



A Comparative Stylistic Analysis of Anne Hunter's 'Winter' and Charles Simic's 'Against Winter': Pedagogical Implications for EFL Students

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Abstract

This paper examined two poems: 'Winter' by Anne Hunter and 'Against Winter' by Charles Simic from a stylistic perspective. It conducted a stylistic analysis to elucidate how the poets' intended meanings are constructed in an effective manner through the principles of 'foregrounding': linguistic deviation, linguistic parallelism, and informality, in ways that reflect these poets' distinctive style. This study argues that informality is complementary to the other principles; that is, while linguistic deviation and parallelism contribute to content, informality contributes to form (how content is delivered). Altogether they create the poet's distinct style. In spite of enormous stylistic analysis studies, there is a dearth of research that has conducted a comparative stylistic analysis of poems sharing the same perspectives. Employing a qualitative approach, the two poems were compared with regard to how each poet described the winter, and thus how linguistic tools were used to construct messages about this season. The analysis enhances students' literary awareness of stylistic analysis as an effective tool to better understand texts and write with their style. The study concluded with important pedagogical implications.

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Keywords: Linguistic Deviation, Linguistic Parallelism, Poems; Stylistic Analysis, Winter.

1. Introduction

Comparative stylistics analysis elucidates how language features are employed by poets/ writers in different literary texts of the same or different genres for the purpose of constructing specific meanings in an affective and persuasive manner (Warner, 2023). Stylizations assume that language features are a key to form meaning in a specific manner, creating the poet's distinctive style, as embedded in the principles of stylistics set by various scholars (Enkvist, 1985; Turner, 2014; Verdonk, 2002, 2013; Widdowson, 2014). Semino (2002) maintains that the stylistic analysis of literary texts substantially differs from the literal

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interpretation of these texts since stylistics focuses on text analysis based on linguistic evidence; further, he maintains that pre-twentieth-century English poetry language is characterized by formality and even archaism in many cases. However, the poetry language of the 20th century witnessed a significant change in terms of using conversational rather than traditional poetic style (Semino, 2002). Employing a great variety of language forms and features in literary texts in the twentieth and first-twentieth centuries prompted developments on the part of stylisticians regarding the techniques and frameworks (and how they should be applied), with various focuses, needed to investigate the language of literary texts. In this regard, Busse and McIntyre (2010) argues that “the last decades have seen a further division of stylistics” (p.33). This division is manifested by emerging new “branches such as Cognitive Stylistics, Multimodal Stylistics, Corpus Stylistics, Historic Stylistics, and Pragmatic Stylistics.” (Busse & McIntyre, 2010).

In a stylistic analysis, a literary text's syntactic and semantic elements can have a direct impact on the meaning of utterances. It is based on the methodical observation, categorization, and description of literary language. Thus, it opens the analysts' minds to the diverse dimensions of a specific literary text. An analyst of poetry would investigate linguistic deviation, linguistic parallelism, and informality to study how the poets' distinct style is constructed at the syntactic, semantic and informality levels in poetry. For this purpose, the present study examined two poems Charles Simic's 'Against winter' and Anne Hunter's 'Winter'. Charles Simic was a Serbian well-known American poet of modern age. He died in 2023, leaving behind hundreds of poems and other literary works. Anne Hunter is a romantic poet and lyricist. These two poems were selected in particular as they addressed a similar topic about the bad consequences of winter on poor people. These poems help reveal social structures of society, which constitutes a ground upon which these two poems can be contrasted and compared linguistically. There are multiple ways that reflect how these stylistic features can play a role in exposing social structure, and how the poor against rich are treated by the winter. Additionally, these two poems relied on different techniques to construct style. Consequently, these two poems were purposefully selected to be examined from a stylistic perspective.

This comparative analysis is only confined to these two modern poems with three main stylistic features namely linguistic deviation, linguistic parallelism, and informality to study how the poets' distinct style is constructed at the syntactic, semantic and informality levels in poetry. The winter is among themes that people heavily talk about in life, as being an integral part of their physical, social and emotional life. It symbolizes various meanings in different cultures that are associated with human life. Poets (e.g., Simic and Hunter) symbolize winter as loss, fear and despair. In these poems, the winter is used to expose societal defects and reveals social life's injustice. That is, while the winter can be kind to the rich, it is not so to the poor. Accordingly, people are treated differently due to their economic conditions. Therefore, poems with winter themes can be analyzed to shed light on how language features can depict this social structure. In pedagogical contexts, EFL students can use stylistic analysis to reveal this social injustice. Stylistic analysis can thus help EFL students gain a better understanding of literary texts carrying such meanings as social injustice, and how society can be depicted by language represented by literary texts, as in this context. This type of analysis is used to describe the social world and in turn how the social world can shape language.

Considering the significance of stylistics, this study seeks to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are the linguistic (stylistic) techniques used to foreground imagery in both poems?
2. How do the poet's voices differ in both poems?
3. What are the pedagogical implications that can be drawn from this study?

This study employed theoretical principles and practical frameworks to gain a more in-depth understanding of how stylistics can be applied to literary texts. This study shed light on the most important linguistic features used by both the poets that reflected numerous aspects of linguistic variation (including syntax, semantics, and informality). Based on the stylistic analysis and through close reading and attention to the poems, this paper investigated how intended meanings/messages were foregrounded through important principles of stylistics: linguistic deviation, parallelism and (in)formality (register). Linguistic devices are tools by which the meaning is constructed to affect the recipient, and this meaning is highlighted/emphasized. This meaning or poetic effect is seen as the target since this effect can shape how the recipient should think of the world.

2. Literature Review

- *Theoretical Framework*

Stylistics is defined as the study of language style (Leech, 2014; Leech & Short, 2007; Verdonk, 2013; Widdowson, 2014). Leech and Short (2007) maintain that style is “the linguistic characteristics of a particular text” (p.12). In the broader definition of stylistics, some scholars (Enkvist, 1985; Turner, 2014; Verdonk, 2002, 2013; Widdowson, 2014) associate the term ‘style’ with literature. It is defined as “a study of literary discourse from linguistic orientation” (Widdowson, 2014). Aor (2019) views stylistics as a branch of applied linguistics that

makes links between Linguistics and Literature. In the same vein, Giovanelli and Harrison (2022) define stylistics as “the study of language patterns in texts and the meaningful relationship between linguistic choice and literary interpretation” (p.381). This implies that doing stylistic analysis can enrich analysts with strategies for examining how language can be used and facilitate understanding of literary texts (Simpson, 2004).

This study is based on theoretical perspectives and principles of stylistics from scholars of stylistics (Halliday, 2019; Miall & Kuiken, 1994; Widdowson, 2014). These theoretical perspectives and principles serve as basic guidelines for the stylistic analysis of the current study. Widdowson (2014) set up a theoretical model to show the position of stylistics as a mediation between linguistics and literary criticisms, as revealed in Figure 1.

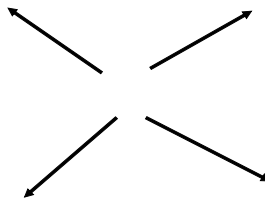


Figure 1: Widdowson's Theoretical Model of Stylistics.

According to this model, “stylistics can serve as a means whereby literature and language as subjects can by a process of gradual approximation move towards both disciplines of linguistics and literary criticism” (Widdowson, 2014). Widdowson is attempting to show how stylistics mediates between two disciplines, linguistics and literary criticism, and also two subjects of a Language and a Literature. This also suggests that stylistics is not a discipline, nor can it be treated as a subject either, but it is a means of relating discipline and subject. Stylistics thus can be developed as a separate branch of study to examine any literary work of art.

Foregrounding is an important concept in stylistics. It is realized by parallelism and linguistic deviations (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010), especially semantic deviations such as metaphor or lexical deviations such as ellipsis and conversion. These are explicit manifestations of foregrounding in literary texts. Miall and Kuiken (1994) point out that the concept of ‘foregrounding’ was used in linguistics for the first time by Prague School linguist Jan Mukarovsky in the twentieth century; and maintained that this term “refers to the range of stylistic variations that occur in literature” (p.390). They further argued that these variations can be at different language levels (e.g., phonetics, grammatical, and semantics). Halliday (2019) maintains that foregrounding leads to prominence since the foregrounded language is “both memorable and highly interpretable.” This prominence, in turn, is motivated by contributing to the development of characters, themes and/or images (Simpson, 2004). Many scholars (Semino, 2002; Widdowson, 1992) stressed the pedagogical benefits to students in TEFL classes. They argued that the distinct and deviant use of language features in literary texts can develop students’ writing practice through adaptation. Based on theoretical frameworks of stylistics, Semino (2002) examined the nature of linguistic variation and its potential effects in poetry, she demonstrated the great variety of linguistic features that interact on different linguistic levels, in a way that shows a great deal of linguistic complexity. As this study is linguistics-based, those theoretical perspectives and principles of stylistics needed to be consulted to explain how texts shape realities (and ideologies) about the social world, reflecting poets’ voice or style.

- *Empirical Research*

There have been numerous stylistic studies (Assadi & Ras, 2023; Aziz & Ghani, 2023; Haider & Ramzan, 2023; Madlool, 2023; Salman & Mansoor, 2020; Saputra & Abida, 2021; Yuqi, 2022) that have examined the nature of linguistic variety in literary texts, particularly poetry. In more detail, Saputra and Abida (2021) conducted a stylistic analysis to investigate the structure and style, viewpoints, and themes of Frost's poem ‘An Old Man’s Winter Night’. They employed descriptive qualitative and content analysis approaches to examine language at the level of phonetics, phonology, grapheme, semantics and grammar (Assadi & Ras, 2023). They found that the poet Frost employed a variety of stylistic elements such as alliteration, metaphor, personification, symbolism, and imagery to foreground his point (Gregoriou, 2023). Such variations in stylistic devices in literary texts, as the findings reveal, have attracted research to shed light on pedagogical outcomes that learners can benefit from (Sotirova, 2022). Jaafar and Hassoon (2018), too, investigated the effectiveness of pedagogical stylistics in helping EFL university students raise their literary awareness and performance (poetry interpretation and analysis). They employed a mixed approach (an experimental approach (a pre-test and a post-test) and a questionnaire for this purpose. Based on the results of this study, which showed positive perceptions of stylistic tools and students’ high performances, they recommended that teachers should direct students’ attention to drawing upon stylistic techniques in poetry analysis and interpretation in the classroom.

Stylistics is not only confined to educational contexts; many researchers have conducted stylistics studies to elucidate how language was used in political contexts. In this regard, Sadeq Alaghbary (2022) analyzed 30

tweets (on political issues) posted by Donald Trump from a critical stylistic perspective, over the period between 2011 and 2020. He conducted this analysis using the textual conceptual functions framework with five levels of language (morphological processes, lexical choice, semantic level, pragmatic level, and casual level). The results showed a rich variation of linguistic (lexical, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic) choices made in his rhetoric hiding Trump's ideologies to influence his followers' perceptions of realities.

Al-Khawaldeh and Shureteh (2017) displayed the most exquisite parallelisms of all kinds in Al-Ahwas' poetry. The parallelism in this poetry is morphologically, semantically, and structurally created. Al-Ahwas didn't stop at using identical morphological equations to produce rhythm; he also tried to achieve parallelism through repetition, which may be broken down into many patterns. They may be mentioned in a single verse line or several lines that all support the same notion but are written in various circumstances. Epanaphora, also known as Epanalepsis, is the second repetition pattern in terms of rhythm and structure. It is a repetition-based structure, where one word is added to the beginning and then repeated through the text. Al-Ahwas used parallelism to attain both a semantic and high rhythmical harmony by consciously emphasizing words existing in a parallel system cantering on the main concept (Al-Khawaldeh & Shureteh, 2017).

It is apparent that parallelism is the core of stylistic studies conducted by those and other researchers interested in stylistics. Among other important stylistic studies investigating parallelism is Thwala (2017). He conducted a stylistic analysis of parallelism on the syntactic and semantic levels in selected C.T. Msimang's Poetry. In the poems investigated, he found that parallelism, which is manifested in words and phrases that were carefully chosen, is employed to emphasize simple and complex concepts and thoughts for the purpose of developing the narrative and creating rhythmic aspects in a systematic fashion.

Other studies also added deviation besides parallelism to elucidate how they craft meaning in poetry. For example, Yuqi (2022) analyzed E. E. Cummings's poem "Love is More Thicker Than Forget" from a stylistic perspective. Yuqi highlighted a new and unique poetic style adopted in this poem. This poetic style, constructed by two stylistic features: linguistic deviation and parallelism. They both contributed to enriching the meaning of poetic language and provided the reader with new perspectives of how he/she perceives these meanings. He further asserted that the stylistic techniques deepened understanding of the ideological meanings of this poem.

As discourse analysis is closest to stylistics as both investigate how linguistic features create meanings, researchers employed stylistics guided by discourse analysis principles. Aziz and Ghenni (2023), for instance, used discourse-stylistic approach to examine Hopkins' Poem "Binsey Poplars". They found that all the stylistic tools used by the poet contributed to the overall meaning, such as personification occupied the highest rank of frequency with a ratio of 50%, then repetition (48%) is followed by reference with a percentage of (31%). The researchers concluded that the poet used various types of cohesive and stylistic devices for the purpose of delivering exact meanings and thoughts of his poem. These devices can better access the readers to implicit messages so that he/she can better understand the poet's intention.

Reviewing literature, this study offers an addition to the growing literature of stylistic analyses of literary texts by finding connections between linguistics and literature for pedagogical EFL purposes. This study also fills gaps in the literature by conducting a comparative stylistic analysis of poems on the same topic. Through this analysis, it establishes a two-sided framework (content and form) whose purpose is to guide EFL students to analyze poems from content and form through investigating specific features. That is, while linguistic deviation and parallelism is concerned with content, informality pertains to form (how content is delivered). Altogether they create the writer's distinct style. This study thus argues that informality is complementary to the other two principles. These connections can serve as guidelines for designing lesson plans to help students interpret and understand literary texts by relying on implicit and explicit ties between content and form in poetry. Thus, this study sets stylistic analysis as an EFL practice that can guide course designers and educators to design EFL materials that center on this (stylistic) analysis.

3. Methodology

- *Research Design*

This study used qualitative approach to offer explanations of how the poets drew upon various stylistic features to reveal how the winter treated people differently due to their different conditions, and this exposed social injustice among people belonging to different social classes, in ways that make these poets reflect their style. Linguistic deviation, linguistic parallelism, and informality were three common stylistic features that poets drew upon in poetry, and therefore were focused upon in this study.

- *Sampling and Data Collection*

This study used the purposive sampling technique for the selection of these poems from the *poetryfoundation.org* website, based on two criteria: first, they addressed the same topic/theme (suffering from winter). Second, these poems represented different time period. Poem 1 entitled 'Against Winter' (by Charles

Simic) is based in the 21st century and poem 2 entitled 'Winter' (by Anne Hunter) belongs to the 19th century. This can help reveal how style can differ in both times. Moreover, the texts of the poetry genre were selected as they were very rich with various linguistic features that were worth shedding light on. They were selected to investigate how meaning and imagery were foregrounded by linguistic means, including linguistic deviation, linguistic parallelism, and informality in both poems.

- *Data Analysis*

The study was conducted as a stylistic analysis in an analytical framework to investigate the poets' construction of style about different themes that are related to life and society to further explore new innovative ways that can be used to create voice or style by which poets or writers can stand out. While doing the content analysis of both the poems (the first poem is divided into three five-line stanzas, while the second one consists of three stanzas, with the first two each four lines and the last one six lines), these poems were analyzed with regard to two different aspects of language, which are at the level of syntax and semantics. Following studies that conducted a stylistic analysis of literary texts, this study used an adapted conceptual framework of foregrounding. A comparative analysis of stylistics was applied between the two texts in accordance with the concepts of informality and foregrounding (Stockwell, 2020). It was adjusted to be confined to the linguistic deviation and parallelism at the syntactic and semantic levels. They are the most important principles of foregrounding that stylisticians focus on in their analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

This section discusses how the linguistic techniques were employed in these two poems to create the poets' distinct styles. Both poems talked about the negative sides of the winter as being harmful drawing upon various linguistic features. In this section, three features have been highlighted: linguistic deviation, parallel features, and informality.

- *Linguistic (Semantic) Deviation*

The term linguistic deviation "refers to moving away from a norm on all linguistic levels" (Nørgaard et al., 2010). Is a preliminary aspect of foregrounding whose aim is to draw the reader's attention to particular aspects of meaning (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010). In the data of this study, one level of deviation was identified, which is the semantic level. The poet used metaphor to create a reality about the winter season. This linguistic feature is among the most important features that are used by the poets in this study. They predominantly draw upon this feature to make an effect on the addressee as they are addressing the disastrous consequences of the winter season. Therefore, the bad consequences of the winter season are the main focus of this poem.

"The truth is dark under your eyelids" (from 'Against winter')

The sky is full of clouds. These clouds hide the truth about the weather and thus they hide bad things from, and can be harmful to, the addressee and hide what may happen due to the winter. This expression is used to describe this particular situation.

In poem 'Winter', semantic deviation can be captured in metaphorical expressions that the poet used to create a reality of the brutality of the winter.

*"Behold the gloomy tyrant's awful form
Binding the captive earth in icy chains;" (from 'Winter')*

Here the poet relies on sharp affective words that are metaphorically used to describe the scene. He used personification to portray the brutality of the winter season as a brutal person who captivates the earth in chains. He describes the winter as a tyrant with a frightening appearance. Thus, this metaphor pictures the winter as a tyrant. The lexical meaning of this expression contradicts the norms. This deviation is thus aimed to trigger the recipient's attention to think of the metaphorical meaning, which is this tyrant (winter) captivates the earth with an icy chain. This shows to what extent the winter is unfair and harsh. The poet uses very effective words to draw this image. Here the poet drew heavily upon affective words to describe the winter. Imagery is painted by describing the winter itself. Similarly, the poet's words are organized in sentences. This is a characteristic of written discourse.

- *Linguistic Parallelism*

Linguistic parallelism is identified by "(overuse of) repetitive structures" at the linguistic level (Nørgaard et al., 2010). Poets and writers rely on this technique to foreground certain aspects of meaning (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010). Parallelism is another important technique that was used in both poems. Many aspects of reality were foregrounded through parallelism. Exploring a variety of parallelism structures helps readers benefit from inherited rhetorical information and Arab criticism on several levels (Thamer, 1987). This technique helps poets express their ideas while allowing room for interpretation on the side of the reader who becomes a critical thinker over a passive receiver who doesn't delve into or engage with the text (Alshamout, 2023). Around the main

subject, parallelism is built up in successive layers of understanding and significance to make the poem coherent and create harmony through rhyme, rhythm, and euphonics and highlight idealistic materialistic, or imaginary notions, and thus encouraging open-mindedness. Two levels of linguistic parallelism were identified in the data of this study. These levels are syntactic and semantic as discussed below:

- *Syntactic level*

“All day long you'll squint at the gray sky.

When the wind blows, you'll shiver like straw.” (from ‘Against Winter’)

The poet used this feature at the level of sentence structure (*syntactic* parallelism) to emphasize his idea concisely in the extracted quotation above. This parallel construction is important as it also attracts the addressee's attention to the meaning conveyed in these lines. Here the structural parallelism is aimed to make prominence with regard to that part of reality, which is the poor's inability to live with the harsh situations of the winter.

- *Semantic level*

In poem ‘Winter’, there are no instances of structural parallelism. However, there are many instances of semantic parallelism. Using semantic parallelism, the poet paints a picture with contrasting sides. That is, while winter brings fear and death to the poor, the rich can find warmth and happiness in this season (the winter). Thus, winter can be different for different people, according to their financial status. Using this feature, the poet draws a line between people of different statuses. This comparison highlights the miserable circumstances of the poor, the injustice that they are suffering and its consequences. Thus, the winter exercises its dominance and power over poor people.

*“See from its centre bends the rifted tower,
Threat'ning the lowly vale with frowning pride,
O'er the scared flocks that seek its sheltering side,
A fearful ruin o'er their heads to pour.”* (From ‘Winter’)

This is another example of semantic parallelism that is used by the poet to foreground certain aspects of reality. Opposition between what the tower was supposed to be and what happened. That is, the tower was supposed to shelter them from the rain, but the result was exactly the opposite. Here in these lines, it can be seen that there are phrases that are repeated with similar meanings ‘rifter tower’ a fearful ruin’ ‘threatening the lowly vale’ and ‘the scared flocks. They all foreground the miserable situation they were in due to winter.

Semantic parallelism is also available in poem ‘Against Winter’ as follows:

*“A meek little lamb you grew your wool
Till they came after you with huge shears.
Flies hovered over open mouth”* (from poem 1, by Simic)

This semantic parallelism serves to make this season look evil and destructive. Leaves of trees fell just as the wool of lamb sheared. This is also compared to birds that fly away due to winter. The imagery is used to paint a gloomy scene. In this poem, many language features exist that make it very unique. Metaphorical expressions such as ‘the truth is dark under your eyelids; the birds are silent’ are used in this poem. They are used by the poem to paint a gloomy image.

*“Winter coming. Like the last heroic soldier
Of a defeated army, you'll stay at your post”* (from ‘Against Winter’)

The winter is an invading force, and the addressee is the last soldier left to stop it, so it is a poem in opposition to winter.

“You're crazier than the weather, Charlie” (from ‘Against Winter’)

The poet established a ground of similarity between the very dissimilar objects (the addressee and the weather) to foreground certain realities. Here the poet used a parallel structure (a comparison structure). This comparison is based on using the adjective ‘crazier’ to compare the addressee and the weather metaphorically so that the poet constructs his intended message. That is, although the winter is harsh and crazy, the addressee is even crazier. Thus, with this construction, he puts his conclusion (the addressee is even crazier than the weather) because of the state he reached due to the winter; therefore, his physical appearance is bad because of the winter.

- *Informality ‘Register’*

With regard to the informality feature, there are important distinctions between the two poems examined in this study. This phenomenon is manifested through four features: using pronouns, rhetorical questions, adjectives and contractions. In more detail, in poem ‘Against Winter’, the poet Simic makes a direct

relationship with the addressee. Simic's poem discourse is characterized by informality (informal language). That is, the language of Simic's poem is more likely to occur in informal interactions than in Hunter's poem 'Winter'. That is, there are many occurrences of the pronoun (you/your). This explicitly suggests the active presence and involvement of the recipient. This reveals that the poet attempts to make a closer relationship with the addressee, who is struggling with the winter. This is manifested by the frequent occurrences of the second-person pronouns (you/your) in Simic's poem. In this poem, there are seven occurrences of the second pronoun (six times 'you' and one time 'your'). This feature is typical of interactive speech. He describes who suffers from the consequences of winter. On the other hand, Hunter's poem 'Winter' uses third-person pronouns instead. This includes one occurrence of the pronoun (his) and one occurrence of the pronoun (its), two occurrences of the pronoun (their), and two occurrences of the pronoun (her).

Informality can also be manifested in the question formulated 'What are you going to do about it?' in poem 'Against Winter'. Here the poet (Simic) forms a rhetorical question as he addresses the recipient. This can reveal that Simic's poem is more linked with informal language used in everyday interactions. However, Hunter's poem ('Winter') is more associated with descriptive language that is used in written discourse. This can be statistically demonstrated by using far more adjectives in Hunter's poem than in Simic's poem.

No	Affective words	<i>Against Winter</i>	<i>Winter</i>
1	Action verbs	16	9
2	Adjectives	18	27

Besides, the poet (Simic) adheres to time sequencing which is a technique used to describe events chronologically based on time. This feature is used to paint this image (the consequence of winter to people), which is the miserable state of people due to the winter.

Another important technique, with regard to informality, upon which these two poems can be compared is the use of contractions. Simic heavily relied on contractions (e.g., you'll). He used five contractions. This is another manifestation that reflects informality. However, Hunter used one contraction (o'er) in her poem. Thus, this is another feature that suggests that, unlike Hunter's poem, Simic's poem language tended to be closer to everyday language.

Although the winter is a beautiful season for many people. The poets highlighted certain (bad rather than good) aspects of this season. Using specific linguistic features such as metaphor and parallelism, the poets directed the reader's attention to think of the winter in specific ways. That is, with these features being used this way, many other good aspects of the winter were hidden. For example, the winter is needed to revive the trees and flowers, besides being an important supply of water. However, all these aspects are not highlighted in these two poems. Instead, the focus is only on the harsh and negative consequences of the winter in both poems. In this regard, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) content that many writers use linguistic features including metaphors to reveal certain aspects and at the same time hide other aspects of the social world. This can be certainly achieved by how and what language is used by writers/speakers. Thus, all these positive aspects associated with this season were backgrounded. It can thus be claimed that linguistic features can determine how the recipient should think of the issue addressed.

They used many linguistic features at the micro level, including metaphor, simile, lexis, and parallelism to make imagery with certain scenes. Foregrounding thus should be seen as a channel through which the prominence of certain aspects of realities is motivated. They are attention-seeking techniques at the different levels of language that are used in texts. These linguistic choices made by the poets signal different realities that these poets need the addressee/ the reader to pay attention to. Thus, foregrounding is not a goal, but it should be seen as a means to achieve the ultimate goal, which is the constructed meaning/message that the poet tries to make. That is, linguistic features are necessary for foregrounding and in turn, foregrounding is necessary for making meaning (message). Features are seen as tools, foregrounding is a process, and intended meaning/message is a product (Ul, 2014).

Comparing these two poems, this study can show many similarities. Nevertheless, each poet has a distinct style. The poem 'Winter' by Hunter reveals the reality of social injustice between the rich and poor. Unlike the poor, the rich are more powerful and thus more resistant to the harshness of nature (the winter). It reflects the unjust social system and blames the winter for being unfair to the poor and rich. However, poem *Against Winter* by Simic describes the miserable state of the addressee, who is suffering from the winter, without discussing the social structure of society (the rich versus the poor). Two important features that the poet Simic used that weren't used by Hunter; using the pronoun (you) and rhetorical questions. However, it was clear that the poet Hunter used many more metaphorical expressions (e.g., "Binding the captive earth in icy chains") to describe the harshness of winter. The poet Hunter relied heavily on metaphor to paint this picture. Besides, Hunter's poem involves more instances of parallelism. This can be explained by the fact that she exposed the unjust social structure between the different levels of society (the rich versus the poor).

Al-Zubaidy (2014) maintains that the language of poetry is not only a tool to describe or reflect reality, but also to perform or enact reality. He thus adopted the critical discourse analysis perspective that language is used to create reality, as being a social practice through which writers/poets can make intended meanings and

knowledge to shift people to specific realities (Fairclough, 2015). All these language features, constituting the poets' style, foreground the poets' rhetoric about the miserable states of the poor and the social structure in society. While the poem *Winter* foregrounds the social injustice (between the rich and poor), poem *Against Winter* foregrounds the miserable state of the addressee (the poor), without highlighting the unfair social structure of society and its consequences on the poor. Although both poems are about the same topic (the harshness of winter), the poem *Winter* is far more critical of the unfair society's social structure than poem *Against Winter*. However, they both symbolize the winter as a person with double-standards dealing with the poor and rich differently. Accordingly, it can be said that the imagery and symbolism were foregrounded in each poem.

- *Pedagogical Implications*

This study helps learners come up with a set of stylistic tools based on the text they analyze so that they can effectively use them as effective tools to understand literary texts (Haider & Ramzan, 2023). Doing stylistic analysis enables students to account for linguistic variations that poets/writers make to construct the intended meaning. Style is the writer's distinct way of creating meaning, that is characterized by its uniqueness. Accordingly, stylistics as an education approach can assist students in writing with a distinct style (voice) as they can enrich their repertoire with such effective stylistic tools. Widdowson (1992) is among the first scholars who pointed out to pedagogical values that poetry can bring to students in educational contexts, and thus are worth considering. This way students can realize the voices or styles that poets/writers adopted or created in their works. This study can guide students to different styles that writers can create in accordance with the writer's perspective and beliefs. Jaafar and Hassoon (2018) maintains that stylistics can help enhance both native and EFL students' understanding of literary texts using linguistic tools.

This study provides grounds for helping students make abstract relationships between unrelated objects, sharing one or some characteristics in a way that adds to the beauty of their ESL writing in a figurative rather than literal way. This can develop their ESL writing so that they can create with their voice or style, and thus they can construct their identity. Training students to use linguistic deviations and informal aspects of writing will open the door for them to create ideas and think of innovative ways to defend them. This can further motivate them to seek different ways to convince the reader when they select a topic where they find themselves more able to take a stance and defend that stance. Furthermore, students can realize the power of language as a social practice that can be used not only to reflect or represent but also to create knowledge or realities about the social world, such as the realities of winter (in the context of this study). Here, the poets created certain realities about this season that many people have never thought about this season. They thus shifted the reader's attention to what the poets wanted the reader to perceive, regarding this season, by highlighting certain aspects of realities rather than others.

This paper can draw course designers' attention to focus on stylistic analysis-based activities as an important part of the curriculum. Using pedagogical stylistic activities will enhance students' collaboration, and thus provide an important ground for students to work in groups, as such activities are of multi-aspects that students need to deal with. For example, firstly, students in groups are directed to identify stylistic features that poets used, then divide these features into lower stylistic levels (e.g., phonological, lexical, semantic, etc.), then students should associate each level with specific purposes (e.g., identity construction, criticisms, attraction, etc.). After that, they need to share their responses. Consequently, such activities can enhance learner's motivation to understand and examine literary texts in the classroom. In other words, students can analyze and study these texts relying on stylistics tools. Additionally, students can reflect on their understanding and analysis of poems by writing an essay or paragraph of any topic of their choice as one way to employ these tools in their writing. This can help enhance their effective use of these tools.

This study recommends teachers and curriculum designers to teach stylistics from a contrastive perspective (e.g., two pieces of literature belonging to different times) to look at how meaning is made. This can facilitate students' understanding of style and aspects associated with formality. It is recommended to study linguistic deviation in these poems as it can teach students language creativity and the necessary tools to make the intended meaning. It can help them understand language formation processes in context.

5. Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

This study conducted a stylistic analysis to elucidate how two poets (Anne Hunter and Charles Simic) employed three main linguistic features (deviation, parallelism and informality) to foreground certain aspects of meanings about the winter season in ways that reflect their own distinctive voice. This study concluded that poem *'Against Winter'* is of interactive type. This is manifested in the occurrences of the pronoun 'you', rhetorical questions and more verbs being used, and thus messages are constructed through dialogue with the addressee. The poem *'Winter'* is descriptive (thus messages and their effects are produced through descriptions). This explains why *'Against Winter'* involves more action verbs but fewer adjectives than *'Winter'*. The poem, *'Against Winter'* on the other hand, involves more complex sentences with linguistic deviations than the poem *'Winter'* (for example, "While to the cheerful hearth and social board"). This is attributed to the different times that both poems were written.

This study can provide curriculum designers and instructors with important guidelines, tools and techniques that are necessary to design stylistics-based activities and tasks for the purpose of helping EFL students understand literary texts. This can be important for students in TEFL classes, as one effective strategy to develop their writing skills (Akyel, 1995). Students should have a good command of lexical, syntactic, rhetorical, and organizational features that qualify them to construct their voice in their EFL writings. Thus, employing such stylistic analysis-based activities can help them use linguistic devices and strategies effectively in their EFL writings. Unfamiliarity, in turn, with such strategies can be an obstacle that prevents learners from writing with voice and understanding literary texts effectively.

The present study, however, had some limitations that can be addressed in future research. First, this study was only limited to two poems. It can be thus replicated with a corpus of poems on the same topic to gain more representative findings and indicate how different poets employed linguistic features to create their own style or voice. Another limitation was that this study investigated linguistic features only from a stylistic perspective. Therefore, this analysis can be enriched with a cognitive analysis by employing an experimental approach based on psycholinguistic (discursive psychology) methods to examine how these stylistic features influence the recipients' performance in the EFL settings. In this regard, it would be recommended to investigate to what extent that stylistic analysis-based activities can facilitate students' understanding of literary texts and to what extent they can enhance their motivation to study poetry. It may also be recommended that future research employs mixed methods of data collection (e.g., interviews, observation and questionnaire) to survey EFL students and instructors, examining their perceptions of the effectiveness of doing stylistic analyses in EFL settings and conduct experimental tests to measure their performance in understanding literary texts and improving their ESL writing skills.

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