

Seeking the Context of a Poem

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Abstract

Context is an important factor in the processing of a script and it can make the connectivity the whole script. The context may give some messages with emotion from writer to reader. Context was sought by dividing into two parts in this paper. There are the choice of words of poet and the relationship between meaning and word order. The outcome of this paper is what a good writer is.

Introduction

An author writes a poem or a novel or an article without context. Context can make a good novel and also a poem. Context has many definitions. But I will use the definition of context in this paper by Stylistics point of view.

Context is an important factor in the processing of INFORMATIONAL VALUE OR WEIGHT.² Definition of context in Stylistics is “refers to something which precedes or follows something.”³ According to the definition and operation in a paragraph, context can make connectivity.

In this paper, it is intended to seek the function of context in a poem. The informant poem is one of the poems by Saya Zaw Gyi who was most popular poet in Myanmar. The name of poem is ‘ The a ye /Δι| ≅ ψε|∨ ’. We study this paper by dividing into two parts, the first part is the choice of words of poet and the second part is the relationship between meaning and word order.

1. Choice of words of poet

Choice of words of poet which gives the readers feeling, emotion and meaning. Choice of words is described direct meaning , indirect meaning (cognitive) , time , period and personality of poet and so on. The other name of choice of words in literature is ‘ usage ‘.

Usage is defined in Dictionary of Stylistics as follow;

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² Wales, Katie, 2001, 81

³ - ibid -

“ As a singular noun, usage is the general linguistics practice at any one period of time in speech and writing of a speech-community”⁴

According to above definition, usage can told about the period of time in speech and writing of a speech- community. This is the one function of context in paragraph. The usage in poem , ‘The a ye’ is analyzed.

THE A YE သည်အရေး	/Δι ≅ ψε
ပြဒါးရှင်	/βφ≅ δα ~□ι~/
ပေးချင်ခဲ့ ခုအရေး	/πε ~δΖι~ NE κηυ ≅ ψε
ဇော်ဂျီမောင် ငါမစစ်လို့	/ ζΟ δΖι ~μαυ~ Να μ≅ σι? λο /
စိတ်ညစ်တယ်လေး။	/ σει? θι? τΕ λε
ဇော်ဂျီ	

The poet composed using 12 words only in this poem. These 12 words were divided into three groups. These three groups are Noun , Verb and Particle.

Noun group includes ပြဒါးရှင်/βφ≅ δα|~□ι~/, အရေး/≅ ψε|, ဇော်ဂျီမောင်/ ζΟ| δΖι| ~μαυ/, ငါ /Να| / .

Verb group includes ပေးချင်/πε|~δΖι~/, မစစ်/μ≅ σι?/, စိတ်ညစ်/ σει? θι?/.

Particle group includes ခဲ့ / NE| / , ခု / κηυ| / , လို့ / λο| / , တယ် / τΕ| / , လေး / λε| / .

First of all we study the noun group -

ပြဒါးရှင်/βφ≅ δα|~□ι~/, အရေး/≅ ψε|, ဇော်ဂျီမောင်/ ζΟ| δΖι| ~μαυ/ ανδ ငါ/Να| / .

ပြဒါးရှင်/βφ≅ δα|~□ι~/ means “ Legendary ball of mercury compound, like the philosopher’s stone, giving the possessor supernatural powers”⁵

The second word ‘အရေး/≅ ψε|’ is become a new word from combining the prefix and verb by affixation in Myanmar Language. This word အရေး/≅ ψε| has two meanings. There are

⁴ Wales, Katie, 2001, 401

⁵ Myanmar-English Dictionary, 2011, 285

‘writing, composition and affair, business, matter’⁶. The writer used second meaning affair and matter in this poem.

The third word ဇော်ဂျီမောင်/ ငါ့ဝါ့ သိလိ -မူလ/ , ဇော်ဂျီ was modified မောင်. ဇော်ဂျီ means ‘alchemist who possess supernatural powers’⁷ and မောင် is different meanings. There are -
“ 1.younger brother 2. Title holder of a body-building contest 3. Term of endearment used by a woman to address her husband or lover 4. Term of address used when addressing, a male younger than oneself 5. Title prefixed to the proper name of a male”⁸

All different meanings point out one thing only. That is မောင် refers to a male and then ဇော်ဂျီမောင်/ ငါ့ဝါ့ သိလိ -မူလ/ refers to the a male who possesses supernatural powers. And the other word is ငါ့ /Nα/ . ငါ့ /Nα/ is a simple word which is generally used in speaking in Myanmar. It is common usage both male and female and also any ages . The meaning of ငါ့ /Nα/ is ‘ generally used when speaking to one’s equals or inferiors’⁹ This usage expresses the speaker’s self-confidence and close relationships between speaker and listener.

All the nouns refer to ‘ a male who possesses supernatural powers , a ball or stone which possessor supernatural powers and affair.’ Especially the word ငါ့ /Nα/ represents the pronoun of poet. The sound of this word describes the voice of poet.

Verb group includes ဝေးချင်/πɛ(-δZι~/, မစစ်/μ≡ σι?/, စိတ်ညှစ်/ σει? θι?/. A Dictionary of Stylistics defines Verb as follows;

‘ Verb are a major word class in English which function as the PREDICATION in a CLAUSE, linking SUBJECT with PREDICATE’¹⁰

A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics defines the verb as follows;

‘ The FORMAL definition of a verb refers to an element which can display MORPHOLOGICAL contrast of TENSE, ASPECT, VOICE,

⁶ - ibid- , 586

⁷ Myanmar-English Dictionary, 2011, 150

⁸ - ibid- , 352

⁹ - ibid- , 91

¹⁰ Wales, Katies, 2001, 404.

MOOD, PERSON and NUMBER. FUNCTIONALLY, it is used as the minimal PREDICATE of a sentence , co- occurring with a SUBJECT.’¹¹

Verb group was analyzed detail two kinds of verbs. စိတ်ညစ်/ ဧါ? ဖါ?/ , a kind of verb is full or lexical or main verb. The ဝေးချင်/ပါး\~δΖ1~/, မစစ်/မခဲ ဧါ?/ , other kind of verbs are verb phrases. စိတ်ညစ်/ ဧါ? ဖါ?/ , a full or lexical or main verb means ‘ be troubled in mind, feel unhappy, depressed’ ¹². So this verb expresses someone’s feeling. Noun usage ငါ /Nα|/ points out who is someone. According to noun usage someone is poet. Cognitive meaning ‘ Why’ follow by Poet’s feeling. This cognitive meaning can catch the sense of readers. It can motivate to know the readers. The writers used to use the power of choice of words in their scripts if possible.

Particle group includes ငဲ့ / NE| / , ခ / κηυ| / , လို့./ လဝ| / , တယ် / τE| / , ဝေး/λE| / .

ခု / κηυ| / means ‘ now, the present’¹³ in colloquial and reference, adjective in grammar.

ငဲ့ / NE| / means sentence final particle in grammar, ‘poetic’¹⁴.

လို့./ လဝ| / means ‘because’¹⁵ in colloquial , conjunction in grammar.

တယ် / τE| / means ‘colloquial form of sentence final’¹⁶

ဝေး/ λE| / means ‘word used as ending in lyric poems and the like for euphonic effect’¹⁷

In Generally, all choice of words are mixing colloquial style and written style and also modern style and ancient style. But most of particles are modernized. The usages point out the writer existed in modern period and talked about an affair with his emotion. This is the function of choice of words.

2. The relationship between word order and meaning

Word order was defined by A Dictionary of Stylistics as follows;

¹¹ Crystal, David, 1997, 410

¹² Myanmar-English Dictionary, 2011, 122

¹³ - ibid- , 56

¹⁴ - ibid- , 94

¹⁵ - ibid- , 438

¹⁶ - ibid- , 190

¹⁷ - ibid- , 436

‘ the arrangement of words in CLAUSE and SENTENCE in particular, but also phrase’¹⁸

A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics defines Verb is –

‘ A term used in GRAMMATICAL analysis to refers to the SEQUENTIAL arrangement of words in larger linguistics unit . Some LANGUAGES rely on word order as a means of expressing grammatical relationships within CONSTRUCTIONS.’¹⁹

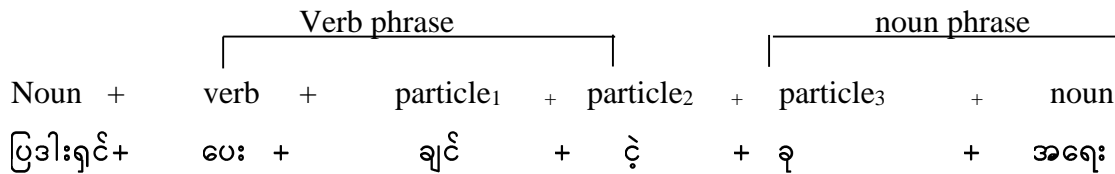
We study the word order in this poem-

THE A YE သည်အရေး	/Δι ≅ ψε
ပြဒါးရှင်	/βφ≅ δα ~□ι~/
ပေးချင်ခဲ့ ခုအရေး။	/πε ~δZι~ NE κηυ ≅ ψε
ဇော်ဂျီမောင် ငါမစစ်လို့.	/ ζO δZι ~μαυ~ Nα μ≅ σι? λo /
စိတ်ညစ်တယ်လေး။	/ σει? θι? τE λε
ဇော်ဂျီ ²⁰	

by above definitions. According to statistics , this poem was constructed 12 words , 4 lines , 2 sentences.

ပြဒါးရှင်	/βφ≅ δα ~□ι~/
ပေးချင်ခဲ့ ခုအရေး။	/πε ~δZι~ NE κηυ ≅ ψε
is 2 lines , one sentence and -	
ဇော်ဂျီမောင် ငါမစစ်လို့.	/ ζO δZι ~μαυ~ Nα μ≅ σι? λo /
စိတ်ညစ်တယ်လေး။	/ σει? θι? τE λε

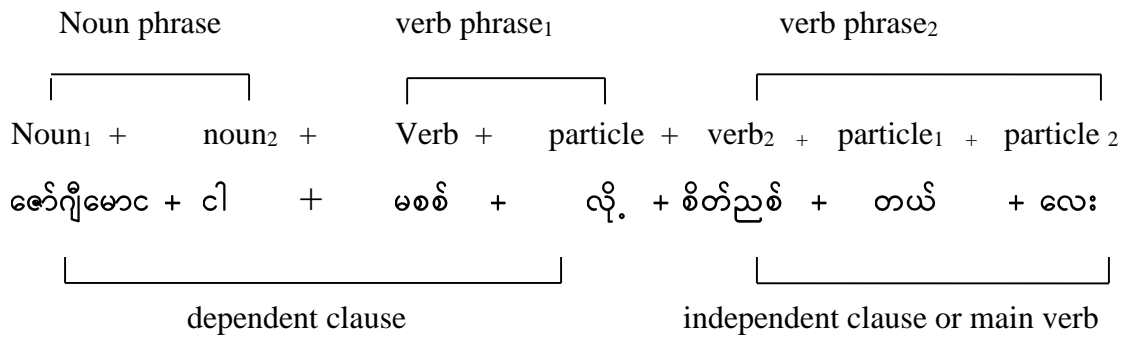
is 2 lines , one sentence. We mark sentence one and sentence two. We find the structure of sentence one like that.



¹⁸ Wales, Katies, 2001,
¹⁹ Crystal, David, 1997, 421
²⁰ Zaw Gyi, 2001,

This sentence 's structure is deviation from formal structure of Myanmar Language. The place of Verb is the end of sentence in formal structure in Myanmar Language . The poet make a deviated sentence by poetic license . This word order gives the meaning ' Wish to give the legendary ball or stone which possessor giving supernatural powers now or at present for affair'. But another meanings ' what' and ' Why' appear at the same time. There are cognitive meaning or indirect meaning.

And then, we study continually sentence two.



Above sentence is complex sentence. Dependent clause and independent clause with conjunction 'လို့'. Dependent clause includes noun and verb. Word order is formal. But meaning is not complete. Dependent clause means ' I am not real Zawgyi who possesses supernatural powers'.

Verb phrase 'မစစ်လို့' follow by noun phrase 'ဇော်ဂျီမောင်'. So the order of words is noun and verb. According to this word order we can appreciate 'sentence'. But particle 'လို့' follows by negative verb 'မစစ်'. Therefore verb becomes verb phrase and also a dependent clause.

The arrangement of words in this dependent clause tells us 'Although My name is ZawGyi because I am not real Zawgyi who possesses supernatural powers'. This meaning is not complete.

The Last part of this sentence is "စိတ်ညစ်တယ်လေး". It is complete structure and meaning as well. So this word order is main verb phrase or an independent clause or a sentence. This verb phrase expresses the feeling of the poet. Poet Saya ZawGyi felt unhappy.

Dependent clause "ဇော်ဂျီမောင် ငါ မစစ်လို့" is the reason for independent clause "စိတ်ညစ်တယ်လေး". The whole complex sentence was combined dependent clause and

independent clause or main verb phrase. This whole sentence tells us “the poet Saya ZawGyi who is not real Zawgyi who possesses supernatural powers had trouble in his mind”.

The structure of this complex sentence is formal structure in Myanmar Language.

We studied the whole arrangement of words in this poem. Some word order are deviate by poetic license. Meaning is complete with motivation to readers. This is the function of beauty by language.

And then, some word orders can describe the meaning simply.

The relationship between word order and meaning carry the meaning to the deeper meaning. The deeper meaning is cognitive meaning. Because the poet did not tell ‘What is affair?’ , “How much difficult it is” and “How do they solve?”. He told the readers “ he felt unhappy for he can not do anything even though his name is Zawgyi”.

Conclusion

A poem was reflected the period of poet, emotion of poet and personality of poet. The poet used to describe his feelings using language. Saya ZawGyi, the most popular poet in Myanmar, expressed the language with poetic license. His poem ‘သည့်အရေး/Δါ| ≅ ψε\’ was too short 12 words- 4 lines- 2 sentences only was composed by poet. But it is the function of in language fully , clear expression and full direct and indirect meaning simply. This is the creative power of the poet and good context in a poem.

We can see the excellent thinking and composing power of the poet, Saya ZawGyi in his poem.

Reference

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Zaw Gyi. (2001). *ဇော်ဂျီ ကဗျာပေါင်းချုပ်* ။ ရန်ကုန်၊ ခရမ်းရောင်စာစဉ်။