Attitudes Towards Identity in Literary Writings

Dr. Zemri Amel[*]

Dr. Moulay Tahar University of Saida, Algeria,amel.zemri@univ-saida.dz

Abstract:

Language and identity in literature is an insightful interdisciplinary issue in the field of sociolinguistics where language is affected by many psychological and socio-cultural factors. This paper investigates the use of codes in written literature tackling a set of variables that affect identity. To produce a well detailed description of the linguistic identity, a qualitative research method is adapted to check language performance in written texts in which the identity variable acts as a challenging factor. It is affirmed that the social norms are one of the most influential variables that affect the writers' intentions and styles dealing with syntactical, phonological or lexical consumptions that dominate the literary production and reflect one's notion of identity.

*Keywords:*linguistic identity- language- social norms- literature- variables.

1. Introduction

In literary writings, the linguistic variables are able to be used for creating a variety of effects, such as establishing tone, mood, character, and setting thanks to the variation at the level of grammar and syntax, lexis and pronunciation. Most often, *literary writings* are connected to creative and artistic intentions. In response to the expressed subjective aspect that governs the literary style, one can say that the writers express themselves taking into account their artistic visions, the themes ,and even previewing others' experiences .The research problem manage to confirm the aspect of identity as a social variable that affect the literary styles . Oldcastle (2000) explained

---

[*] Dr. Zemri Amel

> the distinction between writing of didactic purpose and literary writing which has that other, aesthetic, dimension. In fundamental terms literature is 'an expression of life through the medium of language' [2], but language used more profoundly than when used simply to convey information. (p.1)

Motivati... literary p... affirming... society t... violent approach in attacking most obnoxious cultural practices in Africa' (Chukwu, 3). It is unique according to the aim of the writers who entended to achieve independence and shape their own identity. Language as a code of communication is able to construct various identities in distinctive contexts that shape the literary device.

A qualitative research methodology highlights the fictional aspect of study via close reading, narrative and discourse analysis, textual analysis with interviews and observations.

One measures two major perspectives while reflecting upon identity. The former is the personal identity and the latter the collective identity. Hence, both of them combined together give birth to the social identities that ensure cohesion among the members of the community who use language as a linguistic identification.

2. The Cultural Identity in Literature

The literary code is affected by the historical and the cultural background of the writer. Writers and readers, most often, preview their background knowledge to understand the context. Therefore, language is regarded as a marker of cultural identity .Schall (2023) explained "One way I have encouraged readers to explore the cultural backgrounds and cultural identities of book characters is through a learning engagement that uses identity intersections." (p.1) .All the social , economic and even geographical phenomena affect the identity intersection including, ethnicity, religion, gender, education and race; it is ,just, the importance of the variable that may change from one area of interest to another.

Ann Jaramillo (2008) wrote a realistic fiction novel *La Linea* a group of readers created an identity intersection for the character Elena creating a graphic representation of an independent woman who faces life without having her parents by her side because of immigration. Some other readers, on the other hand, prefer to use lines, various sizes and colors to emphasize the important aspects of the story. "The power of the identity intersection as a learning tool is

in how it supports thinking about culture and cultural identities. Opportunities for reflection and thought should be woven throughout this engagement." Schall (2023). It is so normal for Europeans, for instance, to live autonomous, they make their own choices and they even think independently. Actually, modeling their own identity it is part of their culture which is something that works differently in the Arab world since we are governed by other social and religious norms that lead to a distinctive lifestyle. On the whole, language plays a crucial role in shaping cultural identity and reflecting cultural heritage in literature.

3. Literary Behavioural Variation on Identity

Writers and audiences are inseparable units in the literary universe; they have such a reciprocal connection to share emotional, social and cultural values. Sayuti (2019) affirmed that "The realization of cultural democratization is basically inseparable from the contribution made by the literary text and the textual universe that it builds."(p. 310) .Literary texts are, basically, manifestations of a set of ideas that are culturally clear because they are straightly resulting from a real life background which can be direct and literal as it may also be imitative and symbolic. Consequently, the human existence character is affected by the literary devices.

The linguistic variation in literature highlights identity traces and emphasizes the fictional aspects that affect the cultural, emotional and moral behavior. The cultural identity of writers might have considerable effects on language variation. To comprehend how it functions in a community, the cultural identity interactions and other external variables are considered critical variants. Some writers make their choices relying on the available space of opportunities for an effective interaction with the readers. It is essential for the readers to reflect the contextual background of the piece written in order to determine the norms of behavior that construct the plot lines and characters reflecting the writers' identity and stereotypical views of social and linguistic variables.

As an example of a text exploring identity as a theme is *Beowulf*, an epic poem written by Seamus Heaney, where the characters are concerned with the establishment of their own identities, which are basically constructed by two key elements; ancestral heritage and individual reputation. Its literal interpretation of identity takes place by discussing the characters' origin and religious background.

4. Language and Social Context in Literature

The social norms that govern any speech community refer to the factors that shape the use of language in a given society in order to communicate effectively. The literary code as a social action entails creativity to produce an outstanding artistic linguistic form of text .However, literature allows the writers to deviate from the linguistic norms that govern the usual use of language (i.e) phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic levels, to the stylistic management based on individual choices in running the linguistic habits of writers which makes it possible to shift from one style to another. The style of the writer is what attracts the readers' attention.

The socio-cultural background is not interrelated to sharing the same language as a medium of communication, but it is, rather, connected to other external factors, such as culture and identity, that lead to social harmony. There is no absolute objective reality in literature, mainly; it is the language which keeps a complex relationship between the readers and the writer in analyzing the literary texts. Beard (2001) affirmed that 'it is sometimes wrongly suggested that texts are somehowself-contained, existing in a world of their own and so free from outside influences.'(p.3). Yet, the literary analysis never come to one single right opinion to have final interpretations.

It happens, sometimes, that many writers write about an event or a happening for different purposes. Having *The Titanic* story as an example ,started from being a written manuscript to oscars winner movie in which the details emphasized were reliable to the writers' interest and that what makes the written version variant with the curant cultural values. The readers are not motivated to read the story on paper ; they would rather prefer to enjoy the artistic visual side rather than having many writers' attitudes. Some writers see it as a conspiracy to sink the ship; others are showing the idea of the social classes as a physical structure ;modern writers think that the story need to be reshaped since its traditional outline in well-known and the plot can be more powerful.

It is concluded that the literary texts are affected by various factors relying on how the writers are approaching one topic, each one representing an ideas that might influence the text interpretation.

4.1 Text and Context: Elucidating Example

The Convergence of the Twain is a poem written by Thomas Hardy for the dramatic Titanic disaster. The writer had two friends who did not survive the tragedy. Beard (2001) suggested the following poem to check the readers' expectations and how the readers' attitudes change from pre-reading to second reading task.

Text *The Convergence of The Twain*

 (lines on the loss of the Titanic)

I

In a solitude of the sea

Deep from human vanity,

And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

II

Steel chambers, late the pyres

Of her salamandrine fires,

Cold currents thrid, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

III

Over the mirrors meant

To glass the opulent

The sea-worm crawls – grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

IV

Jewels in joy designed

To ravish the sensuous mind

Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

V

Dim moon-eyed fishes near

Gaze at the gilded gear

And query: 'What does this vaingloriousness down here?'

VI

Well: while was fashioning

This creature of cleaving wing,

The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

VII

Prepared a sinister mate

For her – so gaily great –

A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate

VIII

And as the smart ship grew

In stature, grace, and hue,

In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

IX

Alien they seemed to be

No mortal eye could see

The intimate welding of their later history,

X

Or sign that they were bent

By paths coincident

On being anon twin halves of one august event,

XI

Till the Spinner of the Years

Said 'Now!' And each one hears,

And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

(P.18,19)

Previewing our knowledge as readers, it is expected to show sympathy and kidness. Almost the same historical event was described by Hopkins in *The Wreck of the Deutsch-land* who judged the incident to be a demonstration of a supreme mystery that reflects the power of God.

What the writer has marked is that his students came up with a critical conclusion that was not expected. They did not find it an emotional and an expressive poem that mirrors the pain, the blame and the sadness of the tragedy. The second reading task was more professional dealing with the literary study of the poem noting lexis, design, structure and stylistic devices such as metaphors. Checking part of the students' discussion for illustration, the archaic term "*Twain*", in the title, means two; pairing such as *fire and water* or *light and dark;* comparing the ship and the iceberg to *opulence and slime* ,besides, the phonological aspect which entails the analysis of sounds in combination. Exploring the contextual framework using the titanic story as a connecting theme, the writers shape their materials for a specific target that requires distinctive linguistic features.

5. Attitudes Towards Language Performance in Literature

The audiences might have different expectations that affect the **mood** and **tone** of writing. The tone, on the one hand, speaks of the authors' personality and communicates how they feel about their work. On the other hand, the mood refers the overall impression of the literary writing, for instance, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë would be far less efficient as a gothic manuscript when it is terrifying and the atmosphere is episodic.

The use of language as a literary device from the style to the imagery and choice of words shape the psychological attitudes that can help the readers to get a clear

vision of tone and mood. Analyzing an example quoted from Wuthering Heights;

> "Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living. You said I killed you—haunt me then. The murdered do haunt their murderers. I believe—I know that ghosts have wandered the earth. Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad. Only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh, God! It is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!"

This passage displays intensifying emotions and dark themes through the use of words like "ghost," "haunt," and "abyss'. The novel, then, is unique because it combines various different genres; **romance** parts portraying nature and **dark setting** with the sense of evil forces threatening the social order.

The diction mirrors writers' and the readers' attitude towards a subject, their environment and interest, where they grew up, or how they see themselves. It can make a piece of writing simple and pleasing to read, or difficult and boring.

Literary language permits writers to investigate complex themes and ideas in a way that takes readers to a deeper level of harmony and understanding. It enables sharing human experiences, and provokes new thought. Via literary language, writers can create powerful and lasting impressions. Sometimes the authors face challenges to interpret works that need profound reflection and analysis by means of complex literary devices. Consequently, literary codes cover the artistic and the creative use of lexis, thought and generate a unique reading experience. It can be found in various forms of literature that often employs techniques such as figurative language and symbolism. While it may require deeper analysis to fully understand between the lines the embedded meaning.

6. Conclusion

Theoretically speaking, language attitudes are often explored using three main approaches: direct, indirect, and social. The direct method involves explicitly reporting language attitudes, mainly through surveys or interviews. The indirect approach also entails in more subtle ways to defend language attitudes through quantitative and qualitative methodology. Furthermore, in societal treatment

researchers are connected with direct observation or analyze existing artifacts to infer language attitudes. Specifying literature, attitude refers to the way writers or characters think and feel about the subject. It is expressed through the stylistic analysis of literary, which are point of view, tone, voice and even sentence structure.

Many research works are conducted to explore the interrelationship between reading literary texts and enhancing readers' critical thinking skills. Likewise, literature mirrors the complexity of human identity via the representation of individuals' experiences, cultural origins, and personal development. By exposing readers to some variant writings, they are quite able to discover their own sense of self. On the other hand, attitudes towards identity in literature have changed through time and across cultures, reflecting the social changes. The linguistic variables in literary writing are complex issues to tackle. However, by understanding its distinctive that can be found in literature, one can expand a profound appreciation of the ways in which language is used to create meanings in literary texts.

7. References

1. Chukwu, M. N. *Language of a Society and its Influence on Her Literature*. Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri https://www.globalacademicgroup.com/journals/pristine/Language%20OF%20A%20society%20and%20its%20influence%20on%20her%20literature.pdf
2. Oldcastle, J. (2000). *What is Literary Writing?*. Literature study online
3. Schall, J. M . (2023) .*Exploring the Cultural Identities of Students and Book Characters with Identity Intersections* . university of arizona
4. Sayuti , S.A. (2019). *Literature as a Field of Identity Construction.* Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, volume 461 1st International Conference on Language, Literature, and Arts Education
5. Beard,A .(2001).Texts and Contexts .Routledge London and New York
6. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/writing_style/diction/tone_mood_audience.html 23/12/2023 13:20
7. https://wowlit.org/on-line-publications/stories/storiesiv6/6/
8. https://www.asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-06-01-1968/wintermons-language-social-context.pdf

9. https://open.lib.umn.edu/communication/chapter/3-4-language-society-and-culture/
10. https://civis.eu/en/learn/civis-courses/phd-workshop-language-and-identity-in-the-intercultural-encounter
11. http://www.literature-study-online.com/essays/literary.html