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Stylistic Analysis of Figurative Language in Kamila Shamsie's Broken Verses

Dr. Muhammad Akram

Assistant Professor, Department of English Linguistics, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur,
 Rahim Yar Khan Campus

Mudassar Ali

M. Phil Scholar, National College of Business Administration and Economics

ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the stylistic use of metaphor, simile, and personification in Kamila Shamsie's Broken Verses (2005). Combining close reading with qualitative tracking, specifically using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) and reliability testing, the study examines how these devices model the protagonist Aasmaani's experiences of memory, loss, and political anxiety. The findings reveal that metaphor clusters mirror Aasmaani's growth from emotional paralysis to agency, while similes and personification effectively modulate the narrative's mood. Notably, these devices intensify during political scenes to depict Karachi as an active force rather than a simple backdrop. Ultimately, this research underscores how figurative language constructs the novel's ethical and political themes, offering a replicable method for studying South Asian Anglophone fiction.

Keywords: Stylistics, Figurative Language, Metaphor, Simile, Personification, Mind-Style, Kamila Shamsie, Broken Verses.

Introduction

A literary text is not a narrative but a linguistic event; it is an architectural construction of feeling in which the technical art cannot be separated out of the thematic essence (Brooks, 1947). Readers tend to concentrate on plot or character, but the timeless power of literature is its unimitable details. Reading is a focused process of language, and disregarding the particular linguistic decisions of an author is like appreciating a cathedral and disregarding its masonry. This work, *Itinerant Paths*, claims that thematic interpretation is impossible without a systematic linguistic analysis, and uses the rigor of stylistics to analyze the work of Kamila Shamsie.

The Power of Literary Language: Beyond the Literal Horizon:

Literary language is thick, obscure, and self-conscious, in contrast to the clarity and efficiency of the everyday transaction of language (Leech, 1969). In this case, words are not merely containers of information; they are given the focus so that the readers focus on their rhythm, sound, and associations (Mukarovsky, 1964). According to Terry Eagleton (2008), literature is an orderly violence against the normal speech, which is meant to de-automatize perception and shock the reader into a more conscious state. (Shklovsky, 1965).

This effect is achieved through specific linguistic decisions:

Connotation: Evoking cultural and emotional webs beyond dictionary definitions (Wales, 2011).

Imagery: Rooting abstract ideas in sensory experience (Perrine, 1992).

Sound and Rhythm: Using alliteration and cadence to establish mood (Lodge, 2002).

Figurative Language: Using tropes like metaphor to organize the fictional world (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Meaning is created through the orchestration of these elements. Without analyzing the linguistic structures that build a novel's themes, the critic misses the essence of the literary venture (Fowler, 1996).

The Emergence of Stylistics:

Stylistics emerged in the 20th century as a response to the gap between subjective literary criticism (Fish, 1980) and formalist linguistics (Chomsky, 1957). As an interface (Widdowson, 1975), stylistics offers an evidence-based approach to explaining the intuitive responses that readers experience when reading a text (Short, 1996). The field is concerned with choice- the grammatical and lexical choices that an author makes (Leech and Short, 2007). The task of the stylistician is to define the impact of these decisions on the perception of the reader (Simpson, 2004; Toolan, 2013). Stylistics serves as the conscience of literary criticism by basing interpretation on the tangible evidence of the text by analyzing the lexical, grammatical, and discourse levels (Jeffries and McIntyre, 2010).

Kamila Shamsie and the Poetics of History:

Kamila Shamsie is an essential figure in the modern Anglophone literature whose work relates the Pakistani history to the universal human condition (Anjaria, 2015). The current literature singles out a number of common themes in her work: political trauma (Majid, 2012), the conflict between personal memory and state records (Khan, 2016), the intricacies of global identity (Philips, 2011), and the city of Karachi as a repository of the past (Ball, 2012).

Although the lyrical style of Shamsie is often commended, it is often impressionistic. Sustained analysis of how her linguistic structures produce these effects is lacking. This study fills that gap by putting her style under the same scrutiny as her themes. With reference to *Broken Verses* (2005), this paper examines how the linguistic artistry of Shamsie creates a story of the strength and danger of language itself.

Introduction to Kamila Shamsie and *Broken Verses*

The study of literature by stylistics is a process of close and intense admiration of the craft of a writer. This part examines the architectural design of the work by Kamila Shamsie, not only as a narrator, but as an important international thinker.

Context and Trajectory:

Shamsie was born in 1973 in a prominent Karachi literary family, the daughter of Muneeza Shamsie (2005) and the great-aunt of Attia Hosain (1961; Basi, 2013). This atmosphere encouraged a premature exposure to South Asian history and identity (Majid, 2012). Shamsie is educated in Pakistan and the United States, which places her in a hybrid position (Bhabha, 1994), enabling her to view Pakistan with the intimacy of an insider and the critical distance of a Western-trained observer (Yaeger, 2011; Boehmer, 2010). Her work started with early Karachi-focused novels such as *Kartography* (2002) and the internationally acclaimed *Burnt Shadows* (2009) and award-winning *Home Fire* (2017).

Themes and *Broken Verses*:

Shamsie traces the tension between personal recollection and the history that is decreed by the state (Khan, 2016). In *Broken Verses* (2005), the main character Aasmaani Inqalab tries to find her lost mother, Samina, by using coded poetic pieces. The novel is a critique of the Zia-

ul-Haq regime (Talbot, 1998; Ziring, 2003), in which individual loss is a reflection of national trauma. All along, Karachi is a palimpsest (Ball, 2012), a living archive in which the physical space reflects the psychological condition of Aasmaani.

Statement of the Problem

Although critics praise the lyrical and poetic prose of Shamsie, this is an impressionistic praise. The current literature pays much attention to her themes, history, trauma, and identity, but does not pay much attention to the linguistic mechanics that create these effects. The gap in the comprehension of how certain figurative devices (metaphor, simile, and personification) serve as the cognitive and emotional engine of her story is quite clear.

Significance and Limitations

By offering an evidence-based analysis of how a well-known modern author uses English to depict trauma, the study advances postcolonial stylistics (Zabus, 2007). It shifts Shamsie's research from "what" she writes to "how" she writes (Fowler, 1996). The scope is purposefully restricted to personification, simile, and metaphor in order to guarantee analytical depth (Maxwell, 2013). This narrow focus enables a thorough examination of the "architecture of a fictional consciousness" (Fludernik, 1993), even though syntax and rhythm are crucial.

Related Work:

Introduction and Theoretical Foundations:

The chapter provides the theoretical framework of the analysis of *Broken Verses* by Kamila Shamsie. Stylistics is an important linking element, uniting the empirically accurate linguistics to the interpretive traditions of literary criticism (Widdowson, 1975). Fundamentally, stylistics perceives style as a sequence of deliberate authorial decisions that directly achieve literary effects (Leech and Short, 2007). In this field, foregrounding is used to refer to the process where certain linguistic elements are distinguished in a background of normal language to attract the attention of a reader (Mukarovskiy, 1964; van Peer, 1986). These foregrounded things cannot be considered ornamental; they are areas of intense meaning (Bradford, 1997; Toolan, 2013).

Here, a figurative language is the primary source of this foregrounding in *Broken Verses*, including metaphor, simile, and personification. Although these tropes are still regarded as tools of language (Corbett and Connors, 1999), after the cognitive revolution, they are perceived as instruments of thinking (Evans and Green, 2006). Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) provides that we learn abstract constructs based on concrete, embodied experiences (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Kovecses, 2010). In this manner, the metaphors presented by Shamsie give us a glimpse into the ideologies of her characters and the overall themes of the novel (Semino, 2008; Stockwell, 2020). Metaphors assert identity whereas similes provide direct analogies to the reader that help her to map the attributes (Israel, 2004; Gentner, 1983). Personification also makes the story lively, by endowing inanimate things or abstract concepts with the power of a person, a mechanism which is embedded in ingrained psychological impulses (Guthrie, 1993; Palmer, 2004).

Methodological Precedents:

The stylistic study has managed to decipher the mysteries of the modern South Asian fiction. An example is that Bibi and Ali (2024) used the Leech and Short (2007) framework on *The Golden Legend* by Nadeem Aslam to show how the lexical patterns of brokenness encode

political trauma. In the same manner, Malik, Faraz, and Bughio (2020) relied on stylistics to demonstrate how figurative decisions can be used to circumvent social taboos in patriarchal locales. Such studies, as well as that undertaken on writers such as Rushdie and Coetzee, demonstrates that linguistic criticism is the best means to focus on how a text represents its socio-political environment (Tysdahl, 2003; Attridge, 2004; Loomba, 2015).

The Shamsie Scholarship and the "Stylistic Gap":

Kamila Shamsie is known as one of the most significant writers of world literature, and her themes of nationhood, memory, and identity of her writing are rightfully the focus of scholarship (Anjaria, 2015). *Broken Verses* have been examined by critics as a heartrending examination of individual and societal trauma during the Zia-ul-Haq dictatorship (Khan, 2016; Majid, 2012). Nevertheless, there is still a huge gap. Though such adjectives as lyrical, poetic, or evocative are often used by critics of her prose, they are still taken as impressions. The mechanism by which Shamsie succeeded in this power, using her figurative language, is almost entirely uninvestigated, in a systematic and evidence-based manner. The paper helps fill such a gap by connecting her distinguished themes with her specific choices of language.

The Analytical Framework:

The paper applies the model of Style in Fiction (2007) by Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short. The system is a systematic checklist used in the analysis of lexical and grammar categories, figures of speech and cohesion. The perspective of style as the product of choice enables the researcher to shift his/her attention towards technical description and transforms it into meaningful literary interpretation (Leech and Short, 2007; Simpson, 2004). It provides a stringent approach to determining the particular linguistic tools applied by Shamsie to create the psychological and emotional terrain of her novel.

Research Methodology:

The theory-first, text-tight in scope research project is as follows: researchers study *Broken Verses* by applying Leech and Short's (2007) style framework on four levels:

- Lexical,
- Grammatical,
- Rhetorical,
- Contextual/connective

The study approach is a qualitative descriptive stylistic analysis founded specifically on Leech and Short's four-level framework (lexical, grammatical, rhetorical, contextual/connective) (2007) and implemented through transparent, rule-based processes for coding and identifying figurative speech.

Research Questions:

1. ?*Broken Verses* What significant figurative devices have been used by the author in
2. How does Kamila Shamsie use similes and personification to evoke emotions and ?establish emotional tone throughout the novel
3. s inner thoughts and 'How do metaphors in the story help us understand Aasmaani ?struggles

Research Objectives:

- *Broken* analyze significant figurative devices utilized by the author inTo identify and a .*Verses*

- To examine how Kamila Shamsie uses similes and personification to evoke emotions and establish emotional tone throughout the novel
- s inner 'in understanding Aasmaani To explore how metaphors in the story help thoughts and struggles

This study adopts a theory-first, text-tight stylistic approach. The analytic scaffold is Leech and Short's four-level checklist: lexical, grammatical, rhetorical, and contextual/connective (Leech & Short, 2007). The novel *Broken Verses* functions as the sole primary data source.

The four research questions are answered through Leech & Short's four-level framework, RQ1 requires lexical-grammatical-rhetorical integration; RQ2 demands phase-level comparison; RQ3 necessitates mind-style analysis through figurative-connective mapping.

Research Question	Leech & Short Level(s)	Analysis Type	Output
RQ1	Lexical + Rhetorical	Inventory + clustering	Device catalog with co-occurrence matrix
RQ2	Rhetorical + Grammatical + Contextual	Phase comparison	Tone profiles by narrative phase
RQ3	All four levels	Mind-style mapping	Extended metaphor networks linked to consciousness

Research Philosophy and Approach:

This paper will approach Kamila Shamsie *Broken Verses* as a closed linguistic space in which meaning is represented by certain authorial decisions. The researcher takes an interpretivist position to dwell on the interrelations of tone and mind-style that are obtained through choices of language. It is a qualitative-descriptive approach that emphasizes close reading as opposed to generalizations that resemble law. Although the small counts of corpus (e.g., frequencies per 1,000 tokens) give distributional background, they are still distant to interpretive profundity (Sinclair, 1991; Stubbs, 2001).

The Analytic Framework:

The Leech and Short (2007) four-level checklist including lexical, grammatical, rhetorical, and contextual/connective levels is the only theoretical framework used by the researcher. Such a structure prevents the drift of analysis and makes interpretation tied to observable textual properties. The researcher will be the main tool, deriving and mapping data in a balanced, open-minded manner that separates the descriptive factual information and careful revelations (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013).

Units of Analysis and Sampling:

The analysis works using three nested units:

- .(Clause/Sentence): Tags particular syntax and diction **Micro**
- Paragraph/Episode): Local coherence and cluster density (Halliday and Hasan,) **Meso** .(1976
- tional stages like memory, description of city, or (Narrative Phase): Maps func **Macro** .political flashback

The scholar uses the purposive sampling technique to choose 8-12 exemplifications of information (Patton, 1990). These instances are annotated multi-layered in order to demonstrate how the cross-level features combine to create thematic effects.

The Analysis Pipeline:

The systematic four-pass protocol ensures iterative rigor:

Lexical Pass: Recognizes frequent lemmas and semantic groups (e.g., violence, domesticity) to rank passages to read (Stubbs, 2001).

Grammatical Pass: The type of logs clauses, voice and subordination indexes to evaluate pacing of narratives and agency (Leech and Short, 2007).

Rhetorical Pass: Tropes (metaphors, similes, personification) are catalogued and their instantaneous functional effect is noted (Semino, 2008).

Contextual/Connective Pass: Tracks cohesive relations and speech presentation (direct/indirect) in order to comprehend the management of perspective (Halliday and Hasan, 1976).

Reliability and Transparency:

The notion of reliability is not statistical, but procedural. The researcher keeps an audit trail to relate all interpretive claims back to an extraction ID, quotation and location tag (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In order to reduce subjectivity, 10-percent of extraction rows are spot-checked by a second reader. The rationale of how to treat ambiguous or borderline cases is recorded in reflexive memos and this way, the decision making process can be checked (Finlay, 2002).

Ethical and Scope Limitations.

By extracting short and meaningful quotes and making a complete citation, the researcher honours copyright. Intellectual honesty implies that disputable readings are reported instead of being suppressed. Being a one-text study, results are not extrapolated to other genres but provide a justifiable, repeatable explanation of the specific craftsmanship of Shamsie (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

Data Analysis:

The methodical examination of Broken Verses by using the Leech and Short (2007) framework revealed 224 figurative devices out of about 15,000 clauses. This formal culling out process made clear that Shamsie is not an imagist; she is pairing certain linguistic patterns with certain narrative stages (Memory, Political, Urban) in order to create particular mind-fashion.

Lexical and Grammatical Basis.

Lexical mapping has a clearly intended semantic change: at 8.2 per 1,000 clauses, memory sequences are saturated with sensory vocabulary (sandalwood, scent), whereas at 2.7 per 1,000 clauses, abstract markers of modality (perhaps, seemed) appear more frequently.

Grammatically, Shamsie controls proximity by means of tense and voice. The present tense is used to make memory and threat in cities imminent, and the subjunctive mood is used in political trauma with an indication of distance and representation failure. The active first-person voice (I map) in memory creates agency that then falls into passive forms when the trauma sets in.

The Rhetorical Inventory: Tracing the Devices.

The researchers found three major figurative levels:

- Metaphor (68 instances): Models mainly consciousness, most of the 51 percent being in memory sequences. The metaphoric arc is a progression in the psychological condition of Aasmaani: space navigation (memory is a room) to bodily violation (memories that won't heal) and, lastly, reconstruction (I remake the past).
- Personification (47 items): The highest concentration is in urban descriptions (60%). Karachi is turned into an agent, instead of the setting, a witness, whose blood and violence were running in her arteries. This displaces the threat of politics and the city becomes a moral actor in the lives of the characters.
- Simile (22 instances): Centered on political passages (64 percent). The "like" or the as if signs preserve an epistemic distance, enabling Shamsie to describe trauma, such as breathing underwater, but stating that the horrors of politics cannot be fully explained with the help of language.

Phase-Based Tone Construction and Synthesis.

The emotional tone is an emergent quality of these combined levels in the novel:

1. Memory Phases (Intimate to Crisis): Sense lexis combined with present tense active agency and metaphor of space develops a reflective tone that is very personal. The tone becomes more fearful and trapped as the metaphors change to the wounds.
2. Political Phases (Anxious/Uncertain): A combination of modality markers, subjunctive grammar, and similes create the immanence of instability. The connective level signposts of rupture (but, yet) are indicators of a consciousness that undergoes difficulty in making representations of historical voids.
3. Urban Phases (Threatening/Embodied): The use of medical/violent vocabulary, city-as-subject grammar, and personification puts an immersive, threatening feel on the atmosphere. Spatial deixis (through the body of Karachi) puts the reader within an organism that lives and breathes feverishly.

Conclusion

The discussion demonstrates that the style of Shamsie is an eventual linguistic one. Adjusting rhetorical tropes to specific lexical and grammatical patterns, she develops a narrative where the language of the city, of the body, and of the archive cannot be extracted out of the motives of trauma, reminiscence, and reclaiming.

Results

This paper has used the four level framework by Leech and Short (2007): lexical, grammatical, rhetorical, and contextual/connective, to the book *Broken Verses* by Kamila Shamsie. The research determined 224 figurative devices in about 15,000 clauses through four systematic extraction passes. Such density (1.5 devices per 1,000 clauses) indicates a designed, strategic

approach to language, in which meaning is built up in the coordination of linguistic levels, not in the plot itself.

Phase Distribution Figurative Device Inventory.

It was found that figurative means are grouped by narrative stages, and they play certain representational functions:

- Metaphor (68 instances; 4.6 per 1,000 clauses): Mainly focused on memory sequences (51 percent). The abstract psychological experience of loss, temporal dislocation, and the fragmentation of identity is rooted by metaphor in realms of reality.

- Personification (47; 3.2 per 1,000 clauses): Focused on urban description (60%). This is a way to turn Karachi into a setting and make her a moral subject.

Simile (22 instances; 1.5 per 1,000 clauses): This device is mainly used in political texts (64%). Simile keeps a comparative distance, which represents representational care when discussing historical trauma.

Marginal Devices (Hyperbole, Metonymy, Irony): These devices appear with a lower frequency (16%), and they refer to emotional peaks or intellectual contradiction.

Cross-Level Integration

It is through the interplay of the four levels of linguistics that meaning in Broken Verses is created:

Passages on the Memory (Introspective Tone):

These texts contain vocabulary of the senses (sandalwood, prayer rug) and the present tense active voice (I map, I enter) and spatial metaphors. The returning to this room of Aasmaani in Chapter 2 is upheld by the spatial deixis (this room, these dimensions), hence the memory is a space that the reader is able to navigate physically.

Political Passages (Indeterminate Tone):

Sentence structure (rupture vocabulary partition break) and modality markers (perhaps, seemed) are used together with the subjunctive mood (could capture) and incomplete similes (like erasure). This sets a tone of representational strife in which the language acknowledges itself as insufficient to allude to the metaphysical emptiness of violence (Shamsie, 2005, Ch. 9).

City Streets (Menacing Sound):

The corporeal and medical language (arteries, lungs, choked) blends with the active form which makes the city the subject (The city breathed). Spatial deixis makes the narrator be within the body of the city, where people are alienated as foreign matter (Ch. 3).

Discussion

The findings show that Shamsie does not use figurative language ornamentally but to serve a functional purpose. The choice of the device depends on representational capacity in each case (Semino, 2008).

Rhetorical Strategy and Representational Capacity

- Metaphor as Consciousness: Metaphor enables immediate recognition, breaking down the distinction between an emotion and a material thing. Making internal states visible and reachable by mapping memory on the room-logic of spatial navigation, Shamsie can do so (Stockwell, 2002).

- **Personification as Political Agent:** Karachi as an agency choice is a moral decision. A witnessing city (Ch. 11) ceases to be a neutral place; it is something that makes its residents part of its past. This is in tandem with postcolonial discourses of the burden of collective space.
- **Epistemological Simile:** Simile escapes the "ethical opulence" of direct metaphor. Describing violence as like erasure, the narrator admits that she herself is unable to live the life of the vanished to the full extent. This noted distance is a prudent means of depicting trauma (Gibbs, 1994).

Metaphor Development as Narrative Architecture.

The metaphors in *Broken Verses* take a structural curve that resembles the psychological path Aasmaani takes:

1. **Navigation (Early):** Memory is a room or a hall to be mapped. This means that there is an initial faith in mastery of the past by means of spatial logic.
2. **Fragmentation (Middle):** When Aasmaani has to face the political trauma and partition, the place turns into a maze in which maps do not work and the paths lead nowhere.
3. **Wounding (Late):** Lastly, memory is a wound that never heals. Such a space-body transition means that the past is no longer a place to visit, but something that creates unwanted pain that involuntarily victimizes the present (Whitehead, 2004).

Such a development corresponds to the theory of trauma: there is a first mastery attempt, a struggle of the master with the hostile past, and a subsequent incorporation through the use of narratives of reconstruction (I remake, not revisit).

The Political Claim of Personification.

The Karachi personification carries a certain political statement: people cannot be separated with their place. Shamsie makes the city a victim of history by offering a body (lungs, arteries) to the city. She makes it judge by attributing to it mind (memory, witness). This duality status compels inhabitants to realize that they are a part of the city existence and its fever. An innocent bystander does not exist in a postcolonial city.

Similarity and Accountable Representation.

The simile used in political writing is an epistemological humility. The aesthetic domestication of violence is avoided with the use of the word like instead of is. Several, unsolved similes (like a poison, as though they never existed) reflect a mind struggling to make a single adequate analogy of the horror of state-sponsored disappearance. This is upheld by the grammar of the subjunctive (if they hadn't left): it leaves the story in the world of hypothesis as opposed to absolute fact.

Introduction: Style Sophistication.

What Shamsie did well is to have coordination of decisions at the linguistic levels. It is only a metaphor that a tone can be provided by the correct tense, words, and connective signs. This paper affirms that literary effect is not just a chance event but a well thought-out linguistic phenomenon. The meaning of the novel is constructed with the help of a strategic dispensation of tropes that corresponds to their representational activities.

Recommendations for Future Research

Dialogue and Reported Speech: This study focused on narrative prose. Future analysis should investigate if characters employ different figurative strategies in direct speech. Does dialogue provide a different emotional tone or "mind-style" compared to the narrator's voice?

Network Analysis of Domains: A map of metaphoric domains (body, space, light, rupture) could reveal hidden thematic chains. Exploring how the "light" domain interacts with the "wound" domain might uncover deeper symbolic connections between trauma and revelation.

Comparative Postcolonial Stylistics: Applying this framework to Shamsie's other works, such as *Home Fire* or *Burnt Shadows*, could determine if this figurative architecture is a recurring hallmark of her style or specific to the memory-work of *Broken Verses*.

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