minimum five published blogs. One blog from each blogger was considered for analysis. In case the bloggers had more than five published blogs, only the most recent blog was selected for this study. The selection of the blogs was not random rather it was purposive. Commentaries and reviews were not included.

3.2. Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to Pakistani non-diasporic female bloggers; however, some other studies may be conducted to compare and contrast the linguistic repertoire and selection of themes between diasporic and non-diasporic Pakistani female bloggers to evaluate how they use language to exert hyper freedom.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

Saba and Anwar (2018) cited Spicker (2007) who believed "where information is public, it is available to researchers without any necessity to obtain individual consent"(p. 253). However, the participants i.e. bloggers were informed through email about this study and their consent was also taken through email. The element of anonymity was respected and the names of the bloggers were not shared at any stage.

4. Data Analysis

Fairclough's 3D model was applied for the analysis of selected blogs; however, only the first part of the model i.e. discourse as text was applied. The study has presented a descriptive analysis i.e. whether the Pakistani female bloggers exert hyper freedom or not. Whether this notion of hyper freedom should be encouraged or discouraged has not been the focus of this study.

- **Like father, like son: The abusive and helpless sons of battered mothers (Blog 01, 30th September, 2018)**

Domestic violence is a common phenomenon in rural and tribal areas of Pakistan where due to illiteracy and lack of awareness of human rights, especially with regard to females, women suffer excessively. At times there are cases of physical torture by husbands and in-laws as they have been projected in short films by Shermeen Obaid namely, *"Face Saving"* and *"A Girl in the River"*. The blog, taken for analysis, is a voice against male chauvinism which is reflected and imposed through domestic violence resulting in grave repercussions not only on the female but also on the children in general. Those kids, whose mothers are battered by their fathers, suffer from psychological impairments leading to abnormality in behaviour and attitude. Being a Clinical Psychologist, the blogger's meeting with a woman who was suffering from depression due to *"long-term abuse at the hands of her husband and in-laws"*, incited her to raise voice for the women, raising awareness in them through the platform of blogging.

The blogger, through this blog, tries to bring to surface an issue which is not much discussed i.e. domestic violence. According to World Report (2018) "Violence against women and girls—including rape, "honour" killings, acid attacks, domestic violence, and forced marriage—remained a serious problem. Pakistani activists estimate that there are about a 1,000 "honour" killings every year". Such violence not only lashes the physical and psychological state of women but also brings grave consequences to their children's psychology.

The blogger particularly shares the effects of battering upon the male kids when they grow up as they mostly follow their father's footsteps. She refers to some young boys who came to her and sought psychotherapy. They were facing psychological issues because they had seen their fathers humiliating and beating their mothers

violently. The feeling of helplessness on the part of male kids and the sufferings of their mothers haunted them to the extent that they decided never to marry. One of the boys got married but he was shocked and felt depressed as he himself did the same with his wife what his father used to do i.e. battering. The blog emphasises the dire need of psychological treatment for the kids of battered mothers especially the males as they carry forward the *"cycle of abuse"*.

Akter and Chindarkar (2019) argue that intimate partner violence (IPV) generates negative impact on mother's vulnerability and "children's human capital" (p. 187). It has significant effects on the cognitive skills of the children which result in negative associations owing to "the mother's poor health and disruption of home environment" (ibid). These effects do not prove to be short-termed rather they have their influence on the whole life span of the children. The blog starts with the image of a child who is trying to close his ears with both hands so that he could not hear his father who tends to *"love batters and humiliates the mother"*. The pain and helplessness on child's face is reflective of his mental state. The intention behind starting the blog with a child's image may be to arouse the feeling of sympathy for the victims i.e. mothers and kids, and the repercussions of battering which affect the innocent minds of children.

The title consists of phrases which convey an incomplete sense; different notions have been put together which are interlinked but do not offer a complete meaning. The blogger does not emphasise the act of battering but the repercussions of battering upon the females and the children while she criticises the male members in the first part of the title. Lexical expressions have the tendency to be foregrounded and the grammatical expressions are backgrounded conventionally. If something is backgrounded it is always with respect to something else that is foregrounded (Boye & Harder, 2012). Battering, here, is ancillary and less important hence backgrounded. The effects of battering on kids are grave, discursively primary hence foregrounded. The title also reflects the theme of the blog and is an open address to all those females and children, especially boys, who suffer from domestic violence one way or the other, directly or indirectly. The blog cannot be generalized directly as it has contextualized a particular group of society i.e. *"battered mothers"*, however, the consequences of such issues do not confine to a particular group rather they affect the whole society. The adjectives used by the blogger i.e. *"abusive and helpless"*, for the sons of battered mothers, reflect the impact of this action upon the children, even after the death of the father, for which the blogger has raised her voice.

"Fathers and husbands… are considered the stronger gender in this patriarchal society" and to have a platform where one can openly share one's feelings against the powerful definitely refers to passage to hyper-freedom. The blogger brings forward those hidden aspects of personality which are consciously or unconsciously moulded by the childhood memories i.e. the children of battered mothers. They *"simply model the behaviours they learned as children… or they become agents of change by identifying with the victim"*. The use of second person pronoun in *"all **you** need is processing your childhood trauma of living"*, makes the reader realize his/ her responsibility as a parent to deal with the child appropriately regarding painful childhood memories. These memories should not only be recalled but courage should also be built up to face them. In this patriarchal society, where to share the issue of battering with the family members is considered a sin, to discuss it on a global platform reflects the notion of hyper-freedom being enjoyed by the blogger which takes her to another world, different from the male-dominating world.

The blogger, at the end, makes her voice realized and takes a stance by using the first person pronoun i.e. *"I request all such men…"*. It is noteworthy that a request is a polite way of asking for something whereas command reflects the giving of orders with authority (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). Moreover, psychologically, the requests have greater impact on others than the commands. Hence in the concluding lines, the word *"request"* reveals that although the blogger criticizes the insane attitude of *"such men"*, she also respects the prestige and status provided to them by the society.

- **'Revenge rapes': Why are Pakistani women constantly paying for the sins of their men?" (Blog 02, 1st April, 2018)**

In a Pakistani society, the news about a rape case is neither shocking nor heart-breaking nor does it make any difference. Not a single day passes without any rape incident making the news. The blog revolves around a particular rape case in Toba Tek Singh and the decision made by the *"punchayat"* [people's court] in this regard. The blogger criticizes the patriarchy in Pakistan which does not considers women as humans but merely bodies or commodities which can be offered for *"rape revenge"*. A 40-year-old woman was ordered to be raped by a 16-year-old boy for the crime of her brother. The blogger raises voice for women since they have to pay for the *"sins of the men in their lives"*. The blogger concludes by suggesting different strategies for *"panchayats"*, for men and for women to make this world acceptable for everyone.

On 20th March, 2018, a man named Wasim Shehzad was charged of raping his neighbour. Instead of taking the case to the court, a *"panchayat"* decided the fate of a woman. Later, ten people were arrested by the police for ordering the rape of the innocent woman for the price of revenge. The news provoked the blogger to challenge the *"violence against women"*.

The title of the blog is a combination title, consisting of two parts divided by a colon. The first part consists of the key words i.e. *"Revenge rapes"*, whereas the second part elaborates the background, victims and perpetrators of *"revenge rape"*. The meaning of the title is conveyed through interpersonal context which is obvious from blogger's sharing of knowledge about the Pakistani women. The action verb *"paying"* in present tense reflects the continuous aspect of the verb, referring to an on-going situation in the country. The title in interrogative form not only needs to be answered but also reveals the whole picture of sufferings and suppression of Pakistani females. It is not a rhetorical question and the blogger demands an answer from all the readers in order to provide support and power to Pakistani females.

From the very beginning of the blog, the blogger tries to maintain a close link with her readers which is evident from her use of contractions e.g. *"I've"*, *"that's"*, *"we're"*, *"I'm"* etc. The blogger, after sharing the rape news, brings forth short questions by using linguistic device of reiteration to enhance the impact of these questions i.e. *"Need a body?"*, *" Need someone to blame?"* and *"Need a scapegoat?"*. The blogger indirectly criticizes the male members who themselves offer their women for revenge by referring to these male members as *"they say"*. Another indirect address is made when the blogger refers to these men in *"take my sister"*, *"take my wife"* and *"take my mother"* which also reveals that these relationships are no more respected by the patriarchy in Pakistan.

In order to condemn patriarchy on a broader level, the blogger uses inclusive 'we'. To criticize patriarchy, she claims that *"we live in a society that thrives off using women"* to link herself with the readers. The sentence *"we say we're trying to change, that we want women to have equal rights"* presents the blogger to be a part of this society which mistreats women and the efforts made by the society to empower women go in vain. The inclusive *"we"* reveals that all women suffer from suppression and misogyny.

The blogger adds a few rhetorical questions in the blog like *"Are women not people?"*, *"Do these words (rape new) make a difference to you?"* and *"Do they make you feel anything at all?"* which do not require answers since the reader knows them however they make a point in the on-going discussion. Everybody knows that women are people and the rape cases are so common that they do not affect the people any more.

In response to the perpetrator's apology to the rape victims, the blogger also includes exclusive "I" when she takes a stance and shares her opinion assertively i.e. *"In my opinion, rape can never be forgiven"*. This assertion in the present tense reflects authoritative tone and the modal verb *"can"* adds to the possibility of the action i.e. *"forgiven"*. The adverb *"never"* not only reflects the negative polarity but also diminishes any chances of possibility.

The *"revenge rape"* and women oppression raise a few more questions which need to be answered i.e. *"Why are we so constantly and so thoroughly failing our women?"*, *"Why are women constantly paying for the sins of the men in their lives?"*. These questions demand answers from the society because the answers will generate awareness among people regarding women status in society.

The blog concludes with a positive message for women i.e. *"Don't give up"* is a direct address to women with implicit 'you'. Through negative polarity, the blogger encourages the oppressed women to continue their struggle for equal rights. *"We can, we have and we will conquer this hurdle as well"* reflects the possibility of achieving something which is already in process. *"As well"* presupposes those many hurdles which the women faced boldly in the past and are motivated to overcome the hurdle of *"revenge rape"* too.

- **When privileged students Snapchat naked poor children for "fun" – because child pornography and poverty is a joke, right? (Blog 03, 23rd October, 2017)**

The blog revolves around a very sensitive issue in a Pakistani society which is not even overtly discussed i.e. *"child pornography"*. The blogger shares a post by a university student who had been to a village for a university assignment and during her visit to village she not only clicked some obscene pictures of the kids but also uploaded them on her Snapchat and Instagram account. The blogger also shares the status of the girl's social media accounts as being open to the public and hence the uploaded pictures could be seen by anyone. Although, the girl received a negative response from the general public, she did not feel ashamed of her wrong deed. She not only justified her action but also regarded her action as a fun-seeking activity. The girl later issued *"a half-hearted apology"* and also changed the privacy settings of her account, restricting it to private contacts only. The blogger criticises the parents and those who defend and support their kids after such heinous activities. The blogger believes

that without etiquettes and humanity, the education alone cannot convert a man into a human being. The blogger insists the parents to invest more on their child's mental health instead of spending money on gadgets.

This online blog is triggered by another social media site where a girl uploaded the pictures of poor kids who were either naked or were asked to *"pose inappropriately with rude hand gestures"*. The girl was on a trip where she decided to have some fun and good time with her friends and the blogger herself acknowledges that the *"details (of the fun) were enough to trigger"* her. Some more pictures also ridiculed the villagers since it was a poor and underdeveloped area. The idea of making fun of the poor and the poverty made the blogger afraid of the future of many kids like her own. The blogger wants to take this issue to the court *"under child pornography and cybercrime"* but owing to insufficient resources she uses blogging as a means to convey her message to the university management to take action against such students.

The title of the blog is more of a comment and less of a traditional title. It begins with a comment on the students' fun-seeking activity and then criticises the act by using irony and ends with a question. It consists of two dependent clauses beginning with *"when"* and *"because"* and does not have any independent or main clause in the title. Moreover, the question also consists of one word only i.e. *"right?"*. The intention may be that the blogger does not want to pass any verdict before sharing the whole incident with her readers and such incomplete thoughts invoke the reader to go through the blog to seek details.

The word *"fun"* is highlighted by the blogger to negate the notion of fun the students claimed to have in clicking and uploading the obscene pictures of the poor kids. The title reflects the theme of the blog i.e. a voice against child pornography and poverty-abuse and seems to be challenging since a female is not supposed to discuss openly such a tabooed topic. The question asked by the blogger is also a rhetorical question and carries a negative response which is understood.

The blog begins with the pictures of poor kids which were uploaded by the girl; however, the faces are blurred by the blogger to hide the identity of the kids. The intention behind sharing the pictures is to attract the attention of the readers to make them feel empathy which the blogger also felt after viewing those graphics. The blog begins like a narration since the blogger shares her routine and the incident she encountered while browsing on internet. The use of exclusive *"I"* in the beginning of the blog presents the blog as an extract from personal diary which is later turned into an open discussion. The blogger invites the reader to be a part of the incident when she addresses them directly *"If you think this is bad, wait till it gets worse"*. This writing style presents blog as a face-to-face interaction where the second person pronoun is used to address each other.

The blogger adopts an apologetic tone i.e. *"I am sorry but this is not…"* when she begins to criticise the university students for their immoral act of clicking the pictures which can be due to the social status of the students who belong to *"wealthy families"* and *"reside in posh areas"* whereas the blogger herself lacks *"the resources to do so to fight these obviously well-off kids"*. However, at times the tone gets harsh especially toward the concluding part of the blog when the blogger uses the metaphor of *"donkey"* for these students who weigh the burden of education but are devoid of *"human decency"*.

The blogger has different audience for her blog and they include firstly, the people of Pakistan and secondly, the parents of those students who involve themselves in inhuman and insane activities. The blogger also addresses them directly when she says, *"I am scared of you, of parents who send their children to these "elite" schools"*. This audience is different from the aforementioned audience to whom the blogger considers sensible and considerate enough to have felt the grave consequences of the incident.

The reiteration of the clause *"I feel scared"* accentuates the responsibility the blogger demands from the parents while rearing up their kids since the negligence not only puts their kids into trouble but others' too because they become the victim of theses elite class students. The blogger criticises the education at elite schools by using the adjective *"fancy education"* and considers it wastage of money since it cannot raise decent human beings.

The blogger does not blame the university since the students were sensible kids and question the *"parenting skills"* which need to be reconsidered to avoid any such incident in future. Blogging generates that heterotopian space for the blogger where she feels free to make the incident *"a part of a larger conversation"*. She cannot file a case against these students, although she wants to, owing to their financial background yet she utilises blogging to spread her voice to the university management and she requests them to take necessary action. It is also worth noticing that the blogger does not blame the university but the schools and the parents.

- **For a nation obsessed with fair and lovely, are we really surprised at #Blackface? (Blog 04, 17th March, 2018)**

The colonial past of Pakistan still has its aftermaths on Pakistani society where people are obsessed with fair complexion and those with dark complexion are considered outcaste and inferior. The blog criticizes the Pakistani society in general and a morning show in particular which promote the liking rather infatuation for white skin. The blog focuses on one of the episodes of *Jago Pakistan Jago* (the morning show) where the white skinned women were converted into blackface ladies and then they were given a bridal makeover. Moreover, the blogger also criticizes the humiliating attitude of the hostess towards make-up artists who participated in bridal make-up competition in that episode owing to the fact that they belonged to lower class.

Morning shows take extra account of their audience to establish a good rapport between their program and the audience who *"live in the my-world"* which determines the style, schedule and setting of these morning shows. *"Daily rhythms and habits of the audience"* help producers regulate the schedule of the program, however the *"viewers' priorities at daybreak"* suggest the styling of the program. The setting of Morning Shows is to create a balance and compatibility between "the world of leisure and home and the outside world of work" (Pantti, 2005 p. 23). Considering these formalities required for a morning show, one of the episodes reflecting racism and classism in society prompted the blogger to share her disliking for the program format.

The title reflects the blogger's disdain towards Pakistani society where fair and lovely complexion is given more importance than a black face. The use of hashtag (#) has become a popular phenomenon, especially in the cyber world where every significant incident is highlighted by the use of # (hashtag), e.g. #MeToo, #khanmeetstrump, #avengersendgame and "*#Blackface"*. The blogger has also adopted this technique to attract the attention of her readers toward a very sensitive issue e.g. complexion. The title consists of two parts: the first part *"For a nation obsessed with fair and lovely"* consists of a phrase which not only highlights the theme under discussion but also determines the reader for the blog. The second part contains a question which is more of a confirmation and less of a question. The word *"really"* in the second part of the title i.e. *"are we really surprised at #Blackface?"* reflects the attitude of society toward black face which does not require interrogation rather confirmation only. There is no action verb in the title which signifies the missing of action and emphasizes the state the women are in. The use of adjective "obsessed" is a hyperbolic expression that reflects (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019) the intensity of how much people think about the white and black complexion.

From the very title the blogger has used "we" to protest collectively against *"racism"* and later against *"classism"*. The opening line of the blog i.e. *"If there is one thing Pakistani TV is good at, it is never failing to surprise audience with how low it can go in its attempt to "entertain"* projects the literary device of irony which refers to "an utterance with a figurative meaning that departs from its literal meaning in one of several standard ways" (Wilson & Sperber, 2012 p. 123). The blogger does not appreciate something good about the TV rather she criticises the extent to which the TV producers can go to *"entertain"* the audience. Here, again the irony is that the TV does not entertain the audience rather it humiliates them.

The blogger first shares her personal experience of a morning show which *"disturbed"* her. Along with the morning show, she also criticises a past campaign by Sana Safinaz which contributed to racism. In that campaign, the black people were used as props which ignited racism (Lodhi, 2018). The blogger also considers the show title *Jaago Pakistan Jaago (wake up Pakistan)* as ironic because instead of awakening people of their unawareness, it seems to be ignorant when *"tackling a very prevalent and disconcerting issue"*. The blogger incorporates the literary device of intertextuality by including Tweets in the same program to support her claim and to minimize the element of subjectivity e.g.

> *"How are some Pakistanis with Sanam Jung on promoting black face on her morning show?... This is racist…"*

(-mahin(@manirhee) March 15, 2018

The blog is a voice against social setup where females are *"meant to be eye candy, divested of intellect"*. The blogger invites the readers in her discussion when she raises different questions e.g. *"why have we restricted women to the circumference of family drama…, Is our media determined…., Would this still be the case…"* and many other. The purpose can be to get support from the readers in raising voice against racism especially when it comes to women's complexion. The blogger realizes that in a Pakistani society the element of racism is deep rooted *"in our colonial past"* however, she has also observed that here, in our society, "*class discrimination accompanies racial discrimination"*. It presupposes that both types of discriminations exist side by side in our society.

The blog appears as a counter narrative to all the fairness campaigns on media in Pakistan which promote fair complexion but pretend to show concern for the dark skin too. The *"shackles"* of beauty standard reveal the intensity of how much the society is obsessed with the notion of fair complexion. The blogger concludes by

suggesting that not only the morning shows halt their fairness campaigns rather they should also encourage women to embrace their skin colour as it is.

5. Discussion

The analysis of the blogs reveals that the use of linguistic devices like reiteration, adjectives, idioms, modality, backgrounding, foregrouding, etc. have been employed by the bloggers to exercise hyper freedom. The use of such devices especially idiom can be due to the contextual use of language where the meaning of idioms is culturally constructed. In this way, the blogs are meant for a specific audience i.e. Pakistani who face the issues raised by the bloggers. The linguistic device of hyperbole also accentuates the nature of issues like harassment, rape, social injustice, racism, etc. to make them prominent. The use of taboo words is more conspicuous because they help the bloggers use language without restrictions enabling them to elucidate their viewpoint. Sometimes, the use of taboo and frequent code-mixing in the above cited blogs seem to eliminate the subjectivity as well. The bloggers, in this section, have used first person pronoun repeatedly either to maintain their viewpoint i.e. the use of 'I', or to strengthen the writer-reader relationship to minimize the severity generated by the criticism i.e. the use of 'we'.

The titles are either two-part or interrogative which are more explanatory than simple titles and justify the bloggers' standpoint. Interrogative titles include the readers in exercising hyper freedom in a world suffused with the social issues faced by the writers and the readers. The deplorable and heinous act of rape is criticised overtly in each society at every platform including Pakistan but the difference lies in the treatment of the rape victims. In a Pakistani society, the rape victims instead of being treated through Cognitive Processing Therapy are treated as sinners and no proper legal and health care is provided to the victims (Khan et al., 2014).

Within the domain of blogging, the use of linguistic devices presents another aspect of virtual world where the females exploit their hyper-freedom to raise voice against multiple issues like child pornography, sexual harassment, male chauvinism and improper parenting. These issues cannot be discussed openly owing to socio-cultural norms; however, the blogging provides the females a floor where they can execute their right to exercise freedom. The hyper-freedom used by the bloggers also helps them in identity formation. They virtually identify themselves with those who are with rape victims, appreciate black face, and stand with many others no matter they are the victims or the ones raising voice against social injustice. The blogs with such daring topics and content help the bloggers in identity formation by exercising hyper freedom. They can identify themselves in a different way, heading towards self-realisation which gives them a new reality, a new identity which is not yet fixed and encourages them to feel free.

The blogs also project a revolutionary activity since it is not easy to expose one's self while choosing and writing on those topics which appear to be controversial and tabooed. Without restricting themselves, the bloggers have tried to create virtual identity which may be similar or different to their real world identity.

Conclusion

Today the blogs share features similar to discussion forums and generate a text-based practice of reciprocal computer-mediated communication, hence reflecting their hybrid nature. It can be concluded that the recent blogs are technically more advanced and developed and are accessible to a wider range of audience. Blogging appears as such a platform which offers Pakistani females an opportunity to explore different horizons of freedom. It not only enables them to share their opinions and feelings but also provides them an opportunity to impart those unsaid things which can never be said otherwise. It can be concluded that blog writing offers Pakistani female bloggers a way to express what they feel and want to share. The expanded and extended use of blogging by Pakistani females not only confirms their increasing popularity but also enhances their diverse uses in future.

Note: This paper has been extracted from Tabassum Saba's PhD thesis entitled "Investigating the Dynamics of Weblogs as Heterotopian Spaces through Discourse Virtual Approach: Identity Formation of Pakistani Female Bloggers".

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