

A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF INFLUENCER LANGUAGE AND NARRATIVE
DISCOURSE IN "A ROSE FOR EMILY" BY WILLIAM FAULKNER

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Abstract: *Through a linguistic examination of William Faulkner's short tale "A Rose for Emily", this study investigates the idea of influencer language within narrative discourse. The collective narrator ("we") serves as an early kind of influencer discourse, influencing public opinion, moral judgment, and social standards within the community, even though the story takes place before contemporary social media. This study examines how language creates authority, influence, and social control through discourse analysis, narrative voice analysis, and pragmatic interpretation. The results show that by framing events, directing audience interpretation, and bolstering prevailing views, the town's collective voice functions similarly to modern influencers.*

Keywords: *influencer language, narrative discourse, collective narration, discourse analysis, social influence*

INTRODUCTION

Language is essential for creating collective beliefs, affecting attitudes, and forming social reality. Influencer language, which is closely linked to social media, shapes public opinion in modern culture through framing, repetition, assessment, and emotional appeal. But linguistic influence is not a recent development.

William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily", which uses a collective first-person narrator ("we") to reflect the voice of the town, is a powerful illustration of pre-digital influencer discourse. This narrative voice actively interprets, evaluates, and shapes the reader's perception of Miss Emily's life in addition to recounting events.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how narrative discourse in "A Rose for Emily" serves as influencer language, influencing reader interpretation as well as internal community opinion. The study connects literary analysis with contemporary linguistic notions through the use of linguistic and discourse-based frameworks.

Literature Review. Literary linguistics has always placed a strong emphasis on narrative discourse, especially as it relates to the form of stories and the language used to communicate meaning. According to Genette, narrative voice actively changes readers' understanding through focalization, temporal manipulation, and viewpoint¹⁶. The narrator serves as a bridge between what happens and how the audience perceives it in this situation.

¹⁶ Genette, G. (1980). *Narrative discourse: An essay in method* (Vol. 3). Cornell University Press.

Scholars have paid close attention to Faulkner's use of collective first-person narration in "A Rose for Emily". Booth asserts that collective narrators conceal personal accountability while creating the appearance of group power¹⁷. By portraying subjective opinions as objective facts, the pronoun "we" creates a shared moral position.

Many academics believe that "A Rose for Emily"'s narrator is untrustworthy. According to Ahmadian, ideological bias rather than factual errors is the source of unreliability. Social conventions, customs, and prejudices are reflected in the town's speech, which affects the reader's comprehension as well as the behavior of the characters¹⁸. This is in line with contemporary discourse studies, which emphasize how dominant narratives are constructed by collective voices.

Using Collective Pronouns as an Influencer Approach

A sense of shared morality and collective authority is fostered by the frequent usage of the word "we". By aligning the reader with the town's viewpoint, this inclusive language gently promotes acceptance of its conclusions.

For instance: "We thought she had to do that".

Instead of providing objective facts, this statement guides interpretation by normalizing deviant conduct.

Framing and Moral Judgement. By portraying Miss Emily as "poor", "fallen", and "tragic", the narrator both elicits pity and defends surveillance and rumors. This is similar to influencer strategies that combine control and empathy.

Similar to hashtags or slogans, repeated statements like "Poor Emily" reinforce a common emotional position.

The story presents the past as ethically better and mostly relies on tradition-based authority. Similar to influencer appeals to authenticity and nostalgia, this ideological position affects both the reader's emotional alignment and the town's behavior.

Conclusion. This study demonstrates that influencer language is not limited to digital platforms but exists within narrative discourse. In "A Rose for Emily," Faulkner employs collective narration as a powerful linguistic mechanism to guide perception, normalize surveillance, and enforce social norms. Recognizing these strategies enhances our understanding of how language influences society across time and mediums.

Future research may compare literary influencer discourse with contemporary social media narratives to further explore linguistic continuity in social influence.

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¹⁷ Booth, A. (2004). *How to make it as a woman: Collective biographical history from Victoria to the present*. University of Chicago Press.

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