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Graphological, Morphological, and Lexico-Syntactical Analysis of the Poem *The Innocent Killings* by Jasmine: A Stylistic Analysis

Abstract:

This study stylistically analyzes a poem, "The Innocent Killings", by an anonymous poet, Jasmine. The poem has been analyzed at morphological, lexico-syntactical, and graphological levels where thematic and foregrounding elements have been used. Moreover, the unique deviation and parallelism have been taken as a suggestion to the spirit of the age. Various stylistic features in the context of brutal terrorism have been employed in the poem to convey the denser ideas and traumatic sufferings of the nation. The researchers also explored the unique structure of the poem carrying different moods and troops with proper choice of dictions in each portion. The stylistic techniques in the poem move parallel to the tone of the mood, such as; the use of progressive verbs, abstract nouns, symbol device like "Jasmine", and lack of the main verb in the last three lines of the poem shows a failure to defend the nation from terrorist attacks..

Key Words:

Blast, Foregrounding, Graphological Level, Jasmine, Lexico-Syntactic Level, Morphological Level, Parallelism and Deviation, Stylistics

Introduction

Stylistics is a branch of applied linguistics concerned with the study of style in texts. Before the 20th century, stylistics only handled literary texts, yet from the 20th century, it started dealing with non-literary text(s), including law, religious beliefs, advertisements, newspapers and so on. Katie [Wales \(2014\)](#), in *A Book of Stylistics*, writes that the end goal on most stylistics is not simply to spell out the formal features of text messaging for their own reason but for showing their interpretation of the text, or as a way to relate literary effects to linguistic causes. Stylistic analysis comments on objective, quantifiable and scientific-based data. It uses focused technical conditions and principles which are derived from the science of linguistics. In other words, stylistic analysis is a different approach from literary or fictional criticism. Fictional criticism continues to give attention to interpretation, where the field of linguistics has little to say of literary works beyond the sentence level. Because of a question that may come up in the minds of the readers for the correlation between stylistics and literary criticism, it is finally preferred that the purpose of stylistic research is not to replace full-fledged literary criticism, but the sole purpose is to comment on the compliment of it.

The term stylistics is used for analytical science, which embodies the other aspects of fields, namely, syntax, phonology, prosody, lexicology and morphology ([Cuddon, 2010](#)). Stylistics is an investigation or studying of literature through linguistics that encompasses the manifestation of all the elements of language. The linguistic orientation studies various styles for analyzing any piece of literature. In short, stylistics studies the expressive value of literature. Stylistics sees the difference between

between style and grammatical rules. It analyzes a literary text by observing the areas that how it defies grammatical rules. It expresses the desired effect of a writer by a technique of deviation. Therefore, [Widdowson \(1975\)](#) has rightly said that if stylistics differs from traditional grammar on the one hand, but it also bridges the two in the process of analysis.

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The use of stylistic analysis with some comparative reference will help to enhance students' understanding and analysis of numerous aspects of modern English poems in a more aesthetic manner. A further advantage of students, who are familiar with the lingo and the underlying ideas and principles of stylistics, will also have the means to explore poetry in the context of indigenous linguistic features. Indeed, a comparative approach is likely to supplement students' knowledge of literature in general basic standards. This research work is based on the stylistic analysis of the poem "The Innocent Killing", written by an anonymous poet. The analysis addresses the uniqueness of style as it combines both linguistics and literary studies. It also examines how words are put together in transferring the message to the readers.

Literature Review

Style is a broader term that has several meanings varying according to different contexts. "Style" is a word derived from the Latin word "elocution", which means style and lexis in Greek. Style is a broader term that has several meanings in and outside of the literary text. A particular procedure by which something is done, a manner, or a way is style. Broadly, the appearance of everything is style. A style reflects the thoughts of a person's mind that describe the way of a person's speaking and writing. The way something is being displayed or presented is what makes its style. On the other hand, in literary terms, it is said that style is the way how a person expresses his thoughts in words.

In addition, Stylistics is the discipline of applied linguistics that deals with the study of style and how properly the words and language have been used. According to Widdowson (1975), "Stylistics is the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation". Then he says that stylistics is the bridge between linguistics and literary criticism as it links the two. According to [Carter \(1989\)](#), style is dependent on what linguistic choices have been made and what expectations do the readers have from the specific literary piece. [Haynes \(1989\)](#) is of the view that style is the study of differences and deviations about what has been said in the place of what could have been saying. He further employs that style and variety are the same since style studies different variations in different texts and that texts vary according to the contexts, which is the main reason for these variations among texts. [Brini \(2000\)](#) also says that it may be estimated in terms of the sociolinguistic contexts, and it may also be figured or analyzed on linguistic, semantic and even semiotic terms.

Stylistic analysis is undertaken by applying the yardstick of its levels of analysis. The levels determine the efficacy of work, and further, the road map is made clear for the anatomization of a text. The levels of stylistic analysis include three basic levels they are; graphology, morphology and lexico-syntax. In one of the works of [Crystal and Davy \(1969\)](#) cited in [Alabi \(2007\)](#), graphology refers to the systematic study of writing or its system (orthography), which is seen in various types of handwriting. In terms of this view, graphology entails punctuation, spacing, spelling and other topographies. [Alabi \(2007\)](#) added that a graphological discussion of style, among other features, necessitates the foregrounding of quotation marks, ellipses periods, hyphens, and other related elements.

Moreover, according to Mark and Kirsten (2005) morphological level of stylistic analysis refers to the mental system. The mental system involves word-formation that takes place in the mind, the internal structure, which can either be a surface or deep structure and the way how the words are formed. This stylistic level is solely concerned with word-formation processes subject to specific conditions and rules. The word-formation process includes prefixes and suffixes (affixation) and other processes like; borrowing, clipping, and blending and so on.

Finally, the third level is known as lexico-syntax, which is a word formed by the combination of two different words, "Lexis" and "syntax". Lexis is the total vocabularies that make up a language or the body of words known and used by a specific person. Syntax, According to [Tallerman \(2011\)](#), means 'Sentence construction': how words group together to make phrases and sentences". It is also used to mean the study of the syntactic properties of languages; in this sense, it is used in the same way as we use 'stylistics' to mean the study of literary style. Lexico-Syntactic patterns may be obtained through several means, which comprise

infrequent or inverted word order, omission of words and repetition. Lexico-Syntactic choices are obtained through devices such as; particular parts of speech, the inversion of natural or usual word order, insertion of words, omission of words and so on.

Research Questions

1. What are the distinctive stylistic features that give the selected poem its identity?
2. What types of effects and functions do stylistic elements add to the poem?

Research Objectives

- To ascertain the distinctive stylistic features in the selected poem
- To know about the effects and functions of stylistic elements in the selected poem

Methodology

The poem was analyzed stylistically, and the five levels of analysis were applied to it. The five levels are; graphology, morphology, lexico-syntactical level, thematic level, parallelism and deviation. The levels have been thoroughly discussed with examples and some in tabulated forms followed by an explicit analysis. The poem was analyzed through textual analysis, keeping in view the context of Pakistan, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Results and Discussion

This poem is written by an anonymous embryonic poet in the memory of the blasts and terrorism which had killed and still killing innocent humans for no reason. Though its theme is universal yet it has been written after the brutal massacre of the innocent jasmynes (students) at Peshawar in Army Public School (APS). The poet, as a citizen of the city, has witnessed such types of terror attacks which induced him to narrate the pathetic suffering of children and their families along. In the poem, the poet uses “Jasmine”, which symbolizes innocent children of Pakistan and the National flower of Pakistan.

Title of The Poem

“The Innocent Killings”

In order to understand this poem, the title is a key to unlock the hidden meanings. Innocent Killings is the right choice in the sense that children are innocent, they cannot differentiate between good and bad, they do not have any religion, neither cast nor social stigmas, but they are flowers that show happiness and beauty to their families. In the poem, innocent killing is further contextualized by the word Jasmine(s), which symbolizes flower(s) who have been victimized for no reason. Though they do not know the name of terror and fear, they only smile and laugh to enjoy the innocent beauty of their life.

The poem is written in Past tense, which shows that it is a reflection of the poet’s mind. What he/she has seen and experienced in the horrific environment in Pakistan, reflected naturally with proper attention to the diction in the poem. The choice of his/her diction such as blast, lump, spirit, tears, gloom, spell, smoke, smog, crying, amber, hiccup, patience, and silence are the words that show complete parallelism to the title, which is chaotic and melancholic and fully misery and suffering.

Table 1. Distribution of Open Class Words

| Noun | Main verb | Adjective | Adverb |
|---------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Rays | Shinning | National | Brightly |
| Jasmine | Saying | Sudden | Loudly |

| Noun | Main verb | Adjective | Adverb |
|-------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Anthem | Climbing | All | Sweetly |
| Hope | Ravished | Unable | Intensively |
| Desire | Demolished | | |
| Sky | Filled | | |
| Blast | Involved | | |
| Jasmine | Utter | | |
| Air | Spell | | |
| Lump | Crying | | |
| Spirit | Kept | | |
| Plants | To Spread | | |
| Birds | To bring | | |
| Tears | To Bring | | |
| Gloom | | | |
| Words | | | |
| Smoke | | | |
| Smoge | | | |
| Terror | | | |
| Mother | | | |
| Reasons | | | |
| Jasmine | | | |
| Thorn | | | |
| Duty | | | |
| Fragrance | | | |
| Beauty | | | |
| Duty | | | |
| Smile | | | |
| Peace | | | |
| Mother | | | |
| Wish | | | |
| Light | | | |
| Peace | | | |
| Mother | | | |
| Tears | | | |
| Amber | | | |
| Answer | | | |
| Hiccup | | | |
| Pain | | | |
| Patience | | | |
| Silence | | | |
| Answer | | | |
| 43 | 14 | 4 | 4 |

Analysis

The above table shows that the poem is composed of forty-three nouns and fourteen main verbs. Most of the nouns are abstract, and only fourteen nouns are in concrete form that reflects physical objects. Apart from these, the adjectives and the adverbs are in minimum number, which is four for each. The use of such a limited number of concrete nouns is the indication of the disturbance created by the terrorists and making the people

restricted to only abstract reactions such as tears, amber, crying, asking, and so on. The poet has not used too many adjectives and adverbs for the reason that nouns and verbs are intensively loaded semantically due to the contextual situation of the poem, which is the reflection of brutal killings of innocent jasmines.

Table 2. Distribution of Nouns into Various Classes

| Nouns Related to Nature | Nouns Related to Humans | Nouns Related to Both Humans and Nature |
|---|---|--|
| Rays, Jasmine (Flower), Sky, Air, plants, birds, smoke, smog, thorn, beauty, amber | Hope, Jasmine(Children), Desire, Anthem, Blast, Lamp, spirit, tear, gloom, words, mother, reasons, duty, fragrance, smile, peace, wish, hiccup, patience, silence, answer | Jasmine, smoke, smog, thorn, beauty, amber |

Analysis

Such type of combination of nouns that are interconnected semantically in the poem is a clear indication of the interconnection between humans and nature. Without nature, man cannot survive, but humans are destroying nature by killing each other for no reason, inventing new explosives to demolish humans and pollute the air with smoke.

Further, the verbs in the first three lines of the poem are “Shinning”, “Saying,” “climbing”, concerning the noun “Jasmine”. Here “jasmine” represents children, which is the national flower of Pakistan. Jasmine(s) are in a progressive state, and they are striving for their goals to serve their nation to bring shine and success. Such type of use of tense shows the immediacy and ongoing nature of children to learn and serve. “Hope and Desire were climbing into the sky” is the unavoidable link between Human desire to explore more about nature “sky” and use it for the service of humanity. As a developing country, we struggle to bring comfort to our people, but the world is cutting our roots in the form of killing our innocent jasmines (children).

In the fourth stanza of the poem, a sudden change in the tone of the poem is brought about by the verbs “Ravished and Demolished”. Those children were vanished and killed who were thinking of themselves as the builder of harmony in society to bring beauty and love. The other verbs “filled”, “involved”, “to utter,” and “to spell” are affected verbs, in other words, induced verbs due to the noun “blast”. This blast brought the nation into “tears” and “gloom”.

“Crying”, “Kept”, “to spread”, and “to bring” are the verbs which are the responses and results of the previous stanzas which contained the verbs “Ravished”, “Demolished” “involved” “Filled”. Mothers are the true builders of their nation, and they know the innocence and value of their children. Children are flowers of a garden. They only add to the beauty of the garden, but the brutal people kill them for their beauty. In the last three lines, the poet did not use any main verb, which shows that the blast made all the humans and nature weep. They were ignored due to a lack of power to save innocent Jasmine from these daily routine dreadful crushing suicide bombers and attacks.

Deviation and Parallelism

Deviation and parallelism deal with the perceptions of writers who give an effect to their text. It suggests that how and why writers go for foregrounding in their texts or for the parts of their text. Foregrounding is the epicentre of stylistic analysis of any text in which the association of text and meaning is cascaded. In order to bring about the perlocutionary effect of a text, foregrounding is perceptually used. On the one hand, linguistic deviation is a way through which foregrounding is obtained. This linguistic deviation is attained in terms of the graphological feature of a text. On the other hand, another way of introducing foregrounding is utilizing

the extra-linguistic features or patterns of a text. The extra-linguistic features are something beyond the realms of linguistic items that are informative but not communicative. They may include the style of the speaker or writer, the pitch, the identity, the habitual aspects of a speaker or writer and so on. These extra-linguistic features take place by a persistent repetition of linguistic structures. In this way, once the linguistic structures are persistently repeated, they mark parallel aspects of a text. They have the same grammatical structure, which is also known as grammatical parallelism and some of the other features repeated in an identical manner. In a nutshell, the symmetrical structure of grammar and its repetition lead to parallelism in a text. So, foregrounding is an important part of leading to deviation and parallelism in stylistic analysis.

In light of the above-mentioned discussion, in the present study, the structure of the poem is on the verge of complete deviation from the norms in which a poem is composed of. Here in the very first three lines, the poet presents a portrayal of harmony and progress in society which present one spectrum of society. Then a sudden change takes place in the coming stanza that locates the ideas of the poem on the other extreme. The sudden change can be seen when applied by a separate stanza of five lines with a contrasting idea to the first three lines, which are demolishing the hopes and desires of children. On the first hand, the tone of the first three lines is positive. After that, the optimistic tone of the first three lines shifts into a melancholic tone. Then after these last five lines, there is another deviation from the demolished jasmines to pathetic feelings and emotions of the suffered mother whose children died. Here the mothers are melancholic, and they mourn and groan for their deceased children. In these lines, the poet depicts the cries of their mothers in a melancholic tone.

In the last three lines, the poet, as an observer of all this horrible destruction, concludes the poem by using the words “tears”, “Amber” “Hiccup”, “pain”, “patience”, and “Silence” which symbolize the failure to answer to mothers’ question regarding the innocence of their children. It brings about the poem on the verge of sabotage. Another deviation in this poem is the use of upper case letters in the poem in the middle of each line, such as: “Jasmine”, “National” “Anthem” “Loudly”, “Sweetly”, “Desire”, “Ravished” “Demolished”, “Lump”, “Spirit”, “Fragrance”, “Smoke” “Smog” “Spell” “Peace”, “Mother”, and many more. The reason for adopting such type of style reflects the importance and value of Jasmines in the first three lines. The next five lines show us the intensity of suffering of mothers and their weeping, where the poet expresses the inability to protect children from terrorist attacks.

Lexico-Syntactical Analysis

Lexico-syntax denotes the combination of both lexis and syntax to give rise to a specific type of structure used by the poet. The poem conveys different meanings by using various types of lexico-syntactic techniques, which are piling of usual collocation, unusual collocation, archaic, inversion of the usual order, omission of words, and particular parts such as Anastrophe, parenthesis, ellipsis, asyndeton, anaphora, epizeux, pun, Anthimeria, periphrasis, hyperbole, personification, paradox, synecdoche, oxymoron, simile, metaphor, archaic words, synonyms and antonyms. In the present work, in the very first line, there is a focal lexical feature, the word “Jasmine”, which foregrounds the feature represents children and the nation of Pakistan because it is the national flower of Pakistan. Then the poet uses the words “National Anthem”, which shows a clear indication to children who are singing the national anthem. The word “blast” used in the poem shows modern invention with its destructive invention for humans. “It filled the air with Lump and spirit of them” and “It involved plants and Birds into tears and gloom” such type of usual collocation of words, the destruction and suffering of human and nature are due to the blast. Then two words, “Smog and Smoke”, with the word “terror”, is also another unusual collocation that conveys a message that such a destructive massacre of humans by terrorists is spreading terror like smoke and smog are polluting the environment.

In the poem a beautiful line which touches the hearts “That Jasmine kept no thorn to harm them”: syntactical combinations are a unique creation in the sense that it embodies a denser meaning. The children (Jasmine) are innocent and free from any sort of corruption, but they only provide happiness and charm to

their parents and family. They are just like flowers that add beauty to a garden. Such lexico-syntactic usage of words and sentences add multiplicity to the context of the poem and even creates a hypnotizing sort of aesthetic beauty.

In the last three lines, there is strange lexico-syntactic construction that further contributes to bringing out a passive response of the suffered nation. For the last few decades, we are suffering from terrorism and even now, they have attacked our flowers; those flowers, children and jasmines who do not know the meaning of any religion. The words “tears and Ambers”, Hiccup and Pain”, and “Patience and Silence” are the hidden reaction to these innocent killings at Peshawar. In a nutshell, this poem is stylistically loaded with literary devices and rich linguistically to convey the complexity and sensitivity of the perturb situation of the suffered nation in Pakistan.

Conclusion

The stylistic analysis of the poem “The Innocent Killings” by Jasmine, an anonymous poet at the level of graphology, morphology, lexico-syntactical level, thematic level, parallelism and deviation in the format of the poem, was quite successful. The researchers reached the conclusion that the poem is stylistically enriched with above mentioned stylistic levels, such as most of the nouns are abstract rather than concrete. The poem also shows a multiplicity of meaning used by the poets in the specific context. The tone of the poem is melancholic in nature for the reason that the words “blast”, “cry”, “pain”, “Amber”, “Hiccup”, and “silence” contributed to its meaning of the poem as a whole. Even the title is suggestive about the brutal massacre and suffering of our nation.

The verbs in their progressive form such as “shinning”, “saying,” and “climbing” signify progress but abrupt and unexpected shift brought about by the verbs which are “demolished”, “Vanished”, and “Crying” that shows the unpredictability of such drastic destruction of the children. Then in the last three lines, the poet did not use any main verb, which is a clear indication of failure to respond to mothers’ cries.

Finally, the poet, with the help of this stylistic expertise, brings changes in the tone, mood, and intensity of the situation. In this sense, it is concluded that various stylistic levels have been used in the poem, which produces a perlocutionary effect as delineated in the poem “The Innocent Killings” the Jasmine molds ideas, tone, and affect from active to passive and from physical to mental.

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Appendix

The Innocent Killings

By Jasmine (Anonymous Poet)

- 1 Shining brightly in the rays, Jasmine were,
- 2 Saying National Anthem Loudly and Sweetly,
- 3 Hope and Desire were climbing into the sky.
- 4 A sudden blast Ravished and Demolished all Jasmine,
- 5 It filled air with Lump and Spirit of them,
- 6 It involved plants and birds into tears and gloom.
- 7 Each one was unable to Utter and Spell words,
- 8 Because of the Smog and Smoke of the terror.
- 9 Mothers were intensively crying for reasons,
- 10 That Jasmine kept no thorn to harm them,
- 11 Their duty was to spread Fragrance and Beauty,
- 12 Their duty was to bring Smile and Peace to Mother,
- 13 Their wish was to bring Light and Peace to Mother.
- 14 Only Tears and Amber were answer to them,
- 15 Only Hiccup and Pain were answers to them,
- 16 Only Patience and Silence were answer to them