



Article Title

Navigating Identity and Urban Experience: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Language Use in Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke*

Ummara Zulfiqar

Visiting Lecturer, The Women University, Multan, Pakistan.

Email: ummara.zulfiqar@yahoo.com

ISSN (Print): 2707-6873

ISSN (Online): 2788-8347

Volume: 5

Issue No: 2

Year: December 2024

Issue DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.52700/ijlc.v5i2>

Article DOI: [10.52700/ijlc.v5i2.272](https://doi.org/10.52700/ijlc.v5i2.272)



How to Cite:

Zulfiqar, U. (2024). Navigating Identity and Urban Experience: A Psycholinguistic Analysis of Language Use in Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke*. *International Journal of Linguistics and Culture*, 5(2), 113-125.
<https://doi.org/10.52700/ijlc.v5i2.272>

Abstract:

*This paper explores how language reflects identity and urban experience in *Moth Smoke* by Mohsin Hamid, focusing on Darashikoh "Daru" Shehzad, whose decline from a banker to a life of poverty and crime mirrors Lahore's fragmented society. Through Daru's interactions and internal monologues, Hamid captures how language reveals his psychological state, struggles with social status, and evolving identity amid Lahore's social divides. Using Social Identity Theory as a framework, this research examines how Daru's language choices—shifting between English and Urdu, code-switching, and colloquial phrases—reflect his conflicting desires and sense of self. English symbolizes access to the elite and represents his aspirations for sophistication and social acceptance, yet it also heightens his awareness of his insignificant status, intensifying feelings of inadequacy. This paper analyzes how Daru's shifting language reflects his broken sense of self, as he navigates his ambitions and hatred toward the very elite he desires to join. Daru's interactions with wealthier characters like Ozi and Mumtaz further reveal language as a marker of class and social boundaries. Their linguistic dynamics highlight power imbalances and underscore Lahore's rigid socio-economic divisions. Through Daru's unraveling mental state—marked by tone and language changes—Hamid portrays Lahore as a place of alienation for those who cannot fit its social expectations. This analysis demonstrates that language in *Moth Smoke* is more than communication; it mirrors ambitions, psychological defenses, and identity struggles in a split society. By examining language as a reflection of identity and urban alienation through the lens of Social Identity Theory, this paper offers insights into how language functions in postcolonial literature, emphasizing the psychological impact of class and exclusion in an urban landscape.*

Keywords: *Social Identity Theory (SIT), psycholinguistics, language, identity, alienation, identity conflict, urban experience, Mohsin Hamid, *Moth Smoke*.*

Introduction:

Moth Smoke (2000) is, undoubtedly, one of Mohsin Hamid's masterpieces. In his debut novel, he skillfully captures the stormy journey of Darashikoh Shehzad, also known as "Daru", who faces issues of identity, class distinction, and belonging in an urbanized Lahore. Mohsin takes his readers on an expedition exploring how social status and economic imbalance in a society shape individuals' identities and relationships. Daru, the protagonist of the novel, goes from being a promising banker to a marginalized outcast after losing his job and finally becomes accused of a murder that he did not commit. His life becomes a rollercoaster of misfortunes as he makes one bad decision after another to keep his identity as a proud upper middle-class person. This novel serves as a mirror to show how one's identity and sense of belonging in a modern urbanized society pressurizes an individual socially, economically, and psychologically.

Daru's life is a constant struggle between belonging and alienation and Hamid's Lahore is a city that worsens identity conflicts for those who fall outside its elite standards. Daru's language shifts between English and Urdu, code-switching, and use of colloquial expressions reveal the degree of his psychological state and identity conflict. English is a symbol of superiority and access to Lahore's elite class which Daru desperately desires to join but feels excluded from it. English represents his ambitions and gives him a sense of social elevation but at the same time, it also emphasizes his middle-class status, creating a sense of inferiority. It fills him with anger and jealousy towards the very social elite class that he wishes to join. Daru's linguistic expressions change as his social and mental condition worsens.

This research applies to a psycholinguistic approach using SIT as a framework to analyze how Daru's language reflects his fractured sense of identity and conflicted social desires. While showing Daru's interactions with wealthier characters like Ozi and Mumtaz, Hamid uses linguistic dynamics to emphasize class difference and social alienation, marking language as a powerful socio-economic tool. These interactions highlight the power imbalance between Daru and his wealthy friends through their use of language. Moth Smoke gives an insight into how a language, in addition to its communicative function, operates as a reflection of identity, social status, and psychological struggle. By examining language in this way, this paper explores the effects of urban life and social exclusion on a person's identity within a divided, postcolonial context. This research shows the double-edged nature of language in Daru's life and reveals how it serves not only as a tool of communication but also as a mirror to show inner thoughts, identity conflict, social alienation, and psychological issues in an urban society.

Significance of the Research:

The research adds significantly to the previous understanding of the novel as it explores how language in Moth Smoke serves as a tool to understand identity's psychological and social

dynamics in a divided urban setting. By examining the novel through a psycholinguistic approach, this research uncovers different ways language reflects and reinforces the characters' internal conflicts and social identities. It offers a deeper understanding of how Hamid captures the psychological impact of social exclusion, class disparity, and urban alienation. It also sheds light on how individuals' language choices and narrative styles can reveal unspoken biases, insecurities, and the complex nature of self-perception within hierarchical societies. Additionally, the research contributes to broader literary studies by demonstrating the value of psycholinguistics as an approach to analyzing identity and urban experience in literature. Finally, this study not only enriches the understanding of *Moth Smoke* but also provides insights into how language shapes and reflects identity, adding to discussions about the impact of social structures on the human psyche in contemporary urban contexts.

Research Questions:

1. How does Mohsin Hamid use language in *Moth Smoke* to reflect the psychological effects of class difference and social isolation on individual identity? How does SIT explain this psychological impact?
2. What does Daru's language choices and narrative style in his interactions with other characters reveal about his identity conflict and sense of alienation within Lahore's social-economical class system?
3. How does the novel's language contribute to the portrayal of urban Lahore as a space of both opportunity and alienation; and how do these portrayals, according to SIT, affect character identities?

Literature Review:

Jaco Robert Kantor first coined the term psycholinguistics in 1936 in his book 'An Objective Psychology of Grammar' where he explored the relationship between psychology and the structure of language. His work laid the foundation for the interdisciplinary study of language processing and cognitive functions. The term has since become central to the field of language and cognition. It has been a subject of study in understanding the relationship between language and human psychology. Psycholinguistics deals with language learning, comprehension, and perception. Much work has been done in this field to explain the relationship between language and human psychology. Balamurugan and Thirunavukkarasu defined psycholinguistics as a "language science that decodes how a human brain acquires language, processes it, comprehends it and gives feedback or produces language" (2018). They described how several theories of psycholinguistics, such as behaviorist theory, innateness theory, and social interaction theory, offer various approaches to comprehending the behavioral and cognitive processes involved in language production, comprehension, and acquisition.

Many researchers have tried to explain the connection between language usage and identity formation in any society. Alshehri explores this connection in the article ‘The Relationship between Language and Identity’ (2023) and explains how language affects one’s identity formation. She argues that a person shapes his identity according to the language that he/she is speaking, and the relationship between the two is ‘indescribable’. Alshehri's work emphasizes the idea that language shapes who we are and how we want to be seen, in addition to conveying information. It also changes depending on the context to reflect social roles and group connections.

Lindquist, MacCormack, and Shablack in their article ‘The role of language in emotion: predictions from psychological constructionism’ (2015) research to explain how language relates to emotions. They argue that language plays a fundamental role in shaping emotions, challenging the idea that emotions are purely physical and separate from language. They explain how language helps individuals categorize and make sense of their emotional experiences. They support the idea that language shapes how we perceive and experience emotions.

Rusi Jaspal examines the close relationship between language and social identity in ‘Language and Social Identity: A Psychosocial Approach’ (2009). The article looks at how people, especially in multilingual and multicultural settings, utilize language to negotiate their feelings of inclusion or exclusion within various social groups. Jaspal talks about how linguistic decisions can represent cultural identity, individual identities, and social power dynamics. The article also emphasizes how language policies can cause psychological and social estrangement by promoting dominant social identities and frequently marginalizing speakers of minority languages. This study highlights how crucial language is in forming both personal and societal identities.

Rajesh Kumar and Om Prakash's edited book ‘Language, Identity, and Contemporary Society’ (2019) explores how language shapes identity in a contemporary, worldwide society. As individuals increasingly connect across cultural barriers, the book discusses how issues like urbanization, digitization, globalization, and media affect language boundaries and identities. It emphasizes how crucial language is for creating social groupings, establishing shared stories, and creating recollections as a group.

Language shapes one’s identity but at the same time, it can also become the cause of losing one’s identity and creating a sense of alienation from a certain group. This aspect becomes more prominent in non-native English speakers who constantly strive to learn English to gain ‘identity’ in their societies. Bonny Norton discusses this in the article ‘Language, Identity, and the Ownership of English’ (1997) and explains how English, as a global language, should not be seen as exclusively belonging to native speakers. She proposes that all speaker’s native or non-native interact with English and modify it to fit their identities, experiences, and cultural

contexts. She also presents the idea of "investment," whereby language learners invest in their English language education to acquire social and cultural resources that complement their identities and goals. According to this perspective, studying English becomes a life-changing event that is related to personal and social identity.

The role of the English language in identity formation within postcolonial literature, especially in Asian literature, is a complex subject that links language, power, culture, and historical suffering. English, as a colonial legacy, plays a dual role in shaping the identities of postcolonial societies. Many researchers have strived to explain this complex relationship between the English language and identity struggles in postcolonial literature and they all express that it acts, both, as a tool of oppression and empowerment, as it becomes a medium for expressing struggle and the complex navigation of cultural identities. Shruti Das in her article 'Against Odds: Identity and Survival - South Asian Literature in English'(2013) examines how identity and survival are major topics in South Asian literature written in English, particularly in post-colonial settings. With an emphasis on how the use of English in literature frequently reflects complicated conflicts with cultural revival, linguistic issues, and nationalist movements, the article explores the literary traditions of nations like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar. Das emphasizes how English has shaped literature against the backdrop of these countries' distinct historical and social settings, serving as both a colonial legacy and a vehicle for global identity. Kalasva Dimpal Dhirubhai in the article 'Postcolonial Literature and Identity: A Comprehensive Review' (2023) explores important topics and stories in postcolonial literature with an emphasis on identity creation and the effects of colonial heritages. The article investigates how hybridity, marginalization, and opposition to colonial power structures are addressed in postcolonial texts. Dhirubhai emphasizes that globalization and diaspora have shaped postcolonial identities. Jamil Asghar also examines such relationship between language and identity in his article 'Postcolonial South Asian Literature and the Quest for Identity' (2017). He observes how identity issues in the postcolonial era are addressed in South Asian literature, particularly in English literature. It looks at the conflict between the need for cultural authenticity and colonial legacies, emphasizing how authors deal with the complexities of language and identity. He highlights how postcolonial writers try to redefine and reconstruct national and personal identities in their writings while English, as a colonial legacy and a global tool, impacts these identities.

Pakistani English literature also explores the themes of language and identity while treating English as a language of global communication as well as a colonial heritage. Many researchers have examined the relationship between language and identity in Pakistani literature. Dr. Syed Hanif Rasool in his article 'Negotiating Conflict: Regional and National Identities in Contemporary Pakistani Fiction in English' (2021) examines how regional and national identity

battles are reflected in Pakistani English-language literature. Rasool explores themes of gender, partition, and marginalization in works by Sara Suleri and Bapsi Sidhwa, highlighting how these tales showcase various, frequently conflicting Pakistani identities. Ubaidullah Khan, Muhammad Uzair, and Shaista Zeb in the article ‘Construction of Cultural Identity via Language: A Study of Salt and Saffron’ (2020) examine how Kamila Shamsie's novel *Salt and Saffron* uses language to create and reflect culture. They analyze that the novel demonstrates how language serves as a tool for negotiating cultural history and contemporary identity by highlighting the merging of English and Urdu linguistic features through its characters and narrative style.

Moth Smoke by Mohsin Hamid also presents language and identity construction as one of its prominent themes and a few researchers have analyzed it in this context. Muhammad Kamran and co-authors in their article ‘Identity Construction through Language in Mohsin Hamid’s *Moth Smoke*’ (2023) examine how Hamid employs language in *Moth Smoke* to reveal conflicted identities. The study focuses on how characters, Daru in particular, use language and the social structures in their environment to express their social roles and personal identities. Using a sociolinguistics theory, the dramaturgy theory given by Goffman, the authors analyze Daru's connections with Lahore's elite circles and the differences between public and private selves.

This review highlights that *Moth Smoke* is a valuable text for examining psycholinguistic and social identity dynamics. Hamid uses Daru’s changing language to capture the complexities of identity formation and social belonging in a divided city. Language in *Moth Smoke* mirrors internal and social conflicts, shedding light on postcolonial identity, class tensions, and psychological alienation, ultimately showing how language in postcolonial literature captures conflicted identity struggles in divided urban cities.

Theoretical Framework

This research uses the Social Identity Theory (SIT) as a theoretical framework to make a psycholinguistics analysis of the language used in *Moth Smoke* by Mohsin Hamid. SIT was proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979, and it focuses on how people develop a sense of identity based on their belonging in social groups. It implies that the groups to which we belong, whether they be family, nationality, social status, or any other group, have an impact on how we perceive ourselves. These groups can be based on characteristics such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, or social class, and this theory helps explain intergroup behavior, including discrimination, prejudice, and social categorization. These communities give people a sense of purpose, belonging, and self-worth. The important stages of SIT are as follows:

- 1. Social Categorization:** This is the process of classifying oneself and others into different social groups, which helps simplify the social world. It can also lead to stereotyping.
- 2. Social Identification:** Once categorized, people adopt the norms, behaviors, and values of the group they belong to, and their self-esteem becomes linked to the group's success.
- 3. Social Comparison:** People compare their group (in-group) with others (out-group). This comparison often leads to in-group favoritism, where people tend to favor their group over others.
- 4. In-group and Out-group:** The in-group refers to the group one identifies with, while the out-group refers to those outside of it. People generally view their group more favorably. People favor those in their group, sometimes at the expense of those in out-groups. Categorizing people into groups can lead to overgeneralization and bias against out-groups.
- 5. Positive / Negative Distinctiveness:** The need to maintain a positive self-image motivates people to see one group as better or distinct from others, which can lead to prejudice or discrimination. When groups compete for resources or status, tensions can arise, leading to hostility and conflict.
- 6. Identity Negotiation:** Where individuals adjust their language and behavior to align with in-group norms in different contexts.
- 7. Identity Threat:** This is the psychological discomfort experienced when an individual's social identity is challenged, devalued, or undermined.

SIT (SIT) provides a good framework for psycholinguistic research focusing on the cognitive and social processes involved in language use, and it provides a valuable lens to explore how language is employed to express and negotiate group identity. It helps explain group dynamics and conflicts but also has limitations, particularly in its ability to explain the fluid nature of personal and collective identities over time.

Research Methodology:

The research uses a qualitative approach rooted in SIT (SIT) to explore the use of language in Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke* as a medium to construct and negotiate identity within an urban setting. Through textual analysis, the study examines how linguistic expressions, and narrative structures reflect group affiliations, social hierarchies, and identity dynamics among Daru's character.

Analysis and Discussion:

Mohsin Hamid employs complex psychological and psycholinguistics dynamics in *Moth Smoke*. He nicely weaves his characters' identities through their use of language and their interactions with each other, which becomes more prominent in Daru's character. Language in

Moth Smoke is a way of constructing identity and works as a mirror to the characters' inner selves. It reflects the psychological consequences of social differences, categorization, and comparison through Daru's linguistic choices. It shows how these social categories and comparisons cause identity struggles and psychological stress.

Language as a Reflection of Class Difference and Social Isolation:

SIT states that social categorization, classifying oneself and others in certain social groups, can lead to psychological stress and stereotyping. It advocates that individuals derive a sense of identity and self-worth based on their group memberships, often fostering group bias. It makes a person feel inferior or superior based on those classified groups and intensifies the feelings of class differences and social isolation in them. Social categorization is discussed openly in *Moth Smoke* and works at the root of many problems in the novel. It clearly divides its characters into two groups based on their wealth and status; the rich and the poor; the elites, those who can afford air-conditioning, and the masses, those who cannot afford air-conditioning. This categorization and class difference deeply affects Daru's psychology leading to stress, alienation, and identity conflict. When he loses his electricity on top of losing his job and becomes unable to enjoy air-conditioning anymore, he realizes that he has lost his status as part of the elite group. He feels like he has traveled back 'in the seventeenth century'. He gives so much importance to the air-conditioning that he even believes that his mother would not have died if an AC had been on in their room that night. Attaching so much importance to air-conditioning shows how Daru longs to keep up with the appearance of being part of the elite group, and losing this symbol of elites makes him mentally troubled and he fears exclusion from the group. This social categorization makes him more aware of the class difference between him and his rich friends and makes him insecure about his identity.

SIT suggests that social categorization gives way to social comparison. It asserts that people use social comparison to determine their value, and Daru does the same throughout the novel. His vocabulary portrays a poor opinion of himself as he compares himself with his wealthy friend all the time. He is self-aware of the class difference between him and his upper-class friends like Ozi and Mumtaz. His monologues show his obsession with Ozi's wealth as he constantly compares his life with Ozi's. He always describes Ozi as being better than himself. Throughout the novel, he uses words like 'unfairly sexy, charmer, handsome and heartthrob' to describe Ozi while using words like 'disheveled, horrible and a mess' for himself. He describes Ozi's mansion as having 'marble floors cool as water' and compares it to his own flat which is like 'a furnace trapping heat'. This comparison shows his feelings of jealousy and self-pity. He compares his car with Ozi's who has a Pajero. He feels like Pajero gives Ozi's 'words added authority'. His choice of words and linguistic juxtaposition reflect his feelings of inferiority, jealousy and restrained resentment towards his elite friends. He feels like a failure in front of

them and this constant social comparison makes him hate his in-group, the masses, and increases his desire to join the out-group, the elite group. It leads to psychological stress, alienation, and a diminished sense of identity in Daru.

SIT suggests that if a person feels excluded from a high-status group, it can lead to self-loathing and personal devaluation. Daru's realization of this marginalization is seen in his frequent use of sarcastic humor and self-critical language. In his narrative voice, he frequently makes derogatory remarks about himself or resentfully admits that he cannot match his upper-class friend's financial success and social ease. His identity conflict is fueled by this language choice, which emphasizes his knowledge of his out-group status and demonstrates the negative psychological implications of his social isolation. SIT explains that people may want to leave their current in-group in favor of another out-group that gives them a more positive identity if they believe that belonging to their own group is not boosting their self-esteem. Daru also wants to belong to the upper-class group. He wants to enjoy having the pleasure of air-conditioning all day long and having authority over others which he could enjoy belonging to his current group.

Daru's Linguistic Choices and Identity Conflict:

Hamid highlights the gap between Lahore's socioeconomic divisions by combining code-switching between English and Urdu and the use of colloquial phrases. Daru's language and vocabulary change depending on who he speaks to. SIT describes this as social identification, where people adopt the norms, behaviors and values of the group they believe they belong to. Daru is struggling to maintain his identity as an upper middle-class person after losing his job. His discussions with his upper-class companions like Ozi and Mumtaz frequently hint at his sense of inferiority and subdued hostility. He tries to act sophisticated and intellectual whenever he meets Mumtaz. He uses witty remarks and metaphors like 'a bird trapped in a golden cage' to comment on Mumtaz's position. By using such cultural references and witty remarks, he tries to enforce his intellectual superiority to his elite-class friends. Such remarks also show that he is self-aware of his lower-class standing and is desperately trying to hide it. Because Daru's tone changes based on his awareness of his lower socioeconomic standing than Ozi's, this difference exemplifies how language may become a sign of class distinction.

Daru's language becomes authoritarian and dismissive when interacting with lower-class characters like his servant Manucci. For example, he harshly orders Manucci to 'clean it up quickly', using brief, authoritative phrases that reinforce the hierarchy between them. This linguistic strategy highlights Daru's need to assert dominance in spaces where he retains some power, even as his larger social identity erodes. Similarly, in the company of his drug-dealer friends like Murad Badshah, Daru's language becomes informal and shifts to casual slang, reflecting his descent into a subgroup where he feels temporarily accepted. For example, he

jokes about getting ‘high as the clouds’ and ‘stoned out of my mind’ with them, adopting their vocabulary to fit in. Daru’s ability to adapt his language to different social contexts demonstrates his attempts to negotiate multiple identities. His bitterness toward the elite and dominance over the less privileged demonstrate how Daru’s psychological state is shaped by his perception of his place within Lahore’s socio-economic framework. His swaying between resentment and superiority reveals a fragmented identity and a mind increasingly at odds with itself. SIT explains this linguistic flexibility as a form of identity negotiation, where individuals adjust their language and behavior to align with in-group norms in different contexts. Daru alternates between in-group identification, with the elite, and out-group integration, with the masses and struggles to find a stable sense of belonging.

Daru’s monologues are also filled with justifications for his failures, which serve as psychological defenses to protect his fragile self-esteem. He justifies his bitterness and jealousy toward Ozi by emphasizing Ozi’s unearned privileges saying phrases like, ‘He was handed everything on a silver platter, while I had to struggle for scraps and it’s not that I failed; it’s that the system is rigged’. Such defensive language and tone reflect SIT’s concept of out-group bias and derogation, as Daru devalues Ozi to reinforce his own sense of worth. At the same time, Daru’s introspective moments reveal his deep self-doubt. He admits, ‘I’m not the man I thought I would be,’ a confession that removes his fake confidence and exposes his inner turmoil. SIT describes it as an identity threat which is the psychological discomfort experienced when an individual’s social identity is challenged, devalued, or undermined. This shift between blame and self-reflection illustrates the inner conflict that defines Daru’s character. His linguistic choices highlight the psychological strain of identity conflict, and this inability to reconcile his past identity with his present reality worsens his mental instability, pushing him toward self-destructive behavior.

Urban Lahore: A Place of Opportunity and Alienation:

The city of Lahore is a central character in *Moth Smoke*, and Hamid's depiction of Lahore as a city of extremes; luxury and scarcity, opportunity and exclusion, is central to its exploration of identity. He portrays the city as a place of contradictions, promising opportunities for some while alienating others. Such a linguistic portrayal of urban spaces serves as both a setting and a metaphor for the characters’ psychological experiences. According to the SIT, urban spaces function as visible markers of social hierarchies and group distinctions. Physical discrimination, such as gated communities for the elites and slums for the masses, reinforces mental categorization by creating clear boundaries between social groups. These divisions shape individuals' sense of belonging and social identity, emphasizing who is included or excluded from positions of power and privilege. The privileged inhabitants of gated communities enjoy security and status, while those in marginalized areas face social exclusion and limited

opportunities. This spatial dynamic not only reflects but also perpetuates societal inequalities, reinforcing identity-based distinctions in the urban environment. Lahore is also portrayed as such an outrageous urban space in *Moth Smoke*.

For the elites, Lahore is a place of endless possibilities, described in terms of luxury and indulgence. Ozi and his friends speak of exclusive parties, designer brands, and international travel with a casual ease that reflects their privilege. Ozi's casual comments like 'the world is opening up for us—new malls, new investments,' exemplify this sense of opportunity. In contrast, Daru's descriptions of the same city are tinged with sarcasm and bitterness. He describes the new malls as 'temples of excess' and the city's rapid development as 'a facade hiding the rot underneath.' This linguistic divide underscores the different realities experienced by Lahore's different classes, with language serving as a marker of privilege or exclusion.

Daru's linguistic choices portray Lahore as a hostile environment for those on the margins. He describes the city's heat as 'an oppressive weight,' its traffic as 'a snarling beast,' and its power outages as 'a constant reminder of what we lack'. These vivid, personified descriptions of the city convey his alienation and frustration with an urban space that seems to conspire against him. SIT provides a framework for understanding this sense of alienation and explains it as a result of group membership denial. Daru's inability to identify with either the elite or the masses leaves him without a stable social group, intensifying his psychological distress. His language reflects this liminality, wavering between hating and yearning as he navigates a city that both tempts and rejects him.

Hamid uses specific locations like Ozi's mansion and Daru's apartment as symbols of social stratification. Ozi's mansion is described as 'a fortress of wealth,' while Daru's apartment is 'a crumbling relic of better times' which suffocates him. These contrasting descriptions not only highlight material inequalities but also reflect the characters' emotional states. The novel's language thus constructs Lahore as a city of contrasts, where opportunity and alienation coexist. This duality shapes the characters' identities, as they struggle to find their place within a fragmented social landscape.

Conclusion:

In *Moth Smoke*, Mohsin Hamid uses language as a powerful tool to explore the psychological effects of class difference, identity conflict, and urban alienation. Through the framework of SIT, the novel reveals how linguistic choices reflect and shape the characters' struggles to navigate Lahore's socio-economic divides. Daru's shifting language, defensive narration, and metaphoric imagery capture his fractured identity and sense of alienation. Meanwhile, the novel's broader linguistic landscape highlights the duality of urban Lahore, portraying it as both a space of opportunity and alienation. Hamid's nuanced use of language highlights the characters' inner lives and critiques the systemic inequalities that define their world. By

intertwining psycholinguistics with social identity, *Moth Smoke* offers a compelling exploration of how language mediates the relationship between self and society, providing a poignant reflection on the complexities of modern urban life.

Future Recommendations:

1. **Comparative Analysis with Other Postcolonial Texts:** Future research could compare *Moth Smoke* with other postcolonial novels, such as Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* or Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, to explore how language reflects identity struggles across different socio-political contexts.
2. **Gender and Linguistic Identity:** Future studies could focus on how gender intersects with language use in *Moth Smoke*, particularly examining Mumtaz's identity struggles and code-switching as a woman navigating patriarchal social structures.

These recommendations could broaden the scope of research on language, identity, and urban experience in postcolonial literature while contributing to interdisciplinary studies in linguistics, psychology, and cultural theory.

References:

- Kantor, J. R. (1936). *An objective psychology of grammar*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Norton, B. (1997). Language, identity, and the ownership of English. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(3), 409-429.
- Jaspal, R. (2009). Language and social identity: A psychosocial approach. *Journal of Social Psychology and Language*, 7(1), 23-40.
- Das, S. (2013). Against odds: Identity and survival—South Asian literature in English. *International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, 8(1), 45-60.
- Asghar, J. (2015). Postcolonial South Asian literature and the quest for identity. *Postcolonial Studies Journal*, 12(3), 112-130.
- Lindquist, K. A., MacCormack, J. K., & Shablack, H. (2015). The role of language in emotion: Predictions from psychological constructionism. *Psychological Review*, 122(2), 146-174.
- Balamurugan, G., & Thirunavukkarasu, P. (2018). *Language science and psycholinguistics: Theories of language acquisition and comprehension*. Chennai: Language Press.
- Kumar, R., & Prakash, O. (Eds.). (2019). *Language, identity, and contemporary society*. New Delhi: Global Academic Publishers.
- Kamran, M., Ali, S., & Raza, H. (2020). Identity construction through language in Mohsin Hamid's *Moth Smoke*. *Journal of Sociolinguistics and Literature Studies*, 14(4), 56-75.
- Khan, U., Uzair, M., & Zeb, S. (2020). Construction of cultural identity via language: A study of *Salt and Saffron*. *Cultural Linguistics Review*, 11(3), 78-94.

- Rasool, S. H. (2021). Negotiating conflict: Regional and national identities in contemporary Pakistani fiction in English. *Journal of South Asian Literature Studies*, 13(1), 23-40.
- Alshehri, N. (2023). The relationship between language and identity. *Journal of Language and Social Studies*, 15(2), 34-50.
- Dhirubhai, K. D. (2023). Postcolonial literature and identity: A comprehensive review. *Literature and Cultural Identity Studies*, 9(2), 90-115.