Metaphor and Identity: An analysis of modern English and Urdu Poetry

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Abstract:
This paper discovers the relevance between identity and metaphor in modern English and Urdu poetry by using *Preludes* of T.S. Eliot and *Mujh Se Pehli Si Muhabat Mere Mehbob Na Mang* of Faiz Ahmed Faiz. Early twentieth century poetry shows the complexities of individual and social identity shaped by society, politics, and culture. So, in these poems metaphor not only serve as a stylistic device but also as a strong strategy for shaping and indicating broken, unclear, and emerging identities**.** Alternatively Faiz express tension between personal love and social constraints by changing romantic metaphors in to a device for political awakening. In comparing the two poems and by adopting a qualitative textual analysis approach the researcher analyzes both shared designs, themes, and cultural differences to show how identity is shaped by using metaphors in poetry. After carefully analyzing the poems and by coding the data in the themes, the study declares that metaphor plays a central function in building identity in modern poetry. Moreover, it also hints towards the social and historical context of both poems.

1. Introduction

Metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word describes one thing as another or it gives the quality of one thing to another, when we want to show the similarity between them. It is actually a comparison between two things without using "like" or "as".

1.1. Background of the Study

From centuries poetry is playing a vital role for communicating societal truths, human emotions and experiences. Metaphor is one of the most crucial literary devices in poetry which enable poets to express ideas that go beyond the literal language. Identity is always a major issue in poetry of every period. Issues like social disintegration, cultural identity, and alienation are the major themes explored by the traditional as well as contemporary poets in their poems. In this situation metaphor is essential for illustrating how people view themselves and their relationships. This study examines the metaphors and identity in two poems from modern period. The study explore how metaphors serve as a decorative device in making individual and societal identity. As Ricoeur also explains that figurative language plays a central role in shaping

language and literature. According to him poetry use metaphors to reveal deeper layers of reality and human experience (Paul Ricoeur, 1978). Due to quick change in society the identity in modern times is unstable or scattered. Straut Hall (1996) says that identity is a product of culture and history. In modern poems metaphor is not only an adorning technique but it is intellectual too. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) make it clear that human cognition and insight about the world are organized through metaphors. So metaphor is a central device through which poets shows isolation and hardships of their time.These two poems have different backgrounds. One poet is from Western Modernism and other is from South Asian developing period. T.S.Eliot explores the urban detachment of early 20th century England. On the other hand Faiz Ahmed Faiz connects the personal feelings with social and political awareness (Agha Shahid Ali, 2001). This study comparatively analyzes how identity is shaped by using metaphors and how cultural and social background of poet impact this identity.

1.2. Scope and Significance of Study

The study focuses on the use of metaphors in modern English and Urdu poetry particularly in *Preludes* by T.S. Eliot and in *Mujh Se Pehli Si Muhabat Mere Mehbob Na Mang* by Faiz Ahmed Faiz. The scope of our study include these two poems and their in depth analysis. It does not enter in the boundaries of other genres, poets and other literary periods. The critical and comparative methodology of the study makes it significant. This study advances the knowledge of how historical, social and cultural context influence identity through metaphor by comparing progressive Urdu poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz with modernist English poetry of T.S. Eliot. Findings are not just useful for researchers and students of comparative literature but also for those who study language, identity and culture in literature. The findings might help the poets to use metaphors more thoughtfully as a literal and cultural tool and it also shed light on the use of poetic language and its effect on self perception.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The metaphorical representation of identity is different in both contexts, regardless of same modernist trouble. Faiz redefines identity through political solidarity but Eliot shows existential crisis of that time. The study examines the way in which metaphors represent identity in these two poems.

1.4. Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to discover how metaphors represent the concept of identity in *Preludes* by T.S. Eliot and in *Mujh Se Pehli Si Muhabat Mere Mehbob Na Mang* by Faiz Ahmed Faiz. The study aims to identify how metaphorical language is used in both works to constitute and express different forms of identity. It also provide insight into the fact that how cultural and historical context influence the use of metaphors and formation of identity in both poems. In addition, this research aims to identify how these two poems converge and diverge in their use of metaphors and how modernism is a universal literary moment. This study demonstrates how metaphor serve as a crucial literary strategy for expressing individual emotions, societal consciousness, and specific cultural experiences in contemporary poetry by using comparative comparison.

1.5. Research Questions

1.How metaphors represent the idea of identity in *Preludes* by T.S.Eliot and in *Mujh Si Pehli Se Muhabat* Mere Mehbob Na Mang by Faiz Ahmed Faiz?

2.How the cultural and historical background shape up the formation of identity through metaphors in poem?
3.What similarities and differences exist in metaphorical development of identity in both poems?

1.6. Delimitations and Limitations of The Study

This inquiry is delimited to the comparative analysis of two selected poems. One is *Preludes* by T.S. Eliot and the other is *Mujh Se Pehli Si Muhabat Mere Mehbob Na Mang* by Faiz Ahmed Faiz. Within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory this study mainly look for the themes of identity and how the metaphor are used to show the identity in the poems. It does not include other poems of early 20th century, literary style, or additional perspectives like psychoanalysis or postcolonial theories. The research is limited by its dependence on close analysis of the text which involve personal evaluation. As we are using only two poems so we can not generalize our results to all the modern poetry. The culture and language difference also shape the evaluation of metaphors across different backgrounds.

2. Literature Review

Poets are the intellectuals who observe the world around them with a tender eye. They are the most sensitive as they can feel the pain of people in society and detect the changes. They often express their opinions and foreshadow the future in their poetry by using various literary devices to give a hidden message. As Eagleton said that, the poetry reflects the cultural and historical conditions of a society (Terry Eagleton, 1996). In this study the researcher deals with literary device of metaphor but this study will also observe symbolism, imagery, personification and fragmentation. Among all these metaphor is the primary tool, which is used to analyze that how fleeting concepts such as love, identity alienation are understood. Imagery in the poems make the metaphors strong by engaging sensory experiences. On the other hand symbolism tells about ideological meanings. And fragmentation shows physical and emotional barrenness. Conceptual Metaphor Theory by George Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* put forward that metaphor is not just a literary tool but basic mechanism of thinking (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). CMT explains that feelings are understood by linking with concrete experiences. This theoretical standpoint shifts literary analysis from just focusing on metaphor as a stylistic tool, to recognize it as one that constitution the meaning itself. As many metaphors are grounded in concrete universal experiences this cultural representation is different across various societies.(Kovecses, 2018). Modernist poetry of early twentieth century portray identity as injured and unstable due to industrialization and war. T.S.Eliot is one of the beginner poets who is associated with the identity crisis. The poem sensory details of "grimy scraps" "burnt out ends" and "smell of steaks" paints an image of harsh urban environment. T.S. Eliot quickly move from sensory experiences to the second person intimacy ("You tossed a blanket from the bed") and first person reflection ("I am moved by fancies…"). From viewpoint of CMT these images build the conceptual metaphor of Identity in a Decaying Urban Space (Eliot 1917/1971). The continuous discussion about enclosed places like rooms or streets reflect what Lakoff and Johnson describe as Container schema.(Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).Self is actually trap in these enclosed structures of religion, culture and society.

The line in the poem "the thousand sordid images" carry variety and breakdown. Scholars such as Suar and Krupa prove that Eliot was influenced by philosophers like Bergson and F.H. Bradley, who feel that modern people feel separate or so far from each other. This also shows that consciousness is dispersed and unstable. The cycling rhythm and theme of barrenness in *Preludes* emphasize the idea that identity is imprisoned in repetitive and endless routine. So, metaphor and imagery together work to built an identity that is passive, broken and is in isolation. Some scholars interpret Eliot's imagery as symbolic of existential crisis (Ricks, 1998). Imagery supports the metaphor by engaging sensory experiences. Symbolism in the poem move beyond explanatory possibilities and fragmentation shows mental and social disruptive characteristics of modernist style (Childs, 2000). In comparison modern Urdu poetry shape identity with in a social or political structure influenced by class consciousness, history and ideology. Faiz Ahmed Faiz is among the progressive writers who mixed romantic idealism with political and social realities. The poem *Mujh Se Pehli Si Muhabat Mere Mehbob Na Mang* by Faiz Ahmed Faiz begins with image of beloved which suggest that the love Is The Center Of Existence. The beloved is presented as the light which enable the poet to see the world and the destiny due to which the whole world bend before him. However as the poem move forward darker images start emerging like blood, dirt, cruelty and sufferings. The basic difference between two is that the Eliot concept of identity is fragmented and disruptive. While the Faiz concept of identity is emerging and transforming. The images of "cruel magic" ,"bodies being sold in the market" covered with dust and blood hint toward the idea that society is an injured body and oppression is darkness.

2.1. Recent Studies

Many intellectuals have analyzed identity and metaphor in modern poetry. According to Peter Berry modern poetry reflects fragmentation and alienation in newly emerging society (Peter Berry, 2002). In T.S. Eliot poems Saur observes that Eliot imagery of decay represent both decline of tradition and the personal pain. Krupa (2024) studies the rhythmic structure of poem and suggest that it broken musical quality shows the mess of modern life (Suar, 2023;Krupa, 2024). The poems like *Preludes* and *The Hollow Men* manifests that modern generation is spiritually vacant and without any purpose (Chanwaria and Gahlot , 2024). These works confess that T.S. Eliot uses imagery of body parts to convey the message weakness and division. Rajoria (n.d.) explains that how the poem *Mujh Se Pehli Si Muhabat Mere Mehbob Na Mang* show social consciousness of colonial time. The poem line " Aur bi dukh hn zamane main muhabat ke siwa" shows that happiness is not parted from the social sufferings in this period. Tehseem observes the poem from a discourse view point and argue that private feelings and social bitterness is interconnected. Hussain contrast Faiz Ahmed Faiz with P.B. Shelley and conclude that Faiz Ahmed Faiz uses intimate language at first but later transformed it into patriotic and transformative language and tone (Hussain 2021). Comparative studies are also there. (Abdin et al , 2024) compares T.S. Eliot's *The wasteland* with Faiz *Dast-e-Saba* and find convergence in fragmentation but divergence in results. Eliot shows hopelessness while Faiz Ahmed Faiz shows hope for change and defiance. Habib discusses the Eliot impact on modern Urdu poetry and shows that the modernist techniques in

English literature entered the Urdu literature gradually and have it influence on it (Habib, 2007). However, there is a balance in Faiz modernist technique and emotional comfort. Overall, the study reveals that both poets deals with crisis and brokenness but Faiz provides a light of hope and T.S. Eliot focuses on hopelessness

2.2. Research Gap
Methodological Gap

Previous studies of both poems mainly deals with their thematic interpretation, historical background and literary criticism. But no one use systematic qualitative research method to analyze these poems. In particular there is no structured thematic analysis and metaphor analysis of these poems. Moreover, there is no comparative qualitative analysis between T.S. Eliot and Faiz Ahmed Faiz till then. So, the study will fill this methodological gap by using a qualitative analytical approach.

Conceptual Gap

The conceptual gap of this study is actually the gap in the ideas or themes. Because there is no exploration of the relationship between identity and metaphor in comparison. Many researchers work on the theme of alienation in Eliot's poetry and social awareness in Faiz's poetry but no one still work on the use of metaphorical language in modern poetry and it's impact on identity construction. So, this study will fill the conceptual gap by giving a deeper understanding of the concept of metaphor and the role of metaphor in shaping identity and social consciousness.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

The study is based on multidisciplinary theoretical framework which integrates modern poetry, conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), and modern literature from post colonial period. The framework discover metaphors as a logical and aesthetic technique for designing identity. As Eliot portray western urban isolation conversely Faiz reacts against the colonial abuse in India, unmasking both shared modern crisis and different cultural expressions. (Abdin et.al.,2024; Habib 2007).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is rooted in literary theory, cultural studies, and modernist perspective with focus on metaphor as a device for representing identity. According to this framework identity is socially and culturally constructed and can be interpreted through the use of figurative language specifically metaphors. The study use a qualitative interpretive or constructivist framework where meaning emerges from close textual analysis and contextual understanding of both poems. In this framework metaphors are used as cultural and mental processes that reveals personal and social ways of identity. Identity is treated as something which is multi layered and complex.

Analytical Framework

The analytical framework follow six step process of qualitative data analysis:
1. **Data familiarization**
   First step involve reading the poem several times in order to comprehend and identify themes and metaphors.
2. **Creation of initial codes**
   This step involves the identification of lines and phrases that signify identification in the process of creating codes.

3. **Looking for themes**
   This step involve categorizing metaphors in various groups like romantic, social, urban, and political.
4. **Examining themes**
   In this step researchers check the themes to see if they properly capture the metaphorical portrayal of identity in both poems.
5. **Labeling the themes**
   In this step researcher finalize the thematic labels such as fragmented individual identity, collective social identity, and cultural consciousness etc. This help us to define and design themes.
6. **Interpreting the results**
   In this step researcher examines how metaphors relate to historical and cultural context, compare poem and construct identity. So, this study uses a qualitative thematic analysis approach, guided by Creswell interpretive model.

3.Research Methodology
3.1.Research Design
Using close textual analysis the study implement a qualitative comparative research design. The research is interpretive in nature and is rooted in Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson (2003). Lakoff and Johnson declare that metaphor is a basic mechanism of thinking. It is not only a stylistic tool in language. According to their theory humans understand various ideas through material experiences. These metaphors shape thinking and indirectly beliefs. This study used a Comparative Qualitative design with an elaborative comparison table. This comparative analysis help us to identify both universal designs of modernity and culture particular metaphor structures.

3.2. Research Tool
The main research tool is close analysis of the text leaded through conceptual metaphor theory. In this research we will locate metaphorical representation, source domain, and target domain with in the two selected poems. Then by evaluating these metaphors we get the answer to the question that how metaphors help shape the concept of identity of a reader.

3.3. Sampling and Population
The population of the study is modern English and Urdu poetry. The samples which this study is using for inquiry consist of two poems:
1. *Preludes* by T.S. Eliot
2. *Mujh Se Pehli Si Muhabat Mere Mehbob Na Mang* by Faiz Ahmed Faiz

We are choosing these poems due to their richness of metaphors in a well defined sociocultural background.

3.4. Data collection Procedures
The data of this study is gathered by using a systematic and qualitative strategy, centered on textual analysis of two modern Urdu and English poetry. Urdu poem explore identity by representation of metaphors. The first step is the attentive selection of a symbolic corpus of poetry. Primary texts are taken from original poetry collection, substantiate online archives, and verified translations to preserve precision and language shades. Then the selected poems were read multiple times to introduce the researcher with the content. Notes were taken carefully. Then by using qualitative coding strategy metaphors in the poem were highlighted and categorized. Identity type was noted for each metaphor. Then metaphors were interpreted in broader sociocultural and historical context. Urdu poem is taken in real script. On the other hand English poem is taken from original edition. Then the interpretations are thoroughly coded and

arranged into thematic categories such as love, isolation, pain, and societal pressure. Secondary sources like analytical essays and commentaries are used to confirm vague decelerations and give informative insights. In the final step, the data are arranged in a relative substructure to tailor a detailed analysis of convergence and divergence between Urdu and English poetic traditions, ensuring reliability and depth in the research results. To enhance the trustworthiness the researcher use triangulation across various coding cycles. Interpretation of metaphorical meaning and contextual accuracy confirmed with the help of peer debate. To guarantee reliability and conformability, notes were taken methodically (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). All the metaphors and coding categories were gathered in to a table which lay the foundation for the comparative analysis.

4. Data Analysis and Preparation

Thus study analyzes how metaphors represent identity in *Preludes* and *Mujh Se Pehli Si Muhabat Mere Mehbob Na Mang*. The analysis will follow a qualitative data analysis process which includes data organization, reading and coding of text, developing themes, interpreting meanings, and presenting findings. The first step of data analysis involve organizing and arranging the data for analysis. In this study primary data is the selected metaphorical expressions or phrases from both poems. These metaphors were identified by closely reading the text. The metaphors are then arranged according to their themes. After carefully analyzing the poems, lines which have metaphorical expressions of urban life, emotional experiences, and social sufferings were selected for analysis. The second step involves a deeper understanding of the meaning by reading the poems repeatedly and cautiously. In Preludes Eliot uses a lot of urban images like:

"The burnt-out ends of smoky days.
And now a gusty shower wraps
The grimy scraps
Of withered leaves about your feet"

These opening lines of the poem quickly present a metaphorical imagery of monotonous and dull industrial life. At deeper level the metaphor of "burnt- out end of smoky days" and "grimy scraps" also hint toward the loss of spiritual and personal identity. It also symbolizes wastage of time or unproductive life. Similarly, metaphorical images in Faiz poem reflect social awareness and collective transformation. The lines like:

"Main ye samja tha ke to ha darkhsahn behayat"
"Ja Baja bikty huey kocha-o-Bazar main jism"

In the first line the poet said that his beloved is the source of happiness for him. But later he realizes that there are some greater sufferings in our society and these sufferings are more important than his personal love. That's why, he is unable to focus on his romantic love. After reading and familiarization the next step is to code the data. Coding is the process of finding meaningful segments in the text and giving them a suitable label. In this research metaphorical expressions from both poems were coded according to their themes. The researcher identify the three major codes:

1. Fragmented identity
2. Social awareness and collective identity
3. Cultural and historical influence

Preludes metaphors like "burnt out ends of smoky days", "thousand sordid images", and "stretching of soul across the skies" show the alienation, and psychological fragmentation in a mechanical society. In Faiz's poem metaphors like "jism nikly huy amraz ke tanuron se" and "Aur bi dukh hain

zamane main muhabat ke siwa" were coded under social awareness and collective identity. The third code include those metaphors which reflect broader social and historical context of both poems. After this researcher code by grouping similar codes together to build broader themes. This step follow a thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and explores three main themes. The theme of fragmented identity is clearly present in Eliot's *Preludes*. The metaphors in the poem portray modern individual as someone fragmented, lonely, and spiritually vacant. The imagery of filthy streets, broken objects and repetitive routines are the symbols of identity crisis and spiritual decay in the city. These metaphors contain a common characteristic of modern literature, where writers often show alienation, despair and feeling of disconnection in modern society This shows that how rapid industrialization and materialism influence the identity. The second theme of social awareness and collective sufferings is present in Faiz poem. At first, the poet uses metaphors of love and ideal beauty. But after that, he immediately shifted toward themes like suffering, pain, and injustice. In this way he uses the metaphors as a tool for making people aware of the violent and oppressive conditions in the society. The third theme is most important and it shows the impact of cultural and historical context on the use of metaphors in both poems. So, by his metaphors Eliot portrays the Western urban life of late 19th century, while Faiz portrays South Asian colonialism, injustice, and violence, focusing on identity and metaphor in poetry. The last step in analysis is interpreting the meaning of the themes. Both poems use metaphors to highlight social and psychological realities. But the direction and the aim of these metaphors differ significantly. These poems also share a similarity because they both use metaphors as a device for connecting personal emotions with broader social realities. In both poems metaphorical expressions are used to answer the complex questions about identity and human existence.The researcher found that both poets use the metaphors of darkness in their poems according to their culture and history. For example, in the *Preludes,* the metaphor of "winter evening settles down" and "burnt-out ends of smoky days" are the images of darkness, which represent the dark atmosphere of the city due to smoke of industries and furnaces. On a deeper level, the poet talks about the pathetic condition of the human in the newly emerging mechanized society which gives preference to money and productivity over moral awareness, love, and empathy. On the other hand, in *Mujh Se Pehli Si Muhabat Mere Mehbob Na Mang,* the metaphor of "Beshumar sadion ke tarik bahimanaa talism" gives the imagery of dark or cruel magic which symbolizes the oppression of colonizers on the colonized in British India from centuries. In short, the poet talks about the dehumanizing of people colonized by colonizers in the subcontinent, which affects their identity and independence. So, both poets use the metaphor of darkness, which gives different meanings and identities shaped by their cultural and historical background.

Table 4.1:
Table of Comparison between Preludes by T.S. Eliot and Mujh Se Pehli Si Muhabat Mere Mehbob Na Mang by Faiz Ahmed Faiz:

Types of metaphors	Urban imagery, decay, darkness, mechanical routine	Imagery of love, suffering, exploitation and social injustice	Both use metaphors to express identity
Representation of identity	Fragmented and isolated modern men	Identity transformed from lover to socially consciousness person	Divergence
Social context	Modern urban society with rapid industrialization	Colonialism and post colonial struggle	Divergence
Emotional tone	Pessimistic and cold	Critical, socially aware and empathetic	Divergence

Purpose of metaphor	To show spiritual emptiness and monotony	To emphasize on the sufferings of people	Divergence
Use of Symbolic language	Strong symbolic imagery of decay	Strong symbolic imagery of social sufferings and decay	Convergence
Function of metaphor	Express deeper psychological and social meaning	Express deeper emotional and social meaning	Convergence

Trustworthiness and Reliability

A number of strategies were used to maintain the reliability of the qualitative analysis. Credibility was preserved through triangulation by using secondary sources like scholarly assessments of T.S. Eliot and Faiz Ahmed Faiz to support the meaning of the poems. Reliability was ensured by maintaining complete notes and coding tables, enabling other scholars to review and duplicate the findings. To reduce the subjective bias conformability was attained by bridging all the interpretations, academic references and textual evidence together. Lastly, transferability was addressed by mapping the concepts in detail and providing examples so that the reader could evaluate how well the results applied to other poets' work. Together all these strategies improve validity and reliability of the study's qualitative conclusions and make it trustworthy for readers.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were also adhered to this study from beginning. Every source whether it is primary or secondary was properly acknowledged and citied. Through meticulous analysis orignal meaning, metaphors, and cultural context of both poems was preserved. By avoiding plagiarism and correctly citing all theoretical concepts and academic sources researcher upheld academic integrity. To avoid personal prejudice the interpretations were backed up by textual evidence. Transparency of the work was ensured by these ethical standards.

5. Results and Findings

The study analyzes that T.S. Eliot's "*Prelude*" and Faiz Ahmed Faiz's "*Mujh Se Pehli Si Muhabat Mere Mehbob Na Mang*" both heavily use metaphors to convey identity. According to the study Eliot shows a fractured and alienated modern identity by using metaphors that are linked with decay, urban life, and industrialization. The spiritual emptiness and identity crisis that people feel is reflected in these metaphors. However, Faiz demonstrates change in identity by using metaphors of love, beauty, pain and social in justice. The findings show that cultural and historical background strongly impact the expressions of metaphors in both poems. Faiz metaphors shows social inequality and injustice in South Asian society. While Eliot metaphors implied toward the western modernity. Despite differences these poems show that metaphors are powerful tools for shaping identity.

6. Conclusion and Implications

This paper shows how metaphors represent identity in *Preludes* by T.S. Eliot and *Mujh Se Pehli Si Muhabat Mere Mehbob Na Mang* by Faiz Ahmed Faiz. The in-depth study of these poems show that both poems use metaphors to show identity and human experience. A similarity between these poems is that both use metaphors to reflect the social and emotional condition of his speaker. However, there is a difference in the thematic focus and cultural background of both poems. Eliot's metaphors mainly show urban isolation, decay and fragmented identity of modern times in Europe, while Faiz metaphors shift the thematic focus from personal love toward social awareness and collective sufferings of colonial time in British India. Eliot give a pessimistic view of modern life with no solution to the problems. On the other hand, Faiz Ahmed

Faiz gives the message of hope and human empathy. This study implies that in poetry metaphors are strongly shaped by socio-cultural background and play a central role in forming identity and meaning in both Eastern and Western modern literature. So, this study identifies modernism as a global literary moment because it is not limited to English literature only.

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