



From Subjects to Citizens: A Literary and Stylistic Study of the Narrative Transition in Hyderabad's Liberation Literature

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Abstract

The liberation of Hyderabad in September 1948 stands as one of the most decisive political transformations in the history of independent India. While historians often emphasize military operations and diplomatic negotiations, the event also produced a profound transformation in language, literature, and public discourse. This paper examines the narrative transition in Hyderabad's liberation literature through a stylistic and linguistic analysis of speeches delivered by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and English translations of regional literary works emerging from the Telangana resistance movement. By applying approaches from Narrative Theory, Stylistics, and Critical Discourse Analysis, the study identifies how the liberation moment produced a shift in literary vocabulary and rhetorical structure. The discourse moved from the language of feudal submission—where people were described as subjects of a ruler—to the language of democratic participation in which individuals emerged as citizens of a nation-state. Patel's public addresses, characterized by brevity, firmness, and moral authority, contributed to constructing the image of the "Iron Man" as a stabilizing archetype in the national narrative. Simultaneously, translated poetry and prose from Telangana introduced the voices of peasants, workers, and marginalized communities into the broader literary sphere. The paper argues that Hyderabad's integration into the Indian Union was not merely a territorial achievement but also a transformation in narrative consciousness. Language, rhetoric, and literary representation collectively enabled communities to imagine themselves as participants in democratic governance. In this sense, the liberation of Hyderabad illustrates how political change is deeply intertwined with linguistic and literary transformation.

Keywords: Hyderabad Liberation, Narrative Transition, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Stylistics, Telangana Literature, Subaltern Voices, Democratic Discourse, Operation Polo

1. Introduction

Political revolutions often produce linguistic revolutions. When systems of governance change, the language through which people interpret their reality also transforms. Words that once symbolized authority, submission, and hierarchy gradually disappear, while new vocabulary emerges to reflect rights, participation, and citizenship. The liberation of Hyderabad in 1948 represents one such moment in Indian history where political transformation produced a corresponding shift in narrative discourse.

Prior to its integration into the Indian Union, Hyderabad State was ruled by the Nizam under a feudal political order. Social hierarchy and administrative authority were reinforced through language. Royal proclamations, legal orders, and official correspondence reflected the vocabulary of monarchy. Citizens were described as *subjects*, expected to obey rather than participate. In literary terms, this language represented a narrative of submission.

However, the period surrounding Hyderabad's liberation witnessed a dramatic change in discourse. The leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, popularly known as the "Iron Man of India," played a crucial role in redefining the rhetorical language of governance. Patel's speeches emphasized unity, discipline, and national integrity. His language was concise, direct, and morally persuasive. Unlike ornate diplomatic rhetoric, Patel's style conveyed clarity and determination. Through such discourse, the narrative of the nation shifted from fragmented princely identities to a unified democratic vision.

At the same time, the Telangana region experienced a powerful grassroots resistance movement against feudal oppression. The Telangana Armed Struggle produced a body of literature—poetry, songs, narratives, and testimonies—that reflected the experiences of peasants and marginalized communities. When these texts were translated into English, they entered broader literary and academic conversations, transforming local resistance into part of India's national narrative.

This paper examines how these linguistic and literary developments collectively contributed to a narrative transition—from subjects to citizens. By studying rhetorical structures, metaphorical patterns, and lexical shifts in political speeches and literary texts, the study highlights the role of language in constructing democratic identity.

Thus, Hyderabad's liberation should not be understood solely as a political event. It was also a cultural and linguistic turning point in which the vocabulary of power shifted toward the language of citizenship.

2. Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this research are:

1. To analyze the stylistic features of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's speeches related to Hyderabad's integration.
2. To identify the rhetorical devices that contributed to constructing the "Iron Man" persona in public discourse.
3. To examine the lexical transition from feudal terminology to democratic vocabulary.
4. To study the representation of resistance and empowerment in translated Telangana literature.
5. To explore how English language discourse facilitated the emergence of subaltern voices.
6. To evaluate the relationship between political leadership and narrative transformation during Hyderabad's liberation.

3. Review of Literature

The historical integration of Hyderabad has been widely documented by historians and political scholars. V. P. Menon's *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States* remains one of the most authoritative accounts of the political negotiations and administrative decisions that led to Hyderabad's merger with India. Menon's narrative highlights the strategic leadership of Sardar Patel and the complexities involved in integrating princely states.

Ramachandra Guha's *India After Gandhi* provides a broader context for understanding the political consolidation of India after independence. Guha examines the challenges faced by the newly independent nation and discusses the significance of Hyderabad's integration in ensuring territorial unity.

While these works focus primarily on political and administrative history, literary scholars have increasingly explored the cultural dimensions of nation-building. Benedict Anderson's influential concept of "imagined communities" suggests that nations are constructed through shared narratives and linguistic practices. According to Anderson, print culture and language play crucial roles in shaping national consciousness.

Similarly, Norman Fairclough's theory of Critical Discourse Analysis emphasizes the relationship between language and power. Fairclough argues that discourse not only reflects social structures but also shapes them by influencing how individuals perceive authority and identity.

In the context of Telangana literature, works by poets such as Kaloji Narayana Rao and Dasarathi Rangacharya provide powerful representations of resistance against feudal oppression. Their writings articulate the experiences of marginalized communities and highlight the aspirations for dignity and freedom.

Despite the availability of historical and literary studies, the stylistic relationship between Patel's political rhetoric and the emerging literature of Hyderabad's liberation remains relatively unexplored. This paper seeks to address this gap by examining how leadership discourse influenced narrative transformation in literature.

4. Methodology

The research adopts a qualitative analytical approach combining stylistic analysis, discourse analysis, and narrative theory.

Lexical Analysis: The first step involves identifying recurring vocabulary in Patel's speeches and literary texts. Words such as *unity*, *discipline*, *security*, and *citizenship* are analyzed to understand how political rhetoric constructs national identity.

Stylistic Analysis: The study examines structural features of language including sentence length, tone, metaphor, and rhetorical emphasis. Patel's speeches are particularly noted for their brevity and clarity.

Narrative Analysis: Literary texts related to the Telangana struggle are analyzed to identify narrative structures. Many stories follow a pattern of oppression, resistance, and liberation.

Discourse Analysis: The ideological implications of language are explored using discourse analysis techniques. The study examines how terms such as *subject*, *citizen*, *freedom*, and *integration* reflect broader socio-political transformations.

Sources: Primary sources include speeches of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, government records, and contemporary newspaper reports. Secondary sources include literary translations of Telangana resistance literature and scholarly works on political integration and discourse theory.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 The Construction of the "Iron Man" Persona: One of the most striking features of Patel's rhetoric is its stylistic simplicity. Unlike many political leaders who relied on elaborate speeches, Patel preferred concise statements that conveyed firmness and authority. His rhetorical style emphasized clarity and decisiveness. This stylistic feature contributed to the construction of the "Iron Man" persona. In literary terms, Patel became an archetypal figure representing order and stability during a period of political uncertainty.

5.2 Metaphorical Language in Political Discourse: Metaphors played an important role in framing Hyderabad's integration. One notable metaphor described Hyderabad as an "ulcer" in the body of India. Such imagery transformed political conflict into a medical narrative in which intervention appeared necessary for national health. By framing the situation in these terms, Patel's rhetoric justified decisive action while simultaneously emphasizing the goal of unity.

5.3 Lexical Shift from Monarchy to Democracy: The transformation from feudal rule to democratic governance was reflected in vocabulary. Before integration, administrative language included terms such as *firman*, *jagir*, and *tribute*. After integration, discourse increasingly featured terms like *constitution*, *rights*, and *citizenship*. This lexical transition illustrates how language reflects political transformation.

5.4 Emergence of Subaltern Voices: The literature of the Telangana struggle brought the experiences of peasants and marginalized communities into public discourse. Through translation into English, these voices gained wider recognition. Poetry and narratives from this period often portray themes of suffering, resistance, and hope. The shift from silence to expression represents an important dimension of narrative transformation.

5.5 Role of English as a Mediating Language: English played a complex role in post-independence India. While it had previously functioned as a colonial administrative language, it gradually became a medium for expressing democratic aspirations. Through translation, regional struggles were communicated to national and international audiences. English thus served as a bridge connecting local experiences with global discourse.

6. Conclusion

The liberation of Hyderabad represents more than a political or military event. It also marks a profound transformation in narrative consciousness. Through the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the emergence of resistance literature from Telangana, the discourse surrounding Hyderabad shifted from the language of feudal submission to the language of democratic citizenship.

Patel's rhetorical style contributed to constructing a powerful national narrative centered on unity and discipline. At the same time, translated literary works amplified the voices of marginalized communities and articulated aspirations for dignity and equality.

The transition from "subjects" to "citizens" was therefore both political and linguistic. Language shaped identity, empowered communities, and facilitated the emergence of democratic participation.

For scholars of English literature and linguistics, the Hyderabad liberation offers a valuable case study demonstrating how discourse and narrative influence historical transformation.

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