



The Stream of Consciousness of Exiled Characters in the Novel *Pulang* by Leila S. Chudori: A Direct, Free Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze free direct discourse as a representation of exile characters' stream of consciousness in Leila S. Chudori's novel *Pulang* using a pragmatic stylistics approach. Grounded in Elizabeth Black's (2016) framework, the research addresses three objectives: (1) to identify the forms of free direct discourse in the novel, (2) to examine its pragmatic functions in representing the psychological conditions of exile characters, and (3) to interpret its stylistic implications for reading historical trauma and identity crises. Employing a qualitative descriptive-analytical method, data were collected purposively from the novel based on Black's linguistic criteria. Out of 33 identified instances, three representative excerpts were selected for in-depth analysis using qualitative content analysis, pragmatic interpretation, and stylistic evaluation. The findings reveal three primary forms of free direct discourse: (1) chained rhetorical questions that depict existential confusion and fragmented cognition; (2) expressions of astonishment and disbelief that articulate the absurdity of exile and function as existential protest; and (3) reflective criticism of official historical narratives that demonstrate mature critical awareness. Pragmatically, these forms operate as narrative strategies that authentically reconstruct traumatic memory, foster emotional immediacy with readers, and serve as subtle ideological critiques against historical repression and collective amnesia. A systematic psychological gradation—from confusion and shock to critical reflection—indicates that free direct discourse also mirrors the characters' gradual psychological recovery. This study contributes to the development of pragmatic stylistics in contemporary Indonesian fiction and offers a linguistic lens for reading historical trauma through narrative form.

Keywords: stream of consciousness, characters, novel

Aliran Kesadaran Tokoh Eksil dalam Novel *Pulang* Karya Leila S. Chudori: Analisis Wacana Langsung Bebas

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis wacana langsung bebas sebagai representasi aliran kesadaran tokoh eksil dalam novel *Pulang* karya Leila S. Chudori menggunakan pendekatan stilistika pragmatik. Penelitian dilatarbelakangi oleh fungsi stilistika wacana langsung bebas yang mengaburkan batas narator dan tokoh guna merepresentasikan disorientasi psikologis pascatrauma politik 1965. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif analitis dengan kerangka teori Elizabeth Black (2016). Pengumpulan data dilakukan pada teks novel, menghasilkan 33 data, dan dipilih tiga data paling representatif untuk dianalisis secara mendalam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa wacana langsung bebas dalam novel *Pulang* hadir dalam tiga bentuk utama: (1) pertanyaan retorik berangkai yang merepresentasikan kebingungan eksistensial dan fragmentasi pikiran; (2) ungkapan keterkejutan dan ketidakpercayaan yang mengekspresikan absurditas nasib eksil serta berfungsi sebagai protes eksistensial; dan (3) kritik reflektif terhadap narasi sejarah yang menunjukkan kematangan kesadaran kritis tokoh dalam membongkar konstruksi sejarah resmi. Secara pragmatik, ketiga bentuk tersebut berfungsi sebagai strategi naratif yang tidak hanya merepresentasikan memori traumatis secara otentik, tetapi juga membangun kedekatan emosional (*immediacy*) dengan pembaca serta menjadi instrumen kritik ideologis terhadap represi dan pelupaan sejarah. Gradasi psikologis dari kebingungan menuju refleksi kritis mengindikasikan bahwa wacana langsung bebas juga merepresentasikan proses pemulihan psikologis tokoh eksil. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian stilistika pragmatik dalam fiksi Indonesia kontemporer, khususnya dalam membaca trauma sejarah melalui pilihan kebahasaan.

Keywords: aliran kesadaran, tokoh, novel

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INTRODUCTION

Language in a literary work is not merely a means of conveying a story, but also a medium or tool for expressing deeper and more complex meanings. Through language, authors can convey hidden messages, ideas, and even criticism in an aesthetic and imaginative manner. Literary works express the author's ideas related to the nature and values of life, as well as human existence, encompassing the dimensions of humanity, social, cultural, moral, political, gender, education, and divinity (Al-Ma'ruf & Nugrahani, 2017). Thus, language is a core part of a literary work because it conveys not only a story but also a form of human freedom that conveys deeper messages through specific word choice, style, and narrative structure. Leila S. Chudori's novel "Pulang" (Homecoming) is a contemporary Indonesian literary work that explores the theme of political exile after the events of 1965. This novel not only tells a historical story but also invites readers to explore the deepest feelings of the exiled characters, those exiled from their homeland due to the political upheaval in Indonesia. Through her unique storytelling technique, Chudori often blurs the lines between the narrator's voice and the characters' inner voices, as if the reader directly experiences the trauma, longing, and fear experienced by Dimas Suryo and his friends (Chudori, 2012).

This novel reconstructs Indonesia's dark history through the perspectives of fictional characters who speak not only as individuals but also as part of the nation's memory. Reflectiveness, meanwhile, emerges from the author and characters' reflections on the past, questioning historical truth, and seeking meaning in the suffering they have experienced. This aligns with Bagtayan (2021), Elmustian & Jalill(2015) who argues that the historical reality underlying the creation of a literary work plays a crucial role in giving meaning to a work of literature. Literary works often portray a particular era and become reflections of that era.

One of the most interesting stylistic aspects of the novel *Pulang* is the use of free direct

discourse. In pragmatic stylistics, free direct discourse is a form of presenting a character's speech or thoughts without quotation marks and reporting verbs. According to Black (2006), this form allows the character's voice to be present spontaneously and appear directly in the text without the intermediary of a narrator, thus blurring the boundaries between narrator and character, and making the reader feel closer to the character's consciousness.

This phenomenon is important to study because the free direct discourse in the novel *Pulang* functions not only as a stylistic variation but also as a means of representing the stream of consciousness of an exiled character experiencing psychological disorientation due to historical trauma. As Inayah & Atikurrahman (2024) explain regarding the structure of Sigmund Freud's mentalism in the novel *Pulang*, the dimensions of space and time in this novel serve as reflections of the characters' psychological states, colored by traumatic experiences and the unconscious. This research confirms that collective and individual trauma influence the perception of time and space in the novel, which is reflected stylistically through the choice of specific discourse forms.

Based on this background, the research problem is formulated as follows: (1) What are the forms of free direct discourse in the novel *Pulang*? (2) What is the pragmatic function of this free direct discourse in representing the psychological condition of the exiled character? (3) What are the stylistic implications of the use of free direct discourse for reading the character's trauma and identity crisis?

In line with the research problem formulation, the objectives of this research are: (1) to describe the forms of free direct discourse in the novel *Pulang*; (2) to analyze the pragmatic function of free direct discourse in representing the psychological condition of the exiled character; and (3) to interpret the stylistic implications of the use of free direct discourse for understanding the trauma and identity crisis of the exiled character. This research is expected to be theoretically



beneficial for the development of pragmatic stylistic studies, particularly in the analysis of free direct discourse in contemporary Indonesian fiction, as well as practically for literary researchers and language educators.

Stylistics has not been widely applied due to literary researchers' limited understanding of linguistic aspects. This is clear because literary research using a stylistic approach will actually reveal the aesthetic aspects of literary works (Didipu, 2013). More specifically, stylistics exists as a combination of stylistics and pragmatics, namely studying language by considering the communication context, the speaker's intentions, and the social situation behind it.

The theoretical review in this study uses the pragmatic stylistics framework developed by Elizabeth Black in her book *Pragmatic Stylistics* (2016). Pragmatic stylistics is an interdisciplinary approach that combines stylistic analysis with pragmatic theories to understand how meaning is generated in literary texts. Black (2016) argues that a pragmatic approach to language is very useful for understanding fictional texts. Black (2016) developed a typology of speech and thought representation that distinguishes four main forms: direct discourse, free direct discourse, indirect discourse, and free indirect discourse. The main focus of this study is free direct discourse with the following characteristics: (1) does not use quotation marks; (2) does not use reporting verbs; (3) continues to use personal and tense pronouns according to the character's point of view; (4) often appears in the form of rhetorical questions, exclamations, or incomplete sentences; and (5) creates an effect of direct closeness to the character's experience (Black, 2016).

Relevant research supporting this study includes

Sabila (2024) on the representation of history and the search for social identity in the novel *Pulang* using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics. She found that signs in the novel can reveal the meaning of history and identity in a structured way. Furthermore, Inayah & Abdullah (2024), in their psychoanalytic study of *Pulang*, found that

collective and individual trauma influence the perception of time in the novel. Furthermore, Safitri et al. (2024) demonstrated that *Pulang* factually reflects the May 1998 riots as a socio-historical document. Unlike these studies, this study focuses on the stylistic aspects of pragmatics, specifically free direct discourse as a representation of the stream of consciousness of exiled figures, which has not been widely explored. The scope of the study is limited to three aspects: the linguistic form of free direct discourse, its pragmatic function, and its stylistic implications for reading exiled trauma and identity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on the representation of discourse in the novel "*Pulang*" has not been extensively conducted, but several studies have addressed relevant aspects. The study (Sabila, 2024) entitled "*Historical Representation and the Search for Social Identity in Leila S. Chudori's Novel 'Pulang': A Semiotic Analysis*" by Charles Sanders Peirce" is an important early study. Using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory, Sabila found that the novel "*Pulang*" represents history and the search for identity through three categories of signs: icons, indices, and symbols. This research is significant because it demonstrates how signs in literary works can reveal the meaning of history and identity in a structured manner. However, it has not yet addressed how stylistic aspects, particularly the choice of discourse forms, contribute to this representation.

Inayah & Abdullah's (2024) study on "*Psychoanalytic Study: The Structure of Sigmund Freud's Mentalism in the Novel Pulang*" offers a closer approach to the focus of this research. They analyze how the dimensions of space and time in the novel function as reflections of the characters' psychological states, focusing on the role of memory, trauma, and the unconscious. Their finding that "collective and individual trauma influence the perception of time in the novel" aligns with this study's assumption that the psychological states of the exiled characters are reflected in stylistic choices.

Safitri et al.'s (2024) study on "Reflections of the May 1998 Riots in Leila S. Chudori's Novel Pulang" found that the novel Pulang factually reflects the May 1998 riots, encompassing the chronology of the riots, the student movement, the causal factors (the monetary crisis and the Trisakti tragedy), and the resignation of President Soeharto. This research is important because it demonstrates how literary works can function as representations of contemporary traditions as well as socio-historical documents. However, it has not yet addressed how stylistic aspects, particularly the choice of discourse forms, contribute to this representation.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative, descriptive approach. Data were collected using library research techniques. A library study is a study conducted using documents as its primary source, such as manuscripts, books, newspapers, magazines, and so on. With the advancement of technology, the term "library" refers not only to written documents but also to digital documents (Abubakar, 2021; Razak, 2017). The use of library research techniques was chosen because the data required for this research was not obtained through field observations, but rather through the search and review of written documents relevant to the research problem. All research data comes from Leila Chudori's novel "Pulang," which serves as the object of study, as well as various theoretical references supporting the analysis, such as books on stylistics and pragmatics, and previous research.

The data in this study is in the form of direct, free discourse. The data consists of narrative text that demonstrates the use of specific language styles, such as word choice, sentence structure, and pragmatic context in the dialogue between characters. The research data comes from the 464-page novel "Pulang" by Leila S. Chudori (2012), published in 2012 by KPG (Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia).

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and compiling data obtained from notes, and organizing the data according to categories. The data analysis technique used in this study is stylistic data analysis. Stylistics serves as a bridge to describe the specific characteristics of literary works. Wallek and Warren, in their book, "Theory of Literature" (2014), state two possible approaches to stylistic analysis. The first approach begins with a systematic analysis of the literary work's linguistic system, followed by an interpretation of its characteristics from the perspective of the work's aesthetic purpose as "total meaning."

RESULTS

Based on an analysis of Leila S. Chudori's novel "Pulang," three main forms of free direct discourse were found, used by the author to represent the stream of consciousness of the exiled characters. The following is an explanation of each form, along with the data found.

1. Classification of Free Direct Discourse

Based on the analysis of Leila S. Chudori's novel "Pulang," three main forms of free direct discourse were found, used by the author to represent the stream of consciousness of the exiled characters. These three forms were classified based on their stylistic characteristics and pragmatic functions: (1) free direct discourse in the form of a series of rhetorical questions, (2) free direct discourse in the form of expressions of surprise and disbelief, and (3) free direct discourse in the form of reflective criticism of the historical narrative. The following is a complete explanation of each form, along with the data found.

2. Free Direct Discourse in the Form of a Series of Rhetorical Questions

The first form of free direct discourse found in the novel "Pulang" is a series of rhetorical questions that appear sequentially without quotation marks and without reporting verbs. This



form reflects the character's chaotic, unstructured thought process, filled with existential confusion. In pragmatic stylistics, these questions do not serve to demand answers, but rather to express the character's inner anxiety and inability to understand the situation they face. The following data falls into this category:

I don't know how to begin the story of Indonesia. From my family? From the chaotic situation? From Bung Karno, whose political direction is becoming increasingly unclear? Does he love his comrades on the left? What does he want from Nasakom? And all those friends in Jakarta who continually question Bung Karno's presence at Halim Perdanakusuma during the bloody events? How can I tell Vivienne all these puzzles? Or should I just start with my obsession with wayang stories? (Chudori, 2012)

The above quote is the most representative example of free direct discourse in the form of a series of rhetorical questions. This utterance appears directly without quotation marks and without introductions such as "I ask" or "I think," so the reader feels as if they are directly entering the character's mind.

Stylistically, this excerpt is dominated by eight questions arranged in sequence without narrative pauses. These questions are not logically structured; the character jumps from one question to another without a clear sequence, reflecting the chaos of his thoughts. The use of the word "porak poranda" to describe the situation, as well as the mention of the names "Bung Karno" and "Nasakom," indicate that the character's confusion is directly related to the historical reality of Indonesia during a time of political upheaval.

From a pragmatic perspective, the questions in this excerpt are rhetorical because they are not intended to elicit answers from the interlocutor (Vivienne). Their primary function is to express the character's existential confusion while subtly criticizing the political ambiguity of the time. The question, "Does he love his comrades on the left?"

contains a tone of irony and doubts about Bung Karno's political consistency. Similarly, the final question, "Or should I just start from my obsession with wayang stories?" shows the character's desperation in finding the right way to convey a complex and traumatic history.

Black (2016) explains that free direct discourse is often used to display "disorganized and illogical thought processes," which are characteristic of stream-of-consciousness in modernist fiction. In the novel *Pulang*, this disorganization is not a technical flaw, but rather a deliberate stylistic strategy to represent the psychological state of the exiled characters, torn from their historical roots and identity.

3. Free Direct Discourse in the Form of Expressions of Shock and Disbelief

The second form of free direct discourse found is expressions expressing shock, disbelief, and absurdity over the fate of the exiled characters. This form is characterized by the use of rhetorical interrogatives "how" and "isn't it" and sentence structures that emphasize the contradiction between expectations and reality. The following data falls into this category:

How could Father and his friends leave Indonesia for just one conference in Santiago (followed by conferences in Havana and Peking) with backpacks on their backs, never to return to their homeland? Isn't that absurd? And why did Father leave? (Chudori, 2012)

This quote appears in the novel, indicating that the character's anxiety continues to more specific questions about his father's fate. Like the previous quote, this quote is presented without quotation marks and without reporting verbs, so the reader is invited back into the character's stream of consciousness.

Stylistically, this quote uses three questions that gradually increase in emotional intensity. The first question, "How could Father... leave Indonesia just for a conference...", highlights the absurd

contradiction between the cause (a seemingly ordinary conference trip) and the effect (a permanent failure to return). The word "only" is used to emphasize that the cause is insignificant compared to the resulting consequence, thus reinforcing the character's sense of injustice.

The second question, "Isn't that an absurdity?", is a form that actually functions as an affirmative statement. The character doesn't actually ask whether the situation is absurd; rather, he asserts that it is. The use of the word absurdity, borrowed from a foreign language, indicates that the character possesses a philosophical awareness to give a name to his bitter experience—something that, in the context of exile, often lacks a proper name. The third question, "And why did Father leave?", is the culmination of the character's emotions. This question cannot be answered by anyone, including the narrator or the reader. Its pragmatic function is to express helplessness and offer an existential protest against an unfair fate. Within the framework of Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995 in Black, 2016), this question has a powerful contextual effect because it forces the reader to reflect on the same injustice.

The mention of three Cold War-era cities: Santiago, Havana, and the national capital (Cuba under Castro, China under Mao, and Chile under Allende). By mentioning these three cities, Chudori implicitly directs readers to the understanding that the exiles who could not return home were those deemed associated with communist ideology—an accusation that, during the New Order, was enough to destroy a person's life.

Inayah & Abdullah's (2024) research on the structure of Sigmund Freud's mentalism in the novel *Pulang* found that "the dimensions of space and time in the novel function as reflections of the characters' psychological states." In the FDD-21 data, the three cities function as spatial markers that emphasize not only the geographical but also the psychological and political distance between the characters and their homeland. The further their father's journey, the more impossible it becomes to return.

Black (2016) asserts that free direct discourse offers readers the freedom to assess the situation the characters face for themselves, without being influenced by the narrator's commentary. In this data, the reader is not told that the situation the character's father experiences is unjust; The reader is left to come to their own conclusions through the rhetorical questions the characters ask. This effect is much stronger than if the narrator explicitly said "it's not fair."

4. Free Direct Discourse Takes the Form of Reflective Criticism of Historical Narratives

The third form of free direct discourse found is reflective expressions that subtly yet sharply criticize the way history, particularly post-1965 Indonesian history, is constructed and presented to the public. This form appears at the end of the novel, when the characters have had enough time and reflection to question the authority and interests behind the official historical narrative. The following data falls into this category:

This is history. They tell stories that made my childhood messy, dirty, and noisy. This diorama may have a more powerful effect than the highly theatrical film, because this form allows for a more in-depth imagination. Who created the diorama? Was it originally intended for information, education, propaganda, or entertainment? Or all of these? Did the creator later realize that the diorama could be effectively used as a story for schoolchildren, about how this country was shaped into a land of pain and paranoia? (Chudori, 2012)

This quote differs from the previous two. While the previous two quotes were dominated by confusion and shock, this quote demonstrates a more mature critical awareness. The character no longer asks "how could this be?" but instead begins to question "who" is behind the construction of history and "for what purpose" it is being conveyed.

Stylistically, this quote opens with a short declarative sentence: "This is history." This



sentence feels emphatic, as if the character wants to establish a truth. However, the following sentence immediately uses the word "menibang," which has negative connotations, like blowing dust or blowing fire, indicating that the history the character receives is not something natural and neutral, but rather something constructed and forced ("blown") upon him from childhood.

The words "messy, shabby, and noisy" to describe childhood suggest that the history the character received offered neither tranquility nor beauty, but rather chaos and noise—a powerful metaphor for the psychological impact of a historical narrative filled with violence and lies. The character then asks three critical questions: (1) "Who created the diorama?"; (2) "Was it created from the beginning as a tool for information, education, propaganda, or entertainment?"; (3) "Did its creator later realize that the diorama could be used effectively as a fairy tale for schoolchildren...?"

These questions serve a pragmatic function as instruments of ideological critique. The character does not simply complain about his past; he actively dismantles the assumptions underlying the production and reproduction of historical narratives. The word "propaganda" is explicitly mentioned as one possible purpose for creating the diorama, indicating that the character has realized that the history he has received is not objective truth but rather a tool of power.

The phrase "fairy tales for schoolchildren" contains bitter irony. Typically, fairy tales are fictional stories that entertain and educate children. However, in this context, "fairy tale" is used to convey a narrative about a "land full of wounds and paranoia." In other words, Indonesian children are being taught frightening and traumatic tales, a sharp critique of Indonesia's post-1965 history education system.

From the perspective of Black's pragmatic stylistics (2016), the questions in this quote can be read as echoic mentions, where the character echoes the official discourse on history (diorama as a tool for information and education) but with

an ironic and critical tone. By echoing this discourse in the form of questions, the character refuses to simply accept the narrative constructed by those in power.

Black (2006) explains that "echoic mention often carries an attitude of rejection or ridicule toward the echoed utterance." In this data, the character does not explicitly state that the diorama is a propaganda tool. However, by listing "information, education, propaganda, or entertainment" in one rhetorical question, the character implies that the four possibilities are difficult to distinguish and that so-called "historical education" may be nothing more than propaganda wrapped in an educational package.

DISCUSSION

Dynamics of Existential Confusion in Serial Rhetorical Questions

The free direct discourse in the novel "Pulang" (Homecoming) in the first data set displays eight rhetorical questions that appear in sequence without any logical pattern, reflecting the chaotic and fragmented flow of consciousness of the exiled character. Free direct discourse in (Mahmood, 2021) plays a role in creating a sympathetic narrative attitude towards the character. This is highly relevant to free direct discourse as a medium for displaying the character's chaotic and complex consciousness and building emotional closeness with the reader. By eliminating markers such as "I think," Chudori creates an effect of immediacy so that the reader not only "hears about" the character's confusion but actually "experiences" it.

Research (Pramudita et al., 2025) on conflict can be defined as a direct and conscious opposition between individuals or groups to achieve a goal. Furthermore, the question "Does he love the friends on the left?" contains echoic mention (Black, 2016), an ironic echo of Bung Karno's official discourse of loyalty, which doubted whether "love" was sufficient to protect against the massacre. Chudori asserts that he uses figurative language to critique the state's systemic

violence. Thus, free direct discourse is not simply an alternative grammatical form, but a stylistic strategy that expresses confusion, subtly critiques, and builds reader empathy for the psychological state of the exiled characters.

Absurdity and Existential Protest in Expressions of Shock

The second finding shows that the free direct discourse in the novel "Pulang" (Homecoming) represents the absurdity of the exiles' fate through the contradiction between the cause of the conference trip and the consequence of being unable to return forever, where the characters explicitly use the word "absurdity." The parenthetical mention of three cities (Santiago, Havana, and Peking) serves as an ideological marker representing the communist "danger" inherent in the character's father. It also reflects the fragmentation of traumatic memory, as the journey is not presented as a logical sequence but as fragments enclosed in parentheses (Inayah & Abdullah, 2024; Makhfudli, 2022). The final question, "And why did Father go?"—which remains unanswered—becomes the culmination of existential protest; within the framework of Relevance Theory, unanswered questions have a maximal contextual effect because they force the reader to reflect on an injustice that cannot be rationally explained (Black, 2006). Thus, the FDD-21 data demonstrates that direct, free discourse can represent the absurdity of the exile's fate while simultaneously functioning as an existential protest through rhetorical questions and ideologically charged mentions of cities, without the need for explicit or melodramatic narratives.

Ideological Critique and Polyphony in Reflections on Historical Narrative

The third finding shows that the free direct discourse in the novel *Pulang*, as seen in the third data, functions as a sophisticated instrument of ideological criticism, characterized by a unique structure: it begins with the declarative sentence "This is history," then "they blow stories" that ruin

the character's childhood, and ends with a critical question about the diorama. The metaphor "blowing" (not "telling" or "teaching") reveals the character's stance that history is not something natural but rather artificially imposed (Black, 2016), which Arianto (2024) emphasizes as a critique of the New Order regime that blew certain narratives into public consciousness through media such as dioramas. The question "Who created the diorama?" is a *wh*-question to uncover the agency behind the historical narrative, while the dual-voice effect, because the sentence "This is history" can be read as both the narrator's voice and the character's voice, creates ambiguity that enriches interpretation.

DISCUSSION

The Dynamics of Existential Confusion in Chained Rhetorical Questions

The free direct discourse in the novel "Pulang" (Homecoming) initially presents eight rhetorical questions that appear in sequence without any logical pattern, reflecting the chaotic and fragmented flow of consciousness of the exiled character. Free direct discourse in (Mahmood, 2021) plays a role in creating a sympathetic narrative attitude towards the character. This is highly relevant to free direct discourse as a medium for displaying the character's chaotic and complex consciousness and building emotional closeness with the reader. By eliminating markers such as "I think," Chudori creates an effect of immediacy so that the reader not only "hears about" the character's confusion but actually "experiences" it.

Research (Pramudita et al., 2025) on conflict can be defined as a direct and conscious opposition between individuals or groups to achieve a goal. Furthermore, the question "Does he love the comrades on the left?" contains an echoic mention (Black, 2016), an ironic echo of Bung Karno's official discourse of loyalty, which doubted whether "love" was sufficient to protect against massacre. emphasizes that Chudori uses figurative language to critique the state's systemic violence.



Thus, free direct discourse is not simply an alternative grammatical form, but rather a stylistic strategy that expresses confusion, subtly critiques, and builds reader empathy for the psychological state of the exiled character.

Absurdity and Existential Protest in Expressions of Shock

The second finding shows that free direct discourse in the novel "Pulang" (Pulang) in the second data set represents the absurdity of the exile's fate through the contradiction between the cause of the conference trip and the consequence of being unable to return forever, where the character explicitly uses the word absurdity. The mention of three cities (Santiago, Havana, Peking) in parentheses serves as an ideological marker representing the communist "danger" inherent in the character's father, while also reflecting the fragmentation of traumatic memory because the trip is not mentioned as a logical sequence but rather as fragments enclosed in parentheses (Inayah & Abdullah, 2024; Makhfudli, 2022). The final question, "And why did Father go?"—which has no answer—becomes the culmination of existential protest; Within the framework of Relevance Theory, unanswered questions have maximum contextual effect because they force readers to reflect on injustices that cannot be rationally explained (Black, 2006). Thus, the FDD-21 data demonstrates that free direct discourse is capable of representing the absurdity of the exile's fate while simultaneously functioning as an existential protest through rhetorical questions and ideologically charged mentions of the city, without the need for explicit or melodramatic narratives.

Ideological Critique and Polyphony in Reflections on Historical Narrative

The third finding indicates that the free direct discourse in the novel *Pulang*, as illustrated in the third data, functions as a sophisticated instrument of ideological critique, characterized by a unique structure: it begins with the declarative sentence "This is history," then "they blew up the story"

that ruined the character's childhood, and concludes with a critical question about the diorama. The metaphor of "blowing" (not "telling" or "teaching") reveals the character's attitude that history is not something natural but rather artificially imposed (Black, 2016), which Arianto (2024) emphasizes as a critique of the New Order regime that blew certain narratives into public consciousness through media such as dioramas. The question "Who created the diorama?" is a wh-question to uncover the agency behind the historical narrative, while the dual voice effect because the sentence "This is history" can be read as both the narrator's voice and the character's voice creates ambiguity that enriches the interpretation.

CONCLUSION

This study found that free direct discourse in the novel "Pulang" (Homecoming) occurs in three main forms with distinct pragmatic functions. First, the series of rhetorical questions represents the existential confusion and disorientation of the exiled characters in the face of their family's historical trauma. Second, expressions of shock and disbelief express the absurdity of the exiles' fate while also serving as an existential protest against the systemic injustice that separates them from their homeland. Third, the reflective critique of historical narratives demonstrates the maturity of the characters' critical awareness in questioning the construction and transmission of official history through various media such as dioramas. Pragmatically, these three forms of free direct discourse not only represent utterances but also serve as instruments of subtle yet incisive ideological critique of the New Order regime, authentically representing how traumatic memories are stored and accessed as fragmented sensory fragments (Black, 2016).

Furthermore, this study reveals a systematic psychological gradation in the three free direct discourse data, from confusion to shock and protest, to mature critical reflection, indicating that Chudori consciously uses free direct discourse as

a narrative strategy to represent the character's psychological healing process from historical trauma. In line with this view, research by (Izzati, 2025) on the stylistics of resistance in Leila S. Chudori's contemporary novels confirms that the choice of language style is a narrative strategy that not only enriches the aesthetic dimension but also functions as a symbolic means of resistance against repression and historical oblivion.

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