

**Dialect Use in the English literary Text
Between Language Variability and Levels of Formality**

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In fact the idea of this paper stems from a perpetual misunderstanding between linguistic and literary researchers. While the former claim that they protect language from lies, lies that are all in all fiction, fiction that is nothing but magic spell. In linguistics, language is exact and intact; language is good and good is mind. The latter protest that they serve language with beauty, beauty that is all in all truth, truth that is nothing but knowledge, knowledge is power. In literature language is aesthetically communicated and communication is civilization. We are left in doubt as to be rational or sympathetic, logic or flexible while there are urgent needs to decide the note on which the string will vibrate.

The Interaction of linguistics and literature

Such bizarre misunderstanding may be easily avoided if a slight reflection is set on it as to think that literature, before being given any sophisticated definition, is simply a means of communication where language remains essentially primordial and exceptionally particular. Then what is literary language which brings together researchers of art and linguistics in a mutual collaboration? What is the corpus of such language that causes an interweaving interaction between a scientific and artistic domain?

Jakobson (1960:377) insightfully insists on a common interest from both literary and linguistic critics for each other when he says:

A linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and un-conversant with linguistic methods are equally flagrant anachronisms.(Oxford University press www.oup.com/elt Literature and Language Teaching)

The interaction between linguistics and literature has many implications that are habitually neglected and easily causing an electrifying tension that Lyons lessens from its length by asserting that:

Linguists are more assertive as they used to be about the scientific status of their own discipline, and they are more careful in their formulation of the principle of the priority of spoken language. (1981:296).

Therefore, linguistic critics and others in sociolinguistics and dialectology increasingly inquire about the literary language and develop investigations that help to explore an open-endless area renewed and enriched by innovative techniques to approach literature to be considered as:

The privileged realm in which language is exercised, clarified and modified....from myth to oral literature, from folklore and the epic to the realist novel and modern poetry, literary language offers a diversity. (Kristeva 1989:287).

The Literary Language

The literary language is then distinct in being diverse and realistic in mixing between different varieties of the standard and dialect and beautiful in associating rules of rhetoric because speech is an essential feature in the literary discourse and though the literary language is almost entirely written it “will not be appreciated in depth if we stop thinking about speech altogether” (R.Chapman 1989:35).

Literature is a normal transfer of information where the writer is supposed to send messages referred to a person called character, written in a specific language related to his cultural background, gender, age and his belonging. Consequently not only does literature include a variety of subject matters but conceivable varieties of language are attributed to it as well as which makes of the literary text almost the only context where different varieties of language are moulded aiming at representing a human experience and consequently different styles and levels of formality are required. This interesting awareness towards dialect use in literature springs from late modern studies in sociolinguistics and dialectology which

consider the standard in its origin “a dialect, and in the view of some linguists, can and should be called the standard dialect” (Arthur 1996:267).

This is why the writer is a messenger revealed about the human nature and responsible to trace it out in a context multi faceted that gives too important a splendour to visualize with admiration. Macaulay (1993:111) says:

There is nothing more complex, structured, and revealing of our human nature than ordinary talk, and nothing more interesting than learning to notice it and to understand it as an object of beauty.

The literary text is an authentic text where real language is used in a context and the reader is put backwards and forwards, in and across and outside the text to understand its meaning which makes the nature of its communication problematic indeed. It provides examples of language resources that represent different thoughts, cultures, traditions, and modes of living. And the difference is clearly noticed from the lexis the writer uses that engenders many social and cultural associations simply because cultures do not associate symbolic interpretations the same way.

The writer –the novelist in particular- exposed to a diction suiting special characters in terms of social position, cultural background and in the case of England the class he belongs to. While it is very good to master the rhetoric of language and all its functional aesthetics in the literary text, it is quite odd and unfair to make a shepherd who has never been in school in his life speak the English that an educated character may use.

Early Times of Dialect Use

The function of dialect in literature has been rooted in the history of English literature centuries before since its beginning as asserted by Riley:

Dialect is in literature and has been there since the beginning of all written thought and utterance...dialect means something more than mere rude form of speech

and action ...it is simply, purely natural and human.
([www.burstnet](http://www.burstnet.com/ads/Dialect%20in%20Literature). Com/ads Dialect in Literature)

Geoffrey Chaucer adapts many forms that are Kentish in his poetry, besides some dialectal words that are not from his own dialect in his work entitled "The Reeve's Tale".

Above and beyond dialect has been found in Shakespeare's plays and he has been excellent and unique in bringing different varieties together in one text, as he did in *Henry V*, act III Scene 2.

Dialect has remarkably been used by the epic poet Milton who recognizes the delicacy and importance of speech understanding its primacy when he turned from Latin to English verse: Hail, native language, half unpronounced, slide through my infant lips" (R.Chapman 1989:35).

Dialect Use in the 19th c. Literature

Previously dialect was used in literature fulfilling specific purposes like comedy or laughter only exploited by low characters generally fat or uneducated or miser or drunkard or any status that makes him in a comic and eccentric effect. Nowadays, writers are more and more aware in presenting skillfully the registers and the different varieties of speech in a standard text; accordingly function of dialect has been thoroughly investigated and applied by novelists of the 19th century in the novel designed for its "artistically organized systems for bringing different languages in contact with one another" (R.Carter et al 1989:33)

Dialect writers differ in its use either to fit with the sociolinguistic patterns as age, gender, style, social context, and cultural background; or to depict various provincial and rustic characters supporting the movement of the 19th c. era which is realism.

First of all Walter Scott in his historical novel *Heart of Midlothian* sticks to those Scottish forms where he opposes the Scots to the English in their culture, systems of justice, urban cities and dialects. In fact the Scottish dialect speakers still say moose for mouse and doon for down which means that languages and dialects have either a unifying or separatist function because:

They help to divide the world into 'us' who speak alike and 'them' differently, it is this attitude that helps to

explain the resistance to change in regional dialect.
(Macaulay 1993:133)

The function of dialect has been strengthened with Emily Bronte who uses the Yorkshire dialect in *Wuthering Heights* and Mrs Gaskell who insists on her native way of speech introducing the Lancashire variety in her novels and for fear of unintelligibility she offers some aiding helps to understand it in terms of grammar and pronunciation.

Great deal of dialect use is submitted to Charles Dickens who is a popular culture using Cockney in his novels to represent both uneducated and characters dialect spelling belonging to the upper class as well as; and this variety is a major element in the English of London.

In addition to Marian Evans who publishes her works under a male pseudonym George uses the Derbyshire- her childhood dialect- which belongs to Warwickshire around the Midland area in almost all her first four novels: *Adam Bede*, *Scenes from Clerical Life*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and *Silas Marner*.

The table below shows the different writers of dialect and the geographical areas to which these varieties belong.

the writer	the dialectal variety	the geographical area
E.Bronte	Yorkshire	north,west and south Yorkshire,around Sheffield,Leeds,and Cumbria
Mrs Gaskell	Lancashire	Manchester east, Cumbria north, Liverpool south
C.Dickens	Cockney	a working class dialect in London
G.Eliot	Derbyshire	also Warwickshire in Stratford upon Avon
T.Hardy	Dorset	south England near to the Isle of Wight.

Table nr1 Areas of Dialects by the Victorian Novelists

Over and above the Victorian poet and novelist Thomas Hardy who is famous for his writing of Wessex novels introducing the Dorset variety which he sees “not as a deviation from the national standard, but as a survival of the ancient speech of Saxon Wessex” (Tom Mc Arthur 1995:425) .

There are other exponents of dialect writing in England such as Bernard Shaw especially for low characters in many of his plays and seriously examined the social problem of dialect in *Pygmalion* plus D.H.Lawrence and his use of the Nottinghamshire in *Sons and Lovers* to represent the Midland dialect of miners who do not speak the English of London.

Conclusion

The main points demonstrated in this paper are as follows:

- 1- There is a lesser misunderstanding between literary men and linguists by exploring language resources out from the literary text.
- 2- There is a prior importance to the language based approach than the stylistic approach to read and interpret the sense of the literary text
- 3- It is unreasonable that a non native speaker appreciates the sense of literary text as the native one unless he possesses a command of different levels of language organization.
- 4- The literary text is more complex than wrongly thought before for it engenders different subject matters, cultures and languages
- 5- the literary language offers a diversity which gives such privilege to literature
- 6- Dialect use in literature is not a minimization from its value but rather an enhancement to it.
- 7- Dialect speakers in the novel give a clearer idea about the real personality of the character and his belonging.
- 8- The hero in the novel can be a dialect speaker as does Dickens with Stephen Blackpool in *Hard Times* and G.Eliot with Hettie in *Adam Bede*.
- 9- A text that is authentic is that which uses real language associating different varieties which mark the ordinary speech affecting our emotion and character.
- 10- Sociolinguists and stylisticians develop their perspective about the function of dialect in literature to free it from its traditional narrowed

scale by setting the rules and laws of language in noting, collecting and methodizing them.

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