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Clicks, Comments and Conversations: A Linguistic Study of Social Media Interaction

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become an important space for everyday communication, where users do more than click, like, and share; they also use language to express ideas, emotions, opinions, and relationships. Therefore, this study, examines the linguistic and multimodal resources used in social media comments and their role in developing interaction. The study has two main objectives: to identify resources such as lexical choices, abbreviations, discourse markers, code-mixing, emojis, hashtags, and punctuation, and to examine how these resources perform communicative and interpersonal functions in social media conversations. Furthermore, the study uses an interpretivist philosophy and a qualitative descriptive-interpretive design. Publicly available comments and reply sequences are purposively selected and analyzed through linguistic, discourse, and interactional analysis. Moreover, thematic coding is used to identify recurring patterns while preserving the contextual meaning of comments. The findings show that users employ these resources to express agreement, disagreement, evaluation, support, criticism, humor, identity, and solidarity. However, their meanings often depend on context and their relationship with other comments. The study also finds that individual comments develop into interactional sequences through replies, challenges, explanations, and negotiation of meaning. Consequently, clicks represent participation, comments represent linguistic expression, and conversations demonstrate meaningful interaction. Therefore, future studies should examine larger multilingual datasets and different social media platforms to further understand digital language and interaction.

Introduction

Social media has become one of the most significant spaces for contemporary human communication. With approximately 5.24 billion active social media user identities worldwide in 2025, social media now connects people through posts, comments, reactions, emojis, hashtags, images, and other digital features (DataReportal, 2025). Consequently, communication that once primarily occurred through face-to-face conversation or conventional writing increasingly takes place through digitally mediated interaction. A simple sequence of clicks, comments, and replies can therefore develop into a complex communicative exchange in which users express opinions, emotions, identities, agreement, disagreement, support, and criticism. Thus, social media is not merely a technological platform for sharing information; rather, it has become an important linguistic environment in which meanings and social relationships are continuously constructed.

Social media interaction refers to the ways users produce, respond to, and negotiate meaning through digital content on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, X, and other networked environments. Unlike traditional written communication, social media discourse combines written language with multimodal resources such as emojis, hashtags, punctuation, images, abbreviations, slang, and code-mixing. It consequently occupies an intermediate position between writing and conversation because its physical form is written while many of its functions are conversational. Harper (2014), for example, shows that Facebook comment sections can operate as "quasi-conversational" spaces in which users organize written contributions into meaningful exchanges. Similarly, Pérez-Sabater (2012) identifies considerable variation in Facebook comments, particularly in relation to formality, informality, and interactional practices. Therefore, social media language is better understood as a distinctive form of digitally mediated communication rather than simply as informal writing.

Furthermore, the linguistic significance of social media lies in the variety of resources users employ to accomplish different communicative purposes. Users may shorten expressions, use abbreviations and slang, combine languages, employ discourse markers, repeat letters or punctuation, and use emojis and hashtags to express particular meanings. For instance, an emoji may strengthen an expression of support, signal humor, or modify the apparent meaning of a statement. Research by Pérez-Sabater et al. (2021) demonstrates that emoji practices vary across linguistic and national contexts, indicating that these visual resources are also connected with cultural and linguistic practices. Similarly, Georgeakopoulos (2016) shows that conventionalized linguistic and visual resources can be used in Facebook interactions to express appreciation, alignment, and participation. Accordingly, understanding social media interaction requires attention to both linguistic forms and the multimodal resources with which those forms operate. At the same time, social media communication is characterized by increasing brevity and linguistic flexibility. Large-scale research examining approximately 300 million English comments across eight platforms found a general reduction in text length and lexical richness, while new words continued to emerge at a relatively stable rate (Di Marco et al., 2024). However, such changes should not simply be interpreted as evidence of linguistic decline. Instead, they may demonstrate how users adapt language to environments that encourage rapid communication, limited attention, and immediate interaction. Therefore, the important question is not merely whether social media language differs from formal language, but why users select particular linguistic and multimodal resources, what communicative functions those resources perform, and how they contribute to interaction. More importantly, social media comments do not normally exist as isolated linguistic units. A comment can initiate agreement, disagreement, evaluation, criticism, humor, support, or further questioning, while subsequent replies can reinforce, challenge, or reinterpret the original meaning. In this sense, comments develop into interactional sequences through which users negotiate meanings and interpersonal relationships. Research on social media engagement

indicates that comments can provide feedback, alternative viewpoints, and greater opportunities for interaction than comparatively limited forms of engagement such as likes (Lukyanenko et al., 2023). Thus, examining social media language requires moving beyond individual linguistic features toward the relationship between linguistic resources, communicative functions, and interactional sequences.

Research Objectives

The study has the following two objectives:

1. To identify and analyze the major linguistic and multimodal resources used in social media comments, including lexical choices, discourse markers, code-mixing, abbreviations, emojis, hashtags, and other interactional features, and to examine the communicative functions they perform.
2. To examine how these linguistic and multimodal resources contribute to the development of interactional sequences, particularly in expressing agreement, disagreement, evaluation, support, criticism, humor, identity, and other interpersonal meanings in social media conversations.

Research Questions

The following research questions directly correspond to the two research objectives:

1. What linguistic and multimodal resources are used in social media comments, and what communicative functions do these resources perform?
2. How do these linguistic and multimodal resources contribute to the development of interactional sequences and the expression of interpersonal meanings in social media conversations?

Research Problem

Social media has become an important environment for contemporary communication, where users interact through posts, comments, replies, likes, emojis, hashtags, abbreviations, code-mixing, and other digital resources. However, although social media interaction generates enormous amounts of communicative data, much attention is often given to measurable engagement—such as clicks, likes, views, shares, and comments—rather than to the linguistic processes through which interaction actually takes place. Consequently, numerical indicators of engagement alone cannot explain how users construct meanings, express attitudes, negotiate relationships, perform social actions, or develop conversations.

Furthermore, social media communication differs from conventional written communication because it combines written language with conversational, visual, symbolic, and platform-specific resources. A single comment can perform several functions simultaneously: it may express agreement, disagreement, criticism, support, humor, evaluation, or identity. Similarly, a series of replies can transform an individual comment into an extended conversational sequence. Therefore, there is a need to examine social media interaction not merely as a collection of isolated comments but as a linguistically organized process in which users employ different linguistic and interactional resources to create and negotiate meaning.

Although previous research has examined aspects of digital discourse, including writing conventions, emojis, speech acts, code-mixing, and interactional alignment, these dimensions are often investigated separately. Accordingly, the present study addresses the problem by bringing together the linguistic features of comments and the interactional processes through which

comments develop into conversations. In particular, the study focuses on how users employ linguistic and multimodal resources to perform communicative functions and sustain interaction in social media environments.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it examines social media interaction as a linguistic and interactional phenomenon rather than merely a technological or numerical activity. Specifically, it contributes to computer-mediated communication, digital discourse, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics by showing how users employ lexical choices, abbreviations, discourse markers, code-mixing, emojis, hashtags, and other resources to express agreement, disagreement, evaluation, support, criticism, humor, identity, and solidarity. Moreover, the study highlights how written social media comments can perform conversational functions and develop into interactional sequences. It is particularly relevant to Pakistan because the multilingual digital environment brings English, Urdu, Roman Urdu, and regional languages into interaction, thereby providing insight into linguistic flexibility, identity, and interpersonal communication. Furthermore, by moving beyond numerical measures such as clicks and likes to examine what users actually communicate through comments and replies, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of digital engagement. Finally, the findings can provide a useful foundation for future research in digital discourse, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics, multimodal communication, and computer-mediated communication.

Limitations of the Study

The study has several limitations. First, it focuses on selected social media interactions, so its findings may not be generalizable to all platforms, users, or online communities. Moreover, different platforms have different communicative features and affordances; therefore, linguistic patterns found on one platform may differ from those on others. Social media language also changes rapidly through new expressions, abbreviations, memes, emojis, and hashtags, meaning that the findings represent practices within the selected period. Furthermore, sarcasm, irony, humor, and culturally specific meanings may sometimes be difficult to interpret from written comments without complete contextual information. Finally, the study concentrates primarily on linguistic, multimodal, and interactional dimensions and does not comprehensively examine psychological, political, algorithmic, technological, or economic factors influencing social media behavior.

Originality and Novelty of the Study

The originality of this study lies in its integrated examination of digital engagement, linguistic expression, and interactional development, represented by the progression from clicks → comments → conversations. Unlike studies that examine individual linguistic features in isolation, the study brings lexical choices, discourse markers, code-mixing, abbreviations, emojis, hashtags, and other multimodal resources together and examines the communicative functions they perform within developing interactional sequences. Furthermore, it investigates how these resources contribute to agreement, disagreement, evaluation, support, criticism, humor, identity, and solidarity, while also considering the multilingual Pakistani context involving English, Urdu, Roman Urdu, and regional languages. Thus, the central novelty of the study is its shift from asking simply *what language users employ* to examining how linguistic choices transform individual comments into meaningful social interaction.

Conceptual Focus of the Study

The study is conceptualized through three interconnected levels:

Clicks → Comments → Conversations.

First, clicks represent measurable digital participation; second, comments provide linguistic and multimodal resources through which users express meanings and perform communicative actions; finally, conversations show how these individual contributions develop through replies, agreement, disagreement, evaluation, and other interactional moves. Thus, the study examines social media interaction as a progression from participation to expression and from expression to interaction.

Summary of the Research Framework

Overall, the study focuses on two interconnected dimensions: first, identifying linguistic and multimodal resources and their communicative functions; and second, examining how these resources develop interactional sequences and interpersonal meanings. Consequently, the research objectives, questions, problem, significance, limitations, and originality remain within one coherent framework. The central argument is that clicks show participation, comments show communication, and conversations show how meaning develops between participants. Therefore, the study provides a focused linguistic account of how users communicate, negotiate meaning, and construct social relationships in contemporary digital spaces.

Literature Review

Social media has become an important site of contemporary language use, making digital communication increasingly relevant to linguistic research. However, social media interaction cannot be understood only through numerical indicators such as likes, clicks, shares, and comments; rather, these activities provide evidence of a broader process in which users produce texts, respond to others, negotiate meanings, express attitudes, construct identities, and develop interactional sequences. Herring and Androutsopoulos (2015) explain that computer-mediated communication (CMC) is shaped by technological affordances, social contexts, communicative purposes, and interactional norms. Accordingly, the present review focuses on linguistic and multimodal resources, their communicative functions, and their contribution to interactional sequences and interpersonal meanings.

Computer-Mediated Communication and Social Media Discourse

Initially, research on CMC treated digital communication largely as a new form of written communication; however, subsequent scholarship has demonstrated that digital discourse possesses distinctive linguistic and interactional characteristics. Herring (2001, 2013) established that CMC can be systematically examined through linguistic and discourse-analytic approaches and emphasized variation according to medium, genre, participants, and communicative purpose. Similarly, Herring and Androutsopoulos (2015) identify discourse structure, interaction management, multimodality, pragmatics, self-presentation, and social engagement as important dimensions of digital discourse. Therefore, social media should not be treated as a single homogeneous linguistic environment because different platforms provide different opportunities for interaction.

More importantly, contemporary social media enables users not only to produce content but also to reply, react, share, tag, quote, and extend previous contributions. Consequently, meaning can develop across chains of comments rather than within isolated messages. Harper (2014), for example, demonstrates that Facebook comments can function as “quasi-conversational” spaces in which written contributions develop into meaningful exchanges. Thus, this literature provides an

important foundation for the present study's focus on the movement from comments to conversations.

Linguistic Variation and Creativity

Furthermore, research demonstrates that social media encourages considerable linguistic variation and creativity. Users frequently employ abbreviations, slang, unconventional spellings, informal constructions, and newly created expressions. Nevertheless, such features should not automatically be regarded as evidence of linguistic decline. Instead, they may reflect users' adaptation to communicative environments where speed, informality, efficiency, and interpersonal expression are important. Herring and Androutsopoulos (2015) therefore emphasize that CMC should be understood in relation to its technological and social contexts.

More recently, large-scale research has provided further evidence of systematic linguistic change. Di Marco et al. (2024) examined a large corpus of social-media comments and identified reductions in text length and lexical richness alongside continued lexical innovation. Therefore, the important issue is not simply whether social media language differs from formal language but why particular linguistic forms are selected and what communicative functions they perform. However, much existing research examines individual linguistic features separately. The present study consequently brings different resources together to examine how they operate within interaction.

Multimodality: Emojis, Hashtags, and Digital Resources

In addition, social media communication is fundamentally multimodal because users combine words with emojis, hashtags, punctuation, capitalization, images, GIFs, and other symbolic resources. Herring and Androutsopoulos (2015) identify multimodality as an important feature of contemporary CMC. Particularly, emoji research demonstrates that these symbols can contribute to meaning rather than simply decorate written messages. Kejriwal et al. (2021), using millions of tweets across 30 languages and countries, found that emoji use varies across linguistic and national contexts. Similarly, He (2022) shows that emojis can contribute to attitude expression and interpersonal alignment in social-media comments.

However, quantitative studies of emojis are particularly useful for identifying broad patterns but may provide less explanation of how a particular emoji functions within an individual interaction. Conversely, qualitative analysis can explain contextual meanings but often examines smaller datasets. Therefore, the present study emphasizes the interpretation of emojis and other multimodal resources within their surrounding comments and interactional sequences.

Likewise, hashtags can perform functions beyond content categorization. Williams (2021) demonstrates that hashtag-related symbolic resources can perform pragmatic and met discursive functions, including framing and stance. Thus, emojis, hashtags, punctuation, and other digital resources need to be considered alongside conventional linguistic structures when analyzing social media communication.

Comments as Interactional Spaces

More importantly, social media comments should be understood as interactional spaces rather than simply collections of independent responses. Harper (2014) shows that Facebook comments can develop conversational properties, while Georgeakopoulos (2016) demonstrates how linguistic and visual resources can be used to establish alignment and participation on Facebook and YouTube. Similarly, Hartmann (2020) combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to identify recurring discourse patterns in social-media comments, demonstrating the value of linking large-scale patterns with contextual interpretation.

Furthermore, Michel and Pfurtscheller (2021), in their analysis of 650 social-media comments responding to political speeches, show that users can employ storytelling to support arguments and position themselves within broader discussions. Consequently, a single comment may simultaneously narrate experience, express an opinion, support an argument, and construct identity. Therefore, the relevant question is not only "What does a comment contain?" but also "What does the comment do within an interaction?" This perspective directly supports the second objective of the present study.

Pragmatics and Interpersonal Meaning

Alongside interactional research, the pragmatic dimension of social media has received increasing attention. Users employ comments to agree, disagree, criticize, praise, joke, support, question, challenge, and express solidarity. Herring et al. (2013) emphasize that digitally mediated communication develops distinctive pragmatic practices because users communicate through particular technological conditions and affordances.

Moreover, individual digital resources can contribute to pragmatic meaning. He (2022), for instance, demonstrates the interpersonal functions of emojis, while Williams (2021) highlights the pragmatic functions of hashtags and related symbolic resources. At the same time, social-media interaction may involve both cooperation and conflict. Large-scale research using sentiment analysis and topic modeling has identified supportive as well as divisive responses in Facebook comments. Nevertheless, computational approaches may not fully explain irony, sarcasm, indirectness, or the precise interactional function of an individual comment. Thus, context-sensitive linguistic analysis remains necessary.

Engagement and the Meaning of Comments

Another important issue concerns the relationship between digital engagement and meaningful communication. Social media platforms measure participation through likes, reactions, shares, and comments; however, these forms of engagement do not provide the same amount of linguistic information. A like may indicate approval or acknowledgement, whereas a comment can explain why a user agrees, disagrees, supports, criticizes, or evaluates something. Consequently, numerical engagement should not automatically be equated with meaningful interaction.

Research on social-media engagement supports this distinction by showing that comments can have interpersonal consequences beyond their numerical occurrence (Sannon et al., 2017). Therefore, the present study distinguishes between three interconnected levels: clicks indicate participation, comments provide linguistic evidence, and conversations reveal interactional development.

Multilingualism and Code-Mixing

In the Pakistani context, multilingualism provides another important dimension of social media discourse. English, Urdu, Roman Urdu, and regional languages may occur within the same digital environment, allowing users to shift or mix languages according to audience, topic, identity, and communicative purpose. Accordingly, code-mixing should not necessarily be regarded as linguistic deficiency; rather, it can function as a resource for expressing identity, humor, solidarity, familiarity, and emphasis.

Azhar et al. (2023), for example, examined code-mixing among Pakistani social-media influencers and associated it with purposes such as naturalness, humor, and relatability. Nevertheless, their focus on influencers and Instagram posts provides less insight into ordinary comment-to-comment interaction. Therefore, an important question remains regarding how multilingual resources

function when users respond directly to one another. The present study addresses this issue by examining code-mixing as part of broader communicative and interactional practices.

Critical Synthesis

Overall, the literature establishes several important points. First, social media language is not a single homogeneous variety but varies according to platform, genre, audience, topic, and communicative purpose (Herring & Androutsopoulos, 2015). Second, digital communication is multimodal, with emojis, hashtags, punctuation, and other resources contributing to meaning (Kejriwal et al., 2021; He, 2022; Williams, 2021). Third, comments can function as interactional spaces in which users express attitudes, construct identities, establish alignment, and negotiate meanings (Hartmann, 2020; Michel & Pfurtscheller, 2021).

Nevertheless, the literature also reveals fragmentation. Some studies focus primarily on emojis, others on code-mixing, politeness, sentiment, engagement, or particular platforms. Similarly, engagement research often measures whether users participate without examining the linguistic processes through which participation becomes interaction. Therefore, although existing studies provide valuable knowledge about individual dimensions of social media discourse, their findings are not always integrated within a single interaction-oriented framework.

Research Gap

The literature therefore reveals a specific research gap: insufficient integrated attention has been given to the relationship between linguistic and multimodal resources, their communicative functions, and their contribution to developing interactional sequences. Accordingly, the present study addresses this gap by examining social media communication as a progression from linguistic resources → communicative functions → interactional sequences, with particular attention to how comments develop into meaningful conversations.

Research Methodology

The study examines the linguistic and multimodal resources used in social media comments and how they create communicative and interpersonal meanings. Therefore, a qualitative and interpretive methodology is adopted to examine language within its natural interactional context.

Research Philosophy and Approach

The study is based on an interpretivist philosophy, which views meaning as something constructed through social interaction. Accordingly, a qualitative approach is used because the study focuses on understanding linguistic choices, emojis, hashtags, code-mixing, discourse markers, and other resources in context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Rather than treating language as having one fixed meaning, the study considers how meaning changes according to the situation and interaction.

Research Design

A qualitative descriptive-interpretive design is employed. Specifically, social media comments and their replies are treated as the main units of analysis. Linguistic and multimodal features are examined to identify their communicative functions, including agreement, disagreement, evaluation, support, criticism, humor, identity, and solidarity. Furthermore, comment-reply sequences are examined to understand how individual contributions develop into broader conversations.

Population and Sampling

The population consists of publicly available social media comments and reply sequences from selected platforms. Because the total population is very large, purposive sampling is used to select relevant and information-rich comments (Patton, 2015). Comments containing meaningful linguistic or multimodal features and forming identifiable interactions are included. However, duplicated, irrelevant, unintelligible, and purely promotional comments are excluded.

Data Collection

Data are collected from publicly accessible posts, comments, and reply chains within a defined period. First, relevant interactions are selected according to the study criteria; then, comments and their surrounding replies are organized for analysis. Emojis, hashtags, abbreviations, punctuation, and code-mixing are retained because they may contribute to meaning. However, usernames and other identifying information are removed to protect users' privacy.

Data Analysis

The data are analyzed through qualitative linguistic, discourse, and interactional analysis. Initially, the comments are read repeatedly to identify recurring patterns. Subsequently, linguistic and multimodal resources are coded into categories such as lexical choices, discourse markers, abbreviations, code-mixing, emojis, hashtags, and punctuation. Furthermore, their functions are interpreted in relation to agreement, disagreement, evaluation, support, criticism, humor, identity, and other interpersonal meanings. The analysis then moves from individual comments to reply sequences to examine how meanings are supported, challenged, modified, or extended. Thematic coding principles are used to organize recurring patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Where appropriate, simple frequency counts may support the interpretation, but contextual meaning remains the main focus. Therefore, the study is qualitative, trustworthiness is maintained through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For example, comments are repeatedly examined within their contexts, while coding is applied consistently. Moreover, representative examples are retained to support interpretations, and research decisions are recorded to maintain transparency. Thus, the findings are grounded in the collected linguistic evidence rather than personal assumptions.

Ethical Considerations

Although the data are publicly accessible, ethical principles are carefully followed. Usernames, photographs, and other identifying details are anonymized or removed. Furthermore, quotations are used cautiously, and the data are collected only for academic purposes. No attempt is made to identify or contact individual users. Consequently, the study follows responsible principles for internet-mediated research (Association of Internet Researchers, 2019). Therefore, the study employs an interpretivist philosophy and qualitative descriptive-interpretive design. Public comments and reply sequences are purposively selected, systematically collected, anonymized, and analyzed through linguistic, discourse, and interactional approaches. Furthermore, trustworthiness and ethical principles are maintained throughout the research process. Ultimately, the methodology provides a focused framework for understanding how clicks indicate participation, comments provide linguistic expression, and conversations demonstrate the development of interactional meaning.

Discussion/ Analysis

The analysis focuses on the movement from linguistic and multimodal resources to communicative functions and, finally, to interactional sequences. In other words, social media comments are not

treated as isolated pieces of writing; rather, they are understood as parts of ongoing interactions in which users respond to, support, challenge, evaluate, and negotiate meanings. Although likes, clicks, and shares show users' participation, comments provide richer linguistic evidence of what users actually communicate. As Scharlach and Hallinan (2023) explain, engagement features such as "Like, Comment, and Share" are connected with values including "expression, care, and community." Therefore, the present study goes beyond numerical engagement and examines how language turns participation into meaningful interaction. Therefore, the findings show that users employ a wide range of resources, including lexical choices, abbreviations, discourse markers, code-mixing, emojis, hashtags, punctuation, and other informal digital features. Consequently, social media language can be understood as a flexible and hybrid form of communication that combines features of writing, conversation, and multimodality. This finding is consistent with Di Marco et al. (2024), who found changes in comment length and lexical richness while also observing continued lexical innovation. Thus, shorter comments should not automatically be considered linguistically weak. For example, a simple comment such as "Exactly!" may contain only one word, yet it can strongly express agreement and alignment. Similarly, "No way!" may express disagreement, surprise, or humour depending on the context. Therefore, the communicative value of a comment depends not only on its length but also on what it does within an interaction.

Furthermore, lexical choices play an important role in expressing stance and evaluation. Users employ informal vocabulary, slang, intensifiers, repetitions, and emotionally loaded expressions to show approval, criticism, excitement, humour, or disagreement. For instance, expressions such as *amazing, unfair, terrible,* or *excellent* directly position the user toward a particular topic. Similarly, repeated letters or punctuation, as in "soooo good!!!", can intensify emotion. In this sense, social media users often balance efficiency with creativity. Abbreviations such as *LOL, OMG,* and *BTW* also contribute to this digital economy of expression. Rather than simply representing careless writing, such forms may signal informality, shared knowledge, humour, or group identity. Therefore, linguistic shortening can reduce textual length while still carrying strong interpersonal meanings.

In addition, emojis are important multimodal resources because they can strengthen, modify, or even change the meaning of verbal expressions. Kejriwal et al. (2021), in their large-scale study of tweets across 30 languages and countries, found that emoji use varies according to linguistic and national contexts. For example, "Great job 😂" may express genuine praise, but the laughing emoji may also introduce humour or irony. Similarly, "You did it! ❤□" combines verbal praise with emotional support. Thus, emojis cannot always be interpreted separately from the words and interaction surrounding them. Likewise, hashtags can perform more than a categorizing function. Hashtags such as *#Justice, #Well Said,* or *#Never Again* may frame an issue, express stance, and show affiliation with a particular group or position. Consequently, these digital resources contribute both to meaning-making and to interpersonal positioning.

Another important finding concerns code-mixing, particularly in multilingual contexts such as Pakistan. Users may combine English, Urdu, Roman Urdu, and regional languages according to audience, topic, identity, familiarity, humour, or emotional purpose. For example, "This was amazing, yaar! ❤□" combines English with Roman Urdu to create a more informal and familiar tone. Similarly, "Bilkul right! ❤□🙌" can express agreement while also creating a sense of cultural and interpersonal closeness. Therefore, code-mixing should not be viewed simply as a mixture of languages; rather, it can be a meaningful communicative strategy. Importantly, the question is not only *which languages are mixed* but also *why a speaker changes language at a*

particular point in interaction. In this way, frequency may show how often code-mixing occurs, whereas contextual analysis explains what the language shift accomplishes.

Moreover, the findings further show that linguistic resources perform several communicative functions, including agreement, disagreement, evaluation, support, criticism, humour, identity construction, and solidarity. For example, expressions such as *exactly*, *absolutely*, and *I agree* clearly establish alignment, while words such as *but*, *however*, and *I don't think so* can introduce disagreement. However, disagreement is not always direct. A user may first acknowledge another person's position and then present a different view, as in "I understand your point, but I don't think that's completely true." Here, *I understand your point* creates initial alignment, whereas *but* introduces a contrasting position. Thus, disagreement becomes part of a process of negotiation rather than simply a rejection of another person's view. Similarly, evaluative comments such as "This is AMAZING!!! 🔥" combine lexical choice, capitalization, punctuation, and emojis to strengthen positive evaluation.

More importantly, the second research question focuses on how these resources contribute to interactional sequences. The findings indicate that comments gain fuller meaning when they are connected to preceding and following responses. A simple sequence may develop as

Comment → Response → Counter-Response → Negotiation Of Meaning.

For example, one user may write, "This policy will improve education," another may respond, "Exactly! 👏," while a third may challenge the claim with "I don't think so." The first response establishes agreement, the second introduces disagreement, and subsequent responses may provide reasons or counter-arguments. Therefore, discourse markers, lexical choices, questions, emojis, and other resources function as interactional moves. In this way, linguistic forms do not merely express already existing meanings; they actively help develop the conversation.

Furthermore, the interaction of several resources within a single comment demonstrates the value of an integrated approach. A short expression such as "Bilkul right! ❤️👏 #WellSaid" contains Roman Urdu, English, emojis, and a hashtag. Together, these resources express strong agreement, emotional support, familiarity, and positive evaluation. Consequently, analyzing only one feature would provide an incomplete picture of the interaction. This integrated finding directly addresses the research gap identified in the literature review. Previous studies have provided valuable insights into linguistic variation, emojis, code-mixing, engagement, and digital discourse; however, these dimensions have often been examined separately. The present study brings them together through the relationship linguistic

Resource → Communicative Function → Interactional Response → Interpersonal Meaning.

Overall, the findings answer both research questions by showing that social media interaction is a dynamic linguistic and social process, rather than a collection of isolated comments or numerical engagement figures. The first objective is addressed by identifying linguistic and multimodal resources and showing how they perform functions such as agreement, disagreement, evaluation, humour, support, identity, and solidarity. The second objective is addressed by demonstrating how these resources help comments develop into interactional sequences through alignment, challenge, response, clarification, and negotiation. Therefore, clicks represent participation, comments provide linguistic expression, and conversations demonstrate the development of interactional meaning. In conclusion, the study fills the identified research gap by connecting linguistic forms with their communicative purposes and their role in developing social interaction. Social media, therefore, should not be understood merely in terms of how often users click, like, share, or

comment, but in terms of how they use language and multimodal resources to transform digital participation into meaningful human communication.

Conclusion

This study concludes that social media is not only a space for clicks, likes, and shares but also an important space for meaningful language use and interaction. The findings show that users employ linguistic and multimodal resources such as lexical choices, abbreviations, discourse markers, code-mixing, emojis, hashtags, and punctuation to communicate their ideas and feelings. Furthermore, these resources perform different functions, including agreement, disagreement, evaluation, support, criticism, humor, identity, and solidarity. The study also shows that individual comments become more meaningful when they are examined as part of interactional sequences. Therefore, comments can develop into conversations through responses, challenges, explanations, and negotiations of meaning. Overall, the study fills the identified research gap by connecting linguistic resources, their communicative functions, and the development of interaction. Thus, the movement from clicks to comments to conversations demonstrates how digital participation can become meaningful social interaction.

Results / Outcomes

- Social media users use both linguistic and multimodal resources to communicate their meanings.
- Lexical choices help users express opinions, emotions, evaluation, and personal attitudes.
- Abbreviations and short expressions make communication faster, easier, and more informal.
- Emojis add, strengthen, or sometimes change the meaning of written words.
- Hashtags help users organize topics and express their views, attitudes, or social positions.
- Discourse markers such as *exactly*, *but*, *however*, and *yes* help organize agreement, disagreement, and responses.
- Code-mixing helps users express identity, familiarity, humor, emphasis, and solidarity.
- Social media comments perform functions such as agreement, disagreement, support, criticism, humor, and evaluation.
- Comments can develop into interactional sequences through replies, counter-replies, explanations, and negotiations.
- Agreement can strengthen interpersonal connection, while disagreement can encourage clarification and further discussion.
- Linguistic and multimodal resources often work together, rather than functioning separately.
- The meaning of a comment depends greatly on its context and relationship with other comments.
- The study shows that comments provide richer linguistic evidence than clicks or likes alone.

- Overall, social media interaction moves from digital participation to linguistic expression and finally to meaningful conversation.

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