

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Naming Practices in Sindh, Pakistan

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Abstract

Naming babies is a socially meaningful expression of family identity, belief, memory, and cultural values (Alford, 1988; Blount, 2015). This study explores reasons that motivate naming practices in Sindh, Pakistan. Parents were approached through their children to explain the motivation of their naming choices and why they chose the names they did. This research adapts a qualitative research design. Open-ended online questionnaires were randomly for data collection from 520 participants from all over Sindh, data were analyzed using critical discourse analysis framework (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak, 2001). The data are discussed and interpreted through a lens of conceptual framework consisting of number of theories depending on the categories and themes of reasons behind naming practices. Results show that naming practices in Sindh are influenced by different factors including memory of ancestors, religion, family customs, cultural and ethnic identity, emotional bonds, personal preference, astrology, admiration for famous personalities, literary influence, and contemporary naming trends. Earlier research has found some of the factors similar to this study (Rahman, 2015; Shaikh, 2024). Names function as personal identifiers and as carriers of cultural memory and social significance (Assmann, 1995). The Research finds both traditional and modern values. It coexists with modern and global influences, resulting in hybrid and negotiated naming practices (Noor et al., 2024). Current study offers a thorough context-sensitive description of naming practice in Sindh, explaining how common naming choices reflect broader and historical processes (Galasiński & Skowronek, 2001; Hough, 2016).

Keywords: Naming Practices, family identity, cultural memory, global influences

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Introduction

Personal names are often viewed as merely identification labels. Nonetheless, research in sociolinguistics, anthropology, and discourse studies demonstrates that naming is a deeply social and cultural act (Blount, 2015; Hough, 2016). Names include significant meanings with social values to religion, family history, and emotional attachment. Through naming, families express who they are, where they belong, and what they value. Therefore, naming cannot be viewed as a neutral or purely individual decision; it is influenced by social norms, cultural traditions, and historical experiences (Alford, 1988; Fairclough, 1992).

Naming practices in South Asia are associated with societies, and naming practices are closely connected to communal identity and belief systems (Embleton, 2023; Pilcher, 2017). In Sindh, characteristics are linguistic diversity, Islamic customs, Sufi legacy, tribal system, and colonial history, and names convey social meaning (Kalhoro, 2010; Soomro, 2015). Parents often choose names to honor their elders, to remember their ancestors, to demonstrate religious devotion, or to maintain cultural continuity. At the same time, social and cultural changes, increased education, migration to cities, and global media have influenced contemporary naming practices. As a result, many families try to find a balance between traditional naming values and modern preferences, aesthetic considerations, and aspirations for social mobility (Noor et al., 2024; Rahman, 2024). A recent study shows that naming practices in Pakistan are becoming increasingly dynamic, among younger and urban families (Ahmad et al., 2023; Shaikh, 2024). Another research indicates a growing tendency to choose names that retain religious and cultural value, individuality, modernity, and global awareness, (Noor et al., 2024; Rahman, 2015).

Despite these developments and changes, limited research examines naming practices in Sindh using a critical discourse-based approach with parents' own narratives. To fill this gap, this study explores how parents in Sindh explain the reasons behind naming their children. Instead of focusing only on the linguistic form of names, this research examines naming as a discursive practice that is shaped by historical, cultural, and ideological contexts (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak, 2001). The foundation of this research is critical discourse analysis (CDA), which allows for the examination of naming practices in social structures, power relations, and collective memory (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak, 2001). The study offers a comprehensive view of how naming practices in Sindh reflect identity construction, cultural continuity, and social change. Data from culturally rich and understudied locations are provided.

The study also adds to the worldwide conversation about naming, identity, and speech (Galasiński & Skowronek, 2001; Hough, 2016).

Review of the Literature

❖ Naming, Identity, and Ideology

Naming is a universal human practice, and all communities, societies, and cultures engage in the universal human habit of naming (Alford, 1988). Naming serves as a way to preserve cultural values while also responding to social change (Al-Zumor, 2009; Moyo & Dube, 2024). Academics conclude that personal names are not random labels but also socially meaningful symbols that allow individuals to be identified and positioned within their communities (Hough, 2016). Names have a crucial role and they reflect cultural values, religious beliefs, historical experiences, and social norms, which make them central to identity formation (Blount, 2015; Rahman, 2015). In a broader sense, naming practices conserve group memory and replicate ideological meanings and social relations of power in societies (Fairclough, 1992; Galasinski and Skowronek, 2001).

Naming and identity construction are two aspects that are closely related, as noted in a lot of literature works. Noor et al. (2024) believe that naming in Pakistan is the manifestation of the ongoing identity negotiation, particularly among younger parents who tend to strike the right balance between the inherited traditions and the modern values. Shaikh (2024) demonstrates the use of personal names as a symbol of ethnic pride, membership in a tribe, and regional identity. Rahman (2015) also adds that social class, ideology, and cultural orientation act as the driving forces behind naming practices in Pakistan.

These observations and findings are recorded by the earlier studies. In their study, Gohar and Mangrio (2021) show that nicknaming is a social interaction process that displays closeness, intimacy, hierarchy, and power. Rahman's past work (2013, 2014, 2015) illustrates how names may reinforce social hierarchies and cultural capital, and how individuals change occasionally or avoid certain names to escape caste-based or social discrimination. Similar patterns are found beyond Pakistan. Al-Zumor (2009) shows how naming in political discourse categorizes social groupings and encodes religious identity, family history, and cultural values, while Galasiński and Skowronek (2001) illustrate how naming in political discourse categorizes social groups and shapes collective identity.

The academic study of names that looks at the linguistic, cultural, and social aspects of naming is called onomastics (Hough, 2016). Anthro onomastics is a subfield of anthropology that focuses specifically on personal naming practices and their meanings in social life. Researchers believe that names are shaped by phonological, morphological, and semantic patterns as well as cultural conventions and belief systems (Al-Zumor, 2009; Ahmad et al., 2023). Thus, onomastics provides one of the frameworks for examining names as both a structured linguistic system and a socially embedded practice (Rahman, 2015).

A major theme in naming studies is the connection between individual names and identity construction. Names indicate individual identity and signal group affiliation based on religion, ethnicity, gender, and class (Alford, 1988; Shaikh, 2024). Blount (2015) says that names influence how individuals are perceived and treated in social situations. In terms of ideology, naming practices often reproduce dominant social values and norms, particularly in postcolonial and religious societies (Fairclough, 1995; Noor, 2024). However, naming can also function as a place of resistance where individuals assert cultural and linguistic identity (Moyo & Dube, 2024).

❖ Naming, Power, and Historical Context

Apart from identity and ideology, naming is deeply in relation with power and historical processes (Galasiński & Skowronek, 2001). Earlier research shows philosophical views that treated names as neutral labels have been challenged by research demonstrating that names carry social implications (Fairclough, 1992). Rahman (2014) explains that names that serve as identity markers expose individuals to discrimination, stereotyping, or exclusion. According to historical studies in South Asia, naming has been used to categorize communities along religious and ethnic lines, particularly during colonial and postwar periods (Embleton, 2023; Soomro, 2015).

Names carry complex phonological, morphological, and semantic meanings. Noor et al. (2024) show that hybrid naming practices in Pakistan frequently combine the blending of Arabic, English, and indigenous linguistic elements. Shaikh (2024) notes that phonological adjustments are commonly applied to traditional Sindhi names and give them modification or global sound. Studies from Zimbabwe similarly demonstrate that morphological patterns in names reflect cultural values and social meanings (Moyo & Dube, 2024). Ahmad et al. (2023) emphasize the morpho-semantic richness of Urdu Muslim names, while Rahman (2013–2015) explains that Pakistani naming practices are shaped by Arabic, Persian, and South Asian linguistic

traditions and an identifiable linguistic pattern that encodes cultural values, religious, and ideological implications.

❖ **Contemporary Trends in Naming Practices**

The recent research demonstrates that the traditions of naming are evidently shifting because of the effect of globalization, media exposure, education, and generational change. Contemporary and creative names are becoming more popular with parents who are growing fonder of modern names that convey uniqueness and worldly consciousness. These names often incorporate a mixture of Arabic, English, and local linguistic components, as an effort to merge the continuity of religion and the modern hopes. On the same note is a practice where parents are balancing between the traditional Islamic values and the modern stylishness; therefore, it is a negotiated zone (Noor et al., 2024).

The same trends can be found outside of Pakistan. The name of a place, a study of Tanzanian place names, Masanja (2023), indicates how the renaming of cultural places, a phenomenon of adopting cultural places, is an indicator of broader social change. The Zimbabwean studies also show that names are becoming more hopeful, defiant, proud, and collective struggle in reaction to socio-political reality (Moyo & Dube, 2024). These international relations reinforce the assertions that practices of naming are subject to social transformation, and not ancient cultural customs.

❖ **Naming Practices in Multilingual Societies**

The language interaction status and identity negotiation influence the naming practices in multilingual societies (Zuvalinyenga, 2021). Most of the time, people choose names that balance between the global and local traditions (Qiu, 2025). Moyo and Dube (2024) demonstrate that naming practice can be used as a cultural resistance and memory, whereas Zuvalinyenga (2021) proves that historical discourse can influence naming decisions. These worldwide trends are also visible in Pakistan, where indigenous naming practices coexist with English-influenced names (Rahman, 2024).

South Asian naming practices are influenced by religion, caste, gender norms, and colonial history (Pilcher, 2017; Embleton, 2023). According to studies, names frequently reproduce social hierarchies and gendered expectations (Pilcher, 2017). Throughout the region, similar patterns are observed where names function as markers of religious and communal identity (Galasiński & Skowronek, 2001). These studies highlight the ideological role of naming in South Asian societies.

In Pakistan, naming practices are strongly shaped by Islamic values, Arabic and Persian linguistic traditions, and colonial legacies (Akram & Qureshi, 2012; Rahman, 2015). Religious affiliation, ideology, and socioeconomic class are sometimes indicated by personal names (Rahman, 2013, 2024). Ahmad et al. (2023) demonstrate that Muslim personal names in Urdu have undergone structural and semantic change over time. Shah and Rafique (2023) highlight religious motivation as a central factor in parental naming decisions. Contemporary research shows an increasing preference for English or hybrid names in urban Pakistan, increasingly reflecting globalization, modern identity, and social mobility (Rahman, 2024; Noor et al., 2025). Abrar (2023) further identifies tension between English-influenced naming and indigenous naming practices, revealing competing language ideologies in Pakistani society.

Research on local identity and linguistic ideas is highlighted by research on indigenous languages in Pakistan (Riaz, 2024). As a cultural pride and sign of emotional attachment, speakers of regional languages often prefer local personal names (Khan & Bughio, 2024). However, mispronunciation, insult, and stereotyping are common for people with indigenous names, which can negatively affect attitudes toward their names and languages (Abrar, 2023; Riaz, 2024). Despite these challenges, local naming practices support linguistic continuity and cultural resistance (Rahman, 2015).

Naming Practices in Sindh

Sindh's Sufi traditions, tribal ties, and migrations, specifically colonial rule represents a historically layered naming environment. (Kalhor, 2010; Soomro, 2015). As a sign of ethnic identity and cultural continuity, Sindhi naming practices reflect a blend of Arabic, Persian, and indigenous linguistic resources that function as markers (Rahman, 2015; Shaikh, 2024). Ahmed (2025) shows how Sindhi households balance between tradition and modernity when naming children, while Noor et al. (2025) highlight generational shifts influenced by urbanization and media. Abrar (2023) demonstrates that Sindhi personal names frequently express a strong emotional tie to the mother tongue. These studies collectively demonstrate how naming in Sindh is strongly associated with identity information, cultural tradition and linguistic devotion (Khan & Bughio, 2024).

In the Sindhi context, a recent study of note is Anum Abrar's sociolinguistic qualitative phenomenological study on personal naming practices. Abrar examines 400 personal names; 200 English and 200 Sindhi. The study identifies fourteen

shared naming categories including religion, nature, and personal attributes, professionals, animals, flowers, abstract nouns, actions, and borrowing. These findings demonstrate that naming practices in both languages follow systematic linguistic patterns. The study followed semi-structured interviews and explored language attitudes. Abrar discovers that parents who select personal names are often closely connected with Sindhi language and literature. While many remember unpleasant childhood experiences, such as teasing or mispronunciation, most develop pride in their names in adulthood. Significantly, the study links personal naming with language maintenance, showing that local names strengthen emotional attachment to the mother language and support the preservation of indigenous languages in Sindh (Abrar, 2023).

Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in an interdisciplinary conceptual framework that sees naming as a significant, social, cultural, and discursive practice. Critical discourse analysis serves as the analytical framework of this study. CDA is used as the main analytical lens because it looks at how language both reflects and creates social realities, power dynamics, and ideological meanings that are placed in a socio-historic context (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak, 2001). Naming practices in Sindh cannot be understood in isolation, as they are influenced by religion, ethnicity, family lineage, cultural memory, and ongoing social change. Using CDA enables the researcher to analyze how parents discuss names and how their justifications and explanations reflect broader social values, beliefs, and ideologies. Alongside CDA, the study uses a few selected sociolinguistic and cultural theories to support the interpretation of the themes that emerge from the data. These theories serve as interpretive tools in a CDA-based analysis as separate analytical stages. Each theme is linked with one primary theory to ensure analytical clarity and theoretical consistency. The theories are defined in the following section.

The Cultural Memory Theory (Assmann, 1995) is employed to decode the themes of honor, tribute, and memory, where names are given in honor of ancestors, religious personalities, or historical figures. These names serve as bearers of cultural memory and help to maintain cultural and religious heritage. The Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory (Giles & Johnson, 1987) is employed to decode the themes of family tradition and cultural/ethnic identity, where names serve as indicators of group membership and linguistic identity in Sindhi society. Identity Theory (Hall, 1990; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) contends that themes for the validity, such as religious impact, astrology-driven naming, and personal meaning, in which names are used to evaluate and

convey meaning. Meaning-driven naming is analyzed using Distributed Morphology, which allows the study of names as linguistic statements that convey semantic, moral, and religious content. Structuralism (Saussure, 1916), which demonstrates that these processes follow culturally defined patterns rather than chance. Modernity-related themes are interpreted through Variationist Sociolinguistics (Labov, 1966), which takes into account the impact of media, mobility, and global cultural flows on local naming practices. It also explains the need for individuality by considering that naming is a means to express ourselves within the boundaries of society. The desire for uniqueness is explained through Individualization Theory (Beck, 1992), viewing naming as a form of self-expression within social limits. Naming influenced by famous personalities is interpreted through Bourdieu's concept of Symbolic Capital (Bourdieu, 1986), where naming is impacted by well-known individuals. Affective theory is perceived to be a resource that are linked to prestige and social aspiration. The personal liking of parents is explained by the Affective Theory and focuses on the emotional part of the decisions about naming, but it is also recognized that it has a cultural background. Lastly, the role of literature and poetry is elucidated by Intertextuality (Kristeva, 1980) to demonstrate how symbolic identity and cultural awareness are formed using literary allusions. This conceptual framework, with the help of the application of appropriate sociolinguistic and cultural theories, enables the analysis of naming practices in Sindh by means of critical discourse analysis without losing a sensible and coherent meaning.

Methodology

❖ Research Design

The research investigated Sindh naming practice, a qualitative and exploratory paradigm, which is a highly personal, socially significant practice that cannot be adequately reflected and described using only numerical data. Naming is a result of elements like beliefs, emotions, traditions, and social values, which cannot be measured but should be interpreted. This study is phenomenological in its orientation, as the authors use the lived experiences of parents and their personal justifications to see how and why the later selected names for their children. The design is consistent with wider critical discourse analysis framework which is more focused on meaning-making, social situation, and the correlation between language, ideology, and culture. The qualitative interpretivist paradigm (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2017) enabled the researchers to explore naming practices within their broader cultural, religious, and social contexts and to analyze how parents use

language to explain, justify, and give meaning to their naming choices. Using this paradigm, the study seeks to understand naming as a discursive process that reflects social identity, cultural continuity, and social values in Sindhi society.

❖ **Population and Sampling**

Since parents are the main decision-makers, the population of the study consisted of parents living in different regions of Sindh. In the naming process, this study used simple random sampling to select participants who could provide relevant and meaningful insights into naming motivations. 520 parents from both urban and rural locations took part in the survey. Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Khairpur, Mirpur Khas, Nawabshah, Badin, Dadu, Jacobabad, Thatta, and Thar Parkar were among the many districts of Sindh from where participants were selected. This broad geographic representation helped capture linguistic, cultural, and social diversity across Sindh.

❖ **Data Collection**

Data collection was conducted using a designed online survey. The questionnaire had two major sections. The first section collected the demographic data of the participants whose names were to be analyzed for reasons. Their details such as age, gender, educational level, mother tongue, place of birth, and current place of residence was also determined through this part. These details facilitated the researchers to understand the social context of the individuals and the manner in which they may influence the naming traditions. These participants were asked to further inquire their parents for the reasons why they were given these names. They were requested to write exact words their parents had expressed to know the reasons behind choice of their children's names. There were no categories or examples that were predefined, and parents were free to describe their motivations. All Sindhi parents had the opportunity to take part in the online survey, and it was open from 6 to 9 December 2025, thus allowing Sindhi parents to take part in the survey in a variety of districts. The main dataset to be analyzed was the written responses.

❖ **Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Of the 520 participants, and 62.5% participants were male, and 37.5% female. The highest percentage of the respondents in terms of age fell under category of 21-25 years old, 32.7 percent of the total number of responses. This was then followed by respondents in the 26-30 years (18.1%), then 16-20 years (16.3%). The sample was 9.4% among the participants aged 10-15, with small proportions in the older age

groups, such as 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, and 46-50. Generally, the younger respondents are more represented, especially those in early adulthood.

The majority of respondents have identified Sindhi as their mother tongue when asked what their language background was. The speakers of the Sindhi language made up 55.2% out of the total sample. Other mother tongues reported were Balochi (16.3%), Urdu (8.7%). Lower percentages of Saraiki, Punjabi, Brahui, Marwari, and Dhatki speakers was also a part of this study.

Most of the respondents reported that they could speak their native languages. When questioned whether they were able to speak their mother tongue, a very large proportion 98.1% responded in the affirmative, with only a very small percentage saying that they could not speak their mother tongue. This implies that there is vigorous language continuation among the participants even when there is social and educational diversity.

The respondents had different levels of education. Almost half of the respondents had a bachelor's (49.4%). This is followed by college-level education (17.9%) and MPhil/MS-level education (13.8%). A very low percentage of respondents had primary education only (8.5%), and matric level education; and only a very small percentage had a doctorate or any other further degree. The data suggest that individuals with higher education or continued education take the center stage of the sample.

Data Analysis

It was not predetermined that the responses would be read and re-read to identify the repeating concepts in the data. Religious influence, family and ancestry name, cultural and Sufi name, historical admiration, name meaning-based name, astrology, individual preference, and fashionable or trendy name were the themes. The themes were examined through the contextualization of the justification in naming of the parents in the broader context in the social, cultural, and religious context of Sindh. CDA helped identify the use of language about naming justifications given by parents and how the naming arguments reflect the shared beliefs, values, and ideologies. Special emphasis was placed on how naming discourse is used in the creation of identity, cultural continuity, tradition, and modernity.

Relevant sociolinguistic and cultural theories were applied to derive the meanings and functions of the themes, and not as individual stages to analyze them. This

allowed the study to correlate individual reasons to give names to children with larger social values such as spirituality, ancestral respect, cultural pride, emotional attachment, social aspiration, and building a new identity in modern society. Written responses were read repeatedly in order to determine recurrent themes and patterns. Themes were not set, but they were inductively learned through self-explanations that the participants gave. This step was used to structure the information and determine the most important focuses.

Findings and Discussion

❖ Tribute, Memory, and Honor

These findings indicate that the naming as honor and tribute is interwoven with the extensional family discourses during which recollection is moral and emotive. Parents often name their children after the departed family members as a way of honoring, appreciating, and showing feelings of attachment towards the later. This practice of naming is constantly replicated over generations as it is an extreme wish of the community to make their families survive in memory. Such names are chosen also as part of the knowledge of names as symbolic connections between past and present. Everyday language and naming can be used to maintain family stories and collective memory (Fairclough, 2013). Apart from this, people name their children to pay tribute to their national and cultural heritage as well

For example, a male participant was given the name “Mehran” as a way of paying tribute to the Indus River that goes by the local name Mehran as well. Another male was named “Shiraz” after the Iranian city.

The Cultural Memory theory has been very firm in this theme because it believes that the culture that is carrying the past is doing so using symbolic representations and collective behaviors (Assmann, 1995). Family is able to maintain the image of the demised family members in their daily life since the namesakes serve as bearers of communal memory. It is through naming that parents can deliberately reproduce and repeat family history in the present. It is a cultural practice, which means that there is a cultural assumption that memory is not just a thought process but rather a social and symbolic phenomenon that defines the identity of generations (Assmann, 1995).

❖ **Desire for Uniqueness**

This category of names indicates that discourses of uniqueness go hand in hand with the growing individual agency and the transferred social expectations. Most of the respondents stressed the need to adopt names that are unique and not widely used in society. This reflects a broader cultural trend of nonconformity to the group and a unique self-expression. This is where negotiating individuality takes place as parents seek to accommodate cultural and social arenas without violating the boundaries of the names given to people.

The practice indicates that personal uniqueness is a constructed value within society that is influenced by a change in modern culture as opposed to an issue of personal wants alone (Beck, 1992). The researchers came across very unique names while going through the data which were new to them too, for example, Mustajab, Areena, Toufeed. The theory of individualization, which argues that modern civilizations place a high value on individual choice and self-expression, is congruent with the subject. Nonetheless, such an urge to be unique is limited because of cultural values, religion, and familial pressures. Consequently, the exercise of an individual choice is within the socially approved limits, recognizing the interplay of personal agency and social structure in naming practices.

❖ **Trend and Modernity**

Trend-based naming is regarded as one of the consequences of more general social developments such as globalization, urbanization, and media influence. There were many instances where modern/stylish names were mentioned, meaning that there has been a tendency to take names which reflect the modern lifestyles and social goals. The naming of individuals indicates the fluctuating processes of prestige and social mobility with the concept of modernity and social levels. The use of names is representative of the modern identity and the influence of social development on these trends. Variationist Sociolinguistics supports this interpretation by believing that change always occurs in socially structured patterns in language and therefore provides some validity to this point of view (Labov, 1966). This viewpoint suggests the importance of naming patterns in social stratification and generational change since the name of a given group of people becomes popular. Using this perspective, naming practices are not arbitrary, but they employ social patterns, which reveal greater cultural change.

❖ **Astrology or Spiritual Guidance**

Naming founded on astrology is based on ancient belief systems that heavily emphasize fate, harmony, and spiritual protection as its core values. Usually, participants referred to seeking the advice of elders, spiritual leaders, or astrologers, which points to the social validity of such advice.

One of the participants was named Haresh because the spiritual leader of the family had advised to name the newly-born child with a word starting with letter 'H'. Another participant reported that his name was given looking at the movement of stars as per the day and month of birth.

This custom represents a cultural idea that naming decisions must be according to cosmic or spiritual impacts, and names can determine fate and personality. Therefore, through naming that is based on astrology, authority is portrayed as something that is not personal and is entrenched in culture (Hall, 1990). Such a theme is what Identity Theory agrees with when it argues that the process of constructing identity involves common shared cultural meanings and social practices (ibid). Naming based on astrology locates the individuals in a spiritual world and constructs their identity based on the discourse of culture and religion. This notion is aligned with the issue of identity, and the practice demonstrates how the cultural beliefs and collective values shape the personal identity since birth.

❖ **Religious and Spiritual Influence**

The naming practices of religion are based on the old religious and moral discourses that construct the social life of Sindh. Religious commitment and uprightness were highly reflected in the names of prophets, saints, and religious personalities. This is because such names are perceived to be a way of enhancing faith and spirituality, and a way of seeking the blessings of God on the child.

Participants in this category were named after the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), or the prophets before him such as Yahve (locally Yahya), or the family members of the Prophet Muhamamd (Sadia, Prophet's foster mother, Khadija Prophet's wife) or his companions (Uzair). Some names were given after the Caliphs (Muhammad Usman, Muhammad Umer), others were given because these names were mentioned in holy scripture (Kanza, for example). Some participants were named after the names of Allah mentioned in the holy scripture (Wajid), some were named after famous spiritual personalities (Abdul Qadir, named after the famous saint buried in Baghdad Iraq Abdul Qadir Jilani). Apart from Muslim names, Hindu

names were also kept from the perspective of spirituality (for example, Narain Das, the servant to a Hindu God). This was a list comprising of over seventy names pointing to a magnitude of names having their roots in religion and spirituality.

CDA focuses on the replication of religious discourse through naming, so it is a social action that might strengthen the values and identity of religious communities (Fairclough, 2013). The idea promotes the theory that identity is created through the use of cultural discourse as formulated by Hall (Hall, 1990). Religious names are symbolic resources that enable individuals and families to manifest and uphold spirituality. By naming, the parents enforce social solidarity and disseminate religious sentiments by conveying religious beliefs and moral concepts (ibid).

❖ **Meaning-Based Naming**

This cultural perception presumes the power of words to affect character and fate of the name holder. The meaning of the name used by parents is usually strength, peace, or success, which reveals their belief that the names can determine the future behavior. The strategy is a moral interpretation of language where words are socially and ethically significant and not neutral; as a result, parents naming their children is an intentional attempt to impose hopes and expectations upon them (Hanks, 2013). This theme has been correlated with Distributed Morphology, which considers words as important units of language that have both morphological and semantic attributes (Halle & Marantz, 1993).

For example, one participant was named “Mohan” because it means attractive. Another participant stated that he was named Shafique “for its positive meaning”. A male participant was named Farrukh because it meant and signified bravery and the parents thought the child will inherit this quality in his personality. A female was named Laraib because the name means purity. The concept of chastity is highly valued in Sindhi society and by naming the children as such, parents expect the quality to grow in the child. Another female was named Gulrukh which literally means the face like a rose. Examples like these signify how parents associate their expectations and semantic connotations with the names of their children.

This was a bigger category than the religion and spiritual names. More than eighty participants were named under this theme. This shows that the names are not labels but meaningful constructs that define identity and social perceptions. Showing how these notions are culturally supported and reproduced in the course of everyday speech, CDA provides historical layers to the process of demonstrating how these beliefs are culturally supported and reproduced (Wodak, 2001).

❖ **Family Tradition**

Some of the reasons stated behind the naming practice of this theme are discussed here. One of the participants was named to maintain 'a historical family tradition'. Another was named due to 'connection with family lineage'. Resonating this, another participant was named 'according to the traditional family ritual'. A participant from "Mughal" surname was given the title of "Mirza" before his actual name to keep traditional family lineage with the former rulers of India alive.

Naming according to the family tradition is put in the perspective of respect, duty, and continuity. The participants emphasized the importance of ancestry introduction and honoring ancestors by naming the new generations with the names held by the deceased members of their families. Such practices reinforce the family identity and communal memory that form discourses of hierarchy and shared identity within the family context. This theme is in line with the Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory which states that language use maintains culture continuity and social cohesiveness using traditional names (Giles & Johnson, 1987).

❖ **Cultural and Ethnic Identity**

Culturally motivated naming can be placed within the framework of the greater history of the quest of preserved identity. These names employed by participants can be an instrument of ethnic and cultural pride, as well as cultural resistance against perceived cultural loss. These names are used as evidence of social identification and affiliation. Subsequently, naming has therefore become a discursive tool to state cultural identity and reject cultural assimilation. Historicity and sociality of such practices are motivation behind such cultural struggles (Fairclough, 2013).

For example, one of the female participants was named Sindhvarni to stress her Sindhi ethnicity. Another participant was named Ali because of "Shia ancestral tradition". Another participant was named to stress the Sunni identity. In the context of Sindh, people do not just consider culture and ethnicity as part of their identity, but their religion and sect are also important components of their identity as is evident from the data.

This naming practice can also be viewed from the perspective of Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory which states that language is used to create and sustain ethnic identity (Giles and Johnson, 1987). Naming is an act of cultural reproduction which is symbolic because one boosts ethnic identification and cultural pride. It is an

example of how language actions can provide resistance to cultural marginalization (ibid).

❖ **Inspiration from Famous Personalities**

The process of giving names to people in positions of social power indicates the circulation of prestige and power in society. This is because they admire and aspire to pick names of celebrities, leaders, or spiritual figures, as expressed by participants. This type of naming connects individual identity with social ideals and social narratives. The use of such names indicates the perceived status and symbolic instruments of social mobility (Fairclough, 2013).

In this interesting category, following are some of the famous personalities after whom the children were named: Ilahi Bux Soomro (a famous Sindhi politician), Saddam Hussain (former ruler of Iraq), Bibi Rabia Basri (famous Islamic female personality), Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, Kajol Agarwal (Bollywood actress), etc.

This corresponds to the idea of symbolic capital introduced by Bourdieu, according to which cultural symbols can be used to express social value and prestige (Bourdieu, 1986). By giving their children names after famous people, parents attempt to associate their children with social success and status. This habit indicates social desires and the need to acquire a symbolic status in society (ibid).

❖ **Parents' Personal Liking**

The growing discussions of individual agencies and taste are embodied in personal preferences. Parents tend not to give a name that may cause conflict or societal reproach. This depicts that emotion is cultivated within the boundaries of culture and ideals within the social context (Fairclough, 2013). This category contained the most names, nearly a hundred and forty participants were named simply stating that their parents liked these names for them.

In this case, the theme is consistent with Affective Theory, that show how emotions can influence social behavior. This is affected by the societal and cultural restrictions; emotional preferences have a significant influence on naming decisions. The parents select names in a manner that are emotionally significant and also acceptable to society; parents demonstrate the manner in which feelings and culture interact during naming processes (Hochschild, 1983).

❖ **Similarity or Matching Naming Practice**

Many parents name their children from an aesthetic or stylistic point of view. One of the techniques they employ in this regard is alliteration, e.g. all names must start with a certain letter or sound, or they must contain certain letter. Another way is rhyming so that the names may sound similar.

For example, a participant was named Asadullah because it rhymed with his siblings' names Najeebullah and Hizbullah. A female participant was named with letter A because her mother's name started with A. Another female participant's name ended with 'na' because her mother and sister's names ended with the same sound. An interesting case of two twins, a male and a female, participants was found in which the twins had been named almost similarly with a difference of a gender marker only i.e. Rohail (male) and Rohaila (female). A participant was named Chanda while her twin sister was named Tara, both words meaning 'a moon' exhibiting semantic similarity.

Similarities in names represent cultural orderliness of practicing harmony and righting their family. Participants noted that they used similar sounds or concepts while naming siblings or relatives. Such repetition is the cultural value of uniformity and stasis in the family structure that reinforces cultural and social norms (Fairclough, 2013). This is in agreement with Structuralist theory, which alludes to the fact that cultural activities conform to basic norms and structures. Matching names is a system of structured culture in which similarity and order are appreciated. With this approach, the name is regarded as a social formation that organizes cultural continuity and family identification (Saussure, 1916).

Literature and Poetry Influence

This theme of naming points to the incorporation of personal identity into shared cultural tales through intertextual allusions. The literary culture has also impacted the naming practices to the extent that those who participate in the naming usually use the names that are found in poetry, literature, or Sufi books. These titles are expressive of identity, aestheticism, and cultural literacy. The practice of literary naming displays has revealed that cultural texts remain influential in normal living conditions and identity (Kristeva, 1980).

For example, some participants were named after famous characters from Shah Jo Risalo, a widely poetry book of the most celebrated poet of Sindh Shah Abdul Latif

Bhattai. The names like Marui, Moomal, Laila, and Paras are allusions to the famous book. Names like Salman, Shabnam, Manjhi came from famous characters in novels.

This is in line with the intertextuality, which is the words used by Kristeva to refer to the interactions between texts and the dissemination of meanings between texts across cultures. The cultural knowledge and literary heritage that are passed down via language are manifested in the naming after. It shows how cultural texts are integrated into a process of forming an identity on day-to-day basis (Kristeva, 1980).

Table: 1 Themes of Naming Practices Emergent from Data

Serial	Theme	Core Theory	Analytical Focus
1	Honor, Tribute, and Memory	Cultural Memory Theory (Assmann, 1995)	Names preserve ancestral, religious, and historical memory across generations
2	Family Tradition	Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory (Giles & Johnson, 1987)	Naming sustains ethnic lineage and cultural continuity
3	Cultural and Ethnic Identity	Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory (Giles & Johnson, 1987)	Names mark group belonging and cultural pride
4	Religious Influence	Identity Theory (Hall, 1990)	Religious names construct and reinforce spiritual identity
5	Meaning-Based Naming	Distributed Morphology	Semantic meanings reflect cultural values and identity aspirations
6	Similarity or Matching	Structuralism (Saussure, 1916)	Patterned naming reflects underlying cultural structures
7	Literature / Poetry Influence	Intertextuality (Kristeva, 1980)	Literary references shape symbolic and cultural identity
8	Trend and Modernity	Variationist Sociolinguistics (Labov, 1966)	Naming practices vary across generations and social groups
9	Desire for Uniqueness	Individualization Theory (Beck, 1992)	Names express individual identity within social limits
10	Influence of Famous Personalities	Symbolic Capital (Bourdieu, 1986)	Prestige and aspiration influence naming choices
11	Astrology or Spiritual Guidance	Identity Theory (Hall, 1990)	Belief-based identity rooted in cultural worldview
12	Parents' Personal Liking	Affective Theory	Emotional attachment shapes naming decisions

Conclusion

Research findings in this study indicate that naming in Sindh has a strong social, cultural, and religious significance that connects people to the past, culture, and social values of a family. Naming can be seen as a form of social discourse and social communication which projects how individual people consider themselves and how they would like other individuals to consider them. The results indicate that the naming practices in Sindh are a dynamic activity in which tradition and modernity are in contact with each other. Naming is not random, but is a reflection of the social values, cultural beliefs, and ambitions of an individual. With the help of CDA, this research demonstrates that naming is an influential space in which identity, memory, and social change are repeatedly negotiated through language (Fairclough, 2013). Personal names in Sindh play an effective role as identity, memory, and cultural markers. Faith, respect, emotional attachment, tradition, and modern aspirations are passed on in the family through naming, which is not just a linguistic designation. The analysis demonstrates that naming practices connect the lives of people with wider social structures as well as history. The analysis is placed in larger sociolinguistic and cultural research because it focuses on naming as an eloquent meaning-making and identity-construction site. It shows the expression of religious commitment by names, maintenance of family history, religious commitment, modern tendencies, and the maintenance of ethnic identity. Such findings point to the importance of understanding everyday use of language so as to explore how culture and history are replicated and reproduced in social life through discursive practices.

Lastly, the study recommends that future research may analyze the difference between regional and generational differences in the naming practice. Such a study would be useful in explaining further the connection between linguistics, people, and social transformation in multi-lingual societies.

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