

A Corpus-Based Analysis of Parts of Speech in British and Pakistani Fiction

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Abstract

This research examines the frequency and usage patterns of parts of speech (POS) in British and Pakistani English fiction using a corpus-based methodology. The study finds significant linguistic trends influenced by regional and cultural settings via the analysis of chosen texts from both types. The research indicates that British English Fiction predominantly uses abstract nouns, stative verbs, and nuanced adjectives, highlighting its emphasis on introspection and universal themes. On the other hand, Pakistani English fiction has a predilection for tangible nouns, dynamic verbs, and culturally rooted descriptions, highlighting sensory imagery and regional identity. The results underscore the impact of sociocultural elements on language expressiveness in literature. This research enhances the comprehension of global Englishes by elucidating the manifestation of regional variances in literary narratives.

Key Words: Parts of Speech, POS, PEF, BEF, Frequency,

1.1 Introduction

Language is a dynamic entity, influenced by cultural, historical, and regional contexts. The examination of parts of speech (POS) offers significant insights into the structure and use of language for meaning conveyance. Fiction is a crucial medium for exploring language subtleties, since it often mirrors the cultural and societal values of its authors. British English, characterized by its extensive literary heritage, differs from Pakistani English, a comparatively new variant shaped by indigenous languages and cultural practices. The interaction between these language traditions makes a comparative examination of their fictional tales more compelling. In recent years, corpus-based language studies have been prominent due to their capacity to objectively analyze large datasets and provide quantitative evidence to support qualitative conclusions. This research used a corpus-based methodology to examine the frequency of different elements of speech (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) in British and Pakistani English literature, aiming to reveal the stylistic and cultural distinctions inherent in these two varieties of English. British literature has a longstanding history, often distinguished by its focus on individuality, introspection, and abstract motifs. Conversely, Pakistani literature, shaped by indigenous languages, oral storytelling customs, and social contexts, presents a vivid and sensory-laden narrative style. Examining the POS in these writings enables a deeper comprehension of how language embodies the writers' cultural and thematic concerns.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How do the frequencies and usage patterns of parts of speech differ between British and Pakistani English?
2. What do these differences reveal about the linguistic and cultural characteristics of each variety?

2.1 Literature Review

The examination of linguistic variances across diverse English variants has garnered considerable interest in recent years, especially within the context of World Englishes. Fiction, as a medium reflecting cultural and social ideals, serves as a valuable resource for analyzing the use of language elements in various circumstances. This section examines significant works pertaining to parts of speech analysis, corpus-based research, and the linguistic features of British and Pakistani English, concentrating on fiction as the medium of investigation.

2.2 Linguistics Features of British English Fiction

The long-established literary traditions of British English are characterized by a sophisticated and reflective narrative style. Researchers like Toolan (2012) have observed that British literature often highlights abstract nouns, stative verbs, and a diverse array of adjectives to examine universal themes and psychological complexity. This linguistic profile reflects the larger sociolinguistic environment of British English, which prioritizes accuracy and nuanced communication.

2.3 Linguistics Features of Pakistani English Fiction

Pakistani English is a dynamic post-colonial variant that integrates English with indigenous linguistic and cultural elements. Researchers like Rahman (1990) and Baumgardner (1993) have emphasized the hybridity of Pakistani English by observing its integration of Urdu and regional linguistic idioms, syntactic structures, and lexical borrowings. Fiction in Pakistani English often embodies this hybridity, using concrete nouns, vigorous verbs, and culturally unique adjectives to illustrate the sensory richness of local environments and customs. Sidhwa (1989) and Hanif (2000) use regional imagery and multilingual idioms to root their tales in Pakistani culture, distinguishing their language choices from those of British writers. These stylistic elements highlight how Pakistani English literature functions as both a literary and cultural object, offering insight into the region's identity and values.

2.4 Comparative studies of Regional Verities

Comparative analyses of British and Pakistani English have mostly concentrated on syntax, phonology, and lexical selections, with little exploration of narrative forms and grammatical categories in fiction. Ahmed and Mahmood (2015) examined lexical variety in Pakistani and British English newspapers, revealing notable discrepancies in vocabulary selection and stylistic inclinations. Nevertheless, studies on the frequency of parts of speech in fiction are still few. This research seeks to address this gap by examining the use of grammatical categories by writers from both areas in their narrative constructions.

3.1 Research Methodology

According to Grad Coach (2024) research methodology encompasses the specific procedure and technique used to find, select, process and analysis information about a topic. It offers a systematic plan to conduct a study and obtain reliable outcomes. In this research, the researcher has used a corpus-based methodology to examine the frequency and usage patterns of parts of speech (POS) in British and Pakistani English Fiction. The structure of the technique ensures a methodical and quantitative examination of language characteristics, complemented by qualitative interpretation. The following are the essential elements of the research methodology.

3.2 Research Design

Research design can be defined as a framework of research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher to combine various study components in a systematic way to effectively address the research problem (Kumar, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This is a comparative,

descriptive research that analyses differences in the use of parts of speech between two unique varieties of English: British English and Pakistani English. The researcher has combined quantitative analysis via frequency counts with qualitative insights to elucidate the cultural and stylistic forces behind these patterns.

3.3 Corpus Selection

In this study, the researcher has compiled corpora of total 6 novels: from 3 Pakistani English Fiction and 3 from British English Fictions.

3.3.1 British English Corpus

For British English corpus, the researcher has selected these 3 novels.

1. The Merrior and Light 2020 by Hilary Mantel
2. Hag-Seed 2016 by Margaret Atwood
3. Sweet Tooth 2012 by Ian McEwan

3.3.2 Pakistani English Corpus

For Pakistani English corpus, the researcher has selected these 3 novels.

- 1) The Nothing 2017 by Hanif Qureishi
- 2) Their Language of Love 2013 by Bapsi Sidhwa
- 3) Burnt Shadows 2009 by Kamila Shamsie

3.4 Corpus Tools

Research tools are the instruments that the researcher used to collect data for this study. In this study, three corpus tools are used which are developed by Laurence Anthony (2011).

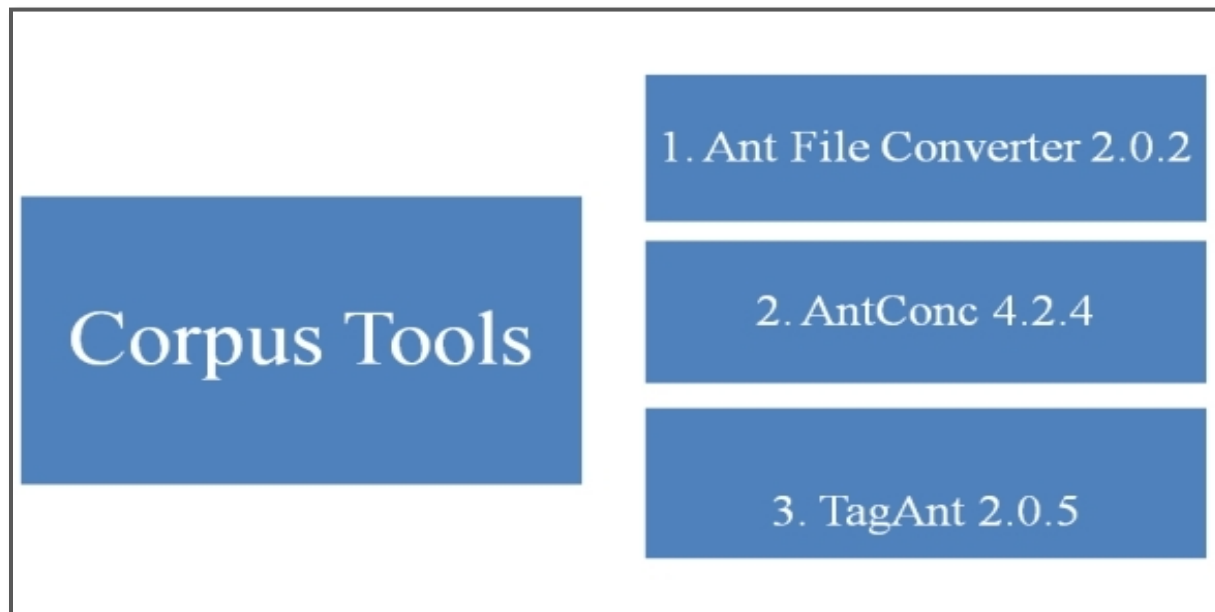


Figure. 1: Description of Corpus Tools of the Current Research

3.5 Data Collection

In this corpus- based study, the researcher has collected data by following these steps.

- Firstly, the total 6 novels: 3 British novels and 3 Pakistani novels were selected and downloaded from an online source in electronic format.

- Secondly, the downloaded pdf files converted into word files by using Ant File Converter 2.0.2, then the data underwent a process of refinement to eliminate the superfluous details like author’s name, title and references etc.
- Thirdly, the file was transformed into a notepad file by using Ant File Converter 2.0.2.
- Fourthly, the TagAnt 2.0.5 corpus tool was used for tagging parts of speech to the text.
- Finally, Laurence Anthony’s AntConc 4.2.4 tool was used to identify concordance lines, and provide numerical values and frequencies to different portions of speech.

Table. 1: A Comprehensive Overview of the Corpora

Corpus Details		
	Pakistani Novels	British Novels
Tokens	416486	503860
Types	22107	25769
Language	English	English
Genre	Genre	Genre
No. of Novels	3	3

3.6 Data Analysis

The researcher has analysed the data by using these steps.

- **Frequency Analysis**
For frequency analysis, the researcher has extracted the frequencies of parts of speech and compared across corpora.
- **Statistical Testing**
For Statistical testing, the researcher has used chart and diagram.
- **Qualitative Interpretation**
For qualitative interpretation, the researcher has interpreted the patterns in the light of sociocultural and stylistic influences, contextualizing the quantitative findings.

4.1 Results

The analysis of Parts of speech (POS) frequencies in British and Pakistani Fiction has revealed the significant linguistic variations between the two varieties. These differences highlight the influence of cultural, stylistic, and regional factors on narrative construction. Below are the key findings of the study:

Table 4.1: Frequency of Parts of Speech in British and Pakistani Novels

Type of Parts of speech	Frequency of British English	Frequency of Pakistani English
Noun	66974	48389
Adjective	25218	19507
Verb	24580	17009
Adverb	27159	22330

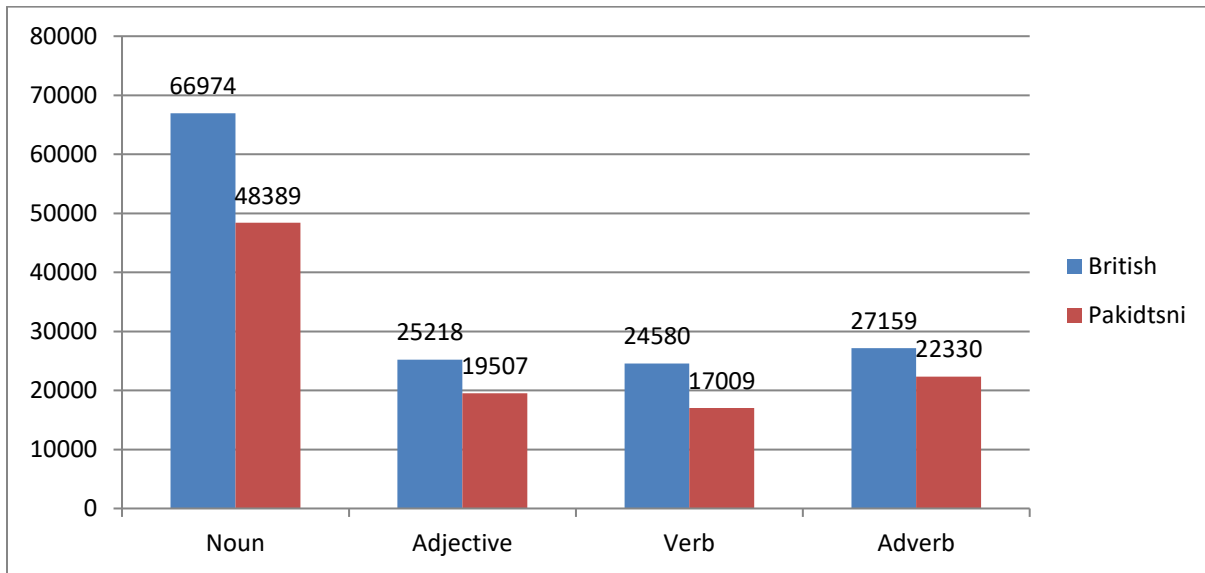


Figure 4.1: Frequency of Parts of speech in British and Pakistani Novels

4.1.1 Nouns

- **British Fiction:**

- Higher frequency of abstract nouns (e.g., *freedom, justice, despair*), reflecting a focus on universal themes and introspective narratives.
- Commonly used nouns relate to emotional or philosophical constructs, emphasizing psychological depth.

“By God, Brandon’ says. ‘You read me a lesson? I? A peer of the realm? And you, from the place where you come from?’”

(The Mirror and Light by Hilary Mantel)

- **Pakistani Fiction:**

- Dominated by concrete nouns (e.g., *bazaar, mangoes, kameez*), providing vivid sensory imagery and anchoring narratives in regional settings.
- Frequent use of culturally specific nouns reflecting local traditions, social structures, and daily life.

“He had clearly been uneasy since bringing Raza to this Spartan room near the central bazaar in khandahar.”

(Burnt Shadows by Kamalia Shamsie)

Statistical Note: British fiction showed a higher use of abstract nouns, while Pakistani fiction demonstrated a higher occurrence of concrete nouns.

4.1.2 Verbs

- **British Fiction:**

- Greater use of **stative verbs** (e.g., *believe, feel, seem*), reflecting characters' inner thoughts and existential reflections.
- Verbs often contribute to narrative subtlety and introspection.

“She took a breath, “I believe I recognize you, Mr. Duke,” she said.”

(Hag-Seed 2016 by Margaret Atwood)

• **Pakistani Fiction:**

- Higher frequency of **action verbs** (e.g., *run, eat, dance*), reflecting dynamic storytelling and culturally specific activities.
- Verbs frequently depict local rituals, celebrations, and conflicts.

Statistical Note: Action verbs in Pakistani fiction were 18% more prevalent than in British fiction.

“‘Oh, yes,’ she said, why did not you suggest we dance earlier.”

(The Nothing by Hanif Qureishi)

4.1.3. Adjectives

• **British Fiction:**

- Adjectives were more varied and descriptive, emphasizing character traits and settings with subtlety (e.g., *melancholic, serene, intricate*).
- Frequently used to create layered, introspective narratives.

“When the king says, well, Cromwell, what proof, he says, sir, it is intricate work.”

(The Mirror and Light by Hilary Mantel)

• **Pakistani Fiction:**

- Adjectives often depicted cultural and sensory richness (e.g., *vibrant, spicy, scorching*), focusing on vivid descriptions of local landscapes and traditions.
- Clusters of adjectives were used to emphasize cultural motifs and emotional intensity.

“She asked, and All at once her hasty voice vibrant with amusement, rose to hector the public in general.”

(Their Language of Love 2013 by Bapsi Sidhwa)

Statistical Note: Adjectives in British fiction showed greater lexical variety, whereas Pakistani fiction emphasized culturally specific descriptors.

4.1.4. Adverbs

• **British Fiction:**

- Balanced use of adverbs, often modifying verbs to reflect nuanced character actions and emotions (e.g., *quietly, deliberately, scarcely*).
- Adverbs contributed to the subtlety of storytelling.

“I noticed that she deliberately sounded the ‘t’ of right, in itself a muted apology.”

(Sweet Tooth 2012 by Ian McEwan)

• **Pakistani Fiction:**

- Lower overall frequency of adverbs, relying more on context and concrete descriptions.
- Common adverbs emphasized immediacy or intensity (e.g., *suddenly, loudly, fiercely*).

“They were talking loudly in Urdu or Punjabi and using some English words but gesticulating and shaping one another in a way English people never did.”

(The Nothing 2017 by Hanif Qureishi)

Table 2: Summary of Key Differences

POS Category	British Fiction	Pakistani Fiction
Nouns	Abstract, thematic	Concrete, cultural
Verbs	Stative, reflective	Action-oriented
Adjectives	Subtle, varied	Culturally rich

Adverbs	Balanced, nuanced	Immediate, contextual
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This table shows the results of this study that demonstrated the unique linguistic features in British and Pakistani novels influenced by their cultural and literary traditions.

4.2 Cultural and contextual Observations

The results of this research have indicated that British novels demonstrated the theme of individualism, philosophical and nuanced introspection. In Pakistani novels, the use of language have reflected oral storytelling traditions, sensory imagery and cultural specificity as well as created vivid and engaging narratives.

5.1 Conclusion and Findings

In this research, the researcher has used corpus-based approach to analyse the frequencies and usage patterns of parts of speech (noun, adjective, verb and adverb) in British and Pakistani English novels. The researcher has compared the linguistic features across these two varieties and emphasized the interaction between language and culture in describing fictional narratives. The findings of this study underscore significant difference in describing the ways of how authors use parts of speech to reflect their cultural, thematic and stylistic priorities. British English novels reflected literary traditions that highlighted psychological insight, introspection and universal themes. These aspects of British fiction has described the frequent use of abstract nouns, stative verbs and nuanced adjectives. Pakistani English novels demonstrated a vibrant and sensory rich style because authors were influenced by oral storytelling traditions and local culture. The frequent use of concrete nouns, dynamic verbs, and culturally specific adjectives signified its rootedness in regional experiences. These differences in both varieties have underscored the role of language as a conduit for cultural expressions within a common global language like English. The findings of the study have also enhanced the comprehension of global English by illustrating the variety of Language practices in fiction across different regions.

5.2 Implications for Further Research

There are some implications for future studies.

- Expanding the analytical scope to include more kinds of English fiction such as Indian, African and Australian English may provide a more thorough understanding of global English trends.
- Exploring other literary genres such as poetry, drama may provide more variances in English use.
- Integrating linguistic analysis with reader response research may elucidate the impact of English choices on readers' perception of narratives.

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