Pakistani Identity and Kamila Shamsie's Novels: An Analysis in Stylistics (Thematic Parallelism)

| Irfan Ullah* | Liaqat Iqbal† | Ayaz Ahmad‡ |

Abstract   *This paper explored thematic parallelism in Kamila five of Shamsie's novels i.e. Salt and Saffron, Cartography, Broken Verses, Burnt Shadows, and Home Fire. The paper identify here conflicts, depressions, identity fluctuations and a relentless machination of transformations by the powerful and resisting quarters of the region. The repetitive rule of military in Pakistan, the negative fallouts of engagement in Afghanistan's resistance against the Soviets, the alienation of Muhajirs, the national and international catastrophe of 9/11 emerge as the strings that reflect the dilemma of the nomadism of modern times. The tyranny of destructive forces is amply reflected in the parallel desolation of places, characters and cultures. Karachi in its violence is parallel to Tokyo and New York. These parallels sublimate each other in conveying the poignancy of uprootedness and loss of identity. The lexical and syntactic parallels identifiable through corpus tools helped in identifying such parallels.*

Key Words: Linguistics, Stylistics, Parallelism, Novels, Kamila Shamsie, Burnt Shadow

Introduction

Critics value literature for style, which as an individualizing factor remains a key feature of any literary text at various levels of stylistics, for example, phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, lexical analysis, and discourse analysis. Poetry as a representative genre is considered a suitable area for the study of style (Jacobson, & Schklovsky, 1930). However, the novel is relatively a new and less explored genre in the study of style, though it possesses the potential for such investigation/study. Novels in general and modern novels, in particular, are diversified and innovative in terms of stylistics. Among modern novels, the contribution of the South Asian novels is at par with the Western modern novels. Research in Western modern novels with reference to style is relatively better established than the study of Eastern and specifically, South Asian novels. Among South Asian novelists, Kamila Shamsie is an eminent novelist whose works represent the stylistic aspects of South Asian novels. Therefore, this study identifies characteristic features of her style focusing on thematic parallels which are not only a cross-cultural eccentricity but also an inimitable possession that makes writers of the same community/culture different. Even, these differences can be found in various works accomplished by the same writer and maybe rich in parallelism leading to thematic interests. Therefore, for this study five novels of Kamila Shamsie, which include *Salt and Saffron*, *Cartography, Broken Verses, Burnt Shadows, and Home Fire*, are selected.

Parallelism, one of the important components of any literary text and the writer's style, is not only important for making a piece of literature flowing and lucid but also a useful tool in making a writer different from others. Jakobson and Gerard Manley Hopkins (1930) used the term "parallelism" as a denomination encompassing all the varieties of equivalence that we encounter in art. According to Hopkins (1865), tools of

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*Assistant Professor, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KP, Pakistan.
Email: irfanullah68@gmail.com
† Assistant Professor, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KP, Pakistan.
‡ Lecturer, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, KP, Pakistan.

parallelism on the basis of equivalence are two; that is, likeness such as metaphor, simile; and unlikeness such as antithesis, contrast, etc. In parallelism of lexical items, lexical equivalents need not have the same syntactic function or parts of speech of related sentences. They may be identical in form and in meaning, or they may be related by lexico-semantic relationships, such as synonymy, hyponymy, and antonymy. Lexico-semantic relation of synonymy, hyponymy, and antonymy adds to compositional cohesion. Semantic affinity (e.g. in synonymy and hyponymy) is revealed in lexical repetition, variation, connotations, and associations while antonymy is revealed through oppositional lexemes. The cohesion of vertical context (the relationship among words used in different places in a text or texts) that normally remains less explicit is expressed by this type of lexico-semantic analysis. Such lexemes indicate the theme(s) of a text going parallel or otherwise in the texts of a writer. If a lexeme manifests semantic links with one or more other words in the text, it shows thematic relevance and several links of this sort may be considered a semantic field.

This study conducts an analysis of Kamila Shamsie's novels focusing on the use of thematic parallelism. This analysis would help find the role of parallelism in developing various themes in different eras of Kamila Shamsie's novels. Furthermore, the study also informs the readers about the application of corpus tools in digging thematic parallelism. The study also highlights the British Commonwealth phenomenon (Anglophone audience and Pakistani setting). This study is significant as it highlights the distinction of Kamila Shamsie as Anglo-Pakistani novelist and identifies characteristic features of her style with reference to thematic parallelism. Moreover, the selection of Kamila Shamsie novels was not accidental, rather a number of reasons were at work in this process. To a greater extent, the texts are chosen for their relevance to the study as various themes to be explored in the proposed study will open avenues for understanding a text more systematically. So this research asks, what is the role of stylistic devices in developing parallel themes in a continuum from beginning to last of Kamila Shamsie's novels?

Literature Review

This section provides a problem-oriented introduction to the study of Kamila Shamsie's novels. Certain questions that were raised for the current study in the methodology section, it is pertinent to establish the nature and dynamics of corpus linguistics that currently in vogue among the practitioners, especially those who concentrate on the analysis of fiction. It is also significant to establish how the expert linguists connect corpus study to stylistics and then successfully apply the same for the explication of texts belonging to the genre of fiction. To do this, in the current section, researchers move from the general parameters to the specific application of the construct on the work under review i.e. corpus stylistics and parallelism.

To start with stylistics in general, Widdowson (1975) is of the opinion that stylistic analysis is a source of mediation between linguistics and literary criticism, while Leech (1981) defines stylistics as a linguistic approach to literature, elucidating the connection between language and artistic function. From the linguists' perspective, it is 'Why does the author here choose this form of expression? 'From the literary critic's viewpoint, it is 'How is such-and-such aesthetic effect achieved through language?' (Leech& Short, 2007:11). Thornborrow (1998) calls stylistics as the choice of some forms and features over others. Crystal and Davy (1969) enumerates these features as any bit of writing or speech, an individual can pick out from the common current of language and argue on—both function and social-context- a specific word, a fragment of word/s, categorization of words, and articulating words. Nonetheless, Niazi and Guatam (2010) are of the opinion that the aim of stylistics is not only to label various features of texts but also demonstrate their functional importance by giving a thorough account of a certain style in a context, the grammatical investigation, lexemes, phonology, semantics, and other stylistic markers. Undoubtedly, stylistics is termed as 'the linguistic characteristics of a particular text' (Leech & Short 2007). Stylistics mainly investigates how readers interact with the language of (mainly literary) texts in order to explain how we understand and are affected by texts when we read them. To make stylistics more objective, reliable and data-based, researchers usually resort to corpus analysis.

Eventually, the corpus is being utilized for the analysis of literary stylistics, although, (Wynne, 2005) regretted over expectation while the literary critics (Louw, 1997) resisted the very idea of using the computer for literary analysis. On the contrary, McEnery & Wilson (2001) opine that authors use selected linguistic devices which naturally be verifiable, indicating and determining some notions and ideas. The analysis of style cannot be

totally objective but with numeric data, the notion of style is supported with facts (Leech & Short, 1981). The inherent quality of a language study through corpus tools is that it is data-based. Corpus-based analysis strengthens the scope as well as the reliability (Biber et al., 1998). Furthermore, the application of these corpus tools helps in identifying so far hidden but significant stylistic markers (Stubbs, 2005). To give more validity to an analysis of small corpora, larger corpus as a norm should be used which enables the validation of the unattested works (Barnbrook, 1996 as quoted by Burrows, 2002). Recent studies based on corpus tools cover different areas, such as love metaphors in tragedies as well as comedies (Archer et al., 2005), language and gender (Sobhan Raj Hota & Moshe Koppel, 2006), and imageries in the tragedy of Macbeth (Zyngier, 1999). In short, I will say that corpus-driven/based studies may match other studies carried out on stylistics but the addition of corpus tools make it more rigorous and strengthened.

Any piece of writing is a matter of lucid structure, formal grammar, and good style. While structure and grammar are reasonably unequivocal, the style develops the idea of propriety and intelligibility that can be blurry. A writer through structures utilizes parallelism to attract readers. The opening of parallelism establishes the reader's expectations and its termination meets those expectations. As already mentioned in the significance of the study, parallelism has been rarely explored in novels and there is a scarcity of research-oriented studies in the genre. There is a possibility of various kinds of parallelisms pervading in the genre of novels which need proper research study. Such various forms of parallelisms are the chief rhetorical devices of imaginative writings (Herbermann, Charles 1913) in the literary works of many other cultures around the world, particularly in their oral traditions. James (1971) considers Robert as the inventor of the concept of *parallelism membrorum* (parallelism of members, i.e. poetic lines) in his 1788 book, '*Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrew Nation*'. While Roberts pioneered the application of parallelism in ecclesiastical texts, it was Jakobson who ushered in the application of the text that is 'secular' in character and thus explored this feature in poetry. Jackobson thus became the harbinger of a new era in linguistics across the globe by erecting the edifice of the Russian school (Jakobson, 1987). Chinese and Vietnamese classical poetry and prose have frequently made use of parallelism. Conversations between learned men in many cases involved exchanging single parallel couplets as a form of playing with words, as well as a kind of mental duel (Ann Huss, Ann; Liu, Jianmei 2007).

Steedman (2000) and Selkirk (1984) identify the role of parallel structures (phrasal/POS) in the development of thematic aspects, such as the agent-patient role. In such a parallel structure, information related to theme and rheme highlight categorization and variation in the themes (Clark & Haviland, 1977). They also identify corpus analysis as a useful tool in categorizing these structures related to themes. Carlson (2001) and Frazier et al., (2000) link the parallel structure simply to the comprehension of themes contained in them. The markedness of phrasal structures facilitates the identification of variations in themes and their categorizations (Hemforth, 1993).

While 'ambiguity and markedness' remain at the center of attention in the studies of parallelism, an equally valid question is also address in most of the serious works on parallelism and this is how parallelism facilitate in producing the effects for which it is applied in the first place. Frazier et al., (1984) for instance, investigated how parallelism best support syntax and by examining sentence components they elaborated how the realization of non-syntax is effected through the grammatical structure of sentences. The studies the outcomes of parallel structures manifest in a wide range of structures and forms such as 'nouns' and on the basis of their study suggested that parallelism may be manifest in grammatical structures but their effect go beyond grammatical forms (Carlson, 2001; Frazier et al., 2000). It is also noteworthy that semantic parallelism also lead to exploitation of semantic forms, structures and functions. This process of semantic exploitation of forms, functions and essence can be based established when we allow comparisons a role to play in identification and analysis of the parallel forms and essence. Likewise, thematic parallelism also raises the thematic implications. Through the device of a noun, by describing the physical attributes and appearance of a character as a device, an author not only draws a lucid image of the subject of their product but also creates and evolves implied thematic construct encompassing the character. A writer creates inherent thematic significance using stylistic devices. How a character is delineated and what dimensions are emphasized says much for that character's value in the story or as such thematic implication. Thematic parallelism also relies on the use of metaphoric parallelism. That is parallel metaphors used toward the same end.

The intimacy of the thematic relationship between N1 and N2 was evaluated exploiting Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA; Landauer & Dumais, 1997), which derives semantic sameness from an ample sample of text/s via patterns of word co-occurrence. The mean LSA scores between N1 and N2 in the Related condition were significantly higher than the mean LSA scores between N1 and N2 in the Arbitrary condition (.05), $F(1, 142) = 149$, $p < .001$. S.

Zaenen et al. (2004) develop a model of the annotated corpus in their study. They made a hierarchy containing ten classes, covering various categories. They are HUMAN, ANIMAL, MAC (automata), PLACE, VEH (vehicles), ORG (organizations), TIME, CONCRETE (physical objects), NONCONC (abstract entities), and MIX (NPs describing heterogeneous groups of entities). The classes definitions are simple—an NP describing a vehicle is a VEH—and Zaenen et al. offer elaborate handling of equivocal cases. Unlike the class sets, these classes crucially cover all NPs. This comprises freestanding nouns, such as people, pronominal, whose selection of class much reckon on contextual data not present within the NP or in the sentence.

King (2011) has identified thematic parallels in Shamsie's novel Burnt Shadow, where the identity and alienation are expressed through the wars and militarization in Japan, Pakistan and other places. She also draws historical parallels between the past and the present in terms of sameness and contradictions.

Research Methodology

Parallelism as a research problem has sufficient ground to arose a linguist's curiosity and find significant aspects of language's contents and forms. Pparallelism specifically maintains a point of significance in its own right. If other perspectives such as the role of parallelism in the establishment of themes further increase the import of a linguistics work/study. The relationship between parallelism and theme in texts go beyond the core aspects of language and relate language to the context. As Kamila Shamsie's novels verge on the border of culture, time, and identity, she cannot avoid the influence of context because of which both variations and parallelism in style and as such in themes may emerge.

As the present study focuses on the analysis of Kamila Shamsie's five novels (covering different themes, for example, war, political violence, riot and despair, friendship, love, and the ever-fluctuating relationship) written in different eras to explore the difference in a writer's style with respect to thematic parallelism. This study observes thematic dependence on lexical and semantic parallels (e.g. in semantic fields) by identifying the correlation of antithetical and synonymous parallels of early and later periods in Kamila Shamsie novels. The themes would be indicated by the presence of coherences and consistencies via synonymy and antonymy signifying intra-textual parallels giving an overall thematic unity between the early and later periods in Kamila Shamsie's novels, and allows to find thematic parallels. To make the analysis more objective and verifiable, a corpus tool is a useful way of characterizing the 'aboutness' of a text/s is used. In order to find out thematic parallelism, especially, lexico-sematic patterns with or without variations in the Kamila Shamsie's novels, Wmatrix (Rayson, 2003, 2007), a web-based corpus processing environment, that can methodically encompass analyses of keywords, parts of speech and semantic-fields while digging out thematic parallelism, will be used.

In this study, we use BNC (Imaginative Writing) as reference corpus, which helps more precisely in finding out the parallel structures/themes in Kamila Shamsie's novel. The basic premise behind this study is that thematic parallelism of lexico-sematic patterns dug through keywords, parts of speech or semantic fields as defined by software (Wmatrix) can offer the stylistician a valued tool for textual analysis. Where classification according to subject field seems hardly appropriate to texts which are fictional or which are generally perceived to be literary or creative. Consequently, these texts are all labeled imaginative and are not assigned to particular subject areas.

Framework

Keeping in view the discussion in the previous section, Figure 1 (on next page) is proposed as the framework for this study.
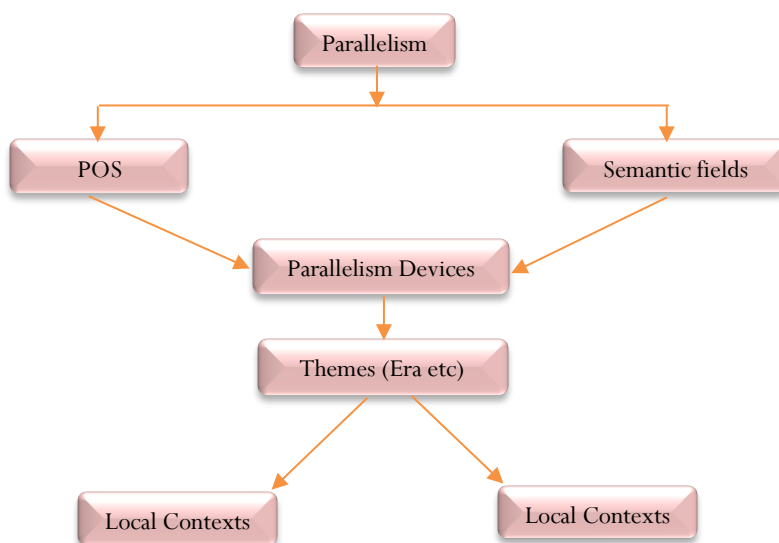
Figure 1:

With the selected Kamila Shamsie's novels arranged in chronological order of composition, the following table shows their era-wise (early, mid and later period), tentative division:

Table 1

Novel	Publication Year
Early Period	
Salt and Saffron	2000
Mid Period	
Cartography	2002
Broken Verses	2005
Later Period	
Burnt Shadows	2009
Home Fire	2017

This study uses nouns and adjectives to find lexical and semantic parallels and thus identify thematic parallels in Kamila Shamsie novels. In this study, thematic parallelism is considered as the shared themes in the novels of Kamila Shamsie. As stylistic analyses of various South Asians writers, for example, Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days* (Naeem, 2010) and Sidhwa's fictions (Mehmood, Mehmood and Nawaz, 2014) have already been carried out, so the present study intends to explore works of Kamila Shamsie with reference to thematic parallelism - a specific feature of stylistics. She, one of the most prominent writers of Indo-Pak, has published an oeuvre of fiction (1998-2017). The present study focuses on the analysis of Kamila Shamsie's five novels (covering different themes, for example, war, political violence, riot and despair, friendship, love, and the ever-fluctuating relationship) written in different eras to explore the difference in a writer's style with respect to thematic parallelism.

Analysis and Discussion

This section is developed with the help of some examples from the corpus analysis of the novels of Kamila Shamsie. Each figure, containing aspects of the corpus are discussed for parallels of themes conveyed through lexical relations discussed earlier.

The novels under the study are rich in the stylistics of parallels. The application of corpus analysis has successfully revealed a rich array of lexical stylistics of parallels in the text showing both the intertextual and

intratextual linkages. As the results were quite extensive and repetitive in nature, the researchers chose some examples for the purpose of illustration in this paper.
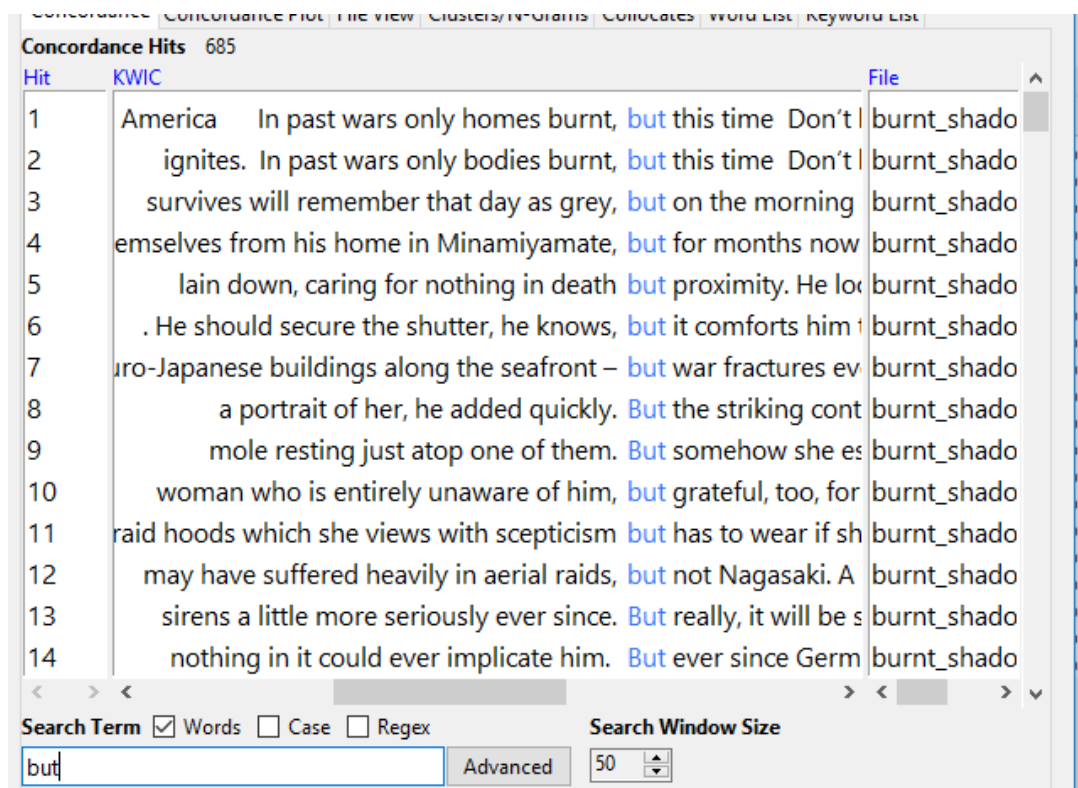
Figure 2: Showing Parallels of Comparison

Figure 2 shows the occurrence of comparative "but" as indicator of lexical and syntactic parallels. Most of the relations expressed here are contrastive in nature. The parallel expressed in the first line shows chronological contrast between the past and present of the USA. Similarly the second line shows contrast in the past and present wars in terms of the nature and magnitude of destruction. In some instances like the fourth and fifth line shows exception as a parallel of presence/absence. The use of "but" thus marks versatility in stylistics of its strategic deployment to augment the parallels in locus and help develop a case of intertextual thematic parallels that span across the novels. From the contents of this figure it is clear that the parallels of comparisons/contrasts range the theme of war, location, identity, alienation, globalization, and dilemma of modernization.

Table 2. Frequencies and Percentages of common connectives marking parallels

	Frequency	%	CUM %
However	355	77.68	77.68
In contrast	25	5.47	83.15
On the other hand	23	5.03	88.18
Nevertheless	22	4.81	93.00
Conversely	11	2.41	95.40
Nonetheless	6	1.31	96.72
Instead	5	1.09	97.81
In turn	3	0.66	98.47
Otherwise	3	0.66	99.12

By contrast	1	0.22	99.34
On the contrary	1	0.22	99.56
Rather	1	0.22	99.78
At least	1	0.22	100.00
Total	457	100.00	100.00

Another useful aspect of corpus-based analysis of the novels is reflected in the frequencies of different connectives that are normally used for establishing continuity and hence parallels. "However", is the most frequent connective used in her work. From stylistics perspective her use little deviates from the standard usage in BNC. It implies that her work follows the stylistics of the British writers, and it is quite natural to find so as the audience of her novels is the Anglophone world. Besides, the broader convergence with BNC she shows a personal quirk as an original writer uses it for the effect of introducing often a surprising and sometimes shocking revelation. Thus, this word largely contributes to present similarities between the ugliness of South Asia and the apparently forgotten grisly details of the World Wars that destroyed Europe. The contrastive use of this word is also interesting as it shows to the Western audience the limitation of their democratic system and world view which in her works is elaborated as irrelevant to the sociocultural processes of Pakistan and India. The application of Western ideals in the Eastern context often leads to the misery and confusion of the affected people. To sum, her skillful use of "however", nuances the peculiar stylistics of her work and establish her as an original writer.

Figure 3: Parallels through the use of "neither"

Figure 2, indicates the use of "neither" for the indication of parallels of absence/presence of a semantic feature. The skillful use of "neither" in the first lines shows that the heterdoxical and contrary features of living flesh and the inanimate object "silk" can both occur together in the body of a human. The theme of identity is built with the help of this parallel. The horrors of war and modernization leave human being a peculiar zombie both dead and alive at the same time. Man compares to machines who are dead but appears as alive and the human body through alive is dead in nature. This parallel builds her own unique take on the effects of twentieth-century developments in technology, politics and society as the culprits for the confusion of man as an individual and as part of society.

Conclusion

Kamila Shamsie being an English speaking writer of Pakistani origin has covered themes that are cosmopolitan in character, however, the specific allegiance of her work lies in the heart of South Asia i.e. India and Pakistan. The first theme of parallel is drawn between the global and regional aspects of human existence. As she extensively developed her oeuvre on this region, she necessarily embraced the intense conflicts, moments of extreme

depressions and hopes, loss and gain of identity and relentless machination of transformations by the powerful and resisting quarters of the region. The repetitive rule of military in Pakistan, the negative fallouts of engagement in Afghanistan's resistance against the Soviets, the alienation of Muhajirs, the national and international catastrophe of 9/11 emerge as the strings that reflect the dilemma of the nomadism of modern times. The tyranny of destructive forces is amply reflected in the parallel desolation of places, characters and cultures. Karachi in its violence is parallel to Tokyo and New York. Hiroko Tanaka is reflected and contradicted in Hiroko Ashraf and Konrad, Sajjad and Ilse. The lexical and syntactic parallels identifiable through corpus tools exhaustively highlight the novels as a complex web of intricate parallels. Thus, all her novels appear as the momentarily illuminated spots in the long saga of personal quests and collective wilderness.

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