



## **The Poetics of Awareness: From Anthropocentrism to Ecological Consciousness; An Ecolinguistics Analysis of Muneer Niazi's Poetry**

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### **Abstract**

The research paper explores the selected poems of Munir Niazi from an ecolinguistics point of view. The research mainly hypothesises that the poet vouches for the use of figuratively rich language that provokes the idea of the interdependence of nature and humans. Moreover, the research argues that via the portrayal of eco-centric themes, the poet develops eco-consciousness in the mind of the reader; hence, deconstructing the anthropocentric perspectives regarding the treatment of nature. Moreover, the study employs the “Story of Metaphors” as a linguistic theory to frame the arguments within the theoretical premises for easy comprehension. Further, the researchers demonstrate that the innovative poetic process of Niazi transcends the receptiveness of human/natural relations and the establishment of a sense of ecological kinship with the immediate experience. This figurative transformation shows the significance of poetry in creating

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the required inner consciousness to maintain a sustainable, non-exploitative relationship with the natural world.

**Keywords:** anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, eco-consciousness, ecolinguistics.

### **Introduction**

The growing issue of environmental degradation in the twenty-first century is increasingly being seen as not merely a technical or political issue, but as a moral and ethical crisis based on the current anthropocentric worldview. This view puts man at the Centre of existence, which inherently gives nature only utilitarian and commodity value. Understanding that this anthropocentric model is the direct cause of environmental destruction, a significant part of modern ethical discussion is founded on the basic conflict between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism (Frantz et al., 2025). A solution to this dilemma can be a paradigm shift in cultural attitudes, which requires distributing responsibility among authors and academics in the humanities, and literature in particular, to take the first step towards a sustainable world. Therefore, this research hypothesises that the poetry of Munir Niazi, an eminent poet in Urdu literature, performs double functions; thereby, investing the metaphorical techniques, the first function is its use as an active literary tool that mirrors the eco-consciousness to the reader; second, it, as an impact, also constructs the ecological consciousness, which this research considers an advancement in the radical shift from mere anthropocentric attitude towards nature. In addition, through this endeavour, the present study is an act of sharing the moral responsibility that lies with the academics by developing a morally responsible connection to the environment via ecocriticism. Ecocriticism, which primarily deals with the evaluation of ecological issues in literature, the fundamental oneness of man and nature, and the active development of ecological awareness (Wajid, 2025), but not limited, as the field has grown to be



more than mere thematic analysis, and now ecocriticism addresses the formal and presentational aspects of the environmental message, such as the creation of inter-arts hybrids that require a multi-sensory approach to the life of the planet (Keller, 2025). Moreover, within Ecolinguistics approaches, using strategies such as eco-centric framing and positive metaphors, authors can significantly influence attitudes, which proves that the active use of language can contribute to conservation, not only to the description of the problems. In this regard, poetry provides a powerful and concise means of building ecological consciousness. Not only is it regarded as a useful pedagogical tool (Alfuhayd, 2025), but it is also an element of green creativity that is essential in climate action and the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (Ojong et al., 2025). The ideological force of poetic descriptions of landscape has been widely followed, especially in cases where poets incorporate cultural identity into the natural landscape to create powerful tropes of resistance (Alwaqaa, 2025; Shamim, 2024). Therefore, through the selected poems, this research work brings the Eastern concern of the environment and the ideas connected to it. In other words, the research paper highlights the eco-centric discourse in the region, which is drawn by the poet.

### **Literature Review**

Ecocriticism is an emerging discipline that is no longer content with mere thematic analysis but is seeking new avenues in which literature reacts to environmental crises, especially in the form and manner in which the ecological message is delivered. This involves the increasing trend in the popularity of ecopoetic hybrids works that are a combination of poetry and visual or musical arts, as examined by Keller (2025). Although poetry has always possessed musical or visual qualities, modern environmental writers such as Jennifer Scappettone and JJJerome Ellis are



actively producing these inter-arts hybrids to accomplish two primary objectives: first, to attract multi-sensory attention to the actual, physical state of planetary life, and second, to create new modes of perception of the world. In this way, they question the artificial division between Western humans and the more-than-human world and actively destabilise the anthropocentric norms that cause environmental destruction and injustice. Finally, this formal innovation is an essential move towards expanding the environmental imagination required to transition to a more ecological worldview (Keller, 2025). Moreover, language is not a passive instrument, it is a dynamic force that influences our mindset towards the environment. According to research conducted by Ashraf et al. (2025), eco-linguistics research has highlighted that the language we use, in particular, may either prevent or promote ecological action. They discovered that anthropocentric (human-centred) and extractive language structures tend to impede the engagement, whereas relational and empathetic language structures are actively involved in fostering stewardship. Importantly, the research finds that such linguistic strategies as eco-centric framing and constructive metaphors are effective tools of attitude and behaviour change. This directly leads to the main premise of the present paper, which is that through the analysis of the metaphors in the poetry of Munir Niazi, we can learn how exactly poetic language operates to disrupt human-centred thinking and effect ideological transformation. Shamim (2024) analysed the ecocritical concerns of the selected poetry of Mahmoud Darwish and Naomi Shihab Nye, arguing that nature is used as a resistance trope to colonialism. The paper demonstrates how the two poets bring the culture and identity of their native land to the natural world through the analysis of the concepts of the *pastoral* (idealises a harmonious, manageable, and highly cultivated relationship between humans and nature), *wilderness* (idealizes nature as untouched, untamed, and independent of human intervention), and the *sublime* (often



reinforces the notion of human mastery) (Garrard, 2004). This approach, in which ecocriticism creates new possibilities of reading world literature, focuses on the ideological power of landscape. Elaborating on the ecocritical idea that our language of eco-discourse influences our perception of the environment, Johnson and Zakariyah (2025) utilised an eco-linguistic method to interpret the nature poems by Remi Raji and Niyi Osundare. They discover that these poets are actively opposing the adverse effects of globalization such as loss of culture and destruction of the environment, through the application of strong ecological metaphors and vivid nature imagery. This form of poetry provokes critical arguments that are consistent with the sustainability goals of the world. Their discussion points out that the language employed by the poet does not simply bring up environmental concerns; it also promotes conservation and a harmonious co-existence between man and nature. Furthermore, ecocriticism well reveals the influence of regional places on culture and how poets can transform our perception of those places. As an example, Alwaqaa (2025) applied an ecocultural approach to the Arabic poetry of Muḥammad al-Thubayṭī and establishes that he does not view the Arabian Desert as a deserted, forgotten land. Rather, he introduces it as the source of Arabic culture and civilisation. The analysis of the layers of meaning in the desert landscape proves the strong bond between the culture and the geography. Al-Thubayṭī is a visionary, and he transforms the traditional perception of the desert through his poetry and demonstrates a great ecological awareness. This emphasis on the way a poet employs language and poetic devices to re-establish a particular natural space, The Desert, directly contributes to the purpose of the present study to analyse the nature themes in the poetry of Munir Niazi through the analysis of language. Ponton (2023) in “More than just a tree: Ecolinguistics and responses to the felling of ‘Hadrian’s tree’”, Eco-linguistically analyses public reaction to the felling of Sycamore Gap tree, comparing



figures from social media and e-newspapers left for mourning, to find out if these widespread demonstrations of sorrow are emitting real ecological signals. The study concludes that, whereas grief was evident, characters' attitudes towards trees tended to be reductionist and instrumental rather than profoundly ecological (thereby separating pseudo- from genuine environmental sensitivities in narratives about trees). This perspective is most relevant to the aim of exploring thematic concerns related to nature in the selected poetic texts through attention to language use, in that the fundamental methodology is critical analysis of language and how this reflects attitudes towards nature. Ponton and Raimo's (2024) article, "Framing environmental discourse. Greta Thunberg, metaphors, blah blah blah!," Ponton and Raimo take a closer look at Thunberg's speeches from the early Fridays for Future movement all the way to 2022. They use Ecolinguistics and Positive Discourse Analysis to dive into how she employs metaphors to create compelling narratives. The study highlights how Thunberg's word choices help foster a positive connection between different social groups and the environment. It also points out that part of her influence comes from targeting a sense of generational conflict that resonates with younger audiences. Ecocritical works demonstrate that the themes and styles of environmental poetry are highly influenced by national and cultural backgrounds. As an example, Zimina and Sargsyan (2025) compared recent ecological poetry in Britain and America. They discovered that American poets tend to be eco-active, and they use their poetry to insist on action. British poets, on the contrary, tend to take an ecocritical position, and their primary concern is the lamentation of the lost English landscapes. This method of categorising the particular themes and styles that poets employ is highly conducive to the aim of the present study, to examine the language in the poetry of Munir Niazi in order to clearly define its particular ecological subject matter and narrative interest.



The influence of language on environmental thinking is profound, even to the extent of defining our concept of healing and trauma. Das and Chanda (2023) apply the eco-linguistics theory of Arran Stibbe to the novel *Home* by Toni Morrison to discuss how the ecology of language reveals nature as a strong healer. Their study examines the stories that the characters live by, and it is shown that the novel employs nature to heal the harsh psychological and emotional traumas of African Americans. This approach that links the language and plot of the novel to the therapeutic theme of nature in particular gives a good example to the present research, which seeks to examine the language in the poetry of Munir Niazi to comprehend the nature-related themes. Further, Ecocriticism offers the most important theoretical basis of the study of the relationship between literature and environmental problems. According to Wajid (2025), the discipline is based on the foundational texts such as *The Ecocriticism Reader*, which seeks to demonstrate how literature is concerned with ecological issues and criticises anthropocentric thought. The main aim of the discipline is to underline the oneness of humankind and nature and actively promote ethical and ecological awareness. This assumption about the ability of literature to transform views and attitudes is the direct foundation of the present research, which is going to evaluate whether the poetry of Munir Niazi can be used as a means to not only mirror the environmental concerns but also to make the reader more environmentally conscious. Ecocritical studies pay more attention to the role of literature in influencing environmental ethics and cultural consciousness, particularly among the youth. Alfuhayd (2025) advocates the concept of poetry as a major pedagogical instrument, which is supported by the analysis of children's poetry by Nikki Giovanni. The paper shows that her writing creates a 'Black nature' paradigm that connects ecological facts and cultural identity.



The result is that the poems of Giovanni give young readers and educators unique tools for building cultural-ecological consciousness and strong environmental ethical principles. This underscores the importance of poetry in children as a pedagogical instrument. Moreover, Ecological awareness is not merely critical in the explanation of literature but also in the inspiration of sustainable consumerism.. Tan et al. (2025) examined the intention to purchase eco-friendly products (BUI) with a focus on eco-consciousness (including environmental literacy (ENL) and environmental concern (ENC). They found that knowledge about the environment (ENL) enhances the concern (ENC) of a person, which in turn results in an intention to purchase green products (BUI). This validates the significance of psychological and cognitive awareness in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 12 (SDG12). This observation reflects the purpose of the present literary analysis: to evaluate how the poetry of Munir Niazi serves as a tool to develop and form the ecological consciousness of the reader, proving that the ecological consciousness is a prerequisite to a sustainable future in the consumer and literary worlds. In addition, Ecocritical studies affirm that the work of a poet can have a direct impact on environmental action. Reddick (2023) criticised the perception of Seamus Heaney as a poet of passive nature connection. Rather, Reddick demonstrated, using archival research, that Heaney was an active supporter and participant in large-scale conservation movements to preserve such environments as local boglands. This discussion confirms that Heaney employed his writing to defend the places he cherished, which proves that literary culture is a key factor in fuelling environmental action. The modern studies have shifted their attention to the practical application of poetry to attain environmental objectives. Ojong et al. (2025) firmly believe in the use of eco-poetry, which they describe as a type of green creativity, as an essential instrument of climate resilience. Their research suggests the application of eco-poetry in climate change education to develop green leadership and initiate tangible measures towards Sustainable Development Goal 13 (SDG 13).





They conclude that literary media are effective agents of social and ecological change, as they play a role in improving environmental sustainability in various sectors. According to Frantz et al. (2025), the conflict between ecocentrism (the importance of the ecosystem) and anthropocentrism (the importance of humanity) is the main moral dilemma of our era, which is identified in modern ethical discourse. This conflict is important to overcome to create sustainable societal values. Nevertheless, the current literature mostly maintains this tension in a philosophical framework, which leaves a gap: we do not have a literary and cultural analysis of how this dilemma is articulated, contested, and possibly solved in art. This study bridges that gap by analysing the poetry of Munir Niazi. In particular, it comments on the poetic devices, including metaphors, to oppose anthropocentric thought and evaluates the strength of the poetry as a means to reflect and actively shape ecological consciousness. Through this discussion, the study contributes an important cultural aspect to the philosophical issue that Frantz et al. (2025) identified, showing how literature actively contributes to reorganising the values of society to a harmonious relationship with the environment.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research design utilising an ecolinguistics approach. The central goal is to provide an in-depth, interpretive analysis of the relationship between poetic language and ecological awareness, rather than seeking statistical generalisation. The methodology is designed to systematically analyse linguistic features that reinforce or challenge the human-centred (anthropocentric) worldview. The source material for this analysis is the collected Urdu poetry of Munir Niazi. A corpus of eight poems was selected using purposive sampling. The criteria for poem selection mandated a prominent presence of nature imagery (e.g., storms, forests, city bricks, blood, and water), a thematic focus on the relationship between an inner



human experience and external natural phenomena, and the presence of complex metaphorical structures that implicitly challenge the traditional separation of culture and nature. The study is guided by the principles of Ecolinguistics, which critically examines how language shapes human ecological interactions. The specific analytical tool applied is the "Story of Metaphor" framework, as developed by Arran Stibbe (2015). This framework enables the identification and evaluation of underlying linguistic metaphors to determine their function: specifically, whether they reinforce destructive, anthropocentric worldviews (e.g., treating nature as a commodity) or whether they construct relational, eco-centric worldviews (e.g., establishing ecological kinship or interdependence). Moreover, the analysis of the eight selected poems was conducted in three sequential, replicable phases corresponding to the study's objectives. Phase 1, Metaphorical Mechanism Analysis, involves subjecting each poem to a close reading to identify and categorise the key metaphors. The analysis focuses on how these poetic metaphors (e.g., contrasting human desire with a lightning flash; connecting inner chaos to external decay) function to explicitly or implicitly challenge anthropocentrism. Phase 2, Thematic and Linguistic Examination, utilises the identified metaphors and language use to ascertain the dominant nature-related thematic concerns of the selected poems. This phase focuses on demonstrating how the poetic language constructs a worldview where human life is inseparable from natural forces. The final step, Phase 3: Evaluation of Ecological Consciousness, assesses the resultant reading experience, driven by the unique metaphorical framing, which functions as a literary medium to move the reader toward an internal ecological awareness (kinship) beyond mere intellectual concern, thereby demonstrating its capacity to shape the reader's consciousness.



### Analysis and Discussion

The poetry of Munir Niazi deals with nature in a unique manner. He, at the same time, attempts to deconstruct the anthropocentric view regarding nature and environment, which is based on the idea that nature/ the environment is designed in a manner that is supposed to serve only humans. Alongside, he explores the close connection between nature and humans thematically, and argues the interdependence of the two; however, to develop this sense of interdependence, the poetical struggle of Niazi can be seen to educate humanity via instigating the eco-consciousness of the readers. For this purpose, the following discussion investigates the poetry of Niazi.

#### Employing Poetic Mechanisms: Challenging Anthropocentrism

Analysing the poems of Munir Niazi, a critical reader finds a striking aspect of his poetic style, especially in handling the use of poetic devices. In his poem, *Barsat*, the use of figurative language can be seen as a force to deconstruct the conventional human-nature order. Instead of perceiving nature as a passive space or a mere resource, Niazi personifies it to provide power to the non-human world. He writes, while depicting the scene of *Barsat*, the Rain, “The trains of clouds, which keep on swelling in the sky/ And the murmurs of the trembling trees below my windows/ Wander, aimlessly, everywhere” (Niazi 1986). In the given lines, it can be noticed that nature has been personified in words like ‘trembling trees’ or the analogy of clouds that wander everywhere. This personification can be used as an illustration of the poet linguistically transforming non-human objects into living beings with their subjective experiences, fears, or intentions. The concept behind this mechanism is that it challenges anthropocentrism in the sense that non-human life is valuable and must be treated ethically and non-utilitarianly.



Moreover, in “*Badal or Main*” (The Clouds and Me), the poet attributes human qualities to the Cloud, and argues that it can behave like humans in multiple layers. In other words, challenging anthropocentrism, he argues that the cloud is not merely a physical phenomenon, but a volitional agent that "displays new patterns". It is a playful child, a "cheerful (smiling) woman", and a living entity that can coquette and be proud at the same time when it is most watched (Niazi 1986). Under this mechanism, the cloud is virtually endowed with a full, flowing personality that is even more exacting of its worth and independent existence beyond human utility, and this is a statement that the cloud makes. Alongside the poem, “*Shab e Viran*” (A Deserted Night) employs pathetic fallacy (applying human emotion to nature) and continues personification to question anthropocentrism, with the non-human world being the main focus of the sorrow in the poem. The moon and the wind are directly attributed with human suffering: the moon is lonely, sorrowful, the stars are shivering, the chilling drafts are enshrouding and softly weeping. This changes the emphasis on human grief to ecological grief, which demands that loneliness is a non-human, universal state and eliminates the human as the centre of existential experience. The eucalyptus is also a sentient, important character, who is said to be on guard on the heights, giving the tree a role of conscious attention and permanence that casts its shade over the observations of any human character. In addition to the technique of personification, the poet uses metaphor to a greater extent as a tool of deconstruction of viewing nature and environment as the slaves of humanity. While arguing the nature and human relation, he points out the feelings of nature via the use of figurative language. The poem, “*Aik Pahili*” (A Riddle), questions the anthropocentric worldview through the female figure as a deep metaphor for Nature or the Earth. The anthropocentric hierarchy is immediately shattered with the line "She is restless just like me", creating a common existential state between the human subject (the I) and the natural other (Niazi 1986).



This analogy compares her internal turmoil with that of humans and indicates that they are related and equally vulnerable to ecological changes. Moreover, even the title, *A Riddle*, suggests that the natural world is not easily categorised or mastered by humans, and it is a challenge to the anthropocentric desire to simplify, control, and use nature. Moreover, utilising simile and the imagery in the poem “*Apny Ghar Main*” (In My Home), the poet develops the relationship between the environment and humans by borrowing features from nature to describe human feelings and emotions. Depicting via the imagery and simile, of wild nature to express the strength of human emotion, he argues, "I felt as if a lightning bolt had flashed" or "a magical ring had glittered in the jungle's darkness"(Niazi 1986). The lightning and the jungle are non-human powers of great power, abrupt transformation, and secrecy. The poem implicitly gives nature a greater power and primal value than the human emotional context; it tries to describe human emotions by making the natural world the ultimate point of reference of human experience. When the poet refers to nature for the representation of strong human emotions, he employs the idea that nature is the highest criterion or gauge through which we know ourselves. In the same manner, it can be noted that the use of natural elements, such as rain, for human emotions is not a mundane depiction, but it brings aesthetic and cathartic features. For instance, the onomatopoeic feature of rain does not just fall, but it “sings sweet melodies”, which transforms the rain into an active lyrical background actor and not a passive external state; thereby, decentring the view of uselessness by humans in any other aspect than just pouring water from the sky. Moreover, Niazi in “*Pagal Pan*” (Craziness) opposes anthropocentrism through the use of strong, natural, and primal imagery to explain the inner human conditions, implying that the human experience is deeply rooted in the wild. The mental conflict of the persona is projected onto the most graphic images of the uncivilised nature:



"The voice of a jungle with snakes is heard" (Niazi 1986). This metaphor avoids the common domesticated comparisons and puts the chaos of the self directly into the picture of a hostile, untamed ecosystem. This process decentres the human being by demonstrating that the most emotional truths are most articulated in the language of the wilderness, and that the jungle is more authentic than human domination. Moreover, the poem brutally disrupts the human/nature dichotomy by introducing magic and sensual nature to the city: A flower of magical colours starts to shine in the streets. This metaphor questions the anthropocentric division of the city (streets) and the wild flower. It suggests that the human-constructed rational environment is weak and can be conquered by the unpredictable, non-human aesthetic power.

### **Thematic Concerns: Analysing the Poetic Language**

As the previous section of the discussion dealt with the deconstruction of anthropocentrism, Niazi also explores the thematic issues that are present in the poetry and appeals to the shared experiences of humans and the environment. He depicts the emotional, psychological relationship and the effects of urbanisation on humans and the environment. In the era of advanced industries and artificiality, the increasing proximity of relation between humans and the environment strikes the ecological consciousness of Niazi. His works, through the figurative use of language, surface themes of the vulnerability of nature, the disconnection of contemporary urban life from nature, and the unity of all life. For example, the repeated use of imagery of darkness, silence, or forgotten events, along with descriptions of nature, implies a thematic interest in humanity's destructive nature and its consequent isolation. The analysis expresses the ecological sensibility of the poet and his commentary on the socio-environmental state. In the view of the poet, the disconnection has affected the aesthetic sense and appreciation of beauty and nature.



On the one hand, humans express their desires and feelings, on the other hand, a particular Gothic and horror take over the expression. For instance, in his poem, “A Riddle”, he writes, in her eyes, there is a dark night, restless like me (Niazi 1986). As discussed earlier, in this poem, the environment has been personified; therefore, though the expression appears romantic, this dark night can be understood as the invisible harm, trauma, or pain caused to the environment by human activity. It implies that there is a deep, internal darkness of exploitation behind the apparent beauty of nature. Furthermore, the poem attempts to justify that nature, due to the expanding distance between humans and the ecosystem, is frightened to interact with humans. He writes that when one approaches her, she restrains and depicts the expectations of an alarming connection. In another of his poems, “In My Home”, the poet extrapolates nature as a place of expression for desire. He writes that human emotions can best be depicted through the appeal to the wild, uncontrolled power of nature. According to the poet, human feelings are not merely of humans, but feelings of nature as well. While personifying nature, he draws the oneness of the feelings as such, “In those wet eyes reside the heart's deepest desires” (Niazi 1986), which she, the nature, wishes to express; however, the distance is increasing day by day between the two. Moreover, advocating nature, Niazi argues for the complexity of nature. He views the emotional richness of nature and its capacity to influence human emotion in his poem “The Clouds and I”. The language underlines the duality of the cloud to reassure and frighten the human heart. The cloud can make me a merry woman, but it can also make me a frightened heart by shedding its own blood. This theme suggests that nature is a complicated object that may cause immense aesthetic pleasure (playful child) and existential threat or profound suffering (shedding blood) (Niazi 1986). The activities of the cloud, concealing in the room, winking, displaying coquetry, form a theme of a playful, but distant relationship between humanity and nature, in which nature dictates the conditions of interaction and retains its mystery and dominance.



Similarly, his other poems, “A Deserted Night” and “The Return”, develop the themes of how nature expresses itself sometimes in songs of sorrows, and sometimes becomes cold, as if showing dismay with the attitude of humans. In “The Return”, nature wishes that humans may show some concern for her grief, may they sing for her, because nature needs to be taken care of; it needs not more deserted nights. Overall, the selected poems depict the theme of human and nature relation, their treatment of each other and the emotional responses they return to each other. In other words, the poet, via the use of figurative language, establishes themes that activate the human consciousness in relation to the ecosystem, which is the development and propagation of eco-consciousness. With the help of poetry, this eco-consciousness is an effort towards a green and eco-friendly life attitude by humans.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, an ecocritical and eco-linguistic approach to the poetry of Munir Niazi is applied to assess its role in the anthropocentric challenge and the emergence of ecological consciousness. The paper has determined that the poetry of Niazi is a powerful literary instrument that can be proactively employed to transform the mindset of the reader towards a more sustainable worldview. Two key findings were made in the analysis. First of all, Niazi employs relational language throughout, employing the sustained personification and pathetic fallacy to render non-human objects (clouds, trees, the moon, etc.) conscious and subjective. This is effective in decentring the human narrative and compelling the reader to recognise the natural value of nature. Second, the poetry is built on the principles of shared ecological grief and emotional interdependence, disrupting the traditional human-nature dichotomy and demonstrating that human well-being is impossible without ecological well-being.





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