Stylistic Analysis on Douglas Malloch's "Be the Best of Whatever You Are" Poem

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Abstract
The current study aims to analyze the stylistic devices and describe their realization in constructing the theme and meaning in Douglas Malloch's "Be the Best of Whatever You Are" poem. This descriptive qualitative study applied Content Analysis as an approach. Leech & Short's (2007) Stylistic Theory was adopted as an analytical tool to examine the levels of language (style) in the poem. Based on the findings, there are 67 items found in the phonological level, 60 items found in the graphological level, 7 items found in the morphological level, 151 items found in the lexical levels, 30 items found in the syntax level, and lastly, there are 13 items found in the semantic level. The stylistic realization has revealed that Malloch uses varied linguistic elements in constructing the theme of this particular poem. Importantly, Malloch, through this poem, conveys a message of hope and motivation for people of all ages to always remember that a complex reality and negative aspects in life can be juxtaposed with the positive ones such as being the best version of ourselves and share it to the world.

Keywords: *Stylistics; Poem; Douglas Malloch; Be the Best of Whatever You Are*

INTRODUCTION

A poem represents a wide variety of spoken and written forms, styles, and patterns, which extends readers' imagination and brings them into the universal thought, for it has something broader beyond the line (Barnet, Burto & Cain, 2008; Ferber, 2019; Safitri & Rosa, 2018). Since it is a reflection of the state of human mind, a poem can be considered a means not only for the poet him/herself to share their feelings but also for readers to enter into the poet's feelings regarding the objects, people, events, or ideas within the poem (Abdul, Raffique & Saddique, 2014; Regmi, 2015). Due to the fact that a poem's language is deliberately crafted to have an aesthetic or artistic impact, a well-written poem will inspire the reader's imagination, allowing them to visualize the subject at hand. Such an impact is influenced by the author's style in writing the poem. Style is the way in which an author writes and conveys a message in a piece of literature. It is what sets an author apart from another and creates the expressions that audiences see when they read (Barnet, Burto & Cain, 2008; Leech & Short, 2007).

In order to comprehend and examine literary works such as poems and its core elements, stylistics is the field of study that is appropriate to realize it. It is proposed to explore language use in literary works since it combines

linguistic and literary analysis (Leech & Short, 2007). Additionally, Thornborrow & Wareing (1998) state that stylistics is concerned with the idea of 'style', with the analysis of literary texts, and with the use of linguistics. 'Style' is usually understood within this area of study as the selection of certain linguistic forms or features over other possible ones. Therefore, a poem can significantly be analyzed through the diverse levels of the stylistic analysis (Najah et al., 2021; Sharma, 2019).

When stylisticians of literature talk about 'style', they have traditionally referred to the textual patterns that are the result of choices made by authors (Simpson, 2004). The creativity of the author has, for the most part, not been a direct concern; instead, authorial creativity has been viewed solely as the impetus for the text's creation. It is the text itself that has been the focus of analysis and interest (Simpson, 2004; Stockwell, 2002). Leech & Short (2007) ever mention that style is 'the dress of thoughts'. It is the way in which a writer expresses the message to the readers. Therefore, with stylistics, linguists and literarians aim to explain how the words of a text create feelings and responses that can be understood by the readers when they read it. Moreover, the concepts of 'style' and 'stylistic variety' in language are based on the premise that the same content can be expressed in a variety of linguistic forms within the same language system (Najah et al., 2021).

The issues of stylistic analysis on poems have been a growing interest worldwide for the last several decades (Murad & Amin, 2020; Nafi, 2016; Najah et al., 2021; Safitri & Rosa, 2018; Sharma, 2019; Wiadji & Hanidar, 2020). Evidently, a number of researches have been conducted to examine the poets' style in their poems such as Najah et al., (2021) who recently examined the language style used by Al-Barudi in his poem by describing the theme, elements of feeling, and language style based on aspects of diction, sentence structure and rhetorical aspect. More, Murad & Amin (2020) examine the graphological and grammatical levels of style in four English postmodern poems by hypothesizing that the poets tend to use graphological and grammatical deviation in their poems to attract audience. Likewise, Wiadji & Hanidar (2020) analysed the linguistic features of five most liked poems posted on Instagram. Last but not least, Nafi (2016) attempts to explore John Milton's poetic style in his epic poem Paradise Lost, and the internal and external influences that shaped it. The above-mentioned studies are the small amount of researches conducted to examine and describes the levels of style of poems.

Having a review of the previous relevant studies, not a single study, to our knowledge so far, has attempted to examine the linguistic style in Douglas Malloch's "*Be the Best of Whatever You are*" poem and describe its realization. Therefore, the current study offers a novel finding by attempting to analyze the levels of language (style) in the above-mentioned poem and critically describe its linguistic realization. More, the urgency of this study lies on the importance of inspirational and instructional poems such as "*Be the Best of Whatever You are*" for now-a-day people. Evidently, millions of people across the world browse the internet and their social media feeds seeking something that makes them happy and feel encouraged in living their lives. That is why reading motivational poems may ultimately bring benefits to them. Hence, to fill the emphirical void, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of language (style) found in Douglas Malloch's "*Be the Best of Whatever You Are*" poem?
2. How is each level of language (style) realized to construct the theme and meaning in Douglas Malloch's "*Be the Best of Whatever You Are*" poem?

In connection to the above-mentioned research questions, the objectives of this study are (1) to analyze the levels of language (style) so as (2) to describe the realization of each level of language in constructing the theme and meaning within Douglas Malloch's "*Be the Best of Whatever You Are*" poem.

Levels of Language (Style) in Stylistic Analysis

Doing stylistics thereby enriches someone's ways of thinking about language and, as observed, exploring language offers a substantial purchase on our understanding of (literary) texts (Simpson, 2004). Leech & Short (2007) asserts that literary stylistics has, either implicitly or explicitly, the goal of elaborating the relation between language and artistic function within a piece of literature. They classify six fundamental levels of language (style) in stylistic analysis.

1. Phonological Level

Phonological choices constitute a different style level and they can be regarded as an important ingredient of stylistic value (Leech & Short, 2007). To large extent, there are features of language which poets and prose authors exploit to create effects such as beauty or emphasis in their writing through phonology (Stockwell, 2002). Accordingly, Leech & Short propose four phonological features in stylistic analysis, namely; (1) alliteration (repetition of the initial consonant in two or more words), (2) assonance, (reiteration of vowel sound in a verse of poetry), (3) consonance (repetition of the consonant sounds in the words before or after different vowel sounds), and (4) rhyme (the repetition of similar sounds in two or more words that occur at the either end or middle of a poem).

2. Graphological Level

Graphological level is a minor and superficial component of style in a poem analysis (Leech & Short, 2007). It involves analyzing the layout of a poem (Sharma, 2019). Leech & Short (2007) states that the features of graphological level includes (1) punctuation (the marks used in writings to separate sentences and their elements as well as to clarify meanings), (2) stanza (a division of four or more lines having a fixed length, meter, or rhyming scheme), (3) capitalization (the writing of a word with its first letter in uppercase and the remaining letters in lowercase), (4) italics (a style of font that slants letters evenly to the right), (5) contracted forms (shortened forms (usually auxiliary verb and the negation "not") in which one or more letters have been omitted), and (6) structure or layout (the way of a writing is designed or arranged. In poetry, layout refers to the visual form of a poem).

3. Morphological Level

Morphology is essential for understanding how the human brain functions and processes language (Dominguez, 1991). Accordingly, Leech & Short (2007) mention that the devices of morphological level include (1) prefix (an affix that is joined before a root or stem), (2) infix (an affix inserted right into a root or base of word), (3) suffix (a morphological process whereby

a bound morpheme is attached to the end of a stem), (4) reduplication (a word-formation process that involves copying some part of a base (a segment, syllable, or morpheme), or even the whole base), and (5) compounding (the combinations of two or more lexemes).

4. Lexical Level

Lexical analysis refers to, in a broad sense, novelty in utilizing words (Pirnajmuddin & Medhat, 2011). According to Leech & Short (2007), there are several different categories or classes of words available in stylistics analysis, but the most common ones include nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions. Moreover, determiners, quantifiers, slangs, clichés, and even foreign words can also include in poem analysis (Sharma, 2019; Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998).

5. Syntax Level

Syntax deals with how words are combined to form phrases, how phrases are combined to form clauses or larger phrases, and how clauses are combined to form sentences (Miller, 2016). Therefore, in syntax level of analysis, as stated by Leech & Short (2007), the elements include (1) clauses (main and subordinate), (2) structure-based sentence types (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences), and (3) function-based sentence types (declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamative sentences).

6. Semantic Level

Semantic analysis is concerned with meaning, and interestingly amongst other things, in those aspects of language which give the sentence a 'truth value' (Simpson, 2004). This suggests that simple words may carry remarkable significance or those words can convey deeper meanings than they used to (Simpson, 2004; Wales, 2001). Accordingly, Leech & Short (2007) mention that the semantic devices in stylistic analysis include (1) metaphor (a comparison between two things that are unique from one another yet comparable by the claim that 'X is Y'), (2) simile (a comparison of two different things that can be marked by the words *like, seems, as, similar to* and other equal words), (3) hyperbole (the excessive exaggeration of a fact or a possibility), (4) personification (a literary term used by authors to add human qualities to non-human things), and (5) imagery (a figure of speech used to portray things, thoughts, and activities in a manner that stimulates our physical senses; sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste).

Poem as a Mode of Thought and Expression

Along with the development of literary works, poems are still the most popular genre of literature. Poems are a beautiful freedom of expression that are able to put oneself in the place of the other and lets feelings flow with words that silence the heart (Ferber, 2019; Najah et al., 2021; Wiadji & Hanidar, 2020). This is the most concise means to express a widely held viewpoint, which is regarded as undeniable common sense by the vast majority of general readers and many literary critics (Ferber, 2019).

People understand and interpret a poem by inferring the poet's intended meaning (Ferber, 2019). The notion of poetry are the poet's utterances and that readers must discover what the poet intends to convey in it makes a poem as a dress or mode of thought and expression of a poet. In poem writing, the

distinction between identity of meaning and identity of sense is illustrated by the so-called "elegant variation" technique (Leech & Short, 2007). Through a poem, people (as readers) may read the poet's mind

Since thought and expression are linked to the concepts of emotions, feelings, and passions from its early accounts (Zalipour, 2011), understanding and appreciating a poem should be taken into account critically and carefully between what is said and how it is said, between body and dress, between message and medium, and between content and form (Ferber, 2019). As a result of expressing their ideas, emotions, and memories through a careful selection of words (poetic diction), many poets are able to establish a stronger connection with their audience. This is, as firmly stated by Leech & Short (2007), the persistent concept of style (in a poem) as 'the dress or mode of thought and expression'.

Recognizing Douglas Malloch

Douglas Malloch (May 5, 1877 – July 2, 1938) was an American poet, short-story author, and Associate Editor of American Lumberman, a trade paper in Chicago. He became enamored with writing poems and short-stories about lumbering scenes, hence, was both locally and nationally known as the "Lumberman's poet". He was also noted for writing "Be the Best of Whatever You Are" and "Round River Drive" in addition to many other creations. He was commissioned to write the Michigan State Song (Felleman, 1936).

Brother Malloch, as he was renowned to his family and friends, was born in Muskegon, Michigan, a well-known lumbering centre in the upper Midwest of the United States of America. He was raised among logging camps, sawmills, and lumberyards. He became well-known among the lumber business professionals of the twentieth century. Helen Miller, a journalist and the founder of the National Federation of Press Women, was his wife. His works include *"A Man"*, *"Ain't It Fine Today?"*, *"Always A Mason"*, *"Be the Best of Whatever You Are"*, *"Building"*, *"Chaudière"*, *"Father's Lodge"*, *"Good Timber"*, *"Michigan my Michigan"*, *"Old Town Road"*, *"You have to believe in happiness"*, *"Someone to Care"*, *"The Heart Content"*, *"Live life today"*, and *"Oh Weep No Weeps"*.

METHOD
Design

The current study used descriptive qualitative with Content Analysis as an approach. As Ary et al., (2018) mention that the goal of a qualitative research is a holistic description and depth of comprehension rather than a numeric analysis of data. Since the current study focused the analysis on text description, therefore, Krippendorff's (2018) Content Analysis (CA) was applied as the analytical method. Content Analysis is a research method for drawing reliable and reproducible conclusions from texts (or other recorded material) that focuses on analyzing, describing, and interpreting to learn about human behavior (contexts of usage). The material may be public records, textbooks, letters, films, tapes, diaries, literary works, reports, or other documents (Ary et al., 2018; Krippendorff, 2018). Additionally, Leech & Short's (2007) Stylistic

Theory was adopted as the analytical tool in order to examine and elucidate the stylistic devices (levels of language) in the poem.

Data Source
The data were all lines and stanzas of a poem entitled "*Be the Best of Whatever You are*" written by Douglas Malloch (1926) and was obtained from a literary book entitled "*The Best Loved Poems of the American People*" authored by Hazel Felleman (1936) which was the source of data. Furthermore, the poem was selected as the research subject because of the following justifications:
1. The poem is deemed inspirational, motivational, and instructional that shares an encouraging message for readers of all ages.
2. It comprises a strong, interesting, and well-placed poetic diction which is important to make readers feel encouraged and give them joyful shiver.

Procedures of Data Analysis
In order to answer each of the research questions, analytical procedures were necessarily and carefully conducted in order to analyze the data. To answer the first research question, a general frequency count (percentage) was conducted to determine and take into account the levels of language and their features by counting and tabulating the data in Excel worksheets. Using stylistic-based coding, we first determined the features of each level of language contained in the poem occupying Leech & Short's (2007) Stylistic Theory (see Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, Table 5, Table 6, Table 7, and Table 8). After the frequency count was done, a stylistic description and interpretation of the levels of language following Leech & Short's (2007) Stylistic Theory was conducted in order to answer the second research question. Additionally, other relevant frameworks such as Ferber (2019), Simpson (2004), Stockwell (2006), Thornborrow & Wareing (1998), and Wales (2001) were also occupied to support the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Levels of Language (Style) of the Poem
In order to answer the first research question, a stylistic-based coding of levels of language were necessarily conducted. The results are based on each level of language which are divided into *phonological level* (see Table 1), *graphological level* (see Table 2), *morphological level* (see Table 3), *lexical level* (see Table 4), *syntax level* (see Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7), and *semantic level* (see Table 8).

To begin with, the analysis was started with the identification of the phonological level of the poem. The result of the phonological features found in the poem is displayed on the following table.

Table 1. The distribution of phonological features of the poem

Features	Frequency	Percentage	Location in the Poem
Alliteration	21	31%	• Line 2, 4 Stanza 1 • Line 5,6,7,8 Stanza 2 • Line 9,11 Stanza 3

			• Line 14,16 Stanza 4
Assonance	25	37%	• Line 1,2,4 Stanza 1 • Line 5,6,7 Stanza 2 • Line 9,11,12 Stanza 3 • Line 13,14 Stanza 4
Consonance	20	30%	• Line 1,3,4 Stanza 1 • Line 7 Stanza 2 • Line 10,11 Stanza 3 • Line 15,16 Stanza 4
Rhyme	1	1%	• Line 12 Stanza 3
Total	**67**	**100%**	

As seen on Table 1, the most frequently used phonological feature is assonance (37%) which can be found in all of the stanzas of the poem. the second most frequently used phonological feature is alliteration (31%) followed by consonance (30%) and the least used feature is rhyme (1%) which can be found in only one stanza of the poem.

The second analysis was the identification of graphological features of the poem. The result of the graphological features found in the poem is displayed on the following table.

Table 2. The distribution of graphological elements of the poem

Features	Frequency	Percentage	Location in the Poem
Capitalization	16	26%	• Line 1,2,3,4 Stanza 1 • Line 5,6,7,8 Stanza 2 • Line 9,10,11,12 Stanza 3 • Line 13,14,15,16 Stanza 4
Contacted forms	12	20%	• Line 1,2,3,4 Stanza 1 • Line 5,6,7,8 Stanza 2 • Line 9,10,11,12 Stanza 3 • Line 13,14,15,16 Stanza 4
Punctuations	28	47%	• Line 1,2,3,4 Stanza 1 • Line 5,6,7,8 Stanza 2 • Line 9,10,11,12 Stanza 3 • Line 13,14,15,16 Stanza 4
Stanza	4	7%	Stanza 1 – 4
Italics	0	0%	———
Total	**60**	**100%**	

As seen from Table 2, the most frequently used graphological feature is punctuations (47%) which are contained in all stanzas of the poem. Next, the second most frequently used graphological feature is capitalization (26%), then the next is contracted forms (20%) followed by stanza (7%). However, italics are found to be absent in the poem which means that Malloch does not use italics in this particular poem.

The next analysis was the identification of morhological features of the poem. The result of the morphological features are displayed on the following table.

Table 3. The distribution of morphological features of the poem

Features	Frequency	Percentage	Location in the Poem
Compounding	4	50%	• Line 6, 8 Stanza 2 • Line 10 Stanza 3 • Line 13 Stanza 4
Suffixation	4	50%	• Line 6, 8 Stanza 2 • Line 9, 11 Stanza 3
Infixation	0	0%	——
Prefixation	0	0%	——
Reduplication	0	0%	——
Total	**7**	**100%**	

As seen on Table 3 above, only two features of the morphological level are used in the poem. They are compounding (50%) and suffixation (50%). Both share the same amount of the items found. However, other morphological features such as infixation (0%), prefixation (0%), and reduplication (0%) are found to be absent in the poem.

The next analysis is the identification of lexical features of the poem. Since lexical level deals with word classes (Verspoor & Sauter, 2000), the features are abundantly used. The result of the lexical features are displayed on the following table.

Table 4. The distribution of lexical features of the poem

Word Classes			
Features	Frequency	Percentage	Location in the Poem
Nouns	27	18%	• Line 1,2,3,4 Stanza 1 • Line 5,6,7,8 Stanza 2 • Line 9,10,11,12 Stanza 3 • Line 13,14,15,16 Stanza 4
Pronouns	14	9%	• Line 2, 4 Stanza 1 • Line 5,6,7,8 Stanza 2 • Line 9,11 Stanza 3

			• Line 14,16 Stanza 4
Adjectives	10	7%	• Line 1, 3 Stanza 1 • Line 5,6,8 Stanza 2 • Line 11,12 Stanza 3 • Line 16 Stanza 4
Verbs	38	25%	• Line 1,2,3,4 Stanza 1 • Line 5,6,7,8 Stanza 2 • Line 9,10,11,12 Stanza 3 • Line 13,14,15,16 Stanza 4
Adverbs	3	2%	• Line 7 Stanza 2 • Line 10 Stanza 3
Prepositions	14	9%	• Line 1,2,3 Stanza 1 • Line 5, 8 Stanza 2 • Line 10, 11 Stanza 3 • Line 16 Stanza 4
Conjunctions	15	10%	• Line 1, 4 Stanza 1 • Line 6,7,8 Stanza 2 • Line 10,11,12 Stanza 3 • Line 13,14,15 Stanza 4
Determiners	24	16%	• Line 1,2,3,4 Stanza 1 • Line 5,6,7,8 Stanza 2 • Line 9,10,11,12 Stanza 3 • Line 13,14,15,16 Stanza 4
Quantifiers	6	4%	• Line 6 Stanza 2 • Line 9,10,11 Stanza 3
Slangs	0	0%	——
Clichés	0	0%	——
Foreign Words	0	0%	——
Total	**151**	**100%**	

As seen from Table 4 above, the most frequently used lexical item (word class) is verbs (25%). The second most frequently used lexical item is nouns (18%) followed by determiners (16%), conjunctions (10%), pronouns (9%), prepositions (9%), adjectives (7%), quantifiers (4%), and adverbs is the least one (2%). However, other lexical items such as slangs (0%), clichés (0%), and foreign words (0%) are found to be absent in the poem.

The next is the identification of syntax elements of the poem. The analysis were divided into three, namely *clause types*, *structure-based*

sentence types, and *function-based sentence types*. The first result of the syntax element found in the poem is displayed on the following table.

Table 5. The distribution of clause types of the poem

Clause Types			
Features	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Location in the Poem**
Independent	11	48%	• Line 2, 4 Stanza 1 • Line 5, 7 Stanza 2 • Line 9, 10, 11 Stanza 3 • Line 13, 14, 15, 16 Stanza 4
Subordinate	12	52%	• Line 2, 4 Stanza 1 • Line 5, 6, 7, 8 Stanza 2 • Line 11, 12 Stanza 3 • Line 13, 14, 15 Stanza 4
Total	**23**	**100%**	

As seen on the above **Table 5**, the most frequently used clause type in the poem is independent clause (49%) followed by subordinate clause (52%). Furthermore, the second result of the syntax element found in the poem is displayed on the following table.

Table 6. The distribution of structure-based sentence types of the poem

Structure-based Sentence Types			
Features	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Location in the Poem**
Simple	2	18%	• Line 10 Stanza 3 • Line 16 Stanza 4
Compound	3	27%	• Line 9,11,12 Stanza 3
Complex	5	45%	• Line 1,4 Stanza 1 • Line 5 Stanza 2 • Line 13,14 Stanza 4
Compound-Complex	1	9%	• Line 15 Stanza 4
Total	**11**	**100%**	

As seen on Table 6 above, based on the structure, the most used sentence is complex sentence (45%) followed by compound sentence (27%), simple sentence (18%), and compound-complex sentence (9%).

More, the last result of syntax elements found in the poem is displayed on the following table.

Table 7. The distribution of function-based sentence types of the poem

Function-based Sentence Types			
Features	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Location in the Poem**
Declarative	8	50%	- Line 6,8 Stanza 2 - Line 9,10,11,12 Stanza 3 - Line 14,15 Stanza 4
Imperative	8	50%	- Line 1,4 Stanza 1 - Line 5,7 Stanza 2 - Line 13,14,16 Stanza 4
Interrogative	0	0%	——
Exclamative	0	0%	——
Total	**16**	**100%**	

As seen on the above Table 7, based on the function, only two types of sentence are used; declarative (50%) and imperative (50%). Both share the same amount which is 8 items used each. However, the other two types; interrogative (0%) and exclamative (0%) are found to be absent in the poem.

Last but not least analysis of the levels of language (style) of the poem is the semantic analysis. The result of the semantic features found in the poem is displayed on the following table.

Table 8. The distribution of semantic features of the poem

Features	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Location in the Poem**
Metaphor	15	100%	- Line 6,8 Stanza 2 - Line 10 Stanza 3 - Line 13 Stanza 4
Hyperbole	0	0%	——
Imagery	0	0%	——
Personification	0	0%	——
Simile	0	0%	——
Total	**15**	**100%**	

As seen on Table 8 above, the only semantic feature which is mostly used by Malloch is metaphor (100%). Other features such as hyperbole (0%), imagery (0%), personification (0%), and simile (0%) were found to be absent in this particular poem.

Realization of the Levels of Language (Style) of the Poem

In order to answer the second research question, a stylistic description and interpretation was carefully conducted to see how Malloch choices and utilizes words, phrases, and sentences to construct and develop the poetic theme so as to convey meaningful message to the readers.

First, the phonological level is likely the most significant level at which the language of poetry operates and is modified (Leech & Short, 2007), since poetry (or at least the one which is being analyzed in this study) is above all the maximum exploitation of the sound potentialities of the language. In the poem, some alliterations such as '*If you can't **b**e the **s**un **b**e a **s**tar*' (line 14 stanza 4) are used by Malloch to provide an auditory pulse that gives a piece of literary text a melodious, poetic, and/or emotional effect. Even though the repeated initial '**b**' and '**s**' sound are not in the whole sentence, but Malloch's wishful thoughts on becoming a meaningful individual are imbued with a somnolent, ruminative quality owing to the gentle rhythm of the repeated initial sound. Such an effect would make the assonance and consonance as well. Some assonances like '***A**nd some highw**a**y h**a**ppier m**a**ke*' (line 6 stanza 2) and consonances like '*If you can't **b**e a **b**ush **b**e a **b**it of the grass*' (line 5 stanza 2) surely add some memorable rhyme to the poem. Importantly, by using alliterations, assonances, and consonances in the poem, they will capture the reader's interest and create some memorable impression that will last a long time (Sharma, 2019; Wales, 2001), since those poetic phonological features are catchy and easily get stuck in people's minds.

Furthermore, each and every poem will not be considered good without the structure or layout (Nafi, 2016). In this poem, Malloch follows a rhyming scheme of '***a-b-a-b***' in which the last words of each line rhymes with alternate line like '*hill*' and '*rill*', '*grass*' and '*bass*', 'here' and 'near' and so on throughout the poem. Such a rhyming scheme functions to build structure while generating a pleasant or even beautiful symmetry between lines of the poem (Leech & Short, 2007; Nørgaard, Montoro & Busse, 2010). The poem comprises of four stanzas only in which readers will find it easy to remember it. Moreover, punctuations such as commas (,), aphostrophes ('), semicolons (;), an exclamation mark (!), and periods (.) are abundant in this poem. Besides that, contracted forms such as *can't, we've, there's*, and *isn't* are fairly used in the poem as well. Importantly, both punctuation marks and contracted forms bring together the poetic meaning to the phrasal intonation of normal prosaic utterance (Abdul-zahra, 2013). By using such forms, Malloch tends to indicate a casualness in conveying an instructive message to the readers.

To bring the casualness, diction is also one of the fundamental elements in poetry writing. The words *highway* (line 6 stanza 2), *something* (line 8 stanza 2), *liveliest* (line 10 stanza 3), and *whatever* (line 16 stanza 4) have experienced a compounding process. Compounding is a morphological process of combining two words (free morphemes) to create a new word (Dominguez, 1991; Wales, 2001). Using compound words may bring a catchy line to the poem. Through the specific words and terms, readers will find it easy to memorize specific phrases or even the whole lines of the poem. Moreover, suffixations are also found to be used by Malloch in this poem. The inflectional suffixations such as *liveli**est*** (line 8 stanza 2) and *less**er*** (line 11 stanza 3) are used to stress the quality of an individual should be (Leech & Short, 2007).

As for the lexical features, it was found that verbs is the most frequently used word class in the poem. The verb '**be**' itself appears 16 times in the poem. Ideologically, by using the word 'be', Malloch intends to motivate and advice readers to always 'be the best' version of they are. As Verspoor & Sauter (2000) say that the verb 'be' includes into imperative, it therefore functions to give commands, provide directions, or offer advice. Through the utilization of such verbs, it makes the theme of this poem to be an instructional poem.

Syntactically, Malloch's sentences include into several types. Based on the structure, complex sentence is the most used type of sentence. The sentences like '*If you can't be a bush be a bit of the grass*' (line 5 stanza 2) include into the complex one since it consists of an independent clause and a dependent clause conjoined with a subordinating conjunction (Miller, 2016; Verspoor & Sauter, 2000). Other types of sentence are also used in this poem such as simple sentence (2), compound (5), and even a small amount of compound-complex sentence (1). Since poems and all other forms of artistic literature are not a kind of regular speech acts (they are not the poet's "utterances" in any common sense), therefore, using a varied type of sentences is usual in poetry writing (Ferber, 2019).

Moreover, based on the function, Malloch mostly uses both imperative and declarative sentences. The sentences like '*If you can't be a bush be a bit of the grass*' (line 5 stanza 2) includes into an imperative sentence. In line with the use of verb 'be' to instruct the readers, the above-mentioned line is the realization of the verb which surely makes the theme of the poem (to instruct and give readers advice to be the best of they are). More, declarative sentences are also used in this poem, such as in '*we can't all be captains, we've got to be crew*' (line 9 stanza 3). Through this line, Malloch declares that one must not always be either on the top or in front of others to give orders and lead in such a way (since a captain (of a ship) is in charge of the ship's navigation, maneuvering, cargo handling, communications, and safe operation), however, one should occasionally be a crew as well in order to test him/herself to follow whatever is instructed to them. Through the discrepancies of sentences and phrases used in a poem, it will signify the implicit theme and message of the poem (Barnet, Burto & Cain, 2008; Leech & Short, 2007). As Ferber (2019) agrees that if a poem appears to express something about the poet implicitly, we must instantly attribute the poem's thoughts and attitudes to the dramatic speaker.

The fact that poetry constitutes meaning is undeniable (Leech & Short, 2007). It uses the basic building blocks of ordinary language by anchoring the semantics as the making-meaning concept (Herbelot, 2014). Semantically, Malloch seems to mostly use metaphors in this particular poem. For instance, the word '**sun**' and '**star**' in '*If you can't be the sun be a star*' (line 14 stanza 4) denote a metaphorical expression in which two great things that dwell the universe are being compared to state his message. As we know that sun is the center of the solar system and the provider of life-giving light and energy, whilst a star, on the other hand, is more like a luminous point in the night sky yet provides light and beauty. Therefore, through the utilization of both counterbalanced terms, Malloch intends to motivate the readers that when you are not able to be 'something' that brings joy, energy, and great benefits for others to thrive in their daily lives, you can still attempt to be 'something' that brings a little light and may guide others in the dark and harsh condition.

Stylistically, we can see how Malloch keenly observes and appreciates the mother nature throughout this poem. The poetic diction of **pine** and **scrub**, a **Muskie** and a **bass**, **highway** and **trail**, and more others implies the his power of observation of nature, since he has observed quite well that the smaller and less significant objects of nature attract our attention just as much as the larger and more significant ones. Essentially, by using the knowledge of the real world, readers can infer that each entity that exist in this world contributes to the beauty of the surrounding environment and fairly evoke some special feelings.

DISCUSSION

In line with what Leech & Short's (2007) state that poems contribute to the realm of humans' emotions, sensibilities, and imagination, Malloch has shown the quality that a poem can give supportive influence to the world. Furthermore, in its own way, apart from the well-worn paths of the sciences, a poem performs a fundamental role in the formation of an individual (Ferber, 2019).

From the analysis, it can be highlighted that the elements of the poem that enable readers to speculate with more certainty on precisely why most poets, such as Malloch, chose to use such seemingly odd 'style' to encourage people to do what their intention (Regmi, 2015; Safitri & Rosa, 2018), in this case, be the best version of whatever they are. Extensively, Malloch discovers that the smaller and less significant elements of nature capture the attention just as much as the larger and more significant ones do when they enhance the beauty of the environment or elicit strong emotions in human. Through a unique way with particular value than most readers realize, a brief string of words can convey the poet's intention, thoughts, and messages without the need for a lengthy statement (Nafi, 2016; Sharma, 2019).

The realization of each and every level of language within this poem urges us to put ourselves into the best of whatever we do. Semantically, the poetic diction of natural objects may give clear explanation how an individual should be. This particular poem gives implication to society to always become a morally acceptable individual as well as any poet around the globe to always convey meaningful message in the poem, not just stating and revealing what feeling they have at the moment (Al-Zubaidy, 2014). Therefore, by conducting the current study, it proves that the meaning and intention of the poem can be gained and comprehended through the stylistic analysis (Leech & Short, 2007; Murad & Amin, 2020; Nafi, 2016; Najah et al., 2021; Simpson, 2004).

CONCLUSION

The current study has analyzed the levels of language (style) in Douglas Malloch's 'Be the Best of Whatever You are' poem and describe its stylistic realization in constructing the theme and meaningful message. Through the analysis and interpretation of the linguistic style realization of the poem, it can be fairly state that no matter how much one aspires to achieve success and be at the top of life, what counts most is what we can do for the rest of the world. Spiritually, Malloch tends to say that when you find your life's purpose, act as if God had called you to accomplish it at this very instant time. Thus,

whatever you do, do it with all your heart, as if you were working for God and not for human masters, because you know that God will reward you with a blessing life. Be the best of whatever you are!

AUTHOR STATEMENT

Ihsan Tanama Sitio: Conceptualization, introduction, theoretical frameworks, methodology, data collection and analysis, and references.
Rahmadsyah Rangkuti: Proofreading, theoretical frameworks, and refining the overall manuscript.

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