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Logical Fallacies in Tweets: A Case of Pakistani Political Discourse

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative descriptive work anticipates inspiring the users of social media to apply their critical thinking abilities to fairly assess the merits and defects of opinions. The researchers aim to inspire the user of social media to use responsible approach against their debates by pointing out and identifying the fallacies by its type to educate them. Researchers will point out diversity of fallacies with the help of examples. The findings of this study consequently have pedagogical implementations for practical uses to recognize logical fallacies in daily life. The research concludes that current political discussions are merely deceptive. They engage in emotional demagoguery, aggressive language, and personal attacks that have no place in a democracy. A reasonable, humble, and independent climate is needed to be re-established into the political sphere, and most importantly, citizens need to be made aware of these fallacies.

Introduction

A fallacy is a false notion which is an illegal move towards the discourse. The academic writing arguments are basically considered to be a claim, with the possible assumptions or reason to support that argumentative claim. For example, researchers have witnessed that people of Pakistan who considerably conservative states "Tuesday is a bad day to start a positive work/task". There is an argument that is related to superstitious culture regardless of the fact that it is merely another superstition. People use such reasons to support their claim despite of the fact which is altogether different from the fact. For example, the argument for the example mentioned above considered fallacies by a non-superstitious person who was born on Tuesday.

Fallacies are commonly used by politician, law authorities, social, print, and electronic media. Most of the time, these tricks are used in our society without even knowing and commonly knowingly by above mentioned social institutes. And these fallacies are often committed by us on almost daily bases, as fallacies have power to build an illogical statement into logical one that is why they are sometime unobservable. Politicians use them in their debates to manipulate their voters to believe the claim which are allegedly logical as per their political agendas. Researchers aim to recognize the fallacies in political discourse, point out the fallacies as per their types to educate the social media users so that they may avoid indulging themselves in deceitful conversation on social media (Muzaffar, Yaseen. Safdar, 2020). Through this social media user might be saved from the hatred and being misled by the politicians and agenda holders.

Since social media makes information easily accessible and available, they become everyone's favorite. Users of social media sites will be able to engage with others, share their thoughts with them, and exchange and spread persuasive ideas. Social media are helpful

within the teaching and learning procedure. The usage of social media is thought to improve critical thinking abilities because it enables the development of higher order thinking abilities by allowing users to evaluate the reliability of information sources. Numerous existing research on the teaching and learning of the English language point out that many of these studies have not yet addressed the issue of how to develop critical thinking skills.

Most politicians today actively use social media to enhance their public's opinion and relations as well as to amplify political views and preferences. The freedom of expression and creative options have both increased thanks to social media. The use of Twitter by Pakistani politicians is growing steadily, much like it has in other western democracies. They are well conscious of the value of this platform as a prime medium for their message, as evidenced by their active Twitter accounts. A survey revealed that nearly 25% of National Assembly members were communicating with potential voters via social media (Shami, 2017). It has been noted that Pakistani politicians heavily rely on Twitter to distribute any information, engaging the audience in direct conversation. The gatekeepers' function is being diminished as a result of politicians' ability to create and destroy pictures, post anything without applying it to any sort of review or selection, and so on.

This study will help people to avoid fallacious arguments and strengthen their statements. The social media particularly tweets are the best sources for the common people as well as politicians to express their views and thoughts. They also end up being the most important and determining element in settling a certain political issue that is affecting the state. It can be understood using language, which frequently makes false claims, as Hayon (2005) discovered in his study. This study will assist readers in locating and emphasizing logical arguments made in Pakistani political tweets.

Literature Review

Everywhere—in offices, homes, schools, commercials, the media, etc.—people use fallacies in conversations that take place in our daily lives. As a result, the foundation of any comprehensive argumentation theory is fallacy. Given its high ranking, the study of fallacies starts as soon as reasoning and logic take shape. Aristotle as well as the sophists are two examples of those who studied fallacy logically. Others, such as Hamblin (1970), favor a dialectical approach. Fallacy seems to be a pragma-dialectical stance that, in the words of Eemeren & Grootendorst (1999), "derail[s] strategic maneuver." Others, however, take a practical approach to error. Eemeren and van Grootendorst (2004) use a thorough research program made up of several interconnected components to address the complicated issues at hand. Walton noted in 1992 that a fallacy was a process with a beginning and an end that could occur in any situation. According to this strategy, known as the process approach, fallacies are dynamic phenomena that move through various phases in the direction of a shared goal based on the cooperative communicative proposition that governs how judgements are made in the process (Walton). The fallacy process method begins with the objective or the aim. behind a deceptive statement. Walton (2007, p. 159) emphasises this objective and views fallacy as a skillfully crafted persuasive tactic.

According to Houtlosser and Eemeren (1999), a fallacy is not a disadvantage. In order to adequately convey their perspective in this sense, they create a concept known as "strategic maneuvering" that reflects "reality that engaging in contentious discourse always entails standing in at same time out both critical rationality and creative efficacy" (Houtlosser and Eemeren). Houtlosser and Eemeren describe error a "derailment of strategic maneuver where rhetoric takes overwhelming advantage over dialectics or vice versa." According to the present research, fallacies are thought to emerge when a person making the claim has access to effective (rhetorical) tools at the price of logic. Discussion of how efficacy might be raised when rationality is reduced.

According to Walton (1995, p. 25), one of the major flaws in their methodology is that it is difficult to identify fallacies; in other words, there are no set standards for doing so. For this reason, this research chose not to use their methodology. Walton is another academic who consistently maintains the process approach to fallacy (1995, 2007). In his opinion, every error has a beginning and an end in every given situation. As a result, a process approach sees fallacy as an element that moves through various phases in a dynamic manner in an effort to achieve a group goal using only the collaborative conversation postulates that serve as a guide for movement throughout the process.

Fallacy caused by the improper use of argumentation themes is outside the purview of the current study because fallacy in the current study is committed by giving a flawed argument in support of another argument, whereas this is not the case with Walton's argumentation themes (1995).

When it comes to how fallacy is connected to using a plan for making arguments incorrectly, Walton (1995, p. 255) defines it as "an argument that fails to meet some norms of correctness when used in a dialogue context so this, for different reasons, seems to have a semblance of accuracy in that sense and entails a severe obstacle to the realization of the dialogue's goal." Therefore, the Gricean notion of cooperativeness, as stated by Grice (1975), reads as following: "make your contribution as is required by the recognized direction and purpose of the discourse exchange in which you are engaged," as per Walton (1995: 23.)

Material and Methods

The data was thoroughly analysed and described with detailed descriptions in this study, which uses a descriptive and qualitative research methodology.

Target Population

This study is based on the material collected from Twitter post on political and public profiles having political discourse by the researcher itself. Social media has formed a virtual community where groups and profiles are formed on multiple ideas and common interests i.e., religious, political, social, etc., sharing no geographical boundaries. The population for this research is drawn from the online community and includes educated, knowledgeable, career-based, and highly skilled young people. Accounts and profiles of businesses, factories, researchers, musicians, artists, football players, cricket players, and other groups make up the populace.

Sampling

The material for this study is collected from an authentic social media icon i.e., Twitter. The data is taken from the multiple accounts using convenient sampling method and, in this method, population is chosen on the basis of whoever, whatever is available. The non-probability sampling method is used in which each and every member does not have equal chance to be selected. The data collection procedure from social media icon is random and data is collected manually in the form of images and screenshots from the tweets of users. Authentic data is collected for the analysis which is counter verified via self-assessment add Google research.

Theoretical Framework

To identify the different logical fallacies that are used in political discourse, a conceptual framework of Mayfield's logical fallacies is used. Mayfield (2007) attempted to categorize logical fallacies into four major groups: fallacies that manipulate with the use of language, fallacies which manipulate with emotions, fallacies that manipulate through interference, and inductive fallacies.

Taxonomy of Fallacies mentioned by Mayfield

There are more than 300 different types of fallacies, although logical fallacies are said to exist in both quantity and diversity. And among them, the most well-liked and regularly applied one in political discourse is ad hominem, that refers to criticizing private matters. To make it more useful, logical fallacies are categorized in the taxonomy of fallacy and divided into four main groups, including fallacies that manipulate language, emotion, distraction, and inductive fallacies.

The fallacy taxonomy is as follows:

Types of fallacies

Manipulation through language

1. Word Ambiguity
2. Misleading Euphemism
3. Prejudicial Language

Manipulation through emotions

1. Appeal to fear
2. Appeal to pity
3. Appeal to false authority
4. Appeal to bandwagon
5. Appeal to prejudice
     i.   Personal attack
     ii.   Poisoning the well

Manipulation through distraction

1 Red herring
2 Pointing to another wrong
3 Straw man
4 Circular reasoning

Inductive fallacy

1 Hasty generalization
2 Either or fallacy
3 Questionable statistic
4 Inconsistencies and contradictions
5 Loaded questions.
6 False analogy
7 False cause
8 Slippery slope

The fallacy taxonomy is used as a framework method to identify faulty arguments in political discussion that has been recorded and typed out in Table 1. In this subject, it is utilized to decipher false arguments. However, one thing that comes out of this study is that it is not intended to define logical fallacies or find examples of renowned individuals making ridiculous errors. Instead, regardless of how a political figure feels about the subject or how the debate has been conducted as a whole, the research is restricted to erroneous arguments. In other terms, it solely serves to promote awareness of fallacious arguments

found in social media for educational purposes. By addressing the logical fallacies present in arguments posted on social media, it intends to assist users of social media in applying their critical thinking abilities to fairly assess the strengths and weaknesses of arguments.

Results and Discussion

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed with the title of excerpts as follows:

Excerpt 1

The name of the twitter account who commented is Market Pakistan. The title of the account is gender neutral. Market Pakistan is replying to Aaj Kamran Khan. In the above statement Red Herring Fallacy is used. The Red herring fallacies is a style of error that is employed to draw attention away from the main matter being discussed. An unnecessary question is brought into the dialogue for this reason. This fallacy offers an argument that, while it might be true, does not speak to the matter at hand. Mostly, it's an effort to divert attention.

The main focus of the tweet is Shahbaz Sharif's visit to his brother in London, however the commenter is attempting to deflect attention by bringing up the travel of another person to London. So it is considered a red herring fallacy when attention is drawn away from one topic and onto another.
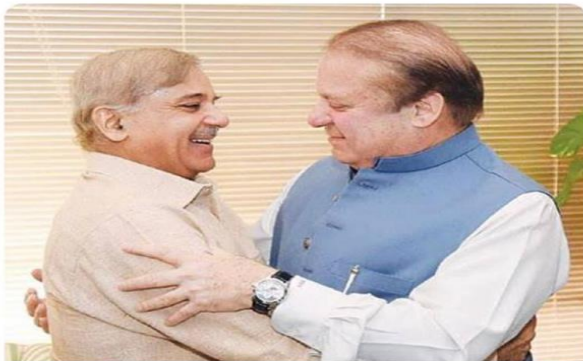
Excerpt 2

The name of the twitter account who commented is Aamir. The title of the account is of Male gender. Aamir is replying to Aaj Kamran Khan. In the above statement Strawman Fallacy is used. When someone uses another person's claim or argument, exaggerates it or distorts it in some way, and then criticises the severe misrepresentation as if it were the original claim to make it refutable, they are using a straw man fallacy.
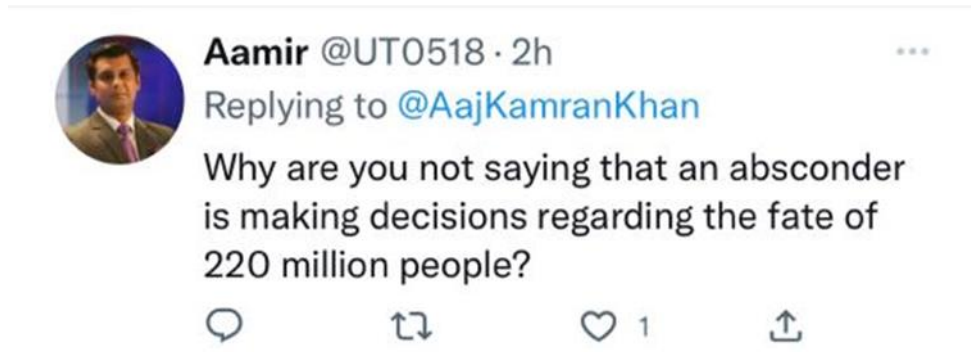
The fundamental point of the tweet is that Nawaz Sharif is the Prime Minister, but the commenter twisted the reasoning to claim that someone who just fled shouldn't have the power to decide the fate of 220 million people.

> **Aamir** @UT0518 · 2h
> Replying to @AajKamranKhan
> Why are you not saying that an absconder is making decisions regarding the fate of 220 million people?
>
> 💬   ↻   ♡ 1   ⬆

Excerpt 3

The name of the twitter account who commented is Fatima. The title of the account is Female gender. Fatima is replying to Hassan Ayub. In the above statement Personal Attack Fallacy is used. The fallacy known as ad hominem, or "against the individual," is also referred to as the personal attack fallacy or the name-calling fallacy. This type of fallacy occurs when the speaker is criticised rather than the case. On the personality or characteristics of the adversary, there is an abusive assault.

This is a personal attack fallacy since Fatima is essentially labelling the other person a hypocrite and doing so by making a judgement about their character.

> **@fatima** @fatima07854... · 21/10/2022
> Replying to @HassanAyub82
>
> حسن ایوب ایک منافق انسان ہو اللہ تم کو تباہ اور برباد کرے ۔۔
>
> 💬   ↻   ♡   ⬆

Excerpt 4

The name of the twitter account who commented is Afsheen. The title of the account is Female gender. Afsheen is replying to Hina Pervaiz Butt. In the above statement Red Herring Fallacy is used. The Red herring fallacies is a style of error that is employed to draw attention away from the main matter being discussed. An unnecessary question is brought into the dialogue for this reason. This fallacy offers an argument that, while it might be true, does not speak to the matter at hand. Mostly, it's an effort to divert attention.

This tweet was mostly about the injustice that occurred with Nawaz Sharif in 2018, but the commenter shifted the focus to a another problem involving Imran Khan and the army.

Excerpt 5

The name of the twitter account who commented is Suleman Khan. The title of the account is Male gender. Suleman Khan is replying to Hina Pervaiz Butt. In the above statement Red Herring Fallacy and Prejudicial language is used. The Red herring fallacies is a style of error that is employed to draw attention away from the main matter being discussed. An unnecessary question is brought into the dialogue for this reason. This fallacy offers an argument that, while it might be true, does not speak to the matter at hand. Mostly, it's an effort to divert attention. As far as prejudicial language is concerned it refers to the use of loaded or emotive words to give a proposition value or moral goodness.

By only replying, "Acha chalo sai ye btao" the person in this case orally turned all focus to another topic on which Imran Khan is under discussion which is identified as Red Herring Fallacy. Then he uses prejudicial language to for Imran Khan as it seems he is emotional towards him.

Excerpt 6

The name of the twitter account who commented is Dr. Sara Idrees. The title of the account is Female gender. Dr. Sara Idrees is replying to Nawaz Sharif MNS. In the above statement Hasty Generalisation Fallacy is used. A hasty generalisation is a fallacious argument where the conclusion reached is not supported logically by adequate or unbiased data. It is often referred to as a faulty generalisation.
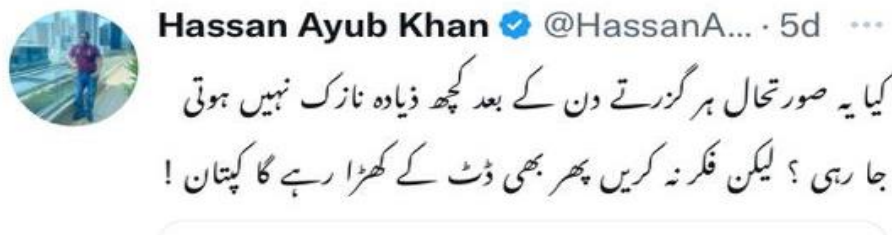
On the grounds of corruption, the suspect believes Nawaz Sharif is to blame for Arshad Sharif's death.

Dr. Sarah Idrees @SarahIdrees7 · 1d   ⋯
Replying to @NawazSharifMNS

Ap ne he qatal krwane ki koshish ki hai mian sahab, Arshad Sahrif ko b apne he marwaya hai, ALLAH apko gharaq kre, sarey zulm ka badla le ameen.

💬 3   🔁 2   ♡ 17   ↥

Excerpt 7

The name of the twitter account who twitted is Hassan Ayub Khan. The title of the account is Male gender. In the above statement Loaded Question Fallacy is used. A loaded question, sometimes known as a "complex question," is a form of logical fallacy—a mistake in logic or a mental trick employed as a debate strategy. The respondent's credibility or reputation could be damaged by this kind of query. As a result, loaded questions are commonly employed in a variety of circumstances as a rhetorical device.

The person is asking a lot of unfair and divisive questions since he doesn't support Imran Khan.

Hassan Ayub Khan ✓ @HassanA... · 5d   ⋯

عمران خان کی دوسری نااہلی کی کب تک توقع کی جا سکتی ہے ؟
ایک نااہلی کے بعد جب دوسری نااہلی ہوگی تو کیا وہ شدید نااہلی کہلائے گی ؟

💬 442   🔁 655   ♡ 2,930   ↥

Hassan Ayub Khan ✓ @HassanA... · 5d   ⋯

کیا یہ صورتحال ہر گزرتے دن کے بعد کچھ ذیادہ نازک نہیں ہوتی جا رہی ؟ لیکن فکر نہ کریں پھر بھی ڈٹ کے کھڑا رہے گا کپتان !

Excerpt 8

The name of the twitter account who commented is Zahra PTI. The title of the account is Female gender. Zahra PTI is replying to Hina Pervaiz Butt. In the above statement Appeal to Fear Fallacy is used. As implied by its name, this kind of fallacy preys on people's fears. This fallacy, in instance, depicts a terrifying future in the event that a particular choice is chosen today.

On the basis of Makafat e Amal and the day of judgement, the individual is attempting to persuade the subsequent person in this.

Excerpt 9

The name of the twitter account who commented is Hira Sindhu. The title of the account is Female gender. Hira Sindhu is replying to Waseem Badami. In the above statement Appeal to Fear Fallacy is used. As implied by its name, this kind of fallacy preys on people's fears. This fallacy, in instance, depicts a terrifying future in the event that a particular choice is chosen today.

By doing this, the person is attempting to instill fear of Allah's suffering in the other person.

Excerpt 10

The name of the twitter account who commented is Benish Mustafa. The title of the account is Female gender. Benish Mustafa is replying to Aaj Kamran Khan. In the above statement Personal Attack Fallacy is usedAd hominem, or "against the individual," is a fallacy that is also referred to as the personal attack fallacy or the name-calling fallacy. This type of fallacy occurs when the speaker is criticised rather than the case. On the personality or characteristics of the adversary, there is an abusive assault. The individual insults him and uses foul language in this argument.

Conclusion

The idea of logical errors in argumentation within political speech is discussed in this document. When used in this context, the word "argument" refers to a discussion between two parties rather than a disagreement. Rather, the argument is a line of reasoning where one or more claims are made in support of another claim or claims. As a result, could be considered that presenting fallacy taxonomy by looking at instances of sentences that contain logical fallacies in the discourse of Pakistani political tweets is a useful step toward closing the gap in knowledge of logic.

The study reveals that current political discussions are merely deceptive. They engage in emotional demagoguery, aggressive language, and personal attacks that have no place in a democracy. A reasonable, respectful, and democratic climate needs to be reestablished into the political sphere, and therefore most importantly, citizens need to be made aware of these fallacies. And mostly commonly type of fallacy which is used is Ad Hominem; personal attack.

Understanding logical fallacies will enable social media users to evaluate others' claims with greater objectivity. Finally, the findings of this study may have pedagogical consequences for possible practical actions to identify logical fallacies in daily life as well as in the teaching and learning of languages. Regarding the teaching elements, students will be made aware of many logical fallacies categories so that they can construct reasonable arguments. The findings lead to the conclusion that instructors should be more concerned with assisting students in developing solid reasoning in their arguments than with merely labelling flawed statements.

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