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Stylistic Study of Figures of Speech in *Yellow Birds* by Kevin Powers

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Abstract

The present study aims to explore the stylistic features with a special focus on the use of figures of speech in *The Yellow Birds* by Kevin Powers. It examines how these devices such as metaphor, repetition, personification, hyperbole and irony contribute to the novel's structure and affect the narrative. Using Leech and Short's (2007) model, the study adopts a qualitative approach to analyze seven purposively selected extracts. The researcher obtains the data from the novel itself. The analysis reveals that Powers skillfully employs figurative language to convey the psychological disintegration and emotional intensity of war, enriching the poetic texture of the narrative. This study contributes to the field of stylistics by showing how figures of speech function not only as aesthetic devices but also as tools for expressing the profound human experience of war. Particularly in the context

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of war literature, it emphasizes how figures of speech are not just instruments of artistic expression but also vital in conveying the inexpressible elements of human experience.

Keywords: stylistics, metaphor, personification, The Yellow Birds, Kevin Powers

دراسة أسلوبية للمجاز البلاغي في رواية "الطيور الصفراء" بقلم كيفن باورز

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المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف السمات الأسلوبية، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على استخدام المجازات في رواية "الطيور الصفراء" لكيفن باورز. وتبحث الدراسة في كيفية مساهمة هذه الأساليب، كالاستعارة والتكرار والتشخيص والمبالغة **والمفارقة**، في بنية الرواية وتأثيرها على السرد. باستخدام نموذج ليتش وشورت (2007)، تتبنى الدراسة نهجاً نوعياً لتحليل سبعة مقتطفات مختارة بشكل هادف، ويحصل الباحث على البيانات من الرواية نفسها. ويكشف التحليل أن باورز يوظف اللغة المجازية بمهارة للتعبير عن التفكك النفسي والكثافة العاطفية للحرب، مما يثري النسيج الشعري للسرد. وتُسهم هذه الدراسة في مجال الأسلوبية من خلال إظهار كيف تعمل المجازات ليس فقط كأدوات جمالية، بل أيضاً كأدوات للتعبير عن التجربة الإنسانية العميقة للحرب. وفي سياق أدب الحرب تحديداً، تؤكد الدراسة على أن المجازات ليست مجرد أدوات للتعبير الفني، بل هي أيضاً حيوية في نقل عناصر التجربة الإنسانية التي لا تُوصف.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسلوبية، الاستعارة، التجسيد، الطيور الصفراء، كيفن باورز

Introduction

Stylistic is a branch of linguistics which studies the features of situationally distinctive uses (varieties) of language, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the

particular choices made by individual and social groups in their use of language (Crystal, 1980). Leech (1969) claims that stylistic analysis offers a "meeting-ground of both linguistics and literary study" (p.2). He defines stylistics as a field of study that focuses on how language is used in writing. Whereas, Simpson (2004) defines stylistics as a method of interpreting texts that is mostly focused on language, because language has so many different forms, patterns, and levels of linguistic structures. These linguistic structures are an important index of the texts.

Kevin Powers' *The Yellow Birds*, a critically acclaimed war novel, presents a poignant and lyrical depiction of the Iraq war, combining raw realism with poetic intensity. Alongside his coworkers, Sergeant Sterling, Private Daniel Murphy (Murph) and Private John Bartle served in Al Tafari, Iraq, as recounted in the book. The narration retrospectively moves through Iraq, Germany and the United States to portray the context and repercussions of Bartle's experience of war. The title of Kevin Powers' novel inspired from a marching song he learned on maneuvers with the US army. *The Yellow Birds* by Kevin Powers focuses on John Bartle, a soldier who must deal with the horror of the Iraq War and its aftermath. The narrative examines the psychological and physical effects of fighting, the breakdown of morality, and the long-term effects of guilt and loss. The story revolves around Bartle's inability to fulfill his commitment to bring his friend Murph home alive. The novel delves deeply into themes of trauma, detachment, and the dehumanizing effects of war. (LitCharts, 2018)

The current study aims to conduct a stylistic analysis of the figures of speech employed in *The Yellow Birds*, exploring how Powers' rhetorical choices contribute to the novel's thematic development, emotional tone, and narrative style. By examining the linguistic artistry of the text, the study sheds light on the interplay between language and meaning in war literature and demonstrates how stylistic devices function as powerful tools for literary expression and reader engagement.

As an analytical tool, stylistics focuses on the junction of language and literature, revealing how figurative elements shape literary effect. Examining the use of figures of speech within this framework uncovers the psychological depth and narrative structure embedded throughout Powers' prose. Key themes in the novel such as trauma, disorientation, and fragmented memory are illuminated through his vivid and often haunting figurative language, showing how style mirrors subject matter.

Focusing on the use of figures of speech, the current study intends to investigate the stylistic elements of *The Yellow Birds*. It looks at how the structure and emotional effect of the novel are shaped by figurative language including metaphor, personification, irony, contrast, and repetition. At the same time, it considers how these devices shape the meaning and reception of the narrative.

Despite the growing body of work on war literature, few studies have applied stylistic lenses to Powers' novel, especially figures of speech interpretation. This paper, therefore fills a gap by providing a linguistic and literary examination stressing how Powers' approach supports the ideas of fragmentation, alienation, and emotional battle. By focusing on stylistic elements, this research contributes to a more nuanced appreciation of Kevin Powers' narrative technique, and how language itself becomes a vehicle for conveying the experiences of war and its aftermath.

Literature Review

The present study focuses on investigating figures of speech represented through data that is obtained from *The Yellow Birds* by Kevin Powers. This section evaluates the most related previous studies that have been conducted on the novel to justify the need for the present study. For instance, Al-Janabi and Chen wrote a paper in 2019 concentrating on *The Yellow Birds* by Kevin Power's Symbolism. The fundamental emphasis of Al-Janabi and Chen's work is this symbolic framework. They argued that Powers employed literary symbols to challenge the stories of valour and patriotism usually linked with battle as well as to depict the psychological disintegration of soldiers. The study showed how symbols served as a vehicle for expressing emotional depth and unutterable feelings by means of a close reading of the text. The research design used in the study is qualitative. This method is demonstrated by the study's emphasis on close textual analysis and interpretation of literary devices found in Kevin Powers' novel *The Yellow Birds*. Purposive sampling and close reading are employed to examine the novel's literary depiction of war scenes. The picture of *the yellow birds* is especially studied as a sombre metaphor for lost innocence and the ongoing presence of death. The findings of the study indicated that Kevin Powers' *The Yellow Birds* critiques the brutality and psychological destruction brought on by the Iraq War by means of strong symbolism. Al-Janabi and Chen study emphasized that the novel's symbolic components such as the yellow birds, blood imagery, and broken narrative structure serve to mirror the internal suffering of soldiers and the moral ambiguity they felt. The study also shows that these symbols aid in conveying feelings and experiences that are otherwise challenging to articulate using literal language.

Majeed and Abdullah in 2020 study *The Myth of Empty Iraq* in Kevin Powers's *The Yellow Birds* by portraying Iraq as a barren and abstract battleground rather than a live, historical environment. The authors say Powers's book helped build a Western narrative marginalising the Iraqi viewpoint. Focusing on this idea of "empty Iraq," this paper showed a more general trend in post-9/11 American war narratives that emphasized the psychological battles of American soldiers while ignoring the humanity of Iraqis. Emphasizing qualitative techniques, the paper examined literary devices, narrative structure, and thematic material. The researchers of the study did a thorough analysis of the text of the book to found hidden meanings and ideas. The Novel has been deliberately chosen for its rich depiction of the Iraq compact and its relation to the goals of the research.

The analysis criticized the symbolic silence of the people and location at the core of the conflict and underlines the absence of Iraqi voices in the book. Viewed in this way, the study pushes academics and readers to rethink how literature could reflect, support, or oppose dominant ideas.

Raihanah's 2022 study examined Powers' post-heroism portrayal in reference to the Second Gulf War. The paper examined how Powers drew on his experience as a U.S. Army machine gunner. It looked at the protagonist's struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder. The use of symbolic imagery to illustrate the horrors of war, and the broader transition from idealised heroes to a more realistic, humanised portrayal of modern combat. Study findings indicated that, instead of praising war, the book emphasized the psychological suffering, moral difficulty, and emotional estrangement suffered by soldiers. While the narrative illustrates how troops priorities survival over honour, images of death and ruin emphasize the futility of war. The paper finds that Powers's work criticized the romanticised perspective of war by showing it as a cause of great psychological pain and moral uncertainty.

Another important study conducted by Al Khazraji 2024 employed a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the ideological components in Kevin Powers' novel *The Yellow Birds* (2012). The study investigated the author's use of language, metaphors, and narrative structures to show the psychological consequences of war on individuals, the larger society repercussions, and the complicated analysis of power dynamics. Al Khazraji looked at ideological elements in Kevin Powers' *The Yellow Birds* using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). By way of linguistic components, metaphors, and narrative structures, the study revealed how the novel creates meaning around trauma and violence. Drawing on CDA academics including Fairclough and van Dijk, it understood how language mirrors power and ideology. The study also looked at how the first-person narrative of the book affect the reader's comprehension in light of the subjective viewpoint and emotional involvement it promotes. The findings helped one to better grasp the ideological foundations of war literature and how the language shapes meaning in stories of warfare and its aftermath.

Despite this number of studies that has been conducted to investigate *The Yellow Birds* by Kevin Powers through different lenses, little is said on figures of speech in narrative texts, namely Kevin Power's novel *The Yellow Birds* from a stylistic perspective. The previously reviewed studies made efforts to fill a number of gaps. However, these studies were not without limitations. These limitations took various forms, such as the scope of the studies, the investigated type of context, the data analysis and interpretation of the findings. The present study may be considered unique in dealing with *The Yellow Birds* stylistically focusing on figures of speech, Adopting Leech and Short's model (2007). The study adopted this model to analyze different figures of speech such as metaphor, repetition, irony, personification etc. Therefore, to understand how powers manipulate language to

pass his message to the readers the current study analyzes the novel stylistically focusing on figures of speech.

Data Analysis and Discussion

According to Kerlinger (1973), research design is the structure, plan and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance. The present study is classified as qualitative since it focuses on how specific phenomenon of language is utilized in a certain context and under specified conditions. The main aim of the research design is to outline how the researcher obtained answers to the research questions. Research design is defined by Creswell (2013) and Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) as the techniques employed to collect and analyze data so as to convey the results depending on the research questions. Moreover, a good research design guarantees correct data collecting and analysis, hence producing precise outcomes. Qualitative in nature, the research design of the present study uses content analysis techniques to meet its objectives. Qualitative analysis is the process of investigating an issue and creating a thorough knowledge of a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Since the researcher wants to thoroughly examine the data under examination, this kind of research design appears more suitable.

The primary data for this research is selected from the novel *The Yellow Birds* by Kevin Powers (2012). The researcher has bought it from Amazon. (<http://www.amazon.com/>). The instrument used for data collection in this research is the documentation since it is selected from the content or text of the novel. In this approach, selected extracts from the novel are documented and analyzed through content analysis as a technique to be interpreted stylistically. The researcher utilizes strategies such as direct quotation, paraphrasing, and summarizing to capture key elements of the textual data (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). The instrument ensures a systematic approach for collecting relevant excerpts that contribute to the analysis of the figures of speech in *The Yellow Birds* by Kevin Powers.

Purposive sampling is the method of sampling employed in this study, giving the emphasis on the novel's figures of speech. The researcher deliberately chooses extracts from the book that particularly shows how these figures influence the narrative. Purposive sampling allows for the gathering of data directly connected to the study goals and so supports a comprehensive investigation of the research subject (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011).

ET. 1 The war tried to kill us in the spring. As grass greened the plains of Nineveh and the weather warmed, we patrolled the low-slung hills be-yond the cities and towns. We moved over them and through the tall grass on faith, kneading paths into

the windswept growth like pioneers. While we slept, the war rubbed its thousand ribs against the ground in prayer. When we pressed onward through exhaustion, its eyes were white and open in the dark. While we ate, the war fasted, fed by its own deprivation. It made love and gave birth and spread through fire.

The first lines of *The Yellow Birds* provide a disturbing portrayal of conflict. This text establishes the novel's setting, tone, and thematic aspects. It introduces the reader to the war's context as well as the characters' experiences. The mention of Nineveh, an ancient city traditionally connected with war and destruction, has symbolic significance. The structural feature noticed here is the introduction or exposition, which gives important background information to help the reader navigate the narrative. The expert is narrated in the first-person perspective, suggesting a subjective and intimate portrayal of the protagonist's experiences. War cycles and the metaphor of spring with the seasons suggest that there is time progression. The repeated actions of patrolling, sleeping, and eating indicate the dullness of life in the military.

Figuratively, metaphor is used to make an indirect comparison between two objects. The use of metaphors in the provided extract serves many significant purposes. They often carry symbolic significance, helping to reinforce central themes and motifs within the text. In this extract, metaphors such as "We patrolled the low-slung hills... kneading paths into the windswept growth like pioneers." Soldiers are metaphorically compared to pioneers. In this line "The war tried to kill us in the spring", war is personified as an active force seeking to destroy soldiers. The war is given human-like qualities, making it seem alive and almost supernatural. War is depicted as an active entity with intent. Also we can note that the phrase "the war" is repeated many times, personifying war as an active and living entity.

ET. 2 Nothing seemed more natural than someone getting killed. And now, as I reflect on how I felt and behaved as a boy of twenty-one from my position of safety in a warm cabin above a clear stream in the Blue Ridge, I can only tell myself that it was necessary. I needed to continue. And to continue, I had to see the world with clear eyes, to focus on the essential. We only pay attention to rare things, and death was not rare. Rare was the bullet with your name on it, the IED buried just for you. Those were the things we watched for.

These lines explore Bartle's response to the death of translator Malik, who, talking with Bartle moments before he died, showed apathy to the man's death. This clarifies Bartle's indifference to death and his lack of emotions about the man's death. He describes his reaction as an instinctive and required process. Bartle defended his carelessness in that we should only focus on uncommon events. In the setting of war death became something natural, hence death was not unusual. Moreover, Bartle has to control his reaction to the deaths of others since too many feelings would take his attention away from combat and survival, which are the two primary goals of this war. The self-protective must therefore

develop a required survival strategy by growing apathetic to death. War has forced him to concentrate on his own survival and to see the deaths of others as something trivial.

By means of figures of speech including personification, contrast, metaphors, and exaggeration, the writer wishes to deepen the emotional resonance and depth of the text in several ways. The phrase "Nothing seemed more natural than someone getting killed" is an example of hyperbole since it overstates the notion that death has become a normal and anticipated part of life. Most individuals, in fact, do not view death as a normal, daily event. Still, the narrator's experience, probably in a combat zone, has altered his viewpoint to the point that death seems as natural as any other aspect of existence. He sees death as an inevitable reality, something as normal as breathing or eating rather than surprising or tragic. "The bullet with your name on it" coupled with "the IED buried just for you," Personifying the violence makes it seem intentional and personal for the writer. He emphasizes the contrast between past and present by contrasting the warm, tranquil environment of the Blue Ridge with the bitter memories of war.

ET.3 "And you're gonna look out for him, right?" she asked. "Um, yes, ma'am." And Daniel, he's doing a good job?" Yes, ma'am, very good." How the hell should I know, lady? I wanted to say. I barely knew the guy. Stop. Stop asking me questions. I don't want to be accountable. I don't know anything about this. "John, promise me that you'll take care of him." "Of course." Sure, sure, I thought. Now you reassure me and I'll go back and go to bed. Nothing's gonna happen to him, right? Promise that you'll bring him home to me promise," I said. "I promise I'll bring him home to you.

This exchange between Bartle and Murph's mother, who is happy to learn that Bartle and Murph are developing close friendship. Though John is hesitant, feeling pressured by the duty to safeguard Murph, she is trying to comfort her son's safety. Though he hardly knows Daniel, his inner monologue reveals how uncomfortable he feels being held accountable for Daniel's protection. Though he would rather not, Bartle finds himself promising Mrs. Murphy that he would bring her son back to her. Sterling subsequently tells Bartle, after hearing this conversation, that he should not have promised that. Bartle returns to his bed after lying in the snow for some time. Bartle looks out at the stars knowing some of them have already died. Feeling as though he is seeing a deception, he thinks everyone in the world is a liar.

Figuratively, repetition is used many times to add emphasis on something. For example, "Stop. Stop asking me questions.". The repetition of "Stop" emphasizes frustration, hesitation and urgency, showing the protagonist's growing impatience. In the following lines "Sure, sure, I thought.". The repetition of "sure" conveys sarcasm and insincerity, reinforcing his reluctance. While in the following lines "I promise," I said. "I promise I'll bring him home to you.". The repetition of "I promise" suggests forced reassurance, possibly foreshadowing doubt or future conflict. The narrator exaggerates in "I don't know

anything about this.". As he likely knows something but exaggerates his ignorance to emphasize his detachment and unwillingness.

ET. 4 At the top of the card, in the appropriate boxes, Murph had written the requested information. His name: Murphy, Daniel; his social security number, his rank; his unit. Below that were other boxes, left blank in case the need arose to record an assortment of information with a quick X in ink. There was a box for Killed in Action, for Missing in Action, and for Wounded in Action (either lightly or seriously). There was a box for Captured, and for Detained, and for Died as a Result of Wounds. There were two sets of Yes or No boxes, one each for Body Recovered and Body Identified. There was a space for witness remarks and for the signature of the commanding officer or medical personnel. Murph had placed an X in the box for Body Recovered, "Just in case," he said when he caught me looking. Both of our cards were signed already.

This extract depicts a death card or casualty card, a sad but typical part of a soldier's battle duty. These cards cover soldier death, injury, capture, or loss. The section underlines Murph finishing his own card with the option "Body Recovered," which he ticks out himself, darkly joking, "Just in case.". These lines reveal the psychological effects of war and how young soldiers are forced to confront their likely deaths so frequently that it becomes routine. Murph's decision to click the "Body Recovered" box is both ironic and unsettling. Combining dark humour and fatalism, he says, "Just in case." Though he tries to downplay it with a joke, he understands death is quite real. The tone is gloomy, melancholy, and somewhat tragic. Though nothing violent is going on right now, a powerful psychological mood persists. This brief excerpt from *The Yellow Birds* is among the most haunting and quietly powerful. This is depicted not by action but by routine—a moment of paperwork ultimately resonating over the rest of the book war's folly and violence. It's a quiet but awful picture of young fighters trying to grasp death while holding onto some sort of control.

Figures of speech in this excerpt interact to increase the emotional tension and hard reality of war. Murph's comment, "Just in case," has irony as he marks the box for "Body Recovered" on his own casualty card, a darkly nonchalant act that sadly predicts his fate. The list of categories "Killed in Action, Missing in Action, Wounded in Action" reflects military formality while underlining how death and suffering are normal and become something natural that happens every moment, even mechanical, thereby reflecting repetition. The clinical tone of the official terminology contrasts with the terrible reality they represent; the dispassionate language sharply opposes the emotional weight they carry. There is also personification in how the card itself appears to assign or foresee fate; it quietly retains the power to pronounce a soldier's end, nearly as if it has a will of its own.

ET. 5 I had become a kind of cripple. They were my friends, right? Why didn't I just wade out to them? What would I say? "Hey, how are you?" they'd say. And I'd

answer, "I feel like I'm being eaten from the inside out and I can't tell anyone what's going on because everyone is so grateful to me all the time and I'll feel like I'm ungrateful or something. Or like I'll give away that I don't deserve anyone's gratitude and really they should all hate me for what I've done but everyone loves me for it and it's driving me crazy." Right.

Bartle at home in Virginia feels as though he cannot share his feelings with anyone. His inability to speak comes from his awareness that revealing how much humiliation and pain war has left him will shock others. Bartle doesn't want to disappoint anyone, nor does he want to burden others with his own suffering. Bartle, who had been so emotionally detached throughout the war, is now experiencing their full force. Their great intensity distinguishes him from others since the people around him are only living their daily lives devoid of suffering unlike he does. Bartle's shame thus proves to be dual; it is not only linked to his wartime conduct but also to his incapacity to inform anybody about them, which drives a circle of guilt. In this situation, when he does not feel secure confiding in anybody, Bartle's main want is to stop feeling awful for what he has done—a wish he will come to accept over the next few years.

This extract employs various figures of speech to expose intense emotional conflict. The narrator in this section exposes great emotional conflict using various figures of speech. The metaphor "I had become a kind of cripple" suggests that the narrator feels fundamentally broken and unable of continuous connection, therefore strongly conveying not a physical hurt but an emotional or psychological immobility. Vividly dramatizing the severity of internal shame and self-hatred, the hyperbole "I feel like I'm being eaten from the inside out" makes the emotional suffering seem nearly physically intolerable. Running throughout the imagined discourse is irony, in which the narrator envisions a casual talk concealing intolerable emotional burden, hence stressing the ridiculous contrast between surface appearances and buried agony. "Everyone is so grateful to me... everyone loves me," says the narrator, whose public adoration contrasts brutally with his secret self-hatred. The repetition of "everyone" emphasizes how smothered the narrator feels by public acclaim. These forms of speech intensify the reader's awareness of the character's inner isolation by means of a strong contrast between exterior perceptions of heroism and internal experiences of remorse and estrangement. By drawing the reader into the narrator's severe psychological battle, they render the emotional conflict vivid, raw, and relatable. Pulling the reader into the narrator's intense psychological battle, they make the emotional conflict vivid, and relatable.

ET.6 I hadn't talked to Murph in days. No one had. I found the remnants of his casualty feeder card and the letter and picture from his ex-girlfriend in a laundry bucket, soap and all. I put them in my pocket. I started tailing him, trying to figure out what he was up to. I didn't want to believe that I was watching the actions of

someone who was already dead, so I searched for evidence that would contradict this; I searched for some grasp, at least, at life.

This extract reveals the narrator's increasing worry and powerlessness as he witnesses Murph's psychological decline. The sentence "I hadn't talked to Murph in days. No one had. "The remnants of his casualty feeder card and the letter and picture from his ex-girlfriend in a laundry bucket, soap and all" is a very symbolic discovery. In fact, these items, once linked to Murph's identity, relationships, and life outside the war, are now abandoned and half-destroyed. The picture of the "laundry bucket, soap and all" highlights the casual, almost careless manner in which Murph appears to be throwing away not only personal memories but also his own sense of self. His choice to begin "tailing him" like a detective adds a sense of tension and dread, it shows his awareness and his mounting concern that Murph is already past rescuing. The narrator candidly acknowledges his denial: "I didn't want to believe I was seeing the behaviour of someone already dead." Though Murph is still physically alive, this strong statement implies that emotionally and spiritually he has already given up to death. "Searched for evidence" and "grasp at life" reflect the narrator's frantic, almost illogical desire to uncover any indication Murph could still recover, despite his deep-seated suspicion to the contrary.

Powers used many figures of speech in this section to increase the emotional impact of the story. Though he is still physically alive, the concept that Murph is "already dead" greatly emphasizes metaphor; this metaphor suggests that death in combat can be a slow emotional and spiritual process, not just a single instant. The "casualty feeder card," "letter," and "picture" all use a symbolism to represent Murph's lost identity, personal history, and shattered links to civilian life. The usual reference to "laundry bucket, soap and all" brings synecdoche, in which tiny personal items represent the complete breakdown of Murph's interpersonal relationships. Emphasizing the persistence of hope against great despair, the use of the verb "searched" underlines the narrator's frantic and continuous attempts to discover indications of life. There is also a slight irony such as when the narrator searches for proof of life to disprove Murph's spiritual death, he appears to know, deep down, that Murph is already lost. By demonstrating that death in war is not just physical but also psychological, and that grief and helplessness start long before an actual death happens, these figures of speech help to build meaning by building a narrative loaded with sadness, denial, and quiet destruction.

ET.7 He'd been with us for ten months. He was eighteen years old. Now he was anonymous. The picture of him that would appear in the newspaper would be of him in Class A's in basic, a few pimples on his chin. We'd never be able to see him that way again.

These lines capture the sad death of a young soldier in battle. The narrator mourns a fellow soldier who had been with them for 10 months, only 18 years old still almost a boy. His death has robbed him of his identity and turned him into a "anonymous" symbol. The

only publicly available image will be the sanitised, idealised photograph of him in his military uniform from basic training, which starkly contrasts with the reality of his death. Key ideas of the book, the dehumanizing character of war and the loss of innocence are captured in the text. It's a reflection on how young soldiers are remembered, as frozen figures from before the stress of war altered them, not for who they actually were.

Figures of speech in this excerpt increase the emotional impact of the young soldier's death. The sentence "Now he was anonymous" reflects irony by contrasting the intimacy of shared experience with the impersonal character of public mourning. Synecdoche can be found in "a few pimples on his chin," where a small physical detail stands in for the boy's youth and uniqueness. The stark transition from life to death is highlighted by a good use of juxtaposition between "He was eighteen years old" and "Now he was anonymous." Metonymy is present in "the picture... in the newspaper," where the image and publication stand for the way society remembers soldiers—through sanitised, distant depictions. Finally, the repetition of "He was..." serves as anaphora stressing the sudden and tragic change from presence to absence. These devices work together to deepen the themes of loss, identity, and the dehumanizing character of war in the narrative.

Theoretical Frameworks

The study adopts Leech and Short's (2007) model as its analytical framework. This model, introduced in **Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose**, is a comprehensive approach to examining the stylistic features of literary texts. It provides a systematic method for analyzing how language choices contribute to meaning, mood, and narrative style. The model adopted in this study sets off the idea of analyzing selected extracts from the primary source stylistically taking into account lexical categories, context and cohesion, and figures of speech. According to Leech and Short (2007), stylistics endeavors to provide an "understanding of how language is employed and its artistic significance" (p. 11). Leech and Short assume their inferential model as they call it, consisting of a checklist of four headings: lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, context and cohesion. The following figure presents this model:

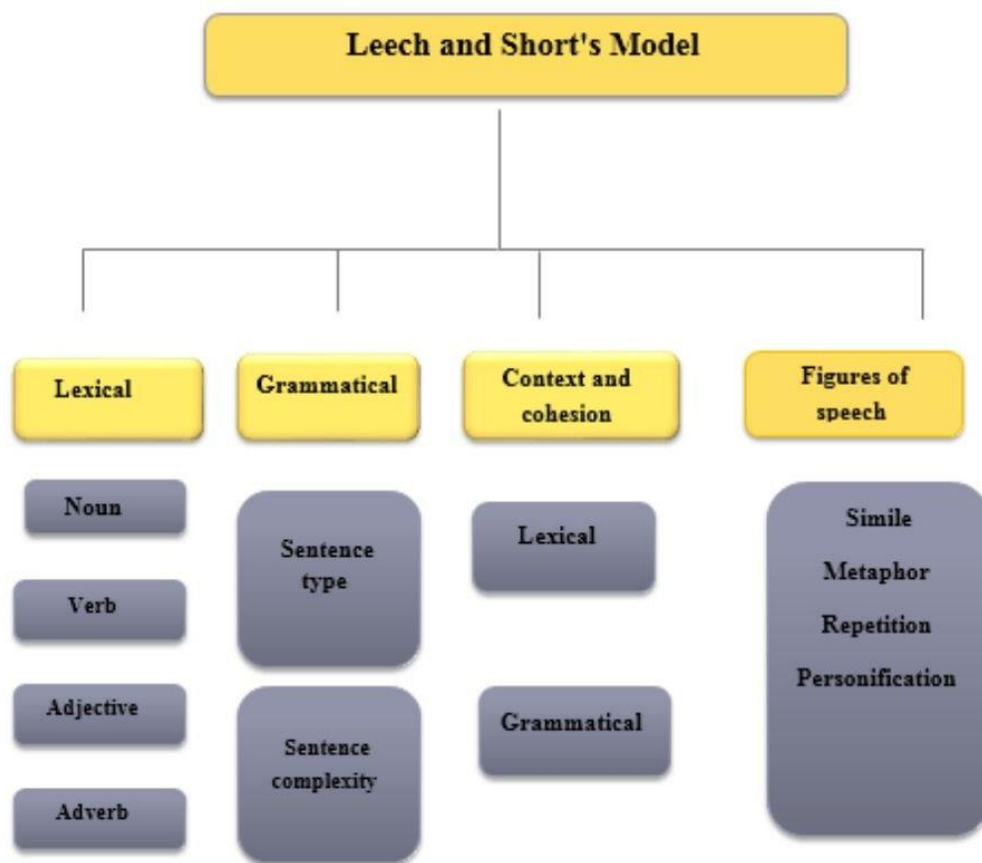


Figure (1): The Conceptual Framework of the Study

Based on Leech and Short's model (2007), the current study tends to stylistically investigate figures of speech in *The Yellow Birds* by Kevin Powers, as clarified below: Figures of speech include metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole, repetition etc. However, Lexical categories, context and cohesion and grammatical categories are excluded from the stylistic analysis of the present study.

Conclusions

This paper has looked at the employment of figures of speech in Kevin Powers' *The Yellow Birds* using Leech and Short's (2007) model of stylistic analysis. By means of careful examination of chosen extracts, the research has shown that Powers uses a wide range of figurative language including metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole and others to express the terrible facts of war and its deep emotional effect on people.

The study shows that figures of speech in *The Yellow Birds* are not only aesthetic additions, but rather vital means of conveying trauma, disorientation, psychological impact, and existential fear. For example, Powers's use of metaphor and simile turns abstract emotional states into vivid, palpable pictures, allowing readers to interact more

closely with the inner world of the protagonist. Similarly, personification and other devices increase the emotional impact of the narrative by giving inanimate components of the combat environment symbolic weight and psychological relevance.

From a stylistic perspective, the use of figures of speech enhances the lyrical and poetic character of the language and reflects the narrator's shattered mental state. By turning the unexplainable parts of trauma into expressive and affective language, these tools support the major preoccupations of the novel, memory, guilt, loss, and the lasting battle scars. Guided by both personal experience and literary crafting, Powers' figurative selections let the narrative swing between beauty and horror, coherence and chaos.

In sum, this stylistic analysis emphasizes the main importance of figures of speech in forming the narrative voice, emotional texture, and thematic depth of *The Yellow Birds*. The study shows how language innovation may be used to investigate complicated psychological and moral terrain by looking at these rhetorical devices under Leech and Short's stylistic framework. This study not only deepens our respect of Powers' literary style but also supports more general debates on the interaction of language, trauma, and representation in modern war literature.

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