



Power of Influence: Language and Literature

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to discuss the interface between language and literature. This type of relationship is debatable and arouses various views to the extent that one can presume which one of them (language or literature) takes the lead and has more effects on text rendering.

Unquestionably, language and literature are intercommunal acting as a feedback for each other. Language is a medium where literature is modeled and shaped in the way it is conceptually designed for. What matters is their proportionality of influence. Literature exists in a written form- abstract idea- and with the aid of language it becomes materialized. It is language that makes a distinction between the types of literature- each has a distinctive style, certain vocabulary and cohesive ties be their diagnostic hallmarks. Literature is like any manufacture, a writer uses its fibers (lexical items) in an artistic way to produce different forms with a linguistic aroma. This, of course, does not only pertain to literary works but also to other disciplines. An ardent science reader can easily discern which text type is- physic, administrative, medical... etc. Both language and literature are deeply rooted in the human brain, with a discrepancy of controlling areas.

Key words: language, literature, influence, interface, image, proportion

المستخلص

العلاقة بين الادب و اللغة علاقة وثقى فاحدهما يكمل الاخر. فالادب ترجمة الافكار والصور الذهنية الى افكار مقروءة و علم اللغة يعمل على صياغة المفردة المؤثرة العاملة على ديمومة النص ضمن اسلوب شيق يميزه صناعة الاختيار وليس كل ما يكتب يستمر ويتلقاه الجمهور عبر الازمنة فهناك اعمال ادبية لم تلق رواجاً واخرى ولدت ميتة لكون الوسيطة الناقلة (اللغة) غير سليمة والصياغة مشوشة. فاللغة فن و بناء لغوي و مصدرراً للجمالية. أن دور الادب مهم في الحفاظ على اللغة والارتقاء بها من خلال اشكاله الابداعية المختلفة كالشعر والرواية والمسرحية والنقد.

1. Introduction

The impressive effect of a text is characterized by the style in which it is written. The most widely recognized impact is the figures of speech (tropes). Irony, overstatement (hyperbole), understatement (meiosis and litotes), metonymy, synecdoche, as elements of style portrait the texts with powerful language.

Language, being versatile, that has many roles (informative, expressive, phatic, and aesthetic) furnishes pathways for literary men to manipulate words in the same way as they might model clay or paint a picture. Crystal (1997) supports such a part played language by saying '... everyday experience suggests that much of our thinking is facilitated by language' (14). He further queries the possibility of thinking without language; or whether the ways of our thinking are dictated by language (Ibid). To this end, a writer should scrutinize two aspects – diction (the choice and use of words) and syntax (sentence construction). Related to these two aspects is the manipulation of rhetorical devices. Diction, syntax, and rhetorical devices have effects penetrating in literary techniques (rhyme, rhythm, alliteration ,...etc.). Collocation, deviation, and semantic ties are also at play.

We receive our world of reality through our senses and being magnified by ideas and language. The brain receives information and assembles it in meaningful messages for us. People of specialty hold distinct views of language influence. Edward Sapir and B. Lee Whorf believe that the linguistic system of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas (Carroll 1956:212). To advocate Sapir's view, W. Humboldt goes so far as to say that language is the expression of the spirit of a nation (Underhill 2009:97). In a similar vein, but from a different perspective, Noam Chomsky asserts that language is a part of the internal mental structure common to all languages (Chomsky, 2006: ix). He lays more emphasis on competence along all its types than performance. Human creativity with the aid of language can be feasible in various and many routes.

Poetry is one of many ways whereby humans employ the magic of language. Poetry uses words in unusual ways to convey meanings, emotions, or ideas to the audience. Poets have all kinds of words not available to any other kind of writer. They use words with a wide spectrum of special effects such as repetition, meter, rhyme, assonance, alteration to render imagery, word association and sound qualities due their exceptional features; thus such eccentricity throws poetry into being notorious to translate.

2. The Language Features of Poetry and Novels and Drama

It is important to notice not only what a novelist or a poet says (conveys the idea, story, sentiment ...) but also how he/she says. A poet quite possibly does not expect that every poem is his prime assuming that his first thoughts are not his best thoughts, so he invokes his linguistic repertoire to revise what he has written. The point is why an author might choose some words instead of another, for example, a poet might choose words for their assonance, words with "L" ; "O" ; "PH" combinations for their soft sounds and melodious quality, or words with "K" ; "J", "G", "Z", "T";

"Q" to create a harsh, obnoxious effect. Writers often use verbs of motion to create an effect of urgency or hurriedness. Characters and places names are often symbolic. punctuation and sentence structure are often regular. On the other hand, poets often change words rapidly and repeatedly between multiple tenses for rhetorical effect. They often deviate from language norms to achieve a poetic mode.

The pivotal role of literature is to preserve language and exalt its quality through its various creative forms- poetry, drama, novel, or literary criticism which in turn helps develop language to cope with all modern breakthroughs. Literature is the product of all social traditions and conventions, for instance, the seven *mualaqat* in Arabic (seven odes; literally the seven suspended) are considered as historical and linguistic evidence to reflect the deepest sensations of literary prestige and poetry in particular. Alternatively, Language confers on literary texts special flavor discernable in their form and texture and vision as well. Text analysis largely depends on language components in a sense that it is the derive of engendering a plethora of styles in literary works.

Literature in all its types (poetry, novel, drama, stories) uses certain devices to raise the readers' awareness and make them be at the scene in all its sensory richness. In irony (sarcasm), the author writes the opposite of what they mean often for cause effect- to invert expectation as in Coleridge's poem 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' which depicted a ship blown up by a south wind. Coleridge wrote:

"Water, water, everywhere,

And all the boards did shrink;

Water, water, everywhere,

Nor any drop to drink."

Another citation of irony is in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I, Scene V when Juliet ordered her confidante to get wind of Romeo:

"Go ask his name: if he be married. My grave is like to be wedding bed." Metaphor is an indirect comparison between two things to show how they are alike as in "She was drowning in paperwork." ; "He is a rainbow" ; "Time is money"

Other devices such as simile, alliteration, assonance assume to be predominant. Following are illustrative examples

1. "the very mystery of him excited her curiosity like a door had neither lock nor key." – gone with wind, by Margaret Mitchel. (Simile)

2. "Deep into that darkness, long, I stood there wondering, fearing doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before." (from the poem 'The Raven' by Edgar Allen Poe) (alliteration)

3. 'Hear the Mellow Wedding bells' (from The Poem 'Bells' by Edgar Allen Poe. (assonance).

Moreover, what makes poetry powerful and enticing is its imagery. Poetic language is denser, more artistic and the word order is more significant than other structures for the purpose of achieving impact on readers' emotions. To illustrate, a fiction writing may convey an image in some pages, but the poem will do so in a few stanzas. Poets often do not abide by the strict grammar rules to render the poems more open. Poetic language uses words that go beyond the literal meaning to evoke emotional responses. The aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of language necessitate meticulous selection of words used in poems so as to appeal to the senses to intensify the impact of the images. The stylistic choice of words in T. S. Eliot's *Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* elicits skepticism of being real or symbolic.

Let us go then, you and I,

When the evening is spread out against the sky

Like a patient etherized upon a table;

Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,

The muttering retreats

More compelling powerful poetic excerpts show how words

themselves are poignant:

1. A stanza from The poem 'She Walks in Beauty' by Lord Byron

She walks in beauty, like the night

Of cloudless climes and starry skies;

And all that's best of Dark and bright

Meet in her aspect and her eyes...

2. A stanza from the poem 'Funeral Blues' by W. H. Auden

He was my north, my South, my East and my West.

My working week and my Sunday rest.

My moon, my midnight, my talk, my song.

I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.

As for novel, a genre of fiction writing, it aims to create the scene and action in the reader's mind. The defining characteristic feature of novel is the use of standard language rather than rhythmic language as in poetry. The use of prose and dialogues is recurrent. Brilliant novelists make their work a quick and accessible read. They try to make events compelling, memorable and easy to digest. They articulate their cases in a way they look new and fresh.

Dramatic language is obviously featured by words of symbolic sound and movement. It incorporates stage directions into dialogues with words that fit the character, the setting and the situation; words that designate tension and conflict between characters to manifest development in character and plot. To notice the grip of language over literature is that literature of specific culture responds to the language womb in which different text types are versified.

Research on corpus linguistics stresses the word role and its influence on audience. A spoken word can be used in a highly powerful manner to provoke the reader/listener emotionally. It inflicts tremendous impact on the reader's thinking. A word has the power to help us be good parents, great partners, dexterous negotiator and solicitous neighbours. A word can create an atmosphere conducive to moving people and eventually to resurrecting the society. A word can make things irreplaceable, extraordinary and just kind of marvelous. Words with mellow sounding and pleasant associations relieve the hearers and involve them in the world of contemplation. For example, words such as 'charm', 'delight', 'halcyon', 'lullaby', 'mellifluous', and 'tranquility' promote the brain's cognitive functioning and diffuse emotional stress. By contrast, ugly words like 'clumsy', 'nostalgia', 'usurp', 'retard', 'funereal', morose and so disrupt the brain functioning and ignite bad temper. The legacy of word remains steady over time embossing out in time of turbulences and hard to erase; everything vanishes but word heritage evidenced by what Old Testament says, "in the beginning was the word... (John 1:1-5). In sum, language is the vehicle by which literature develops and serves as a repository of literary thoughts. Language is a catalyst of thoughts and ideas formation to afford inspiration and power to literary men.

A bipartite relation between language and literature has been well documented to the extent that there is no literature without language. Literature aims to entertain, instruct, highlight social traditions and values and its types (poetry, drama, novel...) mirror social behaviors through satire, irony, symbolism. Literary men expose their thoughts and criticize the ills in the society by their choice of relevant words for each social behavior.

With conjunction of the two types of dictions mentioned earlier, it is feasible to suggest two operative instruments, linguistic and literary from which literary men creatively conflate their ideas in various forms. Linguistic instrument is the matrix where ideas are created and modeled to emerge in various aesthetics. This can be physiologically explicable. The two hemispheres of the human brain are responsible for language processing and images mapping. Neuroscience of human brain imaging stresses that syntactic and semantic information processing is localized in

the left hemisphere of the brain in the majority of healthy people. The left hemisphere is the habitat of logical reasoning and language analysis (logical brain) and the right hemisphere is engaged in imagination and contemplation. The left hemisphere is dominant in speech, comprehension, arithmetic and writing. The right hemisphere embraces creativity, spatiality, and music. There is a complex relationship between these two hemispheres and they symmetrically contribute to language functions.

Studies on the physical structures of the brain show that the artistic ability is located in the right hemisphere and with the collaboration of the left hemisphere which manipulates the object to perform the task in normal progression, the creation of the image is fulfilled.

Research on neuroscience exploring brain regions that are involved in language processing has found that the cortex is largely engaged in text interpretation. The two contiguous areas Broca (for Paul Broca, a French neurosurgeon, located in left frontal lobe) and Wernicke (for Carl Wernicke, a German neurologist, located in left temporal lobe) specialize in symmetrical functions. It is Broca's area, where language processing is housed, to form and express language. The angular gyrus and Wernicke's area assemble information and process word sequences to determine context and meaning. These areas coordinate through neural pathways to produce auditory and/or visual images. More specifically, information is recognized and contextualized in Wernicke's area and then transmitted to Broca's area then to motor cortex to send a message. One can deduce that these areas which reside in the left hemisphere are mainly responsible for language production (Broca's area) and language processing (Wernicke's area). A standpoint, though controversial but important, is of interest here. It contends that the left hemisphere's specialization of language is due to its maturation a bit earlier.

More recent studies have been conducted to investigate how language functions are organized in the brain. The American neurologist Norman Geschwind proposed a model labeled 'connectionist' revealing that language perception, comprehension and production are managed by a network of connected neural modules in the brain. Geschwind's model has been criticized for having pitfalls. An alternative model was proposed by another American neurologist Marsel Mesulam who believed that information processing is hierarchically managed in terms of degrees of complexity. Simple language processes require motor and premotor areas to be activated whereas complex processes of semantic and phonological dimensions require more areas to activate. Another view states that language management in the brain activates in parallel across distinct areas. Whether these processes take place successively or simultaneously, they remain a case of dominance.

The language of literature triggers images to promote the context of events as though writers watch the scene. This is part of cognitive science which involves the mental processes where images are created by experience retrieval and senses. Human cognition is of various types – conscious, unconscious; concrete-abstract; intuitive (knowledge of a language) and conceptual (a model of language). It can be said that the intuitive cognition supplies the conceptual cognition

with raw material to craft the image wanted. It supplies symbols or language skills to entice imagination to portray the desired description (figures of speech).

3. The language of science

Language is not exclusively devoted to communication, it has a profound effect on all aspects of life, science is no exception. One can easily detect, among an array of disciplines, which sort of science is intended, each is recognized by its design features. Factual and objective information is a milestone of being a science. The logical order of ideas and condensed information are among many diagnostic features. Vocabulary and structure are definitely inherent defining characteristics of a kind of scientific text. Technical words are chosen to a particular field per se. Words like telegenic, videogenic and photogenic are obvious tokens of media. Other scientific fields have their genre and terminology. The use of simple present tense and passive construction of verbs is preferable.

Concluding Remarks

The relationship between language and literature has been the hub of various interdisciplinary concerns and scored a good deal of attention from many academic researchers who have been trying to delineate the altitude of such a relationship. A number of researchers have been many times at odds about the proportion of influence exerted by language and literature each on text wording. Linguists argue that language is at a nexus of interrelationships between literature, linguistics, culture and neuroscience. Literature pervades all walks of life; its central objective is to nurture society's values and ethics. Literature acquaints people with the aspects of other cultures as it embraces a collection of expressions presenting a portrait of society. Literature quite possibly affects one's knowledge as readers try to react sympathetically to the characters and actions of literary work. As a corollary, Language is the basic part of literature to the extent that it fosters it to be a carefully built structure of creative thoughts crafted by the power of language. To the other extreme, a background knowledge of the linguistic system of language is a prerequisite to an intelligent discussion of literary works. However, the interface between these intertwined systems is hard to isolate.

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