THE PLACE OF STYLISTICS IN LITERARY STUDIES

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Abstract
This study investigates the interconnection between linguistic stylistics and literary studies. In this work, the linguistic stylistic analysis of Dennis Brutus' four poems shall be used for the practical explications of the discussions on stylistics given in this treatise. For the analysis, Margaret Berry's linguistic framework theory (1977, P.65) shall be adopted. This choice is based on the high premium this theory places on sociological aspects of language. This enables it to account for "features of particular variations, features of particular idiolects, features of particular texts and so on. Through this theory, it will be easy for language scholars to account for the prominent linguistic features that permeate these four poems vis-à-vis their stylistic roles in the text. The analysis shall be restricted to the roles of pronominal references and conjunctions in the poems. Besides, they elucidate adequately and clarify the concepts highlighted in the paper.

Keywords: linguistics, stylistics, criticism, analytical, interpretation, literature

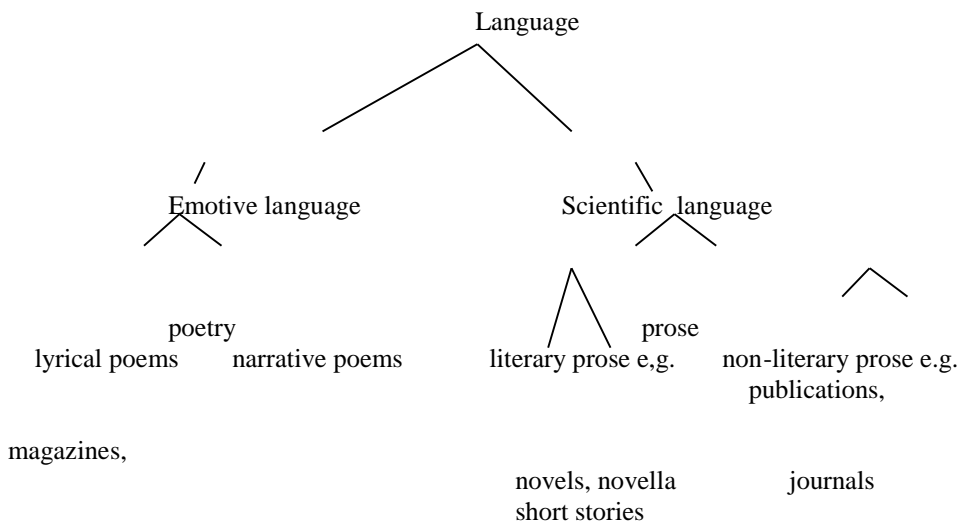## Introduction
What is Stylistics?
Most scholars consider stylistics to be the linguistic study of literature or a linguistic approach to literature. Properly put, stylistics is the study of the language of literature (Toolan , 1996: viii as qtd in Kamalu, 2015, p. 143). It is concerned with the ways meaning is created through language in literature and in other non-frictional texts. Stylistics is a broad term that has assumed various meanings from different linguistic scholars. It can be simply put as the study of style. (Lucas, 1955,p.`9) defines style as the effective use of language, especially prose, whether to make statement or to rouse emotions. It involves first of all the power to put fact with clarity and brevity. Style is also defined as the

description and analysis of the variability forms of linguistic items in actual language use (Ogunsiji, 2013, p.2). (Leech, 1969, p.14) quotes Aristotle as saying that, "The most effective means of achieving both clarity and diction and a certain dignity is the use of altered form of words".

Stylistics is also defined as a study of the different styles that are present in either a given utterance or a written text or document. According to (Ogunsiji, 2013, p.2), the consistent appearance of certain structures, items and elements in a speech, an utterance or in a given text is one of the major concerns of stylistics. Stylistics requires the use of traditional levels of linguistics and meaning. As a result, the consistent occurrence of certain structures, items and elements in a given text or in speech utterances is one of the major concerns of stylistics. As an academic discipline, stylistics is a twentieth century invention that has historical ties with (classical) rhetoric, "the art of speech; an art concerned with the use of public speaking as a means of persuasion" (Bradford, 1997, p.3). The rhetorical art in classical Greece began as an oral performance. It was not until towards the end of the fifth century B.C. that oral communication began to give way to the written form (Webb, 1994, p.5). The dominant oral communication that was typical of the Greek society aided retours in no small measure in the practice of rhetoric. Thus, the ability to use words fluently and eloquently became a skill that had to be acquired if one were to be listened to and understood with the right impact.

Speech was usually perfectly structured in poetic form, not just to create aesthetic harmony, but to convince or persuade the listener/audience (Kamalu, 2015, p.144). Linguistic stylistic studies are concerned with the varieties of language and the exploration of some of the formal linguistic features which characterize them. The essence and the usefulness of stylistics is that, it enables the immediate understanding of the utterances and texts, thereby maximizing our enjoyment of texts. It is therefore pertinent that we take a look at language usage in texts. Language gives life to literature. According to Richards, there are two ways to language usage:

1. Scientific use of language
2. Emotive use of language

Language

Emotive language   Scientific language

poetry   prose
lyrical poems   narrative poems   literary prose e,g.   non-literary prose e.g.
publications,

magazines,

novels, novella   journals
short stories

This table differentiates between the emotive and scientific uses of language

Emotive Usage	Scientific Usage
1. Language is connotatively used .	1. Language is denotatively used.
2. Words draw attention to themselves.	2. Words do not draw attention to themselves
3. Words are used according to their sound effects.	3.Words are not used according to their sound effects.
4. Words are in their active voice.	4. Words are in their passive voice.
5. Words are opaque .	5. Words are transparent.
6. Words are used in a subjective way.	6. Words are used in a subjective way.
7. Words are used in a poetic form.	7. Words are used in a prosaic form.
8. Language is personal.	8. Language is impersonal.
9. Language evokes emotions and attitudes. attitudes.	9. Language does not evoke emotions and

This paper, will investigate the interconnection between linguistic stylistics and literary studies. Linguistic stylistics explores the linguistic features of a text. It points out the linguistic choices which a writer or a speaker has made as well as the effects of the choice. The discipline of linguistic stylistics sprang up in the early 1960s as a complementary approach to literary criticism. Linguistic stylistics is derived from the terms, "Linguistics" and "stylistics". Linguistics is generally seen by scholars as the scientific study of language and like any scientific discipline, the linguistic study of texts is definite and precise as it adopts verifiable and objective methods of analysis and interpretation. This is in sharp contrast to the subjective interpretation of literacy criticism. As such linguistic stylistics is an analytical approach that helps readers to objectively study both literary pieces and non-literacy materials. Linguistic stylistics differs significantly from literary criticism, in that conclusions which proceed from infinite knowledge are carefully arrived at within

definable linguistic framework. (Ayeomoni, 2015, as qtd in Oyeleye p. 177). This therefore makes the discipline much reliable in its descriptions. He posits that one important advantage of linguistic stylistics for the study of literary texts is the opportunity it provides the reader to systematize his response to the various works of literature he has cause to study. For example, when interpreting texts, this method enables the reader to make explicit the route which he has chosen. With this factor, it is impossible for him to make sweeping remarks that cannot be verified, just because he has to particularize his observations by supplying concrete examples from the text. In order to do this, this reader has to move carefully through the linear structure of the text. The foregoing implies that linguistic stylistics is primarily concerned with the use of and its effects in a text. Given a piece of literature, a poem for example , a linguistic stylistic analyst will be interested in describing the form, function of language in the poem, paying attention to certain curiosities that may be accounted for in linguistic terms . This does not simply imply that linguistic stylistics ignores meanings which a poem conveys. In fact, the meaning is the focal point, but the system of language used is of crucial importance to the stylistician that works within the system of linguistic stylistics. (Widdowson ,1975, p.15 as qtd in Oguniji , 2013, p.14) posits that, "… it may well be the case that the linguistic analysis of the language of a poem is dependent on some prior intuitive interpretation of what the poem is about". Linguistic stylistics then, directs its attention mainly to how a piece of discourse expresses the language system. By language system we mean linguistic features that can be examined based on the levels of language. It is worthy of note that the gap between linguistic stylistics and literary studies has been bridged by the advent of the discipline of linguistic stylistics. Linguistic stylistics was introduced to act as a complementary approach to literary criticism where the linguistic study of text was evident. (Mukarovsky, 1964, p.58) defines literature as "an aesthetically purposeful distortion of standard language such that literature foregrounds its longing. It calls attention to itself through its form. Fowker (1986, P. 77) says that in linguistics, literature is language that will be theorized just like any other discourse. He further says that there is no sense in degrading language to a mere medium, since the meaning, themes, larger structures of a text, literary or not are uniquely constructed by the text, its inner relations with social and other contexts. According to Pound (1961, p. 86 as qtd in Oyeleye 2003, p.178), literature is language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree. "This means that language is seen as the material of a poet or of the work and so the relationship between language and literature is clearly recognized due to the fact that literary work is a "verbal work of art" Todorov (1977,p.64). This means it is a work that makes language its tool, therefore, literature cannot be examined without adequate attention being paid to its medium language. It is therefore obvious that linguistic stylistics handles the relationship between literary and ordinary language more effectively than any other approach since its inception, as it is found to be a reliable method of literary interpretation. Thus, Crystal (1969, p.10) define linguistics as "the scientific study of language. Consequently, stylistics attempts to put criticism on a scientific basis as it aims at studying literary language with a view to relating it to its artistic function. As a result, Leech and Short (1981, p.74) posit that linguistic stylistics and literary criticism play complementary roles in literary texts interpretation. However, literary critics argue that the analysis of literary texts is outside the domain of linguistics. This treatise however, strongly affirms that the linguistic stylistic analysis of any work has become necessary and unavoidable considering the fact that traditional literary critics have failed

to evolve an objective and reliable method of analysis and interpretation. (Freeman, 1973, p.75) is in support of this position as he argues that "Linguistics gives literary criticism a theoretical underpinning as necessary to that undertaking as mathematics is to physics".

Some Features of Linguistic Stylistics
This section will limit itself to some linguistic features that would serve as a platform for an in-depth stylistic analysis of any text, though emphasis would be on poetry. For example, have a look at these lines

> Jilt her
> Rape her
> Milk her
> Suck her

In the above excerpt from *The Eaters of The Living* (P.80) by Okpanachi we notice a sense of lexical relation "milk" and "suck" in the context of the poem function as synonyms. The synonymous selection is determined by the poet's emotion.

The main purpose of the poet is to emphasize his disgust for the political situation of his country. A close look at the poem reveals that the words correspond with the social situation of the country which the poet portrays.

Lcxico-Semantic Level: In this respect, we look at semantics that deals with meaning. At the lexico-semantic level we view the lexical choices made by a writer or speaker. Here, words can be chosen for their denotative, connotative and other dimensions of meanings. For example:

> "But tomorrow cannot be consoled."

The excerpt above is taken from Yeibo's *Maiden Lines*. The line is syntactically correct. The sentence starts with 'but' assuming it contrasts with the idea that precedes it. However, if this sentence is viewed semantically, "tomorrow" is inanimate and therefore cannot be consoled, it is only human beings that can be "consoled" or not consoled. An effect is created as "tomorrow" is made to go with "consoled" creates some effect at this level.

Syntactic Level
Syntax has to do with the arrangement of words in a unit larger than the word. These units include phrases, clauses and sentences. Considers this sentence
> "He went home."

This sentences has the pattern, SPA (S-subject, P-predicator, A-Adjunct).
A poet is free to violate the order of the above sentence to read:
"Home he went." (the pattern now is ASP)
The item 'home' now occurs in the initial position of the sentence to foreground it. This deviation is for a specific effect.

Phonological Level (Sounds)

The term phonology refers to the organization of sounds. In poetry, sound patterning functions linguistically to project a poet's purpose or concern in a work (Aboh, 2008:67-8 as qtd in Ogunsiji et al, 2013:16) poetry has fashions and different forms of sound patterning. Let us look at the example below taken from Dasylva's *Songs of Odamolugbe:*
The Stanzas are stifling <u>scandals</u>
Cause the masses to <u>curse</u>

Here we see an example of alliteration. The sounds *stanzas* and *scandals* are the poet's deliberate selections. These choices were made to give the reader a deeper sense of understanding of the enormity of corruption and insincerity in the Nigerian society. It is the insincerity of those in power that 'cause' the masses to 'curse'.

Graphological Level

Graphology means that arrangement of words based on their meanings. This is another way through which poets make us contemplate the otherwise unmarked morphological structure of words, they play around the word boundaries. If a [poet breaks the word, "stardom" into 'star' 'dom', the poet has tampered with the morphology of the word, thereby affecting the meaning. For example, let us consider some excerpt and from Ushie's *Hill Songs*":

  On the wrinkled face of the hills…
  I see my shortening shadow as my sun creaps
  towards the west gently, gently
  like afternoon flame to ash in the evening (P.35).

This poem describes the concept of birth and death, while the preceding lines of the poem, explicitly point to aging, "lowering" (the graphological symbolism) depicts interment. It narrates the process of burial. According to Halliday (1971) in his article, "An Inquiry into the Language of William Golding" in *The Inheritor*, the term deviation has received a great deal of attention and seems to be regarded as prominence to excellence, probably because it is a deterministic concept. It can be said to mean linguistic usage considered to depart from normal expertise.

Deviation: As already explained, above, stylistic investigation operates with certain key concepts. These concepts assist the analyst to make explicit statements that are verifiable within the given linguistic framework of a text .Aong these concepts is the concept of deviation. Deviation can be said to mean linguistic usage considered to depart from normal expectation of the users of the language. (Chapman, 1973 as qtd in Oyeleye , 2003,p.179) believe that deviation occurs due to the fact that poets enjoy the poetic license to manipulate rules of grammar and conventions generally observed by the users of the language. Leech (1981,p.6) claims that the liberties poets have taken with language have been of immense varieties and sometimes reached a pathological degree of abnormality. Deviation therefore is mainly used to for the purpose of comprehension of meaning by using one item of language instead of many. It is further concerned with the creation of aesthetics in the use of language in texts. The incidence of deviation occurs at all levels of language analysis.

We thus have what are known as lexical relations, lexico-semantic, syntactic, phonological, graphological, grammatical deviation and foregrounding.

Foregrounding

Foregrounding is a popular concept in stylistics, especially in the analysis of the language of poetry. According to Wales (1989, p. 10), it was Garvin who introduced the term, in 1864 to translate the Prague Schools "Akualisance" which means "actualization" (p. 182). Foregrounding which is now a popular notion in the study of stylistics implies making certain features prominent in a text. (Halliday (1967,p. 68) thus defines foregrounding as prominence that is motivated. To him, it is difficult to find patterns of prominence in a poem or prose text. Regularities in sounds and words or structures that stand out in some way, or may be brought out by careful reading. He also claims that one may often be led in this way towards a new insight by finding out that such prominence contributes to the writer's total meaning. Thus, to Halliday , a feature that is brought into prominence will be foregrounded only if it relates to the meaning of the whole text. He posits that foregrounding can be qualitative i.e. deviation from the language case, or quantitative, deviation from the expected frequency (Ogunsiji,2013, P.5).The purpose of foregrounding, linguistic or non-linguistics, is to add an unusual and unique idea to the language. Thus, foregrounding can manifest in various ways in a text. These include unusual italicization, capitalization, contractions, bold words, underlining, picture/art works and so on. The use of these foregrounding devices can be said to create some visual imagery which adds to the memorability of a text.

Two Main Types of Foregrounding

Wales (1989: 182) posits that foregrounding can be achieved in a variety of ways, usually grouped into two main types(The deviational and non-deviational (repetition) ie paradgmatic and syntagmatic foregrounding) . The deviational type describes the kind of deviation that has the function of bringing some linguistic items into prominence, so that they stand out clearly. Wales explains further that deviations are violation of linguistic forms, e.g. grammatical/semantic norms, strange metaphors, similes or collections that are deployed to achieve special effects on the text; especially poetry, amount to foregrounding. Consider this example from Okara's *"New Year's Eve Midnight".*

"A year and my heart-bell is ringing".

Here "a year is said to be born and a bell is said to be ringing in the poet's heart! (non deviational repetition). This type of foregrounding is said to be a kind of deviation as it flouts the "normal rules of usage by over frequency". (Wales, 1989.p.182). The repetition of sounds on syntactic patterns has the tendency to strike the readers as uncommon and thereby engage their attention. An instance of such a device is seen in Senghor's poem. "*I Will Pronounce Your Name*" the first line of the poem reads:

I will pronounce your name, Naett, I will reclaim you.

See also lines two, three and four of the poem with this kind of foregrounding.

> Naett, your name is mild like Cinnamon,
> it is the fragrance in which lemon grove sleeps,
> Naett, your name is the sugared clarity of blooming coffee trees

It is worthy of note that in the above poem non-deviational foregrounding is observed as certain aspects of language or literary norm are use in consistent and systematic manner. This

> Naett your name….. I will exclaim
> Naett your name is mild like…..
> Naett your name is sugared….

Repetition could also be in the form of recurrence of syntactic structure which persists intralinearly and interlinearly in a text. Thus, often draws a pattern that draws attention to itself. (Awonuga, 1988, p.90) in his own view gives one reason why foregrounding is important. According to him, it has to do with the notion of relevance in literary interpretation, that is, it enables one to identify those linguistic and literary patterns that are significant for meaning in a text and those that are not. Foregrounding then acts as a touchstone for structural coherence of a text in relation to the totality of the communicated meaning.

Conclusion

In view of claims discussed above, we make bold to assert that linguistics provides a basis for understanding the totality of human communication, while the language of literature is an aspect of language variation and a branch of linguistic stylistic studies. It is obvious that assessing literature without an examination of its medium (language) cannot yield any meaningful fruit. Consequently, we hold the view that the study that the study of English or any other language at all, should be regarded as a prerequisite to the study of literature. Thus, (Turner, 1973.p. 99) posits that linguistics is the science of describing language and showing how it works. He also asserts that stylistics is part of linguistics; which concentrates on variation in the use of language. To Freeman (1970.p.87) linguistic styles in literary criticism is a theoretical underpinning necessary to the understanding of literature as mathematics is to physics. Finally, (Hill, 1967. p.45) on his part observes that all literatures are connected through stylistics. These three schools of thought support the assertion that any linguistic analysis of a literary piece must take cognizance of its linguistic traits. This is because literary discourse manifests a high density and frequency of the occurrence of certain phonological, syntactic, lexical and semantic features which are often significant for its interpretation.

We therefore conclude that stylistics is the middleman between language and literature. Hence, the analysis of literary texts should proceed from the language use in it as language provides the clues for the realization of the messages in it as it is the vehicle that carries all subjects. This makes them tightly connected and inseparable.

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