

**The Emotional Structure in the Poem “For Your Loss,
How Do the Lips Smile?”
A Study of Structural Patterns**

البناء العاطفي في قصيدة لثلك كيف تبتسم الثغور
-دراسة في البنى التركيبية-

Zakaria Youcef Errahmani*

Received: 20/10/2025

Accepted: 22/10/2025

Published: 05/12/2025

Abstract

This study, entitled “The Emotional Structure in the Poem ‘For Your Loss, How Do the Lips Smile?’ – A Study of Structural Patterns,” seeks to address several fundamental questions concerning the loci of emotional and stylistic intelligence within the poem. The study opts for Charles Bally’s expressive stylistic approach to trace the emotional charges embedded in the syntactic structures of the text. Accordingly, the study moves beyond traditional stylistic analyses that focus mainly on aesthetic or semantic mechanisms, directing attention instead to the emotional substance of language itself.

Keywords: Stylistics, Emotional Content, Charles Bally, For Your Loss, How Do the Lips Smile?

* Yahia Fares Medea University, errahmani.zakaria@univ-medea.dz

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة المعنونة البناء العاطفي في قصيدة لشكلك كيف تبتسم الثغور – دراسة في البنى التركيبية لطرح عدة أسئلة جوهرية حول مواطن الذكاء الأسلوبي العاطفي القصيدة، إذ حاول البحث الاستعانة بالمنهج الأسلوبي التعبيري عند شارل بالي لرصد الشحنات العاطفية الكامنة داخل البنى التركيبية في النص، وعليه ستتجنب الدراسة البحوث الأسلوبية التقليدية التي تحاول ضبط الآليات الجمالية أو الدلالية في النص لتلج المحتوى العاطفي للغة.

كلمات مفتاحية: الأسلوبية، المحتوى العاطفي، شارل بالي، قصيدة لشكلك كيف

تبتسم الثغور؟

*** **

Corresponding Author: Zakaria Youcef Errahmani,
errahmani.zakaria@univ-medea.dz

Introduction

In recent years, stylistic studies have witnessed a remarkable intensification of analytical research, as scholars have moved beyond the boundaries of classical theoretical approaches to explore the intricate articulations within the applied field of stylistics. Consequently, a large body of contemporary research has focused on the philological framework of Leo Spitzer, occasionally drawing on the functional orientation of Roman Jakobson, and at times venturing into the realm of stylistic reading in its analytical dimension.

The motivation behind selecting the topic “The Emotional Structure in the Poem ‘How Can Smiles Blossom for Your Bereavement’: A Study of Syntactic Structures” stems from a desire to enter a new stylistic domain—one that many critics have long considered exhausted by research and interpretation. However, a close examination of the available empirical studies reveals a noticeable scarcity in applied investigations. Despite the diversity and abundance of stylistic inquiry, much of it has followed a singular trajectory, namely the pursuit of aesthetic and artistic features within the text, while overlooking or marginalizing the emotional content as conceptualized by Charles Bally, the founder of affective stylistics.

This study raises several central questions, the most significant of which are: How is the emotional structure constructed in the poem “How Can Smiles Blossom for Your Bereavement”? What are the functional and semantic dimensions underlying the concentration of emotional thought within the poem?

In order to address these questions, the research adopts a stylistic methodology, with a particular focus on the affective dimension as theorized by Charles Bally.

The study is divided into two major sections. The theoretical section examines the nature, typology, and classifications of emotional content, while the applied section explores the sources of affective stylistic intelligence, locating them—most prominently—at the syntactic level of the text.

Emotional Content in Bally's Theory – Nature and Classifications

The affective dimension in Charles Bally's stylistic theory constitutes one of the foundational concepts upon which he constructs his philosophy of language, both in form and content. Bally defines stylistics as the study of “the phenomena of linguistic expression in terms of their emotional content — that is, the expression of affective sensitivity through language, and the reflection of language through this sensitivity.”

For Bally, the task of the stylistic analyst is not to uncover the writer's psychology or the poetic nature of discourse, but it is to follow the emotional charges manifested by speakers through linguistic structures. From this perspective, Bally's stylistics focuses on the language of a community of speakers, asserting that “the affective content of language forms the central concern of stylistics, while the study of the individual's emotional state as reflected in particular contexts is considered of secondary importance.”

Thus, emotional content, in Bally's view, exists within the broader linguistic and communicative contexts of speakers. Consequently, Bally's stylistic approach extends beyond purely literary or aesthetic texts to include various forms of discourse — intellectual, literary, and direct communicative speech.

Charles Bally's Classification of Emotional Content

Charles Bally distinguishes between two principal types of emotional structure within language: natural emotional content and emotionally conveyed language. Bally maintains that language inherently carries an emotional dimension within its

very nature, independent of how it is performed or by whom. This emotionality is embedded in linguistic expressions that convey affection, tenderness, or exaggeration.

In the verses of Tamim al-Barghouti, linguistic morphemes imbued with affective resonance — enemies, despire, baseness — naturally express feelings of anger and aversion. Whether spoken by a poet, a professor, a student, or a farmer, the emotional tone remains constant. Hence, there exists a natural relationship between sound and meaning in imitative words where phonetic and semantic dimensions combine to evoke emotion.

Moreover, Bally argues that language, in many of its functional dimensions, carries emotional charges through the performance of speakers. It derives its affective force from the social group that uses it, giving rise to linguistic varieties across social classes, professional groups, and discourse genres. Accordingly, social context plays a significant role in defining emotional content. Different social classes and professions shape linguistic tone and register. In parallel, gender influences the emotional dimensions of language: women’s literary expression, in its themes and tones, often differs from that of men. Accordingly, Bally concludes that variations in emotional thought and tone largely attributes to how speakers perform and deliver language in diverse social and cultural contexts.

The Emotional Structure of Interrogative Forms in the Poem

The applied component of this study seeks to investigate the sources of emotional-stylistic intelligence within an anonymous poetic text, attributed by al-Maqqari in *Nafh al-Tib*

to an unknown poet. Consequently, the analysis deliberately avoids the conventional stylistic framework that classifies elements hierarchically—rhythmic, syntactic, and semantic—and instead focuses on uncovering the emotional dimensions embedded within the poem. To this end, interrogation functions as one of the central stylistic and rhetorical devices. It is defined as a request for understanding or information to obtain unknown knowledge. However, beyond this primary meaning, interrogation often deviates from its literal communicative role to serve aesthetic, semantic, or emotional purposes. For instance, the poem’s opening question — “For your loss, how do the lips smile, joyfully, when all lips have lost hope?” — unites lexical oppositions such as loss, smile, and joy, while juxtaposing similar morphemic patterns. The interrogative structure establishes a paradoxical emotional tension between joy and grief, life and death. Through this emotional contrast, the opening question transcends its informational purpose, creating a binary emotional opposition between vitality and demise, and therefore, transforming the interrogative form into a vehicle for affective conflict rather than logical inquiry.

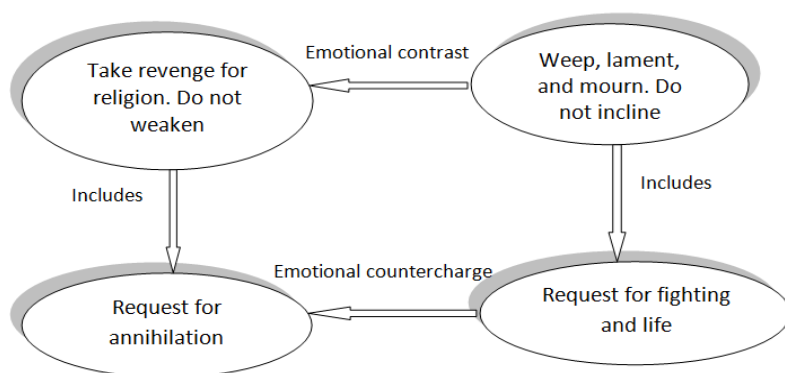
Throughout the poem, interrogatives recur, not to elicit answers but to express denial and despair. Each question implies its own negation and evokes a sense of decline and humiliation. Yet in one verse — “Is there not a man of sound judgement, from whom we might seek deliverance?” — The interrogative shifts from denial to yearning and hope, expressing a plea rather than resignation. Thus, interrogation in the poem functions on two levels: as a request for understanding and as a rhetorical shift towards denial or longing. Through this duality, the poem

constructs an intricate emotional rhythm that transforms grammar into emotion.

The Emotional Dimension as Reflected in Commands and Prohibitions

In classical Arabic grammar, the imperative denotes a request to perform a particular action, be it physical or moral. However, within stylistic and rhetorical contexts, it often deviates from its literal semantic role to convey emotional undertones of supplication, encouragement, challenge, or irony.

A close examination of the poem reveals a dense accumulation of imperatives and prohibitions that collectively create an emotionally charged linguistic network. The poem opens with calls to defend faith and seek vengeance, then shifts to prohibitions against weakness and fear, before culminating in an exaggerated command to die — embodying ultimate despair. The related sequence of commands, delivered with escalating intensity, constructs an emotional crescendo within the poem. The alternation between imperatives and prohibitions reflects a deep internal struggle between resistance and resignation, tragedy and sarcasm.



The Emotional Dimension in the Use of Vocative Forms

The use of vocative particles and structures in the poem functions as a powerful mechanism for expressing emotional states. The act of calling or addressing, whether directed at an individual, a collective, or an abstract concept, represents an elevated form of affective communication.

Although the poem's theme revolves around lamentation and the arousal of collective zeal, the poet notably refrains from employing direct vocative appeals. He uses the vocative only once: "Ah, my sorrow! Ah, my sorrow! It repeats as the ages repeat." Here, the poet's address is inward rather than outward, intensifying the emotional charge through repetition and sound. This single instance of self-address becomes symbolic of the poet's isolation and despair. Even when he turns outward, it is through an interrogative rather than a vocative, transforming the call into a question — an instance of fading hopes.

The Temporal Dimension of Emotional Syntax

The temporal organisation of verbs plays a central role in denoting emotional states and psychological progression. A close reading reveals deliberate alternation between past, present, and future tenses, each contributing to the poem's emotional rhythm. To illustrate, the past tense dominates the opening, reflecting loss and nostalgia, while the present tense conveys ongoing oppression and suffering. Finally, the future tense generates a sense of hope and divine anticipation — a movement from despair to spiritual resilience.

Conclusion

The analysis of the poem entitled “For Your Loss, How Do the Lips Smile?” through the lens of Charles Bally’s expressive stylistics reveals that emotional content is inherently tied to its linguistic form. Each syntactic choice — interrogative, imperative, vocative, or temporal — functions as an emotional marker rather than a purely grammatical element.

The poem-based emotional architecture is constructed through contrast and transformation: interrogatives evolve from inquiry to lamentation and hope; imperatives swings between despair and resistance; the solitary vocative embodies silence; and temporal variation traces the journey from past sorrow to future anticipation.

By fusing linguistic precision with emotional resonance, the poem alchemizes grammar into feeling and syntax into spirit — becoming, in Bally’s terms, a living language: a human cry etched into structure reverberating through sound.

References

- Salah Fadl, Stylistics: Principles and Procedures, 1st ed., Dar Al-Shorouk, Cairo, 1998, p. 21.**
- Pierre Guiraud, Stylistics, Presses Universitaires de France, p. 44.**
- Youssef Abu Al-Adous, Stylistics between Theory and Practice, 2nd ed., Dar Al-Masirah, Amman, 2010, p. 93.**
- Pierre Guiraud, Stylistics, p. 45.**
- Pierre Guiraud, Stylistics, p. 46.**
- Pierre Guiraud, Stylistics, trans. Munther Ayyashi, 2nd ed., Dar Al-Hasoub, Aleppo, Syria, 1994, p. 56.**

Ahmad ibn Muhammad Al-Maqri Al-Tilimsani, Nafh Al-Tayyib min Al-Ghusn Al-Andalusi Al-Ratib, vol. 4, Dar Sader, Beirut, 1968, p. 484.

Habanaka Al-Maydani, Arabic Rhetoric: Its Foundations, Sciences, and Arts, 1st ed., Dar Al-Qalam, Damascus, 1996, p. 258.

Ahmad ibn Muhammad Al-Maqri Al-Tilimsani Nafh al-Tayyib, 484.

Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Maqri al-Tilimsani, Nafh al-Tayyib, p. 484.

Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Maqri al-Tilimsani, Nafh al-Tayyib, p. 484.

Mustafa al-Shakaa, Andalusian Literature: Its Themes and Arts, Dar al-Ilm lil-Malayin, Beirut, 4th ed., 1989, p. 519.

Habanka al-Maydani, Arabic Rhetoric: Its Foundations, Sciences, and Arts, pp. 228-231.

Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Maqri al-Tilimsani, Nafh al-Tayyib, p. 484.

Same source, p. 485.

Mubarak Triki, The Call Between Grammarians and Rhetoricians, Annals of Heritage Magazine, No. 7, 2007, Mostaganem, Algeria, p. 137.

Muhammad Ibn al-Abbar al-Quda'i, Diwan Ibn al-Abbar, read and commented on by Abd al-Salam al-Harras, 2nd ed., Tunisian Publishing House, Tunis, 1986.

Ahmad Ibn Muhammad al-Maqri al-Tilimsani, Nafh al-Tayyib, p. 484.

Ibid., p. 484.

Ahmad Ibn Muhammad al-Maqri al-Tilimsani, Nafh al-Tayyib, p. 486.