

Literary stylistics Linguistic analysis, in other words, can describe and analyse the language of a literary text but is not of itself an applied linguistic activity. It is not perhaps in itself applied linguistics as it involves no practical decision making, but it is, as we shall see, an important resource for the analysis of powerful and persuasive uses of language in general. An example, however, can be found in the extract by Roger Fowler in Section 2. Stylistic analyses tend to highlight three related aspects of literary language: its frequent deviation from the norms of more everyday language use; its patterning of linguistic units to create rhythms, rhymes, and parallel constructions; and the ways in which the form of the words chosen seems to augment or intensify the meaning.

I wander through a chartered street
Near where the chartered Thames does flow
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

It raises awareness, not only of the importance of exact wording but of how there is far more at stake in the use of language than the literal meaning of the words. Literary analysis, of its nature, cannot be brief if it is to do justice to its complex subject-matter and there is no space to go into any detail here. All these features are present in the melancholy opening stanza of William Blake's poem 'London'. It begins to move in that direction, however, when linguistic choices are linked to their effects upon the reader and some attempt is made at an explanation. This is the endeavour of literary stylistics.