

Stylistics in the Southeast Asian ESL or EFL Classroom: A Collection of Potential Teaching Activities

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Abstract

For the past few decades, stylistics has emerged as a discipline that encompasses both literary criticism and linguistics. The integration of both disciplines opened many opportunities for English literature and language teachers to get creative in their teaching—by introducing the stylistic approach in their classrooms. However, in a typical Southeast Asian classroom (Sadiman, 2004), several problems such as the lack of resources, scarcity of quality teaching strategies, time deficiency, as well as the unfamiliarity of authentic assessment seem to impede the utilization of the mentioned approach or other learner-centered approaches. Moreover, only limited literature on the analysis, let alone the teaching, of the ballad adopting the stylistic method are evident. This paper could be described as an attempt to address these problems. It provides a fresh perspective in analyzing a well-known 18th century British ballad, “The Charge of the Light Brigade,” in the syntactical/structural, lexical, and phonological aspects of stylistics. It also attempts to explain the evident theme of warfare based on textual evidences in the aforementioned aspects. In addition, it contributes to the existing literature advocating the stylistic approach in both the teaching of language and literature. Furthermore, it provides several potential comprehensive activities that take into account the challenging setting and situation of Southeast Asian English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, especially at the tertiary level. This paper also has implications on classrooms that experience the same aforementioned challenges, and is not only limited to the Southeast Asian context.

Keywords: activities, ESL, EFL, lexis, phonology, syntax, tertiary

Introduction

It is apparent that Southeast Asian language classrooms tend to be more teacher-centered than student-centered (Renandya, Lim, Leong, & Jacobs, 2014). This could pose a problem, as the learning potential of the learners may not be maximized in a teacher-centered setting. Learner-centered practices stress higher-order thinking skills such as synthesizing, analyzing, and evaluating (Brookhart, 2010). Teachers who adopt these practices also train them to become more independent, creative, and active in learning, which may be mutually beneficial as teachers learn useful information to enhance their teaching while learning from their students. It can be observed that a lot of teachers in Southeast Asia prefer not to use the learner-centered approach (Renandya et al., 2014). Renandya et al. (2014) studied 212 English teachers in Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines and discovered that they are still moving toward learner-centered practices in the classroom. Moreover, results of the study showed that assessment practices in the aforementioned countries are traditional or exam-based. In another study by Pham and Renshaw (2013), results showed that Vietnamese classrooms were still predominantly teacher-centered, textbook -based, and routine-based.

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Some possible causes for the impediment of the full paradigm shift to learner-centered teaching would be (1) lack of time and skills, (2) the flawed relationship between assessment and teaching because teachers are pressured to produce exam results that do not measure communicative language use, (3) quantity and quality of materials, (4) diverse philosophies and views on instruction, as mentioned in the study by Renandya et al. (2014).

The needs of a typical Southeast Asian classroom (Sadiman, 2004) can be summarized as follows: (1) lack of resources, (2) lack of time, (3) lack of learner-centered strategies, (4) lack of authentic assessments, and (5) lack of teacher training and professional skills. In this paper, we aim to cater to these needs by starting with a stylistic analysis of one specific poem, “The Charge of the Light Brigade,” and then offering potential activities suitable for Southeast Asian language classrooms. The stylistic analysis contributes to the limited studies on “The Charge of the Light Brigade” by discovering the theme of the literary text through textual evidence. Based on the analysis we aim to provide educators with potential activities focusing on syntax, phonology, and lexis that will lead their language or literature learners to an interpretation of the ballad. These activities are not only time-efficient, resource-friendly, and easy to implement but also anchored on learner-centered philosophies. They are flexible and may be modified depending on the needs of the learners and teachers. Moreover, this paper suggests specific steps on how to implement activities that can help the learners develop an appreciation for poetry, history, and the English language, while also giving them an avenue to practice their language macro-skills in speaking, writing, reading, and listening.

In particular, this paper aims to answer the following questions: (1) What is the theme of “The Charge of the Light Brigade” based on syntactical, phonological, and lexical evidence from the poem itself? (2) How does the syntactical, phonological, and lexical evidence relate to the interpretation of the poem? (3) What potential stylistic activities in syntax, phonology, and lexis can educators utilize to teach learners to appreciate the beauty of literature and also language macro-skills such as speaking, writing, reading, and listening?

Before we present the analysis and teaching activities, we will discuss the relationship between language and literature, the nature of the stylistic approach, and the benefits of this approach on ESL/EFL literature and language classes.

The Relationship between Literature and Language

Literature and language are thoroughly intertwined (Amase, Tsavmbu, & Kaan, 2014). Literature is a tool for understanding language in different cultural and classroom contexts. Thus, it can aid in language development. When teachers facilitate a discussion of a certain literary text, the learners are provided with an avenue to practice the language, especially when they voice their opinions and share their insights in oral or written forms. This, in turn, enhances the language proficiency of the learners. Moreover, literature also helps in the learning of a language, as some texts may have been adapted from real life conversations and situations (Wang, 2010).

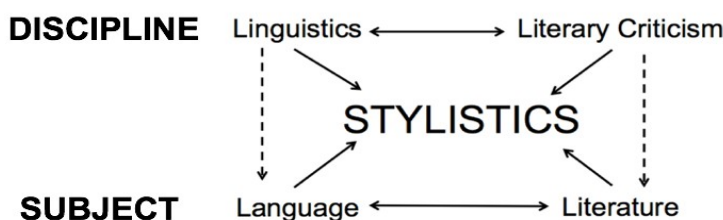


Figure 1. Grid of Relationships of Stylistics with Other Disciplines
(Philippine Normal University, 2013, p. 246)

Ludwig Wittgenstein (2010), an Austrian-British philosopher, once said that the limits of one's language means the limits of one's world. Language is an integral part of literature because it is not only used to communicate or express ideas orally and in written form, it also serves as an artistic medium for the literary piece (Chapman, 1973). It is important for one to understand that aside from entertaining, one of the goals of literature is to inform. Another is to persuade and stimulate the mind. It is with language that literary ideas are formed. Furthermore, the study of language in literature, or linguistics, is essential in literary criticism as it teaches learners to appreciate the literary text, its syntax, lexis, and phonology, and its relationship to the interpretation of the text. The analysis of these literary ideas using language, or linguistics, is part of what is known as stylistics, which is a combination of language and literature and a bridging discipline between linguistics and literary criticism (See Figure 1) (Philippine Normal University, 2013). Figure 1 illustrates their relationships to stylistics.

Stylistics and the Stylistic Approach

According to Leech (1969), stylistics is the study of the use of language in literature. Abdulqadir (2012) elaborates this by defining it as a study of a literary discourse from a linguistic orientation; it is an interdisciplinary subject (see Figure 1). In stylistics, one may focus on the syntactic, phonological, lexical, semantic, and graphological elements of style (Leech & Short, 1981). The elements mentioned earlier are important considerations in text analysis because they portray the range of senses expressed in a literary piece. They are integral to the stylistic analysis of the text as they provide readers a more objective way into the text, which may be beneficial as it complements the subjective analyses of the readers (Carter, 1982), which is typically found in a traditional literature classroom where the teacher assigns the learners a reading and after a while asks them comprehension questions at the literal, inferential, and evaluative levels. Teachers in the conventional literature classroom may also ask the them to identify the plot through a diagram. The subjective analyses pertain to the inferential and evaluative levels of questioning such as asking the author's purpose or the moral lesson of the story. Thus, the stylistic approach may help the readers read and think critically. Not only does it allow them to read between (inferential), and beyond (evaluative) the lines to comprehend the text, it encourages them to look at the text itself (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010).

Because of the potential advantages and the tested deficiencies of traditional poetry teaching, educators around the world attempt to formulate strategies and activities that revolve around stylistics (Ahmad, 2014; Akyel, 1995; Fakeye & Temitayo, 2013; Inyang, 2009; Jaafar, 2014). This is the stylistic approach, which is the investigation of how the resources of a language code can be put into use in the production of actual messages (Fakeye & Temitayo, 2013). In the stylistic approach, literature is considered a communicative discourse. The goal of this approach is to "decode meaning and structural features of literary texts by identifying linguistic patterns in the text" (Fakeye & Temitayo, 2013, p. 51). It is also with this approach that the author's choice of words and their functions are emphasized, along with the structure, deviation from norms, foregrounding, parallelism, grammatical patterns, and how they bring meaning to the text (Fakeye & Temitayo, 2013).

Benefits of the Stylistic Approach to ESL or EFL Literature Classes

The stylistic approach brings numerous benefits to the ESL or EFL classroom, particularly in literature classes. Thus, several educators choose to use this approach. Aside from encouraging learners to think critically, another rationale in adopting the stylistic approach in classroom instruction would be its effectiveness in teaching poetry. In Inyang's (2009) study, it was demonstrated that ESL learners exposed to the stylistics method performed significantly better in tests than those who were taught using the formalist approach. The assessment instrument used in Inyang's study is the Poetry in English Achievement Test (PEAT), which aims to determine "the achievement and retention ability of students in poetry" (p.84). It consists of 50 multiple-choice items and has

the KR-20 reliability coefficient of 0.75 (adequate). In another study by Ahmad (2014), apart from the very significant and positive differences between the groups taught using the formalist and stylistic approach in terms of their performance, both teachers and learners in different Saudi Arabian universities found the stylistic approach an enjoyable means to “enrich and energize the learning environment of an ESL classroom” (p.123). According to the results of Akyel’s (1995) study, student teachers in Turkey found that the stylistic approach of teaching poetry was an effective tool for preparing their lessons because it helped them gain confidence in reading and interpreting. Moreover, they felt that the lessons were successful due to the high level of participation in the classroom. Furthermore, Fakeye and Temitayo (2013) recommended that the stylistic approach be utilized in teaching various concepts in poetry upon discovering the significant positive effects of the approach on 138 ESL learners in six secondary schools in Africa. It can be suggested that the stylistic approach may be effective in teaching literature in Asian ESL (e.g., the Philippines and Singapore) in the perspectives of teacher and learners.

Although the stylistic approach seems to be more effective than formalism in teaching literature, especially poetry, it should not be a replacement for the formalist approach of teaching literature (Inyang, 2009). Instead, it may be used as a supplement to the traditional approach. However, teachers may opt to use the stylistic approach without the traditional method, as it has been done before (Inyang, 2009). With that in mind, it is evident that stylistic-based activities can improve the quality of poetry learning and teaching in the literature classroom.

Benefits of the Stylistic Approach to ESL or EFL Language Classes

For many years, stylisticians were grounded on the idea that literature is made out of language and claimed that their academic activity may be useful for struggling EFL learners (Gower, 1986; Watson & Zyngier, 2007). In fact, in Asian EFL countries such as China, the stylistic approach seems to be the trend in pedagogy research (Shi & Wang, 2013). Although there is literature demonstrating that the stylistic approach actually impedes language learning and several critics claim that literary reading has no direct role in language learning (Gower, 1986; Watson & Zyngier, 2007), a recent study by Fogal (2015) generally showed the following: (1) stylistics may be a tool for improving L2 performance, (2) stylistics contributes to language awareness, and (3) stylistics may be a tool for building academic skills beyond L2 acquisition. Devardhi and Nelson (2013), in their study, advocated the stylistic approach as a means to “develop language proficiency and highlight metalinguistic reflection” through “conscious attention to details and linguistic features” (p.1). Shi and Wang (2013) strongly agree with this and state that the stylistic approach might give learners command of how to use the language; however, they note that enriching their knowledge of stylistics is a prerequisite. They also pointed out that the stylistic approach highlights the road for English learning.

In addition, the stylistic approach would most likely be effective for Southeast Asian (e.g., Filipino, Cambodian, etc.) learners at the tertiary level because they possess higher comprehension and analytical skills than their primary and secondary counterparts according to Piaget’s stages of cognitivism. The researchers also believe that the approach is practical as it makes use of the text and focuses on analysis through communicative discourse, which also develops their communicative abilities (Punchard, 2002). By allowing learners to express their opinions and ideas, and to give their own interpretations of texts based on textual evidence in the classroom, the teacher can guide and indirectly, or directly, teach language skills (Punchard, 2002). In terms of pronunciation, the stylistic approach is effective since one component of the approach is the phonological aspect (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010). The teacher may constructively correct their pronunciation if needed.

Despite criticism of the stylistic approach and the justifiably and relatively weak representation of stylistics in the ESL and EFL contexts, it seems that the approach does have positive implications for ESL and EFL classrooms just as in the literature classroom (Hori, Tabata, & Itō, 2009).

Introduction and Summary of the Poem

This paper focuses on Alfred Tennyson's poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade." Unlike Tennyson's other works such as "St. Simeon Stylites" (1833), a dramatic monologue, and "Tears, Idle Tears" (1847), a blank-verse lyric poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (1854) is a narrative poem. The English-born Victorian poet wrote the ballad during the Crimean War when Britain entered the war in Crimea in an effort to defend Turkey from Russian expansion to preserve British access to eastern trade routes (Markovitz, 2013). The literary work is a response to the historical military called the Charge of the Light Brigade at the Battle of Balaclava—a result of the political drama between the British and the Russians. According to the historical record, due to miscommunication and tactical blunder, the Light Brigade or light cavalry was sent to the front lines against another artillery battery that is heavily equipped with firearm. Although the Brigade was not totally destroyed, it caused the loss of the British brigade and eventually paved the way for World War I as the balance of power in Europe was altered (Baugmart, 2002).

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

by: Alfred, Lord Tennyson

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>I.</p> <p>1 Half a league, half a league,
2 Half a league onward,
3 All in the valley of Death
4 Rode the six hundred.
5 "Forward, the Light Brigade!
6 Charge for the guns!" he said:
7 Into the valley of Death
8 Rode the six hundred.</p> <p>II.</p> <p>9 "Forward, the Light Brigade!"
10 Was there a man dismay'd?
11 Not tho' the soldier knew
12 Some one had blunder'd:
13 Theirs not to make reply,
14 Theirs not to reason why,
15 Theirs but to do and die:
16 Into the valley of Death
17 Rode the six hundred.</p> <p>III.</p> <p>18 Cannon to right of them,
19 Cannon to left of them,
20 Cannon in front of them
21 Volley'd and thunder'd;
22 Storm'd at with shot and shell,
23 Boldly they rode and well,
24 Into the jaws of Death,
25 Into the mouth of Hell
26 Rode the six hundred.</p> | <p>IV.</p> <p>27 Flash'd all their sabres bare,
28 Flash'd as they turn'd in air
29 Sabring the gunners there,
30 Charging an army, while
31 All the world wonder'd:
32 Plunged in the battery-smoke
33 Right thro' the line they broke;
34 Cossack and Russian
35 Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
36 Shatter'd and sunder'd.
37 Then they rode back, but not
38 Not the six hundred.</p> <p>V.</p> <p>39 Cannon to right of them,
40 Cannon to left of them,
41 Cannon behind them
42 Volley'd and thunder'd;
43 Storm'd at with shot and shell,
44 While horse and hero fell,
45 They that had fought so well
46 Came thro' the jaws of Death,
47 Back from the mouth of Hell,
48 All that was left of them,
49 Left of six hundred.</p> <p>VI.</p> <p>50 When can their glory fade?
51 the wild charge they made!
52 All the world wonder'd.
53 Honor the charge they made!
54 Honor the Light Brigade,
55 Noble six hundred!</p> |
|---|--|

Interpretation and Stylistic Analysis

The following section is divided into four parts: (1) structural/syntactical analysis of the poem, (2) lexical analysis of the poem, (3) phonological analysis of the poem, and (4) theme analysis of the poem. It aims to provide evidence to lead readers to their own interpretations of the ballad.

Structural/Syntactical Analysis of the Poem

Every aspect of the text has to be taken into consideration if one wishes to understand a literary piece from the stylistic point of view. This includes the structural and aesthetic elements of the text. After looking into the structural and syntactical analysis of the literary text, it appears that the poem is stanzaic and is divided into six stanzas. However, the number of lines in each stanza varies and is not consistent throughout the poem. This “inconsistency” may be in parallel with the inconsistencies of a war. Also, with careful observation, you will notice that the stanzas are episodic, meaning that each stanza highlights an event in the narrative poem. In addition, it appears that there are only several instances where there is indentation in the poem, and these indentions are not the ones we use in prose. Also, the lines are justified to the left. What does this imply? Along with the parallel syntactic structure of certain lines such as line 13 to 15 of the poem, the almost symmetric alignment of the poem could suggest that the Light Brigade is very orderly and acts as one unit with one purpose. It could also imply the discipline the soldiers had. From a certain vantage point, it may actually look like the formation of the brigade. According to Turner (2003), a brigade is composed of three to six battalions each. The poem has six stanzas, which could represent the six battalions that were sent to battle.

It also appears the certain phrases in the poem are repetitive. In lines 1 and 2 of the poem, we can see that the phrase “half a league” is repeated three times. This could suggest a progression, which emphasized the distance the army had to travel to battle the Russians.

Furthermore, the repetition of the syntactic structure [“cannon” + prepositional phrase (PP)] in lines 18 to 20 and 39 to 41, along with the parallel syntax of lines 24 and 25 [“into the” + noun phrase (NP) + prepositional phrase (PP)] can possibly emphasize of the details of the battlefield— the sound of cannons everywhere, indicating chaos and uncertainty, as well as the repetitive gunshots and seemingly never-ending deaths.

Moreover, the poem could also stress the intensity of war and the reality of death. It also appears that the noun phrase “six hundred” appears in the last lines of all stanzas of the literary text. Perhaps the author wanted to emphasize the 600 cavalymen who blindly obeyed their senior officers and fell victim to death due to the officers’ blunder.

Lexical Analysis of the Poem

The lexis or vocabulary should also be considered in the interpretation of a poem. The choice of words portrays an image that can be beneficial for text analysis. From the title of the poem, as well as certain lines, the “light” in “The Charge of the Light Brigade” may mean two different things. It could mean the type of arms they carry; it could also be associated with the cheerfulness and courage the troops possessed on the battlefield. Aside from that, in lines 27, 29, and 35, one can see the stark contrast between the sabers of the British and the guns and cannons of the Russians from the choice of words: “stroke” and “flashed” for the sabers and “shot” and “shell” for the guns and cannons. If you notice, the words “volleyed” and “thundered” are more likely associated with the bullets and guns of the enemy since “volley” denotes the projectile of arrows or bullets and “thunder” is linked to a loud and booming sound. In addition, from the contrast, we can see the apparent shift of meaning of the guns. In line 6, “guns” suggest a challenge or call to war. However, as the poem progresses, the guns have another signifier – “cannons,” which reflect the reality of death in battle. The figurative choice of words such as personification is noticeable in the poem. The author, in “Valley of Death” in lines 3, 7, and 16, gave “Death” jaws in lines 24 and 46 of the ballad. This most likely seemed like a reference to a powerful lion because an encounter with one would mean immediate death. In addition, “Death” is also a personification of the “Grim Reaper,” a phrase that first appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1847, seven years before Lord Tennyson wrote the ballad. Moreover, from the literary text, we can infer that the personal pronoun “he” in line

6 of the ballad must pertain to someone of great authority – someone great enough to command the infantry in battle – the general. What is the antecedent of the objective personal pronoun “them,” which was repeated three times in lines 18 to 20? Based on textual evidence such as the phrase “six hundred” found in lines 8, 17, 26, 38, 49, and 55 of the poem, one can deduce that “them” refers to the cavalry or the Light Brigade.

Phonological Analysis of the Poem

Aside from the structure, phonological elements such as rhyme, assonance, and alliteration are language patterns that contribute to the total effect and imagery of the poetry (Chapman, 1973). These patterns are integral to the analysis and representation of the text. If the patterns change, the representation changes with it (Widdowson, 1992). “The Charge of the Light Brigade” is filled with phonological patterns and evidence as mentioned above. In line 22 and 43, the alliteration of the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative /sh/ is evident and somehow paints the imagery of bullets shooting; one can almost hear the bullets leaving the barrels. The author may have purposefully chosen the words since both “shot” and “shell” are words related to bullets. Also in line 35, the alliteration of the voiceless alveolar grooved fricative /s/ is apparent in the compound word “saber-stroke.” This alliterative pattern suggests the swishing sound of the blade as it cuts through the air. In addition, along with the consonant sounds /s/, /t/, and /r/, the high-mid back rounded vowel /o/ followed by the voiceless velar plosive /k/ reflects the fast and abrupt striking of the blade. An example of this in the poem is the word “stroke” in line 35, where the sounds /s/, /t/, and /r/ are followed by an /o/ and /k/ sound. The /o/ and /k/ sound is also found in “smoke” and “broke” in lines 32 and 33, respectively.

Throughout the poem, it seems that the voiced alveolar-dental stop /d/ is also evident, especially at the end of the line. An example would be at lines 50-55 where all the last letters have the sound /d/. Evidence of the consonant /d/ can also be found in words such as “death” in line 24, “dismayed” in line 10, and “shattered” in line 36. In line 31, the consonance of the alveo-dental /d/ is present in the clause “All the world wondered,” while in line 15, the alliteration of /d/ is evident in the words “do” and “die.” This phonological evidence could reflect the distant blasting of cannons.

Another phonetic feature evident in this poem, aside from alliteration and consonance, is the rhyme. It appears that the rhyme is irregular, rhyming couplets (lines 32 and 33) and triplets (lines 27-29) are identified throughout the text. Slant rhymes such as the words “blundered” and “hundred” of lines 4 and 8 in stanza 1 were also identified. The unruliness and irregularity of the rhyme somehow signal the chaotic nature of the people on the battlefield and, of course, the aftermath. With regard to rhythm, the ballad is dactylic. In other words, most feet in the poem begin with a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables. Evidence of this can be found even at the beginning of the poem. “Half a league, half a league” located in line 1 is dactylic in nature since “half” is stressed while “a” and “league” are not. Other evidence can be found in line 16: “into the valley of death.” Two dactylic feet are evident in the line: “IN-to the” and “VAL-ley of” – the capitalized letters being stressed. From the dactylic feet spotted throughout the poem, one can almost hear the beating of the drums, the marching of the soldiers, or even the percussive and echoing sound of the horse hooves. In lines 18-20, one might even hear the loud and then diminishing sound of the cannons: “CAN-non to the right of them” (line 18).

Theme Analysis of the Poem

From the textual evidence in syntax, lexis, and phonology, the theme of warfare is evident. Alfred Tennyson may be trying to show the readers that war can have disastrous and catastrophic consequences. From the phonological sounds to the choice of words, the author indirectly points out the realities of war. Also, with the choice of negative words as “Death,” “shot,” “storm’d” and positive words such as “noble,” “glory” and “hero,” the author might also be trying to emphasize the bilateral nature of war. Some people may perceive war as something related to confusion, bloodshed, and terror; while other people might look at war as something honorable, valiant, heroic, or even exciting. Furthermore, the author may have also depicted the following: (1) contrast

between mortality and immortality, (2) deaths of several soldiers, and (3) immortality of the courage and valiance of the noble soldiers who, without question, have fought honorably in “The Charge of the Light Brigade.”

Teaching Activities

In the following section, potential stylistic classroom activities in syntax, phonology, and lexis are given to guide teachers so that they can help literature learners appreciate the text more and language learners to enhance their skills in English. The activities are learner-centered and do not only focus on the reading and identification of plot events as in the traditional approach; they also consider the exchange of ideas and opinions, linguistic analysis, and active participation. Critical reading and analysis of the ballad is needed to succeed in the following activities.

Generally, there are five potential activities that correspond to the aforementioned stylistic evidence: (1) Oral reading and summarizing the poem, (2) structural/syntactical analysis of the poem, (3) lexical analysis of the poem, (4) phonological analysis of the poem, and (5) theme analysis of the poem. Under lexical analysis, there are two smaller activities – phrase structural analysis and pronominal analysis while under phonological analysis, there are three mini-activities – alliteration and consonance, rhythm patterns, and stress patterns.

These activities can aid the teacher in facilitating discussion of the poem and are based on the aforementioned analysis of syntactical, phonological, and lexical evidence found in the ballad “Charge of the Light Brigade.” The following activities are primarily designed for Southeast Asian ESL and EFL learners, particularly those at the tertiary level. However, they can also be adapted to address the needs of native speakers of English in the higher elementary to secondary grades, since they are assumed to be more adept in English language use than ESL learners (Stricker, 2002).

Activity 1: Oral Reading and Summarizing the Poem

The teacher gives copies of the poem to the learners. The teacher introduces the ballad, saying that it is one kind of poetry. The teacher gives different examples of poetry such as the haiku, sonnet, etc. and continues with the activity.

The teacher can assess how they interpret the ballad by dividing them into six groups and initially assigning each group with a stanza in the poem, which is given to them on a sheet of paper. The activity would be more effective if the six groups were arranged in a circle. After each group has read their first stanza aloud, the teacher instructs the groups to give their stanza to another group. In other words, the papers containing the stanzas should be passed clock-wise (e.g., Group 1 would pass their paper to Group 2, Group 2 to Group 3, etc.). When the paper containing the stanza reaches the home group, the teacher asks a representative from each group to present their stanza by summarizing and then sharing their group’s interpretation. Then, as a synthesis activity, the teacher can ask questions like: How does each group’s interpretation of their respective stanzas contribute to the overall interpretation of the poem? Does this group’s interpretation differ from how you interpret it? What makes it differ from your interpretation? What textual evidence in the poem contributes to your interpretation of the poem?

The teacher can then instruct learners to get a sheet of paper and list clues and textual evidence from the series of activities. The teacher tells them to hold onto the paper for the duration of the analysis.

Activity 2: Structural/Syntactical Analysis of the Poem

Based on the structural/syntactical analysis done in the earlier parts of this paper, the teacher guides the learners into deducing a possible image of the poem. The teacher facilitates a discussion and may ask learners the following questions: If you try to squint your eyes, look at the poem from afar, or rotate the piece, what do you see? (to elicit the six-stanza-six-battalion relationship discussed earlier) Did you notice the figure of the overall structure of the ballad? How does the alignment of the poem affect your interpretation of the ballad? What does this formation suggest about “Charge of the Light Brigade”? (to elicit the image of orderliness and discipline of

the soldiers marching as discussed) What words or phrases repeat throughout the poem? What does this imply? (to elicit the repetition of the gun sounds, etc.)

Activity 3: Lexical Analysis of the Poem

Vocabulary Analysis

Using the same groupings as in activity 1, the teacher divides the class into six groups. After dividing them, they give each group a piece of paper and they write the word “light” on the board. Then, the teacher instructs learners to write as many synonyms or related word phrases/definitions to the word “light” within one minute. After one minute, the teacher calls on each representative of the group and asks them to say their words as they fill in the table (see Figure 2). The group with the most correct words/definitions wins. In the case below, the winners are group 6. Another variation of this activity may be done with the word “death.”

LIGHT					
Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
sun not heavy feather-like	no darkness courage good	happy good sun	stars moon not heavy	happy sun good	carefree starry stars cheerful

Figure 2. Example Table for Vocabulary Analysis Activity (to be drawn by the teacher)

The teacher then continues the vocabulary activity by posting the following words in metacards on the board: volleyed, thundered, shot, shell, cannons, flashed, stroke, sabre, and plunged. The teacher posts the aforementioned words in random order and asks learners to categorize them into two categories: (1) gun and (2) sword. The teacher calls on volunteers to pick one metacard and post it around one of the words written with the result being a vocabulary word web.

After the activities, the teacher may ask the following questions: What do you think “light” means in the title? Why? Why was “death” given jaws? How are the words on the metacards (e.g., gun and sword) related to the word written on the board? Why did the author choose these specific words instead of ___? What is the importance of word choice in literature? How does it affect interpretation?

Pronominal Analysis

Considering that learners have an adequate background for the use of pronouns, the teacher can ask them to highlight all of the pronouns in the poem to help them identify who or what is being referred to in the ballad. The teacher may then instruct the learners to get another sheet of paper and to write down all of the pronouns; then, based on contextual evidence, the teacher asks learners to identify the antecedents of the pronouns by asking questions such as: What does he in line 6 refer to? What evidence in the text helped you arrive at that conclusion?

Activity 4: Phonological Analysis of the Poem

Alliteration and Consonance

The teacher can ask learners to identify at least one set of alliterative words and another set of words that show consonance. The teacher writes down the words on respective metacards and then posts these on the board. After that, they can instruct learners to sketch images that reflect what they feel or hear when they see the words. After a while, the teacher instructs them to post their artwork around the respective metacards. The teacher can

then ask: What image from the ones posted on the board struck you the most? How are the images reflected through alliteration or consonance in the poem? What effect does the alliterative /sh/ sound carry? What does the /sh/ sound reflect? How about the consonant /d/ sounds? What do you hear as you reread the poem?

Rhythmical Pattern: Rhyme Pattern

The teacher shows a stanza of the ballad. Using a light-colored marker or a highlighter, the teacher emphasizes the last word of each line with a circle or highlighting. The teacher can then ask the following questions: What do you notice about the words? Do they rhyme? Do they rhyme perfectly or not? From the rhymes, what could the author be implying? How do the imperfect slant rhymes relate to your interpretation of the poem (Charge of the Light Brigade)?

Rhythmical Pattern: Stress Pattern

The teacher can instruct learners to read the poem again. This time, the teacher can task them to tap the tables and stomp their feet, mimicking the war theme of the ballad, to reflect unstressed and stressed syllables. The teacher can ask the following questions: What effect does the activity have on the poem? How does it differ from the initial reading of the poem? What do you hear? What sounds can you associate or relate to the pattern of the beating? How does it contribute to the overall picture of the ballad?

Activity 5: Theme Analysis of the Poem

First, the teacher divides the class into four groups and tells the learners that they will all participate in a mini debate. The first two groups will be assigned the topic: “Does the poem depict war as something chaotic and bloody or brave and noble?.” The other two groups will be assigned: “Does the ballad emphasize mortality or immortality?.” The teacher tells them that they need to use evidence from the text, whether syntactical, lexical, or phonological to support their arguments.

After the activity, the teacher may instruct learners to sit in a circle. The teacher facilitates the culminating activity by asking the following questions: Based on the previous activities as well as the textual evidence written on your paper, what can you now say about the theme of the poem? What is the author trying to say in the ballad? Do you think that focusing on grammar, sounds, and vocabulary was useful in understanding the poem’s meaning and in helping you interpret it? How? Do you now appreciate language/linguistics in helping you interpret a text? Do you now appreciate literature for helping you improve reading, speaking, listening, and writing? How will you apply what you have learned in analyzing this ballad in the future?

Conclusion

Stylistics, a bridged discipline between linguistics and literary criticism, is an under-appreciated and misjudged tool for teaching both language and literature. Some teachers may deem it ineffective for teaching language since the nature of the stylistic approach is not language centered, but literature-interpretation centered. However, Ahmad (2014) suggests that poetry can be a great tool to improve the language skills of learners if language activities are integrated into the teaching of poetry. Literature teachers, on the other hand, may attribute its ineffectiveness to the complexity of the procedure and the implementation. Moreover, some learners may find the stylistic approach too technical or boring.

Nevertheless, some researchers have shown that this approach can enhance the development of language proficiency and contribute to language awareness aside from improving L2 performance (Devardhi & Nelson, 2013; Fogal, 2015). These researchers also highlighted that the stylistic approach may promote communication between the teacher and learners and may be used to indirectly teach the four macro-skills in language. The stylistic approach also seems to show positive results in literature classes (Akyel, 1995; Fakeye & Temitayo, 2013; Inyang, 2009).

Although the current study only focused on the ballad “The Charge of the Light Brigade,” a small representative of literature as a subject, the study has several implications to ESL and EFL language and literature classes. The stylistics-based activities suggested seem promising for Southeast Asian ESL and EFL language and literature classrooms for the following reasons: (1) it does not require many materials or a lot of space, (2) it may not be as time-consuming as other learner-centered activities, depending on a teacher’s pace, (3) it is predominantly learner-centered, and (4) it integrates authentic assessment (drawing, debate, etc.) into the actual lesson. The stylistics activities that the researchers recommended, took into consideration the deficiencies, or rather, challenges of a typical Southeast Asian classroom such as that of the Philippines. This paper offers an alternative perspective of pedagogy for ESL and EFL classrooms.

In summary, based on the aforementioned discussion, analysis, and activities, it is apparent that the stylistic approach has great potential in both literature and language classes, especially at the tertiary level; first, because it teaches learners how to appreciate the beauty of literature through linguistics, and second, because it teaches them how to communicate with others by expressing their opinions and ideas while guiding them to read and listen to poetry critically.

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