

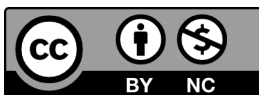
Framing Minority Belonging: Cognitive Metaphors, Translanguaging, and Cultural Memory in South Asian Anglophone Fiction

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Abstract: South Asian Anglophone fiction has often been examined as a field of postcolonial history, migration, and cultural identity, yet its relevance to language-and-cognition research remains insufficiently specified. This article develops a qualitative cognitive discourse analysis of minority belonging in four South Asian Anglophone narratives: Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*, and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*. It asks how cognitive metaphors structure minority identity, how translanguaging and culturally loaded expressions frame belonging, displacement, and memory, and how these linguistic-cognitive patterns disclose postcolonial forms of cultural cognition under globalization. Drawing on conceptual metaphor theory, frame semantics, conceptual blending, narrative cognition, translanguaging practices and postcolonial identity theory, this article puts forward a Cognitive-Postcolonial Framing Model of Minority Identity. The analysis reveals that home is conceptualized as a memory container, a moral origin, an unstable territory and an imagined horizon; border, body, and language function as deictic frames through which diasporic subjects negotiate visibility and exclusion; and translanguaging markers operate as cognitive anchors that resist monolingual assimilation. The article contributes to cognitive linguistics by extending metaphor and framing analysis into postcolonial minority narratives, and to South Asian Anglophone studies by specifying how language organizes cultural cognition rather than merely reflecting identity.

Keywords: Cognitive Metaphor; Postcolonial Identity; South Asian Anglophone Fiction; Cultural Cognition; Translanguaging; Minority Narrative; Cognitive Discourse Analysis



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1 Introduction

Language is not merely a medium for minority groups to narrate migration, but also a cognitive tool that shapes people's perceptions of places, bodies, memories and social statuses. In South Asian Anglophone fiction, experiences

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commonly described as diaspora, displacement, minority identity, or postcolonial belonging are repeatedly organized by linguistic forms that do more than represent cultural difference. Names carry histories that are not easily translated; kinship terms activate family-based schemas of obligation and intimacy; religious and ethnic labels condense public frames of suspicion or loyalty; and spatial expressions such as home, border, here, there, inside, and outside provide conceptual scaffolding for narrating who belongs and who remains conditionally visible. These textual features render South Asian Anglophone fiction a valuable research subject for cognitive linguistics, as they demonstrate that cultural identity is constructed via recurring metaphors, deictic positioning, frame activation and translanguaging practices.

Existing scholarship on South Asian Anglophone writing has developed sophisticated accounts of colonial history, migration, diaspora, hybridity, gender, religion, and global capitalism (Bhabha, 1994; Boehmer, 2005; Brah, 1996; Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1990; Mishra, 2007; Nasta, 2002; Ranasinha, 2016; Spivak, 1988). Recent criticism of the selected authors has further refined debates on migration, world-literary circulation, citizenship, grief, and diaspora, especially in relation to Hamid, Lahiri, and Shamsie (Bilal, 2020; Khorakiwala, 2021; Knudsen & Rahbek, 2021; Lagji, 2019; Perfect, 2019; Pishotti, 2022; Sadaf, 2020). Yet most of these studies regard language mainly as a vehicle for representation or evidence of cultural politics. By contrast, cognitive linguistics and cognitive poetics have formed robust interpretations of metaphor, frame semantics, mental spaces, narrative comprehension and embodied meaning (Bruner, 1991; Dancygier, 2012; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002; Gibbs, 1994; Kövecses, 2005, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Langacker, 2008; Stockwell, 2002; Turner, 1996; Werth, 1999). However, scholars in these fields rarely focus on postcolonial minority narratives, where cognition is influenced by multilingualism, racialization, migration and colonial memory. The gap is therefore not the absence of research on either South Asian literature or cognitive discourse; it is the limited integration of the two into a framework that can explain how postcolonial identities are cognitively organized in language.

This article addresses that gap by developing a qualitative cognitive discourse analysis of four South Asian Anglophone narratives: Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*, and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*. This corpus is deliberately limited in scope, and the research adopts an interpretive approach instead of statistical analysis. It was selected because the four texts foreground different but related configurations of minority belonging: intergenerational Bengali American identity, British Asian self-positioning, globalized migration through speculative mobility, and Muslim British citizenship under securitized visibility. Combined, these texts enable comparisons across American, British and transnational contexts, while the research stays focused on South Asian Anglophone literature. The analysis does not claim to measure reader cognition experimentally; rather, it identifies linguistic and narrative patterns that model cultural cognition at the level of textual organization.

The article asks three research questions. RQ1: What cognitive metaphors structure minority identity in selected South Asian Anglophone narratives? RQ2: How do translanguaging and culturally loaded expressions frame belonging, displacement, and memory? RQ3: How do these linguistic-cognitive patterns reveal postcolonial forms of cultural cognition under globalization? These questions correspond to three analytical steps: metaphor identification, analysis of frames and translanguaging, and theoretical interpretation. The article argues that minority belonging is organized through a recurring cognitive architecture in which home is metaphorically mapped as container, origin, wound, and horizon; border and body become deictic frames that locate subjects in relation to power; and translanguaging markers serve as cognitive anchors that preserve cultural memory while challenging monolingual norms of intelligibility.

The contribution is threefold. First, the article extends cognitive metaphor and framing analysis into postcolonial

literary discourse by showing how metaphorical mappings are inseparable from histories of race, migration, and colonial classification. Second, it contributes to South Asian Anglophone studies by specifying the linguistic mechanisms through which cultural identity becomes cognitively organized, rather than treating identity as a purely thematic or sociological category. Third, it proposes a Cognitive-Postcolonial Framing Model of Minority Identity that can be adapted for future research combining literary texts, multilingual discourse, reader response, corpus linguistics, and psycholinguistic methods. The article proceeds by reviewing relevant scholarship, presenting the theoretical model, explaining the methodology, analyzing three main findings, and discussing implications for language-and-cognition research.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Language, Cognition, and Cultural Meaning

Cognitive linguistics is built on the premise that meaning is not an abstract system separated from experience, but a set of patterned relations linking language, perception, embodiment, categorization and cultural knowledge. Cognitive grammar and usage-based approaches show that linguistic forms invite speakers and readers to construe events from particular vantage points, profile selected aspects of experience, and organize conceptual domains through recurrent usage (Croft & Cruse, 2004; Evans & Green, 2006; Langacker, 2008). This premise is crucial for postcolonial discourse research, for language does not merely label minority identity but also shapes it cognitively through repeated choices in categorization, spatial orientation, evaluation and perspective.

In literary and narrative discourse, such cognitive processes become especially visible because fiction intensifies ordinary meaning-making. Narrative does not merely recount events; it guides readers through temporal sequencing, viewpoint management, memory reconstruction, and the attribution of agency (Bruner, 1991; Herman, 2009; Turner, 1996). Cognitive poetics has further argued that literary interpretation depends on schemas, conceptual domains, text worlds, deixis, and embodied simulations that readers use to make fictional worlds coherent (Dancygier, 2012; Stockwell, 2002; Werth, 1999). South Asian Anglophone fiction is therefore not only a literary record of migration but also a site where cultural cognition is arranged through language.

This orientation allows cultural identity to be examined as a process of cognitive salience. Rather than treating identity as an already-formed social attribute, the cognitive approach asks how identity is made imaginable and narratable. Words such as home, border, name, body, accent, passport, prayer, mother tongue, and silence are not neutral lexical items. They recruit frames of domesticity, territoriality, lineage, embodiment, state recognition, religious belonging, linguistic inheritance, and withheld speech. When these frames emerge in postcolonial fiction, they carry social histories and organize cognition via linguistic patterns, helping readers understand selfhood, exclusion and belonging.

2.2 Cognitive Metaphor and Narrative Framing

Conceptual Metaphor Theory remains central to the study of language and cognition because it shows how abstract domains are structured through more concrete domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Metaphor is far more than rhetorical ornamentation. It is a conceptual mechanism that makes complex experiences, including identity, memory, emotion, morality and belonging, comprehensible. Kövecses (2005, 2010) emphasizes that metaphor is simultaneously embodied and culturally variable: many metaphorical mappings draw on shared bodily experience, but their elaboration is shaped

by cultural models, historical conditions, and discourse communities. Gibbs (1994) similarly argues that metaphor, imagination, and embodied understanding are central to everyday cognition. Recent studies on metaphor have also refocused on audience comprehension and contextual variation, proving that metaphorical source domains influence readers' interpretations in different social settings (Brugman et al., 2022). For South Asian Anglophone fiction, this means that metaphors of home, exile, border, and memory should be analyzed not only as literary motifs but also as cognitive mechanisms.

Frame semantics complements metaphor theory by explaining how words activate structured scenes of meaning. Fillmore's (1982) account of frames shows that lexical items presuppose background knowledge; to understand a word is to understand the frame it invokes. Entman's (1993) work on framing, although developed in communication studies, similarly clarifies that frames select and make salient certain aspects of reality. Semino (2008) demonstrates that metaphor and discourse analysis can reveal how recurring patterns of language organize social understanding. In postcolonial minority narratives, terms such as immigrant, native, refugee, citizen, foreigner, Muslim, Indian, Pakistani, Bengali, British, American, or home do not function as isolated descriptors. They activate frames that organize moral evaluation, legal belonging, historical memory, and social visibility.

Conceptual blending and mental space theory further explain how narratives combine different domains into emergent meaning (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). A diasporic subject may simultaneously inhabit mental spaces associated with ancestral homeland, host nation, family memory, legal citizenship, and global mobility. Fiction can stage these spaces in condensed form, allowing readers to perceive identity as a dynamic integration rather than a fixed category. Narrative cognition thus helps explain why postcolonial minority fiction repeatedly returns to names, domestic interiors, documents, routes, rituals, and bodily markers: these elements become cognitive prompts through which different social and historical spaces are blended.

2.3 Postcolonial Minority Identity and South Asian Anglophone Writing

Postcolonial theory has long emphasized that colonial and diasporic identities are produced through unequal systems of representation. Bhabha's (1994) account of hybridity and ambivalence shows that postcolonial identity emerges in the in-between spaces of cultural translation. Hall (1990) argues that cultural identity is not a fixed essence but a positioning within history, memory, and representation. Brah (1996) defines diaspora through entangled relations among home, location, and power, while Gilroy (1993) insists that modern cultural identity must be understood through movement, transnational memory, and racialized modernity. Anzaldúa's (1987) border thinking and Spivak's (1988) question of subaltern speech remain relevant because linguistic visibility does not automatically equal interpretive authority.

South Asian Anglophone fiction is especially valuable for examining these dynamics. Rushdie's influence helped establish the aesthetic and political significance of English as a transformed postcolonial medium, while later writers expanded the field into migration, gender, religion, class, and global urban life (Boehmer, 2005; Mishra, 2007; Nasta, 2002; Ranasinha, 2016). In Lahiri's *The Namesake*, the Bengali American family becomes a site where naming, food, domestic ritual, and intergenerational memory shape belonging; recent work on the novel foregrounds reflexive identity and diasporic self-construction (Khorakiwala, 2021). In Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, British Asian identity is staged through performance, racial visibility, class mobility, and urban youth culture. In Hamid's *Exit West*, migration is cognitively reorganized through speculative doors that compress distance and make global displacement imaginable as a sudden spatial transition; criticism has read the novel through mobility, refugee subjectivity, world literature, and temporal migration (Bilal, 2020; Knudsen & Rahbek, 2021; Lagji, 2019; Perfect, 2019; Sadaf, 2020). In Shamsie's

Home Fire, Muslim British identity is framed through family, citizenship, grief, state surveillance, and public suspicion, a dynamic explored in recent scholarship on loss and national belonging (Pishotti, 2022). These works are therefore suitable for a cognitive discourse analysis of minority belonging.

The relevance of translanguaging and World Englishes is crucial. Kachru's (1985) model of World Englishes challenged native-speaker norms by showing how English is localized across global contexts. Pennycook (2007) and Canagarajah (2013) further emphasize that English circulates through transcultural flows and translingual practices rather than through a single standardized center. García and Li (2014), Li (2018, 2022), Lee (2022), and Li & Lee (2024) conceptualize translanguaging as dynamic meaning-making across named languages, semiotic resources, roles, and positions. In South Asian Anglophone fiction, translanguaging appears not only through code-switching but also through names, kinship terms, food words, religious vocabulary, idioms, place names, and culturally marked rhythms. These elements are not mere local color for stylistic effect. Instead, they serve as cognitive cues that lead readers into multilingual frames of memory and belonging.

2.4 Research Gap and Analytical Framework

The literature reveals a productive but underdeveloped intersection. Literary scholarship has analyzed South Asian Anglophone fiction as postcolonial, diasporic, and transnational, yet it often leaves implicit the cognitive mechanisms by which linguistic details organize identity. Cognitive linguistics has provided tools for metaphor, framing, deixis, and narrative understanding, yet it has not consistently treated postcolonial minority writing as a central site for theorizing cultural cognition. Translanguaging studies have shown how multilingual practices challenge bounded language ideologies and how methodological innovation is reshaping applied linguistics (Lee, 2022; Li et al., 2023; Li, 2022), but their insights can be further connected to metaphor and narrative framing in literary discourse.

This article, therefore, treats South Asian Anglophone fiction as a concentrated site of cultural cognition. The term concentrated site is deliberate: the study does not claim experimental measurement. It means that literary texts stylize cognitive processes and render them analyzable. These processes enable minority groups to understand their sense of belonging amid migration, racialization and globalization. The proposed framework integrates conceptual metaphor, frame semantics, deictic positioning, translanguaging, and postcolonial identity theory. Its purpose is not to dissolve literary interpretation into cognitive terminology but to specify how linguistic structures guide readers toward particular models of home, border, body, memory, and minority selfhood.

3 Theoretical Framework: The Cognitive-Postcolonial Framing Model of Minority Identity

The Cognitive-Postcolonial Framing Model of Minority Identity proposed in this article is built on the premise that minority belonging is linguistically mediated, cognitively structured, and historically situated. This model neither regards cognition as universal abstractions divorced from power, nor views postcolonial identity as pure discourse lacking cognitive structure. Instead, it asks how particular linguistic resources activate conceptual patterns that allow minority subjects to locate themselves within unequal cultural fields.

The model has four dimensions. The first is metaphorical mapping. In the selected narratives, home, border, body, language, silence, and memory are repeatedly used as source or target domains through which identity is understood.

Home becomes a container that holds family memory, but it also becomes a fragile territory, an inherited obligation, or an imagined horizon. Borders are more than geopolitical lines. They are conceptual boundaries that distinguish legitimacy from suspicion, intimacy from public exposure, and mobility from detention. The body becomes the visible surface on which race, religion, gender, and national belonging are read. These mappings are cognitive because they provide the conceptual structure through which readers make sense of minority experience.

The second dimension is deictic positioning. Deixis refers to spatial and temporal orientation, including distinctions between here and there, now and then, us and them, as well as inside and outside. In minority narratives, these terms are rarely neutral. A character’s here may be a legal home but not an affective home; there may be an ancestral place remembered through parents rather than lived experience; us may be family, religious community, ethnic group, nation, or precarious alliance; them may be the host society, the state, the media, or an internalized gaze. Deictic positioning, therefore, organizes belonging as a shifting cognitive perspective.

The third dimension is translanguaging markers. These include names, kinship terms, food words, religious expressions, place names, idioms, and untranslated cultural references. Such markers function as cognitive anchors. They activate cultural schemas that are not fully reducible to English, even when embedded in English-language prose. Translanguaging thus performs a double operation: it makes minority worlds legible within Anglophone fiction while preserving semantic residues that resist full assimilation.

The fourth dimension is memory-identity framing. Narratives organize identity by connecting personal memory, family memory, colonial history, migration history, and public memory. Memory is not simply content recalled by characters; it is a frame that allows past and present to be blended. When a name recalls a dead relative, when a domestic ritual brings an absent homeland into a diasporic apartment, or when a public label turns a citizen into a suspect, memory functions as a cognitive structure that links individual identity to collective history. Figure 1 presents this model as a high-resolution conceptual figure rather than as a table.

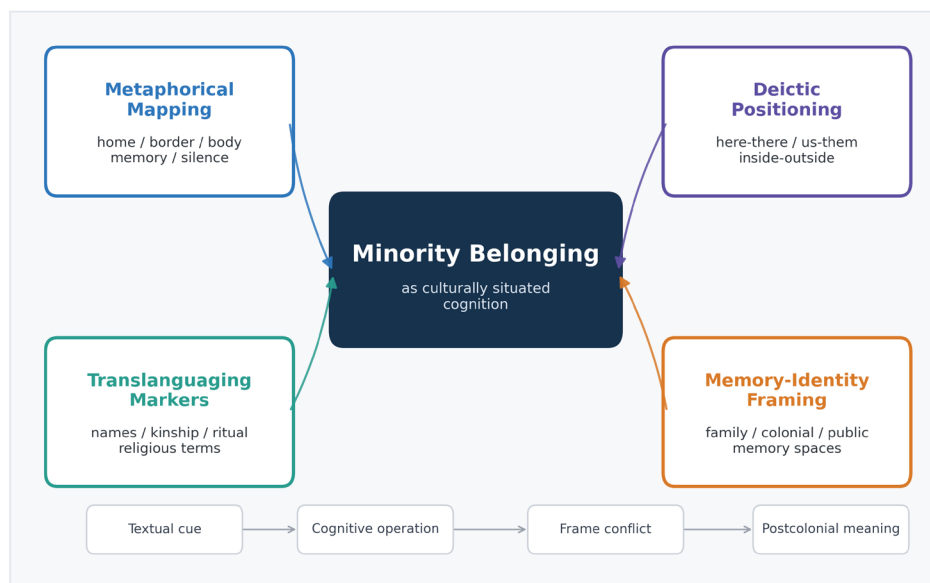


Figure 1 Cognitive-Postcolonial Framing Model of Minority Identity (How multilingual literary cues become culturally situated cognition)

Interpretive claim: Minority identity is not merely represented by language; it is cognitively organized through metaphor, deixis, translanguaging, and memory frames.

4 Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This article adopts qualitative cognitive discourse analysis combined with close reading. This is a qualitative method, as it prioritizes interpretive depth over frequency statistics, keyword lists, concordances and other corpus linguistic results. It is cognitive because it identifies metaphorical mappings, activated frames, deictic positions, and translanguaging markers that shape how minority belonging is conceptualized. It is discourse-oriented because it attends to linguistic patterning across narrative situations rather than isolating words from their contexts. The design draws on recent discussions of translanguaging as both theory and method, particularly the need to examine how communicative resources move across named languages, semiotic modes, and subject positions (Lee, 2022; Li, 2022; Li & Lee, 2024).

This analysis adheres to the principle that all literary evidence must be verifiable, rather than simplified into mechanical coding procedures. The study, therefore, uses a transparent interpretive sequence: identifying relevant passages, annotating linguistic indicators, grouping them under cognitive dimensions, interpreting them through postcolonial theory, and comparing patterns across texts. Metaphorical patterns are identified through close contextual comparison between the literal semantic domain of a textual marker and the abstract identity domain it helps structure; the article does not claim to implement a formal word-by-word metaphor identification procedure. Methodological transparency is strengthened by treating each conceptual claim as dependent on a recoverable textual marker, including the short primary-text quotations and page references provided in Section 5.

4.2 Textual Corpus

The corpus consists of four South Asian Anglophone narratives: Lahiri's (2003) *The Namesake*, Kureishi's (1990) *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Hamid's (2017) *Exit West*, and Shamsie's (2017) *Home Fire*. The texts were selected according to four criteria. First, each foregrounds minority identity in Anglophone contexts shaped by South Asian histories. Second, each makes language, naming, spatial movement, or citizenship central to narrative meaning. Third, the corpus includes different settings and genres, allowing comparison across domestic realism, British coming-of-age fiction, speculative migration narrative, and political family tragedy. Fourth, the texts align with the second author's expertise in South Asian literature and culture, postcolonial theory, and minority issues under globalization.

Because the present article is designed as a submission-ready interpretive study rather than a corpus-linguistic database article, it does not reproduce extensive copyrighted passages or claim quantitative corpus evidence. Instead, it uses short, edition-specific textual markers with page references to anchor the analysis while keeping all quoted material limited to brief phrases that serve a specific analytical purpose. The primary-text evidence is therefore traceable and proportionate to the article's qualitative design.

4.3 Analytical Procedure

The analytical procedure had six stages. First, the four texts are examined to identify scenes where identity stands out linguistically through naming, home construction, border crossing, religious symbols, racial visibility, kinship terms and memories. Second, culturally loaded linguistic items were identified, including proper names, kinship terms,

religious vocabulary, food words, place names, and unassimilated expressions. Third, metaphorical patterns were annotated by asking whether a concrete domain, such as a container, journey, boundary, wound, inheritance, or surface, structured an abstract domain, such as belonging, memory, exclusion, or identity. Fourth, frame-semantic coding was used to identify the background knowledge activated by key terms, including citizenship, family, homeland, exile, surveillance, and assimilation. Fifth, the patterns were interpreted through postcolonial identity theory, especially hybridity, diaspora, cultural positioning, and minority visibility. Sixth, cross-text comparison identified convergences and differences among the four narratives.

Table 1 summarizes the analytical dimensions, linguistic indicators, cognitive functions, postcolonial interpretations, and representative example patterns used in the analysis. The example patterns provide a coding overview, while Section 5 and Table 2 supply the corresponding direct textual markers with page references so that the close readings remain verifiable.

Table 1 Analytical Dimensions, Linguistic Indicators, and Cognitive Functions

| Analytical Dimension | Linguistic Indicator | Cognitive Function | Postcolonial Interpretation | Example Pattern |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Metaphorical mapping | home, door, border, body, name, silence | Structures abstract belonging through concrete domains | Identity is made intelligible through spatial, bodily, and mnemonic metaphors | Home as container of memory; border as social threshold |
| Deictic positioning | here/there, us/them, inside/outside, now/then | Locates self and others in shifting perspective fields | Minority belonging is relational and conditional | A legal home is narrated as affectively distant |
| Translanguaging markers | names, kinship terms, food words, religious vocabulary | Activates cultural schemas unavailable to monolingual English alone | Multilingual residues resist assimilation into a single national frame | A South Asian name indexes lineage and misrecognition |
| Memory-identity framing | family stories, rituals, inherited objects, public labels | Blends personal memory with collective history | Diasporic identity links private life to colonial and global histories | A domestic ritual reopens an absent homeland |
| Frame conflict | citizen/suspect, immigrant/native, home/hostland | Creates competing interpretations of one subject position | State and media frames contest family and community frames | A citizen becomes legible as foreign through public discourse |

4.4 Trustworthiness and Limitations

Trustworthiness was pursued through interpretive transparency, theoretical triangulation, and negative case attention. Interpretive transparency means that each finding is linked to identifiable linguistic indicators and direct textual markers rather than general thematic impressions. Theoretical triangulation means that metaphor theory, frame semantics, translanguaging theory, and postcolonial theory are used together, but each is assigned a distinct analytical function. Negative case attention means that the study does not assume all multilingual or cultural markers automatically resist assimilation; some markers can also become objects of commodification, stereotype, or surveillance.

The limitations are also clear. The study does not provide experimental evidence of actual reader processing, nor does it claim statistical representativeness across all South Asian Anglophone literature. It also does not employ corpus searches, frequency counts, or keyword statistics; its contribution is theoretical and interpretive: it clarifies how selected narratives organize minority identity through linguistic-cognitive patterns. Future research can test these claims through reader-response studies, eye-tracking, corpus-based metaphor analysis, cross-linguistic comparison, or psycholinguistic experiments.

5 Findings and Analysis

To make the literary evidence recoverable, the following analysis uses compact textual markers from the four primary works. Table 2 lists the key direct phrases and page references that ground the subsequent close readings; the surrounding interpretation remains qualitative and discursive rather than corpus-statistical.

Table 2 Primary Textual Markers and Analytical Functions

| Primary text | Direct textual marker | Page | Analytical function |
|---|---|-------|---|
| Lahiri, <i>The Namesake</i> | “a sort of lifelong pregnancy” | p. 49 | Foreignness mapped through embodied temporality and burden |
| Lahiri, <i>The Namesake</i> | “absurd and obscure”; “neither Indian nor American” | p. 76 | Proper name as frame conflict between family memory and public classification |
| Kureishi, <i>The Buddha of Suburbia</i> | “Englishman born and bred, almost” | p. 3 | National deixis qualified from within |
| Kureishi, <i>The Buddha of Suburbia</i> | “funny kind of Englishman” | p. 3 | Englishness as racialized and performative category |
| Hamid, <i>Exit West</i> | “A window was the border” | p. 71 | Domestic surface reframed as violent boundary |
| Hamid, <i>Exit West</i> | “doors that could take you elsewhere” | p. 72 | Door schema blended with emergency migration |
| Shamsie, <i>Home Fire</i> | “British Muslim”; “British passport holders” | p. 42 | Citizenship grammatically qualified by ethnicity, religion, and suspicion |
| Shamsie, <i>Home Fire</i> | “Mr. British Values” | p. 42 | State-aligned identity as public performance |

5.1 Home as a Cognitive Metaphor of Belonging and Loss

The first major finding is that home functions as a complex cognitive metaphor rather than a stable geographical referent. Across the selected narratives, home is repeatedly mapped onto four related domains: container, origin, unstable territory, and imagined horizon. These mappings allow characters and readers to conceptualize belonging as something held, inherited, threatened, or projected into the future. The home metaphor thus bridges emotional memory and spatial cognition. The textual markers in Table 2 illustrate how such mediation is realized through concise yet analytically rich expressions.

In Lahiri’s *The Namesake*, home is organized through domestic objects, names, food practices, and family routines that connect the Bengali immigrant household to an absent but cognitively active homeland. Ashima’s formulation of foreignness as “a sort of lifelong pregnancy” (Lahiri, 2003, p. 49) makes displacement legible through an embodied and temporally extended schema: foreignness is not a temporary condition but a continuing state of waiting, burden, and bodily unease. The Ganguli family apartment in the United States is therefore not simply a residence. It becomes a container for cultural memory, in which Bengali rituals, naming practices, and family expectations preserve a world that cannot be fully recreated. At the same time, the second-generation protagonist’s relationship to home is divided. The parental home functions as an origin that gives him identity, but it also becomes a space from which he seeks distance. Cognitively, the narrative maps onto a container that both protects and confines, a pattern that resonates with Khorakiwala’s (2021) reading of reflexive identity construction in the novel.

The name Gogol serves as a typical carrier of metaphor and framing. A name is linguistically small but cognitively expansive: it activates family history, accident, literary memory, embarrassment, intimacy, and public misrecognition. When Gogol experiences his name as “absurd and obscure” and as “neither Indian nor American” (Lahiri, 2003, p. 76),

the proper noun becomes a frame conflict rather than a neutral label. The protagonist's changing relation to his name models the tension between private family frames and public social frames. In cognitive terms, the name becomes a mental-space connector linking the father's memory, Russian literature, Bengali kinship, American bureaucracy, and the protagonist's self-concept. In postcolonial terms, it shows that minority identity is not secured by choosing between origin and assimilation; it is formed through the difficult blending of incompatible frames.

Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* reorganizes home through performance and suburban mobility. The protagonist's opening self-description — “Englishman born and bred, almost” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 3) — immediately destabilizes national deixis: the speaker claims Englishness while qualifying it from within. The suburban home is not a stable origin but a stage on which racial, sexual, classed, and generational identities are performed. The protagonist's movement between suburban and urban spaces maps identity onto journey and theatricality. Home is not where identity rests; it is where identity is rehearsed, mocked, desired, and re-coded. This pattern complicates nostalgic models of diaspora. The text frames belong to performative navigation through social scenes rather than returning to the authentic origin.

Hamid's *Exit West* radicalizes the home metaphor through speculative doors that collapse distance. Doorways are a familiar spatial schema: they mark entry and exit, inside and outside, safety and exposure. The reported rumors of “doors that could take you elsewhere” (Hamid, 2017, p. 72) transform this everyday schema into a global metaphor for migration. Home becomes unstable not because characters lack attachment but because global violence and mobility make every location provisional. The door functions as a conceptual blend combining domestic architecture, border crossing, emergency flight, and planetary migration. This interpretation connects with readings of the novel as a world-literary and mobility-centered text (Bilal, 2020; Knudsen & Rahbek, 2021; Lagji, 2019; Sadaf, 2020). As a result, displacement is cognitively compressed: the reader experiences migration not as a long journey but as a sudden transition from one mental space to another.

Shamsie's *Home Fire* foregrounds home as both family attachment and national claim. The recurrence of public labels such as “British Muslim” and “British passport holders” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 42) demonstrates that national belonging is linguistically qualified before it is emotionally inhabited. For British Muslim characters, home is not simply where one lives or where one's family resides; it is also the nation that may recognize or revoke belonging. The metaphor of home is therefore contested by frames of citizenship, security, grief, and betrayal, themes that Pishotti (2022) links to the novel's politics of loss. The novel shows how a minority subject can be legally inside the nation while being cognitively positioned outside it by public discourse. Home becomes a field of recognition in which family memory conflicts with state framing.

Across the four narratives, home is never a single place. It is a cognitive-metaphorical structure that organizes memory, obligation, safety, desire, and exclusion. As a container, it holds cultural memory; as origin, it gives continuity; as unstable territory, it registers displacement; as horizon, it sustains imagined belonging. This finding answers RQ1 by showing that minority identity is structured through metaphorical mappings that make abstract belonging concrete but also ambivalent.

5.2 Border, Body, and Language as Frames of Minority Positioning

The second finding is that border, body, and language operate as interrelated frames of minority positioning. These frames are deictic because they orient characters within social fields: inside or outside, visible or invisible, native or

foreign, citizen or suspect. They also reveal that minority belonging is not merely internal self-understanding; it is shaped by how others read bodies, accents, names, and affiliations.

Border is the most explicit frame in *Exit West*, but the novel transforms the border from a physical line into a cognitive condition. The phrase “A window was the border” (Hamid, 2017, p. 71) transforms an architectural structure into a life-threatening boundary, revealing how war redefines domestic space as an exposed area. The doors make borders porous at the level of the plot, yet social borders persist in new forms. Migrants move rapidly across space, but they remain subject to frames of crowding, threat, hospitality, and exclusion. This distinction is important for cognitive discourse analysis because it shows that crossing a border does not automatically change the frames through which a person is perceived. A body can move into a new location while remaining positioned as outside the imagined community, a point that aligns with analyses of refugees and postcolonial mobility in the novel (Lagji, 2019; Perfect, 2019; Sadaf, 2020).

In *Home Fire*, the border frame is internalized into citizenship discourse. The relevant boundary is not only between countries but between acceptable and suspect forms of national belonging. Muslim British identity is framed through legal documents, media labels, family histories, and state power. The labels “British of Pakistani descent,” “British Muslim,” and “British passport holders” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 42) show how citizenship can be grammatically retained while cognitively separated from unmarked Britishness. The language of loyalty and betrayal activates a frame in which citizenship becomes conditional. The cognitive effect is to split the subject into competing mental spaces: family member, believer, citizen, public suspect, and symbolic threat. Shamsie’s narrative thereby shows how public discourse can reorganize the reader’s understanding of a character’s body and name before the character speaks.

The body frame is especially visible in Kureishi’s work, where racialized and sexualized embodiment becomes a surface of social interpretation. Karim’s opening claim to be an “Englishman born and bred, almost” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 3) is not merely a national statement; it is a bodily and social deixis that locates him within a racialized field of recognition. The protagonist’s mixed and British Asian identity is repeatedly negotiated through how others see, desire, exoticize, or misread him. The body is thus not only a biological presence; it is a semiotic field. Cognitively linguistically, the body becomes a source domain for social legibility: color, gesture, dress, voice, and performance are interpreted as signs of authenticity or difference. Postcolonially, this demonstrates that minority subjects are often compelled to manage the frames projected onto their bodies.

Language itself also functions as a border. In *The Namesake*, the protagonist’s name marks him as intimate within the family but awkward in public spaces. The description of the name as “absurd and obscure” (Lahiri, 2003, p. 76) demonstrates that the same linguistic sign shifts meaning across frames. Within the family, the name carries memory and affection; within school, work, or romantic contexts, it becomes a source of misfit or explanation. This frame shift illustrates the cognitive instability of minority signs. A word does not carry one meaning across all contexts; it activates different background scenes depending on who hears it, where it is used, and what cultural knowledge is available.

Translanguaging theory helps clarify this process. A multilingual marker can open a rich cultural frame for some readers and characters while appearing opaque, foreign, or excessive to others. The problem is not only translation but frame access. If a kinship term, name, or religious expression is forced into monolingual English equivalence, part of its cognitive and cultural function is lost. In this sense, translanguaging marks the border between semantic density and institutional simplification. This understanding extends García and Li’s (2014) account of bilingual meaning-making and Li & Lee’s (2024) account of transpositioning as the fluid management of communicative roles and identities.

These patterns answer RQ2 by showing that belonging, displacement, and memory are framed through the interaction of linguistic signs and social positioning. Border, body, and language are not separate themes; they form a cognitive triad. Border locates the subject, body makes the subject visible, and language makes the subject interpretable. Under postcolonial conditions, all three are unstable because the frames of family, community, state, media, and nation compete to define minority identity.

5.3 Translanguaging and Cultural Memory as Cognitive Resistance

The third finding is that translanguaging and culturally loaded expressions function as forms of cognitive resistance. Resistance here does not mean simple opposition or a political slogan. It refers to the preservation of alternative schemas of meaning within Anglophone prose. Names, kinship terms, foods, religious expressions, place names, and culturally marked rhythms keep open cognitive worlds that cannot be fully absorbed into monolingual national frames.

In *The Namesake*, naming practices demonstrate how translanguaging can operate without continuous code-switching. The distinction between a public name and a family name activates Bengali cultural schemas of intimacy, lineage, and social presentation. English-language narration can explain parts of this distinction, but its full meaning depends on a cultural frame that exceeds direct equivalence. The phrase “neither Indian nor American” (Lahiri, 2003, p. 76) condenses this problem into a linguistic-cognitive border: the name is not simply unusual but culturally unplaceable within dominant classification systems. The protagonist’s discomfort with his name is therefore not merely personal embarrassment. It is a cognitive conflict between the family frame that treats the name as memory and the public frame that treats it as an oddity.

In *The Buddha of Suburbia*, multilingual and multicultural signs are frequently entangled with performance. Karim’s position as a “funny kind of Englishman” (Kureishi, 1990, p. 3) reveals that Englishness is not a neutral national category but a frame through which racial difference is socially narrated. South Asian identity can be embraced, mocked, commodified, or exaggerated depending on context. This is a negative case against romanticizing translanguaging. The mere presence of culturally marked language does not guarantee resistance. Sometimes cultural signs are consumed by dominant audiences as an exotic style. Yet even in such scenes, translanguaging reveals the instability of Englishness itself. British identity appears not as a pure national language but as a contested field shaped by accents, slang, racialized performance, and diasporic creativity.

In *Exit West*, the prose often uses a comparatively restrained global English, yet the novel’s treatment of place, movement, and intimate address creates a translanguaging effect at the level of worldview. The narrative refuses to make any single national language the stable center of experience. The phrase “doors that could take you elsewhere” (Hamid, 2017, p. 72) carries a deliberately simple vocabulary, but it opens a complex multilingual and geopolitical frame in which migrants carry memories, habits, and relational norms across spaces. Cultural memory survives not by remaining untouched but by being re-situated. This supports Li’s (2018, 2022) understanding of translanguaging as a dynamic practice and method rather than a simple alternation between named codes.

In *Home Fire*, religious and family markers become politically charged cognitive anchors. Muslim names, rituals, and affiliations are not neutral cultural details; they are processed through competing frames of family devotion, faith, public fear, and state securitization. The public persona “Mr. British Values” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 42) turns national belonging into a performable and surveilled moral frame. The narrative shows how the same marker can hold intimate memory and public risk. This is where cultural cognition becomes explicitly postcolonial: minority signs

are overdetermined by histories of empire, race, migration, and contemporary security discourse. Translanguaging, therefore, is not only a matter of linguistic plurality but also a struggle over who has the authority to define what a sign means.

Across the corpus, culturally loaded expressions do three kinds of cognitive work. First, they anchor memory by linking present narration to family and community histories. Second, they create frame friction by refusing effortless translation into dominant national categories. Third, they enable conceptual blending by allowing characters to inhabit multiple cultural spaces at once. These functions answer RQ3: postcolonial cultural cognition under globalization is revealed not as smooth hybridity but as negotiated frame management. Minority subjects do not simply possess multiple identities; they move among cognitive frames that may support, distort, commodify, or endanger them.

6 Discussion

The findings contribute to language-and-cognition research by showing that cognitive metaphor and framing analysis can be extended to postcolonial minority narratives without reducing them to universal schemas. Home, border, body, and language are grounded in general cognitive domains, but their narrative elaboration is historically specific. The container metaphor of home carries different implications when the container refers to a diasporic apartment that preserves Bengali memories, a suburban stage of British Asian performance, a temporary shelter after violent migration, or a national home that conditionally recognizes Muslim citizens. This confirms Kövecses's (2005) argument that metaphor is both embodied and culturally variable, while also demonstrating that postcolonial history is one of the forces that shape metaphor variation.

The article also refines frame analysis. In much discourse research, framing is examined in news, political communication, or public rhetoric. The present analysis shows that literary narratives model frame conflict at the level of character experience. The same sign can activate different frames: a name can be family memory or public misrecognition; a body can be selfhood or racialized spectacle; a passport can be security or exclusion; a religious marker can be devotion or suspicion. Minority belonging is, therefore, a problem of frame competition. Cognitive discourse analysis helps specify how that competition is linguistically cued and narratively organized.

For South Asian Anglophone studies, the article offers a language-cognitive account of concepts often discussed in broader theoretical terms, such as hybridity, diaspora, and cultural identity. Bhabha's (1994) hybridity can be read not only as a cultural condition but also as a cognitive operation of blending and frame negotiation. Hall's (1990) identity as positioning can be linked to deixis and perspective management. Brah's (1996) diaspora space can be analyzed through metaphors of home, route, border, and memory. In this sense, cognitive linguistics does not replace postcolonial theory; it provides tools for describing the linguistic mechanisms through which postcolonial identity becomes intelligible.

The analysis further suggests that translanguaging in literature should be understood beyond visible code-switching. A text may be formally written in English while still organizing cognition through multilingual and culturally specific schemas. Names, kinship structures, religious categories, food words, and place-based memories can create translingual meaning even when the sentence structure remains English. This observation connects World Englishes and translanguaging research with literary discourse. South Asian Anglophone fiction does not merely use English; it provincializes, stretches, and re-frames English by embedding it in cultural cognition shaped by colonial and diasporic histories.

The model proposed here is also relevant to future empirical work. Psycholinguistic studies might examine how readers process untranslated terms or culturally loaded names; corpus studies might map metaphor clusters across a larger body of South Asian Anglophone texts; reader-response research might compare how readers with different linguistic repertoires access frames of home, religion, and citizenship. Such work would move from textual modeling to cognitive reception. The present article does not claim to have completed that empirical step. Its value lies in clarifying what should be studied: not simply whether readers understand cultural references, but how those references activate, block, or transform frames of belonging.

Finally, the article explains why South Asian Anglophone fiction belongs within the scope of language and cognitive science. The selected texts do not provide laboratory data about the brain, but they offer highly structured evidence of how language models cognition in culturally complex contexts. They show how meaning emerges at the intersection of metaphor, frame, deixis, memory, and multilingual practice. Since cognitive science explores how humans organize experience, postcolonial minority narratives are by no means marginal. Instead, they are essential for understanding cognition in contexts of linguistic diversity and social inequality.

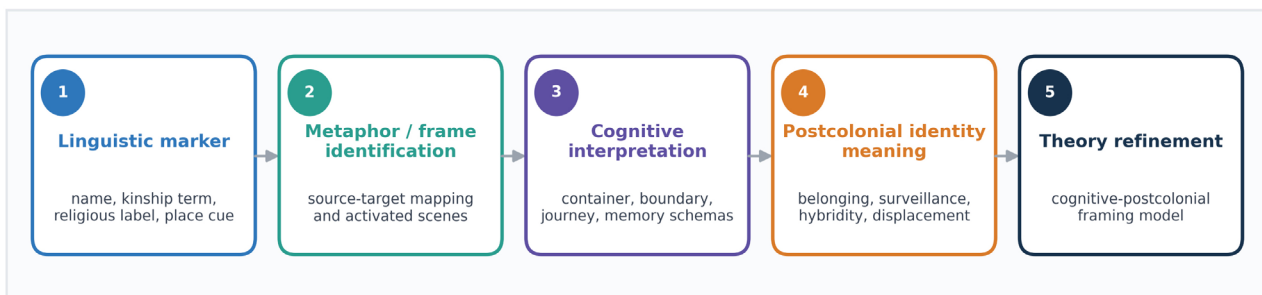


Figure 2 From Linguistic Marker to Cultural Cognition: Analytical Workflow
(A transparent pathway from textual evidence to theoretical contribution)

Quality control: Every interpretive claim must be traceable to a textual marker and must distinguish cognitive operation from postcolonial interpretation.

7 Conclusion

This article has developed a cognitive discourse analysis of minority belonging in four South Asian Anglophone narratives. It asked what cognitive metaphors structure minority identity, how translanguaging and culturally loaded expressions frame belonging, displacement, and memory, and how these linguistic-cognitive patterns reveal postcolonial forms of cultural cognition under globalization. The analysis showed that the home functions as a container, origin, unstable territory, and imagined horizon; border, body, and language orient minority subjects through competing frames of visibility and exclusion; and translanguaging markers anchor cultural memory while resisting monolingual assimilation.

The proposed Cognitive-Postcolonial Framing Model of Minority Identity integrates metaphorical mapping, deictic positioning, translanguaging markers, and memory-identity framing. Its central claim is that postcolonial minority identity is not merely represented by language; it is cognitively organized through language. This claim contributes to cognitive linguistics by expanding metaphor and frame analysis into postcolonial literary discourse, and to South Asian

Anglophone studies by identifying the linguistic-cognitive mechanisms through which diaspora, hybridity, and minority belonging become narratable.

The study has limitations. It is based on a small purposive corpus and does not measure actual reader processing. It avoids extensive quotation, but it now provides short primary-text markers with page references to make each central claim traceable. Future studies can extend the model through larger corpora, multilingual annotation, psycholinguistic experiments, eye-tracking, reception studies, or cross-comparison with non-Anglophone South Asian literatures. Despite these limitations, this article proves that South Asian Anglophone fiction provides an ideal research context for the integrated study of language, cognition and cultural identity.

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