

## EXPLORING SYNTACTIC CONFIGURATIONS IN BAPSI SIDHWA'S NOVELS THROUGH CORPUS-BASED LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

*This study explores the syntactic configurations present in Bapsi Sidhwa's novels through a corpus-based linguistic approach, integrating Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as the analytical framework and UAM CorpusTool as the primary annotation and analysis instrument. The research draws on syntactic elements—such as noun phrases, prepositional phrases, subordinate clauses, and participial constructions—extracted from a representative corpus of Sidhwa's major novels including Water, Ice Candy Man, The Pakistani Bride, An American Brat, and The Crow Eaters. Utilizing SFL's metafunctions—ideational, interpersonal, and textual—the study investigates how these syntactic forms construct meaning, shape narrative voice, and portray character relationships. UAM CorpusTool facilitates multi-layered annotation of these structures, enabling both qualitative interpretations and quantitative pattern recognition across texts. The findings reveal a dynamic syntactic landscape wherein grammatical constructions are employed not only for stylistic variation but also to encode cultural nuances, emotional tones, and thematic depth. This research contributes to literary linguistics by providing a methodologically robust model for analyzing South Asian English fiction through corpus linguistics and functional grammar, highlighting the stylistic and semantic richness of Sidhwa's prose.*

*Keywords: Bapsi Sidhwa, syntactic analysis, corpus linguistics, systemic functional linguistics, UAM Corpus Tool, literary stylistics.*

### 1. Introduction

Bapsi Sidhwa A great Pakistani-English novelist, Bapsi Sidhwa is widely recognized as the writer of expansive range, sensitivity to cultures, and finer language. Her work, including *The Crow Eaters*, *The Pakistani Bride*, *Ice candy man*, *An American Brat*, and *Water* stand out because of complexity in their syntax and richness in themes. Newer research in the field of literary linguistics has both brought to the forefront the use of corpus-based approaches as ways of revealing grammatical difference and stylistic choice in texts (Hardy, 2021). Nevertheless, syntactic analysis, even in South Asian Anglophone fiction, is sidelined as most of the analysis is biased towards thematic or semantic interpretation despite the growing popularity of these methods (Balossi, 2014).

Present developments in digital humanities and that which has been established concerning corpus resources has armed academic scholars to explore literary syntax in not only detail but also breadth. Multilayered annotation Like in cascade annotation, tools like UAM CorpusTool support

connectivity between syntactic patterns and larger discursive functions (O'Donnell, 2020). When grouped with Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), this computational design provides an all-inclusive view: the algorithm does not only provide analysis of how certain syntactic elements appear but also how they function contextually in terms of narrative discourse (Haida Kareem Ali & Eman Adil Jaafar, 2025). The current research aims at reducing the gap between a stylistic theory and empirical linguistic research by applying the SFL analysis of corpus transparency to the syntactic structuring of Sidhwa.

### 1.1 Research Objectives

- To identify and classify the syntactic configurations present in Bapsi Sidhwa's novels using corpus-based methods.
- To analyze how these syntactic structures contribute to meaning-making through Systemic Functional Linguistics.

### 1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the dominant syntactic configurations in Bapsi Sidhwa's selected novels?
2. How do these configurations function contextually within the SFL framework?

### 1.3 Problem Statement

The postcolonial English literature has grown significantly over the recent years but the area of syntactic practices study, especially in South Asian fiction, has been relatively ill provided. The body of work of Bapsi Sidhwa provides a productive starting point to fill this gap, as it tends to put a focus on the issues of narrative technique and style specifically. Up to now, the focus of critical commentary has been on thematic issues and the resulting syntactic dimension has been mostly unexamined. It is the aim of this research, therefore, to redress this imbalance through a consideration of how narrative structure, theme development, and stylistic unity is shaped by the syntactic choices made by Sidhwa with the help of the UAM CorpusTool and the approach of systemic functional linguistics.

## 2. Literature Review

The methodological study of syntax in literary writings has received significant academic momentum due to its ability to reveal stylistic richness and affect the narrative role. According to modern studies, sentence construction structures such as participial phrases, sub-clauses, and prepositions have significant influence in the narrative point of view and theme presentation (Haida Kareem Ali & Eman Adil Jaafar, 2025). These syntactical characteristics help the authors to control the rhythm, voice, and psychology of the characters, which makes them essential elements of literary interpretation (Toolan, 2019). Despite their significance, syntactic constructions in South Asian fiction, including that of such an author as Bapsi Sidhwa, are under-researched (De Capitani, 2023).

A change in the Performative of analytical practice has instigated the adoption of the corpus linguistics into literary stylistics. Hardy (2021) emphasizes the points about the importance of frequency and collocational analysis to be used to determine recurrent stylistic choices throughout large corpora. Nowadays, the analysis of syntactic constructions can be studied using such contemporary technologies as LancsBox and Sketch Engine modifying studies not only according to genres but also historically (Kim & Mahlberg 2020). This change of approach allows researchers to empirically confirm the styles trends, which in the past could only be observed impressionistically (Khujakulov, 2025).

Highly precise syntactic annotation has become possible with the computer aids and syntactic taggers specifically AntConc, UAM CorpusTool and CLiC. O'Donnell (2020) cites the capacity

of the UAM CorpusTool to carry out multi-layered tagging such as parts of speech, clause structure, and discourse roles. These abilities are especially useful when analysing literature syntax, notably to find phrases sophistication and clause inclusion (Hao et al., 2024).

The current backdrop of functional stylistics continues to depend on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) since SFL conceives language as a source of meaning. According to Wang and Ma (2020) the ideational metafunction, the interpersonal metafunction, and the textual metafunction offered by SFL establish a complete analytical framework around which syntax can in situ be explored. Haida Kareem Ali and Eman Adil Jaafar (2025) shows that the utilization of SFL in the context of the corpus-driven approach allows researchers to explore the interconnection between specific syntactic decisions and their role in relationships between characters and the unfolding of topics. This practice has been empirically confirmed in analyses of postcolonial literature, in which the presence of syntactic deviance indicates the tension of hybridity and narration (Bocanegra-Valle, 2020).

Linguistic identities of fictional characters often are determined through their syntactic choices. Such use of elliptical constructions, incomplete clauses, and use of tagged questions, to name but a few, can be indicators of emotional insecurity, insecurity, and use of sociolect (Bocanegra-Valle, 2020). Such syntactical patterns in the novels of Sidhwa also have the power to encrypt the cultural displacement, changes in tone, and interrelationships. These remarks reinforce the fact that syntax is ingrained in the narrative role (Toolan, 2019; Haida Kareem Ali & Eman Adil Jaafar, 2025).

New studies have started exploring the linguistic hybridity in the South Asian English fiction placing it in a wider socio-political context. As it is revealed by Bocanegra-Valle (2020), code-switching, syntactic borrowing, and non-standard constructions that take place in Pakistani English novels indicate postcolonial resistance and identity negotiation. A case in point within Sidhwa surreal syntactic constructions and stratification of the speech can be found, their representations of cultural displacement and gendered response as embodiments of texture (De Capitani, 2023).

Annotated literacy corpora turned out to be essential tools of stylistic and discourse analysis. Kim and Mahlberg (2020) state that corpus annotation helps to explore narrative strategies, including focalization and speech presentation, systematically. Such tools as UAM CorpusTool allow custom syntactic tags, which makes them particularly useful with more elaborate literary works. Annotated corpora allow making comparative analysis among novels and authors, which is an advantage over improving the generalizability of stylistic findings (Hao et al., 2024).

An increasing number of scholarly texts attempted to mediate between close reading practice and computational approach. Digital stylistics is not a replacement of the interpretive criticism but an enhancement of it as it provides empirical basis. Hardy (2021) argues that bringing statistical information and stylistic theory together results in the more subtle comprehension of narrative technique. This transdisciplinary convergence presents special opportunities to South Asian literature, where such an analytical algorithm can help find patterns that could be veiled by cultural and linguistic diversity (Khujakulov, 2025).

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative, corpus-based linguistic methodology underpinned by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). The aim is to analyze syntactic configurations in Bapsi Sidhwa's novels and interpret their functional significance within the narrative structure. The approach combines corpus stylistics with functional grammar to uncover stylistic patterns and grammatical choices that reflect narrative, cultural, and character-driven dimensions of Sidhwa's prose. Using

UAM CorpusTool, this research integrates multi-layer syntactic annotation with metafunctional analysis, allowing a rigorous examination of syntactic structures and their discourse functions.

### 3.2 Corpus Construction

The primary corpus comprises selected extracts from five of Bapsi Sidhwa's major novels: *The Crow Eaters* (1978), *The Pakistani Bride* (1982), *Ice Candy Man* (1988), *An American Brat* (1993), and *Water* (2006). Extracts were chosen based on their narrative density, syntactic richness, and representational diversity. Each novel contributed approximately 3000 to 4000 words, yielding a corpus of 18,000 to 20,000 words. Texts were manually digitized, normalized, and segmented into units such as paragraphs and clauses for consistent annotation. Only descriptive and narrative prose was retained, excluding forewords, glossaries, and editorial notes to maintain textual coherence.

### 3.3 Corpus Annotation with UAM CorpusTool

The corpus was imported into UAM CorpusTool v3.3, a tool suitable for multi-layer annotation. Annotation proceeded in two main layers: syntactic and functional. In the syntactic layer, structures such as noun phrases, participial constructions, subordinate clauses, and coordinating conjunctions were tagged. The functional layer involved mapping these syntactic units to SFL's metafunctional categories:

- Ideational (representing experience)
- Interpersonal (enacting social roles)
- Textual (organizing discourse)

This tagging enabled analysis of how syntactic constructions contribute to narrative functions such as setting the scene, building character identity, or advancing thematic motifs. Annotation consistency was ensured through inter-annotator agreement, where multiple coders cross-validated sample annotations to refine the scheme.

### 3.4 Analytical Framework

The core analytical framework is Systemic Functional Linguistics as formulated by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). SFL views language as a social semiotic system, making it ideal for exploring literary narratives where syntax supports story-world construction. Within this framework, the study examined how Sidhwa's syntactic structures encode:

- **Processes** (verb groups)
- **Participants** (noun groups)
- **Circumstances** (prepositional or adverbial phrases)

These elements were analyzed to determine their role in ideational metafunctions, particularly in constructing experiential meaning. Additionally, the interpersonal function was investigated through pronoun use, modality, and embedded clauses reflecting stance or evaluation. Textual metafunctions were explored by examining cohesion devices and thematic progression through clause sequencing and punctuation.

### 3.5 Data Interpretation and Thematic Analysis

Post-annotation, the data was exported for frequency and co-occurrence analysis. UAM CorpusTool's statistical functions were used to identify recurrent syntactic features and their distribution across texts. Key patterns such as repeated use of participial phrases or embedded subordinate clauses were subjected to thematic analysis. For example, the use of coordinating conjunctions in *Ice Candy Man* often paralleled emotional escalation or temporal pacing, contributing to textual rhythm. Findings were triangulated with insights from the literature to ensure interpretive validity.



#### 4. Results and Findings

This section presents the corpus-based syntactic analysis of Bapsi Sidhwa's novels using UAM CorpusTool, aligning with the methodological and functional framework discussed earlier. Syntactic elements were tagged and examined across 30 extracts—three from each of her five major novels. The findings below are systematically organized through tables, highlighting patterns in adjective phrases, prepositional phrases, participial constructions, subordinate clauses, coordinating conjunctions, and other syntactic elements.

**Table**

1

Syntactic Elements in Extract 1 from *Water*

Syntactic Element	Description
Adjective Phrases	"the demure figure sitting on the stone bench," "the golden leaves strewn around her"
Prepositional Phrases	"on the stone bench," "under the great spread of the banyan," "down the steps, right up to the water"
Sentence Structure	Primary clause: Subject (Narayan) + Predicate (had noticed); modified by descriptive clauses

*Note.* This extract focuses on scenic and spatial description through layered syntactic structures.

**Table**

2

Syntactic Elements in Extract 2 from *Water*

Syntactic Element	Description
Participial Phrase	"massaging Madhumati's head through the bars"
Subordinate Clause	"When Madhumati was in this mood"
Coordinating Conjunction	"and once she'd had her fix"

*Note.* The syntactic constructions in this extract highlight emotional pacing and conditionality.

**Table**

3

Syntactic Elements in Extract 3 from *Water*

Syntactic Element	Description
Direct Speech	"It's settled then," Narayan remarked; "I'm quite fond of her too," he said gently
Coordinating Conjunction	"and Kalyani knew he meant it"
Simile	"Narayan shimmered before her like an avatar through the sudden tears of joy"

*Note.* This extract emphasizes interpersonal tone and figurative language to convey emotion.

**Table**

4

Syntactic Elements in Extract 4 from *Ice-Candy-Man*

Syntactic Element	Description
Prepositional Phrase	"on a luminous November Saturday"
Subordinate Clause	"When a muffled surge of sound emanates from my parents' bedroom"

Syntactic Element	Description
Coordinating Conjunction	“but the kind of noises signifying Father's frolicsome mood”

*Note.* This extract utilizes contrasting structures to depict mood and time.

**Table**

5

Syntactic Elements in Extract 5 from *Ice-Candy-Man*

Syntactic Element	Description
Participial Phrase	“Hoping to escape detection”
Coordinating Conjunction	“and their plans were sketchy and optimistic”
Adverbial Clause	“As dusk gathered about them”

*Note.* Syntactic elements in this passage emphasize setting and character intention.

**Table**

6

Syntactic Elements in Extract 6 from *Ice-Candy-Man*

Syntactic Element	Description
Verb Phrase	“picked up his son”
Prepositional Phrase	“into the grey light”
Subordinate Clause	“With luck”

*Note.* The extract portrays action and anticipation through concise syntactic design.

**Table**

7

Syntactic Elements in Extract 7 from *An American Brat*

Syntactic Element	Description
Noun Phrase	“a bunch of Hare Krishna crusaders”
Prepositional Phrase	“in front of the Co-op store”
Adverbial Phrase	“in the recessed shelter of a small door”

*Note.* Syntactic patterns in this extract reflect cultural scenery and social identification.

**Table**

8

Syntactic Elements in Extract 8 from *An American Brat*

Syntactic Element	Description
Adverbial Phrase	“at around eight o'clock”
Participial Phrase	“Fading light”
Subordinate Clause	“that the melody of an alien music moved her so deeply”

*Note.* Emphasizes temporal framing and affective expression.

**Table**

9

Syntactic Elements in Extract 9 from *An American Brat*

Syntactic Element	Description
Relative Clause	“known as 'Oxford aunt' (her husband had spent a year in Oxford...)”
Coordinating Conjunction	“and end up marrying white madams”

Syntactic Element	Description
Subordinate Clause	“You can’t expect our girls to remain virgins their entire lives!”

*Note.* Highlights dialogue-driven syntactic strategy with socio-cultural commentary.

# Table

10

Syntactic Elements in Extract 10 from *The Pakistani Bride*

Syntactic Element	Description
Participial Phrases	“jostled each other,” “peering behind arching doorways,” “cocooning the girls”
Subordinate Clause	“as they looked at the girls leaning from balconies”
Coordinating Conjunction	“and from the structures cocooning the girls pulsated the melody”

*Note.* Highlights dialogue-driven syntactic strategy with socio-cultural commentary.

# Table

11

Syntactic Elements in Extract 11 from *The Pakistani Bride*

Syntactic Element	Description
Relative Clause	“where men were heroic, proud, and incorruptible...”
Coordinating Conjunction	“tall and light-skinned men”
Subordinate Clause	“that lived beside crystal torrents of melted snow”

*Note.* Establishes setting and mythologized masculinity.

# Table

12

Syntactic Elements in Extract 12 from *The Pakistani Bride*

Syntactic Element	Description
Coordinating Conjunction	“American, Australian, British, and other Europeans”
Subordinate Clause	“who otherwise had very little in common”
Participial Phrase	“turning hostile”

*Note.* Syntax here illustrates cross-cultural tension and alienation.

# Table

13

Syntactic Elements in Extract 13 from *The Crow Eaters*

Syntactic Element	Description
Subordinate Clause	“speak not, see not, and hear not”
Coordinating Conjunction	“married, unmarried, old, and young”
Participial Phrase	“hidden in a mango grove, near the village well”

*Note.* This extract showcases humor and exaggerated description via layered structure.

# Table

14

Syntactic Elements in Extract 14 from *The Crow Eaters*

Syntactic Element	Description
Coordinating Conjunction	“Freddy caught the girl’s eye and signalled her”

Syntactic Element	Description
Participial Phrase	“galvanised into a spurt of energy”
Imperative Sentence	“Now you sit right here and talk to me”

*Note.* Uses syntactic assertiveness to establish character dominance.

#### Table

15

Syntactic Elements in Extract 15 from *The Crow Eaters*

Syntactic Element	Description
Prepositional Phrase	“on a flower-bedecked stage”
Compound Adjective	“silver and pearl embroidery”
Coordinating Conjunction	“rice, coconut slivers, and rose petals”

*Note.* Enhances ceremonial imagery with syntactic embellishment.

These tables collectively illustrate the frequency and variety of syntactic structures employed across Bapsi Sidhwa’s works. The diverse use of participial, subordinate, and prepositional constructions reflects her narrative depth and stylistic complexity. Each syntactic element is strategically deployed to enhance imagery, reinforce mood, and express nuanced cultural and psychological themes.

### 5. Discussion

This discussion is an in-depth explanation of the findings of the syntactic analysis that was conducted on the UAM CorpusTool, which is based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). It analytically reviews the role those syntactic decisions used in her writings by Bapsi Sidhwa in her literary works play in terms of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings in intercultural and narration contexts. Using the field of linguistics in the form of subordinate clauses, prepositional phrase, participial, coordinating conjunction, and noun and verb phrase, within this discussion a connection has been provided between quantitative syntactic frequency and thematic and narrative interpretation. All the metafunctions are discussed in detail with the references to the works connected with studies in the literary discourse and new findings in the field of the corpus stylistics and linguistic analysis.

#### 5.1 The Ideational Metafunction and Syntactic Strategies

Ideational metafunction in SFL is connected with the Questions of how language is used to express experiential meaning, what is happening, what people and what circumstances (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The noun phrases, participial and prepositional phrases are used as the most pronounced ideational structures in the novels of Bapsi Sidhwa. Such grammatical elements allow complicated portrayals of characters, settings, and cultural circumstances. Some relationships between the syntactic density in literary prose and the desire to represent the complicated inner life or social-political realities can be discovered (Rocha & Da Rocha, 2018).

Take an example in *Water* where such prepositional phrases as on the stone bench, under the great spread of the banyan, down the steps, right up to the water are repeated and this is not only to place the action in the physical locality but to metaphorically hint the restricted agency of the characters in the social confinements. Such syntactic structure is not just the matter of location, but existing ideological and cultural limitations which frame female characters experiences. This corresponds to the interpretation made by Hunt (2021) about the regular encoding of emotional or psychological boundaries inside the physical space of the literary narrative.



Collective and individual identities are also constructed by noun phrases in *An American Brat* and *The Pakistani Bride* as seen by a bunch of Hare Krishna crusaders or bright rosy-cheeked children. Such identities are in most cases embedded within cultural expectation and ethnic systems. According to De Capitani (2023), noun phrase stacking, a now well-studied technique of South Asian literature in English, is an attempt to assimilate culturally precise information into the Anglophone grammatical system.

The participial phrases are other elements within the frame of Sidhwa who gave the representation of layered action and psychological consciousness. The actions of phrases such as: peering behind arching doorways or galvanised into a spurt of energy by his exasperation (*The Crow Eaters*) are processes that are related together in time and cause. According to Jeffries (2020), these constructions enable the writer to present multiple realities in the same syntactic structure, thus, increasing the experience level of the narrative.

### 5.2 Interpersonal Metafunction and dynamics of Character

The interpersonal metafunction is related to performance of social roles, relationships and positions. This metafunction is actively implemented in the aspect of syntactic strategies (mood structure (imperatives, interrogatives, declaratives), modality, coordination, reported speech) in the novels written by Sidhwa. Such grammatical elements are used to achieve relational tension between characters, as well as narrator-reader.

An example of the use of imperatives includes *The Crow Eaters* whose characters are seen to issue commands in reference to hierarchical relationships. The phrase Now you sit down here and talk to me is indicative of the great level of control and assertiveness. Roberts (2018) affirmed that the use of imperatives in literature fiction tends to represent power jostling and character pushiness particularly in a culture that is stratified.

The Direct Speech in *Water* like It is settled then, Narayan said, plays interpersonal and narrative roles. It is immediacy that shows character positioning. The direct quotation, which includes such verbal process as remark and said gently, shows narrative empathy, and matching, which is in tune with Bocanegra-Valle (2020) appraisal theory. These inserted mood markers indicate sympathy to characters and vulnerability of feelings.

Coordinating conjunctions serve the purpose of organizing lists and creating links among different clauses using the conjunction that is particularly effective, which is the word and. The overwhelming repetition of and in *The Pakistani Bride* evokes an effect of ritual abundance, with the items areized with cultural implication (rice, coconut slivers, and rose petals). Habit and purpose of such coordination of syntax supports the rhythm of stories and inward pressure. Wang and Ma (2020) defend this fact by stating that these patterns of repetition as an important characteristic of the discourse structure, plays an important role in managing the expectation of the reader.

The characters of Sidhwa frequently show the evaluative attitude in the form of the subordinate clauses, such as who otherwise did not have much in common. Coupled with ideological layering through judgments and emphasis on social disparity, these structures contribute diversity to societies by creating a certain degree of separation between them. According to Jeffries (2020), one of the main syntactic features that allow the author of fiction to encode his subjective commentary without any form of explicit narrator intervention is clause embedding.

### 5.3 Metafunction and Cohesion in Text

SFL Textual metafunction in SFL, the textual metafunction is the order of the flow of information and a degree of textual coherence. Thematic fronting, adverbial clauses, use of anaphoric reference:

are some of the stylistic features that help keep the text together in Sidhwa's novels. It leads to a rather free narrative form that helps thematic development.

Prepositional and adverbial phrases are usually applied in the process of thematic fronting, as in: As dusk gathered about them (*Ice Candy Man*), At around eight o'clock (*An American Brat*). Such constructions bring about circumstances to the foreground and create space or time context. Khujakulov (2025) poses that fronted circumstantial elements affect the thematic growth by signaling the reader that situational and not agentive priorities are applied. The mode of this approach is very interesting, focusing on mood and environment, which is also the common pattern in Sidhwa's narrative arsenal. The other harmonious style is parataxis- in which clauses are put side by side as they are not subordinated and connected by any word like and. This is seen in *The Crow Eaters* and *The Pakistani Bride*; construction of parataxis is adopted to produce rhythm and oral traces of the stories. This structure relates to literary voices of postcolonial literature that parody the rhythms of vernacular as an act of asserting its claims against colonial linguistic superiorities. The employment of and in the long chains of clauses allows Sidhwa to provide syntactic rhythm which refers to the cultural standards of speech.

The use of syntactic parallelism and anaphora also serves to increase cohesion. The use of repetition of structures (e.g., tall and light-skinned men, American, Australian, British and other Europeans) can give the work stylistic consistency and warning effect in the usage of the rhetorical device. These methods lead to the involvement of the reader and facilitate in terms of reinforcement of the theme.

#### 5.4 Transnational Syntactic Regularities and Stylistic Development

In these five novels, some syntactic elements with a high rate of occurrence are observed and several changes are experienced in their meaning. The participial phrases are used through the works to realize psychological nuance and complex actions. Even in *The Pakistani Bride* when we have participial constructions such as cocooning the girls, the sense of physical enclosure to protect and at the same time social enclosure are fused together. According to Toolan (2019), these dual-purpose structures are a feature of authors who would speak in terms of thematic ambiguity which is embedded in grammatical ambiguity.

Another feature that becomes notable is the subordinate clause. In *An American Brat*, such phrases as [that the melody of an alien music to move her so deeply] are used to express emotional reactions and themes to whom it is more important. These structures give a lot to the narrative speed, encourage contemplation and introduce further ideological implications. The subordination also enables Sidhwa to contemplate an inner fire particularly in diasporic and feminist connotations.

Additionally, the development, which occurred in the syntactic grounds between the descriptive narration in earlier works such as *The Crow Eaters* and later narration, more dialogic and ideologically charged narrative such as *Water*, marks a change in the style of Sidhwa. This remains in line with Simpson (2014) account on point of view, which links variation in the level of syntactic complexity with the developing sense of narrative authority.

#### 5.5 Syntax and Cultural Relevance in South Asians

This syntax of Sidhwa is directly related to the fact that she comes from the culture of a South Asian who writes in English. The selection of the Anglophone grammatical structures to represent culturally particular stories incurs negotiation and innovation. This especially can be seen in the inculcation of the cultural ideas within English noun phrases or in the rhythmical enumeration of the social norms connected with the use of coordinating conjunction. As mentioned by De Capitani

(2023), syntactic hybridity serves to construct a space outside language hegemony and maintain the authenticity of narration which South Asian Anglophone writers tend to employ.

How grammar turns to a cultural tool is evidenced by the use of prepositional and adverbial phrases to establish context or to suppose cultural structures e. g. rituals, social customs, or even spatial symbolism. In *Water*, the line, down the steps, right up to the water does not only give a sense of direction but also a sense of spiritual reconfiguration which is a religious and gender specific.

Sidhwa also has this fusion of style and culture present in her relative as well as adverbial clauses. This is bio-graphical information inserted humorously as well as culturally loaded; e.g., as in, she was known as, the Oxford aunt (her husband had spent a year at Oxford studying to repair truck and tractor engines). The interconnection of irony, criticism, and social observation used by South Asian Anglophone fiction can be noticed using these grammatical decisions.

### 5.6 Literary Stylistics and Corpus Linguistics implications

The results of this investigation prove the importance of syntactic approach in literary stylistics. There is no freakish plot to her grammar, as Sidhwa is rigidly adherent to thematic purpose and cultural statements. The combination of SFL and tool available in a corpus such as UAM CorpusTool will provide a shareable paradigm to studying other writers in the postcolonial context of cross-cultural backgrounds.

Pedagogically, those analyses help students and scholars to identify the role of grammatical detail in narrative form. It also encourages greater interaction with texts in their cultural localities, and that the application of corpus stylistics could become beneficial in mediating between linguistics and literary criticism. Since stylistics broadly defined as an area of literary consideration also encompasses literary stylistics (Jeffries, 2020), literary stylistics will have to keep on the path of expanding its methodological toolbox towards the inclusion of digital tools and socio-functional grammars.

## 6. Conclusion

This paper has engaged in a comprehensive syntactic study of the chosen extracts of the major novels of the Bapsi Sidhwa, in the context of the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) model with the help of the UAM CorpusTool. The analysis of the research made it clear where grammatical decisions of Sidhwa are closely linked with narrative structure, cultural and national identity, character shaping and revealing of themes. Based on a corpus-based approach, the analysis has demonstrated that such syntactic structures as the participial phrase, noun group, subordinate clause, prepositional phrase and coordinating conjunction play significant role in ideational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction and the textual metafunction of language.

The latter is one of the most crucial discoveries as there is an extensive use of prepositional and participial phrases to represent experiential and circumstantial values. These pieces of work were found to be highly coded in physical, psychological, and emotional levels especially in the encounter of the gendered experience and sociopolitical policed conditions. The practice of noun phrase was used to create descriptive and contextually anchored identity of characters that disclosed crossover identities of ethnicity, religion, and gender. Subordination within clauses, with the frequent use of the adverbial and adjectival modifiers, provided a shade of distinction and ideological identity, and coordinating conjunctions induced optimization of rhythm, tempo, and relation clarity amid clauses.

The use of SFL as a framework together with the annotation tool of the UAM CorpusTool that emerged another powerful tool to perform and reproduce a linguistic analysis. Both of the extracts were evidence of requiring the syntactic creativity of the author and the cultural embedding of

language choices. The mention of metafunctional interpretation demonstrated how Sidhwa employs the English grammar beyond the role of storytelling to that of resistances, negotiations, and redefinition of cultural norm in the postcolonial anglophonic world.

Besides the identification of the stylistic traits, the paper draws attention to the possibilities of the corpus-based linguistic practices in literature studies. The UAM CorpusTool offered ability to mark multilayered syntax and functional annotations that were able to combine quantitative and qualitative analysis. The methodological synthesis generally improves objectivity in stylistic studies besides adding strength to interpretation. The analysis of a certain number of words in length (the corpus of every novel consisted of nearly 20 000 words) allowed the researchers to reveal general stylistic tendencies and specific aspects of the novel (or novels) under consideration. The study is a contribution to an increasing body of knowledge of corpus stylistics and postcolonial literary linguistics. It leaves room of future research opportunities on the role of syntactic variation in different genres, different authors and linguistic tradition of South Asian literature in English. The pedagogical implications are also relevant in the results, as it proves how we can explain grammar not only as form but as a conveyor of narrative, emotion, and ideology.

However, the study concludes that syntax in literary fiction is more than a structural requirement and is also a domain of expression (creative, ideological, and cultural). Bapsi Sidhwa is a master of syntactic art and the influence of the linguistic form on the narrative action as the method to create a strong and reverberating literary voice. By means of her elegantly planned exploitation of the English grammatical resources, Sidhwa creates the literary discourse that is aesthetically persuasive and culturally rooted. This syntactic mapping hence provides in-depth manner in her narrative vision and a paradigmatic model of style inquiry in the world literatures.

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