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Representation Through Interdiscursive References: A systemic Functional (Re)Construction of Malala Yousufzai's Identity on Pakistani Social Media

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Abstract

This article focuses on the way the identity of a particular person is (re)constructed by different groups of a society. For this purpose, this article takes the case study of Malala Yousafzai and discusses how her identity is (re)constructed and (mis)represented by different groups on Pakistani social media through particular discursive choices. For this purpose, it particularly focuses on interdiscursivity, and integrates it with systemic functional representation. The social media users construct Malala Yousafzai's identity in such a way that the past events of her life are constantly (re)echoed and foregrounded in order to interpret her identity at present. Moreover, the past events of her life are recontextualized through implicit and explicit interdiscursive references.

Keywords: Discourse, social media, Halliday, Fairclough, identity

1. Preliminary considerations

This article provides a systemic functional account, building on theoretical concepts of 'interdiscursivity' to analyze the representation of the Pakistani Nobel laureate, Malala Yousufzai on Pakistani social media. It is argued that discourses largely build on (mis)representation(s) and (re)constructions to create ontological (anti)realities. This fact (re)echoes that the notion of 'discourse' encompasses a range of theoretical concepts and, thus, reveals its reliance on multiple epistemic/historical traditions and cultural continuity (Hall, 1997; Foucault, 1980, 1972). As this article deals with the connection between past and present discourses [related to identity

(re)construction of a particular individual], the foregrounding of interdiscursivity (as complementary elements of the text) seems inevitable. Interdiscursivity (employed as a strategic tool for linguistic representations of certain ideas) is (re)echoed in the concept of resemanticization which makes an attempt to investigate the way a discourse (re)uses prior discourses and move across certain social practices. As Malala related social media discussion provide commentaries on some of the past events in her life; namely her survival after being shot by a Taliban gunman in October 2012 (Profile: Malala Yousufzai, 2014) and her subsequent rise to fame etc., the investigation of interdiscursivity (the relationship between past and present discourses) makes much sense.

Overall, Malala related discourse paradigm either bears references to Mr. Yousufzai's (Malala Yousufzai's father) alleged link-ups with the CIA, or relates previous incidences of Yousufzai's family life to national responsibility and patriotism, thus doubting the authenticity of the terror attack in which Malala was shot. One of the aims of this article, therefore, is to look at the role that discursive references play in the construction of polemic identification practices of a society. While determining such identification practices [which (re)constructs and projects an individual and group's image in public discourse], it has been observed that interdiscursive references play a very important role. The interdiscursive references reveal the semiotic affordances of the texts' 'metafunction' (Halliday and Matthiessen 2014) at all three levels (i.e. ideational, interpersonal and textual) of meaning making. In the context of this particular article, interdiscursive references assist in tracing how various discourses about Malala Yousufzai move across Pakistani discursive space. Such discourses employ certain linguistic modes which carry the effect of historical continuity and dominant epistemic order (thus enriching the meaning of the texts under investigation).

2. Social media , intertextuality and interdiscursivity

It is argued that Pakistani social media discourse attempts to legitimize certain propositions via (both) direct quoting/paraphrasing; and indirect presupposition, assumption and negation. Fairclough (1992b) labels such strategies as direct and indirect forms of intertextuality. Such textual conventions could be a result of both conscious or unconscious associations and 'accidental associations' (Irwin, 2004, p. 240) between the texts. Scollon (1998) also uses the same term 'intertextuality' to label such associations. In addition to this, he also uses the term 'polyvocality' for these textual associations. Intertextuality or polyvocality, according to Scollon (1998), is

closely related to ‘interdiscursivity’ which operates above the level of sentence. Interdiscursivity is “created when genres, situations, registers, social practices or communities of practice are appropriated in a text” (Oostendrop, 2015, p. 40).

Broadly speaking, the main argument of this article is that the information presented on social media is opinionated. Against this backdrop, the concept of interdiscursivity seems quite relevant as it explains way meaning-making shifts from context to context, from practice to practice, or from one stage of practice to the next. Furthermore, it is argued that a systemic functional (SFL) approach is a powerful tool of analysis as it has the potential to underscore a myriad of facets of representation (i.e. historical, intertextual, interdiscursive).

On Pakistani social media, interdiscursivity could be used in a number of ways across the textual, interpersonal and ideational metafunctions: Interpersonal metafunction are, for example, rendered literally in mode choice and textual metafunction can complement a certain mode choice with foregrounding of a marked interpersonal theme. It is proposed that such metafunctional intertextual play can be used as a way of bonding with the ideational paradigm of the readers and creating a sense of community.

3. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The analytical framework for this particular study is divided into two levels: the level of macrostructure (i.e. thematic analysis) and the level of microstructure (i.e. lexico-grammatical analysis). This two-level analysis draws upon CDA (Fairclough, 1992a, 1992b, 1995a, 1995b, 2001; Wojtkdak and Reisigl, 2001; van Leeuwen, 2008) because CDA allows movement between macrostructures and microstructures easily, thus making the framework dynamic and accommodating. Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) as developed by Fairclough (2003, 2001, 2000, and 1992) has garnered a great deal of attention both positive and negative since its emergence. CDA has inspired a flurry of scholarly activity: some proudly bear the label critical (e.g. Caldas- Coulthard & Coulthard, 1996), there are some others who attack its overtly political foundations (Schegloff, 1997). Among different approaches to CDA, five common features can be identified. These features which make it possible to categorize the approaches belonging to the same movement (see Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 271).

- i. The social and cultural processes are partly discursive in character
- ii. Discourse is both constitutive and constituted
- iii. Discourse is empirically analyzed within its social context

iv. Discourse functions ideologically

Fairclough (1995) defines CDA as an approach which seeks to investigate systematically [o]ften opaque relationships of causality and indetermination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts and (b) broader social and cultural structures, relations and processes [...] how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power [...] how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. (Fairclough, 1995, p. 132.)

The definition clearly shows that CDA believes that social events/practices and texts are manifestation of opaque relationship between ideology and power. The opacity of these relationships ensures the hegemony and establishes the institutionalized power relations.

For the analysis of microstructures, this study prefers the labels of Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) (Halliday, 1984; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014).

Halliday's (1984) Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) is based on functions of language in a context. Although the focus is on the syntactic structure of language, SFL takes the function of language as a key principle. So, the questions like 'what language does', and 'how it does it' make the crux of SFL theory. It is a groundbreaking idea because other approaches to syntax give preference to structural elements of a language. Context is a key to the understanding SFL. Another important concept is 'stratification' which suggests that the language is analyzed in terms of four strata:

- a. Context,
- b. Semantics,
- c. Lexico-Grammar and
- d. Phonology-Graphology

The first stratum 'context' concerns three components: Field (what is going on), Tenor (who is involved) and Mode (how is it going on?). The second stratum 'semantics' is grounded in 'pragmatics' and is divided into three components:

- Ideological semantics (concerns the nature of the propositions made in language);
- Interpersonal semantics (concerns with the language in social interaction and modes of expressions etc.);
- Textual Semantics (concerns organization of the text, e.g., theme-structure, given / new

information).

The third component lexico-grammar is all about syntactic organization of words in utterances. Even here, a functional approach is taken and lexicogrammar is analyzed in terms of three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual (See Halliday 1994). The definitions of related SFL terms will be provided in the analysis section.

Now let us have a brief overview of the relationship between CDA and SFL. According to Matthiessen (2012, p. 443) the relationship between CDA and SFL is historical because many theorists have been using SFL approach to do a CDA research (see Young & Harrison, 2004) since long. From the point of view of SFL, CDA is one of a number of specialized or special-purpose kinds of discourse analysis. The “critical” aspect of CDA can be located within applicable and socially accountable strands of linguistics studies (Matthiessen, 2012, p. 443). According to SFL practitioners (e.g. Matthiessen, 2012, p. 443), CDA can be characterized alongside other types of discourse analysis in terms of the semiotic environment in which discourses operate. The said semiotic environment refers to three parameters of context identified in SFL, i.e. field, tenor and mode. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Here *field* refers to context and nature of activity; *tenor* stands for roles and relationship of the participants of a communication activity and *mode* denotes the role language or any other semiotic systems plays in a given context. According to Matthiessen (2012), CDA is more focused on tenor, on complementary aspects of relationship of communication participants in different social situations. To address the challenge of relating microcategories to macrocategories, Fairclough (1992a, p. 71-73) proposed a “social theory of discourse”. This theory involves a “three-dimensional conception of discourse” involving text, discursive practice and social practice, each of which is informed by a distinct analytical tradition. This conceptualization in Fairclough’s more recent accounts of CDA (Fairclough, 2001; 2003) brings it closer to SFL.

4. Discursive construction of identity on social media

Studies that investigate the discursive construction of identities on social media have largely focused on the construction of particular communities and on the performance of identities as discursively ‘produced, reproduced, transformed and destructed (see Seargeant & Tagg, 2014). Contrary to the majority of studies on identity construction on the (social)media (Levo-Henriksson, 2007; Wodak et al. 1999; Hsu, 2014), this article focuses on an individual, not a group. The social media interactions project public figures such as politicians and celebrities as constructed beings

crafted out of words and characterization of the text producers. In other words, famous personalities are discursively constructed by the social media users defining who they are, how they are perceived and represented by the majority of a community, and whether they are considered the representatives of a society and nation. A public figure or famous personality is perceived and subsequently represented according to manipulated (and manipulating) rhetoric and mainstream evaluative narratives. In other words, the mainstream narratives construct the identities of famous people and make the audience interpret and subsequently (re)construct these identities in similar ways.

5. Malala Yousafzai: a brief introduction

For the purpose of this article, the construction of the identity of one particular newsmaker, the first ever Pakistani Nobel Peace Prize winner, Malala Yousufzai, is in focus. Malala Yousafzai is a well-known personality in Pakistan (the 17-year-old became the youngest ever Nobel Peace Prize winner in 2014), but a lot of controversy surrounds the way in which she is depicted/represented on Pakistani social media or in public discourses in general. A number of socio-political and socio-historical events shaped and constructed the perception and interpretation of the terror attack on Malala Yousafzai as a significant event. First and foremost, as a young school girl, Malala Yousafzai is generally recognized as a common Pakistani citizen. A significant majority of Pakistanis is unable to understand why she got international recognition all of a sudden. She comes from the Swat Valley in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of northwest Pakistan, where the local Taliban (in January 2009) banned girls from attending school. Malala Yousafzai first came to public attention through her diary, published on BBC Urdu which chronicled her desire for girls to have the chance to be educated. On October 9, 2012 she was shot by a Taliban gunman but she survived the attack and rose to international fame. There has been continued reporting on her for a period of time, even before she published her autobiography and won the Nobel Prize. What makes Malala Yousafzai a controversial figure is that her autobiography *I Am Malala* has been construed as a negative representation of Islam and Pakistan by a section of Pakistani media. A section of Pakistani society—influenced by such campaign—considers Malala anti-Pakistan and anti-Islam, and therefore her Nobel Peace Prize a conspiracy against Pakistan and Islam.

Taking all these criteria into consideration, one Facebook discussion from a prominent Pakistani journalist, Ansar Abbasi's page was selected and analyzed for this study.

. The selected Facebook page was initiated when Malala Yousafzai got Nobel Peace Prize on

October 10, 2014. The discussion on this page is rich in content; and covers a variety of voices (of sympathy, apathy and ambivalence over the terror attack on Malala) for and against Malala Yousafzai. Furthermore, this thread resonates with the debate over Malala as a representative of Pakistan and Islam; and, therefore, provides a glimpse into the discursive set-up of Pakistani society. Given this context, the following procedure was used as the comments were reviewed:

- (1) *Identifying relevant texts* by examining a range of discussions on the social media about Malala Youfsafzai
- (2) *Text selection* according to explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria and;
- (3) *Discursively analyzing the data for themes.*

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were:

- Those written in English;
- Posts that represent socio-political discourses in relation to Malala Yousafzai and;
- Those related to positive and negative representation of Malala Yousufzai

At this point, it must be mentioned that the analysis in this section is based on 545 comments posted on the selected page comprising 1005 ranking clauses and 9452 words.

6. Analysis

This analysis explores discourse as a network which keeps (re)echoing past and present discourses interpreting them as a resource organized in terms of a number of dimensions, i.e. social, historical, cultural and political etc. According to Ghadessy (1999: 130), “Halliday’s dictum that ‘text is the process of meaning’ must guide our methodology for making or breaking the text”. It is generally believed that the textual metafunction plays a less active role in the process of meaning making (Ghadessy 1999: 130). The textual metafunction is about the verbal world, especially the flow of information in a text, and is concerned with clause as message. In this study, it was observed that it is actually textual metafunction which plays the most significant role in the discursive construction of meaning. The intertextuality and interdiscursivity which actually provide the discursive space to the interpretative practices are incorporated into the texture of the discourse through the textual metafunction. The following comment (C.1, here C stands for comment) and many others prove this proposition:

C.1 So politics win again!

The textual metafunction of systemic functional linguistics regards elements placed at the beginning of a clause as ‘given information’, with which the text recipients are already familiar,

while elements placed on the right are regarded as new information. This is known as thematic structure of the clause which gives the clause its character as a message. It could be assumed that, in an order of discourse, the clause has the character of message transmission. The clause, in this way, assumes some form of organization which gives it the status of a communicative event (Halliday, 1985). The message or meaning of the communication event is organized by assigning a special status to different parts of the clause (i.e. theme, the starting point of clause and rheme, the point of departure after starting point). Thus, the starting point (i.e. theme: 'So politics') of the above given comment (see C.1) is responsible for providing the discursive space to ongoing communication event. It is the adjunct 'so' which embeds interdiscursivity in this single clause and makes it a representative of the mindset of a section of Pakistani society. By choosing a continuative starting point, the commenter connects Malala Yousafzi related discourse to already existing discourses. An indirect form of interdiscursivity is detectable in the lexical item 'politics'. In order to make an implicit connection to anti-Malala discourse(s), the text recipients need to evoke the prevalent epistemic and discursive space of Pakistani society. Firstly, word 'politics', seems to have negative connotation in this particular context. Secondly, there is lack of agency in this particular comment. There must be someone who is politicizing Malala's achievements. Hiding the agent makes reader keep guessing who the agent is. At the same time, it serves to shift the focus from Malala's achievements to some powerful agent, who are more significant than Malala's achievements.

One popular narrative in the selected comments is that Malala Yousafzai's book and her life represents Islam as an oppressive code of life which does not allow women's rights and education. It is evident from the fact that 49.5% of the selected comments express doubts and serious misgivings about Malala's achievement. By connecting her achievements (through adjunct 'so') to discourses of politics and manipulation, her patriotism is doubted and her national and religious identity is questioned. This is only one instance. There are dozens of instances like this, where conjunctions and continuatives lead to interdiscursive ties between the existing and prior texts. The same could be observed in the following instances where 'but' and 'so' serve to point to previous (anti-malala) discourses :

- C.2 Initially I respected Malala for her courage, but, later she represented political preferences of west.
- C.3 So its like, be a West's puppet and you get everything..... She never made

single real effort Malala for peace.

For these types of conjunctions to be successfully employed and interpreted, the text recipients need to be aware of Pakistan's political history and religious ideology. This kind of argumentation is not limited to the anti-Malala segment of the society. The pro-Malala segment also resorts to a similar style of argumentation. They also use similar argumentation structure, which bring different discourses together in a particular comment showing how textual metafunction creates discourse and serves as a binding factor between texts and discourses. Example C.4 given below is one such comment where the commenter is criticizing Ansar Abbasi, the journalist who has overt right wing ideology:

C.4 Pakistan is a cruel place for minorities and women. Its not heresay but a fact.... But then, the best part, you want the world and us Pakistanis to believe we are some holy pure nation with "Islam" as our banner. We are a disgrace to not just Islam but civil society Then to add insult to injury, your kind (Ansari) want us to believe that all of the above is less important or is there because of drone strikes. So lets go curse America and burn a flag because you know that will fix everything.

Here once again it could be observed that the adjuncts: conjunctions serve to deconstruct conservative discourses and some popular political narratives of Pakistan.

All the themes underlined in the above given examples are textual conjunctive themes which unsurprisingly emerge out to be the most dominant theme choice in the selected data (see Table 1: Here Pro- stands for pro-Malala comments and Anti- stands for Anti Malala comments). Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 79) state that theme play no part in the experiential meaning of the clause. But, obviously, they do play a part in order to refer to discursive space outside the realm of a given text. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 81) also talk about 'discourse adjunct' which are [textual] conjunctive adjuncts and realized by adverbial groups or prepositional phrases. They relate the clauses to create the discourse and cover roughly the same semantic space as conjunctions. But the Table 1 indicates that Pakistani social media users do not use 'discourse adjuncts' very frequently and find simple 'conjunctions' more convenient linguistic tool to send their messages across.

Table 1: Theme analysis

Themes	Sub-categories of themes	Overall %	Pro- %	Anti- %
Textual	Conjunctions	14	10	4
	Conjunctive	1.4	1	0.4
	Adjuncts			
Interpersonal	Vocatives	1.2	1	0.2
	Modal Adjuncts	3.5	2	1.7
	Finite Elements	2.75	1.2	1.5
	WH-question words	7	3	4
Topical	Processes	5	3	2
	Circumstances	6	3	3

Table 1 shows that ‘conjunction’ is the dominant theme choice of Pakistani social media users. This preference for simple conjunctions could be attributed to the influence of L1 on L2 and hypothetical lack of discourse conjuncts in L1. Whatever the reason for Pakistani social media discourse’s lack of preference for discourse adjuncts, conjunctions by connecting different texts and discourses through both internal and external references, place Malala Yousafzai’s terror attack and her subsequent achievements within the discursive space of religious and patriotic fervor for the country. The effect of placing the text in that specific discursive space is that the text becomes interdiscursively linked to previous occurrences in the country’s history related to the rise of sectarian violence and militancy during cold war era and Pakistan’s involvements in the creation of mujahidin.

The similarity between the thematic preferences between anti-Malala and pro-Malala is evident in almost all the categories: all categories being equally not much frequently exploited especially in terms of interpersonal themes and circumstances.(see Table 1). The difference of opinion is foregrounded through the use of the ‘textual theme: conjunctions’ and ‘topical theme: processes, i.e. verb in traditional grammar’. Generally, the processes emerge as ‘theme’ in imperative clauses. Once again with the use of imperatives, the text producers tend to exercise power and authority over their adversaries and text recipients in another context. Thus the construction of a positive

identity of Malala is achieved with relatively more vigor and authority (as it is apparent in slightly higher frequency of ‘process theme’) as compared to negative identity. For example, let us have a look at C.5 and C.6 below:

C.5 Brace yourselves: haters will be here soon.

C.6 Stop being insecure and paranoid.

In these comments (i.e. C.5 and C.6) the processes ‘brace’ and ‘stop’ are foregrounded as themes to add weight and force to the arguments. Comment C.5 is a sort of caution to Malala and pro-Malala sections of the society. The text producer tells like-minded people that they should be ready to face the hatred and harsh criticism of the opponents and the critics of Malala. Similarly C.6 is an order to people with anti-Malala sentiment to stop spreading negativity and hatred. This type of lexico-grammatical features establishes that anti-Malala and pro- Malala sentiments are linguistically represented as almost the same, but not exactly the same. According to Halliday (1985), it is structure as a whole or configuration which construes or realizes the meaning. The interdependent strands of meaning which three metafunctions form thus constitute the order of discourse. Each of the three metafunction is therefore held to be reflected in structure/function which subsequently leads to the configuration of discourse.

The order of discourse in a discursive space can make sense only if its ideational and interpersonal metafunctions are understood: the way they link-up and perform two general functions of any semiotic system. Ideational, comprises both experiential and logical meanings (creation) of text / clause as experience (experiential meaning) and sequences of experiences (logical meaning)), interpersonal (creation of text / clause as an exchange) (Caffarel-Cayron, 2009, p.11). Ideational meaning is located in the processes (i.e. what is goings-on) involving happening, doing, sensing, meaning, being, and existing. These processes constitute transitivity system of language. Thus, transitivity explores how language construes our experience around the world. Table 2 shows the transitivity analysis of the data.

Table 2: Transitivity analysis

Clause Types	Overall %	Pro- Malala %	Anti-Malala %
Material (doing)	55	20	25
Mental (sensing)	14	8	6
Behavioral	1	0.5	0.7

(behaving)				
Verbal (saying)		10	4	6
Existential		1	0.75	0.6
(existing)				
Relational (being)	Attributive	15	12	3
	Identifying	1	0.75	0.5
	Possessive	2	2	0.6

Table 2 shows that the pro-Malala group on Pakistani social media comes up with more relational clauses identifying Malala’s positive attributes and values, while the anti-Malala group (with fewer number of relational clauses) seems to lack the arguments. The relational-attributive clause, thus, establishes a discrepancy between the opposite groups’ ideological standpoint and serves to make the text recipients compare the polemic arguments. Then, there is also enough similarity in the arguments of the opposite groups (see Table 2, the rest of the categories other than relational attributive-clauses) to make it hard for the laypersons to judge Malala categorically either as an aberrant or as an ideal being. Some of the arguments from both the groups are reproduced here (the attributes are underlined):

- C.7 it must be very agonizing for Pakistani pseudo-intellectuals, who think that they are all-knowing !
- C.8 Malala is a shining beacon and source of immense pride for all Pakistanis wherever they are...
- C.9 thank God that there are some men left in Pakistan like Ansar Abbasi,, who are having insight of Jewish plans and have courage to speak too
- C.10 She's just an innocent girl being used for political reasons.
- C.11 its a planned drama...
- C.12 MALALA incident is the major DRAMA of CENTURY.

In the above-given comments (from C.7 to C.10) two opposite identification paradigms could be observed. The term ‘identification paradigm’ refers to a complex web of identity markers which is available to every individual in a given *intercontextual* setting. On the one hand there are people who consider Malala “a shining beacon and source of immense pride for all Pakistanis” (see C.8). On the other hand there are people who see some conspiracy going on in the whole chain of the

events and consider the terrorist attack on Malala a “drama” (see C.11). Such opposite stance(s) on Malala’s achievement seem connected through both internal and external references (i.e. patriotic discourse and discourse of appreciation etc.) at times.

Then, there are some other occasions where people’s comments seem disconnected because they place Malala’s experiences within competing discursive space(s) (i.e. ‘approval and celebration’ vs. ‘suspicion and conspiracy theories’). The effect of placing the text in such specific discursive spaces is that the text becomes interdiscursively linked to previous ideational representations. As with all interdiscursive references whether explicit or implicit, these linkages will only become apparent if the text recipients have access to appropriate background and contextual knowledge about Pakistan and Malala (e.g. about Pakistan’s history and more specifically about the rise of terrorism in Pakistan).

Let us have a look at Table 3 which presents the mood analysis of the selected comments.

Table 3: Mood analysis

Mood class	Overall %	Pro- %	Anti- %
full declaratives	67	36	31
Elliptical declaratives	7	4	3
Full polar interrogative	4	1	3
Elliptical polar declaratives	0.4	0.1	0.9
Full WH- Interrogatives	5	1	3.7
Elliptical WH-interrogatives	1	0.7	0.3
Imperatives	6	3.5	2
Minor/Abandoned/Incomplete	8	4.5	3.8

This table shows that the most frequent mood type in the selected data of social media comments is ‘declaratives’ which is not surprising, because declaratives are usually most frequent linguistic choice in almost all the genres and registers. Table 3, like Table 1, confirms the evidence of stylistic preference for Wh-questions and imperatives after declaratives. The majority of Wh-questions raised by the text producers on Pakistani social media have been rhetorical and sarcastic. Some of these questions are reproduced below (C.13 to C.16):

C.13 Mr Ansar Abbasi, how is it (terror attack on Malala) a lie? ... If she's CiA

agent, what are you (Anti-Malala journalist)?

C.14 ... Why we always try to find hidden agenda even in something so obvious. Can any father or person himself plan his own murder attempt except talibans?

C.15 ... Everytime she mentioned Taliban i felt like asking her, what is the proof and who are they?

C.16 ask the ruling party at that time esp Rehman Malik why did he let her settle in UK, got her father a job in Pakistani counsalate there?

The Wh- questions also provide evidence for both internal and external references to other discourses. By raising the questions, a subtle form of intertextuality, assumption, is employed in order to create connections between texts. In this way, the events that occurred (or might have occurred) earlier and the events that occurred after the terrorist attack on Malala are connected.

The argumentation between the pro-Malala and the anti-Malala group is also marked by sarcastic orders and rhetoric requests (i.e. imperatives). Imperatives like interrogatives are also linked to other texts and discourses through assumption and sarcasm. Let us have a look at the following couple of comments:

C.17 take your own daughters to remote areas of Pakistan for an education and stop writing stupid comments from your fancy iPhone living in the comfort of either Islamabad or any other civilised area of the world!

C.18 Sell your conscious. Be a spy And get pounds and dollars.

In this particular context, imperatives serve to (re)echo the connection between religion and patriotism with an authority and reflect the discursive space of hypernationalists of Pakistan. As far as the use of interrogatives (both Wh- and finite questions) in the selected data, they either intend some 'order' or imply some 'suggestion' (imperatives). Now, let us have a look at C.19 and C.20:

C.19 wanna give peace prize?? give it to abdul sattar eddhi who truly deserves it. But what to do?? America's involvement is everywhere.

C.20 ... Eidhi is working FOR Pakistan but these kinda Prizes are for those who work AGAINST Pakistan. Point to be noted.

In C.19 the interpersonal component (Wh-interrogatives, imperatives and exclamations) becomes apparent first and leads to the discernment of the ideational metafunction (transitivity features) of

the text. In C.20, on the other hand, the ideational metafunction (through the use of material and interpersonal clauses) of the text emerges immediately, and the intended message recipients (the in-group members) could be identified afterwards. The sense or intended message in both the comments is the same though different linguistic strategies have been applied. Though the choice of certain linguistic item is not the conscious one, it invariably leads one to infer different perceptions and ideologies of people and groups. In this particular context, the Nobel Prize committee is being evaluated and politicized. By juxtaposing two polemic point-of-views (i.e. anti-Malala and pro-Malala), two different yet interconnected discursive spaces are observed. Such discourse not only (re)builds and invigorates the narrative of religious nationalism, but also recontextualizes and resemanticizes the narrative of charity and public welfare (by acknowledging the services of an elderly national philanthropist and ascetic, Mr. Abdul Sattar Edhi). Furthermore, the argumentation is placed in the discursive space of justification and injustice. Such argumentation trend is obvious from these two comments and many others. Abdul Sattar Edhi is regarded as a morally upright figure because people have been observing his philanthropist activities for decades. Malala, on the other hand, is misunderstood because her struggle for women's education has not been witnessed by a section of Pakistani society.

It could be inferred that such linguistic strategies (e.g. verbal assaults through imperatives, satiric rhetorical questions and so on) serve to disconnect rather than connect the opposite groups.

The discussion given above clearly shows that although the two groups (i.e. anti-Malala and pro-Malala) could be compared but they are in fact poles apart. These groups construct and interpret Malala's identity differently (i.e. as a terror victim and nation's pride vs. untruthful and nation's shame), but their linguistic repertoire remains similar. The declarative/material clause is clearly the dominant mode of representation (see Tables 2 and 3). Furthermore, the interrogatives and imperatives extend or complement the information (provided by the declaratives/ material clauses).

7. General discussion and conclusion

In short, all the comments just analysed are of both similar and dissimilar nature. The interpersonal and textual metafunctions work together to construct Malala Yousafzai's identity in such a way that her ideological beliefs are always focused on. The ideational component of discourse materialized through transitivity (i.e. relational processes) arguably performs the most important functions in this regard. At this point, major trends of interdiscursive references in the selected

data can be summarized. The major trends of interdiscursive references in Malala Yousafzai related discourse(s) include:

- a) references to [(pre)supposed] antagonistic social actors,
- b) references to past discourses and texts about Malala and
- c) references to moral, political and religious discourses

The interdiscursive references allow text producers to discuss the terror attack on Malala within the discourse of religious nationalism and national interests. This is achieved by re-contextualizing certain linguistic choices (though not consciously) in order to reveal a particular perception of given narratives: such as resemanticizing the commands (which predominantly serve to defend Malala and outwit the out-group members), foregrounding the textual themes (i.e. theme: processes), and connecting the ongoing arguments to the experiential domain of the society. One of the experiential domains in this particular context comes from that/those discursive space(s) which build(s) upon the positive and negative image(s) of Malala (e.g. highlighting Malala's positive and negative attributes in relational clauses). Interdiscursivity and intertextuality analysed through a systemic functional approach to language play a key role in constructing Malala in this way, thus reiterating Halliday's (1985) view that texts perform ideational and interpersonal functions—that is, they convey representations and establish relations among participants.

The analysis also shows that interdiscursivity in social media argumentation is achieved (to a great extent) through suggestive and sarcastic remarks. As key interdiscursive references get resemanticized (by moving across themes, interrogatives, imperatives and attributive phrases), the intended meaning undergoes a shift in purpose and is reiterated and eventually reinforced. All three Tables 1, 2 and 3 show whenever there is a difference in linguistic choices it is pro-Malala group which shows more linguistic variations. The polemic linguistic representation of Malala seems like a verbal battle between two groups where members of each group are keen to express their command over historical and contextual facts. This sort of depiction is ideally suited to computer mediated communication where one can stay anonymous and express controversial opinions without any inhibition.

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