

---

**THE SHAPES OF CHARACTERS' LANGUAGE IN PSYCHOLOGICAL  
DEPTH (IN THE EXAMPLE OF "THE SOUND AND THE FURY" BY WILLIAM  
FAULKNER)**

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20181317>

**Usmonova Zarina Habibovna**

*Senior teacher of Bukhara state university*

*Email: [z.h.usmonova@buxdu.uz](mailto:z.h.usmonova@buxdu.uz)*

**Ro'ziyeva Sadoqat Sanoqul qizi**

*1st year student of Master degree*

*Email: [rsadoqat5@gmail.com](mailto:rsadoqat5@gmail.com)*

**Abstract**

This article examines the role of character language in creating psychological depth in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. Instead of presenting inner life through direct explanation, Faulkner allows the structure, rhythm, vocabulary, and limitations of each voice to reveal a particular state of mind. The study focuses on four important voices: Benjy, Quentin, Jason, and Dilsey. Benjy's sensory and repetitive speech suggests a consciousness shaped by memory and loss; Quentin's broken syntax reflects pressure, guilt, and a failing sense of order; Jason's sharp and hostile diction exposes resentment and emotional poverty; and Dilsey's steady speech gives the novel a moral counterweight. The analysis shows that the psychological force of the novel is not separate from its language. Rather, Faulkner turns language itself into the main medium through which trauma, obsession, bitterness, and endurance become visible.

**Keywords**

William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, character language, psychological depth, stream of consciousness, narrative voice, modernist fiction.

**Introduction.** William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* remains one of the most demanding works of twentieth-century American fiction, not only because of the events it narrates, but because those events reach the reader through unstable and deeply personal forms of consciousness. The Compson family story is not arranged as a simple linear plot. It is refracted through different voices, each of which changes the reader's understanding of time, memory, and emotional truth. Benjy's narration is sensory and discontinuous; Quentin's section is tense,

intellectual, and increasingly fragmented; Jason's section is more orderly on the surface but emotionally harsh; and the final section opens the household to a wider moral perspective. This design makes language one of the central instruments of psychological representation in the novel.<sup>22</sup>

The central question of this article is how the language of characters influences psychological depth in *The Sound and the Fury*. The article argues that Faulkner does not build psychological complexity by describing feelings from the outside. Instead, he makes each character's speech and thought-pattern perform the work of psychological disclosure. The reader learns the characters not simply by hearing what they say, but by entering the rhythm, limits, and tensions of their language.

This issue is important because Faulkner's modernist technique changes the function of narration. In many realist novels, a narrator explains a character's motives, emotions, or moral position. In *The Sound and the Fury*, however, the character's own language often becomes the evidence of the inner state. Repetition, gaps, dialect, abrupt temporal movement, emotional vocabulary, and syntactic disorder all work as signs of consciousness. For that reason, character language should not be treated as a decorative stylistic element. It is the very structure through which the novel creates psychological depth.

**Methods.** The study applies qualitative textual analysis to Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. The analysis is based on selected passages from the novel and on their relation to narrative technique, character psychology, and linguistic form. Four aspects receive particular attention: the sensory organization of Benjy's narration, the fragmentation of Quentin's syntax, the aggressive and controlling diction of Jason's narration, and the ethical steadiness associated with Dilsey's speech.<sup>23</sup>

The method involves three connected stages. First, the main linguistic features of each selected voice are identified. Second, these features are interpreted as signs of psychological condition rather than as isolated stylistic details. Third, the voices are compared in order to show how Faulkner builds a layered representation of consciousness across the whole novel. This approach is suitable because the novel's meaning depends heavily on the relation between form and mind: what the characters say matters, but the manner in which they say it often matters even more.

<sup>22</sup> Brooks, Cleanth. *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963.

<sup>23</sup> Vickery, Olga W. *The Novels of William Faulkner: A Critical Interpretation*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959.

**Results.** Benjy's language creates psychological depth through the logic of sensation and memory. He does not explain events in ordinary causal order, and he cannot organize time according to adult chronological habits. His mind moves through sounds, smells, places, objects, and repeated associations. A small sensory detail can open a whole emotional past. The most famous example is his memory of Caddy:

"Caddy smelled like trees."<sup>24</sup>

The sentence is very short, yet it carries strong psychological weight. Caddy is not defined through social status, appearance, or direct characterization. She is remembered through smell. For Benjy, smell becomes a private language of attachment. The image of trees suggests childhood, protection, freshness, and an earlier world that he cannot recover. When Caddy changes, leaves, or becomes distant from the family's old pattern, Benjy has no abstract vocabulary with which to explain the loss. His sensory language nevertheless shows that he feels it intensely. In this way, his inner life becomes visible before rational explanation begins.

Benjy's repetitions also matter. They are not merely signs of simplicity; they create the emotional structure of his consciousness. The repeated return to Caddy, the pasture, the gate, firelight, and familiar household sounds shows how memory lives in fragments. The reader must assemble meaning from these fragments, and this process brings the reader close to Benjy's own way of experiencing the world. Psychological depth here is produced by limitation: because Benjy cannot explain his trauma, the form of his language carries it.

Quentin's language creates a different kind of psychological depth. Unlike Benjy, Quentin can think abstractly and morally, but this ability becomes a burden rather than a source of clarity. His narration is filled with memory, family honor, guilt, sexuality, time, and the impossible desire to restore a lost order. His sentences often move quickly from one association to another, and grammatical stability begins to weaken under emotional pressure. One of the most important images in Quentin's section is his father's statement about the watch:

"I give you the mausoleum of all hope and desire."<sup>25</sup>

The watch is not presented as a neutral object. Through the word "mausoleum," time becomes linked with death, burial, and exhausted desire. Quentin tries to transform emotional chaos into philosophical meaning, but the attempt only increases his suffering. His language shows a mind that cannot rest in

<sup>24</sup> Faulkner, William. *The Sound and the Fury*. New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1929. Benjy section.

<sup>25</sup> Faulkner, William. *The Sound and the Fury*. New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1929. Quentin section.

the present because the past repeatedly invades it. The collapse of sentence order, the pressure of repeated memories, and the obsessive return to Caddy do not simply tell the reader that Quentin is disturbed. They make the reader feel the movement of disturbance from within.

Jason's narration is easier to follow than Benjy's or Quentin's, but its clarity is deceptive. His language is direct, sarcastic, punitive, and often economically minded. He speaks as a person who measures relationships through blame, money, power, and control. On the surface, his section appears more stable because it is less formally fragmented. Psychologically, however, it reveals a narrowed and damaged interior life. Jason does not break down in the same way Quentin does; instead, he hardens.

The depth of Jason's character lies in the emotional narrowness of his speech. He uses language to accuse, reduce, and dominate. Other people rarely appear in his words as full human beings; they become sources of inconvenience, financial loss, or personal humiliation. Through Jason, Faulkner shows that psychological damage does not always appear as confusion. It can also appear as bitterness, cruelty, and the inability to imagine another person's pain. Jason's relatively clear language therefore carries a dark irony: formal clarity can conceal moral emptiness.

Dilsey's speech offers the novel a different kind of depth. She does not receive a long stream-of-consciousness section, yet her presence strongly shapes the final movement of the novel. Her language is marked by dialect, but it is also marked by endurance and moral firmness. Near the end of the novel, she says:

"I seed de beginnin, en now I sees de endin."<sup>26</sup>

This sentence should not be read as weak or merely comic dialect. It carries a historical and ethical vision. Dilsey has witnessed the decline of the Compson family, and her speech gathers that experience into a compact statement of survival. While the Compson children are trapped in private forms of memory, anger, or obsession, Dilsey places suffering within a wider moral frame. Her language is simple, but it is not psychologically simple. It gives the novel a voice of endurance, faith, and judgment.

**Discussion.** The findings show that Faulkner's psychological depth depends on linguistic difference. Each major figure has a distinct way of receiving and expressing reality. Benjy's voice is organized by sensation; Quentin's by pressure and collapse; Jason's by resentment and control; Dilsey's by steadiness and moral

---

<sup>26</sup> Faulkner, William. *The Sound and the Fury*. New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1929. Dilsey/final section.

memory. These voices do not merely provide different perspectives on the same events. They create different mental worlds.

One of Faulkner's major achievements is that he makes language behave like consciousness. In Benjy's narration, time is not explained as a sequence; it is experienced as sudden return. In Quentin's narration, memory attacks the present until thought loses order. In Jason's narration, disappointment becomes sarcasm and aggression. In Dilsey's speech, suffering is neither denied nor dramatized unnecessarily; it is carried with dignity. For this reason, style and psychology cannot be separated in the novel.

The analysis also shows that absence functions as part of character language. Caddy is central to the emotional life of the novel, yet she does not receive her own narrative section. She is constructed through the words and memories of others. Benjy remembers her through smell and comfort, Quentin through guilt and idealization, Jason through anger, and Dilsey through family history. Caddy's silence makes her more, not less, psychologically powerful, because the reader sees how one person can exist in several minds at once.

This point is especially important for understanding Faulkner's psychological realism. The novel does not rely mainly on explanation. It asks the reader to interpret rhythm, repetition, tone, dialect, broken grammar, and verbal pressure as evidence of the mind. Psychological truth is therefore created through linguistic form. The reader is not simply told that the Compson family has declined; the reader experiences that decline through voices that remember, distort, resist, and endure it.

**Conclusion.** The language of characters plays a decisive role in forming the psychological depth of *The Sound and the Fury*. Faulkner assigns each major consciousness a specific linguistic pattern. Benjy's sensory repetitions reveal attachment, loss, and trauma. Quentin's fragmented syntax exposes guilt, obsession, and mental collapse. Jason's aggressive diction reveals resentment and ethical emptiness. Dilsey's stable and morally grounded speech offers endurance and balance.

The main conclusion is that Faulkner's novel does not merely describe psychological experience; it produces that experience through language. Character language becomes a code through which the reader interprets pain, memory, desire, anger, and survival. When the reader follows the form of each voice, the history of the Compson family becomes more than a sequence of events. It becomes a set of inner worlds, each marked by its own linguistic rhythm. For this reason, the

psychological depth of *The Sound and the Fury* is inseparable from its verbal design.

### REFERENCES:

1. Faulkner, W. (1929). *The Sound and the Fury*. New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith.
2. Brooks, C. (1963). *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
3. Bleikasten, A. (1976). *The Most Splendid Failure: Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
4. Vickery, O. W. (1959). *The Novels of William Faulkner: A Critical Interpretation*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
5. Minter, D. (1980). *William Faulkner: His Life and Work*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
6. Usmonova, Z. H. (2017). The artistic character of Stephen King's novels and their influence on Uzbek science fiction. *Miĵnarodniynaukoviy magazine Internauka*, (1 (1)), 170-172.
7. Habibovna, U. Z. (2025). REALIAS AND UNIVERSALIAS IN TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH SI-FI. *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATION AND LEARNING*, 3(2), 633-639.
8. Usmonova, Z. (2022). СТИВЕН КИНГНИНГ “ЎЛИК МИНТАҚА” (“DEAD ZONE”) АСАРИДА «THE LAUGHING TIGER» (“СМЕЮЩИЙСЯ ТИГР”) ОБРАЗ ТАЛҚИНИ. *ЦЕНТР НАУЧНЫХ ПУБЛИКАЦИЙ (buxdu. uz)*, 12, 12.
9. Usmonova, Z. H. (2021). The peculiarity of fantastic works (on the example of the works of Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov and Stephen King). *European Scholar Journal*, 2(4), 499-503.