



RESEARCH PAPER

Exploring Textual Patterns in Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*: A Systemic Functional Perspective

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| PAPER INFO | ABSTRACT |
| Received: July 17, 2019 | The study aimed to investigate metafunctional diversity in the light of textual, interpersonal, and ideational thematic relations by analyzing thematic structures in Durrani's <i>My Feudal Lord</i> . A mixed-method approach was used in the current study. Data for the analysis were taken from <i>My Feudal Lord</i> which consisted of 18 chapters. The introductory paragraphs of each chapter were analyzed by using the UAM corpus tool. For the analysis of themes Halliday's Theme theory of systemic functional grammar was applied to the text. The study concluded that <i>My Feudal Lord</i> contains a high percentage of topical themes, especially unmarked topical themes. The ratio of the textual and interpersonal theme is very low which shows that the text is not complex. The study will be helpful for the students to improve their understanding of the text and they will be able to navigate themselves through the problematic texts using this method upon understanding the idea of theme and rheme. |
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Introduction

Language is a vehicle used by people to communicate with one another while living in society. It is the language that holds different people belonging to different caste, creed, and colour under a single umbrella. A text is the ultimate result of a language. Art of writing has a long history but the existence of a text is dependent upon the existence of the language. Writers organize ideas with the help of words of a language. By arranging different words, a writer constitutes clauses and sentences and by arranging the sentences, a writer arranges the whole text. It means that a text is dependent upon clauses and sentences which have their meanings and themes. To analyze the meanings and organization of a text

different approaches have been used in the world. According to LaPolla (2013), Halliday's systemic functional grammar (SFG) is one of the most important approaches for the analysis of a text and it is common to all linguists. This approach consists of the three metafunctions viz. ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The present research applied the textual metafunction expounded by Halliday (2004) for the textual analysis in Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*. This study aims to investigate the thematic structures in line with ideational, interpersonal, and textual thematic relations in the English text of *My Feudal Lord* by Tehmina Durrani. The study is carried out i) to focus on different thematic structures used by the writer, Tehmina Durrani in *My Feudal Lord*, ii) to analyze text according to the parameters of theme/rheme, and iii) to realize the social purpose of thematic choices used by the writer in *My Feudal Lord*.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The creation of meaning in linguistic discourse can be explained and analyzed by employing systemic functional linguistics, which proposed a theory of the three-layered purpose of language. It is claimed that, like any semiotic system, language fulfills three communicative functions at the same time. These are ideational, the way reality is constructed in a discourse; interpersonal, the grammatical choices that enable people to enact their complex and diverse interpersonal relations; and textual, the internal organization, and communicative nature of a text (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The present research analyzes the thematic structure of the text while employing textual analysis theory given in Halliday's model (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) because the theme is a major aspect of how speakers construct their messages in a way which makes them fit smoothly into the unfolding language event (Wei, 2014).

The Textual metafunction analyzes a text contextually and co-textually (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Gerot & Wignell, 1994). The textual meaning expresses its relationship to its verbal and non-verbal environment (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). They are realized and identified through the patterns of Theme and Rheme and generally influenced by the mode of a text.

According to Chang and Lee (2019), themes can orient the readers in navigating the text, critical to effective writing. Themes can be defined as those elements which come first in a clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). They are the departure points of a previous clause to the next clause. On the other hand, Rheme can be defined as part other than the theme (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). It comprises new information for a reader. The Theme tells us about the previous information that has gone before, while the Rheme works in both, backward and forward directions by telling about the new information and linking it with the previous one (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). In a nutshell, they tell us about the developing process of a text.

Awareness of different themes could lead to organize different discourse patterns that may serve different purposes (Williams, 2005). Themes are used in the clauses of different moods. They are used with the clauses in declarative mood, interrogative mood, imperative moods, and exclamative moods. They are divided into three different types, i.e. ideational, textual, and interpersonal themes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Gerot & Wignell, 1994). All the themes can be in a single clause or a clause may have one or none. According to Halliday (2004), ideational themes can be nominal groups, prepositional phrases, adverbial groups, and embedded clauses. A topical theme may occupy a different place in a sentence. In an unmarked case, they (topical themes) may come to occupy the place of a subject, and in this way, they play the role of a subject in the clause. The topical themes when they are not at the place of a subject are called Marked Topical Themes.

The experiential element of a clause is known as a topical theme. It can be recognized as the first element in the clause expressing some sort of representative meaning. The topical element within the theme is some unit that functions as an adjunct and process subject, complement, or circumstantial (Halliday, 1994). The topic refers to one part of the experiential elements: process, participant. Topical themes may be marked or unmarked. In the usual clause pattern, the theme is conflated with the subject. Such a theme refers to as *Unmarked Theme*, declaring that "the *Subject* is the element that is chosen as theme unless there is a good reason for choosing something else" (Halliday, 2014, p.97). A theme that is not subject Halliday (2014) denotes it to as *Marked Theme*. The most common types of *Marked Themes* are circumstantial adjuncts (e.g. today, currently, on 14 August, at the meeting) and complements.

Textual themes are those themes that link a clause to its context (Halliday, 2004). Textual themes can be in the form of conjunctive adjuncts and conjunctions (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). There is a difference between conjunctions and conjunctive adjuncts. They are not the same. Conjunctive adjuncts are those words in a clause which can be moved easily from one place to another, while conjunction could not be moved. The conjunctive creates a logical link between the present and the previous clause. Conjunctions always come at the beginning and are restricted to their position.

Interpersonal elements are those elements that come before the topical theme (Gerot & Wignell, 1994). They are also thematic. There can be different types of interpersonal themes. They can be in the form of *finite*, *vocative*, *modal adjuncts*, and *Wh-elements*.

Previous Studies in the Field

According to Qasim, Sibtain and Talaat, (2018), systemic functional grammar has emerged as a theoretical and analytical tool on the horizon of linguistic and literary studies in the last two decades. Different studies in different

areas of linguistics have been conducted so far using this tool. Different researchers have used this tool in different ways of uncovering the hidden structures and meanings of the texts. Various researchers have contributed to the study of the textuality of texts by analyzing their theme, thematic structure, and thematic progression in text across different languages to find out how academic texts unfold thematically.

Writers of any language need to master a wide range of thematic option and use them in their writing to make their writing clear and argumentative (Hawes & Thomas, 2012). Thematic analysis research is a well-established research area. Many researchers have conducted research using this model. Different categories of the thematic analysis have been identified among different texts. The following studies have been conducted so far in the current area: Hasselgard (2004), Williams (2005), Zhou (2006), Denardi, Greggio, DellAgnello, and Gil (2007), Hu (2008), Ren, Cao, and Li (2009), Sari (2009), Paiva and Freitas (2011), Jallilifar and Khedri (2011), Adebola (2011), Ebrahimi and Khedri (2012a), Ebrahimi and Khedri (2012), Sujatna (2013), Jing (2013), Shanrmdama and Panamah (2013), Ghaleasadi (2013), Wang (2014), Hasan (2015), Damayanti (2016), Puspa (2016), Stoian and Dejica (2016), Ezeifeka (2016), Stella (2017), Nurlela, Gustiaingsih, Sofyan and Rosa (2017), Koutchadé (2017), Hamid (2018), Astuti (2018), and To (2018). The studies mentioned above are conducted in different areas. There is a lack of research in the autobiographical area of the study. The present research was conducted to fill this gap by using the thematic analysis model.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The study relies on both qualitative and quantitative methods. A mixed-method approach was adopted to describe a comprehensive picture of differences in thematic relations of metafunctions and their grammatical and functional constraints. The unit of analysis is a clause rather than a sentence within the systemic functional grammar framework. Clauses are grammatical structures containing a finite verb (verbs that perform tensely as it has passed, is going, is going to go) as opposed to grammatical structures containing non-finite verbs that happen in infinite such as going or going (a gerund). To analyze thematic relations, the categories of ideational themes, interpersonal themes, textual themes, topical themes, marked and unmarked themes, etc. were covered in the present study

Data Collection

The material was taken from *My Feudal Lord*, the autobiography of TehminaDurrani. *My Feudal Lord* was written by TehminaDurrani, William Hoffer, and Marilyn Hoffer. The text consists of eighteen chapters. The introductory paragraph of each chapter was taken as a sample for the analysis. The purposive sampling was used in this study. The reason behind choosing the introductory paragraphs is that a reader may know the background, which type of trends has

been used and what the problem is, what has been done by others, and what you are going to do through them. Moreover, the topic has also been introduced in the introductory paragraphs of the chapters. Therefore, it becomes the most important part of the analysis.

Data Analysis Procedure

The developed corpora were processed in the UAM corpus tool for the annotation regarding thematic relations. The UAM corpus tool is fully effective for the annotation of the English texts. The tagging of the English corpora produced the results only in statistical form. The English text was annotated according to the annotation scheme which the UAM corpus tool exports.

Results and Discussion

Textual Analysis of Text

The data analysis, through the corpus tool UAM, revealed that the grammatical choice made in analyzed text consisted of more theme structures than the rheme. The theme/rheme analysis of the text of *My Feudal Lord* by Durrani revealed that 50.80% of the text comprised the thematic structures, while only 21.70% grammatical choices were the part of the *rheme*.

Table 1
Percentage rations of theme, rheme, and sentence

| Grammatical structures | Percentages |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Theme | 50.87% |
| Rheme | 21.70% |
| Sentence | 25.69% |

The inequity existing between the percentage of the *theme* and *rheme* is significant as it expresses the range and types of social functions being performed by the parts of textual metafunction, theme, and rheme. The purposes of thematic choices have been discussed in the section of discussions. Figure 1 contains a graphical representation of the ratios of theme, rheme, and sentences.

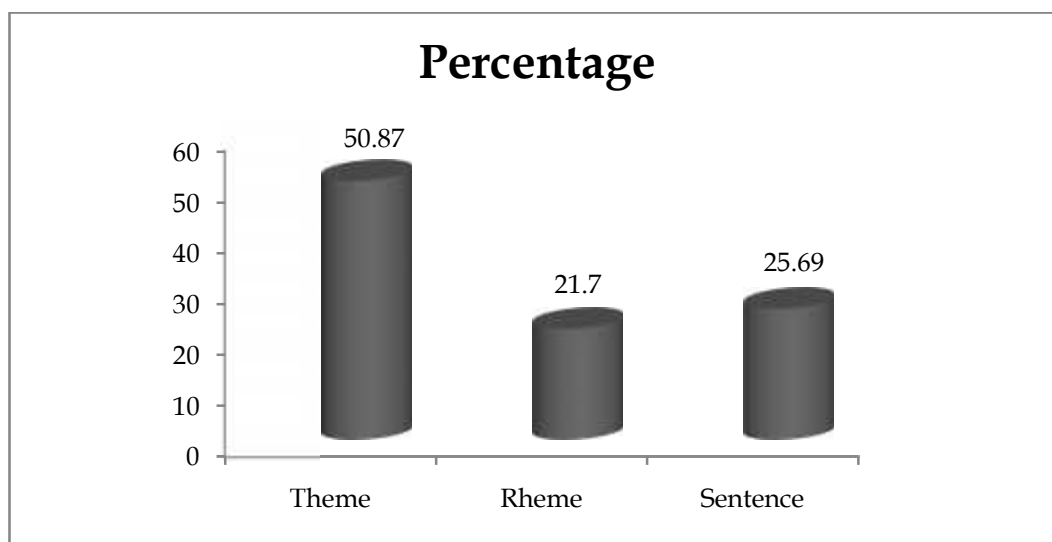


Figure 1. Percentage ratios of Theme, Rheme, and Sentence

Analysis of the Theme Types

The author has employed different types of themes in the text. The text of *My Feudal Lord* contains 5.99 percent textual themes (Text), 0.50 percent interpersonal themes (IT), and 21.20 percent topical themes (TT). The analysis also reveals that 16.46 percent of the text does not contain the textual themes, while 21.95 percent text is without the interpersonal themes. The ratio of the topical themes is higher as compared to interpersonal and textual themes. The high ratio of topical themes and less usage of interpersonal themes serves certain social purposes. This has been explained in the section of discussions. The details of the ratios of different types of themes have been given in table 2.

Table 2
Details of types of themes with their percentage of presence

| Theme type | Percentage |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Textual Theme (Text) | 5.99% |
| No Textual Theme (NTT) | 16.46% |
| Interpersonal Theme (IT) | 0.50 |
| No Interpersonal Theme (NIT) | 21.95% |
| Topical Theme (TT) | 21.20 |

Figure 2 gives a very realistic and tangible picture of the percentage of the different types of themes in *My Feudal Lord*.

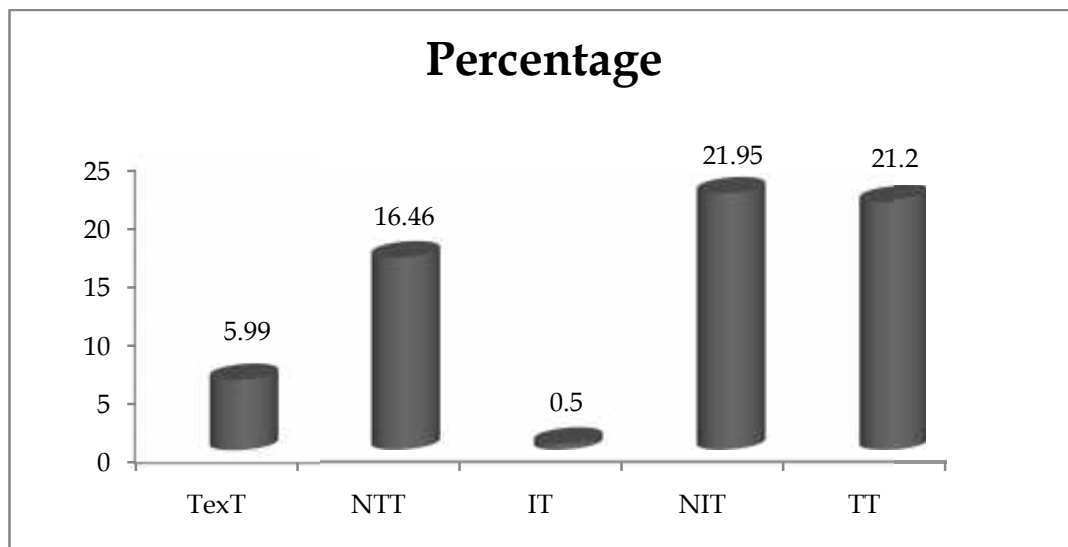


Figure 2. Graphical representation of different types of theme

Topical Themes in *My Feudal Lord*

The results of the thematic analysis of the text reveal that the ratio of topical themes in the text of *My Feudal Lord* is higher as compared to the textual and interpersonal themes present in the text. It has been revealed that 21.20 percent of the whole text contains topical themes. The 5.99 percent of topical themes are marked. The marked topical themes consist of 3.24 percent complements, 0.25 percent prepositions, and 2.49 percent adverbs. There are 14.21 percent unmarked topical themes. Out of the unmarked topical themes, 9.23 percent times nominal group pronouns have been used. The nominal group common nouns have been used 4.49 % times as unmarked topical themes. The significance of these marked and unmarked themes has been highlighted in the part of the discussions. The details of the different types of topical themes with their percentage of presence have been given in table 3. The example below contains the unmarked topical theme. The third-person pronoun has been used as a topical theme.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| They | demanded the release of forty of Zia's political prisoners and |
| Theme (topical) | Rheme |

The clause also contains a textual theme of the conjunction 'and' as well. Another example of a topical theme has been given below.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| I | argued with him about this unnecessary vanity |
| Theme (topical) | Rheme |

In this clause, the first person pronoun has been used as a topical theme. Another example of the topical theme has been given below.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Grey hair | looks distinguished on a man of your position |
| Theme (topical) | Rheme |

In the example given above, grey hair has been used as a topical theme. The example below shows the use of adverbial and the noun both as topical themes in the clause.

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Around my neck a row of diamonds | matched my earrings |
| Theme (topical) | Rheme |

Table 3
The details of different types of topical themes with percentages

| Topical theme and types | Percentage |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Topical Theme | 21.20 % |
| Marked Topical Theme | 5.99% |
| Complement | 3.24% |
| Prepositional | 0.25% |
| Adverbials | 2.49% |
| Unmarked Topical Theme | 14.21% |
| Nominal Group Pronoun | 9.23% |
| Nominal Group Common Noun | 4.49% |

Interpersonal Theme and Its Types

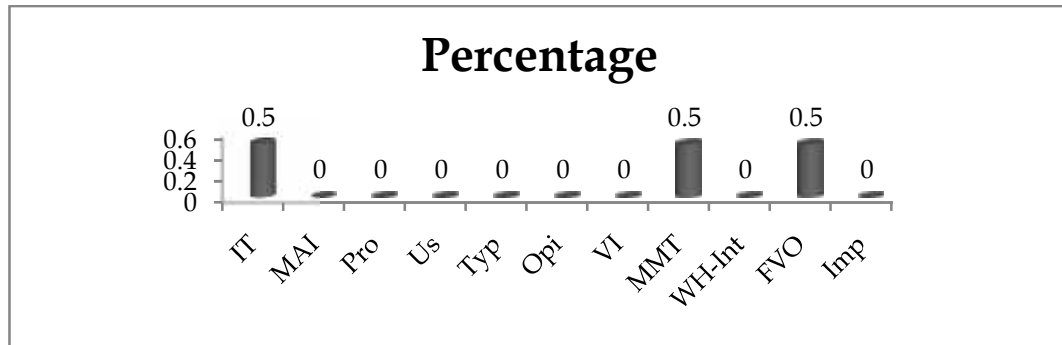
The analysis of the theme/rheme choices made in the text of *My Feudal Lord* by Durrani reveals that interpersonal themes are the types of themes that have been used less than all other types of themes. The analysis shows that the text of *My Feudal Lord* contains only 0.50 percent interpersonal themes. The analysis reveals that the analyzed text does not contain modal adjuncts depicting probability, usuality, and typicality of the opinion. The text also misses vocatives and Wh-interrogatives. The text contains 0.50 percent interpersonal themes which are marking the mood of the clauses, and 0.50 percent verbal operators functioning as finite. The significance of the less use of interpersonal themes in serving certain social purposes has been discussed in the section of discussions. The details of the different types of interpersonal themes with their percentage of presence have been given in table 4.

Table 4
Details of the types of interpersonal themes

| Interpersonal theme and its types | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Interpersonal Theme (IT) | 0.50% |
| Modal Adjuncts Interpersonal (MAI) | 0.0% |
| Probability (Pro) | 0.0% |
| Usuality (Us) | 0.0% |
| Typicality (Typ) | 0.0% |
| Opinion (Opi) | 0.0% |
| Vocative Interpersonal (VI) | 0.0% |

| | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| Mood Marking Theme (MMT) | 0.50% |
| Wh- interrogative (Wh-Int) | 0.0% |
| Finite Verbal operator (FVO) | 0.50% |

Graphical representation of the different types of interpersonal themes has been given in the figure below.



Textual Theme and its Types

The thematic analysis through the UAM corpus tool shows that the textual themes come on the second number according to the number of percentages after the topical themes in the text of *My Feudal Lord*. The results show that there are 6.48 percent textual themes in *My Feudal Lord*. It has been calculated through the UAM tool that the author has not used continuative textual themes. The use of conjunctions to create the textual links is 1.5 percent. The textual links have been created by using conjunctive adjuncts 1.5 percent times. The significance of the ratio of textual themes in the text of *My Feudal Lord* has been evaluated and discussed in the part of discussions. The details of the different textual themes with their percentage of presence in the text have been given in table 5. The following clauses contain textual themes of conjunction and continuation. The first two clauses contain the textual theme of conjunction but and the last one contains the theme of continuation.

| | | |
|---------|---------|-------------------|
| But | what | was to happen now |
| Theme | | Rheme |
| Textual | Topical | Rheme |

In this clause, there is the textual theme of conjunction as the word 'but' is present.

| | | |
|---------|---------|--------------|
| But | it was | not expected |
| Theme | | Rheme |
| Textual | Topical | Rheme |

In this clause, the textual theme of conjunction is present as the word 'but' has been used to link the clause with the previous clause.

| | | |
|---------|---------|--|
| As | I | checked my appearance in a full-length mirror my face flushed with self-conscious pleasure |
| Theme | | Rheme |
| Textual | Topical | Rheme |

In the clause mentioned above, there is a textual theme of continuation as the word 'as' has been used. The talk has already been going on, and the word 'as' has been used to continue the point already being talked about.

Table 5
Details of the types of textual themes and their percentages

| Textual theme and its types | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Textual Theme (TexT) | 6.48% |
| Continuative (Cont) | 0.0% |
| Conjunctions (Conj) | 1.25% |
| Conjunctive Adjunct | (CA) 1.25% |

Discussions

The results of the theme/rheme analysis of the text of *My Feudal Lord* revealed that the text contains grammatical structures of the theme in a significantly high percentage. Looking at the percentage of the presence of different types of themes shows that topical themes are used more than the textual and interpersonal themes. The use of interpersonal themes is remarkably less in number. The percentage of the presence of textual themes is also low in the text of *My Feudal Lord*.

Certain types of themes indicated certain fore-grounded information in the text by the author. Therefore, different types of themes used in the text of *My Feudal Lord* served specific social purposes. The inequities existing among the percentages of the presence of topical, textual, and interpersonal themes of the text, therefore, served certain purposes.

My Feudal Lord is an autobiographical work of Tehmina Durrani in which she describes her relationship with her ex-husbands, especially Mr. Ghulam Mustafa Khar. She narrates incidents from her own life as well as the political incidents of the past. She also evaluates the role of Mr. Khar in the Politics of Pakistan, his relationship with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and the political scenario of Pakistan in Bhutto's era and after his death.

She uses different thematic choices to show different aspects. The use of the unmarked topical theme is significant as she evaluates Mr. Khar's role in the politics of Pakistan. She uses her name and pronouns for him when writing about him. In this way, she uses nominal group common nouns and nominal group

pronouns as a theme of the clauses. Similarly, when she describes her relationship with her ex-husbands she uses marked topical themes. Furthermore, the unmarked themes have been used by her to evaluate the relationship between Mr. Khar and Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Therefore, the more number of unmarked topical themes serve the purpose of description and evaluation of characters and narration of the incidents from the lives of the characters. To do so, she had to use the names or the pronouns in place of the common nouns.

My Feudal Lord belongs to the literary genre. The literary genre is marked by the flowery language. The writers use unusual grammatical patterns to attract readers to make this literary piece of work look more beautiful. Therefore, the marked thematic patterns have been used by the writer to make the language of her book more attractive, extra-ordinary, and beautiful. For this purpose, she uses complements and adverbial and preposition groups as the themes of the clause.

Furthermore, the book has been written from the first-person point of view and it involves narration. The incidents, conversations, and events have been narrated by the author. Therefore, the book does not include first-hand dialogues and conversations. This is the reason that *My Feudal Lord* contains a low percentage of interpersonal themes. The mood marking themes have been used to indicate the moods of the clause, but these are also less in numbers. The text of *My Feudal Lord* contains textual themes that are in second place after the topical themes according to the percentage of presence. The themes are significant as these have been used to create links across the text.

Conclusion

From the results and the discussions of the current study, it has been concluded that the text of *My Feudal Lord* contains a high percentage of topical themes, especially unmarked topical themes. The study also concluded that the ratio of textual themes and interpersonal themes is very low in the selected data of the text. Furthermore, it has been concluded that unmarked topical themes function as the representative of description and evaluation of the characters, while marked topical themes have significance in making the language of the text attractive. The fewer number of interpersonal themes denotes the narrative nature of the text and the less use of first-hand dialogues and conversations. The low percentage of textual themes marked that the text of *My Feudal Lord* is not complex in texture.

Recommendations

In this study, the researchers selected introductory paragraphs for the analysis. Further research can be conducted on the whole text which will be very helpful for the learners. A comparative study of the Urdu version, *Mainda Sain*, and English text can also be conducted.

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