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Some salient Linguistic features of Complex Predicates in Hindi

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The linguistic features of a complex predicate have been very interesting and unique phenomena in different Southeast-Asian Languages. These features can be clearly and categorically analyzed from syntactic, morphological and semantic points of view.

The formation and function of the 'complex predicate' manifests very distinctly and it marks the linguistic features in such a way that they can easily explained with their relationship to various case-association, valences of the verb, thematic role and agreement patterns from that of the simple-predicate.

The present paper is an attempt to examine how we combine a Noun/Adjective with a verb (i.e. a light verb) and thus make a predicate out of these combinations and the whole process strengthens the verb in terms of making a complex predicate in case of a 'conjunct verb'. However, a somewhat similar process of combining a verb to another verb i.e. in forming a 'compound verb' weakens the verb (i.e. the polar verb) in producing a complex predicate. There is also an attempt in the paper to show how and why the complex predicates are formed in different Indian languages, and how these complex predicates, especially the 'Conjunct verbs' help the natives to verbalize some expressions such as 'to forgive, to hate, to love, and to marry, to clean, to shortened etc. which most Indian languages don't have verbal expressions and these concepts are verbalized by putting a noun/adjective with a light verb and thus, the lack of such verbal expressions are fulfilled. The acquisition of these complex predicate makes the speakers more competent to master some very useful aspects of language and make them comfortable to handle different contexts of the use of verbal expression in the language.

The paper examines the case of 'compound verb and conjunct verb' to exemplify the instances of 'some salient linguistic features of complex predicate in Hindi'.

Keywords: complex predicate, case-association, thematic role, strengthening, weakening, linguistic features, conjunct verb, compound verb, agreement etc.

1. The grammatical categories in languages

We know that the linguistic elements are the constructs of different concepts of human cognition. The way in which the human mind responds to the categorization of linguistic constructs in human languages is surprisingly similar across the board, yet very complex to comprehend. And this is where the linguistic theorization comes very handy to explain these similarities that are

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found in languages without any genealogical or geographic relatedness. In short, the linguistic elements are unique items in themselves. They have their own existence, and they help human beings to weave the garland of communication in the form of atoms of human language which culminates in a sentence as the basic unit and a discourse as an output of the whole process.

2. The synthesis of linguistic units into a complex construct

We have abundant examples in human languages where we notice that two or more lexical items get linguistically synthesized. If we examine the historicity of the synthesis of these items, it will unfold several natural and fascinating theoretical facts. However, we must wonder as to why we have not been concerned and thus discuss such issues in linguistics at all. An instance of synthesis of two lexical items that comes to mind immediately is the process by which the 'phrases' gradually become 'compounds' in many languages.

Some phrases in a language are made of two lexical items and are connected together by a functional word. These phrases become so common for everyday usage and we get so used to such expressions that after some time we feel that the functional word that helps connecting the two lexical items in the phrase is completely redundant. We also see that the language always chooses the principle of economy, thus, it rather prefers to drop the functional word of the phrase and goes one step ahead to synthesize the two items by one of the morphophonemic processes that are available in the language of such synthesis.

For example:

'gʰoɽe ki səwɑri   becomes 'gʰʊɽsəwɑr'

'rɑja kɑ pʊtrə'   becomes 'rɑjputrə'

devõ mẽ indrə   becomes 'devẽdrə'

If we examine the form and function of 'compound and conjunct verb' in Hindi under this schema, I more than sure that we will be able to explain some of the unanswered questions that are still unanswered regarding the way the 'grammatical category' function in a very complex way. The present paper is an attempt to try to examine the above mentioned complex verb phrases using the model of cognitive grammar and draw the conclusion that there is something more than the structural dependencies of the linguistic structure that we see in it usages, and we should try exploring the cognitive properties of the human mind that shape the usage of the language by fine tunings and adjusting the psychological factors for the grammatical structures.

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3. The salient features of grammatical categories:

The fact that the grammatical categories share some of their core properties in order to be together to form a new category has always been an interesting area of investigation. It is important to evaluate this process especially when two different and distinct grammatical categories such as noun+verb and adjective +verb come together for a new category such as a conjunct verb which is also known as one of the complex predicates. It is but natural that nouns or adjectives can't just come to be the part of a verb phrase unless they give up some of their core semantic and syntactic features and then come to be the part of the verb phrase. The nominal elements in this context display very interesting facts to examine. There has been a formal distinction that is maintained between a nominal and a verbal element in the grammar and it is a must to make some distinction between the two as this is how we separate these two grammatical categories in the grammar.

However, in some cases when a nominal entity is forced to become the part of the verb phrase for the purpose of bridging the gap that the language might have, the nominal entity must give up some of its core properties and share some of the verbal properties as it has to synchronize and be the part of the verb phrase. The case of conjunct verb, in Hindi and many other languages from Southeast Asia, is such a case where some of the abstract nouns come and become a part of the verb phrase in order to bridge the gap that the language has. Meaning, unless we bring a noun in the verb phrase the process of verbalization that is needed in the language is just not possible. For example, we don't have a verb in Hindi for the expressions like 'to remember', 'to hate', 'to love', 'to marry' etc. and if we want to make such predication possible in Hindi, it is a must that we bring a nominal element and put in the verb phrase and introduce a light verb[1] that comes and combines with the nominal entity and form a predicate that fulfills the requirement of making a predicate that is equivalent to the expressions like 'to remember', 'to hate', 'to love', 'to marry' etc. in English. This is what I call the sharing features of the grammatical categories.

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[1] A light verb is a grammaticalized verb that is used more like an auxiliary verb in the language. The most salient feature of the light verb is that it has been semantically bleached and thus it does not retain its lexical meaning.
Butt (2010) Butt, Miriam. The Light Verb Jungle: Still Hacking Away, In M. Amberber, M. Harvey and B. Baker (eds.) Complex Predicates in Cross-Linguistic Perspective, 48–78. Cambridge University Press. is the best that I have come across.

4. The process of grammaticalization:

The process of grammaticalization is one of the most salient features of human language and the way it produces new grammatical structures of different types is also very interesting to examine. It is very interesting to examine different processes of grammaticalization that take place in languages to facilitate with the new grammatical constructs that are demanded by different discourse phenomena. The simplest and most convincing instance of grammaticalization that I remember is the one that is used for 'continuous or progressive' marker in Hindi. We know that a lexical item 'rəhnɑ', 'to stay' is selected to formalize the use of 'progressive aspect' in Hindi. This lexical item passes through the process of grammaticalization. Thus, it sheds off its core semantic properties and after being semantically bleached it becomes available to mark the 'progression' of an action when it is used with the main verb. Unlike English where there are some handful of verbs such as 'see', 'love' and 'understand' etc. that cannot take the progressive marker '-ing' in English, there is no such exceptions in Hindi. The grammaticalized verb 'rəhnɑ', to stay' can be used with any main verb. It can, in fact, be used with the identical lexical verb 'rəhnɑ', 'to stay' where one is the main verb and second one is the grammaticalized item for marking the 'progressive' aspect of the verb. This is a classic case of the process of 'grammaticalization' and this has not been reported earlier by any researcher. Some examples at this juncture of our discussion become necessary:

For example:

1. ləṛka   čɪṭṭʰi   lɪkʰətɑ   hɛ
   boy-3MS-Nom   letter-N.f   write-3MS-impf   be-pres-3MS
   'The boy writes a letter.'

2. ləṛkɑ   čɪṭṭʰi   lɪkʰ   rəhɑ   hɛ
   boy-3MS-Nom   letter-N.f   write   stay-Cont-3MS-Impf   be-pres-3MS
   'The boy is writing a letter.'

3. vəh ləṛkɑ   čɑr vərsõ-se   dɪlli-mẽ   rəh   rəhɑ   hɛ
   that boy-3MS-Nom   four years-from delhi-Loc stay cont-3MS be-pres-3MS
   'The boy has been staying in Delhi for past four years.'

The above examples (1-3) show an interesting fact of grammaticalization of a lexical element 'rəhnɑ', 'to stay' in Hindi. In example (2), the auxiliary verb 'rəhnɑ', to stay' shows that this element is used as an auxiliary verb, after being grammaticalized, as this adds upto an aspect of

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continuous reading of the earlier sentence (1). However, the next example (3) is the one which proves the point of grammaticalization at its best. The natives of Hindi have internalized the grammaticalized element 'rəhnɑ' as an aspect marker for 'continuous' in such a way that it does not pose any constraint even when this is used with a lexical verb 'rəhnɑ', 'to stay' that is used as the main verb.

In most instances of 'the conjunct verb' and 'the compound verb' the light verb is usually a grammaticalized linguistic element. In examples like 'lərkɑ bɛʈʰ gəyɑ', 'The boy sat' or 'lərkɑ mɪʈʰɑi kʰɑ gəyɑ', 'The boy ate the sweet' etc., the light verb 'gəyɑ', 'went' has been grammaticalized or delexicallised[2]. In the expressions such as 'us-ne səb-ki gəlti *maf ki*', 'He forgave everyone's mistake', 'us-ne meri bɑt-pər *dʰyan dɪya*', 'He paid attention to my issue' etc., the light verbs i.e. 'kərnɑ', 'to do' and 'denɑ', 'give' have also been grammaticalized and thus don't have their complete lexical meaning.

5. The degree of grammaticalization:

It is necessary to examine the degree of grammaticalization when we talk about the use of the light verbs in different complex predicates i.e. 'the compound verb and the conjunct verb' in Hindi and other languages. The issue of 'strengthening and weakening' is somehow deeply related to the notion of degree of grammaticalization. It is an issue that the researchers have not taken very seriously and thus it needs some urgent attention in order to understand some of the related issues such as ± transitivity of the compound verb and the agreement facts of the conjunct verb. I have examined this phenomenon of degree of grammaticalization very carefully and have come up with three different degrees that are shown very clearly when we evaluate the process of grammaticalization.

5.1 A case of complete grammaticalization:

The case of complete grammaticalization surfaces when we look at the instance of 'rəhnɑ', 'to stay' that is used for marking the 'progressive aspect' in Hindi. Let us see the example (3) that is repeated here for the purpose of explanation:

4. vəh lərkɑ   čar vərsõ-se   dɪlli-mẽ   rəh   rəhɑ   hɛ
   that boy-3MS-Nom four years-from delhi-Loc stay cont-3MS be-pres-3MS
   'The boy has been staying in Delhi for past four years.'

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[2] Delexicalization or delexicalised item is used frequently as a synonym of 'grammaticalization' or grammaticalized element.

The use of 'rəhnɑ', 'to stay' in the above sentence both as a main verb and an auxiliary to mark the progressive aspect of the main verb is the proof that the second use of 'rəhnɑ' has been completely grammaticalized and there is no lexical meaning left in it. This, as I mentioned earlier, is a classic case of grammaticalization, also because there is no exception to it i.e. there is no verb in Hindi that cannot take this progressive auxiliary. However, a large number of vector verbs (i.e. V_2 or the light verb of the compound verb) fulfill this requirement. For example, when we use the expressions like 'bɛʈʰ gəyɑ', ' sat', 'so gəyɑ', 'slept', 'kʰɑ gəyɑ', 'ate' etc. the light verb of such expressions is completely grammaticalized as 'no one can sit and go at the same time' so, the light verb 'gəyɑ' in all these cases are completely grammaticalized.

5.2 The semi-partial grammaticalization:

This term might be new for all of us, but this is what I could, at best, come up with. This is another kind of grammaticalization where the bleaching of the semantics takes place but the degree is not very high and thus the lexical items do pose a constraint of identity. In other words, this category of grammaticalization refers to a lexical item, having been grammaticalized, can be attached to any or many lexical items to do what it is employed for, however, it fails to do so when the lexical item is identical or same to which this is meant to be attached. I want to put the conjunctive participle marker of Hindi in this category. The conjunctive participle marker (CPM)'**kər**', 'having done X/after doing X' is derived and in fact is the grammaticalized-form of lexical verb 'kərnɑ', 'to do'. We can add this CPM to any and many verb, but when we add it to a lexical verb 'kərnɑ', it poses problem and thus we do not have a construction 'kər-kər' in Hindi[3].

5.3 The partial grammaticalization:

The case of partial grammaticalization includes a small section of 'compound verb' and those cases of light verbs in the 'conjunct verb construction' that show agreement with its nominal host. The instances where the light verbs do not show agreement with their nominal hosts despite the fact that they are potential candidates for the agreement in Hindi, also because they are null

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[3] It is interesting that no one has ever tried to explain as to why it is not possible to have 'jɑnɑ', 'to go' as the main or V_1 or 'polar' verb in Hindi except in one negative use of the compound verb 'vəh kəhɑ jɑ mərɑ, where 'jɑ mərɑ' means 'went' (data was obtained in personal communication with Prof. R. Gargesh over a cup of tea'. The nature of present paper is different and if we take up this issue, it will take me in other direction, thus, it is better to leave it as a topic for further research.

case marked nominal, the light verbs are certainly different from those which show agreement with their host nominal. Mohanan (1993) and Masica (1993) have mentioned this fact in their papers on 'conjunct verb'[4].

Let us see some example:

5. mɪrɑ-ne   mohən-ko   yɑd   kɪyɑ
   Meera-3FS-Erg Mohan-Acc   remembrance-N(f)   do-perf-default-3MS
   'Meera remembered Mohan'.

6. rəhim-ne   dɪneš-ko   ɑwɑz   di
   Rahim-3MS-Erg Dinesh-Dat   call/sound-N(f)   give-perf-3FS
   'Rahim called Dinesh'.

7. dineš-ko   səmirɑ-se   gʰɾnɑ   hʊyi
   Dinesh-3MS-Dat Sameera-??(Abl/Loc)   hatred-ness-N(f)   be-perf-3FS
   'Dinesh hated Sameera'.

In the above examples (4-6), there are two different types of 'light verb' that have been used with regard to the process of 'grammaticalization'. Das (2009) has explained the reasons for treating these light verbs differently. The crux of the matter can be said in this way; the light verb if it shows the agreement with its host nominal, the degree of grammaticalization for the noun as well as the verb in a series of N+V has to be different. This is so because the verb has to function more like a lexical verb than an auxiliary, and the noun, having fulfilled the semantic need to be the part of the verb phrase to make the predication possible, also has to re-gain some of its nominal quality as it has to function as one of the arguments of the predicate and show agreement with the verb.

In case of the compound verb construction, it is very clear that there are some compound verbs in which the V2 or the vector verb has not been completely grammaticalized and thus there is a definite and distinct change of the meaning of the compound verb when the polar verb is changed, which otherwise should not have happened in case of the compound verb. For example:

8. us-ne   mer-i   čɪṭʰi   pəɾʰ   li
   he-3MS-Erg   my-F   letter-3FS-Acc   read-V1   take-past-3FS
   'He read my letter'. <In a sense that he should not have done it, but did it.>

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[4] Both these papers can be seen for detail information in Verma (1993 ed.) *Complex Predicates in South Asian Languages*.

9. us-ne   mer-i   čɪṭṭʰi   pəɽʰ   di
    he-3MS-Erg   my-F   letter-3FS-Acc   read-V1   give-past-3FS
    'He read out my letter for me'. <In a sense that he did a favor for me.>

The examples in (8-9) clearly show that the use of vector verbs, 'lenɑ', 'take' and 'denɑ', 'give' have not been totally grammaticalized. The semantic change of the meaning of the compound verbs in these examples is the fact that lends support to the core hypothesis of different degree of grammaticalization in different linguistic constructs where two or more linguistic elements get combined to outsource all together a different 'pragmatic meaning'.

6. The result of grammaticalization:

The process of grammaticalization is the key factor that allows the linguistic elements to come together to form a new grammatical construct for the requirements of the pragmatics and discourse purposes. In this process of grammaticalization, the lexical item that becomes grammaticalized has to efface some of its linguistic properties. For example, there are no parallel verbs to denote 'to love, to have, to develop, to progress etc. in Hindi and thus to fulfill the requirement and bridge the gap in the language, the nouns, the abstract nouns in particular, have to be grammaticalized to allow them to get combined with the light verb to form what is known as 'conjunct verb construction'. Similarly, the V_2, or the vector verb in the case of 'compound verb' has to pass through the process of grammaticalization to get combined with the 'polar' or main verb to make the expression more perfective in expression.

Coming back to the issue at hand, the V_2 or vector verb weakens the linguistic properties of the 'polar verb' when it gets combined with it to form the 'compound verb construction'.

There are three well-established requirements that any combination of two verbal elements has to qualify before being called as a 'compound verb'. These requirements are with regard to the semantic, morphological and syntactic conditions[5] of the compound verb constructions.

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[5] Some of the conditions mainly the semantic and morphological are universal for almost all the languages that have compound verb, but the syntactic condition is parametric and is more valid for the languages that has grammatical gender and ergativity.

6.1.1 Semantic condition:

10.	**Polar verb**	**Vector verb**	**= Compound verb**
	pəṛʰna 'to read'	*lena* 'to take'	= pəṛʰna
	mɛ̃-ne yəh kɪtɑb pəṛʰ li I-1MS-Erg this book read-V1 take-V2-Pst-3FS 'I read this book.'		mɛ̃-ne yəh kɪtɑb pəṛʰi I-1MS-Erg this book read-Pst-3FS 'I read this book.'

The first and very important condition for the compound verb construction is that of its semantics. It is well-known and proven fact in Hindi that the V$_1$ or 'polar' verb dominates the semantics of the construction. There are some exceptions to it and we will take it up later, it is enough at the moment to say that if the meaning of the 'polar' verb is not equitable or replaceable to that of the whole compound verb, we don't call such combinations of two verbs as the compound verb. For example:

However, let us see an example which looks very similar in the form to the above example (10), but there is a semantic as well as morphological condition violation in the example. Let us examine the case:

11.	**False Polar verb**	**False Vector verb**	**= Not a Compound verb**
	cəlna 'to go/walk'	*jana* 'to go'	= cəlna
	ləṛkɑ gʰər čəla gəya boy-3MS-Nom house walk-3MS went-Pst-3MS 'The boy went home.'		*ləṛkɑ gʰər čəla boy-3MS-Nom house walk -Pst-3MS 'The boy went home.'

The above example shows that the verbs 'čəla' and 'jana' cannot form a compound verb in Hindi. The semantic criterion is violated in the above example. However, there is another criterion that has been violated in the above example and that is the next point for us to prove.

6.1.2 The morphological condition:

The morphological condition of a compound verb in Hindi is that the V$_1$ or the 'polar' verb must appear in the root form in all the instances of the compound verb construction. There are parametric variations[6] for the morphological condition in Indian languages, but whatever is the case, the polar verb must occur in just one form. There are languages like Magahi, Maithili

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[6] See Das (2006) for more detail account of the variation in different varieties of Hindi-Urdu.

where the polar verb takes a 'stem forming morpheme' and having taken that morpheme it occurs in a uniform manner across the examples of compound verb construction.

Coming back to the point of discussion, the polar verb in Hindi must be in the root form. For example:

12.	polar verb	vector verb	compound verb
	bɛʈʰ-nɑ	jɑnɑ	bɛʈʰ gəyɑ = 'sat'
	kʰɑ-nɑ	lenɑ	kʰɑ lɪyɑ = 'ate'
	so-nɑ	jɑnɑ	so gəyɑ = 'slept'
	mər-nɑ	jɑnɑ	mər gəyɑ = 'died'
	pəɽʰ-nɑ	lenɑ	pəɽʰ liyɑ = 'read'
	lɪkʰ-nɑ	denɑ	lɪkʰ dɪyɑ = 'wrote'

All the compound verbs in the above table show that the 'polar verb' must appear in the root form in Hindi. Now, if we consider the example (13) and its variants we can prove our point more authoritatively that the two verbs in combination in example (13) are not the instances of compound verb construction.

13.	False polar verb	False vector verb	No compound verb
	cəl-nɑ	jɑnɑ	cəli gəyi = 'went' for feminine
	cəl-nɑ	jɑnɑ	čəlɑ gəyɑ = 'went' for masculine
	cəl-nɑ	jɑnɑ	čəle gəyɑ = 'went' for plural nouns

So, the morphological criterion of the compound verb in Hindi that requires the 'polar verb' not to be inflected with the PNG of the subject noun is obeyed by the examples given in (10), but the examples in (11) show a different picture. If we use this verb in different examples with a changed subject, the 'polar verb' will be inflected with the subject noun phrase in the sentence and thus it is a violation of the condition for the compound verb in Hindi and almost all languages that have compound verb.

6.1.3 The syntactic condition:

This is a unique and very appealing condition in Hindi and some other languages including Kinnauri[7] where the ± transitivity of the 'vector verb' plays a crucial role in terms of licensing the ergative case with the subject noun phrase as if the 'vector verb' is intransitive, the whole compound verb is intransitive. And if the 'vector verb' is transitive, the whole compound verb becomes syntactically transitive and it can license the ergative case with the subject NP. Let us see one example of each to make the point clear.

14. ləɾkɑ   sɑri   roṭi   kʰɑ   gəyɑ
    boy-3MS-Nom   all-F   bread-3F   eat-V$_1$ go-V$_2$-past-3MS
    'The boy ate all the bread'

In the example (14), the ergative case '-ne' is not possible as the compound verb becomes syntactically intransitive as the 'vector verb' in intransitive here. If we remove the 'vector verb' and say the same sentence in Hindi with just the main verb with the same tense and aspect , there will be an ergative case with the subject noun in that sentence. For example:

15. ləɾke-ne   sɑri   roṭi   kʰɑ-yi
    boy-3MS-Nom   all-F   bread-3F   eat-pst-3FS
    'The boy ate all the bread'

15. ləɾke-ne   sɑri   roṭi   kʰɑ   li
    boy-3MS-Nom   all-F   bread-3F   eat-v$_1$ Take-v$_2$-perf-FS
    'The boy ate all the bread'

The above example (15) proves the point we just made about the 'vector verb' in Hindi. The mirror imaging is also possible. Meaning if the V$_1$ or polar verb is intransitive and the V$_2$ or vector verb is transitive, the entire compound verb becomes syntactically transitive. Let us see the example:

16. ləɾki-ne   səb-ke sɑmne   čʰik   dɪyɑ
    girl-3FS-Erg   all-Gen-front   sneeze-V$_1$ give-V$_2$-pst-3MS
    'The girl sneezed in front of everyone'.

17. mɛ̃-ne   jəldi-mɛ̃   kəm pɑni-se   nəhɑ   lɪyɑ
    I-1MS-Erg   in hurry   little water-with   bathe-V$_1$ take-perf-3MS
    'I hurriedly bathed in little water'.

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[7] See Das (2013) for more detail, especially for the syntactic condition of the 'compound verb' as Kinnauri also follow the syntactic condition for licensing the ergative case suffix..

17. kʊtte-ne   gaɽi-pər mʊt   dɪyɑ
    dog-3MS-Erg car-Loc piss-V_1 give-V_2-pst-3MS
    'The dog pissed on the car'.

There are some other set of intransitive and transitive pairs in Hindi such as 'bʰõk denɑ', 'to bark', 'nəhɑ lenɑ', 'to bathe' and 'mʊt denɑ', 'to piss' etc. which work absolutely fine with regard to the abovementioned syntactic condition for the compound verb.

6.2 The weakening of linguistic features in the Compound verb construction:

Having discussed the above conditions of the compound verb construction we can now make the main points of the paper i.e. whenever there are two linguistic items together and there is process of grammaticalization that takes place for the synthesis of these items, one or the other seems to gain the advantage over other with regard to the syntactic, morphological or semantic function. Thus, one of the two has to become either weak or strong. If we talk about the compound verb construction, very contrary to the traditionally known and explained facts of the complex predicate, there is a process of weakening that happens for the V_1 or the polar verb which to my knowledge has not been reported by any researcher.

6.2.1 The finiteness of the verb:

Let us see the example of a compound verb construction to explain the 'finiteness issue of the verb'. We know that a finite verb has an edge over the verb that is not finite (either non-finite or infinitive) in an expression. The very defining property of a sentence is that a sentence is a sentence as long as there is finite verb in the sentence. So, a finite verb in the sentence must be a very important element in a sentence. However, take an example of a compound verb in Hindi or in any language that has a compound verb, the V_1 can never be a finite verb because it is the V2 that has the tense and the aspect markers in a compound verb construction. For example:

18. bəččõ-ne   šišɑ   toɽ   dɪyɑ
    children-3Pl-Erg glass break-V_1 give-V_2-pst-3MS
    'Children broke the glass'.

The sentence in (18) shows that the V_1 in Hindi compound verb construction has to be in its root form. So, despite the fact that V_1 dominates the compound verb with regard for the semantics of it, the V_2 makes the polar verb 'weak' in terms of forming the syntactic unit of compound verb

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as a complex predicate. The linguistic features that make the predicate 'finite' stay with the V_2 instead of V_1, and this certainly is the case of weakening the syntactic value of the V_1.

6.2.2 The semantic content of V_2:

There are two issues that would be required to understand this concept. If one questions as to what is that the V_2 does in a compound verb and if one goes by the explanation given in the literature[8] and also observe the use of the compound verb construction, we would conclude that the V_2 makes the compound verb to mean more perfect. For example:

19a. buɽʰɑ   hɑtʰi   mərɑ
     old   elephant-3MS-Nom   die-pst-3MS
     'The old elephant died'.

And

19b. buɽʰɑ   hɑtʰi   mərɑ   gəyɑ
     old   elephant-3MS-Nom   die-V₁   go-V₂-past-3MS
     'The old elephant died'.

The above examples (18a-b) are the most cited examples in the literature of the compound verb construction. There are different reasons for the wide use of the above set of examples of compound verb in the literature from the ones that are being emphasized in the present paper.

The point that this paper wants to make is very simple. First, it can be proven by the statistical data that everyone, natives or non-natives ever, would prefer (18b) to (18a) in any context and if this is true, we must say that V_2 weakens the V_1 in terms of attaining the perfective reading of the compound verb construction.

The other issue is more relevant to discuss the so called semantics of the V_2 in compound verb construction. Let us first see some examples. We have already discussed these examples in (7 and 8), but the context demands to repeat them here:

20. us-ne   mer-i   čɪttʰi   pəɽʰ   li
    he-3MS-Erg   my-F   letter-3FS-Acc   read-V1   take-past-3FS
    'He read my letter'. <In a sense that he should not have done it, but did it.>

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[8] Hook, P. E. (1974) *The Compound Verb in Hindi*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies.

21. us-ne   mer-i   čɪṭṭʰi   pəṛʰ   di
    he-3MS-Erg   my-F   letter-3FS-Acc   read-V1   give-past-3FS
    'He read out my letter for me'. <In a sense that he did a favor for me.>

If we pay attention to the core fact of the semantics of the above sentences, we would have to say that the semantics in the two sentences is totally different. The sentence (7) is more of an allegation that someone has done something that s/he was not supposed to do, while the sentence (8) shows some sort of help that one extends to another. The interesting thing is that we attain this great change of semantics just by replacing the V_2 in the above sentences. So, the semantic contents of V_2 (in limited usages) 'weaken' the linguistic property of V_1.

6.2.3 The Syntactic content of V_2:

This is an interesting linguistic feature of V_2 and there has been no extensive work on this aspect the compound verb. A typological work of this feature of the V_2 in compound verb will enrich the research in this area. The syntactic content of the V_2 or vector verb in compound verb construction is such that if the vector verb is intransitive[9], the whole complex predicate becomes *syntactically* intransitive. For example:

22a. bɪlli   sɑra dʊdʰ pi   gəyi
      cat-3FS-Nom   all   milk   drink-V1.(tran) go-V2-pst-3FS.(intran)
      'The cat drank all the milk'.

*22b. bɪlli -ne   sɑra dʊdʰ pi   gəyi
      cat-3FS-Erg   all   milk   drink-V1.(tran) go-V2-pst-3FS.(intran)
      'The cat drank all the milk'.

The above two sentences (22a-b) prove the point we made in the section earlier. The V2, having been intransitive, syntactically turns the whole complex predicate in an intransitive verb phrase. So, despite of having other required conditions fulfilled to have an ergative case with the subject, the sentence (22b) shows that it cannot have the ergative case with the subject because, the V2 syntactically weakens the entire verb phrase by being intransitive.

If we examine the mirror image of this phenomenon, it can give us a deceptive picture in the beginning. For example:

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[9] Abbi, A.& D. Gopalakrishanan (1991) have observed the phenomenon but they have a different view point, and in fact their claim looks invalid in the light of new facts that come out from the structural descriptions of Hindi and some other related languages.

23a.   ləɽki   səb-ke sɑmne   cʰɪk-i
        girl-3FS-Nom   all- Gen- front   sneeze-pst-3FS
        'The girl sneezed in front of everyone'.

23b.   ləɽki-ne   səb-ke sɑmne   cʰɪk   di
        girl-3FS-Erg   all- Gen- front   sneeze-V$_1$ give-V$_2$-pst-3FS
        'The girl sneezed in front of everyone'.

The examples (23a-b) show exactly opposite of what we saw in (22a-b) and one can get deceived at the first and quick glance that V$_2$ in this case 'strengthens' rather than weakening the polar verb. This is so because the polar verb which was intransitive verb has been syntactically changed into transitive by putting a transitive V$_2$ in the compound verb construction. The result of this placement of a transitive V$_2$ in the complex predicate is that it syntactically turns the whole unit into a transitive one and thus the marking the subject NP with an ergative case has been possible.

The above account is very much true and this is how it functions in the actual usage of the language. However, the V$_2$ has not strengthened the V$_1$, rather it has 'weakened' it to this extent that it has produced a new category in the grammar of the language and we have to relearn that there can be a syntactically transitive complex predicate in the sentence but there will be not ***direct object*** in that sentence. It seems very unusual that we have a transitive complex verb phrase without a direct object in it! I think this is not that unusual if we think of the category of the verb such as 'un-accusative verb' and 'un-ergative verb'. They V$_1$+V$_2$ as a combination of transitive and intransitive functions as an 'un-ergative' verb, and the V$_1$+V$_2$ as a combination of intransitive and transitive one behaves as an 'un-accusative' verb phrase. But for the present paper what is important is the process of 'weakening' of the linguistic features in both the case and for the polar verb.

6.3 The strengthening of linguistic features in the Conjunct verb construction:

In the earlier section we saw the process of weakening of linguistic features in the compound verb constructions. As opposed to the process of weakening in the compound verb construction, the conjunct verb construction shows a process of strengthening of the linguistic features when two linguistic items come together as a synthesized item. I will make some quick points about the conjunct verb construction before we discuss the main issue here. Any combination of an N/Adj + verb is not qualified as a 'Conjunct verb' in Hindi or in the languages where this

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grammatical construct exists. There are some abstract nouns only that can come and be the part of a light verb and be synthesized as 'Conjunct verbs'. For example:

'rɑm-ne əpnɑ *homework kɪyɑ*', 'Ram did his homework' or 'mɛ̃-ne əpne   mɪtr-ko   ek   *cɪʈʈʰi lɪkʰi*'*,* 'I wrote a letter to my friend' etc. are not where the combinations of N+V can be called as the 'conjunct verb' in Hindi. There are two reasons for not accepting these are conjunct verbs. One that the words like 'homework' and 'letter' are not abstract nouns, second that the verbs in these cases are lexical verb and thus the homework and letter are the direct object of the these lexical verbs.

But the combinations of N+V such as 'mɑf kərnɑ', 'to forgive', 'prəgəti kərnɑ', 'to develop' 'ənʊbʰəv kərnɑ', 'to experience', 'yɑd kərnɑ', 'to remember', 'əpmɑn kərnɑ', 'to insult' and 'səfəl honɑ', 'to succeed' are some of the examples of conjunct verb in Hindi where all the nouns are the abstract nouns and when these complex predicates are used in a sentence, the nominal hosts do not become the direct object of the light verb in most cases. These are the defining properties of the conjunct verb construction in Hindi and the languages that have this construction.

With regard to the process of 'strengthening of linguistic features in the conjunct verb construction, there are three main points that I want to highlight hrer:

6.3.1 The increase in the number of the participants:

24. mɑnəs-ne   əpnɑ   homwərk   kɪyɑ
    Manas-3MS-Erg   self   homework-MS   do-pst-3MS
    'Manas did his homework'.

If we talk about the number of participants (arguments) that are there in the sentence (24) with a transitive verb 'kərnɑ', 'to do', we would say that there is a subject and a direct object for this transitive verb in the sentence and it sounds fine for any theoretical approach or model.

But,

25. mɑnəs-ne   sʊmɑn-ko   yɑd   kɪyɑ
    Manas-3MS-Erg   Suman-3FS-Acc   remembrance-N.f   do-pst-3MS
    'Manas remembered Suman'.

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The sentence (25) has the same transitive verb 'kərnɑ', 'to do' that we had in sentence (24), but if we count the number of participants, we find an increase in the number of participant. There is a new participant in the sentence i.e. 'yɑd', 'remembrance' which is besides the subject and the direct object of the transitive verb 'kərnɑ', 'to do'. This means that the noun that becomes the internal member of the conjunct verb construction strengthens the 'light verb' of the complex predicate. The strengthening itself happens two-fold. One, that it helps the light verb to attain the predication which otherwise does not seem to be available as a verb in Hindi such as 'ənʊbʰəv kərnɑ', 'to experience', 'yɑd kərnɑ', 'to remember', 'əpmɑn kərnɑ', 'to insult' and 'səfəl honɑ', 'to succeed' etc. Second, the nominal host along with the light verb helps to increase the number of participants in the construction.

6.3.2 The parsing of the unusual case suffixes:

The other important thing that we must include in explaining the process of strengthening of the linguistic feature of the light verb in a conjunct verb construction is the kind of case association that happens in the complex predicate. Let us see some example and then explain the phenomenon.

26. nitu-ne   məheš-ko   ek   kɪtab   di
    Neetu-3FS-Erg   Mahesh-3MS-Dat   one   book-FS-Acc   give-pst-3FS
    'Neetu gave a book to Mahesh'.

The verb in (26) is a di-transitive verb one and thus the participants (arguments) i.e. the subject, the direct object and the indirect object have their associated cases in the sentence that are ergative, dative and accusative respectively. The verb of this sentence is a full lexical verb. Let us now examine the conjunct verb construction with same di-transitive verb.

27. dʰirəj-ne   bəččõ-pər   dʰyɑn   dɪyɑ
    Dhiraj-3MS-Erg   child-MPl-obl-Loc   attention-MS   give-pst-3MS
    'Dhiraj paid attention to the children'.

This is an interesting example. In sentence (27), we have the same di-transitive verb but the difference that is shown with regard to the case association with different participants in the sentence is puzzling. If at all, the participant 'bəčče', 'children' is the indirect object in the sentence, it should have a dative case marker, and this is attestable in almost every language. But

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we have a locative case instead with the indirect object. The only possible way to explain the phenomenon is that we have to say that the nominal host strengthens the light verb in conjunct verb construction and if we see N+V as one unit, the licensing of the locative case becomes clear. So, there is a process of strengthening that takes place for the light verb and it is supported by the noun that has come to make the predication possible and help the verb to accommodate the unsupported case association.

6.3.3. The degree of synthesis and the agreement:

The last way in which the nominal host strengthens the light verb in conjunct verb construction can be explained by looking at the agreement features of the conjunct verb[10]. Let us see the example to explain the notion:

(adopted from Bahl: 1974:24):

28a. ʊs-ne   mohən-ko   yɑd   kɪyɑ
S/he-3M(F)S-Erg   Mohan-3MS-Acc   memory-N(fem)   do-pst-3MS
'S/he remembered Mohan'.

28b. ʊs-ko   mohən-ki   yɑd   ɑyi
S/he-3M(F)-Dat   Mohan-3MS-Gen   memory-N(fem)   come-perf-3FS
'S/he remembered Mohan'.

Das (2009) has given the explanation of the above puzzling pattern of agreement in complex predicates and there is a follow up research that is taking place to support the hypothesis that has been proposed in the work. However, to explain how the process of strengthening takes place by the nominal to the light verb it is necessary to outline the abovementioned hypothesis here.

The verbs, either intransitive or transitive or di-transitive, bear their structural or canonical cases with them, and in order to be conjugated in different tenses and aspects and take the inflectional markers of the subject noun phrase, they have to give away or disperse the canonical case(s) to the arguments/participants in the sentence.

If the canonical cases of the verb phrase have already been dispersed, the synthesis between the two elements in conjunct verb construction remains undisturbed. However, if the light verb of the conjunct verb construction has not been able to give away its canonical cases, the nominal

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[10] For a full length discussion on the issue, see Das (2009).

hosts comes up for help and strengthens the light verb by taking one of the canonical cases and shows agreement with it. The two examples in (28a-b) exemplify the same fact. The example (28a) is has a transitive verb and there are two canonical cases i.e. nominative/ergative and accusative, and if we examine the sentence, these cases have already been given to the subject and the direct object of the sentence. The nominal host in this situation remains synthesized in the complex predicate and the verb takes the default agreement morphology which is 3MS. The sentence (28b), however, is interesting. There is an intransitive verb in the sentence, meaning it has only one case i.e. nominative to disperse. If we check the cases that are associated with different kinds of noun phrases, we would say that they are many other case-endings but the nominative. The light verb cannot become finite unless it gives away this canonical case and thus the nominal host strengthens and empowers the light verb by taking this case and shows agreement with it. This is how the strengthening of linguistic features takes place in conjunct verb construction.

7. Conclusion:

The hypothesis presented in the paper is very new. I have been observing the nitty-gritty of different kinds of functions of the complex predicate for a long time now and very closely in all my research and teaching. The presented facts and the data regarding the weakening and strengthening of the linguistic features of linguistic items have been selected and chosen very carefully. There has been several cross checks for all the semantics of individual members of the complex predicate. The native speakers' opinion has been taken for all the corpora that have been used as the means to prove the theoretical point in the paper. It seems that we forget to take-care of these small points but if we want to add a brick of our own to the edifice of the overall knowledge system, the idea presented in the paper is a modest attempt to cover this lacuna and is open for all kind of critical evaluation.

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Possessive Love and Psychic Disorders: A Psychological Analysis of Characters in Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea*

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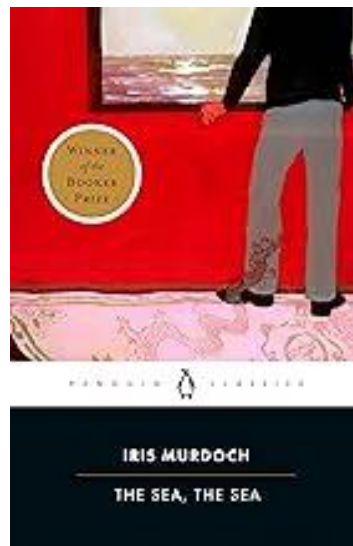
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Abstract

Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea* delves into the complexities of possessive love and its psychological ramifications through the lens of its protagonist, Charles Arrowby. This paper examines how Charles's obsessive fixation on his childhood love, Hartley, reveals deep-seated psychic disorders and emotional immaturity. Despite retiring to a secluded coastal home to reflect on life, Charles becomes consumed by his desire to reclaim Hartley, disregarding her autonomy and marital bond with Ben. His actions, driven by narcissism and inability to relinquish control, expose the destructive nature of possessive love. Hartley, in

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contrast, embodies resilience and purity, remaining devoted to Ben despite Charles's manipulative attempts to disrupt their relationship. The novel also explores the themes of trauma, self-centredness, and the dichotomy between appearance and reality, drawing parallels to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Through a psychoanalytic approach, this study highlights how Murdoch critiques the egotism inherent in romantic aspirations and societal neglect of emotional maturity. The characters' inner conflicts and transformations underscore the enduring relevance of Murdoch's work to understanding human relationships.

Keywords: *The Sea, The Sea,* Iris Murdoch, Possessive love, psychic disorders, emotional immaturity, narcissism, autonomy, trauma, self-centredness, dichotomy, psychoanalytic approach, Shakespearean echoes.

Introduction

Iris Murdoch, one of the most celebrated authors and philosophers of the 20th century, carved a niche for herself with her intricate psychological novels that seamlessly blend philosophical musings, comedic elements, and profound explorations of human relationships. Her works often delve into the complexities of love, morality, and the human psyche, offering readers a window into the inner lives of their characters. Among her many acclaimed novels, *The Sea, The Sea* stand out as masterpieces that encapsulate her unique narrative style and philosophical depth. Published in 1978, the novel earned Murdoch the prestigious Booker Prize, cementing her status as a literary giant. As Allan Abraham Malayil notes in his scholarly analysis, "Murdoch focuses on one individual, the renowned actor Charles Arrowby, whose interior life is troubled by his numerous relationships" (160). This focus on Charles Arrowby, a retired theatre director who retreats in a coastal mansion named Shruff End, serves as the foundation for an exploration of themes such as possessive love, emotional immaturity, and the dichotomy between appearance and reality. Through Charles's obsessive fixation on his childhood love, Hartley and Murdoch critique the egotism inherent in romantic aspirations and societal neglect of emotional maturity.

At the heart of *The Sea, The Sea* lies the tension between appearance and reality, a theme Murdoch frequently revisits in her works. Charles Arrowby, the protagonist, embodies this tension as he embarks on what he perceives as a journey of self-discovery. Upon retiring from public life, Charles resolves to isolate himself in Shruff End, where he plans to reflect on his life and time. He likens his endeavours to Prospero's relinquishment of magic in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, a connection Murdoch deliberately draws to underscore the

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novel's exploration of power and transformation. As Charles reflects on his past, he is consumed by the memories of Hartley, his childhood love. Murdoch writes, "Charles considers reminiscence to be the foundation of truth. He conducts an enquiry by examining his past experiences" (*The Sea, The Sea* 94). This introspective process, however, reveals more about Charles's inability to confront reality than about any profound truth. Critics like Peter J. Conradi have noted that Murdoch's characters often engage in such self-deceptive pursuits, stating, "Murdoch's protagonists are frequently trapped in their illusions, unable to see beyond their immediate desires" (233). Charles's obsession with Hartley exemplifies this tendency, as he romanticises their past relationship while disregarding the reality of her present life with Ben Fitch.

The relationship between Charles and Hartley serves as a focal point for Murdoch's critique of possessive love and its psychological ramifications. Despite Hartley being married to Ben, a retired fire extinguisher salesman and former combatant, Charles becomes determined to reclaim her. His actions reveal a disturbing lack of regard for Hartley's autonomy and well-being. As Malayil observes, "Hartley declines Charles's invitation to his home, prompting him to devise a strategy to demand her presence" (161). This strategy culminates in Charles abducting Hartley during her husband's absence and confining her to a room in his residence. Such behaviour underscores the psychic malady afflicting both Charles and Hartley, as Charles's possessiveness spirals into a form of emotional imprisonment. Murdoch's portrayal of this dynamic highlights the destructive nature of possessive love, a theme she explores through psychoanalysis. Bran J. Nicol, in his analysis of the novel, argues that "Murdoch's depiction of Charles's actions reflects a broader commentary on the human tendency to prioritise personal desires over the autonomy of others" (196). This critique is further amplified by Charles's exploration of trauma and emotional immaturity, as Charles's inability to mature emotionally perpetuates his obsession.

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* serves as a significant intertextual reference in *The Sea, The Sea*, enriching Murdoch's exploration of themes such as relinquishment and transformation. Charles's decision to retire to Shruff End mirrors Prospero's renunciation of magic, symbolising a desire to abandon worldly ambitions and embrace solitude. However, unlike Prospero, who ultimately achieves redemption through forgiveness and reconciliation, Charles struggles to relinquish his personal "magic"—his theatrical charm and influence. Murdoch writes, "Through his thoughts and actions, Charles argues that it is difficult to

relinquish power or effect significant change" (*The Sea, The Sea* 104). This difficulty is evident in Charles's interactions with Hartley, as he clings to the illusion of their past romance despite the passage of time and the reality of her marriage. Critics have drawn parallels between Charles's predicament and Prospero's journey, noting that "while Prospero transcends his ego through acts of forgiveness, Charles remains trapped in his self-centred worldview" (Conradi 236). This contrast underscores Murdoch's critique of egotism that often accompanies romantic aspirations, as Charles's inability to let go of his desires leads to emotional turmoil for both himself and those around him.

The novel also delves into the dynamics of Hartley's relationship with her husband, Ben, offering a counterpoint to Charles's possessive love. Ben and Hartley's marriage, though fraught with occasional conflicts, is characterised by deep-seated affection and mutual respect. Unlike Charles, who views Hartley as an object of desire, Ben cherishes her as a representation of purity and innocence. As Malayil notes, "Ben's desire for Hartley is not based on physical or mental attachment; rather, he desires her as a symbol of the bygone era of purity and innocence" (161). This perspective highlights the stark contrast between Ben's genuine love and Charles's selfish obsessions. Hartley, for her part, remains devoted to Ben despite Charles's attempts to disrupt their relationship. Her resilience and unwavering commitment to her spouse underscores Murdoch's emphasis on the importance of emotional maturity and mutual respect in relationships. Critics have praised Murdoch's portrayal of Hartley, with Nicol observing that "Hartley's character embodies the virtues of patience, loyalty, and selflessness, serving as a moral anchor in the narrative" (201).

Murdoch's use of psychoanalytic theory further enriches the novel's exploration of the characters' inner lives. Charles's psychological breakdown becomes increasingly apparent as he isolates Hartley in his home, preventing her from interacting with others. His actions revealed a profound psychic disorder rooted in his inability to reconcile his desires with reality. As Malayil explains, "Charles's frustration is directed at Hartley, his childhood sweetheart, for her ignorance" (162). This frustration stems from Charles's failure to recognise Hartley's autonomy and agency, reducing her to a mere projection of his fantasies. Murdoch's depiction of this dynamic aligns with Freudian concepts of id, ego, and superego, as Charles's unchecked desires clash with his moral conscience. Critics have noted that "Murdoch's integration of psychoanalytic theory allows her to delve deeper into the complexities of human behaviour, exposing the underlying motivations that drive her

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characters' actions" (Conradi 233). This approach not only enhances the novel's psychological depth but also reinforces its critique of possessive love and emotional immaturity.

Throughout *The Sea, The Sea*, Murdoch employs a first-person retrospective narrative style, allowing readers to witness Charles's gradual unravelling through his reflections. This narrative choice enables Murdoch to explore the unreliability of memory and the subjective nature of the truth. As Charles recounts his past experiences, he often romanticises events, distorting reality to fit Hartley's idealised vision. Nicol observes that "the first-person retrospective narrative in *The Sea, The Sea* highlights the fallibility of memory and the ways in which individuals construct their versions of truth" (196). This distortion is particularly evident in Charles's recollections of his theatrical career and relationships, which he views through a nostalgic lens: Murdoch's use of this narrative technique underscores her broader philosophical enquiry into the nature of reality and illusion, inviting readers to question the reliability of Charles's accounts.

In addition to its psychological and philosophical dimensions, *The Sea, The Sea* offer poignant commentary on contemporary society. Through its portrayal of characters such as Charles, Hartley, and Ben, the novel critiques the egotism and self-centredness that often characterise modern relationships. Murdoch suggested that individuals frequently prioritise their desires over the emotional well-being of others, leading to psychological trauma and interpersonal conflict. As Malayil concludes, "All of these characters exemplify contemporary society, in which people adore one another for the sake of their advancement. They disregard the emotions and psychological traumas of the other individuals in this situation" (161). This critique resonates with Murdoch's broader philosophical concerns, as she advocates a more compassionate and morally grounded approach to human relationships. Critics have praised Murdoch's ability to weave social commentary into her narratives, with Conradi noting that "Murdoch's works serve as a mirror to society, reflecting its flaws while offering a vision of redemption through moral introspection" (236).

The Sea, The Sea stands as a testament to Iris Murdoch's literary genius, offering readers a rich tapestry of psychological insight, philosophical enquiry, and social critique through its exploration of themes such as possessive love, emotional immaturity, and the dichotomy between appearance and reality, the novel challenges readers face when confronting the complexities of human relationships. Murdoch's masterful use of

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psychoanalytic theory, intertextual references, and narrative techniques enhances the novel's depth, making it a timeless work that continues to resonate with audiences today. As critics have observed, "Murdoch has created a piece of art that merits recognition in the contemporary era" (Malayil 160). By delving into the inner lives of her characters and exposing the motivations that drive their actions, Murdoch invites readers to reflect on their relationships and the societal norms that shape them. In doing so, she reaffirms the enduring relevance of her work in understanding human conditions.

Discussion

The Dichotomy of Reality and Illusion in *The Sea, The Sea*

One of the central themes explored in Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea* is the dichotomy between reality and illusion, a theme that resonates deeply with Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Charles Arrowby, the protagonist, embarks on a journey of self-discovery after retiring to Shruff End, a coastal mansion where he plans to reflect on his life. However, his perception of reality becomes increasingly distorted as he is consumed by the memories of Hartley's childhood love. Murdoch writes, "Charles considers reminiscence to be the foundation of truth. He conducts an enquiry by examining his past experiences" (*The Sea, The Sea* 102). This introspective process, however, reveals more about Charles's inability to confront reality than about any profound truth. Critics like Peter J. Conradi have noted that Murdoch's characters often engage in such self-deceptive pursuits, stating, "Murdoch's protagonists are frequently trapped in their illusions, unable to see beyond their immediate desires" (Conradi 233). Charles's obsession with Hartley exemplifies this tendency, as he romanticises their past relationship while disregarding the reality of her present life with Ben.

The novel's exploration of appearance versus reality is further enriched by its intertextual connection with *The Tempest*. Charles likens his retirement to Prospero's relinquishment of magic, symbolising a desire to abandon worldly ambitions and embrace solitude. However, unlike Prospero, who achieves redemption through forgiveness and reconciliation, Charles struggles to relinquish his personal "magic"—his theatrical charm and influence. As Bran J. Nicol observes, "While Prospero transcends his ego through acts of forgiveness, Charles remains trapped in his self-centred worldview" (Nicol 196). This contrast underscores Murdoch's critique of egotism inherent in romantic aspirations, as Charles's inability to let go of his desires leads to emotional turmoil for both himself and those around him.

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Possessive Love and Its Psychological Ramifications

At the heart of *The Sea, The Sea* lies the destructive nature of possessive love, a theme Murdoch explores through Charles's obsessive fixation on Hartley. Despite Hartley being married to Ben, a retired fire extinguisher salesman and former combatant, Charles becomes determined to reclaim her. His actions reveal a disturbing lack of regard for Hartley's autonomy and well-being. As Allan Abraham Malayil notes, "Hartley declines Charles's invitation to his home, prompting him to devise a strategy to demand her presence" (160). This strategy culminates in Charles abducting Hartley during her husband's absence and confining her to a room in his residence. Such behaviour underscores the psychic malady afflicting both Charles and Hartley, as Charles's possessiveness spirals into a form of emotional imprisonment.

Murdoch's portrayal of this dynamic highlights the psychological ramifications of possessive love, a theme she explores through psychoanalysis. Bran J. Nicol argues that "Murdoch's depiction of Charles's actions reflects a broader commentary on the human tendency to prioritise personal desires over the autonomy of others" (196). This critique is further amplified by Charles's exploration of trauma and emotional immaturity, as Charles's inability to mature emotionally perpetuates his obsession. Hartley, for her part, remains devoted to Ben despite Charles's manipulative attempts to disrupt their relationship. Her resilience and unwavering commitment to her spouse underscores Murdoch's emphasis on the importance of emotional maturity and mutual respect in relationships.

The Dynamics of Hartley and Ben's Relationship

In contrast to Charles's possessive love, the relationship between Hartley and Ben serves as a counterpoint that highlights the virtues of genuine affection and mutual respect. Ben and Hartley's marriage, though fraught with occasional conflicts, is characterised by deep-seated affection and mutual respect. Unlike Charles, who views Hartley as an object of desire, Ben cherishes her as a representation of purity and innocence. As Malayil observes, "Ben's desire for Hartley is not based on physical or mental attachment; rather, he desires her as a symbol of the bygone era of purity and innocence" (161). This perspective highlights the stark contrast between Ben's genuine love and Charles's selfish obsessions.

Hartley, for her part, remains devoted to Ben despite Charles's attempts to disrupt their relationship. Her resilience and unwavering commitment to her spouse underscores

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Murdoch's emphasis on the importance of emotional maturity and mutual respect in relationships. Critics have praised Murdoch's portrayal of Hartley, with Nicol observing that "Hartley's character embodies the virtues of patience, loyalty, and selflessness, serving as a moral anchor in the narrative" (201). This portrayal reinforces Murdoch's critique of possessive love, as Hartley's steadfastness contrasts sharply with Charles's emotional instability.

Intertextuality: The Influence of *The Tempest*

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* serves as a significant intertextual reference in *The Sea, The Sea*, enriching Murdoch's exploration of themes such as relinquishment and transformation. Charles's decision to retire to Shruff End mirrors Prospero's renunciation of magic, symbolising a desire to abandon worldly ambitions and embrace solitude. However, unlike Prospero, who ultimately achieves redemption through forgiveness and reconciliation, Charles struggles to relinquish his personal "magic"—his theatrical charm and influence. Murdoch writes, "Through his thoughts and actions, Charles argues that it is difficult to relinquish power or effect significant change" (*The Sea, The Sea* 202). This difficulty is evident in Charles's interactions with Hartley, as he clings to the illusion of their past romance despite the passage of time and the reality of her marriage.

Critics have drawn parallels between Charles's predicament and Prospero's journey, noting that "while Prospero transcends his ego through acts of forgiveness, Charles remains trapped in his self-centred worldview" (Conradi 236). This contrast underscores Murdoch's critique of egotism that often accompanies romantic aspirations, as Charles's inability to let go of his desires leads to emotional turmoil for both himself and those around him. The intertextual connection to *The Tempest* thus enhances the novel's exploration of themes, such as power, transformation, and the relinquishment of personal desires.

Psychoanalytic Insights into Character Motivations

Murdoch's use of psychoanalytic theory further enriches the novel's exploration of the characters' inner lives. Charles's psychological breakdown becomes increasingly apparent as he isolates Hartley in his home, preventing her from interacting with others. His actions revealed a profound psychic disorder rooted in his inability to reconcile his desires with reality. As Malayil explains, "Charles's frustration is directed at Hartley, his childhood sweetheart, for her ignorance" (178). This frustration stems from Charles's failure to recognise Hartley's autonomy and agency, reducing her to a mere projection of his fantasies.

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Murdoch's depiction of this dynamic aligns with Freudian concepts of id, ego, and superego, as Charles's unchecked desires clash with his moral conscience.

Critics have noted that "Murdoch's integration of psychoanalytic theory allows her to delve deeper into the complexities of human behaviour, exposing the underlying motivations that drive her characters' actions" (Conradi 233). This approach not only enhances the novel's psychological depth but also reinforces its critique of possessive love and emotional immaturity. By exploring the inner conflicts of characters like Charles and Hartley, Murdoch offers readers a nuanced understanding of the human psyche and societal norms that shape it.

Narrative Style and the Subjectivity of Truth

Throughout *The Sea, The Sea*, Murdoch employs a first-person retrospective narrative style, allowing readers to witness Charles's gradual unravelling through his reflections. This narrative choice enables Murdoch to explore the unreliability of memory and the subjective nature of the truth. As Charles recounts his past experiences, he often romanticises events, distorting reality to fit Hartley's idealised vision. Nicol observes that "the first-person retrospective narrative in *The Sea, The Sea* highlights the fallibility of memory and the ways in which individuals construct their versions of truth" (196). This distortion is particularly evident in Charles's recollections of his theatrical career and relationships, which he views through a nostalgic lens.

Murdoch's use of this narrative technique underscores her broader philosophical enquiry into the nature of reality and illusion, inviting readers to question the reliability of Charles's accounts. As Malayil notes, "Charles habitually compares his thoughts to a cave, reaffirming that the memory of Hartley illuminates them: '...the great light in which I have been wandering my way half-consciously'" (180). This metaphor highlights the subjective nature of Charles's perceptions, as his memories of Hartley serve as a guiding light shaping his understanding of reality. By delving into the inner workings of Charles's mind, Murdoch challenges readers to confront the complexities of human relationships and societal norms that shape them.

Social Critique and Contemporary Relevance

In addition to its psychological and philosophical dimensions, *The Sea, The Sea* offer poignant commentary on contemporary society. Through its portrayal of characters such as Charles, Hartley, and Ben, the novel critiques the egotism and self-centredness that often characterise modern relationships. Murdoch suggested that individuals frequently prioritise

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their desires over the emotional well-being of others, leading to psychological trauma and interpersonal conflict. As Malayil concludes, "All of these characters exemplify contemporary society, in which people adore one another for the sake of their advancement. They disregard the emotions and psychological traumas of the other individuals in this situation" (181).

This critique resonates with Murdoch's broader philosophical concerns, as she advocates a more compassionate and morally grounded approach to human relationships. Critics have praised Murdoch's ability to weave social commentary into her narratives, with Conradi noting that "Murdoch's works serve as a mirror to society, reflecting its flaws while offering a vision of redemption through moral introspection" (236). By delving into the inner lives of her characters and exposing the motivations that drive their actions, Murdoch invites readers to reflect on their relationships and the societal norms that shape them. In doing so, she reaffirms the enduring relevance of her work in understanding human conditions.

Language and style of Iris Murdoch

Iris Murdoch's language artistry is defined by a captivating combination of philosophical insight, psychological depth, and vividly woven prose. Her narrative often mirrors her philosophical roots, particularly her fascination with existentialism and moral philosophy, which she weaves effortlessly into the tapestry of her storytelling. The outcome is a collection of works that are not only intellectually invigorating but also deeply emotional.

Murdoch's characters are commonly depicted as richly imperfect yet profoundly relatable, wrestling with dilemmas of ethics, affection, and autonomy. They navigate elaborate social landscapes where connections are intricate and charged with tension. Her dialogue brilliantly encapsulates the subtleties of human exchange—awkwardness, deflection, fervor, and fragility—often revealing more about her characters than their introspective thoughts. This dance between spoken words and the silence in between infuses her novels with an essence of realism and psychological depth.

In terms of style, Murdoch favors lengthy, flowing sentences brimming with meticulous observations, crafting an immersive experience within her characters' emotional realms. She possesses a painterly sensibility for detail, portraying settings and appearances with striking vividness and care, almost as if curating a visual masterpiece. Yet this descriptive opulence never feels excessive; it acts to illuminate themes or reflect emotional landscapes.

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A distinctive hallmark of Murdoch's style is her deft use of irony and ambiguity. While her tone can exude compassion, it often harbors a subtle thread of detachment, as if she beckons readers to scrutinize her characters from a thoughtful distance. This duality empowers her to delve into universal truths while preserving an air of enigma and unpredictability. Ultimately, Murdoch's linguistic prowess and character portrayals provoke contemplation on the human experience, blending intellectual depth with profound compassion.

Conclusion: A Masterpiece of Psychological Depth

In conclusion, *The Sea, The Sea* is a testament to Iris Murdoch's literary genius, offering readers a rich tapestry of psychological insight, philosophical enquiry, and social critique through its exploration of themes such as possessive love, emotional immaturity, and the dichotomy between appearance and reality, the novel challenges readers face when confronting the complexities of human relationships. Murdoch's masterful use of psychoanalytic theory, intertextual references, and narrative techniques enhances the novel's depth, making it a timeless work that continues to resonate with audiences today. As critics have observed, "Murdoch has created a piece of art that merits recognition in the contemporary era" (Malayil 170). By delving into the inner lives of her characters and exposing the motivations that drive their actions, Murdoch invites readers to reflect on their relationships and the societal norms that shape them. In doing so, she reaffirms the enduring relevance of her work in understanding human conditions.

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Compound Verbs in Ahirani Language: A Descriptive Study

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Abstract

This paper presents a detailed description of Compound verb Structures in Ahirani Language. Ahirani Language is spoken in Khandesh region in Maharashtra state in India. This language belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family. Compound Verbs are made up of two verbs. The study delves into the syntactic, semantic, and morphological aspects of compound verb constructions, examining their structure. This paper is purely Descriptive in Nature.

Keywords: Ahirani Language, compound verbs, Indo-Aryan Language.

Introduction

Ahirani language is one of the most common languages spoken in Khandesh. Khandesh region mainly constitutes Dhulia, Jalgaon and Nandurbar districts (Patkar, Patil, Peddi - 2020). Ahirani is surrounded by Gujrati on the west and north-west, Rajasthani and Hindi in the north, Varhadi on the south and east (Chitnis, V. 1976). According to (Tarfe, O. S., & Bagul, M. 2024), Ahirani is one of the dialects of Marathi Language. They further said that "Ahirani is primarily spoken in the Ahirani region, which includes cities such as Dhule, Nandurbar, and Jalgaon in Maharashtra and certain parts of Gujarat. The region's notable Ahir community also speaks it. The dialect is influenced by the Ahir community's language, culture, and traditions, resulting in unique terminology and expressions. Ahirani Marathi features regional vocabulary, influenced by the Ahir community's language and lifestyle. The dialect may differ from mainstream Marathi due to unique phonetic traits, such as pronunciation and accent differences." As per 2011 census, Ahirani has 16,36,465 speakers.

The objective of this paper is to look at the compound verb structure in Ahirani from the point of view of morphology, syntax and semantics and presents a descriptive analyses

Methodology and Data Collection

The data for this paper has been collected from Dhule District of Maharashtra. A questionnaire was prepared in advance focusing on the compound verb construction in Ahirani verbs. The language consultants from whom this data was collected are Prof. Sharad Bhaviskar sir and Prof. Pradeep Shinde sir. After collecting the data, it was sorted and glossing was done to analyse the data.

Compound Verb Construction in Ahirani:

The term Compound Verbs is usually used to refer to constellations of verbs that have the form $[V_1 + V_2]$, in which V_2 loses its independent meaning to a large extent. V_1 is referred to as the main verb and V_2 is referred to as the Explicator verb or vector verb; (Singh, M. 1990). In simple terms, the compound verb is made up of two verbs that act as a single verb. The first verb or V_1 is called as the main verb and V_2 is called as the vector verb.

$$V_1 + V_2 = V$$

For Example:

1. sitɑ-ni   lɑkʊɽ   toɽ-i   ʈɑki
   sita-3FS-Erg   wood-3FS-Abs   cut-V_1-sfm   put-V_2-3FS-Perf
   'Sita cut the wood'

Semantics in Ahirani Compound Verb Construction

"More or less in every language where it is possible to have V_1 and V_2 as forming a complex predicate, the semantics of the complex predicate is more or less uniform. It seems that (i.e., the polar verb) semantically dominates the meaning of the whole complex verb form. It is also as the part of the strategy of forming a complex verb by putting a constraint that if the combination of V_1 and V_2 cannot be attained by putting the single verb that is V_1, the compound made out of the combination is not accepted as the instance of a compound verb. The V_2 (the vector verb) is semantically bleached or what we technically call "has gone through a process of 'grammaticalization'". In other words, the meaning of the second verb seems to be laxicalized or bleached, meaning that is attested elsewhere in the language" (Das, P.K, 2006).

Examples:

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2. ram-ni   mɑle   rɑstɑ-mɑ   tʰɑmbɑr-i   linɑ
   ram-3MS-Erg   i-1MS-Abs   way-Loc   stop-V₁-sfm   take-V₂-Perf
   'ram stopped me on my way'

3. tu   pər-i   gəyɑ
   you-2MS-Nom   fall-V₁-sfm   go-V₂-2MS-Perf
   'you fell down'

4. ɑmi   səgyɑ   gʰər   i   gəʊt
   we-1MPl-Nom   all   home-3S   come-V₁   go-V2-1MPl-Perf
   'we all came back home'

5. rɑm-ni   sitɑ-le   čɪṭṭʰi   dʰɑr-i   dinɑ
   ram-3MS-Erg   sita-3FS-Dat   letter-3MS-Abs   send-V₁-sfm   give-V₂-3MS-Perf
   'ram sent a letter to sita'

Now, it has become really clear that it is the main verb that contributes to the meaning of the compound verb construction in Ahirani. In example 2, the meaning 'stop' is contributed by the main verb, same is the case with examples 3,4,5 where the meaning of fall, come, send have been contributed by main verb only. It is also to be noted that the whole compound verb in the above examples can be replaced by V_1 only, yet it will give the same meaning.

Morphology in Ahirani Compound Verbs

Morphology of the compound verb is explained by saying that the V_1 occurs in three different forms in a language.

• It can be in the bare form.

• It can be with some inflectional marker.

• It can be with a participle marker.

In Ahirani, the main verb is attached with a stem forming morpheme in compound verbs; the second verb takes the load of all kinds of inflectional markers of the sentence. These markers are the markers of the tense, aspect and the agreement morphology (Das, P.K. 2006).

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V₁ (Polar Verbs/ Main verbs):

In Ahirani, the V_1 occurs in bare form but with a 'stem forming morpheme', **/i/,** consistently. Some examples of V_1 occurring with the stem forming morpheme, also called the compounding marker are as follows:

6.   mənə hatʰ   **bə-i**   gəyɑ
    my   hand-3MS-Nom   burn-V₁-sfm   go-V₂-3MS-Perf
    'my hand got burned'

7.   rohən-ni   tʊ-le   **dekʰ-i**   linɑ
    rohan-3MS-Erg   you-Abs   see-V₁-sfm   take-V₂-Perf
    'rohan saw you'

8.   čɪṛi   **ʊṛ-i**   gəyi
    bird-3FS-Nom   fly-V₁-sfm   go-V₂-3FS-Perf
    'the bird flew'

In all the examples mentioned above, Main verbs are marked uniformly with the stem forming morpheme **/i/.** But the stem forming morpheme does not change the meaning of the Main Verb.

Vector Verb

In Ahirani language, V_2 loses its original lexical meaning and functions as an auxiliary verb. But, it plays an important role in clarifying the meaning of the main or polar verb. For this reason, the compound verb is referred to as an explicator compound verb. Additionally, it is the vector verb (V_2) that carries the inflectional markers (for instance, agreement markers such as person, number, gender, mood, and aspect markers) associated with various agreements in the sentence. (Das P.K, 2006). V_2 (vector verb, light verb etc.) must be grammaticalized or semantically bleached of its meaning in majority of the cases. (Das P.K, 2015).

9.   To   kʊrči-bər   bəs-i   **gəyɑ**
    he-3MS-Nom   chair-loc   sit-V₁   go-V₂-3MS-Perf
    'He sat on the chair'

10.   tyɑ-ni   rohən-le   načən   sɪkɑṛ-i   **dinɑ**
    he-3MS-Erg   rohan-3MS-Dat   dance-3MS-Abs   teach-V₁-sfm   give-V₂-3MS-Perf
    'He taught dance to Rohan'

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11. tyɑ-ni   dʊsmən-le   mɑr-i   **ʈɑkɑ**
    he-3MS-Erg   enemy-3MS-Abs   kill-V$_1$-sfm   put-V$_2$-Perf
    'He killed the enemy'

In all the above-mentioned examples, we have clearly seen that V$_2$ carries the inflectional marker and not the V$_1$. V$_2$ doesn't contribute to semantics but to the grammatical features like inflectional markers of person, number, gender, tense, aspect etc. we have also seen that V$_2$ is having markers agreeing with subject or object of the sentences the other markers.

Syntax of the Compound Verb

"The syntax of the compound verb is relevant only for the languages which are classified as 'ergative-absolutive' types and also realizes the importance of the grammatical gender' as the structure device to depict the grammatical agreement" (Das, P.K, 2006).

There can be following Sequence of V$_1$ 'Polar verb' and V$_2$ 'Vector Verb':

'Compound Verb' is formed by the combination of a 'polar' and a 'vector' verb in a sequence of V$_1$ + V$_2$. This sequence of V$_1$ + V$_2$ can occur in the following combinations of V$_1$ and V$_2$:

1) V$_1$ (+trans) + V$_2$ (+trans)

2) V$_1$ (+trans) + V$_2$ (-trans)

3) V$_1$ (-trans) + V$_2$ (+trans)

4) V$_1$ (-trans) + V$_2$ (-trans)

1) Compound Verb with V$_1$ (transitive) + V$_2$ (transitive)

12. rəmes-ni   ḍɔri   wər-i   lidi
    ramesh-3MS-ERG   rope-3FS-Abs   put-V$_1$-sfm   take-V$_2$-3FS-Perf
    'Ramesh pulled the rope'

13. tyɑ-ni   pɑni   bʰər-i   didə
    he-3MS-ERG   water-3M-Abs   fill-V$_1$-sfm   give-V$_2$-3M-Perf
    'he filled the water (in bucket)'

14. nehɑ-ni   kəpṛɑ   dʰʊ-i   ʈɑkɑt
    neha-3FS-ERG   clothes-3MPl-Abs   wash-V$_1$-sfm   put-V$_2$-3MPl-Perf
    'Neha washed the clothes'

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In the examples provided regarding compound verb constructions, the vector verb carries the inflectional markers related to tense, aspect, gender, number, and so on. Since both V_1 and V_2 are transitive verbs, the entire compound verb will be classified as a compound verb. It is noteworthy that in Ahirani, when the vector verb is transitive, the whole compound verb is transitive.

In this context, the subject takes the ergative case, while the object lacks any overt case marker. Thus, the verb V_2 agrees with the object and carries various inflectional markers such as number and gender. This agreement between the object and the verb may occur because the aspect is perfective. The perfective aspect is considered the default for a compound verb consisting of a transitive verb (V_1) followed by another transitive verb (V_2), since it is a typical feature of such compound verbs that if the second verb (V_2) is transitive, the overall compound verb functions as a transitive verb phrase. The vector verb adds syntactic meaning to the entire compound verb, while the polar verb contributes the semantic meaning. It is important to highlight that when V_2 is transitive, the subject appears in the ergative case when in the perfective aspect.

Compound Verb with V_1 (transitive) + V_2 (intransitive)

15. to   tenɑ   gʰər   ek-i   ṭɑkɑ
    He-3MS-Nom   his   home-3S   sell-V_1-sfm   put-V2-3MS-Perf
    'he sold his home'

16. mi   dɪlli-le   pəhʊč-i   gəʊ
    i-1MS-Nom   delhi-loc   reach-V_1-sfm   go-V2-1MS-Perf
    'I reached Delhi'

17. poryɑ   dərbɑjɑ   ʊgṛa-i   wənɑ
    boy-3MS-Nom   door-3MS-Acc   open-V_1-sfm   come-V2-3MS-Perf
    'the boy opened the door'

In the above examples of V_1(transitive) + V_2(intransitive). The vector verb does not add anything to the meaning of the compound verb. V_2 has inflectional markers for tense, aspect and PNG. The V_2 is responsible for the syntactic meaning of the whole compound verb. So, here the whole compound verb is syntactically intransitive. And in this case, we don't find subject to be ergative case marked even when the aspect is perfective and V_1 is transitive.

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Ahirani has morphology similar to Hindi morphology as Hindi morphology does not permit an ergative case marker -'ne' with the intransitive verbs. So, the subjects are bare NPs. Therefore, the vector verb agrees with the Subject. It is shown in the examples above. It must be noted that the +/-transitivity of the compound verb depends on the +/-transitivity of the main verb.

Compound Verb with V₁ (intransitive) + V₂ (transitive)

18. ti-ni   gostʰə   ɑɪkisən   rəɽ-i   dɪdə
    she-3FS-Erg   story-3S   after   cry-V₁-sfm   give-V₂-Perf
    'she cried after (listening) the story'

19. tʊ-ni   bʰərpur   bol-i   lidə
    you-2MS-Erg   much   speak-V₁-sfm   take-V₂-Perf
    'you spoke (too) much'

20. tyɑ-ni   jor-mɑ   šɪk-i   didə
    he-3MS-Erg   force-ins   sneeze-V₁-sfm give-V₂-Perf
    'he sneezed with force'

Here, V₂ is transitive, which causes the entire compound verb to become transitive, even if the polar verb is intransitive. While the polar verb conveys the overall meaning of the compound verb, the compound verb as a whole is considered transitive because the vector verb is transitive. The vector verb provides the syntactic meaning to the compound verb and adds additional meaning to V₁. In this sequence, the vector verb clarifies the meaning of the entire compound verb.

Similar to Hindi, the subject takes the ergative case because the vector verb transforms the whole compound verb into a transitive form, and V₂ does not show agreement with the subject.

Compound Verb with V₁ (intransitive) + V₂ (intransitive)

21. pore   ʊʈʰ-i   gəyɑt
    boy-3MPl-Nom   wake-V₁-sfm go-V₂-3MPl-Perf
    'the boys woke up'

22. poryɑ   pəɽ-i   gəyɑ

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boy-3MS-Nom   fall-V$_1$-sfm   go-V$_2$-3MS-Perf
'the boy fell (down)'

23. to   bəs-i   gəyɑ
     he-3MS-Nom   sit-V$_1$-sfm   go-V$_2$-3MS-Perf
     'he sat (down)'

Here also, both the polar verb and vector verb are intransitive. Thus, the compound verb functions as intransitive. The vector verb syntactically gives meaning to the whole compound verb as intransitive and bears all the tense, aspectual, PNG markers. But the polar verb semantically gives meaning to the whole compound verb.

Conclusion

This paper draws the conclusion that Ahirani language exhibits the existence of the compound verbs. The compound verb is formed by the combination of the Polar and Vector verbs in the sequence of V$_1$ + V$_2$. There is a difference between conjunct verb and compound verb. Conjunct verb is the combination of N/adj/adv + V. The compound verb is the combination of V$_1$+V$_2$.

If we look at the data of the Ahirani language, and when we look into the semantics, morphology, syntax of the compound verb. We can conclude that:

• Morphologically, V$_1$ occurs with the stem forming morpheme (SFM) /i/. The V$_2$ does not retain its lexical meaning. V$_2$ carries the aspectual, tense and Person, number, gender markers.

• Semantically, the V$_1$ gives the meaning to the whole compound verb. V$_2$ loses its meaning. The compound verb has the same meaning as that of polar verb and the whole compound verb is replaceable by V$_1$.

Combinations of the compound verb (based on transitivity) in Ahirani are as follows:

➢ V$_1$ (+trans) + V$_2$ (+trans)   ➢ V$_1$ (-trans) + V$_2$ (+trans)

➢ V$_1$ (-trans) + V$_2$ (-trans)   ➢ V$_1$ (+trans) + V$_2$ (-trans)

• Syntactically, the vector verb decides the syntactic meaning of the compound verb. As the vector verb loses some of its specific meaning, it still determines whether the compound verb

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will act as +/- trans. For instance, if the vector verb is transitive, the entire compound verb will also function as transitive. And if the vector verb is intransitive, then the whole compound verb will behave as intransitive. V_2 bears all the inflectional markers for the PNG, tense, aspect etc. So, when the vector verb is transitive with perfective aspect in Ahirani, it will have an ergative case with the subject.

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Anxieties in English Language Learning Among Polytechnic Students - Telangana State in India

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Abstract

Polytechnic students graduate every year through private and government institutions in Telangana. The very purpose of Polytechnic education is to guarantee employment to degree holders. But in the present scenario, most of the diploma holders struggle to get through in a competitive world due to various factors, one of the reason being poor communication skills because of which they fail to perform well at interviews and even if they are placed in good posts, they are unable to communicate well at their workplace. This paper, investigates on how effectively polytechnic students learn the target language in and out of classroom and looks at speaking anxieties that polytechnic students face when trying to communicate in English. This paper also recommends strategies that may be employed to reduce anxieties related to speaking.

Keywords: Polytechnic students, Telangana, anxiety, English language learning

1   Introduction

Communication is very essential for humans. People communicate not by cryptograms but by using language. Since communication, language, and life cannot be separated, we use

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language   to gain and share information, express thoughts, and exchange opinions. Communication in a foreign language, especially English requires practice. In a world that is globalized , it is irrefutable that the attitude towards honing oral communication skills in English is popular in India and English is widely used as a medium of instruction across all educational institutions . English is an international language that is so remarkably associated with every profession, medical, engineering and business that it is necessary for students to be proficient in both oral and written English. "The emerging need for a good communication skill in the English language has created a huge worldwide demand for English among non-native speakers around the globe" (Mehmoodzadeh, 2012p. 466). There are four language skills *listening, reading, speaking, and writing*. Of all these four skills, writing and speaking are collaborative and productive tasks that require respective grammatical discourse patterns. Speaking is one of the most effective ways to communicate, which entails a long cognitive complex process and many students feel hesitant to talk when set oral communication tasks, when they come across this tunnel of learning process.

Today's companies expect potential employees to be well trained and fluent in communication. Higher educational institutions and all polytechnic colleges emphasize communication skills as a prerequisite in the ESL curriculum. Among many streams of education, polytechnic is one which aims at enhancing employability skills, where students learn through hands-on experience. English is not just a language, but an essential skill for students. Students in polytechnic colleges have plenty of opportunities to be employed in different organizations, as soon as they have progressed to diploma, provided they possess soft skills and technical skills. They ultimately must compete with other graduates who have good communication skills in English. Good communication includes the ability to communicate confidently in English, to be able to express one self's freely, and to exchange views without fear. To meet the demands of globalization, all organizations tend to recruit employees who are fluent in English. Thus, technical institutions have a great responsibility in producing graduates and advanced diploma holders who are good at English.

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Language has always been an effective instrument of communication and mastering any language needs a certain set of skills. Self-confidence and anxiety are two factors that influence second language learners in developing their speaking capabilities. Polytechnic students are no exception to this anxiety, worry; panic and low level of self-confidence hamper students to progress in their ability to learn English language. There is a correlation between Students' speaking anxiety, self-confidence, and their ability to acquire good oral proficiency. "Most of the learners express their uncertainties and a feeling of uneasiness against learning English as a foreign language" (Aida (1994).

In a polytechnic classroom setting, a majority of students encounter traumatic experiences with their poor performance in spoken English when they try to learn the language. Horwitz et al. (1986 p.66) emphasized that English language learners face devastating anxiety vis-a-vis oral communication skills in English language, when learning pronunciation, meaning, and grammar (Fielding et al., 2007). Each student faces different degrees of anxiety if they are asked to execute oral tasks in front of the class. Due to anxiety, most of the times students become nervous, feel very uncomfortable and prefer to be silent or reluctant to participate in any of the collaborative oral activities in the classroom. The whole learning process is negatively impacted if the student has language learning anxieties. There is an immediate requirement to address anxiety issues as they can curtail proficiency in language learning. The objective of this paper is to investigate common factors of causing speaking anxiety among polytechnic students and to identify strategies employed by learners to overcome their fear of speaking English.

2   Literature Review

Anxiety is not a bad thing; sometimes it makes the learners self-motivated to acquire the language. All target language learners confront this tendency to anxiety when it comes to learning a new language and polytechnic students are no exception, they experience two-fold anxiety at every stage of their learning the second language, which negatively affects their communication skills. There has been continuous research on measuring anxiety types when

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learners attempt to communicate in a second/foreign language. This paper addresses anxiety related issues in the ESL Class room.

To scrutinize the causes of speaking anxiety, Young (1990) developed an advanced survey with 135 students at the university level and he chose 109 students from school who were keen to learn the language. He discovered that students were very reluctant to speak in front of the teacher and classmate. Kitano (2001) investigated the sources of speaking anxiety among college-level American students who were learning Japanese as their second language. He used a self-rating scale of items prepared by Horwitz, et al. (1986), which showed that fear of negative evaluation and student's low perception towards learning the language determines their level of anxiety. Among the participants, students who had good self-perceived speaking ability encountered lower levels of anxiety compared with those who felt inferior and had low confidence. Kitano (2001) involved 212 Japanese learning students in America to attempt a trial test to answer the items in the scale prepared to test the anxiety level based on self-perception. The results revealed that participants' self-perceptions affected their anxiety level. Students with low self-perceived capability in speaking skills experienced more anxiety compared to those participants with higher self-perceived speaking ability. Liu and Jackson (2008) surveyed 547 first-year Japanese learners of English and identified the positive correlation between language learning anxiety and unwillingness to accomplish oral tasks. According to this survey, many students faced problems in interpersonal dialogues, balancing the fear of negative evaluation.

AL-lawati (1995) discovered that Omani polytechnic students face many difficulties when they speak English. He says that the teachers always concentrate on completion of syllabus instead of focusing on providing ample opportunities to enhance different language skills like vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

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Brown (1993) holds that anxiety is always allied with feelings of uneasiness, self-doubt, apprehension when it must deal with second language learning. Mosaddaq Yahya (2013 pg 466), reported three domains of anxieties, these being

    i.   Communicative anxieties

    ii. Negative feedback anxieties and

    iii. Test anxieties

His studies have shown how communicative anxiety and test anxiety affect learner's cognitive abilities leading to fear of negative feedback. He concludes his paper with the following recommendations:

    a)   Students should have a cheerful atmosphere

    b)   Teaching must be student-centered

    c)   Teachers should understand student anxiety and accordingly modify teaching methods.

3   Problem Statement

Most of the students who join polytechnic courses have rural background and they do not have any exposure to any language other than their mother tongue, because of this, students are unable to speak English when they are required to use target language. The anxiety and low self-confidence adversely impact the ability to use English.

This paper addresses the following questions:

a) What are the different factors leading to anxiety among polytechnic students?

b) What are the strategies that can be used to alleviate anxiety in learning the English language?

c) What are the challenges that the teachers face in teaching English?

4   Objectives of the Paper

This study intends to benefit polytechnic students to identify problems that they encounter when learning a second language, and to cope with anxieties when developing communication skills in the English language.

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4.1 Sources of Anxiety in English Language Classroom Among Polytechnic Students in Developing Their Communication Skills

The demand for communication skills in the modern age has grown so much that every student is being encouraged to learn the English language. Apprehension and anxiety are both common in language learning process. Contemplating this issue of anxiety in the learning process in classrooms is deemed to be an essential challenge to help them develop their communication skills in the second language. Literature reviews show that English language is curriculum centered. Most of the time the opportunity to learn communication skills is given low importance. In most polytechnics, students find it difficult to speak because of limited exposure to English, poor grammar, lack of vocabulary, lack of pronunciation, and interlocutors' language deficiency. A list of common causes of language learning is discussed below.

i) Regional Medium Background

All polytechnic courses are treated as optional courses, and these courses are rarely opted by good rankers, only the underprivileged from rural areas with poor financial backgrounds choose a polytechnic course. Most of the students believe that English is an emblem of status, that those who are economically well off use English to share their scholarly ideas and so feel shy to express themselves in the English language. The very first problem that the polytechnic students specify is *Telugu as their medium of instruction till 10th standard.* Mother tongue influence on the target language is pronounced and they find it difficult to switch to English from Telugu.

ii) Lack of Vocabulary

The meaning of a word is context-based in the English, and lack of adequate vocabulary is a problem for anyone attempting to communicate. Polytechnic students face difficulty in understanding and using lexical patterns of English. They become anxious when they are unable to pick the right word for the right situation. As they have inadequate exposure to different sources of English language, they lack vocabulary. And students find it very

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difficult to choose appropriate vocabulary for the right context in a conversation. They feel very nervous to express themselves.

iii) Teacher Centered Teaching

Teachers resort to a convenient way of teaching and end up doing the minimum to complete syllabus. They seldom provide an opportunity for students to have any task-based activities to develop oral communication skills. Another reason is that most of the students fear making mistakes when speaking before teachers and peer groups as they think such slip ups will eventually impact their end course grades. Teachers prefer lectures in the classroom without any kind of interaction with students and students are merely passive listeners, bored and rigid when they lack opportunities in the classrooms. For collaborative activities with fellow students, they need to interact actively with the teacher and their classmate.

iv) Fear of Making Mistakes

Most of the students are too conscious of making mistakes in sentence formation and very particular about common grammatical errors. Even when an opportunity is given, students show unwillingness to converse in English and they are afraid to make mistakes while speaking, especially when the teacher is trying to correct them. It's because most of the students feel very insecure with the way the teacher handles them, particularly when teachers humiliate students in the name of error correction.

v) Lack of Resources

Most of the polytechnic institutes are in remote areas where students hardly find an ambience that promotes learning a second language. Many of the institutions, lack effective resources such as libraries or digital aids. Students hardly find any classmates or groups they can communicate through English.

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vi) Absence of Self-attentiveness

The polytechnic course aims at improving employability skills and it is designed to impart practical knowledge to students. Most students think that it is very important to gain subject knowledge and consider fluency in English an optional skill. Most students therefore lack self-motivation to speak or learn English. Self-motivation is a basic principle that determines a learner's aptitude on how much energy one can devote towards learning, and how long he preserves it. (Littlewood, 1984 p.57)

vii) Fear of Negative Evaluation

In a classroom, students feel apprehensive that the teachers and class mates are constantly noticing their errors, which silences them. When students are compared with their peers, they develop an inferiority complex. Their self-evaluation of their capabilities and competence leads to their inability to overcome the challenges of speaking English.

viii) Fear of Being Inferior

Students tend to believe that if they make any mistake, classmates mock them and this afftects their self-esteem and identity. Most technical students lack self-motivation to speak or learn English. Self-motivation is a basic principle that determines a learner's aptitude on how much energy one can devote towards learning, and how long he preserves it. (Littlewood, 1984 p.57). Hashemi and Abbasi added that learners get nervous as they come across a high level of proficiency from their teachers, and encounter unequal foreign language competence between teacher and student.

English is essential for a polytechnic student's career. Students confront hurdles in acquiring fluency in English, despite having learnt it for 10 years in schools, even as their medium of instruction. It is observed among polytechnic students that teachers expect them to perform beyond their levels of competence. Students can never speak if they have not yet subconsciously acquired the language. They believe that they can never open their mouth until

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they speak good English, So they prefer to avoid speaking most of the time. Indeed, there are many other individual challenges because of which they are reluctant to speak English.

Fig 1 shows how the whole process of communication is hampered by different kinds of anxieties. Most of the students are very good at understanding and reciprocating the encoded communication but by the time they deliver the message, they are anxiety-ridden and the process communication is badly affected.

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┌──────────┐
│  Sender  │
└────┬─────┘
     ▼
┌──────────┐                    ┌───────────────┐
│  Encode  │                    │  Behavioural  │
└────┬─────┘                    └───────────────┘
     ▼                       ↗
┌──────────┐    ┌───────────┐
│ Message  │──▶ │ Anxieties │
└──────────┘    └───────────┘
                            ↘   ┌───────────────┐
                                │   Cognitive   │
                                └───────────────┘
┌──────────┐
│  Decode  │◀───────────────────────────────────
└────┬─────┘
     ▼
┌──────────┐
│ Receiver │
└──────────┘
```
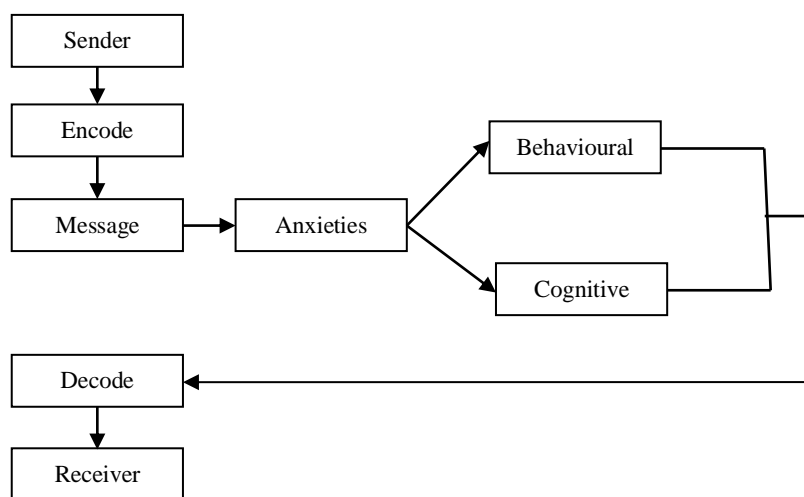
Fig 1: Anxiety hinders the process of Communication

5   Methodology

This paper investigated sources of anxiety among English language learners of polytechnic colleges and sheds some light on the strategies that may be used to combats speaking anxieties among students.

6   Research Design

The nature of this survey is both quantitative and qualitative and it deals with the subject's behavior, perception and motivation. This study is not affected by any of the previous assumptions but involves a direct identification of different types of anxieties that the participants undergo when speaking English.

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7   Participants

The participants of this study were from government polytechnic college Kothagudem. 30 members of 4th-semester diploma students from different socio-economic backgrounds took part in the study.

8   Data Collection Procedure

Individual interviews for 10 minutes were conducted with each student. A questionnaire was designed for the data collection pertaining to speaking anxieties. The findings revealed the causes of anxiety (Table1).

9   Discussion and Results

Every learner has their respective individual experiences and personal anxieties in language learning. Lack of vocabulary and fear of negative evaluation are major factors of anxiety among polytechnic students. These are the following causes they came up with as factors which lead to anxiety.

1. Most students keep thinking that other students have better command of English
2. The more they try to put their oral skills to practice in the classroom, the more disappointed they get.
3. They worry about their pronunciation and accent.
4. They specified that they lack vocabulary due to limited contact with speakers of English and with English language.
5. They feel nervous since they sense their pronunciation is flawed. Added to this, lack of practice, lack of confidence and poor phonetics are the main causes for their anxiety.

10   Strategies to Reduce Speaking Anxiety

After determining the sources of anxieties some techniques that might be useful in the English language classrooms to improve speaking skills of students and to decrease the anxiety levels of polytechnic students are suggested. If they follow some of these strategies, students would improve their communication skills.

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i) Prepare, Practice, and Present (PPP):

Without practice, one can never have a grip on the language. When there is thorough practice the anxiety levels of the students would inevitably diminish. Though the polytechnic students come from rural areas, they are somehow connected with English from childhood, based on this belief if they try to improve them English, in due course of time, students would be able to acquire some fluency in oral communication. There is no magic pill to acquire fluency in any language except practice. Before presenting something in the classroom in front of the whole class, if preparation is done before hand, students won't experience so much anxiety.

No	Sources of anxiety	Parameter	The anxiety level in the students (100%)
1.	Application of grammar rules	Lack of vocabulary	90%
		Pronunciation	80%
		Fear of forming complete correct sentences	90%
2	Fear of negative evaluation	Strict and formal evaluation	90%
		Peer group evaluation	90%
3	Lack of good ambiance	Family background	60%
		Inadequate resources	70%
		Low levels of self confidence	90%

Table 1: **Causes of anxiety levels**

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ii) Expertise over vocabulary:

Learning new words to enhance one's vocabulary is a solution. Many students experience anxiety frequently when they need to pick words apt for the situations. Most of the time they don't find the right word to embellish their conversation with. When words are learned in groups, phrases, and chunks it becomes easy to master vocabulary and that results in reduction of anxiety when using target language.

iii) Think in English:

Previous research has revealed that students always tend to translate the conversation into their mother tongue and then re-translate it to their target languages: it takes a lot of efforts to think and talk naturally in the second language. It is suggested that if students can think and respond to conversations without translations, students would face no anxiety.

iv) Use of Technology:

Audio-visual aids play a vital role in helping students get a good grip over language and decrease anxiety levels. If students take the initiation to listen to English through news channels and other sources; if they can practice pronunciations, they get used to language so well that it slowly improves their spoken English. All that they need is interest and some time to spend in practicing language from online and offline sources that are available.

v) Self-talk:

If students are anxious to communicate in the classrooms in front of the teacher, the strategy of self-talks would work out. They should practice the whole presentation before a mirror until they are perfect with their speech,and they can identify their errors and correct themselves without fear of negative evaluation.

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To improve communication skills and to reduce anxiety levels, students should seek out discrete ways of developing better communication skills and thus reduce levels of anxiety. Students should be communicative in classrooms when taking part in group discussions, Just a minute sessions, mock interviews and role plays to overcome their fear of anxiety. Students should realize that communication errors are a part of speaking which would be corrected in due course of time.

As shown in **fig 2**, students should employ different means to reduce their anxiety levels. Particularly, this study recommends that English language teachers of polytechnic support students to minimize their anxiety in the classroom by providing adequate time for different communicative activities, to build confidence among students. They should make the teaching context less anxiety-provoking. While a few teachers are strict in terms of accuracy and they believe in snubbing students on the spot, they need to curb this practice and instead assist students to perform well in second language classrooms. English teachers have a crucial role to motivate students to alleviate speaking anxiety among them and to ensure this, learners must be encouraged by teachers to perform well in terms of acquiring the language naturally. In this context, it is also necessary to shed some light on teacher's roles and challenges that they encounter while teaching English to polytechnic students.

11   Challenges faced by English teachers in polytechnic classrooms

Learner's level of anxiety reduces, and they get motivated to learn English with the efforts of teacher. To reduce embarrassments to students, teachers should invest more of themselves in classroom settings inspite of the challenges they encounter. English language teachers face insurmountable challenges some of which figured below:

i.   Inadequate teaching resources:

Not only English classrooms but any teaching would mostly depend on resources. English language teaching in most polytechnics is carried out with inadequate resources. Effective English language teaching is possible only when there are adequate resources like good

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infrastructure, digital devices, and audio-lingual aids. As we discussed above most of the government polytechnics are in rural areas, where not only the students but teachers have limited access to resources. Non-availability of technical support and lack of teaching aids are problems that teachers face.

ii. Bilingual classroom.

This is a universal challenge that all English teachers face. Most of the polytechnic students come from regional medium background. Generally, polytechnic students from urban areas face less difficulty during the process of learning the language, their home environment helps students to acquire and follow the language quickly while, for students from rural area polytechnics, bilingual method should be adopted to teach English. Students tend to learn English through translation mode so that they request English teachers to use bilingual method. This method contributes to real learning process as a whole .Though teachers encourage learners to speak in English they find it easy to communicate in their mother language. It is a difficult task for an English teacher to make learners communicate in English.

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                  ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                  │ Ways of reducing anxiety among   │
                  │ polytechnic students             │
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Ways of reducing anxiety among polytechnic students

Establishment of learner support

Media intervention

student cantered learning classroom

Self-talks
Developing reading skill
Enhancing good list of vocabulary

YouTube channels

News channels

Animated English based movies

Group discussions
Enactment of group discussions
Interaction with teacher
Practicing conversation with peer groups

Fig 2: Ways of reducing anxiety among polytechnic students.

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iii. Limited time for lecture to teach

Time is the most important tool in teaching language. Teachers hardly get two to three hours per week and the stipulated period is used to complete the syllabus and to meet the targets they have been assigned. Thus, there is not enough time for teachers to organize extra teaching activities. There are other constraints to such as a large number of students in the classrooms, lack of student's initiative to use English, etc. Though teachers face many impediment to teach English,it's their primary responsibility to involve students in the language learning process by creating a safe environment with plenty of interactive sessions, by teaching English through games, and different alternative methods and approaches that appeal to students.

12   Conclusion

Though from ages research is in progress with regard to learner anxieties in learning the second language, only a small segment has addressed anxiety among polytechnic learners. The findings have shown that polytechnic students encounter different types of anxieties when learning English language and acquiring better communication skills .

It is evident that speaking anxiety would adversely impact language learning. This study aims to guide polytechnic students to tackle issues of speaking anxieties in learning the target language. More efforts are needed to ensure that teachers create a stress-free and comfortable classroom environment. Further research should be initiated in this field to discover other factors that may be related to English speaking anxieties among polytechnic students. New and better strategies may be designed to teach speaking effectively.

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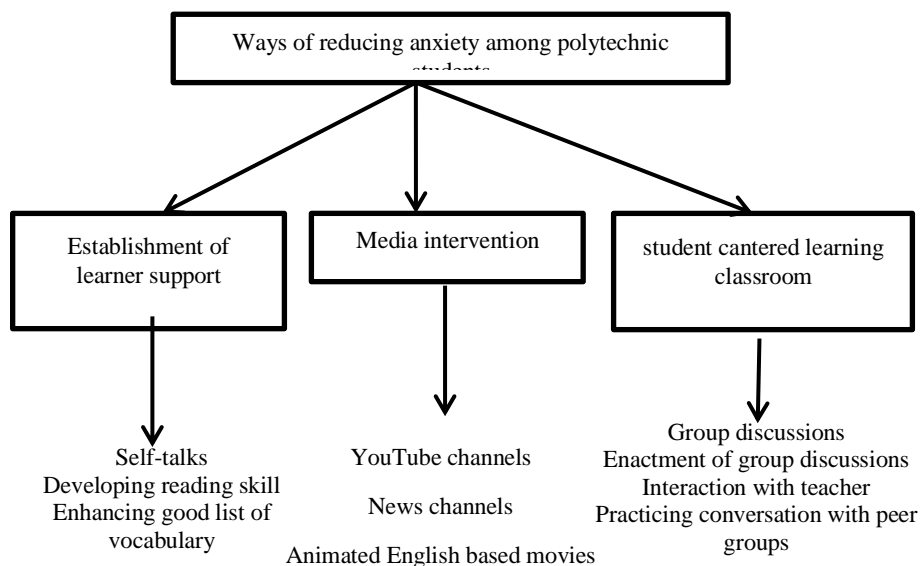**Language in India** www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:2 February 2025**
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A Study of Epistolary Narrative Voicing Ecowomanism in Alice Walker's Novel *The Color Purple*

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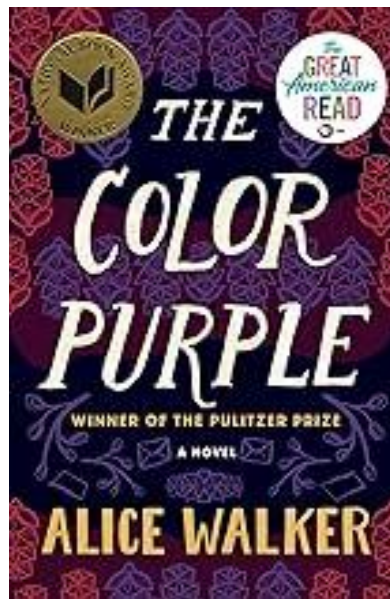
Courtesy: www.amazon.com

Abstract

This study analyses Alice Walker's use of epistolary narrative in her most celebrated novel *The Color Purple* and discovers the merits of narrative style in propagating Ecowomanism. This famous woman writer pens about the miseries of suppressed black women. *The Color Purple* deals with the feeble condition of women in male dominated society and the way they existed unaware of their own self. Ecowomanism is a theory of

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African American women thinkers who debunk the stereotypes against African Americans and expose the environmental works of Afro Americans to the world. This research paper aims at the protagonist's self-discovery who is a coloured, illiterate and quieted girl of fourteen years in the beginning of the novel but turns out to be an independent woman by the end of the novel. It also evaluates the impact of narrative technique in communicating environmental activism.

Keywords: Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*, Epistolary Narrative, Narrative Technique, Self-Discovery, Black Female Experience, Ecowomanism.

Introduction

Epistolary narratives are the stories narrated through the medium of multiple letters by one or more characters in the story. Though the usual form is letter diary entries, newspaper clipping and other forms of documents are also used in epistolary novels. The style is traced back to Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* 1740, in which the female character Damsel writes a series of letters to her partner. The huge popularity received by Richardson, inspired many writers like William Hill Brown and Tobias Smollett in the 18th century. But the style was less used in the early 19th century, except few works like Bram Stoker's powerful epistolary usage in "Dracula" of 1897. In the 20th century most of the writers used few letters in their works, but there are very few examples of complete epistolary novels. Recently the genre has grown into emails, presentations and other recent forms of communications in writing and films. There are a number of American writers employed the epistles in their works to achieve various purposes. Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* published in the year 1983, which uses the epistolary form extensively. The present study is limited to the use of epistolary form by Walker in *The Color Purple*. The main focus is upholding the merits of literary form by investigating the impact created by the writer selecting the form in spreading Ecowomanism.

Alice Walker constructed the theory of Womanism, to express the experiences of black women who were not included in mainstream feminism. With the development of women movements, feminists moved to ecofeminism and Afro American women thinkers to Ecowomanism. Ecowomanism is more inclusive, it advocates equality for all and exposes all kinds of oppression of men and women, other living beings and the mother earth. The

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systematic theory of Ecowomanism is written by Melanie L Harris in her book, "Ecowomanism: African American Women and Earth Honouring Faiths". According to Harris, the important steps of Ecowomanism are: i) Honoring the experience and Mining Ecomemory, ii) Critical reflection on experience and ecomemory, iii) Womanist intersectional analysis iv) critically examining African And African American History and Tradition, v) Engaging transformation, vi)Sharing Dialogue (Harris M, 23-59)

Literature Review

The tradition of epistolary narrative is found in the early English novels and used by many writers in different periods. But Alice Walker uses it in her magnum opus *The Color Purple* in entirely different mode. According to UKessays, "This technique allows Celie to speak for herself; she also gets to structure her identity and her sense of self by writing her letters. Celie's letters, her growing ability to express her thoughts point to her spiritual development and also pave the way for her independence. The novel's narrative technique is linked with the novel's main thematic image of gaining an identity, of rebirth and of survival. Through the form, Walker also links a formal and western tradition to an oral and distinctly African American folk expression."

Walker's use of form does not restrict her from exploring societal issues of her times. "Walker revolves the story of her novel The Color Purple around two characters, Celie and Nettie, but actually she is talking about the whole society that is full of domestic violence which includes both physical and mental abuse, racialism and patriarchy (Zafar)

It is obvious for a learned character to use a letter but Walker makes Celie to write letter in broken sentences with the words she manages to learn from her sister. Along with Celie's self-exploration, exploration of outside world she is exploring language and we find at the end of the novel an accomplished woman. So is the opinion of Weisenburger, Steven C, "Alice Walker takes a form with a firm set of associations and uses it to tell the story of someone opposite to the kind of person you normally would find as the main character of an epistolary novel". (Steven,30)

Speaking about the themes used by Walker, Patrrica Harris Abrams says "Walker explores themes, many of which germinate in her earlier short stories and poetry, which illuminate the human condition: loss of innocence, search for faith, the nature of human

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suffering and triumph of human spirit. Additionally, she examines some taboos in that relationship between women as well as between parents and children." (Abrams) She also expresses the thoughts on use of epistolary narrative while writing "This epistolary method provides Walker with a means of revealing the past in order to provide an understanding of the source of the oppression of the black woman." (Abrams) In the novel Nettie's letters contain a lot of information about Olinka, an African tribe, with whom Nettie stays as a part of missionary. She writes to Celie about the hard work women do while men sit relaxed. She pens about their practice of female genitalia mutilation in bloody initiation rites. Exposing injustice is essentially a part of Ecowomanism. The letter form makes it easier for Nettie to report the experiences of Africa as it is to her sister.

By the literature survey it is apparent that Walker's use of epistolary narrative is different from the conventional practice of writing. The adoption of style was with a purpose and her craftsmanship has successfully fitted the style to narrate the modern period experience giving a new surge to the old literary technique.

Walker's Use of Epistolary Narrative in *The Color Purple*

The novel *The Color Purple* is a story of Celie, a14-year-old, young black American, unschooled girl. The misery of the protagonist in the novel is multi-faceted. She was mentally and physically abused continuously by her father, the truth of him being her step father was revealed to her many years later, towards the end of the novel. She was poor and uneducated adding to that raped and silenced by her step-father. She becomes more miserable when she loses her mother resulting in the entry of step-mother into the house. Conventionally the letters are written by the superior class learned character, but here it is inverse. She manages to write with the broken sentences which she has learned from her sister Nettie. As she cannot speak to anyone, she addresses her letters to God. In the essay it is rightly pointed out that letters were a ray of hope for Celie to express herself so that she can free her mind "Letters afford her a voice which otherwise she does not have" (StudyMoose). To any human being communication is a gift and having nobody to speak with is imprisonment. Celie being the victim of inhuman violence by people around her, this kind of isolation worsens her condition. In this context the letters play a crucial role in her story.

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Ecowomanism encourages women to speak about their experiences. It is committed to fighting against female oppression. Walker, in using Epistolary narrative, gives an instrument to the readers to fight against oppression. The act of writing about the experiences helps the oppressed to relieve mental stress and gives a chance to ponder over the experience and makes them feel comfortable fighting against the oppression. Honouring experience is the first step in Ecowomanism. Writing is the best way of honouring one's experience. Letter form gives scope for writing the experience as experienced. The language and expression used by the writer has undergone transformation as the protagonist passes through various experiences and understands herself and the world around her. The language is used carefully; the dialect reinforces the charm of this old literary form.

Walker has used many letters in *The Color Purple* and the arrangement of the letter sequence itself is decisive for the story line. The suspense and the realistic account of travel in time and place is achieved through the narrative. The novel has 90 letters in total, and among them the first 51 are written by Celie. The remaining ones are of Nettie, sister of Celie, the only soul with whom Celie connects and establishes mutual understanding loving each other unconditionally. Critical examination is possible when others think about the experience. Alice Walker by making Celie write her experience, make readers and Nettie reflect on her experiences which is the second step in Ecowomanism.

One aim of epistolary novels is to give insight into somebody's thoughts. This form has aided Walker to present the inner voice of an African American marginalized female, her loss of identity, her position as silent sufferer, her search for identity, her self-exploration, her revolt, her struggle and finally independence. "The first twenty-eight letters Celie writes roughly constitute Kenosis. However, the loss or sacrifice of virginity--a loss or violent taking of her innocence--which should mark the end of the liminal period is the beginning of her kenosis. The opening inscription to the novel, "Tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy," gives the reader the first clue of Pa's dastardly deed--the apparently incestuous sexual molestation--that circumscribes Celie's life. She is sworn to secrecy by the force of Pa's authority and held in a speechless bond by fear of her mother discovering what has taken place." (Preston) So the narrative style has helped in revealing the female oppression in an effective manner as the narration goes in first person. It also exposes inner feeling of African American woman who is oppressed physically and mentally in her own household.

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Ecowomanism concerns the oppression of black women, and also views it parallel to the exploitation of earth. The novel in a parallel line gives the account of colonization of African land by the Europeans.

The novel, written as a series of letters, permits Celie to speak for herself; She, in search of her identity, finds her lost or forgotten self and constructs it in the process of penning down her experience. The letters also express her growth in terms of ability to communicate, spiritual advancement, and also her journey towards independence in the family and society. The theme of the novel, gaining new identity and struggle for survival is also linked with epistolary narrative technique. There is a meeting point of western formal culture and African tradition achieved through this form of narrative. The study of African culture and accepting earth honouring practices are aims of ecowmanism. "Did you know there were great cities in Africa, greater than Milledgeville or even Atlanta, thousands of years ago?" (p123) There are many earth-worshiping ways of Africans brought in the novel. The roof leaf tree is worshiped as God by the Olinkans. They also have an Ecomemory to share related to the roof leaf.

The Color Purple has the character Celie who is lonely and the letters are the finest medium for her to express her feelings. Unlike traditional epistolary novels Walker has introduced letters unread. Letters are meant to be exchanged to convey the message. But here all initial letters by Celie are addressed to God whom she thinks never listens. Her sister's letters were hidden by Celie's husband so were unread for quite a long time until Shug manages to find it and gives it back to Celie. Readers really don't find a kind of conversation between the two in the letters, but they are written to express the sorrow, exploitation and helplessness by Celie. Nettie writes to send messages to Celie and to keep her informed about what is happening in her life. It also gives detailed information about African tribes and their culture. Critics say that Celie has never used her letter to ask about Nettie, but examining the traumatic condition in which Celie is in, with no formal education, we cannot expect more than what she has scribbled in the dialect she is familiar with. This local language also serves to downpour her feelings as she felt it and gives legitimacy to her writings. As giving emphasis on thoughts, feelings, and emotions is one feature of epistolary novels, both the sisters convey their moods, sentiments and thinking in their letters. They seem direct,

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intimate and real as it is their own first-hand account of understanding. This frankness is also needed for an ecowomanist to speak about the injustice on women and on mother earth.

Though the letters are written by only two characters of the novel, it is not limited to two sisters. The story unfolds the experience of larger society and the sufferings of the Afro-Americans in general. Celie gives the accounts of Sofia's struggle, revolts and misery in her letters. It includes the suffering of popular women of the time with the character Shug. It also speaks about the mindset of African American men towards women. Mr. Albert in the course of the novel tells Celie that she is black; she is ugly and good for nothing. Inhuman treatment is not limited to Celie, Harpo too beats his wife and tries to control her. It is also the journey of African American society because the novel presents the societal changes that happen in the new generation, the changing mind-set of people.

The development of people by missionaries as against the helping hand of fellow people who wholeheartedly help and encourage one another is posed in the novel. The female bonding is another theme in the novel, the two sisters, Celie and Shug, Sophia and Celie all share strong bonding in the novel. *The Color Purple* voices against black lynching by referring to Celie's father's case and also Sophia who had to serve the whites household as punishment. In brief the novel mirrors the experiences of African American women and the society of the period. It is much more than the story of two sisters, it is about societal change, and it's about change in the mind-set of people in general and of the thinkers. At the end of the novel, Celie addresses the letter not just to God, her vision has broadened; "Dear God, Dear Star, dear trees, dear sky, dear people. Dear everything. Dear God," (p. 249).

Conclusion

The epistolary form in the hand of Alice Walker becomes ironic due to her extraordinary craftsmanship. Walker uses it to explore the inner trauma of an African American downtrodden girl. Unlike conventional letter writers, Walker's character is poor and miserable. Celie, being not well educated, provides a multidimensional approach to the novel. Education and being able to communicate is promoted as a weapon against subjugation of women. The same can be used for voicing against exploitation of earth. It is Celie's story, it's African American's story, it is the voice of an Afro-American female, it's the revelation of many taboos, and it's about the entire society. The letters explore several

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journeys here; Celie's self-exploration, Celie's growth in terms of using language, her spiritual journey, societal transformation, male-female relationship, racism, poverty, lesbian relationship, white missionaries, the life of Africans and their culture and environmental conservation. The conservative writers use it between the protagonists to exchange information and feelings, but Walker by not exchanging the letters gives more meaning to it. The timing of the letters also carefully arranged to give climax to the story which raises the importance of letters in the novel. The old form fitting the new situation creates magic by reviving itself.

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Gender Stereotypes in the Higher Educational Institutions of Bihar and Jharkhand: Impact on Career Choices for Women

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Abstract

Gender discrimination is not just encoded in language and linguistic codes but in other modes of expression like color choices in art forms and shapes and sizes of symbols creating and contextualizing gender stereotypes in social minds. Such stereotypes result in limited opportunities for women in the professional domains, especially in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Such prevailing stereotypes not only limit professional prospects for women but also condition them into self-doubt owing to the 'normalization' of such a discriminatory mindset as a social reality. Such conditioning results from consistent exposure to subtle social cues and practices that impact their cognition, leading to them not choosing or opting out of STEM fields. This study investigates the socio-cognitive effects of gender stereotypes in the linguistic landscape (LL) of twelve higher education

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institutions in Bihar and Jharkhand and its impact on the balance of opportunities for women. Content analysis of the photographs suggests that the LL in the institutions is gendered, which also strongly impacts the attitude, both male and female, about career choices. As gender-based disparities lead to unevenness in society, the study highlights the need to change the social reality through subtle changes in the linguistic landscape, especially within educational institutions.

Keywords: Gender Stereotypes, Higher Educational Institutions, Bihar and Jharkhand, Culture and cognition, culture and education, gender discrimination, gender stereotype, linguistic landscape

Introduction

Gender has been depicted as a multi-dimensional, historically changing structure of social relations constructed in active social practices (Connell, 1987). These social practices often cognitively impact society by creating guiding principles that determine how the genders perform social roles. These 'social roles' often limit humans in recognizing an individual's true potential beyond societal expectations. This, in fact, is a stereotype. A stereotype may be defined as an overstated perception linked to a specific group utilized to rationalize one's behavior concerning that group (Allport, 1954). Lipmann (1922) states that a stereotype can be described as a persistent and broadly generalized belief about a specific class or group of individuals, often noted as a phenomenon in scientific inquiry. In other words, it could be implied that stereotypes are thought to assist individuals in simplifying and managing the complexity of the social environment (Lipmann, 1922).

Stereotypes, according to Hamilton (1979), occur when a perceiver makes judgments about another person solely based on that person's membership in a particular group. Since individuals cannot communicate and comprehend every group member, they judge the entire group based on their observations about some of them. Gender is a social construction, and individuals often distinguish between genders and develop ideas about the characteristic traits and behaviors associated with each gender (Liu et al., 2023). These gender stereotypes partly encapsulate the distinctions between males and females (Ellemers, 2018).

Gender stereotypes, similar to other social stereotypes, are a manifestation of observers noting people's everyday behaviors (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). Numerous studies have revealed

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that gender stereotypes label women as communal and warm (nurturing and caregiving) as opposed to labeling men as agentic (being dominant, adventurous, and aggressive) (Biernat & Sesko, 2018; Kahalon et al., 2018; Eagly, 1987). These convictions empower members of a society to manage conduct, authorize specific actions, penalize or constrain others, and delineate what is deemed acceptable or condemned within a community (Romera, 2015; Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 1998, 2003). Gender stereotyping poses a substantial challenge to the advancement of women's careers, particularly in management roles (Tabassum & Nayak, 2021). Stereotypes can either benefit or harm cognitive performance in men and women depending on whether the participants perceive the testing environment as frightening or challenging (Betz & Hackett, 1981).

Gender stereotypes are prevalent in our society to such an extent that even certain occupations and careers have become gendered. While considering professions, a typical or representative image of the occupational group may be conjured in one's mind (He et al., 2019).

In childhood, the socialization process of genders is often shaped by the expectations of teachers and parents regarding the roles, behaviors, and attitudes of children, and this influence directs males and females towards professions perceived as suitable for their respective genders (Ramaci et al., 2017).

Educational premises expose students to subtle cues regarding their expected social roles, thus profoundly impacting nascent cognitive minds in their formative years. Consequently, professions viewed as practical are often seen as masculine, making them more favored by males, while social and artistic roles are traditionally associated with femininity and are thus preferred by females (Ji et al., 2004). While growing up, male children are allowed to engage in mechanical, scientific, and technical activities compared to female children (Betz & Hackett, 1997). Despite the absence of gender-based variations in academic grades, parents are more inclined to perceive science as both less captivating and more challenging for their daughters compared to their sons (Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2003).

Literature Review

The subsequent paragraphs offer a comprehensive review of prior research on gender stereotypes and their impacts on career choices, presenting diverse viewpoints and insights derived from global studies. Studies have revealed that boys tend to confine their aspirations to careers traditionally dominated by males (often in high prestige), whereas girls show interest

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in a broader spectrum of careers, encompassing both traditionally male-dominated and female-dominated options (Mendez & Crawford, 2002). It is seen that there is a higher proportion of men in comparison to women in careers like law enforcement, whereas occupations like nursing have a higher proportion of women than men (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Jarman et al., 2012). Certain occupations are categorized as 'women's jobs' or 'men's jobs,' contributing to a discernible gap in the distribution of occupations between women and men (Bradley, 2000; Maccoby, 1998). It has been revealed that there is a tendency for women to surpass men in the teaching profession, while in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, men tend to outnumber women (Meece, 2006; Messersmith et al., 2008). Snyder & Dillow's (2012) study reveals that in 2011, women obtained 80 percent of the degrees in education, 85 percent in nursing and health professions, and 77 percent in psychology, while it was 30 percent, 19 percent, and 29 percent for economics, physics, and engineering, and philosophy respectively. A study by Ramaci et al. (2017) found that among Italian adolescents, females more commonly express an inclination to pursue further education, while males tend to prefer non-university routes, such as military careers. Additionally, more women than men place considerable importance on factors such as employment prospects, access conditions, class size, and, notably, the availability of practical workshops in their university courses.

Existing research also indicates no discernible gender disparities in academic grades related to performance achievement (Mozahem, 2020). According to Bandura et al. (2001), their path analysis demonstrates that, while overall perceived academic self-efficacy did not differ between boys and girls, boys exhibited higher self-efficacy, specifically in math, science, and technology. Girls, on the other hand, demonstrated greater efficacy in educational and health-related fields. Other studies, such as Cech et al. (2011), have also indicated that females tend to have lower confidence and self-efficacy in fields like engineering.

Research indicates that gender differences in grades related to performance are non-existent. However, if a significant number of women choose not to pursue STEM fields, they might miss the chance to evaluate their abilities in these areas. This avoidance could impede their mastery development, as proficiency usually requires engaging multiple times (Bandura, 1982). Despite the increasing participation of women in STEM education and professions, persistent gender disparities exist, with women exhibiting a lower likelihood of involvement in STEM education and pursuing STEM careers compared to men (Charlesworth & Banaji, 2019;

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Wang & Degol, 2017). In the United States, research indicates that during middle school, the intention to pursue STEM-related careers is more than twice as prevalent among boys as girls (Legewie & DiPrete, 2014).

The under-representation of women in STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) is globally observed (Ceci & Williams, 2011). In India, just like in marriages, an individual's educational decisions are usually decided by family members, especially their parents (Mukhopadhyay, 2018). The subjects a student chooses in high school generally determine their future study path. Gender role stereotypes lead to the gender labeling of school subjects. Subjects related to language are commonly viewed as predominantly associated with females, while Mathematics is often perceived as predominantly linked with males (Whitehead, 1996), a perception shared not only by students but also by teachers (Simpson, 1974; Keller, 2001). The selection of career options or alternatives is shaped by a combination of external factors, such as the labor market and economic conditions, as well as internal factors, including education, family background, and individual attitudes (Agarwala, 2008). The gender-based categorization of careers emerges during the initial stages of adolescence, potentially manifesting in middle school or the initial phases of high school (Adya & Kaiser, 2005). Culture, too, plays an important role. The career-related choices of students are anticipated to be influenced by cultural values, impacting the various factors and relationships involved (Agarwala, 2008). Hofstede's (1980) empirical index on cultural dimensions reveals that Western countries, including the USA, the UK, and Australia, tend to align with individualist tendencies, while Asian nations such as Japan, Taiwan, and India lean towards collectivist inclinations. In this context, "individualism" denotes a propensity for individuals to prioritize their interests, perceive themselves as independent from organizations, and emphasize self-reliance and individual actions; on the other hand, "collectivism" refers to the inclination of individuals to perceive themselves as interdependent within a larger group, prioritizing the interests of the group members (Agarwala, 2008). In the Indian context, individuals prefer to take the collectivist approach in choosing their careers as it prioritizes the interests of group members, especially family members.

The patrifocal nature of Indian society primarily influences the Indian academic science environment. Patrifocality pertains to family structures and beliefs within kinship systems that prioritize men over women (Mukhopadhyay & Seymour, 1994; Subrahmanyan, 1998). The

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predominant hindrances to women's education in India have been the existence of robust patrifocal structures and ideologies (Gupta & Sharma, 2003).

Gaps and Motivation

A high school degree enables individuals to prepare for the future by securing employment, negotiating for better wages, and enhancing their household's standard of living (Hussain, 2011). Nevertheless, in South Asia, there is a perception that parents have lower motivation to educate their daughters up to this level (Hussain, 2011). Significant evidence points to gender disparity in education in India, with girls historically falling behind boys in educational achievements (Aggarwal, 1987; Agrawal & Aggarwal, 1994). Moreover, India's significant preference for male children is a result of the cultural construct of Indian society, which perpetuates gender bias against men and women, with varied degrees and variable circumstances against the opposite sex (Kohli, 2017). India is ranked 141st out of 142 countries and 2062 districts worldwide that are considered gender critical in terms of women's survival and health relative to men (Kohli, 2017). Studies indicate that the impact of female education on social outcomes such as fertility, child health, and infant mortality is more significant than male education (Drèze & Murthi, 2001; Subbarao & Raney, 1995). A regional disparity in gender literacy exists in India, especially marked by a North-South divide with higher gender disparity in education noticeable in Northern and Central Indian states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh (Sopher, 1980), especially in the Hindi speaking regions of India. Begum and Sinha's (2017) study attempts to highlight the prevalence of gender bias in Hindi, linking language use to stereotypical and discriminatory behavior against women. Interestingly, existing research has not investigated the impact of the subtle cues that are presented to the students within the premises of educational institutions in the form of their visual landscape reinforcing gender stereotypes and disparate behaviors, which oftentimes go against the classroom teachings.

The current study has been undertaken to fill the gap so that society as a whole becomes sensitive to the contents that are exposed to the impressionable mind. Two states, Bihar and Jharkhand, have been selected for this study.

Objectives

The gap, as identified in the previous sections, thus leads to the study's objectives: to investigate whether gender stereotypes are visible in the schoolscape and how they impact an

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individual's career choices. The focus of this study is on individuals from two states in India - Bihar and Jharkhand. Thus, this study attempts to highlight such characteristics of the LL within educational institutions and discusses their impact on students' attitudes and career choices. The objective has been crystalized into two research questions here:

1. Is the schoolscape gendered in the context of higher educational institutions in Bihar and Jharkhand?

2. How do such gender stereotypes cognitively influence the students' career choices?

Figure 1. Map of India highlighting Bihar and Jharkhand
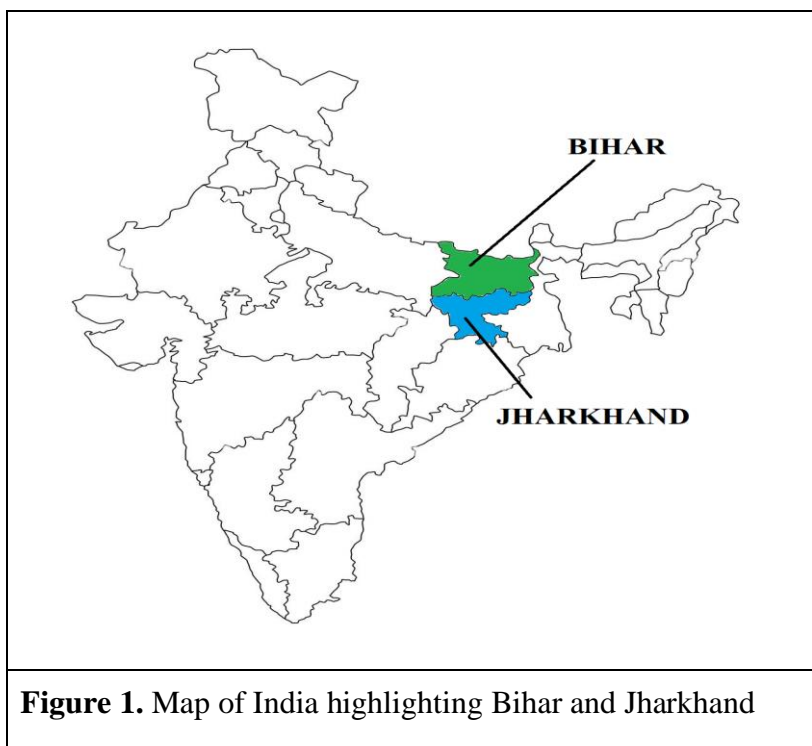
Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This section presents the theoretical framework and methodology adopted for this study.

Social Cognitive Theory

In addition to cultural values, cognition also plays an important role. Social cognitive theory (SCT) is one of the predominant theories employed to elucidate observed gender disparities in career preferences (Mozahem, 2020). The Social Cognitive Theory, proposed by Bussey and Bandura (1999), provides a framework for comprehending why women continue to be underrepresented in particular disciplines. This theory holds that learning is closely related to a person's observation of other people in social situations and interactions.

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Bhattacherjee and Sinha's (2023) study tries to understand the impact of the use of animal imagery in social media discourse on human behavior towards animals. This study uses conceptual metaphor and conceptual blending theories to highlight the relations between language, cognition, and manifested behavior.

The socio-cognitive domain also controls gender stereotypes. Social cognitive career theory proposes that self-efficacy significantly influences interest development and future educational and occupational decisions. Self-efficacy also plays a vital role in an individual's career choices. It functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy (Betz, 2004). Betz and Hackett (1981) and Hackett and Betz (1981), using social cognitive theory, explained differences in career choices between males and females. They found that female college students demonstrated reduced self-efficacy for occupations traditionally associated with males, whereas male students exhibited comparable self-efficacy for roles historically dominated by men.

Self-efficacy is often associated with the underrepresentation of women in STEM fields. In 1977, Bandura first described self-efficacy expectations as people's confidence in their ability to carry out a specific activity. Perceived self-efficacy is an evaluation of one's talents that are impacted by and affect performance rather than being only based on objective skills. Instead, it molds how we use our abilities (Lent & Hackett, 1987). Layton's (1984) significant discovery revealed that career salience moderates the influence of self-efficacy on occupational consideration, with career self-efficacy being a more reliable predictor for women with high career salience. Hackett and Betz (1981) highlighted the potential of self-efficacy theory to explain women's professional advancement by extending it to career behavior. According to their concept, societal views instilled via socialization experiences may represent substantial obstacles to professional choice and successful behavior, influencing self-efficacy-related cognitive beliefs.

Methodology for Data Analysis

The methodology adopted for this study is content analysis and data collection through a questionnaire. Content analysis is employed to analyze the images of educational institutions' posters, advertisements, and wall paintings. The theory of multimodality proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) is applied to analyze the images. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021) define multimodality as using multiple semiotic modes to create a semiotic product or event. Advertisements, posters, and wall paintings are filled with diverse communication strategies,

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such as various fonts and vibrant colors, to quickly capture the viewer's attention. Along with this, they also feature slogans and captions. Both the verbal and non-verbal elements have to be analyzed to interpret the meaning associated with these images; hence, the multimodal framework has been employed.

Data Collection

Twelve higher education institutions from Patna and Gaya (Bihar) and Jamshedpur and Ranchi (Jharkhand) were selected for data collection. The two states' highest two most populated cities were selected based on the census data (Indian Census, 2011). As per the Indian Census 2011, Bihar is one of the most populated states in India, with 104 million total population. The male-to-female ratio in Bihar is 918 per 1000 males. Jharkhand has a population of 32.9 million, and the sex ratio of Jharkhand is 948 per 1000 males. To address the first research question, photographic data (n=240) comprising posters, art, and other images were collected from higher education institutions.

These educational institutes offer undergraduate degree courses, diploma courses, post-graduate degree courses, and doctoral degree courses. Only those images were collected where a male or female figure was present for the photographic data collection. Posters, art, advertisements, and other images found in hallways, classrooms, and common rooms (recreational rooms in institutes) were considered. No data was collected from individual residential spaces (hostel rooms).

For the second study, data was gathered through a structured questionnaire with multiple-choice response formats. Its design drew upon existing literature for formulation. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed, and informed consent was obtained from each of the respondents. Out of a total of 225 responses initially, 23 were discarded due to their incompleteness. Hence, for the final analysis, 202 responses were considered. Respondents (n = 202, mean age = 21.40, SD = 3.82) were either in their undergraduate degrees or postgraduate degrees. Of the total participants, 62.9% (n=127) were males, and 37.1% (n=75) were females. 76.7% (n=155) of the participants were in Undergraduate courses; 101 were males, and 54 were females. 23.3% (n=47) are in Postgraduate courses; 26 were males, and 21 were females. 85.1% (n=172) belonged to Science and Technology; 115 were males, and 57 were females, 8.9% (n=18) belonged to Humanities and Social Sciences; 9 were males, and 9 were females, and 5.9% (n=12) belonged to Commerce and Finance; 3 are males 9 are females.

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Analysis

The following sections attempt to analyze both the photographic data as well as the questionnaire to understand their socio-cognitive impact through two subsections: Analytical Study 1 and Analytical Study 2 below. Study 1 is further subdivided into three distinct themes, as explained below.

Analytical Study 1

The following sections attempt to analyze both the photographic data.

The following section shows the analysis of images. The analysis is subdivided into three themes:

- Images showing males and females in gendered activities.
- Images showing males and females in different gender roles.
- Images showing female empowerment.

Images showing males and females in gendered activities
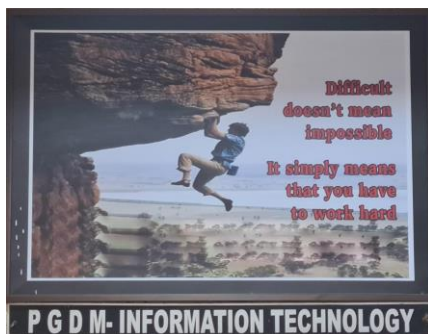
Figure 2. Poster showing motivation

Figure 3. Painting of a girl dancing

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Figure 4. Advertisement for a sports **Figure 5.** A woman doing yoga
competition

Numerous visual representations in outdoor sports and adventurous activities consistently depict males as predominant participants, contributing to the establishment and reinforcement of gendered perceptions. The prevalent portrayal of men in these activities perpetuates the belief that traits such as risk-taking and adventurous spirit are inherently associated with the male gender, while females are notably underrepresented in similar scenarios. Moreover, even when females are depicted, they are frequently portrayed in the company of males, reinforcing the societal notion that women are less inclined to engage in independent risk-taking pursuits.

In specific visual instances, such as depicting a man engaged in rock climbing accompanied by a quote, 'Difficult doesn't mean impossible. It simply means that you must work hard,' subtle associations may inadvertently reinforce gendered interpretations (Figure 2). Additionally, within the context of sports, visual content tends to showcase male players in activities like basketball and badminton (Figure 4), while representations of females are often confined to traditionally feminine pursuits such as dancing and yoga (Figures 3 and 5). This contributes to the gendering of activities, where sports are predominantly associated with males, reinforcing societal stereotypes.

Images showing males and females in different gender roles

Figure 6. Advertisement for a soft drink

Figure 7. Advertisement of Nestle products

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Figure. 8. Poster of motivation
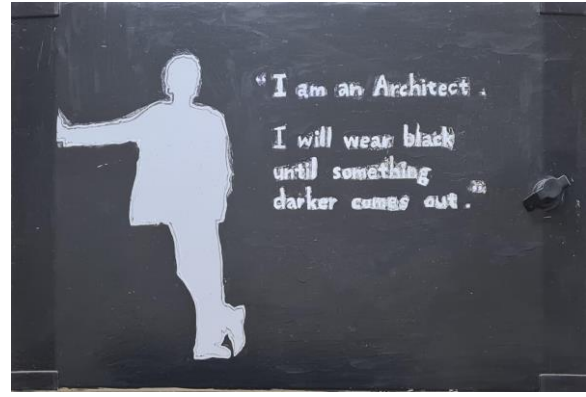
Figure 9. Poster showing an architect

In the context of visual representations in posters and advertisements, distinct gender roles are often depicted. Females are frequently portrayed in casual and dream-like scenarios. An illustration features a woman thinking about a romantic event where a boy gives flowers to a girl (Figure 8). Another image (Figure 6) depicts two women consuming soft drinks and smiling or sharing a laugh while looking at a mobile phone. A third image (Figure 7) features a female standing beside a beverage can. The image portrays the woman touching herself, what Goffman (1987) termed 'feminine touch.' This involves women using their hands and fingers to touch their hair or other body parts. Additionally, women in these depictions are shown smiling, aligning with Goffman's (1987) notion that a smile is a form of ritualistic subordination. Ritualization of subordination is detachment from the present scenario.

In contrast, images portraying men depict them in serious roles. For instance, one image features a paper cut-out with the caption, I am an architect. I will wear black until something darker comes out,' resembling a man (Figure 9). This image underscores that when men are represented, they are typically showcased in serious, occupation-related scenarios, engrossed in remunerative activities. The way these images portray gender stereotypes creates an impact on the viewer's mind that limits them in making confident choices.

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Images showing female empowerment.

Figure 10. Poster of SWAYAM

Figure 11. Billboard advertisement for a university

Despite efforts by institutions and organizations to promote gender equality by including women in posters and advertisements, the prevalence of such representations remains limited. In Figure 10, an advertisement for SWAYAM, a Government of India program focused on providing education and optimal teaching-learning resources to all segments of society, features three women and one man. Notably, one woman is depicted in professional attire, symbolizing women's empowerment. Figure 11 is an advertisement for a university program for Bachelor and Masters in Business Administration. Advertisements for such degrees rarely feature female figures. Consequently, when the public notices such portrayals, it influences individuals to rethink while opting for various courses, particularly females. These promotional materials serve as a notable and impactful initiative. These instances underscore the potential of visual representations to act as catalysts in fostering gender inclusivity within educational and professional domains.

Analytical Study 2

This section deals with the analysis of the questionnaire. The research design was developed to gain insights into the perceptions and experiences of gender stereotypes among the students about their career choices. The study exclusively focused on students across diverse disciplines. The questionnaire consisted of 2 sections: Section 1 consisted of demographic questions; Section 2 consisted of perceptions of gender equality and gender roles toward career choices in humanities and social sciences and STEM fields. Data analysis was

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performed using IBM – SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to perform inferential statistics. For inferential statistics, the focus was on the chi-square analyses to examine the relationships between variables.

Measures

To examine the perceptions of gender roles and gender equality toward career choices, chi-square tests were employed for the items in the questionnaire. The results are as follows-
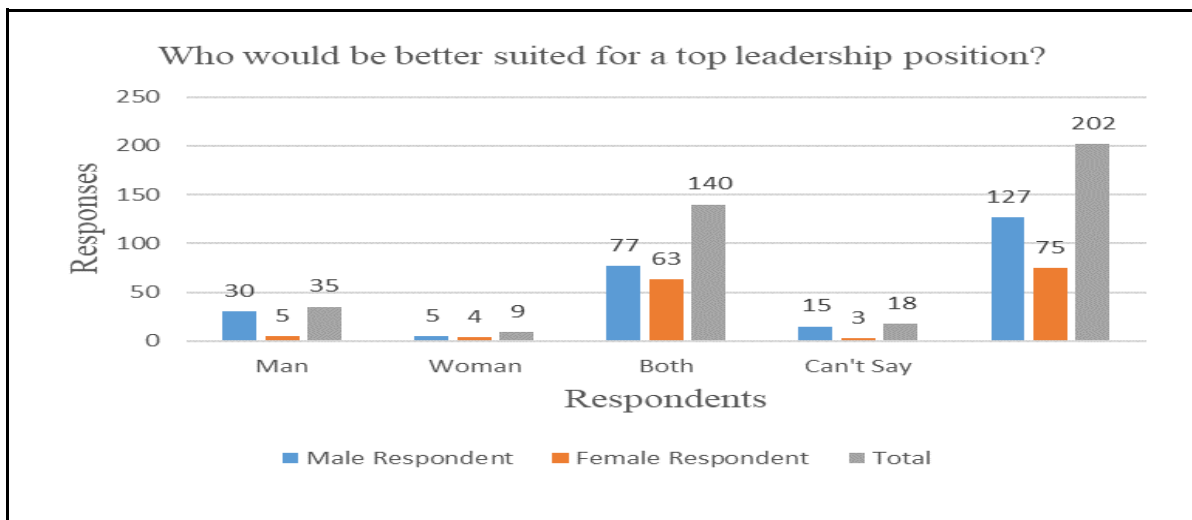
Figure 12. Who would be better suited for a top leadership position?

Table 1. Who would be better suited for a top leadership position?

	Male Respondent	Female Respondent	Total
Man	30	5	35
Woman	5	4	9
Both	77	63	140
Can't say	15	3	18
Total	127	75	202

On the question, who would be better suited for a top leadership position?' Out of the total 202 respondents, 35 respondents believed that men are better suited for a top leadership

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position, while 9 respondents believed that women are better. 140 respondents believed both men and women were better suited for a top leadership position, while 18 respondents believed they were unsure. A chi-square test examined the relationship between gender and perceptions of suitability for top leadership positions. The results indicated a significant association between the respondents' gender and their perceptions, χ^2 (3, $N=202$)= 14.974, $p=0.002$. These findings suggest a statistically significant gender-based difference in perceptions regarding the suitability for top leadership positions.
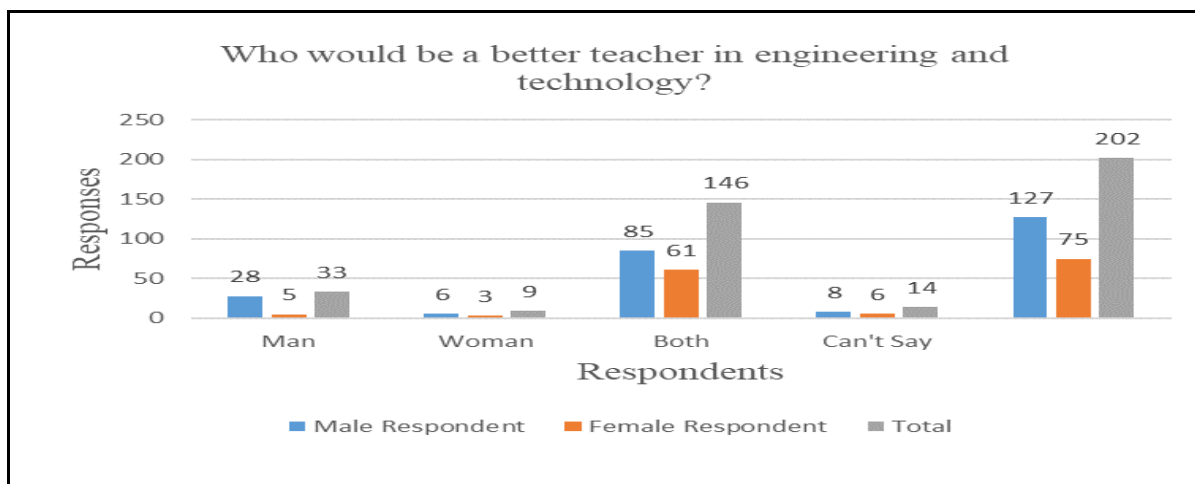
Figure 13. Who would be a better teacher in engineering and technology?

Table 2. Who would be a better teacher in engineering and technology?

	Male respondent	Female respondent	Total
Man	28	5	33
Woman	6	3	9
Both man and Woman	85	61	146
Can't say	8	6	14
Total	127	75	202

On the question about 'who would be a better teacher in engineering and technology?' 33 respondents believed that men would be better teachers in engineering and technology streams, while 9 respondents believed that women would be better teachers in engineering and

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technology streams. Again, 146 respondents believed that both men and women would be better teachers, while 14 respondents believed that they were unsure. A chi-square test was conducted to explore the relationship between gender and perceptions of suitability for a better teacher in engineering and technology streams. The results indicated a significant association between the respondents' gender and their perceptions, χ^2 (3, N=202)= 8.434, p=0.038. These findings suggest a statistically significant gender-based difference in perceptions regarding gender and teaching in science and technology streams.
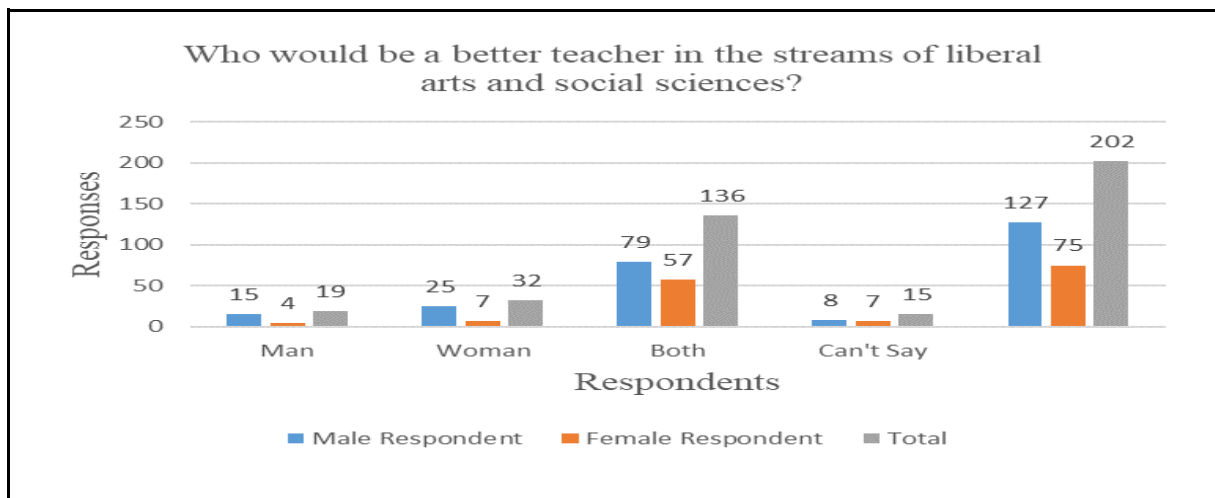
Figure 14. Who would be a better teacher in the streams of liberal arts and social sciences?

Table 3. Who would be a better teacher in the streams of liberal arts and social sciences?

	Male Respondent	Female Respondent	Total
Man	15	4	19
Woman	25	7	32
Both	79	57	136
Can't say	8	7	15
Total	127	75	202

On the question about 'who would be a better teacher in the streams of liberal arts and sciences?' 19 respondents believed that men would be better teachers in the streams of liberal

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arts and social sciences, while 32 respondents believed it to be women. Again, 136 respondents believed that both men and women would be teachers in the streams of liberal arts and social sciences, while 15 respondents believed that they were unsure. A chi-square test was conducted to explore the relationship between gender and perceptions of suitability for a teacher in the streams of liberal arts and social sciences. The results, however, did not reveal a statistically significant association between the respondents' gender and their perceptions, χ^2 (3, N=202)= 7.211, p=0.065. These findings suggest that there is no significant difference between male and female perceptions regarding whether a man or a woman would be a better teacher in the stream of liberal arts and social sciences.

Discussions

From the findings of Analytical Study 1, it can be implied that many of them are stereotypical in nature. Figures 2 and 4 show men undertaking mountaineering, playing badminton, respectively. Figures 3 and 5 show a woman performing a dance step (ballet) and a woman in a yoga pose. Selecting a male representation for promotional campaigns associated with risky behavior establishes a connection between masculinity, strength, and warfare (Romera, 2015). Students tend to align their professional aspirations with stereotypical norms, with males showing a preference for traditionally male-dominated careers and females leaning towards traditionally female roles such as teaching and nursing (Zysberg & Berry, 2005). Again, the figures 6, 7, 8, and 9 feature men and women in different gender roles. The women are portrayed in advertisements promoting products like beverages, and men are portrayed in specific occupations such as an architect. These images portray gender stereotypes by impacting the viewer's mind and limiting them in making certain choices based on their genders.

However, there are a few images that show women in empowering roles. These posters portray women in roles that are non-traditional. Figures 10 and 11 portray women in advertisements and posters promoting higher education and in technology-related advertisements, which is very rare. Generally, it is observed that higher education and the field of technology are male-dominated. Bussey and Bandura's (1999) social cognitive theory proposes self-efficacy that plays a vital role in the career choices of individuals. An increase in

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the portrayals of females in non-traditional roles will influence the female population to take up such roles in their lives.

In Analytical Study 2, the results provided valuable data indicating that individuals have varying opinions regarding occupations and career choices among males and females. Focusing on the careers in institutes of higher education, the results showed that individuals are of the opinion that males are better in the streams of science and technology. They prefer men more than women in teaching subjects related to science and technology. These findings are consistent with the findings of Ceci and Williams (2011). Furthermore, the gender results also indicate that among male respondents, more males choose men to be better teachers in engineering and technology streams and in leadership positions. On the other hand, female respondents are less stereotypical in their attitudes, as they prefer both men and women suitable for top leadership positions and as teachers in science and technology streams.

Ramaci et al. (2017) state that stereotypes serve as a method of categorizing that individuals employ to simplify a diverse world of experiences, resulting in two primary outcomes: firstly, they simplify reality, and once established, they often resist change due to reinforcement through cognitive, behavioral, and linguistic mechanisms; secondly, they contribute to misinterpretation. This is clearly indicated from the results in this study as most of the male responders are of the perception that female teachers are not suited for science and technology streams and they also do not have an interest in pursuing these fields. The results also indicate that male teachers are suitable for teaching both science and technology streams in higher education and they are also fit to be teaching in the primary and pre-primary grades. As already established in another research rooted in language in the Indian context, linguistic tools must be used and propagated responsibly (Begum & Sinha, 2017); it is imperative that non-linguistic ways of expression be monitored for a more equitable society.

Conclusion

This study explores the gender stereotype-building process in the LL of educational institutions in Bihar and Jharkhand and its consequences on the career choices of both genders in the select two states. This makes gender identity more static, contrary to its fluid nature in the era of postmodernism. The study reveals a prevalence of gender stereotypes, particularly in the portrayal of men in roles associated with strength, leadership, and warfare, while women

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are often depicted in traditional and stereotypical roles. This aligns with existing research suggesting that such stereotypical representations can influence individuals' perceptions and choices.

The study also underscores the persistence of gender stereotypes in students' professional aspirations, with males gravitating towards traditionally male-dominated careers and females leaning towards roles in teaching and nursing. The impact of these stereotypes is further evident in respondents' perceptions of gender roles in various occupations, with some professions being deemed gendered. Interestingly, the research findings indicate a nuanced perspective among female respondents, challenging stereotypes in their attitudes toward leadership positions and teaching roles in science and technology. However, male respondents exhibit more stereotypical views, particularly in their skepticism regarding female teachers' suitability for science and technology streams.

The study's second phase, focusing on opinions about occupations and career choices, reinforces the gendered perceptions prevalent in society. Males are often perceived as more suitable for science and technology-related subjects, reflecting deeply ingrained stereotypes. This trend persists despite the recognition that gender stereotypes can manifest in various ways, leading to potential underrepresentation of women in certain fields. These findings underscore the need for ongoing efforts to challenge and dismantle gender stereotypes in educational and professional settings. Addressing these stereotypes is crucial for promoting inclusivity, diversity, and equal opportunities for both genders. By understanding and confronting these biases, educators, policymakers, and society at large can contribute to creating a more equitable and diverse environment in institutes of higher education and beyond. Thus, it can be said that gender-stereotyped signs and symbols, as part and parcel of society, influence people cognitively in the course of everyday life and are shaped by societal practices simultaneously.

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Navigating Love, Career, and Culture: Indigenous Women in *The Village Bride of Beverly Hills* and *For Matrimonial Purposes*

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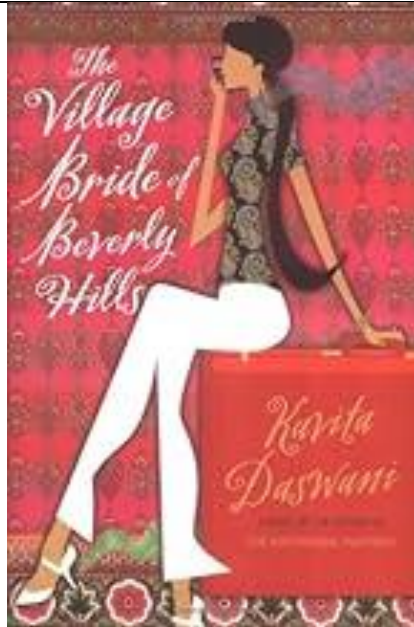
Courtesy: www.amazon.com

Abstract

This research examines the convergence of love, profession, and cultural identity among Indigenous women as portrayed in *The Village Bride of Beverly Hills* and *For Matrimonial Purposes.* These accounts underscore the difficulties encountered by Indigenous women as they reconcile traditional expectations with contemporary ambitions. The characters confront social standards, family expectations, and personal desires via the perspectives of cultural preservation, identity, and empowerment. The narratives highlight the conflict between conventional roles and modern occupations, illuminating the intricacies of reconciling affection and professional advancement. Central themes include perseverance, self-discovery,

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and cultural adaptability as the ladies attempt to harmonise their history with their aspirations. The research highlights the significance of cultural representation and the changing positions of Indigenous women in literature. This analysis demonstrates the interconnection between love and marriage with societal expectations, while job ambitions provide a means to independence. The tales challenge patriarchal systems and emphasise the transformational potential of self-determination. These narratives ultimately respect the resilience and autonomy of Indigenous women as they traverse the intersections of romance, profession, and cultural identity.

Keywords: *Village Bride of Beverly Hills, For Matrimonial Purposes,* Indigenous women, love, career, culture, identity, tradition, modernity, empowerment, resilience, self-discovery, adaptation, marriage, societal norms, autonomy, patriarchy.

Introduction
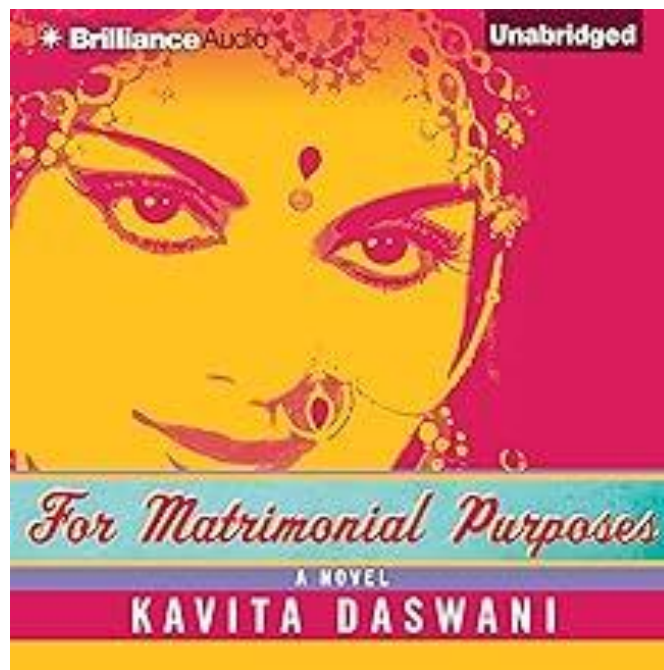
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The convergence of love, work, and cultural identity has historically been a prominent issue in literature, especially in stories that examine the experiences of women manoeuvring through the intricacies of tradition and modernity. Kavita Daswani's *The Village Bride of Beverly Hills* and *For Matrimonial Purposes* are incisive representations of Indigenous women navigating the conflicting demands of cultural norms and individual ambitions. These books provide a complex examination of the interplay between cultural legacy, family

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responsibilities, and personal aspirations, often resulting in tension and conflict. Daswani illuminates the obstacles encountered by Indigenous women in reconciling love, job aspirations, and cultural identity via the experiences of their characters, presenting a complex array of issues that appeal to a wide readership.

In *The Village Bride of Beverly Hills*, the protagonist's trip symbolises the conflict between traditional beliefs and the requirements of a contemporary job. The narrative starts with the protagonist's contemplation of her arranged marriage, a cultural tradition profoundly embedded in her Indigenous ancestry. She states, "I had always anticipated that my marriage would be arranged, but I never envisioned the sensation of standing at the altar with an unfamiliar person" (Daswani 15). This phrase embodies the conflict between societal norms and individual feelings, a persistent motif throughout the work. The heroine encounters a sharp difference between her conservative background and the fast-paced, individualistic society of Beverly Hills as she adapts to her new existence. This cultural mismatch is exacerbated by her want to pursue a profession, which often conflicts with the conventional responsibilities anticipated of her as a wife and daughter-in-law.

For Matrimonial Purposes similarly explores the intricacies of love and marriage among societal expectations. The protagonist, Anju, is a prosperous professional who experiences familial pressure to adhere to conventional marital expectations. Anju's internal struggle is well articulated when she states, "I wanted to make my parents proud, but I also wanted to make myself proud" (Daswani 42). This comment underscores the contradictory constraints encountered by many Indigenous women, who must balance familial and communal obligations with the pursuit of personal fulfilment. Anju's odyssey is characterised by self-discovery as she navigates the equilibrium between her cultural identity and her ambitions for romantic and professional achievement.

Critics have emphasised the importance of Daswani's work in illuminating the experiences of Indigenous women in modern literature. Scholar Meena Alexander asserts that "Daswani's novels give voice to women frequently marginalised in mainstream narratives, presenting a nuanced depiction of their struggles and triumphs" (Alexander 78). This viewpoint is especially pertinent for Indigenous women, whose narratives are often neglected or inaccurately portrayed in literature. Daswani confronts preconceptions and provides a more genuine portrayal of Indigenous women's lives by focusing her tales on their experiences.

The issue of cultural preservation is crucial in both stories, as the characters attempt to

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retain their cultural identity while acclimating to new surroundings. In The Village Bride of Beverly Hills, the protagonist's efforts to maintain her cultural background are apparent in her engagements with her family and community. She often contemplates the significance of her cultural traditions, asserting, "My culture is integral to my identity, and I cannot merely abandon it" (Daswani 67). This feeling is reflected in *For Matrimonial Purposes,* where Anju's affiliation with her cultural heritage acts as a source of fortitude and perseverance. Notwithstanding the obstacles she encounters, Anju stays dedicated to preserving her ancestry while also forging her path in life.

The significance of family and community is another key topic in Daswani's writings. In both *The Village Bride of Beverly Hills* and *For Matrimonial Purposes,* the characters' families significantly influence their choices and experiences. The need to adhere to family standards consistently generates tension as the protagonists endeavour to express their autonomy while preserving their connections with their relatives. This contradiction is more apparent in *For Matrimonial Purposes,* when Anju's family consistently underscores the significance of marriage and conventional gender roles. Critic Priya Joshi notes, "Daswani's depiction of familial dynamics emphasises the intricate relationship between personal aspirations and societal expectations, illustrating the difficulties encountered by women in patriarchal societies" (Joshi 93).

Simultaneously, Daswani's books exalt the tenacity and autonomy of Indigenous women. Notwithstanding the challenges they encounter, the characters in both works eventually discover methods to establish their autonomy and follow their aspirations. In The Village Bride of Beverly Hills, the protagonist's odyssey is one of empowerment, as she acquires the skills to manoeuvre through the intricacies of her new existence and affirm her individuality. Instances of self-discovery and development characterise Anju's path in *For Matrimonial Purposes* as she navigates the equilibrium between her cultural identity and her ambitions for love and professional achievement. These accounts provide a powerful message of hope and perseverance, highlighting the strength and resolve of Indigenous women amidst hardship.

Daswani's work has relevance beyond the personal narratives of her characters, providing a wider critique of the obstacles encountered by Indigenous women in modern society. According to historian Anjali Gera, "Daswani's novels serve as a reminder of the ongoing struggles faced by Indigenous women, who must navigate the intersections of culture,

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gender, and class in their pursuit of love and career success" (Gera 119). Daswani challenges prevailing narratives by centring her tales on the experiences of Indigenous women, so providing a more inclusive and truthful picture of their lives.

Kavita Daswani's *The Village Bride of Beverly Hills* and *For Matrimonial Purposes* provide a profound examination of the convergence of love, work, and cultural identity among Indigenous women. These books, via their characters' experiences, underscore the problems and successes of reconciling tradition with modernity, providing a detailed depiction of the intricacies inherent in Indigenous women's lives. By focussing her storytelling on the realities of Indigenous women, Daswani confronts prejudices and provides a more genuine portrayal of their obstacles and ambitions. These books exemplify the strength and agency of Indigenous women, conveying a message of optimism and empowerment for readers from many backgrounds.

Discussion and Analysis

Kavita Daswani's *The Village Bride of Beverly Hills* and *For Matrimonial Purposes* provide a profound and intricate examination of Indigenous women's experiences as they traverse the interconnected domains of love, work, and cultural identity. These works explore the intricacies of tradition and modernity, providing a significant remark on the difficulties encountered by women attempting to reconcile family obligations with individual ambitions. Daswani underscores the resilience, autonomy, and cultural adaptation of Indigenous women via the experiences of her heroines while also challenging the patriarchal norms that often limit their options.

In The Village Bride of Beverly Hills, the protagonist's planned marriage serves as a central theme for examining the conflict between tradition and modernity. The book starts with her contemplation on the cultural importance of arranged weddings, asserting, "In my community, marriage was not merely a union of two individuals but a confluence of families, traditions, and expectations" (Daswani 12). This remark highlights the significant cultural demands imposed on Indigenous women, who are often required to choose family responsibilities over personal aspirations. The heroine acclimates to her new life in Beverly Hills, facing the sharp disparity between her conservative background and the independent, rapid-paced society of her surroundings. This cultural mismatch is exacerbated by her want to pursue a profession, which often conflicts with the conventional responsibilities anticipated of her as a wife and daughter-in-law.

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The protagonist's conflict between her cultural identification and job ambitions is a persistent issue throughout the story. She contemplates the difficulties of managing these conflicting demands, asserting, "I aimed to respect my heritage, yet I also sought to establish my own identity in the world" (Daswani 45). This contradiction exemplifies the overarching issues encountered by Indigenous women, who often contend with contradictory demands from their families and communities. Critic Meena Alexander notes, "Daswani's depiction of the protagonist's journey underscores the resilience and adaptability of Indigenous women, who must continually navigate the boundaries between tradition and modernity" (Alexander 78).

Matrimonial Purposes similarly examine the intricacies of love and marriage against the backdrop of societal expectations. The protagonist, Anju, is a prosperous professional who experiences familial pressure to adhere to conventional marital expectations. Anju's internal struggle is well articulated when she states, "I wanted to make my parents proud, but I also wanted to make myself proud" (Daswani 42). This remark summarises the conflicting pressures experienced by several Indigenous women, who must balance familial and communal expectations with their pursuit of personal fulfilment. Anju's odyssey is characterised by self-discovery as she navigates the equilibrium between her cultural identity and her ambitions for romantic and professional achievement.

The issue of cultural preservation is crucial in both stories, as the characters attempt to retain their cultural identity while acclimating to new surroundings. In The Village Bride of Beverly Hills, the protagonist's efforts to maintain her cultural background are apparent in her engagements with her family and community. She often contemplates the significance of her cultural traditions, asserting, "My culture is integral to my identity, and I cannot merely abandon it" (Daswani 67). This concept is reflected in *For Matrimonial Purposes* , where Anju's affiliation with her cultural heritage acts as a source of strength and perseverance. Notwithstanding the obstacles she encounters, Anju stays dedicated to preserving her ancestry while also forging her path in life.

The significance of family and community is another key topic in Daswani's writings. In both *The Village Bride of Beverly Hills* and *For Matrimonial Purposes* , the characters' families significantly influence their choices and experiences. The need to adhere to family standards consistently generates tension as the protagonists endeavour to express their autonomy while preserving their connections with their relatives. This contradiction is more apparent in *For Matrimonial Purposes,* when Anju's family consistently underscores the

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significance of marriage and conventional gender roles. Critic Priya Joshi notes, "Daswani's depiction of familial dynamics emphasises the intricate relationship between personal aspirations and societal expectations, illustrating the difficulties encountered by women in patriarchal societies" (Joshi 93).

Simultaneously, Daswani's books exalt the tenacity and autonomy of Indigenous women. Notwithstanding the challenges they encounter, the characters in both works eventually discover methods to establish their autonomy and follow their aspirations. In The Village Bride of Beverly Hills, the protagonist's odyssey is one of empowerment, as she acquires the skills to manoeuvre through the intricacies of her new existence and affirm her individuality. Instances of self-discovery and development characterise Anju's path in *For Matrimonial Purposes* as she navigates the equilibrium between her cultural identity and her ambitions for love and professional achievement. These accounts provide a powerful message of hope and perseverance, highlighting the strength and drive of Indigenous women in the face of hardship.

Daswani's work has relevance beyond the personal narratives of her characters, providing a wider critique of the obstacles encountered by Indigenous women in modern society. Critic Anjali Gera observes, "Daswani's novels underscore the persistent challenges encountered by Indigenous women, who must traverse the intersections of culture, gender, and class in their quest for love and professional achievement" (Gera 112). By focussing her tales on the realities of Indigenous women, Daswani contests prevailing myths and provides a more inclusive and truthful depiction of their lives.

The Village Bride of Beverly Hills illustrates the protagonist's journey as a representation of the wider challenges encountered by Indigenous women in reconciling tradition with modernity. Her insights into the cultural importance of arranged weddings emphasise the burden of family and social expectations. At the same time, her ambition to pursue a profession illustrates the conflict between personal goals and traditional duties. The protagonist's path, under these contradictory challenges, exemplifies the strength and flexibility of Indigenous women.

In *For Matrimonial Purposes,* Anju's path is characterised by instances of self-discovery and development as she navigates the equilibrium between her cultural identity and her ambitions for love and professional achievement. Her psychological struggle exemplifies the overarching difficulties encountered by Indigenous women, who often contend with

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contradictory demands from their families and communities. Daswani provides a nuanced depiction of the complications faced by Indigenous women via Anju's journey, emphasising the courage and resolve necessary to manage the intersections of culture, gender, and class.

The issue of cultural preservation is fundamental in both stories, as the characters struggle to preserve their cultural identity while acclimating to new surroundings. In The Village Bride of Beverly Hills, the protagonist's efforts to maintain her cultural background are apparent in her engagements with her family and community. She often contemplates the significance of her cultural traditions, asserting, "My culture is integral to my identity, and I cannot merely abandon it" (Daswani 67). This concept is reflected in *For Matrimonial Purposes* , as Anju's bond with her cultural heritage acts as a source of strength and perseverance. Notwithstanding the obstacles she encounters, Anju stays dedicated to preserving her ancestry while also forging her path in life.

The significance of family and community is another key element in Daswani's writings. In both *The Village Bride of Beverly Hills* and *For Matrimonial Purposes* , the characters' families significantly influence their choices and experiences. The need to adhere to family standards consistently generates tension as the protagonists endeavour to express their autonomy while preserving their connections with their relatives. This contradiction is more apparent in *For Matrimonial Purposes,* when Anju's family consistently underscores the significance of marriage and conventional gender roles. Critic Priya Joshi notes, "Daswani's depiction of familial dynamics emphasises the intricate relationship between personal aspirations and societal expectations, illustrating the difficulties encountered by women in patriarchal societies" (Joshi 93).

Simultaneously, Daswani's books exalt the tenacity and autonomy of Indigenous women. Notwithstanding the challenges encountered, the protagonists in both novels ultimately discover methods to assert their autonomy and pursue their aspirations. In The Village Bride of Beverly Hills, the protagonist's journey embodies empowerment as she learns to manoeuvre through the intricacies of her new existence and affirm her identity. Instances of self-discovery and development characterise Anju's path in *For Matrimonial Purposes* as she navigates the equilibrium between her cultural identity and her ambitions for love and professional achievement. These accounts provide a powerful message of hope and perseverance, highlighting the strength and drive of Indigenous women in the face of hardship.

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Language and Style

Kavita Daswani's *The Village Bride of Beverly Hills* and *For Matrimonial Purposes* employ a vibrant and engaging narrative style that blends humor, satire, and cultural introspection. Her writing is characterized by a lighthearted yet insightful tone that effectively captures the dilemmas faced by modern Indian women navigating tradition and contemporary aspirations.

In *For Matrimonial Purposes*, Daswani's prose is witty and conversational, reflecting the protagonist's internal struggles and societal pressures regarding marriage. The first-person narration provides an intimate perspective, allowing readers to connect with the protagonist's emotions, anxieties, and humorous observations. The language is simple yet evocative, punctuated by moments of irony that highlight the contradictions between Indian traditions and Western influences.

Similarly, *The Village Bride of Beverly Hills* employs a breezy, fast-paced style with sharp dialogues and vivid descriptions. The protagonist's journey from India to the United States is portrayed with a mix of humor and poignancy, emphasizing the cultural dissonance she experiences. Daswani's use of contrasting settings—traditional Indian households and glamorous Beverly Hills—enhances the novel's thematic depth. Her language is accessible, and her writing often relies on situational comedy to address deeper issues of identity, marriage, and societal expectations.

Daswani's writing style is engaging, humorous, and deeply reflective of the complexities of cultural hybridity. Her accessible language, relatable characters, and sharp observations make her novels both entertaining and thought-provoking, appealing to a wide audience interested in diasporic narratives and women's fiction.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Kavita Daswani's *The Village Bride of Beverly Hills* and *For Matrimonial Purposes* provide a profound examination of the convergence of love, work, and

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cultural identity among Indigenous women. These books, via their characters' experiences, underscore the problems and successes of reconciling tradition with modernity, providing a detailed depiction of the intricacies inherent in Indigenous women's lives. By focussing her novels on the realities of Indigenous women, Daswani confronts prejudices and provides a more genuine depiction of their obstacles and ambitions. These books exemplify the strength and agency of Indigenous women, conveying a message of optimism and empowerment for readers from many backgrounds.

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the language used in former President Joe Biden's Political Speech on the Russian-Ukraine war, which is relevant in today's political landscape. The objective is to investigate the types of discursive strategies used to validate and invalidate the decisions and actions of both warring parties and describe the linguistic features through which these discursive strategies are realised and their functions in the speech. The study adopts van Leeuwen's (2008) framework for legitimisation and delegitimisation, complemented with a qualitative descriptive method in examining fifteen texts purposively sampled from a political speech delivered by the former president on February 21, 2023. The analysis indicates that the discursive strategies of authorisation (personal authority, impersonal authority, and authority of tradition), moral evaluation (evaluation and analogies), rationalisation (instrumental and theoretical rationalisation), and mythopoesis (cautionary tales and single determination) serve to legitimise the United States and NATO's support for the Ukrainian government in its defensive fight against Russia and delegitimise Russia's aggressive confrontation of Ukraine. The study underscores the pivotal role of language in shaping political narratives and influencing public perception. The legitimisation

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and delegitimisation strategies foreground positive and negative representations of two political camps (The "US" vs "Them") in the speech. The "Us (denoting The United States, NATO, and Ukraine) vs. Them (denoting Russia)" dichotomy in Biden's speech reflects a desire to justify "our" (i.e., NATO's) actions and policies by showing that they are correct, beneficial, and carried out following international law, while "their" (i.e., Russia's) actions and policies are not in line with the normative order because they are perverse, deviant and pose a threat to the Ukrainian people's lives. The study concludes that language is an effective tool by which political gladiators legitimise their actions and delegitimise those of their rivals.

Keywords: Language conflict, Joe Biden, De-legitimization, discursive strategies, legitimisation, Russian-Ukraine Conflict.

Introduction

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which began in February 2014 in response to the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity, is one significant political issue that has recently drawn much attention. Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine and backed pro-Russian separatists who were battling the Ukrainian military in the Donbas war. As Russian and Ukrainian forces controlled the eastern border regions, the battle descended into an ongoing standoff marked by frequent bombardment and fighting along the frontlines. Russian armies attacked a completely unprepared Ukraine in February 2022 after Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a unique military campaign against the country (Wilson, 2001). Since the crisis began, leaders from various nations have given speeches that either legitimised or delegitimised the causes of the war and the acts of the presidents of both nations. In addition to the leaders of other nations, US President Joe Biden has also publicly stated whether or not he supports the choices and actions of the two nations. This study examines one of the political speeches delivered by Joe Biden, the former President of the United States, on 21 February 2023 to ascertain the discursive strategies used to legitimise or delegitimise the decisions and actions of the warring parties. It also describes the linguistic features used to realise these discursive strategies and their functions in speech.

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Conceptual Review

Legitimisation and delegitimisation are two constructs relevant to this study. Legitimisation is constructing an action as productive, advantageous, correct, comprehensible, requisite and admissible in a specific context (Vaara, 2014). It is a fundamental aspect of language use that entails offering valid justifications for actions that have drawn criticism from others in the past or present (van Dijk, 1998). Legitimisation is the process by which speakers seek authorisation for actions and social relations and elucidate their positive actions to justify why they are rational and required. According to Fairclough & Fairclough (2012), legitimisation validates an action that can be acknowledged publicly. The process of legitimisation involves two levels of justification. The first level is the justification for action based on a reason, and the second level is the justification for that reason based on a system of widely accepted norms, values, and beliefs (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). The foregoing statement implies that interlocutors justify their demeanours by pointing out that they adhere to particular social standards, values, and beliefs (Ross & Rivers, 2017). The following are examples of legitimisation techniques: general ideological principles, charismatic leadership projection, boasting about performance, positive self-presentation, and arguments about voters' wants" (Chilton, 2004). Legitimisation in discourse parallels delegitimisation, which is the deliberate production and dissemination of unfavourable perceptions of the other (Screti, 2013). Delegitimisation involves questioning opponents' plans and demonstrating that they are not aligned with values and norms because they do not include any constructive, valuable, or moral action (Ross & Rivers, 2017). Delegitimisation encompasses presenting oneself negatively, condemning, oppressing, segregating, and criticising one's uprightness and rationality (Chilton, 2004).

Theoretical Framework

In his framework, van Leeuwen (2008) distinguishes four legitimisation and delegitimisation strategies and their linguistic realisations. These strategies include authorisation, moral evaluation, rationalisation and mythopoesis. As stated by Tienari & Vaara (2008), these strategies serve as a mechanism through which language works and is employed to establish

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legality. Authorisation legitimises something by citing the authority of law, tradition, custom, and/or individuals with institutional authority. Six types of authorisations are distinguished: impersonal authority, role model authority, expert authority, personal authority, tradition-based authority, and conformity-based authority. Personal authority is the legal power where a person's decisions or actions are driven by the influence of his position in society. Such individual utilises their power to take actions or make decisions they are not required to defend or explain. Language is used to achieve this kind of authority, where the person in charge uses a modality of obligation in their speech. Expert authority is the kind of authority impacted by a person's expertise. Verbal or mental process clauses realise this authority. Role model authority is where people's decisions or actions are driven by their superiors' or role models' deeds, convictions, or viewpoints. Impersonal authority is the kind of authority where rules, policies, and guidelines influence decisions and actions. Nouns like policy, regulation, rule, and law and their adjectives or adverbs like mandatory, obligatory, or compulsory make it a reality. Traditional authority is the kind of authority that is shaped by local customs or standards. The established norms of the place serve as a guide for decisions and actions. Authority of conformity is the kind of authority impacted by practices consistent with society's standards. Legitimisation by conformity is acknowledged using a high-frequency modality and an explicit comparison (van Leeuwen, 2007).

Moral evaluation is predicated on moral principles not enforced by a centralised authority and delegitimises actions without explanation. Rather than employing overt language techniques, it is identified through common-sense knowledge (Ross & Rivers, 2017). Evaluation, abstraction and analogies are the three categories that separate moral evaluation. Evaluation is the process of expressing specific attributes of behaviours or objects and praising them about a set of values by using evaluative adjectives like good, bad, healthy, regular, and natural. The abstraction strategy is the presentation of moral evaluation practices in an abstract manner that moralises them by removing a characteristic that connects them to moral value discourses. Analogies are comparisons to legitimise or delegitimise. A situation known as an

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implicit analogy occurs when a term used to describe one social practice's activity is used to describe another, and the constructive or negative implications related to the other undertaking are then transmitted to the first undertaking. A similar conjunction or comparison circumstances are used to express an explicit analogy.

Rationalisation refers to legitimation that appeals to the audience's and speaker's shared mental interpretations of existing information to actualise cognitive approval or credibility (van Leeuwen, 2008, p.108). It is divided into two categories: instrumental rationalisation and theoretical rationalisation. Instrumental rationalisation justifies actions by citing their objectives, applications, and results. It is further divided into goal-oriented, means-oriented, and effect-oriented instrumental rationalisations. Goal-oriented instrumental rationalisation endorses legality by giving individuals whose activities are motivated by conscious or unconscious motives or goals a sense of purpose. The means-oriented instrumental rationalisation defines an action's purpose as one that can be achieved using particular methods. Effect-oriented rationalisation actualises legitimation by constructing purpose in actions with a specific negative or positive outcome, consequence, or result for the people. Theoretical rationalisation employs a descriptive statement of the factual state of affairs to accomplish legitimation. It is divided into definition, explanation, and experiential theoretical rationalisation. The definition of theoretical rationalisation actualises legitimation by defining an activity in terms of another moralised activity. Experiential rationalisation expresses legitimation through proverbs, moral maxims, and wise sayings. Experiential theoretical rationalisation refers to system bodies of knowledge used in institutionalised practices to realise legitimation.

Mythopoesis or storytelling can be used to establish legitimacy. The four kinds of mythopoesis are cautionary tales, moral tales, single determination and overdetermination. Cautionary tales indicate dire repercussions of choosing an unwise course of action. Moral tales refer to glorifying or idealising the deeds of a specific character or cause of action. Single determination refers to a narrative in which events are presented to legitimise or delegitimise them. Overdetermination

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represents social actors participating concurrently in different social practices (van Leeuwen, 2007, p117-118). The present paper applies this framework in examining Biden's political speech for the discursive strategies employed in legitimising or delegitimising the actions of the Presidents of Russia and Ukraine.

Methodology

The data of the present study consists of the speech made by former President Joe Biden on February 21, 2023, ahead of the first anniversary of Russia's brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. More specifically, the data comprises purposively sampled excerpts from the speech. The speech has been downloaded from the U.S. Department of State website. The present study adopts a qualitative methodological approach. To analyse the collected data, van Leeuwen's (2008) legitimisation and delegitimisation strategies are employed. The qualitative approach and van Leeuwen's methods have been chosen as they are deemed more suitable for the current study and help yield an in-depth data analysis. Instances of legitimisation and delegitimisation strategies and their linguistic realisations are identified in the data. Significant examples representing the strategies, the linguistic devices used to realise them in the data, and the functions fulfilled by these strategies are elucidated.

Data Analysis

This section illustrates how Joe Biden used legitimisation and delegitimisation techniques in his speech. The legitimisation and delegitimisation techniques proposed by Leeuwen (2008) are used to analyse the data.

Authorisation

This tactic describes the individual or group with the right to use lawful authority. The following examples illustrate how President Joe Biden's speech uses personal authority, impersonal authority, and authority of tradition in the data.

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Example One

  And the principles that had been the cornerstone of peace, prosperity,

  and stability on this planet for more than 75 years were at risk of being

  shattered (Biden's Speech, 2023).

In this instance, President Joe Biden's statement uses impersonal authority, which is defined as authority legitimised through the use of laws, rules, and regulations. By using the word "principles" to refer to the values that have served as the foundation for peace, prosperity, and stability on the planet for decades, Biden undermines the legitimacy of Russia's aggression against Ukraine by demonstrating that it goes against the rules of international agreements that are binding on all members of the United Nations. When Biden says that the principles that had sustained peace, prosperity, and stability in the world for decades were at risk of being crushed, he is referring to the unlawful activities of the Russian troops in Ukraine. The second category of legitimisation used in Biden's political speech is personal authority, as shown below.

Example Two

  And yesterday, I had the honor to stand with President Zelensky in Kyiv

  to declare that we will keep standing for the same thing no matter what

  (Biden's Speech, 2023).

Here, legitimisation by personal authority is used when President Joe Biden tells his audience that the Ukrainian government and people have received firm assurances and hope during difficult times. Europe, America, and NATO are all addressed with the pronominal "we" in this text. Biden's use of legitimate authority to make a declaration on behalf of NATO and Europe may be hinged on his office as the President of the United States and the United States, regarded as the most powerful nation in the world. Another significant justification for his exercise of personal authority here is the United States' role as one of the biggest donors to NATO, a testament to the financial power behind his authority. The verbal process "declare" is used to legitimise personal authority

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linguistically. The choice of a verbal process in this text is in tandem with the position of van Leeuwen (2007) that utterances exemplifying personal authority contain some form of obligation modality deployed in legitimising such authority. The decision to use a verbal process depends on the President's ability to communicate such a statement about America, Europe, and NATO's readiness and willingness to support Ukraine. The authority of tradition, as indicated below, is the next category of authorisation to be examined in the speech.

Example Three

> Our support for Ukraine will not waive, NATO will not be divided,
>
> and we will not tire (Biden's Speech, 2023).

Using the authority of tradition, President Joe Biden aims to justify NATO's backing for Ukraine in this instance. The pronominal "our" in this text performs a collective function, representing NATO as a body. Article 5 of the NATO charter, which declares that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be deemed an attack against them all, demonstrates the legitimacy of the principles that underpin the alliance's decision to support Ukraine due to its willingness and readiness to enlist as member of NATO. Over time, NATO has faithfully upheld this tradition. Modal and material verbs such as "will not waiver," "will not tire," and "will not be divided" are used to legitimise NATO's stance and readiness to support Ukraine.

Moral Evaluation

The speech employs the strategy of moral evaluation, which is realised through evaluation and analogies. Evaluation is realised through evaluative adjectives and analogies through comparisons. The use of evaluation and analogies is shown below.

Example Four

> One year ago, the world was bracing for the fall of Kyiv. Well, I have

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just come from a visit to Kyiv, and I can report; Kyiv stands strong!

Kyiv stands proud. It stands tall. And most importantly, it stands free.

(Biden's Speech, 2023).

In example four, President Joe Biden refers to Kyiv's resilience in the face of Russian aggression and attacks on its territory. He employs the affirmative assessment metrics "stands tall," "stands proud," "stands strong," and "stands free." By employing these positive evaluative indicators, he validates Kyiv's capacity to protect its territory and itself following Russian attacks. He adds that Kyiv's resolve and determination to withstand any Russian subjugation have shocked the world, which had been expecting to see Kyiv defeated by Russia. This text demonstrates that evaluative markers are employed to delegitimise Ukraine's foes' pessimistic expectations and validate the Ukrainian people's solidarity with their nation.

Example Five

President Putin's craven lust for land and power will fail. And the Ukrainians people's love for their country will prevail (Biden's speech, 2023).

With phrases like "...the Ukrainian people's love for their country will prevail," President Joe Biden aims to present a positive picture of the Ukrainian people. On the other hand, he presents a negative picture of President Putin by using the pejorative assessment, "President Putin's lust for land and power will fail." Accordingly, these evaluative statements both legitimise Ukrainians' patriotism and undermine President Putin's excessive attempts to subjugate Ukraine. President Joe Biden uses moral evaluation in example six when discussing the scope of Russia's war crimes against Ukraine.

Example Six

Extraordinary brutality from Russian forces and mercenaries. They

have committed depravities, crimes against humanity, without shame

or compunction. They've targeted civilians with death and destruction.

Used rape as a weapon of war. Stolen Ukrainians' children in an attempt

to steal Ukrainians future. Bombed train stations, maternity hospital,

school, and orphanages (Biden's Speech, 2023).

To illustrate the extent of Russia's war crimes against Ukraine, Biden uses derogatory terms like "extraordinary brutality" and "committed depravities." In these expressions, attributive adjectives such as "extraordinary" and "committed" are deployed as evaluative indicators to modify the nouns "brutality" and "depravities". These evaluative indicators are further complemented with the verbs "targeted" and bombed," as captured in the expressions "targeted civilians with death and destruction" and "bombed train stations, maternity hospitals, schools, and orphanages." Biden frowns at these dastardly acts carried out by Russian troops in Ukraine. By portraying Russian forces and mercenaries in a negative light, he undermines the legitimacy of their destructive activities in Ukraine.

Example Seven

A choice between chaos and stability. Between building and destroying.

Between hope and fear. Between democracy that lifts up the human

Spirit and the brutal hand of the dictator who crushes it (Biden's Speech,

2023).

President Joe Biden uses an analogy to express moral judgment in his remarks about the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. He points out that, as humans, we must make various daily decisions and that our future depends on them. He employs the analogy technique to present two sets of opposing options, addressing his audience. His use of both positive and negative evaluation adjectives delegitimises Putin's autocratic lifestyle and legitimises Ukraine's democratic practices. For example, chaos is the opposite of stability; it goes from hope to fear and building to destruction.

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Since their current decision will either make or mar their future, Biden tells his audience that if they must live in a world where democracy is paramount, they should make an informed decision.

Rationalisation

Legitimisation through rationalisation is employed in the speech. The categories of instrumental rationalisation in the speech are namely, goal-orientation, means-orientation and effect-orientation. They are displayed in examples (8) – (10) as shown below:

Example Eight

The largest land war in Europe since World War two had begun (Biden's Speech, 2023).

To highlight the impact of conflict on human lives, President Joe Biden discusses Europe's biggest land war since World War II. He accomplishes this by demonstrating the consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine through the use of the orientation rationalisation technique. The past perfect tense "had begun" is used linguistically to realise this strategy, signifying that the most important land war had begun.

Example Nine

President Putin's craven lust for land and power will fail (Biden's Speech, 2023).

Biden draws attention to Putin's plans to invade Ukraine in text nine, stating that they are motivated by his "lust for land and power.". The former president emphasises Putin's war against Ukraine by using goal-orientation rationalisation. Furthermore, Biden reassures his listeners that Putin's war against Ukraine will fail. By nominalising "Putin's craven lust for land and power," the goal-orientation legitimisation tactic is achieved.

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Example Ten

One year after the bombs began to fall and Russian tanks rolled
into Ukraine, Ukraine is still independent and free (Biden's speech,
2023).

Using the phrase "bombs began to fall and Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine" to describe Russia's actions in Ukraine, Excerpt 10 illustrates the application of the means-orientation rationalisation in Biden's speech. Russia is aggressively attempting to subjugate Ukraine in order to achieve its goals. President Biden does point out that Ukraine is still strong and independent despite a string of bombings and the retreat of Russian tanks into the country. Apart from instrumental rationalisation in the speech, theoretical rationalisation is also used, achieved through definition, explanation, and prediction, as shown below.

Example Eleven

The United States and the nations in Europe do not seek to control
or destroy Russia. The west was not plotting to attack Russia, as Putin
said today. And millions of Russian citizens who only want to live peace
with their neighbours are not the enemy (Biden's Speech, 2023).

Example eleven employs theoretical rationalisation in the form of a definition. President Biden outlines the intentions of the United States and other European countries toward Russia. He discusses the goal by characterising it in terms of the moral behaviour of the United States and all European countries that do not aim to subjugate or destroy Russia. By employing this tactic, Russia's violent actions in Ukraine are delegitimised, and America and Europe's intentions toward Russia are legitimised.

Example Twelve

It's simple. If Russia stopped invading Ukraine, it would end the

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war. If Ukraine stopped defending itself against Russia, that would

be the end of Ukraine (Biden's Speech, 2023).

The use of theoretical rationalisation as an explanation to describe the participants in practice is illustrated in Example 12. President Joe Biden describes Russia and Ukraine in this text. According to him, the war will end if Russia removes its troops from Ukraine and stops bombing the nation, but if Ukraine gives up on self-defence, they will be captured and then placed under Russian rule. By making this declaration, President Biden both validates Ukraine's act of self-defence against Russian forces and delegitimises Russia's actions in Ukraine.

Example Thirteen

As Ukraine continues to defend itself against the Russia onslaught, and lunch counter-offensive of its own, there will continue to be hard and very bitter days, victories and tragedies (Biden's Speech, 2023).

In example thirteen, President Joe Biden uses theoretical justification through prediction, outlining what Ukraine can anticipate going forward as it continues to defend itself against Russia's assault and launches its own counteroffensive. Biden's prediction of the future is summed up in the statement, "There will continue to be hard and very bitter days." By using this tactic, President Biden both legitimates Ukraine's ongoing self-defence against Russian attacks and expressly delegitimises Russia's assault on Ukraine.

Mythopoesis

In mythopoesis, narratives are used to legitimise and delegitimise actions. This strategy is employed in the speech by using cautionary tales and single determination, as shown in examples (14) - (15).

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Example Fourteen

> The European union and its member states have stepped up
> with unprecedented commitment to Ukraine, not just in
> security assistance, but economic, and humanitarian, refuge
> assistance, and so much more (Biden's speech, 2023).

Example 14 uses a single determination when President Joe Biden discusses the actions taken by the European Union and its member states to support Ukraine due to its willingness and readiness to become a NATO member. He summarises the aid and support that Ukraine is receiving from the union and its member nations. The application of a single determination validates the European Union's obligations to Ukraine in this instance.

Example Fifteen

> If Ukraine stopped defending itself against Russia, it would be the
> end of Ukraine (Biden's Speech, 2023).

In example sixteen, President Joe Biden discusses Ukraine's determination to protect itself from Russian attacks. According to him, Ukraine's existence will come to an end if it gives in to Russian pressure. The use of cautionary tales helps to justify Ukraine's attempts to defend itself against Russia's aggression.

Conclusion

The current study has investigated the language used in political speech to validate or invalidate the decisions and actions of two warring parties, using van Leeuwen's (2008) legitimisation and delegitimisation strategies. It has also examined the linguistic devices employed to realise these discursive strategies and their functions in speech. The data analysis reveals that the discursive strategies used in speech are authorisation, moral evaluation, rationalisation, and mythopoesis. Regarding authorisation, President Joe Biden's statements employ three subcategories of this approach: impersonal authority, personal authority, and authority of conformity. Russia's war

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against Ukraine is delegitimised through the use of impersonal authority. Using personal authority justifies the United States' decision to back the Ukrainian government. The authority of tradition justifies NATO's position to assist Ukraine in its defensive struggle against Russia. Moral evaluation in speech is realised through evaluation and analogies. Through this discursive, the president uses evaluative adjectives to represent NATO's support for Ukraine and Ukraine's defence of its sovereignty in a positive light. On the other hand, Russia's actions against Ukraine are represented in a negative light using evaluative markers. Both theoretical and instrumental rationalisation are the rationalisation types employed in the speech. Through goal orientation, instrumental rationalisation is accomplished. The study's conclusions show that both legitimisation and delegitimisation strategies are used to create positive and negative presentations as captured in the "Us versus "Them" dichotomy reflected in Biden's speech. By demonstrating that "their" actions and policies are perverse, deviant, and dangerous to other people's lives, the "them" dichotomy reflects a desire to defend "our" actions and policies by arguing that they are proper, advantageous, and compliant with international law. The clear and direct application of legitimisation and delegitimisation techniques in President Joe Biden's speech demonstrates this.

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Contours of Catastrophe: Ecological and Existential Crisis in Samantha Harvey's *Orbital* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Living Mountain*

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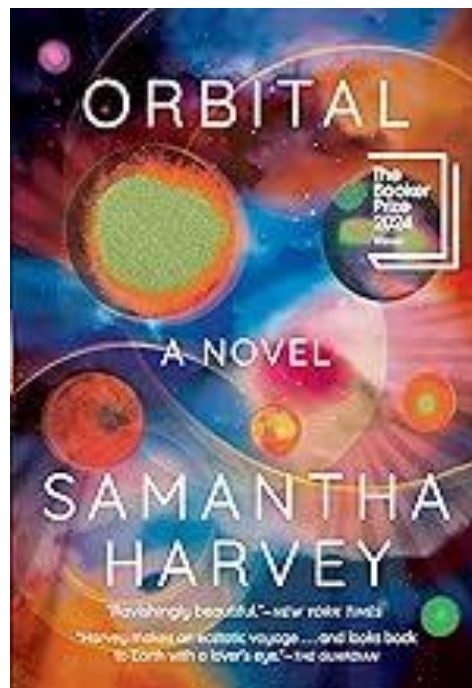
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Abstract

This research article examines the intertwined themes of ecological and existential crises as represented in Samantha Harvey's *Orbital* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Living Mountain*: A Fable of Our Times. Through the lens of eco-criticism and existential philosophy, the study explores how these works articulate humanity's fraught relationship with the environment amidst the Anthropocene's looming threats. Harvey's *Orbital* portrays the Earth's fragility from a spatial perspective, invoking a sense of human insignificance against planetary vulnerabilities. Conversely, Ghosh's *The Living Mountain* employs a fable-like narrative to

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critique resource exploitation, offering a poignant commentary on the interconnectedness of human and ecological survival. The article delves into the philosophical undertones of each text, juxtaposing Harvey's existential reflections with Ghosh's postconnmentalism. The comparative analysis highlights their shared thematic preoccupations with environmental degradation while emphasizing their distinct narrative strategies—Harvey's experimental spatiality versus Ghosh's allegorical storytelling. By examining these works, the study underscores literature's critical role in interrogating the Anthropocene's challenges, offering profound insights into the human condition and our collective ecological responsibility. This paper explores the duality of the themes of ecological crisis and existential crisis through the representations in *Orbital* by Samantha Harvey and *The Living Mountain: A Fable of Our Times* by Amitav Ghosh. Using eco-criticism and existential philosophy as critical frameworks, this paper demonstrates how these texts implicate humanity in an awkward relationship with the environment amidst the looming threats of the Anthropocene. Harvey's *Orbital* grants a spatial perspective on Earth's fragility, evoking an image where human significance becomes minimal in contrast to the vulnerabilities of planets. In contrast, Ghosh's *The Living Mountain* employs a fable-like form to address critiquing resources exploitation with a relevant remark on human survival and ecological integrity. This paper explicates the philosophical underpinnings embedded within each text by situating Harvey's existential ruminations against Ghosh's postcolonial environmentalism. A comparative reading thus reveals common thematic concerns about environmental disintegration while foregrounding diverse narrative techniques used therein: spatial experimentation in exploration of possibilities by cataloguing failures versus allegorical storytelling. Engaging with such texts, this study elucidates how literature plays an important role in interrogating what challenges continue to be posed by the Anthropocene epoch, offering significant reflections upon human existence and our shared ecological stewardship.

Keywords: Samantha Harvey, Amitav Ghosh, *Orbital, The Living Mountain.* Ecological crisis, Existential Crisis. Anthropocene, Eco-criticism,

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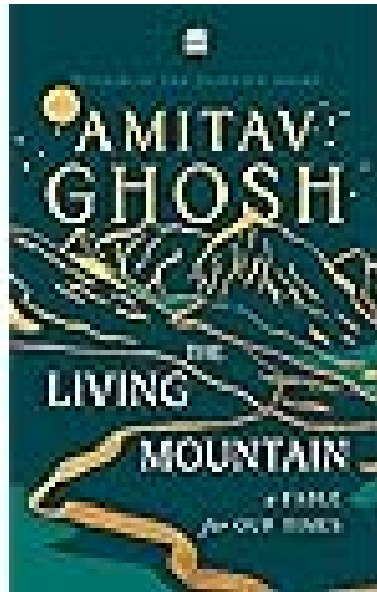
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Introduction

In the epoch of the Anthropocene, literature has emerged as a profound medium to confront and interrogate the multifaceted crises of our time. The environmental and existential dilemmas posed by ecological degradation compel a reconsideration of humanity's role in, and responsibility toward, the natural world. The literary endeavors of Samantha Harvey and Amitav Ghosh, particularly in *Orbital* and *The Living Mountain: A Fable of Our Times*, respectively, provide incisive explorations of these themes, fusing philosophical inquiry with ecological critique. This article seeks to examine the contours of ecological and existential crises within these texts, revealing their shared preoccupations with human vulnerability and environmental precariousness.

Harvey's *Orbital* offers a spatial perspective on the Earth's fragility, evoking a sense of human insignificance amidst planetary vulnerabilities (McKagen). As the protagonist, a former NASA employee, bears witness to the planet's deterioration from the vantage point of outer space, the text confronts the reader with a stark realization of humanity's contingent existence (Chaudhuri). In contrast, Ghosh's *The Living Mountain* employs a fable-like narrative to critique resource exploitation, foregrounding the interconnectedness of human survival and ecological well-being. The text's allegorical approach serves as a powerful commentary on the postcolonial dimensions of environmental degradation, drawing attention to the disproportionate impact on subaltern communities (Jones).

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A comparative analysis of these works illuminates their divergent narrative strategies while underscoring their shared thematic concerns. Harvey's text delves into the existential implications of environmental crisis, reflecting on the human condition in the face of planetary vulnerabilities. Ghosh's work, on the other hand, mobilizes a postcolonial environmental perspective, highlighting the social and political dimensions of ecological devastation (Chatterji). By examining these texts through the lenses of eco-criticism and existential philosophy, this paper aims to elucidate the literary articulations of the Anthropocene's challenges, ultimately underscoring the critical role of literature in confronting the dual crises of the environment and the human condition.

Harvey's *Orbital* situates its narrative in the spatial fragility of Earth, articulating a profound meditation on the planet's precariousness and humanity's existential insignificance. The narrative embodies what Timothy Morton describes as "ecological thought," which "includes negativity and irony, ugliness and horror" (Morton 11). On the other hand, Ghosh's *The Living Mountain* adopts a fable-like structure, critiquing resource exploitation while underscoring the interconnectedness of ecological and human survival. In his work, Ghosh laments the erasure of indigenous wisdom and the consequences of unchecked anthropocentrism, aligning with Ursula K. Heise's observation that "the Anthropocene demands not only a scientific but a narrative shift" (Heise 14).

Both texts grapple with the dual crises of ecological degradation and existential precariousness, albeit through distinct narrative strategies. Harvey's *Orbital*, by presenting a spatial perspective on Earth's fragility, evokes a profound sense of human insignificance in the vastness of the cosmos (Dewi; Jones). Ghosh's *The Living Mountain*, on the other hand, employs an allegorical mode to critique the postcolonial dimensions of environmental exploitation, drawing attention to the disproportionate impact on subaltern communities. (Vandertop; Leikam and Leyda)

Through these comparative readings, this paper illuminates how literature plays a crucial role in addressing the multifaceted challenges of the Anthropocene. The authors' divergent approaches - Harvey's existential ruminations and Ghosh's postcolonial

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environmentalism - reveal the rich diversity of literary engagements with ecological crisis, underscoring the power of narratives to prompt critical reflections on humanity's relationship with the natural world.

Despite the stark differences in form—Harvey's experimental spatiality versus Ghosh's allegorical storytelling—both texts converge in their urgency to address the crises of our era. The anthropocentric hubris that underpins ecological degradation becomes, in their narratives, a focal point for philosophical and ecological critique (Yoneyama). While Harvey's work engages with existentialist thought, reflecting the anxieties of Kierkegaard and Heidegger, Ghosh's narrative critiques the colonial and capitalist systems that perpetuate environmental destruction. These texts not only enrich the eco-critical discourse but also demand a reevaluation of literature's role in shaping contemporary ecological consciousness.

This study explores these dimensions through the theoretical frameworks of eco-criticism, existential philosophy, and postcolonial environmentalism. By juxtaposing *Orbital* and *The Living Mountain*, it seeks to unravel the intricate interplay of ecological and existential crises in these works, emphasizing their relevance in an age where literature serves as both a reflection of and a response to humanity's ecological predicaments. As Ghosh poignantly asserts, "The climate crisis is also a crisis of culture, and thus of the imagination" (The Great Derangement 9). Through these texts, this article contends that imaginative literature holds the power to illuminate the complexities of the Anthropocene, urging a reimagining of humanity's place within the broader ecological web.

Literature Review

Eco-criticism, as a critical framework, has emerged in response to the escalating ecological crises of the Anthropocene, a term denoting the epoch in which human activity has become the dominant influence on the Earth's geology and ecosystems. Cheryll Glotfelty, a pioneer in this field, asserts that eco-criticism seeks to "study the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (Glotfelty xviii). Timothy Morton extends this perspective, introducing the concept of "hyperobjects"—phenomena so vast in scale and temporality, like climate change, that they elude human comprehension (Morton 1). The Anthropocene has necessitated new literary paradigms that transcend anthropocentrism, emphasizing interconnectedness and the ethical obligations of humans toward non-human entities.

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Ursula K. Heise highlights that contemporary literature must grapple with the "spatial and temporal dimensions of environmental change" to foster a planetary imagination (Heise 22). However, scholars such as Bruno Latour critique the limitations of traditional ecological narratives, arguing for a "more-than-human" perspective that acknowledges the agency of non-human actors (Latour 38). This discourse informs the works of both Samantha Harvey and Amitav Ghosh, whose narratives interrogate human culpability and vulnerability in the face of environmental precarity.

Samantha Harvey's *Orbital* has garnered critical attention for its innovative narrative approach, which situates the Earth within the vastness of space to underscore its fragility. Critics have lauded Harvey's spatial poetics, which challenge anthropocentric paradigms by presenting the Earth as both a vulnerable entity and a site of existential reflection. As Mary Ann Duffy observes, *Orbital* "renders the human experience minuscule against the infinite backdrop of cosmic vulnerability" (Duffy 46). Harvey's work aligns with existentialist philosophy, drawing parallels to Heidegger's concept of "being-toward-death," which emphasizes human finitude and the inevitability of existential anxiety (Heidegger 247). Yet, as Elizabeth Rankin critiques, *Orbital* risks aestheticizing ecological crises, potentially diluting its ethical imperatives (Rankin 14). This tension between aesthetic representation and ecological activism remains a contested terrain within eco-critical discourse.

Amitav Ghosh's *The Living Mountain: A Fable of Our Times* continues his longstanding engagement with environmental themes, situating itself as a fable that critiques the anthropocentric exploitation of nature. Scholars have highlighted Ghosh's use of allegory to illuminate the interdependence of human and non-human worlds. As Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin argue, "Fables allow for the deconstruction of human exceptionalism, inviting readers to imagine a world where the human is not the center" (Huggan and Tiffin 12). Ghosh's narrative is deeply informed by his broader critique of colonial and capitalist systems, which he views as central to environmental degradation. In The Great Derangement, Ghosh asserts that the climate crisis is rooted in a "derangement" of human priorities, where economic growth has superseded ecological balance (Ghosh 7). However, some scholars, such as Mark Dowie, contend that Ghosh's reliance on allegory risks oversimplifying complex socio-political dynamics, potentially undermining its broader critique (Dowie 89). Despite the extensive

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scholarship on eco-critical literature, there remains a paucity of comparative studies examining the thematic and philosophical intersections between Harvey's *Orbital* and Ghosh's *The Living Mountain.* While both texts grapple with the Anthropocene's challenges, their distinct narrative strategies—Harvey's existential spatiality and Ghosh's allegorical storytelling—offer complementary yet underexplored perspectives. Furthermore, the interplay between ecological and existential crises in these works remains an area ripe for critical inquiry, providing a nuanced lens through which to interrogate the Anthropocene's ethical and philosophical implications.

This research draws upon an interdisciplinary theoretical framework comprising eco-criticism, existential philosophy, and postcolonial environmentalism to examine the thematic and philosophical intersections of ecological and existential crises in Samantha Harvey's *Orbita*l and Amitav Ghosh's *The Living Mountain*. Each theoretical lens offers a nuanced approach to interrogate humanity's fraught relationship with the environment, contributing to a deeper understanding of the Anthropocene's ethical and philosophical dilemmas. Eco-criticism forms the foundational lens for this study, emphasizing the interconnectedness of human and non-human worlds. Timothy Morton's concept of "the ecological thought" serves as a critical touchstone, as it "forces us to think big—globally and expansively—about how everything is interconnected" (Morton 3). Morton's idea of "hyperobjects," phenomena that transcend human temporal and spatial scales, is particularly relevant to *Orbital*, which situates Earth within the cosmic vastness to underscore its fragility (Morton 1). Similarly, Ursula K. Heise's advocacy for a "sense of planet" highlights the need for a global ecological imagination that resists parochial narratives (Heise 10). In contrast to these expansive views, Bruno Latour critiques the anthropocentric framing of ecological discourses, proposing a "more-than-human" approach that foregrounds the agency of non-human actors (Latour 45). This perspective aligns with Ghosh's critique of colonial and capitalist paradigms, as articulated in *The Living Mountain*. By engaging these eco-critical theories, this study interrogates the ethical imperatives embedded within Harvey's and Ghosh's narratives.

Existential philosophy provides a critical framework for understanding the human condition as represented in *Orbital*. Martin Heidegger's concept of "being-toward-death" underpins Harvey's exploration of existential anxiety, wherein the recognition of human

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finitude is juxtaposed with the planetary precariousness of Earth (Heidegger 247). This existential awareness, as Sartre posits, often manifests in a confrontation with "nothingness," which compels individuals to seek meaning amidst the absurd (Sartre 67). Harvey's narrative exemplifies this tension, using the spatial motif of Earth viewed from orbit to highlight humanity's fragility. As Camus argues, existential crises often provoke a "revolt," a refusal to succumb to despair despite the awareness of life's absurdity (Camus 36). This existential revolt parallels the ecological imperative to act despite the overwhelming scale of the Anthropocene's challenges, a theme resonant in both *Orbital* and *The Living Mountain*.

Finally, postcolonial environmentalism provides a crucial lens for examining the geopolitical and socio-economic dimensions of the ecological crisis, as foregrounded in Ghosh's *The Living Mountain*. Vandana Shiva's concept of "Earth Democracy" foregrounds the intersections of ecological and social justice, highlighting the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on marginalized communities. Dipesh Chakrabarty's critique of the universal category of "the human" in the Anthropocene further complicates simplistic narratives of ecological crisis, emphasizing the need to center diverse, non-Western perspectives. By incorporating these complementary theoretical frameworks, this research seeks to offer a nuanced understanding of the Anthropocene's ethical, existential, and postcolonial implications as reflected in the contrasting narratives of Harvey's *Orbital* and Ghosh's *The Living Mountain*.

The study also incorporates postcolonial environmentalism, particularly as articulated by Amitav Ghosh in his broader oeuvre. Ghosh's narratives frequently critique the colonial and capitalist systems that perpetuate environmental degradation, aligning with Rob Nixon's concept of "slow violence." Nixon defines this as "violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a delayed destruction dispersed across time and space" (Nixon 2). In *The Living Mountain*, Ghosh employs allegory to expose the exploitative practices that undermine ecological and cultural resilience. Furthermore, Ghosh's emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems challenges the epistemic erasures wrought by colonial modernity. As Huggan and Tiffin assert, "Postcolonial ecocriticism seeks to recover the marginalized voices and perspectives that are often silenced in dominant environmental narratives" (Huggan and Tiffin

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15). By juxtaposing Ghosh's fable with Harvey's existential spatiality, this study highlights the intersections and divergences in their critiques of human-environment relationships.

The integration of eco-criticism, existential philosophy, and postcolonial environmentalism allows for a multifaceted analysis of *Orbital* and *The Living Mountain*. These frameworks illuminate how the texts negotiate themes of ecological degradation, human finitude, and ethical responsibility, offering complementary perspectives on the Anthropocene's crises. By situating these narratives within broader theoretical discourses, the study underscores literature's critical role in fostering ecological and existential awareness. The comparative analysis of Samantha Harvey's *Orbital* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Living Mountain: A Fable of Our Times* delves into their shared thematic preoccupations with ecological crises while revealing distinct narrative strategies and philosophical undertones. Both texts provide critical reflections on humanity's complex relationship with the environment, yet their approaches diverge in spatial, temporal, and ethical dimensions, reflecting nuanced cultural and epistemological frameworks. Harvey's *Orbital* situates Earth within the vast cosmos, emphasizing its fragility and existential insignificance. This perspective aligns with Timothy Morton's concept of "hyperobjects," which posits that ecological phenomena like climate change are so vast and distributed that they defy human comprehension (Morton 1). Through an orbital viewpoint, Harvey destabilizes anthropocentric narratives, urging readers to consider Earth as part of an interconnected cosmic system. Such spatial reframing parallels Ursula K. Heise's argument that a "sense of planet" is essential for fostering global ecological consciousness (Heise 8). Conversely, Ghosh's *The Living Mountain* anchors its narrative in localized environmental imaginaries, foregrounding the cultural and spiritual significance of specific ecosystems. The anthropomorphism of the mountain resonates with Bruno Latour's assertion that environmental ethics must acknowledge the agency of non-human entities (Latour 52). Ghosh critiques exploitative practices through an intimate portrayal of the mountain as a sentient being, challenging capitalist paradigms of resource extraction and fostering what Robin Wall Kimmerer describes as an ethic of reciprocity (Kimmerer 28).

The treatment of temporality differs markedly between the two texts. Harvey's *Orbital* adopts a fragmented narrative structure, mirroring the disorientation of ecological crises and the nonlinear progression of climate change. This aligns with Morton's critique of linear time,

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which he argues perpetuates anthropocentric delusions of control and progress (Morton 19). Harvey's fragmented temporality compels readers to confront the unpredictability and complexity of ecological collapse. In contrast, Ghosh employs the timeless form of a fable to convey universal truths about humanity's exploitation of the natural world. The narrative's cyclical temporality reflects indigenous epistemologies that prioritize long-term ecological balance over short-term gains. This approach echoes Amitav Ghosh's broader critique of modernity's temporal arrogance, which privileges immediate consumption over intergenerational sustainability (Ghosh 24). By invoking allegory, Ghosh highlights the enduring consequences of environmental mismanagement, aligning with Dipesh Chakrabarty's notion of the "deep history" of human impact on the planet (Chakrabarty 212).

The ethical dimensions of the two texts also diverge, reflecting their distinct philosophical foundations. Harvey's *Orbital* grapples with the existential insignificance of humanity in the vastness of the cosmos, resonating with Martin Heidegger's concept of "being-toward-death." This perspective instills a sense of humility and acknowledges the limits of human agency in the face of global ecological crises. Conversely, Ghosh's *The Living Mountain* imbues the natural world with moral standing, attributing sentience and agency to the mountain itself (Poray-Wybranowska and Ball 544). This approach is informed by non-Western epistemologies that challenge the human exceptionalism inherent in Cartesian dualism. As Donna Haraway suggests, "storytelling is a key practice for cultivating the speculative fabulation needed to apprehend our current predicament (Yoneyama; Biswas;Wutz)." By weaving together elements of eco-criticism, existential philosophy, and postcolonial environmentalism, this study illuminates how literary narratives can foster ecological and existential awareness, encouraging readers to reimagine their relationships with the more-than-human world.

Harvey's *Orbital* interrogates human agency through existential and philosophical frameworks. The narrative foregrounds the tension between humanity's cognitive awareness of ecological collapse and its inability to enact meaningful change. This existential paralysis is reminiscent of Albert Camus's notion of the "absurd revolt," wherein individuals must grapple with the futility of their efforts while striving for ethical engagement (Camus 35). By presenting Earth from an orbital perspective, Harvey underscores humanity's shared responsibility for

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environmental stewardship. Ghosh's *The Living Mountain*, however, situates agency within a postcolonial critique of global systems of exploitation. The indigenous community at the heart of the narrative exemplifies an ethic of care, resisting the capitalist commodification of nature. Ghosh's portrayal aligns with Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin's argument that postcolonial ecocriticism seeks to recover marginalized voices and epistemologies that challenge dominant paradigms of development (Huggan and Tiffin 14). By rooting ethical responsibility in localized knowledge systems, Ghosh offers a counterpoint to the global abstractions of Harvey's narrative.

In conclusion, the juxtaposition of Samantha Harvey"s *Orbital* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Living Mountain* reveals the diverse ways in which literature can engage with the ecological crises of our time. While both texts grapple with humanity's complex relationship with the environment, their distinct spatial, temporal, and ethical frameworks illuminate the multifaceted nature of the Anthropocene. The former adopts a cosmic perspective that destabilizes anthropocentric narratives, while the latter grounds its narrative in the cultural and spiritual significance of specific ecosystems. By foregrounding divergent philosophical and ideological foundations, this analysis demonstrates the crucial role of literary narratives in fostering a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between human and non-human worlds.

Both texts challenge anthropocentric binaries, yet their methods diverge significantly. Harvey's cosmological framing dismantles the illusion of human centrality, advocating for an ecological ethic that transcends individual action. In contrast, Ghosh's localized focus underscores the cultural specificity of ecological resilience, emphasizing the importance of indigenous knowledge systems in fostering sustainable practices. This tension reflects broader debates in ecocriticism regarding the relative merits of global versus local approaches to environmental advocacy (Heise 12). Moreover, the narrative strategies of the two works underscore their thematic divergences. Harvey's abstraction creates a dispassionate distance that compels readers to consider the planetary scale of ecological crises, whereas Ghosh's allegorical intimacy fosters an emotional connection with the natural world. This contrast reveals the multifaceted nature of literary engagements with the Anthropocene, demonstrating how different narrative forms can illuminate complementary dimensions of ecological thought.

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The comparative analysis of *Orbital* and *The Living Mountain* underscores literature's potential to reimagine humanity's place within the natural world. By situating these narratives within eco-critical and postcolonial frameworks, this study highlights their shared commitment to fostering ethical and ecological awareness. Despite their differing approaches, both texts contribute to an emerging literary tradition that seeks to confront the Anthropocene's challenges and envision alternative futures.

This discussion explores the thematic, narrative, and ethical implications of Samantha Harvey's *Orbital* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Living Mountain: A Fable of Our Times*, contextualizing their contributions to ecological discourse within contemporary literary and philosophical frameworks. By juxtaposing the planetary and the local, the universal and the specific, the two texts invite nuanced reflections on humanity's ecological responsibility in the Anthropocene.

Both Harvey and Ghosh use literature as a means to challenge prevailing anthropocentric paradigms, fostering a deeper understanding of humanity's entanglement with the natural world. Harvey's orbital perspective exemplifies Timothy Morton's "ecological thought," which demands an awareness of the interconnectedness of all life forms beyond immediate perception (Morton 5). By destabilizing conventional hierarchies, Harvey reframes ecological crises as collective and cosmic, urging readers to adopt a planetary ethic. Ghosh, however, grounds his narrative in localized cultural and ecological contexts, resonating with Robin Wall Kimmerer's assertion that indigenous storytelling embodies an ethic of reciprocity, where humans are caretakers rather than conquerors of the Earth (Kimmerer 32). The mountain's anthropomorphic portrayal exemplifies Latour's critique of the modernist dichotomy between nature and culture, highlighting the agency of non-human entities in shaping ecological narratives (Latour 67).

Through their divergent approaches, Harvey and Ghosh offer complementary perspectives on the role of literature in addressing the Anthropocene. Harvey's narrative grapples with the overwhelming scale of environmental degradation and the paralysis of global institutions, mirroring the challenges of imagining meaningful action in the face of capitalist structural and discursive constraints. (Jones). Narratives of human interference with the

environment – so-called "cli-fi" texts – have long played a role in raising awareness of climate change and its catastrophic consequences, often blending speculative fiction with ecological critique to envision both the perils of inaction and the possibilities for resilience and transformation. (Leikam and Leyda) These range from classic science fiction to contemporary realist and speculative fiction. Amitav Ghosh's *The Living Mountain* further contributes to this burgeoning genre by grounding its ecological concerns in a specific cultural and geographical context.

The contrasting temporalities in *Orbital* and *The Living Mountain* highlight divergent ways of grappling with ecological crises. Harvey's fragmented, nonlinear structure reflects the disorientation of the Anthropocene, where the effects of human actions unfold across deep temporal scales. This aligns with Dipesh Chakrabarty's "Four Theses on Climate Change," which emphasize the temporal rupture introduced by humanity's geological agency (Chakrabarty 221). By situating Earth within a cosmic framework, Harvey emphasizes the insignificance of human timelines, inviting reflection on long-term sustainability. Conversely, Ghosh's cyclical narrative mirrors indigenous temporalities that prioritize balance and intergenerational harmony. The fable form, with its universal resonance, allows Ghosh to critique extractive practices without confining his critique to a specific historical moment. This approach complements Chakrabarty's call for integrating diverse epistemologies to address the Anthropocene's challenges (Chakrabarty 225). The differing spatial and temporal perspectives in *Orbital* and *The Living Mountain* reveal the plurality of literary engagements with the Anthropocene. Harvey's cosmic scale aligns with the planetary consciousness advocated by Ursula Heise, while Ghosh's localized focus echoes the place-based ecocriticism of Buell and Glotfelty. By juxtaposing these narratives, this analysis underscores the importance of multiplicity in fostering effective environmental advocacy.

Both authors confront the ethical dilemmas posed by ecological degradation, though their approaches diverge in scope and focus. Harvey's planetary vision underscores the moral imperative of recognizing humanity's shared vulnerability, echoing Morton's claim that ecological crises necessitate a collective reimagining of ethical boundaries (Morton 14). However, this abstraction risks alienating readers by prioritizing global over local concerns. Ghosh's narrative, by contrast, emphasizes localized resistance to ecological exploitation,

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advocating for the revitalization of indigenous knowledge systems. This aligns with Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin's argument that postcolonial ecocriticism seeks to recover subaltern voices marginalized by global capitalist systems (Huggan and Tiffin 19). By humanizing the mountain, Ghosh fosters an emotional connection that complements Harvey's intellectual abstraction, providing a holistic approach to ecological ethics.

The narrative strategies employed by Harvey and Ghosh shape their ecological messages in distinct ways. Harvey's dispassionate, orbital perspective challenges readers to transcend anthropocentric biases, yet its abstraction may hinder emotional engagement. This tension reflects broader debates in ecocriticism regarding the efficacy of intellectual versus affective approaches to ecological advocacy (Heise 10). Ghosh's fable, with its allegorical intimacy, evokes empathy and fosters a sense of accountability. This aligns with Kimmerer's assertion that storytelling is a powerful tool for cultivating ecological awareness (Kimmerer 44). By engaging readers on an emotional level, Ghosh bridges the gap between abstract ecological concepts and lived experiences, making his message accessible to a broader audience.

While both texts critique exploitative relationships with the environment, their approaches reveal inherent tensions between global and local, abstract and specific, intellectual and emotional. Harvey's universalism complements Ghosh's particularism, demonstrating that diverse narrative forms can address different dimensions of the Anthropocene. This multiplicity underscores the importance of integrating varied perspectives in ecological discourse, reflecting Chakrabarty's call for "plural narratives" to navigate humanity's planetary crisis (Chakrabarty 228). The comparative analysis of *Orbital* and *The Living Mountain* highlights the potential of literature to reimagine humanity's relationship with the natural world. By juxtaposing cosmological and localized perspectives, the two texts challenge readers to confront the ethical, temporal, and spatial complexities of the Anthropocene. Their complementary approaches demonstrate the necessity of integrating global and local frameworks, intellectual abstraction, and emotional engagement to foster a comprehensive ecological ethic.

Conclusion

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The comparative exploration of Samantha Harvey's *Orbital* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Living Mountain: A Fable of Our Times* elucidates the multifaceted role of literature in fostering ecological awareness and reimagining humanity's relationship with the natural world. Both works, though distinct in their narrative strategies and thematic emphases, converge in their critique of anthropocentric paradigms and their call for an ethical reorientation in the Anthropocene. Harvey's cosmological lens compels readers to grapple with the vastness of planetary interconnectedness, aligning with Timothy Morton's assertion that "the ecological thought must transcend the here and now, delving into the cosmic to grasp the gravity of human actions" (Morton 15). By shifting the perspective away from human-centered narratives, *Orbital* challenges readers to adopt a planetary ethic that transcends cultural and temporal boundaries. Yet, as Ursula Heise notes, such abstraction may risk alienating readers, underscoring the necessity of bridging intellectual rigor with emotional resonance (Heise 12). Conversely, Ghosh's *The Living Mountain* employs an allegorical intimacy that localizes ecological discourse within indigenous epistemologies and lived realities. This approach not only resonates with Robin Wall Kimmerer's emphasis on storytelling as a "reciprocal act of ecological stewardship" (Kimmerer 38) but also critiques extractive modernity through the lens of subaltern resistance. By humanizing non-human entities, Ghosh reaffirms Bruno Latour's contention that "modernity's dichotomy between nature and culture must be dismantled to envision a sustainable future" (Latour 71). The synthesis of these texts highlights the complementary nature of their approaches: Harvey's planetary abstraction complements Ghosh's localized particularity, collectively offering a holistic framework for ecological thought. This duality aligns with Dipesh Chakrabarty's advocacy for "plural narratives that integrate diverse epistemologies to address the Anthropocene's complexities" (Chakrabarty 230). The juxtaposition of their perspectives underscores the necessity of balancing global and local, intellectual and emotional, to foster a comprehensive ecological ethic.

Ultimately, *Orbital* and *The Living Mountain* exemplify the transformative potential of literature in confronting the ethical and existential challenges of the Anthropocene. Their narratives invite readers to reconceptualize humanity's role within the web of life, fostering a sense of planetary solidarity and accountability. As Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin aptly observe, "ecocritical literature serves as a vital site for rethinking humanity's embeddedness in the natural world and its responsibilities toward it" (Huggan and Tiffin 22). By engaging with these texts, scholars and readers alike are prompted to envision alternative futures where

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ecological sustainability and ethical coexistence are paramount. In sum, the comparative analysis of Harvey and Ghosh underscores the urgent need for interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approaches to ecological discourse. By intertwining literary, philosophical, and ethical insights, their works illuminate pathways toward a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the natural world—one that acknowledges the agency of non-human entities and the interconnectedness of all life forms. This integrative vision not only enriches ecological thought but also reaffirms literature's indispensable role in shaping humanity's ecological consciousness.

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From Traditional to Modern: The Transformation of Indian Drama through Vijay Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session*

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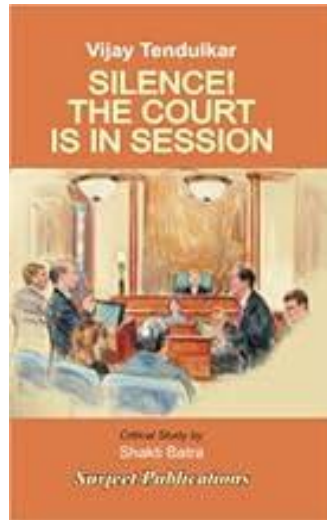
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Abstract

Vijay Tendulkar, a pioneering figure in Indian theatre, played a crucial role in transforming Indian drama from its traditional roots to a modern, hybridized form. This paper explores how Tendulkar's works reflect the evolution of Indian drama by blending indigenous cultural elements with Western modernist influences. Traditional Indian drama, rooted in Sanskrit plays and epics like the Mahabharata and Ramayana, focused on moral dichotomies and societal norms. However, post-colonial Indian English drama, as exemplified by Tendulkar, shifted toward addressing contemporary socio-political issues, particularly those affecting the urban middle class. Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session* serves as a case study, highlighting themes such as patriarchy, gender roles, and

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social hypocrisy. Through the mock-trial concept, the play critiques societal injustice and the subjugation of women, symbolizing the broader struggles of modern Indian society. Tendulkar's humanitarian approach challenges established norms, advocating for authenticity, sincerity, and a new moral order. His focus on psychological, existential, and feminist issues underscores the fragmentation of modern life. By analyzing Tendulkar's unique lens, this paper demonstrates how Indian drama evolved into a platform for social critique and cultural hybridity.

Keywords: Vijay Tendulkar, *Silence! The Court is in Session,* cultural hybridity, traditional drama, modernism, patriarchy, gender roles, social critique, humanitarian values, mock-trial, urban middle class, post-colonial, existentialism, feminism.

Introduction

Indian drama, as a revelatory genre, has long served as a mirror to society, vocalizing human emotions and exploring the hidden realities of individual lives, group dynamics, politics, and societal structures. Its origins can be traced back to the Vedic Aryans, who performed drama in simple yet profound ways. Ancient Indian epics like the *Bhargava Gita*, *Mahabharata*, and *Ramayana* were not merely religious or philosophical texts but also dramatic narratives that depicted the eternal struggle between good and evil, morality and immorality. These traditional forms of drama adhered to the principles of Sanskrit theatre, which emphasized moral dichotomies and societal norms. However, as time progressed, Indian drama evolved beyond its ancient roots, incorporating diverse cultural elements and adapting to the changing socio-political landscape. This transformation gave rise to a hybrid identity, particularly evident in contemporary Indian English drama, which blends Indigenous traditions with Western modernist influences (Bandyopadhyoy XIIV).

The evolution of Indian drama is deeply intertwined with the cultural and historical trajectory of the nation. From its classical Sanskrit origins to its post-colonial manifestations, Indian drama has continually reinvented itself to address the pressing issues of its time. The post-colonial era, in particular, marked a significant shift as Indian English drama began to reflect the complexities of urban, middle-class life, grappling with themes such as industrialization, capitalism, and technological advancements. This period saw the emergence of playwrights who used drama as a tool for social critique, challenging established norms and advocating for change. Among these dramatists, Vijay Tendulkar stands out as a pivotal figure who bridged the gap between traditional and modern drama. His works exemplify the

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cultural hybridity of contemporary Indian theatre, addressing psychological, existential, and feminist issues while critiquing societal vices such as patriarchy, hypocrisy, and corruption.

Tendulkar's contribution to Indian theatre lies in his ability to transform regional narratives into national conversations. He brought the struggles of the urban middle class to the forefront, exploring themes like love, betrayal, motherhood, and the subjugation of women. His play *Silence! The Court is in Session* serves as a quintessential example of this transformation, blending satire with a profound critique of patriarchal society and legal injustice. Through the mock-trial concept, Tendulkar exposes the harsh realities faced by women in a male-dominated world, making his work both a reflection of societal issues and a call for humanitarian values (Banerjee ix).

The objective of this paper is to analyze how Tendulkar's works reflect the transformation of Indian drama from traditional to modern. By focusing on themes such as cultural hybridity, societal critique, and the evolution of dramatic forms, this study aims to highlight Tendulkar's role in reshaping Indian theatre. Through an exploration of his plays, particularly *Silence!* , this paper seeks to demonstrate how Tendulkar's unique lens captures the essence of contemporary Indian society while challenging its entrenched norms.

The Evolution of Indian Drama

Indian drama traces its origins to the ancient Sanskrit tradition, which was deeply rooted in moral storytelling and societal norms. The classical Sanskrit plays, inspired by epics like the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, depicted a clear dichotomy between good and evil, often serving as moral lessons for society. These dramas were not merely entertainment but also vehicles for philosophical and ethical reflection, emphasizing the triumph of virtue over vice. As Subodh Bandyopadhyoy notes, "The genre of drama belongs to India, even if it does not follow the instructions of ancient Sanskrit drama" (XIIV). This traditional form laid the foundation for Indian theatre, where characters were archetypal representations of morality, and plots often revolved around divine interventions and human dilemmas. However, while these early forms celebrated cultural identity, they adhered strictly to established norms, leaving little room for questioning societal structures.

The post-colonial era marked a significant shift in Indian drama as it began to absorb Western theatrical techniques and modernist themes, creating a hybrid genre that reflected both Indian cultural identity and global influences. This transformation was fueled by the socio-political changes in a newly independent India, where industrialization, capitalism, and

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technological advancements reshaped urban life. Indian English drama emerged as a distinct form, addressing the concerns of the urban, English-speaking middle class. Arundhati Banerjee observes, "Contemporary Indian English drama is post-colonial in the context of its cultural identity" (ix). Playwrights like Vijay Tendulkar played a pivotal role in this transition, using drama to critique societal vices such as patriarchy, hypocrisy, and corruption. Tendulkar's works exemplify this hybridity, blending indigenous storytelling with existential and feminist themes. His play *Silence! The Court is in Session* critiques patriarchal norms through the mock-trial concept, exposing the subjugation of women in a male-dominated society. Ram Sharma highlights this evolution, stating that Tendulkar's plays challenge "sexual politics to subjugate a woman" while advocating for a new humanitarian order. Thus, Indian drama evolved from its traditional roots into a modern, reflective art form that continues to question and redefine societal values.

Vijay Tendulkar's Unique Lens

Vijay Tendulkar, one of the most prominent figures in Indian theatre, carved a unique niche for himself by blending Indian traditions with Western modernism, creating a hybrid identity that defines contemporary Indian English drama. His plays serve as a revelatory genre, vocalizing human emotions and exploring the hidden realities of individuals, groups, politics, and society (Bandyopadhyoy XIIV). Tendulkar's works reflect a cultural hybridity that mirrors the socio-cultural changes occurring in post-colonial India, particularly within the urban, middle-class, English-speaking society. This paper delves into how Tendulkar's unique lens captures the essence of these transformations, addressing themes such as industrialization, capitalism, and technological advancements while critiquing societal norms. By analyzing his plays, this study highlights Tendulkar's ability to bridge the gap between traditional Indian drama and modern theatrical techniques, offering a profound commentary on the complexities of contemporary life.

Tendulkar's plays exemplify the hybrid identity of Indian English drama, which has evolved to incorporate both indigenous cultural elements and Western influences. As noted in the content, contemporary Indian English drama is "post-colonial in the context of its cultural identity," reflecting the integration of modern Western culture into Indian theatre. Tendulkar masterfully blends these influences, using drama as a medium to critique societal vices such as patriarchy, hypocrisy, and corruption. His works often depict the psychological, existential, and feminist issues faced by individuals in a rapidly changing society. For

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instance, *Silence! The Court is in Session* critiques patriarchal norms through the mock-trial concept, exposing the subjugation of women in a male-dominated society. Ram Sharma observes that Tendulkar's plays challenge "sexual politics to subjugate a woman," highlighting the playwright's focus on gender dynamics and power structures (Sharma 12).

A significant aspect of Tendulkar's contribution lies in his focus on urban middle-class issues, which are deeply intertwined with the socio-cultural changes brought about by industrialization, capitalism, and technological advancements. These forces have fragmented modern life, making it increasingly complex and disjointed. Tendulkar's plays address the challenges faced by the urban middle class, exploring themes such as love, betrayal, motherhood, and economic independence. In *Silence!* , the protagonist, Benare embodies the struggles of unmarried motherhood, fighting for her right to self-esteem and dignity in a society that marginalizes her. Arundhati Banerjee notes that Benare "possesses a natural lust for life and spontaneous joie de vivre." Yet, she becomes the victim of a cruel game orchestrated by her co-actors, symbolizing the societal forces that seek to silence independent women (Banerjee ix). Through such narratives, Tendulkar critiques the hypocrisy and narrow-mindedness of contemporary Indian society while advocating for a new humanitarian order.

By blending Indian traditions with Western modernism and focusing on the socio-cultural changes affecting the urban middle class, Tendulkar's plays offer a powerful reflection of modern Indian society. His unique lens not only critiques societal vices but also champions authenticity, sincerity, and integrity in life. Through an exploration of his works, this paper seeks to demonstrate how Tendulkar's contributions have reshaped Indian drama, making it a platform for social critique and cultural hybridity.

Themes of Transformation in Tendulkar's Works

Vijay Tendulkar's works are a profound critique of societal issues, particularly patriarchy, gender roles, and hypocrisy, often presented through the lens of satire. In *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Tendulkar uses the mock-trial concept to expose the subjugation of women in a patriarchal society. The play satirizes both social and legal justice, as Miss Benare is harshly punished based on mere conjecture while Prof. Damle, the real culprit, escapes accountability. As noted in the text, "The injustice projected in the play will go on repeating itself in actual life until this 'man-centred' world becomes a human-centred world'" (*Silence! The Court is in Session* 51). This highlights Tendulkar's sharp commentary on the

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systemic oppression faced by women. Through Benare's humiliation during the mock trial, Tendulkar critiques societal norms that stigmatize unmarried motherhood and strip women of their dignity. Ram Sharma observes that Benare becomes "a challenging woman to those of men called executors of power politics subjecting sexual politics to subjugate a woman" (Sharma). The play thus serves as a powerful indictment of patriarchal structures that perpetuate inequality and injustice.

Tendulkar also delves into psychological, existential, and feminist issues, reflecting the fragmentation of modern life and the complexities of human relationships. His characters often grapple with inner turmoil, societal expectations, and existential dilemmas. For instance, Benare's character embodies resilience and self-assertion despite being victimized by societal norms. Arundhati Banerjee describes her as possessing "a natural lust for life and spontaneous joie de vivre." Yet, she becomes isolated and subjected to cruelty due to her defiance of social conventions (Banerjee ix). Tendulkar's exploration of these themes underscores the alienation and disunity experienced by individuals in contemporary society. He portrays how industrialization, capitalism, and technological advancements have fragmented human connections, leaving individuals as "islands" in a rapidly changing world (Content). This existential perspective adds depth to his critique of societal vices, emphasizing the need for authenticity and sincerity in human interactions.

The themes of love, betrayal, and unmarried motherhood are central to *Silence!* , where Tendulkar uses the mock trial to comment on societal norms and women's rights. Benare's desperate attempts to find a father for her unborn child reflect the pressures of conforming to patriarchal expectations. However, she is ultimately punished without compassion, highlighting the double standards faced by women in matters of love and sexuality. The play critiques the societal tendency to vilify women for their choices while absolving men of responsibility. As Bandyopadhyoy notes, *Silence!* is "the first significant modern Indian play in any language to centre on woman as protagonist and victim" (XIIV). Through this work, Tendulkar challenges traditional notions of morality and advocates for a new humanitarian order. He emphasizes that "what is important in life is one's feeling, one's sincerity or integrity if the life lived is authentic" (*Silence! The Court is in Session* 52). By addressing these universal themes, Tendulkar not only critiques societal flaws but also calls for a reevaluation of human values, making his works timeless and transformative.

Case Study: *Silence! The Court is in Session*

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Vijay Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session* is a seminal work in Indian theatre that critiques the societal and legal injustices faced by women, particularly those who defy patriarchal norms. The play revolves around a group of amateur actors rehearsing a mock trial drama, which inadvertently turns into an actual trial for one of their own—Miss Leela Benare. Through this narrative, Tendulkar exposes the systemic subjugation of women in a male-dominated society. The central theme of the play is the silencing of women who challenge societal conventions, as symbolized by the mock-trial concept. Benare, the protagonist, is accused of infanticide and promiscuity, subjected to relentless scrutiny, and ultimately punished without compassion. Her private life is laid bare, exposing her illicit relationship with Prof. Damle, which resulted in her pregnancy. Despite her innocence and vulnerability, she becomes the scapegoat of a cruel game orchestrated by her co-actors, who represent patriarchal forces. The play serves as a scathing critique of societal hypocrisy, legal injustice, and the failure of moral systems to protect women. As noted in the text, "The injustice projected in the play will go on repeating itself in actual life until this 'man-centred' world becomes 'a human-centred world'" (*Silence! The Court is in Session* 89). This underscores the universality of the issues addressed in the play, making it a timeless commentary on gender dynamics and social structures.

The mock trial in *Silence!* Serves as a powerful metaphor for societal hypocrisy and the silencing of women. What begins as a rehearsal for a fictional courtroom drama transforms into a real-life indictment of Benare, highlighting the ease with which societal norms can be weaponized against women. The mock trial is not merely a theatrical device but a reflection of how society judges and punishes women for their choices, often without evidence or fairness. Benare's character embodies the struggles of women who dare to assert their individuality in a patriarchal world. She is portrayed as a self-conscious, assertive, and independent woman. These qualities make her a target for her co-actors, who are described as "utterly selfish, hypocritical, and malicious amateur artists" (*Silence! The Court is in Session* 63). These characters, including Ponkshe, Sukhatme, Karnik, and the Kashikars, attack Benare not because of her guilt but because she defied societal expectations. Ram Sharma observes that Benare becomes "a challenging woman to those of men called executors of power politics subjecting sexual politics to subjugate a woman" (Sharma). Her struggle for self-assertion is evident in her defence of her actions and her refusal to conform to societal

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norms. However, despite her resilience, she is ultimately silenced by the patriarchal forces at play, symbolizing the broader oppression faced by women in contemporary Indian society.

Tendulkar uses the mock trial to critique the failure of legal systems to deliver justice, particularly for women. The play highlights how societal biases infiltrate legal proceedings, leading to unjust outcomes. Miss Benare is harshly punished based on conjecture and hearsay, while Prof. Damle, the real culprit, escapes accountability. This stark contrast underscores the double standards inherent in patriarchal societies, where men are often absolved of responsibility while women bear the brunt of societal judgment. As noted in the text, "She is punished harshly, even disproportionately, and Prof. Damle, the real culprit, goes scot-free" (*Silence! The Court is in Session* 96). The mock trial exposes the flaws in the legal system, which fails to protect vulnerable individuals like Benare. Instead, it perpetuates the very injustices it claims to address. Arundhati Banerjee describes Benare as "possessing a natural lust for life and spontaneous joie de vivre." (Banerjee ix). Her punishment, which includes the suggestion of foeticide, is both ironic and tragic, as it reflects the cruelty of a society that criminalizes women for their choices. Through this satire, Tendulkar critiques not only the legal system but also the societal attitudes that enable such injustices to persist.

The play also delves into the psychological and emotional toll of societal judgment on women. Benare's mental agony during the mock trial is palpable as she is subjected to relentless questioning and humiliation. Her co-actors attempt to console her by claiming they are "only joking," but the severity of her suffering is undeniable. This highlights the insidious nature of societal oppression, which often masquerades as harmless banter or entertainment. The play's mock seriousness pervades every scene, blurring the lines between fiction and reality. What begins as a conjecture evolves into a grave revelation about Benare's private life, culminating in her public humiliation and emotional collapse. Subodh Bandyopadhyoy notes that *Silence!* is "the first significant modern Indian play in any language to centre on woman as protagonist and victim" (XIIV). This observation underscores the play's significance in addressing the plight of women in contemporary Indian society. By focusing on Benare's experiences, Tendulkar sheds light on the systemic injustices faced by women who challenge societal norms.

The themes of love, betrayal, and motherhood are central to *Silence!,* as Tendulkar explores the societal norms surrounding these issues. Benare's desperate attempts to find a father for her unborn child reflect the pressures of conforming to patriarchal expectations.

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Her situation highlights the stigma attached to unmarried motherhood and the lack of support for women in similar circumstances. The play critiques the societal tendency to vilify women for their choices while absolving men of responsibility. Simon de Beauvoir's perspective on patriarchy is echoed in the play, as Benare's predicament illustrates how marriage and relationships are often structured to subordinate women. De Beauvoir writes, "For the man is not of the woman but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman but the woman for the man" (110). This sentiment is reflected in Benare's treatment, as she is judged and punished for defying traditional gender roles. Through her character, Tendulkar challenges the notion that marriage is a sacred institution supported by tradition and morality, exposing it instead as a tool of oppression.

Tendulkar's humanitarian approach is evident throughout *Silence!* , as he advocates for authenticity, sincerity, and integrity in human interactions. The play critiques societal vices such as hypocrisy, vulgarity, barbarism, superficiality, narrow-mindedness, corruption, duplicity, and treachery. These flaws are embodied by the characters who participate in the mock trial, representing the patriarchal forces that dominate contemporary Indian society. Tendulkar's commitment to human values is reflected in his portrayal of Benare as a victim of these vices. Despite her suffering, she remains a symbol of resilience and self-assertion, challenging the established norms and values of society. As noted in the text, "What is important in life is one's feeling, one's sincerity or integrity if the life lived is authentic" (Content). This philosophy underscores Tendulkar's belief in the need for a new humanitarian order that prioritizes human dignity and equality.

The play's satire extends beyond its critique of legal and social justice to encompass broader societal issues. Tendulkar uses the mock trial to expose the hypocrisy of a society that claims to uphold moral values while perpetuating systemic injustices. The characters' behavior during the trial reflects their true nature, revealing their selfishness, malice, and lack of empathy. For instance, Mr. Sukhatme, the lawyer, and Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar, the judge and his wife, behave mockingly, further humiliating Benare. Their actions highlight the pervasive nature of patriarchal attitudes, which normalize the subjugation of women. Ram Sharma points out that the play critiques "sexual politics to subjugate a woman," emphasizing the role of power dynamics in perpetuating gender inequality (Sharma 12). Through this satire, Tendulkar challenges audiences to confront the injustices faced by women and to question the societal norms that enable such oppression.

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In conclusion, *Silence! The Court is in Session* is a powerful critique of societal and legal injustices faced by women in contemporary Indian society. Through the mock-trial concept, Tendulkar exposes the hypocrisy and cruelty of a patriarchal system that silences women who dare to assert their individuality. Benare's character serves as a symbol of resilience and self-assertion, challenging societal norms and advocating for a new humanitarian order. The play critiques the failure of legal systems to deliver justice, particularly for women, and highlights the psychological and emotional toll of societal judgment. By addressing themes such as love, betrayal, and motherhood, Tendulkar sheds light on the systemic injustices faced by women who defy traditional gender roles. His humanitarian approach underscores the need for authenticity, sincerity, and integrity in human interactions, calling for a reevaluation of societal values. Through *Silence!* , Tendulkar not only critiques societal flaws but also champions the cause of equality and justice, making his work a timeless and transformative contribution to Indian theatre.

Language and Style:

Vijay Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session* is marked by a sharp, realistic, and intense dramatic style that effectively critiques societal norms. His language is simple yet powerful, blending colloquial speech with incisive commentary. The dialogues are natural and conversational, capturing the rhythm of everyday speech while subtly revealing the psychological depths of the characters.

Tendulkar employs satire, irony, and sarcasm to expose hypocrisy, particularly in relation to gender and power structures. The play's courtroom setting serves as a metaphor for societal judgment, and the language shifts between formal legal rhetoric and casual banter, reflecting the blurred lines between justice and personal vendetta.

His use of pauses and silences is particularly striking, emphasizing unspoken tensions and the oppressive social reality faced by the protagonist, Leela Benare. The play's structure allows for a gradual buildup of psychological pressure, culminating in a deeply impactful climax.

Tendulkar's style is also influenced by Brechtian techniques, such as minimal stage directions and an emphasis on dialogue-driven storytelling, which engage the audience intellectually and emotionally. Overall, his linguistic and stylistic choices enhance the play's themes of social injustice, moral policing, and individual agency, making it a compelling and thought-provoking work.

Conclusion

Vijay Tendulkar's works exemplify the transformation of Indian drama from its traditional roots to a modern, hybridized form that blends Indian cultural identity with

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Western influences. His plays reflect the evolution of Indian English drama as a post-colonial genre, addressing the socio-cultural changes in urban, middle-class society while critiquing entrenched societal norms. Through his unique lens, Tendulkar captures the complexities of contemporary life, exploring psychological, existential, and feminist issues that resonate universally. Plays like *Silence! The Court is in Session* highlights the subjugation of women in a patriarchal society, using satire and symbolism to expose systemic injustices. The mock-trial concept in *Silence!* Serves as a metaphor for societal hypocrisy, emphasizing the failure of legal systems to deliver justice, particularly for marginalized groups. Tendulkar's ability to blend Indian traditions with Western modernism underscores the hybrid identity of contemporary Indian theatre, making his works both culturally specific and globally relevant. The significance of Tendulkar's contributions to contemporary Indian theatre cannot be overstated. As Subodh Bandyopadhyoy notes, *Silence!* was "the first significant modern Indian play in any language to centre on woman as protagonist and victim" (XIIV), marking a turning point in Indian drama. His focus on authenticity, sincerity, and humanitarian values challenges audiences to confront societal flaws and advocate for change. Tendulkar's global recognition stems from his ability to address universal themes while remaining rooted in Indian cultural contexts. However, his works also invite further exploration into the intersection of tradition and modernity in Indian drama. Future research could examine how other playwrights have navigated this dynamic or analyze the evolving role of women in Indian theatre. By continuing to study Tendulkar's transformative impact, scholars can deepen their understanding of how Indian drama reflects and shapes societal values, ensuring its relevance for generations to come.

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Evaluation as Ecolinguistic Device in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*

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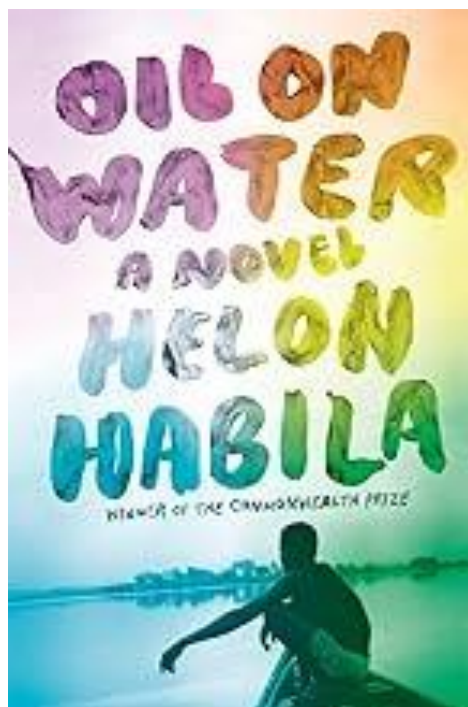
Courtesy: www.amazon.com

Abstract

This study examines the thematic concerns in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* from an ecolinguistic perspective. The objective is to identify the linguistic means through which evaluation as an ecolinguistic tool is realised in the text and to describe how this tool is deployed in portraying the thematic concerns discussed by the author. Using evaluation as one of the toolkits proposed by Arran Stibbe in his ecolinguistics framework, the study analysed five sample texts purposively extracted from Habila's *Oil on Water*. The findings reveal that evaluation in the analysed texts is constructed using a variety of sentence types, pronominal reference, additive and adversative conjunctions, nominals, verbal, linguistic contrast, and descriptive and evaluative lexical items. Sentence types such as complex and compound-complex sentences help clarify, elaborate, and construct a multidimensional depiction of the environmental issues Habila conveys in the text. The study concludes that the creative utilisation of evaluation as an ecolinguistic device attests to Habila's novel being mainly information-laden and fact-given.

Keywords: Helon Habila, *Oil on Water,* Ecolinguistics, Environmental concerns.

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Introduction

Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* presents the sordid reality of the Niger Delta. The text discusses issues such as the devastating effects of environmental pollution in the Niger Delta, the neglect of the people by the authorities concerned as a result of corruption in Nigeria, and the resultant social unrest in the region (Koussouhon, & Dossoumou, 2015). The story is told through the eyes of a young journalist, Rufus, who hunts down a story in search of his big break. He accompanies his mentor, Zaq, a man haunted by his past, into the winding creeks. Their mission is to find the wife of an expatriate oil worker held for ransom by militants. An army intervention, run-ins with militants, and illness punctuate the journey. In the end, Rufus finds another truth he had not been seeking. The text captures an apt representation of the endless cycle of death and decay in the Niger region (Imossan, et al., 2025). Corrupt oil companies exploit small communities supported by the greedy government. The militants in the text are not black or white. They blow up the pipelines, polluting the waters. To them, it is the only way to get the attention of the companies that break lives while looking for new places to sink their pipelines. People are not faultless with greed, and sometimes, they overcome rationality. Through his mastery skills, the writer can use imagery to portray the damaged waters, the dead fish, and the burning villagers. The yellowed eyes of hungry souls and the looks of terror in the eyes of men whose lives were cut shut. In addition, the writer shows how politics has permeated every inch of our relations (Komolafe et al., 2025) and how poverty and oppression have pushed a narrative of silence even on the ones who need to speak the truth. Considering the significance of Habila's environmental text, the present paper seeks to examine the concerns raised in the text from the perspective of ecolinguistics. The objective is to identify the linguistic means through which evaluation is realized in the text and describe how evaluation as an ecolinguistic tool has been used to appraise these issues (Edem & Aluya, 2023).

Review of Literature

This section reviews previous studies that have been conducted on Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*. The review aims to identify the depth of research carried out in the novel under examination to establish the gap in literature that the present intends to fill. To start with, Koussouhon & Dossoumou's (2015) article examines Habila's *Oil on Water* using the Systemic Functional

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Grammar as a theoretical framework. By applying the theory of the grammar of experiential meaning to Helon Habila's *Oil on Water (*2011*)*, the study attempts to auscultate African society's emerging perception of gender identity as it affects and re-presents women. By borrowing the way the writer encodes his experience via the medium of language to affirm male writers' support of the trend, this article proves the propriety and relevance of womanist theory by re-evaluating and re-defining African women's identity and personality through the novel under study.

Edokpayi (2019) examines Habila's *Oil on Water* from a Linguistic stylistic perspective. The paper focuses on the significant syntactic, lexico-semantic, and graphological levels of language study. To this end, the paper seeks to expound on how the writer deploys language resources to convey the Niger Delta crises, their security risks to society and the Nigerian economy, as well as the decisive steps to arrest the ugly situation. The paper employs linguistic stylistic analysis as a theoretical framework for analysing extracts purposively selected from the text. The findings indicate that syntactic features (declarative sentence, interrogative sentence, imperative sentence, exclamatory sentence, parallelism), lexico-semantic features (simile, metaphor, personification, and idiomatic expressions) and graphological features (capitalisation, ellipsis, use of pidgin) are used to portray the devastating effects of ecological degradation which have subjected the people of the region to a lot of problems ranging from environmental pollution, unemployment, poverty, hunger, diseases and deaths. The study concludes with Habila's call on the Nigerian government and the oil companies to give more attention to the Niger Delta and address the problems with all seriousness and urgency to restore peace and enhance national development in Nigeria.

Diana (2017) studies Habila's *Oil on Water* and *Waiting from an Angel* from a linguistic stylistic viewpoint. It seeks to identify both texts' recurrent linguistic and stylistic features and the stylistic significance of Habila's style choice. This study adopts the style analysis method outlined by Leech and Short in analysing extracts randomly extracted from the texts. The study reveals that Habila is consistent in his style of writing. For every linguistic feature and stylistic device examined in *Waiting for an Angel*, there seems to be a similar recurrence in *Oil on Water*, except for a few. Habila's style conforms to the concepts of style, which see style as a choice and deviation. This work has been able to establish that the style of the text is manifest in the linguistic

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features of the text. This study has revealed that Habila has been consistent in his style since both texts have more recurrent linguistic features than diversities.

Ojukwu & Gajir (2019) explore Habila's *Oil on Water* to explicate the effects of oil exploration in the Niger-Delta region. Using Critical Discourse Analysis coupled with principles of ecocriticism, the study, through a content analysis, examined extracts from the novel. The findings reveal that Habila employed experiencer constructions, laced with graphic descriptions of the damaging effects of oil spillage, to elicit emotions by the various degree of environmental degradation and the injurious effects of oil exploration in the Niger Delta. The breakdowns of grammatical structures in critical discourse analysis extend the scope of language from its formal structures of modes that re-create social realities beyond the sentence level.

Ojarike (2018) studies Habila's *Oil on Water* from a stylistic perspective. The study adopts the Systemic Functional Grammar and Critical Stylistics as theoretical models. The findings reveal how the nominal group feature and the naming strategy in describing the reckless exploitation of petroleum resources in the underdeveloped region as well as reveal how the people of the Niger Delta have been impoverished and their environment degraded from decades of exploitation and neglect.

Edem (2023) examines how meaning is negotiated through some cohesive devices in Habila's *Oil on Water*. Also, the study focused on a qualitative research procedure and adopted Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion theory as a theoretical model. The findings reveal that words cannot be isolated, as they are related in a text to produce a predetermined meaning. This was achieved through the author's careful use of some cohesive devices such as reiteration, synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy, which improved the textual quality of the text. The study concludes that the author, through cohesive devices, made reading of the text meaningful and easily understood by the reader.

Imossan et al. (2024) examine the representations of actions, events, and states in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*. To do this, Jeffrey's (2010) critical stylistics model, which centres on

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investigating underlying ideologies within a text or an utterance, is the foundation upon which the study was premised, emphasising Hallidiyan's Transitivity Model—thus forming its theoretical framework. With this framework, Habila's use of the processes of transitivity highlights the subject of corruption, violence, and exploitation as entrenched in society. The method of analysis used was the textual analysis. Twelve excerpts were extracted from Helon Habila's *Oil on Water* with a focus on his choice of lexical items within a syntactic construction. This aided in explicating how actions, events, and states are represented in the text. From the findings, it was concluded that Habila's lexical choices reflect the four processes of the transitivity model: Material process, verbalisation, mental process, and relational process. Through these processes, his ideologies, which primarily are the indictment of the government and oil companies in the exploitation of the people, are not just well represented but have within them the potential to be impressed upon the readers.

Komolafe et al.'s (2025) study examines prioritisation as a critical stylistic tool in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*. The research aims to analyse how specific elements within the text are prioritised by Habila to strengthen the ideological dimensions of his narrative, heighten emotional impact, and strengthen topical ideas. The qualitative research uses Lesley Jeffery's (2010) Critical Stylistics Models but focuses only on prioritisation. Ten (10) extracts were selected from the text to demonstrate how this critical stylistic tool has been used in the text. The findings show that Habila's stylistic choices strongly influence the narrative structure and thematic concerns, offering a nuanced understanding of character development and plot dynamics. The study further reveals that prioritisation in *Oil on Water* sets out to foreground key events and character experiences, create urgency, and examine the differences between expected and actual outcomes. The data analysis shows that Habila employs prioritisation to emphasise notable narrative moments. This technique by Habila also focuses on the characters' emotional and physical states. The study contributes to the broader field of literary criticism by demonstrating how prioritisation functions as a key stylistic tool in contemporary African fiction.

Theoretical Framework

Arran Stibbe's (2015) ecolinguistics serves as the study's framework. Arran Stibbe observes that ecolinguistics examines language to identify the narratives we live by, evaluates

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those narratives from an ecological standpoint, rejects harmful narratives, and aids in the hunt for alternative narratives to live by. He claims that by exposing and questioning the narratives we live by, the theory contributes to the reinvention of society along more ecological lines. Stibbe (2015) notes that the stories we live by are narratives many culture members carry about, shaping their behaviour, speech, and thoughts. He lists eight categories of stories: ideology, evaluation, erasure, salience, identity, narrative, framing, and metaphor. He notes that these categories can affect people's cognitive perceptions of reality, inspiring people to use language that will inspire them to preserve the environment rather than endanger it (Aluya & Ocheme, 2024). "Evaluation" refers to people's narratives about what aspects of life are good or poor. Cognitive assessments are associations we have in memory, such as that honesty is good and lying is bad, rather than a meticulous data analysis to determine whether something is good or bad. These stories become cultural evaluations when widely shared within a culture; they are stories about what is good or evil that have gained societal acceptance. Numerous cultural judgments are ingrained in everyday discourse regarding various facets of social life, such as the positive aspects of economic expansion, retail sales, higher profits, speed, and convenience (Stibbe, 2015). Cultural assessments can get entrenched to the point that people forget why some things are viewed as good and others as bad. It gets easy to accept the "good news" that Christmas sales are up without thinking about the environmental costs or the issues associated with mounting personal debt or to accept the "good news" that an exploitative and environmentally harmful corporation is making more money (Aluya & Uduma, 2024).

Methodology

The study applies qualitative content analysis to examine environmental degradation in Helon Habila's Oil on Water, which serves as the data for the study. The study employs a purposive sampling method to select the data. The choice of the purposive sampling method as a technique for data selection is based on the fact that it enables the researcher to choose only those portions of texts that will be relevant to the variables under scrutiny (Ogunsiji & Aluya, 2022). The study employs the purposive sampling method in collecting five excerpts from the text chosen for the study. The study employs Stibbe's (2015) ecolinguistic framework. Stibbe's ecolinguistics model consists of eight toolkits. Out of the eight toolkits, only one is used for the analysis. To conduct

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the analysis, portions from the text are critically examined for instances of Habila's use of evaluation as an ecolinguistic tool.

Textual Analysis

Stibbe (2015) defines evaluation as stories in people's minds about whether a particular area of life is good or bad. These stories are associations we have in memory that, over time, influence how we view or address issues. Evaluation, an ecolinguistic tool, is deployed by Habila to assess some stories (i.e. discourse subjects or themes) in his texts. This is actualised by deploying value-laden language to express an opinion or point of view. The writer employs different sentence types and choices of lexemes that show judgment and emotional attachment to the stories or issues addressed. The following extracts from the texts exemplify evaluation as an eco-stylistic tool.

Extract 1

Irifike Island, also known as Half-moon Island because of its distinct
the crescent-shaped coastline had long since disappeared, swallowed by
the distance and the darkness cast by the mist that rises like smoke
from the river banks (Habila, 2012, p.3).

Extract 2

The village looked as if a deadly epidemic had swept through it. A
square concrete platform dominated the village centre like some
sacrificial alter. Abandoned oil-drilling paraphernalia; some appeared
to be sprouting out of widening cracks in the concrete, alongside thick
clumps of grass. The chunks began not too far away from the derelict
platform. We are went from one squat brick structure to the next, from
compound to compound, but they were all empty, with-wide -open
windows askew on broken hinges, while overhead the roofs had big
holes through which strong sunlight fell (Habila, 2012, p.7).

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Extract 3

I couldn't understand their words but imagined they were speaking of dwindling stocks of fish in the river, the rising toxicity of the water, and how soon they might have to move to another place where fishing was still fairly good (Habial, 2021, p.16).

Extract 4

And that was why we decided to leave, ten families. We did not take their money. The money would be our curse on them for taking our lands and for killing our chief (Habila, 2012, p.41).

Extract 5

Karibi sat straight between two soldiers, his hands tied behind him, His face stares at the horizon (Habila, 2012, p.13).

Extract one employs linguistic contrast in presenting two contrasting realities about an Island in the Niger Delta region. This presentation is captured using a compound-complex sentence. The text begins with the nominal expression "Irifike Island", alluding to the writer's topic of discourse. The adjective in the nominal expression specifies the particular Island being referred to by the writer. The first reality of the Island, as captured in the text, alludes to its beauty and ambience. This is represented by lexical expressions such as "half-moon Island" and "distinct crescent-shaped coastline." These are evaluative indicators used to evaluate the beautiful sight of the island. However, the second reality alludes to the devastating state of the Island. This devastating state is represented using lexical evaluations such as "disappeared" and "swallowed". Both lexical items are verbs deployed to indicate what environmental degradation has done to the Island (Edem & Aluya, 2019). Other lexical expressions in the text deployed as evaluative indicators to assess the pitiable plight and sight of the Island include "the darkness cast by the mist" and "smoke from the river banks". The abovementioned lexical items are deployed as evaluative indicators to assess the former and current state of the Island. Through the foregoing

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evaluation, Habila laments the devastating havoc environmental degradation has caused in the region.

Evaluation in extract two is observed to be made about the desertion of the local communities by its inhabitants. This is due to the havoc caused by oil spills. For example, the adverse effect of oil spills is primarily evaluated to its negative impacts on the indigenes. Almost all the lexical evaluations in this extract are achieved through adjectivisation (e.g. deadly epidemic, abandoned oil-drilling paraphernalia, thick clumps, derelict platform, etc.). Apart from the abovementioned lexical items used as evaluative indicators, lexical expressions such as "from compound to compound", "all-empty-with-wide-open windows", and "broken hinges" corroborate the abandonment of the communities by their inhabitants. The use of "abandoned oil-drilling paraphernalia" suggests the activities of the oil operators (Aluya, 2016). The choice of "widening cracks", "thick clumps of grass", and "derelict platform" indicate that the villages had been deserted for a long time. Finally, the lexical item "deadly epidemic" denotes the disease caused by the toxic substance from oil spills, so the inhabitants vacated the communities.

Extracts Two and Three focus on the devastating consequence of oil spills on the rivers in the region using a complex sentence that comprises a main clause and several subordinate clauses. The main clause is introduced with the expression, "I could not understand their words". Evaluation in this text features in the subordinate clause. Evaluative expressions include: "dwindling stocks of fish" and "the rising toxicity of water". Here, Habila assesses the current state of fish in the river and the current condition of the rivers through lexical evaluations such as "dwindling stock" and "rising toxicity". Through these lexical evaluations, Habila depicts the adverse impact of oil spills on the fish and the rivers.

Evaluation in extract four is made to the desertion of the villages by their residents and their refusal to accept the money offered by the government as compensation for the lands that were forcefully confiscated from them. Also, it captures the reason behind the residents' decision not to accept the money. Lexical expressions such as "decided to leave", "did not take their money", "taking our lands", and "killing our chief" are deployed in the text to render the activities

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of the government and oil companies in the region in a negative light. The focus of extract six is on the oppression and brutalisation of leaders of the region by law enforcement agents owing to their refusal to consent to the government's request to possess their lands. Such oppression and brutalisation are depicted through lexical evaluations such as "sat straight between two soldiers" and "his hands tied behind him".

Conclusion

This study has focused on evaluation as an ecolinguistic device in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*. It approaches the subject of environmental degradation using insights from Stibbes' concept of evaluation. The 5 sample texts that constitute the data examined bring to the fore some ecolinguistic features used in the texts. Evaluations in the sample texts examined are constructed using a variety of sentence types, pronominal reference, additive and adversative conjunctions, nominals, verbal, linguistic contrast, and descriptive and evaluative lexical items. Sentence types such as complex and compound-complex sentences help clarify, elaborate, and construct a multidimensional depiction of the environmental issues Habila conveys in the text. Remarkably, the discourse functions of these sentence types suggest that Habila seeks more than just informing. Pronominal references range from first, second, and third-person pronouns. These pronoun references are operative linguistic features that Habila employs to identify different classes and groups. Habila exploits linguistic contrast in presenting different realities about the issues of environmentalism discussed in the text. The creative utilisation of these eco-stylistic features attests to the writer's novel being mainly information-laden and fact-given. Also, it confirms that most of the misunderstanding between the Niger Delta inhabitants and the government is based on clash of ideologies.

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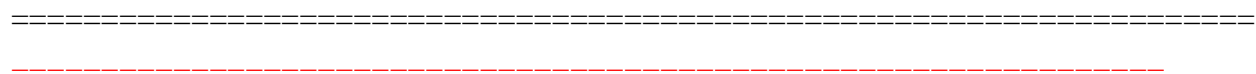
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Endangered Orality in Kinnaur: Linguistic and Cultural Interference

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Abstract

This paper examines the decline of native languages and oral traditions among the Kannaura tribe in Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, and the cultural consequences of such changes. Kinnaur, a linguistically diverse region, is home to both Sino-Tibetan and Indo-Aryan languages spoken by the Kannaura people. Despite being recognized as a Scheduled Tribe under the Indian Constitution, which has supported the preservation of its cultural identity, the tribe faces challenges from linguistic assimilation, urbanization, and technological advancements. The study identifies the key factors contributing to this decline and highlights the risks posed to the community's heritage. It also proposes pragmatic strategies for revitalizing oral traditions, emphasizing their critical role in preserving the tribe's unique cultural identity.

Keywords: Kinnaur, endangerment, vitality, indigenous, mother tongue, revitalization.

1. Introduction

The Kannaura people, residing primarily in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh, India, are a tribe whose languages and oral traditions have long been central to their identity. They speak eight languages, including seven from the Tibeto-Burman family and one from the Indo-Aryan family (Negi 2023). Lacking a writing system, their languages serve not only as a means of communication but also as vital repositories of traditional knowledge and history.

The languages of Kinnaur are essential to the community's identity, connecting people with their past, cultural values, and lived experiences. With no written tradition, these languages serve as a repository of knowledge, passing down stories about ancestors, gods, and nature. However, this heritage is under threat due to the dominance of languages like Hindi and English (Negi

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2023). As younger generations shift to the "trendy" languages, they are also adopting new cultural practices that distance them from their traditions. This shift is leading to the decline of oral traditions—such as folk songs, rituals, and mythology—that have been central to Kinnauri culture (Negi 2021).

Linguistic interference from dominant languages like Hindi and English is altering the Kinnauri language, with changes in the indigenous lexicon, structure, and semantics. This shift is accompanied by broader cultural changes, such as shifts in social, economic, and political practices. As Hindi and English become more common in education and daily life, younger Kinnauri speakers increasingly use these languages, seeing them as markers of social mobility. This is causing a divide between generations, with younger people losing touch with traditional linguistic practices and oral customs (Negi 2021).

The cultural implications of this linguistic shift are significant. Oral traditions that once preserved collective memory and cultural values are fading as digital media and formal education take over. Knowledge about agriculture, spirituality, and the environment, once passed down through oral storytelling, is also being lost. This paper explores the relationship between language, culture, and identity in Kinnaur, focusing on how the erosion of oral traditions is tied to sociolinguistic, cultural, and political forces. By examining linguistic and cultural interference in the Kinnauri-speaking community, this study aims to understand the challenges facing the preservation of Kinnauri oral traditions and the cultural heritage they represent.

2. About the Tribe and Their Languages

Kinnaur is located on the northeast side of Himachal Pradesh in India. It shares international land border with Tibet on the east, Uttrakhand on the south, Shimla district on the west and Spiti district on the northern side. It is situated at latitude 31°34'59.99"N and longitude 78°24'59.99"E. The district is spread over an area of 6,401 square kilometers. It is divided in three administrative sub-divisions: Kalpa, Nichar and Poo. Population of the district is about 84,000 (Census 2011) which is 1.2% of the population of Himachal Pradesh and density of population is a low 13 person per square kilometers (Census 2011). (See fig. 1 for geographical map of Kinnaur).

At different stages in history, Kinnaur had intimate contact with the north plains and Tibet which influenced their language and culture. The inaccessible topography, steep valleys, and rugged mountains have shaped the daily lives of its people, contributing to the development and

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preservation of its distinct linguistic and cultural identity. The isolation of this region, with its limited access to outside world, has allowed the languages and oral traditions to thrive for centuries, deeply intertwined with the natural environment and the rhythms of local life (Negi 2021).

Figure 1. Administrative map of Kinnaur

http://himachalpradeshtravel.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Tourist-Map-Kinnaur.jpg

Kannaura tribe is locally called *Kanoora* or *Kanaura*. The tribe has been referred as Koonawur (Gerard 1841, Cunningham 1844), Kunawura (Jaschke 1865), Kanawara (Joshi 1911) Koonawara (Konow 1905; Grierson 1909) or Kinnar (Sanskritayan 1948).

Nothing concrete is known about the Kannaura people, except sporadic mention in ancient literature. Gerard (1841) in 'Account of Koonawur' noted,

"In absence of authentic records the early history of Kinnaur is obscure and the reference to their past is confined to the legends and mythological accounts. The historical incidents surrounding the north Indian plains between 6th B.C. to 7th century A.D., indicate that Kinnaur was part of the extended territories of the Magadha Kings, Maurya Kings, the Kushanas, the Gupta Empire and Harsha. Their territories extended from the north plains up to northwest India and inner Himalayas. Evidencesto this effect are found in the historical records of each these empires. After the decline of the Harsha, local tribe heads

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kept fighting for control over the land. They were called Thakurs and controlled small territories. Chinni, Labrang and Kamru Thankurs are some of the known Thankurs from that period."

Kannaura tribe speaks about eight languages, seven from Tibeto-Burman and one Indo-Aryan language family (Negi 2021):

Kinnauri is spoken uniformly in Kalpa and Nichar sub-divisions of the district, and in some villages of Poo sub-division. It is the most widely spoken language of the tribe. Bhoti Kinnauri is spoken in Poo sub-division. The influence of Tibetan language and culture is noticeable in villages in upper Kinnauri. Chitkuli is spoken in Rakcham and Chitkul villages of Sangla. Sumcho is spoken in Kanam valley of Poo. Jangrami or Jangshung is spoken in Asrang, Lippa and Jangi villages of Poo. Sunam is spoken in Sunnam village of Poo. Chhoyuli is spoken in Nesang and Kunnu Charan villages of Poo. See Table 1 for languages of Kinnaur.

Language	ISO 639-3	LF	Area	Population
Kinnauri	kfk	TB	Lower Kinnaur	30,000-35,000
Pahari Kin.	kjo	IA	SC of lower Kinnaur	9,000
Bhoti[1] Kin.	nes	TB	Poo tehsil	6,600
Sumcho	scu	TB	Sumcho & Ropa valley	2,500
Chitkuli	cik	TB	Chitkul, Rakcham	1,300
Sunam	ssk	TB	Sunnam	400
Jangrami	jna	TB	Jangnam valley	2,700
Choyuli	-	TB	Nesang, Kunu charang	700
Total			about 600 villages	70,000-84,000[2]

Table 1. Language varieties of Kinnaur with their area and population

The Indo-Aryan language 'Pahari Kinnauri' is spoken by a particular social class in regions of Kinnaur. The classification of Pahari Kinnnauri is:

Indo European –Indo Iranian – Indo Aryan --Northern zone -- Himachali – Pahari Kinnauri (Ethnologue).

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This study focuses on the Kinnauri speaking population of Kinnaur living in Kalpa and Nichar sub-division. See Table 2 for the classification of TB languages of Kinnaur.
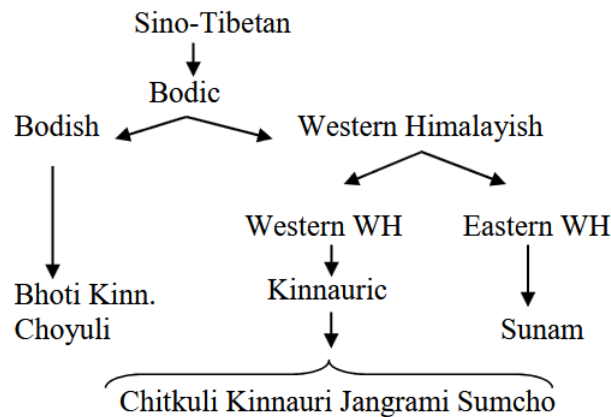

Table 2. Classification of TB languages of Kinnaur

(Benedict 1972)

3. Linguistic Characteristics of Kinnauri

Kinnauri belongs to the Sino-Tibetan language family. It shares linguistic characteristics with several other languages spoken across the West-himalayan region, classified into various sub-types based on region and the specific practices of local communities. Kinnauri language shows phonological variations which is a reflection of the topographically and culturally varied landscapes of Kinnaur that creates relative isolated regions.

Kinnauri exhibits a rich pronominal system, tonal qualities, honorific system and politeness markers (Negi 2016). The phonological structure is distinctive from Indo Aryan languages like Hindi or other regional languages. This tonal feature in Kinnauri is an essential part of Kinnaur's cultural fabric, with many oral traditions, such as songs and prayers, relying on the tonal modulation to convey meaning and emotion. The complex system of honorifics and politeness markersreflect the hierarchical social structures within Kinnauri community. The system of address—based on age, gender, and social status—reinforces the cultural norms of respect and deference that are central to Kinnauri society.

4. Oral Traditions

Oral traditions in Kinnaur are not merely a form of entertainment, but a critical practice that reinforces social norms, transmits historical memory, and imparts moral values to younger generations. Oral narratives in Kinnauri come in various forms, including folktales, songs,

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proverbs, and ritual chants, each serving a different purpose in the social and cultural fabric of the community.

Folktales are among the most cherished oral traditions in Kinnauri culture. These stories often filled with mythical creatures, gods, heroes, and moral lessons, serve to both entertain and educate. In the lores of *Devi Chandika Kothi* (Goddess Durga, a local deity), *Grosnam Maheshwar* (deity of Nichar), Kinnauri orality vividly reflect the deep-seated values, beliefs, and worldview of the community (recorded narratives). These stories, imbued with themes of profound love, sacrifice, repentance, and hardship, are central to the cultural fabric of Kinnaur.

The songs of *Devi Dutt* and *Thakur Moni* are integral to the cultural and spiritual landscape of Kinnaur, reflecting the very essence of the community's social fabric. These songs go beyond mere rituals or entertainment; they are carriers of the region's moral and social codes, embodying values that shape the community's collective identity and social cohesion.

The narrative of *Padma Dasi,* too, reflects a deep connection between love and suffering. The song conveys the protagonist's devotion and the hardships she faces on her journey of repentance and moral recovery. These stories show that suffering is not just a personal trial but an integral part of the moral and spiritual journey, leading to enlightenment and balance.

The mythological significance of *Kinner Kailash*, as a divine abode, further strengthens the connection between the community's spiritual beliefs and their environment, with tales depicting the sacred mountain as a symbol of divine power, purity, and protection.

Folksongs of religious gurus; *Sunam Negi Rinpoche*, *Locha Rinpoche* from Asrang plays a significant role in the spiritual and cultural life of the people of Kinnaur. The lores have managed to preserve the centuries old beliefs and interactions with Buddhist traditions of spiritual teachings, rituals, and monastic practices in the area.

Collectively, these folktales and folksongs serve as both a moral guide and a cultural archive, reinforcing the Kinnauri community's belief system, which values love, self-sacrifice, and redemption in the face of adversity. These themes continue to shape the identity of the people, linking past and present generations in a shared understanding of their spiritual and cultural heritage.

While folk stories entertain people, they also help in imparting historical knowledge and moral lessons. Mythological stories have a special place in Kinnauri folk tales. The story of

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mythological figures like *Kansa Raj* and *Lord Krishna,*tales of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* are popular in Kinnaur. In the folktales of tales, we see bravery, dishonesty, justice, intelligence, feuds etc. Apart from this, evil spirits, animals, birds, demons, Kings, queens or princes and princesses have been the main characters in the folk tales here.

Songs associated with various seasons—such as the harvest season, crop season, winters, spring, and New Year—are deeply intertwined with the agricultural and cultural practices of the community. These songs, which are often passed down through generations, not only reflect the cyclical nature of life but also the spiritual significance of each season, reinforcing the connection between the people and the land they cultivate. They encapsulate the rhythms of daily life, the hardships and joys tied to each season, and the deep respect for nature and its cycles.

For instance, during the annual *biish* festival, which marks the arrival of spring, Kinnauri songs and hymns are performed, invoking blessings from deities and ancestors. Similarly, oral storytelling—whether through mythological tales, historical narratives, or personal anecdotes—remains central to community life, providing moral lessons and preserving the collective memory of the Kannaura people.

Proverbs are another key aspect of Kinnauri oral culture. The proverbs presented here offer rich insights into Kinnauri culture, mirroring the community's values, relationships, and worldview through a blend of humor, wisdom, and cautionary advice.

For example, the proverb "*mii jigicu batang teeg*" parallels the Hindi saying "uncii dukaan phiki pakvan" (a high shop but bland food). This shows how Kinnauri proverbs often emphasize the gap between appearances and reality, urging people to look beyond surface-level impressions.

Another interesting saying, "*ma to gorbonu laik, ma to sansaru laik*" meaning 'neither good for family, nor for the world," convey the significance of personal integrity. It reflects the deeply introspective nature of Kinnauri culture, where self-awareness and personal conduct are key to maintaining one's dignity and place within the community.

The proverb "*mai gucu gucu gvao, naar gucu gucu haar*" which means "if you tease a fire repeatedly, it gets extinguished, if you tease a woman repeatedly, she runs away" draws from local traditions like *haar* or *hari*, which allow women to leave her in-laws if mistreated. The proverb highlights the delicate balance of relationships and the consequences of persistent

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harassment or disrespect. It also conveys an inherent respect for women's autonomy and personal choice within the social context.

In "*banthini totoh thi lanni, gar piigre duyo*," (what to do with beautiful face, if teeth are yellowish) the focus is on the value placed on both physical and moral attributes. This proverb appears to poke fun at a certain village's women, whose beauty is overshadowed by the yellowing of their teeth. It underscores the idea that outward beauty must be complemented by good habits and a balanced lifestyle, or else it becomes meaningless.

Clearly, Kinnauri proverbs serve as a dynamic tool for social learning, offering lessons on relationships, personal behavior, and community expectations. Through these proverbs, the Kinnauri people preserve their cultural wisdom and pass it down through generations, using storytelling as a means to embed deep moral values in everyday life.

5. Sociolinguistic and Cultural Forces Shaping Kinnauri Orality

The preservation of Kinnauri is increasingly threatened by a range of sociolinguistic and cultural forces that are reshaping the linguistic landscape of the region. These forces include growing bilingualism, linguistic interference from dominant languages, and the broader forces of cultural globalization. As Kinnauri speakers, particularly among younger generations, adopt Hindi and English, the oral traditions that have long been the cornerstone of Kinnauri culture face unprecedented challenges.

In Kinnaur, language shift is one of the most significant sociolinguistic phenomena currently influencing the preservation of Kinnauri orality. While Kinnauri has traditionally been the primary language spoken at home, in local markets, and during religious and cultural ceremonies, the growing adoption of non-native languages among younger generations is gradually diminishing the everyday use of Kinnauri. This shift is rooted in the larger sociopolitical and economic changes occurring in the region, where Kinnauri, once the dominant language, is increasingly seen as a regional or local language with limited utility in a broader national context.

One of the primary drivers of this language shift is the rise of bilingualism, especially among the younger Kinnauri-speaking population. Hindi is also the lingua franca in the region. Hindi is now the medium of instruction in most educational institutions, and the prevalence of English, especially in higher education and professional environments, has made it an essential tool for

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social mobility and economic opportunities. As a result, the younger generation is increasingly fluent in Hindi and English, while their proficiency in Kinnauri is often limited to familial and traditional contexts.

The declining domains of language use of Kinnauri also challenge the intergenerational knowledge transfer in Kinnauri culture, especially with the increasing dominance of Hindi and English. The rise of formal education and the pressures of modern life have led to a decline in the practice of storytelling and other oral traditions, resulting in a gap between generations.

The role of media in shaping language practices cannot be overstated. Television, cinema, and the internet, all of which are dominated by Hindi and English content, are powerful tools for cultural and linguistic dissemination. For the younger generation, exposure to Hindi and English-language media has not only led to the passive erosion of Kinnauri but also to an active preference for languages that offer more social prestige. Hindi and English, through their widespread media presence, have become symbols of modernity, success, and upward mobility, further undermining the status of Kinnauri as a language of everyday life.

6. Strategies for Preserving Kinnauri Orality

The preservation of Kinnauri orality, an integral aspect of the community's cultural heritage, is critical in the face of pressures of modernity and globalization. Efforts to safeguard this indigenous oral tradition would involve an approach that combines community-driven initiatives, the integration of orality into modern education, and the revitalization of cultural practices. The Kinnauri language, with its rich repository of stories, songs, rituals, and ecological knowledge, faces significant challenges, but through strategic actions, these traditions can be revitalized and passed down to future generations.

Community-driven initiatives are one of the most effective means of preserving the Kinnauri oral traditions. Efforts to document and safeguard Kinnauri oral forms can help ensure that this vital part of Kinnaur's heritage does not vanish with the passing of the older generations. A significant step in this process is the establishment of oral archives that record stories, songs, prayers, and other traditional forms of communication in Kinnauri. These archives can serve as a valuable resource for future generations, providing a comprehensive record of the language in its various forms. Elders, who are the custodians of Kinnauri oral traditions, can be encouraged to participate in these projects, ensuring that their voices and knowledge are preserved for posterity.

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In addition to oral archives, cultural preservation projects can focus on compiling Kinnauri folktales, proverbs, and songs into accessible formats, such as books, documentaries, or audio recordings. Local initiatives, often spearheaded by community groups or NGOs, can work in partnership with linguistic experts and anthropologists to ensure that these projects are done with cultural sensitivity and respect for traditional practices. These initiatives could also promote the creation of Kinnauri language resources—such as dictionaries, textbooks, and language guides—that not only help in the documentation of the language but also serve as educational tools for future generations.

Local schools and educational institutions play a key role in preserving Kinnauri orality. Schools in Kinnaur can introduce Kinnauri as part of the curriculum, offering lessons in the language to ensure that younger generations learn to speak, read, and write it. Teachers, especially those fluent in Kinnauri, can be trained to incorporate oral traditions into the classroom, fostering a deeper connection to the language and culture. In this direction, the government, under the NEP 2020, has introduced primers in Kinnauri language in pre-schools in Kinnaur with the objective to take mother tongue to the schools and help early learners learning in their mother tongue and therefore promote local languages.

Another innovative approach is to use modern technologies to bring Kinnauri oral practices into the digital age. Digital platforms such as podcasts, mobile apps, and social media offer a new avenue for revitalizing Kinnauri orality, especially among younger generations. Podcasts can be created to feature stories, interviews with elders, and discussions about Kinnauri culture and traditions. This format allows for the language to reach a wider audience, even those who are not geographically located in Kinnaur. Mobile apps designed to teach Kinnauri can include audio recordings of stories, proverbs, and songs, creating interactive and engaging learning experiences for users. These technologies can also serve as repositories for the oral archives, making it easier for younger Kinnauri speakers to access, learn, and engage with their language.

Social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook can be harnessed to share videos of traditional performances, storytelling sessions, and educational content in Kinnauri. Younger generations are already well-versed in using these platforms, and by sharing Kinnauri content in these familiar formats, the language can be normalized and celebrated in modern,

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relatable ways. Digital technologies not only preserve oral traditions but also help make them more accessible, fostering engagement from people across age groups and geographic locations.

7. Conclusion

This study has explored the intricate relationship between language, culture, and identity within the Kinnauri-speaking community in Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh. The findings underscore the pivotal role of Kinnauri orality—in the form of stories, songs, proverbs, and rituals—as a central cultural asset. These oral traditions serve not only as a means of communication but also as a living archive of the community's history, ecological knowledge, and spiritual beliefs. However, this cultural heritage is facing significant threats due to the growing linguistic and cultural interference from Hindi and English, which are increasingly replacing Kinnauri in key domains such as education, media, and everyday communication.

The shift towards bilingualism and the dominance of Hindi and English have had a profound impact on the preservation of Kinnauri oral traditions. While older generations continue to engage in traditional practices, younger people are often more comfortable with Hindi or English, leading to disconnect between generations. Language shift is eroding the transmission of oral traditions, resulting in the loss of invaluable cultural knowledge, especially in areas like agriculture, ecology, and religion. Moreover, the increasing presence of modern media, tourism, and migration has further accelerated this process, making it more difficult for Kinnauri orality to thrive in its original form.

Given the crucial role of Kinnauri orality in shaping cultural identity, it is imperative that active measures be taken to preserve this heritage. Language revitalization efforts, such as community-driven documentation, incorporation of oral traditions into education, and the use of digital tools, are vital to the survival of Kinnauri.

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# Reclaiming Identity and Authority: A Feminist Analysis of Kavita Kane's *Lanka's Princess*

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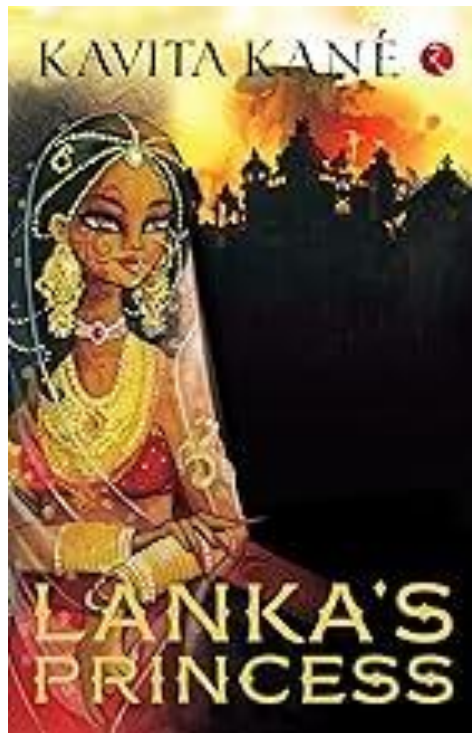
Courtesy: www.amazon.in

Abstract

Emphasizing the often misinterpreted and disregarded figure of Surpankha, Kavita Kane's *Lanka's Princess* offers a creative rereading of the Ramayana. Kane challenges the traditional definition of flawless womanhood by humanizing Surpankha, who was once presented as a villain. Originally called Meenakshi, Surpankha's rebellious character drives her

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brother Ravana to choose her a new name. Examining Surpankha's experiences as a neglected and underprivileged daughter, Kane offers a detailed study of her inner turmoil and the social rejection she suffers. By stressing Surpankha's resilience among hostility and loss, the story questions the usual dichotomy between Surpankha and Sita—where Surpankha marks disobedience, and Sita epitomizes acquiescence. By dissecting Surpankha's portrayal as a dreadful "other" and pushing for reevaluating women's image in Indian mythology, Kane's reworking highlights sometimes disregarded aspects of female identity. This study questions the way women are portrayed in legendary literature, challenging patriarchal paradigms.

Keywords: *Lanka's Princess,* Kavita Kane, Ramayana, Indian mythology, female subjectivity, revisionism, gender perspective, Indian literature.

Introduction: Image of Women in Indian Mythology

Oppressive stories that uphold rigid and idealized qualities for femininity have historically shaped how women are represented in Indian mythology. Deeply anchored in the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata, these mythologies have helped to produce regressive and often repressive images of women. While marginalizing and denigrating any who deviate from these norms, these epics have created the archetype of the ideal woman as subservient, obedient, and self-sacrificial. In this framework, it is essential to scrutinize and challenge these images and the mythological conceptions of women that support them. Pillai (161) argues that rereading these male-centric epics from a female perspective helps to question the ideas of ideal womanhood.

Postmodernist theory has challenged the legitimacy and claims of universal truth, undermining the authoritative standing of "grand narratives" since the late 20th century. Lyotard (xxiv) argues in The Postmodern Condition that an "incredulity towards metanarratives," which denigrates the dominant institutions controlling knowledge development, defines the postmodern ethos. Particularly by feminist writers who challenge the predominance of patriarchal mythology, this metamorphosis has produced more reinterpretation and modification of legendary stories. According to Madhavi Arekar (132), Indian feminists seek to "revisit mythology by recreating, retelling, and refolding it from a woman's perspective," therefore subverting the patriarchal portrayal of female characters.

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Sharma (140) points out that this revisionist viewpoint stimulates important questions about the goals and techniques of mythical reinterpretations: Why is this perspective being revived? For what fresh meanings does it seek to establish? Reevaluating women's position in Indian mythology, these revisionist works highlight the voices of underprivileged female characters historically limited to binary stereotypes of either moral figures or promiscuous people. With heroines like Sita representing the ideal woman, these legendary stories have often shaped Indian cultural expectations and norms. Any departure from this ideal is usually seen as a transgression, thereby preserving the authority of the patriarchy over women's subjectivity.

Kavita Kane sees mythology as a framework for present reflection rather than only as a collection of historical stories. She argues in an interview that although they reflect the socio-cultural values of their time, myths can be reinterpreted to face modern issues (Kaushik, para. 3). According to Kane, myths are dynamic things that act as living books, allowing one to consider and criticize modern society problems. Kane presents different points of view on female characters who have traditionally been neglected or misinterpreted, challenging the patriarchy inherent in mythology via a revisionist technique. Rich (18) notes that "Re-vision" goes beyond simple historical study; it becomes a necessary act of survival, particularly for women excluded in conventional narratives.

Kane's works mirror Adrienne Rich's "revisionist mythmaking," which turns a person or story towards feminist goals. The feminist rereading of these great stories presents an opportunity to correct the gender stereotypes that have dogged these stories for millennia (Ostriker 73). Divakaruni (xv) notes that mythology often marginalizes women, showing their emotions and intentions just in comparison to male heroes, with their positions depending on the men in their lives. Kane argues that the conventional view of women in mythology results from sexism and chauvinism, which hides the strength and complexity of female characters, therefore undermining this limited portrayal. She says these women should be returned to their authentic selves and that mythology can help them find their voices (Kaushik, para. 5).

The story of Surpankha, the much-mistreated sister of Ravana, Kane's Lanka's Princess, shows this approach. Traditionally, Surpankha—who represents the "other" of Sita in the Ramayana—has been portrayed as a hideous, demonized creature whose story is sometimes

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disregarded and misinterpreted. Rereading Surpankha's story, Kane transforms her from an "ugly, adulterous, disfigured ogress" into a confident and audacious woman who questions society's expectations and rejects the constrictive rules pushed upon her (Arekar 131). Usingrecounting, Surpankha can express her own story, offering a more complex picture of her identity and behavior.

Kane's focus on Surpankha's identity development as an unwelcome female child—overlooked by her mother and eclipsed by her brothers—highlights the neglected aspects of her character, therefore highlighting how these events shaped her female subjectivity. Kane offers a feminist rereading of Surpankha's story, enabling her to be seen as a woman who has suffered rejection, hate, and loss rather than as a "monster." This paper investigates how Kane's rereading of Surpankha challenges accepted ideas of gender and marks a significant turning point in reforming patriarchal stories.

Meenakshi's Crisis as an Undesired Female Reproduction

The only girl among three strong sons—Ravan, Kumbhakarna, and Vibhishan—Meenakshi, the progeny of Rishi Vishravas and Rakshasi Kaikesi. With her sons running the three kingdoms and Lanka acting as their capital, Kaikesi dreamed of another son, realizing her desire to build an asura empire (Kane 14). Still, Kaikesi was unhappy by the time Meenakshi was born. She sobbed, resentful, staring at her newborn child, "This girl has turned back my intentions... a faint sense of discomfort making her more restless" (Kane 14). The story shows Kaikesi's great suffering at bearing a daughter instead of a son, a perceived failure buried in sadness and frustration (Kane 14). Rishi Vishravas claimed that Meenakshi was "born fighting against the expectations of the world" (Kane 15), meaning that her presence damaged the basic hopes of her family. Meenakshi thus was excluded, ignored, and neglected, having defeated her mother's goal of producing perfect children—robust men to uphold the asura legacy.

The way Kavita Kane presents Meenakshi as an undesired female child invites readers to consider the psychological development of a woman subjected to mistreatment and exclusion. Chakravarty (133) argues that a woman's subjectivity is much influenced by her surroundings. Meenakshi's formative events most certainly significantly influenced her

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growing identity in this environment. Mandapaka (81) claims that a family provides stability and a feeling of belonging, helping to shape a person's self-identity. Meenakshi's family did not provide her with the necessary emotional support. Her family's disregard for her health made her prone to feelings of bitterness, anxiety, and anger.

Meenakshi was forced to grow up seeing herself as an outsider inside her own family because of the ongoing injustice she experienced. Kane clarifies Meenakshi's inner terrain, therefore improving this study. She considers her place in the family and notes that her brothers receive preferential treatment: "Ravan consistently advocated for his mother, while Vibhishan aligned himself with their father. Kumbha, exhibiting unwavering loyalty to Ravan, would feel compelled to support her mother." She was thus in a dilemma: what line of action should she follow? Still, nobody seemed to be bothered about her. "Or her opinion"[(Kane 56). Meenakshi's comments suggest that her parents favored Ravan and Vibhishan, which caused her isolation and voicelessness. With his physical power and asura inclination, Ravan stood for Kaikesi's dreams for the future; Vibhishan, with his rishi qualities, attracted his father's respect. Meenakshi was caught between these extremes without a clear stance in this power relationship.

Kane notes that Meenakshi's gender restricted her potential. Meenakshi was robbed of knowledge and education, unlike her brothers, who had the chance to develop their intellectual and athletic capacities. By asking, "Am I not also the offspring of Rishi Vishravas?" she questions this unfairness. Why, like my brothers do, am I not reading the Shastras and the Upanishads? Kane 33 Her research exposes the gender barrier preventing her from gaining the same skills her boys were advised to acquire. Meenakshi's discontent emphasizes her awareness that, being a woman, she was judged unworthy of the intellectual and physical growth given to her male siblings. Her absence from the intellectual circle of the family confirms her marginalization and identification as "other" inside the family. Meenakshi was excluded from her family's ambitions as she could not fulfill her mother's vision of an asura empire, reachable alone through her brothers.

Meenakshi's portrayal of Kane as the unloved and neglected daughter emphasizes the psychological and emotional consequences of gender-based abuse. Meenakshi's road is marked

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by the terrible awareness that her existence compromises the patriarchal goals of her family, leading to great loneliness and discontent. This story clarifies the complex evolution of female subjectivity under the impact of personal traits and the confining family and societal structures limiting a woman's potential.

Princess of Lanka: Surpanakha or Meenakshi?

Named for her "golden and graceful" eyes resembling a fish (Kane 16), Meenakshi was also known as Chandranakha by her mother, Kaikesi, who was enthralled by her "abnormally long nails." Then Ravan called her Surpankha after her hostile behavior. For Meenakshi, moving from Meenakshi to Surpankha marks a profound path of assertion, disobedience, and sexual emancipation. Crucially, in the story, Ravan kills Meenakshi's beloved pet, Maya, which drives her to exact revenge by attacking him. This violent deed shows that Meenakshi chooses to resist rather than give in to grief, therefore highlighting her tenacity and ability to defend her dignity and rights. Her first act of rage, the attack on Ravan, marks the start of her transformation into a strong and independent being.

"Meenakshi felt her hand twitch and, like a cat, pounced on the unsuspecting Ravan, sinking her nails into the delicate flesh of her neck, her teeth exposed in a fit of rage," Kavita Kane says, "one arm shielding her face from her clutching fingers while the other attempted to dislocate her." Ravan cried astonishment that turned into a scream of agony, one arm shielding her from her clutching fingers while the other tried to remove her. She continued, nevertheless, lacerating the flesh, biting her sharp nails into any exposed skin, and probing beyond to produce more severe injuries. (Kane 19)

Meenakshi: Unrestricted Sexually Restrained Woman

Surpankha's story is sometimes reduced to a portrayal of horrific disfigurement in the Ramayana, where she is marked as a sexually (un)tamed female. Her visage was severely mutilated in the confrontation in the bush involving Ram, Laxman, Sita, and Surpankha. The female body as a site of patriarchal control is best shown by this forceful attack against Surpankha (Sabala and Gopal 45). Considered a legitimate reprisal meant to dishonor Surpankha, the mutilation permanently branded her face as a reminder of her degradation (Kane 196). In her essay "Surpanakha's Mutilation or That of Womanhood?" In "An Inquiry

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into Two Feminist Retellings," Anindita De argues that this mutilation serves as a warning for women, therefore motivating them to follow patriarchal rules (De 2). Surpankha's disfiguration in the male-centric story is explained as her attempt to attack Sita. The feminist theory holds that her "dishonourable crime"—yearning for Ram and Laxman—was the reason behind her punishment (Kane 190). Surpankha's mutilation, notes Karline McLain, reflects a gendered vengeance for her sexual transgression (McLain 35). It also shows the ingrained mistrust in patriarchal nations about unbridled female power and sexuality (Erndl 68).

Surpankha is portrayed as an immodest, adulterous woman, which stands in sharp contrast to the idealized portrayal of Sita, who is said to be a chaste and obedient wife. While Surpankha represents an autonomous, sexually assertive woman, marked by her fiery individuality and unquenchable passion, Valmiki's Sita reflects the classic ideal of femininity, typified by her suppressed sexuality and relentless obedience. While the "bad woman," shown by Surpankha, resists these limitations, Kathleen Erndl clarifies that the "good woman" remains subordinate to her husband or male relative, with her sexuality limited to childbearing and servicing her spouse (Erndl 83). Karline McLain also claims that Surpankha was not scarred for attacking Sita; instead, her sexual daring violated social norms (McLain 35). This emphasizes how sexually messy women are seen as dangers to society and so demand correction. It is decided that the mutilation of these women is a fitting penalty to maintain the systems of society. Erndl claims that Surpankha's gender, more than her identity as a demoness, is the main problem (Brown and Agrawal 250).

Veena Talwar Oldenburg points out that this exchange sends a strong message encouraging violence against sexually active women. It emphasizes the significant steps men might take to suppress uncontrolled female libido (qtd. in Brown and Agrawal 250). Kane's rereading of this incident emphasizes the inherent cruelty of the mutilation, usually dismissed by many specialists. She assesses using violence as a tool to enforce conformity to patriarchal norms (Kumar and Mahanand 100–101). Surpankha questions the brutality of her treatment in her portrayal, wondering whether her punishment resulted from her yearning for the two men or their concern about her apparent sexual insubordinate behavior (Kane 190).

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Presenting her sexual aggressiveness as an act of affirmation rather than violation, Kavita Kane aims to challenge the traditional view of Surpankha's mutilation. She questions Surpankha's rationale for her punishment, suggesting that her bold desire challenged patriarchal conventions rather than being a lousy deed (Gulati and Anoop x). Contending that the negative image of Surpankha is a patriarchal technique to rationalize her rejection and subsequent disfigurement, Kane's portrayal of her in Lanka's Princess offers a feminist interpretation of her conventional representation as an evil entity (De 4).

Humanising Surpankha Mythology shows the complexity and flaws of people and gods. Kavita Kane claimed in an interview with India Today that in Lanka's Princess, she aimed to "humanize a demonized character" (qtd. in Kuenzang, para. 6). Although no one has tried to understand Surpankha as an individual, a woman with her own story, this comment highlights how historically she has been seen as either a criminal or a victim (Gupta 344). According to Kane, calling women angels or devils reduces their humanity. Kane wants to free Surpankha from the "dagger point of contempt and condescension" (Pillai 162), presenting her as a human being capable of both virtue and sin. By humanizing Surpankha, Kane helps us to see her not only as a straightforward villain but also as a complex, flawed character who reflects the aspirations and difficulties of modern women.

Surpankha's figure, according to Anjali Verma and Prerna Jatav, captures the reflections of a modern woman's challenges and ambitions (Verma and Jatav 124). Surpankha's fearlessness, boldness, love, fury, and regret make her more human than demonic. P. R. and Asher. Nandhini notes that Kane gives neglected characters from these epics traits of solidarity and astuteness, therefore bestowing upon these female figures a rejuvenated identity and human dimension (2391). Particularly at a pivotal moment when Surpankha refutes killing Laxman's wife and child and chooses instead to show sympathy and regret, Kane displays Surpankha's humanity. By enabling Surpankha to be "a woman more hated than hateful," this act of restraint humanizes her (2391).

Conclusion

Reworking Surpankha, Kavita Kane challenges the traditional portrayal of her as the "other" with respect to Sita. Providing Surpankha a voice and presenting her as a symbol of

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knowledge, agency, and strength helps Kane try to expose her actual identity. Although Surpankha's role may have been limited in the original Ramayana—that which keeps women from surpassing the male characters in the story— Kane's rendition highlights her strength and sharp mind. Kane shows Surpankha as an emancipated woman who has been traditionally excluded in patriarchal stories. Unlike the subdued presentation of Valmiki's rendition, Kane's Surpankha is lively in both thought and movement.

Through his retelling, Kane exposes the patriarchal character of legend and works to honor wounded women like Surpankha (Pillai 162). Kane recontextualizes Surpankha as a strong, multifarious woman and releases her from the shame of being an ugly, monstrous figure. Kane deviates from traditional epic readings in Lanka's Princess by focussing on the peripheral rather than the central story, offering a fresh and inspirational point of view.

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Women Psyche: From Circumscribed Past to Liberated Present: A Special Reference to Arabian Literature

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Abstract

This paper attempts to bring a psychological transformation of women with reference to Arabian literature, this paper examines Arabian English literary works and through the years how women evolved their status of depiction in literature from circumscribed past to liberated present. Liberated women are those who challenges social norms in the search of the independence. Early literature women did not have the space to establish their identities as an individual they are always depicted and hide behind their familia duty as wife, sister and mother. the writers also did not show any gumption to bring women as their central character in any of their works they produced during that time, here comes the relevant of this paper, this paper examines how women came out form the shadow of men and established their own identity as a woman.

Keywords: Arabian literature, women, Psyche, Circumscribed past, liberated present, autonomous writers, resistant readers.

Introduction

In the past if one examines, literary works produced in Arabian English literature , one could see women end up the as mere shadows of men characters, women's likes and dislikes were circumscribed by the likes and dislikes of men , most of the women characters were confined to acquiesce the order of the men and their domination over women were widely seen in all literary works produced during that era, and readers also entertain such type of narration

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only . Women' roles were often confined to domestic sphere, with societal expectations, limiting their opportunities to depict as an independent woman characters. This circumscribed past has influenced their mental health, identity, and self-perception.

For centuries women were not allowed to come out of the stereotypes characters as lovable mothers , generous sister, obedient wife , " take me all womanly compassion and fill me with manly cruelty" (Macbeth) since time memorial all the writers depicts women as the synonym of the compassion and men as the synonym of the cruelty in this quote of Shakespeare's work clearly pointing out woman were always put into a so called definition of the society that's why lady Macbeth says take all the womanly compassion and fill me with manly cruelty, these all are pointing out the narrow attitude of men towards women in literature .
As the result of the women's liberation movements in 1970s a noticeable change could be seen in the depiction of the women in literature, the women writers decentered themselves from male writers' monopoly, women writers gain the gumption to produce the unique literary works about women representing and analyzing women as a central character , this brought significant changes to the literary arena and set a new stages for the women writers and this changes not only confined in a certain country it could be seen across the world .

The evolution of Arabian English Literature from circumscribed past to a liberated present is a fascinating journey that reflects broader social, cultural, and political changes. In the past the scenario was women were excluded from all the main stream characters in the present the scenario completely changed through the emergences of the revolutionary writers and their attempt to depict woman as their main characters in their works paved the way to establish women identity as an individual. Accordingly, this article will highlight some of the significant literature on the subject of women representations written between in the past era and present time in Arabian English literature. This article gives special attention to circumscribed past ,where how women were depicted by quoting some of the works written during that time and "Liberated present" how women are presenting and depicting in the recent works produced in Arabian English literature .

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1.1 Objective of the Study

This study aims to analyze how women break the stereo type characters of the past and established their won space in Arabian English literature in the present.

1.2 Literature Review

The large volume of the study has been conducted on women literature from stereotype past to liberated present

"Portrayal of women in literature -Through the ages ", Sima Singh in this article brings to the lame light the modern Indian writers who voiced the opinions in as strong contemporary and ultra-modern way through their novels, the author says, women were depicted in their novels exceptional and nonconformist way, she also pointed the women who breaks all sorts of prohibitions and feels unconventional, the author also proven women characters are forerunners of social change and equality.

In another article, "A history of the struggles of the women in literature" the author Lauretta Paterson in this paper argues that women in literature depicted much wider than they were few years ago, women have acquired a degree of consequence and appropriate character. "Images of woman", the question of woman's representations in literature, by Nawel Mauaci and Pr. Assia Karced ,   this article also discusses the underrated narration of women in English literature by patriarchy , this article suggesting that challenging and changing representation of women writers and resistant women reader by quoting different prominent works of literature "Representation of Women in literature through different era ", By Jolina M Lucas and Sweet Chields Ordenize", in this article the researchers trace into the evolutionary pathway followed by feminist entities in the literature. The researchers argue that Medieval literature were limited to commoditization of the women along with promoting different roles of woman, the later era have focused on praising the beauty of women and was considerably liberal , the research also found women faced satire based on ineffective correspondence with social norms in the Victorian era and in modern age the writings are focused over reliance over feminism for fighting social evils .

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" Women's portrayal in classic literature and Hollywood's Golden age to determine its Ramifications " another article about the deterioration of women in cinema by Lnes Romirez Trelles and Johnny Lopez -Figueroa substantiated struggle women undergone in cinema by setting false portrayal and expectation of women characters in cinema , often women were objectified and little speaking time in movies , in fact , modern media has bettered in its portrayal of women, the article suggests that a line can be drawn that if more woman are involved in Media creation.

1.3 Images of Circumscribed Past Women

Portrayal of women as a subordinate and subservient and powerless with relatively limited roles and rights in live was the common scenario of the literary works produced in the past by male dominated writers in Arabian English literature. Historical overview illustrated that in patriarchal contexts women did not have many opportunities, their roles were always confined to obedient wife, loyal sister, generous mother though the same characters are not reflected from their male counter parts, women always depicted as victims, submissive, and passive destined to obey the likes and dislikes of her spouse. This preconceived notion of writers contributed to propagate negative stereotypical images of women. For instance, in many works in the past women were destined to acquiesce the order of the male oriented society," season of migration to the North" by Tayeb Salih, is a perfect example to substantiate the above-mentioned statement, the character of Hosna is depicted as a traditional woman who is expected to adhere to societal norms and expectations. Her obedience can be seen throughout the novel when she interacts with male characters, especially with her husband and narrator. When Hosana was coerced by her circumstances marrying a man despite her unwillingness to marry him she was compelled to obey the wishes of her family and society. This shows how society treated woman and forced to succumb their wishes in front of the patriarchal society.

Hosana's character illustrates how women are often seen as obedient and complaint within the context of their roles in society. Her struggles against these expectations highlights the tension between individual desires and societal obligations, reinforcing the notion of women as

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obedient figures in the narrative. This passage substantiates in the circumscribed past women often seen as an object solely made to satisfy man desires.

1.4 The Hindrances of Depicting Woman as Independent Character

There are many factors that became an obstacle in the growth or development of woman and depicting them as the mainstream characters.

A. **Traditional Role and Expectations:** Early literature often portrayed women within the restrictive social norms, tradition always wanted to see women in undeserving of respect often degraded images by ignoring their identities and feelings, for instance, in "Celestial bodies" by Jokha Alharthi, portrayed the character of Mayya how she became victimization of the patriarchal society by sacrificing her choice of marriage and motherhood. When Mayya's marriage is arranged her feelings were completely ignored by giving preferences to the family decision and societal norms.

B. **Cultural and Religious Constrains**

Most of the characters depicted during the past were influenced by cultural and religious constrains, if women were portrayed beyond the definition of the religion the work would be ostracized and banned, so no writers shown the gumption to give main stream portrayal of the woman that was against religious ideology that prevailed in the past.
Writers like Taha Hussein and early century authors depicted women primarily in relation to their familial roles, often reinforcing religious constrains. these writers advocated for education and social reform yet women's liberation was not primary focus in their narrative as a consequence of religious constrains.

1.5 Liberated Past

The evolution from circumscribed past to liberated presented in Arab English Literature reflected a broader societal change as female authors gain prominence and their narrative gain visibility there are many factors paved the way to depict woman as a main stream characters in Arabian English literature

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A. Emergence of Female Writers

Contemporary Arabian English Literature features a growing number of female authors who explore complex characters and diverse experiences, they denounced and rejected the stereotypical male chauvinism thorugh their writings, this wave of gynocentric writers encouraged women writer to write about women's experience and also could develop women's critical readers through their bold independent writing.

B. Diverse Experiences

Modern women writers explore a range of topics, ethnicities and socio economics status, reflecting the diversity of women's experiences in the Arab English literary world.

C. Challenging Tradition

Many contemporary novels depict women who resist traditional roles and assert their independence, "Map of home" By Randra Jarar in this novel follows a young Arab-American girl navigating her identity between her family's cultural expectations and her desire for independence.

D. Changing Depiction of Relationships

Contemporary literature often portrays more egalitarian relationships between men and women reflecting changing attitudes towards, marriage, love, gender.

Conclusion

Emergence of women writers, the rise of female authors has brought diverse perspectives and experiences to the forefront. Writers like Hala Alyan and Zeyan Joukhadar depict strong complex female characters who assert their identities and challenge societal norms.

The evolution of Arab English literature from a circumscribed past to liberated present highlights the complexities of women's experience in the Arab world. As authors continue to challenge stereotypes and offer diverse narratives, literature serves as both refection of societal changes and a catalyst for further discussions on gender and identity. this shift not only empower

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female character but also inspires readers to envision new possibilities for women's lives in the Arab world.

The paper ends by suggesting that challenging and changing representation of women in literature needs both autonomous writers and resistant women readers.

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