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A STYLISTICS NOTE ON SANJAYA BARU'S THE "ACCIDENTAL PRIME MINISTER" by
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Abstract

The "Accidental Prime Minister" is a superb portrait and real political life accounts of Dr.Manmohan Singh. Sanjaya Baru has succeeded in his own ways to mould the text as context to suit the narrative technique, characterization in this book. Style is the manner of linguistic expressions either in prose form or poetry form. It exhibits how the writer says whatever he says. The typical style of Sanjaya Baru is analyzed in terms of 'diction' in this paper. This paper also analyses his choice of words, syntax, sentence structure, and other stylistics devices employed by him in his writings with a close study of the "Accidental Prime Minister".

Key words: Style, Choice of words, Alliterations, Language

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1. INTRODUCTION

Sanjaya Baru is an Indian political commentator and policy analyst, currently serving as Director for Geo-Economics and Strategy at the International Institute of Strategic Studies. Previously he had served as associate editor at The Economic Times and The Times of India, and then chief editor at Business Standard. Before he became a journalist, he was a member of Communist Party of India (Marxist) when he was a student at University of Hyderabad. He became Manmohan Singh's media advisor and chief spokesperson, a role in which he served from May 2004 until August 2008. In April 2014, Penguin India published *The Accidental Prime Minister*, the making and unmaking of Manmohan Singh is Baru's Journal accounts of what it was like to "balance" Public views for Singh while giving us a riveting look at Indian Politics as it happened behind the scenes. Baru observed up close Singh's often troubled relations with his ministers, his careful equation with Sonia Gandhi. The bestselling book has always been associated with competent writing and competent writing has always required an easy command of correct language and style. The style of a writer is an involuntary and intimate expression of his personality.

2. IDIOMS

The author incorporates idioms in this book, in order to make his work more creative and to give a dynamic visual to the readers. He uses correct idioms to amplify his messages in a way that draws readers in and helps to awaken their senses. Some examples are:

"I often burnt my finger" (instead of saying harm one 'self or often involved in risky tasks).

I assured him that I had heard it '**from the horse's mouth**'. (Page 6)

C.Rangarajan, **as hop, skips and jumps** (old-fashioned term for triple jump).

To **win brownie points** in the two states where it needed to bolster its presence (to get praise or approval for something you have done).



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3. CHOICE OF WORDS

Sanjaya Baru chooses words that contribute to the flow of a sentence. Polysyllabic words, alliteration, and consonance are used to create sentences that roll off the tongue. Onomatopoeia and short, staccato words are also used to break up the rhythm of a sentence. Sanjaya Baru wants to make Dr. Singh's character as unique and interesting as possible to the readers. One way to do this is to give his character a special skill or talent that sets him apart from other people. Besides, the author crutches gestures of Dr. Singh elsewhere in the book. They come in all shapes and sizes—maybe an eye roll, curled fists or shrugs—cues the writer tends to use while trying to convey what Dr. Singh's character or feeling through choice of effective descriptive words. To convey Dr. Singh is an introvert nature to the readers, Sanjaya Baru uses well sounded descriptive words in the following pages:

Despite the fact that I got to know Dr Singh well over the years, he continued to **remain an enigma**. **A man of few words**, he almost **never engaged in conversation** of a private or intimate nature. While he found it easier to talk 'talk shop' _ policy or current affairs __ he was **rarely animated**. When I began to work for him, I would often see him **sitting quietly, even awkwardly**, with **visitors and betraying very little emotion**. He had **no gift for small talk**. When obliged to interact with relatives during a visit to Kolkata or with old friends in Geneva, it seemed Dr Singh did not quite know what to say to them, and it was left to Mrs Kaur to keep the conversation going. His shyness, however, often made him appear **lacking in warmth and emotion**. Successful politicians are Janus-faced. They know when to be withdrawn and cold, and when to be warm and expressive. The wilier among them make the switch between these two persons in a flash. Dr Singh was not capable of such **swift transformations**. As Mrs Kaur once put it to me, '*He swallows everything, doesn't spit anything out.*' In formal meetings with visiting heads of government, he had a prepared brief that he often **memorized like a good student and followed**. In became **notorious**



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for his silences. Over time, his silences and his *overt shyness* seemed to be more strategy than the habits they had probably been, to begin with. The author humorously remarked that It would be easy to be his 'eyes and ears', which is what he wanted me to be when I joined the PMO, The tough part would be to be his 'voice'

word	Equivalent choice of words/Phrase
Introvert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain an enigma • A man of few words • never engaged in conversation • rarely animated • sitting quietly • no gift for small talk • lacking in warmth and emotion • notorious for his silences

4. INITIALISMS AND ACRONYMS

Short forms are the best way to avoid redundancies. So, the author uses initialisms and acronyms in his writing, some of example are:

PMO, CEO, PM Meets, PM Compliments, TV anchors , CRRID, NCMP, NAC, NSAB, NSSP, IPS, CFR, 7RCR, FTA, The-India-ASEAN FTA, CCPA, NCMP, MGNREGA, NREGA, SAU, SAARC, MEA,NSSP, MEA,DEA DC, ECC.....



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Instead of MoS fiancé under Dr.singh, he was now Mos in the Pmo. (page 7)

5. ALLITERATIONS

Alliteration is a powerful tool, the author uses sparingly and in the right way in this book. Some of examples are:

He sat **shell-shocked, all alone**, in his cabin and looked drawn and tired through the day(this sentence conveys the sound of the event its describing the sounds of detachment or sorrow sicken) .

'big bang' reforms (the rapid expansion of matter from a state of extremely high density)

He had entered the government's **sanctum sanctorum** (the Latin phrase sanctum **sanctorum** is a Latin translation of the biblical term "Holy of Holies).

Left would 'bark' but not 'bite', a phrase commonly used by the media to interpret its stance.

Wishy-washy reply saying

6. COMPOUND WORDS /HYPHENED WORDS

The writer uses large compounding words which are a distinct feature of Indian English writing. Some compound words/hyphened words are: Swift transformations, active morality, power sharing, overrated economist, I have **combined personal, admittedly subjective**, accounts of what I regard as **important events** with an analysis, **hopefully objective**, of **policies and issues** (xiv). This perspective of **people-to-people** and **business-to-business relations** and not just **government –to-government** relations (p.171). So, India's **non-alignment** was tactical, not strategic (p.168). A **round –table** is a dialogue (p.135). **ill-considered** , all **salary-earning** professionals(p.112), the third category were partisan journalists___**pro-BJP,pro-Left,pro-Sonia,pro-Arjun,pro-Pranab** and so on (p.124), **home-grown politician-intellectuals**(p.128).

7. POST MODIFICATION

This device is used by the author to achieve economy of expression through the process of reduction. Some examples are: I want you to be **my eyes and ears**. Tell me what you think I should know, without **fear or favor** (p.30), India has gone through both **centralizing and**



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decentralizing phases with Prime ministerial power **waxing and waning (p.160)**. India is proud to be **an open society** and **an open economy (p.183)**.

8. QUOTES

The correct use of quotes is an important part of journal writing. Baru begins every chapter with a quote; the quote conveys the theme of the chapter. Some of quotes are:

1. The calls from PMO - 'call the doctor!'
2. Getting to know Dr Singh - 'Sometimes in life it is wise to be foolish.'
3. Manmohan's PMO- 'I want you to be my eyes and ears.
Tell me what you think I should know,
Without fear or favour.'
5. Responsibility without power – 'I am an accidental prime minister.'

9. CONCLUSION

The research paper has made an attempt to show how the writer has consciously made use of English language style markers to project both the political literary text and linguistics qualities imbibed in the book.

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