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Language Diversity in Al Araj's "*The Disaster of the Seventh Night after the Thousand*"

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Language Diversity in Al Araj's "*The Disaster of the Seventh Night after the Thousand*"

Dr. Hanane Rabahi [α], Dr. Nadia Ghounane [σ] & Prof. Ilhem Serir Mortad [ρ]

Abstract- The effectiveness of a literary text is firstly determined by its language and how it succeeds in conveying the author's message to his readers about the socio-cultural background of a given society in an imaginative way through the use of many narrative techniques. In fact, some writers tend even to employ different languages or varieties at both artistic and technical levels in order to provide realism. Thus, the main purpose of the current research paper is to explore language diversity and its effects on the literary text. In this regard, an investigation of Wasini Al Araj's "*The Disaster of the Seventh Night after the Thousand*" was made, when a thorough examination was held with the help of some approaches in sociolinguistics and literature. To this end, the findings revealed that Al Araj succeeded in bringing different languages and varieties within the novel. Stated differently, it was found that the use of linguistic diversity provides both historical and social accuracy and realises realism through the introduction of myths and oral tales.

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I. Introduction

Language has taken a paramount position as a means of daily communication between human beings. It has also been recognised as an essential medium of literary traditions. Henceforth, it is of eminent importance to state that language is the first tool that defines the bases of the literary text. This means that the ideas and events of a given story are formed through a good literary discourse. In another way, language represents and reflects the traditions of a given society and makes it real, although it is represented in a fictional work.

In addition, exploring the use of sexual discourse has become an important ingredient in the field of sociolinguistics or linguistics on one hand, and discourse analysis on another. Indeed, from a sociolinguistic point of view, literature has been seen as a rich field to search not only the social construct of a given society, but also how this construct is rooted in its individuals' ideas, thereby how it is built in an imaginary work. Besides, what has enhanced scholars of this field is that a literary work represents also the norms, and traditions of these societies, which in return consider literature as a vital component that sheds light on its walls, and reflects the thoughts of its individuals at a given point in time.

More importantly, sociolinguists have also been attracted towards linguistic diversity in literary texts or the use of different languages which in term reflect cultural diversity of a given society. This means that the writer provides an account about the existing languages or varieties of the same language in his society's cultural traditions and represents in turn its cultural diversity.

Another important idea that should be added in this regard is that the literary text transmits an indirect message about a social conflict existing in a society on one hand and the linguistic and cultural diversity in addition to the folk tales, oral traditions and poems that the writer includes within his literary text to provide a limelight or to draw a panoramic picture about his society.

To this end, the choice embarking upon this research work sprang from the fact that Algerian literature is rich in literary traditions that employ many languages or varieties in novels such as the work of Wassini Al Araj, Rachid Boujadra and Assia Djabar. Hence, the current research paper attempts to shed light on how the linguistic diversity of some literary texts mainly has reflected some realities about the Algerian society. It also aims at identifying some linguistic and writing techniques adopted by Al Araj in the novel under scrutiny. It also implies to take into consideration some literary theories in resolving linguistic diversity in the novel. Herewith, the research work argues for a rational way that helps in analysing literary discourse and the use of different languages or varieties of the same language in literary texts from a sociolinguistic point of view. From the foregoing discussion, our research enquiries fall on the ensuing research questions which are presented as follows:

1. How does Al Araj represent linguistic diversity in his novel?
2. What are the reasons that push Al Araj to rely on language diversity in his novel?
3. What are the effects of employing linguistic diversity on a literary text?

Taking into consideration the above research questions, the following hypotheses can be put forward:

1. Language has taken an indelible position in the novel and Al Araj succeeds in presenting and organising language diversity. Hence, improving the

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literary discourse through the introduction of many languages has given the novel a unique literary technique.

2. Al Araj wants to introduce new literary techniques to the literary traditions of the Algerian novel in particular and Arabic literature in general.
3. Al Araj succeeds in improving the Algerian novel through introducing new narrative techniques inspired from "*Thousand and One Nights*".

Henceforth, the importance of this study lies on finding ways to explore language diversity in literary texts, especially those who reflect both language and cultural diversity.

II. Review of the Related Literature

a) A Linguistic Approach to Literary Discourse

Exploring the use of language in literature or literary language has attracted more scholarship especially in the fields of discourse analysis and sociolinguistics, even though many critics regard it as distinct and artificial. In contrast, many researchers see it as "emotional, rhetorical, rhythmical, deviant, aesthetic, expressive, symbolic, fictional and, therefore, sublime and superior to non-literary language" (Ghazala, 2014, p. 04). This fact opens the researchers' appetite to investigate the features that characterise literary discourse.

Admittedly, studying the quality of a literary language goes hand in hand with what is called 'genre', i.e., the structure of the literary text has also taken an eminent importance in exploring its language. This means that there are many components that build the literary text including culture which constitutes "the social reality in which the activities of all social participants are implicated" (Mial in Graesser, et al., 2003, p. 325). As a matter of fact, genre theory helps a lot in exploring the cultural components of a given society through its literary works. In other words, genre theory gives "a potentially rich resource for more precise empirical studies to literary reading" (Miall in Graesser et al., 2003, p. 324).

On the other side of the corner, using linguistic theories in investigating a literary discourse has raised much controversy among linguists. In this regard, Lodge (1984a) argues that a literary text cannot be explored from a linguistic point of view since linguistic theories are distinct from literary criticism. In the light of this idea, he states the following:

> The discipline of linguistics will never replace literary criticism, or radically change the bases of its claims to be a useful and meaningful form of human inquiry. It is the essential characteristic of modern linguistics that it claims to be a science. It is the essential characteristic of literature that it concerns values. And values are not amenable to scientific method.

In the light of this tight, the problem, that faces linguists, is how to study a literary text. Some said that it should be explored diachronically and others maintained that they have to take into account "the description of a literary system as a static pattern (synchronic studies)' (Jacobson, 1987, p. 16). Jacobson (1987), further, highlights that linguists are more aware about the structure of the literary text more than its content, i.e., "the important thing about literature is the way in which structure is organized to foreground the substantive elements of the text-in particular, phonology and syntax" (p. 17). Jacobson also states that researchers cannot separate a literary text from linguistic studies and adds that "literary analysis will need a change in linguistics. I insist on this kind of methodological relationship; literary semiotics cannot be considered as simply as followers and a parasitic linguistics" (p. 18). Jacobson claims that in studying a literary text, linguists forget its social aspects. In this vein, Fennell ad Bennett (1991) posit that "the limitations of linguistics can apply only to a narrow definition of the field, one which targets sentence-level grammar and largely ignores the social characteristics of language" (p. 371).

III. Approaches to Study Literary Text

a) Stylistics

According to Mills (1995a), stylistics deals with the use of language in literary texts through employing linguistics to explore the literary discourse. In fact, the mixture of linguistic theories and literary criticism leads to the emergence of linguistic stylistics which investigates the structure and linguistic features of the literary text. In this vein, Simpson (1993) highlights the following:

> A text is a linguistic construct and we process it as a linguistic construct before anything else. And the argument runs, if there is to be any serious attempt to engage with meaning of a particular text, then there must be some concomitant engagement with the language of a text. (p. 3)

Interestingly enough, one can add that linguistic rules help in analysing how the writer reproduces the language or how he mixes a set of varieties to build one language which represents the author's point of view about a given society. Hence, language of a literary text has an interpersonal and a textual function. These functions provide an overview about the writer's experience and his relationship with his characters.

Another important point that should be also added in this respect is that linguistic stylistics investigates how gender features and socio-cultural background affect and influence language use in a given society at a given period of time. It helps in analysing how the author approaches the use of language orthe different varieties of the same language

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in his characters' speech, their age, socio-cultural background or social class.

IV. Critical Discourse Analysis

This field of research is designed to analyse language in literary texts. It also tends to explore dialect use or language diversity in a given literary text. It attempts to study the text in relation to its socio-cultural background. It focuses on studying language of a given period of time in relation to the social happenings of the author's time. In the light of the previous idea, Simpson (1993) highlights the following:

> A critical linguistic analysis will seek to *interpret,* rather than simply *describe* the linguistic structures of texts […] This type of interpretation, extrapolating from textual analysis to questions of political bias encapsulates the critical linguistic method. From this perspective, texts are never regarded as neutral, value-free chunks of language; rather, they are viewed as embodiments of a host of institutional and political discursive practices. (p. 105-106)

Interestingly enough, one can state that critical discourse analysis explores the literary text in relation to society and language in addition to the social ideologies. It also investigates how society is constructed and how language proves its change through times.

V. Methodology

Thus far, this research work relies on a set of methods taken from literary criticism, sociolinguistics in order to explore linguistic diversity in Al Araj's "*The Disaster of the Seventh Night after the Thousand"* taking into account gender and the socio-cultural background of the characters.

Consequently, data were collected from chunks of speech from the characters' communication with each other. Then we shift towards analysing extracted features from the characters' speech, hoping that it may help in identifying the linguistic features that Al Araj adds to his novel.

VI. Results

The researchers had taken the most important points in relation to the research questions stated above. Hence, the analysis demonstrated that the novel introduces the reader to the writing techniques that characterise Al Araj's major works and his ambition towards the inclusion of new methods that may give birth to new literary texts.

Another important point that the findings proved is that the novel under scrutiny gives an overview about how Al Araj represents the socio-cultural background of the society under investigation through providing a critical view. Therefore, Al Araj's technique can be summarised as follows:

1. Al Araj gives an eminent place to language in his novel through concentrating on the narrator who takes the first position in revealing the beauty and importance of using language diversity in order to bring the novel to the modern literary traditions.
2. He also avoids chronological order in citing the social events within the story; as a matter of fact, the novel deserves to be a modern master piece.
3. The results also demonstrate that Al Araj was influenced with the traditional Arabic master piece '*Thousand and one Nights'*
4. The analysis shows that Al Araj introduces a variety of stories and makes them in one unique tale. Thereby, the introduction of many languages, periods of time, narrators and social background gives beauty to the novel's writing techniques.
5. The overuse of many languages and narrative techniques which give the novel a special position as a modern literary text because the set of languages are used as if they represent one discourse.

a) Language Diversity in "The Disaster of the Seventh Night after the Thousand"

Al Araj provides a diversity of languages starting with Arabic language in addition to sexual discourse, while Spanish language is present through poems. Besides, oral traditions have taken the lion-share in the novel. Al Araj introduces popular stories, poems and proverbs in addition religious language. However, it is impossible to site all languages; consequently, the researcher will concentrate on exploring dialectal Arabic and Quranic language.

b) Dialectal Arabic through Popular Songs

The novel under investigation is rich in the use of dialectal Arabic, although Al Araj employs Modern Standard Arabic. In fact, dialectal Arabic is utilised separately between the sentences of Standard Arabic. His aim is to evaluate the dialectal form of Arabic and introduce it to the literary discourse. Unlike many literary works, which tend to present language problems in employing dialectal Arabic, Al Araj's aim is to show that this diaglossic situation is flexible and dialectal Arabic can be also employed in literary discourse.

The use of dialectal Arabic is apparent in oral traditions mainly public proverbs. These proverbs give an overview about Algerian folk tales and proverbs. The central reason behind the introduction of oral traditions to literary discourse is to introduce the reader to Algerian culture. Another important feature which is apparent in the novel is the use of popular songs. The latter makes the literary text distinct to other classical writings. The following table will summarise the most important popular songs from the novel:

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Table 1: Popular songs representing language diversity

Popular Songs in Arabic	Translation in English	Page Number
غني يا عيني غني	Oh my eye sing	185
القلب صار وحيد	The heart becomes alone	185
اه يا وليد	Oh son!	185
شكون باعك في سوق العبيد	Who sold you in slave's market	185
إذا اتاك الزمن بضره	If the time hurts you	324
واشطح للقرد في ملكه	Dance for the monkey in his kingdom	324
وقل يا حسرة على ما مضى	And say Oh regret for the past	324

The song in table 1 reflects a real image about the social background of the characters and their sufferance under domination of the governors. Al Araj integrates these popular songs to Standard Arabic as they are a part of it; hence, providing a panoramic picture about the social problems existing in the story.

c) Dialectal Arabic through Popular Proverbs

Another essential ingredient that Al Araj attempts to integrate to Standard Arabic is the use of dialectal terms taken from the Algerian dialect. His endeavour is to shed light on the Algerian identity through presenting the dialect which has no value in the Algerian classical literary texts. The integration of the Algerian Arabic has made the novel in the list of modern works with special writing techniques. It also helps in making characters and events real; therefore, providing realism which is a component of eminent importance in fictitious works. The following table will present some examples extracted from the novel:

Table 2: Popular proverbs as a form of language diversity

Algerian Arabic	Translation in English	Page Number
دارها بينا ولد لحرام	He deceived us	262
هذا قالهم ارقدوا نغطيمكم	He said sleep I will cover you	466
دير روحك مهبول تشبع كسور	Make yourself a foul, you will eat for free	98

As it is revealed from the analysis, Al Araj tends to introduce the Algerian dialectal Arabic into the novel. What characterises the use of these expressions is that they are parts of the Algerian popular proverbs which constitute an indelible part of daily use in Algerian dialects.

d) Quranic Verses

The novel contains also verses from Quran. The main and central purpose of Al Araj is to enrich language use in the text since he insists on the use of linguistic diversity as a new technique that distinguishes the novel from the classical writings that insist on the use of Standard Arabic. Besides, he attempts to present religion to solve nowadays' issues; therefore, these Quranic verses have been integrated to the literary discourse of the novel in purpose. In fact, the introduction of these verses has a relation with the social and political events of the story. As a matter of fact, it is the events of this literary text that gives a new interpretation to these verses. This means that the story does not take from the cultural heritage, but it employs it to give a new meaning. The following table will introduce from verse employed in the novel:

Table 3: Quranic verses as a form of language diversity

Quranic Verses	Page Number
سيقوم الخلق بين يدي الله صفا، صفا و كل واحد يحمل كتابه من كان مؤمنا سيحمله يمينا ومن كان كافرا سيحمله يسارا.	312
وستصلون نارا ذات لهب و تصعدون جبال جهنم على وجوهكم	291

VII. Conclusion

It is of crucial importance to note that the findings of this research paper are just some recommendations and suggestions for researchers who are interested in exploring language diversity in literary works in general. It is also agreed that the study of linguistic diversity in literary texts helps fields of linguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and literary criticism with theories that explore the use of languages or varieties of the same language in the literary discourse. Besides, the researchers tried to investigate the use of dialectal Arabic through analysing extracts from popular songs and proverbs which have been integrated and modified depending on the themes being presented in the novel. Besides, the current research paper cannot take into account all the issues related to language diversity; henceforth, the researchers concentrated on the use of dialectal Arabic and the integration of Quranic verses which form a unique literacy discourse that makes the novel unique in its style and narrative techniques.

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