

**STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE SHORT STORY 'CALL IT A
SUNSHINE?' BY HAMID KHAN**

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Abstract

This research aims at analyzing Hamid Khan's short story 'Call it a Sunshine?' from the perspective of stylistics. Stylistic tools such as lexical, grammatical and phonological schemes are focused during the analysis of the story following Leech and Short's (2007) checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories. The story is unique in the sense that it does not give names to the two characters; the narrator and the person whom the story revolves. In this regard, it deviates from normal story structure which foregrounds that it is every body's story on the planet. The selected short story is suitable for conducting a stylistic analysis because the creator has used a lot of linguistic choices which indicate his dexterity and decorum of style. Lastly, the paper is based on the objective of attracting the attention of budding researchers to analyze and critically appreciate local writers as local voices depict their society and issues.

Introduction

The present research is concerned with the investigation of linguistic choices used by Hamid Khan. It is a stylistic analysis of the short story 'Call it Sunshine?', which is unique in the sense that a lot of linguistic choices are used that attracts the attention of the readers towards an implied message.

'Call it Sunshine?' is a story of an unknown man of thirty who has lost confidence in life and is at the verge of death. The story teller takes us back to his early life of vigor and enthusiasm. He was once a man of strong defiance who would wholeheartedly accept the challenges in life. But now he has turned hater of life as he is sick and tired of the calamities befalling him, though he has the courage to face all the challenges on his own. He does not seek anybody's help.

The narrator informs us that the strange behavior of this man is due to something terribly done to him in the past, though he does not want to disclose it to anyone. One thing is sure that he does not want to leave this world at so young an age. The writer grabs the attention of the reader towards the sheer fact that life must be accepted in whatever form it is assigned to anybody as it becomes beyond one's control if they want to fulfill every wish and desire.

The writer of the story is a local poet and short story writer who writes his literary works in English. He has published two volumes of poetry i.e. *Three Voices* and *Velvet of Loss* (2002) are the two volumes of his poems and also published a lot of short stories in various local newspaper, and in the *Journal of English Literary Club*, University of Peshawar. *Three Voices* is a poetic collection written in collaboration with Professor Daud Kamal and Kaja Ikram Azam. Ramzan and Abdul Karim Khan (2020) introduced Hamid Khan in these words;

“Apart from his literary pursuits, Hamid Khan did his Ph.D. in English and successfully supervised many scholars at M.Phil and Ph.D. levels. He also worked at various administrative positions and retired as a bureaucrat. Currently, he is working as Chairman of the Department of English Linguistics and Literature Qurtuba University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar.” (p. 157)

Literature Review

This part of the paper provides the available relevant literature review as well as the theoretical framework of the study. Abdul Karim Khan and Zahir Jang (2020) analyze Hamid Khan's poetry through code-switching to explore socio-cultural issues discussed in his poetry. They assert that Hamid Khan portrays the local issues of the society in which he lives and tries to resolve all the problems of the society.

Similarly, Khan (2020) explores parallelism of words in the selected poems of Hamid Khan's poetic collection *Velvet of Loss*. He limitates his paper to some specific words taken from the poems which are selected for analysis. In the conclusion and discussion section the researcher concludes that “parallel occurrence of words connotes various themes with respect to time frame. It is the night that brings darkness and dims the star” (p. 174).

Moreover, Ramzan et al. (2021) stylistically analyses Shadab Zeest Hashmi's poem 'You are chained' from the perspective of foregrounding. They conclude their study as they say Hashmi's treatment of themes that;

“The choices of words, phrases, and lines bespeak her considerate nature and sincerity towards fellow beings and co-religionists. The wonders of her treatment of the theme are explored through the theory of foregrounding where, in the poem, its elements of deviation and parallelism compelled us to go and search for the desired idea and themes” (p 285).

Stylistics

The study of stylistics helps researchers explore the hidden meanings in a text. There are various tools of stylistics analysis through which researchers analyze literary pieces (texts). These stylistic tools can be used in teaching methodology and in language classrooms. Style is presenting or expressing thoughts in a peculiar way. Everyone has their own style to express thoughts through the use of language. In this regard, Al-Qudsi (2016) puts that when language and style are combined then the “study of both fields called stylistics appeared” (p. 6).

According to Simpson (2004) and Baldick (2008), stylistics is the study of literary texts which are explored from linguistics point of view. It is also considered as the study of linguistic choices in literary contexts. Similarly, the main focus of literary stylistics is on both linguistics and literary texts. Stylistic analysis is generally concerned with the analysis of literary texts linguistically. It acts as a bridge between literature and language studies. Stylistics explores the individual patterns as well as linguistic structure used in pieces of literature to extract the hidden meanings of given texts. In this regard, stylistics presents a scientific approach to construe the literary texts as an alternative of using subjective views (Oztekin, 2013).

In this connection, Wales (1989) observes that these stylistic approaches are mainly due to the influences of linguistics as well as literary criticism. Widdowson (1975) considers stylistics as a link between linguistics and literary criticism as well. According to David Crystal (1980), stylistics is a part of linguistics which deals with some features of language variation. In this respect Khan, et al. (2015) asserts that stylistic analysis tends to explore the specific linguistic choices made by the author in the selection of words and sentence structure as well. The study further gives Leech and Short's (2007) definition of style as “the way of the writer to convey message to the reader” (p. 10).

Methodology

The study explores Hamid Khan's short story 'Call it Sunshine?' through Stylistics. The heuristic checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories of Leech and Short (2007) has been applied to investigate the selected story. Leech and Short's checklist provides a systematic basis for analyzing of a text through stylistics. It offers four levels for analyzing the linguistic choices used in the text understudy in terms of style. These levels include the grammatical categories, lexical categories, figures of speech, and context as well as cohesion.

The present study is delimited to the level of figures of speech. The researchers follow the grammatical and lexical schemes of linguistics as parallelism. In this regard, the researchers consider incidence of features foregrounded by virtue of deviation in some manner from traditional rules of discussion by means of the language code such as utilization of regularities of formal pattern or deviations from the linguistic code. In this regard, the conventional figures of speech such as schemes and tropes are very useful categories for exploring these features.

Leech and Short's (2007) level of figures of speech

The present study is delimited to the level of figures of speech Leech and Short's Checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories. The study provides the level of figures of speech below;

1. "Grammatical and lexical. Are there any cases of formal and structural repetition (anaphora, parallelism, etc.) or of mirror-image patterns (chiasmus)? Is the rhetorical effect of these one of antithesis, reinforcement, climax, anticlimax, etc?"
2. Phonological schemes. Are there any phonological patterns of rhyme, alliteration, assonance, etc.? Are there any salient rhythmical patterns? Do vowel and consonant sounds pattern or cluster in particular ways? How do these phonological features interact with meaning?
3. Tropes. Are there any obvious violations of, or departures from, the linguistic code? For example, are there any neologisms (such as Americanly)? Deviant lexical collocations (such as portentous infants)? Semantic, syntactic, phonological, or graphological deviations? Such deviations (although they can occur in everyday speech and writing) will often be the clue to special interpretations associated with traditional poetic figures of speech such as metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, paradox and irony. If such tropes occur, what kind of special interpretation is involved (e.g. metaphors can be classified as personifying, animising, concretising, synaesthetic, etc.)? Because of its close connection with metaphor, simile may also be considered here. Does the text contain any similes, or similar constructions (e.g. 'as if' constructions)? What dissimilar semantic fields are related through simile?" (Leech and Short, 2007: pp 63-4)

Data Analysis

The selected short story contains a lot of figures of speech which the researchers strive to explore through Leech and Short's checklist of linguistics and stylistic categories. The present study is delimited to the level of figures of speech and will prove helpful for other researchers and scholars to pursue their research in this field.

1. Grammatical and Lexical Schemes

In this stage of the analysis, the study explored the use of grammatical and lexical schemes such as parallelism and anaphora. In the case of parallelism, the study takes into consideration the words, phonemic and syntactic levels while in the case of anaphora, the study deals with the clauses or sentences which start with the same words, phrases or expressions. The story contains a lot of anaphora as well as parallel syntactic structures.

Parallelism

"I am going **to love none, to trust none**", (1). "I am sure there is **nothing to be afraid of, nothing to be frightened of**" (2). "...yet he lost **all the vigor, all the liveliness**" (3). "...let them go **more crazy, more crooked, more disastrous**" (4).

Both sentences 1 and 2 contain infinitive clauses. The clauses are bolded for their specification, and are syntactically structured which create logical and meaningful sentences. Sentence 3 also has parallel structure due to the use of the word '**all**' in both of the clauses of the sentence while sentence 4 contains three adjectival phrases which start with the comparative adjective '**more**'. All the clauses and phrases in the above sentences are connected with a comma in between them.

Similarly, the below sentences are selected to explore the parallelism in the use of words in between phrases, clauses or sentences.

"I'll face the world **alone**, all **alone**", "He was not **the same person**, the **man** I knew". "He was **passing, passing** fast". "There was **no** passion, **no** fire in his talking now". "It was **time—time** that played with me". "...I realized that he was **not addressing me, never**". "He was **so proud, so absorbed** in himself".

Parallelism focuses on repetition of words, phrases, clauses, sentence structure and sounds, or the use of any other kind of linguistic devices in the text. The producer has used parallel structures of sentences, clauses or phrases and words for the purpose to strike the attention of readers towards the text. The function of parallelism is to introduce repeated syntactical similarities for creating rhetorical effects in a text.

Anaphora

The formal or structural repetition in a text in the beginning of sentences or expressions is termed as anaphora. The function of anaphora in a piece of literature is to make the readers attracted, and strike their attention. There are some sentences, clauses or words which act as anaphora in the story under study.

"**This is life**" (1). "**THISIS LIFE!**" (2). "**It was not my fault...**" (3). "**It was time...**" (4).

The above sentences are simple declarative. There are total four sentences in the selected text from the story. Sentences 1 and 2, and sentences 3 and 4 are anaphoric respectively. The first two sentences are the same expressions while sentences 3 and 4 started with the demonstrative pronoun 'it' collocated with the auxiliary verb 'was'.

The function of anaphora is to create emphasis. Anaphora is one of the rhetorical devices which are used by the producer of a literary piece to emphasize his message or to make his words memorable. Here, Hamid Khan used such rhetorical devices that attract the readers' attention. It has the effect to engage the readers in a particular emotive experience. Anaphora allows the reader to participate in process.

Similes

There are used a lot of similes in the text as;

"These words now **seem to be** mere wish-fulfillment". Here, the narrator likened the hopeful words of the protagonist to be mere wish-fulfillment. The writer is of the opinion that every aspiring and enthusiastic person wants to do many things in life, but no one can fully succeed as we are bound by fate.

"**Like** an ancient tree". Here, again the narrator compares his righteousness to an ancient tree which is about to fall soon. The writer, here, wants to say that no matter how much one tries to alter circumstances, it is never in one's control, and ultimately one will have to succumb to the clutches of fate. That is why the narrator comments that it is not the sunshine or the prime age which is expected to be a harbinger of perpetual joys.

"Death **like** tone." Here, the narrator of the story compares the tone of the protagonist to the death. In this expression we are shown the protagonist's unhappiness and his lost of confidence in life.

Metaphors

There are also found a lot of metaphors in the text under study.

“...From the **sunshine** of youth”. Here, the abstract noun ‘sunshine’ has been metaphorically used in the sense which gives the meaning of feelings of happiness and joy, or full brightness of youth i.e. young age.

“...the **grotesqueness** of age”. Here, again an abstract noun ‘grotesqueness’ has been used which represents the ugly part of life. The story tells us about the unanimous protagonist that his condition is worsened by the unknown circumstances. He himself acknowledges that his good share of life has ended up and now it is time that he will surrender to ugly part of it.

2. Phonological schemes

In this stage the study deals with the phonological patterns of rhyme, alliteration and assonance in the text. It also deals with significant rhythmical patterns, vowel and consonant sounds pattern, and to find that as to how these phonological features interact with meaning. There are some phonological schemes used in the story as:

Alliteration

The purpose of alliteration is to stress a specific point or to make some feature of a work of literature more memorable. There are some expressions taken from the text of the story containing alliteration as:

“...never happy **with** the **world**” (1). “...always **seemed** to be in a **stark** terror” (2). “**S**omething, **s**ometimes, **s**omewhere had gone wrong with him” (3). “...that life **was** too much **with** him” (4). “...he did not **seem** to be the **same** person” (5). “...like **an** **ancient** tree...” (6). “He **l**ooked broken and **l**ost” (7). “...he had **f**allen **f**arther...” (8).

The above sentences, clauses or phrases have been taken from the story and numbered for better analysis of each of them. The researchers have bolded as well as underlined each of the sound used repeatedly in the sentence. Sentences 1 and 4 have [w] sounds in the beginning of the two words ‘with’ and ‘world’, and ‘was’, and ‘with’ respectively. Sentences 2, 3 and 5 are declarative, having alliteration of the sound [s] in the beginning of each of the words. Sentence 6, again, is a declarative and has [a] sounds in the beginning of the words ‘an’ and ‘ancient’. Sentence 7 has [l] sound in the words ‘looked’ and ‘lost’. Similarly, sentence 8 is also a simple declarative one and has [f] sound in the beginning of the words ‘fallen’ and ‘farther’.

Assonance and Consonance

“Let ‘time’ **creep** or **flee**...” (1). “...had **gone** **wrong** **with** **him**” (2). “...**passing** **fastly**”(3). “...**w**aving and **s**waying” (4).

The above expressions have some words having similar vowel sounds. The same vowel sounds within words have been bolded and underlined in each of the expression, clause or phrase. In sentence 1, the selected words ‘creep’ and ‘flee’ have the same vowel sound represented by the phonetic description [i:]. Sentence 2 contains of two pair of words ‘gone’ and ‘wrong’, and ‘with’ and ‘him’. The first pair of words has the vowel sound [ɒ] while the second pair of words has the vowel sound [ɪ] in phonetic description. In sentence 3, the words ‘passing’ and ‘fastly’ have the same vowel sound [ɑ:] and in sentence 4, the selected words ‘waving’ and ‘swaying’ have the same vowel sound [eɪ]. Sentences 1, 2 and 3 have single vowel sound while sentence 4 has a diphthong.

“At times he lookedd almost collapsedd, yet existedd” (1). “...he did not seemm to be the same person” (2). “It was a fadingng, a complete waningng” (3). “...just wavingng and swayingng in the air” (4).

The above sentences or clauses contain some of the words having same consonant sounds in their end. Sentence 1 has three words ‘looked’, ‘collapsed’ and ‘existed’ which end with the same sound [d]. All these consonant sounds have been bolded and underlined. Similarly, sentence 2 has two words ‘seem’ and ‘same’ end with the sound [m]. Sentences 3 and 4 also have two words ‘fading’ and ‘waning’, and ‘waving’ and ‘swaying’ respectively which end with the sound [ŋ].

Tropes

Trope is a figure of speech through which text producers aim to convey meanings of words or phrases differently from their literal meanings. It is a figurative or metaphorical use of words in which writers deviate from traditional norms of writings. The trope may be phrase, word or image which used to create artistic effect.

The writer has used some deviant structured sentences, clauses in the story which attracts a reader’s attention.

The writer has used some expressions or words in capital letters such as:

(1). “**THIS IS LIFE!**” and (2). “**BEYAND**”.

There are some examples of syntactic deviations in sentences like;

(1). “The words came from his mouth not with ease”. (2). “And in an almost death-like tone he said....”

There are some punctuation deviations in the text like;

(1). “He was a strange man, never happy with the world: always seemed to be in stark terror”.
(2). “He never told anyone, but one thing was as sure as anything else, that life was too much with him”.

Findings

The study found a lot of grammatical, lexical and phonological schemes in the selected short story by Hamid Khan. The whole story contains declarative sentences having some sentences of negation. It also found the story narrated in third person pronoun except some descriptions are there in first person pronoun where the narrator describes the protagonist’s one assertion in inverted commas. The study also found a lot of sound repetitions in the selected story. The producer has made abundant use of sound devices. The writer made such a figurative or metaphorical use of words which deviate from traditional norms of writings. There are some examples of syntactic as well punctuation deviations in the sentences, and used some deviant structured sentences, clauses in the story which attracts a reader’s attention. Some of the examples are:

Syntactic deviation; “And in an almost death-like tone he said....”

Punctuation deviations in the text such as;

“He was a strange man, never happy with the world: always seemed to be in stark terror”.

Expressions or words in capital letters such as:

“**THIS IS LIFE!**”, and “**BEYAND**” etc.

Similarly, the study also found a lot of alliterations, assonance and consonant sounds in the story as well. Alliteration is found in some of the sentences as; “...never happy with the world” (1). “...always seemed to be in a stark terror” (2). “Something, sometimes, somewhere had gone wrong with him” (3).

Example of assonance and consonance are as follow;

Let ‘time’ creep or flee...”. “At times he lookedd almost collapsedd, yet existedd”. The first example is related to assonance while the second is related to consonance.

Overall, the writer also made an abundant use of similes, metaphors, tropes and parallelism in the story.

Conclusion

Through the stylistic analysis it is revealed that the writer has abundantly used, through his peculiar style, the tools that attract the attention of the reader towards issues and problems especially targeted with regional emphasis. The silence and gloom are indirectly and, at places, directly highlighted for deriving messages and meaning on part of the reader regarding social issues and problems which, in turn, make the readers conscious of the need for reforming the society. Lastly, it is highly recommended that the budding researchers should take interest in exploring the local issues and problems embodied in the works of the local writers.

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