

THE ARTISTIC AND FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF LINGUISTIC UNITS IN THE SHORT STORIES OF SABAHATTIN ALI

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Annotation

This article explores the artistic and functional role of linguistic units in the short stories of Sabahattin Ali. The study analyzes how phonetic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic elements contribute to the aesthetic structure and semantic depth of literary texts. Particular attention is given to the writer's ability to employ simple yet expressive language to convey complex emotional states and social realities. Using a qualitative stylistic approach, the research demonstrates that linguistic units in Ali's narratives function not only as structural components but also as powerful tools for character development, psychological depiction, and social critique. The findings reveal that the author's linguistic mastery lies in the harmonious integration of form and meaning, which enhances both the artistic value and communicative effectiveness of his works.

Keywords

linguistic units, artistic function, stylistics, narrative language, Turkish literature, Sabahattin Ali, lexical analysis, syntax, morphology, phonetics, literary discourse, functional linguistics.

Introduction. Language is the fundamental medium through which literary art is created, interpreted, and appreciated. In fiction, especially in short stories, linguistic units are not merely instruments of communication but serve as essential elements that shape aesthetic form, emotional intensity, and ideological content. The interaction between language and literature has long been a central concern in fields such as stylistics, Linguistics, and literary theory, where scholars examine how linguistic choices influence meaning and reader perception.

Among the prominent figures of 20th-century Turkish literature, Sabahattin Ali occupies a unique place due to his ability to combine artistic simplicity with profound social and psychological insight. His short stories reflect not only individual human experiences but also broader socio-political realities, including issues of inequality, injustice, and alienation. What distinguishes Ali's literary style is his deliberate and skillful use of language at multiple levels—phonetic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic—to construct vivid narratives that resonate with readers.

In modern literary studies, the analysis of linguistic units has gained increasing importance, particularly within the framework of functional and stylistic approaches. The concept of linguistic units encompasses all levels of language structure, from sounds and words to grammatical forms and sentence patterns. Each of these levels contributes to the overall artistic effect of a literary text. For instance, phonetic features can create rhythm and mood, lexical choices can convey symbolic meanings, morphological structures can express subtle nuances, and syntactic patterns can shape narrative flow and psychological depth.

The relevance of this study lies in its attempt to bridge the gap between linguistic analysis and literary interpretation. While many studies on Sabahattin Ali have focused on thematic and ideological aspects, relatively few have examined the functional role of language in shaping his artistic expression. By analyzing how linguistic units operate within his short stories, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of his narrative technique and stylistic uniqueness.



The main objective of this article is to investigate the artistic and functional roles of linguistic units in the short stories of Sabahattin Ali. To achieve this aim, the study addresses the following research tasks: (1) to identify the key linguistic features present in his narratives; (2) to analyze their stylistic and functional significance; and (3) to evaluate their contribution to the overall aesthetic and communicative impact of the texts.

In conclusion, examining the language of Sabahattin Ali from a functional and stylistic perspective not only enhances our understanding of his literary craftsmanship but also contributes to broader discussions in linguistics and literary studies. It demonstrates that even the simplest linguistic elements, when used skillfully, can produce powerful artistic effects and convey complex layers of meaning.

Literature Review. The study of linguistic units in literary texts has long occupied a central position in modern Linguistics and stylistic research. Scholars have emphasized that language in literature is not merely a neutral medium but a dynamic system through which aesthetic, emotional, and ideological meanings are constructed. Within this framework, the works of Sabahattin Ali have attracted considerable scholarly attention, particularly in the fields of literary criticism, realism studies, and socio-cultural analysis.

Early research on Sabahattin Ali primarily focused on his role as a representative of social realism in Turkish literature. Critics have highlighted his ability to portray the struggles of marginalized individuals, rural life, and socio-economic inequalities with remarkable clarity and empathy. His narratives are often examined in relation to the broader context of 20th-century Turkish socio-political transformations. However, these studies tend to prioritize thematic and ideological aspects, often overlooking the micro-level linguistic mechanisms that contribute to the artistic power of his prose.

In Turkish literary scholarship, researchers such as Doğan Aksan have underscored the importance of semantic and lexical analysis in understanding literary texts. Aksan's work on semantics provides valuable insights into how words acquire contextual meanings and emotional connotations in discourse. His approach is particularly relevant for analyzing Sabahattin Ali's lexical choices, which are characterized by simplicity, clarity, and symbolic depth. Through everyday vocabulary, Ali constructs a rich semantic field that reflects both individual emotions and collective experiences.

Similarly, studies in Turkish grammar and morphology, including those by Zeynep Korkmaz, have contributed to understanding the structural features of the Turkish language. These works emphasize the agglutinative nature of Turkish and its capacity for expressing nuanced meanings through suffixation. Such morphological richness plays a significant role in Ali's writing, where subtle grammatical variations often convey shifts in perspective, temporality, and emotional tone.

In addition, the field of stylistics has made significant contributions to the study of literary language. Scholars such as Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short, in their seminal work *Style in Fiction*, emphasize the importance of analyzing linguistic patterns at different levels—phonological, lexical, grammatical, and discourse—to understand the stylistic uniqueness of a text. Their approach highlights how even minor linguistic details can produce significant artistic effects, a principle that is clearly evident in Sabahattin Ali's concise yet expressive prose.

Furthermore, Paul Simpson expands the scope of stylistics by integrating cognitive and pragmatic perspectives. Simpson's work demonstrates how language in literature shapes readers' interpretations and emotional responses. This perspective is particularly useful in examining how Ali's language evokes empathy and psychological engagement, drawing readers into the inner worlds of his characters.

Despite these theoretical advancements, there remains a noticeable gap in the comprehensive linguistic analysis of Sabahattin Ali's short stories. While existing studies acknowledge his stylistic simplicity and narrative strength, few have systematically explored



how different linguistic levels interact to produce artistic meaning. Most analyses remain either purely literary or purely linguistic, lacking an integrative approach that combines both dimensions.

Recent trends in interdisciplinary research have begun to address this gap by combining methods from linguistics, literary studies, and discourse analysis. These approaches emphasize the importance of examining texts holistically, considering both form and function. In this context, the analysis of linguistic units becomes crucial for understanding how literary texts achieve their aesthetic and communicative goals.

In conclusion, the existing body of literature provides a strong theoretical foundation for analyzing the language of Sabahattin Ali. However, there is still a need for more detailed and systematic studies that focus on the functional role of linguistic units in his works. By building on the contributions of linguistics and stylistics, the present study aims to offer a more comprehensive understanding of how language operates as a key element of artistic expression in his short stories.

This analytical table presents the classification of linguistic units observed in Sabahattin Ali's short stories and examines their artistic and functional roles. The table highlights how different levels of language—phonetic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic—contribute to narrative aesthetics, emotional expression, and social meaning. It also demonstrates the relationship between linguistic form and literary function, emphasizing the writer's stylistic mastery.

Functional-Stylistic Analysis of Linguistic Units in the Short Stories of Sabahattin Ali

Linguistic Level	Linguistic Unit	Example (Generalized)	Artistic Function	Functional Role in Text
Phonetic	Sound repetition (alliteration, assonance)	Repetition of soft consonants	Creates rhythm and mood	Enhances emotional tone and reader engagement
Phonetic	Intonation patterns	Smooth vs abrupt phrasing	Reflects emotional intensity	Supports narrative flow and atmosphere
Lexical	Everyday vocabulary	Simple, colloquial words	Ensures clarity and realism	Makes text accessible and authentic
Lexical	Symbolic words	Nature, poverty-related terms	Adds deeper meaning	Reflects social and psychological themes
Lexical	Emotionally colored words	Words expressing sadness, loneliness	Intensifies emotional impact	Reveals characters' inner states
Morphological	Affixation (suffixes)	Tense, mood, diminutives	Expresses nuance and subtlety	Indicates time, perspective, attitude
Morphological	Word formation patterns	Derived and compound forms	Enriches expression	Expands semantic possibilities



Linguistic Level	Linguistic Unit	Example (Generalized)	Artistic Function	Functional Role in Text
Syntactic	Simple sentences	Short, direct structures	Creates tension and clarity	Speeds up narrative pace
Syntactic	Complex sentences	Long descriptive structures	Provides detail and depth	Reflects psychological processes
Syntactic	Dialogue structures	Conversational forms	Adds realism	Reveals social background and relationships
Discourse	Narrative perspective	First/third person narration	Shapes viewpoint	Guides reader interpretation
Discourse	Repetition and parallelism	Recurrent sentence patterns	Emphasizes key ideas	Strengthens thematic unity

The table demonstrates that linguistic units in Sabahattin Ali's short stories function on multiple levels simultaneously. Each linguistic element contributes not only to the structural organization of the text but also to its artistic expressiveness and communicative effectiveness. The interaction between different linguistic levels creates a harmonious narrative system in which form and meaning are closely interconnected.

Discussion. The analysis of linguistic units in the short stories of Sabahattin Ali demonstrates that language in his works functions as a complex and multi-layered system in which form and meaning are inseparably interconnected. The findings of this study confirm that each level of language—phonetic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic—plays a distinct yet interdependent role in shaping the artistic structure and communicative impact of the text.

From a functional perspective, the results align with the theoretical assumptions of Michael Halliday, who argues that language simultaneously performs ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. In Sabahattin Ali's narratives, these metafunctions are clearly observable. Linguistic units not only represent reality (ideational function) but also establish emotional connections between characters and readers (interpersonal function) while maintaining coherence and cohesion within the narrative (textual function). This confirms that Ali's use of language is not arbitrary but systematically organized to achieve specific artistic goals.

At the phonetic level, although less prominent than in poetry, sound patterns subtly contribute to the emotional atmosphere of the stories. The discussion reveals that Ali employs phonetic harmony to enhance readability and create a natural narrative flow. This supports the idea that even minimal phonetic devices in prose can significantly influence readers' perception and emotional engagement.

The lexical analysis highlights one of the most distinctive features of Ali's style—his preference for simple and accessible vocabulary combined with deep semantic richness. This apparent simplicity should not be misunderstood as a lack of complexity; rather, it reflects a deliberate stylistic choice aimed at maximizing communicative effectiveness. Words in his stories often carry symbolic meanings that extend beyond their literal sense, enabling the author to address broader social and psychological issues without resorting to elaborate or obscure language. This finding is consistent with the views of Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short, who emphasize that stylistic impact is often achieved through subtle linguistic variation rather than overt complexity.

Morphologically, the agglutinative nature of the Turkish language provides Sabahattin



Ali with a wide range of expressive possibilities. The discussion shows that the use of suffixes allows for precise expression of temporal, modal, and emotional nuances. These morphological features contribute to the dynamic representation of characters' inner states and perspectives. In this sense, morphology functions not only as a grammatical system but also as a stylistic resource that enhances narrative depth.

At the syntactic level, the variation between simple and complex sentence structures plays a crucial role in controlling narrative rhythm and psychological intensity. Short sentences tend to convey immediacy and tension, while longer, more complex constructions allow for detailed description and introspection. This syntactic flexibility reflects the cognitive and emotional states of characters, supporting the argument that sentence structure is closely linked to narrative meaning and reader experience.

Another important aspect highlighted in this discussion is the role of linguistic units in expressing social critique. Sabahattin Ali's stories are deeply rooted in the socio-cultural context of his time, and language serves as a tool for revealing social inequalities and power relations. Differences in speech patterns, vocabulary, and tone among characters often indicate their social status, education level, and cultural background. Through these linguistic contrasts, the author implicitly critiques injustice and gives voice to marginalized groups. This demonstrates that linguistic units in his works perform not only aesthetic but also ideological functions.

Furthermore, the interaction between different linguistic levels creates a cohesive and harmonious narrative structure. The effectiveness of Ali's style lies in his ability to integrate these elements seamlessly, ensuring that no single component dominates the text. Instead, phonetic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic features work together to produce a unified artistic effect. This supports the broader view in modern stylistics that literary meaning emerges from the interplay of multiple linguistic factors rather than from isolated elements.

Despite these findings, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. The qualitative nature of the analysis means that interpretations may be influenced by subjective perspectives. Additionally, the study focuses primarily on selected short stories, which may not fully represent the entire range of Ali's stylistic variation. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating quantitative methods or expanding the corpus of analyzed texts.

In conclusion, the discussion confirms that linguistic units in Sabahattin Ali's short stories are essential to both artistic expression and functional communication. His mastery of language lies in the strategic and balanced use of linguistic resources, which enables him to convey complex meanings through seemingly simple forms. This not only enhances the aesthetic value of his works but also reinforces their social and psychological relevance, making his narratives enduringly significant in the field of literary studies.

Conclusion. The present study has demonstrated that linguistic units play a fundamental role in shaping the artistic and functional structure of the short stories of Sabahattin Ali. Through a comprehensive analysis at the phonetic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic levels, it has been established that language in his works operates as an integrated system in which each element contributes to the creation of meaning, emotional depth, and aesthetic value. One of the key findings of the research is that Sabahattin Ali achieves a unique balance between simplicity and expressiveness. His preference for clear and accessible language enhances readability while simultaneously allowing for the transmission of complex psychological and social ideas. Linguistic units in his narratives are not used randomly; rather, they are carefully selected and structured to fulfill specific artistic and communicative functions. The study also confirms that different levels of language interact dynamically to produce a unified stylistic effect. Phonetic elements subtly reinforce emotional tone, lexical choices provide semantic richness and symbolic depth, morphological structures convey nuanced meanings, and syntactic patterns shape narrative rhythm and psychological intensity. This multi-level interaction reflects the principles of functional linguistics and stylistics, demonstrating that literary meaning emerges



from the harmonious integration of linguistic features. Furthermore, the analysis highlights the ideological dimension of language in Sabahattin Ali's works. Linguistic units serve as tools for social critique, revealing issues such as inequality, marginalization, and human suffering. Through language, the author not only depicts reality but also interprets and evaluates it, guiding readers toward a deeper understanding of social and moral concerns. In conclusion, the artistic and functional role of linguistic units in Sabahattin Ali's short stories underscores the importance of language as a central element of literary creation. His works exemplify how even the simplest linguistic forms, when used skillfully, can produce profound artistic and communicative effects. This study contributes to the broader field of literary linguistics by providing a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between language and literature, and it opens new avenues for further research in stylistic analysis.

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