

## NARRATIVE POINT OF VIEW AND STYLE IN *THE HUNGER GAMES*: AN APPLICATION OF PAUL SIMPSON'S NARRATIVE STYLISTICS

**Maria Aman**

M.Phil. English Scholar Qurtuba University DIKhan, KP

Email: [mariaaman498@gmail.com](mailto:mariaaman498@gmail.com)

**Sobia Tabbasum**

Sub Divisional Education Officer Elementary & Secondary Education Department, KP

Email: [qantra79@gmail.com](mailto:qantra79@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*This research study's main aim is to find out the features of narrative stylistic theory in the novel The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collin. The purpose of this research is to examine the narrative stylistic features like textual medium, sociolinguistics code, characterization (events and action), point of view, textual structure, and intertextuality and how they influence the reader's interpretation, contribute to the reader's analysis of the text. This research utilizes qualitative textual analysis of the novel Hunger Game, adopting narrative stylistic framework of Paul Simpson (2004) to interpret and systematically identify these elements in the novel. Paul Simpson (2004) designed the key framework for narrative stylistics. This analysis uses the six fundamental narrative stylistic features to enhance understanding of the text. The narrative stylistic investigation helps readers understand Katniss's personality, her struggles and surviving. Katniss's survival struggles shaped her character and also influence the reader's perception. Her problems, conflict with the capital, rebellion against authority, emotional confused regarding Peeta and efforts to stay emotionally and mentally strong throughout the novel are revealed by the use of narrative stylistic features in the novel The Hunger Games. Sociolinguistics codes and intertextuality reflect the real-world social hierarchies and oppression. Complex characterization subverts traditional hero archetypes. These findings help readers understand how narrative techniques shape characters perception and engagement. This study may be valuable for literary analysis, educational purposes and future research on storytelling in dystopian fiction.*

**Keywords:** *Narrative stylistic, textual medium, sociolinguistics code, characterization (events and action), point of view, textual structure, intertextuality.*

### Introduction

Narrative stylistics uses stylistic and linguistic components to explore the narrative works. It depicts how language plays an important role in creating narratives. Narrative stylistics uses these aspects to describe how meaning can be conveyed through the narratives, how they reveal the ideological and cultural strategies and how audience and readers are affected through narratives. These linguistic and literary theory's concepts and tools to provide knowledge about the impact and beauty of narrative works are merged.

This research examines Paul Simpson's narrative stylistic (2004) framework on the novel *The Hunger Games* (2008) by Suzanne Collins. Stylistics distinction between content and style is one between what-one-has to say and how-one-says it (Leech and Short,38). The linguistic branch "stylistics" is the study and analysis of written work from a linguistic standpoint. Through the linguistic elements and structure, the researcher examines the literary work how language conveys the meaning and how these implications affect the reader's interpretation. Geoffrey N. Leech defines that stylistics simply as "the study of literary style or... the style of the use of language in literature" (1936, p.1)

In his book Simpson explains these six fundamental elements. The textual medium is the first fundamental element which carries the mode of communication and relation between the reader and the narrative. The second fundamental element is the sociolinguistic code in which the researcher explores the cultural, historical and linguistic setting with diverse accents and dialects. The third fundamental element is event and action which tells the progress of the character in the novel, also the character's "saying", "doing" and "thinking" are examined

when events and actions take place. The fourth fundamental element is the point of view which tells about first, second and third-person narration in the novel and describes the narrator's or character's point of view in the course of events. The fifth fundamental element is textual structure which examines the organization and arrangement of the narrative in the novel. The last fundamental element is intertextuality which utilizes the "allusion" technique. It addresses several ways of language that are used in a novel. Stylistics is regarded as an "accepted method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language" (Simpson, 2004, p.2).

Suzanne Collins is an American writer, novelist and screenwriter also known for her famous work *The Hunger Games* trilogy which ushers in a new sort of setting for children's and young adult fiction. She started her career by writing for children. She wrote many works for Nickelodeon such as *The Mystery Files* of Shelby Woo, and *Clarissa Explains It All*. Moreover, she wrote various stories like *Oswald* and *Little Bear*. She was nominated for Christmas special for her co-written work with her friends Santa and Baby. Furthermore, Collins wrote her first book in 2003, *Gregor the Overlander* for middle school and received the Nutmeg Children's Book Award.

This research examines Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*, paying particular attention to how Collins' choice of point of view and narrative voice affected how she portrayed the characters and events. This analyses of the novel's authority, submission, and disobedience using first-person narrative, a variety of point-of-view shifts, and subtly suggestive linguistic devices. It examined how author's bias could have affected these results.

### **1.2 Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the narrative stylistic elements in Suzanne Collins' novel *The Hunger Games*. Narrative stylistics gives a new way for to readers to analyze *The Hunger Games*. Narrative stylistic theory has not yet been applied to this novel. The novel's narrative structure can shed light on the issues and viewpoints of young adult readers because of its widespread popularity and *influence* among this group. The application of narrative stylistic theory helps the researchers to examine how the other characters and especially the lead character of the novel are built by Suzanne Collins. The character's progress, complexities and motivation can be disclosed after the narrative elements application. Narrative stylistics explores a new way for the readers that how narrative analysis captivates the reader's interest in *The Hunger Games*. The novel's first-person narration, tone, voice, and linguistic indications provide a unique opportunity to explore the role of perspective and narrative in affecting readers' interactions with literary texts. This study has broader implications for the role of narrative stylistic theory in molding public discourse and cultural norms since it can shed light on how perspective and narrative are used in literary texts to influence readers' comprehension of the central idea. The application of narrative stylistics on literary text permits the readers to be aware of its role in literature.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this analysis is to examine Suzanne Collins' novel *The Hunger Games* through Paul Simpson's theory of narrative stylistics. This research aims to explore the elements of character, voice, tone, and point of view in the novel. This study determines the reader's impression and understanding developed by the use of language and narrative strategies of the novel. This investigation aims to dig out whether Suzanne Collins utilized the narrative strategies in her novel *The Hunger Games* and also how these strategies contribute to the novel's narratives, and progression of the characters. This study's goal is to figure out the effects of the narrative style on the reader's deep experience with the novel and its contribution to attraction and connectivity in the novel. Paul Simpson's theory of narrative stylistics and its six fundamental units textual medium, sociolinguistic code, action and event, point of view,

textual structure and intertextuality are explained and discussed in the novel.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study about the narrative analysis of the Suzanne Collins novel *The Hunger Games* are summarized as follows:

- 1.1 To identify elements of Paul Simpson's theory in *The Hunger Games*.
- 2.1 To investigate the functions of Collins' theory in creating an impact on readers.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

The research questions for the study are as follows:

- 1.1 What elements of Paul Simpson's theory can be identified in *The Hunger Games*?
- 2.1 How does Collin's theory functions to create an impact on readers?

#### **1.6 Organization of the Study**

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is introductory and contains background of the study, summary of the novel, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation, rationale and organization of the study. Chapter two contains the Literature review. It holds all the relevant studies and also contains previous work related to the topic. Chapter three is the research methodology. It contains different methods and procedures that are used in the research study. Chapter four covers the analysis of the selected work. Chapter five is the conclusion of the research study. It sums up the whole idea of the research, contains the results of the study and gives further recommendations.

#### **Literature Review**

The section of the research is based on a literature review discussing the related resources, articles, books and research papers.

##### **2.1 Theory of Narrative Stylistics**

Booth (1961) writes that point of view plays a crucial role in the development of a story and in defining the experience of the reader. Point of view, in his opinion, "creates the illusion that the reader is seeing, hearing, and feeling what the narrator is seeing, hearing, and feeling" (Booth, 1961). Additionally, several scholars have worked on the concept of focalization or the vantage point from which the narrative is presented, as it was introduced by Genette in 1988. In *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, Gerard Genette examines how focalization might be used in many ways to impact the reader's understanding of a story. He differentiates between internal focalization, in which the viewpoint is restricted to one character, and external focalization, in which the narrator is all seeing and hearing.

Likewise, Susan Lanser (1981) in her book "*The Poetic of Perspective*" says that the author's choice of point of view and position has a considerable influence on the reader's experience and the progression of the story. She emphasizes the importance of comprehending how a text's various points of view affect the reader's perception of the narrative.

Genette's (1983) book *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* contains one of the most significant contributions to narrative theory. Genette's writings provide a solid foundation for understanding numerous literary narrative devices including point of view and focalization. According to Genette, using many narrators or focalization techniques gives a story more complexity and intensity, which encourages the reader to consider a larger variety of viewpoints and potential meanings.

Cohn, (2012) and Mohanty, (1986) have expanded on Genette's work by examining the applications of point of view and focalization to investigate questions of identity, power, and representation. Feminist and postcolonial scholars have focused on the ways in which point of view and focalization can be utilized to subvert prevailing narratives and give voice to disadvantaged perspectives.

## 2.2 The Hunger Games

Sar and Murni (2012) focus on the concept of political dystopia in Suzanne Collins's "Hunger Games" identifying five key aspects such as totalitarian government led by Capitol and president Snow, political repression in districts to ensure submission, dehumanization evident in the prohibition of humanity by the Capitol, restrictions of freedom through district rules imposed by Capitol, and oppression leading to rebellion, with Katniss Everdeen opposing Capitol's oppression. The conclusion affirms the presence of political dystopia in the novel based on the analyzed aspects. Additionally, the analysis extends to Suzanne Collins as a dystopian writer, suggesting that dystopian fiction serves to criticize and satirize the world. Dystopian writers, including Collins, envision a bleak future as a consequence of present human actions, reflecting concern about societal pitfalls. *The Hunger Games* portrays a tragic future caused by human behavior, emphasizing the potential consequences of acting poorly in the present.

Woloshyn et al. (2013) examine the portrayal of characters' in *The Hunger Games* trilogy through the lens of Connell's gendered discourses, including hegemonic masculinity, marginal masculinity and emphasizing femininity. After a brief overview of the trilogy's plot, the analysis focuses on three characters and their representation in relation to societal gender norms heteronormativity and the use of violence. The argument asserts that the characters align with specific gender discourse. Gale embodies hegemonic masculinity, Peeta represents marginalized masculinity and Katniss exhibits a complex blend of the marginalized while incorporating elements of emphasized femininity. The conclusion highlights that despite the trilogy featuring a strong female protagonist and potentially conveying feminist themes, it also subjects Katniss to heteronormative constraints.

### Research Methodology

In this chapter researcher gives more information about the application of research methodology. The theoretical structure, research design and research type are discussed in this chapter. This chapter also explains the data analysis, collection of data and the methods. All these techniques are used in this methodology to examine the text.

### 3.1 Data Collection

The research was conducted using descriptive and analytical techniques by carefully examining the Suzanne Collins novel *The Hunger Games*. Moreover, collecting the different books, scholarly articles, and papers is gathering of existing data on narrative stylistics and implications on literary works. Especially attention to those works of literature which examine the stylistic techniques, narrative feature and their impact on narration. In the novel, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins to perform the whole examines to identify the narrative features like textual medium, sociolinguistic code, characterization (events, action), point of view, textual structure and intertextuality. The conducts analyze the Suzanne Collins novel *The Hunger Games* by Paul Simpson's narrative stylistics theory. The unique technique of the suggested method is to examine the Suzanne Collins novel *The Hunger Games* through narrative techniques and also contribute using the narrative stylistic features in selected text. The current study focuses to figure out the research gap in the novel by application of narrative stylistic elements.

### 3.2 Data Analysis Technique

This study investigates Suzanne Collins' novel *The Hunger Games* using the qualitative method. The aim of this research is to explore and elaborate using six fundamental units of narrative stylistics by Paul Simpson. Furthermore, the purpose of this study is to conduct the narrative stylistic features in the novel such as textual medium, sociolinguistics code, characterization (events, action), point of view, textual structure and intertextuality. Stylistic features are a great resource for examining the novel from several angles. The method compiles

data from the novel by using Paul's six fundamental elements, character, voice, and tone. The literary text is examined using the analytical approach which emphasizes the structure of the novel *The Hunger Games*. Studying the novel through the six fundamental elements can help the reader to better understand the literary text. Each element is carefully examined to understand the literary text. To identify the connection between these elements the researcher independently investigates them. Through the analytical approach, readers get the opportunity to learn that what is the central idea that the author gives in the text. After finishing the reading, readers can conclude that the author has been successful in her endeavors.

### 3.3 Research Type

The methodology utilizes the descriptive methods as its primary analytical framework, an approach particularly suited to literary analysis due to its emphasis on systematic observation and detailed textual examination. The method enables a comprehensive investigation of narrative structure, stylistic devices within selected literary work. By focusing on accurate representation rather than experimental intervention, it allows for an objective exploration of the text's inherent qualities. As Kothari (2004) notes, the descriptive method is invaluable for presenting characteristic of a subject in an organized manner, while Creswell (2014) highlights its effectiveness in qualitative textual analysis. In this research, the method facilitates both close reading of the primary text and critical interpretation of its literary elements, ensuring a thorough understanding of the work's artistic and contextual dimension.

### 3.4 Theoretical Framework

Paul Simpson provides the six fundamental units to investigate the text in the light of narrative stylistics. Simpson set and categorized these six fundamental units in his book *Stylistic: A Resource Book for Students*. The novel *Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins will be studied in terms of narrative stylistics using this framework. Narrative stylistic theory by Paul Simpson and its elements are given below.

#### 3.4.1 Textual medium: (novel)

Textual medium relates to physical means of communication such as novel, short story, plays, tales and others through which narrative and story is told.

#### 3.4.2 Sociolinguistic code: (language)

It focuses on the language which is made up of the narrative's historical, linguistic and cultural context. Along with it, it describes the place and time of narration. The sociocultural context is revealed by language. Different accents and dialects are used which attribute to the story's character and narrative.

#### 3.4.3 Characterization: (events and action)

Events and action consist of the character's development and its "doing", "saying", and "thinking" in the text while action and events occur.

#### 3.4.4 Characterization: (Point of view)

Point of view establishes the narrator in first, second, and third person and investigates the relation between the narrator and the character's point of view.

#### 3.4.5 Textual structure: (order)

Textual structure forms the text and examines the method by which the narrative is organized and arranged.

#### 3.4.6 Intertextuality: (Other text)

Intertextuality uses the technique of "allusion". It discusses multiple uses of language in which the development of the novel is accomplished.

### Data Analysis

This chapter aims to analyze *The Hunger Games* through the lens of narrative stylistics by applying the six fundamental units of narrative stylistics to shape its storytelling. It explores how language choice help build meaning, engage readers and develop themes. The analysis

highlights how Suzanne Collins' stylistics decision affect the reader's experience.

#### 4.1 Textual Medium

Textual medium refers to forms of communication such as novels, short stories, plays, and tales through which narratives are conveyed. According to Paul Simpson, textual medium involves the structural and linguistic features of a narrative, including diction, cohesion, syntax, and narrative viewpoint. These features shape how a story is told, influence readers' emotions and understanding, and help reveal deeper meanings within the text.

##### 4.1.1 Flashback

Flashback is an important narrative device that provides background information, develops characters, and reveals key plot details. In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss recalls, "I was eleven, then. Five years later, I still wake up screaming for him to run" (p. 5), referring to her father's death in a mining explosion.

This flashback highlights the lasting trauma caused by her father's death and explains how she was forced to take responsibility for her family at a young age. It reveals the origins of her independence, resilience, and emotional guardedness. The memory also explains her strong desire to protect her sister Prim and her fear of losing loved ones. Thus, the flashback deepens readers' understanding of Katniss's character and shows how her past continues to influence her actions and decisions.

#### 4.2 Sociolinguistic Code

Sociolinguistic code refers to the social, cultural, and historical use of language in a narrative. According to Paul Simpson, it plays an important role in shaping and interpreting narratives by examining characters' language, dialogue, and narrative voice. Sociolinguistic codes help create realism, reflect social relationships, and show how language varies according to different social contexts.

##### 4.2.1 Dialect

Dialect is a variety of language associated with a particular region, community, or social class. It differs in vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar and often reflects the speaker's cultural and social background.

In *The Hunger Games*, Suzanne Collins uses dialect to distinguish people from different districts and the Capitol. Katniss Everdeen speaks in a simple and informal manner that reflects her upbringing in District 12. For example, "By the morning, we have a dozen of fish, a bag of greens and, best of all, a gallon of strawberries" (p. 11).

The straightforward language and focus on food and gathering reflect the daily struggles and survival-oriented lifestyle of District 12. The simple expression and practical vocabulary emphasize the district's poverty and dependence on hunting and foraging. Katniss's direct and informal speech highlights her resourcefulness, modest background, and connection to her environment. Through this dialect, Collins effectively portrays the social and economic realities of District 12 and reinforces the link between language and social identity.

##### 4.2.2 Register

Gale: We could do it, you know. Leave the district. Run off. Live in the wood. You and I, we could do it, Katniss: if we didn't have so many kids. (p.9) Gale and Katniss have this conversation in wood beyond the boundaries of District 12. This register is informal and communicative which reflects their close relationship with them and their growing up experience within District 12. Gale uses straightforward language and conveys a sense of sincerity and intensity. The short phrase "Run off. Live in woods" is direct and to the point, reflecting the focused on-action mindset. The use of "I" and "you" creates an intimate, personal tone, emphasizing the bond between them.

Katniss continues the same informal register by saying "if we did not have so many kids". She gives a quick and realistic reply to him and doesn't exaggerate or speak in full grammatically

difficult sentences. She uses more formal terms also adding to the informality by using “kids” instead of “siblings”. Their familiarity and closeness show with one another in their conversations. They share the struggle and pragmatic approach to survival which shows in the way of speaking.

The register in this exchange the harsh reality of their lives and refinement of themes of survival, they discuss something as drastic as running away. The lack of formal language reflects the directness of their emotions and thoughts, grounded in the tough conditions they face every day.

#### **4.2.3 Idiolect**

*“I volunteer as tribute!”* (p. 22)

This statement is spoken by Katniss Everdeen when Prim’s name is drawn at the Reaping. It reflects her unique personality, strong sense of responsibility, and protective nature. The direct and decisive language is characteristic of Katniss’s speech throughout the novel.

The word “*volunteer*” highlights her self-sacrifice, as becoming a tribute in District 12 is considered a death sentence. The term “*tribute*” reflects the harsh reality of Panem and Katniss’s acceptance of her role. Her words show courage, determination, and deep love for her sister.

The phrase also reflects the dystopian society of Panem, where the Hunger Games are a brutal annual event. Katniss’s concise and powerful language reveals her independence, strength, and willingness to take control of a difficult situation, emphasizing her role as a protector.

#### **4.3 Characterization (Event and Action)**

In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss states, “*Gale and I divide the spoils, leaving two fish, a couple of loaves of good bread, greens, and a quart of strawberries, salt, paraffin and a bit of money for each*” (p. 14).

This action reveals Katniss and Gale’s survival skills, responsibility, and practicality in the harsh environment of District 12. Their fair sharing of resources reflects cooperation and wise use of limited supplies.

The passage also highlights their kindness and concern for each other’s families despite their own difficulties. It demonstrates their strong friendship, mutual trust, and shared struggle for survival. Through this simple event, Suzanne Collins develops the characters indirectly, showing their compassion, resilience, and the strong bond between them.

#### **4.4 Characterization (Point of View)**

In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss reflects on her survival in the woods: “*The wood became our savior, and each day I went a bit farther into its arms...*” (p. 51). Through the first-person point of view, readers gain direct access to Katniss’s thoughts, experiences, and emotions, creating a close connection with her character.

Katniss personifies the woods as a “savior,” showing her dependence on nature for survival. Her description of gathering food, hunting, and foraging highlights her resourcefulness, adaptability, and determination. The phrase “*It was slow-going at first*” emphasizes the effort and patience required to develop these survival skills.

This perspective not only reveals Katniss’s actions but also her practical mindset and strong sense of responsibility toward her family. Her straightforward narration reflects her resilience and survival instincts. Thus, the first-person point of view deepens readers’ understanding of Katniss’s character and encourages sympathy for the challenges she faces.

#### **4.5 Textual Structure (Order)**

In *The Hunger Games*, while traveling to the Capitol on the tribute train, the narrative moves between present events and Katniss’s memory of Peeta. She reflects: “*To this day, I can never*

*shake the connection between this boy, Peeta Mellark, and bread that gave me hope ... And now it never was. Because we're going to be thrown into an arena to fight to death"* (p. 32).

This shows how the story is structured through shifts between past and present. Katniss recalls Peeta's kindness in giving her bread during a time of hardship, while also recognizing that he is now a potential opponent in the Games. This contrast creates emotional tension between gratitude and survival.

By using this arrangement, Suzanne Collins builds suspense and deepens the reader's understanding of Katniss's inner conflict. The past memory adds meaning to the present situation and highlights how earlier experiences influence current emotions and decisions.

Overall, the structure strengthens the narrative by linking past and present events, enhancing character development, and increasing emotional impact through contrast and continuity.

#### **4.6 Intertextuality (Other Text)**

While traveling to the Capitol, Katniss reflects on the geographical history of Panem: "*In school, they tell us the Capitol was built in a place once called the Rockies. District 12 was in a region known as Appalachia.*" (p. 41). This shows how the novel connects its fictional world to real-world geography, helping readers understand the formation of Panem's dystopian setting.

Intertextually, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins relates closely to George Orwell's *1984*, as both explore themes of control, authority, and oppression. In *1984*, Orwell presents an authoritarian regime (Big Brother) that controls information, rewrites history, and monitors citizens through surveillance and propaganda.

Similarly, in *The Hunger Games*, the Capitol maintains power over the districts through strict control, manipulation of information, and media propaganda. The Games themselves are presented as entertainment, hiding their violent and oppressive reality, much like how *1984* shows distorted truth through state-controlled messaging such as "war is peace" and "freedom is slavery."

Both texts highlight how ruling powers manipulate truth to maintain dominance, create fear, and ensure obedience. In this way, *The Hunger Games* expands on the dystopian ideas found in *1984* by showing similar mechanisms of control in a different narrative context.

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