



STYLOSTATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF A. K. RAMANUJAN'S POEM 'ECOLOGY'

Leelawati Patil

Asst. Prof. in English,
SMDBS College, Miraj

Dr. M. V. Rodriques

Head, Dept. of English
CSIBER, Kolhapur

ABSTRACT:

Stylistics is defined as the study of the language of literature, using the various tools of linguistic analysis. It is a field of empirical inquiry, in which the insights and techniques of linguistic theory are used to analyze literary text. Stylo-statistical approach relies on the evidence of language usage found in the text. It aims to investigate the text from the authors individual style. The present paper aims to make a stylo-statistical analysis of A. K. Ramanujan's poem 'Ecology' focusing on lexical, syntactic and semantic features such as word length, word classes, sentence length and figures of speech.

Key words: *stylistics, stylo-statistics, word length, sentence length, word classes, figures of speech.*

INTRODUCTION:

The style is the quality of language which communicates precisely emotions or thoughts, or a system of emotions or thoughts peculiar to the author. It is defined as an individual's deviation from norms for the situations in which he is encoding, these deviations being in the statistical properties of those structural features for which there exists some degree of choice in his code.

Stylistics is concerned with the study of style in the text. It refers to literary and non-literary texts. According to Leech and Short,

Stylistics is the linguistic study of style, is rarely undertaken for its own sake, simply as an exercise in describing what use is made of language (1981).

Charles Balley believes and Taylor quotes that -

Stylistics studies the elements of a language organized from the point of view of their effective content; that is, the expression of emotion by language as well as the effect of language on emotions”.

(Taylor: 1980)

Stylistic study of any work of art is open-ended and exploratory. It aims to bring to light patterns in style which influence reader's perceptions and relates to the disciplinary concerns of literary and linguistic interpretations.

The stylostatistical study aims to concentrate on the both – the style and the statistics. Linguistic features of any literary text can be counted to arrive at the figures that can be tested by statistical measures. Most stylo-statisticians have found that the measures of word length, lexis, syntax and semantics can identify the author's individual style and certain period styles within a given language.

The present paper aims to measure the word length, frequency of open and closed class words, sentence length and figures of speech used by A. K. Ramanujan in his poem 'Ecology' to examine his creativity.

A. K. RAMANUJAN'S CRAFTSMANSHIP:

A. K. Ramanujan's poetry is remarkable in its linguistic aspects. He is a master of creating marvellous pictures by dint of his superb technique. William Walsh honours him as 'the most gifted poet'. (Walsh, 1992). He is a remarkable and original craftsman. He has a mastery of words and in his poems each word is used adroitly, attentively, accurately and economically. M. K. Naik examines Ramanujan's poetic technique as –

In poetic technique, of all his contemporaries, Ramanujan appears to have the surest touch for he never lapses into Romantic cliché. Though he writes in open forms, his verse is extremely tightly constructed. (Naik 1982)

Ramanujan is especially known for his brevity of style. He prefers to be brief while expressing his emotions and communicating those with the readers. His style is polished and refined. He shaped and polished his each poem, cutting facets until the desired result approached. His choice of words is distinct, he strives for using the simplest and shortest words to convey his message. His skilful use of open class and closed class words,

the varied sentence length and adept use of figures of speech make him a unique poet in the annals of contemporary Indian English poetry.

INITIAL INTERPRETATION OF `ECOLOGY':

The poem 'Ecology' is taken from A. K. Ramanujan's third volume of poetry, 'Second Sight', (1986). The poem focuses on familial relations. The son in the poem is loyally devoted to his mother. He is angry at the trees that give his mother migraine, a very bad kind of headache. The Red Champak trees in the poem have

.... burst into flower and given Mother
her first blinding
migraine of the season. (CP. 124)

The fragrance of the pollen of the flower of the Red Champak tree is heavy and suffocating as the yellow pollen spread everywhere. The son wants to cut down those trees but his mother refuses on the ground that they are seeded by passing birds to give her gods and her daughters and grand children basketful of annual flowers. The mother never allow the tree to be cut for it is

a flowering tree
almost as old as her (CP. 124)

The mother, son, cousins all appear in the poem and a conflict between the two generations is presented in the sentimental attachment of mother to the "flowering tree" and the poet's detached clinical attitude to it.

WORD LENGTH :

A word is a single meaningful element of speech or writing which can stand alone as a complete utterance separated by spaces in written languages and by pause in speech. The length of the word is observed by measuring the number of letters used in a word. The following statistics indicates the number of letters in each succeeding word in the poem.

Word length:

9 3 2 3 3 4 7 1 4 4 6 1 5 6 5 4 2 5 3 6 4 4 1 5 7 3
3 3 2 1 4 2 6 4 1 4 2 1 8 5 3 6 2 3 3 7 2 3 7 10 2 4
1 4 3 3 5 2 5 7 2 2 5

Statistic 1:

**Frequency Distribution of Word Length in
“Breaded Fish”**

Valid	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
1	6	9.8	9.8
2	11	18.0	18.0
3	13	21.3	21.3
4	10	16.4	16.4
5	8	13.1	13.1
6	6	9.8	9.8
7	5	8.2	8.2
8	1	1.6	1.6
9	1	1.6	1.6
10	1	1.6	1.6
Total	61	100	100

Statistics 2:

**Center Value and Variation of Word Length in
“The Striders”**

N	Valid	47
	Missing	0
Mean		4.43
Std. Error Of Mean		.358
Median		4
Mode		3^a
Std. Deviation		2.456
Variance		6.032
Skewness		1.064
Std. Error Of Skewness		.347
Kurtosis		.569
Std. Error Of Kurtosis		.681
Range		10
Minimum		1
Maximum		11
Sum		208

INTERPRETATION:

1. The stylo-statistical analysis of word length of the poem ‘Ecology’ reveals that mean, median and mode of word length are 4.51, 4 and 3 respectively.
2. The variations in word length are depicted by Standard Deviation and Variance as 2.437 and 5.940 respectively.

3. The important pattern of frequency distribution of word length is the range from 3 to 5 word length.

SIGNIFICANCE OF WORD LENGTH:

The stylo-statistical analysis of word length in 'Ecology' indicates that Ramanujan usually prefers short, simple, enigmatic and cryptic words to express his emotions. The word length effect arises because short words are more frequently rehearsed than the long words. The length of the words tends to have inverse relationship to their frequency. In the poem 'Ecology' frequent words are shorter and rare words tend to be longer. It indicates that Ramanujan has a peculiar mastery over words. His short words expresses his urgency and sharpness of thought.

WORD CLASSES:

Ramanujan exclusively uses miscellaneous substantive expressions, he is quite particular in the use of words while sharing his emotions; he follows the fine confinement of open class words and closed class words. The choice of words play a significant role in creating meaning and helps readers understand the message the poet tries to pass on.

Frequency of open class words in "Ecology"

Open class words	Frequency
Nouns	44
Adjectives	19
Verbs	13
Adverbs	2

The above statistics shows that Ramanujan uses maximum number of nouns to make his poem object oriented. The highest score is for the frequencies of nouns. The frequencies of adjectives and verbs are closely associated with the uniformity of theme. Frequency of adverb is quite rare.

Frequency of closed class words in "Ecology"

Closed class words	Frequency
Determiners	10
Pronouns	14
Prepositions	13
Conjunctions	4
Auxiliaries	4
Enumerators	4
Interjections	0

The frequency table of closed class words in “Ecology” indicates that the poet uses personal pronouns in large number and makes the poem subjective. Also there is a high frequency of prepositions indicating the formal style of the poet. High frequencies of determiners and pronouns do overlap in the poem. Conjunctions function as introductory linking words that introduce phrases as well as clauses. The high frequencies of determiners, pronouns and prepositions show Ramanujan’s skill in using words with precise specification. Conjunctions, enumerators and auxiliaries appear equal in number in the poem. The closed class words function as markers to the structure of a sentence. The mixing of open class words and closed class words occupy a certain slots in sentences and set up a frame for interpreting the interrelationships between the poet, his mother, cousins and the tree and its emotional association with mother.

SENTENCE LENGTH:

All the facts and emotions are intermingled with a single sentence in the poem. The poem is loaded with different clauses and phrases, and are joined together precisely and appropriately. There are one fifty five words all in all. Though the sentence is lengthy it doesn’t escape from the subject instead it creates a lilt, harmony in the poem. The poet successfully conveys his ideas, thoughts and feelings.

FIGURES OF SPEECH:

Figures of speech is the use of a word or phrase which transcend its literal interpretation. It often provides emphasis, freshness of expression or clarity; sometimes it adds to ambiguity of the meaning.

- A flowering tree almost as old as her. (Simile)
The line suggests a lifelong association of mother to the tree.
- The flowering of the tree (Metaphor) .
The flowering of the tree is compared to mothering in Indian context.
- Black pillared house whose walls, had ears and eyes.
(Personification)

The wall is an inanimate thing but it is suggested as it has all the human feelings and senses.

Black pillared house whose walls,
had ears and eyes,
scales, smells, bone-creaks, nightly
visiting voices and were porous
like us (Simile).

The activities in black pillared house are compared to the activities of men.

The figures of speech Ramanujan employs here justify the theme and image oriented nature of the poem.

CONCLUSIONS:

A. K. Ramanujan is quite particular in his use of words while sharing his emotions. He tends to use minimum words. There is a fine blending of open class words and closed class words. Ecology is a poem which could be read as one single sentence. However, each stanza has one particular idea. There is a casual connection between the ideas and they flow from one stanza to the next. Also there is a genuine and potent expression of Indian sensibility. Ramanujan observes the inalienable link between life and art and tries to touch the life into art. Ramanujan uses English language with ease. He, as the H. C. Harrex observes used language with a surgeon-like precision, realising that the secret of life is more likely to be found in the smallest rather than the most comic particles of existence. (Harrex 155).

REFERENCES:

1. Harrex, C. (1980). "Small Scale Reflections on Indian English Language Poetry".
A Journal of Indian Writing in English. 8, 1-2 (Jan-1980)
2. Leech, Geoffrey & Short, M., (1981) : *Style in fiction* London: Longman.
3. Naik, M. K. (1982) : *History of Indian English Literature* New Delhi : Sahitya Academy.
4. Ramanujan A. K. (1995) *The Collected Poems of A. K. Ramanujan* (ed) Vinay Dharwadkar New Delhi: OUP.
5. Taylor, T. J. (1980) *Linguistic Theory and Structural Stylistics*. Oxford : Pergaman Press.
6. Walsh, William, (1992) "Small observations on a Large subjects ", *Aspects of Indian Writing in English*, ed. M. K. Naik. Madras : MacMillian.