Gender Representation in Literary Text: A Study of Linguistic Sexism in Ali's *The Stone Woman*

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the use of language at word level to determine the types of sexist language used in a literary text. For the purpose, Tariq Ali's (2000) novel *The Stone Woman* (TSW) is selected as it contains several female and male characters, and it is expected that the writer has represented both these genders differently through the use of different linguistic choices. Linguistic items from TSW have been collected through purposive sampling technique using close reading method and AntConc (3.2.1) software. Similarly, the study findings have been presented in the form of tables and interpreted accordingly. It has been found that the unequal treatment of the representation of gender through linguistic choices does exist to marginalize women. The study findings also assert that gender discrimination is carried out through linguistic sexism and that the feminist stylistic model is suitable to analyze such a sexist attitude of the writers. The use of such language which represents women negatively shows a biased attitude of the writer towards gender depiction.

Keywords: Marked /Unmarked Terms, Sexist Language, Overt Sexism, Women Representation

1. Introduction

Despite the slogans and the efforts made by the feminists resulting in several achievements in the economic and social set up of the societies, the unequal treatment of the representation of gender through linguistic choices does exist to marginalize women even today. Language being an interesting and fascinating phenomenon keeps on changing over the time due to many factors. One of these factors as claimed by Alzharani (2019) is gender. The gender differences existing in any society are cemented, challenged, and even constructed by language use. When this language use works to derogate any one gender, it results in sexism. The use of sexist language is prejudiced because it insults gender either by removing any gender from linguistic landscape or by using derogatory terms for it. These were the feminists like Mills (2008), who first paid attention to this biased use of language which resulted in the marginalization of women. Holmes (2005) discusses in detail how the language users discriminate gender through language use at word, sentence/phrase, and discourse level. She further discusses the linguistic items and patterns under each level to elaborate her views by taking examples from different genres. Sexist language encompasses the use of several elements that offer themselves for analysis from gender perspective. The present research aims to explore the use of language at word level to determine the types of sexist language used in a literary text. For the purpose, Tariq Ali's novel *The Stone Woman* (2000) is selected as it contains many female and male characters, and it is expected that the writer has represented both these genders differently through the use of different linguistic choices.

2. Literature Review

The writers in their writings intentionally or unintentionally exclude a gender which results in a biased use of language. The analysis of such a language use has been carried out since years where it is observed that these are the females who are mostly discriminated. The use of sexist language in different genres of literature has been analyzed. For example, the language used in poems, short stories, movies, and novels has been analyzed from different perspectives by several researchers (Ahmad et al., 2022; Amir and Mehmood, 2018; Anwar et al.,2022, 2024; Arikan, 2016; Ashimbuli,2022; Darweesh & Ghayadh, 2016; Denopra, 2012; Qayyum et al., 2019; Kayani et al.,2023; Kudus, 2008; Malik et al., 2013; Mumtaz, 2022; Sher & Saleem, 2023; Usman et al.,2023).

Based on changing contexts the words once used in a sexist way may not be regarded as sexist by the critics and analysts and the same is the case with neutral words. According to Mills (2008), the sexist attitude attached to certain grammatical choices and words throughout the history may not be interpreted as sexist in some cases. Hence, dealing with sexism as a form of gender exploitation one needs to be conscious in the developing gender awareness (Budidarma et al. 2023). Sexism can be divided into two types based on its identification. Firstly, overt, or direct sexism is that form of sexism which is easily discernable. The choice of linguistic items in this case is influenced by gender stereotypes resulting in a discriminative attitude. This type of sexism according to Mills (2008) identifies through a number of linguistic markers and linguistic features. Such a sexist use of language is biased as it discriminates women by designating them to an inactive and lower position.

The use of suffixes like "-ess" and "-ette" when added to masculine terms to refer to females result in their derogation. Such feminine suffixes are diminutive in nature and give a concept of smallness to women. For example, Bravo (2009) demonstrates how females are described through diminutive "-ess" in "waitress" where it is derived from masculine term "waiter". But some non-sexist terms can also give a sexist meaning depending upon the context of their usage as claimed by Ehrlich and King (1994). For example, the title used to address a woman "Ms" becomes sexist when context describes it as a third term to refer to women. Other than these, the use of masculine nouns and pronouns inclusive of both the genders is also sexist as it sets the masculine term as the norm. Naming practices have also been criticized for being male – centered. No names given to women or names derived from masculine names used for women come under criticism by the feminists. This exclusion of women from naming and defining practices was resisted. Moreover, the terms used to refer women carrying negative connotations also result in gender discrimination even when these are apparently used in a positive sense (Mills 2008). Insult terms used for women are another element that is used to portray women through a sexualized position as claimed by Mills (2008). According to Holmes (2005), the sexist use of language also results in the semantic derogation of women. The neutral terms carrying positive meanings once used for women become sexist with the passage of time. The terms associated with women undergo a change in meaning i.e., with negative connotation. The passive portrayal of women especially in the sexual scenes is also projected through transitivity

choices in any text (Wareing 1994). The transitivity analysis with a focus on 'who does what to whom' depicts female characters according to Burton (1982) as being "acted upon". Such a depiction presents them passive and submissive people. Other than these aspects, women are also degraded through the use of indirect reported speech and sexist jokes.

Tariq Ali, the selected writer of the present study is a Pakistani -British writer. He is famous for his *Islamic Quintet* consisting of five historical novels. These novels have been analyzed from several perspectives like historical perspective (Ali et al.,2014; Chandio & Kulsoom, 2017) identity perspective (Amir & Mehmood, 2018; Usman et al., 2021) postcolonial perspective (Hussain & Mishra 2022; Liao,2022, Yousef ,2019) and feminist perspective (Amir & Mehmood, 2018; Batool, 2022); Kayani & Anwar, 2022; Malik et al., 2013). The studies interested in sexist linguistic choices of Ali have been conducted to analyze transitivity patterns (Mahmood & Hashmi, 2020; Anwar et al., 2024) and word choices (Anwar et al., 2023) as well.

3. Data and Methods

This study has been conducted following a mixed method approach to reach at better understanding and authentic conclusions. Mahlberg (2010) in this context claims that quantitative research can only provide valuable insights when it is linked to qualitative analysis. Based on the insights from feminist literary criticism and utilizing Mills (2008) sexism in language use ideas the researchers have applied corpus methodology to collect and analyze data at word level. For the purpose, Tariq Ali's novel *The Stone Woman* (2000) is selected as it contains many female and male characters, and it is expected that the writer has represented both these genders differently through the use of different linguistic choices.

For the purpose, the researchers after reading this novel, developed a corpus of this selected novel which was then searched for specific search terms in Cluster program AntConc (3.2.1). This corpus tool has been helpful as the search in AntConc (3.2.1) provided the researchers with a neat and complete list of all the searched items. Moreover, it saved researchers' time as reading manually and collecting related examples is a time taking process as Short (2018) points out, "analyzing a long novel in close stylistic detail could take a lifetime" (p.255). Other than this, the attitude of a word as used in its context is very important to determine either a word is sexist or not as proposed by Mills (1995). For this purpose, AntConc (3.2.1) proved helpful where the researchers utilized its Concordance program to analyze the identified examples in relation to

their context. Hence, the researchers collected the frequencies and patterns for three features at word level namely generic nouns, generic pronouns, and marked/unmarked terms in TSW. Then the contextual excerpts for these words were collected and analyzed to detect the elements of overt linguistic sexism in the text. Similarly, the study findings have been presented in the form of tables and interpreted in the form of words by quoting the examples from the text accordingly.

4. Results and Discussion

This section covers an analysis of the sexist use of language at word level where the researchers find out the use of generic nouns and pronouns, paired terms in binaries and marked/unmarked forms used for women and men in the selected text. The following sections cover a discussion of each of these categories individually.

4.1. Use of Generic Noun and Neutral Nouns in *The Stone Woman*

Keeping in view Wambura (2018) claim that women are portrayed discriminatively when the writers write in a sexist way, the present study looks at the use of generic nouns and pronouns. The choice of linguistic items becomes biased when one gender is set as the norm. For example, generic forms like "man" and "mankind" are examples of sexist use of language when these masculine terms are used to refer to both the genders i.e., male and female. In comparison to this the term "humankind" is a neutral term that can be used to cover both the genders. Based on this understanding, the present study researchers have analyzed the collected data to see the use of generic nouns like man and mankind. But at the same time, they have looked for those instances as well where the writer has used neutral terms to refer to humanity in general. Such a comparison helped the researchers in developing an understanding of the writer's attitude towards gender representation.

4.1.1. Use of Generic Noun "Man" in TSW

The text form of the novel was searched through AntConc (3.2.1) software cluster program where the search term "man" was searched, and only relevant examples were selected as given in Table 1. The search resulted in an identification of 4 examples where the masculine noun "man" is used generically i.e., inclusive of both the genders.

In example 1 the term man appearing as in "*a dying man*" refers to all the human beings where the writer narrates how the habits once developed in human beings remain with them even when

they are on their deathbed. Again, the use of term "man" in "*a dying man*" (example 2) is sexist as it refers to humanity in general. While giving the idea that telling a lie by a dying person is pointless, the writer has used the masculine generic noun 'man' to refer to humanity in general.

1. *Once you acquire the habit of speaking untruths, it is difficult to do otherwise, even for **a dying man**, but I am determined to break the habit here and now.*

2. *Sara. I will write the truth. It is futile for **a dying man** to do otherwise.*

3. *He says he will bear the pain **like a man**."*

4. *He celebrated their innocence and wrote of how dependent **man** was on each of them*

Likewise, the use of idiomatic expression like '*to bear the pain like a man*' is also noted in the text as given in example 3 where male is set as norm. Example 4, too, falls under the category of generic noun where "man" is used which refers to all the human beings where while discussing about the utility of animals the character says that how man i.e. human beings are dependent on these animals. These examples (1-4) where the masculine generic noun "man" is used to refer to both the genders shows Ali's (2000) biased attitude towards women. Hence, strengthening Mills's (2008) assertion about generic forms that these forms "perpetuate a view of the male as a norm or universal and the female as deviant or individual" (p. 87).

4.1.2. Use of Neutral Terms in TSW

Other than generic noun "man" the researchers have also investigated the use of neutral terms like "*person*", "*human*", "*human beings(s)*" in the text to see the attitude of the writer towards gender representation. These search terms were searched through AntConc (3.2.1) cluster program and relevant examples were noted as given in Table 2. The terms "human/human beings" are used three times in the corpus (examples 5-8) in a neutral way where these terms are used to refer to both the genders without any discrimination. The term "human" in "*human voice*" as shown in example 8 refers to both the genders without using any masculine term. The use of these neutral terms by Ali (2000) in this text is an example of his non-sexist use of language.

5. *The only way **human beings** can survive in this world is to become like ants.*

6. *What your philosophers call progress, my dear Baron, has created an inner drought in **human beings**.*

7. *They had done something so terrible to their fellow-**human beings** that it was difficult to pretend*

8. *fully expecting a brief lecture on the **human** voice and the conditions that caused it to change .*

Likewise, another neutral noun "person" which carries the reference to both the genders is also noted in the text. But this term, though neutral, is also used in a sexist way in 12 % cases (examples 9-11) where this neutral term is followed by masculine pronouns to refer to both the genders.

9. *"If too many stones are thrown at a **person**, **he** stops being frightened of them."*

10. *If the dervishes observed **any person** leaving the room they could rush after **him** and stab **him** with a devotional dagger.*

11. *If such a **person** is present it would be useful at this stage if **he** could identify **himself**."*

In example 9, the term "*person*" though is inclusive of both the genders, yet it is used in a sexist way because it is followed by masculine generic pronoun "*he*". The same is the case with example 10 where "person" is followed by generic pronoun "him". Example 11 shows the same sexist use of language where "person" is followed by two generic pronouns i.e., "he" and "himself". Other than these three examples, Ali (2000) has used the neutral term "*person*" for 22 times (88%) instead of "man" to refer to human beings in general which shows his biased free attitude towards gender depiction. The following examples (12-25) from TSW show a biased free attitude of the writer where the neutral term 'person' is used to refer to human beings in general.

12. *And he never talked about us to any living **person**.*

13. *How could any **person** be unhappy in these surroundings?*

14. *Selim threatened any **person** who showed even the slightest interest in it with death*

15. *It never reached the **person** for whom it had been intended.*

16. *he appeared to be a very different **person** these days.*

17. *He had told me of this **person** before I left Istanbul,*

18. *the thoughtful and generous **person** I had known as a child.*

19. *He claims that there is a **person** present in this room,*

*20. I have never spoken of these matters to any living **person**.*

*21. too much of a punishment for one **person** to bear*

*22. A **person** close to us dies. A person not so close to us carries on living.*

*23. He knew he could not trust any other **person**.*

*24. I and no other **person** would ever be in control of my emotions,*

*25. We will not mention it to another **person** as long as we live.*

Table 1 presents an overall view of the division of these discussed linguistic items based on their sexist and non-sexist use in TSW.

Table 1: The sexist/non-sexist use of Generic Noun "Man" and other nouns in TSW

Sr#	Linguistic item	Sexist Usage	Non-sexist use
1	**Man**	100%	--------
2	**Human/**	----------	100%
	Human beings		
3	**Person**	12%	84%

4.1.3. Use of Non-Gendered Nouns in TSW

Other than these neutral terms, some other nouns used by Ali (2000) in TSW are also identified through a close reading of the text which are not gender specific. The analysis of these nouns is interesting to see how these are used in a sexist or non-sexist way. These include "*assassin*", "*child*", "*guest*", "*killer*", "*master*", "*lover*" and "*victim*". Generally, these apparently non-gendered terms can be understood with reference to any one gender depending upon the context and the cotext of its usage. But the examples of these selected terms taken for the present study are those where these terms include a reference to both the genders. For example, the term "*assassin*" as given in example 26 shows the sexist use of language because it can refer to both the genders but the use of masculine pronoun "he" makes its use sexist.

*26. I will look the **assassin** straight in the eye, so that **he** can remember the face of at least one of his victims.*

Another term used in a sexist way is "guest" where it includes both the genders in it but as in example 27 where the use of "he" sets the male as the norm excluding the female from linguistic landscape.

27. "*Once a **guest** entered, **he** could not leave till the singing was over*".

Likewise, the term "*killer*" may be used to refer to both the genders but the use of masculine generic pronoun "he" makes its use sexist where the context does not give any hint about the gender as in example 28.

28. "*Everyone prayed for the courageous **killer** never to be found. Whoever it was **he** must have carried on working here.*"

Another neutral term used in a sexist way is that of "*master*" (example 29) where while discussing a painting, the female character wonders about the master, the use of "his" with master whose gender is not clear shows how certain professions and job roles are associated with the males stereotypically.

29. "*How many times the **master** had changed **his** mind*"?

Likewise, the term "lover" in example 30 is referring to human beings in general including lovers irrespective of their gender. But the use of masculine generic pronouns "*he*", "*his*" and "*he*" with this term again shows writer's gender bias.

30. *For your part resist falling in love ang guard against becoming a **lover**, […] **he** is without means. […] **his** aim […] **he is** elderly […]*

Another example substantiating the same point is the use of "victim" (example 31) which refers to human beings in general, but "he" is used which shows how even gender inclusive term can be used in a sexist way.

31. *The character of the **victim** had to be assassinated in as many ways as possible and **his** name blackened.*

Table 2: The use of Non-Gendered Nouns in TSW

Sr#	Non-Gendered Nouns	Sexist Usage	Non-sexist use
1	Assassin	100%	--------

2	Child	--------	100%
3	Guest	100%	--------
4	Killer	100%	--------
5	Master	100%	--------
6	Lover	100%	--------
7	Victim	100%	--------

4.2. **Use of Generic Pronouns in *The Stone Woman***

Other than these nouns, the use of pronouns is also analyzed by the researchers to determine the sexist/non-sexist use of language by the writer. The study has focused on the use of masculine generic pronouns like "*he*", "*his*", "*himself*" along with the use of neutral pronouns like "*one*", "everyone" and "we". Table 3 presents an overall summary of the use of generic and neutral pronouns in TSW. The following discussion presents an analysis of these linguistic items based on their usage to determine either these are used in a sexist or a non-sexist way. Ali's (2000) use of masculine pronoun "*he*" as given in example 32 shows a sexist use of language because "he" in this example refers to humanity in general.

 32. ***He*** *who will pay, will have **his** say.*

Likewise, masculine pronoun '*himself*' (example 33) again highlights the sexist use of language where it is preceded by a neutral pronoun "*everyone*". Though "everyone" is a neutral pronoun which does not show a gender bias but the use of "*himself*" to refer to all the human beings results in the sexist use of language which ultimately results in gender discrimination as claimed by Crawford and English (1984) that how the generic usage of pronouns like "he" to refer to both women and men results in women's marginalization.

 33. <u>*Everyone*</u> *is trying to get something for **himself** before a new order is restored.*

Other than these two cases of sexist use of pronouns, the writer appears to be less sexist when he uses neutral pronouns like "*one*" and "*we*" to refer to human beings in general. A total number of 11 examples for the neutral pronoun "one" are used in the text. These examples are used in a non-sexist way where these refer to both the genders without using any masculine form as the

norm. Examples (34- 44) show how Ali (2000) has used this term instead of "man" to avoid the sexist use of language.

> 34. *It is such a big country that **one** could lose oneself in its vastness.*
>
> 35. *It is in times like these that **one** realizes that there are other joys in this world*
>
> 36. *a very useful prop for **one's** memory.*
>
> 37. *Strong premonitions can have that effect on **one's** body.*
>
> 38. *What one is, **one** does*
>
> 39. *as **one** might think.*
>
> 40. *When **one** first arrives here after a long absence,*
>
> 41. *when **one** is feeling happy it is not possible to answer such question*
>
> 42. *It is not easy to clear **one's** head of emotional waste*
>
> 43. *Without the experience of darkness **one** can never properly appreciate the light,*
>
> 44. *It is these small victories that enrich **one's** life,"*

Another way to make language less sexist as observed in TSW is the use of plural pronoun "*we*" where instead of writing that "How **a man** lives **his** life does not, unfortunately, depend on **him** alone.", Ali (2000) writes:

> 45. "*How **we** live **our** lives does not, unfortunately, depend on **us** alone*"

Based on this analysis the researchers maintain that the language use can be made less sexist with the help of alternate terms like "one", "we" and "everyone" which are inclusive of both genders and no gender is discriminated in this way.

Table 3: The use of Generic Pronouns in TSW

Sr#	Generic pronouns	Total Examples	Sexist Usage	Non-sexist use
1	**He**	1	100%	--------
2	**Himself**	1	100%	--------
3	**One**	11	--------	100%
4	**Everyone**	1	100%	--------
5	**We**	1	--------	100%

4.3. **Use of Paired Terms in *The Stone Woman***

The use of paired terms in binaries is another aspect that is analyzed at word level by the researchers. These terms appear in pairs where one refers to a male and the other to a female. The term that appears at the initial position is more important and it is observed mostly that the male terms appear first in most of the cases which relegate the females to a secondary or marginal position. A search for these paired terms in the present study was carried out by the researchers following two steps. Firstly, the most common words used for these both genders like woman, man, male, female and terms for certain relations like father, mother, son, daughter, sister, brother etc. were searched through AntConc (3.2.1) cluster program. The left and right collocates of these terms were noted to keep only those examples which were falling under the category of paired terms. Table 4 presents different patterns for these binary terms found in the text with relevant examples.

Table 4: Use of Paired Terms in *The Stone Woman*

Sr#	Paired Terms with Men in initial position		Paired Terms with women in initial position	
1	Men and women	=100%	Women and men	=0%
2	Father and the mother	=50%	Mother and father	=50%
3	Brother and sister	= 100%	Sister and brother	=0%
4	Uncles and aunts	=67%	Aunts and uncles	=33%
5	Gods and goddesses	=100%	Goddesses and gods	=0%

A total number of 5 patterns of paired terms are identified where it is found that male terms are appearing first in maximum cases i.e., 82 % while female terms take the initial position only in 18% cases. The binaries like "*men and women*" (examples 46-49) give the impression that these are the male members of the society who are important in status as they are given the initial positions in the binaries.

> 46. *Everyone from our household,* **men and women**, *master and servant, was present*
>
> 47. *It must have been the last time Zakiye danced with other* **men and women.**
>
> 48. *He told me that he could no longer bear the tears of the* **men and women**

49. *is this not rare for* **men as well as women**

Likewise, the binaries "*the fathers and the mothers*" (example 50), and "*brother(s) and sister(s)*" (examples 51-55) again show the higher status of the men where masculine terms appear first in the binaries. The general reference to the siblings carries male term "brother" at the initial position and this makes the English language sexist.

50. *The Karmatians were* **the fathers and the mothers** *of all the different Sufi orders that exist today.*

51. *I hoped your affection for each other was that of* **a brother and sister,**

52. *whether we were* **brother and sister** *or a newly married couple*

53. *What my* **brother and sisters** *don't know is that*

54. *My* **brothers and sister***, who had been summoned*

55. *All my friends had* **brothers and sisters**

Other than the sexists use of these binaries, "*uncles and aunts*" (example 56), "*great-uncles and great-aunts***"** (example 57), and "*gods and goddesses*" (example 58) show the important position given to males where the masculine terms referring to them are used at the initial position.

56. *I had brought him up on stories of our family, of my* **uncles and aunts**

57. *the preserve of those* **great-uncles and great-aunts**

58. *stories of the ancient Greek* **gods and goddesses.**

In comparison to these, females are given this initial position only in three cases like *"my mother and my father"* (example 59), "*aunts and uncles*" (example 60) and "*princesses and noblemen*" (example 61).

59. *I think of Hasan Baba as both* **my mother and my father.**

60. *stories about Yusuf Pasha from* **aunts and uncles**

61. *the portraits of* **princesses and noblemen.**

It is observed that even in these examples where female terms appear at the initial position do not designate them in possession of power or importance. Instead, the context of these examples shows that females are headed first when stereotypical gender roles in relation to emotions are assigned as in "*I think of Hasan Baba as both my mother and my father*" (example 59). Likewise,

in example 60 where female term "aunt" appears at the initial position, it is meant to highlight how the women are talkative who narrate the stories always. In third example (example 61) the initial positioning of the female term "*princesses*" is described in relation to the imaginary beautiful paintings of them. Hence, such a description where the maximum paired terms take male terms at the initial position shows the biased attitude of the writer towards women representation. The findings of the present analysis strengthen Ansary & Babai's (2003) claim that language is male-centered where the initial position is reserved for masculine nouns.

4.4. Use of Marked/Unmarked Terms in TSW

The data for this aspect of language used at word level are collected through close reading of the text followed by a search in AntConc (3.2.1). Based on the close reading of the text a total number of 11 words i.e., linguistic items (Table 5) were selected to see the attitude of these linguistic choices in relation to their being marked/unmarked usage for both the genders. Table 5 presents an overall picture of the use of marked and unmarked forms of these 11 linguistic items with a gender-wise division. The analysis indicates that men are described mostly through unmarked terms i.e., Egyptian (50%), friends (47%), Italian (75%), and secretive (75%). In comparison to this, women carry maximum marked terms (see Table 5) where the only term used as unmarked for them is "friends" (33%). Such an imbalanced picture where the linguistic terms are marked in maximum cases when used to describe women and are unmarked in maximum cases when used for showing a biased attitude of Ali (2000) towards women.

Table 5: Use of Marked/Unmarked Terms in TSW

Sr#	Terms	Used for Men		Used for Women	
		Marked	**Unmarked**	**Marked**	**Unmarked**
1	**Children**	100%	-----	-----	-----
2	**Egyptian**	-----	50%	50%	-----
3	**European**	-----	-----	**100%**	-----
4	**French**	**60%**	-----	40%	-----
5	**Friends**	7%	47%	13%	33%
6	**Italian**	-----	75%	25%	-----

7	**Peasant**	-----	-----	100%	-----
8	**Secretive**	-----	50%	50%	-----
9	**Servant**	75%	-----	25%	-----
10	**Serving**	-----	-----	100%	-----
11	**Slave**	-----	50%	50%	-----

The terms "*Egyptian*", "*French*", "*Italian*", "*secretive*" and "*slave*" are marked when these are used for women but unmarked when Ali (2000) uses these terms to describe men. For example, a male is referred to as simply "*Egyptian" in "she could not possibly marry an Egyptian*" (example 62) but when the text uses this term to refer to a female it becomes marked (example 63) where the female marker 'woman' is added with it and it becomes "*an Egyptian woman".* This gender bias is further visible when the term "French" is used to refer to men without being marked for four times but when this term is used for women it is used in a marked way for 6 times as in "*French woman"* (examples 64), "*French women"* (example 65), "*French female"* (example 66) and *"a French lady"* (example 67).

> 62. *she could not possibly marry an* **Egyptian**.
> 63. *an* **Egyptian woman**
> 64. *the* **French woman**
> 65. *Those* **French women**
> 66. **French females,**
> 67. *A* **French lady**

Likewise, "*Italian"* is used for three times (examples 68-70) to refer to men in the text but it takes "lady" with it and becomes a marked term as "*The Italian lady*" (example 71) when referring to a woman. The term "*secretive*" shows the same attitude where it is unmarked when referring to Halil, a male, as given in example 109 but the same term becomes marked as "*secretive girl*" when used for a female as given in example 108.

> 68. *the* **Italian**
> 69. **an Italian** *by the name of Niccolo*
> 70. *why this* **Italian** *and why now?"*

> 71. *The Italian lady*
> 72. *Halil could also be very **secretive**.*
> 73. *You're such a **secretive girl.***

The term "*salve*" is also used in a biased way in the text where it appears as a marked term for two times when used for women (examples 76 & 77). Another term used in a marked way for women is "*European*" which is used with female terms *woman*, *European lady* and *wife* in examples 78-80 respectively.

> 74. ***The slave***
> 75. *the Sultan's favourite **white slave**,*
> 76. *his **slave-girl***
> 77. ***slave-girls***
> 78. ***European woman***
> 79. ***European lady***
> 80. *his **European wife***

An important term used both in marked and unmarked way in TSW is "friend(s)". It is marked for women for two times as "*women friends*" (examples 81 & 82) while only once for men as "*male friends*" in example 83.

> 81. *my **women friends***
> 82. *some **women friends***
> 83. *or **male friends** and visitors*

The unmarked use of this term is important to analyze where it is used to represent women for five times (examples 84-88). For example, in "*a man imposed on me by my mother, just as all my childhood friends had*" (example 87) the context shows that friends here refer to female friends. Likewise, men, too, are described through this term as unmarked where context again makes it clear that referent is a male. For example, in "*my uncle's friend, but I had forgotten his name*" (example 89), the pronoun "*his*" shows that friend is a male.

> 84. *my closest **friend** who is also a painter[…] she joked*
> 85. *She met Halil, who […] was pleased I had found a **friend**.*
> 86. *She told her **friends** that she could never be satisfied*
> 87. *a man imposed on me by my mother, just as all my childhood **friends** had.*
> 88. *The Countess Galfalvy was an old **family friend**,*
> 89. *my uncle's **friend**, but I had forgotten **his** name*

It is important to note that through the use of marked forms for men, the writer may exhibit a biased use of language. The data have given an example of such a case where the term "servant" is used as marked term for woman for one time (example 90) but it is marked for the men for three times (examples 91-93). Such a usage shows that this derogatory term referring to a low status profession is reserved for women, and it is important to mark it when it is used for the men.

> 90. A ***female servant***
>
> 91. *an old* ***male servant***
>
> 92. *the* ***man servan****t*
>
> 93. *their own* ***man servants.***

5.   **Conclusion**

Based on Mills's (1995, 2008) ideas regarding linguistic sexism, the researchers have analyzed the use of language in Ali's TSW at word level for three features; generic nouns, pronouns, and marked/unmarked terms. A total number of 93 examples collected through close reading and AntConc (3.2.1) cluster program were categorized based on their use for women and men which was followed by a contextual analysis of these terms. The use of generic noun "man" is sexist (100%), while neutral term "human" is used in a non-sexist way (100%). However, the term "person" though a non-gendered term is used in a sexist way in 12% cases. Likewise, non-gendered nouns show a sexist use in 100 % cases. The pronouns like "he", "himself', "one" and "we" are used in a sexist way in 100% cases. Only one pronoun" one" is used in 100% non-sexist cases. The high tendency of use with male terms at the initial position is also observed which again shows the sexist use of language. Likewise, the maximum cases with male terms unmarked and female terms marked also hints upon the sexist use of language. The findings and discussion of the data have led the researchers to conclude that Ali (1998) has shown a biased attitude towards the representation of female in his novel *The Stone Woman* (2000). Based on the findings of this study it can be concluded that Ali (2000) treats gender unequally. The linguistic choices by the writer though marginalize women, yet the text gives some examples of neutral linguistic choices, though less in number, as well. Overall, the study indicates that the element

of linguistic sexism is visible in TSW which proves Mills and Melany's (2011) claim that the negative portrayal of the women is the result of how language is used in a stereotypical gendered way.

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