

Linguistic Sexism In Fiction: A Corpus-Based Study Of Paired Terms In Selected Pakistani English Novels

Behzad Anwar

Abstract

Going a step further from the amalgam of corpus linguistics and corpus stylistics, the present study embarks on the exploration of sexist language used in literary texts of female and male Pakistan writers from a feminist stylistic perspective. This study is a corpus based feminist stylistic analysis of two corpora of Qaisra Sheraz's novels corpus (QSN) and Nadeem Aslam's novels corpus (NANC) to analyze the sexist use of language at word level. From within the toolkit provided by Mills (1995) in her Feminist Stylistics, the study examines the data that is in the form of words. From within different categories at word level, the present study focuses on only one feature i.e., paired terms for a fine grain analysis. The data are collected through purposive sampling by ¹corpus tool AntConc (3.2.1) utilizing its Clusters and Concordance programs. Following a mixed method approach, the paired terms with fe/male term at initial position are tabulated and analyzed frequency wise and with reference to their context of occurrences as well. The findings of the study indicate that both the novelists have used paired terms in their texts with a discriminative use of language. Sheraz has used binaries with male terms at the initial position for 81% times while only 19% binaries take female terms at initial position. Aslam, too, uses binaries with male term at initial position in maximum cases i.e., 65 % while only 35 % cases are there with female terms at initial position. The contextual analysis has also supported this linguistic discrimination based on the frequencies. It has been observed that male terms appear at initial position only when the context is depicting a positive situation or propagating a serious theme. All the binaries with female terms at initial position are occurring in negative contexts. Such a discriminative treatment of male and female terms highlights the sexist use of language in the analyzed corpora.

Keywords: *Corpus linguistics, Feminist stylistics, paired terms, sexist language, Sheraz, Aslam.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The advancement in computing has resulted in the availability of data in electronic form to allow the researchers to carry out research in various fields from various perspectives. The field

of linguistics, too, underwent a revolution with the emergence of corpus linguistics. Corpus linguistics studies language arrangements and patterns by analyzing the samples i.e., corpora by utilizing software. Corpus software helps linguists to collect and quantify linguistic phenomena to examine linguistic choices and patterns. Corpus linguistics studies different electronically saved texts ranging from written language like textbooks, articles, essays to transcriptions of spoken language like daily conversations, interview sessions, TV shows, speeches and so on. Even the sign language corpora can also be analyzed with corpus techniques. The study of the style of any text comes under stylistics, a branch of linguistics. Stylistics studies the style of any text from a linguistic point of view. Hence it is “the study of style” (Thornborrow & Wareing 1998, p. 2). With its foundation on linguistics and literary criticism, stylistics becomes literary stylistics when it is concerned with linguistic analysis of literary text. From within the two approaches towards stylistic analysis, the present study goes for the modern approach i.e., corpus based stylistic analysis.

The utilization of corpus linguistic tools to study the style of fiction has resulted in an interface between literary stylistics and corpus linguistics. And a new field of study named ‘corpus stylistics’ emerged which is considered “a recent innovation: an extension of earlier linguistic corpus-based studies, which focused on more traditional issues of lexical and grammatical variation in use” (Biber, 2005, p. 20). The value of corpus stylistics is authenticated by different studies conducted to analyze several texts to study their stylistic features. Corpus linguistic tools and methods are used to analyze literary texts with an underpinning of literary criticism and literary stylistics as well. The present study goes a step further where it utilizes corpus linguistic methodology to analyze literary corpora from a feminist stylistic perspective. The feminists’ interest in the sexist use of language in relation to gender disparities supported by feminist literary criticism proposed that English is “a language with sexist structures” (Holmes, 2008, p. 318). In this context, feminist stylistics emerged as a new field of study offering methods to analyze the language of literary texts for gender representation (Hodge and Kress, 1988).

From within several ways and methods, Mills (1995) comprehensive framework of studying texts from gender perspective as offered in her model of feminist stylistics is selected for the present study regarding data collection and data analysis. By laying stress on the functioning of theoretical aspects of gender, Mills (2005) suggests three levels of analysis to judge a text based on sexist/non-sexist use of language: word level, phrase level and discourse level. A writer’s choice of certain words and patterns over the others are not accidental or random. Instead, these hint at the attitude and belief system of a particular writer towards any gender (Nayef, 2016).

The present study embarks on the exploration of the language used in the novels written by Pakistani English female and male writers from a feminist stylistic perspective where the level of word suggested by Mills (1995) is chosen by the researcher. Thus, the researcher with an interest in the use of sexist language delves deeply into the selected texts to answer the following research question:

1. How do Pakistani fe/male novelists use pair terms with reference to sexist use of language in the selected corpora?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sociolinguists' belief that language affects our world view, according to Holmes (2008), influences how we, the language users, perceive and treat gender through language. Hence, the concept of sexist use of language came into the limelight in the field of language and gender. This linguistic sexism has been perceived by different linguists differently. Weatherall (2002) believed that the sexist use of language results in a sexist society while Mills (1995) asserts, on the other hand, that "language determines the way the world is perceived by the language-users" (p. 84). And there are the others who consider language to be only one factor in how we construct the world (Pauwels, 1998). Hence, it can be claimed that language in one way or the other can contribute to making our societies less or more sexist.

The sexist use of language most often results in a bias against women as Cameron (1992) suggests that sexist structures of language use make women suffer. Earlier Spender (1980), too, claims that the men in power construct and build the reality which works in their favor. While highlighting the threats of linguistic sexism Weatherall (2002) asserts that how such kind of sexism "in different ways diminishes women and make them invisible" (p.76). Keeping in view the feminist's agenda to highlight the use of sexist language, the present study incorporates the corpus methodology into the feminist stylistic analysis of literary texts.

Other than giving an understanding of the linguistic sexist elements in any text, the corpus tools and methodology enhance the authenticity and reliability in research as well. In corpus methodology, the corpus is searched for the set linguistic elements to find out frequency and different patterns of the language use. Corpus according to Wilson (2001) is "any collection of more than one text" (p. 29). Corpora are the collection of texts in an electronic form. The researchers either by utilizing the corpora developed by others or by developing their own corpora are conducting research to explore different texts. Studies conducted by Murphy (2007), Stubbs (2007) and Starcke (2010) have utilized corpus linguistic tools to study certain texts. Hence, stylistics when combined with corpus linguistics results in corpus stylistics. Corpus based stylistic study of literary language means to work with an electronic analysis of the texts to investigate the use of language. Such an investigation into the use of language in relation to gender opens new vistas as claimed by Wynne and Prytz (2005).

According to Short and Semino (2008) "stylistic analysis is a linguistic criticism" (p.117). Feminist stylistic, a sub-branch of stylistic, focuses on language styles focusing on the linguistic choices made by the writers from a gender perspective. Mills (2003) extended her model by elaborating two perspectives i.e., "the production and the reception perspectives" (p.22). The production constraints include discourse and language constraints, sociological factors, and the influence of the publishers which can impact the way a certain text is produced (Mills 2003, pp.22- 23). The text's reception, on the other hand, is influenced by "the audience that actually buys the book" (Mills, 2003, p.24). Due to its direct relation with sexist language and gender perspective, the researcher has applied feminist stylistics model to two corpora developed by the researcher to carry out a linguistic analysis at word level. The word level analysis includes the examination of generic terms, marked forms, paired terms, items with semantic derogation of women and naming practices. The present study has utilized only one feature of language use under word level aspect: use of paired terms. Based on a study

conducted on how women are semantically derogated by Schulz (1975), Mills (1995) asserts that “once a word becomes associated with women, it will begin to lose any positive quality that it originally had” (p. 116). This idea is explained using pairs which consist of gender specific terms. Mills (1995) claims that the terms for women in pairs carry negative meanings for women. The examples quoted by Mills (1995) are those of “courtesan,” “spinster,” “mistress,” and “hostess” which carry sexual connotations. Hence these derogatory terms used for women present women negatively. Cameron (1992) also asserted that “the male chauvinism are encoded into language” (p.13). Another way to judge the sexist use of paired terms is to investigate the order in which these terms appear. According to Mills (1995) the elements appearing at the initial position carry the most important information. And the cases where binary terms are fronted by male terms show the discriminative use of language. The binaries like male and female, man and woman, Mr. and Mrs., husband, and wife, are used frequently where male terms come at the initial position. Mills (1995) claims that the position of female terms after the male terms relegate them to a lower status.

By utilizing this feature of the positioning of term in pair words, the researcher explores the corpora of Pakistani English novels to see how the female and male writers depict gender in their writings. Pakistani English literature has gained worldwide reputation and Pakistani English writers have reached a stage where they have established their own identity (Cilano, 2009). The writers like Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie, Nadeem Aslam and Qaisra Sheraz discuss and highlight not only their national and regional issues in their respective works but deal with international issues as well. According to Rehman (1991) “Pakistani literature is being studied not for nationalistic reasons but simply because it too is one of the new literatures of the Third World written in the English language” (p. 11). The literature produced by these writers is studied and analyzed both by the Pakistan and international researchers from several aspects but there is still a lack of studies which are corpus based. In accordance with it, the present study is a contribution in the field of corpus stylistics research where it highlights the feminist agenda in the selected works utilizing a corpus-based approach.

3. METHOD AND MATERIAL

The study follows a mixed method approach keeping in view the idea that quantitative research can only provide valuable insights when it is linked to qualitative analysis (Mahlberg, 2010). Based on the insights from feminist literary criticism and utilizing Mills (1995) feminist stylistic analysis model for word level, the researcher has applied corpus methodology to collect and analyze data. For the purpose, the researcher selected three novels of each selected novelist and developed two corpora to carry out this study. The corpora were searched and analyzed utilizing corpus software tool AntConc (3.2.1). The corpus methodology has been helpful in this study for two reasons. First, reading and collecting the data from six selected novels would have been a time taking process as Short (2018) points out, ‘analyzing a long novel in close stylistic detail could take a lifetime’ (p.255). Hence, the frequencies of the selected linguistic items with their patterns in quantification retrieved through corpus tool saved the researcher’s time. Secondly, the qualitative analysis with reference to the representation of gender through stereotypical ideologies has been done through concordance program which saved not only the time, but it has also lent an authenticity to the findings of this study where quantitative findings have been discussed and analyzed through qualitative analysis. The data

are collected from the corpora of Sheraz's novels and Aslam's novels compiled by the present study researcher. The reason to select these two authors is that both of these novelists belong to Pakistani English writer's clan and secondly, they belong to two different genders i.e., male and female. Hence, the study aims to see the attitude of both the female and the male writers towards gender depiction through their linguistic choices. The data are collected through purposive sampling. After determining the search terms used for gender depiction like male/female, men /women etc., the researcher searched for the frequencies and patterns occurring at word level. Then to see the use and attitude of these individual words in the context, the excerpts were collected through concordance program of AntConc (3.2.1). The data were analyzed with selected features from feminist stylistic toolkit to detect gender treatment in the corpora. Due to limitation of time and space, the study has analyzed only one feature i.e., use of paired terms.

4. DISCUSSION

The section discusses the findings of both quantitatively and qualitatively analysis. The quantitative side of the discussion is based on the frequencies of different patterns of paired terms collected from the corpora through AntConc (3.2.1) cluster program (see Figure 1, Appendix 2). This comparison of frequencies is followed by a thorough discussion of these paired terms in relation to the cotext and context in which these are used. To collect relevant excerpts from the corpus, the researcher has utilized the concordance program (see Figure 2, Appendix 2)

4.1. Gender Specific Terms in Pairs

The use of paired terms can also be sexist when there is an unequal treatment observed in the use of these binaries for women and men. Mills (1995) questions the position of these terms where it is the norm that male terms always come first preceded by the female terms. Such a practice is discriminatory that puts women in marginal position. Mills (1995) theory proposes that the order in which the pair terms for women and men appear in a text may also result in gender discrimination. The examples she quotes are those of the male and female, Mr and Mrs, man and wife and husband and wife.

In the light of this proposition, the researcher has searched two corpora to find out the similarities/differences between the selected writers use of such pair terms. For this purpose, the researcher, at the first step, devised ten search terms to collect data through the Clusters tool, Antconc (3.2.1). At the second step, only relevant clusters were selected and classified into different categories. And lastly, these clusters were analyzed with the cotext and context by utilizing Antconc (3.2.1) Concordance tool. Hence, quantitative data were collected through cluster program followed by manual scrutiny while contextual analysis was carried out based on these identified terms through concordance lines. The following sections present the findings of the study along with a detailed discussion.

The data collected through AntConc (3.2.1) search tool has given the researcher a total number of 121 paired terms with male and female terms appearing in binaries. Table 1 presents an overall division of these terms corpus-wise both in number and percentages. It can be noted that NANC shows the maximum use of these terms with 57 terms while QSNK uses 54 paired

terms. As for as the sexist use of these terms is concerned, Sheraz, the female writer, appears to be more sexist where she uses paired term with masculine terms at the initial position for 44 times (81%) while the female terms appear at the initial position for only 10 times (19%). In contrast to this biased attitude of Sheraz, Aslam, the male writer, seems to be less biased towards gender depiction. Table 1 shows that in Aslam's NANC the male terms appear at the initial position for 37 times (65%) while the female terms in the pairs appear at the initial position for 20 times (35 %). Such a result rejects the previous claims that male writers are more biased towards gender depiction.

Table 1: Use of Paired Terms in QSNC and NANC

Paired Terms	QSNC	NANC	Total
Female terms at initial position	10=19%	20= 35%	27
Male terms at initial position	44=81%	37=65%	81
Total	54=100%	57=100%	121

Depending upon the frequencies as given in table 2 it can be maintained that both the writers are biased in their use of paired terms as in maximum cases these are the male term that appear at the initial position. To check and match the results obtained from this quantification of the data, the researcher has further delved into the examination of these identified patterns in relation to their cotext and context of occurrences. For this purpose, the concordances program in AntConc (3.2.1) has been utilized to collect the details of these occurrences. The data have been discussed in the following sections for each corpus separately:

4.1.1. Use of Pair Terms in QSNC

The results have shown that Sheraz has used paired terms with both the patterns where male and female terms appear at the initial position but with a different frequency and meaning. A total number of 44 paired terms with male terms appearing first and a total number of 10 paired terms with female terms at the initial position are used in the text. The collected paired terms with their number of frequencies are given in Table A.1 and Table A.2 (Appendix 1). The paired terms that appear in QSNC with male terms at the initial position are man and (a) woman, men and women, man or woman, boy(s) and girl(s), husband(s) and wife(-ves), father (s) and mother (s), brother(s) and sister(s), and son(s)/son-in-law and daughter(s)/ daughter-in-law. An analysis of these paired terms indicates that men are projected as important when they are described at the initial position. Following excerpts from the text show how males are projected positively through a description of positive activities and ideas attached to them. They are placed at the initial position in the paired terms without any negative thought or idea communicated in a particular context. Instead, this initial position of male terms can be traced in relation to certain gendered ideologies. For example, male terms appear first when the text narrates the intimate and loving relationship of the life partners (excerpts 1-8). Hence, setting the men at the initial position in the context of enjoyment, love and satisfaction shows that man is more important in the text.

1. their exchange had all the trappings of a very intimate scene between **a man and a woman**.
2. there is a unique relationship between a husband and a wife, between **a man and a woman**.
3. A **husband and wife**, who loved one another.
4. Her **father and mother** had apparently led a fulfilled life and shared all its pleasures.
5. **Husband and wife** laughed at their grandson.
6. **husband and wife**, eating bananas.
7. It would be good to spend time in the company of your **son and daughter-in-law**.
8. Habib and Shahzada were delighted to meet the Egyptian **brother and sister** who had made their daughter so welcome in Cairo.

Othe than this when introducing the customs and ideologies of the people, the text again puts the male terms at the initial position (excerpts 9 & 10) to give an effect that these are the men who are more cultured and sophisticated.

9. Kissing **men and women** on the cheeks is very normal for English people.
10. The veil has always perplexed and tantalized the Western world, both **men and women** alike

The description in relation to work or job roles in paired terms is also initiated by the male terms as shown in the excerpts taken from the text. Excerpts 11 and 12 describe them in relation to their employment in a company and their being “Jamaati” i.e., belonging to a community offering prayers and travelling. The description of men at the initial position is meant to show them in relation to some prestigious jobs or noble cause.

11. a score of **young men and women** employees
12. her fellow group of Jamaati **men and women** were sitting.

Another ideology with which men are described through their initial positions in the paired terms is their critical outlook and power of judgment. Excerpts 13- 17 show how in several situations the characters are judged by other men and women (excerpts 13, 15-17) and by the son and daughter-in-law (excerpt 14). Such a description also proposed that in Pakistani society the opinion and judgment of a man is more important than that of a woman.

13. No **man or woman** will be my judge.
14. Chaudharani Kaniz weds at fifty! What would my **son and daughter-in-law** say?
15. Seeing that they were in a public place, out in the courtyard, with **men and women** watching and listening to them with interest, Zarri Bano felt awkward in Sikander’s company.
16. The crowd of **men and women**, talking in hushed whispers, left the madrasah courtyard.
17. she was continuously faced with not only hiding her blushes but having to explain to some of the **village men and women**.

Another gender stereotypes associated with Pakistani society is the concept of male preference. Boys are preferred over girls because they can look after their parents in a better way as given in example 18. A female character is described as taking pride in having two sons. The same excerpt as reproduced in example 18 reinforces the gender specific roles as well where females are restricted to household chores. Similarly excerpt 20 again presents the typical Pakistani ideology about the domains of men and women i.e., a man is to work outside, and a woman is to look after the house.

18. who prided herself on having a perfect family of **two sons and two daughters**; sons were needed for looking after the parents, but daughters were a must for household chores.
19. Mehreen has only one son and Gulbahar **one son and one daughter**.
20. A home needs a woman to run it. If both **husband and wife** work, how can the house run?

The paired terms with female terms at the initial position noted in QSN C are women and men, woman or man, girl(s) and Boy(s), mother (s) and Father (s), mother(s) or father(s), sister(s) and brother(s), sister(s) or brother(s) /spouses, daughter(s)/ daughter-in-law and son(s)/son-in-law. But this placement at the initial position does not highlight the women as important characters. Thus, rejecting Mills's (1995) claim that the elements which come first in English are generally seen to be the most important in terms of information-processing. Instead, the contextual analysis of the found examples in this study has shown that this is not the position of the terms, but it is the position within a context that determines how a gender is represented in the text. The selected excerpts from the QSN C describe the females in relation to stereotypical image of them. For example, excerpt 21 describes a disturbed situation where the perplexity of the character is highlighted and, in this context, "women" the female term is set at the initial position. Likewise, the pair term "mothers or fathers" with a female term at the initial position in example 22 presents a degrading situation the reason of which is yet to be communicated.

21. Zarri Bano turned from the window, wondering how many **other women and men** had experienced this nightmare scenario.
22. Shirin was playing alone, as usual, for the village children had been schooled by their parents to keep away from the girl. Though none of their **mothers or fathers** had ever explained the reason.

The negative image of the woman is also highlighted by placing her at the initial position when the mean nature of human beings is describes who can take advantage of others as given in example 23. Likewise, in a scene where both the parents are silenced by Ruby, the female term 'mother' is placed at the initial position as given in example 24.

23. Another **woman or another man**, could have taken advantage of their vulnerability.
24. Ruby intervened before her **mother or father** could say anything.

The women are also placed at the initial position when the text describes both the genders with relation to their lowers status jobs as given in following excerpt.

25. He was fully aware who was in which room and what particular task each of **his women and men servants** were working on.

Another idea attached to women is that they are blamed for their infertility. Excerpt 26 hints at the idea where ‘sister’, the female term is placed at the initial position followed by the male term “spouses”. Hence, the major responsibility for not having a child lies on the woman as it is often assumed in a typical Pakistani society.

26. Was it the **sisters or their spouses** who were infertile?

4.1.2. Use of Pair Terms in NANC

Based on collected data and the categorization of identified patterns, it is observed that Aslam is biased in his use of language where he used 37 paired terms with male terms at the initial position while females are described through initial position in 20 cases. These paired terms with initial position for each gender with their number of frequencies are given in Table A.1 and Table A.2 (Appendix 1). Other than the differences in their frequency of occurrences position wise the contextual analysis have shown that the writer is biased in his selection of words regarding their placement. It is observed that men are mostly placed at the initial position when the writer is highlighting a particular issue of importance. For example, the need to get the children educated is highlighted where male terms are placed at the initial position as shown in examples 27 and 28 where in the context of education male term “boys” comes at the initial position.

27. That was how it began, Marcus, his hand amputated, deciding to secretly tutor Usha’s **boys and girls** in the perfume factory.
28. both **boys and girls** are taught at the school

Likewise, when the text describes the adventurous expeditions or travelling scenes these are the male terms that appear first in a binary as given in examples 29 and 30 where the masculine term “men” precedes “women in each case. Example 31 again puts the male term “sons” at the initial position followed by female term “daughter” were travelling and settling abroad for livelihood is described as a challenging and courageous task on the part of its citizens.

29. he said that he and a small group of like-minded **young men and women** had come together and were planning to journey back to Kabul in a few weeks.
30. A group of people **men, women** and children was on its way to the other side of the town
31. Pakistan is a poor country [...] millions of its **sons and daughters** have managed to find footholds all around the globe in their search for livelihood.

The merry making scenes are also described with the initial position of male terms in the paired terms as examples 32 and 33 exhibit.

32. It was Sunday and a small group of Saturday-night revelers, **young white men and women** [...] on their way back to their homes from some late party.
33. From the courtyard high-pitched yelps and urgent commands, the sound of his **brothers and sisters** at play reached the room.

The concordance lines for the paired terms in NANC have given examples where Aslam has highlighted the beliefs and ideologies of his characters as well. It is noteworthy that while highlighting these though patterns, these are the male terms that are introduced first and only then the female terms appear. In example 34, Aslam while highlighting how the Muslims are careful about the cleanliness of their clothes, uses the pair term “Muslim men and women” which sets male as the important member of the community. Likewise, Aslam deplores the situation where Pakistanis are considered savage who are involved in killing their people. While describing the victims of this killing the male terms “sons” and “brothers” are set at the initial positions in example 35. Likewise, the partition theme and its aftereffects are highlighted where “men and women” are searching for betel leaf (example 36).

34. Most **Muslim men and women** of the neighbourhood have a few sets of clothing reserved solely for outdoors, taking them off the moment they get home to put on the ones they know to be clean.
35. the white police are interested in us Pakistanis only when there is a chance to prove that we are savages who slaughter our **sons and daughters, brothers and sisters**
36. all over Sohni Dharti **men and women** were experimenting with any leaf they came across in case it resembled the betel in bitterness and flavour.

Other than this, the text describes men and women in relation to the brutalities and sufferings of the wars and unrest as well. In such descriptions male terms again appear at the initial position as shown in examples 37-39.

37. Thousands of **men, women** and children fell victim to the Afghan’s own incompetence and lack of technical knowledge.
38. hundreds of **men, women**, and children had been gunned down at the Jallianwallah Garden in Amritsar.
39. We were letting those **men, women** and children die to expose the brutality of the Soviets.

While commenting upon the condition of immigrants, Aslam highlights their issues where the paired terms take male terms at the initial position as given in examples 40 and 41.

40. At his office he and his staff have to explain various procedures to **men and women** who are unemployable in two languages.
41. all **young men and women** who had paid thousands of rupees to the people who ran this and other similar immigration scams.

The rich culture of Afghanistan is praised by highlighting the memory and knowledge of its people where men are highlighted as important ones when the binary term “men and women” places male terms at the initial position (example 42).

42. The **men and women** of Afghanistan share between them a store of tales so extensive, so rich and ancient, that it has been said it is unrivalled by any other land.

Another ideology propagated using language in NANC is the preference of male children over the female ones. The initial positioning of “sons” and “boys” in the following excerpts from the text show how sons are preferred over daughters.

43. **Sons and daughters**, on hearing that their mother is dying, are supposed to come to her side
44. what with her **sons and daughter** away, leading their own lives,
45. All three children are far away, the **boys and the girl**
46. an orphan **boy and girl** from a nearby village

The pair terms “brother and sister” with the initial positioning of male term in the beginning in the following examples (47- 49) again highlights how male family members are preferred:

47. a cloud of something anaesthetizing hung over his **brother and sister**.
48. the **brother and sister** move the dining table and chairs into the centre of the next room,
49. he can go out and look for his **brother and sister**.

This male preference is again highlighted in the descriptions of the paintings where the male term “men/man” is preceded by the female term “women/woman” (examples 50 & 51) as in the following examples:

50. he wetted a small piece of cloth in warm water and carefully lifted away the earth smeared onto **the men and women** on the walls, layer by patient layer.
51. A **young man and a woman** made out of the ruins of the dozens in this interior.
52. the album containing the photographs of **his father and mother**.

The following examples with the placement of male terms at the initial position again confirms Mills’s (1995) claim that the positioning of a particular gender at the initial position makes this gender prominent and, in this case, the male community.

53. The children are going around saying that in the lakeside woods a pair of sad ghosts wanders, luminous, like figures stepped down from a cinema screen, **a man and woman**,
54. He is about to emerge from the orchard when he sees that **the old man and the woman** are there a few yards ahead of him.

In comparison to the pair terms with male terms at the initial position, the positioning of female terms at the initial position is less in number. The paired terms identified following this pattern in NANC are women and men, girl(s) and boy(s), wife(-ves) or husband(s), mother (s) and father (s), sister(s) or brother(s) /Spouses. The data have shown that these are the negative, melancholic, and miserable contexts in which the terms for women precede those used for the men. Such a description relegates the position of women to a lower status. For example, in the abduction scene these are the “girls” who are mentioned first in the pair term as given in following excerpt:

55. no government had the right to prevent them from abducting infidels **the girls and boys** for pleasure.

The loss of human life is described where a mother is grieving upon the loss of her children and currently the traditional pattern of “boy and girl” is reversed. Instead, the female term “girl” is placed at the initial position. Other than this the miserable state of the workers also describes “women and men” working in a factory (example 57). Some more examples where the characters are described in relation to the oppressed and miserable state of life show how in such cases female terms are used at the initial position of paired terms. Example 59 describes a terrifying and painful scene where the screaming of the “girl or boy” is highlighted. Again, the forced human beings by their agents with reference to immigration are described in example 59 which uses the paired term “wife or husband”. The first term is the female term which relegates the position of woman instead that of designating her important. Likewise, example 60 describes a painful situation in which the “mother or father”, and “sister or brother” of the missing person search for their missed one. The position of female terms at the initial slot in these pair terms show how women are given this frontal position only in the scenes with negative themes.

56. And a woman, broken with grief at having lost **a girl and a boy**, approaches David and wants to know why the Americans had released that criminal from custody.
57. He must be asleep in the perfume factory, down there where **women and men** used to work at one time.
58. Dr Sharif would drag inside any child that passed by the surgery and, pinning the kicking and screaming **girl or boy** to the oor with his knee, inject the dose.
59. The Agency also made the recruits sign a paper saying they wouldn't mention to their spouses the true nature of their work, but he didn't know of anyone who didn't tell everything to his **wife or husband**, easier than having to explain those late-night meetings with agents
60. In the months to come his **mother or father, sister or brother**, would be scouring this land for some word of him.

Other than these contexts, women are also described with initial positions in binaries when the writer intends to highlight the wrong beliefs and practices of his people. These are the women who are highlighted in such cases. In example 61 the wrong practice based on the ignorance of people is highlighted where the parents take their daughter to the holy man who gives her severe beatings to cure her of some disease. The description of such an ignorant and cruel parent is given in example 62 where the female term “mother” appears first in the pair term “mother and father”. Likewise, the description of same parents after the girls is dead and the holy man is arrested, again describes them as “mother and father”.

61. The holy man reassured the family that if reasonable force was used the girl would not be affected [...] The girl was taken into the cellar and the beatings lasted several days with **the mother and father** in the room directly above reading the Koran out loud.
62. the holy man has been arrested [...] and **the mother and father** would perhaps receive a decade or so each for being accessory to the killing.

63. I want you to stop accusing **Mother and Father**. They are not forcing me into an arranged marriage.

Another ideology discussed by Aslam is that of forced marriage where again the female term “mother” comes before “father” in the pair term (example 63). Such an analysis strengthens the researcher’s claim that the writers use paired terms with male term at the initial position to portray them positively in positive contexts while the women terms when placed at the initial position do not highlight them as important. Instead, they are described negatively through their initial positions. Two more examples highlight this sexist use of language where female terms come first but with negative image and context. Example 64 presents a scene where “the girls and boy” have left home while example 65 gives a description of the characters through their old age where “mother” is placed at the initial position followed by “father”.

64. We are aware that the **girl and the boy** have left home
65. both the boys will be back here and take over the reins of the business from their aged **mother and father**

A description of bad habits is also observed with the same pattern of the pair terms with female terms appearing at the initial position. The drug addiction (example 66), poor living conditions and the greedy nature (example 67) and the criminal nature of human beings (example 68) is highlighted where female terms coming first in the respective pair terms as highlighted in these quoted examples form NANC. Such a description of females with negative contexts highlights their characters negatively.

66. He was glad Islam forbade alcohol, because otherwise I am sure both **my mother and my father** would be alcoholics.
67. **Mother and Father** sit in the circle of light. He is eating rice and tinda. Above them, attracted by the smell of Kala-Kola hair tonic, clusters of mosquitoes whine, their paths a mess of tangles and knots.
68. Just then the eldest girl came to the kitchen door and looked with frightened eyes at the corner of the courtyard whereas a little girl, ten or so years ago, she had watched **her mother and father** burying books and magazines that would have incriminated her father in the event of a police raid.

5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion as presented in previous two sections, it can be concluded that the paired terms are used in a sexist way which hints at the sexist attitude of the writers. The difference in frequencies indicates that how both the writers give preference to male terms while writing about both the genders in pair terms. The pair terms with male at initial positioning outnumber the pair terms with female at the initial position in both the corpus. Figure 1 presents an overall picture of the use of these terms in the corpora where difference in percentages is highlighted.

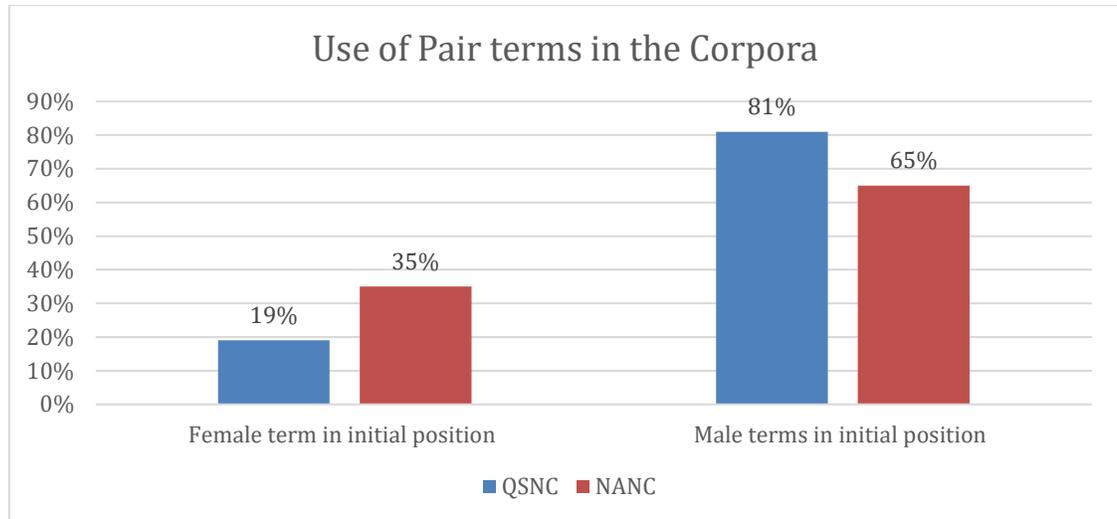


Figure 1: Overall corpus wise division of pair terms based at initial positioning

Other than this difference in frequencies, the contextual analysis as given in previous sections has supported the present study researcher's claim that both the novelists are biased in their language use. Table 2 provides a summary of all the functions and meanings of the context in which these pair terms are used in QSN and NANC. It can be noted that the male terms with initial positioning are always used by the novelists when there is a positive context. QSN shows the use of male terms at the initial position in positive context like that of pleasure seeking, prestigious jobs, making judgment, working outdoor and involved in cultured and sophisticated topics of discussion. The female terms, on the other hand, are placed at the initial position when the texts describe some degrading situations relating to fear, loss, misery, work and infertility. While giving a description of the mean nature of human beings, female terms come first in paired terms. Similarly, the same pattern is observed in the analysis of pair terms in NANC where all the positive contexts descriptions are reserved for such pair terms where male terms appear at the initial position. For example, the context in which characters are described in relation to education, adventure and travelling, merry-making, or in relation to the propagation of some though provoking ideas and themes, these are the male terms that appear at the initial position. Contrary to this, the contexts with negative representation or the darker side of human beings use pair terms with female terms at the initial position in NANC. These darker sides include the description of abduction, drudgery, misery, loss, elopement, old age, poverty, greed, criminal mindset and wrong beliefs and practices of human beings as given in Table 2.

Table 2: Representation through sexist Paired Term Patterns: A comparison of QSN and NANC

Paired Terms Patterns	Context of use in QSNC	Context of use in NANC	Representation
F.T* in initial position	Nightmares	Abduction/physical pleasures	
	Degrading situation	Drudgery/misery/pain	
	Mean nature	Loss of life	
	Silenced characters	Missed persons,	
	Lower status jobs	Wrong and misled religious beliefs and practices,	Negative
	Infertility	Elopement	
		Old age	
	Drug addiction		
	Poor living condition and greed,		
	Criminal acts		
M.T** in initial position	Enjoyment, love and satisfaction	Education	
	Cultured and sophisticated contexts	Traveling and adventure	
	Prestigious job positions,	Merry making/leisure time	Positive
	Judgement and critical thinking,	Preference to male family members	
	Outdoor activities	Serious themes/thought patterns and ideologies related to war, immigration.	

(* F.T =female terms, **M. T=male terms)

Based on these findings and discussion, the researcher concludes that linguistic sexism is not a matter of the gender of a writer. Instead, linguistic sexism is the result of prevailing sexism in our society. The writers' conscious or unconscious use of pair terms fronted by male terms is an indication of the discriminative use of language. The study has also found that Mills's (1995) claim that the gendered terms at the initial position carry importance is correct for male terms only. The findings of the study have proved that the positioning of female term is initial slot does not show them important as they are placed first in the binaries within a negative context. Hence, the researcher proposes that positioning of these terms is important but what is more important is the context of their use. In such a case, the researcher lays stress on the need to analyze even such minute aspects of language to highlight the element of sexism and to develop a critical thinking in language users to end gender discrimination. The findings of this research

are expected to help the readers to read a text critically to understand the sexist attitude of the writers. On the other hand, it also highlights the need to avoid sexist use of language to end discrimination against any gender be it a woman or a man.

References

- Biber, D. (2011). Corpus linguistics and the study of literature: Back to the future? *Scientific study of literature*, 1(1), 15-23.
- Cameron, D., & Cameron, D. (1992). Introduction: Language and Feminism. *Feminism and Linguistic Theory*, 1-17.
- Cilano, C. (2009). "Writing from Extreme Edges": Pakistani English Language Fiction. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 40(2-3).
- Hodge, R. I. V., & Kress, G. R. (1988). *Social semiotics*. Cornell University Press.
- Holmes, J. (2008). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (3rd Ed.) Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Mahlberg, M. (2010). Corpus linguistics and the study of nineteenth-century fiction. *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 15(2), 292-298.
- Mills, S. (1995). *Feminist Stylistics*. Routledge.
- Mills, S. (2003). *Gender and politeness* (No. 17). Cambridge University Press.
- Mills, S. (2005). Gender and Impoliteness. *Journal of Politeness Research Language Culture Behavior*, 1(2), 263-280.
- Murphy, S. (2007). Now I am alone: A corpus stylistic approach to Shakespearian soliloquies. In *Papers from the Lancaster University Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics & Language Teaching* (Vol. 1, pp. 67-85).
- Nayef, H. (2016). Linguistic sexism in TV drama: A linguistic analysis of verbal violence against women in the Egyptian sitcom Al-Kabeer Awi. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 4(1), 84-103.
- Pauwels, A. (1998). *Women changing language*. London: Longman.
- Schulz, M. (1975). The semantic derogation of women. *Language and sex: Difference and dominance*, 10, 64.
- Short, M., & Semino, E. (2008). Evaluation and stylistic analysis. *The Quality of Literature*, 117-137.
- Spender, D. (1980). Learning to create our own knowledge. *Convergence*, 13(1), 14.
- Starcke, B. (2006). The phraseology of Jane Austen's Persuasion: Phraseological units as carriers of meaning. *ICAME journal*, 30, 87-104.
- Stubbs, M. (2020). Conrad in the computer: examples of quantitative stylistic methods. In *The language and literature reader* (pp. 230-243). Routledge.
- Thornborrow, J., & Wareing, S. (1998). *Patterns in language: An introduction to language and literary style*. Psychology Press.
- Weatherall, A. (2005). *Gender, language and discourse*. Routledge.
- Wilson, M. (2001). The changing discourse of language study. *The English Journal*, 90(4), 31-36.
- Wynne, M., & Prytz, Y. B. (2005). Corpus approaches to the language of literature. *Methods*, 14(1), 5-24.

Appendix 1

Table A.1 : Male terms appearing first in the corpora

Sr. No.	Male terms appearing first	QSNC	NANC
1.	Man and (a) woman	4	5
2.	Men and women	10	11
3.	Men, women	0	4
4.	Man or woman	1	0
5.	Boy(s) and girl(s)	1	5
6.	Husband(s) and wife(-ves)	13	0
7.	Father (s) and mother (s)	1	1
8.	Brother(s) and sister(s)	8	3
9.	Son(s)/son-in-law and daughter(s)/ daughter-in –law	6	6
10.	Male and female	0	2
	Total	44	37

Table: A.2 Male terms appearing first in Paired Terms in the corpora

Sr. No.	Female terms appearing first	QSNC	NANC
1.	(a) woman and (a)Man	0	0
2.	women and Men	2	1
3.	Woman or man	1	0
4.	girl(s) and Boy(s)	1	4
5.	Girl(s) or boys(s)	0	1
6.	wife(-ves) and Husband(s)	0	0
7.	wife(-ves) or Husband(s)	0	1
8.	mother (s) and Father (s)	1	10
9.	Mother(s) or father(s)	2	1
10.	sister(s) and Brother(s)	0	0
11.	Sister(s) or brother(s) /Spouses	1	1

12.	daughter(s)/ daughter-in -law and Son(s)/son-in-law	2	0
13.	Female and male	0	1
	Total	10	20

Appendix 2

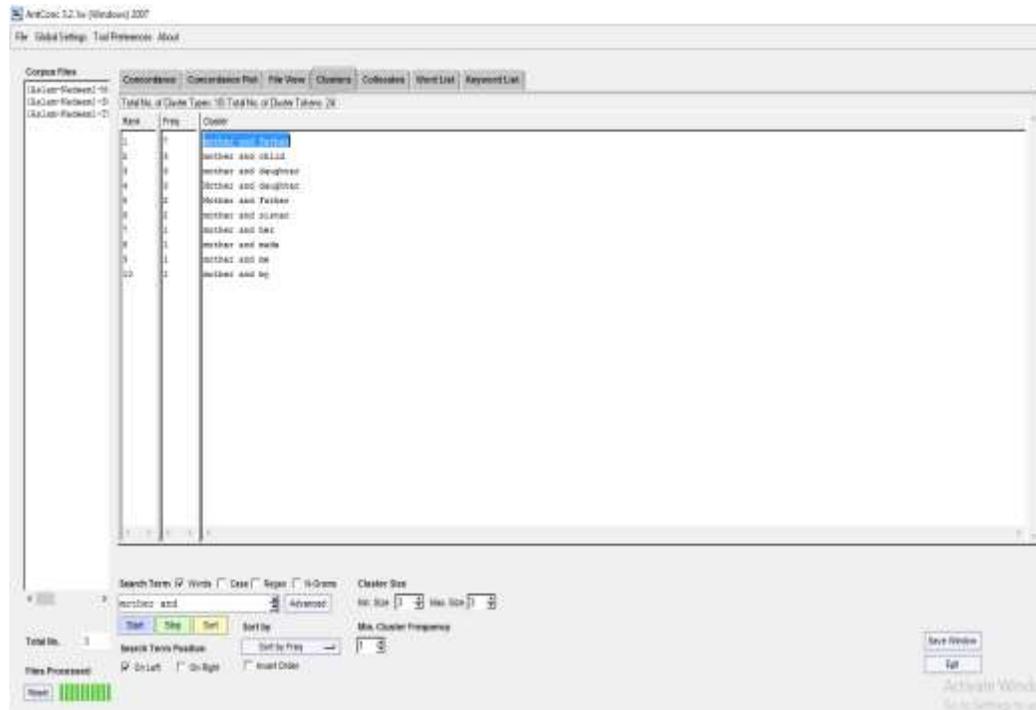


Figure 1: AntConc(3.2.1) Cluster program for identification of paired terms frequencies

1678 Linguistic Sexism In Fiction: A Corpus-Based Study Of Paired Terms In Selected Pakistani English Novels

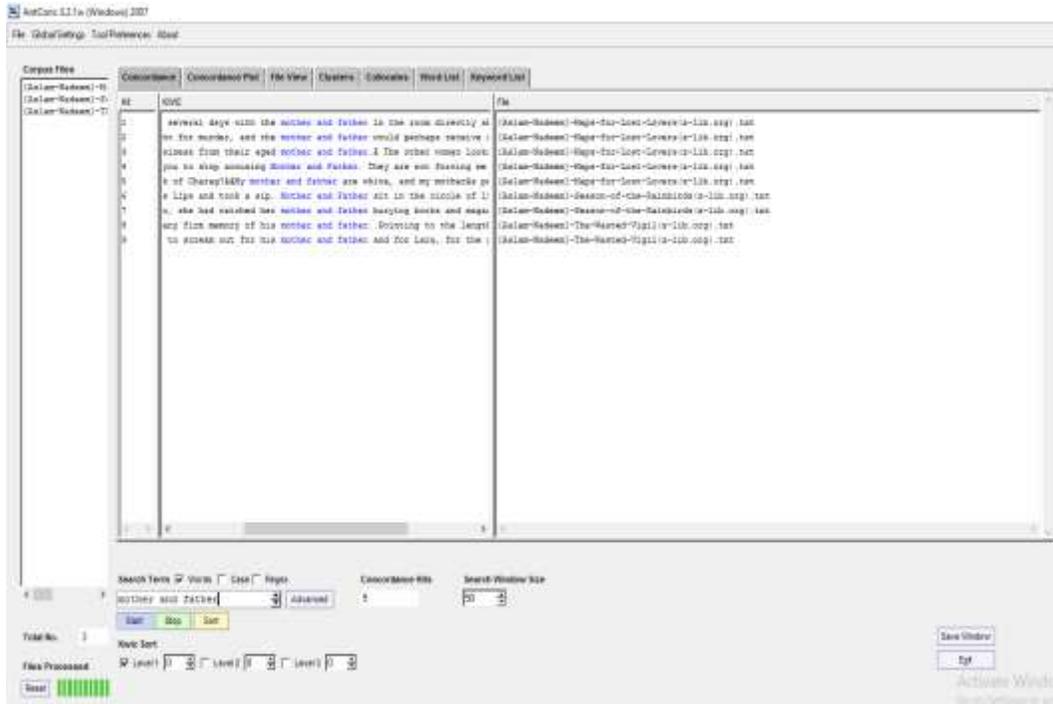


Figure 2: AntConc(3.2.1) Concordance program for collection of concordance lines for paired term