



A Cognitive Stylistic Analysis of Alienation in J. D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye

Nesaem Mehdi Al-Aadili¹, Dhurgham Mageed Abdzaid²

¹Department of English, College of Education for Human Science, University of Babylon, Babylon, Iraq
hum.nesaem.mehdy@uobabylon.edu.iq

²Department of English, College of Education for Human Science, University of Babylon, Babylon, Iraq
dhurgham.mageed@gmail.com

Abstract: This study aims at providing a cognitive stylistic analysis to the concept of alienation in J. D. Salinger's (1951) *The Catcher in the Rye*. It pursues this aim through using cognitive theories and frameworks. To do this, the study has three main central goals: Firstly, exploring the types of image schemes that can contribute to the concept of alienation in the novel. Secondly, identifying the cognitive domains that can lead to the concept of alienation in the novel. The analysis reveals that each of previous frameworks deals with specific feature of the literary text and the combination of them can lead to a very fruitful strategy that may introduce a comprehensive investigation of the selected novel. To do this work, the study follows a number of steps which are providing the theoretical knowledge concerning the stylistics and cognitive linguistics with reference to the cognitive stylistics and the cognitive framework like domain and image schema. Applying the previous frameworks too different selected texts of the novel. The study ends up with a number of conclusions. Within this study, the researcher has delimited the main cognitive frameworks: domains and image schemas, all of them within the blurry boundaries with each other are employed in the analysis in order to focus how different linguistic items can generate the concept of alienation in the novel.

Keywords - alienation, image schema, domains, cognitive linguistics, cognitive stylistics.

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1. Introduction

The discourse of any text contains different items that can activate mental representations in the reader's mind, cognitive linguistics theories are now used to show how these representations can be activated in the reader's mind. In fact, since stylistics cannot reflect what is going on inside reader's minds, so there is a need to know the stylistic choices that led to these representations and this can be achieved by cognitive stylistics, which cannot involve counting the linguistic items, but it is after the mental representations in the readers' mind.

The different mental representations in the reader's mind can be accounted through the different image schemas presented in the readers' mind. Moreover, the cognitive domains that lead the reader to build and activate the concept of alienation in their minds after reading the narrative text.

In literary texts, many events are not derived from our real life, some of them are not unfolded directly; they reflect more than one meaning and can be depicted in many different ways. So cognitive domains and image schema may account for developing aspects of text apprehensions. It can access to the elements that result in the establishing of the different meanings that can lead to text comprehension, which means how readers can build mental representations within in their minds depending on the varied items presented

in the text of the novel to delve into the concept of alienation and to absorbed with this concept through the process of reading the narrative text.

The current cognitive stylistic study aims at exploring the types of image schemes that can contribute to the concept of alienation. Also, identifying the cognitive domains that can lead to the concept of alienation. Doing such a step, the researchers may hopefully give a clear explanation of alienation within the minds of the readers through the process of reading. The study hypothesizes that image schemas of alienation, death, barrier, path and isolation can be activated in relation to the text and help in producing alienation concept in the reader's minds, also cognitive domains of loneliness, blackness and searching for identity can be activated in relation to the text and help in producing concept of alienation in the reader's minds. The present study is limited to investigate alienation from a cognitive stylistic point of view, and it is limited to explore alienation in selected text of the novel *The Catcher in Rye* (1951) by J.D.Salinger.

2. Cognitive Linguistics

From 1980 onwards, numerous linguists have endeavored to discover ways that could help people to comprehend and conceptualize the world around them (Eynon, 2002). Cognitive linguists consider elements like metaphors as cognitive processes rather than simply linguistic ones (Robinson, 2008).

To Evans and Green (2006) cognitive linguistics (henceforth CL) can be considered as a new school in linguistics that arose from dissatisfaction with formal approaches to language in the 1970s. CL is how to deal with language in its cognitive function, it pays attention to the embodied experience that comes from the interaction of people with the environment in their daily life.

Cognitive Linguistics (CL) emerged between the 1970s and 1980s, pioneered by Len Talmy, George Lakoff, and Ron Langacker. Lakoff (1990) highlights that what sets cognitive linguistics apart is its commitment to conducting analyses in a manner akin to cognitive sciences research. Langacker (1987a) adds that languages are best described through communication processes and fundamental human cognition (Geeraerts, 2005). A key focus in cognitive linguistics is the study of metaphorical construction. For this Eynon (2002) states that "cognitive linguistics presumes that metaphorical extension is the best way by which language can be developed. To provide a more precise definition, CL is the field of study that investigates the cognitive functions of language. CL and cognitive psychology share a common ground in their assumption that our interaction with the world is influenced by informational structures in the mind. However, CL is more precise in its focus on the role of natural language in organizing, processing, and transmitting information through these structures.

The core tenet of the CL paradigm is that language reflects our mental categorizations of the world. This posits that our use of language is influenced by our perception and classification of the world. Thus, our understanding of language is intimately tied to our understanding of cognition. CL also emphasizes the importance of context in shaping the meaning of language. It suggests that meaning arises from the interaction between linguistic forms, our conceptual knowledge, and the communicative context in the language is used. This can help explain why the same words or phrases can have different meanings depending on the context in which they are used (Evans & Green, 2006). Besides making theoretical advancements, CL has made vital contributions to practical fields like language pedagogy, translation, and natural language processing. Exploring the correlation between language and cognition, has revealed the essence of human language and how it mirrors our cognitive abilities and thinking patterns.

One of the key concepts in CL is the notion of embodied cognition. This refers to the idea that our experiences and bodily interactions with the world shape the way we think and understand language. For example, the metaphorical expressions we use in language often draw on our physical experiences, such as when we use the phrase "grasp the concept" to refer to understanding something. It also studies meaning in a different way through the process of meaning construction. Furthermore, CL does not only show the mundane feature of language, rather it studies the conceptualization of categories like time, space, event and scenes (Eynon, 2002).

3. Style

To understand the term style, that may affect the features attributed to stylistics as one of different disciplines of linguistics. Wales (1995) lists the following features of style: First, The term "style" pertains to how thoughts are communicated through language, similar to the way that actions, such as playing a sport or painting, are carried out. An individual's writing or speaking may be described as ornate or humorous in style.

Second, different situations contain different styles like (comic or turgid), also the same activity might help in producing different variations of style. So the style can be considered as diversity in the use of language. The concept of style can differ significantly in literary language depending on the genre or period. For instance, one may refer to the style of Augustan poetry to distinguish it from other poetic styles. As such, style is not an isolated characteristic but is instead viewed within various domains or contexts, ranging from larger ones like literary genres or historical periods to smaller ones like specific texts or individual writers (Wales, 1995).

Third, in each case style is regarded as unique, consisting of a specific collection or total of linguistic features that distinguish it from others, whether of genre, period or register. This understanding of style is frequently employed, particularly at the text level, for example, the style of Jane Austen's "Emma." or Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" (Wales, 1995).

Features that are related to stylistics are basically features of the language itself, so to some extent, style can be considered equivalent to language. However, it cannot be denied that language has certain uniqueness and importance that play a crucial role in shaping a theme's design, for instance. When referring to an author's work, style encompasses the distinct attributes or traits that are unique to the author, such as his or her habits of language or idiolect (Caballero, 2005).

Fourth, another important approach to style is identify specific features and compare them with others, concerning a deviation from a norm. It is incorrect to suggest that style is inherently abnormal or deviant, despite the existence of marked poetic idiolects. Instead, we evaluate a text or language sample by comparing it to the linguistic standards of its genre or era, as well as the core of the language in general (Wales, 1995).

There is another view about style in which it is the way of man. From the sociological point of view, a man is the result of the society and when the man writes this which emphasizes the existence of socio-political experiences. The men themselves are considered as a the way of style. It is established that it is impossible to separate matters from manners, in other words there is no difference between what writers write and how they write. Namely, man's writing can tell us who he is or what his background is. However, this definition is not always active in showing the identity of the person through writing (Robinson, 2008).

4. Stylistics

In the realm of human existence, the concept of style is characterized by a multitude of interpretations. Generally, style refers to doing, presenting or expressing something. As stylistic expression encompasses a means of utilizing words or written compositions in a manner that conveys an aesthetic and elegant appeal. Within the limits of linguistics, style indicates the art of composing or employing language in an aesthetically pleasing manner. It follows that the correlation between language and style has prompted the emergence of the field of stylistics (Leech & Short, 2007).

Stylistics can be defined as a subfield of linguistics that deals with analysis of style in languages depending on some important issues like context, genre, author and historical periods (Crystal & Davy, 1969) and (Leech, 2008). Writers have their own different styles, these styles related to a particular genre, or the features by which the literary style is constituted. Looking deeply to the features of a certain text and marking the main functional value is called style analysis that is done in order to interpret the text in question (Wales, 1995).

This definition of stylistics is quite classical one, because of the developments of stylistics over the last thirty years, hence this definition puts stylistics in a place of seeking the interpretation of the texts only, while stylistics today started to look for the readers' role in the process of text interpreting (Stockwell, 2002a).

Originally, stylistics was primarily concerned with analyzing literary works, as it combined linguistic analysis with literary criticism. It focused on investigating prose and poetry. However, in modern times, stylistics has broadened its scope and can now be applied to non-literary works as well. Although literary texts remain the preferred study in stylistics, other forms of discourse, such as advertising, journalism, popular music, and even everyday conversations, often demonstrate a significant level of stylistic features. Now, the study of stylistics can be used by more circles and it is being more flexible and applicable (Simpson, 2004).

Stylistics uses specific stylistic categories than language ones. In their book " *Style in Fiction* " Leech and Short (2007) refer that stylistics contains four categories of study. The first is lexical categories which comprise lexical items within the text like verbs, adjectives, adverbs and nouns. The second is grammatical categories. that deal with the structure of the sentence. When producing a sentence, the speaker or the writer focuses on things like tenses, level of sentence, passive and active of a sentence as well as word choice (Leech & Short, 2007). The third is cohesion and coherence, while the fourth is figures of speech. By the use of figures of speech, language becomes figurative.

Stylistics originated from the Russian formalist school of literary criticism in the early 20th century, though "style" dates back to classical rhetoric. Key figures like Roman Jakobson, Victor Shklovskii, and Boris Tomashevskii aimed to identify the unique features of literary language and explore defamiliarisation's role in art and literature's aesthetic value. Russian formalism believed art's purpose was to make the familiar seem new, giving viewers or readers a fresh perspective. This influence on stylistics is evident, especially in the concept of foregrounding as a psychological concept (Leech, 2008).

5. Cognitive Stylistics

Cognitive Stylistics or Cognitive poetics is an approach to the study of literature which applies ideas, constructs and methodology from cognitive linguistics. The role of cognition or the cognitive process in the unraveling of style did not appear to be a major concern with traditional stylisticians or with the later structuralists. In functionalist and formalist stylistics, the analysis focuses on the sentence and then text respectively, while cognitive stylistics can be considered as a withdrawal from textual to contextual interpretation of the text, Its work is not only to focus on the text, but also on contributions of one's mind with reading. . In other words, cognitive stylistics explore that how we can understand certain types of metaphorical images by using the reader's knowledge, ideas, beliefs and interpretations. Unlike traditional stylistics, cognitive stylistics elevates the creative process, through both author and reader, in the process of unravelling the text.

Jeffries and McIntyre (2010) state that cognitive processes by which the reader respond to certain text are part and parcel of cognitive stylistics, it also attempts to capture how readers employ their real life background knowledge that is already existed in their minds or schematic knowledge in the interpretation of literary writings, which means that cognitive stylistic approach is considered as bringing author's imagination into discourse with the reader's own creative imaginings.

Stockwell (2002) states that there are many scholars who work in the field of cognitive stylistics, they use different theories such as schema theory, conceptual metaphor theory, text world theory, blending theory, mental space theories in order to expand the boundaries of linguistic analysis of literature. The focus of these theories is on reading and cognition. All these theories provide frameworks for the analysis of literature.

To make things clear, cognitive stylistics uses some analytical approaches that link the linguistic choices to the cognitive phenomenon. Hence, cognitive stylisticians consider language not one of the autoumonus faculties, but rather as a reflection of cognitive structures.

Geeraerte (2005) refers that cognitive stylistics is a reflection of the process of the human construal for the external meaning and how we perceive the world and reality. It bridges the gap between the social and psychological within the community and individual. Meaning is also sensitive to the contextual factors and effects and the semantic categories should be taken in consideration. Meaning is a result of the interaction in which the reader \s interact with the world. Meaning reflects people's experience, in different words, cognitive stylistics does not deal with the texts, rather it deals with mind's contribution to the process of reading. It explores the certain types of linguistic units like pronouns can only be understood through reader's knowledge, beliefs and interferences. Cognitive stylistics is a fusion of cognitive science and the study of literature, it aims to elucidate how readers deal with texts and how linguistic features impact their cognitive processes.

Cognitive stylistics explores how readers engage with and process language at various levels, including lexical, syntactic, and semantic. It seeks to uncover the cognitive mechanisms behind comprehension and interpretation of textual content. Metaphor plays a central role in cognitive stylistics. Researchers examine how metaphors are understood and how they shape readers' mental representations of a text (Gibbs, 1994). Cognitive stylistics also delves into narrative structures and the cognitive processes involved in constructing mental representations of stories. It examines how readers create mental models of story worlds and characters (Stockwell, 2002).

6. Image-schemas

Cognitive linguistic theses remove the boundaries between language and the other faculties in our minds. It overlaps with our knowledge and conceptual structure. Such theses have led some cognitive linguists to ask about how our knowledge is structured and how our minds handle meaning. One of the most significant claims in this context is that our perceptual interactions, bodily experiences and manipulations of objects play a fundamental role in structuring our knowledge by different patterns. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (Johnson 1987, 1993; Lakoff 1987) formulated these patterns in what are called image schemas. "They emerge throughout sensorimotor activity as we manipulate objects, orient ourselves spatially and temporally, and direct our perceptual focus for various purposes (Gibbs, 1996: 41)." The illustration of how image schemas are depicted can be discovered in Johnson's (1987:331) work on the topic.

A seemingly trivial depiction of a morning routine, characterized by the repeated use of words such as "in" and "out," reveals the structured nature of sensory-perceptual experiences in everyday life. Rooms and medicine cabinets stand for physical "containers" that move our bodies and objects into them. These containers are different, but they are similar at an abstract level and express a basic principle of "containment". Surprisingly, this principle can be applied not only to physical containers like "robes" and "covers" but also to figurative ones like sleep and stupor that we cannot literally go in and out of. Another example is the recurrent act of physical travel. The sources, paths, and goals of our physical travels likewise form a coherent logic that can be mapped onto the beginning, process, and completion of non-physical activities. This is why we can speak of 'short-cuts', 'detours', and 'milestones' in our research projects (Wen and Tylor, 2021). Many cognitive linguistic investigations refer to the regular appearing of many image schemas and image schemas transformations during people's daily reasoning, thinking, and imagination.

Things like containers are known as image schemas, they are related to our sensory experiences of the world, so they are "Imagistic" in this sense, While they are "Schematic" since they generalize over multiple instances of such experiences. Oakley (2007) describes them elegantly as "condensed re-descriptions of perceptual experience for the purpose of mapping spatial structure onto conceptual structure".

Image schemas are conceptual structures, and this is a psychological reality that is agreed upon. They develop in the course of childhood and form building blocks of our conceptual representations in the mind. Therefore, according to CL, they are also likely to underpin various aspects of linguistic structure.

Images schemas are formed before the complete acquisition of first language and this is most basic and important characteristic of them. Infants develop pre-conceptual image schemas by distilling basic spatial concepts through repeated exposure to different movements and object manipulations (Mandler and Cánovas,2014).

7. Conceptual Domains

Langacker (1987) defined the notion of cognitive domains as a consistent framework that is related to conceptualization in which semantic units can be characterized. The background information against words can be used and understood can be provided by the conceptual domains. For example, the words 'arm', 'hand' and 'finger' are all from the domain of 'body', so to understand and use these words, we need to access to the knowledge within this domain (Body).

Domains differ from image-schemas because they are propositional and schematically organized, rather than simple visual models of our sensory experiences. They encompass a greater amount of information and complexity.

In other words, cognitive domains refer to the broad areas of knowledge and experience that provide the ground for meaning construction in language. These domains encompass various aspects of human experience, such as space, time, motion, and social interactions, which form the foundational structures upon which linguistic expressions are built. For instance, the spatial domain includes concepts related to location, direction, and distance, which are essential for understanding and communicating about the physical world (Langacker,1987).

7. Analysis

7.1 Text one:

This First text reflects different image schemas like **PATH** image schemas, hence Holden's confrontation with the thief followed a path, he depicts himself going to the thief and engaging in a conversation. Holden's mental path symbolizes his sense of detachment and disconnection from others. The mental conflict in the hero's mind as he think whether to go to the thief or not reflects the **BALANCE** image schema, hence Holden swing between the fear of the confrontation and the wish to assert himself and find his identity.

Also this text can activate the **CONTAINMENT** image schemas in the reader's mind, hence this extract describes the protagonist taking his red hunting hat out of his pocket and putting it on, as well as pulling the earlaps down. This action of physically enclosing oneself within the hat could be seen as a manifestation of containment, suggesting the protagonist's attempt to isolate himself from his surroundings or shield himself from external influences.

Also **CONTAINER** schema is activated by the notion of trying to contain his cowardice ("I try not to show it") within himself but failing, suggesting an internal struggle and self-alienation. while the **FORCE** Image Schema is evident in the imagined forceful confrontation between Holden and the thief (*that had stolen them probably would've said, his voice very innocent and all, 'What gloves?'*), where the narrator envisions exerting force to reclaim his gloves but is ultimately powerless, indicating his weakness alienation in social environment. while **BLOCKAGE** Image Schema represents the blockage in Holden's ability to act on his aggressive impulses, symbolizing his tendency to avoid conflict and resulting in alienation, this is activated in the following line (to sock the guy in the jaw or something—break his goddam jaw).

The **LINK** image schema establishes a cognitive link between the Holden's thoughts and his implicit actions, hence his depending on imaginary dialogue reflects his difficulty in communicating with others. he relies on his mind and constructs hypothetical dialogue. This reliance on imagined conversations reflects a sense of estrangement from relationships and shows his inability to communicate with people. Also this extract can activate the **domains** like **(Existential Alienation)**:

"I'm one of these very yellow guys."

This sentence reflects a detachment from the society and peers. Also this extract reflect the **(social alienation)** from the norms, hence Holden says:

"I probably would've said, 'Nobody's calling anybody a thief',

In fact, this is not the usual way to talk with thief, so it reflect the domain of **(Social Alienation)**.

Some of the phrases mentioned in the previous extract contributed to activate **domains** in the reader's mind, such as domain of **(weakness)**, since Holden mentions his weakness in confronting the thief and different memories related to this confrontation. Also mentioning the challenges and difficulties within the confrontation with the thief can activate the domain of **(searching for identity)**, such a domain of searching for identity reflects Holden's implicit feelings of alienation , it also reflects Holden's own search for meaning and purpose in his life. The author uses different sentences within this text describing the details that might face Holden during the confrontation with the thief, this activated the image schema of **SCALE**, and finally the **CYCLE** image schema which involves different representations and patterns in recurred happenings like the blaming self, cold and rain that reflect the monotonous feelings inside Holden. Also the **domain of (Spatial distance)** is activated in this text, since all details and ways of thinking in the thief can enhance the alienation concept within the reader's mind.

7.2 Text two :

In the previous extract, they are different image schemas related to alienation like **CONTAINMENT** image schema, The description of the place clearly reflects the contradiction inside Holden's personality. The wonderful atmosphere inside the museum contradicts the cold one outside, in this way **CONTAINMENT** image schema activates the sense of belonging inside Holden's character, but he still suffers from alienation due to old memories.

Also Mentioning ancient Indian tools that are made by hand activates the stagnation Image schema, referring to fixed identities that reflect stable and unchanging feelings of Holden Caulfield. Holden's use of the colloquial language like (damn) and (helluva), reflects Holden's mind style, that reflects the his inner revolution against the fixed customs, traditions and norms of the society, which usually take a certain conservative pattern, such as remembering a word or some words.

Some of the phrases mentioned in the previous extract contributed to activate **domains** in the reader's mind, such as domain of **(childhood)**, since Holden mentions his childhood, memories, and nostalgia for the past when he was walking inside the museum and comparing himself to his sister Phoebe.

The narrator in this text tries to describe his visit to the museum and expressing his sense of longing for past happenings:

"I get very happy when I think about it. Even now."

The **CONTAINER** Image Schema represents the positive memories are contained within the narrator's mind, offering a contrast to his present dissatisfaction. This schema highlights his alienation from the present as he finds solace only in the contained memories of the past.

The museum represents a stable, unchanging environment that contrasts with the uncertainties of the narrator's current life:

"I knew that whole museum routine like a book."

The previous line might activate the **CYCLE** Image Schema that indicate and express the repetitive, unchanging routine of the museum visits just like a cycle, provides a sense of stability. This cyclic routine contrasts with the narrator's current state of flux and instability, emphasizing his alienation from the secure past.

Also, The references to school trips with a teacher and the joy of simple pleasures highlight a lost innocence, this can reflect the domain of **(innocence)** and **(childhood)**:

The same previous line might activate **PATH** image schema, which is the path from childhood to the present represents a journey from innocence to experience. The narrator's longing for the innocence of childhood illustrates his alienation from the complexities of adulthood.

tWithin the previous text, The ancient artifacts in the museum activate the domain of (**oldness**), and domain of (**continuity**) over time:

"Sometimes we looked at the animals and sometimes we looked at the stuff the Indians had made in ancient times."

The same previous line can activate **LONGEVITY** Image schema, the enduring nature of the artifacts represents can refer the domain of (**stability**) over time, highlighting the narrator's sense of impermanence and **alienation** in his current life.

8. Conclusions

1. The readers can understand the novel through revealing the concept of alienation that is activated by different image schemas and cognitive domains, this emphasize the significance of different linguistic choices that can activates the concept of alienation in the readers' mind and help them to understand the text of the novel.

2. Cognitive domains and image schemes focuses on the importance of readers' inference and background knowledge in the correct understanding of the novel's events, domains as well as schemas are correlated with the background of the readers to pave the way for the concept of alienation in the readers' mind.

3. This study can defend the view which claims that readers enjoy the novel only when they find themselves with the characters of this literary work (*mind theory*),

but the analysis shows that domains and schemas can activate different images and fantasies in minds of the readers in order to enjoy the novel in the best way.

4. Within this paper, the researcher has delimited the main cognitive notions domains, and image schemas, all of them within the blurry boundaries with each other are employed in the analysis in order to focus how different linguistic items can generate the concept of alienation.

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