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Beyond the Inhuman Stone: Reclaiming Gender in an Ecofeminist Reading of Maha Khan Phillips's The Curse of Mohenjodaro

Roha Javed[1], Maria Naseem[2], Wilder Saavedra[3]

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the role of parental language in emotional regulation and trauma healing of characters in the novel Best of Friends by Kamila Shamsie. In 2024, a research was conducted in which Judith Herman's trauma theory was used to analyze the emotional and psychological effects of cultural and familial trauma in Sudha Murty's novels, but it did not explore the role of parental language in healing trauma by using corpus tool (Supriya and Jayakanth). Thus, the present research focuses on analyzing the impact of parental language in trauma healing process by incorporating mixed methods approach. The qualitative method of this research is grounded in Herman's 3 stage trauma recovery model and the quantitative method is integrated through corpus-assisted KWIC analysis using AntConc software. It focused on the role of parental language in contributing or obscuring trauma healing. The results show that the parents of Zahra and Maryam use emotionally restrained and authoritative language respectively which hinders their trauma healing in different ways. The combination of Herman's trauma recovery model with corpus tool can successfully examine the role played by parental language in healing post trauma. In future, the researchers can explore a different literary text and focus on gender-based differences in representing trauma healing.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Parent-Child Communication

The scientific study of human natural language is referred to as linguistics which has its deep-rooted impacts on other disciplines as well such as psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, artificial intelligence and many more. Despite its widespread importance, it was a common perception even among the educated people that linguistics is all about language learning and the linguists either learn language or teach language. However, later on it was accepted that the field is not just related to language learning or teaching, but it is mainly concerned with the study of nature of language and communication (Akmajian et al.). Communication is the main engine of any social relationship and thus plays a pivotal role. It comprises of factors such as active listening, availability, mutual respect and understanding.

Among all other communications, the parent-child communication holds immense

[1] English Language Instructor, Ailin Education, Henan, China. rohajaved1012@gmail.com
[2] Lecturer, Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Sialkot Campus, Pakistan. maria.naseem@skt.umt.edu.pk
[3] English Language Instructor, Ailin Education, Henan, China. Wildersaavedra123@gmail.com

importance due to its significant contribution in the psychological development of children. It plays a pivotal role in creating highly effective relationship, mutual acceptance and understanding between children and parents (Runcan et al.).

1.2 Influence of Parental Language on Trauma

The importance of parent-child communication can never be negotiated and when it comes to trauma, the value of this interaction even strengthens. There has always been an immense need of research on such crucial topics due to their sensitivity as they contribute significantly for the development of children followed by the overall growth of a healthy society. The researcher conducted a research in 2019, in which he highlighted the importance of parental language and responsiveness in shaping a child's psychological development and its ultimate coherence with narrative post a traumatic event (Overbeek et al.). The present study aims to contribute more in this area of research and thus will be taking the novel *Best of Friends* by Kamila Shamsie and will be comparing the influence of different parental language on the two leading characters of the novel, Maryam and Zara, who were exposed to trauma at an early age.

1.3 Trauma Theory of Judith Herman

Herman added great insights into the trauma theory and thus presented his own version of trauma theory in 1992 titled as *Trauma and Recovery*. In this theory, Herman divided the recovery of trauma in three main stages such as establishing safety, reconstructing the traumatic story and restoring the connection between the survivor and his/her community. This trauma model of Herman is grounded deep in feminist as well as psychological principles. It significantly highlights the importance of interpersonal communication, particularly within the families itself, in case of healing from any sort of trauma (Herman). Thus, this provides a great framework for interpreting parental language and its influence in the novel *Best of Friends* by Kamila Shamsie.

These three stages of trauma recovery have been used by many researchers in order to depict the phases of trauma recovery in different literary works and goes hand in hand with the present research as well. A study, "Psychological Impact of Violence: A Trauma Based Analysis of Gender and Power in Sudha Murty's Fiction", was conducted in 2024 in which the researcher used this trauma model of Herman and studied the reflection of trauma in the characters in diverse forms such as emotional neglect, familial betrayal and cultural dislocation. The hazardous impact of trauma on identity and relationship has also been highlighted in the research (Supriya and Jayakanth).

1.4 Shamsie's *Best of Friends*

Shamsie's novel *Best of Friends* revolves around the friendship of Maryam and Zahra who had their teenage years in Karachi in 1980s and had their adult lives in London in 21st century. The two friends faced many challenges including psychological trauma in early childhood which had a long-lasting impact later in their lives (Shamsie). In the study, "A Pathway to Female Homosociality novel, *Best of Friends*, by focusing on the tendency of female homosocial bonds in challenging the patriarchal along with heteronormative norms.

The study highlighted that how the emotional asexual connection of women results in resistance and thus promotes female empowerment in male dominating societies (Ahsan and Raza).

Thus, the present study will be analyzing the Kamila Shamie's novel *Best of Friends* by using Herman's three stage trauma recovery model and corpus tool. The study has taken its gap from the article "Psychological Impact of Violence: A Trauma Based Analysis of Gender and Power in Sudha Murty's Fiction" in which the researcher analyzed the healing of characters through the lens of the three-stage trauma recovery model Herman. The research focused on the healing of characters specifically within the social as well as cultural context of India (Supriya and Jayakanth). It did not discuss the work with respect impact of parental language in the healing process of trauma. The current study will be bridging this gap by using the three-stage trauma recovery model of Herman while also highlighting the role played by parental language in the trauma healing process on the novel *Best of Friends* by Kamila Shamsie. It will also be using corpus tool in order to strengthen the accuracy and authenticity of the study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Language

Language has thought to be emerged in human history around 1,00,000 to 10,00,000 years ago (Fedorenko et al.). It comprises of duality of patterning. This ability of language to utilize very limited phonetic expressions and produce infinite utterances and words highlights the unique and intricate nature of linguistic communication (Trask). Language also plays a pivotal role in rearing young humans, in organizing human communities, and in passing down the cultural legacy from generation to generation (Whorf).

2.2 Parental Language

There are many children that are exposed to multiple traumatic and stressful events (Breslau et al.). There are some families who talk about the stressful event with an intention to console and burry the memories to rest, while others avoid taking about such things (Silverman et al.). Family factors including communication is one of the most influential factors in the development of children. Positive family communication is directly related to reduced sexual risk and more expressive relation between parents and children. Whereas, poor communication skills result in increased aggression and intolerance among children. (LeBlanc et al.).

In a study conducted in 2020," The Impact of Bad Parenting on Children's Mental Health in Movie *MOTHER* by Tatsushi Omori: A Psychological Approach", the researcher highlighted the impact of negative parental language in shaping the mental health of a child. The study explored that how Akiko, the mother character, used emotionally abusive language that clearly adds on to the psychological distress on the child (Abdillah and Nugroho).

2.3 Trauma

Trauma is commonly associated with negative emotions that includes feelings of humiliation, shame, self-blame and feelings of utmost helplessness that ultimately leads to the feelings of avoidance and alienation**.** In the present century, trauma has found its new ways into everyday language, where is it associated with any type of frustrating or painful event and is used in a semantically overstretched way (Busch and McNamara). According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), trauma in children could be defined as "a frightening, dangerous, or violent event that poses a threat to a child's life or bodily integrity" (Pickett).

Trauma has been described by many theorists. The term "Trauma Theory" was first used by Cathy Caruth in 1996 in the book "*Unclaimed Experience*" in which she explained trauma as a result of catastrophic or sudden events that could potentially overwhelm a person (Abubakar and Abubakar). According to Freguson, trauma occurs when body and brain reacts to danger by entering into a protective mode (Jameson).

2.4 Trauma in Literary Works

Aziza in 2023, in her work "PTSD as a Result of the Childhood Trauma Experienced by Ellice in *All Her Little Secrets"*, used the American Psychiatric Association's PTSD framework in order to analyze the impact of childhood trauma on the protagonist Ellice in the novel *All Her Little Secrets.* The researcher explored the trauma-induced PTSD symptoms and thus focused on social abuse, bullying and violence associating it with trauma (AZIZAH). Similarly, Behzad in 2024, in the work "Trauma Narrative and Healing: A Post-traumatic Exploration of Toni Morrison's *Home*", applied Caruth's trauma theory focusing her concepts of fragmentation and repetition on Morrison's *Home*. The researcher explored that how the narrative of the novel reflects trauma and healing along with the psychological impact of racial violence and war. This highlighted the depiction of disorienting effects of trauma in the fragmented structure of novel (Pourgharib, Esmaili, et al.).

2.5 Herman's Trauma Theory in literary works

In a study conducted in 2025, "Mrs Dalloway: A Critical Analysis of Traumatized Characters through Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery*", the researcher analyzed the psychological states of Septimus Warren Smith and Clarissa Dalloway in Virginia Wolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* by using the trauma theory of Judith Herman. The researcher focused on the trauma symptoms of Herman's trauma theory which includes hyperarousal, intrusion, and constriction(Aman and Noreen).

Another, study was conducted in 2024, "Psychological Impact of Violence: A Trauma Based Analysis of Gender and Power in Sudha Murty's Fiction", in which the researcher applied the three-stage trauma model of Herman on Murty's fiction. The researcher focused on tracing the journey of characters towards healing particularly within the social and cultural context of India (Supriya and Jayakanth).

2.6 Corpus Integration In Literary Works

In the study, "A Corpus Linguistic Analysis of Trauma in Self-help Literature", the researcher used corpus tools such as LIWC and Lancsbox in order to examine the self-help trauma in literature. The study incorporates corpus tools in identifying specific linguistic patterns in self-help texts that engage the reader towards the healing journey. It helped in understanding the role played by language in the emotional healing of its reader (Lampe).

Similarly, in another study, "Corpus Based Analysis of Literary Works of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*", the researcher highlighted the representation of female experiences and trauma during wartime by using corpus tools such as WordSmith and AntConc (Wan).

Thus, keeping in consideration the above discussion, in the present study the researcher will be using Herman's trauma model particularly focusing on the three-stage trauma recovery model. The researcher will be applying this theory on the novel *Best of Friends* by Kamila Shamsie in order to highlight the influence of good and bad parental language. Moreover, the researcher will also be using AntConc software to identify the exact frequency of words that represents good and bad parental language. This will help in increasing the overall authenticity and validity of the study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The focus of the chapter is to explain the research design of the study, corpus collection method, sample of the study, data analysis process and theoretical framework of the study in order to describe the role of parental language in the healing of trauma in the novel *Best of Friends*.

3.2 Research Design

The present research implemented the mixed methods descriptive research design. The conceptual framework of research design that is carried out in this research is explained by Creswell in 2009. This research is carried out through the thematic analysis of parental language using Herman's three-stage trauma recovery model and corpus analysis, to investigate the KWIC of the selected words.

The present research employs a qualitatively driven mixed methods design as explained by Morse in 2003 such as **QUAL quan** design. The qualitative (QUAL) analysis will be dealing with analyzing the parental language of parents during the times of trauma through a thematic approach using Herman's three step trauma recovery model. On the other hand, the quantitative (Quan) part will be using corpus tool such as AntConc in order to extract the words and to check the KWIC of words and phrases that represents good or bad parental language. Corpus tool will only be helping in identifying the intended words just will be then analyzed thoroughly with the help of thematic analysis.

3.3 Corpus Collection Method

The primary data was collected from the novel. The corpus for the present study was collected in two steps: first the required novel was taken in soft form and copied in word file. In the second step, the word file is copied in text.doc file in order to interpret it in AntConc software. The AntConc software of 4.3.1 version in used in this research.

3.4 Sample of the Study

In the present research, the researcher has used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is referred to as the one in which the researchers select particular samples that are based on the capacity, importance and research objectives of the study (Oliver and Jupp). In the present research, the analysis of the role played by parental language in the healing process of trauma is carried through purposive sampling technique.

3.5 Data Analysis Process

Two step analysis was conducted in order to attain the specific research objectives of the current study. In the primary step, the specific dialogues were extracted from the novel through keen reading and these dialogues were examined using the Herman's three stage trauma recovery modelIn the next step, certain words were selected from the novel and were interpreted through KWIC analysis using AntConc software.

3.6 Theoretical Framework of the Study

The theoretical framework of the present research is based on Herman's three stage trauma recovery model.

3.6.1 Herman's Three Stage Trauma Recovery Model

Judith Herman in 1992 presented a trauma recovery model that comprises of 3 fundamental stages in the psychological healing process of trauma victims. These three steps include: **establishing safety**, **reconstructing the traumatic story** and **restoring the connection between the survivor and his/her community**. In her model, Herman highlights that trauma is not merely a psychological state, but it also disrupts the emotional, social and the relational structures specifically those related to familial connections (Herman).

One of the most important aspects of Herman's theory is the role played by familial and interpersonal relations in either facilitating or diminishing recovery. The role of familial relations could be further narrow down into the role of parental language as well in context to the requirement of the present research. The first stage of trauma recovery is **establishing safety** that deals with a sense of protection both physically and emotionally mostly through good supportive relations. The second stage of recovery is **reconstructing the traumatic story** whose focus lies on reconstructing the memory of trauma in relatively safer context. The final stage of recovery is **restoring the connection between the survivor and his/her community**. This stage deals with rebuilding the lost emotions and relations and creating a coherent and strong sense of self. Herman emphasizes that the social support of family members is highly crucial in the healing process. She explains that trauma quite often "breaches the attachments of family, friendship, love and community" (pg. 56).

The three-stage trauma recovery model of Herman is used as the theoretical framework in the present research. This framework will be helping in analyzing that whether the parental language in Shamsie's novel *Best of friends*, facilitates the process of healing or deepens it. The broader aspect of familial relations, from Herman's trauma recovery model, is further narrowed down into the use of parental language as the pivotal relational factor in the recovery process of trauma in the present research. Thus, this research analyzes the role of parental language in either promoting emotional safety, mourning, and reconnection or deviating through the recovery stages of Herman as mentioned above.

Chapter 4

Analysis

This chapter will be carried out in three sections. In the first section, the parental dialogues of Maryam and Zahra will be analyzed on the basis of the three-stage trauma recovery model of Herman, while in the second part, specific words of Maryam and Zahra's parents will be examined using the KWIC feature of AntConc software for adding more clarity and authenticity in the work. Finally, the triangulation section will be discussing the links between the findings of theoretical interpretations and linguistic analysis of specific words using AntConc software.

4.1 First Section

The 3 stages of this model by which the dialogues will be examined are listed below:

1. Stage 1: Establishing Safey Post Trauma
2. Stage 2: Remembrance and Mourning in Trauma Healing
3. Stage 3: Reconnection with Relations

4.1.1 Stage 1: Establishing Safety Post Trauma

There are many incidents in the novel *Best of Friends* that reflects the three-stage trauma recovery model of Herman. In one of the earliest incidents in the novel, Zahra's father asks her that,

"*What are these tears?"* (86)

This question by her father superficially seems to be a very simple question, but it holds important emotional weight. This dialogue is delivered in during politically chaotic situation where Zahra is highly distressed. The use of such dialogue provides Zahra with a space to validate her emotions instead of suppressing them. This incident aligns with the first stage of Herman's trauma recovery model where the trauma survivors must be offered with psychological and emotional safety. Though Zahra's father did not continue a sustainable conversation, yet his tone and presence offered a support that gave her the necessary validation and acceptance.

During a moment of distress, Maryam and Zahra are caught in a situation where a boy is being mocked and tensions prevail in the classroom and the social circumstances are also highly charged. Maryam's mother says to her,

"*Come on, Maryam. We're going home"* (121)

Although this dialogue reflects that Maryam's mother is trying to protect her by asking her to move away from the place, but the tone and the background of the dialogue suggests that this dialogue lacks the presence of emotional support which is necessary in the first stage of trauma recovery that is establishing safety. This act of protecting seems to be practical, but is not nurturing or healing her emotionally. Maryam's mother seems to be more reactive and less interactive.

4.1.2 Stage 2: Remembrance and Mourning in Trauma Healing

The thorough and careful reading of the novel *Best of Friends* reveals that there are no such dialogues of Zahra's parents that supports the second stage of Herman's recovery model. Zahra's parents do not engage in any sort of deep-rooted discussions that gives Zahra a space to express her emotions and this leaves an empty space in her trauma recovery journey. Zahra is left alone to process her thoughts and stay under the weight of her emotions while her parents do not provide her with an opportunity to open up. In trauma studies and particularly in Herman's trauma recovery model, this absence represents an emotional void that proves to be a missing step in the psychological recovery of Zahra.

On the other hand, during a highly intense situation where Maryam comes back home from a very traumatic experience that involved police and some legal consequences, Maryam's father says,

"*If we call the police… everyone will think something really unspeakable happened to you" (118)*

This scene could be analyzed under the second stage of Herman's trauma recovery model where the survivor must be given an opportunity to name and remember the incident and discuss it, but in this dialogue, Maryam's father shut down all these opportunities where she could have expressed herself. Her father's main focus was on how and what people will think about them rather than focusing on validating his daughter's internal turmoil and he eventually left her with imposed silence. The phrase **"*something really unspeakable"*** suggests that trauma is being regarded as something unexplainable not because its is quite painful, but because it is considered as a shameful act that will negatively impact reputation in society.

4.1.3 Stage 3: Reconnection with Relations

In a very rare moment, when Zahra and her mother reunites with her father in London after a long separation caused by political turmoil, Zahra's father says to her,

"*My loves," he said, all the weight… lifted off him* (241)

This moment proves to be a very important turning point in the emotional healing journey of Zahra and it successfully aligns with the third stage of Herman's trauma recovery model that is reconnection. The phrase **"*My loves",*** carries a unique sense of warmth that is necessary for the emotional haling of Zahra. This dialogue contrasted immensely to the way how her father used to talk to her earlier. For Zahra, this phrase proved to be a turning point where she started to develop emotional reattachment with her family. In the context of trauma healing, this scene resulted in reconstructing the lost trust and emotional closeness of Zahra with her familial relations.

While discussing Maryam's parents through the lens of Herman's third stage of trauma recovery, it becomes quite clear that Maryam's parents rely more on non-verbal gestures rather than the spoken words. After a long duration of tension and political distress Maryam's father tends to offer her fruits as a gesture of care instead of verbally communicating with her and validating her emotions.

4.2 Second Section

This section comprises of quantitative method and will be undergoing the KWIC of the selected words of Zahra and Maryam's parents by using AntConc software. The analysis of this section will be carried out in following two points:

1. KWIC of Zahra's Parents
2. KWIC of Maryam's Parents

4.2.1 KWIC of Zahra's Parents

The figure 4.1 shows the KWIC of the word ***enough*** shows multiple instances in the novel where this word is being used. There is only one instance where this word is used directly my Zahra's father as he says, ***"That's enough for now," her father said, handing a slice of…..*** This dialogue is delivered by Zahra's father during a moment where emotions and stress were rising. The structure of the dialogue is firm and it shuts down the further dialogue. The word ***enough*** puts limit to further conversation. It appears in quite restrictive context.

In term of trauma recovery, the word ***enough*** does not cause clear harm, but it neither contributes to the deep healing from trauma. This represents a parental communication style that benefits merely the surface level safety instead of emotional engagement.

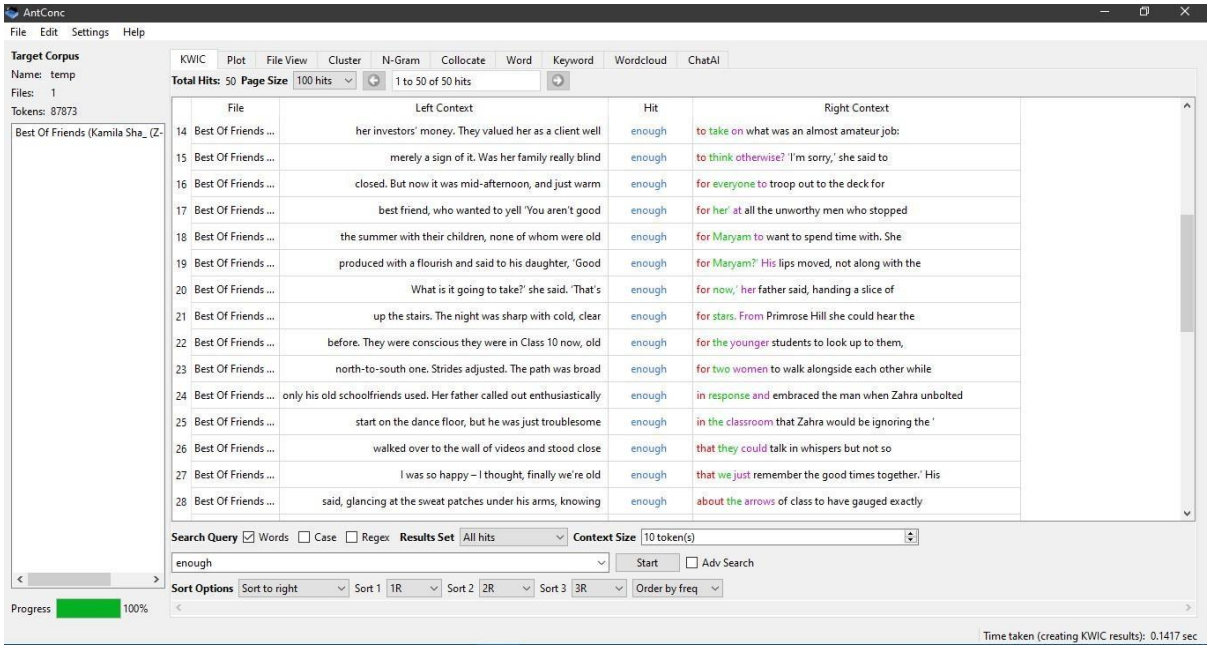

Figure: 4. 1 "Enough"

The figure 4.2 shows the word ***trust*** which is being used by Zahra's father as he says, ***"Zahra is very sensible and I trust her".*** This dialogue by Zahra's father occurs quite late in the novel when they reunite with their father in London. The word ***trust*** is used with the phrase ***"very sensible"*** that shows that the father of Zahra has finally begin to think about Zahra as someone who could take wise decisions. The KWIC shows that the word ***trust*** is surrounded by phrases that represents parental judgement and some sort of reflective tone as well. This indicates that the parents of Zahra have at last started to validate her confidence and support her emotional state of mind. A very important fact that this is the only instance when the father of Zahra shows direct affirmation towards Zahra and it add weigh to it.

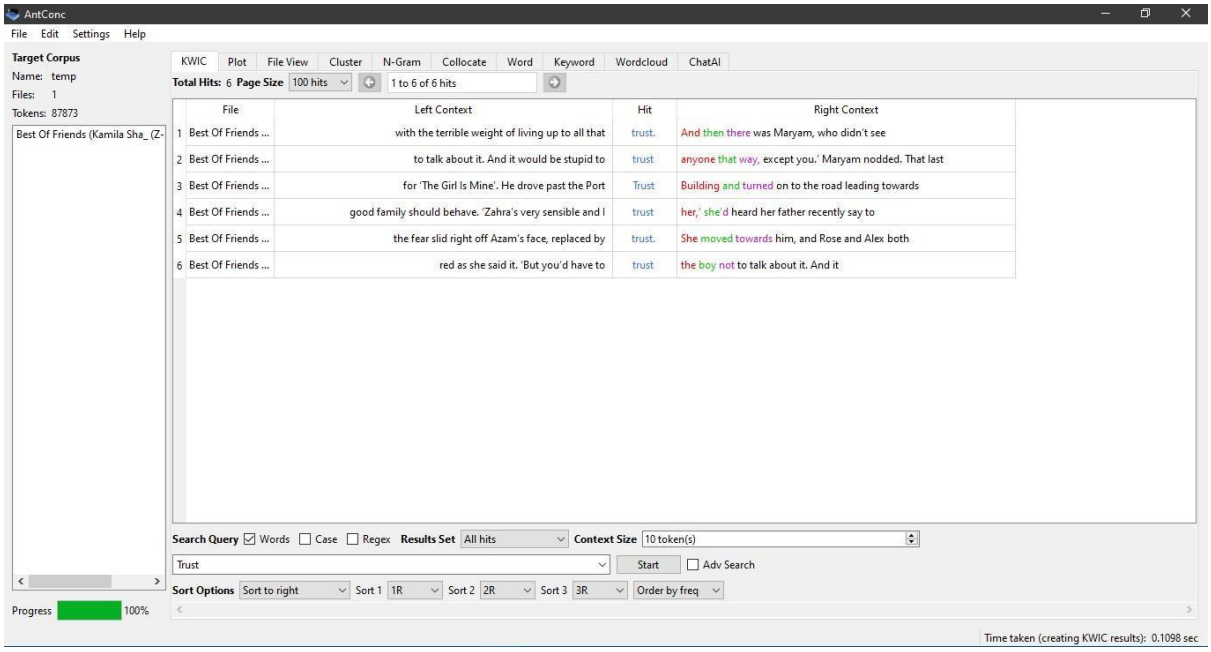

Figure 4.2 "*Trust*"

4.2.2 KWIC of Maryam' Parents

The figure 4.3 shows the word ***terrible*** which is being used by Maryam's mother as she says, ***"being a pair of hooligans with no regard for the terrible day anyone else was having".*** The usage of the word ***terrible*** by Maryam's mother exaggerates the weight of her own circumstances and shifts that stress and tension on to her daughter Maryam. Here the word ***terrible*** plays the role of a semantic intensifier that is used not merely to describe the day, but to also justify the act of scolding and thus this asserts authority as well.

In the context of the trauma recovery model of Herman, the safety stage demand for more validating and supporting environment. But the use of the word ***terrible*** by Maryam's mother in the present context, responds to her own stress by putting all the frustration and anxiety on to the shoulders of Maryam. Such situations deprive children from validating their own emotional space.

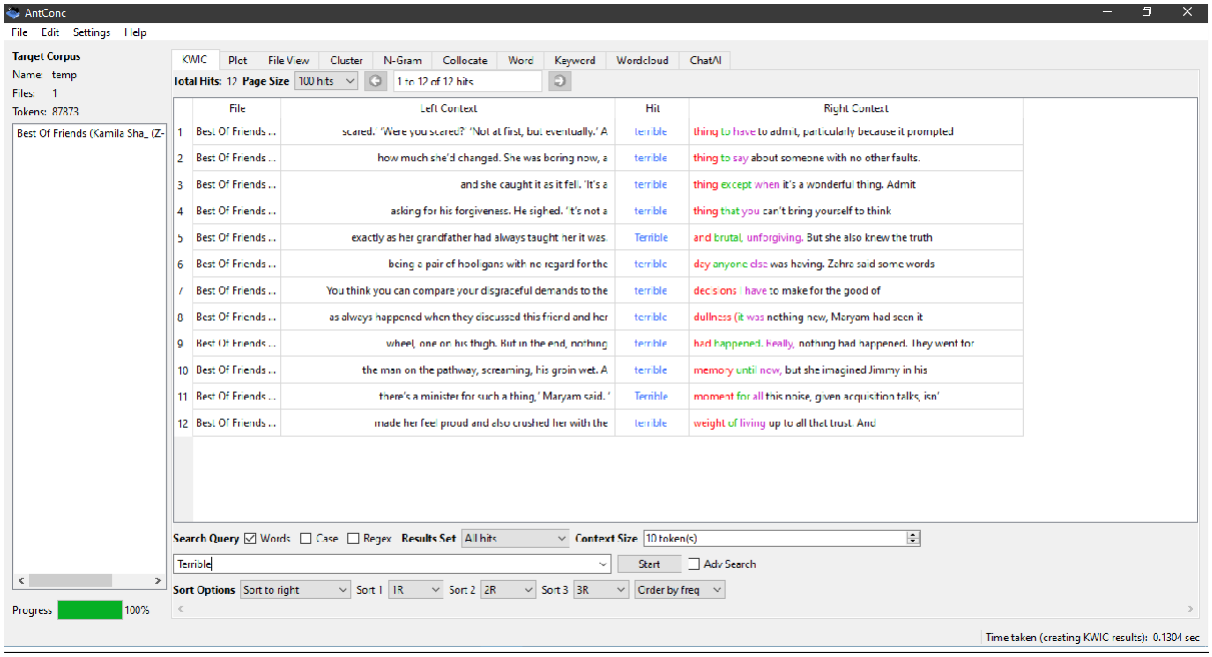

Figure: 4. 3 *"Terrible"*

Lasty, in the figure 4.4 , the word ***power*** could be seen which is being used by the grandfather of Maryam as he says, ***"Of course you hate that. But always respect where power lies — and then work out how you can use it.".*** Here the word ***power*** reflects the emotional or behavioral economy in which Maryam is being raised. In this regard, the real meaning of ***power*** lies where survival means to leverage and understand hierarchies instead of confronting them. This build a sense in Maryam that relationships are supposed to be strategic and to think that these are not safe spaces for the growth of emotional growth.

In the context of trauma recovery, the use of the word ***power*** in this dialogue represents external safety that in real masks internal fragmentation. Here it reflects that control is prioritized over connection and authority is a position which can never be questioned. It can only be managed.

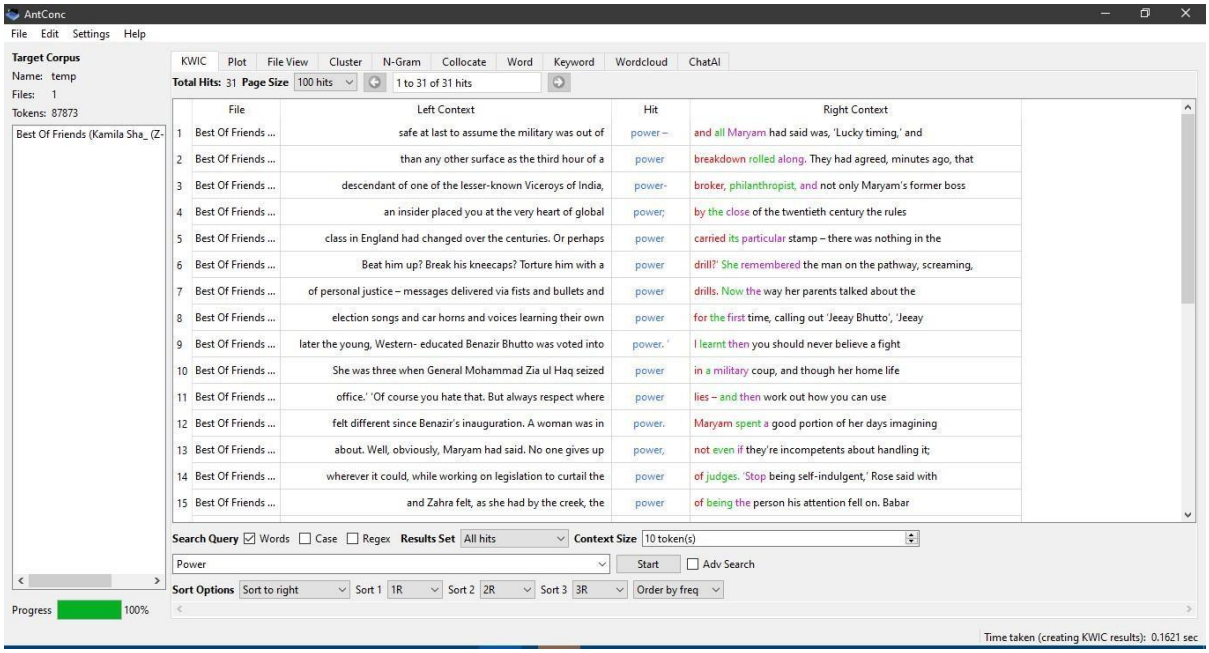

Figure: 4. 4 *"Power"*

Thus, all these words clearly describe the influence of the language of Zahra and Maryam during the trauma healing journey in the novel *Best of friends.*

4.3 Triangulation

The third section of analysis comprises of triangulation which will explain the link between the findings of theoretical interpretations and linguistic analysis of specific words using AntConc software. The purpose of triangulation is to combine the results of both qualitative and quantitative analysis and presents the parallel findings.

The present research used a triangulated research design by incorporating **thematic interpretations**, **corpus-based KWIC analysis of specific words** and **a parallel case study of Zahra and Maryam** from the novel *Best of Friends* in order to increase the validity and credibility of the research.

The analysis began with the textual analysis of the dialogues of Zahra and Maryam's parents that either contributed or obscured the trauma healing journey of Zahra and Maryam. The selected dialogues were analyzed under the lens of Herman's 3 stage trauma recovery model. The interpretation of selected dialogues showed that the parents of Zahra provided the emotional and psychological healing from the childhood trauma, but to a very limited level.

In the second section of the analysis, KWIC corpus analysis of specific trauma influenced words of Zahra and Maryam's parents was conducted using AntConc software. The KWIC analysis of selected words reflected that the parents of Zahra made use of words that not thoroughly, but somehow helped in validating Zahra's emotions and thus contributed in the trauma healing journey. But the parents of Maryam used the words that sounded more authoritative and less validating and thus obscured the trauma recovery journey of Maryam.

Moreover, the present research conducted a parallel case study approach in which the two characters i.e., Zahra and Maryam were studied parallel. This approach made the present research a comparative study.

Thus, the research aims to analyze the influence of parental language in the psychological and emotional trauma healing of both Zahra and Maryam in the novel *Best of Friends.* The results collected from the thematic analysis of dialogues and the KWIC of selected words showed that the parents of Zahra used language that contributed in her healing journey, but to a limited extent. On the other hand, the parents of Maryam used language that hindered her healing journey. Thus, it could be concluded that the use of specific parental language has a great influence in either contributing or obstructing the trauma healing journey.

Chapter 5
Discussion and Conclusion

The importance of language in organizing human communities and in passing down the cultural legacy from generation to generation cannot be negotiated. It comprises of duality of patterning (Whorf). The contribution of family factors particularly communication plays an important role in the development of children. The role of positive parenting results in reduced sexual risk and more expressive relation between parents and children whereas poor communication skills result in increased aggression and intolerance among children (LeBlanc et al.).

Trauma is an overwhelming and a quite frightening experience that goes beyond the protective shields that keeps individuals safe from unnecessary anxiety and fear. Behzad in 2024, in the work "Trauma Narrative and Healing: A Post-traumatic Exploration of Toni Morrison's Home", applied Caruth's trauma theory focusing her concepts of fragmentation and repetition on Morrison's Home (Pourgharib, Esmaili, et al.).
Another study was conducted during wartime by using corpus tools such as WordSmith and AntConc in the work "Corpus Based Analysis of Literary Works of A Thousand Splendid Suns" (Wan). By keeping in consideration, the previously conducted research on trauma, the present research put forwards a parallel case study of two characters i.e., Zahra and Maryam who have gone through childhood trauma. The research examines the influence of parental language on the psychological healing from trauma.

The results of the research show a comparison of dialogues used by Zahra and Maryam's parents that reflect a clear difference in parenting styles. The parents of Zahra particularly her father reflected a pattern which represented a superficial calm and not a thorough validation of her emotions. The chosen dialogues of stage 1 of Herman's trauma recovery model shows that although some of the dialogues tend to provide her comfort, but the parents of Zahra did not provide her with the safe space where she could express her internal turmoil. Zahra felt a sense of external safety, but she lacked the crucial emotional openness. On the other hand, in the case of Maryam, the dialogues of Maryam's parents reflect authoritative parenting. The dialogues suggest that Maryam built safety, but this safety was through control and not through emotional trust.

Similarly, the dialogues for the second stage suggests that the parents of Zahra did not use language that contributed towards remembering and mourning in the healing journey of trauma. Zahra was left alone to process her thoughts and stay under the weight of her

emotions. In trauma studies and particularly in Herman's trauma recovery model, this absence represents an emotional void that proves to be a missing step in the psychological recovery of Zahra. On the other hand, there were dialogues of Maryam's parents that could be analyzed in the second stage of trauma recovery model, but her parents were again more authoritative.

The dialogues for the third stage of trauma recovery model suggests that the parents of Zahra tried to rebuild the bond with their daughter. This act by her parents resulted in a partial emotional and psychological recovery. On the other hand, the dialogues of Maryam's parents suggested that they parents rely more on non-verbal gestures rather than the spoken words. This resulted in obstructed healing of Maryam from trauma.

Moreover, the KWIC analysis of selected words that the parents of Zahra made use of words that not completely, but somehow helped in validating Zahra's emotions and that contributed in the trauma healing journey. But the parents of Maryam used the words that were more authoritative and less validating. Such representation obscured the trauma recovery journey of Maryam.

In future, the study could be extended by exploring a different literary text that deals with trauma and also focus on the differences based on gender in representing trauma. The researchers could also take into consideration the role of parental language across different cultures in trauma healing.

Thus, the present research used Herman's 3 stage trauma recovery model and analyzed the parental dialogues of Zahra and Maryam's parents. The research also incorporated AntConc software and did KWIC analysis of selected words of Zahra and Maryam's parents that reflected contribution or obstruction in the trauma healing journey. It showed that in fiction trauma is not only present in specific event, but it can also be portrayed through the language and silence of characters.

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