A Stylistic Investigation into the Effect of Phonological Features on Literary Text Reception: A Case Study of William Shakespeare's Sonnets

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1. Abstract

By using a case study of William Shakespeare's sonnets, this stylistic study attempts to examine the function of phonological elements in the reception and interpretation of literary works. The phonological level of stylistic analysis examines how sound devices contribute to texts' stylistic value. It focuses on how phonological devices such as **Rhyme scheme, Alliteration, Assonance, Consonance, Rhythm, Onomatopoeia, Intonation, and Stress** affect readers' or listeners' experience and emotional reception of the poems. This study aims to analyse how Shakespeare's phonological devices influence how readers perceive and interpret the poetry content by looking at the stylistic components used in these sonnets. Shakespeare's sonnets, according to the study, have a particular rhyme pattern that goes like this: ABAB CDCD EFEF GG, with equivalent rhymes in the first, third, and fourth lines. The poems' continual continuation is achieved through a couplet. Shakespeare's sonnets show his mastery of anaphoric repeats, employing various patterns beyond iambic pentameter. Onomatopoeia is more prominent in his plays, and the sonnets' aesthetic form is established through their internal coherence.

Keywords: Phonological Features, Text Reception, Shakespeare's sonnets, Rhyme scheme, Alliteration, Assonance, Consonance, Rhythm, Onomatopoeia, Intonation, and Stress.

دراسة أسلوبية لتأثير السمات الصوتية على استقبال النص الأدبي: دراسة حالة لسوناتات ويليام شكسبير

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الملخص

هذه الدراسة الأسلوبية تحاول من خلال دراسة حالة من سوناتات ويليام شكسبير استكشاف دور العناصر الصوتية في استقبال و تفسير الأعمال الأدبية. تحليل الأسلوب على المستوى الصوتي يدرس كيف تسهم الأجهزة الصوتية في القيمة الأسلوبية للنصوص، مركزًا على كيفية تأثير أجهزة الصوت مثل نظام القافية، والتشابه الصوتي ، والتوافق الصوتي،وتناغم الأصوات والإيقاع،والتقليد الصوتي(المحاكاة الصوتية)، والتنغيم، والنبرة على تجربة القراء أو السامعين واستقبالهم العاطفي للقصائد. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل كيفية تأثير أجهزة الصوت في شكسبير على كيفية تصور القراء وتفسير محتوى الشعر من خلال النظر إلى المكونات الأسلوبية المستخدمة في هذه السوناتات. تُظهر سوناتات شكسبير، وفقً للدراسة، نمطًا معينًا للقافية يسير على النحو التالي ABAB CDCD EFEF GG ؛، مع قافية متساوية

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في الأسطر الأولى، الثالثة، والرابعة. يتم تحقيق استمرارية القصائد من خلال قصيدة **زوجية**. تُظهر سونتات شكسبير مهارته في تكرار الأنا ، واستخدام أنماط متنوعة تتجاوز القدم الإيمبية الخماسية. الصوت الدلالي أكثر بروزا في مسرحياته، وتتمثل الشكل الجمالي للسونتات في تماسكها الداخلي.
الكلمات المفتاحية : سوناتات ويليام شكسبير،العناصر الصوتية،استقبال و تفسير الأعمال الأدبية، القافية، والتشابه الصوتي ، والتوافق الصوتي،وتناغم الأصوات والإيقاع،والتقليد الصوتي.

2. Introduction

At the phonological level, stylistics is a field of study that focuses on the sound effects and patterns used in language to create a unique style and convey meaning at the phonological level. To understand how various elements of sound, such as intonation, accent, rhythm, stress, and pronunciation, contribute to the overall aesthetic effect of text or voice, this task involves analysing a range of phonological features. This includes examining how **Rhyme scheme, Alliteration, Assonance, Consonance, Rhythm, Onomatopoeia, Intonation, and Stress** are utilized to achieve specific effects and enhance the aesthetic appeal of written or spoken works.

Phonological Stylistic analysis at various levels According to Odden (2005:2), phonology is the study of sound structure in language, as opposed to the studies of sentence structure (syntax), word structure (morphology), or how languages develop through time (historical linguistics). Phonology, the study of a language's sound systems, is concerned with how particular sounds convey particular concepts. This study is concerned with the phonological analysis of Shakespeare's sonnets. The purpose of the study is to determine how phonological elements affect the reception of literary writings.

3. Literature Review

Jannat (2017)explores William Shakespeare's sonnet 138 from a stylistic viewpoint. We'll delve into literary stylistics and style, providing a concise overview of Shakespeare's sonnets. The goal is to introduce Shakespeare and the concepts behind sonnet 138, offering a clear understanding of the sonnet's style analysis. This analysis will cover the sonnet's graphology, grammar, phonology, and lexicon, allowing readers to fully appreciate its composition and phrasing. Additionally, this essay will help readers grasp the themes and motifs that Shakespeare intended to convey.

Al-Sheilkh and Hamoudi (2014)highlight the idea that a poem's sound patterns have a significant role in forming the poet's worldview. They explore the auditory texture of Shakespeare's sonnet number 55, "Not marble, nor gilded monuments." The study treats the sonnet as a phonetic unit of meaning. There are three sections to the research. The fundamental ideas of contemporary phonetics and phonology are introduced in Part I. The "syllable–producing pulses" and the "stress-producing pulses," which are phenomena seen in almost all human languages, are used to highlight the phonological component of the

verse structure and the phonological processes that give the poem its aesthetic shape. Sound devices such as "rhythm," "rhyme," "alliteration," "onomatopoeia," and others are part of these processes. The study explores these concepts from a phonological perspective. Shakespeare's sonnet is analyzed from a phonological standpoint using Cummings and Simmons's "Systemic Description." The analytical approach shows how the poem's use of language creates both a linguistic and artistic form.

Omosule (2013) states that Shakespeare's sonnets delve into various vices of the character who chooses not to have children, possibly to preserve her beauty, in a lyrical and philosophical way. Despite all indications to the contrary, the persona is thought to be male. The paper's primary objective is to analyze the poet's language to dissect the poems and identify the themes that interest the poet. Thus, this study seeks to apply stylistics to the analysis of the poems to uncover the influence of word choice on the subject matter.

It has been observed that previous research works have not given due importance to the role of phonological attributes in literary analysis. Therefore, it is highly recommended for scholars to expand their understanding of the interplay between form and content in poetry. To this end, a thorough analysis of the phonological elements in Shakespeare's sonnets becomes important. Such an investigation can shed light on the impact of these characteristics on the interpretation and reception of the sonnets across different audiences and historical epochs. Hence, this study can help bring to the fore the timeless value and significance of Shakespeare's literary accomplishments.

3.1. Stylistics

According to Zyngier (2001: 380), stylistic analysis is an effective technique that can help readers understand a text. The author believes that besides the text itself, other critical elements like production, mediation, reception, and post-processing are inseparable from it. Zyngier explains that conducting a stylistic analysis can lead to the creation of new models that readers can recognize as expressive linguistic constructions.

According to Leech and Short (2007: 55-56), stylistics is concerned with understanding the connection between a writer's artistic expression and the language they use to achieve it. Stylistics analyses the relationship between a text's meaning and the linguistic features that make those meanings apparent. "Markers" or "features" are the terms used to describe these linguistic traits (ibid.). According to Leech and Short, they can be divided into four groups: lexical, grammatical, phonological, and graphological. Even if it is intuitive, choosing these traits to determine their value in a text is a challenging for them. They like to have "a checklist of potential style markers... so that a reader may carry out a linguistic survey of the text, searching for significant features" because of this.

Stylistic analysis aims to interpret texts and connect literary effects to linguistic reasons, providing objective, scientific critiques based on tangible evidence. It uses specialized technical expressions from linguistics, but literary criticism emphasizes interpretation beyond the sentence level, unlike stylistic analysis. (Salma et al, 2014: 1)

3.2. Levels of stylistic analysis

In linguistics, there is a language level that can be used for stylistic analysis. Depending on the goal and extent of the investigation, stylistic analysis can be done at many levels. According to Simpson (2004:5), there are seven levels. However, the researcher will only use four levels in this section: graphological, phonological, grammatical, and lexical level.

3.2.1.Graphlogical level: According to Wales (2014:194), graphology refers to a language's writing system as it appears in handwriting and typography, as well as to other related features like capitalization and punctuation.

3.2.2. Grammatical level: Both the syntactic and morphological levels are covered at this level. The goal is to examine the internal organisation of sentences in a language and how they work in successions. To determine the foregrounding and the deviation, clauses, phrases, words, nouns, verbs, etc. must be differentiated and subjected to analysis (Salma et al., 2014: 2).

3.2.3. Lexical Level: "Lexicology is the words we use; the vocabulary of a language," says Simpson (2004:5). All words used in languages that have grammatical meaning and function are included in linguistics, which is related to lexical choice.

3.2.4. Phonological Level: In contrast to the studies of sentence structure (syntax), word structure (morphology), or how languages develop over time (historical linguistics), according to Odden (2005:2), phonology is the study of sound structure in language. The study of language's sound systems, or phonology, deals with how specific concepts are represented by particular sounds. This study is an application of this level of stylistics.

4. Shakespeare's sonnets

William Shakespeare is commonly known for his plays, but he is also considered to be one of the most significant poets in the English language. While the majority of his plays are written in verse, it may not seem necessary to differentiate between "the poetry" and "the poetry of the plays" at first glance. However, specific passages from both the plays and poems can be highlighted to demonstrate their similarities (Hyland, 2003:1).

Hyland (2003:2) stated that Shakespeare's plays are frequently staged and (increasingly) filmed, but for most of us, reading the plays in print is how we first encounter them. This tendency to consider Shakespeare's plays as "poetry," as if plays were the same sort of thing as poems, is reinforced by this. Because they met quite different cultural demands in Shakespeare's time, we mistakenly

believe that the printed play and the printed poem are materially identical when they are not. Shakespeare the poet is, however, defined for us by his plays, and the majority of us are unfamiliar with his works.

William Shakespeare is well recognised around the world and throughout history for penning sonnets, which are a type of poetry. Each sonnet contained a couplet and three quatrains with 12 lines and 10 syllables per line. Every quatrain has an ABAB rhyme scheme as well as an iambic pentameter foot and meter. He has composed 154 sonnets, which he has separated into two groups: Sonnets 127–154 are addressed to the "dark lady," while Sonnets 1-126 are dedicated to a cherished "young man". Shakespeare's sonnets include three main themes: the destruction of time, the assurance of immortality, and poetry's devotion. Shakespeare uses a variety of poetic methods to convey the eternities of beauty and love, guiding readers to experience magnificent and never-ending aesthetic bliss (Quackenbush et al., 2019:233).

Shakespeare's first works were written in the conventional manner of the day. He frequently resorted to using long, sometimes inflated metaphors and narcissistic expressions. His manner frequently came off as haughty and domineering. Because the majority of his sonnets are about love, they are written simply (Shawa and Khaled, 2017:69)

5. Method

The study focuses on stylistic analysis at the phonological level. This level of stylistic analysis focuses on the study of a language's formal pronunciation rules, or its sound system. **Rhyme scheme, Alliteration, Assonance, Consonance, Rhythm, Onomatopoeia, Intonation, and Stress** used as part of stylistic analysis. The study will conduct a thorough analysis of these phonological devices, in multiple sonnets written by William Shakespeare. See the following figure:

6. Data Analysis and Discussion

6.1. Rhyme scheme

Shaban (2020:2) defines sonnets as the fourteen-line poetry form that consists of an octave with two quatrains a stanza of eight lines. Additionally, it has a sestet with a stanza of six lines. Iambic pentameter and a rhyme scheme are typically used in sonnets. Thus, Petrarchan sonnets, also known as Italian sonnets, and English sonnets, sometimes known as Shakespearean sonnets, are the most popular sonnet types.

Shakespeare's sonnets generally follow an ABAB CDCD EFEF GG rhyme pattern, which requires that the first and third lines and the second and fourth lines rhyme. The same pattern is repeated in the following quartet of four lines, but with different rhymes, and it concludes with rhyming couplets. See the following table which consists of some Sonnet rhymes:

Sonnet 18		Sonnet 30		Sonnet 48		Sonnet 154	
Day	A	Thought	A	Way	A	Asleep	A
Temperate	B	Past	B	Thrust	B	Brand	B
May	A	Sought	A	Stay	A	Keep	A
Date	B	Last	B	Trust	B	Hand	B
Shines	C	Waste	C	Are	C	Fire	C
dimm'd	D	Flow	D	Grief	D	Warmed	D
Declines	C	Night	C	Care	C	Desire	C
untrimm'd	D	Woe	D	Thief	D	discarm'd	D
Fade	E	Forgone	E	Chest	E	By	E
ow'st	F	O'er	F	Art	F	perpetual,	F
Shade	E	Moan	E	Breast	E	Remedy	E
grow'st	F	Before	F	Part	F	Thrall	F
See	G	Friend	G	Fear	G	Prove	G
Thee	G	End	G	Dear	G	Love	G

Shakespeare's concluding words are crucial because they might be a reference to the poet's style, which provides the stylistic differences of the poet's language. Shakespeare's sonnet's rhyme scheme, abaabbcbccdcdefegg, substantially influences the texture of the sound in both the entire poem and the quatrain as a single unit. The sonnets' musicality and rhythmic flow are facilitated by the rhyme scheme's regularity, which also helps to make them remember and sounding in the reader's mind. Shakespeare's sonnets would have much less impact without this precise attention to rhyme since the auditory patterns convey subtle emotional undertones and work as a memory help.

6.2. Alliteration

Alliteration, is based on phonic repetition and may be the least obvious or straightforward to recognize. This is especially true when the frequency of the repeated phoneme in the line is low. The letters and phonemes are certain to reoccur since the English language "uses about forty-five phonemes" (Adams, 1997: p. 33).

Shakespeare's verse frequently repeats similar sounds, typically consonants or consonant clusters in a series of words:

"Cheerèd and checked even by the selfsame sky" (Sonnet 15)

Now see the repetition of the sound /m/ , /n/ and /l/ in *sonnet 116*

"the marriage of true minds" (sonnet 116)

"I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd."(sonnet 116)

"Love is not love" (sonnet 116).

Shakespeare's Sonnet 116 contains an unusual instance of alliteration where the letter sounds /l/, /n/ and /m/are repeated. These are rare examples of alliteration

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because the same sounds or different spellings of the same word are used in each instance, emphasising the words and/or imagery even more.

Therefore, using these patterns of alliteration contributes to the cohesiveness of the phonetic texture in Shakespeare's sonnets. He uses alliteration in Sonnet 116 to create a melodic and rhythmic feel. The reader's attention is drawn to the concepts and ideas being conveyed by the use of alliteration, which also serves to highlight certain words and phrases. It can also have a calming and consoling impact, which would enhance the sonnet's general mood. This technique enhances the text's lyrical and emotional resonance, highlighting the lasting nature of love and fostering harmony.

6.3. Assonance

When writing poetry or prose, authors can use assonance to create a rhythmic pattern and repetition in their work, without necessarily relying on rhyme. This technique involves the repetition of vowel sounds within words, which can help to establish a particular mood or tone and create a more memorable reading experience for the audience:

"So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
 So long lives this and this gives life to thee."   *(sonnet 18)*

See the repetition of /eə/ sound in Shakespeare *(sonnet 1)*:

"His tender heir might bear his memory."*(Sonnet 1)*

Shakespeare makes equally deft use of assonance in his sonnets to keep the musical harmonies twirling:

'Not marble nor the gilded monuments' (*sonnet 55*)

Shakespeare's Sonnets employ assonance to create musicality, harmony, and timelessness, enhancing the listener's experience. In Sonnet 18, it creates a soothing melody, while Sonnet 1 establishes a strong emotional connection. In Sonnet 55, it highlights the beauty and timelessness of the subject matter, leaving a lasting impression.

6.4. Consonance

Shakespeare's sonnets often feature consonance, the repetition of consonant sounds in close proximity within a phrase or line of poetry. This technique adds emphasis, rhythm, and melody to the phrase:

"When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes"   (*sonnet 29)*

The repetition of the "n" sound in "in," "fortune," and "men's" adds to the melancholic tone of the line.

"Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang." (sonnet 73)

The words "ruin'd," "choirs," and "birds" all have the same "r" sound, which conveys a feeling of decay and desolation. The repetition of sound /s/ in "sweet" and "sang".

In his sonnets, Shakespeare masterfully employs the literary technique of consonance to create a powerful and captivating effect on the readers. By

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repeating certain consonant sounds within the lines of his poetry, he enhances the musicality of his language and evokes a range of emotions. Some of the most compelling examples of this technique can be observed in his sonnets, which continue to captivate readers with their enchanting melodies and profound insights into the human experience.

6.5. Rhythm

Rhythm is considered as the mother of repetition. Rhythm is achieved by repeating some combination of interval between sounds of light and strong beats (Mazany 2014:124). Iambic pentameter, a rhyme pattern in which each sonnet line has ten syllables, is the main metre used in Shakespeare's sonnets. Iambs, also known as iambic feet, are five-pair divisions of the syllables. One unstressed syllable is followed by one stressed syllable to form the metric unit known as an iamb:

When I / do COUNT / the CLOCK / that TELLS / the TIME *(Sonnet 12)*

Shakespeare's sonnets' rhythmic patterns can be used to determine whether a word is stressed or unstressed.

Shall I / com PARE/ thee TO / a SUM / mer's DAY?

Thou ART / more LOVE / ly AND / more TEM / per ATE   (Sonnet 18)

Shakespeare also uses different patterns in his sonnets in addition to the traditional iambic one as in sonnet 18 :

A Trochaic pattern: thee to

Two pyrrhic patterns: (ly) and (perate)

In summary, the poet's good use of rhyme and rhythmic patterns adds to the poems' overall aesthetic appeal and emotional resonance, drawing readers in on a visceral and profound level. Through an examination of the distribution of stressed and unstressed syllables, rhyme schemes, and meter patterns, we may learn more about how rhythm influences literary texts' meaning and reception, amplifying their impact and enduring importance.

6.6. Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia, the initial stage of language expression, comes from onomatopoeic interjections (such as noises people use to entice animals). Association should be the foundation of knowledge, and it is the basis for language's structured nature. As a result, onomatopoeia is a crucial indicator of the development of true language from quasi-language (Qinghua,2018:43)

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,*(Sonnet 18)*

It is clear that Shakespeare used onomatopoeia more often in his plays than in his sonnets:

"Bow-wow. / Hark, hark! I hear / The strain of strutting chanticleer / Cry cock-a-diddle-dow."*(The Tempest)*

Musicians, O musicians, "Heart's ease,"

"Heart's ease." O, an you will have me live, play

"Heart's ease."   (Romeo and Juliet Act 4Scene 5Line 106)

Onomatopoeia lends a dynamic sense of actuality and urgency to poetic work because it mimics the sounds of everyday life. The tone, ambiance, and meaning of a narrative or lyrical poem can all be created using it.

6.7. Intonation

Intonation is the term for a set of auditory characteristics, such as duration, intensity, and pitch, that are utilized to convey the meaning of a conversation. The methodical use of voice pitch to differentiate lexical objects is tone, which is distinct from this:

"Elle beauty dead fleece made gay again" *(sonnet 68)*

The "dead fleece" prevents the third seizure reversal, which is typically preceded by at least a brief gap in intonation. The ideal approach to achieve this, according to Peter Groves, is to extend the subordinate S syllable (in this case, "dead"). The result is to emphasize particular points to some degree.

"That god forbid, that made me first your slave,

I should in thought control your times of pleasure," (sonnet 58)

The word "times" as well as the words "you" and "your" repeated several times in the speaker's part are the main conduits for the bitter intonation.

6.8. Stress

The three quatrains, or four-line stanzas, of a Shakespearean sonnet are followed by a couplet, or two-line stanza. Iambic pentameter, a particular poetic rhythm, is used throughout his sonnets. Iambic poetry features lines that alternate between stressed and unstressed syllables. An iambic foot is a single pair of unstressed-stressed syllables. Each line in iambic pentameter has a length of five feet, and the overall beat is "da-DUM da-DUMda-DUMda-DUMda-DUM." as in sonnet 21 :

So **is** it **not** with **me** as **with** that **Muse**,

Stirred **by** a **paint**ed **beau**ty **to** his **verse**,

Thus, each line contains 10 syllables—five stressed and five unstressed—in total.

7. Results and Conclusion

The sonnets of Shakespeare are renowned for their adherence to a particular rhyme scheme. This scheme is characterized by the pattern ABAB CDCD EFEF GG, wherein the first and third lines, along with the second and fourth lines, share corresponding rhymes. Subsequently, the following four lines create a quartet that follows the same pattern but with different rhymes. The sonnets culminate with a couplet that rhymes. This aids in the poem's continual continuation by switching the positions of each rhyming word with the one preceding it.

Shakespeare's sonnets are a testament to his exceptional command of Alliteration. They abound throughout his extensive body of work, leaving no doubt as to his mastery of this literary technique.

Shakespeare definitively employs various patterns in his sonnets, going beyond the traditional iambic pentameter as mentioned in the previous section.

Shakespeare undoubtedly used onomatopoeia to a greater extent in his plays than in his sonnets.

Shakespeare's use of the sounds indisputably established the aesthetic form of the sonnets through their exceptional internal coherence.

Shakespeare's masterful use of phonological elements powerfully captures the author's tone. The deliberate choice of sounds serves a precise function, demonstrating the poet's exceptional skill in creating sounds within specific limitations. This not only showcases their intelligence but also draws readers in, making for a captivating read and fully understand the literary work.

Further studies are needed to examine how the phonological characteristics of Shakespeare's sonnets compare to those of other poets or literary traditions, enhancing the understanding of poetic language and its effect on readers.

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