Linguo-aesthetic Study of 'Ode To Bombay'

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Abstract: The recent developments in linguistics can be compared to the revolution Einstein brought about in Physics. Stylistics which is actually applied linguistics has symbiotic relationship with the disciplines like linguistics, semiotics, poetics, aesthetics, rhetoric, criticism, etc. Linguistic Stylistics studies the style features of a text by applying linguistic principles. Linguo-aesthetic approach is one of the models linguistic stylistics provides for the study of verbal art. This approach entails investigation of the use of form as an instrument for expressing the content. According to Ted Hughes 'a poem is an assembly of living parts moved by a single spirit. The living parts are the words, the images, the rhythms. The spirit is the life which inhabits them when they all work together.' For perceiving an existence of a poem as an aesthetic phenomenon, an investigation of its internal patterns, its spirit, its stylistic characterization is essential. This paper examines how the linguistic patterns used in 'Ode To Bombay'; a poem by Dilip Chitre, an Indian bilingual poet, translator, painter and filmmaker, communicates poet's explosion of life. It attempts analysis of the selected poem at phonological, lexical, syntactic and semantic level to show how form is used as an instrument to express content i.e. how content is mapped on form.

Key Words: stylistics, linguistic stylistics, linguo-aesthetic, Bombay.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Stylistics is actually applied linguistics. Linguistics is structural and stylistics, as an approach is practical. The essential of stylistic study is setting up a series of correspondences between the linguistic structure and the content structures of the text. Stylistic approach attempts to characterize literary writing as discourse. It mediates between the linguistic treatment of literature primarily as text and the critic's treatment of it primarily as message. It seeks to show how the use of linguistic patterns creates a form of communication which conveys the unique reality of the individual vision. Its purpose is to develop in students interpretative procedures rather than make them dependent upon told meanings. The value of stylistic analysis is that it can provide the means whereby a learner can relate a piece of literary writing to his own experience of language and go to extend that experience. H G Widdowson shows the relevance of stylistic analysis to the teaching of literature and not to the practice of literary criticism as a discipline. For Widdowson (1997: 03) stylistics is the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation and is a means of linking literary criticism and linguistics and has no autonomous domain of its own.

The linguistic study of different styles is stylistics. It studies style in spoken and written text. Style is a way in which language is used i.e. it belongs to parole rather than to langue. For Plato and Aristotle style meant quality and manner of expression respectively. It is the soul of communication. According to Burke (2018:24) 'style is not a discretionary extra in linguistic exchanges; rather, it is part of the essence of communication itself.' It is an important medium. Marshall McLuhan, the twentieth century philosopher of communication, (as quoted by Burke :2018:24) once put it, 'the medium is the message.'

Stylistics has connected the branches like linguistics, literary criticism, language (code) and literature (meaning).It examines the expressiveness of literary language, manner and quality of linguistic expression i.e. style. According to Kumar (2003: 02) this formal mode of inquiry performs, achieves its target of analysis, guides and justifies its practice by its theoretical foundations. ''Stylistics of literature may be defined as a discipline concerned with the

study of patterns of language use in correlation with textural and structural features and thereby with aesthetic qualities in the literary texts aimed at refining and reinforcing our understanding of the literary texts as a whole'' (Kumar: 2003: 66).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Linguistic Stylistics:

In modern stylistics, the study of style is based on the principles of linguistics which is perceived as linguistic stylistics. 'Linguistic stylistics is the systematic study of verbal art on linguistic principles.' (Kumar: 2003: 03) Verbal aspect has to do with linguistics and artistic aspect is related to aesthetics. Therefore linguistic stylistics is a combination of two independent disciplines i.e. linguistics and aesthetics. It makes available linguistic characterization of aesthetic experience.

According to Burke(2018: 28) 'it is time to reintegrate the key tools of rhetoric and poetics into the modern stylistician's toolkit, for he / she will need them to both pick out finer detail and map out larger and more innovative frameworks as stylistics steps boldly into the fields of creative writing, multimodality, hypertext fiction and cognitive neuroscience.' Stylistics has symbiotic relationship with the disciplines like linguistics, semiotics, poetics, aesthetics, rhetoric, criticism, etc. Linguistics provides tools for the study of style in different contexts. Classical rhetoric and poetics are part and parcel of stylistics. Poetics is the theory of literature and stylistics is the study of literary style. According to Rene Wellek (as quoted by Kumar : 2003: 08) "both are strictly descriptive disciplines aiming at the observation, classification and characterization either of verbal style or of the verbal devices used in literature." Rhetoric is concerned with the problem of beauty in expression. The realization of literary works as an aesthetic objects is possible through the concept of style. According to Kumar (2003: 09) 'stylistics in a large frame is so to say, semiotics, involving the study of expression system and context system in interrelation.' Stylistics aids literary criticism. Thus stylistics has symbiotic relationship with the above mentioned disciplines.

3. Different Approaches within Linguistic Stylistics:

3.1 Approaches According to Linguistic Levels

Suresh Kumar stated different approaches within linguistic stylistics. The size level of linguistic units and language functions are inter-related factors which play pivotal role in identifying style features. Approaches of micro- stylistics and macro-stylistics are based on size level of linguistic units. Micro-stylistics deals with the style features identified below sentence level and macro-stylistics deals with style features identified above sentence level. They are as follows.

1) Phonostylistics: Its concern is the study of sound symbolism, phonological schemes, prosody, phonoaesthetic function, etc. In poetry phonological effects are much marked than prose. Phonology can extend into the area of meaning even if it is not in itself referential. Sound must be seen as an echo to the sense. Not accent but number of syllables and their arrangement is controlled by a poet.
2) Morhphostylistics: It deals with the study of morphemes and morphological features as style features.
3) Lexicostylistics: It deals with lexical items, patterns of vocabulary, repetition, etc.
4) Syntacticostylistics: Patterns of sentence, structures below the sentence, arrangement of words and their functioning are its concerns.
5) Semantic Level: It is concerned with deep structure, transference of meaning which creates sense of nonsense and absurdity in poetry. It studies modes of meaning and modes of style elements in the context.

3.2 Approaches According to Language Functions:

Buhler's Tridimensional Model of Language Functions

According to Buhler's tridimensional model of language functions, language is symbol, symptom and signal at once. "Symbol is information and is text –centered, symptom is self-expression and is speaker- centered, and signal is persuasion and is hearer- centered" (Kumar : 2003: 13). Based on this there are expressive stylistics, cognitive stylistics and affective stylistics. Expressive stylistics focuses on the investigation of the author's or speaker's personality. For example lyric poetry, diary writing, etc. Cognitive stylistics entails the realization of loads of information through symbols. Affective stylistics has the prominence of signal affecting hearer, reader leading to action. As there is no watertight compartment amongst these language functions, any text may have the prominence of one of the functions or may be investigated for all three functions at the same time.

Linguo-aesthetic Approach:

The use of language has many dimensions and one of them is aesthetic wherein language content is tailored and chiseled resulting into transcendence of worldly reality. As the language is used artistically in literature, rather than having any practical intent, the work of literature is a verbal art. And in consideration of work of literature as aesthetic object, style plays a pivotal role. Linguistic stylistics provides two approaches to the study of verbal art. They are-

the structural i.e. the linguo-aesthetic and the transformational generative i.e. the semio- linguistic.

In linguo-aesthetic approach, an instrument of linguistic analysis is used for the study of beauty of literary works i.e. form is the instrument for expressing the content. Literary texts are treated as realization of language i.e. language is a means to realize the end which is a literary text. The correspondence between linguistic elements and the correlating content element is set up. In the words of Suresh Kumar (2003: 05) 'In linguo-aesthetic model of linguistic stylistics, the content of the text is treated as having been realized by the way the language has been used in text.'

3. Research Methodology:

The parts of the poem 'Ode To Bombay' by Dilip Chitre are investigated at micro and macro level along with their function. The poem is analyzed at phonological, lexical, syntactic and semantic level. The study is carried out by using qualitative and quantitative research designs.

3.1 Ode To Bombay:
I had promised you a poem before I died (1)
Diamonds storming out of the blackness of a piano (2)
Piece by piece I fall at my own dead feet (3)
Releasing you like a concerto from my silence (4)
I unfasten your bridges from my insistent bones (5)
Free your railway lines from my desperate veins (6)
Dismantle your crowded tenements and meditating machines (7)
Remove your temples and brothels pinned in my skull (8)

You go out of me in a pure spiral of stars (9)
A funeral progressing towards the end of time (10)
Innumerable petals of flame undress your dark (11)
Continuous stem of growing (12)

I walk out of murders and riots (13)
I fall out of smouldering biographies (14)
I sleep on a bed of burning languages (15)
Sending you up in your essential fire and smoke (16)
Piece by piece at my own feet I fall (17)
Diamonds storm out of a black piano (18)

Once I promised you an epic (19)
And now you have robbed me (20)
You have reduced me to rubble (21)
This concerto ends. (22)

3.2 Reflections on the Meaning of 'Ode To Bombay'
Dilip Chitre was a bilingual (who considered himself pluri-lingual) poet, translator, painter and film maker. This Indian writer in English is a recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award for both translation and poetry in 1994. He was determined to show the world who Indians' Shakespeare, Racine and Dostoevsky are. His passion for music, photography, drawing and painting was propelled by his entry into Bombay. His entry into Bombay and the entry of Bombay into his poetry almost happened simultaneously. Bombay city figures in many of his poems. The range of the themes he deals with is diverse. In this regard Patke (2016: 258) says, 'Chitre has often declared eclecticism an asset for the contemporary Indian poet.'

Bombay, an island city, city of dreams may be perceived in terms of Michel Foucault's urban theory of 'Heterotopia'. It meant different things to different writers. For example Rohinton Mistry and Nissim Ezekiel found it productive yet incompatible. Rohinton Mistry in his film 'Such a Long Journey' refers to Bombay as 'a golden nest with no place to rest'. Modern poets including Dilip Chitre vent the paradox associated with Bombay. In Dilip Chitre's poetry Bombay is portrayed without her make-up. In a confessional mode he picturized the contamination and filthiness of the city, modern Indian chaos for which it stands and hellish tensions it gives. He never hesitated to portray harsh realities, instead he rejected to beautify the ugly world.

'Ode To Bombay' portrays conflicts of modern life. It presents the poet speaker's fractured self, undoing of life

and his preoccupation with death in storming, violent images and intense metaphors. It picturizes its many voices, luxuries and discordance, its nature of not admitting any barrier and lack of human values also. It also unfolds his desperate need for expression.

Once he promised a poem to Bombay before his death. But the verse is tersely terminated in the middle. Instead of giving it took so much from him and he is reduced to ashes. He lived in its vicious atmosphere of crowded apartments, human beings as meditating machines, the ambivalent positioning of the temples and brothels on the same street, murders and riots, etc. And he is struggling to come out of it. His fiery death has reduced him to diamonds from coal.

In a nutshell, it is his expression of self-liberation in devastative manner and his death which is violent explosion of life. It recalls the depiction of damned in Dante's 'Divine Comedy'. It recalls the idea of 'life-in-death' and 'death-in-life' in T S Eliot's 'The Hollow Men'. It even reminds us T S Eliot's depiction of doomed souls in 'What the Thunder Said' from his 'The Waste Land', a landmark modern poem which is land of death. It leaves us with number of questions such as is it unreal city? , Who is the protagonist?, etc.

4. Analysis of 'Ode To Bombay':

4.1 Phonological Level:

In poetry sound patterns play significant role as music cannot be separated from meaning. The prominent phonological features identified in 'Ode To Bombay' are described as follows.
The phonological scheme 'Alliteration' is employed in the poem. Alliteration refers to repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of the succeeding or nearby words. Empson (as quoted by Nowottny :1996:05) opines, 'I think myself its most important mode of action is to connect two words by similarity of sound so that you are made to think of their possible connections.' The following examples illustrate the use of Alliteration in 'Ode To Bombay'.

Sr No	Expressions from 'Ode to Bombay'	Consonant Sound Repeated at the Beginning of words
01	Piece by piece (line 3 and 17)	/ p /
02	Meditating machines (7)	/ m /
03	Spiral of stars (9)	/ s /
04	Free I fall (line17)	/ f /

In terms of harshness and softness of the speech sounds vowels are sonorous and open and back vowels are more sonorous. Among consonant sounds Plosive / p, b, t, d, k, g / are hard sounds whereas Nasals are soft sounds. The hard sounds result into cacophony. In 'Ode To Bombay' more violent images and hard sounds are used. The following table illustrates this.

Sr No	Hard Consonant Sounds	Use of Hard Sounds at the beginning of words in 'Ode To Bombay'
01	/ p /	promised, promise (line 1 and 19) piano (line 2 and 18) pinned (line 8) piece (line 3 and 17)
02	/ b /	blackness (line2) bridges (line5) bones (line 5) brothels (line 8) burning (line 15) black (line 18)
03	/ k /	concerto (line 4 and 22) crowded (line 7)
04	/ d /	Died (line 1) diamonds (line 2 and 18) dead (line 3)

			desperate (line 6) dismantle (line7)
05	/ t /		tenements (line7) temples (line8)

'Ode To Bombay' is written in free verse with irregular line length. It has the rhythm of colloquial speech and liberating effect in tune with the theme of undoing of life and ascension through cremation. There is no use of any fixed metre. Moreover, trochaic foot is dominant.

4.2 Lexical Level:

As 'Ode To Bombay' picturizes the undoing of poet speaker's life, all the verbs used in it are dynamic verbs used in present, past and progressive form. They are as follows.
   i)   promised (line 1 and 19)
   ii)   died (line 1)
   iii)   storming (line 2)
   iv)   fall (line 3,14 and 17)
   v)   Releasing (line 4)
   vi)   unfasten (line 5)
   vii)   Free (line 6)
   viii)   dismantle (line 7)
   ix)   remove (line8)
   x)   go (line9)
   xi)   undress (line 11)
   xii)   walk (line 13)
   xiii)   Sending (line 16)
   xiv)   storm (line 18)
   xv)   robbed (line 20)
   xvi)   reduced (line 21)
   xvii)   ends (line22)

4.3 Syntactic Level:

Selectional restrictions are the restrictions on the co-occurrence of lexical items. Selectional restrictions are disregarded in poetry as poetry is characterized by violation of usual selectional restrictions. Selectional restrictions are violated profusely in 'Ode To Bombay'. The expressions which violate selectional restrictions are as follows. In line (4) the poet is releasing Bombay from his silence. In line (5) he is unfastening its bridges from his bones. In line (6) he is freeing its railway lines from his veins. In line (8) he is removing its temples and brothels which are pinned in his skull. In line (11 and 12) petals of flame undress its dark stem of growing. In line (20) Bombay robbed him. In line (21) it reduced him to rubble. The actions involved in the above expressions are not conceivable.

Collocation refers to the company the words keep. The following expressions of collocational violations are identified in 'Ode To Bombay'. In these expressions nouns do not keep the company of adjectives used before them in normal language.
   i)   insistent bones (line 5)
   ii)   desperate veins (line 6)
   iii)   meditating machines (line 7)
   iv)   smouldering biographies (line 14)
   v)   burning languages (line 15)

The structural patterns are repeated in line (13), (14) and (15). The structure of line (5) and (6) is repeated with implied subject in line (6). Parallel structures are used in line (7) and (8) also.

In line (11) and (12) enjambment is found as the noun phrase 'dark continuous stem of growing' is broken over a line boundary leading to the creation of startling effect. John Sinclair (as quoted by Short :2013: 156) calls the effect of enjambment created by the line-end interrupting the flow of the grammar as 'arrest'.

The poet speaker's piece by piece fall is emphasized by the use of the device of 'Inversion' in line (17) 'Piece by piece at my own feet I fall.'

4.4 Semantic Level:

In 'Ode To Bombay' throughout + human and + animate features are attributed to – animate which leads to personification of Bombay. The poem is loaded with series of Metaphors. In Metaphor 'x' is spoken in terms of 'y' which results into complexity. According to Nowottny (1996: 59) a Metaphor is 'a set of linguistic directions for supplying the sense of an unwritten literal term' and 'Metaphor allows us to supply an uncontaminated image from our own experience of the physical world.' In line (2) 'Diamonds storming out of the blackness of a piano' the poet speaker has compared his fiery death with diamonds from coal which entails a lot of violence. The metaphorical expressions in lines (5), (6), (7) and (8) convey the idea of his liberation from Bombay. Bombay was the very essence of his life. It controlled him. And he is trying to come out of the vicious entrapment by unfastening its bridges just like button and buckles from his bones, freeing its railway lines from his veins, dismantling crowded apartments and removing temples and brothels from his skull. These expressions of various structures and buildings remind us William Blake's poem 'London' in which they also represent evil things. The metaphorical expression in the ambivalent positioning of temples and brothels (line 8) on the same street suggests lack of values and reminds us objects placed on Belinda's dressing table 'Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux,' in Alexander Pope's 'The Rape of the Lock'. The metaphorical expressions in line(13)'I walk out of murders and riots', in line (14) 'I fall out of smouldering biographies and in line(15) 'I sleep on a bed of burning languages' suggest violence which surrounds him, his suffocation and his desperate longing for communication respectively. All these expressions underline exploitation, contamination, squalor that surrounds him and reinforce that Dilip Chitre had come to Bombay with lot of expectations but this dream city consumed him. Instead of giving it took so much from him.

According to Helen Dunbar (as quoted by Nowottny : 1996: 174) 'symbol is an expression of meaningful experience having basis in association.' It is 'unique in its power to give perspective of relationship.' 'Ode To Bombay' uses very striking symbols. The image of concerto symbolizes his life. In line (4) 'Releasing you like a concerto from my silence', Bombay is released like his life from his silence which leads to the literary device Simile. 'Meditating machines' in line (7) 'Dismantle……………meditating machines' symbolize human beings representing quotidian life in Bombay. The image of 'black piano' in line (18) 'Diamonds………black piano' symbolizes his fiery death.

There is pun i.e. word play on the word 'temples' in line (8) 'Remove temples………skull' leading to lexical ambiguity. Empson (as quoted by Leech: 1969:205) in his 'Seven Types of Ambiguity' refers to it as 'any verbal nuance, however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language.' Here 'temples' may refer to religious structures and also to right and left temples with respect to anatomy.

5. CONCLUSION:

Thus the use of linguistic elements in 'Ode To Bombay' at phonological, lexical, syntactic and semantic level is investigated and style features are identified. These elements at micro and macro level with respect to their communicative value and effect in the context of the poem are analyzed. The analysis shows that the essential meaning of 'Ode To Bombay' is expressed through a particular selection and specific arrangement of linguistic forms. This investigation and analysis yield interpretation of the poem leading to the development of teaching material.

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