# Exploring Lexical and Grammatical Features in *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of the present study is to a) find the lexical features, b) discover the role of linguistic features in the text, c) examine the grammatical elements used in the novel, and d) check the sentence structure and patterns. The research design of this study was exploratory qualitative. The data for the study was derived from the novel Home Fire. After an in-depth study of the novel, the researcher gathered relevant lexical and grammatical categories from the text in the form of rough drafts and later utilized them while doing the analysis. The researcher has applied a modified Leech and Shorts (2007) model for grammatical and lexical categories to analyze the text. Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are extracted from the text in linguistic features. At the same time, functional types of sentences and minor word classes like prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, and articles were analyzed under grammatical categories. The study's outcomes show that the writer has used mainly concrete nouns, descriptive adjectives, transitive verbs, and adverbs of manner in the mentioned text. The detailed knowledge of the text analysis can help the reader become more insightful and discerning. This study is expected to help the students and researchers in enhancing their academic writing and understanding.*

**Key Words:** Grammatical Categories, Leech and Shorts Model, Lexical Features

## Introduction

Language is a system of communication that conveys ideas and feelings in the form of symbols and sounds (Goldstein, 2008). It has various functions, such as in written form, explaining connotative meanings to the receiver, and in spoken form, helping to communicate ideas with no fixed grammatical rules. It enables impactful communication in real time and space through written language, which allows people to deliver their ideas to others (Crystal, 2010). Katz (2013) said that for career development, it is compulsory to have proficiency and command over written language.

According to Widdowson (2014), stylistic analysis is an approach related to language. As a bridge between linguistics and literature, stylistics deals with context, utterances, and patterns. The writer uses various strategies to make the text imaginative and impressive. Stylistic analysis can also be used as a research topic to deal with the problem at the lexical, syntactic, semantic, or pragmatic level. Such analysis includes alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, rhyme; metaphor, irony, hyperbole, simile; and foregrounding at phonological and semantic levels. Dialects, idiomatic expressions, and the archaeology of words are in the lexical and syntactic category.

According to Leech and Shorts (2007), most linguistic elements are nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and verbs, which comprise most of the text. According to Stanley (2007), nouns are categories that give the name to a person, thing, place, or idea. They can also be divided into concrete, abstract, collective, or proper nouns. Concrete nouns are used more than abstract ones to give an image to a text. Verbs are the action part of the sentence; without them, a sentence cannot be completed. They can be stative to manifest

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biological situations like felt, stay, etc., or dynamic to show happenings like walking, drawing, etc. Adjectives can have various uses, as they can modify the noun or give information about its quality or fault. They can be pre-modification or post-modification.

An adverb provides additional information about verbs or an adjective and another adverb. An interjection gives feelings or passions, such as happiness or disgust. A researcher can use such lexical elements to create an insightful development process by selecting words or phrases. Grammatical elements are used to make logical and significant relations between words and sentences as the words and phrases are interconnected in a text. Simpson (2004) suggests these categories can be used to measure the patterns or structures in a text, either literary or nonliterary.

Analyzing the grammatical features in a text can help one determine the objective of using specific sentence types or patterns (Arigusman, 2018). These grammatical categories include sentence structure, its function, clause types, noun phrases or verb phrases. Also, the use of complements, adverbials, and transitive or intransitive verbs can be studied under the evaluation of clauses.

A novel is a fictional prose in the form of a narrative with a considerable length, and actors or personalities are shown in a complicated plot. In the 17th century, forerunners like Bunyan, Malory, Behn, and many other novelists laid the foundation for their descendants in the 18th century, giving them a proper chance to improve the novel. Factors like the rise of the middle class, the Industrial Revolution, and the existence of new libraries contributed to an increase in book production and availability. Instead of superheroes, the authors wrote about actual life and real-life heroes who became the public's voice.

In the late 20th century, Pakistani writers and novelists like Mohsin Hamid, Qaisra Sheraz, Sara Suleri, and many others started to take interest and give importance to the novel. Kamila Shamsie is also one of those rewarded with the Booker Prize and other awards for their writing. She is a Pakistani-British writer, born in 1973 in Karachi. Her award-winning novel Home Fire was published in 2017, and she is well known for it. The novel Home Fire deals with themes like love, betrayal, nationality, and identity. It dealt with five locations: London, Massachusetts, Istanbul, Syria, and Karachi, and got the Women's Prize in 2018. The researcher has analyzed the first seven chapters of the novel.

The present study aims to analyze the stylistics of Kamila Shamsie's novel Home Fire. According to Leech and Shorts (2007), language cannot be separated from literature and artistic value. The study also aims to highlight the criticism with a stylistic approach to make it easier for the researcher to comprehend the message and discover the stylistic categories in the novel Home Fire.

## Research Objectives
The objectives of the study are:
1. To discover the role of lexical categories in the text under study.
2. To ascertain the grammatical elements used in the novel.

## Research Questions
The research questions of the present study are as follows:
Q1: What are the lexical categories utilized by the author in the novel?
Q2: How do the grammatical elements unfold the plot and structure of the story?

## Theoretical Framework
According to a model of stylistic analysis given by Leech and Shorts (2007), lexical categories, grammatical features, figures of speech, cohesion, and coherence are the categories used to analyze a literary or nonliterary work. (Leech & Shorts 2007)

Lexical elements include nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, vocabulary, etc. The vocabulary can be simple, complex, formal, or everyday. Also, the language's idiomatic expressions can make the text accurate, and using a specific dialect shows a recognized person's geographical area or register.

Nouns can be abstract or concrete and make up the most significant part of a text. The frequency of adjectives shows the occurrence of an adjective, while attributes of nouns are described with qualitative

adjectives. Verbs play a crucial role in forming the lexical category. These can be stative or dynamic and show the movements, speech acts, and psychological states.

Adverbs perform semantic functions like manner, place, degree, and time. Sentence types, structure, phrases, or clause types are studied under the grammatical category.

The writer used declarative sentences or questions and commands to show the order of the statements. Also, the study of emotions and feelings under exclamations or statements with no verbs is studied under the same category.

The complexity of a sentence is determined by its average length and the ratio of dependent and independent clauses. The reason for a sentence's complexity, coordination, or subordination is studied under the grammatical category. Present tense, progressive aspect, perfective aspect, auxiliaries, and departure of simple past tense also come under the same linguistic feature.

While the major word classes are studied under the lexis category, the minor ones, such as prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliaries, and interjections, are discussed under grammatical elements.

## Literature Review

Many researchers have studied various aspects of the Home Fire novel using different strategies and methodologies. A stylistic analysis of the short story "The Last Word" is studied by Tabassum & Ahmad (2015) as they analyze characters, perspective, and allegory in detail. Following the checklist given by Leech and Short, grammatical, lexical, and phonological schemes were analyzed with a specific focus on alliteration, repetition, parallelism, consonance, and rhyme, which the writer used to create a harmonious effect and address.

Research on the choices of adjectives in "How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia" by Mohsin Hamid was conducted by Faiz et al. (2018) using the model of Leech and Shorts (1981). It was an empirical study, and the writer's choices and functions of adjectives were traced out. The study outcomes guided the researchers to get evidence about the subjective explanations of the text.

Malik et al., (2015) presented a stylistic analysis of the novel "The Bull and She-Devil," written by Zaibunnisa Hamidullah, in which the framework by Leech and Shorts (2007) was used for the linguistic study of the novel. The study's findings showed that the author had used these linguistic features in which nouns and verbs were more frequent. The writer used co-referential links to give wholeness to the text, and all the lexical items, figures of speech, and appropriate tones played a vital role in supporting the themes in the novel.

## Research Methodology

The researcher used exploratory qualitative research for the present study, with the main focus on the qualitative analysis of the selected data, which is later mixed with the quantitative research to give validity and reliability to the findings. The researcher used a mixed research method to conduct the study. A mixed method, as Creswell (2002) stated, is an approach that includes gathering numeric data or information along with textual information. Hence, the final database has both qualitative and quantitative data.

Kamila Shamsie's award-winning novel Home Fire, written in 2018 by the Pakistani female post-colonial writer, is the object of study for the present research. It is a rework of Sophocles' Antigone, including familial love, identity crises, and loyalty as its major themes.

In this exploratory study, all the collected data are in the form of verbal language spoken by the characters of the novel under study in phrases, sentences, and utterances.

## Data Collection

First, the researcher downloaded the PDF of the novel under study from the website yes.pdf.com and printed it out for close reading and further analysis. According to Best and Kahn (1998), note-taking is extracting material from the selected text in a form that can be recalled and revised. The researcher used note-taking and intensive reading skills for analysis.

The criteria for qualitative research are taking proper steps for analysis, developing research questions, connecting the framework of theory to the study, and using methods to make logical and generalized reasoning (Gilbert, 2002).

After a deep study of the novel, the researcher found the major themes and categorized the text into word classes like Nouns (proper, concrete, abstract, and common), verbs (base form, transitive, intransitive, stative, and dynamic), adjectives (comparative and superlative degrees), and adverbs using TagAnt software. The researcher made graphs for each word class separately and chose grammatical categories, such as sentence types, according to function, to exclude from the text. At last, the researcher extracted minor word classes from the text, such as prepositions, conjunctions, and pronouns.

## Data Analysis

According to Stanley (2007), concrete nouns are the physicality and conceptual framework of the name of a person, thing, place, or idea. Fares et al. (2018) described that compound nouns are complete units of language that cannot be further divided. Khokhlova (2014) stated that abstract nouns talk about unseen properties, actions, and relations of various objects.

In the novel under study, the writer has used concrete nouns in abundance, in contrast to any other noun, like laptop, women, shop, TV, suitcase, jacket, snow, phone, etc., to create images of objects in the minds of readers and to make it easy for them to imagine them. Mkrtychian et al. (2019) said that concrete nouns are easier for the human brain to remember and relate to than others.

**Figure 1**

*Distribution Chart of Nouns*
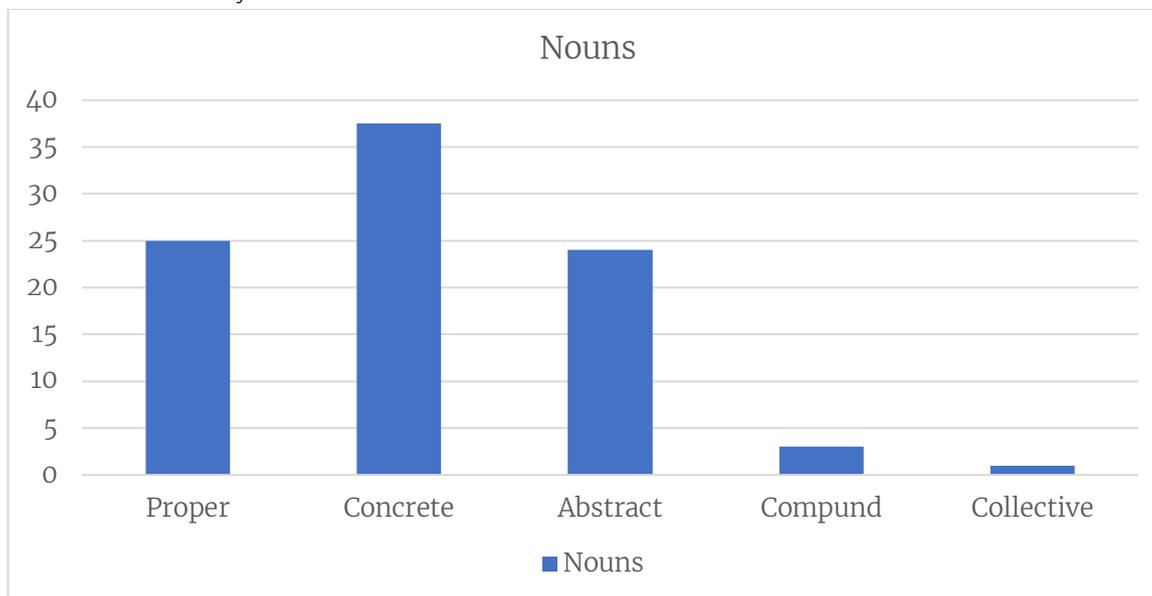


According to Stanley (2007), an adjective is a class of words that defines or qualifies a noun or a pronoun by adding some features or distinguished characteristics to it.

The adjectives that describe the property of a noun are descriptive; the writer has used them in combination with physical and evaluative adjectives. Proper adjectives show the specifications of the nouns and should be capitalized. These are used by the writer in the novel under study, such as Muslim, American, British, etc., to specify the nouns. To show the number or place of a noun/pronoun, numeral adjectives like first, then, last, etc., are used to show the sequence and order of the happenings for better understanding.

Quantitative adjectives show the number of nouns, such as things and events. The author has used chiefly descriptive adjectives like dry cleaning shop, academic interest, suicide bombers, law students, hidden secrets, grease marks, marital status, frizzy hair, exposed skin, chunky pictures, etc., to make the text immersive and elaborative.

**Figure 2**
*Distribution Chart of Adjectives*
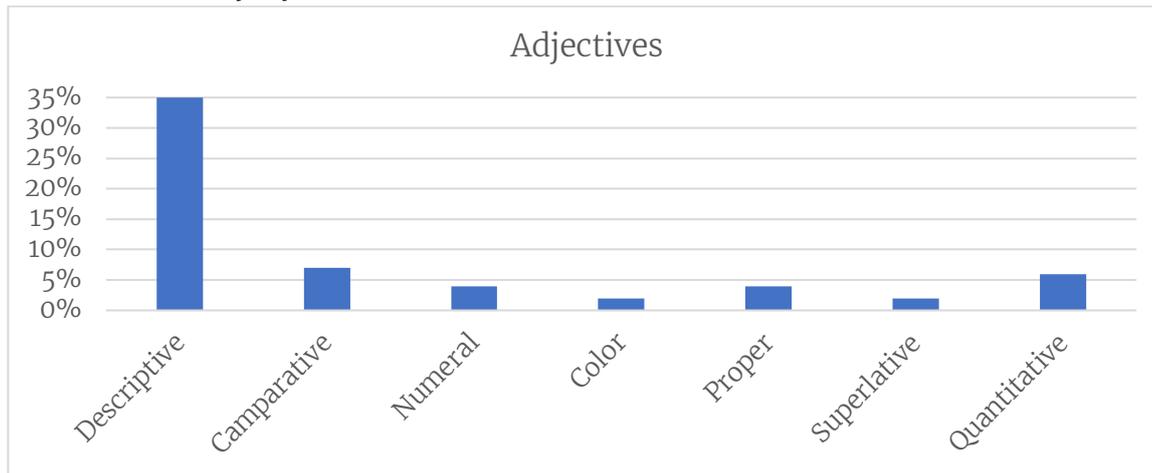


Verbs are the most essential part of text and make understanding situations easier. Kline and Demuth (2014) say these can be transitive or intransitive depending on the object's presence. Intransitive verbs don't need an object, either direct or indirect, to complete the action (Can, 2009). Hartmann and Stroke (1972) defined infinitive verbs as forms that can exist independently and are preceded by *to*. Yamazaki (2001) discussed modal verbs to recommend, suggest, or conclude. Modal verbs like should, would, might, may, could, and can are used by the author in the novel under study to show situations like an option, capability, or request, along with the main verbs.

The researcher found that the writer used transitive verbs mostly to authentically and validly describe actions or states by adding an object to them.

**Figure 3**
*Distribution Chart of Verbs*
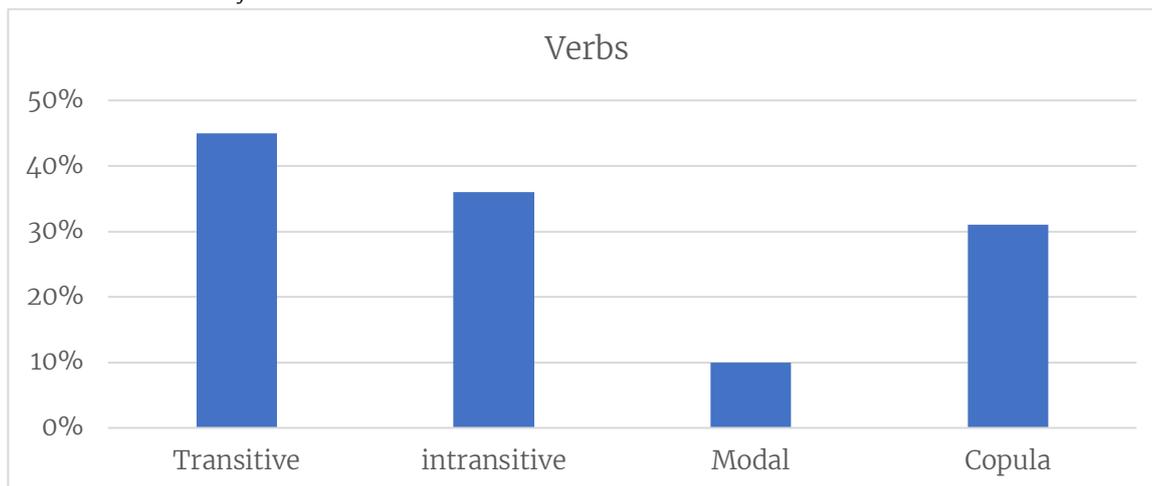


Adverbs modify the meaning of a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. The adverb of manner tells about the way, the adverb of place tells the direction of the verb, and the adverb of time shows the span or happening time of the verb. The frequency of an adverb refers to often, degree shows the intensity of the verb or action, and quantity tells about the potential measurements of the verbs.

The researcher has observed that the adverb of manner is the type that is widely used by the writer, such as previously, regularly, firmly, hardly, thoroughly, clearly, academically, unexpectedly, really, anecdotally, awkwardly, actually, etc., in comparison with the adverbs of place, frequency, time, or quantity. About six frequency adverbs are primarily used in English, which are always, often, usually, sometimes, never, rarely, etc.

**Figure 4**
*Distribution Chart of Adverbs*
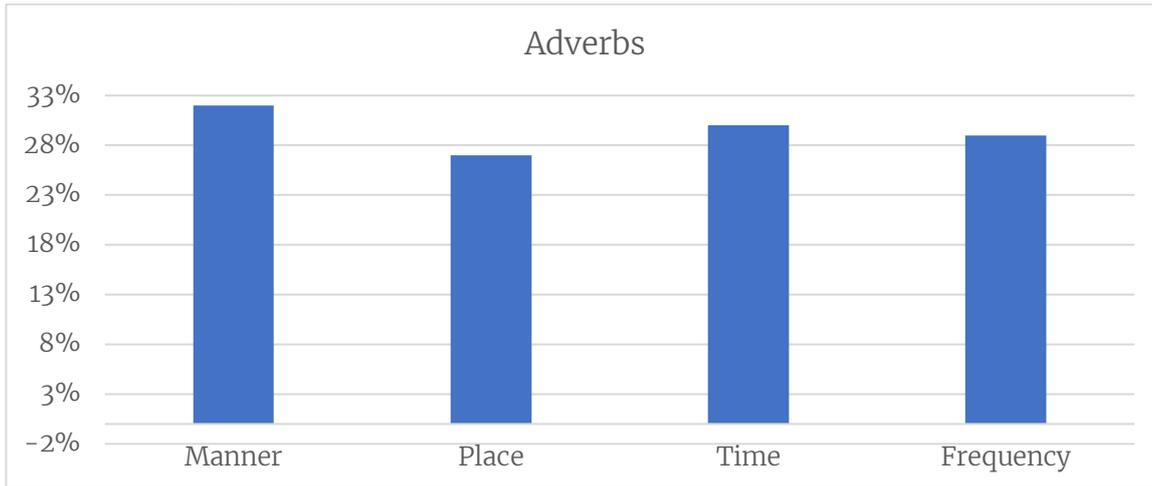


According to Zhang (2009), grammar is the foundation of the English language, working at sentence, syntax, and word levels.

For the grammatical analysis, the researcher selected only the functional types of sentences: declarative, imperative, exclamatory, and interrogative. Declarative sentences are usually positive and convey information; they are the most common type of sentence. Imperative sentences have commands, requests, or advice that instruct someone about something.

Interrogative sentences ask for information about actions, objects, or events and are used to answer the audience's queries, while exclamatory sentences show the characters' sudden emotions.

The researcher observed that the writer used the declarative form of the sentence primarily to describe the plot, characters, and events.

**Figure 5**
*Types of Sentences*
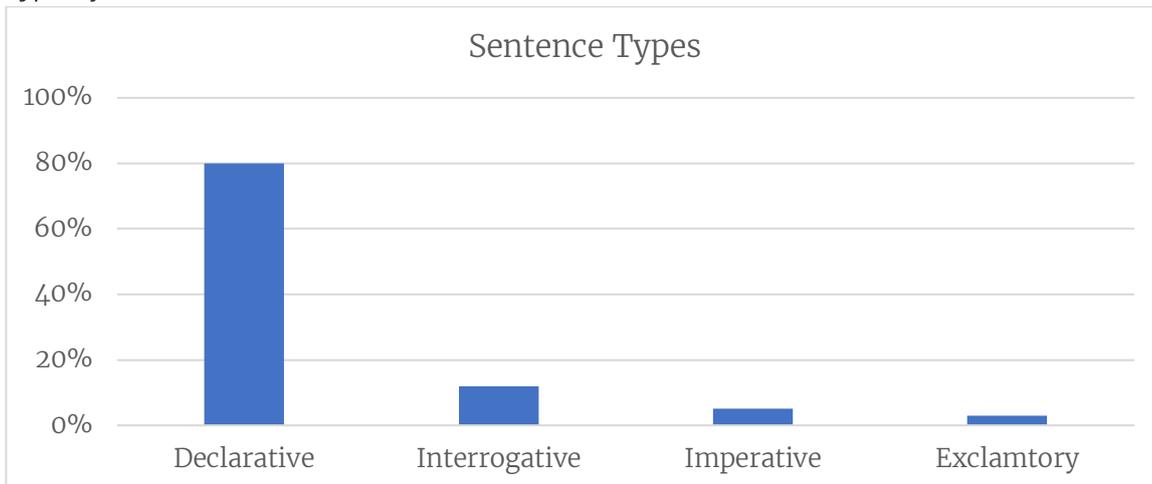


The researcher has observed minor word classes like articles involving a, an, and prepositions like after, in, into, of, at, etc. Mukundan and Roslim (2009) cited these as the most vital parts of the English language for teaching and learning. The writer uses them to create a connection between the subjects and verbs for better understanding and making things sensible.

The writer uses interjections like "umm," "uh," "mhmm," "oh," etc., to make the text emotive and reality-based by providing additional information about the expressions, while conjunctions like "and," "or," "but," "because," "moreover," etc., are used to link the effects, causes, and precedents in the text.

**Figure 6**
*Minor Word Classes*
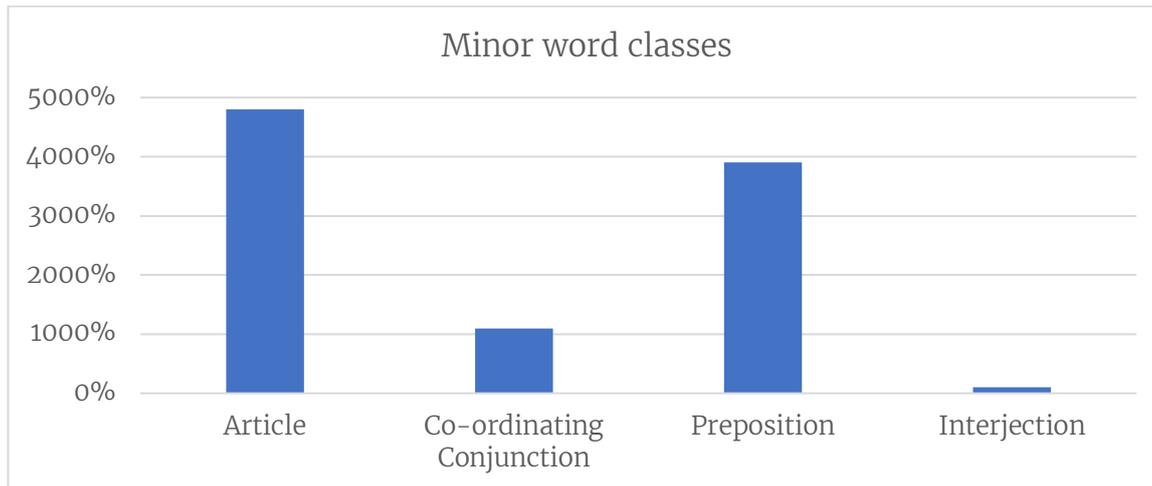


## Discussion

### What are the Lexical Categories Utilized by the Author in the Novel?

As the study indicates, the author has used a simple-to-complex vocabulary approach. Kamila Shamsie has provided the complete description and concept of ideas through her elevated writing style by using terminologies like the gene pool, bonnet cap, gender-segregated place, night terror, etc., showing her mastery of the language. She has used the proper and concrete noun combinations to give the maximum knowledge about characters and the plot, like Razia apa, Aunty Naseem, Istanbul, laptop, hijab, flight, suitcase, etc. Adjectives make up the next major part of the text after nouns. They are used to modify the nouns attributively and predicatively, making the prose style more impelling and expressive, like blue silky underwear, grey scarf, etc.

In the novel under study, the writer has utilized various forms of verbs in the conversations, including transitive, intransitive, modal, and copula verbs. Adverbs are used for importance, to indicate the manner of the action, such as perpetually, firmly, now, then, and often, and to convey the information and intensity of the adjectives and verbs.

### How do the Grammatical Elements Unfold the Plot and Structure of the Story?

The researcher has removed functional types of sentences, like declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory, from the grammatical categories. The researcher observes that declarative sentences are most often used by the writer to describe things and the plot. Sneddon et al. (2010) stated that these sentences convey information and opinions about actions as they state a fact or an argument.

The investigator has identified interjections, articles, conjunctions, and prepositions in minor word classes. Two types of articles, a and an, are used to specify nouns and contribute to the major part of noun phrases. To make the text cohesive and connective, prepositions like for, after, by, to, though, etc., are used, while the author uses interjections like oh, umm, and well to give realistic and touching information about the actions.

## Suggestions

The present study can be used by researchers to do research in the same field by applying some other models of stylistics and linguistics analysis, which can be helpful in identifying various properties and comprehensive interpretations from the text, like the three-dimensional model of Fairclough and the structural model of Roman Jakobson.

## Conclusion

The research evaluated lexical and grammatical elements in Home Fire by Kamila Shamsie to discover their influence on the novel's stylistic depth. The study identified how Shamsie builds up descriptive language with concrete nouns and transitive verbs together with descriptive adjectives to design vivid visualizations

and elevate reader engagement throughout the narrative. The use of manner adverbs deepens both emotional feel and action clarity in the text. The novel's continuous flow stems from the grammatical elements, which include declarative syntax combined with prepositions and articles along with conjunctions. Language components in Karmarina form a system that illustrates Shamsie's technical ability to convey significant themes about identity and displacement and family dedication through expert writing. The stylistic analysis provides significant value to literary interpretation, according to the study, which shows that more work should continue to use other models with expanded textual selections.

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