| RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Stylistic Analysis of Manuel Arguilla's *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife*

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| ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the writing style of Manuel Arguilla in 'How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife' in order to propose guidelines for describing writing style. The use of structural grammar helped describe the stylistic functions of words; the nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs; sentences; sentence length, structures, patterns, and voice; and local color: nativist diction. These features were identified, counted, and tabulated to describe the writing style of Manuel Arguilla. Hence, the writing styles revealed are vivid, jaunty, direct, smooth-flowing, and precise. The findings of the study and the effects of these linguistic features were the basis to come up with proposed guidelines for analyzing a writing style of an author. Based on the findings the conjunctions, the rhetorical type of sentences, and the other elements of local color are recommended for further analysis of styles.

| KEYWORDS

Writing Style, Linguistic Features, Words, Sentences, Nativist Diction

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Basically, the study of the integration of language and literature is stylistics. The main concern of stylistics is to help one acquire a clear mind map of this area of linguistics so that he can make decisions for himself about what to investigate and discuss in any given poem, play script, or work of prose fiction. Stylistics is primarily concerned with the value or quality of text but with the description and analysis of the linguistic detail of a text (Keith, 1999).

Furthermore, the use of linguistic features in stylistics is an attempt of explaining the author's choice of words and sentence variation to a certain literary piece or an ordinary passage.

Writing is a way of expressing thoughts, ideas, feelings, and imaginations with which the writer constructs a literary piece. Writing is a method of representing language that is used by the writer to give the meaning of his piece. The writing style is a way in which the writer shows how he uses the language in a particular piece in order to convince the audience. Written pieces like short stories are literature; nonetheless, it uses language too; without language, they cannot be expressed the way the writer wants.

The use of linguistics in this study would enable the researchers to conclude about the author's style in writing. There is no question about the use of literary devices in the piece and what it means. However, the principle of writing style is not about the meaning that is conveyed by the author; instead, it focuses on how the author delivers it.

This study was conducted to determine the style of the Filipino Author Manuel Arguilla in the selected short story, and offer an innovative criticism of a literary piece that hopefully can help modify the misconceptions about stylistics.

2. Literature Review

Various readings and empirical studies on stylistics are reviewed in this section basis for the conduct of this study.

2.1 Readings on Stylistics

Simpson (1997), stylistics is a method of applied language study which uses textual analysis to make discoveries about the structure and function of language; he adds that stylistics can assist critical readings by highlighting and explaining linguistic patterns in a literary text. He stresses that knowing about language is an extremely effective way of finding out about what writers are doing.

Stylistics provides essential information for informed interpretation and evaluation of text by showing how the language is at work in the text and in readers' minds. Looking at how language works are not drudgery. It is an exciting process of discovering why a poem can move you, why a joke can make you laugh out loud, why a play is gripping, or why the ending of a novel is achingly sad. Think how a single linguistic feature can ruin any of these effects: a wrong word here, a failure to pause at the right moment, or an unintended ambiguity (Keith, 1999).

The study of style is a certain way of doing something. For instance, each basketball player has his own way or technique of shooting the ball into the basket. Each tennis player has his own way of driving a ball over the net. Each writer, too, has his own peculiar way of handling sentence structures of his language to suit his ends. In each case, there is some degree of freedom as to which shots, strokes, or linguistic structures to use (Ohmann, 1973).

Benlot (1979) elaborately discussed the use of linguistics in the study of style by claiming that linguistics aids in making explicit one's responses to the use of language in a text and developing a more sensitive attitude to language, integral to the appreciative study of literature. It is required of the student of style to make an enumeration of the words or structures which are found in the corpus and which the author seems to favor.

The word is the unit for statistical analysis of style. As Ullman points out, phonetic and syntactic choices are limited, but lexical choices are practically unlimited and hence a better indication of individual style (Doherty, 1969).

 Corbet (1969) says that sentence length is one of the features that can tell a reader something about an author's style. But it should be obvious that one cannot make a tenable generalization about an author's characteristic sentence-length until one has determined, by some tedious counting and tabulating, just how long or short his sentences are—but this is a necessary step if one is to learn something about style. He adds that to get the average sentence length, one should get the total number of sentences and the total number of words, then one will just simply divide them. From this, we can get an idea of variations in sentence length by tabulating the percentage of sentences. One can also tabulate the grammatical types of sentences (simple, compound, complex, compound complex). Furthermore, he says that studying a variety of sentence patterns is also necessary to look at the normal word order and kinds of sentence openers.

Beardsley (1969), the use of active voice can make one's sentences livelier and more emphatic and carries a tone of greater assurance and decisiveness rather than using the passive voice.

Cali in (www.learnnc.org) said that the three important elements of stylistics study are word choice, sentence fluency, and voice. Good writers are concise and precise, weeding out unnecessary words and choosing the exact word to convey meaning. Precise words — active verbs, concrete nouns, specific adjectives — help the reader visualize the sentence. Good writers use adjectives sparingly and adverbs rarely, letting their nouns and verbs do the work. Good writers also choose words that contribute to the flow of a sentence. The flow and rhythm of phrases and sentences refer to sentence fluency. Good writers use a variety of sentences with different lengths and rhythms to achieve different effects. They use parallel structures within sentences and paragraphs to reflect parallel ideas, but also know how to avoid monotony by varying their sentence structure.

2.2. Empirical Studies

In her study, Ekinci (2005) identified and counted the content words in Oscar Wilde's selected short stories. Content words refer to the words that convey information in a text. These content words are nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Nouns were identified whether they were concrete or abstract. Verbs were identified whether they were linking, transitive, or intransitive; and only adverbs of manner and descriptive adjectives were identified.

In her study, Ortega (1975) demonstrated the practicality of using a linguistic approach to a study of style. She examined the syntactic level of one hundred randomly chosen sentences from each columnist. Ortega analyzed the deep structures of the sentences and drew the tree diagrams of these structures to come up with an apprehensible and discernible description of the styles of Lerner and Napkil.

In his study, Benlot (1979) proved that linguistics practically aids the study of styles. Benlot gave the linguistic description of sample sentences from the short stories of Nick Joaquin and William Faulkner. Parallel to Ortega, Benlot identified the transformational operations undergone by the deep structures of sentences in arriving at their surface structures. He also accounted for the uses of selected verbs, adjectives, nouns, adverbs, and pronouns.

3. Methodology

3.1 Method used.

This study is a qualitative analysis of Manuel Arguilla's style in his How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife.

For this study, the prose was chosen and not poetry. The ultimate reason for choosing prose lies in the fact that it comes closer to conversational English. While it is true that what is involved here is literary English, the truth still remains that prose resembles the common everyday language more than poetry does (Benlot, 1979).

The second reason for choosing prose is the fact that Manuel Arguilla is better known for his fiction, particularly *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife*.

The focus of this qualitative research was to determine the writing style of Manuel Arguilla through counting and tabulating the linguistic features such as words and sentences to come up with proposed guidelines in analyzing style for future researchers and professors of Literature for them to be fully aware and to be knowledgeable on how to evaluate the writing style of different authors.

3.2. Sources of Data.

The ultimate source of data in this particular study was the short story of the Filipino author, Manuel Arguilla, which is How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife, and different books on stylistics. The text of the short story was analyzed to determine what words and sentences were dominant. This would help reveal the writing style of Manuel Arguilla.

3.3. Data Gathering Procedure

Style can be described by counting the relative frequencies of expressions and phrasing; thus, the style depends on which choices are more or less frequent or consistent (Ekinci, 2005).In dealing with this qualitative research, the following procedures were followed.

Phase 1. Content words of the chosen piece were classified according to their function: as a noun, verb, adjective, and adverb; and they were counted and tabulated to get their occurrence and percentage. Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs were classified into their specific usage and were counted and tabulated to get their occurrence and percentage. By counting and tabulating these lexical features, the habit or the mannerism of the author's choice of words would be revealed.

Phase 2. The sentences of the chosen literary piece were counted and tabulated according to their sentence length, structures, patterns, and voice to get their occurrence and percentage; and to see if the author used a variety of sentences.

Phase 3. Elements of local color were counted and tabulated to get their occurrence.

4. Results and Discussion

This section deals with the results and discussion of data which is divided into three (3) parts. The first part presents the linguistic features that are present in the story. The second part presents the elements of local color present in the story in terms of nativist diction. The third and last part reveals Manuel Arguilla's writing style for the proposed guidelines in analyzing writing style.

4.1. The Linguistic Features in the Story

Table 1. Words

Lexical Categories	Occurrences
Noun	
Abstract	11
Concrete	493
Verb	
Transitive	169
Intransitive	164
Linking	74
Adjective	
Descriptive	138
Adverb	
Manner	40
Frequency	14
Place	123
Time	14
Degree	14

Manuel Arguilla used nouns as the most frequent part of speech and most are concrete nouns. These concrete nouns are usually names of people, places, things, and animals, and these concrete nouns certainly bring about the identity and serve to localize the story. Examples are the words: *Brother Leon, Baldo, Maria, Ca Celin, and Labang.* Moreover, concrete nouns provide a vivid picture of the story and it lets the reader portray clearly the situation and the characters of the story. On the other hand, abstract nouns provide the reader with the specific terms to create similar images and associations in a philosophical and theoretical style that leaves an ambiguous picture of the story that needs interpretation. However, abstract nouns make one's writing dense because they let the reader think about what they exactly mean. With the use of this word, the readers are able to visualize that the story took place in some rural places or provinces in the Philippines. This sample proves that concrete nouns provide a vivid picture of the story. The limited use of abstract nouns in the story did not give too much density to his writing.

Verbs such as transitive and intransitive verbs occurred more frequently than linking verbs. The frequent use of action verbs enlivens the style and imparts to the author's writing the desirable features of energy and movement. Moreover, intransitive verbs and transitive verbs refer to various kinds of action; they are important ingredients of vigorous writing. According to J.B. Williams, (1973), one characteristic of a lively style is the discerning use of active verbs to suggest images of change. J.M. Williams (2007) also says that when writers consistently rely on verbs to express key actions. Sentences are more concrete because they have concrete subjects and verbs and sentences tell a more coherent story.

For instance: *She stepped down from the carretela of Ca Celin with a quick, delicate grace (sentence 1).*

The intransitive verb **step** emphasizes action rather than states. Likewise, intransitive verbs are usually described as self-sufficient. They are usually followed by adverbials and prepositional phrases. For instance: We stood alone on the roadside (sentence 34). The verb **stood** is self-sufficient since it does not need an object to complete the action.

On the other hand, a transitive verb needs an object of the verb to complete the stated action.

For instance: *"I watched Ca Celin." "He ran his fingers through its forelock" (sentence 19).*

The sun was in our eyes, for it was dipping into the bright sea (sentence 35).

The verbs **watch** and **ran** would not be completed without the objects following these verbs. While linking verbs is rhetorically effective to bring out not only the actual situation but also the characters in the story. The linking verb helps describe the actual situation in the story by linking the subject and the word or phrase that modifies the subject.

The descriptive adjectives obtained the least occurrences. The occurrences of the adjectives mostly depend on the occurrences of the linking verbs because adjectives usually come after the linking verb especially if the writer describes the characters and the actual situations of the story.

For instance: *the sky was wide and deep and very blue above us (sentence 36).*

It is so many times bigger and brighter than it was at Ermita beach (sentence 91).

The adjectives: wide, deep, very blue, bigger, and brighter comes after the verb is and was that link these words to subjects: the sky and it. Furthermore, the occurrences of adjectives depend on the subject of the sentence. This means that if the subject is having an animate character, it needs an animate description, therefore, one cannot say that —the tree is happy" it is because the word tree has not got an animate character unlike the word happy. Animate characters should be described with animate words. With these, readers are able to portray clearly the setting and the characters of the story.

For instance: *"She was lovely" (sentence 2). "She was tall" (sentence 3). "She was fragrant" (sentence 7).*

The personal pronoun she refers to one of the characters in the story particularly, Maria, who has a human character and was given an animate description. The adjectives **lovely, tall, and fragrant** are all characteristics of an animate character.

Adverbs occurred as the third most frequent. Adverbs are usually not necessary to the sentence and they are only an additional part of the sentence.

For instance: *And by and by she was scratching his forehead very daintily (sentence 15).*

In this sentence, the word daintily is an adverb that describes how was the subject, she, was doing the action verb scratching. However, the sentence could still be considered complete with or without the adverb. But, the manner of action was clearer and specified by the use of adverbs of manner. Moreover, the degree of action was even restricted, more specified, and was made clearer with the use of adverbs of degree, and very.

Here is another example: —*My brother Leon put down the two trunks on the grassy side of the road"* (sentence 16).

In this sentence, the phrase on the grassy side of the road is an adverb that describes the place where the action took place. Again, this sentence could still be completed with or without the adverbial phrase. "My brother Leon put down the two trunks." is still a sentence that expresses a complete thought. However, the sentence would be more complete, and more vivid with the presence of the adverbial phrase. Cali (www.learnnc.org) has to say this: good writers use adjectives sparingly and adverbs rarely, letting their nouns and verbs do the work. This means that the use of adverbs and adjectives is not as frequent as nouns and verbs because they are merely there to add up the zest of a literary piece while nouns and verbs are very effective in giving descriptions to the events and characters of the story.

Arguilla's frequent use of concrete nouns provides a vivid and clear style of writing and the rare use of abstract nouns provides simplicity in writing. His discerning use of action verbs provides his short story vigorous, concrete, and jaunty style of writing and his keen use of linking verbs bring out transpicuous descriptions of the characters and the setting of the story. The use of descriptive adjectives makes his writing more vivid, clear, and ornate. Adverbs are comparable to adjectives. They add good flavor, clearness, and precision to a sentence. Furthermore, adverbs restrict specific actions of the story.

Table 2. Sentences

Sentences Length	Occurrences
Short	94
Average	11
Long	71
Structure	
Simple	67
Compound	79
Complex	16
Compound Complex	14
Basic Patterns	
S-LV-Adv.	1
S-LV-SCadj.	9
S-LV-SCn.	2
S-IV	17
S-TV-DO	24
S-TV-IO-DO	1
S-TV-IO-DO-OCadj	0
S-TV-IO-DO-OCn.	0
There-be-S	3
Voice	
Active	145
Passive	2

Manuel Arguilla used short sentences the most in the short story. Short sentences create a staccato and jarring effect on the reader, especially when each sentence has the same construction (Ahmad, ___). However, Williams, J.M. (2007) says that writers used short sentences to strike a note of urgency and artful writers use the length of a sentence for a purpose. Consider the following sentence:

She was lovely (sentence 2)

She was tall (sentence 3).

He did not say Mayang (sentence 22).

If these short sentences were used throughout the whole story, one might say that Arguilla is a monotonous writer by giving a staccato and jarring effect on the readers. However, Arguilla was able to use a variety of sentence lengths and managed to shift sentences from short to long and to average length. Moreover, he was able to use short sentences for particular purposes and urgency every time he described his characters to give emphasis and vivid descriptions. In addition, long sentences investigate an idea more thoroughly, give a vivid description, and develop suspense in the written piece of the author. Moreover, long sentences

characterize formal styles, especially discussions of ideas, also common in fiction. (J. M. Williams, 2007). Consider the following sentences:

> "*She was smiling at him, and I stopped in the act of tying the sinta across Labang's neck to the opposite end of the yoke because her teeth were very white, her eyes were so full of laughter, and there was a small dimple high up on her right cheek*" (sentence 47).

> "*At the bend of the Camino real where the big duhat tree grew, he rattled the handle of his braided rattan whip against the spokes of the wheel*" (sentence 33).

> "*He must have taught her the song because she joined him, and her voice flowed into his like a gentle stream meeting a stronger one*" (sentence 111).

The first given long sentence tells a series of actions and vivid descriptions of the characters and the actual situation of the story. Whereas the second given sentence creates suspense and a feeling of intense in the readers because the subordinate clause introduces the main clause. Introductory actions were stated before the main action was revealed. This kind of sentence construction adds suspense and thrill to the readers. The last given example was used in order for the character of the story to discuss and convey his ideas to the other characters. Consequently, long sentences are not only used to tighten the sentences without disturbing or even reducing the ideas of the writer; but it enables the writer to express his ideas in a complicated yet creative and clear way.

Manuel Arguilla preferred to use compound sentences in his short story rather than the other sentence structures. The compound sentence gives emphasis on balance and parallelism to the author's piece and is usually joined by the conjunctions for, and, nor, but, or, yet and so. By the use of compound elements, the author is able to achieve sentence economy or vigor since parallel patterns are very well established that entire structures had not to be repeated. By doubling or tripling constituents, the author succeeded in adding full ideas without having to compose separate sentences (Benlot, 1979).

Consider the following sentences:

> And each time the wheels encountered a big rock, her voice would catch in her throat, but my brother Leon would sing on, until, laughing softly, she would join him again (sentence. 112).

> She laughed then and they laughed together and she took my Brother Leon's hand and put it against her face (sentence 95).

> I climbed into the cart over the wheel and Labang would have bolted, for he was always like that, but I kept a firm hold on his rope (sentence 50).

In these examples, Arguilla was able to achieve a balance idea of what the sentence meant and forbid him from repeating simple ideas that could have been joined as one. Furthermore, the connection of the two different sentences merged consumed separate ideas in order for the author to still grab the attention of his readers. Compound sentences made the flow of the narration of the story smooth.

On the other hand, a short simple sentence grabs a reader's attention; it gives an excitement to the story and this kind of sentence structure enables the author's audience to anticipate the idea of what will happen next.

Arguilla was able to use complex sentences to rarely surrogate the simple sentences' intensity and emphasis to the main action or incident of the story. The complex sentences where the subordinate clause comes first before the main clause is a kind of construction occurred infrequently in the story. With this kind of sentence structure, writers are able to emphasize the main action of the sentence and it is more intense than using simple structures of sentences in series. Benlot (1979), the rhetorical effect of fronting the subordinate clause could hardly be overlooked, putting the dependent clause before the main clause gives the main clause more emphasis since it builds the introductory subordinate clause.

However, similar to simple sentences, too much use of this sentence structure might be a ground of tedium. The use of S-V-DO constructions provides the basis for saying that the author's style is characteristically brisk or lively because this kind of construction provides actions and images of change with the incidence of the transitive and intransitive verbs which are action verbs.

The sentence patterns S-LV-C occurred eleven times, nine of the complements are adjectives and two of the complements are nouns. This kind of sentence pattern utilize linking verbs and adjective and noun complement. Arguilla is able to use this kind of sentence pattern every time he gives descriptions and complements to the setting of the story as well as the characters of the story. With this, readers easily picture the story.

The There-Be-S constructions occurred three times. In this pattern, the **be verb** comes before the real subject and it sounds more direct and crisper (Pearson Education Canada, 2009).

The S-TV-IO-DO construction occurred only once in the story. However, this kind of sentence pattern was also used in compound and complex sentences in the story. With this kind of sentence construction, readers clearly see the recipients of the action it is clearer and more precise when one says, *my brother, Leon handed me a rope than saying my brother Leon handed a rope*.

The S-be-Adv. constructions occurred only once. The verb being is followed by an adverb indicating where or when. The use of adverbs in this kind of sentence pattern enables the writer to indicate clearly where and when the subject of the sentence is.

The active voice of the verb in the story occurred more frequently than the passive voice of the verb. Out of 148 verbs in the story, 145 of them are used actively by Manuel Arguilla and only 2 of them are used passively. According to Beardsley (1969), the usage of the active voice of the verb in a sentence will make the sentence lively, emphatic, and direct the fact that the subject is the doer of the action.

Likewise, J. M Williams (2007) says, readers, judge writing to be clear and direct when they quickly see topics and subject/characters and when subjects of sentences name characters and verbs name actions. On the other hand, using the passive voice of a verb in the sentence is necessary and is very effective especially when a writer wants to give an unclear situation in the story by hiding the doer of the action this may make the statement less direct, but it can be more dramatic and striking (Beardsley, 1969).

4.2. Elements of Local Color.

Writers used nativist dictions to make their work localized. It is applied to take pictures of the events and also to make clearer pictures in the mind of the readers. In using these nativist dictions, Manuel Arguilla used his creativity and imagination on how to arrange the words in order to make them more artistic. Nagrebcan is a barangay of Municipality Badoc in Ilocos Sur which is in the outlying area. This is where the author of the story was born and spent his childhood. Most of his stories reflect the place and the culture of the people. To make a clearer understanding, some native terms were also used in the story. When paying respect to others or the elders, he used the local endearment or term of the Ilocanos. Ca and Lacay are locally used in the province of Ilocos. Even the term *hoy*! Which is the local informal way of calling someone who passed by or when a person is calling somebody from afar was also used in the story. These terms are widely used not just by Ilocanos but also in some areas of the Philippines. Some local grass was also mentioned in the story, in the phrase the thick, unpleasant smell of dangla bushes, and the sharp scent of arrais roots. These local plants that grow in the countryside area are known to be one indication that the story is locally made. Clumps of andadasi, camachile tree are also mentioned which is clearly known to be trees growing in the country.

The Filipino culture is also reflected in the story, the use of carabao and horses as a sort of transportation was also used in the story. In the story, the three main characters are riding in a Paragos (Filipino sledge) that is pulled by a water buffalo also known as a carabao. In provinces, they have the main road is called Camino real which is used to enter remote areas, especially those living near the mountainsides. Camino real is a Spanish term for the highway but literally means a royal road that originated during the period of Spanish rule in Southwest, Mexico, and Central America and has been traveling using wagons(philippineislands.ph). The use of local color particularly nativist diction makes the story more realistic. Arguilla's creative and timely use of local color makes the writing realistic likewise, artistic.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Arguilla's frequent use of concrete nouns provides a vivid and clear style of writing and the rare use of abstract nouns provides simplicity in writing. His discerning use of action verbs provides his short story vigorous, concrete, and jaunty style of writing and his keen use of linking verbs bring out transpicuous descriptions of the characters and the setting of the story. The use of descriptive adjectives makes his writing more vivid, clear, and ornate. Adverbs are comparable to adjectives. They add good flavor, clearness, and precision to a sentence. Furthermore, adverbs restrict specific actions of the story.

Arguilla's use of varied sentence lengths and the shifting of these varied sentence lengths made him escape the monotonous style of writing. His interchangeable use of simple sentence structure, compound, and complex sentence structure evades the possibility of the tedious style of writing and the high incidence of compound elements able him to economize and balance his ideas and able him to express complex ideas precisely, and made the flow of the story smooth. And the seldom use of complex sentence construction, where the subordinate clause comes first before the main clause, is unable to provide suspense to the readers. The seldom use of basic sentence patterns implies that Arguilla did not limit himself to basic sentence patterns instead he preferred to use a complicated discourse to suit his end. However, these basic patterns still have stylistic effects.

Arguilla's use of S-V-DO construction will not only say that he is a brisk and lively writer but, he must be also a clear and direct writer because he has been able to utilize his characters vividly as doers of actions. The use of linking verbs and adjectives and noun complements together contribute to the clearness, vividness, and ornate writing style. The infrequent use of the There-Be-S constructions makes the writing more direct and crisper. Moreover, the use of indirect objects made the sentences in the story

clearer and more precise. Meanwhile, the voice of the verb in a sentence does not imply whether one makes his sentence correct because it is lively, emphatic, and direct or it is deviant because is less lively, and less direct.

The voice of the sentence always relies on the writer's stylistic preference, when to use the active voice or the passive voice. Furthermore, Arguilla's frequent use of active voice in the short story makes the story lively and direct. However, using the passive voice as a necessity was done very effectively, yet, this did not affect the directness and liveliness of the story.

On the other hand, the creative and timely use of local color makes the writing realistic likewise, artistic. The tedious counting and tabulating of the linguistic features strongly provide a basis for revealing the writing style of Manuel Arguilla. Through the theory of structural grammar, the specific functions of the words and sentences in the story were identified. With these, the writing styles of Manuel Arguilla were revealed. The writing styles of Manuel Arguilla as revealed from the study are vivid, jaunty, direct, precise, and smooth-flowing. It is recommended to determine if the styles revealed in the study are relevant to the theme of the story and if it leads to an easier understanding of the story.

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