



STYLISTICS & LITERARY CRITICISM

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ABSTRACT

In the study of literature, there are two components to criticize the literary work. One is Literary Criticism and another one is Stylistics. Literary language is the deviation of language. The deviation can be understood and judged by the norms of the literary language. For this kind of judgment, both criteria are useful. One is the literary criteria and the second one is the linguistic criteria. As a new approach to literature Stylistics criticizes linguistic features of the literary work. So, it is also known as a branch of linguistics. The historic view of stylistics can give us an idea of how stylistics develops as a new branch of linguistics that connects linguistics and literature. The development of the theories of criticism and new techniques in criticism expresses the development in criticizing techniques in this modern scenario. As a new branch, the description of Stylistics is explained here in detail. H. G. Widdowson's theory of stylistics explained with his view as stylistics is a discipline of disciplines.

Keywords: *Stylistics, Criticism, linguistic application, deviation of norms, discipline*

INTRODUCTION

In the study of literature, there are two components to criticize the literary work. One is Literary Criticism and another one is Stylistics. Literary language is different from dialect.



Literary language is the deviation of language. The deviation can be understood and judged by the norms of the literary language. For this kind of judgment, both criteria are useful. One is the literary criteria and the second one is the linguistic criteria i.e. Stylistics. Literary criticism is the theory of criticizing the literature and stylistics is a science to describe the literature for judging the usage of language and morphology of the literature.

(II) Stylistics is an application of Linguistics

Linguistics is science, which describes the language and shows how it works. Stylistics is an application of linguistics to the study of literature. It is a science. In comparison to other sciences stylistics is a new branch of the study of the literary or non-literary text. Stylistics is a part of linguistics that focuses attention on variations in the uses of the language. But it does not concentrate exclusively with special attention to the most conscious and complex usages of the language in literature. The term 'Stylistics' comes from the word 'Style'. The word 'Style' can convey several meanings. Its pre-linguistic meaning is the manner of writing, speaking, and behaving. It means human beings gain contact with others with a particular style. Turner expressed his views, in his book 'Stylistics', "Stylistics is not a stylish word but it is well connected. Stylistics means the study of style with a suggestion from the form of the word of a scientific or at least a methodical study." It means the style is nothing but a manner of using language how language is used and stylistics is a science to study that style.

(III) Historic view of Stylistics

The term 'Stylistics' is used in the early 19th century and English it is found in 1846 (Oxford English dictionary) Stylistics 'as the art of forming good style in writing' and 'as the science of literary style' are a few of the meanings given in some dictionaries.

Aristotle regarded style as the 'ornament of thought' in his classical work 'rhetoric' and 'poetics'. Swift's definition of style as 'proper words in proper places.' There are also psychologically oriented theories of style that reflect one's personality. Buffon's definition that 'the style is the man' can be regarded as a characteristic manner of expression.

From the beginning stylistics as a discipline, two tendencies are formulated in French 'Stylistique' and German 'Stiforschung'. The first one is closely linked to linguistics and the latter to literary criticism, philosophical idealism, psychological attitudes, and history. In France, it first appeared in 1920, by Bally Traite de. In 1927 I.A. Richards the origin of the school of criticism developed Stylistics as a separate branch. I.A. Richards's principles of literary theory are his important field. His important work is Practical Criticism, a book which has a distinction of setting Stylistics on a new footing without reference to hereditary



literary disciplines. In that period there is a development in linguistic stylistics, the Prague school Stylistics, transformational Stylistics, and so on. Literary stylistics as advocated by Spitzer and his followers in the 1950s is more subjective than objective, more literary than linguistics.

(IV) Stylistics developed as a new branch

As science and as discipline stylistics is developed in the 1960s. A new branch of linguistics, stylistics studied the linguistic study of literary text and the scientific study of 'Style' of a language, as a function of the mode and manner and variety of literature. Though the branch developed in the 1960s, it developed on I.A. Richards's concept of stylistics. His followers also described stylistics as a linguistic point of view. In the period of 1960s, most stylistics described their view and also gave the illustration of the poem. W. B. Yeats' poem 'Leda and the Swan' was analyzed by four statisticians in three different ways. Hoyt Throwbridge (1953) and Leo Spitzer (1940) are described as literary stylistics. M.A.K. Halliday (1966) described linguistics stylistics and H. G. Widdowson (1974) described it as discourse analysis. For Widdowson, stylistics is a study of language, and therefore, stylistics is a branch of sociolinguistics.

(V) Development of the theories in Literary Criticism

Literary Criticism is a criticism of the literary point of view. It is a theory. Theory changes from time to time. Literary Criticism has the historic background, to criticize the text. Various critics describe their theories of criticizing literature. Aristotle's 'The Poetics' deals with poetry. This theory of imitation based on Catharsis shows the concept of purgation, purification, and clarification based on the psychological condition of the tragedy. His view about three unities of drama (time, place, and action) shows a structural view. Longinus's sublimity of literature shows the importance of the soul. Sidney criticized poetry with history and philosophy. To his point of view, poetry is superior to history and philosophy. To his point of view, poetry is superior to history and philosophy. Dr. Johnson a neo-classical critic put forth the biographical criticism. He wrote 'Lives of the Poets' criticized the importance of the biographical view of literature. Coleridge as a romantic critic distinguished the difference between prose and poetry and express his views on imagination in poetry. It shows that up to the 19th-century literature judges from a social, psychological, biographical, and also structural point of view. The structure of text also developed on a psychological and sociological basis. It shows the importance of the manner of the text than style. Aristotle regarded style as the 'ornament of thought'. The word Style was used to refer to a text itself.



In the 20th century, there are two views of criticism developed, practical criticism and new criticism. I.A. Richards, the origin of the school of criticism developed practically in 1924. He was reacting to both biographical criticism and sociological criticism. He refuses title and author's name for judging objectivity. In practical criticism, he said that literature is a mirror of society. It is unnecessary to go through the biography of the author. The critics F. R. Leavis, T. S. Eliot took interest in this movement.

New criticism also gives importance to the text. Cleanth Brooks, W. K. Wimsatt, R. P. Blackmur were interested in the new movement in the field of criticism. (1930-50) The basic view of the new criticism is that literary criticism does not consider external circumstances of the literature but the effect of work itself. It was a reaction against aesthetic impressionistic criticism. The basic concept of new criticism in the form and the meaning are inseparable. Cleanth Brooks in his essay 'The Heresy of Paraphrase' shows us the basics of new criticism. It is a monist approach to literature.

In the 20th century, there were also other theories of literary criticism, which are Mathew Arnold's TouchStone Method (Comparative method/ Theory) and Saussure's structural approach. But Saussure deals more with language than literature. His followers as like Jonathan Culler tried to make contact of structural view with literature. In the modern approach, a reader-response theory was also developed for criticizing the text. In this theory, the reader response is important than the author's intention. The author's intention is neither available nor desirable.

(VI) Similarities between Stylistics and Literary Criticism

Stylistics and literary criticism are similar somehow. Practical criticism and new criticism offer the same things as stylistics for criticizing the literature. Stylistic and literary criticism both give importance to the text. Stylistic is the study of a literary text. So to go through the text is the first approach to the stylistics. Literary criticism also gives importance to the text. The text itself is a pretext. So there is a similarity of text.

The other similarity of stylistics and literary criticism is the close repeated reading of the text. With closed repeated readings stylistics analyze concerning each word and it shows us the author's intention. e.g.

*'Water Water everywhere
And not a drop to drink' ('The Sea' by S. T. Coleridge)*



In these two lines of a poem author's use of language shows the intention. Repetition of the word 'Water', it's a poetic use of language, makes water's intensification. Repetition of the sound- consonants 't', 'dr' become alliterate. Each word has some meaning behind it. With a closed repeated reading for stylistic analysis, we got the author's intention.

In literary criticism also, with the help of closed repeated reading the critic analyses the manner of literary work. Each word has some meaning behind it. e.g.

*'A host of Golden Daffodils;
(Daffodils' by Wordsworth)*

In a single line of a poem, a particular word has a particular meaning behind it. In a line, the word 'host' has meaning as a large number. There is also thought of homeliness. Another word 'golden; is as reflected as precious things. It shows us that a single line reflects a manner of a poem. The line shows us the poem has religious christen thoughts.

There is another similarity in stylistics and new criticism that text is autonomous. There is no need to go outside the text. Internal evidence or objectivity of the text shows us in stylistics as well as in new criticism.

(VII) Differences between Stylistics and Literary Criticism

There are some differences in stylistics and literary criticism. There are ordered stages in literary stylistics which are different from the ordered stages of literary criticism. In criticizing literature description is important and it can be the first stage of stylistic analysis. In stylistics, there is a description of the objective and verifiable analysis. Every stylist uses this first stage for objective analysis of a literary text. e.g.

*'Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.'
(Daffodils' by William Wordsworth)*

In the two lines of a poem, the construction pattern is changed. The pattern is OVS instead of SVO. In the two lines, there is a rhyme of the consonant/S/. There is a use of finite and nonfinite verb phrases. The verb 'Saw' is a finite verb and 'Tossing' is a nonfinite verb. There is a use of contrast that 'Ten thousand' and 'At a glance' in the first line.

The objective description of the use of language shows the stylistic analysis of a poem, which is very faithful.



Though the description is the first stage of stylistic analysis it has been restricted to short poems or paraphrases. We shift in limitation cannot describe epic or drama or novel as a whole. In a drama, we can describe important dialogues. In a novel, we can describe an important paragraph. But the complete description of drama or novel is an impossible thing. This is the reason that this type of description is restricted to a short poem.

In literary criticism, critics do not give importance to the description. So for literary criticism, it is the last stage of analyzing a literary work.

2) Interpretation

The second stage of stylistic analysis is interpretation. But a few stylistics use interpretation to make a distinction between meaning and intact of the word and link description and interpretation.

H. G. Widdowson analyzed Robert Frost's poem 'Stopping by Woods on a snowy evening'. The stylistic analysis of a poem is with literary appreciation. Widdowson had an interest in interpretation also. Because he thinks that stylistic analysis is discourse analysis. We should analyze the work with description and interpretation of the literary work. On the other hand, M.A.K. Halliday's analysis of W. B. Yeats' poem 'Leda and the swan' is only a descriptive analysis. He does not interpret the poem.

In literary criticism mostly critics interpret the text. With interpretation, they stress the meaning and impact of the meaning in literary work to evaluate the literary work.

3) Evaluation

The third stage of stylistic analysis is evaluation. It is the last stage because stylistics is less interested in evaluation.

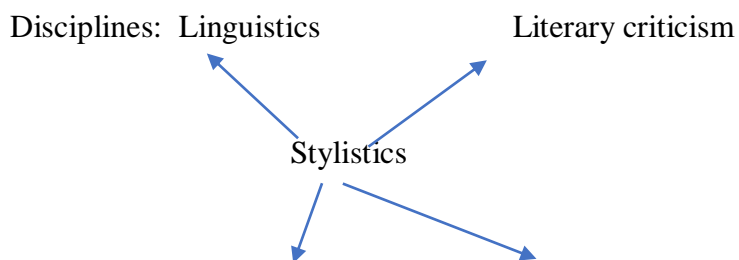
This is a complete contrast to literary criticism that literary criticism starts from evaluation. Evaluation is the first stage of literary criticism. Literary critics analyze a proper value to the work of art and also a proper value of the author. All critics evaluate the literary work.

The purpose of literary criticism is to interpret and evaluate literary writings as works of art and that the primary concern of the critic is to explicate the individual message of the writer in terms that make its significance to others. The literary critic is primarily concerned with messages and his interest in meaning convey in a particular instance of use.

(VIII) Stylistics is the discipline of disciplines

H. G. Widdowson described in his book 'Stylistics and the teaching of literature' the views of stylistics and literary critic to analyze the literary work. He expressed "A piece of literature a poem, for example, the linguist will be interested in finding out how it exemplifies the language system and if it contains curiosities of usage how these curiosities might be accounted for the grammatical terms." This is not to say that the linguist will necessarily ignore the meanings which the poem conveys and indeed it may well be the cause that the linguist's analysis of the language of a poem is dependent on some prior intuitive interpretation of what the poem is about. Interpretation may be an aid to his analysis but the literary critic takes interpretation as his aim. He had an interest in finding out what aesthetic experience or perception of reality, the poem is attempting to convey and his observation of how the language system is used will serve only as a means to this end. H. G. Widdowson emphasizes the purpose of stylistics as it is to link the two approaches by extending the linguist's literary intuitions and the critic's linguistic observation and making their relationship explicit.

H. G. Widdowson expressed the relationship between stylistic and literary criticism. "Stylistic is an area of mediation between two disciplines and also two subjects that means English language and literature."



Subject: (English) Language (English) Literature

It shows that stylistics is not a discipline and we can't treat it as a subject but it is a means of relating discipline and subject. Stylistics developed as a separate branch of study the literary work as a linguistic point of view. As a dynamic nature, it is revealed in its potential for multi-directional progress from subjects to disciplines, or from one subject to another subject, or from one discipline to another discipline.

(IX) Conclusion:



Stylistics is known as a branch of applied linguistics according to it uses the tools and methodologies of linguistic description in the analysis of literary texts. From a critical approach, it can be considered as an extension of practical criticism because of its focus on the language of literature. But it has limitations about criticizing the literary work. So it does not become an independent branch of studying the literary work. But the study deals with both language and literature. So, it joins the two subjects, English language, and English literature. It is an application of linguistics and it deals with linguistic points in literature and adjoined to literary criticism. So, it joins the two disciplines, linguistic science, and literary theory. Stylistic is not an autonomous science at this stage but it is a discipline of disciplines.

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