
Discourse Analysis of Dylan Thomas's *Fern Hill*

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to determine the relationship between linguistic structure and its cultural or situational context of the poem. The research proposes to investigate the literary context and uses of metaphors in the poem 'Fern Hill' with the help of MAK Halliday's model of discourse analysis. The textual analysis of the poem provides a platform a gateway to interpret the poem more effectively. Halliday developed an analysis of context in terms of field, tenor and mode. It helps to demonstrate and comprehend the situational and ideational function of the poem. The analysis of the poem reveals the ideational and thematic axis of the literary context which characterizes the writer's experiences of his childhood and young age. The analysis reflects the eternal joy of the author by comparing his phases of life with the shining star and the Sabbath of the holy stream. The textual analysis of metaphor of the poem enhances and develops the interpretative abilities of the reader to develop their own context of the poem.

Keywords- Linguistic, Literariness, Nationality, Globalization

Introduction

Discourse analysis is the study of text from linguistic point of view. It is to analyze how forms function to create a specific situation. It deals with the choice of words, organization of words, structure and its ideational context. The analysis of literary texts includes how language is used to construct the message. The text is itself an activity which captivates the interest of readers and writers. There is no definite and objective meaning of the texts. It is a continuous process in which the reader works upon to construct the meaning on certain linguistic patterns and signs. Through discourse analysis we come to know that the art of engagement work out in the text. Interpretation and meanings are framed according to social and cultural conventions. It is a sort of communication process between the writer and the reader. Language is not the independent identity which has plurality of meaning rather meaning is perceived and conceptualizes according to the cultural conventions. Similarly the readers do not merely rely on the surface layer of meaning of the linguistic items used by the writers rather the inherent quality of all individuals to relate the interpretation to their personal experiences. The writers use metaphorical devices to beautify the literary text. Discourse analysis of the literary text is a broader term which includes the way of studying language use and its interpretation therefore the study of the text is delimited to the analysis of metaphors used in the poem Fern hill by Dylan Thomas. The study aims to identify Metaphors used in the poem and the procedure to analyze metaphors. Metaphor is the substitution of an object with another, used to assist expression or understanding Metaphors are analyzed by the process of Tenor, Mode and Field. Field is the use of linguistic units in a context for the readers to derive sense. It deals with the structure or grammaticality of language. Tenor is use of appropriate or relevant words according to the profession to frame the right choice of register. Mode is the way the text should be organized. (Lukin, 2011)

Halliday is of the opinion that linguistic analysis of literary text can never be the whole of it. The proper analysis of literary text requires both linguistic as well as literary analysis (Widdowson, 2014). Halliday's model of discourse analysis essentially deals with the social and situational context. He has designed a concept or procedure to analyze a context with the help of Tenor, Mode and Field. These elements are of great help to understand the context or situation pattern by the language items (Lukin, 2011).

Discourse analysis has long historical roots and the aim of analysts along with huge bulk of linguists has been to uncover the use of language in different contexts referring to syntax, semantics,

morphology etc and in a wider sense analyzing use of language under the broader spectrum of society. The aim ultimately narrows down to simply know the paradigm under which any text or any discourse effect the hearer or reader and under what circumstances. Language is taken as a process which has different structures and relations and discourse analysts unmask such structures and relations and in a modern world the focus is how already preconceived structures of power and politics have hand in making any discourse. In a more traditional sense critical discourse analysts were mostly interested in the domain of stylistics and how any producer of discourse use wittingly or not different formal aspects of language like phonetic, morphological or syntactical and more often analyzing turns and shifts to show how it effects the receiver in a particular context. In the modern context discourse analysis is a plural strategy analyzing in a very comprehensive manner mostly seeing language use in a social context. For instance, Michel Foucault is an often quoted discourse analyst in a postmodern world who studied the relation of power and knowledge and how power is inherent in every social discourse dictating the meaning of any particular discourse. Every discourse is power ridden even human nature driven from discourses. Discourse analysis examines patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used (Paltridge B. , 2012). Literary texts are phonologically, semantically and syntactically patterned in such a way that it creates a meaningful context. The context is fashioned or designed over and above on linguistic patterns. It is not necessary that writers deviate from the linguistic rules to create a unique situation it can be deviant as a discourse as well.

It views the text from multiple perspectives which includes Grammar, cohesion and coherence, thematic axes, Figures of speech etc. the analysis of Figurative language helps to widen the concepts and perception of an individual while interpreting a text. Metaphor is for most people a device of poetic imagination and ornamental aspect of speech that is used for some artistic and rhetorical purpose. Or, as the Encyclopedia Britannica puts it: “metaphor [is a] figure of speech that implies comparison between two unlike objects. Metaphor assists us to pattern our everyday concept (MacFarquhar, 1797).

The basic assumption of much work done within the frames of literary linguistics has been that metaphors are Ornamental devices of the texts (Marugina, 2014) . The writhers commonly make use of literary devices to beautify their work and to present it extra ordinarily. These figurative expressions not only beautify the text but also provide multi layer interpretations. The use of metaphor in literary texts

provides us the way to conceptualize the abstract ideas, emotions and feelings and explains how we project our experiences with physical objects.

Lakoff and Turner, (1989) claim that a conceptual metaphor in literary texts is able to extend its influence by presenting more profound knowledge (Marugina, 2014) the purpose of using metaphors is to draw the comparison between two objects which are unrelated. It helps the readers to engage themselves in cognitive process. It may help the reader to actively engage in the text to extract the meanings of the text. There are different types of metaphors which may help to grasp the concepts. Absolute metaphor, a metaphor in which differentiation can be made between tenor and vehicle. The poem Fern Hill by Dylan Thomas contains a lot of metaphors in another type of metaphor which helps to understand conceptual domain is understood in terms of another is known as conceptual metaphor. So we can say that by defining and explaining the metaphors we can easily understand the crux of any writing. When we try to understand the figurative approaches of any writer then it is very much important to know how to evaluate all the different types of figures of speech. When we will be able to analyze the figures of speech then we will be able to express the text in an impressive way.

In Fern Hill poet has used a lot of images and ornamental devices to depict the rural life in artistic way in order to make it unique from an ordinary reflection of life. The early age reflection has charm, enjoyment and pleasure in it. The only thing which we find here is the shining stars and blossoming life. The shining star is being compared with the youth. The star is symbolic for energy, strength and guidance similarly young age is embodiment of power and energy. So a reference is made between two objects of similar qualities as if they are one. The beauty of figurative language is that it conveys an ordinary message more emphatically with the help of comparing contrasting objects..the poem essentially deals with the delight and charm which he enjoys in childhood or young age. Through all these symbols he not only values the life but also compares it with his internal joys of being young. Throughout the whole poem Time is being given the quality of animate objects and compared with human's phases of life. Time is used as vehicle in this poem taking the character of human being through the different stages of his life and ending at the death.

As in line three he says "Night above the dingle Starry" here night is not used as a scary time but the writer used it here as a shining moment of the day. Here the poet compares the shining star with his youth. The star signifies the fortune and prominence similarly youth is the prominent and golden phase of

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human being. It is the time period in which hindrance and obstacles cannot halt and restrain an individual from his will. The poet describes the optimistic state by referring to the shining star.

In the fifth line of the poem the writer uses metaphor expression for youth that is 'Golden eyes in the heydays time'. As the core focus of the poem revolves around the young age of the poet who recalls his early days as the golden span of his life time. The most significant element in facial expression is the eyes which represents and reflects the sign of happiness, delight, suffering etc. The golden eyes, which is the source domain, signifies the time of his youth. It shows the peak and pinnacle of velour and strength. The poet uses figurative language in a way that it carries very deep and philosophical meaning. Certainly it is a complex process to engage the reader in an art to conceptualize the sense. 'I was prince of the apple towns'. In this line the poet has compared his childhood like a prince hood. The word prince is vehicle which is the source domain and child is the tenor which is the target domain. These two ideas or concepts are being compared on the similar ground which refers to the carefree age. The age which is free from all responsibilities. It is the golden time of a child like a prince

In line 9 the writer says there is 'a river of the windfall light'. He is comparing the rural life with night, a life of charms and lavishness and by using the figurative speech very artistically is painting the landscape of countryside. In line 22 the speaker says there is a fire 'green as grasses. He compares the fire with green apart from this he takes fire as the warmth of life which gives him boost, and zeal and zest to the youth and brings happiness in the life of speaker.

He speaks about the 'horses flash in the night' this is certainly again metaphorical. Here the horses do not flash but the time of youth which he spent in the farmhouse in the countryside. The author writes 'all is flashing and shinning' here by describing the beauty of morning when everything seems to be dancing with joy and singing in delight and ecstasy. The writer compares this shining joyful morning with his youth age. In line 33 the poet mentions 'the birth of the simple life'. Here he uses the simple and birth in the sense of innocence and writer recalls his time in countryside as a time of innocence, sober and meek. So we can say that the poem is beautifully written. Though it is hard to understand real sense of the poem in a reading. But as you keep on reading you get more joy and the poem also raise your interest the more. The comparison of time and life is stunning impressive. The writer here used the imagery in an artful manner and with great mastery. As you understand the imagery you feel as the art of the poem and feel the joy of a simple, sober and meek life.

The poem contains metaphors which are used to convey the philosophical and conceptual meanings. In literary texts these rhetorical devices are meant to transmit profound and deep knowledge.. ‘The lamb white days’ refers to the innocence stage of the author. The lamb is the vehicle which is compared with the childhood a tenor. The lamb is significant for innocence, peace and white days is symbolic for harmony and calmness. Here the author has artistically portrait the childhood as the age of peace and serenity. The poem describes the delight of the childhood.

Conclusion

The metaphor analysis of the poem demonstrates and develops an ideational social context of the writer’s childhood and young age. The selection of words, its organization and the way language is patterned create a situation which is full of pleasure and delight. The textual features enhance and develop the interpretative abilities to draw the comparative analysis of apparently contrasting objects. The study assists the learners to interpret the texts at multi layered level. Discourse analysis of the poem bridges a link between the language and literary context. It examines the relationship between language and the situation which is constructed by the linguistic pattern. Through this research we can demonstrate the function of forms and structure to understand the context effectively.

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