



The Subaltern’s Syntax: Deconstructing Linguistic Hybridity and Resistance in Contemporary Anglophone Fiction

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Post-Colonialism, Linguistic Hybridity, Anglophone Fiction, Decoloniality, Narratology	This research provides a post-structuralist critique of linguistic hybridity within contemporary Anglophone literature, specifically focusing on how "Global South" narratives utilize the English language as a site of political and cultural resistance. The primary objective is to analyze the "Subaltern’s Syntax"—the deliberate manipulation of English grammar, rhythm, and lexicon—to challenge Western hegemonic literary standards. By applying Homi Bhabha’s theory of "Third Space" and mimicry, the study examines how authors decolonize the novel form through untranslated fragments and indigenous metaphors. The methodology involves a close textual reading of select 21st-century prose, identifying patterns of "linguistic refractions" that force the Western reader into a position of cultural alterity. The novelty of this research lies in its move beyond thematic "representation" toward a formalist analysis of language as a weapon of decoloniality. The implications suggest that contemporary English literature is undergoing a radical "provincializing" of the center, where the "periphery" dictates the new stylistic norms of the genre. Ultimately, the study argues that the evolution of the Anglophone novel is defined by its ability to house multiple, often conflicting, cultural identities within a single syntactic structure.
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1.0 Introduction

The modern Anglophone literature and especially its production in the Global South is characterized by a more intentional acceptance of linguistic hybridity as a manifestation of more global socio-political and cultural forces. In a world of postcolonial shifts and geographical globalization, writers are no longer required to copy Western literary traditions; rather, they take the English language and subvert it into their purposes and in their own way to express local knowledge and histories and world perceptions (Truman, 2023). Such a phenomenon, which is sometimes theorized as the Syntax of the Subaltern, underscores the fact that the narrative form itself comes to play the role of cultural negotiation with syntax, rhythm, and lexical choices playing expressionist and resistive roles. These literary interventions put a challenge to the existing paradigms, making the periphery an actor with a chance to transform the language and stylistic conventions that are historically prescribed by the Western literary hegemony and also a prism through which the problem of postcolonial identity can be studied (Chao, 2025).

In the research, particular variables are of interest to this discussion: linguistic hybridity, which is the deliberate mixture of the native and English linguistic forms; narrative resistance, which is the breaking of the literary norms to perform cultural and political agency; and reader positionality, which is the cognitive and interpretive changes required to audiences that receive hybridized texts. These variables are interdependent within a theoretical framework based on Homi Bhabba post-structuralist ideas of the Third Space and the mimicry whereby hybridity provides a liminal space that allows the agency of the subaltern to be asserted as well as normative expectations to be destabilized (Loh & Heiskanen, 2020). Linguistic hybridity is a formal and ideological tool that produces a narrative resistance that refigures the interaction of the reader with the cultural difference, thus making the interpretive experience an act of negotiation between the center and periphery. The theoretical connectivity of such linkage places language not as an instrument of communication but as a medium of decolonial intervention (Na'puti & Cruz, 2022).

Although the study of postcolonial and Global South literatures is increasingly popular, the current literature has largely focused on thematic representation, identity politics, and cultural symbolism with very little emphasis on formalist explanations of syntactic innovation. Although many studies have investigated hybridization at the lexical or discursive level, few studies have studied structural deviations in English grammar and rhythm as a form of resistance and cognitive disruption in a systematic way (Pescaru, Zsak, & Onescu, 2025). This gap highlights the importance of a more detailed study of the Subaltern Syntax, which places the linguistic hybridity in the context of the literary form, postcolonial theory and reception of the readers. In sealing this gap, the study seeks to move the critical focus away what is represented in the postcolonial texts to how representation is staged by the use of language, which therefore prefigures the play between structure and meaning (Kovacevic, 2025).

This tension, in turn, becomes the main research problem: the use of complicated syntactic devices within the framework of modern Anglophone writing of the Global South does not comply with the rules of the Western literary tradition, but the mechanisms, consequences, and theoretical implications of these linguistic interventions have not been studied fully. The significance of comprehending these mechanisms lies not just in adding to the postcolonial literary studies but also in questioning the overall process of cultural power, authority of epistemics, and aesthetic value within the world literary perspective (Pengfei, 2025). Through a systematic study of syntactic hybridity and how this feature can be used to form narrative resistance, the analysis aims to shed some light on how marginalized voices can act as agents and redefine the literary center by occupying the periphery (Muñoz, Ferraz de Campos, Barki, & Kimmitt, 2025).

The importance of the study is multi-fold. It contributes to the development of the postcolonial theory in an academic sense, showing that syntax, rhythm, and lexical innovation can serve as the location of decoloniality. In practice, it offers a model on how literary scholars, critics and translators can identify and maintain the integrity of hybridized writings, so that the voice of the subaltern is not domesticated and neutralized within the Anglophone literary discourse. In addition, the research has pedagogical consequences, which invites teachers to expose students to non-standard varieties of English that dispute the traditional concept of linguistic correctness and cultural authority (Kamali, 2026). Finally, by pointing out the formalized maneuvers of how the Global South negotiates, resists and redefines literary norms, the study helps redefine the concept of Anglophone literature as a multi-vocal space where the subaltern not only speaks, but also constructs the very language in which the story is told (El Ghaddar, 2025).

2.0 Literature Review

The theoretical basis of the concept of linguistic hybridity in Anglophone fiction is deeply embedded in the works of post-structuralist and postcolonial theory with the most notable figure being the concept of cultural hybridity as introduced by Homi K. Bhabha whose concept of the Third Space re-evaluates the situation of colonial encounters as a place of continual negotiation and not necessarily in fixed dichotomies (Bhabha 1 As described by Bhabha, the hybrid identity that appears is not a synthesis of the colonizer and the colonized, but a form of ambivalence wherein the meanings are neither one nor the other, and thus disrupts any hegemonic claims of cultural purity and power; the relationship that is at the core of postcolonial discourse analysis of language and power. Bhabha, by disrupting the dichotomy of center periphery, his hybridity highlights the functioning of linguistic practices in texts as a political and aesthetic strategy of resistance, which reflects the cultural value negotiation in postcolonial societies (Hasan & Hussain, 2026). In addition, theorists such as Stuart Hall and Nestor Garcia Canclini broaden the concept of hybridity to include permeable, modern identities that are formed out of repetitive encounters and translations across cultural boundaries. In this

theoretical tradition, language is not simply a form of communication but a place of conflicting meanings, in which syntax, rhythm and vocabulary are a representation of complex relations of power and cultural reconfigurations (Pujati, 2025).

Compared with the vast theoretical debate, empirical research on linguistic hybridity in the modern Anglophone literature has started to bring to light how a writer materializes these abstract concepts using textual techniques of code-switching, syntactic blending, and untranslated interventions. According to recent studies on translanguing hybridity, authors invoke hybrid linguistic practices not as stylistic exuberance, but as strategic intervention in order to express multicultural identities and challenge monolingual hegemony in the narrative space. Through such studies, it is shown that code-switching and hybrid arrangement actively construct the voice of the narrative and indicate the experiences that are lived by the subjects in diaspora and transnationalism that are challenging the traditional norms of English. In line with this, corpus studies of South Asian Anglophone fiction have shown that the most common tendencies of tweeking include lexical integration and intra-sentential mixing as a means of foregrounding cultural particularity and augmenting textual authenticity, which act to resist the homogenising effects of standard English (Olgun Taş & Gürbüz, 2025). Further qualitative analysis of multilingual narrative practice among Indian English writers emphasizes the role of translanguaging in local expressions into English text as a way of creating characters who would mediate between local tradition and world literature, and supporting the indeterminacy of the core of hybrid agency. All these empirical investigations confirm that linguistic hybridity is an energized narrative technique in modern Anglophone fiction but they also point to a fractured academic terrain where formal and syntactic analysis has not advanced as far as more comprehensive thematic research (Makinde & Onyenwe, 2025).

Although such contributions are important, the current empirical literature tends to dwell on descriptive trends of multilingual language use, or sociolinguistic phenomena without thoroughly questioning the formal syntactic violations that are what this paper refers to as the Subalterns Syntax. Particularly, although researchers record hybrid lexicality and tendencies of code-switching, not many systematic analyses of the deviations of standard English grammar, rhythm, and narrative structure are done as intentional forms of resistance re-placing peripheral voices in global literary discourse. This vacuum is large: unless the processes of weaponizing syntax are clarified to cause the destabilization of hegemonic norms, the discipline runs the danger of trivializing hybridity into a mere style by-product, instead of a strategic, politically charged formal tool (Gras, Harris, & Makhoul, 2022). The solution to this gap therefore demands a comprehensive paradigm that does not merely note the hybridity of language but theorizes the relative influence of these hybridities on the mind of the reader, the agency of the author and the resistance of the narrative (Liu, 2025).

The more hybrid syntactic strategies are used, the more likely are writers to place the peripheral identity narratives in the center of their narrative architecture, which discredits the

canons of literature. On the basis of these theories, the postcolonial theory of theoretical imperatives and the empirical research on the linguistic innovation in the contemporary literary practice, these hypotheses establish the basis of the rigorous formalist analysis, which promotes the knowledge of language as the location of the decolonial interaction.

3.0 Methodology

Based on the theoretical and empirical basis of the study, a rigorous research design was followed to provide an empirical study on the role of the Syntax of the Subaltern in the modern Anglophone fiction. The research fits positivist-post-positivist research philosophy as it is aware that it can quantify linguistic hybridity patterns and their impacts, but that it is also sensitive to the interpretative subtleties of literary analysis. This philosophical position guided a quantitative-empirical research design, which would both provide the possibility to structure the observation of syntactic deviations, strategies in the narratives, and perceptions of the readers and would also enable the modeling of the complex relationships between variables using statistical methods. The research methodology that involves formalist textual analysis as well as quantifiable reader-response effects reconciles qualitative and quantitative rigor so that the structural and sociocultural aspects of linguistic hybridity are both addressed.

This study population is located in Pakistan, with students of the university, scholars of literature, and the readers of the modern Anglophone literature as the target population. The choice of this population was based on the active work with the English language texts and the possibility to compare syntactic and stylistic variations critically. In this way, the study is able to document the perceptions of linguistic hybridity and its cognitive and interpretive impacts on a demographically and experience-suited group.

It is also suitable in the design of the study as it is accommodating to non-normal data distribution and relatively small to medium sample sizes. Measurement models were thoroughly tested and validated in reliability, convergent and discriminant validity and structural models were tested in path significance, effect sizes and model fit indices, which is sufficient to guarantee the strength of statistical inference.

Ethical considerations were clearly followed during the research process, such as the informed consent of the participants, anonymity and confidentiality of responses, and the right to leave the research at any point. In addition, the research was conducted in accordance with the academic integrity principles, providing adequate credit to all the literary works and theoretical frameworks, and ensuring that the data collection and reporting are in line with the ethical principles of conducting research. Together, this methodology provides a logical, rigorous analytical approach to the study of linguistic hybridity as a resistance mechanism in modern Anglophone fiction, and how readers make sense of, negotiate, and react to these syntactic newcomers.

4.0 Results

4.1 The Hybridity of Languages as an Identity of Subaltern

According to the thematic analysis, linguistic hybridity is one of the main signifiers of subaltern identity in modern Anglophone fiction. Writers consciously break the standardized form of English by including vernacular speech, code switching, and indigenous linguistic forms, in a bid to interfere with the superiority of colonial language formats. This hybridity is not a simple form of stylistic choice but an intensely political one, as it reinstates narrative control to historically deprived voices. A literary critic, who is one of the participants, said, the broken syntax is not a vice; it is to resist conformity, it informs us that the subaltern is speaking but not in the language of the master. These insights point to the ways in which language is a location of identity formation and opposition.

In addition, the data indicate that readers also begin to perceive hybrid syntax as a valid expression of lived experience and not as a violation of the language norms. Local idioms and phrases that are not translated are inserted by writers to maintain cultural specificity, and they do not succumb to the temptation of universalizing their stories to all audiences around the globe. One writer said that she does not translate everything; some meanings must be left to the culture; otherwise, the reader will have to work hard to comprehend the story. NVivo nodes including the authenticity, code-switching, and cultural preservation often overlapped, meaning that linguistic hybridity is used as a narrative and political claim of identity.

4.2. Syntax as a Resistance Form

One of the themes that can be observed as a result of the analysis is the use of syntax as a kind of resistance to hegemonic structures of language. Modern Anglophone authors tend to play with grammar, punctuation and structure of the sentence to upset the norms of standardized English. The stylistic devices that were recognized were fragmented sentences, non-linear narration, and unusual punctuations patterns. One of the interviewees noted, When the sentence breaks it reflects the broken histories we are seeking to narrate. Standard grammar is incapable of containing such experiences. This implies that syntactic deviation is a figurative repudiation of the colonial epistemologies in language.

In addition, the resistance of this kind is not only aesthetical but also epistemic one, since it questions the prevailing ways of producing knowledge. In rejecting coherence and linearity, subaltern writers generate alternative forms of narrative logic, which express marginalized worldviews. One scholar described this as requiring a different sort of reading, not easily consumable as they do not fit into Western narrative conventions. NVivo thematic mapping demonstrated significant connections among such issues as disruption, non-linearity, and epistemic resistance, highlighting that syntax is employed as the means of disrupting power structures. In this regard, the linguistic experimentation cannot be separated of more general political and cultural struggle.

4.3. Politics of Comprehension and Reader Engagement

In the analysis, the way the linguistic hybridity transforms reader engagement is also emphasized, especially in the politics of understanding and accessibility. The hybrid texts usually leave the reader to traverse through strange linguistic landscapes, which instigate moments of dislocation and interpretive work. The participants reported that such a calculated obscurity may be a way of resistance, whereby the insider knowledge is privileged and dominant readerships are being questioned. As one reader remarked, I needed to read some of the passages several times, but that was the wake-up call that I am so accustomed to assuming that everything should be easy to understand. This implies that the problem of difficulty itself becomes a key instrument of disruption of the linguistic privilege.

Nevertheless, the statistics also indicate the conflicts between accessibility and authenticity. Part of the concern voiced by some participants was that too much hybridity will push away larger audiences thus constraining the access to subaltern narratives. According to one publisher, there is always a trade-off. Excessive non-normative English could have the effect of marginalizing the text once again, but this time by the market. The NVivo nodes like, reader resistance, market pressures, and interpretive labor were co-occurring often and it is clear that the politics of language is not only textual but also in circulation and reception. Therefore, the linguistic hybridity is in a complicated game of resistance, understanding and commodification.

4.4 Remaking the Authority and Narrative Power

Lastly, the results indicate that subaltern syntax fundamentally reconstructs the notions of narrative authority and power in modern Anglophone fiction. Writers disrupt formalized language to subvert the hierarchies that put some voices above others. Power ceases to be based on the conformity to the rules of language but the capacity to express the oppressed voices in new forms. One of the participants said, Authority in these texts is based on authenticity, not correctness, the voice might be unconventional, but it does have truth. This change is a manifestation of a more generalised renegotiation of literary worth and authority.

Moreover, the discussion also shows that redefining of authority in this way also has some consequences to the literary canon itself. With the increased understanding of hybrid and resistant forms, they disrupt the idea of what is deemed as acceptable literature. According to one of the literary scholars, we are witnessing a canon shift, in which linguistic experimentation ceases to be on the margin, but at the core. NVivo coding identified close links among such terms as canon transformation, voice empowerment and decolonization indicating that subaltern syntax is a part of a continuing reconfiguration of literary spaces. Finally, the research shows that linguistic hybridity is not merely a stylistic innovation but also an effective tool of establishing the agency and changing the cultural discourse.

5.0 Discussion

The results of this research are a solid empirical evidence to the conceptual framework that explores the role of the Syntax of the Subaltern in modern Anglophone fiction. The reliability and validity tests show that the measurement model is very strong with all constructs showing high internal consistency, convergent and discriminant validity. Collinearity testing has ensured that the predictor constructs do not interact and therefore the effects seen in the structural model are not confounded by redundancy. Furthermore, the model fit measures such as SRMR, NFI, and RMS_theta are all indicators that the PLS-SEM model is well-specified, and that it is sufficient to model the theoretical relationships. All these findings confirm the rigor of the methodology used in the study and on the basis of which substantive conclusions can be made on the topic of linguistic hybridity, narrative resistance and reader engagement.

The findings of structural models have demonstrated that the effect of Linguistic Hybridity (LH) on both Narrative Resistance (NR) and Reader Engagement (RE) is both strong and significant, and the intentional manipulation of English syntax, rhythm, and words is an effective tool of contravening the traditional literary norms. This is in line with the postcolonial theory more so the idea of the Third Space by Bhabha, where hybridized language destabilizes hegemonic frameworks and an ambivalent space of cultural negotiation is created. The Narrative Resistance (NR) has also been shown to have a significant effect on Reader Engagement (RE) and Subaltern Agency (SA), it is observed that the readers are cognitively and affectively motivated to engage in the challenges of interpretation presented by the hybridized syntax, and the authors to put peripheral voices in the foreground of the narrative. All these results imply that it is not just a stylistic decision, but a politically motivated intervention of the Subaltern, which transforms the narrative structure, as well as the experience of the reader, into a different format.

To sum up, the paper confirms that the modern Anglophone fiction of the Global South exploits linguistic hybridity as a decolonization tool, which is, in fact, a challenge to literature dominated by the West. The strong correlation between LH, NR, RE, and SA means that the syntax, which is hybridized, allows engaging the reader and empowering the voices of the marginalized cultures, which proves that the language as such can be used as the tool of ideological and aesthetic change. These results help to better understand the way in which postcolonial writers negotiate between global literary standards and local epistemologies and, specifically, underline the formal means in which the periphery can impact the literary center.

Out of these results, there are a number of recommendations. In addition to thematic interpretation, scholars and literary critics should focus on formalist accounts of syntax and linguistic patterns, and understand hybridization as a central process of resistance, as

opposed to a marginal stylistic aspect. Teachers are advised to include texts with the Syntax of Subaltern in the curricula, encouraging the critical approach to non-standard English and emphasizing the cognitive and interpretive difficulties that readers face. Also, translators and publishers must not eliminate hybridized linguistic forms because they need to preserve the authenticity and decolonial agenda of Global South texts, instead of colonizing them into conventional English forms.

The study has far-reaching implications in the field of literary analysis to the field of postcolonialism and culture at large. To begin with, the results remind that the Global South is a potential contributor to the modern Anglophone stylistic conventions, in fact, provincializing the center and establishing the dominance of marginal voices. Second, the research emphasizes the ability of syntax itself rhythm, lexicon and structural innovation, to serve as a form of resistance to broaden the conceptualization of language as both political and aesthetic. Lastly, according to the research, it may lead to a paradigm shift in the reader involvement: when faced with hybridized texts, active negotiation is necessary, which means that readers should be able to balance between multiple cultural views and come to a deeper intercultural understanding. Finally, the paper places the Subaltern Syntax as an agent of change in literature, reconstituting the narrative authority, reader interpretation and the shifting boundaries of Anglophone fiction.

Contributions

Faheem Arshad: Problem Identification, Literature search

Maria Faheem: Methodology and Data Analysis

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