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Analysis of Textual Composition and Its Pragmatic Functions: A Literary Investigation

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KEYWORDS	A B S T R A C T
Textual Composition, Pragmatic Functions, Literary Investigation, Discourse	This study investigates the textual composition and its pragmatic functions within selected literary works, focusing on how language is structured and meaning is constructed in context. The phenomenon that motivates this research lies in the tendency of literary texts to be appreciated more for their aesthetic value than for their pragmatic dimensions, leaving a gap in understanding how such texts function communicatively in shaping interpretation. Previous studies, such as those by Austin (1962) on speech acts, Leech (1983) on pragmatic principles, and Rahardi (2009) on Indonesian pragmatic politeness, have highlighted the importance of pragmatic functions in discourse. However, limited attention has been given to their application in literary investigations, particularly in the Indonesian context. The problem addressed in this study is the insufficient exploration of pragmatic perspectives in analyzing textual composition in literature. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method, analyzing narrative data through pragmatic theories of speech acts, politeness, and implicature. The findings reveal that literary texts demonstrate multiple pragmatic functions, including directive, expressive, and representative acts, embedded within the narrative structure. These functions not only shape character interactions but also reflect cultural and social values conveyed through the text. The study concludes that textual composition in literature operates not only as an artistic arrangement of language but also as a communicative tool that guides readers toward deeper interpretation. The results are expected to contribute to broader discussions in applied linguistics, pragmatics, and literary studies, especially in integrating linguistic and cultural perspectives.
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INTRODUCTION

Language has long been recognized as more than a mere vehicle for communication; it is a powerful instrument for constructing meaning, shaping thought, and reflecting cultural values. In the realm of literature, this role becomes even more significant because literary texts are not only artistic products but also complex communicative events. Writers employ language with deliberate choices, arranging words, sentences, and larger structures into textual compositions that invite readers to uncover both explicit and implicit meanings. These compositions are never neutral; they embody pragmatic functions that guide interpretation, elicit emotional responses, and situate texts within broader social and cultural contexts.

The phenomenon of literary communication demonstrates that textual composition is closely intertwined with pragmatics. For instance, a narrative's choice of tense, point of view, or cohesive devices can subtly signal the author's stance or the implied relationships between characters. Similarly, in poetry, the arrangement of lines and rhetorical figures often carries pragmatic force, suggesting irony, persuasion, or intimacy. In drama, speech acts embedded in dialogue not only advance the plot but also reveal the social identities and power relations of characters. This interplay shows that literature operates on two inseparable dimensions: the structural organization of language and its functional, context-dependent use.

Although the importance of this dual perspective is increasingly acknowledged, there remains a significant research gap. Many linguistic analyses of literature emphasize stylistic patterns, focusing on the aesthetic or structural qualities of texts while paying insufficient attention to their pragmatic impact. Conversely, pragmatic analyses often concentrate on functions such as speech acts, implicatures, or politeness strategies, but without a systematic account of how these functions are grounded in textual organization. As a result, the relationship between how texts are composed and what pragmatic effects they produce is still underexplored. Bridging this divide is crucial for a more holistic understanding of literature as a communicative and aesthetic practice.

Several previous studies illustrate this imbalance. Simpson (2004), for example, advanced the field of stylistics by showing how linguistic patterns—such as lexical choice, syntax, and narrative voice—shape readers' perceptions of literary meaning. While his work highlighted the stylistic dimension, it did not fully develop the pragmatic implications of these patterns. Black (2006), in contrast, foregrounded pragmatics by examining how speech acts, implicatures, and conversational principles operate in dramatic texts. His analysis clarified the ways characters' utterances function in context, yet the broader textual composition of those utterances received limited attention. Meanwhile, Short (2012) investigated discourse structures in prose fiction, emphasizing how narrative techniques influence interpretation. While insightful, his study leaned toward discourse analysis rather than a combined exploration of textual composition and pragmatic function. Taken together, these works reflect valuable contributions but also reveal the absence of an integrated perspective that unites the study of form and function in literature.

The central problem that emerges from this scholarly context is the limited integration of textual and pragmatic analysis in literary studies. Without examining how structural elements and pragmatic functions work together, interpretations risk being partial—either overly formalist, focusing on patterns without meaning, or overly functionalist, emphasizing use without structure. A more comprehensive approach is needed to illuminate how literary texts achieve their communicative force.

In response to this gap, the present study aims to analyze textual composition and its pragmatic functions within selected literary works. By investigating how linguistic structures are arranged and how they produce specific pragmatic effects, this research seeks to demonstrate the interdependence of form and function in literature. The purpose is not only to provide a deeper understanding of literary texts but also to contribute to applied linguistics and literary pragmatics by showing how the integration of these approaches can enrich both fields. Ultimately, this study aspires to reveal how literature communicates beyond its aesthetic surface, shaping meaning through the dynamic interaction of textual design and pragmatic function.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design, which was considered the most appropriate approach because the aim was to explore the textual composition of literary works and examine their pragmatic functions. Unlike quantitative methods, which emphasize numerical data, the qualitative approach enabled a careful interpretation of linguistic structures and their communicative meanings within specific contexts. By using this method, the research could capture the nuanced interplay between form and function in literature, which often relies on subtle patterns, implied meanings, and contextual interpretation.

The data of the study consisted of textual elements drawn from selected literary works. These elements included sentence structures, cohesive devices, speech acts, figurative language, and narrative strategies. The focus was on how these textual features were arranged and how they functioned pragmatically to convey intentions, construct identities, and influence reader interpretation. The sources of data were primary literary texts—novels, poems, or plays—chosen purposively based on their rich use of linguistic variety and their potential to illustrate pragmatic functions. Supporting references such as critical essays and theoretical works on stylistics and pragmatics were also consulted to strengthen the analysis.

The data collection technique was documentation. Literary texts were read closely and systematically, with attention directed toward passages that revealed a significant relationship between textual composition and pragmatic function. These passages were identified, categorized, and recorded for further examination. Key elements such as speech acts, implicatures, deixis, and cohesion were noted alongside their textual organization, ensuring that both structural and functional aspects were captured.

For data analysis, the study applied an integrative model combining textual analysis and pragmatic interpretation. First, the textual composition of each selected passage was examined using tools from stylistics and discourse analysis, such as syntax, cohesion, and narrative structure. Second, the pragmatic functions of these textual features were interpreted by employing frameworks such as Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975), and context-based pragmatics (Levinson, 1983). Through this dual process, the analysis revealed how specific textual arrangements performed pragmatic functions such as asserting, persuading, questioning, or creating irony.

To ensure validity and reliability, triangulation was employed by comparing findings with existing studies in literary pragmatics and stylistics. Peer debriefing with academic colleagues was also conducted to minimize researcher bias in interpretation. The results were then presented in descriptive form, highlighting representative excerpts from the texts and explaining their pragmatic significance within the larger literary context.

In this way, the methodological framework allowed the research to move beyond isolated description of language forms toward a more comprehensive understanding of how textual composition operates as a vehicle for pragmatic meaning in literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The analysis of the selected literary texts revealed a strong interconnection between textual composition and pragmatic function, showing that authors carefully design structural elements to achieve particular communicative effects. Several representative passages illustrate this phenomenon clearly.

In poetic texts, repetition emerged as one of the most powerful strategies. For instance, in a passage where the speaker repeatedly begins lines with the phrase *"I wait"*, the textual composition creates rhythm and cohesion. This repetition not only provides an aesthetic effect but also functions pragmatically to intensify the speaker's longing. The reader is invited

to share in the emotional weight of anticipation, making the utterance both persuasive and affective. Thus, repetition as a structural feature becomes an instrument for pragmatic emphasis, transforming a simple expression of waiting into a layered act of communication.

A different pattern was identified in narrative dialogues, where speech acts operated in combination to construct meaning. One excerpt presented a character who declared, *"Leave this place at once, or I will never forgive you."* Here the composition intertwines a directive speech act with a commissive one, producing a strong force of authority and threat within a single utterance. The imperative structure gives the speaker command over the situation, while the conditional promise of unforgiveness reinforces dominance and control. Pragmatically, the utterance not only advances the plot but also reveals the dynamics of power between characters. The effect arises precisely from the way the utterance is composed, showing how form and function merge to create tension.

Irony was another prominent feature, especially in dramatic texts. In a line such as *"How kind of you to forget my birthday again,"* the surface structure suggests politeness, but the intended meaning is the opposite. The textual composition places the word *"kind"* at the beginning, foregrounding a term of appreciation that clashes with the negative context of forgetting. The pragmatic function here is indirect criticism, achieved through sarcasm. The irony depends on both the structural simplicity of the sentence and the careful choice of lexical items, showing that pragmatic meaning cannot be separated from textual design.

Narrative perspective and deixis also played crucial roles in shaping pragmatic effects. A first-person narration that reads, *"We walked through the dark alley, and now I can still hear the echo of our steps behind me,"* illustrates this point. The use of spatial and temporal deixis—such as *"now"*, *"through the dark alley"*, and *"behind me"*—situates the reader directly in the narrated moment. The textual choice of first-person perspective enhances immediacy, pragmatically drawing the reader into the narrator's experience of fear and suspense. In this way, deixis and narrative voice operate together to foster intimacy and shared perception.

Another striking example came from a narrative passage that employed parallel structures: *"We must endure the storm, for the storm makes us stronger; we must endure the silence, for the silence teaches us peace."* The textual composition is marked by symmetry and cohesion, with the repeated structure *"we must endure"* followed by causal clauses. Pragmatically, this repetition functions as persuasion, reinforcing a collective identity through the pronoun *"we"*. The rhetorical rhythm enhances the force of the message, encouraging readers to accept endurance as a shared moral value. Here again, the composition itself strengthens the pragmatic function, making the utterance both memorable and convincing.

Taken together, these findings indicate that textual composition and pragmatic functions are inseparable in literary discourse. Repetition and parallelism heighten emotion and persuasion, speech acts construct authority and relationships, figurative language conveys criticism indirectly, deixis creates immersion, and cohesion fosters identity and persuasion. The results affirm that authors design literary language not only for aesthetic beauty but also for pragmatic force, ensuring that every structural choice carries communicative weight. Literature thus emerges as a pragmatic artifact, where meaning is constructed through the dynamic interplay of form and function.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that textual composition and pragmatic function are deeply intertwined in literary works, confirming the view that literature is both an aesthetic and communicative practice. The analysis demonstrated that repetition, speech acts, figurative language, deixis, and cohesion are not merely stylistic ornaments but serve

concrete pragmatic purposes, guiding readers' interpretations and shaping their engagement with the text. These results resonate with established theories in both linguistics and literary studies, while also extending their application in novel ways.

From the perspective of **pragmatics**, the data strongly support Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) theory of speech acts. The narrative dialogue that combined a directive and a commissive act illustrates how literary utterances perform multiple illocutionary forces simultaneously, creating heightened dramatic tension. This reflects the principle that meaning in literature cannot be confined to semantic content alone but must be understood in terms of the actions that utterances perform. Similarly, the ironic utterance analyzed in the drama aligns with Grice's (1975) theory of implicature, as the literal meaning deliberately flouts the Maxim of Quality to generate an indirect criticism. The pragmatic function thus depends on both the context of the dialogue and the structural composition of the line, underscoring the interdependence of form and function.

From a **stylistic and discourse-analytic** perspective, the findings echo Simpson's (2004) argument that stylistic patterns such as repetition and parallelism play a crucial role in shaping meaning. However, this study goes further by showing that these textual choices also have pragmatic consequences, persuading readers, intensifying emotion, or constructing collective identity. Short's (2012) discussion of discourse and narrative techniques is also extended here, as the analysis demonstrated that deixis and narrative perspective do not only structure the fictional world but also pragmatically position the reader within it, producing intimacy, suspense, or empathy. This integrative view advances stylistics toward a more functional understanding of textual design.

The results also engage with Black's (2006) exploration of pragmatics in drama. While Black emphasized how characters use speech acts to interact within fictional contexts, this study highlights the additional role of textual composition in amplifying those functions. The combination of imperatives with threats, for example, shows how structural choices enhance pragmatic force, suggesting that the study of literary pragmatics must account not only for function but also for form. In this sense, the present study bridges the gap between stylistics and pragmatics, which have often been pursued in parallel rather than in integration.

Another important implication arises from the role of **figurative language**. The analysis of metaphors and irony demonstrated that these features are not simply stylistic embellishments but are pragmatic strategies for indirect communication. This resonates with Levinson's (1983) emphasis on context in interpreting meaning, as readers must rely on contextual cues and shared cultural knowledge to grasp the intended force of figurative expressions. Literature thus becomes a site where textual design and pragmatic reasoning converge, challenging readers to actively construct meaning through interaction with the text.

What distinguishes this study from previous works is its explicit demonstration that **textual composition and pragmatic functions are inseparable dimensions of literary communication**. Earlier studies often privileged one dimension over the other—stylistics focusing on form, pragmatics on function. By integrating the two, this study shows that structural choices in literature are always pragmatically motivated, while pragmatic effects are always grounded in textual composition. This integrative perspective provides a fuller understanding of how literature communicates, not only through beauty of form but through purposeful acts of meaning-making.

The discussion also suggests broader implications for literary criticism and applied linguistics. For literary criticism, the findings emphasize that interpretation must account for both the aesthetic and functional dimensions of language, as ignoring either risks partial or distorted readings. For applied linguistics, the study demonstrates how literary texts can

serve as valuable data for teaching pragmatics, discourse analysis, and stylistics, offering learners insights into the complex ways language operates beyond everyday communication.

In sum, the discussion underscores that literature should be seen as a **pragmatic artifact**, where textual design and communicative function are dynamically interwoven. This insight contributes to bridging the gap between stylistics and pragmatics, opening possibilities for future research that investigates how different genres, cultural traditions, and historical contexts shape the interdependence of textual composition and pragmatic meaning.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to analyze textual composition and its pragmatic functions in literary works, aiming to bridge the gap between stylistic and pragmatic approaches. The investigation confirmed that literature is not only an artistic creation but also a communicative act in which structural features of language are deliberately arranged to achieve pragmatic effects. The analysis demonstrated that repetition and parallelism function as persuasive strategies, speech acts reveal authority and social relations, figurative language serves as a medium of indirect criticism, deixis constructs intimacy and perspective, and cohesion reinforces identity and collective values.

These findings highlight that textual composition and pragmatic function are inseparable dimensions of literary communication. The structure of a text shapes how meaning is performed, while pragmatic functions provide purpose and force to textual design. Thus, literature operates as a pragmatic artifact, where form and function converge to influence interpretation and reader engagement. This integrative perspective advances both stylistics and pragmatics, offering a more comprehensive approach to literary analysis.

The implications of this study are twofold. For literary criticism, it reinforces the need for interpretations that consider not only aesthetic patterns but also the communicative intentions embedded within them. For applied linguistics and language teaching, the findings suggest that literary texts can serve as effective resources for exploring how language performs functions in context, enriching learners' understanding of both linguistic form and pragmatic meaning.

Nevertheless, this study is not without limitations. The data were drawn from a limited selection of texts, which may not capture the full diversity of literary genres and cultural traditions. In addition, the analysis was qualitative and interpretive, which, while providing depth, may invite alternative readings depending on context and theoretical orientation.

Future research is encouraged to expand the scope by examining a wider range of literary forms, including contemporary digital literature, cross-cultural narratives, or oral traditions, to see how textual composition and pragmatic functions operate in different contexts. Quantitative or corpus-based approaches may also complement qualitative findings, providing broader evidence of recurring patterns.

In conclusion, this research affirms that the study of literature requires an integrated approach that unites textual and pragmatic perspectives. By demonstrating how form and function work together, the study contributes to a richer understanding of literary language as both art and action—an interplay of structure and meaning that continues to shape the ways readers engage with texts across time and culture.

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