

## Stylistics' pattern in the writing of Rashid Askari

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper aims at analyzing the stylistics usages of Rashid Askari. This one also is looking forward to probing what these stylistics usages mean. "Stylistics, Peter Barry says in his Beginning Theory, developed in the twentieth century and its aim is to show how the technical linguistic features of a literary work, such as the grammatical structure of its sentences, contribute to its overall meaning." And the paper, therefore, will explore the author's sincerity that is very much essential for grounding the establishment of Bangladeshi Literature in English (BLE).<sup>1</sup>*

**Key Words:** *Stylistics, endophora, code-switching, negative capability*

Stylistics has put a huge impact upon the attitude of modern literature. The contemporary authors have become more mindful to using it. Stylistics, generally speaking, is the use of common aspects of language. It has made the authors choosy and the readers sharp and even a single punctuation mark is observed minutely: that is a big challenge for the authors. Critical theory has given a great shape to the faculty of human thinking, even to write a single line we have to pay attention for making it theoretical. From Homer to T.S. Eliot all are aimed with the arrow of modern critics. This might be one of the major reasons to make the literature more abstract than ever before. Words of the texts, previously, were more valuable than the punctuation mark. But the trend has changed as punctuation marks define the meaning of the words, help to understand the motif of the text, scrutinize the symbols if they are hidden, and do many more. Pronoun, a lesser part of speech considering the width of meaning, has got a new meaning and bigger importance in a modern literature and it is no longer the replacement of noun the way we usually deal with grammar. Stylistics made it possible unchain all linguistic terms. All got own identity and all most equal value.

An article from "The Wounded Land"<sup>2</sup> by Rashid Askari can be taken for this discussion. Why I take a Bangladeshi author for this can be asked. Its answer is simple and easy understandable for the readers, who have little information about 'Literature in English', which is no longer the property of King's Land. Common Wealth english is English now. It has overcome the dichotomy among lands, the value of white-black-red alphabets, even poet like T.S. Eliot adopted non-English syntax "London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down"<sup>3</sup>. And our English is no longer like this 'Lekin Lady, I every time happy this England. Horses gentlemen, ladies gentlemen, and grass is gentlemen' or 'You eating knife and fork I eating knife and fork. I not knowing this knife and fork. Great Mogul he knowing how mount this elephant. You not knowing. You sitting howdah in uniform with English lady. Great Mogul he mount properly, he dressed in white muslin and squat by himself on elephant's back. You sitting howdah, we laughing you not knowing.'<sup>4</sup> And so there is no problem between Dr. Aziz and Mr. Fielding to make friendship again.<sup>5</sup>

The stylistics usage of Rashid Askari is grave, neat and clean and the most important aspect of his stylistics is to make the literary ornament more meaningful—just not to zip the lips of the critics. This gives him an extra advantage of being a successful author. His has the ample usages of endophora, exophoric, flat adverb, code switching, hendiadys, contrast between Desi and foreign words etc. Some of them are going to be discussed. We can, for example, take a paragraph from "The Wounded Land."

"It was not a language of the divinities. It was not a language of the heavenly revelation. Nor of any ruling caste. It was rather the language of some lesser mortals. A 'vulgar tongue', 'a language of the gutter'! Yes, it was our language, and still is. We preferred hell and our language to heaven others'. This is our mother tongue; our beloved Bangla; our *dukhini barnamala* (poor alphabet)!"<sup>6</sup>

Firstly, we want to discuss the usage of 'it' and how it impacts upon a text as David Birch quoted 'analyzing text is an activity which is concerned with understanding how a text means, not with what a text means.'<sup>7</sup>

It, in ordinary sense, seems very much introductory, but it is not as simple as it seems. It is a very good example of endophora. Endophora is a pronoun like word or phrase, which denotes something backward or forward in the text. The text above is all about our Bangla language. But 'it' reveals its target meaning later. First two lines start with 'it' but the third line, which is fragmented, without having 'it' keeps the meaning of 'it' and this absent method of 'it' gives us a pause to avoid its more repetition. But the fourth line again brings back 'it'.

Up to this section, 'it' is divided into two parts: first one takes negative words like not, nor etc. and the very last rather. 'Rather' denies the strong negativity of 'not' and 'nor'. 'Rather' refers both approval and disapproval and sometimes denotes preference. Dr. Askari took the second meaning. 'Rather death than dishonour' is a common use of this kind. That means first endophoric (first three lines) is rejected by second endophoric (fourth line). The use of endophoric is very common but the rejection of endophoric, masterly done Dr. Askari, by another endophoric, same in appearance, is very atypical, cannot be found easily. Again first endophora links with divinity, heavenly revelation and ruling cast which are also surpassed by the second endophora (lesser mortal). So, the usages of it with endophora finally reveal that the language of lesser mortal is not less valuable than the divine language. This is such an example of endophora.

To descend the heaven on earth Milton had to write 'Paradise Lost', Aristophanes 'The Frogs', but modern use of endophora (with an 'it' only) can be done even in prose, which is not a grand narrative at all. Going back little bit earlier-if we quote from Keats- will not be irrelevant as we get there a superb use of 'negation', a form of affirmation by denial.

"No stir of air was there,  
as on a summer's day  
feathered grass,  
rest."<sup>8</sup>

Not so much life  
Robs not one light seed from the  
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it

Again it was John Keats, who had much headache for the 'negative capability', which, he says, Shakespeare possessed so enormously.<sup>9</sup>

The ironical starting is revealed when we reach to the end of portion. This is a U-turn narrative style, which somersaults the meaning.

Secondly, the use of code switching, much related topic with lingua franca, is used let not lose the originality of the native language lest it should fail to fulfill the meaning of the target language. Code switching again proves that a word has no more synonyms, can only be synonymous or closer to the meaning. If it could be possible, George Orwell, in his 'Animal Farm', long ago would use king, elephant driver, white gentleman, heavy swords instead of Raja, mahout, sahib, dash etc.<sup>10</sup> Sometimes we are very much akin to using second language, but it is not sufficient as "Different lands have different tongue, as Ram Nidhi Gupta says, without own tongue expectation cannot be sung."<sup>11</sup>

Thirdly, code switching used by Dr. Askari is a question mark that might carry the meaning like Benedict Anderson's nationality, Shamsur Rahman's dream of a country and the life-long labour of Vidyasagar-Tagore-Bankim. His switching contains the image of independent Bangladesh. He proudly used Dukhini barnamala (Poor alphabets), Ekushey (21st February), Swadhinata (Independence) etc. Can Ekushey be replaced by twenty one or something else? Is Ekushey just a digit or an odd number of a series before twenty two and after twenty? If Caesar, when he was stabbed by Brutus, would not tell 'Eu tu Brutus', could it be the reminder of the Roman Empire?<sup>12</sup> Never: we all will agree.

Moreover, barnamala can be, roughly, replaced by alphabets though Bangla is fairly alpha-syllabic. But what is about dukhini? Can it be overthrown by poor or something else? Never: this will again be agreed by the connoisseur of Bangla language. The reason is dukhini is a feminine gender, which has an image of aged woman, who is not happy at all for being pinched with cold, hunger or want. Dukhini, if we express symbolically, must be noted with woman+ unhappiness+ Indescribable poor condition. Swadhinata, another striking switching by Dr. Askari, is the combination of Stuart Mill's liberty, George Washington's independence and Martin Luther King's freedom. So, Swadhinata will remain its footprint on the every isle where Lincoln-Gandhi-Mujib will be born perpetually.

A good author is a good observer. The Writer's Roles' says "The skilled writer, like an accomplished actor, can choose from a repertoire of roles and adopt each with ease. But whether observer, expositor, evaluator, persuader, or speaker, the writer strives for clarity, felicity, drama, original thought, style, and, above all truth."<sup>13</sup> Again the author says "The enemies of Ekushey are the enemies of the Independence of

Bangladesh.”<sup>14</sup> Ekushey is embodied as the collective images of anti-liberation force and therefore; it is switched. So, the author is not isolated from the text at all, not from the motif both literally and theoretically. This might be a superb example of those readers, who think the mature thinking of the critics is sharper than that of the authors as some say Shakespeare is made by A. C. Bradley rather Shakespeare, it would be suitable to say, might be discovered by Bradley just like the law of gravity by Sir Isaac Newton. There is a popular epigram as it follows:

“I dreamt last night that Shakespeare’s Ghost  
Sat for a civil service post.  
The English paper for that year  
Had several questions on King Lear,  
Which Shakespeare answered very badly  
Because he hadn’t read his Bradley.”<sup>15</sup>

So, one of the major tasks of a reader is to cultivate the text tirelessly.

So, the use of code switching has gone the distance. The riddle of stylistics: a theory or a practice, head lined by Peter Barry, has been solved. Peter Barry suspiciously mentioned, “There are good reasons, then, for regarding stylistics as different, but none, in my view, for regarding it as untheoretical.” But the sensible uses of stylistics, as Dr. Askari did, can make it pure theory or theory equal.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Here BLE means the pieces written by the Bangladeshi authors or rooted with it.

<sup>2</sup> A collection of his articles

<sup>3</sup> What the Thunder said’; The Waste Land- T.S. Eliot, line-426.

<sup>4</sup> Atmaghati Bengalis (Suicidal Bengalis)-Nirad C. Chaudhuri, chapter-3, page-36, 13<sup>th</sup> edition. These are the words of Sir General Partab Singh who was very dear to the English for his English.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Aziz and Mr. Fielding: two characters from ‘A Passage to India’ by E. M. Forster

<sup>6</sup> The true spirit of *Ekushey*, page-13

<sup>7</sup> Language, Literature and Critical Practice by David Birch, page-21

<sup>8</sup> Hyperion by John Keats

<sup>9</sup> [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negative\\_capability](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negative_capability)

<sup>10</sup> These are the Hindi words adapted by Orwell.

<sup>11</sup> Nanan deshe nanan bhasa, bina swadeshi bhasa mite ki asha

<sup>12</sup> Last sentence uttered by Caesar before he was finally stabbed by Brutus.

<sup>13</sup> The Writer’s Role: Reading With Rhetoric

<sup>14</sup> ‘Friends and foes of *Ekushey*’ from ‘The Wounded Land’

<sup>15</sup> A poem by Guy Boas; Lisa Hopkins introduced his book Beginning Shakespeare with this stanza which proves the influence of a critic.

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