Research Article

Section: Literature, Linguistics & Criticism

Check for updates

Using colloquial language in prose fiction texts: An exploratory study

Suhair Eyad Jamal Al-Alami
Department of General Education, Skyline University College, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
Email: suhair.alalami@skylineuniversity.ac.ae
iD http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1488-4305

Abstract
Prose fiction texts have an aesthetic function, which seeks to create a sense of aesthetic appreciation through means of language style amongst other devices. Bearing this in mind, it is the author's belief that using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively impact language style of the text and acquisition of the foreign language. Motivated by this conviction, this study addresses two main questions. First, how does use of colloquial language impact language style of a prose fiction text? Second, how does use of colloquial language impact language acquisition in relation to foreign and second English learners? For data gathering purposes, the author of this paper created and distributed a questionnaire comprising ten items. Including three groups: English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students; EFL university instructors; and adult readers, the questionnaire was addressed to a total of one hundred and sixty-six subjects in Dubai. Moreover, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview involving six subjects. According to the statistical results, most of the respondents and interviewees believed that including colloquial language in prose fiction texts would negatively impact language style of the text and acquisition of the foreign language.

Keywords: colloquial language, foreign language acquisition, language style, prose fiction text

Public Interest Statement

This study explores why a writer of prose fiction needs to avoid using colloquial language in the text, whilst considering both language style of the text and quality acquisition of the language. Due to the scarce studies on this issue, this research paper is expected to add to the body of knowledge within the areas of prose fiction writing, stylistics, and language acquisition.

1. Introduction

Literary texts can be seen as reflections on life and reflections of authors' experiences in life conveyed via language, worthy of aesthetic appreciation (Du, 2020). Commenting on prose fiction in particular, a prose fiction text refers to a made-up story which uses a narrative mode of writing the ultimate outcome of which is presented in varied lengths; namely, a novel, a novella, and a short story (Al-Alami, 2023). A prose fiction text is per se an art of creative expression and an articulation of aesthetic value which seeks to impress the reader via means of language style amongst other means. What is language style though? According to the author of this paper, language style is a manifestation of how writers manipulate language in stretches of discourse, whether orally or in writing. While some styles are straightforward, others are mysterious and while some styles are lofty and thorough, others are simple and squat. James Joyce, for instance, is known for having a lofty style of writing. Unless otherwise requested, authors prefer to use the language style they feel most comfortable with. It goes without saying, however, that writers are affected by the era they witness, the place they belong to, and the way their community members use language. Literary language, which as known prose fiction belongs to, has functions other than the language of general texts' type does. Serving the function of creative expression amongst other functions, for example, literary language has the function of foregrounding the utterance (Short, 1996).

Language style in prose fiction mirrors the writer, depicting his/her identity, mentality, and personality. As seen by the author of this paper, using colloquial words and phrases in a prose fiction text would negatively impact language style of the text and acquisition of the foreign language. The examples below reflect using colloquial language in a prose fiction text.

> 'Miss Leefolt, she look terrified a her own child.'
> 'But Miss Leefolt, she don't pick up her own baby for the rest a the day.'
> 'Here's something about Miss Leefolt: she not just frowning all the time, she skinny.'
> 'By the time she a year old, Mae Mobley following me around everywhere I go.'
> '..but I spec this is the smallest house I ever worked in. It's just the one story. Her and Mister Leefolt's room in the back..'
> 'Naw, never mind.'
> 'Course I's happy.'

In a prose fiction text, several writers want the story's characters to sound realistic, hence giving the reader the impression that they are genuinely speaking in a real-life situation. In a real-life situation though, people may sometimes misspeak or may not speak smoothly. As emphasized by Kidder and Todd (2013) amongst others, good prose avoids using too informal writing. It is also the author's belief that a writer of prose fiction texts needs to avoid reproducing everyday spoken transcripts for, though authentic, may not be sufficiently impressive when converted into words on paper. Bearing this in mind, the current paper seeks to examine this issue considering the opinions of three essential categories: EFL university students, EFL university instructors, and adult readers. Comprised of five more sections, section two highlights several studies and opinions pertaining to the issues this paper highlights. Section three discusses the research aims and questions, section four describes the study methodology, and section five portrays the study's findings. The paper ends with recommendations for scholars to consider.

2. Literature Review

Section two of the current paper sheds light on the use of colloquial language in prose fiction texts, considering different perspectives. To ensure adequate coverage of the main points the current paper explores, this section is comprised of three parts: colloquial language in terms of meaning and use, colloquial language in relation to writing whether as a skill to employ or to teach, and language style.

2.1 What is colloquial language?

Colloquial language is an informal language style which suits oral speech more than written one (Oxford Dictionary 2010; Merriam Webster dictionary 2006; Cambridge Dictionary 2005). Reflecting on communication within real-life contexts, colloquial language is used when interlocutors speak in an informal situation such as family members at home (Epoge, 2012). Burchfield (2004) explains that colloquial language is excluded to informal language style, spoken language specifically. Partridge (1937) asserts that colloquialism comprises five types: single words, contractions, verb-adverb combinations, clipped words, and short picturesque. Single words are usually used in daily language within informal settings. Contractions refer to using shortened forms of one word or more by deleting an internal letter or letters. Verb-adverb combinations refer to using a verb which is followed by an adverb. Clipped words refer to creating new words which are used by shortening the original word or words. And short-picturesque words are sometimes used as a variation to refer to technical terms and, as the name indicates, are short.

Colloquialism covers using informal words and phrases which exist within a dialect. A dialect can be defined as a language variant which is spoken by a specific group within a specific territory, making it unique within the larger language it relates to (Trudgill, 2014). A dialect is usually regional, indicating that a specific group of people in a specific geographical area may speak a language which is different from the way the same language is spoken by another group. For instance, people in West Midlands of the United Kingdom use a dialect which is not the same one used by people in Scotland of the United Kingdom. It is worth mentioning in this context that although English native speakers, apart from where they originally come from, can understand each other as regards standard English, they may not be able to comprehend in full the accent or colloquial expressions used by other native speakers who live in other parts of the English-speaking countries.

Colloquialism also includes slang and jargon (Epoge, 2012). Briefly speaking, a slang includes the informal words and phrases that are used by a group of people such as a certain subculture of a nation. Jargon, within the context of informal language use, refers to a pidgin or nonsensical language. Both jargon and slang are considered specific to certain groups of people. Jargon can be formal and informal; formal when used as a technical expression or a special characteristic of an activity or a field of study and informal when used as a pidgin or incoherent language.

2.2 Should Colloquial Language Be Used in Writing?

This part of section two presents several ideas, studies and opinions which are related to using colloquial language for writing, whether academic or literary. To start with, colloquial writing is characterized by a conversational style, but it is not necessarily written the way it is spoken. A statement which is said or written in an informal language style can still adhere to the rules of standard language (Trudgill, 2004). A sloppy form of language, informal language style is still governed by rules as rigorous as the rules which govern formal language (Akmajian, et al. 2001). An informal language style can still minimize the structure of spoken language whilst adhering to the grammatical conventions of written language (Alred, Brusaw and Oliu, 2011). An informal writing style can be found in personal emails and WhatsApp messages amongst other informal written forms, indicating that there is no formal distance between the writer on the one hand and the receiver on the other as the tone is personal.

Looked at from the opinion of several scholars, use of colloquial language to improve students' foreign/ second language would be helpful. In his study, Karimi (2021) examined how teaching colloquial English

would impact EFL learners' listening comprehension skills. Involving forty students, the participants were divided into experimental and control groups. During study conduct, the experimental group was taught colloquial English while the control group was taught standard English. A pre-post listening test was administered to the two groups. The results proved that, towards the end of study implementation, there was a significant difference between the two groups' performance in favor of the experimental group. Hasanah (2020) explored if using colloquial expressions would support EFL students to develop their speaking skills and enhance their communication competencies. Comprising rubric analyses, interviews, and class observations as the study's tools, the research involved one high school in the city of Bandar Lampung. Relying on the findings of this study, the researcher advocated using colloquial language while teaching EFL learners speaking and communication skills. Turning the discussion to grammar and colloquialism, studies on diachronic changes in English whether British or American propose that colloquialism plays a role in relation to the increasing use of some grammatical categories (Collins and Yao, 2013).

On the other hand, some scholars do not advocate using colloquial language for formal purposes such as academic writing. In Pan's opinion (2012), researchers need to present their work following what is known amongst international scholars as standard language, so that the work can be understood and disseminated. Use of incorrect grammar and inappropriate vocabulary are instances which writers have to avoid. Several types of colloquial language may be inappropriate for a global audience such as second and foreign language readers, who are usually taught the standards and conventions of a second/foreign language formally. These types include slang such as till instead of until, vulgar words, and idioms as they may pose problems. If understood literally, idioms for example may cause misinterpretation of meaning Peters (2007). Peter proceeds to argue that colloquial language may subvert the serious impact a writer wants his message to hold.

Master's theses and doctorate dissertations are academic forms of writing which need to be formally written. With this in mind, Wang (2016) conducted a study aiming to investigate the extent to which MA theses and PhD dissertations submitted by EFL students in China included colloquial language. Based on the study's findings, the similarities that existed between PhD dissertations and MA theses outweighed the differences; PhD dissertations were not found to include any less colloquial language than MA theses were found. This could be due to factors such as lacking sufficient knowledge about register in academic writing and being influenced by colloquialism, besides unneeded transfer of first language while using a second/foreign language, English in this case. Wang, therefore, recommends increasing awareness of formal language style and avoiding use of informal language whilst writing MA theses and PhD dissertations.

As far as using colloquial language in prose fiction is concerned, peculiar and dialectal expressions that are included in a prose fiction text exemplify use of colloquial language in literature. Writers of prose fiction use colloquialism for different reasons such as adding a touch of authenticity to the text and depicting certain eras amongst other reasons. For instance, in Wharton's novel The Age of Innocence (1920), upper-class colloquial phrases are used to mimic European upper classes' speech then, including a number of French phrases.

2.3 Language Style at a Glance

Newmark (1981) highlights six functions of language. First, the vocative function which is related to readership and the social consequences of the writer's work. Second, the phatic function which is related to speech and dialogues with the effect of maintaining a friendly contact with the reader. Third, the information function which is related to the external situation such as facts about a topic. Fourth, the expressive function which is related to both the writer's mentality and ways of viewing issues in relation to the text. Fifth, the aesthetic function which is related to utilizing literary devices with the aim of appreciating beauty depicted in language. Sixth, the metalingual function which reveals how language explains its own features, but it is rarely connected to fictional language. Relying on the six functions highlighted here, there could be more than one way of examining language style. It should be borne in mind though that language style is not only

a sense; it is a touch perceived in the language of a literary text. Baker (2000, p. 245) argues that style is 'a kind of thumb print that is expressed in a range of linguistic as well as non-linguistic features'. The concept of style is central to our understanding of text construction (Boase-Beier 2006; 2014).

Relating the discussion to prose fiction texts specifically, effective style and good prose fiction are interrelated; the questions which are related to both how and to what extent a piece of writing is good cannot be separated (Hartley, 2016). A prose fiction text's style relies on the choices the writer makes regarding the use of diction, literary devices, dialog, detail, structure, and rhythm (Prose 2006; Strunk and While 1959). Diction is concerned with word choice such as choosing a connotation or a denotation. Diction choice covers advanced and simple vocabulary, modern and archaic words, concrete and abstract expressions, and frequent and infrequent terms. Diction choice yields a written discourse which can be simple or advanced, long or short, and formal or informal. Literary devices are literary tools which the writer can use whilst constructing the story to impress the reader via means of exquisite manipulation of discourse and lofty articulation of expression. Examples of literary devices include irony, symbolism, personification, metaphor, and simile amongst others. Dialog refers to the conversations which take place involving a story's characters. Dialog reflects characters' background and accentuates their personalities. Detail refers to the amount of information the writer offers regarding the story's characters, events, and messages. Whereas some authors prefer to go in depth while portraying characters and reporting events, others prefer to use sparse prose or summary narrative. Structure covers text construction and sentence pattern. The structure the writer uses can be characterized as formal or informal, simple or complex, and long or short. Rhythm is the form of flow and pattern of movement the writer adopts whilst writing the text. Alliteration, repetition, rhyme, and parallel structure are examples of rhythm the aim of which is to trigger emotion, thought, and response via means of impressive sound effects.

Word choice is another requirement of exquisite language style (Strunk and While 1959). When choosing an appropriate word for a specific context, the writer should take several factors into account. For instance, the writer needs to decide when to use denotations and when connotations. Denotation is the word's dictionary meaning and usage. Connotation, on the other hand, is the suggestion or implication of a meaning by a word apart from the thing it explicitly describes or names. Obviously, both types are required for effective writing style. Connotations, however, can be more in demand as regards literary language. Wise selection of words also takes into consideration the audience for whom the text is addressed. Readers' mentality and age are amongst the main factors to consider. For example, writing a children's story is different from writing an adult's story. An impressive word used in a children's story does not necessarily have the same impact if used in an adult's story. Another important requirement regarding word selection is concerned with the factor of specificity. A word in English may have several different meanings, depending on the context in which it is used. This requires an artistic selection of words that are specific in meaning, proper in function, and accurate in usage.

In sum, language style depicts and reflects the writer's selection of syntax, diction, literary devices, and rhythm. While writing a prose fiction text, the writer's style is influenced by his/her choice of literary devices such as personification, imagery, and symbolism to effectively narrate events and delineate characters. To embody the writer's attitude, tone needs to be effectively utilized so that the writer can create a proper atmosphere for the novel.

3. Study Aims and Questions

This study is an attempt to investigate whether inclusion of colloquial language in a prose fiction text would negatively impact language style of the text and acquisition of the foreign language. This study, therefore, seeks convincing answers to the two inquiries below.

Question one: How does inclusion of colloquial language in a prose fiction text impact acquisition of the target language?

Question two: How does inclusion of colloquial language in a prose fiction text impact language style of

the text?

In answering the two research questions above, the discussion depicts the viewpoints of the study's subjects: EFL university students, EFL instructors, and adult readers. Furthermore, the discussion sheds light on scholars' perspectives wherever possible.

4. Methodology

This section of the paper discusses the methodology the researcher utilized to achieve the intended aims of the current research. As such, this section is comprised of three parts: participants, study instruments, and procedures.

4. 1 Participants

To sufficiently address the issues this paper explores, the author targeted three categories while conducting the study: EFL university students (one hundred and thirty-two), EFL instructors (fourteen), and several adult readers (twenty). Starting with the first category, EFL university students, the author included all the students who she was teaching while she was implementing this study at a private university in Dubai. Regarding the second category, EFL instructors, the author selected fourteen professionals of vast experience from several academic institutions in the United Arab Emirates. The selection was mainly based on ease and practicality of accessing instructors. The third category, adult readers, were members of the book club which the author was a member of during study conduct. Tables 1, 2 and 3 below highlight demographic data in relation to each of the three categories.

Table 1. Students' Demographic Data

University Major	Year of Study	Gender
Engineering: Electrical and Electronics, Mechanical, & Computer	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th	17 (males) 8 (females)
Computer Science and IT	1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th	13 (males) 10 (females)
Business Administration	1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th	16 (males) 14 (females)
Interior Design	1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th	4 (males) 6 (females)
Architecture	1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th	4 (males) 3 (females)
Law	1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th	15 (males) 7 (females)
Public Relations	1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th	7 (males) 8 (females)

Table 2. Instructors' Demographic Data

Degree and Major	Years of Teaching Experience	Gender
PhD in English	25, 14, 28	3 (males)
	7, 36	2 (females)
MA in English	10	1 (male)
	24	1 (female)
PhD in Language Education	21, 9, 31	3 (males)
	14, 23	2 (females)
MA in Language Education	18, 35	2 (males)

Table 3. Readers' Demographic Data

Degree	Major	Gender
Ph.D.	Business	1 (female)
M.A.	Business, Education & Linguistics	5 (females)
B.A.	Education, Engineering, & Science	14 (females)

4.2 Instrument and Procedures

The author created a ten-item questionnaire, using a five-point Likert scale. Point one indicates a respondent's *strong disagreement*, two *disagreement*, three *being unsure* about the answer, four *agreement*, and five *strong agreement*. Table 4 below presents the questionnaire.

Table 4. Questionnaire

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may impede the process of communication.					
2.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may obstruct the process of comprehension.					
3.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may hinder enhancement of reading skills.					
4.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word meaning.					
5.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word spelling.					
6.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word pronunciation.					

7.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect grammar acquisition.					
8.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect syntax acquisition.					
9.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may not yield an exquisite language style.					
10.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may lessen aesthetic appreciation of the text.					

In addition to the questionnaire presented above, the researcher conducted interviews as another study tool. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), interviews can be of three main categories; namely, unstructured, semi-structured, and highly structured where each serves a specific purpose and a certain context. As semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to collect specific data about certain issues in detail, the author of this paper conducted semi-structured interviews. Involving six subjects, three EFL instructors and three adult readers, the interviews were all conducted face-to-face based on both ease of accessing the interviewee and the interviewee's willingness to be interviewed. It is worth mentioning that students were excluded from the interview as it was not practical enough to decide who to include or exclude.

Below are the two questions which the author raised during each interview.

A. How would use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text negatively impact a student's acquisition of the target language?

B. How would use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text negatively impact language style of the text?

5. Study Findings

Section five highlights the study's findings in relation to the two study's tools implemented for this research. To start with, table five and chart one below present students' responses to the questionnaire.

Table 5. Students' Responses to the Questionnaire

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may impede the process of communication.	0%	0%	2%	86%	12%
2.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may obstruct the process of comprehension.	0%	6%	2%	80%	12%
3.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may hinder enhancement of reading skills.	0%	10%	4%	72%	14%
4.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word meaning.	0%	8%	4%	80%	8%
5.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word spelling.	10%	14%	5%	65%	6%

6.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word pronunciation.	0%	15%	5%	67%	13%
7.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect grammar acquisition.	0%	0%	4%	86%	10%
8.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect syntax acquisition.	0%	0%	2%	92%	6%
9.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may not yield an exquisite language style.	0%	0%	2%	78%	20%
10.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may lessen aesthetic appreciation of the text.	0%	0%	2%	80%	18%

Chart 1. Students' Responses to the Questionnaire

While items 1 through 8 are related to the first research question, items 9 and ten are related to the second. In response to the first question on whether inclusion of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively impact the process of communication, 86% of the participating students agreed and 12% strongly agreed. Regarding students' responses to the second question on whether using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may obstruct the process of reading comprehension, 80% of the students agreed and 12% strongly agreed. Students' answers to the third question on whether using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may hinder enhancement of reading skills indicate that 72% of the students agreed and 14% strongly agreed. Responding to the fourth question on whether using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word meaning, 80% of the students agreed and 8% strongly agreed. Moving to the fifth question on whether using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word spelling, 65% of the students agreed and 6% strongly agreed. With reference to the sixth question on whether use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word pronunciation, 67% of the students agreed and 13% strongly agreed. Students' responses to the seventh question on whether use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect grammar acquisition reveal that 86% of the students agreed and 10% strongly agreed. Concerning the eighth question on whether use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect syntax acquisition, 92% of the students agreed and 6% strongly agreed. Regarding the last two items on whether use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may not yield an exquisite language style and may lessen aesthetic appreciation of the text, 78% of the students agreed and 20% strongly agreed in relation to the ninth question, and 80% of the students agreed and 18% strongly agreed in relation to the tenth question.

As far as instructors' responses to the questionnaire's items are concerned, table six and chart two below present the results.

Table 6. Instructors' Responses to the Questionnaire

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may impede the process of communication.	0%	6%	0%	86%	8%
2.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may obstruct the process of comprehension.	0%	4%	0%	80%	16%
3.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may hinder enhancement of reading skills.	0%	16%	0%	76%	8%
4.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word meaning.	0%	20%	0%	78%	2%
5.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word spelling.	0%	22%	0%	76%	2%
6.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word pronunciation.	0%	0%	0%	82%	18%
7.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect grammar acquisition.	0%	2%	0%	82%	16%
8.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect syntax acquisition.	0%	2%	0%	82%	16%
9.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may not yield an exquisite language style.	0%	0%	0%	40%	60%
10.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may lessen aesthetic appreciation of the text.	0%	0%	0%	52%	48%

Chart 2. Instructors' Responses to the Questionnaire

In response to the first question on whether inclusion of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively impact the process of communication, 86% of the instructors agreed and 16% strongly agreed. Regarding instructors' responses to the second question on whether using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may obstruct the process of reading comprehension, 80% of the instructors agreed and 16% strongly agreed. Instructors' answers to the third question on whether using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may hinder enhancement of reading skills indicate that 76% of them agreed and 8% strongly agreed. Responding to the fourth question on whether using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word meaning, 78% of the instructors agreed and 2% strongly agreed. Moving to the fifth question on whether using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word spelling, 76% of the instructors agreed and 2% strongly agreed. With reference to the sixth question on whether use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word pronunciation, 82% of the instructors agreed and 18% strongly agreed. Instructors' responses to the seventh question on whether use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect grammar acquisition reveal that 82% of them agreed and 16% strongly agreed. Concerning the eighth question on whether use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect syntax acquisition, 82% of the instructors agreed and 16% strongly agreed. Regarding the last two items on whether use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may not yield an exquisite language style and may lessen aesthetic appreciation of the text, 40% of the instructors agreed and 60% strongly agreed in relation to the ninth question, and 52% of the instructors agreed and 48% strongly agreed in relation to the tenth question.

Proceeding to the adult readers' answers to the questionnaire, table seven and chart 3 below demonstrate

the responses.

Table 7. Adult Readers' Responses to the Questionnaire

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may impede the process of communication.	0%	18%	0%	78%	4%
2.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may obstruct the process of comprehension.	0%	48%	0%	42%	10%
3.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may hinder enhancement of reading skills.	0%	22%	0%	69%	9%
4.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word meaning.	0%	10%	0%	81%	9%
5.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word spelling.	0%	8%	0%	80%	12%
6.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word pronunciation.	0%	5%	0%	78%	17%
7.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect grammar acquisition.	0%	2%	0%	70%	28%
8.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect syntax acquisition.	0%	2%	0%	70%	28%
9.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may not yield an exquisite language style.	0%	0%	0%	48%	52%
10.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may lessen aesthetic appreciation of the text.	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%

Chart 3. Readers' Responses to the Questionnaire

In response to the first question on whether inclusion of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively impact the process of communication, 78% of the readers agreed and 4% strongly agreed. Regarding readers' responses to the second question on whether using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may obstruct the process of reading comprehension, 42% agreed and 10% strongly agreed. Readers' answers to the third question on whether using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may hinder enhancement of reading skills indicate that 69% of them agreed and 9% strongly agreed. Responding to the fourth question on whether using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word meaning, 81% of the readers agreed and 9% strongly agreed. Moving to the fifth question on whether using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word spelling, 80% of the readers agreed and 12% strongly agreed. With reference to the sixth question on whether use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word pronunciation, 78% of the readers agreed and 17% strongly agreed. Readers' responses to the seventh question on whether use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect grammar acquisition reveal that 70% of them agreed and 28% strongly agreed. Concerning the eighth question on whether use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect syntax acquisition, 70% of the readers agreed and 28% strongly agreed. Regarding the last two items on whether use of colloquial language in a prose fiction text may not yield an exquisite language style and may lessen aesthetic appreciation of the text, 48% of the readers agreed and 52% strongly agreed in relation to the ninth question, and 50% of the readers agreed and 50% strongly agreed in relation to the tenth question.

To ensure accurate findings, table 8 below presents the response average per item for the three categories.

Table 8. Average of Subjects' Responses per Item and Value

No.	Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may impede the process of communication.	0%	8%	1%	83%	8%
2.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may obstruct the process of comprehension.	0%	17%	1%	69%	13%
3.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may hinder enhancement of reading skills.	0%	16%	1%	72%	11%
4.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word meaning.	0%	13%	1%	80%	6%
5.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word spelling.	3%	15%	2%	73%	7%
6.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively influence vocabulary acquisition in relation to word pronunciation.	0%	7%	2%	75%	16%
7.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect grammar acquisition.	0%	1%	1%	80%	18%
8.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may negatively affect syntax acquisition.	0%	1%	1%	81%	17%
9.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may not yield an exquisite language style.	0%	0%	1%	55%	44%
10.	Using colloquial language in a prose fiction text may lessen aesthetic appreciation of the text.	0%	0%	1%	60%	39%

Proceeding to the second study tool semi-structured interview, the number of interviewees was six, including three English EFL instructors and three adult readers. Regarding the instructors' answers to the first interview question on how including colloquial language would impact acquisition of the target language, Instructor A explained that it might influence the acquisition of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax as students would not be exposed to the standards and conventions of academic language. As regards skill acquisition, instructor A argued that as long as the students were reading and writing, it would be the skill that they could ultimately improve regardless of language input. Instructors B and C were of the opinion that inclusion of colloquial language in a prose fiction text might not effectively support students in acquiring the correct vocabulary, grammar, and syntax of the target language. Regarding skill acquisition, however, instructor B felt that the skill to be negatively affected would be that of reading. As students read, deviations from language conventions would in a way impede the process of reading comprehension due to the use of unfamiliar words and structures. According to instructor C, it would be both reading and writing because texts would present effective models for students to follow. On the other hand, the three adult readers argued that even though the language elements like vocabulary and grammar might not be acquired correctly in full, skill acquisition would be since it is a matter of practicing the skill and being exposed to different varieties of English.

As far as the second interview question on how using colloquial language would impact language style of a prose fiction text, instructor A stated that it would negatively impact language style as the text would include deviations from language standards which might yield confusion rather than pleasure. Instructors B and C stated that the element of aesthetic appreciation might not be the outcome, amongst other outcomes, which a prose fiction text would yield in this case. Since English is currently used as a global language in

many parts of the world, instructors B and C highlighted, adhering to the language norms and conventions would lead to writing a comprehensible input, which if effectively created and articulated, would yield an effective language style worthy of aesthetic appreciation. On the other hand, adult reader A confirmed that, if focus was on academic language standards, then inclusion of colloquial language in a prose fiction text would negatively impact language style and aesthetic appreciation. If, however, focus was on authentic uses of language in genuine life situations, then inclusion of colloquial language in a prose fiction text might not impact language style negatively due to deriving language input from communication exchanges in real life contexts. Adult reader B believed that due to individual differences among people, we might not agree that certain specifications would yield an effective language style. What would be effective from someone's opinion might not be effective from others' perspectives. Finally, adult reader C thought that, with globalization in mind, an effective language style should be comprehended by all readers from around the globe. Though authentic within real life situations, authenticity might not always entail effectiveness.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, a prose fiction text is a coherent accumulation of thought and emotion, conveyed through a proper corresponding tone and an appropriate language style. How the writer constructs a text translating ideas, emotions, and attitudes into words; phrases; clauses; and sentences delineates a writer's language style. A writer's language style is a unique fingerprint in writing. Aspiring prose fiction writers acquire their own fingerprint through fostering an original style. Acquiring an original language style, however, is a time-taking and a talent-requiring process. Amongst the steps which can be taken to develop one's own writing style as regards composing a good prose fiction text are expanding the repertoire of vocabulary, reading immensely, exploring the styles of renowned authors, utilizing literary devices, and writing genuinely. Obviously, the impressive manipulation of the proper word for the proper context is what writers of prose fiction texts need to stress.

To end with, this paper explores answers to two main inquiries: how does inclusion of colloquial language in a prose fiction text impact acquisition of the foreign language, and how does inclusion of colloquial language in a prose fiction text impact language style of the text? In answering the first research question, the majority of the study's subjects believed that inclusion of colloquial language in a prose fiction text would negatively impact acquisition of the target language; vocabulary, grammar, and syntax specifically. In answering the second research question, the majority of the study's subjects thought that inclusion of colloquial language in a prose fiction text would negatively impact language style of the text. It should be borne in mind though that the current study is limited to a sample of one hundred and sixty-two participants. For scientific generalization purposes, further studies on the two main issues the current paper addresses should be conducted covering larger samples, and possibly, more literary genres.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Biography:
I hold a PhD in English Applied Linguistics from Aston University, United Kingdom. I currently work in the Department of General Education at Skyline University College, Sharjah. I have contributed a wide range of research papers to various international journals, served as a co-editor of nine publications, reviewed many articles for refereed journals, and presented research papers at numerous conferences. Additionally, I have received awards in recognition of my teaching, research, professional development, and community service activities. My research interests cover fiction, stylistics, translation of literary texts, language acquisition, and teaching methodologies.

References

Al-Alami, S. (2023). Translation of Prose Fiction Texts: An Exploratory Study. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 12(2), 147-158.

Akmajian, A., Farmer, A.K., Bickmore, L., Demers, R.A., & Harnish, R.M. (2001). *Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Alred, G.J.; Brusaw, C.T.; and Oliu, W.E. (2011). *Handbook of Technical Writing*. Bedford: St. Martin's Press.

Boase-Beier, J. (2006). *Stylistic Approaches to Translation*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

Boase-Beier, J. (2014). *Stylistic Approaches to Translation*. London: Routledge.

Burchfield, R.W. (2004). *Fowler's Modern English Usage Revisited* (3rd edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cambridge Dictionary. (2005). *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Collins, P., and Yao, X. (2013). Colloquial Features in World Englishes. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 18(4), 237-258.

Du, L. (2020). Appreciation and Reading Aesthetic Analysis of English and American Language and Literature Works from the Perspective of Linguistics. *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Financial Management, Education and Social Science*. Suzhou, China: CSP, 372-376.

Epoge, N.K. (2012). Slang and Colloquialism in Cameroon English Verbal Discourse. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 4(1), 130-145.

Grant, M. (2020). *The Difference between Fiction and Nonfiction*. United States of America: Book Riot.

Hartley, D. (2016). *The Politics of Style*. United States: BRILL.

Hasanah, D. (2020). The Use of Colloquial Words in Improving Students' Speaking Through Teacher's Daily Assessment. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* (Vol. 430). Hong Kong: Atlantic Press, 29-33.

Karimi, L. (2021). Effect of Using Colloquial versus Standard English to Teach EFL Listening Comprehension. *International Journal of Listening*, 35(2), 100-109.

Kidder, T., & Todd, R. (2013). *Good Prose*. London: Random House Publishing Group.

Merriam, S. B., and Tisdell, E. J. (2016). Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Merriam Webster Dictionary. (2006). *Webster's New Explorer Encyclopedia Dictionary*. United States of America: Federal Street Press.

Newmark, P. (1981). *Approaches to Translation*. Oxford: Pergamon.

Oxford Dictionary. (2010). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pan, F. (2012). *Corpus-Based Language Research and Pedagogical Applications*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press.

Partridge, E. (1937). *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*. United Kingdom: Routledge.

Peters, P. (2007). *The Cambridge Guide to Australian English Usage* (2nd edition). Port Melbourne, Vic: Cambridge University Press.

Prose, F. (2006). *Reading Like a Writer: A Guide for People Who Love Books and for Those Who Want to Write Them*. United States of America: HarperCollins Publishers.

Short, M.H. (1996). *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays, and Prose*. London and New York: Macmillan.

Stockett, K. (2009). *The Help*. United Kingdom: Fig Tree.

Strunk, W., JR., & White, E.B. (1959). *The Elements of Style*. United States: Macmillan.

Trudgill, P. (2004). *Dialects (2nd edition)*. London: Routledge.

Wang, N. (2016). Investigating Grammatical Colloquial Features in EFL Learners' Theses by Chinese English Learners. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 6(6), 138-146.

Wharton, E. (1920). *The Age of Innocence*. United States of America: D. Appleton & Company.

Wood, J. (2018). *How Fiction Works*. United States: Macmillan.