

LINGUISTIC STYLISTICS AND LITERARY STYLISTICS: Stylistic approaches to analyse literary text

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ABSTRACT:

Stylistics is considered as a branch of applied linguistics. It analyses literary or non-literary text in an objective way. It has got immense vitality in analysing, understanding and comprehending literary work of art. Therefore I have taken this topic for the discussion. This very article will focus on the term stylistics, its role and its distinction from literary criticism. Two approaches of stylistics : linguistic stylistics and literary stylistics are discussed in general terms. This study will focus on which approach is better or more apt for the readers understanding of the literary piece. After all literature is created for the readers/audience(drama, one act plays) so, their understanding it is important. This article will also discuss the relationship between linguistics, stylistics and literary criticism.

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Stylistics has its origin from rhetoric which was an independent discipline in the classical period of Aristotle. As a branch of linguistics it applies linguistic theory, methodology to interpret literary style. Here the term style can be explained as a way of selecting or choosing linguistic means (Wales, 1989). Selection of particular linguistic patterns characterises writer's individual style. For Abrams it is 'manner of linguistic expression' (2005). Style can be on two levels – 1) individual – it can be stated as persons distinctive language habits, or the set or individual characteristics of language use. eg. Hemingway's style, Milton's style, Henry James' style. 2) Group or general – some or all the language habits shared by group of people at one time, or over a period of time. For example Elizabethan style, Victorian style etc.

Stylistics is the study of style of writing. According to Chapman stylistics is "the linguistic study of different styles" (1973). It combines the use of linguistic analysis with the psychological process involved in reading. It primarily emerged as a reaction to the subjective, vague and impressionistic traditional literary criticism – says Abram (2008). Many modern theorists consider stylistics is close to literary criticism and practical criticism as both are text centred. It also is told that it combines linguistics and literary criticism, but there are severe confrontations between linguists and literary critics. This is because linguistics is a science of a language and as a science it has to be objective. On the other hand literary critics are firm on their way of analysing literary text which is not as strict as linguistics. They study literature with their own response and experience of literature, life and language. Therefore their judgements are different from one another about literary style.

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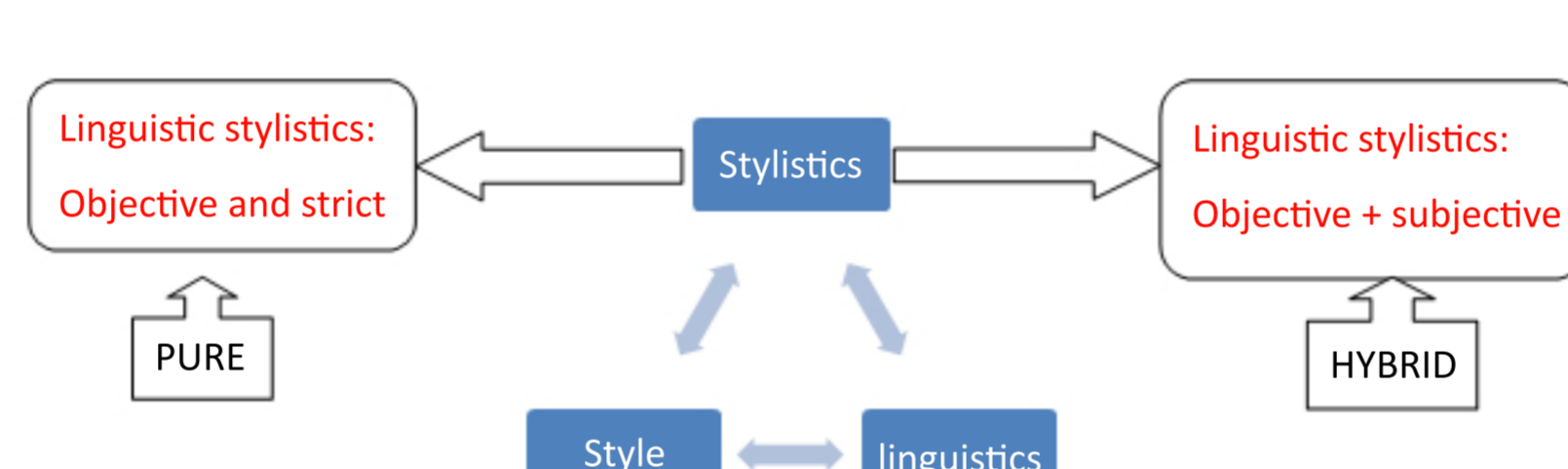
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To mingle this to disciplines, stylistics as a tool to analyse literary text emerged. It investigates literary phenomenon along with linguistic analysis. Though it has combined different disciplines it does not lose its individuality. It analyses literary text based on linguistic constituents in them, without any consideration to external details.

Widdowson calls it, an interfering area between the disciplines Linguistics and literary criticism (1977). Widdowson also writes on stylistics as "a study of literary discourse from linguistics orientation which shall take in view that distinguishes Stylistics from literary criticism on one hand and from linguistics on the other hand. Is that it is essential a means of linking the two and has no autonomous domain of its own" (1975).

Linguistic stylistics and literary stylistics are two important approaches of stylistics. Both of them have their own ways of interpreting literary or non-literary works of art. The following diagram shows the clear idea of stylistics.



Halliday defines linguistic stylistic as "the description of literary text, by methods derived from general linguistic theory using the categories of the description of the language as a whole; and the comparison of each text with other, by the same and by different authors in the same and in different genres." The linguistic stylistician considers literary text as a part of language system. It observes the language used in a text by an author and tries to differentiate and highlight the linguistic features such as phonological, lexical, syntactical,

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and semantical in a text. This description of a literary text is based on linguistic theories. This makes stylisticians able to interpret text objectively and precisely. He does not go beyond language structures, patterns in a literary piece. Prague school, formalism, structuralism, deconstruction, these theories support this study. Linguistic stylistic study involves close study of text. By this kind of study impressionistic reaction to the literary style will be implemented and they will be developed and modified by the application to them of the categories of linguistics.

As above we have seen linguistic stylistics is based on pre-determined knowledge of linguistics. But this approach to literary analysis does not relate linguistic facts used in a text to the motives of the writer. Leech and Short write "if a text is regarded in objective simplicity as a sequence of symbols on a paper then the modern linguist's scrutiny is not just a matter of looking at the text to its significance." On the other hand literary criticism deals with systematic matters in an entirely unsystematic way.

To fulfil this intense need literary stylistic emerged. It gathers linguistics and subjective criticism under an umbrella. It emphasises on both the linguistic features and artistic comprehension of the text. It is not as restricted as linguistic stylistic but uses expansive procedures. Modern criticism such as practical criticism is the best example of literary criticism. Leech and Short write "literary stylistic is typically concerned with explaining the relationship between style and literary or aesthetic function. In my opinion it can be called 'hybrid' stylistics.

As we know the importance of stylistics in understanding of a text and learning a language it has to be reader oriented. Literary stylistics unlike linguistic stylistics takes in to account literary aspects of a text than its mere linguistic constituents. This is literary approach tends to be little bit subjective. Literary stylistician is more interested in a text's hidden meaning. He tries to make possible connection between content and form. It tries to build up

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a connection between language use and the context which offers meaning to the text. It finds true with the literary stylistics as Newman says "Style thinking out into language.

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