

Stylistic Comparison of the Dialogues between Oppressors and the Oppressed in Harold Pinter's Mountain Language

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the stylistic variations of the dialogues between oppressor and the oppressed in Harold Pinter's Mountain Language. Whether via compliance or opposition, language plays a vital role in expressing power dynamics. One main goal is to find and investigate the stylistic differences of their dialogues and this is done to investigate the functions of silence, forceful language, and interruptions as well as to show how language either supports or questions power. The methodological approaches of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Pragmatics, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and Stylistic Analysis help to achieve the goals. Some conversations are marked by a focus on syntax, vocabulary, speech actions, turn-taking patterns, transitivity, emotion, and modality. The results show that oppressors assert their power by means of high modality, direct verbal actions, and urgent formulations. Oppressed people often use low modality, ellipses, and bad grammar to express their unhappiness against oppression.

Key Words: *Stylistic Comparison, Oppressors, Oppressed*

1. Introduction

Language is not only considered as significant means of communication but a powerful instrument for establishing, maintaining, and challenging power relations. In oppressive regimes, language often serves as a mechanism of control, where the dominant group imposes restrictions on the language of the subjugated group to reinforce authority and silence dissent. Harold Pinter's play *Mountain Language* (1988) critically explores this phenomenon by depicting a totalitarian regime that bans the language of a marginalised community. Through its minimalist yet highly charged dialogue, the play illustrates the oppression of linguistic identity and the psychological consequences of silencing a people.

Harold Pinter (1930-2008) is a British playwright, screenwriter, actor and director. He is a Nobel Prize winner and is considered the most influential modern British dramatist best known for his dramas including *The Birthday Party* (1957), *The Homecoming* (1964) and *Mountain Language* (1988). Pinter, known for his "comedies of menace" and political theatre, employs distinct linguistic patterns to differentiate between the oppressors (guards, officials) and the oppressed (prisoners, women, and old men). His stylistic choices—such as fragmented dialogue, silences, interruptions, and coercive speech—highlight how language can be manipulated to assert dominance and suppress resistance. By analysing these stylistic elements, this study aims to uncover the underlying power structures embedded in dialogue, revealing the broader socio-political implications of linguistic control.

The oppressors in *Mountain Language* represent the bureaucratic authority of that society. They use dehumanizing, rude and commanding language while communicating with the oppressed. They lack emotional attachments towards the minorities and their dialogues are characterized by an emphasis on command, showcasing the mechanical brutality of totalitarianism. For example, in a scene in the play, a prisoner guard asks to a prisoner's wife: "*Your language is dead. It is*

forbidden. It is not permitted.”(Pinter). This repetition of synonyms highlights the irrefutable nature of regime’s attitude, showing the oppressors’ struggle to control the every aspect of communication.

On the other hands, the language and dialogues of the oppressed are characterized by silence and suppression, having broken sentences and lack of formal expression. But still their use of dialogues expresses resistance and an act of defiance against the authority. The women’s struggle to talk with their loved ones who are the victims of dictator regime, uncover that how language can be a resistive force even when it is controlled. As in a scene, when an old woman, who is silenced, uses her body language to communicate with her son. This scene highlights how even non-verbal language can serve as a form of resilience challenging the oppressor’s cruelty and authority. Michael Billington (1996), a British author and an authorized biographer of Harold Pinter, argues that Pinter’s use of silences in the oppressed characters’ dialogues “function as an indictment of the ways in which power silences the marginalized.”

Stylistics analysis and comparison of these dialogues also uncovers the aspect of language as an oppressive tool. Based on Norman Fairclough’s theories of critical discourse analysis, this research focuses on how Pinter has reflected oppressors’ totalitarian control through their speech while also symbolizing the oppressed characters as linguistic resistant against the authority. Fairclough’s concept of “power behind discourse” is applicable here. This is because it reflects that how the language of oppressors is rooted in broader aspects of dominance.

By exploring the themes of power, silence and resistance, this research highlights the broader discourse on the role of politics in language and literature. Moreover, it also sets Pinter’s literary works within the political theatre of 20th century, reflecting the views that how *Mountain Language* draws different questions relating to human rights, identity and linguistics imperialism. There are many studies done on Harold Pinter’s *Mountain Language*. The research paper “Your Language is Forbidden: Language Negation as Political Oppression in Pinter’s *Mountain Language*” by Goodspeed, A. (2019) looks thoroughly at the complex web of connections between political power and linguistic oppression in Mountain language. He argues that Pinter's depiction of a state prohibiting the "mountain language" is a powerful metaphor for real conditions in which authoritarian governments use language to suppress other voices. Goodspeed argues that this imposed linguistic denial robs the oppressed of their cultural identity as well as their autonomy. He investigates the use of language between oppressors and the oppressed in the play and argues that language has played a significant impact in dominating authority as well as a tool of resistance. The use of their own language by mountain people shows their resistance and strength against the oppressors and the totalitarian authority. Goodspeed has greatly emphasised the play’s language. He investigates that Pinter’s use of language in the play reflects oppressors attempt to downgrade and destroy the language and identity of the minority groups. By analysing and interpreting play’s language and features, Goodspeed’s article portrays the implementation of bureaucratic regime of the oppressors on the mountain people. Key topics of the paper include systemic oppression, cultural identity erasure, and personal dehumanisation.

“The Unquiet Pedagogy of Harold Pinter’s *Mountain Language*: Topical Lessons from India” is an article by Chandran, K. N. (2024) which investigates his various viewpoints on *Mountain Language* and how the play is related with social, political and economical situations of India. He examines that Mountain Language holds an exclusive discussions on the themes of power, identity and language suppression. Chandran’s analysis provokes the thinking of the readers to question

against their traditional norms and their ignorance. He says that by motivating students about their language and identity have meaningful social, linguistic and political impacts.

Saunders, J. (2019) demonstrates in "Language Performing Violence and Violence Performed on Language: A Political Lesson in Harold Pinter's *One for the Road*, *Mountain Language*, *The New World Order* and *The Pres and an Officer*" that language functions both as a tool for aggression and as a recipient of harm. Saunders states that Pinter shows through his work how political tyranny emerges from language manipulation and deterioration which blocks critical thought and democratic discourse. Saunders states that the lack of language in these plays demonstrates ignorance. Through purposeful language reduction, authoritarian governments show their ability to control people by suppressing criticism through language. Through his work, Pinter shows authoritarian governments use language to suppress free speech by emphasising the fractured nature of language. Saunders links Trump's vocabulary to Pinter's political theory about linguistic violence in political discourse. According to Saunders, Pinter's plays function as warnings about political discourse disrespect and democracy needs linguistic integrity to survive. Saunders believes this research shows Pinter's desire to use language as a tool for political intervention against linguistic exploitation. Through her research, Saunders demonstrates how truthful language functions within effective democratic institutions to reveal power structures and the importance of prudent political communication.

Vairavan, C. (2018) has composed the article "A Cultural Materialistic Approach to Harold Pinter's *Mountain Language*". Using Raymond Williams' ideas, Vairavan examines *Mountain Language* from a cultural materialist perspective, investigating the vocabulary and power symbols of the play. Vairavan contends that the military order prohibiting the mountain people's language was a repressive tool aimed to demonstrate how both the oppressors and the oppressed used language. The military used the official language to try to dominate and standardise the mountain people; the text calls this a show of dominance. The mountain people demonstrate their determination through their refusal to abandon their native language as a symbol of cultural preservation against language extinction. Through his research, Vairavan demonstrates how Pinter critiques authoritarian language tactics because they function as weapons to eliminate personal identity and social connections between people.

Švachová, V. (2009) article "Language as a Means of Power in Harold Pinter's Drama" examines in her dissertation how Pinter uses language to generate power and control. Characters may utilise language to control, frighten, and dominate others as seen in plays like *No Man's Land* and *The Birthday Party*. One such is Goldberg and McCann's *The Birthday Party*'s unclear, repeated language. This shows how linguistic techniques could be used as kinds of psychological pressure. Implying that language is more than just a medium of expression, Švachová emphasises how Pinter exposes power conflicts in daily conversation, hence implying control and opposition in that domain. From this perspective, Pinter's theatrical works highlight the intricate interplay between power and words.

From a posthuman perspective, this article "Horror and Terror in Harold Pinter's *Mountain Language*: A Posthuman Approach" by Nemati Ziarati, A., & Javidshad, M. (2021) analyses the play *Mountain Language* for its treatment of fear and its deconstruction of conventional ideas of power and humanity. According to the report, Pinter's depiction of a dystopian society in which the suppression of language results in the loss of identity and agency creates an existential dread. By taking a posthuman stance in his works, which exposes a society where injustice from all

sources diminishes people to nameless, helpless corpses, Pinter questions the anthropocentric perspective. For example, the Elderly Woman's decision to remain silent is seen as a deliberate act of defiance against the totalitarian government; this suggests that her power is in her silent resistance. El-Sawy (2019) claims Pinter purposely adds pauses and silences that let the audience see the subtle power dynamics and tensions in the play, hence breaking from conventional speaking patterns. This beautiful quietness questions our dependence on spoken language itself and asks more than just words to express the many political and emotional undercurrents at work. Saeed, Y., & Muhammed, A. A. (2019)'s article "Dysfunctional Semantic Role of Language in Literary Texts: A Case Study on Harold Pinter's *Mountain Language*" investigates Pinter's *Mountain Language* for semantic dysfunction in order to show how political and social violence hinders effective communication. The writers claim that language and literature are one entity since they constantly change one another's operating capacity. By showing how people violate Grice's maxims, the authors use them to analyse the dialogues in the play and show how this causes confusion and communication failure. The authorities' ban on mountain language creates a conceptual void that makes the characters' native language unworkable and destroys their cultural identity. The imposed language restriction emphasises how language interacts with political control and oppression, therefore serving as a weapon of power.

Watt, S. (2009)'s article "Things, Voices, Events: Harold Pinter's *Mountain Language* as Testamental Text" conducts a detailed analysis of *Mountain Language* as a foundational text which demonstrates how language and cultural suppression occur. Through the work of Alain Badiou, Bill Brown and Cary Wolfe, Watt demonstrates how totalitarian governments use language to suppress their citizens. According to Watt, the play demonstrates how the prohibition of "mountain language" leads to the destruction of indigenous identities while the government gains complete control. Watt demonstrates cultural disintegration's extensive consequences through his analysis of character interactions under the dehumanising conditions of language restrictions. The perspective demonstrates how language continues to matter after years of captivity while revealing the healing potential for oppressed people.

Ouali, F. (2015)'s article "A Discourse-Pragmatic Oriented Approach to Pinter's Drama: *Trouble in the Works, Betrayal, and Mountain Language*" examines the role of language in specific social situations in Pinter's plays, especially *Mountain Language*, through the theories of pragmatics and discourse analysis. The author studies how characters employ language to accomplish their goals while violating Grice's cooperative principles and employing politeness strategies as tools of power and control. The authoritarian administration has employed the ban on mountain language as a tool to dominate the oppressed population by removing their cultural heritage and linguistic freedom. The research demonstrates how characters employ non-verbal communication and language resistance to maintain their presence and agency despite language barriers. The discourse-pragmatic approach reveals the relationship between language and power structures as well as social systems in Pinter's entire body of work.

The research topic "Stylistic comparison of Dialogues between Oppressors and the Oppressed in Harold Pinter's *Mountain Language*" presents a contrast between the language of oppressors which is authoritative and structured, and the oppressed which is silenced, fragmented and desolate in Harold Pinter's *Mountain Language*. This also studies the tone, word choice, structure and other stylistic elements of the dialogues between the two groups. Many other writers and critics provide theoretical frameworks to underscore the oppression, silence, horror, power, control and resistance

portrayed in play's language by Harold Pinter. But this topic provides broader lens to study the politics of silence and linguistic dominance in modern theatre.

2. Methodology

Aim of this study:

The research aims to examine the dialogues between oppressors and the oppressed stylistically, reflecting the role of language as a weapon of oppression and resistance.

Theoretical Framework

Analytical Framework

Four key analytical frameworks will be employed to provide a comprehensive study of the dialogues in Mountain Language:

Stylistic Analysis: The stylistic analysis of the dialogues focuses on the linguistic elements which include vocabulary selection, sentence structure and rhetorical techniques. The analysis will reveal the different communication patterns between the oppressors and the oppressed through this method. **Discourse Analysis:** Discourse analysis investigates how language is used in interaction and how power relations are embedded within communication. By analysing speech patterns, discourse markers, and politeness strategies, this approach will uncover how language serves as an ideological tool in Mountain Language. **Pragmatic Analysis:** Pragmatics focuses on the implied meanings and functions of speech acts in the play. This section will determine how the performative aspects of language contribute to power struggles and subjugation in the play.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL): Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday) provides a framework for analysing language in relation to its social function. This approach will reveal how linguistic structures in Mountain Language reflect the underlying power imbalances within the play's social setting.

Data Collection

Harold Pinter's Mountain Language is examined as the primary text of this research. The secondary sources include books, articles and criticism of different literary scholars on Pinter's works. The research will analyse specific dialogues which demonstrate the power relations between oppressors and oppressed groups through repeated linguistic patterns, speech actions and stylistic elements that reinforce the play's themes.

Data Preparation:

The data has been collected and copied into a text file and the dialogues are analysed and categorised.

Ethical Consideration:

The dialogues are analysed without any discrimination and prejudice.

3. Analysis and Results

This section presents the analysis and findings of the research, according to the structured framework of pragmatics, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), discourse analysis, and stylistic analysis. Employing each paradigm, we examine how Harold Pinter's Mountain vocabulary contrasts the vocabulary of the oppressors with that of the oppressed. This research analyses key interactions, revealing the play's linguistic potency, mechanisms of resistance, and systems of dehumanisation.

3.1 Stylistic Analysis of the Dialogues

Stylistic analysis investigates how the lexical choices, syntax, and rhetorical features are presented in the speech of the oppressors and the oppressed.

Lexical Choices and Semantic Contrast: The language of the oppressors is harsh, imperative, and dehumanising which is often characterised by monosyllabic, blunt words that establish authority. On the other hands, the language of the oppressed characters is hesitant, fragmented which avoids direct confrontation.

Example: Oppressor: *"Your language is forbidden."*

Oppressed: *"But... I... my mother..."*

The oppressor's terse, commanding statement claims authority; the victim's fragmentary reply shows doubt and dread. Often laced with orders, bans and insults, oppressors' rhetoric supports their supremacy.

Sentence Structure and Syntax: **Oppressors** are often forceful in tone, short, direct, and declarative words: (e.g., "Do not speak!"). **Oppressed** use long, uncertain, and unfinished statements frequently interrupted by fear or repression define the oppressed. The oppressors' strict language patterns contrast with the shattered syntax of the downtrodden, therefore reflecting their loss of control.

Use of Repetition and Silence: Often to strengthen control, the oppressors repeat orders like *"You cannot speak your language."* Either as a forced reaction or a form of defiance, the oppressed people remains quiet. Pinter's use of pauses and ellipses in the speech of oppressed characters reveals their battle to express themselves under tyranny

Findings: The stylistic study reveals that although the oppressed utilise broken speech and silence as survival tactics, the oppressors use linguistic violence to establish authority, hence weaponising language in the drama.

3.2 Discourse Analysis: Power Dynamics and Linguistic Oppression

Discourse analysis in Mountain Language emphasises how language shapes and preserves power relations.

Power Asymmetry in Dialogues: Power is ingrained in who talks, how they speak, and who is silenced. The play's discourse framework portrays the oppressors as dominating speakers and the downtrodden as passive receivers of linguistic limitations. The oppressors often interrupt the oppressed, so denying them the opportunity to voice their ideas. Often, the oppressed individuals are referred to as "you people" instead than by real names.

Example:

Officer: *"You. You people don't belong here."*

Woman: *"But my husband—"*

Officer (interrupts): *"No talking!"*

Discursive Strategies of Resistance: Though muted, the victimised figures use nonverbal resistance including:

Not answering: Ignoring the oppressors' involvement.

Deliberate quiet: Employing silence as passive resistance.

In some cases, repressed people resist by whispering or repeating illegal phrases, hence defying authorities.

Findings: Discourse analysis shows that language oppression is institutionalised in the play's conversations, hence supporting actual power relations in authoritarian countries. But quiet and nonverbal actions are strong but understated means of resistance.

3.3 Pragmatic Analysis: Speech Acts and Meaning Suppression

Focusing on directives, prohibitions, and non-verbal communication, pragmatic analysis investigates how speech acts operate in the play.

Speech Act Theory in Oppressive Language: Using Austin and Searle's Speech Act Theory, the oppressors predominantly use:

Directives (Commands): "*Do not speak.*" (ordering)

Declarations (Banning Language): "*Your language is dead.*" (enforcing prohibition)

Threats and Warnings: "*If you speak again, there will be consequences.*"

These verbal actions are performative; hence they exercise power only by being said. By contrast, the oppressed characters are not permitted to make pronouncements or express agency, therefore their illocutionary power (capacity to carry out speech actions) is limited.

The Role of Silence and Implicature: Oppressed people communicate unspoken messages by means of silence as an implicature. The oppressors either misread or ignore their silence, hence supporting unequal communication.

For instance: Guard: "*Do you understand?*" (Silence from the oppressed character)

Guard: "*I said do you understand?*" (Continued silence, implying resistance rather than incomprehension)

Findings: Pragmatic study emphasises how the silencing of speech is a kind of power and how the marginalised create other means to express defiance by means of silence and non-verbal signals

3.4 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL): Language as Social Power

SFL looks at Mountain Language's ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions.

Ideational Function: Language Reflecting Power Structures: Language lets the oppressors shape reality—"Your language does not exist"—thereby shaping the way the oppressed see them. The oppressed struggle to maintain their linguistic identity, symbolising the conflict between imposed and self-determined identity.

Interpersonal Function in Controlling Relationships through Language: Imperatives and declaratives are used by the oppressors to assert control. The oppressed use interrogatives and hesitations, indicating their marginalised position.

Example: Oppressor: "*Your language is forbidden.*" (Declarative)

Oppressed: "*Why? We have always spoken it...*" (Interrogative, expressing confusion and resistance)

Textual Function of Linguistic Cohesion in Oppression: Repetition of commands ("No talking.") reinforces the oppressors' control. Fragmentation in oppressed speech reflects their disempowerment.

Findings: SFL study verifies that *Mountain Language's* language is shaped to organise power; linguistic oppression results in social and psychological control.

3.5 Key Findings of the Study

1. The play's language is a tool of oppression.

Oppressors regulate speech by means of orders, threats, and bans.

Through broken speech, silence, and resistance tactics, the downtrodden fight against this domination.

2. Silence is a strong weapon of resistance, not just lack of words.

The oppressed people exert agency by means of non-verbal resistance.

3. Speech actions and discourse frameworks reflect actual suppression of minority language.

The play mainly highlights the dominance of authoritarian regime through language suppression of minority groups.

4. This multi-layered suppression is exposed through stylistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and SFL.

3.6 Discussion

The themes of power, silence, resistance, identity and language suppression are explored in Harold Pinter's well-known play, *Mountain Language*. The research frameworks such as stylistic analysis, discourse analysis, pragmatics and systemic functional linguistics (SFL) are used to evaluate the key findings of the previous chapters in discussion chapter. The analysis of the dialogues between oppressors and oppressed in the play reflects how Pinter's linguistic choices function beyond style. Both oppressors and the oppressed represent and oppose totalitarian systems where oppressors use language to control people and suppress the identities of the oppressed.

The linguistic and stylistic features of the dialogues in *Mountain Language* reflect a contrast between oppressors and the oppressed. The language of the oppressors is characterised by the commanding tone, declarative mood and imperative structures. Their dialogues are short having no particular modal verbs. This also represents their authority and rule. Their use of dialogues like "Your language is forbidden" or "She must not speak" represents their rigid and declarative attitude towards the oppressed. Short's (1996) concept of stylistics is also linked with these stylistic choices. This refers to the linking of linguistic forms with their ideological functions.

While on the other hands, language of the oppressed is reluctant, fragmented and is grammatically defective. This shows psychological uncertainty and sense of fear among the oppressed. Their artistic uncertainties reflect the consequences of systematic suppression. The disjointed speech, hesitations, and lack of confidence indicate internalised oppression. Furthermore, the feminine characters (specifically the elderly lady and the prisoner's spouse) employ a tone that is emotionally evocative but subdued. This stylistic difference reflects the verbal disparity arising from socio-political injustice which demonstrates how stylistics may expose power asymmetries inherent in theatrical interactions.

Discourse analysis also examines the mechanisms of power in interactional structures. Oppressors use physical as well as linguistic violence to silence, speak over and interrupt the oppressed. According to Fairclough's (1989) theory of critical discourse analysis, language is a social practice that reproduces power. In *Mountain Language*, the structure of the discourse itself performs violence.

Notably, the military guard and the officer exercise discourse dominance through presupposition and directive illocutions, positioning themselves as epistemic authorities. They use discourse strategies that leave no room for negotiation or dissent. This is evident when the officer says: "There is no such language," erasing the linguistic and cultural identity of the oppressed with a simple declarative lie—an act of verbal colonisation.

Conversely, the oppressed characters often struggle to initiate or maintain turns. Their discourse reflects Gricean violations of quantity and relevance, not due to incompetence but imposed limitations. Their silences, monosyllabic responses, and evasion are strategic in nature. As Wodak (1996) argues, discourse is shaped by institutional power relations, and in *Mountain Language*, the state's presence is deeply entrenched in every conversational turn.

Pragmatics allows for a closer look at the intended and implied meanings behind utterances. Drawing upon Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) speech act theories, this study observes that

most of the oppressors' speech acts are directive and commissive, functioning to enforce compliance. These speech acts do not merely convey information—they execute orders. The illocutionary force of statements such as “She is not allowed to speak” results in perlocutionary effects of fear, silence, and suppression.

The oppressed, however, engage in what Levinson (1983) calls “pragmatic resistance.” Even when they are silent or non-cooperative, they communicate subversion. For instance, the prisoner's wife's silent gaze carries implicatures that defy domination. The use of non-verbal communication, such as pauses, eye contact, and bodily presence, becomes a speech act of resistance. These pragmatic elements align with Butler's (1997) idea of performativity, wherein silence itself can be a form of protest.

Furthermore, pragmatics highlights how power alters the felicity conditions of speech acts. The same utterance, when made by an oppressor, is performative; but when attempted by the oppressed, it lacks institutional force. This asymmetry illustrates the play's central argument: language is not neutral—it is embedded in structures of legitimacy and power.

From an SFL perspective, language in *Mountain Language* is used to construct social reality and reinforce power hierarchies. The ideational function, which represents experience, is hijacked by the oppressors to construct an alternative reality where the native language is declared nonexistent. Their declaratives are not just personal beliefs—they become institutional truths. This aligns with Halliday's (1978) claim that language shapes how people experience the world.

The interpersonal metafunction in the oppressors' speech reveals their consistent use of high modality, asserting authority and leaving no room for ambiguity. Their speech presents no subjective stance or negotiation, e.g., “It is not allowed,” not “I think it should not be allowed.” This modality choice underscores the performative force of authoritarian language.

On the other hand, the oppressed speak with low modality and use interrogatives or declaratives with epistemic hedges, showing reduced confidence and power. This reflects their marginalised position in the linguistic hierarchy of the play. Their speech is emotionally and socially constrained by the fear of reprisal. SFL thus reveals how language encodes the power to act, and in *Mountain Language*, only one group possesses this powerfully.

At its core, *Mountain Language* thematises the relationship between language and identity. When language is forbidden, it is not only communication that is lost, but memory, heritage, and personhood. The refusal to allow the use of “mountain language” symbolises the erasure of a people. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) articulates, language is the carrier of culture, and its denial is the denial of existence.

Yet the oppressed in the play do not surrender their identity. Their fragmented utterances, silences, and non-verbal expressions embody a silent revolution. Despite brutal institutional attempts at linguistic erasure, *Mountain Language* dramatises the human spirit's resilience. The refusal to completely conform to the oppressor's discourse is, in itself, a reclaiming of agency.

This discussion also acknowledges the interdisciplinary resonance of the findings. From a sociolinguistic perspective, *Mountain Language* exemplifies how real-world language policies—such as those affecting the Kurds in Turkey or the Uyghurs in China—can be critiqued through literature. From a postcolonial lens, the play becomes an allegory of linguistic imperialism, where the coloniser invalidates the voice of the colonised. Ethically, Pinter's play demands the audience to confront their role in systems of oppression. The language of the oppressors is not foreign. It is recognisable in bureaucratic speech, media discourse, and legal decrees.

4. Conclusion

This study aims to explore the stylistic and linguistic dimensions and choices in Harold Pinter's *Mountain Language*. It focuses specifically on the dialogues between the oppressors and the oppressed. How language is used as a tool to dominate power and how the silence represents resistance of the oppressed, are uncovered in this research paper. Stylistic analysis, pragmatics, critical discourse analysis, and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) are employed in this study. The stylistic analysis reflects that the dialogues of the oppressors represent commanding tones, have declarative mood and have formalised structures. They use dehumanising, rude and commanding language while communicating with the oppressed. They lack emotional attachments towards the minorities and their dialogues are characterised by an emphasis on command, showcasing the mechanical brutality of totalitarianism.

On the other hands, the oppressed characters use fragmented language. They are hesitated and silent. Their speech is limited in terms of vocabulary as well as structurally empowered. This reflects their suppression and muted existence under authoritarian regime. Their speech patterns and linguistic choices reflect their resistance through silence and broken language.

Discourse analysis provides a clear investigation on strategic policies of totalitarian regime to dominate power through linguistic control. Continuous verbal violence, interruptions and immoral questioning from guards toward women reflect their authoritative control over minority group. The study finds that conversational turns are asymmetrical: the oppressors hold the floor, demand answers, and shift topics without allowing the oppressed any discursive freedom.

Pragmatic analysis further shows that speech acts by the oppressors served primarily illocutionary functions—commands, threats, and prohibitions—whereas those of the oppressed are limited to perlocutionary acts that often went unheard or unacknowledged. For instance, when Sara speaks in her native language, her attempt to communicate is immediately shut down by the authorities. This is not just a denial of language but a denial of humanity. The study highlights how silence itself functions pragmatically as a response strategy when verbal expression is not only futile but dangerous.

Through the lens of Systemic Functional Linguistics, the dialogues are interpreted in terms of their ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. The guards speak language which is characterised by dominance, rules, and punishment. Their dialogues lack emotions and are loaded with commanding tones. They try to suppress the oppressed with their authoritative linguistic choices. But the oppressed remain silent and resisting against the authority.

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