

Negation as a Textual Conceptual Tool in Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist: A Critical Stylistics Study

النفي كأداة ذهنية-نصية في رواية تشارلز ديكنز أوليفر توست: دراسة اسلوبية نقدية

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Abstract

Critical stylistics works as a bridge to fill the gap between critical discourse analysis and stylistic. Nothing start from scratch, thus critical stylistics is based on the findings of critical discourse analysis, besides providing more comprehensive tools than critical discourse analysis.

One of the most prominent tools of critical stylistics is Negation which tries to figure out the implicit ideologies of the texts. Therefore, the present study aims to discover the implicit ideologies in Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist by applying the most prominent tool of critical stylistics which is Negation.

The study finds out that Negation is an effective critical stylistic tool which enables the researcher to discover the implicit ideologies of the text. Furthermore, Charles Dickens relies on Negation in order to present the hidden ideologies to the readers.

Key Words: Critical Stylistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Negation, Charles Dickens, and ideology.

المستخلص

وجدت الأسلوبية النقدية من أجل التقارب بين تحليل الخطاب النقدي من جهة والأسلوبية من جانب آخر. من الأمور المسلم بها أن لا شيء يبدأ من الصفر، وبالتالي فإن الأسلوبية النقدية بنية على تحليل الخطاب النقدي، بالإضافة إلى توفير أدوات أكثر شمولاً من تحليل الخطاب النقدي. إن من أبرز أدوات الأسلوبية النقدية هو النفي الذي يحاول معرفة الأيديولوجيات الضمنية للنصوص. لذلك، تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى اكتشاف الأيديولوجيات الضمنية في أوليفر تويست لتشارلز ديكنز من خلال تطبيق الأداة الأكثر بروزاً في الأسلوب النقدي وهي النفي.

توصلت الدراسة إلى أن النفي هو أداة أسلوبية نقدية فعالة تمكن الباحث من اكتشاف الأيديولوجيات الضمنية للنص. علاوة على ذلك، يعتمد تشارلز ديكنز على النفي من أجل تقديم الأيديولوجيات المتضمنة للقراء.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسلوبية النقدية، تحليل الخطاب النقدي، النفي، تشارلز ديكنز، والأيديولوجيا.

1. Stylistics

The word stylistics is often associates with the word style, thus an overview about style will be introduced first. Style is very common word used in our daily life. The origin of the word goes back to the Latin particularly the word “Stylus”. Style is often referring to the ways of expressing one’s speech as well as writing. (Ogidefa, 2014:100). Consequently, the product of writing is varied according to different styles used in the process of writing, thus the term style refers to the different ways of speaking and writing (Renkema, 2009: 96).

Regarding the term ‘Stylistics’, which varies according to the different stylistic approaches. These verities of stylistics are influenced by different branches and theories of linguistics and literary criticism. Stylistics is traced back to Russian Formalists in 1920, where Roman Jakobson closing his statement in the famous Conference of Style which holds in 1958 as well as the work of Thomas Sebeok ‘Style in Language’ which becomes the manifesto to the stylistic studies later on (Leech, 1989 :12).

Recently, stylistics in modern times is seen as an analytical science which covers all language levels; phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicology (Cuddon and Preston, 2010:872). Stylistics is a linguistic field that studies language of literature in all its manifestation and studies literary discourse which is based on the use of different styles in the language. Widdowson views stylistics as the study of literary discourse from a linguistic perspective. Accordingly, stylistics includes both literary criticism and linguistics as its morphological frame suggests. So, according to Widdowson stylistics is an area where two fields meet; literary criticism and linguistics (Bashiruddin, 2018: 121).

2. Stylistics and Narratology

Stylistics did not stand as a distinct field until the rapid development that take place in 1960. At this time, narratology based on the structuralist view as a systematic study of narratives, which appears in France and quickly developed in other countries. Being responsible for the investigation of different forms of narrative fiction, stylistics and narratology developed rapidly side by side (Shen, 2014 :191).

Stylistics clearly has longer history than narratology yet, in the past two decades these disciplines enjoying relatively parallel development. In fact, both stylistics and narratology seem to share relatively the same bases. Examining the definitions of both fields, stylistics often forms a distinction between content and style in other words “between what one has to say and how one says it” (Short and Leech, 2007 :38). Narratology, similarly draws a distinction between story and discourse or

“between what is told and how it is transmitted” (ibid). Thus, the two fields’ distinction match with each other (Short and Leech, 2007 :38).

3. Critical Discourse Analysis

The importance of discussing critical discourse analysis in this section came from the fact that it shares critical stylistics the study and the analysis of ideology as a backbone for the analysis. . CDA begins as a new direction of study in the work of figures like; Fairclough, van Dijk, Wodak, and many others in 1980. In a meeting at Amsterdam, CDA begins in 1992 as a movement with the presentations by Fairclough, Van Dijk, Wodak, and Van Leeuwen and these presentations later published in Discourse and Society journal. This movement gradually develops and these figures are used to meet from 1992 onward (Ali and Sahat, 2016 :3).

Critical discourse analysis has moved beyond critical linguistics in many forms. This is done by forming a relation between social practices and discourse. In other word, there is an attempt to build critical discourse analysis on social critical theories in order to figure the embedded relationship between them. Critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary field because in modern days it strongly involves interaction between discourse analysts in one hand and political scientists, historians, and sociologists on the other hand (Ali and Sahat, 2016:4). Focusing on the concepts of dominance and inequality, critical discourse analysis is unlike other fields and disciplines, it is not aimed to contribute to a particular discipline or theory of discourse but rather to many fields and disciplines and this shows the interdisciplinary nature of critical discourse analysis understanding (Van Dijk, 1993: 253).

The concept of critical discourse analysis has two views regarding its development. The first view, looks at critical discourse analysis as field developed in 1970 at University of East Anglia. And the term critical discourse analysis is used interchangeably with the term critical linguistics but in the present time the term critical discourse analysis is often used (van Dijk, 2008: 85). The second view, sees that critical discourse analysis emerges due to the development that takes place in linguistics due to the emergence of Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics. Between 1960 and 1970 most of the linguistic studies based on Chomsky’s linguistic views. Later on, critical discourse analysis emerges as a reaction to the formal discourse analysis in 1960 and 1970 (Blommaert , 2005 : 22).

4. Critical Stylistics

Critical stylistics is a new linguistic approach that is founded by Lesley Jeffries who tries to join critical discourse analysis with stylistics under one heading of critical stylistics. Jeffries attempts based on the fact that stylistics is an interdisciplinary approach so that critical stylistics can be developed by bringing together theories of stylistics and critical studies. Critical stylistics is an approach which tries to study the language aiming at figuring out the ideology and the style of the text under scrutiny. Besides, critical stylistics tries to link between stylistics in one hand with its

emphasizes on linguistic devices and CDA with its emphasize on contextual features of language (Ras, 2020: 196).

Critical stylistics is a reaction toward CDA by Jeffries (2010) who is trying to study ideology and language power. Jeffries (2010) is the pioneer linguist who formulate this analytical set of tools. What differentiate critical stylistics from CDA is that critical stylistics based on butting text in the central position in the analysis and moving away from the political nature of CDA (Ras, 2020: 197). What is more is revealed by Chilton (2011:769) who goes further in his explanation by saying “that there are distinguished CDA scholars who simply think that Linguistics is not relevant to CDA at all” (Chilton, 2011:769).

However, Jeffries is interested by the first two stages of CDA namely; *description* and *interpretation*. So, her starting point in the creation of critical stylistics is by providing a list of tools like; Simpson’s (1993) modality, Halliday’s transitivity, semantics and even pragmatic analysis which provides a more satisfying methodology in detecting ideology from texts (Jeffries, 2010 :14).

5. Model of Analysis

Jeffries (2010) creates a set of tools and call them textual conceptual tools. This set of tools is taken from different linguistic files like, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and even grammar. ‘*Negation*’ is a critical stylistic tool that is applied in the analysis of this paper.

The reasons behind choosing particularly this tool in the analysis are listed below. First, this tool has the ability to construct a version of situation in the reader’s mind which is clearly odd to the one confirmed in the text. Second, *Negation* is concerned with the textual practices which many have ‘Narrative’ and ‘ideological’ significance. Third, *Negation* as a critical stylistic tool is used as a generic term to refer to the ‘*Conceptual Practice*’ rather than the simple *negation* of the verb. Four, and the most powerful effects that language can have is to strike fear in the reader/hearer’s heart to make them act or think in a particular way. Thus, for these reasons *Negation* is applied as tool of analysis in this paper. The following figure (1) show the sub-tools of *Negation*.

Figure (1) Sub-tools of Negation



According to figure (1) Negation can be divided into different sub-tools. First, 'Lexical negation' which can also be sub-divided into 'Auxiliary' as in example (1) and 'Dummy Auxiliary' as in example (2) see the below examples:

(1) He *is not* playing tennis yet.

Auxiliary

(2) They *did not* do their homework.

Dummy Auxiliary

The second sub-tool is 'Morphologically Negated Items' like (in, un, anti, etc.) as in the following example:

(3) Jake seems *unhappy* after the meeting.

The third sub-type of negation is 'Pronouns' like (none, no one, no body, etc.) as in the next example:

(4) *No body* enter the class today.

The forth type is 'Adjectival Negation' as in the coming example:

No more choices are required.

The fifth sub-type of negation is 'Semantically Negated Items' like (verb, noun, adverb) check the examples below:

(5) There is a *lack* of respect in your speech.

Noun

(6) They *refuse* to answer the questions.

Verb

6. Data Analysis

The following extracts are taken from Dickens' Oliver Twist. The analysis will be restricted to one tool of critical stylistics which 'Negation'.

Extract (1)

Negation is an effective tool of critical stylistics that is used to unplanted the hidden ideologies. *Negation* finds in the following examples:

In the previous examples Dickens uses negation to attract the reader's attention toward particular point related to the child maltreatment. Dickens in examples (1 and 2) uses what is called 'Auxiliary Negation'. While, in example (3), he uses 'Dummy Negation', whereas in example (4) 'Adjectival Negation' is adopted. The importance of this tool lies in striking fear in the heart of the readers. Furthermore, this tool is used to construct a situation that is opposite to the confirmed one. Therefore, the ideologies of 'Bullying' and 'Suffering' are so prominent in the previous examples due to the use of this tool.

Extract (2)

Negation is a critical stylistics tool that is used by Jeffries to unplant the hidden ideology, since negation is used to strike fear in the heart of the audience. The following examples show the use of Negation:

- (1); Examples (1 - 3) adopt a type of negation called '*Dummy Auxiliary Negation*', whereas examples (4) follows '*Pronoun Negation*'. While, examples (5 and 6) adopt a type of negation called '*Auxiliary Negation*'. Dickens makes use of negation to highlight *Child Maltreatment*, negation in the previous examples is used to show how Oliver suffers not only physically but also emotionally by the people around him. Oliver is the victim of the *Child Physical* and *Emotional Abuse*. An important ideology that is highlighted through the use of this tool is '*Bullying*'.

Exatract (3)

Negation is set up by Jeffries to figure out the hidden ideologies in the text. The coming examples show the sue of this type:

Dickens in example (1and2) uses '*Semantically Negated Item*', this tool helps Dickens to describe how Oliver is derived from his right to express himself because he was forced to do thing. In example (3), Dickens uses '*Morphological Negation*', this tool is sued to express that Oliver does thing unintentionally. Finally, in example (4) '*Dummy Auxiliary*' is used to express Oliver astonishing about the houses' robbery. Because he does not think that one day he will be a robber, this situation highlights to the reader how a noble person Oliver was, since he refuses to participate in such bad work. Thus, this tool highlights Child Maltreatment by figuring out related ideologies like '*Neglect*' and '*Bullying*'.

7. Result of the Analysis

Based on the above analysis the following results are reached. The analysis proves that Negation and its different tools can work effectively in revealing the text's embedded ideologies. The following table (1) shows the type of *Negation* that are used in figuring out the ideology of the text.

Table (1) Types of Negation and their Frequencies and Percentages.

| Type of Negation | Occurrence | Percentages |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Auxiliary Negation | 4 | 30.70% |
| Dummy Auxiliary Negation | 5 | 38.40% |
| Adjectival Negation | 1 | 7.75% |
| Pronoun Negation | 1 | 7.75% |
| Semantically Negated Items | 2 | 15.40 |
| Morphological Negation | 0 | 0% |

| | | |
|-------|----|------|
| Total | 13 | 100% |
|-------|----|------|

Figure (2) the Result of the Analysis

The above table (2) shows that '*Dummy Auxiliary*' scores the highest frequency among other types of Negation with (5) occurrences and (38.40%) frequency. This type of *Negation* has an important ideological significance in revealing the text's implicit ideologies. Besides, the nature of the data under the investigation has close relation to this type of Negation. The second highest type of negation is 'Auxiliary Negation' which scores (4) occurrences and (30.70%) percentages. In the middle of the scale comes another type of negation which calls 'Semantically Negated Items'. The lowest types are 'Adjectival negation' and 'Pronoun Negation' respectively with (1) occurrence and (7.75%) percentages. Finally, at the bottom of the scale comes 'Morphological Negation' with no occurrence. The following figure provides a vivid idea about the types of Negation and their occurrences and frequencies.

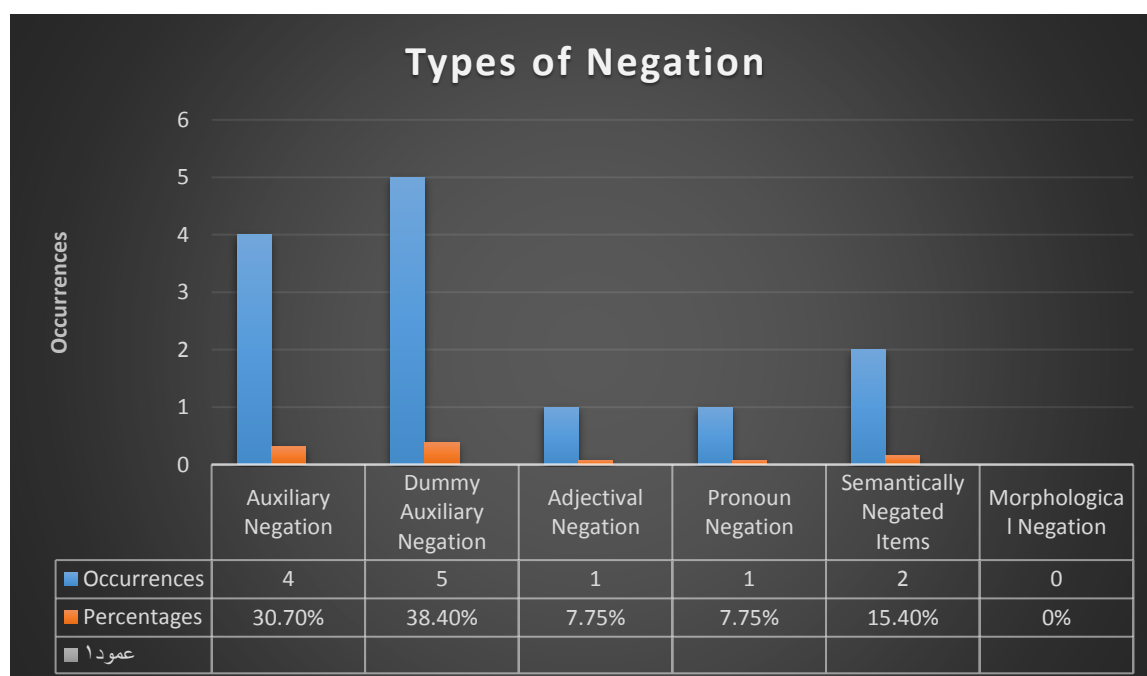


Figure (2) Types of Negation and their Percentages and Frequencies

Negation is used to highlight different text's ideologies. In the first extract, *Negation* is used to uncover the ideologies of 'Bullying' and 'Suffering' that Oliver undergoes. In the second extract the tool of *Negation* figures out the ideologies of 'Child Physical and Emotional Abuse' as well as 'Bullying'. In the last extract, the tool of *Negation* helps discover other ideologies like 'Neglect' and 'Bullying'. Therefore, this tool as shown in the previous extracts is used to discover the ideologies of 'Bullying' and 'Neglect' as well.

Conclusion

The result of the analysis shows many interesting findings. First, the study proves that *Negation* is an effective tool that is used to discover the text embedded ideology. Negation helps to figure out the ideologies of 'Bullying' and 'Neglect' and these

ideologies are related to the ideology of Child Victimization or Maltreatment. Second, the analysis shows that critical stylistics can be used effectively in revealing the text's implicit ideologies and the linguistics realizations of these ideologies. Third, the analysis shows that the most common type of negation is '*Dummy Auxiliary Negation*' which figures out the ideologies of '*Bullying*', '*Neglect*', and '*Child Abuse*'. Therefore, critical stylistic tools in general and Negation in particular are prove to be effective tools of analyzing literary text as Jeffries claims.

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