

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In chapter 2, models and theories used by researchers in the study of stylistics were discussed. Based on these models and theories a suitable model or framework was devised by the researcher to analyse Re. Karthigesu's four Tamil novels. In view of the inter ethnic, intercultural, and interactional complexities observed in the novels of Re. Karthigesu, it may be a life time herculian task in case somebody wants to penetrate into the various complicated stylistic features involved in the novels under study. However, in this study an attempt was made to analyse all the possible stylistic features that are found to be significant and relevant for the study.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Taking Short's (1996:256) principle into consideration deliberating with Supervisor, Senior Research Fellow Prof. DR. Sam Mohan Lal and Associate Professor Rajeswary.S (supervisor until her retirement) the following theoretical framework was devised to analyse Re. Karthigesu's style of language. In all the novels of Karthigesu selected for the present study we could identify the major elements of *theme, plot, characters, role relationship* and *settings* (Fig. 3.1). Among these five significant elements of the novels, the **theme** and the **plot** could be termed as the nucleus of the novels. In other words, these are the two elements which cut across all the other elements of the novels and through these elements the novelist disseminates various stylistic, literary and linguistic variations. It may

be noted that the above mentioned five elements are intertwined with one another through different living characters, and incidents created by the author which have direct relationship with the plot and the theme.

While discussing the significance of the plot of a novel, E.M. Forster, author of works such as *A Room with a View* (1908) and *Howards End* (1910) claims that *plot* is a “narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality.” By this statement he meant that *plot* is a series of events that depend on one another, not a sequence of unrelated episodes. Again, by this statement Forster meant that *plot* is a series of events which are derived from the general theme of the novel. This derivation of events always depend on the relationship of the characters with the plot. It is clear that *theme* can be seen as the higher conceptual level in a novel and the *plot* is embedded within the theme. Further, the microscopic components of the *theme* will be represented by the characters of the novel who enact within the framework of the novel. From this conceptualisation of Forster it is possible to derive the fact that *theme* can be the platform for the writer to drive a plot and give life to it through the characters which the author spins.

By keeping Forster’s notion in mind when we try to analyse the novels of Re. Karthigesu we could segregate the following five phases. They are *theme*, *plot*, *characters*, *role relationship* and *settings* (Fig.3.1) In all these five phases, stylistic features vary depending on the discourse structure of the interlocutors, their mood, social hierarchy and so on. All these five categories are intertwined with one another and have certain hierarchical relationship too.

The hierarchy of the structural elements of the novels can be as follows:

- Themes of the novels at the first level (Phase 1)
- Plots which are based on the themes will be at the second level (Phase 2)
- In order to execute the plot various characters will be identified in the novel. This element can be placed at the third level. (Phase 3)
- The executors (characters) who have various role relationships with one another in order to execute the plot will be at the fourth level.(Phase 4)
- Actual performing platforms (settings) of the characters in the appropriate sociolinguistic and environmental settings will be the last in the hierarchy.(Phase 5)

It is observed that throughout the novel all these five *Phases* have constant interaction between one another. Interrelationship between these five phases are summarised as shown in figure 3.1. These interrelations reveal various unique stylistic features. These variations in stylistic features often depend on the themes that always have a direct impact on the plot. Further the theme of the novel determines the linguistic and literary style of the author.

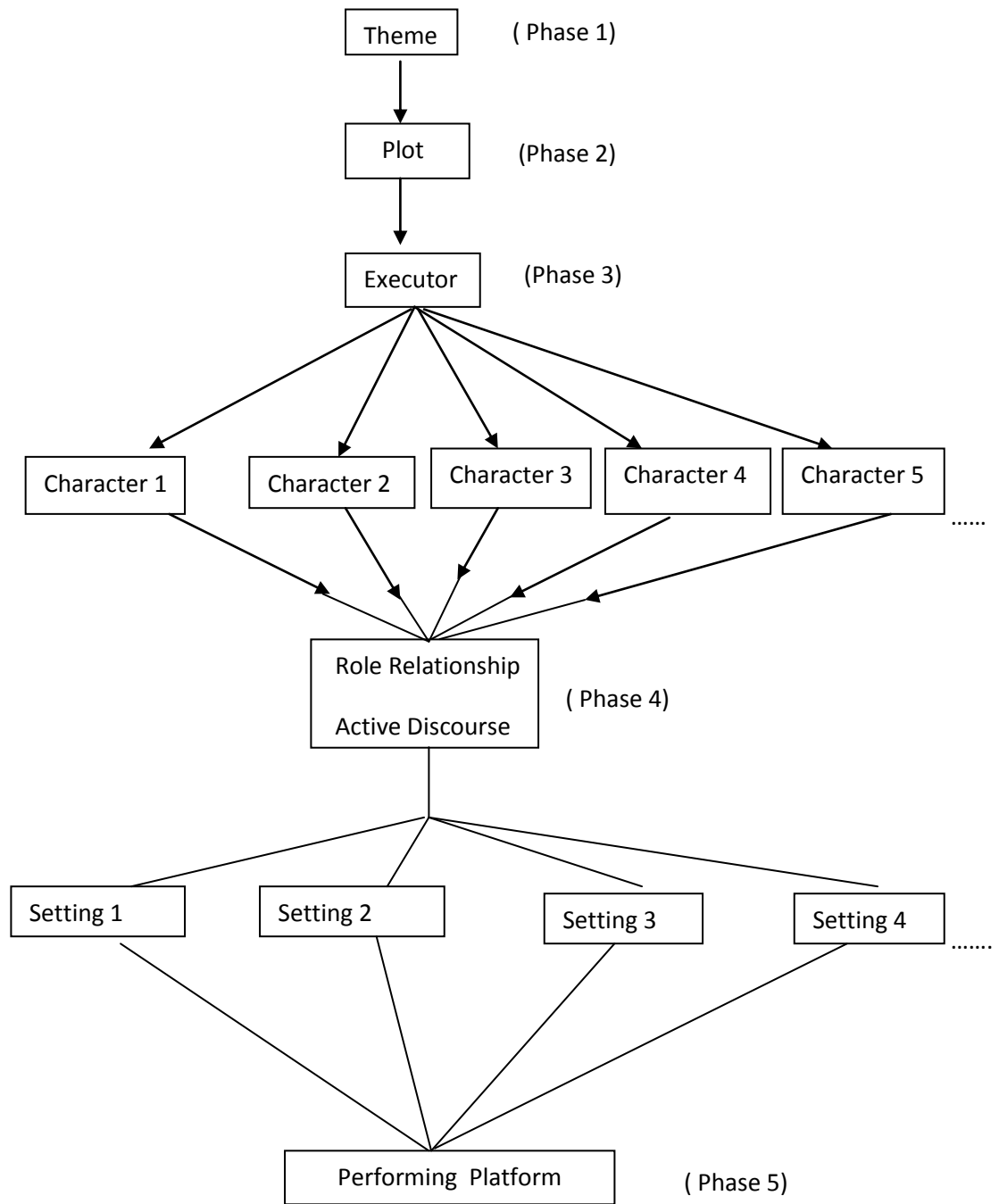
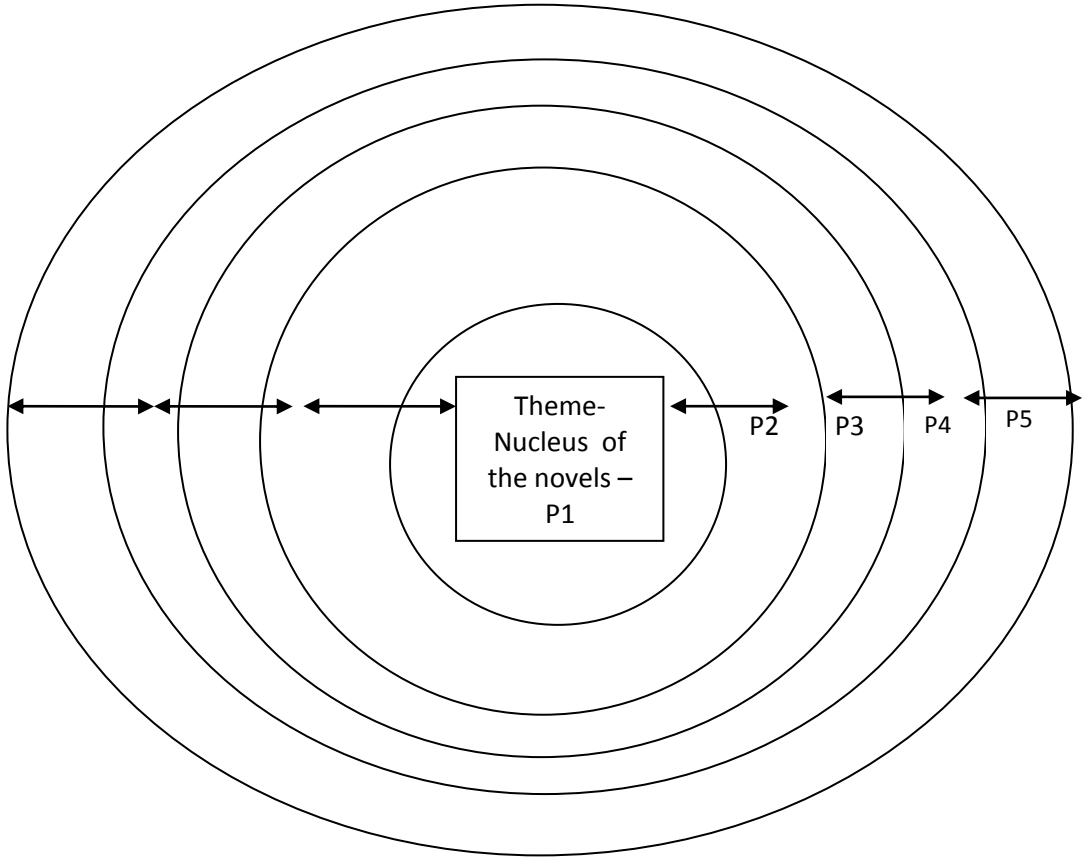


Fig. 3.1 :
The Phases in a Novel

In Figure 3.2 the five successive circles with bidirectional arrows are shown to illustrate the interrelationships and interactions between the five phases. All the novels of Re.Karthigesu are mounted on this platform made up of these five phases. Subsequently, the stylistic variations of the author which are conditioned by the discourse situations result in back and forth and circular movement between the five elements (*theme, plot, characters, role relationship* and *settings*). In other words, an unique style of the author at a given phase depends on the nature of interaction the specific elements have in that environment.



P1- Theme,

P2 - Plot (Author Performance), P3- Character, P4 - Role Relationship, P5- Setting

Fig 3.2 :
Cross Section Showing the Schemata of the Novel

The concepts mentioned above are further illustrated in the following chart by keeping in view the possible linguistic variations one can expect in different phases.

1. Phase 1 - Passive Discourse
2. Phase 2 - Active Discourse
3. Phase 3 - Passive Discourse (Narrator – Narratee)
4. Phase 4 - Author –Reader
5. Phase 5 – Author -Author

Language Structure:

| | | |
|--|---|-------------------|
| Phase 1 (Theme) | → Literary Schemata, conceptualization and low profile discourse involving less number of characters but author takes active role | Passive Discourse |
| Phase 2 (Plot) | → Conditioned by situation Variations in language use Varying Stylistic Features and Language Structure | Active Discourse |
| Phase 3 (Characters) Narrator > Narratee (Social features known) | → Conditioned by situation Variations in language use Varying Stylistic features and Language Structure | Passive Discourse |
| Phase 4(Role Relationship) Author > reader (social character not known) | → Conditioned by Situation Variations in Language Varying Stylistic Features and Language Use | Passive Discourse |
| Phase 5(Setting) Author > Author | → Conditioned by Situation Variations in Language Varying Stylistic Features, Language Use and Language Structure Soliloquy, any other techniques and language use | Passive Discourse |

As shown in figure 3.2 the nucleus of a novel *vis a vis*. theme, plot, characters, role relationship and setting are developed within five phases under different social structures. The scheme of the complete novel is based on this nucleus. The nucleus of the novel like ripples in the water disseminates many layers in the form of sociolinguistic and cultural interactions. These layers can be termed as different phases. Each phase is identified as the basis of its varying language structures involving different interlocutors introduced in the novel. As shown in figure 3.3 all these phases are superimposed on one another forming the overall structure of the novel.

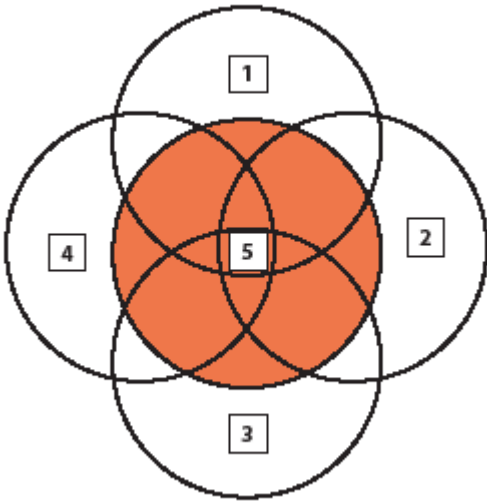


Fig. 3.3 :

Superimposing Diagrammatic Representation of Phases

Phase 1 - Theme being the core or nucleus of the novel it has a vital role to play in controlling or extending the tentacles into all the other four phases. This is mainly because of the fact that the theme which is covered in *phase 1* needs to have its roots in all the other phases. Unless this is not properly achieved, it may not manifest the holistic nature of the novel. Though this phase has a significant role to play during its interactions with the other phases, the discourse taking place in this phase is comparatively passive. This is because in this phase the author and only a few characters of the novel will introduce the theme at different stages during the development of the story. Sometimes this will happen in a soliloquy or on a swift unidirectional interaction and sometimes the discourse will be bidirectional involving the author and a character.

Phase 2 - Plot is mostly in the form of multidirectional discourse involving more than two characters of the novel. Mostly this will be an active discourse structure where one can observe different language structures, discourse elements, and dialectal variations. Mostly the content of the discourse will be related to emotion, cynicism, attitude of the interlocutors, an outburst of agony, jealousy and emotional outburst. For example, when a doctor speaks to another doctor in a formal situation he will use medical terms and standard language but when he speaks to his patient he may use simple language with lot of phonological and morphological reductions.

Phase 3 - Characters have both uni and bidirectional discourse or interaction between character 1 to 2; character 3 to 4; character 5 to 6 and vice versa. Though there may not be a significant variation in the content of the interaction when compared to the content mentioned in phase 1, there will be significant variations in the language structure. Since phase 3 involves extensive interaction between different characters we can observe various discourse features.

Phase 4 - Role Relationship is an unidirectional discourse between the author and the reader. In this category the author gives his opinion, suggestions, criticism, explanation, and comments to the reader about whom he does not have any idea regarding his/her sex, age, mental make up and knowledge level. In spite of this the author selects certain concepts related to the world, development of the storyline and the actions of the characters of the novel and discusses them addressing to the readers. This unidirectional interaction will often have a simple sentence structure with less discourse markers and less variations in the language.

Phase 5 -Setting is both uni and bidirectional interaction between the author and his own consciousness /mind and between the character of the novel and the author. The content of the interaction is mostly about certain philosophical thoughts, advice, long narration, and lamentation. In this we could identify two types of linguistic outputs as follows:

- Author's soliloquy or revelation of his inner mind in the form of explanations of some action or situations being described in the novel. This revelation of mind may sometimes represent the author's own ideologies or his own character.

- The author's ideology is sometimes expressed through the mind of one of his characters in the novel.

In all the five phases discussed above one can see a platform involving various settings where the story occurs. For some novelists, the setting is essential and it plays a major role in the theme of the novel and for other authors, the setting is not so important. For example, the focus in a novel on the inner thoughts of a single character as in autobiographies. But in the nucleus of Re. Karthigesu the setting involves his own creations. The author himself often interacts with his own creations. This interaction will be mostly in the form of soliloquies or author – character interaction or character-character interaction . This is illustrated in the following figure 3.4.

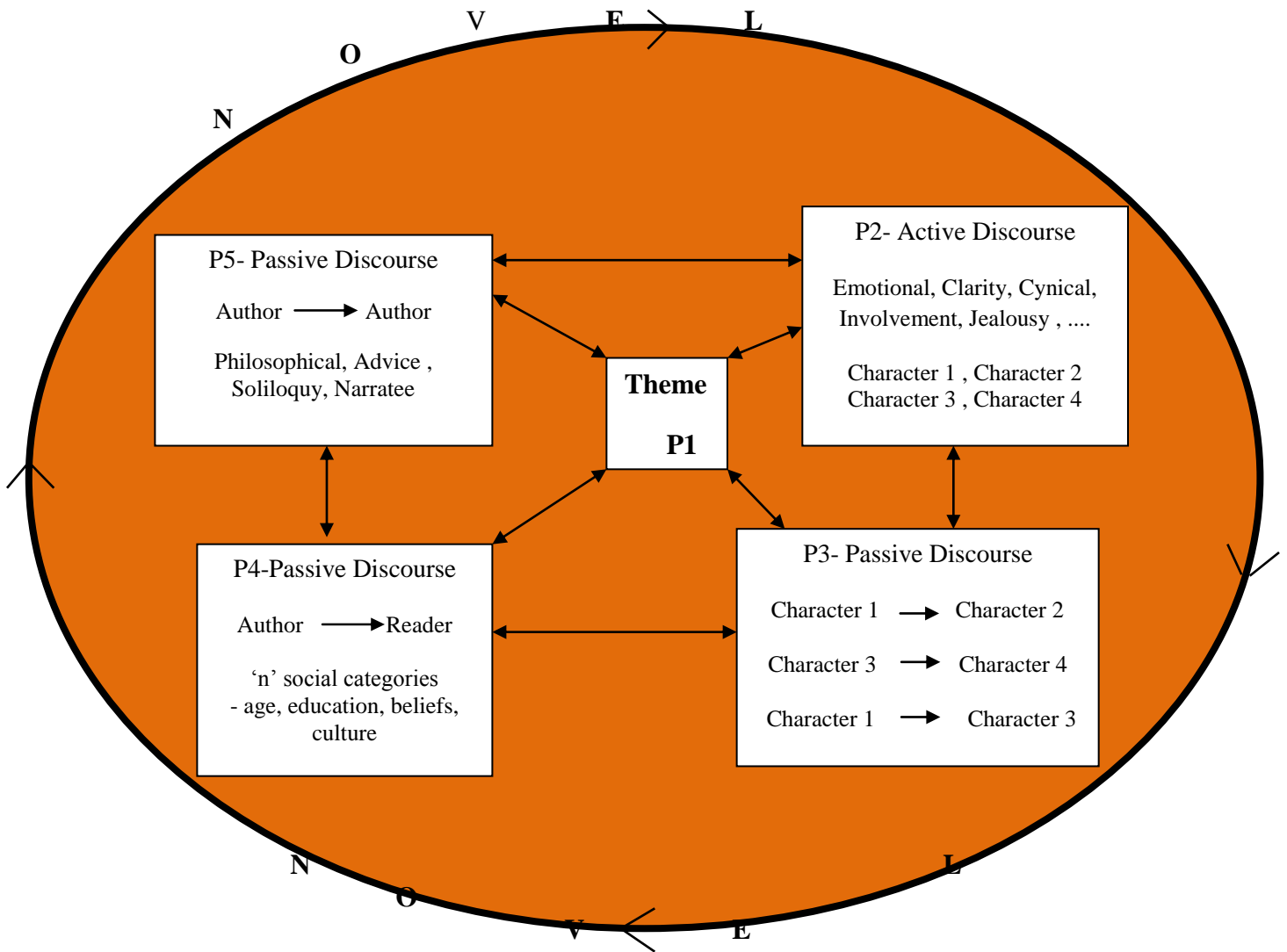


Fig. 3.4 :
Stylistic Elements in Phases

3.2 Pilot Study

By applying this theoretical framework, a pilot study was carried out using one of the novels of Re.Karthigesu to show the stylistic features of the author. To validate the theoretical model the findings were presented in two different conferences organised by the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics (FLL), University of Malaya: (1) International Conference on Tamil Linguistics (23-24 October 2009) and (2) FLL Postgraduate Research Conference (7-8 December 2009). The model and the findings were well received by the participants. It should be noted here that Re. Karthigesu the author of the novels under study also attended the International Conference on Tamil Linguistics held at the University of Malaya.

3.3 Collection of Data for the Study

The data for this research was collected from four Tamil novels written by Re. Karthigesu, namely, *aṅtima ka:lam*, *te:Tiyirukkum taruNangaL*, *su:ta:TTam a:Tum ka:lam*, and *va:nattu ve:lihaL*. The criteria for selecting these novels are stated in Chapter 1. (cf. 1.6, p:20)

To start with, the novels were read by the researcher critically and the main characters of the novels were identified. Their social strata in the society, background, education level, and role played by these characters were recorded (Appendix 2). This data is very

essential to evaluate the ability of the author to use the appropriate language or the style of language which suits the characters accordingly.

Having identified the character sketch involved in the novels under study, during the second reading of these novels, the main thrust was given to identifying the unique linguistic features used by the author, which have sociolinguistic and sociocultural attestations with the characters of the novels. Being a study that focuses on stylistic analysis, the researcher analysed the linguistic features by classifying them under the following headings:

(i) **Linguistic Features:**

- Anaphora,
- Parallelism
- Metaphor
- Unique Expressions,
- Code-switching / Loan blending
- Formal and Informal conversations /dialogues
- Similes
- Idiomatic expressions
- Clusters alien to Tamil
- Cohesion and Coherence
- New coinages
- Reduction
- Analogy

- Types of sentences used by the author
- Literary and Historical events as stylistic components

(ii) Paralinguistic Features

- Non-verbal communicative strategies such as gesture, body movements and communication, emotions and language etc.

The data collected were then analysed critically using stylistic - linguistic techniques as mentioned in the second chapter. The analysis of data are discussed in the following chapter using relevant tables and linguistic features.

3.4 Analysis of Data

As Verdonk (2002:29) asserts that, “stylistics deals with the possible significance of linguistic features in texts and how the texts can be interpreted as representing an event or situation from a particular perspective or point of view to show the style of an author.” Normally readers will make sense of a text by relating it to the context of their knowledge, emotions, and experience. Since such contexts are different for a particular reader or readers, the interpretations will also vary. Usually when we start reading a novel or a short story questions arise within ourselves as to who the narrator is , or whose voice we are supposed to hear and whose version of events we ‘listen to’ etc. Thus, we have to refer to a narrating person or persons in a fiction and this can be done with the internal evidence of the text itself.

Based on this assumption, the language data collected from the four novels under study are categorized under various functions as used by the author towards the reader of the text as well as towards the various characters of the novels who are involved in discourse. The various language features used by Re. Karthigesu are categorized under *Linguistic*, *Sociolinguistic*, *Paralinguistic* and *Rhetoric* functions as given in the figure 3.5 and discussed in the fourth, fifth and sixth chapters with relevant examples from the novels under study.

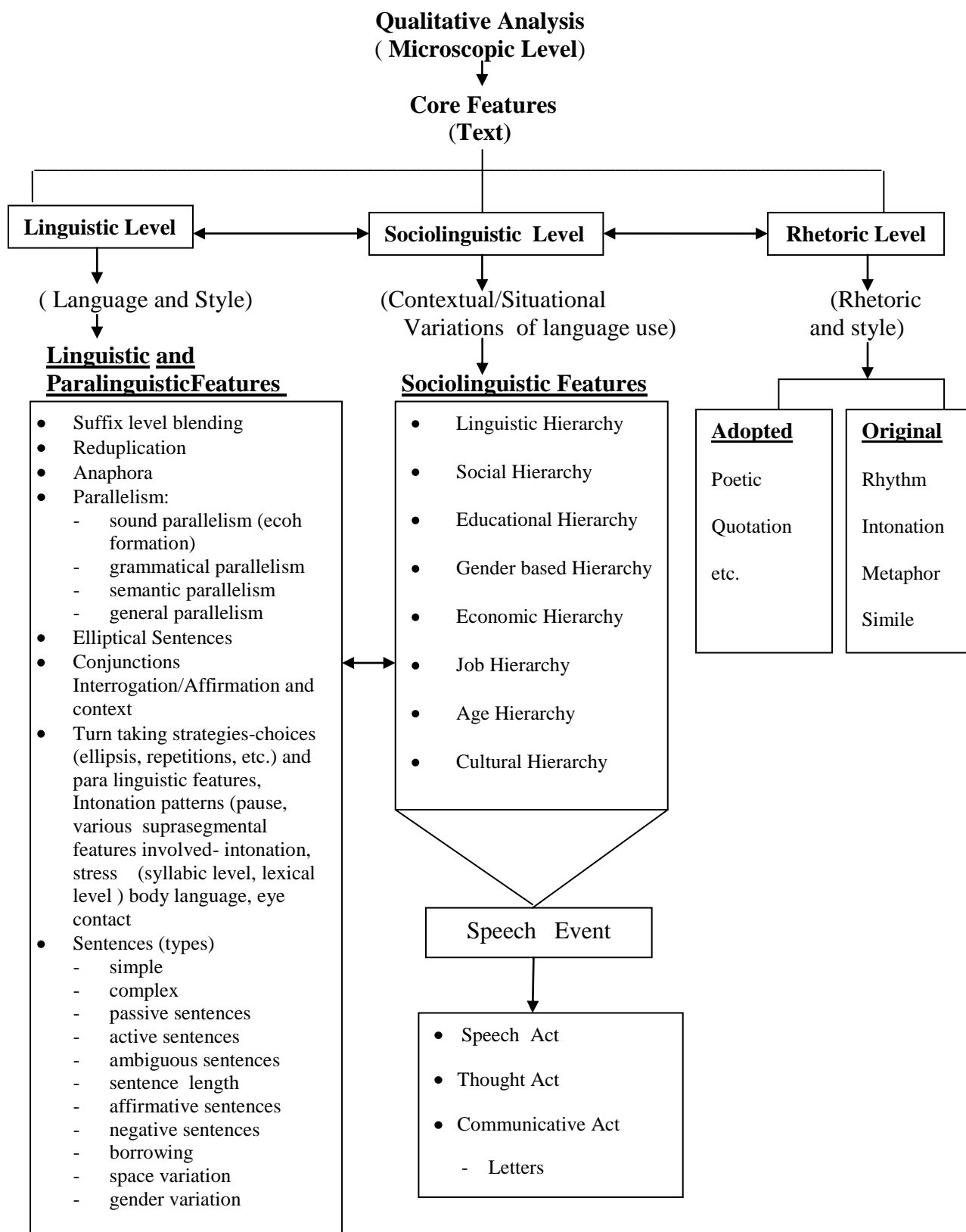


Fig. 3.5:
Analytical Schemata of the Stylistic Features of Re. Karthigesu's Novels