# Analysis of Language Used in Contemporary English Fiction: A Descriptive Analysis

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**Abstract**

This paper seeks to analyze the language used in contemporary English fiction in a descriptive manner. Stories set in the present that don't contain fantasy elements are considered contemporary fiction. Contemporary fiction aims to give readers a glimpse into a particular aspect of everyday life and what it's like to stand in someone else's shoes. Language analysis looks at strategies authors employ, including figures of speech, literary devices, choice of words, the structure of sentences, register, or tone, to convey meaning. Linguistic elements such as discourse, vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, are examined. To further comprehend how language shapes literature and interpretation, this research seeks to highlight stylistic and functional elements of language in contemporary English fiction. The study can contribute to literary studies, linguistics, and language education, and guide the recommendation of reading materials for language learners and language education programs.

Keywords: Contemporary Writers, Contemporary Fiction, English fiction, language, linguistic

**Introduction**

Lacking fantasy components, works set in the current day are considered contemporary fiction. The term, "contemporary", is explicitly used to separate it from realistic fiction with a historical context. It is technically qualified as a type of realistic fiction. Contemporary fiction generally aims at offering readers a glimpse into specific facets of everyday life and demonstrating what it's like to be in a different person's position. While a few of the narratives may have political overtones or be meant to increase social consciousness, others are purely for pleasure. The goal of contemporary fiction writers is to make every detail as realistic as they can. Avoiding exaggeration is often essential. Many readers of modern fiction adore the emphasis on reality and may even criticize works that stray too far into impossible circumstances. Some renowned contemporary English fiction includes—*White Teeth* by Zadie Smith, *The Paying Guests* by Sarah Waters, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* by Neil Gaiman, *Cloud Atlas* by David Mitchell, *Life After Life* by Kate Atkinson, *Doctor Glass* by Louise Worthington, *Ordinary People* by Diana Evans, *The Woman in Cabin 10* by Ruth Ware, *Blue Ticket* by Sophie Mackintosh, *The Silent Wife* by Kerry Fisher, and many others.

Some critics refer to contemporary fiction as "post-postmodernism" because it is the literary movement that succeeded postmodern literature, popular from the late 1950s to about 1990. In response to World War II, postmodernism adopted characteristics such as randomness, play, fragmentation, intertextuality, and metafiction to highlight a response to the war. Postmodernism

also exposes the meaninglessness of life and existence. Conversely, modern fiction pushes back against or plays with the ideas of postmodernism to produce new and innovative works of fiction. This in turn influences the type of language utilized by contemporary fiction authors. Multiple narrators, literature that makes self-referential comments, a pastiche of subjects and genres, and innovation with style and genre are a few hallmarks of contemporary English fiction.

Language analysis pertains to how the author uses linguistic devices to express meaning. This entails identifying the linguistic devices utilized and describing how they work. For instance, while speaking or writing persuasively, the art of rhetoric must be should focused upon. How writers deploy these approaches to persuade must be noticed. Areas to concentrate upon while conducting language analysis of a narrative include genre and narrative, literary representation and audience, literariness and literary purpose, foregrounding and fashion, poetic vs. grammatical voice, and narrative point of view and literary positioning.

## Literature Review

According to Ferdinand de Saussure, the father of structural linguistics, "Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs; the second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first". He dismisses the study of writing and considered speech primary (Culpeper and Kytö, 2010). The contemporary English novel, according to David Lodge, must be read, giving attention to the language used within the text, which is typically neglected by readers and critics. Many modern authors want to make their writing as easy to comprehend as possible by utilizing straightforward and colloquial words and expressions that are frequently heard in daily speech. Authors may employ slang and dialect to give their works a sense of authenticity and render their characters more relatable. Rahv gives examples of the obsession with symbols, tracing allegories and mythic patterns in contemporary style (Lodge, 2015).

To produce vivid descriptions and capture the reader's imagination, contemporary fiction frequently uses figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, and other literary devices. Multiple perspectives may be used in contemporary fiction to give readers a more complex understanding of the characters and happenings in the narrative. Changes in tense, point of view, and narrative voice can all be examples of this. Both literary and non-literary style of language is employed in this genre. Richards also speaks about the two types of discourse utilized in English fiction. Ransom's 'texture', Blackmur's 'gesture', Empson's 'ambiguity', and Brook's 'irony' are other concepts that define the literary language, distinguishing it from other types of language. Richards discusses the use of distinct modes of writing or the usage of language in different ways, stating that it asserts varying orders of truth. Many critics have begun reflecting on linguistic form and purpose (Lodge, 2015).

Bağlama briefly discusses the language used in *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith. Ntoya discusses how the majority of contemporary English novels are written in standard English, but for a variety of reasons, they may also use non-standard linguistic variations. This rhetorical device has a long history of use in English-language literature and was theorized, in particular, by Mikhail Bakhtin. Zadie Smith's debut book, White Teeth, is a great example of a modern book that deals with a variety of English dialects. As a result, it offers an especially intriguing corpus for a comparative study of the use of non-standard English. Modern fiction frequently uses descriptive language to create a realistic image of the protagonists and their environment. This can contain comprehensive accounts of the setting, the appearance, and the emotions of the characters. As technology develops,

contemporary fiction frequently reflects these developments by incorporating contemporary language and technology into the story. This includes messaging, social media, and other digital communication channels, being incorporated into storylines. A lot of modern authors employ humor and irony to give depth and complexity to their work. Sarcasm, satire, and other kinds of wit that make observations about society and its ideals can fall under this category.

*White Teeth* is a recent work that demonstrates the continued significance of the old literary device known as "heteroglossia" for referencing several linguistic types. Furthermore, the text in question sparked a lot of interest among readers in general, critics, and academic researchers, including those with an interest in heteroglossia (such as Mair (2003), Hodson (2014), Rotenberg (2015), and Kollamagi (2016)). Direct speech, or the utterances of characters, according to Hodson, is the earliest and "most canonical place to find dialect representation in literary texts". It is possible to represent non-standard language in a more indirect way, specifically by using metalanguage. This can happen in numerous circumstances in literary texts and is described by Jane Hodson as "talk about talk". As stated by Hodson, "The first place to look for metalanguage about dialect is in the paratexts that often accompany literary texts". The purpose of these is to "convey information, suggest interpretations, or offer advice to the reader as he or she encounters the main body of the text," and they include prefaces, dedications, footnotes, glossaries, indexes, and other similar tools.

Similarly, McWilliams conducts an analysis of *Cloud Atlas* by David Mitchell. The language of Cloud Atlas draws notice as it drastically changes between the novel's six sections, serving as one of the primary signs of how the characters are distinct from one another and unrelated. With meticulous attention to detail, Mitchell invents two distinct futuristic dialects as well as multiple nuances of a historical fiction dialect that he jokingly refers to as "bygone-ese" because it combines some archaic words and phrases with a contemporary dialect. He then acknowledges that within these contexts, he has fabricated differences between various social groups, ethnicities, genders, and so forth in an effort to give each character a distinctive and appropriate voice (McWilliams, 2014).

**Objective of the Study**
To Review the analysis of language used in contemporary English fiction

**Methodology**
This study utilized a structured questionnaire to conduct a survey, and statistical methods such as mean & t-test were used to analyze the responses from 217 participants. The sampling method used in this research was convenience sampling, where individuals were selected based on their accessibility & willingness to participate.

**Table 1 Opinion about Language Used in Contemporary English Fiction**

| Serial No. | Statement of Survey | Mean Value | t-value | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The point of view affects the reader's perspective and understanding of the characters and events. | 4.19 | 8.882 | 0.000 |
| 2 | Authors use tone to convey their message and engage readers emotionally. | 4.32 | 9.927 | 0.000 |
| 3 | Contemporary English fiction showcases diverse | 4.50 | 11.806 | 0.000 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| | language usage, reflecting the multicultural society we live in. | | | |
| 4 | Symbols helps to deepen the meaning of the story and engage readers intellectually. | 4.05 | 5.546 | 0.000 |
| 5 | Authors use repeated words, phrases, or images to create emphasis, rhythm, and unity. | 3.85 | 3.704 | 0.000 |
| 6 | Metaphors help readers to understand complex emotions, relationships, and situations. | 4.45 | 11.337 | 0.000 |
| 7 | Authors use vivid descriptions and sensory details to create images in the reader's mind. | 4.06 | 6.944 | 0.000 |
| 8 | Short sentences create tension and drama, while longer sentences can convey a sense of relaxation or reflection. | 4.14 | 8.777 | 0.000 |
| 9 | Authors may use unconventional syntax, grammar, and vocabulary to create unique styles and voices. | 3.73 | 3.002 | 0.002 |
| 10 | Dialogue in contemporary English fiction is realistic and reflects the way people speak in everyday life. | 4.42 | 12.083 | 0.000 |

Table and Figure 1 demonstrates the mean values for each of the statement of the study done on the "analysis of language used in contemporary English fiction", examining the average scores, the statement that obtains the highest mean score can be described as "Contemporary English fiction showcases diverse language usage, reflecting the multicultural society we live in", which has the mean score of 4.50, Looking at the next statement which is "Metaphors help readers to understand complex emotions, relationships, and situations" the mean score is found to be 4.45. Looking at the mean value of 4.42 for the statement "Dialogue in contemporary English fiction is realistic and reflects the way people speak in everyday life" shows that dialogue is also responsible for contemporary English fiction. Looking at the other benefit of contemporary English fiction is, "Authors use tone to convey their message and engage readers emotionally" which displays the mean score of 4.32, and the statement "The point of view affects the reader's perspective and understanding of the characters and events" showcase the mean value of 4.19. Then the statement "Short sentences create tension and drama, while longer sentences can convey a sense of relaxation or reflection" obtains mean value of 4.14 and the statement "Authors use vivid descriptions and sensory details to create images in the reader's mind" has 4.06. The statement "Symbols helps to deepen the meaning of the story and engage readers intellectually" showcase the mean value of 4.05. Therefore, the last two statements fall within the lowest category or level, "Authors use repeated words, phrases, or images to create emphasis, rhythm, and unity" mean value of 3.85, the statement "Authors may use unconventional syntax, grammar, and vocabulary to create unique styles and voices" has 3.73. The significance of the t-value for each statement in the investigation on the analysis of language used in contemporary English fiction is significant. The t-value statements were positive, and their significance value was less than 0.05, indicating a significant relationship between the two variables.
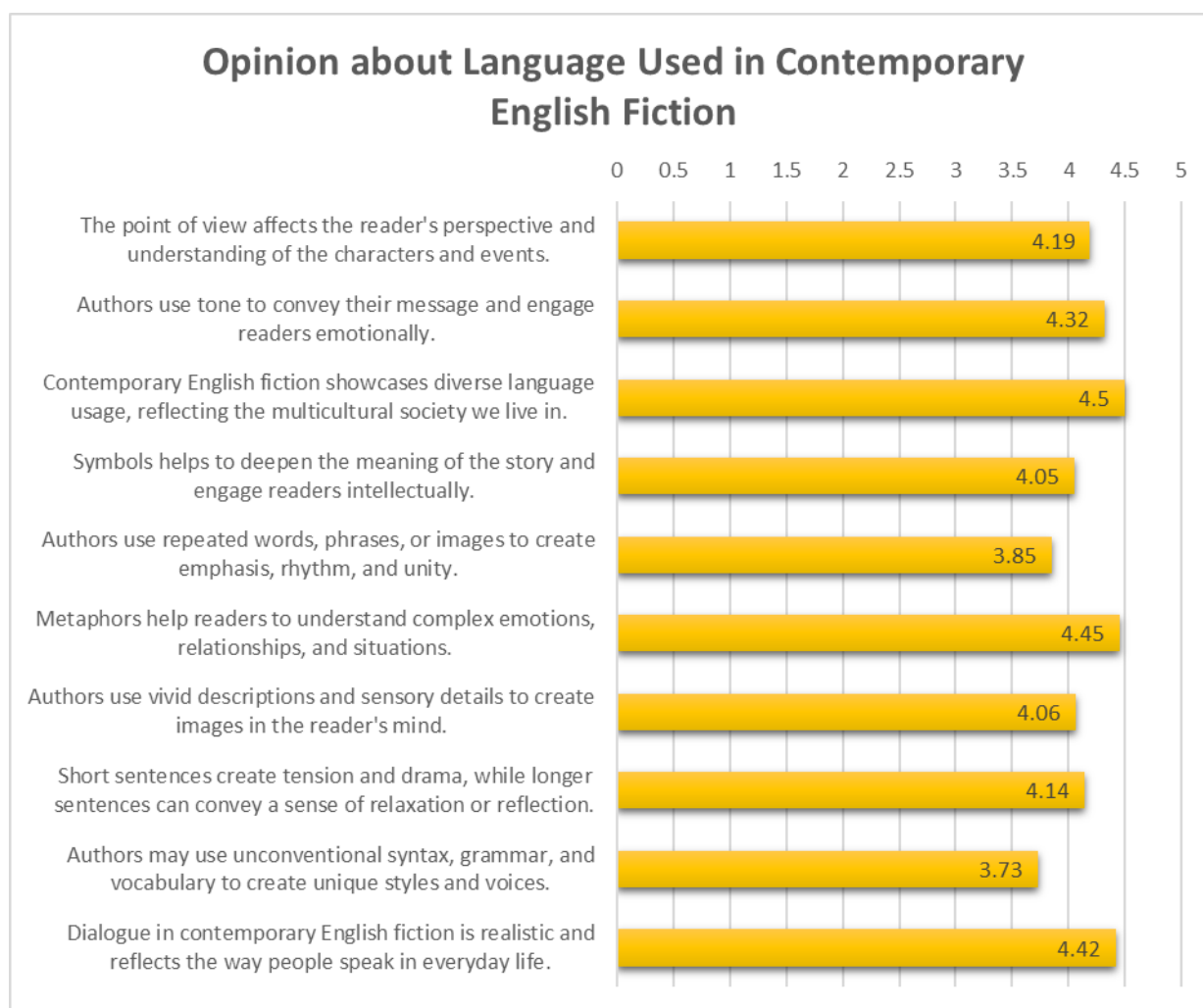
**Figure 1 Opinion about Language Used in Contemporary English Fiction**

**Conclusion**

In order to shed light on the stylistic decisions and trends in modern writing, this research study examines the language employed in contemporary English fiction. The essay provides a descriptive examination of the chosen authors' language and examines how they employ various linguistic elements including syntax, semantics, and discourse to convey meaning and effect. This will assist in a better understanding of how language is utilized in modern literature to create feelings and convey meaning. Since it may throw light on the nature of language and how it is used in various contexts, this kind of research can also have implications for literary studies and language instruction.

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