



DECODING HUMOR AND CULTURE IN PAKISTANI MEMES: A LINGUISTIC AND DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Internet memes have become a central mode of humor and cultural expression in Pakistan, offering multimodal spaces where users share commentary through the brief and replicable content. While memes are widely conceptualized as cultural units circulating through imitation and variation (Dawkins, 1976; Shifman, 2014), their linguistic and discursive functions in Pakistani digital contexts remain underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining how humor is structurally constructed, culturally interpreted, and ideologically circulated in political, cricket-related, and gender-based memes. Drawing on Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humor GVTH, Sharifian's Cultural Linguistics, and Fairclough's Three-Dimensional discourse model, a purposive sample of fifty Facebook memes was analyzed for script oppositions, logical mechanisms, narrative strategies, and language use. Findings show that oppositions such as Normal vs. Abnormal and Expectation vs. Reality, realized through irony, exaggeration, and Urdu-English code-mixing, activate shared cultural schemas and encode layered ideological meanings. The study contributes a triangulated linguistic-discursive model for understanding Pakistani digital humor and highlights how memes function as structured humorous texts, culturally grounded cognitive prompts, and ideologically meaningful artifacts.

Keywords: *Attardo, Cultural Conceptualizations, Discourse Analysis, Fairclough, Humour, Ideology, Pakistani Memes, Sharifian*

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1. Introduction

Internet memes, a form of short, multimodal texts, have become a ubiquitous way of everyday communication in the rapidly growing digital world of Pakistan, where their users are able to express criticism, humor and social commentary. Even in Pakistan, where such apparently simple humorous posts are rooted in profound linguistic, cultural, and ideological frameworks, their meaning will be immediately familiar with the viewer with knowledge of the political events, the culture of cricketing, and gender-related norms. Since memes are modern digital artefacts, their ability to become more dynamic and spread among participatory digital communities makes them useable units of cultural transmission (Shifman, 2014; Dawkins, 1976).

Although they have a massive following and cultural appeal, discursive roles of Pakistani memes are underrepresented. Such platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have changed the political and the cultural discourse in that passive audiences, specifically younger people, have promoted themselves as active participants in the public discourse (Tufekci, 2017). Indirect forms of critique are needed in politically sensitive environments and memes create this space. The distribution of their content as viral, humorous content permits commentary on the governance, social conventions, and institutional authority without the use of conservative media outlets (Milner, 2016). Consequently, Pakistani users are starting to use memes to communicate ideologies, express anger, and commentary on socio-political issues in subtle but effective ways (Rehman, 2021). Nevertheless, these memes are not systematically analysed in terms of their linguistic, cultural and ideological mechanisms.

Although linguistic humor research specifically the General Theory of Verbal Humor formulated by Attardo (1994, 2001) provide instruments to analyze script oppositions, logic effectiveness, narrative techniques and language, such structural theory cannot be used to identify what makes humor so resonant in Pakistan. The model of discourse analysis (3-dimensional) by Fairclough (1992) emphasises the interaction between texts, discursive practises and social practises to create and transmit ideology, whereas Sharifian conceptualization framework of culture (2017) describes shared schemas, cultural categories and cultural metaphors in collective meaning-making. However, a combination of these theories has rarely been used in relation to the Pakistani digital humor. This leaves an understanding gap on how memes in a similar case encode humorous structure, utilize cultural knowledge, and engage with socio-political discourse. The gap is particularly evident in memes related to politics, cricket, and gender domains where irony, exaggeration, and cultural schemas shape audience interpretation but remain understudied.

The current research paper seeks to fill this gap by providing an integrated linguistic, discursive and cultural synthesis in humor in Pakistani memes. A combination of GTVH suggested by Attardo, CDA proposed by Fairclough, and Cultural Linguistics proposed by Sharifian is used to answer these research questions. Attardo describes how the phenomenon of script oppositions, logical processing, the narrative structure, and the choice of language formulates humor in political, cricket, and gender memes. Fairclough assists in raising the topics of how such humorous patterns are formed and how discourse and ideology are produced, whereas Sharifian demonstrates how in common cultural pattern audience can read and negotiate meaning.

2. Research Questions

The present study answers the following questions.

1. What is the role of script oppositions, logical mechanisms, and narrative strategies construct humor in political, cricket, and gender-based Pakistani memes?
2. How do linguistic choices Urdu, English, and Urdu–English code-mixing contribute to humor construction in these memes?
3. How do humorous structures reflect, negotiate, or challenge cultural meanings, social tensions, and ideological positions within Pakistani digital discourse?

3. Literature Review

3.1. Theoretical Framework

This study relies on the three theory-related models that connect to provide an insight into the interaction of humor, language, and culture in Pakistani memes. First, the General Theory of Verbal Humor (1994 and 2001) by Attardo points out a structural framework of interpretation of humor. According to Attardo, humor is organized in terms of six knowledge resources, and these include the script opposition, logical mechanism, narrative strategy, situation, target and language. These resources demonstrate so-called patterned contrasts as normal against abnormal or promise against reality which form a sense of humor created by memes. The oppositions are connected by logical mechanisms irony, exaggeration, analogy and narrative strategies such as two-panel contrasts present them. Individuals or objects that get ridiculed are reflected in the situational and target dimensions, and the language applies linguistic preferences (Urdu, English, or code-mixing) to weave together features of culture. Thus the model by Attardo results in the technical and multimodal architecture of humorous meaning in the memes.

During the building of humor, as has been explained by Attardo, the Critical Discourse Analysis offered by Fairclough (1992, 2001) clarifies the role of humor as a social process. Fairclough conceptualizes the texts as discursive events that are framed by

the linguistic form, practises of circulation and wider ideological frames. It is in this light that the Pakistani memes become places of power, identity and ideology negotiation. Political memes are a way of expressing dissatisfaction with leadership; gender memes replicate or disrupt social conventions; cricket memes create feelings of nationalistic pride, solidarity and fear of uncertainty. The model by Fairclough explains the role of humorous language in the process of ideological naturalization and dispute in the digital publics (KhosraviNik, 2014).

The Cultural Linguistics (2008 and 2017) by Sharifian is the cultural-cognitive layer and since it offers information about the interpretation of the memes by the audience in terms of shared schemas, categories and metaphors of the collective cognition. Cultural schemas used to create memes in Pakistan include corrupt politician, Rishta expectations, izzat and shame or the emotionally sensitive cricketing fan. It is these common conceptual patterns that enable instant decoding of humor and apprehending of the cultural reasoning behind seemingly uncomplicated meme images by the viewers. That is why Sharifian framework can be used to describe the cultural grounding, which renders Pakistani meme humour intelligent and significant.

These three theories combine to create a single perspective in this study. Attardo describes the structural generating process of humor; Fairclough demonstrates the ideological and discursive content of humor and Sharifian why humor makes culturally sense to Pakistani audiences. The modern literature emphasizes their multimodality, intertextuality and remix ability (Shifman, 2014; Milner, 2016; Miltner, 2018; Knobel and Lankshear, 2007; Wiggins, 2019). This combined framework assists in the purpose of the study to explore the interaction of humor, language, and cultural knowledge in digital memes. It is based on this that in the next section, global and regional meme scholarship is reviewed to demonstrate why a structural, cultural and ideological approach has to go hand-in-hand.

Based upon the ideas of imitation put forward by Dawkins (1989) and grounded in a Greek word beginning mime-ma, memes have become multimodal artefacts that are central to digital communication. According to Velikovsky (2014), meaning of the memes is contingent to the collective cultural knowledge, the familiarity of the context, as well as the cognitive alignment expressed by the users, and this implies that to comprehend a meme, a person is required to be part and parcel to the same social world of creation. By doing so, memes are acting as socially relevant discourse encoding what communities know, believe, and laugh at as the same time enforcing and redefining the cultural meanings within the digital public field.

Initial research has explored the aspects of memes as discourse and identity practises. The World Made Meme (2016) by Milner employs discourse analysis to consider the area of participatory culture, whereas Eychaner (2013) uses the linguistic and cognitive humor theory to explain how humor is encoded in memes. Subsequent studies indicate the development of memes into elaborate sociopolitical artefacts based on the progression of the image macros (Nissenbaum and Shifman, 2017; Arnaut, 2024; Mihăilescu, 2024). Research indicates a constant presence of memes that are an amalgamation of humor, satire and political commentary (Godwin et al., 2025; Mortars and Memes, 2023; Bielova, 2023).

In the global and South Asian surroundings, memes serve as identity-forming, affective, and sociopolitical expression instruments (Silvestri, 2020; Makombe & Agbede, 2021; Zeb et al., 2025). The study by Pakistani researchers reveals that memes reflect the frustration of the youth, criticize the institution and discuss gender expectations (Sultana et al., 2023; Ahmad et al., 2024). Research on the subject matter of war and conflict evidences the presence of memes as key to the vernacular resistance, emotional catharsis, and narrative reframing (Mejova et al., 2025; Bukhari and Tariq, 2021; Hussain et al., 2021).

Regardless of all the scholarly effort, there is a general lack of literature that studies how humor is constructed (linguistically), interpreted (culturally), and recirculated (ideologically) as the Pakistani meme culture. In such a way, studies tend to take on either a single framework structural, political, or cultural without bringing in script oppositions, cultural schemas and ideological analysis within a single model. Few studies discuss memes within the context of politics, gender, and cricket, although they are the most discussed in Pakistani society.

The given study addresses these gaps by triangulating the GTVH by Attardo, Cultural Linguistics developed by Sharifian, and CDA developed by Fairclough to decode humor as a linguistic semiotic ideological practice. Through studying memes in the fields of politics, gender and cricket, it provides a robust framework of how comedy is formed, culturally decipherable, and ideologically implicative in the Pakistani online culture. This combination of meme and South Asian discourse studies.

4. Methodology

This paper uses the qualitative research design to explore how humor in the Pakistani memes creates political, cricket-related, and gendered meaning. The qualitative approach is used, since it is not the purpose to measure the memes, but understand the structural, cultural and ideological processes that produce humor. Memes based on humor

is achieved by multimodal interaction of image, text and cultural schemas which require an interpretive framework that transcends mere description.

The data was gathered on facebook, which is the most popular site of meme spreading in Pakistan. The accessibility of Facebook, multimodal, and mass interaction make it appropriate to use in the research of culturally resonant humor. Thugs of Pakistan, Urdu lateefy he lateefy, leegends Memes, Lateefon Ki Dunya and Sarcasmistan were intentionally chosen since all of them regularly post political, cricket-related, and gendered jokes and all of them engage well with their audience, which is a sign of cultural impact.

A purposive sample of 50 memes was gathered during a 9-month timeframe, i.e. January 2024 to October 2025 Only publicly posted memes with an image coupled with text in Urdu, English, or both were selected. The memes were forced to be explicit to any of the three thematic domains. This narrow range of sampling provided analytically rich content that can be interpreted multimodally and culturally to be interpreted and sufficient data to conduct theory-driven analysis.

The three complementary frameworks have been combined to make up the analysis. To code the memes in order to describe humor structure, first Attardo considers the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) and applies it to classify memes in terms of six knowledge resources script opposition, logical mechanism, narrative strategy, target, situations, and language. Secondly, the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) created by Fairclough examines textual characteristics of memes, practices of their circulation and remixing on Facebook, and larger ideological frames on which they function. Third, the Cultural Linguistics by Sharifian perceives the cultural schemas and metaphors through which Pakistani audiences perceive the oppositions like normal and abnormal or promise and reality and connect humor with the common cultural thinking.

It was analyzed using a sequential approach: (1) the GTVH coding of all memes; (2) thematic coding of political, cricket, and gender contents; (3) CDA analysis of ideological positioning; and (4) cultural conceptualization analysis. Such triangulation enhances validity since humor is explored in structural, discursive and cultural ways.

The peer debriefing helped to ensure trustworthiness by refining the interpretations and shallow journaling to deal with researcher bias. Ethical considerations were ensured through the examination of solely available material in the public and exclusion of individual details. It was centered on the cultural and ideological roles of memes and not individuals.

The study has limitations. Even 50 memes are not enough to represent the entire range of Pakistani humor, and if the focus is on Facebook, then there are discourses that may not be included in Facebook. Lack of reception by the audience does not allow much understanding of the interpretation of the memes by the viewers. Nevertheless, the research limitation does not affect the appropriateness of the methodology to the study purpose and offers a strict description of how humor and ideology interact in Pakistani meme culture.

5. Analysis

In this chapter, the theoretical based study of a total of fifty memes gathered in the field of politics, gender and cricket is offered in a unified manner. Analysis of the memes that form humor within linguistic and multimodal structures, as well as how humor structures are based on culturally shared conceptualizations, and how they are involved in ideological processes, are discussed within the Pakistani society. This chapter uses the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) by Attardo (1999), the Cultural Conceptualization Theory by Sharifian (2003, 2017) and the three-dimensional analysis of discourse by Fairclough (1992). All these structures, collectively, demonstrate humor as a linguistic, cultural and ideological practise in line with the larger objective of the dissertation, which is to decode humor and culture among Pakistani digital discourses.

Figure 1



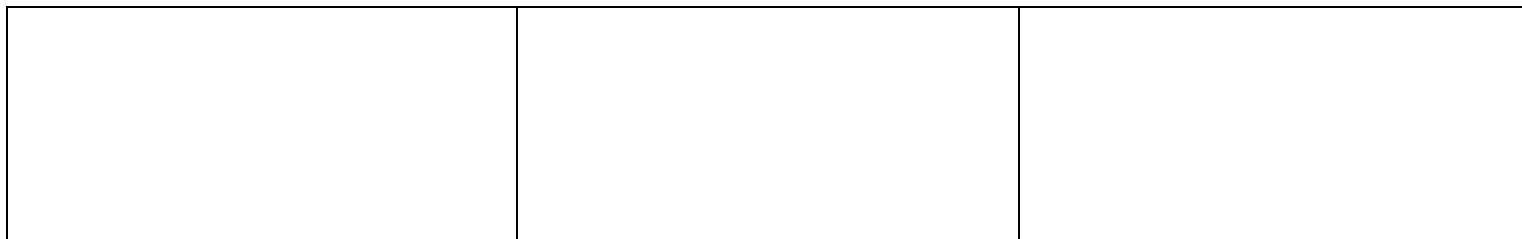


Figure 1 Source: Facebook page.

The pictures give six juxtaposing meme scenes which depend on comparison of image and captioned irony. Cricket memes, e.g. the picture of a Pakistani player being a donkey on a ride, are superimposing the sense of dignity that goes hand in hand with professional athletes. Gender memes of Figure 1 have contrasting high and low social status by using irony whereby the captions such as Women in Public and Women in Court appeals to common cultural beliefs of gender roles. Similarly, Figure 1 is a dog too, but once again symbolizes political supporters by metaphor, playing on visual exaggeration, which is a line of criticism of blind devotion and social hierarchy. The former demonstrates Pakistani athlete at the field with an Urdu text with a joke of what can be really called national respect not the rhetoric but the result, sport performance as the indicator of national pride.

In the second picture, there is a popular political figure of Pakistan with a caption in Urdu indicating a sarcastic questioning of the revolutionary change claims which brings out the reality that has a gap between promises and reality. The third meme employs a side-by-side comparison: an astronaut who went to the moon and only made several photos against a woman who went to the bathroom and made many photos, which is used to produce contrast and humor due to the exaggeration and ordinary social conduct. In combination with these memes visually and textually prefigure irony, exaggeration and expectation against reality. The linguistic construction of humor involves language, the dynamics of its usage, and the interpretation of humor.

5.1. Frequency Summary

Table 1

Script Opposition Across Memes

Script Opposition	Politics	Gender	Cricket	Total
Normal vs. Abnormal	14	9	10	33
Expectation vs. Reality	8	2	7	17

Script Opposition	Politics	Gender	Cricket	Total
High vs. Low	3	8	2	13
Expected vs. Unexpected	2	3	1	6

5.2. Linguistic Construction of Humor

The linguistic construction of humor is connected with language, language dynamics and decoding humor. The General Theory of Verbal Humor by Attardo offers the key to comprehend the construction of humor by means of systematic linguistic and multimodal incongruity by Pakistani memes. In addition to finding script oppositions, this analysis goes further to investigate lexical selections, tone, and multimodal fit in the Language Knowledge Resource by Attardo. The frequency trends indicate that the biggest portion of the dataset is represented by Normal vs. Abnormal (n = 33) and Expectation vs. Reality (n = 17), which demonstrates the origins of humor in the violations of the daily social logics. These contradictions are strengthened by means of indexical language markers, including colloquial Urdu, ironic hyperbole, Urdu-English code-mixing, and so forth, which, put together, create the pragmatic quality of the memes.

Table 2

Logical Mechanisms Across Memes

Logical Mechanism	Politics	Gender	Cricket	Total
Irony	10	5	5	20
Parody	7	3	5	15
Exaggeration	8	8	6	22
Incongruity	5	4	3	12

Fig 1, one of the memes created by the cricketer in Pakistan representing a Pakistani cricketer riding a donkey, applies a Normal vs Abnormal opposition in order to upset the supposed sport-related prestige of the cricketer. The word usage of royal ride provides the ironic uplift, contributing to the point of contrast between the supposed culture of elite cricket and the ridiculous image. Attardo Logical Mechanisms of exaggeration Multimodal salience with the donkey in the centre of the picture with distinct

vectors guiding the eyes increases the visual incongruity. The contrasting storey technique, panel contrast and short sharp Urdu captions create an effect of coherence and humor.

Table 3

Narrative Strategies Across Memes

Narrative Strategy	Politics	Gender	Cricket	Total
Juxtaposition	10	6	7	23
Reversal	6	5	4	15
Analogy	5	3	3	11
Captioned/Visual	8	7	6	21

On the same note, Figure 1 relates to the application of Normal vs. Abnormal and metaphoric analogy in describing political supporters as dogs. The combination of animal imagery and judgemental Urdu phrases connoting an obedient animal responds to come up with an enriched Script Opposition of Attardo by working with culturally charged vocabulary. Juxtaposition (n = 23) is a prevailing narrative effect, because the leader is placed in a superior compositional juxtaposition whereas the dog-like followers seem to be clustered in giving visual unity and ideological directionality. This struggle between the narrative strategy and the Language KR demonstrates that humor should not be viewed as purely visual, but it is supported in the linguistic context by captions used to contextualize the analogy.

Table 4

Language Use Across Memes

Language	Politics	Gender	Cricket	Total
Urdu	12	13	10	35
English	4	1	2	7
Urdu-English Mix	4	1	3	8

The Logical Mechanism of Gender memes including the one in Figure 1 is a High vs. Low opposition which is reinforced by irony. The opposing sheets Women in Public vs. Women in Court are based on the usage of the small and informative language, which indexes the culturally recognized gender roles. The captions contain short, clipped phrases of a judgmental and playful tone. The arrangement of the women in various visual settings

involves multimodal salvage in the values of framing and salience, which empowers the Script Opposition of Attardo through the creation of the contrast being clear at a glance.

5.3. The Conceptualizations of humor in Culture.

The Cultural Conceptualization Theory by Sharifian makes it possible to understand why Pakistani audiences intuitively understand the comedy created by Attardo using oppositions. Whereas in the case of Attardo, structural incongruity is identified, Sharifian describes that humor is only meaningful when it mobilizes culturally mediated schemas that cross-spread throughout a community. The aspects of cultural knowledge are inscribed in cultural schemas, role schema, event schema, and emotion schema that determine the way individuals process a discourse, according to Sharifian (2003, 2011, 2017). Humor is, however, a conceptual act of culture, rather than a textual or a visual phenomenon.

Figure 1 is a political meme that uses humor based on the cultural schemas of patronage, corruption, mistrust, and emotionalized political loyalty that has deep roots in society (Jaspal, 2020; Sharifian, 2017). Once the proponents are represented as dogs, viewers are left to trust a role schema that is historically supported by placing Pakistani political leaders on the dominance role and supporters as mindless followers. This interpretation constitutes distributed cultural cognition, i.e. people have a shared hereditary cultural knowledge that allows people to immediately decode (Sharifian, 2003, 2011). The meme also triggers the emotion plot of frustration, cynicism, and disappointments, which are common elements to Pakistani political discourse (Ahmed and Skoric, 2019). In this way, the framework focused on by Sharifian can explain why the humor of the meme appeals to the audience is resonant as far as the audiences invoke conceptualizations about the images embedded in their culture, rather than the image.

Gender memes such as Figure 1 are based on culturally contextualized interpretation of an identity and performance. In Pakistan, gender relations are embedded in the relative perennial formation of izzat (honour), modesty, emotional denial, and social respectability (Zafar, 2021; Sharifian, 2017). The comparison between Women in Public and Women in Court is made humorous as it fits into a culturally recognized role schema-controlled femininity in the public and expressive behavior during confrontation. The interpretations arouse their emotion schemas that include but are not limited to shame, anger, and pride emotions that are invariably attached to gendered expectations of South Asian system (Khan, 2014). The theory by Sharifian demonstrates that humor in this case is not random, but rather, it is based on a common intellectual knowledge and outlines anticipations of gender action.

Meme figures such as Figure 1 are based on events schema, which Pakistan has in its cricket culture, and where there are periods of hope, anxiety, and disappointment (Malik, 2020). Since the game of cricket is a national identity, the audience has a body cultural schema with which the image of the donkey will be comic at first. Humor relies on the emotion schemas of national pride, ironic acceptance, and repetitive frustration (Ahmed, 2019). These common cultural conceptualizations allow viewers to see and enjoy the exaggeration without an explanation, which exemplifies that Sharifian made a point of showing that the cultural schemas work at the level of the subconscious (Sharifian, 2017).

Overall, the framework created by Sharifian shows that humor in Pakistani memes is generated within the conceptualizations of a specific culture, not necessarily through visual or literary implications. Being activated by the memes, deeply rooted schemas on matters of politics, gender, and cricket make audiences handle the incongruity faster and easily. Through humor, therefore, is a culturally rooted thinking practise and meaning is created via the shared knowledge practises, which Pakistani viewers apply to the meme (Sharifian, 2003, 2017).

5.4. Ideology and Discursive Work.

The three-dimensional model of discourse created by Fairclough offers a rational approach to the knowledge of the Pakistani memes in the ideological production. Fairclough (1992, 1995, 2001, 2003) states that discourse needs to be analyzed in the three interrelated dimensions, including: (1) textual features, (2) discursive practise, and (3) social practise. The use of this model shows that the reproduction, negotiation, and contestation of social meanings in Pakistan takes place through humorous memes, which also have the power of entertainment.

At the textual level, ideological meanings are encoded in memes at the textual level with the application of metaphor, irony, exaggeration, and multimodal composition in order to make them sound amusing and laugh at the surface but with underlying deeper social implications. As an example, Figure 1 concerning political meme is based on metaphorical representation advocates of Fig 1 in the form of dogs which is what Fairclough (1992) refers to as an ideological meaning potential. The meme conceals confrontation by play, a typical tool of digital politics, by incorporating the critique in humor. The image-caption multimodality produces the unity of textual signs that set the political powers as illegitimate or manipulative (Fairclough, 2003).

In discursive practise, the memes are created, distributed, decoded on the platforms of participatory digital spaces like Facebook pages in which people share, remix, and comment content. Fairclough (1995) points out that meaning is constructed in the context of the consumption and distribution; memes do not only have the power of ideology due

to what they represent but also due to how they are dealt with by the audience. The ideological stances regarding leaders, gender roles, and the national sentiments are normalized and constructed through the repetition of political memes and as Fairclough (2001) puts it, into a common-sense ideology. Memes therefore assume a life of their own beyond what they originally created, gathering ideological strength with repetition.

On the social practise level, memes mirror and recreate more general patterns of power and ideology in Pakistani society. Figure 1 is an example of political memes that can serve as a slight criticism of governance, and it has a similar concept to that of Fairclough (1995): discourse is capable of confronting dominant power structures and disclose contradictions and inequalities. Gender memes (Figure 1) unveil each feminine rule as stabilized and challenged by the appeals of humor, which according to Fairclough (2003) is also a part of ideological negotiation. Memes of cricket (Figure 1), in their turn, serve as sources of social cohesion as they strengthen communal emotional discourses associated with the national identity. In all the categories, humor is a discursive resource where social ideologies are expressed, reinforced or opposed.

Overall, the model created by Fairclough proves that Pakistani memes are functioning as the textualized constructions, the participatory discourses, and the ideological practises concurrently. Memes can be analyzed using these three dimensions and by doing so we observe how humorous media and content are being involved in producing the collective consciousness, making critique normative, and spreading cultural common sense (Fairclough, 1992, 2003). This does not make memes just entertainment value but places significant discursive locations where language, power, and ideology collide.

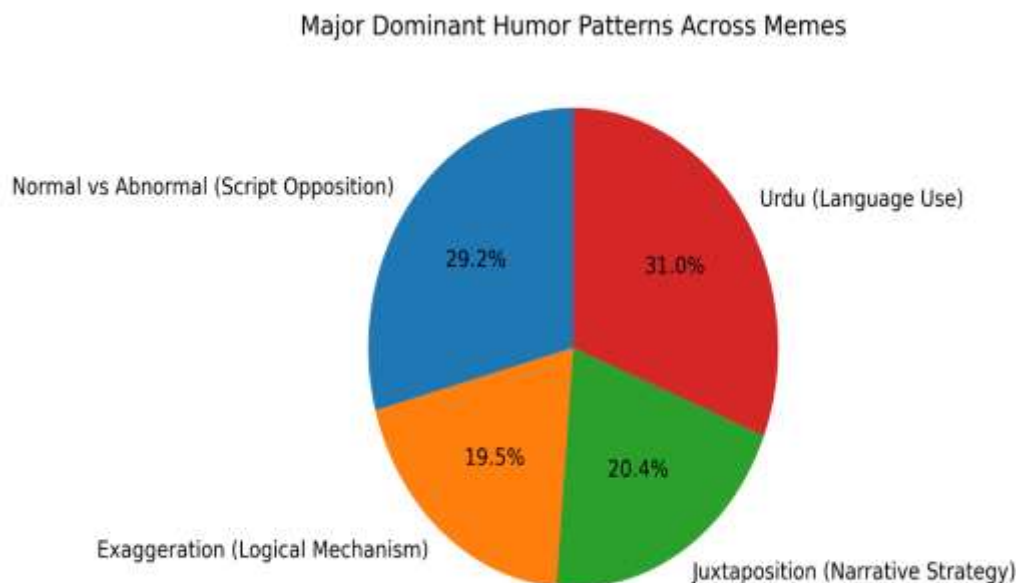


Figure 3

This pie chart demonstrates that the entertainment in Pakistani memes is determined by a strict order of dominating patterns as opposed to arbitrary selection. The most prominent one is the use of Urdu language, which demonstrates that the use of humor is firmly embedded in the domestic linguistic assets and the knowledge spread by the culture, and thus jokes become more direct and socially closer to Pakistanis. Just after this comes the dominance of the Normal vs. Abnormal script opposition that proves that humorous element is the creation of an incongruity on the level of everyday expectations where the normal social conventions are violated to create a laugh. The narrative technique of juxtaposition further supplements this sort of structure, as both the visual as well as textual presentation of the contrasting realities makes juxtaposition side by side, so that the humor comes out almost immediately without any long explanation. Although this has been reduced a bit, exaggeration is also an important constituent that is reinforcing in its ability to exaggerate social weakness, emotions or occurrences, which results in criticism not being confrontational, but amusing. On the whole, the chart shows that Pakistani memes are based on close interrelation between language familiarity, cultural scripts, and visual-narrative differences to create social meaning of humor that is accessible to a wide audience.

6. Discussion

In this paper, the role of Pakistani memes in causing humor and the way the humorous constructions invoke cultural knowledge as they disseminate ideological meanings was discussed. Through the General Theory of Verbal Humor (1999) by Attardo, the Cultural Linguistics (2003, 2017) by Sharifian and the three-dimensional model of conversation discourse (1992, 1995) by Fairclough, the analysis reveals that the emergence of humor in political, gender, and meme about cricket is due to systematic interplay of structured incongruity, sharing of schema across the culture and positioning within the discourse layer in the public sphere. These results are consistent with the overall body of literature that perceives memes not as an insignificant form of entertainment but as a culturally and politically valuable form of communication (Milner, 2016; Shifman, 2014; Wiggins, 2019).

According to the framework presented by Attardo, there are patterns of convergence in the joke that are consistently used to produce humor in the dataset, specifically the script oppositions of the categories of Normal and Abnormal and Expectation and Reality, which was also found in modern humor studies (Bielova, 2023; Eychaner, 2016). Political and cricket memes understand themselves largely in these oppositions to reveal the disparities between idealized stories and lived life. As an illustration, in the cricket meme in Figure 1 the athletic expectations are overstated with a cricketer on a donkey and the political meme in Figure 2 represents the proponents of the act as dogs to break any assumption of rational political action. Gendered humor, in its turn, relies more upon High vs. Low oppositions, which reiterate the hierarchical relations observed in digital gender studies (Sultana et al., 2023). All these oppositions are strengthened with the help of logical strategies without exception exaggeration and irony, multimodal strategies including juxtaposition, reversal, and panel contrast, which are also underlined in the multimodal memes study (Silvestri, 2020; Nissenbaum and Shifman, 2017). Domination of Urdu captions grants them intimacy with their cultures, Urdu-English code-mixing indices urban, digitally fluent and regular to linguistic hybridity in digital communication among South Asians (Ahmad et al., 2024; Zeb et al., 2025).

The framework of cultural conceptualization developed by Sharifian can be used to comprehend the fact that these humorous models find such an easy way into the minds of Pakistani citizens. Memes bring into play commonly shared cultural codes of political mistrust, patriarchal demands, and emotionally volatile cricketing emotions (Sharifian, 2003, 2017). These schemas help the viewers to make reading very quick in comprehending something. In cases when the political leaders are being made ridiculous or when the supporters are animalized as in Figure 2, the comedy builds on common conceptualizations of corruption, patronage, and performative loyalty. Gender memes including Figure 3 are funny since they utilize culturally recognizable schemas of izzat,

affective outlay, and contextual identity acting. Cricket memes trigger national emotional schemas hope, anxiety and disappointment creating visual hyperboles immediately significant. The results support the fact that memes depend on cultural intertextuality and community-shared metaphors in order to be understandable (Knobel and Lankshear, 2007; Shifman, 2014).

The model created by Fairclough proves that after linguistic and cultural de-coding humor, memes are ideological texts. On the textual level, they insert text through irony, metaphor and exaggeration. On the discursive practise level, memes are spread by and within the citizen network where they are shared, tagged, remixed and their impacts are enhanced. An example of this is the political meme represented in Figure 2 where they not only portray the adherents as irrational but make the argument go viral with the use of digital media and strengthen common-sense scepticism of authority. This trend is consistent with the studies that indicate that online political humor softens the disillusionment and criticism of governmental policies among the population (Rehman, 2021; Silvestri, 2020). Gender memes are ideologically ambivalent: some of them reproduce patriarchal stereotypes while others quietly criticize them, which is the reflection of the global trend of gendered jokes as both a source of reinforcement and opposition (Bielova, 2023; Sultana et al., 2023). The memes around cricket work as affective texts that perpetuate the function of national identity and emotional cohesion and, like scholarship that defines digital humor as affective citizenship, it resonates (Mejova et al., 2025; Milner, 2016).

In all these realms, memes serve as discursive means of structuring the understanding of political performance, gender norms, and national emotions among the audience. Humor is used in political memes that go on to negotiate dissent within socially acceptable boundaries, the broader systems of which consist of a subset of vernacular resistance in digital culture (Milner, 2016; Bukhari and Tariq, 2021). Memes and their rapid spreading as Shifman suggest (2014) as complex societal meanings condensed to condense and easily decode forms; this paper demonstrates that Pakistani memes adhere to the same logic, albeit sitting on schemas that are culturally specific and that are full of ideological contradictions.

The three theoretical frameworks are in a sequential chain of interpretation. Attardo recognizes the way humor is structurally constituted; Sharifian describes why these humorous patterns are recognized and identified by the audience; Fairclough shows the way the resulting texts are involved in the reproduction and contestation of ideologies. This consecutive interdependence is among the major contributions of the studies, as it presents a triangulated approach that encompasses humor as a linguistic, cultural, and

ideological practise all at once as a method never used to analyze memes of Pakistani people.

Like any qualitative study, this work has limitations. The sample is also restricted to Facebook memes, and it lacks audience reception which might also make the interpretation richer. Further studies are needed to understand platform-specific humor, multimodal narrative transition on Tik Tok or Instagram Reels, and how dissimilar groups of individuals perceive digital humor.

All in all, this work proves that Pakistani memes can be considered organized funny texts, culturally conditioned cognitive stimuli, and ideologically significant online visual images. The study provides contribution to discourse studies, humor linguistics and South Asian media studies by exposing the way humor spreads cultural information and by the way humor sets up social criticism. It emphasizes the significance of memes as dynamic forms of mass representation, which influences the perception of culture, social orientation, and ideological bargaining in the dynamically shifting digital world of Pakistan.

7. Conclusion

This paper discussed the intersection points of humor, culture, and ideology in Pakistani meme through the combination of Attardo GTVH, Sharifian Cultural Linguistics and Fairclough CDA. The review indicates that humor in political, gender and cricket memes is created systematically as a result of repetitive script oppositions especially that of Normality and Abnormality as well as Expectation and Reality backed by logical processes like exaggeration and irony. These comic frameworks emerge as intelligible motivating the reason they induce the Pakistani cultural schemas, such as political suspicion, gendered anticipations, and emotional depth in cricket, which are shared on the broadest scale. After interpretation, memes can serve as ideological text that naturalizes political disbelief, bargains with patriarchy, and strengthens nationalism.

The interdisciplinary synthesis approach illustrates that memes are not shallow Internet products, they are rather multimodal cultural artefacts which compress social meaning into funny and easily understandable forms. The triangulated model adds to the scholarly work in international memes by being one of only a handful of studies to address Pakistani digital humor with an integrated linguistic, cultural, and ideological perspective and add another viewpoint to the discourse studies traditionally focused on the Western world.

The analysis confines itself to Facebook memes and omits asking the audience to be received, which opens possibilities of future research on the cross-platform cultures of

memes and interpretative diversity. However, the results also indicate the fact that humor is becoming increasingly popular in the development of political perception, gender communication, and the sense of nation in the Pakistani digital environment.

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