ABSTRACT

A stylistic analysis of any text is required to understand it properly. Stylistics is divided into two branches: linguistic stylistics and literary stylistics. An appropriate stylistic study of a text should be done at both these levels together. On one hand, linguistic stylistics deals with language structure and its concern is with the way the signals of the writer are constructed; while, on the other hand, literary stylistics is concerned with the underlying message which an interpretation of the signals reveals. In other words, its purpose is to explain the individual message of the writer. Every writer has an ideology with which he writes; and it is projected through the themes which he takes for his writing. It can be observed in the case of Girish Karnad who goes back to the ancient Indian folks, myths and history to base his writings on or to take his themes from so the language, he uses in his plays, is suitable to them with long idiomatic sentences; while, on the other hand, Badal Sircar takes the most relevant contemporary social issues as the themes for his plays, so, he employs an emphatic language comprising small, fragmented and repetitive sentences. Therefore, language differs according to themes. Though apparently both of them must be looking quite different from each other in the choice of their themes and the pattern of their writing yet the ultimate purpose they want to serve with the help of their writing is almost the same and that is of establishing a distinct place of Indian theatre.

Key Words: Language, Stylistics, Plays

A stylistic analysis of the writing pattern of Girish Karnad and Badal Sircar used in their plays will prove to be a good attempt to understand their ideology contained in the themes of their plays as a particular kind of writing pattern or language is used to deal with a particular kind of theme.
For instance, the writing pattern of Karnad suits his themes taken from Indian mythology, folklores and history with the help of such a language which produces long, dramatic sentences; while, Sircar’s writing pattern suits his socially concerned themes. As Sircar had been influenced by the great social dramatists like Bertolt Brecht and Richard Schechner, there is seen an absurdist element in his writing. The burning social issues are perfectly projected in his emphatic, fiery and highly symbolic language, presenting most of the elements of absurd theatre, which, at the first sight, looks to be quite meaningless with the display of short, incomplete and fragmented sentences, displaying discontinuation, but, in reality, is replete with a grave meaning. As characters are in number and they are also limited, they play different roles. All the plays taken for the study can be analyzed at some stylistic level or the other as some particular features are prominent in particular plays.

There are some words as ‘blood’ and ‘cold’ which are symbolically quite significant, used in Sircar’s play Bhoma. Stylistically, analyzing at the lexico-semantic level, the words ‘blood’ and ‘cold’ have great connotative meanings signifying the sacrifice of Bhoma and the indifference of human-beings towards Bhoma’s sacrifice respectively. As is see in the given dialogues: “Red blood in the veins….. Red blood drips black on the soil clots black on the soil.” (Sircar Three Plays 66)

The hard work of the poor peasants is suggested through the turning of their blood from red to black on the earth. Foregrounding, a prominent stylistic feature is well evident in the form of repetition of certain words as michhil, ‘cold’, ‘blood’ etc. to project or emphasize a certain idea from Sircar’s plays Procession and Bhoma. As ‘procession’ is the English translation of the Bengali word ‘michhil’ which is also the title of the play so, definitely, it is quite symbolic and significant to serve the motive of the playwright. Similarly, the words ‘cold’ and ‘blood’ also work as the vehicle to carry playwright’s suggestive ideas. Procession of Sircar is basically a play having a Calcutta-oriented origin. As Ella Dutta says about it:

For a long time, Sircar had had the idea of making a kind of montage on Calcutta: scenes of Calcutta streets, people chatting in teashops and in the coffee houses, different scenes in the offices. (He has probably captured that very well in the very first speech in procession). Then, suddenly, the idea of Calcutta as a city of processions came vividly upon him: ‘It is one
of the very few plays where I had the idea of the production even before I began writing it, articulally the procession idea.’ (Sircar *Three Plays* 5)

Karnad in his play *Tughlaq* employs some words as chess, python, vulture and rose etc. which can be analyzed at the lexio-semantic level to convey their connotative meanings. Tughlaq, a skillful chess player, is seen in the play, playing chess not to pass his time but to find out some ways to solve the complicated problems, as he says, “I have just solved the most famous problem in chess. Even al-Adli and as-Sarakhi said it was insoluble. And it’s so simple – ” (Karnad *Tughlaq* 9) Here the connotative meaning of the word ‘chess’ symbolically presents the manipulative and crooked nature of Sultan. Just like the game of chess, Tughlaq deals with his enemies quite cunningly. He takes his rivals and opponents like the pawns of chess which he can use according to his own wish. He perfectly plays the political chess using Sheikh Imam-ud-din as his pawn against Ain-ul-Mulk to solve the problems created by both of them. Tughlaq’s complex kingdom, being full of problems, is also symbolically presented through the game of chess.

The passage of Tughlaq’s fort is symbolized as a hungry python. As a python crushes and kills its prey by twisting itself round and round, in the same way, any living being who enters the fort is swallowed up and does not come back. Old Man says to the curious Young Man about the passage of fort that “it’s a long passage, a big passage, coiled like an enormous hollow python inside the belly of the fort…. ” (Karnad *Tughlaq* 52) The python symbolizes Tughlaq’s crafty political tricks which he employs to trap his rivals rebelling against him. It also symbolically presents the fierce, brutal and inhuman nature of Sultan.

The ‘vultures’ symbolize the rebels in Tughlaq’s kingdom who keep thrusting their beaks in his flesh and do not allow him to stay in peace. As Sultan says in dejection, “Don’t you see- This patient, racked with fever and crazed by the fear of the enveloping vultures, can’t be separated from me ?...” (Karnad *Tughlaq* 56). The vultures also symbolize Sultan’s ambitions, desires and revengeful ideas which deprive him of any satisfaction.

Being a man of learning, Tughlaq is attracted towards the poetry of Sheikh Sadi of Persia which influences and inspires him to plan a rose garden. Later on, his beautiful garden is left just
as a place heaped with counterfeit coins. The rose garden that Sultan had planned is symbolically presented as the garden of ideals which has dried by towards the end.

To deal faithfully with the traditional themes of his plays, Girish Karnad employs a symbolic, figurative and idiomatic language. A few instances of that can be mentioned. The play *Hayavadana* is replete with figurative expressions. An instance of hyperbole is found in Bhagvata’s description of the status of Padmini and Devadatta as he says: “In her house, the very floor is swept by the goddess of wealth. In Devadatta’s house, they’ve the Goddess of learning for a maid.” (Karnad *Hayavadana* 19)

Along with this, there is seen the use of simile in the dialogue of Devadatta and Kapila admiring the beauty of Padmini:

DEVADATTA. How can you even talk of them in the same breath as her?
Before her they’re as . . .

KAPILA. . . . as stars before the moon, as the glow-worms before a torch.
Yes, yes, that’s been so fifteen times too. (Karnad *Hayavadana* 12)

Another instance of metaphor is marked in the description of Kapila about himself before Devadatta when the former offers the latter to help him approach Padmini, as he says: “My dear Devadatta, your cloud messanger, your bee, your pigeon is sitting right in front of you…” (Karnad 15) When Kapila meets Padmini, he gives his views regarding her with the use of simile like this: “But this one is fast as lightning – and as sharp.” (Karnad *Hayavadana* 19)

A combination of simile and personification is seen in the speech of Bhagavata: “Why do you tremble, heart? Why do you cringe like a touch-me-not bush through which a snake has passed? The sun rests his head on the fortunate Lady’s flower. And the head is bidding good-bye to the heart.” (Karnad *Hayavadana* 24-25) Through this metaphoric speech Bhagavata suggests the dejection of Devadatta when Padmini gets ready for the trip of Ujjain against his wish.

The use of some idiomatic and proverbial expressions are also evident in the play *Hayavadana*. When Padmini tries to remove Devadatta’s doubt about her longing for Kapila, she manipulates him by saying: “Really you have no sense of humour.” (Karnad *Hayavadana* 21) At
this, Devadatta gives vent to his anger and frustration in such a reply: “It’s humour for you. But it burns my insides….” Similarly, when Padmini does not find Kapila getting ready for the Ujjain trip she shouts at him this way: “Why are you standing there like a statue?” (Karnad Hayavadana 24)

Apart from this, the play Yayati also contains an idiomatic language. Devayani gets enraged by Sharmistha’s description that Yayati married the former only in order to get sanjeevani from her father. Then Devayani asks Yayati whether it is right. At this, Yayati starts praising her highly. Then Devayani replies idiomatically like this: “Don’t play the fool, please. I must know.” (Karnad Yayati 14)

Stylistically, a text also needs to be analysed from the coherence’s point of view as coherence accounts for the meaningfulness or relevance of a text; and in Sircar’s plays, there is seen lack of coherence among dialogues at many places, for instance:

ONE. Everyone everyone two rupees and five going for eight – take one, sir, it’s house full – full fighting full fighting – eight rupees eight rupees – want one? Want one…

TWO. One cutlet for table number two. Two cups of tea for number seven, two rupees forty. Two fish fries. Clean up the table. Three rupees sixty.

THREE. (practicing). Sa re ga, re ga ma, ga ma pa, ma pa dha…


FIVE. Why were you so glum yesterday? (Sircar Three Plays 27)

From the above dialogues, one can analyze that not any of the dialogues are connected to each other. All of them have a different context. In this way, they are lacking coherence. The incoherence of these dialogues suggests contemporary hectic life-style in which everybody is deeply involved in his own life and activities without getting affected by the others’.
At the graphological level, too, one sees that the playwright has tampered with the morphology of a few words to create some effect. For instance:

OLD MAN. Khoka is lo-o-o-st.

CHORUS. Khoka, come ba-a-a-ck.

OLD MAN. Khoka’ll never come back ho-o-o-me no mo-o-o-re.

CHORUS. Khoka – aa-aa-come ba-a-ck, come ho-o-o-me.

OLD MAN. Never again to the old home, if he comes back it’ll be to a new home, true home, truly true ho-o-o-me.

CHORUS. Khoka-aa-aa, come ba-a-a-ack come ba-a-a-ack come ba-a-a-ack.

(Sircar Three Plays 21-22)

A lot of stress has been given on a few words tampering with their structure such as ‘lost’, ‘back’, ‘home’ etc. Doing this, the playwright tries to emphasize the point that Khoka, representing the innocent youth, has been lost in this corrupt world and will not come back to the old home which is lacking human values but to the new one, which is assumed to be full of humanity.

At the phono-graphological level, one can look at a feature known as intonation. As intonations are of two types; rising intonation and falling intonation. There is seen an instance of rising intonation in the play Evam Indrajit as:

WRITER. So you are not married yet?

INDRAJIT. No. never had the time for it. You?

WRITER. The same.

INDRAJIT. What about the others?

WRITER. The others? (Sircar Evam Indrajit 38)
Though a few statements in these dialogues do not start with an interrogative word yet in the end just the question mark turns them into questions. This feature is known as rising intonation.

Parallelism, a syntactic feature is most evident in Sircar’s plays, as an instance is taken from the play Bhoma:

TWO. What’s that?
THREE. What’s that?
FOUR. What’s that?
FIVE. What’s that?
SIX. What’s that? (Sircar Three Plays 64)

This parallelism is seen when One utters Bhoma, and, as no one is aware of Bhoma, they all interrogate suddenly which shows their surprise. There are some other examples as well of the same type in which there is seen parallelism to focus on a particular point or catch the attention of the reader to that very point.

An element of echo, after the famous motto of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose ‘Give me Blood, I will Give you freedom’, is observed in the speech of character Five when he says “Give me blood, I’ll give you jobs...give me blood, I’ll give you permits...Give me blood, Ill give you a kingdom.” (Sircar Three Plays 77-78) This imitation is presented in the form of a satire on the cunning techniques of the contemporary corrupt leaders as how they misguide and persuade the innocent masses against their political rivals under the guise of the devoted statesmen and serve their own purpose of benefitting themselves.

Making a syntactic analysis of their plays one finds ellipses in dialogues which are taken to be the most prominent syntactic feature as they are able to create and maintain a kind of suspense throughout the play. It is an important feature of drama as it is demanded to be exciting throughout to tempt the reader or viewer to be clung to it upto the end. The play Yayati is replete with ellipses out of which a few can be illustrated, as in the very starting of the play one comes to know that there had been some argument between Swarnalata and Sharmishtha, in which
Devayani mediates. Both are Devayani’s maid servants. As Sharmistha was a rakshi and had been her childhood friend Devayani tries to be lenient towards her, which is seen in the under given dialogue, displayed elliptically:

DEVAYANI (calmly) : Why do you try so hard at being nasty? I feel sorry for you sometimes. It won’t help to…

SHARMISHTHA : Help? I am afraid I don’t know what ‘help’ madam can possibly mean. I may not be able to provide all that Swarnalata so freely provides, but…(Karnad Yayati 9)

In this way, Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu and some other local Indian words, used in the plays of Badal Sircar and Girish Karnad, project not only some stylistic motivations of these writer, as they use them when they want to emphasize some ideas through those emphatically suited words only, finding no other substitute of them in English language, but those words also reflect the deliberate employment of pidgin or indigenized English to make the meaning much more effective. So, the use of such words, phrases and sentences serves two significant purposes; first they are used to be foregrounded to emphasize the motive of these writers and secondly, they reflect indigenized English.

REFERENCES


