



Article

A Pragmastylistic Study of Charles Dickens's Short Story 'Our School'

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Abstract. In this paper, the pragma-stylistic features of Charles Dickens's short story *Our School* (1851) are analyzed from the perspective of Elizabeth Black's (2006) pragma-stylistic framework. This responds to the fact that little systematic work has yet been conducted on the application of an integrated pragma-stylistic perspective to *Our School*, particularly as linguistic choices entail a meaning that bypasses their literal sense. The study employs a qualitative descriptive research design in analysing chosen extracts from the narrative, relying on five pragmatic tools, namely Speech Act Theory, Grice's Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature, Deixis, Presupposition, and Politeness Theory. This study revolves around the functioning of these realist tools in the negotiation between narrator, character, and implied reader, especially as it concerns contextualization, indirectness, irony, and reader inference. The paper illustrates that Dickens's linguistic decisions fulfil significant pragmatic functions beyond any purely stylistic effect. They see speech acts as serving to evaluate or characterise, and conversational implicatures allowing the narrator to indirectly voice his criticisms. The Diary Frequency also uses deictic expressions, creating a retrospective narrative vision here, especially the collective pronoun "we," which emphasizes aspects of memory and nostalgia within its themes. Dickens assumes the knowledge we have because they are shared, so it can be a kind of tacit information about school life; politeness and impoliteness lay bare our relationships with one another and how these play out in the power dynamics between students, teachers, and vice versa. The sets of pragmatic instruments identified are shown to work not in isolation but together, producing humour and irony while more broadly performing Dickens's critique of Victorian educational practices through an indirect rather than explicitly accusatory manner. In conclusion, this paper finds in Black (2006) a pragma-stylistic framework which is capable of interpreting *Our School* as an integrated explanation of how linguistic form and contextual meaning interact with communicative intention to result in the full use the reader makes by inference—one lexical choice can lead to all these routes toward meaning. The study also adds to the broader field of Dickens studies by highlighting the value of pragmastylistics as an approach to analysing Victorian literary prose.

Keywords: Pragmastylistics, speech act theory, cooperative principle and conversational implicature, deixis, presupposition, politeness theory

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language is at the heart of literary discourse because literary texts generate and transfer meaning through cautiously chosen linguistic choices. From a linguistic standpoint, literature can consequently be studied not only as an artistic form but also as a modelled use of language through which writers erect fictional worlds, symbolise characters, express positions, and guide readers toward certain types of construal.

Leech and Short (2007) stress the importance of looking closely at the language of literary texts in order to understand how stylistic choices help create meaning. Simpson (2004), on the other hand, demonstrates that linguistic analysis can reveal how texts construct perspectives, identities, and attitudes. Likewise, Toolan (1998) emphasizes that paying attention to linguistic form is essential if we want to understand how literary narratives produce meaning and influence the way readers respond.

But the literal meaning doesn't always lie in the words themselves. It frequently transcends its literal meaning, as it relies on the reader to recognize intention, attitude, presuppositions, and hidden meanings influenced by the context in which certain phrases occur. Since then, pragmatics has become really important in literary studies: the way meaning works based on context, how implications and allusions arise from intention, what is said versus what is meant.

This is why explaining the implicit meanings of literary texts is so particularly suited to *pragmastylistics*. This introduces a framework pulling from both pragmatics and stylistics to explore how linguistic selection and contextual interpretation function in tandem to create meaning in literature.

The research context of *pragmastylistics* has a theoretical basis in analyzing what it means when stylistic form and pragmatic context work together to create meaning in linguistic choices found in literary texts or other discourse. It merges two compatible domains: pragmatics, which concerns the way meaning works and how speakers convey far more than the literal interpretation of their words is capable of capturing, and stylistics, which concentrates on linguistic features' relevance for literary comprehension. Stylistic analysis and pragmatic analysis go together like peanut butter and jelly: stylistic analysis points to significant forms that recur within language use (by identifying patterns), and pragmatics explains what those patterns do contextually that generates communicative meaning.

The proximity of these interactions makes contextual interpretation vital, since literary meaning often hinges less on what is explicitly stated than on inferences drawn from the text, as well as surrounding context and relations of participants. Thus, the integration of reader inference into analyses of literary discourse is central to understanding authors' communicative intentions, because word choices can communicate attitudes, implicatures, and presuppositions through subtle linguistic forms.

According to Elizabeth Black (2006), *pragmastylistics* is an approach that applies pragmatic theoretic tools to literary texts and provides a methodology for understanding how 'the interpretive and communicative function of literature works, grounded in contextual meaning, inference and agency over linguistic choice. Particularly valuable about Black's framework is that it offers an approach to systematically linking textual features with the communicative processes by which readers create interpretations. Because it understands that literary texts operate through complicated interactions between overt linguistic signals, context-assumed background knowledge, meaning not overtly expressed but implied, and communicative purpose, it lends itself especially well to the study of literature. Black's approach draws on several pragmatic theories to present a comprehensive view of how communication and interpretation in literary texts work.

There are certain writers whose names are practically a synonym for the concept of English literature itself; and among them, Charles Dickens is one of those authors whose style has long been both distinctive and recognized as something rather special. This is exactly what makes him so valid a target for *pragmastylistic* analysis. Dickens, as one of the dominant Victorian novelists, has remarkable talent in merging realism, satire, humor, and biting social observation grounded in a masterly narrative voice.

Perhaps most striking in his fiction is his talent for making a character alive, fully formed and real to the person being killed or roused from unconsciousness by hand as well as damning speech, action and the physics of contact. Dickens tended to find the base nature of social inequality throughout his narrative, and through realism he exposed the institutions, such as law enforcement, education and bureaucracy, found in Victorian life by taking aim at both. But usually he did not do this in a heavy-handed way. Instead, he turned to satire and humour, letting the serious censure come implicitly, often amused.

Instead of outwardly mocking the injustices of Victorian institutions, Dickens often used irony, hyperbole, finely drawn characters, and omissions to compel readers themselves to see the contradictions and flaws in their own society. The richness of his imagery, his ear for voices, and the way he captures the seeming manipulation of perspective in rhythm all emphasize how much it is a textual matter of the discursive choices made,

both linguistically and contextually, which underwrite and shape representation. That the pragmatic style of Dickens is such a prime site in order to demonstrate how communicative intention, irony, inference, and contextual meaning permeate literary language renders him all the more an absolutely appropriate author for a pragmatylistic study, partly due to precisely these qualities.

As evidenced by the work of prominent critics and scholars, such as John Forster, Michael Slater, Philip Collins, and David Lodge, all of whom provide a diverse set of perspectives which prove invaluable in exploring the stylistic methods Dickens adhered to as well as the social issues that permeate his writings.

Charles Dickens's *Our School* appeared in *Household Words*, Volume IV, Magazine No. 81, on 11 October 1851, where it filled pages 49 to 52. Because its depiction of school life owes so much to Dickens's own experiences at Wellington House Classical and Commercial Academy from 1824 to 1826, we can also call it strongly autobiographical in spirit. The story is prefaced with a note stating the school building was separate from the main house, and was largely destroyed when a deep railway cutting was cut through for the London and North Western Railway, a detail that connects the narrative point-blank to Dickens's childhood dates.

The story begins with the narrator back at the school and seeing that the railway has "laid it low root and branch." Right from the start, this establishes memory loss as one of the principal themes, and the shifts modern life has brought with it, which we both have. Dickens contrasts visits to the teachers and pupils with an exposition about the mundane details of school life, creating a rich picture of Victorian schooling from behind a thin veil of nostalgia. Using humorous descriptions and ironic comment, he lays bare the awful state of the school (especially through the ignorance of the headmaster), details life for those pupils unfortunate enough to come under its harsh discipline, and highlights how riches in this place trump genuine merit.

Consequently, *Our School* acts concurrently as a yearning rebuilding of childhood experience and a satirical contemplation on Victorian education, while the devastation of the school by the railway represents the wide-ranging consequences of social and technological change.

Our School is distinguished by a variety of distinct literary and stylistic characteristics that participate in its active and attractive presentation of childhood memories. The story adopts first-person narration, with the collective pronoun "we" used throughout the story to present the narrator's memories as communal experiences and to create a conversational association with the reader. Dickens mingles this narrative voice with humour, irony, exaggeration, and comic descriptions to depict the school, its teachers, and its pupils. The unskilled schoolmaster, for instance, is presented via funny remarks about his imperfect knowledge and severe means of punishment, while the weird and unforgettable pupils are portrayed through overstated stories and humorous details. The conversational feature of the narration is also obvious in the narrator's recurrent expressions of indecision and remembrance, such as "we remember," "we suspect," and "we have no idea now" (Dickens, 1851, pp. 50–51), which strengthen the reflective and nostalgic character of the text. Characterization is another significant characteristic, as Dickens generates unforgettable persons via typical physical descriptions, behaviours, and anecdotes, comprising the schoolmaster, the ushers, and numerous uncommon pupils. These characteristics unite to make *Our School* an appropriate text for pragmatic stylistic study since its meaning is conveyed not only via its topic but also via its narrative voice, funny language, irony, characterization, and the connection between the narrator's terms and the reader's construal.

Pragmatics is chiefly fitting for examining *Our School* because Dickens often conveys assessments and stances via indirect rather than directly stated meanings. The narrative comprises traits that can be scrutinised through speech acts, Gricean implicatures, indirectness, shared knowledge, context, irony, presupposition, and reader inference. For instance, instead of stating directly that the schoolmaster is inept, the narrator perceives that "The master was supposed among us to know nothing" (Dickens, 1851, p. 49), presenting the sentence as a common belief among the pupils instead of as a straight accusation. This formula of roundaboutness incites readers to deduce the narrator's negative assessment from the context and from the encompassing portrayal of the

master's imperfect knowledge and punitive practices. Likewise, Dickens frequently supposes that readers can identify the comical or ironic importance of specific descriptions without these valuations being openly explicated. The meaning of such terms therefore rests on contextual knowledge, shared suppositions, and the reader's capability to deduce communicative intents beyond their literal phrasing.

In much the same way, presuppositions and implicatures allow details about the school, the people in charge, and the values of the society it reflects to come across indirectly. In fact, 'irony' occupies a central position here; it generates a distance between what is meant literally and what the narrator wishes the readers to believe. This is exactly why pragmatics is such an appropriate lens through which to scrutinise *Our School*: a lot of Dickens's power as a novelist comes not from straightforward assertion, but through implicit communication, situationally-specific interpretation and reader inference.

The first proposal, by Black, has four parallel analytical categories for investigating meaning-making within literary discourse, which he calls *pragmastylistics*: Speech Act Theory, the Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature, Deixis, Presupposition, and Politeness Theory. In this approach, Speech Act Theory, which provides that language is a form of action, encourages us to examine literary statements in terms of what their speakers or narrators are doing with them. However, the Cooperative Principle emphasizes that conversational cooperation is a critical part of people making sense of meaning, whereas Conversational Implicature refers to the meanings readers read between the lines beyond what a literal utterance expresses. Deixis examines how linguistic expressions construct perspective by linking the meaning of those expressions to participants, time, place, and other elements of a context. Presupposition concerns the background information or suppositions that writers assume and on which readers depend when construing a text. Lastly, Politeness Theory inspects how characters exchange interpersonal connections via their linguistic selections. Taken together, these instruments present a systematic way of inspecting the association between language, context, and interpretation in *Our School*, and they help disclose how Dickens produces humour, irony, and characterization via both overt and covert meanings.

Earlier studies on Charles Dickens have scrutinized a range of facets of his writing, comprising his use of realism, his representation of education, his satirical treatment of society, and his unique stylistic techniques. Yet, there appears to be a gap in the systematic application of Elizabeth Black's integrated *pragmastylistic* framework to *Our School*. While present approaches can enlighten the text's realistic representation of Victorian education, its humour and satire, and its literary style, a *pragmastylistic* tactic can bring these aspects together by probing how meaning is produced through linguistic selections, contextual suppositions, indirectness, inference, and communicative intentions. It is a gap worth plugging, since *Our School* leans heavily on indirect judgement, irony, social situatedness, and the reader's own interpretative resources, aspects which cannot be fully described stylistically. So, Black's framework allows us to present such a more holistic account of the humour, irony, character, and social commentary created through Dickens's language while also showcasing just how helpful *pragmastylistics* can be in determining how elements of literary communication work.

This paper aims to investigate the function of *pragmastylistic* features in the novel *Our School* by Charles Dickens based on an integrated model put forward by Elizabeth Black, and is applied across five core analytical fields spanning Speech Acts, Conversational Implicatures, Deixis, Presupposition as well as Politeness. The project aims to explore the way in which Dickens and his readers have made use of these much maligned pragmatic elements, focusing on how they help shape character, irony, humour and thematic meaning through linguistic choices from the text itself.

To elaborate, the research investigates how both character and narrator convey meanings both directly and indirectly, in what ways context colors our understanding of things, and how readers can look beyond the literal words on the page for something more deeply meaningful. The paper thus aims to yield a more complete description of the interplay between linguistic form and situated meaning in *Our School* through studying these pragmatic devices in conjunction rather than individually. Ultimately, its aim is to promote the utility of *pragmastylistics* as a method of investigating literature and

demonstrate how semantic value arises from the negotiation among language, context, and inference in the process of signification.

2. Statement of the Problem

The paper closes an important gap in the scholarship, being the first to apply Elizabeth Black's integrated pragmastylistic framework systematically to Dickens' *Our School*. Most past studies have focused on the realism in Dickens's masterpiece, the novel as a reflection of its historical period, his use of satire and creative plot formations, or some other aspect of style that receives little to no investigation into how meaning is created through pragmatic features such as contextual meaning and indirectness through inference and communicative intentions.

3. Research Questions

1. How does Dickens employ Speech Acts in *Our School*?
2. What is the contribution of Conversational Implicatures to the meaning of the story?
3. How do perspective and context work with Deixis?
4. How are Presuppositions investigated throughout the text?
5. How does Politeness act as a means of characterization and how we relate to one another?
6. What do these pragmatic features afford in terms of characterization, irony, humour and thematic meaning?

4. Research Objectives

The study aims to:

- examine Speech Acts in *Our School*;
- analyse Conversational Implicatures;
- investigate Deixis;
- inspect presupposition;
- scrutinise Politeness;
- discuss how these elements work on characterization, irony, humour and thematic significance.

5. Significance of the Study

Pragmastylistics has much to contribute to the existing corpus of literary interpretation, which is rather limited in its scope; thus, this study may serve as a good entrance into understanding how pragmastylistics can be incorporated into reading literature. By extending the insights of Black, it illustrates how choices made within language, context, inference, and implication construct Dickensian humour, irony, characterisation, and social critique. It furthers Dickensian scholarship and provides a practical model for future pragmastylistic analyses of Victorian prose fiction.

2. Literature Review

Within the literature on Dickens's autobiographical and educational writings, *Our School* (1851) occupies an important place. It was first published in *Household Words*, Volume IV, on 11 October 1851 and is a short autobiographical insight into Dickens's own schooling days. The narrative is inextricably linked to Dickens's own experiences as a pupil from 1824 to 1826 at Wellington House Classical and Commercial Academy, as indicated by Slater (1998). The piece is prefaced by editorial notes indicating, for instance, that the school was impacted by a railway cutting, and even this event echoes within the opening lines of *Our School*. The story is of course autobiographical at heart, and has a preference for emphasizing memory, loss, and the temporal shifts caused by time, so-called progressivism and modernity.

In Dickens scholarship, the autobiographical dimension of *Our School* has received considerable interest. Forster (1872–1874) relies heavily on Dickens's recollections of his first school days, but strikes *Our School* for the tone with which it examines this period in Dickensian history. The editorial notes that two of Dickens's former schoolmates confirmed: "that the chief features of the school were reproduced with considerable fidelity". In a similar manner, Collins (1963) examines Dickens's educational history and the connection between these experiences and his literary representation of education. The autobiographical element of the text is profoundly significant precisely because Dickens does not simply revive events from childhood; he reshapes them in terms of the voice of a deliberately ambivalent and at times comic narrator as artist.

Dickens's depiction of schooling in *Our School* can also be studied within the broader context of his interest in Victorian educational institutions. Collins (1963) inspects Dickens's stances toward education and reveals the significance of educational experience in his writing. In *Our School*, Dickens depicts the school through the memoirs of a previous pupil, describing teachers, pupils, punishment, lessons, and the social hierarchy of the institution. The schoolmaster is depicted as unknowing and unduly involved with corporal punishment, while wealth influences the treatment of certain pupils. Slater (1998) further authenticates Dickens's negative reminiscences of William Jones, the model for facets of the schoolmaster character, and reports that Dickens later criticized Jones more openly.

Humour and satire establish another important characteristic of *Our School*. Slater (1998) reveals the significance of Dickens's comic and satirical techniques in his journalism, while Forster (1872–1874) exhibits *Our School* as an unusually precise rebuilding of Dickens's school experience. Dickens employs comic descriptions, exaggeration, uncommon anecdotes, and humorous depiction to characterize teachers and pupils. The narrator's account of the schoolmaster's lack of knowledge and severe punishment, for example, turns criticism of educational authority into humorous narration.

Characterization is thoroughly associated with Dickens's humour and satire. Collins (1963) perceives the importance of Dickens's educational experiences for his fictional depictions of teachers and schools. In *Our School*, teachers and pupils are made outstanding through bodily descriptions, behavioural details, rumours, anecdotes, and distinctive features. The editorial commentary mainly joins Dickens's schoolmaster with Mr Creakle in *David Copperfield* and the gentle usher with Mr Mell, showing how Dickens converted reminiscences of real people into literary characters. Slater (1998) similarly stresses the autobiographical sources causing these depictions.

From a stylistic point of view, *Our School* stands out for its use of a first-person plural narrator. Leech and Short (2007) stress the value of looking closely at linguistic choices in literary works, since stylistic features play a role in shaping meaning and perspective. The repeated use of "we" throughout *Our School* presents memories as shared experiences and creates a conversational bond between the narrator and the reader. Some of its phrases invoke where we are remembering from: "we remember," "we suspect," "we have no idea now," and they draw attention to memory's awkward, uncertain quality. Thus, the narrative style is more than mere description; it contributes to the nostalgic atmosphere of the work.

Another highly useful area for elucidating the literary language of Dickens lies in the interrelationship between pragmatics and stylistics. Simpson (2004) demonstrates that stylistic analysis can reveal the ways in which a literary text constructs different kinds of point of view, identity, and attitude; Toolan (1998), in his focus on narrative meaning, is clear about how linguistic form matters. However, literary meaning is often not restricted to the literal words on a page. Readers deduce attitudes, assumptions, and intentions from the context; they identify implied meanings. This is why the present study proposes a pragmatylistic analytical scale that merges stylistic and pragmatic perspectives.

One theoretical home for this sort of analysis in the context at hand is provided by Black (2006) in her book, *Pragmatic Stylistics*. Her application of this theory to literary texts explores the use of pragmatic concepts in the interpretation of narrative discourse. This is the framework of her investigation, which combines the Cooperative Principle, conversational implicature, Relevance Theory, irony, indirect discourse, narrative voice, deixis, and politeness. This framework is suitable for *Our School* since Dickens often conveys evaluations implicitly rather than via overt accounts.

The use of indirectness is mostly noteworthy in Dickens's treatment of the schoolmaster. Instead of openly mentioning that the master is inept, the narrator comments that "The master was supposed among us to know nothing." (Dickens, 1851, p. 49) Black (2006) offers a valuable framework for grasping such expressions because pragmatic interpretation takes into account how readers derive meanings from context, suppositions, and communicative selections. The statement can then be construed not merely in accordance with its literal content but in relation to the encompassing description of the master's inexperience, punishment, and authority. Thus, the present

study contends that such indirect assessments express why pragmatics is especially appropriate for construing *Our School*.

The narrator's rapport with the implicit reader is also substantial from a pragmastylistic standpoint. Black (2006) pays close attention to narratorial authority, character focalization, straight and inferred discourse, and the pragmatic construal of literary narration. In *Our School*, the collective "we," expressions of doubt, shared reminiscences, and jokey comments invite readers to partake in rebuilding the past. Thus, it has to rely on inference from context rather than only on explicit statements. That makes the text especially suited to at least test how one interacts with the other.

Overall, background knowledge makes the case for *Our School* as a useful resource for understanding Dickens's schooling, autobiographical writing generally, and his humor/satire/characterization. Forster (1972–1874) and Collins (1963) provide essential introductions to Dickens's school years, with Slater explaining more about the editorial/biographical background. Stylistic contributions are provided by Leech and Short (2007), Simpson (2004), and Toolan (1998), while Black (2006) provides a pragmatic framework in which to explore literary communication. However, the study points to a further need for formal consideration of a more systematic implementation of Black's aggregated pragmastylistic approach on *Our School*. This strategy can thus integrate the analysis of humour, irony, characterisation, context, indirectness and reader inference and provide a more unified account of how Dickens builds literary meaning as a whole.

3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

3.1. Theoretical Framework

3.1.1. Elizabeth Black's (2006) Framework

This study is primarily grounded in the Pragmatic Stylistics of Elizabeth Black. Black (2006) shows how systematic application of pragmatic theories can be done on literary texts, connecting together linguistic form, context, and interpretation, and thus literariness. It incorporates how the Cooperative Principle factors into literary interpretation and examines such phenomena as irony, indirect discourse, narratorial authority, and character focalization. As a practical application of Black's approach, the present study examines Speech Act Theory, the Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature, Deixis, Presupposition, and Politeness Theory with respect to five key pragmatic areas. In conjunction with these texts, which together form a mini corpus on their own, the tools provide an analysis of how Dickens uses language to signal affect and significance beneath the literal surface of words, and how readers draw conclusions about attitudes and relationships and any social value judgements they imply from a text's context (Black, 2006).

3.1.2. Pragmastylistics

Pragmastylistics is a two-layer approach which unites pragmatics and stylistics in order to explore the meaning creation of linguistic choices in literary texts. Stylistics generally studies linguistic and formal properties of texts, while pragmatics is traditionally interested in meaning as interpreted with respect to context, communicative intentions, assumptions, and inference. Consequently, pragmastylistics offers a framework for examining not only what literary language tells but also what it transfers implicitly and how readers form meaning from contextual data. This approach is specifically apt for literary texts since authors often depend on irony, indirectness, presupposition, implicature, and contextual knowledge rather than stating every stance or assessment openly. Black's work exhibits pragmatic theories as valued instruments for literary interpretation and definitely investigates their worth in scrutinising narrative discourse, irony, indirect discourse, and literary communication. (Black, 2006; Leech & Short, 2007; Simpson, 2004)

3.1.2.1. Speech Act Theory

Speech Act Theory is based primarily on the work of J. L. Austin, who claims that language can be utilised to achieve actions rather than simply to describe states of affairs. In *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin (1962) identifies three dimensions of utterances: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. The locutionary dimension involves the production of a meaningful linguistic expression; the illocutionary dimension involves the communicative act performed in saying something, such as requesting, promising,

warning, or asserting; and the perlocutionary dimension involves the effect an utterance produces on a hearer. Searle (1969) afterward developed Speech Act Theory by supplying a more systematic classification of illocutionary acts. Within literary analysis, Speech Act Theory can be applied to dialogue and narration to inspect what characters and narrators achieve through their utterances, including criticizing, commanding, informing, evaluating, or persuading. In *Our School*, this perspective can help recognise how the narrator's and characters' utterances achieve communicative and social actions. (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969)

3.1.2.2.1. Grice's Cooperative Principle

Grice's Cooperative Principle offers an essential account of how participants usually collaborate in conversational contact so as to communicate efficiently. In "Logic and Conversation," Grice (1975) suggests that conversational contributions are construed in relation to four conversational maxims: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. The maxims involve supplying a suitable amount of information, being truthful, maintaining relevance, and expressing oneself clearly and orderly. Prominently for literary interpretation, speakers or narrators may appear to violate or flout these expectations in ways that encourage readers or hearers to seek an additional meaning. Black (2006) applies the Cooperative Principle to literary interpretation, demonstrating how pragmatic expectations can help clarify meanings created via literary language. In *Our School*, jokey and ironic accounts can hence be scrutinized in relation to what the narrator utters, what might rationally be anticipated to be said, and what readers deduce from the difference. (Grice, 1975; Black, 2006)

3.1.2.2.2. Conversational Implicature

Conversational implicature refers to meaning that is transferred or concluded beyond the literal content of an utterance. According to Grice (1975), hearers construe conversational contributions against the supposition of cooperation and may deduce additional meanings when an utterance seems to deviate from one or more conversational maxims. Levinson (1983) treats implicature as one of the chief topics of pragmatics and stresses its significance in grasping meaning in context. In literary discourse, implicature is particularly important because writers can convey stances and valuations implicitly, leaving readers to rebuild the intended meaning. This makes implicature valuable for examining Dickens's humour and irony. For instance, when the narrator states that the master was "supposed among us to know nothing," the evaluation of the schoolmaster's unskillfulness is exhibited as a shared belief rather than as a straightforward announcement. Such a voicing necessitates that readers deduce the narrator's evaluative attitude from the expression and the included text. (Grice, 1975; Levinson, 1983; Black, 2006)

3.1.2.3. Deixis

Deixis analyses linguistic expressions whose interpretation relies on the context of an utterance. Levinson (1983) classifies deixis as one of the major areas of pragmatic analysis and examines categories comprising person, place, time, discourse, and social deixis. Deictic expressions such as *I*, *we*, *here*, *there*, *now*, and *then* establish relations between language and the participants, locations, times, and discourse situations to which expressions refer. In literary texts, deixis is specifically significant because narrative discourse builds viewpoints and places readers in relation to events and characters. In *Our School*, the narrator's recurrent use of the collective pronoun "we," together with temporal and spatial expressions, helps create a reflective standpoint and exhibits the reminisced school experience as a common past. Deixis can then participate in the study of narrative voice, perspective, memory, and the connection between narrator and reader. (Levinson, 1983; Black, 2006)

3.1.2.4. Presupposition

Presupposition refers to information that an utterance supposes or takes for granted rather than overtly declaring. Levinson (1983) includes presupposition among the main areas of pragmatic analysis and considers its connection to linguistic meaning and contextual interpretation. Presupposed information can supply readers with the background required to construe an utterance and can found suppositions about people, events, relationships, or circumstances. In literary discourse, writers can use presupposition to present information economically while inciting readers to accept

specific suppositions as part of the narrative world. In *Our School*, references to teachers, pupils, school practices, and recollected events can hinge on information that the narrator introduces as already known or indicated within the narrative context. Probing such suppositions can consequently show how Dickens directs readers toward particular interpretations without openly mentioning every evaluative or contextual detail. (Levinson, 1983; Mey, 2001; Black, 2006)

3.1.2.5. Politeness Theory

Politeness Theory examines how speakers manage interactive relationships and save the social self-image, or “face,” of participants in communication. Brown and Levinson (1987) differentiate between positive face, including the desire to be appreciated or approved of, and negative face, comprising the desire for freedom from imposition. Their framework explicates how speakers may use different strategies to accomplish possibly face-threatening acts, including directness, indirectness, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record strategies. Mey (2001) also stresses the significance of social context and interaction in pragmatic interpretation. In literary texts, politeness analysis can expose relationships including authority, distance, solidarity, conflict, and social status. This is mainly related to *Our School*, where relationships between teachers and pupils are shaped by institutional authority and asymmetrical social positions. Politeness and impoliteness can therefore partake in the representation of power, interpersonal tension, characterization, humour, and social criticism. (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Mey, 2001; Black, 2006)

3.1.3. Framework Application

Viewed together, these pragmatic mechanisms offer a combined framework for investigating how Dickens creates literary meaning in *Our School*. Speech Act Theory makes it possible to inspect what the narrator and characters achieve through their utterances; the Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature explain how readers derive meanings beyond literal phrasing; Deixis discloses how language forms narrative viewpoint; Presupposition identifies the suppositions shaping interpretation; and Politeness Theory explores interpersonal relations and social power. These constituents are predominantly applicable to Dickens's use of humour, irony, indirect evaluation, characterization, and social criticism. Thus, the current study identifies these five sub-fields as its prime analytical apparatuses and contends that they help elucidate the connection between linguistic form, contextual meaning, and literary interpretation. Hence, Black's framework offers the theoretical foundation for investigating how pragmatic selections take part in characterization, irony, humour, and thematic meaning in *Our School*. (Black, 2006; Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996)

3.2. Research Methodology

The design of this study involved a qualitative descriptive approach that treats *Our School* as its major literary corpus and Black's (2006) pragmastylistic model as the dominant analytical framework. Dissected through Speech Act Theory, the Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature, Deixis, Presupposition, and Politeness Theory, the researcher opted fragments. It is analysed by considering linguistic form, context, inference, and communicative intention, which leads to a link between the pragmatic interpretation of the utterance and characterisation, irony, humour, and thematic meaning. It sets out to show how Dickens's stylistic features serve pragmatic purposes, and by extension, how pragmastylistics can inform the reading of literature.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Introduction

Interval after this, *Our School* by Charles Dickens is a text very rich for pragmastylistic analysis because the literary effects are largely conditioned by the interplay of form, context, inference and communicative intention. The article was published in 1851 in the periodical *Household Words* and is a semi-autobiographical reminiscence of Dickens's own school days, containing elements of autobiography and humour, as well as satire, irony, characterisation and social criticism of Victorian education. In this research, the stylistic features found in the text are identified as the first-person narrative voice, collective pronoun “we”, humorous descriptions, irony, exaggeration, conversational narration and characterisation.

These features can be understood with pragmatism. However, Dickens does not always make his judgements foregone conclusions. Rather, he regularly sets up contexts for the reader to chew on those things in ways that suggest they can read the narrator's views between or outside explicit statements through shared assumptions, odd descriptions, ironic contrasts, and bizarrely apparent cooperative overtures. The approach to this story is therefore related to the main question of pragmatics: how do linguistic features relate to the meaning generated from reading. The relationship between literature and pragmatics is one that can be suitably examined through the lens of pragmatic theories, such as those established by Black (2006).

The analysis here presented focuses on some specific characteristics of *Our School* tenets through the lens of five pragmatics-related categories: Speech Act Theory, the Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature, Deixis, Presupposition and Presupposition Projection, and Politeness Theory. The goal is not simply to identify pragmatic features, but to show how they function in Dickens's characterisation, humour, irony and thematic treatment of education and authority, childhood and social change.

4.1.1. Speech Act Analysis

This approach is a sound one because we know that literary utterances do more than register speech acts bearing fact, and the Speech Act theory provides a readily available starting point for thinking in this way. Austin (1962) differentiates between the locutionary content of an utterance, the illocutionary act performed through it, and the perlocutionary effect it may produce. Searle (1969) afterward develops a classification of speech acts. In *Our School*, both the characters and the narrator use language to perform actions such as informing, evaluating, criticizing, remembering, asserting, and entertaining.

The narrator's descriptions are particularly important because narration itself accomplishes evaluative actions. When the narrator reports that the schoolmaster was "supposed among us to know nothing" (Dickens, 1851, p. 49), the statement does more than offer information about the master's reputation. It makes an indirect act of criticism. The narrator presents the judgment as something collectively supposed by the pupils instead of simply declaring his own negative evaluation. The construction therefore generates some distance between the narrator and the accusation whilst still transferring a clear evaluation of the schoolmaster.

This speech act is momentous for characterization. Instead of labelling the master straight as inept, Dickens permits his assumed ineptitude to arise through the pupils' alleged view of him. The reader is therefore placed as an interpreter who should identify the evaluative force of the statement. The communicative action of criticizing is thus rooted within an outwardly informative statement. This explains how Dickens utilizes pragmatic indirectness to create characterization.

Speech acts also function in the depiction of authority. The schoolmaster's institutional position gives his utterances and actions specific force. Commands, disciplinary instructions, and authoritative behaviour shape the relationship between teacher and pupil. The linguistic and behavioural actions connected with authority subsequently contribute to the description of the school as a hierarchical institution. Thus, the master's ignorance and harsh disciplinary procedures are significant factors in Dickens's portrayal of the school. Dickens stresses this conflict between institutional authority and intellectual ineptitude as he remembers that "the master was supposed among us to know nothing," whilst the lone branches of education with which he displayed "the least acquaintance" were "ruling, and corporally punishing" (Dickens, 1851, pp. 49–50).

Concerning the narrative level, the narrator's speech acts also have a social and aesthetic function. The package of memory creates a conversation with the reader: by remembering, commenting on that past, judging it as funny or not, you are creating something totally different from individual memory. Here are phrases like "we remember," "we suspect," and "we have no idea now" (Dickens, 1851, pp. 50–51), which suggest the narrator is simultaneously remembering, qualifying, and interpreting his memories. Thus, speech acts participate not only in the transmission of information but also in shaping the conversational environment that unfolds in a story.

4.1.2.1. Grice's Cooperative Principle

The Cooperative Principle, for example, proposed by Grice (1975), proposes that participants in conversation will make conversational contributions as far as possible towards the purposes of the conversation. The four van der Grift maxims Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner provide a useful mechanism for exploring the ways in which literary discourse generates new meaning through conventional expectations of communication.

Even though *Our School* is a literary sequence rather than a normal dialogue, Dickens establishes an implicit conversation between the narrator and reader. The narration is frequently in the mode of recounting events as if recalling them with someone who knows the context. The sustained use of "we" is particularly notable because it builds a sense of shared experience and conversational intimacy.

We also see the narrator repeatedly qualifying his memories. Statements such as "we remember," "we suspect," and "we have no idea now" (Dickens, 1851, pp. 50-51) do not offer every memory as unquestionably certain. From a pragmatic viewpoint, these qualifications are important because they confirm the narrator as ostensibly cooperative and reliable: he does not pretend to own information that he cannot assuredly remember. At the same time, the uncertainty contributes to humour and nostalgia.

Dickens also uses expectations of relevance and manner via deviations, comic details, exaggerations, and unusual descriptions. Information that may primarily seem excessive or irrelevant can contribute to characterization or satire. For instance, the narrator deviates into intricate and implausible stories about the pupils, including the allegation that one rich boy was "too wealthy to be 'taken down,'" while another was visualized as the son of a Viscount whose mother allegedly carried "a silver pistol" for revenge (Dickens, 1851, pp. 50-51). The narrator's seemingly unpremeditated movement from memory to anecdote consequently urges the reader to construe the story not merely as a truthful description but as a wisely built literary performance.

This handling of conversational expectations is mostly vital for humour. The narrator can seem to be only remembering an entertaining incident whilst concurrently drawing attention to the silliness of an institution or individual. The reader then realizes a difference between the surface function of the story and its wider communicative intention. Consequently, Dickens's accounts frequently demand contextual interpretation and reader inference.

4.1.2.2. Conversational Implicature

Conversational Implicature is one of the most prolific categories for construing *Our School*. Grice (1975) argues that speakers can transfer meanings that are not obviously included in their words. Levinson (1983) likewise identifies implicature as a key constituent of pragmatic interpretation. In literary discourse, implicature permits authors to transfer stances, criticism, humour, and irony without uttering them openly.

The portrayal of the schoolmaster offers an obvious example. The narrator states that the master was "supposed among us to know nothing." (Dickens, 1851, p. 49) Literally, the sentence conveys a belief held by a group of pupils. Pragmatically, nevertheless, it communicates much more. Readers deduce that the schoolmaster is considered ignorant and that this judgment is well known among the pupils to be presented as shared knowledge. The narrator then avoids an overt statement such as "the master was incompetent" whilst permitting the reader to arrive fundamentally at that interpretation.

The implicature is reinforced by the encircling descriptions of the master's knowledge and behaviour. The statement cannot be construed entirely in isolation; its meaning arises via the context of the school and the narrator's wider depiction of the master. This proves why contextual interpretation is indispensable to Dickens's humour and criticism. Implicature is also thoroughly linked with irony. Dickens may describe an individual or institution in outwardly neutral or even courtesy terms while supplying contextual information that urges the reader to recognize a conflicting evaluation. The humour thus relies on the reader's capability to discover the gap between what is literally offered and what is pragmatically transferred.

The same mechanism works in Dickens's wider criticism of Victorian education. Rather than frankly accusing educational authorities of incompetence or unfairness, the narrator offers entertaining observations, anecdotes, and character descriptions. Readers deduce

the criticism from the buildup of details. Consequently, Dickens often conveys evaluations indirectly instead of through directly affirmed meanings.

4.1.3. Deixis and Narrative Perspective

Deixis involves expressions whose interpretation relies on contextual coordinates such as person, place, time, and discourse. Levinson (1983) identifies person, spatial, temporal, discourse, and social deixis as vital areas of pragmatic analysis. In literary discourse, deixis is principally significant because it helps create narrative perspective and puts the reader in relation to the events being depicted.

The most obvious deictic feature in *Our School* is the recurrent use of the first-person plural pronoun "we", which occurs 44 times in the story and is initiated with "WE went to look at it," (Dickens, 1851, p. 49). The collective "we" builds the narrator's reminiscences as collective experiences instead of merely individual memories. It can refer to the narrator and his previous schoolmates, but it can also produce a rhetorical relationship with the reader by offering the recollections as reachable and shared.

The temporal organization of the story is likewise significant. The voiceover narrator speaks as an older man recalling childhood moments. The narrative then consists of the past that is remembered, and a present that is the practice of narrating. That temporary distance is part of the work's nostalgic characteristic and allows the adult narrator to judge the institutions and people he experienced as a child.

There is also a spatial deixis in the opening. The narrator is back at the spot where this old school used to be but learns that it has been bulldozed by the railway. Essex railway has "mangled it root and branch" (Dickens, 1851, p. 49), sharp enough to provide a distinct distinction between remembered space and the transformed modern-day space. Temporal change thus becomes a pragmatic as well as thematic marker of physical destruction.

So, far from pointing to things or just words that reference raindrops. It creates a lens through which childhood can be recalled and understood. The reader experiences the school not only as an actual physical location from the narrator's past, but also through an absent space in the present of the narrator. The interplay between deictic perspective and memory bolsters these themes of nostalgia, loss, and changing social dimensions.

4.1.4. Presupposition

Presupposition involves information that speakers or writers suppose to be accepted or understood in a particular context. Levinson (1983) and Mey (2001) consider presupposition as a significant part of pragmatic meaning because communication often relies on background suppositions that are not openly expressed.

Dickens makes wide-ranging use of collective suppositions in *Our School*. The narrator often refers to people, events, practices, and reminiscences as if the reader can accept them as part of the recognised world of the story. This creates an economical narrative style because Dickens does not explicate every supposition from the beginning. Instead, readers reconstruct the relevant background from contextual hints. The shared narration is mainly relevant to presupposition. When the narrator uses "we" to recall events, the story presupposes a collective history among those signified by the pronoun. Expressions of recollection similarly presuppose that there is a past experience obtainable to be remembered. The reader is therefore invited to enter an already established world of school remembrances.

Presupposition also backs Dickens's humour. A comic description becomes more operative when readers comprehend the background assumptions against which the description is presented. The narrator does not always clarify why a specific teacher, pupil, or school practice is ridiculous; the neighbouring context permits the reader to recognize its ridiculousness.

Furthermore, presupposition contributes to social criticism. Dickens can presuppose certain relationships of authority, wealth, discipline, and institutional power and then uncover their ridiculousness through narrative details. The reader is then urged to appraise the school not only in accordance with what the narrator openly says but also in accordance with the suppositions shaping his accounts.

4.1.5. Politeness Theory

Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory offers a framework for examining how speakers manage interpersonal relationships, face, social distance, and power. This

framework is mostly relevant to *Our School* because the school is organized around uneven connections between teachers and pupils. The institutional status of teachers gives them authority, while pupils fill a subservient position.

The school setting consequently creates numerous chances for face-threatening acts. Commands, punishments, criticism, and disciplinary actions threaten the pupils' freedom and social status. At the same time, the pupils' reactions to teachers are restricted by the authority structure. Dickens exemplifies this hierarchy when the Chief awakens the sleeping Latin master and sternly tells him, "Mr. Blinkins, this is no place to be ill in," before returning to his position and caning a boy for inattention (Dickens, 1851, p. 51). Thus, politeness and impoliteness can subsequently expose the social hierarchy functioning within the school.

Dickens's narrator also employs politeness strategically when referring to individuals. Rather than presenting all criticism via directly aggressive language, he often uses humour, understatement, irony, and indirectness. This permits him to criticize characters whilst preserving the conversational and amusing character of the story. The indirectness of the criticism is then both a pragmatic strategy and a stylistic resource.

The link between politeness and humour is particularly important. A directly aggressive account might state its criticism openly, whereas Dickens's playful and indirect style invites the reader to take part in constructing that criticism. The narrator seems to entertain the reader while at the same time undermining the authority or competence of the people he describes. Politeness analysis therefore contributes to characterisation and social criticism. The ways characters speak to one another reveal authority, distance, harmony, and conflict. The school becomes not just an educational setting but a social environment in which linguistic behaviour reflects institutional power.

4.2. Irony and Pragmatic Interpretation

In this study, irony is not treated as a separate element of Black's framework; rather, it emerges through the interplay of pragmatic tools such as implicature, context, indirectness, and inference. Black (2006) presents the specific significance of pragmatic tactics to irony in literary interpretation. In *Our School*, irony often ensues when the outward meaning of an utterance conflicts with the construal boosted by the encompassing context.

Dickens's depiction of the schoolmaster shows this process. The narrator does not merely declare that the master is inept. Rather, the negative assessment arises from the collective belief ascribed to the pupils and from the encircling contextual details. The reader consequently takes part in building the ironic or humorous interpretation.

Likewise, irony permits Dickens to critique Victorian foundations without implementing a constantly accusatory tone. The story's criticism of education is conveyed via memory, humour, exaggeration, and comic characterization. The result is a formula of social criticism that is convincing, in part, because readers are urged to unearth the criticism themselves.

This tactic is fundamental to pragmastylistics because the interpretation hinges on the connection between what is said and what is meant. The reader must move from the linguistic utterance to its contextual implication. Irony thus reveals, specifically and obviously, the significance of interpretation in literary interaction.

4.3. Humour and Pragmatic Inference

Humour in *Our School* is strictly associated with the pragmatic processes debated above. Dickens generates humour via exaggeration, unanticipated accounts, character differences, irony, and conversational narration. However, the amusing outcome often relies on the reader identifying meanings that are not mentioned in a straight line.

The schoolmaster's supposed ignorance, the unusual pupils, and the comic accounts of school life are instances of this strategy. The narrator does not always openly proclaim that a situation is ridiculous. Rather, the choice and exhibition of details permit readers to arrive at that deduction.

The collective "we" similarly partakes in the humour by producing an impression of communal enjoyment. The narrator seems to invite the reader into a group of recollected experiences. The amusing influence then becomes interpersonal: the narrator shares the reminiscence, while the reader partakes in assessing it.

From a pragmastylistic perspective, humour therefore ensues from the interaction of

linguistic form, contextual knowledge, implicature, irony, and reader inference. This concurs with Black (2006), who argues for the pragmatic analysis of stylistic data by showing that communicative functions can be obscured by formal approaches to style.

4.4. Characterization

In *Our School*, characterization is established aesthetically as much through physical description and narrative commentary as it is through pragmatic features. The schoolmaster is characterized via his speech, actions, supposed knowledge, connection with pupils, and the narrator's implied evaluations. The ushers and pupils are likewise characterised via their conduct, relationships, and unforgettable tales.

Speech acts expose what characters endeavour to achieve; politeness and impoliteness show their relationships; implicatures unveil meanings that characters or narrators leave implicit; deixis grounds their stances within the story; and presuppositions unwrap what they take for granted. Characterization is hence formed via a mixture of obvious description and pragmatic interpretation.

This is mainly significant for Dickens because his characters repeatedly become unforgettable via the interaction between language and social behaviour. The reader does not simply receive a list of character qualities; rather, the qualities arise via communicative situations. Pragmatic investigation can then prove how Dickens's characters are created via their ways of speaking, acting, and interacting.

4.5. Thematic Meaning

The pragmatic features of *Our School* participate in its major themes as well. One of the most significant is the connection between childhood memory and social change. The destruction of the school by the railway creates the contrast between the narrator's recalled past and the altered present. Deixis and temporal view are especially vital here because the story moves between the past being recollected and the present from which it is recalled.

Another principal theme is institutional authority. Via speech acts, politeness, indirectness, and characterization, Dickens characterizes the unsatisfactory relationship between teachers and pupils. The school's disciplinary construction becomes a source of humour but likewise a subject of criticism.

Lastly, the pragmatic features partake in Dickens's depiction of Victorian education. The narrator's implicit valuations and ironic accounts encourage readers to identify problems in the interior of the institution without demanding the narrator to make a formal argument. In this respect, the critique arises from a combination of diction, context, implication, and literary technique.

5. Results, Discussion, and Conclusion

5.1. Results of the Study

A pragmatic stylistic analysis of Charles Dickens's *Our School* reveals that the text carries some distinctive pragmastylistic elements which make up its literary meaning. The use of the framework put forward by Black (2006) allows the authors to identify four speech acts, such as evaluation, criticism, and characterisation, and two types: Gricean implicatures that enable meaning to be conveyed without explicit declarations, rather through negative judgements.

Deixis, specifically the recurrent collective pronoun "we," creates a reflective narrative viewpoint and reinforces the themes of shared memory and nostalgia. Presupposition permits the narrator to depend upon background knowledge and shared suppositions, demanding that readers take part vigorously in construing the story. Politeness and impoliteness show relationships of authority, social distance, and power between teachers and pupils.

The results further display that these pragmatic features work together to create humour, irony, and characterization. Dickens often relies on contextual interpretation and reader deduction, permitting criticism of the schoolmaster and Victorian educational practices to arise via indirectness, comic description, and irony. Therefore, the results confirm that the meanings of *Our School* stretch out beyond its literal linguistic content. The study displays that Black's (2006) combined pragmastylistic framework offers an active medium of explicating how linguistic form, context, communicative intention, and reader inference co-operate to construct literary meaning in Dickens's story.

5.2. Discussion of Results

The results of the current study reveal that Charles Dickens's *Our School* is extremely appropriate for pragmastylistic analysis since its literary meanings are often built via the interaction of linguistic choices, context, inference, and communicative intention. The analysis, based on Elizabeth Black's (2006) framework, examined Speech Act Theory, Grice's Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature, Deixis, Presupposition, and Politeness Theory. The results show that these pragmatic features do not act separately; instead, they work together to generate humour, irony, characterization, and thematic meaning. This result supports the chief supposition of pragmastylistics that literary interpretation can be enhanced by probing not only what language literally conveys but also what readers deduce from its contextual and communicative functions. The investigation of Speech Acts establishes that Dickens uses language to achieve a variety of communicative actions, comprising informing, evaluating, criticizing, remembering, and entertaining. Crucial is rather the narrator's implicit evaluation of the schoolmaster in that he was "supposed among us to know nothing". The narrator does not directly state that the man in charge is incompetent, instead delivering it as a belief held by his students. So the syntactical nature of the statement performs an assessing and critical function, disguising itself as a report. This finding sheds light on why Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) Speech Act Theory make fruitful approaches for identifying the performative aspects of communicative action embedded in literary narration. It further demonstrates that Dickens's characterization is partly a matter of what, pragmatically, his descriptions and expressions accomplish.

Results regarding Gricean Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature are particularly interesting. Dickens is beholden to what he writes: as if everywhere in his work he were trying to persuade the reader to rise above the surface. The narrator's descriptions frequently seem to supply information, but their wider communicative drive is evaluative or humorous. The account about the schoolmaster's assumed ignorance, for instance, encourages readers to deduce a stronger judgment about his competency. The critique is hence transferred implicitly via implicature. This backs Grice's (1975) claim that speakers may transfer supplementary meanings beyond the literal content of their words and Levinson's (1983) opinion of implicature as a significant constituent of pragmatic interpretation. In literary discourse, such implicatures permit Dickens to criticize persons and institutions without depending upon straight accusation. The results also display that irony and humour are strictly related to implicature and contextual deduction. Dickens often exhibits situations or characters in ways that create a contrast between literal utterance and the construal fortified by the context. The reader should therefore identify the disparity between what is openly expressed and what is pragmatically transferred. This implicit means of criticism is particularly effective since it permits the reader to take part in building the jokey or sarcastic interpretation. The results subsequently support Black's (2006) application of pragmatic assumptions to literary texts, mostly her stress on inference, irony, and the communicative functions of narrative discourse.

Since deixis applies here, that means you can see how much is given away in perspective through *Our School*. The repeated use of the collective pronoun "we" throughout the story gives it the tone of shared memory, creating an intimacy between the narrator and the remembered group of students. These transitions with time between childhood and the narrator's present also establish a nostalgic atmosphere within the story. That first mention of the railway obliterating the concrete physical school is especially telling, since it creates a stark contrast between the past as remembered and the present as transformed. Evidence suggests that translational deictic expressions are not solely referential but integral to framing the narrative's point of view and thematically underscore embodied themes, memory, loss, and social change. This result is harmonious with Levinson's (1983) handling of deixis as a context-dependent pragmatic phenomenon.

The inspection of Presupposition proves that Dickens often depends on background suppositions that are not completely explicated to the reader. References to teachers, pupils, school practices, and past experiences are offered as constituents of a previously founded world. The shared narrative voice likewise presupposes a collective history

among the reminisced pupils. Such suppositions make the narrative economical whilst concurrently urging readers to restructure the social and educational context of the school. Presupposition hence participates in characterization and thematic interpretation for the reason that the reader should recognise not only what Dickens overtly transfers but also what his story takes for granted. This result matches with Levinson's (1983) and Mey's (2001) handling of presupposition as a vital facet of contextual meaning.

The results regarding Politeness Theory show that language in *Our School* mirrors relations of authority, social distance, and power. Discipline and authority are at the heart of the story because the whole thing is built on a grossly uneven power dynamic between teachers and students. Rather, Dickens tends to use humour, hinting, and ironic allusion to criticize teachers. This allows him to undermine their authority, while still maintaining the banterous and humorous tone that his tale keeps. Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory is then valuable for probing how interpersonal relationships and face concerns function within the school setting. The results also show that politeness and indirectness can partake in characterization and social criticism.

Co-operatively, the five analytical classes prove that Dickens's characterization is powerfully reliant on pragmatic meaning. The schoolmaster, pupils, and other personages are not described entirely via direct descriptions. Their identities arise through their communicative activities, relationships, suppositions, and the narrator's valuations of them. Speech Acts disclose what characters perform through language; implicatures expose meanings that are left unspecified; deixis determines their position within the narrative world; presuppositions uncover collective suppositions; and politeness brings to light social relationships. Pragmatic analysis thus supplies a more inclusive account of Dickens's characterization than a merely descriptive approach.

The results further show that Dickens's social criticism is mostly indirect. Instead of openly offering a disputation against Victorian educational institutions, he lets criticism arise via humorous descriptions, comic characterization, ironic observations, and contextual inference. The reader is prompted to identify the incompetence of the schoolmaster and aspects of the educational system via the way the story is built. This indirectness is vital to the communicative efficiency of the story and exhibits why pragmatics is especially suitable for literary analysis.

By and large, the results reinforce the research objectives. The investigation positively recognises Speech Acts, Conversational Implicatures, Deixis, Presupposition, and Politeness features in *Our School* and proves their role in characterization, irony, humour, and thematic meaning. The findings therefore back the practicality of Black's (2006) combined pragmatylistic framework for inspecting literary discourse.

5.3. Conclusion

The current study has investigated Charles Dickens's *Our School* from a pragmatylistic viewpoint, benefiting from Elizabeth Black's (2006) framework. The study was founded on a qualitative descriptive methodology and concentrated on five main pragmatic mechanisms: Speech Act Theory, Grice's Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature, Deixis, Presupposition, and Politeness Theory. The investigation reveals that these features supply valuable insights into how Dickens builds literary meaning.

It is concluded that the meaning of *Our School* cannot be completely grasped via literal linguistic construal alone. Dickens often relies on indirectness, contextual suppositions, implicature, irony, and reader inference. His valuation of the schoolmaster, for instance, is transferred via a seemingly collective judgment instead of a direct accusation. Likewise, humour and irony often result from the disparity between what is openly expressed and what readers deduce from the context.

Correspondingly, the results prove that pragmatic features play a significant part in Dickens's characterization. They are simultaneously produced through their communicative acts, interpersonal connections, and the inferences that envelop what they do. The reflective nature of the first person, especially through the weaving use of the collective we, creates a wonderfully personal narrative that helps emphasize and solidify this story's stance on memory and nostalgia. Presupposition functions to allow Dickens to draw on common or implicit knowledge, whilst an application of Politeness Theory unearths the interactions occurring through social levels in the school environment.

Most importantly, the work demonstrates that pragmastylistics offers a fruitful point of interaction between linguistic investigation and literary criticism. This framework by Black (2006) highlights how Dickens's formal stylistic choices are functional in the communicative acts they perform, and how readers functionally infer meanings that are left ironically unstated. This is a move up the analytical ladder away from just distinguishing stylistic traits toward an explanation of how those traits function in practice.

To sum up, the exploratory Horizon of Our School proves pragma-stylistics as a promising analytical toolkit. The emergence of Dickens's humour, irony, characterization, and sociopolitical critique occurs through the interaction of lexicon, context, communicative intent, and inference made by the reader. For that reason, the study clearly indicates the relevance of Black's (2006) framework within literary communication, as well as offers robust theoretical underpinnings through which one could grasp and understand the murky relationship between pragmatic meaning and literary style in Dickensian Our School.

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