

Exploring Figures Of Speech In Maki Kureishi's Poem Kittens: A Stylistic Analysis

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Abstract

The current research analyses stylistically the selected poem, *Kittens*, written by Maki Kureishi. The aim of this study is to explore her use of a distinct form of language in the selected poems and how she succeeded in projecting a clear picture of sufferings of the people after the partition of the Indian Sub-Continent. In order to achieve this objective, the researcher uses stylistic analysis, with its focus on the use of figures of speech in the poem. The findings of this research lead to the conclusion that the poet has utilized figures of speech like simile, personification, metaphor along with strong imagery to address her concerns regarding the condition of the people of Pakistan.

Key Words: Stylistic analysis, Figures of Speech, Partition, Maki Kureishi.

1. Introduction:

The language of poetry may deviate from the standard language in many ways. Some of the deviations are obvious while some are subtle (Leech, 1969). The stylistic analysis is of great importance in studying nature and the effect of linguistic variations in a poem. Stylistic analysis is defined differently by different writers. Widdowson (1975), defines it as a study of literary discourse from a linguistic point of view. Moreover, Short and Candlin (1989) describes stylistic analysis as the linguistic study of literary texts. Maki Kureishi holds an important place among all due to her unique style of writing in depicting the true picture of the sufferings of the people of Pakistan after Partition. Nee Maki Dhunjibhoy was born in Calcutta in 1927. She spent most of her childhood in Ranchi. Her father was a psychiatrist and served in the Medical field Services while her mother was a language instructor in Germany which means that books were part of their life.

Maki started her early education in St. Joseph's Convent D.J. Science College and did her masters from Smith College. Her family moved to Karachi some years before Partition where she served as a Lecturer for about thirty years at Karachi University. Maki chose to remain in Pakistan at the time of Partition where she witnessed the sufferings of the people and the destructions caused in Karachi. Maki started writing in the 1960's after she studied the Afro-

Caribbean poetry and found this poetry and the experiences of the Africans related to the Pakistani experiences. She had a great interest in Afro-Caribbean poetry and this interest inspired her to start writing her own. The common themes found in her poetry are identity crisis, disease, fear, disability etc (Shamsie, 1997).

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Pakistani poets have witnessed the sufferings of the people before, during and after Partition. Millions of innocent people were the victims, and they suffered a lot during that period. People were killed by the mobs and no one had the courage to question or controlled them. The poet, Maki Kureishi, portrayed a poignant picture of the condition of the people in Pakistan at that time. She, through the use of figurative language, conveyed the theme of identity loss, bloodshed, death and sufferings of innocent people in Pakistan. The poet, through the use of artistic features depicted to the world a true picture the consequences of the Partition. The current research is focused on the importance of the use of language in the poem of Maki Kureishi. The aim of this research project is to explore the poem, *Kittens*, from Stylistic point of view.

1.2. Research Questions

Following are the Research Questions of the study:

- 1) How do the figures of speech play an important role in the poem, *Kittens*, of Maki Kureishi while dealing with her personal concern?
- 2) What are the different figures of speech used by the poet in the selected poem?
- 3) What is the importance of the use of figures of speech in communicating themes in the selected poem of Maki Kureishi?

1.3. Research Objectives

Following are the Research Objectives of this research project.

- 1) To explore the importance of the use of figures of speech in the selected poem, *Kittens*, of Maki Kureishi, dealing with her personal concern.
- 2) To identify the different figures of speech used by the poet in her poem.
- 3) To analyze the importance of the use of figures of speech in communicating themes in the selected poem of Maki Kureishi.

1.4. Significance

This research is significant in a way that there is hardly any study or research which has analyzed the poems of Maki Kureishi from the Stylistic perspective. This study aims to bring an understanding of the poem, *Kittens*, as well as use of figures of speech in her poem. Moreover, this research would be helpful for the readers to understand the stylistic means through which Maki communicated the different themes in her poetry.

2. Literature Review

Zia (2017) analyzed the poem “*Ode to A Nightingale*” written by John Keats stylistically. The poem is one of the master pieces written by Keats. *Ode to A Nightingale* is known in literature due to its distinctiveness and charismatic style. The concept of beauty and also the idea of Negative Capability makes his writing distinct from his fellow writers. The analysis not only focuses on the investigation of stylistic devices combined to create a pictorial and emotive meaning rather it also focuses on the impact of the different stylistic devices that are embedded in the structure of the poem. Different figures of speech are used by the poet in order to create an impact. The analysis of the poems is done on different stylistic levels i.e. Phonetic level, Phonological level, Graphological level etc. The study brings forth the use of meter and rhyme scheme, Assonance, Consonance and vowel patterns. Also, the poet makes use of powerful imagery, Metaphors and Personification in order to convey the powerful meaning to the readers.

Khan et al. (2014) analyzed William Blake's poem "Night" stylistically. The poem deals with the subject of existence of "This World" which is savage and dangerous and "new World" which is very civilized and safe. This poem is an awareness about the environmental crisis related to the possible nature of death. The poem consists of references to god, guardian angels and demons. Also, the language used in the poem is descriptive and contains metaphors and allusions. The analysis of such dramatic language was made under the stylistic levels that are Lexical, Semantic and Phonological patterns. Different stylistic devices were found during the study which helped in developing a better understanding of the poem. Different devices like Alliteration and Onomatopoeia, Simile, Metaphor, Personification, Imagery and Allusion were found in the stylistic study of the poem. The language of the poem was analyzed at Lexical Level. As a result of Lexical study of the poem, 30 Nouns, 13 Adjectives and 28 Verbs were found.

Batool et al. (2015) studied the poem "Leisure" in the light of Stylistics. Through the use of figurative language, the poet tried to show the contrasting relation between the modern man and the beauty of nature. The poem deals with the theme of materialism in a very innovative way. Modern man only concentrated on wealth and is materialistic in nature. The poet wants to show the modern man that mental and physical health is more important than material wealth. Through the stylistic analysis, the researcher was able to explore the idea of the poet in the poem. In order to analyze the poem, the following models are used in "A Linguistic guide to English Poetry" by Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short and also Longman's "Exploring the language of Poems, Plays, Prose". The analysis brings forth the following results. This poem consists of Seven rhyming couplets in Iambic Tetrameter (aa, bb, cc, dd, ee, ff, aa). Also, Repetition is quite a common figure of speech used in the poem. Lastly, the Figures of Speech for example Personification, Imagery, Simile etc. are commonly found during the study.

Aslam et al. (2014) studied the poem "Bereft" written by Robert Frost and analyzed it stylistically. The poem is the expression of a person's feelings and state of mind. The analysis of the poem "Bereft" was made under the aspects of Graphological, Syntactical, Grammatical and Phonological patterns. The poem studied on Graphological Level shows that throughout the poem there was no proper division of stanzas, proper Capitalization and Punctuations like Full Stop, Colon, Comma and Apostrophe were used. The Lexical study of the poems shows the frequent used of Nouns, Verbs, Adverbs etc. 11 Nouns, 2 Pronouns, 11 Common Nouns, 1 Collective Noun, 3 Proper Nouns 8 Verbs, 2 Adverbs and 9 Adjectives were found during the lexical study of the poem. However, the phonological study shows that the poem consists of 16 lines which means that it is Lyrical. The Rhyme Scheme was AA-AA-AB-BA-CA-DD-DE-DE. The use of Alliteration was also found during the study. This research was helpful as it analyzed the structure and style of the poet in order to reveal the theme of the poem. The main idea was conveyed to the readers through the use of different literary devices.

Batool & Ahmed (2014) analyzed Emily Dickinson's poem "Success is Counted Sweetest" stylistically. Emily Dickinson is one of the greatest poets of America. The poem is analyzed on different stylistic levels that are Graphological, Lexical, Grammatical and Phonological. In Graphological Level, the poem is studied that shows the frequent use of Punctuations like full stop, hyphen, exclamation mark etc. also, Capitalization is also used by the poet in her poem in order to show the importance. Phonological analysis of the poem shows the use of Alliteration in the poem. The analysis brings forth the use of symbolism and paradoxes used very skillfully by the poet. The poet makes use of easy words and does not follow the sentence pattern of the poem. This study was helpful in identifying the different themes of the poem that are isolation, death and indifference of man. The poet makes use of easy words and do not follow the sentence pattern of the poem. The analysis provided a deeper understanding

of the poem. Niazi (2013) studied the form and content of D.H Lawrence novel 'Sons and Lovers'. Style is an important technique that helps in providing a better understanding of the meaning and value of the work. It is the style that makes writing different and unique from the others. The novel "Sons and Lovers" is analyzed stylistically while keeping in mind the use of Figures of Speech, Cohesion, Lexis, Phonology, Coherence etc. This analysis was helpful in unveiling the different themes of the poem related to Family, Psychology, Oedipus Complex etc. The analysis shows that according to the structure, the novel is divided into two parts. The first part contains six chapters while the second part contains nine chapters. In the novel, frequent use of Symbolism can be seen. Also, the language or vocabulary used in the novel is complex

Mugair and Mahadi (2014) studied the famous speech of King Martin Luther, "I Have a Dream". The analyst studied the style of the author and analyzed the speech stylistically. The analysis focused on the arrangement of the speech as well as the use of Figures of Speech by Martin Luther. The speech delivered, was arranged in proper order and was logical. It means that the thoughts and ideas of the speaker slowly and gradually stepped into the mind of the listeners. The figures of speech like Metaphor and Parallelism were used repeatedly by the speaker. The analysis focused on the arrangement of speech as well as the use of figures of speech. The speech was arranged in proper order and was logical. It means that the thoughts and ideas of the speaker slowly and gradually stepped into the mind of the listeners. The figures of speech like metaphor and parallelism were used frequently.

Hassoon (2016) studied the language used in Newspaper. She took six stories from the newspaper in order to find out the deviations in the language used in the Newspaper. Newspaper language deviates from the rules of standard language, which is why the six stories were studied in order to find out the distinct features and grammatical structure. She used three different models for the analysis. The three models are Inverted Pyramid, Grast and Bernstein's model and Dunworth. The results derived using these models were, Deletion of the function words is very common in the language of Newspaper. Secondly, VS pattern was mostly used instead of SV pattern. Thirdly, Passive voice is used commonly in situations where active voice can serve the purpose. And Lastly, the structure of newspaper is Inverted which means it is upside down. It does not follow the chronological order of writing. Dita (2010) studied Ophelia Alcantara Dimalanta's poem 'Montage'. The poem is analyzed keeping in mind Lexical and Syntactic investigation in mind. The analysis focused on the grammatical structure and the use of vocabulary in the poem in order to provide a better understanding.

Victor (n.d.) studied the different commercial and political posters as they are an important form of visual communication. This study analyzes the selected posters of a campaign in Nigeria using *Crystal and Davy's Linguistic stylistic model*. The posters were analyzed Graphologically focusing on the selected posters images. In these posters, the images of the political leaders are presented in such a way that suggests the superiority of one candidate over the other. Capitalization is used regularly which shows the importance of the words. The word size is increased from the normal font size so that the posters are visible from far away and can catch the attention of the passer by. The Semantic analysis shows the word choice in the posters that is ambiguous. Ambiguity of the words in the posters mean that the positive remarks about a candidate can also bring negativity for the same candidate. Different Figures of Speech like Antonomasia, Metaphor etc. were found during the study. The Syntactic study shows whether the sentences used in the posters were in declarative and imperative mood. Also, the vocabulary of the poster was analyzed to see whether the words used were emotive or concise. Code Switching and use of clauses is common in the posters.

3. Research Method

This research focuses on the analysis of the poem, *Kittens*, written by Maki Kureishi from the stylistic perspective. The study is analytical in nature and uses qualitative research method as a tool in order to analyze the selected poem of Maki Kureishi stylistically while keeping in mind the use of figures of speech.

3.1. Techniques or tools

This analysis uses G.N Leech and Mick Short model for the study of the selected poem, *kittens*, of Maki Kureishi. The poem is analyzed keeping in mind the role of figures of speech in conveying the meaning.

3.2. Data collection method

The data was collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary source of data collection was the poem of Maki Kureishi. While books, Research Articles were the secondary source of data collection.

3.3. Theoretical Framework

This study uses the theoretical framework proposed by G.N Leech and Mick Short. This model is helpful as it aids in the finding of the artistic features in a text or poetry. Therefore, a checklist was followed where special attention is paid towards the use of language by the literary writers. According to Leech and Short, the analysis or study of a style is basically an attempt made, in order to find out the artistic principles behind the writer's choice of vocabulary. There are four general categories that are helpful in developing an understanding of the significance of style. Besides, these categories help to analyze the language. The categories are named as Lexical, Grammatical, Context and Cohesion and Figures of speech. In Grammatical category, the grammatical structures of a sentence are studied. The focus of the analyst is to find out the complexity within a text. Lexical or lexeme refers to the use of words. Here the main focus is put on the choice of vocabulary. The use of words plays a significant role in any literary piece. The lexical Category involves the study of words used within the text by the writer. The word context refers to the background knowledge or information. The context plays an important role in the understanding of the literary text. On the other hand, Cohesion refers to the logical link or connection between the sentences. This link helps the writer to keep his ideas flow smoothly between sentences. The cohesive text is quite easy to understand as there is no disruption in the ideas.

3.3.1. Figures of speech

The language used by literary writers does not follow the standard rules of grammar, rather it deviates from the standard language. In literary writings, exploitations of regularities is common. Figures of speech are useful in order to identify the deviations or the distinct features in the literary writings. There are three different categories which helps in the analysis of any piece of literature (Leech & Short, 2007).

3.3.1.1. Grammatical and Lexical

In linguistics, Grammar can be defined as the set of structural rules that directs the compositions words, phrases and clauses in a language (Harris, 1951 p,10). In this connection, grammar is defined by Butterfield (1992) as a generic way that refers to the aspects of English that people object to. It deals with the study of different grammatical structures and the choice of words by the writer. Here main focus is on the formal and structural repetition. For example, Anaphora, Cataphora, Parallelism etc.

Furthermore, the word Lexis is derived from Lexeme which means words or vocabulary. Lexical level observes

“the mode in which distinct words and phrases incline to design in diverse linguistic context, on the semantic level in position, of Stylistics. It studies words relative to internal expressiveness” (Mahmood & Jamil, 2015).

3.3.1.2. Phonological Schemes

Lodge (2009) defined Phonology as the way in which the linguistic systems use the differences of the meaning represented through the sound in language. Phonological analysis means the study of the sound patterns and formations of words, utterances by the use of sound in language. This category focuses on the phonological patterns of rhyme. For example, Assonance, Consonance, Alliteration etc. Moreover, Ofuya (2007) points out that Phonology is the way in which the sounds in a language are arranged into a system. It deals with the arrangement of sound patterns and rhyming of the words or phrases within a certain language

3.3.1.3. Tropes

Tropes can be defined as the use of figurative language in order to create an artistic effect in a piece of writing. Trope is used to describe the literary devices and the rhetorical devices in a creative work (Raupp, 2020). This category focuses on the deviations from the general rules of language. Poets and literary writers deviate from the standard language at four different levels, that are, Semantic, Syntactic, Phonological and Graphological. It involves the occurrence of different figures of speech for example, Metaphor, Metonymy, Synecdoche, Paradox, Irony, Simile, personification etc. These figures of speech are actually presenting the underlying thoughts and ideas of the poet (Leech & Short, 2007).

3.3.1.4. Figures of Speech

Figures of speech are defined by Gautam (2014) as the way of saying something. It helps to reveal the main idea by relating one thing with the other. Furthermore, Gray (2003) defines a figure of speech as a form of expression which does not follow the standard norms of language.

Figures of speech are used in literature and writing to give an auxiliary meaning to a literal or written text. They are used at different levels to give a secondary meaning to the text.

Some of the figures of speech are listed below:

- 1) Anaphora
- 2) Cataphora
- 3) Alliteration
- 4) Assonance
- 5) Consonance
- 6) Simile
- 7) Personification
- 8) Metaphor
- 9) Imagery
- 10) Paradox
- 11) Irony

4. Data Analysis

The poem “Kittens” shows the condition of a cat which is dismayed after delivering so many kittens. The kittens are so many in number that even the close relatives are unable to adopt them all. As they are so many, the relatives and friends, which the poet refers to as “kind”, suggests that to take the kittens to Bazaar and leave them there to their destiny. They will live the life destined for them. But the poet is very worried and confused due to the kittens and cannot think of leaving them in the Bazaar. As they are so small that they will be either stepped upon or eaten by the street dogs. The poet then remembers a way and suggests the cat to do the European thing. By doing the European thing, the poet means to take the kittens and drown them in warm water. This way they will die easily and will not remember the person who drowned them. By doing so the kittens will be killed while they are unaware of themselves.

The poem is analyzed keeping in mind the use of figures of speech. The poet has used different figures of speech in order to convey to the reader the underlying idea behind her words. The stylistic analysis of the poem shows the regular use of Assonance by the poet. Firstly, the title of the poem itself very symbolic as *Kittens* refers to something premature or small. The poet used the word symbolically referring to the newly formed state i.e., Pakistan. The poet through the use of Figures of Speech like Simile, Symbolism and strong imagery tried to show the problems of the newly formed state. Secondly, the analysis of the poem brings forth the following results. In Grammatical and Lexical category Anaphora and Cataphora are used 2 times i.e.

Anaphora

My relatives say...

Kind friends cannot...

Cataphora

The European thing...

There are too...

In the Phonological Schemes Alliteration is used only once whereas Assonance is used frequently as it was found to be used in the poem 15 times.

Alliteration

They are so...

Assonance

Cat, dismayed

Let them.

In the tropes, the figures of speech like Simile is found 2 times also the poet has made use of symbolism by referring *Kittens* to the newly formed state.

Simile

Like a tomato...

Landed like a...

5. Discussion

It is through the use of figures of speech that the poet is able to convey her inner feelings and thoughts to the readers. The poet, while using figurative language, tries to point out the policies of the successive Pakistani Government. Metaphorically, these policies gave birth to so many kittens that were unemployed, uneducated and deprived of the basic necessities of life. These kittens (youth) quite easily became the cannon fodder for terrorism. On the other hand, the idle rich people who were myopic liberals exploited the youth. They took these young kittens to bazaar and left them to their destinies. They were left at the hands of harsh and cruel society to survive on their own. If the state had taken their responsibility at time and tried to educate them, they, by now would have become civilized citizens. The poem is the depiction of the condition of the cat who is worried and in a state of confusion whether to follow the eastern advice or the western.

The poet also tried to show to readers the state of confusion of the youth. These young people were confused regarding their culture. They were unaware about their own culture. They do not know which culture to follow; the western or eastern. The poem shows the undercurrent darkness running through the society. Through this poem the poet wants to show the condition of the youth who is confused between the two cultures. They have no idea which culture to choose also they have no idea which one is better for them.

5.1 Conclusion

MakiKureishi, through the use of figures of speech has conveyed her concerns regarding the people who suffered during and after the Partition. The selected poem, *Kittens*, contains different figures of speech that play a vital role in the portrayal of its horrors. Maki revealed the exploitation of the common people at the hands of the unknown forces in this poem. People of all ages were forced to suffer the horrors of but she particularly refers to what happened in Karachi, the city of beauty and life was bleeding like many other. The poet, through the use of figures of speech, has skillfully conveyed to the readers, her thoughts on how people went through those torrid times. With all the evidence given above, we may conclude that Maki Kureishi has used appropriate figurative language that brings to the readers the theme and subject matter of her poem, *Kittens*. She artistically showed a clear picture of the horrors of Partition. Frequent use of similes, assonance and strong imagery reveals her personal concern for the innocent people, particularly the condition of the youth at the time of Partition. There is harmony in the language of the poem. The choice of words plays a very important role in making meaning explicit. The analysis brings the intention of the writer clear to the reader. She has frequently made use of blank verses throughout all of her poems and did not focused on the rhyming scheme. The diction of the poem is simple and evocative expressing her empathy for the suffering mankind

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