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Investigating The Ideology of Bullying in Hunt's Fish in a Tree: A Critical Stylistic Approach

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Abstract

Language always conveys ideologies that represent an essential aspect of the world we live in. The beliefs and opinions of an individual or community can be organized, interacted with, and negotiated via the use of language. Recent researches have paid attention to bullying as a social issue. They have focused on the psychological aspect of bullying rather than the linguistic one. To bridge this gap, the current study is intended to investigate the ideology of bullying from a critical stylistic perspective. The researchers adopt Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistics model to analyze the data which is five extracts taken from Hunt's *Fish in a Tree* (2015). The analysis demonstrates that the critical stylistic tools contribute significantly to the linguistic formulation of the concept of bullying and account for a significant amount of the meaning of the text under consideration. The study concludes that the ideology of bullying is

represented through using most of the stylistic tools but with different bullying acts.

Keywords: Critical stylistics, Bullying, Ideology, School discourse, Fish in a Tree

تقصي التنمر في رواية *Fish in a Tree*:

دراسة اسلوبية نقدية

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المستخلص

تنقل اللغة أيديولوجيات تمثل جانباً أساسياً من العالم الذي نعيش فيه. إذ يمكن تنظيم معتقدات وآراء الفرد أو المجتمع والتفاعل معها والتفاوض بشأنها من خلال استخدام اللغة. تبحث هذه الدراسة في أيديولوجية التنمر في رواية سمكة في شجرة (2015) للكاتبة ليندا مولالي هانت من منظور أسلوبية نقدي. تتبع أهمية هذا البحث من حقيقة أن معظم الأبحاث الحديثة تناولت التنمر باعتباره قضية اجتماعية. ولقد ركزت على الجانب النفسي للتنمر بدلاً من الجانب اللغوي. لسد هذه الفجوة، تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقيق في أيديولوجية التنمر من منظور أسلوبية نقدي. وقد اعتمد الباحثون نموذج جيفريز (2010) الأسلوبية النقدي لتحليل البيانات. تتكون بيانات هذه الدراسة من خمسة مقتطفات مأخوذة من رواية (Fish in a Tree 2015). يوضح التحليل أن الأدوات الأسلوبية الهامة تساهم بشكل كبير في الصياغة اللغوية لمفهوم التنمر وتمثل قدرًا كبيرًا من معنى النص قيد الدراسة. خلصت الدراسة إلى أن أيديولوجية التنمر يتم تمثيلها من خلال استخدام معظم الأدوات الأسلوبية ولكن بأفعال تنمر مختلفة.



الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسلوب النقدي، التمر، الأيديولوجيا،
الخطاب المدرسي، Fish in a Tree

1. Introduction

One of the most common problems that leads to arguments in the community is bullying. According to Sullivan (2004), bullying is a series of deceptive, damaging, and aggressive behaviors performed by certain people with great authority against others who are attempting to stand up for their rights. Students who have special education needs or difficulties with learning are in risk of being excluded or bullied because of their disabilities. All of the features of bullying are present in the novel *Fish in a Tree*. The story is about a middle school girl named Ally who is good at math and art but cannot read because she has dyslexia. Ally has some difficulties in learning, so she does her best to avoid writing and reading assignments at school. *Fish in a Tree* has been first published on the 5th of February 2015. It is argued that this novel manifests bullying. Thus, the current study aims to make a contribution to the fields of linguistics and critical studies by specifying the critical stylistic tools employed to convey the concept of bullying in the analyzed data, and uncovering the underlying ideology embedded in the bullies' speech.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Critical Stylistics

Stylistic studies are quite similar to practical criticism in that it thoroughly examines the text and analyze its main linguistic forms for the purpose of interpretation (Jaafar, 2014). The study of critical stylistics has lately developed and has proven useful in providing discourse ideational meaning (Khalil, 2020).

In order to bridge the gap between critical linguistics and stylistics, Jeffries (2010) developed the analytical area of critical stylistics (henceforth CS). Through the formal linguistic level of the text, CS tends to deliver extensive analytical tools to uncover the hidden ideology and its effects on the reader. The aesthetic decisions text creators may have ideological

implications (Jeffries, 2010). The term "critical" has a very different meaning in critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) than it does in CS; the former suggests a method of identifying ideology in texts, whether readers agree with it or not, while the latter has a particular socialist (Marxist) view of language analysis (Jeffries, 2014, p.7). CS refers to stylistic products that study the ways in which language reflects social meanings. Critical linguistics along with critical discourse analysis paved the way for the emergence of CS forms of study and analysis. More significantly, CS is concerned with revealing underlying ideology in texts through investigating the set of tools that were used to convey any ideology (Jeffries, 2014). Ten tools of analysis are proposed to examine the world-view as portrayed by the text producer. They are: Naming and Describing; Representing Actions/Events/States; Exemplifying and Enumerating; Prioritizing; Negating; Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of others; Equating and Contrasting; Assuming and Implying; Hypothesizing; and Representing Time, Space and Society (Jeffries, 2010). As a result, Jeffries (2010) proposed the CS model as a method of analysis that used CDA and stylistics tools to create a model that is capable of analyzing ideological attitudes inside the texts (Jeffries, 2010).

The following is a description of the analytical tools of CS as presented in Jeffries' (2010):

2.1.1 Naming and Describing

Naming highlights the different nouns that might be used to refer to the same thing. It may be done directly by selecting nouns from the available alternatives.

2.1.2 Representing Actions/Events/States

Jeffries (2010) uses this tool to show how the speaker or writer describes the event in terms of acts, events, and states. It is concerned with the semantic function of the noun phrase in relation to the verbal elements.

2.1.3 Equating and Contrasting



It is concerned with how the world is constructed in the texts in terms of both opposition and equation.

2.1.4 Exemplifying and Enumerating

The use of exemplification or enumeration in a given text is based on pragmatic inference. In a certain situation, it is used to determine which is more relevant than the other. Because there are no linguistic distinctions between them.

2.1.5 Prioritizing

The syntactic possibilities of prioritizing one piece of information over another depend on the fact that when structuring a sentence, the crucial information is placed at the beginning as in fronting through the transformational process, and in other structures, the emphasizing information is placed at the end.

2.1.6 Implying and Assuming

This tool deals primarily with pragmatics since the latter is concerned with what is implicit in a language.

2.1.7 Negating

It is used to discuss conceptual practice as opposed to the verb in the negative. It helps the speaker in creating an imaginary version of reality.

2.1.8 Hypothesizing

Modality can be used to manifest the hypothetical reality in the text. Jeffries thinks that modality is ideational based on the conceptual significance that it possesses (Jeffries, 2016).

2.1.9 Presenting Others' Speech and Thought

This tool supplied the words and thoughts of others through direct and indirect speech according to the textual function (Jeffries, 2016).

2.1.10 Representing Time, Space and Society

It shows the text's time, place, person, and context through linguistic realization. The text's use of deixis makes textual ideology more sensitive (Jeffries, 2016).

2.2 Ideology

Ideologies may be traced back and extracted, through the formal aspects of language, where the writers' choices reflect the worldview they build in order to affect their receivers (Khalil and Sahan, 2022). The term "ideology" originally used in English to describe the science of ideas. Nowadays, it is most often used to refer to "a systematic body of concepts," especially those that are associated with a specific group or political party (Olatuwoye, 2015, p. 88).

All works, whether written consciously or not, have an ideological influence. CS offers analytical techniques that let the analyst reveal hidden textual meaning. Comparing CS to CDA, CS has mostly succeeded in offering a more comprehensive and logical framework for an analytical tool (Olatuwoye, 2015).

Abrams and Harpham (2011) define ideology as "the beliefs, values, and ways of thinking and feeling through which human beings perceive, and by recourse to which they explain, what they take to be reality" (p.204). Jeffries and Walker (2012) say that "ideology is often recognizable through textual analysis," but Fairclough (1995) says that ideology can't be "read off" a text. As stated by Jeffries (2010), ideology is a conceptual framework that is created, conveyed, reproduced, and contested via the use of language. It is important to emphasize that no discourse is free of ideas and, thus, ideology. As a result, it is possible to maintain that ideologies are conveyed through language and are expressed either explicitly or implicitly (Ibrahim & Hussein, 2018).

2.3 School Discourse

Discourses can be regarded as knowledge combinations and their application in practice through power. Discourses in the context of bullying are bodies of knowledge that construct bullying as a cultural object. They specify how it should be managed in practice and how it should be understood. They also emphasize how people are influenced by knowledge and power and how



they are situated concerning others (Kendall & Wickham, 2003).

Concerning bullying in school discourses, numerous researchers contend those students' views of bullying and its underlying reasons can be connected to their roles and responsibilities within the school discourse (Fretwell, 2015). Many studies in several fields have highlighted the importance of the relationships kids experience at school on their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Wubbels et al., 2015).

According to Eliot et al., (2010), teacher-student and student-student relations are definitely the most important relationships in the school discourse. The relationships between the relational climate and bullying at school are more significant in this study. In general, a negative social climate in school has been linked to a greater number of bullying behaviors (Espelage & Swearer, 2010). Negative relationships between students could be an important risk factor for victimisation. According to earlier research, victims typically report having weak peer connections that are marked by low levels of friendship, support, and reciprocity (Perren & Alasker, 2006).

Students who are separated from significant individuals (such as teachers, faculty, administration, and other students) should behave more cooperatively. This should also apply to how students view their schools; for example, they may be less likely to follow the rules if they believe that their schools are unfriendly, unfair, and unsupportive. In an environment that is neither encouraging nor providing care, picking on and bullying other students ought to be more common. In fact, studies have shown students who attend schools with high conflict levels and lower perceptions of supportive environments are more likely to engage in bullying (Nansel et al., 2001). As a result, bullying will be regarded as occurring less frequently if the school atmosphere becomes more supportive. Teachers play an important role in creating a supportive environment by engaging students, forming relationships,

controlling the classroom, serving as positive role models for pro-social behaviours, and enforcing school rules (Di Stasio et al., 2016).

Other than students themselves, teachers are a school's most important resource against victimisation and bullying (Rodkin & Hodges, 2003). Teachers determine the general tone of the classroom. According to Doumen, et al., (2011), aggressive behaviours are less common if students are more engaged in class because teachers are able to build strong relationships with students who can be difficult to educate and exhibit behaviour problems.

The current study is concerned with analyzing some extracts that reflect the concept of bullying in the novel. The context within these traits is concerned with school discourse, that is the characters are school students and that bullying takes place in school atmosphere.

2.4 Previous Studies

Bullying occurs at all ages, beginning at the age of three. It may take various forms, including being shoved in the school corridor, being called names, being forced to give up lunch money, being ostracized from a group, being exposed to physical assaults on the bus, and being threatened with text messages (Perdew, 2015). A bully is often portrayed as a larger, angry child who is harsh to those who are weaker. Bullying becomes significantly more complicated when incidents, bullies, victims, and bystanders are explored in deeper detail. (Perdew, 2015). Bullies use verbal and nonverbal language to show their aggressiveness to their victims in both overt and covert ways throughout the bullying process (Tracy et al., 2005). Mocking, name-calling, and gossiping are all forms of verbal bullying. Nonverbal bullying manifests itself in two ways: physically and relationally. The physical can be in the form of beating, kicking, pushing, shoving, or shutting someone inside (Wang, Iannotti, & Luk, 2012). Whereas the relational may include isolation/exclusion, extensive monitoring, physical intimidation, and disregard for opposing ideas. Physical and verbal bullying is considered



a direct bullying activity. Bullying, however, can be indirect. Spreading rumors about someone or removing individuals from events, for example, are indirect acts of bullying. Studies prove that girls are more likely to participate in indirect bullying, while boys are more likely to engage in direct bullying (Ockerman et al., 2014).

3. The Analytical Part

3.1 Methodology of the Study

Jeffries (2010) model is adopted to analyze the data being examined. In order to identify the ideology underlying spoken utterances, Jeffries provides a thorough and exhaustive typology of CS tools. She proposed ten linguistic devices: Naming and Describing; Representing Actions/Events/States; Exemplifying and Enumerating; Prioritizing; Negating; Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of others; Equating and Contrasting; Assuming and Implying; Hypothesizing; and Representing Time, Space and Society (Jeffries, 2010).

3.2 Data Analysis

The current section presents the analysis of the data *Fish in a Tree (2015)* within the framework of Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistic tools.

3.2.1 Extract 1

As soon as my mom is gone, Shay asks, "So, Ally?"

I look over.

"Why would you give Mrs. Hall that card? That's, like, really mean." Since there is no good answer to give, I stare at the page in my book. I'll ignore them. I've taken their teasing before.

Jessica laughs. "Has your mother always been a waitress?"

"No," I blurt out. "She used to be an astronaut."

They break into laughter and, over near the kitchen, my mom smiles.

She thinks I'm bonding with them.

"My father," Jessica begins, "owns his own flower business, and he says_"

Shay interrupts. "Ally, maybe you can be a waitress when you grow up.

But can you read the flavors of ice cream for me? I'm having trouble." She points up at the slow-turning cube hanging from the ceiling that lists the flavors on each side. The movement makes it even harder to read.

I feel my face get hot. Oh no. Do they know I can't read?

(Fish in a Tree 2015. p.24)

3.2.1.1 Context of Bullying Act

The events described in this extract take place at Ally mother's restaurant, A.C. Petersen Farms, where she works as a waitress. Ally walks to her mother's workplace telling her mother about the event that has occurred at Mrs. Hall's baby shower. Mrs. Hall is Ally's teacher. At the beginning of the story, she is expecting a child and will soon begin maternity leave. At that very moment, Ally recognizes voices coming through the glass doors; it is Shay and Jessica, the most known bullies in the class.

3.2.1.2 Analysis

Shay, the most popular class bully, and her closest friend Jessica are directly and emotionally bullying Ally. Shay and Jessica's words, which reveal their ideology of how to taunt Ally and treat her with contempt in a painful way, serve as an example of every bullying act shown in this extract. Different tools are used in this extract starting with the first statement *"Why would you give Mrs. Hall that card? That's, like, really mean."* The concept of bullying is constructed through a variety of tools here. Representing Actions, Events, and States, Equating and Contrasting, Implying and Assuming, Hypothesizing and Representing Time, Space and Society.

For the Representing Actions, Events, States tool, by using the verb "give" Shay uses the Material Action Process to convey her ideology. The use of the relational process is denoted by the intense verb "is". Ally's inability



to read makes her act in an inappropriate way by accident.

Equating is a powerful tool because it allows individuals to make sense of their surroundings via the use of the equivalent. This event illustrates the societal repercussions of Ally's dyslexia. Metaphorical equivalence is demonstrated in this sentence through the use of the simile "like".

Moving to the tool of Implying and Assuming, Shay's statement conveys an existential presupposition that is manifested through using "that card" which implies the presence of a mutual notion that causes Ally to respond in a disoriented manner.

Hypothesizing process is triggered through the modal adverb "really" as epistemic modality indicating Shay's certainty that Ally is not an intelligent person.

Representing Time, Place, and Society, the last tool in the CS model, demonstrates how the world is shown. Shay refers to Ally with the personal pronoun "you" in this sentence as a person deixis. The demonstrative "that" "is always" referring to Ally's stupid behavior. This demonstrates that Shay intentionally chooses this pronoun to address everyone. In addition, "Mrs. Hall" presents the social title.

Ally's behavior at Mrs. Hall's baby shower illustrates how her dyslexia prevents her from following the social norms properly such as presenting suitable cards at parties, which in turn makes everyone to be even more confused by her behavior. To put it another way, Ally's inability to read makes her seem dumb and, in this instance, like a mean person trying to get attention, despite the fact that her internal thoughts makes it clear that she really wanted to do something kind for Mrs. Hall.

Another statement is used by Jessica "*Has your mother always been a waitress?*" , Jessica employs a number of tools in her statement to demonstrate her ideology of bullying through belittling and humiliating Ally's mother. She looks up to Shay as a role model and aims to be just like her in each and every way.

For the Naming and Describing tool , the word "waitress " as a choice of noun is used to refer to Ally's mother in a teasing way.

Moving on to the Assuming and Implying tool, Jessica's utterance carries an existential presupposition of "your mother" referring to Ally's mother in a taunting manner. Jessica's insult about Ally's mother demonstrates that what Shay and her best friend Jessica prioritizes most is money, as being a waitress is traditionally a job that pays poorly.

In addition, the process of hypothesizing is revealed by the use of the modal adverb "always" which indicates the epistemic modality. Jessica emphasizes her opinion that the job of Ally's mother is an unpleasant one.

Some Other CS tools are integrated to show how Shay is acting in a bullying behavior in the following statements "*Ally, maybe you can be a waitress when you grow up. But can you read the flavors of ice cream for me?*" *I'm having trouble.* The first tool Naming and Describing is used by Shay when she changes the verb "flavor" into a noun "the flavors" just to describe it as a process. Jessica and Shay find Ally's mother works as a waitress absurd and laughable. Ally could work as a waiter, according to Shay, if she could read the ice cream flavor labels. Later, Ally discovers that her classmates are aware of her inability to read. With the tool Representing Actions, Events, and States, the conceptual meaning under investigation is shown according to the verb phrase. The verb "be" is an act of intensive relational process. The verbs "grow up" "read" indicate the material action process. While the possessive relation is realized through the verb "having".

The tool of Prioritizing is also used by Shay to convey her ideology of bullying . She uses the subordinator "when" to emphasize the main clause "*you can be a waitress*".

For Equating and Contrasting tool, Contrasting is found through the conjunction "but". Shay expresses her ideology by making fun of Ally and telling her she cannot be anything, not even a waitress. In other words, Ally's inability to read makes her seem stupid



and, in this situation, like a mean person looking for attention and an easy target to be bullied.

The process of Hypothesizing is revealed via the epistemic modality verb “can”; Shay's idea that she is certain that Ally is unable to read is conveyed multiple times throughout the text.

Concerning the tool of Representing Time, Space and Society, Shay makes many references to Ally by using the pronoun “you” as a person deixis.

According to the findings of the analyses, Bullying is an ideology that is realized by mocking, taunting, and humiliating others.

3.2.2 Extract 2

I hear, “Hey, Ally!” It’s Shay. She is standing with Jessica and a few others.

“Yeah?” I ask.

“Do you want to sit with us for lunch?”

Of course I don’t want to sit with them. But I am getting tired of sitting

alone. And having everyone else see me sit alone.

Jessica points at Albert and they start laughing...

Hey, Albert,” she calls, “is that supposed to be a fashion statement?”...

Shay hits me on the side of the arm and points down at his feet.

The backs of his sneakers have been cut out.

Shay calls him over and he comes. I don’t know why everyone does

what she says. Even me. Today, anyway.

“What’s the matter?” she asks him. “Don’t you have any money for

shoes?”

3.2.2.1 Context of Bullying Act

After lunch, Shay presents an invitation to Ally to join her and her friends at one table. Ally is skeptical about joining them, but she does so

because she has a strong desire to be considered normal and to earn the respect of individuals like Shay. Albert, one of Ally's closest friends, is pointed out by Jessica at the same moment as everyone begins to laugh.

3.2.2.2 Analysis

For Ally and Albert, there is not any place on earth that is more terrifying than a school cafeteria. In this extract, both Ally and Albert faces a direct emotional bullying from Shay and Jessica.

In the following statement “*Do you want to sit with us for lunch?*” again, this shows how Ally's learning disability isolates her from other students in her class. A number of tools are used together in these utterance: Naming and Describing, Representing Actions, Events, and States, Hypothesizing, and Representing Time, Space and Society.

For Naming and Describing, Shay utilizes the term “lunch” that is pre-modified by the preposition “for” to show her ideology through sarcasm even at lunch, Ally is neglected and isolated since nobody likes to sit with her.

Going on to the next tool of Representing Actions, Events, States tool, a material Action Intentional process is found through the verb “sit”. Shay's invitation demonstrates that Ally's loneliness makes her open to Shay's bullying, even though it might seem that her request is innocent.

The process of Hypothesizing can be identified via the lexical word “want” which functions as an epistemic modality. Here, Shay is certain that Ally will accept her invitation since she is ignored by others. Therefore, Ally examines her seat to ensure that it has not been booby-trapped. This is because Ally has seen that both Shay and Jessica are smiling in a flirty manner.

The tool Representing Time, Space and Society is also used to reveal Shay's ideology of belongingness by using the person deixis “us”. This is accomplished by demonstrating that Shay



and the other individuals are a group of friends, however Ally is not a member of this group.

After making fun of Ally, Shay and Jessica come over to Albert and make fun of him for being poor. They look at his slippers and say *“is that supposed to be a fashion statement?”*. The ideology of bullying that Shay embodies is conveyed by her use of the expression “a fashion statement” as a choice of the noun that would represent the tool of Naming and Describing. Shay is making fun of the way Albert is dressed since he is wearing his proper uniform, which consists of pants and a t-shirt with the Flint logo on it.

Through the tool of Representing Actions, Events, States, Shay highlights her ideology by taunting Ally through using the relational process verb “be” asking Albert if that what he wears is new or unusual and is meant to draw attention.

As for Representing, Space, Time, Society in the same utterance, she utilizes the time deictic “that” as a demonstrative referring to Albert’s ill-uniform.

It is clear that bullying is embodied in Shay’s character. She continues mocking Albert and ask him sarcastically *“Don’t you have any money for shoes?”*,. While Ally’s class knows that Albert is exceptionally intelligent; nonetheless, they often find his fussy personality and his emphasis on certainty to be annoying. Shay makes fun of Albert not just for this, but also for the fact that his family is poor, which can often be seen in the clothing that Albert wears.

A number of tools work together in Shay’s utterance. As for the first tool Naming and Describing, it is realized through Shay’s choice of nouns “money” and “shoes”. Teasing Albert about his shoes reveals that Shay puts a significant amount of importance on a person’s financial situation, which demonstrates that she is small-minded and has just one view of what success is.

Moving on to the Representing Actions/Events/States tool, Shay expresses her

ideology via the possessive relational process through the word “have”. While Negation is found throughout the syntactic negation *“Don’t”*.

Representing, Space, Time, Society tool is also used. Shay makes use of the person deixis “you”. By employing this pronoun, Shay is insulting Albert and his family for their poverty.

In this extract, the ideology of bullying is realized through insulting, taunting, and social isolation acts.

3.2.3 Extract 3

Shay is making fun of Albert because his clothes don’t fit. “What’s with the pants, Albert?” she says. “Did you get that outfit in the third grade?”

Keisha whips around fast. “Why do you always try to pull people down?” she asks.

“Because some people deserve it, that’s why,” Shay answers.

“Deserve to be pulled down? Really?” Keisha asks...

Keisha lets out a laugh so loud that Mrs. Muldoon shoots her a look.

Keisha covers her mouth and tries to squelch the sound. “That is perfect, Albert. Man, you really are a smart dude.” She turns to Shay. “You, on the other hand, are so low, you could play tennis against a curb.”

Shay’s eyes narrow, but before she can say anything, Mrs. Muldoon appears and tells us to line up. (Fish in a tree 2015. p.55)

3.2.3.1 Context of Bullying Act

This extract takes place during the holiday concert backstage where Shay makes fun of Albert’s ill-fitting clothes as usual. However, Keisha defends Albert. Keisha is a new student at the school. She is the only black hair girl and is quite confident in her skills and abilities. Because of this, she often challenges Shay and defends others.

3.2.3.2 Analysis

Shay is almost always commenting on her classmates for being different in some manner. While Albert has been subjected to direct



emotional bullying, Keisha is trying to protect Albert and others from being teased, and she is also harassing Shay directly. In the following statement:

What's with the pants, Albert?” she says. *“Did you get that outfit in the third grade?”*, Shay's favorite method of bullying is criticizing her classmates' financial circumstances, which most of the time seem to be far worse than her own. Shay combines Naming and Describing, Representing Actions, Events, Implying and Assuming and Representing Time, Space and Society tool in her speech to bully Albert.

The prepositions “with” and “in” are used as pre-modifiers for the two nouns “the pants” and “the third grade,” which are two instances of noun modification used in Naming and Describing. In order to reveal her ideology, Shay employs noun modifications such as being sarcastic about Albert, underestimating him, and refusing to consider him as a real person.

Representing Actions, Events, and States tool is clearly used to highlight the ideology of bullying through taunting. The material action intentional verb “get” is employed by Shay in her utterance. Shay is certain that there are some individuals who deserve their place at the bottom.

Assuming and Implying tool is found through using the demonstrative “that” with the noun phrase “outfit” as existential presupposition; Shay assumes how nasty and unappealing his outfit is.

For the last tool, Representing Time, Space and Society, in an arrogant and contempt manner, Shay refers to Albert by using the person deixis “you”. As usual, Shay looks at her colleagues with arrogance and condescension. Moving to the other utterance *“You, on the other hand, are so low, you could play tennis against a curb.”* When Shay makes fun of Albert's ill-fitting clothing, Keisha defends Albert. Albert offers the helpful observation that people who are dragging someone else down are already below their victim. Keisha mocks Shay while laughing. Keisha makes use of a variety of tools, including insults directed to Shay, in order to reflect her ideology. She employs different tools

like Naming and Describing, Representing Actions, Events, States, Equating and Contrasting, Hypothesizing, and Representing Space, Time and Society.

As for the first tool, Naming and Describing in Keisha's speech, it is carried out through the noun “a curb” that is pre-modified by the preposition “against”. This is a reflection of Keisha's inner state of mind, as well as her perspective regarding Shay's system and the way she interacts with her classmates.

Representing Actions, Events, States appears in Keisha's utterance when she uses the word “play” as a Material Action verb to convey her ideology regarding Shay that she does not deserve anything more than to be outside playing with the sidewalk. In addition to that, the relational process is found through the relational verb “are”.

Turning to Equating and contrasting, equivalence is found through intensive relational equivalence in the utterance *“You, on the other hand, are so low”*. Keisha demonstrates to Shay that she is lower than everyone else, and that she is not in any way on a higher level than the rest of them.

In the case of Hypothesizing tool, epistemic modality is found through the lexical modality verb “could”. Attempting to tell Shay that she would spend much of her life alone and that no one will like her.

Finally, Representing Space, Time and Society tool is used through the person deixis “you” twice; both times referring to Shay. In this situation, Keisha shows her self-confidence and demonstrates that she is prepared to support the position of her colleague.

In this extract, the ideology of bullying is performed by the acts of mocking and taunting which are revealed via Shay's language, while insulting, refusing and rejecting acts are exposed through Keisha's language.

3.2.4 Extract 4

As soon as Mr. Daniels steps into the hallway to talk to another teacher, Shay says in her I'm-being-loud-on-purpose-so-everyone-can-hear-my voice, “So, Jessica. Yesterday, I saw that Ally



riding in this disgusting green-colored car that I can't believe was even allowed on the road. Ally had to pull a rope to even get the windshield wipers to work."

"You must be joking," says Jessica.

"Ally? What junkyard did you find that heap in?"

Jessica laughs like she's supposed to.

I try to ignore them. My mom has always said you just ignore mean

people because they are only trying to get a rise out of you.

"I mean, what kind of loser would have a car like that? Probably the

only thing your mother can afford."

Finally I can't take it. "It's my brother Travis's car. And it is not a loser

car."

(Fish in a tree 2015. p.83)

3.2.4.1 Context of Bullying Act

In the extract above, Shay is waiting for Mr. Daniels to enter the hallway before she tells Jessica loudly that yesterday she saw Ally in a rundown car. Mr. Daniel, a new teacher who replaces Mrs. Hall. He is the first person who identifies Ally's dyslexia.

3.2.4.2 Analysis

In this extract, Ally faces another type of bullying in a direct way when Shay aims to embarrass Ally publicly which is a subtype of social bullying. The tools that are used in this extract are illustrated in the following discussion: Starting with first statement ***"So, Jessica. Yesterday, I saw that Ally riding in this disgusting green-colored car that I can't believe was even allowed on the road. Ally had to pull a rope to even get the windshield wipers to work."*** the bullying nature of Shay's character is shown in this extract. Her language clearly demonstrates her ideology. Shay's ideology of bullying is shown through humiliating and shaming Ally in front of her peers that is revealed via the utilization of the following CS tools: Naming and Describing, Equating and Contrasting, Implying and Assuming and Representing, Space, Time, and Society.

The tool of Naming and Describing is found in the use of the noun modification in the utterance ***"in this disgusting green-colored car"*** where the head noun is pre-modified by the preposition ***"in"*** and the adjective ***"disgusting"***. Shay deliberately used a negative adjective to just be sarcastic towards Ally's status and family. In continuation with the other noun modifications, the head noun ***"the road"*** which is pre-modified by the prepositional phrase ***"on"*** is used. The practice of choice of noun, which is another practice located under the tool Naming and Describing, can be found in the phrase ***"a rope"***. Hence, Shay has decided to focus her discourse on the many processes that have been associated with the concept of bullying.

Regarding the tool of Representing Actions, Events, States, many processes are combined in order to generate the concept that is being analyzed. The verbs ***"saw"*** and ***"believe"*** are forms of mental process, while the verbs ***"riding," "pull,"*** and ***"work"*** are representations of material process. The verbs that are used in the utterances that are discussed above encode Shay's ideology of bullying by embarrassing and humiliating Ally in front of other.

Using the tool of Equating and Contrasting, Shay emphasizes her contempt and insults by using two statements: ***"I saw that Ally riding in this disgusting green-colored car"*** and ***"that I can't believe was even allowed on the road."*** These two statements emphasize Shay's ideology.

For the CS tool Negation, Shay uses ***"not"*** which indicates Syntactic Negation. In Negation, the reader is often given the opportunity to explore both the presence and absence of a thing. Shay expresses her ideology of bullying by employing the Hypothesizing tool through using the epistemic modal verb ***"had"***.

Prioritizing is also used by Shay to emphasize the idea that she is making her speech in public to confront Ally and all of her classmates. She does this by using the subordinator ***"that"*** and elevating the main clause.

Naming and Describing tool appears once again in the following utterance ***"Ally? What junkyard did you find that heap in?"*** To



enhance her ideology of bullying, Shay begins with the term “junkyard” which is a location where scrap is gathered before being recycled or thrown. She uses this negative adjective to describe Ally's car.

Representing Actions/Events/States tool is found through the verb “find” as an intentional material verb. By using this verb, Shay reveals her ideology concerning bullying.

Implying and Assuming is shown by the existential presumption “that heap” which is defined as a collection of objects piled or tossed on top of one another. Waiting until Mr. Daniels finally leaves. Shay's behavior reveals that she places a high level of importance on bringing people down, since she obviously puts a lot of effort and preparation into the way that she achieves this goal. This is more evidence that her popularity and social position are dependent on bullying people in order to make herself seem more powerful.

Bullying appears in other statements in this extracts. For example

“I mean; what kind of loser would have a car like that? Probably the only thing your mother can afford.” Although Ally here attempts to ignore them, she eventually gives in when they point out that this car is probably all what her mother could afford. Shay tries to insult Ally in every way. In this utterance, Naming and Describing is found through the word “loser” is, a noun that is used to insult someone in this speech and is chosen without much deliberation. Shay makes many attempts to belittle Ally and tries to insult her in every way. Naming and Describing is found through the choice of nouns “kind” and “loser” as derogatory term tossed out with little thought.

The second tool of CS, Representing Actions, Events, States, which realizes the function of the verb phrase, appears in the verb “mean”; it represents a Mental process to highlight Shay's intent hurt and tease Ally all the time. Relational process is found by the relational verb “have” which describes the sense of attachment that is mixed by the Hypothesizing tool. Epistemic modal “would” shows that Shay is sure that this kind of car is sufficient for

a family like Ally's. At last, the verb “afford” identifies the material action process.

For Assuming and Implying, Shay's speech conveys an assuming process of existential presupposition via the utterance “*the only thing your mother*”. Here, Shay is making an obvious attempt to mock Ally's mom by mentioning that she drives a cheap car since she works as a waitress in a restaurant.

This is more evidence that Shay's popularity and social position are dependent on bullying others in order to make herself seem more powerful.

The ideology of bullying is consistently related to the notion of humiliation, embarrassment, and belittling, as seen in this extract.

3.2.5 Extract 5

“Hey, freak,” Shay whispers, glancing over at Mr. Daniels, who is working with someone at his desk, to make sure he can't hear. “We don't need to hear every weird thought in your tiny little brain. We're trying to work.” Oliver's face is unmoving. Until he says, “If I Were. Aquaman. I. Would. Summon. The piranhas. To take you away. You could be their queen.” Keisha starts laughing and Mr. Daniels finally looks up. “Keisha?” She puts her arm down on her desk and leans her forehead against it. Trying to stop laughing. The more she tries, the more Shay glares. With Mr. Daniels watching, most everyone goes back to their work. After a while, even Keisha does. (Fish in a tree 2015. p.94)

3.2.5.1 Context of Bullying Act

This conversation takes place in Mr. Daniels's class as he is assigning a writing project for the students in which they are required to write about a fictional character who they regard to be a hero. While Oliver lists every superhero in the world one after the other, he never stops talking and never gives anybody the



opportunity to respond. Oliver is Ally's classmate. Being always active and chatting makes him a popular target for bullying.

3.2.5.2 Analysis

For Shay, bullying in a variety of contexts is not only acceptable but also helpful to her own social position. She is able to keep her position as the dominant student in the class while ensuring that everyone is aware of this fact. This extract clearly shows another kind of direct emotional bullying which is revealed through the following utterances:

“We don’t need to hear every weird thought in your tiny little brain. We’re trying to work.” Shay's ideology of bullying through the acts ridiculing and mocking others are expressed via the utilization of these tools: Naming and Describing, Representing Actions/Events/States Implying and Assuming, and Representing, Space, Time, Society.

Starting with Naming and Describing, Shay chooses the derogatory adjective “freak” as a choice of noun to describe Oliver since it is often used in schools and everyone is aware of how much it hurts. To continue with another realization of Naming and Describing tool, the head noun “thought” that is pre-modified by the adjective “weird” as a Noun modification is utilized. Moreover, Shay's belief that Oliver is a mindless automaton is shown in her use of the noun phrase “tiny little brain” that is pre-modified by the preposition “in”. She indicates her ideology toward Oliver; a man who never stops chattering about anything and everything.

The Representing Actions, Events, States demonstrates one use of the mental process verb via the use of the verb “hear” which is combined with the syntactic negation “not”. In a harsh tone, Shay tells Oliver that they do not need actually listen to his thoughts. In addition, a Material Action process is found via the use of the verb “work”. These utterances demonstrate Shay's bullying ideology.

Implying and Assuming tool is accomplished by combining the possessive pronoun “your” with the noun phrase “tiny little brain” as a form of existential presupposition.

Here, Shay presupposes that Oliver's current behaviors are signs to bad acts. If Shay does not stop him, Oliver will certainly continue behaving improperly.

For Representing Time, Space and Society, Shay uses “we” as a person deixis to refer to herself and her best friend Jessica just to give the sense of power. Oliver has troubles with his self-esteem, and all it takes is a glance of contempt from Jessica for him to shrink.

While in the next bullying utterance “*If. I. Were. Aquaman. I. Would. Summon. The piranhas. To take you away. You could be their queen.*”, Oliver refuses to be insulted by Shay therefore he decides to be sarcastic toward her directly. Oliver uses Naming and Describing tool to mock Shay. He uses the noun phrase “The piranhas” which refers to a kind of fish that has the ability to swim, breathe underwater, and talk with sea species. this is an attempt on Oliver's part to convey the feelings he has towards Shay. It is inappropriate to use since it is a negative term that demeans women and should be ignored completely.

For the tool Representing Actions, Events, and States, Oliver uses the verbs “summon” and “take” as material action verbs. Oliver's use of these two verbs reveals his ideology of bullying, that could take the form of insulting or being contemptuous.

Equating and Contrasting is also used in this utterance. The subject pronoun “you” and the noun phrase “their queen” are found on the opposite side of the intensive relational equivalence “be”. As a result of this, Oliver considers Shay to be the queen of piranha, which is a derogatory term for a girl who engages in promiscuous behavior.

The noun phrase “their queen” has an existential presupposition, which serves as a trigger for the Assuming and Implying tool. Oliver believes that Shay does not have great morals because of her childish behavior towards her classmates. This leads Oliver to believe that Shay does not have good judgment.

The Hypothesizing process appears through the epistemic modality “would” and “could”. Another form of modality is represented



by the use of the modal adverb “away” which indicates boulomaic modality. In this utterance Oliver expresses his confidence and his desires to dismiss Shay.

She also attacks classmates for being different or “freaks.” After Mr. Daniels takes away Shay's recess for bullying Oliver, Shay becomes very sneaky about her bullying. This makes it harder for teachers to stop, though by that point, Mr. Daniels has already given his other students the abilities and resources that empower them to stand up to Shay themselves. Once more in this extract, Shay's ideology about bullying is linked to the acts of insulting and ridiculing, while Oliver's statements is linked to the act of sarcasm.

4. Conclusions

After analyzing the extracts from the novel *Fish in a Tree*, it is obvious that critical stylistic tools are used in the construction of the concept of bullying in order to uncover the ideology hidden in the language of the characters. The ideology of bullying is presented through Shay's character who is the most bully character in the novel. She presents the ideology of bullying through employing different acts of bullying such as insulting, ridiculing, disregarding, social isolation, ostracizing, underestimating, humiliation, and public embarrassment as the analysis of the extracts revealed. According to data analysis, it is clear that bullying is conveyed by using most of the critical stylistic tools. All previously chosen tools are recognized in the analysis which are Naming and Describing; Representing Actions, Events, States; Prioritizing; Negating; Equating and Contrasting; Assuming and Implying; Hypothesizing; and Representing Time, Space and Society.

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