

A HIGHLIGHT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF STYLISTICS IN EXPLORING DISCOURSE ORGANIZATION OF LITERARY TEXTS

LIKNAW YIRSAW

English Language and Literature Department, Debre Markos University, Debre Markos, Ethiopia

ABSTRACT

Stylistics simply defined as the (linguistic) study of style, is believed to be one possible way of approaching literary texts based on language and linguistics clues of the literary texts from which the literary texts are made of; it focuses on the close reading of the texts without any emphasis something out of the language of the texts. As stylisticians like Leech and Short, style even in some cases or in simple terms, is considered as the writers' way of using language and linguistics clues in the literary texts what they are writing. Therefore, stylistics will have a strong link with the discourse organization of the literary texts. Discourse organization as it is indicated in the paper here is believed to be the way that writers use to design the discourse, or it is the mechanism in which writers use it to develop the story or the whole plot structure/story-line in their literary texts. In discourse organization or story development, writers use the way they like to follow which makes their discourse organization easier, creative, and attractive that they think their discourse would be; thus, writers can organize their discourse as they like, or each writer has his/her own style of discourse organization of a certain literary text. Therefore, as literature is made of language, it is through the language used or the stylistics aspect of the literary texts that we readers can explore or deal issues on discourse organization/ plot structured of literary texts. However, it doesn't mean that discourse organization of a literary text could fully be explored or analyzed only by using the linguistic or stylistic aspect of the literary texts for discourse is any mode and part of communication both in the text and outside of the literary texts Therefore, the main intention of the highlight, provided in this paper, is precisely discussing the function or importance what stylistics plays in the exploration and discussion of the discourse organization, the arrangement of the incidents and anecdotes in the story line of any narrative based on the language and respective linguistics hints of the literary texts.

KEYWORDS: Stylistics, Discourse, Discourse Organization, Literary Text

INTRODUCTION

Though the main intention of this paper is dealing issues with the significance of stylistics in the exploration of discoursed organization of literary texts, it is good if we are clear with key concepts like, style, stylistics, discourse, discourse organization and literary texts as a background and the need to this paper as these are the most frequently mentioned terms used in this paper.

Style

Style has traditionally been defined as the manner of linguistic expression in Prose or verse as how speakers or writers say whatever it is that they say. The Style specific to a particular work or writer, or else distinctive of a type of writings, has been analyzed in such terms as the rhetorical situation and aim; characteristic diction, or choice of words;

type of sentence structure and syntax; and the density and kinds of figurative language (Abrams, 1999: 303).

Similarly, the most regarded personalities in stylistics, Leech and Short, defined the term style as; “In its most general interpretation, the word style has a fairly uncontroversial meaning: it refers to the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose, and so on (Leech and Short, 1981: 10).” Therefore, here we can understand that style is individual or personal; even, a single individual or writer has a different style to deal issues in different contexts. Therefore, different writers use their own way or language to convey the meaning they like to convey in a context they suppose to deal their issues.

There are always distinctive features that distinguish one person from the other; thus in literary style, one is able to differentiate between the writings of Soyinka and Achebe, based on their use of language, among other things. A person’s style may also be shaped by his social and political background, religious inclination, culture, education, geographical location, etc. Simply put, the notion of style as the man sees style as an index of personality. But this perspective is not without its own problems. For example, one may exhibit different styles on different occasions; when this happens; do we say the writer has different personalities? (Ogunsiji and etal, 2012:14).

In stylistics approach, readers are supposed to give a due consideration only the text. Stylisticians are expected to leave the biography of the author, the setting or the sociopolitical atmosphere of the then context when the literary product is produced and other various issues in the analysis and interpretation of the literary product aside. They are expected to practice close reading, or readers are expected to be fully dependent on the text, not to consider issues beyond the text invites them to consider.

Sometimes the author's identity is given away by some small detail reflecting a habit of expression or thought, and this seems to confirm that each writer has a linguistic 'thumb-print', an individual combination of linguistic habits which somehow betrays him in all that he writes...So if we think of style as 'the linguistic characteristics of a particular text', we shall be on the safest ground (Leech and Short, 1981: 12).

Therefore, we are wisely advised to be fully dependent on the literary text in the interpretation and analysis of literature using stylistics as a tool of interpretation i.e. only the language and linguistic clue from which the text made is enough.

Stylistics

“Stylistics, simply defined as the (linguistic) study of style, is rarely undertaken for its own sake, simply as an exercise in describing what use is made of language (Leech and Short, 1981: 13).” A course guide at National Open University of Nigeria defines stylistics as:

Stylistics, a yoking of style and linguistics, is a discipline which has been approached from many perspectives. Its meaning varies, based on the theory that is adopted. When we carry out the different activities that are connected to our area of business, either in spoken or written forms, we often use devices of thought and the rules of language, but there are variations so as to change meanings or say the same thing in different ways. This is what the concept of style is based upon: the use of language in different ways, all for the purpose of achieving a common goal - to negotiate meanings (Ogunsiji

and etal, 2012:12).

There is no room, in a critical practice that extends its notions of discourse so far, for the idea of an absolute, either in what is constituted as text or in terms of 'truth'; there is therefore no room for 'objectivity'. Knowledge is relative to a particular discursive practice that may change at a given time and in a given space. No knowledge is ever fixed for ever (Birch, 2005: 16)

As the interpretation of literary text is not inclined into one universally accepted meaning and since interpretation has not an everlasting conclusion, negotiating meanings or having a common goal made from our interpretation is achieved through stylistics as stylistics has a foundation from the actual literary text.

In addition, another article on grammatical patterning in literary texts and linear unit grammar in the dialogue of Hills like white Elephants of Hemingway by Lucy Stone at the University of Nottingham in School of English states stylistic as,

An approach which investigates literary works using a linguistic approach, where the symbolic relationship of the linguistic and the literary affect one another. Spitzer characterizes this process as 'a cyclic motion whereby linguistic observation stimulates or modifies literary insight, and whereby literary insight further stimulates linguistic observation' (Leech and Short, 1981:13 quoted in Stone, 2011: 2).

Discourse

"Discourse is linguistic communication seen as a transaction between speaker and hearer, as' an interpersonal activity whose form is determined by its social purpose" (Leech and Short, 1981:209).

According to Stubbs (19:1), discourse is concerned with the "... organization of language above the sentence or above the clause and therefore... larger linguistic units such as conversational exchanges and written texts". This implies that, discourse is basically concerned with linguistic structures that are larger than the boundaries of a sentence or utterance (i.e. conversation and narratives), and can be presented in two basic forms spoken and written, both of which have definable communicative function. This further implies that it involves the use of language in society as an interactive tool, which involves the speaker and listener, on one hand, and the writer and reader, on the other. The fundamental point is that, in both instances, we can only decode the meaning intended by the communicant from a vast range of variable sentences (quoted in Yeibo, 2011: 1).

Here, we can understand that discourse is as vast as any mode of communication be either written or spoken. However, the main emphasis of the term paper here is the written discourse particularly the literary discourse. The literary discourses are considered as discourses of literature, or discourse whose feature is literariness in the form of poems, short stories or novels. In simple terms literary discourse is a discourse made in literary texts. Therefore, we can understand literary discourses as one modes of communication in literary texts.

Discourse Organization of Literary Texts

Discourse organization is believed to be the way that writers use to design the discourse, or it is the mechanism in

which writers use it to develop the story or the whole plot structure/story-line in their literary texts. In discourse organization or story development, writers use the way they like to follow which makes their discourse organization easier, creative, and attractive that they think their discourse would be; thus, writers can organize their discourse as they like, or each writer has his/her own style of discourse organization of a certain literary text.

For example one/ a certain writer may organize his or her discourse through medias-res/ starting a certain story from the relatively middle part of the story; and the other may arrange the events or incidents in their actual occurrence chronologically; still, the rest may organize his/her discourse in flashback style/ starting a narration from the end part of the actual story.

So, it is their style which they like to use determines their narrative technique or discourse organization in their produced literary texts; thus, we can take discourse organization as part of stylistics as it has been mentioned so far, discourse organization is the technique of designing or organizing discourse of the literary text.

Discourse as it has been mentioned previously is a very fundamental concept and difficult to understand for it is a very broad concept which is made use of both in the text and beyond the text from which the literary text is interpreted from the wider view point. Therefore, stylistics is very vital in its function in providing as a gateway or doorway as window of criticism in the literary text initially which basis on the language and linguistic clues of the literary text. It is because of this reason that this paper has been attempted to be bring some sort of insights as stylistics is a passport to enter into the verisimilitude of the literary discourse though stylistics is limited only the language and linguistic hints of the text. Thus style/stylistic has a great deal of impact in the exploration or analysis of discourse organization of literary texts as it is stated in the next part of the paper hereunder.

STYLISTIC AS A TOOL OF EXPLORING DISCOURSE ORGANIZATION OF LITERARY TEXTS

Once if we said that style is the way in which the language and the linguistic features used by writers in their literary texts is investigated in relation to linguistic view points, and discourse organization is the way in which the story or discourse is made or organized in the story line/plot structure of the story; stylistics/the study or discipline of style has importances in the exploration or analysis of discourse organization of literary texts.

Therefore, as literature is made of language, it is through the language used or the stylistics aspect of the literary texts that we readers can explore or deal issues on discourse organization/ plot structured of literary texts. However, it doesn't mean that discourse organization of a literary text could fully be explored or analyzed only by using the linguistic or stylistic aspect of the literary texts. An article entitled with Literature and discourse analysis International Journal of Linguistics, Volume 42, with an anonymous author explains this issue as:

Among the people who claim to practice literary discourse analysis, very few do it in reality: most of the time they only apply pragmatic concepts to literary texts, without changing the way they understand literature, as if a discourse analytical outlook were an "approach" like any other one. So, many people give to the term "literary discourse analysis" a "weak" meaning, using it to refer to approaches that bring to the fore enunciation activity, genres, contracts, implicatures, speech acts, etc. Undoubtedly, taking into account pragmatic phenomena is very important, but discourse analysis wants more. It aims to consider the reciprocal envelopment of text and context, which implies shifting

the core of the analysis: from the creator and his or her work to the conditions that make literary discourse possible.

Plus the material adds that

By its nature, discourse analysis exceeds the boundaries of the usual distinction between text and context. Discourse analysts are threatened by two dangers, one that could be named “textualism” and the other, “sociologism”. The former consists of reducing to the text the scope of the analysis; the latter consists of studying the setting of the speech independently of discourse activity.

Therefore, the importance of stylistics in the exploration or analysis of discourse organization is inclined to only the issues related to the text or the language and its features that the text is made of, and as it has been indicated in the consecutive quotes above, the discourse organization aspects out of the text should go beyond stylistics.

All in all, though discourse is beyond the language or the linguistic clues used in the literary texts and stylistics is fully dependent of these linguistic clues, we can possibly put stylistic into practice as one possible method or tool of exploration of discourse organization of literary texts.

...the value of examining objective characteristics carefully, before talking at large about the imaginative constructs reared on the foundation of words, is that this results, at least, in a recognition of the part played by the corporeality of words, and by the structures which connect them, not only in determining lesser poetic effects but also in directing the larger mental and imaginative processes activated by the poem; it may well lead, further, to a recognition of the fact that the various elements of poetic language interpenetrate one another with an intimacy which is of first importance in any consideration of how poetry ‘works’ (Nowotny, 1962:2); (quoted in Birch, 2005: 99).

It/this idea is right; because, it is through his/her style employed in the literary text that a certain writer organizes his/her discourse of literary product or text. Therefore, we have to be clear/ exposed with discourse organization as part of stylistic as it is the way of arranging discourse elements in the literary product.

However, we need to know the style of a certain writer before dealing issues exploring the discourse organization of the writer of a certain literary text through the style employed by the writer of the text. Therefore, though they way of sensitivity and identification is varied, we need to know how the style employed in a certain literary text is identified. Regarding such concept stylisticians have suggested some sort of tips or advices how the employed style of a certain writer in the literary text is recognized; for example, Style of a certain writer is identified in relation to the consistency and tendency of the utilized style which Leech and Short (1981) subsumed these two elements (consistency and tendency) into frequency.

It is not that stylistics is uninterested in this or that local feature of a text; but rather that local or specific features have to be seen in relation to other features, against the background of the pervasive tendency of preferences in the text. The recognition of cohesion and consistency in preference is important: without it, one would scarcely acknowledge a style. To go one stage further: ‘consistency’ and ‘tendency’ are ‘most naturally reduced to ‘frequency’, and so, it appears, the stylistician becomes a statistician (Leech and Short, 1981: 42).

Therefore, though there is a problem of agreement in the degree in the quantitative aspects of frequency of using linguistic features, we have to take the predominantly consistent manner of presentation as the style of the writer of the literary text. Plus the aforementioned scholars/Leech and Short suggested the following issue as a solution of problems in relation to the quantifying aspect of stylistics or style.

The role of quantitative evidence can be understood more clearly if we look at the interrelation of the three concepts of DEVIANCE, PROMINENCE, and LITERARY RELEVANCE...we shall associate literary relevance with the Prague School notion of FOREGROUNDING, or artistically motivated deviation, as discussed in 1.4. Fore-grounding may be QUALITATIVE, i.e. deviation from the language code itself - a breach of some rule or convention of English - or it may simply be QUANTITATIVE, and i.e. deviance from some expected frequency. The question stylistics must consider is: how are these three concepts of deviance~ prominence and foregrounding interrelated? (Ibid: 48).

Here, we have important terminologies that we should be clear with. I.e. prominence, deviance, foregrounding and literary relevance. Prominence though it is relative and different in sensibility to individuals the relatively normal or recognized occurrence of linguistic features; Deviance is a concept which tells us the difference between the normal frequency of a feature and its actual occurrence in a text; foregrounding is a technique of brining something into the front as a point of discussion or making something a point of attention in various ways like in deviation, repetition, foreshadowing, de familiarization and the like; likewise, literary relevance is the concept that implies the purpose of using a certain style, or it is the cumulative effect related to the expected conveyed meaning resulted from a certain employed literary style in the text. In other words, literary relevance answers the question: "for what purpose/why does the writer use this and that style of discourse presentation or narration"?

Therefore, it is through the linguistic features/textual clues that the writer uses in a relatively consistent manner with the respective literary relevance or supposed conveyed meaning that we readers can identify the style used in a certain literary text.

After identifying the style of the writer in the literary text, we can possibly use that style to explore or analyse the discourse organization of the literary text. Because, discourse organization seeks knowledge of stylistic, or discourse organization is part of stylistics as discourse organization is the technique of designing or arranging the various linguistics features to make/ create a discourse in the literary text.

Discourse Analysis and Stylistics are broad based disciplines which deal with the functional aspects of language. While D.A. analyses what is communicated in Discourse, Stylistics analyses how it is communicated. The two disciplines often interact with each other. Thus Discourse-Stylistics is concerned with the analysis of communication to reveal its function, using various tools of interpretation including textual peculiarities. Such analysis enables us to appreciate style (Yeibo, 2011: 2)

Therefore, as it has been mentioned in the previous pages of this term paper, though discourse is beyond the language or the linguistics features used in the text and stylistics is fully dependent of the text, it (stylistics) has its own significance in the exploration of discourse organization in literary texts in particular and discourse analysis in general.

Text linguistics and discourse analysis have been working towards the satisfactory definitions of text and discourse since their beginnings. The borderline between the two concepts is by no means clear and it is becoming obvious that defining such concepts as text and discourse requires an interdisciplinary approach which allows overlaps between various fields of social-scientific methods of text and discourse analysis. Recently, there has been a progressive dynamism in converging scientific approaches in both fields and working with texts in stylistics can only profit from the fact that the two coincide and merge more and more. Major contribution of applying discourse analysis in stylistics are the implicatures brought to its scope via consideration of a variety of linguistic criteria and sociolinguistic aspects discussed in text linguistics and discourse studies (Missikova, 2009: 1-2)

Thus, we need to be familiar with the stylistic approaches which should be utilized while we are exploring or analyzing the organization of the discourse or issues of the discourse, and hereunder are some of the approaches suggested by Leech and Short (1981) that should be practiced in the analysis or exploration of discourse of literary products.

The first issue that we should take into consideration is approaching the language used in the literary text from the assumptions of various functions of language.

Language is intrinsically multi-functional, so that even the simplest utterance conveys more than one kind of meaning...Of the many functional classifications of language that have been proposed, three have had some currency in literary studies. The oldest of the three is that of I. A. Richards, who in *Practical Criticism* (1929) distinguishes four types of function, and four kinds of meaning: sense, feeling, tone, and intention. Jakobson's (1961) scheme is based on a more systematic theory of language, and distinguishes six functions (referential, emotive, conative, phatic, poetic, metalinguistic), each corresponding to one essential aspect of the discourse situation. More recently still, Halliday's functional model of language acknowledges three major functions, which he calls 'ideational', 'interpersonal', and 'textual' (quoted in Leech and Short, 1981: 30).

In the quote above, though scholars are different in their perception of the different functions of literary language, one function of language in one's scholar classification overlaps on the other's and stylisticians like, Leech and Short have advised us the most accepted one is Halliday's functional model, we have to take the fact that the language used in our literary products that we are reading has different functional units and the respective meanings.

Therefore, our awareness to the language of a certain literary text through stylistics invites us to give a due consideration on the language used in the literary text and the functional aspect of language would be considered in the exploration of discourse organization of the literary texts.

"The fictional nature of fiction writing is important; yet we cannot understand its nature without seeing it as a special case of the ordinary referential, truth-reporting function of language" (Leech and Short, 1981: 151).

Here, as far as stylistics as a tool of exploration in the discourse analysis of the literary text is concerned, our inference should not be beyond the language or the text used in the literary product- it should be carried out with a close reading approach including the mood and tone of the language used.

In the tone unit, there is a general tendency for GIVEN information to precede NEW information: that

is, for the speaker to proceed from a starting point of information which is assumed to be shared by the hearer, to information which is assumed to be 'news' to the hearer, and therefore communicatively more salient (Leech and Short 1981: 2120).

Also, in considering the various functions of language in discourse exploration through stylistics, the following approach is suggested as an advice to use stylistics as a tool of analysis.

A typical way to do stylistics is to apply the systems of categorization and analysis of linguistic science to poems and prose, using theories relating to, for example, phonetics, syntax and semantics. Theories and techniques of analysis from other areas such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, cognitive linguistics and historical linguistics are also brought to bear on texts (Wynne, 2005: 1).

In addition, in the exploration of discourse organization of a literary text through stylistics, we need to give a due consideration on the basic issues or variant features of stylistics with their respective implications used in the literary text. Therefore we have to give emphasis on the presence of issues like; the style of sentence structure, figures of speech, repetitions, foregrounded elements may be in the form of defamiliarization, foreshadowing, and other various issues of stylistics used in the literary text.

Stylistics is important in the identification of the aforementioned stylistic elements in the literary text and in taking the very purpose of each stylistics element into consideration; because, it could be difficult to explore the discourse organization of the literary text without the consideration of the various elements of stylistic. So, one should take these elements into consideration so that he/she can easily consider the respective implications of these elements to the organization of the discourse of the literary text for each and every stylistic element is expected to be used for the purpose that the writer wishes to express or indicate.

Moreover, we need to consider whether the incidents or events of the story are organized chronological or achronological in discourse organization of literary texts. Events and incidents in the story may be arranged in the way what events have a chance to be happened in their actual or natural occurrence of happening, and this is the chronological narration of events in discourse organization; Whereas, achronological arrangement of events and incidents of the story in discourse organization is the narration or organization technique or style in which events and incidents are arranged not in the natural setting or happening. It is done either in medias-res/starting discourse organization from the relatively middle part of the story or in flashback/ starting discourse organization from the end part of the actual story.

Therefore, stylistics answers our question of why does the writer uses chronological way of discourse organization or achronological discourse organization in the literary text; because, the style of arrangement that the writer has used has a literary relevance in discourse organization.

In short, the above mentioned approaches of stylistic are not the exhaustive approaches that can be used in the utilization of stylistics in the exploration of discourse organization of literary texts. These are simply some of the basic approaches that readers can put into practice in the exploration of discourse organization though still there is individual difference or style in practicing the point under discussion. In other words, though different individuals have their own different strategies, these/the strategies mentioned above, are some of the strategies or approaches that some stylisticians suggested in using stylistic as a tool of exploring the discourse organization of literary texts.

CONCLUSIONS

Style which can be easily understood as the way of using language in literature has a discipline -Stylistics, which in turn, in this case and in simple terms may be defined as the study of the language of literature or the style of using language in literature, and it makes use of various tools of linguistic analysis like all the linguistic features in relation to phonetics, syntax, semantics, tone, repetition, foregrounding in various forms, deviation e.t.c. has a vital role in the analysis or exploration of discourse organization of literary texts.

Stylistics as a window of exploring the discourse organization of a literary text has implications in relation to inform us the significance or the literary relevance of the various elements or issues of stylistics, or why any mode of organization or style of presentation is used in the narrative discourse is impliedly indicated. Plus, stylistics is very important to identify how the events or incidents of the story are organized with their respective implications of arrangement.

Above all, it is through the language which is the concern of stylistics as a doorway that we can enter into the literary text. Because literature is made of language, and language in literature is described through stylistics so that it is through stylistics that we can start our affair in the discourse of literature.

However, as it has been explained before in the concept note, it doesn't mean that everything in the discourse of literature is finished through stylistic. Stylistics enables us to deal issues of discourse based on the language or the text of the literary product. Issues on discourse out of the language/text of literary product are out of the domain of stylistics. Stylistics is inclined to issues only in the text; it doesn't worry issues on the biography of the write, when and where the literary product is produced, to whom the literary product is addressed and e.t.c.

All in all, though discourse is beyond the language or the linguistic clues used in the literary texts, and stylistics is fully dependent of these linguistic clues, stylistic has various importances, and it provides textual clues in the exploration of organization of discourse in literary texts. Therefore, it is an initial tool or doorway through which we can possibly enter to the literary texts in the area of analysis in particular and in hermeneutics/ the study of meaning and interpretation in general.

REFERENCES

1. Abrams, M.H. (1999). **A Glossary of Literary Terms**; Seventh edition.
2. Birch, David. (2005). **Language, Literature and Critical Practice: Ways of Analyzing a Text**; Taylor & Francis e-Library.
3. Leech, Geoffrey and Short, Michael. (1981). **Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Guide to English Fictional Prose** New York, Longman.
4. Missikova, Gabriela. (2009). **Learning Culture through Text Analysis: Semantic and Pragmatic Foundations for Working with Texts**; Tomas Bata University in Zlín, Czech Republic.
5. Ogunsiji, Ayo and etal. (2012). **Literary Stylistics: Course Gide**, National Open University of Nigeria.
6. Stone, Lucy. (2011). **Grammatical Patterning in Literary Texts and Linear Unit Grammar**; in the University

of Nottingham in School of English Vol. 4: 2011-2012.

7. Wynne, Martin. (2005). **Stylistics: corpus approaches**; Oxford University.
8. Yeibo, Ebi. (2011). **a Discourse-Stylistic Analysis of Mood Structures in Selected Poems**; International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Vol. 1 No. 16; November 2011: Niger Delta University.