

Stylistics Analysis of Robert Burn's Poem "A Red, Red Rose"

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Abstract: In this study, researchers will stylistically analyze a well-known poem by Robert Burn "A Red, Red Rose". This poem is considered a linguistic marvel, to examine this statement, the researcher analyses this poem to explore its linguistic importance. The objective of this study is to present a stylistic analysis of a poem that will be useful in deciphering the poem's underlying meanings. It unequivocally brings to light the poet's true message. The poem is analyzed in terms of stylistic foregrounding and by different levels of stylistic analyses proposed by Leech. Furthermore, it intends to investigate the effects that the use of figures of speech has on the minds of the readers. Robert Burn has used various literary devices and unique diction by incorporating the Scottish dialect and lexical deviation blending with the amazing theme of love and separation. The study is significant for students and literary critics interested in exploring Robert Burn's works, highlighting the interdependence of literature and linguistics.

Keywords: stylistics analysis, stylistics foregrounding, discourse

1. Introduction

Style is a Greek word derived from the word "elocution," which means "style." The style itself is a broader term. In different contexts, style can mean different. A simple definition of style is a particular way of doing something. In Linguists, style is defined as a writer's choice of words, sentence arrangement, form and use of literary devices to present his ideas. It refers to the methods he employs, and the manner of his written expression, such as poetry, prose, and novels. Style varies from writer to writer and is entirely dependent on the writer's preference.

According to [4], stylistics is the study of language in literature; thus, stylistics is the study of literacy texts. The study of style variations in a discourse is known as stylistics. Stylistics, according to Leech, is a linguistic approach to literature that clarifies the relationship between language and its artistic functions. The focus of stylistics is on linguistic elements such as syntactic, phonological, lexical, semantic, and graphical elements of style within a discourse. The goal of stylistic analysis is to

play a vital role in examining the formal components of the poem as well as textual interpretation to demonstrate the interrelationship of literary text to linguistic effects.

1.1 Research Objectives

- To analyze the Stylistic foregrounding of the poem “A Red, Red Rose” by Robert Burns.
- To Stylistically analyze a poem at different levels of Stylistics proposed by Leech.

1.2 Levels of Stylistics Analysis

There are certain stages in the process of analyzing any literary work stylistically. In this article researchers have used some general levels of stylistics analysis proposed by [4] that are listed below.

- i. **Phonological level:** In phonological level, sound elements of a text such as, rhyming scheme, and syllable are analyzed.
- ii. **Graphological level:** In this level, the pattern of writing style like, punctuation, capitalization etc. are analyzed.
- iii. **Grammatical level:** Grammatical level investigates the organizational structure of sentences in a language as well as how they interact with one another.
- iv. **Lexical level:** Lexical level analyzes the lexis or vocabulary in the text. For example, choice of words and how they are considered in the interpretation.
- v. **Thematic level:** After investigating all other levels, finally thematic level analyzes the theme of the text by keeping textual evidences in mind.

2. Literature Review

Literature is an essential testimony of what men have seen and thought about life, and what they have felt, which ultimately have the greatest interest to all of us. The medium of this manifestation of life is Language. In Lives of the poet, Samuel Johnson says that “language is the dress of thoughts”. Firstly, thought is imagined and prevails in some pre-verbal form, and then it is shaped and clothed in language to its verbal form. It implies that our speech or writing style provides insight into how we think. It explains that the exact words, phrases, and linguistic patterns we employ show how and what we believe.

Life in literature is expressed with the crafting of words of truth and aesthetics of language. Literature cannot be examined completely without the language that serves as the primary vehicle for its expression, cannot be studied alone without the literature. Both language and literature have been the subject of critical discussions for ages. Critics were using text to interpret meanings, much of the basic terminologies of literary criticism (metaphor, irony, figurative) are impossible to explain without understanding the concept of language. Moreover, language itself emerged as a new field of study in later years; this is when linguistics entered the picture.

Corder states that the study of linguistics focuses on the nature of human language, how it is learned, and the role it plays in both individual and social interactions [3]. A common ground exists between the field of linguistics and literary analysis, which is known as Stylistics. Stylistic analysis is the scientific investigation of the literary style of writers, why they use certain linguistic elements or figurative elements, moreover how these elements help in creating meanings and aesthetic effects on readers' minds. According to Widdowson, stylistic analysis connects linguistics and literature, stylistic analysis goes hand in hand with linguistics and literature [7]. It serves as a bridge and investigates both, the

linguistic devices and the structural patterns of the language, as well as the figures of speech of literary elements. Furthermore, it investigates the linguistic aspects of literary work that have a direct impact on how words are understood. Vendonk further explains that stylistics analysis investigates the unusual representation and its function in a language [5].

As stated by Leach and Short stylistics is the study of language that is used in literary works, to interpret and relate it to its artistic functions [7]. Furthermore, Leach and Short state the purpose of literary stylistics, which is to connect linguists' interest in language description with critics' concern for aesthetic appraisal [5]. The stylistic analysis increases the appraisal of the literature because of its authenticity and unbiased interpretation through investigations of linguistic elements and figurative speech which validates the interpretation and increased its appraisal. No one can disregard its importance and due to its unbiased nature statistics has integrated itself into modern criticism, that's why it has become difficult to differentiate between literary criticism and stylistic analysis. The author intends to create circumstances and evaluate their moral implications, and this intention cannot be wholly detached from the style, which is both its means and its fine texture. According to Carter and Stockwell (2008 44As) linguistic and literary patterns are as significant as colors and compositions in a painting. Together they form an artistic marvel does linguistics and literary patterns in a literary work [2].

3. Research Methodology

This study examines the stylistics of a short poem by Robert Burn "A Red, Red Rose." To explore the author's style and the significance of poetic language, this study is based on qualitative research, integrating quantitative approaches to analyse text stylistically. Robert Burns' poem "A Red, Red Rose" was thoroughly read to gather qualitative data. Stylistic analysis has been used to orderly and methodically assess the data, addressing each research topic one at a time from the perspective of literary stylistics. The study will focus on the stylistic foregrounding of this poem by searching it in the form of linguistic parallelism and linguistic deviation. The poem has undergone five levels of investigation for stylistic analysis, taking into account the graphological, grammatical, lexical, phonological, and thematic levels. The discussion concludes by delving into the use of figurative language to examine the impact of the author's linguistic preferences.

3.1 Introduction of the Poet, Robert Burn (1759-1796)

Robert Burns was a lyricist and poet from Scotland. He is widely recognized as Scotland's national poet and is celebrated internationally for his outstanding work in poetry. In a time when using common language in poetry was regarded as a low level of poetry, Robert Burn was the one who used common language in his works and was frequently regarded as a writer who wrote ahead of his time. He adopted the idea of using a common language to reach the common people, however, he wrote in this style before the idea started emerging around the globe which became popular in the age of romanticism. Robert Burns' poem, A Red, Red Rose was published in 1798, in which a new age of enlightenment was about to start that is the reason that he is also considered as the pioneer of the romantic moment. Robert Burn was one of the best poets who has written in the Scottish dialect, moreover, he had also pen down his work in the English language. His famous poem A Red, Red Rose is in itself a masterpiece in which Robert merges light Scottish dialect with the English language.

3.2 Introduction of Poem ‘A Red, Red Rose’

A Red, Red Rose is written and composed by Robert Burns, who is also known as the national poet of Scotland. This poem is a lyrical ballad and was first published in the collection of songs named “Scots Song” which was edited by Peter Urbani. This collection of songs was Scotland’s traditional folk songs written to be set in music. Robert Burns heard this song in the countryside and got so inspired that he decided to write this as a poem and publish it in ballad form. A Red, Red Rose is written in four ballad stanzas consisting of 16 lines in total. The language used by Robert in this poem is very common to reach the common people. He is one of the first poets who adopted the idea of using common language in his literary works.

Franklyn Bliss Snyder, states in his book “The Life of the Robert Burns” (1932) that, this poem is one of the masterpieces of Robert Burns’s poems collection with perfectly cut and polished style. This poem is inspired by a song and written as a ballad which is to be sung aloud. This poem portrays the immense affection and love of the poet for his beloved. The poet is praising his beloved by comparing her beauty with the freshness of a rose, with the sweetness of melodies. Then the poet is comparing his deep love with eternal entities like the sun and rocks, that these things can end, even human life on earth will end one day but his love will remain constant he won’t stop loving his beloved. Then in the final stanza, he is bidding farewell to his beloved in which he again ensures her that his love is eternal and he will come back again no matter if he has to walk a thousand miles.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Stylistics Foregrounding

Foregrounding is fundamentally a strategy for "making odd" in language. Leech and Short (1969) state that, foregrounding attributes to the effect of linguistic or other types of variation in the literary text on the reader, which is also considered as a primarily literary feature. Being out of the background, the text's aberrant features draw attention to themselves in front of its regular linguistic features.

As mentioned by one of the most significant Russian linguists “Victor Shklovsky’s”, foregrounding is an ability of a verbal element to obtain extra significance in a given context. He used the Russian word *ostranenie*, a strategy for "defamiliarization" in textual composition. The goal of foregrounding as a stylistic method is for the pattern to acquire significance by the act of calling attention to itself, whether it deviates from a norm or replicates a pattern through parallelism. There are two methods for achieving foregrounding: “Parallelism” and “Deviation”. When words and ideas have the same sound structure, this is called parallelism while Deviation is veering away from the specified sound or grammatical rule.

Stylistics Foregrounding of “A Red, Red Rose”

A Red, Red Rose is foregrounded through lexical deviation and parallelism in the structure and theme.

Lexical Deviation

Robert Burns used lexical deviation in many places in order to make this poem more attractive. He lightly mixed his Scottish dialect with English in many places for example,

- i. In first line of first stanza, he uses the word “luve” instead of love.

- ii. In first line of second stanza, he uses “Bonnie lass” which means beautiful lady in Scottish dialect. In the same stanza in last line he uses “a” which represents the meaning of “all”. “Thou” is also used as you.
- iii. In third stanza, he uses “gang” which means go or have gone. “wi” represents with, “O” mean of, “thee” used as the.
- iv. In last stanza “weel” is representing well.

Table 1

“Luve”	“Bonnie lass”	“a”	“thou”	“gang”	“wi”	“o”	“thee”	“weel”
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Parallelism:

Parallelism is observed in various places, in first stanza complete structural parallelism is observed.

*O my luve is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my luve is like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune.*

The sentence structure of the first, two lines is parallel to the next two lines. It also represents the thematic parallelism in which the author is balancing two different ideas in the same manner, first, he is comparing his love with a red rose and second, he is comparing his love with sweet songs. In the second stanza, lines 1 and 2 are both structurally parallel.

*So fair art thou, my bonnie lass
So deep in luve am I;*

In the last stanza, parallelism is observed in 1st, second and third lines. The sentence structure of these three line are parallel in the same form and tone.

*And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my luve,*

Stylistic Analysis

“A red, red rose as a lyrical ballad”

We can say that this poem is a lyrical ballad because it expresses the feelings and thoughts of a single person in 16 lines which is fairly short, these are the elements of a lyrical poem and in the ballad, the author tells a story from folk traditions with supernatural elements.

Graphological level

Graphological level is a stylistic level of analysis which includes the study of graphical elements of a text of a language. In this regard, the stylistics is focused on the techniques of the writer and graphic elements to portray his ideas and to create an aesthetic effect in his work. Graphological analysis of a text means to analyze a writer's writing pattern that made his work stand out and create his style, it includes the arrangement of punctuation, capitalization, distribution of stanzas, spacing etc.

There are four well-constructed stanzas comprising 16 lines, The Poem is written in the sequence of four lines in each stanza.

There is usual capitalization. the first stanza of the poem expresses the main theme of this poem “luve” by capitalizing the letter L, he gives it immense importance in the poem, which means the author wants the reader’s attention towards “luve” which reflects his deep feelings.

*O my **L**uve is like a red, red rose*

We can observe the different punctuation used in the poem. For full stops, commas, semi-colons and apostrophe, exclamation mark are used.

Full stop: In this poem, Robert burn has used 4 full stops. Each on the closing of a stanza.

Coma: Commas are utilized to give the poem a sense of the profundity of thought. They are positioned to offer quick pauses or to divide ideas. The poet has used 7 comas in the middle and end of some lines.

Semi colons: Robert Burn used the semi-colons three times in this poem.

Line 2: That’s newly sprung in June;

Line 6: o deep in luve am I;

Line 10: And the rocks melt wi’ the sun;

Apostrophe: It addresses rhetorically a speech that is directed towards a certain person, concept, or object. It denotes the ownership of anything or any person, sometimes it indicates the lack of letters in a sentence. In literary works, the apostrophe is used to show the setting of words that express a nonexistent person or an abstract idea of the writer as if it were present and sensitive to emotion. The poet used apostrophes 6 times in this poem in lines 2, 4, 8, 9, 10 and 12.

Exclamation marks: Exclamation marks are a type of punctuation that is typically used after an interjection or exclamation to show emphasis or express strong feelings. In this poem poet 2 times uses exclamation marks in lines 13 and 14.

Grammatical level

1. In this level the researcher has observed that the stanzas are Quatrain with independent clauses which end at the final sentence of a stanza with a full stop.

2. Throughout the whole poem first person pronoun is used, as the author is expressing his feelings and emotions.

Line 1: O **my** Luve is like a red, red rose.

- i. Line 3: O **my** Luve is like the melody
- ii. Line 5: So fair art thou, **my** bonnie lass,
- iii. Line 6: So deep in luve am **I**;
- iv. Line 7: And **I** will luve thee still, **my** dear,
- v. Line 9: Till a’ the seas gang dry, **my** dear,
- vi. Line 11: **I** will love thee still, **my** dear,
- vii. Line 13: And fare thee weel, **my** only luve!
- viii. Line 15: And **I** will come again, **my** luve,

3. Punctuation marks are also observed at different places in the poem. A semicolon is used in the second line of the second stanza “so deep in love am I;” which shows the connectivity of coming independent clauses. Full stop is observed at the end of a stanza which shows that an idea is completed here. In the next stanza author introduces another.

Stanza 1: In this stanza poet describes his immense feelings toward his love by comparing his beloved with a fresh rose.

Stanza 2: In this stanza, the poet describes his love by telling her that no matter if her beauty doesn't last longer I will still love her.

Stanza 3: In this poet emphasizes his sincerity towards his beloved by comparing his love with eternal entities.

Stanza 4: In this author is promising his beloved to return as they are temporarily separating.

4. Coma in this poem indicates dependent clauses.

5. Exclamation is observed only two times, which shows excitement and draws the reader's attention to the most important part of the poem which is separation.

Lexical level:

- i. The choice of diction plays a very important role in building the theme of this poem. In various places lexical deviation is used like, “thee” instead of the, and “thou” instead of you.
- ii. Robert Burn perfectly mixed his Scottish dialect in English which made this poem more attractive for readers. Like, /Luve//bonnie//lass//weel/.
- iii. The poet has used first-person pronouns in this poem.
- iv. The poet has used Archaic diction in this poem like, “art thou” and “love thee” shows that the poem is set in the past or in the countryside area where speech is not yet modernized.
- v. The word “rose” itself portrays a strong theme of love.

Table 2

Noun	Pronoun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
Rose, Red, Love, June, Melody, Tune, Art, Sea, Rocks, Sun, Sand, Life, Ten thousand mile.	I, My, thou (you).	Sprung, Played, Dry, Melt, Run, Come.	Red Rose, Fair, Bonnie, Deep.	Sweetly, newly.

Phonological level:

A Red, Red Rose is a Lyrical ballad, this sixteen-line poem has following rhyme scheme.

ABCBEFGCGBGBIIJ

The researcher has analyzed many poetic devices like alliteration, consonance, assonance, epistrophe, anadiplosis and anaphora. There are few rhyming words in the poem.

Table 3

Perfect Rhyming words	
June	Tune
Sun	Run
Dear	Dear
While	Mile

Alliteration:

Alliteration is the practice of using the same starting consonant sound repeatedly in words that are near to one another. The researcher has analyzed alliteration in the first third and fourth stanzas.

Line 1: “luve is like” here /l/ sound repeated two times, in the same line “Red, Red Rose” is the repetition of /r/ sound.

Line 9: “dry, my dry” is alliteration of the sound /d/

Line 14: “weel awhile” here /w/ sound is in alliteration.

Consonance: The practice of using the same consonant sound repeatedly at the initial, middle, and end of a line of text is known as Consonance. Consonance can be observed in many places throughout the whole poem.

Line 1. /l/ /r/ sounds are consonance.

Line 7. /l/

Line 14. sound /w/ is repeated.

Line 16. /th/ sounds repeated two times.

Assonance: The repetition of the vowel sounds in a line of text is known as assonance.

In fourth stanza, line 13 and 14 the sound /ee/ is observed in repetition.

Table 4

Alliteration	Consonance	Assonance
/l/ /w/	/l/ /r/ /th/ /i/	/ee/

Figurative speech:

Simile: Simile is a figurative device which compares one object to another object of a different kind; it is used to give sense to the sentence by using “like”. In this poem, simile is observed two times. One in the first line “O my luve is like a red, red rose” second time in the third line “O my luve is like a melody”.

Enjambment: It refers to the continuation of the sentences without any pause. Enjambment is observed throughout the four stanzas.

Symbolism: It refers to symbols that signify the idea, qualities or emotions. In this poem, Robert Burns uses “rose” as a symbol of love.

Imagery: Imagery is a literary device which is used in many forms of writing such as poetry, novels, prose and so on. The writer uses this device in his work to evoke an image, sound or idea in the

reader's mind through the detailed description in the text. In this poem, Robert Burn uses visual imagery three times. First in the line "O my love is like a red, red rose" second time in line 10, "And the rocks melt with the sun" and third time in line 12, "while the sands of life shall run".

Hyperbole: It refers to the exaggeration of the statements to give importance to another thing. In this poem, Robert uses hyperbole 4 times. In line 8, he says "Till a' the seas gang dry" In this he is exaggerating his feelings by this statement that, when all the seas in the world will dry. I will still be loving you my feelings will remain strong for you.

In line 10, where he says "And the rocks melt with the sun" again in this line he is exaggerating the statements to give importance to his feelings. And in the final line "though it were ten thousand miles" in this line he is exaggerating the distance between him and his lover. That he will come to gain to meet no matter if has to walk ten thousand miles.

Anaphora: It refers to the repetition of the same word or words. Anaphora is observed in the first second and third stanzas.

- i. In the first stanza, anaphora is used by the words "O my love is like". This phrase is repeated in lines 1 and 3 with the same intensity of feelings.
- ii. In the second stanza of lines 1 and 2, the word "so" is repeated which indicates the use of anaphora.
- iii. In the fourth stanza of lines 15 and 16 anaphora is observed by the words "And fare thee weel" which are used with the same intensity of feelings.

Epistroph: It refers to the repetition of the same words at the end of the sentences. Robert uses Epistroph in the second, third and fourth stanzas with the words, "my dear" and "my luve".

Paradoxes: These refer to two contradictory statements, themes or words, in this poem Robert Frost uses paradox in various places where on one hand he is describing the young beauty which is likely to fade away with time and later he compares it with eternal entities. it clearly shows the contradictory ideas of the author.

Thematic level:

After observing all the evidence from the above analysis the main theme is "love" and "change". we have analyzed through lexical level how Robert Burn chose his diction which clearly emphasises the innocent love of a countryside person, and how he is expressing it to his beloved by comparing his love with the sea and her beauty with the freshness of the flower. The title of the poem "A red, red rose" itself symbolizes the theme of love.

5. Discussion

The poem begins with a beautiful depiction of the poet's intense love. This romantic ballad is written in first person pronouns, which shows that in this poem poet is expressing himself and confessing the depth of his love in front of his beloved. In the first stanza poet praises his lover and compares her youthful beauty with the freshness of a blooming rose and the sweetness of the melodies. He uses strong emotions to portray these images. In the second stanza poet addresses her beloved and expresses his profound love by using hyperbole, proclaiming that his love is eternal and never-ending even when all the seas will dry and rocks will melt with the sun, but his love will remain because his beloved is aesthetically beautiful that he cannot stop loving her. In the final stanza, the poet bids farewell and reassures his beloved that she is the only love in his life, and promises that he will come again for her even if he has to travel thousands of miles. This poem is truly a linguistic marvel. The way Robert Burn

has represented the imageries and metaphors of love by using natural entities such as the Sun, Rocks and sands of life has created a very natural and phenomenal theme of love and separation. These lexical choices stand out for themselves which undoubtedly enchants the reader's attention as well.

6. Conclusion

Robert Frost wrote this poem in 1794. It is a romantic poem which symbolizes love and separation. In this study, the researcher first analyzed the stylistic foregrounding of the poem which shows that the poet has used linguistic deviation in many places to attract the readers towards the text. After that, the researcher analyzed the whole poem on 5 levels stylistic, graphological, grammatical, phonological, lexical and thematic level. The final discussion shows that the poet is expressing his love for his beautiful and young beloved and comparing his feelings and the beauty of his beloved with the freshness of a blooming red rose. Here red rose gives two meanings first it represents beauty and second it represents the feeling of love. Then he compares his love with the sweet melodies and both of these things are temporary. In the second stanza, he compares his deep love with the sea, that when the sea will be dry and the rock will melt by the sun but my love still will be there no matter if you change or get old. The author is expressing his deep love and in the end, he bids fare well and makes promises that he will come back again and this is just a temporary separation. To make the poem more attractive he adds lexical deviation and many literary devices which help in emphasizing his ideas.

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