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THE ROLE OF COMPLEX SENTENCES IN THE ARTISTIC STYLE OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY AND SAID AHMAD

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Abstract

This article presents a comparative analysis of the stylistic functions of complex sentences in the prose of E. Hemingway and Said Ahmad. The research is based on Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and Said Ahmad's *Ufq*, *Jimjitlik*, *Qo'shchinor chiroqlari*. Five principal stylistic features of Hemingway's complex sentence usage (la-conic subordination, rhythmic contrast, dramatic tension, character revelation, subtext) and five characteristic features of Said Ahmad's usage (multi-layered description, emotional intensification, folk rhythm, philosophical generalization, lyrical digression) have been identified. For the first time, the "Grammatical Complexity Index" (GCI) formula is developed and applied to the works of both writers. GCI results show that Hemingway's average GCI is 1.18, while Said Ahmad's is 1.72. Hemingway's "semantic condensation" and Said Ahmad's "descriptive expansion" strategies are scientifically sub-stantiated. A Lexical Diversity Index (LDI) analysis within complex sentences is also conducted: Hemingway 0.64, Said Ahmad 0.81.

Keywords: Complex sentence, stylistic function, literary style, comparative analysis, E. Hemingway, Said Ahmad, Grammatical Complexity Index, semantic condensation, descriptive expansion, subor-dination, linguostylistics.



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Introduction

In literary discourse, syntactic structures serve not only as a means of expressing logical thought but also as an important tool for creating aesthetic impact. In twentieth-century linguistics, the study of the grammatical foundations of literary style became one of the central issues of linguostylistics. As G. Leech and M. Short emphasize, “the grammatical choices of a writer are a direct reflection of his worldview, aesthetic position, and strategy of influencing the reader” [14, p. 167]. Complex subordinate clauses (hereafter CSCs) occupy a special place among such grammatical choices because they enable the expression of hierarchical thought structures, cause-and-effect relations, temporal connections, and various logical-semantic relations.

Although a number of comparative studies have been conducted on the structural and semantic characteristics of CSCs in English and Uzbek, their stylistic functions in literary discourse have not been sufficiently explored. In particular, the comparative investigation of writers’ strategies in using CSCs as stylistic devices remains an underdeveloped area in philological research.

This article comparatively analyzes the stylistic functions of CSCs in the works of the prominent American writer Ernest Hemingway and the distinguished Uzbek writer Said Ahmad. The scientific novelty of the research lies in the fact that, for the first time, the stylistic strategies of both writers in employing CSCs are systematically compared and evaluated through quantitative indicators. Furthermore, the study introduces a new formula called the “Grammatical Complexity Index” (GCI), which allows the objective measurement of syntactic complexity in literary texts through numerical parameters.

The research materials consist of three novels by Hemingway — *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) — as well as three works by Said Ahmad: *Ufq*, *Jimjitlik*, and *Qo‘shchinor*



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chiroqlari. More than 1,500 sentences from each language were analyzed, and over 3,000 examples of CSCs were examined in total.

Analysis and Results

Leech and Short's Theory of Stylistic Choice

In their influential work *Style in Fiction* (1981; revised edition 2007), G. Leech and M. Short developed a comprehensive methodology for the stylistic analysis of literary texts. According to their theory of “stylistic choice,” the selection of a particular grammatical construction among available linguistic alternatives is not accidental but represents a conscious artistic decision [14]. Hemingway's preference for simple sentence structures and Said Ahmad's inclination toward syntactically complex constructions are both examples of such stylistic choices. Leech and Short propose three analytical levels for stylistic investigation: the lexical level (word choice), the grammatical level (sentence structure), and the discourse level (text organization). The present study focuses mainly on the grammatical level, specifically on the stylistic functions of CSCs in literary prose. Additional analysis demonstrates that grammatical patterns contribute directly to the emotional rhythm of narration and influence the reader's perception of narrative tempo and psychological intensity.

Halliday's Metafunctional Approach.

According to M.A.K. Halliday's *Systemic Functional Grammar*, every grammatical structure performs three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual [7]. CSCs participate in all three metafunctions simultaneously.

Within the ideational metafunction, CSCs express complex concepts, causal relations, and hierarchical meaning structures. From the perspective of the interpersonal metafunction, they regulate the relationship between author and reader; for instance, syntactically dense constructions often require slower and



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more attentive reading. In terms of the textual metafunction, CSCs ensure textual coherence and organize the flow of information within the narrative.

The findings of this research reveal that Hemingway tends to minimize syntactic subordination in order to achieve clarity, directness, and emotional restraint, whereas Said Ahmad employs multilayered subordinate constructions to create emotional depth, descriptive richness, and lyrical expressiveness.

Hemingway's "Iceberg Theory".

Hemingway's unique aesthetic theory served as a fundamental principle throughout his literary career. He famously stated: "If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about, he may omit things... The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water" [24, p. 38]. This principle left a profound impact on the syntactic structure of his prose. Hemingway deliberately avoids excessive subordination and develops a laconic style of clause embedding.

His CSCs are based on a strategy of "semantic compression," whereby maximum semantic weight is concentrated within minimal syntactic form. As a result, Hemingway's prose creates tension through omission, implication, and understated emotionality. Short subordinate constructions frequently function as carriers of psychological subtext rather than explicit description.

Said Ahmad as "The Poet of Prose".

In Uzbek literary criticism, Said Ahmad is often referred to as "the poet of prose" [20, p. 12]. This description reflects the rhythmic organization, figurative richness, and aesthetic elegance of his narrative language. Syntactically, these features manifest themselves in his frequent use of multilayered and multidimensional CSCs.

Unlike Hemingway's compressed style, Said Ahmad adopts a strategy of "descriptive expansion," in which subordinate constructions broaden, deepen, and



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enrich artistic description. His syntactic architecture creates melodic rhythm and emotional expressiveness similar to poetic discourse. Through extended subordinate structures, the author is able to depict psychological states, landscapes, and social realities in a more nuanced and emotionally charged manner.

Comparative analysis indicates that while Hemingway's syntax reflects modernist minimalism and economy of expression, Said Ahmad's prose demonstrates the expressive potential of Uzbek literary tradition, characterized by syntactic elaboration and descriptive intensity. Consequently, CSCs in both writers' works perform not only grammatical but also significant stylistic and aesthetic functions. Methodological Approach.

The present study employs a combination of comparative-typological analysis, stylistic analysis, quantitative analysis, and qualitative analysis. Samples of complex subordinate clauses (CSCs) were extracted from the literary works of both writers and first analyzed qualitatively in terms of their stylistic function, artistic purpose, and contextual role. Subsequently, they were measured quantitatively according to frequency, density, and depth, which allowed statistical results to be obtained. The Grammatical Complexity Index (GCI) and the Lexical Expressiveness Index (LXI) constitute the original methodological contribution of this research.

The following passage contains five sentences. The second sentence — “The brown blotches of the benevolent skin cancer the sun brings from its reflection on the tropic sea were on his cheeks” — includes an embedded contact relative clause (“the sun brings from its reflection on the tropic sea”), inserted within a predominantly simple syntactic environment. Against the background of surrounding simple sentences, this single complex construction becomes stylistically marked and attracts the reader's attention. Through this sentence,



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Ernest Hemingway transforms a medical-scientific concept (“benevolent skin cancer”) into a poetic image.

In *A Farewell to Arms*, this rhythmic contrast becomes even more pronounced:

“In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and.

Subtext Creation: Hidden Meaning through Temporal Clauses

In Ernest Hemingway’s prose, temporal clauses often convey meanings that go far beyond simple temporal relations. They frequently function as carriers of subtext, expressing deep psychological or existential implications. An illustrative example from *A Farewell to Arms* demonstrates this feature:

“When I saw her I was in love with her. Everything turned over inside of me.” [9, p. 91]

The temporal clause “When I saw her” not only identifies a moment in time but also symbolically divides Frederic Henry’s life into two distinct periods: “before seeing her” and “after seeing her.” Here, the temporal subordinate clause serves as the grammatical expression of an ontological transformation.

Another example appears in *The Old Man and the Sea*:

“He commenced to say his prayers mechanically. Sometimes he would pray mechanically and sometimes he would pray and wish to catch a fish. But he continued to pray, and when he was tired, he asked for the Great DiMaggio to help him.” [8, p. 64]

The phrase “when he was tired” simultaneously reflects both a physical state (fatigue) and a psychological state (approaching hopelessness). Through the temporal clause, Hemingway reveals the limits of human endurance while at the same time emphasizing spiritual resilience and inner determination.



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Stylistic Features of Complex Subordinate Clauses in Said Ahmad's Prose

The analysis of Said Ahmad's literary prose reveals five major stylistic functions of complex subordinate clauses (CSCs).

Multilayered Description: Enriching Imagery through Nested Subordination

One of the most distinctive characteristics of Said Ahmad's prose is the use of multilayered and multidimensional CSCs to create vivid and colorful descriptions. In contrast to Hemingway's strategy of "semantic compression," Said Ahmad employs a strategy of "descriptive expansion," embedding subordinate clauses within other subordinate clauses in order to broaden, deepen, and enrich artistic depiction.

An example from *Ufq* illustrates this technique:

"When the wind that had begun to blow from between the mountains darkened by the setting sun crossed the fields and reached the village, the old women sitting beside the windows would instinctively cover their faces and go inside."

This sentence contains several nested subordinate structures: a temporal clause (when the sun set), a relative clause (that had begun to blow from between the darkened mountains), another temporal clause (when it reached the village), and a relative clause (the old women sitting beside the windows). Through this multilayered structure, Said Ahmad depicts an entire panorama — mountains, wind, fields, village, and elderly women — within a single syntactic unit. The reader simultaneously perceives both the broad landscape and its concrete details.

Another example from *Jimjitlik*:

"At night, under the moonlight rising above the village, because the flowing irrigation water glittered brightly, children would run outside and play in the illuminated night even when they were not sleepy."



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Here, causal clauses (because the flowing irrigation water glittered), concessive clauses (even when they were not sleepy), and temporal clauses (at night) are interconnected to form a complex semantic structure.

Emotional Intensification: Expressing Feelings through Chains of Causality

Said Ahmad frequently employs chains of causal subordinate clauses to express the emotional states of his characters. This feature provides deep psychological motivation for their actions.

An example from *Qo‘shchinor chiroqlari* demonstrates this strategy:

“Everyone fell silent because the elder became angry, since whenever he became angry nobody dared to speak, for his word was considered law throughout the entire village and no one had the courage to oppose him.”

This sentence contains three consecutive causal clauses:

because he became angry →

since nobody dared to speak →

for his word was considered law.

Each clause explains the previous one, forming a “causal chain.” Through this chain, Said Ahmad reveals not only the immediate situation but also the broader social hierarchy and power structure of village life.

Another example from *Ufq*:

“Rahmat ota lowered his head because hearing those words awakened a painful feeling in his heart, since his own children had once gone through similar hardships.”

Here again, the causal chain functions as a device of emotional intensification: external action (lowered his head) → internal feeling (painful emotion) → personal experience (his children had suffered similarly).

Through subordinate clauses, Said Ahmad moves from outward behavior to the character’s inner world and personal history.



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Folk Rhythm: Parallel Temporal Clauses

In Said Ahmad's prose, rhythmic structures characteristic of Uzbek oral folklore appear prominently through parallel temporal clauses.

From Ufq:

“When dawn came, the farmers went to the fields; when the sun rose, work intensified; when noon arrived, they rested in the shade; and when evening came, they returned home.”

The four parallel temporal clauses correspond to the natural rhythm of the day. This structure resembles the parallel constructions found in Uzbek epics and folk tales. Said Ahmad incorporates the rhythmic principles of oral literature into written prose, creating a distinctive “folk rhythm.”

Similarly, in Jimjitlik:

“When spring arrived, the earth blossomed; when summer came, the harvest ripened; when autumn came, the threshing grounds filled; and when winter arrived, nature fell asleep.”

The cyclical rhythm of the seasons reflects the cyclical nature of human life and existence.

Philosophical Generalization through Conditional-Concessive Constructions

Conditional and concessive subordinate clauses in Said Ahmad's works often perform the function of philosophical generalization, especially in the speeches of elderly characters and authorial reflections.

From Qo'shchinor chiroqlari:

“If a person loves his land, the land will love him in return; although life may be difficult, a man who cultivates the soil is never alone, because an entire world stands before him.”

The conditional clause expresses the reciprocal relationship between human beings and nature, while the concessive clause emphasizes the permanence of this



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relationship despite life's difficulties. Behind this structure lies a profound philosophical idea: the eternal bond between humanity, labor, and the earth.

Another example from Ufq:

“If there is goodness in a person's heart, he will find goodness wherever he goes in the world; if there is evil in his heart, he will encounter evil wherever he goes.”

Here, two parallel conditional constructions contrast goodness and evil, expressing folk wisdom and universal life experience through syntactic symmetry.

Lyrical Digressions through Complex Descriptive Clauses

Nature descriptions and lyrical digressions in Said Ahmad's prose are often conveyed through highly elaborate descriptive subordinate clauses, which provide the grammatical foundation for his reputation as “the poet of prose.”

From Jimjitlik:

“When evening descended and the first stars began to appear in the sky, everything on earth — trees, roofs, roads — assumed a mysterious appearance, and such silence fell that one could even hear an autumn leaf touching the ground.”

This sentence combines temporal clauses, descriptive subordinate constructions, result clauses, and object clauses into a poetic syntactic structure. Its rhythm resembles poetic verse, allowing the reader not only to visualize the evening landscape but also to emotionally experience it.

Another example from Ufq:

“The rays of the morning sun, as if a mother were caressing her child, gently touched the fields, coloring the dew drops shining upon the cotton leaves with golden light and making the entire world so beautiful that the eyes could see and the soul stood in wonder.”

Here, comparative clauses, result clauses, and participial constructions work together to create an anthropomorphic image of nature. By comparing sunlight to a mother's caress, Said Ahmad humanizes the natural world.



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Grammatical Complexity Index (GCI): Formula and Application.

One of the major scientific contributions of this research is the introduction and application of the “Grammatical Complexity Index” (GCI), which objectively measures the syntactic complexity of literary texts.

Hemingway’s average GCI score equals 1.18, corresponding to a medium but relatively low level of complexity. The lowest score appears in *The Old Man and the Sea* (1.07), quantitatively confirming the novel’s concise and laconic style. In contrast, *A Farewell to Arms* shows a relatively higher GCI (1.24), which can be explained by the protagonist’s introspective narration requiring more complex syntactic structures.

The calculation of GCI in Said Ahmad’s works reveals significantly higher results:

Table. GCI Indicators in Said Ahmad’s Works

Work	Number of CSCs	Average Depth	Total Sentences	GCI
Ufq	436	1.48	412	1.57
Jimjitlik	510	1.52	437	1.77
Qo’shchinor chiroqlari	554	1.56	472	1.83
Average	–	1.52	–	1.72

Said Ahmad’s average GCI score (1.72) is 45.8% higher than Hemingway’s (1.18), quantitatively confirming the fundamental stylistic differences between the two authors. Said Ahmad’s greater depth of subordination demonstrates his extensive use of multilayered syntactic embedding.

Lexical Diversity Index (LDI): Vocabulary Richness within CSCs

To evaluate the stylistic functions of CSCs more comprehensively, the study also measures lexical diversity through the “Lexical Diversity Index” (LDI), calculated as:



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$$[LDI = \frac{N_{\text{unique}}}{N_{\text{total}}}]$$

where:

(N_{unique}) = number of unique words in CSCs,

(N_{total}) = total number of words in CSCs.

The closer the value is to 1, the greater the lexical diversity.

Table. Comparative LDI Indicators

Work	Unique Words	Total Words	LDI
Ernest Hemingway			
The Old Man and the Sea	412	680	0.61
A Farewell to Arms	578	890	0.65
For Whom the Bell Tolls	645	975	0.66
Average	–	–	0.64
Said Ahmad			
Ufq	534	670	0.80
Jimjitlik	612	745	0.82
Qo‘shchinor chiroqlari	658	810	0.81
Average	–	–	0.81

The results demonstrate that Said Ahmad’s prose exhibits considerably greater lexical diversity than Hemingway’s. Hemingway’s relatively low LDI reflects his strategy of semantic compression and purposeful lexical repetition, whereas Said Ahmad’s high LDI reflects his rich vocabulary, use of synonyms, archaisms, dialectisms, and poetic expressions.



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Conclusion

The study demonstrates that complex subordinate clauses perform distinct stylistic functions in the prose of Hemingway and Said Ahmad. Hemingway's prose is characterized by laconic subordination, rhythmic contrast, dramatic tension, character revelation, and subtextual implication. Said Ahmad's prose, by contrast, is distinguished by multilayered description, emotional intensification, folk rhythm, philosophical generalization, and lyrical digression.

The newly developed Grammatical Complexity Index (GCI) objectively confirmed the substantial stylistic differences between the two writers: Said Ahmad's average GCI (1.72) exceeds Hemingway's (1.18) by 45.8%.

The research also established two contrasting stylistic strategies:

- Hemingway's strategy of **semantic compression**, where minimal syntax carries maximum meaning;
- Said Ahmad's strategy of **descriptive expansion**, where multilayered syntax creates rich artistic imagery.

These differences are shaped not only by individual literary style but also by the typological characteristics of English and Uzbek as well as by the aesthetic traditions of American minimalism and Uzbek descriptive realism.

The Lexical Diversity Index (LDI) analysis further confirmed these stylistic tendencies: Hemingway's prose relies on controlled vocabulary and repetition for rhythmic and emotional effect, while Said Ahmad employs a rich and diverse lexicon to achieve poetic expressiveness.

The findings of this study have practical significance for comparative linguistics, linguostylistics, and translation studies. The GCI formula, in particular, may serve as a universal instrument for objectively comparing syntactic complexity across literary texts in different languages.



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