A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF COLONIAL THEMES IN ICE-CANDY MAN AND POST-COLONIAL THEMES IN AN AMERICAN BRAT SHAPING GENDERED LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the discursive representation of female identity in Bapsi Sidhwa's Ice-Candy Man (1988) and An American Brat (1993), using a corpus-derived quantitative and interpretive analysis based on Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) and postcolonial theory. AntConc software was applied to identify the gender, agency and social roles-related recurrent lexical items (i.e., voice, girl, woman, freedom education independent body honour) appearing in both novels and look for recurrent patterns of representation. The contrast in the quantitative results is strong: Postcolonial narratives in An American Brat are about independence, education and finding freedom of self-expression while colonial (Ice-Candy Man) narratives exposes physical vulnerability and policing of society's honor.

The analysis of a few selected concordance lines further reveals how language shapes gender-based power structures and agencies at a given time in history " language in use. These Women Characters of An American Brat Female characters move much as male ones do, through transnational spaces, in order to claim autonomy and challenge patriarchal practices and attitudes; while they find personal freedom seemingly at some remove from home, for women humiliation is visited on a woman's body. In Ice-Candy Man bodies or a woman's reputation stand for the power structure; female private space serves the public interest – whether it be family honour or nationalist politics. The gendered language serves both as a weapon of subjugation and resistance, mirroring and shaping women's lives across time and space. These findings contribute to feminist literary scholarship and postcolonial studies by elucidating the evolving discursive strategies through which female identity is negotiated, constrained, and empowered in South Asian literature.

Keywords: Gendered language, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), postcolonial literature, female identity, Bapsi Sidhwa, corpus-based analysis, agency, power, Ice-Candy Man, An American Brat

1. Introduction

In the construction, maintenance and disruption of social realities in colonial and postcolonial contexts where identity, power and gender converge, language is key. Although many of the studies report that language and gender is an established dimension of social theory, feminist scholars maintain that gender is 'often under-theorized within a wide range of disciplines' (Alway, 1995:1; Francis, 2002:169). In literature, language does not simply reflect social hierarchies but actively contributes to constructing them, which makes it a key location for ideological struggle and identity formation (Bergvall 2014; Bucholtz 1999).

In the postcolonial world, literature is an indispensable site for producing narratives of power and resistance in language. The phase of colonial encounter was marked by political, economic, physical dominations and forms of linguistic hierarchies wherein some languages were included into the standard and other languages had to be cast as silenced or shuttled (Barker et al., 1994 Hulme & Iverson; Young, 2016). Postcolonial thinkers claim that traces of

these linguistic hierarchies continue in the aftermath of colonialism, including after it has been (seemingly) colonised—how they are felt in gendered discourse and how representation is made to thematise female subjectivity through literature' (Dirlik, 2002; Hiddleston, 2014). As Boehmer (2005) notes, postcolonial literature frequently works with "migrant metaphors" to express the gendered hybridity of those who are suspended between colonial pasts and postcolonial presents.

Amidst this menagerie, Ice-Candy Man (1988) and An American Brat (1993) by Bapsi Sidhwa emerge as fertile grounds for examining the tangled skein of gender, language, and colonial/postcolonial ideologies. The roles that the women in Ice-Candy-Man occupy present the Partition as a time of violent social collapse, and in which the women are both forces and signifiers-in-action, their bodies, their voices won fair or fought hard for no-man's-land: confluences between patriarchy and colonial conquest -the arm-wrestling machines at cultural crossroads. On the other hand An American Brat addresses the pressing issues of postcolonial identity and cultural alienation / displacement in terms of female assertion and gendered roles in a transnational context (e.g. Appiah 2006; Boehmer 2005:Ball 2012).

Utilising a corpus-based methodology enables a more systematic and data-driven exploration of how these ideological constructs are enacted through linguistic patterns. When used in the context of literary studies, corpus linguistics provides empirical evidence for how gendered identity is built and performed as it maps word frequency, collocation patterns and discourse markers (Lazar 2007, Leurs 2017 onwards). This methodological synthesis is one that connects critical discourse analysis with feminist literary criticism (which can offer us the possibility of both quantitative and qualitative analyses on gendered representation [Lazar, 2007; Cooper, Disch, & Hawkesworth, 2016).

Furthermore, feminist theorists argue that gender and coloniality are interrelated power structures which influence discourse and subjectivity (Chilisa & Ntseane, 2014; Manning, 2021). Postcolonial gender feminist readings remind us to think about the specific historical and cultural conditions forming gendered and sexualized subjectivities, particularly in non-Western cases (Ozkazanc-Pan, 2012; Mulinari et al., 2016: Keskinen, Irni & Tuori). This study, in examining gendered language in Sidhwa's novels, draws on these theoretical stances and adopts a view that looks at the evolution of linguistic renditions of femininity and agency during colonial as well as postcolonial phases.

This study is also significant in that it merges corpus-based linguistic inquiry with postcolonial feminist theory examining how language can be understood to contribute towards, and reflect on gendered subjectivities. It contributes to feminist and postcolonial literary studies, giving case study evidence for how the gendered language works within the socio-cultural specificities of colonialism and post-coloniality (Boehmer, 2005; Hiddleston, 2014; Lazarus, 2004). Finally, the paper scrutinizes certain modes of gender identity and power, circumscribed by colonial and post-colonial conditions, in South Asian literature.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To identify and analyze the linguistic features that reflect colonial and postcolonial ideologies in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* and *An American Brat*.
2. To examine how gendered language constructs, reinforces, or challenges gender identities within the colonial and postcolonial contexts of these novels.
3. To employ a corpus-based analytical framework to uncover lexical patterns, collocations, and discursive structures associated with gender, power, and identity.
4. To interpret the findings within the frameworks of feminist critical discourse analysis and postcolonial literary theory, highlighting the evolution of women's linguistic representation from subjugation to agency.

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1.4 Research Questions

1. What linguistic features in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* and *An American Brat* reflect colonial and postcolonial ideologies?
2. How does gendered language construct, reinforce, or challenge gender identities within the colonial and postcolonial contexts of these novels?
3. What lexical patterns, collocations, and discursive structures associated with gender, power, and identity emerge from a corpus-based analysis of the selected texts?
4. In what ways do the findings from the corpus analysis, interpreted through feminist critical discourse and postcolonial theories, reveal shifts in the representation of women's linguistic agency from subjugation to empowerment?

2. Literature Review
2.1 Language and Gender

Language and gender research has progressed beyond an initial feminist critique of the structure and organization of language, to a more sophisticated understanding of how language-in-use constitutes social reality. Earlier influential western works (Alway, 1995 & Felski, 1989) attended to the idea that language mirrors and reinforces a hierarchical gender order and suggesting women's writing is subordinated in literary speech. Jackson and Jones (1998) also maintained that feminist theories uncover the ideological bases of patriarcal language, prompting a re-evaluation of how gender is constituted through sociocultural processes.

In more recent scholarship, Bergvall (2014) and Bucholtz (1999) further explore these issues in developing increasingly intersectional and context-sensitive views of how gender roles are linguistically constructed within specific sociocultural contexts. Francis' (2002) insistence that the gender identity work of psychologists should respond to gender identity issues in all their complexity, while paying attention to the tension between realism and relativism in research on gender identity emphasized the necessity for critically engaged readings of how a discourse constructs subjects as being always already some specific version of that which its writer/publishing moment describes. Like Schößler and Wille (2022), however, we would also emphasize that gender studies has to constantly reorient itself towards emerging socio-political discourses in order to remain analytically productive.

2.2 Colonial and Postcolonial Discourses

Postcolonial critics have long argued the centrality of language as a site for both imperial power and subversion. Barker et al., 1994) placed colonial discourse as a lens through which the colonizer formed the Other to justify the domination of representation. This view was further expanded by Boehmer (2005) who states that post-colonial literature employs language to restore identity and prevent cultural dislocation. Dirlik (2002) and Young (2016) positioned postcolonialism within the power structures of the world, insisting that colonial ideologies are still prevalent in creating cultural and linguistic identities for postcolonial nations.

Further development influence of colonialism in terms of linguistic and socio-political hierarchy is addressed by Mahoney (2010), whereas David & Okazaki (2006) introduced "colonial mentality" as an inward inferiority complex demonstrated among colonized peoples and noted its occurrence reflected in post-colonial attitude to language. In a similar vein, Lazarus (2004) and Hiddleston (2014) argued that postcolonial literature is key to exploring how the formerly subjected societies mediate cultural identity and historical trauma through narrative structure and language..

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2.3 Feminist Postcolonial Theory

The intersection of the two "disciplines" Feminism and Postcolonial Studies Collapsed categories of both feminism and post-colonialism. Chilisa and Ntseane (2014) remarked that African feminist criticisms of patriarchy share a common cause with other Black feminisms in resistance to colonialist accounts, arguing for context-specific methodologies. According to Nfah-Abbenyi (1997), African women writers with the ideological stand of literature as a site for identity/feminism/difference interchange utilize narrative strategies which contest imperial and gendered domination. Ball (2012) located the writing of Palestinian women in postcolonial feminist analysis showing how linguistic expression becomes a locus of resistance. Manning (2021) and Ozkazanc-Pan (2012) also showed how decolonial feminist theories unveil gendered power relations in global and organizational domains. These works highlight the importance of not detaching the gendered impact of colonialism from larger cultural and linguistic systems of power.

Lazar (2007) furthered this dialogue by suggested the use of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) to explore how discourse serves to sustain unequal power relations, along with how it allows for defiance. Cooper, Disch and Hawkesworth (2016) as well as Leurs (2017) emphasised the need for a politically reflexive ethical analysis in feminist linguistics research. The merging of FCDA and postcolonial literary analysis becomes a useful focal lens in exploring how gender functionalities are linguistically constructed both in colonial and postcolonial texts like Ice-Candy Man and An American Brat...

2.4 Literary and Linguistic Representations of Gender in Postcolonial Texts

Postcolonial critical feminist readings of literature have not stopped showing us how gender and power intersect in narrative. McGillis (2013) resorted to the voices of the peripherized subjectivities in postcolonial children's literature and Marshall (2004) re-worked gender representation as a process of symbolic transformation in cultural texts. Koplatadze (2019) and Schueller (2004) underscored the flexibility of application of postcolonial theory to world literatures, by proposing that postcoloni al language in writing acts as a mediating factor between historical memory and identity-forming change..

Boehmer's (2005) concept of "migrant metaphors" gains particular importance in the landscape of Sidhwa's fiction, for characters are often maneuvered into this triadic play between displacement, hybridity, and linguistic transaction. Her novels—Ice-Candy Man, An American Brat—are, as we see them, informed by the tension between colonial residue and negotiating new consciousness of feminist kind ideal for corpus-driven analysis. The use of language in these novels tells us much about the ways postcolonial women represent themselves in a patriarchal and culturally stratified society..

3. Research Methodology
3. Research Design

This study is a transdisciplinary project, with qualitative emphasis on corpus-based linguistic analysis and Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) and seeks to investigate the ways that colonial and postcolonial ideologies emerge in gendered language in Bapsi Sidhwa'sIce-Candy Man and n American Brat. The quantitative aspect of the research involves creating two literary corpora with the selected texts and then using a range of corpus tools to examine frequency patterns as well as collocates and concordance lines for key words in relation to gender, power and identity. We also look at qualitative evidence for this corpus-based analysis. Methodology: The qualitative part of the study is based on an FCDA (Lazar, 2007) to explore how language operates as a terrain of reproduction and resistance in the ideational domain particularly related to gendered subjectivities.

Theoretical framework The study is underpinned by postcolonial theory and supports key aspects of Robert J. C.Young's notion of postcolonialism focusing on colonial discourse, power relationships and their enduring influence on identity construction (Young, 2016). This reading is informed by certain postcolonial feminist arguments (Boehmer, 2005; Lazarus, 2004) that foreground the coterminous nature of colonial power and patriarchy. Further, by combining corpus and critical discourse-based data with a systematic and theoretically plotted evaluation of the colonial and postcolonial representation of gendered language, the methodologically controlled search enables an analysis that is strong both from a methodological point view and depth-wise.

4. Findings and Discussion
4.1 Corpus-Based Linguistics (Quantitative) Findings
4.1.1 Corpus Size and Basic Statistics

Text	Total Tokens	Types	Type-Token Ratio (TTR)
Ice Candy Man	94101	11335	12.04557
An American Brat	110478	12316	11.14792

Table 1: Corpus Size and Token Distribution in *Ice-Candy Man* and *An American Brat*

Table 1 presents the size and lexical diversity of the two corpora. Ice-Candy Man is with 94,101 tokens and 11,335 types (with TTR of 12.05) An American Brat have got the word count of approximately 110,478 tokens and types submerged in it are about to be (12,316) with a TTR of 11.15. These numbers illustrate that both corpora are adequately sized and comparable for corpus-based analysis which means that the linguistic patterns observed can be reliable representative of the language material, while slightly higher lexical variety in Ice-Candy Man indicates more diversely use of vocabulary in colonial setting.

4.1.2 Frequency of Gendered Lexical Items

Lexical Item	Ice Candy Man	An American Brat
Woman/Women	173	135
Girl/Girls	69	130
Wife	34	42
Mother	321	117
Body	41	35
Honour/Honor	4	12
Silence/Silent	35	22
Obedience/Obedient	1	2
Violence	10	3
Power	17	10
Freedom	0	7
Education	0	16
Independence/Independent	5	10
Choice	3	11
Shy	10	14
Weak	5	2
Delicate	2	2
Voice	103	68
Izzat	0	68
Helplessness	0	2
Youth/Youthful	11	2
Burka	7	0

Moan/Moans/moaned/moaning	12	2
Veiled/Veil/Veils	3	3

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Selected Gendered Lexical Items Across the Two Corpora

Table 2 shows the distribution of selected gendered lexical items across the two corpora. Recurring words such as woman/women, mother and voice materialize in both texts themselves, and speak to overarching preoccupations with female identity/voice. Interestingly, colonial Ice-Candy Man underlines familial and subjugated roles (mother, wife, silent, obedience) while postcolonial An American Brat highlights greater occurrences of empowerment terms like education, freedom, independence and izzat. These distinctions in emphasis between female restraint under colonial patriarchy and burgeoning autonomy and agency in a post-colonial context are further exemplified quantitatively.

4.1.3 Collocational Patterns of Key Gendered Terms

Node Word	Ice Candy Man (Top Collocates)	An American Brat (Top Collocates)
Woman/Women	burkha, veiled, kidnapped, moans, fallen, young, men	young, lissome, dress, men, rights, groups, committees
Girl/Girls	dancing, diamond, boys, nautch, young, taught	pretty, weddings, navjotes, boys, pregnant, marry, beautiful
Body	mutilated, murdered, stuffed, discovered, gutter	Compact, racked, sobs
Honor		guest, izzat
Voice	gruff, tone, quavering	grating, inflection, jee, messianic, lilt, nightingale, tone, booming
Freedom		heady, youthful, crush, encompass

Table 3: Major Collocates of Selected Gendered Terms (L5–R5 Window)

Table 3 presents the major collocates of selected gendered terms, revealing ideological associations in each text. In Ice-Candy Man, collocates of woman/women (burkha, veiled, kidnapped, moans) and body (mutilated, murdered, stuffed, found) indicate oppression and violence and control while collocates of voice (gruffly tone glotallal quavering constrained muffling) indicates the constraint on voicing. By contrast, multiple collocates (woman/women [young, lissome, dress, rights] and body [compact obs.sobs]) in An American Brat emphasise more corporeal autonomy and social advocacy and voice (grating obs.inflection brcloudburst) assertive expressiveness. These patterns illustrate how linguistic choices express differing experiences of gendered subjectivization in colonial and postcolonial contexts.

4.1.4 Lexical Indicators of Power, Control, and Agency

Category	Lexical Item	Ice Candy Man	An American Brat
Control	Silent/Silence	35	22
Control	Obedience/Obedient	1	2
Control	Violence	10	3
Control	Power	17	10
Agency	Voice	103	68
Agency	Freedom	0	7
Agency	Education	0	16
Agency	Independence/Independent	5	10
Agency	Choice	3	11

Table 4: Frequency of Power, Control, and Agency-Related Lexical Items

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Table 4 quantifies the presence of control- and agency-related lexical items. Silence, obedience, violence and power as control words are more common in Ice-Candy Man while voice, freedom and education as agency oriented names do not occur or only minimally making references to the marginal position of women. In comparison to this Discreet women, terms of agency like voice, freedom, education and choice and lower frequency control terms also appear more evenly distributed in An American Brat. This table supports the empirical assertion that a change from patriarchal authority to postcolonial agency is taking place.

4.1.5 Comparative Summary of Gendered Language Patterns

Dimension	Ice-Candy Man (Colonial)	An American Brat (Postcolonial)
Dominant female descriptors	burkha, veiled, kidnapped, moans, fallen, young, mother, wife, shy, weak	young, lissome, dress, educated, independent, assertive, rights, groups, mother, wife
Power-related terms	frequent: silence (35), obedience (1), violence (10), power (17)	limited: silence (22), obedience (2), violence (3), power (10)
Agency-related terms	marginal: voice (103), independence (5), choice (3), freedom (0), education (0)	dominant: voice (68), independence (10), choice (11), freedom (7), education (16), izzat (68)
Gendered identity	constrained, victimized, controlled	negotiated, agentive, socially and politically aware
Bodily representation	mutilated, murdered, stuffed, discovered, gutter, burkha, veiled, moans	compact, racked, sobs
Social / Familial Roles	mother, wife, burdened, traditional	mother, wife, rights, groups, active participation

Table 5: Comparative Overview of Gendered Language Patterns in Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts

Table 5: Comparative Overview of Gendered Language Patterns

Table 5 synthesizes the previous findings into a comparative overview. In Ice-Candy Man, women are portrayed as the repressed and victimized others through adjectives that describe them as powerless figures with bodily fragility; familial submissiveness, while words denoting 'acting' remain marginal. In contrast, the women in An American Brat are depicted as socially and politically alert, self-reliant with a voice of their own that collocational as well as lexical evidence testifies to." 5 agency: rights/education Bushra,Zakir Role of Million-Mutinied Woman- An Analytical Study. This review underlines the shift in gendered language from colonial masculine oppression to postcolonial feminine self-determination, setting a stepping-stone to discussing qualitative discourse analysis.

4.2 Discourse Based (Qualitative) Findings

This section discusses the corpus-based quantitative results from an FCDA and postcolonial theory perspective. The qualitative analysis directs attention to how gendered discourse in Ice-Candy Man (Colonial) and An American Brat (Postcolonial) creates, perpetuates or even challenges the feminine identity, by investigating recurring themes of oppression, agency, body portrayal, social roles and voice.

4.2.1 Lines Reflecting Gender, Power, and Agency in *Ice-Candy Man* and *An American Brat*

Node Word / Lexical Item	Extract from Text (Concordance Line)	Text Source
Voice	*"Slight, velvet-eyed, fair-skinned girl with a nightingale's voice and a ready smile. Aban was distantly related to ..."*	An American Brat
Woman/Women	*"Feroza had grown into a woman — a desirable and passionate woman — in the three years he'd been away, and ..."*	An American Brat
Freedom	*"These and the other constraints would crush her freedom, a freedom that had become central to her happiness."*	An American Brat
Education	*"A lot of people are sending their daughters for education to America."*	An American Brat
Independent / Independence	*"Feroza would be far enough away to feel independent and near enough for Manek to be on call.."*	An American Brat
Girl/Girls	*"wish to prove herself? Even if she was only a girl? Explore possibilities that were beginning to palpitate and twinkle —"*	An American Brat
Body	*"naked into their courtyard, her long hair dishevelled, her boyish body bruised, her lips cut and swollen and a bloody"*	Ice-Candy Man
Honour	*"great-grandmothers who burnt themselves alive rather than surrender their honour to the invading hordes besieging their ancestral fortresses."*	Ice-Candy Man

Table 5: Representative Lexical Items and Concordance Lines Reflecting Gender, Power, and Agency in *Ice-Candy Man* and *An American Brat*

4.3 Discussion

The qualitative results under FCDA and a supplemented postcolonial theory perspectives show that gendered language in Ice-Candy Man and An American Brat is an important means of female subject formation, empowerment, and socially positioning. The concordance lines in Table 5 highlight themes of dominance, protest and self-empowerment that appear throughout the colonial and postcolonial periods.

In An American Brat variegated semantic fields of voice, freedom, education, independence and girl inform the constitution of female becoming and subjectivity. Thus, the phrasing of a "little soft-voiced, fair girl" is not only about physical form and femininity, but also carries an encoding of how performance and visibility in social contexts are expected. The recurrent invocation of freedom/independence (e.g., "Feroza would be far enough away to feel independent") illuminate the negotiation around agency in transnational and postcolonial locations, and how mobility and education become key means for self-actualization. The concentra-tion on education epitomizes parental and societal commitment to developing capable, competent women, suggesting that empowerment is not only socially constructed but also culturally aspirational.

On the other hand, Ice-Candy Man eroticises female vulnerability and physical subjection, and constriction of patriarchal codes of honour. 209) The passage "naked into their courtyard, her long hair tangled, her boy's body beaten" gives readers an image of the bodily victimhood of women at a time on colonial dislocation and speaks not only to gender but also to violence and power. Such ancestral sacrifice is invoked by the writer when s/he speaks of "great-grandmothers who burnt themselves alive rather than surrender their honour," and explicitly emphasises how transcultural understandings even of honour are historically constituted inflected with women's agency but defined within rigid social codes. In doing so the body becomes a reservoir through which power/ oppression and subsequently postcolonial trauma and survival (reputation at a great cost for women penises of idioms, loss) are produced.

the discourse in the two texts also occurring being to be that of negotiation between social power and private autonomy as well as traces how female subjectivity responds to history's shifting tensions. a counterbalance to the corpus quantitative study as they show that lexical patterns are not just purely linguistic; rather, they carry impact from an ideological perspective and reveal how language is replicating gender hierarchies or intervening in doing so. In general, cultures work to influence the discursive construction of female subjectivity. Qualitive Results Man foregrounds structured oppression and bodily precariousness. This contrast shows how historical, social and By nosurprises a different setting dominates in the postcolonial context of An American Brat for women to monitor independences and to re-imagine selfhoods when compared with the colonial milieu on which it rests in Ice-Candy.

5. Conclusion

Resolved through the binary of both quantitative and qualitative analysis, gendered expression in Ice-Candy Man and An American Brat reveals itself a powerful matrix to read the formation of female identity, agency-talk and social positioning during coloniality/postcoloniality. In An American Brat, these intersecting features of language upon voice and space and freedom or independence or education in postcolonial/transnational contexts/cs signal the potential for agency through self-possession and choice. And yet in Ice-Candy Man this repeated link-up of the body-honour appears to consign women as some-what catalysts for patriarchy and bloodshed or they are victims in worst kind of hyper-virility. andcruelty not solely negative but makes a complex textured where genderedness meets power.

More broadly, the research points to ways in which language not only reflects social reality but also is related to its constitution − it reflects gendered power hierarchies and at the same time offers sites of resistance/self-assertion. And yet, the findings they report ultimately confirm how context — historical, political and cultural — shapes whom women are depicted as and in what agency they move. Positioning colonized and postcolonial narratives in dialogue with each other, this book offers a framework for understanding the discursive construction of women's identity and the shifting complex within which repression, resistance, resilience, and agency are enacted – at different times and in varied societies.

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