

On Language, Stylistics and patterns: A Comparative Analysis in the Select works of Anita Desai And ManjuKapur

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Abstract

Literature imprints society and the other close knitted aspects in the medium of language; various other aspects of human life and their universal implications find expression in it. These expression of thoughts and ideological approaches are found in literature in the forms of viz. Novels, prose, poetry, drama and so on. Thus, the same representation of any such ideological perspective can be put forth by the writers in their own way and form, which thus leads to the difference in the stylistics, style, language variation, discourse structure and so on. The paper scrutinizes Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* and Kapur's *A Married Woman* and tries to draw a comparison between the two novels on the ground of 'chutneyed English' and other lexical features as presented in the selected two works. A comparative study is important for the readers to know how language, style and stylistics of the different writers/ authors contribute to the meaning generation. The present study, thus, attempts to find out the difference in the styles of the two writers by analyzing the selected narratives. The paper forms a basis for the discussion on the diversities and similarities in the writing style of the two very important prominent feminist writers in Indian Writing in English.

Introduction:

On Style and Stylistics

As the number of articles and research works on style and stylistics have started emerging, a distinctive pattern of comparison has also begun to emerge. At the end of the 18th Century and beginning of the 19th Centuries, the art of rhetoric almost ended and fell in a state where scholars treated it under the category of linguistics. But in the beginning of the 20th Century it came back in the literary debate as 'stylistics', though, the term stylistics had been used since the early nineteenth century (Tariq 46).

In the modern times, it is an "an analytical science which covers all the expressive aspects of language as phonology, prosody, morphology, syntax and lexicology." (Cuddon 872). Thus, stylistics in general, is the study of language of literature in all its manifestations which tends to tell us about the way/ style of a writer or author. The study of stylistics leads a reader or a researcher to differ between the various writing styles of the writers and this is what makes a writer different from the other; how a literary genre is different from the other. The pioneer critics in context to this, propound:

In literary studies, style is most often associated with individual authors... Two different novelists might, for example, write a description of the same event in very different ways, and the fact that writers have different styles means that it is possible for other writers to parody them. A good example of this is the comic novel by David Lodge called *The British Museum is Falling Down*. Part of the fun of this novel is that he parodies the style of ten other famous novelists (including Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and C.P. Snow) at various points in his novel. The reader has to play the "spot the parody" game. (qtd. In "Style: What Is It" Short and Archer).

Different renderings to the meaning and comprehension of style and stylistics is given by many authors since its origin. The paper further discusses the core and basic understanding of the terms. Stylistics is often described as the study of style used in literary language and as well as verbal language and what effect it leaves in framing the understanding and perception of a reader/listener in context to the reception of meaning, their analysis, literary criticism and critical discourse analysis. Crystal and Davy explain stylistics as:

... a discipline which studies literary or non-literary texts in a new way. It plays significant role in the teaching of English literature in India. It has been defined as a "sub-discipline" of linguistics that is concerned with the systematic analysis of style in language and how this can vary according to such factors as, for example, genre, context, historical period and author (94).

Stylistics thus, can also be defined as the study of language of literature which makes use of various tools of linguistics analysis. According to a critic:

Stylistics is a method of textual interpretation in which primary place is assigned to language. The reason why language is so important to stylisticians is because the various forms, patterns and levels that constitute linguistic significance as discourse acts in turn as a gateway to its interpretation. While linguistics features do not of themselves constitute a texts' 'meaning', an account of linguistic features nonetheless serves to ground a stylistic interpretation and to help explain why, for the analyst certain types of meaning are possible. The preferred object of study in stylistics in literature whether, that

be institutionally sanctioned 'Literature' as high art or more popular non- canonical forms of writing (Simpson 2-3).

The renderings of stylistics has changed throughout these years and the understanding of the term actually deviate from what Lecerde propounded that stylitics is 'acting'. The modern definition and understanding of stylistics can thus be regarded as a method of textual interpretation in which primary position is assigned to 'language'. One of the major reasons as to why 'language' is seen as primary and is kept at centre is because of the various forms, patterns and levels that constitute linguistic structure are an important index of the proper function of the text. Though linguistic features don't constitute to the 'meaning' of the text but serves a ground to a stylistic interpretation and helps to explain as to why for an analyst, certain types of understanding, rendering, interpretation and 'meaning' is possible. Further, study of stylistics contains various levels of language study. The present work looks only at the morphology and syntax of 'Hinglish' as used in the writings of the two authors and lexical/ syntax analysis which forms as the basis of comparison between the select narratives.

To start off with the selected scrutiny of the texts, an understanding of the basic levels of language becomes important. Simpson simplifies the relation between stylistics and levels of language as:

Level of Language	Branch of Language Study
of spoken language; the way words are pronounced	Phonology; phonetics
of written language; the shape of language on the page	Graphology
words are constructed; words and their constituent structures	Morphology
words combine with other word to form phrases and sentences	Syntax; grammar
se,; vocabulary of a language	Lexical analysis; lexicology
The meaning of words and sentences	Semantics
The way words and sentences are used in everyday situations; the meaning of language in context	Pragmatics; discourse analysis

Fig. no.1 (Simpson 5)

Due to various limitations and constraints, the paper only attempts to draw a comparison in the stylistics of Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* and Kapur's *A Married Woman* on the keystone of the syntax of Hinglish and syntax/grammar used by the authors in their respective texts.

Hinglish: A new form of code-mixing or Chutnied English

'Hinglish' has been regarded as a language of youngsters or a fashionable language which is often used in casual settings. It has now become a language of many such local scenarios and people like cab-drivers, shop-keepers, tourist guides and so on. Due to the high use of bilingualism in various parts of the country, the language has been observed to be used more than the pure form of either English or Hindi. The distinctive meanings of the term Hinglish according to the various dictionaries is given below: *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, defines Hinglish as a language, which is a mixture of

English and Hindi, especially a type of English that includes many Hindi words. The dictionary stresses

upon the statement that it is a language, in which there is English that includes many Hindi words and not Hindi that includes many English words.

A blend of Hindi and English, in particular a variety of English used by speakers of Hindi, characterised by frequent use of Hindi vocabulary or constructions.

-English Oxford Living Dictionary

A mixture of the languages Hindi and English, especially the type of English used by speakers of Hindi.

-Cambridge Dictionary

A variety of English incorporating elements of Hindi.

-Collins English Dictionary

A language that combines elements of English and Hindi or other South Asian languages.

-Macmillan Dictionary

The heterogenous nature of the Indian society where linguistic diversity and multi-culturalism is idly celebrated, acts as a major contributory factor in the stylistics of the Indian Writing in English. The language and the style of 'Hinglish' in these narrative thus, accommodates diversity, lends flexibility and justifies the modern usage of language in India. The study, further draws a comparison in the employment of 'Hinglish' or 'Chutnied English' in Desai's,

Cry, the Peacock and ManjuKapur's, *A Married Woman*.

The fiction of Desai is notable for its 'chutnied' form or 'Hinglish'. Besides many other major aspects of Desai's first work, *Cry, the peacock*, the duplexity of the style and the structure as she represents in her works caught the attention of many researchers and critics. Her works incorporated special literary and linguistic techniques like code-switching, language mixing, and had various experimental edges of lexis, semantics, syntax, morphology and other such aspects of language. As the critic puts forth, "Anita Desai differs from other Indian novelists such as R K Nayan, MulkrajAnand, Bhabani Bhattacharya, and Raja Rao in her set of language and style that she employs to portray the inner crisis and tension existing in the life of a character" (Sridevi 11).

Of 'Hinglish': A Study of Hybridity in *Cry, the Peacock*

As discussed in the introductory segment, Desai enjoys the flavour of code-mixing, which clearly reflects in her work, *Cry, the Peacock*. The writer, herself is multi-lingual and deals with English, Hindi, German and Bengali. In her interview with a journalist, she opines:

I think and all Indians are aware— since all of us are bilingual if not trilingual— one tends to employ more than one language and select whichever word seems more apt and most descriptive at the moment. There are a few German words and phrases which come easily to me to be more descriptive than their Hindi or their English or Bengali counterparts but, actually, I have had to quite consciously erase these from my writing as well as from my present life too. It would be too complicating to being in the German strand apart from all other strands which make up my life (qtd. in Shah, 8-9).

Desai makes her characters appear realistic in nature and approach by giving them the dialogues closely knitted with the social milieu of the mentioned characters. To show the nuances of the social variants in her choice of words from other languages, Desai borrows words from different origins, cultures and traditions.

Words like 'Veranda' and 'Sahib' in the first chapter of *Cry, the Peacock*, provides a background of the culture and society she is dealing with, in her narrative. By using these words from the Hindi language she is trying to put forward the language of the common people of India where 'veranda' is often used for the word, 'porch' and 'Sahib' for 'Sir'. Another word, 'Zamindar' which means 'landlord' is used in its unaltered and raw Indian tone when she quotes, "A wealthy zamindar might introduce novelties into his house..." (Desai 15) which suggests her close association with the mindset of the workers or daily wagers who very frequently use the word 'zamindar' when they talk about some wealthy landlord. Variations in the linguistic dealing of the dialogues found in her characters makes the readers feel that Desai, like a linguist, differentiates very well the ethnicity of the variant groups and communities. For instance: the marked differences between regional and standard English, Punjabi, Persian, Urdu and so on.

Pure standardised Hindi words are employed in many dialogues in the text. Various such quoted examples are looked upon below:

“The Milky-way swooped across from north-east to south-west. *Akash-Ganga*, the Ganges of

the sky.” (Desai 22). Here, the author makes use of both standard English word, ‘Milky-way’ and Hindi language word, *Akash-Ganga*, thus, justifying her dealing with the usage of ‘Hinglish’ in her narratives. Meenakshi Mukherjee writes, “Anita Desai is a rare example of an Indo-Anglian writer who achieves that difficult task of blending the English language to her purpose without either a self-conscious attempt of sounding Indian or seeking the anonymous elegance of public school English” (181).

To evoke the multiculturalism existing in India, Desai also uses words from various Indian languages, especially from Urdu and English. The selected employment of such words within the dialogues are mentioned below:

“...on the *maidan* in the army cantonment where I was sometimes...” (Desai 38). Other words like: *dupatta* and *bazaar*. The use of the word *mandir* instead of temple in the word, “Birla Mandir” (Desai 54).

The application of words from regional Hindi language in one of the most foundational dialogues of the narrative, suggests the author’s love for her close association with the multicultural aspect of India, where she propounds, “Do you not hear the peacocks call in the wilds? Are they not blood-chilling, their shrieks of pain? “pia, pia”, they cry. “Lover, Lover.” “Mio, mio, — I die, I die.” (Desai 82).

Various other Hindi words that are employed are:

Sunnyasis, Yogi, Diva, Chameli, Champa, Bela, Pan-juice, Dhobi, Attra, Sindoor, Kum-Kum, to define tradition and culture of the exotic regional parts of India.

About the application of Urdu language or words used in the narrative, a dialogue says, “my father had said, turning the finely worked pages of a book of *ghazals* as he read to me, ‘No language more aristocratic’” (Desai 86). Excerpts and dialogues with a profuse use of Urdu words are listed below:

The trainer, holding onto a string which is, attached to a metal ring that passes through the bears’ nose, goes around with his filthy turban turned inside out, singing a song for pity and *baksheesh* (Desai 75).

The soft blue twilight in the garden vibrated with rich words like ‘*zulph*’ and ‘*mehtab*’— words filled with the short, deep sighs of *Weltschmerz*, and rounded with a passion for balance, design and precision (Desai 84-85).

‘*Paimana*’, mused as an ecstatic voice, lost on the swaying sea of a word which he repeated to himself so ecstatically. ‘*Tamanna*’ (Desai 87).

The dialogues thus imply that Desai uses Indian lexical items to name a few, *attar, sindoor, pan* etc to show her bend towards the rustic Indian language. Not all the words used in the narrative and scrutinised in the paper do not have an English substitute, some words do have an English substitute but the author still chooses to write those words in its regional Indian Urdu/ Hindi form, shows the writer’s deep inclination towards the language.

Peculiarities of Indian English in ManjuKapur’s *A Married Woman*

The Indianization of English forms a major part of the stylistics of many authors of Indian Writing in English. English, since its very beginning as a language used in writing in India, has been either Indianized, or chutnified or mixed with other regional languages in the writings of the authors. Raja Rao also talks about the conceptualisation of the Indianization in the preface to his novel, *Kanthapura*, where he says:

English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up— like Sanskrit or Persian was before — ... We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We can only write as Indians (...) (13).

ManjuKapur’s works employ a lot of dialogues where, Indianization of vocabulary and other linguistic creativity can be seen and scrutinised. The paper, further, tries to find out Kapur’s application of Indianized English/Hinglish/ chutnefying English in her narrative, *A Married Woman*.

“This is *Brahmakaal*, the hour of the gods.” (Kapur).

Words like, ‘*pranayam*’, that have no substitute in English language are also used. Various other words from Hindi language are used in its regional form /tone to show her deep association and inclination towards socio-linguistic concepts of her narratives. Words like “Bengali Market *chaat*shop” is one such example of her employment of English and Hindi lexicon together. The words like ‘*Dhoti-kurta*’ shows her attempt to explore culturalism in her work. Kapur, in her narratives, not only refers to a wide spectrum

of culture, customs and tradition but also tries to make all details as realistic by choosing culinary words as they are being used by the local Indians in their routine use of language or dialect.

And this was just on potato *tikkis*, what about the *papri*, the *kulchas*, the *dahibharhas*, the *golgappasin* spicy water, the *golgappasin dahi* and *chutney*, the *Kachori* with *Channa*, the *purialoo*, the *channabathura*, the newly introduced *dosas*, the dry savouries, sweets, and chips that he was cunningly displaying in glass cases... (Ibid).

Various words are employed in their rustic Hindi form to show a deep understanding of Indian relationship like: *beti*, *beta*, *mama*, *behenji*, *papaji*, *mummy*, *ma*, *sa'ab*, *dada*, *dadi*, *swamiji*, *nani*, *didi*, *papa*, *bua* and *son*.

Kapur's dealing with the directions and places in details and their true sense reflects her strong bend towards the close knitted association between place and linguistics/language. Places of Old and New Delhi like Shahdara, Nirman Vihar, Swasth Vihar, Preet Vihar, Asman Vihar, Connaught Place, Sky Colony, JorBagh, or Defence Colony, Akbar Road, Lodhi Colony, Paharganj, Babri Masjid— Ram Jnambhoomi are employed.

Another such thread that employs the use of 'Hinglish' in *A Married Woman*, is quoted as, "Outside, the tent *Wallahs*... enclosing it with *shamianas*, ... putting up *tandoors*..." (Kapur). The quaint culture and tradition has been put into its true sense to preserve its authenticity, the author quotes, "In the evening there was a *havan*... dangling *chura*... tossing the *samagri*, feeling dazed and unreal." (Ibid). "Bhajan singing, praying, *arti*, offering *bhog*, receiving *prasad*, drinking holy water..." (Ibid). These dialogues containing words that describe culture, tradition and regional practices develop a bond between the readers and the writer.

Various other Indianized words used in the narrative are:

Basti, *jumkas*, *sampradayakta*, *shawls*, *chowki*, *verandah*, *yatra*, *paneer*, *seekh kebabs*, *fish tikkas*, *romalirotis*, *sari palla*, *charpai*, *mandir*, and so on. Thus, a lot of local expressions with a flavour of local culture and customs makes this narrative and the writing style of these two writers different in their style and approach. But it makes both the narratives lucid in its use of a mixture of Indianized English, chutnified English or Hinglish.

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