

# Gender Representation in Pakistani and British English Fiction: A Corpus Based Study

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## Abstract

The present study aims at the comparative stylistic analysis of gender presentation in terms of status and attitude in Pakistani and British English Fiction. The data are based on the instances of 'he is' and 'she is' in relation to the complements following them. The methodology adopted for the research is corpus based and deals with the data both qualitatively and quantitatively, however, with a major inclination towards qualitative analysis. The instances of 'He is' and 'She is' along with the concordance words are derived from PEF and BEF corpora consisted of one million words for each through Antconc 3.2.2. The data are further manually analyzed in MS Excel and then categorized in relation to Status and attitude linked with 'he' and 'she' in both PEF and BEF. It is found that the gender representation is quite typical of the culture it relates to. The presentation of 'he is' and 'she is' in BEF is of positive and balanced nature where as that of in PEF is based on the superiority and inferiority of men and women respectively. The research is a contribution in the better understanding and interpretation of Pakistani English fiction and British English fiction.

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of the present research is to make a comparative stylistic analysis of the representation of he and she in relation of complements following he is and she is in BEF and PEF. The major interpretations are related to the status and attitude of 'he' and 'she' in terms of positive and negative presentation of men and women in Pakistani English Fiction and British English Fiction. Both qualitative and quantitative methodology has been adapted to deal with the instances of 'He is' and 'She is'. However major inclination remains towards the qualitative analysis of the data.

Stylistics is the study of linguistic analysis of the written and oral text. It aims at the interpretation and understanding of the text through linguistic choices at different levels. In other words, it refers to the technique of textual interpretation through language by reflecting the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language. Widdowson (1975:3) defines stylistics as the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation. He further adds that stylistics is a link between literary criticism and linguistics by describing it as an area of meditation between two disciplines as its morphological construction suggests: the 'style' is related it to the form or shape and the 'istics' to the method of writing. He therefore perceives stylistics as a medium of better understanding and appreciation of literature. Style has different meanings for different people.

According to Leech and Short (1981:13) Stylistics is the (linguistic) study of style, is rarely undertaken for its own sake, simply as an exercise in describing what use is made of language. They also said that the major aim of studying stylistics is to explore the meanings and understand the linguistic features of the text. Short and Candlin (1989:183) said that stylistics is a linguistic approach to the study of the literary texts. It thus embodies one essential part of the general course - philosophy; that of combining language and literary study. Widdowson (1975: 3) defines stylistics: as the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation. It is a linking technique. He also suggests that stylistics is in between linguistics and literary criticism and its function is to link between two. So, generally, it deals with both the literary and linguistic factors.. Another definition given by Verdonk and Jacques Weber (2002) in *Twentieth Century Fiction*: "Stylistics is the study of spoken and written text. By style is meant a consistent occurrence in the text of certain items and structures, or types of items and structures, among those offered by the language as a whole." Style, interpreted widely in linguistic literature, can be viewed as variations of language use against the background of some context (Simpson, 2004). Verdonk refers to style in language as distinctive linguistic expression used for some purpose and to some effect.

There are mainly two approaches towards stylistic analysis of a text: one is the traditional way doing stylistic analysis at different levels of choices and the other is corpus based analysis through computer. Computer has

become the most objective way to access those features which are almost impossible to explore manually. ‘The use of the computer is complementary to the human researcher and enables the optimization of research value and time since the computer

can access those features that are too far apart in texts, see beyond the human eye, store and handle very expansive data, and works with incredible speed’ (Alexandra Esimaje, 2014). Working on computers with language has developed corpus linguistics and consequently corpus stylistics. As Biber (2005) says “Corpus stylistic research is widely considered to be a recent innovation: an extension of earlier linguistic corpus based studies, which focused on more traditional issues of lexical and grammatical variation in use” (p. 20).

Corpus linguistics is a new field in stylistic analysis of a literary text and termed as corpus stylistics. Corpus stylistics has contributed in literary analysis not only in the collection and compilation of data but also increased the reliability of the data analysis and interpretation. Due to this reason many researchers (Starcke (2010), Stubbs (2007), and Murphy (2007)) are taking interest in corpus stylistics and have contributed in the interpretation of literary texts from different dimensions to give in depth understanding to the reader.

Pakistani English fiction is growing day by day. Many eminent writers like Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie, Mohammad Hanif, Bapsi Sidwa etc have got themselves internationally recognized through their remarkable fictional work. Their work is the representation of the culture they belong to. However it has got international reputation due to the marvelous literary sense of the writers and the subjects matters it deals with. In the words of 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).

Pakistani fiction is quite novel in the field of English literature. Much needs to be researched and explored in this genre. Therefore the present research explores the variations and similarities in the representation of ‘he is’ and ‘she is’ along with the complementary adjectives in BEF and PEF. The research is an attempt to give new insights through corpus tool into the representation of the status and attitude of He is and She is in PEF and BEF.

## 2. Literature Review

Stylistics is the study of the choices made in written and spoken texts at different linguistic levels. It helps in the interpretation and understanding of the meanings of the text. In the words of Thornborrow & Wareing (1998), “stylistics is the study of style”. Stylistics is different from literary criticism which deals with the making of hypothesis and then proving in the course of criticism of the text, whereas stylistics is essentially logical based interpretation of the text through language choices. These choices are analysed at different levels. These levels include graphological, morphological, syntactic, phonological and semantic etc. The graphological level refers to the whole writing system: punctuation and paragraphing as well as spacing along with the languages writing system or orthography as seen in the various kinds of handwriting or topography. Alabi (2007: 170) added that “a graphological discussion of style among other features entails the foregrounding of quotation marks, ellipses periods, hyphens, contracted forms, special structures, the full stop, the colon, the comma, the semicolon, the question mark, the dash, lower case letters, gothic and bold prints, capitalization, small print, spacing, italics etc”. Phonological level deals with how sounds are exploited for particular marked meanings and interpretation. The lexical level is related to the choice of words: how deviant the choice of words is from routine patterns to create a particular meaning and impact. According to Tallerman (1998, p.1), “Lexico-Syntactic choices are obtained through devices such as piling of usual collocates, unusual collocates, archaic words, particular parts of speech, metaphor, simile, oxymoron etc”. Morphological level deals with the construction of the word by adding prefixes and suffixes to the root words. The syntactical level deals with syntax, related to sentence construction: how words group together to make phrases and sentences. So, it is used in the construction of the sentence as stylistics is used in literary style.

There are two approaches towards stylistic analysis: one is the traditional approach of doing stylistic analysis at different linguistic levels and the other is the corpus based stylistic analysis of different features of the corpora (large collection of text in electronic form) utilized through computer software. In other words, one is manual and the other electronic analysis of the data. Corpus based approach has increased the reliability of the analysis while dealing not only with a large amount of data at one time but also with authenticity and specificity. Some major corpora are Brown (1960), LOB (1980), London-Lund (1990), Helsinki (1993), Pen Tree Bank (1992), British National Corpus (1994) etc Corpora are used as Example Bank by many linguists to support their hypothesis (Mehmood and Perveen, 2013: 97). Corpus based analysis is normally done through the frequency rate of the key words and word list. These key words are further analysed in relation to the concordance and collocation words, so that the interpretations are made according to the context.

Biber (2011) has discussed corpus-based analytical techniques and the way by which these techniques have been helpful for the study of literature. He says that such techniques are very popular and common under the umbrella term of Corpus Stylistics. Most of the researches analyze keywords, lexical phrases and collocations for the exploration of textual features and themes. These analyses require two corpora: one is the target corpus and other is the comparison corpus.

Most of the corpus based researches are related to literary texts. Zyngier (2001) has compiled the corpus of Shakespeare's Macbeth and of Shakespeare's complete tragedies as reference corpus to investigate whether traditional studies could be supported through linguistic methods and how far the corpus based approach is helpful in creating reliable meaningful interpretations. Different words occurring most frequently are analyzed and compared both qualitatively and quantitatively. The results regarding the representation of man and women in Shakespearean tragedy show that man is given supremacy over women who are shown as inferior creatures. Some of the researchers have also conducted their research on corpus other than literature based. For example, Kang and Yu (2001) have conducted corpus based research to find out stylistic features of tourism English using Antconc 3.2 and wordsmith 3.0 for their corpus named as TEC (Tourism English Corpus). However the data in this research is relatively small and was collected through internet. The present research is based on the comparative stylistic analysis of the complements occurring with "he is" and "she is" in Pakistani English fiction and British English fiction. The purpose is to explore the status and attitude of male and female presented in the two fictions through corpus based techniques. The interpretations are given at the level of semantics.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Procedure

The present research is a mixed method research exploiting both qualitative and quantitative techniques for the analysis of data. The data has been taken from the corpora of PEF and BEF (Mehmood and Mehmood, 2009) consisting of one million words each. The Antconc 3.2.2 software is used for the searching of the frequency and occurrence of the 'he is' and 'she is' from PEF and BEF corpora and were seen in relation to the complements occurring after them. Search queries for both 'he is' and 'she is' were the same. The frequencies found from the concordancer were transferred into an MS Excel table. The data was manually analysed regarding the lexical choices in terms of complements along with he is and she is. The selected instances are given in the following tables in terms of total occurrences and lexical choices in both PEF and BEF. The lexical co occurrences are further categorized in relation with the status, attitude and age of the presented gender.

#### 4. Findings and Discussions

Frequency of occurrence of He is and She is in BEF and PEF

Table: 1

	BEF	PEF
He Is	298	592
She Is	184	328

The results show a very marked difference of the frequency of occurrence of both he is and she is in BEF and PEF. Men are talked about (in terms of he is) 298 times in BEF whereas this frequency is remarkably greater in PEF occurring 592 times. That shows the focus of attention in PEF is much greater on men as compared to BEF. same is the case with the occurrence of She is in PEF and BEF. Here too she is more focused and talked about in PEF as compared to BEF. That may also be the indicator of the themes and topics in BEF and PEF. Pakistani English Fiction is more concerned about the characters depicted in it as compared to British English Fiction.

Table: 2 Status and Attitude of 'HE IS' in terms of lexical choices in BEF

Status	lieutenant man	Producer,	direct superior	incharge well prepared	skier and mountaineer	master , resourceful	an angel	Politician	At inspection A good one	genius	resourceful block
	disinformation agent	Dead	diplomatic disaster								
Attitude	unusual, very	Very open,	frank,	anarchist	genuine,	unusual	doing his best,				
Age and outlook	24	much younger	handsome	Tall							

In British English fiction 'he is' occurs 298 times that is much lesser than that occurred in Pakistani English Fiction. The representation of male in BEF is quite positive. Status wise 'He is' enjoying the position of being resourceful, superior, lieutenant man, angel and skier and mountain. The lexical choices at the level complement with "he is" are more positive than negative. Men are resourceful, masters, producers, and politicians, shown at controlling end. However, he is not shown without negative qualities. Such as,

*He is an Anarchist, Ned; and as such cannot be trusted*

*Devious politician he is.*

*He is so foolish to depress the DOWN*

Although we do not find any extensive description of HE IS in BEF. However he is also shown as disinformation agent and diplomatic disaster. Attitude wise BEF presents young male gender as frank, genuine and very open always doing best, though an anarchist also. Overall the male gender is presented as normal

beings not controlling and ruling the world as opposed to the depiction of male in PEF.

**Table: 3 Status and Attitude of HE IS in terms of lexical choices in PEF**

status	my leader,	quite powerful, ,	man who runs the world,	Chairman,	Shaheed Not blind	Right	landlord	My fate	hero	loaded with money,	an officer,
	responsible	rich man	Great thinker	gentleman	Great thinker	Very trustworthy	unyielding	significant	dedicated	Most important presence in her life	innocent
	Accused of	Not a strong boy	Not apologizing						Old and helpless		
behavior	easy going	genial,	very merciful	Warm human being	innocent	too smart,	Real gentle man	Sharp cookie	Very keen	Not scared	
	Very emotional		puzzled	Disgusting and evil creature		So discrete	Polite	Really mean	More agitated	greedy,	
Age and out look	Young	handsome	Fine								

'HE is' holds a very significant place in terms of its frequency of occurrence in PEF. *Status wise* PEF presents male in a very powerful position from social, political, intellectual and domestic point of view. HE is presented as a power full entity running and controlling the world, all in all. He is the leader and fate of female gender represented in fiction. He is master of the world, chairman, right, landlord, and an officer.

*He is the man who runs the world with a packet of Dunhill.*

*He is the great thinker of politics and statecraft.*

*He is a Copt and very trustworthy.*

*He is my fate.*

*He will not go to jail as far as he is loaded with money.*

*He is quite powerful and I don't want to let him down.*

Power in PEF is always associated with "he" male gender, such as "powerful man didn't mind", "powerful man in United states", "powerful man in the land" etc.

Attitude wise PEF presents male gender both in positive as well as negative colouring. He is genial, easy going, merciful, innocent, gentle man, and keen on the one hand whereas a greedy, agitated and mean on the other. The use of very, great and so too are other strikers in stating the position of Man. Only the old is associated with helplessness. His position weakens only as being old as: "*He is old and helpless now. He does not offer advice but shakes his head.*"

'He is' in general shown as powerful, dominating and a controlling authority. He is the man who runs the world. Such as the examples show:

*He is a visionary.*

*This does not mean he is ignorant.*

*He is also great enthusiast for religious activities.*

This sort of depiction is very much typical of the Pakistani society where to be man is everything. "He is" the master decision maker and controller of everything at home being father, brother, son and husband. In society there is general and very much easy acceptance of men as compared to women who instead of participating in every field of life are considered inferior and lacking sensibility. "He" enjoys the status of being "He" and controls the world with his never declining position in the society. This extremely dominating status of man has sometimes led him towards meanness in his attitude as "he is" shown in PEF. He is never apologizing; he is mean and greedy. However, generally man is shown having a positive attitude of warmth, amicability and friendliness. His is an easy going attitude towards general activities of life that distinguishes him from women.

**Table: 4 Status and Attitude of 'SHE IS' in terms of lexical choices in PEF**

Data She Is PEF

status	My mother, , my daughter	capable	cooking	murderer	Professional	his mother	ordinary nurse	ripe to die	dead	gracious	at fault	not accepted
	my wife wife of our new friend,	jinnah wife	midwife	Cruel enchantress	Over protective	the fallen woman	Finished					
Behavior		struggling	careful	alert	always unhappy	Bitter	of good character	On the verge of tears	exaggerating	Good girl	tense, anxious	muttering
Age and Out look	twelve year old	beautiful beyond bearing	fatter	old	Not even pretty	lighter skinned						

The frequency of occurrence of "She is" is much lesser than that of "he is" in PEF. As far as the data regarding

the status of she is in PEF is concerned it is typical of Pakistani culture where the women are mothers, wives and daughters and have identity associated with men, being recognized through the male members of the society. She is generally considered as responsible of house hold chores involving physical labour, the one with no decision power that is the hallmark of ‘He’ only. She is good if her character is good. The general criterion for goodness of character is to obey the male members of the family without showing resistance. The women are generally regarded as inferior and are not easily accepted but as the property of men Such as

*She is the wife of our new friend*

*She is my wife*

*She is his mother*

*She is someone else’s wife*

*She is my daughter*

. They are not shown in authority or as public figures. The only professional figure is an ordinary nurse. Women are presented on negative extreme.

*She is over protective and impolite.*

*What she is doing is too cruel*

*She is the cruel enchantress.*

*She is a murderer.*

The woman presented in PEF does not have any significant identity of their own. Many times (more than 8 times) she is shown as not existent: *she is dead, ripe to die*. This typical status moves women towards typical attitude of depression and anxiety. Most of the times, she is confused and uncertain.

*She is not sure if someone will actually open it*

*She is not sure if she will find Teddy*

She is struggling, careful, bitter, on the verge of tears, alert and anxious though has softness and good character. Women’ identity is given through the eyes of men: “my wife”, “my mother” etc. women themselves are not having any identity they are not business men, professionals, doctors etc. that is quite typical Pakistani society where although women are working in various fields of life and contributing equally but are regarded only ‘women’ “not accepted’ in male dominated society. She is shown as weak creature She is *crying, screaming, on the verge of tears, in love, horrified, unhappy* etc. use of adjective before she’

**Table: 5 Status and Attitude of ‘SHE IS’ in terms of lexical choices in BEF**

Status	light of love	capable of blowing	quite right	flustered	Robust				
Behavior	nice girl	alert	an amenable nature	not especially anxious	Smiling	more than satisfied	Admiring	deeply unresponsive	Dusty

The representation of she is in BEF is different and in contrast with the data in PEF. In contrast to PEF, BEF presents women positively and as capable creature. She is light of love, capable of blowing and quite right. The attitude is also in sharp contrast with PEF where women are shown anxious and tense. The woman in BEF is shown as nice, more than satisfied, smiling, admiring and not anxious. However she is being presented as robust and dusty.

## 5. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

The representation of gender in both Pakistani and British English fiction is typical of the culture they belong to. In Pakistani culture women are generally regarded as being inferior to men and capable of doing nothing significant and are treated likewise. Whereas, we do not find any sharp discrimination between men and women in English culture. Some important points are to be noticed in the representation of women in PEF. They are shown as emotional rather than intellectual and rational beings in their approach towards life. This is why they are restricted to domestic chores which are generally thought as insignificant.

The most important issue to be noticed is of the identity of women in Pakistani fiction. Women do not have their own identity. They do not exist by themselves but as wives, daughters, mothers and sisters.

The gender is more strongly presented in PEF as compared to BEF. We find greater number of frequencies of both ‘HE is’ and ‘She is’ in PEF. However this representation in PEF is particularly typical of Pakistani and British cultural context. He is’ is shown as all powerful, dominating and resourceful landlord whereas She is in PEF also reflects women general situation in Pakistan. She is less empowered, inferior and ordinary, hence tense, struggling, anxious, screaming and crying. As we have examples like she is screaming, she is on the verge of tears and she is always unhappy. Even her good character does not contribute in the happiness of her life. And she remains unhappy. Many times she is declared as dead. Almost five to six times we are told about she is dead and then a murderer even. ‘He is’ in PEF is also typical of its culture being dominating and empowered. He is my lord and my fate. He is the one who controls the world. BEF presents gender in a normal and positive way as

human beings having both positive and negative qualities. Women are not only robust but also admiring, smiling, nice and of amenable nature. He is in BEF is enjoying status of being resourceful, superior, lieutenant man, angel and skier and mountain but not devoid of some negative qualities as being disinformation agent. These results very aptly supplement the findings of Mehmood, R. et al (2013) on the representation of man and woman in terms of adjectives and verbs in PEF and BEF. The results show that 70% of the adjectives used with Man in PEF are having positive connotation representing man as “powerful, authoritative and genius figure” quite opposite of the representation of Woman (2013: 99).

The research is significant for its contribution in studying literature from a new and different perspective that would help students and teachers of English in developing deeper insights in to the study of fiction. The present research also throws light on the status of Pakistani women presented in fiction work. Such a representation is quite thought provoking and demand to be practically concentrated.

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