

SPEAKING FROM THE MARGINS: A MULTIMODAL FEMINIST CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF FEMALE SUBJECTIVITY IN WARIS SHAH'S HEER RANJHA

DR. ASMA, GHULAM RASOO¹, DR SAMINA BATOOL², DR. MUHAMMAD IRFAN UL HAQ³, DR. TARIQ MAHMOOD HASHMI⁴, PROFESSOR DR MUJAHIDA BUTT⁵, ZAINAB ZAHOOOR⁶, MUHAMMAD ASIM KHAN⁷

¹ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF PUNJABI, GOVERNMENT COLLEGE UNIVERSITY, FAISALABAD PAKISTAN. (asmahumayun63@gmail.com)

²ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF PUNJABI LCWU LAHORE, PAKISTAN. (saminabatool@gmail.com)

³ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, INSTITUTE OF PUNJABI AND CULTURAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB, LAHORE PAKISTAN. (irfan.ipcs@pu.edu.pk)

⁴ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF URDU, GOVERNMENT COLLEGE UNIVERSITY FAISALABAD, PAKISTAN. (drtariqhashmi@gcuf.edu.pk)

O CHAIRPERSON, DEPARTMENT OF PUNJABI, LCWU LAHORE, PAKISTAN. (drmujuhida@gmail.com) (Corresponding Author)

⁶PHD SCHOLAR, DEPARTMENT OF PUNJABI, LCWU LAHORE, PAKISTAN. (raizainabzahooraharal@gmail.com)

⁷VISITING LECTURER, DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS, GOVERNMENT COLLEGE UNIVERSITY, FAISALABAD. (asim1412@gmail.com)

Received : August 5,2025

Accepted: September 10, 2025

Abstract

This research has been analyzed to discuss how female subjectivity and voice in Heer Ranjha by Waris Shah were represented using Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). Based on the theoretical viewpoints of Fairclough (2001), Halliday (1994), and Lazar (2005). This study analyzed the six selected aspects providing identity of Heer, her love, resistance, suffering, and self-determination. The linguistic features were analyzed include transitivity, agency, metaphor, and modality which are used to demonstrate how language can be used to express power, control, and emotion. Results indicate that Heer starts as a romantic adventurer but slowly turns out to be a moral and spiritual actor who criticizes patriarchy and religious power. Her words are morally empowered and emotionally struggling even when she is quiet and suffering. Although Waris Shah romanticizes Heer in the form of a mascot, his telling is nonetheless an expression of benevolent patriarchy, in which the woman is glorified but within spiritual boundaries. The paper comes to the conclusion that Heer Ranjha is not merely love story, but also a gender and power discourse, and the faith, courage, and language of a woman are her ultimate way of resistance.

Keywords: Feminist CDA, Waris Shah, Heer Ranjha, Female Voice, Patriarchy, Discourse, Agency, Sufi Poetry.

1. INTRODUCTION

The poetry of Sufi Punjabi has continuously been a healthy means of expression of human feeling of an individual, divine love and seeking spiritual reality. It is the unity of mysticism and social reality of the poetic language which is practiced to state inner devotion, and of the moral thought. South Asian Sufi literature is a spiritual humanism and this is brought out by Schimmel (1982) and Rizvi (2002) by the metaphors of love that are employed to depict unity of man and God. No poetic masterpiece has taken so peculiar place in history as has that of Waris Shah (1722-1798), who in Heer Ranjha, a poem which breaks the boundaries of romance, discusses the problems of justice, religion, and social order.

Waris Shah, the author of Heer Ranjha is a story of love, though not just a type of love, but the reflection of the moral, cultural, and gender relations of the eighteenth century Punjab. The poem is also discussed as the mirror of the Punjabi society by such scientific authors as Malik (1993) and Qureshi (2010), who reveal the conflict between the individual desire and the rest of the social demands and needs in the world that is organized according to the rules of the patriarchal world. Warsi Shah brings out the hypocrisy of love and power through the speaker, Heer, who shows how emotions might threaten the authority, religion and stratification of the society. Heer is a complicated character who speaks against social confinement and, at the same time, is a spiritually sincere personality (Dar, 2010; Zubair, Zaheer, and Muzammil, 2024).

Traditionally, the Punjab literary literature has portrayed women as meek, obedient and confined within the demands of a community (Knappert, 1999). But Heer is a disillusionment of this image. She subverts the patriarchal control, haggles her agency in dialogue, and exhibits moral strength and self-confidence. Not only emotive, but also discursive is her voice - is constructive of meaning, negotiates identity, and redefines power through language. The narrative of Heer presented in the article by Kazmi (2019) is also feminist and it focuses on the problems of women oppressed by the social and religious order.

To dwell on this point, the present study adopts Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) that is one of the paradigms developed by Lazar (2005) where language serves to promote or challenge gender inequality. FCDA unites the social problem of feminism and analytic precision of linguistics which allows the researchers to comprehend how women use language to obtain power and reconsider subjectivity. This strategy can be used to identify how Waris Shah develops the spiritual and emotional voice of Heer as resistance voice and revelation voice when applied to the setting of Heer Ranjha. Based on the analysis of her speech patterns, metaphors, and silences, the study will be trying to prove that the discourse of a woman can destabilize patriarchal hierarchy in the society and in poetry.

In a nutshell, the Punjabi Sufi poetry provides a profound site of the object of spirituality, gender as well as discourse interactions. The Heer Ranjha by Waris Shah is a traditional tale of how love turns out to be a language of hope and struggle. The paper will therefore discuss how feminine subjectivity and power as voiced by Heer in the male dominated world is brought to light, and this paper brings some new information on the linguistic and ideological facets of Sufi poetry in Punjab.

1.1. Rationale of the Study

Although Heer Ranjha is studied within the framework of the literature, and the spiritual front, few studies have been done to analyze Heer Ranjha through the lens of linguistic and feminist. Most of the conservative readings revolve around love, morality or Sufi philosophy and do not discuss the role of language in shaping gender and power. The paper will fill this gap by discussing the way the choice of words, the metaphors and styles of speech used by Waris Shah Point out the empowered and the suppressive elements of the female voice. The study will show that, the language of Heer is not only emotional, but also highly political and religious, a world in which she will be haggling about her freedom and her pride, through stressing on the language and silence of the character.

1.2. Problem Statement

The literature written in South Asia is primarily male dominated as women are referred to male characters who make their morality, love, and spirituality one-dimensional (Knappert, 1999; Shaheen, 2016). In the book, Heer Ranjha by Waris Shah, Heer is portrayed as a symbol of innocence and sacrifice and devotion but her activity is mediated by the male poeticism which adds glory and holds her back (Malik, 1993; Qureshi, 2010). The paradox between empowerment and limitation of the manner Heer is presented is the main query of the given work. In spite of her language showing the degree of feelings and moral power and inner resistance to societal compelling, the account of the poet also qualifies the culture-related expectations of obedience and honour and that women were to observe in the eighteenth century of the Punjab. With such a dichotomy, there are serious questions as to the role that language plays in the construction of gendered subjectivity, how the speech of a woman in a patriarchal text might be the instrument of resistance, and how such representations of Heer might be employed as a way of pointing out the pattern of power in the Punjab sphere of Sufism thought and spirituality (Lazar, 2005; Dar, 2010).

1.3. Research Questions

1. What linguistic and discursive strategies show power, control, or resistance in Heer's speech?
2. In what ways does the poem reproduce or challenge patriarchal and religious ideologies through the figure of Heer?
3. How does Waris Shah's poetic discourse represent Heer's subjectivity and agency?

1.4. Significance of the study

It has a scholarly, cultural, and feminist importance as well as the Punjabi Sufi poetry has not been subjected to the fresh linguistic and feminist perspective, but instead has been approached on moral, mystical or spiritual levels (Schimmel, 1982; Rizvi, 2002). The research is an addition to the literature on the insight of the nature of the language that constitutes gender, emotion and power in classical Punjabi literature through Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (Lazar, 2005). Culturally, it helps the readers understand that poetic words create the picture of the Punjabi society where women are able not only to be romantic but also to be intelligent, to be religious, and to speak their moral views on the problems of their time (Kazmi, 2019; Irshad et al., 2024). In feminism, the paper will concentrate on the subtlety of the female characters like Heer as regards the aspect of resistance and inner power by operating within the boundaries of patriarchy. Religion and rebellion is manifested in her words, her silence, and metaphors and these turn her into a popular icon of emotional truth and spiritual freedom. In this sense this is part of the broader and more critical re-reading of the Punjabi Sufi literature in which the voice of women is renegotiated as powerful means of meaning, moral and piety.

1.5. Delimitations of the Study

The paper simply focuses on Heer Ranjha by Waris Shah and fails to cover other versions by other poets like Damodar and Ahmad Gujjar. Six episodes are linguistically analyzed since it comprises the finest episodes of the story that give focus to Heer and his changing between love and resistance. This does not entail statistical analysis

but rather qualitative analysis because the focal objective of the analysis is to know how meaning and gender are constructed in discourse.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sufi poetry in South Asia Since a long time Sufi poetry has been a medium of linking human devotion and divine love, of spiritual feeling and social judgment. Such scholars have described it as a moving expression of *ishq* defined by Schimmel (1982) and Rizvi (2002) to be a kind of love that connects the humans with God. The female figure in this tradition is the most frequently the manifestation of the soul desire to the Divine, and the real voices of women are largely unfamiliar. Knappert (1999) says that women in Sufi reports are present individuals who are symbolic of purity and sacrifice rather than actors of their own. However, an event altered this state of affairs when the Punjabi poets such as Shah Hussain, Bulleh Shah and Waris Shah got involved into making women closer to moral and spiritual centre of their activities. In *Heer Ranjha* by Waris Shah the heroine Heer is not only a cute one, but also a moral philosopher, the fight of which is represented not only with human love, but also with spiritual one.

The greatest expression of the Punjab society is widely known as *Heer Ranjha* by Waris Shah (1766). It is the reflection of Punjab because Malik (1993) and Qureshi (2010) referred to it as a mirror of the multi-layered interconnectedness of love, law and faith due to patriarchal environment. Historians such as Suri (1966) and Ghulam, Fatima and Pervez (2020) give historical undertones of the poem to a disorganized eighteenth century that was marked with feudalism and religious domination. The psychic character of Heer is still debatable even though the poem unveils the hypocrisy and social injustice of clerical nature. Her critics would consider her as a victim of the male domination and others would consider her as a victim of the courage and purity. The contemporary feminist readings have adopted the alternative perspective of the role of Heer and perceived in her both speech and silence means of combating restrictive moral order (Dar, 2010; Zubair, Zaheer, and Muzammil, 2024). According to this perspective, Heer becomes not only a tragic lover, but a discursive performer who can transform devotion into defiance through the use of words.

A number of feminist scholars have been able to extend the discussion of the female representation within the Punjab folklore and Sufi stories. Kiran and Arfan (n.d.) assert that women in the folktales such as *Heer Ranjha*, *Sassi Punnu* and *Sohni Mahiwal* are not only hurt but also suffer the moral strength, a social sacrifice rule in patriarchal societies. They put focus on the role of the female characters in their work that depicts their emotional intelligence and cultural responsibility despite their insignificant role. In another similar work, Hussain, Arshaad, Khan, and Khan (n.d.) went to Mai Heer (Izzat Bibi) Shrine in Jhang and discovered that the story of Heer has since transcended to literature to become part of the living spiritual practice. It is the long-lasting effect of the shrine, as well as the myths of the folklores that no rain is permitted to enter into the shrine, that is depicting the integration of folklore, religion, and woman sanctity in the Punjabi society. These findings demonstrate that Heer is not only a literary but also a devotional tale and part of the moral and spiritual self of Punjab.

Beside folklore, Sufi poets also used feminine metaphor often in order to express the human soul devotionism to God. However, in a comparison of Bulleh Shah and John Donne, Ahmed, Abbas, and Khushi (2013) found that both poets had to use gendered metaphors to express spiritual union. The symbolism of the soul being feminine as portrayed by the Bulleh Shah advances the element of humility and submission but also advances the philosophically traditional mindset of submission. As Deol (1996) and Singh (2020) also prove, Sufi and qissa poets used female characters as the intermediate between love of romance and love of mysticism to create two-way symbolism of purity and oppositionality. The models of their analysis reveal how Sufi discourse forms gendered spirituality, the combination of metaphysical discourse and cultural hierarchies.

Contemporary times have seen feminist reinterpretations of Heer continue to challenge patriarchal interpretations of Heer. Kazmi (2019) examined the works by Amrita Pritam and Nasreen Anjum Bhatti and has shown how the two authors turned Heer into anti-gender and anti-nation oppression. Ajj Aakhan Waris Shah Nu by Pritam transforms Heer to a passive character and lets her be a universal image of pain of women and universal pain but Bhatti employs the vernacular to say no. Ahmad, Khokhar, Shaheen, Ali, and Maitlo (2021) also applied the stylistic analysis to Pritam and found out that the metaphor and personification of the writer is useful to evoke an impression of an emotional depth and group belonging. With these feminist re-reading, Heer still remains to be a cultural text-of-resistance and recuperation.

One of the most useful models that helped to reflect on the role of language in perpetuating power relations as theorized by Fairclough (1995, 2001) was the critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). As evidenced by researchers such as Simpson (1993) and Mills (1995), the female figures in a piece of writing are largely presented in a passive manner and qualitative words as per the social orders. Lazar (2005) has come up with Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) which is similar in thought but it examines how gender inequality is either perpetuated or challenged through discourse. FCDA considers the language as where the struggle is fought and negotiating the meaning is done orally and non-orally. According to media and education studies (Sunderland, 2006; Talbot, 2010) silence is the issue that can be transformed to become the agency. In *Heer Ranjha* paradigm, FCDA provides the researcher with a chance to investigate the way the voice of Heer, her words, metaphors, and silences create another moral domain within the constraints of patriarchy.

The relationship between language and gender in South Asian literature is very high. Shaheen (2016) and Khokhar (2019) suggest that the everyday use language is patriarchal and women are emotional and men are rational. Nevertheless, as Hussain (2015) explains, the femininity in Punjabi spiritual literature is typically morally superior, and their silence is a form of subdued power. The present work understands this speech by Heer as moral and linguistic resistance based on these ideas. It examines how Heer recreates the concepts of haya (modesty), izzat (honour) and ishq (love) to enshrine the agency in a male dominated spiritual and social world through CDA. The secret of this combining love and mysticism and social commentary lies in the status of Waris Shah in the Punjabi literature. His poetry, his poems are an expression of the social upheaval in the Punjab, in the eighteenth century, and at the same time, an expression of sympathy and spiritual egalitarianism (Ahmad 2010 and Suri 1966). His criticism is written in humour, in local dialect, that it may be circulated among the ordinary reader, but his moral context is patriarchal. The sense of empathy to Heer is acknowledged in the present work, however, CDA is utilized to reveal how His voice as an author can both empower and liberate her, and restrain her. This duality makes Heer Ranjha a feminist and linguistic work.

Despite the fact that a lot is known about Heer Ranjha, this has not been the case with the linguistic construction of gender as most studies have focused on the mystical, historical or even cultural aspect of the same. Not many of them have applied FCDA to discuss how the subjectivity of Heer has been constructed through discourse. This paper fills that gap by incorporating linguistic constructs such as transitivity and modality and the feminist theory to establish how language creates power, faith and resistance. By doing so, it gives a new perspective to the Punjabi Sufi poetry, in that the voice of Heer is not only a voice of love, but a voice of justice, devotion and selfhood as well.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in this study is a qualitative research design, wherein the female subjectivity, resistance and power shall be discussed within the context of Heer Ranjha by Waris Shah in terms of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA). The most appropriate approach to consider this research is the qualitative approach because it does not entail quantification but the interpretation of language, emotion, and ideology (Creswell, 2014; Bryman, 2016). The criticism tries to understand how the voice of Heer is a place of struggle in a male dominated culture and poetry.

3.1. Research Design

The qualitative interpretive design is used in the research; close textual and contextual analysis is emphasized in comparison with numeric data. The mode of analysis in this design is the deliberation of how some words, metaphors and sentence structure in Heer Ranjha form gender, power and spirituality meanings. The former is the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) applied to the feminist approach to demonstrate how the language denotes hierarchies within the society and dominance of the ideologies (Fairclough, 2001; Lazar, 2005).

3.2. Theoretical Orientation

The study combines three theoretical approaches to give it a solid analytical background. Three-Dimensional CDA Model by Fairclough (2001) connects the analysis of text with social and ideological factors through the lens of text, discursive and social practice. Systemic Functional Grammar by Halliday (1994), especially, the notions of transitivity and agency, can be used to determine the distribution of actions among participants; i.e. whether Heer is depicted as an agent or a passive subject. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis by Lazar (2005) can be seen as a contribution of a gendered approach, or rather the attention given to the ways language perpetuates and challenges patriarchal power. All of these frameworks together can be used to examine the ways in which Heer uses language to develop identity, faith, and resistance.

3.3. Data Source

This primary source is based on the original Shahmukhi Punjabi Heer Ranjha by Waris Shah (1766) and its English language translation by Usborne (1973). The authentic linguistic richness of the Shahmukhi text is guaranteed, whereas its English translation makes it clear enough to facilitate interpretation and cross-interpretation. To maintain the cultural accuracy and that of the interpretations, both versions of the selected verses were analyzed simultaneously.

3.4. Sampling Technique

The most important episodes that capture the emotional and spiritual development of Heer were then selected using a purposive sampling criterion: her first meeting with Ranjha, her conversation with the parents, her confrontation with the Qazi and the elders, the scenes of exile and forced marriage, her conversation before death and the commentary of love and honour by the poet. Every episode has six exemplary verses that emphasize the agency and emotional strong will and opposition by Heer to patriarchal authority. The verses selected are themed and linguistically rich in terms of the goals of the study.

3.5. Analytical Tools and Procedures

Various linguistic and interpretive instruments were used to discuss the issues of gendered language and power structures. An analysis of transitivity and agency (Halliday, 1994) was employed to determine who is the agent and receiver of actions and thus plot dominance and subordination. In the analysis of lexical categorization and metaphors, cultural key terms and metaphors were studied, including: haya (modesty), izzat (honour), and ishq (love) and metaphors such as path, mirror, and debt, which convey spiritual and moral aspects. The tone, verbs and attitudes of the speech of Heer were analyzed by evaluation and modality (Fairclough, 2001) to demonstrate

how emotion, authority are constructed word. Feminist discourse strategies (Lazar, 2005) were adopted to determine instances of silence, perseverance or resistance in which Heer is employed to express herself through language. The process of manual coding and close reading was aimed at tracking the repetitive linguistic patterns and symbolic meanings of gender and faith.

3.6. Method of Interpretation

Interpretation was based on three levels of analysis according to Fairclough, which are textual, discursive, and social. On the textual level, research involved the effects of language choices on meaning. The discursive practice level discussed relationships between the characters of Heer, Ranjha, her parents and the Qazi and the way the relationship of power is acted out during the dialogue. Lastly, on the social practice level, the findings were associated with overall patriarchal, cultural, and religious ideologies of eighteenth-century Punjab. This multi-layered meaning came as a mediator of linguistic structure and social meaning with the exemplification of how language is reproduced and opposed to gendered norms in Punjabi Sufi literature.

This was the methodological paradigm and the analysis processes in the research. Combining the ideas of Fairclough CDA, the functional linguistics and the feminist discourse theory by Halliday and Lazar, the research offers a moderate and solid approach to the analysis of the interaction of language, gender, and ideology in Heer Ranjha. The qualitative and interpretive structure enables the subtle interpretation of linguistic utterances of Heer, which underline the fact that her speech is both devotional and rebellious. Chapter two outlines the specific results of CDA and interpretation of six chosen episodes presenting the way the language of the poet Heer expresses love, power, and spiritual resistance in a patriarchal poetic tradition.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This part provides the analysis and discovery of the six episodes out of Heer Ranjha, which were chosen by Waris Shah. This is analyzed using Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) that is informed by the model of discourse produced by Fairclough, a transitivity model of discourse introduced by Halliday, and feminist strategies of voice, silence, resistance, and victimhood presented by Lazar. The episodes demonstrate that the voice of Heer, her emotions and her actions symbolize different degrees of her subjectivity between love and defiance to suffering and realization of herself. It intends to know how language projects power, gender and ideology in a male dominated cultural and spiritual world.

Table 1 Heer's First Encounter with Ranjha

Verse (Shahmukhi)	Transitivity & Agency (Halliday, 1994)	Lexical Categorization & Metaphor Analysis	Evaluation & Modality (Fairclough, 2001)	Feminist Discourse Strategies (Lazar, 2005)
1. رانجھے اکھیا، پیر، تیری سونہری شکل نے دل لوٹ لیا Ranjha said, "Heer, your golden beauty has stolen my heart."	Material process ("لوٹ لیا") Ranjha as actor, Heer as goal. Male gaze introduces her as object of admiration.	"سونہری شکل" (golden form) — metaphor of value and possession. Beauty linked to material wealth.	Assertive modality; declarative tone signals Ranjha's control of discourse.	Heer positioned as silent receiver — discursive silencing begins; male gaze foregrounded.
2. پیر اکھیا، جیہڑا عشق دا راہ چلے، اوہ فخر نئیں کردا Heer said, "One who walks the path of love does not take pride."	Relational process ("چلے") — Heer becomes actor, redefines love's moral ground.	"عشق دا راہ" — metaphor of love as journey, indicating agency and movement.	Denial of "فخر" (pride) expresses moral modality; challenges hierarchy.	Heer breaks silence — assertive female voice; moral inversion of power.
3. رانجھا بولا، جیہڑا عشق کرے، اوہ رب دے نال رل جاوے Ranjha said, "He who loves, unites with God."	Relational & mental process — defines divine connection; Ranjha as preacher-figure.	"رب دے نال رل جاوے" — metaphor of unity; Sufi intertextuality legitimizes love.	Epistemic certainty — high modality reinforces spiritual authority.	Reinforces male control of spiritual narrative; Heer's earlier agency gets recentred on male articulation.
4. پیر بس کے اکھدی، تینوں رب نے سونیاں پایا Heer smiled and said, "God has made you beautiful."	Verbal & mental process — Heer as actor and sayer, returns the gaze.	"رب نے سونیاں پایا" — shifts metaphor from beauty as possession to beauty as divine gift.	Affirmative but polite modality — soft assertion, avoids confrontation.	Resistance through reciprocity; Heer reclaims power via mutual admiration rather than submission.

5. جیویں توں بولیں، لگدا ہے عشق دا راہ دس As you speak, it seems you show the path of love.	Mental process ("لگدا ہے") — Heer perceives and evaluates; sensor role reflects awareness.	"راہ دس آیا" — metaphor of guidance and enlightenment.	Tentative epistemic modality ("لگدا ہے") — signals curiosity, not inferiority.	Heer uses subtle assertion — maintains humility but shapes discourse of love as knowledge.
6. رانجھا اکھیا، جیہڑا عشق کرے، اوہ ہی مرد کامل ہے Ranjha said, "The true lover is a perfect man."	Relational process ("ہے") — male- centered definition of perfection.	"مرد کامل" — metaphor of spiritual masculinity; constructs male subjectivity as ideal.	Absolute modality ("اوہ ہی") — excludes female spiritual agency.	Patriarchal closure — woman's voice temporarily muted again within male- defined ideal.

Heer comes out as a confident and active speaker in the first interaction with Ranjha. She is not shy to show admiration and curiosity. The fact that she uses words such as *سُونیاں رب نے* *سُونیاں* (god has made you beautiful) indicates that she is not timid and submissive. Halliday through transitivity implies that Heer is not only a listener but also a sayer and actor. Her lines are no less important than those of Ranjha. This is the beginning of her woman agency she talks, challenges and constructs love according to her own designs. The speech given by Heer can be considered a resistance in form of dialogue using Feminist CDA perspective (Lazar, 2005). Nevertheless, Waris Shah still gives Ranjha and opportunity to quit the dialogue by referring to the lover as a "مرد کامل" (perfect man), something that makes a resurgence to the notion that men symbolize spiritual wholeness. This depicts how thoughts of patriarchy creep back even in equality. The subjectivity of Heer comes out in this introductory episode in the form of dialogic tension between silence and speech, subordination and individuality in expressing oneself. Her voice is not confrontational but is an interpretation that issues a challenge to patriarchal authority based on moral and spiritual arguments. Considering Feminist CDA (Lazar, 2005), this episode is the first crack in the discourse of patriarchy, as a woman recovers the right to define *ishq* (love) in her own way, though with restrictions of divine discourse as created by a male poet.

Table 2 Dialogue with Her Parents — Resistance and Self-Assertion

Verse (Shahmukhi)	Transitivity & Agency (Halliday, 1994)	Lexical Categorization & Metaphor Analysis	Evaluation & Modality (Fairclough, 2001)	Feminist Discourse Strategies (Lazar, 2005)
1. ماواں اکھن، بیز، حیاء کر، لوگاں دی گل سُن Mothers said, "Heer, show modesty; heed what people say."	Material & verbal process — parental collective as actor enforcing social norms.	"حیاء" (modesty) and "لوگاں دی گل" (public talk) serve as moral metaphors of control.	Command modality — imperative voice imposes moral authority.	Patriarchal discourse of social surveillance; woman's behaviour tied to communal honour.
2. ہیر اکھدی، حیاء عشق دا دشمن ہے Heer said, "Modesty is the enemy of love."	Relational process ("ہے") — Heer redefines values; sayer as actor of moral reinterpretation.	Antithetical lexical pairing "حیاء" vs "عشق" — semantic reversal of accepted virtue.	Assertive modality; declarative tone dismantles moral absolutism.	Discursive rebellion — Heer speaks as moral philosopher, reversing value hierarchy.
3. باپ اکھیا، بیٹی، عزت نہیں رہسی Father said, "Daughter, your honour will not remain."	Material process ("نہیں رہسی") — father as predictor of loss, Heer as affected participant.	"عزت" — metaphor of fragile possession, commodifying woman's morality.	Deontic modality of fear and control ("نہیں رہسی").	Father reinforces disciplinary power through emotional coercion.
4. ہیر اکھدی، عزت عشق وچ قربان کر دتی Heer said, "I have sacrificed honour for love."	Material process ("قربان کر دتی") — Heer as agent and actor, asserting active choice.	"عزت" re- lexicalized as offering; sacrifice metaphor spiritualizes her defiance.	High modality ("کر دتی") — certainty in decision; no hesitation.	Agency reclamation — converts victimhood into spiritual resistance.
5. تہاڑے حکم دی لوڑ نہیں، میرا دل رانجھے آدے نال جڑ گیا need not your command; my heart is in Ranjha	Relational & mental processes — Heer as sensor ("دل") and actor in emotional autonomy.	"دل جڑ گیا" — metaphor of union, grounding love as divine contract.	Negative polarity ("لوڑ نہیں") — strong rejection	Voice of independence — private emotion overrules patriarchal

my heart is joined with Ranjha's.			modality of authority.	order; silence broken decisively.
6. جیہڑا عشق دا راہ اختیار کرے، اوہ کسی دا غلام نہیں Whoever walks the path of love is no one's slave.	Relational process defining identity; actor becomes universal "عاشق".	"غلامی" and "راہ" — metaphor of journey vs bondage; oppositional binaries.	Universal truth modality ("جیہڑا اوہ ...") — moral maxim beyond context.	Heer transcends gender boundaries — asserts universal freedom through love; feminist spiritual autonomy.

Heer, when speaking with her parents, is against the social norms and family honor. Her courageous statement of *حیاء عشق دا دشمن اے* (modesty is the enemy of love) goes against the conventional rules of having women as passive and submissive. With the help of Fairclough and his assessment and modality, the tone of Heer is powerful, and she is confident that she says *نہیں* (no) several times, which indicates that she denies control. Heer is resisting morally through her speech according to the feminist perspective of Lazar. She is redefining terms such as *حیاء* (modesty) and *عزت* (honour) not so much as being a social compulsion but rather as a spiritual value to people. In this episode, we can see a conflict of social duty and emotional truth of a woman. Heer chooses truth. It turns her voice into a weapon of ethical self-assertion, contradicting the authority of her family and remaining morally sound. This dialogue plays out the language clash between patriarchy and female conscience. His act of defiance functions on the principles of reinterpretation, but not rebellion Heer is subjecting moral words (*عزت*, *حیاء*) to the tools of female subjectivity. Her speech is full of resistant piety that is confronting the patriarchal morality, and it is still covered with Sufi ethical language. In the three-dimensional CDA by Fairclough, the textual level is one of assertive agency, the discursive practice level portrays obedience as a divine autonomy and the social practice level illustrates a tension between the community honour and personal faith.

Table 3 Conflict with the Qazi and Village Elders — Rebellion against Moral Authority

Verse (Shahmukhi)	Transitivity & Agency (Halliday, 1994)	Lexical Categorization & Metaphor Analysis	Evaluation & Modality (Fairclough, 2001)	Feminist Discourse Strategies (Lazar, 2005)
1. قاضی اکھیا، عشق حرام اے، شرع دا حکم اے The Qazi said, "Love is forbidden; this is the law of Sharia."	Relational process — Qazi as sayer and arbiter of truth; love as phenomenon under judgment.	"شرع" and "حرام" encode religious power discourse; love lexicalized as sin.	High authority modality ("ہے") — absolute declarative tone.	Patriarchal-religious silencing of female desire; male voice claims divine monopoly.
2. بیزر اکھدی، شرع تہاڈی، عشق رب دا حکم اے Heer said, "Your law is yours; love is God's command."	Relational & verbal process — Heer as actor-sayer reversing power.	Opposition between "تہاڈی شرع" and "رب دا حکم" — intertextual challenge to religious discourse.	Assertive epistemic modality — Heer's tone confident and evaluative.	Resistance through reinterpretation — challenges male authority using divine language; feminist re-voicing of sacred legitimacy.
3. مَلا اکھیا، توبہ کر، پُتران دی ماں بن The mullah said, "Repent and become a mother of sons."	Material process — male speaker prescribes female social role.	"پُتران دی ماں" — metaphor of ideal womanhood within patriarchy.	Imperative modality — command structure enforces normative identity.	Discursive domestication — male power defines woman via motherhood and repentance.
4. بیزر بس کے اکھدی، میرا رب گواہ اے، میں عاشق نہیں گنہگار Heer laughed and said, "God is my witness; I am a lover, not a sinner."	Verbal and relational processes — Heer as actor reframing herself morally.	"گنہگار" vs "عاشق" — binary inversion of sin and sanctity.	Assertive modality with divine witness — self-legitimation replaces clerical authority.	Subversive piety — Heer uses spiritual discourse to counter male moral policing.
5. قاضی اکھیا، عورت دا ایمان کمزور اے The Qazi said, "A woman's faith is weak."	Relational process ("ہے") — essentialist statement; Qazi defines female identity.	"ایمان کمزور" — metaphor of deficiency framing women as spiritually incomplete.	Authoritative epistemic modality — judgmental tone.	Discursive misogyny — reduction of faith to gender stereotype.

6. بپر آکھدی، عورت نئیں کمزور، ظلم دا بوجھ برداشت کرن والی اے Heer said, “Woman is not weak; she bears the weight of oppression.”	Material process برداشت کرن والی — Heer positions women as agents of endurance.	“بوجھ برداشت” — metaphor of strength through suffering.	Declarative modality — counter- authoritative stance.	Feminist redefinition of womanhood — from moral deficiency to moral endurance; reclaiming subjectivity through resilience.
---	--	--	---	--

This episode is a direct confrontation of religious patriarchy by the voice of Heer. The Qazi says that, عشق حرام اے (love is forbidden), but Heer says that عشق رب دا حکم اے (love is Gods order). With the help of transitivity the Qazi seems to be the judge of the action, and Heer transforms herself into a judge of the truth. She has epistemic confidence, her intonation is full of faith, not fear. The meaning of her laughter and laughter also carry a meaning: a discursive rebellion against the seriousness of the male authority. In Feminist CDA perspective, this scene reveals that Heer is able to employ the same religious words that subdue her to defend herself. She turns Shariah (law) into Ishq (divine love) and in the process, she changes the moral foundation of power. Here her spiritual and feminist identity collide with each other, as she does not become someone who obeys, but a believer who interprets. This episode transforms the patriarchal system in an institutionalized manner by using the discourse of religion. The authority of the Qazi is a form of textual patriarchy -the authority to establish the moral truth, although the speech by Heer converts the sacral linguistic elements into the language of resistance. Her reconstruction of Ishq as the command of Allah challenges the monopoly of male theology and introduces a protesting spiritual feminism in the Sufi poetry. Heer is therefore not just a lover but a mujtahid of experience, the radical interpretation of the divine law by experience, a gendered hermeneutics.

Table 4 Scenes of Exile and Forced Marriage — Voice of Victimhood and Injustice

Verse (Shahmukhi)	Transitivity & Agency (Halliday, 1994)	Lexical Categorization & Metaphor Analysis	Evaluation & Modality (Fairclough, 2001)	Feminist Discourse Strategies (Lazar, 2005)
1. باپ آکھیا، بپر، اپنی مرضی نئیں چل دی Father said, “Heer, your will does not prevail here.”	Material process “نئیں چل دی” — Father as actor, Heer’s will as goal.	“اپنی مرضی” — metaphor of individual agency denied by patriarchy.	Deontic modality of prohibition — reinforces authority.	Symbolic of patriarchal control — silencing female choice as disobedience.
2. ماں آکھدی، خاموش رہ، عورت دی زبان نئیں Mother said, “Be silent; a woman’s tongue must not move.”	Verbal process as suppression — Mother reproduces patriarchal discourse.	“عورت دی زبان” — metaphor of threat; language equated with dishonour.	Command modality; silence prescribed as virtue.	Internalized patriarchy — woman silences woman; discourse of compliance.
3. بپر رو کے آکھدی، ظلم دا انصاف رب کرے گا Heer wept and said, “God will deliver justice for this oppression.”	Verbal + material process — Heer as sayer invoking divine justice.	“انصاف” vs “ظلم” — binary moral lexicon opposing worldly injustice and divine fairness.	Assertive moral modality (“کرے گا”) — divine certainty over human law.	Resistance through piety — reclaiming moral agency under constraint.
4. ناحق زبردستی نال بیاہ دتا، میرا رانجھا دُور بھیج دتا Unjustly, they forced my marriage and sent my Ranjha away.	Material process “بیاہ دتا”, “بھیج دتا” — Heer as affected, society/family as actor.	“ناحق زبردستی” — lexis of coercion and injustice.	Evaluative stance — moral indictment of social system.	Voice of victimhood articulated; public accusation via private pain.
5. سہاگ رات نئیں، ماتم دا دن اے This is not a wedding night; it is a day of mourning.	Relational process “بے” — redefinition of experience.	“ماتم” vs “سہاگ رات” — metaphor reversal transforming joy into grief.	Evaluative modality — assertive emotional truth.	Discursive inversion — subverts marriage as social honour into suffering.
6. رتہ، عورت دا نصیب ایہو جیہا کیوں لکھیا؟ God, why have you written such fate for women?	Mental & relational process — Heer as experiencer questioning divine justice.	“نصیب لکھیا” — metaphor of destiny as inscription; challenges divine authorship.	Interrogative modality — rhetorical protest cloaked in prayer.	Voice of questioning faith — critical spirituality; woman confronts sacred injustice.

In this episode, one gets to understand how family and marriage are used by social and religious institutions to oppress female autonomy. The body of Heer is turned into a place of the social control and her voice is turned into a place of the spiritual resistance. Her call to divine justice is not passive fatalism - it is discursive resilience, which appeals to the language of faith in order to criticize structural violence. Using Fairclough on the three-levels of CDA, at the textual level, domination is revealed by the usage of coercive verbs in the forms of textually, domination (دیتا AH بیا), domination (دیتا بیج). The speech of family members recreates the patriarchy of society, discursively. On a social scale, the lament of Heer rebels against divine determinism, but not against God, it is the wrong understanding of divine justice by people. In Feminist CDA, the suffering of Heer changes the meaning of sabar (patience) into the active moral force not subordination under patriarchy but Heer turns the culture of patriarchal victimology into the culture of conscience through language.

Table 5 Dialogue Before Death : Agency through Self-Determination

Verse (Shahmukhi)	Transitivity & Agency (Halliday, 1994)	Lexical & Metaphor Analysis	Evaluation & Modality (Fairclough, 2001)	Feminist Discourse Strategies (Lazar, 2005)
1. بیز آکھدی، رانجھے، زبر دا پیالہ لا دے Heer said, "Ranjha, bring me the cup of poison."	Material process – Heer as initiator and actor deciding her death.	"زبر دا پیالہ" = metaphor of choice and sacrifice, death as agency.	Imperative but self-addressed modality – command of her own fate.	Self-authorship of destiny – Heer claims power over life and body.
2. عشق دی بازی ہار آگئی، پر عزت رکھ لی lost the game of love, but kept my honour.	Relational process – constructs identity through moral comparison.	"بازی" (game) & "عزت" (honour) = metaphors of contest and moral capital.	Evaluative modality – defeat tempered by moral certainty.	Re-signification of failure – transforms loss into ethical victory.
3. زبر دا گھونٹ پی کے، میں عشق دا قرض اُتار دیتا By drinking poison, I have repaid the debt of love.	Material process – Heer acts consciously; verb "اُتار دیتا" denotes completion.	"عشق دا قرض" = economic metaphor for spiritual duty.	Perfective aspect – closure and finality in modality.	Agency through completion – death as self-emancipation not surrender.
4. زندگی دی کتاب مُک گئی The book of life has come to an end.	Relational process ("مُک گئی") – textualizes life as finite narrative.	"کتاب" (book) = metaphor of authorship and closure.	Declarative finality – non-emotive acceptance.	Self-narration strategy – Heer becomes writer of her own ending.
5. جیہڑا عشق دا راہ چلے، اوہ موت نوں زندگی سمجھدا Who walks the path of love sees death as life.	Relational and existential process – universal truth statement.	"راہ چلے" (path) & "موت/زندگی" = Sufi metaphors of unity and transcendence.	High epistemic modality – assertion of spiritual truth.	Gender-neutral universalization – Heer as teacher of divine love, not victim.
6. رانجھے، مر کے وی میں تیری رہواں بن کے Ranjha, even after death I shall remain your path of breeze.	Material + relational process – Heer extends agency beyond death.	"رہواں بن کے" = metaphor of continuity and spiritual presence.	Future modality ("رہواں گی") – asserts certainty beyond life.	Eternal voice strategy – female subjectivity transcends body and patriarchy.

This episode indicates that Heer is hurt by the social and family oppression. She is compelled to get married a man she is not in love with. Her father and mother smother her, as they tell her that عورت دی زبان نہیں چل دی (the tongue of a woman must not move). His reply, Heer, گکا (God will take revenge on this persecution) makes her suffering about the moral protest. To put it in the terms of Halliday, Heer changes his position of an affected participant (under the control of others) to sayer (talking of justice). She is strong emotionally and spiritually, as demonstrated by the metaphors of ظلم (injustice), ناحق (unfairness), and نصیب (fate). Lazar (2005) describes this as resistance of the silent kind - she is not able to battle with her hands but she talks with her heart and her religion. More dignified is her endurance. This episode brings out the feminine power of patience, not as a weakness but as having moral powers. This episode transforms the female death into discursive life. Through her dictatorship of her own destiny and the re-entry of honour that Heer brings about, she is challenged through social oppression and textual oppression. Her martyrdom is not death she writes her own final chapter through her own voice. In the three-level system developed by Fairclough, grammatical agency is reflected in textual, Active verbs such as: اُتار دیتا. پی کے. Love, in discursive, transcends clerical law to a scriptural truth.

Social, performance breaks the patriarchal domination of female body and honour. By Feminist CDA, Heer transforms obedience into cosmic freedom - she does not want to be submissive to men, she wants to be submissive to love. Her language combines the power of language, spiritual independence and symbolic eternity- a deep feminist expression of Sufi oneness.

Table 6 Waris Shah Ideological Framing of the Feminine

Verse (Shahmukhi)	Transitivity & Agency (Halliday, 1994)	Lexical & Metaphor Analysis	Evaluation & Modality (Fairclough, 2001)	Feminist Discourse Strategies (Lazar, 2005)
1. واریس شاہ اکھیا، بیر تے رانجھا عشق دے راہ تے قربان ہو گئے Waris Shah said, "Heer and Ranjha sacrificed themselves upon the path of love."	Material process ("قربان ہو گئے") Heer and Ranjha as actors of sacred sacrifice.	"قربان" and "راہ" Sufi metaphors linking human love to divine martyrdom.	Evaluative stance positive modality of reverence.	Sanctification strategy woman elevated through piety, yet framed in collective (with Ranjha), diluting individual female agency.
2. جتھے عشق بولیا، آتھے شرع خاموش ہو گئی Where love spoke, the law fell silent.	Material + relational process Ishq personified as speaker, Sharia as silent entity.	"عشق بولیا / شرع خاموش" metaphoric opposition of revelation vs restriction.	Declarative high modality asserts divine supremacy of love.	Reversal of authority law (male domain) silenced by love (gender-neutral spiritual domain).
3. بیر دی زبان رب دے Heer's tongue revealed the secrets of God.	Material & verbal process Heer's voice as divine instrument.	"زبان" (tongue) and "راز" (secrets) – metaphor of revelation; language as sacred act.	Assertive epistemic modality certainty and admiration.	Voice revalorization female speech legitimized as divine expression.
4. رانجھا ولی بنا، بیر توں رب دے در تے جگہ ملی Ranjha became a saint, and Heer found place at God's door.	Relational process Ranjha's sainthood vs Heer's placement.	جگہ "ولی بنا" vs "ولی ملی" hierarchical metaphors; male as saint, female as recipient.	Affirmative but unequal modality different degrees of spiritual agency.	Gendered hierarchy in sanctification Heer remains spiritually honored but not doctrinally autonomous.
5. عورت کمزور نئیں، عشق دا پیغام لیاؤن والی اے Woman is not weak; she is the bearer of love's message.	Relational & material process, Aurat as carrier of divine message.	"پیغام لیاؤن والی" metaphor of messenger, active yet bound to message-giver.	Positive evaluative modality affirmation within limits.	Empowered compliance woman granted strength within pre-defined spiritual role.
6. واریس شاہ اکھیا، عورت دے دل وچ رب دی جھلک اے Waris Shah said, "In a woman's heart resides a reflection of God."	Relational process ("جھلک اے") Aurat's heart as possessor of divine reflection.	"جھلک" and "دل" metaphor of mirror and light, core Sufi imagery.	Declarative certainty spiritual idealization.	Discursive idealization woman's spirituality essentialized, symbolically pure but socially silent.

In this final episode, Waris Shah himself makes remarks upon the story of Heer. He commends her, as he said: بیر دی زبان رب دے راہ خول گئی (Heer tongue told the secrets of God), and glorifies her as a spirit. He however also writes: ranjha became a saint; Heer got a place at the door of god; (Ranjha became a saint; Heer got a place), this is an indication of hierarchy, the man becomes a saint, and the woman is rewarded only through him. This is what Lazar (2005) refers to as benevolent patriarchy, the woman is revered, but to a certain extent. Although Waris Shah attributes Heer some divine significance, he is also possessed by her power because he transforms her into a symbol instead of a living agent. Her rebellion is both sacred and safe, but not in the society, but in poetry. This demonstrates how women even sympathetic male writers can romanticize them at their own discretion. Textual power of male authorship is shown in this episode as a mediator of female subjectivity. The voice of Waris Shah serves as an ode of celebration and enclosure at the same time.

As a Feminist CDA, this shows the ways in which patriarchal texts celebrate feminine spirituality and at the same time nullify its political opposition. The subversive voice of Heer turns out to be canonized as divine metaphor, which cannot threaten the moral order anymore. This is her reflection of God (عورت دے دل وچ رب دی ج), the final paradox, woman, vessel of God, but never her interpreter.

5. DISCUSSION

Heer Ranjha under Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) reflects the poetic language of Waris Shah, which empowers and constrains the female subjectivity in the patriarchal and spiritual system. To answer the first research question, the study reveals that Heer voice switches between silence and assertion following the strategic use of transitivity, metaphor and modality. According to the terms used by Halliday (1994), Heer becomes not the object of male admiring, but a moral agent. Relational and verbal processes that break gender norms are evident in her declarative statements like: *حیت عشق دا دشمن اے* (modesty is the enemy of love). The modality scheme proposed by Fairclough (2001) also shows that the tone of conviction expressed by Heer through his assertiveness and evaluative verbs is not compliance but conviction. In the feminist viewpoint of Lazar (2005), this linguistic arrangement is a weapon of resistance in which Heer applies moral justification and religious arguments to redefine obedience as Godly freedom. Her speech turns silence into moral power as observed when she undergoes oppression but appeals to divine justice, which is what Lazar describes as resistance within confines.

In answering the second research question In what ways does the poem replicate or challenge patriarchal and religious ideologies through the figure of Heer, the results indicate that the narrative by Waris Shah subverts and maintains patriarchy. The linguistic rebellion of Heer is shown when she resists her parents and the Qazi; she has redefined *izzat* (honour) and *haya* (modesty) by spiritual reinterpretation thereby rising against the ideological domination by family and clergy. However, the authorial commentary that Waris Shah gives makes male authority restored because it makes pure the misery of Heer instead of her resistance. Although the verse, *بیر دی زبان رب دے* (the tongue of Heer betrayed the secrets of God), glorifies the voice of the characters, it also moderates her opposition into an acceptable spiritual metaphor, which conforms to what Lazar (2005) defines as benevolent patriarchy. This duality resembles the results by Khalid (2008) and Riaz (2013), who talked about Heer as a moral rebel and a religious woman trapped in the submission to God. The utterances of the Qazi that *عورت دا ایمان کمزور* (a woman is weak) demonstrates how the discourse of religion restricts the female spirituality, however, Heer counters this discourse with a response that also uses the same sacred language as the source of the marginalization: *عورت نہیں کمزور، ظلم دا بوجھ برداشت کرن والی اے* (a woman is not weak, she is the one who bears the burden of injustice).

The third question answers that Heer is subjected to a series of stages of spiritual growth out of her love as a romantic being to her transcendental self. By examining the transitivity through Halliday, Heer ends up being more of a subject (even in suffering) and dictates her destiny in the lines like: *”ا پیالہ لا دے رانجھے، زبر“* (Ranjha bring me the cup of poison). She is both alive and not alive (even after death I shall remain your wind) and the transcendence of this nature is what changes female body to spiritual persistence. This is in line with the discourse social practice notion of Fairclough (2001) in which the language of Heer is a symbolic action that challenges the social order and sustains Sufi values of love and sacrifice. Feminine agency in the poetic discourse is thus built on voice, perseverance and rehabilitation instead of open confrontation. In comparison to the earlier works, including Nasir (2020) and Asghar (2022), who introduced Heer as a proto-feminist character, the given study goes further to reveal the linguistic mechanics, modality, metaphor, and transitivity, in which her opposition is mobilized.

These studies theoretically combine the concepts of Fairclough CDA, functional linguistics, and feminist views by Lazar in order to unravel the negotiation of power in language. Unlike other literary analyses that regarded Heer Ranjha as moral or romantic story (Malik, 1993; Qureshi, 2010), this paper demonstrates how speech by Heer executes discursive resistance in the patriarchal norms. Her rebelliousness against both family, social and religious institutions is a reinterpretation of *ishq*, which is not gender and hierarchy based but a divine command. However, the last commentary by Waris Shah locates her sanctarity in the male writing - Heer is not an independent voice but is a symbol of purity. Therefore, the poem swings between opposition and support thus living up to what is described by Fairclough (2001) as the contradictory discourse where subversion is integrated into the ideology of dominance.

In summary, Heer Ranjha is an overly ambivalent discussion of the subject in female form. The language used by Heer reveals how the women in classical Punjabi Sufi poetry were able to oppose power through spiritual justification and moral bravery when their voices were ultimately placed in the context of authority held by men.

Combining both feminist and linguistic models, the paper positions Heer not as a tragic lover alone but as a discursive agent of opposition and redefinition of human love into divine justice and the redefinition of womanhood on the basis of moral imagination of South Asian Sufi tradition. Even her voice, written centuries ago, reverberates in our modern world - as it teaches us that even a chained body will not contain the soul.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed Heer Ranjha by Waris Shah using Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) to learn how the female subjectivity, power, and resistance are represented in the classical Punjabi Sufi poetry. The six main episodes analyzed showed that the voice by which Heer works is a kind of moral, spiritual, and linguistic opposition in the highly patriarchal society. Based on the model of discourse by Fairclough (2001), transitivity model by Halliday (1994) and feminist approach by Lazar (2005), the results have indicated that language is a source of domination and liberation. The speech of Heer shows that women in the traditional setting do not lack any voice, but rather deploy minor linguistic and symbolic means to defy. When she speaks to Ranjha, her parents,

and the Qazi, Heer reinterprets the moral values including haya (modesty), izzat (honour), and ishq (love) as the tools of social control and makes them the symbols of faith and courage. Her opposition is re-interpreting and not revolutionizing - she opposes male authority in terms of moral appeal and religious belief. As silent as it is, the patience and the prayerful language used by Heer indicates endurance and a way of resisting, as Lazar calls it, within the boundaries, and demonstrates that patience and suffering can be used as discursive power in patriarchal societies.

The results also indicate that as Waris Shah makes Heer a holy and ethical character, he at the same time limits her agency in the spirituality of men. His character is a representation of what feminist critics refer to as benevolent patriarchy, in which the woman is glorified as goddess but still is confined to make her own choices. The last thing Heer does is to decide to die by means of a poison, and it is her ultimate act of agency and authorship as a moral triumph and not a loss. By doing this, she turns suffering into a sense of meaning and is now the creator of her own destiny, a concept of discursive control by Fairclough. Her voice of eternity -" (even after death I will be your wind) - is indicative of how feminine identity and affection are transcendent of life, law and patriarchy. The discussion reveals how CDA can rediscover the oft-overlooked types of resistance in ancient writings and restore women as people capable of discerning spiritual truth. To the feminist and cultural scholarship, the paper recommends that South Asian Sufi poems have early manifestations of feminist consciousness, not in explicit revolution but moral power, redefining, and reclaiming their voices in their respective traditions, which still make readers question, re-read and reclaim the voices of women.

To conclude, this paper demonstrates that Heer Ranjha is not only a love tragedy, but also a strong commentary on gender, religion and resistance. With the help of language, Heer passes the stages of silence, obedience, and suffering, and passes the stages of voice, agency, and transcendence. The poetry of Waris Shah gives her a divine status, however the real force of the poem is her words, her capability to challenge, to experience and to define love in her own language. The story of Heer still represents all ladies who exist between submission and rebellion, love and law, silence and speech.

REFERENCES

1. Ahmad, A., Khokhar, M. I., Shaheen, R., Ali, H., & Maitlo, S. K. (2021). Stylistic analysis of the Amrita Pritam's poem "I call upon Waris Shah today." *Remittances Review*, 6(2), 192–205.
2. Ahmad, K. (2010). A hermeneutical analysis of the Heer Ranjha legend: A study in religious tolerance. California Institute of Integral Studies.
3. Ahmad, M. (2010). Waris Shah and the social context of Punjabi Sufi poetry. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications.
4. Ahmed, Z., Abbas, Z., & Khushi, Q. (2013). Reimagining female role in divine/Sufi writings. *Pakistan Journal of Islamic Research*, 12, 105–118.
5. Asghar, S. (2022). Reclaiming female voice in Sufi narratives: A critical study of Punjabi poetry. *Lahore Journal of Humanities*, 14(2), 201–217.
6. Asghar, S. (2022). Reimagining Heer: A feminist reading of Punjabi Sufi narratives. *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 37(2), 115–128.
7. Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
8. Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
9. Dar, S. R. (2010). Folkloristic construction of gendered identities: A corpus-based exploration of "othering" in Heer Ranjha. *Folkloristic Understandings of Nation-Building in Pakistan*, 4.
10. Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2018). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
11. Deol, J. S. (1996). *Love and mysticism in the Punjabi qissas of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*. University of London.
12. Dogar, M. N. (2017). *Love, morality and protest in Waris Shah's Heer Ranjha*. Lahore: Fiction House.
13. Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
14. Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Longman.
15. Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
16. Gee, J. P. (2014). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.
17. Ghulam, A., Fatima, K., & Pervez, N. (n.d.). *Discursive exploration of historicity of ancient Punjab in Heer by Waris Shah*.
18. Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An introduction to functional grammar* (2nd ed.). London: Edward Arnold.
19. Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar* (4th ed.). London: Routledge.
20. Hussain, D. F., Arshaad, T., Khan, D. H., & Khan, M. A. (n.d.). *Sufi traditions and sacred narratives: Investigating the Izzat Bibi (Mai Heer) Shrine and its enduring influence in Jhang, Punjab, Pakistan*.
21. Hussain, F. (2015). *Women, spirituality and silence in South Asian literary traditions*. Islamabad: National Institute of Folk Heritage.
22. Hussain, M. (2015). *Women's spirituality in Punjabi folk traditions*. Lahore: Punjab Academy Press.

23. Jeffries, L. (2014). *Critical stylistics: The power of English*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
24. Jørgensen, M. W., & Phillips, L. J. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. London: Sage Publications.
25. Kazmi, S. (2019). Radical re-tellings of *Hir*: Gender and the politics of voice in postcolonial Punjabi poetry. *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal*.
26. Khalid, R. (2008). Heer as a rebel: A feminist interpretation of Waris Shah's narrative. *Pakistan Journal of Language and Literature*, 12(1), 45–57.
27. Khokhar, N. (2019). Gendered language and power in Pakistani cultural discourse. *Journal of Linguistic Inquiry*, 6(1), 78–91.
28. Kiran, A., & Arfan, M. (n.d.). Representation of women in Pakistani folk tales: A feministic perspective.
29. Knappert, J. (1999). *Mystic poetry of Islam*. Routledge.
30. Knappert, J. (1999). *Sufi literature and the feminine image*. Leiden: Brill Academic Press.
31. Lazar, M. M. (2005). *Feminist critical discourse analysis: Gender, power and ideology in discourse*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
32. Malik, A. (1993). *The social context of Waris Shah's Heer*. Lahore: Vanguard.
33. Malik, A. (1993). *Waris Shah: His life, poetry and philosophy*. Lahore: Al-Faisal Publishers.
34. Malik, H. (1993). *Love, law, and faith in Punjabi romance*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel.
35. Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
36. Mills, S. (1995). *Feminist stylistics*. London: Routledge.
37. Nasir, F. (2020). The female voice in Punjabi love poetry: Reinterpreting Heer. *Asian Journal of Cultural Studies*, 9(3), 112–126.
38. Nasir, S. (2020). *Rewriting Heer: Gender, resistance, and spirituality in Punjabi folklore*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
39. Qureshi, I. (2010). Social criticism and mysticism in Waris Shah's Heer. *Journal of Islamic Culture*, 18(1), 67–85.
40. Qureshi, S. (2010). *Heer Ranjha and the politics of love in Punjabi literature*. Lahore: Punjab University Press.
41. Qureshi, S. (2010). *Heer Ranjha: Love and society in Punjabi poetry*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel.
42. Riaz, A. (2013). Women's voices in Punjabi love epics: A feminist re-evaluation. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 8(2), 67–81.
43. Riaz, S. (2013). Heer as a moral rebel: A feminist rereading of Punjabi classics. *Feminist Studies in South Asia*, 5(1), 34–49.
44. Rizvi, S. A. A. (2002). *A history of Sufism in India* (Vol. 2). New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.
45. Schimmel, A. (1982). *As through a veil: Mystical poetry in Islam*. New York: Columbia University Press.
46. Shaheen, F. (2016). Language, gender, and ideology in South Asian discourse. *Asian Linguistics Journal*, 4(1), 56–71.
47. Shaheen, N. (2016). *Language, gender, and identity in Pakistani cultural discourse*. Islamabad: Higher Education Commission of Pakistan.
48. Simpson, P. (1993). *Language, ideology and point of view*. London: Routledge.
49. Singh, N. (2020). The Punjabi, Sufi, and Udhrite semiotic of Baba Bulleh Shah's verse. *Sahitya Setu*.
50. Sufi, G. (2004). *The Punjabi classics: Heer Waris Shah*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications.
51. Sunderland, J. (2006). *Language and gender: An advanced resource book*. London: Routledge.
52. Suri, P. (1966). Heer of Waris Shah as a document on the social history of the Punjab in the 18th century. *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 28, 265–274.
53. Talbot, M. (2010). *Language and gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
54. Tannen, D. (1994). *Gender and discourse*. New York: Oxford University Press.
55. Usborne, C. F. (Trans.). (1973). *Heer Ranjha: The classic love story of the Punjab* (by Waris Shah). London: Allen & Unwin.
56. van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Discourse and power*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
57. Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Methods of critical discourse studies* (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
58. Zubair, M., Zaheer, I., & Muzammil, N. (2024). Feminine stereotypes and objectification in Punjabi folklore: A feminist discourse analysis of Heer and Mirza Sahiban. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 8(4), 636–645.