

COURSE CODE: ENG 315
COURSE TITLE: STYLISTICS
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LEVEL: 300
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TOPIC: What is Stylistics?

INTRODUCTION

This course is studied at both 300 level and 400 level. It is an applied course meant for higher levels. The course exposes students to different ways of analysing data from a linguistic point of view. It also allows students to analyse data without any form of restriction. Data are subjected to linguistic analysis. This is to say that linguistic features that have stylistic effects in a particular data are identified and analysed. In order to carry out a good stylistic analysis of any text, language is crucial most especially functionality and descriptiveness. So, stylistics has to do with how language is used to perform different functions. It describes and interpret linguistic data from an objective perspective.

CONTENT

Stylistics is defined as the scientific study of style. Style can be seen as a choice or deviation. It can as well be seen as a systemic study of literary works; the meeting ground between literature and linguistics. It is an idiosyncrasy that is peculiar to a person that makes that person different from another in terms of writing, speaking, dressing, walking etc e.g Achebe and Soyinka. There are different approaches to the study of stylistics: Linguistic stylistics and literary stylistics. Our focus will be on linguistic stylistics.

WHAT IS LINGUISTIC STYLISTICS?

Linguistic stylistics is an analytical method used in analysing or objectifying both literary and non literary texts. It is the application of linguistic tools such as graphology, syntax, lexis etc to the language of literature. The analysis under this approach stems from intuition to interpretation/rigorous analysis and finally to conclusion. The major task of stylisticians is to identify the message a text is trying to convey through the reliance on the linguistic evidence in the text (Ogunsiji and Olarenwaju, 2010). Some textual data will have to be identified by the analyst since the linguistic features in these data have stylistic effects (see Turner 1973, Cluysemaer 1976, Lawal 1997, Chatman 1071 etc).

BASIC CONCEPTS IN STYLISTICS

(a) Foregrounding

This principle was coined by Jan Mukarovsky. By foregrounding, it means “putting to the front” or fronting an item (Ogunsiji and Olawaju, 2010, p. 137). They further explained that the principle is used to refer to factors of deviation from linguistic and literary norm. Foregrounding can be deviational and non deviational. Deviation means violation of a norm. The non deviational type is a structure that acquires prominence in a text in a way that it attracts the attention of the reader while the deviational type draws its own attraction by a way of violating the rules and norms of language. Foregrounding is achieved mainly through capitalisation, repetition, parallelism, code-switching and so on. It can also be achieved through prominence

(b) Norm

A norm is an established pattern within a text. In other words, it is the generally agreed pattern of writing. There is a pattern for writing poem, prose and drama, if the rules are followed, then one has adhered to the norm of that writing.

(c) Deviation

Ogunsiji and Olarenwaju (2010, p. 135) also describe deviation as the deautomatization or violation of the norm. This violation can occur at the following levels: lexical, phonological, graphological, semantic, syntactic etc.

Works Cited:

Ogunsiji, Y. & Olanrewaju, F. R. (2010). Analytical Linguistics. Ago-Iwoye: Olabisi Onabanjo University Press.

Books for Further Reading:

Chatman, S. (1967). The semantics of style. Social Sentence Information VI

Cluysenaar, A. (1976) Introduction to literary criticism. London: Blackwell Publishing

Turner, G. N. (1973). Stylistics. England: Penguin