

Language and Identity in the Virtual Discourse



Submitted by,

Uzma Yasmeen

M. Phil Applied Linguistics

I.D # 110984022

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Science in Applied Linguistics

School of Social Sciences and Humanities
Department of English Language and Literature
University of Management and Technology, Lahore.

ABSTRACT

Emergence of online media and mediated communications has triggered a change in the standard features of language and patterns of everyday life in society. In this global world, new networking application, for example, Twitter, Skype, Linked In, etc. are connecting human beings. However, the present study investigates how Pakistani Facebook users project their identity onto the virtual space. To investigate the subject, data from Facebook 'Profiles' and 'Wall posts' were copied and scrutinized. The participants for the present study were divided into three equal groups according to their ages- teenagers, youngsters, and adults. Moreover, males and females of each age group were equally included in the study to see differences with gender. The data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively through simple computations of the content and subjective investigations by using Fairclough's three dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis. The findings revealed that people have a wide array of opportunities to project their real identity onto the virtual space, like self disclosure through profile, home pages, linguistic structures, and most importantly name and profile picture show *who a person is*. Moreover, it was found that traditional patterns of variation in socialization, self-disclosure, and communication on the basis of age and gender persist in the virtual world. Where male and female show differences in their life on Facebook, but these differences vary across participants of three age groups. Moreover, transition in life phases of adolescents, youngsters, and adults is identified through their linguistic and socialization behavior equally in the virtual space.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank a number of people who contributed in the completion of this thesis. They provided me support and encouragement on all the way to complete a long and complicated journey of writing this thesis.

First and foremost, I want to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Muhammad Shaban for his supervision, inspiration and a constant support. I am fortunate enough in having the advisor who gave me freedom to work in my own way. His precious guidance, patience and suggestions directed me throughout the research work and contributed to the successful completion of this research.

Thanks to my family, friends, and classmates who supported and encouraged me at the times whenever I lost my stamina and interest. I would also like to thank my brothers who encouraged me and supported me in all the possible ways throughout the time of my research. It would not be possible without patience and support of my family.

Special thanks to my mother for her love, support and prayers; for cheering me up every time when I became discouraged, picking me up when I faltered and supporting me on every step of the way.

DEDICATION

I owe my success to one who worked, struggled, traveled, prayed and supported me in all possible ways during the course of my life.

I heartily dedicate this thesis to my father who took the lead to heaven before the completion of this work.

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