Non Fiction of Khushwant Singh: A Stylistic Perspective

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Abstract

Stylistics in literature is an attempt to make literary criticism much more scientific, meticulous, objective and precise. It stresses upon the need to form literary grammar of language, a literary transformation and satisfactory definition of various literary terms such as, 'style, poem, image, etc. More technically stylistic is the study of linguistic features of a literary text-phonological, lexical or syntactical, etc.; this directly affects the meaning of utterance. Stylistics as a branch of Linguistics deals with the features that are used in a literary text to bring out certain expression feelings or thoughts and also, the psychological impact on the reader's mind. Within literary stylistics, various figures of speech as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, synonymy, polysemy, personification, pun, similarity and contrasts, etc. are more emphasized upon. When a text is analyzed linguistically, more scientific outlook is required to accomplish the task. The linguistic items used in writer's style provide his text more and more variations, which is chief constituent of good writing. Khushwant Singh while writing especially, his non-fiction work, implemented linguistic features based on three levels i.e., level of sounds, words, sentences, paragraphs and even the text as a whole. It is very easy to analyze Khushwant Singh's style linguistically in the area of fiction, but, it's a challenging task to analyze his writing style within his non-fiction work. This paper deals with the linguistic analysis of his non-fiction through a linguistic perspective, that how he used to make it more real, interesting and touching and convincing to his readers. Thus, with his unique style, he provoked his readers to ponder over burning problems and get ready to find their solutions on their own as well as persuaded his readers to appreciate colorfulness and wonderful aspects of their lives.

Key Words: style, linguistics, variation, alliteration, assonance, semantics, syntax.

Introduction: Style

"Like children at the feet of a conjurer, people react to style with varying attitudes. Some simply relax and enjoy the effects and perhaps later recollect their emotions in tranquility. Others feel the naughty boy's urging to peep up the performer's sleeve and to expose the partitions of his hat, even at the risk of ignoring part of the show and of irritating rest of audience."(1)

In other words, the subject of style is always approached with appreciative curiosity. The word 'style' is very common and familiar to all of us, yet it has its own significance with elegance in some peculiar aspects, especially with the way of speaking and writing. However, the spelling 'stile' or 'style' originates from a meaningless variant of 'stile', which owes its modern currency both in French and English, to the erroneous notion and the word is derived from Latin 'stylus'(or stylus) which means "sense". Each and every thought of a person could be expressed through appropriate

set of meaningful words or sentences. This 'appropriate set' here is meant with particular way or manner in which words are made to display emotions and thoughts of a person. Similarly, swift defines style as, "Proper words in proper places."(2)

This suggests approval that styles can be evaluated, prescribed and proscribed.

As Chomsky observes, "a style is a characteristic use of language and it is difficult to see how the uses of a system can be understood unless the system itself has been mapped out." (3)

In fact, it is very difficult to define style, as it is one of the abstract terms like 'personality'. "Personality in man is the ultimate justification so is style in a writer. It is the essence of aesthetic pleasure." (4)

In the field of writing, style can be a medium to express thoughts and even, situations by a writer who knows how to sublime his expressions with more dexterity and clarity. In other words within a written piece we find something personal and special of the writer, poet or novelist etc. That is, work of a writer can be said to be a reflection of his own personality.in other words, "style is writer's individual way of feeling and seeing will compel an individual way of using language."(5)

According to Enkvist, "style is a concept as common as it is elusive: most of us speak about it, even lovingly. Though a few of us are willing to say precisely what it means. Those who write vaguely, subjectively and impressionistically about it remain open to charges of conceptual looseness, however elegantly they may express their prejudices." (6)

Style with regard to literature is very different from that of linguistics. The linguist and the literary critic do not see matter as the same. "To the former, the investigation of style is essentially a scientific description of certain types and sets of linguistic structures that occur in a given text, and of their distribution. The literary critic will be interested in textual stimuli or aesthetic effect which recalls some past experience of the reader." (7)

Thus, style has a great significance not only in the field of Literature, but also in Linguistics. That is, for investigating somebody's style, both linguistic and literary perspectives are required.

Stylistics

 "Stylistics was born of a reaction to the subjectivity and imprecision of literary studies. For the appreciative raptures of the impressionistic critic, stylisticians purport to substitute precise and rigorous linguistic descriptions, and to proceed from those descriptions to interpretations for which they can claim a measure of objectivity. Stylistics, in short, is an attempt to put criticism on a scientific basis."(8)

Thus, stylistics is more arrow and scientific aspect of style of a writer, poet, journalist, etc. to mark out the individual stamp of the work of particular author stylistic study is done. Even on the part of the author himself the stylistic device provides his literary or non-literary composition with a captivating and everlasting effect upon the readers.

Stylistics as a branch of Linguistics is more than a quarter century old now, and is widely accepted as an important tool of literary criticism. " The claim of stylistic rest on essentially on the proposition that the farthest range of a writer's art, the depths of his emotional experience, the heights of his spiritual insights are expressed only through his work and can be apprehended only an examination of verbal art"(9)

Thus stylistic is not something opposed to literary criticism for,

"… Between true literature and linguistics there is no conflict: the real linguistic is at least half a litterateur and the real litterateur at least half a linguist"

Stylistician therefore, is said to be occupying the middle ground between linguistic and literary criticism and its function are mainly concerned with these two areas. It also approaches by examining and analyzing a text individually. Yet, stylisticians are more trained linguistically in analyzing a text to investigate the same with much more modification and scientific touch, "the stylistician, ideally knows three thing which linguistically untrained people do not: he is aware of the kind of structure of language and thus the kind of feature which might be identified with: and he has a technique of putting these features down on paper in a systematic way in order to display their internal pattering to maximal effect"

Recent work in linguistic stylistics may be divided into three types: style as deviation from the norm, style as recurrence and convergence of textual pattern, and style as a particular exploitation of a grammar of possibilities. If there is a norm of fixed standard and the style of a text strictly adheres to that norm, then it is narrative style. And if it doesn't adhere to that norm then, the style of the writers using such technique, while they use different types of register in order to make the discourse familiar to the reader: for example, an outsider coming to our village would never ask 'who are you? But 'what are you' [Wl/10]

Here, we find the writer violating the rules of Standard English, but the statement is acceptable in the conversation made by common Indians. Thus, according o the regional dialect, 'what are you?' is acceptable but, the norms of Standard English do not confirm the same. Again, we usually find the writers, especially Indian English writers, using different language codes in their writing to give it regional touch as, "*... we described ourselves as ajnabis* (strangers) *and talked of our ancestral village with nostalgia* as our *Vatan* (homeland)." [WI/11]

Thus, deviation takes place not only in the meaning, grammar, and language variations but also in sounds.

Stylistics is also concerned with the selection, variation and sometimes repetition as well. Selection of a particular variety of language, linguistic items as well, including phonological, morphological and lexical items used by writers provide their texts with distinguished style, which is minutely analyzed by stylisticians.

Literary stylistics

In case of literary analysis of style it is a work of art, "the problem is is very different as soon as we narrow our attention to a study of literary style, in the sense of style in imaginative literature, with an aesthetic function… We then raise the question of nature of literature and the nature of aesthetic effect and response. And the study of style then has to grip with poetics and the theory of literature."(10)

A literary analysis makes the work of art greater, "For literary studies, style is a component of, and must be considered in relation to a quite different system, which is not strictly linguistic, which indeed transcends language as ordinarily understood: a theme, a plot, structure (in a wider sense), character, above all aesthetic significance, whatever sense we may attach to that phrase."(11)

Again, to provide distinctness and liveliness to the text along with the picaresque quality to the writings, writers use some features like alliteration, assonance, imagery, and even illusion, etc. However, the techniques of using irony, wit, humour with imagery, beautiful and distinct phrases

also help the writers to express their art of displaying emotions through their works. Thus, a writer can reach into his deep thoughts or, can express his inner self very wisely and clearly to his readers. It is due to the literary style of a writer that we find him successful in inducing his own thoughts. Right from a poet to an author, we find them all reaching and touching the hearts of the readers through right expression and description of situations. Finally, Literary style mostly deals with the effects and the influences which a writer reflects upon his readers while linguistic style is chiefly concerned with the use of linguistic items related to phonological, morphological, syntactical or semantic levels to produce the required effect on the readers.

Linguistic Stylistics

When we analyze a text linguistically, we observe that more scientific approach is required to accomplish the task. In other words, we are required to be more technical and methodical to analyze the style used by the writer with linguistic perspective. It is very interesting to note that with the linguistic perspective a writer can make his style more and more homogeneous, vivid and practical. He has a lot of freedom in giving his text with selective choices at certain levels. That is, the writer enjoys full freedom to select and implement various linguistic features from the level of sounds, words, sentences, paragraphs and even the text as a whole. Such stylistic study is also based upon the following levels as,

At the sound level

Unlike other Indian English writers, Khushwant Singh is very apt in using phonological features and thus added different sounds within his writings. He has used alliterative, assonant, rhyming words and different words producing distinct sounds within his fictional and non-fictional also works.

(a) Alliteration
Khshwant Singh's uses of alliterative words make his writings more expressive as it fills the dumb effect and expression with distinctive sound. For example, he has used various kinds fo words which are distinctive even in the English Language, as,

(i) … which restrict their vision to political tittle-tattle. [MMMF/17]
Here, the word 'tittle-tattle' has been used instead for 'petty gossip' and this has produced a comic effect. In the word the sound /t/ is repeated and alliterates which makes the line not only satirical but also effective. This quality of writer shows that he is proficient in the English language.

(ii) In the sentence, 'Lahore is just a half-hour hop away from Delhi.' [MMMF/54], Remarkably, the writer has used alliterative sounds /h/ for two times and even 'half-hour hop' has been used twice in the same topic itself. Here, the initial sound /h/ is repeated twice in the word 'half ' and 'hop'. We have chosen such words because they are quite distinctive and rarely used by other Indian writers.
Khushwant Singh also has avariety and native touch of the background. And, in using such variations he has also used other foreign languages like, Jakartan language of Indonesia. For example, within following lines,

(iii) 'Jakartans have charming pseudonyms for them; *Kupu Kupu Kalan* - butterflies of the night [MMMF/ 127]

Here, we find /k/ as initial consonant ocurring in the alliterative sets as in 'Kupu Kupu Kalan'.

(iv) Similarly, we find other alliterations like, 'He piled me up with cups of tea, *papdams* and *pakoras* ' [NNK/57]

In the above sentence, we find sound /p/ of 'piled', *'papadams'* and *'pakoras'* alliterating.

(v) We find afew alliterative sets in the title itself as in ' Going Gaga Over Yoga'. [NNK/111]
Here, we find that the author has made the title very distinctive and interesting by using the alliteration of the sound /*g*/ in 'going' and 'gaga'.

(b) Assonance

   As given in the Oxford dictionary, Assonance is "*similarity between the vowel sounds or the consonant sounds of two words or syllables, as in sharper or garter and killed and cold."()*
Khushwant Singh has expertise in using assonant sounds, for example,

(i) 'I was charmed by the way she threw in Hindustani words like, *lafda. haqngama, barobar, bhaav, bindaas, chaaloo, khalaas,* and scores of others in her narative and dialogue. ' [WMIL/6]
   Here, we find the vowel sounds, / /, / /, and /u:/ being highly stressed to emphasize upon the Hindi words.

(ii) 'No amount of shouting *Poh, Poh* drove them away. ' [WMIL/73]
   To the tell readers about the loud sound of a four-wheeler's horn the writer has used the assonant sound by repeating the sound / / twice in above example

(iii)'*Bilkul besura gaatee hai* (she sings totally out of tune), I told him.' [WMIL/109]
   Here, the narrator has strongly emphasized upon the truth about the person's wife, which he spoke infront of him despite the fact that, he praised hher a lot for singing. Here, the assonant sounds like, /l /, / /, / /, / /, / /, / /, are used.

(iv) Vermaji replied: ' *Naam vaam to main kisee ka nahion janta'* (I don't know anybody's name). [SSS/88]

   Again, by using sounds and words of Hindi language, the writer has emphasized upon the stubbornness of a character. Within these lines the vowel sounds like, / /, / /, / /, / / has been used.

(c) Rhyming

   In both, fiction and non-fictional works of Khushwant Singh we find him using rhyming lines and sometimes words, and these make his text more real with sounds and vision together, for example,

(i) '*soda, baraf, whiskey do,
 nahin to gaddichor do.'* [WI/111]

   Whenever, Khushwant Singh describes the Indian backgroubd in his works, he sometimes chooses to tell it in Indian langue, mostly Hindi and Punjabi language.In such a way Of Hindi langue , He borrows the total language effect for the required situation. Here, we find rhyming verse in such a way of Hindi language. The first and the second lines end with *'do'* or / /. The writer has made his own slogan in favour of drinking liquor. Such use of distinctive features of other langue in English works enables him to depict the situation deep and real.These lines have made the sentence honorous and effective.

(ii) ' *Upper Allah, Talley Jalla.*
    Jalley dey sir tey khalla .(In Heaven there is Allah, On earth there is Jalla. May he smack on Jalla on the head with a shoe).' [HSLK/84]

Above lines are parts of the history of Punjab, which the writer has represented with rhymig words. Use of such rhyming lines has made the description of the facts more interesting, amusing and unforgettable. the words *'Allah'* and *'Jallah'* in the first line and the word '*khalla*' in the second line, has made them rhyming.

(iii) We know that, Khushwant Singh is one of the best Columnists of India. Sometimes, he uses rhyming sounds in his setences. Such sounds and words are other Indian languages, For example,
The Guru or the *Murshid* who required dedication of *tan, man, dhan-* body, mind, worldly wealth. [NGIC/166]

If we carefully observe the above line, we find that the Hindi words *tan, man, dhan,* actually rhyme words. Here, the writer has decently used these words in a single sentence.

At the Word Level

Words are made up of sequences of sounds, each sound being represented, ideally by a particular letter of the alphabet; and that, whereas the words of a langue have a meaning, the sounds do not their sole function being to form words. Therefore, a 'word' could be meaningful unit of sounds. Linguistically, creatve writers often coin several unique word, which have aspecial effect on the meaning. such unique word-formation is seen and this ivs a specific sensto a given situation. Such wod-formation by the author sometimes becomes intricate phenomenon and in this way, we get some more and new words in the language.The author normally utilizes affixation, reduplication, and compounding systems of the language.Khushwant Singh has used all these processes of word-formation in his writings.

(a) Affixation

There are two types of process common in the English Language for the formation of words-

(i) Suffixation: It is the commonest form of word-formation in languages.A few distinctive suffixes used by Khushwat singh are-

root	+	suffix	-	word
Box	+	wallas	-	boxwalllas [NGIS/148]
Tamil	+	ian	-	Tamilain [NGIS/151]
Sarkar	+	I	-	sarkari [NGIS/160]
Gym	+	khana	-	Gymkhana [NGIS/230]

It is very common quality of Indians especially educated people to use such words with ' walla + s (plural form)'.

(ii) Prefixation: Although, they are a few than suffixes yet, Khushwant Singh has used some other kind of prefixes, which are not regular prefixes of English langue. Some of them are used as-

prefix	+	root	-	word
anti	+	Israeli	-	anti-Israeli [WI/146]
pro	+	pak	-	pro-pak [MMMF/30]

Here, root word is 'pak' (Pakistan) while the regular prefix 'pro' is used for 'after'.

prefix	+	root	-	word
de	+	flowered	-	deflowered [NNK/34]
be	+	friended	-	befriended [NNK/76]
dis	+	comfort	-	discomfort [NNK/122]

un	+	hurt	-	discomfort	[NNK/130]
un	+	shaken	-	unshaken	[NNK/130]
un	+	clipped	-	unclipped	[NNK/201]

(iii) Reduplication : Reduplicaiton is very common phenomenon of langues. It involves adding the form like affixation, but the added form may be in part or the whole.we have seen in the khushwat singh's writngs, the usage of english, hindi and Punjabi or Urdu reduplicative words within his writings in the English language. For example-

(a) Mr. *Baw Baw* [NNK/62]
Infact, '*baw baw*' is actually a Hindi word used for barking of a dog. Here, it is used in the context of a person who hates langue of his subordinate and therfore he has given this name to make him feel small. The utterance of thedog is reduplicated ina sarcastic sense.

(b) Similarly, we find Khushwantsingh using such words like,
Arey chhod curiosity-phuriosity ! [NNK/80]
Here, we find the English word 'curiosity' being reduplicative with a meaningless variant, '*phuriosity'*.

(c) ' Oxford or *phoxford*' [NNK/109]
This is one of the peculiar formatio of words by Khushwant Singh. He can use even Two words of different langues to reduplicate and sometimes a meaningless reduplicative form like; ' *phoxford*' is used here.

(d) Other than the Hindi or English words, the words of Urdu language are equally used for reduplication especially, In Khushwant Singh's writings. For example-
"*Toba Toba,* heaven forbid," she replies [WI/72]

(e) Khushwant Singh is versatile in describing Nature's beauty. The description of enchanting scenes withtheir natural colours and music of reduplicated words made for birds makes it lively and intelligible and enjoyable as well as,

" Green barbets go on their wavy flight from dark-foliaged tree to another, wind themselves up. *kurr, kurr, kurr,* and then let themselves go*: kutrook, kutrook, kutrook."* [NW/21]

In above lines, sounds like, *kurr, kurr, kurr* and *kutrook, kutrook, kutrook* are reduplicated to produce natureal sounds.

(iv) Compounding : A compound normally has two or more constituents, where the first member of a compound is normally a modifier of the second member. The second member usually acts as the head of the compound, and most of the syntactic propertes of the compound are derived from it. while, the first member is its dependant. A few examples of compounding are as follows-

noun	+	**noun**	-	**word**
idol	+	breakers	-	idol-breakers [WL/14]
palki	+	bearers	-	*palki*-bearers [HSLK/36]
Dharma	+	*yuddha*	-	*Dharmayuddha* [HSLK/157]
Temple +		goers	-	temple-goers [NW/91]
pronoun	+	**noun**	-	**word**
self	+	deprecation	-	self-deprecation [WI/35]
self	+	presevation	-	self-presevation [SSS/9]

adjective	+	noun	-	word
black	+	pepper	-	black-pepper [SSS/75]
hot	+	heads	-	hot-heads [SSS/99]
wild	+	fire	-	wild-fire [NNK/86]
verb	+	**noun**	-	**word**
pay	+	packet	-	pay-packet [WI/110]
drill	+	seargents	-	drill-seargeants [HSLK/13]
make	+	shift	-	make-shift [NGIC/3]
spell	+	binder	-	spellbinder [NGIC/7]
adverb	+	**noun**	-	**word**
high	+	rise	-	high-rise [NGIC/78]
out	+	*bhaasan*	-	out-*bhaasan* [NGIC/88]
noun	+	**adjective**	-	**word**
cheek	+	boned	-	cheek-boned [MMMF/126]
rain	+	sodden	-	rain-sodden [NGIC/78]
noun	+	**verb**	-	**word**
shoe	+	beating	-	shoe-beating [MMMF/121]
bird	+	bath	-	bird-bath
adjective	+	**adjective**	-	**word**
warm	+	hearted	-	warm-hearted
hazel	+	brown	-	hazel-brown

At the Sentence Level

Of words, this expresses a statement, question, command, or request. It is shown with a sentence is a group punctuation marks. We can divide all the sentences into two major parts- simple and multiple sentences. A simple sentence consists of a single clause, which is independent. Multiple sentences can further be divided into compound and complex sentences.

(a) Simple Sentences

Khushwant Singh is very apt in using very short and long simple sentences as,

(i) Am I proud of being an Indian?   [WI/36]
(ii) what is she to you?   [MMMF/23]
(iii) There is a curious paradox in the Pakistani political scene.   [MMMF/39]
(iv) What more is there to say in a speech of farewell?   [NNW/9]
(v) Near the river were the tents of yet another order from somewhere on Bihar.   [NNK/107]
(vi) Why don't you put an end to this wickedness?   [NNK/109]

In the same type of sentences we find very short sentences as command or statement, etc. as,
(i) get back to India.   [WI/37]
(ii) They looked prosperous.   [NNK/107]
(iii) It was our turn to laugh.   [NNK/110]
(iv) Apparently, sprouting banalities is in our genes.   [NGIC/77]
(v) I doze off.   [NGIC/78]

(vi) In future the order is to be reserved.   [NGIC/127]
(vii) It went on and on.   [NGIC/291]
(viii) They ate at a cheap bistro.   [NGIC/292]

(b) Compound Sentences

A compound sentence is one, which has two or more independent coordinate clauses. A few examples of compound sentences used by Khushwant Singh in his non-fiction are-

(i) Her nuns found sheets but there was no money to buy cotton.   [NNK/23]
(ii) I quicken my steps and go down a flight of stairs.   [NNK/158]
(iii) It will give employment to thousands of Indians and give a boost to poultry farming.
(iv) They are notoroiously bad at foreign languages and poor communication causes a lot of misunderstanding.   [NGIC/241]
(v) I knew my readers would forgive for the liberties I took because my version was a mixture of fact and fiction.   [NGIC/241]

(c)   Complex sentences

The muliple kind of sentences are also called as complex sentences in which there is one independent clause and others are dependent clausues. For example-

(i) I pay tribute to the Quaid whom I met few times and whose ability and integrity I had rated as high as Gandhiji's or Nehru's.   [MMMF/31]
(ii) Even back amongst his family, V.P. had to be constantly guarded by gunmen because of threats to his life by rival claimants to the *gaddi* of Manda.   [MMMF/73]
(iii) Lord Hardinge wanted the ruling clique to remain sikh so that it could keep a balance of power with the Muslims, who formed majority of the population.   [HSLK/129]
(iv) The Puranas gave this nite its mythical explanation in *Amrita Manthan* when gods and demons jointly chanted the waters of ocean.   [NGIC/73]
(v) Our Yuppy has a degree in commerce from a second-rate college, is familiar with American business terminology which he pronounces with an imitated nasal twang and mispronounces most other English words.   [NGIC/148]
(vi) He rang me up a few times when he wanted publicity for something he was doing ans usually ended with the vague, *'Kabhi hamare ghar aana'*.   [NGIC/252]

At the Text Level

A text consists of almost all the features of a language. Within a text, we find many sounds are combined to form words, words to sentences, sentences to paragraphs and all these together gorm a text. Apart from these, all the grammatical and linguistic categories are used for correct expressions and representation of thoughts and situations. Therfore, a linguistic study is primarily based upon the selection of the text. That is if the text selected for stylistic study is good and full of socio-cultural aspects, then the stylistic study of the same will be equally good. As far as Khushwant Singh's non-fiction is concerned, we find a lot of variations in socio-cultural aspects.

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