



Voices on the Move: A Critical Analysis of Public Vehicle Literature in Nepal

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Abstract

Public texts written on vehicles are not merely cosmetic but powerful tools for communicating diverse identities and ideologies. This qualitative research investigates common themes or contents written on Nepali vehicles, and analyzes them at the textual, discursive, and sociocultural levels based on Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis (CDA). Twenty eight photographs of vehicle texts were purposively selected as samples for the study. Among them, twenty four photographs were captured using my iPhone during my travels across various locations in Nepal, while four photographs were collected from social media. The study reveals the vehicle literature conveys messages about identity, life struggles, socioeconomic commentary, philosophy of life and reflections, humour and satire, politics and government, and romance and teasing. Textually, the vehicle literature comprises poetry, prose, slogans, verses, phrases, and sentences, enriched with literary devices like irony, metaphor, parallelism, hyperbole, satire, contrast, personification, and symbolism. These features discursively illustrate how literary features integrate into vehicle literature, positioning vehicles in Nepal as mobile platforms for creative linguistic and literary expressions, echoing societal discourses. The writings socioculturally expose cultural, political, economic, religious, and gender-based ideologies. The study concludes that public vehicles serve as linguistic spaces for public messaging, self-expression, emotional release, and critique, providing insights into lifestyles, values, and admiration, while promoting cultural and ideological narratives. Pedagogically, vehicle literature offers valuable resources for teaching linguistic and literary features while fostering cultural awareness, and creative and critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, identity, ideologies, power, public vehicles



Introduction

Writing on the public transport vehicles is a common phenomenon in Nepal. People can see some images, slogans, songs, quotations, statements, stanzas, poetry, single words, and phrases on many public vehicles while travelling in Nepal. Some expressions are humorous, others ironical, and still others emotionally touching. Public transport vehicles serve as unique sites for artistic and literary expression in Nepal and much of South Asia (Kafle, 2024). As vehicles travel across various regions, their messages circulate widely. Writings on such vehicles are considered a form of popular literature since they are widely consumed and enjoyed by Nepali drivers and travellers, and thus regarded as a popular form of entertainment during long journeys (Adhikary, 2024). They reflect individual characters of truck proprietors and general public (Firdaus, 2021) and drivers' and in some cases the owners' struggles with notions of home, belonging, loneliness, travel, identity, faith, romance, and life in general (Kafle, 2024). In addition to education, patriotism, regionalism, religion, and longing for home, they reflect the ideas and ideologies of drivers, helpers, and owners (Kafle, 2021), their personalities, values, thoughts, sorrows, joys, love, separation, and frustrations. They showcase the hidden belief systems, ideologies, morals, dispositions, attitudes, convictions, qualities, and custom (Firdaus, 2021). Therefore, the study of vehicle literature offers valuable insights and academic significance.

Vehicle writings can be regarded as situated literary practices that reflect not only the dominant undisputed discourses but also the dynamic interplay of power relations, the relationship of cultural structures and individual customized versions of those structures (Hasrati et al., 2016). Although verses and poetry composed on trucks are short and simple, sometimes considered as low rated poetry, they mirror the mindsets of people who are reading and writing them and can change their ideas (Firdaus, 2021). They not only provide drivers with a unique platform to voice their perspectives in ways that mainstream media and traditional literary outlets do not offer but also challenge canonical genres of literature and inspire writers to deal with the issues of contemporary concern, including migration, identity, unemployment, and political economy (Kafle, 2024). Truck literature and vehicles verses perpetuate gender stereotypes that reinforce male domination and female submissiveness (Adhikary, 2024). They are the moving graffiti or mobile literary forms that may carry deep philosophical meanings. They provide the readers or audience knowledge about Nepali societies and cultures. However, there has been little qualitative analysis of vehicle literature through critical discourse analysis (CDA). This study, therefore, explores common themes or contents written on the vehicles in Nepal and analyzes them at the textual, discursive, and sociocultural levels based on Fairclough's (1995) CDA.

Literature Review

The practice of writing visual messages on public transport vehicles, often referred to as the culture of transport literature, is commonly found in South Asian countries, particularly Nepal, Indian, and Pakistan (Aondover & Akin-Odukoya, 2024). Formal study on truck art first began in early 1970s in Afghanistan (Madan, 2018). Studies on writing on the vehicles can be found in other countries, including Nepal. Most of the writings are found on the back of the vehicles since it is the most visible area. However, Elias (2005) argued that the front is one's face to the world and the behind the butt of jokes. The lower back typically features humorous verses, pithy sayings, and popular moral and ethical messages; the top section either is panoramic or reflects icons of popular culture; religious symbols are placed on the front; and formal and highly respected texts are written on the lower part of the front (Elias, 2005). Thus, the placement of writings on different parts of the vehicles carries distinct cultural significance.

A number of researchers have studied the contents of public vehicles in different countries. Alkurdi (2016) found that writing on vehicles in Jordan expresses envy, warning, pride, humour, desperation, religious beliefs, complaint, sacrifice, economic thoughts, advice, cynicism, love, wisdom, humiliation, and seriousness. The vehicle inscriptions serve as expressive outlets, conveying a range of messages. Hasrati et al. (2016) analyzed the contents of vehicles in an Iranian context and found six of the most frequent themes, namely humour, religion, didactic expressions, playing pessimism, ethno-geographic identification, and love. In their study on the texts written in Pakistani public vehicles, Bilal and Shehzad (2019) found that public vehicles included themes of love for religion, parents, opposite sex and country, socio-economic problems, morality, desire for upward mobility, and wisdom-based quotations. The linguistic analysis showed that the text employs lexicalization, overlexicalization, and lexical cohesion and there is extensive use of metaphors, euphemism and personification. Public vehicle literatures employ multimodality to convey messages. Kafle (2021) mentioned that North Indian truck literature consists of four recurring themes: popular aphorisms; society, beliefs, and identity; traffic rules and road safety; and romance. Similarly, Mensah and Nyong (2022) observed that transporters communicate various messages reflecting their local attitudes, beliefs, folk psychology, religious identities, and safety precautionary measures to recipients. Therefore, public vehicles are the platforms to express the views, thoughts, and emotions of the drivers, co-drivers, and owners on personal, religious, and social issues influencing the society.

Nepal is a South Asian country where road literature is flourishing (Ya'u, 2016, cited in Aondover & Akin-Odukoya, 2024). The journalist Subid Guragain collected truck literature and published a book, entitled *Truck sahitya: Sankalit Srijanaharu*

“Truck Literature: Collected Creations (2068)” (Annapurna Post, 2076, Poush, 27). In a similar vein, Baruwal (2022) syntactically analyzed the texts found on Nepali buses, trucks, jeeps, motorcycles, and taxis and explored the phenomenon behind the use of truck literature, such as love of the nation, upward mobility, faith over god, parental influence, life and death, success and failure, union and separation, tears and laughter, and ups and downs. In his study on truck literature from gender perspectives, Adhikary (2024) identified male chauvinism in truck literature in Nepal, which portrays women as being weak, emotional, and unintelligent and often objectifies and sexualizes them. Such gender-biased truck literature conveys negative stereotypes about women, which further marginalize them.

The studies reviewed above reveal growing research interests in vehicle graffiti and literature, particularly truck literature. However, few studies have analyzed vehicle literature using CDA even in foreign countries. In Nepal, this issue is not much more explored. Therefore, the proposed area offers a fertile ground for research that provides new insights in the field of CDA.

Methods and Procedures

This study employed a qualitative research design, particularly CDA as outlined by Fairclough (1995). His CDA includes three dimensional frameworks: text, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice. Texts can be multi-semiotic, which includes language, images, music, and designs. At the textual level, the genres, literary devices, dictions, connotations, and themes present are analyzed. In this research, vehicle writings, such as slogans, poetry, quotes, humour, witty or sarcastic lines, and instructions were the texts. Discursive practices focus on how the texts are produced, consumed, and distributed (Alnaji, 2020). They are more interpretative which seeks the meanings of the description. Sociocultural practices include social relations, social identities, cultural values, consciousness, and semiosis. In this research, writings on the vehicles were explained to uncover connections between language, power, and ideology (Fairclough, 2012). CDA examines how discursive practices, events, and texts are ideologically shaped by and emerge from relations and struggles over power (Fairclough, 1995) and how social power, cruelty, domination, and discrimination are represented in texts and discourses (Van Dijk, 1998). CDA brings the critical tradition to social analysis to study discourse and its relations with other social elements, such as institutions, power relations, ideologies, and social identities (Fairclough, 2012).

The research site for this study included highways, rural roads, urban roads, and bus parks across Nepal, where public vehicles were directly observed and photographed. Furthermore, social media platforms served as secondary sites for collecting vehicle

literature. Twenty eight photographs of vehicle literature collected from trucks, buses, public vans, and social media were purposively selected as samples for analysis. Among them, twenty four photographs were captured using my iPhone during my journey across various locations in Nepal, while four photographs were collected from social media. The texts, originally written in the Nepali and other languages, were transliterated and translated into English, then categorized into thematic groups, and analyzed and interpreted through the framework of CDA.

Results and Discussion

The study identified different contents on the vehicle literature which were categorized into seven themes and analyzed and interpreted through CDA.

Philosophy of Life and Reflections

The vehicle literature expressed themes of philosophy of life and reflections that reflect how the drivers, co-drivers, and common Nepali people are living.

Figure 1

Importance of Money



(1) **FOR A HAPPY LIFE GIVE THE MONEY TO YOUR WIFE**

This vehicle literature textually uses humour and simplicity to convey a universally relatable idea, employing direct, prescriptive language “Give the money.” Discursively, it reflects societal narratives by portraying the wife as the manager of domestic affairs and husband as the source of income. Socioculturally, it mirrors Nepal’s patriarchal ideologies, reinforcing the stereotype of women handling household expenses while relying on men’s earnings. Such gendered vehicle literature and discourses reproduce traditional gender and role stereotypes (Rojo & Esteban, 2005). Moreover, the text conveys a collectivist ideology that prioritizes family harmony over individual autonomy. This finding supports Adhikary (2024) that truck literature portrays women in traditional roles, such as homemakers, and men as strong and powerful figures. It reveals how vehicles reinforce and disseminate gender stereotypes across different locations.

Figure 2

Life's Hardship and Courage



- (2) *Nanggai ayeko duniyama, hernus ta kati bhagdaud gardaichhan jabo euta katroko lagi*

[Born naked into this world, see how fiercely they struggle just for a shroud.]

- (3) *Jitnu bhanda thulo kura himmat naharnu ho.*

[Greater than winning is not losing courage.]

The text (2) critiques the futility of life's struggle for material gains that ultimately hold limited significance in the face of mortality. The metaphor of “nakedness” and “shroud” reflect deep socio-economic realities, that is, hardships faced by marginalized people in acquiring the bare minimum. In terms of sociocultural practice, the text (3) highlights the value of resilience and courage over material victories or societal glorification of success. It urges individuals to focus on intangible virtues like courage rather than tangible possessions. The antithetical structure focuses on the difference between winning and courage. Therefore, discourse and sociocultural practices shape how texts, such as vehicle literature are produced and interpreted (Fairclough, 1995). In this sense, vehicles serve as dynamic linguistic landscape where societal values are not only expressed but also critically examined and challenged.

Figure 3

Value of Money in Life



- (4) *Chatta herda jindagi dami chha Sabai thik chha hajur paisakai kami chha.*

[At a glance, life appears beautiful,

Everything is just fine, sir, except for a lack of money]

This poetic Nepali song textually begins with a positive, optimistic language. The phrase *chatta herda* “at a glance” metaphorically suggests a superficial view of life which appears beautiful but hides deeper realities. Socioculturally, the use of *hajur* “sir” reveals hierarchical power relations and politeness, common in Nepali society. The second line reveals an ideology where money defines a “good” life. Discursively, the text reflects economic struggle in Nepali society and economic ideology, particularly desire for money and less financial resources (Firdaus, 2021). This vehicle literature highlights the societal emphasis on material wealth as a key to a better life.

Figure 4

Fate and Effort



- (5) *bhagyale nidharana mutirako raichha*
ma bhane pasina samjhera puchhirahe.

[Fate has urinated on my forehead,

But I keep wiping it away, thinking it's only sweat.]

The first line of this poetic expression metaphorically conveys disempowerment by an external, uncontrollable force (“fate”), while the second line reflects the speaker’s determination and agency. The expression “Thinking it’s only sweat” reframes humiliation (fate’s urination) as the result of one’s own hard work (sweat). In Nepali culture, “urine on the forehead” symbolizes deep disrespect or helplessness, while “sweat” represents hard work and dignity. The language reflects the ideology that fate determines life’s outcomes. However, the speaker’s response challenges fatalism, promoting an alternative ideology of resilience and self-reliance. This finding supports Hasrati et al. (2016) that vehicle writings often express pessimism, characterized by feelings of hopelessness and dissatisfaction. It reveals how fatalistic beliefs shape their lives.

Figure 5

Responsibility in Life



(6) *jimmewariko bojhle thiche pachhi*
premko upanyas hoina sangharshako
kathaharu man parne rahechha mahodaya!
 [Once burdened with responsibilities,
 One comes to prefer stories of struggle
 over romantic novels, sir!]

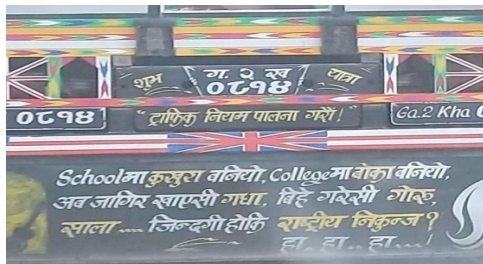
Textually, expressions like *jimmewari* “responsibility” and *bojh* “burden” emphasize the weight of obligations, while *premko upanyas* “romantic novels” and *sangharshako kathaharu* “stories of struggle” contrast fantasy with reality. The text uses a reflective tone, shifting from personal experience to a general observation. Socioculturally, the text critiques the irrelevance of romanticism amid heavy responsibilities. It aligns with a realist worldview that values resilience over idealism. Discursively, it reflects Nepali societal realities, especially in rural or disadvantaged areas, where struggle is central. In general, the text reflects male chauvinism that portrays men as bearing the bulk of familial and social responsibilities (Adhikary, 2024). Consequently, love and romance appear to be less significant than their responsibilities.

Humour and Satire

The finding of this study aligns with Alkurdi (2016), who found expressing humour as the most dominant function of graffiti in the transport of Jordan, and with Firdaus (2021) that “use of satire is a unique flavor of truck writings” (p. 123). Such humorous and satirical texts convey deep socio-cultural meanings.

Figure 6

Roles at Different Life Stages

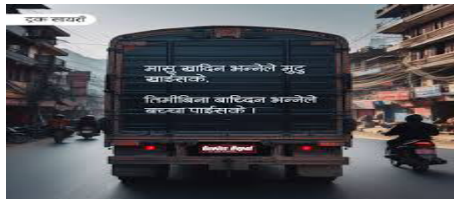


(7) *schoolma kukhura baniyo, college ma boka baniyo*
aba jagir khayesi gadha, bihe garesi goru
sala...jindagi hoki rastriya nikunja ?
Ha. Ha..ha...
 [I was made a chicken in school; a goat in college.
 Employment made me a donkey; and marriage turned me into an ox.
 Damn...is it a life or a national park?
 Ha. Ha..ha...]

This text presents code-mixing as a natural feature of everyday discourse (Dewan & Saud, 2022). It employs irony and animal metaphors to uncover life's burden across different stages: a chicken in school suggests timidity, a goat in college suggests reckless youth, a donkey in job reflects burden and laborious work, and an ox in marriage signifies toil and responsibility. These transitions critique how society progressively constrains individuality and increases responsibilities. The rhetorical question “Is life a national park?” humorously critiques the loss of autonomy. The word ‘damn’ conveys frustration, while the closing laughter adds comic relief and resilience. Discursively, the text critiques Nepali social norms that burden individuals with societal roles. Socioculturally, it questions the dehumanization and loss of autonomy under systematic forces. Following Meyer (2000), such satirical humour targets misbehavior and unusual social norms and activities that need reform.

Figure 7

Women as Commodity



- (8) *masu khadina bhannele mutu khaisake*
timibina bachhdina bhannele baccha paisake

[The one who claimed to be a vegetarian has already consumed the heart;

The one who swore they couldn't live without you has already had children]

The text employs irony and metaphor, notably “eating the heart” to suggest betrayal or hypocrisy. The phrase “having children” implies the fleeting nature of love and loyalties. Terms like “heart” and “children” carry deep emotional and cultural significance, enriching the text's critique. Discursively, the text comments on trust and relationships, while socioculturally, it reflects disillusionment with insincerity and challenges untrustworthy authority figures. Notably, the text portrays women as sources of betrayal and objects of commodity. It also shows the degradation of trust in the Nepali societies.

Figure 8

Gendered Expectations



(9) *baru churot khane budhi paros tara facebook ma keta sanga
maski-maski bolne budhi dusmanlai ni naparos.*

[Better to have a wife who smokes cigarettes than one who flirts with boys on Facebook, even to the enemy.]

This vehicle literature textually uses comparison (a smoking wife and a flirting wife) and metaphor to highlight moral standards. The derogatory term *budhi* “wife” reinforces a hierarchy of acceptable behaviours, with flirting worse than smoking. Discursively, it reflects conservative gender roles and power dynamics in Nepali society. Socioculturally, it upholds patriarchal ideologies that regulate women’s behavior, especially their interactions with men and their use of social platforms like Facebook. Women are subject to moral surveillance and regulation, and are to be passive and loyal to men. The text also reflects how technology has enhanced women’s autonomy while disrupting men-centric authority since men perceive virtual flirting to be more threatening than smoking.

Figure 9

Domestication of Women



(10) *hatar nagar bhai
budhi gharmai chha.
poila ga chhaina.*
[Don’t rush, brother
Your wife is at home.
She hasn’t eloped.]

At the textual level, the expressions like *hatar nagar* “don’t rush,” *budhi* “wife,” and *poila ga chhaina* “hasn’t eloped” suggest reassurance laced with possessiveness. Moreover, the expression *poila ga chhaina* “she hasn’t eloped” reflects drivers’ cultural anxieties, while the term *buddi* “wife” emphasizes her domestic role, reinforcing gender stereotypes. The text discursively reinforces the patriarchal norm, portraying women as domesticated and men as breadwinners. Socioculturally, it highlights power imbalance that portrays women as possessions, or commodities. Such gender based ideology promoted through the vehicle writings reveals broader societal attitudes (Firdaus, 2021) that question the moral character of women.

Romance and Teasing

This study revealed that romantic poetry and verses are important parts of vehicle writings, which align with Firdaus (2021). The romance and teasing incorporate

the themes of love, such as success or failure in love, difficulties in being in love, the unfaithful beloved, the transient nature of love, being constant in love, and the melancholy of love (Hasrati et al., 2016).

Figure 10

Love Expression



(11) *ma mare pachhi mero lasama post-mortem garna nadinu hai priya
mutuma timro nam bhetida anusandhanma phasauli*

[My beloved, don't let them perform a post-mortem on my body after I pass away.

If they find your name in my heart, they'll entangle you in the investigation.] Textually, words like *mare pachhi* "after I pass away," post-mortem, and *anusandhan* "investigation" evoke imagery of death, love, and consequences. Hyperbolic language dramatizes emotional attachment, with *mutu* "heart" symbolizing a deep bond between the writer and their beloved. Discursively, the text reflects a romanticized view of love as eternal, even beyond death. Socioculturally, it subtly places the beloved in a position of responsibility, asking them to protect the speaker's legacy. It critiques societal interference in personal relationships. Such romantic expressions appear on trucks which, as Elias (2011) argued, are feminized –seen as romantic or sexual partners, even as wives.

Figure 11

Value of Smile



(12) *timro muskan nai mero har pidako malam ho sanu.*

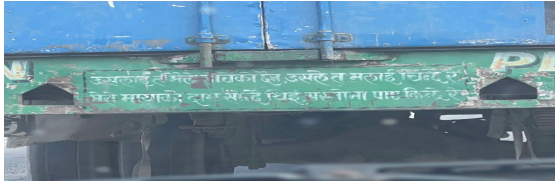
[My dearest, your smile is the soothing balm that heals all my pain.]

Textually, the phrases like *muskan* "smile" and *har pidako malam* "all my pain" metaphorically suggest the beloved's smile as healing, while *sanu* "my dearest" softens the tone and adds intimacy. Discursively, this text romanticizes suffering and highlights emotional support as a remedy for pain, idealizing women's care. Socioculturally, it

reflects Nepali cultural values of emotional interdependence in love and relationships. Such romantic expressions contribute to the feminization and romanticization of the vehicle (Elias, 2011). They reveal love and smile as therapeutic forces that offer comfort and healing in one's life.

Figure 12

Commoditization of Love



(13) *uslai ta maile socheko chhaina, usle ta malai chinchha re*
mero mayako dam sodhdai thiyi, sastoma paye kinchhe re
[I scarcely know her, yet she claims to know me well.

She inquired the worth of my love - she'd buy it if it's cheap.]

This study endorses Al Karazoun and Hamdan (2021) that love is expressed via songs, romantic expressions, and poetry on vehicles. Textually, the text (13) uses a mixture of ambiguity, metaphor, and materialism. The term *mayako dam* “worth of my love” metaphorically commodifies love. Discursively, the text critiques how relationships are scrutinized through materialistic lenses. It shows how love or affection is being reduced to a transactional or commodified exchange. Socioculturally, it challenges power dynamics that devalue love, contrasting with Nepali cultural ideals of love as an emotional and spiritual bond.

Figure 13

Teasing



(14) *keti jiskaune ketaharuko bani ho.*
ramri chhu bhanera makkha napara hai nani ho.
[Teasing girls is a common behaviour among boys.

Don't be overly proud of your beauty, young lady.]

This couplet textually uses a condescending tone that reinforces gender stereotypes, presenting beauty as a girl's main attribute and phrases like *keti jiskaune* “teasing

girls” and *ketaharuko bani* “common behavior among boys” show teasing as a typical behavior of boys. The expression “Don’t be overly proud of your beauty” reflects societal control over female agency, discouraging self-confidence and reinforcing humility as a virtue for women. Discursively, the text emerges from a patriarchal setting that excuses problematic male behavior as routine. Socioculturally, it reflects patriarchal ideologies that regulate female behavior and appearance, positioning boys as active agents and girls as passive recipients, thus reinforcing gender-based power imbalances.

Figure 13

Expression of Purity



(14) *kuwako pani*

churotko thuto

taruniko oth

kahile hudaina jutho

[Water drawn from a well,

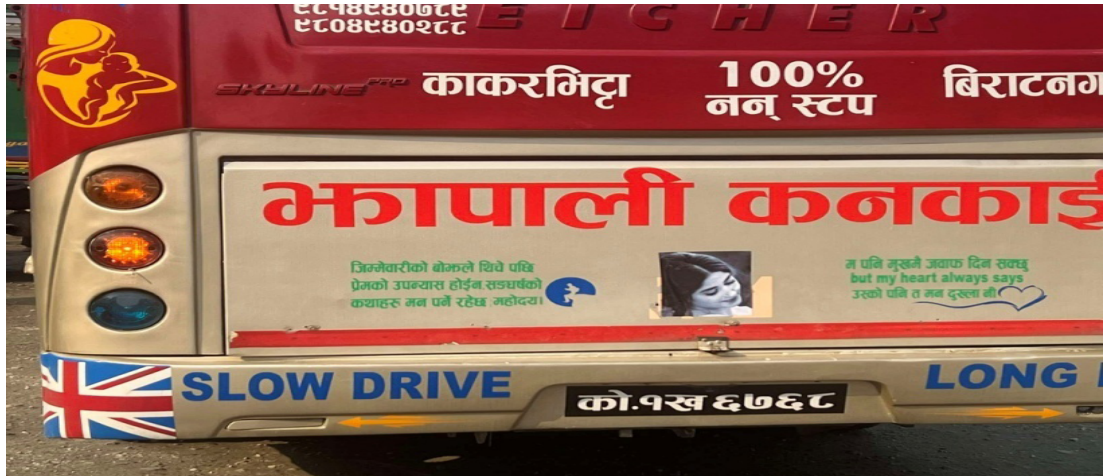
a cigarette stub,

the lips of a young girl –

none are ever impure.]

In Nepal, concepts of purity and impurity are deeply ingrained in caste systems, gender norms, and religious beliefs. The text juxtaposes “water,” “a cigarette stub,” and “young girl’s lips” to challenge traditional notions of purity. Declaring “none are ever impure” challenges caste-based, gender, and patriarchal ideologies (Adhikary, 2024). The idea resists societal attempts to sexualize or control young women through the imposition of purity standards.

Figure 14
Expression of Deep Love



(15) *ma pani mukhmai jawaph dina sakchhu*
but my heart always says
usko pani ta man dukhla ni.
 [I can respond sharply
 but my heart always reminds me –
 she might be hurt, too.]

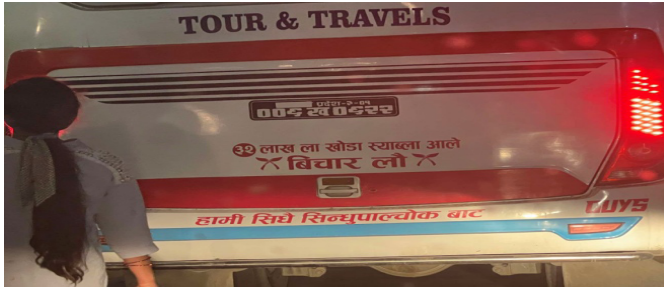
The text uses antithesis by contrasting external action “respond sharply” with internal feeling “she might be hurt, too,” highlighting the tension between external strength and internal emotional awareness. The heart is personified as a moral compass that suggests that emotions guide the speaker’s decisions rather than rational thought. Discursively, the text represents a societal preference for emotional sensitivity and harmony. Such lines produced from our daily routine lives have become a part of vehicle discourse (Firdaus, 2021). Socioculturally, the text underscores Nepali cultural values that prioritize empathy over individual expression.

Identity

Public vehicles, regarded as public places, are socially constructed spaces where producers of language showcase and enact their identities, ideologies, and language practices through their writings (Tupas, 2024). The drivers express their cultural and territorial identities through writings on the vehicles, which align with Al Karazoun and Hamdan (2021).

Figure 15

Tamang Identity and Territory



(16) *battish lakh la khoda syabla ale*
bichar lau

hami sidhai Sindhupalchok bata Guys

[You'll be punished with a khoda –a weapon worth thirty-two lakh. Think about it.]

We are directly from Sindhupalchok guys.]

The first line of the Tamang text reflects Nepal's multilingualism and uses a hyperbole to assert power through the weapon *khoda* (also called *katti* in Nepali). The second line uncovers Tamang's territorial identity. Discursively, the text incorporates the discourses of power (a direct threat) and identity, showing how “discourse can be ‘internalized’ in power, and vice versa” (Fairclough, 2013, p.4). Socioculturally, it reflects ethnic or cultural and territorial identity through language. Following Al Karazoun and Hamdan (2021), the writer expresses how they are deeply linked to and proud of their tribe and locality.

Figure 16

Love and Identity



(17) *purba jane rel auna kanchhi love garau bihe nauhjela*

[The train is heading east, dear Kanchhi, let's at least fall in love unless we get married]

(18) *Kathmanduma chineko chatta kamar chhineko*
janebhaye au hai kanchhi ma ta bhojpur hideko
Bhojpur udan

[A woman, acquainted in Kathmandu, so slender in appearance.
If you're coming, then join me, dear Kanchhi, I'm heading to Bhojpur.
The Bhojpur flight awaits.]

This study supports Aondover and Akin-Odukoya (2024) that public transport vehicles serve as tools of identity construction, cultural transmission, and social reflection. These two texts at the textual level use humour, imagery, and conversational language to convey a playful and affectionate tone. The Nepali kinship term *kanchhi* adds an affectionate and intimate tone, while references to *purba* “east,” Kathmandu, and Bhojpur signal identity and belonging. The texts discursively reflect urban-rural dynamics. By presenting love and marriage as mutually exclusive, the first text challenges conventional societal ideals where love naturally leads to marriage. The second text perpetuates patriarchal norms by emphasizing male agency and reducing the woman to her appearance (*chatta kamar*) and obedience. Both texts socioculturally reflect Nepali patriarchal society when men often have greater freedom of mobility and decision-making, while women are secondary participants. The discourse reflects traditional Nepali cultural norms where romance is publicly expressed in veiled, poetic language, maintaining modesty and societal expectations.

Figure 17

Budha Born in Nepal



(19) *waripari pahad bichama tal chha*
Buddha janmeko deshma buddikai anikal chha.

[Surrounded by hills lies a lake;
Yet in the land of Buddha, wisdom is rare.]

Textually, this text employs poetic imagery to critique societal and ideological conditions. Words like *pahad* “hills” and *tal* “lake” evoke Nepal’s natural beauty, while the phrase *Buddha janmeko deshma* “the land of Buddha” references Nepal’s cultural and historical significance, highlighting its association with peace and enlightenment. Juxtaposing Buddha with a scarcity of wisdom underscores the gap between the heritage and contemporary realities. The text discursively blends cultural

pride with self-criticism. The text socioculturally highlights the natural and historical pride, urging self-awareness and a commitment to the ideals of Nepal's cultural and historical legacy.

Figure 18

Power and Skill



(20) *gadi ho Tatako*

yodda kaccha nasamjha

driver ho purbeli

thito baccha nasamjha

[This vehicle's made by Tata.

Don't mistake it for something weak.

The driver is from the east.

Don't mistake him for a kid.]

This vehicle literature illustrates how lexical choices and discourses are shaped by power (Fairclough, 2013). It highlights themes of dominance and strength, showcasing both the vehicle's power and the driver's skill. Textually, the Tata brand metaphorically symbolizes strength and durability, while *purbeli* "from the east" evokes regional pride and identity. Both words convey resilience and capability. Discursively, the text likely emerges from road travel culture or informal dialogues among drivers, or passengers. It socioculturally challenges preconceived notions of human and machinery weaknesses, asserting the strength and maturity of both the vehicle and the driver. The last line of the text reinforces masculine ideals tied to strength, experience, and authority in the Nepali sociocultural setting.

Socioeconomic Commentary

The study revealed that economic ideologies are expressed through vehicle writings. The drivers in Nepal face a lot of challenges, such as family break up, discontinuation of their study, failure to fulfill basic needs of the family, and compulsion to go abroad because of poor socioeconomic conditions.

Figure 19

Consequence of Economic Crisis



(21) *ghar base arthik chap*

bidesh gaye swasni tap

[Staying home brings financial strain,

Going abroad invites a wife's disdain.]

The couplet textually juxtaposes economic and emotional struggles through colloquial language and irony, portraying both staying home and going abroad as equally burdensome. The text discursively highlights the economic pressures and structural inequalities in Nepali societies where local opportunities are insufficient, forcing individuals to go abroad for livelihood, but their absence disrupts family dynamics. Socioculturally, it reinforces traditional gender roles in the Nepali society where men are expected to be financially responsible, and women as emotionally dependent, a tension between societal and familial expectations. The text captures the realities that many Nepali people feel a sense of discontent both at home and abroad.

Figure 20

Family and Financial Needs



(22) *sano hunda gharbata paisa napauda man dukhne garthyao*

ahile gharma paisa dina nasakda man dukhdai chha.

[When I was young, I'd feel hurt when I didn't receive money from home.

Now, I feel hurt when I cannot send money back.]

At the textual level, the text contrasts the experiences of youth and adulthood through parallel structure and emotional language. It discursively draws on personal or collective experiences in Nepali society, where familial support is valued and financial

responsibility marks adulthood. As a child, the speaker felt powerless and dependent on family for financial needs, experiencing emotional pain when those needs were unmet. As an adult, the speaker now holds the power and responsibility, but feels the emotional burden when unable to fulfill this role. The pain expressed may also reflect broader socioeconomic realities, such as financial struggles or the societal pressure to meet familial obligations. Socioculturally, the text critiques the expectation that adults, particularly men, must support their families financially. As Zuo and Tang (2000) argued, men are expected to serve as breadwinners in the family, and ailing to do so can result in feelings of inadequacy and societal judgment.

Figure 21

Fragility of Trust



(23) *lyayo swasni khwayo bhoj*

gayo bidesh arkailai moj

[Wed a wife with a feast grand.

Went abroad, pleasure in another's hand.]

This vehicle literature textually uses irony and colloquial language to critique infidelity. The contrast between celebrating marital union and indulging in infidelity creates a sense of irony. The rhyme enhances its memorability and emotional impact. The text discursively reflects societal frustrations with the erosion of marital and familial responsibilities. It suggests that while a man fulfils his public duty through marriage and by going abroad to earn money, the wife, left behind, engages in infidelity. Socioculturally, the text questions the wife's role in her husband's absence within a patriarchal society. It underscores the fragility of trust and commitment in a changing socio-economic landscape. I agree with Adhikary (2024) that women in vehicle literature are often objectified and sexualized that reinforce gender stereotypes.

Figure 22

Effect of Poverty in Study



(24) *padhai kina bichaima chhodis bhanera prashna nagaridinus*
mahodaya parikshama garib bhanne bishaya
lagyo kataunai sakina

[Don't ask why I left my studies, sir.

I failed the test in 'poverty,'

A subject I could never pass.]

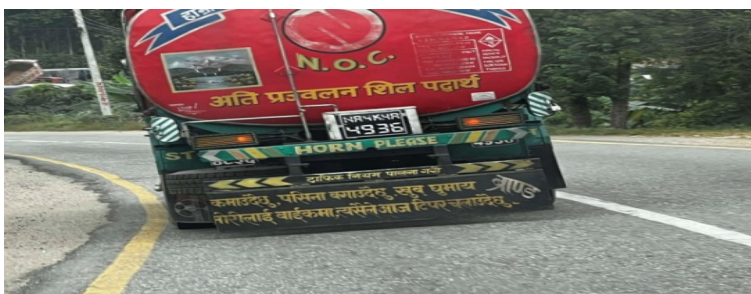
This vehicle literature at the textual level uses irony and metaphor to critique systemic barriers, highlighting how poverty itself makes education inaccessible. Discursively, it amplifies the voices of those affected by poverty, with the speaker's plea ("Don't ask why") expressing frustration, shame, or helplessness. This reflects how individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds face judgment for circumstances beyond their control, such as failing to complete their education or pass exams. The inability to "pass" symbolizes how poverty impedes one's progress and opportunities. The text socioculturally exposes the struggles of marginalized groups and calls for systemic changes to ensure educational access regardless of economic background. The speaker's address to *mahodaya* "sir" reflects the hierarchical relationship between those in power (e.g., educators, policymakers) and marginalized individuals.

Life Struggles

The study revealed that vehicle literature incorporated contents related to life struggles.

Figure 23

Driver's Life



(25) *kamaudaichhu, pasina bagaudaichhu,*
khub ghumaya morilai baikma,
tyasaile aja tipper chalaudaichhu

[Earning I am, sweating all day

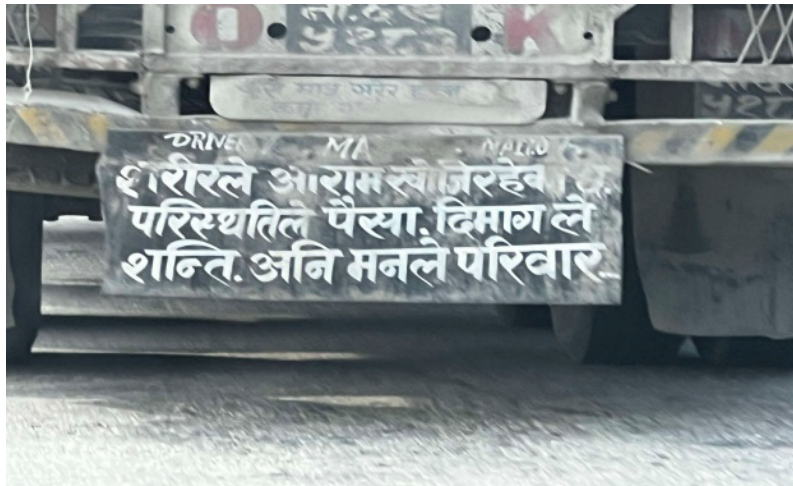
We roamed on a bike

Now a tipper I drive away.]

This poetic text vividly portrays the tension between youthful dreams and adult responsibilities in Nepali society. Textually, it uses contrast and symbolism to convey emotional depth. The bike symbolizes youthful dreams and freedom, while the tipper symbolizes heavy responsibilities. Discursively, it serves as a shared expression among working-class individuals, highlighting the drivers' hard work. The text socioculturally reveals the limited opportunities for upward mobility. It reinforces societal expectations that men must shoulder the burdens of economic survival.

Figure 24

Multiple Needs



(26) *sharirle aram khojiraheko chha*
paristhitile paisa, dimagle shanti
ani manale pariwar

[The body pleads for rest.

The circumstances demand money,

The mind seeks peace

And the heart yearns for family.]

This vehicle literature highlights different aspects of human life, such as *sharir* “physical needs,” *dimag* “mental needs,” and *man* “emotional needs.” Textually, words like *aram* “rest,” *paisa* “money,” *shanti* “peace,” and *pariwar* “family” represent fundamental human needs. Discursively, the text reflects the realities or narratives of Nepali working class people for whom physical labour, financial stress, and familial obligations are pervasive. Socioculturally, the emphasis on economic needs over emotional and mental well-beings reveals the capitalist and neoliberal ideologies. Dismantling needs into body, mind, and heart represents fragmented identities shaped by different social forces, underscoring societal failures to harmonize these aspects.

Figure 25

Travel and Liquor Consumption



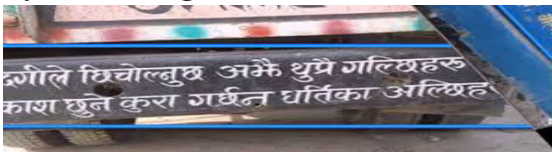
(27) *januchha tada batochha kachchi*
bhulera pani nakhau jand raksi
“Lalitpure tiger”

[The road is rough, the goal still far –
Never drink homemade liquor
‘Lalitpure Tiger.’]

This poetic expression textually uses simple, rhythmic language to convey a strong message. It uses a direction tone *nakhau* “don’t drink” and a metaphor, such as “Lalitpur Tiger” to convey fierce identity and pride. References to “far goal” and “rough path” symbolize life’s challenges. The text discursively serves as a cautionary message for the drivers, warning against homemade liquor (*jand raksi*) and promoting health, safety, and moral concerns. Socioculturally, it critiques the social pressures of alcohol consumption while promoting self-control, strength, and responsibility in Nepali society.

Figure 26

Life’s Challenges



(28) *jindagile chhicholnuchha ajhai thuprai galchhiharu*
akash chhune kura garchhan dhartika alchhiharu.

[Life has to journey through many bends
The earthbound idlers dream sky-reaching ends.]

This poetic expression textually uses vivid metaphors to describe life struggles. The expressions like *galchhiharu* “bends” implies life’s challenges, while *akash chhune* “sky-reaching” portrays lofty dreams and *alchhiharu* “idlers” grounds the critique in

social observation. The text discursively critiques inaction and misplaced priorities, resonating with Nepali cultural values of resilience and hard work. Socioculturally, it reflects disappointment, rigour, and uncertainties faced by the poor in Nepali society, emphasizing that hard work requires effort, not empty ambition.

Politics and Government

This study revealed that vehicle literature incorporate the contents related to politics and government. It displays some of the most specific socio-political statements and ideologies (Madan, 2018) and reflects the political aspects or issues of the Nepali society.

Figure 27

War and Bribery



(29) *Ukraine dhwasta Rusale*

Nepal dhwasta ghusale

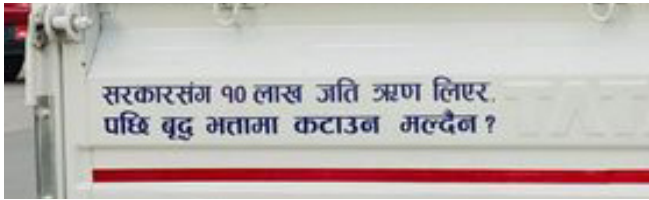
[Ukraine was destroyed by Russia.

Nepal was destroyed by bribe.]

This poetic vehicle literature textually uses critical, satirical, and accusatory tone, and the direct language to describe a deep frustration. It discursively engages with political discourse of war and bribery and critiques Nepal government's inability to combat bribery. It socioculturally draws a powerful comparison between destruction by external military force (Ukraine by Russia) and the internal corruption (bribery in Nepal), portraying bribery as so pervasive that has plagued Nepal and caused its downfall. This contrast highlights how nations can be vulnerable to both external and internal threats.

Figure 28

Concern with Government



(30) *sarkarsanga 10 lakh jati rin liyera
pachhi brida bhattama katauna mildaina?*

[Can't the government offer a loan of about 10 lakhs, with the amount later deducted from senior citizen allowance over time?]

This vehicle literature textually criticizes the inadequacy of government programs in meeting the financial needs of citizens, particularly the elderly by using irony and humour. It discursively questions how impractical the current welfare systems are. It socioculturally unmasks economic vulnerability and power dynamics between the state and its citizens. The reliance on government loans and allowances not only reflects a structural dependence on state systems but also reinforces the hegemonic role of the state in economic security. The text may critique the lack of sustainable financial policies for the elderly.

Conclusion

The present study targeted to analyze the contents of public vehicles in Nepal through the lens of CDA. The findings reveal that public vehicles are the dynamic linguistic landscapes, which incorporate a wide range of linguistic and literary expressions, including poetry, prose, verses, slogans, phrases, and sentences, enriched with rhetorical devices, such as metaphor, personification, symbolism, hyperbole, contrast, irony, rhetorical question, and satire. Vehicle literature can be considered as a form of mobile literature, as it moves across different geographical locations, carrying messages to diverse audiences. Therefore, vehicle literature has a great impact in the societies. As Firdaus (2021) suggests, vehicle arts and literature absorb and incorporate various aspects of the society in which they are created, interacting with sociocultural norms and ideologies. They unmask gender-based, economic, cultural, and political ideologies, positioning vehicles as spaces for self-expression, critique, emotional release, and public messaging, while conveying everyday experiences, pride, and cultural and ideological narratives.

Moreover, vehicle literature can be used as a significant pedagogical tool. Integrating vehicle literature into the curriculum can help students appreciate diverse forms of expression and critically analyze sociocultural themes in unconventional

texts. Such texts might increase student interests and engagement in teaching and learning activities. Gender-based, economic, cultural, and political ideologies and issues conveyed through vehicle literature can be used for awareness raising, critical thinking, and creative writings. Teachers and students can use such literature as resources to discuss its linguistic and literary features, power dynamics, identity, and grassroots problems prevalent in the society. Encouraging such creative expressions can promote innovative storytelling and meaningful social commentary.

This study confines itself to twenty eight photographs and thirty texts collected from different vehicles. Future research could explore truck graffiti, gender ideologies in vehicle literature, public perceptions of such texts, and cross-cultural comparison of vehicle literature in Nepal.

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