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Vattamalaipalayam, NGGO Colony Post

COIMBATORE-641022, Tamilnadu, India
www.srec.ac.in

11th International Congress on English Grammar (ICEG 2014)
In association with Systemic Functional Linguistics

Grammar and Grammar Teaching: Changing Perspectives

Editor
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A Corpus Stylistic Approach to Browning's Monologue: *Andrea Del Sarto*

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1. Introduction

Stylistics, an off-spring of structuralism, and an *objective* or *scientific* analysis of a literary text, has a variety of tools to its credit. One such is Corpus stylistics, a relatively new approach (emerged around 1990s) that needs more focus (Toolan 1). As Ferdinand de Sassure says, the language is a world of *signs*, the combination of the *signifier* and the *signified* (Abrams 71). The undeniable *centre* of the *signifier* is, in fact, grammar. The kind nurse – Grammar - has been preserving the structures of language and thus paves the way for effective communication. The investigators' prime motto is to unearth the interdependence between Grammar and Corpus stylistics.

Andrea del Sarto, one of the master-pieces of Robert Browning, is the corpus selected for exploration.

2. Textual Analysis

2.1. Lexical Features

The manual concordance of the select corpus highlights the great majority of concrete nouns **(81.679%)** which can be grouped under seven domains – 01. *Art* 02. *Physique* 03. *Common noun* 04. *Church & relatives,* 05. *Building & others,* 06. *Time & nature* 07.*Proper nouns & Pronouns*

Proper nouns & Pronouns play a predominant role (**54.906%**) in the poem. The personal pronoun *I* (63) and the possessive pronouns *me* (20) and *mine* (5), *myself* (3) complement the opposite sex, female – *you* (42), *yours* (1), *yourself* (1). The study, at semantic level, shows the dominance of *human Physique* (**10.046%**). He sees the physique, from the artist's view point.

The abstract nouns **(18.320%)** are comparatively less in number. The lesser quantity falsifies the investigator's hypothesis that the artist should use more number of abstract nouns.

The corpus is brimming with possessive adjectives (51.724%) and positive (40%). The possessive adjective *my* (28), which is comparatively high in number, illustrates the lyrical or personal view point of the poet. The enormous use of *his* (21) proves his active, dominant mind, according to the researcher.

2.2. Lexico-Syntactic Patterns

1. "To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this!"   (20)

2. "Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think-"   (120)

3. "The rest avail not. Why do I need you?"   (135)

4. "I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,"   (151)

5. "They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:"   (253)

6. "… as God lives,

   Said one day Agnolo, his very self,

   To Rafael . . . ."   (183-185)

Anastrophe, the inversion of usual word order, (Britannica CD) in sentence 1, shows the lover's agitation. In sentence 2, it explores his trait of not blaming others. In sentence 3, the inversion aids the fevered imagination. Statements 4, 5, and 6 show his love for wordplay, for rhythm and rhyme.

Asyndeton, deliberate omission of conjunctions, tend to produce an impressive rhythm. Except the noncommittal connective 'and', the following lines have no conjunctions.

07. "As if--forgive now--should you let me sit

   Here by the window with your hand in mine

   And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,

   Both of one mind, as married people use,

   Quietly, quietly the evening through,

    I might get up to-morrow to my work

   Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try."   (13-19)

8. "Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve

   For each of the five pictures we require:"   `   (23-24)

Language in India www.languageinindia.com **ISSN 1930-2940** 14:1 March 2014
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9. "I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!" (52)

10. "--Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,

And fail in doing. I could count twenty such" (70-71)

11. "And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,

God, I conclude, compensates, punishes." (140-141)

12. "One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,

The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,--
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,

To crown the issue with a last reward!" (156-164)

13. " 'Tis done and past: 'twas right, my instinct said:" (167)

The highest use of *Ellipsis*, the deliberate omission of words, (Oxford, 2008, p. 240) stresses the presence of the submerged, troubled soul in Andrea del Sarto :

14. "Treat his own subject after his own way,

Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine." ` (6-9)

15. "I, painting from myself and to myself,   `

    Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame

    Or their praise either"   (90-92)

16. "In this world, who can do a thing, will not;

    And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:"   (137-138)

17. "...To-morrow, satisfy your friend."   (234)

18. "Since there my past life lies, why alter it?"   (246)

19. "I took his coin, was tempted and complied,

    And built this house and sinned, and all is said."   (248-249)

    Epizeuxis, in data 20 and 21, shows the speaker's excitement

20. "And, best of all, *this, this, this* …."   (162)

21. "Finish the portrait out of hand--there, there,

    ……………………………………………

    …Cousin's freak."   (236-239)

2.3. Lexico-Syntactic Choices

    Simile is an explicit comparison which is conventionally identified by the use of 'as/like'. The

simile, in the line below, shows the longing of the lover for his beloved, Lucrezia:

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22. "Both of one mind, as married people use,"   (16)

Metaphor, the implicit comparison, adds beauty to the lyrics:

23. "Your soft hand is a woman of itself,

And mine the man's bared breast...."   (21-22)

24. "My face, my moon, my everybody's moon"   (29)

25. "And i'm the weak-eyed bat...."   (169)

Hyperbole, "the bold over statement, or the extravagant exaggeration of fact" (Abrams 133), is also identified:

26. "Your soft hand is a woman of itself,"   (21)

27. "In that humane great monarch's golden look,-"   (153)

28. "You called me, and I came home to your heart"   (172)

29. "Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold"   (175)

The artist exaggerates the hand, in sentence 26, by calling it a woman by itself. The great monarch can ornament himself with precious jewels, made of gold. But it is humanly impossible to

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give the 'golden look', as mentioned in the 27th statement. Again, as in no. 28, it is highly imaginative that a human being- del Sarto- took home in her heart.

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which 'a part of something is used to signify the whole, or the whole is used to signify a part' (Abrams 109):

30. "My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,"   (29)

31. "Your soft hand is a woman of itself,

And mine the man's bared breast...."   (21-22)

Here, 'face and moon' represent Lucrezia. Her hand signifies a woman and his a man's breast, in 31.

Parenthesis is the insertion of words that interrupt the normal syntactical flow of the sentence. (Alabi 163). The selected corpus is brimming with the device, which aids the reader to penetrate into the persona's mind. Few examples of this type are:

32. "I do what many dream of, all their lives,

--Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,

And fail in doing. I could count twenty such

On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,

Who strive--you don't know how the others strive

To paint a little thing like that you smeared

Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,--"   (69-75)

33. "Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth

    The Urbinate who died five years ago.

    ('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)"   (104-106)

34. "Above and through his art--for it gives way;

    That arm is wrongly put--and there again--
    A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,

    Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,

    He means right--that, a child may understand."   (110-114)

35. "But all the play, the insight and the stretch--

    (Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?

    Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,

    We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!

    Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think--

    More than I merit, yes, by many times."   (116-121)

36. "But had you--oh, with the same perfect brow,

    And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,

    And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird

    The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare --

    Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!"   (122-126)

37. "The triumph was--to reach and stay there; since

    I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?

    Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,

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You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!

"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;

"The Roman's is the better when you pray,

"But still the other's Virgin was his wife--"

Men will excuse me."   (173-180)

The figure of speech reemphasizes the self explaining eagerness of the speaker.

3. Findings

Analysis of the data proves that *redoubling* has no room in the interpretation of a single work. It is also found that the corpus stylistic approach, which holds grammar as the unequivocal centre is one of the best means to regulate the *idea of freeplay.* The interdependency between Grammar and Corpus stylistics is proved by the study which fully deals with the parts of speech and their types. The manual concordance, further, highlights the majority of concrete nouns (81.679%), especially, Proper nouns & Pronouns (**54.906%**). The higher rate of the personal pronoun I (63) unveils the self-adoring soul of Andrea del Sarto. The abstract nouns (18.320%) are comparatively less in number.

The lesser quantity falsifies the investigator's hypothesis -- the artist might use more number of abstract nouns. Analysis of the Lexico-syntactic patterns and choices prove that each of these elements enhances the dramatic as well as poetic qualities of the lyric. The findings ensure the undeniable role of Parentheses and Ellipses in making the lyric a resounding success, in spite of its obscurity.

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