

Feature Writing and Stylistics as Media for Local Branding: A Structural Hermeneutic Analysis

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 22-01-2024 Accepted: 15-02-2024 Published: 16-02-2024 Volume: 2 Issue: 1 DOI: https://doi.org/10.61276/loqula.v1i2.33	Feature writing is a typical journalistic product that contains a combination of news and opinion, with a storytelling style containing human interest and beautiful language. The art of feature writing is more widely understood in the context of entertaining and inspirational reading products rather than as a medium for promotion. The purpose of this study is to make a theoretical analysis to understand the art of feature writing by looking at the substance from the stylistic side that features are more than entertaining reading but are positioned as a medium for local branding. The results show that the morphology of feature writing is built on cohesion and imagery as the dominant elements of stylistics that support the delivery of meaning through the narrative structure. In conclusion, from a structural hermeneutic perspective, stylistic elements in feature writing not only build an entertaining discourse, but objective and informative, which implicitly promotes the locality as local branding.
KEYWORDS <i>Feature writing, Local branding, Stylistics, Structural Hermeneutics.</i>	



Introduction

Feature writing is widely seen as entertaining and inspiring because of the creativity in combining opinion, facts, touching storytelling, and the beauty of language. Feature is a journalistic writing art commonly found in newspapers. The distinctiveness of features results in several categorizations of the art of writing, namely News features, Backgrounders, Commemorative Story, Investigative features, Colour pieces, Triumph over Adversity, Formulaic features, Think pieces, Human interest features, Historical features, Profile features, Business Story, First-Person Story, Travel features, Explanatory and how to do it features, Scientific features, Hobbyist Story, Medical Story, Odd-Occupation Story, Personal columns, and Reviews, Sports reporting, Crime reporting, Environmental journalism, Fashion journalism, Food journalism, Science journalism, War reporting, and Medical reporting (Lesmana, 2021). However, the development of features has not yet explored the factual, creative, and inspirational sides of features and utilized these sides optimally as art in promoting something, for example, locality.

This research sees that the feature is not a creative and inspirational art, but an art to promote something. Facts and creativity in the art of feature writing are the strengths in narrating a region and exploring the aesthetic sides of a locality. This can be seen from some of the feature writings in an anthology entitled “Kampung HalamanKu” by students of MAN 1 Yogyakarta in 2023. Referring to the background above, the formulation of the problem to be studied is how stylistics in the art of writing features in the anthology entitled “Kampung HalamanKu” constructs facts from a locality and is combined with the author's creativity for local branding. Stylistics looks at the creation of works in terms of language styles used to obtain aesthetic effects and convey certain ideas implicitly. It is the context, form, and purpose that determine the style of a work. Therefore, language style is always related to the author's personal taste and sensitivity to his environment. The purpose of this study is to make a theoretical analysis to understand the art of feature writing by looking at the substance from the stylistic side that features are more than entertaining reading but are positioned as a medium for local branding.

This research uses a structural hermeneutics approach to see the relationship between stylistic elements in the text that constructs a certain idea about the fact of locality, imagination, and creativity of the author for local



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branding in the anthology entitled "Jejak Memori Kampung HalamanKu." This research takes stylistics as the formal object and feature writing in the anthology entitled "Kampung HalamanKu" as the material object. The structural hermeneutics approach to a work reconciles the tendency of subjectivity in hermeneutics with the rigidity of structuralism in its tendency of objectivism. This research uses a structural hermeneutics approach based on three main points in Paul Ricoeur's theory of interpretation (1981), namely (1) a detailed study of the linguistic patterns of the text as the objective dimension of interpretation, (2) the interpreter's perspective as the subjective dimension of interpretation, (3) both dimensions are equally important in the activity of interpretation.

Structural hermeneutics has been used as an approach as well as a method in previous studies. The approach and methods of structural hermeneutics in behavior produce theories, assumptions, and descriptions of culture (Alexander and Smith, 2003). In the context of culture and media artworks, this paradigm analyzes how impressions work as structures of meaning and media texts (Norton, 2011). Performing structural hermeneutics also provides what is referred to as "the bones of what is observed without losing its flesh" to literary works (Ahimsa-Putra 2006). Research with stylistics as a formal object has been done in many previous studies of literary works but not with a structural hermeneutic approach or method. Analyzing a text stylistically is different from analyzing a literary work because it must be more objective and rooted in facts. In previous studies, stylistic analysis has explained how the words in a text create the feelings and responses we get when reading it, how analysis can be structured, how to relate linguistic elements to meaning, and how to provide an objective explanation of the initial interpretation of a text (Ali, Bhatti, and Shah, 2016; Almahameed, 2020; Isti'anah, 2017; Saputra and Abida, 2021). In this study, structuralism and hermeneutics as interrelated paradigms are used to conduct content analysis on feature writing by looking at the relationship between stylistic elements that construct ideas about the facts of locality, imagination, and creativity of the author for local branding. The utilization of stylistics in feature writing for promotional purposes has not been discussed in previous studies.



Method of Research

This research is an interpretative qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is used to identify and analyze characteristics embedded in the text (Frey, Botan, and Kreps, 1999). The design of interpretive content analysis is, “especially for latent content analysis, where the researcher goes beyond simply quantifying the most straightforward denotative elements in a text” (Ahuvia, 2001). Qualitative data were taken from four feature writings in an anthology entitled “Jejak Memori Kampung Halamanku” written by MAN 1 Yogyakarta students, edited by Joko Santoso, Awla Akbar Ilwa, and Wiwien Widyawati Rahayu, and published in 2023. The contents of the anthology were classified into four major categories, namely “Romantisme” (Romanticism), “Memori” (Memory), “Sejarah dan Tradisi” (History and Tradition), and “Geliat Ekonomi” (Economic Stretch). A feature writing title from each classification became a sample text. The four sample texts are titled “Lembaran Kisah Pengangkut Batu” [Sheet Story of a Stone Carrier] by Haka Aghitsna Ridloka dan Parwati Hadi Noorsanti, “Wonosobo, Kota Sejuta Kenangan” [Wonosobo City of a Million Memories] by Kayla Nissa Febillya Az Zahra dan Wiwien Widyawati Rahayu, “Balorejo, Kesuburan di balik Daerah Rawan Banjir” [Balorejo, Fertility behind a Flood-prone Area] by Muhammad Ali Mahrus dan M. Badrus Siro, “Salak Pondoh, Komoditas Ekspor yang Meredup” [Salak Pondoh, A Fading Export Commodity] by Alifiko Arya dan Yashinta Farahsani.

This study applied the qualitative research procedure of interpretative content analysis. The data analysis procedure adapted and combined Ahimsa-Putra's *ceriteme* model (2006) and Nurgiyantoro's stylistic elements (1995) as rhetorical devices. The procedure is as follows: First, selecting the sample texts. Second, determining *ceriteme* (groups of sentences that form a narrative structure) as the unit of analysis. Third, classifying the unit of analysis based on stylistic elements (1995). Fourth, analyzing the unit categories (*ceriteme*) based on language and style (stylistic elements) as rhetorical elements. Fifth, drawing inferences of the meanings in the text structure concerning promoting locality.

Discussion

The result of the research shows the morphology of 4 feature writings that become the material object of this research. The morphology of the feature



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texts shows the number of sentence lines, the overall categorization of the sentence lines into paragraphs, the grouping of sentences that make up the narrative structure of the feature text (*ceriteme*), dominant stylistic elements that become rhetorical devices of the feature text, and the meanings in the narrative structure concerning promoting locality. The following tables show the morphology of feature texts systematically.

Table 1.
 Morphology of Feature Writing Entitled
 “Lembaran Kisah Pengangkut Batu”

Paragraph	<i>Ceriteme</i>	Dominant Stylistic Element	Meaning Inferences
1 (lines 1- 25)	Description of the main character's occupation and the geographical condition of the residence in Banjarnegara	Cohesion and imagery	A life that blends with the locality and nature as a source of livelihood
2 (lines 26-40)	The main character's routine in the geographical setting of Banjarnegara	Cohesion and imagery	A life that blends with the locality and nature as a source of livelihood
3 (lines 41-63)	Job description of the main character and geography of Banjarnegara	Cohesion and imagery	A life that blends with the locality and nature as a source of livelihood.
4 (lines 64-82)	Characterization of the main character with	Cohesion and imagery	A life that blends with the locality and nature as a



	the geographical setting of Banjarnegara		source of livelihood.
5 (lines 83-97)	Characterization of the main character with the geographical setting of Banjarnegara	Cohesion and imagery	A life that blends with the locality and nature as a source of livelihood
6 (lines 98-114)	Characterization of the main character with the geographical setting of Banjarnegara	Cohesion and imagery	A life that blends with the locality and nature as a source of livelihood

Table 2.
 Morphology of Feature Writing Entitled
 “Wonosobo, Kota Sejuta Kenangan”

Paragraph	<i>Ceritime</i>	Dominant Stylistic Element	Meaning Inferences
1 (lines 1-7)	Main character with the geographical setting of Wonosobo	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture
2 (Lines 8-15)	Main character with the geographical setting of Wonosobo	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture
3 (lines 16-26)	Main character	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with



	with the geographical setting of Wonosobo		the local nature and culture
4 (lines 27-45)	Geographical condition of Wonosobo	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture
5 (lines 46-54)	Main character and local tradition in Wonosobo	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture
6 (lines 55-64)	Main character and local tradition in Wonosobo	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture
7 (lines 65-76)	Local tradition in Wonosobo	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture
8 (lines 77-80)	Main character and local tradition in Wonosobo	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture

Table 3.
 Morphology of Feature Writing Entitled
 “Balorejo, Kesuburan di balik
 Daerah Rawan Banjir”

Paragraph	<i>Ceriteme</i>	Dominat Stylistic Element	Meaning Inferences
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1 (lines 1-9)	Main character with the geographical setting of Balorejo	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture
2 (lines 10-17)	Main character with the geographical setting of Balorejo	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture
3 (lines 18-27)	Main character with the geographical setting of Balorejo	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture
4 (lines 28-35)	Main character with the geographical setting of Balorejo and local tradition	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture
5 (lines 36-49)	Main character with the geographical setting of Balorejo and local tradition	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture
6 (lines 50-60)	Main character with the geographical setting of Balorejo and local tradition	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture



7 (lines 61-68)	Main character with the geographical setting of Balorejo and local tradition	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture
8 (lines 69-73)	Main character with the geographical setting of Balorejo and local tradition	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture
9 (lines 74-83)	Main character with the geographical setting of Balorejo and local tradition	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local nature and culture

Table 4.
 Morphology of Feature Writing Entitled
 “Salak Pondok, Komoditas Ekspor
 yang Meredup”

Paragraph	<i>Ceriteme</i>	Dominant Stylistic Element	Meaning Inferences
1 (lines 1-11)	Main character and local distinctiveness (Salak fruits)	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local economic life



2 (lines 12-23)	Local fruit (Salak) is a specialty of the Sleman region	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local economic life
3 (lines 24-31)	Efforts to increase the value of Salak fruit commodity	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local economic life
4 (lines 32-47)	Efforts to increase the value of Salak fruit commodity	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local economic life
5 (lines 48-54)	Main character and the efforts to increase the value of Salak fruit commodity	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local economic life
6 (lines 55-61)	Efforts to increase the value of Salak fruit commodity	Cohesion and imaginary	A life that blends with the local economic life

The relationship between the storytelling and dominant stylistic elements supports the formation of meanings that promote local nature, culture, and economic life. Stylistic elements, especially cohesion, and imagery, support the story that describes geographical conditions. The excerpts of the feature writing entitled “Lembaran Kisah Pengangkut Batu” show the relationship between sentences that convey meaning supported by imaginary elements to form a series of stories to produce meaning about a life that blends with the locality and nature as a source of livelihood.

Di tempat inilah Mbah Roso melihat seongkah harta karun yang dapat menyelamatkan hidupnya, yaitu mengangkut dan memecah



batu. Banjarmasin yang dialiri arus sungai Kali Mrawu memberikan sumber daya alam tersendiri bagi pekerja seperti Mbah Roso ini. (p. 13)

Ia harus mengangkut batu-batu besar ini dari dasar Kali Mrawu ke daratan yang ketinggiannya enam meter dengan rute yang bisa dibilang tak mudah. Jalan kecil yang dibuatnya sendiri untuk lalu lintas memindahkan batu ini berada di tengah-tengah hutan bambu dengan semak- semak di sekitarnya. Alasnya pun masih tanah yang permukaannya terjal, dan sangat mungkin Mbah Roso terpeleset apabila tak fokus satu detik saja. Dengan rute tersebut, tak bisa dipungkiri bahwa binatang merayap seperti ular dapat menghampirinya. Belum lagi arus sungai yang tak menentu, membuat Mbah Roso harus selalu sigap apabila arus sungai mendadak deras tiba tiba. (p. 14)

Ceritime is the morphology of cohesion in stylistics. In *ceritime*, sentences are related to form cohesion by linking ideas implicitly and explicitly. Cohesion, according to Aminuddin (1995), is the relationship between sentences and parts of the text that convey meaning to the reader.

The relationship between cohesion elements and imagery in the story describes the geographical conditions that support local nature as local branding, which introduces the beauty of local nature to readers. The excerpts of the feature writing entitled “Wonosobo, Kota Sejuta Kenangan” also introduce the beauty of local nature to the reader.

Kayla dan keluarga selalu mengunjungi tempat wisata yang termahsyur di Wonosobo, yakni Kalianget dan Kebun Teh Tambi. Kedua tempat itu sungguh menjadi lokasi yang cocok untuk healing. Bagaimana tidak? Keberadaan Kalianget di tengah ademnya Wonosobo bagaikan surga dunia. Sumber mata air itu elalu berhasil menghangatkan tubuh-tubuh yang menggigil kedinginan. Ditambah dengan khasiat tirta Kalianget yang dapat menyembuhkan berbagai macam penyakit. (p. 61-62)



Jika Kalianget menawarkan healing mental dan fisik, maka Kebun Teh Tambi menawarkan healing visual. Hamparan kebun teh peninggalan Belanda yang hijau subur nan asri sungguh memanjakan mata. Kebun Teh Tambi ini membuka diri kepada wisatawan seperti Kayla untuk bereksplorasi di tengah kebun. (p. 62)

The coherent imagery also supports *ceriteme* in describing the local culture. Imagery is the use of words and expressions that can evoke sensory responses. According to Nurgiyantoro (1995), Images and imagery refer to mental reproduction. Imagery is a picture of various sensory experiences evoked by words. The excerpts of “Balorejo, Kesuburan di balik Daerah Rawan Banjir” show that the coherent imagery supports the story in describing local culture.

Selain hamparan padi, kita juga dapat melihat rawa-rawa yang ditumbuhi bunga teratai indah yang mekar secara bersamaan. Ini tentu menjadi daya tarik tersendiri jika kita mengunjungi Balorejo. Selain keindahan alam, kita bisa menjumpai keceriaan anak-anak bermain dan mencari ikan di sungai. Saat kemarau tiba, bermain layangan di sore hari dan gogoh menjadi kebiasaan anak-anak Balorejo. Gogoh ini merupakan cara mencari ikan dengan tangan kosong tanpa bantuan alat apapun. Tak hanya anak-anak, orang dewasa pun melakukannya saat sungai irigasi mulai mengering dan berlumpur. Ikan seperti lele dan gabus banyak dijumpai di sungai dan aliran irigasi Balorejo. (p. 95-96)

The cohesively organized images and imagery support the imagination while stimulating the reader's desire to know more about the discourse presented in the feature text. Cohesion and imagery that support the story provide actual and factual information about the discourse in the text. The excerpts of “Salak Pondoh: Komoditas Ekspor yang Merdup” describe a life that blends with the local economic life.

Selain itu, upaya dari warga lokal di Sleman juga patut untuk diapresiasi. Sri Sujarwati, warga Kembangarum, Donokerto,



Turi, adalah salah satu warga yang berupaya untuk mengolah salak menjadi berbagai macam barang seperti dodol, ketupat, karamel, geplak, manisan, acar, bahkan biji salak menjadi mi numan serbuk seperti kopi. Tujuan Sujarwati adalah menaikkan harga salak saat panen raya. (p. 103-104)

The feature writings in "Jejak Memori Kampung Halamanku" explore locality by combining human interest, nature, history, culture, and economy. The combination formula refers to the development of a more creative type of feature. "Jejak Memori Kampung Halamanku" shows that the creative side combined with facts in feature writings offers a new form of feature that implicitly contains a promotional side to the locality.

The promotional side of feature writing is attached to stylistic elements, especially cohesion, and imagery, which support *ceriteme* in forming certain meanings. Stylistic analysis with a structural hermeneutic approach to feature writings positions stylistic elements that are interrelated in the text to form meaningful narratives for readers. Thus, stylistics is more than just building "beauty" as in literary texts (poetry, novels, and drama) but an objective and clear understanding and information on the meaning in the feature texts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, from the structural hermeneutic perspective, the art of feature writing emphasizes the morphology of linguistic patterns of texts as the objective dimension of interpretation. The morphology of the feature writings includes stylistic elements, particularly cohesion, and imagery to support the *ceriteme* to convey meanings to readers, which is more than entertaining reading, but inspiring and informative reading to locality. The process of interpreting the feature text involves the subjective dimension of the reader (the analyst) who sees the meaning of inspiring and informative reading to the locality in feature writings as a medium for local branding.

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