



THE ROLE OF ASYNDETON IN BUILDING SUSPENSE, CONTROLLING NARRATIVE PACING, AND ENHANCING READER ENGAGEMENT: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF DAPHNE DU MAURIER'S *REBECCA*

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Abstract

This study investigates the stylistic functions of asyndeton in Daphne du Maurier's Rebecca, a suspenseful novel. It stylistically examines asyndeton on the level of building suspense, controlling narrative pacing, and enhancing reader engagement in the novel. Asyndeton, the deliberate omission of conjunctions, creates punchy prose that builds suspense, manipulates the narrative pacing, and engages readers psychologically. For this research study, the data was collected from the novel Rebecca. Multiple excerpts of asyndeton were taken through a close reading of the novel and stylistically examined its functions by following Leech and Short's comprehensive stylistic framework as outlined in Style in Fiction (2007). The findings of the study reveal that asyndeton as a stylistic device is purposefully used by Daphne du Maurier in her novel Rebecca. It shows that use of asyndeton builds a higher level of tension by creating a sense of dislocation and discomfort. It speeds up the narrative pacing when the story demands quick action, and slows it down when portraying characters' internal conflicts across different scenes. Moreover, the asyndeton forces readers to interpret layered descriptions, fostering deeper mental engagement. This research study shows common yet significant functions of asyndeton, including tension enhancement, narrative fluidity, and the induction of more active reading. By addressing a relatively neglected aspect of Rebecca, this study contributes new insights that broaden the existing literature on the significance of stylistic devices across texts.

Keywords: Asyndeton, Rebecca, Suspense, Narrative Pacing, Reader Engagement

1. Introduction

Rebecca, the novel written by Daphne du Maurier in 1938, is a masterpiece of the gothic suspense genre, which is full of tension and intrigue. In this novel, the narrator and protagonist is the second Mrs. de Winter, a young, unnamed woman who marries Maxim de Winter. She tells the story in the first person, but du Maurier never reveals her name, which is a deliberate stylistic choice that emphasizes her insecurity and sense of inferiority compared to Rebecca, Maxim's glamorous first wife. As narrator, she provides a highly subjective perspective, full of self-doubt, fear, and imagination, which creates suspense and sometimes raises questions about her reliability.

In the novel, Daphne Du Maurier has employed various stylistic and literary devices like lexical, narrative, and phonological etc. to build suspense, emotional intensity and tension, to foster narrative pacing and to engage readers, but this study deals with stylistic analysis of asyndeton. An asyndeton apparently is a stylistic device which means "coordinated clauses or phrases without explicit conjunctions or connectives instead only commas are used" (Wales,

2001: 33). Among the use of different literary devices that contribute to the overall atmosphere of the novel, asyndeton, a syntactic feature where writer omits conjunctions between parts of a sentence i.e. words, phrases and clauses, is used as stylistic device in the novel to manipulate the narrative pacing, to build suspense and to engage readers psychologically. By omitting conjunctions between the parts of a sentence, it becomes fragmented. For example, “*He began to mop the cloth, while the waiter, seeing the disturbance, came swiftly to the rescue.*” (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 4). It is a stylistic aim of Daphne du Maurier to take control of syntactic structures, using asyndeton to create jagged, herky-jerky, and high-voltage prose that engages readers.

Previously many scholars and linguists studied the role of asyndeton in different novels and stylistically examined it. The significance of asyndeton in Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* has been investigated by Al-Abodi (2014), stylistic role and impact of asyndeton in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland and its Dutch Translation* has been stylistically analyzed by Leenknecht (2015), and Atabaev (2023) has stylistically analyzed the role of asyndeton and polysyndeton in English prose. It was found that the previous studies have not paid any attention towards the function of asyndeton in Daphne du Maurier’s *Rebecca* and hence has yet to be explored, so this study attempts the stylistic analysis of asyndeton and its function of building suspense, narrative pacing, and reader engagement. While the novel *Rebecca* is renowned for its skillful suspense, little critical and scholarly attention has been given towards the roles of stylistic devices in Daphne du Maurier’s *Rebecca* that generate different stylistic effects. Out of these unexplored stylistic devices, asyndeton plays an important role in generating suspense, tension, and emotional intensity. Despite its key contributions to the overall atmosphere of the novel *Rebecca*, it has remained unexamined. This study fills this gap and deals with the stylistic analysis of asyndeton, and explores its role in creating a sense of suspense, pacing, and reader engagement. This research study also illuminates a profound relationship between devices and narrative effects in Daphne du Maurier’s *Rebecca*. It describes that how Daphne du Maurier engages readers cognitively through the use of asyndeton as a stylistic device in the novel *Rebecca* through the analysis of different examples of asyndeton that how does asyndeton builds suspense and how does she employs it to engage readers cognitively.

1.2 Research Objectives

The aims of this research study are:

- i. To find the role of asyndeton in the novel’s suspenseful atmosphere.
- ii. To explore the asyndeton’s contribution in controlling the novel’s pacing.
- iii. To reveal how asyndeton stimulates the psychological participation of the reader in the narrative.

1.3 Research Questions

This research study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- i. How does Daphne du Maurier use asyndeton to build suspense in *Rebecca*?
- ii. What effect does asyndeton have on the novel’s narrative pacing?
- iii. How does Daphne du Maurier engage readers cognitively by using asyndeton in *Rebecca* as a stylistic device?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Stylistics

Stylistics is defined as the study of style and use of language in literary texts. It is a branch of linguistics that bridges a gap between linguistics and literature. It investigates that

how different language features and stylistic devices contribute to overall atmosphere in literary works i.e. novels, and how they impact their overall atmosphere.

2.2 Asyndeton

Asyndeton is the Greek word for unbound or unconnected words. “An asyndeton is a stylistic device, which implies an ellipsis that consists of coordinated clauses or phrases without explicit conjunctions or connectives and only commas are used instead” (Wales, 2001: 33). Aljanabi (2024) claimed that asyndeton is not only used as a rhetorical device but also as a stylistic figure. One of the examples they suggested was the asyndeton that President Abraham Lincoln used in his Gettysburg Address when he proclaimed that, “*government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth*” (p. 2). Cuddon (1999) defines asyndeton as: “A figurative device where conjunctions, articles, even pronouns, are left for, to get impetus in writing.”

According to scholars and researchers like Leech and Short (2007), stylistic devices in a novel are important to create narrative dynamics. Among them, asyndeton has an important function in building suspense, speeding up the narrative pacing, and immersing the readers. A stylistic analysis of asyndeton remains unexplored so far, specifically in the context of psychological suspense novel, *Rebecca*.

2.3 Earlier Studies

Many scholars and linguists carried out various studies and stylistically analyzed the role of asyndeton in various literary works in the past.

Said and Aljanabi (2024) explored the use of syndeton, asyndeton and polysyndeton in Mark Twain’s literary works, *A Dog’s Tale* (1904) and *A Horse’s Tale* (1907). The research quantitatively found polysyndeton is used more often than asyndeton. They also asserted that asyndeton serves to speed up pacing in Twain’s narratives.

Kamalova (2024) explores the utilization of syntactical stylistic devices such as, repetition, parallelism, enumeration, inversion, polysyndeton, asyndeton, and ellipsis in fairy tales, emphasizing their role in improving narrative structure and engaging the audience. The study employs a stylistic analysis methodology, drawing on theoretical insights from Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968), regarding repetitive syntactical patterns, and Claude Lévi-Strauss's *Structural Anthropology* (1963), regarding parallelism and binary oppositions. The analysis examines examples from both English fairy tales (like "The Three Little Pigs" and "Goldilocks and the Three Bears") and Karakalpak fairy tales (like “Sharhpa’lekli Bala”), focusing on how these structures contribute to the text. Key findings underscore that these syntactical structures contribute significantly to the rhythmic flow, emotional tone, and thematic depth of the stories. Repetition is found to reinforce key information, aid memory retention, and build tension and rhythm, while parallelism enhances the rhythmic quality and reinforces comparison and symmetry in the narrative. The study concludes that syntax is integral to shaping the enduring charm and timeless appeal of fairy tales across various cultures.

Atabaev (2023) syntactically examined the function of asyndeton and polysyndeton in English prose and highlighted asyndeton’s application in enhancing speed and intensity in fast-paced genres including suspense etc. As an exercise, he claimed that asyndeton could be helpful to create chaos or tension in the text, such as in an action scene or a moment of heightened emotion, giving the sense that everything is happening at once, and drawing the reader in. Like asyndeton for urgency or suspense: “*Hurry! Run! Don't look back!*” (p. 7).

Dlamini (2023) investigated the artistic use of asyndetic sentence patterns, the omission of conjunctions, in the novels of E.D.M. Sibiya, addressing a gap identified in the existing

scholarly analysis of his work. The study was conducted using a qualitative research method, which adopts an interpretative approach to analyze data collected from Sibiya's novels. The study critically analyzes four novels by Sibiya: *Kungasa Ngifile* (2002), *Ngidedele Ngife* (2006), *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2010), and *Inkululeko Engakhulekile* (2020). The analysis focuses on asyndeton as a syntactic feature, observing its use in sentences separated by full stops and clauses separated by commas. The theoretical framework followed is a linguistic stylistic approach, which proposes using the grammatical category of Leech and Short's (1981) checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories to theoretically ground the analysis. The key findings reveal that Sibiya's artistic use of asyndeton contributes significantly to the texts by creating a **steady** reading pace, rhythm, and flow.

Ali et al. (2022) stylistically analyzed rhetorical and literary devices in *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. They studied a total of seventeen literary and rhetorical devices in Orwell's *Animal Farm* and discussed their functions and roles in the novel's narrative mechanisms, themes and emotional effects. Their perspective is that Orwell employs asyndeton to provide emotional intensity and confusion to the text.

Korkut-Nayki (2021) performed a theoretical reading focusing on how the main characters in Daphne du Maurier's novel *Rebecca* (1938) cope with the haunting influence of the past. The methodological approach employs the theoretical framework of "hauntology," a concept developed by Jacques Derrida in *Specters of Marx* (1993), which revolves around the notion of the "specter" haunting the present. The study argues that the novel's characters, Maxim and the narrator, are complete failures in dealing with the specter of Rebecca because they rely on narrow ontological strategies to eliminate or suppress the past, rather than learning to speak to or with the specter. Key findings reveal that Rebecca emerges as a powerful specter that exposes the fundamental, flawed, and hypocritical values of the dominant patriarchal social order represented by Manderley. The novel ultimately expects discerning readers to move beyond the characters' failure, acknowledge the specter, and probe its wider social and cultural implications.

Leenknecht (2015) analyzed stylistically how asyndeton behaves in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland and its Dutch Translation*. This study demonstrates both quantitative and qualitative analysis of asyndeton features versus its stylistic impact in Dutch translation that to what extent the style of an author can be transferred and adopted in case of translating into another language.

Malik et al. (2015) presented a stylistic analysis of *The Bull and the She Devil* (1958), a short story by pioneering Pakistani feminist writer, Zaibunnisa Hamidullah. The story addresses the complex and taboo theme of sexuality in a repressed patriarchal society. The study was carried out using the stylistic model proposed by Leech and Short (2007), analyzing the text based on Lexical Categories, Grammatical Categories, Figures of Speech, and Cohesion and Context. The study analyzed the author's lexical and syntactic choices to understand how she subtly communicates this controversial subject. The key findings show that Hamidullah effectively deals with the taboo subject without being explicit, largely through the use of the bull as an extended metaphor for sexuality. The analysis demonstrated how linguistic choices, including the author's peculiar use of syntactically incomplete sentences, develop the theme of sexuality and underscore the dual state of the patriarchal man as both oppressor and victim.

Al-Abodi (2014) explored the stylistic role and impact of asyndeton in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. He states, "Asyndeton is often used for emphasis" (p. 1). He believed that when conjunctions are omitted between the parts of sentence i.e. words, phrases, and clauses,

it will create some confusion for a moment, forcing the readers to go back to what was recently read/said. He stated that asyndeton first appeared in ancient Greek, where Aristotle and other writers used it often. It also accelerates the narrative pacing of novels.

2.4 Research Gap

Many scholars and linguists have conducted various studies and stylistically analyzed the impacts of asyndeton in different novels over the years but no research study has been conducted on the stylistic analysis of asyndeton in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*. This study seeks to address this gap through an analysis of the ways in which asyndeton facilitates syntactic fragmentation, suspense, narrative pacing, and reader engagement in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*.

3. Methodology

Based on the research questions, this research study adopts a qualitative stylistic analysis as a method to analyze the role and impact of asyndeton in building suspense, controlling narrative pacing, and enhancing reader engagement in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*. The methodology contains the following steps:

3.1 Research Paradigm

The current study uses qualitative data; thus, the research design for this research study is qualitative and paradigm is interpretivist. It focuses on the textual and stylistic analysis of asyndeton in the novel *Rebecca*.

3.2 Data Collection

The data was collected for this research study from the novel *Rebecca* written by Daphne du Maurier. As this study is concerned only with the stylistic analysis of asyndeton, multiple excerpts of asyndeton were taken through a close reading of the novel. During the process of data collection, first the examples of asyndeton have been identified and then categorized accordingly.

3.2.1 Identification

At first, sentences with no conjunctions between their parts i.e. words, clauses and phrases etc. were identified through close reading, considered as the examples of asyndeton, and collected as the data for the present study to analyze them stylistically.

3.2.2 Categorization

After collecting the examples of asyndeton, they were categorized based on the role they play in building suspense, controlling narrative pacing, and enhancing reader engagement.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

This study draws on Leech & Short's stylistic framework as outlined in *Style in Fiction* (2007; original work published in 1981), which provides a comprehensive account of how linguistic choices shape literary meaning. Their approach shows how style and linguistic selection contribute to the creation of a literary work's register, tone, mood, and reader response. Within the present study, this framework is particularly relevant for analyzing how asyndeton functions in *Rebecca* to heighten suspense. The omission of conjunctions produces fragmented, abrupt clauses that disrupt syntactic flow, creating a terse rhythm and intensifying the reader's sense of unease. By examining how this stylistic device alters sentence structure and foregrounds discontinuity, the framework makes it possible to account for both the narrative's pacing and the psychological effects on the reader. Thus, Leech & Short's model demonstrates how a linguistic feature such as asyndeton simultaneously shapes the temporal flow of the narrative (pacing) and the reader's engagement, particularly in relation to the building of suspense.

4. Data Analysis and Results

The data, multiple excerpts of asyndeton, collected through a close reading of the novel *Rebecca* were analyzed using the stylistic and textual analysis techniques. Section 4.1 presents the role of asyndeton in building suspense, section 4.2 discusses its role in controlling the narrative pacing, and section 4.3 discusses that how asyndeton compels and engages readers. This section presents the key findings of the study which reveal that asyndeton has key role in building suspense, controlling narrative pacing, and enhancing reader engagement.

4.1 The Role of Asyndeton in Building Suspense

The genre of suspense is best showcased in the composition of the novel *Rebecca* where asyndeton builds suspense in the plot of the story. The stylistic analysis of the collected excerpts of asyndeton is carried out as:

"The beeches with white, naked limbs leant close to one another; their branches intermingled in a strange embrace, making a vault above my head like the archway of a church." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 1)

Here, the lack of conjunctions between the clauses adds a sense of suspense. The use of asyndeton is causing a fragmentation in the line that captures the dark, horror like setting of the scene with nature constantly fighting the protagonist. Researchers claim that asyndeton is often used in novels to add a sense of suspense. Daphne du Maurier uses this technique in a similar way to quicken the pace in the narrative of the novel. Here, images follow one after another, piling up quickly and giving the reader no pause. Asyndeton makes the woods feel chaotic and threatening. The beeches have "white, naked limbs," their branches "intermingled in a strange embrace," forming a "vault above my head like the archway of a church." The rapid flow of these details speeds up the pace and mirrors the narrator's growing fear, as if she is being swallowed by her surroundings. The forest feels alive, twisted, and monstrous. By fragmenting order, asyndeton turns the path into a scene of dread, foreshadowing the destructive power of nature and setting a tone of deep suspense. Here, the narrator describes dreaming of Manderley. This entire sequence sets a tone of initial, powerful suspense through decay and haunting memory.

"The drive was a ribbon now, a thread of its former self, with gravel surface gone, and choked with grass and moss." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 1)

Here, the asyndeton quickly builds suspense by focusing intensely on decay. This technique removes connecting words, leading to a fast rhythm that reflects the chaos overwhelming Manderley. The rapid listing of ruin highlights that nature has "triumphed in the end" over human order, creating a feeling of emergency. Since this passage is the narrator's dream of the ruined Manderley in the novel's opening, this stylistic choice immediately establishes the house as a dangerous, haunting, and decaying place, hooking the reader's emotional engagement and setting a suspenseful tone for the entire story. Asyndeton strengthens a narrative by producing a fast-paced rhythm that is reflective of emergency or degradation. This technique has been shown to evoke emotional engagement in readers, enhancing their perception of suspense and decay.

"They crowded, dark and uncontrolled, to the borders of the drive." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 1)

Here, the lack of conjunctions evokes the protagonist's anxiety and a sense of suspense. It creates immediate suspense by reflecting the narrator's deep anxiety. This line describes the woods overwhelming Manderley's drive in the opening dream. By listing the aggressive qualities ("dark and uncontrolled") without the typical pause of conjunctions, the technique speeds up the rhythm, making the image of the encroaching woods feel sudden and relentless. This quick, fragmented presentation establishes a psychological tension that matches

the narrator's fearful mental state, signaling that the house is uncontrolled place that she fears and cannot manage. This style of description immediately introduces the sense of threat and dread central to the novel's suspense. Leech and Short (2007) point out that writer often manipulates sentence structure, including the omission of conjunctions, to create psychological tension in readers and reflect a character's mental state.

"The moss smelt rich and deep, and the bluebells were earthy, bitter." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 13)

In this excerpt, the use of fragmented sensory details, despite the conjunction "and" appearing once, creates suspense by quickly contrasting pleasant and unsettling elements. This fragmented description captures the eerie feeling of the woods when the narrator is alone, highlighting the dark undertones of Manderley's environment. Here, the shift in tone enhances the reader's perception of suspense and decay, making the natural beauty seems dangerous and uncomfortable, linking the present scene to the psychological tension surrounding Manderley's past secrets. Fragmented and sensory-rich language interrupts a reader's cognitive flow, creating sense of suspense and unease. In literature, fragmented text and imagery often left interpretive holes, inviting readers to fill that gap and construct meaning, thus creating suspense and tension.

"He looked down at me panting, his face foolish, saliva dripping from his tongue and his heavy jowl." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 13)

The omission of conjunctions in the description of Jasper, a dog, quickly generates suspense. This fragmented listing emphasizes the dog's physical state (panting, foolish face, dripping saliva, heavy jowl), which the narrator usually associates with affection when Maxim is present. However, in this context, the rapid, piecemeal details create urgency and suspense by making the familiar animal seem alarming, mirroring the narrator's mounting anxiety and psychological tension when she is alone at Manderley and starting to sense dark secrets and dangers. As pointed out by Leech and Short (2007), asyndeton speeds up the tempo of the scenes in literary texts that generate an impression of urgency and suspense.

"And none of them will ever guess, none of them will ever know." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 20)

The lack of conjunctions emphasizes the profound secrecy and tension surrounding Maxim's confession. This line is spoken by Maxim, describing his murderous lie about Rebecca's death, just before he shoots her. The fragmented, rapid sequence of repeated phrases mirrors his paranoia and fear that the truth will be revealed. The suspense is extreme because the reader realizes Maxim is confident his secret is safe from, creating intense psychological tension for both Maxim and the narrator as they now share this forbidden knowledge. This fragmentation raises the tension as the hidden truths are revealed. This reflects that fragmentation of narrative form, along with rhetorical techniques such as repetition and asyndeton, heightens psychological tension, and therefore creates suspense in literary texts.

"Light came from the windows, the curtains blew softly in the night air, and there, in the library, the door would stand half open as we had left it, with my handkerchief on the table beside the bowl of autumn roses." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 1)

The fragmented details in this description of the library in the narrator's dream build suspense by immediately establishing a jarring contrast. While "Light came from the windows" and "the curtains blew softly" seem peaceful, the quick succession of images, the open door, the handkerchief, the roses, creates a nervous, vivid feeling that hints at the fragility of this memory. This moment, where the house "lived and breathed as it had lived before", is quickly shattered by the disappearance of the light, confirming that this fragile memory contains a

terrible, unsettling secret the narrator cannot yet grasp. This nervous feeling contrasts with the smooth and calm description of everything else. This contrast builds suspense by hinting that something terrible is about to happen, even though it isn't directly said.

4.2 The Role of Asyndeton in Controlling Narrative Pacing

Asyndeton is used to quicken the narrative in the prose. Authors also used it to highlight the main concept and omit conjunctions to get swiftness in the flow of thoughts and ideas. Asyndeton is used often in a suspenseful scene. Daphne du Maurier also uses asyndeton as a stylistic device in order to speed up the pacing and to build suspense in the novel. Here is the analysis of the collected excerpts of asyndeton that work towards the pacing of the novel.

"Gone was my glad excitement, vanished my happy pride." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 7)

Asyndeton quickens the narrative, reflecting the narrator's sudden emotional shifts, such as the stab of panic and uneasy sickness upon arriving at Manderley. This rapid succession of feelings, including a sense of fear and unrest, builds suspense by mirroring the immediate psychological disturbance. The stylistic haste emphasizes the unsettling influence of the past and the secretive atmosphere surrounding Rebecca's enduring presence. Here, asyndeton speeds up pacing, mirroring how quickly the emotions change. The rapid switches of "gone" and "vanished" establish urgency. Asyndeton speeds up the pacing, making it particularly effective for highlighting a moment of heightened emotion or a psychological turn.

"Like a juggler's assistant I produced the props, then silent and attentive I waited on my cue." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 3)

Here, the asyndeton highlights the quick list of protagonist's actions, movements, and internal struggle. The quick pace created by asyndeton, mirrors the narrator's social anxiety and internal struggle while serving Mrs. Van Hopper. This hurried feeling enhances suspense by showing her immediate fear of intrusion and humiliation, hinting at the uneasy, passive role she accepts before meeting Maxim de Winter. This stylistic haste sets up the subsequent dramatic changes in her life.

"Wondering if he liked it, if he was bored." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 13)

The fast pacing of the asyndeton reflects the narrator's sudden internal fear and self-doubt. This quick tempo mimics her psychological unrest, highlighting her desperate desire to please Maxim. This rapid shift in worry builds suspense, showing her lack of poise and her growing sense of inadequacy compared to Rebecca's confident memory.

"It was quite dark. There was no moon. The wind was squally, from the west." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 20)

This fragmented pacing emphasizes the danger and foreboding atmosphere surrounding Maxim's desperate act. This hasty listing mirrors the immediate psychological distress of the moment Maxim sank Rebecca's boat. The stark description quickly builds suspense, highlighting the secretive violence and the unsettled environment that hides the truth of Rebecca's death. Here, the lack of conjunctions quickens the pace, heightens the starkness of the atmosphere, and creates a foreboding quality in the environment that reflects the disorder of the weather.

"I walked slowly along the passage to the door by the archway, my mind still blunt and slow as though I had just woken from a long sleep." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 19)

The slowed pacing achieved through asyndeton, as here it reflects the narrator's shock after confronting Mrs. Danvers and her attempt at suicide. This deliberate deceleration mirrors the psychological trauma and helps build suspense by intensifying the moment of emotional recovery, just before she learns about the shipwreck and Maxim's truth. The fragmented thought process highlights her fragile state.

"I've got everything, I think. Map, glasses, stick, coat. Everything complete. Well, goodbye, both of you." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 27)

Here, the asyndeton quickly reveals Colonel Julyan's need for order and haste. This rapid, functional pacing, contrasted with the immense crisis Maxim faces, builds suspense by emphasizing Julyan's meticulous nature just before he leaves. His hurried checklist underscores the immediacy and formality of the situation, hinting that Maxim's secret is nearly exposed and that external forces are closing in. The repeated structure creates a sense of order and speed.

"Favell was right about wanting a drink, I want one too and so do you." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 27)

The use of asyndeton creates quick, urgent phrasing, reflecting Maxim and the narrator's deep shared anxiety. This style mirrors the immediate danger of exposure following the recent inquest and Maxim's confession that he killed Rebecca. Such clipped statements build suspense by highlighting the couple's exhaustion and the need for immediate relief and action after facing crisis. This feeling of urgency accelerates the narrative pacing in this intense part of the story. It engenders a kind of shared tension and the possibility of distraction.

"I must never think about that, never, never, never." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 6)

The repetition "never, never, never" emphasizes the narrator's urgent need to hide forbidden thoughts of Rebecca. This clipped pacing creates suspense by highlighting the immediate danger her curiosity poses to her fragile new life with Maxim. The repressed thought is the constant shadow of Maxim's former, beautiful wife, who still seems mistress of Manderley. The clipped, repetitive structure heightens the emotion, accelerating the pacing to mirror urgency.

"It's all over, darling, it's finished." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 27)

This immediate, clipped phrasing conveys the couple's urgent need for relief, quickening the narrative pace after the intense legal threats following the murder confession. The finality enhances suspense because Maxim remains troubled; suggesting their sudden escape from danger is fragile. The brevity highlights the desperate hope that the terror, including Mrs. Danvers' recent ominous exit, is truly over.

"At any rate I have lost my diffidence, my timidity, my shyness with strangers." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 2)

The listing of "diffidence, my timidity, my shyness" creates a declarative pace. This quick removal of her former qualities generates suspense by immediately signaling a profound, unexpected change in the narrator. This sudden confidence is dangerous because it leads her away from her subservient role and into the complex, threatening life of Manderley. This rapid pacing mimics the breathless spontaneity of her self-assessment.

4.3 The Role of Asyndeton in Enhancing Reader Engagement

In the current study, the collected excerpts of asyndeton are examined that how Daphne du Maurier uses asyndeton in *Rebecca* as a stylistic device for engaging the readers.

"Tact was a quality unknown to her, discretion too, and because gossip was the breath of life to her this stranger must be served for her dissection." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 3)

Asyndeton enhances reader engagement by quickly exposing Mrs. Van Hopper's predatory nature, making her a formidable obstacle. This sudden, vivid characterization compels the reader to worry about the naive narrator, increasing tension and investment in her vulnerable position. This statement goes from one extreme to another by removing the conjunction to leave holes in the sentence that require readers to most actively interpret the layered descriptions of the character. Asyndeton can result in an impression of fragmentation, which compels the reader to fill in the gaps generating more forceful reader engagement.

"There was nothing for it but to sit in my usual place beside Mrs. Van Hopper while she, like a large, complacent spider, spun her wide net of tedium about the stranger's person." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 3)

In this case, asyndeton drives readers into Mrs. Van Hopper's figurative "web." By linking Mrs. Van Hopper immediately to a "large, complacent spider", the use of asyndeton enhances reader engagement by creating a quick, fearful image of her predatory nature. This vivid metaphor compels the reader to worry for the naive narrator, who is described as trapped in Mrs. Van Hopper's "wide net of tedium", increasing the reader's investment in the narrator's escape from this controlling relationship.

"I shuddered now when I remembered the touch of her hand on my arm, and that dreadful soft, intimate pitch of her voice close to my ear." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 16)

The asyndeton here pushes readers to plug together what they feel through the sensory details responding positively to what they think. Readers visualize the suspense behind the sensory details. The omission of conjunctions here intensifies the narrator's visceral disgust toward Mrs. Danvers, enhancing reader engagement. By listing the sensory details—"touch of her hand," "dreadful soft, intimate pitch of her voice", without linking words, the asyndeton makes the memory feel fragmented and immediate. This fragmentation forces readers to actively share the narrator's shudder and fear of Mrs. Danvers's false intimacy.

"I thanked God she had not seen me crouching in the gallery. And I wondered, too, if she thought that it was I who had told Maxim about Favell's visit to the house." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 16)

Here, the omission of conjunctions forces the readers. The abrupt shift between the narrator's gratitude for being hidden and her panicked speculation about Mrs. Danvers's thoughts intensifies reader engagement. The asyndeton mirrors her "inner instability," forcing the reader to instantly process her fear of discovery and her guilt about potentially revealing Favell's visit to Maxim, thereby increasing the tension in their dangerous relationship with Mrs. Danvers.

"She turned round and faced me, smiling, one hand in her pocket, the other holding her cigarette." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 20)

The asyndeton listing Rebecca's simultaneous actions like smiling, hand in pocket, holding a cigarette, heightens reader engagement by stressing her casual confidence right

before Maxim shoots her. This fragmented style forces the reader to focus on her subtler power dynamics and audacious composure, emphasizing how she intentionally provoked Maxim with her smile. The immediate, powerful image of her smiling face enhances the shock of her subsequent death.

"He will talk quickly and eagerly about nothing at all, snatching at any subject as a panacea to pain." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 2)

The asyndeton describing Maxim's desperate conversation style enhances reader engagement by instantly revealing his hidden psychological condition. By listing his quick, eager talking and subject-snatching, the fragmented flow compels the reader to perceive his deep, masked pain. This abrupt presentation of his suffering immediately involves the reader in trying to fill the gaps and understand the source of his profound inner torment.

"I know how many grouse are killed, how many partridge, how many head of deer." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 2)

The use of asyndeton enhances reader engagement by emphasizing the meticulous, almost obsessive control the narrator maintains over specific details of English country life. This rapid, disconnected list reflects a ritualistic behavior. By forcing the reader to recognize her detailed knowledge of these facts, the text highlights the narrator's deep longing for the realities of an English spring and her courage to face this glittering sky of exile.

"I'm sorry about that; I like the sea," I said. She did not answer; she just went on staring at me, her hands folded before her." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 7)

The asyndeton listing Mrs. Danvers's static actions enhances reader engagement by emphasizing the unmoving tension of the scene. This fragmented description compels the reader to interpret her silence and folded hands as deliberate hostility. Because the narrator had just offered a polite, simple comment ("I like the sea"), the abrupt, non-verbal rejection by Mrs. Danvers creates immediate psychological threat and underlines the narrator's feeling of inferiority and discomfort. The fragmented sentence urges the reader to draw conclusions about what the interaction means and how much the moment weighs.

"They can be my secret indulgence. Colour and scent and sound, rain and the lapping of water, even the mists of autumn, and the smell of the flood tide, these are memories of Manderley that will not be denied." (du Maurier, 1938, Chapter 2)

The fragmented listing of sensory details compels reader engagement by highlighting the narrator's deep, emotional devotion to Manderley. This rapid succession of evocative images forces the reader to acknowledge the memories she holds sacred. By emphasizing these forbidden sensual pleasures, the asyndeton underscores the courage she gains to face her exiled reality in an alien land. Here, readers have to work cognitively to associate these images if they are to understand the depth of the protagonist's emotions and her devotion to Manderley.

Asyndeton can be multifunctional in any novel at once. The stylistic analysis of asyndeton shows that it is a multifaceted stylistic device in *Rebecca*, building suspense, controlling the narrative pacing, and enhancing reader engagement.

5. Discussion

Following the stylistic analysis technique, the collected examples of asyndeton from novel *Rebecca* have been analyzed in the previous section of data analysis and results and it was revealed that asyndeton has key role in building suspense, controlling the narrative pacing, and enhancing the reader engagement. This section interprets and discusses the results found in the previous section. At the start, this section interprets the results, and in the end a comparison is made between the results of the current study and previous studies conducted on the asyndeton.

The analysis of key stylistic feature asyndeton in *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier proves that it generates suspense and tension. The omission of conjunctions leaves the sentence hanging which create a choppy disjointed atmosphere that adds to the foreboding, uneasy suspense of the novel. These results come in line with Michille's (2017) remark that asyndeton is often used in fictions to build a sense of suspense.

In *Rebecca*, Daphne du Maurier uses asyndeton effectively to break up sentences to build suspense. The absence of conjunctions creates terse, fragmented prose that reflects the protagonist's anxiety in key scenes. For example, details like "*The drive was a ribbon now, a thread of its former self, with gravel surface gone, and choked with grass and moss*" build suspense through quick and disjointed details. This syntactical device adds a layer of psychological dimension to the novel by mimicking the fragmented thoughts of its characters. Asyndeton also enables Daphne du Maurier to create swift successions of events, produce deliberate gaps inviting readers to make inferences, and add to the sense of mystery. By omitting the explicit conjunctions, a more natural flow of language is interrupted, where sudden shifts leave the reader surprised and anticipating what comes next.

The results reveal that asyndeton stylistically speeds up the overall narrative pacing of the novel and sometimes slows down the flow of thoughts when sentences become fragmented. It also generates a sense of urgency. Such findings echo Michelle's (2017) observations about the usage of asyndeton to induce promptness in the trains of thoughts.

The use of asyndeton shapes the narrative pacing of *Rebecca*, granting an ability to Daphne du Maurier to control the tone and tempo of the narration. During moments of immense tension, asyndeton speeds up the pacing by removing conjunctions, increasing the urgency and rapidity. The fragmented sentence structure such as, in "*Gone was my glad excitement, vanished my happy pride*", replicates the instant, sharp change in her feelings, with an urgency to drive the narrative onward. Alternately, sometimes asyndeton can be used to slow down the narrative pacing. Similarly, du Maurier uses asyndeton to heighten the simultaneity of actions: "*She turned round and faced me, smiling, one hand in her pocket, the other holding her cigarette,*" quickening the narrative pacing and reflecting the fluidity of events. This dual capacity of asyndeton both fast and slow tracks pacing to keep the narrative in a place of flow, adapting the cadence to the emotional and thematic needs of the story, ensuring reader engagement in an increasingly complex narrative.

Stylistic analysis of asyndeton indicates that this device also forces the readers to visualize suspenseful moments and interprets fragmented and layered representations of the scenes and characters. These results are consistent with Iser's (1978) theory regarding the implied reader, which proposes that the gaps caused by the lack of connective between the parts of sentences compel readers to actively interpret the fragmented parts of description regarding the scenes and characters in the novels. In *Rebecca*, asyndeton also invites readers to engage with the text at the cognitive level by positioning gaps in the narrative which demand active interpretation. Lack of conjunctions compels readers to fill in the gaps, making the readers work harder through the act of reading, engaging them with the text.

Stylistic analysis of asyndeton shows that as a stylistic device it can yield multiple roles at a time in any novel i.e., to engage the readers, control the narrative pacing, and build suspense. As such, in *Rebecca*, asyndeton is not merely a single-function device but rather a tool that thrives on multiplicity, that enhances narrative, adds a new avenue of psychological complexity that has the potential to engage reader attention. In short, the findings verify that asyndeton serves a versatile and powerful stylistic device.

The findings of this study reveal that asyndeton as a stylistic device is purposefully used by Daphne du Maurier in her novel *Rebecca* for some stylistic purposes. Results of the study also show that the use of asyndeton as a stylistic device in the *Rebecca* can serve multiple purposes simultaneously i.e. to attract readers, control the narrative pacing, and build suspense. Daphne du Maurier uses it brilliantly to heighten suspense, to engage readers, and to quicken and slow the flow of thoughts in her novel *Rebecca*.

The findings of the current study are in accordance with previous studies of asyndeton like Kashif Ali et al. (2022) and Michelle (2017). Kashif Ali et al. examined literary and rhetorical devices used in *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. In their work, they explored seventeen of the literary and rhetorical devices used in Orwell's *Animal Farm* and discussed how each contributes to the novel's narrative structure, themes and emotional impact. They argued that Orwell's use of asyndeton produces emotional intensity and confusion in the novel. Similarly, Michelle also thinks that strategic use of asyndeton leaves suspense.

Conclusion

The present study focuses on the stylistic analysis of asyndeton in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*. It discusses how it contributes to suspense, narrative pacing, and reader engagement in the novel. This study concludes that asyndeton plays a pivotal role in establishing the suspenseful atmosphere of the novel. The novelist, Daphne du Maurier uses asyndeton as a stylistic device to make a sentence fragmented, bringing a sense of suspense and discomfort in most of the scenes of the novel. In addition, the use of asyndeton also intensifies the whole emotional depth of the novel by reflecting the inner conflict of the characters specifically the protagonist. The comma has also an impact on the narrative pacing of the novel because by elimination of the conjunction between the parts of a sentence i.e. words, clauses, and phrases etc, it brings quickness in the events and sometimes slows down the flow of thoughts. The novel bounded by such internally torturous descriptions gets interpreted by readers and consequently it compels readers psychologically to re-discuss it. The results of the present study reveal that asyndeton as a stylistic device may perform multiple roles simultaneously in any novel, i.e., to keep the readers engaged, control the narrative pacing, and instill a tension through suspense. This study contributes to the existing knowledge on stylistic analysis and enhances the understanding of asyndeton's role in suspenseful novel, *Rebecca*. Further research on asyndeton in future could interpret its role across other genres.

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