

Investigating Ideational and Interpersonal Metafunction in Vehicular Discourse in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract

This research focuses on the analysis of Vehicular discourse on Pakistani public transport vehicles in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which is one of the provinces of Pakistan. The data was collected from vehicles on roads, in marketplaces, in parking lots, and other crowded areas in Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi, and Abbottabad. Most of the texts provided a thorough understanding and a deep insight into the mindset and ideologies of the public transport drivers specifically and of the people living in these areas generally. The vehicular discourse collected was found to be written in two languages: Urdu and Pashto. The initial sample size was thirty, which was then delimited to ten texts. The data was analyzed using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, mainly focusing on ideational and interpersonal Metafunctions. The findings of the analysis reveal that the text contains different processes, participants, and circumstances as well as different aspects of mood, modality, and polarity. The data was then further analyzed to foreground cultural and religious ideologies of the drivers that resonate with the ideologies of common people of the region. This analysis gives a broader picture of the lifestyle and bond of common Pakhtoon people to their culture and religion and has valuable implications for future research. The study highlights that written texts on Pakistani public transport vehicles do not only serve as aesthetics but also reflect social realities and cultural identities of local people. The research further reveals that language functions as a tool for identity construction among the working class. Furthermore, it proposes that even informal, everyday discourse can offer valuable sociolinguistic insights.

Keywords: Vehicular discourse, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Religious & Cultural Ideologies.

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Introduction

In many parts of Pakistan, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), the backs of trucks, rickshaws, and buses are more than just metal; they're storytelling landscapes. The words painted on them offer a glimpse into the hearts and minds of those who drive them. Through short, striking phrases, these drivers share their beliefs, emotions, values, and views on life. Whether it's a tribute to a mother, a reflection on the temporary nature of the world, or a message about loyalty, these texts reveal much about the society they come from. This form of public expression, which has often been overlooked, carries layers of cultural, religious, and social meanings.

The tradition of decorating vehicles in South Asia goes back decades and has evolved into a rich blend of visual art and verbal expression. Scholars like Breckenridge (1995) have highlighted how public culture in South Asia, through its everyday forms such as signage, street art, and vernacular media, serves as a site for negotiating modernity, identity, and belonging. Initially, vehicle art focused on ornamentation: bright colours, intricate floral patterns, portraits of idealized figures, but over time, written messages became just as prominent. Truck art and vehicular decoration have long been part of Pakistani visual culture, with roots tracing back to Afghan influences in the 1970s, as cited by Bilal et al. (2024). Over time, what began as visual ornamentation expanded to include written messages, transforming these vehicles into mobile platforms for personal and social expression. Today, these messages are found not only on trucks but also on buses, taxis, and motorcycles, written in languages like Urdu, Pashto, and Punjabi. Each phrase contributes to the larger cultural conversation taking place on the roads across the country.

By analyzing a selection of messages taken directly from vehicles in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, this research highlights how even a few painted words can tell powerful stories about identity, struggle, and belief. Vehicular discourse offers a unique lens through which to explore the lived experiences of ordinary people in Pakistan; people whose voices might not otherwise be heard, but who find expression through the language they choose to display on the move.

In Pakistan, and especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), texts inscribed on public transport vehicles exist as a rich, culturally embedded form of discourse neglected in scholarly research. While research has investigated visual and economic dimensions of vehicular discourse from multiple perspectives, all those researches have been conducted in Punjab. Therefore, there exists an immense research gap in investigating these

mobile texts in cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other provinces of Pakistan. Owing to this reason, this research bridges the gap by analyzing vehicular discourse across different cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In spite of the sociocultural richness embedded in such brief but powerful messages, less effort has been devoted to considering how they build social realities, convey states of feelings, or encode social, religious, and cultural ideologies. This research fills this gap by exploring the structures of transitivity, mood, modality, and polarity in vehicular discourse to bring to the forefront the socio-religious awareness and the cultural traits of the drivers in KPK and, consequently, the communities that they speak for.

Research Questions

1. What themes and social realities are constructed through different processes in vehicular discourse in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?
2. How do different aspects of mood, modality and polarity in vehicular discourse reflect local cultural and religious ideologies of the people?

Literature Review

The literature review section of this research deals with the available research done in the fields of Systemic Functional Linguistics and Vehicular Discourse.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Metafunctions

Halliday (1978) claims that intrinsically, any kind of linguistic expression has the ability to perform multiple functions at once. Halliday categorizes these functions of language broadly into three types of ‘metafunctions’. These metafunctions include: ideational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction, and textual metafunction. According to his theory, the ideational metafunction depicts how we conceptualize the real world around us. Ideational metafunction comprises Process, Participant, and Circumstance, to be precise. The interpersonal metafunction represents “the idea that language can be used as a means of communicating information” (Halliday, 1977). Interpersonal metafunction, as a key concept in SFL, focuses on how language builds, transforms, and manages social relations.

Hoang (2021) discusses how Halliday's approach constantly shifts towards the relationship between language and society. The study shows that unlike formal and non-SF models of language, SFL conceptualizes metafunctions of language not just as "uses of language" but as a fundamental property of language itself.

Vehicular Discourse

Vehicles are a mode of transportation, used to transport people or goods from one place to another. Writing quotations, interrogative statements, jokes, slogans, political messages, and religious statements on public transport has become a global practice now. These texts on vehicles depict the owner's ideology and affiliation (political/religious). Moreover, vehicular discourse also represents the owner's identity, affection towards homeland, family, and friends.

Research on discourse analysis that has laid foundational work in the domain of vehicular discourse was conducted by Bilal and Shehzad (2019). Their study focused on both linguistic and social dimensions, and utilized Janks' (2005) rubrics, adapted from Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, and identified features such as lexicalization, lexical cohesion, metaphor, euphemism, personification, and transitivity. The methodology was qualitative and based on thematic analysis; data were collected from public transport vehicles in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Initially, fifty samples were collected, but then the sample size was reduced to ten samples for the final analysis. While Bilal and Shehzad focused on general vehicular discourse in the twin cities of Punjab, the present research is geographically focused on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), providing a regional perspective and examining how meanings are constructed ideationally; by examining processes, participants, circumstances, and interpersonally; through mood, modality, and polarity in that specific sociocultural context. This difference in both analytical focus and regional scope distinguishes the current study and contributes to broadening the understanding of vehicular discourse in Pakistan.

Mahmood (2021), through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), explores how the inscriptions on vehicles, which are often humorous, poetic, moralistic, or political, reflect the public's collective consciousness and socio-political crisis of a society. The texts function not only as personal expressions but also as acts of resistance and identity construction within public spaces. This research significantly aligns with the present study's focus on ideational and interpersonal Metafunctions,

particularly in how vehicle texts encode meanings related to power, emotion, and cultural values.

Bilal et al. (2024) conducted invaluable research in the domain of Vehicular Discourse; the research focused on drivers as representatives of Pakistani society. They (2024) discovered how mobile transport can paint a picture of the socio-economic crisis in a society. Their study, rooted in Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar and Janks' analytical rubrics, focuses on the use of lexical features and transitivity processes to unveil the ideological underpinnings embedded in inscriptions. While Bilal et al. concentrated completely on socio-economic grievances, the framework and findings of this research benefit the current study. That research focused on how vehicular discourse reflects the socio-economic crisis of a society, and this present research is concerned with analyzing ideational and interpersonal metafunctions in a different province of Pakistan.

Methodology

Theoretical & Analytical Framework

The theoretical and analytical framework employed in this research article is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The proponent of the theory is Michael Halliday, who developed it in the 1960s. The framework was selected for its effectiveness in creating meaning and social change through a social semiotic theory. The theory is based on the conceptualization of grammar as a functional meaning-making resource that constructs and reflects the context of situation and the context of culture in which semiotic systems evolve and are used (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). SFL asserts that language and other meaning-making systems cannot be comprehended without the investigation of the immediate context in which multimodal or multilingual communication takes place or develops, nor can it be understood in isolation to the issues of power, language socialization, and ideology (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). SFL consists of three metafunctions: the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. These metafunctions are realized through the use of field, tenor, and mode resources. The scope of this research is limited to ideational and interpersonal metafunctions.

The Ideational Metafunction

The ideational metafunctions employ field resources to construe ideas and experiences. These resources construct transitivity patterns, which include processes, i.e., the selection of specific types of verbs. These

different types of verbs construct participants, which are different kinds of nouns or noun groups. Depending on the verbs in a clause, any participant can play a variety of roles. Similarly, different kinds of verbs and prepositional phrases construct different types of circumstances related to time, manner, and place (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

The Interpersonal Metafunction

The interpersonal metafunction constructs interpersonal dynamics which describe how language is used to interact with others, establish relationships, and express attitude. These dynamics employ tenor resources which include the use of mood, modality, and appraisal systems to construct the degree of formality and informality as well as power dynamics and attitude (Martin & White, 2005). The tenor system also comprises modality resources used to construct the degree of possibility or certainty. Derewianka and Jones (2016) make clear that language users do not simply exchange questions, statements, commands, and offers using the modality system, but rather, they also “express attitudes, engage the listener or reader, and adjust the strength” of their “feelings and opinions” through the semiotic choices they make (Derewianka & Jones, 2016, p.25).

Data Collection and Sample Size

Data collection focused exclusively on capturing traditional truck art inscriptions within the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. The primary data was gathered by photographing textual content displayed on commercial vehicles, specifically focusing on slogans, poetry, and religious texts. The photographs were captured using a Xiaomi Redmi Note 14 Pro smartphone camera under daylight conditions to optimize textual clarity and resolution. Vehicles were selected based on a convenience sampling approach; photographs were taken when vehicles were stationary at local truck stands, fuelling stations, and check posts across the province.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Initially, a broad pool of thirty (30) textual samples was compiled from the photographed vehicles. To facilitate an in-depth qualitative analysis, this dataset was delimited to a final selection of ten (10) texts based on deliberate inclusion and exclusion parameters. Texts were chosen if they offered high legibility, completeness, and strong thematic representation across the target categories. Partially obscured or highly repetitive texts

were excluded. Duplicated poetic verses or identical religious phrases were removed to ensure a unique and linguistically rich final sample size.

Translation Verification

The primary translation of the selected truck art inscriptions from Pashto and Urdu into English was executed by the researchers. Nonetheless, formal validation steps were integrated to uphold academic rigor. The translations were verified by the university's translation department to eliminate subjective bias and to verify semantic accuracy.

Ethical Statement

Because the texts and inscriptions were displayed publicly on commercial vehicles traversing public roads, formal informed consent from individual truck owners was not required. Nonetheless, strict ethical protocols were maintained during data collection to protect privacy. All photographs were taken in public spaces. To ensure complete anonymity, all personal identifying features, including vehicle registration plates and the faces of drivers or bystanders, were completely omitted from the final analytical dataset.

Results

This section deals with the presentation of the observations of vehicular texts, pointing out their ideational metafunction and interpersonal Metafunction in the text.

Analysis of Text 1

Original Pashto Text	Urdu Translation	English Translation
چې خاطر دی یکی خاوری شی بھی مت کرو که اپنی قدر خاطرہ دومرہ مہ کوہ خاطر دجاد سترگو خاک میں مل جائے۔	کسی کی آنکھوں کی اتنی قدر بھی مت کرو کہ اپنی قدر خاطرہ دومرہ مہ کوہ خاطر دجاد سترگو خاک میں مل جائے۔	Don't value someone's eyes so much that your own worth is reduced to dust.



This text has been written in the Pashto language.

Ideational Metafunction:

In this text, only the material process has been found.

1. **Process:** Lose(خاک میں ملا دینا) is a material process indicating an action done by the actor.
2. **Participant:**
 - Actor: The implied "you" (تم) (understood subject).
 - Goal: "Your own worth" (اپنی قدر) is what is being lost.
3. **Circumstance:** "In valuing someone else's eyes" (کسی کی آنکھوں کی قدر) functions as a circumstantial element of cause/reason – explaining why or under what condition the loss occurs.

Interpersonal Metafunction:

1. **Mood:** The mood of this clause is imperative, as it issues a warning or advice.
2. **Modality:** The text exhibits a strong suggestion, so it has a Medium modality – expressing advisability or warning (strong suggestion).
3. **Polarity:** The text has a negative polarity, due to the use of the word "don't." (مت)

Analysis of Text 2

Original Text	Pashto	Urdu Translation	English Translation
	هاتھ میں تلوار اور گردن پر کفن تورہ په لاس کفن په غاړه به را باندھ کر اٹھوں گا، اگر مجھے پاسم که خبر شم ده پښتون ده پښتونوں کی غلامی کی خبر ملی۔ غلامی نہ		I will rise with a sword in my hand and a shroud around my neck if I hear news of the Pashtuns being enslaved.

4.2.1



Ideational Metafunction:

Material and Mental processes have been identified in this text.

1. Process:

- Hear (خبر ملنا) is a mental process involving perception.
- Rise (اٹھوں گا) is a material process showing action.

2. Participant:

- Actor: "I" (مجھے) in both processes.
- Phenomenon (for mental process): Pashtuns being enslaved
- Goal (for material process): Implied uprising or action (not explicitly stated, but suggested through "rise").

3. Circumstance:

"With a sword in my hand and a shroud around my neck" ہاتھ میں تلوار اور گردن پر کفن circumstance of accompaniment (depicting preparedness for battle and death).

"If I hear news of the Pashtuns being enslaved" اگر مجھے پختونوں کی غلامی کی خبر ملی

– circumstance of condition (when the action will be triggered).

Interpersonal Metafunction

1. **Mood:** The mood is declarative, as the driver is asserting a strong, determined statement.
2. **Modality:** It exhibits high modality, as it expresses a strong intention and readiness to act.
3. **Polarity:** Positive polarity – no negation is present.

Analysis of Text 3

Original Pashto Text	Urdu Translation	English Translation
زہ شاہین دا دنگو غورونو غیرتی او نچے پہاڑوں کا م کہ دشمن بھی میری غیرت پر غیرتی کہ می دشمن وی زندہ باد زنده باد کہتے ہیں		In honor, I am a falcon of the high mountains, Even my enemies salute my pride.



Ideational Metafunction

The following text has relational and material processes.

1. **Processes:** “Am” (میں) is a relational identifying process, establishing identity. Salute is a material process, showing physical or behavioral action.
2. **Participants:** In the first clause, "I" (میں) is the identified, and "a falcon of the high mountains" (اونچے پہاڑوں کا شاہین) is the identifier. In the second clause, "my enemies" (میرے دشمن) are the actors, and "the pride I carry" is the goal.

In the embedded clause "I carry pride", "I" is the actor, and "pride" is the goal.

3. **Circumstance:** "In honor" (غیرت میں) functions as a circumstance of manner or domain: the thematic context of the identity claim.

Interpersonal Metafunction

1. **Mood:** The mood is declarative as it asserts identity and describes the behavior of others.
2. **Modality:** It has high modality because it suggests strong certainty and self-praise.
3. **Polarity:** It has Positive polarity – no negation is used.

Analysis of Text 4

Original Pashto Text	Urdu Translation	English Translation
مونځ دی کړے دی	نماز پڑھ لی ہے؟	Have you offered the prayer?



Ideational Metafunction

The text contains Material Process only.

1. **Process:** Offered (پڑھ لی ہے) (or "read" in literal Urdu) is a material process showing a physical action (performing a religious ritual).
2. **Participant:**
Actor: Implied "You" (تم نے) (the one being addressed).
Goal: "Prayer" (نماز) (the action being done).
3. **Circumstance:** None explicitly stated in this clause.

Interpersonal Metafunction:

1. **Mood:** In this text, the mood is Interrogative. It is a question aimed at gathering information or reminding.
2. **Modality:** It exhibits medium modality, which implies expected or encouraged action of offering the prayer (subtle obligation in a religious context).
3. **Polarity:** It has a Positive polarity – no negation is present.

Analysis of Text 5

Original Urdu Text	English Translation
ماں جنت کا پھول ہے۔	Mother is the flower of heaven.



Ideational Metafunction: Representing Experience

In this text, only the relational process has been found.

1. **Process:** Relational
2. **Participant:** In this text, “Mother” (ماں) is acting as the token, and “flower” (پھول) as the value.
3. **Circumstance:** “of heaven” (جنت کا) is the circumstance.

This statement contains a relational identifying clause in which mother is identified as a token. Flower is the value, and the remaining part of the text is acting as the circumstance.

Interpersonal Metafunction

1. **Mood:** The overall mood of the clause is *declarative*. Because it is making a statement and giving some kind of information.
2. **Modality:** The statement does not contain any modality.
3. **Polarity:** The text is in positive polarity.

Analysis of Text 6

Original Urdu Text	English Translation
دنیا فانی ہے	This world is mortal.



Ideational Metafunction

In this text, the relational process has been identified.

- **Process:** The verb “ہے” (is) is acting as a relational identifying process because it assigns a quality to a participant.
- **Participant:** In the clause, “دنیا” (the world/worldly life) is identified, while “فانی” (mortal, transient, temporal) is acting as an identifier.
- **Circumstance:** No circumstantial element is found in the clause.

Interpersonal Metafunction

- **Mood:** The mood of this clause is declarative. It is simply stating facts or giving information.
- **Modality:** No explicit modal verb or modal expression is present in the clause. Expressions such as might, may, could, or should are absent.
- **Polarity:** The clause exists in positive polarity.

Analysis of Text 7

Original Text	Pashto	Urdu Translation	English Translation
		جیسے تم خواب دیکھ رہے ہو	As if you are dreaming.
		لکه خوب چي ویني	



Ideational Metafunction

In this text, a relational process has been found.

- **Process:** *are* is a relational attributive process in the clause.
- **Participant:** “تم” (You) is acting as a carrier, whereas “ویني” (dreaming) is acting as an attribute.
- **Circumstance:** “لکه” (As if) is the circumstance in the clause.

Interpersonal Metafunction

- **Mood:** The mood of the clause is declarative as it makes a statement or conveys information. It is used to declare facts, opinions, or explanations. Unlike interrogative or imperative sentences, declarative sentences are not questions or commands. They typically end with a period.
- **Modality:** The clause does not contain any modality.
- **Polarity:** Positive, there is no negation. The clause is affirmative.

Analysis of Text 8

Original text	Translation
ماں کے علاوہ کوئی وفادار نہیں	No one is loyal except mother



Ideational Metafunction

Relational identifying process has been found in this text.

- **Process** ہے ”(is) is a relational identifying process in the clause.
- **Participant:** “کوئی” (No one) is acting as *identified (Token)*, whereas “وفادار (loyal)” is acting as *identifier (Value)*
- **Circumstance:** “کے علاوہ ماں” (*except mother*) is the circumstance in the clause.

Interpersonal Metafunction

- **Mood:** The clause is in the declarative mood, meaning it expresses a statement or shares information. It is intended to present facts, viewpoints, or clarifications.
- **Modality:** There is no use of modality within the clause.
- **Polarity:** The clause exhibits negative polarity, realized through the construction “نہیں.... کوئی” (no one ... not). The negation excludes all individuals from the category of وفادار (loyal/faithful), while “ماں” (mother) is presented as the sole exception

Analysis of Text 9

Original Urdu Text	English Translation
ہوتی وفا خون کے رشتوں میں تو نا بکتا یوسف مصر کے بازاروں میں	If there were loyalty in blood relations, Joseph would not have been sold in the markets of Egypt.



Ideational Metafunction

In this text, two types of processes have been found: relational and material.

Relational

- **Process:** the lexical item “ہوتی” (*were/existed*) is a relational attributive process in the clause.
- **Participant:** *there* is a participant acting as carrier, whereas “وفا” *loyalty* is the attribute.
- **Circumstance:** *if* any “خون کے رشتوں” in *blood relations* are the circumstances in the clause.

Material process

- **Process:** “بکتا” (*have been sold*) is a material process.
- **Participant:** “یوسف” (*Joseph*) is not the actor but acting as the goal (participant affected by the action) in this specific clause.
- **Circumstance:** “میں مصر کے بازار” (*In the markets of Egypt*) is the circumstantial element of the clause.

Interpersonal Metafunction

- **Mood: Declarative**

The clause makes a statement, not a question or command. It presents a hypothetical or counterfactual assertion about a past event.

- **Modality: Modal Auxiliary- would**

The modal auxiliary verb would in the English translation signals a counterfactual conditional meaning, presenting an imagined outcome that did not occur. The modality does not express certainty about future events; rather, it constructs a hypothetical relationship between the presence of ”وفا“ (loyalty) and the absence of Joseph's sale.

- **Polarity: Negative**

The clause contains negative polarity, realized through ”نا“ (not). The negation rejects the possibility of Joseph's sale under the hypothetical condition that genuine loyalty existed within blood relations

Analysis of Text 10

Original Pashto Text	Urdu Translation	English Translation
نه می دولت نه می دنیا پکار دواه زما ده مور او پلار دعا پکار ده	نه مجھے دولت چاہیے، نہ دنیا کی پکار، مجھے صرف ماں باپ کی دعا درکار ہے	I neither need wealth, nor the world. I need my parents' prayers.



Ideational Metafunction

In this text, two clauses have been identified. Both contain mental processes.

Mental process in 1st Clause:

- **Process:** “پکار” (needed/required) is a mental process in the clause.
- **Participant:** “زما” (I) is the participant acting as *senser*, whereas “دولت” (wealth) and “دنیا” (world) are phenomena.
- **Circumstance:** The clause does not contain any circumstance.

Mental process in Clause 2:

- **Process:** “پکار” (needed/required) is a mental process as it expresses a particular state of mind of the drivers.
- **Participant:** “مجھے” (I) is acting as *a sensor* (a conscious entity), whereas “دی مور او ” پلار دعا زما“ (*my parents’ prayers*) is the phenomenon.
- **Circumstance:** No circumstance is found in the clause.

Interpersonal Metafunction

- **Mood: Declarative**

The clause gives information by making a statement.

- **Modality: None**

No explicit modal auxiliary is present in either clause. Therefore, the clauses express the speaker’s position as a direct statement rather than as a possibility, obligation, or probability.

- **Polarity: Negative Polarity**

The first clause displays negative polarity through the construction “نه... نه” (neither ... nor), which rejects both “دولت” (wealth) and “دنیا” (the world/worldly life) as desired objects. The second clause shifts to a positive assertion, identifying “دی مور او پلار دعا” (parents’ prayers/blessings) as the only valued need.

Discussion

‘چی خاطر دی یکی خاوری شی خاطره دومره مه کوه خاطر د جاد سترگو’
which is translated as ‘Don’t value someone’s eyes so much that your own

worth is reduced to dust' delivers a moral lesson grounded in self-worth and dignity, warning against diminishing one's own worth while trying to gain others' approval. Such statements are often found on vehicles in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as expressions of folk wisdom, emotional resilience, or spiritual/moral advice, often reflecting societal attitudes toward self-respect in the face of social or relational struggles.

Text 2 'توره په لاس کفن په غاره به را پاسم که خبرشم ده پښتون ده غلامی نه' which is translated in English as 'I will rise with a sword in my hand and a shroud around my neck if I hear news of the Pashtuns being enslaved' demonstrates a passionate resistance ideology, steeped in cultural and historical pride. It reflects the Pashtun code of honor (Pashtunwali), emphasizing liberty and readiness to fight for the nation's dignity. The use of emotionally charged imagery, "sword and shroud," symbolizes a warrior ethos highlighting themes of sacrifice, loyalty, and defiance. Such messages on vehicles act as mobile declarations of cultural identity and socio-political consciousness of the people of KPK.

Text 3 'زه شاهین دادنکو غورونو غیرتی یم-غیرتی که می دشمن وی زنده باد' which is translated in English as 'In honor, I am a falcon of the high mountains, Even my enemies salute my pride' functions as a symbolic affirmation of identity, pride, and respect. The metaphorical use of a "falcon" is culturally significant, often associated with strength, nobility, and freedom in Pashtun and Islamic traditions (inspired by Allama Iqbal's poetry). The reference to enemies saluting the speaker's pride elevates the tone to one of moral superiority and invincibility, reinforcing an image of respect earned even from the adversaries. This aligns with vehicular discourse in KPK, where expressions on trucks and buses reflect bravery, high self-esteem, and honor rooted in local and national ethos.

Text 4 'مونخ دی کڑے دیے' which is translated in English as 'Have you offered the prayer?' is an interrogative statement which is commonly seen painted on the backs of trucks and buses in Pakistan, especially in regions like KPK. It functions as a religious reminder, appealing to the shared faith and values of the community. The choice of words reflects moral accountability and a gentle spiritual nudge rather than confrontation. Such expressions in vehicular discourse serve both a social and didactic purpose, reinforcing religious identity and public piety in everyday life.

Text 5 'ماں جنت کا پھول ہے' which is translated in English as 'Mother is the flower of heaven', shows a strong cultural and religious respect for mothers in Pakhtoon society. It highlights the emotional connection and spiritual importance of the mother figure, who is often seen as sacred and

nurturing. These expressions demonstrate how drivers, representing everyday people, use language to promote values of respect and love for mothers.

Text 6 ‘دنيا فانی ہے’ which is translated in English as ‘The world is transient’. The clause says that “دنيا” (worldly life) is “فانی,” meaning it's transient or temporary. This shows that material life is fleeting and will eventually vanish. This idea is common in Islamic teachings, where there's a big difference between this temporary life and the everlasting afterlife (Qur'an 57:20 and 3:185). Through its simple structure, the clause reflects on what life means and how focused we should be on material things. It highlights the divide between brief worldly matters and long-lasting spiritual stuff. When you look at it this way, the clause fits a larger pattern: religions often turn their complex views into simple phrases. These quick sound bites pass along lessons about right and wrong and share personal beliefs and insights on life (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Eggins, 2004).

Text 7 ‘لکه خوب چی وینی’ which is translated in English as ‘As if you are dreaming’. In this text, the linguistic elements ‘However’ “لکه” (as if) with “خوب” (dream) give a feeling of being not quite real. When someone says something is like a dream, they imply it seems far from regular reality or is hard to understand completely. This dream-like picture can show uncertainty, surprise, doubt, or emotional thought based on how it's said. Instead of plainly stating facts, the speaker uses figures of speech to share their view of what's happening. These kinds of comparisons show how we talk every day by leaning on mental pictures to express feelings and thoughts. By calling something a dream, the person finds the event strange, shocking, or out-of-the-ordinary. So, this expression lets us see how people shape their views of the world using fancy words that tell a lot about how they feel in short, powerful lines, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), and Eggins (2004).

Text 8 ‘ماں کے علاوہ کوئی وفادار نہیں’ which is translated in English as ‘No one is loyal except mother’. This statement calls “ماں” (mother) the perfect example of “وفادار” (loyal/faithful). It sets maternal devotion apart from all other relationships. Using “وفادار نہیں کوئی” (no one is loyal), the speaker shows that loyalty is rare. At the same time, it makes the mom an exception to this rule. The text really praises motherhood, a common theme in Urdu and South Asian culture where moms represent unconditional love, sacrifice, and devotion. By comparing how faithful a mother is to how unreliable others can be, the speaker judges’ different kinds of relationships. This shows just how important family love and trust truly are.

Text 9 ‘ہوتی وفا خون کے رشتوں میں تو نا بکتا یوسف مصر کے بازاروں میں’ which is translated in English as ‘If there were loyalty in blood relations, Joseph would not have been sold in the markets of Egypt.’ Referencing the Qur'anic story of “یوسف” (Joseph), the author resorts to the known religious story for analyzing the complexities of human and family connections and the question of human loyalty. The opposition of “وفا” (loyalty) to the selling of “یوسف” (Joseph) serves as an example of the moral judgment in which familial connections cannot be regarded as the only means of proving loyalty (Qur'an 12:19-21). The conditional structure makes the audience analyze the relationship between family connections and human morals. Relying on the well-known religious and historical story, the speaker places his message in a more general ethical context, showing that human loyalty and integrity need to be proved by actions rather than just blood relations. This is an example of how references to religion can be used for conveying the author's reflections and moral judgment.

Text 10 ‘می دولت نہ می دنیا پکار داه زما ده مور او پلار دعا پکار دمنہ’ which is translated in English as ‘I neither need wealth nor the world. I only need my parents’ prayers. This excerpt shows the importance of material objects, namely “دولت” (wealth) and “دنیا” (worldly life), and how these material objects can never equal the moral and spiritual significance of “د دعا پلار دعا” (parents' blessings). Here, the speaker stresses that the former objects cannot be compared to the latter object. This kind of statement usually relates to those values that prevail in the culture of respecting parents and remaining humble. However, one must exercise caution when generalizing such a point of view with regard to the whole population living in a certain province or social community. In other words, this excerpt presents one of the views held by a particular participant who takes part in the collection of data.

Conclusion

This research employed Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar to analyze vehicular discourse in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), specifically focusing on the ideational and interpersonal Metafunctions. This research illustrates that KPK's vehicular discourse is much more than aesthetic art; it is an on-the-move linguistic articulation of identity, ideology, and social reality. Through the examination of ten texts chosen very carefully. The transitivity analysis uncovered a range of material, mental, and relational processes that indicate themes of self-worth, resistance, religious devotion, reverence for mothers, and disillusionment. The interpersonal metafunctions of mood, modality, and polarity further showed how drivers interact with their audience, express personal beliefs, and convey

emotional and moral judgments. As a whole, vehicular discourse provides a telling insight into the lived experiences, challenges, and values of working-class groups in KPK. They operate as folk commentaries on society, and this study confirms their utility as sources of good data for sociolinguistic and cultural study.

Addressing the first research question, themes such as maternal love, mortality, betrayal, material detachment, and spiritual resilience were identified through the ideational analysis, using different participants, processes, and circumstances. All the texts that were selected for analysis showed different transitivity processes, for instance: Material processes expressed some kind of physical activity, as mentioned in the text, "I will rise with a sword in my hand and a shroud around my neck." According to this text, 'I' is the 'actor' who is going to carry out the material process; "rise" is the material process, and "with a sword in my hand and a shroud around my neck" is the circumstantial part of the clause. Mental processes voiced the driver's observations, perceptions, and feelings. For instance, the text, "neither need wealth, nor the world. I need my parents' prayers." represents the driver's observation and perception about the mother who is considered sacred among Pakhtoon society.

From this research, it was concluded that all these processes constitute the transitivity system of language, which belongs to the experiential Metafunction. Hence, it can be said that transitivity analysis describes how language interprets our experience of the world around us. These findings relate to the third research question in the current study.

In transitivity analysis, relational processes describe the way participants are related to each other through the processes of being and having. For example, in the clause "Mother is the flower of heaven," the relational process constructs an identifying identity of the mother and an exalted social reality where motherhood is sacred. Similarly, in "If there were loyalty in blood relations..." The relational process and hypothetical circumstance and relational process construct a socio-religious reflection on betrayal in families, referring to the narrative of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph).

Most frequently, the imperative mood is deployed to provide advice, moral reminders, or warnings. For example, in the phrase "Don't lose your own worth in valuing someone else's eyes," the imperative form is employed not to order but to steer the reader toward emotional self-knowledge and self-regard.

To conclude, the research aimed to identify dominant themes and social realities constructed through vehicular discourse in KPK and how different aspects of mood, modality, and polarity in vehicular discourse reflect local cultural and religious ideologies. It indicates deeply ingrained religious roots among locals of KPK; it shows the readers that their perspective of life is anchored in faith and religion. Their religious orientation isn't merely decorative, but it serves as a discursive tool. Additionally, the data reflected a collective consciousness of self-reliance, brotherhood, and internal strength, as in text 3: "In honor, I am a falcon of the high mountains, even my enemies salute the pride I carry". This kind of framing aligns with the historical narrative of Pakhtoon's resilience and brotherhood. Overall, this research provides a strong basis for further research in Vehicular discourse in the domain of Sociolinguistics and Cultural studies of other regions of Pakistan.

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Appendix

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