

NARRATION OF TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES AND COMMENTS ON RAPE BY SOCIAL MEDIA USERS

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Abstract

This study focuses on the traumatic experiences of rape victims and the comments of Facebook users as they share such trauma with the public through the platform opens up by the social media. The study aims at using pragmatic analysis to examine the strategies deploy by the victims of sexual violence and the public to narrate and share their experiences with the member of the public to gain sympathy, empathy, and supports. The study engaged quantitative method of data collection. It purposively sampled and selected 12 narrations and comments of Facebook users for analysis. Three major contextual issues discussed include; victim/perpetrators blaming language, victim support language, and shared experiences of the victims and the public. Appraisal and stance theories of White & Martin (2005) and Du Bois of (2007) were used for analysis. Findings review that victims/Sexually Assaulted Persons (SAPs) deployed the attitudinal aspects of appraisal theory such affect, appreciation, and judgment to solicit supports, sympathy, and empathy from the public through the media. In doing these, the SAPs used adjectives and adverbs to externalize their pains and emotions as they take different stances from the way the society views the act of rape. This paper concludes that while victims share experiences to seek for support, many members of the public sympathizes, empathizes and support, few individual support the perpetrators of rape. The study recommends that the media and linguists should help amplify the role of language to enthuse and reshape the cultural belief about rape and gender-based violence.

Keywords: Traumatic experiences, victims of rape,, sexual violence, the public, blaming.

Introduction

The study of rape discourse on social media has emerged as a critical area within digital communication, gender studies, and linguistics. It focuses on how rape and sexual violence are discussed, represented, and responded to in online spaces. Social media has become a powerful platform for raising awareness about sexual violence. Hashtags like #MeToo, #TimeUp, #BelieveSurvivors, and #WhyIDidntReport have allowed survivors to share their experiences, challenges, and challenge rape myths, and call for justice. In recent years, social media has become a prominent platform for individual to share their experience and opinions on various topics. (see Koven, M. 2002). The language of trauma, particularly in

the context of rape survivors and public perceptions, is shaped by psychological, social, and cultural factors. It influences how survivors process their experiences, how others respond to their narratives, and how society frames sexual violence. Understanding the language of trauma requires sensitivity to how survivors speak and how society responds. Empowering survivors involves shifting from doubt-based discourse to validation, support, and justice. However, platforms like #MeToo have reshaped discourse, giving survivors agency over their narratives. In addition, online spaces such as Facebook, Twitter, and others also expose them to skepticism, victim-blaming, and re-traumatization. Supportive spaces validate survivors' voices, while dismissive reactions can lead to re-traumatization. News and courtrooms may use language that downplays rape, e.g. "non-consensual sex" instead of "rape", reinforcing harmful norms.

Methodology

This paper adopts quantitative research method of data collection. 3 stories narrated by victims of rape and 12 comments by facebook users were sampled and purposively selected for analysis which was further subjected to pragmatic examination. The comments and stories were selected from four major groups namely: "*Rape Survivors*", "*Victims & Survivors of Rape and Domestic Violence support group worldwide*", "*I Was Raped*", "*Confessions of Abused Survivors*." The study was analysed using the appraisal theory of White & Martin (2005) and stance theory of Du Bois of (2007). Three major contextual issues were raised. The issues which include: victim/perpetrator blaming strategies, victim support language strategy, and shared experience of sexual violence were engaged by deploying pragmatic resources.

Review of Scholarly Perspectives

Linguists and some scholars from diverse views have engaged issues of gender-based violence and domestic violence such as rape or assault recently. This is in view to unraveling the rape myths and perceptions of the public on the social menace. Few among them are: Alice, M (2022), examines the semantics of sexual violence: "The Imperfect Victims" in the Italian Media. The study focuses on the reconstruction of lexical, socio-semiotic, and narrative domain anticipating the phenomenology of victim blaming, which characterizes the media narratives of sexual violence. The study concludes that media, live language have performative and creative power of reality. Mehreen, F & Waqasia, N (2023), examine linguistic construction in rape cases. They used Gujrawala motorway case as a case study. The study revealed the linguistic representation of Gujrawala motorway rape case with the help of inclusion and exclusion strategies: activation and passivation: nomination, categorization, and time sequencing. The findings revealed that the identity of the rape victim was constructed based on their affiliated to the family and other social

actors.. Muniba, Z & et al (2023), investigate a critical discourse analysis of news in media about rape victims in Pakistan. They focus on the reporting of rape cases, victim blaming, and fact-hiding in the Pakistani media discourse. The study deployed Van Dijk model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to unveil biases or power inequalities deep rooted in the structure and management of news reporting discourse. The study concludes that media have power to feed, pass on, and reinforce these socio-cultural biases through misleading narratives of gender-based violence. Richard Damilare, & et al, (2024), analyse news articles from five Nigerian newspapers published between 2018 and 2022. The study identified strategies such as vilifying perpetrators through labeling and evoking empathy for victims, suggesting that Nigerian media attempts to combat rape by negatively portraying the act and its perpetrators. However, this current paper examines the narration of traumatic experience and comments of rape by social media users (victims/public) with a view to examining the language use to express, communicate, and engage the public to gain support, sympathy, and empathy.

Theoretical Backgrounds

This paper combines appraisal and stance theories for the analysis of the data selected for this study. In this section, both theories (White & White 2005 & Du Bois 2007) will be concisely explicated. Appraisal theory was first put forward by a group of researchers led by a Sydney linguist, Professor James Martin in the 1990s but later developed by White and Martin (see Iedema, Feez, and White 1994, Martin 1995a, Martin, 1995b, Coffin 1997, Eggins and Slade, 1997, White & Martin 2005). The theory is part of a linguistic framework within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) that focuses on how language expresses attitude, emotions, judgment, and values. It expands upon the concept of interpersonal meaning in language, offering a detailed analysis of how speakers or writers use language to convey evaluation and engage with their audience. The linguistic framework was developed to evaluate, explore, describe, and explicate the way language is deployed to adopt personal and interpersonal stances, and the relationships that exist between how speakers/writers pass judgment on people. It also accounts for how speakers/writers agree with those who share same stance with them and disagree with those who do not share their viewpoints. According to White, (2001,p.1), appraisal theory examines how different methods of telling stories by speakers are characterised by their different uses of objects of evaluation. The modes of story-telling are not only evaluated, the linguistic items/materials deployed are also taken for linguistic examination. White, (2001,p.2), opines that the term 'Appraisal' means 'evaluation' which can be related to appraising or evaluating language use in text (intertextuality), utterances in praising or blaming (attitudinality), or in verbal communication (dialogicality), especially, where communication is in written form. Here, speakers externalise their inner expressions and thoughts. Through appraisal, speakers can

align or disalign with their audience's views, creating solidarity or distancing themselves from others. It is an essential aspect of persuasive language, enabling a person to strategically express their attitudes and emotions to influence how their message is received. Du Bois. & Elise, K.(2012, p.443), appraisal theory analyzes the way language reflects the speaker's or the writer's stance, judgments, and feelings towards a subject, shaping interpersonal meaning. These compositions work together to reveal attitudes embedded in language, showing how people construct meaning and position themselves socially. Precht, K. (2003), opines that this aspect of appraisal is particularly useful in discourse analysis, as it allows for the exploration of how speakers or writers influence audience through emotional and evaluative language. In the realm of attitudinality, there are three components of appraisal: affect, judgment, and appreciation:

Affect

The affect system is a subcomponent of the appraisal framework that deals specifically with the expression of emotions. It encompasses the resources language provide to indicate feelings, emotions, and reactions(anger, happiness, frustrations) toward particular entities, situation or state of affairs. According to Cech, C, & Condon, S. (2002), these emotions can be positive or negative and vary in intensity. This aspect deals with expression of emotions and feelings. It reflects the speaker's or writer's emotional responses, such as happiness, anger, sadness, or fear.

Judgment

The judgment system in the appraisal framework addresses the ways in which speakers or writers evaluate people's behaviour based on social norms, morals, and ethics. It focuses on how actions are judged to be acceptable, praiseworthy, or blameworthy, thus shaping attitudes toward individuals or group. The judgment system is crucial in positioning attitudes because it allows language users to express approval or disapproval of others's behaviours in terms of culturally shared values. Judgment involves evaluating people's behaviour based on social norms and moral standards. It can include assessments of a person's character, ethics, or actions often categorised as positive or negative. (see Clark, (2020,p.75). Judgment is subdivided into two main categories which include:

(a) *Social esteem*: This relates to evaluations that affect social standing or respect. It encompasses: normality which assesses how typical or unusual a person's behaviour is e.g, 'strange', 'ordinary', or capacity which evaluates someone's abilities or competence, e.g, 'skilled', 'incompetent', and tenacity which judges a person's resolve or reliability e.g, 'brave', 'unreliable'.

(b) *Social sanction*: This evaluation concerns ethical or moral judgment which includes veracity (judging truthfulness or honesty e.g, 'honest,' 'deceptive'), and propriety which concerns assessment of how morally appropriate or ethical someone's behaviour is, e.g 'kind,' or 'immoral'. By using the judgment system, language users

can express attitudes toward individual's behaviour, potentially influencing social relationships, creating alignment or misalignment with shared values, and affecting the audience's perception of people or action.

Appreciation

The appreciation system in the appraisal framework deals with the evaluation of things, object, process, and states of affairs. It focuses on how language users express their attitudes toward the quality, aesthetic value, or significance of inanimate objects, events, or abstract concepts. Unlike the judgment system, which evaluates human behaviour, appreciation is concerned with the evaluation of entities and experiences. White, P.R (2001), asserts that appreciation focuses on the evaluation of objects, events, or phenomena, considering their aesthetics, cultural, or functional value. The appreciation system is divided into three main categories reaction, composition, and valuation.

Engagement is the second subsystem of appraisal framework which refers to how language acknowledges, entertains, or challenges alternative viewpoints. It considers how speakers or writers position themselves concerning other voices or perspectives within their discourse. This subsystem is also a key component of appraisal system, which was developed by linguists Martin and White (2005) as part of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The engagement in particular, deals with how speakers or writers position themselves concerning the viewpoints, beliefs, and expectations of others. It deals with the various ways in which communicators can acknowledge, align with, contest, or reject different viewpoints. Engagement is concerns with how language expresses attitude, graduation, and evaluation stance. The engagement system is focused on monoglossic statement which focuses on indisputed facts and heteroglossic statement which allows alternative view points of other statement.

The last subsystem of appraisal theory advanced by Martin and White (2005) involves studying how individual evaluate or appraise events, situations, or stimuli, particularly in relation to emotions and psychological responses. According to Eisenstein, J. (2013, p.361), opine that appraisal theory is a concept in psychology and emotions research, suggesting that emotions are extracted from our evaluations (appraisals) of events based on significance for our well-being. Richard Lazarus (2001) emphasised how appraisals influence emotional experiences. Graduation system focuses on how appraisal processes affect behavior and mental health. It is subdivided into focus and force which either sharpen or heighten the effect of a proposition made by a speaker/writer.

Stance theory, a concept widely used in linguistics and communication studies, was propounded by John W. Du Bois, an American linguist. Du Bois introduced the theory in the context of discourse analysis, particularly in his 2007 paper titled "The Stance Triangle". The theory emphasizes how speakers expresse attitudes, evaluations, or positioning relative to their utterances, their interlocutors, and the topics of discussion. The

Du Bois's stance triangle includes: evaluation (how speakers assess something), positioning (how speakers align themselves in interaction), and alignment (how speakers relate to others' position). Stance theory has been applied to various fields, including sociolinguistics, anthropology, and media studies, (Hyland, Ken (2005), Jaffe, Alenxandra; (2009), and Graham, Todd, et al.(2016). Stance theory examines how speakers position themselves in relation to the content, an audience, and the broader social context. It focuses on alignment, evaluation, and the speaker's identity. The theory also examines how speakers position themselves in relation to the listener, the content of their speech, and their social content. It involves expressing attitudes, alignment, and positioning. In language evaluation, stance refers to the position, attitude, or perspective that a speaker or writer adopts toward a topic, audience, or situation. Stance indicates how individuals position themselves toward a topic, express attitudes, and align with others. It reflects the way language is used to express opinions, beliefs, or attitudes. Stance can manifest through word choice, tone, modality, and evaluative language. This theoretical framework was designed to explicitly explicate the affective or evaluative use of language based on the intellectually-driven and attitudinally-driven position one takes toward something, about anything (Chindamo, M & Elisabeth, A. 2012; Peyton, R Mason & et' al, 2006, p.2, & Smith and Jucker, 2000). Stance is popular among researchers in language use and communications especially on how people indicate confidence or doubt, appraisal and judgment on subject or object of evaluation (Martin, 2000; Precht, 2003).

Data Presentation and Analysis

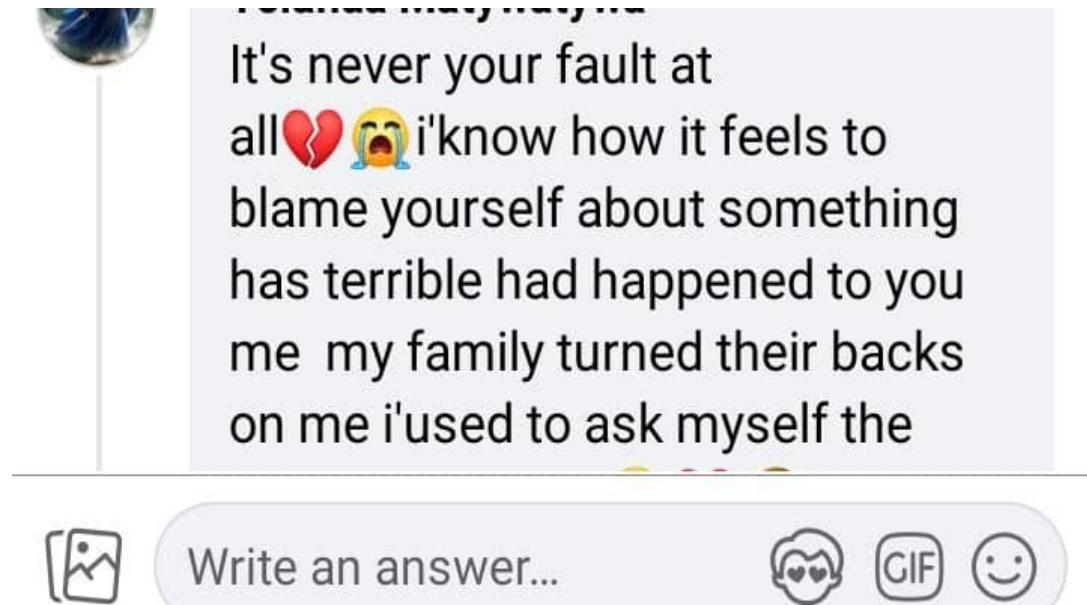
The data of this study are presented as established on the three major contextual issues raised in the data by the participants. The issues are as follow:

Shared Experience of Sexual Violence

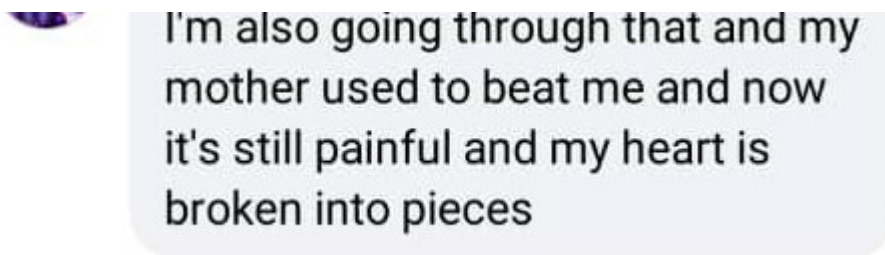
Language plays a powerful role in expressing shared experiences of sexual violence. This study examines the language that provides a platform for survivors to connect, validate their experiences, and foster a sense of community. Shared experience generally refers to the collective understanding, emotions, and impacts that survivors of sexual violence share due to their similar experiences. While each survivor's journey and response to trauma are unique, certain patterns and shared elements often emerge. This section of our study discusses concept of shared experience of sexual violence which include: emotional responses such as fear, shame, guilt, anger, or helplessness, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. However, shared experience can also relate with impact on relationships with others which center on difficulty in trusting others, changes in relationships with family, friends, or intimate partners, feelings of isolation among others. In many cases, the concept of shared experience becomes significant in group therapy, support networks, or activism where survivors find strength in understanding they are not

alone. This collective experience can promote healing, advocacy, and the fight against rape culture. The participants in this study deployed the pragmatic resources of ...to enact shared experiences in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 1



Excerpt 2



Excerpt 3



When I speak of rape, they declare me a robot because of the microchip in my head.

1 wk Like Reply

Excerpt 4



I've moved on physically but I'm broken inside, my ex partner at the time I got raped said I didn't fight hard enough, I only had a cut on my hand trying to take the knife from the rapists hands. Also that he told some of his colleagues and they don't believe I got raped. 💔 The police let him out and he is roaming the streets... 😭 but there is a God in heaven, I wish they told me, I heard from people around that he was released from prison.

While taking position and aligning, the speaker in excerpt 1 adopts a supportive stance by aligning with the listener's feelings, "*I know how it feels to blame yourself*" this positions the speaker as empathetic and understanding, fostering solidarity. Through emotional implication, the speaker likely feels compassion and empathy toward the listener. The speaker's narrative suggests lingering feelings of rejection or loss "*my family turned their backs on me*" but a degree of acceptance is also deployed as the informative clause is framed in past tense. The speaker's self-disclosure signals a coping mechanism: sharing personal pain to normalize the listener's experience. By aligning their narrative with the listener's, the speaker fosters empathy and mutual understanding. (listener's situation) the

speaker explicitly removes blame through attribution of responsibility from the listener(victim) “*it’s not your fault at all*” this alleviates guilt and suggests the listener is not in control of what occurred. (Speaker’s experience). By sharing their own story “*Me, my family turned their backs on me*”, the speaker implies she too, was not responsible for her circumstances. In excerpt 2, the speaker engaged epistemic stance to ascertain their feelings and the reality of the past abuse. There is no ambiguity or uncertainty in their statement. Interactional stance was engaged in the phrase “I’m also going through that” establishes a connection with the listener or situation, implying shared experiences or empathy with the victim. This suggests that the speaker is opening up in a vulnerable manner, possibly seeking support, understanding, or validation. The speaker expresses a negative evaluation of their past experience “my mother used to beat me’. The pain is ongoing “it’s still painful”, suggesting that the past trauma remains unresolved and emotionally impactful. The reference to a “broken heart’ indicates deep emotional significance. The relationship with the mother is likely crucial, intensifying the sense of betrayal or hurt. The use of “I’m also going through that” links the current situation to a similar or related emotional struggle, further emphasizing its ongoing relevance. The tone suggests limited coping potential at this moment. The expression “heart is broken into pieces” implies feelings of helplessness, fragmentation, and a struggle to process or recover from the emotional pain. The speaker likely feels sadness, hurt, and possibly resentment or anger toward the situation. The pain described is both emotional “heartbroken” and potentially physical “beating”.

In excerpt 3, the comment reveals a clash between the speaker’s attempt to assert his humanity and voice on a deeply personal issue (rape) and his audience’s rejection, which dehumanizes and delegitimizes him. The emotional and evaluative charges of the comment become clear, emphasizing feelings of marginalization and moral injustice. The comment highlights the speaker’s isolated position and the breakdown of alignment between the speaker’s intent and the listener’s reception. This speaker underscores the broader implications about the societal tendency to silence or invalidate certain voices, particularly when discussing difficult topics like rape. Epistemic stance was used by the speaker to position himself as acknowledgeable and truthful about rape but highlights that others reject his testimony, questioning his credibility through a reductive metaphor “robot.” Affective stance in the excerpt shows the speaker conveys frustration or alienation, possibly feeling dehumanized or dismissed when addressing the sensitive issue of rape. His affective stance is one of dismay and anger, reflecting emotional harm caused by others’ dismissive reaction. On excerpt 4, the comment reflects a complex interplay of emotional turmoil, moral evaluation, and social positioning. The speaker’s emotional and evaluative processes, show how the trauma and validation have left her “broken inside” but still capable of resilience. The comment also indicates how speaker aligns with an audience of survivors,

positioning self as an empathetic and supportive figure. It shows the speaker's emotional journey and her attempt to transform personal pain into a message of hope for others. The speaker positions herself as emotionally vulnerable but also resilient. The phrase "I'm broken inside" reveals a personal, subjective experience of pain, while "I have moved on physically" suggests progress in another domain, emphasizing a dual state. The speaker conveys deep emotional pains and trauma. It also suggests an unresolved inner conflict. Judgment was deployed by the speaker to evaluate her ex-partner's experience as lacking empathy and support "said I didn't fight hard enough". This indicates a moral judgment of the ex-partner's actions which exacerbated the emotional harm.

Victim/Perpetrator Blaming Strategies

In narration of rape experiences, stories tend to focus on blaming either on the Sexually Assailed Persons (SAPs) or the perpetrators of the act. Victim and perpetrator blaming in the context of rape is a damaging social phenomenon where responsibility is misplaced, often worsening the experiences of those who have been sexually assaulted and providing undue leniency to those who committed the act. Blaming the victims involves holding the survivors partially or wholly responsible for the assault such as questioning the victims' actions, biases, and assumptions about consent. The impact of victim-blaming is severe. This can lead to feelings of guilt, shame, and isolation. It can also prevent the victims from reporting the crime, seeking help, and accessing justice. While on the other hand, perpetrators' blaming refers to society's reluctance to fully hold perpetrators accountable, or their tendency to empathize with them rather than the victim. Excusing behaviors, shifting focus from the assaulted person to the reputation of the perpetrator, lenient punishment or disbelief can affect rape reporting and getting justice for crime committed. Language of blame includes terms and phrases that imply victim responsibility-like questioning the victim's actions.

Speaker1 1



Anonymous member ▶ I WAS RAPED

Jun 16 · 🧑🏿🧑🏿🧑🏿

I'm in pain, I'm crying right now. Was that my fault to be raped when I was very young, until I got pregnant 🥹🥹🥹🥹🥹🥹

🥹👍 19



Speaker 2

gave birth to a child who is the product of my rape. We haven't had much contact in over a decade. Recently he's reached out and wants a relationship with me. Mentally I can't handle it, his entire existence is a huge trigger for me. But I feel so guilty leaving him with that kind of void. Am I a horrible person? truly wish things were different.

🥹👍👍 11

Excerpt 5



Maybe the state must introduce chemical castration for serial rapists. Sexual immorality is their daily diet. Maybe I should kill one of the suspects for this rape to stop. They declare me insane to avoid prosecution...

Speaker 3

I was raped by my own father. Twice. The first time it happened I was six so I didn't really know what to do about. I thought that since he was my dad it didn't matter. the second time was much worse and it had occurred just a couple months ago. I don't know what to do anymore. I'm too afraid to tell my mom because I think that she wont believe me.



Speaker 1

adopts an emotional stance by explicitly expressing pain (I'm in pain, I'm crying right now). This positions the speaker as emotionally vulnerable and invites the audience to empathize with her sufferings. The question, "*was that my fault?*" reflects uncertainty and a conflicted stance toward her own role in the event. It suggests that the speaker may have internalized societal or externalized narratives that blame victims of sexual violence, despair her lack of

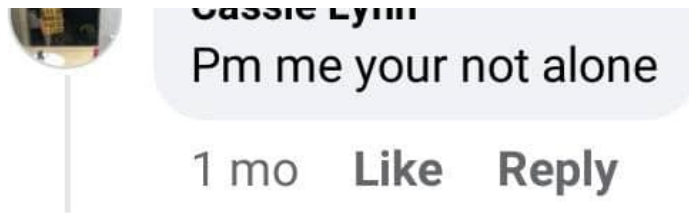
culpability. My questioning her guilt, the speaker implicitly critiques societal attitudes toward victimhood and rape. This indicates a struggle to align with or resist these societal judgments. The phrase, “*I’m crying right now*” functions as a direct appeal to the listener and aims to elicit understanding or support. This establishes a personal connection and reinforces the speaker’s vulnerability. The phrase, “*until I got pregnant*” conveys the lingering consequences of the trauma which is reinforcing the speaker’s appraisal of the event as life-changing and irrevocable. The mention of being raped, “*when I was very young*” underscores a lack of agency and control. This reflects an appraisal of vulnerability and helplessness during the event of rape. The rhetorical question, “*was it my fault to be raped...?*” indicates a moral and self-directed appraisal. The speaker questions her responsibility for what happened. This is suggesting a struggle with guilt or shame. This reflects a deeper societal or personal tendency to assign blame, even to victims. The declarative clauses, “*I’m in pain*” and “*I’m crying right now*” indicate intense negative emotions of distress, sadness, and possibly hopelessness. These emotions reflect the speaker’s appraisal of the situation as deeply harmful and overwhelming (emotive adjectives). From the speaker 2 above, the speaker reflects a complex interplay of emotions and stances driven by the speaker’s evaluation (pronounce) of a deeply traumatic event and the subsequent lack of support. The speaker deploys appraisal strategy to help unpack the emotional responses, while stance is used to illuminate the attitudes and relational dynamics conveyed. The speaker positions the perpetrator “family member” as the source of harm and betrayal, which disrupts the expected safety of familiar relationship. The speaker expresses disappointment and emotional hurt due to their mother’s lack of trust. This reflects a stance of unmet expectations and a breakdown in the anticipated support system. The speaker in excerpt 5 aligns themselves against serial rapists, portraying them as irredeemable. By proposing “chemical castration” and potentially violent action, the speaker positions themselves as an advocate for victims and justice, even if it means endorsing controversial or illegal measures. He also deployed affective stance in the comment which conveys strong emotions, including anger, frustration, and a desire for retribution. The affective stance underpins the extreme proposals, indicating the speaker’s desperation and moral outrage. The speaker appears certain about the nature of the problem by the use of epistemic stance to acknowledge the issue at hand, assuming that serial rapists cannot be rehabilitated “sexual immorality is their daily diet.” The speaker expresses anger and disgust toward the actions of serial rapists, describing them as having “sexual immorality as their daily diet.” There is a sense of helplessness and frustration, as seen in the extreme suggestion to kill a suspect to stop the crime. The speaker morally condemns the perpetrators, framing their behavior as irredeemable “sexual immorality is their daily diet.” Serial rapists are judged as lacking any capacity for reform, warranting drastic measures like chemical castration. Speaker 3rd comment indirectly critiques societal norms

that prioritize familial loyalty and silence around abuse. The speaker's reluctance to disclose the abuse reflects the stigmatization and disbelief often faced by survivors of familial sexual violence. The speaker's use of "I thought that since he was my dad, it didn't matter" suggests a distorted sense of self-blame or normalization of the abuse due to the perpetrator's identity as a father. Interpersonal positioning toward others which reflects in the speaker's positioning toward the father is complex. The use of the phrase "since he was my dad, it didn't matter" reveals an internalized normalization of the abuse, possibly reflecting societal or familial conditioning. The speaker demonstrates epistemic uncertainty, especially regarding the reaction of her mother. "I think she won't believe me." This reflects doubt and an internal conflict about whether her experience will be validated or dismissed. The overall tone conveys deep despair, especially in the repetition of phrase like "I don't know what to do anymore".

Victim Support Language Strategies

Victim support language on rape issues is framed to provide comfort, understanding, and empowerment to survivors while being sensitive and non-judgmental. It involves using words and phrases that validate the survivors' experience, avoid blame, and dignity. Support language is about fostering an environment of trust, empathy, and respect. It requests active listening, avoiding harmful stereotypes, and prioritizing the survivors' well-being. By using thoughtful and empowering language, we can help survivors feel heard, supported, and valued. Each stakeholder in gender-based violence has a critical role to play in ensuring a safer environment which includes counseling for the survivors. When supporting a rape survivor, it is essential to use compassionate, non-judgmental, and empowering language such as "I believe you", "what happened to you was not your fault", and "you are not alone". The public needs to avoid victim-blaming, minimizing, or pressuring them to act in any specific way. Instead, centre their feelings and choices while reinforcing that they are not at fault.

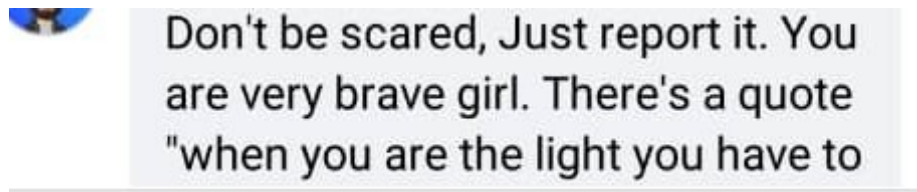
Excerpt 6



Excerpt 7



Excerpt 8



Excerpt 9



Excerpt 6 invitation to “Pm me” (private message me) reflects an appraisal of the situation as one where personal, direct communication might help alleviate emotional distress. The statement signals that the listener’s emotional state is important to the speaker. By offering support, the speaker positions themselves as someone who can influence or improve the listener’s situation. The statement has a positive valence, aiming to provide hope and

connection. The brevity of the statement conveys immediacy, emphasizing the speaker's readiness to help. Affective stance shows that the speaker adopts a supportive and caring stance, and aligning emotional alignment with the listener's presumed feelings of isolation. The phrase "You're not alone" is affectively loaded, aiming to counteract feelings of abandonment or despair. Excerpt 7, the speaker assumes alignment with the listener, expecting them to share the same urgency and sense of responsibility. There is no hedging or negotiation in the comment, implying that the listener is expected to agree and act without hesitation. Also, the speaker conveys urgency and concern through the imperative "Hurry!" This reflects an emotional stance investment in resolving the situation quickly. The speaker expresses high certainty and authority over the necessity of the action. The direct imperative "Report the case to the police" demonstrates the speaker's confidence in what needs to be done. The speaker's concern and urgency indicate a heightened emotional state, likely reflecting anxiety, fear, or concern over the situation. The speaker implies a sense of moral or social obligation, reporting the case is portrayed as the "right" action. Excerpt 8 aligns with the listener by urging action. The repeated use of imperatives suggests a direct and persuasive tone which seeks solidarity or compliance. By saying "Be strong", the speaker acknowledges the potential difficulty of the task, thereby emphasizing with the listener while motivating the action. Affect was used in the comment to convey urgency and encouragement. It invokes a sense of determination in the mind of the listener. The use of "wake up" suggests emotional intensity which aims to provoke a heightened emotional state in the listener. In excerpt 9, the comment evaluates fear as a natural and manageable emotion, the subject's action as condemnable, and reporting as the right course of action. The speaker positions themselves as a supportive and directive, aligning with the listener against the perpetrator while asserting a strong moral imperative. The speaker reveals how language aims to empower and guide the listener toward decisive action. The comment implicitly reflects a moral stance, emphasizing that exposing and reporting perpetrator is not only justified but also a social or ethical responsibility. The speaker aligns themselves with the listener, offering encouragement and solidarity against the perpetrator "him". This creates a "we vs him" dynamic, fostering collective action against perceived perpetrator. The speaker appears confident and directive, expressing certainty that exposing and reporting the perpetrator is the right course of action. The imperative leaves little room for doubts. The use of "Don't be scared" suggests an understanding of listener's fear but position fear as an obstacle to the desired action. The positioning encourages bravery and empowerment.

Conclusion

This paper reveals the pragmatic strategies deployed by victims and social media users to express, communicate, and position themselves on issues of shared experiences of rape,

victim/perpetrators blaming strategy, and victim support language strategy on rape on Facebook platform. It further reviews the resources employed to enact the issues such as: affective stance, evaluative stance, alignment/disalignment, focus/force, engagement, positive/negative judgment, and words like: verb, adjective, and adverbs to describe, evaluate, and express sympathy, action, and support needed to recover justice and healing.

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