



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Environmental Pollution and Industrialization in Pakistani Short Fiction: An Eco-Stylistic Analysis**

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**ABSTRACT**

The objective of this research is to analyze selected Pakistani short fiction which depicts environmental pollution and industrialization through a combined lens of ecocriticism and stylistics which is referred to as eco-stylistics. The research examines the language and narrative devices used by selected fiction writers for describing ecological and human-related issues. This research highlights the significant use of words and the employment of symbols in analyzing conflict between characters and nature. The arrangement of sentences spoken by the individuals and the character's voice both portray the environmental conflict as well as the political side of it. A close reading of the selected stories by Tariq Rahman, Daniyal Mueenuddin, and Mohammed Hanif reveal that the environmental pollution is sometimes described in literal sense and sometimes is seen as a symbol of troubles in the society. The research shows that the novels and short stories also criticize industrial growth and the treatment of people towards nature. The research further focuses on the social and economic differences among individuals. The research is significant in adding to the growth of eco-stylistics as a theoretical and methodological strategy in South Asian literature. The study also gives fresh outlook on the ecological awareness from the perspective of Anglophone Pakistani fiction.

**KEYWORDS** Environmental Pollution, Industrialization, Pakistani Literature, Short Fiction, Eco-Stylistics

**Introduction**

South Asian literary canon values Pakistani short fiction as it covers various cultural, political and environmental experiences of People living in Pakistan. After Pakistan was created in 1947, many writers started to write short stories to describe the fast-changing society and politics of the nation. The Progressive Writers' Movement inspired early works of Pakistani short fiction which often discussed class issues, poverty and the pain of the partition. The main writers like Saadat Hasan Manto, Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi and Intizar Hussain first shaped the genre of short fiction. The works of Manto, Qasmi and Hussain bring out the richness of the genre, its topics and unique styles.

With the passage of time, the genre of short fiction extended to look at issues such as the relationship between men and women, religious violence, the complexity of identity and problems of environment. Today, Pakistani authors have been writing stories that reflect growing worries about ecology caused by chaotic urbanization, pollution and a lack of environmental care. Tariq Rahman, Daniyal Mueenuddin and Mohammed Hanif are among those writers who have helped envision this shift by adding environmental descriptions and criticism to their stories. The stories attempt to highlight the problems between people and the environment by choosing metaphor, irony and following the focus on a narrator. This means that Pakistani short fiction reflects society and it also helps to

protect the environment, aiming for a sustainable culture with creative use of words and phrases.

Over the past few years, people around the world have grown concerned about the environment and this has led many scholars to study how cultural narratives express ecological crises. Literature both shows and comments on society which makes it important for presenting environmental issues and ideas about people's connections to the natural world. In this context, eco-stylistics braiding ecological criticism with linguistic stylistics is now recognized as a suitable means for studying environmental awareness in texts (Goatly, 2011; Nørgaard, 2014). This paper studies about how and what is said or written describes the hidden meanings in terms of our surroundings. In this way, the language makes evident the ideological messages related to nature, pollution and environmental troubles.

The society and environment in Pakistan provide an interesting background for this kind of research. Pakistani cities have experienced more pollution as compared to the rest of the rural areas. The reason behind the issues related to environmental pollution is due to the rapid growth in towns and cities, increased industrial activities and lack of effective strategies to control pollution (Khan et al., 2018). In spite of the seriousness of environmental problems, very few Pakistani writers have examined ecological degradation specifically by applying eco-stylistics. Short stories written in Pakistan, mainly focus on reality and social questioning. This research emphasizes that there is a great need to study how contamination and industrial progress are woven into stories through the medium of language.

The study further aims to examine the selected Pakistani short fiction to see how writers represent the deterioration of the environment by focusing mainly on pollution and industrialization. By studying authors like Tariq Rahman, Daniyal Mueenuddin and Mohammed Hanif, the research discovers that pollution appears as a real problem and also as a way to critique the negative aspects of society and different cultures. With this study, eco-stylistics and South Asian ecocriticism have gained fresh knowledge about the role of language used in stories to build environmental consciousness.

Even though the world is learning more about environmental issues, the relationship between environment and Pakistani literature has not been fully studied and explored by many writers. A lot of scholarship has covered ecological topics found in Western and postcolonial literature, but very little has addressed stylistic and language aspects in Pakistani short fiction that deal with the environment. Literary analysis usually downplays the portrayal of pollution and industrialization, which are ecological issues. It is important to look into how Pakistani literature reflects on the damages of industrial growth and its challenges especially by focusing on eco-stylistics. This study aims to explore how the Pakistani writers write about the environmental issues by taking into account the style and language, symbols and metaphors used in Pakistani short fiction.

## **Literature Review**

Using eco-stylistics, critics have been able to study the role of language in shaping nature and criticizing the harm done to the environment in literature. Drawing on ecocriticism which looks into how literature relates to nature, eco-stylistics analyzes the linguistic and stylistic factors that affect ecological narratives. Among the first, Goatly (2007) combined stylistics with ecology and suggested that the use of metaphor, modality and transitivity could make language work against nature's usage.

Stibbe (2015) followed Goatly by setting up a method to detect the dominant narratives that affect people's actions toward the environment. According to Stibbe, toxic conversations usually make it seem acceptable to damage the environment by using

language that sounds less harsh or impersonal. As a result, applying eco-stylistics helps discover such patterns and examine how novels can object to dominating ideas promoted by people and industry.

While Mukherjee (2010) examines the use of ecological themes in Indian literature for South Asian scholars, Pakistani literature in the same area is not fully studied yet. Boehmer (2005) and Huggan and Tiffin (2010) note that many postcolonial novels include environmental topics by suggesting the mainly extractive nature of colonialism and the worries of development present today. The effects of urbanization, industrial development and nature damage are clearly shown in Pakistani short stories, especially through the work of Tariq Rahman, Daniyal Mueenuddin and Aamir Hussein, using small but effective shifts in language and storytelling. But there has not been much focus on looking at the ways these texts represent pollution and harm to the environment.

Analyzing how pollution is described in language can be done well by looking at agency and causality using Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). A writer often decides whether pollution is treated as something natural or as caused by humans by using certain stylistic devices. The studies by Simpson (2004) and Leech and Short (2007) have pointed out that modality, point of view and word selection in writing often reveal where a writer's views come from.

Furthermore, sharing ecological problems can be done through the voices of characters, the descriptions of places or the narrator and this sheds light on how the work expresses concern for the environment. Garrard (2012) points out that these kinds of stories depend on the style and manner of presentation, too.

Even though there are more and more studies on eco-literature, few investigate eco-stylistics in Pakistani short stories. Although South Asian novels sometimes address environmental themes (an example is Paranjape, 2012), scholars have not explored how resistance to pollution and industrialization are put in language in short fiction, as cited by (Thompson, 2014). Since Pakistan is suffering from ecological challenges such as pollution and fast-paced industrial development, literature serves as a key place for thinking and talking about the environment.

Therefore, the study brings together stylistic analysis and the study of ecological discourse to examine the way selected short stories from Pakistan either introduce, challenge or confirm stories about pollution and industrialization. It takes advantage of previous studies in eco-linguistics and makes a regional and genre distinctive addition to the field.

## **Material and Methods**

Using qualitative methods, this study analyzes how Pakistani literature portrays pollution and industrialization by looking at its language use. There is a collection of short stories in the data by well-known Pakistani authors like Tariq Rahman, Daniyal Mueenuddin and Mohammed Hanif, who address ecological problems in their writing. Textual analysis analyzes styles such as transitivity, the use of modal verbs, literary figures, lexical options and the perspective in which the story is told, applying theories from Halliday's SFL and traditional educational stylistics. Attention is given to ecocriticism for exploring that how environmental topics, especially the issue of pollution is seen or imagined in literature, stressing both the language used and the intentions and behaviours behind it. This method allows us to see the ways environmental topics are depicted and interpreted in Pakistani literature.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The analysis relies on a mixed method of ecocriticism and eco-stylistics, which is based on the merging of ecocriticism and stylistics. The eco-stylistics is interdisciplinary because it is a combination of ecocriticism (the relationship of literature with the environment) and stylistics (the study of style, and language especially in literary texts). The aim of this field is to explore the role of language and style used by writers in literary texts. Further, it also engages with the representation of natural environment in literature through language and its influence on human beings. Identifying how language masks, challenges or accepts harm to the environment begins by reading Andrew Goatly's (2007) and Arran Stibbe's (2015) works. It looks at how writers use metaphor, give agency to characters, express views and employ different narrative voices to build environmental ideas in fictional and non-fictional stories. The study makes use of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) to examine transitivity patterns and how the authors describe both the causes of environmental degradation and the consequences of industrialization (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). With this method, one can critically examine both the linguistic style and the environmental effects found in such narratives. Further, the study employs ecocritical perspective for analyzing the relationship of nature, human beings and literature.

## **Results and Discussion**

The research focuses on the study of the relationship between literature, language and environment. The Pakistani short fiction draws attention to the themes of pollution and industrialization. The analysis is based on the ecocritical and eco-stylistic approach, the study points out the ways through which ecological damage and human involvement are highlighted.

### **Tariq Rahman -Bingo**

In the short story bingo by Tariq Rahman, the environmental pollution is not being merely pictured as a peripheral setting. Instead it is being reflected onto a metaphoric representation of mental and social corruption. The main hero is an alcoholic war veteran walking in the city whose air was filled with smoke, dust and despair. This line reflects a material process on transitive terms with the use of the verb was to define environmental destruction as emotional suffocation. Textual examples:

1. "The smell of sewage hung in the air like a rotting memory."
2. "Plastic wrappers clung to the tree roots like desperate ghosts."
3. "The river had turned grey, its belly full of factory waste."
4. "Children played near the garbage heap, their laughter thin against the stink of decay."
5. "Smoke from the chimneys drew black scars on the sky."

Stylistically, terms like stinking alley, rusted tin and the oozing sewage are used by Rahman to produce a negative semantic prosody. These phrases emphasize the eco-social entanglement, which is the degradation of urban living in tandem to the inner wasteland of its citizens. In eco-stylistic terms, it can be related to the idea of toxic narratives proposed by Stibbe (2015) according to which the destruction of the environment is justified or becomes invisible. But Rahman perversely opposes this routine normalizing by making pollution consistently connected to moral and cosmic stagnation.

*"Even the rats seemed confused, sniffing about in despair, as if they too had lost their way."* (Rahman, 1973, p. 114).

In this case, the animistic quality of rats has a symbolic purpose as this aspect is pointing out to the fact that environmental destruction does not only interfere with the lives of people; it also interferes with the lives of any urban ecosystem.

### **Daniyal Mueenuddin In Other Rooms, Other Wonders**

In the recent short story by Mueenuddin called Nawabdin Electrician, pollution and industrialization is being described more critically, as it is part of the social-economic fabric of rural Pakistan. The author says:

*"The tube wells coughed into life, choking on rust and algae, feeding poisoned water into thirsty fields."* (Mueenuddin, 2009, p. 87).

This sentence is a very strong eco-stylistic metaphor that makes the eco part of it all the more interesting, as the machines that were created to signify progress are now the ones to choke and the water they bring as a result is the one that is poisoned. The transitivity structure in this instance shows the agentive of technology: by means of tubewells (actor) a material process (cough/choke/feed) is carried out, but its outcome is poisonous. The inconsistency of the roles (lifesaver and polluter) is a reference to the destructive linguistic framing of concern as identified by Stibbe (2015).

Moreover, Mueenuddin applies a symbolic metonymy of sceneries. The sky and the land are often handled in active non-active forms e.g., There is a tendency of passivization in ecological damage, symbolically expressed as the splitting of the earth, i.e. the damage is less in the focus of human responsibility and is more of the technique that opens the way to criticism. Textual examples:

1. "The tube well coughed up rust-colored water."
2. "The land no longer yielded grain, only dust and thorns."
3. "Electric fans stirred the pesticide-laden air."
4. "The garden had withered into a memory of itself."

Mueenuddin mixes metaphor and agentive wording to point out the harmful effects of the environment. Because of the evaluation in "poisoning," and the use of the active voice, we are led to assume corporations and agricultural systems cause most of the problems. This agrees with eco-stylistic thinking which sees language highlighting who has power. The irony in "shimmered not with heat but with haze" undercuts romanticized rural imagery, replacing it with a disturbing visual of contamination, indicative of industrial agriculture's silent violence. The following textual line is the best example from the work of Mueenuddin:

*"The air in the fields shimmered not with heat but with the haze of pesticide, sprayed from low-flying crop dusters, poisoning both crop and farmer alike."*

The air is cleaner in the house of the landlord as opposed to the dust-laced dusk of Nawabdin. This different access to clean environs is a sort of social commentary that goes well with the postcolonial ecocriticism (Huggan & Tiffin, 2010) as a form of assessment to investigate how environmental injustice meets with the social inequality of classes.

### **Mohammed Hanif - *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (extracted episodes)**

Hanif, selected passages from *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* may look like narrative islands in spite of the fact that technically the book is a novel with multiple stories and a

wide range of eco-stylistic indicators. The setting of the scenes where the action in Karachi government hospital takes place is also described in a grotesque detail:

*"Flies danced over dried blood, and disinfectants mixed with sewage to create a perfume of modern decay." (Hanif, 2011, p. 153)*

The line contains some sensory imagery and juxtaposition (disinfectant vs. sewage), and thus brings out the irony of being modern. This is the kind of stylistic irony (a typical device in eco-literature that is used to discredit the narratives of industrial advancement).

Through Hanif's writing, ecological damage becomes a revolving process of spreading contamination. The expression "feeding fish with blood and bile" shows how people's actions make the environment unclean and against nature. That process and direction are given to industrial waste by using "emptied" and "feeding." Stibbe (2015) describes this passage as showing "destructive stories"; these are ways of speaking that expose issues in the ideologies of everyday systems. The following is the textual example: "Karachi's hospital drains emptied directly into the Arabian Sea, feeding fish with the blood and bile of the city's sick." (p.).

Hanif also applies dialogue as a form of resistance, where the voice of the characters is used to make slight environmental statements. A nurse complains, e.g. that even the water running into our mouths is rust. Perhaps we are rusting and e, "Fog fo." The inside-out rusting metaphor entangles the body and the environment pollution with the reflection of Hallidayan transitivity in the form of putative prop of the nurse as the subject of experience, the water as the object of perception and rusting as mental process that becomes a metaphor to describe the process of corruption. Textual examples:

1. "Even the cows seemed sickened by the city's fumes."
2. "Tanker water tasted of metal and something else—maybe rust, maybe resentment."
3. "Flies danced on pools of stagnant water near the hospital waste bin."

Hanif employs the approach of eco-stylistic in agreeing the environment pollution by means of political satire to demonstrate how political ignorance and corruption contribute to pollution of the environment. and the hospital is full of old machines, leaky roofs, and cancerous cleaners that replicates that large scale industrial-political negligence.

**There are general eco-stylistic signals found in Pakistani short fiction which are named as following:**

- **Lexical Fields of Decay:** "rot," "waste," "stench," "rust," "toxic," "choked," "filth"
- **Metaphorical Language:** Nature personified as "sick," "tired," or "suffocated"
- **Contrastive Imagery:** "Once lush / now barren," "trees stripped bare," "cracked soil like broken skin"
- **Sensory Overload:** Descriptions of smell, sight, and touch to evoke pollution (e.g., "acrid air," "burnt plastic smell," "sticky fog")

One can see in every story how the authors highlight the environmental effects of rapid industrial growth through metaphor, transitivity, modality and their use of evaluative language. Even though it does not single out particular people, the discussion

points out the negative impact caused by city growth, the use of chemicals in farming and collapsing infrastructure. In this sense, as Stibbe (2015) explains, eco-linguistics show that ideas of economic progress and progress in general cover up the destruction that is happening to the environment. The study highlights that Pakistani short fiction does not only report on pollution, but also examines the beliefs that keep it going.

## **Discussion**

It is found in the analysis that Pakistani short fiction makes use of different stylistic tools to portray environmental damage that is caused by pollution and industrialization. Similar to what ecocritics and stylists state (as per Stibbe, 2015; Goatly 2007), the selected texts employ metaphors, indirect actions and human attributes on things to bring attention to ecological issues and also examine the systems behind such destruction.

Images such as the filthy “dead snake” canal and the “black smoke” capturing the street like an evildoer create a picture of corruption in the environment and among people. This agrees with Cohn (1978), who states that fiction should portray consciousness by making the external world a mirror of the author’s own socio-political worries and concerns. Attributing agency to smoke, chemicals and dirty water like in the narratives shows a struggle between progress and the danger it brings, just as Leech and Short (2007) found when exploring style and ideology in literature.

In addition, the analysis of transitivity points to the way ecological harm is often shown as happening without an identified human agent. Like Banfield (1982), this approach shows that there are many “unspeakable” sentences which make it hard to identify who is responsible for environmental problems, illustrating how society tends to obscure matters of accountability in such cases. Sometimes, when people are named such as pesticide sprayers, the text becomes more serious, stressing that people are causing environmental problems.

The loss of sunflowers in children’s drawings because of smoke from industry is a good example of Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin’s (2002) concept of postcolonial ecological trauma, in which modernization and industrialization disturb traditional and natural lifestyles. This kind of conflict can also be seen in the works of Shamsie (2017) and Hanif (2011), who reveal how sudden urban and industrial expansion negatively affects people and the environment.

So, Pakistani selected fiction portrays the environment and opposes traditional stories that praise unlimited progress. The writers choose certain styles that form “toxic” stories questioning development and look at how people relate to the natural world. The analysis ties into ongoing world ecological literature, focusing equally on local and global matters, to add to the expanding field of postcolonial ecocriticism (Quayson, 2000; Boehmer, 2005).

## **Conclusion**

This research reveals how today Pakistani short fiction relies on ecocriticism, and eco-stylistic techniques to present powerful stories about the many environmental dangers caused by pollution and the industrialization. By using metaphors, personification and such language styles, these texts point out the effects on the environment as well as those who cause such changes. The choices of language in these stories point to a dance between what people choose to do and the impact on the environment, commonly indicating that some responsibility is covered up. It is also introducing new merging of ecocriticism and eco-stylistics by highlighting the diverse cultural and postcolonial aspects in Pakistani environmental literature. All in all, these stories suggest that modern progress

comes at a cost to people and the environment and they promote a discussion about the way humans interact with nature.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

- Other future studies can investigate how novels, poetry and dramas use similar stylistic approaches to represent issues related to the environment.
- Doing comparative analysis between Pakistani eco-narratives and those from various other regions could highlight what these different areas have in common or differ from their environmental writings.
- Studies of how readers respond to and feel about different ecological factors in Pakistani fiction can explain how effective these stories are in informing readers about the environment.
- Bringing together Eco-stylistics and Environmental Science or Sociology could enable assessing how literary representations impact public policies and people's views on the environment.



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