Thematization Processes and the Representation of Love in The Forty Rules of Love: A Corpus Stylistic Analysis

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Abstract

The current study argues that corpus tools can potentially provide empirical and objective perspectives to study literary works and produce insightful literary interpretations. This study attempted to explore the thematic concerns and the thematization of love in Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* by means of corpus techniques. Wordsmith Tools software package was used to generate a keyword list which was subsequently utilized to provide a thematic categorization of the novel. Seven thematic signal keywords were found to capture the thematic foci of the novel, which came in agreement with several literary critics who argued that *The Forty Rules of Love* was predominantly about different forms of love: divine and physical. Sketch Engine online interface was also utilized to calculate the collocations of the thematic signal keyword *love* in order to examine the semantic prosodies relating to *love* and scrutinize the ways in which the theme of love was presented in the novel. Based on both quantitative and qualitative evidence, it was concluded that Sufi love, represented as unconditional, intense, encompassing all humanity and all creatures, transcended the power of language and all confinements, causing the transformation of the lover. The analysis also revealed that the novel created two main dichotomies: one between the religious and the spiritual, the other between divine love and physical love.

Introduction

Stylistics is broadly regarded as not only studying the style and language of literary works (Ho, 2011), but it also involves the use of linguistic tools and frameworks for the study of literature. Likewise, corpus linguistics has generally been recognized as the use of computer software tools in the study of large electronic language data (Baker, 2006; McEnery & Wilson, 2001). The use of corpus tools to investigate literary works has generally been conducted under the umbrella of 'corpus stylistics.' Corpus stylistics is thus an approach that synergizes stylistics and corpus linguistics by employing corpus linguistic tools to examine the views of literary critics and, hence, aims to relate linguistic features to literary views.

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The use of corpus tools in literary analysis remedies a problem that stylisticians have long been confronting, i.e., the problem of length (Mahlberg & McIntyre, 2011). Corpus stylistics, hence, makes use of various corpus techniques, such as the employment of computerized literary works and utilization of statistical measures for analysis (Wynne, 2000). In doing so, corpus stylistics can recognize textual characteristics that may go unnoticed by literary critics (Fischer-Starcke, 2010; Mahlberg, 2012; Mahlberg, 2013; Murphy, 2015). Moreover, the use of corpus tools in research gives reliability and objectivity to the analysis and results (Biber, Conrad, & Reppen, 1998; Ho, 2011). In this sense, corpus stylistics can be regarded as an approach that connects language and literature together by dint of new descriptive methods that conform to linguistic apparatuses and, simultaneously, explain particular textual features and relate to literary interpretation (Mahlberg, 2007).

The present study draws on corpus techniques as a means of examining the ample and intricately woven thematic components of Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love*, in general and the theme of love, in particular. The aim is to gain more insights into literary and textual meaning of the novel. A bestseller across the globe, the novel, which has been translated into several languages, traces Ella Rubinstein's spiritual quest for love and the self through a profound Sufi mystic experience. A middle-aged housewife living in the USA in the 21st century, Ella has a mystic glimpse of Sufism through her reviewing of a literary work about the inspirational and passionate relationship between great Persian poet, scholar and Sufi canon Muhammad Jalal ad-Din, recognized by the Anglophone culture as Rumi, and the Sufi Dervish Shams of Tabriz, who lived in Konya in the 13th century. *The Forty Rules of Love* is a novel within a novel, i.e., the story of Ella and Aziz is recounted and intertwined in parallel with the seven-century older story of Rumi and Shams.

The aim of the current study was to explore the potentiality offered by corpus tools in capturing the thematic foci of *The Forty Rules of Love* and the love representations permeating through the novel. Hence, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

1) What thematic foci of Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* are conveyed through keyword analysis?
2) How can the thematization of love in the novel be methodologically revealed using collocation analysis?
3) How is love represented in the novel?

The research objectives, then, are: (1) to examine the feasibility of keyword analysis and concordance analysis as two important corpus techniques in revealing the thematic concerns of the novel, (2) to explore the possibility of using collocation analysis to reveal the thematization of love in the novel, and (3) and to investigate how 'love' is represented through collocation analysis, concordance analysis and semantic prosody of the keyword *love* in the novel. It should also be noted that the current study adopted the corpus stylistic analytical model of Mahlberg and McIntyre (2011) to explore literary thematic concerns, and the concept of semantic prosody (Fischer-Starcke, 2010; Louw, 1993) to scrutinize representation of 'love' in the novel.

Literature Review

The current section aims to provide a review of the literature related to the main aspects of the current research: the concept of keyness, that of collocation, and the novel under scrutiny. From a methodological point of view, research in the field of corpus stylistics has recently been increasing (e.g., Adolphs and Carter (2002); Culpeper (2002); Hori (2004) ; Fischer-Starcke (2009); Biber (2011); Mahlberg (2013); Mahlberg (2012); Mahlberg, Wiegand, Stockwell, and Hennessey (2019), etc.) Most corpus stylistics studies use three corpus techniques in the stylistic analysis: keywords, collocations, and clusters (Biber, 2011). The current study made use of the first two techniques: keyword analysis and collocational analysis.

- *Keywords*

Keyness is perceived as the statistically significantly greater frequency of specific terms or clusters in the corpus under investigation when compared to another corpus, either a broad reference corpus or a corresponding specialized corpus (Baker et al., 2008). Keywords are regarded as words which are markedly more frequent in one text in comparison of another (Scott & Tribble, 2006). Keywords can be statistically calculated through corpus software packages, e.g., WordSmith Tools (Scott, 2007), or corpus online interfaces, e.g., Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff, Rychly, Smrz, & Tugwell, 2004). In this process, each lexical item in the corpus under investigation is compared to each lexical item in a reference corpus. If a certain lexical item is relatively higher in one corpus rather than the other, it is seen as key. The importance of extracting keywords is to reveal the 'aboutness' of a corpus, i.e., its content and main theme. In addition, the keywords extracted from a corpus can be points of departure for further investigation and literary interpretations (Fischer-Starcke, 2010; Mahlberg, 2010), i.e., they provide 'signposts' which help the analyst to delve into the corpus (Baker, 2006). Keywords can also be regarded as 'signals' for how the fictional world is built and 'triggers' for thematic foci of the literary work (Mahlberg & McIntyre, 2011). In this sense, keywords function as pointers to meanings in literary works. It is also worth mentioning that the foregrounding effects often mentioned by stylisticians are closely related to keyword results attained by comparing a corpus under scrutiny with a reference corpus (Mahlberg & McIntyre, 2011).

Among influential work in corpus stylistics is Culpeper's study of *Romeo and Juliet* (2009) where he uses WMatrix (Rayson, 2008) to provide a categorization of keywords and parts of speech based on Halliday's strands of meaning (Halliday, 1994). The results show that ideational keywords characterize Romeo's speech, textual keywords characterize Juliet's speeches, and interpersonal keywords characterize the Nurse's speeches. Significantly, Mahlberg and McIntyre (2011) provide a classification of keywords for Ian Fleming's *Casino Royale* to sketch the novel's thematic concerns. To that end, they distinguish between two categories of keywords: 'fictional world' keywords and 'thematic signals.' Fictional world keywords serve as signals that build the novel's literary world, e.g., characters, settings, etc. Hence, fictional world keywords are more concrete than thematic signals, which are taken as triggers for the thematic interests of the novel. Furthermore, the identification of keywords as thematic signals depends on the interpretations of readers. Thus, thematic signal words are referred to as reader-centered keywords, whereas fictional world keywords are referred to as text-centered (Mahlberg & McIntyre, 2011).

- *Collocations and Semantic Prosody*

Collocation is defined as the frequent co-occurrence of two words within a span of a pre-defined number of words, usually five words, on one of the two sides of the node word (Baker et al., 2008). Collocation closely relates to semantic and syntactic features ascribed to individual word forms and lexical items (Bartsch, 2004). Significantly, it has been argued that the collocates of a node word contribute to its meaning (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Sinclair & Sinclair, 1991); collocates also deliver messages implicitly (Hunston, 2002). Moreover, the meanings and functions of a node word in a specific discourse can be sketched through the examination of the node's collocates (Baker et al., 2008).

Comparing the literary works of O'Connor with the Hardy and Durian (2000) examine the collocations and colligations of *see* and *saw* in O'Connor's language. They conclude that themes in the corpus specified are related to descriptions of visual impressions. Murphy (2015) studies the language of soliloquies in 37 of Shakespeare's plays using WordSmith Tools, i.e., he examines language forms of soliloquies using Halliday's three language metafunctions and concludes that certain linguistic features characterize Shakespeare's soliloquies, e.g., use of the first-person pronoun, mental state, and body expressions, linking adverbials, etc. The thematic emphasis of Shakespeare's tragedies, comedies, and historical plays are love, the monarch, and the supernatural. Montoro and McIntyre (2019) use a corpus stylistic approach to compare serious and popular fiction in relation to syntactic complexity. To this purpose, they use the Lancaster Speech, Writing, and Thought corpus and compare it against different parts of the BNC in Wmatrix (Rayson, 2008). The findings indicate that there is no ground in claiming that serious fiction is syntactically more complex than popular fiction. However, on the phrasal rather than the clausal level, a specific genre of popular fiction, Chick Lit, is syntactically simpler.

Closely related to the concept of collocation is that of semantic prosody. Introduced by Louw (1993), semantic prosody refers to the additional shades of meaning, positive or negative, which a lexical item acquires through its collocates. Semantic prosody, then, characterizes the features of a word in relation to its semantic context (Starcke, 2008). As argued by Mahlberg (2012); Mahlberg (2013), the semantic prosody of a word relates to its evaluative or attitudinal meaning, i.e., it explains the co-occurrence patterns of of a lexical item in relation of evaluative or attitudinal meanings. In this sense, semantic prosody does not stem from the repetitive use of a word but from the pattern of its collocation with other words, i.e., its context. Louw (1993) argues that the notion of semantic prosody adds to the toolkit of stylistic analysis because it can provide useful interpretations to unusual or creative uses of lexical items and, consequently, help in producing particular literary impacts. For example, Louw (1993) analyzes the lexical item *utterly* and finds that it has a negative semantic prosody since a great deal of its collocates have negative meanings. He also analyzes the collocates *days are* and concludes that they are frequently followed by the lexical items *over*, *past* and *gone*. Thus, the collocation *days are* is typically related to a sense of melancholy.

Adolphs and Carter (2002) explain semantic prosodies according to point of view, while Starcke (2008) studies semantic prosody in extended collocations of *I don't know* and *the end of* in BNC and concludes that the more extended a phrase is, the more fixed is its use. The reason is that the longer a phrase is, the more semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic constraints are imposed. Fischer-Starcke (2010) examines the semantic prosody of words relating to textuality, e.g., *journal*, *novel*, *manuscript*, etc., in a selection of Jane Austen's novels to find that these words have negative semantic prosodies. Words relating to familial relationships, on the other hand, such as, *sister*, *daughter*, *cousin*, etc., have positive semantic prosodies. Yazdanjoo, Ghorban Sabbagh, and Shahriari (2016) discuss semantic prosody of the main character's language in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. They conclude that Holden's language reflects a negative semantic prosody in relation to social institutions and cultural conventions. On the other hand, his language has a positive semantic prosody regarding family members and familial relations.

- *The Forty Rules of Love*

The Western interest in the cultural heritage of Rumi has been increasing since the 1990s, i.e., Barks's (1995) translations entitled *The Essential Rumi* initiated a series of works that led Rumi to be recognized by the Western world. *The Forty Rules of Love* came as a step forward—a notably prominent and successful one—in the Western fascination with such heritage (Furlanetto, 2013). Though a worldwide success, Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* has been the locus of few studies. For example, using the corpus tools of keywords and collocation, Nadeem, Qadeer, and Tahir (2020) study the conceptual metaphors in *The Forty Rules of Love*, with a special focus on those related to 'love' and 'journey'. They conclude that conceptual metaphors stem from simple words and are primarily meant to convey emotive feelings. Abd Hassan and Alhusseini (2020) qualitatively examine the metaphorical expressions in selected parts of the novel using lakoff and Johnson's Cognitive Metaphor Theory (1980) on two levels: contextual level and cognitive linguistic level. They conclude that metaphors are used as rhetorical devices to express Sufi concepts and symbolic references. Abdel Mageed (2019) uses a recent feminist love studies approach to explore how love contributes towards the self-transformation of Desert Rose, the harlot and concludes that love is the only way that enables the harlot's self-transformation to purity and mysticism. Sherwani (2020) conducts a critical discourse analysis of the dialogues and conversations of Rumi in order to uncover how Sufism and spirituality are represented by Shafak, i.e., the techniques of intertextuality and oversimplification are used to capture the connection between the socio-cultural, historical and political discourses in the novel.

Imran, Nazakat, and Khan (2020) take a psychological perspective to explore the mystical experience in the novel and concluded that the mystical experience is not to be identified with psychological confusions; on the contrary, it is the equivalent of psychological welfare and emotional growth. From a cognitive and existential perspective, Mehdi, Mehmood, and Ali (2021) explore the role of Sufism and spirituality in *The Forty Rules of Love* as determiners of one's well-being, i.e., they qualitatively analyze how Sufism, spirituality, religious experience, and love contribute towards a positive transformation of an individual. From a temporal perspective, Aladaylah (2017) contends that Shafak connects the past with the present in the novel, providing unconventional construction of fictional narrative discourse. Furlanetto (2013) examines how Shafak oversimplifies and decontextualizes the Sufi aesthetics and dialectics to suit American readers' interests rather than representing a comprehensive and accurate picture of Sufism. The same argument is shared by Gray (2020), who focuses on the teacher-student relationship between Rumi and Shams of Tabriz.

Methodology

- *Research design*

The importance of corpus stylistic analysis stems from its recognition of the interrelationship between quantitative statistics and qualitative analysis (Mahlberg, 2010). The methodology adopted in the current study was both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The quantitative part was evident in the use of corpus tools to generate wordlists, keyword lists, collocations, and concordances of node words. The qualitative part was represented by the close and in-depth examination of keywords and collocates in their linguistic milieu to uncover the themes and the representations of love in the novel. The current study adopted the corpus stylistic model of Mahlberg and McIntyre (2011) to uncover the novel's thematic concerns, and the concept of semantic prosody (Fischer-Starcke, 2010; Louw, 1993) to sketch the representations of love. The reason for selecting this particular framework was its compatibility with the research questions of the study. Mahlberg & McIntyre model (2011) specifically fathoms the potentiality of keyword analysis to pinpoint thematic interests of a fictional work, while the notion of semantic prosody focuses on sketching evaluative representations through collocation analysis.

- *Data collection*

The best way to illustrate a textual domain is through the use of a corpus (Biber, 2011). The corpus under investigation is the text of Elif Shafak's novel *The Forty Rules of Love*, published in (2010). The corpus is composed of 8,731 types and 110,992 tokens. The reference corpus, amounting to 24,728 types and 847,355 tokens, comprises six manually compiled novels, that is, *1Q84* (2009-2010) and *After Dark* (2004) by Haruki Murakami, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) and *The Kite Runner* (2003) by Khaled Hosseini, *My Son's Story* by Nadine Gordimer (1990), and *Disgrace* (1999) by J.M. Coetzee. The rationale behind selecting and compiling this particular reference corpus is four-fold: First, all the novels selected are contemporary to *The Forty Rules of Love*. This point eliminates any potential eccentricity or nonconventionality in the language used. Second, the novels selected are either bestsellers or prize-awarded, i.e., they are significant and worth-noting literary works. Third, they are of different genres, focusing on various themes. Diversity signals a good reference corpus since it allows the thematic interests of the focus corpus to be pinpointed. Fourth, the authors of these novels speak different languages other than English, they belong to different cultures, and some of them even belong to different ethnicities, which represents a further aspect of comparability.

- *Research Procedure*

The methodological procedure adopted in the present study was two-fold: As the first step of delving into the corpus, Wordsmith Tools software package (Scott, 2007) was used to extract a keyword list for the corpus specified. The calculation of keyness relies on the statistical comparison of each word in both corpora against each other, so words with a relatively high frequency of occurrence in one corpus was marked as key (Baker, 2014). Then, the resultant keywords were manually sifted so that only keywords which had a *p-value* of ≤0.0000000001 were selected. Such a statistical significance 'cut-off point' was very small according to social science research. However, it provided a reasonable number of key words in linguistic comparisons (Hunston, 2002). Typically, functional words and pronouns were excluded, e.g., *as*, *I*, *my*. For spatial reasons, character names were excluded from the keyword table but considered in the keyword categorization.

- *Data analysis*

Sketch Engine online interface (Kilgarriff et al., 2004), henceforth SkE, was subsequently used to examine the concordances of keywords in-depth, in order to provide a thematized categorization of keywords, according to Mahlberg and McIntyre (2011). Thus, rather than focusing on the quantitative part of frequencies and statistics, contextual and functional factors were carefully considered (Mahlberg, 2014). The analysis of keywords' concordance lines served to identify key themes in the corpus and shed light on the characterization of fictional persona (Fischer-Starcke, 2010). Mahlberg and McIntyre's process of thematization (2011) is based on the continual modification of groups to which keywords are being fit into so that each keyword is fit into the appropriate group according to its text-specific meaning and function.

Usually, exploring a corpus using a single corpus tool is not adequate to fully reveal the literary meaning. Hence, employing different corpus techniques for stylistic analysis is preferable (Fischer-Starcke, 2010). Consequently, the second analytical phase used the Word Sketch corpus tool offered by SkE to collocationally explore the semantic prosody of the thematic signal keyword *love* with the aim of gaining more insight into the literary meaning and thematization of love in the novel. Word Sketch tool offers the node word, its frequency, the collocates of the node word organized by their grammatical relations, the frequency of collocates, their typicality score, the most frequent structure of collocations, and menus for additional tools and actions. It should be noted that in exploring concordances of the keyword collocates, the diminishing returns—instances where the same concordance line appeared twice when exploring two different collocates— were excluded.

Results and Discussion

- *Keywords as Pointers to Thematic Concerns*

Concordance line investigation revealed that Wordsmith Tools dedicates separate entries for different word forms since the keyword extraction process is not lemmatized, e.g., *dervish/dervishes* and *Sufi/Sufis*. The current study, thus, considered different word forms separately in the keyword categorization (Table 1). Moreover, the keyword list generated by Wordsmith Tools displays *Qur* as a keyword (Figure 1). However, close examination of concordances reveals that *Qur* in all its instances was part of the word *Qur'an* (the holy book of Muslims), e.g., 'Late in the afternoon, I took out the *Qur'an* hanging on the wall, determined to study it on my own.' It is, thus, classified under the group entitled *religious order*.

In 33 out of 36 instances, *Desert* is used to refer to the harlot named *Desert Rose*. Hence, *Desert* is categorized under the sub-category of character names. As for the keyword *Rose*, in 34 out of 61 cases, it refers to the same character, that is, *Desert Rose*, e.g., 'No sooner had *Desert Rose* entered the room than she ran to kiss the hands of Shams, sobbing.' In most of the remaining cases, it is used to describe scenes, as in: 'I knelt beside a climbing *rose* tree that stood thorny and bare in the snow…' It is, thus, categorized under two sub-categories: *characters* and *places*. Finally, the keyword *master* in most of its occurrences is used to refer to dervishes and Sufi scholars, e.g., Seyyid Burhaneddin, Baba Zaman, Rumi, etc., which justifies its belonging to the group *religious order*, e.g., 'In the midst of this chaos lived a distinguished Islamic scholar, known as Jalal ad-Din Rumi. Nicknamed Mawlana – "Our *Master*" – by many.'

N	Key word	Freq.	%	RC. Freq.	RC. %	Keyness	P_emmas Set
1	SHAMS	459	0.41	0		1,980.66	0.0000000000
2	ELLA	362	0.33	0		1,561.81	0.0000000000
3	RUMI	245	0.22	6		1,001.61	0.0000000000
4	MY	1,235	1.11	3,002	0.35	955.60	0.0000000000
5	I	3,141	2.83	14,403	1.70	612.14	0.0000000000
6	DERVISH	139	0.13	0		599.45	0.0000000000
7	GOD	254	0.23	211	0.02	506.83	0.0000000000
8	AZIZ	111	0.10	1		467.49	0.0000000000
9	TABRIZ	108	0.10	0		465.74	0.0000000000
10	KONYA	105	0.09	0		452.80	0.0000000000
11	ME	934	0.84	3,125	0.37	419.58	0.0000000000
12	LOVE	249	0.22	300	0.04	391.44	0.0000000000
13	KIMYA	63	0.06	0		271.66	0.0000000000
14	SUFI	59	0.05	1		244.48	0.0000000000
15	JEANNETTE	56	0.05	0		241.47	0.0000000000
16	MASTER	67	0.06	14		217.77	0.0000000000
17	ALADDIN	48	0.04	0		206.97	0.0000000000
18	KERRA	44	0.04	0		189.72	0.0000000000
19	QUR	41	0.04	0		176.79	0.0000000000
20	DERVISHES	38	0.03	0		163.85	0.0000000000
21	BAYBARS	36	0.03	0		155.22	0.0000000000
22	BLASPHEMY	35	0.03	0		150.91	0.0000000000
23	BAGHDAD	34	0.03	0		146.60	0.0000000000
24	TAVERN	35	0.03	1		142.02	0.0000000000
25	DAVID	81	0.07	84		141.27	0.0000000000
26	NORTHAMPTON	29	0.03	0		125.04	0.0000000000
27	BROTHEL	29	0.03	0		125.04	0.0000000000
28	FORTY	56	0.05	41		119.42	0.0000000000

Figure 1. *Keywords of The Forty Rules of Love (excluding character names, pronouns, and functional words)*

Table 1. *Keywords in The Forty Rules of Love (character names excluded)*

No.	Keyword	Frequency	Keyness
1	dervish	139	599.45
2	God	254	506.83
3	Tabriz	108	465.74
4	Konya	105	452.80
5	love	249	391.44
6	Sufi	59	244.48
7	master	67	217.77
8	Qur('an)	41	176.79
9	dervishes	38	163.85
10	blasphemy	35	150.91
11	Baghdad	34	146.60
12	tavern	35	142.02
13	Northampton	29	125.04
14	brothel	29	125.04
15	forty	56	119.42
16	sheikh	27	116.42
17	every	176	115.62
18	universe	30	114.88
19	mom	26	112.10
20	Sufis	29	110.70
21	scholar	36	109.52
22	harlot	24	103.48
23	desert	34	96.75
24	Islam	31	96.05
25	lodge	28	93.89
26	rules	49	88.63
27	wine	53	88.11
28	rose	54	86.84
29	sweet	47	86.24
30	patron	20	86.23

As for *blasphemy* and *sweet*, they are classified as belonging to the group *social order*, since in most of their concordances, they refer to Aziz's novel, which Ella has been reviewing, e.g., '*Sweet Blasphemy* is his first novel and most probably his last.' However, *blasphemy* also belongs to the group *religious order* since, in some cases, it refers to its conceptual meaning, e.g., 'There is a thin line between where you stand and sheer *blasphemy*.' Obviously, *tavern* and *brothel* fit into the places group while *harlot* belongs to the social order group, e.g., 'Everyone in the *tavern* stood to bid him farewell,' 'When a harlot from the *brothel* needed to go out, Sesame accompanied her like a silent shadow' and 'I didn't even want to think what could happen if they found out there was a woman amid them, let alone a *harlot*.' Except for few cases referring to Ella's age, *forty* is mostly used in religious and mystical references as in: 'In Islamic mysticism there are *forty* degrees between man and God' and 'Shams talks about the *Forty* Rules of the Itinerant Mystics of Islam – the basic principles of the religion of love.'

Sheikh is exclusively used to refer to Sheikh Yassin, the extremist who opposes Shams' concept of Sufi love. *Universe* is almost exclusively used in reference to Islam and Sufism, e.g., 'It took God only six days to create the entire *universe*' and 'If we can embrace the *universe* as a whole, with all its differences and contradictions, everything will melt into One.' The same applies to *wine*, e.g., 'I don't understand why *wine* was forbidden in this world but promised in heaven.' Though *universe* and *wine* are partially used regarding Sufi discussions and argumentations, they are classified solely under the religious order group. The reason is that both words are concrete which outweighs their fitness into the fictional world group rather than the thematic signal group. The keyword *scholar* is mostly used to refer to Rumi, his father, or in the course of discussing religious issues, as in: 'Are you telling me that an ordinary Sufi has a deeper grasp of the Qur'an than a sharia *scholar*?' *Mom* is mostly used by Jeanette to address Ella. In most of its occurrences, the keyword *patron* is used in reference to the brothel patron where the Desert Rose lived, e.g., 'I knew how to handle these delicate situations, giving the client the false impression that I would love to be his mistress and serve solely him, but for that to happen he had to spend a lot of money and make the *patron* happy first.' (See Table 2)

Table 2. *Thematic classification of keywords in The Forty Rules of Love*

Category	Keywords
1. Fictional world	
Characters	Shams, Ella, Rumi, Aziz, Kimya, Jeannette, Aladdin, Kerra, Baybars, David, Yassin, Hristos, Avi, Orly, Scott, Desert, Rose
Places & settings	Tabriz, Konya, Baghdad, tavern, Northampton, brothel, rose, tavern, lodge
Religious order	master, Qur'an, blasphemy, sheikh, universe, Islam, scholar, wine
Social order	sweet, blasphemy, love, mom, harlot, patron
2. Thematic signals	
	dervish, dervishes, God, love, Sufi, Sufis, forty

Seven keywords explicitly relate to the thematic interests of the novel, and thus, are categorized as thematic signals (Figure 2): *dervish*, *dervishes*, *God*, *love*, *Sufi*, *Sufis*, and *forty*. Perspicuously, *The Forty Rules of Love*, in many respects, is a novel about divine love and Sufism. In this sense, Sufi dialectics can be thematized under these seven keywords. According to the analysis, the corpus-assisted categorization of keywords is in accordance with the thematic concerns provided by literary critics who assert that the novel focuses on the pivotal role played by love in the Sufi spiritual journey, e.g., Abdel Mageed (2019), Sherwani (2020), Imran et al. (2020), etc. In this mystical travel, the reciprocal love between the lover and beloved is indispensable so that the seer becomes the eye and the eye becomes the seer (Gray, 2020; Zarrabi-Zadeh, 2015).

- *Semantic Prosody of the Thematic Signal Keyword 'Love'*

The second phase of scrutinizing the corpus at hand was collocational analysis. This section aims to provide a collocational profile of the thematic signal keyword *love* as a way into more understanding of literary meaning and thematization of love in the novel. The reason for focusing on the thematic signal keyword *love* was two-fold: First, qualitative analysis is an indispensable phase of concordance lines examination. However, space limitations allow for the in-depth exploration of only one keyword. Second, the thematic signal keywords encompass five lemmatized words: *dervish*, *Sufi*, *God*, *love*, and *forty*. All five words are interconnected, i.e., they all revolve around the notion of love, i.e., mostly divine love. In this sense, love is the main axis that all thematic signal keywords have in common. Hence, *love* is chosen to be the focus of this section. The semantic prosodies of the word *love* are examined in order to reveal how love is represented in the novel.

Word Sketch offers a complete collocational sketch of a node word organized according to its grammatical relations. Moreover, for the words with different parts of speech, it offers a separate profile for each part of speech. *Love* is word-sketched by SkE twice: as a noun and as a verb (Figure 2). The collocational profiles of the two parts of speech are presented in Table 3 and Table 4. It should be noted that since the current research is semantically-oriented, the analysis focuses on the lemmatized form of love, rather than the different syntactic forms.

modifiers of "love"		nouns modified by "love"		verbs with "love" as object		verbs with "love" as subject	
unconditional unconditional love	...	**language** love , language	...	**experience** experience love	...	**mature** Love who has not matured	...
pure pure love	...	**boundary** love , boundaries	...	**make** make love	...	**exist** Love exists	...
unrequited unrequited love	...	**Love** Love , Love	...	**crave** craved their love	...	**dissolve** love dissolves	...
burning burning love	...	**part** Love PART	...	**savor** savoring the unconditional love	...	**open** Love opened	...
true true love	...	**nothing** love nothing	...	**shun** shun love	...	**become** love became	...
much much love	...	**God** love God	...	**taste** taste love	...	**take** love take	...
more more Love	...	**Konya** Love , Aziz Shams KONYA	...	**encounter** encounter pure love	...	**turn** love turned	...

Figure 2. *Collocates of the keyword love as displayed in Word Sketch*

As a noun, *love* collocates with *Unconditional* twice: (1) When Husam felt Shams' absolute love for him, 'I felt like a little boy savoring the *unconditional love* of a parent.' Shams praises Husam's answer for being consistent with the Sufi core, saying that Husam has the heart of a Sufi. In this instance, the difference between traditional, and sometimes zealotry, religious thinking, on the one hand, and spiritual thinking arises and marks one crucial thematic concern of the novel: Sufi love is unconditional. (2) In a pivotal conversation between Shams and Kerra, Rumi's Once-Christian wife, Shams says: 'Religions are like rivers: They all flow to the same sea. Mother Mary stands for *compassion*, mercy, affection, and *unconditional love*. She is both personal and universal.' Here, two issues permeate perspicuously: religious tolerance and the distinction between the religious and the spiritual. Harmoniously, literary critics argue that the rejection of religious and cultural fundamentalism is a key theme of the novel (Gray, 2020). The semantic prosody of the collocation *unconditional love* is inherently positive since it relates to the elevated and selfless nature of love.

Table 3. *Collocates of the keyword love (n.) categorized by grammatical structure*

No.	Grammatical Structure	Collocates of the keyword *love* (n.)
1	modifiers of *love*	unconditional, pure, unrequited, burning, true, much, more, new
2	nouns modified by *love*	language, boundary, love, part, nothing, God, Konya, Rose
3	verbs with *love* as object	experience, make, crave, savor, shun, taste, encounter, seek, trust, add, resemble, accept, expect, choose, let, call, feel, know, say, be
4	verbs with *love* as subject	mature, exist, dissolve, open, become, take, turn, be, come, say, have
5	*love* and/or	love, passion, faith, awareness, intellect, originator, heartbreak, boundary, hatred, security, language, admiration
6	prepositional phrases	of love, in love, for love, love in, love of, love with, love for, about love, with love, love at, through love, without love, than love, as love, against love, on love, at love, love after, love between, over love
7	adjective predicates of *love*	secondary, great
8	*love* is a …	essence, water, goal, ocean, feeling, reason
9	possessors of *love*	father, God
10	pronominal possessors of *love*	their, his
11	… is *love*	second

The same two ideas are asserted in the two instances of the collocation *of pure love*. In the first, the wind comes back to Shams with the saints' answer: 'O dervish, in this city you'll find only two extremes, and nothing in between. Either *pure love* or pure hatred.' The extended concordance reveals that to the dervish Shams: 'It makes no difference to me whether that place belongs to Muslims, Christians, or Jews. I believe that the saints are beyond such trivial nominal distinctions. A saint belongs to all humanity.' To the saints' warning, Shams insists, 'As long as I can encounter *pure love*, that'll be enough for me.' Towards the theme of the distinction between the religious and the spiritual, the collocations *room for* and *in heart* stand out, as Shams argues: 'If every Ramadan one fasts in the name of God and every Eid one sacrifices a sheep or a goat as an atonement for his sins, … but at the same time has no *room* for *love in his heart*, what is the use of all this trouble?' Again, the semantic prosody of the collocation *pure love* here is also pertinent to the purity and elevated nature of love.

Table 4. *Collocates of the keyword love (v.) categorized by grammatical structure*

No.	Grammatical Structure	Collocates of the keyword *love* (v.)
1	modifiers of *love*	truly, in, absolutely, openly, enough, much, first, about, almost, already, also, still, ever, only, even, always, never, not
2	objects of *love*	one, Thee, Aziz, father, fiction, imagination, parent, mean, boundary, money, Shams, being, man, anyone, water, Kimya, God, someone, person, book, husband, Rumi
3	subjects of *love*	fire, leper, lover, Sufi, someone, thing, man
4	*love* and/or	forgive, follow, decide, pamper, take, live, respect, say
5	prepositional phrases	love in, love by
6	pronominal objects of *love*	him, yourself, them, me, you, us, her, it
7	pronominal subjects of *love*	you, we, I, they, she, he
8	infinitive objects of *love*	lynch, suck, create, study, join, have, give, take, hear, see, be
9	complements of *love*	much
10	usage patterns	in passive, in reflexive

In the same vein, on his way to Konya, Shams encounters people of every race and plight, and still, as a Sufi abiding by the mystic rules of love, he describes his love for them as *burning*: 'Amid this chaos I stood in a place of unperturbed silence and serenity, utterly indifferent to the world and yet at the same time feeling a *burning love* for all the people struggling and suffering in it.' Actually, Shams' call for love is prevalent throughout the novel and apparent in different collocations as when confronted by Rumi's son, Aladdin, who denounces Shams' influence on his father: 'The only way to get closer to Truth is to expand your heart so that it will encompass all humanity and still have room for *more Love*.' The vastness of love and its power to include all humans is also marked in an array of collocates such as, *circle of* and *become*: 'After Shams came into his life, his *circle of love became* so vast it included even the most fallen of society—prostitutes, drunks, and beggars, the scum of the scum.' The semantic prosodies of the collocates *burning, more, circle* and *become* all correspond to the all-encompassing quality of love.

The dichotomy between divine love and physical love is realized through the concordances of the collocations *pain of, unrequited love, much love, make love*, *taste*, etc. Kimya's misfortune is a result of Shams' indifference to physical love and starts with her belief that 'I will give him so *much love* and happiness he will have to change.' She believes the words of Desert Rose that 'Your husband will not only *make love* to you tonight, he'll come back tomorrow asking for more.' Then comes her realization: 'Shams of Tabriz knows a great deal about love. But there is one thing he doesn't know anything about: the *pain of unrequited love*,' and her despair of having her marriage consummated: 'deep inside I know that I will never *taste love* of such proportions.' The separation between earthly love and heavenly love is also clearly conveyed in the relationship between Ella and Aziz when they met in Boston, e.g., 'on each occasion they came very close to *making love*, but they never did' and 'I was even afraid to touch you, let alone *make love*.' Here, a question arises: Is abandoning sexuality a must in order to begin the journey of spirituality? Verifiably, the stories of Ella, Kimya, and Desert Rose strongly insinuate this notion.

Although the two collocates *much* and *make* do not have obvious semantic prosodies, the collocates *pain, unrequited, taste*, etc. convey a negative semantic prosody since they are related to the deprivation and agony of love. The same image of agonizing love is contributed by the collocates *be, passion*, etc., as in: 'Where there *is love*, there is bound to be heartache,' where Shams revealed the end of his time with Rumi, and 'When we were done, Kimya didn't look like an inexperienced, timid girl anymore, but a woman burning with *love* and *passion*' where Kimya's adoration for Shams causes not only her continuous disappointment but also the end of her life.

Significantly, the collocation *of true love* is used by Shams as his time and mission in Konya is about to come to an end: 'Every *true love* and friendship is a story of unexpected transformation.' The transformation meant here is not only a reference to Rumi and Shams, but to Ella and Aziz as well. In the same way that Shams transforms Rumi into a mystic scholar who appreciates music, dance, and poetry, Rumi also completes Shams' journey and drives him nearer to his doom. Harmoniously, in the same way that Aziz drastically changes the course of Ella's life, she brings his life into a completion. The parallel between Ella and Rumi is straightforwardly expressed by Aziz to Ella as he compares Ella to Rumi: 'But you can be Rumi. If you *let love* take hold of you and change you, at first through its presence, then through its absence.' It is worth mentioning that the parallel between Rumi and Shams on the one hand, and Ella and Aziz on the other is marked by literary critics, e.g., Furlanetto (2013) and Gray (2020). Here, *true love* and *let love* have a positive semantic prosody as they refer to the powerfulness of love and its ability to cause change.

The idea of transformation can also be noticed in the collocate *mature*: 'The quest for Love changes us. There is no seeker among those who search for *Love* who has not *matured* on the way.' Aziz also has gone through the same process of metamorphosis after his wife's death: '*Love opened* up my eyes to a more fulfilled life. After I lost the woman *I loved*, I metamorphosed drastically.' Ironically, the collocate *happiness* is originally meant by Kimya to refer to Shams' transformation into a husband and a father: 'I will give him so much *love* and *happiness* he will have to change.' However, tracing various collocates shows a different transformation: the end of both Kimya and

Shams' lives. The collocation between *love* and the first-person pronoun *I* also signals the idea of transformation caused by love, since in nearly half of its instances, it relates to the transformation that Ella, Aziz, and Kimya go through because of love, e.g., the metamorphosis that Ella experiences after she loves Aziz: '*I* first *loved* your imagination and your stories, and then I realized *I love* the man behind the stories.' Contributing to the same thematic focus of people transformed by love, the collocation of *resemble love* is used in a letter by Baba Zaman to Seyyid Burhaneddin. In the letter, Baba Zaman announces Shams' departure to Konya to meet Rumi and recounts Shams' argument that to get silk, the farmers must kill the silkworm. The same idea applies to Shams' case. He and Rumi will have their own Divine Love cocoon, and for the silk to be saved, Shams' life has to come to an end: 'Painfully delicate and surprisingly strong, silk *resembles love*.'

Love did not top Ella's list of priorities initially; this fact makes her transformation at the end more conspicuous and poignant. The collocation of *love* with *nothing, experience, shun, feeling, secondary, absence of,* etc. reveals this idea, e.g., 'Unless, that is, one lived in novels or romantic movies, where the protagonists were always larger than life and their *love nothing* short of legend' and 'She sat curled up in her rocking chair and wondered how she, hurt and cynical as she was, could ever *experience love* again.' Ella herself explains by the end: 'As Rumi reminds us, it hits everybody, including those who *shun love*.' Also, in 'How could people be naïve enough to *expect love* to open every door for them?', Ella, in the first part of her life, totally disbelieves in the power of love and takes Scott for a naïve to tell her that he and Jeannette love each other. The role played by love in Ella's transformation is also discerned in the collocates *be* and *seek*. When Ella confesses her love to Aziz to her husband, she says: 'I didn't go out and *seek love*.' That love, and not revenge, is the reason she is leaving David: 'It *is* about *love*.'

The collocates *come, look for,* and *at time* also shed light on the idea of love as unexpected and sudden: '*Love came* to Ella as suddenly and brusquely as if a stone had been hurled from out of nowhere into the tranquil pond of her life.' Although the collocates *nothing, experience*, and *expect* have quite negative prosodies of love, portraying it as a superstitious fairy-tale, the collocates *seek, is* and *shun* have quite positive semantic prosodies since they convey love's forcefulness and compelling nature.

Love collocates with *choose*, asserting that love is people's first choice and priority in life, as Rumi expresses in a poem that Ella finds in Aziz's blog: '*Choose Love, Love!*' Relatedly, *love* also collocates with *love* to further stress the indispensability of love. Contributing towards the same notion, *Love* also collocates with *add* and *harmony* in one of Aziz's letters to Ella where he argues for one of Shams' thoughts that the world is a huge cauldron, and it is man's decision either to add 'resentments, animosities, anger, and violence' or to add '*love* and *harmony*.' The collocations *say love, be love, love exists, water, essence, greater, kind of,* etc. also support the same idea: 'Even a speck of love should not go unappreciated, because, as Rumi *said, love* is the *water* of life,' 'Faith is only a word if there *is* no *love* at its center, so flaccid and lifeless, vague and hollow -- not anything you could truly feel' and '*Love exists* within each of us from the moment we are born and waits to be discovered from then on.' All these collocates have a positive semantic prosody as they portray love as a superior, indispensable priority for existence.

A number of collocates relate to the Sufi dialectics and traditions as expounded and formed as rules by Shams, e.g., the idea that love transcends the power of language: 'When you step into the zone of *love, language* as we know it becomes obsolete' and 'When you step into the *zone of love*, you won't need language.' Shames also tells Kimya that love obscures all confinements: 'In *love, boundaries* are blurred.' Shams elaborates that Sufi love is for the sake of love itself. This thematic salience can be noticed in the collocates *God, reason, goal,* etc.: 'Motivated by neither the fear of punishment in hell nor the desire to be rewarded in heaven, Sufis *love God* simply because they *love Him*, pure and easy, untainted and nonnegotiable. *Love* is the *reason. Love* is the *goal.*' The image of God as a reflection of one's inner self is obvious in the collocation between *love* and *compassion*. Shams' conversation with the innkeeper in Samarkand represents the Sufi perception of the relationship between man and God: 'If God brings to mind mostly fear and blame, it means there is too much fear and blame welled inside us. If we see God as full of *love* and *compassion*, so are we.' These group of collocates have a positive semantic prosody, i.e., they portray divine love as the cause and the goal of Sufis' behavior and as having the power to transcend all limitations. Interestingly, the two collocates *heartbreak, originator,* etc. point to the famous whirl dance of dervishes as their way to God and unity with the universe, e.g., 'we dervishes will dance our *way through love* and *heartbreak* even if no one understands what we are doing' and 'Rumi was transformed from a mainstream cleric to a committed mystic, passionate poet, advocate of *love*, and *originator* of the ecstatic dance of the whirling dervishes.'

Rumi argues that love stems from the self, not from the outside of it, and Ella echoes this belief in: 'You don't need to go out and look for love anymore … Rumi says we don't need to hunt for love outside ourselves.' This theme is signalled by the two collocations *look for* and *hunt for*. Divine love is thematized and portrayed as an ocean in its vastness, as expressed by Rumi when he first met Rumi: '*God*'s *love* is an endless *ocean*, and human beings strive to get as much water as they can out of it.' Earthly love is not a single experience in a lifetime as the exploration of the collocates *experience* and *joy* tells on the tongue of Rumi: 'thanks to Kerra I have *experienced love* and joy.' The collocates *look for, hunt for, God, ocean, experience,* and *joy* have positive semantic prosodies as they depict love in general, and divine love in particular, as vast, joyful and all-pervasive.

One important thematic focus suggested by the collocates *trust* and *drunkenness of* is the inseparability between love and trust. When Shams suggests that Rumi goes to a tavern and buys them two bottles of wine, Rumi answers: 'But I trust you fully, because I *trust* the *love* between us.' Harmoniously, love also has to be accepted and embraced as a whole, for the good and the bad, as expressed by Shams on his way to meet Rumi: 'The real challenge is to love the good and the bad together, not because you need to take the rough with the smooth but because you need to go beyond such descriptions and *accept love* in its entirety' and 'Isn't it the same with the *garden of love*? How can love be worthy of its name if one selects solely the pretty things and leaves out the hardships?' The collocates *trust, drunkenness,* and *garden* have positive semantic as they equate love with positive qualities such as trust and joy.

The collocations *call love*, *epitome of,* etc. shed light on the idea of people's inability to comprehend love if they are not into it. Rumi uses an anecdote of Layla and Qys to indicate people's inability to understand the kind of love between him and Shams: 'You have to see me with the eyes of Majnun. Otherwise you could never solve this mystery *called love*.' Some people even hate those who talk about love as the innkeeper tells Shams: 'The more you talked *about love*, the more they hated you.' In spite of the lack of specific semantic prosody, the collocation of *call love*, *epitome of love,* and *about love* refer to the peculiarity of love and its quite distinctive nature.

The collocations *love dissolve*, *love say* and *Sufi loves* mark the thematic focus of the difference between love and intellect as Shams explains, e.g., 'Intellect and love are made of different materials … Intellect ties people in knots and risks nothing, but *love dissolves* all tangles and risks everything.' Interestingly, Shams signals that difference by arguing: 'A scholar lives on the marks of a pen. A *Sufi loves* and *lives* on footprints!' Through various collocates, e.g., *voice of, religion of* and *heart of,* mysticism is represented as the religion of love and Rumi as its emblem and most prominent figure 'Shams talks about the Forty Rules of the Itinerant Mystics of Islam—the basic principles of the *religion of love*' and 'This boy will open a gate in the *heart of love* and throw a flame into the hearts of all mystic lovers.' The unique love between Rumi and Shams can be discerned in the collocation *of their love*: '*Their love* for each other is so visible and intense, and what they have is so rare, that one can't help feeling despondent around them, seized by the realization that a bond of such magnitude is missing in one's own life.' Again, these series of collocates, e.g., *love dissolve*, *love say*, *Sufi loves and lives*, *their love, voice of, religion of* and *heart of* contribute towards a positive semantic prosody of love as they portray it as divine, elevated, and celestial.

The collocate *have* introduces the theme of the instantiality of love, i.e., love is all about the present moment, not the future and not the past: '[Aziz] believed that *love had* nothing to do with "plans for tomorrow" or "memories of yesterday."' The exploration of the collocation *love yourself* leads to the idea that self-love is the first step towards other people's love as argued by Shams: 'Unless you learn to *love yourself*, fully and sincerely, there is no way you can be loved.' The collocations *love had* and *love yourself* have positive semantic prosodies because they imbue love with a philosophical dye. The adverbial collocates *openly, truly, already, also, absolutely*, etc. contribute towards a positive semantic prosody of love, e.g., 'There is no wisdom without love. Unless we learn to love God's creation, we can neither *truly love* nor truly know God.'

The collocates *respected, admired, follow, forgive* and *me*, contribute to a positive semantic prosody of love. For example, in 'He is *loved*, *respected*, and *admired* by thousands', the positive lexical items *loved*, *respected*, and *admired* are juxtaposed. Love is also equated with life itself in: 'To [Aziz], people who had not made their heart their primary guide to life, who could not open up to *love* and *follow* its path the way a sunflower follows the sun, were not really alive.' Love is juxtaposed with forgiveness in 'we, a mixed bunch of wine lovers of all faiths, raised our glasses and toasted together, hard though it was to believe, to a God who could *love* and *forgive* us even when we ourselves clearly failed to do so.' God's love bestowed on all His creatures regardless of their sins is expressed by Suleiman, the drunk, in: 'At that moment I knew there was a God after all, and He *loved me*.' (See Table 5)

Table 5. *Thematic concerns revealed through the examination of the collocates of the keyword love in The Forty Rules of Love*

	Representations of Love	**Collocates involved**
1	Sufi love is unconditional, intense, encompassing all humanity and all creatures	unconditional, pure, burning, more, become, circle of, room for, truly, we
2	The distinction between the religious and the spiritual	unconditional, pure, compassion, room for, in heart, at center, reason than
3	Religious tolerance	unconditional, pure, compassion
4	The dichotomy between divine love and physical love	unrequited, much, make, taste, of proportions, him
5	The parallel between Rumi and Ella, on the one hand, and Shams and Aziz on the other	true, let
6	Love transcends the power of language	language, zone of

	Representations of Love	Collocates involved
7	Love obscures all confinements	boundaries, say
8	Love is our first choice as humans (Indispensability of love)	choose, love, add, say, be, exist, harmony, water, essence, greater, kind of, need for, attained through, life without, only love, water
9	Love causes the lover to transform, e.g., Ella, Rumi, Shams, Aziz, Desert Rose, etc.	nothing, experience, shun, be, seek, resemble, expect, mature, open, take, turn, faith, security, happiness, their, feeling, secondary, absence of, pain of, fall in, looking for, in marriage, enough, about love, also love, not loved, Aziz, things, past, join, me, it, we, I, she
10	Sufi love is for the sake of love itself	God, reason, goal, Him, you, they
11	Earthly love is not a single experience in a lifetime	experience, joy
12	The inseparability between love and trust	trust, drunkenness of
13	Love is to be accepted in its entirety, with the perfections and the imperfections	accept, garden of, in entirety, beings, God
14	Love is a mystery, not seen or realized by many people	call, epitome of, fall in, about love, mean, someone, you
15	Love causes heartache, agony, and deprivation	be, passion, pain, unrequited
16	The separation between love and intellect	dissolve, say, Sufi
17	The unexpectedness of love	come, seek, look for, at time, guard against
18	Love is mostly related to the present, not the past, not the future	have
19	Whirl dance of dervishes and Sufis is their way to God and a connection between people and God	heartbreak, originator, speck of, performed for, way through
20	People's image of God is a reflection of their inner selves	compassion
21	The Sufi love between Rumi and Shams is rare and intense	their
22	God's love is infinite	God, ocean
23	Rumi being its epitome, Sufism in Islam is the religion of love	voice of, religion of, heart of
24	Love comes from within	look for, hunt for
25	Self-love is the first step towards other people's love	love yourself

Conclusion

A much-celebrated figure in the Persian and Turkish-speaking countries, Rumi has been the focus of various literary works in the last two decades. *The Forty Rules of Love* is one of the notable and most successful participation of what has been called 'the Rumi phenomenon' (El-Zein, 2000). The present study adopts a corpus stylistic approach as a way into examining thematic foci, the thematization of love and the representation of love in Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love*. Although quantitative approaches to literary works have been accused of falling short of capturing literary meaning and textual significance (Van Peer, 1989), corpus stylistics incorporates both the qualitative aspect of stylistics and the quantitative aspect of corpus linguistics, i.e., the main aim of a corpus stylistic research should be the artistic style, while statistics should be used only as a means (Ho, 2011). Multifarious frameworks can be used to conduct a corpus stylistic research. However, the current study adheres to Mahlberg and McIntyre's model (2011) in order to explore literary thematic concerns of the novel, and the concept of semantic prosody (Fischer-Starcke, 2010; Louw, 1993) to scrutinize representation of 'love'.

The utilization of quantitative methods to study the novel at hand proves fruitful, i.e., the thematic classification provided through keyword analysis (Mahlberg & McIntyre, 2011) is evidently congruent with the themes provided by literary critics, e.g., Gray (2020); Zarrabi-Zadeh (2015), etc. Thus, as an answer to the first research question of the current study, the thematic foci of *The Forty Rules of Love* can be sketched

through the seven thematic signal keywords: *dervish*, *dervishes*, *God*, *love*, *Sufi*, *Sufis*, and *forty*. The novel is primarily about love coming in all its forms: Divine love, human love, and physical love. Responding to the second question, the theme of love can be collocationally revealed by examining the collocates of the node word 'love'. Thus, SkE online interface offers a word sketch tool which enables calculating the collocates of any node words and classifying them according to different syntactic relations. This quantitative calculation leads to literary qualitive exploration of how love is thematized in the novel—the hub of the third question.

By examining concordances where *love* and its collocates occur, the semantic prosodies of *love* unfold. Interestingly, most semantic prosodies of *love* are positive, especially divine love. Mostly in cases related to physical love, i.e., Ella's earlier conception of love and Kimya's disappointment in her love to Shams, is love portrayed negatively. The disparity between the positive representation of divine love and the negative representation of physical love is supported by the fate of the characters, e.g., Ella, Kimya, and Desert Rose. Moreover, twenty five representations of love can be discerned, e.g., Sufi love is unconditional, intense, encompassing all humanity and all creatures; the religious is to be distinct from the spiritual; divine love and physical love are dichotomized; Ella parallels Rumi while Aziz parallels Shams; love causes the transformation of the lover; love causes pain, agony and deprivation; love transcends the power of language and transcends all confinements; people's image of God is a reflection of their inner selves; love comes from within; Sufi love is for the sake of love itself; self-love is the first step towards other people's love; and God's love is infinite.

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