

## Status Analysis of Tariq Rahman's "Deaf, Dark, Walls": A Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach

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### Abstract

*The aim of the study is to find out the relations among the participants and their status by focusing on language use and its interpersonal meanings through Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics theory in Tariq Rahman's short story "Deaf, Dark, Walls." The data is collected through mixed methods, both qualitative and quantitative. By applying this theory, the study found that the status of the participant Khaista Gul is six times high, and Javed's status is six times low in the selected eighteen statements. This study also highlights the research gap in the area of Pakistani Literature in English and invites scholars to conduct research from other theoretical perspectives, such as the theory of foregrounding and cognitive linguistics.*

**Keywords:** Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Status, Short Story, Tariq Rahman, Pakistani Literature in English

### Introduction

Pakistani Literature in English originated before independence when the British were ruling on the sub-continent and the English language was introduced as a medium of education. The history of Pakistani Literature in English is divided into three phases, i.e., first, second, and third phases. The first phase was started from 1947 to the 1960s in which the prominent writers were Ahmed Ali, Zulfiqar Ghose, Shahid Suhrawardy, Shahid Hussein, and Bapsi Sidhwa, and the most explored themes at that time were the impacts of partition, colonialism, and identity. The second phase was started from the 1970s to 1980s, and it was full of literary spirits and famous due to the great writers Taufiq Rafat, Daud Kamal, Maki Kureishi, Hina Faisal Imam, Anna Molka Ahmad, and Alamgir Hashmi. They highlighted the themes of politics, economic disparity, women's emancipation, culture, and dictatorship regime. The third phase was started from the 1990s till the present day. Pakistani Literature in English has gained global recognition due to the great collections of authors like Alamgir Hashmi, Kamila Shamsie, Heinz, Amina Khamisani, Mohsin Hamid, Fatima Bhutto, Moniza Alvi, Tariq Hussain, Omar Tarin, Haris Khaliq and their works address key issues such as residency, technology, middle-class people's issues, political crises, cultural clashes, and fictional writings.

In fictional writings, the short story is the most significant genre in Pakistani Literature in English and emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the collection of famous writers like Saadat Hasan Manto, Syed Waliullah, Ahmed Ali, Zaib-un-Nisa Hamidullah, Zulfiqar Ghose and many more. At that time, Pakistan was facing many problems like political, ethnic discrimination, social, geographical, religious, and cultural issues, so writers tried to highlight these issues in their writings.

Tariq Rahman is also a great Pakistani short writer, and his works are interesting and mostly related to real-life situations. Tariq Rahman wrote many short stories, which he listed in his book *Complete Short Stories*, written between 1968 and 2024. His works are based on the themes of sexual representation, social hypocrisy, cultural clashes, industrialization, and social inequality. In this study, one of his short stories, “Deaf, Dark, Walls,” is analyzed by Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), which aims to find out the relations among the participants. In Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), tenor concerns the relationships between those who are taking part in communication. Tenor is further divided into three parts, i.e., status, contact, and affect. Status deals with the interrelationship between the writer and the characters in the story, the writer and the reader, and between the characters themselves. It means that whether the status or social ranking of the participants is comparable or not. It is further divided into equal, unequal, lower, and high status. Thus, the study is conducted to investigate and analyze Tariq Rahman’s short story “Deaf, Dark, Walls” on the level of status through Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985) aims to find out the relations among the characters and the roles developed due to the language use, their correspondence, and their influence on one another by examining the language that is present in the form of a text. By applying Systemic Functional Linguistics theory to the short story “Deaf, Dark, Walls” by Tariq Rahman, the study is conducted to identify and analyze the relative positions of the participants in a cultural and social hierarchy called status.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To investigate Tariq Rahman’s “Deaf, Dark, Walls” on the level of status through Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory.
2. To analyze as to how status suggests various layers of meanings through Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory in Tariq Rahman’s “Deaf, Dark, Walls.”

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the linguistic tools utilized as status in Tariq Rahman’s “Deaf, Dark, Walls”?
2. How does status suggest various layers of meanings through Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory in Tariq Rahman’s “Deaf, Dark, Walls”?

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study is to add knowledge to the already existing bulk of knowledge related to the fields of linguistics and English literature. This study will motivate students and scholars to conduct research in the field of functional linguistics at BS and M.Phil. levels. Lastly, the study offers insights and a way for future scholars to opt for Pakistani Literature in English while conducting research in the field of applied linguistics.

### **Literature Review**

### Pakistani Literature in English

Pakistani Literature in English is a body of literature that is transcended from British Literature as the subcontinent was used as a colony by the British Empire so in this way, the writers got influence to use English as a medium to express their ideas emotions, feelings, etc. (Khan et al., 2024, p. 1412)

Pakistani Literature in English refers to the literary works written in the English language by authors from Pakistan (Junaid, 2021). The origin of Pakistani Literature in English can be traced back to colonial times when English was introduced as the medium of education and administration in the subcontinent. Different works were written at that time, highlighting the themes of colonialism, freedom, injustices, and more. During this time, writers like Muhammad Iqbal and Faiz Ahmed Faiz laid the foundation for the use of English as a literary language in Pakistan. After independence, Pakistani Literature in English truly began to flourish and authors like Zulfiqar Ghose and Ahmed Ali made significant contributions (Yaqoob, 2020). Since then, Pakistani Literature in English has continued to grow with many talented writers, and the direction of writing works has changed to themes like religion, miseries due to the partition, ethnic problems, feminism, socio-political, identity crises, and ideology (Junaid, 2021).

Pakistani Literature in English can be divided into three phases. The first period was the early phase, starting from 1947 to the 1960s, and was marked by the emergence of Pakistani writers who chose to write in English. It was not full of strong passions and spirits because most of the writers were expatriates, and the English language was only used in schools and administration (Yaqoob, 2020). The explored themes of the works at that time were the impacts of partition, colonialism, and identity. The prominent writers who wrote in this period were Ahmed Ali, Zulfiqar Ghose, Shahid Suhrawardy, Shahid Hussein, and Bapsi Sidhwa. In this phase, the dominant genre was fiction. Some notable novels are *The Heart Divided* (1948) by Mumtaz Shahnawaz, *Twilight in Delhi* (1940) by Ahmed Ali, *The Murder of Aziz Khan* (1967) by Zulfiqar Ghose, *The Crowded Room*, and *The Stone Woman* by Tariq Ali (Junaid, 2021).

The second phase was started from 1970s to 1980s (Yaqoob, 2020). This period was full of literary spirits and famous due to three great writers, Taufiq Rafat, Daud Kamal, and Alamgir Hashmi. This was the time when the “Big Three” of Pakistani English Poetry, namely, Taufiq Rafat (1927-1998), Daud Kamal (1935-1987), and Alamgir Hashmi (1951), were in their best form, and created some exceptional verses. The central themes of the works were political upheavals, economic disparity, women's emancipation, culture, and dictatorship regime (Yaqoob, 2020). Rafat's *Arrival of the Monsoon* (1987) is probably the most important poetry collection of that time. Professor Hashmi wrote some exceptional fine verses and made important contributions to literary criticism and critical studies at home and abroad. Other important writers at that time in Pakistan included Maki Kureishi, Hina Faisal Imam, Anna Molka Ahmad, Kaleem Omar, Ghulam Fariduddin Riaz, and Sheharyar Rashed, while expatriate writers included Hanif Kureishi, Imtiaz Dharker, Adrian A. Husain, Sara Suleri, and Bapsi Sidhwa (Ullah, 2023).

Bapsi Sidhwa is still alive and writing abroad. She was one of the important fiction writers from Pakistan, who started publishing at this time, and her novels *The Bride* (1983), *The Crow Eaters* (1978), and *Ice-Candy-man* (1988) took the world by storm, nationally as well as internationally. She is an expatriate writer and took up in detail various larger issues such as the trauma of Partition in 1947, the poor treatment of religious minorities and growing intolerance, and the increasing suppression of women in society. One of the most important Pakistani scholars, Dr Tariq Rahman, also started writing some important critical and literary

works at that time including his world-acclaimed linguistics studies, in which writing has continued till today (Ullah, 2023).

The third phase was started from the 1990s till the present day. Pakistani literature in English has gained global recognition due to the great collections of authors like Alamgir Hashmi, Kamila Shamsie, Heinz, Amina Khamisani, Mohsin Hamid, Fatima Bhutto, Moniza Alvi, Tariq Hussain, Omar Tarin, and Haris Khaliq (Junaid, 2021). In this phase, there are many works written in the genres of poetry, novels, short stories, and dramas. Moreover, Alamgir Hashmi is still alive and writing poetry; Omer Tarin, Ejaz Rahim, M. Athar Tahir, Ilona Yusuf, and Haris Khaliq are significant writers, writing in Pakistan, while Moniza Alvi and Waqas Ahmad Khawaja keep alive the tradition of poetic excellence in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA), respectively. Bapsi Sidhwa still writes some amazing new talent pieces that are read with international and national acclaim. Further, the most well-known writer, Mohsin Hamid, wrote the novels *Moth Smoke* (2000) and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), which gained popularity internationally (Ullah, 2023).

Another writer, Kamila Shamsie, wrote works exploring the themes of power, identity conflicts, cross-cultural relationships, and history. Her works are *Salt and Saffron* (1998), *Kartography* (2002), *Burnt Shadows* (2009), and *A God in Every Stone* (2014), which were also read and liked out of the country. Further, Mohammad Hanif, with *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008) and *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) were also awarded. Bina Shah wrote *Where They Dream in Blue* (2001), *The 786 Cybercafe* (2004), and *Slum Child* (2010). Many other writers and poets contributed well to the future of Pakistani Literature in English (Junaid, 2023). Dr Tariq Rahman and other Pakistani scholars are known for their unique style and voices, which reflect Pakistani culture. Post-colonial novels address key issues such as residency, technology, middle-class people's issues, political crises, cultural clashes, and fictional writings (Hayder, 2023).

Heinz wrote *Sexual Orientation* (1995), which discusses that sexual minorities are the largest minorities present in the world, neglecting ethnic boundaries, social class, and age, while Mumtaz Shahnawaz was a political activist, freedom fighter, and novelist. Her novel, *The Heart Divided* (1957), discusses the problems of women, which has been considered the starting point of feminism in Pakistan. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) by Afghan American writer Khalid Hosseini deals with the problem of sexual abuse and the deserving rights of women in Afghanistan (Hayder, 2023).

Amina Khamisani's book *Sinds Contribution to English* (1975) mentioned all the writers who wrote on subjects like economics, history, and Islam in English. *Belles lettres* are creative writings that cannot be included in a short story or a novel but in prose. Some biographies have great literary qualities, like *Memory* (1966) by Feroze Khan and *Purdah to Parliament* (1963) by Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah can hardly be ignored in the development of prose in India and Pakistan. Noon Meem Rashid and Shaista Ikramullah had a simple and great style of writing in English which is different from the writers of nineteenth and twentieth-century Indian writers. Some biographies are written in Pakistan by politicians, generals, and others (Rahman, 1991). Furthermore, Khan et al. (2023) discuss that a huge part of the newly emerged body of literature called Pakistani Literature in English has not yet been explored, so in order to explore it, this study is conducted to examine the short story "Deaf, Dark, Walls" by Tariq Rahman on the level of status through Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics.

## Methodology

The objective of the study is to investigate and analyze Tariq Rahman's short story "Deaf, Dark, Walls" through M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) on the

level of status. The data is collected after reading the short story “Deaf, Dark, Walls” by Tariq Rahman through the mixed form of data collection under the domain of Systemic Functional Linguistics. In the process of data collection, selected statements are collected from the short story via Systemic Functional Linguistics.

### Theoretical Framework

Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985) studies the relationship between language and its functions in society. This theory is also known as Systemic Functional Grammar, Hallidayan Linguistics, and Systemic Functional Linguistics. There are three levels in Systemic Functional Linguistics theory: semantics, phonology, and lexicogrammar. This field of study was developed in the 1960s by British linguist Michael Halliday (Nordquist, 2021).

The theory describes the syntactic structure of language in which language plays a central role. On the other hand, structural approaches put all the elements of language and their combinations as central. Systemic Functional Linguistics begins with the social context and focuses on how language acts upon and is imposed by the social context (Information on Systemic Functional Linguistics, n.d.).

This study tries to analyze Tariq Rahman’s short story “Deaf, Dark, Walls” using Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), which aims to find out the relations among the participants and the interpersonal meaning among the participants. In Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), tenor concerns the relationships between those who are taking part in communication. Tenor is further divided into three parts, i.e., status, contact, and affect. Status refers to the relative position of the participants in a cultural and social hierarchy. It is further divided into equal, unequal, lower, and high status. Thus, the study is conducted to investigate and analyze Tariq Rahman’s short story “Deaf, Dark, Walls” through Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985).

### Status

Status is the first part of the tenor, which deals with the interrelationship between the writer and the characters in the story, the writer and the reader, and between the characters themselves. It refers to the relative position of the participants in a text. It is divided into equal, unequal, lower, and high status. It means whether the status or social ranking of the participants is comparable or not or whether it is high or low. There are different realizations of the principle associated with the status. The main principle is the reciprocity of choice, which means that when a group of people behaves in the same way, they work together and give each other advantages. The people of equal status in the text can be realized by their same kind of choice, while unequal status is realized by them taking up different choices.

### Data Analysis

Status refers to the relative position of the participants in a cultural and social hierarchy. It is further divided into two parts, equal and unequal status. Based on the data interpretation, the short story “Deaf, Dark Walls” by Tariq Rahman shows unequal status among the participants like the unequal status between Khaista Gul and Shahid, Javed, and their other two friends.

The old guard says to Khaista Gul, **“But that is no concern of ours,” he had added, “for there are girls who like to be teased”** (Rahman, 2024a, p. 677, para. 2). The old guard is trying to guide Khaista Gul about society before he hands over the job to Khaista Gul. Here, in this sentence, **“but”** shows an independent clause, which may suggest that the residents of

the village were independent, means free. It may suggest that the guard who is speaking has spent many years serving that village. Therefore, he knows what type of boys and girls live in that society. Perhaps, that is the reason he presented this remark because they must guard what they are entrusted to, not indulge in such business. They were just the guards. Therefore, he suggested **“that is no concern of ours”** but guarding. Further, he adds, **“for there are girls who like to be teased.”** In this sentence, the word **“who”** shows that this is a relative clause. It probably means that this guard knows every inch of that society and believes that the girls of that society are not civilized. They keep themselves in a relationship with the uncivilized boys and even put the honour of their family into jeopardy to elope with them. It may suggest that the people of that society are far away from the traditional norms and religious values. In the above statement, the language used by the old guard is good, reflecting his status. According to Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the status of the participant is shown by the knowledge he has and the language he uses, so, in the mentioned statement, the status of the old guard is higher than Khaista Gul.

The statement, **“This new chowkidar (guard) is a bloody nuisance”** (Rahman, 2024a, p. 677, para. 3) is said by Javed to Shahid. This statement of Javed introduces Khaista Gul to the readers. Javed used the word **“bloody nuisance”** for Khaista Gul because he knows that Khaista Gul is a person who interfered in all matters happening in the village and does not like him. The researcher can also take that the participant Javed uses the mentioned word for Khaista Gul because Khaista Gul acts like a breaker in their plan. It also shows that Khaista Gul is a brave man because the other participants, like Javed and Shahid, are discussing him as the only person who can interfere and stop them from taking Saman with them. By applying Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985) to the mentioned statement, the status of the participant Khaista Gul is high because he is the only person who can stop Javed and his friends from taking Saman with them, and this is the reason that they are talking behind Khaista Gul.

**“Why? What’s wrong with the idiot?”** (Rahman, 2024a, p. 677, para. 4) said Shahid to Javed. It is an interrogative clause because the question is asked twice times. The question is asked in the text to get information from another participant and to inform the reader about the situation. This also shows that the person who asks questions is not common but of high rank because common people in society cannot ask questions even for their rights, and if they raise questions, they are not given any proper answer. So, this direct statement shows that Shahid belongs to the upper class in society, which is why he is asking questions from Javed. According to Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the language used by the participant reflects his status, so, in the above statement, the status of Shahid is higher than Javed because Shahid is asking questions.

Javed resentfully argues, **“He pokes his nose in everybody's affair... but he is gone, and she will come out soon”** (Rahman, 2024a, p. 677, para. 5). Javed is talking to Shahid about Khaista Gul, whom he interferes in everyone's matters. Here, **“but”** is a coordinating conjunction combining two independent clauses. The researcher can take the meaning that he is responsible for guarding and has no concern with the businesses of the youth in that village. He restricted the people of that society so much that girls could not come out of the home. This was not his job, but still, he was poking **“his nose”** in it. The researcher can also take the meaning that the Pakistani establishment interferes in every affair of the country; though their job is to protect the borders from foreign intruders, or those who look with an evil eye at Pakistan, they influence politics, business, and other institutions of the country. Here, it also means that Khaista Gul works as a breaker. According to Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the status of the participant is high when he has more information

and is active in conversation. So, in the mentioned statement the status of Javed is high because he knows everything and provides information to Shahid about the participant Khaista Gul.

The phrase **“but he’s gone and she will come out soon,”** (Rahman, 2024a, p. 677, para. 5) said Javed to Shahid, and he talked about Saman and that she would come out of the home when Khaista Gul leaves. This shows the gender differences and female gender status in Pakistani society. In Pakistani society, girls are not allowed to go out of home alone without a reason because it is considered immoral. Even girls are killed when they go out of their homes in daylight or without permission. In the story, the guard Khaista Gul does not let her go out at night alone; therefore, it suggests that in Pakistani society, gender roles are set as women have to stay at home and men have to go out and earn to feed the family. This is the reason that woman gets afraid of their family members when they go out without permission. Here, the above statement shows that the participant Saman is sitting inside the home and waiting for Khaista Gul to go out, then she can come out because she is afraid of him even though he is just a guard, not her family member. According to Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the status of the participant is high when he is active in communication or has more information about others, so in the above statement, the status of the participant Khaista Gul is high because Saman cannot even come out of her home as she was afraid of Khaista Gul even though he is just a guard.

**“Have a drink everybody,”** (Rahman, 2024a, p. 677, para. 6) said the fourth friend of Javed, who is anonymous in the story. It is a minor clause that shows formality because these participants are friends, and the personal pronouns “I” and “You” can be used, but a formal way is chosen to offer a drink. Further, it can be the psychological aspect that the participant considers himself inferior to the others which is why he is treating them like a waiter. The same thing is still present in our society as the upper class of society is treated very nicely by the lower class even if the upper class does not care about the lower class. In Pakistan, the poor people treat the wealthy people very nicely even if the wealthy people do not give them a single penny to help them. According to Halliday’s theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (1985), the status of the participant is shown by the language he uses, and the status is high when he is active in communication. So, in the above statement, it can be said that the status of the anonymous person is lower than Javed and Shahid which is why he talks to them formally and offers a drink.

**“The car is at the end of the street. Let us go.”** (Rahman, 2024a, p. 678, para. 2) is a statement given by Javed, and it is an imperative clause because it shows command. Javed is giving instructions to his friends and Saman about the car’s location so that they do not face any problems finding a vehicle and leaving the village. It seems that the plan is made by the participant Javed, and he is leading his group, so it is shown that the status of Javed is high in the above statement. Further, in contemporary society, we can see that only upper-class people are allowed to talk and present ideas and also people listen to them. In contrast, the lower-class people and their ideas are not given importance. According to Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the status of the participant is high when he is active in speech, so the status of Javed is high because he is giving instructions to all of his friends about the car’s location.

**“Where are you going?”** (Rahman, 2024a, p. 679, para. 1) is an interrogative clause and the question is asked by Khaista Gul from Javed and his group. Here, he shows himself as an authoritative person who asks questions because he considers himself the protector of the village. However, it is not his job to interfere in the matters of the people of the village because he is just a guard, and his duty is to protect the property and honour of the villagers. The participant Khaista Gul can be taken as a metaphor for the Pakistani establishment, whose job

is not to interfere in economic, social, and political issues but to pay attention to the protection of the state. According to Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the status of the participant is high when he is active in conversation. In the mentioned statement, it can be said that the status of Khaista Gul is high over the other participants because he is active in conversation and asks questions from the villagers like he is the owner of the village.

**"Don't shout,"** hissed Javed, **"and you can have something for a cup of tea."** (Rahman, 2024a, p. 679, para. 2) is a sentence consisting of two clauses. **"Don't shout"** is an imperative clause because it is a command used by Javed. Its tone is serious and shows anger because Khaista Gul acts like a breaker in their plan. Javed considers Khaista Gul lower than him, which is why he ordered him not to shout. Javed tries to tell Khaista Gul that he is a servant and has nothing to do with them, but Khaista Gul is not letting them go. According to Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the status of the participant is shown by the language he uses, so, in the above statement, the status of Javed is high because he is giving a command to Khaista Gul. The second part of a sentence, **"and you can have something for a cup of tea."** is a coordinate clause because **"and"** connects it to the first clause. Here, Javed offers a bribe to the character, Khaista Gul, to let them go. He tries to grease his palms so that they do not face any difficulty while eloping Saman. Javed thinks that Khaista Gul will be like the poor people who are not honest in their jobs and are corrupt, but Khaista Gul is not like that. In the present Pakistani society, people commit many crimes and even kill others, but no one is punished for this. All the laws and regulations are made and applied to the poor. Wealthy people are not questioned. They do everything through corruption. According to Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the status of the participant is high when he is active in speech, so, in the above statement, the status of the participant Khaista Gul is high because Javed is offering him something to take and wants him to leave the place.

The sentence **"Kho mara get out"** (Rahman, 2024a, p. 679, para. 4) is said by Khaista Gul when he was offered fifty rupees. It was threatening so that boys may leave the girl and go away in order to protect her honour. This sentence is an imperative clause that shows an order given by the participant, Khaista Gul. The tone is serious as there is a threat in it. The phrase **"Kho mara"** is taken from the Pashto language and mixed with English. It is common in Pakistan, and almost everyone knows it. Khaista Gul does not know the Urdu language as he finds it difficult, therefore, he mixes it with Pashto phrases to insult them. According to Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the status of the participant is high when he is active in speech. The participant, Khaista Gul, is active in conversation and orders the other participants to leave like the owner of the village, so his status is high in the mentioned statement.

The sentence **"Oe Khan! Oe! Oe! don't be a fool,"** (Rahman, 2024a, p. 679, para. 5) is told by one of the boys of the group to the character, Khaista Gul. That participant is anonymous in the story and replied to Khaista Gul in the same tone as Khaista Gul talked to them. The anonymous participant is trying to realize Khaista Gul's status that he is just a guard and he should deal with his duty only. Khaista Gul was much more interested in their matters than his duty which is why the other participants called Khaista Gul a fool to Khaista Gul. The tone of the anonymous character is very harsh and full of anger. It can be concluded that the meaning that the writer is trying to represent the clashes between Pashtoon and Panjabi nations in Pakistan. They are not accepting each other and they are always trying to put dominance over one another. According to Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the status of the participants is shown by the language they use, so the status of the anonymous participant is high in the above statement because he is trying to realize Khaista Gul's reality shown in a harsh tone.



“**Mind your own business you idiot**” (Rahman, 2024a, p. 679, para. 6) said Shahid, and he was trying to keep Khaista Gul quiet by showing him a pistol. The participant, Khaista Gul, was a person who was not scared of pistols and was still interfering. The same thing is also present in Pakistani society, where people do not perform the duties which are assigned to them. Instead, they are interested in others’ jobs. The servants consider themselves boss and want to be treated accordingly. By applying Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985) to the mentioned statement, the status of Shahid is higher than that of Khaista Gul because Shahid is keeping Khaista Gul’s limits that he is just a guard, and his duty is the security of the village.

“**You are Badmashes (hoodlums, bad characters, roughs),**” (Rahman, 2024a, p. 679, para. 7) is a direct statement said by Khaista Gul to the other participants. It means that Khaista Gul considers those people bad characters who talk or go out with girls at night. It can also be said that Khaista Gul came out of his village for the first time, so he saw this situation for the first time and felt very bad. The participant, Khaista Gul, belongs to a typical Pashtoon society where the majority of children do not know manners and how to talk to others, which is why he is using bad words, “**hoodlums, bad characters, roughs**” for Shahid and his friends. Khaista Gul is spoiling the honour of the village owners by himself. According to the Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the status of the participants is shown by the words they use. So, Khaista Gul used very bad words for Shahid and his friends which means that he belongs to lower class society.

“**What?,” “are you mad?”**” (Rahman, 2024a, p. 679, para. 8) said the boy who had the bottle of brandy. He was shocked at how a servant used the words “hoodlums,” “bad characters,” and “roughs” to them. He also used the word “**Mad**” for Khaista Gul so he also used the same tone which Khaista Gul had used. Applying Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985) to the statement shows that the informal tone of the anonymous boy reflects his status and that he belongs to a lower status.

“**Just get out**” (Rahman, 2024a, p. 679, para. 9) said Khaista Gul to Javed and his friends. This is a minor clause. Javed and his group were trying to convince Khaista Gul that he was just a guard and he had no right to interfere in their issues, but the participant, Khaista Gul, was not letting them go and told them again to leave. In this statement, it is shown that Khaista Gul was considering himself as an authoritative person so he is giving a command to Javed and his friends to leave. According to Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the status of the participants is shown by the language they choose to speak; in the above statement, the status of the participant Khaista Gul is high because he is giving commands to Javed and his friends like he is the owner of the village.

“**For God’s sake**” (Rahman, 2024a, p. 681, para. 2) said Sarmad Shah’s wife in a soft but painful tone. She was crying for her husband and asking him not to take a step outside of the home because she knew that if he interfered in the matter of Khaista Gul and the group of boys, then it would create an issue for her family. According to Halliday’s theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (1985), the status of the participants is shown by the language they choose to use. The mentioned statement shows that the status of the participant, Sarmad Shah, is higher than that of Mrs Sarmad because she is requesting her husband and using a soft and formal tone.

The sentence “**Please Abboo (father), so you want to kill mother? She already has heart disease,**” (Rahman, 2024a, p. 681, para. 2) is said by the daughter of Sarmad Shah. She was requesting her father not to interfere in the matters of Khaista Gul and Javed because of her mother, as she was a heart patient. In this sentence, standard language and a soft tone are used, which shows respect for the daughter toward her father. According to Halliday’s Systemic

Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the status of the participants in the short story is shown by the language they use. In the above statement, the status of Sarmad Shah is higher than his daughter, because she respects her father and uses a soft tone while requesting him.

**“I’ll faint if you move one step ahead,”** (Rahman, 2024a, p. 681, para. 3) said Mrs. Sarmad to the participant Sarmad Shah. She was trying to stop her husband at any cost from helping Khaista Gul because she thinks that if Sarmad Shah interferes in the matter of Khaista Gul and the group of boys then it will create an issue for him also. According to Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics theory (1985), the status of the participant is shown by the language he uses, so in the above statement, the status of Mrs Sarmad is high because when she told Sarmad Shah not to take a single step towards the door to go out than Sarmad Shah did the same and refused to help Khaista Gul.

### Findings and Conclusion

The language used and knowledge of the participants show their status. The study found that Khaista Gul's status is six times higher, and Javed's status is six times lower in the selected eighteen statements of Tariq Rahman's short story “Deaf, Dark, Walls.”

Status is the first part of the tenor, which deals with the interrelationship between the writer and the characters in the story, the writer and the reader, and between the characters. It refers to the relative position of the participants in a text, and the status of the participant is shown by the knowledge and language that are used, so after applying status, it was found that the status of the old guard was higher than the participant Khaista Gul, because he was providing information about the society to Khaista Gul.

In the second statement, the status of the participant Khaista Gul was high because only he had the confidence to stop Javed and his friends from taking Saman with them. That was why Javed was calling Khaista Gul a bloody nuisance. In the third statement, the status of the participant Shahid was high because he was asking questions from Javed, and it was known that common people in a society cannot ask questions even for their rights. In the fourth statement, the status of the participant Javed was high as he was provided information about the participant Khaista Gul to Shahid. In the fifth statement, the status of the participant Khaista Gul was high because Saman was afraid of Khaista Gul even though he was just a guard. She was waiting for him to leave so that she could go with Javed.

Furthermore, the sixth statement showed that the status of the participants Javed and Shahid was higher than the anonymous person because the anonymous participant offered a drink to them in a very formal way. In the seventh statement, the status of the participant Javed was high as he was helping Saman and his friends to leave the village in such a way that no one knew, that was why he was providing information about the location of the car to all of his friends and Saman. The eighth statement showed that Khaista Gul's status was higher than the other participants because he asked questions from Javed and his friends as if he were the owner of the village. In the ninth statement, the status of Javed was higher than Khaista Gul as he was ordering Khaista Gul to shut his mouth, take something for a cup of tea, and leave the place. The tenth statement showed that the status of the participant, Khaista Gul, was high as he was active in conversation and ordering the other participants, like the owner of the village.

Besides, in the eleventh statement, the anonymous participant's status was high because he was trying to realize that Khaista Gul was just a guard and had no right to interfere in their matters in a very harsh tone. The twelfth statement showed that Shahid's status was higher than Khaista Gul's as Shahid was using strict words to tell Khaista Gul that his job was to take care of the street, not to interfere in their matters. The thirteenth statement demonstrated that the

status of the participant Khaista Gul was lower than the other participants as he used bad words for them.

Moreover, in the fourteenth statement, the status of the anonymous participant was lower than Khaista Gul because he used an informal word for Khaista Gul. In the fifteenth statement, the status of Khaista Gul was high as he acted as an authoritative person and ordered Javed and his group to leave. In the sixteenth statement, the status of Sarmad Shah was higher than Mrs Sarmad because she was requesting her husband, Sarmad, not to take a step outside the home. In the seventeenth statement, the status of Sarmad Shah was high as his daughter requested him and used a soft tone to stop him from interfering in the affairs of Khaista Gul. In the last statement, the status of Mrs Sarmad was high because Sarmad Shah did not take a single step to help Khaista Gul when she warned him.

### Recommendation

It is recommended to conduct a thorough study on the short stories by Tariq Rahman from other theoretical perspectives theories such as the theory of foregrounding and cognitive linguistics.

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