2.1 The term style: Various approaches

Style is a broad term. It can be defined by various angles and different view points. Some of the definitions of style are given below:

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines style as:
'manner of writing, speaking or doing; or diction or artistic expression .... proper to a person or school or period or subject; and noticeably superior quality or manner.'

Goethe defines style as:
'Einfache Nachahmung der Natur, Manier, Stil.'
Goethe's definition regards style as a higher, active principle of composition by which the writer penetrates and reveals the inner form of his subject.

Henri Morier defines style as:
'Le style est pour nous une disposition de l'existence, une, maniè re d'être.'

1. The Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford, 1933) VII.
2. Discussed and quoted by Emil Ermatinger in Das dichterische kunstwerk, leipzig and Berlin, 1921, p. 199.
Henri Morier regards style as a disposition of existence, a way of being.

Shipley regards:
'Style consists in adding to a given thought all the circumstances calculated to produce the whole effect that the thought ought to produce.'

Jeremy Warburg defines style as:
'Good style, it seems to me consists in choosing the appropriate symbolization of the experience you wish to convey, from among a number of words whose meaning area is roughly, but only roughly, the same (by saying cat, for example, rather than pussy).

Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren Stated that:
'Style is used merely to refer to the selection and ordering of language.'

In another book they stated that:
'This term (style) is usually, used with reference to the poet's manner of choosing, ordering and arranging his words. But of course, when one asks on what grounds certain words are chosen and ordered, one is raising the whole problem of

form. Style in its larger sense, is essentially the same thing as form. 1

Charles Hockett defines style as:
'Roughly speaking, two utterances in the same language which convey approximately the same information but which are different in their linguistic structure, can be said to differ in style.' 2

Bernard Bloch stated that:
'...the style of a discourse is the message carried by the frequency distributions and transitional probabilities of its linguistic features, especially as they differ from those of the same features in the language as a whole.' 3

Gray tries to define the term style as:
'Style, exists in the mind of scholars or in the theory of linguistics and critics as either exists in the field of Physics.' 4

According to J.M. Ellis:

'Where an extra word is used to differentiate two expressions we tend in ordinary discourse to say that meaning has been added, while when an expression is replaced by another, perhaps more differentiated one, an entirely parallel change of meaning tends to be called style.'

Riffaterre defines style as choice:

'Style is understood as an emphasis (expressive, affective or aesthetic) added to the information conveyed by the linguistic structure, without alteration of meaning, which is to say that language expresses and that style stresses.'

A.A. Hill thinks of style as choice between the equivalent items. He writes:

'It is possible to define the sum total of style as all the choices of equivalent items which the language offers the users in each linguistic situation.'

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Herdan wrote:

'may not a difference in style between two writers revealed itself as a difference in the frequency of use of certain Linguistic Forms, which might then show 'frequency of use' as at least, one characteristic feature of style?'¹

Herdan claims that the choice of words is subject to chance to some extent.

Gleason describes style as:

'Style as the patterning of choices made within the option presented by the conventions of the language.'²

In this way, most of the scholars are of the opinion that style as choice. The definitions of style as choice involves three types of selection: grammatical, non stylistic and stylistic. Grammatical choice is that type of choice which is permitted by the rules of grammar. It distinguishes between grammatical and ungrammatical, possible and impossible utterances. Non-stylistic choice involves selection between different meanings and without stylistic consideration. For example Hindi words stri and nāri. The selection among these

¹ G. Herdan, 'Language as choice and chance' Groningen, 1956, p. 12.
two words is non stylistic choice. Stylistic choice is bound with stylistic reasons and aesthetic considerations. For example Urdu words ḍā'yānā and ḍhōsī. The selection of one between these two words for aesthetic reason is called stylistic choice. Stylistic choice exists in all linguistic units such as phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, lexis, and other larger units. The borderline between non-stylistic and stylistic choice is much difficult to draw. Both are optional.

Enkvist distinguished between non stylistic and stylistic choices in the following way:

'Stylistic choice .... involves the choice of style markers, whereas non stylistic choice involves selection from among stylistically neutral items. All neutral items are capable of occurring in the context at hand and within the style in question. Non stylistic choice is thus contextually free, stylistic choice contextually bound. In practice, most utterances are composed of style markers as well as of stylistically neutral elements.'

The another important definition of style which has been established by various modern critics and scholars is 'style as deviations from the norm.'

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Stankiewicz remarked:

'Deviations from the accepted norm ... are not only tolerated but even expected within various poetic traditions, periods and genres. Such deviations must not be viewed as poetic licence and individual creations; they are, rather, the result of manipulations of available linguistic material and the skilful utilization of possibilities inherent in it.'

Levin points out:

'most, if not indeed all, of poetry's characteristic devices exemplify deviation in one way or another.'

Jan Mukarovsky pointed out that:

'The purposeful distortion of the components of language is the most significant distinguishing feature of poetic language. It is the intentional systematic violation of the norm of the standard language that makes possible the poetic utilization of language, without this possibility there would be no poetry.'

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'A well chosen deviant utterance', says Noam Chomsky, 'may be' richer and more effective.'

Chomsky's concept of the 'deep' and 'surface' structures of the sentences may also provide an insight into deviation from the norm.

Charles E. Osgood defines:

'Style is defined as an individual's deviation from norms for the situations in which he is encoding, these deviations being in the statistical properties of those structural features for which there exists some degree of choice in his code.'

Martin Joos suggested that 'The style of a text is a function of the aggregate of the ratios between the frequencies of its phonological, grammatical, and lexical items, and the frequencies of the corresponding items in a contextually related norm.'

Scholars and literary critics have established the significance of deviation in literary text. The concept of deviation is an important one in linguistic approaches to style. However no precise boundary can be established between what is norm and what is deviation. And it is also not easy

to decide upon a norm. Norms can be defined as the ordinary mode of expression. Deviation may be defined as the unusual from usual, special from normal use of language. It is the outcome of the creativity of poet or writer. A deviant feature whatever it may be, phonological, grammatical, lexical or semantic can simply be noted as an infrequent item in the total. The concepts of the norm and deviation are tentative and cannot be taken to be the sole basis of an analysis of poetic language.

Some critics have viewed that style is an expression of personality.

According to French Scholar Buffon:

'le style est l'homme meme.'\(^1\) (style is the man himself).

To Garrod,

'a man's poetry is but a part of him.'\(^2\)

Gibbon stated that:

'Style is the image of character.'\(^3\)

S. Ullmann agrees that:

'there is an intimate connection between writers' language and his personality.'\(^4\)

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1. Quoted from Graham though, style and stylistics London, 1972, p. 3.
F.L. Lucas has remarked that:

'Literary style is simply a means by which personality moves others.'\(^1\)

He further remarked 'Style is a means by which a human being gains contact with others; it is personality clothed in words character embodied in speech.'\(^2\)

J.A. Symonds writes:

'Whatever a man utters from his heart and head is the index of his character.'\(^3\)

Enkvist discusses six approaches to style which treats style as an embellishment, 'a shell surrounding a pre-existing core of thought and expression; as the choice between alternative expressions; as a set of individual characteristics; as deviations from a norm; as a set of collective characteristics; as a set of relations among linguistic entities that are stable in terms of wider span of text than the sentence.'\(^4\)

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2. Ibid, p. 49.
After reviewing and observing various viewpoints and approaches to style, we come to this conclusion that - style is a very messy and mazy, abstract and complex, controversial and elusive term. Style is personal ideology, a technique of expression and exposition, the highest achievement of literature. A psychologist, an anthropologist, a literary critic, a language teacher everybody feels concerned with the phenomenon of style. It is one of the areas where linguistics, poetics, pragmatics, rhetorics overlap. Style is a link between context and linguistic form. Style in linguistic analysis is not an ornament, but it is confined to the language, the aspects of language, the structure of language of a literary text. In the study of style psychological, statistical sociological implications play a great role. They help in classifying style exactly and accurately, in the solution of pure literary problems and from the viewpoints of the varieties of language. The concept of style can be made meaningful only when make a unified theory of style and it will be possible when the linguistics and stylistics are correlated with aesthetic value of literary text.

2.2 **Stylistics: A Linguistic approach to Literature**

Linguistic approach to literature is generally known by the name of stylistics. It is a branch of applied linguistics. The term 'stylistic' was first used in the
19th century. The First example of German Stilistik recorded by Grimm's dictionary is from Novalis. In English the noun style is found as early as 1846; in French, the first example of stylistique is from 1872 in current use. Stylistics as a discipline, however, emerged in the early twentieth century mainly through the efforts of Charles Bally, a distinguished Pupil of De Saussure.

Stylistics is comparatively a very young discipline. It is called by Halliday as *Linguistic Stylistics*.

Halliday stated that:

'We can define Linguistic Stylistics as the description of literary texts by methods derived from general linguistic theory, using the categories of the description of the language as a whole and the comparison of each text with others by the same and by the different authors in the same and in different genres.'

History of Literary Criticism reveals that from the antiquity to present, the literary critic is busy in analyzing and theorizing literature. It is wrong to say that the history of literary criticism is built up only on the subjective analysis and appreciation. No doubt dictums like 'poetry is at bottom a criticism of life (Matheu Arnold), 'Poetry is the

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spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. It takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility*, (Words worth) contain a very little objective value. Nevertheless there has been a school of critics called 'Formalists' in Russia and elsewhere, who had devoted time to understand the relationship between 'sound and sense', 'form and content' and likewise. A whole body of knowledge has developed around these problems of Rhetorics and Prosody. Actually what goes under the name of 'Poetics' covers these vary problems.

But the analysis of literature and poetry by the classical writers inspite of providing some deep insights lacks the systematic knowledge of linguistics as accumulated during the 20th Century. These writers had a very crude knowledge of phonetics and had no concept of phonemes and morphemes, and had a very outworn notions about the word-classes and their syntactical arrangements. In fact their whole notion of grammar was based on certain types of logical and philosophical notions. Therefore they could not go deep into the structure of language. Two major concepts which governed their rhetorics and prosodies were the concept of word as against morpheme and the concept of letter as against phoneme. Their whole analysis was bound up with these notions.

The development of linguistics goes back to De Saussure, who is called the 'father of modern linguistics'. His early work established him as a distinguished comparative philologist
of the old school. But between 1906 and 1911 he gave three courses in general linguistics, which brought a new turn in the field of modern linguistics. His lectures were published by his two pupils Charles Bally (1805-1947) and Albert Sechehaye (1870-1946) in the name of 'Cours de linguistique générale', after the death of Saussure in 1916.

Saussure was not interested in the study of style. But his concepts were carried on much further by his pupil Charles Bally, who invented the term 'la stylistique' but did not use this term in current sense. He defined style from the point of view of expression.

We can not neglect the activities of formalists in Russia who were taking interest in formalism. In 1915, a group of students at Moscow University founded the Moscow Linguistic Circle. Roman Jacobson is a great name of this circle. He wrote a paper on 'Xlebnikov's poetic language'. This paper shows the current linguistic analysis of the structure and effects of material pattern. Jacobson moved to Prague from Soviet Union. So the focus of Linguistic Poetics had shifted to Prague. Prague Linguistic Circle was founded in 1926. The contributors of this school were Roman Jacobson, Nikolai Troubetzkoy and J. Mukarovsky.

In the conference on style held at the University of Indiana in 1958, Roman Jacobson summed up what are the
main effects of the language revolution on the understanding of literature.

Jacobson stated that:
'All of us here, however, definitely realize that a linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unconversant with Linguistic methods are, equally flagrant anachronisms.¹

Troubetzkoy distinguished two major aspects of phonological study: the study of the role of speech sounds in carrying out the representative functions of language, and the study of their role in carrying out the other two functions, namely the expressive and the appeal functions. The former field of study is phonologie for which American current term is 'phonemics'. The other field of study is called 'phono-stylistics'. Most of Troubetzkoy's work is concerned with phonology rather than phono-stylistics.

Jan Mukarovsky discussed the aesthetic function of language. He gave the concept of foregrounding as against the backgrounding. His fore-grounding is 'the aesthetically intentional distortion of the linguistic components'. He

also presented the concept of 'prosodic line' of a poem, that is the choice of the prosodic features that characterized a particular work of poetry.

Modern linguistics in the United States has developed for more than a half century in close association with anthropological studies. In the earlier stages of its development modern linguists did not care much for literature inspite of the brilliant writings of Edward Sapir about literature. After Sapir, Bloomfieldian behaviorism became the Fashion of the day. The main concern of linguists of this period was the structure of the language and the development of a methodology for analysis. At this stage the linguists carefully avoided the problem of meaning. Meaning and literature were in the realm of metalinguistics for them. It is for this reason, that Bloomfield has nothing to say about literature. However the interest of linguists about literature could not be postponed much longer. Many linguists have entered in this field via literature. In the early 60's even the structuralists like A.A. Hill began to take interest in the application of linguistics for the analysis of literature. But people like Hall and Hockett kept them strictly structuralists. They sought to define and understand literature in terms of structuralism. There was another group of linguists who tries to analyze literature in its own terms, taking as much help as it could from linguistics. This is laid by Fowler and Levy. A revolution was brought by
Noam Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar theory. The theory of Generative Grammar gives us the most precise instrument for the analysis of grammatical structure and thus for the analysis of that aspect of style. It has new bearing on the analysis of literary style of language as well.


Indian scholarship adopted this new trend of applied linguistics. Several scholars entered into the field of stylistics and contributed many brilliant papers and dissertations on the stylistic analysis of Indian languages. The chief among them are R.N. Srivastava, Suresh Kumar, R.S. Gupta, R.C. Sharma, Ashok Kelkar, H.R. Dua, Masud Husain Khan etc.

2.3 **Stylistics and related disciplines:**

Linguistic stylistics is closely related to other disciplines such as literary criticism, Poetics, Rhetorics, Aesthetics, Semiotics etc.
2.3.1 **Stylistics and literary criticism**:  

A piece of literature is an artifact and linguistic stylistics provides an objective outlook, analytical inquiry, scientific methodology, theoretical framework and necessary tools for the analysis of the texture of this artifact. Linguistic stylistic approach is precise, verifiable, predictive, tentative and systematic approach which has facts, methods, principles, observations, inferences and generalizations. It is based on phonoaesthetic effect, intersentence linkage, textual organization, text-typology, and text-corpora and linguistic description of literary text. Thus it is separated from old practice carried out under the term literary criticism. Value judgement, subjectivity, aestheticism, interpretation, verbosity, intellectual gymnastics, vague generalizations, nebulous epithets, ulterior considerations and unsubstantiated personal opinions are the parts of literary criticism.

As a discipline it is parallel to literary criticism but as a technique it is complementary to literary criticism.

Enkvist stated that:

'A recognition of the dual and complementary value of intuitive judgement of language use on the one hand, and the more objective techniques of description of language phenomena which modern linguistics makes available on the other, is necessary and
indeed fundamental to this view of stylistic study. ¹

Stylistics is not opposed to literary criticism. According to Gray:

'Between true literature and linguistics there is no conflict the real linguist is at least half a litterateur and the real litterateur at least half a linguist.' ²

Stylistics provide a method of description, Literary Criticism provides a method of evaluation. Stylistics serves the study of literature, it aims at investigating the aesthetic effects of language. stylistics is an aid to literary criticism.

2.3.2 **Stylistics and poetics**:

Poetics deals with the theory of literature. It is concerned with the question what makes a verbal message a work of art?

Roman Jacobson stated that:

'Because the main subject of poetics is the *differentia specifica* of verbal art in relation to other arts and in relation to

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other kinds of verbal behavior, Poetics is entitled to the leading place in literary studies.  

Jacobson further shows the relationship of poetics and linguistics by saying that:
'Poetics deals with problems of verbal structure, just as the analysis of painting is concerned with pictorial structure. Since linguistics is the global science of verbal structure, poetics may be regarded as an integral part of linguistics.'

2.3.3 **Stylistics and aesthetics**

Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy which studies beauty in art and nature. This view relates literature with other fine arts and have a clearer view that the concept of style as choice between alternative expressions achieve a particular goal. Linguistic stylistics offers justification of aesthetic judgement of literary text through stylistic analysis. Then the study of style will be called a part of aesthetics.

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2.3.4 **Stylistics and Rhetorics**:

Rhetorics is concerned with effectiveness of language use. Rhetorics as Aristotle defines and treats it - 'the art of persuasion.' Rhetorics should not stop with Aristotle. But the study of rhetorics can justifiably and conveniently began with him. It has been and will continue to be productive for literary and linguistic studies to start largely from new premises that are self contained within a given canon. Style covers the area traditionally occupied by rhetorics. Rhetorics covers - clarity, vivacity, persuasiveness, figures of speech. These categories also belong to stylistics. Thus stylistics is related to rhetorics.

2.3.5 **Stylistics and Semiotics**:

Semiotics is the science of linguistic signs and their relationship. This relationship is three-fold:

1. **Syntactic**
2. **Semantic**
3. **Pragmatic**

A Semio-linguistic approach looks at literature as discourse. Semio-linguistic approach extends the concept of choice, that a writer makes, including the choice of one code or the other from the verbal repertoire of the speech community. Semiotics is based on stylistic analysis of the literary text. Semiotics is the larger frame of stylistics. It has two sides expression and content. Both systems are related to each other. Thus stylistics is related to semiotics.
2.4 **Stylistics achievements and the levels of linguistics**:

We can see the stylistic achievements on the following levels of linguistics:

1. **Phonological aspects of style**
2. **Grammatical aspects of style**
3. **Lexical aspects of style**
4. **Semantic aspects of style**.

**Phonological aspects of stylistics** comprises sound-symbolism, alliteration, consonance, assonance etc.

**Grammatical aspects of style** deals with the change of word order, repetition of the parts of speech, deviation in the use of affixes and grammatical categories etc.

**Lexical aspects of style** consists of lexical choice and lexical devices. It deals with the typology of words and style-features of lexical items.

**Semantic aspects of style** comprises the problems of meaning, and meaning relations. It includes figurative use of language, style markers and semantic parallelism.

In this way, stylistics can be studied at various levels of language.
2.5 Concluding Remarks

To sum up we can say that the essential of the stylistic study is setting up a series of correspondences between the linguistic principles and the content of the literary text. Technically, stylistics in the study of the linguistic features such as phonological, grammatical lexical and semantic. These features directly affect the meaning of an utterance.