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Editorial

It is with great pleasure that we present **Volume 4, Issue 1 (January–June 2026)** of the *UCP Journal of Languages and Literature*. This issue brings together five original contributions that collectively demonstrate the breadth, interdisciplinarity, and contemporary relevance of language and literary scholarship. Although the articles engage with diverse subjects—from climate discourse and digital media to literary representation, public semiotics, and language endangerment—they are united by a common intellectual concern: the ways in which language both reflects and reshapes the social, cultural, political, and ecological realities in which we live.

The opening article, "**Green Silence in the Age of Climate Crisis: An Ecolinguistic Study**", addresses one of the defining challenges of our time by examining the linguistic construction of environmental realities in digital weather communication. Through a corpus-assisted ecolinguistic analysis of social media weather updates, the study demonstrates how everyday discourse frequently marginalizes ecological concerns while privileging human-centered narratives. In doing so, it reminds us that language is never a neutral vehicle of communication; rather, it actively shapes public consciousness and influences how societies understand climate change, environmental responsibility, and the interconnectedness of human and non-human life. The article extends ecolinguistic inquiry into the rapidly evolving sphere of digital communication, offering both theoretical innovation and practical implications for climate communication.

Questions of language transformation continue in the second contribution, "**The Netflix Effect: How Globish is Shaping Language Use Among Undergraduates in Lahore**." Situated at the intersection of sociolinguistics, media studies, and language pedagogy, this study explores how global streaming platforms have become influential agents of linguistic change. By investigating undergraduate students' adoption of simplified English—or Globish—the authors illuminate the growing impact of informal digital exposure on communicative practices traditionally shaped by formal educational institutions. The findings invite scholars and educators to reconsider long-held assumptions about language acquisition and acknowledge the increasingly significant role of global media in shaping contemporary English usage.

While the first two studies investigate language in digital and communicative environments, the third article, "**Sacred Oppression: State-Sanctioned Islamophobia in Nadeem Aslam's *The Golden Legend***", shifts our attention to the critical role of literature in interrogating structures of power. Through a nuanced engagement with theories of biopolitics, racialization, and postcolonial critique, the authors examine how Aslam's novel exposes the institutional mechanisms through which religious identity becomes politicized and weaponized against marginalized communities. Rather than treating literature merely as artistic representation, the study demonstrates its capacity to reveal the

complex intersections of religion, nationalism, law, and state violence. At a time when questions of identity, belonging, and religious freedom remain globally significant, this contribution underscores literature's enduring role as a site of ethical reflection and social critique.

The issue then turns toward the linguistic landscapes of everyday life in **"Investigating Ideational and Interpersonal Metafunction in Vehicular Discourse in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa."** Drawing upon Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, the study reveals that the inscriptions displayed on commercial vehicles are far more than decorative expressions. Instead, they function as mobile texts through which communities negotiate identity, morality, spirituality, social values, and emotional experience. By bringing attention to an often-overlooked form of public discourse, the article demonstrates the richness of vernacular linguistic practices and illustrates how ordinary communicative artifacts serve as repositories of collective cultural memory and social ideology.

The final contribution, **"Language Vitality of Chilisso: A Case of an Endangered Language of Pakistan,"** addresses an equally urgent yet frequently underrepresented concern: the preservation of linguistic diversity. Through an empirical investigation of the vitality of Chilisso, the study documents the multiple demographic, educational, economic, and sociocultural pressures contributing to language shift within a multilingual society. Beyond documenting language endangerment, the article highlights the intimate relationship between language, identity, cultural heritage, and community resilience. In an era of accelerating globalization, the preservation of endangered languages represents not only a linguistic priority but also an essential commitment to safeguarding humanity's cultural diversity.

Taken together, the contributions in this issue reveal several emerging directions within contemporary scholarship. They demonstrate that language cannot be studied in isolation from the wider social forces that shape human experience. Whether examining environmental communication, digital media, literary representation, public discourse, or language preservation, each article illustrates the dynamic interplay between discourse and society. Collectively, these studies remind us that language is simultaneously a medium of communication, an instrument of power, a repository of culture, and a catalyst for social transformation.

This issue also reflects the increasingly interdisciplinary character of research in languages and literature. Corpus linguistics, ecolinguistics, sociolinguistics, systemic functional linguistics, literary studies, discourse analysis, and language documentation converge to address questions whose significance extends well beyond disciplinary boundaries. Such diversity exemplifies the evolving nature of humanities research, where linguistic inquiry engages productively with environmental studies, media studies, sociology, education, cultural studies, and political thought.

As always, the publication of this volume would not have been possible without

the dedication of many individuals. We extend our sincere appreciation to our contributors for entrusting us with their scholarship, to our reviewers for their rigorous evaluations and constructive recommendations, and to the members of the Editorial and Advisory Boards for their continued commitment to maintaining the journal's academic standards. We are equally grateful to the Faculty of Languages and Literature and the University of Central Punjab for their unwavering institutional support in fostering a vibrant culture of research and scholarly excellence.

We hope that the articles presented in this issue will stimulate meaningful academic dialogue, encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, and inspire further research addressing the complex linguistic, literary, cultural, and societal challenges of our rapidly changing world. It is our aspiration that this volume contributes not only to ongoing scholarly conversations but also to the broader pursuit of knowledge that advances critical inquiry, social understanding, and human flourishing.

Prof. Dr Khalid Manzoor Butt
Editor-in-Chief
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We appreciate your understanding of this disclaimer and hope that you find the content within this journal informative and thought-provoking.

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Green Silence in the Age of Climate Crisis: An Ecological Study

Muhammad Saleem^{1*}

Abstract

Amid the growing severity of climate change and expanding pollution of the environment, the vocabulary of referring to a weather event becomes a central aspect of ecological awareness among the population. This article examines the discourse of green silence, or the absence of ecological allusions, in weather reports on social media. Based on the Six Stories We Live By (Stibbe, 2015) framework, the study examined 200 posts on five popular (AccuWeather, Windy.com, The Weather Channel, Clime (NOAA), and PakWeather) weather-focused accounts on social media over a six-month period (May 2024 to October 2024). The mixed-methods corpus-assisted research demonstrates that ecological oblivion, anthropocentric prominence, and hostile identity work are predominant across these short, frequently shared weather messages. Often, the consequences of weather events on non-human life and the environment in general, and the ecosystem, are downplayed or put into the background, whereas the impact of weather events is centralized on the human experience through metaphorical use. The results indicate that such platforms promote a linguistic ideology of anthropocentrism that erodes ecological awareness within public discourse and undermines the power of climate change discourse, particularly undermining SDG Goal 13 (Climate Action). The instances of erasure and negligence across platforms with varying regional reach show the ideological roles of common digital textual interactions. This makes ecocritical theoretical analysis applicable to real-time-based, app-based, and algorithmic communication scenarios. It contributes to the field of eco-digital discourse. It provides practical recommendations that can guide climate communicators, app developers, and environmental editors when they would like to ensure that eco-responsibility and ecological presence are integrated into common weather discourse. It calls for a reimagining of weather bulletins as possible locations of ecological narratives, empathy, and Earth awareness.

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Keywords: Climate, Erasure, Green Discourse, Identity, Salience, Weather Reports

Introduction

Extreme weather, including heat waves, floods, droughts, and wildfires, is plaguing the planet, and their strength and frequency have never been higher as the world is experiencing the compounding effects of climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2023) is alarmed that the environment is fast reaching dangerous tipping points not only for ecosystems but also for human civilization itself. Within this context that is worldwide, Sustainable Development Goal 13 calls countries to take urgent action to combat climate change and its effects not only at the level of policy but at that of awareness creation and communicative sense (United Nations, 2015). Language proves to be a very useful instrument, not just in the sharing of information but even in the development of ecological values, ideologies and behaviors (Stibbe, 2021; Alexander & Baldwin, 2020; Saleem & Rehman, 2026).

Social media has turned out to be one of the main media of climate and weather communication in the currently hyper-connected world. Apps may include Twitter/X, Facebook, or Instagram, and in these applications, odds are good that users will find out about breaking weather alerts ten times to a hundred times more than through traditional print or television sources. Social media is utilized to reach millions of people directly, having social media as a new way of issuing updates, visualizations, and warnings through meteorological agencies, digital weather services, and tech-based weather apps like AccuWeather, Windy.com, and The Weather Channel (Schäfer & Painter, 2021). As much as this change enhances access and immediacy, it begs relevant questions as to what these postings bring into view, into the margin, or leave out in their representation of weather events.

This study analyzes three stories, i.e., erasure story, identity story, and salience story, from the six Stories We Live By theoretical framework (Stibbe, 2015). With the analyses of these stories, the researcher defines and extracts Green Silence.

Stibbe (2021) defines Erasure as follows:

Erasure is a story in people's minds that an area of life is unimportant or unworthy of consideration. An erasure pattern is a linguistic representation of an area of life as irrelevant, marginal or unimportant through its systematic absence, backgrounding or distortion in texts. Erasure, of course, is something intrinsic to the

very nature of discourse. In representing and constructing areas of social life, texts and discourses will always be partial, bringing certain elements together into a configuration while leaving out a whole universe of other elements. The concept of erasure only becomes meaningful when an analyst surveys the universe of elements that have been excluded, declares that one of these elements is important, that it is being ‘erased’ from consciousness, and argues that it should be brought back into consideration. What that ‘something important’ is depends on the goals and interests of the analyst. (p. 141)

According to Stibbe (2021):

An identity is a story in people’s minds about what it means to be a particular kind of person, including appearance, character, behaviour and values. A self-identity is an evolving story people tell themselves and others about what kind of person they are. Identities are models in people’s minds, but manifest themselves in particular ways of dressing, writing, speaking and behaving. Some identities (e.g. the insatiable consumer) encourage behaviours that are ecologically destructive if people adopt them, i.e., if they accept that they are that type of person and conform to the mental model of what that kind of person says and does. On the other hand, different identities may encourage people to behave in ways which help protect the systems that life depends on. (p. 100)

Stibbe (2021) defines a salience story as follows:

Salience—a story in people’s minds that an area of life is important or worthy of attention. Salience pattern—a linguistic or visual representation of an area of life as worthy of attention through concrete, specific, and vivid depictions. (p. 160)

Yet the exclusionary, disciplined removal of nature, non-human actors, and causative climate from these updates is part of the construction of a shallow, self-assertive vision of weather as inconvenience, spectacle, or risk, rather than ecological effect (Naess, 2003; Norgaard, 2011).

This study is significant for three key reasons. First, it addresses a gap in ecolinguistic research, which has focused on news media or policy discourse. Second, it highlights the ideological work of silence, which can be equally damaging in shaping environmental attitudes (Stibbe, 2021). Third, it contributes to Eco digital discourse studies, a rapidly evolving intersection between digital media research, linguistics, and environmental humanities.

Literature Review

Ecolinguistics investigates the role of language in promoting or hindering ecological sustainability (Stibbe, 2021). It builds on the idea that discourse constructs not only social realities but also environmental ideologies. At its core is ecosophy (Naess, 2003), which refers to a philosophy of living harmoniously with the Earth. Stibbe (2015, 2021) reinterprets ecosophy as an evaluative framework against which linguistic patterns can be examined: do they contribute to the flourishing or destruction of life systems? Language does not merely describe the environment. It constructs what is visible, important, and morally relevant.

As such, Stibbe (2021) describes this as the “Erasure Story”. Being animals, ecosystems, or even climate itself are left out of language. The deliberate absence of existential consideration is precisely that, a deliberate act; indeed, it serves dominant anthropocentric ideologies of topical discourse on human necessities, breakdowns and bounce-backs (Saleem & Khattak, 2025). Erasure is found in the weather discourse discussing floods that fail to account for habitat destruction, or heatwaves. Heatwaves are described only in terms of human comfort and energy use, but not by defining what high temperatures do to non-human life forms.

As mobile-first weather applications such as AccuWeather, The Weather Channel, Windy.com, Clime, and PakWeather have taken off, weather communication has moved on to become visual, fast, and platform-tailored. These news bites are frequently shared in a form of short and drastic impact: headlines, image cards, or playable maps that encourage their consumption but not analysis. Anderson (2020) and Schafer and Painter (2021) provide data according to which social media weather forecasts often simplify complicated weather phenomena to provocative or safety-related information. Even though these services play important roles in the provision of safety to the public, the communicative patterns are usually ecologically shallow. Wozniak et al. (2021) and O’Neill et al. (2015) demonstrate that digital weather-related text prioritizes anthropogenic impacts (such as commutes, air con, and deaths), yet they do not focus on the wider ecology; such discourse, therefore, contributes to what this research paper defines as green silence.

A repetition of the same imbalance over time and across platforms creates a cultural inclination toward considering weather separately and independently of ecology. Studies across international and Pakistani media outlets reveal that dominant framing patterns construct nature as an external threat while backgrounding ecological interdependence (Saleem et al., 2025). It establishes an ontological gap between climate systems and

meteorological phenomena, which adds to what Stibbe (2021) defines as the causing of the stories of destruction. These tales, although not malicious on the face, do propagate a form of storytelling where there is no particular care for non-human life.

Although ecolinguistics has been applied to news articles (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014), climate reports and environmental activism (Mo & Xiao, 2024), the field has yet to take seriously algorithmic weather updates as an object of ecolinguistic analysis. Key ecological terminology is systematically omitted from weather discourse (Saleem & Khan, 2025). This is a huge gap since such platforms address millions, shape perceptions day by day, and are often seen as objective or apolitical. This study responds to this gap by bringing Stibbe's (2015) ecolinguistic framework to bear on social media weather discourse from global and local weather apps, with special attention to erasure, salience, and identity constructions. It contributes a novel dimension to ecolinguistics by bridging it with digital environmental humanities, a field still in its early development.

Previous studies emphasize the role of language in shaping environmental discourse. Faraz and Saleem (2024) discuss the framing of the idea of the term development in economic discourse in their related study with the help of the ecolinguistic approach. They indicate that the type of language adopted to facilitate development has habitually adopted metaphors and framings that justify unsustainable presentations, and it has made growth appear positive in nature despite ignoring environmental impacts. The papers illustrate the importance of discourse in defining the popular knowledge of development and the environment, and they raise the significance of more environmentally aware discourse both in policy and media communication.

This paper presents the concept of salience or an understanding of what is brought to the fore in the discourse. As Stibbe (2015) notes, salient stories frame attention: they bring the contents into the picture and leave out others. The human character is often present (as a victim or as an agent) in digital weather updates, and the non-human nature is either passive or excluded in this context. As an example, a tweet about a thunderstorm can be written with a focus on the destruction to the property and injury to the people, but it will not mention deforestation, wetland destruction, and displacement of animals.

Methodology

The data consists of social media weather updates (primarily Twitter/X posts) made between May 1, 2024 and October 30, 2024. This window

was selected to capture the peak occurrence period for all four event types across the regions. This period overlaps with the South Asian monsoon season. During this period, flooding is most prevalent in Pakistan. The five selected digital weather platforms are:

- AccuWeather (@accuweather)
- The Weather Channel (@weatherchannel)
- Windy.com (@windyforecast)
- Clime / NOAA Weather Radar Live (@weatherliveapp)
- PakWeather (@pakweatherlive)

These platforms were selected based on three criteria:

- Global and regional reach
- Linguistic accessibility
- Platform influence

This was operationalized through a combination of follower count and geographic scope of audience. The Global Weather Platforms we selected, i.e., AccuWeather, The Weather Channel, and Windy.com, have large audiences around the world and high numbers of followers. PakWeather has a large audience in South Asia and is therefore included as a regionally focused platform. The Clime/NOAA Weather Radar Live Weather Radar is associated with Clime/NOAA, which is a well-respected leading institution for meteorological data. They are published primarily in English on their X/Twitter accounts.

A purposive sampling strategy was used to select posts related to extreme weather events (e.g., floods, storms, heatwaves, and droughts). A total of 200 posts were selected for detailed analysis. These 200 posts were distributed equally across the five platforms (i.e., 40 per platform) as shown in Table 1. The corpus will not be made publicly available for replication. Posts were preserved in .txt format. Posts that were later deleted or altered by their original authors on the platform were retained as originally archived at the time of collection. Coding was conducted by a single researcher (the author) using a pre-defined framework based on Stibbe's (2021) ecolinguistic story types. As a second coder was not involved, formal inter-coder reliability statistics (e.g., Cohen's kappa or percentage agreement) were not calculated. We acknowledge this as a limitation, particularly for interpretive constructs such as erasure and identity, and recommend that future iterations of this work incorporate a second coder and reliability testing to strengthen replicability. The study's findings are also limited to English-language posts from five institutional weather accounts on a single platform (X/Twitter) over a six-month period (May 2024 to October 2024); as such, the conclusions may not generalize

to other languages, social media platforms, weather information sources, or seasons, and should be interpreted within this specific context. Because coding was conducted by a single researcher without a formal inter-coder reliability check, the classification of interpretive constructs such as erasure, salience, and identity may be subject to researcher bias; future studies would benefit from incorporating multiple independent coders to strengthen the replicability of these categories.

All five data sources are official institutional weather platforms. All posts were limited to institutional weather updates and forecasts. Formal institutional ethics (IRB) approval was not obtained for this study, as the data consisted entirely of publicly available posts from institutional, non-private accounts, with no direct interaction with or collection of personal data from human subjects.

Exclusion criteria

The posts were excluded if they were duplicate posts, sponsored content, or non-English updates.

Table 1: *Distribution of Posts by Platform and Event Type*

Platform	Floods	Storms	Heatwaves	Droughts	Total
AccuWeather (@accuweather)	10	10	10	10	40
The Weather Channel (@weatherchannel)	10	10	10	10	40
Windy.com (@windyforecast)	10	10	10	10	40
Clime / NOAA Weather Radar Live (@weatherliveapp)	10	10	10	10	40
PakWeather (@pakweatherlive)	10	10	10	10	40
Total	50	50	50	50	200

A post was coded as exhibiting erasure when it described a weather event (flood, storm, heatwave, or drought) using exclusively human-centered or infrastructural terms (e.g., travel delays, school closures, property damage) without any reference to ecological entities, processes,

or non-human impacts (e.g., wildlife, vegetation, water systems, soil, biodiversity). The operational threshold was the complete absence of ecological terminology in the post, rather than a partial or proportional measure.

Salience was recorded as an operational definition or scheme through which to separate out “human-centered” (e.g., residents, traffic, schools, economy, infrastructure, casualties) from “ecological-centered” (e.g., wildlife, forest, river, ecosystem, habitat, species) using a word-list methodology. Posts with an emphasis in the first clause (main subject and verb) were categorized as “human-centered” based on their focus on human-related impacts as opposed to ecological-related impacts.

The Identity coding procedure identified the differences between “nature as threat” versus “nature as neutral” by identifying the two types (i.e., “agency” or “adversarial” verbs/metaphors (i.e., “storm hit,” “nature struck,” “battling the flood”) that characterize environmental phenomena as being engaged aggressors) compared to “neutral descriptive” language (i.e., “rainfall recorded,” “temperatures up to 40 degrees Celsius.”) in that the first type represents environmental phenomena as having been engaged to perpetrate/perform an act of aggression and the second type represents environmental events as being passive, without intent or aggression, and are measurable occurrences with respect to actual fact.

Procedure of Analysis

Corpus Compilation

Exporting and formatting the 200 weather updates into plain text format.

Quantitative Analysis

AntConc (Anthony, 2024) was used in Version 4.3.1 for the frequency and collocation analyses, following these criteria: there was no stopword list; all forms of each word (including function words) were included in the analysis in order to keep intact the complete syntax of the corpora; and prior to analysis, all words were lemmatized in order to group morphological variations (e.g., “storm,” “storms,” “storming”) under one lemmatized form. A five-word left and five-word right collocation window was created with log-likelihood used as the statistical measure to determine statistically significant collocations.

Qualitative Coding

Each post was manually annotated for story type using a pre-coded framework based on Stibbe (2015).

Results

Using a mixed-method approach, the analysis integrates quantitative corpus techniques with qualitative manual coding based on Stibbe (2015) Six Stories We Live By framework, particularly on Erasure, Salience, and Identity stories.

Table 2: *Keyword and Frequency Patterns*

Platform	Frequent Keywords	Observed Focus
AccuWeather	storm, alert, risk, roads	Urban infrastructure, safety
Windy.com	wind, forecast, map	Meteorological data
Clime (NOAA)	hurricane, fire, flood	Events, alerts
The Weather Channel	emergency, residents, impact	Human-centered narratives
PakWeather	rain, damage, homes	Religious framing, human losses

Collocation and Concordance

Collocation analysis in AntConc revealed consistent lexical pairings such as “storm damage,” “heat alert,” “rain disruption,” “evacuation notice.” Few collocates involved nature (e.g., “forest fire,” “river overflow”), and those that did often served as background context rather than thematic focus. Concordance plots also confirmed the overrepresentation of human-centered narratives and underrepresentation of ecological concerns, even in weather events directly impacting ecosystems.

Ecolinguistic Stories

Each weather update was coded for story types based on Stibbe's (2015) ecolinguistic model. The stories were not mutually exclusive; a single post could exhibit multiple narrative patterns. Three stories were particularly prevalent:

Erasure Stories

More than 80% of the posts were devoted to these stories. Photos on floods that did not include effects on rivers, wetlands, or species were ecologically empty. Erasure stories are found in the heatwave warnings, when they talk about dying plants, lack of water, or urban biodiversity without mentioning it. But storm-and-fire updates are without any context about forests being wiped out, animals losing their homes, or entire ecosystems collapsing. Example: Heavy rains hit the city. Roads blocked. Stay indoors.” The consistent omission of non-human impacts reflects what Stibbe (2021) terms a “destructive erasure story”.

Salience Stories

In 74% of the posts we coded, salience patterns (human-based consequences) prevailed. The main ones included roadblocks, blackouts (words used in public statements), alarms (pulling the alarm button, available in some places), effects on the human body or being uncomfortable, and social services interventions. Nature tended to be an accent or visual cue (e.g., clouds, fire) but not a linguistic priority. A clear example of this was in the discourse on The Weather Channel and PakWeather, where salience regarding human interest and security took center stage. So, news alert: ‘Lightning has been alerted, and stay clear of the areas to prevent injuries.

Identity Stories

These stories showed up in 62% of the postings. Nature is regularly presented as a danger (e.g., ‘nature strikes back,’ angry skies’), a neutral stage (e.g., “under the influence of western winds”), and sometimes, an enemy on its own rights (e.g., “storm invades coastal city”). The identity of nature was seldom relational, seldom caring. In identity and conviction stories about what climate change means, the existence of ecological action potential is revealed as suppressed, and alarmingly little signifier for specific causal attribution shines through, often only in defined plans for local regional weather forecasting elements (Saleem et al., 2025).

Table 3: *Comparative Platform Analysis*

Platform	Dominant Story Type	Ecological Presence (%)	Unique Observation
AccuWeather	Salience, Erasure	12%	Emphasis on traffic and disruptions
Windy.com	Technical framing	18%	Rare mentions of fire ecology
The Weather Channel	Erasure, Identity	8%	Nature as enemy; strong metaphors
Clima (NOAA)	Mixed framing	25%	Occasionally mentions forest fires, rivers
PakWeather	Religious, Human focus	5%	Frequent divine framing, total erasure

Ecosophical Reflection

Grounding on Stibbe's "ecosophy" (i.e. living in harmony with the non-human world, justice for other forms of life, interdependence), the ecolinguistic appraisal shows that ecological words are eradicated linguistically but also serve anthropocentric ideologies imposed by economic and political establishments. The absence of environmental cause-effect chains in weather updates, it says, favors episodic understanding at the expense of discipline-based spatial literacy with respect to climate. Language, on the other hand, normalizes short-term thinking centered around urban approaches, while erasing the precariousness of the peasant ecosystem. The silence that surrounds these platforms in green is not incidental, but patterned, systemic, and ideologically significant.

Table 4: *Representation of Three Stories*

Story Type	Presence	Linguistic Markers	Interpretive Function
Erasure	80%	Omission of nature/ecology	Constructs nature as irrelevant or invisible
Salience	74%	Emphasis on human outcomes	Reinforces anthropocentric priority
Identity	62%	"Nature strikes," "storm hits"	Constructs nature as a threat or aggressor

The data analysis in Table 4 provides evidence that environmental concerns are consistently erased in short-form social media weather discourse. The study demonstrates how platforms normalize human-centered narratives. The findings support the claim that social media weather updates play a subtle but powerful role in shaping public disengagement from ecological reality. This reinforces the necessity of integrating ecosophical awareness into digital environmental communication.

Discussion

The most prevalent lingual trend has been a trend of what this paper terms a green silence; that is to say, a uniform and systematic blanking out of nature, ecosystems, and non-human life from weather communication. This one is in line with the concept of Erasure Stories that Stibbe (2021) uses to describe beings and worldviews that are excluded in the discourse, remaining invisible in the realm of publicity.

Most of the weather updates in the sample under examination referred to nature as the primary factor in the weather phenomenon (storms, heatwaves, or floods), but the environmental aspect of the situation was still given minimal attention or left out completely. As an example, the flood-related reports mostly mentioned the closing of roads, shutting off power, and warning the inhabitants, and nothing was given about loss of wetlands, habitat loss of animals, or soil erosion. This is manifested in anthropocentric framing in which nature is considered a passive background or an enemy rather than a fellow that cohabits. Such omissions are not accidental but rather form a reproducible discourse pattern that aligns with dominant ideologies of industrial modernity, where ecological systems are subordinated to human needs and conveniences. This mirrors earlier critiques in ecolinguistics and environmental discourse studies that warn of the ideological power of linguistic exclusion (Stibbe, 2015; Fill & Penz, 2017).

Such a process of erasure and antagonistic presentation does not occur without cost. A repetition of human-centered and de-ecological language creates the worldview in which extreme weather is seen as something isolated, episodic, and controlled; it does not create a world in which extreme weather symptoms are seen as indicators of a more significant lack of climate stability and loss of ecological integrity. It helps create cultural denial, which Norgaard (2011) and Stibbe (2021) refer to as a process through which societies do not see a need to address the ecological crisis because of the narrating and framing of words in everyday language. Nature is linguistically objectified or misrepresented; sometimes it is

erased so it is simple to ignore, forget, or deny the systemic problems that are about to lead to environmental deterioration.

In this respect, the role of the online media in shaping the level of ecological awareness among the population is quintessential. Social weather networks have come to be one of the most used avenues providing up-to-the-minute information on the environment. Being short and understandable, they are effective means of dialogue with people. Nevertheless, dominant ideologies about ecological complexity are also transported in those platforms, as demonstrated in this study. As one example, PakWeather often refers to weather occurrences as the will of God or destiny by saying things such as Allah is angry or heaven storming, although these descriptions are culturally relevant, further approximating the events to any possibility of human responsibility or systematic responsibilities. In the same way, websites such as AccuWeather and The Weather Channel may provide very technical or emergency-centered messages that deprive weather events of their ecological significance, as they are mere disturbing of their routine.

These communicative practices are problematic, given the situation around Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG 13), according to which it is vital to perform immediate action regarding the problem of climate change and its effects. Stibbe (2021) points out the central role of language in determining the values and assumptions that drive human actions. As this normalizes the risk of omission of the ecological implications of the everyday symbolic production, it helps create what this paper refers to as the discursive blindness to climate, which is the inability to detect the interdependency between human lives and the ecological structures. There can be no such place in the popular imagination as the empathy with the ecological system or the ecological activism, unless this system and its tribulations or strength are linguistically represented and vocalized.

The analytical approach used in the given work, which is determined by the six stories of Stibbe (2015), especially by erasure, salience, and identity, was rather successful concerning the diagnosis of ideological premises of weather discourse. Such story types are not only descriptive typologies; they talk about underlying moral and philosophical commitments in language. The patterns of erasing nature and recurring to situations of human discomfort display how the hyperpresence in discourse is indeed a reproduction of more extensive cultural narratives of anthropocentrism and short-termism. These accounts contradict the practices of ecosophy, which has been here adapted as the point of evaluation.

The discussion confirms that social media weather discourse is not indifferent. It is also involved in the ideology of cognizing the environment through whatever it emphasizes, obscures, or leaves out. With the rise of climate crises, there is perhaps no greater need to reconsider what words we apply to our surrounding world. The inclusion of ecocentric and systems-based language into familiar public weather language is not just theoretically possible, but an imperative of building ecological literacy, emotional connection, and motivation in a planet-level emergency. Corpus-assisted analyses of both international and Pakistani print media further confirm the marginalization of ecocentric perspectives in favor of human-centered risk, policy, and disaster narratives (Saleem et al., 2025).

Conclusion

In the pursuit of understanding the contribution of social media weather updates to ecological awareness, or rather the absence thereof in the masses, this paper identified the linguistic flow that most popular social media outlets (AccuWeather, Windy.com, Clime (NOAA), The Weather Channel, and PakWeather) pursued based on the updates they share on their respective pages. The paper applied a corpus-assisted ecolinguistic approach, based on Stibbe (2021) Six Stories model, to the study of the appearance and prominence as well as the absence of ecological discourse in 200 social media weather-related posts. Observations show that the trend is also systematic across platforms of sacrificing ecological aspects in favor of human-oriented stories. Such lack is not an accidental matter but constitutes what this paper refers to as green silence, a discursive state in which nature is linguistically offered out of the public discourse of weather.

The main discoveries indicate that the main trend observed in posts was ecological erasure, and stories about floods, storms, and heatwaves uniformly failed to acknowledge the non-human consequences of such natural events, i.e., destruction of ecosystems, destruction of habitat, and other forms of environmental destruction. In the instances when ecological implications were quite straightforward and easy to notice, including wildfires or droughts, linguistic decisions were rather limited: either safety of people, urban chaos, or infrastructural destruction. Further completion of this framing was done through salience stories in which human issues were foregrounded, and ecological issues disappeared into the background. Equally, nature was pictured in identity narratives as something threatening or as a harmless background, but hardly as a vulnerable or relational being. These are linguistic inclinations that signify and strengthen a type of worldview with people at its center and the environmental realities peripheral or dispensable.

In the current climate crisis, such discourse is problematic enough. The importance of words in how people perceive the problem of ecological degradation and planetary uncertainty (IPCC, 2023) is increasingly significant as the scientific community increasingly agrees that the issue should be treated as extremely urgent. One social media platform, due to how far they reach and how quickly they spread, takes on the role of being an important juncture in the development of ecological awareness. However, as demonstrated in this paper, they are usually used to conceal instead of enlighten the environmental aspect of the extreme weather systems. The consistent exclusion of references to ecology predisposes the normalizing of the disconnection between climate events and their systemic causes and effects and discourages progress when it comes to sustainability, systems thinking, and climate justice.

This paper makes a contribution to the field of ecolinguistics as well as digital environmental communication in pointing out the discursive moves in sidelining nature in real-time climate discourse. It confirms the claim of Stibbe (2021) that linguistic constructions not only reflect the world, but they create it. The silences of what is not stated in the public debate are as ideologically and morally crucial in terms of the debate content as the statements themselves. Such culturally induced exclusion of environmental issues in the general awareness is symptomatic of a larger cultural tendency to isolate the ecological issue by preventing its general circulation into the realm of common thought and thus contributing to the very trends of thought that condone ecological oppression.

Based on the results, it is necessary to rethink the language of weather forecasts not as an impersonal update but as a place of reification of narrative and reproduction of ideology, considering the linkage between communicators, the developers of platforms, and environmental activists. Even the short posts can contain ecologically significant references to assist in developing empathy, awareness, and system thoughts. Unless our stories change, it must start with the words we hear every day, including words that inform us about the weather. Creating the electronic ecology is not a question of style in the era of climate crisis, but an ethical and environmental imperative.

The research has several avenues that can be opened in further studies. First, additional cross-cultural analyses may investigate the possible emergence of such patterns of green silence in non-Western or indigenous media sources of the weather discourse. Second, user interpretations and reception of ecologically rich versus ecologically silent weather reports could be studied, which would be of interest to disciplines such as ecolinguistic reception research and environmental psychology. Third,

future studies along a longitudinal line may be able to monitor the development of changes in linguistic trends due to climate activism or institutional changes to trace the manifestation of these changes in people in the form of statistical differences in attitudes to nature or changes in behavior.

The conclusions of the given study go beyond the limited sphere of reporting the weather to the more substantial issues of the role of language that develops the human relationship with the Earth. Although green silence is a stylistic element of digital communication, it is also an extremely ideological move, the consequences of which turn out to be far-reaching. It is not only imperative on the communicative level, but it is a moral one, to pursue the reappropriation of ecological terms in our daily communication, and particularly in media that addresses millions of people in real time. With active narration, framing in respect, and systems sensibility, digital climate weather discourse will shift, becoming an effective tool of ecological learning as well as climate movements.

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The Netflix Effect: How Globish is Shaping Language Use Among Undergraduates in Lahore

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the perception of undergraduate students of the use of a simplified version of English known as Globish. Netflix has appeared as the medium of this simplified English exposure. The key features of Globish are simple sentence structures, active voice, and avoidance of idiomatic expressions in speech. This research is grounded in Saussure's theoretical framework, which explores their grammatical preferences, contextual applications, and adaptation of simplified English. For data collection, 60 students of seven schools at Beaconhouse National University, Lahore, voluntarily participated. Data were collected through a Google Form, which comprised closed and open-ended questions. For the analysis, a convergent mixed-method approach was employed. Quantitative data were analyzed through SPSS for descriptive analysis, and qualitative data were interpreted through thematic analysis. Eventually, the key findings indicate a clear trend of students' preference for using Globish features in their language. Furthermore, Netflix had a significant impact on shaping these linguistic trends. The findings emphasize that the media platform is not only entertaining but also has become a medium of linguistic input. Consequently, the findings open new pathways of language learning in pedagogical methods and school curricula.

Keywords: Globish, Netflix, Jean-Paul Nerrière, Simplified English, Convergent Mixed-Method, Ferdinand De Saussure.

Introduction

Digital technology has created visible changes that are engulfing all fields of life. The way people use language to communicate with each other has also evolved through global media. The system of language operates through established grammar rules, yet people use their language

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in real-life situations to create actual meaning. The current digital technology enables global media to create informal user-driven language patterns that develop outside established academic teaching methods. Streaming services like Netflix have created a new way for users to access English content by using interactive media content rather than traditional grammatical teaching methods. The current trend shows that people need to understand spoken language better than they need to master complex written language. Globish is a simplified English language system that non-native speakers use for international communication. The term “Globish” was coined by Jean-Paul Nerrière, a former IBM executive, in 1995. Later, he formally popularized the concept in 2004 with his book ‘Parlez Globish’. Newton (2013) underscores the importance that “English has dominance both in international communication and academia, providing the opportunity for career mobility and overseas study” (p. 1121). What is emerging, therefore, is neither traditional British/American English nor vernacular pidgin, grounded in simplified grammar and adapted through digital exposure.

The communication pattern among Anglophones led Jean-Paul Nerrière to develop a set of rules by blending the words English and Global. Globish is easier and quicker to learn than traditional English. It uses only 1500 core words and simple grammar. Unlike English (with over 600,000 words), Globish helps people communicate using a shared, small vocabulary. It is based on 1500 words that can expand to 5000 by adding prefixes or suffixes. Robert McCrum purports that “Globish is like a river accepting many tributaries and has become enormous and laden with many new words” (McCrum, 2010, as cited in Castillo, 2011, p. 1363). He elaborates further that “this simplified model is based on basic English grammar and uses mostly Active Voice and avoids idioms. It relies on gestures and facial expressions to support understanding” (McCrum et al., 1992).

The research shows that conventional English teaching methods have begun to lag behind current language research developments. Kuper (2011, as cited in Newton, 2013, p. 1122) explains that native speakers control the dialogue by using Globish, which provides them with better comprehension and faster speech through phrases like “So what you’re saying is.” Nerrière (2011) demonstrated that “Globish empowers non-native speakers by giving them a tool to communicate clearly without needing to master full English fluency” because it helps non-English speakers to express themselves. The meta-analysis by Kim et al. (2024) showed that students from various backgrounds achieve better language results through digital platforms, which include streaming services,

because they help students develop basic communication abilities (p. 175–198). The term Globish entered worldwide usage after Netscape and Windows products became available to users. The expansion of Globish through social media and streaming apps, which electronic media developed into a major worldwide technology, reached global audiences. Current digital tools, which include Netflix, provide a new way to study how students use Globish in their spoken English. Students in Pakistan who study at the undergraduate level use simplified English more frequently because they watch streaming apps. The academic curricula follow traditional English standards. The system creates a visible gap between ineffective teaching methods and the practical communication students receive through media.

Although abundant studies exist on language learning through streaming apps, few have explored their impact on the use of Globish. Existing research either focuses on traditional ESL outcomes like vocabulary retention or academic performance or is generally conducted in Western or East Asian contexts. There are a few studies examining Netflix as a medium through which undergraduate students encounter Globish-oriented English. There is a significant knowledge gap in examining how Pakistani students interpret and apply Globish features in real-life communication as a result of exposure to digital content.

The study aims to explore Netflix as a medium of informal English exposure and to examine the specific grammatical patterns among the undergraduates in Lahore. This paper will fill the gap by exploring this phenomenon through the theoretical foundations of Globish. It will be followed by an investigation of media-driven language acquisition, and finally, a discussion of the pedagogical and linguistic implications of this shift.

Research Questions

These three research questions are designed to capture the students' perceptions of influence and the specific Globish features they incorporate into their communication.

1. How do undergraduate students perceive their use of Globish features as influenced by Netflix viewing?
2. What simplified grammatical patterns are evident in undergraduate students' communication?
3. In what types of real-life communication contexts do undergraduate students apply Globish features?

In teaching and learning contexts, the basic yet functional structure of Globish makes it highly effective for teaching English. Similarly, the simplified linguistic model of Globish offers communication efficiency, enabling students to focus on clarity and mutual understanding rather than learning traditional English rules. The integration of Globish into language teaching for SLA (Second Language Acquisition) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) can equip students for academic and professional conversations. This shift is vital for adapting language education to meet real-world speaking demands. Newton claims that “Currently, non-native speakers are using the reduced version of English for communication, which is called Globish” (Newton, 2013, p. 1121). This highlights the need for research on the use of Globish among undergraduate students in educational contexts in Pakistan, which would also help address the existing gap in the literature. By understanding how Netflix influences the use of Globish, educators and linguists can develop informed curriculum designs, improved teaching strategies, and inclusive language models that reflect contemporary communication.

Literature Review

The process of language acquisition has been studied as both a linguistic system and a social human activity. Theoretical foundations established by Saussure emphasized the distinction between *langue*—language as a structured system of rules—and *parole*—language as it is used in everyday practice. The basic view of English development demonstrates how the simplified English dialect called Globish emerged from its actual use in various worldwide contexts, including digital environments. The process of learning Globish through Netflix shows the practical language development of students who acquire their language skills through this platform, according to Peluso (2021). The process of learning Globish shows that people now communicate in their own way because they no longer follow strict language rules. The internationalization of the English language has entered educational fields since the 21st century. Entertainment algorithms enabled new methods of language exposure that extend beyond colonial control. The interesting aspect is that what is arising is neither the British/American nor the vernacular/pidgin. It is a media-optimized variant that has the features of Globish. Kachru (1985) established the ‘Three Circles’ model of World Englishes as his foundational study about how English spread throughout the world. The model demonstrated how English was spoken in different ways throughout postcolonial areas and worldwide networks. Globish emerges as the modern version of Jenkins’ (2000) ELF English as a Lingua Franca. McCrum (2010) describes it as a system of basic vocabulary and grammar

that enables people from different cultures to communicate better. The frameworks created by Jean-Paul Nerrière (2011) brought Globish back into existence after his time as an executive at IBM.

McCrum (2010) views “Globish as a reflection of the diminishing influence of Anglo-American culture and notes its widespread use in everyday interactions across the European Union” (p. 64), and further asserts that “Globish will experience growth during the upcoming period” (p. 66). The current research shows that digital media helps people learn languages. McCrum (2010) acknowledges the role of American cartoons and films as forms in which English is assimilated. The distribution of English-language content through pirated materials has expanded access to English content, according to McCrum (2010). The modern world uses streaming apps as platforms that change complex language into simpler forms. The emergence of digital technology during the early 2000s, together with Facebook, YouTube, and Netflix, has become the informal medium of language. The new media consumption practices that evolved from audiovisual content led people to develop linguistic patterns that exceeded traditional teaching methods. The streaming platforms that provide access to media content with simple dialogue enabled Globish to spread widely among young people in non-English-speaking countries such as Pakistan.

The most essential part of worldwide communication work needs all participants to create a shared understanding through their use of distinct and understandable messages. Farkas (2011) asserts that non-native speakers can understand each other better when they use basic language elements, which include limited idioms, simple vocabulary, and fundamental grammatical patterns. The straightforward nature of Globish makes it easy to comprehend, but the language system receives important criticism because it operates mechanically. Simon Kuper claimed that “Globish can be dull for native English speakers, lacking the emotional and cultural richness that characterizes natural speech” (Kuper, as cited in Newton, 2013). The conversational and literary limitations of Globish, which Cohen described, prevent speakers from achieving advanced communication skills, according to Newton (2013). The evidence shows that non-English speaking areas need practical solutions that use simplified English.

The latest research studies examine Netflix’s worldwide influence and its particular impact on English language acquisition among non-native speakers. As a case in point, Alm (2019) considers Netflix “an appealing tool for language learning” (pp. 13–18). It is a fact that “social media platforms and online subscriptions such as Netflix have made it possible

for Pakistanis to stay up to date with what's happening around the world and have access to the most popular movies" (Mahmood & Masud, 2019). According to Robert and Marpaung (2022), "Netflix, the US-based streaming app founded by Marc Randolph and Reed Hastings in 1997, has become the leading platform among other streaming apps" (pp. 330–336). Consequently, Netflix has become an instrument, spreading English among many other languages.

The literature presents mixed findings on the influence of Netflix on language learning and academic performance among students, which raises an anomaly within the academic discourse. According to Shabbir et al. (2021), "Netflix usage shows no correlation with academic performance among Pakistani youth". It is also revealed that "social media platforms like Netflix, Facebook, and YouTube influence English language learning at the undergraduate level" (Ali, 2023). Whereas there is a relationship between "Netflix viewing habits, grammatical competence, and academic self-efficacy of senior high school students" (Faminiano & Yango, 2023), it does not specifically address undergraduate students' perceptions of Globish features. On the contrary, Maharani et al. (2024) concluded that "Netflix, as a digital learning aid, positively impacts listening and speaking skills for EFL students" (pp. 212–225). Binge-watching Netflix is prevalent among university students in Lahore, serving as a means to alleviate boredom but potentially leading to negative psychological outcomes (Adnan et al., 2024, p. 368). Overall, researchers have demonstrated that digital platforms such as Netflix create major effects on language acquisition processes, which particularly impact listening and speaking abilities. The study results demonstrate that digital media usage patterns establish a complex connection to language acquisition, which presents both advantages and drawbacks.

However, there are abundant studies on the impact of Netflix in language learning, and much of the existing research focuses on general EFL outcomes such as listening, vocabulary, or academic self-efficacy (Maharani et al., 2024, p. 212; Faminiano & Yango, 2023, p. 316; Robert & Marpaung, 2022, p. 331), yet there is a lack of comprehensive studies on the role of Netflix in influencing undergraduate students' use of Globish. These findings establish a literature and knowledge gap. This gap is particularly prevalent in non-Western, postcolonial settings, such as Lahore, where students engage with both conventional academic English curricula and the informal, media-influenced register of Globish. Through an analysis of this gap, the effect that Netflix has on the adoption of Globish among undergraduate students can yield relevant data for instructors, linguists, and curriculum designers about how access to global

media, conditioning English usage beyond formal education contexts, is affecting attitudes and characteristic grammatical forms in communication.

In conclusion, although digital platforms like Netflix provide value for language development among EFL users who learn English as a Foreign Language, the development of Globish as a media-based English variation remains an overlooked aspect. The research investigates how Pakistani undergraduates use Globish while showing their attitudes toward the language that they learn from media content. Future studies have to generalize across other age groups, geographical regions, and the usage of subtitles to determine the impact of global media on the linguistic behavior of non-native English speakers.

Methodology

A mixed-methods research design within the pragmatics paradigm has been used to investigate the influence of Netflix on the adoption of Globish features among undergraduates of BNU Lahore. In the convergent mixed-methods approach, numerical patterns with participant perspectives have been combined to explore the linguistic phenomenon, Globish, affected by Netflix exposure. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007, as cited in Mirhosseini, 2018) provide an umbrella definition of mixed methods as a type of research that “combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative-quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration” (p. 123).

In this convergent design, both types of data were collected simultaneously, analyzed separately using SPSS and thematic analysis, and then merged during the interpretation phase. As Creswell (2014) notes, “the convergent design is most useful when the researcher wants to compare quantitative results with qualitative findings to validate or enrich the interpretation” (p. 219). “Mixed methods can also help to highlight the similarities and differences between particular aspects of a phenomenon” (Bernardi et al., 2007).

Framing the research within Ferdinand de Saussure’s theoretical distinction between *langue* and *parole* enhances the analytical depth of this design. By incorporating this framework, the study interprets Netflix-influenced English usage (Globish) as *parole*—language practice shaped by real-world digital interactions rather than rigid curricular instruction. This theoretical grounding justifies the convergence of numeric patterns

and narrative insights, enabling a nuanced portrayal of language adaptation among Pakistani undergraduates.

Furthermore, the flexible nature of the pragmatic paradigm allows the integration of quantitative (survey results) and qualitative (open-ended responses) data to produce richer insights into the research. This descriptive nature of the study effectively categorizes patterns rather than testing hypotheses. This design was chosen to describe the media-driven patterns of Globish usage among undergraduate students and understand their real-world applications. “The pragmatic paradigm”, as Creswell (2014) explains, “arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions” (p. 10). Thus, this research design supports the research aim of exploring the linguistic preference and choice between traditional English and the informal usage of Globish.

The Google Form survey, comprising 23 closed and open-ended questions, was used to collect responses. The quantitative component measured Likert scales, dichotomous choices, and frequency-based responses. To identify the linguistic choices of the participants, a document comprising thirty Globish sentences taken from different shows on Netflix and traditional sentences was attached to the Google survey form. Participants were asked to choose whether they preferred the Globish sentences or the traditional sentences to communicate. The qualitative section covered participants’ linguistic preferences and strategies for communication. The data were collected within two weeks.

Non-random purposive sampling was selected as suitable for a descriptive-exploratory research design. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, as cited in Etikan et al., 2016) suggest that “this involves identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals that are proficient and well-informed with a phenomenon of interest” (p. 2). The research was conducted on undergraduate students at Beaconhouse National University in Lahore who frequently engage with Netflix content. Almost 100 students were expected to respond, but 65 completed the survey, providing adequate data for descriptive analysis. The homogeneous strategy has been employed by keeping education and age levels consistent to ensure that participants’ traits are similar and relevant to the research topic. Demographic data such as age, gender, and academic background were also collected to enrich the analysis.

The software SPSS was used to extract quantitative data. Responses were summarized using descriptive statistics rather than inferential statistical procedures. The purpose of this study is not to test predictive relationships. Therefore, Netflix viewing frequency was not treated as an

independent predictor of Globish preference but as a descriptive exposure variable.

Netflix usage patterns, grammatical preferences, and the application of contextual language were visualized using bar and pie charts. Google Form frequency tables have also been employed. For the qualitative responses, a thematic analysis was performed. An inductive approach was utilized to examine open-ended responses. As this research is uncharted in Pakistan, these responses were thematically coded. Pre-existing frameworks were not imposed so that patterns could emerge directly from the data. Responses were coded manually to identify recurring themes. To strengthen the analysis and provide a wide-ranging view of Globish influence, these themes were triangulated with quantitative findings. The analysis mapped how exposure to Netflix appeared to influence students' language choices across various settings—academic, digital, and informal—without attempting to quantify causal relationships.

The research process adhered to ethical principles established by the Belmont Report (1979). The research team provided participants with information about the study's objectives and study methods before they completed the Google Form. Personal information, such as names, email addresses, or addresses, was not gathered to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. Students participated voluntarily in the study, and they had the right to refuse to answer any question that made them feel uneasy. Internal approval from the concerned department at BNU was obtained, along with adherence to ethical research guidelines for undergraduate projects.

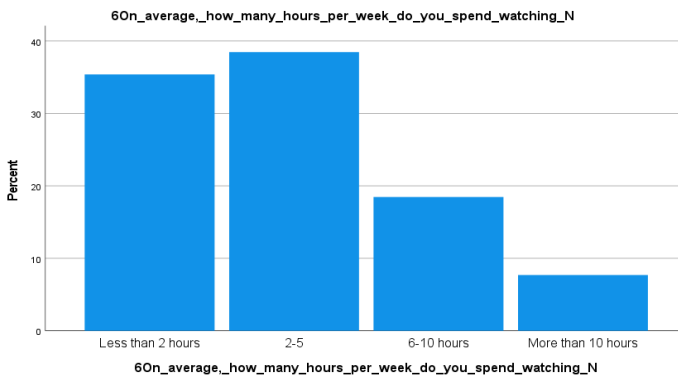
The chosen research design is a logical choice, yet it contains some elements that create doubt about its effectiveness. Purposive sampling ensured relevance, as selected students are familiar with Netflix content. Students tend to either underestimate or overestimate their language abilities because surveys collect self-reported data about their linguistic views. The descriptive design established the study patterns through which future research should use correlational or experimental designs to study their relationships. Manual thematic coding may be subject to interpretation bias. Overall, the study achieved its goal of combining statistical patterns with deep qualitative data through the implementation of a mixed-methods convergent design.

Results

The study gathered information from 65 undergraduate students who completed a closed-ended questionnaire. The gender distribution was

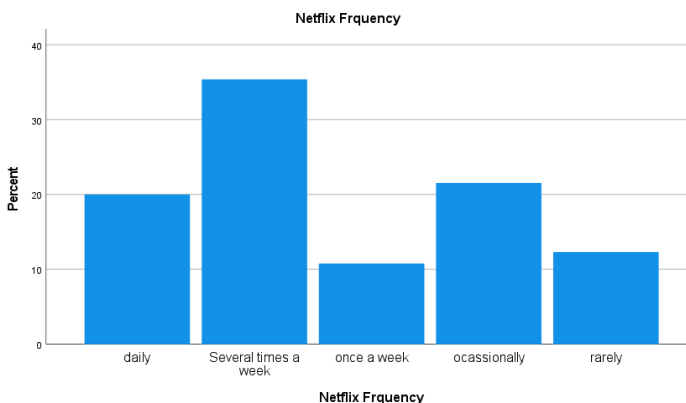
fairly balanced, with 52.6% identifying as male and 47.4% as female. The majority of respondents belonged to the 20–21 age group, followed by the 22–23 and 24–25 age groups. The majority of participants (47.7%) had English as the primary medium of instruction, while others had a mix of English and Urdu (43.1%). This research presents the descriptive quantitative findings of the survey, which aimed to examine the influence of Netflix on Globish (simplified English) usage among undergraduate students across academic and informal settings.

Figure 1: Frequency in Hours



The participants were asked how frequently they watch Netflix. As shown in Figure 1, in terms of average weekly hours spent watching Netflix, 38.5% of participants watched Netflix 2–5 hours, 35.4% watched less than 2 hours, a small portion (18.5%) reported watching 6–10 hours per week, and only 7.7% reported more than 10 hours a week.

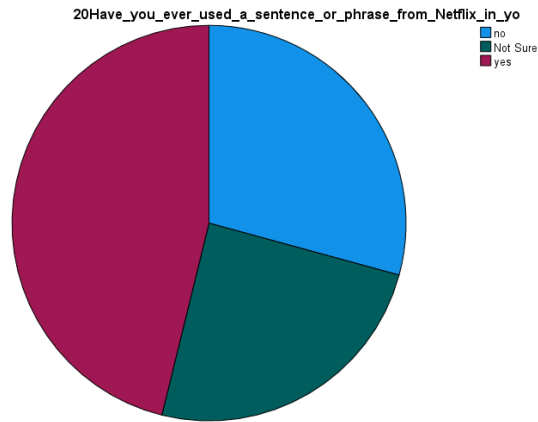
Figure 2: Frequency in Days



A notable number of students reported watching Netflix several times a week (35.4%), then occasional viewers (21.5%), and daily users (20%),

as shown in Figure 2. Only a small portion indicated watching Netflix rarely or once a week. The mean score was 2.71 on a 5-point scale. It reflects moderate to high levels of exposure and indicates that it is a commonly accessed platform among respondents. The most popular genre was thrillers (33.3%), followed by romance (15.8%) and comedy (12.3%). This exposure was further explored by asking whether students had ever used phrases or expressions learned from Netflix in real-life communication.

Figure 3: *Netflix Phrases Usage*



48.5% agreed, and 12.1% strongly agreed with the statement, while 33.3% remained neutral, as shown in Figure 3, extracted from SPSS. A small number of participants (4.5%) disagreed. The research results demonstrate that media exposure affects how people use their functional language skills, acquired through two different platforms.

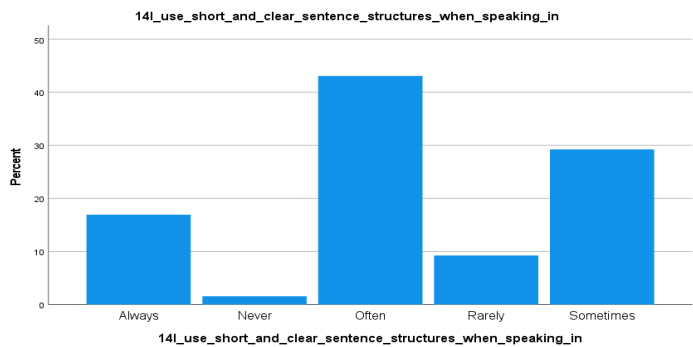
Table 1: *Use of Simple Tenses*

15I_prefer_simple_tenses_like_present_simple_or_past_simpl e_					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	10	15.4	15.4	15.4
	Never	3	4.6	4.6	20.0
	Often	22	33.8	33.8	53.8
	Rarely	5	7.7	7.7	61.5
	Sometimes	25	38.5	38.5	100.0
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

A noteworthy number of participants reported a preference for the present simple or past simple tenses in their communication. 38.5% of students in Table 1 reported that they “sometimes” preferred simple tenses, while 33.8% of students said they “often” did so. Only 4.6% selected

“never”. The results demonstrate that more than 87% of participants prefer to use simpler grammatical structures, which serve as the fundamental characteristic of Globish.

Figure 4: *Preference for Short and Clear Sentences*



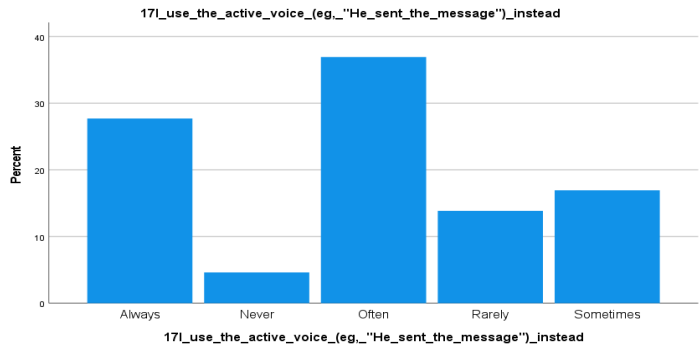
43.1% of participants reported “often” using short and clear sentences, and 29.2% selected “sometimes” when asked about their sentence structuring practices. The cumulative 89.2% of students who selected “sometimes”, “often”, or “always” indicates a deliberate effort to enhance clarity and brevity in speech.

Table 2: *Avoidance of Idioms and Phrasal Verbs*

16I_avoid_using_idioms,_phrasal_verbs,_ _or_figurative_express					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Always	6	9.2	9.2	9.2
	Never	7	10.8	10.8	20.0
	Often	7	10.8	10.8	30.8
	Rarely	16	24.6	24.6	55.4
	Sometimes	29	44.6	44.6	100.0
Total		65	100.0	100.0	

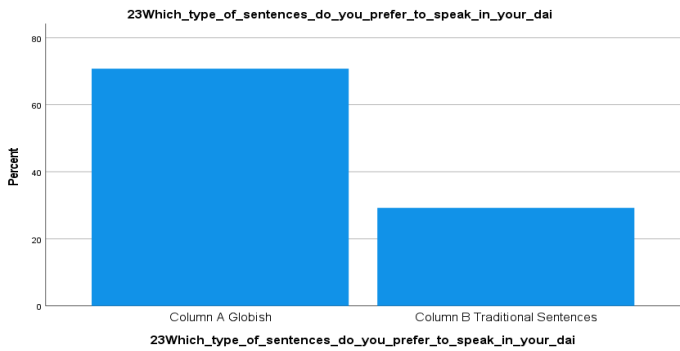
The students showed moderate restraint when selecting their words. 44.6% of respondents reported that they “sometimes” avoid idioms, phrasal verbs, or figurative expressions. 24.6% indicated they “rarely” use them. Only 10.8% stated that they “never” avoid such expressions. The data show that Globish-oriented simplification exists in the language used by speakers, but they do not completely avoid using idioms, as shown in Table 2.

Figure 5: Use of Active Voice



As shown in Figure 5, 36.9% responded “often”, and 27.7% reported “always” in using active voice rather than passive voice in their communication. Only 4.6% claimed they “never” use it. A prominent consolidation of 81.5% aligns strongly with Globish principles that favour straightforward syntax and clarity. Together, these results demonstrate that students are actively incorporating Globish-aligned grammar into their communication.

Figure 6: Linguistic Preference



An outstanding number of the participants (70.8%) preferred using Globish over traditional English sentences in their daily life communication. However, only 29.2% opted for traditional phrasing, as shown in Figure 6. In terms of viewing frequency, 20.0% of participants reported watching Netflix daily, while 35.4% watched several times a week, and 10.8% once a week. However, 21.5% reported occasional viewing, and 12.3% rare viewing. In terms of weekly viewing hours, 35.4% watched Netflix for less than two hours, 38.5% watched for two to five hours, 18.5% for six to ten hours, and 7.7% for more than ten hours.

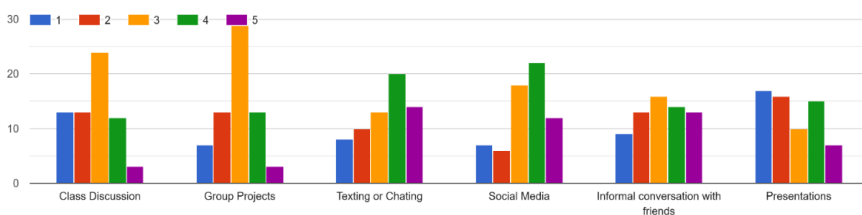
This strong preference supports the notion that simplified, clear, and globally intelligible English is more accessible and favored, particularly

by non-native speakers. This result has been interpreted as a descriptive pattern. Statistical patterns have not been tested to prove the relationship between Netflix exposure and Globish adoption. The present analysis does not test the relationship between Netflix and viewership frequency; it does not compare light, moderate, or heavy Netflix viewers.

To understand the functional application of Globish, students were asked to report their usage of simplified English in six different contexts, which included academic and informal settings. The Likert scale ranged from 1 (disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The results demonstrate that people use Globish more frequently when they encounter fewer formal situations.

Figure 7: *Contextual Use of Globish*

19. Please tick how often you use Globish in the following settings:



The class discussions reached an average score of 2.62 because 36.9% of participants used Globish “sometimes” and 21.5% of participants said they “never” used it. Group projects showed a slight increase in usage, which reached a mean of 2.85; 43.1% of participants selected “sometimes” and 24.6% selected “often” or “always”, according to Figure 7, based on data from the Google Form. Digital communication environments served as the primary platform for Globish usage. 52.3% of students used the texting and chatting application “often” or “always”, while 12.3% of students said they did not use it at all. Social media showed identical results because the mean score reached its highest point at 3.40. About 52.3% used Globish frequently, and 27.7% sometimes. In informal conversations, people used the language at a high rate because 40% of people used it frequently, but only 15.4% of people never used it. People used Globish at academic presentations the least because their usage reached 2.68, when more than 50% of people reported rare or no usage. The results indicate that students will use formal English in their structured academic assignments.

The responses showed how people use language in real life. The students said they spoke Globish during group meetings and during

informal social interactions, and through normal daily conversations. One P33 responded, “It definitely does, because there’s less room for misunderstanding and it saves much time.” P3 explained that Globish English helps him communicate better with his conversational partners during group discussions. Students held a positive view of Globish because of their experiences with the language. P10 thought that he could understand things better when he had easier access to content, while P3 explained that using simplified English he found to be a fast and simple method. The speakers showed that they recognized its value for conducting daily conversations. The study found that most students preferred short, clear sentences, which 72% of students selected, and 70% chose simple tenses, and 82% selected active voice, while they purposefully avoided idioms and phrasal verbs.

The SPSS analysis of Likert-scale questions revealed that respondents used Globish at moderate to high levels across texting and social media, group projects, and informal conversations, while their formal presentation activities showed the least usage. The findings showed a mean score of 3.40 for Globish use on social media, which indicates that users frequently use the language in digital platforms, while the mean score of 2.68 for presentations favours traditional English in formal situations.

The statistical patterns observed in the study received confirmation from the qualitative answers provided by the participants. The participants explained their reasons through the statement which P9 made about Globish that he found to be “easy and convenient”. P2 explained that “because as we live in a developing country where the national language is Urdu, not everyone may understand and be fluent in English.” Another P54 reported, “I use simpler words and grammar, speak slower, and avoid idioms.” The students prefer comprehensible language models because these models enable them to understand the material better.

Overall, data show that people use Globish most frequently in informal situations, which involve texting and chatting and using social media platforms. Students use basic grammar patterns, which include active voice and simple tenses and short sentences, to demonstrate the main characteristic of the Globish language system. Students choose to communicate in the same way they see characters on Netflix shows instead of following their academic studies. The use of Globish features is the preferred option because they provide users with faster, clearer, and more efficient ways to communicate in multilingual environments.

Discussion

The current results show their relationship with previous research, which studied simplified English together with media-driven language advancements. The descriptive results concluded strong preferences for simplified English. However, the participants reported varying levels of Netflix exposure. There is a lack of evidence that concludes a direct relationship between Netflix and Globish preferences. Instead, it seems to hint that Netflix might provide a familiar communicative space. The students showed a preference for using short, clear sentences that included simple tenses and active voice. This research supports Farkas's theory, which states that people achieve better understanding when they use simpler language to explain their ideas. McCrum (2010) describes Globish as a simplified English language, which shows this connection because participants are found to use specific language patterns that match this description. Netflix appears as the medium of exposure to these language preferences. Alm (2019, 2021), Kim et al. (2024), and Maharani et al. (2024) demonstrate that streaming services help people learn languages through their continuous exposure to visual and audio content. The research demonstrates that Netflix serves as both an entertainment platform and an informal space where students have exposure to everyday English in their daily interactions. Research has also shown that many contemporary tweens and teens are likewise voracious television viewers, spending on average two hours each day with their lineup of "just can't miss" TV content (Matrix, 2014). This media exposure plays a vigorous part in disseminating the Globish features through streaming apps.

Responses indicate that the participants identify and replicate the language patterns observed in Netflix series, particularly those designed for international audiences. Pakistan appears to have one of the largest populations of English as a Second Language (ESL) speakers among the countries surveyed. In recent years, streaming apps, particularly Netflix, have emerged as a leading platform of English-language exposure, especially among university students. In this regard, a recent study by Shahril and Abdullah (2022) provides insight that "language learning is not limited only to the traditional and professional classroom setting, but a streaming service like Netflix can also be the domain of learning" (Shahril & Abdullah, 2022). Consequently, the results suggest that Netflix serves as a passive entertainment outlet that reshapes the linguistic choices of the students, reinforcing Globish as a pragmatic tool in their academic and social interactions.

The initial research question, which depends on studying perception, shows that people hold a favorable view of Globish. The findings support

Nerrière's view of Globish as a basic English language system that enables non-native speakers to communicate effectively. Students prefer to use clear, direct speech because it helps them understand better.

The second research question found that students' grammar preferences revealed a second pattern, which confirmed existing trends. Farkas (2011) demonstrates that non-native speakers communicate better when they use simpler vocabulary and grammar together with reduced idiomatic expressions. The data display the Globish grammar framework, which removes unnecessary complicated elements.

The third research question investigates how Globish is used in various situations. Alm (2019, 2021) considers Netflix a significant tool for informal language learning. Likewise, Kim et al. (2024) note that digital platforms can enhance second language acquisition, particularly in relation to functional communication. This study demonstrates the preference for a Globish-oriented mode of communication in the context of Pakistani undergraduates over fixed language.

The additional evidence from quantitative results has confirmed the open-ended responses. Thematic analysis identified five main themes, which included clarity and ease of communication, grammatical simplification, audience awareness and adaptation, real-life contextual use, and positive attitude toward simplified English. The key characteristics of Globish, which transcribers presented, included their practice of avoiding idioms and their preference for using simpler sentences.

The conscious avoidance of idiomatic expressions, together with their preference for simple grammatical structures and their use of active voice, demonstrates their movement away from conventional English teaching methods, which focus on language as a system, toward native speaker speech patterns. The results indicate that students prefer a linguistic model based on real-life needs over formal norms. This concept is elaborated in Saussure's theoretical background.

The findings demonstrate that McCrum's (2010) research assessment of Globish as an English dialect that lacks cultural expressions and uses basic grammatical patterns has been substantiated through the research results. Participants' responses resonate with his claim that "Globish is set to only grow" as a practical lingua franca in global contexts (p. 66). The data support the notion that students use practical choices that help them achieve understandable communication. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data shows that people use Globish as their main language system in digital media environments. The responses underpin that Netflix

is the platform that is shaping grammar preferences, which resonates with the Globish framework.

The findings show that Jean-Paul Nerrière's claim about Globish enabling effective communication for non-native speakers through its basic structure proves correct. In Pakistan, English functions as the second language and is spoken to enhance social status. Given this context, Globish serves as a simple language solution that helps users develop self-assurance. The data validate that Netflix is an active medium in disseminating linguistic patterns. Alm (2019) maintains that Netflix delivers easy-to-access audiovisual language materials that help ESL students develop both comprehension and production abilities. Mahmood and Masud (2019) asserted that digital platforms help Pakistani youth maintain their language skills at an international standard through their use of basic English. Additionally, many participants reported it as an easier learning curve, with practical and global intelligibility characteristics.

On the basis of the findings, it is analyzed that students prefer native-like English in formal situations over Globish. Netflix has been treated as the platform of informal English exposure but not as an independent variable. Therefore, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that Netflix exposure causes or predicts Globish preference. The research exhibits the conscious shift of language according to the situation.

The findings contribute to the notable role of the domain of SLA (Second Language Acquisition) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) for curriculum development in reshaping English to meet local needs. Globish proves to be more effective and practical than traditional English in actual situations. Additionally, this framework is helpful in reshaping the speaking and listening modules according to local needs. On the basis of this, media studies should play a significant role in the acquisition of linguistic expression.

The learning process will become active through the combination of these elements. Media literacy should become an essential component of language acquisition, according to the research. Popular shows on Netflix can be used in classrooms to build sentence structure and vocabulary skills.

Despite the fact that the study explores useful findings, it also contains multiple limitations. The findings do not test cause-and-effect relationships because of their descriptive nature. The questionnaire recorded students' Netflix viewing frequency and hours; however, the statistical analysis of light, moderate, and heavy viewers has not been recorded or compared. As a result, the study does not claim a causal or predictive relationship between Netflix exposure and Globish preference.

This study is limited to undergraduate students of a single institution (BNU Lahore) due to accessibility and time constraints. A small sample size restricts the ability to make generalizations. A survey across multiple universities in Lahore can gather more dependable data. Furthermore, the research presents an initial framework, but more empirical and comparative research needs to be conducted to determine Globish's standing between established frameworks, which include World Englishes and ELF. Acknowledging the limitations, this research studied the pattern of linguistic usage among the students from Netflix content. The convergent mixed-methods design laid out the groundwork for the researchers to understand that students prefer using Globish because it helps them communicate clearly while understanding what others say.

Conclusion

The findings offer strong evidence. Despite the non-recognition of Globish in formal academic syllabi, students utilize it constructively through exposure on the internet. Globish emerges as a linguistic code, facilitating communication in informal and semi-formal settings. Among the prevailing trends in the participants' responses was the direct use of phrases as compared to idiomatic or culturally charged phrases, which is consistent with the very basic rules of Globish as outlined by Nerrière and McCrum. Further, the study revealed a growing sensitivity among the students towards their communicative strategies, which seem to be affected by media exposure.

This research contributes to existing literature by linking theories of language learning to present-day digital contexts, in this case, non-Western, marginalized contexts. While existing research has made brief references to overall EFL attainment or the influence of Netflix on exposure to language, restricted research has tended to be carried out on Globish itself or an overview of how Pakistani learners acquire and reproduce it. The application of the theoretical Saussurean model of parole vs. langue offers greater context to this transition from rule-based instruction to usage-based learning as enabled by media experience. With these findings, the study leaves several avenues open for future research and practical application. Different research methods, including comparative, correlational, and longitudinal studies, will be used to determine how exposure occurs. Overall, this research provides a beginning point for reconsidering English language teaching in a revised environment where online dominance tends to override classic textbook exposure.

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Note: Appendix is attached to the article.

Appendix A

Globish	Netflix Show / Movie	Traditional Sentences
Let's meet at 8.	Emily in Paris	Shall we meet at 8 o'clock?
I don't get it.	Stranger Things	I do not understand the concept.
Tell me what to do.	Outer Banks	Kindly advise me on the appropriate course of action.
This is not my thing.	Never Have I Ever	I am not particularly inclined toward this subject.
He is always late.	The Perfect Date	He has a persistent habit of arriving late.
I will fix it.	The Umbrella Academy	I shall rectify the issue.
You make me crazy.	To All the Boys I've Loved Before	Your behaviour is highly exasperating.
No problem, I do it.	Money Heist (English dub)	It's not an issue; I shall take care of it.
She looks tired.	13 Reasons Why	She appears to be fatigued.
I go now.	Dark (English dub)	I am leaving now.

Globish	Netflix Show / Movie	Traditional Sentences
He is not nice to me.	Heartstopper	He behaves in an unkind manner toward me.
We talk later.	Elite	We shall speak at a later time.
I check and call you.	The Lincoln Lawyer	I shall verify and revert with a phone call.
You can't do this.	Wednesday	This action is impermissible for you.
I send the file now.	The Recruit	I am forwarding the document to you presently.
She is faster than him.	Fate: The Winx Saga	She is faster than he is.
I have no idea.	Kaleidoscope	I am unaware of that information.
He tells me everything.	You	He informed me of all the details.
Why you say like this?	Indian Matchmaking	Why are you expressing yourself in that manner?
I do not agree with you.	Fauda (English subtitles)	I do not concur with your opinion.
This thing is crazy.	Black Mirror: Joan Is Awful	This situation is extremely unusual.
Why you ask this?	The Brothers Sun	May I ask why you're inquiring about this?
I finish this job.	The Recruit	I will complete this assignment.
We are good now.	Beef	Our conflict has been resolved.
I feel nothing.	Wednesday	I am emotionally detached.
You send me email now?	The Recruit	Could you send me the email now?
No time now.	Outer Banks	Unfortunately, I do not have time right now.
You make me tired.	Never Have I Ever	Your behavior is exhausting.
We fix the problem.	Heartstopper	The problem will be resolved.
I finish the job now.	Money Heist	The job is being completed now.

Sacred Oppression: State-Sanctioned Islamophobia in Nadeem Aslam's "The Golden Legend"

Mehak Hussain^{1*}, Shehbaz Siraj², Ihsan Ullah³

Abstract

Nadeem Aslam's *The Golden Legend* (2017) brings forward the contradictions of state-sponsored Islamophobia in Pakistan, where a regime that presents itself as the custodian of Islam employs religious identity as a means of repressing minorities and dissidents alike. This article argues that Nadeem Aslam critiques the way that postcolonial states racialize Muslim subjects—religious and political subjectivities—a process theorized by Sahar Aziz in *The Racial Muslim* (2021), by portraying blasphemy laws and vigilante violence as tools to mark “heretical” communities (Christians, secular Muslims) as dangers to national purity. By synthesizing Aziz's theoretical model with Mahmood Mamdani's examination of religious polarization during the Cold War and Michel Foucault's theories of biopolitics, this research demonstrates how Pakistan's political and legal institutions codify the very anti-Muslim racism that they officially denounce. Through close readings of characters such as Helen, a Christian charged with blasphemy, and Nargis, a Muslim shielding forbidden knowledge, this paper illustrates how the novel portrays the state's hypocrisy and imagines resistance in gestures of remembrance and solidarity. The punctuating role of literature in this process gives rise to the concept of transnational religious racism; in the end, this narrative analysis challenges the usual Western-centric focus of the study of Islamophobia, and demonstrates how fiction offers a way to conceptualize transnational religious racism and the need to contemplate oppression outside the geopolitical framework.

Keywords: Intra-Muslim Racialization, Biopolitics, Muslim Identity, Oppression, The Racial Muslim, Pakistan, Racialization

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Introduction

In today's era, the research and academic discussion on contemporary academic discourses surrounding Islamophobia mainly centers around the geopolitics and prejudice of the West. On such occasions, *The Golden Legend* (2017) by Aslam poses a powerful counter-narrative, arguing that Muslim regimes within their countries enact anti-Muslim racism in the name of religious safeguard. Thus, in this intellectual terrain, Nadeem Aslam's *The Golden Legend* (2017) offers an important counter-narrative, and how anti-Muslim racism functions in the partitioned lands of post-colonial states like Pakistan, ostensibly in the name of preserving theological order. This novel is a fierce condemnation of the blasphemy laws and other forms of discrimination and state-sponsored violence faced by religious minorities in Pakistan, revealing a phenomenon that is not at all addressed in the traditional analytical framework. This typically views the entire situation from a Western perspective. The paper refers to the fact that Islamophobia research has concentrated mostly on Western states' policies—hijab bans, surveillance, counter-terrorism, etc.—and has neglected how states with Muslim majority populations internalize the same type of religious racialization policy. This is because Pakistan presents itself as a champion of Islam while the rights of minorities are suppressed and already marginalized groups are thrown into the darkness. This reveals a fundamental contradiction—how the Pakistani state has been able to assert its role as proclaiming itself as a champion of Islamic identity, yet racializes, marginalizes, and suppresses minorities and dissidents within its own borders.

In this paper, it is argued that Nadeem Aslam's novel is an extremely significant place for exploring and elaborating Sahar Aziz's (2021) theoretical perspective of the "Racial Muslim." Through Aziz's schema, we can better understand the ways in which state bodies profile and punish subjects whose behavior falls outside state-prescribed religious orthodoxy and are disciplined in institutionalized settings in the name of national security and/or theological purity. This paper offers a response to this imbalance and helps to theorize an under-examined intersection in postcolonial literary studies. Gaps in existing scholarship have to do with the global absence of analysis on the reproduction of localized and institutionalized anti-Muslim racism against South Asian nonconformist Muslim citizens and the official South Asian anti-imperialist and Islamic mask.

The theoretical framework for this paper is *The Racial Muslim: When Racism Quashes Religious Freedom* (2021) by Sahar Aziz. This

framework investigates how Muslims are discriminated against through geopolitical and legal identity construction. This framework elucidates the methods through which the Pakistani state and other similar states implement religious discourse, like blasphemy charges, to frame certain groups as heretical dangers to legitimize radicalization and exclusion. This analysis bridges Aziz's socio-legal theory into the realms of literature by highlighting how *The Golden Legend* (2017) presents the aftermath of state-sponsored Islamophobia in the lives of victims. This novel portrays characters such as Massud, a progressive Muslim architect murdered for his heterodoxy, and Helen, a Christian woman falsely accused of blasphemy. While Aziz's formulation primarily addresses the racialization of Muslim identity, this paper extends her framework to argue that the postcolonial state utilizes an identical majoritarian apparatus to consign both non-Muslim minorities and heterodox Muslims into a singular category of racialized, existential threats to the nation. Consequently, both characters come to epitomize the structural mechanics of the "Racial Muslim" dynamic—subjects who are unable to accept state-enforced orthodoxy and hence fall victim to state-sanctioned violence.

To further enhance the analytical dimensions of this study, this research implements Mahmood Mamdani's *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (2004). This is to historicize how postcolonial majoritarian regimes inherit colonial statecraft to bifurcate their populations into compliant subjects and existential threats. This study also incorporates Michel Foucault's framework of biopolitics, specifically examining how sovereign power utilizes disciplinary mechanisms to regulate the population and police thought through state-sanctioned discourses. These theoretical lenses combine to reveal the ways the blasphemy laws of Pakistan reproduce the exclusionary logics of British colonialism. Methodically, this article explores how narrative aesthetics dramatize dissent through motifs such as the possession of secret and forbidden secular works, textual resistance that provides a counter-narrative to state hegemony, and reclaims agency for voices that are silenced subjects.

Finally, this article argues that *The Golden Legend* (2017) is an important intervention in global Islamophobia discourses and that it can contribute to remapping the process of racialization of religious identity across geopolitical boundaries. As the book highlights the socio-legal critique of the hypocrisy of institutions, Aslam's novel simultaneously makes a claim as an aesthetic space that marks unexpected sites of transnational resistance and cross-religious solidarity, from the perspective of narrative voice provided by the novel's "victim" protagonists, whose lives are predicated on a predatory state set against them. In doing so, this

study helps further the discussion on the interaction between state power, race and religion, and the novel form has a unique power to not only reveal the machinery of internal state oppression, but also its psychological apparatus.

This article answers an important research question that remains underdeveloped in postcolonial literary scholarship. Specifically, how Nadeem Aslam's *The Golden Legend* (2017) discloses the Pakistani state's deployment of Islam as a racializing instrument of domestic domination through the combined theoretical frameworks of Sahar Aziz, Mahmood Mamdani, and Michel Foucault. By persecuting the likes of Helen, a Christian woman victimized by a false accusation of blasphemy, and Massud, an extra-judicially murdered secular Muslim, the novel reveals a disturbing paradox—a state that, under the guise of protection, reproduces the very anti-Muslim logics identified with the West. By problematizing the West-facing model of Islamophobia, Aslam demonstrates the manner in which postcolonial states deploy religious identity to exclude minorities, women, and dissidents. The narrative also points to the intersectional nature of the violence and the machinery of ideology, where the blasphemy law is invoked not to protect religion but to target unorthodox or dissident bodies. Acts of resistance challenge and disrupt official narratives that profit from *Muslimness* and compliance, including Nargis's furtive possession of forbidden books. This article examines how this domestic Islamophobia may help one to analyze the dynamics from “domestic” to “left” or “right” using Sahar Aziz's “racial Muslim” model, and identifies a common authoritarian orientation that underlies such moves and defies East-West scenarios.

While this novel marks a localized evolution of the thematic preoccupations with faith, trauma, and transnational belonging that Aslam previously explored in *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) and *The Wasted Vigil* (2008), *The Golden Legend* (2017) uniquely exposes how postcolonial blasphemy laws are structurally weaponized to racialize domestic subjectivities. To do so, the analysis intersects three dimensions: first, it extends Aziz's concept of the “racial Muslim” to investigate how Pakistan's political system utilizes its legal framework to categorize both religious minorities and heterodox Muslims as heretical dangers. Secondly, it incorporates Mahmood Mamdani's work on religious polarization to historicize the genealogy of this suppression. Thirdly, it applies Foucault's biopolitical control mechanisms to deconstruct the portrayal of censorship, surveillance, and punishment present in the novel. Though the central text is *The Golden Legend* (2017), the paper also draws real-life parallels—like the blasphemy case of Asia Bibi—to highlight

fiction's ability to mirror systemic, state-sanctioned violence. The interdisciplinary spectrum is intentionally broad and extends beyond literary critique and critical race theory to challenge Western-centric models of Islamophobia and to highlight intra-Muslim and intra-state racialization.

There are a number of limitations to this paper. The analysis focuses on just one literary work – *The Golden Legend* (2017) – which, however, as rich as it is thematically, can by no means claim to reflect the multivariate manifestations of Islamophobic expressions of state policy across the Muslim world. The result of a comparative study with other literary works of Pakistan may provide more insights. Secondly, the analysis is based on the triangulation of Aziz's theory of racialization, historical materialism of Mamdani, and biopolitics by Foucault, thus potentially leaving other important frameworks, such as feminist or queer critiques of the blasphemy laws, out. Third, this paper is mostly concerned with the aesthetics of the text as opposed to actual data or interviews, restricting its analysis to the fictional experience with minor and occasional exceptions such as Asia Bibi's case. Finally, the specific focus on Pakistan might be susceptible to the danger of overlooking the extreme localness of the dynamics; future research could profitably be comparative, aiming at finding out about which aspects of Aziz's schema are transnational and which are not.

Research Questions

1. How does the state's enforcement of blasphemy laws (e.g., Helen's persecution) serve political ends, demonstrating how the postcolonial state extends the anti-Muslim racialization apparatuses to non-Muslim minorities?
2. What mechanisms connect vigilante violence (e.g., Lily's murder) to a joint regime of theological majoritarianism and anti-minority nationalism through the somatic racialization of the subject?
3. Why does the archive of secular art and literature become a vital symbolic site of resistance against state-imposed religious orthodoxy in the text?

Literature Review

Criticism of imperialism in the Western world has always played a significant role in shaping scholarly debates on Islamophobia; books such

as Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and Sherene Razack's *Casting Out* (2008) have been very influential in establishing that the discursive construct of the Muslim identity is related to imperialistic and neocolonial subjugation. Said's writing helped set in place Western discourse on Islam as a threat within one blanket of the "backward" and a construction that was later adopted by others such as Arun Kundnani (2014) in his discussion on the modern practices of surveillance and counterterrorism. These foundational schemes offer an irreplaceable vocabulary with which to map out extra-territorial, imperialist dynamics, but at the same time their analytical gaze is overly focused on policies adopted by the West, such as the French hijab ban or the internal infrastructures of the War on Terror. Thus, this scholarship creates an analytical void on the capacity of postcolonial Muslim-majority states to mimic and/or make many of these very same practices of anti-Muslim racism in the name of religious purity.

The Racial Muslim (2021) by Sahar Aziz makes a welcome and substantive contribution to this debate in that it suggests that the governments of postcolonial nations such as Egypt and Pakistan will resort to using Islamic identity as a means of subjugating those ideas that are challenging it and racialize the religious minorities and secular Muslims as "heretical" threats to state purity. Aziz writes about how, for example, laws persecuting the Ahmadi community and other anti-Ahmadi killings by the state are not first and foremost about the protection of Islam, and how the state can even be said to mimic the motives of anti-Muslim racism. It is this paradox that is independently examined through a socio-legal lens in the novel, though Aziz has studied the same in her book, whereas Nadeem Aslam's *The Golden Legend* (2017) helps examine the paradox of literature.

Overall, the current scholarship on Aslam's novel has tended to regard it as an expression of postcolonial trauma or aesthetic innovation, with comments on its representation of religious violence and memory from scholars such as Aamir Mufti (2007) and Peter Morey (2018). For instance, Mufti discusses Aslam's novel as part of a "South Asian literary tradition...which addresses Partition's impact and legacy," and Morey places it in the category of "new British-Muslim fiction." But it is still only within a Western-centered construction of Islamophobia that they can be understood, meaning to even just ignore the novel's own critique of intra-Muslim racialization.

For example, consider Mufti's reading of Aslam's work to support this claim. Mufti's *Enlightenment in the Colony* (2007) is more of a reaction to the legacy of Partition and the persistence of communal violence in South

Asia” (p. 245). This framing fails to show how the novel’s specific condemnation of the Pakistani post-colonial state (not only communal tension) as an agent provocateur of religious persecution in *The Golden Legend* (2017). By concentrating on the violence and tensions of the Partition period, Mufti neglects to consider the country’s precise description of the blasphemy laws as a post-1980s state apparatus of racialization, as described by Aziz (2021) and considered as a modern phenomenon.

Similarly, Morey (2018) situates *The Golden Legend* (2017) within “contemporary British-Muslim fiction’s engagement with terror and trauma” (p. 112), emphasizing the novel’s aesthetic experimentation with memory and loss. Morey’s analysis is valuable for understanding Aslam’s narrative techniques, but it remains tethered to a Western reception context that reads Pakistani religious violence through the lens of the Global War on Terror. What Morey misses—because his framework is oriented toward British readerships—is the novel’s internal critique of how Muslim-majority states replicate anti-Muslim racism within their borders, a dynamic that cannot be reduced to Western Islamophobia or its afterlives.

The Golden Legend (2017) should also be reinscribed: it tells the tale of Helen, a Christian lady accused of blasphemy and impending doom, and Massud, a secular Muslim architect, who is murdered when he espouses progressive ideas. It is a testament to the racism in Pakistan’s judicial and lynching machinery, in line with Aziz’s “racial Muslims” theory. The novel’s discourse about State surveillance and vigilante violence by people is also an example of Michel Foucault’s biopolitics that shows the exercise of power through heresy discourse and public punishment. This study adds to literary analysis’ exploration of the racialization of Muslim citizens in a majority Muslim country through these converging theories.

The remarks need to be understood in the light of this. For this, many have sought the guidance of Mahmood Mamdani’s book, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (2004), which explains how the laws of blasphemy were made tools of repression in a Cold War geopolitical context. The colonial legal order, such as Pakistan’s blasphemy laws, “was pumped into and used by the postcolonial states to control religious uniformity in the unstated support of Western parties who were concerned with rolling back the Soviet threat,” Mamdani said. Aslam’s novel is typical in this regard because it highlights the fact that the postcolonial state of Pakistan, with all its anti-imperialist rhetoric, is a continuation of the colonial forces’ violence. Contrasting between Helen’s ordeal of oppression and factual incidents—most notably the blasphemy case of Asia Bibi—also shows

how fiction can help humanize the systemic oppression (Iqtidar, 2019). What is also a Foucauldian “counter-archive” to the rule of the state on historical discourses is Nargis’s hidden library, which harbors the forbidden secular texts. The resistance narrative, however, has not been fully theorized in current literature, which focuses more on the victim side rather than the resistance.

The intersectional interpretation of the novel, identifying religious racism with oppression by class and gender, requires subtler examination. The defenselessness of Christian woman Helen and the murder of secular intellectual Massud reveal the way states constrict dissent into deviance, an effect theorized by Aziz (2021) but represented by Aslam with visceral force. Although analyzed by critics like Ulka Anjaria (2021) as a trauma discourse, this article approaches the political significance of *The Golden Legend* (2017), putting it alongside books like Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) in exposing state hypocrisy. Both books respond to the manner in which postcolonial states incorporate religious identity to constitute violence against minority communities, but Aslam’s particular emphasis on Pakistan’s blasphemy laws sheds particular light on the racialization of the Muslim population.

Last, this review underscores the requirement to situate *The Golden Legend* (2017) in transnational Islamophobia studies beyond those scholars like Razack (2008) who remained committed to West-centric theories to confront how racialization of Muslim identity occurs in postcolonial states. By synthesizing Aziz’s racialization theory, Mamdani’s historic materialism, and Foucault’s biopolitics, this study offers a novel way of reading Aslam’s novel—a reading which foregrounds literature’s capacity to critique and counter state violence. Future scholarship can take into account how other postcolonial fiction, like Mohammed Hanif’s *Red Birds* (2018) and Kamila Shamsie’s *Home Fire* (2017), addresses the same concerns to expand the geographic and methodological reach of research on Islamophobia.

Whereas Western Islamophobia has been the subject of extensive scholarship—through concepts such as Orientalism (Said), racialized surveillance (Razack), and securitization (Kundnani)—significantly less attention has been dedicated to how Muslim-majority states use Islamic identity to wield oppression. Sahar Aziz’s *The Racial Muslim* (2021) bridges this gap in socio-legal fields by analyzing how states like Pakistan racialize Muslim minorities and dissidents through religious discourse and blasphemy legislation. However, her focus is socio-legal and does not broach literature’s possibilities in unveiling this phenomenon. Works like

Nadeem Aslam's *The Golden Legend* (2017) vividly dramatize state-colluded Islamophobia—i.e., trumped-up blasphemy accusations and mob violence. Yet, while existing criticism on contemporary Pakistani fiction frequently examines the themes of religious nationalism and state violence, it rarely integrates structural racialization theory to examine these dynamics. This omission is significant, for fiction alone unpacks the formal, aesthetic dimensions that expose the paradox of states' racializing the very identity they claim to defend. By combining Aziz's theory and literary analysis, this study upends the Western-centric bias in Islamophobia research and illustrates how postcolonial literature reveals the transnational mechanisms of religious-racial oppression.

This study employs Sahar Aziz's *The Racial Muslim* (2021) as a theoretical background to investigate how Nadeem Aslam's *The Golden Legend* (2017) depicts Islam as a racialized political conception, which the Pakistani regime uses to repress dissent. Aziz's theory illustrates how Muslim identity is racialized as a category through state discourses that brand religious minorities and secular Muslims as "heretical" threats. While Aziz's formulation primarily targets the profiling of Muslim bodies, this paper contends that the postcolonial state extends this identical structural lens to non-Muslim minorities—a dynamic exemplified by Helen's false accusation of blasphemy. This is in accordance with Aziz's argument that anti-Muslim racism operates within Muslim-majority states as forcefully as it does within Western frameworks.

To historicize this, Mahmood Mamdani's *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (2004) connects how the blasphemy laws of the colonial period were reshaped to suppress dissident voices under the rubric of religious deviance, mirroring the book's representation of state-sponsored extremism as a Cold War legacy. It is where figures like Massud—a secular architect—are silenced as "un-Islamic." In *Society Must Be Defended* (2004), the French theorist Michel Foucault uses the term "biopolitics" to describe the way that the modern state works on populations by establishing "normal" and "deviant" bodies. Biopower is different from sovereign power: it is power over life, not over death. The blasphemy laws and state-sponsored violence in *The Golden Legend* (2017) are biopolitical instruments which do not just dismantle individuals. They are performative acts of purity in which the national body is purified by the removal of puritanically defined religious outsiders.

This extension is valid, given that Aziz's schema makes clear that certain state practices, including legal profiling, blasphemy allegations, extrajudicial violence, and the discursive construction of "heretical"

threats to national purity, are not necessarily done in terms of the actual religion of the target. Helen the Christian and Massud the secular Muslim are treated alike under Pakistan's blasphemy laws. They both are accused of threatening the orthodoxy of Islam: they are both the victims of state-sanctioned or condoned violence. They are both portrayed as an existential threat to Pakistan's Islamic identity. The "racial Muslim" dynamic, as theorized by Aziz, also occurs when religious otherness is deemed an unchanging and racialized threat to the Islamic polity—and non-Muslim others are perceived as threatening its purity. The mechanism is the same because the 'bad Muslim' and the 'non-Muslim' are both rendered into one 'other' of the heretical outsider, and it is this 'other' that is targeted and silenced.

The novel's structure has been further explicated with the help of Michel Foucault's theory of biopolitics as an elucidating framework. This highlights how the postcolonial state leverages mechanisms of censorship, surveillance, and spectacular punishment of the social body to protect the conformity of religion and politics in absolute terms. Collectively, these theorists create a tripartite framework that not only exposes the Islamophobia that is bolstered by the state but also exercises the forms of agency at the local level. The study brings together Aziz's theory on "racialization", Mamdani's ideas of "historical genealogies" and Foucault's ideas on "power analytics," which render Nargis's hidden library, for example, as a Foucauldian "counter-archive" actively contesting the state's monopoly on notions of historical truth. In the end, this double theoretical standpoint provides a way to see how an already-marginalised identity—postcolonialism—can become racialized by the state, and how ways of imagining space can help literature better imagine, and preserve spaces of resistance.

Methodology

Research Design

In the present study, data are gathered based on a qualitative design with a close reading approach. It does not intend to measure fixed variables but to attempt to understand Islamophobia and resistance conceptualized here as state-sanctioned, as it is articulated in *The Golden Legend* (2017). The novel is read as a cultural text with the voices, imagery, and characterizations as political and legal commentaries. The approach follows postcolonial literary studies and critical race literary studies on Islamophobia. Those fields or areas do not require numerical data, so the qualitative design is more appropriate. The analysis aims at depth of

interpretation, examining how fiction reveals the racialization of religious identity, and how state violence works in everyday life.

Data Selection Criteria

The Golden Legend (2017), authored by Nadeem Aslam, is the primary source for this research work. The entire novel was read, but analysis focused on instances where protagonists' religious actions come into conflict with the law, and where deadly force is more obvious as a form of conflict. Three groups of material are used to make the selection. First, the occurrences of blasphemy accusations against Helen are shown to depict the process of blasphemy working within the novel as well as the affective effects of these blasphemy laws. Second, scenes which have to do with the deaths of Massud and Lily and other episodes of 'mob action' are used to deconstruct the relationship between 'mob violence', 'majoritarian nationalism' and inherited 'good/bad Muslim' binaries. Thirdly, Nargis's hidden book room and her preservation of forbidden literature form a sustained motif of counter-archive and dissent.

The selection is purposive. The passages are chosen as the ones that address specifically the research questions on blasphemy, racialization and resistance. Real-world scenarios, e.g., the Asia Bibi case, and socio-legal literature about the blasphemy regime in Pakistan are used only as background. They serve only to situate the novel within a familiar legal and critical network of laws and discussions, but they are not marked as a second data set.

Analytical Procedures

The analysis proceeded in stages. Firstly, the novel has been studied a number of times to comprehend the entire story, the framework, and the recurring images. Some accusations of blasphemy, racialized insults, mob violence, and archiving/reading were examined later in the readings. These notes were then grouped into initial themes: 'Blasphemy as biopolitics,' 'racialized Christian subject,' 'good/bad Muslim binaries,' 'vigilante sovereignty and counter archive and memory.' This is a manual coding focused on changes with regard to focus, focalization, tone, and metaphor.

These thematic clusters are then "read" using the selected lens. As such, through the mobilization of Sahar Aziz's notion of the 'racial Muslim', Helen's experiences of persecution were centered to highlight the text's ways of racializing religious identity. Episodes concerning Lily's death and other types of selective violence were juxtaposed with Mahmood

Mamdani's text on 'good' and 'bad' Muslims to explore how the publics of the state and the agents of policing are employed as "sorting machines". Using the framework of Foucault's biopolitics, discipline, and some of his concepts of counter-archive, descriptions of Nargis's library and her keeping of secular books were interpreted. Throughout the postcolonial history of Pakistan, the context of the law was used to fine-tune, rather than direct, the readings. This is a mix of formal close reading and the interpretation of themes with a theoretical approach.

Researcher Positionality

The reading is situated in a certain scholarly place. The researcher is trained in postcolonial literary studies and critical studies of racism against Muslims, generally, and South Asian Muslims, in particular. A particular focus of this background is on the issues of law, state power, and racialization in the text. This also could be taken to be a way of minimizing the importance of other emphases, for example, merely psychological or formalist interpretations. Because debates on blasphemy, Islamisation, and global Islamophobia are part of the contemporary scholarly and public conversation, this study assumes familiarity with these issues and uses them to frame Aslam's choices. This explicitness of positionality is meant to be a way of elucidating how *The Golden Legend* (2017) can be read and to allow other, differently positioned reading possibilities.

Results

Blasphemy and the Persecution of Helen

In *The Golden Legend* (2017), it is the blasphemy laws which pose a daily threat to Helen's life. Helen's story starts with her in a place where the things people do and the corruption of others— "some of the most securely concealed vices"—are "out in the open" (Aslam, 2017, p. 13). This scene suggests a lack of privacy in the city, and here, acts of rebellion and observation go hand in hand. As a Christian minority woman, Helen works in this space.

She is later a victim of false accusations of blasphemy. It has also been stressed that such a charge can be easily made. A character says "You can go to a police station and say 'My neighbor said that their law has resulted in innocent people being killed or jailed'" (Aslam, 2017, p. 98). The language is vernacular, but it reveals how a simple law comment can be transformed into an offence. The narrative shows the swiftness of rumors

regarding Helen and how the neighbors stalk her and the manner in which the charge impedes her everyday excursions in the novel.

Helen's story is one of the variation or gap between the purpose and the use of blasphemy legislation. They appear to be means of protecting the saintly. But, as the story unfolds, one proves them to be devices that put a minority woman at risk of legal wrath, society's suspicions, and potential mob violence. All of that is the inner struggle that she always fights throughout the chapters that tell of her ordeal: fear, confusion, and isolation.

Vigilante Violence and Lily's Killing

Lily helps to flesh out the larger sense of danger that shrouds the novel. His very sudden death was described as being unconstitutional and unprovoked. His murder is a pivotal moment, and an indicator of the dangers faced by religious minorities "generally," as the text puts it. After Lily's death, this novel is linked to the fate of the not-quite-safe Christian communities at large.

But there is racialized language in this violence, too—this racially charged language is accented by Aslam. One of the attacks took place when an "Ink Black" Muslim received beatings while a hostile mob was yelling "You black bastard, you pretending to be a Muslim!" at the victim (Aslam, 2017, p. 176). In this insult, skin color and religious suspicion are combined. It is not only an offensive word, but it is an example that the person is "out of place" in both race and religion.

The same is noted next to Lily's name. His "blackness" is fused with his Christian faith, rendering him a double outsider. After being extrajudicially killed, the violence spreads out. However, the mob's chanting 'Let's burn down all Christian houses before the recital of dawn' (Aslam, 2017, p. 116) becomes the focus not just from one victim to a community. Fire, night, chanting, again and again, here appears to be something of a ritual cleansing. The novel shows that in these events, the community uses race and religion as a justification for punishment, and mob action as its duty for the community.

Nargis's Library: Silent Protest

But between all this talk of the violent, *The Golden Legend* (2017) offers one other mode of resistance: Nargis and her secret library. It is the story of a private sanctuary that's also a library founded by Nargis and her

late husband, Massud. An illustration of that is in “The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire in seven volumes” (Aslam, 2017, p. 141). This type of writing stands in contrast to the State’s particular Islamic renditions of history.

The novel is preoccupied with the manner in which Nargis interacts with these books. In Aslam’s portrayal:

She ran her finger along the spines, not reading but remembering. Each book was a door she had chosen not to close. (Aslam, 2017, p. 143)

The authorship would determine the book’s content and influence upon the student’s life. Given that the structure of the book is a door, it suggests the flow of time, place, and ideas. That the learning is about ‘remembering’, not ‘learning’, indicates that the knowledge held in the library is not new, but is out of the limelight and requires sustaining, reviving, and making alive.

From these actions, Nargis refrains from making any sound: these acts consist of her refusal to accept the obligatory ‘closure’ of the state in the domain of ideology. This collection is marked “private” and even “foreign,” indicative of the difference between this project and the official project of a pure Islamic nation. All of this—the novels she holds onto, the stories she keeps, the “doors” she does not shut—is a quiet defiance of the state in its efforts to have its certain histories retold and other memories erased.

Discussion

Blasphemy, Racialization, and the “Racial Muslim”

From the results of the effort regarding Helen’s persecution, the blasphemy in the novel is not merely a sacred line but rather a means of social and legal regulation. The mention of her Christian faith renders Helen clearly identifiable, as she is bound to be accused of anything and everything she said against the law, in a world that does not tolerate the slightest against it. Here, the story is about the dynamic that Sahar Aziz points to in *The Racial Muslim* (2021): weaponized religion creates categories of suspect subjects—and the identity of Muslims is, in this sense, by the very nature of that identity threatening. Much like Aziz’s statement that law and suspicion operate in tandem to signify that certain

bodies are permanently 'suspect,' a neighbor can bring suspicion against a person to the attention of the police.

Notably, the novel depicts a Christian woman in a Muslim-dominated state; hence the logic can also be applied to this context. Aziz doesn't just say that Helen's treatment is racializing a mechanism of "racial Muslim"; it applies to non-Muslims as well. She emerges as a character whose body represents the fears of state and local bodies relating to purity and loyalty. It is a part of the overall thrust of the article, which argues that anti-Muslim logics are used to select filters even within post-colonial regimes; that blasphemy law functions as a political tool and not only a theological proviso.

The relationship between the inside gaze at Helen and the outside gaze offers a Foucauldian interpretation. The blasphemy law does not just exist as a disincentive for acts of blasphemy in the future—it is a biopolitical mechanism that works to structure people's conduct. Before Helen is ever given a formal verdict, the law redefines her movements, speech, and thoughts. *The Golden Legend* (2017) is thus a narrative of the ways in which modern states rule, through various legal codes, rumors, and internalized self-policing.

Lily's Death, Nationalism, and Sovereign Violence

The scenes surrounding Lily's murder seem to contribute to this image and illustrate how State power and horizontal violence are mutually reinforcing. Lily's murder outside of court serves as proof that in the novel's world, the rights of minorities are both fragile and legally and socially uncertain. The call by the crowds to "burn down all Christian houses" suggests that this incident is not a crime but a purifying event, enacted by the community. This reasoning matches Michel Foucault's theory about sovereign power that makes decisions on life and death and biopolitics that act on populations. The decision by the sovereign to allow mobs to attack is used to extend the state's power unofficially in the novel.

In postcolonial states, the issue is well elucidated by Mahmood Mamdani's distinction between "good" and "bad" subjects. Lily is Christian, but his treatment would be typical of the attitude taken by postcolonial regimes against certain Muslims as dangerous outsiders. It is the same logic that has been used against "bad Muslims" that is being proclaimed against Christian citizens. Once the state has "sanitized" these binary oppositions, it is simpler to take or celebrate violence against the "other half."

But this schema is complicated by the racialized insult to the “Ink Black” Muslim character. It demonstrates that racialization is across confessional lines, with layers of authenticity and suspicion given based on difference. This reinforces the point that this novel is not just a representation of sectarian tension but that this is part of a larger regime in which race and religion together determine who belongs to the nation. In this regard, *The Golden Legend* (2017) does not limit the discussion on Islamophobia to a simplified dichotomy of ‘the West and Islam’, but takes an expanded trajectory by addressing intra-Muslim and intra-state racialization.

Counter-Archives, Memory, and Resistance in Nargis’s Library

The results of Nargis’s library reveal that it is not only about representing victims; the novel also imagines practices of resistance. Nargis’s library of secular/historical works directly challenges the state’s efforts to unify a single pure history. As Foucault discusses knowledge/power, the library seems counter-archive. It resists the temptation to depict stories purely and constantly; in fact, it tells stories of mixture, decline, and contingency. Strategies of hiding and preserving these books imply a denial of the state’s attempt to define a legitimate memory, ultimately allowing the preservation of these books.

She reads the material in this way, and her interaction with the reading materials supports this interpretation. “She’s remembering”—indicating it was once something carried around more easily. By running a finger along the edges and foregoing those “doors,” she is rejecting a closing of historical potential. This phrase “disciplining” of Foucault (modern power acts on what can be known, on the archive that can be remembered) here materializes in the archives of the state, which seeks to control and discipline not only bodies but archives as well; and in the archives of Nargis, whose mission is to keep an archive alive.

The restrictions of citizenship by religious identity imposed by postcolonial states create another layer, as Mamdani pointed out in his criticism of postcolonial states. But for Nargis, the political community’s imaginative space is expanded by her private archive if official history canvasses who can belong. Her vision of Pakistan is plural and historically entangled, open to difference. However, spaces of learning and memory have been found to have potential for resisting processes of majoritarian consolidation, as demonstrated in recent work in education and resistance in Pakistan, including discussion of pluralist curricula and critical pedagogy by Naseem. Nargis’s library is therefore not only a fictional

variant of the type of fragile but vital libraries, but it is also an experience that draws its life from the readers' activity as much as from the books and their creators.

Helen's persecution, Lily's death, and Nargis's acts of preservation demonstrate in combination a continuum of state-sanctioned Islamophobia and resistance in *The Golden Legend* (2017). Blasphemy laws, mob violence, and controlled histories are all elements of a shared system of racialization and narrowing of the boundaries of belonging.

Conclusion

This paper has explored how *The Golden Legend* (2017) reveals the Pakistani state's implementation of Islam as a means of domestic oppression from the very moment it attempts to build Muslim identity by opposing the West's imperialism. The novel shows that religion shields laws, which are used to discipline minorities and secular Muslims and even to make them targets as "heretical," and who are no longer citizens. These are narrative choices in Sahar Aziz's conception of the "racial Muslim" that normalize deviation from orthodoxy—set by the state—as a racialized threat that can only be responded to with violence. Both Mahmood Mamdani's historical framework and Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics help to shed light on this violence: Mamdani's by reading it as a Cold War legacy of "good" and "bad" subjects, and Foucault's by decoding this violence as the novel's privileged interest in censorship, surveillance, and spectacular punishment techniques for population management and the suppression of dissent.

The novel, on the other hand, does not only tell of oppression, but sketches a picture of forms of resistance as well. Massud's contemporary mosque architecture and Nargis's quasi-clandestine library serve as both gestures of care for knowledge that is at risk and as a tacit resistance to the state's ideological purity. These motifs point toward two themes: the literature can not only reflect the brutality of state power, but it can also present counter-narratives in which memory, secular learning, and cross-religious solidarity are viable. This analysis unfolds in the intersection of Aziz, Mamdani and Foucault, disrupting any simple East/West dualism, and highlighting the fact that there is a religious racism beyond these geopolitical demarcations, even in Muslim-majority nation states.

The study thus contributes in two ways. As regards literary scholarship, it serves as a paradigm for reading *The Golden Legend* (2017) as a sustained critique of intra-state Islamophobia and racialization, not just as

a trauma narrative or aesthetic experiment. On the subject of Islamophobia studies, it raises the need to enhance consideration of how postcolonial governments are involved in more practices of maintaining anti-Muslim logics within their own countries, albeit not towards non-Muslims but towards heterodox Muslims. Studies in the future may explore this method with other postcolonial novels, both in Pakistan and in the diaspora, to see how other novels react to the state hypocrisy and the intermingling of religious and national identities. In an era where authoritarianism is growing, where what constitutes belonging is increasingly politicized, Aslam's novel and this reading of it call for resistance to the imagined invisibility of the oppressed and the questioning, remembering, and re-writing of a "pure" nation-state which was homogeneous.

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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 کہ 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	میں غیرت میں شاہین ہوں	In honor, I am a falcon of the high mountains,
او نچے پہاڑوں کا یم		Even my enemies salute my pride.
کہ دشمن بھی میری غیرت پر غیرتی کہ می دشمن وی زندہ		
زنده باد کہتے ہیں باد		



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
موخ دی کړے دے	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 داندنگو 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 "دنیا" (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 'لکھ خوب چی وینی', which is translated in English as 'As if you are dreaming'. In this text, the linguistic elements 'However' "لکھ" (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 ہے', 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 دهنه’ 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

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



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7.



8.



9.



10.



Language Vitality of Chilisso: A Case of an Endangered Language of Pakistan

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Abstract

Endangered languages are a vital part of the world's linguistic heritage and their unique cultural and cognitive systems are under threat. Chilisso is a critically endangered Indo-Aryan language spoken in some pockets in District Kohistan in northern Pakistan. It is an undocumented language; about 500-600 people speak it, the majority of whom are elderly. The present sociolinguistic study aims to assess the linguistic vitality of Chilisso in Kohistan by focusing on two main factors: language use in different domains, and the attitude of speakers towards Chilisso. The study is based on a survey conducted in Dasu among 51 respondents of various age groups between 2024 and 2025 with the assistance of questionnaires. The results of the study indicate that the process of intergenerational transmission of the Chilisso language is low, and younger generation uses less Chilisso, shifting to Shina, which is one of the dominant languages of the region. The findings also hint at the less positive attitudes of the younger generation towards their ancestral language, as well as a continuous process of the shift to Shina in daily communication. This study can contribute some empirical data to the existing very limited literature on the Chilisso language and language use patterns, and can also fill part of the gap in the literature on the intergenerational transmission of the language in the Chilisso community. It also marks negative language attitudes towards Chilisso and the current shift to Shina, which provides insights that can contribute to future documentation efforts, language maintenance efforts, as well as policy planning of endangered languages in the region.

Keywords: Endangered Language; Language Vitality; Language Shift; Language Use; Language Attitudes; Chilisso

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Introduction

Language endangerment has become one of the main concerns of modern Sociolinguistics, as a considerable number of languages around the world are now assessed as being at risk of extinction. Language loss involves not only the disappearance of language systems but also the loss of cultural heritage, oral traditions, and indigenous knowledge (Crystal, 2000). On the same note, Fishman (1991) points out that the weakening of intergenerational transmission is one of the most crucial indicators of the language shift and subsequent endangerment. Globalization, urbanization, and the prevalence of major languages in education and media are some of the forces that contribute to this process, and often result in the younger generations abandoning their ancestral languages in favor of those that offer greater socioeconomic mobility.

Pakistan is a land of linguistic diversity; however, most of the minority languages are under the threat of extinction. There is an extremely diverse variety of regional and indigenous languages used in the country, especially in its northern regions, although most of them are not officially recognized or supported by the institutions. However, whereas Urdu is the national language and English prevails in the official, educational, and administrative contexts, there are smaller languages, most of which are predominantly spoken in informal settings. Researchers have observed that this hierarchical distribution of language creates the circumstances in which there is a language shift, or that there is a language shift that is directed towards younger speakers who associate dominant languages with education and economic progress (Rahman, 2002). In remote areas such as Kohistan, other factors like geographic isolation, illiteracy in the local languages, and increased contact with other dominant linguistic groups further hasten the endangerment process.

It is within the wider frame of sociolinguistics that Chilisso is a highly threatened language. Chilisso is spoken by a small group of people in the Kohistan region. Ethnologue (Eberhard et al., 2025) estimates that the number of Chilisso speakers is less than 10,000, whereas Hallberg (1992) speculated that around 1600 Chilisso speakers live in the scattered areas of Kohistan, including Jalkot and Mahirin. The latest study estimates that less than 1000 Chilisso speakers are left in Kohistan (Liljgeren &

Akhunzada, 2017). According to our own field observations and data provided by the members of the community, the number of Chilisso speakers is estimated to be 500-600, yet there is no authentic official census information on the matter at the moment. Encyclopedia of World's Endangered Languages by Moseley (2008) classified Chilisso as a moribund language of northern Pakistan. Chilisso is spoken in a Shina- and Indus Kohistani-dominated region, and this language is under tremendous pressure, has limited functional domains, and is mostly used in home and community settings. The increasing power of Shina and Urdu has resulted in mass bilingualism and growing language shift among speakers. Previous observations indicate that younger age groups are less proficient in Chilisso and prefer dominant languages to communicate more widely (Hallberg, 1992; Liljegren & Akhunzada, 2017). This means that there is a deterioration in intergenerational transmission, which, as Fishman (1991) notes, is one of the main indicators of language endangerment. Although Chilisso has cultural and linguistic relevance, it has been under-documented, especially as regards empirical sociolinguistic research, and this has necessitated systematic investigation of its current trends of use, attitudes of the speakers, and the contributing factors to its decline.

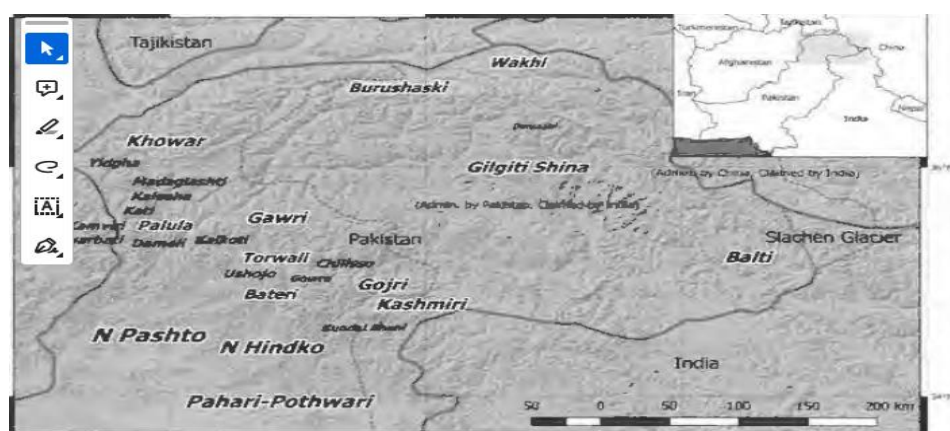
Chilisso belongs to the Dardic sub-group of the Indo-Aryan family. The speakers refer to it as 'chelisyo', '*cheliso*' or '*chiliso*' and *ziip* (language). It is named after the Chillis Khel community, living on the mountainous east bank of the river Indus in Kohistan, Pakistan. It is placed in the Kohistani group of languages along with Shina, Indus Kohistani, Gowro and Bateri (Liljegren, 2016). Geographically, Kohistan extends from Gilgit-Baltistan in the north to the Mansehra District in the east, and further to the Battagram, Shangla, and Swat districts in the west. Serving as a convergence point for the Hindukush, Karakoram, and Himalayan ranges, Kohistan forms a natural boundary that distinguishes different ecological zones within these vast mountain systems.

The multilingualism in the eastern Indus Valley is driven by population and communication needs. Shina is the dominant language on the eastern bank of the Indus, and is used as the main language of communication within communities. It is used not only at home but also at the market as a lingua franca, facilitating communication between people speaking

different languages. Urdu is also an important language in the region, being the language of administration and the primary language of education. Consequently, the majority of speakers in the region become proficient in Urdu, despite it being a second language.

The region is also home to a number of smaller language groups, such as speakers of Chilisso. The Chilisso community tends to use its own language within the community, but uses Shina for communication with other groups and Urdu for their dealings with the government. This complex multilingual context gives rise to multilingual competence, where Chilisso speakers manage Shina as a local lingua franca - and Urdu as a national and academic language.

Figure 1: Map of Northern Pakistan Exhibiting Language Locations (Liljegren & Akhonzada, 2017)



The current study is focused on the Chilisso-speaking community belonging to Dasu and Gujjar Banda. Dasu is a small town in Kohistan, and Gujjar Banda is a remote village in the Jalkot valley. The primary aim of this research is to analyze the existing trends in Chilisso language use in the major areas of social life, including home, community relationships, and workplace environments, to learn about its functional distribution. It also aims to examine the variation in the use of language by the Chilisso-speaking society in terms of the different age groups in language use. The other important goal is to determine how much the intergenerational transmission of the Chilisso language is occurring and being used by younger speakers. The study will also seek to examine speakers' attitudes towards both Chilisso and the prevailing language, Shina. Last but not

least, the analysis aims to discover and examine the sociolinguistic forces that are contributing to the current shift of Chilisso to Shina and, therefore, to establish language use in a larger frame of social, cultural, and economic forces. To address these aims in a methodical manner, the following questions were formulated to focus on the language use patterns, intergenerational transfer, and the attitudes of speakers in the Chilisso-speaking society.

1. How does language use vary in different domains across younger and older age groups in the Chilisso-speaking community?
2. What are the attitudes of speakers towards Chilisso that cause maintenance or shift to Shina across younger and older age groups in the Chilisso-speaking community?

The two factors, language use and attitude, are key factors to study a language's vitality. They are included in several frameworks that study language vitality, such as the Graded Intergenerational Disrupted Scale (GIDS) by Fishman (1991), Language Vitality and Endangerment (LVE) by UNESCO (2003), and Extended Graded Intergenerational Disrupted Scale (EGIDS) by Lewis and Simons (2010). The language use in different domains helps to measure language safety in the community. If a language is used across multiple domains, that language is considered safe (Rehman, 2012; Li, 2024; Fatinah et al., 2025). Likewise, language attitudes also determine the vitality of a language. Positive attitudes indicate higher chances of language maintenance in the future (Anjum, 2016; Gimeshi, 2022; Murad et al., 2023).

Age was selected as a key sociolinguistic variable because language maintenance and shift are strongly shaped by intergenerational patterns of use, proficiency, and attitude. In endangered-language contexts, comparison between younger and older speakers helps determine whether a language is being transmitted successfully or whether its use is becoming restricted to older generations (Kircher et al., 2023; Gimeshi, 2022).

Literature Review

Language attitudes generally refer to the feelings, evaluations, and judgments that speakers hold about their own language or the languages of others (Crystal, 1992). These attitudes are related to the hidden perceptions

about a particular language, thus determining its significance, status, and benefit (Preston, 2010). Sociolinguistic research views language attitudes as an essential factor to measure language maintenance and shift, especially in multilingual situations where social and economic benefits are associated with the dominant language (Baker, 1992; Garrett, 2010). Positive attitudes towards a language indicate higher chances of its maintenance in the future, while negative attitudes result in limited language use, thus making it endangered

Focused on the languages of northern Pakistan, several studies were conducted to investigate language shift and maintenance, such as Rehman (2012), who, in his sociolinguistic study of Kundal Shahi, concludes that speakers disregard their language for being low in prestige. This negative attitude leads to the reduction of the intergenerational transmission of Kundal Shahi. Similarly, Anjum (2016), in her sociolinguistic study of Mankiyali, notes language shift in the Mankiyali community. It is mainly due to the negative attitudes of the younger generation towards their native language because of its lower market value as compared to the dominant language, while older speakers value their language as an important identity marker. These studies illustrate how language attitudes significantly influence patterns of language use and contribute to language shift in endangered language communities.

Research on Chilisso remains extremely limited, and few scattered references in the literature are found. John Biddulph (1880), in his early work, only makes short comments on the origin of the community and briefly makes grammatical remarks, which do not shed much light on the sociolinguistic state of affairs. More specific descriptions are found much later, especially in *A Sociolinguistic Survey of Kohistani Languages*, Volume 1 by Hallberg (1992), and in *Linguistic diversity, vitality and maintenance: a case study on the language situation in northern Pakistan* by Liljegren and Akhunzada (2017). These works give us some of the few sociolinguistic accounts of Chilisso and its usage, attitudes of speakers, and the pressures that it experiences in the multilingual environment of Kohistan.

An early description of the sociolinguistic situation of Chilisso is given by Hallberg (1992). He collected two wordlists of Chilisso from Jalkot and Mahirin and compared them with each other and also with other languages of Kohistan, as shown in Figure 2. The findings indicate that Chilisso shares the highest lexical similarity with the Indus Kohistani varieties spoken in Seo, Patan, and Jijal, with a percentage of 71.

Figure 2: Comparison of Chilisso with other Languages (Hallberg, 1992)

Kandia														
98	Duber													
90	91	Seo												
91	92	100	Patan											
88	90	95	95	Jijal										
71	70	71	71	71	Chilisso (Jalkot)									
69	69	71	71	71	87	Chilisso (Mahrin)								
61	61	63	63	62	65	68	Gowro							
58	59	61	61	60	55	54	60	Bateri						
40	40	37	37	38	56	49	41	30	Jalkot (Shina)					
38	38	36	36	37	55	48	40	29	100	Palas (Shina)				
40	41	38	38	39	53	52	43	30	97	97	Kolai (Shina)			
28	28	27	26	27	25	26	24	27	16	15	16	Kalami		
28	27	28	27	27	27	26	25	29	17	17	19	44	Torwali	
17	17	18	18	18	17	16	18	18	16	15	15	15	12	Urdu
14	14	12	12	12	11	12	11	12	12	11	13	7	9	11 Pashto

The study also revealed that Chilisso was still in use in the community at the time, especially in home and intra-group communication. The language was used as a medium of daily communication despite the small community size living in scattered places. Nevertheless, there were also indications of the pressure from Shina, the major lingua franca of the region, as pointed out by Hallberg. The use of two languages was common; Chilisso was used in the close domains and Shina in the broader context of communication. The attitudes towards language seemed to be rather ambivalent: speakers appreciated Chilisso as an identity indicator, but they were aware of the usefulness of Shina. Notably, some of the first signs of language change can be traced, particularly in areas outside the house, indicating that the vitality of Chilisso was compromised already. This study was based on short interviews from ten participants, which have limited empirical evidence.

Liljegren and Akhunzada (2017) measured the linguistic vitality of several different northern languages according to the factors proposed by UNESCO (2003). Chilisso is described as having low ethnolinguistic vitality with a low number of speakers and growing marginalization, lack of documentation, and no use in the media. The research also mentions that there is a considerable decline in intergenerational transmission and in use of the Chilisso language among younger speakers. Shina has also ventured into the majority of functional areas, which were the preserve of

Chilisso. On the whole, the picture is presented as one of continuous language shift with Chilisso being reduced to fewer and fewer contexts of use. Taken as a whole, the work of Hallberg (1992) represents an older phase of the language that is stable though showing strained bilingualism; whereas the subsequent analysis by Liljegren and Akhunzada (2017) depicts a definite shift towards language shift and endangerment. This study does not present a comprehensive picture of the linguistic vitality of Chilisso as it lacks empirical data, and mostly conclusions are given descriptively as estimates.

Expanding on the previous studies, the present research draws on empirical evidence, offering insights into the vitality of the Chilisso language and contributing to understanding its current status in a multilingual setting. Earlier studies by Hallberg (1992) and Liljegren and Akhunzada (2017) have reported an ongoing language shift in the Chilisso community, caused by the dominance of Shina as the regional lingua franca and factors such as the greater socioeconomic and educational value of Shina and Urdu. While these studies identify the major forces driving language shift, the present study examines the language shift through the theoretical lens of the Theory of Ecology of Pressures (TEP).

Theory of Ecology of Pressures (TEP) is a theory proposed by Terborg (2006) and later refined (Terborg & Landa, 2013), which can serve as a useful lens to understand why some languages are preserved and others are gradually lost. The framework is based on the more general concept of linguistic ecology, proposed by Haugen (1972), which considers language as a component of a dynamic system influenced by its social context. In this approach, the usage of the language is not predetermined but is always under the influence of the interaction between speakers and the situations where they use the language.

In its simplest form, TEP states that speakers in multilingual contexts are given competing forces that affect how they choose to communicate in their daily interaction. These pressures are caused by two complementary factors, namely, individual motivations and the immediate surrounding sociolinguistic environment. On one hand, the options of speakers are determined by the personal interests of the speakers, such as their attitudes, beliefs, needs, and perceived benefits of a language. Alternatively, these decisions are predetermined by externalities like the speaker distribution, language use patterns across all domains, levels of proficiency, and the

nature of interactions in the community (Haugen, 1972). Collectively, these forces dictate the language that will prevail or gain favor in certain situations.

The framework especially considers several major indicators of language vitality, including the percentage of speakers in the entire population, the degree of intergenerational transmission, the language use patterns across all social spheres, and community attitudes towards the language. Once they become weak, the pressures will shift towards a dominant language, which may result in decreasing usage and even eventual language shift.

Within the framework of the current research on Chilisso, TEP provides a topical theoretical background in analyzing the current sociolinguistic change. Chilisso-speaking people are a community that lives in a multilingual society where Shina and Urdu have a dominant influence. By applying TEP, it is possible to examine how various pressures influence the language choices of speakers by examining the degree to which the language is passed on to younger generations and its use in various contexts, such as home, community, and workplace. It also enables the systematic study of the community attitudes towards Chilisso and other competing languages.

By introducing the analysis as being based on ecological pressures, this research can go beyond mere description to explain why changes in the use of language are taking place. Particularly, it assists in determining whether a decline in using Chilisso is influenced by inner or outer forces like the shift in attitudes and preferences as well as the prevalence of Shina and Urdu in education, administration, and overall communication. By so doing, TEP offers a systematic method to the process of learning the mechanism behind the language maintenance or shift in the Chilisso-speaking community.

Methodology

This study is based on the data collected from Chilisso speakers during the researchers' visit to Kohistan in 2024 and 2025. Currently, the Chilisso community (400-500 speakers) lives in scattered areas across Kohistan, and the majority is concentrated in a small village, Gujjar Banda.

It is difficult to access a large number of the community members in that village due to their constant seasonal migration. During summer, they migrate towards higher and colder areas; whereas, in winter, they move towards urban areas. Adopting a convenient sampling technique, the data for the study were collected from the speakers available in Gujjar Banda and Dasu. Sociolinguistic data were collected from 51 respondents belonging to different age groups through questionnaires. Mostly, the data were collected from the males as it was difficult to access females for data collection due to the community's cultural norms and values. The participants were divided into two groups according to their age: younger generation and older generation. All of them reported being bilingual in Chilisso and Shina (see Table 1), that is, the dominant languages on the east bank of the Indus. Almost every male also had medium to low proficiency in Urdu, which is the language of offices, education, and media.

Table 1: *Demographics of Participants*

Variable	Category	N
Age	15–30 (younger generation)	29
	31–75 (older generation)	22
Gender	Male	44
	Female	7
Residence	Gujjar Banda	12
	Dasu	39
Raised in language	Chilisso	6
	Shina	13
	Both	32
Education	Uneducated	26
	Primary	15
	Matric and above	10

Instrument

The data used in this research were gathered via a structured questionnaire based on the adaptations of Rubin (1968) and Choi (2005), previously used by Gomeshi (2019) in a similar sociolinguistic setup. The tool was created in the form of a structured questionnaire to record the patterns of Chilisso language use, frequency of interaction in Chilisso, and the attitudes of the people towards Chilisso in a systematic manner.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. In the first section, the details about the demographic and linguistic background of the participants were collected. Questions included:

- age, gender, residence, and proficiency in different languages.
- Participants' parents' language backgrounds and the language in which participants were raised.

The second section of the questionnaire was designed to collect data about use of Chilisso in different domains such as friends, home, job, market, mosque, and school.

Language use across different domains was measured using a five-point Likert scale reflecting the frequency of Chilisso use. Responses were coded as 1 = Always, 2 = Frequently, 3 = Half time, 4 = Sometimes, and 5 = Rarely. Consequently, lower mean scores indicate more frequent use of Chilisso, whereas higher mean scores indicate less frequent use. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were calculated for each domain and compared across younger (15–30 years) and older (above 30 years) respondents. Pearson's chi-square test was used to examine whether the distribution of responses differed significantly between the two age groups.

The last section of the questionnaire contained statements to measure attitudes toward Chilisso. The participants were given choices using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” Each statement is about a different aspect of language attitudes:

- Chilisso is embarrassing.
- Chilisso is important for employment opportunities.
- Chilisso is an important identity marker.
- Chilisso should be taught to the new generation.
- Chilisso is easy
- Shina is easy

These questions were included to understand community perceptions and emotional attachment toward the language.

Further, this section also covered two questions on self-assessment of Chilisso and Shina proficiency by the participants. These responses helped to understand the participants' perceptions about these languages and also the level of inter-generational transmission of Chilisso.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered in the field as part of the data collection process, through the Chilisso-speaking community. The questionnaire was written in Urdu and Chilisso so that the respondents could clearly understand the questionnaire. Where respondents were not fluent or proficient in Urdu, assistance was given through the Chilisso-speaking mediators.

The participants were contacted in various community settings, and the aim of the study was clarified to the participants prior to participation. There were attempts to make sure that all the questions, and especially those that concerned language use and attitudes, were clear to respondents. This strategy assisted in reducing misinterpretation and enabled the participants to answer more naturally in a language of their choice.

Results

The data were organized according to the age of the respondents, dividing them into the younger generation and older generation. The results are presented under two categories: personal language use patterns in different social domains and language attitudes and opinions. Data were analyzed quantitatively with the help of the software R, and percentages for each response of the questionnaires were calculated. Final results are presented in the form of bar charts and line graphs to address each research question.

Language Use in Different Domains

This section of results is based on the first two sections of the questionnaire that address the first research question:

RQ1: How does Chilisso language use vary in different domains across younger and older age groups in the Chilisso-speaking community?

Considering the importance of young people for the vitality of a language, the data were collected and analyzed based on the age group of the respondents. The questionnaire contained six social domains of Chilisso use: friends, home, job, market, mosque, school. The Chilisso-Shina bilingual participants were given choices ranging from always to never. Table 2 presents results of the frequency of use of Chilisso in

different domains. Among younger speakers, Chilisso use remains consistently low across domains (see Table 2).

Table 2: *Language Use in Different Domains among Younger Respondents (15-30 Years), n = 29*

Domain	Always n (%)	Frequently n (%)	Half Time n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Rarely n (%)	M	SD
Home	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (10.3)	11 (37.9)	15 (51.7)	4.41	0.68
Friends	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (37.9)	18 (62.1)	4.62	0.49
Workplace	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.4)	28 (96.6)	4.97	0.19
Market	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.4)	4 (13.8)	24 (82.8)	4.79	0.49
Mosque	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (17.2)	6 (20.7)	18 (62.1)	4.45	0.78
School	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	29 (100.0)	5.00	0.00

Note. The scale was coded as 1 = Always, 2 = Frequently, 3 = Half time, 4 = Sometimes, and 5 = Rarely. Higher mean scores indicate less frequent use of the language in the domain.

Data show Chilisso is used ‘sometimes’ in the home setting, which is slightly higher than other domains. At home, use of Chilisso is slightly higher but still restricted, while 51.7% use it rarely, and 10.3% about half the time (M=4.41, SD=0.68). It is evident that in the home domain, Chilisso is used marginally more than in other domains, but still not a dominant medium of communication.

While interacting with friends, the majority responded as using Chilisso rarely (62%), whereas 37.9% use it sometimes, and no one uses it frequently or regularly (M=4.62, SD=0.49). It indicates that Chilisso use is limited in informal interactions by the younger generation.

Chilisso is minimally used at the workplace. The majority (96.6%) reported they rarely use Chilisso, while only a few use it sometimes (3.4%). Likewise, in the market, the majority use it rarely (82.8%), while 13.8% use it sometimes (M=4.97, SD=0.19). The results suggest that Chilisso is mostly out of use in trade.

At mosques, Chilisso is also limited, where we have 20.7% responses as sometimes use, and 17.2% use it about half the time. However, the

majority 62.1%) of the younger generation responded that they rarely use Chilisso in mosques ($M=4.45$, $SD=0.78$).

In schools, 100% of responses indicate that they rarely use Chilisso in schools ($M=5$, $SD=0$). This highlights its lowest use in formal educational environments.

Overall, Chilisso is not a major medium of communication for the younger generation. It is rarely used informally and formally. The patterns reveal that the younger generation does not use Chilisso (see Table 3) frequently in their daily lives.

Table 3: *Language Use in Different Domains among Older Respondents (31 Years and Above), $n = 22$*

Domain	Always n (%)	Frequently n (%)	Half Time n (%)	Sometimes n (%)	Rarely n (%)	M	SD
Home	1 (4.5)	2 (9.1)	6 (27.3)	3 (13.6)	10 (45.5)	3.86	1.25
Friends	2 (9.1)	3 (13.6)	4 (18.2)	9 (40.9)	4 (18.2)	3.45	1.22
Market	0 (0.0)	1 (4.5)	1 (4.5)	2 (9.1)	18 (81.8)	4.68	0.78
Workplace	0 (0.0)	4 (19.0)	4 (19.0)	8 (38.1)	5 (23.8)	3.67	1.06
Mosque	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (22.7)	7 (31.8)	9 (40.5)	4.23	0.81
School	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	22 (100.0)	5.00	0.00

Note. Percentages are based on valid responses for each domain. The scale was coded as 1 = Always, 2 = Frequently, 3 = Half time, 4 = Sometimes, and 5 = Rarely.

In the home domain, the use of Chilisso is more balanced; however, it is not very strong. The data shows that 13.6% of people use it frequently. The largest groups are people who use Chilisso half the time, which is 27.3%, and those who hardly ever use it, which is 45.5%. ($M=3.86$, $SD=1.25$). This shows that Chilisso is still important in the home domain for the older generation.

With friends, Chilisso is used more compared to other areas of life. The results show 9.1 % of people always use Chilisso when they are with friends, and 13.6% use it frequently. Then there are 9% who use Chilisso sometimes and 4.5% who hardly ever use it ($M=3.45$, $SD=1.22$). This tells us that when Chilisso is used with friends, it still has a presence even if people do not use it all the time.

For markets, the use of Chilisso is very low. Most people, which is 81.8%, never use Chilisso when they are at the market. 9.1% use it sometimes, and a small group of 4.5% use it frequently ($M=4.68$, $SD=0.78$). This shows that when people are buying things, they do not use Chilisso. For jobs, the pattern of Chilisso use is mixed, as data shows that 19% of people use Chilisso frequently at work and another 19% use it half the time. Then there are 37.5% who use Chilisso sometimes and 23.8% who hardly ever use it ($M=3.67$, $SD=1.06$). This tells us that older people may still use Chilisso to some extent at work, but they do not use it all the time. One respondent did not answer this question, which means that Chilisso may not be used in all jobs.

For mosques, the use of Chilisso is a little higher, and 22.7% of people use it half of the time, 31.8% use it sometimes, and 40.5 86.4% hardly ever use Chilisso at the mosque ($M=4.23$, $SD=0.81$). Nobody uses Chilisso regularly or frequently at the mosque. This tells us that Chilisso is not used much in community settings. For schools, Chilisso is not used at all. All the people (100%) said that they never use Chilisso at school. This shows that Chilisso has no place in education.

Overall, older people use Chilisso more than young people, especially when they are with friends and at home. However, the use of Chilisso is not consistent. The use becomes much weaker in public places like markets and mosques and in formal settings, like schools. This tells us that while older people still use Chilisso to communicate with each other in informal settings, the use of Chilisso is already very limited in terms of where and how it is used. Chilisso is still used by people (see Table 4), but it is not used as much as it could be and its use is decreasing.

Table 4: *Comparison of Language Use in Different Domains by both Age Groups, n = 51*

Domain	Younger (n = 29) M ± SD	Older (n = 22) M ± SD	χ^2	df	P
Home	4.41 ± 0.68	3.86 ± 1.25	8.78	4	.067
Friends	4.62 ± 0.49	3.45 ± 1.22	17.48	4	.002**
Market	4.79 ± 0.49	4.68 ± 0.78	1.59	3	.661
School	5.00 ± 0.00	5.00 ± 0.00	—	—	—
Mosque	4.45 ± 0.78	4.23 ± 0.81	1.84	2	.398

Domain	Younger (n = 29) M ± SD	Older (n = 22) M ± SD	χ^2	df	P
Workplace	4.97 ± 0.19	3.67 ± 1.06	28.94	3	< .001***

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; χ^2 = chi-square. The chi-square values in this table were calculated from the frequency distributions shown in Tables 1 and 2 after excluding response categories with zero totals.

** p < .01. *** p < .001.

The results demonstrate limited use of Chilisso across all domains by younger people. The school domain shows (M = 5.00, SD = 0.00), indicating that all younger respondents reported rarely using the language at school. Likewise, for the results for workplace (M = 4.97, SD = 0.19), market (M = 4.79, SD = 0.49), friends (M = 4.62, SD = 0.49), mosque (M = 4.45, SD = 0.78), and home (M = 4.41, SD = 0.68). These results suggest that the younger generation uses Chilisso infrequently not only in public domains but also in informal and intimate contexts.

Less use of Chilisso is also demonstrated in older people's responses, although their mean scores were generally lower than those of the younger group. It shows a comparatively more frequent use of Chilisso among older respondents. The difference is especially visible in the friend domain, where older respondents had a lower mean score (M = 3.45, SD = 1.22) than younger respondents (M = 4.62, SD = 0.49). A similar difference is seen in the workplace domain, where older respondents reported more frequent use (M = 3.67, SD = 1.06) than younger respondents (M = 4.97, SD = 0.19). In the home domain, older respondents also showed somewhat more frequent use (M = 3.86, SD = 1.25) compared with younger respondents (M = 4.41, SD = 0.68), although this difference was not statistically significant.

The chi-square results show statistically significant differences between the two age groups in two domains. The difference in language use with friends was significant, $\chi^2(4) = 17.48$, $p = .002$, indicating that younger and older respondents differ strongly in their patterns of language use in peer interaction. The workplace domain also showed a highly significant difference, $\chi^2(3) = 28.94$, $p < .001$, suggesting that age group is strongly associated with language use in work-related contexts. In both cases, the older group reported more frequent use than the younger group.

The remaining domains did not show statistically significant differences. Language use at home approached significance, $\chi^2(4) = 8.78$, $p = .067$, but did not reach the conventional .05 level. Market use, $\chi^2(3) = 1.59$, $p = .661$, and mosque use, $\chi^2(2) = 1.84$, $p = .398$, showed no significant age-based differences. The school domain could not be tested because both groups gave identical responses, with all respondents reporting rare use.

The results indicate generally low use of the language across all domains, especially among younger respondents. Younger participants reported rare use of the language in school, workplace, market, friends, mosque, and home domains, as reflected in high mean scores across all domains. Older respondents also reported limited use, but their comparatively lower mean scores suggest that they use the language more frequently than younger respondents in some contexts. The chi-square test showed significant age-based differences in the friend domain, $\chi^2(4) = 17.48$, $p = .002$, and the workplace domain, $\chi^2(3) = 28.94$, $p < .001$. These findings reveal generational differences more clearly in communication with friends and workplace communication. In the home, market, or mosque domains, we do not see any significant difference among younger and older groups. Overall, the findings point to restricted use of the language across domains, where younger speakers use Chilisso less than older people, which is an indication of the ongoing intergenerational language shift.

Language Attitudes

This section presents results based on the third section of the questionnaire. It addresses the second research question of the study:

RQ2: What are the attitudes of speakers towards Chilisso that cause maintenance or shift to Shina across younger and older age groups in the Chilisso-speaking community?

The questionnaire contained questions about the attitudes of Chilisso speakers towards Chilisso. It also contained questions about proficiency in Shina and Chilisso (see Table 5). The data were analyzed for the younger generation and older generation.

Table 5 presents results on language attitudes towards Chilisso of the younger generation.

Table 5: *Language Attitudes of Younger Respondents (15-30 Years), n = 29*

Variable	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		M	SD
	N	%	n	%	N	%	n	%	n	%		
Chilisso embarrassing	5	17.2	14	48.3	5	17.2	4	13.8	1	3.4	2.38	1.05
Chilisso identity marker	0	0.0	9	31.0	9	31.0	11	37.9	0	0.0	3.07	0.84
Chilisso useful for job	1	3.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	13.8	24	82.8	4.72	0.80
Chilisso should be taught	1	3.4	7	24.1	11	37.9	8	27.6	2	6.9	3.10	0.98
Shina is easy	27	93.1	2	6.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.07	0.26
Chilisso is easy	2	6.9	10	34.5	6	20.7	9	31.0	2	6.9	2.97	1.12

Note. Responses scale was coded from 1 = Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree.

For the question about using Chilisso being embarrassing, answers are skewed towards agreement, and 65.5% agree or strongly agree, while 13.8% disagree or strongly disagree and 17.2% are neutral. This is an indication that a significant percentage of younger speakers actually do associate Chilisso with embarrassment.

In the case of considering Chilisso as an identity marker, the attitudes are mixed, albeit leaning towards the negative. About 31% agree, 31% are neutral, and 37.9% disagree. The lack of a high rate of agreement shows that Chilisso is not always considered a powerful identity marker among younger speakers.

In the case of the importance of employment (job), the trend is quite evident, where 85.7% strongly disagree, and 11.4% disagree, with a very small fraction (2.86%) strongly agreeing. This indicates that younger speakers do not attribute economic or professional significance to Chilisso.

Lastly, for teaching Chilisso to the next generation, attitudes are mixed and a bit hesitant. The support of teaching is 27.5%, and the opposition is 34.5%. The neutrality is 37.9%. This implies that even among the younger speakers, there is no solid agreement towards actively passing the language to the other generation.

In the case of speaking proficiency in Shina, there is a very strong and uniform pattern. All the respondents are highly proficient, with 91.4% strongly agreeing and 8.57% agreeing. This verifies that Shina is strongly prevailing in regard to competency. In the case of speaking proficiency in Chilisso, reactions are rather split. Approximately 37.1% of them agree or strongly agree that they are proficient, with 20% of them being neutral. A higher proportion (about 42.9) does not agree or strongly agree that they are proficient, with 20% of them remaining neutral. This means that there is a lack of balance in the perceived competence of oneself, which is quite surprising since younger speakers are usually anticipated to have a stronger command.

In general, positive attachment levels to Chilisso (see Table 6) are weaker in the younger generation as compared to what would be expected. It has a certain degree of embarrassment, a lack of understanding of the value of the identity, a reduced perception of economic usefulness, and a divided opinion regarding teaching. This, together with a skewed self-reported proficiency, indicates a language that is not just losing functional domains, but also experiencing a loss in confidence and support even among younger speakers.

Table 6 presents results of attitude towards Chilisso of the older respondents. Mostly, the older generation, on the issue of whether it is embarrassing, do not support this claim.

Table 6: *Language attitudes of older respondents (31 years and above)*

Variable	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		M	SD
	n	%	n	%	N	%	N	%	n	%		
Shina easy	19	86.4	2	9.1	1	4.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	1.18	0.50
Chilisso easy	8	36.4	3	13.6	6	27.3	4	18.2	1	4.5	2.41	1.30
Chilisso embarrassing	1	4.5	3	13.6	7	31.8	5	22.7	6	27.3	3.55	1.18

Chilisso identity marker	8	36. 4	3	13. 6	4	18. 2	5	22. 7	2	9.1	2.5 5	1.4 4
Chilisso useful for job	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	9.1	20	90. 9	4.9 1	0.2 9
Chilisso should be taught	3	13. 6	7	31. 8	4	18. 2	4	18. 2	4	18. 2	2.9 5	1.3 6

Note. Responses were coded on a scale: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree.

The percentage of strongly disagree and disagree is 37.5% and 12.5%, respectively, with only 18.8% in agreement that it is embarrassing. This means that Chilisso is not usually perceived negatively by the older generation.

Attitudes are more positive in terms of identity. Half of the respondents strongly agree and agree (36.4% & 13.6% respectively) that Chilisso is a part of their identity. Even though a large portion of the population (31.8%) disagrees, the general trend is that a large number of old speakers still identify the language as their identity. However, its perceived economic value is very low. A huge majority, 90.9%, strongly disagree that Chilisso is useful in employment, and a majority of 9.1% also disagree. This indicates a strong unity of the view that the language does not help secure employment.

Self-reported competence is a mixed-field. Although half of the respondents strongly agree and the rest only agree that they speak Chilisso well, only a small proportion disagreed, with the rest remaining neutral. This implies a lack of confidence and competence in older speakers.

Contrarily, Shina presents very good results over time. The percentage who strongly agree and agree that they speak it well is about 86.4% and 9.1%, respectively, with almost no opposition. It proves that Shina is the language that older speakers consider themselves most fluent in.

There are mixed views on whether Chilisso should be imparted to the coming generations or not.

Approximately half of them do not support its transmission (13.6% strongly disagree & 31.8% disagree), but almost 32.4% are those who support transmission. This disunity indicates that there is doubt about the future of the language.

On the whole, older individuals do not consider Chilisso something embarrassing and tend to associate it with who they are. Simultaneously, they do not have much practical value in it, report mixed levels of proficiency, and are divided on its transmission. This union indicates that, although Chilisso continues to play a symbolic role (see Table 7), its survival in the long term is not guaranteed.

Table7: *Language attitudes of both age groups (n=51)*

Variable	Group	Strongly agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly disagree n (%)	M	SD	χ^2	df	p
Shina easy	Younger	27 (93.1)	2 (6.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1.07	0.26	1.46	2	.482
	Older	19 (86.4)	2 (9.1)	1 (4.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1.18	0.50			
Chilisso easy	Younger	2 (6.9)	10 (34.5)	6 (20.7)	9 (31.0)	2 (6.9)	2.97	1.12	8.83	4	.065
	Older	8 (36.4)	3 (13.6)	6 (27.3)	4 (18.2)	1 (4.5)	2.41	1.30			
Chilisso embarrassing	Younger	5 (17.2)	14 (48.3)	5 (17.2)	4 (13.8)	1 (3.4)	2.38	1.05	13.09	4	.011
	Older	1 (4.5)	3 (13.6)	7 (31.8)	5 (22.7)	6 (27.3)	3.55	1.18			
Chilisso useful for job	Younger	1 (3.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (13.8)	24 (82.8)	4.72	0.80	1.09	2	.580
	Older	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (9.1)	20 (90.9)	4.91	0.29			
Chilisso should be taught	Younger	1 (3.4)	7 (24.1)	11 (37.9)	8 (27.6)	2 (6.9)	3.10	0.98	5.41	4	.248
	Older	3 (13.6)	7 (31.8)	4 (18.2)	4 (18.2)	4 (18.2)	2.95	1.36			
Chilisso identity marker	Younger	0 (0.0)	9 (31.0)	9 (31.0)	11 (37.9)	0 (0.0)	3.07	0.84	16.52	4	.002
	Older	8 (36.4)	3 (13.6)	4 (18.2)	5 (22.7)	2 (9.1)	2.55	1.44			

The chi-square test of independence was used to examine whether younger and older respondents differed significantly in their response patterns for each language attitude item. In this analysis, a p-value below .05 indicates that age group and response pattern are significantly associated.

The results show that three attitude variables had statistically significant differences between younger and older respondents.

For “Chilisso embarrassing,” the difference between age groups was significant, $\chi^2(4) = 13.09$, $p = .011$. Younger respondents were more likely to agree that Chilisso is embarrassing, while older respondents were more likely to disagree or strongly disagree. This suggests a clear generational difference in attitudes toward the prestige or social image of Chilisso.

For “Chilisso identity marker,” the difference was also significant, $\chi^2(4) = 16.52$, $p = .002$. Older respondents showed stronger agreement that Chilisso is an identity marker, whereas younger respondents were more neutral or disagreed. This indicates that older speakers attach stronger symbolic and cultural value to Chilisso than the younger generation.

For “Chilisso easy,” the result was close to significance but did not reach the conventional .05 level, $\chi^2(4) = 8.83$, $p = .065$. This means that younger and older respondents showed some difference in their views, but the difference is not statistically strong enough to be reported as significant.

The other variables were not statistically significant. “Shina easy” showed no significant difference between age groups, $\chi^2(2) = 1.46$, $p = .482$. “Chilisso useful for job” was also not significant, $\chi^2(2) = 1.09$, $p = .580$. “Chilisso should be taught” was not significant either, $\chi^2(4) = 5.41$, $p = .248$. These findings suggest that the two age groups have broadly similar response patterns for these items.

Discussion

This study suggests that the Chilisso language is indeed being replaced by the Shina language by the Chilisso-speaking community. It is reflected in the distribution of language and users' attitudes, as well as in the self-reported language proficiency. The findings point to a significant decline in the functional strength of Chilisso and the emergence of Shina as the language of everyday regional language in use. The observations in the present study corroborate those of Hallberg (1992) and Liljegren and

Akhunzada (2017), which noted that the Chilisso community is moving towards Shina.

The present results, however, also raise questions about Hallberg's (1992) suggestion that the community has not lost faith in the value of Chilisso because of the transition. The findings indicate that the value of Chilisso is now restricted and erratic. There are limited connections between Chilisso and employment, income, education, and social mobility generally. This means that Chilisso can still be of symbolic and cultural significance to some of its speakers, especially to the elderly speakers; however, it has little, if any, material and socioeconomic value in the existing linguistic ecology. Urdu is seen as associated with schooling, literacy, media, and institutional mobility, while in contrast to that, Shina is seen to be more useful in regional interaction.

The results of the identity component are a sociolinguistic paradox. Chilisso is still a marker for some of the older respondents. But this symbolic bond is not always manifested in the actual use of language. They may feel good about the value of Chilisso in an emotional sense, but may find themselves more proficient in speaking Shina, or may not be confident they will be able to teach the next generation Chilisso. This pattern reinforces one of the conclusions drawn in the study by Rusdiansyah et al. (2024), that associating language to identity does not correspond to the language use pattern and transmission.

The younger speakers are particularly crucial for language vitality. Intergenerational transmission of Chilisso is getting weaker, as younger respondents indicated less use of the language and lower proficiency than their older counterparts. The study by Gomashie (2022) of Nahuatl and Spanish bilingual youth is relevant here since its findings indicate that bilingual youth can have positive attitudes towards a heritage language and use it in only a few domains, primarily with older members of their families. Likewise, the results of the Chilisso study indicate that positive attitudes are not enough to guarantee the maintenance of languages. For Chilisso to sustain itself, the use of the language has to be active and confident among younger people in their daily communications.

Chilisso's reported embarrassment in being spoken by younger speakers should be viewed in the context of the unequal prestige relations between languages. If the language is not used in the schools, markets, offices, media, or formal communication, younger users might start to relate the language to low status or low opportunity. They are by no means rejecting Chilisso from their identity; it does not mean they do not have any identity whatsoever. Instead, it demonstrates the possibility of a coexistence of

pride and insecurity. A speaker might be culturally attached to the use of Chilisso but not in public settings due to the presence of social capital associated with Shina and Urdu. For language maintenance, actual language use is vital along with positive attitudes (Kircher et al., 24).

Shina is a key player in this process. It serves as a regional lingua franca and has the value of being used in friendships, in the marketplace, when traveling, at work, and with speakers from other communities. Thus, it is not just a preference for a different language that is driving the transition towards Shina. It represents the need for the practical aspects of a multilingual environment in which Shina offers wider communication and geographical recognition. The pressure is further compounded by Urdu, as it is associated with education, educational attainment, administration, media, and mobility formally. Consequently, Chilisso has become endangered due to low prestige, less economic value, and lack of institutional support. Similar findings were reported in a study by Dai & Wang (2026), which outlines factors such as rapid intergenerational shift, Mandarin-centered education, occupational change, and stigmatization of the language as responsible for the endangerment of the Tanka language.

However, as there is uncertainty about teaching Chilisso to the next generation, this also points to weakening language maintenance. Intergenerational transmission is recognized as an important factor for language vitality. Crystal (2000) points out that when the transmission of a language to younger generations is inhibited, the language becomes endangered; and Grenoble & Whaley (2006) stress the importance of children and young people continuing to learn and use the language for language maintenance. The current study indicates that the younger speakers' lower level of proficiency and lower frequency of use of Chilisso may mean that the language is not being passed on as effectively within the home and community.

The findings can be interpreted using the Theory of Ecology of Pressures (TEP) that describes language shift as being caused by competing pressures within a multilingual ecology (Terborg, 2006; Terborg & Landa, 2013). For Chilisso, these pressures are a small speaker population, low intergenerational transmission, low prestige, and lack of institutional support. But the pressures in the Chilisso case are not independent, either. Urdu pressure is generated in the institutional sphere and in the context of education, literacy, and the official sphere, whereas Shina pressure is generated in the local and regional sphere in everyday communication.

The Chilisso speakers are a significant ecological pressure, being a very small population. The number of speakers is low, less than 1,000, making opportunities for its use, transmission, and development into new domains scarce. The problem of young speakers being less proficient in the language is aggravated by the growing use of Shina in everyday life by younger speakers. Another key determinant is prestige hierarchy. Because Chilisso is not tied to economic opportunity, education, or social mobility, it may be less commonly spoken than other languages that are more practical. In TEP terms, this is an illustration of the impact of low socioeconomic value on the vitality of a language.

The Chilisso case also helps to broaden discussion about language shift in isolated mountain communities. This transformation seems not to be solely due to migration to and within urban areas. Instead, contemporary integration, such as through road systems, education, the media, cell phones, markets, and regional transportation, has transformed the community's linguistic landscape. This demonstrates that language change may take place even if the community continues to live in its traditional place, as broader social and economic factors come into the community and alter the value of languages.

In general, the results indicate an advanced stage of the Chilisso language shift. Despite its symbolic and cultural importance, speakers associate less instrumental value with Chilisso; therefore, it does not meet the requirements for language maintenance. It only has a small number of functional domains, low prestige, weak transmission to younger speakers, and almost no institutional support.

Conclusion

This study has shown that Chilisso is undergoing a serious decline in functional vitality, with Shina increasingly occupying everyday social domains and Urdu dominating formal and institutional spaces. While Chilisso still carries symbolic value as a marker of ethnic identity, its reduced use among younger speakers, weak intergenerational transmission, low socioeconomic value, and lack of institutional support indicate that it is moving toward a restricted heritage-language status. Viewed through the Theory of Ecology of Pressures, the shift is not the result of a single cause, but of interacting demographic, economic, educational, and prestige-based pressures that reshape language choices within the community.

The significance of this study extends beyond the Chilisso-speaking community. Theoretically, it contributes to research on language shift by

showing how small mountain languages may decline even without large-scale urban migration, as modern schooling, regional mobility, markets, and institutional hierarchies introduce new pressures into local linguistic ecologies. In this way, the study adds to the application of TEP by demonstrating how regional and national languages can exert different but overlapping pressures on a minority language. For the areal linguistics of northern Pakistan, the study provides empirical evidence from an under-researched speech community and adds to existing scholarship on language maintenance, multilingualism, and ethnolinguistic vitality in the region. Practically, the findings are relevant for endangered language documentation and language policy planning, as they highlight the urgent need to document Chilisso and to consider community-based measures that can strengthen its use among younger speakers.

Future research should move beyond general descriptions of language use and examine the social mechanisms that shape language choice more directly. A mixed-methods approach would be particularly useful, combining a larger quantitative survey with qualitative ethnographic interviews, family language-use observations, and focus-group discussions with younger speakers, parents, and elders. Such research could identify how economic aspirations, education, mobility, and peer-group pressure affect language choices in specific domains. Matched-guise or verbal-guise experiments may also help uncover hidden attitudes toward Chilisso, Shina, and Urdu, especially where speakers publicly express symbolic pride but avoid using Chilisso in practice. These methods would provide a deeper understanding of both visible language behavior and latent language ideologies within the community.

The future of Chilisso will depend largely on whether the language can regain relevance among younger speakers and expand beyond symbolic identity into active everyday use. Documentation, intergenerational transmission, and community-led revitalization efforts are therefore essential. Without such measures, Chilisso may continue to lose communicative functions and survive only as a cultural emblem rather than as a living community language.

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