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Exploring Language and Style in Julio Cortázar's "Axolotl": A Stylistic Analysis
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ABSTRACT

The study undertook a stylistic analysis of Julio Cortázar's short Story "Axolotl". We analysed the story stylistically in terms linguistic features instead of carrying out a literary analysis that has hitherto been done. In so doing, we employed the checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories proposed by Leech and Short's (2007). The aim was to see how language adds to thematic development of the story. Features of repetition, Parallelism, Alliteration, Consonance, Assonance, Anaphora, and rhyme were also focused on. This study demonstrates how the author employs literary techniques and language to create a sense of metamorphosis and psychological depth. We found that usage of stylistic devices enhances the thematic concerns of the story and leaves its impact on the readers. The research concludes by highlighting the significance of stylistic analysis in unravelling deeper layers of meaning within literary texts.

Keywords: *Stylistics, analysis, short story, Axolotl, Leech and Short's model*

Introduction

The research aims to explore and investigate that how particular choices made by the writer contribute to create particular meanings. This study offers a stylistic analysis of the short story 'Axolotl', which is unique in the sense that a lot of linguistic choices are used that attract the attention of the readers towards an implied message.

The story selected for the purpose of stylistic analysis is written by Julio Cortázar, who was an Argentine author, translator, and literary critic. He was born in 1914 and passed away in 1984. Cortázar was noted for his investigation of issues such as identity, time, and reality, and he is widely regarded as one of the most inventive and important writers of the 20th century. The short story "Axolotl" written by Julio Cortázar is a frightening and bizarre investigation into identity, reality, and the lines that separate human beings from animals. The protagonist of the story, who remains nameless, is an individual who becomes fixated with a bunch of Axolotls that are kept in an aquarium. This individual spends hours upon hours examining the behaviour of the Axolotls (Kerrigan, 1992). The narrator spends more and more time with the Axolotls, and as a result, he starts to experience a peculiar sense of connection with them. Eventually, he comes to the conclusion that he has in some way become one of the creatures. He explains that he felt as though he was "caught in a web" of the Axolotls' world, unable to evade their attention or get away from their impact.

What is Stylistics and Stylistic Analysis

Stylistics helps us interpret a literary text logically with the help of linguistic evidence (Parveen, et al, 2021). It is said by various critics that the term style is normally used without understanding its meanings. Style is a mode in which something is written, spoken and performed (Leech, 1969). To create the sprightliness in any piece of literature, writer uses different techniques to make it stylish and attractive. It is called 'Stylistics'. Stylistics is a subfield of applied linguistics, originated as a way of applying linguistic models to literary content.

Widdowson (1975) defines it as "the study of literary discussion from a linguistic orientation". "Stylistics is an access to the study of literary texts using linguistic explanation and considers it as a linking method" (M. Short, C. Candlin, 1989).

Stylistics is a subfield that bridges Linguistics and Literature. (Carter, 1988). Though, there are a number of controversial approaches and orientations which are adopted by the analysts. These different approaches, according to Wales (1989) are appropriate to the main influence of linguistics and literary appreciation. Widdowson (1975) observes the view that stylistics is a connection between the literary criticism and linguistics. Meanwhile David Crystal (1980) says, "stylistics is a part of linguistics which studies different aspects of language deviation".

The field of stylistics has witnessed great development during the last few years. It, now, includes insights from different approaches and methodologies for examining how language shapes society and is shaped by the social realities (Carter, 2010). It offers valuable support to English language teachers by enabling them to integrate language and literature in a meaningful way. Through stylistic analysis, students can engage with texts critically and creatively while developing a deeper understanding of grammar and language use in context (Cushing, 2018).

In recent years, Stylistics has increasingly been combined with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to uncover underlying ideologies and implicit meanings in socio-political and cultural contexts. By focusing on textual and linguistic features, this approach provides concrete linguistic evidence for interpretation and helps reduce the risk of overly subjective readings (Widdowson, 2008).

Another important development in the field is Corpus Stylistics, which has enhanced the reliability and validity of literary interpretation (Sinclair, 2004). Corpus Stylistics examines patterns in language through the analysis of high-frequency lexical items and concordance lines. These patterns are further explored through concepts such as collocation, colligation, and semantic prosody to identify themes and meanings within a text (Hardy, 2007). This methodology provides a systematic and data-driven approach to literary analysis. Researchers such as Stubbs (2005) and Starcke (2006) have successfully employed corpus stylistic techniques to investigate lexical patterns in literary texts, while Mahlberg (2007) applied the approach to Dickens' novels using recurrent lexical features. Since Corpus Stylistics also relies on quantitative evidence and statistical patterns. It offers a more objective basis for interpretation and minimizes personal bias (Semino & Short, 2004).

In this way the purpose of the stylistic analysis is to explore and explain the different choices made by the author in the variety of words and sentence formation. Style also explained by Leech and Short (2007) as "the way to transmit the message of the writer, to the reader". That is why stylistic analysis is not confined to study of poetry alone. In fact, various researchers have conducted stylistic analyses of other literary texts and even religious texts (Parveen, et al. 2020) The present study draws upon both literary and linguistic stylistic approaches to analyze the selected story. It aims to explore the significant linguistic features of the text and relate them to the recurring themes of alienation and identity crisis that are central to diaspora literature.

Statement of Problem

Existing studies predominantly focus on philosophical and symbolic interpretations, leaving the relationship between language patterns and thematic meaning underexplored. Therefore, a stylistic investigation grounded in Leech and Short's framework is needed to reveal how linguistic features contribute to the representation of metamorphosis and shifting consciousness.

Research Objective

The objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the stylistic features employed in Julio Cortázar's *Axolotl* based on Leech and Short's (2007) stylistic framework, including grammatical categories, figures of speech, lexical categories, and cohesion and context
2. To examine how these stylistic features contribute in the enhancement of thematic depth

Research Question

Based on the research to be carried out, there are two questions are formulated.

1. What stylistic features are employed in Julio Cortázar's *Axolotl* particularly in terms of grammatical categories, figures of speech, lexical categories, and cohesion and context according to Leech and Short's (2007) stylistic framework?
2. How do these features contribute to the development and reinforcement of the themes presented in *Axolotl*?

The purpose of these questions is to inquire about the contributory significance of "Axolotl's" stylistic elements to the overall meaning of story. The questions also aim to dissect the ways in which the story subverts the reader's expectations and the norms of conventional storytelling.

Significance of the study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the understanding of the stylistic features used by authors to convey their themes. It also encourages a deeper appreciation of literary texts through language-based analysis. The purpose of this research is to shed light on both the postmodern literary canon and the work of Julio Cortázar that how linguistic choices contribute to the portrayal of major thematic expressions.

Research Method

The research is qualitative in nature.

Research Design

We adopted a qualitative stylistic research design. The design is quite suitable to examine the linguistic features of a literary text. How linguistic choice determine meaning and key themes is the primary objective behind using a stylistic analysis. We find out how identity, metamorphosis, alienation, and consciousness emerge as themes due to author's linguistic choices.

Data Source

The primary data for this study consist of Julio Cortázar's short story *Axolotl*, originally published in the collection *Bestiario* (1964).

This study includes following four analytical categories / levels of stylistic analysis,

1. Figure of Speech
2. Grammatical Categories
3. Lexical Categories
4. Cohesion and Context

Checklist of style markers by Leech and Short (2007) is discussed below.

Figure of Speech

This category includes various rhetorical devices such as metaphor, simile, personification, irony, etc. These figures of speech are used to create vivid imagery and convey abstract ideas in a more concrete way.

Grammatical Categories	This category includes the use of various grammatical structures such as passive voice, nominalization, subordination, etc. These structures can affect the clarity, emphasis, and tone of a text.
Lexical Categories	This category includes the use of various types of words such as adjectives, adverbs, verbs, nouns, etc.
Cohesion and Context	This category includes various cohesive devices such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, etc.

Data Analysis Procedure

To analyse the data, the researchers read the selected text over and over again. While reading, the researchers marked and classified the the categories identified by Leech and Short (2007). We paid particular attention to the following:

- a) Recurring lexical patterns
- b) Grammatical structures
- c) Figurative language
- d) Cohesive devices

Relevant textual extracts were selected based on their frequency, prominence, and contribution to the narrative and thematic structure of the story.

Lexical Categories

Lexical categories are classes of words in the field of linguistics that share similar grammatical qualities. Examples of lexical categories include nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions. These classes can be distinguished from one another based on the functions that words perform in sentences and the connections they have with the other words in a sentence. The following are some instances that can be found in the short story "Axolotl" that were taken from several lexical categories:

Nouns

Axolotls, Aquarium, Jardin Des Plantes, Bike, Lions, Panthers, Building, Dictionary, Salamander, Genus, Species, Africa, Land, Periods, Drought, Rain, Sheet, Water, Tank, Specimens, Guard, Ticket, Floor, Moss, Stone, Tail, Body, Fish, Feet, Fingers, Nails, Halo, Eye, Orifices, Level, Mystery, Head, Plane, Crevice, Stone, Sides, Ears, Sprigs, Coral, Outgrowth, Gills, Direction, Fights, Tiredness, Time, Space, Presence, Life.

Verbs

Learned, Found, Read, Cared, Consult, Isolated, Studied, Discovered, Ringed, Etched, Grew, Barely Move, Hitting, Arise, Feels, Stay, Made, Saw, Seemed, Understand, Abolish, Contracted, Reckoning, Proved, Obsessed, Spoke, Showing.

Adjectives

Great, Faint, Green, Grey, Dark, Humid, First, Pink, Aztec, Specialized, Morning, Afternoon, Perplexed, Silent, Immobile, Wretched, Rosy, Translucent, Milky, Small, Extraordinary, Sensitive, Transparent, Black, Profile, Delicate, Barely Slit, Lifeless, Triangular, Total, Vegetal, Quick, Diminutive, Mild, Cramped, Quiet, Mineral, Handsome, Different, And Simple.

Adverbs

Adverbs are words that modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs by providing more information about the manner, time, place, degree, or frequency of an action or event. In the short story "Axolotl," there are several adverbs used to add detail and nuance to the narration. Examples include:

- Now: "Now they were suffering, every fiber of my body tensed in defense against the final assault, and I saw them through the glass, motionless, in profile." - The word "now"

adds a sense of immediacy to the situation and indicates that the author is describing events as they are happening.

- Already: "Already the aquarium my immobility." - The word "already" suggests that the guard's presence is unexpected.
- Next: "Next day I went back." Through the word "next", the author establishes a sense of continuity. The events progress from one to the next.
- Morning: "Morning after morning, I went to see them." - The word "morning" shows that the narrator routinely visits the aquarium.

Prepositions

Prepositions are used to show the relationship between a noun and other words in a sentence. In "Axolotls," there are numerous prepositions used to provide context and detail to the story. Some examples of prepositions used in the text include:

- "At the Jardin des Plantes": The preposition "at" indicates the specific location where the speaker went to see the Axolotls – the Jardin des Plantes.
- "In front of the tanks": The preposition "in front of" indicates the position of the speaker in relation to the tanks that house the Axolotls.
- "To study it better": The preposition "to" indicate the purpose of the speaker's mental isolation of one of the Axolotls – to study it better.
- "By the Axolotls": The preposition "by" indicates the presence of the Axolotls as the cause or condition for something else – in this case, the speaker hitting it off with the Axolotls.
- "With no other trait save the eyes": The preposition "with" indicates the manner in which the Axolotls have no other trait – only the eyes.
- "On the right and somewhat apart from the others": The prepositions "on" and "apart from" indicate the location of the specific Axolotl that the speaker mentally isolates – on the right and separate from the others.
- "Through an effort like telepathy": The preposition "through" indicates the means or method by which the speaker makes an effort – like telepathy.
- "Onto the palm of my hand": The preposition "onto" indicates the destination of the Axolotl as it moves – onto the palm of the speaker's hand.
- "In the succession of identical tanks": The preposition "in" indicates the location of the tanks that house the Axolotls – in a succession of identical tanks.
- "In the darkness": The preposition "in" indicates the location or environment of the speaker – in the darkness.
- "In the night": The preposition "in" indicates the time or period of the speaker's observation – in the night.
- "In the strange room": The preposition "in" indicates the location of the strange room that the speaker enters – in the strange room.
- "Toward the aquarium": The preposition "toward" indicates the direction of the speaker's movement – toward the aquarium.

These prepositions help to establish the setting of the story. Moreover, they convey the speaker's actions and observations. In addition, these create a sense of spatial and temporal relationships within the story.

Grammatical Categories

Parallelism and Anaphora

Parallelism

Parallelism is a literary device that involves the repetition of grammatical structures or patterns, such as clauses or sentences. In the short story "Axolotls," examples of parallelism include:

- "The left one pressed itself against the glass and only that side was marked with tiny gold specks on the pink; the right one looked, from the front, completely white. The phenomenon is common enough among axolotls."

In this example, the author repeats the structure of contrasting the left and right axolotls. The parallelism helps to emphasize the strange and unique physical characteristics of the axolotls.

- "They were like witnesses of something, and at times like horrible judges."

Here, the author repeats the structure of comparing the axolotls to witnesses and judges. The parallelism helps to convey the sense that the axolotls are watching and judging the narrator.

- "Their pink color faded into the shining yellow of the rosettes, pale apotheoses, petals without flower but with mimicry of the idea of flower."

In this example, the author repeats the structure of describing the colours and shapes of the axolotls. The parallelism helps to create a vivid and detailed image of the axolotls in the reader's mind.

- "I began seeing the axolotls in the evening, after the hour when the glass cases disappear in the shadows."

Here, the author repeats the structure of describing the time of day when the narrator sees the axolotls. The parallelism helps to create a sense of routine and habit in the narrator's visits to the aquarium.

- "I woke up with a headache, my neck cramped because I had slept with my head on the edge of the table."

In this example, the author repeats the structure of describing the physical symptoms that the narrator experiences. The parallelism helps to convey the sense of discomfort and unease that the narrator feels.

- "I went to see them in the aquarium at the Jardin des Plantes and stayed for hours watching them, observing their immobility, their faint movements."

Here, the author repeats the structure of describing the narrator's actions in visiting the aquarium and watching the axolotls. The parallelism helps to create a sense of focus and attention on the axolotls.

- "I was friend of the lions and panthers, but had never gone into the dark, humid building that was the aquarium."

In this example, the author repeats the structure of describing the narrator's relationship to different animals. The parallelism helps to contrast the narrator's familiarity with other animals to their fascination with the axolotls.

- "The time feels like it's less if we stay quietly."

Here, the author repeats the structure of describing the passage of time. The parallelism helps to convey the sense that time slows down when the narrator is watching the axolotls.

Anaphora

Anaphora, on the other hand, is a literary device that involves the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences. In "Axolotls," examples of anaphora include:

- "Mentally I isolated one, situated on the right and somewhat apart from the others, to study it better. I saw a rosy little body, translucent; I saw internal organs." Here, the phrase "I saw" is repeated at the beginning of two clauses.
- "And then I discovered its eyes, its face. Inexpressive features, with no other trait save the eyes, translucent and perfectly still, a living ice, a window to absolute night." The word "its" is repeated at the beginning of two clauses, emphasizing the speaker's fascination with the axolotls' eyes.

- "I decided on the aquarium, looked obliquely at banal fish until, unexpectedly, I hit it off with the Axolotls." The phrase "I" is repeated at the beginning of two clauses, emphasizing the speaker's personal experience and decision-making.
- "I was heading down the boulevard Port-Royal, then I took Saint-Marcel and L'Hôpital and saw green among all that grey and remembered the lions." Here, the word "I" is repeated at the beginning of three clauses, emphasizing the speaker's personal journey and thought process.
- "The aquarium guard smiled perplexedly taking my ticket. I would lean up against the iron bar in front of the tanks and set to watching them." The phrase "I would" is repeated at the beginning of two clauses, emphasizing the speaker's routine and ongoing fascination with the axolotls.
- "It was their quietness that made me lean toward them fascinated the first time I saw the Axolotls." The phrase "It was" is repeated at the beginning of two clauses, emphasizing the speaker's initial attraction to the axolotls and the role of their quietness in that attraction.

In each of these examples, the repetition of words or phrases creates a pattern and emphasizes the ideas being expressed. Parallelism and anaphora are both powerful rhetorical devices that can help to create a sense of rhythm and balance in a piece of writing.

Apostrophes

Are punctuation marks used to indicate possession or to show the omission of letters or numbers in contractions? In the short story "Axolotl," there are a few examples of apostrophes used for possession.

Possessive apostrophes

Possessive apostrophes are used to show ownership or possession. In the text "Axolotl," possessive apostrophes are used to indicate that something belongs to someone or something else. For example:

- "the Axolotl's eyes" (indicating that the eyes belong to the Axolotl)
- "my immobility's" (indicating that immobility belongs to the narrator)
- "the tiger's" (indicating that something belongs to the tiger)
- "the tiger's gleam" (indicating that the gleam belongs to the tiger)
- "the Axolotl's pink Aztec face" (indicating that the face belongs to the Axolotl)
- "my hand's trembling" (indicating that the trembling belongs to the narrator's hand)

In each of these examples, the apostrophe is used to show ownership or possession. By using possessive apostrophes, the author is able to clarify who or what the object belongs to and provide more detail to the reader.

Contractions:

Contractions are a type of apostrophe usage in which two words are combined to form a shortened version, with an apostrophe indicating the omitted letters. Contractions are commonly used in informal writing and speech to convey a more conversational tone. In the short story "Axolotl," there are several examples of contractions used:

- "I'd" (shortened form of "I had" or "I would")
- "they're" (shortened form of "they are")
- "it's" (shortened form of "it is")

"I'd" is used multiple times, such as "I'd better go and see the Axolotls" and "I'd become one of them, metamorphosed into axolotls." In these instances, "I'd" is a contraction of "I would" and "I had," respectively.

Cortázar's choice of vocabulary plays a significant role in the development of the story's themes and meanings. There are certain lexical items that occur repeatedly, these items contribute to the narrator's growing fascination with the axolotls. The story contains a wide range of words associated with observation and perception. There are verbs like *see*, *look*, *watch*, and *observe*. These verbs are seen frequently. They highlight the narrator's continuous engagement with the creatures. There are other items that relate to confinement and transformation Nouns such as *aquarium*, *glass*, *tank*, and *water* create an environment of enclosure and separation. The author uses these lexical items to establish the atmosphere of the story. These reinforce the narrator's sense of isolation.

Phonological Schemes

Alliteration

We found several examples of alliteration in *Axolotl*.

- "I saw a rosy little body, translucent; I saw internal organs." (repetition of the "s" sound)
- "The eyes of the Axolotls spoke to me of the presence of a different life, of another way of seeing." (repetition of the "l" sound)
- "Morning after morning, I went to see them." (repetition of the "m" sound)
- "The lions were sad and ugly and my panther was asleep." (repetition of the "s" sound)

Some examples of alliteration in the text include:

- "Once I saw them in a glass jar, since then I have been in their world."
- "The eyes of the Axolotls spoke to me of the presence of a different life, of another way of seeing."
- "I think it was the axolotls' heads, that triangular pink shape with the tiny eyes of gold."
- ""I began seeing in the axolotls a metamorphosis which did not succeed."
- "I was afraid of them. That was the only fear I had, except for that of dying."

In each of these examples, the repeated consonant sound creates a sense of unity and cohesion within the sentence, drawing attention to the words being emphasized. The repetition of "axolotls" and "eyes" is particularly effective in conveying the narrator's fixation on these creatures. Overall, the use of alliteration in "Axolotl" adds to the story's unique and haunting atmosphere.

Assonance

Is a figure of speech that involves the repetition of vowel sounds in nearby words, while the consonant sounds are different? It is used to create a musical effect and draw attention to particular words or phrases. In the short story "Axolotl," the author makes use of assonance in several instances.

It is the repetition of vowel sounds in nearby words. In the short story "Axolotl," there are several examples of assonance, including:

- "Slowly during the following days, I went back to the zoo."
- "Only the eyes were alive, and they were monstrous."
- "I was afraid of them."
- "They and I knew."
- "I saw a rosy little body, translucent."
- "I had known better how to imagine."
- "The eyes of the Axolotls spoke to me of the presence of a different life."
- "I leaned over, my elbows on the tank, and the axolotls looked at me with their torpid eyes."
- "I began seeing in the axolotls abolishing the original."
 - The repetition of the "i" sound in "succession," "identical," "miracle," "axis," "swarming," and "impurities" creates a musical effect.

- "It had occurred to me that this piece of coral, because of its resemblance to a coiled infant, was a monstrosity. But this time I understood. At the bottom of the tank, on the grayish, almost blue, ground, the pinkish axolotls kept up their dance..." - The repetition of the "o" sound in "bottom," "almost," "blue," and "dance" creates a musical effect.
- "They were lying in wait for something, a remote dominion destroyed, an age of liberty when the world had been that of the axolotls. Not possible that such a blindness should exist in that transparent jelly?" - The repetition of the "i" sound in "lying," "remote," "dominion," "destroyed," "blindness," and "jelly" creates a musical effect.
- "Now I knew. I was an axolotl and was walking along the bottom of the tank." - The repetition of the "o" sound in "know," "axolotl," and "bottom" creates a musical effect.

In all of these examples, the assonance helps to create a lyrical effect and draws attention to the specific words being repeated.

Consonance

Is a phonological scheme that involves the repetition of consonant sounds, usually at the end of words, in close proximity. It is a subtle technique that can create a pleasing, musical effect and draw attention to certain words or phrases.

In the short story "Axolotl," there are a few instances of consonance. For example:

- "Some days I went in early and stayed for a long time watching the animals"
- "I began seeing in the aquarium nothing but axolotls"
- "They were lying there in front of me, and I was looking at them. I saw their eyes, which were human eyes, with a look of suffering and also with a look of intelligence"
- "And in the night I learned that the axolotls were Mexican, like the man who had given them to me"

In each of these examples, there is a repetition of consonant sounds, such as the "s" and "l" sounds in "animals," "axolotls," and "long," or the "n" sound in "nothing," "front," and "man." These repetitions help to create a sense of cohesion and rhythm within the text, and draw the reader's attention to the words being repeated.

Rhyme

The repetition of sounds that are similar to or exactly the same, particularly in the stressed final syllables of phrases that often consist of two or more words. These types of rhyming methods contribute to the attractiveness of the writer's peculiar style, particularly when it comes to poetry and songs. The author of the narrative, Cortazar, has done an excellent job of utilizing the rhyming approach. These lines of poetry elevate the story's artistic effect to a higher level:

- 1) "said" and "led"
- 2) "tank" and "blank"
- 3) "toes" and "moss"
- 4) "light" and "bright" in the phrase "the light from the street entered like a white blade"
- 5) "him" and "swim" in the phrase "I was looking at him through the glass, and he was looking at me. I learned later that he could see himself in a mirror, but I do not believe it.

In any case, he was very far away. I began to go every morning, morning and afternoon some days. The aquarium was not far from my room."

In these examples, the repetition of similar sounds at the end of the words creates a sense of harmony and rhythm in the text. The use of rhyme can also make certain phrases more memorable and impactful for the reader.

"...my bike against the gratings and went to look at the tulips."

"...the majority pressed their heads against the glass, looking with their eyes of gold at whoever came near them."

"...a vegetal outgrowth, the gills, I suppose."

Although *Axolotl* is a prose narrative, it has certain phonological features that contribute to its stylistic effect. There are a few sound patterns such as alliteration, assonance, and consonance in selected passages of the text. These features create rhythm and emphasis. This enhances the aesthetic quality of the narrative. However, it must be kept in mind that the phonological devices do not determine the stylistic impact of this story. In fact, more important than these are the repetition of key words and recurring sentence structures. The repeated structures to the axolotls and their physical appearance highlight the narrator's obsession. Therefore, phonological features should be understood as supporting elements. They complement the overall stylistic structure of the narrative.

Similes, Metaphors and Personification:

After reading her short story "Axolotl," one discovers that Cortazar is capable of using a variety of figurative languages, including metaphors, similes, and personification in his work. This is another important facet of Cortazar literary style. Some examples are;

Similes

Is a figure of speech that involves the comparison of two things using the words "like" or "as". In "Axolotl," Cortazar uses several similes to create vivid images in the reader's mind.

- 1) "They were like fairies or like the Sirens, whose song enticed men to their doom."
- 2) "They were like some kind of pure thinking, that had dissolved away from the world and lost itself."
- 3) "The only thing that exists for me is the narrow basin in whose transparent depth the pale face of an Axolotl, those eyes, forever floating, with a fierce and sad look, the lean fingers of the forepaws, like the delicate stems of plant."
- 4) "I began to go every morning, morning and afternoon some days, and evening when I could escape from my other obligations, to the aquarium."
- 5) "I discovered them (or they obliged me to recognize them) one day when I was leaning over the banister, utterly soaked by the rain, sparrow-hawk eyes that the humidity had dulled, and the water streaming down my back and catarrh in my nose."
- 6) "Looking like a small lizard about six inches long, ending in a fish's tail of extraordinary delicacy."
- 7) "Like brooches, wholly of transparent gold."
- 8) "A vegetal outgrowth, red as coral, like tiny sprigs."
- 9) "The time feels like it's less if we stay quietly."
- 10) "The time feels like it's less if we stay quietly."

Metaphors

Metaphors are another type of figurative language used in literature, where a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable, in order to suggest a resemblance. Some of the examples of metaphors in the story include:

- "I began to go every morning, morning and afternoon some days, to the glass at the aquarium, until I knew them by heart."
- "They were like witnesses of something, and at times like horrible judges."
- "Only the little hands were a pinkish, almost transparent rose color; I looked at them for a long time."
- "And then I discovered its eyes, its face. They were indeed like mine, but they were lovely."
- "Now I am an axolotl."

Overall, the use of metaphors in "Axolotl" contributes to the story's dreamlike and surreal atmosphere, as well as its exploration of themes such as identity, transformation, and perception.

Personification

Examples of personification in *Axolotl* include:

- "The Axolotls were like witnesses of something, and at times like horrible judges."
- "They continued to look at me, immobile; from time to time the rosy branches of the gills trembled."
- "I was afraid of them..... the slight movements of their long fingers."
- "Paris was spreading its peacock tail"
- "The lions were sad and ugly"
- "Their little pink Aztec faces"
- "feet, of the slenderest nicety"
- "triangular plane of the face"
- "every ten or fifteen seconds the sprigs pricked up stiffly"

Pronouns:

The use of "I" creates a sense of intimacy and personal connection between the reader and the narrator. The narrator shares his experience of visiting the aquarium and observing the axolotls. As a result, he develops an intense fascination with them. This use of the first-person point of view allows the reader to experience the story through the narrator's perspective, creating a deeper emotional connection with the narrative.

1) Time Markers:

"There was a time" is used to indicate a past time period, and "now" is used to indicate the present.

2) Linking words:

"and," "then," "but," and "once in a while" are used as linking words.

3) Enumeration:

"nine specimens" is used to enumerate the number of *Axolotls* in the tank.

4) Cause and Effect:

The narrator's fascination with the *Axolotls* is linked to their quietness and immobility.

5) Comparison:

The *Axolotls'* eyes are compared to "brooches" and "Chinese figurines of milky glass."

Context

1) Setting:

The aquarium at the Jardin des Plantes in Paris is the primary setting of the passage.

2) Time:

The passage takes place in the past and present.

3) Characters:

The narrator and the *Axolotls* are the primary characters.

4) Theme:

The theme of the passage is fascination and the search for understanding.

5) Language:

The use of specialized vocabulary, such as "larval stage," "genus," and "gills," creates a scientific context for the passage.

6) Culture:

The mention of the *Axolotls'* "little pink Aztec faces" and their Spanish name, "ajolote," links them to Mexican culture.

7) Nature:

The behavior and characteristics of the *Axolotls* in their natural habitat are described, such as their ability to live on dry land and in water.

8) Emotion:

The conjunction "but" is used to contrast ideas, whereas the conjunction "and" is used to provide information. Conjunctions are used to unite ideas. Both types of examples can be found in this passage, such as the statement "the lions were sad and ugly and my panther was asleep."

When you connect ideas using words that have meanings that are similar to one another or that refer to related concepts, you have achieved lexical coherence. For instance, the phrase "green among all that grey" associates the color green with the bleak atmosphere that prevails in Paris during the wintertime.

In addition, the writer makes use of context in order to evoke a sense of familiarity and to establish links between concepts that at first glance appear to be unrelated. For instance, the author makes a connection between the experience of viewing tulips in a garden and the experience of discovering *Axolotls* in the aquarium that is close.

The author uses first-person narration and shifting narrative perspective in *Axolotl*. An unnamed protagonist narrates the story. He initially presents himself as an observer of the axolotls. However, gradually, the boundary between the observer and the observed becomes blurred. Language and narrative technique are used to achieve this shift in perspective. The narrator's increasing identification with the axolotls eventually leads to a complete transformation of consciousness. As he begins to perceive the world from the creatures' point of view, the readers start to experience his psychological journey. It also creates a sense of ambiguity with regard to the reality and identity.

Thematic Interpretation of Stylistic Features

The narrator's persistent observation of the axolotls reflects his desire to understand an alternative form of existence. Meanwhile, the gradual transformation of perspective symbolizes the breakdown of conventional boundaries between human beings and other living creatures. The use of metaphors and personification further strengthens the connection between the narrator and the axolotls. This creates an atmosphere of mystery and psychological depth. Hence, we can argue that Cortázar's stylistic choices are not just decorative elements of the text. In fact, these choices function as important tools through which he communicates the central themes of the story.

Discussion

The study of the stylistic features in "*Axolotls*" helps us to understand the story in all its details. If the reader understands why and how the author is using various lexical categories, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions, it helps them to understand the theme as well as the plot. For example, the nouns offer the reader a glimpse into the personalities of the characters. In the same way, verbs provide the reader with the ability to comprehend the action in the narrative. The use of adjectives helps readers have a deeper comprehension of the story's characters'. Adverbs provide the reader with a sense of the manner in which the acts were carried out when they are used in a sentence.

Similarly, the authors makes use of literary devices emphasize particular words. The use of parallelism results in the creation of balance and symmetry. These are necessary parts in the process of making a text aesthetically beautiful. Anaphora, on the other hand, contributes to the text's focus and rhythm. Certain aspects or concepts are highlighted by the use of repetition.

Through this analysis, we are able to see how the author makes use of a variety of literary devices to create a story that is not only interesting but also provokes thought and catches the attention of the reader.

On the basis of the analysis, we are able to draw the conclusion that "Axolotls" is a short story that includes a number of different lexical categories, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions. In addition, the narrative makes use of a number of other literary devices, such as parallelism, anaphora, and repetition, in order to strengthen the story and keep the readers interested.

Conclusion

This research set out to examine stylistic features employed in Julio Cortázar's short story reveals that Cortázar's stylistic choices play a crucial role in constructing the story's surreal and psychological depth. The frequent use of vivid imagery, repetition, and metaphor enhances the sense of transformation and blurring of identity between the narrator and the axolotls. The atmosphere of alienation is intensified by lexical choice as the diction reflects obsession, isolation, and introspection. In terms of cohesion and context, seamless flow is adopted by narrative structure that mirrors the narrator's psychological transition from observer to being observed. Overall, the stylistic analysis demonstrates that "Axolotl" is not merely a story of fascination with creatures but a profound exploration of consciousness, identity, and existential dislocation. The study highlights how linguistic and stylistic features work together to reinforce the complexity of thematic expression of the text, making it an invaluable contribution to stylistic and literary analysis within the field of linguistics.

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