Writing and Sentence Style Analysis in The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

Jui Chen
Pittsburg State University

Phil Rudd
Pittsburg State University

Recommended Citation

Writing and Sentence Style Analysis in The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

Researcher: Chen, Jui   Advisor: Dr. Rudd

Department of English, Pittsburg State University

Abstract

In *The Alchemist*, Paulo Coelho inspired people how to follow their dreams by telling a Shepherd's brave and mystical story. The novel attracts readers and brings them into the shepherd's journey to figure out what treasure he is looking for. What this book portrays just what an alchemist does, transforming "lead to goad". Page after page makes readers understand that every great thing starts from a simple thing, and finally it "leads" readers to their true personal "goal" in life. Similarly, every great book is built on every single word and grammar structure, thus this study focuses on analysis the grammar and usage in this book. This study identifies Paulo Coelho's writing style by analyzing and examining what kinds of sentence structures, sentence patterns, moods, verb tense and common voice Paulo Coelho uses in his novel, *The Alchemist*. In this study, a new approach to style analysis is used. The method employs traditional diagraming or the Reed-Kellogg system to map out a depiction of Paulo Coelho's writing, which turns out to be an illuminating way to visualize a writer's style. The results show that Paulo Coelho mostly used complex, indicative sentences in the simple past tense and active voice.

Purpose

A person with good taste in car will not only appreciate the exterior but also focus the detail components of the car. Similarly, a person who is seeking a great command of literary study should also dig deeper into the language, not only for its semantic but also for its uniquely secret formula, the sentence structure. As the saying goes, "The devil is in the details." Understanding these details empowers readers with a different vision to explore the literature. It enables forensic linguists to investigate a crime. It facilitates computational linguistics to create artificial intelligence. Most importantly, it is these details that amplify our ability to see human complexity, and broaden our intellectual horizons.

Sentence Patterns

P1: S+BE+ADV(Time or Place)

P2: S+BE+SC(PA)

P3: S+BE+SC(PN)

P4: S+LV+SC(PA)

P5: S+LV+SC(PN)

P6: S+ITV

P7: S+TV+DO

P8: S+TV+IO+DO

P9: S+TV+DO+OC(Adj)

P10: S+TV+DO+OC(Noun)

Verb Tenses

Simple past
Simple present
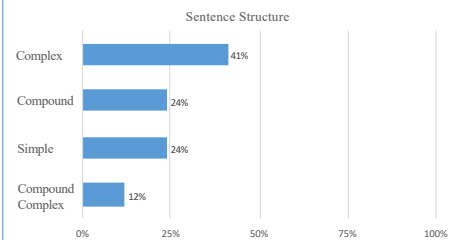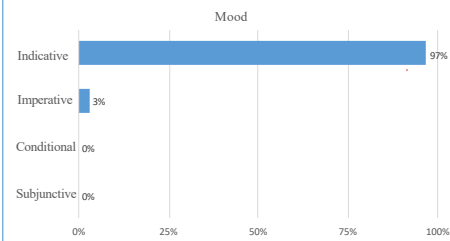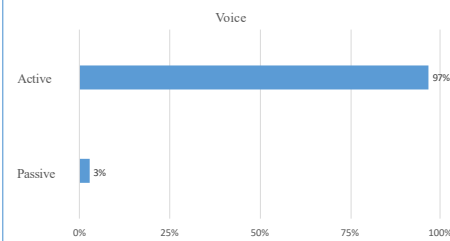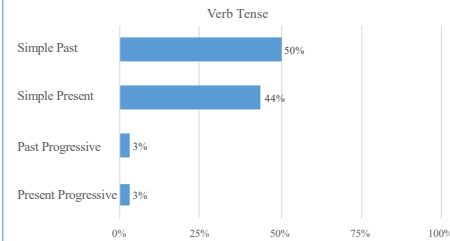Past progressive
Present progressive

Voices

Active
Passive

Moods

Indicative
Imperative
Conditional
Subjunctive

Sentence Structures

Complex
Compound
Simple
Compound Complex

Results

Verb Tense

- Simple Past — 50%
- Simple Present — 44%
- Past Progressive — 3%
- Present Progressive — 3%

Voice

- Active — 97%
- Passive — 3%

Mood

- Indicative — 97%
- Imperative — 3%
- Conditional — 0%
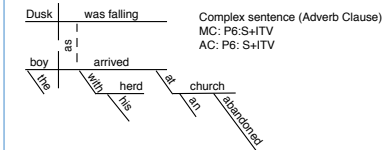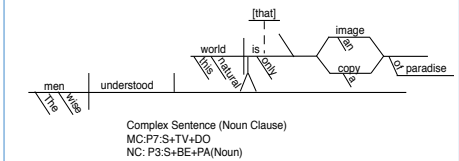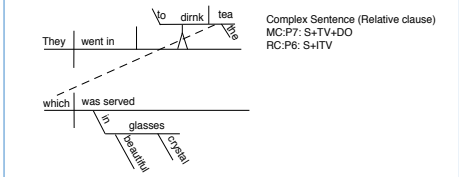- Subjunctive — 0%

Sentence Structure

- Complex — 41%
- Compound — 24%
- Simple — 24%
- Compound Complex — 12%

Sentences Diagram

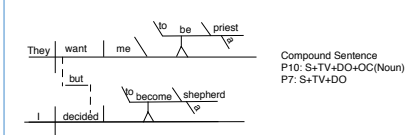Dusk was falling as the boy arrived with his herd at an abandoned church.

Complex sentence (Adverb Clause)
MC: P6:S+ITV
AC: P6: S+ITV

The wise men understood that this natural world is only an image and a copy of paradise.

Complex Sentence (Noun Clause)
MC:P7:S+TV+DO
NC: P3:S+BE+PA(Noun)

They went in to drink the tea, which was served in beautiful crystal glasses.

Complex Sentence (Relative clause)
MC:P7: S+TV+DO
RC:P6: S+ITV

They want me to be a priest, but I decided to become a shepherd.

Compound Sentence
P10: S+TV+DO+OC(Noun)
P7: S+TV+DO

They come in search of new things, but when they leave, they are basically the same people they were when they arrived.

Compound Complex Sentence
MC:P6: S+ITV
P3: S+BE+PA(Noun)
AC: P6: S+ITV
RC:P3: S+BE+PA(Noun)
AC:P6: S+ITV