LIBERAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE REVIEW
An International Double-Blind Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-3175 | ISSN (Print): 3006-3167
Volume 5, Issue 8 October, 2026

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF BULLEH SHAH'S POEM I HAVE SEEN THE RISING SUNS SETTING (چڑھدے سورج ڈھلدے ویکھے)

Aliza Zahid[1], Qurat Ul Ain Rafaqat[2], Muhammad Nadeem Anwar[*3]

[1,2]*Department of Linguistics and Communications (DLC), University of Management and Technology, UMT, Sialkot.*
[*3]*Associate Professor, University of Management and Technology, UMT, Sialkot.*

[1]25023084003@skt.umt.edu.pk, [2]25023084008@skt.umt.edu.pk, [*3]nadeem.anwar@skt.umt.edu.pk

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23763367

Keywords
Bulleh Shah, stylistic analysis, figurative language, Punjabi language

Article History
Received: *25 June 2026*
Accepted: *16 September 2026*
Published: *29 October 2026*

Copyright @Author
Corresponding Author: *
Muhammad Nadeem Anwar

Abstract

This research focuses on an in-depth stylistic analysis of Bulleh Shah's poem I Have Seen the Rising Suns Setting (چڑھدے سورج ڈھلدے ویکھے). Unlike many previous studies that mainly examine translated versions of Punjabi poetry, this study concentrates on the original Punjabi text to explore its literary richness and stylistic beauty. The research is qualitative in nature and the research focuses on the use of figurative language in the poem to understand how Bulleh Shah conveys deep philosophical and spiritual meanings through poetic expression based on Leech and Short's (2007) model. The study's conclusions show that Bulleh Shah's wisdom, spirituality, and social insight are reflected in the poem, which is both stylistically and emotionally rich. The poem's use of figurative language conveys universal truths about life, power, and human nature while also enhancing its aesthetic appeal. Additionally, because original language has deeper cultural and stylistic meanings than translated texts, the study highlights the significance of doing more research on indigenous Punjabi literature in its original form.

INTRODUCTION

Stylistics is an organized approach to text analysis as it examines textual language and attempts to elucidate how it produces style, affect, and meaning. In practical terms, stylistics serves as a bridge that connects the two significant disciplines of linguistics and literature. The best way to define stylistics is as "the linguistic study of style," according to Leech and Short in their book Style in Fiction (2007, p.11). They also state that "using an altered form of words is the most effective means of achieving both clarity and diction and a certain dignity." (p.14)

Short and Candlin (1989) defined it as a linguistic approach that deals with literary texts. Stylistics is also referred to as 'Linguo-stylistics' which is a branch of general linguistics in the words of Galperin (1971). Style and Stylistics go hand in hand; however, stylistic refers to the expression, use of language, choice of language or diction, rhythm or tone, sentence structure, and deviations from the traditional set of patterns regarding grammar, and how meanings are created through poetic style; (Bradford, 2005), while style refers to that how language is expressed i.e., in what manner, with what intensity, etc, a person's thoughts and his way of writing or speaking (Abdulbari et al. 2015). Wales (2001) says that stylistics is an ambiguous term and is hard to define. Every author or poet has their own specific and unique format of writing, his choice of words and use of language, portrayal of emotions which is considered as the style of that writer (Zhukovska, 2010) this is why it varies from person to person and text to text.

Syed Abdullah Shah Qadri who is commonly known by the name Bulleh Shah is renowned for his mystic, revolutionary poetry and existentialism. He is considered as the "Poet of People" and "Father of Punjabi

LIBERAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE REVIEW
LJLLR
An International Double-Blind Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-3175 | ISSN (Print): 3006-3167
Volume 5, Issue 8 October, 2026

Enlightenment". Bulleh Shah followed and practiced the Sufi custom of Punjabi verse laid out by Sufi poets like Shah Hussain, Sultan Bahu and Shah Sharaf and is also known as a well-known sufi mystic of Punjabi poetry (Motwani, 2021). He is one of the most "celebrated and famous poet", he had a natural appeal and no other sufi poet enjoys the same reputation as he did (Tahseen, 2022). His verses are filled with profound spiritual insights and societal critiques. Through his eloquent words, he explored themes of love, devotion, and the human connection to the divine, making him a cherished poet whose works resonate with people seeking spiritual enrichment and personal growth. The attractiveness of his work lies in its ability to address complex themes of love, spirituality, and the human condition in a relatable and beautiful manner. He is best known for his captivating and melodious style, his poetry strikes a harmonious balance between mysticism and reality. His style is different in the way that he represents his culture and the authentication of language in all of his works.

Jaafar (2014) illustrates that stylistics shows more concern towards how poetry is written than what is written. Poetry being a unique genre of Literature expresses many linguistic deviations from the language used in prose or daily life conversations (Crystal, 1987). The function of stylistics is not only to describe some formal features of the text but it also significantly describes its functions (Wales, 2001). This helps to analyze a literary work far more accurately and this process of analysis is termed "Foregrounding" in Stylistics.

This study explores the stylistic features of Bulleh Shah's poem *I Have Seen the Rising Suns Setting* (چڑھدے سورج ڈھلدے ویکھے), a profound reflection on the temporary nature of worldly power, pride, and human status. Through the use of figurative language, the poem presents deep spiritual and philosophical ideas in a simple yet powerful poetic style. This research analyzes various figures of speech such as metaphor, symbolism, imagery, simile, and repetition to uncover the hidden meanings and artistic beauty of the poem. The study further highlights how Bulleh Shah employs symbolic expressions and poetic imagery to criticize worldly arrogance and emphasize the reality of decline and mortality. Moreover, the use of original Punjabi language reflects the richness of Punjabi literary tradition and strengthens the emotional and cultural impact of the poem.

Problem Statement

Although stylistic analysis of poetry has long been a significant field in linguistic and literary studies, the majority of studies that have been done on Sufi poetry in Punjabi have either relied on translated versions or have mainly concentrated on thematic interpretation rather than analyzing the original textual and linguistic elements. The systematic analysis of figurative language and stylistic devices in the original Punjabi text of Bulleh Shah's poetry, especially in the poem *I Have Seen the Rising Suns Setting*, has received no attention. Previous studies have emphasized the spiritual and philosophical aspects of Sufi poetry, and they have examined the stylistic construction of meaning through metaphors, symbolism, imagery, and other figurative expressions in another poem of Bulleh Shah (Shafique & Khan, 2020). There is still a lack of knowledge about how linguistic decisions add to the text's poetic and ideological depth in this particular poem. By performing a thorough stylistic analysis of the figurative language in the chosen poem, this study seeks to close this gap and reveal how Bulleh Shah uses poetic expression to communicate difficult concepts of spirituality, unity, and human existence.

Research Objectives

- To analyze the use of figurative language (such as metaphor, imagery, symbolism, paradox, and hyperbole etc) in Bulleh Shah's poem *I Have Seen the Rising Suns Setting* (چڑھدے سورج ڈھلدے ویکھے).
- To investigate the role of stylistic features in conveying social meanings in the selected poem.

Research Questions

1. What type of figurative language (such as metaphor, imagery, symbolism, paradox, and hyperbole) used in Bulleh Shah's poem *I Have Seen the Rising Suns Setting* (چڑھدے سورج ڈھلدے ویکھے)?
2. What role do stylistic features play in conveying social meanings in the selected poem?

Significance of the Study

LIBERAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE REVIEW
LJLLR
An International Double-Blind Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-3175 | ISSN (Print): 3006-3167
Volume 5, Issue 8 October, 2026

This research is significant as it contributes to the understanding of stylistic features in Bulleh Shah's poem *I Have Seen the Rising Suns Setting* (چڑھدے سورج ڈھلدے ویکھے). By focusing on figurative language such as metaphor, imagery, symbolism, paradox, and irony, the study highlights the linguistic richness of the selected poem. It also draws attention to the ways in which these stylistic devices contribute to expressing social meanings. The findings of this research are expected to be useful for students, researchers, and literary scholars in understanding Sufi poetry from a stylistic perspective. This research enhances the appreciation of stylistic analysis in exploring the literary and ideological significance of Sufi poetic works.

Literature Review

Roona et al. (2022) unearth Daud Kamal's representative poem *'The Street of Nightingale'* stylistically and also on various linguistic levels to explain the function performed by style and structure along with stylistic devices to create a coherent poem and meaning. The poem concerns the difference between modern life and its chaos and rustic life and its beauty. Morphologically, they praise Kamal's choice of words to construct this unimaginable piece of writing, the poem is romantic in nature but the tone is full of agony and fear. Anjum (2021), similarly works on the same poem and analyzes it at almost all linguistic levels to applaud Kamal's perfect use of imagery in the poem.

Bulleh Shah is considered one of the most well-known Punjabi poets, and his poem named *'Bullah I know not who I am'* is analyzed by Mazhar et al. (2021), on different linguistic levels like graphological, phonological, semantic, morphological, pragmatic, and lexico-syntactic level. They also highlight the indispensable role of stylistic devices to convey the hidden thoughts of the poet beautifully. The study is done on the translated version of the poem. Bulleh Shah's grand style, portrayal of the culture, and diction are very clear in his poetry, he is known as '*the acme of Sufi literature'*.

Bulleh Shah *'Ilmon Bas Kren O-Yaar'* is explored pragmatically by Shafiq (2019) to explain the hidden meaning and purpose of the poet. Mystic poetry serves the purpose of bringing people back together in times of chaos and mayhem. The poem is considered to be a masterpiece of Shah, in which he sarcastically calls the attention of people to utilize knowledge to understand humanity by giving various examples. Bulleh Shah expressed uncertainty concerning the worth of knowledge that one gains when it serves for no good reason but rather ends up making many issues for the learned ones (Abbas, 2016).

Syahputra et al. (2018) analyzes Allama Iqbal's 'The Bird's Complaint' phonologically. They deconstruct the sound devices as assonance, consonance, alliteration and onomatopoeia along with the rhyming patterns that makes the poem melodious and pleasing to ears when read aloud. Consonance is the most effective sound device at first place and second to it is assonance giving the phonological effect along with alliteration. The rhyming patterns used in the poem are monotonous because almost all stanzas follow the same rhyming patterns.

Browning's poem *'Patriot into Traitor'* is one of the best-known poems in terms of style and structure. Ahmed and Irshad (2015 selected this poem for stylistic analysis. Browning is famous for his dramatic monologues and his choice of words and use of lively images, rhyming patterns, and diction distinguishes him from other poets. This analysis is done on four linguistic levels graphological, phonological, morphological, and lexico-syntactic levels. The poem is deconstructed to disclose the underlying meanings that the poet really wants to impart. In the poem, Browning very beautifully shifts from real-world problems to Greek Mythology in no time to intensify the scene. The phonological features which include the sound devices, rhymes, and patterns make the poem melodious and appealing to one's ears and this is one of the best features of Browning's poetry.

Khan and Jabeen (2015) explore John Keats's *'To Autumn'* from a stylistic point of view through its grammar, graphology, phonology, syntax, and various stylistic devices and schemes in the poem. Keats' use of sensuous images, objectivity, his use of personification, nature, and beauty, everything aspect is vivid in his poem. Robert Frost's *'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening'* has always been a subject of criticism because of the idea he presented in it, and still, it is thought to be incomprehensible because of its use of words. Hashmi, Mahmood, and Mahmood

LIBERAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE REVIEW
An International Double-Blind Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-3175 | ISSN (Print): 3006-3167
Volume 5, Issue 8 October, 2026

(2019) stylistically analyze this masterpiece of Frost to explain the main idea that he wants to display, the idea of a short span of human life and innumerable responsibilities of humankind.

Bulleh Shah is not against acquiring knowledge but he condemns people who gain little knowledge and then flaunt their learning as scholars. He actually encourages the search for truth of humans, through knowledge that leads you to reality and divinity. He prefers that knowledge should bring peace to humans rather than misery. Despite the parallel construction of both versions of poems, original and translated, through an in-depth analysis, it is revealed that the essence of the original version is lost when it is translated and meanings, that the poet actually wants to convey, are also altered (Rafat; 2014).

Thus, considering the discussion above, a research gap exists in the stylistic study of Bulleh Shah's poetry, particularly in the limited focus on the figurative language used in the original Punjabi text of the poem *I Have Seen the Rising Suns Setting* (چڑھدے سورج ڈھلدے ویکھے). Previous studies have largely emphasized thematic interpretation and translated versions, while the detailed analysis of stylistic devices such as metaphor, imagery, symbolism, paradox, and irony remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining the figurative language in the selected poem. It aims to highlight how these stylistic features contribute to the expression of spiritual, philosophical, and social meanings in the text, thereby enhancing understanding of the poetic and aesthetic richness of Punjabi Sufi literature.

Methodology

Research Design

The data for this research consist of the original Punjabi text of Bulleh Shah's selected poem *I Have Seen the Rising Suns Setting* (چڑھدے سورج ڈھلدے ویکھے). The study is based on a qualitative research design, as it involves a detailed textual interpretation rather than numerical analysis. According to Creswell (2017), "A qualitative method is the one in which the researcher frequently bases knowledge claims on constructivist, participatory, or both viewpoints". Stylistic analysis is employed as the main analytical framework to examine the linguistic and literary features of the poem. The stylistic model of Leech and Short (2007) is applied in this study, which is widely used for analyzing literary texts at different linguistic levels. The analysis focuses on identifying and interpreting figurative language used in the text. The selected lines from the poem are closely examined to determine how linguistic choices contribute to meaning-making and poetic expression.

Data Collection

This study focuses on Bulleh Shah's poem *I Have Seen the Rising Suns Setting* (چڑھدے سورج ڈھلدے ویکھے), which serves as the primary source of data. The poem is taken from reliable published translations and authentic literary sources to ensure accuracy. First, the researcher collected the complete text of the poem. Second, the poem was carefully read multiple times to identify significant stylistic and figurative elements. Third, the selected lines and expressions were organized for detailed analysis. Finally, a stylistic analysis approach was applied to examine how figurative language and stylistic features contribute to the expression of the poem's central themes and meanings.

Sampling Technique

Sampling technique are of two major types that are probabilistic sampling and non-probabilistic sampling (Bhardwaj 2019). This study used purposive sampling. The purposive sampling technique is also known as judgment sampling. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Oliver (2006) emphasizes that purposive sampling is one in which researchers select specific samples based on importance, capacity, and research question in this approach the researcher chooses units of sample on knowledge basis and specifically for this research study (Oliver and Jupp 2006). In the present study, the research data is selected through purposive sampling, which allows the researcher to choose relevant portions of Bulleh Shah's poem for detailed analysis. This approach helps in highlighting key meanings, stylistic features, and thematic messages conveyed in the text.

LIBERAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE REVIEW
An International Double-Blind Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-3175 | ISSN (Print): 3006-3167
Volume 5, Issue 8 October, 2026

Theoretical Framework

Stylistics is an organized approach to text analysis as it examines textual language and attempts to elucidate how it produces style, affect, and meaning. In practical terms, stylistics serves as a bridge that connects the two significant disciplines of linguistics and literature. The best way to define stylistics is as "the linguistic study of style," according to Leech and Short in their book Style in Fiction (2007, p.11). They also state that "using an altered form of words is the most effective means of achieving both clarity and diction and a certain dignity." (p.14)

Data Analysis

Metaphor

A direct comparison in which one thing is said to be another to suggest a deeper meaning.

ہیرے دا کوئی مُل نہ تارے (No one knows the value of a diamond)

The diamond metaphorically represents genuine virtue, wisdom, or spiritual worth. It is not merely a precious stone but a symbol of a truly valuable person. So, this is metaphor comparison of diamond with valuable person.

Symbolism

The representation of a deeper or abstract meaning through the use of a person, thing, or image.

کھوٹے سکے چلدے ویکھے (I have seen counterfeit coins circulate)

Counterfeit coins represent individuals who are devoid of true value but achieve success and social acceptance. The symbol criticizes society's flawed value system.

Paradox

A seemingly contradictory statement that actually reveals a more profound truth.

میں تے پتھر گلدے ویکھے (I have seen stones melt)

Normally, stones don't melt. The statement articulates the paradox that the impossibly possible can be made possible by divine power.

Hyperbole

A deliberate exaggeration used for emphasis or effect.

پانی اتے چلدے ویکھے (I have seen people walk on water)

This is an intentional overstatement of human potential. It highlights the use of divine grace for miraculous transformation.

Antithesis (Contrast)

To put opposing concepts side by side to draw attention to a difference.

چڑھدے سورج ڈھلدے ویکھے (I have seen rising suns set)

Antithesis is produced by the contrasting pictures of rising and setting. They emphasize how fleeting success and power are in this world.

Imagery

A descriptive language that gives the reader clear mental images.

چڑھدے سورج, دیوے بلدے,کھوٹے سکے, ہیرے, پانی, پتھر (rising suns, burning lamps, diamonds, counterfeit coins, water, stones)

These striking visuals stimulate the reader's senses. They bring abstract spiritual concepts to life and help people remember them.

LIBERAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE REVIEW
An International Double-Blind Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-3175 | ISSN (Print): 3006-3167
Volume 5, Issue 8 October, 2026

Irony

A contrast between what is expected and what actually happens.

ہیرے دا کوئی مُل نہ تارے (No one knows the value of a diamond)

کھوٹے سکے چلدے ویکھے (I have seen counterfeit coins circulate)

There is situational irony here. One would expect genuine worth (the diamond) to be recognized and valued, but instead fake coins circulate successfully. The reality is the opposite of what should happen.

Conclusion

This study provides a stylistic analysis of Bulleh Shah's poem *I Have Seen the Rising Suns Setting* (چڑھدے سورج ڈھلدے ویکھے) with a particular focus on figurative language. The analysis shows that the poem is rich in stylistic devices such as metaphor, imagery, symbolism, paradox, and irony, which play a significant role in constructing meaning and enhancing poetic expression. This study concludes that the selected poem is not only artistically powerful but also deeply meaningful in its social, philosophical, and spiritual dimensions. It further demonstrates that the original Punjabi text carries strong aesthetic and cultural value that may not be fully captured in translated versions. Overall, this research contributes to a better understanding of stylistic analysis in Sufi poetry and emphasizes the importance of studying indigenous literary works in their original language.

REFERENCES

Abdulbari, R. A., Malik, M. Z. A., Manzoor, S., & Asif, M. K. (2015). Stylistic Analysis of "Daffodil by William Wordsworth". *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, *2*(9), 491-494.

Ahmed, M., & Irshad, A. (2015). Stylistic Analysis of Robert Browning's Poem "Patriot into Traitor". *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 6(4), 11-19.

Ali, F., Ashraf, I., & Tahseen, A. (2022). An analysis of Literary Culture in Pakistan in the light of Sufi Kalam 'Tere Ishaq Nachayaa by Baba Bulleh Shah. *International Journal of Linguistics and Culture*, *3*(2), 193-207.

Bradford, R. (2005). *Stylistics: The New Critical Idiom*. New York: Routledge.

Crystal, D. (1987). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Galperin, I. R. (1971). Some Principal Issues of Style and Stylistics as Viewed by Russian Linguists. *Style*, 1-20.

Jaafar, E. A. (2014). A stylistic analysis of two selected poems. *Journal of the College of Education for Women*, *25*(1), 238-248.

Khan, A. B., & Jabeen, T. (2015). Stylistics analysis of the poem 'To Autumn'by John Keats. *International Journal of Academic Research and Reflection*, *3*(1), 127-137.

Leech, G. N., & Short, M. (2007). Style in fiction: A linguistic introduction to English fictional prose (No. 13). Pearson Education.

Mazhar, A., Iqbal, Z., Naseer, S., & Shahid, A. (2021). Stylistics Analysis Of "Bulla I Know Not Who I Am". *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, *18*(7), 2470-2478

Motwani, S. (2021). A Sufi Transformation: Baba Bulleh Shah.*The Acropolitan Magzine by New Acropolis*.

Rafat, T. (1982). *Bulleh Shah: A Selection*. Lahore: Vanguard.

Roona, M., Ghazanfar, S., & Maqbool, S. (2022). Stylistic Analysis of Daud Kamal's Poem The Street Of Nightingale. *Jahan-e-Tahqeeq*, *5*(1), 204-218.

Shafiq, Z. (2019). Pragma-Stylistic Analysis of Bulleh Shah's Translated Poem "Ilmon Bas kren O-Yaar". *Pakistan Journal of Language Studies*, *3*(1), 1-14.

LIBERAL JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE REVIEW
An International Double-Blind Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN (Online): 3006-3175 | ISSN (Print): 3006-3167
Volume 5, Issue 8 October, 2026

Short, M., & Candlin, C. (1989) Teaching study skills for English literature, *Reading, analyzing and teaching literature.* London: Longman.

Syahputra, F. P., Manurung, I. P. S., & Sinar, T. S. (2018). Phonological Level in Allama Iqbal's Poem "The Bird's Complaint": A Stylistic Analysis. *LiNGUA*, *13*(2), 79-90.

Wales, K. (2001) A Dictionary of Stylistics Studies in *language and linguistics.* London: Longman.

Wales.K (2001). *A Dictionary of Stylistics,* Pearson Education.

Zhukovska, V. V. (2010). *English stylistics: Fundamentals of theory and practice*. *Житомир*: Вид-во ЖДУ ім. І. Франка.