

**Linguistic Features in Re.Karthigesu’s Novels: an Overview from a Stylistic Perspective**

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In linguistics, the concept *discourse analysis* is used to refer to the analysis of both spoken and written texts. In other words, discourse analysis studies the meaning of usages in context which can be explained with the physical and social knowledge; and the socio-psychological factors influencing communication, as well as the knowledge of time and place in which the words are uttered or written (Stilwell Peccei 1999, Yule 1996 cited in Joan Cutting, 2008:2). So, *discourse analysis* gives importance to the structures of texts. It also explains how language structure beyond the sentence level is organized and used to convey the intended messages—conveyed meanings of the writer to the readers.

Novels which have written discourses or texts, often organize groups of sentences into paragraphs, groups of paragraphs into sections and groups of sections into chapters in a coherent and cohesive manner. In novels we find different characters taking part in various kinds of discourses (part playing different roles) among themselves. Also, the author either narrates the story by himself or through one of the characters. Besides conversations among the characters, various speech acts and communicative acts are also created by the author. Halliday identifies that these written or spoken discourses have three principal messages: First of all the text is a message by itself. That is, the sentences follow one another in a certain order and cohere
together to make a unified entity. This is a **textual message**. Second, it seeks to represent reality (not necessarily physical). This is known as an **ideational message**. The third one creates a relationship with its audience. This is the **interpersonal message** (cited in Geoffrey Finch, 1998:209).

In this paper, some of the texts in Re.Karthigesu's novels, one of the famous Tamil fiction writers in Malaysia, have been identified and analysed to highlight the unique linguistic stylistic features employed by him.

**Language Usage and Communication Techniques in Jayakandar’s Short Fiction**

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Jayakandar is a well known writer in modern Tamil literature. He received the ‘Jnanapith award’ for his life time contribution to literature. He has many literary faces like short story writer, novelist, poet, column writer. His writing career spans more than five decades, and he is still going strong.

This paper contains two parts

The first part deals with the language use of Jayakandar in his short fiction. It tries to analyse the face of the language emerging as dialects in conversations between characters in his short fiction.

The dialect survey brings to the fore the dialects of various social sectors such as caste, religion and group.

**caste and religion**

Various caste and subcaste dialects are used in Jayakandar’s short fiction. The dialect of Christianity occurs in one of his fictional pieces. The group which emerges from a particular political and social background has a specific language usage for it.
Contents

- Introduction
- Objectives of the Study
- Research Questions
- Methodology
- Theoretical Framework
- Findings and Discussion

Introduction

- no adequate and well formalized studies - with reference to Tamil
  Literature and Linguistics
- a few researches available but not analysed with empirical data and
  suitable methodology
- "tuttama na nata", "naTama na nata", "nimalya na nata", "Liya
  na nata", "pootama na nata", or "saRiyaluku na nata"
- forms as given above are explained in a subjective way without
  empirical evidences and applying objective methodology
- related to the fluency of language use, choice of appropriate
  expressions, coherence or cohesion between language structure and
  language use: free flow of communicative
- So, this kind of objectivity that is brought into the stylistic studies made
  me to undertake a study of linguistic stylistics with reference to Tamil
  modern literature

What is STYLISTICS?

© Geoffrey N. Leech (1981:13), defines, stylistics as the linguistic study
of style, and simply as an exercise in describing what use is made of
language.
© Charles Bally (in Hough, 1968), one of the founding fathers of modern
stylistics, defined it as the study of the affective elements in language -
these affective elements being conceived as optimal addition to an
already determined meaning.
© While, Block (1993) defines style as the message carried out by the
frequency distribution and transitional probabilities of [a discourse]
linguistic features, especially when they differ from those of the same
features in language as a whole.
© Stylistics is actually a description of various linguistic forms found in a
language use and style is a concept that is used traditionally as a
deviation from an established norm in the literary language. Stylistics is a
part of literary criticism and not of linguistics. As such it goes beyond
consideration of language and beyond description and analysis into
evaluation (Suresh Kumar, 1988)

Objectives of the Study

- to analyse the Tamil language as it is used in Re. Karthigesu's novels
- to identify and describe the stylistic devices used by the author
- to seek possible relationship between them and the context of use of these devices

Research Questions

- What are the stylistics devices used by the author in these novels?
- What are the probable relationships between the stylistic devices and the contexts of use of these devices?
Taking Short's (1996:256) principle into consideration a theoretical framework was devised. First five phases namely: theme, plot, character, role relationship and settings which are found in a novel identified. The various stylistic features found in these five phases are identified and analysed.
Phase 2

- Plot is mostly in the form of multidirectional discourse involving more than two characters of the novel.
- Mostly this will be an active discourse structure where one can observe different language structures, discourse elements, and dialectal variations.
- Mostly the content of the discourse will be related to emotion, cynicism, attitude of the interlocutors, an outburst of agony, jealousy and emotional outburst.
- For example, when a doctor speaks to another doctor in a formal situation he will use medical terms and standard language but when he speaks to his patient he may use simple language with lot of phonological and morphological reductions.

Phase 3

- Characters have both uni and bidirectional discourse or interaction between character 1 to 2; character 3 to 4; character 5 to 6 and vice versa.
- Though there may not be a significant variation in the content of the interaction when compared to the content mentioned in phase 1, there will be significant variations in the language structure.
- Since phase 3 involves extensive interaction between different characters we can observe various discourse features.

Phase 4

- Role Relationship is an unidirectional discourse between the author and the reader.
- In this category the author gives his opinion, suggestions, criticism, explanation, and comments to the reader about whom he does not have any idea regarding his/her sex, age, mental make up and knowledge level.
- In spite of this the author selects certain concepts related to the world, development of the storyline and the actions of the characters of the novel and discusses them addressing to the readers.
- This unidirectional interaction will often have a simple sentence structure with less discourse markers and less variations in the language.

Phase 5

- Setting is both uni and bidirectional interaction between the author and his own consciousness / mind and between the character of the novel and the author.
- The content of the interaction is mostly about certain philosophical thoughts, advice, long narration, and lamentation. In this we could identify two types of linguistic outputs as follows:
  - Author's soliloquy or revelation of his inner mind in the form of explanations of some action or situations being described in the novel. This revelation of mind may sometimes represent the author's own ideologies or his own character.
  - The author's ideology is sometimes expressed through the mind of one of his characters in the novel.

Qualitative Analysis

(Microscopic Level)

Core Features

Linguistic Level

Sociolinguistic Level

Rhetoric Level

(Language and Style)

(Contextual/Situational)

Variations of Language Use

Rhetoric and Style

Linguistic and Paralinguistic Socio-linguistic Features

Features

- Suffix level blending
- Repetition
- Anaphora
- Elliptical Sentences
- Conjunctions
- Turn taking
- Speech act: Thought Act

Adapted Original

- Linguistic: Social, Educational, Gender, Socio-cultural, etc.
- Paralinguistic: Intonation, Emotion, etc.

Rhythm

Poetic

Metaphor
Findings and Discussion

Themes and Messages of Re. Karthigesu

- Depict the struggle of the middle class people of the Tamil community living in Malaysia during the period 1950-2005.
- Due to the social structure and multilingual background, participation of the characters and the discourse structure they use are also based on their social and professional background and as well as their status.

Language

- common linguistic features found among the middle class families
- utterances are meaningful, appropriate
- avoids exaggerations, redundancy or unwanted elements / expression
- loan words - technical words and medical terms - reflect the socio-cultural aspects of the middle class society
- adopted appropriate quotations from ancient Tamil ethical literature and devotional verses
- quotations from the Gospel of Ramakrishna paramahansa and Bhagavat teaching
- excerpts from Malaysian history books

Stylistic Devices

- Conversation - (Active Discourse) - Phase 2
  - direct speech - helps to achieve effectiveness, naturalness and clarity in communication
  - language use - character's age, sex, education level, profession and social contexts (based on the settings)
  - neutral and non-emotional reporting clauses such as ke:TTaks (asked), ku:Rinar (said) in these novels
- Conversational settings - creates realistic places and speech events - eg. hospital, police station
- uses non-verbal communicative strategies

Narrations

- more simple sentences than complex sentences
  - helps to maintain continuity in the discourse
  - express the emotion of the characters and serenity

- Tamil is Diglossia - Both varieties: spoken and written Tamil used
- minimal spoken variety among educated characters - formal / informal
- among friends, close associates, family members - spoken variety though education level is high

Lexical Usage

- common and simple words
- Loan words - English and Malay
- new coinages - eg. tappalin (tarpaulin), i:pputu (waste plate)
- Loan Translation - oUpaTuttum peTTi (the light box used by doctors to see x rays), kal:py:陶aTTi (waste plate)
- Reduplicated Forms
- Repetitions
- Tamilisation/Nativisation
- Loan Blend
Conclusion

- Phonological and morphological reductions (especially in conversations/spoken discourse) are found to vary according to the social parameters such as age, gender, education level, social background of the characters (in the novels).
- Different types of loan blends, loan translations or entirely new coinages are used by the author.
- The author has applied aptly the 'turn-taking' and 'politeness' strategies in conversations.
- Simple standard Tamil in narrations.

THANK YOU