

Lexical and phonological - two levels of stylistics: An analytical study of ted Hughes' poems

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Abstract

The objective of the research paper is to segment the poetic language of Ted Hughes in stylistic perspective. In addition, it intends to analyse the effective presence and functions of the two levels of stylistics: lexical and phonological. The lexical level analysis encompasses hyperbole and oxymoron, similarly, the phonological level analysis includes alliteration, assonance and consonance. The lexical level of stylistics deals with the meaning of the word and their enhancement of the context and the phonological level dissect and distinguish the different sounds produced at the time of articulation. "Japanese River Tales", "Creation of Fishes", "In the Dark Violin of the Valley", "Performance", and "The Morning before Christmas" are the select poems for the stylistics exploration.

Keywords: lexical, phonological, hyperbole, oxymoron, alliteration, assonance and consonance.

1. Introduction

Stylistics is defined as the study and interpretation of texts with respect to their linguistic and tonal style. Stylistics is a branch of linguistics which primarily concerns for the different choices, words, structures and ordering of sentences in a piece of writing. As a discipline of linguistics it is treated equally to literary criticism. Henry Widdowson, an authority in the field of applied linguistics and language teaching, suggests stylistics as the study of literary discourse from linguistic orientation, and he has also professed that stylistics occupies the middle place between linguistics and literary criticism. Banjo (1982) holds the view that stylistics is "the exhaustive study of the role of language in literary works ". Peter Barry has penned "stylisticians suggest new interpretation of literary works based on linguistic evidences" (210).

Lexical and phonological are some of two levels in stylistic analysis which interpret a literary text from a logical perspective. In lexical level, the words of the literary text is explored, similarly, in the phonological level, the literary text is dissected to distinguish the articulating sounds. Ted Hughes, a prolific and versatile British writer of 20th century, has composed numerous poems and has been hailed as the poet laureate. He has distinctly styled his poetry and they support in esteem stylistic interpretation.

2. Lexical - First Level of Stylistic Analysis

2.1. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a prevalent stylistic device in Hughes' composition. Hyperbole is defined as the exaggeration of facts, in addition, it is supposed to be either for serious or ironic or comic effect. In rhetoric, hyperbole is often called as auxesis, which is often used in poetry and oratory. It functions to evoke intense feelings and induces firm impression: as a rhetorical device, it does not help to mean literally.

"Japanese River Tales" portrays a gull with a feminine splendour. The poet pens that the talons of the bird have been lengthened by moonlight and the followings lines validate it: "Her talons / Lengthened by moonlight, numb open" "Japanese

River Tales" (36, 37). The talons of the sea bird are impossible to be enlarged but the poet asserts it as possible to add beauty to the context. The poetic line also marks the overstatement features used by the poet. The poetic work, "In the Dark Violin of the Valley" highlights the presence of hyperbole in "All the dead singing in the river / and the hills unconscious with listening" (19, 21); both the lines encompasses the hyperbolic features. It is incredible to imagine a dead one singing and the hills becoming unconscious by listening to music. But Ted Hughes has made the idea simple by employing hyperbole in the context. It has strengthened the style and technique of the poet.

In "Creation of Fishes" the poet has constructed several conversational exchanges between the Sun and the Moon, and in vice-versa. The poem fantastically portrays the Sun, the Moon and their huge families with regard to their unique features. The poetic lines, "The raving Sun fished up his loveliest daughter / He fished up his fieriest son who leaped / He fished up his quickest, youngest daughter - " "Creation of Fishes" (20, 23, 25) have brighten the hyperbolic idea. The poet says that the Sun fishes his loveliest daughter and fieriest son whom he has drowned in the river already as per the suggestion of the subtle Moon. It is impossible to witness such scenery in the reality but he has used his imaginative faculty to bring out his hyperbolic thought. By this the stylistic device, hyperbole makes explicit, the power of imagination is essential to create hyperbole.

2.2. Oxymoron

As a stylistic device, oxymoron is used to enlighten the style and texture of the literary work. Two contradicting ideas are put together to create an effect and it is defined as oxymoron. In general, oxymoron is structured as having an adjective which is followed by a noun to provide a coupled idea. The function of oxymoron can be traced in all the genres of literature but its function in poetry gains special mention because of its beautifying effect.

The poetic work, "Performance" portrays a damselfly, an insect, in a feminine narration and her splendour becomes transparent in the poet's description. The poet explicates that the damselfly appears with a "... inaudible shriek" "Performance" (2) which marks the presence of oxymoron. The words, 'inaudible' and 'shriek' are coupled to form oxymoron and they are marked as the best paradigm of oxymoron in Hughes' composition. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines 'inaudible' as that you cannot hear and 'shriek' as a loud high shout, on comparison the synonyms of both the words contradict each other and hence they are labelled as oxymoron. Furthermore, the poet divulges the beauty of the damselfly as a Dracula beauty in "Eyelash-delicate, Dracula beauty" "Performance" (6). The poetic line indicates 'Dracula beauty' as oxymoron in the context because 'Dracula' is a character in many horror films who is a vampire and vampires appear at night and suck the blood of their victims but whereas 'beauty' is the quality of being pleasing to the sense or to the mind. By juxtaposing the meaning of both the words, it is vivid that the words act as oxymoron in the context to add beauty to the poetic language.

In "The Morning before Christmas", the poet describe a fluvial landscape and varieties of fish: "A little is plenty. He goes back in the net" "The Morning before Christmas" (44) emphasizes the presence of oxymoron. The context portrays sensory scenery of fish-mating and getting back to the position. It describes that a little sperm is plenty and the poetic lines apparently validate the function of oxymoron. The quantifier, 'a little' contradicts the synonym of 'plenty' therefore, it acts as an oxymoron in the context.

The poem, "Creation of Fishes" vividly projects the conversations between the Earth and the Moon, in addition, to the description of their magnificent appearance and the alluring pictures of their children. The Moon, in her conversation with the Sun, tells that their children are too much, and in their flame-beauty they are too intolerably beautiful. The poetic line, "They are too intolerably beautiful" "Creation of Fishes" (11) throws light on oxymoron and its function. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the word, 'intolerable' means so bad or difficult that you cannot tolerate it; completely unacceptable, but the word, 'beauty' has the meaning as the quantity of being pleasing to the senses or to the mind. Comparatively, both the words give contradicting synonyms to the usage and prove themselves as oxymoron.

3. Phonology - Second Level of Stylistic Analysis

3.1. Alliteration

The term alliteration was derived from the Latin word, 'Latira' which means 'letters of alphabet'. It has a critical role in literature and, especially, in the genre of poetry because it renders musical rhythms and thus makes reading more appealing and absorbing. M. H. Abrams explicates alliteration in his *A Glossary to Literary Terms* as "the repetition of speech sounds in a sequence of nearby words; the term is usually applied only to consonants, and only when the recurrent sound occurs in a conspicuous position at the beginning of a word or a stressed syllable within a word" (17). The alliteration merely serves to connect the words together at the level of sounds.

The poetic line "At her hair, at her raiment" "Japanese River Tales" (5) describes a bird in a feminine tone and underlines the recurring letter 'h' as alliteration. The consonant sound /h/ repeats thrice in the line but the words 'her' and 'hair' only

appears nearby near to give a repeating sound and thus it produces a rhyming tone to embellish the context. Likewise, the poetic line "In her hair, in her ears, at her bare throat" "Japanese River Tales" (10) marks the consonant sound /h/ as alliteration. The poem picturizes the manner that snow covers the bird gradually and steadily. It covers her hair first, then her ears and then her throat. Reoccurrence of the consonant sound /t/ is apparent in "Grips through the full throat and locks" "Japanese River Tales" (34) and it gives a rhyming tone to the poetic line.

The poetic work, "In the Dark Violin of the Valley" deals with a music that is being played all the night, in addition, he has employed alliteration to produce a rhyming tone: "And soul together, and sewing soul" "In the Dark violin of the Valley" (3) marks /s/ as the reoccurring consonant sound of the context. In "Performance" the consonant sound /s/ repeats thrice in different contexts and designate it as a paradigm of alliteration. The poem portrays a Damselfly and also trees, his description of trees highlight the function of alliteration. "Late August. Some sycamore leaves" "Performance" (9) underlines the repeated consonant sound /s/ in the word 'some' and 'sycamore'. 'Some' acts as an adjective in Hughes' usage and rhymes with the word 'sycamore', a European tree of maple family. Similarly, the poetic lines, "So sulphurous and so frail, / Stepping so magnetically to her doom!" "Performance" (25, 26) bring the function of alliteration to light by differentiating the repeated consonant sound /s/. Both the poetic lines begin with the sound /s/ and also followed by the same consonant sound.

By portraying the beautiful scene that the poet has witnessed, the poetic work, "The Morning before Christmas" emphasizes alliteration in several places. "Great, lolling lilies of fungus, irreplaceable" "The Morning before Christmas" (16) marks the consonant sound /l/ repeated twice in the line to reinforce the stress. The poem pictures an aesthetic scene of lolling lilies and the word, 'lolling' acts as an adjective to 'lilies'. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary explicates lolling as to lie or stand or sit in a lazy or relaxed way. In "Rough grip and her head in an armpit", "The Morning before Christmas" (24) the repetitive consonant sound /h/ is explicit. The line explicates a hen fish which has got a feminine description by the poet and alliteration occurs in the description of the hen fish. The line "Squirt in a liquid loosening - spatter" "the Morning before Christmas" (29) emphasizes /l/ as alliteration and the rhyming sound delivers stressing tone to the content. Similarly, "Brindled black and crimson ..." "The Morning before Christmas" (40) denotes the consonant sound /b/ is being repeated to describe the idea of the poet. He illustrates a cock and it has tended him to employ alliteration to make the context more effective in its articulation. Continuously, the poet employs alliteration in his poetic works and the line "Four fish only, forty-odd thousand eggs" "The Morning before Christmas" (50) denotes the repeated consonant sound /f/ which produces a rhyming stress and beautifies the utterance. The poet discloses the availability of total numbers of fish and the number of eggs they lay. The sound /f/ repeats at the beginning of the line and marks the beauty of the rhyming stress. The poetic lines, "In natural times, those six, with make nine, / in five years, with great luck, might make nine." "The Morning before Christmas" (59, 60) highlight the repeatedly stressed sounds; the former line marks the sound /t/ as alliteration and the latter one highlights /m/ as a repeating

consonant sound. Both /t/ and /m/ have functioned as alliteration during the illustration of fish and their reproduction. In the poetic work, "Creation of Fishes", it is challenging to identify the function of the stylistic device, alliteration but still the consonant sound /h/ is explicit in "In agony from his hands, and plunged under." "Creation of Fishes" (24).

3.2. Assonance

Assonance is a stylistic device, defined as the repetition of the similar vowel sound in two or more words of a poetic line. It reinforces the meaning of the words because the meanings of the words are more important. Often, most of the poets employ assonance in their works sparingly and apparently. Being a prolific poet Ted Hughes has used assonance in many of his poetic works and it has nurtured the texture of his poetry.

"Japanese River Tales" carry assonance in several lines and the close similarity between them is the reoccurrence of the vowel /i/ in multiple contexts to complement the aesthetic appeal. The following extract is a quintessence of the reappearance of the vowel sound /i/ as assonance:

Into his grasping bed.
The lithe river rejoices all morning
In his juicy bride-the snow princess
Who peeped from clouds, and chose him, and descended

"Japanese River Tales" (17-20)

'Into his grasping' identify the presence of /i/ thrice and they produced a sort of rhyming sound. The repetition found in the context has increased the beauty of the stress and the poet has dexterously composed the poem. The line "The lithe river rejoices all morning" "Japanese River Tales" (18) marks the function of assonance in three words: 'river', 'rejoice' and 'morning'. The vowel sound /i/ has been repeated to produce a rhyming sound in the line. Besides, presence of /i/ as assonance is apparent in "In his juicy bride-the snow princess / who peeped from clouds, and chose him, and descended" "Japanese River Tales" (17-20); they highlight the similar rhyming sound. The bard evinces his aesthetic feel by versifying that the river rejoices all the morning and this has led him to employ assonance in the context.

Similarly, "With glittery laughter of immortals" "Japanese River Tales" (22) underlines the formation of repeated vowel sound /i/. The poet depicts the glittery laughter of the immortals which unfolds his aesthetic perception of nature and to unveil it in his poetic language he has employed assonance. The vowel sound /i/ reoccurs in the context to upgrade the texture and articulation of the lines "Lifts off the illusions. Lifts / The beauty from her skull. The socket, in fact," "Japanese River Tales" (30, 31). They brighten the function of the vowel sound /i/ as assonance at multiples times and it also displays the presence of aesthetic tone. The poet has employed assonance in his description of a sea bird with much aesthetic fragrance. The vowel /i/ appears in the words 'lift', and 'illusion', and also in the repeated word 'lift' in the poetic line, "Lift off the illusions. Lifts" "Japanese River Tales" (30). The line "The beauty from her skull. The sockets, in fact" "Japanese River Tales" (31) extraordinarily signify the retaining vowel sound /i/. The vowel sound /i/ which plays the role as assonance is highlighted in the words, 'beauty'. Although the word 'beauty' does not display the vowel sound /i/ explicitly, it is vindicated that beauty retains the vowel sound /i/. Phonetically, 'beauty' is transcribed as /bju:ti/ and it

underlines the presence of vowel sound /i/. Likewise, the word, 'socket' does not explicit the presence of vowel sound /i/ but the phonetic transcription of the word /sɒkɪt/ makes it transparent. The vowel /i/ is repeatedly found in the poem for multiple times.

Locating any other vowel sound in "Japanese River Tales" is challenging but it is tediously possible. "Lengthened by moonlight, numb open" "Japanese River Tales" (37) covertly sounds the vowel sound /ə/. The line depicts the way the talons of the bird is enlarged. The word, 'lengthened' is phonetically transcribed as /leŋθənd/ and 'open' is transcribed as /əʊpən/; a comparative perception throws light on the similar vowel sound /ə/. "Japanese River Tales" ends by identifying the vowel sound /i/ as assonance, and depicting that the sea bird flying above by spilling glitters from her grasp. The vowel sound /i/ appears twice in "A spill of glitters" "Japanese River Tales" (39) and it is apparent in 'spill' and 'glitters'; in addition, it enhances the rhyming tone present in between them.

"In the Dark Violin of the Valley" is rich in assonance and beautifully describes the music that echoed to the ears of the poet. Phonetically the word 'soul' and 'sew' have similar vowel sound /əu/ and they rhyme with each other: "And soul together, and sewing soul" "In the Dark Violin of the Valley" (3). In "And sky together and sky and earth" "In the Dark Violin of the Valley" (4) the word 'sky' appears twice and they produce same vowel sound /ai/ to rhyme in their context. The vowel /i/ is marked in "Together and sewing the river to the sea" "In the Dark Violin of the Valley" (5). In 'sewing' and 'river', the vowel /i/ is identified and highlighted as assonance. The vowel sound /i/ is commonly marked in Ted Hughes' poetry as assonance and it is underlined in multiple places of the poetic work, "In the Dark Violin of the Valley". The poetic line, "A lancing, fathoming music" "In the Dark Violin of the Valley" (7) brightens the presence of sound /i/ in the three words, almost toward the end of the respective words. The repetition of the vowel sound /i/ continuously in 'lancing', 'fathoming', and 'music' denote that the rhyming tone beautifies the context. The poet describes a lingering music that echoes in his ears; he says that the music comes and goes but it is a sharp music that has entertained him aesthetically. In "A coming and going music" "In the Dark Violin of the Valley" (12) the vowel sound /i/ is found in 'coming', 'going' and 'music' and it has upgraded the articulation. "Hunched over its river, the night attentive" "In the Dark Violin of the Valley" (16) marks the reoccurrence of /i/ sound thrice in the context. The following poetic lines justify that the vowel sound /i/ reoccurs multiple times in the poetic work:

Crying a violin in a grave
All the dead singing in the river
The river throbbing, the river the aorta
And the hills unconscious with listening.
"In the Dark Violin of the Valley" (18-21)

The vowel sound /i/ is located in 'crying', 'violin', and 'in' of the line "Crying a violin in a grave" "In the Dark Violin of the Valley" (18). This proves that repetition of the vowel sound beautifies poetic line. The poet passionately says that the dead is singing in the river, and it marks the repeated vowel sound /i/ in the poetic line "All the dead singing in the river" "In the Dark Violin of the Valley" (18). Similarly, /i/ is identified in

‘river’, ‘throbbing’, and ‘river’ of the line “The river throbbing, the river the aorta” “In the Dark Violin of the Valley” (20) to add the beauty of the utterance. The presence of the vowel sound /i/ is marked four times in the poetic line “And the hills unconscious with listening.” “In the Dark Violin of the Valley” (21). The repetition of the single vowel sound in the poetic line has contributed to the articulation of the rhyming tone. The line “Bowed over its valley, the river” “In the Dark Violin of the Valley” (17) denotes the appearance of vowel sound /ə/ in ‘over’ and ‘river’. The vowel /ə/ sounds gently in the context to form a pleasant rhyming tone. The poet has surprisingly employed /ai/ as assonance in “Crying a violin in a grave” “In the Dark Violin of the Valley” (18). And the poet describes the music which explicates the aesthetic scenery that has appeared to him and to describe it, he has made use of the stylistic device, assonance.

“Performance” of Ted Hughes is embellished with assonance in multiple contexts. The vowel /i/ is marked in “Eyelash-delicate, a Dracula beauty” “Performance” (6) at two stresses. “In her acetylene jewel.” “Performance” (7) marks the vowel sound /ə/ continuingly towards the words ‘acetylene’ and ‘jewel’. Similarly, the vowel sound /ɔ/ is identified in ‘Robin’, ‘song’ and ‘bronze’ of the line “Robin song bronze-touching the stillness” “Performance” (10). Vowel sound /ɔ/ frequently appears in the context and provides similar stressing tone by which the aesthetic appeal of the language is upgraded. The vowel sound /i/ is identified continually in two lines: “Still in mid-passion- / Still in her miracle play:” “Performance” (16, 17) and enhances the pronunciation by rendering a tone of rhyme. The poet has employed a new vowel sound in “Masked, archaic, mute, insect mystery” “Performance” (18): ‘masked’ and ‘archaic’ of the poetic line has located the vowel sound /a:/; the vowel sound falls after the /m/ consonant sound of ‘masked’ and at the beginning of ‘archaic’.

The line “Everything is forgiven” “Performance” (20) lights the presence of /i/ in the each word of the context and stresses an aesthetic tone. The words, ‘Stepping’ and ‘magnetically’ marks the existence of /i/ in the contexts: “Stepping so magnetically to her doom!” “Performance” (26). Ted Hughes beautifies the damselfly in the context, simultaneously which reflects his vigilance through his styled poetic language. It is obvious, the poet has used /i/ as assonance in most of his contexts and it is validated through marking it in “Dripping the sun’s incandescence-” “Performance” (28). It is challenging to mark different and new vowel sounds in Ted Hughes’ poems, in this connection the vowel sounds /ʌ/, /e/ and /ɔ:/ are identified in “A touch-crumple petal a web and dew-” “Performance” (32): the vowel /ʌ/ and /e/ in the line are explicit. The hyphenated word ‘touch’-crumple’ underlines /ʌ/ and ‘petal’ and ‘web’ mark the vowel sound /e/ to produce a similar stress. The line “midget puppet-clown, tranced on his strings,” “Performance” (33) indicates the function of /i/ in five places: ‘midget’, ‘puppet-clown’, ‘his’ and ‘strings’. Likewise, /ɔ:/ is identified in the poetic line “In the night fall pall of balsam” “Performance” (34). The poem delineates the function of reoccurring vowel sounds those appear repeatedly to form a long stressing tone which obviously entertains the readers and the listeners.

“The Morning before Christmas” is embellished by assonance to render an aesthetic fragrance and the line “Buds fur-gloved with frost. Everything has come to a standstill” “The Morning before Christmas” (1) underlines the vowel sound /ʌ/. It also

highlights /i/ in ‘with’, ‘everything’, and ‘standstill’, and evidences the reoccurring function of assonance. It depicts a frosty day in the poetic work which raises the aesthetic feel in both the content as well as the form. “Wheel-ruts frost-fixed. Mid-morning, slowly” “The Morning Before Christmas” (5) locates vowel sound /i/ in ‘fixed’, ‘mid-morning’ and ‘slowly’; this proves the perceptual function of assonance in the context. Although the word ‘slowly’ does not make explicit the sound /i/, the sound is identified as latent in the context. However, the repetition of the vowel sound enhances the stress produced during articulation. “Across the fields of hoar. And the river steamed -” “The Morning before Christmas” (7) throws light on the vowel sound /i: / in ‘steamed’ and ‘fields’, and /ə/ in ‘across’ and ‘river’ which beautifies the context. The following lines of the poem disclose the multiple function of assonance which is identified in regard to explicating the fish and the river in a merry mood:

By the **salmon-ladder** at the weir- [/æ/]
 The sluice cut, the board exit **lifted-** [/i/]
 The **cage drained slowly**. A dead cock **fish** [/ei/, /i/]
 Hung **its head** into the -leaf-**dre**gs. Another [/i/, /e/]
 Sunk **on its** side, seemed to **pincer-lock** [/ɔ/, /i/]
 The cage wire **with its** kipe. Already [/i/]
 They were **slinging the dead** out, **rigid** in the **net**,
 [/i/, /e/]
 Great, lolling **lilies** of fungus, **irreplaceable-** [/i/]
 Eggs **rotten in** them, **milt rotten**. **Nothing** [/ɔ/, /i/]
 So raggy **dead** offal as a **dead** [/e/]
 Salmon **in its** wedding finery. So [/i/]
 After their freakish luck in the lottery [/i/]
 “The Morning before Christmas” (9-20)

The extract validates that assonance continually functions through multiple vowel sounds in order to embellish the stress of the context. The vowel sound appears to be predominating in the poetic lines and produce a sleek flow of articulation to form an identical stress. “By the salmon-ladder at the weir-” “The Morning before Christmas” (9) marks the vowel sound /æ/ twice and “The sluice cut, the board exit lifted-” “The Morning before Christmas” (10) highlights /i/ twice and thus the repetitions grant an aesthetic tone to the language. “The cage drained slowly. A dead cock fish” The Morning before Christmas” (11) brightens the function of a diphthong /ei/ and a monophthong /i/. The vowel sound /ɔ/ and /i/ are identified in “Sunk on its side, seemed to pincer-lock” / Eggs rotten in them, milt rotten. Nothing” “The Morning before Christmas” (13, 17). Both the poetic lines highlight /ɔ/ and /i/ in their contexts and they embellish the stress. Correspondingly, /i/ and /e/ are found in “Hung its head into the -leaf-dre

gs. Another / They were slinging the dead out, rigid in the net,” “The Morning before Christmas” (12, 15); the presence of dual vowels in both the lines have increased the texture and display the dexterity of the poet.

“The Morning before Christmas” emphasizes the incessant appearance of assonance with multiple vowel sounds. The following lines underline the predominating vowel sound /i/:

Then a **hen** fish – **ten** pounds –lurching alive. [/e/, /i/]
 Rough **grip** and her head in an **armpit**. [/i/]
 Now the thumb and **finger** kneading her belly. [/i/]
 The frost-smoking sun embellishes her beauty, [/i/]
 “The Morning before Christmas” (23-26)

All the lines possess /i/ as assonance but “Then a hen fish – ten pounds – lurching alive.” “The Morning before Christmas” (23) takes /e/ in addition to /i/. The poet portrays a hen fish in the context with a feminine narration and he has embellished both the context as well as the form with his dazzling ability of his composition. The line “Oily massage – again and again. Then the fish” “The Morning before Christmas” (31) highlights the reoccurring vowel sound /ə/ at the beginning of ‘again’ and ‘and’ furthermore, the poet has used ‘again’ twice in the poetic line to lay much stress and thus it enhances the stress of the line. The vowel /e/ is located thrice in “Feathering along her flank sets the eggs spurting -” “The Morning before Christmas” (35). The vowel sound /ai/ is found in “She tries to writhe and shiver a real meaning” “The Morning before Christmas” (36) and it truly marks the repetitive vowel sound and enhance the context.

The poetic line “A little is plenty. He goes back into the net” “The Morning before Christmas” (44) underlines /i/ in ‘little’, ‘is’, ‘plenty’ and ‘into’, in addition, the line also encompasses another vowel sound /e/ in ‘plenty; and ‘net’. The vowel /i/ is always found to be repetitive in Hughes’ composition and “Brindled black and Crimson, with big, precious sports / and releases a milk – jet of sperm” “The Morning before Christmas” (40, 42) confirm it. The appearance of the vowel sound /i/ is easily noted in ‘brindled’, ‘crimson’, ‘with’, and ‘big’; thus, the reoccurring produce an identical stress. “Then they’re set aside. Another hen-fish” “The Morning before Christmas” (48) denotes /e/ as the assonance in ‘then’, ‘set’ and ‘hen-fish’. The vowel sound /ɔ:/ is found in “Four fish only, forty-odd thousands eggs.” “The Morning before Christmas” (50) and it marked in ‘forty’ and ‘four’ as a stressed sound. The poet has employed /ai/ and /i/ as assonance in “In five year, with great luck, might make nine” “The Morning before Christmas” (60). The words, ‘five’, ‘might’ and ‘nine’ possess the vowel /ai/ and ‘in’ and ‘with’ retain the vowel /i/. It is evident that Ted Hughes has employed the vowel sound /i/ as a predominating quintessence of assonance and the following poetic lines exclusively highlight the persistence and function of the vowel sound /i/:

That’s how for kitchen plastic bowls

 Precarious obstetrics. First, the eggs clot,
 Then loosen. Then, lovingly, the rinsings,
 The lavings, the drainings, the rewashing-
 “The Morning before Christmas” (61, 63-65)

The words such as ‘Kitchen’, ‘plastic’, ‘Precarious’, ‘obstetrics’, ‘lovingly’, ‘rinsings’, ‘lavings’, ‘drainings’, and ‘rewashing’ of the poetic lines indicate the function of vowel /i/ to raise the stress of the words as well as to produce the echoing tone while utterance. The vowel /e/ is marked in “Precarious obstetric. First, the eggs clot, / wrought in wet, heavy gold. Treasure-solid. / Dazzle-stamped every cell in my body” “The Morning before Christmas” (63, 69, 71). The vowel sound /e/ appears recurrently in the lines, and produce a similar stress and it enhances the language of the context. Similarly, the poetic line “With its melting edge, its lime-bitter brightness.” “The Morning before Christmas” (72) underlines the vowel /i/, /e/ and /ai/; they repeat in the poetic line to produce an identical stress. The vowel sound /ɔ/ is explicit in ‘pond’ and ‘fox’ of the poetic line, “A flood pond, inch-iced,

held the moment of a fox” “The Morning before Christmas” (73). The poetic line emphasizes the vowel that reappears to render the same vowel stress and enhance the texture of the poetic work.

Poetic language of “Creation of Fishes” is embellished by assonance and the idea is nurtured by personification. “Sun burned among his burning brood” “Creation of Fishes” (2) underlines three repetitive vowel sounds: /ʌ/, /ɜ:/ and /i/, the vowel sounds repeated in the line to render an aesthetic stress at the time of articulation. The vowel sound /i/ and /ai/ are marked in “The souls of earthlings tried to hide in the sea” “Creation of Fishes” (7). The poet constructs a few conversations between the Sun and the Moon to give a pleasant and imaginary appeal. “Said Moon to Sun: “Our children are too much” “Creation of Fishes” (9) marks the vowel /ʌ/ in ‘sun’ and ‘much’, correspondingly, “They are too intolerably beautiful” “Creation of Fishes” (11) underlines the repeated vowel /i/ in ‘intolerably’ and ‘beautiful’. The poet makes impossibilities to possible by using the power of imagination which is a key need for an aesthete. The beauty of the content is reflected through the poetic language, especially by employing the stylistic devices.

The vowel sounds /æ/, /ə/ and /i/ are identified in “Gathered their children into a sack, to drown them.” “Creation of Fishes” (14). The Sun is described as noble, thus, it influences the poetic language of the context by making avail of a repetitive vowel sound /ʌ/ and /i/ in the line “Noble Sun, tear-blind, plucked his darlings” “Creation of Fishes” (15). In the following line, the bard has employed the vowel sound /i/ and /ʌ/ as assonance: “The raving Sun fished up his loveliest daughter” “Creation of Fishes” (20). Repetition of the vowel sounds /i/ and /ʌ/ has improved the rhyming stress of the context and it gives a delightful tone. In the lines, “He fished up his quickest, youngest daughter - / smiling, the Moon hid.” “Creation of Fishes” (25, 30) the vowel /i/ is recurrent. The highlighted repetitive vowel /i/ has indirectly upgraded the tone of articulation. This shows that the poet has used assonance to an esteem degree.

3.3. Consonance

The stylistic device, consonance is explicated as the repetition of the same consonant sound found before and after the dissimilar vowel in two words of a line. For instance, ‘live’ and ‘love’ are transcribed as /liv/ and /lʌv/, and differentiated by the functions of the dissimilar vowel sounds and identified by the appearance of the identical consonant sounds. In concise, consonance has a dissimilar vowel bound by two similar consonant sounds. Consonance is generally employed in the poetic composition, in order to provide a structure to poetry with a rhyming effect. The poet employs the device to reflect the emotions hidden behind the words that the common words cannot express. Furthermore, consonance makes the structure of poetry much appealing and stimulates the lyrical tone of poetry.

Identifying consonance is hard challenging in Ted Hughes’ selected *River* poems. However, it is identified in two poetic works: “Japanese River Tales” and “Creation of Fishes”. The former one portrays a sea bird and grants an aesthetic feminine illustration Employing consonance has brought a rhyming tune in the context and the line “At her hair, at her raiment” “Japanese River Tales” (5) brightens the function of consonance. The words ‘her’ and ‘hair’ are the paradigms of

consonance. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the pronoun, 'her' is phonetically transcribed as /hə(r)/ and the noun, 'hair' is transcribed as /heə(r)/. In the phonetic transcription of both the words, the consonant sound /t/ is bracketed to emphasize it as an optional stress. The words 'her' and 'hair' begin with the same consonant sound /h/ and end with the same consonant sound /r/. The consonants appear similar and have enhanced the stress of the words.

The poetic work "Creation of Fishes" also marks the presence of consonance with regard to its function. The poem picturizes the conversation between the Sun and the Moon and illuminates the tone of the subject as well as the language. The poetic line "But her spasmed, and stiffened, in a torture of colours." "Creation of Fishes" (24) reveals the personified Moon and her mood. And it is apparent that the poet has employed consonance in the line and they are 'spasmed' and 'stiffened'. The word, 'spasmed' is phonetically transcribed as /spæzəmd/ and the word, 'stiffened' is transcribed as /stifnd/. Both the words highlight /s/ as an identical consonant at the beginning and /d/ at the end of the words and they also emphasize the unlike vowel sound. Dissimilar vowel sounds of both the words are /æ/ and /i/. The similarities in their function have enabled to produce same consonant stresses.

4. Conclusion

Lexical and phonological analyses of Hughes' poems throw light on his style of employing words in a connective order. The select poems: "Japanese River Tales", "Creation of Fishes", "In the Dark Violin of the Valley", "Performance", and "The Morning before Christmas" have exhibited the presence, absence and functions of hyperbole, oxymoron, alliteration, assonance and consonance. The analytical analysis illustrates that in lexical level, "Japanese River Tales", "In the Dark Violin of the Valley" and "Creation of Fishes" take hyperbole, and "Creation of Fishes", "Performance", and "The Morning before Christmas" take oxymoron. Similarly, in phonological level, alliteration and assonance are identified in "Japanese River Tales", "Creation of Fishes", "In the Dark Violin of the Valley", "Performance", and "The Morning before Christmas", and consonance is specified in "Japanese River Tales" and "Creation of Fishes". It is explicit that in phonological level alliteration and assonance are stressed in the entire five select poem but whereas in lexical level, hyperbole and oxymoron are used to a minimal extent. Therefore, it can be concluded that Hughes has made avail of alliteration and assonance to an esteem degree.

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