Chapter 3

Stylistics: The Linguistic Study of Literature
CHAPTER -THREE

STYLISTICS: THE LINGUISTIC STUDY OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

In teaching literature the role of the teacher is not to make the students accept predetermined judgments on certain authors and their works without analyzing the text themselves. The students should not be taught to think and feel about certain writer and their works in a certain way, rather they should be encouraged to become sensitive readers and be able to think and feel for themselves. They should be able to judge reasonably for themselves with the help of the textual facts. Alex Rodger (1969) rightly observes in his paper on "Linguistics and the Teaching of Literature" that.

"Our primary duty is not so much the teaching of knowledge about literature as the imparting of skill in the recognition and comprehension of literary modes of meanings... Literary history has its value and its uses, but its massive critical and evaluative generalizations are justifiable for otherwise) only in terms of individual text.

The basic activity of the linguistic study of literature is to achieve this objective by a self-conscious linguistic reading and interpretation of texts. Every thing else is subordinated to the: primary fact that is the text itself.
One may gain some knowledge about the history or culture of the past through literature. But when one reads literature solely for this purpose, one is no longer the student of literature but one takes up the role of a social or cultural historian. With regard to the work, it itself ceases to have literary value for the readers and will merely be instrumental in throwing light on certain extrinsic facts. The teacher's concern should not only be the private activity of reading but also some more general activity that is criticism. The teacher should be able to relate our subjective impression to the objective text the meaning and value of a text is to some extent universal. Though every individual reader has a particular response to a particular text, some degree of unanimity of response is always possible. Reading and enjoyment of literature is not totally subjective.

A text may be valuable for us for some personal reasons. For example, it may depict our post or it may give utterance to our future plans and ambitions. But the literary value of the text will not be acceptable to others on those grounds. There must, therefore, be a value that can commonly be agreed upon.

As teachers and as critics also, we must find some objective evidence as the basis for our subjective evaluation of a poem. We must look for meaning.

"which reconciles the greatest number of subjective responses" with the greatest possible number of demonstrable textual data"

Here subjective response is subordinated to objective text and works within
"the limits set by the normal communicative function of language itself"

All literature is composed of language:

"Every literary form is no more and no less than a language act a combination of synthetic units. There can, conceivably be language without literature there can be no literature without language"

Literary writers modify and arrange the very language we use in daily life in peculiar ways. The language used by a literary writer may deviate from the normal communicative resources of language but the meaning of the text depends upon the norms of that particular language.

The facts we find in literary texts are therefore, linguistic in nature. Every thing else we may find in it is secondary. We can conclude that the study of literature and particularly of poetry,

"is an attempt to register exhaustively the semantic elements or signal-structure of which that poem is made and through which alone it reaches our consciousness."

In literature what we have is language and not concrete situations. It is from its use in the text that we make inferences about the implied context of situation, actions, characters, settings. etc. As Alex Rodger (1969) rightly says, we are able to --
"Arrive at a valid interpretation of it only when we have achieved a high degree of reconciliation between the two i.e. between our sense of worldly or situational probability and the linguistic facts of the text as a whole"

So not the intuitive only but also an explicit knowledge of language is necessary. Linguistics is a systematic body of knowledge about language which describes language in terms of three subsystems – phonological, grammatical and lexical.

In phonology, linguistics tells us what the basic sounds in English are and how they are articulated. As the standard alphabet of English does not adequately describe the pronunciation of words and utterances, linguists, or philologists have evolved a special set of transcriptional alphabet. This transcriptional or phonetic alphabet removes the discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation.

The knowledge, provided by phonology is useful in several ways. First, it gives an adequate alphabet to discuss different dialects, diachronic changes (in speech and spelling), and relationship between pronunciation and spelling. As for the relevance of this knowledge to the study of literature, we may say that that phonetic transcription provides us with such concepts assonance, consonance and rhyme which may be used in reading poems and especially when sounds does not match the spelling. The stress and pitch system of
phonetic transcription helps us perceive, the specific information of the poem which may be significant in producing certain effects.

Linguistics describes grammar in terms of its social usage. It does not merely give us the rules of construction to be followed strictly. It also describes the functions of these constructions. It tells us that if some one used an unusual linguistic feature it does not mean that he is using the language incorrectly. We are told that this uncommon use may be intended to produce certain specific effects. This brings in the concept of deviation and foregrounding which are significant in understanding and evaluating a poem.

Linguistics also describes the vocabulary or lexis of a language. The nature of words and the rules of word-formation are described under this heading. This information is relevant to the study of literature as we can perceive if there is any digression from the convention. If we find archaic words or neologisms in a poem we obviously pay more attention to them to find their significance. Linguistics is then as Bernard Block & G.I. Turner (1973) point out:

"an orderly description of the way people in a given society talk, of the sounds that people utter in various situations, and of the acts which accompany o follow the sound".

This way, by describing both form and function of language linguistics leads to a better understanding of literature.
Stylistics

If style is the art of expression, stylistics is the science of style; stylistics is the science of style. Stylistics is of comparatively recent development and “did not become established in its modern form until the early years of the present century”.

Stylistics in recent times has made tremendous progress from the early years of the present century. Stylistics in recent times has made tremendous progress from the earlier study of rhetoric. Since then different schools of thoughts in stylistics have emerged, though many do not grant stylistics the status of an autonomous discipline. The word “stylistics” is used as a kind of blanket term to cover a wide variety of studies of style, ranging from an extremely rigorous linguistic analysis of language at all levels, to a more or less impressionistic study based upon very little linguistic data. The rise of stylistics as an academic discipline is basically a twentieth century phenomenon. But the concept of style is very old and goes back to the beginnings of literary thought in Europe.

The ancient concept of style was connected more with rhetoric than poetics; and it was generally discussed as part of oratory. Rhetoric, in those days, was by and large prescriptive, which means that there were rules, which prescribed the type of syntax, vocabulary and figures of speech to be used on particular occasions. Graham Hough (-----?) states that “the ancient rhetoric can be divided into three types: viz., ceremonial, political and forensic
oratory, which suit and appropriate a diverse repertory of devices”.

Despite being in usage in Germany since 19th century, no critic has defined the origin and growth of the term ‘stylistics’. Oxford English Dictionary cites that in English the noun ‘stylistics’ is found as early as in 1846 and is defined as “the art of forming good style in writing” and as the “science of literary style”.

From the beginning stylistics has branched off in tow directions –

“one branch of stylistics being associated with linguistics and the other with literary criticism, history and so on. While linguists regard stylistics as a handicapped child of linguistics, literary critics are often bitterly skeptical about its viability”.

For example, who argues that ‘Linguistics, Stylistics and other collateral disciplines, albeit superlatively and frighteningly sophisticated, cannot quite pluck the heart of the mystery of literary creation and appreciation”. As a counter to this kind of critical dogmatism, a healthy pluralistic stance may be advanced. Pluralism is a view of philosophy that

“holds the possibility of a plurality of formulation of truth and philosophic procedures – short, of a plurality of valid philosophies”.

On the strength of this view, Elder Olson acknowledges the plurality of "valid and true kinds of criticism” and observes that “if plurality of valid and
true kinds of criticism is possible, choice must still be exercised. It is impossible to employ all methods simultaneously and selection of method is by no means a matter of indifference. Choice is determined by the questions one wishes to ask and the form of answer one requires and by the relative adequacy of given systems. The discovery of properties peculiar to a given kind of poetry, by extension to any piece of literature demands in differential method..... Therefore, it will be imprudent to question the legitimacy of a stylistic approach to literature.

In the following section we shall outline the orientation of various theories of style in general and indicate their bearing upon stylistics, present a sketch of various sub-sects of stylistics referring to the linguistic and psychological affiliations of each, and state the aims, scope and limitations of stylistics, by way of pointing to the need for an “eclectic” model to handle fiction.

Theories of Style

Most theories of style, ancient or modern, fall into three broad classifications:

(i) Textual theories

(ii) Psychologically- oriented theories

(iii) Organic theories

Textual theories

Textual theories so called for want of a better term focus exclusively on the “material cause” of literature, that is, language. They are based on the
“dualistic” assumption that language is a “dress of thought” and for that reason form and content are separable. In other words, style is constructing by and large as a matter of “fee will”. Textual theories can be either “pragmatic” or “objective”.

Pragmatic theory rests on the premise that “style is persuasion”, which in turn rests on form content dichotomy. Classical works of “Rhetoric” and “Poetics” stem from this premise. These works offer ready-made formulas of Rhetoric and set norms of literature, which are, as M. H. Abrams presumes,

“derived from the qualities of works whose success and long survival have proved their adaptation to human nature, or else being grounded directly on the psychological laws governing the response of men in general.”

Thus pragmatic theories constituted what we might call “normative stylistics”. Swift’s definition of style as “proper words in proper places” belongs here.

Objective theories fix on the “material cause” but their approach to style is analytical. Literature is regarded primarily as “a verbal artifact”, “a heterocosm” and is sought to be analysed in objective terms, ignoring considerations of author period or other extra textual evidence. In this way they make for formalistic, antihistorist approach to literature and they are all of recent origin. Practical Criticism, New Criticism and (most sub-sects of) stylistics are some of the theories that come under this category. But stylistics
differs from Practical Criticism and New Criticism not only in apparatus but also in scope. Stylistics as originally conceived is concerned with the study of stylistic stimuli as signified by features of lexis, grammar and phonology, the end being description of style. Practical Criticism on the other hand, focuses on meaning as signified by sense, tone, feeling, intention etc., the approach being lexico-semantic and the end interpretation of literature. Again, New Criticism focuses on verbal nuances such as Ambiguity, Paradox and Irony, the end being evaluation of literary works.

There are two prominent views of style promoted by stylistic, critics. One view is that "Style is choice" which means selection and ordering of language at various levels, lexical, syntactic and phonological. The other view is that "style is deviance" which means aesthetically purposeful distortion of language resulting in "foregrounding". Foregrounding, indeed is an attention calling device signified by repetition, emphasis, unexpected lexical collocation, syntactic inversion etc.

The task, then, of stylistics appear to be to

"set-up inventories and describe stylistic stimuli with the aid of linguistic concepts. Enkvist however has widened the scope of stylistics by defining style as a aggregate of contextual probabilities of its linguistic items"

and adding that
“context includes textual as well as extra textural
context such as period gener, dialect and
interpersonal relationship”.

Reference this is clearly a departure from the anti-historicist position.

Psychologically Oriented Theories

Psychologically oriented theories of style are base on he assumption that
certain habits of language can be associated with certain character traits. Thus
the “material cause” is regarded as a means to find out the working of “efficient
cause” which is the author’s psyche. From this assumption stem Buffon’s
definition that “style is the man” and Leibnitz observation, quoted by Jacobs
and Rosenbaum (1971:140) that

“languages are the best mirror of the human mind”.

To the same premise can be traced back M.H. Abram’s (1961:94) definition of style as

“a characteristic manner of expression in prose or verse”

The latest along these lines, perhaps, is Ohmann’s definition that

“style is epistemic choice”, “way of sorting out the

phenomena of experience”,

a choice suggestive of and determined by habitual patterns of thought
and feeling. A view of style as such border on “determinism”. The task of
linguistic then, appears to be to trace the habitual patterns of thought and
feeling signified by the language of literature.
Organic Theory

Organic theories claim that intuition is expression and thus equate “efficient cause” with “material cause”. Their premise is that literature is an “organic whole” and therefore form and content are inseparable. From this “monistic” premise issue Romantic postulates that the image conveys thought and emotion imaginatively, that metaphor is a result of a process of the mind, “a mode of apprehending reality” and the like. The consequence is that literature is put beyond the scope of any stylistic investigation.

Linguistics and Stylistics

Stylistics rooted in linguistic is essentially classificatory;

“it’s orientation is positivistic and its ultimate aim is to create a science of style, or a repertory of all the stylistic elements of the language. Literary language of literature is studied, it is analyzed which together constitute a language”.

If the language of literature is studied, it is analyzed as any other piece of language. The approach is extremely rigorous, impressionism is rejected, an exhaustive analysis of the language of the text is made at all levels and statements are supported by voluminous statistical data. Purely descriptive, it is not concerned with relating linguistic facts to aesthetic response.

At the other extreme is the German Stillforechng, which looks upon literature as an art and is interested in studying the language of individual works in order to discover the underlying unifying principle. Speculative and
intuitive, it advocates no rigid methodology. There is no classification of linguistic elements, and the observation of these features is sometimes a springboard for the understanding of the author’s psyche and the age in which the work was written. Yet it is clearly stylistics, for the conclusions take into account linguistic evidence. The principal representative of this school is Leo Spitzaer.

When this is done, Graham Hough feels,

“there is no limit beyond which the student of style is forbidden to go.” And that literally stylistics may broaden out from pure linguistic description to include almost anything found in general criticism”.

This statement of Graham Hough seems to be rather extravagant for stylistics, based as it is on linguistics which is a limited discipline. Linguistics is useful in rooting general criticism down to the linguistic fact and in providing a greater awareness of the way language functions. It is nevertheless severely limited in so far as linguistics at least in its present state of development cannot capture several elements vital to the understanding and appreciation of a work of art. But it is useful as it contributes “new facts, new ways of looking at facts, and new kinds of theoretical commitments to the craft of studying, explaining and evaluating literary art. Viewed in this way – as a contributing but not a controlling body of theory – linguistics give literary criticism a theoretical underpinning, which is necessary.
Distinction between stylistic features and irrelevant language feature

Besides determining the kind of stylistics most useful for his purpose and the amount of linguistics it would involve, the literary critic has to decide what linguistic features it would be profitable to analyse. In order to do this a distinction must first be made between stylistic features and language features. The views of M. Riffaterre and H. Babb would be helpful in this connection.

Riffaterre in his “Criteria for Style Analysis”, states,

“it is necessary to gather first of all those elements which present stylistic features and secondly to subject to linguistic analysis only those to the exclusion of all others (which are stylistically irrelevant). Then and only then will the confusion between style and language be avoided.”

He goes on to say,

“As soon as elements from a literary language are used by an author for a definite period they become units of his style: and it is this particular realization of their value which is relevant, not their potential value in a standard system.”

Howard Babb holds similar views about unmotivated counting.

“the results to date are disappointing for anyone interested in reasonably inclusive characterization of
an artist's style. For many of the features identified by computers are typical of the given language itself rather than peculiar to the writer in question. And other features isolated as distinctive of an individual's style may often lie below the reader's threshold of perception although they are discoverable by computers working with large amounts of data, they seem not to have definable effects upon the reader as he encounters the writer's words. While data of this sort may serve as valuable evidence in determining the author of an unacknowledged text, they are less and less helpful if one is attempting to describe the salient qualities of a writer's style."

The decision therefore, regarding what linguistic elements to investigate and to what depth of discovery, is intuitive and subjective in the sense in which all valid literary judgments may be termed 'intuitive' and subjective.

Linguistics stylistics streams off into structuralist stylistics and transformational stylistics based on linguistic affiliations.

**Structuralist Stylistics**

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 – 1913), the most influential structuralist bought about a tremendous awakening in linguistic sciences in his study of languages. His theory was that language is an abstraction and it is manifested
only in speech. There are three main schools of structuralist linguistics each with its own brand of stylistics. The Bloomfieldians of America, the Neo-Frithians of Britain and the Prague School of linguistics. All three re rooted in empiricism and behaviorism.

Bloomfieldian stylistics critics share the view that style is choice. But they confine themselves to the study of the difference between synonymous sentences. They would not compromise their position with regard to meaning. Consequently their analyses tend to be aridly mechanical.

Neo-Frithians like Prague School Stylisticians they hold that style is "deviance". But they differ from the Prague school in their concept of 'norm'. they argue that

"a literary text must be described not so much against the typical characteristics of its register."

Again they hold that language – including literary language – cannot be viewed apart from its context of situation. Thus context, one of the determinants of meaning, assumes prominence. They examine registers, structures, class systems, collocation and cohesion in literary texts. But like all structuralists, they are concerned only with one level of syntactic representation, that is the surface structure. Consequently, insights that issue from the other level i.e. "Deep Structure" are not accessible to them.

The Prague school, standing midway between the two, combines in itself some of the best qualities of both. Its scientific rigor and interest in quantification relates in itself some of the best qualities of both. Its scientific
rigor and interest in quantification relates it to stylistic. On the other hand, its concern for a work of art as a unique self-sufficient entity, for words and their arrangement in a particular text, and the connection between formal elements and total meaning, shows its affinity with Stillforschung. The useful concept of foregrounding, concern with the various functions of language and the relation of poetic language to other varieties of language are associated with this school of stylistics. Some of the prominent practitioners of the Prague School are Roman Jakobson, Jan Mukarovskiy and Bohuslav Havranck.

Stylistic critics of the Prague school view literature as a cultural phenomenon as "a quasi-spatial structure". They study formal features of creative utterances objectively in order to understand their operation in a general way. To them, literature is deviance, the norm being the entire language with its

"frequency distributions and transitional probabilities".

But the problem is that

"frequency distribution and transitional probabilities of natural language"

are "not known and never will be".

Then their analyses tend to be rather complex in detail and lifeless in its linguistic schematization. However, Mukarovskiy's idea of "Foregrounding" and Jakobson's typology style can be extremely useful in stylistic analysis as well as literary history.
Grammar is regarded as an analogue of the native speaker's mind and as such two levels of syntactic representations are posited the "Deep Structure" and the "Surface Structure". Therefore, it is possible to account for ambiguity, constructional homogymy and paraphrase relationship not only in ordinary language but also in creative writings. Again for the same reason, it is possible to formalize, syntactic as well as semantic deviance, and also account for the density of syntactic structures, which often lead to complexity in creative writing. What is more, besides characterizing the "microgrammar" of a particular literary work, it goes beyond the data and "predicts" the style of the writer. "IG" can be used as Ohmann (1962) does to account for "epistemic choice". Ohmann argues that the very act of prediction is an emotional act with rhythms of its own. Therefore, the stylistic critic must turn his attention to emotion and epistemic choice. In this way, there sits the possibility of bringing out certain psychological implications of style. Here again, the analysis is "predictive". But a serious handicap in this model is that it cannot for contextual aspects of style, like cohesion and registers as IG is a "context-free" grammar.

**Literary Stylistics**

The kind of stylistics practiced in 1940's by Spitzer and his followers is known as literary stylistics. It is based on philosophical idealism. The approach is subjective rather than objective and literary rather than linguistic. Spitzer claims that the critic grasps the "spiritual styron" of a literary work by an
intuitive "click" and thus understands the "inner order". And he moves from an observed detail to the central core of a work of art and from the centre in search of further confirmatory detail. Later critics abandoned the approach on empirical grounds. However, Freeman argues that

"criticism does not proceed from a 'tabula rasa' and that to refer to a given literary effect as a 'stimulus' with the philosophical commitments inherent in such a system is to do violence to the very nature of literature."

Stylistique and Stilforechung, therefore, both suffer from certain limitations as far as the study of literature is concerned. The typology of styles of the first is of little use to the understanding of a work of art, neither is its excessive concern with stem especially helpful. More quantification and classification of linguistic features is barren and stultifying and leads to no positive results in the absence of an effort to relate linguistic data to its aesthetic function in the work of art under study.

"For the student of literature, stylistics provides a precise yet sensitive instrument which can play its full part only if it is closely coordinated with other aspects of literary criticism".

Stilforeschung, on the other hand, could with profit have based its judgments on more linguistic evidence. Another shortcoming of this school is that it is often more interested in studying the psyche of the author, and the age in which the work was written than in the aesthetic function of the linguistic
elements in the work of art. It thus seems to be the old psychological, historical, sociological criticism in a new stylistic framework and consequently somewhat inhibitive as a means of gauging the artistic quality of a work of literature. Spitzer himself seems to have realized this, for he later gave up this approach and examined literary works as self-sufficient entities that deserved to be studied for their own sake.

The literary critic interested in investigating the linguistic features responsible for his total response to a work of art, could take what is useful for his purpose from all these various approaches. Linguistics provides the tools for a formal description of language which to use and to what extent, is left to the discretion and needs of the literary critic. Halliday (1972) endorses this approach to a work of literature when he says

"Linguistics is not and will never be the whole of literary analysis, and only the literary analyst — not he linguist — can determine the place of linguistics in literary studies".

As a matter of fact".

"All sort of mixtures and combinations of criticism and stylistics are possible in practice and the one does not supersede the other"

provided that the statements made are adjective and based on concrete linguistic evidence and not on mere impressionistic response or arbitrary personal taste.
So also, is determining the aesthetic function or the stylistic elements in the text. Aesthetic effects cannot always be related to particular sets of features – there is not one to one correlation between the two, and stylistics does not claim to be predictive. The same linguistic feature in different effects if not more – all equally important in the context as far as producing that particular response is concerned. The archaic can be used to lend dignity to the narrative. It can in a different context also be used for humorous effects. Virginia Tufte, while discussing this phenomenon with regard to ‘syntactic symbolism’ to reflect somehow the erratic motion of the birds in their darting, curving flight in the one and

“successive jolts of a slight automobile accident:

in the other her comment on this phenomenon is revealing, though ‘a swerve’ is actually written in both passages, it would at least be hard to argue that the actions discussed are as similar as the syntax used to discuss them. Grammar, is by nature more limited than meaning for it must carry different meanings, she goes on to say that the same grammatical structure may be used dozens of times without any symbolic force.

The particular response to language, specially the language of literature is the result of a complex of several linguistic and extra linguistic feature like syntax, rhythm, the quality, quantity and combination of vowels and consonants and the denotative and connotative meanings of words. He presence, absence permutation and combination of these elements can result in entirely different effects. Many of these features can be captured and
quantified, though for a rigorous analysis of a text of any length computers are necessary, others elude linguistic study. Until all these features are captured, it is not possible to prove conclusively what precise formula will produce which particular response. It is nevertheless interesting and rewarding to study, within the limitations imposed by linguistics, the features that appear to be responsible, in the context for evoking that particular response. Caution, however, must be exercised in the interpretation of linguistic evidence, and the interpretation to be carried away by the desire to prove a certain hypothesis and read unwarranted meanings in linguistic elements must be guarded against. This is specially important for even such eminent scholars as R. Jakobson (1967) and Levi Strauss have succumbed to the temptation as Fiffaterre points out, in interpreting Baudelaire’s “Les Chats”. This is due, he says, to a confusion of categories resulting from their desire to impose a certain hypothesis on the linguistic data:

“there is a revealing instance where Jakobson and Levi Strauss take literally the technical meaning of feminine as used in metrics and grammar and endow the formal feminine categories with esthetic and even ethical values”.

This may, he continues, in certain cases, “orient the associations they trigger ……. for example, ‘volupte’ ….... is more female than ‘plaisir’ would be. It hardly holds, however, in the case of purely technical terminology, where ‘masculine’ means merely ‘ending on a fully pronounced syllable’ by
stretching this to the limit, we may discover cases where the feminine rhyme does evoke some such associations because it coincides with the specific feminine gender ending; it is altogether unlikely with masculine rhymes, which do not offer any similar concurrence.

Another problem that faces one who analyses a literary text is that of quantification. Some kind of mental statistics involved even when style is classified impressionistically, but how far rigorous it is, another question. The arguments given against quantification are that:

1. it is too crude to capture all the delicate nuances of style.
2. it may in certain case as in that of complex overlapping imagery.
3. it disregards the influence of context.
4. quality is swamped in quantity and that
5. often it is not needed e.g. in case where the occurrence of the stylistic device is too obvious to need statistical proof.

Counting can however be employed, he feels,

“to indicate the frequency of use, density and distribution of stylistics devices and this may be significant to an appreciation of the work.”

The usefulness of quantification depends, therefore, on the purpose for which a statistical count is made and on the countability of the linguistic features.
As regards the methods should be employed, two for approaching the
text have been suggested. One is implicit in a statement like that of Seymour
Chatman and Samuel R. Levin

"linguistic analysis of poetry i.e. literature is usually
content to accept the judgments of literary critics
..... and then to set out and find linguistic correlates
for these judgments."

According to this approach, it is necessary first of all to understand the
literary quality of a work and state the total response before looking for the
stylistic elements to be analyzed. The other procedure is that favored by
Spitzer, of proceeding from some significant linguistic element to the
underlying organizing principle and

“finally making the return trip to all the other groups
of observations in order to find whether the ‘inward
form’ one has tentatively constructed gives an
account of the whole. The scholar will surely be
able to state after three or four of these ‘fro
voyages’, whether he ahs found the life – giving
center, the sun of the solar system”

In fact an awareness of some prominent formal features and response to
them is simultaneous, and whichever end one begins with, a to and fro
movement from the text to the hypothesis is necessary. A close scrutiny of the
linguistic feature may not only corroborate literary judgments, it may even modify them. As Michael Gregory rightly observes:

"It may well be, as Kroeber suggests, that 'judgments and recognition of style are primary analysis and statistics secondary'."

But it is necessary to emphasize that a rigorous checking by means of a description of the total complex of features ....... intuitively judged to be stylistically significant, is likely to uncover other, previously unobserved, significant features: or to demonstrate the inter-relationship of a series of features in such a way as to offer new or at least modified responses to the text as a whole. In this way our responses to the style of a text are open to progressive development.

As far as the concept of style is concerned it is fraught with difficulties. One thing, however, is clear. Stylistics takes a position midway between that of the classical rhetoricians who saw a dichotomy between form ad content and that of the romantics who believed in the organic nature of expression. But as a matter of fact, all studies of style assume that subject matter and expression are to a certain extent, separable, for as Ohmann forcefully states the problem

"if style does not have to do with ways of saying something ..... is there anything at all which is work naming 'style'

If not, most critics of style have given us judgments about what writers mean, masquerading as judgments about manner. The critic can talk about what
the writer says, but talk about style he cannot, for his neat identity – one
thought, one form – allows no margin for individual variation, which is what
we ordinarily mean by style. Style, then becomes a useless hypothetical
construct half way between meaning and the person who means ..........

“Style is in fact a part of meaning as is just as useful
a key to total meaning as is any other element.”

This view of style is supported by transformational grammar and its
notion of deep and surface structures. Optional transformations from the same
kernel sentence may be said to be stylistic alternatives – different ways of
saying “the same thing”. That is to say “no transformation leaves content
absolutely unaltered .......... (but) the most useful sense of ‘content’ –
cognitive content – may be such that transformations do generally leave ..... unaltered. Generative grammar, thus, accounts for both a basic content and
stylistic describe the syntactic choices available and Ohmann admits that,
though syntax

“seems to be a central determinant of style, it is
admittedly not the whole of style. Imagery, figures
of speech and the rest are often quite important
......... transformational patterns (however)
constitute a significant part of what the sensitive
reader perceives as style.”
“This shortcoming of the transformational approach can to some extent be supplemented by the notion of style as contextually bound”

choice which takes into account the alternative ways of expression (including lexical choices) normally expected in a particular situation, real or imaginary, where language is used. Transformational grammar has given us another concept of style – epistemic choice i.e. a writer’s habitual use of certain kinds of transformations reflecting the manner in which his mind structures experience.

Examination of some of the major contribution in the filed of stylistics might provide new insights, ad help in the search for the best approach to a study of the language of a work of art.

Spitzer for example demonstrates how a study of the language of the text in combination with other elements in the work corroborates literary criticism. He questions Lanson’s pronouncement that Rabelais is a pure realist and beginning with an examination of rabelais’ coinages points out how they reflect an attitude somewhere between reality and irreality and by linking the up with the whole work.

“the fantastic voyage of a fantastic people” proves Rabelais antirealism. How effectively emotions can be reflected in the rhythms of the language he shows in his essay on Diderot though he does not make an analysis of the sound patterns of the language.
Richard Ohmann (1962) has applied his theory of style as epistemic choice to some of the works of G.B. Shaw,

“effectively relating the linguistic choices Shaw makes to his special bent of mind – that of a similarity seeker. Ohmann has thus tried to account for Shaw’s social philosophy and his tendency to exaggerate by relating these to his desire for “leveling …… differences and emphasizing similarities in the interests of perceptual stability, and in his search for order. In ‘literature as sentences”

he demonstrates the relevance of generative grammar to literary studies. A passage from Conrad’s “the secret sharer” has been analyzed to show how generative grammar confirms the intuitive response of the reader and how the structure of the language and the theme of the text are related. He takes the deviant structure, “the river wended vales” form Dylan Thomas’ “A Winter’s tale” to demonstrate how it can be understood bet when all the underlying deep structures are examined and only the least deviant one are accepted. The surface structure cannot show the deviance as formally, the structure, “the river wended vales” is similar to the non-deviant construction “meaning made toys” and is thus incapable of offering alternative meanings from which the most acceptable can be selected. How the recurrent use of a few transformations can help capture part of the flavor of an author’s style he demonstrates by
analyzing passages from Faulkner, Hemingway, Henry James and D.H. Lawrence.

Halliday takes up the question of a linguistic description of literary texts and while arguing against the use of ad hoc categories – the inventing, not the new alignment of established categories – demonstrates with the help of systemic grammar the manner in which the language of literary texts (the nominal groups lexical sets and cohesive devices) can be described according to strict linguistic categories. He has not, however, related these descriptions of linguistic features to aesthetic effects, for it is not his purpose to do that in this essay.

He merely provides the data and leaves the reader to make the connection himself. A further step is taken by Halliday (1972) in his analysis of passages from William Golding’s ‘The inheritors’ where he demonstrates how the creative artist explores the functional resources of language for a fusion of theme and style.

“The theme of the entire novel, in a sense, is transitivity; man’s interpretation of his experience of the world, his understanding of its processes and of his participation in them”

and the transitivity patterns realize both semantic and syntactic choices. Halliday points out how the use of intransitive syntax and clauses with non-human subjects is very significant here as they are not just features of the
events themselves, but the meaning itself for among other things, the syntax by itself reveals Lok's limited understanding and the way he structures experience.

In a novel of multiple points of view, written in the stream of consciousness style, where the speech of one character merges almost unobtrusively into that of another, sometimes even within the same sentence, the assigning of speeches correctly to the various characters or to the narrator is of vital importance to the understanding of the work. Leaska has succeeded in correcting previous misinterpretations of Virginia Woolf's 'To the Lighthouse' and in supporting his own assessment by assigning the speeches correctly with the help of linguistic data.

Norman Page in 'The Language of Jane Austen' has made use of linguistic evidence to sharpen critical understanding of her subtle use of language. A careful examination of the words used for example, takes one immediately to some of the crucial issues in the novels. He examines syntax to demonstrate its contribution in reflecting emotion. Jane Austen's use of the technique of the free indirect style of narration, its function, her attitude to a precise use of language and the way in which it indicates, in her novels the worth of a character have also been examined.

**Conclusion**

It is hoped that consideration of some of the theoretical problems regarding stylistics and the study of stylistic approaches with some practical applications of linguistics to literary works will be helpful in determining ways of studying the language of literature.