

The Textual Tapestry of Postcolonial Identity: A Corpus-Assisted Approach to Urdu-English Code-Switching and Lexical Innovation in Modern Pakistani Fiction

Kainat¹, M. K. Abbas Ismail², Syed Hamza Abbas³ and Asma Iqbal⁴

Abstract

This study uses corpus-assisted postcolonial stylistic analysis of Mohsin Hamid's Urdu-English code-switching novels *Moth Smoke* (2000) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) to examine Pakistani postcolonial identity's socio-cultural creation and negotiation. This study examines the linguistic structures that underlie postcolonial resistance to Western cultural hegemony by utilizing hybridity, specifically Homi K. Bhabha's "Third Space," along with sociolinguistic models of language alternation, including Shana Poplack's typology and Carol Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model. Using a specially developed micro-corpus of the two novels, this study records the frequency, morphosyntactic classification, contextual semantics, and text occurrences of culturally laden terms like *yaar*, *dadi*, *chacha*, *saab*, *lota*, *shalwar*, *kurta*, *jalebis*, and regional toponyms. In *Moth Smoke*, the use of widespread intra-sentential switching and kinship honourifics indicates stratified socio-economic hierarchies in Lahore during 1998. In post-9/11 *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, highly chosen, untranslated cultural nouns and food-related lexical items subvert the Western gaze tactically and ironically. The results indicate that code-switching is a well-structured, rule-governed, and intentional aesthetic technique that decentralises the SBE and renders Pakistani English a distinct and sovereign version of English. This research concludes that the bilingual narrative tapestry offers a venue for language decolonisation, where postcolonial writers can attain cultural agency and express the difficulties of a hyphenated diasporic life in a polarised world.

Keywords: Postcolonial Stylistics, Corpus-Assisted Analysis, Urdu-English Code-Switching, Lexical Innovation, Hybridity, Third Space, Mohsin Hamid, Pakistani English Fiction

¹⁻²⁻³⁻⁴Department of English, University of Okara – Pakistan

Introduction

The spread of English around the world has resulted in different institutionalised varieties of English, shaped by the dominant culture, political and historical considerations of the country or region in which they are used. However, in the context of World Englishes, Pakistani English has emerged as an independent and norm-building variety of English with its innovations in morphology/syntax and lexicon (Rahman, 2020). English, as a tool of colonialism in the Indian subcontinent, has now become a language of the state, whose official language is Urdu, as well as the various other vernacular languages of the region. This ongoing linguistic interaction has given rise to a dynamic bilingual environment where the use of two languages is not only a common communicative style but also a symbol of social status, level of education, and hybrid identity (Kachru, 1986).

Postcolonial literature serves as a key site for negotiating the aesthetic and political conflicts between imperial language and vernacular. Postcolonial writers often use the strategies of abrogation and appropriation to de-centre English from its Eurocentric origins and place it in the local landscape. The goal is to cast their own cultural imaginary into the native soil (Ashcroft et al., 1989). Appropriation is the adaptation of language to mirror local sensibilities, idioms and social realities. Abrogation is a refusal of any authority over prescriptive grammatical and lexical patterns in standard British English. The postcolonial writer uses the strategy of untranslated native terms, transliterated borrowings, and hybrid compounds to position himself or herself at a respectable distance from the reader's centre, even as he or she asserts his or her sovereignty as a national voice (Ahmad & Ali, 2014).

Pakistani author Mohsin Hamid is one of the most important voices of the modern Anglophone era, and his writing style is very similar to these cross-linguistic practices. *Moth Smoke* (2000) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) are masterpieces of Pakistani English literature written with localised lexicon and code-switching that show the complex and multi-faceted social setting of urban Pakistan. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, an extended monodrama, tells the story of a Pakistani Princeton graduate who recounts to an ambivalent America the stark class divisions and moral degradation of Lahore's elite and middle classes in the nervy summer of 1998, during Pakistan's nuclear tests. A critical and empirical study of these two texts can provide a useful lens for understanding psychological tensions, socio-economic divisions, and geopolitical resistance in an increasingly polarised global context, as expressed in Urdu.

Although several studies have been conducted exploring the thematic and political aspects of Mohsin Hamid's fiction, especially in the context of class warfare, fundamentalism, and diasporic identity, few empirical studies have been conducted systematically, on a corpus basis, in order to examine the model and operations of code-switching and lexical innovations from a morphosyntactic and sociolinguistic perspective. Existing literary criticisms usually engage with the issues of hybridity and cultural dislocation in a broad qualitative discourse without providing quantitative and structural analysis of the Urdu lexis in the texts. To fill this empirical gap, a special microcorpus called *Moth Smoke* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* has been created to systematically extract, categorize, and analyze Urdu-to-English code-switching expressions and transliterated borrowings. The present study aims to understand how a postcolonial writer creates a hybrid linguistic space that highlights the differences between Western and Pakistani identities by examining the frequencies, morphosyntactic categories, and contextual meanings of these localized insertions.

The study is important because it is the first study to provide an empirical link between quantitative corpus linguistics and qualitative postcolonial literary analysis, which indicates that code switching is not a linguistic corruption but a highly structured and rule-governed aesthetic device. By systematically integrating Urdu words into English syntax, this research makes a valuable contribution to the scholarly discussion of World English and postcolonial stylistics, as it endeavours to establish the independent linguistic identity of Pakistani English. Furthermore, this inquiry offers a meticulous analysis of Mohsin Hamid's narrative strategies that shift from the 'local' dynamics of class in pre-9/11 Lahore to the 'global' politically charged subversion of the imperial gaze in a post-9/11 context.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study is limited to two of his novels that are considered Mohsin Hamid's most significant, namely *Moth Smoke* (2000) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), and subjected to close reading and textual micro-corpus analysis. It focuses on the list of core terms assigned by the supervisor. Similar Urdu roots, transliterated, and culturally specific terms are present in the selected texts. The limitation of this research is the texts used in this study are only available in digital form. There may be slight variation in the page numbers based on the different editions published by its publishers. However, every effort was made to cite page numbers and quotations

from the texts used in this study accurately. However, the study is restricted to the written mode of Anglophone Pakistani fiction and therefore does not incorporate phonological and acoustic variations found in natural oral discourse during code-switching.

Review of the Literature

To complete a critical study of language in postcolonial writings, one must be aware of the intertwining of colonial histories, globalisation, and local traditions as they influence existing identities (Bhabha, 1994). Postcolonial theory has argued that language is one of the most important, if not the most important, ways in which the power of the colonial centre is resisted and challenged (Ashcroft et al., 1989). The authors argue that decolonisation involves a double movement: first the abolition of the colonisers' language as their sole authority, and second, the appropriation of that same language, which can now express the experiences of culturally diverse people. In Anglophone Pakistani fiction, the English language is not merely a colonial legacy; it was creatively and actively negotiated to create a separate national and cultural space (Ahmad & Ali, 2014).

A number of prominent scholars have widely documented the nativisation of English in Pakistan from structural and sociolinguistic perspectives. Braj Kachru's pioneering work on World Englishes has shown that English is systematically modified when introduced into a foreign context, acquiring the phonological, morphosyntactic and lexical features of the indigenous languages (Kachru, 1986). In Pakistan, Tariq Rahman has shown that Pakistani English is an independent variety with its own grammatical and lexical systems and developing norms (Rahman, 2020). Rahman adds that Urdu loanwords and regional turns of phrase are a natural outcome of Pakistan's bilingual ecology and serve to reconcile Western forms with the cultural realities of South Asia. This process of Urduisation is not random but is governed by rules and regulations which strengthen the communication and social identity of the nation (Asgher et al., 2024).

In the past, the use of indigenous words was considered a deviation from the language. Today, in research, it is understood as a linguistic expression of self-determination. The first phase of the incorporation of Urdu words into the local English can be traced back to the early colonial administrative and legal usage, and the second to the use of culturally descriptive words not translated in the literary

texts (Baumgardner, 1993). When authors do not suggest an alternative translation of local terms, they practise a "foreignisation" strategy to maintain the postcolonial text's cultural distance from the European reader. The aim is to ensure that the local knowledge is not reduced and domesticated but preserves the ontological and epistemological dimensions of South Asian societies.

Code switching and code mixing in literature are very highly sophisticated stylistic tools and are not just decoration (Sultana et al., 2012). Shana Poplack (1980) identified three major types of code-switching: inter-sentential, intra-sentential switching and tag-switching (the insertion of a single-word tag or interjection into a sentence or clause). The Markedness Model and Matrix Language Frame, presented by Carol Myers-Scotton (1993), explain how speakers/writers choose the linguistic code to signal social alignment, group solidarity or cultural distance and provide elegant details of these linguistic changes. A move from the language of the matrix (English) to an embedded language (Urdu) in bilingual literature is a conscious and observable choice that registers the cultural specificity of the story and its resistance to absorption in the global language.

Postcolonial notions of hybridity and the Third Space theorise this tension between natives and foreigners (Bhabha, 1994). Cultural identities are never fixed but are constructed in a liminal, fluid third space that arises from historical contact between the coloniser and the colonised. In this hybrid zone the postcolonial subject plays out a subversive mimicry that appears to mimic colonial authority but, at the same time, contests and undermines the authority. The mix of Urdu and English in contemporary Pakistani fiction is a linguistic third space where the binary opposition of the colonial era is dismantled and a multi-layered identity is constructed, which is neither completely Western nor traditional but rather both.

In Mohsin Hamid's debut novel, *Moth Smoke* (2000), recent years have seen research into linguistic choice and the psychological and socio-economic crisis in the context of Lahore in contemporary times (Zulfiqar, 2024). Employing the lens of social identity theory, researchers show how the protagonist, Darashikoh Daru's language choices reveal his changing class identity and his inner experience of social exclusion. Daru's growing use of Urdu slang and slang from the drug scene signifies his loss of effective communication and indicates his diminishing connection to the elite he tries to emulate. *Moth Smoke* is designed to challenge the cultural hegemony of colonial discourses and to discover a voice for the lived experiences of

the local (Hanif, 2026). Such linguistic misdeeds realistically and powerfully illustrate the socio-economic conflicts and class division of the city of Pakistan.

In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), the novelist's attention has been directed at the novel's unique formal structure and language in opposition to the imperial gaze of the West in a very politically charged way. The story is written as an extended dramatic monologue and is propelled entirely by the polite, formal, but also very ironic voice of the main character, Changez. The findings of the current study indicate that the novel's characterisation of code-switching shows Hamid's use of tag switching and culturally selective nouns to convey group identity and cultural solidarity in response to discriminatory acts against others following the 9/11 attacks (Qayyum et al., 2024). Hamid also creates a strategy of "foreignization" by omitting words associated with the local culture of food and dress, as well as local etiquette, which means that the reader in the West must engage with a culture that is not being absorbed and standardised.

Methodology

The study of the structural and thematic hybridisation of contemporary Pakistani fiction needs an empirical methodology that is both quantitative in its precision (corpus linguistics) and qualitative in its depth (postcolonial literary theory). The present study employs a postcolonial, corpus-assisted stylistic research design to systematically investigate the incidence, identification, classification, and evaluation of code-switching phenomena and lexical innovations in Mohsin Hamid's Urdu texts, *Moth Smoke* (2000) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007). In this study, the literary works are considered a specialised raw-text microcorpus, and computational text-retrieval tools are employed to extract lexical tokens and absolute frequencies and generate concordance lines (Ahmad & Ali, 2014). The data-driven approach makes the next step a qualitative analysis based on real and valid textual evidence, not impressionistic generalisations, as one often finds in a purely qualitative literary analysis.

The compilation of the micro-corpus involved the digitisation and formatting of all the novels in their entirety into raw-text files and the processing of the raw-text files for systematic queries. All concordance lines and page numbers used in this study are from the Granta (2000) edition of *Moth Smoke* and the Hamish Hamilton (2007) edition of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, which scholars believe to be most

accurate. The main search words were the words given by the supervisor. These included kinship terms such as *aba*, *ami*, *apa*, *dadi*, *aunty*, *baji*, *chacha*, *saab* and *yaar*; religious or customary terms such as *Allah*, *Quran*, *shalwar* and *dupatta*; and regional toponyms such as *Urdu*, *Pathan*, *Muhajir*, *Karachi*, *Lahore*, *Islamabad*, *Peshawar*, *Punjab* and *Pakistan*.

A manual search was also made to look for emergent, equivalent Urdu-origin word combinations, transliterated borrowings and hybrid compounds that actually appear in the novels. These included *andhi*, *bhai*, *banyan*, *poondi*, *halva poori*, *fundo*, *rickshaw*, *paan*, *charas*, *qawali*, *jalebis*, *kebab*, *tikka*, *saris* and *jenaab*.

The tokens found were systematically recorded in structured tables, including their precise occurrence in the text, their grammatical category, their absolute frequency in the text, their semantic meaning in the text context, their precise page number and the text's precise context. For the structural classification of the code-switched instances, the structural typology of code-switching was used (Poplack, 1980). It classifies the code-switched instances by their position in a sentence or in a clause. The lexical borrowings that did not break the syntactic frame of the English sentence were then classified by the semantic domain of the borrowed word in order to show how specific lexical categories are used to fulfil different social/cultural functions in the narrative.

Theoretical Framework

Qualitative analysis of the findings is informed by postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha's theoretical constructs of hybridity, mimicry and Third Space (Bhabha, 1994). According to Bhabha's theorisation, identity is never a fixed, stable object but a dynamic, processual one that takes place in the "in-betweens" of cultures. The hybrid subject's use of language is an active site of resistance in claiming him/herself, challenging colonial authority from within through mimicry.

Moreover, the Markedness Model and the Matrix Language Frame of Carol Myers-Scotton (1993) are used to analyse the why-grammatical and why-social explanations of language choices. In this model, English is the dominant matrix language, which controls the morphosyntactic structure of the text, and Urdu is the embedded language, which supplies the lexical items with cultural resonance. The narrator or characters interpret switches between these codes as deliberate and

meaningful social relationships, class positions, psychological survival strategies, or geopolitical resistances.

Data Analysis

In his novels *Moth Smoke* (2000) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) Mohsin Hamid uses a corpus method that has exposed a highly selective distribution of lexical items of Urdu origin and code-switching expressions, as well as a structurally deliberate placement of the items. The quantitative data shows that some of the target words are very frequent and some are not found at all. This indicates that Hamid does not use the insertion of codes randomly or excessively but rather uses them to achieve certain narrative, stylistic and political effects (Qayyum et al., 2024).

Results

The following four tables present the systematic frequency distributions, morphosyntactic categorizations, and overall page ranges for the Urduized expressions that actually occur within *Moth Smoke* (2000) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), as verified by comparative corpus typologies (Sultana et al., 2012).

Table 4.1.1: Kinship Terms, Vocatives, and Social Honorifics.

Word (Spelling in Text)	Morphosyntactic Category	Frequency in Moth Smoke	Frequency in TRF	Page Range (Moth Smoke)	Contextual Semantic Meaning
yaar	Tag-switching (Colloquial Address)	12	0	pp. 11-107	Pal, colloquial term of peer address
dadi	Noun (Kinship Honorific)	4	0	pp. 65-70	Paternal grandmother
chacha (Fatty Chacha)	Noun phrase (Kinship Honorific)	5	0	pp. 65-70	Paternal uncle
saab	Noun/Suffix (Respectful address)	6	0	pp. 19-118	Sir, honorific suffix

bhai (<i>Daru bhai</i>)	Noun/Suffix (Respectful address)	2	0	pp. 67-111	Older brother, respectful term
phoppo	Noun (Kinship Honorific)	2	0	p. 66	Paternal aunt
jenaab	Noun/Honorific (Respectful address)	0	1	N/A	Sir, formal polite address

Note. Kinship terms and vocatives serve as high-frequency markers of relational solidarity and socio-economic hierarchy within the narratives. The frequent occurrence of yaar (12 times) and saab (6 times) in Moth Smoke highlights the localized class dynamics and interpersonal networks of urban Lahore, whereas jenaab represents the formal, distance-marking politeness used to construct the dramatic monologue of The Reluctant Fundamentalist.

Table 4.1.2: Attire, Material Culture, and Customary Objects.

Word (Spelling in Text)	Morphosyntactic Category	Frequency in <i>Moth Smoke</i>	Frequency in TRF	Page Range (<i>Moth Smoke</i>)	Contextual Semantic Meaning
lota	Noun (Cultural object)	1	0	p. 27	Water vessel for hygiene
shalwar	Noun (Item of clothing)	2	0	pp. 48-115	Traditional loose trousers
kurta	Noun (Item of clothing)	2	2	pp. 48-49	Traditional loose collarless shirt
saris	Noun (Item of clothing)	0	1	N/A	Traditional draped female garment
shawl	Noun (Item of clothing)	0	1	N/A	Loose outer garment worn over shoulders
banyan	Noun (Botanical term)	4	0	pp. 20-119	Sprawling South Asian banyan tree

rickshaw	Noun (Transportation term)	2	0	pp. 46-48	Motorized three-wheeled taxi
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Note: Items of attire and customary objects are deployed as physical markers of postcolonial hybridity and cultural difference. Terms such as kurta and shalwar are deliberately preserved without translation to resist Western linguistic homogenization, effectively foreignizing the narrative space and asserting a distinct, sovereign South Asian material reality.

Table 4.1.3: Gastronomic and Culinary Expressions

Word (Spelling in Text)	Morphosyntactic Category	Frequency in <i>Moth Smoke</i>	Frequency in TRF	Page Range (<i>Moth Smoke</i>)	Contextual Semantic Meaning
halva poori	Noun phrase (Culinary term)	1	0	p. 108	Sweet/savory breakfast dish
jalebis	Noun (Culinary term)	0	2	N/A	Pretzel-like sweet soaked in syrup
kebab	Noun (Culinary term)	0	2	N/A	Spiced grilled or roasted meat pieces
tikka	Noun (Culinary term)	0	1	N/A	Marinated grilled chicken chunks
Kashmiri tea	Noun phrase (Culinary term)	0	1	N/A	Traditional pink salted tea
samosa	Noun (Culinary term)	0	1	N/A	Spiced, savory fried pastry triangle
channa	Noun (Culinary term)	0	1	N/A	Chickpeas prepared in spiced gravy
roti	Noun (Culinary term)	1	0	p. 68	Unleavened whole-wheat flatbread

Pak-Punjab Deli	Proper Noun (Business name)	0	1	N/A	Hybridized diasporic restaurant
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Note: Gastronomic lexis functions as a powerful sensory and nostalgic anchor in the construction of postcolonial identity. The presence of untranslated food items like jalebis, kebab, and tikka in The Reluctant Fundamentalist establishes an authentic cultural territory that resists domestication into standard Anglo-centric vocabulary, presenting South Asian cuisine as a site of luxury and cultural memory.

Table 4.1.4: Toponyms, Climatic Phenomena, and Sociopolitical Concepts

Word (Spelling in Text)	Morphosyntactic Category	Frequency in <i>Moth Smoke</i>	Frequency in TRF	Page Range (<i>Moth Smoke</i>)	Contextual Semantic Meaning
Lahore	Proper Noun (City name)	6	36	pp. 4-104	Historical/cultural capital of Punjab
Karachi	Proper Noun (City name)	3	0	pp. 31- 105	Largest city/financial capital of Pakistan
Islamabad	Proper Noun (City name)	1	0	p. 104	Federal capital city of Pakistan
Peshawar	Proper Noun (City name)	1	0	p. 105	Historic capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
Punjab	Proper Noun (Province name)	2	0	pp. 34- 38	Central agricultural/cultural province
Pakistan	Proper Noun (Nation name)	3	29	pp. 121- 126	South Asian sovereign nation state
Anarkali	Proper Noun (Toponym)	0	1	N/A	Historic market district in old Lahore
Urdu	Proper Noun (Language name)	0	3	N/A	National language of Pakistan

andhi	Noun (Meteorological term)	3	o	pp. 118-119	Violent, hot seasonal dust storm
poondi	Noun (Slang/Practice)	1	o	p. 29	Localized practice of pursuing girls
fundo	Noun (Slang/Slur)	2	o	pp. 14-100	Truncated slang for fundamentalist
charas	Noun (Narcotics term)	2	o	pp. 47-49	Pure hand-processed cannabis resin
qawali	Noun (Musical genre)	1	o	p. 50	Sufi devotional vocal performance
hakim	Noun (Occupational term)	1	o	p. 61	Traditional herbal physician
mosques	Noun (Religious term)	o	1	N/A	Islamic places of public worship

Note: Toponyms and regional climatic or sociopolitical terms ground the novels' settings within Lahore's postcolonial landscape, emphasizing local social stratification and environmental realities. The overwhelming frequency of Lahore (6 in Moth Smoke; 36 in The Reluctant Fundamentalist) and Pakistan (3 in Moth Smoke; 29 in The Reluctant Fundamentalist) underscores their central roles in negotiating national belonging, diasporic longing, and anti-imperial resistance.

Representative Textual Examples of Code-Switching and Borrowing

To illustrate the structural integration and contextual functions of these expressions, representative textual instances directly extracted from the novels are classified below:

Kinship and Social Honorifics Familial honorifics and colloquial vocatives are regularly employed as tag-switches or noun phrase insertions to index social status, generate relational intimacy, or establish domestic boundaries:

- Ozi establishes peer intimacy and shared memory by saying: "'Thanks a lot, yaar,' he replies" (Hamid, 2000, p. 11).

- The domestic hierarchy of Daru's crumbling household is highlighted when his servant comforts him: "'It will come back, saab,' he says, still smiling" (Hamid, 2000, p. 84).

Attire, Material Culture, and Customary Objects Untranslated nouns indicating material attire and localized cultural objects are strategically preserved to resist Western lexical assimilation and maintain a foreignized narrative space:

- Murad's criminal aspirations are highlighted alongside local dress: "He reaches under his kurta and pulls a silver revolver out of the waistband of his shalwar" (Hamid, 2000, p. 48).
- Changez performs his cultural identity in New York: "Reaching out to graze the embroidery on my kurta with the tip of her finger" (Hamid, 2007, p. 26).

Gastronomy and Culinary Expressions Culinary items are structurally accommodated as untranslated noun heads, serving to heighten cultural authenticity and index sensory and nostalgic associations with the homeland:

- Changez introduces South Asian sweets in Lahore: "Do try these sticky, orange sweets – jalebis-but be careful, they are hot!" (Hamid, 2007, p. 9).
- Food acts as a predatory and raw cultural marker: "We are surrounded instead by kebab of mutton, the tikka of chicken" (Hamid, 2007, p. 47).

Toponyms, Climatic Phenomena, and Sociopolitical Concepts Toponyms and regional meteorological occurrences ground the settings within Lahore's postcolonial landscape, emphasizing local social stratification and environmental realities:

- The seasonal dust storm acts as a psychological and climatic threshold: "'Saab, an andhi is coming,' he says" (Hamid, 2000, p. 118).
- Professor Superb delivers his lecture on class stratification: "'There are two social classes in Pakistan,' Professor Superb said to his unsuspecting audience" (Hamid, 2000, p. 121).

Discussion

This systematic research of lexical items and code-switching patterns of Urdu origin in Mohsin Hamid's early novels shows a complex linguistic approach that enables the postcolonial subject to build and enact his/her identity in a polarization of the global order. Through the prism of the postcolonial theories of hybridity and the Third Space of Bhabha, the Markedness Model, and the Matrix Language Frame of Myers-Scotton, this study indicates that Hamid's bilingual narratives are not simply embellished with local color but play an active part in challenging the Western cultural hegemony (Bhabha, 1994). The changes in the language of the two novels reveal the transition of mapping the dynamics of these classes in the local context of Lahore prior to 9/11 to a politically charged critique of the imperial gaze in a global context after 9/11.

In *Moth Smoke* (2000), the bilingual tapestry is even more predominated by kinship honorifics, words of familiarity, and meteorological or customary markers that are firmly rooted in the social fabric of urban Lahore (Hanif, 2026). The protagonist, Darashikoh Shezad (Daru), lives in a language contact situation where there is a systematic association of the alternation of English and Urdu with the variables of class, wealth, and power (Zulfiqar, 2024). A switch in the ways of speaking, in terms of colloquial Urdu expressions and slang, is a structural indication of Daru's transition from a promising, middle-class banker to a pariah, impoverished man. In a manner that is highly informative about informal solidarity and intimacy between close male peers, he often employs the colloquial vocative *yaar*, which occurs 12 times in the corpus. For instance, when Daru and Ozi reunite after Ozi's return from the United States, Ozi replies to Daru's tease about his receding hairline by saying, "Thanks a lot, *yaar*," he replies (Hamid, 2000, p. 11). Likewise, when Ozi declines a cigarette because he is now a father, Ozu begs, "Come on. One more. For old times. He shakes his head. "Sorry, *yaar*" (Hamid, 2000, p. 14). In this era of the story, *yaar* serves as a code of sorts, an unmarked code that holds the childhood friends in close proximity, despite the increasing economic gap they've developed as Ozi has left for America.

In the course of the story, however, the informality of the linguistic solidarity starts to crumble and give way to a striking class resentment that is expressed in the language the two characters use. The novel's social stratification divides its characters into two groups: the rich, who lived in air-conditioned houses, and the

poor, who did not. Daru is fired from his job at the bank because he is not being treated with the respect he deserves by his manager, Malik Jiwan, who refuses to address him by his name, saying, 'Not you... Malik saab, tell me what happened' (Hamid, 2000, p. 23). As a socio-economic tool, language is used in this charged interaction to mark class boundaries and to marginalize the uncultured masses, with language used as a tool of the wealthy and powerful for whom the suffix "saab" becomes a linguistic commodity.

The social dynamics of Daru's downfall are also demonstrated by the degradation of his 'household' physically and linguistically, as opposed to Ozi's gated mansion and his two beautiful new Pajeros. When Daru loses his electricity, his life is pulled into a dark, hot, suffocating physical realm; he calls back to the seventeenth century, "We're back in the seventeenth century" (Hamid, 2000, p. 84). His little servant, Manucci, tries to console him, saying, "It will come back, saab," he says, still smiling (Hamid, 2000, p. 84). The title of the novel, *Moth Smoke*, symbolizes the tragedy of self-destruction and disillusionment that ultimately leads Daru to his ruin through temptations and desires, including drugs and his best friend's wife, Mumtaz. This self-destructive behavior is paralleled by Daru's growing addiction to narcotics: smoking charas joints on his rooftop with his dealer Murad Badshah to the consumption of a very dangerous blend of heroin and cannabis, which he calls "hairy": "Tonight I feel reckless... and this hairy will have to do." (Hamid, 2000, p. 103). His voice gets all disjointed and drug-laden, as if he's gradually losing his mind and becoming too much of an outsider to fit into the crowd of elites.

Murad Badshah in *Moth Smoke* is a positive example of postcolonial mimicry and the Third Space (Hanif, 2026). Murad Badshah is a highly educated man with an MA in English and is a hybrid postcolonial subject who tries to take on the prestigious language of the colonizer to distance himself from his lower-class origins. But it was Daru's exaggerated diction and grandiloquence, as he points out, that merely highlighted what they were supposed to conceal. The speech of Murad Badshah is a hybrid, a liminal in-betweenness; it is syntax which is continually disrupted by the intervention of local phonetic patterns and a flow of paan-red spit on his shoulder. He imagines a heist with Western business terms and local defiant terminology: "He takes a silver revolver out of his kurta, a big, shiny, somewhat silly-looking revolver. The juxtaposition of the traditional kurta and shalwar with a Python revolver point to the highly fractured and hybrid space that the postcolonial subject must travel

through, between the effects of colonial education and the immediate, harsh reality of a corrupt capitalistic society.

In addition, Moth Smoke represents the domestic realm as an archive of tradition, while Lahore's younger elite are superficially Westernized. The weekly gatherings of the family at Fatty Chacha's home are largely the domain of Dadi, the paternal grandmother, who is "the true heart of the community" (Hamid, 2000, p. 65). Daru's questions are direct, traditional, and devoid of the westernized stance of his friends. 'Come here,' Dadi says, patting the arm of her sofa. Where are you these days? '... Have you found a job? I don't plan on getting married yet. I am not getting married yet. "As soon as you find me someone, Dadi." (Hamid, 2000, p. 66).

through this interaction, it is revealed that kinship terms and domestic spaces represent important locations for sustaining cultural memory and local values against the homogenizing impulse of modernity and consumer capitalism that pervades public space in Lahore.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007) is a very polished, courtly, formal English that is a sophisticated and politically charged subversion of the Western imperial gaze. The Urduized words in The Reluctant Fundamentalist, on the other hand, are few, carefully placed, and selective, and they act as a tactical, postcolonial resistance in contrast to the dense, vernacular code switching of Moth Smoke. The protagonist, Changez, speaks flawlessly in "Anglicized" English to the anonymous American visitor in an Old Anarkali café in a scene that is a dramatic monologue, in which the American is deprived of his voice and becomes a listener to the voice of globalization. Use of untranslated Urdu terms such as kurta, jalebis, saris and Jenaab by Changez is a calculated assertion of cultural authority that is foreignizing rather than fully assimilating into the universal language of the world.

On Changez's return from Greece after his vacation, he makes a conscious choice to wear a kurta and to reach out to graze the embroidery on his kurta with the tip of her finger: "On his return from Greece after his vacation, Changez decides to wear a kurta with a purpose to reach out and graze the embroidery on his kurta with the tip of her finger" (Hamid, 2007, p. 26). In this phase of his career, the kurta serves as a site of a marked linguistic and cultural exoticization of the South Asian identity that his affluent liberal American counterparts celebrate and produce in the consumer market. But, after the September 11 terror attacks, this glorious exoticism

becomes a suspicious point of racial profiling and political threat. At the airport, officials strip-search Changez, and on the streets of New York, people consider him a potential enemy. Growing a beard and keeping his kurta on become a political statement of the greatest magnitude for him, a protest against the rampant anti-Muslim racism in American society.

The lack of translation of Urdu words in his speech serves as a barrier to his cultural protection in this post-9/11 world. "That is not the case," he says to the uneasy American stranger. "We are not surrounded instead by the kebab of mutton, the tikka of chicken, the stewed foot of goat, or the spiced brain of sheep! These, sir, are predatory delicacies, delicacies imbued with a hint of luxury, of wanton abandon." (Hamid, 2007, p. 47). Changez's use of untranslated cultural terms such as kebab and tikka, as well as his depiction of them as "predatory delicacies," disrupts the conventional Western image of the Orient as feminine, passive, and consumable. The linguistic choice is an inversion of the colonial power relations; the postcolonial subject goes from being a passive victim to a very sophisticated and articulate predator, one who will not domesticate his culture for the comfort of the Western visitor.

Moreover, Changez's attack on the English language itself is an attempt to show the level of postcolonialism and the desire for cultural preservation and respect. He describes the limitations of the English language while attempting to communicate with the older members of the cable company he was evaluating: "Had English had a respectful form of the word, as Urdu does, to speak to these old people of the cable company, I would have used it without a moment's hesitation." (Hamid, 2007, p. 98). This metalinguistic commentary serves to show how modern English is poorly suited to express these traditional South Asian values of respect, honor, and hierarchy based on age that are naturally expressed in the Urdu pronoun system. Changez's reference to this lexical lacuna that can be identified in English, therefore, serves to confirm the cultural and ethical superiority of Urdu language and the cultural values of Urdu culture over the professional pragmatism of the West, thus legitimizing his native linguistic culture.

Furthermore, the morphological play can be observed in Hamid's employment of a mixed compound noun that uses native Urdu nouns as premodifiers to English nouns, such as a "samosa-and-channa-serving establishment" (Hamid, 2007, p. 18). The hyphenated lexicosemantic compounding structures given below are complex

structures which demonstrate a very high level of nativization of English syntax. Hamid uses the concept of 'local' food items to formulate the South Asian realities of everyday life in standard English noun phrases, thus sidestepping the conventional grammatical rules. Eventually, Hamid creates a bilingual narrative space where he projects the insertion of Jenaab and Kashmiri tea in ways that are neither merely coded for local color but rather are enabling the emancipation of the imperialized language by developing Pakistani English as a sophisticated, autonomous, norm-generating World Englishes.

Recommendations

Pedagogical Integration of Postcolonial Stylistics: South Asian universities should include postcolonial stylistics and corpus-assisted literary analysis in their curricula. Developing linguistic confidence in bilingual learners entails demonstrating the structural validity and creative potential of localised English to weaken the hegemony of Standard British English (SBE) as a prescriptive form of the language.

Expansion of Pakistani English Corpora: It is recommended that future researchers extend this corpus-assisted research and build a larger Pakistani English fiction corpus with multiple authors. The study of Mohsin Hamid's language will also be compared with the language of other prominent writers in the modern period to track the process of Urduisation through different generations, genres and genders.

Inquiries into Reader-Response Dynamics: Empirical psycholinguistic studies should continue to analyse the psycholinguistic processing of culture-specific terms in Anglophone Pakistani literature that are not translated by native or non-native readers. Assessment of the impact of foreign language items such as Jenaab, lota or andhi on cultural empathy or cultural alienation and distance for different target groups can be facilitated by the use of eye-tracking software and comprehension questionnaires.

Conclusion

The use of a code-switching language and lexical innovations in Urdu-English in the texts of Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke* (2000) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

(2007) has been found to be a highly structured and rule-governed and conscious aesthetic tapestry. This study systematically addresses the research questions of this study raised at the beginning, using a specially designed raw-text micro-corpus.

The quantitative results indicate that Urdu Lexis is localised in *Moth Smoke*, whereas in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, the distribution of nouns specifically associated with culture and the culinary sphere is particularly sparse and charged, underscoring the linguistic and political resistance to the Western gaze in a post-9/11 world. The morphosyntactic analysis corroborates the dominance of the untranslated cultural nouns in the corpus of Urduized terms, which also shows that Hamid uses these loanwords to refer to some realities of South Asia without altering the syntactic structure of English.

Lastly, we can view this inquiry as an illustration of these hybrid linguistic techniques creating a third space, as described by Homi K. Bhabha. Hamid's refusal to translate and italicise such terms as *dadi*, *lota*, *kebab*, and *tikka*, among others, is a forceful postcolonial abrogation and foreignisation. This refusal of the westernisation of Urdu in its syntax can keep the imperial reader at a respectful cultural distance and requires an active engagement with the terms of the postcolonial subject to understand the cultural imaginary of Pakistan. The textual tapestry of modern Pakistani fiction is an important site of linguistic decolonisation, as it signifies that Pakistani English has evolved as an independent, expressive and sovereign variety of World Englishes.

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Correspondence:

M. K. Abbas Ismail

Kamran.ch@uo.edu.pk