

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21759604>

Investigating the Linguistic Patterns of Online Shopping: A Critical Discourse Analysis

Kainat Awais	University of Management and Technology, Sialkot Kainatmughal020@gmail.com
Maria Naseem	Lecturer, University of Management and Technology, Sialkot Marianaseem17@gmail.com
Wajiha Batool	University of Management and Technology, Sialkot Sajiha105@gmail.com
Saba Seher	University of Sialkot, Sialkot sabasaheer171997@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study examined the linguistic strategies employed by malicious actors in the realm of online shopping. Utilizing a purposive qualitative sample of Instagram posts, Facebook posts and e-commerce website reviews, the research explores the discursive manipulation patterns and tactical language utilized by scammers to deceive unsuspecting online shoppers. Methodologically, the study adopts Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to unfold the underlying powers dynamics, ideological constructs and persuasive narratives integrated within deceptive online interactions. The study reveals that fraud-based messages are carefully crafted to exploit consumer vulnerabilities and induce impulsive response. The analysis found five common tactics used on Pakistani online platforms which creating urgency and fake scarcity, inflating product prices, manipulating emotions, being intentionally unclear and pretending to build trust. The study reveals how words are used to appear authoritative and influence what buyers do. It recommends further study into the detailed linguistic scam patterns of logical digital vendors in varied Pakistani socio- economic settings.*

Keywords: *Hostile language, malicious communication, fraudulent, reviews phishing attacks, discourse analysis*

INTRODUCTION

Language is an intricately structured, dynamic instrument for human communication, facilitating the construction of meaning, social realities and power relations. Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) established that language is a system where meaning is produced relationally rather than through isolated words. This system is heavily mediated by cultural and social contexts (Halliday, 1978). In the contemporary digital age, language evolves rapidly in response to technological advancements and shifting socio-economic environments (Crystal, 2001). Beyond mere interaction, language functions as an ideological site where structures are reinforced, naturalized, or contested (Bourdieu, 1991). The exponential growth of e-commerce has fundamentally revolutionized consumer behavior globally and within Pakistan. However, this virtual shift has simultaneously catalyzed an escalation in digital fraud and cyber crime. Malicious actors systematically exploit the text-based nature of digital commerce to deceive, manipulate, and exploit consumers. To unveil these mechanisms, discourse analysis must account for both microlevel textual features (lexical selection, syntactic structures) and macro-level goals (manipulation, domination, and

fraudulent gain) (Stubbs, 2001). Scammers consistently utilize specific linguistic patterns such as emotionally charged nouns, agent-concealing syntactic forms, and rhetorical traps to generate illusion of legitimacy and force compliance. Pragmatically, on terms of how language is used in real life like “could”, “might” and should allow people to suggests things without being specific and accurate.

In addition, buyers often repeat complaints they have seen from others. This repetition called intertextuality, build a common feeling of anger and distrust among shoppers.(Fairclough 1992, Stubbs,1996). Within online shopping spaces, malicious language can range from misleading products claims to aggressive trolling. While direct insults aim to diminish a victim’s confidence, trolling uses exaggerated or false claims to disrupt healthy communication and foster toxic online environments. The psychological impact of this language is worsened by online anonymity which reduces personal accountability and makes individuals more vulnerable to hostile behavior. Victims often experience lasting emotional distress and lowered self- steam. As e-commerce continues to expand rapidly, it has fundamentally transformed modern retail. While online shopping offer immense convenience, it also exposes consumers to significant risk. Manipulating reviews, misleading description and deceptive pitches misshapen consumer perceptions and undermine interest in digital marketplaces. When buyers encounter abusive language or deceptive advertisements, it not only impacts their purchasing decisions but also causes emotional distress. For sellers, targeted malicious language can lead to severe reputation damage and financial losses. To address these challenges, this qualitative study utilizes a specialized corpus to investigate the linguistic strategies used by deceptive actors in online shopping rather than focusing on statistical measurements.

Literature Review:

Linguistic patterns in hostile language are not only a reflection of an individual’s discontent but may also build up a collective narrative that reinforces negative attitudes. By identifying common linguistic features, researchers can trace the spread of toxic language and how it influences consumer behavior. According to Baker (2010), such studies help in understanding how language shapes social attitudes and interactions, particularly in digital contexts where discourses proliferate rapidly and become repetitive. Fundamentally, the linguistic patterns offer a broader understanding of malicious language dynamics in online purchasing environments. Critical discourse analysis positions language as a form of social practice deeply entangled with power and dominance. Rather than analyzing grammar, CDA investigates how texts produce, maintain and reproduce unequal power dynamics (Fairclough, 2010).

Van Dijk’s (1998) foundational work on social cognition highlights that dominant groups use discourse to control the minds and subsequently the actions of dominated groups. Online commerce includes malicious communication, which was designed to mislead, hurt, or manipulate people by using negative or violent language. In this context, such deceitful tactics also included fake reviews, phishing, harassment, and identity theft. Such malicious linguistic strategies have caused the loss of integrity in digital marketplaces and have adversely affected consumer experiences. A good example of such malicious behavior is fraudulent reviews, which are overly positive or unduly negative reviews published by individuals with a hidden agenda, such as competitors or unscrupulous vendors. Recent studies have brought this issue to light. For example, Luca and Zervas (2020) showed that fake reviews greatly mislead consumer perception and purchasing decisions. Whereas competitors' intention for giving bad reviews is to defame the reputation of the rival, vendors may write fake positive reviews to increase artificially the attractiveness of their product. Such manipulations will result in misleading customers and also erode the review platform's credibility. The other malicious linguistic manipulation on the online shopping ecosystem is phishing attacks. These are those attacks built on sending fake messages, which look like they were from a reliable source, like online retailers and payment processors, to trick users into revealing sensitive information, including credit card numbers and login credentials. Akoglu et al. (2021) reported that phishing attacks are increasingly becoming sophisticated, with a high degree of persuasiveness in their content to leverage users'

trust and security vulnerabilities. These can be very destructive to the victims as they might lose a great deal of money and even their private information. Harassment within online shopping can take place by using threatening or aggressive language towards other shoppers or sellers. A study by Kowalski et al. in 2020 has shown that such behavior can make the shopping environment hostile, reduce user participation, and destroy the good name of sellers. Most harassment incidents are in the form of personal attacks to abusive language related to disputed transactions or failures in customer service. This is not only a concern for the people it affects but also ruins the experience of other users on the ecommerce site.

Miller et al. (2021) analyzed scam messages in online communication using linguistic feature extraction and discourse analysis, identifying rhetorical strategies and linguistic markers that characterize scam messages. Smith and Patel (2019) researched deceptive online behaviors using behavioral analytics and text analysis, applying behavioral patterns analysis to detect anomalies in user behavior and combining this with textual analysis to identify deceptive language in online interactions. Deceitful messages depend on specific grammatical sentence structures to deceive the reader. For example, in the research of Dahl and Hornsby (2014), it has been noted that the complex structure of sentences, combined with passive voice, hides the performer of an action with the intent to lie or cheat in a message. Cohesion and coherence patterns can also reveal the malicious intent. Jákel and Igel (2018) have identified that online harassment is usually characterized by disrupted coherence and unusual patterns of cohesion that could equally serve to identify abusive or deceptive texts. Semantic patterns relate to meaning and interpretation and involve the use of certain words and phrases that carry specific meanings and connotations. Word choice may be very. This is a good indicator of deception, as it was shown by González et al. (2020), who investigated the use of some adjectives and adverbs in fake reviews in order to build up an unrealistically positive view of the products. Semantic fields, such as financial or health related terms, may suggest the domain of the fraud in fraudulent contexts. Li et al. (2020) conducted semantic analysis in order to detect fraudulent reviews in e-commerce by tracking unusual semantic fields and fraud-indicative lexical patterns. In pragmatic pattern, language is used in context, for example, speech acts, implicature, politeness strategies. These will be important in understanding how language functions to carry out the communicative goals in a deceptive framework. For example, speech acts could be promises, threats, or requests used in manipulative ways in malicious language. For example, Miller et al. (2021) investigated the different speech acts that could be embedded in scam messages for certain desired recipient behaviors and how pragmatic analysis can uncover such deception. The strategies of politeness usually resorted to are indirectness and hedging in order to camouflage the deceptive intention. Chen et al. (2021) discussed how politeness strategies in scam messages function by lessening suspicion and compliance with the purpose, once again indicating the role that pragmatic patterns could play in a communicatively deceiving process. Discourse patterns concern the major organization and fluency of languages over longer stretches of text-including the structure of arguments and narratives, but also persuasive strategy. Argumentation structures, narrative techniques, and pragmatic and discourse strategies may all be useful in unmasking deceitful narratives online. Deceptive reviews are one of the most common forms of malicious languages in online shopping, purposed to mislead potential buyers by giving untruthfully praising or disparaging comments about a product. The same is confirmed by Liu et al. (2019), where the authors identified, with the use of NLP, overstated positive expressions and misleading information in fake reviews. Similarly, González et al. (2020) have analyzed fake product reviews through hybrid machine learning and deep learning techniques; the authors identified specific lexical choices and syntactic structures that characterize fraudulent reviews, which include overly persuasive language and repetitive praise. Major malicious language includes phishing emails and scam messages, designed in a form to make the receivers disclose information or conduct activity that compromises the security of such receivers. Chen et al., 2021, looked into phishing content comprising urgent wording, fake credentials, and Reasons for legitimacy and urgency: Santos et al. (2021) discussed that phishing emails, in general, have manipulated language patterns that mislead people into creating trust for urgency, including fake security warnings or promotional offers. Social engineering tricks manipulate

individuals into revealing confidential information or to conduct certain actions that make them compromise on their security. Kumar and Gupta, 2022, explored how social engineering attacks use linguistics to manipulate psychological vulnerabilities by flattering or threatening with the use of language. Miller, 2021, regards social engineering fraud, whereby fraudsters create a relationship of trust through telling emotional stories combined with urgent situations. For online shopping contexts, a wide variety of NLP techniques have been used in order to analyze and detect malicious language. Liu et al. (2019) demonstrated the application of NLP for detecting fraudulent reviews by analyzing linguistic features and identifying patterns indicative of deception. Machine learning and deep learning models have proven effective in identifying malicious language patterns. González et al. (2020) employed hybrid machine learning and deep learning models to detect fake product reviews. One gap is the lack of empirical research that uses a detailed, corpus-assisted approach to analyze malicious language specifically in the context of ecommerce. While general studies on online deception and fraud exist, they often fail to systematically examine the particular linguistic features and patterns used in malicious online shopping discourse from a data driven perspective. Zhang 2020, Herring, 2018; Festl 2020-specific investigations into malicious language within online shopping contexts. Most previous studies have focused broadly on fraudulent content without deeply exploring the linguistic features that characterize such discourse (Smith & King, 2021).

The ability to analyze large corpora allows for a deeper understanding of how malicious language is structured and used within online shopping environments. The discourse analysis model proposed by Van Dijk provides a theoretical framework through which the linguistic patterns identified by corpus analysis can be interpreted. His model focuses on the interplay between discourse structures and social contexts, highlighting how language can be used to exert power and influence (van Dijk, 1997). This model, within the framework of online shopping, allows one to examine the ways in which malicious language supports and promotes broader social and ideological positions. Despite the fact that a huge amount of research is carried out on different types of malicious languages, including online harassment, hate speech, and misinformation, there is a remarkable deficiency in studies specifically investigating malicious language within online shopping contexts. Most of the studies so far conducted broadly focus on fraudulent content without working deeply into the linguistic patterns that characterize such discourse. This gap involves empirical research that uses a fine-grained approach to malicious language narrowly situated in e-commerce. In sum, general studies exist in online deception and fraud but have not been grounded with the same level of precision regarding the specific linguistic features and patterns used in the context of malicious online shopping discourses. Furthermore, Van Dijk's discourse analysis model has been widely used in analyzing various forms of discourse, its application to malicious language in online shopping is relatively underexplored.

With the systematic processing of large datasets from online shopping sites, researchers are able to indicate and quantify linguistic patterns characteristic for malicious language. This approach aligns with recent advancements in computational linguistics, which emphasize the value of corpus tools for revealing the way of tactics and complex of linguistic features. Van Dijk's discourse analysis model provides a theoretical lens for interpreting the linguistic patterns. This model provides the discourse structures and social contexts that indicate the way language can be used to apply power and influence.

In this respect, this model allows investigation in an online shopping context into how malicious language operates within larger social and ideological frameworks.

This theoretical framework contextualizes the linguistic features identified by CDA and provides a deeper insight into how those features have contributed to the deceptive practice. This paper contributes to the theoretical development of how malicious language operates in digital contexts through the provision of a detailed linguistic-characteristics-and functions analysis. But perhaps the value added to the greater discourse in the setting of online deception and consumer protection, with new insights into how to identify

and address malicious language, is perhaps the greatest added value. Your study, while focused on the linguistic pattern of malicious language in online shopping, could provide a foothold for new ways to reduce online deception and protect consumers. Discourse analysis helps to gain insight into how malicious language is structured and used in deceptive communication. Jäkel and Igel (2018) conducted discourse analysis in order to identify features of online harassment and abusive language. Semantic analysis shall help in understanding the meaning and implications of language in contexts of malicious usage. Li et al. (2020) conducted semantic analysis of reviews on e-commerce platforms with the purpose of determining fake ones, taking a close look at semantic fields and contextual information to identify the inconsistent and deceptive patterns; hence, this study becomes highly valuable for discourse analysis and consumer protection. This paper combines

This important study forms the basis for more effective countermeasures against online deception and consumer protection by investigating the linguistic patterns of malicious language. This paper contributes to the theoretical understanding of how malicious language works in digital contexts by offering a detailed linguistic characteristic and functional analysis. This contributes to the broader discourse on online deception and consumer protection by providing new insights into how malicious language can be identified and addressed.

METHODS

This chapter presents information on the investigation methodologies followed in view of the research questions of the study. The research approach which the study has followed is identified and rationalized in this chapter. In particular, the chapter describes the research design of the study by employing theoretical framework used to illustrate the linguistic patterns of malicious language in online shopping.

Research Design:

This study implements a qualitative descriptive research design rooted in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This research prioritize textual depths, structural context and sociocognitive interpretation. Qualitative research design allows the investigator to explore participants' contexts, uncovering the subtle meanings and power structures embedded within communicative actions.

Data Collection

For this study data gathering source is Instagram posts, Facebook posts, website comments & reviews, product descriptions, & pitching messages through social media.

Considering the purpose of this study researcher collected the manipulated linguistic patterns utilized by the sellers to attract the costumer. All the data was collected from varied online shopping websites from last five months (February 2024- June 2024).

Sample of the Study

To accomplish the objectives of the research, the implementation of an appropriate sampling method for a selected sample is compulsory. The researcher has selected purposive sampling for this research. This kind of sampling is already used. The purposive sampling technique is also known as judgment sampling. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Oliver (2006) emphasizes that purposive sampling is one in which researchers select specific samples based on importance, capacity, and research question in this approach the researcher chooses units of sample on knowledge basis and specifically for this research study (Oliver & Jupp, 2006). In present study identification of research sample through purposive sampling technique helps to underline the manipulative strategies used by online sellers to get consumers attention and its impacts on consumers. Moreover, application of Van Dijk's CDA model aids in uncovering the power dynamics, malicious linguistic patterns, and scametic techniques applied to appeal the buyers.

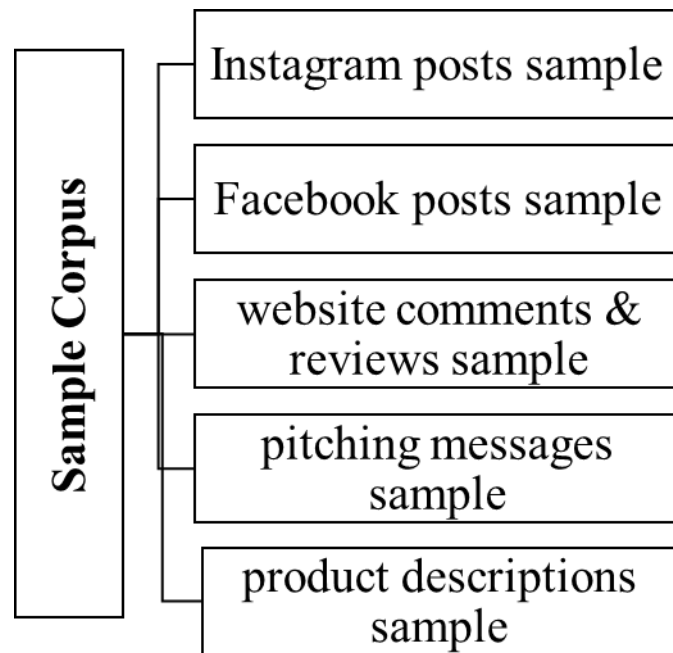


Figure.1 Sample/Population of the Study 3.5 Data Analysis Process

To achieve the research objectives of the study the extracted data was analyzed through socio-cognitive model of critical discourse analysis to illustrate the linguistic strategies used by online sellers to entice the buyer.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

The theoretical framework of this research is based on the Van Dijk's SocioCognitive Model.

Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Model

Van Dijk proposed the idea of a social cognitive model of critical discourse analysis that focused on the role of context in interpretation and discourse construction in a variety of social, political, and cultural contexts (Van Dijk, 1998). In a broader sense, CDA's focus is on the social character of discourse.

Van Dijk (1995 & 1998c) introduced a social cognitive model of CDA. For van Dijk, a key idea of analysis is social cognition. The social cognition interface turns discourse into an independent method of analysis. Analysis focuses on cultural, historical, philosophical, logical, socioeconomic, and neurological positions that examine texts with particular attention to the context in which they are created. The practitioners of CDA do not depend merely upon discourse social structures but it deals with linguistic basis of context and text (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). According to CDA the communicative events in socio cognitive model are important for research in which the shift in study view point becomes evident and practitioners move to a wider para verbal structure of unambiguous communication events from verbal categories such as syntax, stylistics, rhetorical and narrative. Therefore, for the study CDA requires a interdisciplinary, inclusive, wide range of communicative events and evaluation spectrum which is rooted deeply in communities and a insightful viewpoint is needed for understanding and comprehension. Discourse- Society-Cognition is another fundamental paradigm of Van Dijk's model of sociocognition. To begin with other facets of CDA a detailed description is required; the discourse refers not only to text and talk but it covers all conversational features, semiotic, multimedia dimensions, images and typographical layout etc. which are incorporated to it (Van Dijk, T.A 1991). The second important feature of this model is cognition, which covers social and personal cognition accompanying mental processes, beliefs, mental images, objectives, representation and memory constructs. Another important aspect of socio-cognitive model is society that contains national and institutional systems, including political system, social structures, dominance and other conceptual social structures have macro-global contexts (Van, T.A, 1991).

The combined social and cognitive aspects of the socio-cognitive model systematically reflect the relationship between discourse, context and text. The complexity of text needs a comprehensive perspective which amalgamate social views, discourse and linguistic analysis. For this study, the theoretical and methodological perspective of CDA has been taken. Van Dijk (1998c) shows that social cognition is not limited to subjective interpretation of meaning by individual users, but also reinforces a range of basic discourse structures such as power abuse and domination. Social cognitions in addition also defined as mental representation or beliefs which is shared by individuals with other communicative groups. This study looked into that how social actors (online sellers) glorify the discourse to manipulate the human minds to sell their products online. Moreover, present study highlights the manipulation strategies used in online selling discourse specially by scammers.

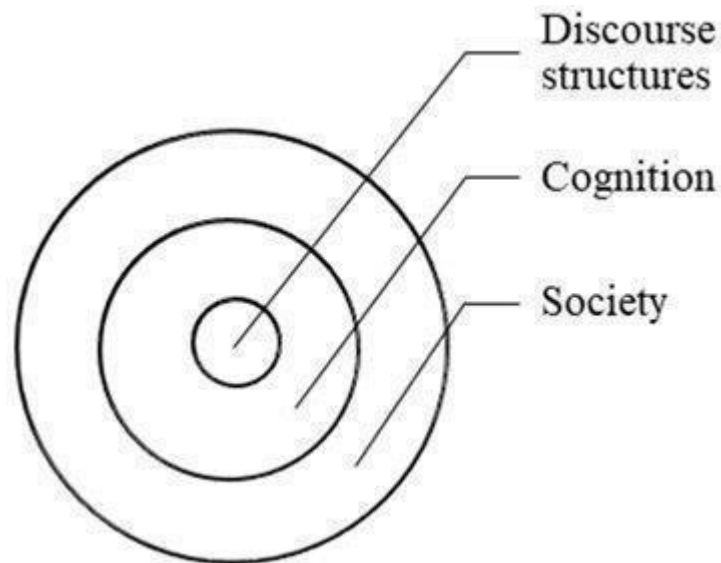


Figure.2 Socio Cognitive Model of Critical Discourse Analysis

DISCUSSIONS

This chapter emphasizes on the results and findings from the developed data of Facebook & Instagram posts, product reviews, comments, product description, and pitching messages from various online shopping websites. This study describes the malicious techniques in the light of Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model (Van Dijk, 1990) of critical discourse analysis.

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach is used for analysing discourses in this study, which functions on three extents of analysis, Social analysis, cognitive analysis, and discourse analysis. The focus of social analysis is on the context and it investigates the complete social structure, and the broader historical, social and political discourse context. From the social point of view, the study focuses on the online sellers who utilized different linguistic strategies to attract the consumer. They use direct and indirect linguistic expression, glorify the product through language, and incorporate scametic techniques to trade the goods. Moreover, present study highlights the fact that how the linguistic manipulation of text by social actors become a drawback in online shopping domains in Pakistan. Language is a means of communication around the globe and in todays digital word, where people are busy in their lives and have no time for in person shopping. Furthermore, online shopping options and home delivery make it more convenient and accessible to a busy man, but with the upsurge of online e-commerce fraud and scamming become a huge problem in online shopping. Costumers face various type of frauds and in mostly cases they become victim of the language they use to describe their products, pitching messages, and the shout outs utilized to sell the products. Researcher identified a few common words and phrases usually employed by the online retailers

to attract the buyers. Table below gives the description about the language and verity of language utilized in posts by various suppliers and its impact on the online buyers.

Table.1 Words Phrases Used by Sellers in Online Posts

Words/Phrases	Example
Off	Enjoy 50% off our most popular handbags
Limited Availability	Limited availability, act fast!
Sale Alert	Flash sale alert!
Save Big	Shop now and save big
Exclusive/Special Offer	Limited-time offer
Available At	Huge discounts available
Get	Buy any cleanser and get a toner free. Exclusive deals on designer perfumes special Discount: Enjoy 30% off your entire purchase
Exclusive Deals	
Special Discount	Mega Discount! Flat 80% OFF on our new jewelry collection
Mega Discounts	Brand new gadgets at ridiculously low prices Limited stock available
Low/Unbeatable/Mind	Flash sale. Don't miss out.
Blowing/Best Prices	Unbeatable Prices: Rock-bottom prices on high-quality furniture are a major sign of a scam
Limited Stock	
Flash	
Unbeatable Prices	

Table 1 shows the words and phrases used by the sellers at Pakistani online shopping platforms websites.

This implies that scammers deceive their customers using malicious linguistic phrases or words. Psychological strategies, manipulating cognitive biases and emotional triggers to encourage rushed, illogical choices are the common manipulative tactics used by scammers. One of their most common techniques is the creation of urgency and scarcity. Phrases like “Limited Time Offer” or “Only a Few Left” work by instilling fear in the shopper that if they don’t act right then and there, they will surely miss out. This artificial feeling of urgency takes away due diligence from probable buyers to look over the product, read the reviews, and explore other alternatives before making any impulsive decisions. Another manipulative tactic involves the inflation of product value, most times done through the overstatement of reductions: “75% Off”, for example, or “Huge Savings”. Often, this will be a ploy in which the original price has been raised artificially, or the item never sold at the price that a discount is to be offered on. What will be done here is to convince the customer that they are saving a lot and use their urge to save to make them buy. Another very common tactic of fraudsters to establish trust where none should exist is through the use of "Credibility-inducing" language. Many times, words such as "Guaranteed," "Certified," or "Trusted Seller" are utilized in communications. These terms have been developed to provide the buyer with assurance regarding their decision. However, in general, the ramifications of these statements are not substantiated, since any valid certifications or assurances do not support the product. Another strategy is emotional manipulation, where the fraudsters will use phrases such as "Don't Miss Out," "Once in lifetime Opportunity," or "Special Discount Just for You" to have an emotional effect on the buyer. These

emotionally engaging statements appeal to either the buyers' urge to feel special or a form of loss aversion, thus opting for irrational decisions without thinking over the matter rationally. This approach also distracts the people from critical thinking and leads them to make impulsive decisions based on either fear or enthusiasm. Scammers avoid accountability through using vague and confusing words.

Advertisers use general terms like "Special Discount" or "High Quality" to state a benefit but not make a specific claim—a claim that might be fact-checked later. A scammer could lie to the consumer and, because the language used is ambiguous, retain deniability by stating that comments were ambiguous and no specific claim was made. Other tactics include the use of trust-based language: terms like "Risk-Free" or "Money-Back Guarantee" that work to establish security. Because they will always get their money back, consumers are misled to believe there is no risk in buying, but all too often these guarantees are false, or the limitations and conditions of the guarantee are unspecified, rendering them difficult, if not impossible. The general approach is to create wording that takes advantage of psychological triggers like urgency, loss aversion, excitement, and trust. By using a combination of emotional appeals and misleading language, scammers are able to create a façade of value and credibility. This manipulation prevents customers from making fully informed decisions, ultimately leading them to fall for fraudulent schemes. Through the careful selection of words and phrases, scammers effectively guide consumers into a state of mind where they are more likely to make quick, uncritical purchasing decisions, which is the foundation of successful online scams.

Linguistic Strategies Employed by Scammers Targeting Online Shoppers based on the qualitative analysis performed above through Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model to perform a meaningful qualitative analysis. This theoretical framework aids the researcher in illustrating how social actors (sellers) control consumers' minds through manipulative language on e-commerce platforms. Commonly used linguistic strategies are given as;

1. Urgency and Scarcity
2. Inflating Value of the Product
3. Emotional Manipulation
4. Unclear and Ambiguous Language
5. Trust-Based Language

4.1.1 Urgency and Scarcity

The first strategy utilized by scammers is urgency and scarcity. Sellers describe their product in a manner that gives the effect of lose if they did not buy the product instantly. Moreover, majority vendors apply action verbs which influences the human minds and urge them for immediate buying. Qualitative analysis of the developed corpus shows that creating a sense of emergency and shortage of products is a common and key linguistic technique used by the sellers to trap online consumer. Examples below gives theoretical description Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model of CDA.

Extract 1

Steal the Deal! Flat 75% OFF on all jewelry pieces. Limited time offers!" Limited pieces!"

In above extract (a) the manipulative language like; **“Steal the Deal”, “Flat 75% Off”, “Limited time offer!”**, **“Limited pieces!”** are used by sellers to pressure shoppers into making quick decisions. It creates a sense of urgency with “Limited time offer” and “Limited pieces”, pushing the fear of missing out. Additionally, the phrase “flat 75% off” overstates price to make the offer look appealing. Such linguistic tricks make consumers believe that they are getting a great deal and forces impetuous purchasing without vigilant thought. According to Van Dijk's framework discourse shapes mental models by creating a perception of urgency, cost, and scarceness, which in turn supports societal norms around competitive,

impulsive shopaholics. Scammers use such words and phrases repeatedly to deceive consumers into acting impulsively. It exploits the human emotions like excitement and fear of missing out. Furthermore, its human nature to be competitive and usually they want to cover their fears and flaws with materialistic things, so these desires forces them for impulsive buying.

Extract 2

Attention fashionistas! Get ready to elevate your style with our exclusive collection of designer handbags and fancy clutches at mind-blowing prices. LIMITED TIME OFFER. For a limited time only, enjoy up to 70% OFF on all our luxury handbags and clutches. These deals are too good to miss! EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNTS Sign up today and receive an additional 10% OFF your first purchase. WELCOME10 at checkout. Hurry, this offer won't last long!

Example (b) highlights the malicious linguistic patterns implied by a handbags and clutches selling company. To attract their consumers specifically female buyers with phrase “elevate your style with our exclusive collection of designer handbags and fancy clutches at mind-blowing prices”, evokes their urge to look classy, fashionable and chance for them to upgrade their status. Moreover, use of glorifying words “exclusive and designer” increases the professed cost of the things, making the bargain seem extremely desirable and inimitable, even when the reductions may not be as noteworthy as advertised. Additionally, opening of the sentence with word “fashionistas” arouses the feeling of buying these

products which elevate their social status and add them with a fashionable group. The coated discounts, like; “up to 70% off” and “additional 10% off” after signing up, develop a sense of increasing discount stop the consumer from critical thinking. The combination of urgency, exclusivity, and social appeal manipulates shoppers into making quick, emotionally driven choices without fully considering whether the product is truly worth the cost. This proves Van Dajik’s idea that society and cognition are shaped by discourse. And social actors used varied discursive patterns concerning the social conditions to manipulate human minds. Present study scrutinized and elaborated the fact that how social actors (sellers) manipulate the costumer through word play on e-commerce platforms. **Extract 3**

Incredible discounts on all perfumes. Shop now and save up to 90%." Special promotion: Free gift with every perfume purchase. Limited time only!"

Another example (c) shows the use of manipulative language to create urgency and exaggerated prices. Current add depicts the discount on perfumes and seller applied the phrase “up to 90% off” effortlessly to trigger the consumers mind, the shopper’s unable to resist this invincible offer. Moreover, it creates a fear of missing out such great opportunity in consumers and leads them to impulsive buying. Additionally, they make it more appealing with “free gift with every perfume purchase”, shopper thinks that they are getting more than they spend on recent buying.

Extract 4 Exclusive Offer! Buy now and get 70% OFF on all jewellery items. Limited pieces!" Mega Discount! Flat 80% OFF on our new jewellery collection. Limited quantities!"

"Flash Sale Alert! Up to 85% OFF on artificial jewellery. Limited stock, act fast!" Than phrases “exclusive offer” (d), “mega offer” (e), “flash sale alert” (f) are generally used to attract the buyer. Furthermore, this justifies the Van Dijik’s perspective that language shapes human cognition. The malicious linguistic patterns shape purchasers’ cognition by misrepresenting their perception of the product's cost and encouraging fast decision making rather than careful actions. Socially, it underpins a culture of impulsive shopping, where discounts and promotions are seen as opportunities not to be missed, regardless of the product's true quality. This strategy is commonly used in deceptive online marketing, where the language manipulates emotions and cognition to shove clients into rapid,

credulous purchases.

Inflating Value of the Product

Second malicious language technique utilized in developed corpus is inflating prices of the products. This study discloses that it's an advertising strategy where vendors exaggerates the actual value of the products and then offering a huge discount, like 20% off or 80% off etc. but the fact is original cost of the product was much lower. However, these statements stimulate the consumers' minds to believe that they are getting the best deal in low price. Present study discovered that these social actors use this money-making strategy to fool the shopper and able to sell their product more than its original cost in discount. Examples are given below;

Extract 5

Unlock your skin's potential with our rejuvenating oils, now at 25% off. Calling all skincare enthusiasts! Enjoy 20% off on our entire range of anti-aging products. Above extract show the use of explicit language to stimulus buyer behaviour by playing on feelings, individuality, and looks. According to van Dijk's this type of language shapes how customers think about the product and themselves. The phrase "Unlock your skin's potential" suggests that the product holds the key to better skin, pleasing to the buyer's longing for self-improvement and the quest of flawless beauty. This forms a mental model where the consumer trusts that purchasing this product will knowingly boost their appearance. Than "skincare enthusiasts" the phrase hits into a specific social identity, giving the buyer a feeling that he is a part of a high-class group that is well-informed and fervent about skincare. This evokes the consumers desire to be the part of that exclusive group, and encourage them to believe that buying these products define their promise to self-care and knowhow in skincare. Moreover, the discount deals, like "25% off" and "20% off," changes the shopper perception about product cost they feel like the present deal is way good to miss out. The language urges the buyer to believe that he/she is getting the best deal with saving option. Although, in majority cases savings are not as substantial as presented. Additionally, focusing on "anti-aging products" targets common self-doubt around aging and appearance, pushing customers to act speedily and purchase the products to ease those apprehensions. Overall, this ad uses emotional appeal, social identity, and supposed cost to influence customers into making hasty and thoughtless buying based on beauty and self-improvement ideals. **Extract 6**

"Fall in love with your skin again. Our deep cleansing treatments are now 50% off" Again, the emotional linguistic appeal and tempting discount off is used to convince the buyer. To connect with buyers desires for better looking skin and confidence seller used the emotionally alluring language. It proposes that if someone is feeling less confident about their skin, this product can help them reinstate that self-confidence and feel good about themselves again. Additionally, discount figures add a sense of urgency and value, making the offer seem like a great opportunity to improve their skin at a much lower price. This mixture of emotive appeal and discount inspires people to act fast and prioritize their self-care.

Extract 7 "Secret Sale! Save up to 80% on exclusive artificial jewelry. Limited availability!"

Another ad shows the use of malicious language to reinforce consumers attitude by creating a sense of emergency, exclusivity, and low-cost purchase. Opening phrase "secret sale" gives an effect that buyers are getting something special and distinct which evokes their desire of being fashionable and unique. This align with Vn Dajik's theory depicts that how discursive practices mold the human thinking and make them to act impulsively. Than, "up to 80% off indicates the exaggerated cost of the products, creating a trusted atmosphere and lead them to buy unreasonable deals with zero savings. This cognitive manipulation stimulates the impulsive purchasing in buyers. Socially, the idea of **"exclusive artificial jewellery"** enriches shoppers' craving for fashionable and unique items, underpinning societal standards about status and appearance. This language pushes consumers to act quickly, buying before they miss the chance, without allowing them time for critical thinking. In general, the ad's discourse works to manipulate thinking

ability and sentiments of buyer, by playing with cost and human desire to look modern and exclusive driving them for emotionally driven purchases. **Extract 8**

“Calling all skincare mavens! Enjoy 15% off on our entire range of serums. Unveil your natural beauty with our organic skincare line, now 25% off”

Here, the phrase **“Calling all skincare mavens!”** directly addresses customers who identify as knowledgeable or passionate about skincare, reinforcing their social identity as experts. This establishes a connection between the product and the consumer’s self-

perception, signifying that using these products aligns with their lifestyle and knowledge.

The phrase **“Unveil your natural beauty”** tap the human desire for self-confidence and grooming, self-improvement and confidence, putting the product as a tool for showing one’s true, beautiful self. This language knocks into societal pressures surrounding beauty and self-care, reassuring customers to sense that they must use these products to meet those ideals. The combination of discounts and emotional triggers, such as the promise of organic, natural beauty enhancement, thrusts buyers to act fast and fervently, driven by both price and individual aspirations. In this way, online sellers manipulate the consumer’s cognition by enticing to their individuality, uncertainties, and longing for self-care, forcing rapid and emotionally driven buying.

Emotional Manipulation

Next linguistic strategy that prevail in online scams is “emotional manipulation. Researcher figure out that scammers excessively used the emotional or sensual language to evoke the consumers emotional desires to buy the products the were longing for a long time.

Discourse like “don’t miss out, special offer, unmissable etc” trigger the buyer’s mental model by connecting the product with their personal and social needs. They feel that if they miss it now there might be no chance anymore to seize such a good deal. Through this emotional appeal, scammers skilfully exploit the fear of missing out, leveraging shoppers’ emotional impulses to attain their illusory goals. Eventually, this manipulation pressures customers into acting swiftly, often leading to lamentable buying. Examples from the developed corpus given below aid to describe this scam in explicit manner. **Extract 9**

Limited Time Offer: Get a free scarf with every handbag purchase. Shop now!

Exclusive Sale: 60% off all clutches and handbags. Don’t miss out

The extract above is about handbag company who offer a free scarf with each handbag purchase. This shows the use of emotional linguistic patterns to arouse the excitement and sense of extra reward. Next, offering a “free scarf” in exchange for a handbag order intensifies this deception by giving the impression that the buyer is getting an additional benefit, which in return produces feelings of excitement and fulfilment. By incorporating the phrases like; “exclusive sale” & “60% off” advertiser painted it as irresistible deal, giving the impression that customers are getting a exceptional opportunity that others might not be able to take advantage of. This caters to the need to buy something desirable at a discount and reinforces a social identity of being smart and affluent. Furthermore, this manipulates the shopper's emotions by alluding to their nervousness about losing an exclusive opportunity through the use of emotional expressions like “Don't miss out”. This type of language not only feeds on people's sense of urgency, but it also sets off individual desires for valuable and status in society, which leads to hasty buying.

Extract 10 Special promotion: Buy two perfumes, get a third one free! Enhance your fragrance collection today

This ad indicates that seller uses behavioral strategies and emotive manipulation that are consistent with van Dijk's socio-cognitive model of critical discourse analysis. This commercial exploits consumers' cognitive biases by presenting the offer as an amazing bargain and convincing them that they would receive

a substantial benefit. “Special promotion” highlights exclusivity and conveys the idea that the buyer is getting a limited edition or special item. The marketing message appeals to the buyer's desire for more products at a lower price by offering a “buy two, get one free” bargain, even though they may not have intended to buy many scents. This reinforces the idea that more is better, which leads to overindulgence.

By presenting the purchase as an attempt to improve one's social standing or way of life, the manipulative statement “enhance your scent collection now” plays on emotions. By suggesting that having a larger range or amount of fragrances is desirable, the phrase

“collection” plays on social identity. The emphasis on acting “today” makes consumers feel excited and compels them to act quickly to avoid missing out. The commercial manipulates social and cognitive factors by appealing to the customer's aspirations for exclusivity and personal development, which leads to the consumer making impulsive, emotionally motivated purchases.

Extract 11

Unmissable offer: Up to 60% off on all perfumes. Limited time only, shop now!

Another advertisement of perfumes highlights the emotional manipulation strategy. **The words “Unmissable”** proposes that the bid is so special that passing it up would be a momentous mistake, producing an emotional pressure on buyer to act immediately.

According to Van Dijk **“Unmissable”** taps into the consumer’s emotional and social needs, shaping their mental framework to view the offer as both worthy and time-sensitive. This manipulation encourages consumers to prioritize the purchase not based on their actual needs but on the fear of losing a great deal. This tactic reflects how online sellers use emotionally charged language to steer consumers into making quick, often unnecessary purchases, aligning with the broader trends identified in your research on deceptive marketing practices.

Extract 12

Once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! Own a rare, designer furniture piece at a STEAL!

PRICE GOING UP SOON! Don't wait - secure this furniture at the current low price! Again, example above signposts the emotionally manipulative linguistic patterns that hijacks the shopper's thinking ability by creating a sense of urgency and shortage. The phrases **“Once-in-a-lifetime opportunity”** and **“price going up soon!”** developing the feeling of losing something and convince the shopper to trust that this deal is fleeting and inimitable. This mental framing persuades them that delaying action could result in a significant loss, as they may never encounter such a valuable offer again. By presenting the purchase as a rare chance to obtain something special at a lower cost, the ad encourages impulsive decision-making. This manipulation of emergency and uniqueness garbles the buyer’s cognitive assessment, pushing them to take instant action over cautious decisions.

On the contrary, “rare, designer furniture” signpost the social status aligning it with the requirement of having antique and trendy products in the house. This illustrates a societal standard of set by people, where such materialistic things are necessary to look unique, modernized, and member of a certain class. So, this manipulative tactic directly hits the shoppers longing to be a part of high-class society and force them for impulsive buying. From discursive point of view, the language is intentionally overstated, with terms like

“steal” and **“price going up soon!”** to increase emotional appeal and earnestness. This hyperbolic language makes the offer look too good to skip and encourages the buyer for quick actions. The discourse aligns with manipulative marketing practices, pushing the consumer to act impulsively without critical thinking and this line up with deceptive linguistic patterns presented in this study.

Unclear and Ambiguous Language

The analysis illustrates that “unclear and ambiguous language” is the fourth strategy used in e-commerce to trap consumers. Van Dijk stated that specific language patterns aid in creating and maintaining power relations within discourse. Discourse is a mediator between human cognition and social structures, it provides a way to manipulate thoughts and social practices. The results of the present study are in line with the theoretical framework used for analysis. This study scrutinized that online sellers vastly used malicious linguistic patterns by using unclear and vague language in product advertisements. They describe the product with glorious and attractive phrases that control human minds and stop them from rational thinking. Examples below describe the use of linguistic strategy under discussion;

Extract 13

High-quality frames at unbeatable prices. Save 25% when you shop now!" Above text indicates the use of unclear and vague language to deceive the buyer, a common tactic utilized in e-commerce. Here deceptive phrases like “high quality” and “unbeatable prices” are employed to manipulate the shopper. The adjective “high quality” is imprecise and has no information about the material or quality of the furniture, the buyer has to trust the words used in the advertisement and buy the product without cross-checking the details. Next,

“unbeatable prices” is a vague statement that lacks background information or comparison item, making it difficult for the shopper to know the actual worth of the product. These ambiguous phrases encourage the buyer to buy without critically analysing its worth. By utilising vague, alluring language without offering specific details the ad shifts the shopper’s mental model, giving them the impression that they are getting a terrific deal even in situations where they don't have enough information to make an informed choice.

Further, the buyers are forced to be impulsive buying by adding “shop now”, this creates a sense of urgency and blocks the thought processing of the buyer. The seller used vague and unclear language to develop attractive but incomplete about their product but led the shopper to make immediate choices based on the provided information rather than learnt decisions.

Extract 14

Handcrafted heirlooms for future generations"* - Suggests long-lasting quality, but items may lack true heirloom status or craftsmanship.**

Another ad is full of ambiguity and imprecise product description. It's full of promises, product quality guarantees, skilled craftsmanship, and can be passed to generations without any fear. However, it contains no specific information about the material and process of manufacturing of the displayed item. The term “**handcrafted**” suggests exclusivity and care in making, yet the lack of specificity about the materials, techniques, or artisan experiences leaves the buyer hesitant of the true expertise involved. The word “heirloom” implies the timeless value of the item and can be passed down the generations, but again there’s no information about what makes it special. From a cognitive perspective, these glorified words trigger the human mind and drive them to trust that they are buying something long-lasting, valuable, and beneficial. This mental linguistic manipulation convinces them to invest in something which even lack proof of product quality. Socially and discursively the scammers attached the traditional & cultural values and legacy of the product and evoked buyers' desire to get something prestigious and significant.

Extract 15

Premium quality hair colors at affordable prices. Save up to 70% today! Hydrating hair masks with premium ingredients, now 50% off. Limited stock available! Another ad full of linguistic manipulation tactics is presented above. An ad produced by a hair mask selling company reflects a discourse of not only unclear and vague language but contains phrases that create urgency, scarcity, emotive language, and

inflating values commonly used techniques used in deceptive marketing. Words like **“premium quality”** and

“premium ingredients” are imprecise and unconfirmed, leaving the shopper to assume that the goods are upright without providing any significant evidence to back up these claims. This absence of specificity produces a mental model where the buyer sees the product as high-end, cheering them to trust they are making a clever buying. This schematic language presents the product as both luxurious and budget-friendly enticing the buyer to desire for a budgeted item with quality. This shows how online sellers control buyers' thoughts with ambiguous but persuasive language.

Extract 16 Treat yourself to salon-quality hair care. Our luxury products are now on sale!" Achieve glowing skin with our skincare sale! Enjoy up to 50% off on all products."

The terms “salon quality” and “luxury products” have an impact on getting some high-end products on cheaper rates. It taps into their mental model and makes them believe that they are getting something they dreamed of but somehow unable to buy them. Additionally, enriches the human urge to look gorgeous by adding “glowing skin with our skincare sale” encouraging the shopper to invest in a product they are not sure of or familiar with. This language manipulation tactic led the buyer to thoughtless buying.

Trust-Based Language

The last strategy analyzed in the present study is the use of trusted language to get consumers' attention. Social actors (sellers) use varied scametic and manipulated linguistic patterns (words, phrases etc.) which gives an impact that the other party (seller) is your (buyer) well-wisher. They portray the product in an appealing and guaranteed manner. You feel a sense of security and trust them blindly. Examples from the developed corpus were extracted for analysis and presented below for better understanding.

Extract 17 Free Installation Available! Shop Worry-Free & Get Your New Appliances Set Up Today!"

The highlight of this ad is addressing consumers post-buying worries. Offering “free installation” reduces a common concern about purchasing appliances: the trouble and possible setup costs. This not only increases the item's worth but also provides the buyer peace of mind that the seller would do everything in their ability to guarantee an easy purchase, instilling confidence in the deal. The word **“worry-free”** addresses to the emotional need for security and convenience, supporting the idea that the seller has taken proactive steps to eliminate potential issues. This type of discourse forms a perception of the seller as reliable and customer-focused which is essential for building trust in an online shopping environment where physical interaction is absent.

Extract 18

Lifetime Warranty Included! Invest in Quality Appliances That Last.

Above extract, the advertisement comforts the customer by offering a "lifetime warranty" that the product is sturdy and reliable, thus developing trust between the seller and buyer. It further amplifies this idea with the encouragement of "investing in quality" so as to have the consumer look at the purchase as a sagacious long-term investment rather than a simple transaction. Cognitively, the promise of a lifetime warranty activates a mental shortcut for the consumer where feelings about minimized purchase risk override more careful consideration of actual product quality. The social aspect is also approached in the ad by aligning the product with the societal values of sustainability and longevity. On the discursive level, the advertisement uses concise and benefit-driven language that underlines positive emotions of peace of mind, thereby connecting the product with a sense of security and dependability. This will strengthen consumer confidence and enable purchasing decisions to be made more on perceived long-term benefits rather than immediate needs. **Extract 19**

Shop our sulphate-free shampoo collection and enjoy free shipping on orders over \$50.

According to **socio-cognitive theory**, this type of language shapes the consumers' mental model by aligning the product with wellness and eco-friendly trends. This emphasis on the absence of harmful chemicals like sulphates which are increasingly avoided by informed and health-conscious consumers. The phrase “**sulphate-free**” triggers associations with purity, safety, and a more natural product, influencing the consumer to trust that the shampoo is better for their health and the environment. Socially, the ad appeals to individuals who align their purchases with personal health standards and environmental responsibility, further reinforcing their identity as conscious consumers. In short, the seller encouraged the consumers to view the brand as both responsible and rewarding by combining an emphasis on well-being with a clear economic benefit.

Discussion and Findings

Language is a means of communication among individuals. They interact with each other through various linguistic mediums to better understand each other socially and culturally. In this digital era, computer-assisted communication and analysis of these conversations is common through various software. The present study investigated the rise of online shopping scams in Pakistan and other countries with the increasing popularity of ecommerce. By using a mixed-method approach researcher identified the malicious linguistic patterns in online shopping in Pakistan. A corpus containing twenty thousand words, collected from various online platforms (Instagram, Facebook, shopping websites, pitching messages etc.) were analyzed through AntConc software for qualitative analysis, and later frequent linguist strategies used by sellers were explored following sociocognitive model of Van Dijk.

This study unfolds the existence of varied malicious linguistic patterns used in online shopping by Pakistani sellers. The researcher explored the malicious words and phrases such as; off, limited availability, sale alert, save big, exclusive/special offer, available at, get, exclusive deals, special discount, mega discounts, low/unbeatable/mind blowing/best prices, limited stock, flash, and unbeatable prices in the developed corpus. The previous studies investigated the shopping scams through Facebook texts (Nurhalimah et. al., 2023), security issues of online shoppers (Aseri & Abdulha, 2021), multimodal discourse analysis of advertisements (Taibanguai & Suraratdecha, 2022) whereas the present research is different in a way that it explores the manipulative linguistic strategies used by the seller to persuade the buyer through corpus analysis. It also investigates the excessively used malicious language patterns presented above. The main focus of the study was to illustrate how language aids the social actors to transform the shopper attitude as per their requirements. Van Dijk (Van Dijk, 1990) describes that language shapes the mental model of an individual concerning social structures and norms. Following this perspective present study explained how sellers used language to convince their consumers to buy products that may not be significant buying. The qualitative analysis of the study reveals the five linguistic strategies commonly used by sellers namely; Urgency and Scarcity, Inflating Value of the Product, Emotional Manipulation, Unclear and Ambiguous

Language, and Trust-Based Language. Phrases like; “steal the deal, limited time offer, limited time only etc.” are used to create a sense of urgency and scarcity. It creates an effect that if the buyer loses this great opportunity he may not get such an offer again. Next, “20% off, save up to 50% off etc. phrases are implied to create hype. Consumers feel pressured to buy immediately to save big. Words like “don’t miss out, special offer, unmissable etc.” give the emotional appeal and encourages the consumer to act fast. Furthermore, products are often described in ambiguous language but the choice of words is persuasive, without a clear description of the product linguistic patterns are enough to motivate the shopper to buy the product. Lastly, the seller develops trust-based discourse which gives a sense of security and confidence to the buyer. Such discourse enables the worry-free purchase. Moreover, the present study shows the implicit use of manipulative linguistic strategies on e-commerce platforms by scammers and frequencies of the developed corpus indicate the excessive use of malicious patterns on online shopping platforms.

CONCLUSION:

The present study explored the alarming rise of online shopping scams in Pakistan and other countries, which have been charged by the increasing popularity of e-commerce. By employing a qualitative approach, the researcher identified the presence of malicious linguistic patterns in online shopping within the Pakistani context. The present study drew on **Van Dijk's sociocognitive model of discourse analysis** to delve deeper into the nature of these manipulative practices.

The research highlights a concerning trend in Pakistani online shopping; the frequent use of manipulative linguistic strategies to influence consumer behavior.

The following were some of the manipulative words and phrases used: "off," "limited availability," "sale alert," "save big," "exclusive/special offer," "available at," "exclusive deals," "mega discounts," "low/unbeatable/mind-blowing/best prices," "limited stock," and "flash offers." Each of these terms is made to create urgency, exclusivity, or not getting a good deal. Scarcity is wooed by "limited availability" or "limited stock," meaning one has to rush before the stock runs out. Similarly, words like "exclusive deals" or "special offer" will make customers feel privileged and special, offering them something of value that might not be given to others.

These are designed to enact a psychological response, mostly skipping the rational processes of decision-making. At this level, words such as "unbeatable" or "mind blowing prices" inflate the value on offer so that the customer can barely resist the deal. Such phrases as "save big" or "flash offers" aim at an illusion of great financial saving or urgency to act instantly. The persistence of this terminology is therefore indicative not only of the retailers' awareness of consumer psychology but also of how to manipulate cognitive biases of consumers through these scarcity biases, anchoring effects, and impulses that demand instant gratification. This has wider ramifications, especially in the light of Pakistani society, where online shopping has been latched onto very fast due to rapid access to the net as well as smartphone purchases. The reliance on these linguistic strategies raises ethical concerns, as they often come at the expense of customer wellbeing for profit. The most vulnerable consumers, including those who are new to online shopping or uninformed about such manipulative tactics, are highly susceptible to falling prey to these strategies. They may overspend, buy unnecessary items, or make rushed decisions that lead to dissatisfaction or financial strain. What is more, these practices represent the general tendency in global e-commerce; however, they obtain special significance within the context of Pakistan with still developing laws of consumer protection and low levels of digital literacy. The results indicate a call to raise consumers' awareness of such tactics and make relevant informed decisions. Education, clear marketing, and stronger regulation might all be part of an attempt to limit the effect of such manipulative strategies. The present study is a significant contribution to this area as it tries to explore the overuse of pernicious language patterns in online purchasing. The study has shown how the language is used strategically to manipulate customer behavior. Looking at the words and phrases most in use by online vendors, the research points out the premeditated attempts to affect and control consumers' attitudes and actions. In view of this observation, this work identifies five commonly used linguistic tools by vendors; these are created to ensure a sale, not necessarily with much regard for consumers' informed consent. The urgency and scarcity argument, inflating the value of products, emotionally manipulating, employing unclear and ambiguous language, are some of those linguistic tactics by which vendors attract customers. Every tactic plays a specific role in creating the perception about the product for the customer and the process of buying, therefore coercing the customers into quick and often uninformed purchasing decisions. Also, the present study will contribute to the literature in terms of conceptualizing how language could be used as a weapon in online marketplaces for customer benefits. It is particularly needed in third world countries like Pakistan, where a majority of the buyers are pretty naive and thus easily fall victim to these devious tactics employed by online sellers. The study also enumerates the importance of critical discourse analysis in unmasking the hidden instruments of control and power inserted in putatively nice language. This study makes it clear that

language is a tool for manipulation as well as communication, and that it can be used to significantly affect customer behavior. Results of this study have pointed out that the education of consumers about such fraudulent techniques is important, with online buying on the rise, in order to make better and wiser decisions when entering an online marketplace. Future studies should be directed at consumer education and awareness as avenues to address the excessive use of manipulative linguistic patterns in online buying. Such programs could lead to better digital literacy, particularly among the most disadvantaged sections, by teaching consumers to identify and avoid misleading language in advertisements.

Understanding phrases like "limited stock" or "exclusive deals" might help consumers in making better choices. Secondly, openness in online marketing will necessarily have to come through stronger regulatory steps taken by governments and consumer protection organizations. It is to be made mandatory for the vendors to provide precise information concerning the prices, sales, and stock positions. The use of misleading words or phrases should be made illegal and any offenders should be punished. Thirdly, guidelines related to ethical marketing can be included in an ecommerce site to avoid such unethical tactic. Such feedback can be utilized to identify harmful patterns and encourage the remedial steps needed. Lastly, more study is required to fully comprehend how manipulative marketing strategies affect a variety of demographic groups psychologically. The studies can also research the efficiency of programs such as awareness and legal frameworks that have been instituted with a view to enhancing the tactics against unethical behavior. Taking these measures will ensure that the investors have a safe, transparent environment for online shopping. Informed consumers making rational, logical choices, it will help check vendors who operate on psychological vulnerabilities through regulatory mechanisms and technological measures. Taken together, this will engender trust and integrity in e-commerce, a fair balance between the interests of consumers and businesses, and, eventually, long-term sustainability of digital marketplaces.

Literature cited

- Aseri, Abdulah. "Security issues for online shoppers." *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research* 10, no. 3 (2021): 112-116.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the International Speech Communication Association, INTERSPEECH*.
- Dawadi, S., & Giri, R. A. (2021). *Mixed-Methods Research : A Discussion on its Types , Challenges , and Criticisms*. 25–36.
- Enosh, G., Tzafrir, S. S., & Stolovy, T. (2015). The Development of Client Violence Questionnaire (CVQ). *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 9(3), 273–290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689814525263>
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. *New Age International. New Delhi*, 12–15.
- <https://www.ptonline.com/articles/how-to-get-better-mfi-results>
- Nurhalimah, N., & Amirulmukminin, A. (2023). Analisis Kinerja Badan Penanggulangan Bencana BPBD Daerah Kabupaten Bima Dalam Penanggulangan Korban Bencana Banjir. *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen, Bisnis dan Kewirausahaan*, 3(3), 347355.
- Taibanguai, K., & Suraratdecha, S. (2022). Strategies to Grab Attention: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Online Selling Posts. *NIDA Journal of Language and Communication*, 27(42), 47-67.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1990). Social cognition and discourse. *Handbook of language and social psychology*, 163, 183.
- Abbasi, A., Zahedi, F.M., Zeng, D., Chen, Y., Chen, H. and Nunamaker J.F. Enhancing predictive analytics for anti-phishing by exploiting website genre information.

Journal of Management Information Systems, 31, 4 (2015), 109–157.

Abbasi A, Zhang, Z. Zimbra, D., Chen, H. and Nunamaker, J.F. Detecting fraudulent websites: the contribution of statistical learning theory. MIS Quarterly, 34, 3 (2010) 435–461.

Akoglu, L., Chandy, R., and Faloutsos, C. Opinion fraud detection in online reviews by network effects. Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media, 7, (2013), 2–11.

Arazy, O. and Woo, C. Enhancing information retrieval through statistical natural language processing: a study of collocation indexing. MIS Quarterly, 31, 3 (2007), 525–546.

Ball, L. and Elworthy, J. Fraudulent or real? The computational detection of online deceptive text. Journal of Marketing Analytics, 2 (2014), 187–201.

Banerjee S. and Chua, A.Y. A theoretical framework to identify authentic online reviews. Online Information Review, 38, 5 (2014) 634–649.

Bhutada, S., Balaram, V.V.S.S.S. and Sree, C.A. Deep learning framework to detect the false analysis of a product given by robots and malicious users. International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering, 8, 6 (2019), 689–692.

Chawla, N.V., Bowyer, K.W., Hall, L.O. and Kegelmeyer, W.P. SMOTE: Synthetic minority over-sampling technique. Journal of Artificial Intelligence Research, 16 (2002), 321–357.

Chen, L.Y. Alibaba lawsuit throws the spotlight on fraudulent reviews. Bloomberg News, December 19, 2016. Available from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-12-19/alibabalawsuitthrowsspotlight-on-brushers-gaming-rankings>

Conner, C. Amazon sues 1,114 fraudulent reviewers on Fiverr. Forbes, October 8, 2015. Available from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/cherylsnappconner/2015/10/18/amazon-sues-1114fraudulent-reviewers-on-fiverr-com/#5d06fc3637d1>

Dalvi, N.N., Kumar, R. and Pang, B. (2013). Para 'normal' activity: on the distribution of average ratings. Proceeding of the Seventh International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media (ICWSM-13). Palo Alto: The AAAI press, pp. 110–119 Deception-Detection-on-Amazon-reviews-dataset. Available from: <https://github.com/aayush210789/Deception-Detection-on-Amazon-reviewsdataset>

Deng, S. Deceptive reviews detection of industrial product. International Journal of Services Operations and Informatics, 8, 2 (2016), 122.

Dong, L., Ji, S., Zhang, C., Zhang, Q., Chiu, D.W., Qiu, L. and Li, D. An unsupervised topic- sentiment joint probabilistic model for detecting deceptive reviews. Expert Systems with Applications, 114 (2018), 210–223.

Federal Trade Commission. FTC brings first case challenging fraudulent paid reviews on an independent retail website. February 26, 2019. Available at <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/press-releases/2019/02/ftc-brings-first-casechallenging-fraudulent-paid-reviews-independent>

Feng, S., Banerjee, R. and Choi, Y. Syntactic stylometry for deception detection. Proceedings of the 50th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics. Stroudsburg: Association for Computational Linguistics, 2012, pp.171–175.

Goes, P.B.; Lin, M.; and Au Yeung, C.M. Popularity effect” in user-generated content: Evidence from online product reviews. Information Systems Research, 25, 2 (2014), 222–238.

- Hazim, M., Anuar, N.B., Ab Razak, M.F. and Abdullah, N.A. Detecting opinion spams through supervised boosting approach. *PLoS One*, 13, 6 (2018), e0198884.
- Heredia, B., Khoshgoftaar, T.M., Prusa, J.D. and Crawford, M. Improving detection of untrustworthy online reviews using ensemble learners combined with feature selection. *Social Network Analysis and Mining*, 7, 37 (2017), 1–18.
- Ho, S.M., Hancock, J.T., Booth, C., and Liu, X. Computer-mediated deception: Strategies revealed by language-action cues in spontaneous communication. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 33, 2 (2016), 393–420.
- Ivanova, O. and Scholz, M. How can online marketplaces reduce rating manipulation? A new approach on dynamic aggregation of online ratings. *Decision Support Systems*, 104, 4 (2017), 64– 78.
- Jalther, D. and Priya, G. Reputation reporting system using text based classification, *International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering*, 8 (8) (2019) 1555–1558.
- Jindal, N. and Liu, B. Opinion spam and analysis. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Web Search and Data Mining*. New York, NY: ACM, 2008, pp. 219–230.
- Kamalesh, M.D. and Diwedi, H.K. Extracting product features from consumer reviews and its applications. *International Journal of Applied Engineering Research*, 10, 2 (2015), 2345–2350.
- Khansa, L., Ma, X., Liginlal, D. and Kim, S.S. Understanding members’ active participation in online question-and-answer communities: a theory and empirical analysis. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 32,2 (2015), 162-203.
- Khurshid F., Zhu, Y. Xu, Z. Ahmad, M. and Ahmad, M. Enactment of ensemble learning for review spam detection on selected features. *International Journal of Computational Intelligence Systems*, 12 (1) (2019) 387–394.
- Kumar A., Shankar, R., Choudhary, A.K. and Thakur, L.S. A big data MapReduce framework for fault diagnosis in cloud-based manufacturing. *International Journal of Production Research*, 54 (2016) 7060–7073.
- Kumar, N., Venugopal, D., Qiu, L., and Kumar, S. Detecting review manipulation on online platforms with hierarchical supervised learning. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 35, 1 (2018), 350–380.
- Kumar, N., Venugopal, D., Qiu, L., and Kumar, S. Detecting anomalous online reviewers: an unsupervised approach using mixture models. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 36, 4 (2019), 1313–1346.
- Lappas, T., Sabnis, G. and Valkanas, G. The impact of fake reviews on online visibility: A vulnerability assessment of the hotel industry. *Information Systems Research*, 27, 4, (2016), 940-961.
- Lash, M.T. and Zhao, K. Early predictions of movie success: The who, what, and when of profitability. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 33, 3 (2016), 874–903.
- Lau, R.Y.K., Liao, S.Y., Kwok, R.C.W., Xu, K., Xia, Y. and Li, Y. Text mining and probabilistic language modeling for online review spam detection. *Transactions on Management Information Systems*, 2, 4 (2011), 1–30.
- Lazer, D.M., Baum, M.A., Benkler, Y., Berinsky, A.J., Greenhill, K.M., Menczer, F. and Schudson, M. The science of fraudulent news. *Science*, 359, 6380 (2018), 1094– 1096.
- Li, F., Huang, M., Yang, Y., and Zhu, X. Learning to identify review spam. *Proceedings of the International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence*, 22, 3 (2011), 2488– 2493.

- Li, H., Liu, B., Mukherjee, A. and Shao, J. Spotting fraudulent reviews using positive unlabeled learning. *Computations y Sistemas*, 18, 3 (2014), 467–475.
- Li, L., Qin, B., Ren, W. and Liu, T. Document representation and feature combination for deceptive spam review detection. *Neurocomputing*, 254 (2017), 33–41.
- Liang, X., Jiang, A., Li, T., Xue, Y. and Wang, G. LR-SMOTE—An improved unbalanced dataset oversampling based on K-means and SVM. *Knowledge Based Systems* 196 (2020), 105845.
- Lim, E. Nguyen, V. A., Jindal, N., Liu, B., and Lauw, H. Detecting product review spammers using rating behavior. *Proceedings of the 19th ACM international conference on Information and knowledge management*. Lyon: ACM, 2010, pp. 939–948.
- Lin, Y., Zhu, T., Wu, H., Zhang, J., Wang, X., and Zhou, A. Towards online anti-opinion spam: spotting fraudulent reviews from the review sequence. *Proceedings of the 2019 IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining*. New York: Association for Computing Machinery, 2014, pp. 261–264.
- Liu, Y. and Pang, B. A unified framework for detecting author spamicity by modeling review deviation. *Expert Systems With Applications*, 112 (2018), 148–155.
- Liu Y., Pang, B., and Wang, X. Opinion spam detection by incorporating multimodal embedded representation into a probabilistic review graph. *Neurocomputing*, 366 (2019) 276–283
- Luca, M. and Zervas, G. Fake it till you make it: reputation, competition, and yelp review fraud.
- Ludwig, S., Van Laer, T., De Ruyter, K. and Friedman, M. Untangling a web of lies: Exploring automated detection of deception in computer-mediated communication. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 33, 2 (2016), 511–541.
- Mukherjee, A., Kumar, A., Liu, B., Wang, J., Hsu, M., Castellanos, M. and Ghosh, R. Spotting opinion spammers using behavioral footprints. *Proceedings of the 19th ACM SIGKDD international conference on Knowledge discovery and data mining*. New York: ACM, 2013, pp. 632–643.
- Mukherjee, A., Liu, B. and Glance, N. Spotting fake reviewer groups in consumer reviews. *Proceedings of the 21st International World Wide Web Conference (IW3C)*. Lyon: ACM, 2012, Murphy, R. Local consumer review survey. December 2019. Available from: <https://www.brightlocal.com/research/local-consumer-review-survey/>
- Ott, M., Choi, Y., Cardie, C. and Hancock, J. T. (2011). Finding deceptive opinion spam by any stretch of the imagination. *Proceedings of the 49th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics: Human Language Technologies*. Stroudsburg: Association for Computational Linguistics, pp. 309–319.
- Proudfoot, J.G.; Jenkins, J.L.; Burgoon, J.K.; and Nunamaker, J.F. Jr. More than meets the eye: how oculometric behaviors evolve over the course of automated deception detection interactions. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 33, 2 (2016), 332–360.
- Rajamohana, S. and Umamaheswari, K. Hybrid approach of improved binary particle swarm optimization and shuffled frog leaping for feature selection. *Computers & Electrical Engineering*, 67 (2018), 497–508.
- Rajamohana, S., Umamaheswari, K. and Abirami, B. Performance analysis of iBPSO and BFPA based feature selection techniques for improving classification accuracy in review spam detection. *Applied Mathematics & Information Sciences*, 11, 4 (2017) 1149–1153.

- Rayana, S. and Akoglu, L. Collective opinion spam detection: bridging review networks and metadata. *Proceedings of the ACM SIGKDD International Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining*, 21, (2015), 985–994
53. Siering, M., Koch, J.A. and Deokar, A.V. Detecting fraudulent behavior on crowd platforms: The role of linguistic and content-based cues in static and dynamic contexts. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 33, 2 (2016), 421–455
- Vanta, T. and Aono, M. Fraudulent review detection focusing on emotional expressions and extreme rating. *Proceedings of the 25th Annual Conference of the Language Processing Society (NLP2019)*. Nagoya, Japan: The Association for Natural Language Processing, 2019, pp. 1-30.
- Xu, Y., Yang, Y., Han, J., Wang, E., Ming, J. and Xiong, H. Slandorous user detection with modified recurrent neural networks in recommender system. *Information Sciences*, 505 (2019), 265–281.
- Yu, C., Zuo, Y., Feng, B., and Chen, B. An individual-group-merchant relation model for identifying fraudulent online reviews: an empirical study on a Chinese e-commerce platform. *Information Technology & Management*, 20 (2019) 123–138.
- Yuan, S., Wu, X. and Xiang, Y. Task-specific word identification from short texts using a convolutional neural network. *Intelligent Data Analysis*, 22, 3 (2018), 533–550.
- Zhang, D.S., Zhou, L.N., Kehoe, J.L. and Kilic, I.Y. What online reviewer behaviors really matter? Effects of verbal and nonverbal behaviors on detection of fraudulent online reviews. *Journal of Management Information Systems* 33, 2 (2016), 456–481.
- Zhang, L., Wu, Z. and Cao, J. Detecting spammer groups from product reviews: a partially supervised learning model. *IEEE Access*, 6 (2018), 2559–2568.
- Zhang, W., Du, Y., Yoshida, T. and Wang, Q. DRI-RCNN: an approach to deceptive review identification using recurrent convolutional neural network. *Information Processing and Management*,