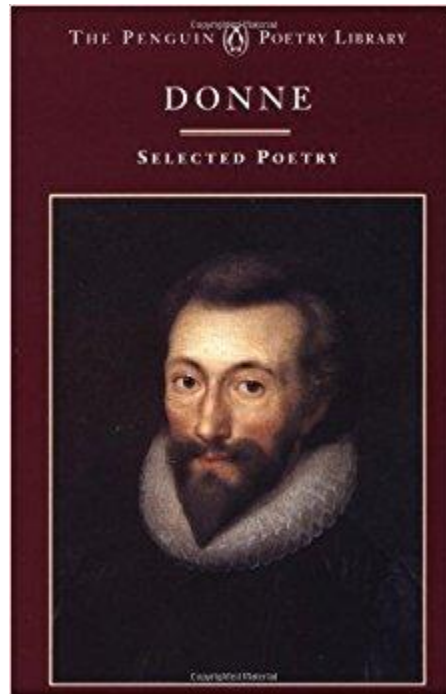


The Foregrounded Regularities and Irregularities in the Language of John Donne's Love Poems

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Abstract

This research is based on the foregrounded regularities and irregularities in the language of John Donne's love poems. It deals with the regularities and irregularities of language which are foregrounded for the purpose of getting attention of the reader. The present work traces out the regular and irregular foregrounded elements which include free verbal repetition, verbal parallelism and all the presumed deviations from the standard use of language. Present research explains the foregrounded elements which include free verbal repetition, verbal parallelism and all the presumed deviations from the standard use of language. Present research explains the foregrounded regularities and irregularities, style and stylistics has been discussed. It also

analysis of foregrounded in the poem at the level of lexis and prominence is pointed out which is presented in the poems.

Key words: Foregrounded, Regularities, Irregularities, Love poems.

Introduction

Linguistics is a multidisciplinary subject. It is a recent field of studies growing very rapidly in all dimensions of human activities. Unlike literary criticism it is an objective field. Due to the enormous development of Linguistics, Linguists look at literary works from Linguistic perspective. This Linguistic perspective of the study of literary work evolved a new area of studies called 'STYLISTICS'. Although a lot of work has been done on this subject in Europe and America, in this region, Stylistics is a new subject.

Stylistic Analysis

Stylistic analysis of a literary work is complex and may involve extensive description and analysis at different levels of language. So it is a broad field. Besides, there may be a number of features and elements of literary piece which can be assessed and analyzed. Consequently, many people are averse to stylistic analysis because it is time-consuming or sometimes, an exhaustive stylistic analysis may not quickly lead to 'a conclusion' interpretation, or the effect of literary statement or style. So there was a time when people questioned, or saw limited use of stylistic analysis when applied to literary text (Halliday 1966 quoted in Widdowson: 1983).

Things have changed since then although, many people may still have reservation about the use of stylistic analysis in classroom and elsewhere for appreciation of literary meanings and effects, such an attitude is a result of short sighted approach to a quickly growing new body of knowledge. Stylistic analysis focuses on how a particular meaning or effect has been created in a poem or piece of fiction. It demystifies both the intricacies of style and literary quality built through it.

This investigation is undertaken with a strong conviction that stylistic analysis has great merit in its own right, and is extremely useful for students of literature who would like not only

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to interpret a poem or short story arbitrarily, but would develop deep understanding and read the mysteries of literary works also. We believe that one of the reasons stylistics studies are so few, and rare is that our students have no exhaustive model of stylistics analysis before them. Just the teaching of theoretical aspects of this subject is insufficient.

Foregrounding in John Donne's Love Poems

This research is focused to find out the foregrounding process in John Donne's love poems. Donne features prominently in every syllabus of English literature all over the world at the level of university education. He is particularly one who experimented with language and invented new style of poetry in his day. In fact he laid the foundation of a new school of poetry on account of his new style and language. His style is the main focus of study even in the most traditional of literary criticism. However, the features of his style are not made the subject of systematic linguistic investigation by applying techniques developed in stylistics. The present investigation pledges to do exactly this.

The purpose of present study is to show how certain ideas and effects are conveyed by the use of foregrounding features in Donne's poetry. The techniques of foregrounding may be many, but they are investigated systematically at different levels. Stylistics analysis of this kind is useful for students to understand the way Donne has experimented with language and has created the wonder effects for which he is so famous. The stylistic tricks furnish strong basis students to interpret the meaning of the text and argue the good and bad qualities of the work. Therefore, it is hoped that this work would be helpful for the teachers of both English language and English literature for teaching this subject with exemplification. Researchers in future would find a body of literature to refer back to as well as to expand it further by research of their own .as said earlier, stylistics is a new discipline of study, and not extensively known in Pakistan, the present study known to show how useful this discipline is for the students and teachers of English.

Although this research aims at the analysis of a selected number of poems, and it would be incumbent to deal with them in detail as case study ,their collective features will be commented on in detail.so on the one hand; this is data based empirical research method with

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analysis of selected poems of Donne. Through this method all the deviation and regularities in the language of John Donne's love poems have been focused for the present study. After a careful analysis of the language, it is attempted to explain how certain aspects of the poem are foregrounded to add more clarity of meaning of the text. The poems have been analyzed by applying the approaches of stylistic analysis. So this research combines quantitative methods of research.

The present study of John Donne has its practical benefits. It has practical uses for the students and teachers of literature. Donne has its own peculiar style of writing at various levels. At various levels he has set new basis and new devices used in poetry. Foregrounding is his special feature. Through foregrounding Donne gives a unique color to his poetry. John Donne foregrounds his ideas and expressions in two ways; through regularities of expression and through irregularities of content. Regularities of expression are the certain aspects of language which are repeated in an unusual manner but are not considered deviant from accepted norms of language use. So foregrounding regularity of expression is a feature of phonology, graphology and surface grammatical structure. In Donne's love poems we dealt with this element at the level of phonology and sentence.

Deviations

In the irregularities of content we deal with all kinds of language deviations. It is a feature of semantics and deep grammatical structure. In this type of foregrounding we dealt with all kinds of language deviation, this deviation is mostly seen at the level of lexis and at the level of discourse where he uses some dramatic techniques such as monologue and analogies.

At the level of lexis we find deviation. It is the technique of John Donne that he is most comfortable with the manipulation of lexical items. The deviation is of graphological, neologism and there is use of un-poetical vocabulary. Sometimes we have to pronounce the words according to the content or intention of poet contrary to the normal situation. For example:

And finde

What winde.

Here word is pronounced as the word 'finde' is pronounced for the sake of rhythm. Then there are unnecessary punctuation marks and bracketed phrases to emphasize one thing or another, as a reader we have to concern these uses of punctuations.

Donne also uses un-poetical vocabulary in his poems. These references and items have been taken from different spheres and fields such as astronomy, science, religion, mythology, legends and navigation. A reader has to understand those terms and concepts to understand wholly the ideas and intentions of the poet, for example:

'Or snorted we in the sleepers den'?

In this line a reader has to learn and understand at first the whole references and incidents of seven sleepers den 'then we can wholly understand what Donne wants to say .and then in poem, he compares himself and his beloved to a pair of compass.

If they are two, they are two so
As stiffed twin compasses are two
They soul the fix foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the other doe.

This term and word is taken from science and mathematics. A reader has to learn fully how a compass works and how a circle is drawn then he will properly understand of what Donne wants to say. There are so many examples of un- poetical vocabulary used in the poems. We can say that to read Donne's love poems a reader must have some extra knowledge to fully grasp and understand the ideas presented in the poems.

Complexity of the Phrases

Then the complexity of the phrases is most marked in complex sentences. Most of the noun phrases are modified by pre-modification. This technique of modification has been frequently used for the extension of meaning. The constituent elements of a noun phrases are combined either through co co-coordinators (asyndeton) or without co- coordinator's (asyndeton).so to learn and understandthe meanings fully we have to see the whole phrase. In

Donne's love poems phrases are often complex. So a reader has to decide the unit to understand completely the ideas of the poet.

Sentence Complexity - Parallelism

The sentence complexity is the most important quality at the sentence level. Our concern was mainly to find out parallelism in words, phrases and clauses. Parallelism is a foregrounded regularity. Linguistics parallelism is very often connected with rhetorical emphasis and memorability. People generally feel that if a parallelism occurs in a poem, some deeper motive or justification for it should be sought. The feeling is all the stronger because most prose writers are inclined to go out of their way to avoid gratuitous effects of this kind alliteration, rhyme etc. Are fact to positive distraction and hindrance to communication unless they are artistically justified, the parallelism of versification belongs to a class of extra regularities which like routine licenses, are not foregrounded in poetry.

Every parallelism sets up a relationship of equivalence between two or more elements which are singled out by the pattern as being parallel. Interpreting the parallelism involves appreciating some external connection between these elements. The connection is broadly speaking a connection either of similarity or of contrast. For example the 'song' there is parallelism:

Ride ten thousand daies and nights

Lives a woman true and faire.

Use of Compound Sentences

John Donne frequently made use of compound sentences. It shows that he wants to elaborate and expand one thing in the relative clauses. He does not only rely on presenting one concept to reader, he justifies his standpoint. For the sake of justification of his feelings and perceptions he elaborates the things in form of compound sentences. It is a technique presented by Donne is that his style is rhetoric. He is often starts the poem by question form. This is form the sake of attracting the attention of the reader. The reader himself ponders over the question asked by Donne. He himself gives possible answers to the assumed readers. Then he himself gives his statement or answers and invites the reader to compare and contrast the answers or

responses of the poet to their own. By presenting the question form of sentence he creates a dramatic element.

He often makes use of imperative sentences. This technique shows him in the position of authority .he sets himself in the position as a guide to the reader. When he uses the imperative sentences it seems as he is teaching by the experience of his own. It means that he has experienced all those things .when he says after constructing a conceit that(and swears ,nowhere that lives a woman true and fair).it shows that he has bitter experiences regarding woman's sincerity.

In his sentence structure and in forming stanzas, he mostly uses right branching,it is sort of deductive approach. In this way, Donne Presents one thing or one idea and then justifies and elaborates the same idea. Sometimes right branching extends up to the whole stanza. This shows his explicative and elaborative nature. He does not seem to leave anything unjustified. He wants to be praised for not being ambiguous.

Pedagogical Implications of Donne's Love Poems

At the level of discourse, the pedagogical implications of his love poems cannot be ignored. The poems have the features in common at that level. In most of the poem of John Donne the reader is an assumed reader .and in the case of addressee, he does not demand any response from him .he emphasize his standpoint by question form sentences and he answers himself. Donne is authoritative in his approach. He also uses 'if-when' clauses in the poems with no explicit cohesive markers.

Analogies

One special feature of Donne's style is that he gives analogies which in literary terms called, 'conceit'. By reading the whole poem we can see his special use of conceit. He creates a dramatic effect by postponing the idea and then reveals it after sometime.

Highly Transparent

So the most striking thing about Donne's love poems is that they are highly transparent. One has to go through the whole poem in order to find clues to the recurrent patterns of foregrounded and prominent language use. For example in the 'song 'one cannot understand the thing which Donne wants to convey till he reaches the lines: 'and swear ,no where, find a woman true and fair'.

If the students are familiar with the discourse of a particular text, they will be better able to understand and appreciate the text. Fowler (1984) observes "a more realistic view of linguistics interaction is that we process text and content.....students 'critical performance. Ability to 'read' in the sense of reading, and realizing text as significant discourse, not ability to dissect text structurally.

A better understanding of discourse makes students of literature improve their confidence .it also involves the teachers of literature to explain the literary text objectively on scientific ground. A poem does have a situational existence on two levels .by virtue of being a poem, it is a communication form the poet to the world in general; but it may, as a poem sets up its own situation of address. The first few lines of a poem are naturally the most important for establishing an inferred situation.in what follows, therefore, we shall concentrate on the beginning of the poems. Donne's songs and sonnets will provide suitable illustrations, being excellent material for the study of contextual implications in building up the world within apoe and particularly of the role in the process of deictic words, deictic words are first and second person pronoun(I ,me, mine, we ,etc.), demonstrative(this ,that),adverbs of place (here ,there ,yonder),adverbs of time (now, then)etc. and adverbs of manners(this, so). Deictic words are italicized in the following examples so that their implications of context can be more quickly appreciated.

/wonder by my troth,what thou and/
Did till we lov'd ,where we not wean'd
Till then?
Busy old fool ,unruly sun,
Why dost thou thus,

Through windows, and through curtains call on us?

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In some cases, a deictic word plays no part in specifying the situation, because it refers to the verbal rather than the assumed extra-verbal context: for example, the *than* in the “the good morrow” refers back to ‘till we loved.

What Do We Learn?

The question to ask about each example is: ‘what do we learn about the situation within the poem from these lines, and how do we learn it? Even without the clues which would be provided reading each poem to its end, we are able to postulate a fairly definite situation for each poem. Much of the burden of communication is born by the deictic words, but these are other formal indicators as well. We have already noted in another connection that vocatives (‘busy old fool, unruly sun’) have implications of context; also imperatives (‘tell me where all past years are’) and questions (‘why dost thou.....call on us?’)

Donne’s lyrical poems are noted for the rhetorical force for their openings, which is due not only to his use of violently emotional language (‘busy old fool’, ‘for god’s sake, etc.) But to this use of implied context. He likes to thrust the reader straight into the middle of a scene of physical or mental action; for example, a lover’s farewell:

So, so break off this last lamenting kiss.

Some items presuppose a preceding verbal context in a strictly formal sense. To illustrate them, we go beyond Donne.

The Inferred Situation

The Inferred situation created by a poet is free from constraints of reality; they do not have to obey the rules of reason or the laws of nature. The most commonplace example of an absurdity of situation is an apostrophe, understood as an address to someone or something that by nature or circumstances is unable to hear or reply. Sometimes a lyrical poem is entirely cast in the form of an apostrophe: Donne’s; the sun rising ‘which begins ‘busy old fool, unruly sun, is a defiant address by a lover to the sun, which comes to drive him from his mistress in the morning.

Then through the poem of John Donne, we found out that his style is that of rhetorician. He in his poems uses rhetoric questions. A rhetoric question is, in a loose sense, a question which is abnormal; in that it expects no answer, 'who cares?' etc. in John Donne's love poems these are found in plethora. For example;

Were we not weaned till then?
Must to thy motions lovers seasons run?

These rhetorical questions produce no violent sense of incongruity. Its dramatic effect arise from feeling that the question demands an answer and is not provided with one.

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