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A Pragma-Stylistic Study of Misdirection in Selected Detective Novels

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Abstract

The analysis of detective novels has taken different aspects. The linguistic analysis of them, for example, has tackled the linguistic systems of morphology, phonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. In line with the linguistic analysis, this study explores the various pragmatic and stylistic devices realized through detective novels for the purpose of misdirecting and deceiving the reader. The problem is that when readers try to reach to the truth, they face difficulties. They might not reach to the right solution or infer wrong conclusions because writers use some techniques to hide the truth and mislead them. This study aims at examining these techniques and devices; namely, Grice's Maxims and ambiguity as pragmatic devices on the one hand, and foregrounding, backgrounding, and focalization as stylistic devices on the other hand. It also aims to show the effect of these devices in a number of selected detective novels written by Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan Doyle.

It is hypothesized that different stylistic strategies are used in detective novels for the purpose of misdirection and that foregrounding is the most frequently used one among these devices. It is also hypothesized that the rate of using pragmatic deception strategies is higher in Christie's novels than in Doyle's ones, especially the violations of Grice's maxims, and that the two maxims of Quantity and Manner are more frequently violated than the other two maxims of Quality and Relevance. The findings of the study reveal that Christies' style of writing is more mysterious than that of Doyle. The study also reveals that focalization, the violation of the two maxims of Quantity and Quality, and the utilization of ambiguous expressions which are also considered instances of violating the maxim of Manner are the most recurrent stylistic and pragmatic deception strategies respectively.

Keywords: stylistics, focalization, foregrounding, burying, pragmatics, Grice's maxims, ambiguity.

1. The Introduction

No one can deny the power of language. Language is a very dangerous and influential instrument that can be used to manipulate, deceive, and control people by affecting their minds, thoughts, and feelings. Different strategies are used for this purpose but they should be used carefully and in need because they can lead to misunderstanding, misdirection, and ambiguity.

The mystery genre is a genre which requires careful threading of information from character to character, between narrator and reader, and from author to audience. Some mystery novels break the traditional forms of language to raise the level of suspense or play on reader's expectations. Not all pieces of information are revealed and that what makes these novels very interesting because they draw the readers' attention and make them want to know more.

Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan Doyle, as the most famous authors of mystery novels, have mastered the art of misdirection. They create suspense by controlling what and how much information they reveal to the readers. The problem is that the inference model that readers use to reach to the truth may fail to fulfill its job because the authors make the readers hold various several conclusions and they continue reading to know which one of them is true. Readers may end up with conclusions that are completely contrary to those

they build up at the beginning. The authors sometimes use an ambiguous language. One sentence may carry more than one meaning. They also don't tell the whole story. They, or their narrators, leave gaps and the readers have to fill these gaps.

The present study aims at investigating those stylistic techniques used in Christie and Doyle's novel; namely, foregrounding, backgrounding, and styles of narration and highlighting their effect as misdirection strategies in these detective novels. Moreover, the study aims at identifying pragmatic misdirection techniques in Christie and Doyle's detective novels, especially those that result from the violation of Grice's maxims and the utilization of ambiguous expressions, for it is generally hypothesized that mystery novels abound in diverse stylistic and pragmatic techniques and strategies that novelists utilize to manipulate readers and distract their attention. Moreover, it is hypothesized that Christie's novels are more mysterious than Doyle's ones. The stylistic and pragmatic techniques and strategies that Christie uses to manipulate readers and distract their attention are more diverse and mysterious than those used by Doyle.

The study is expected to be of value, especially for researchers who want to get information or write about the mystery genre; in particular, the deception strategies and techniques utilized in this genre. In addition, the approach followed in this study can be of use in the analyses those researchers conduct on this genre.

2.Review of Literature

2.1 Mystery Genre

Mystery genre is a type of fiction works where someone, who is usually a detective, tries to solve a crime or a mystery. Gregoriou (2007) points out that the detective is the main character and the others are suspects. Each suspect has a motive and an opportunity to commit the crime. This type of fiction which involves a high level of suspense may take the form of novels or short stories. Authors often use figures of speech, foreshadowing, and inference gaps. They may conceal evidence or use red herrings to mislead reader (p. 37).

In Scaggs' (2005) opinion, not all detective novels abide by the traditional form of this genre but usually there is a structure that most detective novels follow. The crime, which is usually a murder, a kidnap or a big theft, must occur at the beginning or at least at the first half of the

novel. Furthermore, the characters and their descriptions are introduced at the beginning of the novel, too. After the crime part, there comes the investigations that are made by the police officers or detectives to find out who the culprit is and how the crime is committed. They investigate with suspects and ask them questions. They also look for clues that may help them find out the truth. Then there is a twist which is a new sudden and unexpected development in the event or a new clue or discovery that surprises the characters and the readers. After that, the detective solves the mystery and puts all the pieces of the puzzle together by explaining how the crime has been committed and who has committed it. In conclusion, all mysterious questions are answered and the culprit is arrested (pp. 5-6).

2.2 The Stylistics of Mystery Genre

2.2.1 Focalization

The term of focalization was coined by the French narrative theorist Gerard Genette(1972). It means the perspective or the point of view through which the story or the novel is narrated. There are many narration techniques. The narrative voice could be a first or third or even a second person. If the story is told through third person pronouns, a type of narration which is also called an external perspective, zero vocalization, and omniscient writer, the point of view of the writer here is not clear. He is just describing the events and the characters. The thoughts and feelings of the characters are also not very clear. On the other hand, an internal perspective, *i.e.* a story told through first person pronouns, shows the thoughts and feelings of the narrator clearly. Second person pronouns are used when the narrator addresses the audience or the readers (Simpson, 2004, pp. 26-27).

According to Wales (2014), the external perspective is usually used for effects of mystery and playfulness by not allowing us to know what the characters are thinking of while the internal perspective is used to reflect the thoughts and impressions of the characters (p. 315).

2.2.2 Foregrounding

The term ‘foregrounding’ is used to refer to types of language use which might be supposed to draw attention for misleading purposes. In this sense, foregrounding is related to whether an item is possible to be noticeable or not.

It is suggested here that standard and typical systemic choices, which mean choices in the language system, are significant if they have some influence in terms of noticeability. For example, it has been confirmed in psychology that information that is subordinated grammatically is less noticeable than information that is not subordinated (Stockwell and Whiteley, 2014, p. 330). Such systemic choices might not be unusual as such. Nevertheless, they may draw attention in the direction of one item rather than another. The term ‘foregrounding’ has a sense of vagueness since it can be applied either to the linguistic strategies that are used to produce prominence or to the effect of transporting parts of a mental representation to the front position of attention. Psychologists have revealed that foregrounding causes deep effects in semantic processing, the degree to which a reader is completely engaged with the semantic content of the offered information. In this more broad sense, foregrounding might encompass a wider range of devices than doing micro-level stylistic choices, whether deviant or systemic. As a sequence, an author might manipulate attention by predicting a reader’s processing tactics more generally. First, an item (e.g. an object such as a pen or a suitcase) might be given narrative-world prominence by means of the fact that it has obvious significance for a character or more in the narrative world without a consideration of whether or not this is carried by an unusual language. This might be basically because of the remarkable features of the item. It might also be because of the way that the characters react to it. For example, if a character in a story is interested in an item, the reader might see that item as possibly more important. This effect could also be heightened if the character is considered to be ‘reliable’ making the reader take their interests in a serious way (p. 330). Second, text location might be utilized to show information in ways that are usual linguistically but which might still influence processing. For instance, if a reader is likely to make an inference from two or more portions of information, then putting these portions of information adjacent might foreground their connection and, therefore, makes the ability to make that inference easy – the reverse of this might be that it is not as much as easy to make an inference if the related information is unattached. An additional example of the potential effect of text position is that a reader may be more receptive to seeing information as related to a mystery if that information is shown after that mystery has been presented. Conversely, when the reader is in puzzle-solving mode, information may not be so readily utilized in puzzle-

solving if it is shown too early. The third way of managing information processing is to induce a selective focus. Psychologists have viewed that readers habitually focus or concentrate on certain sides of an item or scene, and not necessarily on all sides. Therefore, deepness of processing could be vastly differential, with the result that readers might not draw definite inferences, especially if they are bewildered and unable to concentrate (Stockwell and Whiteley, 2014, p. 331).

2.2.3 Burying (Backgrounding)

When some items are carried to the foreground, other items are left in the background. The concept of backgrounding is studied slightly by stylisticians but it has been of some importance to linguists and psychologists. Perhaps, stylisticians have not been concerned with backgrounding because putting items and information in the background is not typically regarded as a main strategic choice though burying items intentionally in the background of a text for plot purposes is greatly strategic (Stockwell and Whiteley, 2014, p. 331). The meaning of ‘burying’ is that an item is located in the background with the intention to make the reader unable to find it easily. It is familiar that some ads and contracts may conceal unpleasant details in the small print and that politicians may conceal not liked details in the less noticeable fragments of their speeches. The main concern is about the way in which information that is important to solve a puzzle in a detective novel is concealed until it is shown and discovered as a solution at the end of the novel. The aim here is to enhance interest until creating suspense and surprise (p. 331).

2.3 The Pragmatics of Mystery Genre

2.3.1 Ambiguity

As stated by Cummings (2010), the term ‘ambiguity’ is used when a linguistic expression has more than one meaning or interpretation (p. 8). Ambiguity can either be syntactic, scope, or lexical as illustrated below:

1. *He watched the sailor with the telescope.*
2. *All interviewees wanted to see one film.*
3. *She held the note.*

Sentence 1 is syntactically ambiguous and the ambiguity lies in whether the prepositional phrase *with the telescope* is interpreted as either modifying the verb *watch* or the noun phrase *the sailor*. Both interpretations are possible but describe different situations. The scope ambiguity in sentence 2 is due to the interpretations of the relative scope of the quantifiers *all* and *one*. If *all* has a wider scope than one, then there are many films as interviewees. If *one* is given scope over *all*, then all of them want to see the one film. Sentence 3 is an example of lexical ambiguity where the noun 'note' could be a musical sound or a written message. Lexical ambiguity is found when the same phonological shape is shared by two or more semantic units, these are called homonymies, like bat 'the flying mammal' and bat 'club used in sports' where the semantic units are obviously different. There are also polysemous words when one word has different but related senses, like free in 'I'm free on Tuesdays' and 'The gum is sugar-free' (Lyons, 1977, pp. 550–69).

As stated by Cummings (2010), the main challenge in recognizing ambiguity is to distinguish these cases from other ones where there is a lack of specification and this lets the door open for a variety of interpretations. These other cases fall into two major kinds. The first one is deictic expressions. The interpretation of these forms depends on the participants and the context. Examples of these are personal pronouns like *I, you and she*. The denotation of these words can be determined only if there is a context. There are also spatial and temporal expressions like *here* and *now* and these have the same behavior. The second major kind is vagueness, where expressions have a degree of indeterminacy. One example here is degree of generality. In English, for example, some words are not specified for gender. The word *sibling* is ambiguous because it can refer to both brother and sister; *parent* refers to mother and father. The function of this general term is to make the speaker able to refer to the larger set. This type of lexical generality is included under the term vagueness by some writers like Kempson (1977). There is also underspecification shown by gradable adjectives, like *tall, expensive, and fast*. They require a context to be interpreted correctly (p. 8).

2.3.2 The Inferential Model of Communication

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986), there are two models of communication which complement each other: the code model and the inferential model. To achieve good communication, these models must be

used. First, the code model was the traditional and the more accepted one but, later, the inferential model has appeared to address the shortcomings of the old model. It provides a more applicable theory to explain the communication of humans. Communication is achieved by producing and interpreting evidence. Communicators have such evidence in a context, and they use it to make inferences about the intentions and thoughts of others. A very important thing is the difference between sentences and utterances. They share linguistic properties but they differ in their non-linguistic properties. There are non-linguistic properties such as time, place, identity of the speaker, and speaker's intentions. Sometimes, it is difficult to infer people's intentions in a correct way because there is a wide range of things that one can infer from one sentence. So, how can one arrive at the correct conclusion? It is concluded that there is one way to guarantee good and successful communication which is the mutual or the common knowledge but how could this knowledge be established? Many pragmatists have concluded that mutual knowledge is an ideal and cannot be found in reality. The other solution is that good communication can be accomplished by cooperation leading us to Grice's pragmatic principle of cooperation and its four maxims (p. 2).

2.3.3 The Cooperative Principle

Grice, (as cited in Mey, 2001, p. 72), claims that the cooperative principle can be divided into a number of different maxims of conversation:

1. Maxim of Quality
 - a. Do not say what you believe is false
 - b. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence
2. Maxim of Quantity
 - a. Make your contribution as informative as is required
 - b. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
3. Maxim of Relation
Be relevant
4. Maxim of Manner
Be perspicuous
 - a. Avoid obscurity of expression.
 - b. Avoid ambiguity.
 - c. Be brief.
 - d. Be orderly.

2.3.3.1 Violating Grice's Maxims

Grice's maxims can be violated intentionally or unintentionally. Deliberate violation is called flouting. There are many uses for the deliberate violations like telling jokes, evasion, lying, camouflage, and deception. A little has been written on deception strategies in terms of the violation of Grice's Maxims. But the most recent work comes from Cupta et al. (2013) who have taken account of deception in the light of violating Grice's principle and its four maxims. According to Cupta et al, (as cited in Dynel, 2018, p. 234), there are categories of deception which are divided according to the maxim that has been flouted. First of all, there is the contrived distraction which means changing the topic urgently, it involves flouting the maxim of relevance. Secondly, flouting the maxim of quality results in fabrication which can be in the form of an outright lie, overstatement, understatement, and denial which means the contradiction of something that is believed to be true. The maxim of quantity is flouted in half-truth and augmentation when one adds extra trivial or distracting information resulting also in flouting the maxim of relevance. Finally, the maxim of manner is flouted in equivocation (i.e., being ambiguous), obfuscation (i.e. being incomprehensible or complicated), and abstraction which means using generalization and it involves also the violation of quantity as a secondary violation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study is intended to examine how the language of mystery in detective novels is structured to attain one major goal which is to misdirect readers in order not to infer the truth until the end of the novel. Accordingly, a qualitative/descriptive analysis of texts excerpted from seven novels selected is carried out. These assembled materials have been examined based on an eclectic model allowing the qualitative analysis to be highly plausible.

3.2 Corpus Description

To begin with, the genre of mystery and detective novels is selected to investigate misdirection as their major feature and the strategies utilized to achieve it. For this purpose, four of Agatha Christie's novels and three of Arthur Conan Doyle's novels which are arranged in chronological order by UK publication date as illustrated in Table (1) below will be examined as an

essential stage in the analysis presented in Section 4 to obtain an overview of how misdirection is achieved by examining the pragmatic and stylistic strategies and techniques to find out which of these strategies are more characteristic of Christie and Doyle's writings by conducting a statistical analysis.

Table 1 – Christie and Doyle's Novels

Author's Name	Title of The Novel	Year of Publication
Agatha Christie	Death on the Nile	1937
	They Came To Baghdad	1951
	The Murder of Roger Ackroyd	1962
	Endless Night	1967
Arthur Conan Doyle	A Study in Scarlet	1887
	The Hound of The Baskerville	1902
	The Valley of Fear	1915

Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan Doyle's detective novels have been selected to be the only sources that the data are derived from for three reasons. First, they are published in English; and that means nothing is lost in translation. Second, they are ideal examples of mystery genre novels, the most famous and the best-selling. Third, dealing with written texts such as novels, stories, magazines and newspapers could be the finest way to analyze mere language, isolated from visual and auditory effects. In short, Christie and Doyle's novels have been found to be the best sources to collect the data from because they perfectly portray the way the readers are deceived and misdirected by the authors' words.

3.3 The Model Adopted

The categorization of deceptive language strategies and principles is based on an eclectic model that combines aspects or dimensions from two fields: pragmatics and stylistics.

The analysis of the narrator's part of focalization or point of view will follow Genette 1972 and Simpson 2004. The selected novels contains different

kinds of narrators. Each kind will be discussed with an explanation for how it is utilized to help the writer deceive the reader and misdirect her/him.

Following Emmott and Alexander (2014), the term 'foregrounding' is used here to refer to the effect of transporting parts of a mental representation to the front position of attention. Thus, it is used to denote many types of language use which might be adopted to draw attention for misleading purposes. In the analysis, the researcher is going to see whether an action or object is noticeable or not. First, the action or object is noticeable if it is given narrative-world prominence by means of the fact that it has obvious significance for a character or more in the narrative world. In fact, this object or action is insignificant and it is made noticeable by the author to deceive the reader. Second, the text location is important, too. Thus, to make a successful inference from two or more portions of information, they should be adjacent because this might foreground their connection and, therefore, makes the ability to reach to the right inference easier. The reverse of this is that it is not as much as easy to make a right inference if the related information is unattached.

Of course, when some items are carried to the foreground, others will be left in the background. This means that the writer makes these items look insignificant whereas, in fact, they are very significant and important for the solution of the mystery. The analysis, here, will follow Emmott and Alexander (2014). It should be mentioned that the concept of 'background' is studied slightly by stylisticians but it has been of some importance to linguists (e.g. Givo 1987; S.A. Thompson 1987) and psychologists (M. Baker and Wagner 1987; A.J. Sanford and Sturt 2002; A.J.S. Sanford et al. 2009). The importance of this strategy lies in that the reader is deceived. S/he cannot find these significant items and this creates suspense and surprise when these items are revealed later. In this respect, the researcher will look for objects or actions that are referred to slightly, objects or actions that are underspecified or lack exactness, objects or actions that are placed beside salient or foregrounded ones, insignificant objects or actions that are diverged in the narrative world to make the inference more difficult, objects or actions that the characters in the novels consider them unimportant or they say that they are unimportant, objects or actions that have been told by an unreliable character in the novels or have been given wrong significance or have been highlighted from some phases whereas the other important phases are left in the dark providing the

reader with information in which s/he is not interested or on which they are unfocused.

Analyzing ambiguous sentences will follow Lyons (1977). The ambiguous situations that are going to be discussed are those when there is a lack of specification like using deictic expressions and vagueness when an expression has a degree of generality indeterminacy like gender and gradable adjectives. There is also the kind of loose talk when there is a degree of approximation and inexactness. Thus, flexibility of words lets the door open for a variety of interpretations for sentences and they should be interpreted according to the situations, the participants in the speech situation, and context.

As it was mentioned before, the violation of Grice's (1975) maxims is a very important feature in detective stories; therefore, instances where narrators or characters flout one or more of Grice's maxims are going to be categorized and discussed and their occurrences will be computed to find out which maxims are more frequently violated than others in the mystery genre.

4. Results and Discussion

A qualitative analysis of the data selected which involves a simple computational technique is carried out in this section in an attempt to come up with a set of findings on the basis of which the hypotheses of the study are proved or disproved. Research work is divided into two major levels: pragmatic and stylistic levels, each subsumes a set of excerpts selected from the seven novels to be analyzed to detect those strategies which are indicative of the language of deception, thus revealing the authors'/characters' ideologies. Accordingly, this section is divided into two sub-sections that roughly correspond to the two main fields of study in this research paper. The first sub-section displays the results most relevant to the characterization of stylistic structure which has been found to comprise three tools in the selected novels including foregrounding, burying, and focalization. The second sub-section focuses on the pragmatic devices used to serve the purpose of deception; namely, the violation of Grice's Maxims and ambiguity.

4.1 The Stylistic Analysis

The analysis of data at the stylistic level reveals three stylistic devices which the novelists have been found to utilize in their novels selected for the purpose of analysis in the present study, including 'focalization', a technique used to

reflect the narrator's point of view, 'foregrounding', a technique used to make readers think that a thing or a character is important while it is not, and 'backgrounding', a technique used to underestimate an important fact to hide it from reader's eyes. Statistically speaking, 'focalization' is the most recurrent stylistic device which comprises 56.30% of the devices used followed by 'foregrounding' as the second most commonly used device with 28.57% and 'backgrounding' which ranks the last making up 15.12% as illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – Overall Frequencies of the Stylistic Devices Detected in the Selected Novels

Focalization		Foregrounding		Backgrounding		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
67	56.30	34	28.57	18	15.12	119	100.0

A close examination of the overall frequencies of the stylistic devices spotted in Christie and Doyle's novels reveals that such devices are more frequently utilized in Christie's novels than in Doyle's ones as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - A Detailed Description of the Overall Frequencies of the Stylistic Devices Detected in Christie and Doyle's Novels

Author' Name	Stylistic Devices						Total	
	Focalization		Foregroundin g		Backgrounding			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agatha Christie	50	42.01	24	20.16	15	12.60	89	74.78
Arthur Conan Doyle	17	14.28	10	8.40	3	2.52	30	25.21

In what follows is a survey of those excerpts where the stylistic devices were detected in the selected novels. It is worth mentioning that only some excerpts will be displayed in the survey below, for the space of the paper does not allow to mention them all.

4.1.1 Foregrounding

In 'Endless Night' by Christie instances of 'foregrounding' or 'red herring' are represented by one of Christie's characters, Mrs. Lee, an old gypsy women,

who is envisaged by the author as a scary character who says scary things to Michael and Ellie trying to threaten them and frighten them to leave the Gypsy's Acre, which is why it is suspected that Mrs. Lee is behind Ellie's death. The end of the story reveals that Mrs. Lee is not responsible for Ellie's death, it is just used as a red herring to mislead people who live in the village where Ellie and Michael live and also to deceive the readers by this false image given of Mrs. Lee, as made clear in the following survey where it is clearly noticeable how Mrs. Lee is highlighted by the author to send the reader to a wrong direction far away from the truth.

In the following excerpt Mrs. Lee, in her conversation with Michael, is highlighted as a threatening character with her frightening appearance and tangled hair. Gazing at Michael in a frightening way and in a threatening tone she hints that she doesn't want him to be in the Gypsy's Acre warning him to leave and forget everything about it saying that everything comes out of it is bad and the one who thinks to buy it is fool.

"She stared at me through a tangled fringe of black hair and she said:

"Don't have nought to do with it, young man. You listen to me. Forget about it. You're a good-looking lad. Nothing good comes out of Gipsy's Acre and never will."

"I see it's up for sale," I said.

"Aye, that's so, and more fool he who buys it." " (p.11)

Her venomous hateful laugh, in the excerpt below, voices evil especially when mentioning the word 'curse'. Mrs. Lee tells Michael that a curse will be on each house that will be built instead of the old one in the Gipsy's Acre. She also tells him that there is no luck there, no good things, and no joy. She adds that accidents will happen to those who buy it and those who will be working in the building. When Michael laughs, she warns him sharply not to laugh telling him that he might laugh on the wrong side of his mouth one day, she also repeats the words 'no luck'.

"She chuckled to herself. It was malicious, unpleasant laughter.

"Pull down the old ruined house and build, of course. Twenty—thirty houses, maybe—and all with a curse on them."

I ignored the last part of the sentence. I said, speaking before I could stop myself: "That would be a shame. A great shame."

“Ah, you needn’t worry. They’ll get no joy of it, not those who buys and not those who lays the bricks and mortar. There’ll be a foot that slips on the ladder, and there’ll be the lorry that crashes with a load, and the slate that falls from the roof of a house and finds its mark. And the trees too. Crashing, maybe, in a sudden gale. Ah, you’ll see! There’s none that’ll get any good out of Gipsy’s Acre. They’d do best to leave it alone. You’ll see. You’ll see.” She nodded vigorously and then she repeated softly to herself, “There’s no luck for them as meddles with Gipsy’s Acre. There never has been.”

I laughed. She spoke sharply.

“Don’t laugh, young man. It comes to me as maybe one of these days you’ll laugh on the wrong side of your mouth. There’s never been no luck there, not in the house nor yet in the land.” ” (p.11-12)

In another excerpt, she explicitly warns Michael saying literally “I’m warning you”. She tells him to leave and not to come back again, or he will return to grief and peril. This is a reflection of a bad prophecy and a scary future.

“She took my hands in her withered claw and stared down at the open palms. She was silent for a minute or two, staring. Then she dropped my hands abruptly, almost pushing them away from her. She retreated a step and spoke harshly.

“If you know what’s good for you, you’ll get out of Gipsy’s Acre here and now and you won’t come back! That’s the best advice I can give you. Don’t come back.”

“Why not? Why shouldn’t I come back?”

“Because if you do you’ll come back to sorrow and loss and danger maybe. There’s trouble, black trouble waiting for you. Forget you ever saw this place. I’m warning you.” ” (P.12-13)

In 'A Study in Scarlet' by Doyle instances of foregrounding represented by 'Marks of blood' and 'a stump of a candle' have been detected as shown in the following survey.

In a message sent to Sherlock Holmes from his friend, Gregson, who works in Scotland Yard asking him to join them in an investigation of a murder, an instance of foregrounding can be noted in the following excerpt when Gregson gives special importance to the marks of blood in the room and the reason

behind their being there, which is why he mentions them in his message ignoring other details about the murder. Later, it is discovered that these marks of blood have no significance at all, they are called attention to as a red herring technique used by one of the characters in the novel to deceive the reader, as they are used by the murderer to mislead the police.

“My dear Mr. Sherlock Holmes: “There has been a bad business during the night at 3, Lauriston Gardens, off the Brixton Road. Our man on the beat saw a light there about two in the morning, and as the house was an empty one, suspected that something was amiss. He found the door open, and in the front room, which is bare of furniture, discovered the body of a gentleman, well dressed, and having cards in his pocket bearing the name of ‘Enoch J. Drebber, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.’ There had been no robbery, nor is there any evidence as to how the man met his death. There are marks of blood in the room, but there is no wound upon his person. We are at a loss as to how he came into the empty house; indeed, the whole affair is a puzzler. If you can come round to the house any time before twelve, you will find me there. I have left everything in statu quo until I hear from you. If you are unable to come I shall give you fuller details, and would esteem it a great kindness if you would favour me with your opinion”. (p.13)

Another instance of 'foregrounding' is detected in the excerpt below when, in a different situation, we find that Sherlock Holmes and Gregson are very interested and keen on these stains of blood and their mysterious source, and this increases their importance in the reader's eyes:

“Sherlock Holmes approached the body, and, kneeling down, examined it intently. “You are sure that there is no wound?” he asked, pointing to numerous gouts and splashes of blood which lay all round.

“Positive!” cried both detectives.

“Then, of course, this blood belongs to a second individual—presumably the murderer, if murder has been committed. It reminds me of the circumstances attendant on the death of Van Jansen, in Utrecht, in the year '34. Do you remember the case, Gregson?” ” (P.15)

'Foregrounding' is again highlighted in yet another excerpt which sheds light on the concept of 'blood' and how the murderer uses it to scrawl the word 'RACHE' as shown below:

“I have remarked that the paper had fallen away in parts. In this particular corner of the room a large piece had peeled off, leaving a yellow square of coarse plastering. Across this bare space there was scrawled in blood-red letters a single word— RACHE” (p.16)

'Foregrounding' is also exemplified in this novel by instances of 'a stump of a red wax candle'. It is mentioned by Watson in his description of the scene of the crime. The deceptive importance of that candle lies in its strange being in such an empty room and empty house. Thus, the readers start to think of an important reason behind its being there. In fact, there is no reason behind the interest in its whereabouts at all, it is just another red herring to mislead the police and the reader, as explicated in the excerpt below:

“It was a large square room, looking all the larger from the absence of all furniture. A vulgar flaring paper adorned the walls, but it was blotched in places with mildew, and here and there great strips had become detached and hung down, exposing the yellow plaster beneath. Opposite the door was a showy fireplace, surmounted by a mantelpiece of imitation white marble. On one corner of this was stuck the stump of a red wax candle. The solitary window was so dirty that the light was hazy and uncertain, giving a dull grey tinge to everything, which was intensified by the thick layer of dust which coated the whole apartment” (p.14)

4.1.2 Burying (Backgrounding)

In the text below which is excerpted from 'Death on The Nile' written by Christie Poirot and Race, who investigate in the crime on the steamer, decide to search passengers' rooms and luggage hoping that they may find things to help him solve the mystery of the crime. There are communistic books, a lot of photographs, little personal things like old outer clothes and good underclothes and handkerchiefs. The last thing they find in their search is the ring which Poirot looks at and puts it back in its place. Moreover, this ring is only slightly referred to at the end of a text that is devoted to the inspection of Ferguson's

stuff. In doing so the importance of the ring is minimized, there are other things found in the inspection to disperse readers' attention. In the end of the novel the real significance of this ring is revealed when the detective, Poirot, makes known that Ferguson is a lord who has inherited millions and the ring is used as a sign to refer to his honored family, and this has helped Poirot discover his truth.

**“They passed on to Ferguson’s cabin.*

There was a sprinkling of communistic literature, a good many snapshots, Samuel Butler’s Erewhon and a cheap edition of Pepys’ Diary. His personal possessions were not many. Most of what outer clothing there was was torn and dirty; the underclothing, on the other hand, was of really good quality. The handkerchiefs were expensive linen ones.

“Some interesting discrepancies,” murmured Poirot.

Race nodded. “Rather odd that there are absolutely no personal papers, letters, etc.”

“Yes; that gives one to think. An odd young man, Monsieur Ferguson.” He looked thoughtfully at a signet ring he held in his hand, before replacing it in the drawer where he had found it.”(p. 154- 155)

Another instance of backgrounding is detected in Christie's novel 'They Came to Baghdad' where we find that Dr. Rathbone, the boss of Edward, is foregrounded whereas Edward is backgrounded. Edward, the real boss, looks like a simple employee who has nothing important to do. His humble job keeps him a low profile putting him out of the spotlight and implicating that he is innocent, while he is the key driver of all events and the real criminal, as elucidated in the following excerpt. Victoria and Edward are talking in their first meeting. Edward talks about his boss and Victoria asks him about what he exactly does in his job. Edward states that he is just obeying his boss mentioning the words ‘Yesman’ and ‘Dogsbody’ to affirm the idea that he has no power at all. He says that his job is to buy the tickets, make reservations, fill up passport forms, checking if the poetic manuals are packed, and run round here and there.

“‘What do you actually do?’ asked Victoria.

“Well, really it boils down to being the old boy’s personal Yesman and Dogsbody. Buy the tickets, make the reservations, fill up the passport forms, check the packing of all the horrid little poetic manuals, run round here, there, and everywhere. Then, when we get out there I’m supposed to fraternize—kind of glorified youth movement—all nations together in a united drive for uplift.” Edward’s tone became more and more melancholy. “Frankly, it’s pretty ghastly, isn’t it?”” (p.17)

Also, in Christie's 'Endless Night', Claudia, like Ellie, suffers from allergy. This piece of information is mentioned only once in the novel; that is, it is backgrounded, and it is cited among many other details about Ellie and Mike’s neighbors as shown in the excerpt below. Ellie and Mike go to have lunch at Major Phillpot's house. At the beginning of the section there is a description of the house, furniture, and paintings. There is also a story about a painting of a foreign blond woman who poisoned her husband. Then, the narrator turns to talk about other invited neighbors. There is Doctor Shaw, a vicar, a middle aged woman with a bullying voice who breads corgis. The part that is related to Claudia itself contains other information including the description of Claudia, her love of horses, and her being in Egypt last year. Thus, it seems that this fact about Claudia is of little importance whereas, in fact, it is of utmost importance as it solves the mystery of Ellie and Claudia’s death.

“‘And there was a tall handsome dark girl called Claudia Hardcastle who seemed to live for horses, though hampered by having an allergy which gave her violent hay fever.

She and Ellie got on together rather well. Ellie adored riding and she too was troubled by an allergy.

“In the States it’s mostly ragwort gives it to me,” she said—“but horses too, sometimes. It doesn’t trouble me much nowadays because they have such wonderful things that doctors can give you for different kinds of allergies. I’ll give you some of my capsules. They’re bright orange. And if you remember to take one before you start out you don’t as much as sneeze once.”

Claudia Hardcastle said that would be wonderful.

“Camels do it to me worse than horses,” she said. “I was in Egypt last year—and the tears just streamed down my face all the way round the Pyramids.”

Ellie said some people got it with cats.

“And pillows.” They went on talking about allergies.” (P. 87)

Another instance of backgrounding is detected this time in Christie's novel 'The Murder of Roger Ackroyd' where Miss Russell's question about drugs seems to be of no account, which is why it is backgrounded as illuminated in the excerpt below. When Miss Russell, the house keeper, comes to visit Dr. Shepard to have her knee checked, he suspects that the real purpose behind her visit is to have news about Mrs. Ferrars's death. In her conversation with the doctor, she asks him about drugs and also about rare poisons. The readers are distracted here. They cannot infer what the purpose of her visit is. Does she really want to have her knee cured, to learn about Mrs. Ferrars's death, to get information about drugs, or information about poisons? It is discovered later that she wants some information about drugs because her son is a drug addict, and tries to hide her aim of the visit by talking about other things leaving the doctor and also the readers bewildered.

““Good morning, Dr. Sheppard,” said Miss Russell. “I should be much obliged if you would take a look at my knee.”

I took a look, but, truth to tell, I was very little wiser when I had done so. Miss Russell's account of vague pains was so unconvincing that with a woman of less integrity of character I should have suspected a trumped-up trumped-up tale. It did cross my mind for one moment that Miss Russell might have deliberately invented this affection of the knee in order to pump me on the subject of Mrs. Ferrars's death, but I soon saw that there, at least, I had misjudged her. She made a brief reference to the tragedy, nothing more. Yet she certainly seemed disposed to linger and chat.

“Well, thank you very much for this bottle of liniment, doctor,” she said at last. “Not that I believe it will do the least good.”

I didn't think it would either, but I protested in duty bound. After all, it couldn't do any harm, and one must stick up for the tools of one's trade.

“I don't believe in all these drugs,” said Miss Russell, her eyes sweeping over my array of bottles disparagingly. “Drugs do a lot of harm. Look at the cocaine habit.”

“Well, as far as that goes—”

“It's very prevalent in high society.”

I'm sure Miss Russell knows far more about high society than I do. I didn't attempt to argue with her.

"Just tell me this, doctor," said Miss Russell. "Suppose you are really a slave of the drug habit, is there any cure?"

One cannot answer a question like that off-hand. I gave her a short lecture on the subject, and she listened with close attention. I still suspected her of seeking information about Mrs. Ferrars.

"Now, Veronal, for instance—" I proceeded.

But, strangely enough, she didn't seem interested in Veronal. Instead she changed the subject, and asked me if it was true that there were certain poisons so rare as to baffle detection.

"Ah!" I said. "You've been reading detective stories."

She admitted that she had.

"The essence of a detective story," I said, "is to have a rare poison—if possible something from South America, that nobody has ever heard of—something that one obscure tribe of savages use to poison their arrows with. Death is instantaneous, and Western science is powerless to detect it. Is that the kind of thing you mean?"

"Yes. Is there really such a thing?"

I shook my head regretfully.

"I'm afraid there isn't. There's curare, of course."

I told her a good deal about curare, but she seemed to have lost interest once more. She asked me if I had any in my poison cupboard, and when I replied in the negative I fancy I fell in her estimation.

She said she must be getting back, and I saw her out at the surgery door just as the luncheon gong went." (P.13- 14)

In 'The Valley of Fear' written by Doyle the crime tool, the hammer, is given less attention though it is revealed, later on, that it is the core of the crime. While the police, Holmes, and Watson are checking the crime scene, they find a hammer which seems that it is insignificant and not related to the crime but it is just used to distract attention from its real significance in altering the course of events in this novel. In other words, it is tactfully backgrounded as explicated in what follows. Upon arriving the crime scene, the country policeman and the doctor enter the room where the crime has occurred with Barker, Mr. Douglas' friend, to find out that the victim who is thought to be

Mr. Douglas is in fact his enemy as it is revealed later. There is a description of the dead man, his clothes, and his wounds. There is also the shotgun, the crime tool. The sergeant, then, asks Barker to describe to him exactly what has happened and how he has discovered the crime. Barker tells them everything in detail. Among the things that they find near the dead body and give it a special importance is a card with letters and numbers scrawled in ink upon it. A lot of attention is given also to the window which is open. Then, among all these things there is also the hammer, as it is elucidated in the following excerpt. In his question about this tool, Parker tells the sergeant that Mr. Douglas uses it the day before for altering pictures when he himself sees him standing upon the chair to fix a big picture using that hammer, which is why the sergeant disregards this tool and leaves it aside, for his belief it is unrelated to the crime. The purpose behind devaluing this tool is to turn the readers' attention away from the real crime tool.

““What have you got there, Dr. Wood?”

It was a good-sized hammer which had been lying on the rug in front of the fireplace—a substantial, workmanlike hammer. Cecil Barker pointed to a box of brass-headed nails upon the mantelpiece.

"Mr. Douglas was altering the pictures yesterday," he said. "I saw him myself, standing upon that chair and fixing the big picture above it. That accounts for the hammer."

"We'd best put it back on the rug where we found it," said the sergeant, scratching his puzzled head in his perplexity." (p. 22)

4.1.3 Focalization

As regards Agatha Christie's Style of Narration, 'The Murder of Roger Ackroyd' that she writes is a novel with a homodiegetic narrator. It is first person narrated by Dr. Shepard, the doctor of the village and the murderer. As it is mentioned before, he backgrounds his character showing himself as a watcher monitoring people and events in his village. He describes characters and events around him, and sometimes gives hints about himself. He doesn't talk a lot about his feelings and emotions. Readers usually trust first person narrators and his occupation as a doctor boosts their confidence in him. They never expect that he is lying and, in fact, he is not lying. Thus, the big trick is that in spite of his truthful narration, the readers are deceived. They cannot

discover the reality that he is the murderer. He tells the truth but he sometimes leaves gaps and some of his sentences are not very clear, that's why they can carry more than one meaning. The following extracts from the novel show how he hides his feelings toward events around him. The first instance when he talks about Mrs. Ferrars's death. He doesn't show any feeling about her death whether he is sad or happy. He just describes the events.

"Mrs. Ferrars died on the night of the 16th–17th September—a Thursday. I was sent for at eight o'clock on the morning of Friday the 17th. There was nothing to be done. She had been dead some hours."(P.6)

In a similar way, the murdering of Ackroyd has been referred to in the following excerpt. Dr. Shepard's emotional state toward this event is not apparent and the other person speaking on the phone is hidden, too. The readers takes it for granted that the caller is Parker carrying news about Ackroyd's death because they trust the narrator who indeed never lies to them but he lies to his sister and this is the trick.

"It was a quarter past ten as we went up the stairs. I had just reached the top when the telephone rang in the hall below.

"Mrs. Bates," said Caroline immediately.

"I'm afraid so," I said ruefully.

I ran down the stairs and took up the receiver.

"What?" I said. "What? Certainly, I'll come at once."

I ran upstairs, caught up my bag, and stuffed a few extra dressings into it.

"Parker telephoning," I shouted to Caroline, "from Fernly. They've just found Roger Ackroyd murdered.""(P.34)

When he talks about Mr. Ackroyd, he also shows no feelings toward him. He mentions a lot of information about his appearance, his family, and job but nothing about how he does feel toward him. He follows the same approach in his description of other characters. He talks about them generally not personally referring what he says to other people to delude readers and those around him that it is the people's opinion and not his as made clear in the following two excerpts, each begins with the same expression 'a lot of people'.

- *“Quite a lot of people do not like Flora Ackroyd, but nobody can help admiring her. And to her friends she can be very charming. The first thing that strikes you about her is her extraordinary fairness. She has the real Scandinavian pale gold hair. Her eyes are blue—blue as the waters of a Norwegian fiord, and her skin is cream and roses. She has square, boyish shoulders and slight hips.”*(P.25)
- *“A lot of people know Hector Blunt—at least by repute. He has shot more wild animals in unlikely places than any man living, I suppose. When you mention him, people say: “Blunt—you don’t mean the big game man, do you?””*(P.27)

In the excerpt below Dr. Shepard's opinion is again not made explicit, he avoids answering his sister's question so as not to reveal his opinion whether he is satisfied that the death was an accident or not. Consequently, he also hides his opinion from readers.

““There may be. It all depends. If I am able to declare myself absolutely satisfied that the overdose was taken accidentally, an inquest might be dispensed with.”

“And are you absolutely satisfied?” asked my sister shrewdly. I did not answer, but got up from the table.”(P.9)

He rarely expresses his feelings, especially those of sadness, sorry, and happiness. It is noticed that most of his apparent feelings are those of surprise and bewilderment as shown in the following excerpts.

- *“I had no cases of special interest to attend, which was, perhaps, as well, for my thoughts returned again and again to the mystery of Mrs. Ferrars’s death. Had she taken her own life? Surely, if she had done so, she would have left some word behind to say what she contemplated doing? Women, in my experience, if they once reach the determination to commit suicide, usually wish to reveal the state of mind that led to the fatal action. They covet the limelight.”*(P.12)

- *“I had dismissed the last of them, as I thought, and was just contemplating a few minutes in the garden before lunch when I perceived one more patient waiting for me. She rose and came towards me as I stood somewhat surprised.*

I don't know why I should have been, except that there is a suggestion of cast iron about Miss Russell, a something that is above the ills of the flesh.”(P.13)

- *““With Ralph?” I said, surprised; “there isn't any.”*

“Then why is he staying at the Three Boars instead of at Fernly Park?”

I did not for a minute question Caroline's statement that Ralph Paton was staying at the local inn. That Caroline said so was enough for me.

“Ackroyd told me he was in London,” I said. In the surprise of the moment I departed from my valuable rule of never parting with information.”(P.16)

- *“Flora Ackroyd?” I exclaimed in surprise.”(P.16)*

- *“I stared at him openmouthed, and he burst out laughing.”(P.19)*

- *““You know Mr. Ackroyd?” I said, slightly surprised.”(P.20)*

Let us now display some of the rare situations illustrated in the following excerpts where there are some ostensible feelings of sadness.

- *“I think I can safely say that it was at this moment that a foreboding of the future first swept over me. Nothing tangible as yet—but a vague premonition of the way things were setting. That earnest tête-à-tête between Ralph Paton and Mrs. Ferrars the day before struck me disagreeably.”(P.12)*

- *“I nodded mournfully, but in spite of myself I felt secretly entertained. This ridiculous little man was so portentously solemn.”(P.19)*

But, even these instances do not help the readers. In the first case, the readers think that the foreboding means that Dr. Shepard will hear bad news about Mr. Ackroyd's death, not that he will be obliged to kill him. The second example is just an ordinary transient signal when he talks about his loss of some money a year ago and it seems that this has nothing to do with the current circumstances.

On the other hand, Christie's novel 'They Came to Baghdad' is a heterodiegetic novel which is told from what is usually called a third person perspective. This means that it is narrated by a non-named voice outside of the events of the text. Consequently, the narrative voice is different from the one already discussed in the first novel which is homodiegetic, for most of 'They Came to Baghdad' has an external focalization which simply reports what is said and done but not what is thought, except for few situations. Using third person pronouns, the

narrator moves from a scene to another quickly, especially at the beginning of the novel, and in each scene we see different characters, different places and cities, and even different countries. This easy transference between scenes cannot, of course, be obtained with a first person style of narration because one person cannot be in more than one scene at the same time. This change of scenes and the presentation of new characters in each one heighten the mystery effects leaving the readers puzzled and unable to see what the connection is between all these scenes which seem unrelated at the beginning. However, when the readers move on in their reading, they will notice that the link becomes clearer progressively. The opening scene of this novel shows Captain Crosbie in Baghdad. Thus, it presents the first character, and then the second character which is Mr. Dakin and the setting is as follows: 'Baghdad' is the place and 'morning' is the time. The two men talk about a secret conference in Baghdad.

“Captain Crosbie came out of the bank with the pleased air of one who has cashed a cheque and has discovered that there is just a little more in his account than he thought there was.....It was eleven o'clock in the morning in the city of Baghdad.”(p.6)

In the excerpts below is the second scene which takes the reader to New York to present the character of Anna Scheele and her manager who talk about their work and also about Miss. Scheele's sister:

- *“Have you got the reports on the Krugenhof property, Miss Scheele?”*

“Yes, Mr. Morganthal.”

Miss Scheele, cool and efficient, slipped the papers in front of her employer.

He grunted as he read.

“Satisfactory, I think.”

“I certainly think so, Mr. Morganthal.””(p.10)

- *““I never knew you had a sister in England?”*

Miss Scheele smiled very faintly.

“Oh yes, Mr. Morganthal. She is married to an Englishman connected with the British Museum. It is necessary for her to undergo a very serious operation. She wants me to be with her. I should like to go.””(p.11)

In the following excerpt is the third scene takes the reader to London, where Victoria, a new character, is sitting sad in a garden remembering how she has been fired from her work that morning. Then, she meets Edward, another new character, for the first time and he tells her that he is travelling to Baghdad.

“Victoria Jones was sitting moodily on a seat in FitzJames Gardens. She was wholly given up to reflections—or one might almost say moralizations—on the disadvantages inherent in employing one’s particular talents at the wrong moment.”(p.12)

The fourth scene is also in London, but this time it presents Anna Scheele who reaches at Savoy Hotel. Then, she takes a taxi and goes to a jeweller, a florist, and a tailor and there is a car following her. Then, she returns back to the hotel. Later, she goes to her sister in the hospital.

“The Savoy Hotel welcomed Miss Anna Scheele with the empressement due to an old and valued client—they inquired after the health of Mr. Morganthal—and assured her that if her suite was not to her liking she had only to say so—for Anna Scheele represented DOLLARS.”(p.20)

In the excerpt below is the fifth scene, the person who follows Anna Scheele calls someone to tell him about what Anne has done:

“The small dark man in the raincoat entered a public callbox at High Street Kensington Station, and dialed a number.

“Valhalla Gramophone Company?”

“Yes.”

“Sanders here.”

“Sanders of the River? What river?”

“River Tigris. Reporting on A. S. Arrived this morning from New York. Went to Cartier’s. Bought sapphire and diamond ring costing one hundred and twenty pounds. Went to florist’s, Jane Kent—twelve pounds eighteen shillings’ worth of flowers to be delivered at a nursing home in Portland Place. Ordered coat and skirt at Bolford and Ivory’s.”(p.23)

There is also this important scene which presents Carmichael dressed as an Iraqi man in Basrah trying to survive from his enemies who want to kill him. The scene begins with the boat carrying Charmichael to Basrah.

“The boat that had left the marshes two days before paddled gently along the Shatt el Arab. The stream was swift and the old man who was propelling the boat needed to do very little. His movements were gentle and rhythmic. His eyes were half closed.”(p.31)

Thus, the reader has to make a link between all these events, cities, and characters to understand what’s going on, and this is, of course, not an easy task. Other things that intensify the mystery effect are characters' feelings and emotions which are not very ostensible in this style of narration, as it is mentioned in the first paragraph. For example, the readers don’t know anything about how Edward feels or what he thinks of at all. The same thing is true of most characters in the novel like Anna Scheele, Mr. Dakin, and Sir Robert. The characters whose feelings and thoughts are somehow obvious are Carmichael, Victoria, and Richard Baker. Thus, the narrator controls how much information she reveals and whose feelings and thoughts she focalizes so as not to let readers access the thoughts of one of the criminals in an attempt to mystify those readers and make the novel more mysterious.

Regarding Arthur Conan Doyle's Style of Narration, all the novels and short stories he writes including the novels that are included in this study are narrated by one of the characters, who is Dr. Watson, Holmes best friend. This means that they are narrated through external focalization using first person pronouns. Dr. Watson is moderate in telling the events. He describes what he sees exactly and he reports what others say exactly. But, of course, he hides some things like a solution to a mystery or an identity of some characters and never reveals them till the end of the novel. He even, sometimes, talks about his feelings. In short stories, there is no much space for the author to uncover his/her feelings whereas in novels they are free to do so. Actually, *The Hound of The Baskervilles* is amongst those novels which clearly unveil the narrator's emotions, opinions, and feelings. He shows his suspicions of the butler, Barrymore, more than once, as it mentioned earlier. In what follows are some excerpts that display his feelings.

- *"I confess at these words a shudder passed through me."*(p.16)
- *"As I entered, however, my fears were set at rest, for it was the acrid fumes of strong coarse tobacco which took me by the throat and set me coughing."*(p.21)
- *"The promise of adventure had always a fascination for me, and I was complimented by the words of Holmes and by the eagerness with which the baronet hailed me as a companion."*(p.41)
- *"The journey was a swift and pleasant one, and I spent it in making the more intimate acquaintance of my two companions and in playing with Dr. Mortimer's spaniel."*(p.47)
- *"and the bright paper and numerous candles did something to remove the sombre impression which our arrival had left upon my mind."*(p.52)
- *"I found myself weary and yet wakeful, tossing restlessly from side to side, seeking for the sleep which would not come."*(p.53)
- *"The fresh beauty of the following morning did something to efface from our minds the grim and gray impression which had been left upon both of us by our first experience of Baskerville Hall."*(p.54)
- *"It was a pleasant walk of four miles along the edge of the moor"* (p.55)

The events in the novel reveal that Dr. Watson's feelings and suspicions are not true most of the time as this is a technique to deceive the readers; for example, his feelings about Barrymore and also his suspicions regarding the mysterious man who is discovered later to be Holmes.

4.2 Pragmatic Analysis

This section is devoted to the discussion of the pragmatic aspect of the study. Thus, it examines language use in detective novels and how the authors of detective novels make use of certain pragmatic tools to misdirect their readers. First, it is intended to investigate how the author, narrator, or even one of the characters tends to be non-cooperative violating one or more of Grice's maxims in order to hide the truth and veil the solution to the mystery. Forty instances of violating Grice's maxims are detected as detailed in Table 4 below where the statistical results indicate that the two maxims of Quantity and Quality are the most frequently violated maxims making up 45% and 35% respectively.

Table 4 – Overall Frequencies of the Violations of Grice's Maxims Detected in the Selected Novels

Violation of Grice's Maxims								Total	
Quantity		Quality		Manner		Relation			
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
18	45	14	35	6	15	2	5	40	100.0

A close examination of the statistical results in Table 5 below reveals that Grice's maxims are more frequently violated in Christie's novels than in Doyle's ones. This reflects the mysterious nature that characterizes Agatha Christie's novels.

Table 5 - A Detailed Description of the Overall Frequencies of the violations of Grice's Maxims Detected in Christie and Doyle's Novels

Author's Name	Violation of Grice's Maxims								Total	
	Quantity		Quality		Manner		Relation			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agatha Christie	15	37.5	8	20	5	12.5	2	5	30	75
Arthur Conan Doyle	3	7.5	6	15	1	2.5	0	0	10	25

Second, it is intended to examine 'ambiguity' as another strategy that is used for purposes of deception at the pragmatic level through the author's or narrator's use of some expressions to create vagueness in a certain context. Authors, narrators, and even characters were found to use fifty nine ambiguous expressions, the purpose of which is, of course, to heighten confusion and mystification as illustrated in Table 6 and detailed in Table 7 below.

Table 6 – Overall Frequencies of the Ambiguous Expressions Detected in the Selected Novels

Ambiguous Expressions	
No.	%
59	100.0

Table 7 - A Detailed Description of the Overall Frequencies of the Ambiguous Expressions Detected in Christie and Doyle's Novels

Author's Name	Ambiguous Expressions	
	No.	%
Agatha Christie	19	32.20
Arthur Conan Doyle	40	67.79

In what follows is a display of some excerpt which illustrate the authors' use of these pragmatic devices.

4.2.1 Violation of Grice's Maxims

In 'Endless Night' by Christie an instance of violating the Maxim of Quantity is detected in the following excerpt which brings light to Ellie and Mike's first meeting. In that meeting Mike, the narrator of the novel, asks Ellie about her name but he says that she looks hesitant to do so to the extent that he almost thinks it's not her real name when she, in the end, reveals it. He proceeds in his narration saying that he is sure that she has given him her real name. There is a gap here, but not every reader is able to discover it. An attentive reader will know that there should be a reason behind his being very sure that she has given her real name although she has looked very hesitant. Thus, Mike violates the Maxim of Quantity because he has mentioned the effect without mentioning its cause which is very important, it is that Mike has known everything about Ellie before meeting her and he has planned with his girlfriend, Greta, to deceive her by planning to marry her and, then, kill her to get all her money.

“Fenella looked apprehensive when she gave me her name. So much so that I thought for a moment that it mightn't be her real name. I almost thought that she might have made it up! But of course I knew that that was impossible. I'd given her my real name.”(p.28)

In another excerpt taken from Christie's novel 'The Murder of Roger Ackroyd' Dr. Shepard violates the Maxim of Quality because he says something untrue. He says that he got a legacy a year ago, a legacy which was enough to fulfil his dreams but he lost it. The reality is that it wasn't a legacy. It was the money that he got from Mrs. Ferrars by blackmailing. Notice that he doesn't lie to readers here, but he lies to Poirot, the detective whom he is talking to, and this

causes misdirection for readers because they take his words for granted and believe him. They also don't know the real source for the money which is very significant.

““Yes,” I said slowly. “I fancy that that is a common enough occurrence. I myself am perhaps an instance. A year ago I came into a legacy—enough to enable me to realize a dream. I have always wanted to travel, to see the world. Well, that was a year ago, as I said, and—I am still here.””(p.18)

In using the single word 'everything' without giving any details to point to what Mrs. Ferrars has gone through which seems not to have any effect on her manners, Dr. Shepard in the excerpt below violates the Maxim of Quantity by giving readers less information than is required and, at the same time, he violates the Maxim of Manner by being obscure, for the word 'everything' doesn't make clear what he means. Actually, Dr. Shepard has kept blackmailing Mrs. Ferrars who continues to live a normal life though, in the end, she has committed a suicide.

“When had I last seen her? Not for over a week. Her manner then had been normal enough considering—well—considering everything.” (p.12)

In the following excerpt Raymond, Ackroyd's secretary, asks Dr. Shepard about the nature of his visit: If he has come for dinner or has been summoned for an emergency in an indirect reference to Dr. Shepard's black bag. Dr. Shepard makes clear in his response to Raymond's question why he has brought his medical black bag saying that he has expected a call for a birth case. He lies to Raymond violating the Maxim of Quality because he has brought his bag to hide the Dictaphone and the shoes of Ralph in it, but of course, he doesn't tell Raymond that.

*““Good evening, doctor. Coming to dine? Or is this a professional call?”
The last was in allusion to my black bag which I had laid down on the oak chest.*

I explained that I expected a summons to a confinement case at any moment, and so had come out prepared for an emergency call.”(p.24)

In the next excerpt, Dr. Shepard violates the Maxim of Relation. He mentions information that is not important and not related to the case at all, he hides the important piece of information by not mentioning it at all. He talks about a silver table in the drawing room and describes its contents in detail. Then, he draws the reader's attention to the sound that is made when the lid of the table is shut down saying that it is similar to the strange sound that he has heard just before his entering the room. All these irrelevant details are given to divert readers' attention away from the main reason why he lifts the lid of the silver table which is to take the dagger, the tool of the crime, from among the contents of that table. He also violates the Maxim of Quantity because the information that he gives is more than is required.

“Then my eye was caught by what, I believe, is called a silver table, the lid of which lifts, and through the glass of which you can see the contents. I crossed over to it, studying the contents. There were one or two pieces of old silver, a baby shoe belonging to King Charles the First, some Chinese jade figures, and quite a number of African implements and curios. Wanting to examine one of the jade figures more closely, I lifted the lid. It slipped through my fingers and fell.

At once I recognized the sound I had heard. It was this same table lid being shut down gently and carefully. I repeated the action once or twice for my own satisfaction. Then I lifted the lid to scrutinize the contents more closely.

I was still bending over the open silver table when Flora Ackroyd came into the room.”(p.25)

'The Valley of Fear' is narrated, as is the case with all Doyle's novels, by Dr. Watson. Dr. Watson is Sherlock Holmes' friend who is used to recording the events of every case they take part in after it ends. An instance of violating the Cooperative Principle is detected in the excerpt below when Dr. Watson keeps referring to the dead man using such referring expressions as “he”, “the victim”, and “the man”. First, he violates the Maxim of Manner using ambiguous expressions; and, second, he violates the Maxim of Quantity by not mentioning the name of the victim giving readers less information than is required. These two instances of violation, besides the context, are enough to mislead readers. They will take it for granted that the victim is Douglas whereas the end reveals that Douglas is alive and the victim is his enemy.

“The dead man lay on his back, sprawling with outstretched limbs in the centre of the room. He was clad only in a pink dressing gown, which covered his night clothes. There were carpet slippers on his bare feet. The doctor knelt beside him and held down the hand lamp which had stood on the table. One glance at the victim was enough to show the healer that his presence could be dispensed with. The man had been horribly injured.”(p.20)

Barker is Douglas’ friend. He and Douglas’ wife help Douglas change his clothes using his enemy's clothes after killing him. They lie to the police by telling them that the victim is Douglas and fake stories about the murder. In the following excerpt is Barker’s testimony when the sergeant asks about the accident. All the details that he has mentioned are faked, nothing of what he says is true or has really occurred at all. Consequently, he violates the Maxim of Quality and misdirects police and readers.

“Nothing has been touched up to now,” said Cecil Barker. “I’ll answer for that. You see it all exactly as I found it.”

“When was that?” The sergeant had drawn out his notebook.

“It was just half-past eleven. I had not begun to undress, and I was sitting by the fire in my bedroom when I heard the report. It was not very loud—it seemed to be muffled. I rushed down—I don’t suppose it was thirty seconds before I was in the room.”

“Was the door open?”

“Yes, it was open. Poor Douglas was lying as you see him. His bedroom candle was burning on the table. It was I who lit the lamp some minutes afterward.”

“Did you see no one?”

“No. I heard Mrs. Douglas coming down the stair behind me, and I rushed out to prevent her from seeing this dreadful sight. Mrs. Allen, the housekeeper, came and took her away. Ames had arrived, and we ran back into the room once more.””(20-21)

In the excerpt below the detectives ask Barker if Douglas approves his friendship with his wife because there are rumors that Douglas is a jealous husband and he doesn't like this friendship between his wife and Baker. Barker refuses to answer this question. Thus, he is uncooperative and violates the

Maxim of Quantity because he doesn't give the required information. His refusal might be interpreted that there is relationship between them and he hides it whereas in the end it appears that there is nothing between them at all.

"It's only the facts that we want. It is in your interest and everyone's interest that they should be cleared up. Did Mr. Douglas entirely approve your friendship with his wife?"

Barker grew paler, and his great, strong hands were clasped convulsively together. "You have no right to ask such questions!" he cried. "What has this to do with the matter you are investigating?"

"I must repeat the question."

"Well, I refuse to answer."

"You can refuse to answer; but you must be aware that your refusal is in itself an answer, for you would not refuse if you had not something to conceal." (p.37)

4.2.2 Ambiguity

In the excerpt below taken from 'Death on the Nile' by Christie Jacqueline declares to Poirot that she sometimes wishes to hurt Linnet and kill her by knife or by her little pistol. Then, she expresses her surprise using an interjection that ends in an exclamation remark, which is 'oh!'. When Hercule Poirot asks her about the reason behind her sudden scream, she tells him that 'someone' is standing there. When Linnet is killed, Poirot remembers this occasion thinking that the person who has heard Jacqueline's words has made use of them to kill Linnet and throw the charge on Jacqueline. Readers may also think in the same way especially with the fact that Jacqueline isn't left alone at the night of the murder and thus it is impossible for her to kill Linnet. But who is that 'someone'? This word is very ambiguous because there is no name of the intended person and, thus, it could be any one of the passengers on the steamer where the crime has occurred. The reason that makes this word ambiguous is that it has no specific gender; therefore, the detectives or even perhaps the readers cannot limit their suspects to male passengers or female ones and they have to take them both into their consideration. Consequently, this word makes the sentence and the whole situation very vague and complicated.

“Then you ought to approve of my present scheme of revenge; because, you see, as long as it works, I shan’t use that pistol...But I’m afraid—yes, afraid sometimes—it all goes red—I want to hurt her—to stick a knife into her, to put my dear little pistol close against her head and then—just press with my finger— Oh!”

The exclamation startled him.

“What is it, Mademoiselle!”

She turned her head and was staring into the shadows.

“Someone—standing over there. He’s gone now.”(p.49)

Hercule Poirot looked round sharply.

The place seemed quite deserted

Other ambiguous expressions are detected this time in Christie's novel 'Endless Night'. For example, in the following excerpt Mike, the narrator and the hero of the novel, talks about the girl that he loves. He doesn't mention a name and doesn't give any descriptions. There is just the word 'girl' and it is very vague, because it could be any girl in the world.

“A house that in my dreams I would live in with the girl that I loved, a house in which just like a child’s silly fairy story we should live together “happy ever afterwards.”(p.9)

The pronoun 'our' which is mentioned twice in the excerpt below in 'our house' and 'our own beach' is ambiguous and makes the whole excerpt confusing. It is not clear what Mike means by it. Does he mean himself and Ellie or himself and Greta? Most readers will take the first possibility for granted because Mike is married to Ellie whom he loves as it seems clear in his talk about her and her constantly in most parts of the novel. The reality is totally different because Mike loves Greta and she is the one meant by the word 'our'.

“I looked at Greta sitting opposite me. I wondered what she’d really thought of our house. Anyway, it was what I wanted. It satisfied me utterly. I wanted to drive down and go through a private path through the trees which led down to a small cove which would be our own beach which nobody could come to on the land side.”(p.70)

In 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' by Doyle Dr. Watson, who is Holmes' friend, narrates the cases that he has participated in solving them with Holmes. Thus, he already knows the solution but he doesn't reveal it to the readers until the very end of the novel and he uses a mysterious language for the effect of mystery as shown in the following excerpt where Dr. Watson and Holmes are arguing about whom Sir Charles was waiting for the night he dies. The expression that is used here is "someone" which is ambiguous as it doesn't identify a particular person or even their gender.

"Then, again, whom was he waiting for that night, and why was he waiting for him in the Yew Alley rather than in his own house?"

"You think that he was waiting for someone?" (p.24)

Also, in Doyle's novel 'The Valley of Fear' and, specifically, in their investigation of Mr. Douglas' death, the detectives ask his wife if she has any information that could be useful for the investigation. As shown in the excerpt below, she tells them that he sometimes mentions the expression 'The Valley of Fear', which is also the title of the novel, but he doesn't say what he means by it. For example; he doesn't mention its name, where it occurs, and what has happened in it. Thus, everything connected to this valley is ambiguous or unknown and this may cause bewilderment for the readers.

"The Valley of Fear," the lady answered. "That was an expression he has used when I questioned him. 'I have been in the Valley of Fear. I am not out of it yet.'—'Are we never to get out of the Valley of Fear?' I have asked him when I have seen him more serious than usual. 'Sometimes I think that we never shall,' he has answered."

"Surely you asked him what he meant by the Valley of Fear?"

"I did; but his face would become very grave and he would shake his head. 'It is bad enough that one of us should have been in its shadow,' he said. 'Please God it shall never fall upon you!' It was some real valley in which he had lived and in which something terrible had occurred to him, of that I am certain; but I can tell you no more." (p.41)

5. Conclusions

The analysis of the selected novels at the pragmatic and stylistic levels reveals that they abound in pragmatic and stylistic devices and techniques to diverse readers' attention and mislead them. The findings of this study confirm the applicability of these pragmatic and stylistic devices to English detective novels. Besides, they are used to achieve the intended purpose of misdirection. Readers' failure to infer the truth is caused by the authors' deliberate use of these techniques and devices which affect readers' inferential abilities by putting obstacles in the path of the process of deducing the right inference.

In addition, the study has reached the following conclusions:

1. These techniques and devices are more frequently used and are more diverse in Christie's novels than in Doyle's ones.
2. Among the stylistic devices 'focalization' is the most apparent deception strategy utilized in the selected detective novels.
3. Grice's maxims are more frequently violated in Christie's novels than in Doyle's ones.
4. The two maxims of Quantity and Quality are violated more often than the other two maxims of Manner and Relation.
5. The study also finds out that the use of ambiguous expressions as a pragmatic device is not different from the violation of the Maxim of Manner because each case of ambiguity can be considered a violation of this maxim. That being so, the maxim of Manner is another one that has been found to be most frequently violated besides those of Quantity and Quality.
6. As for the voice of narration as a tool of deception, the study has proved that Christie employs both external focalization as in '*Death on the Nile*' and '*They came to Baghdad*' and internal focalization as in '*Endless Night*' and '*The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*'. Doyle, on the other hand, draws only on internal focalization as in in '*The Hound of the Baskervilles*', '*A Study in Scarlet*', and '*The Valley of Fear*'.

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دراسة اسلوبية – تداولية للتضليل في روايات بوليسية مختارة

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المستخلص

لا أحد يستطيع أن ينكر قوة اللغة. فاللغة هي أداة مؤثرة وخطرة من الممكن ان تستخدم للتلاعب بالناس و خداعهم و السيطرة عليهم عن طريق التأثير على عقولهم و أفكارهم و مشاعرهم و هنالك أساليب مختلفة تستخدم لهذا الغرض و لكن يجب استخدامها بحذر و عند الضرورة فقط لانها من الممكن ان تؤدي الى سوء الفهم أو التضليل أو الغموض.

ان أدب الغموض هو ذلك النوع من الأدب الذي يتطلب نقل المعلومات بدقة سواء كان ذلك من شخصية الى شخصية أخرى أو من شخصية الراوي الى القارئ أو من الكاتب للقارئ. ان بعض روايات الغموض تكسر القواعد التقليدية للغة لرفع مستوى التشويق و التلاعب بتوقعات القراء. فلا يتم الكشف عن كل المعلومات و هذا ما يجعل هذه الروايات ممتعة جدا لأنها تشد انتباه القارئ و تجعله يتطلع لمعرفة المزيد.

لقد اتخذ تفسير الروايات البوليسية جوانبا مختلفة و أحد هذه الجوانب هو الجانب اللغوي و هذه الرسالة تذهب مع الجانب اللغوي في استكشاف الدوات الاسلوبية و التداولية المستخدمة في الروايات البوليسية لغرض التضليل و خداع القارئ. تكمن المشكلة في ان القراء قد لا يصلون الى الحل الصحيح او قد يصلون الى استنتاجات خاطئة عندما يحاولون الوصول الى الحقيقة و السبب هو ان الكتاب

يستخدمون طرق وأساليب مختلفة لأخفاء الحقيقة وتضليل القراء. إن هذه الرسالة تهدف إلى البحث عن هذه الأساليب ودراستها و هذه الأساليب هي التقديم أو تسليط الضوء، التأخير أو الإخفاء، أسلوب الراوي، انتهاك مبادئ غرايس، و الغموض. تبين الرسالة بعد ذلك تأثير هذه الأساليب على الروايات البوليسية و قد أختيرت سبعة روايات بوليسية لأجائنا كريستي و أرثر كونان دويل لجمع العينات و تحليلها.

لقد أكدت نتائج الدراسة على صحة استخدام هذه الأدوات و الاساليب في الروايات البوليسية و أكدت كذلك على مدى فعاليتها و كذلك أثبتت الدراسة ان أسلوب اجائنا كريستي أكثر غموضا من أسلوب أرثر كونان دويل. كما أكد الفحص الاحصائي على ان أسلوب الراوي و انتهاك مبدئي غرايس للكمية و الاسلوب هم أساليب الخداع الأكثر تكرارا على المستويين الاسلوبي و التداولي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسلوبية، التداولية، التضليل، مبادئ غرايس، الغموض، أسلوب الراوي، التقديم، الإخفاء.