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SOCIO-ONOMASTICS OF DISTORTED NAMES: NICKNAMING PRACTICES AMONG PUNJABI SPEAKERS IN PAKISTAN

Abstract

Due to hierarchical power relations and the difficulty of confronting others or expressing disdain explicitly in small rural communities, nicknames and spoiled names can be an overt avenue for venting displeasure, ridiculing, expressing social inequality, asserting superiority, conveying judgment, or warning against improper behaviour. The study focuses on how native Punjabi speakers in rural Punjab, Pakistan, distort names to express disdain, rage, affection, or frankness towards people in their presence or absence. Distorted names used both overtly (in the person's presence) or secretly have been collected through a questionnaire filled in by 22 participants belonging to 22 villages in Punjab, Pakistan. Socio-cultural implications of those names have also been investigated and discussed. The author shows that the boundary between distorted names and nicknames is indistinct. This applies to both their formal features, semantic and pragmatic properties. Speakers not only morphologically distort the formal names but also use the names of castes, animals, physical attributes, and professional titles as address forms or referential expressions. Although distorted names generally offend the referent, they, like nicknames, can be used in both positive and negative contexts. The article describes the main motivational patterns of distorted names, similar to those usually pointed out for nicknames, and focuses mainly on their pragmatic features as noted in the metalinguistic comments of the respondents. Though the use of such naming labels may display quite universal regularities, the socio-cultural situation of the caste-based traditional rural communities of Punjab brings its own specifics to the way distorted names and nicknames are used in the area under study.

Keywords: name distortion; nicknames; linguistic informality; slang; onomastic stigmatization; anthroponymy; caste societies

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СОЦИООНОМАСТИКА ИСКАЖЕННЫХ ИМЕН: ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ ПРОЗВИЩНЫХ НОМИНАЦИЙ СРЕДИ НОСИТЕЛЕЙ ЯЗЫКА ПЕНДЖАБИ В ПАКИСТАНЕ

Аннотация

Из-за иерархических отношений власти и невозможности открытого выражения пренебрежения в небольших сельских поселениях прозвища и искаженные имена могут быть способом выражения недовольства в отношении человека, высмеивания его, а также средством проявления социального неравенства, утверждения превосходства или выражения осуждения. Данное исследование посвящено тому, как носители пенджабского языка в сельских районах Пенджаба (Пакистан) искажают имена, чтобы выразить презрение, гнев, привязанность или откровенность по отношению к людям в их присутствии или в их отсутствии. Искаженные имена, использованные как открыто (в присутствии человека), так и тайно, были собраны с помощью анкеты, заполненной 22 участниками из 22 деревень в Пенджабе. В статье обсуждаются социокультурные паттерны их употребления. Автор показывает, что граница между искаженными именами и прозвищами размыта. Это касается как формальных особенностей этих единиц, так и их семантико-прагматических свойств. Помимо искажения имени, в качестве прозвищных элементов, добавляемых к имени при обращении или построении используемой «за глаза» номинации, употребляются названия каст, животных, профессий, официальных титулов. Хотя искажение имени может оскорбить именуемого, искаженные имена, как и прозвища, могут использоваться не только в отрицательных, но и в положительных контекстах. В статье описываются основные мотивационные модели искажения имени, в целом аналогичные тем, которые обычно выделяют для прозвищ, при этом основное внимание уделяется их прагматическим особенностям, отмеченным в метаязыковых комментариях респондентов. Несмотря на то что употребление таких ономастических ярлыков может иметь вполне универсальные закономерности, социокультурная ситуация в кастовых традиционных сельских общинах Пенджаба вносит свою специфику в использование искаженных имен и прозвищ на исследуемой территории.

Ключевые слова: искаженные имена; прозвища; неформальное общение; сленг; ономастическая стигматизация; антропонимия; кастовые общества

1. Introduction

According to the 2017 census of Pakistan, with a population of more than 110 million people, Punjab is the most populous province of Pakistan. "Pakistan is a multilingual country having six main languages and fifty-nine minor languages," while "Punjabi Shahmukhi is spoken by 46.15% of the population" [Hashmi et al. 2019: 357]. Although 60% of Pakistanis speak Punjabi at home, many prefer not to speak it publicly because they consider the language low, vulgar, or indecent [Gillani & Mahmood 2014]. Punjabi is spoken by about 150 million people. Due to the number of native speakers, it is the 11th most spoken language in the world and the 4th most common language in England [Julian 2017].

The current study analyses the nicknaming practices of native Punjabi speakers who live in rural areas in Pakistan. Nicknames have been described as "injurious," "burden," "poisoned," "forms of imprisonment," "deathly traps," "liabilities" [Rahman 2014: 10–18], "markers of Islamic identity," "sites of communal animosity" [Rahman 2013: 251], and "expressions of love and pride" [Smith 1996]. Nicknames can be given or imposed, same as they can be assumed or self-selected. Nicknames given or imposed by others can be positive, negative, or descriptive [Mashiri 1999]. Names and nicknames, thus, can be used to form, reform, tarnish, or destigmatize identities.

In casual situations, nicknames can substitute formal names to indicate acceptance or disapproval. Nicknames can be an overt avenue for venting displeasure, ridiculing, mocking, or warning against improper behaviour [Chauke 2016]. Names and nicknames also reflect an individual's identity and transformation. Naming or labelling by society not only conveys social prestige and social status but can also marginalize and stigmatize individuals or groups [Silva 2018]. Svensson [2022] elucidates that mispronounced names or deliberate misspeaking of names can indicate discrimination. Such distorted names can lead to discrimination against women, ethnic minorities [Nick 2017], immigrants [Girma 2020], and asylum seekers [Madziva 2018]. As a social reality, nicknaming reveals patterns of social inclusion and exclusion, teasing exchanges, prejudices, ideologies, and expectancies, among other things [Mensah 2016]. Intelligibility of names and nicknames depends on contextual and situational contingencies; therefore, the present study highlights how names are distorted, and nicknames or secret nicknames are given to individuals to either address them in their presence, refer to them in their absence, or to do both by the native Punjabi speakers in Punjab, Pakistan.

Manocha [2020] points out that many Punjabis try their best to hide their nicknames given to them by other people. Rahman [2014: 14] claims that due to reasons concerning stigma and shame, or shifting from villages to cities, people

in rural Punjab commonly change their names to escape embarrassment and conceal their "old-fashioned rural identity." Contrarily, the present study pinpoints how people in rural Punjab distort others' names to stigmatize or vent out anger or hurt. Rahman's [2013] study of Pakistani Muslims' sectarian naming traditions reveals that names and issues concerning identity, power, and belief systems are interlinked, and that names can even cause the killing of people due to religious biases. It is forbidden in Islam to distort someone's name because it hurts; nonetheless, multiple factors such as protection from 'evil eye' [Rahman 2016: 70], joint family system, cohesive community structure, frankness, openness, illiteracy, family disputes, comparison and competition among families, narrow-mindedness, honour norms, and societal inequalities like caste, socioeconomic standing, and power relations, etc. influence native Punjabi speakers' culture, particularly of those living in rural areas or small towns, and consequently contribute to the creation of distorted names, nicknames, address forms, and secret identities or titles, etc.

Although the terms *name-distorting* and *name-spoiling* are sometimes used interchangeably, a distinction needs to be made. Name-spoiling and name-calling are malignant practices that can cause disparagement and hurt. Name-calling elicits rage and discomfort, and it puts the addressee's identity in jeopardy [Crozier & Dimmock 1999]. Name-spoiling can occur as a result of name distortion because when a person is addressed or referred to using a distorted name (by either altering the formal name morphologically to connote disdain or anger or substituting the formal name with a term that connotes inferiority or disrespect) by other people, it affects their identity. The author emphasizes that name distortion involves restructuring a name morphologically, using any word as a name or nickname in its original sense, or deviating from the socio-semantic sense of a word to use it as a name or nickname, which on a pragmatic level can both be sweet or malignant depending upon the context, formality, politeness, levels of familiarity, and relationship of addressees. Name distortion can also be sweet or malignant depending upon the intention of the person who distorts a name, as well as the reaction that a distorted name elicits from the addressee or referent. Names can be distorted in an effort to retaliate, express hurt and grievance, or vent our anger and frustration. Name distortion can also be done for convenience or amusement. Name distortion is not always malignant because names other than the formal names can be given or formulated derivationally or inflectionally out of love and affection; nonetheless, it can upset the addressee if either deliberate name spoiling is involved, or the distorted name is incongruous with the addressee's sense of love, affection, and self-respect. Name distortion, as used in its idiomatic sense in English, may also involve name-spoiling, especially when it is done with an intention to taunt or ridicule someone for their disabilities, appearance, inferior social status, or character. Name-spoiling and

name distortion can be used interchangeably when done with a negative intention, such as to stigmatize someone or to evoke a negative reaction. Therefore, name distorting can be a tool of both oppression and counter-oppression caused by social asymmetries.

The following studies on naming practices in diverse cultural contexts are pertinent from the perspectives of socio-onomastic identity construction, and stigmatization, but no study has already been carried out on the name spoiling, name-calling, or aggressive nicknaming practices of native Punjabi speakers in Pakistan. Lindsay and Dempsey [2017], after interviewing 41 parents in Australia, noted that naming practices of the middle class reflected class, gender, and sexuality oriented cultural boundaries and social distinctions. By studying 14 self-referencing usernames and 35 other-referencing display names on mobile phones, Aldrin [2019] noted a huge difference in the social constructions of identity based on the referencing choices of Swedish teenagers for self and the other. Chauke [2016] suggested that nicknames related to physical appearance, behavioural traits, workplaces, and sentimental attachment were used in Xitsonga culture. Babane and Chauke [2015] observed deterioration in the use of nicknames given to South African soccer players. Silva [2018] noted that Sinhalese belonging to socially stigmatized castes in Sri Lanka were increasingly choosing caste-neutral or high-caste names to reflect their social or economic transformation and counter marginalization which was caused by their castes. Mensah [2014] adduced death prevention names and their functions in African culture, while Mensah [2016] found that the nicknames of women in Nigeria reflected resistance to conservative and stereotypical images of women. Nyambi [2018] substantiated how nicknaming and name-calling practices of the masses in Zimbabwe reflect their attitudes and emotions based on transgression, opposition, and criticism of their president.

With the same focus on social cohesion, indigenous attitudes, and emotions, the present study, however, discusses the socio-political, pragmatic, and semantic implications of the naming practices of native Punjabi speakers. Issues such as social positioning, power relations, approval, disapproval, implicit confrontation, identity, and social hierarchies have been brought to light, as done by previous studies as well. The existing studies have focused on names or nicknames, whereas the present study also pinpoints name-spoiling as a way of expressing openness, anger, or hatred. The study can inspire researchers to investigate various aspects of naming practices and traditions in other Pakistani provinces — Sindh, Baluchistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This study addresses the following research question: why and how do native Punjabi speakers living in rural Punjab distort names of people in their presence and absence?

2. Methodology

Based on the author's ethnographic method of personal observation and cultural knowledge as a native Punjabi speaker, her discussions with many people in her vicinity, and responses to a questionnaire filled out by 22 randomly selected participants (students, housewives, teachers, businessmen, and landlords) belonging to 22 villages in 17 districts of Punjab, names of men and women, distorted by their relatives, neighbours or acquaintances have been suggested and interpreted. The reasons behind name distorting practices have also been figured out. The variables of selection include age, gender, being a native Punjabi speaker, and belonging to rural areas in Punjab. Men and women from different age groups ranging from 19–65 participated. Participants belonging to the age group of 19–24 years had lived for 18–20 years in their villages. They could speak and write Punjabi, Urdu, and English. At the time of the survey, they were doing undergraduate studies and living in hostels in cities. They also had exposure to other villages and small towns in Punjab due to visiting their relatives living there. They were sent the questionnaire via email. Respondents belonging to the age group of 25–65 years were either living or had lived most part of their lives in the villages, though all of them had exposure to big and small cities. As the qualification of a few of them was at most the level of matriculation, they couldn't speak or write Urdu and English, so a person translated their responses shared in Punjabi into English and filled the questionnaires on their behalf. The English glosses for the examples provided by the participants have been added by the author.

The questionnaire consisted of seven questions. The first question was designed to learn more about the respondents' age and geographical backgrounds. The second, third, and fourth questions were about whether, how, and why Punjabis distort others' names in their absence, while the fifth, sixth, and seventh questions were aimed at inquiring whether, how, and why Punjabis distort the names of their neighbours, friends, and relatives in their presence. Instead of using the Shahmukhi script of Punjabi, English transliteration of the names has been utilised for readers' convenience (see Tables 1 and 2 below). The underlying morphophonological and semantic patterns of the distorted names have been discussed qualitatively.

3. Findings
3.1. Distorting Names in Others' Presence and Absence

Twenty out of 22 (90.90%) participants specified that Punjabis do distort names in the absence of people, while the remaining two (9.90%) partially agreed to it. Similarly, 17 out of 22 (77.27%) validated the same in case of distorting names in the presence of people, while the remaining five (22.73%) were neutral.

Some of the findings are presented in Tables 1 and 2 with more examples being discussed below.

Distorted Names Used in the Absence of People

Distortion of formal names	*Aabo* (formal name: *Abida*), *Shakeeloo* (formal name: *Shakeel*), *Semmo* (formal name: *Saima*)
Disabilities and appearance	*Billa* 'cat' (with reference to a person with brown or green eyes), *Aalu* 'potato' (with reference to an ugly person)
Animal names	*Bijju* 'badger,' *Naag* 'python,' *Dachi* 'camel'
Nicknames based on adjectives describing the person's character	*PhhosaR* 'lazy or vain,' *Phakki* 'powdered substance made of herbs,' *Kamli* 'crazy', *Phapphay Kutni* 'clever woman who backbites a lot,' *Baghlol* 'simpleton,' *KhaRoos* 'boring'
Curse words	*Kanjar* 'pimp'
Family names, caste, or profession	*Chattha*, *Chaudhry sahib*, *Rana sahib*, *Mahar jee*
Secret names	*Mahrani* 'empress' (with reference to a woman who does not do household chores)

Distorted Names Used in the Presence of People

Distortion of formal names	*Bakhshu* (formal name: *Bakhsh*), *Wiki/Qaaroo* (formal name: *Waqar*), *Salloo* (formal name: *Salman*)
Disabilities and appearance	*Jirafa* 'giraffe,' *PeeDah* 'short,' *Daila* (one having big eyes), *MoTi* 'fat woman,' *Bagoo* (for men having fair complexion), *Krela* 'bitter gourd'
Animal names	*Baandar* 'monkey,' *Bangla* 'heron,' *Ill* 'vulture,' *Daddoo* 'frog'
Nicknames based on adjectives describing the person's character	*Chan* 'moon,' *Laddu* 'a sweet' (often used by parents to address their kids), *PoonD* 'wasp' (with reference to a lascivious man), *PanD* 'joker'
Curse words	*Halka* 'uncontrolled/greedy,' *Begáirat* 'barefaced'
Family names, caste, or profession	*Wakeelan* 'a female lawyer,' *Syedani* 'a Syed woman'
Positive nicknames	*Saabri* (formal name: *Sabir*), *Jeeni* (formal name: *Mehjabeen*)

The participants suggested that name-spoiling is not only caused by "love, frankness, ease, or affinity," but more commonly by "anger, a desire to tease, jealousy,

frustration, hatred, humor, backbiting, contempt, castes, ignorance, illiteracy, joint family system, or a sense of superiority." A male participant informed that "distortion takes place sometimes to differentiate between two persons having the same name, to simplify longer names, to refer to a person's physical appearance, and in other cases for fun and jokes." Another 20-year-old male participant explained:

> Mostly, as far as I have observed, people don't care about the presence/absence of the one whose name is distorted. It is a common practice among people and until two individuals are either not enemies or lack frankness, they don't hesitate to use distorted names and titles for each other. Moreover, native Punjabis have a very interesting quality of accepting things as they actually are. Those who belong to [socially constructed] lower caste/tribes don't feel any shame. The shoemakers proudly call themselves Mochi and the chefs don't feel any shame in being called Naai. Similarly, the butchers don't feel hesitant in mentioning themselves as Kasai.

Another respondent supported: "in day-to-day conversation, the Punjabis use the distorted names many times without feeling hesitant." A few other respondents also supported that name-distorting is not perceived as "unkind nicknaming" [cf. Crozier & Dimmock 1999: 505]. A 50-year-old female participant confirmed:

> When someone has to show anger or disrespect, secret names are used in the presence of people as well. These are used sarcastically to create humor as well. In addition, in villages, many distorted names are used as real names in the presence of people. For example, *Sheeroo* is a man's distorted name that is used as his real name. Similarly, *Jahana 35* is also a nickname of another person whose formal name is *Yousaf*.

Anyhow, just like Crozier and Dimmock [1999] point out that people are afraid of being bullied, so they do not speak up or do anything about name-calling or name-spoiling. Similarly, the author has observed that while people accept some names, largely nicknames with positive connotations, there is a lot of suppression and oppression involved in accepting various distorted names in many cases. In rural areas, native Punjabi speakers sometimes use the distorted names as substitutes for the original names to address people directly [Manocha 2020]; however, these names are mostly used in the absence of folks to refer to them out of anger, contempt, or informality. It is not done everywhere or by everyone because many people use full names or first names to show respect but mostly, while slandering or casually discussing others, these distorted versions are used, specifically among illiterate communities or families that do not particularly like their relatives or have been hurt by them. Sometimes, the whole village or the whole family including extended family, uses the distorted name for that person, especially in their absence. In some villages, it is common to distort names, while in others where people are more aware, educated, or progressive, it is common to use given names or nicknames.

3.2. Positive and Negative Use of the Same Nicknames and Titles Contrasted (Nicknames, Professions, Castes)

According to the participants, native Punjabi speakers frequently address others by their full names, demonstrating enormous respect, love, or affection. Other forms of address include the addition of *Chaudhary*, or *Sahib* to full name, for instance, *Chaudhary Yousaf*, or *Chaudhary Yousaf Sahib*. Men are also addressed as *Chaudhary Sahib* which involves prestige and respect; notwithstanding, words like *Seth Sahib* 'rich man,' *Chaudhary Sahib* 'landlord/rich and influential person in a village,' *Nawab Sahib* 'landlord' etc. are also attributed in a satirical and mocking way. *Chudhraani* 'Chaudhary's wife or daughter/rich and influential woman,' *Nawab Sahiba* 'rich woman,' *Shehzadi* 'princess,' *Heer* 'character in Punjabi folklore → beautiful woman,' or *Madam* are also used to refer to women in both positive and satirical ways. *Beta* or *Puttar* 'son' [Sagoo 2016: 269], and *Beti*, *T'hiyaa*, *T'hee*, *Dhee*, *Dhee Rani* 'daughter' are also used by parents or elders to address girls or women.

Out of affection, girls are frequently addressed or referred by a variety of nicknames, for example, *Mano*, *Bano*, *Guriya*, *Guddi*, *Rani*, *or Billo*, connoting woman, princess, doll, or cat, etc. are used irrespective of the formal names of those girls [Manocha 2020: 1]. Such nicknames are also temporarily used to address a girl if her name is not known to the speaker. Similarly, for boys, nicknames like *Mithhu*, *Billa*, *Chaand*, *Billu*, *Baggu*, *Tipu*, or *Rashi* are used (see Tables 1 and 2). "The use of such nicknames is not offensive because these nicknames are used affectionately," a 34-year-old female participant claimed. On the other hand, nicknames, such as *Fizzo* (formal name: *Fizza*), *Nazo* (for *Nazia*), and *Badar* (for *Badroo*), etc. are also used in the absence of people. Such nicknames are distorted forms which may offend the addressee. Conversely, the respondents suggested that villagers often do not mind if their names are distorted.

When out of respect, names are not used, men are also addressed by their professional titles; for example, *Master Sahib* 'schoolteacher' or *Molvi Sahib* 'religious cleric.' *Sahib* is used to connote respect. *Haaji* or *Haaji Sahib* 'a man who has performed pilgrimage in Mecca,' or *Haajjan* (a respective title for women) are also used to address those who have performed Hajj (pilgrimage), or even those who have not performed it but are known for their good deeds or at least have an appearance which connotes religious affiliation.

3.3. Nicknames to Show Disrespect and Contempt

3.3.1. Professions and Castes

According to the participants, words associated with certain professions that are socially looked down upon or deemed dishonourable are also often used out

of frankness or openness (see Table 1). For instance, *Kanjar* 'pimp,' *Dalla* 'pimp,' *Miraasi* ("Mirasi in traditional Punjabi societies memorized and then narrated the heroic deeds of prominent families from their localities" [Khalid 2016]), *Changar* 'nomad/involved in agriculture to carry sacks,' *Choorha* 'sweeper/one who cleans the gutters or does menial jobs,' *Lohaar* or *Musalli* 'one who does menial jobs in agriculture,' etc. Similarly, words like *Kanjri* 'whore,' *Miraasan, Changri, Choohri,* and *Musallan,* etc., are used for women to refer to their inferior social status or moral depravation. A young male respondent elucidated: "*Dalla, Mirasi,* and *Kanjar* are used for those who do things or spread ideas against the traditions, who don't follow the code of conduct, who have pro-western mindsets, or who don't respect the dress code. Natives are largely conservative".

According to the participants, names are also changed based on professional and regional affiliations. A participant remarked, "a person named *Aslam* will be called *Aslam Ghora* 'horse' because he or his ancestors have joined a profession related to horses, horse-riding or selling." "Sometimes a person is given a name according to their profession, for example, *Mochi* 'shoemaker,' *Dalaal* 'dealer/broker,' *Seth* 'rich man,' or *Aarhti* 'dealer in grain market,' etc." "If someone contests election, his name is distorted by using his electoral sign. For example, if a candidate named *Boota* has a sign *Daantri* (دانتری) 'sickle,' his name is distorted as *Boota Dantri.*" Another participant wrote: "there is a doctor in my village. His name is *Mehmood* but the whole village calls him *Dr. Mooda.* My father's uncle once won an election in the village and since then he has been called *Mimber* 'member'." Another participant mentioned, "sometimes people distort the real names or call others by the name related to the specific area of the village they live in. For example, a man named *Aziz* will be called *Aziz Churhaki Wala* because he lives in the specific area of the village named *Churhaki.*" Professional titles or castes affect names used in the presence of people as well (cf. Table 2). A 21-year-old male participant stated: "a person named *Iqbal* is named *Iqbal Sunyara* 'goldsmith' in daily conversations for he or his ancestors were goldsmiths. Similarly, *Kaneez Kumhaari* will be pronounced for the woman named *Kaneez* because *Kumhar* 'potter' is her caste or pottery is her and her ancestors' profession."

3.3.2. Animal Names

According to the participants, animal names which have negative connotations are also used out of frankness, anger, or disrespect by the traditional Punjabi communities living in rural areas or small towns. For example, *Kutta* 'dog,' *Billa* 'cat,' or *Khota* 'donkey' are socially abhorred because the village culture is snobbish and honour-based and these animals are either forbidden from the religious standpoint, or they stray from house to house or place to place, which is associated

with promiscuity, corruption, immorality, or instability. Though dogs, cats, and donkeys are kept and looked after for agriculture and safety, yet from the perspective of naming, these animals connote disrespect and contempt. Similarly, names of feminine animals, like *Kutti* 'bitch,' *Billi* 'cat,' *Khoti* 'donkey,' or *Majh* 'buffalo' (used for fat women) are used for women out of aggression or informality. Animal names like *Shaer* 'lion' or *Cheetah* are also used in positive contexts because these names connote strength and courage [cf. Rahman 2016].

3.3.3. Curse Words

Animal names and curse words are either used when someone is exceedingly frank with the addressee or angry at him or her. It is more common to use vulgar expressions to mention someone in their absence than publicly; nonetheless, some people call bad names or use vulgar language easily and recurrently due to their social attributes, such as power, seniority, illiteracy, or social acceptance, etc. Men make such linguistic choices more often than women do, while older or married women are also able to use such expressions as compared to young and single women. Individuals or groups may employ fewer or more insulting forms depending on their age, gender, or social acceptance. Educated native Punjabi speakers or young girls, for instance, often avoid vulgar language.

3.3.4. Secret Names or Code Words

According to the participants, people also use code words or secret names to refer to someone in their absence. Such names, which are most often motivated by character traits or recurrent actions, are basically given to poke fun at, create humour, show contempt and hatred, or discuss someone secretly with ease. Mostly, it is done for fun and ease, but it implies some sort of contempt or resistance. For instance, someone may be called *Chipkoo* because they are clingy. Similarly, titles like *Khusra* 'transgender,' *Khhach* 'foolish,' *Daang* 'wand' (with reference to an extremely tall and slim woman), *Run-Mureed* 'hen-pecked,' *Sarrial* 'grumpy' are also used in specific contexts to refer to people in their absence. A respondent explained that distorted names, such as *Moya* 'dead,' *PaykhhaR* 'useless,' *Baghlol* 'simpleton' are also used as secret names to refer to people in their absence. According to the author's observation, these nicknames are also used in presence of the named person to either show frankness, anger, or ridicule.

A 34-year-old female participant viewed that secret names often relate to one's behavior with others. Secret names such as *Munafiq* 'double-faced,' *Bichhu* 'scorpion,' or *Do-number* 'two number → double-faced, dishonest' often relate to someone's hypocrisy. A male participant mentioned that in his village, "if someone works very slowly, their name is distorted as *Loohla* 'handicapped.' If someone's

hair is not normal, their name is distorted as *Mundra* 'bald.' If someone is secretive, their name is distorted as *Pogy*. If someone fails to uphold promises, their name is distorted as *Lota* 'ewer'."

Another young female participant enlightened that people also use others' catchphrases as their nicknames or distorted names: "If a person uses a word repeatedly, others use that 'specific word' to address or discuss that person, e.g., *Qaher Khuda ka* 'commination,' *Toba Toba* 'God Forbid!'."

In some instances, nicknames are used as elements of a secret code shared by a small group of people. In this case, the referent of a nickname is generally unknown to other people, the motivation of the nickname being intentionally non-transparent. For example: *Anday* 'eggs' ("because those boys used to sell eggs"), *Makhhi* 'fly' ("because she was a tiny girl"), *Sethhi* 'tycoon' ("because that man used to behave like a rich and arrogant businessman").

3.3.5. Physical Appearance and Disabilities

Nicknames, referential expressions, or address forms are often motivated by appearance or physical features [Manocha 2020]. Examples given by the participants of the present study include *Ganjoo*/*Ganja* 'bald,' *ToonDa* 'one who has impaired hands,' *Thedal* 'one who has a fat belly,' *Tinda* 'apple gourd' (used for a bald person), *Nikko* 'short woman,' *Nikka* 'little' (used for a boy), *Kala*/*Kaalu* 'black' (used for people with dark skin) [Ibid.], etc. A male informant suggested that "if a person named *Mumtaaz* has a humped back, everyone calls him *Mumtaaz Kubba*."

4. Discussion and Conclusion

As in [Nyambi 2018; Mensah 2014; 2016], the present study also reinforces that naming, nicknaming, and name-calling practices unveil social ideologies based on the patterns of resistance, aggression, exclusion, inclusion, or identification. Spoiled names thus become an instrument to display aggression and name-calling becomes a power retention strategy, a tool to criticize, and a strategy to vent out anger or helplessness [Nyambi 2018].

The present study adds that spoiled names or referential expressions indicate detachment as well. Rahman [2014] proposes that modified names can be used to de-stigmatize rural or socioeconomic identity, however, the current study demonstrates that names distorted by others, even if done apparently without malice, stigmatize the addressee or referent. Spoiled names also reveal the patterns of openness and passivity, simultaneously. As based on the patterns of dominance and resistance concerning gender, age, education, caste, or financial status, the orientation of rural Punjabi culture is hierarchical [Usman 2011], so overt

confrontation is often impossible; therefore, spoiled names are an expression of grievance, helplessness, and hurt. Palsson [2014] also supports that naming is more than a classificatory exercise because it involves power relations of domination and subjugation. Usman [2011] corroborates that power relations are structured around caste in the villages. Emphasising the orientation of rural Pakistani culture as essentially agricultural, he pinpointed the caste-based socio-economic demarcation of gender in terms of the association of dominance with the landowning castes called *Zimindars* and subordination with the service providing castes called *Kammis*. The present study affirms that the names of dominant castes, when added to an official name, are used as positive nicknames, while the names of subordinate castes, when used as nicknames, express irony, derision or anger (e.g. *Sameer Mirasi*, where *Mirasi* is the name of one of the socially considered low castes). Such name-distorting practices reflect onomastic prejudice, bias, and discrimination in Punjab [cf. Nick 2017].

In addition, according to the participants of this study, spoiled names not only reflect emotions of anger and contempt for the referent but also convey a sense of openness, frankness, and endearment among the interlocutors, as well the speaker and the referent or addressee. However, spoiled names, especially when used in front of the addressee, might be construed as a manifestation of bullying language [Ballard & Easteal 2018] or a form of verbal harassment [Crozier & Dimmock 1999]. Rahman [2014], with reference to the Pakistani context, also noted that naming practices could result in extreme sectarian violence. The present study establishes that name spoiling is a way of registering one's protest or communicating one's disappointment against the bad deeds or choices of a person. At the same time, it is a struggle to maintain control. Distorted and spoiled names become a marker of identity, character, or social positioning and performance of a person. Distorted names also reflect the nexus between gender, body/disability, naming and identity because "embodiment and identity are *also* inextricably intertwined with naming" [Pilcher 2016: 766]. The present study explicates that the uniqueness of a person's identity and individuality does not stem from their formal name as much as it arises from the name distorted due to the ideological configuration of a particular social context and to the morphological capabilities of a specific linguistic system.

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