

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN J.K. ROWLING'S HARRY POTTER SERIES: LINGUISTIC AND NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

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Abstract

J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series has captivated millions of readers worldwide, particularly through the multifaceted character of Harry Potter himself. This research employs critical discourse analysis to examine how Rowling utilizes language and narrative techniques to depict and develop Harry's character across the seven-book series. Drawing on theoretical frameworks from narrative theory and discourse analysis, the study explores Harry's evolution from a vulnerable orphan to a courageous leader, analyzing both micro-level linguistic features and macro-level narrative structures. By examining themes of identity, morality, and heroism as portrayed through Harry's interactions and internal monologues, this research illuminates the nuanced strategies through which Rowling shapes Harry Potter's persona and resonates with young adult audiences. This analysis contributes to literary studies by elucidating the intricate relationship between language, character development, and reader engagement in young adult literature.

Keywords: *Discourse Analysis, Character Development, Harry Potter, Linguistic and Narrative Techniques.*

Introduction

Millions of readers worldwide have been enthralled with J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, especially young readers. The series is notable for its personable and multifaceted characters, particularly Harry Potter, who is the main character, despite its captivating stories and enchanted locales. Harry Potter's personality and growth provide ample

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material for academic investigation, given his status as a pivotal character in one of the most popular book series.

Analyzing character portrayal in young adult literature is essential because it affects readers' perceptions of numerous issues, including identity, morality, and heroism, as well as how these readers interact with the book. Finding deeper insights into the narrative strategies that appeal to young audiences can be obtained by examining the ways in which writers develop and utilize language to develop their characters. In order to better understand how J.K. Rowling developed Harry Potter over the course of the series, this research will examine the linguistic and discursive techniques she used.

This study aims to explore the following questions:

1. How is Harry Potter depicted in the series?
 2. How does Harry Potter's character develop through the use of language and discourse?
- The objectives of this research are to:

1. Analyze the depiction and development of Harry Potter in the Harry Potter series.
2. Identify the linguistic and discursive techniques used to portray and evolve Harry Potter's character.

For students of literature, this study provides a practical framework for understanding how character development is achieved through language. It offers a clear example of how narrative techniques can bring characters to life and make them relatable to readers. By examining the intricacies of Harry Potter's characterization, students can enhance their analytical skills and apply these insights to other literary works.

Moreover, this research contributes to the academic discourse on young adult literature by highlighting the importance of language in shaping character and narrative. It underscores the relevance of linguistic analysis in literary studies and provides a model for future research. Ultimately, this study aims to deepen students' appreciation of literary craftsmanship and the powerful role of language in storytelling.

Review of literature

A. Conceptual Framework for Character Illustration

One of the most important factors influencing readers' engagement and understanding of a work of literature is the way characters are portrayed. In his groundbreaking book *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), E.M. Forster makes a distinction between flat and round characters, highlighting the intricacy and evolution of the latter. Whereas flat people stay the same throughout the story, round characters are shown with depth and change. Harry Potter, who personifies a round character whose complex nature and evolution are essential to the series' appeal, serves as an illustration of Forster's concept.

In *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, literary scholars like Mieke Bal (2009) address how different narrative devices, such as internal monologues, conversation, and direct characterization, are used to portray character development. These strategies enhance the reading experience by shedding light on the motivations, feelings, and ideas of the characters.

B. Literary Studies Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis provides useful methods for analyzing character depiction as a way to examine language in texts. The Critical Discourse Analysis approach developed by Norman Fairclough in 1995 offers a way to think about how language shapes social identities and relationships in texts. This method is especially useful for examining how J.K. Rowling shapes Harry Potter's persona and social interactions through words.

Discourse analysis looks at a text's macro-level components, such the overarching narrative structure, as well as its micro-level components, like particular language choices. Teun A. van Dijk's discourse and context research emphasizes how crucial situational context is for understanding the words and deeds of characters. These ideas can be used to the Harry Potter books to provide a more complex picture of how Harry's character changes as a result of his encounters and interactions.

C. Previous Studies on Harry Potter's Character

Numerous studies have explored various aspects of Harry Potter's character. For instance, Maria Nikolajeva (2003) in *Harry Potter and the Secrets of Children's Literature* analyzes the moral and ethical development of Harry throughout the series. She contends that Harry's transformation from an innocent, mistreated child to a brave, self-aware young adult is a reflection of the bildungsroman tradition, in which the main character experiences a major personal growth.

Similarly, Jack Zipes (2001) in *Sticks and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children's Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter* examines the cultural impact of Harry Potter, highlighting how the series addresses themes of power, identity, and resistance. According to Zipes, young readers can relate to Harry's character because he is a role model for moral integrity and resiliency, reflecting their own problems and goals.

D. Research Gap

While existing studies provide valuable insights into Harry Potter's character, there is a lack of focused analysis on the specific linguistic and discursive techniques used to depict and develop his character. This research aims to fill this gap by conducting a detailed discourse analysis of the Harry Potter series, identifying how J.K. Rowling employs language to shape Harry's character and his journey. By integrating theories of character depiction and discourse analysis, this study will offer a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic

strategies that contribute to Harry Potter's enduring appeal and significance in young adult literature.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach, focusing on critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the depiction and development of Harry Potter's character throughout the series. Qualitative research is well-suited for exploring complex phenomena in literary texts, as it allows for an in-depth understanding of the linguistic and narrative techniques used by the author.

The primary data for this research consists of the seven books in the Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling:

- Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (1997)
- Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (1998)
- Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (1999)
- Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (2000)
- Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (2003)
- Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2005)
- Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows (2007)

Secondary data includes scholarly articles, books, and criticism on the Harry Potter series, focusing on character analysis, narrative techniques, and discourse analysis. These sources provide a theoretical framework and contextual background for the study.

Data collection involves a systematic reading and annotation process of the primary texts. Specific techniques include:

1. Textual Analysis: Identifying passages and excerpts that illustrate key aspects of Harry Potter's characterization and development.
2. Coding: Organizing these passages into thematic categories related to character depiction, such as dialogue, internal monologue, descriptions by the narrator, and interactions with other characters

The data analysis is conducted using critical discourse analysis (CDA) principles, focusing on both micro-level (specific linguistic features) and macro-level (broader narrative structures) elements. The analysis follows these steps:

1. Micro-Level Analysis

- Lexical Choices: Examining the words and phrases used to describe Harry Potter, his thoughts, emotions, and actions. This includes analyzing adjectives, verbs, and nouns that contribute to the portrayal of his character.

- Syntax and Grammar: Analyzing sentence structure and grammatical features that highlight Harry's personality traits and development.
- Dialogue and Speech Patterns: Investigating how Harry's spoken language reflects his character growth and relationships with others.

2. Macro-Level Analysis

- Narrative Structure: Assessing how the overarching narrative of each book and the series as a whole contributes to Harry's character development. This includes analyzing plot points, turning points, and climactic moments that shape his journey.
- Thematic Analysis: Identifying recurring themes related to Harry's character, such as bravery, loyalty, and the struggle between good and evil. Analyzing how these themes are developed through language and discourse.
- Character Interactions: Examining Harry's interactions with other characters and how these relationships influence his development. This includes analyzing dialogues, conflicts, and alliances.

E. Validation and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, the study employs triangulation by cross-referencing data from primary texts with secondary sources. Additionally, peer reviews and consultations with experts in literary studies and discourse analysis will be conducted to refine the analysis and interpretations.

F. Ethical Considerations

This research adheres to ethical standards in academic writing and research. Proper citations and references are provided for all secondary sources used. The analysis respects the integrity of the original texts and aims to contribute to the scholarly understanding of the Harry Potter series without misrepresentation or bias.

By combining qualitative analysis with critical discourse techniques, this methodology provides a comprehensive framework for exploring the intricate depiction and development of Harry Potter's character, offering valuable insights for students and scholars of young adult literature.

Results and Discussion

A. Initial Depiction of the Main Character

Harry Potter is introduced as an orphaned boy living with his abusive aunt, uncle, and cousin. Descriptive language such as "small and skinny for his age" and "round glasses held together with a lot of Scotch tape" (Rowling, 1997) establishes Harry as a vulnerable and mistreated child. This initial depiction elicits empathy from the reader and sets the stage for his transformation. The choice of words creates a vivid image of Harry's physical

appearance and his disadvantaged position within the Dursley household, thereby inviting readers to sympathize with his plight.

Language and Techniques Used

Rowling employs both direct and indirect characterization to develop Harry's persona. Direct characterization is evident through physical descriptions that highlight his frailty and mistreatment. Indirect characterization is achieved through Harry's thoughts, behaviors, and interactions with others. For instance, his curiosity and resilience, hinted at through his inner thoughts and small acts of rebellion against his oppressive guardians, suggest an inner strength that contrasts with his outward vulnerability. This dual approach enriches Harry's character, making him accessible and relatable to young readers. The simple, straightforward language used in these descriptions allows younger audiences to easily grasp Harry's situation and empathize with him, setting a foundation for his character's subsequent development.

Development of the Main Character

1. From Innocence to Experience

Harry's character undergoes significant development, evolving from a naive boy into a mature and courageous leader. This transformation is marked by key narrative events and linguistic shifts that reflect his changing mindset.

- **Early Adventures:** In the first three books, Harry's adventures are primarily focused on discovering the wizarding world and his place within it. The language used is often filled with wonder and excitement, as seen in passages like, "He had never even imagined such a strange and splendid place" (Rowling, 1997), reflecting his initial innocence and awe. This phase of his development is characterized by a sense of enchantment and discovery, as he navigates new environments and relationships, laying the groundwork for his understanding of friendship, loyalty, and bravery.
- **Confronting Dark Forces:** Beginning with *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, the narrative tone shifts to a more serious and darker timbre. Harry's encounters with Voldemort and the death of Cedric Diggory mark a turning point in his maturation. The language becomes more somber and reflective, mirroring Harry's growing awareness of the complexities and dangers of his world. Sentences such as, "The world had changed overnight. The last and worst of the unexpected things that had happened to Harry was... no one knew what to do next" (Rowling, 2000), capture his evolving sense of responsibility and confusion. This period of his life is marked

by a loss of innocence and a deeper understanding of the stakes involved in his battle against evil, as he grapples with themes of mortality, sacrifice, and duty.

2. The Role of Dialogue and Internal Monologue

Harry's internal monologues provide deep insights into his character development. For instance, his reflections on his parents' sacrifice and his own fears and doubts are conveyed through introspective passages. These monologues allow readers to witness Harry's internal struggles and growth firsthand, providing a window into his evolving psyche.

- **Mentorship and Guidance:** Dumbledore's dialogues with Harry often impart wisdom and moral lessons. In *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, Dumbledore tells Harry, "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities" (Rowling, 2005). This dialogue reinforces Harry's belief in free will and personal integrity, underscoring the importance of personal choices in defining one's character. These moments of mentorship are crucial in shaping Harry's ethical framework and guiding his decisions.
- **Friendship and Loyalty:** Conversations with Hermione and Ron highlight the importance of friendship and loyalty. Their unwavering support helps Harry navigate his challenges and solidifies his leadership qualities. These dialogues reveal the strength of their bond and emphasize the value of trust and mutual support in overcoming adversities. Through these interactions, Harry learns the importance of relying on others and the power of collective action.

Linguistic and Discourse Techniques

-Use of Symbolism and Metaphor

Rowling frequently uses symbolism and metaphor to deepen the portrayal of Harry's character. The scar on Harry's forehead, for instance, symbolizes his connection to Voldemort and his role as the "Chosen One." This symbol serves as a constant reminder of his past and the destiny that awaits him, intertwining his personal identity with the larger narrative of the wizarding world.

-**Light and Darkness:** The recurring motif of light and darkness underscores the internal and external battles Harry faces. Passages like, "Harry felt a warmth spreading through him that had nothing to do with sunlight; it was hope, hope that had spread like fire through his veins" (Rowling, 2007), use light as a metaphor for hope and resilience. This metaphorical language not only highlights Harry's internal struggles but also serves to elevate the narrative by imbuing it with a sense of mythic grandeur. The interplay of light and darkness

in the text reflects the broader themes of good versus evil and the enduring human capacity for hope and redemption.

Thematic Consistency

Themes of bravery, sacrifice, and the struggle between good and evil are consistently developed through language and narrative structure. Harry's growth is reflected in his increasingly complex understanding of these themes.

Sacrifice and Bravery: Harry's willingness to sacrifice himself in the final battle against Voldemort epitomizes his bravery and selflessness. The language used in these climactic moments is poignant and evocative, capturing the gravity of his decisions. Descriptions of Harry's internal conflict and determination underscore the theme of sacrificial heroism, illustrating the depth of his commitment to protecting others. This thematic consistency reinforces the narrative's moral framework and enhances the emotional impact of Harry's journey.

Character Interactions and Their Influence

Harry's relationships with other characters significantly influence his development. Each interaction adds depth to his character and highlights different facets of his personality.

Conflict and Resolution: Harry's conflicts with characters like Snape and Draco Malfoy serve to challenge and refine his values and beliefs. The evolving nature of these relationships, especially with Snape, reveals complexities and hidden truths that impact Harry's understanding of loyalty and bravery. Snape's eventual revelation as a tragic hero complicates Harry's earlier perceptions, prompting a reevaluation of what constitutes true loyalty and courage. These nuanced portrayals of adversarial relationships add layers to the narrative, reflecting the multifaceted nature of human interactions.

Support and Mentorship: Positive interactions with characters like Sirius Black, Remus Lupin, and the Weasleys provide Harry with the emotional support and guidance he needs to grow. These relationships are portrayed through warm and supportive language, emphasizing their importance in Harry's life. The Weasleys, in particular, offer Harry a surrogate family, providing him with a sense of belonging and normalcy that contrasts with his tumultuous life. These supportive networks are crucial in fortifying Harry's resolve and shaping his worldview.

Conclusion

The depiction and development of Harry Potter's character in the series are achieved through a combination of direct and indirect characterization, linguistic techniques, and narrative strategies. Rowling's use of descriptive language, dialogue, internal monologue, symbolism, and thematic consistency creates a multifaceted and relatable protagonist.

Through critical discourse analysis, this study highlights how these elements contribute to Harry's growth from a mistreated boy to a heroic figure, offering valuable insights for students and scholars of young adult literature.

This analysis underscores the complexity of Harry Potter's character development and the sophisticated narrative techniques employed by Rowling. By examining the interplay of language, symbolism, and thematic elements, this study provides a deeper understanding of how Harry Potter's character resonates with readers and maintains its relevance in the literary canon of young adult fiction. The insights gained from this research not only enhance our appreciation of Rowling's craftsmanship but also contribute to the broader field of character studies and discourse analysis in literature.

Here is an example of a bibliography (Daftar Pustaka) for the research on Harry Potter's character depiction and development:

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