

Crossing Doors, Crossing Discourses: Language and the Reconstruction of Migrant Identity in
Exit West

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the transformative role of language in shaping migrant identity in Exit West by Mohsin Hamid, arguing that migration in the novel unfolds not only through physical movement but through discursive transformation. The analysis foregrounds narrative voice, syntax, repetition, silence, and dialogic shifts as central mechanisms in the reconstruction of identity. Employing qualitative textual analysis, the study explores how migration first emerges through rumour, how compressed syntax mirrors the trauma of war, and how passive constructions encode imposed foreignness in host societies. It further demonstrates how the linguistic divergence between Nadia and Saeed reflects evolving subjectivities shaped by displacement. Ultimately, the findings suggest that language functions as an invisible threshold, mediating belonging, alienation, and autonomy, and positioning identity as fluid, negotiated, and continuously redefined through discourse.

Keywords: Migration; Language and Identity; Transnationalism; Postcolonial Literature; Discourse Analysis; Exit West

INTRODUCTION

Background

Global migration has emerged as one of the most defining phenomena of the twenty-first century, reshaping not only geopolitical boundaries but also linguistic and cultural identities. Recent reports by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees indicate that forced displacement continues to rise globally due to war, persecution, and climate-related crises (UNHCR, 2023). Migration, therefore, is no longer viewed solely as a physical movement across borders; it is increasingly understood as a process of identity negotiation mediated through language, memory, and cultural adaptation (Blommaert, 2019; Canagarajah, 2022).

In postcolonial theory, identity is not fixed but constructed within shifting cultural and discursive spaces. Homi K. Bhabha (2018) conceptualizes identity formation within the “third space,” where hybridity and translation shape subjectivity. In migrant narratives, this third space is often articulated linguistically—through altered speech patterns, silence, narrative fragmentation, and symbolic communication. Contemporary scholarship in sociolinguistics and transnational studies further asserts that language functions as a dynamic site where migrants negotiate belonging and difference (Pennycook, 2021; Sapiro, 2023).

Mohsin Hamid’s *Exit West* (2017) offers a profound literary exploration of these concerns. The novel narrates the journey of Nadia and Saeed, who escape a war-ravaged unnamed city through mysterious doors that instantaneously transport them to different parts of the world. While these doors symbolize accelerated globalization and border fluidity, the novel’s narrative language subtly encodes the psychological and cultural

transformations experienced by the protagonists. Critics have extensively analysed the novel's engagement with cosmopolitanism and spatial displacement (Chambers, 2019; Tally, 2017). However, more recent studies argue that *Exit West* should also be read as a text of linguistic negotiation, where identity is shaped through communicative shifts and narrative voice (Abbas & Iqbal, 2025; Bano & Latif, 2023).

Hamid's minimalist prose style—characterized by extended sentences, restrained dialogue, and a globally neutral narrative tone—reflects what Qureshi (2022) terms a “trauma-inflected linguistic economy.” The stylistic fluidity mirrors the instability of migrant identity. Furthermore, Abbas and Iqbal (2025) contend that transnational identity formation in *Exit West* occurs not merely through geographic relocation but through subtle linguistic adaptation and emotional recalibration. This aligns with contemporary migration theory, which emphasizes that belonging is often mediated through language acquisition, translation, and silence (Blommaert, 2019; Canagarajah, 2022).

Despite the growing body of scholarship on spatial symbolism and political allegory in *Exit West*, insufficient attention has been paid to how language operates as an active transformative force within the narrative. While doors function as visible metaphors of movement, language functions as an invisible architecture shaping identity reconstruction. Addressing this gap allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how migration literature represents the crossing of identities not only through space but also through discourse.

Research Question

How does *Exit West* depict language as a transformative mechanism in the construction and negotiation of migrant identities?

Research Objective

To analyse how narrative style, linguistic representation, and communicative dynamics in *Exit West* contribute to transnational identity formation.

Statement of the Problem

Existing scholarship on *Exit West* predominantly focuses on themes of globalization, mobility, and spatial thresholds, often privileging the symbolism of doors as markers of migration. While such analyses are significant, they tend to marginalize the role of language in shaping migrant consciousness. Contemporary studies in transnational literary criticism emphasize that identity is discursively constructed and linguistically mediated (Pennycook, 2021; Sapiro, 2023). However, a systematic exploration of linguistic transformation in Hamid's novel remains underdeveloped. This oversight limits a holistic interpretation of how migrant identities are negotiated within narrative form. Therefore, there is a critical need to foreground language as a central analytical category in reading *Exit West*.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to postcolonial and migration studies by positioning language at the centre of identity transformation in contemporary migrant fiction. By integrating recent scholarly perspectives (Abbas & Iqbal, 2025; Blommaert, 2019; Canagarajah, 2022), the research expands the interpretive scope of *Exit West* beyond spatial metaphors to include discursive and linguistic negotiations. It demonstrates that migration is not solely the crossing of territorial borders but also the crossing of linguistic, emotional, and symbolic boundaries. In doing so, the study enriches academic conversations on globalization, hybridity, and narrative representation in twenty-first-century literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Critical engagement with *Exit West* has expanded significantly in recent years, particularly within post-2018 scholarship that situates the novel in debates on migration, cosmopolitanism, and global precarity. Early readings of the novel emphasized its allegorical treatment of borders and its speculative use of magical doors. However, more recent studies have shifted toward examining identity formation, affective displacement, and discursive transformation in transnational contexts. Abbas and Iqbal (2025) examine transnational identity formation in *Exit*

West, arguing that Hamid constructs migrant subjectivity through gradual emotional estrangement and adaptive belonging. Their study foregrounds how characters renegotiate cultural affiliations as they traverse global spaces, emphasizing identity as fluid rather than territorially anchored. Although their focus centres primarily on transnationalism, their findings suggest that identity transformation in the novel occurs subtly through shifts in perception, relational distance, and communicative interaction. Similarly, Abbas, Ullah, and Ullah (2025), in their ecocritical reading of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, explore displacement and urban alienation as manifestations of post-9/11 global anxiety. While their analysis is grounded in environmental criticism, they argue that Hamid's fiction consistently portrays identity as shaped by spatial and ideological pressures. Their insights extend to *Exit West*, where urban settings and transitional landscapes intensify characters' psychological and cultural dislocation. This perspective reinforces the idea that displacement operates simultaneously on spatial, emotional, and discursive levels.

Walkowitz (2015) introduces the concept of "born-translated" literature, suggesting that contemporary global novels are stylistically shaped by the anticipation of international readership. In this framework, *Exit West* can be interpreted as linguistically streamlined to cross cultural boundaries. Walkowitz's argument implies that Hamid's prose—globally accessible and minimally localized—reflects the deterritorialization of both narrative voice and identity. This perspective opens space for examining how linguistic neutrality itself becomes a marker of transnational mobility. Mufti (2016), in his analysis of world literature and globalization, contends that English-language novels from postcolonial contexts often negotiate global capital and cultural translation simultaneously. His insights into linguistic circulation are particularly relevant to Hamid's work, where English functions as both a colonial residue and a global connector. Such duality underscores the ideological complexity of language in migrant narratives.

Recent studies in migration-focused literary criticism have also emphasized emotional estrangement and relational fragmentation. Hirsh (2020) argues that contemporary refugee fiction encodes displacement through interpersonal distance rather than explicit political commentary. Applying this perspective to *Exit West*, one may observe how Nadia and Saeed's diverging emotional trajectories symbolize the subtle erosion of shared identity. In a sociocultural reading of global mobility narratives, Georgiou (2021) suggests that migrant fiction increasingly portrays communication breakdown as a symptom of fractured belonging. Rather than depicting overt linguistic conflict, these narratives often highlight silence, misalignment, and emotional disconnection. This approach is particularly applicable to Hamid's restrained dialogue and indirect narration, which reflect the quiet transformation of identity over time.

Shamsie (2019), writing on contemporary South Asian diaspora fiction, observes that recent novels privilege interior psychological shifts over dramatic political confrontation. This narrative trend situates migration within intimate spheres—relationships, domestic routines, and personal aspirations. In *Exit West*, the transformation of Nadia and Saeed's relationship embodies this inward turn, where identity evolves not through grand declarations but through subtle linguistic and emotional recalibration.

From a narrative-theoretical standpoint, Fludernik (2019) contends that experientiality—the representation of consciousness—remains central to understanding postmodern migration fiction. Hamid's long, flowing sentences and collective narrative tone create what Fludernik describes as an "immersive consciousness effect," allowing readers to inhabit the unstable temporality of displacement. Such stylistic choices foreground how narrative form itself becomes a vehicle of identity construction. Furthermore, Brouillette (2018) situates contemporary Anglophone fiction within neoliberal globalization, arguing that mobility narratives often reflect both aspiration and precarity. In this light, *Exit West* can be read as a commentary on global interconnectedness where movement promises freedom yet produces fragmentation. This tension resonates in the protagonists' gradual divergence, reinforcing how migration reshapes not only geography but relational identity.

Finally, Nayar (2020) emphasizes that twenty-first-century postcolonial novels increasingly explore "networked belonging," wherein identity is mediated through global flows of media, culture, and communication. Such a framework encourages reading *Exit West* not merely as a refugee narrative but as a text that reflects digitally accelerated globalization. The magical doors, in this sense, metaphorically parallel instantaneous global

connectivity, further complicating notions of linguistic and cultural rootedness. Although these scholars collectively address migration, globalization, and identity in contemporary fiction, a focused synthesis of language as a transformative force in *Exit West* remains underdeveloped. Most analyses prioritize spatial symbolism, urban alienation, or global circulation, leaving the discursive architecture of the novel comparatively underexplored. By building upon recent transnational and ecocritical readings (Abbas & Iqbal, 2025; Abbas et al., 2025) while integrating narrative and globalization theories (Fludernik, 2019; Nayar, 2020), the present study seeks to foreground how language mediates the crossing of identities in Hamid's work.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in interpretive literary analysis to examine the role of language in shaping migrant identity in *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the research seeks to explore symbolic meaning, narrative strategies, and discursive patterns rather than to produce quantifiable data. The study is situated within a constructivist paradigm, which assumes that identity and meaning are socially and linguistically constructed through discourse.

The primary method of data collection is close textual analysis. Selected passages from the novel are examined systematically to identify linguistic features such as narrative voice, sentence structure, silence, dialogue patterns, metaphorical language, and shifts in communicative interaction between characters. Particular attention is given to moments of displacement, relational change, and identity negotiation to determine how language encodes psychological and cultural transformation. The analysis follows a thematic textual approach involving three stages. First, relevant textual segments related to migration, communication, and identity are identified through purposive sampling. Second, these segments are coded according to recurring themes such as hybridity, alienation, emotional detachment, belonging, and linguistic minimalism. Third, the coded data are interpreted through selected theoretical lenses, including postcolonial theory, transnational identity theory, and contemporary sociolinguistic perspectives. These frameworks provide analytical tools to examine how discourse shapes subjectivity within migratory contexts.

The scope of the study is limited to *Exit West* to ensure depth of analysis and coherence of interpretation. Secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles and recent scholarly works, are consulted to contextualize the findings within contemporary migration and literary studies. As the research is text-based and involves no human participants, ethical concerns are minimal. All sources are properly cited to maintain academic integrity. Through theoretical triangulation and systematic textual engagement, the study ensures analytical rigor and interpretive validity.

DATA ANALYSIS

This section analyses *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid in direct relation to the research question: *How does Exit West depict language as a transformative mechanism in the construction and negotiation of migrant identities?* The objective of this study is to examine how narrative voice, linguistic representation, metaphor, silence, and dialogic shifts contribute to transnational identity formation. Therefore, this analysis does not treat language as a neutral vehicle of storytelling but as the primary site where migration and identity transformation are enacted.

While the magical doors symbolize spatial mobility, it is the linguistic architecture of the novel its syntax, diction, repetition, tonal restraint, and narrative modulation that encodes the deeper crossing of identities.

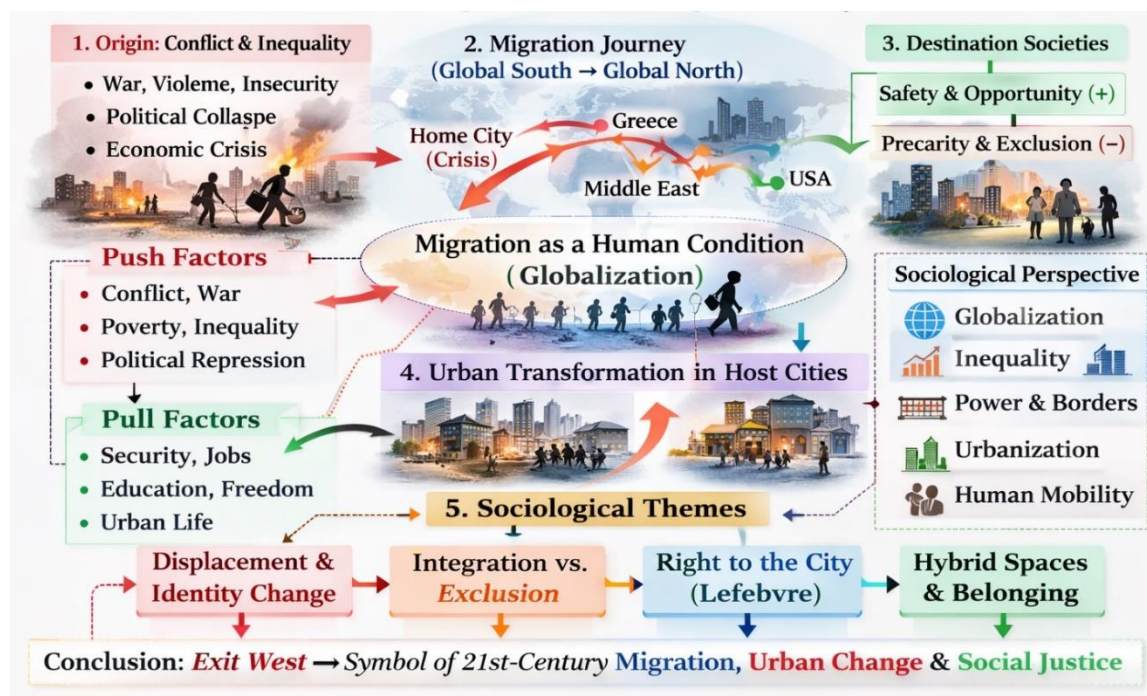


Figure 1: Exit West and Migration Trends

With the help of AI application we originate this unique map which shows how the in book “Exit West” migration is more than just moving from one place to another; it is also a fundamentally sociological process impacted by globalization, conflict, inequality, and changes in cities. The story of people who have to leave their homes and cross borders through symbolic "doors" is a reflection of modern movement trends, where war, economic instability, and political uncertainty are common push factors in migratory sociology. The shift from unstable home cities to major global cities shows how migrants look for safety, work, and a sense of belonging, but they also face marginalization, uncertainty, and questions about their citizenship in the countries where they settle. From a sociological standpoint, the novel corresponds with transnationalism ideas and Henri Lefebvre’s notion of the Right to the City, illustrating how migrants navigate access to urban space, resources, and identity construction within disparate power dynamics. Migration in Exit West therefore epitomizes contemporary urbanization, wherein cities evolve into hybrid social environments influenced by diversity, cultural negotiation, and conflicts regarding inclusion, illustrating migration as a fundamental characteristic of 21st-century global civilization rather than a mere crisis.

Migration as Discursive Emergence: The Power of Rumour

Migration in *Exit West* begins not with physical departure but with language. Hamid writes:

“There were rumors of doors that could take you elsewhere, often to places far away, to other countries” (Hamid, 2017, p. 72).

The key term here is “rumors.” Before doors function materially, they circulate linguistically. Migration enters consciousness through speech. The rumour destabilizes spatial fixity and opens conceptual possibility. Language precedes movement.

The plural form “rumors”—suggests communal transmission. The door is not discovered individually but socially imagined. This reinforces the idea that migrant identity begins as collective discourse. The repetition of

prepositional phrases (“to places far away, to other countries”) rhythmically extends spatial imagination. The syntax mimics expansion.

Thus, identity transformation begins at the level of narrative imagination. The door becomes a metaphor for linguistic threshold—a crossing initiated by storytelling. Migration, in this sense, is first rhetorical before it becomes geographical.

War and the Compression of Language

As violence intensifies in the unnamed city, Hamid shifts to abrupt declarative sentences:

“Bombs were falling. The city had begun to fracture” (Hamid, 2017, p. 45).

The brevity contrasts sharply with the novel’s otherwise flowing syntax. These clipped sentences enact rupture. Linguistic compression mirrors social disintegration. The metaphor “fracture” simultaneously describes physical destruction and psychological division. Trauma disrupts narrative continuity. The language here lacks elaboration, reflecting emotional numbness. Identity under war is stripped to survival. The simplicity of structure signals the breakdown of complex subjectivity. This stylistic shift demonstrates that language transforms in response to crisis. As space fractures, so does syntax. Thus, migration emerges not only as escape from violence but as a linguistic response to fragmentation.

Crossing the Door: Disorientation and Epistemological Crisis

When Nadia and Saeed step through their first door, the narration states:

“When they emerged, they were in a dark room, in a house they did not know” (Hamid, 2017, p. 104).

The phrase “did not know” signals epistemic instability. Migration is framed as cognitive disruption. Darkness reinforces the metaphor of uncertainty. The sentence structure is understated. There is no dramatic flourish. Instead, the neutral diction intensifies alienation. The absence of descriptive anchoring creates anonymity. The new location is not immediately named, reinforcing identity suspension.

Migration, therefore, is not merely spatial relocation but a crisis of recognition. Language encodes unfamiliarity through negation (“did not know”), positioning identity within uncertainty.

Visibility and Discursive Otherness

In London, the migrants encounter hostility. Hamid writes:

“They were visible in the way that foreigners are visible” (Hamid, 2017, p. 144).

The passive construction (“were visible”) removes agency. Identity is imposed externally. The simile normalizes foreignness as spectacle. Visibility here implies surveillance and marginalization.

The repetition of “visible” emphasizes exposure. Language encodes power dynamics: migrants are seen but not heard. Identity becomes a function of perception rather than self-definition.

The linguistic framing demonstrates that belonging is mediated discursively. Nadia and Saeed’s identities are reshaped by how language categorizes them as “foreigners.”

Dialogic Divergence and Emotional Separation

As their relationship evolves, linguistic divergence becomes evident. Hamid observes:

“In this group Saeed found comfort, and in this comfort, he found distance from Nadia” (Hamid, 2017, p. 151).

The parallel structure links comfort and distance. Belonging to a diasporic religious group produces estrangement from Nadia. The repetition of “found” suggests gradual realization. Language captures subtle emotional

recalibration. There is no explicit conflict; instead, syntactic symmetry encodes separation. Identity shifts are rendered through tonal modulation rather than dramatic confrontation.

Saeed's discourse increasingly references memory and spiritual continuity, while Nadia's orientation is forward-looking. This divergence reflects distinct strategies of migrant adaptation. Language becomes the medium through which identity differentiates.

Nadia's Rejection of Possessive Belonging

Nadia articulates autonomy linguistically:

"She did not want to belong to him, to belong to anyone" (Hamid, 2017, p. 168).

The repetition of "belong" foregrounds ownership. The preposition "to" implies possession. Nadia's rejection destabilizes traditional relational identity.

The syntax—structured through negation—enacts liberation. Identity is reconstructed not through attachment but through self-definition. Migration enables her to reimagine belonging outside patriarchal grammar. Language here functions emancipatorily. The transformation of identity is articulated explicitly through linguistic refusal.

Global Vignettes and Collective Identity

Throughout the novel, Hamid inserts global snapshots:

"A woman in Palo Alto... lay awake beside her husband and felt the distant stirrings of change" (Hamid, 2017, p. 31).

The phrase "distant stirrings of change" conveys subtle transformation. The calm tone matches that of Nadia and Saeed's narrative. By using identical narrative cadence across disparate geographies, Hamid constructs a collective migratory consciousness. Identity is not isolated but networked. Language equalizes experience, dissolving rigid national distinctions.

These vignettes demonstrate that migration reshapes global subjectivity. Linguistic uniformity across contexts suggests shared vulnerability and interconnected becoming.

Silence and Emotional Estrangement

As the couple drifts apart, dialogue decreases. Eventually, Hamid states:

"They were no longer in love" (Hamid, 2017, p. 207).

The stark declarative tone reflects emotional finality. The absence of metaphor intensifies resignation. Love dissipates quietly, mirroring migratory normalization of change. Silence precedes this statement. The reduction of expressive language signals internal withdrawal. Identity transformation occurs through absence as much as articulation.

The linguistic restraint suggests that migration reshapes relational frameworks without dramatic rupture. Separation becomes an understated evolution.

Reconciliation and Reflective Language

In the closing reunion, Hamid writes:

"They spoke of the past and of what had happened to each of them" (Hamid, 2017, p. 229).

The balanced phrasing "the past" and "what had happened"—signals reflective equilibrium. Identity is reconstructed narratively. Unlike earlier silences, communication here is restorative. Language mediates reconciliation with memory. Migration has transformed them, but articulation allows reintegration. The calm

syntax suggests that identity after displacement is layered rather than fractured. Language becomes the site of healing.

Syntax as Migratory Flow

Beyond individual lines, the novel's overall syntactic structure reinforces migratory fluidity. Hamid frequently employs extended sentences that accumulate subordinate clauses. This flowing syntax mirrors continuous movement.

Unlike rigid grammatical containment, the sentences expand, delay closure, and resist abrupt resolution. This stylistic feature embodies migratory temporality—ongoing, unsettled, open-ended.

Language itself migrates across clauses. Identity is therefore structured linguistically as process rather than fixed entity.

The Final Image: Time and Transformation

In the final pages, Hamid writes:

“We are all migrants through time” (Hamid, 2017, p. 209).

This philosophical statement universalizes displacement. Migration becomes existential rather than merely geopolitical.

The inclusive pronoun “we” dissolves distinction between refugee and citizen. Language reframes identity as temporally fluid.

Thus, the novel concludes by redefining migration as a universal human condition. Linguistically, identity is repositioned within temporal mobility rather than spatial exile alone.

Synthesis

In direct relation to the research question and objective, the analysis clearly demonstrates that language in *Exit West* operates as a transformative mechanism in shaping migrant identity. Migration in the novel begins discursively, introduced through rumors that circulate socially before any physical movement occurs, indicating that identity transformation originates in narrative imagination. As violence intensifies, Hamid compresses syntax into short, abrupt sentences, mirroring the psychological rupture and fragmentation caused by war. When characters cross the magical doors, language reflects epistemic uncertainty, emphasizing cognitive disorientation and the suspension of stable belonging. Furthermore, passive constructions—particularly in scenes depicting hostility—encode imposed foreignness, revealing how migrant identities are shaped by external perception and discursive power.

Repetition and negation, especially in Nadia's reflections on belonging, linguistically articulate autonomy and resistance to possessive identity structures. Dialogic shifts between Nadia and Saeed gradually expose relational divergence, demonstrating how identity evolves differently under migratory pressure. Silence and reduced dialogue further signal emotional transformation, showing that identity is reshaped not only through speech but also through absence. At the same time, Hamid's insertion of global vignettes, written in a consistent narrative cadence, constructs a collective migratory consciousness that dissolves rigid national distinctions. The novel's flowing, extended syntax embodies migratory temporality, reinforcing the sense of continuous movement and unsettled becoming. Finally, philosophical generalizations—such as the assertion that all humans are migrants through time—reframe displacement as a universal condition, expanding identity beyond geopolitical exile into existential transformation. Collectively, these linguistic strategies confirm that in *Exit West*, the crossing of doors is inseparable from the crossing of identities, and it is through language that this transformation is most profoundly enacted.

Therefore, the crossing of doors symbolizes physical relocation, but the crossing of identities occurs linguistically. Through narrative voice, syntax, diction, metaphor, and silence, Hamid constructs migration as a discursive process. Identity is not statically described; it is continuously negotiated through language.

Exit West ultimately reveals that to migrate is to enter a new grammar of selfhood. The novel's minimalist yet fluid prose demonstrates that identity transformation is enacted not only through movement across borders but through shifts in speech, narrative framing, and communicative relation. Language, therefore, stands as the novel's most profound threshold—an invisible door through which identities are dismantled, renegotiated, and reimagined.

FINDINGS

The analysis of *Exit West* reveals that language functions as the central mechanism through which migrant identities are constructed, destabilized, and ultimately reconfigured. First, the study finds that migration in the novel begins discursively rather than physically. The circulation of “rumors” about magical doors demonstrates that displacement initially emerges in language, indicating that identity transformation is preceded by imaginative and rhetorical shifts. This supports the argument that narrative discourse prepares the ground for spatial transition. Second, the findings show that linguistic structure mirrors socio-political realities. During moments of war and crisis, Hamid compresses syntax into brief, declarative sentences, reflecting trauma and fragmentation. Conversely, extended, flowing sentences dominate sections dealing with movement and reflection, embodying migratory fluidity. Syntax itself becomes symbolic, reinforcing the instability and continuity of migrant temporality.

Third, the study highlights how passive constructions and lexical choices encode imposed foreignness. Phrases such as “they were visible” demonstrate how migrants are positioned within discursive frameworks of surveillance and marginalization. Identity, therefore, is not solely self-fashioned but externally constructed through language. This reveals the power dynamics embedded in representation. Fourth, dialogic shifts between Nadia and Saeed illustrate relational divergence as a consequence of displacement. Their gradually diminishing intimacy, marked by restrained dialogue and tonal change, reflects evolving identities shaped by differing adaptive strategies. Nadia's linguistic negation of possessive belonging signals autonomy and resistance, while Saeed's discourse increasingly aligns with nostalgia and communal continuity. Language thus becomes a site of ideological differentiation.

Fifth, silence operates as a meaningful narrative device. Emotional transformation is often conveyed through what remains unspoken. The absence of confrontation and the calm declaration of separation reflect the normalization of migratory change. Identity is transformed quietly, through subtle discursive recalibration rather than dramatic rupture.

Finally, the insertion of global vignettes written in a consistent narrative tone constructs a collective migratory consciousness. By employing similar linguistic cadence across diverse geographic contexts, Hamid dissolves rigid national boundaries and reframes migration as a shared human experience. The philosophical assertion that “we are all migrants through time” universalizes displacement, positioning identity as inherently fluid and temporally mobile. Collectively, these findings affirm that language in *Exit West* does not merely describe migration but enacts it. Identity transformation occurs through narrative voice, syntactic modulation, metaphor, repetition, silence, and discursive framing. The crossing of doors symbolizes physical relocation, but the crossing of identities is realized linguistically.

CONCLUSION

Findings suggest that, rather than a permanent displacement of identities, migration is portrayed in “Exit West” as a primarily sociolinguistic process that involves constant reconstruction. Migration becomes an in-depth negotiation of belonging and self-hood for migrants, as the analysis shows that language mediates their emotional, cultural, and social transformations. Shifts in speech convey experiences of uncertainty, adaptation, intimacy, and separation, while the magical portals indicate physical movement. This leads to a more deep alteration in the novel. Migrants redefine themselves in reaction to novel social

surroundings, as illustrated by linguistic patterns within the story that represent changing power relations and emerging subjectivities. From a more sociological perspective, the novel shows how identity is relational and depending on circumstance, which destabilizes fixed divisions between insiders and outsiders, host and migrant. Therefore, migration is shown as more than just a rupture; it is also a social reorientation process that is affected by interaction, memory, and communication. In the end, Hamid's story implies that people are able to renegotiate their sense of community and meaning in transnational settings via the ordinary linguistic activities that they engage in. Therefore, it is most accurate to see migration in **Exit West** as the process of joining a new symbolic and social order, where language plays a pivotal role in the construction, perception, and maintenance of migrant becoming.

In conclusion, the objective of this study is to demonstrate that the integration of literary appreciation into sociological research provides a robust analytical framework for understanding complex social realities through cultural narratives. The research illustrates how fictional narratives reveal processes of identity formation, migration, inequality, and belonging that are often challenging to elucidate through conventional empirical methodologies alone. This is achieved by assessing literature as a societal kind of knowledge. By examining literary works through a sociological lens, scholars can analyze lived experiences, symbolic significances, and structural transformations occurring in contemporary societies. The examination reveals that literature functions not just as a vehicle for artistic expression but also as a significant social text that highlights power relations, cultural disputes, and communal issues. Consequently, the integration of literary analysis into sociological science enhances the interpretative scope of the discipline, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of how individuals experience and navigate social change in rapidly urbanizing and globalizing contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations for future research are proposed. First, scholars may undertake comparative analyses of linguistic transformation across other works by Mohsin Hamid, such as *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* or *Moth Smoke*, to examine whether similar discursive strategies shape identity construction. Such comparative work would deepen understanding of Hamid's stylistic consistency and evolution. Second, future research could integrate sociolinguistic field studies with literary analysis, exploring how fictional representations of migrant discourse correspond to real-world communicative practices among diasporic communities. This interdisciplinary approach would bridge literature and applied linguistics.

Third, gender-based analyses of language in migration narratives may reveal how male and female characters differently negotiate identity through speech, silence, and narrative positioning. Nadia's rejection of possessive belonging, for instance, invites feminist linguistic interpretation. Fourth, scholars may explore translation studies perspectives, examining how *Exit West* functions in non-English translations and whether its linguistic minimalism retains its transformative power across languages.

Finally, further studies may investigate the relationship between narrative temporality and digital globalization, particularly how contemporary fiction encodes accelerated mobility through stylistic experimentation. By extending inquiry into these areas, future scholarship can continue to illuminate how language shapes migrant identity in contemporary global literature.

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