

DECODING IDIOMS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN PAKISTAN: A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF INDIGENOUS EXPRESSIONS

Faiza Sarwar 1 Muhammad Farukh Arslan 2

1. MPhil Scholar, Dept. Of English NUML Fsd Campus
faizasarwar585@gmail.com
2. Muhammad Farukh Arslan Lecturer Dept. Of English NUML Fsd Campus
Farukhgil99@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study explores the connection between idiomatic expressions in the indigenous languages of Pakistan, specifically Punjabi and Urdu, and their role in constructing and transmitting cultural identity. Using Neuliep's Cultural Identity Theory (2000) as a theoretical framework, the research examines idioms from Punjabi and Urdu, highlighting how these figurative expressions function as cultural markers. The data for this study was collected through interviews with 120 students from the Agriculture University of Faisalabad, Pakistan, with twenty participants from each language group—Punjabi and Urdu—providing insights into how idioms in their native languages serve as communication tools that reflect and shape cultural identity. The research methodology involved analyzing the idiomatic expressions through qualitative data gathered from the interviews to understand their significance in everyday discourse. The findings demonstrate that idioms play a crucial role in preserving and transmitting cultural values, especially in the context of globalization. Idioms from both languages reflect cultural themes such as resilience, family values, and communal bonds, deeply rooted in the historical and social experiences of these linguistic communities. This research contributes to understanding how language, particularly idioms, intertwines with cultural identity in Pakistan, offering broader implications for the role of linguistic diversity in shaping social dynamics in multilingual societies.

Keywords: Cultural Identity, Idioms, Indigenous Languages, Cultural Identity Theory, Pakistan, Linguistic Diversity, Multilingualism

1. INTRODUCTION

Language functions as an important foundation in shaping and maintaining cultural identity, particularly in the context of idiomatic expressions. Idioms, which are often culturally bound and deeply entrenched in a community's customs, beliefs, and historical experiences, offer a window into how individuals and groups perceive their world. In Pakistan, a country marked by rich linguistic diversity, idioms from indigenous languages like Pashto, Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, and Urdu not only reflect cultural norms but also preserve shared traditions across generations (Neuliep, 2000). These idiomatic expressions become essential tools for cultural transmission, linking language to identity.

In the Pakistani context, idioms summarize regional identities while simultaneously contributing to the broader cultural narrative of the nation. Each province and linguistic community, through their distinct idiomatic phrases, communicates its unique cultural values and worldview. For example, in Pashto, the idiom "Da har tsa che chara pah zra ke wayee da ghawe da khpal warar da marray di" (Whatever one has in their heart, they say it as a good wish for their brother) reflects the cultural position of family ties and sincerity. This is indicative of how language, through idioms, reinforces cultural principles such as familial loyalty and honesty, thus creating a shared sense of identity.

The use of Cultural Identity Theory (CIT) by Neuliep (2000) reveals how language functions as a marker of identity, particularly in a multicultural nation like Pakistan. Idioms, being deeply connected to a community's way of life, serve as symbolic representations of shared information and experiences. According to CIT, individuals use language to negotiate their cultural identity within different contexts, making idiomatic expressions vital in preserving

cultural continuity while fostering a sense of belonging within a linguistic community (Neuliep, 2000). This connection between idioms and cultural identity demonstrates how language reflects the social structures and values of the groups that use it.

In Pakistani context, native languages and their idiomatic expressions face challenges due to globalization, urbanization, and the dominance of English and Urdu in mainstream discourse. Despite these pressures, idioms from regional languages continue to play a crucial role in cultural preservation and identity formation. The usage of idioms in daily communication, storytelling, and folklore maintains cultural traditions, passing down historical narratives and wisdom from one generation to the next. This study, through an analysis of idiomatic expressions from various languages across Pakistan, highlights the enduring relationship between language and cultural identity, demonstrating how idioms act as cultural symbols that resonate with the people who use them.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Cultural identity in Pakistan is profoundly entwined with the rich diversity of its indigenous languages, yet the role of idiomatic expressions in reflecting and shaping this identity remains underexplored. With the dominance of Urdu and English in formal education and media, indigenous idioms risk being marginalized, leading to a potential erosion of regional cultures and identities. This study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing how idiomatic expressions from Pakistan's local languages function as markers of cultural identity.

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study is important because it contributes to the understanding of how language, specifically idiomatic expressions, reflects and preserves cultural identity in a multilingual society like Pakistan. By focusing on indigenous languages, this study emphasizes the importance of preserving linguistic diversity and highlights the role that idioms play in transmitting cultural values and traditions. The findings provide insights that can help in promoting linguistic and cultural awareness in Pakistan, ensuring that regional identities are celebrated and continued in the face of globalization and language homogenization.

1.4. Research Objectives

- a. To analyze idiomatic expressions from indigenous languages of Pakistan and explore their connection to cultural identity
- b. To examine the role of idioms in the preservation and transmission of cultural values within different linguistic communities in Pakistan
- c. To investigate the impact of language shifts and globalization on the use and significance of indigenous idioms in shaping cultural identity

1.5. Research Questions

1. How do idiomatic expressions in indigenous languages of Pakistan reflect and shape cultural identity?
2. In what ways do idioms contribute to the preservation and transmission of cultural values within regional communities?
3. What are the effects of language shifts and globalization on the usage and cultural significance of indigenous idioms in Pakistan?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Idioms are a practice of figurative language that carries meanings beyond the literal interpretation of the words. Idioms often imitate the history, values, and worldview of the community that uses them (Fernando, 1996). Research on idioms indicates that they serve as

compact carriers of meaning, often embodying culturally specific knowledge that cannot be directly translated without losing essential nuances (Liu, 2008). Studies by Baker (2011) highlight the importance of understanding idiomatic language, as idioms function as reflections of collective thought patterns within a culture. The relationship between idioms and cultural identity is particularly relevant in multilingual societies, where the same concept may be expressed in a different way across languages but still carry a shared cultural meaning.

Cultural identity is closely tied to the language of a community. The coexistence of multiple languages in multilingual societies such as Pakistan creates a complex transition between language use and identity formation. According to Newleap's Cultural Identity (CIT) (2000), language is an important tool for communicating and maintaining cultural identity, especially in situations where multilingual cultural groups interact (Neuliep, 2000). And it gives insight into how they see the other. This perspective is essential for understanding how vernacular languages in Pakistan maintain cultural differences in a multilingual, ethnically diverse society through idioms.

In their study, Arslan, Mehmood and Kanwal (2024) conduct a similarity analysis of vocabulary in Punjabi using distributed similarity theory. The analysis identifies key words such as *وی*, *یہ*, *یہاں*, *وہاں*, *وہ*, *وہاں* with prefixes and suffixes included in word formation, and reveals the classification of these words into plural and gender Na they are pointed out. This foundational work paves the way for further exploration of semantic nuances and pedagogical implications for teaching Punjabi metaphors to students.

Arslan, Kanwal, Mehmood, and Haroon (2023) conduct a morphological analysis of case markers in Shahmukhi Punjabi nouns, focusing on how the case reflects the relationship between the noun and other syntactic features. The study identifies the grammatical functions of various noun forms in Punjabi, using eight specific cases that describe the relationship between nouns and verbs. Recognizing changes in spelling, especially in noun endings, the authors clarify the grammatical functions of these words in different contexts. This study provides valuable insights into Punjabi syntax and contributes to the understanding of first language acquisition errors, thus addressing educational and research needs in the field.

Pashto, Balochi, Sindhi, Punjabi, and other vernaculars abound in Pakistan. Each of these languages has a wealth of idioms that reflect the lived experience of its speakers. For example, Pashto idioms often emphasize values of hospitality, respect and community, which are central to Pashtun Wali, traditional Pashtun laws (Rahman, 2002) unlike Sindhi idioms often refer to agriculture and nature, and it reflects the historical and geographical reality of the Sindhi speaking people (Ali, 2015). . . . The survival of this idiom is essential to maintain the cultural heritage of this community, linguistic change or homogeneity may destroy such unique cultural identity Cultural identity associated with this idiom is under threat due to Urdu- . Due to the growing dominance of English in education, media and government communication (Rahman, 1996).

Metaphors are deeply embedded in the social and cultural context of their use, making them powerful markers of cultural identity (Kovecses, 2010). Research shows that metaphors are often associated with a society's values, historical events, and everyday practices. For example, the Punjabi idiom "Hanir di roti" (bread of darkness) refers to earning a living through illegal and dishonest means, a concept that shares social values of morality and justice Punjabi culturally corresponds (Shackle, 1976). Balochi idioms like O dam" (bread and breath) emphasize the importance of original existence and survival, thus the harsh desert environment in which Baloch

culture evolved These idiomatic expressions are not linguistic inventions simply Represent the collective demographics, history, and worldview of the user community. The study by (Kanwal et.al, 2024) investigates the sociolinguistic factors contributing to the decline of the Punjabi language in Pakistan, particularly due to the dominance of Urdu and English. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to assess the perceptions of Punjabi speakers. Findings highlight the role of socioeconomic pressures, educational policies, and lack of institutional support in diminishing Punjabi's prestige. The study emphasizes the cultural and emotional consequences of language death, underlining the need for policies and initiatives to preserve linguistic diversity in Pakistan's cultural landscape (Bot Verification, n.d.-b).

As Pakistan becomes more urbanized and standardized in terms of spoken language, there is a danger that local dialects will lose their dialects. Studies on language change in Pakistan indicate that younger generations, especially in urban areas, are increasingly adopting Urdu and English at the expense of their mother tongue (Zaman, 2014). This shift has led to the marginalization of local dialects and their use of idioms, which are closely associated with regional identity. When native idioms are not used, a significant part of cultural heritage is lost, and this loss impacts speakers' identity This phenomenon is explored by scholars such as Haq (2010), who emphasize the importance of promoting native language and their idioms are encouraged and preserved narratives to maintain cultural diversity and identity.

James W. Newleap's cultural identity theory (2000) provides a framework for understanding how language, and idioms in particular, function as a means of expressing and communicating cultural identity For the multilingual population of Pakistan, . CIT helps explain how metaphorical diversity languages express cultural identities) Using CIT, this research can examine how metaphorical content functions as a cultural marker and how it helps communities maintain their identity. CIT argues that language is central to the formation and expression of cultural identity, making it a relevant theoretical framework for examining metaphor as a manifestation of cultural norms and beliefs

Newlip (2000) argues that language is a way of communicating cultural identity and communicating it to outsiders within the group. In Pakistani languages, idioms function as in-group communication, signifying membership and shared values in speaking a particular language For example, when a speaker uses a Balochi idiom it indicates affinity with a community and between geographies which signify cultural relations which are not well understood by outsiders (Rahman, 2002). It is an emphatic approach, especially in a multilingual and multicultural environment like Pakistan.

CIT also emphasizes the role of language in intercultural communication, where individuals from different cultures communicate. In a multilingual society like Pakistan, idioms can facilitate communication within a cultural group or act as a barrier when communicating with outside groups understanding idioms expressed in linguistic groups a being understood can enhance intercultural understanding and reduce the chances of misunderstandings in communication. For example, understanding the cultural significance of Sindhi idioms can provide insight into Sindhi culture and help non-Sindhi speakers navigate cultural differences more effectively (Ali, 2015).

Globalization, education and official language, led to the rise of mother tongue in Pakistan, the study by Mansor (2004) was a significant influence in the use of local Muhavar, where the rise of English is observed. The use of vanam is limited. Turns out, the diminished use

of idioms by those who may not have the same mother-linguistic ties as previous generations poses a threat to the preservation of cultural identity, as idioms are an important means of cultural transmission values and traditions for between generations.

Despite the challenges posed by globalization and linguistic changes, efforts are being made to preserve idiomatic expression in native languages of Pakistan through Language preservation initiatives, such as regional literature festivals, cultural events and educational efforts to promote mother tongue learning. Form, including metaphorical content, serves as an example of how cultural identity can be preserved through art (Shah, 2013). By encouraging the use of idioms in literature, media and education, these efforts help ensure that the cultural identity associated with the native language is not lost.

In summary, idioms in Pakistani indigenous languages are not just linguistic devices; They are cultural symbols that reflect the values, beliefs, and worldviews of different linguistic groups. The application of Cultural Identity Theory (CIT) (Neuliep, 2000) provides a deeper understanding of how idioms act as expressions of cultural identity, helping communities to maintain distinctiveness in a multilingual society. Period with globalization and linguistic changes continuously affecting Pakistani language, the preservation of these idioms is vital to the survival of the cultural identities they represent. If we examine idiomatic expressions from Pashto, Sindhi, Punjabi and Balochi, this study sheds light on the complex relationship between language and cultural identity in Pakistan.

2.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural Identity Theory (CIT) by James W. Newleap (2000) is based on the idea that language, culture and identity are closely intertwined. According to this theory, individuals use communication to express and celebrate their cultural identity connections, whose membership in cultural communities emphasizes that cultural identity does not go away but is formed through interactions across social contexts.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the research titled “Decoding Idioms and Cultural Identity in Pakistan: A Linguistic Analysis of Indigenous Expressions” is organized to explore the connection between idiomatic expressions and cultural identity using Cultural Identity Theory by James W. Neuliep (2000). This section outlines the research design, data collection methods, population and sampling, and analytical framework.

3.1. Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative research design that focuses on the linguistic and cultural analysis of idiomatic expressions in Punjabi and Urdu, two major indigenous languages of Pakistan. The design is exploratory and descriptive, aiming to understand how idioms reflect cultural identity within these linguistic communities. By analyzing idiomatic expressions, the research seeks to uncover shared cultural values and unique identity markers that are distinct to each language.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The research focuses on idiomatic expressions from two major languages spoken in Pakistan i.e. Punjabi & Urdu.

For each language, a sample of 20 frequently used idioms was selected for analysis. These idioms were chosen based on their relevance to cultural practices, societal values, and their frequent use in everyday communication. The primary population consists of native speakers of these languages who are fluent in both formal and colloquial aspects. To ensure a broad

perspective, the study included participants from diverse age groups, genders, and socio-economic backgrounds at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select both idioms and participants. Experts in Punjabi and Urdu language and cultural studies helped identify idioms that are rich in cultural significance. The final sample included idioms that represent core cultural values and beliefs within each linguistic group.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

This section provides an in-depth analysis of metaphorical expressions in Pakistan's two languages—Punjabi and Urdu—emphasizing their cultural significance, contribution to identity, and function emphasizing the growth of globalization. The research is divided into three themes: cultural thematic analysis, comparative analysis, and contextualized metaphors. Cultural Identity Theory (CIT) guides the analysis by examining how idioms reflect and define linguistic communities.

4.1. Cultural Themes Analysis

Idioms are linguistic vessels that carry rich cultural traditions, values and philosophies. The vocabulary analyzed reflects the culture of different linguistic groups in Pakistan. Each idiom captures key cultural attitudes, norms, and values that are embedded in the community's worldview.

4.1.2 Punjabi Idioms and Cultural Identity

Punjabi idioms often revolve around family values and social harmony. The idiom "Akh da pāni" (تے دھی دا منہ) (tears and daughter's face) represents the family's deep-rooted cultural understanding, especially with respect and honor to women. Punjabi communal life places great emphasis on family ties, especially the role of family members in protecting women. This spoken metaphor reflects the protective and caring attitudes that echo the Punjabi community, and reflects important cultural elements around social responsibility.

Punjabi idioms hold deep cultural significance, capturing the essence of Punjabi life, values, and societal expectations. These expressions provide insights into cultural identity by reflecting traditional beliefs, family dynamics, and social principles. The idioms often emphasize humility, social responsibility, self-awareness, and community bonds, all of which are integral to Punjabi identity.

TABLE 1: PUNJABI IDIOMS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Idiom	Translation	Explanation and Cultural Significance
ویہلی رن پر ویاں جوگی	Idle woman makes unwise friends	Highlights the value of productive work, cautioning against idle time which may lead to unwise associations and trouble. Reflects a cultural emphasis on purposeful engagement.
ٹٹیڈ بھر گیا پر اکھاں نہ بھریاں	Stomach is full, but eyes are not satisfied	A commentary on greed and insatiability, indicating that some people are never content, regardless of what they have. Reflects a moral lesson on contentment.
شیر ساریاں نوں کھاوے، پر شیر نوں کوئی نہ کھاوے	The lion may eat others, but no one dares eat the lion	Symbolizes power and dominance, implying that those who are strong are often feared and respected. Reflects social hierarchies and respect for authority in Punjabi culture.
مان نی مان، میں	Mother, oh mother, I	Demonstrates the deep love and bond between a

رہ نہ سکاں	can't live without you	mother and child, showcasing the importance of family ties in Punjabi society.
نہ نیتی نہ قضا کیتی	Neither did it obey rules nor die	Describes a rebellious attitude, emphasizing a disregard for rules or norms. Reflects cultural views on respect for authority and consequences.
راہ پیا جائے یا واہ پیا جائے	Whether one finds a path or falls into a ditch	Highlights resilience and determination in taking risks. Demonstrates the Punjabi cultural spirit of bravery and confronting challenges.
ویلا نہ وقت، بی بی چڑھ بیٹھی تخت	Neither time nor season, yet the lady ascends the throne	Critiques impulsiveness or untimely actions. Suggests that success or authority requires the right timing, reflecting a cultural respect for patience.
کہنیاں دھی نوں سُنائیاں نُوہ نوں	Said to the daughter, but meant for the daughter-in-law	A subtle way of giving indirect advice or criticism. Demonstrates the cultural use of indirect communication in social relations, especially in family dynamics.
ویلے دی نماز کُویلے دیاں ٹکراں	Praying on time vs. hitting rocks (at other times)	Highlights the importance of punctuality and timely actions, especially in religious practices. Reflects the cultural value placed on discipline and devotion.
باندر ہتھ کٹورا لگیا پانی پی پی آپھریا	Monkey found a bowl, kept drinking water until bloated	Represents overindulgence and lack of self-control, often in response to newfound success. Culturally cautions against excess and promotes moderation.
کرتوت نہ کوئی پلے، کرنی بلے بلے	No good deeds but always boasting	Critiques those who boast without actual achievements, reflecting a cultural appreciation for humility and substance over appearance.
پلے نئیں دھیلا تے کردی میلا میلا	Without a penny but acts like a big spender	Describes people who act beyond their means, cautioning against pretentiousness. Reflects the cultural value of modesty and living within one's means.
کر پرایاں آن جایاں	Helping others can sometimes bring trouble	Warns that helping without caution can lead to personal difficulties. Reflects a balanced approach in Punjabi culture regarding generosity and personal boundaries.
بھاویں ماسی بنے سَس اوہنوں وی ڈین والا چس	Even if she becomes an aunt, she'll still act like a mother-in-law	Describes a dominating nature, often criticizing those who impose themselves on others. Reflects cultural expectations of respecting social roles.
سادھو نوں کی سواداں نال	What does a saint have to do with flavors?	Refers to simple living and detachment from materialism, resonating with cultural values of contentment and spirituality over worldly pleasures.
کاواں ٹولی اِکو بولی	Flock of crows, one voice	Highlights unity and collective behavior, often pointing to a shared mindset. Reflects cultural emphasis on community and unity.
بہتی رنی اوت مرندا	Too much water drowns it	Warns of the dangers of excess or extravagance, suggesting moderation is key. Emphasizes cultural lessons on balance and the perils of overindulgence.
گنا نئیں بوٹا ای	Didn't grow any	Critiques false claims of achievement, promoting

ماریا	sugarcane, but pretended to plant	sincerity and humility in Punjabi culture.
ذات دی کوڑھ کرلی تے شہتیریاں نوں جہے	Of a lowly caste, yet embracing the nobles	Reflects on social pretensions and class dynamics, critiquing people who pretend to be of higher status. Reflects cultural insights into social class and authenticity.
او دن ڈبا جَدَن گھوڑی چڑھیا کبا	The day the crow rides the horse, it's doomed	Suggests that disaster is bound to happen when someone takes on a role they're unfit for, cautioning against unqualified leadership. Reflects cultural respect for competence and wisdom.

These idioms provide a window into Punjabi cultural identity by highlighting values like humility, respect for social roles, and the importance of family and community. They serve as an oral tradition, preserving cultural knowledge and collective wisdom, passing them down through generations, and reinforcing the social fabric within the Punjabi community.

4.1.3 Urdu Idioms and Cultural Identity

As a language throughout Pakistan, Urdu idioms often represent philosophical and ethical issues shared by communities. The idiom "ہاتھی کے دانت کھانے کے اور" (elephant teeth are special for chewing) is a symbol of hypocrisy, the contrast between outward appearance and inward. This metaphorical statement taps into a universal concern for authenticity and transparency in life in practice, reflecting a broader moral anxiety among Pakistani inner circle.

These idioms reflect cultural values, social norms, and wisdom within Urdu-speaking communities, capturing themes of family, respect, humility, and morality.

TABLE 2: URDU IDIOMS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Idiom	Translation	Explanation and Cultural Significance
اونٹ کے منہ میں زیرہ	A grain of cumin in a camel's mouth	Refers to something inadequate or insufficient for a large need. Highlights the cultural understanding of generosity and fulfillment.
اونٹ کے پاؤں میں سب کا پاؤں	In the camel's footprint, everyone else fits	Used to emphasize the stature and influence of a strong or dominant figure. Reflects respect for leadership and authority in society.
الٹا چور کوتوال کو ڈانٹے	The thief scolds the watchman	Describes a person who is guilty yet accuses others. Reflects the cultural disdain for dishonesty and hypocrisy.
نیکی کر دریا میں ڈال	Do good and throw it in the river	Emphasizes the value of selfless kindness without expecting rewards. Reflects the importance of charity and altruism in Urdu culture.
بندر کیا جانے ادراک کا مزہ	What does a monkey know of ginger's taste?	Refers to those who do not appreciate the finer things. Reflects cultural views on discernment and sophistication.
کوا چلا بنس کی چال اپنی چال بھی بھول گیا	Crow tried to walk like a swan and forgot his own	Criticizes imitation and emphasizes the importance of authenticity. Reflects cultural respect for being true to oneself.
گیہوں کے ساتھ گھن بھی پس جاتا ہے	When wheat is ground, husk also gets ground	Implies that innocent people can suffer in the company of wrongdoers. Reflects the importance of caution in associations.

آبیل مجھے مار	Come on, bull, hit me	Refers to inviting trouble unnecessarily. Reflects caution against reckless actions in Urdu culture.
دودھ کا جلا چھاچھ بھی پھونک پھونک کر پیتا ہے	Once bitten, twice shy	Describes caution after a bad experience. Reflects the cultural emphasis on learning from mistakes and being cautious.
چور کی داڑھی میں تنکا	Straw in the thief's beard	Implies a guilty person's guilt can often be revealed unintentionally. Reflects cultural belief in justice and truth prevailing.
اونٹ کے پاؤں میں چھپڑا	The pot in the camel's footprint	Refers to someone trying to compete beyond their means. Highlights cultural importance of understanding one's limits.
گدھے کے سر پر سینگ	Horns on a donkey's head	Used to describe something absurd or unnatural. Reflects cultural humor and mockery toward pretentiousness.
بیل کے منہ میں جپھی	Embracing the bull's mouth	Refers to being overly brave or foolish in the face of danger. Reflects cultural value placed on courage but warns against recklessness.
مرے کو مارے شاہ مدار	When already down, someone else pushes you	Describes piling on when someone is already suffering. Reflects cultural empathy and disdain for taking advantage of the weak.
اونٹ پہاڑ کے نیچے آیا	The camel came under the mountain	Implies that even the proud must eventually face someone stronger. Reflects cultural respect for humility and fate.
ہاتھ کنگن کو آرسی کیا	Why need a mirror for the bracelet?	Used to say that proof is unnecessary when something is obvious. Reflects cultural appreciation for directness and simplicity.
نہ نو من تیل ہوگا نہ رادھا ناچے گی	If there's no oil, Radha won't dance	Implies that actions are dependent on necessary conditions. Reflects practicality and realism in Urdu culture.
بھیگی بلی بن جانا	To become a wet cat	Describes someone becoming submissive or apologetic after being arrogant. Reflects cultural disapproval of pride and promotes humility.
چھوٹا منہ بڑی بات	Small mouth, big words	Refers to someone making grand claims beyond their status. Reflects cultural respect for humility and understanding one's place.
اونٹ رے اونٹ تیری کون سی کل سیدھی	Oh camel, which of your joints is straight?	Implies that someone has many flaws. Reflects humor and cultural acceptance of imperfection, often used playfully.
تلوں میں تیل نہیں	No oil in sesame seeds	Refers to lack of potential or resources. Reflects pragmatism in cultural views, encouraging self-awareness and practicality.
لوبا گرم ہے چوٹ مار	Strike while the iron is hot	Encourages timely action and taking advantage of opportunities. Reflects a proactive approach and seizing the moment.
رنگے ہاتھوں پکڑا	Caught red-handed	Describes someone caught in the act. Highlights the

گیا		cultural value placed on honesty and integrity.
دو کشتیوں کا سوار	Rider of two boats	Implies indecisiveness or conflicting commitments, often resulting in failure. Reflects cultural respect for dedication and focus.
اونٹ کو دیکھو کانٹوں پہ چر رہا ہے	Look at the camel, grazing on thorns	Used to describe someone enduring hardship with patience. Reflects resilience and endurance as valued traits in Urdu-speaking communities.

Each of these idioms captures the rich linguistic heritage and cultural values within Urdu-speaking communities. They offer insights into social norms, promote moral values, and serve as a means of preserving cultural wisdom across generations.

4.2. Comparative Analysis

This analysis identifies the cultural values and priorities embedded within idiomatic expressions in Punjabi and Urdu. While Punjabi idioms often emphasize themes of family bonds, unity, and social solidarity, Urdu idioms tend to reflect universal moral and philosophical concerns that transcend regional identity and address broader human values.

TABLE 3: COMPARATIVE THEMES IN IDIOMS BETWEEN PUNJABI AND URDU

Theme	Punjabi	Urdu
Resilience	"The lion eats others, but none eat the lion"	N/A
Family Values	"Eye's water and daughter's face"	N/A
Harmony & Simplicity	N/A	N/A
Hypocrisy	N/A	"Elephant's teeth differ for eating"

This comparative analysis highlights how idioms in Punjabi and Urdu reflect localized cultural values, helping maintain social norms and continuity within each linguistic community.

4.3. Contextual Use of Idioms

This study shows that idioms are not just linguistic tools; they are cultural artifacts that reveal the collective intelligence and identity of a people. However, due to globalization and linguistic shifts, idiomatic usage is changing across generations. While older generations use idioms frequently and in their traditional form, younger generations are influenced by global media and may use idioms less often or mix them with modern expressions.

TABLE 4: IDIOM USAGE ACROSS GENERATIONS IN PUNJABI AND URDU

Generation	Frequency of Traditional Idiom Use	Influence of Globalization
Older Generation	High	Low
Middle Generation	Moderate	Moderate
Younger Generation	Low	High

The role of idioms in cultural preservation is increasingly complex as external influences reshape their use, particularly in urban areas where younger generations are more inclined toward modern language practices influenced by digital media and popular culture.

5. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Idiomatic expressions in Punjabi and Urdu are deeply intertwined with the cultural identity of their speakers. Both languages feature idioms that encapsulate societal norms, values, and collective experiences, thus offering a glimpse into the ways communities understand and navigate the world. In Punjabi, idioms like "ਠੰਡਿਓਂ ਭਰ ਗਿਆ ਨੇ ਆਂਖਾਂ" (Stomach is full, but eyes are not satisfied) and "ਰਾਹ ਪਿਆ ਜਾਨੇ ਯਾ ਵਾਹ ਪਿਆ ਜਾਨੇ" (Whether one finds a path or falls into a ditch) reflect the themes of humility, contentment, and resilience. These expressions reveal how Punjabi culture values moderation and the acceptance of fate. Likewise, idioms in Urdu, such as "اونٹ کے منہ میں زیرہ" (A grain of cumin in a camel's mouth) and "چھوٹا منہ بڑی بات" (Small mouth, big words), emphasize self-awareness, humility, and the importance of not overstepping societal expectations. These idioms portray cultural identity as grounded in realism, humility, and communal wisdom.

Both Punjabi and Urdu idioms serve as markers of identity by reinforcing cultural norms and expectations within their respective linguistic communities. The idioms highlight cultural values unique to each community yet share universal themes, such as respect, humility, and wisdom, thus contributing to a shared sense of Pakistani identity. The cultural significance embedded in these expressions becomes a way for speakers to assert their identities, particularly in regions where linguistic diversity is vast and identity formation is influenced by multiple ethnic, religious, and social factors.

Idiomatic expressions in Punjabi and Urdu play a crucial role in the intergenerational transmission of cultural values, helping preserve these values despite societal changes. In Punjabi culture, idioms are often passed down through oral storytelling, proverbs, and songs, reinforcing values like loyalty, respect for elders, and the importance of family. For instance, the idiom "میں رہ نہ سکاں" (Mother, oh mother, I can't live without you) reflects the deep reverence for familial bonds in Punjabi culture, a theme common in both rural and urban areas. This idiom, along with others, encourages younger generations to uphold these values, thereby maintaining the cultural fabric of Punjabi-speaking communities.

Urdu idioms also serve as vehicles for preserving cultural wisdom, especially in urban settings where language may change more quickly. Idioms like "نیکی کر دریا میں ڈال" (Do good and throw it in the river) emphasize the values of selflessness and kindness without expecting returns. Such idioms not only reinforce moral values but also shape the social interactions and ethical foundations within Urdu-speaking communities. By using these idioms in daily conversations, speakers embed cultural values in language, enabling the transmission of cultural wisdom across generations.

Additionally, both Punjabi and Urdu idioms contribute to linguistic identity, which in turn helps sustain the cultural uniqueness of each linguistic group. These idioms act as cultural artifacts, representing the collective wisdom, experiences, and ethical standards of their communities. Through the informal education that idioms provide, individuals continue to be culturally grounded, fostering a sense of belonging and continuity with their heritage.

Language shifts and globalization present challenges for the preservation of indigenous idioms in Pakistan. The influence of English and urban migration patterns have led to a gradual decline in the usage of indigenous idioms, particularly among younger generations who may

view these expressions as outdated or irrelevant in modern settings. English phrases and Western cultural references increasingly dominate conversations in urban Pakistan, particularly in professional and educational environments. Consequently, the cultural nuances embedded in idioms risk being lost as younger speakers may adopt more universally recognizable expressions over traditional idioms.

In Punjabi-speaking communities, language shifts are evident as speakers integrate English or Urdu phrases into daily conversation, sometimes replacing traditional idioms. For example, an individual might use the English phrase “time is money” instead of the Punjabi equivalent, “ویلے دی نماز گویلے دیاں ٹکراں” (Praying on time vs. hitting rocks at other times), which emphasizes the importance of timing and seizing opportunities. This linguistic shift not only erodes the idiomatic richness of Punjabi but also diminishes the cultural lessons these expressions convey. As a result, the cultural identity tied to these idioms may weaken, leading to a homogenized linguistic landscape.

In the case of Urdu, although its status as a national language has helped it retain some prominence, globalization has led to shifts in its idiomatic expressions. Urdu speakers, especially in urban and educated classes, increasingly substitute traditional idioms with English expressions, which are often seen as symbols of social prestige and modernity. For instance, the idiom “لوہا گرم ہے چوٹ مار” (Strike while the iron is hot) may be replaced with its English equivalent, thereby disconnecting it from its cultural and linguistic roots. This shift affects how cultural values are passed on, as the use of Urdu idioms often embeds a unique cultural context that cannot be fully replicated through direct translation or substitution with English phrases.

However, globalization also offers opportunities for cultural preservation by increasing access to digital platforms where indigenous idioms can be shared and documented. Social media and online platforms allow people to share, discuss, and even revive traditional idioms in new contexts, potentially broadening their reach to younger generations who may otherwise be disconnected from these cultural expressions.

The idiomatic expressions in Punjabi and Urdu reflect and shape cultural identity by encapsulating shared values, norms, and collective wisdom. While these idioms have historically played a significant role in preserving cultural heritage, language shifts and globalization challenge their continued use and cultural significance. Nonetheless, the resilience of these languages and the cultural pride of their speakers suggest that, with conscious effort, these idioms can continue to be part of Pakistan’s diverse cultural fabric.

Efforts such as integrating indigenous idioms into educational materials, digital archiving, and encouraging their use in creative works (literature, films, and music) may provide paths forward for preserving these rich expressions. Embracing both tradition and adaptation, Punjabi and Urdu idioms can remain vital components of Pakistan’s linguistic heritage, serving as cultural symbols that connect past and present generations in the face of an increasingly globalized world.

5.1. Findings

Idioms in Punjabi and Urdu serve as cultural mirrors, encapsulating values, traditions, and collective experiences. Expressions related to family, humility, and wisdom illustrate the foundational principles of both cultures. In Punjabi, idioms like “شٹیڈ بھر گیا پر اکھاں نہ بھریاں” (Stomach is full, but eyes are not satisfied) convey societal norms around moderation and contentment. Similarly, Urdu idioms emphasize humility, respect, and self-awareness, reinforcing a distinct cultural identity for Urdu speakers. The idioms play a vital role in the

intergenerational transmission of cultural values. They are more than mere linguistic expressions; they convey ethical guidelines and social responsibilities in memorable ways. For instance, idioms reflecting strong family ties, like the Punjabi "ਮਾਂ ਨੀ ਮਾਂ, ਮੈਂ ਰਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਾਂ" (Mother, oh mother, I can't live without you), emphasize respect for family. This study found that idioms act as cultural artifacts, preserving social wisdom within both languages.

Language shifts due to urbanization, globalization, and the increasing use of English have altered idiom usage, especially among younger speakers. Indigenous idioms are at risk of being replaced with English phrases that may not fully capture the cultural essence of their native counterparts. However, the study highlights that digital platforms present opportunities to document and revive these idioms, bridging traditional values with modern mediums.

5.2. Contributions of the Research

By examining the idiomatic expressions of Punjabi and Urdu, this research expands knowledge of how language shapes and reflects cultural identity in Pakistan. The study provides insights into the social norms and values embedded in these idioms, emphasizing their importance in cultural identity formation. This study offers a methodological framework that can be used to analyze idioms from other indigenous languages in Pakistan. The approach focuses on cultural, social, and linguistic dimensions, offering a comprehensive model that can be applied in other cultural-linguistic contexts. By documenting and analyzing these idioms, the research contributes to preserving Pakistan's linguistic diversity. It encourages greater awareness of the risks posed by language shifts, urging steps to retain these expressions as markers of cultural identity.

5.3. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should examine idiomatic expressions in other indigenous languages in Pakistan, such as Pashto, Sindhi, and Balochi. Comparative studies across these languages could provide a richer understanding of cultural diversity and identity within Pakistan. A longitudinal study investigating how idiom usage changes with increased urbanization and exposure to English would offer insights into how globalization affects language and cultural identity over time. With digital media being a primary platform for young people, future research could explore how social media, literature, and online platforms may serve as spaces for preserving, sharing, and even evolving indigenous idioms. Investigating how digital platforms are used to maintain cultural expressions may reveal effective strategies for cultural preservation.

Future studies could explore generational gaps in the understanding and usage of idioms to determine if young speakers interpret these expressions differently or if traditional meanings persist across age groups. This would reveal more about the effectiveness of idioms in transmitting cultural values over time. Further research could assess how idioms from indigenous languages might be incorporated into educational curricula to promote cultural awareness and language preservation, particularly among younger generations who may not be familiar with these expressions. These recommendations emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in future research to ensure the preservation and appreciation of idiomatic expressions as vital components of Pakistan's linguistic and cultural heritage.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research underscores the significant role of idiomatic expressions in reflecting, preserving, and transmitting the cultural identity and values of Pakistani communities. By examining idioms in Punjabi and Urdu, the study illustrates how language serves as a vehicle for conveying social norms, familial bonds, and moral lessons across generations. Despite the

challenges posed by language shifts and globalization, these idioms remain resilient markers of cultural heritage, capturing the unique philosophies and humor embedded in regional identities. As globalization influences language use, preserving indigenous idioms is vital for maintaining cultural continuity and diversity. This research highlights the need for continued efforts in documenting and promoting the use of idioms within educational and digital spaces, ensuring that these expressions remain a living part of Pakistan's cultural context.

REFERENCES

1. Arslan, M. F., Mehmood, M. A., & Kanwal, A. (2024). Punjabi Adjectives: A Morphological Perspective. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*, 8(1), 543-552. Retrieved from plhr.org.pk
2. Arslan, M. F., Kanwal, A., Mehmood, M. A., & Haroon, H. (2023). Morphemic Analysis of Case Markers In Shahmukhi Punjabi Nouns. *Journal of Namibian Studies: History Politics Culture*, 33, 6501-6517. Retrieved from namibian-studies.com
3. Baker, M. (1992). *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. Routledge.
4. Bot Verification. (n.d.-b). <https://jalt.com.pk/index.php/jalt/article/view/96>
5. Hall, S. (1990). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (pp. 222-237). Lawrence & Wishart.
6. Neuliep, J. W. (2000). *Cultural Identity Theory: A Perspective for Understanding Intercultural Communication*. In *Communication Theory* (Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 104-121).
7. Sapir, E. (1921). *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech*. Harcourt, Brace and Company.
8. Wierzbicka, A. (1997). *Understanding Cultures Through Their Key Words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese*. Oxford University Press.
9. Liu, H. (2014). *Cultural Identity and Language in the Globalized World: A Study of Chinese Students' Language Attitudes*. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, 2(2), 56-69.
10. Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge University Press.
11. Kachru, Y. (2006). *World Englishes in Asian Contexts*. In *World Englishes* (pp. 85-101). Routledge.
12. Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and Culture*. Oxford University Press.
13. Bhatia, V. K. (1993). *Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings*. Longman.
14. Ahearn, L. M. (2001). Language and Agency. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30, 109-137.
15. Thibault, P. J. (2004). *Revisiting the Language-Identity Interface: A Theoretical Framework for Understanding the Role of Language in Identity Construction*. *Language and Communication*, 24(3), 177-198.
16. Hymes, D. (1974). *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
17. Tannen, D. (1986). *That's Not What I Meant! How Conversational Style Makes or Breaks Your Relations with Others*. William Morrow.
18. Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Harvard University Press.