
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Stylistic Analysis of Coelho's novel The Alchemist

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ABSTRACT

Style can be defined as the way language is used in a given context. Literary style can be defined as the linguistic patterns chosen by a particular author intentionally or unintentionally among all of the other options that are not chosen by her/him. The focal point of the study is to do a stylistic analysis of *The Alchemist* (1993), written by famous Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho, which is the most influential novel with its profound thoughts and remarkable artistry. The novel has a unique narrative structure and profound symbolic meaning. As the research is theoretical, analytical, and descriptive in nature, close reading text-based analysis is applied in the analysis of the novel. The theoretical framework for the present study is a stylistic model based on linguistic and stylistic features proposed by Leech and Short (2007) that have been applied. They described a list of different categories; lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, coherence, and cohesion, but the present study focused on only two categories; lexical categories and grammatical categories. The researcher used a "mixed approach" for the study. The researcher used a secondary source of data collection. The present study used a non-random sampling design. Thus, in this study, the researcher has done a stylistic analysis of the novel and has presented how academic readers can better understand the writer's use of different literary elements and how meanings are constructed from a specific novel to reveal its themes.

KEYWORDS

Style, Stylistics, Linguistics stylistic Analysis, *The Alchemist*

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1. Introduction

Stylistics is characterized as an investigation of the distinctive styles that are available either in a given expression or in a composed content (Berhanu, 2009). As the scientific study of style, stylistics analysis includes a scope of general language qualities, which incorporate word usage, sentence and paragraph structure, imagery, repetition, cohesive devices, and presentation of thoughts (Ratcliffe, 2015). Each author's works can influence artistic works. Even though their motivation is the same, i.e., the revelation of the truth about existence and human instinct, the ways authors express their thoughts vary from person to person. This implies every one of the writers' works fit certain conditions in particular words. That means stylistic analysis can show the author's mind and description of his/her work. The author's quality can be embraced, and his shortcomings can be lessened.

Therefore, the focal point of the study is to explain the fact that how the study of literary works with linguistics features enhances the understanding of the readers. To express specific themes and to accomplish specific artistic effects, the authors use different linguistic and stylistic features in their works. Thus, stylistic features help in the comprehension of the linguistic competence of literary texts. To present this above-discussed fact, a stylistics analysis of the selected novel, *The Alchemist*, has been done, and the analysis showed how the artistic effects of the novel had been accomplished. *The Alchemist* is the masterpiece of Paulo Coelho (1988), and the researcher analyzed the text of this novel to show how the writer reveals the power of desires and passion and its ability to manifest it in real life. The novel emphasizes the importance of perusing the dreams, and one has to pay the price of one's dreams." (Coelho, *The Alchemist*, 1988)

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study is to contribute to the existing knowledge of literature, linguistics, and stylistics. There has been a debate between linguists and literary critics that the activity of applying linguistics features and approaches in the study of literature is not justified for the literary critics. Lodge (1972) threw light on the difference between literary art and linguistic science and said that linguistic science would never be able to discard the importance of literary criticism or fundamentally change the bases that literary art is helpful for humans, linguistics, as a science has its importance and the same, goes with literary art. So, the present study shows that linguistic and stylistic features enhance the meaning of the literary text when applied to literature.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The present study may help students of literature who want to enhance their knowledge about stylistic analysis and how writers use various stylistic devices to present the construction of meaning. It may help in understanding the themes and hidden meanings behind writing these texts. The research could serve as a springboard for further studies in this area and could promote academic discourse.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions of the present study are as follow:

1. What are the main stylistic features used in the selected novels which contribute to showing the style of the writer?
2. How have basic intrigues of the novels been presented through the lexical choices of the writer?
3. How do grammatical categories contribute to the construction of the style of the writer?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Style

Crystal and Davy (1969) consider "style" as "a choice of language practices, the incidental linguistics idiosyncrasies that describe an individual's uniqueness." It is typically those elements in a person's expressions that are especially bizarre or unique. Samuel Wesley (1969) considers style as "the dress of thought." Style is derived from the Latin word "*stilus*," which means "a pointed instrument utilized for composing writings. But these days, the meaning of style doesn't indicate the devices used by the authors but the characteristics of the writings themselves. This implies that the style is an etymological unique finger or thumb impression of an author, which marks individuality and uniqueness (Enkvist, 2016). This variety of meaning of style suggests that style is something that needs to do with uniqueness and personal identity. The style of the writer is the mirror image of his thoughts. It comes out of the writer's own being. It is said in other ways that these definitions of style suggest that "style is the man" as it uncovers the inward man, identity, and the point of view of an author. Gorrel and Laird (2002) offer trustworthiness to this declaration when they write: "*Style is the man*." Therefore, a great style is that in which the author makes use of words and sentences with the goal that he uncovers himself faithfully. This measurable and numerical approach of distinguishing general and habitual linguistic features in writings brings forth stylometry or stylo-statistics in style study (Tezcan, 2014).

2.2 Stylistics

The modern investigation of style, i.e., stylistics, has its underlying foundations in classical rhetoric: the ancient art of powerful effective speech, which has dependably had a close relation with writing literature (Brooks & Warren, 1972; Sarfraz, 2021). Because it was always viewed as a convincing discourses as well, traditional rhetoric was inflexible because it gave direction with reference to how to be powerful in speech, though stylistics is descriptive in modern times because it tries to call attention to the linguistics features that can be related with specific impacts (Hough, 1969). The improvement of stylistics is noticeably prominent with the work of Charles Bally, a disciple of Ferdinand de Saussure. Moreover, the new period of linguistics stylistics is represented by the French School of Charles Bally, who is generally acclaimed as the father of modern stylistics. He is known for his sincerely expressive origination of style. Charles Bally's stylistics was writer-centered. Michael Halliday (1960) vigorously affected (called British Stylistics) with his structuralist way of dealing with the linguistics analysis of any literary text. Stylistics prospered in Great Britain and America subsequently of the post-war advancements in descriptive linguistics in 1960. Therefore, it can be said that modern linguistic investigation of style is split into three major areas:

Formalism: Russian Formalist Theory and New Criticism (2007),

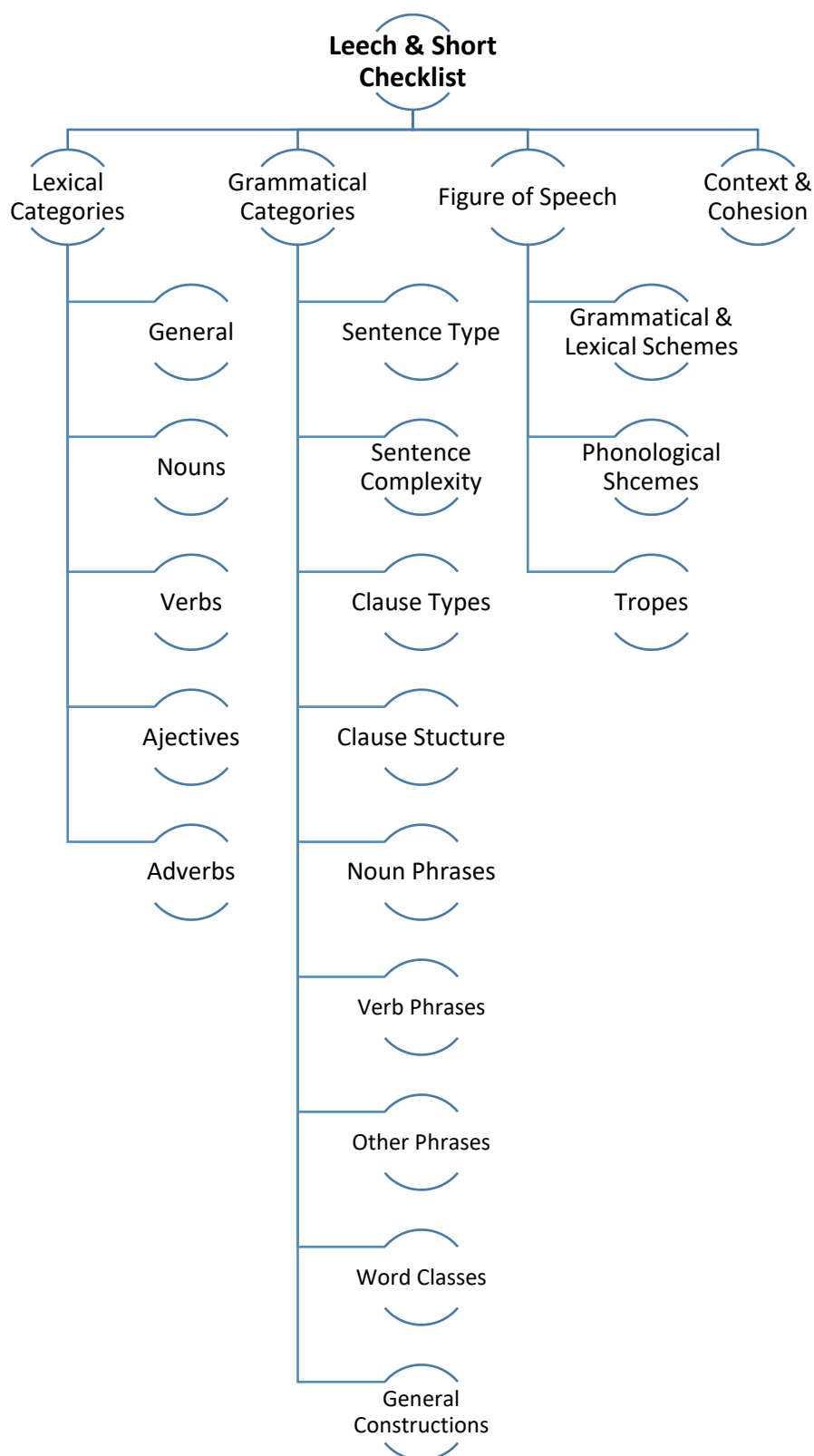
Structuralism: Bally's Expressive Theory, Jakobsonian Theory and Affective Theory (1987) and **Functionalism:** Discourse theories, Halliday's Systematic Theory (2014)

2.3 Linguistic Stylistics

The main focus of the current study is linguistic stylistics. It is basically concerned with linguistic theories. As a branch of linguistics, linguistics stylistic used linguistic approaches to explore the concept of style in written texts (Ayeomoni, 2003: 177). Linguistic stylistics was initially adopted as a supplement to literary criticism in the absence of linguistic analysis of texts. It differs from literary criticism in that linguistic stylistics focuses on the 'linguistic frameworks functioning in the text,' whereas literary criticism focuses entirely on the subjective description of texts (McIntyre & Jeffries, 2010).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

As a theoretical framework, the stylistic model of Leech and Short is used for the analysis of the novel. Leech and Short (2007) believe that stylistics analysis of every text includes choosing a few elements and ignoring or disregarding the other features. It is an exceptionally particular exercise, which might be one element or various elements. The stylistic choice includes the connection between the significances of literary content and the linguistic characteristics in which the significances are shown. Therefore, it can be seen that two criteria of literary criticism and linguistic criterion are involved. A mixture of literary and linguistic discrimination gives us those specific elements of style, which calls for more cautious examination, and these features are regarded as "style markers." For linguistic stylistics analysis, they provide us with a checklist of style markers in four classifications. These classifications will provide a range of information that might be inspected concerning the literary artistic effect of each passage. The list provided by them empowers us to gather information on a systematic basis. It is not too comprehensive, obviously, but rather a list of 'good bets,' categories that are probably going to stylistically analyze the relevant information. Below is the checklist is given by Leech and Short (2007).



Among the above-discussed linguistics categories proposed by Leech and Short (2007), the present study is concerned only with selected linguistics and stylistics categories, i.e., lexical features and grammatical features. These two categories have been employed in the selected novel.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design;

The present research used linguistics stylistics analysis as an actual approach. Linguistics stylistics analysis is selected because it allows interpretation of the linguistic description of a literary text. As a research design, the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative approaches, which is also known as the "mixed approach." The mixed approach "involved integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to generating new knowledge and can involve either concurrent or sequential use of these two classes of methods to follow a line of inquiry." (Stange, 2006).

3.2 Sample and Sampling Design

Generally, in mixed research, the sampling design involves "purposive sampling" for selecting particular individuals, groups, or texts related to the study. The present study used a non-random sampling design. Moreover, he purposefully chooses the blockbuster novel of Coelho, *The Alchemist*. Leedy and Ormrod (2012) preferred the use of purposeful sampling in literary research because the researcher wanted to extract particular features or information from a literary text.

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

In this study, the researcher used a secondary source of data collection. The study applies the method of data collection by having closer reading to the novels, making data classification, and determining the data based on criteria. For triangulation of the lexical data collection of the novels, the researcher has used a tool, "Tropes V8.4 English". The collecting data process is a note-taking technique. The notebook was used to write the summary and key features while reading the selected novel and to identify the lexical features, grammatical features, cohesion, and context of the selected sample. So, this study is also categorized as library research.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Style of Coelho (Findings of 1st research question)

The style of writing is depended on the personality of the author because his choice of sounds, words, and syntactic patterns are reflected through his work. The linguistics stylistic analysis of *The Alchemist* showed that Coelho represents his complex ideas in simple language to persuade his readers. The interesting thing in the novel is that the author is almost invisible as the referent and takes part in the text as a reader who shares his reading with the audience. He used many literary devices in the novel. The literary devices used in the novel are as follows: foreshadowing, irony, personification, symbolism, motifs, imagery, metaphors, and symbols. By use of imagery, he makes the reader understand the importance of the scene and settings. He describes his imagery in such a beautiful way that it seems that every word carries life in it. The major themes of the novel convey the reader's messages related to their lives. Foreshadowing tells the reader that the characters will perform important events in the upcoming chapters. He mostly uses proverbs in his work. The quality of *The Alchemist* showed that Coelho gives special attention to his readers, and the readers try to read the world directly with their physical senses along with the literary text. His readership knows no boundary of age, sex, class, religion, and creed because he tries to share the same concepts as his readers have in their minds. From the analysis of the selected novel, it is clear that the study of style is very important in our lives. Moreover, one should be conscious of adopting a good and particular style of reading and writing in this way the message will be conveyed beautifully and clearly.

4.2 Lexical Features of the Alchemist (Findings of 2nd research question)

In the lexical analysis of *The Alchemist*, it was noticed that the author's use of abstract nouns takes the largest share of the major word classes. The use of abstract nouns showed that the writer represents his complex ideas in simple language; he talked about the ideas that existed beyond time and space. These nouns play a very great role in describing the characters, the setting, and the surroundings well (Figure 2). Verbs, the second dominant group of the major word classes, have played an important role in the novel (Figure 3). Through the use of adjectives (that contribute the 3rd largest number from the major word classes), the author can describe the physical and psychological features of the characters and the setting (Figure 4). This role in making meaning accessible to the reader is achieved through describing actions and, to a certain extent, by playing a stative role in the novels. The least represented in the major word classes are adverbs. They perform different semantic functions such as manner, place, direction, time, and degree (Figure 5).

Figure 2: Varieties of Noun in The Alchemist

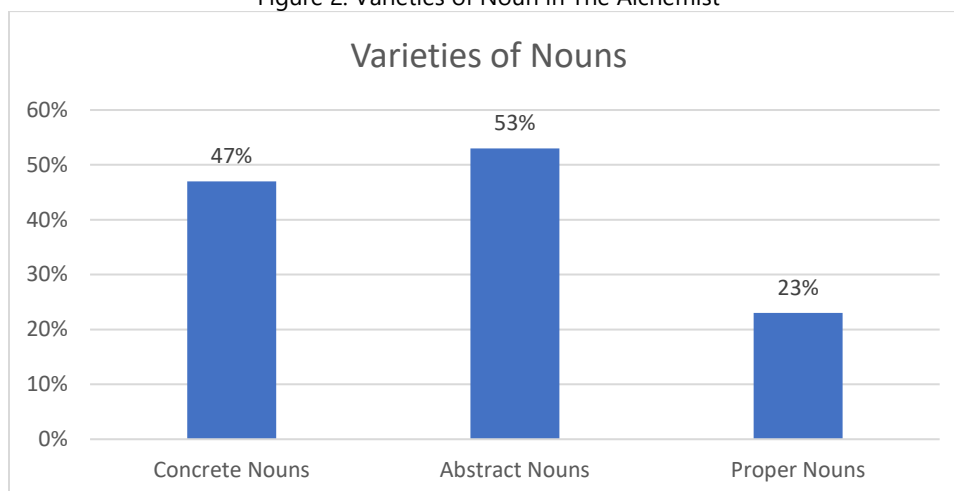


Figure 3: Varieties of Verbs in The Alchemist

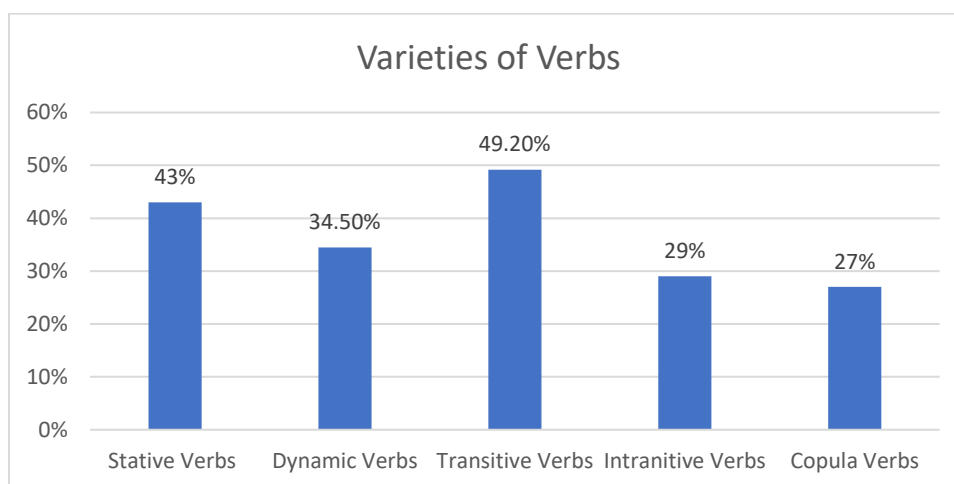


Figure 4: Varieties of Adjectives in The Alchemist

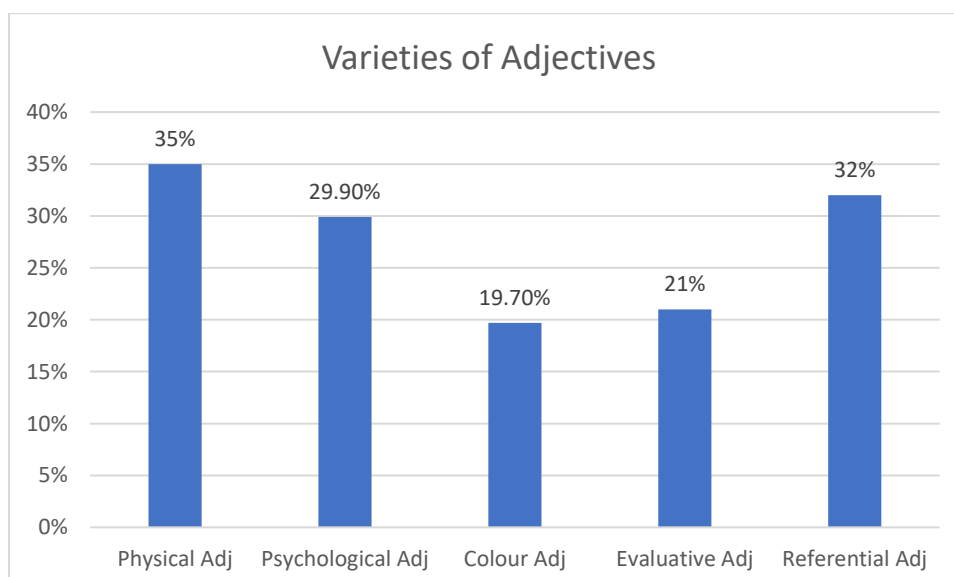


Figure 5: Varieties of Adverbs in *The Alchemist*

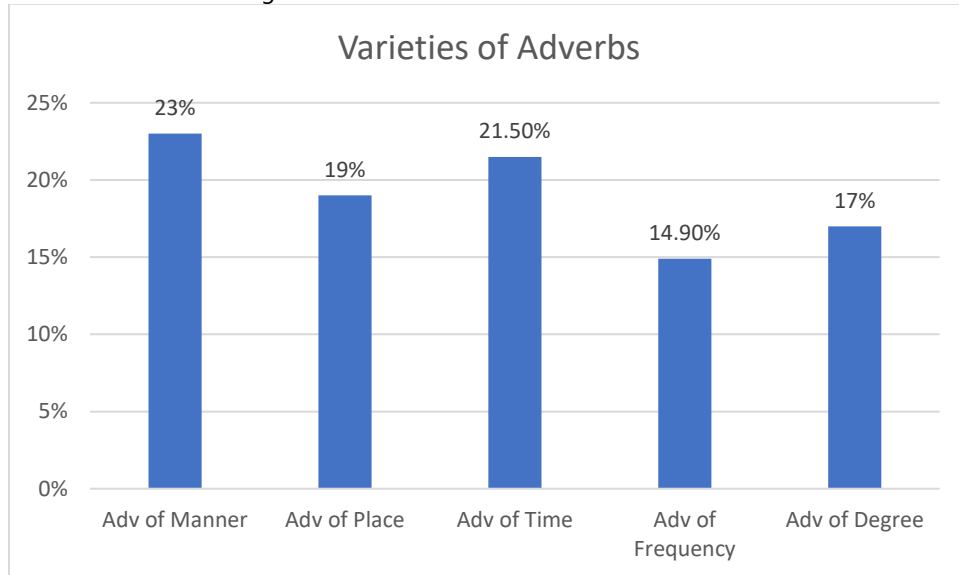
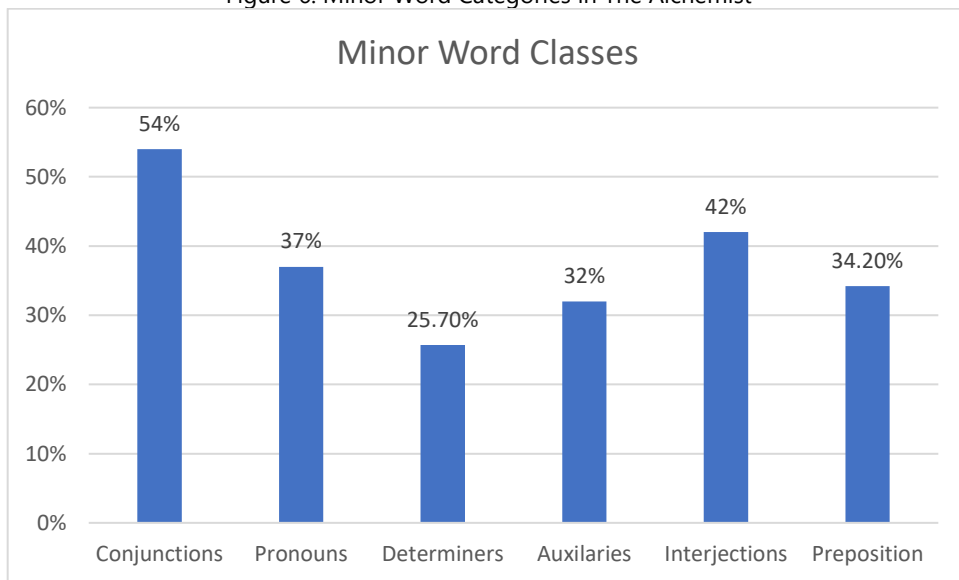


Figure 6: Minor Word Categories in *The Alchemist*



The analysis of the data of the selected text showed how the implication of linguistic and stylistic features to the literary text help in understanding the meanings and themes of the novel. The procedure of the data analysis included exploring the representation of every linguistic and stylistic feature used in the novel *The Alchemist*. The results show stylistic features and their usefulness in interpreting the message.

4.3 General Commentary on Vocabulary

The vocabulary used in the novel is rich, profound symbolic meaning. In the novel, the writer used more abstract vocabulary, which shows that the writer talks about the things that happened beyond time and place. The writer used complex ideas of alchemy, a personal legend in the novel. Santiago's journeys towards Arabs show that Paulo Coelho is well aware of the culture of other nations too. The way he describes the life of the desert pilgrimage of Santiago to different places to discover his treasure shows Coelho's vivid descriptions, illusions, and rich imagery.

4.4 Grammatical Features of the *Alchemist* (Findings of 3rd research question)

The analysis of *The Alchemist* is approached by the use of grammatical categories. In addition to statements (declarative sentences), Coelho employs questions and exclamations in the novel. The functions of the exclamatory sentences are to express strong emotions of various types such as love, obsession, disbelief, happiness/pain, sympathy. Sentences used in the novel are simple and average words in a single sentence of about fourteen words. Various types of clauses such as relative clauses, adverbial

clauses, and different types of nominal clauses are also used by the author. Other features incorporated in the story are noun phrases-simple and complex; verb phrases present, progressive aspect, perfective aspect, modal auxiliaries; other phrase types – prepositional phrases and minor word classes.

From the detailed analysis of the novel, it is clear that Coelho is a world ambassador to literature; he is a writer of his time. By making his reading transparent through his writing, he calls his readers into the world of supposition. The use of inter-textuality of sacred texts causes the reader's ability to influence the world and to mold it according to his understanding. He is loved by his followers because of his simple, realistic and optimistic approach towards life (Figueredo, 2012). The importance of this novel can be realized by Malala Yousafzai, (Noble Prize Winner), the Pakistani girl who has become an education activist, denoted *The Alchemist* to a library because, according to her, this book can educate people and has the power to change our lives.

5. Conclusion

In the process of analyzing the blockbuster novel of Coelho, the researcher notes that Coelho is a gifted and philosophical writer who can express his messages in various ways. Despite the using abstract ideas, clausal nesting in some of the text, giving them heavy syntactic movement, and despite the excessive use of stylistic features, Coelho's novel makes reading very interesting, especially for one with philosophical thinking and have an eye for good language. By good language here, it means good lexical selection sentence structures that match the prevailing scenario in the text. Coelho is indeed a universal and practiced writer with incisive lexical and syntactic creative adaptations. Coelho is famous for his twist ending by several readers who came across any of his works. But apart from that, he is good at setting selection plot construction; very rich in diction. *The Alchemist* is rich enough to be stylistically analyzed. This much is the potential of Coelho in addressing messages across to his readers. The researcher would like to take this opportunity to invite those who are new to his works to read and enjoy his novels.

6 Recommendations

Recommendations for the students, teachers, and researchers are as follow;

- Students can go further than what the researcher has done here to conduct full anatomy of reporting clauses in texts to discover how effectively the writer has deployed the reporting verbs to show the writer's feelings towards the speakers, towards the subject matter, or even how they depict the general mood of the texts or crucial parts of the texts.
- The researchers could conduct a study on Coelho use of magical realism in his novels.
- Teachers of English literature could use stylistic models while teaching literature for the better comprehension of the students.

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