

To cite this article: Saman Yousaf, Laraib Maryam, Laiba Gulzar and Dr. Hassan Bin Zubair (2024). Stylistic Analysis Of Selected Diasporic Postmodern Anglophone Short Story. International Journal of Education, Business and Economics Research (IJEER) 4 (1): 185-192

## STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED DIASPORIC POSTMODERN ANGLOPHONE SHORT STORY

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<https://doi.org/10.59822/IJEER.2024.4112>

### ABSTRACT

This research is based on the stylistic analysis of "A Beheading" by Mohsin Hamid. This analysis consists of morphological and lexical levels of stylistic analysis. The story is about a middle-class man and it is written in first-person narration. The goals of this analysis are to find out the medically and morphologically important features of this literary text. This research is qualitative in nature. This research provides an analysis of the story on morphological and lexical levels. Paul Simpson has already described these levels in his book *Stylistics* in 2004. According to Simpson's theoretical assumptions, morphological level focuses on the morpheme how a word forms and the origin of a word on the other hand lexical level focuses on the lexeme, literary devices, and figurative language of the text. The importance of morphological and lexical elements of stylistic analysis has been emphasized. This highlights some literary devices like repetitive phrases, similes, metaphors, and imagery. This research is very useful to see the word choice and style of writer Mohsin Hamid. By focusing on this work deeply it reveals how different words are found that show the brutality and abuse of power. The writer focuses on the theme of terror and uses a very expressive diction.

**KEYWORDS:** Beheading, Emotions, Expressions, Language, Style, Morphology.

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Published Online: Feb 2024

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of analyzing the text of "A Beheading" by Mohsin Hamid is to study the lexical and morphological levels. In the domain of Stylistic Analysis, a lot of work has been done. But no work provides comprehensive details of this short story. So the basic aim of this paper is to analyze the characteristics of Pakistani writing. This paper analyzes the main idea of the story in a way to highlights the words that play an important role in making the theme of terror and brutality. It

contains some metaphors, personifications, imagery, and stress when studied at the lexical level, and word formation at the morphological level both is included in stylistic analysis. "Style is a way in which language is used in a given context by given people for a given purpose" (Leech and Short 1996). According to Leech and Short the use of vocabulary in a specific situation for a particular aim is style. And they say that it is a medium to convey the thoughts and messages to the readers of the text and in short it is a dress of thoughts and Ideas. "Stylistics, a branch of applied linguistics, is the study and Interpretation of texts of all types and/or spoken language regarding their Linguistic and tonal style, where style is the particular variety of language used by different individuals and/or in different situations or settings"(Wikipedia). H.G Widdoson (1986) describes stylistic as "The study of literary discourse from a linguistics orientation" According to Leech "Stylistic is the study of the style which can be applied in both literary and non-literary text" Stylistics is the study of the style in text. It is the branch of applied linguistics. It deals with the style of both literary and non-literary texts. Newspapers, magazines, law, and other non-literary texts can also be analyzed by using this method. This story starts when the kidnappers kidnap the narrator of the story. The kidnappers enter the home at night. The narrator wants to get rid of this situation but cannot escape. Because of this situation, the speaker becomes worried and terrified. Then the kidnappers catch him. The speaker passes through mental and physical suffering. Despite his kidnapping, he still thinks of his family. He thinks about the circumstances of his wife, children, and parents. He starts mentioning his hopes and thoughts in the short story. In this paper, the

Whole focus is on the statistical examination of A Beheading. Levels of stylistics of the story are:

1. Lexical level
2. Semantic level
3. Morphological level
4. Phonetic level
5. Grammatical level
6. Discourse level

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Complex Investigation is an approach to dissecting any scholarly or non-scholarly text on various expressive levels. As referenced before, the motivation behind this effort is to feature the philological and structural parts of the chosen work. In the present situation, gigantic writing is capable of being connected. Endeavours have been conducted to check numerous surveys. Here are a few of the efforts, let check the commitments of Abdul Bari Khan and Ghazala Siddiqui (2014), Saima Aslam (2014), Sobia Kiran(2013) and Isam M Shihada (2014). Additionally, Abdul Bari Khan and Ghazala Siddiqui (2014) chipped away at Robert Ice's sonnet "The Beginning" which also featured the utilization of lingual authority, images, symbolism, and analogies in the poem through performing its Complex Examination. Furthermore, Saima Aslam (2014) dissected Robert Ice's sonnet "Deprived" according to a Complex perspective and featured its Syntactic, Graphological, Phonological, and philological angles. Since the tale is composed by Mohsin Hamid, so we can explore his more prominent efforts, counting crafted by Sobia Kiran (2013) along with Isam M. Shihada (2015). Notwithstanding this, Sobia Kiran (2013) expresses in the essay that in the text *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid, character loss is a significant situation

faced by individuals entangled in the middle of duo universes. It adds an interesting element to the story. Besides, Isam M Shihada (2015) in his examination essay makes sense that Muslims were unfairly targeted and mistreated after 9/11 in Mohsin Hamid's book *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Katherine Fieldgate presents a survey about this story and says that we are drenched inside turbulent views of broken mirrors along with noisy sounds. In obscurity, the consideration of the mysterious man is read by us. We put in great effort to capture the fragmented and overwhelmed expressions of the man, as he struggled to articulate himself. He was beaten and tossed in a container. We don't have any idea where he is at that point, so the shortfall of setting makes more frenzy. "Simultaneously the continuous flow of the storyteller uplifts our interest. Because of noteworthy word usage and specialized utilization of symbolism, the scene is depicted extraordinarily." (Quiet Edge, 2018)

### **Research Objectives**

- To highlight the stylistics devices in the selected text
- To analyze the lexical and morphological expressions
- To examine the theme of the selected short story stylistically

### **Research Questions**

For the stylistic Analysis, the questions given below are made:

1. How the writer has used stylistics devices in the selected text?
2. How many lexical and morphological expressions are used in the selected short story?
3. How does the writer smoothly make the theme of Power abuse lexically and morphologically?

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This research is qualitative in nature. This research provides an analysis of the story on morphological and lexical levels. Paul Simpson has already described these levels in his book *Stylistics* in 2004. According to Simpson's theoretical assumptions, morphological level focuses on the morpheme how a word forms and the origin of a word on the other hand lexical level focuses on the lexeme, literary devices, and figurative language of the text. The importance of morphological and lexical elements of stylistic analysis has been emphasized. This highlights some literary devices like repetitive phrases, similes, metaphors, and imagery. This study employs both subjective and halfway statistical approaches. It investigates the highlights of the text by utilizing elaborate examination as the primary methodology. Furthermore, it gives a measurable record of the quantity of specific terms, expressions, and scholarly gadgets utilized in the text. "A Beheading" by Mohsin Hamid is centered on the expressive investigation of philological and structural aspects. The philological level is the investigation of the utilization of structural speech and scholarly gadgets. Structural aspects are concerned with the investigation of phrases, term arrangement, and term beginning. By examining the existing work on these aspects philological and structural viewpoints will be led to the forefront. It could be finished by featuring the utilization of likenesses, representations, exemplification also symbolism alongside the subtleties of text development and word beginning. Information is gathered by doing with one's hand.

### Lexically Significant Expressions

- **"As old as my parents, as young as my son"** is an illustration of Metaphor, categorized as lexical-level analysis. As was previously noted, the lexical level examines literary techniques and figurative language. As such, a simile is a literary device that draws comparisons between similar concepts, objects, or people by using the terms "as, like." The narrator is stuck in a difficult situation from which he cannot get out. In an attempt to ease his current mental state, he compares himself to his son or his parents using similes and thinks about his loved ones who are not there with him. This demonstrates the narrator's fear of circumstances.
- **"Shadows are jumping and stretching"** is personification and imagery at the lexical level. Former is a literary element used to give abstract concepts or inanimate objects human characteristics. Another literary strategy is imagery, which is typically employed in fiction writing and involves the writer using words to evoke a mental picture in the reader. The speaker in this instance combines personification and imagery to paint a clear picture for the audience. Here, the shadows represent the abductors' shadows. The shadows' jumping and stretching suggest that the capturers have got into the writer's home, and who has seen that they are hopping there. This results in a terrifying situation. Everything around the narrator seems terrifying surrounding him since the image of the kidnappers invading his home at night sparked fear in his imagination.
- **"I sound like a whispering child"** is a simile at the lexical level, when the speaker compares his voice to a child's whisper by using the word "like." This implies that the speaker is mute and unable to yell for assistance when they are finally discovered by the captors. His voice is as quiet as a scared child whispering.
- **"I wish..."** is an illustration of a phrase that is repeated at the lexical level. This exhibits stress to highlight the writer's disturbed mental state. Throughout the narrative, he says this three times. The author's repeated use of this phrase conveys a sense of helplessness and a desire for some sort of escape. This enhances the writer's imagination (imagery) and helps the reader picture the speaker by using phrases like these. This aids the reader in developing such an image and phrase repetition emphasizes the speaker's complete helplessness and hopelessness. He is unable to assist himself in leaving; all he can do is wish to do so.
- **"Gatekeeper's face is so thin. He looks like we have been starving him"**; morphologically, it is a representation of imagery and irony. The narrator begins by describing the whereabouts of the gatekeeper, who doubles as a kidnapper, using imagery. The word "thin" is used to indicate that the guard is skinny. Moreover, the physique of the guard represents that he had been constantly starved by some unknown person. This is a clear indication of situational irony.
- **"I hope,"** the repetition of these words tells the reader that the speaker is under stress. The narrator is in a state of helplessness he cannot do anything. He is kidnapped but he prays for this family to be safe and sound. The importance of the family is shown by the repetition of these words
- **"I don't ..."** here, stress shown once again by reiteration. The reader here changes his opinion as he is concerned for his family and further thinking about the same thing affects his mental health.
- **"Blackout"** is a metaphor indicating that the speaker is not aware. The term "blackout" refers to the speaker's loss of consciousness after passing out from the kidnappers' relentless

physical and psychological abuse, not the color black. Additionally, it leaves the reader with a dark impression, further suggesting that the speaker is weak.

- **“Used to”** is a figure of speech that implies turning into habitual to something. It does not imply using something frequently, but rather developing a habit with a concept or behavior.
- **“Bigger than me”** is a demonstration of analogy and symbol linguistically, because the language is metaphorical. The storyteller paints an image of the situation by drawing a contrast between his size and that of the kidnappers. Comparing things also serves as a subliminal means of informing the reader that the kidnappers are more powerful than the speaker because they have a larger build than the speaker.
- **“Dead eyes”** is a metaphor for the dreary eyes of the abductor. Phrases imply that eyes are emotionless and icy rather than lifeless.
- **“I watch as I end before I am empty”** is an exemplification of epiphany. The practice of replacing a taboo term with a milder or indirect word is known as euphemism. Here, the author uses the phrase “I am empty,” which alludes to death in a roundabout way.
- **“Blood on the floor like ink”** alludes to both metaphor and imagery. By drawing a comparison between spilled ink and blood on the floor, the speaker conjures up the image of blood. The reader is left with a clear image from this.

### **Morphologically Significant Expression**

- **“Copper colored 81 Corolla”** This phrase has drawn a picture of compounding basically where 81 Corolla is coinage. The term has been analyzed linguistically. A word-formation method called compounding involves joining two words so that they have a single meaning. As the compounded word’s parts of speech change the category might as well. Even when separated, the compounded words retain their unique meaning. “Copper-colored” is a compound word where copper is employed to describe the color of a car as a qualifier, created when the words “colored” and “copper” are combined. The car is referred to as an ‘81 Corolla.’ The speaker has written the year and date in compressed form: 81. It implies that the car is most likely to be manufactured in 1981 based on the reference to “81 Corolla.”
- The names of different languages **“Arabic, Pashto, Urdu, and English”** are mainly referred to by the writer in his work. However, since the text is written in English, no words from these languages’ original languages are used.
- **“Chechen”** is a borrowed instance. Lending is a method of borrowing words from any native tongue, different from the one in which work is written. A Chechen is a person who belongs to a Muslim tribe in Chechnya. The speaker used the word “Chechen” for kidnappers
- **“UPS”** is an acronym, an abbreviation of long phrases and words to avoid repetition and inconvenience.

### **FINDINGS**

Three similes, four imagery examples, three instances of repeated phrases, three instances of metaphorical expressions, and one euphemism are all present in the selected text. Thus, in all, 14 expressions can be classified as lexically significant elements. Secondly, it includes two instances of borrowing, one is an example of compounding, and the other is of merged morphemes, one

example of slang, and one example of abbreviation. Thus, a total of six expressions are considered morphologically significant elements.

## CONCLUSION

The discussion has made it abundantly evident that this text makes use of personification, metaphor, simile, and imagery. This paper employs stylistic analysis at the lexical level to highlight certain figurative aspects of language. For example, it emphasizes various word kinds and their etymologies while concentrating on the text's morphology. Through discourse analysis of the narrative, certain stylistically significant expressions that help connect this tale to the themes of terror, cruelty, violence, and power abuse are highlighted. Thus, the study makes clear how writers employ expressive language to make their points clear to readers. Thus, it is accurate to state that stylistic analysis is essential to understanding and assessing a text more fully.

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## APPENDIX

### Text of Selected Short Story “A Beheading” by Mohsin Hamid

I hear the window shatter. There’s no air conditioner on to muffle the sound. I get out of bed. I wish I wasn’t my age. I wish I was as old as my parents. Or, as young as my son. I wish it didn’t have to be me telling my wife to stay where she is, saying everything will be fine in a voice she doesn’t believe and I don’t believe either. We both hear the shouting downstairs. ‘Put on some clothes,’ I’m saying to her. ‘It’ll be better if you’re wearing clothes.’

The electricity’s gone so I use my phone to light the way. Already there’s the sound of men running up the wooden stairs. I shut the bedroom door and lock it behind me. Shadows are jumping and stretching from multiple torches. I raise both my hands. ‘I’m here,’ I say to them. I want to say it loudly. I sound like a whispering child. ‘Please. Everything is all right.’

I’m on the floor. Someone has hit me. I don’t know if it was with a hand or a club. My mouth is full of liquid. I can’t get any words out. I’m gagging and I have to let my jaw hang open so I can breathe. Behind my back my wrists are being taped together. It feels like electrical tape, the kind of tape you wrap around a tennis ball for street cricket when you’re a kid. I’m lying on my face and there’s a grinding pain from that so I make some noise before I black out.

I’m between two men. They’re holding me under my armpits and dragging me out the front door. I don’t know how much time has passed. It’s still night. The electricity has come back so the gate lights are on. The gatekeeper is dead. He’s an old man and he’s lying folded in on himself. His face is so thin. He looks like we’ve been starving him. I’m wondering how they killed him. I’m looking at him, looking for blood. But I don’t have enough time.

I think there are four of them. They have a copper-coloured ’81 Corolla. We used to have a car like that when I was growing up. This one is in bad shape. They open the trunk and dump me inside. I can’t see anything. My face is partly on a rough carpet. The other part is on the spare tyre. Its rubber sticks to me. Or maybe I’m sticking to it. The shocks are and every bump slams through the car. I think of being at the dentist, when it’s already hurting and you know it’s going to hurt more and you just wait and try to think of mind tricks to make it hurt less.

I feel feverish, a high, malarial fever that makes me shiver and drift in and out of sleep. I hope they didn’t kill my son and my wife and my parents. I hope they didn’t rape my wife. I hope whatever they do to me they don’t use acid on me. I don’t want to die but I don’t mind dying. I just don’t want to be tortured. I don’t want anyone to crush my balls with a pair of pliers and put his cigarette out in my eye. I don’t want this car ride ever to end. I’m getting used to it now.

They take me out in the sunlight. They’re big men. Bigger than me. They take me into a house with paint peeling off the walls and put me in a bathroom with no windows, just a skylight. I’ve already pissed myself and my legs itch from dried urine. I don’t make a sound. I sit there and prepare to cooperate. I wish I could remember how to say my prayers. I’d ask them to let me pray. Show them we’re the same. But I can’t risk it. I’ll make a mistake and if they see that, things will be even worse for me. Maybe I can just mumble to myself and they’ll think I’m religious.

They come back when it’s dark. They’re speaking a language I don’t understand. I don’t think it’s Arabic or Pashto. What is it? Is it fucking Chechen? What is that fucking language? Who the fuck are these people? Tears are coming out of my eyes. That’s good. The more pathetic I look, the better. ‘Sirs,’ I say in the most grovelling Urdu I can manage. ‘What have I done? I beg your

forgiveness.’ My mouth doesn’t work properly so I have to speak slowly. Even then I sound like I’m drunk. Or like someone has cut off half my tongue.

They ignore me. One is setting up a video camera on a tripod. The other is plugging a light into a portable UPS unit the size of a car battery. I know this. I don’t want this. I don’t want to be that goat. The one we bought for Big Eid. I used to feed it after school. We kept it for a week. I would break shoots off the hedge, green shoots that stained my hands, and feed them to that goat. It was a nice goat, but with dead eyes. I didn’t like its eyes. I liked the way it chewed sideways. It was like a pet. I never petted it, but it was like a pet. It had small feet. It could stand on a brick to reach the leaves. My parents let me watch a man come and wrestle it to the ground and say a prayer and sacrifice it to God.

‘Look, don’t do this.’ I’m speaking English now, slurring, and making no sense. The words are just dribbling out of my mouth. I can’t stop them.

They’re like tears. ‘I’ve always censored myself. I’ve never written about religion. I’ve always tried to be respectful. If I’ve made a mistake just tell me. Tell me what to write. I’ll never write again. I’ll never write again if you don’t want me to. It doesn’t matter to me. It’s not important. We’re the same. All of us. I swear it.’

They tape my mouth shut and pin me flat on my stomach. One of them gets behind me and pulls my head up by the hair. It feels sexual the way he does it. I wonder if my wife is still alive and if she’s going to sleep with another man after I’m gone. How many men is she going to sleep with? I hope she doesn’t. I hope she’s still alive. I can see the long knife in his hand. He’s speaking into the camera. I don’t want to watch. I shut my eyes. I want to do something to make my heart explode so I can be gone now. I don’t want to stay.

Then I hear it. I hear the sound of my blood rushing out and I open my eyes to see it on the floor like ink and I watch as I end before I am empty.