

Sentence Complexity in James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury

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Abstract

The present study is based on stylistic analysis of James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury. This paper aims to investigate the reason behind using complex sentences as a stylistic feature in these two literary works. The study analyzes how these two authors have used linguistic features like sentence complexity as a means of transmitting ideas, portraying characters and relating events which are central to the story. The analysis is based on Halliday's and Matthiessen's model (2014) in order to analyze complex sentences and their constituent components. It is concluded that James Joyce uses complex sentences in order to show the phases of his main character's growth from infancy to manhood. However, William Faulkner uses complex sentences in his novel as a means by which he distinguishes his characters' personalities.

Key-words:

Sentence - Syntax - Stylistic complexity - Stylistic feature - Character.

تعقيد الجملة في رواية جيمس جويس صورة الفنان كشاب ورواية ويليام فولكنر الصوت والغضب

الملخص

تعتمد الدراسة الحالية علي تحليل أسلوب لرواية جيمس جويس صورة الفنان كشاب ورواية الصوت والغضب لويليام فولكنر. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحري السبب وراء استعمال الجمل المعقدة كميزة أسلوبية في هذين العملين الأدبيين. تحلل هذه الدراسة كيف استعمل هذين المؤلفين ميزات أسلوبية مثل تعقيد الجملة كوسيلة لنقل الأفكار وتصوير الشخصيات وربط الأحداث الأساسية للقصة. يعتمد التحليل على نموذج هاليداي (2014) بغاية تحليل الجمل المعقدة ومكوناتها. نستنتج من خلال هذه الدراسة أن جيمس جويس استعمل الجمل المعقدة كميزة أسلوبية في روايته بهدف إظهار مراحل نمو شخصيته الرئيسية بينما استعمل ويليام فولكنر هذا النوع من الجمل كوسيلة لتوضيح الفرق بين شخصيات أبطال قصته.

الكلمات المفاتيح:

الجملة - النحو - تعقيد أسلوب - ميزة أسلوبية - شخصية.

La Complexité de la Phrase dans Portrait de l'Artiste comme Jeune Homme de James Joyce et Le Son et La Fureur de William Faulkner

Résumé

L'étude entreprise est basée sur l'analyse stylistique de Portrait de l'Artiste comme Jeune Homme de James Joyce et Le Son et La Fureur de William Faulkner. Cet article vise à étudier la raison de l'utilisation de phrases complexes comme caractéristique stylistique dans ces deux œuvres littéraires. L'étude analyse comment ces deux auteurs ont utilisé des caractéristiques linguistiques comme la complexité des phrases comme moyen de transmettre des idées, de représenter des personnages et de relier des événements qui sont au cœur de l'histoire. L'analyse est basée sur le modèle de Halliday et Matthiessen (2014) afin d'analyser des phrases complexes et leurs autres composants. On en conclut que James Joyce utilise des phrases complexes pour montrer les phases de croissance de son personnage principal de l'enfance à la virilité. Tandis que William Faulkner utilise des phrases complexes dans son roman pour distinguer la personnalité de ses personnages.

Mots-clés:

Phrase - Syntaxe - Complexité stylistique - Caractéristique stylistique - Caractère.

Introduction:

The topic of the present study is concerned with the use of complex sentences in two novels. The works examined are an American novel and an Irish one, *The Sound and the Fury* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. These two novels are written by two notable novelists, William Faulkner and James Joyce respectively. Both James Joyce and William Faulkner are famous for their unusual style in narrating their stories.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is an Irish novel which was written by James Joyce in the twentieth century. As stated in Evans (1990), Joyce is a modernist writer: ‘the modern movement’ of literature or what is called ‘modernism’ began in the early decades of the twentieth century. During this period, the English literature was rich and creative. Modernist authors are those who published their notable works between 1910 and 1930 like James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, D.H. Lawrence and William Yeats.

The Irish literature in general and Joyce’s literature specifically attempt to reflect the reality of the Irish community. Joyce tries to reflect the individuals’ thinking, way of life and desires. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, James Joyce tries to describe the phases of Stephen’s growth from infancy to manhood. In this novel, the author’s style changes in parallel with Stephen’s maturity, attitudes and feelings.

The second novel to be examined in this study is *The Sound and the Fury* which is written by the American author, William Faulkner who is famous of his unusual style. He is famous for using the technique of interior monologues to reflect his characters’ thoughts and feelings and to reveal their secrets. In this novel, Faulkner employs different language style for each one of the three main characters: Benjamin, Jason and Quentin.

1. Literature Review:

The concept of style has a huge number of definitions because it has attracted the attention of many scholars. The origin of the English word ‘Style’ is derived from the Latin word ‘Stilus’ which means a pen or a pointed stick of bone or metal used as a writing instrument to inscribe wax tables . The term ‘style’ then was metaphorically applied to the different ways in which a person can express himself in speech as well as in writing (Lucas, 1990; Renkema, 1993). For Lynch (2005), the term ‘style’ can be used in different domains, such as style in architecture, literature, behaviour, linguistics, dress, and in other fields of human activity. In classical Latin, the word ‘style’ refers to the way of writing

and to the way of expressing, e.g., the style of Shakespeare or the style of Joyce. Practical linguists and teachers of language consider style as the ability to write clearly, correctly and in a manner calculated to interest the readers (Lucas, 2012). Galperin (1990) defines style as the correspondence between thought and its expression. It is shown in the way sentences are arranged to convey the ideas and to get response (ibid.). The term 'style' is the individual way of each individual writer in which he uses language to create his own peculiarities and to achieve the effect he desires (Benzoukh, 2017). Similarly, Chatman (1990) considers style as a product of individual choices and patterns of choices among linguistic possibilities. In other words, style is considered as a fingerprint since each language user has some idiosyncratic features that distinguish him from others using the same language or a variety of language (ibid.). According to this view, style is the reflection of the writer's character because it reflects the writer's own experience, education, understanding and way of putting forward his ideas that differentiate him from others (Mustafa, 1998). Thus, the term 'style' is a board term which is widely used to involve techniques, methods, strategies, grammars and procedures that one may acquire (Corder, 1990).

Defining style leads to the definition of stylistics as a process of literary text analysis which starts from a basic assumption that the primary interpretative procedures used in the reading of the literary text are linguistic procedures (Carter, 2014). Turner (2004, p.7) maintains that since linguistics is the science of describing language and showing how it works, "stylistics is that part of linguistics which concentrates on variation in the use of language often, but not exclusively with special attention to the most conscious and complex uses of language in literature". For Short and Leech (2007, p.11), stylistics "is simply defined as the linguistic study of style". Stylistics has emerged as a result of the application of linguistics to literary texts in addition to the approaches of literary criticism (Benzoukh, 2017). For Carter and Stockwell (2008), stylistics has emerged as a true and separate field in the 1960's as a result of the developments in the linguistic theory, specifically Halliday's Functional Grammar. Carter and Stockwell (2008) state that the traditional approaches to literary criticism, like close reading, focused mainly on the texts of literary works by contrast to the addition of linguistic insights which led to the integration of conversation analysis. In 1966, Lodge saw Spitzer as 'the father of the New Stylistics', citing his concern to relate linguistic structures in literary texts to aesthetic effects (and even the psychology of the author). While Lodge rejects the psychological aspects of Spitzer's work, he approves his emphasis on taking an intuitive

response to a text as a starting point for a more analytical exploration, which may confirm or negate the original reaction. In this sense Lodge sees stylistics as a more objective approach which needs to be added to the aesthetic and evaluative point of view of the literary critic.

The term 'syntax' refers to the structure of sentences. At the simplest level, it means the order or arrangement of words within a sentence, or the grammatical arrangement of words, phrases and clauses to give a sentence its structure. In examining syntax as a part of literary style, one considers several issues. For example, has the writer employed sentences in which the normal order of words is reversed? Is there any reason for the inversion of word order? How frequent is the inversion? Are the sentences predominantly long or short? Are they simple, compound, multiple or complex? Ordinarily, an effective style is one in which there is a variety in the syntax: the writer varies the length and structure of his sentences and sometimes reverses the grammatical order of words. Such a variety is necessary to avoid monotony. Sometimes, however, a writer who wishes to create some special effects or achieve some particular purpose may employ one type of sentence predominantly (Agu, 2008).

Sentences in English are grammatically classified as follows:

A- Simple sentence: A simple sentence is a sentence that contains only one clause; it includes the elements: subject, verb, object, adverbial Etc (Quirk et al.,2010). The simple sentence has four main types:

a. Declaratives: They are sentences in which the subject is overt and generally precedes the verb: E.g. Pauline gave Tom a digital watch for his birthday.

b. Interrogatives: These sentences are formally marked in one of two ways:
i. Yes-No interrogatives: the operator is placed in front of the subject: E.g. Did Pauline give Tom a digital watch for his birthday? And Wh-interrogatives: the interrogative wh-element is positioned initially: E.g. What did Pauline give Tom for his birthday?

c. Imperatives: They are sentences which normally have no overt grammatical subject, and whose verb has the base form: Give me a digital watch for my birthday.

d. Exclamatives: They are sentences which have an initial phrase introduced by what or how, usually with subject-verb order: E.g. What a fine watch he received for his birthday!

B- Compound sentence: The second type of sentences is called compound sentences .It consists of two clauses joined by a conjunction or a connector, each of these two clauses can stand independently (Eckersly&Eckersly, 2003).

Crystal (2006) maintains that it is a sentence with two (or more) main clauses joined by co-ordination conjunction in the same way as the separate parts of a single clause can be. All of the clauses making up the compound sentence are co-ordinate, i.e., equal in rank. In compound sentences, the subject or the auxiliary verb, or both, may be omitted in the second clause if they are the same as those in the first clause. E.g. 'The sun is shining and the birds are singing'.
C- Complex sentence: This type of sentence also consists of two clauses joined together, but not both of them can stand independently because one of them (subordinate clause) functions as a part of the other (main clause) (Palmer, 2014).

2. Models for Analyzing Sentence Complexity:

In this section, two main models which are frequently used in analyzing sentence complexity are introduced:

2.1. Leech and Short (2007):

Leech and Short (2007) claim that complex sentences are generally as a result of subordination since it is the major device for linking ideas together in a complex sentence. For them (Leech and Short), this type of sentences is utilized when the author wants to present a complex structure of ideas. Hence, in the complex sentence, the main clause gives the principle information and subordinating clause adds extra information. In general, clauses are divided into main and subordinate. The subordinate clauses are divided into finite, non-finite and verbless clauses.

In their model of analysis, Leech and Short (2007) suggest a checklist. This checklist includes a list of questions to be answered by a stylistician. The answers of these questions will form the data that will be examined to find the literary effect of each passage. This checklist is devised in order to help stylisticians collect the data of analysis in a systematic way.

The checklist includes information about four kinds of categories:

1. Lexical categories
2. Grammatical categories
3. Figures of speech
4. Context and cohesion

Sentence complexity is included within the grammatical categories. Five questions are raised about such a kind of complexity:

1. Do sentences on the whole have a simple or a complex structure?
2. What is the average sentence length (in number of words)?
3. What is the ratio dependent to independent clauses?

4. Does complexity vary strikingly from one sentence to another?

5. Is complexity mainly due to coordination, subordination, or parataxis (juxtaposition of clauses or other equivalent structures)?

Leech and Short took a sample paragraph from Joseph Conrad's novel (*The Secret Sharer*). Then, they applied their model of analysis on this paragraph. They first scored sentence length for each of the seven sentences of the paragraph, then they tried to give an explanation of the possible effects of placing the shortest sentence at the end of the paragraph. After that, they tried to describe sentence complexity. They found that nearly all sentences are elaborated by coordination and subordination; therefore they are considering them as quite complex. Again, they tried to explain the possible artistic justification behind such a structure: the structure might be used to "imitate the movement from the observer's eye towards the distance" (ibid, p.56). They designed a table that involved all the data they gathered using their suggested checklist: within the grammatical data, they scored the number of the independent clauses, for example (10), and the number of dependent clauses, for example (28), and calculated the ratio of dependent to independent clauses, which is (2.8).

2.2. Halliday's and Matthiessen's Model (Systemic Functional Grammar) (2014):

Halliday and Matthiessen developed a model named systemic functional grammar (SFG). This model is extremely systemic. For them, language is the resource of meaning (meaning potential). In his SFG, Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) use a different way when dealing with elements in grammar. According to them, a sentence can be interpreted as a clause complex: a head clause together with other clauses that modify it. The predicator is the most essential constituent of the clause; in the normal case the number of clauses in a sentence is the same to the number of predicators in that sentence, as in the following example, the sentence: "He shouted, laughed, cried, and finally fell down the stairs" has four clauses, the missing subjects for the three subsequent clauses is understood to be 'he' in the first clause.

Sentence (clause complex) includes Predicator (obligatory) and Head (optional).

According to Halliday's and Matthiessen's model (SFG), there are three types of sentences:

Simplex sentence: a sentence that contains only one clause.

Compound sentence: a sentence that contains one or more independent

clauses.

Complex sentence: a sentence that contains one or more dependent clauses in relation to the main clause.

In Halliday's and Matthiessen's terms, an independent clause is referred to as paratactic clause. Also, a compound sentence is called paratactic construction. However, the complex sentence is called hypotactic construction.

a. Parataxis: It refers to the logical interdependency between clauses where the interdependents are of equal status and this is what is referred to as coordination in generative grammar. If two clauses are related paratactically, the primary one is initiating (1), and the secondary one is continuing (2), e.g. I switched on my TV set and there was a programme about Wales.

b. Hypotaxis: It refers to the logical interdependency between clauses where the interdependants are of unequal status. Thus one of the clauses can be seen as a head being modified by the other(s). If two clauses are related hypotactically, the primary one is dominant (a) and the secondary one is dependent which is referred to as subordination in traditional grammar. Halliday and Matthiessen classify a sentence with one clause as simple, others with more than one whether of the paratactic or hypotactic type as complex.

3. Research Methodology:

The present study is a comparative study. It aims at analyzing sentence complexity in two novels: Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In order to achieve this purpose, the stylistic approach is adopted. The analysis also builds upon works and findings of Halliday's and Matthiessen's *Functional Grammar* (2014).

Since the aim of the present study is to investigate sentence complexity and its stylistic effects, Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* are chosen as the corpora of the analysis because William Faulkner and James Joyce are famous of their complex and unusual styles; therefore, the chosen corpora will be rich of complex sentences. Also, it has been useful to exploit Halliday's and Matthiessen's model in the analysis of the two novels. Halliday and Matthiessen classify a sentence with one clause as simple, others with more than one clause whether of the paratactic or hypotactic type as complex: a mixture of both hypotactic and paratactic as a mixed sentence. The first novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* consists of five main chapters, each of these chapters contains a number of sections. By the end of each chapter, there is a climax in the life of Stephen. Therefore, it is a turning

point in his development. Whereas, the second chosen novel *The Sound and the Fury* consists of four main chapters or sections. Each of the three first chapters is devoted to a main character, Benjamin, Quentin and Jason respectively. As the narrator changes, the style also changes: lexical choices, sentence complexity... etc.

To analyse sentence complexity in the chosen novels, we have counted the total number of sentences then the number of complex sentences in each chapter; then, we have calculated the percentages of complex sentences according to the total number of sentences.

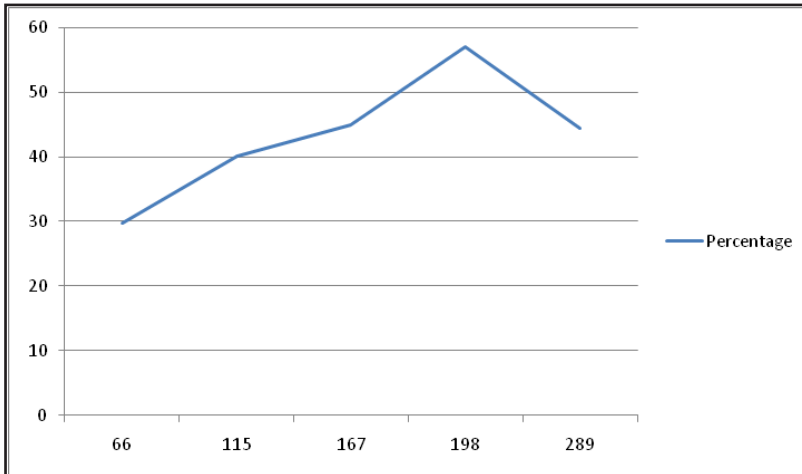
4. Results and Discussion

Results are displayed in the following tables and diagram:

Table1: Distribution of the Number of Complex Sentences and their Percentages in Each Chapter of the Novel ‘A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man’

Number of Chapters	Number of Sentences in Each Chapter	Number of Complex sentences in Each chapter	Percentage
Chapter I	851	253	29,73%
Chapter II	561	225	40,11%
Chapter III	640	288	45,00%
Chapter V	328	187	57,01%
Chapter IV	1165	517	44,38%

Diagram 1: Percentage of Complex Sentences in Each Chapter of the Novel ‘A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man’



- Chapter One ends in page 66.
- Chapter Two ends in page 115.
- Chapter Three ends in page 167.
- Chapter Four ends in page 198.
- Chapter Five ends in page 289.

The table and the diagram above visibly show that the percentage of complex sentences is in its lowest point (29, 73%) at the beginning of the story because Stephen is still a child and he is not linguistically competent yet, thus most of the sentences used by him are short and simple. Then the number of complex sentences increases till it reaches its highest percentage (57, 01%) in the fourth chapter of the novel. Sentence complexity increases in this chapter because it contains the climax of this novel in which Stephen decides to be an artist. Again there is a decrease in the percentage of complex sentences in the last chapter (44,38%). The reason behind the decrease of complex sentences in the fifth chapter is Stephen's return to infancy.

Table 2: Distribution of the Number of Complex Sentences and their Percentages in Each Chapter of the Novel 'The Sound and the Fury'

Chapter	Number of Sentences	Number of Complex Sentences	Percentage %
Benjamin's Chapter	826	226	24,45%

Quentin 's Chapter	1509	535	27,34%
Jason's Chapter	823	452	54,9%

From the table above, we can see that the majority of sentences in the first chapter (Benjamin's section) are simple whereas complex sentences occasionally appear with monotonous and often in appropriate cohesive devices. Despite the fact that the narrator (Benjamin) is 33 years old, his language style gives the impression that the story is narrated by a child.

As the table above shows, the percentage of complex sentences in Quentin's section is more than the percentage in Benjamin's section. It is also the longest section of the novel. The reader can notice that the narrator has a good use of language. It is clear that the percentage of complex sentences in Jason's section is more than the two other sections. Therefore, Jason's style is the most complicated style among the three narrators.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, when reading *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, we can trace the stages of Stephen's maturity development through his language. In the first chapter, Stephen the child uses direct and simple structures since he is on the train of the discovering the world. When showing some maturity, Stephen uses more complex structures showing that he can talk about any subject. What helps him is that he was fond of reading which enables him to use more deep and complex structures. Next, in Stephen's manhood, his language choices are characterized by a linguistic maturity and this is reflected in the huge use of complex sentences in the fourth chapter. And this is what enables Stephen to convince his family and his friends and to justify his choices of art and exile. In the fifth chapter, Stephen returns to infancy, though his sentences are quite long they are characterized by simplicity and repetition of some expressions.

When reading the second novel *The Sound and the Fury*, the reader can notice that the language style in each section corresponds to the characters' perspectives and attitudes which lead to their personae. In the first section, the simplicity of the language has suggested that the narrator, Benjamin, is a simple-minded person. Benjamin's strange associations with which he is not capable of connecting things correctly has implied that he is not only simple minded, but also mentally disabled. Meanwhile, the complicated and stylistically rich language features in the second section have given an impression that the narrator, Quentin, is a smart, well-educated, cultivated man. However, his messy language,

which is marked by frequent language rule violations, has also suggested that he is emotionally and mentally delicate. It confirms Quentin's status as being sad and extremely anxious. In the third section, the informal or colloquial language gives an impression that the narrator, Jason, is an illiterate and close-minded person.

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