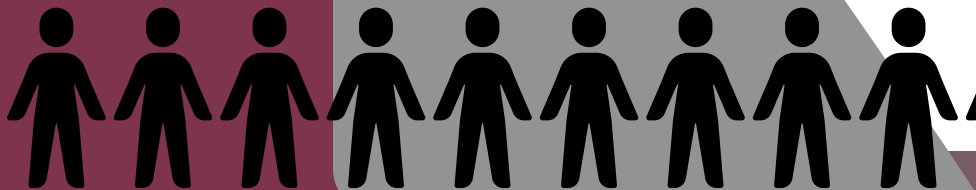


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Halit ALKAN**



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CONTENTS

Chapter-1

**HUMAN RIGHTS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION
IN INDONESIA2**
Manotar Tampubolon

Chapter-2

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF A PAINFUL CASE.....22
Halit Alkan

Chapter-3

**MERDEKA LEARNING CAMPUS MERDEKA (MBKM):
AMBIDEXTIRITY OF INDONESIAN HIGHER
EDUCATION.....38**
Bernadetha Nadeak

Chapter-4

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS ON THE MAIN
CHARACTER OF “GREEN EYED LAMA” NOVEL.....64**
Gantsetseg Sanjmyatav & Enkhzul Buyandalai

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF *A PAINFUL CASE**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Style in language states a thought in various ways based on connotations; thus, it is a characteristic of an author's character that distinguishes the author from other ones (Üstün Kaya, 2009: 6). Crystal states that "style is seen as the (conscious or unconscious) selection of linguistic features from all the possibilities in a language" (1987: 66). Considering literary arts as a unity in which expression and thought are combined, Hough points out that language is "the dress of thought", and style is the fashion of that dress (1969: 3). An analysis of style shows the artistic principles highlighting the author's selection of language. Wales expresses that each author has his/her own stylistic features of language and therefore, style is synonymous with language (1990: 436). Language is important for the presentation of a theme that the author has decided for his/her work. Style is an important characteristic of the author's personality and each author has a linguistic fingerprint (Leech & Short, 1981: 82). The style of an author is provided by effective

* This book chapter is an extended study of abstract paper entitled "Linguistic Features in James Joyce's *A Painful Case*" presented orally at the *3rd International Liberty Interdisciplinary Studies Conference* on January 13-15, 2023 in Miami, USA.

matching between his/her thoughts and his/her selection of linguistic items.

The subject matter of stylistic analyses are literary texts; thus, stylistics can be considered as “the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation” (Widdowson, 1975: 3). Robey defines stylistics as “the branch of literary studies that concentrates on the linguistic form of a text” (1982: 54). *Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*¹ describes stylistics as “the study of style in written or spoken language”. Stylistic analyses involve both the study of style and the study of how effects and meanings are produced by a literary text. Stylistics focuses on the scientific study of the style of a specific author in his works. Stylistic analysis shows the relationship between the artistic function and specific linguistic units in literary texts. The analysis focuses on the causes of author’s choice of language while mentioning his/her feelings and ideas. In general, “the linguistic study of different styles is called stylistics” (Chapman, 1973: 13). As all authors have their own way to express their feelings and thoughts, every text has its author’s own stylistic features. Turner mentions that “style is the man himself” (1973: 23). Since a human being is considered to be an output of the society, his/her written work must reflect his/her socio-political experience. Thus, the author himself/herself is considered as “style” and there is a powerful relation between manner and matter. Hough believes style to be an aspect of meaning that shows the characteristics of an author (1969: 8). In other words, style shows the attitudes of an author in a text since “style is the man” (Lodge, 1966: 50); style is the author himself/herself. The style of an author shows his/her psychology as a human being and his/her literary personality as an author. In short, style and stylistics can be explained as follows:

¹ <https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/stylistics>

Style is a way in which language is used. [...] Therefore, style consists in choices made from the repertoire of the language. [...] Stylistics or the study of style has typically been concerned with literary language. Literary stylistics is typically concerned with explaining the relation between style and literary or aesthetic function. [...] Stylistic choice is limited to those aspects of linguistic choice which concern alternative ways of rendering the same subject matter. (Leech & Short, 1981: 38-39)

Stylistics is regarded as the linguistic characteristics of a particular text, and thus, literary texts are studied to reveal an author's literary discourse through his/her personal use of language. Stylistics provides the opportunity to identify the distinctive characteristics of a literary text "and to specify the generic and structural subdivisions of literature" (Bradford, 1997: xi). Literary stylistics explains the relation between artistic function and language. Short expresses that stylistics answers the questions of how a literary text influences the readers' mind with a fictional world and how they understand the style of a literary text (2006: 2). Stylistics aims to explain the sentient agreement on a text by showing the relations of a text with historical, social and personal contexts. Therefore, if style is the output of a relationship between language and its users and of social situation, stylistics is a part of language and sociolinguistics that is studied in relation to society (Chapman, 1973: 11). Verdonk mentions that readers are "active agents" instead of "passive receptacles" and always competent on "producing their own representations" (2002: 77). A stylistic analysis of a literary text involves the description of scenes, the use of dialogues, the use of passive and active voice, the use of specific language registers, and the distribution of sentence lengths. Stylistics, therefore, relates linguistic facts (linguistic descriptions) to meaning (interpretation) to show evidence for an interpretation of a text. Stylisticians try to discover both what a text signifies and how it comes to signify what it does (Short, 1996: 5-6).

1.1. Theoretical Framework

Literary works come into existence through the use of language's units in the particular ways of authors. A detailed analysis or an interpretation of a literary text can be succeeded through stylistic and linguistic analyses. According to Short, stylistics does not explain everything in a literary work, he states:

The detail of stylistic analysis means that it can only be applied sensibly to short texts or extracts of longer texts, leaving plenty of other aspects of texts in need of exploration, as well as the relations between literary texts and the personal, historical and social contexts of their production and reception. (2006: 5)

Norm, deviation and foregrounding are three major principles of stylistics: Norm is a formed pattern within a literary text that is concerned with language's linguistic levels such as lexical structure, phonology, grammar and graphology. General norm, lexical norm and authorian norm are the different types of norms.

Deviation is the violation of language's accepted order. Deviation is a way to foreground the use of language in narration. It can be categorized such as deep structure deviation and surface structure deviation. Deep structure deviation means semantic deviation which includes something odd in a word/a phrase's meaning. Surface structure deviation involves deviations such as lexical, phonological, graphological, grammatical (syntactic), and dialectal. Lexical deviation occurs when an odd lexical item is taken into the text or when a word is over-used in a text. Phonological deviation is the violation of an ordinary language's accepted sound patterns such as using 'pal' instead of 'friend'. Graphological deviation focuses on the violation of rules in relation to capitalization and punctuation marks. Grammatical (syntactic) deviation breaks grammar rules of a language. Dialectal deviation occurs when, for example, an Indian character uses the dialect of an Italian.

Foregrounding is the deviation of accepted literary and linguistic norms. Foregrounding is formed through repeating a phrase or word in order to highlight a certain situation. There are two types of foregrounding such as non-deviational and deviational foregrounding. The non-deviational foregrounding ensures an emphasis within language use. Scenes, repeated words or speech acts draw readers' attention because they imply meaning in deeper structure whereas the deviational foregrounding is seen when the readers are alerted to the violation in the deep structure.

Leech and Short categorize the stylistic analyses into four groups such as grammatical, lexical, figures of speech, and cohesion-context relation in the literary style of a text (1981: 69). Grammatical category is about the general characteristics of sentence structures. It examines sentence complexity, sentence types, clause structures, clause types, verb phrases and noun phrases. For the grammatical category, syntax as a stylistic feature is essential; for example, the arrangement of the phrases and the grouping of the forms into phrases. For lexical category, the focal point is the general word choice of showing its grammatical relationship because lexical form is related to the words' syntactic function and the meaning in a literary work. Lexical category includes the author's selection of words and their meanings. The emphasis is on words such as nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. The incidence of characteristics in figures of speech are foregrounded "by virtue of departing in some way from general norms of communication by means of the language code; for example, exploitation of regularities of formal patterning, or of deviations from the linguistic code" (Leech & Short, 1981: 78). These deviations show the clues to the author's particular use of language. This category includes figures of syntax and rhetoric, and the basic figures such as simile, irony and metaphor are examined. Lexical and grammatical schemes focus on parallelism and repetitions, and on the rhetorical effect of the anti-climaxes and climaxes. The analysis of phonological schemes concerns about the phonological patterns of

rhyme, assonance and alliteration, the use of consonant and vowel sounds; and interaction of phonological characteristics with meaning. Cohesion and context relation deals with both the internal and external organization of a story. Cohesion is the aspect in which sentences are connected. It is the internal organisation of a literary text. Context is a part of a text assuming a social relation between reader and author, character and character, and a share point by participants of knowledge and assumption, and it is also the external relations of a literary text (Leech & Short, 2007: 64). This category focuses on the narration and its role in the plot of a literary text. There are two kinds of narration in prose: 1st person narrator and 3rd person narrator. The 3rd person narration seems much more “objective” than 1st person narration because it is not attached to a particular character’s viewpoint. In fact, 3rd person narrator is omniscient. 3rd person narrator (author) knows everything and tells the truth whereas 1st person narrator (a character) is unreliable.

This study analyses James Joyce’s *A Painful Case* in the aspect of stylistic features. Irish author James Joyce (1882-1941) is a famous novelist, poet, and short stories author in the early twentieth century. Joyce joined the Royal University to study English, Italian, and French where he got a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1902. During his life, Joyce wrote articles about Irish subjects, translated Irish works into other languages and worked as a lecturer. Joyce wrote reviews on books for Dublin’s newspapers and mastered multiple languages and literature extensively (Ellmann, 1982: 75). He wrote a collection of lyric poems, a collection of short stories, and five novels. *Dubliners* (1914) is a collection of fifteen short stories. It presents Dublin to the world in a realistic way referring to people of Dublin of different ages, sexes, and social classes through the characters that Joyce narrates in the stories. Generally, the stories are a commentary on the cultural, social, economic, political, moral and religious conditions that trapped the Irish people in Dublin in the early twentieth century. The theme *Dubliners* presents from the beginning of the first story to the end is “paralysis or living-death” (Tindall,

1959: 3). *A Painful Case* is one of the fifteen short stories in the collection titled *Dubliners*.

A Painful Case is about a platonic affair between a married woman and an isolated man, the breaking off of the affair, and its aftermath. In the story, James Duffy, a solitary bank cashier, gets to know Mrs Sinico at a Dublin concert. When Mrs Sinico tries to touch Duffy's hand, he decides that they stop seeing each other. Mr Duffy lives alone and does not see any friends or family. Four years later, Duffy learns about Mrs Sinico's death by suicide in the newspaper. Firstly, the analysis of the short story begins with a general interpretation. Secondly, its significant stylistic features are pointed out in terms of lexis, grammar, figures of speech, cohesion and context. Finally, this study shows how the formal stylistic features are used as the basis for inferring the short story's meaning and effect.

2. A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF A PAINFUL CASE

(1) Mr James Duffy lived in Chapelizod because he wished to live as far as possible from the city of which he was a citizen and because he found all the other suburbs of Dublin mean, modern and pretentious. (2) He lived in an old sombre house and from his windows he could look into the disused distillery or upwards along the shallow river on which Dublin is built. (3) The lofty walls of his uncarpeted room were free from pictures. (4) He had himself bought every article of furniture in the room: a black iron bedstead, an iron washstand, four cane chairs, a clothes-rack, a coal-scuttle, a fender and irons and a square table on which lay a double desk. (5) A bookcase had been made in an alcove by means of shelves of white wood. (6) The bed was clothed with white bedclothes and a black and scarlet rug covered

the foot. (7) A little hand-mirror hung above the washstand and during the day a white-shaded lamp stood as the sole ornament of the mantelpiece. (8) The books on the white wooden shelves were arranged from below upwards according to bulk. (9) A complete Wordsworth stood at one end of the lowest shelf and a copy of the “Maynooth Catechism”, sewn into the cloth cover of a notebook, stood at one end of the top shelf. (10) Writing materials were always on the desk. (11) In the desk lay a manuscript translation of Hauptmann’s “Michael Kramer”, the stage directions of which were written in purple ink, and a little sheaf of papers held together by a brass pin. (12) In these sheets a sentence was inscribed from time to time and, in an ironical moment, the headline of an advertisement for “Bile Beans” had been pasted on to the first sheet. (13) On lifting the lid of the desk a faint fragrance escaped - the fragrance of new cedarwood pencils or of a bottle of gum or of an over-ripe apple which might have been left there and forgotten. (Joyce, 1993: 77)

2.1. General Interpretation

There is a detailed description of the main character’s room. Thanks to the etched description, the readers can reconstruct, in their mind, the whole topography of the room which is colourless and has minimal furniture. The readers have a vivid feeling of the loneliness of the main character who is interested in reading. The story is told in 3rd person narration and is written in the past tense.

2.2. Lexical Analysis

In terms of the syllable-length of words, the passage contains mostly two-syllable words. Therefore, the vocabulary is

simple, and the tenor, which is related to how politely or formally one speaks, is formal. The passage contains of physical concrete nouns such as “bedstead”, “washstand”, “chairs”, “table”, “bookcase”, etc. In terms of semantic field, these physical concrete nouns relate to indoor surroundings. The description is made largely of noun phrases such as “an iron washstand”, “a coal-scuttle”, “white wooden shelves”, “a brass pin”, etc. Adjectives refer to colour such as “white bedclothes”, “a white-shaded lamp”, “white wooden shelves”, “a black and scarlet rug”, “a black iron bedstead”, etc. These descriptive words refer to negative feelings. The verbs are mostly stative referring to states such as “hung”, “stood”, “were”, “lay”, etc.

Mr Duffy’s house functions as a microcosm of his soul. His room is not colourful or cluttered but rather it is made of “white wood”, “white bedclothes”, “a white-shaded lamp”, “white wooden shelves”, and “lofty walls” with no pictures. This shows that he is cold and has no passion. Mr Duffy keeps his orderly home very neat, places his books precisely on shelves, organizes a sheaf of papers by a brass pin, and has plain and functional furniture. The colours yellow and brown in Mr Duffy’s “uncarpeted floor” and “an overripe apple” in his desk are considered a symbol of his decaying possibilities. Joyce uses these colours to symbolize paralysis and decay of the main character. The bookshelf, a writing desk, a translation of a German play and his book of thoughts “Bile Beans” show that Mr Duffy is an intellectual.

2.3. Grammatical Analysis

The opening paragraph of the short story consists only of declarative sentences. There are 13 sentences consisting of 314 words. The number of sentence lengths in words is 37 - 29 - 11 - 41 - 14 - 15 - 20 - 13 - 30 - 8 - 30 - 31 - 35. Thus, the average sentence length is 24 words. Sentences (1), (2) and (11) are complex sentences and have a certain similarity of structure such

as linking (coordination) and nesting (subordination) constructions. These sentences give more detailed information about the main character and his room than other sentences. These sentences reveal that the main character is lonely. Sentence (4) consists of listing construction. The article of furniture in the room is narrated one after another. These all words are related to indoor surroundings. The passage includes prepositions of place and direction such as “in” and “on” in sentences (10), (11) and (13). In fact, there is the use of prepositional phrases in terms of the sentence’s syntactic complexity. The preposition “of” relates two noun-expressions together. In this sense, cognition and perception go hand in hand when the eye cannot make a record of an object in the raw, but schematizes it in cognitively coded grouping. Joyce uses simple past tense in order to confirm compatibility with the figural narrative situation he used. Joyce summarizes the story time to put emphasis on the ordinary manner in which Duffy’s life “rolled out evenly”. In terms of semantics, the first sentence (1) and the last sentence (13) of the passage above are about the main character’s loneliness. Sentences (2) - (12) are about his house, his writing materials and article of furniture in the room. Therefore, the meaning of the first and last sentences of the passage is exemplified through the description of his house, furniture and writing materials that reveal the main character’s state of soul.

2.4. Figures of Speech Analysis

There is lexical repetition of “iron” in sentence (4); “black” (4) and (6); “white” (5) - (8); “desk” (4), (10), (11), and (13); “shelf” (5), (8) and (9); and “sheet” (11) and (12). These lexical repetitions direct one’s attention to the negative feeling such as loneliness. There is simile in sentences (7) because the “white shaded lamp” is considered as “the sole ornament of the mantelpiece”. Noun phrases such as “over-ripe apple” (13) and “faint fragrance” (13) bear semantic deviations. When a fruit is

on a tree branch for a long time, it can be overripe. However, the apple in the lid of the desk can be considered as a metaphor which may mean decay as it is forgotten there. While the adjective “faint” is negative like bad, the noun “fragrance” is positive like sweet smell. Therefore, there is a paradox which leads to semantic deviation. The noun phrase “a faint fragrance” is personified through the verb “escape” (13) which is used for living beings. There is grammatical parallelism between sentences (8) and (9) through prepositions of direction such as “from below upwards”, “at one end of the lowest shelf”, and “at one end of the top shelf”.

2.5. Cohesive and Contextual Analysis

The passage bases upon implicit connections of meaning which are strengthened by repeat of words from the same semantic field. Sentences (1) and (2) are about the main character’s house. Sentences (3) - (7) are about article of furniture in his room. Sentences (8) - (13) are about writing materials and the desk in his room. The description of these indoor surroundings reveals the main character’s loneliness. The story is narrated by 3rd person who pays attention to elaborated detail. A 3rd person perspective compels the readers to confide in the character’s concept and perception, leading to the idea that 3rd person narrator is omniscient. The narrator knows everything and takes the readers inside the character’s mind. The use of free indirect speech provides access into the character’s inner world. There is a detailed description about the room which reveals the main character’s state of soul. The domain, which is related to the field or the subject matter, is indoor surroundings, and the tenor is formal. There is spatial (the physical ‘angle’ of) viewpoint related to narrator’s description of the main character’s room. In terms of the characteristics of the passage, it is prosaic, objective, simple and straightforward.

The names of the main character and the suburb have implicit connections with the short story's theme. The main character's name is Mr Duffy which means "dark" or "black" in Gaelic. The suburb, Chapelizod, in which Mr Duffy dwells, takes its name from the French, Chapel d'Iseult. In this sense, Iseult is one of the renowned set of lovers, Tristan and Iseult, whose devoted affair is an iconic love story in literature. This name links the unrequited love and Mrs Sinico's death with Mr Duffy's modest existence when Mr Duffy deliberately chooses his home in this neighbourhood to keep his distance from Dublin's bustle and hustle, and to have a starting point for his daily routine. There are also inter-textual references in sentences (9) and (11). According to sentence (9), a complete Wordsworth stands at the lowest shelf, and a copy of the "Maynooth Catechism" stands at the top shelf. While Wordsworth is a poet of romantic period, the "Maynooth Catechism" is a modified version of a Catechism written in 1775 by Dr James Butler who was the Archbishop of Cashel. There is a conflict between romanticism and realism which leads to isolation. Hauptmann's "Michael Kramer" in sentence (11) is a four-act drama written in 1900 in which Kramer experiences an epiphany about the pain of his dead son, Arnold, who commits suicide. "The headline of an advertisement for Bile Beans" in sentence (12) refers to Charles Forde's "Bile Beans" which was considered as a remedy for the flu epidemic of 1899. The narrator employs journalistic precision when describing Mr Duffy. Joyce's style might be personal naturalism. The narrator takes the reader beyond the usual aspects of life through epiphany. Emotional paralysis of Mr Duffy compels him into a lifelong loneliness.

3. CONCLUSION

The short story's title, *A Painful Case*, foreshows the cause of the inner conflict of the main character and deals with the theme of isolation. The story starts with a detailed description of Mr Duffy's plain home in a neighbourhood he selected for being distant from Dublin because he hates his city and wants to live as far away from it as he can. The narrator describes the space in detail because the author, Joyce, characterizes Mr Duffy through his possessions. Mr Duffy's room is not colourful or cluttered but rather it is made of white and black colours. There are no pictures on his wall. This shows that he is cold, and he has no passion and no friends. He has no joyful memories to immortalize in a frame on his bedroom walls. Mr Duffy keeps his orderly home very neat, places his books precisely on shelves, organizes a sheaf of papers by a brass pin, and has plain and functional furniture. The colours yellow and brown in "uncarpeted floor" and "an overripe apple" symbolize decay and paralysis of the main character. His room reflects the state of his mind: austere and orderly, uncluttered by anything resembling passion. Though figuratively speaking, Mr Duffy is dead. The narrator adopts a pessimistic view of the central character. Mr Duffy feels remorse about Mrs Sinico's death and realizes that his pursuit of control and order has caused only to his loneliness. He experiences an epiphany of his loneliness at the end of the story. Mr Duffy has unwittingly been lonely in the past, is presently lonely, and will be forever lonely.

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