Stylo-Linguistic Methodology of Teaching Poetry

The title of the present chapter explains the main thrust of argument in this section of the dissertation. The ELT methodology, mostly concentrating at the sentence level is quite useful for the beginners but at the advanced level where we are dealing with literary text as a complete discourse, this methodology will not be very useful. Nor will the earlier popular sociological and biographical approach to the analysis of poetry, leaning heavily on the concept of paraphrase, will be of much use in the present times where the gulf between the earlier controversy between language and literature, between literary stylistics and linguistics has narrowed down. As we have argued in the preceding chapter, the general opinion is that both criteria of aesthetics and descriptive linguistics ought to be used for the study and teaching of poetry at the undergraduate level. It is relevant to state here that Stylo-linguistics should not merely be taken as an approach, a sort of amalgamation of the selected theoretical aspects of aesthetics and descriptive linguistics. We, in fact, propose to use it as a technique of analysis with pedagogical exigencies in our mind. We have
already argued that both literary criticism and linguistics converge on language as the infra-structure of their approaches and methodology. We have also mentioned in the last chapter that in a literary text, especially in poetry, the author makes choices potentially available in the language. There is an intratextual variation of these choices which contributes to the implicit meaning of the poem. Hence Stylo-linguistic methodology would involve a judicious blending of the techniques of aesthetic analysis as well as those of linguistic description of the language items relevant to a particular poem.

A comprehensive view of methodology should concentrate on the following aspects of teaching poetry. 1. Selection of the poems and their grading; 2. Presentation of the poem in the actual classroom teaching situation; 3. Minimum requisite language competence of the students; 4. The linguistic equipment and training of the teacher: (a) His ability to prepare supplementary teaching materials, (b) devising tests and measuring terminal achievement. Of the above components the most significant is the teacher's ability to apply the socio-linguistic technique of analyzing a poem. We will briefly touch upon the other components
mentioned above before we embark upon the theory, selection and use of the various aspects of Stylo-linguistics comprising both aesthetic as well as linguistic elements.

1. **Selection Approach:**

We have both short and long poems in English. These poems are lyrical, narrative, descriptive or contemplative. The poem can be difficult, ideationally or because of the structural unusualness or it may be simple in content and conventional in structure such as a sonnet. Similarly, it may have multi layered poetic experiences and complicated emotions and thoughts or it may be a straightforward presentation of feeling or emotions. Some of the love songs of John Donne, for example, represent the first type whereas most of the Elizabethan lyrics, many of the poems of Robert Burns, and the Lucy poems and ballads of WordsWorth represent the latter type. Our purpose is not to enumerate, define or explain the various types of poems available in English but to assert that in selecting a poem for training our students in the Stylo-linguistic analysis of this literary variety the teacher should keep in mind the type of poems which would be most suitable in the teaching context where
he or she is placed. By the teaching context, I mean the linguistic as well as experiential background of the students. Those students, who are compelled to enroll for study in a remote rural college and come from the rural background of poor and educationally backward families, are bound to be different from others with remarkably different background and physical teaching situation. In order to respond to literature the students are required not only to possess the minimum needed linguistic competence but should also have a reasonable range of experience about life and the world. Some of the poems of John Donne, Herbert and Vaughan may appear incomprehensible to the students with limited experiential range of feelings and emotions in life, actually lived, observed or conceptualized through other sources of information. To prescribe poems which do not consider students' linguistic competence and experiential range will be defeatist in its expectation of terminal results. The concept of Cleopatra or Dido type coquettishness and guile treated by Shakespeare and Marlowe may sound strange and unusual to a teenage mind. What we want to propose is that the syllabus framers should keep in mind that the poem selected should be within the range of comprehension for
students at the first year level of the undergraduate programme. It should also ensure not to prescribe poems whose linguistic style may be heavily loaded with allusions and plethora of deviations from the lexical and syntactic norms and rules of the English language. Milton's *Comus* and Eliot's *The Wasteland*, thus, will not be considered a proper choice at the under-graduate level.

The poems thus to be selected should have content which may not be highly topical or rooted in the temporal dimension of the age. It should rather be of relatively neutral nature which could be conceptualised or perceptualised from the reader's normal living context. It has been observed that students do not find long descriptive poems interesting. Hence it should be ensured that the poems selected should have preferably human element. Since if a poem to be taught, as we will argue below, should be taken as one unit (the principle of discourse), is not of the length which can be grasped by the young mind as one living unit, any training or practice in Stylo-linguistic analysis of the poetic text will remain unsatisfactory. The New Critics based their critical tenets on the principle of a poem existing per se, as a living organism (Coleridge's Theory). Hence it should be
envisioned and responded to by the readers as one completed whole entity. For this the most suitable poems would be Sonnets, Lyrics or extracts from poetic narratives, which may be a complete whole in the Aristotelian sense, i.e., it should have a beginning, a middle and an end. It is an established principle of curriculum designing that that the teaching items should be graded. Hence we will be stating the known concept of ELT that these poems should be graded on the principle of linguistic deviations as well as the ideational content.

2. Presentation:

Before we talk of the teacher's presentation of a poem in an actual classroom situation, we would like to point out that stylistic analysis of a literary text involves the concept of linguistic 'constants' and 'variables'. Linguistic constants are the rules governing a particular dialect at the phonological, lexical and grammatical levels. In English for example, at the phonological level we can say that ȝ and ȝ do not occur initially and tl and rk do not occur initially, whereas pauses, rhythms, stress come under variables

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\(^1\) Poetics, op. cit., p. 279.
because they are deviations from the normal. We can pile up examples at the lexical and grammatical levels. Variables are called by R. Fowler as 'optional or latent features'\(^2\) which are a part of the concept of choice we have already mentioned in the preceding chapter. What we intend to say is that the students should have a sound grounding in the traditional and descriptive linguistic description of the English language. Unless the students are aware of the 'norm', or 'normal' they cannot perceive the deviant items at any of the linguistic levels of a poem.

It has been observed in the actual classroom teaching situation in our colleges and universities at the first year under-graduate level that the teacher either aims at strengthening and consolidating the linguistic competence of the students, or talks to them about the poem, dealing mostly with extra-textual information. In the former case he selects a few vocabulary items for practising pronunciation and their use in sentences made by the teacher or students. Similarly, useful grammatical structures are also isolated for practice in the classroom. Their deviations, if only, from the

norm are explained with casualness. This is neither teaching language nor poetry. The second methodology of dealing primarily with extra-textual information may keep the students interested if the information is to their liking. But students do not get into the poem. The teacher should ensure that he gets the students involved in the poem so that their motivation in heuristic learning is encouraged. For this, since poetry, of all forms of literary compositions, makes a maximal phonological exploitation of the language, a proper recitational rendering of the poem by the teacher should be the starting point before involving the students into the poem. The following schematic procedure can be usefully tried out in presenting a poem in a classroom:

1. **Reading aloud:**

   A proper reading out of the poem by the teacher. A poem does not consist only of graphological elements but also of phonological, supra-segmental features such as stress, rhythm, intonation etc. For example students' interest in *The Wasteland* can be properly created if the first five lines conveying the meditation of Tiresius is read out with the grave rhythm they employ, followed by the contrasted
colloquial and racy rhythm of the lines dealing with the German princess's banal pastimes.

If possible, because of the physical constraints of the classroom situation, selected students should be asked to read out the poem trying to imitate the way used by the teacher. This practice quite often induces a better discipline in the classroom as well.

1(a) Title:

If the poem has a title the teacher should make the students aware of the possible/probable implications of the meaning which the poem is going to unfold. The same method can be followed here also as indicated in (3) above, i.e. giving students alternative answers to leading questions such as

(a) Will it make any difference if spender uses 'An Express' in place of 'The Express' in his poem.

(b) What was the 'First Coming' implied in the little 'Second Coming' of W.B. Yeats; who was the first comer?; why should he come a second time?; what does he stand for?. After getting a
satisfactory reply arrived at heuristically by the students the teacher may, give some extra textual information like Yeats' concept of history and civilization, etc.

1(b) Theme:

By using the method of leading questions to encourage students' heuristic involvement in the poem and encouraging them to find linguistic clues, the teacher can proceed to identify the theme/s. We can then proceed to isolate the central theme around which other minor themes may be interwoven. For example, while teaching W.B.Yeats' "Second Coming" the teacher will find no difficulty in making the students see the central point of Christ, the enunciator of Christian Civilization, being reborn, i.e. a new civilization in the offing. But the minor themes of topical and temporal relevance culminating in the image, "Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold", and other minor themes of disruption, violence and awful fright are encapsulated in the multiple images that the poem uses.
2. **Paraphrase:**

The New Critics, like the linguists, insisting upon the close analysis of the language of the text, have denounced the practice of analysing a poem with initially paraphrasing it. It is now an agreed upon aesthetic cum linguistic stand that paraphrase does convey functional meaning. Since language is a cognitive phenomenon it has logical meaning conveyed by the systematized code (i.e. language), oral, or written. The theory of referential or denotative meaning, extending to a deeper or connotative meaning, has been explicitly stated by I. A. Richards. What we call cognitive or logical meaning conveyed by paraphrase has been supported by I.A. Richards in his statement about the scientific and emotive uses of language thus: "A statement may be used for the sake of the reference, true or false, which it causes. This is the scientific use of language. But it may also be used for the sake of the emotions and attitudes produced by the reference it occasions. This is the emotive use of language." Poetry makes an emotive use of language where the referential use functions as a foundation. It retains denotations and reference on the surface level but depends

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upon connotation for its deeper meaning. Hence we feel that paraphrase, as a component of the teaching methodology of poetry, is a useful strategy. After having paraphrased a poem the teacher finds it easier to make the students look for 'significance' which we have talked about in the preceding chapter. However, care needs to be taken to forewarn students against attaching too much significance to paraphrase. Paraphrase belongs to what Spencer would call the aspect of 'field', whereas significance would include what he calls 'tenor'.

3. Devices:

Once these central and minor themes are identified, the teacher can proceed to show how these themes are meaningfully interlocked to give a unified vision of a major facet of Yeats' poetic concern through linguistic and figurative devices. This point will be clarified by illustration when we come to the actual analysis of this poem in the next chapter.

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4 Linguistics and Style, op. cit., p. 86.
4. **Statement of Observation:**

We mentioned above that the students, when their intuition and response are goaded into operation by the teacher, make guesses at the possible meaning of the poem. After this we can proceed to analyse the linguistic as well as figurative devices used in the poem to confirm their guess, hunch intuition or initial response to the poem.

5. **Comprehension Questions:**

Leading questions by the teacher (regarding what the poem is about): This can be done either by isolating words, phrases clauses, images embodying the ideational core of the poem. This aspect will be elaborated when we come to the actual analysis of the poem in Chapter 4.

**Methodology of Analysis:**

A) **Pragmatic aesthetic categories.**

B) **Linguistic categories.**

A) **Pragmatic Categories**

In the light of this the students can modify and/or develop the original hypothesis. The objection of the
linguists to literary critics' approaches has been that the latter did not have a systematically formulated system of categories with reference to which they could analyse a poem. Linguistic categories now have been made available to us by the studies of descriptive linguists. However, we can formulate a tentative schema of categories which may not be as rigorous as those of descriptive linguistics. Nonetheless they can be used as a working and procedural framework for analysing a poem. We can list them as follows:

1. **Intuition or response:**

   This may be at first inchoate. In terms of the methodology of a scientific approach this initial hunch may work as a hypothesis which may be confirmed, refuted, or modified by further observation and testing. Hence the need of reading a poem several times before proceeding to draw any credible conclusion. The teacher may follow suitable strategies to suit his class in this respect depending upon his teaching, situation and context.
2. **Extra-textual information:**

We have already mentioned that literary critics have depended rather too heavily on extra-textural elements relevant to the explication of meaning in a poem. So to repeat what we have averred to earlier, such elements sometimes are extremely relevant while, with regard to certain poems, they are of peripheral importance. Yeats' relationship with Maud Gonne in the third stanza of "Among School Children" and Wordsworth's drawing consolation from the company of his sister (In the later books of "The Prelude") at the critical juncture when he found his faith in French Revolution to have collapsed, are the examples of the relevant type of extra-textual information, whereas Spender's leftist leanings and Audens religious apostacy, while teaching their Nature poetry are examples of marginal utility as far as extratextual element is concerned. Similarly, social and cultural elements should also find place in proportion to their relevance in contributing to the exploration of meaning of a poem.
3. **Intra-textual Context of Situation:**

Extra-textual context need to be controlled and discreet. The most important aspect of the context of situation is the Intra-textual one. The poem creates its own context and situational framework within which its thematic concerns are initiated, developed and argued.

4. **Internal organisation of the poem:**

The poem's own internal organisation starting from the title to the conclusion should be the point of concentration. A poem may make a statement to be elaborated; it may introduce a dialectic to be debated and resolved; it may present a subjective observation of reality to be substantiated within the logical framework of its own organisation; it may project an image of reality, realistically or futuristically envisioned; it may present the poet's point of view to be argued; it may present a pure emotion or feeling aroused by a stimulus internally created or inferred from external circumstances, text, etc. The list can be enlarged depending upon the corpus in hand.
5. The Function of Tropes and Deviance:

Critics have been talking about the figurative use of language and its specialised use (deviance) in poetry. The controversy about the whole history of poetic diction is a pointer to this aspect of the poetic use of language in literary criticism. The Neo-classical poets believed that the language of poetry is specialised and embellished so that it is different from the language of the common speech. Thomas Gray went to the extent of asserting that "the language of the age can never be the language of poetry". The Romantics, especially Wordsworth, devoted considerable energy on arguing this point which we propose to desist from discussing because of the constraints of space and the common knowledge of people about this aspect of literary criticism. However, our concern is about the figurative use of language which contributes to the deeper meaning and precision of expression in a poem. Leech discusses figures of speech in poetry, the most important of which is metaphor, under a framework

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comprising 'tenor', 'vehicle' and 'ground'. Tenor is the object actually under discussion; vehicle is "the image or analogue in terms of which the tenor is represented" and ground is the quality of comparison. In a metaphoric expression "life is a walking shadow", life will be the tenor, walking shadow will be the vehicle, and a figurative meaning derived, i.e. transitoriness will be the ground. This framework can be applied not only to metaphor but to other figures of speech as well. Here our intention is not to discuss the meaning and implication of all the figures of speech (major or minor) but to point out how the figurative use of language is an essential component of the strategy of analysis of a poem. Deviance relates to Tropes, to lexical items and even to contexts. It can be said to mean some sort of violence on the normal linguistic pattern used in a poetic context. Deviance may be strictly speaking a subject to be dealt with under linguistic devices but it partakes of both the domains of the cultural context of a language, determining its usage, collocations, etc. as well as the linguistic components of the language especially those relating to the lexicon and grammar.
6. **Form of the Poem:**

Whether the poem is a lyric, a sonnet, or an elegy should be given considerable attention to. Where the form is a conventional one, it will be useful to point out the underlying features of such a form which will facilitate students' understanding of the poem as well as draw his attention to the importance of adequate grounding in the conventional forms of poetic composition. For example, we can make the student's job easier by telling him that a lyric treats of a single central feeling or emotion and is organized in a particular structural function.

B) **Linguistic Categories**

The following categories have been accepted for use in any stylistic analysis of literary text,

1. Phonological
2. Lexical
3. Grammatical
4. Contextual

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1. **Phonological:**

   It is a commonly agreed principle that language is primarily speech, i.e. sounds organised in a meaningful and recurrent pattern. Poetry yields considerable meaning through the phonological features of a language. We have already mentioned the importance of initial reading of a poem in the classroom. Under the phonological categories we can look for the features of alliteration, consonance, assonance, rhyme, para-rhyme, onomatopoeia, rhythm (including stress & intonation), meter, etc. The distribution and arrangement of phonemes, stress, rhythmic and intonational variations contribute, quite often, to the total significance of a poem. We can give the examples of the use of sibilants and gutturals in the concluding lines of the Prologue to Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, which in fact, forebode the finale of the protagonist's predicament, which is damnation. This has been conveyed by the associative connotation of the hissing sound of a snake (sibilants), evoking the terrible image of Satan's journey to the garden of Eden as an act of rebellion against God. The sound of fire (the gutturals) creates the image of the fire in hell where damned souls are tortured. We can give examples relating to
other phonological features from the same Prologue. For example, the metrical pattern of the opening lines with strong stresses on the iambic feet, denote a marshall movement of the lines narrating great heroic war, erotic and the like themes. Soon after this the metrical pattern changes to one which is close to free verse and the rhythmic movement is colloquial ("only this gentleman... "). This denotes the humble nature of the theme relating to an ordinary mortal. A deft distribution and organization of sounds and stresses by Hopkins is too well known to a student of English literature. We can give innumerable examples of how phonological features convey meanings, which could not be done by lexical or syntactical components of the language. The most glaring examples is to be found in Eliot's The Wasteland. It is true that phonological elements play a greater role in dramatic poetry than in other form of poetic composition. The love lyrics of John Donne are full of such features.
2. Lexical:

Under the lexical categories\(^7\) the most significant element for the purpose of present study is collocation. Spencer describes theoretical categories for the formal description of lexis in his *Linguistics & Style* as follows: He says these categories are fundamentally two- "Collocation" and "Set". Collocation, says Spencer, "is set up to account for the tendency of certain items in a language to occur close to each other, a tendency not completely explained by grammar\(^8\)." "Set" is the field to which the words (collocates) belong. For example, the term 'economy', affairs, policy, land, programme, disaster can occur with reference to one set which can be called the 'nodal item'. Lexical sets are 'open' as compared with 'the closed nature of grammatical system'. From this system of sets the poet chooses or collocates which, when unusual or new, become stylistically significant. We can give some examples of stylistically significant collocational variations or unusualness from Dylan Thomas' poems, which abound in such collocational strangeness; "in the room/so loud to my own", "the heart

\(^8\) *Linguistics and Style*, op. cit., p. 73.
print of man", "the inmost marrow of my heart bone", "A grief ago", "once below a time", "Happy as the heart was long", "All the sun long", "it was Adam and Maiden", etc. in Dylan Thomas' poem "Vision and Prayer". In these examples we find that the underlined words do not belong to the set in which they have been used. Another significant example of a lexical deviance is seen in the use of the word 'manifesto' in the first line of Spender's, "The Express", which is analyzed in Chapter 4, where this word, which came into existence in its modern political denotation during the Russian Revolution, is used in the context of the steaming off the railway engine and the gradual picking up of the speed. Another example is seen in Yeats' Leda and the Swan' which has also been analyzed in Chapter 4. The use of the word 'vague' in Yeats' line, "How can those terrified vague fingers push/The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?" can baffle a reader with its unusual collocation. Under lexical analysis the teacher should make the students aware of the vocabulary items and their functional features in the poem concerned. He should discuss whether the vocabulary is simple or complex formal colloquial, descriptive or
evaluative, general or specific, and how emotive or other associations of words change the meaning of the poem.

3. **Grammatical Category:**

Besides lexical categories needed for presenting a poem in a classroom with emphasis on collocational deviance, the teacher will proceed to concentrate on the four grammatical categories (Unit, Structure, Class and System) which have been very systematically prescribed by M.A.K. Halliday. The teacher should make students pay attention to:

1. **Sentence Type** – declarative, interrogative, commands, exclamations etc.;
2. **The Sentence Complexity** – Coordination, subordination, juxtaposition of clauses;
3. **Clause Types** – dependent, relative, adverbial, nominal etc.;
4. **Clause Structure** – transitive verb construction, initial adverb clauses, etc.;

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5. Noun Phrases

6. Verb Phrases

7. Other Phrase Types (preposition, adverb, adjective).

In English five units can be used for analysis which are sentence, clause, group, word, morpheme which are hierarchically organised in the system of the language.

4. Contextual:

Since the language has a social function to perform, 'context of situation' becomes a significant category. We have mentioned this concept in the last chapter (p. 58). Here it is relevant to point out that students should be made to identify the participants in the situation of the poem, the nature of the situation itself, their relationship etc. to understand the poem's total significance. For example, while teaching Donne's "The Flee" students must perceive that the participants here are a lover and his beloved; their relationship is warm, no doubt, but while the lover is impatient in his irreligious demand, the beloved is restrained, modest and righteous in matter of matrimonial or
sexual morality. The situation is that the lovers are not married and the male participant is arguing against the modesty of the beloved against surrendering herself to the sexual overtures of the lover on religious grounds. The nature of the debate is that the lover's impatience and attitude to love cannot be made clear to the students when the whole intra-textual context is grasped. It is after this that the lexical and grammatical meanings emanating from their extra ordinary use in the poem can be taken up to see how they contribute to the total significance of the poem.

Under grammatical categories we can pay attention to the deliberate preference of one form to the other. Let us have a look at the following lines by Philip Larkins:

The bottle is drunk out by one;
At two, the book is shut;
At three the lovers lie apart,
Love and its commerce done;

Here the first two and the last lines are in the passive voice, Only the third line is in the active voice with an agent. Here the monotony, mechanicalness and lack of any genuine warmth in the love relationship are conveyed by the choice
of a syntactic pattern. Similarly the personal involvement and subjective experience of pleasure is conveyed by the active voice such as in Wordsworth's "My heart leaps up...." or Robert Burns' "My love is like a red red rose....". We can also give examples of a clause, consisting of a phrase only as a syntactic manipulation to underscore the deeper significance of the poetic experience, such as in Larkin's short poem, "Wants": "Beyond all this, the wish to be alone". These two phrases without verbs have been repeated, proving that repetition of syntactic patterns can also be meaningful. Examples like 'Hold your tongue and let me love', 'settle thy studies, Faustus' as examples of the use of imperatives can be added to what we have said above. Sometimes mixing of styles also become stylistically significant such as Eliot's use of banal lexical phrases and highly colloquial sentence patterns, which are interspersed throughout The Wasteland. We find that poetic vigour and prosaic flatness in Eliot's case offers a daring use of significant deviations from the normally acceptable consistency of a poetic style. Literary critic's categories and those of the linguist's converge in the concept of
'Foregrounding', which is discussed briefly in the following paragraphs.

The teacher has to make students aware that poetic language is a specialized exploitation of the Phonological, Lexical and Syntactical Elements of the language. In normal communication or a scientific writing also these elements of the language are used but they are more or less on the automatic pattern. In poetry these elements are meant to augment reader's interest, depending mostly on surprises. These surprises result from deviation from linguistic or other socially acceptable norms. This phenomenon of deviations is called 'Foregrounding', which is a translation of the Czech term 'Aktualisace'. This term invokes the analogy of the figure seen against a background. "The artistic deviation 'sticks out' from its background, the automatic system, like a figure in the foreground of a visual field.... The foregrounded figure is the linguistic deviation, and the background is the language — the system taken for granted in any talk of 'deviation'."

Students should note all types of deviations and see how they are significant in a poem. This deviation is not to be noticed only at the phonological, lexical, and grammatical levels but also at the level of the use of language in a particular poetic context. In this respect we can mention register burrowing as a significant 'Foregrounding', such as the Bar Parlour Monologue in "A Game of Chess" in Eliot's *The Wasteland*: "When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said ..... etc.". Leech has the following remark to make on this monologue,

The very fact that this passage occurs in a poem, in congruously rubbing shoulders with other, more respectably literary types of English, causes us to pay it the compliment of unusual scrutiny. Here it is foregrounded, where as if it had been overheard in a pub or on a bus, it would not have been. We find ourselves not paying heed to its meaning qua casual gossip, but rather asking what is the point of its inclusion at this place in the poem? What is its relevance to its context? What is its artistic significance, in the light of what we have understood of the rest of the poem?
This method of composition recalls the painter's technique of 'Collage'.

Students can start with the phonological 'foregrounding' in locating alliteration, assonance, variation in stress for rhythmic or metrical excegencies. He can also look for the distribution of soft and hard consonants (e.g. l, m, n, r—soft consonants; Pllsives as hard consonants; Fricatives as occupying the mid position between soft and hard), short and long vowels and onomatopoeic effects created by repetition, contrast and parallelism among the various phonological features.

The same practice should be adopted for lexical 'foregrounding' where the students can focus on unusual collocation, repetition or parallelism. Patterns of identity and contrast can also be found in phrases or clauses "To err is human, to forgive divine" (Pope, An Essay on Criticism) is the example which readily comes to our mind. Grammatical 'foregrounding' should also be brought to the notice of the students by pointing out the deliberate choice of a particular syntactic structure, tense form etc. For example, in the

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12 Ibid., p. 58.
famous Apostrophe to Helen in Marlowe's Dr. Faustus we find a deliberate movement of the tense from the past, present to the future: "Was this the face..... that burnt the topless towers of illium".... come Helen come/make me immortal with a kiss... I will be Paris..... etc. Here the use of past, present and future tense forms endows the image of Helen with the attribute of timelessness which has been 'foregrounded' clearly.

A particular poem may have 'foregrounding' of one linguistic aspect more than of others. But students have to be careful about sensing these 'foregrounded' items for which a specially refined sensitivity to language is a sine qua non in the analysis of a poem. The teacher's job becomes more onerous in developing this faculty in the students. Needless to say that the teacher himself should be suitably trained in the detailed mechanism of the language and be able to follow the procedure of descriptive linguistics in analysing the language objectively. He should also possess subjective faculty resulting from his own sensitivity to respond intuitively to the language.
In chapter 4, which follows, we will analyse a variety of poems, to demonstrate how they should be taught in the classroom, exploiting the techniques of Stylo-linguistics.