



LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES AND GENDER SCHEMAS IN PAKISTANI FICTION: A CORPUS BASED STUDY OF DIEXIS

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Abstract

The study examines, the nexus of the interdependence among linguistic devices, narrative voice and restructuring gendered authority in contemporary Pakistani Anglophone literature. The study focuses on the role of language as a place of negotiation where gender norms are reinforced and undermined using the gender schema theory and critical discourse analysis. The Study followed a corpus-based approach to analyse diexes, and narrative techniques that either uphold or defy the traditional gender stereotypes. The patterns of repeated language have been identified using corpus methods. The interpretation of these patterns is rooted in social and ideological structures. The findings contribute to the existing discourse about gender, language and power by showing the interaction of linguistic form and narrative function to produce elaborate images of identity, resistance and transformation in Pakistani fiction. Finally, this study foregrounds the dynamics of linguistic mechanisms in the elaboration of the changing gender discourses in postcolonial literary and cultural contexts of Pakistani literature.

Keywords: *Gendered Power, Linguistic Strategies, Narrative Voice, Corpus Linguistics, Gender Schema Theory, Pakistani Anglophone Fiction.*

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1. Introduction

Language is not only system of communication but a symbolic and ideological apparatus through which social relations, identity and hierarchies of power are negotiated and reproduced as well. It is a dynamic place where meaning and authority is in the process of construction and contestation, and redefinition. Amongst all this language engagement, gender is one of the most potent and ubiquitous types of meaning-making. The cultural beliefs that influence behaviour and social roles are ingrained in the ways men and women talk and are portrayed through language. These linguistic options are even more important in the literary discourse since writers use them to describe the characters and relationships as well to challenge or to support the social ideologies. The present study reviews the way language more precisely, the use of deixis as a linguistic strategy operate as means of saying, opposing, and re-organizing gendered power in the Pakistani Anglophone fiction. It examines the interaction of narrative voice and linguistic strategies subtlety in a corpus-based approach to challenge traditional gender schemas, and provides new understanding of the multifaceted nature of the interaction between language, gender and identity in the postcolonial settings of Pakistani literature.

The intersectionality of language and gender has been the topic of sociolinguistic research. The debate was first initiated by scholars such as Lakoff (1975) who proposed that the language of women was marked with politeness, uncertainty, and hedging, which predetermined and reproduced their passive social position. Although the work of Lakoff was radical, it was also subject to criticism due to the essentializing gendered speech and failure to consider variation as a context. Subsequent studies of Tannen (1990), Holmes (1995) and Cameron (1998) broadened the area by showing that linguistic differences between women and men are not biological and dependent on context as well as, in most cases, being strategic. In that sense, linguistic strategies, which have been considered as being weak, are redefined as means of manipulating sophisticated social confrontations. In line with these, the study of deixis has provided important clues as to how language connotes perspective, identity and social relations. Deixis, which is the Greek word that means pointing via language is used in reference to the elements of language that point people, objects, and events with respect to when, where, and talk of the speaker Levinson (1983). Personal pronouns, demonstratives, time or place adverbs are deictic expressions, which are inherent in the process of constructing a narrative since they help root the reader in particular perspectives as well as relational grammars. They dictate the speaker, location and the audience- thereby defining not only the world of text but also that ideological position of the narrative. Through the gendered prism, deixis brings out the application of narrative voice to establish male and female characters in power structures. The use of

inclusive pronouns such as the use of ‘we’ or exclusive pronouns such as the use of ‘they’ or self-referential pronouns such as ‘I’ or relational pronouns such as ‘you’ are indicative of inherent ideologies of solidarity, autonomy, and authority. This deictic position is particularly important in the postcolonial and patriarchal situations.

2. Literature Review

The issues of language and gender have always been the primary issues of linguistic and literary research, and they give rise to various theoretical and methodological views regarding how speech and writing create, reflect, and change social identities. Analysis of gendered language has changed since the initial versions of deficit theory of difference to multifaceted interpretations of discourse as a place of power negotiation. Among the phenomena of language that have been given much attention in this development are deixis since they are able to encode both social and interpersonal meanings. Although these features appear petite, they are very important in terms of stance and agency and relational positioning and are therefore especially useful in the exegesis of gendered communication and representation in fiction. This literature review discusses the theoretical and empirical background that underlies the present study, considering literature on the subject of gendered language, deixis, the contribution of corpus linguistics to literary analysis with specific attention paid to the context of Pakistani Anglophone writing.

The first attempt to approach the relations between gender and language systematically was conducted by Lakoff (1975) in the works titled as *Language and Woman Place*; he noted that feminine language is social subordination manifested through the use of certain features such as tag questions, hedges, and polite constructions. Although his work was later criticized due to its essentialist assumptions that linguistic choices were socially conditioned and had to do with gendered power structures. In the footsteps of Lakoff came the work of other scholars including Tannen (1990) who furthered the difference model but with a greater focus on men and women speaking differently as competitive and status oriented versus cooperative and rapport oriented.

Although dominant, this dichotomous model faced criticism by feminist researchers like Cameron (1992, 2007), and Coates (1996), who claimed that a more dynamic conceptualization of gendered discourse as contextual and socially constructed but not biological was necessary. The discussions underlie the current study by addressing the issue of gendered linguistic strategies as not fixed characteristics but as discursive performances, which are stipulated by culture and narrative discourses.

Culture plays a central role in shaping gendered communication, as linguistic practices do not develop in isolation but emerge from shared social norms, value systems, and ideological structures. Anthropological linguistics and sociolinguistic scholarship (e.g., Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Mead, 1935; Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2003) emphasize that gender identities are culturally mediated performances embedded within the expectations of specific communities. Cultural schemas influence how men and women are expected to speak, what forms of politeness or assertiveness are encouraged, and how authority, respect, and intimacy are negotiated in discourse. Thus, gendered language cannot be understood without examining cultural scripts that regulate interpersonal behaviour and index gendered meanings.

In the context of postcolonial societies, culture and gender intersect in more complex ways as linguistic practices are shaped simultaneously by indigenous traditions, colonial histories, and contemporary global influences. Scholars such as Mohanty (2003), Spivak (1988), and Bhabha (1994) argue that gender in postcolonial contexts is negotiated through hybrid cultural identities and power structures that influence narrative strategies, character representation, and linguistic choices. Pakistani Anglophone fiction, in particular, demonstrates how gendered communication is embedded within cultural expectations related to modesty, honour, social hierarchy, and familial roles. These cultural frameworks shape how deixis, hedges, politeness markers, and other linguistic features index gendered agency or constraint, making the study of culture essential for interpreting gendered discourse in literary texts.

3. Research Methodology

The study uses a corpus driven approach to examine how the use of linguistic strategies of deixis are applicable in construction and negotiation of gendered power relationship in Pakistani Anglophone fiction. The methodological approach incorporates the corpus linguistics, the critical discourse analysis (CDA), and the feminist stylistics, which guarantees both empirical and interpretive richness. Such a mixed design enables finding patterns in a representative dataset with systematicity and being sensitive to the literary and cultural peculiarities of texts. The sections below describe the research design, corpus building, data collection methods, analytical instruments and interpretive approach used by the study.

The design of the study is corpus-driven, as opposed to corpus-based. A corpus-driven study starts with theoretically informed categories, in this case, the concepts of deixis employs computational means to find them, measure them, and analyse them in the context. This is not just to explain patterns of frequency but to explain how such linguistic

patterns lead to greater sociocultural meanings. This design corresponds to the argument of Mahlberg (2013) according to which corpus stylistics occupies the gap between quantitative evidence and qualitative interpretation, so that the researchers can relate linguistic patterns to narrative and ideological organization.

This study is based on a corpus of twenty two Anglophone novels written in Pakistan between 2000 and 2025 that covers the interests of a variety of male and female writers, stylistic and thematic issues associated with the novels. The novels from Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie, Nadeem Aslam, and Daniyal Mueenuddin etc have been chosen to compile the corpus. These writers have been selected as their fiction highlights the issues of identity, gender and postcolonial modernity and therefore they can be analysed linguistically and with gender orientation. The selection of the texts was done using the following criteria: The novel should be written in English by a Pakistani writer or author of Pakistani descent. It should be publicly accessible in digital format so that there is proper processing of corpus. The size of the corpus should be large enough to bring sound quantitative results and also be small enough to be analyzed qualitatively.

The text is analyzed in terms of prominent linguistic feature deixis. Deixis is discussed in three types namely person deixis, spatial deixis and temporal deixis as explained by Levinson (1983) and Yule (1996). Person deixis, which comprises I, you, he, she, we, they; spatial deixis, which includes adverbs, demonstratives, i.e. here, there, this, that; and temporal deixis, which contains time adverbs, i.e. now, then, today, yesterday.

The frequency lists obtained from the corpus to determine the most frequent deictic expressions. Relative frequency (per 10,000 words) was computed to make the comparison across sub-corpora. The expression of lines was manually analyzed to ascertain the way the expressions operated when in narrative or dialogue settings. Special focus was made on the presence of deixis in the narration or in the speech of the characters as this difference shows the interplay of narrative voice and character agency.

Collocation analysis applied a five word window to the left and the right of every target word. The collocates were investigated in order to find out patterns of association, e.g. whether she co-occurs with evaluative adjectives (weak, silent, strong) or whether I think clusters around verbs of emotion (feel, want, fear). Qualitative interpretation based on feminist stylistics was then applied on quantitative findings. This was the step that explored the role of linguistic patterns in the characterization, point of view, and thematic representation of gender. Based on local, textual, and socio cultural situation deixis were studied.

Several measures were taken in order to make the results reliable. To begin with, crosschecking of corpus data to remove technical discrepancies, AntConc 3.5.9 was used.

Second, deictic terms were identified through random samples of concordance lines to ensure that the right terms were identified. Third, selection of passages was done to reduce bias of the researcher during the qualitative interpretation as two trained linguists with experience in discourse analyses reviewed the selected passages independently. The disagreements in interpretation were eliminated by the discussion, which guaranteed the inter-rater reliability. The validity was enhanced with the methodological triangulation by corpus quantitative evidence and qualitative discourse analysis. Further, the number of the male and female utterances increases the comparative validity of the study since the study can determine whether the linguistic strategies vary according to gender or they represent the general cultural conventions.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Narrative Perspective and Deictic Positioning:

This dimension looks into how the application of the personal pronouns and deictic shifts create narrative authority. As an example, the frequent use of I by a female narrator can be an indication of self-assertion, and the mention of female characters in the third person can indicate objectification. Change between you and we are interpreted as signs of either inclusion, exclusion, or solidarity.

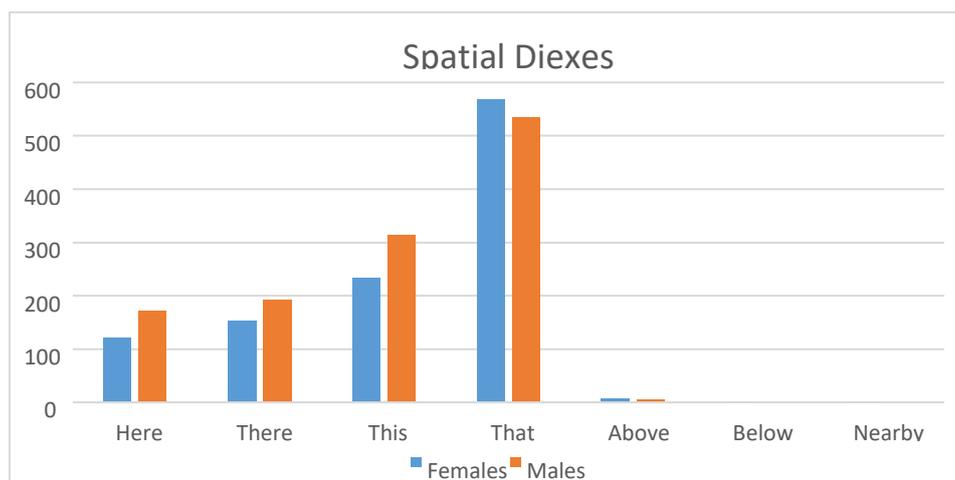
4.2. Cross-Gender Comparative Analysis:

The quantitative analysis Benefitted from the corpora [Corpus of male utterances (CMU) and female utterances(CFU)] compiled for the present research. The phase of the study generated the insight whether there is a gender effect on linguistic preferences in narrative voice or not. The intention is not to discuss the male and female writing styles but to address the question of the way sociocultural and ideological forces shape linguistic representation. The methodological approach is in tandem with the Gender Schema Theory (Bem, 1981) which he assumes people internalize cultural models of gender which shape language and behaviour. The discussion on how narrative discourse supports or challenges cognitive and cultural understanding about gender can be achieved by studying the linguistic expression of these schemas in literature. The corpus evidence and discourse interpretation combine in the study to offer a multi-layered interpretation of how language is used gendered, filling the gap between cognitive, linguistic, and cultural analyses.

The results reveal that deixes creates subjectivity and relational position, and reflects unobtrusively power and resistance negotiations in patriarchal systems. Finally, this methodological synthesis should contribute to the development of linguistic and

literary studies by demonstrating that quantitative corpus analysis identify the delicate interplay between the gender, language and ideology in postcolonial fiction.

Deixis is one of the most disclosing linguistic devices to comprehend the positioning of narrators and characters with respect to the space, time and social hierarchy. In narrative discourse, deictic expressions represent a coding of orientation- Who is talking, in what direction, and to whom. Deixis in Pakistani Anglophone fiction is not just a linguistic category, but one of the discourse strategies used to indicate cultural views of gender, power, and identity. The current corpus analysis of the use of spatial, temporal, and social deixis by male and female writers indicates that the linguistic patterns create different types of narrative presence and power. The quantitative data show that all three types of deictic are always more frequent in male utterances. Nonetheless, through qualitative interpretation, it is apparent that selective application of deixis by female utterances has subtle rhetorical and psychological roles especially in articulating relational awareness and self-reflexivity. In such a way, deixis is a gendered reflection of the narrative consciousness in the postcolonial literary environment.



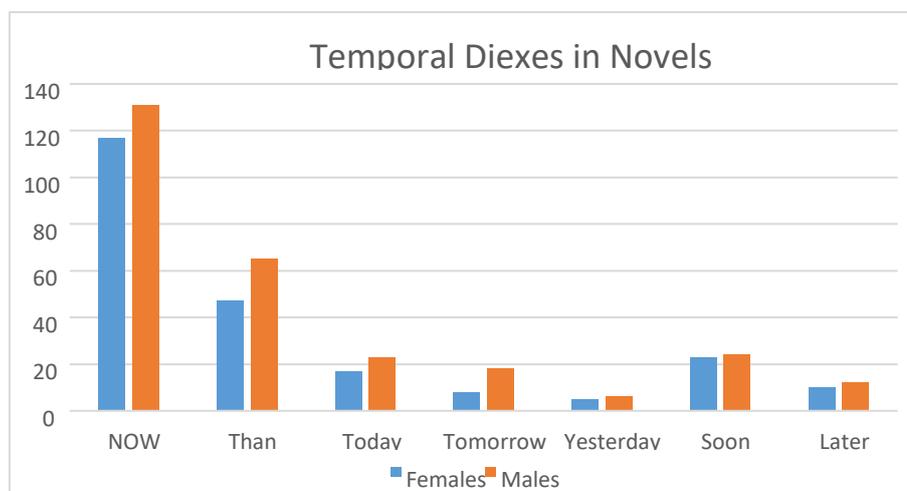
Spatial deixis is used when a speaker refers to something by using words like here, there, this, that, above and below, nearby among other words, which express how an object or activity is in comparison to the speaker. The statistics show that there are great differences between female and male utterances in the application of spatial deixis. Male utterances have standardized frequencies that are almost twice those of female utterances in most categories: respectively _‘here’_ (171 vs. 120), _‘there’_ (191 vs. 153), _‘this’_ (313 vs. 234) and _‘that’_ (535 vs. 559). That almost sounds equal but in general, most spatial indicators are taken in male utterances

This quantitative disproportion brings to light a difference of narrative assertiveness and spatial agency that is the basis for these linguistic phenomena. Male utterances tend to use deictic phrases to create narrative immediacy and to help them to call upon the physical and ideological authority of the setting by the narrator. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, in particular, the constant reiteration of this and here in the direct address of the narrator- Here Lahore. This is my city. Here we live with pride- the speaker grounds himself in a spatial and cultural hub, 3-reaffirming the male dominance and place of ownership. The deictic previews the closeness of the speaker to the referent, which brings about a feeling of confidence and ownership. In the same way, in this case, the narrative voice is positioned in the immediate surrounding, which creates what Fairclough (1995) refers to as discursive presence, a textual expression of social power.

Female utterances who, however, make more judicious use of spatial deixis: it is frequently used to refer to a condition of displacement, temporality, or peripheral status. In *The Burnt Shadows* by Shamsie, spatial deixis swings between here and there as the main character crosses national, linguistic and historical borders. Such expressions as Here in Delhi, she was a stranger, and There, in Nagasaki, she had belonged demonstrate that deictic changes are in line with the disintegration of feminine identity in a globalized, postcolonial society. The fact that the author uses there as opposed to here, conveys a sense of emotional and spatial remoteness, exile and nostalgia as opposed to mastery. This goes in line with the observation of feminist narratology (Lanser, 1992) that female narrative voices tend to be oppositional to fixity and authority by being mobile and indirect.

Curiously, the deictic forms above, below, and nearby, the ones that express vertical and relational direction are encountered in both the male and female corpora at very low frequency though with slight semantic variations. Male utterances, in their turn, use above metaphorically to imply hierarchical dominance (He stood above them, and they had to pay attention to him). This way, even sporadic deictic objects are involved in gendered manifestations of spatial authority: male deixis is more concerned with the dominance and surveillance, and female deixis is more related to empathy and observation.

In general, patterns of spatial deixis demonstrate that in male narratives, elaborations of the control over physical and ideological space are enacted whereas in female narratives, more fluid spatial identities are used. This separation reflects the gendered socio-spatial hierarchy of Pakistan, in which the mobility and power of men is juxtaposed with the lack of space of women. Linguistically, deixis is made an instrument of accomplishing these enlarged cultural actualities.



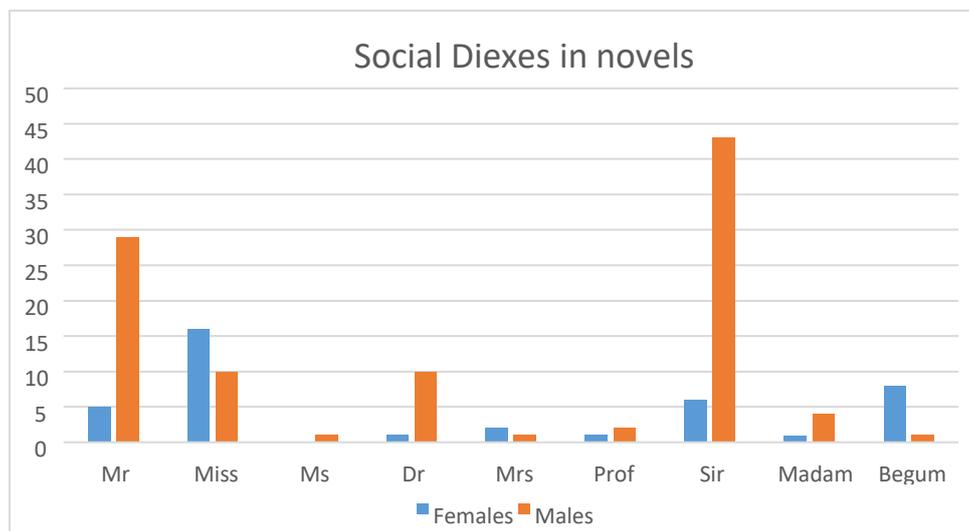
Temporal deixis is the term describing the events that are placed in time, in relation to the time of speech, as now, today, tomorrow, yesterday, soon, later, and then. The corpus data confirm one more gendered asymmetry: male utterances also employ temporal deixis more and with higher standardized ratios. To illustrate, ‘now’ (131 vs. 117), ‘today’ (23 vs. 17), ‘tomorrow’ (18 vs. 8) and ‘soon’ (24 vs. 23) are all more common in male utterances writings. Such figures, even so small, have an interpretive importance when they are read in the context of narrative inclination and subject matter.

Temporal deixis is used to create a goal-oriented and forward moving temporality in male utterances fiction; terms "now" and "today" frame male utterances in the present and create a sense of agency and decisiveness. To create the temporal immediacy, in the novel *Moth Smoke* by Mohsin Hamid the word 'now' is used frequently: 'Now I see what I have become, now the city burns under its own heat.' This type of usage is an indication of self-awareness and mastery of the time view. In the same way, deictic clusters can be frequently found in the stories of Daniyal Mueenuddin, then, now, later, to order action and to focus on consequence, which is conventionally masculine and storytelling opting to follow a linear route rather than relying on emotional reactions and implications. In this way, temporal deixis is an actualized practice of linguistic chronological expertise, which authenticated the patriarchal ideals of progress, rationality, and dominion.

The female utterances fiction, on the contrary, is more reflective, more cyclical in its temporality. Memorial, prospective, and delayed gratification Temporal indicators like yesterday, later, and soon are commonly used in introspective situations. As an example, in the *Kartography* of Shamsie, the narrator uses the image of then and later to mix the time layers of his own and the history of politics: then the silence; later, the reckoning. It is not chronological accuracy but this resonance of the emotion of something— what Richardson (2000) defines as temporal subjectivity. The relative lack of now or today used

by female writers indicates that the voice of the narrative is less present and may indicate alienation or displacement by patriarchal time regimes. They construct their temporal power not by claiming time, but by the backward looking and fantasies.

This temporal asymmetry of deixis is therefore equivalent with narrative temporal differences and gendered consciousness. Male discourse is an act that favors immediacy and continuity, and builds on the protagonists as participants in the ongoing action. Women narratives, however, tend to break or restructure time in a way that prefigures memory, trauma or delayed identity. These trends follow postcolonial time histories where the history of female characters is overlapping with the erasure of history and group silence. Linguistically, the temporal deixis shyness of female utterances is a revolt against the patrilinear nature of patriarchal narration since it gives precedence to subjectivity over time.



Social deixis articulates status, intimacy, and politeness between people conversing with each other. The terms of address that are contained in the corpus analysis are _‘Mr’, ‘Mrs’ ‘Miss’ ‘Ms’ ‘Dr’ ‘Prof’ ‘Sir’ ‘Madam’ and ‘Begum’_. In this case, gender variations are most significant and culturally unveiling. The use of social deictic forms by male utterances is much more common than that of female utterances in almost every category. As an example, _‘Mr.’_ appears 111 times in texts with male utterances but 12 times in the female texts; _‘Sir’_ appears 165 times in male texts but 15 times in female texts. On the other hand, the femalemarked terms of _‘Miss’_ _‘Mrs.’_ and _‘Madam’_ do not seem to occur as frequently as a whole, and in texts by male utterances tend to have an ironic or derogatory connotation.

This imbalance shows the gendered politics of respect and representation. The high incidence of ‘Mr.’ and ‘Sir’ indexes by male writers signifies formal respectability and institutional authority which is the equivalent of patriarchal order. Male title seems to be repeated more than female in the context of bureaucracy and feudalism through which Mueenuddin In Other Rooms, Other Wonders is perceived like Mr. Haroun said, Sir, the orders have come suggesting social subordination and submission. These headings support vertical power dynamics within the discourse and the society by giving more power to the masculine authority figures. Even Madam or Begum are used in male utterances, even with irony or commentary of a status, as women are not independent but reliant on status. Instead, female utterances use social deixis to challenge social hierarchies and re-establish them.

The alternation between Ayah, Begum and Madam in *Cracking India* by Sidhwa reveals a tension of classes and colonialism which is concealed in the gendered address. The selective application of titles by the narrator emphasizes the issue of power transactions in female space, wherein social deixis may equally serve as a resistance space. Nevertheless, the general reduced rate of social deixis of female utterances, notably, formal titles suggests that they prefer familiarity and intimacy and egalitarianism when it comes to the address. These markers attack the hierarchical meaning of one's man of a patriarchal system where the cognitive identification of women is by a matrimonial or an honorific designation (Mrs, Miss, Begum). This is in accordance with the feminist pragmatics (Cameron, 1998) that address forms are ideologically loaded options that are based on the allocation of power in discourse.

One of the most interesting observations is in relation to the word Ms. that is used six times in male utterances texts and zero in female utterances texts. This is an indication that Ms. Is used ironically or to imitate the speech patterns of the West in male utterances, whereas in female utterances, especially those with South Asian roots in realism, do not use it because it is culturally foreign. Gendered academic invisibility can also be seen in the rarity of ‘Prof.’ and ‘Dr.’ in both sub-corpora; the fact that male utterances have some minimal dominance in this case suggests they are more involved with institutional privileges. Social deixis, ‘thus, serves as a linguistic pointer in the power of culture, in showing who is respected and who is marginalized in the textual world.

By synthesizing over the three dimensions of deixis, space, time, and social, there is a clear trend of gendered asymmetry. The increased deictic density of male utterances relates to the narrative strategies that pre-empt certainty, control, and the presence. Deictic anchors to their texts are so thick as this, now, Mr., Sir, which stabilize the narrative view and secure the belongingness of hierarchical order. Women utterances, in their turn, show what can be called deictic minimalism: a conscious deprivation of locating both

themselves and other figures, a disposition to power and authority. Their stories tend to take liminal or transitional postures with less deictic moorings to stay open and multi-faceted.

Looking at deixis in the terms of cognitive-linguistics, it is egocentric in orientation, the speaker conceptualizing the world in the self. In gendered terms, male discourse will take the I in the role of a stable deictic source whereas female discourse will de-centre and spread the perspective on relational and affective planes. This result is reminiscent of the Gender Schema Theory by Bem (1981): linguistic gender encoding is indicative of internalized cognitive (male) models of masculinity (assertive, active) and femininity (receptive, relational). Such schemas are further supported by patriarchal demands and expectations in the Pakistani sociocultural set up where male agency and female modesty are celebrated.

Therefore, deictic asymmetry cannot be only stylistic, but ideological, it is reflected in language and recreates or contests gendered worldviews. Further, the narratives ethics are contrasting due to the dissimilar deictic patterns. The male narratives create authority by deictic anchoring: the speaker is aware of his position and offers the reader to share this position. The female narratives build empathy by creating deictic fluidity: the change in the position of the speaker reflects the complexity of feelings and social insecurity. To illustrate, in the fiction by Shamsie alternation of here and there acts as a metaphoric representation of the diasporic identity and gendered displacement as a challenge to the monolithic concept of belonging. The more stable deictic use that male writers use, on the contrary, recreates mastery and coherence. These tendencies are indications of the gendered stature of narrative legitimacy, who is able to talk, whence and with authority.

The gendered deixis in the Pakistani Anglophone fiction needs to be understood within the scope of the larger socio-cultural ideologies. Traditional societies that are patriarchal have their public space and narrative power controlled by men and voices of women are captured in the domestic or emotional circle. These cultural boundaries are linguistically performed by spatial and temporal deixis. By frequent repetition of here and now, linguistically, male narrators physically and symbolically take up space. By wavering between here and there or because they stay behind and revisit yesterday and later, the female narrators recount lived experiences of marginality and delayed agency.

Concurrently, the selective deictic use of female utterances is also a resistance to the discursive practice. They resist over-anchoring their accounts, thereby creating room to be ambiguous, empathetic and other forms of epistemologies. Their minimum and concentrated use of there or later encourages the reader to be in various temporalities and points of view that are uncertain. This approach will be in line with the postcolonial

feminist aesthetics that resist the linearity, authority, and closure as the features of the patriarchal narrative. Therefore, the deictic restraint at the quantitative level might be an indication of ideological subversion at the qualitative level.

The most straightforward commentary of gendered social order can be found in social deixis. The excessive use of masculine terms (Mr, Sir) in male texts strengthens the value of respect attributed to masculinity by culture. However, the slight trace of figures such as Begum and Madam in female writings recovers the markings of cultural identity without the submissiveness that was placed on them in the male discourses. When f in female utterances, these terms imply unity and appreciation of women, instead of being submissive to men. Therefore, female utterances re-produce social deixis to accommodate empowerment in associations with other people than command.

Deixis is closely related to the narrative point of view as it puts the speaker in the story world. Male discourses, which are mostly first-person or omniscient, embody tight concentration of deictic indicators to sustain focalization. The female narratives tend to use shifting/reduced focalization, which leads to the fluctuating deictic orientation. Such plastics allow depicting uncertainty, introspection and emotional subtlety. Male deixis adds solidity to the narrative and female deixis adds permeability to the narrative in terms of literary aspects. They are both stylistic manifestations of the gendered worldviews: one is based on certainty, the other on the relational understanding.

Furthermore, deictic variation correlates with thematic concerns. Male utterances' emphasis on space (here, this) corresponds to territorial and political themes—nationhood, urban modernity, and public identity_. Female utterances' emphasis on time (then, later) aligns with themes of memory, trauma, and continuity of self. Social deixis, meanwhile, mediates interpersonal relations within these spatial and temporal frameworks, revealing how characters negotiate respect and intimacy across gender lines. Together, these deictic layers create a complex semiotic system through which gendered subjectivities are constructed and contested.

The analysis of deixis across male and female Pakistani Anglophone fiction reveals that: Male utterances display higher frequency and diversity of spatial and temporal deictics, signifying narrative control, assertiveness, and presence. Female utterances employ deixis more selectively, using it to express displacement, reflection, and relational awareness. Social deixis reveals entrenched gender hierarchies—male titles dominate, while female titles appear less and often carry different pragmatic meanings. Deictic asymmetry linguistically encodes gendered schemas of authority, respect, and subjectivity. Female deixis, though quantitatively reduced, functions qualitatively as resistance, reconfiguring traditional power alignments through empathy and ambiguity.

This corpus-based analysis shows indeed that deixis is a concept that goes beyond the grammatical function; it is a linguistic signifier of gendered world-views and narrative authority. The quantitative information shows that in male utterances fill their texts with deictic anchors that serve to establish stability and control, whereas in female utterances it makes fewer but more strategically placed deictic to describe reflexivity and relational identity. This difference echoes the Pakistani dynamics of culture, as the role of gender and access to voice are closely interwoven in this society. Having said that, through deixis, utterances will linguistically reproduce, challenge, or reimagine these dynamics thus being part of the negotiation of gendered power that is going on around them. In short, the deictic system can be regarded as a minor yet potent tool that allows the reorganization of the gender schemas in Pakistani Anglophone literature by means of language and narrative voice.

5. Conclusion

The corpus-based study of deixis demonstrates that linguistic strategies are implemented into the gendered power and narrative identity construction on a much more profound level. Male utterances, on the contrary, show more dependence on assertive spatial deixis (this, that, here) and such modal as should and might, indicating confidence, analytical control, and power in the narrative space. Such patterns are indicative of larger gendered discourse orientations that have been found by researchers like Lakoff, Holmes and Tannen where women are more inclined towards cooperation and empathy and men oriented towards control and certainty. Nevertheless, instead of strengthening stereotypes, the results also show that both genders are strategic in the application of linguistic tools to decide power, presence, and agency within the cultural and social limits. These patterns in Pakistani Anglophone fiction are more of an adaptation than a resistance: the linguistic moderation deployed in the female utterances to assert subjectivity vis-a-vis patriarchal subjectivity, and strategic hedging deployed by the male utterances to humanise authority. deixis may be termed pivotal mechanisms of reformulation of gender schemas by which language alternately reflects social structures and simultaneously provides a nuanced mechanism of transformation through narrative voice and stylistic choice.

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