Freedom and Oppression in the Poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Habib Jalib – A Comparative Corpus Analysis

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This study compares two poems written by Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Habib Jalib, and explores the theme of liberty and repression in the poetry works of the two authors through corpus linguistics' tool such as AntConc. The poetry of Faiz is about the resistances of people in general and about social justice whereas the poetry of Jalib concentrates on the individual opposition to oppression. Qualitative method is used to conduct this study. Through the use of Key Word in Context (KWIC), the collocation, cluster and N-gram, the study identifies the recurring words and phrases concerning these themes in the works of both poets. The study identifies the peculiar language choice patterns followed by Faiz and Jalib to depict the resistance and it provides a new insight of understanding through integrating computers and literary analysis. Future researchers will benefit from this study by understanding how corpus tools might assist them produce their best work.

1. Introduction

The political and social commentary in poetry by Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Habib Jalib is acclaimed to have a very deep political and social commentary because of the focus on issues of oppression and freedom. Both the poets are different in style and context but both use the poetry as a means of rebellion against injustice, tyranny, and political oppression. Faiz, whose poetry espoused idealism of Marxism and revolution, tends to write about struggle of people collectively to be free (Khan, 2024) whereas Jalib whose writings were based on individual rebellion and strength of the have-nots (Nazir, 2023). This comparative analysis aims to consider the manner in which the two poets considered the themes of freedom, oppression, and resistance in their works through the tools of a corpus linguistic analysis concentrate and discuss qualitatively and quantitatively the works of the two authors considering the specific issues of the themes of freedom, oppression, and resistance presented in their works.

The poems of Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Habib Jalib hold an important spot in the South Asian literary and political discourse because of its intense involvement with the issues of oppression, liberty and social justice (Imran, 2024). Both were poets who lived and created poetry at times of political turmoil in Pakistan in an attempt to resist and be activists in their work. Poetry by Faiz is found to be heavily influenced by ideas of Marxism; it is a collective appeal to liberation with a framing of revolution in starry-eyed romanticism, with his poems attacking socio-political domains tinged with lyrical magic (Hasan, 2006; Sinha, 2010; Meera, 2023). Comparatively, Habib Jalib is found to have a straightforward and unadorned manner of writing that addressed the daily problems of the poor folk making him the poet of people who spoke up in opposition to dictatorship and dictatorial rule (Ahmad, 2014; Rehman, 2017; Ahsan, 2020).

Although the thematic basis of both poets resides in the fight against tyranny, the poetics employed by both authors do not quite match as the form, the imagery, and the audience presence are quite different. Faiz regularly used metaphor and allegory, as well as accessing classical Persian and Urdu literary traditions, which enabled him to broach censorship in subtle patterns though it is also possible to discover his revolutionary intentions as well (Rahman, 2011; Rahman, 2022). Jalib adopted a more aggressive and approachable style though; in plain language he would address the systems and political leaders and this made his poetry connect with the masses (Khalid, 2019; Ahsan, 2020).

In this comparative analysis, the poetic treatment of freedom, oppression and resistance in the work of Faiz and Jalib are examined with regard to their thematic and linguistic expression both by using principles of corpus linguistics and with the aid of computer-based tools like AntConc to identify patterns within the lexical use, collocation patterns and patterns of recurrency lexical chunks in each work. With the application of such techniques as Key Word in Context (KWIC), collocation, cluster analysis, and N-gram examination, the research discloses the manner in which each poet creates ideological discourses.

The combination of text analysis and literary criticism will create new information about the poems created by these poets, which will give an empirical foundation of how the language is also used as a weapon of resistance. In such a manner, the study can be questioned both in the field of literature and critical discourse analysis, as well as, the significance of using corpus

techniques to analyse politically laden works of poetry (McEnery & Hardie, 2012; OHalloran, 2010; Baker et al., 2021).

1.1 Objective

To analyse and compare themes of freedom and oppression in Faiz's and Jalib's poetry using Antconc.

1.2 Research Questions

1. Which key terms are related to freedom, oppression and resistance?

2. How do collocations and clusters are related to these themes?

3. How do N-gram are related to political and social freedom?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The current study holds some significant academic value owing to a number of reasons interconnected to each other.

1. It adds value to the growing domain which incorporates the application of computer techniques in literary analysis, and so provides new knowledge with respect to stylistic and thematic aspects of poetry.

2. It provides a comparative structural approach of looking at linguistic strategies with which Faiz and Jalib are describing political and social freedom. The study throws light on how both poets use language in its resistance to oppression and in its quest to change the society by identifying structures and patterns as well as clusters in the product of their writings.

3. Furthermore, the analysis contributes to the future work on the corpus-based studies with regard to other writers, thus expanding our knowledge on literary opposition.

2. Literature Review

Poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Habib Jalib has been widely acclaimed in their underlying interest in ideas of liberty, tyranny and political resistance. Being postcolonial authors in Pakistan, the two poets used literary space to show injustice of society and to support the depressed citizens. Their publications are uplifting and nourishing to academicians as well as to the activists and it is a good source of study on the intersection between the two streams writing and politics.

2.1 Faiz Ahmed Faiz: The Struggle for Collective Freedom

Poems by Faiz Ahmed Faiz have gained popularity to represent politically the notion of resistance by making substantial use of Marxist ideas to address the problems of oppression, social anomalies, and the struggle of the people. Though he positions his poetry within the context of Pakistani political climate, it appeals beyond the borders of countries with the message of the common human need to achieve independence. Such a narrative of resistance developed by Faiz through imagery and metaphor is mentioned as powerful by Ali (2015). His memorable poem Hum Dekhenge is a good example of the mass aspiration of justice and liberation, the subversion of the oppressive regime and the creation of the new order of things. The imagery used in the poem like, when crowns will be thrown down, and thrones be cast

down, demonstrates that the tyrant rule and the success of the rebels are bound to come to an end.

Experts like Shamsie (2017) have discussed how Faiz managed to combine his individual feeling with politics. The poetry of Faiz merges personal emotion along with political revolutionary struggle and central to it is the dreams of oppressed nation. The concept of the freedom in Faiz work is not only political but spiritual since he frequently resorted to the metaphysical concepts to exemplify the release of the soul of oppression chains (Shamsie, 2017) masses (Ali, 2015).

Faiz's focus on collective freedom is evident in his consistent use of terms like "chains of oppression," "struggle for freedom," and "voice of the people." These terms, as seen in his works such as *"Subh-e-Azadi"* ("Dawn of Freedom") and *"Bol Ke Lab Azad Hain Tere"* ("Speak, Your Lips Are Free"), underscore his belief in the power of collective action as the key to liberation. Shamsie (2017) argues that Faiz's revolutionary spirit reflects his commitment to socialist ideals, using poetry as a medium to challenge authoritarian regimes and oppressive systems.

2.2 Habib Jalib: The Voice of Personal Defiance

Where Faiz, in a lot of cases, stresses out on group resistance, Habib Jalib prefers to concentrate on an individual resistance to the status quo. Direct and simple, his works tackle the social and political conditions of Pakistan and addressed, sometimes, the suffrage of the individual within an oppressive structure. Sarfraz (2018) also states that Jalib does not only rebel against the political tyranny in his poems but also against the social injustice. When it comes to poems such as I Do Not Accept (Main Nahi Manta) and What Does Pakistan Mean? (Pakistan Ka Matlab Kya Hai?), Jalib confronts the system per se as he rails against the hypocrisy of the upper classes and how they exploit the daily people.

Reading the writings of Jalib about the military dictatorship in Pakistan, one cannot but observe the emotional effect achieved with the help of verses. Sarfraz (2018) observes in her essay on him that his poetry never ceased in its criticism of injustice. To Jalib, poetry must be used as a means to remind the people that their world has been oppressed systematically and that the only way to fight this is to rebel against it and in such poems, the lines stating that he does not accept this and that the people of the opposition will come back to rise again, turns out, to become an anthem to the underprivileged people of the world, highlighting the importance of individual fight fuelling the social change.

Moreover, the theme of rebellion used by Jalib can be and usually is expressed with the simplicity, and, at the same time, touching language which could appeal to ordinary people. Jalib uses the elements of blood and violence in his poem, The Garden is a Bloody Mess, through which he explains the repressive state of Pakistan in the 1971 war (Sarfraz, 2018). The poem is not only about political oppression existing during the years but also about psychic stress of living under the fear. Ahsan (2020) states that Jalib focuses on the individual sacrifice needed to revolutionize and thus makes his poetry easier and likely to be understood by the person experiencing oppression.

2.3 The Role of Poetry in Political Resistance

Both Faiz and Jalib utilized poetry as a means of social protest, but they did so in different ways. Jalib's defiance is more direct and personal, often delivered with biting sarcasm and critique. He engages with his audience through a more visceral connection, making his poetry accessible to the masses (Ahsan, 2020). Faiz, on the other hand, although equally committed to political resistance, tends to employ a more metaphysical and collective approach, offering hope for the future through unity and shared struggle.

Muneeza (2017) explains in one of her works that poetry is a means of resistance in South Asia, and Faiz and Jalib have never lost relevance as political activists turned to poetry as a protest measure. Their poems during some rallies and protests, stir up the masses to confront the status quo and get the Justice. Muneeza (2017) also notes that, although poetry by Faiz more frequently landed in the left-wing of intellectual circles, poetry written by Jalib was spread out to a wider audience thanks to his simple language and intense dialectical appeals.

2.4 Corpus Linguistics Approach to Analyzing Poetry

Whereas classical literary analysis has been frequently devoted to qualitative interpretation, computational applications (such as AntConc) have been proposed in recent studies to analyze large total text corpora in a systematic fashion. Khan (2019) has used corpus linguistics to study the themes of resistance as seen in Pakistani poetry, which deals with the works of Faiz and Jalib. The study conducted by Khan illustrated how AntConc is most appropriate in locating key terms, collocations, and repetitive clusters to give an understanding of the linguistic arrangement that delivers references to political resistance.For example, the poetry of Jalib explicitly described personal antagonism and opposition, with the terms of acceptance and fight being commonly found in his writing (Khan, 2019).

This corpus-based analysis helps bridge the gap between qualitative literary analysis and computational methods, offering a new perspective on Faiz and Jalib's poetry. By analyzing their works through AntConc, one can track the frequency and context of key terms, providing a deeper understanding of the linguistic strategies used by both poets to communicate their messages of resistance.

2.5 Research Gap

Even though the poetry of Faiz and Jalib has already been studied in great detail in qualitative studies, there is much research to be done that focuses more on corpus linguistics as a method of comparing the way in which they treat the subjects of freedom and oppression in a more systemic way. Such literature is based on textual interpretations or the biographical context, and what is not done is the discussion of the linguistic patterns that are generated when examining their poem using computations. This study is, therefore, trying to close this gap by applying AntConc to measure the content of their poems and determine important keywords, word pairings, and n-grams present in their texts related to freedom, oppression and resistance that appear repeatedly in their discussions

3. Methodology

The methodology of this study involves the use of corpus linguistic tool to analyse the poetry of Faiz and Jalib. The following steps are taken:

3.1 Data Collection

The texts of Faiz's and Jalib's poetry are collected in plain text format.

3.2 Corpus Preparation

The texts are cleaned and prepared for analysis in AntConc, a free corpus analysis tool.

3.3 Key Word in Context (KWIC) Analysis

The key terms related to freedom, oppression, and resistance, such as 'chains', 'voice', 'struggle', 'freedom', and 'oppression' are extracted. The context of these words is analyzed to identify how they are used in each poet's works.

3.4 Collocation Analysis

Words that frequently co-occur with the key terms are identified. For example, terms like "chains of oppression" in Faiz's poetry and "voice of the oppressed" in Jalib's works are explored for their thematic significance.

- **Cluster Analysis**: Repeated phrases, such as "struggle for freedom" or "voice of the people", are identified and analyzed to understand their thematic relevance in the poems.

- **N-gram Analysis**: Two-word (2-grams) and three-word (3-grams) phrases are extracted to identify recurring expressions related to social and political freedom.

4. Data Analysis

Using AntConc, the following results were found:

4.1 Faiz Ahmed Faiz

In the poetry of Faiz, there is a repeated use of words like, struggle, freedom and oppression, this being intertwined with such collective imagery as, chains of oppression, struggle of freedom and voice of the people. Such collocations presuppose an interest in the communal struggles and unity in resisting political persecution. The frequent repetition of these words shows the vision of Faiz about a unified movement of people towards justice and liberty.

4.2 Habib Jalib

More commonly used words in Jalib poetry are also generally used by him were the word freedom and oppression, however, his poems refer to the word more specifically as an individual defying the tyranny. Key phrases such as I do not accept, the voice of the oppressed a voice and we will rise again bring out his attention on personal protest. His poems lean on the individual sacrifice one needs in order to defy oppression.

4.3 Key Terms Related to Freedom, Oppression, and Resistance

4.3.1 Faiz Ahmed Faiz

4.3.1.1 Key Terms Identified

Freedom, oppression, resistance, chains, struggle, etc.

4.3.2 Frequency/Context

In his poems, Faiz tends to equate the term of freedom to communal action in the political fight, which is usually posed as an act of solidarity, i.e., on the part of breaking the chains of repression. The concept of resistance is closely related to the ideas of political opposition, which implies the resistance to the powers of the institutions.

4.3.3 Habib Jalib

4.3.3.1 Key Terms Identified

Oppression, resistance, voice, tyranny, chains, etc.

4.3.3.2 Frequency & Context

The instance of oppression chosen by Jalib is bound to direct towards personal suffering and the political awareness of the common people. Mostly his opposition is in the form of individual opposition to tyranny.

4.4 Collocations and Clusters Related to These Themes

4.4.1 Faiz's Poetry

4.4.1.1 Collocations

"Chains of oppression," "struggle for freedom," "resistance against tyranny."

4.4.1.2 Cluster Example

Faiz often uses clusters like "struggle for freedom" or "chains of oppression," where freedom is tied to collective efforts and overcoming political suppression.

4.4.2 Jalib's Poetry

4.4.2.1 Collocations

"Voice of the oppressed," "fight against tyranny."

4.4.2.2 Cluster Example

Jalib's clusters emphasize the individual's fight against oppression, focusing on the personal "voice" as a symbol of resistance.

4.5 N-grams Related to Political and Social Freedom

4.5.1 Faiz's Poetry

4.5.1.1 N-grams

"Struggle for freedom," "chains of oppression."

These N-grams signify collective and revolutionary resistance against oppression, highlighting the importance of political movements and solidarity.

4.5.1.2 Jalib's Poetry

4.5.1.2.1 N-grams:

"Voice of the people," "fight against tyranny."

Jalib's N-grams reflect individual resistance, where the "voice of the people" becomes central in calling out political corruption or oppression.

4.6 Comparative Analysis of Findings

Faiz lays more stress on the community defiance and political emancipation that implies the importance of friendship and the act of defiance as the process of achieving freedom. His poetic use of words would put greater emphasis on wholeness and action in a group.

Jalib dwells upon an individual conflict and the presence of unfair treatment and emphasizes the significance of the voice of a single person and his self-struggle with oppression. His stance takes a more individualistic and yet politically aware stance in linguistic application.

It is clear that a comparative analysis of the divergent nature of the resistances and the free movement as reflected in the works by Faiz and Jalib are supported with the language and their poetical styles unique to them.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Habib Jalib employ the poetry to pursue political opposition, although, Faiz is more concerned about the struggle of a group of people, and Jalib wants to obtain what he desires as an individual. Analysis of the corpus linguistic data conducted in the AntConc program demonstrated certain tendencies in the application of the key terms and collocations as well as in applying repetitive word combinations concerning freedom and oppression. The current study is not only clarifying the linguistic devices used by both poets but also shows the importance of the computational tools in analysing pieces of literature.

5.1 Recommendations

This study has attempted to shed light on the recurring themes of freedom and oppression in the poetic works of Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Habib Jalib using a corpus-based comparative approach. However, the scope of this research is by no means exhaustive. There are several promising directions future scholars may consider pursuing.

Firstly, expanding the corpus to include a broader selection of poem, particularly those translated into multiple languages—could offer insights into how the themes of resistance and liberation resonate across cultures and linguistic boundaries. Additionally, researchers might explore how the socio-political contexts of different time periods influenced the tone and language of both poets.

Moreover, a comparative study that places Faiz and Jalib alongside other global revolutionary poets—such as Pablo Neruda or Mahmoud Darwish—might help situate their work within a broader, transnational discourse on resistance literature.

Finally, potential future scholars can include interviews, or archival materials in their research, or even digital humanities sources to study fewer known issues of these poets and

their works. These endeavours might help in gaining a greater understanding of the interrelationships between literature, activism and politics in South Asia literature.

The world of resistance poetry can be summarized as changing and expansive. This paper is only a starting point in knowing how poetic expression serves such a powerful means of resisting systems that are considered powerful and giving voice to the marginalized people

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