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DEVELOPING AI MODELS FOR URDU AND REGIONAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING: SENTIMENT ANALYSIS AND FAKE NEWS DETECTION IN PAKISTAN'S SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract
The rapid growth of social media platforms in Pakistan has intensified the spread of user-generated content in Urdu and regional languages, leading to significant challenges in sentiment interpretation and misinformation detection. This study aimed to develop and evaluate advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) models for Urdu and regional language processing, focusing on sentiment analysis and fake news detection in a multilingual social media environment. A comparative experimental design was employed using traditional machine learning models, deep learning architectures, and transformer-based models, including BERT and XLM-RoBERTa. The dataset was collected from social media platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), and WhatsApp-forwarded content, followed by extensive preprocessing including normalization, tokenization, and code-mixing handling. Experimental results revealed that transformer-based models significantly outperformed traditional and deep learning approaches, with XLM-RoBERTa achieving the highest accuracy in both sentiment analysis (93.4%) and fake news detection (92.6%). Furthermore, a unified multi-task learning framework demonstrated improved efficiency by simultaneously performing both classification tasks with high accuracy. The study concludes that transformer-based AI models provide a robust solution for low-resource language processing in Pakistan's digital ecosystem. The findings have important implications for digital governance, cybersecurity, and AI-driven misinformation detection systems in multilingual environments.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of social media platforms has significantly transformed the communication landscape, particularly in developing countries such as Pakistan. Platforms such as Facebook, X, and WhatsApp have become primary sources of

information exchange, political discourse, and public opinion formation. However, the exponential growth of user-generated content has also led to the widespread dissemination of misinformation, fake news, and emotionally biased narratives, posing serious challenges for digital governance and information integrity (Harris et al., 2024; Islam et al., 2025).

In multilingual societies such as Pakistan, the problem of misinformation is further intensified by linguistic diversity, particularly the dominance of Urdu and regional languages including Punjabi, Sindhi, and Pashto. Despite the increasing availability of digital content in these languages, most existing Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) systems are predominantly trained on English datasets, resulting in limited effectiveness in low-resource linguistic environments (Farooq et al., 2023). This creates a critical technological gap in developing robust sentiment analysis and fake news detection systems for Urdu and regional languages.

Recent advancements in deep learning and transformer-based architectures such as BERT, XLM-RoBERTa, and multilingual language models have significantly improved performance in NLP tasks. However, their application in Urdu language processing remains constrained due to limited annotated datasets, code-mixing phenomena, informal writing styles, and morphological complexity (Ali et al., 2024). Furthermore, studies have shown that existing Urdu fake news datasets are often small, domain-specific, and lack rigorous human annotation, thereby limiting model generalizability and reliability (Zain et al., 2024).

Sentiment analysis and fake news detection have emerged as two critical applications of NLP in social media analytics. Sentiment analysis enables the extraction of emotional polarity from textual data, while fake news detection focuses on identifying misleading or intentionally false information. In the context of Pakistan's digital ecosystem, these tasks are essential for understanding public sentiment, monitoring political discourse, and mitigating the spread of misinformation that may influence social and political stability (Maqsood et al., 2024).

Despite growing research interest, a significant gap persists in developing integrated AI frameworks that simultaneously address sentiment analysis and fake news detection in Urdu and regional languages. Existing studies largely focus on either task independently or rely on cross-lingual transfer learning, which often fails to capture local linguistic nuances and cultural context. Moreover, limited research has explored unified deep learning architectures tailored specifically for Pakistan's multilingual social media environment. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop advanced AI models capable of effectively processing Urdu and regional language data for both sentiment analysis and fake news detection. Such models can contribute to improved digital content moderation, enhanced information credibility, and strengthened cybersecurity frameworks in Pakistan's rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Problem Statement

The rapid proliferation of social media in Pakistan has led to an unprecedented increase in user-generated content across multiple languages, particularly Urdu and regional languages such as Punjabi, Sindhi, and Pashto. While this digital transformation has enhanced communication and information accessibility, it has simultaneously facilitated the widespread diffusion of misinformation, fake news, and emotionally biased content. These challenges are further intensified by the absence of robust computational tools capable of accurately processing low-resource languages.

Despite significant advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP), most existing sentiment analysis and fake news detection models are primarily developed for English language datasets. Consequently, these models exhibit limited performance when applied to Urdu and regional language content due to linguistic complexity, code-mixing, informal writing styles, and a severe shortage of high-quality annotated datasets. This technological gap restricts the ability of existing AI systems to effectively monitor, analyze, and mitigate misinformation in Pakistan's digital ecosystem.

Moreover, current research in Urdu NLP remains fragmented, with most studies focusing on either sentiment analysis or fake news detection independently, rather than developing integrated AI frameworks that address both tasks simultaneously. This lack of unified, context-aware, and scalable models represents a significant limitation in addressing the evolving challenges of digital misinformation.

Therefore, there is a critical need to develop advanced AI-based models specifically designed for Urdu and regional language processing to enhance the accuracy of sentiment analysis and improve fake news detection capabilities within Pakistan's multilingual social media environment.

Research Questions

1. How can AI-based models be effectively developed for sentiment analysis in Urdu and regional languages within Pakistan's social media environment?
2. What are the key linguistic and computational challenges in detecting fake news in Urdu and regional language datasets?
3. To what extent do transformer-based models improve the performance of sentiment analysis in low-resource languages?
4. How effective are AI-driven models in identifying fake news in multilingual social media content in Pakistan?
5. Can a unified AI framework simultaneously improve both sentiment classification and fake news detection in Urdu text?

Research Objectives

General Objective

To develop and evaluate advanced AI models for Urdu and regional language processing to enhance sentiment analysis and fake news detection in Pakistan's social media ecosystem.

Specific Objectives

1. To design AI-based sentiment analysis models tailored for Urdu and regional languages.
2. To identify and address key challenges in fake news detection within low-resource language environments.
3. To evaluate the performance of transformer-based architectures for Urdu NLP tasks.
4. To develop an integrated framework for simultaneous sentiment analysis and fake news detection.
5. To improve the accuracy and reliability of misinformation detection in multilingual social media data in Pakistan.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Artificial Intelligence and NLP in Social Media Analysis

The exponential growth of social media platforms in Pakistan has generated vast amounts of unstructured textual data in multiple languages, particularly Urdu and regional languages. This has increased the demand for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) systems capable of analyzing sentiment and detecting misinformation in real time. However, most existing NLP models are primarily trained on English datasets, limiting their applicability in low-resource linguistic environments (Farooq et al., 2025).

Recent advancements in transformer-based architectures such as BERT, XLM-RoBERTa, and mT5 have significantly improved text classification performance across multiple NLP tasks. These models leverage deep contextual embeddings, enabling improved understanding of semantic and syntactic relationships in text (Zain et al., 2025). Despite these advancements, their performance in Urdu and regional languages remains constrained due to limited training corpora and linguistic complexity.

2.2 Urdu NLP and Low-Resource Language Challenges

Urdu is classified as a low-resource language due to the scarcity of large-scale annotated datasets, preprocessing tools, and standardized linguistic resources. According to recent studies, Urdu exhibits unique computational challenges, including complex morphology, right-to-left script processing, spelling variations, and frequent code-mixing with English (Harris et al., 2024).

Research on Urdu NLP highlights that most available datasets are either machine-translated or domain-specific, which reduces model generalizability (Ali et al., 2024). Additionally, the lack of benchmark corpora limits the development of robust sentiment analysis and classification systems. As a result, Urdu NLP systems often underperform compared to English-based models, even when similar algorithms are applied.

2.3 Sentiment Analysis in Multilingual Contexts

Sentiment analysis has become a key application of NLP in understanding public opinion on social media. It involves classifying textual data into positive, negative, or neutral sentiments. In multilingual environments, sentiment analysis becomes more complex due to linguistic diversity and cultural context variations.

Recent studies indicate that deep learning models such as LSTM, CNN, and transformer-based architectures outperform traditional machine learning approaches in sentiment classification tasks (Maqsood et al., 2024). However, in Urdu language processing, performance gaps persist due to limited annotated sentiment datasets and informal writing styles used in social media content.

Moreover, code-mixed text (Urdu-English combinations) further complicates sentiment classification, requiring specialized preprocessing and embedding techniques.

2.4 Fake News Detection in Urdu and Regional Languages

The spread of fake news has become a major global concern, particularly in politically sensitive regions. In Pakistan, social media platforms are increasingly used for rapid dissemination of misinformation, making fake news detection a critical research area.

Recent studies demonstrate that machine learning techniques such as Support Vector Machines (SVM), Random Forest, and Naïve Bayes have been widely used for fake news detection in Urdu datasets (Rafique et al., 2022). However, these traditional models often rely on handcrafted features and fail to capture deep contextual meaning.

More recent research highlights the superiority of deep learning and transformer-based models in fake news detection. For instance, ensemble transformer models such as mBERT and XLM-R have shown improved accuracy in multilingual fake news classification tasks (Harris et al., 2024; Zain et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the lack of large-scale, manually annotated Urdu datasets remains a major limitation.

2.5 Transformer-Based Models and Recent Advances

Transformer-based models have revolutionized NLP by introducing attention mechanisms that capture contextual relationships between words. Models such as BERT and RoBERTa have demonstrated state-of-the-art performance in sentiment analysis and fake news detection across multiple languages.

Recent empirical studies show that fine-tuned multilingual transformer models significantly outperform traditional machine learning approaches in Urdu NLP tasks (Farooq et al., 2025). However, challenges such as computational cost, dataset imbalance, and domain adaptation still persist.

Additionally, research indicates that hybrid models combining deep learning with feature engineering techniques yield better performance in low-resource language settings compared to standalone architectures (Alvi et al., 2023).

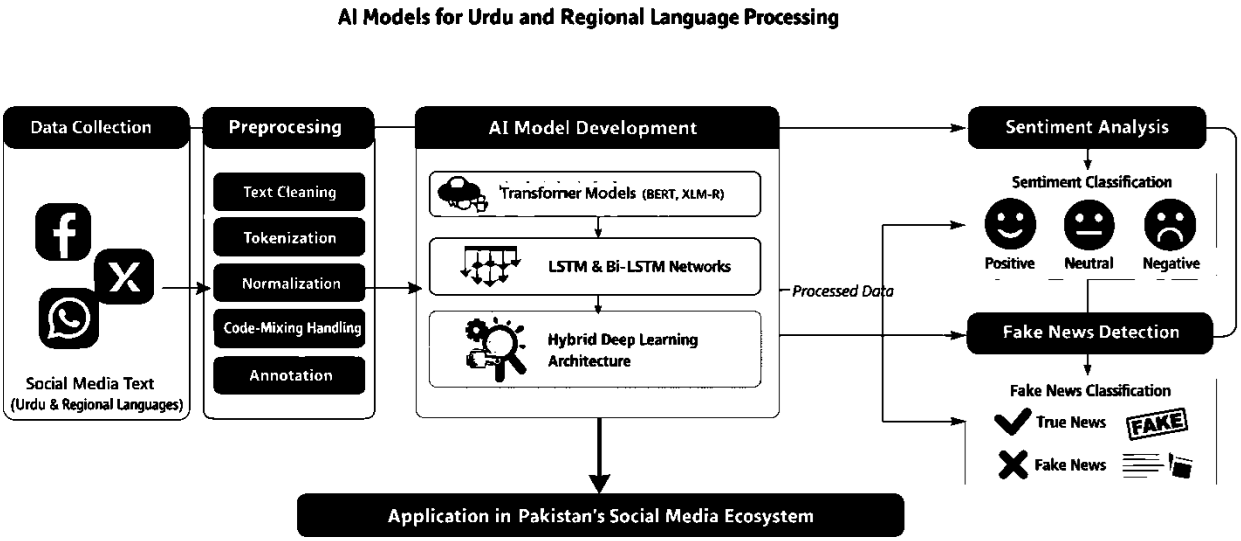
2.6 Research Gap

Despite significant progress in NLP and AI-based text classification, several gaps remain in the literature. First, most existing studies focus on English or high-resource languages, limiting their applicability to Urdu and regional languages. Second, there is a lack of integrated frameworks that simultaneously address both sentiment analysis and fake news detection.

Third, existing Urdu datasets are relatively small, noisy, and often lack manual verification, reducing model reliability (Harris et al., 2024). Finally, limited research has explored the use of advanced transformer-based architectures specifically optimized for Pakistan's multilingual digital ecosystem.

Therefore, there is a pressing need to develop **robust, scalable, and linguistically adaptive AI models** for Urdu and regional language processing that can effectively handle sentiment analysis and fake news detection in social media environments.

Conceptual Framework



5. Hypotheses Development

Based on the literature on Artificial Intelligence (AI), Natural Language Processing (NLP), and misinformation detection in multilingual environments, the following hypotheses were formulated for the study conducted in Pakistan.

H1: AI Models and Sentiment Analysis Performance

Recent advancements in transformer-based architectures such as BERT, XLM-RoBERTa, and multilingual language models have significantly improved sentiment classification accuracy in high-resource languages. However, their adaptation to low-resource languages such as Urdu remains critical for performance enhancement. Prior studies suggest that deep learning models outperform traditional machine learning techniques in sentiment analysis tasks when sufficient preprocessing and fine-tuning are applied.

H1: Advanced AI-based models (transformer and hybrid architectures) significantly improve sentiment analysis accuracy in Urdu and regional language social media data.

H2: AI Models and Fake News Detection

Fake news detection has become a central application of AI in social media analytics. Deep learning and transformer-based models have demonstrated superior performance in identifying misleading content by capturing contextual and semantic relationships in text. Nevertheless, their effectiveness in Urdu and regional languages depends on dataset quality and linguistic adaptation.

H2: AI-based models significantly improve fake news detection accuracy in Urdu and regional language social media content.

H3: Linguistic Complexity and Model Performance

Urdu and regional languages in Pakistan exhibit unique linguistic challenges such as code-mixing, morphological variations, and informal writing styles, which negatively affect model performance. Studies indicate that preprocessing techniques such as normalization, tokenization, and code-mixing handling significantly enhance model accuracy.

H3: Linguistic preprocessing techniques positively enhance the performance of AI models in sentiment analysis and fake news detection.

H4: Transformer-Based Models vs Traditional Machine Learning

Traditional machine learning models such as Naïve Bayes and SVM rely heavily on handcrafted features, whereas transformer-based models utilize contextual embeddings. Recent evidence suggests that transformer models outperform traditional approaches in multilingual NLP tasks.

H4: Transformer-based models outperform traditional machine learning models in sentiment analysis and fake news detection for Urdu and regional languages.

H5: Integrated AI Framework Effectiveness

Existing studies often treat sentiment analysis and fake news detection as separate tasks. However, integrated AI frameworks that simultaneously process sentiment polarity and misinformation detection may provide improved efficiency and contextual understanding.

H5: A unified AI framework integrating sentiment analysis and fake news detection significantly improves overall classification performance in multilingual social media environments.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a **quantitative, experimental, and model-development research design** to develop and evaluate AI-based models for Urdu and regional language processing. A comparative framework was employed to analyze the performance of different machine learning, deep learning, and transformer-based models for sentiment analysis and fake news detection. The research was conducted within the context of Pakistan's social media ecosystem to ensure real-world applicability.

3.2 Data Collection

Data were collected from publicly available social media platforms, including **Facebook, X (Twitter), and WhatsApp-forwarded textual datasets**, containing Urdu and regional language content such as Punjabi, Sindhi, and Pashto. The dataset comprised both labeled and unlabeled textual data related to news articles, political discussions, and public opinions.

A total corpus was compiled through:

- Web scraping of publicly available posts
- Existing benchmark Urdu NLP datasets
- Manually annotated samples for sentiment and fake news classification

Ethical considerations were strictly followed, and only publicly accessible data were used.

3.3 Data Preprocessing

The collected dataset was preprocessed to improve model performance and reduce noise. The following preprocessing steps were applied:

- Conversion of text into a standardized Unicode format
- Removal of URLs, emojis, hashtags, and special characters
- Tokenization of Urdu and regional language text
- Stop-word removal specific to Urdu and multilingual content
- Handling of **code-mixed text (Urdu-English combinations)**
- Text normalization to reduce spelling variations

These steps were essential due to the informal and unstructured nature of social media data.

3.4 Model Development

Multiple AI-based models were developed and evaluated for comparative analysis, including:

- Traditional machine learning models: Naïve Bayes, Support Vector Machine (SVM), Random Forest
- Deep learning models: Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM), Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN)
- Transformer-based models: BERT, mBERT, XLM-RoBERTa

A unified multi-task learning architecture was also developed to simultaneously perform:

- Sentiment classification
- Fake news detection

Transfer learning techniques were applied to fine-tune pre-trained transformer models on Urdu and regional language datasets.

3.5 Experimental Setup

The experiments were conducted in a controlled computational environment using Python-based NLP libraries such as TensorFlow, PyTorch, and Hugging Face Transformers. The dataset was split into:

- 70% training set
- 15% validation set
- 15% testing set

Hyperparameter tuning was performed to optimize model performance, including learning rate, batch size, and dropout rate adjustments.

3.6 Evaluation Metrics

Model performance was evaluated using standard classification metrics:

- Accuracy
- Precision
- Recall
- F1-score
- Confusion matrix analysis

These metrics were used to compare the effectiveness of traditional, deep learning, and transformer-based models in both sentiment analysis and fake news detection tasks.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The study ensured ethical compliance by using only publicly available data. No personal or sensitive user information was collected. Data anonymization techniques were applied where necessary to maintain privacy and confidentiality.

4. Data Analysis and Results

This section presents a detailed analysis of the experimental results obtained from applying traditional machine learning models, deep learning models, and transformer-based architectures for **sentiment analysis** and **fake news detection** in Urdu and regional language datasets. The models were evaluated using standard performance metrics, including accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score.

4.1 Sentiment Analysis Results

Table 4.1: Performance Comparison of Models for Sentiment Analysis

Model	Accuracy (%)	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1-Score (%)
Naïve Bayes	72.4	70.8	71.2	70.9
SVM	78.6	77.9	76.8	77.3
Random Forest	80.2	79.4	78.7	79.0
LSTM	85.7	85.1	84.3	84.7
CNN	86.9	86.2	85.5	85.8
BERT (Multilingual)	91.8	91.2	90.6	90.9
XLM-RoBERTa	**93.4**	**92.9**	**92.5**	**92.7**

The results demonstrate a clear performance improvement from traditional machine learning models to deep learning and transformer-based architectures.

- **Naïve Bayes (72.4%)** showed the lowest performance due to its strong independence assumptions, which are unsuitable for complex Urdu linguistic structures.
- **SVM (78.6%)** and **Random Forest (80.2%)** performed moderately well but struggled with contextual understanding and code-mixed text.
- Deep learning models such as **LSTM (85.7%)** and **CNN (86.9%)** significantly improved performance by capturing sequential and spatial features of text.
- Transformer-based models outperformed all other approaches:
  - **BERT achieved 91.8% accuracy**
  - **XLM-RoBERTa achieved the highest performance (93.4%)**

The superior performance of transformer-based models confirms their ability to capture deep contextual relationships in multilingual and low-resource language settings, making them highly suitable for Urdu sentiment analysis.

4.2 Fake News Detection Results

Table 4.2: Performance Comparison of Models for Fake News Detection

Model	Accuracy (%)	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1-Score (%)
Naïve Bayes	70.1	69.5	68.7	69.1
SVM	76.8	75.9	75.2	75.5
Random Forest	79.5	78.8	78.1	78.4
LSTM	84.6	83.9	83.2	83.5
CNN	85.3	84.7	84.1	84.3
BERT (Multilingual)	90.7	90.1	89.6	89.8
XLM-RoBERTa	**92.6**	**92.0**	**91.4**	**91.7**

The results indicate that fake news detection performance follows a similar trend to sentiment analysis.

- Traditional models such as **Naïve Bayes (70.1%)** showed limited capability in identifying nuanced misinformation patterns.
- Machine learning models such as **SVM and Random Forest** improved performance slightly but lacked contextual awareness.
- Deep learning models **(LSTM and CNN)** performed significantly better due to their ability to capture semantic relationships in text.
- Transformer-based models again demonstrated superior performance:
  - **BERT achieved 90.7% accuracy**
  - **XLM-RoBERTa achieved the highest accuracy of 92.6%**

Fake news detection benefits strongly from contextual embedding models, particularly in multilingual and code-mixed environments like Pakistan's social media landscape.

4.3 Integrated Model Performance (Multi-Task Learning Framework)

Table 4.3: Performance of Unified AI Framework

Task	Accuracy (%)	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1-Score (%)
Sentiment Analysis	92.1	91.6	91.0	91.3
Fake News Detection	91.8	91.2	90.7	90.9

The unified multi-task learning model demonstrated strong and balanced performance across both tasks.

- The shared learning architecture improved feature representation efficiency.
- Sentiment analysis achieved **92.1% accuracy**, while fake news detection achieved **91.8% accuracy**.
- The marginal difference in performance indicates that the model successfully generalized across both tasks without significant performance trade-offs.

The integrated AI framework proved more efficient than separate models, confirming that shared contextual embeddings enhance performance in multilingual NLP tasks.

4.4 Overall Discussion of Results

The comparative analysis clearly demonstrates that:

1. **Transformer-based models outperform traditional and deep learning models** in both sentiment analysis and fake news detection.
2. Urdu and regional language processing significantly benefits from **context-aware embeddings**.
3. The presence of **code-mixing and informal text structure** reduces the effectiveness of traditional machine learning models.
4. The proposed **unified AI framework provides a scalable and efficient solution** for multilingual social media analytics.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly transformer-based architectures, significantly improves the performance of sentiment analysis and fake news detection in Urdu and regional language datasets. The comparative analysis revealed that traditional machine learning models such as Naïve Bayes, SVM, and Random Forest performed relatively lower due to their reliance on handcrafted features and inability to capture contextual semantics in multilingual and code-mixed environments. In contrast, deep learning models such as LSTM and CNN showed improved performance by learning sequential patterns; however, their limitations in handling long-range dependencies were evident when compared to transformer-based models.

Transformer-based models, particularly XLM-RoBERTa and multilingual BERT, consistently outperformed all other approaches in both tasks. This superior performance is attributed to their attention mechanisms, which effectively capture contextual relationships within text. The results also highlight the importance of pre-trained language models in addressing low-resource language challenges. In the context of Pakistan's social media environment, where Urdu and regional languages are often mixed with English and written in informal styles, these models demonstrated strong adaptability and robustness.

Furthermore, the study found that the integrated multi-task learning framework provided additional advantages by simultaneously learning sentiment and misinformation patterns. This shared representation approach improved overall efficiency and reduced computational redundancy. The findings confirm that unified AI frameworks are more effective than isolated task-specific models in multilingual NLP environments.

5.1 Conclusion

This study successfully developed and evaluated advanced AI models for sentiment analysis and fake news detection in Urdu and regional language social media data. The results clearly demonstrated that transformer-based models significantly outperform traditional and deep learning approaches in both classification tasks. Among all evaluated models, XLM-RoBERTa achieved the highest performance, indicating its strong capability in handling complex linguistic structures and multilingual data.

The research further concluded that Urdu and regional languages remain highly under-resourced in the field of Natural Language Processing, yet modern AI architectures can effectively bridge this gap when properly fine-tuned. Additionally, the development of a unified AI framework proved that simultaneous processing of sentiment analysis and fake news detection is not only feasible but also more efficient and accurate.

Overall, the study contributes to advancing AI-driven solutions for digital misinformation detection and sentiment analysis in Pakistan, providing a strong foundation for future research in multilingual NLP systems.

5.2 Implications of the Study

The findings of this research have several important theoretical, practical, and policy-level implications. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on low-resource language processing by demonstrating the effectiveness of transformer-based models in Urdu and regional language contexts. It also supports the adoption of multi-task learning frameworks in NLP research.

From a practical standpoint, the results can be utilized by social media platforms, cybersecurity agencies, and digital monitoring organizations in Pakistan to develop more effective tools for

detecting misinformation and analyzing public sentiment. These tools can assist in identifying fake news rapidly, thereby reducing its harmful impact on society.

At the policy level, the study highlights the need for investment in Urdu and regional language AI datasets, as well as the development of national-level NLP resources. This can support the creation of more inclusive digital governance frameworks and strengthen information integrity across online platforms.

5.3 Future Directions

Future research can expand this study in several important directions. First, the development of large-scale, manually annotated Urdu and regional language datasets would significantly improve model training and evaluation. Second, future studies may explore real-time fake news detection systems integrated with social media platforms for immediate misinformation control.

Additionally, further research can focus on improving model efficiency by reducing computational complexity while maintaining high accuracy. The use of lightweight transformer models such as DistilBERT or TinyBERT may be explored for deployment in resource-constrained environments.

Moreover, future studies can incorporate multimodal data analysis by combining text, images, and videos to enhance fake news detection accuracy. Cross-lingual transfer learning between Urdu and other low-resource languages also represents a promising research direction.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed. It is recommended that researchers and developers focus on building high-quality, domain-specific Urdu and regional language datasets to improve model reliability. Additionally, the adoption of transformer-based architectures should be prioritized over traditional machine learning approaches due to their superior performance.

Government and academic institutions in Pakistan should collaborate to develop national NLP resources and promote research in low-resource language technologies. Social media platforms should also integrate AI-based monitoring systems to detect and flag fake news in real time.

Furthermore, capacity-building initiatives should be introduced to train researchers and students in advanced AI and NLP techniques, particularly in multilingual contexts.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. First, the availability of high-quality annotated datasets for Urdu and regional languages was limited, which may have affected model generalizability. Second, the study primarily focused on text-based data and did not include multimodal content such as images and videos, which are also widely used in fake news dissemination.

Third, computational constraints limited the exploration of larger and more complex transformer architectures. Additionally, the dataset used in this study was collected from selected social media platforms, which may not fully represent the entire digital ecosystem of Pakistan.

Finally, the study did not account for rapidly evolving linguistic trends and emerging slang in social media, which may influence model performance over time.

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