



RESEARCH PAPER

Stylistic Analysis of Surah Al-Naas (Al-nās)

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ABSTRACT

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The Holy Quran is a unique book of its own kind. It is a message of the Creator (SWT) to human beings, His Creation. This paper stylistically analyzes Surah Al-nās, the last Surah of the Holy Book. The research applies four levels of stylistic analysis, i.e. graphological level, phonological level, lexical level and discourse analysis level. The results show that though the Surah is small with only six verses yet it is stylistically a very rich one. The results reveal that the Surah not only has some unique features of composition but also beautifully sums up the message given in the Holy Book. They reveal that the Surah has simple and musically composition. The analysis unveils the unique patterns of the starting and ending of the verses of the Surah. It also shows that the attributes mentioned in the verses of the Surah deal with the direct relation of mankind with the Creator (SWT). The small Surah revises the message given in the Holy Quran and warns the man against the deceptive and evil attacks of Satan. The Surah, on one hand, reveals the power and authority of the Creator (SWT) and on the other hand helplessness of human beings. The human beings are vulnerable to the temptations of Satan, therefore, they need to surrender themselves before Him (SWT) to lead a successful and happy life.

Introduction

Stylistics, also named as literary linguistics (Bruke, 2017), is a branch of linguistics which studies the distinctive uses of language (Crystal, 1997) and analyzes a text linguistically (Bruke, 2013). As a discipline, stylistics is comparatively a new field which came in fashion in the late 19th century. Stylistics mainly concerns with the individual style of expressing one's feeling through the language (Rashid

&Lodhi, 2018). Stylistic or style can be done in three ways, i.e., by analyzing the content of the selected text, observing the explicit form of the text and analyzing the deviation of the writer or poet/poetess from the contemporary trends or certain criteria (Trichomwaree, 2015).

Any text if analyzed by applying linguistic methods not only unveils the word choices made by the author but also familiarizes the readers with the reality regarding why the author used that specific terms and how he/she, by the use of that words and linguistic elements, produces aesthetic sense in the work(Leech & Short, 1981). Verses of the Holy Quran are the words of Allah Almighty (SWT), the Creator of this universe, which were revealed to the Holy Prophet (SAW). The language of the Holy Quran is Arabic which was a fully developed language when it was revealed to the Prophet (SAW) fourteen hundred years ago. At that time, all other languages being used across the world nowadays were either passing through their evolutionary periods or were at the stage of infancy or yet were not born.

Stylistics is concerned with elaborating the significance in the interpretation of the text (Wales, 2014) and it is extremely difficult to analyze the esthetic beauty and loftiness of the language without the deep understanding of the Arabic language. The Holy Quran is the most authentic and matchless book(Rashid &Lodhi, 2018) in this world and to capture the characteristics of the Creator of these verses is beyond the level of understanding of a common human being. However, this paper attempts to analyze Surah Al-Naas, the last Surah of the Holy Quran, stylistically by analyzing some of the literary devices used in the Surah.

Material and Methods

The Holy book is free of the boundaries of time, place and cultures. It is a message of the Creator (SWT) to the human being, His creation. As the Creator of the words of this book is Allah Almighty (SWT), therefore, the rules made by His creation cannot capture the greatness, depth and beauty of these words. The present study attempts to understand the Surah by applying the following four levels of stylistic analysis:

Table 1
Level of Stylistic Analysis used for the analysis

Sr. No.	Name of the Level	Description of the level
1	Graphological Level	This level involves analyzing the structure and pattern of the text. It shows the language pattern used by the writer for expressing his/her ideas.
2	Phonological Level	This level involves the analysis of the phonological devices, e.g., rhyming scheme, alliteration, assonance and consonance, etc. used in the text.
3	Lexical Level	It involves the investigation of the words used by the writer in the text.

4	Discourse Analysis	This level involves the analysis of the literary, hidden and invisible meaning of the text.
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Surah Al-Naas ("Amazing Numerical Facts about Al Nas", n.d.)



Transliteration of Surah Al-Naas

Qula' zুবirabbīn-nās. Malīkīn-nās. Ilāhīn-nās. Mīn sharrīl-waswāsīl-khannās. Allazī yuwas wisu fī ud rin-nās. Mīnal-jinnatī wan-nās (Wikipedia, 2020).

English Translation of Surah Al-Naas

Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind. The Sovereign of mankind. The God of mankind. From the evil of the retreating whisperer - Who whispers [evil] into the breasts of mankind - From among the jinn and mankind" (An-Nas, n.d.).

The Background of the Revelation of the Surah

There is a difference in the opinions of the *Ulamas* (religious scholars) about the time of the revelation of the Surah. Some consider it Makki and to others, it is Maddni Surah, however, according to most of the traditions, the Surah Al-Falaq and Surah Al-Naas were revealed in Makkah ("Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi", n.d.). When Quresh failed to stop the Holy Prophet (SAW) from his sacred mission of spreading the message of Allah Almighty (SWT), they tried to stop him through magic. A group of Jews of Khaiber met Labid bin Asam, a famous magician from the Ansar tribe of Bani Zurayq, and convinced him to cast a magic spell on the Holy Prophet (SAW) so that he might be stopped from his mission (Elserafy, Amira. "The sisters of

the Muslim Brotherhood: Islamic activism for better or for worse.", 2014). Through one of the attendants of the Holy Prophet (SAW), they succeeded in getting a piece of a comb with some hair of Holy Prophet (SAW). A spell in the spathe of a male date-tree was hidden under the stone in the well of BaniZurayq. The spell took a whole year to show its effects on the Holy Prophet (SAW). Though the spell was failed to stop him from his mission, however, it affected him physically. One day, when he was in the house of Hazrat Ayesha (RA), the Holy Prophet (SAW) saw Hazrat Gabriel (AS) and HazratIzrail (AS) in human shape. They told the Holy Prophet (SAW) about the spell and location where it had been hidden. The next day, he (SAW) along with some of his companions discovered the spell from the well. They also discovered a comb and the hair of Holy Prophet (SAW) along with a cord knotted at 11 places. There was also an image with needles pricked into it. Hazrat Gabriel (AS) came there and told the Holy Prophet (SAW) to recite the 11 verses of Surah Al-Falaq and Surah Al-Naas. After the recitation of the 11 verses, all knots were loosened and needles were removed, and the effect of the spell was lost (Ibid, 2014).

Results and Discussion

This section of the paper applies four levels of the stylistic analysis to the Surah.

Graphological Level

Graphological level of the analysis deals with the writing of a text, i.e. contractions, commas, question marks, stops etc. It reveals the way the writer uses graphics to achieve the effects (Phonological & Graphological Level",2015). Surah Al-Naas consists of 6 sentences, 20 words and 80 letters. The Surah has 6 sentences with simple composition.

Table 2
Number of Words in verses

Verse (Ayah) Number	Number of words used in the verse
1	4
2	2
3	2
4	4
5	5
6	3
Total Words	20

Table 2 shows that six verses of the Surah have 20 words. The first and fourth verses have four words each. The second and third verses have two words each. The last verse has three words. The fifth verse is the longest verse of the Surah which has five words. The Surah has a simple composition. This composition produces a musical impact which makes it easy to learn by heart.

Table 3
Frequency of letters

Sr. No.	Letter	Frequency
1		18
2		2
3		1
4		0
5		1
6		0
7		1
8		1
9		2
10		3
11		0
12		10
13		1
14		1
15		0
16		0
17		0
18		1
19		0
20		1
21		1
22	ك	1
23		12
24		3
25		8
26		1
27		7
28	ي	3
29		1
Total No.		80

Table 3 shows that 22 Arabic alphabets have been used in the Surah. The total number of letters used in the Surah is 80. The letter ك has been used more frequently. It has been used 18 times in the Surah. It is the first letter of the name of (SWT). The meaning of ك is likeable and friendly. The letters ي and ك have been used 12 and 10 times respectively. The frequency of letter ي is 8 and ك is 7.

Phonological Level

The phonological level of stylistic analysis analyzes the use of phonological devices like rhyme scheme, alliteration, assonance, consonance etc.

Rhyme Scheme

Surah Al-Naas has 6 verses (sentences) and each verse ends with /s/sound. This is one of the miracles of the Holy Book that most of its Surahs have similar sound patterns of their verses. The rhyming scheme of the Surah is AAAAAA.

Initial letter of the verses

The Surah has a unique pattern of starting the verses, i.e. the verses start with letters **ا** and **م** (Table 4) alternatively. The three verses of the Surah start with the letter **ا** and the three with **م**. Each word of the first, third and fifth verse starts with the letter **ا** and the second, fourth and sixth with **م**. The first verse of the first Surah () of the Holy Book opens with the sound **ا** and last verse of the last Surah () starts with sound(**م**). These two letters may be considered the most beautiful letters of the Arabic Alphabets because the former letter is the first letter of the name of Allah Almighty (SWT) and the latter is the first letter of the name of the Holy Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ (SAW), the most beautiful extremes, i.e. the Creator and the creation. Hence, this claim may not be vague that the Holy Books opens with the name of Allah (SWT) and end with the name of Muhammad (SAW), the last Prophet.

Table 4
Beginning of each verse

No. of Verse	Sound	Word
1 st		
2 nd		ملك
3 rd		
4 th		
5 th		الذى
6 th		

Alliteration

It involves the repetition of the initial consonant sounds in the text. There are 6 verses in the Surah and 20 words. There are 8 words in the Surah that start with a consonant sound but there are no 2 words that start with the same sound in any verse of the Surah, another uniqueness of the Book.

Assonance

Assonance involves the repetition of the vowel sound in the text. There is an /a/ sound that repeats four times in the Surah. The sound /i/ repeats 7 times in it.

Consonance

It refers to the repetition of consonant sound and more specifically, a sound that comes at the end of the word. In Surah Al-Naas, the sound /s/ repeats at the end of each verse, e.g., all 6 verses of the Surah end with the word .

Lexical Level

The lexical level involves the analysis of the vocabulary used in the text. It explores the words used in the literary text (Ruban & Backiavathy, 2016).

Table 5
Frequency of Words

Sr. No.	Word	Frequency
1		1
2		1
3		1
4		5
5	ملك	1
6		1
7		1
8		1
9		1
10		1
11	الذى	1
12	يوسوس	1
13	فى	1
14		1
15		1
16	الجنة	1

Table 5 shows that 16 words have been used in this Surah. All the words have been used once except . This word has been used 5 times in Surah Al-Naas, also the name of the Surah. The initial three letters of the word are which have the highest frequency, 18, 12 and 8 respectively. The meaning of is mankind. This Surah presents a direct relation of mankind with its Creator (SWT).

The Surah opens with the word (I seek refuge). The meaning of *refuge* is to seek shelter against some danger or difficulty. The seeking of the refuge shows the helplessness of a man against the evil forces. The word (mankind) represents the helpless condition of human beings who are constantly threatened by the evil forces, i.e. Satan and his companions. The first three verses mention the three attributes of Allah Almighty (SWT). They are (the Lord, the Cherisher, the Sustainer), ملك (the King, the Emperor) and (the matchless, the Deity, the Only worthy to be worshipped). The other important words used in the Surah are (mischief, evil

attack), (prompter of evil), (one who retreats), فى صدور (in hearts) and جنّة (Including Jins and human beings).

The first three verses of the Surah present the power and Authority of Allah Almighty (SWT). The three attributes of Allah Almighty (SWT) used in the initial three verses are مالک (the Lord, the Cherisher, the Sustainer) because He provides the all living beings with food and other necessities that are required for them to survive. He (SWT) is the مالک (the King, the Emperor) because everything in the universe is under His control and follows His (SWT) directions. He (SWT) is the (the matchless, the Deity) because He (SWT) is entitled to be worshipped and nothing equals Him (SWT) in His authority and power.

The last three verses of the surah reveal the helplessness and weakness of the nature of mankind that is vulnerable to mischievous attacks of Satan and his companions including human beings and Jins. The words (prompter of evil) and (one who retreats) on one hand describe the ways of the attacks of Satan and on the other hands reveal the weakness of human nature which may become a victim of the evil prompts. If a man is not tempted at the first attempt, he may fall a victim if an effort is made again and again ("Towards Understanding the Quran", n.d.). The words used in the fourth verse shows that Satan's weapon of attacking human beings is through prompting evil suggestions because he has no other powers to lead them astray (Islahion, 1991). Perhaps, he knows the weakness of human beings that is why he keeps on inspiring them by whispering the evil suggestions in their hearts. The word is derived from which means to hide after appearing and repeating the same action again and again ("Towards Understanding the Quran", n.d.). The word highlights the style actions that he keeps on repeating his attacks until he succeeds in his objectives. The words جنّة والناس (including Jins and human beings) indicate that the mischievous attacks on human beings are not limited to Satan only. There are his followers among human beings and Jins who carry on his task of leading the people astray.

Discourse Analysis

This level of analysis attempts to understand the hidden meaning of the text. The apparent meaning of the Surah is that it is a lesson that was taught by the Allah Almighty (SWT) to his men through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to seek His (SWT) refuge or protection against the deceptive and mischievous actions of Satan. The analysis shows that the Surah has much deeper meanings.

The Surah starts with repeating the three attributes of Allah Almighty (SWT), i.e. (the Lord, the Cherisher, the Sustainer), مالک (the King, the Emperor) and (the matchless, the matchless, the Deity, the Only worthy to be worshipped). These attributes emphasize the *oneness* of Allah Almighty (SWT). These are the same attributes with which the opening Surah of the Holy Book () starts. The lesson of *toheed* (oneness) taught in the first Surah has been repeated in this Surah. The attributes mentioned here are directly related to mankind because they determine the basic rights of Allah Almighty (SWT) imposed on man (Islahion, 1991). These

attributes are not just to be uttered orally but to have a belief in them is part of the faith of Muslims.

The Surah sum up the whole message given in the Holy Book that Satan is an eternal enemy of a man. He not only had refused to bow (make a *sajda*) before Adam (AS) but also caused to leave him paradise though his mischievous and deceptive actions. He claimed that he (Satan) was superior to man because he had been created from *fire* whereas man had been created from *clay*. He had not only refused to bow before man (Hazrat Adam) but openly challenged Allah Almighty (SWT) that he would lead man astray and put him on evil ways. Allah Almighty (SWT) has warned man again and again about the mischievous and deceptive actions of Satan throughout the Holy Book. The person, who believes in the said attributes of Allah Almighty (SWT), can never be trapped by Satan or his followers.

The Surah opens with seeking the refuge or protection of Allah Almighty (SWT). By seeking His (SWT) refuge or protection means surrendering oneself to His (SWT) wishes and leaving one's earthly desires, even one's own identity aside. When one seeks refuge of or protection from someone, he/she not only accepts his/her helplessness against the oppressor but also accepts the authority of the person whose refuge is being sought. He/she believes that the authority offering refuge has enough resources to meet all the needs of the refugee, it has power enough to meet any challenge, and that it has unchallengeable and indisputable authority, and can force anyone to obey it. By reciting the first three verses, a person accepts his/her helplessness and authority and power of Allah Almighty (WST) Who has complete control on all the resources and can meet the needs of the refugee (man). He/she also accepts that He (SWT) is the Lord (مالک) and the Only worthy to be worshipped (). By accepting Him (SWT) مالک and , one accepts that Allah (SWT) is enough to meet all his/her needs and he/she does not need to look towards any other authority for them because no one is there to equal His (SWT) authority.

Apparently (keeping the background of its revelation), the Surah was taught to the Holy Prophet (SAW) to defuse the effects of the spell made on him but indirectly it revises the message of the Holy Quran. By reciting the Surah, one not only seeks His (SWT) refuge but also accepts his authority and power. H/she accepts his/her weakness against the temptations of the evil forces and prays to Allah Almighty (SWT) to protect him/her from the deceptive actions of Satan.

Conclusion

The Holy Quran is the best source of knowledge and guidance for mankind. This paper attempted to explore the stylistic richness of the Surah and understand some hidden meanings. The four levels of stylistic analysis applied to the Surah reveal that it is a small and beautiful musically composed Surah of six verses. The Surah has 20 words and 80 letters. The letter , the initial letter of the name of Allah Almighty (WST), has been used more frequently. The other frequently used letters are , and . It has a unique pattern of starting the verses, i.e. starting with and .

The first, third and fifth verses start with *Alif* and second, fourth and sixth start with *Laam*. These two letters are the most beautiful letters of Arabic alphabets because the first is the initial letter of the name of *Allah* (SWT) and second is the initial letter of the name of the Holy Prophet ﷺ (SAW). The former letter is also the initial letter of the opening Surah *Al-Fatiha* and later is the first letter of the last verse of the last Surah of the Holy Book. There is another uniqueness of the Surah that no verse has no 2 words starting with the same sound. The sound */i/* repeats 7 times and */a/* repeats four times in the Surah. All of the six verses end with the sound */s/*. This Surah presents a direct relation of mankind with its Creator *Allah* (SWT). The first three verses of the Surah present the power and authority of Allah Almighty (SWT), and the last three verses reveal the helplessness and weakness of mankind that is vulnerable to mischievous attacks of Satan and its evil acts. The Surah also describes how Satan attacks human beings and leads them astray. In short, the Surah sums up the whole message given in the Holy Book.

The research has some limitations as well. The researchers have limited grammatical knowledge of the Arabic language and have employed four levels of stylistic analysis. An in-depth knowledge of the grammar and language would have been helped analyze its lexio-semantic and lexio-syntactic levels. For future studies, an analysis with the above knowledge is recommended.

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