Stylistic Analysis of the Poem "Alone" by Edgar Allan Poe

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Abstract: *This research analyzes Edgar Allan Poe's poem 'Alone' from a stylistic perspective. It is viewed through phonological, morphological, graphological, and lexico-syntactical levels. The selected poem is suitable for a stylistic analysis because the poet has used many linguistic choices that indicate his dexterity and decorum of style. This analysis helps reveal the structure and the message of the poem.*

Keywords—Phonological level; Morphological level; Graphological level; Lexico-syntactical level; Stylistics; Stylistic Analysis; Style

1. INTRODUCTION

The style appears to be the fingerprint of poets in the literary context, encompassing linguistic features as a means of creative literary expression. Understanding poets' distinct ways of storytelling is essential in uncovering the hidden message the writer attempts to convey.

Style chiefly refers to what kind of language a writer is using, and it is used in discussion of literature. In general terms, we express prose and poetry linguistically. What the speaker says is the style itself. In general terms, the word style is not a simple feature of the language, but rather a complex one. How one uses the language in a particular situation, is also embodied in style. Style is generally used for a specific purpose by a person. The speaker/writer makes a selection from the linguistics system for the required occasion (Kumar, 2022).

The scrutinizing process of analyzing a poet's literary work by looking at its linguistic features can be done through stylistic analysis.

Stylistic work examines and assesses deviation in a literary work, a text that does not comply with norms and models linguistic description (Tariq, 2018). David Crystal sees stylistics as a branch of linguistics that "studies certain aspects of language variation" (as cited in Khan et al., 2015) while Leech (as cited in Abdurrahman, 2016) describes stylistics in literature as the study of the writer's style; for instance, the use of language in literature to scrutinize the general features of language as a means of literary expressions.

In general, a stylistic approach can be utilized to analyze both oral and written texts and this process involves the identification of linguistic features (or linguistic characteristics) of the text concerned (Adejare, 2013).

Further, Oztekin (2013) states that stylistic analysis is generally concerned with the analysis of literary texts linguistically. It acts as a bridge between literature and language studies. It explores the individual patterns as well as the linguistic structure used in pieces of literature to extract the hidden meanings of given texts. In this regard, stylistics presents a scientific approach to construing literary texts as an alternative to using subjective views.

2. LEVELS OF STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

Stylistics analysis contains the four levels in understanding the text. These levels are *phonological level, morphological level, graphological level, and lexico-syntactical level of analysis.*

2.1 Phonological Level

Lodge (as cited in Ahmed and Irshad, 2015) explains that phonology is the study of linguistic systems, particularly how sound represents the differences in meaning in a language. In poems, it can be found in rhyme, alliteration, consonance, and assonance.

2.2 Morphological Level

This studies the structure and word formation processes of the words used by the author in the poem.

2.3 Graphological Level

Crystal and Davy (as cited in Ahmed and Irshad, 2015) mention that graphology is the analogous study of language writing systems. Elements included in graphology are punctuation and paragraphing.

2.4 Lexico-Syntactical Level

It is the combination of two different words" Lexis" and "syntax". Lexis means the vocabulary that is used in a language or any writing for any purpose. On the other, syntax means 'sentence construction': how words group together to make phrases and sentences (Manuel, 2017).

2.5 About the Author

Edgar Allan Poe is an American poet known for writing poems with dark themes, including death, isolation, and melancholy. He wrote "Alone" to express the emotional

difficulty of isolation and feeling different from the people around him.

2.6 About the Poem

The poem gives the readers a glimpse of the poet's childhood and how the tragedies from the early stages of his life influenced his different view of the world, making him feel alienated from the people around him. It alludes to the fact that our experiences influence our personality and perception of the world.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This paper aims to explore and investigate how particular linguistic choices made by the poet contribute to developing its message. The poem is viewed through phonological, morphological, graphological, and lexico-syntactical levels.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study used content analysis in analyzing the poem under the aspects of phonological, morphological level, graphological, and lexico-syntactical levels. The data in this analysis include lines, terminologies, and punctuations used in Edgar Allan Poe's "Alone". This research explores the stylistic characteristics of the poem, aiming to deliver a detailed description of its distinctive features.

5. ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

This research explored the stylistic characteristics of the poem, and delivered a detailed description of its distinctive features in the following levels: 1) phonological level; 2) morphological level; 3) graphological level; and, 4) lexical-syntactical level.

5.1 Analysis at the Phonological Level

5.1.a Alliteration

From the **s**ame **s**ource, I have not taken
And all I **l**ov'd— I **l**ov'd alone—

Alliteration is using the same consonant sounds at the beginning of several words that are close together. The alliteration used in the poem can be found in lines 5 and 8. The /s/ sound was repeated in line 5 with the words "same" and "source." The repetition of the /l/ sound was present in line 8, with the word "loved." From the findings, it can be concluded that alliteration is not the prominent feature used in the poem.

5.1.b Assonance

From ch**i**ldhood's hour **I** have not been (Line 1)
As others were—I h**a**ve not seen (Line 2)
And all I l**o**v'd—I *lov'd* alone— (Line 8)

And all **I** lov'd—**I** *lov'd* alone— (Line 8)
Then—in m**y** ch**i**ldhood—in the dawn (Line 9)
Then—**i**n my childhood—**i**n the dawn (Line 9)
Of a most st**o**rmy life—was dr**a**wn (Line 10)
From **e**v'ry d**e**pth of good and ill (Line 11)
Fr**o**m ev'ry depth **o**f good and ill (Line 11)
The m**y**stery wh**i**ch binds me st**i**ll— (Line 12)
The m**y**ster**y** which binds m**e** still— (Line 12)
From the t**o**rrent, **o**r the fountain— (Line 13)
From th**e** torr**e**nt, or th**e** fount**ai**n— (Line 13)
Fr**o**m the red cliff **o**f the mountain (Line 14)
From th**e** red cliff of th**e** mount**ai**n (Line 14)
Fr**o**m the s**u**n that 'round me roll'd (Line 15)
In **i**ts autumn t**i**nt of gold— (Line 16)
From the l**i**ghtning in the sk**y** (Line 17)
As it p**a**ss'd me flying by— (Line 18)
As it pass'd me fl**y**ing b**y**— (Line 18)
From the th**u**nder, and the storm— (Line 19)
From th**e** thund**e**r, and th**e** storm— (Line 19)
And the cloud th**a**t took the form (Line 20)
(When the rest **o**f Heaven w**a**s blue) (Line 21)

According to Manuel (2017), assonance is the repetition of a vowel sound within a line in poetry.

The assonance found in the poem is the sounds /aɪ/, /eɪ/, /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɪ/, /ə/, /ɛ/, /ɔ/, and /i/. However, unlike alliteration, there were a lot of repeated vowel sounds in the poem.

5.1.c Consonance

A**s** other**s** were—I have not **s**een (Line 2)
A**s** other**s** **s**aw—I could not bring (Line 3)
From the **s**ame **s**ource I have not taken (Line 5)
And a**ll** I **l**ov'd—I *lov'd* a**l**one— (Line 8)
Then—i**n** my childhood—i**n** the daw**n** (Line 9)
From the torre**n**t, or the fou**nt**ain— (Line 13)
From the red cli**ff** o**f** the mountain (Line 14)
Fr**o**m the sun that '**r**ound me **r**oll'd (Line 15)
In i**t**s au**t**umn **t**in**t** of gold— (Line 16)

Consonance is a literary sound device that repeats consonant sounds in a sequence of words in a line. From the poem, the consonants found in this poem are the consonants /n/, /s/, /l/, /f/, and /t/.

5.1.d Repetition

And all **I lov'd**—**I** *lov'd* alone—[8]
Then—**in** my childhood—**in** the dawn[9]
From **the** thunder, and **the** storm—[19]
And **the** cloud that took **the** form[20]

Repetition language style is a language style of repetition of words, syllables, words, or parts of sentences that are considered important to emphasize in an appropriate context (Keraf, 2005).

The poet applied repetition on *lines 8, 9, 19,* and *20*. In *line 8*, the phrase *"I lov'd"* is repeated twice. Repetition can also be found on *line 9*, where the word *"in"* is repeated twice.

The word *"the"* was also repeated two times on *line 19.* Finally, the word *"the"* was also repeated on *line 20.*

5.1.e Rhyme

Rhyme is likewise to word sounds (Manuel, 2017). The rhymes in the poem include [1] *been-sin*, [2] *bring-spring*, [3] *taken-awaken*, [4] *tone-alone*, [5] *dawn-drawn*, [6] *ill-still*, [7] *fountain-mountain*, [8] *roll'd-gold,* [9] *storm-form,* and [10] *blue-view.*

5.1.f Rhyme Scheme

The rhyme scheme used in the poem is **AA BB CC DD EE FF CC GG HH II JJ** . The ending words of each 11 couplets in the poem rhyme together.

5.1.g Rhythm

"Alone" is a lyrical poem and follows a type of meter called iambic tetrameter as observed in lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 21. An iambic tetrameter is a type of meter having four iambs per line. In each iamb, the first syllable is unstressed followed by a stressed syllable.

5.2 Analysis at the Morphological Level

5.2.a Derivational Morphemes

From **childhood**'s hour I have not been (Line 1)
Of a most **stormy** life—was drawn (Line 10)
From the **lightning** in the sky (Line 17)

childhood (suffix; -hood) – child (noun) – childhood (noun)
stormy (suffix; -y) –storm (noun) – stormy (adjective)
light (suffix; -ning) – light (noun) – lightning (noun

Derivational morphemes help us create new words out of base words. Derivational morphemes can be found in the word *"childhood"* by adding the suffix –hood (denoting a condition or state of being) to the noun "child." However, it does not change its grammatical category but changes its meaning to the state of being a child. It can also be found in the word *"stormy"* by adding the suffix –y to the noun "storm," it changes its grammatical category from a noun into an adjective, thus changing its meaning; the word now refers to a characterization or indication of a storm.

A derivational morpheme can also be found in "lightning" by adding the suffix -ning (referring to the result of a verb action) to the noun light. There is no change in the grammatical category, but the meaning changes to the flashing light produced by a discharge of atmospheric electricity.

5.2.b Inflectional Morphemes

An inflection is a change that signals the grammatical function of nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns (e.g., noun plurals, verb tenses). In other words, inflectional morphemes are used to create a variant form of a word to signal grammatical information without changing the meanings of words (Wolfgang, 2024). The inflectional morphemes used in the poem include *seen, taken, drawn, loved, and passed.*

5.2.c Analytical Morphemes

From childhood's hour I **have not been** (Line 1)
As others were—I **have not seen** (Line 2)
As others saw—I **could not bring** (Line 3)
From the same source I **have not taken** (Line 5)
My sorrow—I could **not awaken** (Line 6)
Of a most stormy life—**was drawn** (Line 10)

The highlighted phrases are classified under analytical morphemes. An analytical language is used to express syntactic relation within the lines ("Analytic Language | Syntax, Grammar, Semantics | Britannica," 2024).

5.3 Analysis at the Graphological Level

5.3.a Comma

From the torrent, or the fountain— (Line 13)
From the thunder, and the storm— (Line 19)

Poe used the comma twice in the poem, both used in the middle of a line to indicate a pause.

5.3.b Em Dash

As others were—I have not seen (Line 2)
As others saw—I could not bring (Line 3)
My passions from a common spring— (Line 4)
My sorrow—I could not awaken (Line 6)
My heart to joy at the same tone— (Line 7)
And all I lov'd—I *lov'd* alone— (Line 8)
Then—in my childhood—in the dawn (Line 9)
Of a most stormy life—was drawn (Line 10)
The mystery which binds me still— (Line 12)

An emdash is used within a verse or at the end, to indicate a break in thought or verse structure; introduce a phrase added for emphasis, definition, or explanation; or separate two clauses like the semicolon (Samson, 2015). The dashes set apart specific words and phrases, forcing the reader to slow down while reading. The dashes compel the reader to contemplate and ponder over the lines (Emily Dickinson's Capitalization and Punctuation | 123 Help Me, 2014).

The poet used the em dash 17 times in his poem which can be seen in *lines 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19,* and *22.*

5.3.c Apostrophe

From childhood's hour I have not been (Line 1)
And all I lov'd—I lov'd alone— (Line 8)

From ev'ry depth of good and ill (Line 11)
From the sun that 'round me roll'd (Line 15)
As it pass'd me flying by—(Line 18)

In the poem, Poe uses an apostrophe to show possession (childhood's) and as a substitution for an elided letter, such as in the case of the words, loved, which is elided into "lov'd," every into *"ev'ry,"* around into *"'round,"* rolled into *"roll'd,"* and pased into into *"pass'd".*

5.3.d Parenthesis

(When the rest of Heaven was blue) *(Line 21)*

The Parenthesis is a curved notation used to contain further thoughts or qualifying remarks (Samson, 2015). In the poem, only Line 21 line uses parenthesis.

5.3.e Capitalism

(When the rest of **H**eaven was blue) (Line 21)

The first letters of each line are capitalized, as well as the initial letter in the word *"Heaven"* in *line 21* because it is used as a proper noun.

5.3.f Italicism

And all I lov'd—***I*** *l*ov'd alone— (Line 8)
Then—in my childhood—in the dawn (Line 9)

The words *"I"* and *"Then"* in *lines 8* and 9 are italicized to emphasize or to draw attention.

5.4 Analysis at the Lexico-Syntactical Level

5.4.a Simile

As others were—I have not seen (Line 2)
As others saw—I could not bring (Line 3)

In the poem, *lines 2 and 3* contain similes. In these lines, Poe is comparing his personal views of the world to that of the people around him.

5.4.b Imagery

From the **red cliff of the mountain**— (Line 14)
In its **autumn tint of gold**— (Line 16)
From the **lightning in the sky** (Line 17)
(When the rest of Heaven was **blue**) (Line 21)
Of a **demon in my view**— (Line 22)

Imagery as a verbal poetic device is dominant in the poem as observed in *lines 2, 14, 16, 17, and 21*. The imagery was used in the poem to present a vivid representation of ideas. The imagery used in the lines appeals to the sense of sight. They are called 'visual imagery'.

5.4.c Anaphora

As others were—I have not seen (Line 2)

As others saw—I could not bring (Line 2)
From the torrent, or the fountain— (Line 13)
From the red cliff of the mountain— (Line14)
From the sun that 'round me roll'd (Line 15)
From the lightning in the sky (Line 17)
From the thunder, and the storm— (Line 19)

The anaphora was used in the poem to emphasize and establish the connection of ideas. The phrase *"as others"* was repeated twice in *lines 2 and 3,* while the phrase "*from the"* was repeated five times in *lines 13, 14, 15, 17, and 19.*

6. CONCLUSION

"Alone" is a poem by Edgar Allan Poe that reflects the theme of individualism, the experience of being an outsider, and the lasting impact of early experiences on one's identity. It is one of Poe's works that explores dark and introspective themes, reflecting his struggles in life. It is a perfect poem for stylistic analysis as it allows an in-depth examination of its rich language, depicting the emotional value of the poem.

This paper reveals the importance of Stylistic analysis in understanding the poem's message by discerning the deliberate crafting of language to reveal the message of the masterpiece.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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