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Feminist Stylistic Analysis of *Pakistani Bride* by Bapsi Sidhwa and *Tell me Everything* by Elizabeth Strout: A Corpus-Assisted Study

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ABSTRACT

The study executes a rigorous, comparative corpus-assisted feministic stylistic investigation into Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) and Elizabeth Strout's *Tell Me Everything* (2024), deconstructing how disparate socio-political metrics, namely South Asian tribal patriarchy and contemporary western localized domestic hegemony, systematically encoded gendered asymmetries into narrative prose. While cross-culture feminist literary critiques frequently rely on speculative thematic close reading that are structurally vulnerable to confirmation bias and selective data collection, this paper operationalizes a hybrid empirical methodology. By synthesizing Sara Mills (1995) three-tiered feminist stylistic framework with corpus linguistics, the study maps ideological configurations across localized digital corpora of both the texts. The employed methodology explains how gender role, fragmentation, description of body parts, description of clothing, cataloguing, objectification and passivity can play their role in gender construction. At lexical level, semantic asymmetries and discursive fragmentation are evaluated through collocations. Syntactically, Key-Word-In-Concordance (KWIC) concordance pathways are isolated to execute a transitivity analysis, Material Actors Vs Passive Affected Goals. At macro level, the study extracts recurring n-gram lexical clusters and tests semantic prosody to unpack the latent cultural presuppositions and narrative focalization the reinforces structural hegemony. For quantitative analysis Corpus based tool *Antconc 4.4.0* has been incorporated for analysis. The empirical data revealed a striking convergence of structural subjugation achieved via distinct linguistic mechanisms. Ultimately, this study advances the field of corpus linguistics by providing a replicable, mixed method framework, empirically demonstrating



that despite striking geo-political and temporal divergences, patriarchal hegemony remains deterministically embedded within the literal syntax of contemporary fiction.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bapsi Sidhwa's seminal debut novel, *The Pakistani Bride* (1983), stands as a harrowing literary indictment of the socio-cultural forces that dictate female existence in post partition South Asia. Spanning two starkly contrasting geographical and cultural terrains, the relatively fluid, urban landscape of Lahore and hyper patriarchal, honor bound tribal agencies of Korakoram mountains, the novel charts the turbulent journey of its protagonist Zatoon. While traditional literary scholarship has exhaustively critiqued the novel through a thematic lens, focusing primarily on its raw depiction of marital violence, cultural alienation, tribal fundamentalism and the commodification of women, such approaches even overlook the mechanical bedrock of these narratives: the language itself. Language is not a neutral medium; it is tool for constructing social identities, including gender...stylistic choices can never be neutral and instead they are deeply ideological", says Mills, (1995).

Tell Me Everything by Elizabeth Strout's (2024), alongside Bapsi Sidhwa's *the Pakistani Bride* (1983), absolutely shares a powerful singular thematic core: the trauma, invisibility and profound isolation of women trapped within rigid domestic and societal frameworks, and the liberating act of reclaiming their narratives. While Sidhwa uses a high-stakes, dramatic lens (the physical escape through mountains), Strout uses a quite introspective, domestic lens (the emotional landscapes of a small town in Maine. Tell me everything as a theme is explicitly named by Olive Kitteridge and Lucy Barton. They spend their afternoons sharing stories of local towns people, particularly women, whose deep heartbreaks, regrets and sacrifices go completely unnoticed by the world. Olive calls these the 'unrecorded lives. Strout is obsessed with showing that ordinary, quite female suffering matters, even if it leaves no historical mark.

The most striking parallel between the two texts is how society silences or ignores the internal struggles of the women, reducing their life stories to footnotes. Both novels examine how women are broken down by domestic spaces they are confined to, often passing down or enduring deep-seated trauma related to marriage and societal expectations. For both authors, the antidote to isolation and the primary tool for female survival is the act of sharing one's truth, literal or narrative reclamation. Look at the character of Gloria Beach (the mother at the center of the murder investigation). As a young girl she suffered horrific abuse which made her fear and hate 'the sex act'. Trapped into a conventional marriage, she fell into a deep agonizing depression, compulsively eating and lashing out at her children. Her domestic space became a site of absolute psychological confinement of and trauma. Confinement is both physical and structural. Zaitoon is Forced into a forced marriage into an arranged marriage with Sakhi, a man who uses physical violence to domesticate her and assert his masculinity. Like Gloria, Zaitoon faces an environment where her sexuality and body are commodified and her domestic setting is a prison designed to crush her autonomy.

To fully understand how oppression is constructed, normalized and resisted in these texts, one must shift focus from *What is narrated to how it is linguistically engineered*. This paper addresses the critical gap by employing the robust framework of feminist analysis. As pioneered by feminist linguist Sara Mills, feminist stylistic bridges the historical divide between literary theory and formal linguistics. By viewing the text not as oppressive reflection of the reality but as an active ideological battleground, a feministic approach unmask the subtle linguistic operations that hardwire patriarchal dominance into the very fabric of the prose.

In this process, Sara Mill's framework of *gender roles* in text has been used for conceptual underpins of this research. Deeply influenced by Michel Foucault's theories, Mills argues that gender roles are not neutral and fixed; they are socially constructed and constantly negotiated through language. To expose the hidden power dynamics, Mills offers a dynamic three-tiered analytic tool kit to evaluate how gender role

are manufactured at every layer of the text. At the baseline level, Mills looks at how individual vocabulary choices subtly trap men and women into unequal, highly stereotypical identities, e.g., texts often reduce female characters to isolated body parts (her soft lips, her slender waist, her cascading hair). Moving up to the ladder, Mills shifts from standalone words to structure sentence choices, investigating who holds the power to act within a clause, e.g., Men are structurally placed as grammatical actors of material processes (Sakhi struck, “the man decided”) they perform actions that can change the world. Women are frequently regulated to the goal or affected object, the passive receiver of someone else’s action (Zaitoon was taken, she was beaten). At highest tier, Mills examines the overreaching ideological frameworks, narrative perspectives and societal expectations that condition how we read gender roles. Mills demonstrates that when a narrative is focalized consistently through a male’s charters’ lens and experiences, it naturally forces the readers, regardless of their own real-world gender, to adopt a male centered perspective. That’s why Mills encourages resistant reading, urging scholars to decode these hidden traps rather than passively absorbing them as common sense. Keeping in view these factors, below are given the objectives of the study:

1.1 Objectives:

- To analyze the use of lexical choices in *The Pakistani Bride* and *Tell me Everything* to determine how female objectification is constructed at the word level.
- To investigate the distribution of syntactic transitivity patterns to map out how hegemony is maintained and female agency is denied or reclaimed at sentence level.
- To evaluate how macro discourse structures, narrative focalization and implicit cultural presuppositions operate within the text to expose and critique the systemic subjugation of women belonging to different cultures.

1.2 Research Questions:

- In what ways do Sidhwa and Strout employs lexical choices and ‘discursive fragmentation to portray the physical description and commodification of female characters?
- How are grammatical transitivity patterns (specifically material and mental processes) distributed between male and female characters to map agency and power dynamics in the novel?
- How do the discourse level structure, socio-cultural norms and shifts in focalization position the reader to view patriarchal hegemony within the text?

1.3 Significance of the Study:

The present research is quite different from recent feminist and critical discourse studies such as the analysis of the selected texts (*The Pakistani Bride* and *Tell Me Everything*). Its significance primarily lies in unmasking how systemic gender disparities and power imbalances are subtly built into daily language. This offers a vital framework for how literary works can either facilitate or resist oppressive power systems. Alongside, it bridges the gap between purely statistical data and qualitative literary interpretation, it allows scholars to empirically confirm the stylistic trends and cultural nuances that could previously only be guessed at or observed impressionistically.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The critical intersection of gender, language and power have long remained a central focus within postcolonial literary scholarship, particularly within the domain of South Asian English fiction. Historically the representation of women in Pakistani English narratives has been evaluated through a predominantly thematic lens, with critical attention directed towards the systematic operations of patriarchal hegemony, domestic confinement and tribal codes of honor. The patriarchal domination can be traced across boundaries in cross-culture contexts. To highlight the unanimity of feminine suppression, a woman from Maine provides the evidences the subjugation, male-treatment, suppression do not only exist in South Asian setting but also in the west. Women across boundaries suffer the same fate i.e., commodification of women is observed everywhere.

‘Applying the feminist stylistic analysis model for the analysis of text helps readers and analysts to understand what is happening inside and outside the text. And how certain language choices may serve the interest of some people to the detriment of others’, says Mills (1994). Its aim is to draw ‘the attention to and change the way that gender is presented since it is clear that great many of these representational practices are not in the interest of either men or women. Thus. Feminist stylistic analysis is concerned not only to describe sexism in the text but also to analyze the way that point of view, agency, metaphor, or transitivity are unexpectedly closely related to matters of gender’ (Mills, 1994). The integration of functional grammar allows the researcher to investigate ‘how these syntactic forms construct meaning, shaping narrative voice and portray character relationship’ (Malik, 2025). There are multiple ways how semantic disposition of the text is traced through different strategies like fragmentation. It is a stylistic and linguistic technique that is usually employed to represent the body or rather identities of women as disjointed, objectified or in parts and thereby lacking personhood, claims Zeb (2025). Though several studies have been carried out to unpack feminine identity within text yet this research is an attempt to look at gender issues and female agency in an empirical way.

Scholarly investigations into Bapsi Sidhwa’s *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) consistently highlights the texts’ visceral depiction of marital violence, cultural displacement, and the literal commodification of female body within hyper-patriarchal spaces (khalid,2024), Traditional critiques argue that Sidhwa exposes the structural vulnerabilities of women by contrasting the relative autonomy of Urban Lahore with rigid, life threatening constraints of the Karakoram tribal agencies (Muhammad Shakil ur Rehman et al, 2021). However, these thematic readings successfully contextualize the socio-cultural architecture of South-Asian patriarchy (Siddiqui,2014), they frequently treat literary characters as psychological realities rather than complex linguistic constructs. Consequently, traditional literary theory analysis suffers from a critical gap, as it leaves the specific linguistic and syntactic mechanism that construct, normalize, and sustain this oppressive hegemony largely examined.

To address this limitation, contemporary scholarship has turned to the foundational framework of feminist stylistics, a discipline codified by feminist linguists to investigate how gender inequalities are hardwired directly into prose. Rooted in the promise that language is a deeply ideology tool rather than a neutral medium of communication, Sara Mills’ (1995) three-tiered stylistic model offers a systematic methodology for unpacking text at the word, sentence and discourse level. At the foundational word level, feministic stylistics isolates how gender asymmetries are encoded via unequal ‘discursive fragmentation’ where characters are systematically reduced to passive, aesthetic, or sexualized body parts, effectively stripping them of individual autonomy (Zeb,2025). Ascending to the syntactic and sentence level, the framework operationalizes transitivity theory to map out agency and power relation. By dissecting clause level structures, researchers can identify how male characters are grammatically positioned as active material “Actors” who drive the narrative forward, while female characters are relegated to the status of ‘Goals’ or ‘Affected Objects’, passive entities acted upon by external patriarchal forces (Mills, 1995). At the macro-discourse level, the model evaluates how narrative focalization and underlying cultural nuances guide the reader toward accepting patriarchal setup as common sense (Sitorus,2026).

Despite the analytical depth of Mills’ manual framework, traditional qualitative stylistics faces significant methodological challenges particularly its susceptibility to researcher bias and selective data harvesting. When a researcher manually selects specific passages to analyze, it becomes a hard nut to crack. To mitigate this limitation, the emerging discipline of corpus stylistics functions as a crucial empirical corrective. By feeding digital literary texts into computational software such as *AntConc*, researchers can process the entire novel objectively, mapping out widespread linguistic configurations that elude standard close-reading methods (Andres,2025). Computerized text analytics, including key-word-in-context (KWIC), concordance line, a collocation metrics allow for the precise, quantitative measurement of textual patterns (Khan,2024). For instance, corpus-based inquiries into word meanings and syntactic structures

demonstrate that computational tools can reveal structural trends across an authors' entire body of work without losing sight of the text's literary nuances (Malik,2025).

The contemporary synthesis of these two disciplines has given rise to a hybrid, data-driven approach: *Corpus Assisted Feminist Stylistics*. This methodology utilizes computational algorithms to verify feminist hypotheses on macroscale, providing statistical anchors for qualitative literary assertions. By combining the quantitative rigor of corpus linguistics with the critical, ideological insight of Sara Mills' model, this hybrid framework provides an objective, verifiable foundations for deconstructing patriarchal hegemony in Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* and Elizabeth Strout's *Tell Me Everything*.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to move beyond speculative, impressionistic thematic reading that often characterizes cross cultural literary critique, this study operationalizes an empirical, mixed method approach. The research architecture systematically integrates Sara Mills' (1995) Three -Tiered Feministic Stylistic Model with Corpus Linguistics text analytics tools. By combining these two frameworks, this study utilizes *AntConc 4.4.0* to provide an objective, statistical foundations for deconstructing patriarchal hegemony, power dynamics, and gender asymmetries across different cultural landscapes. The use of empirical data '.... adds value to the study of feminist stylistics as it adds statistical data to back up textual observations...[allowing] statements of interpretation...to be measurable or rather calculable, (Zeb, 2025).

3.1 Conceptual Framework:

Integrating Corpus tools into a feminist stylistic analysis, a data driven methodology has been employed. By feeding the digital text of Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *The Pakistani Bride* and Elizabeth Strouts' *Tell Me Everything* into software tool (*AntConc 4.4.0*), the researcher has tackled the issues like bias and subjectivity and provided objective, statistical proof of how patriarchal oppression is built directly into the text. While traditional feminist stylistics relies on the close-reading of isolated literary passages, this study operationalizes a Corpus-Assisted Feminist Stylistic Framework. By triangulating Sara Mills' (1995) three-tiered critique of structural sexism with computerized corpus analytics (including collocating metrics, KWIC concordance structures), this design follows for a rigorous, macro-linguistic verification of gender disparities in the selected texts. Quantitative parameters do not replace qualitative textual analysis; rather they serve as empirical anchors that expose how hegemonic power patterns are distributed across the entirety of selected texts.

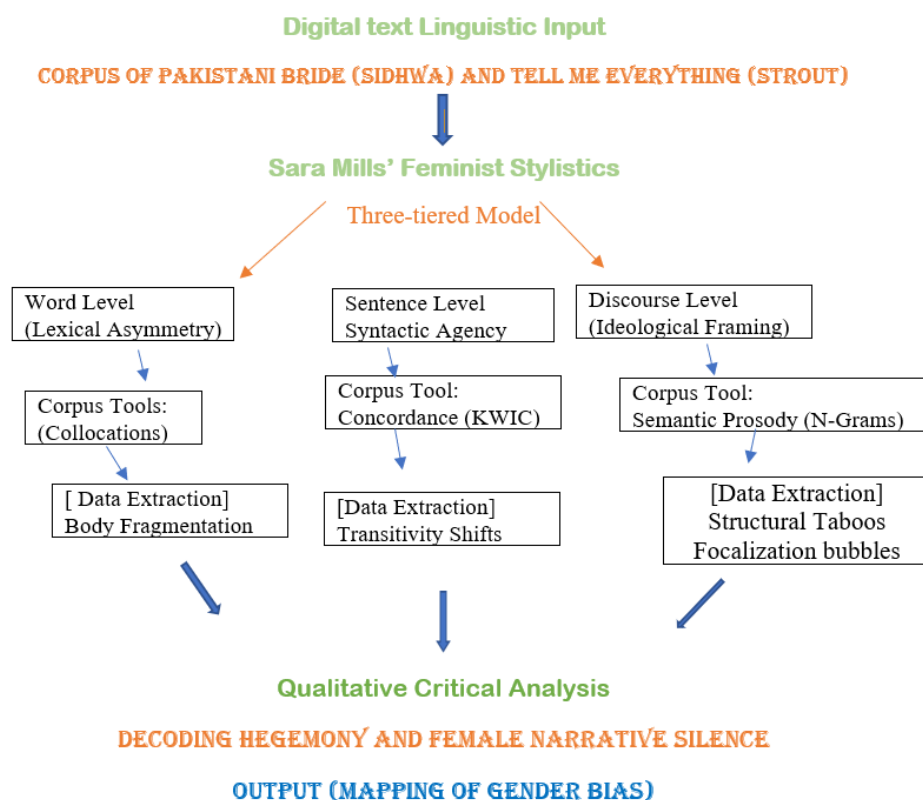


Figure 1 Conceptual Model for Research

3.2 Theoretical Framework:

The qualitative parameters of this study are guided by Sara Mills' (1995) landmark framework for feminist analysis. Mills' model operates on the premises that language is inherently ideological and functions as a primary tool for constructing and maintaining patriarchal dominance. The framework breaks text down into three distinct operational interfaces, which the study tackles using Corpus tools

- **At Lexical Level:** Examines how individual choices of words encode gender bias through discursive fragmentation, where female characters are reduced to passive aesthetic descriptions rather than whole autonomous individuals.
- **The Syntactic Level:** Investigates clause level structures to analyze transitivity and agency. Drawing on systemic functional linguistics, it maps whether characters are grammatically positioned as active, Material *Actors* (those who exert power and drive the narrative) or passive, affected *Goals* (those who are acted upon by external forces).
- **The Macro-Discourse Level:** Analyzes the wider structure of the text, focusing on narrative focalization (the gaze) and underlying cultural nuances that help the readers to view patriarchal setups as natural and inevitable.

To execute the quantitative phase of the research, a corpus-assisted analysis helped to reach some authentic conclusions. The complete literary texts of Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) and Elizabeth Strout's *Tell Me Everything* (2024) were converted from standard digital formats into clean, raw text files (.txt). Front matter, back matter, publisher notes were manually stripped from the files to eliminate the statistical noise. The finalized plain text files were downloaded into *AntConc* (version 4.4.0), a leading corpus analytics tool. This program allows for the automated extraction of contextual patterns, and word relation. Feminine portrayal was traced to measure patterns across Mill's three levels:

- **Lexical Level:** to measure how female characters are described without relying on subjective reading, the study ran a Collocation Analysis or gendered nodes (generic pronouns)
- **Syntactic Level:** To evaluate narrative agency, the software isolated KWIC concordance lines to target female pronouns.
- **Discourse Level:** At macro level, the study utilized the software's N-grams to extract high frequency three-word and four-word lexical structures. By grouping these recurrent patterns, the study mapped the invisible "ideological bubbles" and localized cultural assumptions that govern the characters' worlds. To evaluating how narrative focalization subtly guides the reader to accept or critique the localized patriarchal structures embedded within the text.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, the importance of lexical choices lies in their unparalleled ability to construct meaning, reveal hidden psychology, and dictate reader perception without relying on explicit narrative explanation. "The style of a text is the vehicle of its meaning... Every writer must make lexical choices, and these choices are not random; they reflect a particular way of looking at the world, a specific ideological stance, or a unique psychological state, say Short and Leech (2007). According to Halliday (1978), "'Over-lexicalization is the provision of a large number of synonymous or near-synonymous terms for a single concept... It is an indication of intense preoccupation, anxiety, or ideological struggle within a culture or a mind.'" In *Tell Me Everything*, Elizabeth Strout utilizes a dramatic shift in lexical choices to fundamentally reconstruct Gloria Beach's positionality, transitioning her from a flat, small-town antagonist into a deeply traumatized victim of generational abuse. The townspeople's reductionist labeling of Gloria as "Bitch Ball" highlights how vocabulary is weaponized to enforce social exclusion. As linguist Roger Fowler notes, "vocabulary presents ideology and systems of beliefs through which this world is organized" (Fowler, 1991). In this context, the derogatory nickname reflects the town's underlying culture of casual misogyny and fat-shaming, defining Gloria's positionality purely through a lens of collective malice before her internal reality is ever revealed.



Figure 2 Derogatory Representation of Gloria Jeans

Elizabeth Strout (2024) utilizes Gloria Beach to expose a profound, gendered experience of isolation, positioning her as an archetype for the silent, historical loneliness experienced by small-town women. Left entirely without a safe space or a social lexicon to express her childhood sexual abuse, Gloria is forced to process a lifetime of severe violation in total, agonizing privacy, resulting in a crippling phobia of intimacy that she can never communicate to the world around her. This internal alienation is further exacerbated by a judgmental community that weaponizes her trauma-induced defense mechanisms, reducing her severe anxiety and compulsive eating to a flat, grotesque caricature through the cruel, dehumanizing nickname "Bitch Ball." Cut off from any potential lines of community support or feminine solidarity, Gloria's profound loneliness ultimately mutates into an emotional detachment within her own home; unable to face the unhealed wounds of her own past, she recoils from her daughter Diana's trauma with the destructive slur "whore."

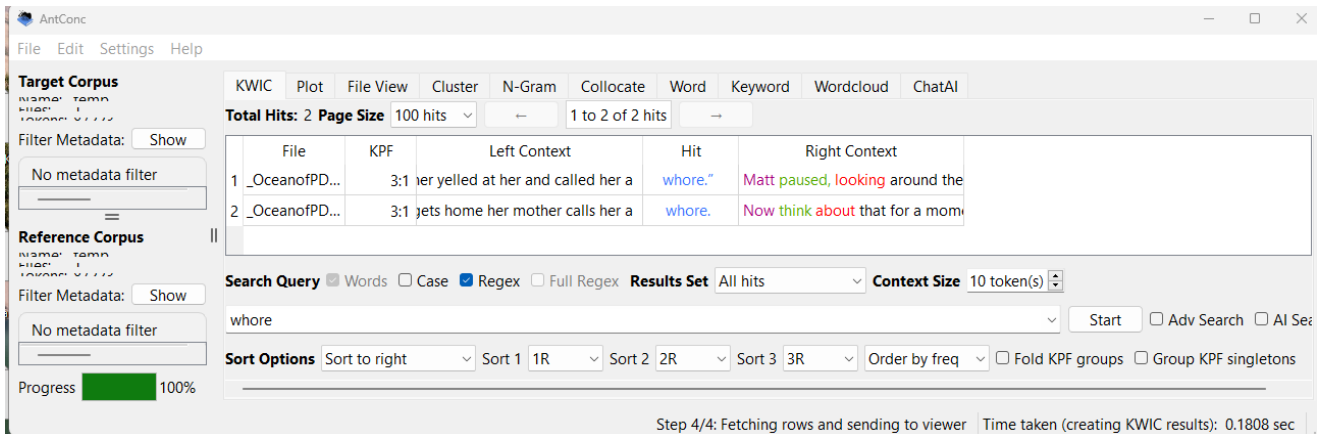


Figure 3

This evidence from the corpora shows that women of different times and spaces are destined to live within a set of patriarchal values. These patriarchal norms powerfully transcend time, space and culture. Their sense of isolation is traumatized when they are not respected and appreciated. She suffered through sexual assault in the childhood which completely tarnished her personality. Another way to express Gloria's private fears in an objective and empirical way is the use of *WordCloud* in *AntConc*. This analytical tool

ACTOR		Goal
He ACTOR	caught	her arm. GOAL
Sakhi ACTOR	struck	her. GOAL
He ACTOR	said, pulling	her GOAL
His eyes ACTOR	Barely glancing	at her face. GOAL
He ACTOR	Spat full	in her face GOAL

Borrowing from film theorist Laura Mulvey, Mills adapts the concept of the **male gaze** into linguistics. She argues that texts are frequently written from a default heterosexual male perspective, positioning women's bodies as a "passive spectacle" meant for external validation and viewing pleasure. Men are typically constructed as the active "subjects" of the narrative. They possess agency, drive the plot, make decisions, and hold the power of defining the world. Women are frequently constructed as the "objects" of narration. They are acted upon rather than acting. Their bodies, choices, and lives are defined, evaluated, and scrutinized through the perspective of others. When a text routinely deprives women of the chance to voice their own experiences, it textually objectifies them. The female protagonist, Zaitoon in *The Pakistani Bride*, is treated as a piece of property. Her adoptive father, Qasim, decides her marriage to a tribal man without her genuine consent, treating her as a bridge to secure his own tribal honor and connection. She is an instrument used to satisfy male ego and lineage. Zaitoon also suffers at the hands of her men. She is tortured on the very first day of her marriage, which continues until she flees. Two months after her marriage, her husband severely beats her up for acting against his commands and going up to the river. She is devastated and wants to return to her world, the world beyond the river, her familiar world. Sakhi treats her brutally as if she is a commodity. How she suffered under such situation that has been evaluated with the help of material transitivity patterns within text with the help of KWIC tool.

In seminal works like *Feminist Stylistics* (1995), Mills provides a practical framework demonstrating how language and narrative structures actively turn women into passive objects. She argues that patriarchal texts establish an unequal dynamic by positioning men as active "subjects" who drive the plot and hold defining power, while women are relegated to "objects" who are acted upon and evaluated through external perspectives. This textual **objectification** operates through specific linguistic strategies, such as grammatical fragmentation where a woman's identity is reduced to isolated body parts and gendered lexical choices that overemphasize physical appearance over professional or intellectual standing. Sara Mills conceptualizes objectification not merely as a visual or social phenomenon, but as a deeply embedded discursive practice that systematically strips women of agency. Below is given the example of fragmentation how body parts of women are presented to establish their identity.

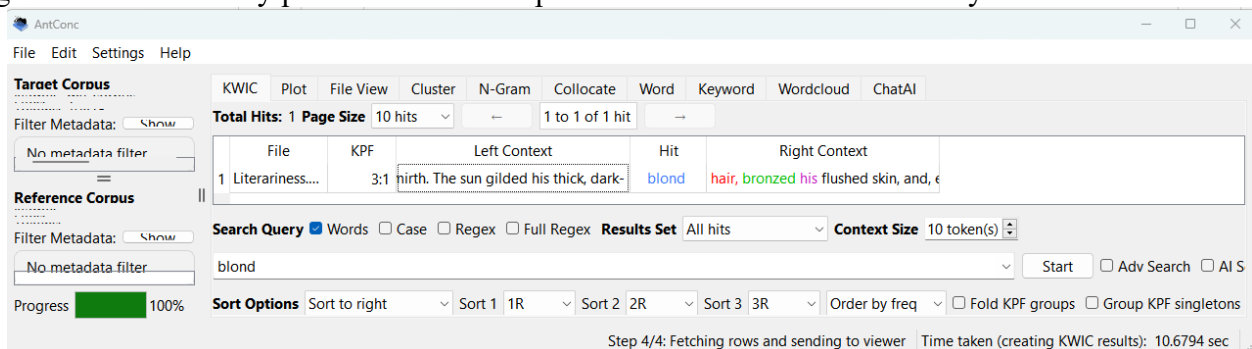


Figure 5 Representation of Female Objectification

Throughout the novel, through the choice of gender specific lexical items such traces of fragmentation were observable in the data.

When we analyse Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* through feminist stylistics, **generic nouns** serve as a critical linguistic device to expose patriarchal dominance and gender stereotyping. Drawing from Sara Mills' (1995) framework, critical discourse analysis tracks how linguistic structures strip women of individual agency while establishing men as the universal norm. Sidhwa explicitly deploys generic terms to reflect how the tribal environment constructs socio-cultural taboos. As noted by the empirical findings in the *International Journal of Linguistics and Culture*: "The findings of the present research recommend that socio-cultural conventional gender taboos are manufactured through a specific language-use to serve masculine's interests as a sign of authority and dominance over women. The culturally gendered language portrayed in the novel is meant to discriminate against women, if they resist it, they are treated as 'other' and 'unnatural' by male dominated society" (Suleman et al., 2021). This dynamic is embedded in the very title of the work, *The Pakistani Bride*. By utilizing the generic noun "bride", Sidhwa signals that the protagonist's identity is defined entirely by her institutional, marital function rather than her individual autonomy. In the figure below, the description of 'bride' is the epitome of expected traits of Pakistani bride as she sits amidst the huddle, waits for the bridegroom, shuts her eyes in embarrassment, wears bangles, adores herself with flowers, has tempestuous display etc.

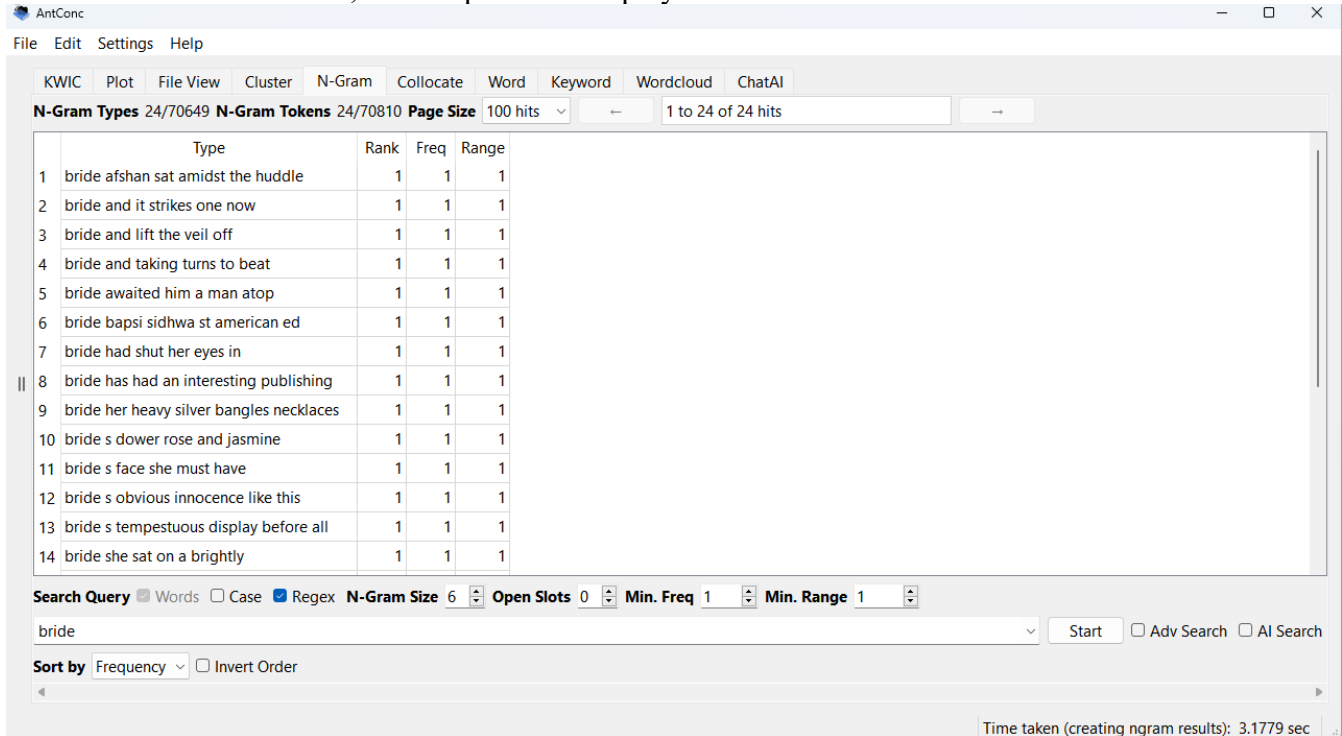


Figure 6 N-Grams Representation of Generic Noun 'Bride'

About gender roles/Characters, Sara Mills opines that, "Characters are made of words; they are not simulacra of humans, they are simply words which the reader has learned how to construct into a set of ideological messages drawing on her knowledge of the way that texts have been written and continue to be written, and the views which are circulating within society about how women and men are." In Pakistan, gender roles ascribed with women are particular that were scrutinized from *The Pakistani Bride* as follows:

Left Context	Hit	Right Context
again. Zaitoon shook her head, mystified. "You'd better see	Nurse."	A clutch of sympathetic girls accompanied her to the
clutch of sympathetic girls accompanied her to the sick roo	Nurse	took her aside. She placed a wad of cotton
Poor child ... had she a mother she'd be learning	to cook	and sew..Does Bhai Qasim Think
going to school and he agreed. From her Zaitoon learned	to cook	sew, shop, and keep her room tidy: and
she a mother she'd be learning to cook and	sew ...	does Bhai Qasim think he's rearing a boy?
school and he agreed. From her Zaitoon learned to cook,	sew,	shop, and keep her room tidy: and Miriam, who

In order to analyze the positionality of men and women N-Gram tool is used. It is operationalized to find and analyze frequently recurring sequences of words in a text or corpus. It was interesting to note that pronoun 'She' has highest frequency of use which shows that the novel focuses to unpack the status of Pakistani women in general.

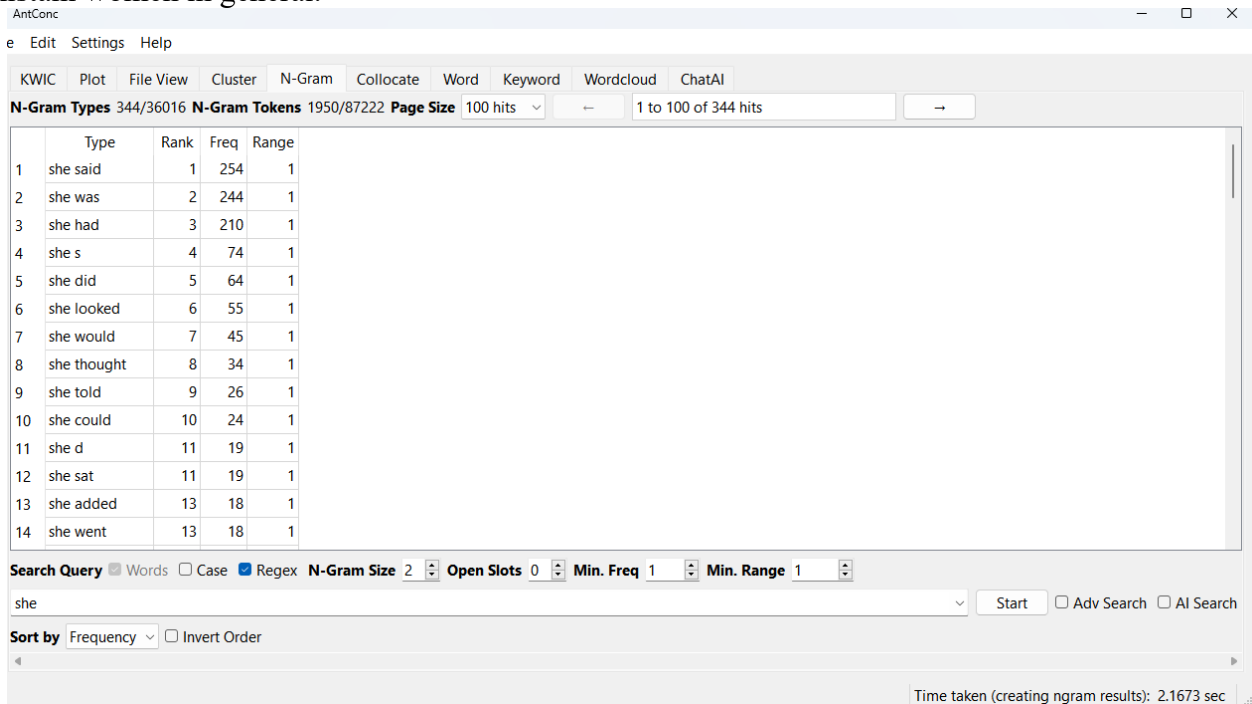


Figure7 N-Grams Representation of Pronoun 'She'

At macro level, In Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride*, **focalization** serves as a powerful narrative tool to dissect the complex intersections of gender, patriarchal violence, and cultural alienation. Rather than relying on a detached, singular perspective, Sidhwa utilizes a third-person omniscient narrator that dynamically shifts its internal focalization among diverse characters to contrast different realities. Through the internal lens of the protagonist, Zaitoon, the reader directly experiences the psychological and physical claustrophobia of the Kohistan tribal landscape, transforming the majestic mountains into an oppressive prison where her autonomy is entirely erased. This intimate view of female subjugation is starkly contrasted with the focalization of Carol, an American woman whose initial romanticized, exotic gaze of Pakistan gradually shifts to horror as she recognizes that patriarchal objectification transcends geographic and national boundaries. Furthermore, Sidhwa intentionally channels the perspective of male characters like Qasim and Sakhi; by filtering the narrative through their consciousness, she exposes the rigid, localized logic of tribal honor and the deep-seated insecurities that fuel toxic male violence. Ultimately, this shifting focalization prevents the novel from becoming a binary political tract, instead forcing the reader to inhabit multiple viewpoints and witness how geography and gender systematically construct human reality.

In *Tell Me Everything*, Elizabeth Strout utilizes **variable internal focalization** by weaving a third-person narrative that fluidly shifts between the distinct internal perspectives of her characters, primarily Bob Burgess, Lucy Barton, and Olive Kitteridge. Rather than delivering a conventional, objective murder mystery, Strout filters the central crime through the emotional history, sensory perceptions, and deep-seated traumas of the townspeople, creating a profound sense of community intimacy. A unique layer of "double focalization" occurs as these characters trade stories about the "unrecorded lives" of others; the reader experiences both the immediate, aging reality of the speakers and the deeply hidden vulnerabilities of the people in their tales. Interspersed with a conversational, authorial voice that occasionally addresses the reader directly, Strout's shifting narrative lens acts as an instrument of radical empathy, breaking down the barriers of human loneliness by revealing the complex internal worlds hiding behind ordinary, quiet exteriors.

5. CONCLUSION

In the selected cross-cultural texts, the singularity and universality of one theme (feminism) has been observed by scrutinizing lexical choices and discursive fragmentation of female characters. With the help of KWIC, general trends prevalent in Eastern and Western societies pertaining to women, their role, positionality were traced out where women are always subjected as inferior, sex-object having least sense of their own self. Through transitivity pattern women are showcased as Goal in the material processes. Being the recipient of the objectification, they are treated no more than commodities. High frequency of N-grams depicted that feminist writers raised their voices in the favor of such voiceless creature who don't have their say in any matter either it is concerned with their marriage or any other matter. At the discourse level structure, socio-cultural norms and shifts in focalization position the reader to view patriarchal hegemony within the text. Through focalization the theme of loneliness was highlighted in *Tell me Everything* whereas in *The Pakistani Bride* it is observed how gender systematically constructs human reality

The study executed a comparative corpus-assisted feminist stylistic analysis of Bapsi Sidwa's *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) and Elizabeth Strout's *Tell Me Everything* (2024), uncovering the distinct yet convergent pathways through which cross-cultural patriarchies structurally encode gender asymmetries into narrative prose. By transitioning from traditional, impressionistic thematic close reading to an empirical mixed-method framework, the research successfully integrated Sara Mills (1995) three-tiered model with corpus linguistic tools. At lexical level, through collocations, deep semantic asymmetries and instances of discursive fragmentation were traced out. In Sidhwa's text, female nodes heavily clustered around tokens of physical vulnerability, animalistic submissiveness, and external body attributes., reflecting an overt, institutionalized objectification with an honor bound tribal landscape. Conversely Strout's prose accomplished a parallel containment through internal, domestic and emotional descriptors, mapping the localized hegemony that restricts female characters to the psychological anxieties and social judgement of small-town surveillance. Syntactically the clause level matrix validated narrative power through projecting female pronouns functioning as active, material Actors versus passive affected Goals. Sidhwa's grammar systematically placed female characters in passive receiving positions within material processes, capturing a landscape explicit physical containment and structural violence.

Ultimately, this study advances the field of corpus stylistics by providing a replicable framework for cross-cultural feminist literary analysis, providing that patriarchal dominance is deterministically embedded within the literary syntax, clause architect and vocabulary systems of contemporary fiction. Future scholarship could expand this dataset into a multi-author macro-corpus or investigate localized translations and regional post-colonial fiction using parallel corpus tools. Unpacking the grammar of dominance remains a necessary first step toward rewriting it, empowering future writers to construct alternative, subverted syntactic landscapes where female agency can be fully realized.

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