

A STUDY OF LINGUISTIC EXPERIMENTS DONE BY HENRY FIELDING THROUGH HIS SELECTED WORKS

Kamalakar Baburao Gaikwad

Assistant Professor in English
A.C.Patil College of Engineering,
Kharghar, Navi Mumbai.

Anant Prabhakar Netake

Research Scholar
Institute of Advanced Studies in English
Aundh, Pune, Maharashtra.

1. Preliminary:

Language is unique to the human species and plays its significant role in telling stories. Almost all novelists use conversational words to advance their stories. Many novels have conversation than narration and the novelists try to imitate the person's speech habits in regional accents and dialects. The studies of language used in the novel provide the conscious control over a language use as well as language evaluation.

Fielding is undoubtedly one of the 18th century novelists. His attitude towards language and communication is useful to understand his hatred of hypocrisy, his contempt for Grub street, suspicion of politics, distrust of the learned professions and aversion to polite society.

In his novels, Fielding has made an attempt to employ an ironic voice which give the readers interest and pleasure in that technique. Like Defoe, Fielding was a political journalist who faced many enemies by the vigor of his writing.

Fielding is one of the greatest English writers who invented powerfully *a new road of entertainment in the relation of nature*. The language of the novel poses the complexity of the problem which invites comparison with other novels. The language of Fielding also demands comparison not only with the Richardson's fictional language but also with the creative words of the other writers of an epic and prose. Thus Fielding's style is treated as fine English as used in high society. His style is comic throughout the novels.

1. Influences of Language Theory:

a) Imitation of Locke's Theory:

John Locke was a modest, prosaic and tentative writer who laid down the fundamental outlines of the philosophy, religion and politics for the next century. His view on language was the orthodox attitude that language was treated as a man made structure. According to him, language was merely the artificial result of an agreement among the members of the human society.

Fielding imitated Locke's intuitive concerns about language and not his systematic philosophy of words.

In the *Covent Garden Journal*, Fielding refers to Locke's essay *concerning Human Understanding*, which describes the two, levels of the abuse of language. i. The original use ii. The proper use. For example, the words, Wisdom, Glory, Grace are carelessly used by most of the men's without any distinct meaning at all.

In *Champion Paper*, Fielding observes the two levels of language of the word *good nature* as i) The language of the ordinary discourses and affair used in careless confusing manner ii) The language of the philosophical inquiries done in precision and consistency of meaning.

In the *Essay on Conversation*, Fielding was concerned with Locke's Theory Of Language that Fielding identifies his own sense of the word with its original meaning. For example, the word *good breeding*, Fielding means *the art of pleasing or contributing which brings the ease and happiness to men*.

b) Ironic Imitation from Swift:

Fielding inherited from the Augustan satirists like Swift, the sophisticated devices of irony, the high low burlesque, and the rhetoric of literary imitation, parody and allusion. Fielding's irony is Corrective, orthodox and intentional. It undermines deviations from a healthy, sensible and social morality. It is the irony of integration rather than disintegration.

The use of satiric characters in *Jonathan Wild* is achieved by the ideal of the plain spoken truth to look out the real meaning of words. Thus the term *prig* means the thief as translated into plain English while the reader mentioned as the *vulgar* refer to the *honest men*.

Thus Fielding deals with the irony as a means to survey the true meanings of words from the corrupt language used in his age. This crucial technique is brought to the concepts of the dramatic and narrative action.

c) Imitation from Mandeville:

Fielding attributed to Mandeville, who proves religion and virtue to be only mere names. He did not attempt to reduce the great moral and spiritual questions to a simple affair of words. Fielding saw the mostly selfish persons in exploiting the powerful sense of language for their own gain. For all of these exploiters, language is an important stock in trade but none of them respects its integrity of purpose. They are concerned with communication of ideas, understanding and truth, personal advantage, persuasion, form or effect.

2. The Corruption of Language:

The idea of the *corruption of the language* is as old as the study of language itself. This phrase is most often used in the 17th and 18th centuries. It takes the knowledge of phenomenon of linguistic change.

Fielding's subject *turncoats* are one of the notable examples of his observation on language appearing in an ironic context. The word *turncoat* is an epitome of the injustice done to certain words. The *turncoats* themselves are simply men whose coats are sufficiently soiled on one side and are handsome on the other.

In *Jonathan Wild*, the names of Wild's sisters: Grace, Charity and Honour are one of the examples of the corrupting words. The noble word like Honour is corruptly used to provide the difference of its original meaning. Similarly Major Bath in *Amelia* is sort of humours who provide ruling passion in his honour.

3. Language of Politics:

The study of language in literary texts can contribute typically to the study of such powerful distributions in society. In this situation, a word is in the more conventional use of literary sources in the study of politics.

Fielding's pronouncements on political matters were inspired by his own involvement in the political party or by hopes of personal reward for his services. His interesting subjects: greatness, good nature, liberty, marriage and human inconsistency are always seen in his satirical novel, *Jonathan Wilde*. His political satire on Walpole and his alliances are always seen in all of his literary works like the *Champion* (1737), *The Patriot* (1745), and *Jacobite's Journal* (1748)

The word *promise* as politician's particular speech is defined as *nothing*. Fielding's euphemistic irony of the abuse of the words is not only in politics but also in promising. The politician's words like *promise, greatness, champion etc. are typically observed as the corrupt language which remains the exact opposite of what the politicians say.*

4. Mock Epic Language:

The 18th century people basically considered the epic to be the highest sense of the literary forms. Mock Epic is basically a parody of the epic form. It can be defined as a work in which a trivial subject is made ridiculous by being treated with the elaborate and dignified devices of the epic. It is basically originated in classical literature in the late 17th and 18th centuries.

It is a form of blame by praise which relies heavily on a pose of fairness. This technical mask produces the impression so necessary to Fielding's personal conception of the English novel. Fielding uses this powerful technique not only to present the perspective of the mistake or falseness in his society but also to persuade all the contemporary persons to cure such social problems.

5. Language of Profession:

Fielding's great novels began to flourish at the time when the middle class in England was attaining increasing economic power. There are lots of ethical evils in the society: the hack writers, the corrupt politicians, and the immoral parsons etc. which are attacked by Fielding in his eternal novels. The life and thoughts given by the author becomes a sign of reality in those days.

In fact, Fielding did not condemn the professions at all. He was always one of the most responsible satirists when he turned his fire against the pedantic Doctors, dishonest Lawyers and hypocrite Parsons. For example, Parson Adams and Dr. Harrison are outnumbered by many bad clergymen portrayed in *Joseph Andrews* and *Amelia*. Parson Barnabus and Parson Trulliber represent the professions of divinity as defined and defended by Fielding in his *Apology for Clergy* papers in the *Champion* of March 29, April 5, 12 and 19, 1740. Thus Fielding has made an attempt to attack the words of professions as far as they lose their original true meaning in the true sense.

6. The Politeness Of Language In A High Society:

The novel is the special form containing aesthetic and moral requirements with the sense of best words and the best order. Fielding's essay on conversation deals with its assumption of the social values of polite discourse. It belongs to a tradition of Renaissance and 17th century conversation books including Swift's hints towards *Essay on Conversation*.

All of Fielding's notable novels basically retain the strongly middle class characteristics of truth and affirmation of middle class human and ethic values. Fielding's high life characters in his plays and novels are particularly guilty of separate words from their proper ideas.

In Fielding's satiric personae, he observes not only the common life of people but also their common use of language in their actual community.

Conclusion:

Fielding's experiments of language use are ironically concerned with politics, religion, morality and human development. Learning the classical and contemporary works, he found the manifold beauties of the literary techniques: Influences of language theory, the corruption of language, language of politics, mock epic language, language of professions, politeness of language in a high society etc. and treated them as a means to create skillfully his own literary works. The powerful words of irony, satire, parody, humour etc. become his important medium to strike the human follies and loose behavior in the sphere of human morality. Thus language mainly used by Fielding in his typical works shows not only his skill of language use but also his great mastery of the English literary world.

REFERENCES:

1. Leslie Stephen, "English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century", Gerald Duckworth and Company Ltd., London, 1955, p.46.
2. Glenn W. Hatfield, "Henry Fielding and the Language of Irony", The University of Chicago Press, London, 1968, p.39-48, 98-104.
3. A.R.Humphreys, "Fielding's irony: Its Method and Effects," Prentice Hall, INC., American, 1962, p.12.
4. Braj B.Kacharu, "The Alchemy of English: Social and Functional Power of Non Native Varieties," Sage Publications, INC., London, 1984, p.176.
5. J.H.Plumb, England in the Eighteenth Century," Penguin Books, England, 1950, p.33.
6. W.P.Robinson, "Language and Social Behaviour", Penguin Education, London, 1972, p.39.