

SOCIOCULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC PERSPECCTIVES OF CHART KORBJITTI'S FICTIONS

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Abstract:

Chart Korbjitti is a renowned writer from Thailand. He writes primarily in Thai, but some of his novels are published in English also. This paper discusses the “Non-Verbal Communication Analysis in Chart Korbjitti’s (CKT) Fictions”. The objective here is to identify the socio-cultural and linguistic perspective of CKT’s fictions and the socio-cultural and the various stylistic features of the language and linguistic intricacies of the author, Chart Korbjitti (CKT).

The main data for this study were taken from CKT’s fictions selected from four novels mentions below to seek and to explore the various stylistic features used by CKT. These are the following four novels selected as the data for the study: 1) NWO (No Way Out) published in 2009, 2) JM (The Judgment) published in 2009, 3) MD & CPN (Mad Dogs & Company) published in 2009, and 4) TM (Time) published in 2011.

This methodological study was proceeded by selecting main data from CKT’s four fictions; namely, NWO, JM, MD&CPN and TM. Then the main data selected to study from CKT were scrutinized by the language in the literary interpretation and several language features. On the wider implications of the stylistics these were scrutinized the socio-cultural and linguistic perspective of CKT’s fictions and the socio-cultural and the various stylistic features of the language and linguistic intricacies of the author, Chart Korbjitti (CKT).

Key Word: Fiction, Stylistic feature, Linguistic intricacies Socio-cultural and perspective

1. Introduction

CKT’s works present the life of the society in which he himself is the member and hence through his characters depicts the role of the influencing society and its current social norms. The extrinsic factors that are the settings and its environment form the stimulus to the attitudes and the speech of the characters. Therefore the socio-cultural structure of the society is reflected in the works of CKT.

Ozea (2008) pointed that NWO is a work of social realism and the story of one family’s desperate struggle to survive in the slums of Bangkok. The novel opens with an emotionally charged scene where Boonma, the father, is berating his teenage daughter, Sida, for turning to

prostitution. This tortured interchange between father and daughter does not actually occur until much later in the story, but it sets the stage for a devastating critique of society from the perspective of the impoverished slum dweller.

NWO is the story making it clear that each of the family members was almost forced to commit illegal or immoral actions due to factors that were outside their control which is not that choices did not exist, but those only bad choices are available things. As the title suggests, the characters are trapped in a web of poverty and despair no matter how hard they struggle to escape. The work established CKT at the “cutting edge” of post-“Literature for Life” writing. This novel takes up many of the themes of the “Literature for Life” genre, but it goes further by addressing the despair that stems from societal alienation and the ideological confusion experienced by the uprooted urban poor.

JM is a poignant societal critique that details one virtuous man’s struggle to find meaning and acceptance amidst a clash of civilizations. This fiction is written in a way that encourages the reader to reflect on their own behavior and the moral course of action in a rapidly changing context that creates a conflict in values. This work gives voice to a palpable sense of societal alienation through a critique of modernity, while suggesting the existential dilemma brought on by the individual’s growing estrangement from society within the modern context. An increase in consumerism and materialism move people away from the communal traditional values of their village formerly represented by the temple. CKT’s treatment of one righteous man’s struggle to retain his dignity in a world that is quickly losing sight of what is important in life highlights the existential crisis of the modern age.

MD&CPN is the social story about the friendships and solaces are potent remedies for human wounds.

And TM, CKT masterfully uses the daily routine of the nursing home and the internal reverie of the producer to suggest the meaninglessness of life – punctuated by the invisible and non-existent voice in the cell – in modern society. There are hints that life was not always like this. This fiction is a hugely creative and forceful work that speaks not only to a shift in the cultural values within Thailand, but also to the unchanging and seemingly universal values of all humanity. Chart creates a dark, bleak world inhabited by everyday people whose struggles go unnoticed in a rapidly modernizing society. The full impact of his works is rooted in the overwhelming sense of defeat suffered by his characters and caused by the powerful workings of modernization. While illustrating the complex and frequently tragic problems of the modern age, Chart provides no solutions. With despair and tragedy pervading CKT’s works, the reader is often left with an image of utter futility and hopelessness. Chart writes in an existential manner about the meaninglessness of modern life, offering no answers, compromises, or viewpoints concerning the social problems he so powerfully depicts. The writings of CKT detail a tension within the indigenous value system that has existed in Thailand throughout the past five decades, and highlights the problems incurred through the implementation of foundationally flawed modern development programs.

Hence to get more understanding about socio-cultural and linguistic perspective of CKT's fictions, this chapter depicts the linguistic behaviour of the characters with regard to their social class and social background of CKT's fictions with these main four topics: 1) Introduction, 2) References to the Behaviour of the Characters, 3) Expression classified into Pathos, Sarcasm with Sarcasm in Discourse and Sarcasm in Characters, Humour and Derogatory Use, 4) Use of Social Realistic Belief. All the above said characteristics are elaborated with suitable examples.

2. References to the Behavior of the Characters

Behavior or behavior refers to the actions or reactions of organism, usually in relation to its environment including the other systems or organisms around as well as the physical environment. It is the response of the system or organism to various stimuli or inputs, whether internal or external, conscious or subconscious, overt or covert, and voluntary or involuntary. In CKT's fictions, the behavior or behavior of his characters is presented and referred on the social and cultural aspects of the society that have their roles in the linguistic study of the language. CKT with the use of his inimitable explanatory technique of this behaviour reference of the characters can provide his readers an accurate perception of all characters in his fictions. He can also bring out the detailed sketch about the varieties of behaviour of realistic human nature with the blend backed by their culture and the society interestingly and clearly. All of these are examples:

In JM, CKT refers to the resent behaviour of Fak getting angry the people who harmed him last night while he was coming from Uncle Khai as:

He was seething with hatred and vengefulness, and tried to work out ways of getting back at those who had hurt him. He could remember quite well that two of his three assailants were Thiang and Song. He had to find a way to pay them back for the hurt he was feeling. He wanted to go to their homes and punch them in the face. He wanted to take a knife and stab them to death. He wanted to force them to beg for their lives. On some nights, he dreamt that he was sitting on top of Thiang's chest and pummelling him in the face, and when he woke up he had the elated feeling that he had actually done what he had dreamt.(JM:233)

In MD&CPN, CKT depicts the behaviour of Thai who doesn't like teaching the commercial trade with math of his father. More Thai's father teaches him, more he hates math. Thai's father is from a Chinese man in Thailand who has belief that all children must learn the commercial trade. This belief has still had in the Chinese family staying in Thailand. However, Thai does not like it. So, CKT depicts the Thai's character through his behaviour no pleasure with math as:

But for Thai, it seemed that what his father was trying to teach him never found its way into his head. Worse yet, some force in it encouraged him to resist. He came to hate numbers and dreaded having to deal with them. His hate extended to math at school and he didn't perform well. And when, after primary school, he moved

up to eighth grade at a new school, which had music as a subject and a music room as well, Thai became aware of what it was he liked.

As a child, the days he had to study Pa's subject were days of misery. He'd be searched, abused and flogged because his father thought he had pocketed the money missing from the total he should have made according to Pa's calculations. (MD&CPN: 186)

In TM, CKT refers to the behaviour of mother, Old Ubon, who is showing a pure love to her son with purification although her son is very disgusting in the eyes of other people. CKT uses nature of mother's love attractively in this fiction as:

She slowly raises her hand to rub his back, to touch his flesh, and finally she can't contain herself, takes her son into her arms and bursts into tears. Her tears flow down to smear her son's shoulder. The stale body odour that others can't stand, the mother smells with delight, as if it is the sweet smell of a newborn a mother raptures over. (TM: 202)

The reference to the behaviour of his characters is a technical way used by CKT to reflex the the actions or reactions of human beings with the blend of social believes and problems to the readers. With this technical way, CKT can provide his readers an accurate perception of all characters in his fictions.

3. Expressions

Hornby (2004) pointed that the expression is the thing that people say, write or do in order to show their feelings, opinions and ideas such as chilling rapidity or accusing silence etc. In this regard Ellis (1970) pointed that the expression is a word or phrase with a different particular meaning from special expression such as disagreeable wind or dry sadness. In the study of CKT's fictions, there are the foibles, absurdities and the exuberance of the virtues and vices and the intense feelings disclosed by him in the form of expressions. CKT uses the expression to show the expression of characters to get a true story in fictions such as:

My wife went talking on and on between sobs, devastated that our daughter had given her an omen she had failed to notice, blaming herself, angry with herself for not being able to snatch our daughter out of the jaws of death. (TM: 45)

However after we scrutinize all CKT's fictions, the expression revealed by CKT can be classified it into Pathos, Sarcasm classified into Sarcasm in Discourse and Sarcasm in Characters, Humour and Derogatory Use. All of them are:

3.1 Pathos

Hornby (2004) pointed that the pathos are as the power of a performance, description, etc. to produce feelings of sadness and sympathy. Pathos is one of the characteristic features where the agony and the sufferings of the characters due to the personal relationships that are contributed by the discussed society. The characters come to a tragic down fall of the state of nothingness. CKT uses this pathos to show the expression of his characters in his fictions. In NWO, the expression of Sida's agony screamed by her father as:

Sida hurriedly stuffed some clothes into a carrier bag, sobbing all the while. The red mark on her cheek was beginning to fade, as if it were slowly being buried in her flesh until it sunk out of sight, down inside her heart. The old man could only look at her with sadness and pity. (NWO: 11-12).

In JM, CKT expresses the pathos of Fak getting sad and tragic emotion from being cheated money from the headmaster as:

Tears streamed down Fak's face. He let them out unashamedly. None of the three teachers had any way of understanding the feelings concealed behind his tears. Still crying, Fak went down the staircase of the teachers' quarters and cut across the school lawn. The eyes of the three teachers followed him until he disappeared into the coconut grove. (JM: 270)

In MD&CPN, CKT expresses Thai and his family members' pathos as:

Thai put down his rucksack and prostrated himself at his mother's feet. When he looked up, his mother was weeping. Thai couldn't hold back his tears. Even Thai's elder sister couldn't control her emotions and burst out into tears as well, and for a while there was only loud sobbing to be heard in the room. It had been such a long time since he had broken away from his brother's sisters it was as if they were dead to one another. The sound of crying woke up Pa. He turned and stared until he was sure that what he was seeing was his son who had fled from the house. (MD&CPN: 232)

With the instances above, we can say that the stylistic pathos in CKT's fictions can be expressed linguistically.

3.2 Sarcasm

Chaitra (2006:61) pointed that the sarcasm is the ironical part of the literary text. It is the activity of giving contradictory statement of what one means. It is also the way of revealing out the intensity of feelings in the form of statements, remarks or incidents due to the personal relationship or the happenings of the societal influence. The sarcasm is "a sharp, bitter, or cutting expression or remark; a bitter jibe or taunt." Some authorities sharply distinguish sarcasm from irony; however, others argue that sarcasm often does involve irony. Sarcasm is a technical part used by CKT. He uses this technique in his fictions to take their divisions as expressed in discourse and through the character's behaviour. The technical sarcasm in CKT's fictions can be divided into two kinds; sarcasm in discourse and sarcasm in characters.

3.2.1 Sarcasm in Discourse

CKT employs sarcasm in discourse subsequently drawing the attention of the readers towards the controversial issues yet that cannot be stated directly by the characters because of their socio-cultural affiliation. For instance in NWO, Boonma's wife grumbled to her husband when she smells of alcohol from him as:

"There's nothing to eat and you can still go out drinking, then?" (NWO: 37)

In NWO also, one of the group crew is sitting round circle and eating breakfast complains the breakfast with un-satisfaction as:

Indeed, that was of variety nor sufficient that they could afford to throw any away. The point was, everyone was hungry. Speed was the one thing that mattered, which had often prompted the skipper and the owner to comment on how "these buffaloes" "stuffed themselves like a white tornado". (NWO: 57)

In JM, Fak says to Auntie Chuea who does not like him because Fak does not have much money for buying some food to eat but still drinking some rice wine as:

"Give me a bottle of rice wine," Fak said to him. "So you've started drinking, have you?" Auntie Chuea asked. (JM: 23)

In MD&CPN, Otto goes to have a look outside and the rain struck his face but he wipes his eyes and looks from side to side says to his friend who comes from Bangkok, a capital of Thailand as:

"Where did 'm mothers go?" he asked his visitor, screwing up his face. He was thinking that they were playing a joke on him. His friends were always up to weird pranks. (MD&CPN: 19)

Stylistically, the sarcasm is very important technique used and revealed by CKT in his narration to focus the fictions more interesting and attractive for the readers.

3.2.2 Sarcasm in Characters

In CKT's fictions, sarcasm can be also disclosed through the discourse of the characters. CKT uses it to make a mocking remark in the attitude to the characters such as father of Boonma in NWO.

The old man's life had been like a pretty piece of coloured material which someone had had made up as a shirt and which, when it started to fall apart from use, had begun to lose its value and turned into a tattered old rag. As time had gone by, it had become dirtier and worthless. His life had been like just such a rag, a lonely, exhausting and worthless life. Now it was gone, waiting to be forgotten. (NWO: 108)

In JM, CKT narrates the psychological and physical condition of Fak being on suffering because people in the village misunderstand him as a person does have a sexual misconduct with his father's wife as:

The days passed. Fak continued to struggle in a web of suffering. Like a fish caught in a net, it seemed that the harder he tried to free himself, the more entangled he became. Search as he would, he could find no way out.

As time went by, he became thinner and thinner. His face was drawn, his complexion had lost its glow and even though he was far from old age, white patches had begun to appear in his hair. (JM: 53)

The sarcasm in discourse and sarcasm in characters are usually used by CKT to narrate the characters in his fictions. This technique is a very important technical way which can be built the charming to the readers.

4.3.3 Humour

In the Free Encyclopedia gave a meaning of humour or humor as it is the tendency of particular cognitive experiences to provoke laughter and provide amusement. Also the Free dictionary (Kernerman English Multilingual Dictionary, 2006-2010) defined it as a sense of humour which is the ability to appreciate or express that which is humorous and is situations, speech, or writings that are thought to be humorous. With the regard of the ideas above, Sultanoff (2011) said that the humour is the experience of incongruity is emotional chaos remembered in tranquility and can be experienced in the joy of "getting" it. Humor can be the understanding of something that we at first did not comprehend. This occurs every day in misunderstandings at which we laugh.

Humour in the fictions of CKT is incisively expressed through the characters in their conversation. CKT brings out the humour in his fiction to disclose the ease in the tragic and amused situation. In NWO there is the conversational humour of Tam talking to Piak and Ort as:

*“Is your Granddad asleep, Ort?” Tam turned towards him and asked.
 “Just changing the subject,” said Piak, catching his friend out.
 “Yeah, he’s asleep.” What do you want him for?
 “Nothing. Nothing at all. Just asking. In case Piak’s going to get out a joint.”
 “Yeah, yeah. I’m a bad’un. You’re the only good’un. The only one in the whole world,” Piak said to his companion and the two of them burst out laughing. Ort smiled. (NWO: 26)*

3.4 Derogatory Use

Mifflin (2000) pointed that the derogatory is as the words or grammatical forms which denote a negative affect; that is, they express the contempt or distaste of the speaker. And McArthur (2005) gave a definition of derogatory in the linguistics as a term often used in dictionaries to label expressions that intentionally offend or disparage for someone considered one side often use the label for the other side dismissively.

A derogatory is a technical way used by CKT. He uses a lot of derogatory words in his fictions to reveal out the agitation and the confliction in the minds of the interlocutors based on different contexts. In NWO, Granddad is cooking some rice and he is frustrated by the sentence of his grandson. This sentence can remain him silent like a child caught out doing something the adults had told him not to.

“Granddad, you’re cooking again, then? If there’s fire, how are you going to get away in time?” (NWO: 16)

In JM, Uncle Khai an undertaker said to Fak as he walked over and sat down on the platform to disallow Fak to drink much alcohol as:

“Why don’t you ease up a bit, Fak? You’re gonna kill yourself, you know?”

“And I don’t want to handle your body.”

“Why not?” asked Fak, turning his head.

“Because I’d have to do it for free, that’s why. Who’d pay me?” (JM: 217)

In MD&CPN, Chuachua says to Otto about the former experience of another friend, Lit’l Hip got many motorcycle accidents. Chuachua talks to the Lit’s Hip’s moustache using a derogatory sentence to reveal out the expression the confliction of his friend as:

“Yeah. In the past, he had so many accidents ridin’ pissed even his damn motorcycle got fed up with him. Have you seen his face lately? It’s full of scars. His moustache is like a retired john brush. He used to have this handsome handlebar of a moustache, all black, but now it’s as scruffy as the hair of a mangy mutt. Every time he’d go to the clinic, the doctor would ask, ‘Back again?’” Otto laughed. (MD&CPN: 28)

A variety of derogatory used for CKT’s fictions is the expression of characters revealing out the agitation and the confliction in the mind or the emotion of interlocutors or express the contempt or distaste of the speaker. This technical way is often used in MD&CPN because there are many dialogue of conversation about the friends. CKT uses the derogatory sentences or words as he is acquainted emotion between each character in the fictions smoothly.

4. Use of Social Realistic Belief

The brief study of Stylistics manages to illustrate how deftly CTK has blended the socio-cultural elements in his fiction. The brilliant rendering of the realistic events contribute to the profound and significant maturity among the characters. The deliberate exhibition of realistic events in an effective manner acts reality in his fiction. In JM, CKT tells the social realistic belief of Thai people about temple and making the merit in the pavilion as:

The temple was the centre of activity for the villagers. When a child was born, it was taken to the temple to be given an auspicious name by the abbot according to the date of its birth. Those who had offspring of ordination age would have them ordained in the temple, where they remained for the duration of the Buddhist Lent. Of course, when someone died, the body would be brought to the temple to be cremated. Whenever people wanted to meet and talk, or whenever the community leader sought to convene a meeting of all the villagers, they did so at the temple. When district officials came to issue identity cards, it was there, too, that they interviewed the villagers. The doctors who gave immunisation shots had everyone line up at the temple. The elderly regularly went there to make merit and renew

their vows. Officers from the police station investigating a crime or looking for a suspect would stop at the temple to ask questions. Individually and collectively, everybody relied on the temple. (JM: 11)

Thai people often enshrine their ancestor's relics in the stupa and keep it in the temple. They have belief that when their ancestor's relic keep in the stupa – their ancestor have own place to stay. On the day, they bring it to the temple to take part in the ceremony that was held there. This belief has practiced and trenten since the part to the present time.

Those who were wealthy enough had small stupas built in which to enshrine their ancestors' relics. These stupas were erected outside the perimeter of the prayer hall, beside and behind the vihara. Once a year on this day, the whole family would come to clean the stupas and the area around them and repaint the decorative images of the mythical beings that adorned the corners of the stupas to restore them to their former splendour. The young ones would help carry buckets of water and wash the stupas while their parents told stories extolling the virtues of the ancestors.

Those who didn't keep the relics in a stupa at the monastery kept them in an urn at home. On the day, they brought the urns to the temple to take part in the ceremony that was held there. As they reached the temple, they placed their urns on the altar that had been set up for that purpose, removed the lids, lit incense sticks and poured lustral water over the relics, which then gave out a clean, fresh smell reminiscent of the smell on the day the body of a dead person was anointed. (69-70)

Dressing in black and white is symbolic belief of Thai people when they come to the temple on the day of taking part in the ceremony to remember the souls of the relatives who now lived in the hereafter, to make merit and pour the water of dedication for them and to call to mind the whole line of ancestors. CKT uses this realistic belief in his narration as:

The villagers were dressed in black and white. Most of the women wore only black. This was the day to remember the souls of the relatives who now lived in the hereafter, to make merit and pour the water of dedication for them and to call to mind the whole line of ancestors, to whom each of the living owed much gratitude for being born and having roots. (JM: 70)

5. Conclusion

Most of CKT's fictions are revealed through the problems of proletariat people and the medium people. He uses their realistic problems focusing on the mental problems in the family, the selfishness of people in the society and the problems of high powerful, educational and rich people getting only their own interests and no attending to the suffering of same national and social people as the plot running his narrative techniques. So, with the scrutinizing on the socio-

cultural and perspective linguistics study of CKT's fictions, we go through the linguistic behaviour of the characters with regard to their social class and social background of CKT's fictions. With six points, we can refer to the socio-cultural and perspective linguistics of CKT's fictions. Firstly, CKT can very well use the reference to the behaviour of characters. In this way, CKT presents and refers on the social and cultural aspects of the society that have their roles in the linguistic study of the language. CKT with the use of his inimitable explanatory technique of this behaviour reference of the characters can provide his readers an accurate perception of all characters in his fictions. He can also bring out the detailed sketch about the varieties of behaviour of realistic human nature with the blend backed by their culture and the society interestingly and clearly. Secondly, the foibles, absurdities and the exuberance of the virtues and vices, and the intense feelings are disclosed by CKT in the form of expressions. CKT can very well use expression with pathos, sarcasm in discourse and in characters, humour and derogatory use. Thirdly, CKT can very well use the social realistic belief to blend the Thai socio-cultural elements in his fiction. He can also use the brilliant rendering of the realistic events to contribute to the profound and significant maturity among the characters. And that deliberate exhibition of realistic events in an effective manner used him can acts reality in his fiction. Fourthly, in the case of realistic illustration of place CKT can fuse and blend the realistic places in his course of the progress of the story as he draws and gets the influences from his life experiences to present the scene and description.

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