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The Art of Language: An Exploration of Stylistic Techniques In “The Little Match Girl”
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Abstract

This work tends to analyze Anderson’s short story “The Little Match Girl” from the perspective of stylistics. For this purpose, the text of the selected short story serves as the major source of primary data. In addition, the researchers gathered secondary data from various online resources for the purpose of reviewing relevant literature in this field. The method of close reading was adopted so to extract various stylistic aspects from the selected short story. The story was analysed from three different perspectives of stylistics. The first level of the analysis contains lexical analysis that deals with various parts of speech.

Similarly, in the second phase, the researchers analyzed the figurative language that the writer used to create a special literary effect in the work. Finally, the third level of analysis deals with the phonological aspects of the story. After careful analysis, the researchers came to the conclusion that the writer has followed such a language that is rich with various literary devices and techniques which have been utilized in an effective and distinctive manner and imaginatively presents his thoughts through the masterful use of language and style.

Introduction

Narration, encompassing both spoken and written storytelling, serves as a universal medium for expressing events and thoughts within diverse communities. Its primary focus lies in illuminating human behavior, cognition, emotions, and the values held by individuals or community members. According to Davies, Browne, Gannon, and Honan (2005), the essence of a narrative lies in its creativity, often transcending mere depictions of actual events. Various scholars, including Labov and Waletzky (1967), Labov (1972), and others, have contributed to defining and understanding the concept of narrative. Schiffrin (1981) characterizes narrative as a universally connected unit of communication, highlighting both its formal and functional grammatical characteristics. Furthermore, Labov (1997) emphasizes the causal connection inherent in a story, where events unfold in a sequence that denotes restructuring and change. The current research undertakes a stylistic analysis of Andersen’s short tale, “The Little Match Girl.”

Hans Christian Andersen, renowned as a literary genius, has made a name for himself in the history of literature through captivating stories that transcend cultural and historical boundaries (Zipes, 2005; Tatar, 2017). At the heart of his repertoire lies the enduring and emotive narrative, "The Little Match Girl." This investigation ventures on a profound analysis of Andersen's masterpiece, exploring the complex layers of language and literary devices that shape this poignant short story. The aim is to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the stylistic elements incorporated into the story "The Little Match Girl."

Hans Christian Andersen was a Danish author and poet, born into a poor family in the year 1805 in Odense. His father was a shoemaker and his mother an illiterate washer. He probably got his first taste for fantastic literature when he heard his grandmother and her friends telling old folk stories in the asylum his grandfather lived and his grandmother worked for. The author was also interested in singing, acting and playwriting (Merriman, 2006). Later in

his life, he became a recognised writer for children and enjoyed fame, international acclaim and good connections, especially in London, where he became close to Charles Dickens (although that friendship ended during his second trip to the English capital) (Wullschlager, 2012). In his stories, Andersen outlines the economic strife and social segregation he experienced during his childhood and early youth, which was still present in Denmark and Europe in general. One example of this is the "The Little Match Girl". Even during adulthood, the writer was always concerned about being left out, forgotten, or not appropriately recognized by his peers (Wullschlager, 2012).

Stylistic evaluation, a necessary aspect of literary inspection, requires a detailed exploration of linguistic characteristics, literary techniques, and structural subtleties to reveal the aesthetic and emotive dimensions of a literary work (Leech & Short, 2007; Simpson, 2004).

In traditional literature, Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Match Girl" endures a timeless masterpiece that requires stylistic scrutiny. Implementing a stylistic perspective, scholars aim to unravel the layers of linguistic artistry employed by Andersen in this poignant short story. The narrative, first published in 1845, revolves around an impoverished girl vending matches on a frigid New Year's Eve, offering readers a glimpse into the harsh realities of life. Stylistic examination of this narrative expands beyond deciphering the plot; it involves an assiduous investigation of Andersen's lexical preferences, figurative language, and phonological aspects to reveal the intentional and artistic crafting of his prose.

The acceptance of stylistic analysis in the study of "The Little Match Girl" reveals Andersen's deliberate use of language to evoke specific emotional responses. Researchers explore the narrative's lexical richness, exploring how particular words and phrases contribute to the overall tone and mood of the story. Figurative language, such as similes and symbolism, adds layers of meaning, inviting readers to explore beyond the literal interpretation. Additionally, attention to phonological elements discloses the rhythmic and sonic qualities that enhance the narrative's immersive power.

As scholars engage in stylistic analysis of "The Little Match Girl," they uncover the subtle shading within Andersen's prose, recognizing that every linguistic choice plays a role in shaping the reader's perception and emotional connection to the narrative. Through this exploration, the intent is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the stylistic dimensions inherent in Andersen's timeless tale.

Research Questions

The researchers formulated the following questions that would seek answers in the following analysis.

1. What are the literary devices that the author has utilized in the selected short story to create special literary effects?
2. How does the writer use language to convey his thoughts as depicted in the story from a stylistic perspective?

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to identify the figures of speech employed by the writer in the selected story to achieve specific literary effects. Additionally, it seeks to conduct a stylistic analysis of the language utilized in the story.

Statement of the Problem

Writers employ various strategies to create a special effect while they are producing literary works. Such strategies include the style, figurative devices and language they utilize. The present work delves deeply into the short story under the title "The Little Match Girl" by Hans Christian Andersen. Thus, it deals with the literary devices, lexical elements and phonological aspects of the selected short story. Moreover, it also presents an overview of the story for the better understanding of the readers and to show how the author has utilized language and depicted the situation in words.

Limitations of the Study

This work has some limitations that should be addressed at the very beginning. First of all, this work deals with the stylistic analysis of the selected short story. In this domain, the researchers only have dealt with the three major areas or aspects of stylistics including lexical analysis, analysis of the figurative language that the author has employed and phonological aspects. In addition, the researchers have gone through nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs that are used abundantly in the story. Similarly, all the figures of speech employed by the writer have been brought under consideration. Finally, in the phonological analysis of the story, the three major elements i.e. Alliteration, assonance and consonance are dealt with.

Significance of the Work

The present work is of foremost significance for researchers in general and students of literature in common. It reveals insights into the author's intentions and the meaning conveyed in the story. It also sheds light on the stylistic elements employed by the writer to create a special effect. In addition, readers can gain a deeper sense of the themes, ideas and messages the author has depicted in the story. Moreover, researchers in future can also compare the writing

style of the selected story with other works of other writers in the realms of literature. Finally, this analysis can help readers to deepen their appreciation and understanding of the selected piece of literature.

Literature Review

Murtaza's (2013) work asserts that Literature owes a good deal of power to the way language is used in the text. Most of the writers including Plato, Aristotle, Wordsworth, Cardinal Newman, and T.S. Eliot have made great efforts to acquire Style. It is recorded by Plato that in one of his drafts of Dialogues, found after his death, the first paragraph was written in seventy different forms. The writers try to write well and the critics try to understand well. Style is the result of choice-making activity in language use, the normal and special both, whether made in textbooks or in real life. Thus, the beauty of literature lies within its language.

Style in literature denotes the method by which language is used in a given text. Similarly, Widdowson defines the term stylistics as "By Stylistics, I mean the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation and I shall take the view that what distinguishes Stylistics from Literary Criticism on the one hand and Linguistics on the other is essentially a means of linking the two and has (as yet at least) no autonomous domain of its own. Stylistics, however, involves both Literary Criticism and Linguistics, as its morphological make-up suggests: the "Style" component relating it to the former and the "istics" component to the latter". Widdowson believes that stylistics is an area where the two disciplines i.e. Linguistics and Literary Criticism-meet (Widdowson, 1992).

According to Bashiruddin (2018), Stylistics simply results from 'style' which is, in a widely held view, correspondence between thought and expression. The notion of style is based on the assumption that of the two functions of language i.e. means of communication and also a means of shaping one's thought. The first one is communicative and the second one is expressive. Generally, it is defined as the ability to write clearly and correctly. Specifically, it belongs to the realm of Grammar and sets up a number of rules and general acceptance as to how to speak and how to write discards all kinds of deviations as being violations of the existing norms.

Khan, Ahmad, Ahmad, and Ijaz (2015) conducted a thorough examination of the stylistic elements employed by Dr AR Tabassum in the selected short story. The research contributes valuable insights into the linguistic and literary techniques utilized by the author. Through the lens of stylistic analysis, the study offers an understanding of the storytelling techniques, language choices, and literary devices incorporated by Dr. AR Tabassum in crafting the short story "The Last Word."

In the scholarly work authored by Parina, & de Leon (2014), a modal framework, as proposed by Simpson, is applied for a stylistic analysis of Ian Rosales' acclaimed Filipino story, "Things You Don't Know." Stylistics, with its focus on linguistic choices and reader interpretation, utilizes Simpson's modal framework to reveal the narrator's attitude. The analysis reveals the prevalence of the epistemic modal, indicating the narrator's uncertainty in various situations. The modal framework also serves to identify the overall tone of the text, whether positive, negative, or neutral. With the epistemic modal predominating, the story is characterized by a negative tone, reflecting the narrator's uncertainty about everyday affairs, emphasized by their reliance on perceptions of external appearances or surroundings. This study offers valuable insights into the narrative intricacies, contributing to a deeper understanding of the stylistic elements in Ian Rosales' "Things You Don't Know."

According to Azar and Yazdchi (2012), there is an exploration of the increasing popularity of "Discourse Analysis" in recent years, specifically its application to the analysis of literary texts. The study focuses on the utilization of the "Systemic Functional Grammar," a framework developed by Halliday, with particular emphasis on the Transitivity model. This model, which examines processes and participants for text analysis, is applied to scrutinize James Joyce's short story "Clay," specifically concentrating on the central character, "Maria." Through the collection and examination of sentences pertaining to the character, the study aims to reveal insights. The outcomes of the analysis are consistent with literary critics' assertions, suggesting that "Maria" functions as a symbolic representation of the Virgin Mary, particularly emphasizing her well-natured qualities. This review acknowledges the research's significance in contributing to the discourse on literary analysis methodologies, providing valuable insights into the nuanced interpretation of characters within the context of Systemic Functional Grammar.

In the dissertation authored by O'Connor (2019), the main objective is to conduct a stylistic analysis of four specific short stories by two prominent American authors, Mary Flannery O'Connor and William Sydney Porter (O. Henry). The stories under examination are "Good Country People" (1955) and "Judgement Day" (1965) by O'Connor, along with "The Green Door" (1907) and "The Last Leaf" (1906) by O. Henry. The research aims to explore the figurative use of language, emphasizing language choices and their impact on readers. The study adopts a theoretical, analytical, and descriptive approach, organized into five chapters. The initial chapter introduces the research, outlining the problem statement, objectives, and significance. The second chapter incorporates a review of related studies and a theoretical framework. The substantive analysis of the selected works is presented in chapter four, while chapter five synthesizes the research findings and offers recommendations. The analysis reveals that both authors employ similar

stylistic devices, yet they convey distinct meanings shaped by their individual beliefs, despite sharing certain background similarities. This underscores the unique contributions of each author in revealing meanings and enhancing aesthetic value, leaving a lasting impact on literature.

Zaib et al. (2022) boards on a narrative analysis of the classic short story "The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe (1843). Employing Labov's Sociolinguistic Model (1972), the study explores the six narrative components through a qualitative research approach. The research identifies the macro characteristics as particularly effective in applying Labov's paradigm of narrative analysis. Additionally, the study explores microfeatures, incorporating elements of discourse analysis such as cohesive ties, discourse markers, substitutions, ellipses, contractions, exchanges, inversions, and other attributes. This thorough exploration aims to reveal representative aspects of the writer's work. Originating from sociolinguist William Labov's framework designed for analyzing oral stories of human experience, the researcher endeavours to examine how the oral story form is represented in a written narrative. The findings of the study showcase how Labov's Sociolinguistic Model serves as a valuable tool for analyzing the narrative structure of a short story, providing readers and students with insights for in-depth study. Moreover, the research contributes to the enhancement of readers' analytical and reading abilities. It underscores the applicability of Labov's Sociolinguistics Model to short literary works, affirming its relevance in the analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's compelling narrative in "The Tell-Tale Heart."

Methodology

The study follows a purely qualitative approach as it uses language to discuss and analyze it from a Stylistics point of view. The study adopted the text of the story "The Little Match Girl" as a source of primary data. In addition, for relevant literature, the researcher collected data from various online sources. The primary data were analyzed in three stages. In the first stage, lexical elements comprising various parts of speech used in the story abundantly were analyzed. In the second phase of data collection, various figures of speech were identified along with instances from the text. At the final stage of analysis, various phonological aspects were examined

Discussion

Overview of the Story

Christian Anderson's story "The Little Match Girl" is thought-provoking in the sense that it presents the terrible situation of a little girl who sells matches. The nature of the story is melancholic and sorrowful as in a very harsh and cold weather a tiny girl, marked by poverty and fear of abuse by her parents, wants to die instead of returning home without having a single penny.

The story begins with a statement, "It was terribly cold and nearly dark on the last evening of the old year and the snow was falling fast (p.1)". From the very start, the writer explains the harsh weather to the readers. In such severe cold, a little girl, barefooted, roams through the street in a struggle to sell matches, having lost one of the oversized slippers in the streets. The writer effectively depicts the fearful picture of the little creature creeping into the street while trembling with cold and hunger. Despite her miserable condition, she goes into an imaginary world by kindling a match against the wall, seeking shelter for a while. By doing so, she comes across a warm and ornamented stove. However, when the tiny fire of the match dies, she finds no more the warm stove. She again kindles another match and finds a table covered by a cloth and a steaming goose on it through the wall. But again, when the fire is extinguished, the visionary scene also vanishes. Next, she lights another match, and by this time she sees her deceased grandmother. On seeing her grandmother, she cries with ecstasy, begging her not to leave her like the stove, the goose, and the glorious Christmas tree. Since she knows that her grandmother will also vanish, she burns the whole bundle of matches as she wishes to keep her grandmother there. Her grandmother takes her in arms, and both of them fly upward far above the earth. There she finds neither cold nor hunger as they are in heaven with God.

At the end of this magically sounding story, the author portrays the miserable condition of the little match girl who dies in a depressed and dejected way. At the dawn of the next day, she is laid in the street with pale cheeks. Due to severe cold, she has been frozen to death. On the very first dawn of the new year, the sun shines on the miserable corpse of the tiny match girl who still has a bundle of matches in her hand. She seems as if she is waiting for someone who can buy some matches in return for money.

Lexical Analysis

Common Nouns	Proper Nouns	Uncountable Noun
Evening girl	Goose	Snow cold
Year streets	New year's eve	Hunger misery
Slippers home	Penny dinner brass iron	Pain
Mother creature	Christmas grandmother	
Cradle Children	God earth	
Window houses	Morning	

Candle stars		
Arms		

Table: various types of nouns used in the story

Besides the abundant use of various types of nouns, other parts of speech have also been utilized in this story. The following table shows the other parts of speech in detail.

Adjective	Verb	Adverb
Cold, dark, large	Roamed, left	Terribly, nearly, last
Poor, little	Running, rolling	Fast, very, quiet
Bare, naked, red	Seized, carried, bought	Certainly, almost
Blue, long, fair	Shivering, crept, hung	Beautifully
Largest, burning, wonderful	Shining, sank, dared	
Polished, thick, damp	Vanished, burst, burning	
Colored, snowy, higher	Dying, glowed	
Shining, glorious, brighter		
Frozen		

Table: Use of verbs, adjectives and adverbs

It is evident from the table above that various degrees of adjectives have been used in the story. Positive degrees of adjectives can be seen in words like cold, large, dark long etc. Similarly, instances of the superlative degree are the largest while comparative degrees can be seen in the word higher. Besides, the present participle of verbs has been used as adjectives like burning, shining etc. Finally, past participle forms are also utilized as adjectives like polished and coloured etc. Along with the use of various degrees of adjective, various forms of verbs like present participle and past participle have been used. Finally, various forms of adverbs can also be seen in the story.

Literary Devices Used in the Story

To create a special literary effect, the author of the story “The Little Match Girl” has adopted various literary techniques. Such literary devices are discussed below in detail.

<p>1. Personification</p> <p>It is a literary technique in which non-human objects or concepts are attributed the qualities of humans. In the selected short story, the writer has effectively utilized this figure. An instance of this device can be seen at the beginning when the writer discusses the cold weather ‘So the little girl went on with her little naked feet, which were quite red and blue with the cold’. So, in this line, feet are personified as here two different colors are used to make them alive and also emphasize how cold they were.</p>
<p>2. Irony</p> <p>Situational irony is used in the story very successfully. The little girl sells matches which are used as symbols of hope and warmth. Thus, she means to give warmth to others but herself dies of severe cold.</p>
<p>3. Symbolism</p> <p>The author has used the technique of symbolism. In this technique, authors use one thing that represents or stands for something else. In the selected story, the writer talks about the red and blue colors of the little girl’s feet. So here red and blue symbolize and emphasizes the discomfort the girl feels due to the severe cold weather. The use of two opposite colors also makes the sentence more interesting and appealing to the vision of the readers.</p> <p>Moreover, the cold symbolizes the harsh reality of poverty and miseries that are faced to the little girl. Similarly, the match sticks are also used as symbols as they stand for hope and warmth in life. They also serve to enlighten a perfect place for the girl.</p>
<p>4. Imagery</p> <p>The writer along with other literary devices has used the technique of imagery. He presents every scene in such a way that it appeals to the senses of human beings. At the very beginning, for example the writer portrays the harsh weather “It was so terribly cold. Snow was falling, and it was almost dark”. Similarly, the writer advances further and describes the physique of the girl. He says “Shivering with cold and hunger, she crept along, a picture of misery, poor little girl! The snowflakes fell on her long fair hair, which hung in pretty curls over her neck. In all the windows lights were shining, and there was a wonderful smell of roast goose, for it was New Year’s Eve”. Here the long curly hairs that were hanging on her neck and the smell of roasted goose present beautiful imagery that appeal to the sense of sight and smell.</p>
<p>5. Simile</p> <p>In order to compare things, the author of the story has used simile. Describing the situation when the girl kindled the match, i.e. “It made a warm, bright flame, like a little candle” the poet has used simile. In</p>

<p>addition the poet also uses simile in line “It burned brightly, and when the light fell upon the wall it became transparent like a thin veil” when she lights another match. Another instance can also be sorted out representing simile from the text, for example, “It really seemed to the little girl as if she were sitting before a great iron stove”. Finally, the girl uses a simile when she talks to her grandmother saying “You will vanish like the warm stove, the wonderful roast goose and the beautiful big Christmas tree!”.</p>
<p>6. Onomatopoeia</p> <p>Onomatopoeia is a literary device that is used to represent or to copy sounds. The writer has used this device when the girl for the first-time lights a match. The extract is taken from the text “She drew one out. <i>R-r-ratch!</i> How it sputtered and burned! It made a warm, bright flame, like a little candle” shows the representation of Onomatopoeia.</p>
<p>7. Soliloquy</p> <p>It is a literary device in which a character speaks with himself. Writers use this method in order to reveal the inner mind of their characters. In this story, the little girl talks with herself when she is alone. She pleases to her grandmother who appears in her imagination. Since she is the product of the character’s imaginations and is not present in actuality, therefore she uses the technique of soliloquy. The selected text i.e. “Grandmother!” cried the child. “Oh, take me with you! I know you will disappear when the match is burned out. You will vanish like the warm stove, the wonderful roast goose and the beautiful big Christmas tree!” shows the soliloquy uttered by the little girl.</p>

Phonological Analysis

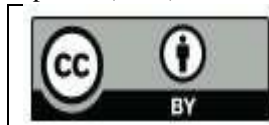
<p>1. Alliteration</p> <p>Alliteration is the repetition of similar sounds in a phrase or sentence. In this story alliteration has been used to create a rhyming effect in words. It is present in lines for example “Oh, take me with you! I know you will disappear when the match is burned out. You will vanish like the warm stove”. Here “W” sound is repeated. Similarly, “L” sound is repeated in “like a little candle”. Another example may be seen in the repetition of “B” sound in “It burned brightly”.</p>
<p>2. Assonance</p> <p>Like alliteration, the writer has amply followed the technique of assonance. It refers to the repetition of vowel sounds in successive words or phrases. An instance of this device can be seen in “the snowflakes whirled around her” where “O” sound is repeated. Similarly, “æ” sound is also repeated in “it gave a strange light!”. Along with the repetition of simple vowel sounds, diphthongs are also repeated. An example can be extracted from the text where “ai” diphthong is repeated in “line of fire”.</p>
<p>3. Consonance</p> <p>Consonance is also the repetition of consonants sounds that occur inside the words. So, in order to create musicality and rhythmic effect in words, the author has utilized the technique of consonance as well. An example can be taken as “in the glow the old grandmother stood clear and shining, kind and lovely” where “S” sound is repeated. In addition, “she could see only the thick, cold wall” also represents the repetition of “K” sound.</p>

Conclusion

"The Little Match Girl" opens as a poignant story that seamlessly weaves together the domains of actuality and imagination. Focused on an impoverished girl navigating the cold streets to vend matches, the writer deftly captures the severity of the weather, portraying the little girl as barefoot and shivering. In her pursuit of warmth, the girl ignites a match, transporting herself into a bewitching world where a cooked goose and a splendid Christmas tree come alive. A third match reveals the presence of her deceased grandmother, whom she implores not to leave. The story ends with a celestial ascent with her grandmother, transcending the earthly struggles of hunger and cold. However, the harsh reality sets in on the following New Year's morning, as she is discovered frozen to death. This research paper employs stylistic analysis to explore the complexities of the narrative. The author employs rich figurative language, incorporating simile, imagery, symbolism, irony, and onomatopoeia to craft a compelling tale. The technique of soliloquy is adeptly utilized, providing insight into the protagonist's inner thoughts. Furthermore, the writer employs alliteration, assonance, and consonance, enhancing the musicality and rhythmic effects of the narrative. Through these stylistic elements, the author achieves an evocative storytelling technique, elevating "The Little Match Girl" beyond a mere tale of hardship into a literary masterpiece.

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