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Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17391578>**Narrative Voice in Sur Sassui of Shah Jo Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai****Muhammad Hassan Khoso**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to highlight the deployment of the narrative voice as a narrative technique in Sur Sassui of Shah Jo Risalo. The analysis of the Sur is made in the light of the theoretical framework of classical narratology based on the core narrative category of narrative voice. The narrative voice is that of the homodiegetic narrator who employs the narrative tools such as autodiegetic narration, narratee signals, the first-person and the second person linguistic references, action-oriented words or phrases, and rhetorical addresses. The selected poetic lines of Sur Sassui were textually analyzed with a close reading technique in the light of the theoretical framework based on the core narrative category of narrative voice. The analysis revealed that Sassui, the protagonist character of the Sur, appears as a homodiegetic narrator and employs above-stated narrative tools for communicating her personal experiences to her silent narratees. She introduces herself in the first person and her narratees in the second person linguistic references. She also interacts with her narratees by creating an 'I-you' narrative situation. With the help of narrative tools of action-oriented words or phrases and rhetorical addresses, Sassui shares her painful experiences of separation from her beloved husband. Conclusively, this study suggests that Sur Sassui of Shah Jo Risalo possesses narrative aspects that function as structural aspects. In addition, this study also recommends that some other sources of Shah Jo Risalo can be studied from a structural perspective.

Keywords: Narratology, Sur Sassui, Shah Jo Risalo, Narrative voice, Homodiegetic narrator, and narratees.

Introduction

This paper focuses on how Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, one of the prominent Sufi poets of Sindh, Pakistan, has employed the narrative voice as one of the narrative techniques in *Sur Sassui* of *Shah Jo Risalo*. *Shah Jo Risalo*, the message of Shah, is a musical compendium that comprises 30

Surs. Each *Sur* has its own name and is further divided into various *Dastaans*, episodes, or cantos (Hotechand, 1991; Iqbal, 1991). The *Risalo* has been translated by different scholars. For this study, Mushtaq Ali Shah's, a career diplomat of Pakistan, version of the *Risalo* is referred to.

As far as the research studies in terms of theses and papers are concerned, various *surs* of *Shah Jo Risalo* have been examined, analyzed, and interpreted. Significantly, the majority of these studies have been attempted thematically. Very few studies have been conducted to discuss the selected *Surs* of the *Risalo* from a structural perspective. To be more specific, no substantial attention has been paid towards this important area despite recognizing that the selected *Surs* are told or sung in the form of stories or tales (Allana, 1991; Shaikh, 1991; Sorley, 1989).

Hühn (2005) and Nkamanyang (2008) demonstrate that any literary work that is told in storytelling tradition is narrative in nature because of the narrative aspects present in it. Therefore, that literary work can be analyzed for exploring narrative aspects, and these aspects function as structural units of that work. They further explain that thematic aspects in any story-oriented literary work are communicated by means of narrative aspects, which work as formal or structural components of that literary work, and with the help of those aspects, an author communicates his or her ideology(s). Thus, narrative aspects play a vital role in communicating themes in any literary narrative work. Theoretically, the narrative aspects are placed under the domain of narratology, which deals with the structural study of the narrative genres of literature such as novels, short stories, narrative poetry, including story-oriented lyric poems, etc (Nkamanyang, 2008; Fludernik, 2009; Jahn, 2017). To be more specific, narratology as a theory, according to Nkamanyang (2008), provides the theoretical framework(s) containing various narrative aspects or core narrative categories, which further possess several sub-narrative aspects functioning as analytical tools for examining any story-oriented literary work.

The poetry of Shah Abdul Latif is commonly recognized as lyrical poetry. Even many scholars call it a pure lyric poetry (Shaikh, 1991; Sorley, 1989). However, there are selected *Surs* of *Shah Jo Risalo* which are told or sung in storytelling tradition (Sorley, 1989; Saleem, 2012; Khoso, 2021), if seen from the perspective of pure lyric poetry, seem to be deviated from the definition of pure lyric poetry on account of the amalgamation of various dramatic as well as narrative aspects. Therefore, we propose that the story-oriented *Surs* of *Shah Jo Risalo* are transgeneric in nature and possess certain narrative aspects which function as structural units. So, the present study aims at exploring narrative aspects by analyzing *Sur Sassui* of *Shah Jo Risalo* textually in the light of the theoretical framework of the core narrative category of narrative voice. As the main objective of this study is to explore the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif from a structural perspective by identifying the narrative aspects, such as narrative voice, various lines of the *Sur Sassui* are textually analyzed with interpretive and descriptive approaches of analysis by using the close reading technique.

The Story of *Sur Sassui*

Punhu was the son of Ari Jam, the ruler of *Kech Makran* of Baluchistan, now one of the provinces of Sindh, Pakistan. In the past, caravans of merchants used to come to Sindh for trade, mostly from *Kech Makran*. While passing through *Bhambhore*, now the town of Thatta, one of the districts of Sindh, some of the people of the caravan mentioned the beauty of *Sassui* to the prince

Punhu. Being a young man and curious to see Sassui about whom he had heard so much, he planned to go to Sindh. He disguised himself as a merchant, arranged for a caravan, and left for *Bhambhore*. The goods he chose for his caravan were perfumes, scents, and other toiletries, mostly used by girls. As their caravan reached Bhambhore, all the people rushed to buy goods from them. Sassui was amongst those who wanted to see these wares. Punhu was fascinated by her rare beauty and fell in love with her. She, too, fell in love with him. Finally, Sassui was married to Punhu, and Punhu settled with his in-laws washing clothes. When Punhu's friends returned to *Kech*, they told Ari Jam and his brothers that Punhu was doing such a menial job, having settled in Sindh. When Punhu's brothers saw that their father was getting restless for his son, they set off for *Bhambhore*, promising to bring him back. Punhu's brothers came as guests and stayed with Punhu. Sassui welcomed them and did everything to please them. They tried to persuade Punhu to go back, but he refused, saying that he could not leave Sassui. Then his brothers planned another tactic. While eating and drinking, they deliberately made Punhu drink so much that he lost his senses. Sassui was asleep, so they tied up Punhu on a camel's back and left for *Kech*. When Sassui wakes up, she gets shocked, and instead of returning to Bhambhore, she follows Punhu on the way to *Kech*. She sets off on the most dangerous road, all alone, passing through the Rocky Mountains full of wild animals. She dies on the way to Ketch and never meets Punhu again.

Literature Review

The term 'narratology' was coined in the late 1960s of the twentieth century. Russian formalists were the first who analyze folk stories under the domain of narratology. Since then, narratology has been regarded as a theory and applied to all forms of narrative genres. From a historical point of view, narratology is placed into classical and post-classical domains.

The classical narratology, also known as structural narratology, deals with the textual features of narrative texts. With the help of various narrative tools, which function as structural aspects provided under the umbrella of the theoretical framework, the narrative texts are examined closely (Nkamanyang, 2008). There are some prominent classical narratologists whose models have been frequently used for exploring narrative aspects in narrative texts. They include, but are not limited to, Tzvetan, Gerard Genette, Rimmon-Kenan, Stanzel, Barthes, Chatman, Lanser, Gerard Prince, and Greimas.

The post-classical or postmodern narratology, on the other hand, deals with the interdisciplinary study of narrative texts. Most importantly, the post-classical narratologists do not deviate from the models of their predecessors. However, they, as Nunning (2008) has rightly pointed out, modify and elaborate applications of those models. Although they do not add to the existing models of structuralists, they introduce innovative approaches in terms of interdisciplinary studies. They have focused on contextual, thematic, comparative, Marxist, feminist, ethnic, intercultural, postcolonial, cognitive, rhetorical, historical, natural, new historical, cultural, gender, critical, etc. approaches of narratology along with structural approaches.

By definition, narratology is the study of narrative texts (Bal, 2009). It comprises several theories or models proposed by various narratologists. These theories or theoretical models are used for exploring narrative aspects and their forms and functioning in narrative texts (Jahn, 2017).

According to Fludernik (2009), it offers narratological models to identify and analyse various narrative aspects and their forms in narrative texts.

Hogan (2013, p.4) demonstrates that narratology functions as a tool for “preparing, initiating or backing up interpretations”. Narratology, from a conceptual point of view, is an object theory. It is more or less concerned with the objective of narrative, its models and narration, mainly depending on conception and adequate properties with typical features applied in different ways.

Narratological theories as object models can better be regarded as methods or methodologies. Following object models, one can use one or several narrative elements of any given model, considering them instructive and analytical components. These various narrative elements, subsumed under core categories, form a theoretical framework (Nkamanyang, 2008).

Various scholars and researchers have explored various narrative aspects in various literary works of the prominent literary writers in the light of the theoretical framework of narratology. Talking in the context of narrative poetry and story-oriented lyric poetry, there are several examples of narratological analysis of narrative as well as lyric poems. These poems have been textually analyzed in the light of the theoretical framework (s) of narratology. In this regard, Hühn’s (2005) narratological analysis of John Keats’s lyrical poem “Ode to a Nightingale” and Wordsworth’s lyric poem “I wandered lonely as a cloud” are illustrative examples. By analyzing these poems textually, Hühn’s analysis of both lyrical poems suggests that there are narrating agents who use certain sub-narrative aspects such as first-person linguistic references, autodiegetic telling, narratee signals, and the story’s plan action words. Therefore, the narrative nature of these poems is maintained due to the presence of these narrative aspects.

Nkamanyang’s (2008) analysis of Byron’s narrative as well as lyrical poems is also worth mentioning contribution from a narratological point of view. Her analysis of various Byron’s poems indicates that there are characters of the stories who appear as homodiegetic narrators and share their personal experiences by means of various narrative tools such as narratee signals, the first person and the second person linguistic references, rhetorical style of speech, action-oriented lines, and simultaneous, retrospective, and prospective modes of narration.

Yao’s (2011) study of Keats’ lyrical odes from a narratological perspective is said to be another important contribution. Yao, while analyzing various odes of Keats, states that his poems contain several narrative and dramatic aspects. Yao emphasizes that there are narrating characters in various odes of Keats. These character-narrators use first-person linguistic references to introduce themselves. At various places in poems, these narrating characters appear addressing directly to their fellow character-narratees directly by calling them with second person pronouns and sometimes with their names. Yao also mentions that there are several instances of rhetorical or conversational communicative situations between narrating characters and their narratees in Keats’s odes, which again shows that there is the dramatic impact of these poems in addition to the narrative nature.

Discussing in the context of Shah Abdul Latif’s poetry, particularly his selected *Surs*, they are said to be story-oriented lyrical poems in which narrating characters are mainly females who speak to their beloved ones (Shaikh, 1991; Sorley, 1989). As discussed above, Shah Abdul Latif’s various

Surs mentioned in *Shah Jo Risalo* have been studied from a thematic perspective by various distinguished researchers and scholars. However, very little has been mentioned about the structural or narrative nature of Shah Abdul Latif's poetry.

To be more specific, there are very few studies that have brought the narrative nature of selected *Surs* of *Shah Jo Risalo* under discussion. In this connection, the research paper of Khoso, Sangi, and Panhwar (2021) is a significant contribution. Their study attempts to explore the narrative aspect of focalization in *Sur Marui* of *Shah Jo Risalo*. Besides this, another important contribution on the selected *Surs* of *Shah Jo Risalo* from a narrative perspective is made by Khoso, Sangi, and Panhwar (2023). They have explored the narrative aspect of homodiegetic narrative voice in *Sur Ranho* of *Shah Jo Risalo*. Nevertheless, the aforementioned contributions of the scholars seem to be insufficient from a narrative perspective, for Shah Abdul Latif is the leading poet of Sindh and whose poetry is read and sung in every nook and corner of Sindh. In a broader context, Latif's poetry is not confined only to Sindh and Pakistan but is read and researched across the world. Much is needed to study.

Therefore, finding the dire need of studying Shah Abdul Latif's poetry from a narratological perspective, the present study is said to be another important contribution in the existing literature on *Shah Jo Risalo*, for this paper attempts to explore the narrative voice in *Sur Sassui* of the *Risalo*. For this purpose, the lines of *Sur Sassui* are textually analyzed with a close reading technique in the light of the theoretical framework of narratology.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study is limited to the core narrative category of narrative voice. Sub-narrative aspects such as autodiegetic narration, narratee signals, the first and the second person linguistic references, action-oriented words or phrases, and rhetorical addresses are subsumed under the core category of narrative voice. These sub-narrative aspects, according to Nkanyang (2008), serve as structural analytical tools for examining any literary narrative text, including story-oriented lyric poems, from a narratological perspective.

Narrative voice

Narrative voice is one of the narrative aspects that authors employ in their works for communicating message(s) or ideologies(s) on both textual and contextual levels. Genette (1980), the classical narratologist, is associated with the pioneering of the concept of narrative voice. Genette (1980, p.12), under the typology of 'voice', discusses the subject of telling events in the story. The act of telling Genette says is made through the voice. The voice is the narrating or telling entity that performs the act of telling. Similarly, Jahn (2017) and Bal (2009) elaborate that the narrative voice refers to the agents or persons who tell stories or events. When narrating, people tell stories in any given text, and that text becomes a narrative text (Bal, 2009). In an ordinary narrative and nonfictional work, authors speak in their own voices, whereas in fictional narratives, historical authors introduce mediating voices.

Rimmon-Kenan (2002) highlights that, in addition to narrating agents, narratees are also part of the narrative voice. Though narratees do not speak, they participate on the story level as silent listeners and hence contribute to the process of communication on the story level. Nkanyang (2008) believes that if narrating agents serve the purpose of telling the story, viewing the events,

and performing the action, the role of narratees can never be ignored because narratees serve as the source of receiving information being addressed by narrators with a particular intention. Jahn (2017) says that both narrators and narratees appear in the text as characters or implied authors and readers or in both ways. Authors may allow one or more characters or narrators or both at the same time to narrate events in the first person or in the third person pronouns.

The narratologists discuss that on the story level, when story internal characters appear telling their own experiences either by addressing directly or indirectly to other story internal characters are to be termed as homodiegetic narrators (Genette, 1980; Rimmon-Kenan, 2002; Nkamanyang, 2008; Jahn, 2017; Bal, 2009). Homodiegetic narrators are characters of the story who tell events of their lives. They are generally known as character-narrators. They tell events they experience themselves. They are located on the level of action known as the intradiegetic level (Genette, 1980; Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). For their telling about themselves, Genette (1980, p. 25) names them “autodiegetic” narrators. Mainly, they appear as the protagonists or heroes of the story and remain dominant throughout the story (Jahn, 2017). They remain restricted only to their present and do not jump like the omniscient and omnipresent narrators. They tell what they see, do, or experience themselves, or they are told by someone else (Nkamanyang, 2008; Jahn, 2017). Homodiegetic narrators interact with other story internal characters to develop intimacy with them for telling about their miseries, pain, sorrows, or joys. They construct, negotiate, and redefine their identities. They tell their narratees about themselves that something strange has happened to them, or they describe their personal issues. They pursue their narratees to tell them their desires, emotions, predicaments, goals, or criticize mainstream society of the time. They wish their ideas to be accepted by their narratees. They try to motivate them to believe in their telling about themselves, hence they project their ideologies or perceptions (Jahn, 2017). Narratees participate in the process of communication on the story level, being silent listeners (Nkamanyang, 2008). There can be one or several narratees in the same text. Sometimes, they are addressed in the second person pronoun ‘you’ and sometimes by their names. Narratees may remain physically present or imagined, or even may be apostrophized in the case of inanimate objects, animals, or any personification (Fludernik, 2009).

Since homodiegetic narrators tell their events based on personal experiences to their fellow story internal characters by addressing them directly or indirectly, they come into face-to-face interaction with them on the action level (Nkamanyang, 2008). They employ verbal sentences, gestures, and movements of the body to engage their narratees. They also employ action-oriented sentences while addressing directly to their narratees, as Jahn (2017) says that homodiegetic narrators tell events in the story’s plain action sentences to engage their narratees actively on the story level. Fludernik (2009) thinks that when character-narrators address directly to their addressees in the story’s plain action sentences, it develops not only an *I-You* narrative situation but also gives the sense of performativity. According to Yao (2011), the narration in the poetic text becomes performative or dramatic when the character of the poem employs the rhetorical questions, exclamatory signals, and apostrophe clues to register her/his emotions and protest.

Methodology

This study is non-empirical and is conducted with a qualitative approach. Narratology, being one of the theories of literary criticism, provides theoretical as well as methodological material. Hühn (2005), Nkamanyang (2008), and Jahn (2017) state that narratology provides not only the theoretical framework(s) but also offers a suitable methodology for analyzing story-oriented genres of literature. Hühn (2005), Nkamanyang (2008), and Plooy (2010) illustrate that the narrative aspects subsumed under the core narrative categories in a theoretical framework of narratology are used as analytical tools. Nkamanyang (2008) further emphasizes that these sub-narrative aspects can be identified and interpreted in any given narrative text, including lyrical poetry, with an interpretive and descriptive approach. The lines or chunks of the text under study can be analyzed textually for exploring the narrative aspects as given in the theoretical framework. Since the theoretical framework of narratology based on core narrative category of narrative voice is regarded as suitable for this study, the sub-narrative aspects such as autodiegetic narration, narratee signals, the first and the second person linguistic references, action-oriented words or phrases, and rhetorical addresses subsumed under the core category of narrative voice are identified and interpreted in *Sur Sassui* of *Shah Jo Risalo*. For this purpose, the poetic lines of the *Sur* are textually analyzed with a close reading technique and are discussed descriptively.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Punhu, the prince, married Sassui, the adopted daughter of the laundryman living in *Bhambhore*, now part of the district Thatta of Sindh. That was unacceptable to Punhuon's brothers, as they were the rulers of *Kech Makran*, now part of Baluchistan, and had a high status. They came to *Bhambhore* and asked Punhu to go with them back to *Kech* without Sassui. But Punhu refused to go without Sassui. Planning a trick, Punhu's brothers agreed to take Sassui with them and started the journey to *Kech*. While on the way to *Kech*, the night fell, and the caravan in the mountainous area decided to take rest and planned to continue the journey the next day. As per the trick, Punhu's brothers kept waking till Sassui did not sleep. As soon as Sassui fell asleep, Punhu's brothers took Punhu, who had already been drugged for deep sleep, away with them, leaving Sassui alone sleeping in the middle of the mountains. On waking up the next morning, Sassui finds Punhu missing. To tell this happening, Sassui tells rhetorically to her peers, who function as her silent narratees:

*Fell asleep oh sisters! Regrettably somehow,
Jatts crippled me having abducted spouse,
Get away oh High Hill! Or I shall mill you (Shah, 2014, p. 214).*

*Cohort left while I slept; no camel when I woke up,
Searching at daybreak where did Keichis go?
Sustenance of distressed no longer in lodges (Shah, 2014, p.217).*

*Sleep is the enemy oh peers! Seek no sleep,
Or you too would wail like me in groves (Shah, 2014, p. 213).*

In the above stanzas, what one can see is Sassui, who is telling somebody the personal experiences that took place somewhere in the past. It can be claimed that Sassui is the homodiegetic narrator, and her recounting is made in the first-person narrative situation. To justify the claim, one can draw readers' attention to the fundamental features that can qualify any narrator as a homodiegetic narrator. In this context, the first point is that the narrator is telling what she witnessed personally, for that it was she who experienced the events of sleeping, waking up, and searching for *Keichis* at daybreak. Secondly, she tells her experiences in an autodiegetic first-person mode for that she does not tell anything about any other character of the story. She tells what happened or is happening with her. Thirdly, she reveals her identity as a protagonist, not as a minor character. Fourthly, she uses first-person linguistic references such as 'I' and 'me', not 'he' and 'she'. Fifthly, she makes her appearance as a character inside the story, speaking on the diegetic level. Moreover, she is telling the events she herself participates in, i.e., she is involved in the action of her own telling. In addition, she is addressing some other characters of the story who function as her narratees, such as her peers and hills on the same diegetic level. Sometimes she addresses them by name, and sometimes in the second person pronoun. Most importantly, she employs the action-oriented lines: 'Fell asleep, Get away', 'I shall mill', 'I slept', 'I woke up', 'Searching at daybreak', and 'Where did *Keichis* go'. And finally, the perceptions, thoughts, and feelings shared are restricted to the narrating 'I' of Sassui, not that of any other character. The above analysis provides sufficient ground to claim that Sassui is a homodiegetic narrator. Moreover, *Sassui*, being the character-narrator, tells her narratees what she experiences herself being present on the scene when *Punhu* was abducted by *Punhu's* brothers:

*Turning reins of sated they jockeyed off,
Saying "we shall have to traverse hills",
Devastated me to speak in Balochi (Shah, 2014, p. 209).*

*Audacious brothers-in-law left grabbing him,
Saying, "leave her alone behind headed to hills",
People advised me Baloch honor did not hike (Shah, 2014, p. 209).*

The above lines suggest that what *Sassui* is telling her narratees is the story of her personal experiences. *Sassui* is a homo-autodiegetic narrator can also be evidenced through the following lines, through which she addresses her fellow story-internal characters by telling them what she is feeling, being separated from her beloved:

*Lost a friend in negligence oh Girls! What shall I do?
Caravan left I slept, aggrieved when I woke up,
Been enquiring for Punhoon, need no nutrition,
Tell me if Hoat said something before leaving (Shah, 2014, p.154).*

At various places in the *Sur*, Sassui appears to have come into face-to-face interaction with her silent narratees. By means of direct and rhetorical addresses in action-oriented lines to her silent narratees, Sassui attempts to persuade them to listen to her most painful experiences that she is experiencing after the separation from her beloved Punhu:

*None may join me, oh Girls! In utter desolation,
No water in a long journey; grits and wasteland,
Troubled by thirst could curse sweetheart (Shah, 2014, p. 226).*

At another place in the *Sur*, Sassui, being a homodiegetic narrator, seems to interact with her narratees in the rhetorical style by employing action-oriented words and phrases to share her personal feelings and miseries. Most importantly, she addresses them in the second person linguistic references and sometimes with their names, such as Mom and Peers:

*Enduring chagrin away from kith and kin,
Why not I died oh Mom! Before this agony,
You know no pain oh sisters! That I endure (Shah, 2014, p. 221).*

*No knives but despair has hacked my heart,
Devastated by bane oh peers! Can live nor die (Shah, 2014, p. 244).*

Sassui addresses rhetorically not only to human beings, making them her narratees, but also addresses rhetorically to inanimate objects, considering them as her narratees for expressing her intense feelings. In this regard, she addresses to wind and hills:

*Erase not oh wind! Traces that I track,
Consign you oh ridge! Trace of sweetheart,
Blow not oh wind! Burying my barrens escort (Shah, 2014, p.168).*

*Be not too tall, oh hills! Grow no dense oh woods,
Shed no tears, my eyes! Lest I lose Punhoon's trail (Shah, 2014, p. 181).*

By addressing inanimate objects as in the above lines, Sassui actually has projected her personal emotions, predicaments, and miseries faced or facing on her way to get reunited with her beloved Punhu. The significance of self-telling is that it provides ground for her to interact with other character-participants for developing intimacy with them. By this means, she constructs, negotiates, and redefines her identity. What one can see through the analysis of the above lines is the narration or telling of the character-narrator directed at her narratees, human beings or inanimate objects.

Performativity and the story's plain action lines are some other clues that further provide the ground to claim Sassui to be the homodiegetic narrator in *Sur Sassui*. At various places in the *Sur* Sassui can be seen telling her own experiences to her narratees, being placed in a dramatic situation by means of tools of communication such as rhetorical addresses, body gestures, and implied physical movements :

*Hold reins! Stop camel! I am distressed and slain,
Be so kind, oh spouse! Revisit the hovel of Humble (Shah, 2014, p. 193).*

*Oh wayfarers! Oh Pal! Did you hear about Keich?
Did you hear amiable oh sire! Talking about me?’
Lady on her toes inquires voyagers of Kohyar (Shah, 2014, p. 219).*

*Bring my loom back, oh Mom! From the yard,
Kohyaro for whom I spun, settled down in Keich (Shah, 2014, p. 227).*

What we see through the above lines is the performativity in the poetic lines. Sassui’s addressing of her narratees by employing rhetorical markers and action-oriented lines with implied physical moves or gestures, ‘Hold reins! Stop camel! I am distressed and slain’, ‘Oh wayfarers! Oh Pal! Did you hear about Keich?’, and ‘Bring my loom back, oh Mom! From the yard, it clearly develops a dramatic effect. The situation under which both the narrator and narratees are placed can be claimed as an ‘I-You’ narrative situation. In addition, the above conversational addresses in action-oriented lines make the narration simultaneous, through which both the action and telling go at the same time. Precisely, Sassui’s verbal movements and gestures make her come into active interaction with her narratees on the story level. Furthermore, the clues of experientiality or performativity can also be evidenced through some other lines of the *Sur* in which Sassui seems to have interacted with her narratees actively:

*Did you come across who devastated me?
Find no spirit, oh brother! Without them,
Share grief only as it became unbearable (Shah, 2014, p. 220).*

*Did you see, oh Dothis! Caravan of Balochs?
They have departed depriving me gentle prattle (Shah, 2014, p. 233).*

What we see through the above lines is ‘I- you’ narrative situation in which Sassui, as a narrating character, is addressing her silent narratees sometimes with the second person linguistic references ‘you’ and sometimes by uttering their names ‘oh brother’, and ‘Dothis’. Moreover, the lines and phrases such as ‘Did you come across who devastated me?’, ‘Find no spirit oh brother!’, and ‘Share grief’, ‘Did you see, oh Dothis! Caravan of Balochs?’ clearly demonstrates that Sassui is addressing her narratees in a rhetorical style by using rhetorical questions and exclamatory markers. Furthermore, these lines and phrases are action-oriented, creating a dramatic sense in the poetic text.

Conclusion

With the findings of this paper, it can be concluded that Shah Abdul Latif’s poetry contains a variety of literary aspects and can be explored from various perspectives. It would not be fair to confine his poetry to the definition of pure lyric poetry and thematic analysis of selected *Surs*. Speaking in a research context, there are several other areas in which selected *Surs* of Shah Jo

Risalo can be studied. One of such research areas is the structural or narrative perspective. Very little has been contributed in the existing literature on the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif from a narrative perspective. Feeling the need for more studies in this area, the present study was conducted to explore narrative voice as one of the narrative techniques in *Sur Sassui* of *Shah Jo Risalo*. Since the narratology provides both the theoretical and methodological material, the present study was guided through the theoretical framework of narratology based on the core narrative category of narrative voice with sub-narrative aspects such as autodiegetic narration, narratee signals, the first-person and third-person linguistic references, rhetorical expressions, action-oriented words and phrases, and performativity in terms of dramatic effect. As these sub-narrative aspects function as analytical tools, they were explored in *Sur Sassui*. As this study is qualitative in nature, the poetic lines were textually analyzed with a close reading technique. The sub-narrative aspects subsumed under the core category of narrative voice were identified, interpreted, and described in the section of analysis and discussion.

The textual analysis of the *Sur* reveals that Shah Abdul Latif has employed the narrative technique of narrative voice in *Sur Sassui*. In the *Sur*, Sassui appears as a homodiegetic narrator and introduces herself with first-person linguistic references. She tells her personal experiences in an autodiegetic manner to her silent narratees, who are introduced in the second person linguistic references and sometimes by their names. Her narratees remain silent throughout the process of communication. Some of her narratees are also inanimate objects such as hills and wind. Sassui addresses her narratees and shares her feelings and emotions in the rhetorical style by means of rhetorical questions and exclamatory markers, which further create a dramatic effect in the poetic text.

This study recommends that narratology is very useful both theoretically and methodologically. With the help of the theoretical framework of narratology, along with methods of analysis, any story-oriented literary work, including lyric poems, can be explored from a structural perspective. This study also suggests that some other selected *Surs* of *Shah Jo Risalo* can be explored from a structural perspective by using the theoretical framework(s) of narratology.

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