
A Corpus Stylistic Analysis of *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe

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Abstract

This paper explores how Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" creates an atmosphere of psychological tension and guilt through language. Using linguistic analysis tools, the study investigated how the text's language reflected the narrator's psychological state, contributing to themes of tension and madness. Two key questions guide the analysis: how Poe's language establishes tension and guilt and how his linguistic choices portray the narrator's descent into madness. By examining word patterns, relationships between words, and word usage frequencies, the study highlights how specific language features contributed to the story's psychological and thematic depth. This research demonstrated the value of linguistic analysis in understanding both the poetics and psychological aspects of literary texts.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a corpus stylistic analysis, which is the examination of electronically stored literary texts. This analysis combines the fields of stylistics, which is the study of linguistic features in literary texts, and corpus linguistics, which is the analysis of language data using electronic resources (Fischer-Starcke 2010: 1). This study aims to examine the way in which psychological tension and guilt are created through language in Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843), with two main objectives. First and foremost, its objective is to present an additional illustration of how corpus linguistics approaches might be applied to analyze a literary work. Secondly, it claims that corpus stylistics can aid in analyzing both the poetic elements and the psychological complexity of a literary text. Specifically, this research will demonstrate how corpus linguistics approaches can reveal how the linguistic structure of the text reflects the psychological states and narrative techniques employed in the story. This study utilizes insights from literary, psychological, and linguistic research to examine Edgar Allan Poe's works in relation to the concept of 'psychological realism.' Specifically, it aims to demonstrate how the depiction of madness and guilt in his texts contributes to their overall characteristics in terms of genre, style, theme, and psychology. The forthcoming corpus stylistic investigation aims primarily to provide fresh perspectives on texts that have already been extensively analyzed. Its objective is to uncover new literary interpretations within the data, as stated in the preface of Fischer-Starcke's work (2010). Additionally, it seeks to

verify if insights gained intuitively align with the actual language usage found in the text (Fischer-Starcke 2010: 10–11).

The study will focus on two primary research topics that arise from corpus-based comparative investigations, specifically examining certain keywords as catalysts for theme meanings. The primary objective of this study is to use computational analysis to evaluate whether, how, and to what degree Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" effectively establishes and maintains a sense of psychological tension and guilt through narrative techniques and stylistic decisions. The second phase of the study seeks to evaluate if the intuitive perception that Poe effectively depicts the narrator's gradual decline into insanity through his choice of language can be substantiated using corpus linguistics techniques. This matter is addressed by doing a thorough examination of linguistic characteristics, such as word frequency, collocations, and concordance lines inside the text.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following reviewed studies demonstrate the value of corpus stylistics in analyzing literary works, revealing patterns that shape narrative techniques, character development, and thematic elements. Mahlberg (2007) and McIntyre (2010) highlight how corpus methods uncover distinctive authorial styles and narrative strategies, while Pasolini (2015) applies these techniques to explore gender and power dynamics in literature. However, these studies mainly focus on narrative and thematic analysis, leaving a gap in the application of corpus linguistics to psychological aspects of literature. This study addresses that gap by exploring how linguistic choices in *The Tell-Tale Heart* construct psychological tension and guilt.

Exemplary research conducted by Mahlberg in 2007 was the application of corpus stylistics to analyze Charles Dickens' short stories. Mahlberg utilizes corpus methods to analyze recurring phrases and collocations, revealing patterns that contribute to Dickens' distinctive storytelling style. The research demonstrates Dickens' utilization of certain clusters and recurring words to construct vibrant descriptions and elicit emotional reactions from readers. Mahlberg's quantification of these patterns illustrates how corpus stylistics can effectively emphasize the unique characteristics of an author's style, which may be disregarded in conventional analysis. Similarly, in her analysis of Katherine Mansfield's short stories, McIntyre (2010) employs corpus stylistic methodologies to investigate the role of language elements in shaping narrative viewpoint and characterization. McIntyre's research centers on Mansfield's utilization of modality, deixis, and free indirect speech, demonstrating how these components establish a sense of closeness between the narrator and the characters. McIntyre's thorough examination of concordance reveals the intricate mechanisms by which Mansfield controls point of view and reader involvement. This highlights the significance of using corpus approaches to analyze narrative tactics in short stories.

These studies demonstrate the capability of corpus-based style analysis to augment our comprehension of short stories. Through a systematic analysis of linguistic patterns, academics can get more profound understanding of the narrative structures, thematic preoccupations, and stylistic subtleties that characterize the writings of short story authors. Corpus tools not only assist in traditional literary criticism but also provide new opportunities to investigate the intricate relationship between language and literature.

Likewise, the research article titled "Words which are 'very much her own' – a corpus stylistic analysis of "The Bloody Chamber" by A. Carter" authored by Anna Pasolini provides a striking illustration of how corpus linguistics techniques can be utilized to analyze literary works. Pasolini showcases the potential of computer analysis, such as Wordsmith, to enhance and augment traditional literary critique. The study centers on the linguistic formation of female identity in Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, specifically examining how Carter's selection of words challenges traditional male-dominated societal standards and presents alternative portrayals of

women. This methodology not only confirms intuitive explanations using statistical evidence but also reveals novel literary significances and understandings of Carter's innovative style and themes.

Pasolini's research entails the examination of wordlists, the analysis of collocations, and the study of keywords to uncover the inherent power dynamics and ideological connotations inside Carter's texts. The research demonstrates that even with limited datasets, valuable insights can be obtained, highlighting the efficacy of corpus stylistic analysis in the field of literary studies. Pasolini's interpretation emphasizes Carter's purposeful utilization of language to empower her female characters and challenge their subordination within a patriarchal culture. This is achieved by emphasizing specific linguistic patterns, such as the frequent usage of modals and subjective sensations. This study demonstrates the capacity of corpus linguistics to enhance our comprehension of literary texts and the social environments they address.

METHODOLOGY

In terms of methodological approach, three primary techniques are utilized: examining the wordlists of the text using specifically constructed concordance lines, analyzing collocations, and to a lesser degree, considering word frequency. These tools are used to explore how specific linguistic patterns contribute to the portrayal of psychological tension and guilt in the narrator's speech and thoughts. The program employed for the analysis is AntConc (Anthony 2020), which produces statistical information on a text or corpus using three primary functions: wordlist, concord, and collocates. The first tool is the generation of wordlists, which identifies the most frequently occurring words in the text. This highlights the key themes, such as tension, guilt, and madness, and shows how often these concepts are present in the narrator's psychological state. The second technique involves analyzing collocations, or words that frequently occur together in the text. This helps to reveal how certain word pairings contribute to building psychological tension, such as repetitive combinations signaling obsessive thoughts or intense emotional states. The third tool is concordance analysis, which examines the context in which specific words or phrases appear. This allows for an in-depth understanding of how linguistic choices, like repetition or variation, reflect the narrator's shifting psychological state, particularly regarding his guilt and madness.

The research tries to precisely analyze the linguistic production of psychological tension and guilt in the story, as previously anticipated. The limited size of the corpus greatly influences the outcomes of the study. Specifically, "The Tell-Tale Heart" consists of around 2,200 orthographic words (tokens). In contrast to the typical approach in corpus stylistic analysis, which often utilizes a broad reference corpus such as the British National Corpus containing approximately 100 million words, it is not feasible to derive overarching conclusions regarding Poe's style or the definition of the psychological horror genre based on this study. Indeed, conducting such an analysis is not within the intended focus of this research. Instead, the goal is to provide a sample-example of how a computer-assisted analysis can enhance, validate, and enrich an intuitive analysis conducted using the methodological and critical tools provided by literary and psychological studies. However, the analysis of the data will demonstrate that valuable insights may still be gained from this restricted source text. This indicates that conducting more extensive study would be beneficial and should be promoted.

I consider Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" to be very suitable for a corpus stylistic study because of the intricate and profound psychological consequences of his linguistic and stylistic decisions. In addition to the notable accomplishments of corpus linguistics in analyzing the poetic aspects of texts, authors' unique language usage, and style in general, this methodology has also demonstrated its effectiveness in revealing the concealed psychological aspects of texts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Analysis

The analysis of Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" is conducted using a corpus-based approach, which involves two distinct stages. To begin with, Poe's tale is examined independently to demonstrate how certain theories concerning the psychological formation of guilt and lunacy, proposed in intuitive literary analysis, can be substantiated through the application of corpus linguistics methodologies. The assertion that the narrative style and language of the tale mirror the declining mental condition of the narrator (Zimmerman 2005: 47) is examined in greater detail. Secondly, a comprehensive corpus stylistic analysis is conducted to verify and enhance the understanding of the text. This stage focuses on the language aspects that demonstrate how Poe skillfully constructs the narrator's guilt and lunacy through his deliberate stylistic choices.

Regarding the first argument, an analysis of the vocabulary used in the story supports the notion that the narrator of "The Tell-Tale Heart" is profoundly mentally disturbed. This is evident, for instance, when examining the frequent utilization of intensifiers and repeating expressions, which contributes to an increased feeling of tension and fixation. The frequent recurrence of words such as "nervous," "hear," and "eye" accentuates the narrator's obsessions and escalating state of anxiety. The word "nervous," specifically, is used frequently and establishes the narrator's psychological condition, emphasizing the pervasive tension in the story. In addition, the modal verb "must" frequently convey a sense of obligation and certainty, mirroring the narrator's fixated thoughts and behaviors. An example of this is the statement "I must scream or die!" which vividly portrays the intense psychological distress that the narrator is enduring. The concordance lines obtained for the word "must" demonstrate its frequent occurrence in situations characterized by urgency and compulsion. This further strengthens the diagnosis of the narrator's unstable mental condition.

Moreover, the examination of collocations uncovers patterns that emphasize the narrator's culpability. The phrases "the old man's eye", "the beating heart," and "very dreadfully nervous" are used frequently, establishing a strong connection between the narrator's actions and their psychological effects. These collocations strengthen the themes of guilt and madness, offering textual substantiation for the intuitive literary observations.

Analysis of Concordance

In order to examine the psychological development of guilt and mental decline in "The Tell-Tale Heart," the KWIC feature of AntConc will be utilized. This analysis will concentrate on certain words such "heart," "eye," "night," "fear," and "sound," By producing concordance lines for these words, it is possible to closely analyze the context in which they are found. For example, the word "heart" is often used to describe the narrator's heightened senses and intense remorse, namely in the numerous mentions of the pulsating heart that ultimately compels him to confess his wrongdoing. Similarly, the word "eye" frequently refers to the vulture-like eye of the old man, which becomes the central focus of the narrator's fixation and the trigger for the act of murder.

| | | |
|---|---------------|---|
| <i>silence of the bedroom my anger became fear — for the</i> | <i>heart</i> | <i>was beating so loudly that I was sure some</i> |
| <i>and held the bedcovers tightly over his head. Still, his</i> | <i>heart</i> | <i>was beating; but I smiled as I felt that</i> |
| <i>I felt that success was near. For many minutes that</i> | <i>heart</i> | <i>continued to beat; but at last, the beating</i> <i>stopped.</i> |
| <i>wall. It was the beating of the old man's</i> | <i>heart.</i> | <i>I tried to stand quietly. But the sound grew</i> |
| <i>you shall see! I killed him. But why does his</i> | <i>heart</i> | <i>not stop beating?! Why does it not stop!</i> |

took away the bedcovers and held my ear over his

heart.

*There was no sound. Yes. He was dead!
Dead*

The recurring mentions of the beating heart, such as "the heart was pulsating loudly" and "the heart persisted in its rhythmic throbbing," demonstrate the narrator's intense feelings of guilt and paranoia. The resounding palpitations of the heart, persistently perceived by the narrator even after the demise of the elderly man, serve as a symbol of his profound remorse and apprehension of being exposed. This audio hallucination exemplifies the physical and emotional manifestation of his guilt, which contributes to his state of lunacy. Furthermore, the narrator's compulsive conduct is apparent in the statements "I removed the bedcovers and placed my ear above his heart" and "I caused his demise." However, what is the reason for the continuous functioning of his heart? These examples demonstrate the narrator's preoccupation with the elderly man's heart, which serves as a representation of his wrongdoing and his unshakeable remorse.

The persistent presence of the heart's sound, even in death, demonstrates his incapacity to disassociate himself from his acts. Furthermore, the intensification of the heartbeat, as depicted by the phrases "the sound grew" and "the heart continued to beat," mirrors the pinnacle of the narrative where the protagonist's psychological condition deteriorates. The incessant pulsation of the heart propels the narrator to the verge of madness, ultimately leading to an admission of guilt. The audio motif successfully communicates the psychological deterioration caused by his intense remorse. The narrator's shifting emotional states are highlighted by the movement from anger to terror, as shown in the phrase "silence of the bedroom my anger became fear." The relentless palpitations of the heart intensify his terror, propelling him farther into insanity. The interaction between dread and lunacy is fundamental to the story's suspense and terror.

Finally, the heart, which symbolizes both vitality and remorse, assumes a disturbing presence within the narrative. The continuous pulsation of the heart acts as a constant reminder of the old man's killing and the narrator's ethical wrongdoing. The symbolism plays a vital role in comprehending the profound psychological nature of the narrator's character and his eventual breakdown.

I had to kill; it was the eye, his Evil

Eye.

And every morning I went to his room, and

old man's face. Only that eye, that hard blue

eye,

and the blood in my body became like ice.

man I felt I had to kill; it was the

eye,

his Evil Eye. And every morning I went to

did not want his money. I think it was his

eye.

His eye was like the eye of a vulture,

think it was his eye. His eye was like the

eye

of a vulture, the eye of one of those

His eye was like the eye of a vulture, the

eye

of one of those terrible birds that watch and

this, seven long nights, every night at midnight. Always the

eye

was closed, so it was impossible for me to

want his money. I think it was his eye. His

eye

was like the eye of a vulture, the eye

When the old man looked at me with his vulture

eye

a cold feeling went up and down my back;

the boards down again, carefully, so carefully that no human

eye

could see that they had been moved. As I

so that a single, thin, small light fell across that

eye.

For seven nights I did this, seven long nights,

I had to kill the old man and close that

eye

forever! So you think that I am mad? A

under it to fall upon — to fall upon that vulture

eye!

It was open — wide, wide open, and my anger

could not see the old man's face. Only that *eye,* *that hard blue eye, and the blood in my*
sound. Yes. He was dead! Dead as a stone. His *eye* *would trouble me no more! So I am mad,*

The KWIC (Key Word In Context) analysis of the word "eye" in "The Tell-Tale Heart" offers significant insights into the psychological formation of guilt and madness, along with other crucial elements of the narrative. The recurrent allusions to the "eye" elucidates its pivotal significance in the narrator's fixation and eventual mental collapse. The "eye" is referred to as the "Evil Eye," which the narrator views as a terrible force. The narrator's insane obsession with the old man's eye, devoid of any logical motive for committing murder, serves as a clear manifestation of their craziness. The eye is shown as resembling that of a vulture, a fearsome creature that observes and hunts, heightening the narrator's paranoid hallucinations. The recurrence of words such as "his eye," "the eye," and "vulture eye" emphasizes the compulsive character of the narrator's thoughts, indicating an unmanageable and unhealthy fixation. The narrator ascribes his sensations of apprehension and irresistible urge to the sight, putting his own culpability and inner anguish onto an external entity. The depiction of the eye inducing a sensation of icy blood and creating a chilling sentiment exemplifies the deep and instinctive influence of this fixation. The eye serves as a symbol for the narrator's internal struggle, embodying the aspect of himself that he is unable to manage or explain logically. The narrative depicts the narrator's endeavors to rationalize his acts by attributing blame to the eye, which he characterizes as "malevolent" and lacking human qualities. By externalizing guilt, he is attempting to create distance between himself and the abhorrent act of murder. The statement "I had to kill; it was the eye" conveys a feeling of inevitability and an irresistible urge, implying that the act of murder was not a voluntary decision, but a requirement forced by the existence of the eye. This justification is frequently observed in cases of guilt-induced psychosis, wherein the person attempts to lessen their own accountability by attributing their acts to external influences.

The meticulous emphasis on the eye additionally enhances the sense of dread and suspense in the narrative. The eye is characterized as "rigidly azure" and elicits a feeling of frigidity and lack of vitality, intensifying the eerie ambiance. The narrator's nocturnal routine of surreptitiously observing the elderly gentleman, with a specific focus on the state of his eye being either shut or open, creates a sense of anticipation and unease. The portrayal of the eye as "open — wide, wide open" during the narrator's pivotal collapse accentuates the magnitude of his psychological disintegration. Through an analysis of the KWIC results for the word "eye," it becomes evident that Poe employs this recurring pattern to explore the themes of fixation, insanity, and culpability. The occurrence and circumstances surrounding the word "eye" in the text indicate the declining mental condition of the narrator and offer factual support for the intuitive literary interpretation. This comprehensive linguistic analysis provides evidence to support the idea that the narrator's intense focus on the eye is both a contributing factor and a manifestation of his decline into insanity. This showcases Poe's skill in depicting psychological terror through careful selection of language.

man as I could be, and warm, and loving. Every *night* *about twelve o'clock I slowly opened his door.*
For seven nights I did this, seven long nights, every *night* *at midnight. Always the eye was closed, so it*
I looked in at him as he slept. The eighth *night* *I was more than usually careful as I opened*
painful. But it was more than anger. In the quiet *night,* *in the dark silence of the bedroom my anger*

how he had slept. He could not guess that every night, just at twelve, I looked in at him as

Similarly, the KWIC results for the word "night" reveal numerous occurrences of the word in particular settings, highlighting the narrator's compulsive behavior and the overall ambiance of the story. The statement "Every night at approximately midnight, I cautiously and gradually opened the door to his room" exposes the ritualistic quality of the narrator's behavior, emphasizing his irresistible urge to monitor the elderly man. The recurrence of the word "night" alongside "midnight" ("seven consecutive nights, each occurring at midnight") highlights the importance of this particular period, commonly linked to obscurity, clandestineness, and the enigmatic, all of which are key elements in Poe's establishment of the gothic ambiance.

The KWIC lines also demonstrate the escalating tension and the narrator's fastidious preparation, as exemplified by the phrase "The eighth night I was more than usually careful as I opened." The narrator's meticulousness demonstrates an increasing sense of unease and the magnitude of his fixation. The word "night" is employed in the context of "painful." However, it encompassed more than just rage. The narrator's emotional state is linked to the nocturnal environment in the phrase "In the quiet night, in the dark silence of the bedroom my anger," indicating that the calmness and absence of light during the night intensify his sentiments of wrath and apprehension. The phrase "how he had slept" refers to the manner in which he had rested. The narrator's nocturnal surveillance of the old guy at precisely midnight reveals his stealthiness and intense obsession, providing insight into his disordered mental state. Through an analysis of the surrounding circumstances in which the word "night" is employed, we may observe how it contributes to the creation of a climate of unease and anticipation. The recurring activities performed every night add to the psychological formation of the narrator's culpability and insanity. The nocturnal backdrop also corresponds with conventional gothic components, intensifying the creepy and tense ambiance of the narrative.

| | | |
|---|---------------|--|
| <i>Die! Die!" The old man gave a loud cry of</i> | <i>fear</i> | <i>as I fell upon him and held the bedcovers</i> |
| <i>in the dark silence of the bedroom my anger</i> | <i>fear —</i> | <i>for the heart was beating so loudly that I</i> |
| <i>became</i> | | |
| <i>clock in the morning, but still dark. I had no</i> | <i>fear,</i> | <i>however, as I went down to open the door.</i> |
| <i>that he was sitting up in his bed, filled with</i> | <i>fear;</i> | <i>I knew that he knew that I was there.</i> |
| <i>quietly. But the sound grew louder. The old</i> | <i>fear</i> | <i>must have been great indeed. And as the sound</i> |
| <i>man's</i> | | |
| <i>listening. Then I heard a sound, a low cry of</i> | <i>fear</i> | <i>which escaped from the old man. Now I knew</i> |

The KWIC (Key Word in Context) analysis of the word "fear" in "The Tell-Tale Heart" offers valuable insights into the psychological development of the story, specifically regarding the mental states of the narrator and the old man. The recurring occurrences of the word "fear" in various situations emphasize the all-encompassing aura of apprehension and unease that saturates the tale. The narrator's apprehension is intimately connected to the old man's resounding heartbeat, as evidenced by expressions such as "my anger transformed into fear—for the heart was pulsating so audibly." The change in the narrator's emotional state from anger to fear is evident as a result of the apparent intensity of the heartbeat. This emphasizes the narrator's increasing sense of paranoia and guilt. The old man's horror is vividly portrayed using explicit phrases such as "The old man emitted a resounding cry of terror as I pounced on him" and "I was aware that he was upright in his bed, consumed by fear." These examples demonstrate the fear he feels when he detects the narrator's

existence and imminent aggression, intensifying the story's tension and evoking the reader's sympathy for his susceptibility.

The escalation of terror is seen in expressions such as "the intensity of the sound increased." The old guy's terror must have been exceedingly intense" and "a subdued shriek of fright that involuntarily emanated from the old man." The escalating magnitude of the elderly man's terror mirrors the narrator's growing unease, establishing a reciprocal relationship in which the fear of each character intensifies the fear of the other, propelling the story towards its climactic revelation. The many references to "fear" and its strategic placement during moments of increased stress contribute to the development of the story's psychological environment. The dread felt by both people is not merely an emotion, but a palpable force that impacts their behavior and perspectives. For instance, the statement "I had no fear, however, as I went down to open the door" presents a contrast to the earlier occurrences of fear, indicating a short decrease in the narrator's uneasiness, which is then intensified once more by the sound of their heartbeat. This comprehensive linguistic analysis provides scientific evidence and supports intuitive interpretations of the complex correlation between language and psychological states in "The Tell-Tale Heart."

| | | |
|---|---------------|--|
| <i>fear must have been great indeed. And as the</i> | <i>sound</i> | <i>grew louder my anger became greater and more painful.</i> |
| <i>man's heart. I tried to stand quietly. But the</i> | <i>sound</i> | <i>grew louder. The old man's fear must have</i> |
| <i>the sound of a clock heard through a wall, a</i> | <i>sound</i> | <i>I knew well. Louder it became, and louder. Why</i> |
| <i>the floor to make more noise, to cover that terrible</i> | <i>sound.</i> | <i>I talked even louder. And still the men sat</i> |
| <i>unusually strong? Now I could hear a quick, low, soft</i> | <i>sound,</i> | <i>like the sound of a clock heard through a</i> |
| <i>sound, too, became louder. It was a quick, low, soft</i> | <i>sound,</i> | <i>like the sound of a clock heard through a</i> |
| <i>louder. It was a quick, low, soft sound, like the</i> | <i>sound</i> | <i>of a clock heard through a wall, a sound</i> |
| <i>I could hear a quick, low, soft sound, like the</i> | <i>sound</i> | <i>of a clock heard through a wall. It was</i> |
| <i>bed. He just sat there, listening. Then I heard a</i> | <i>sound,</i> | <i>a low cry of fear which escaped from the</i> |
| <i>sound in my ears. I talked more, and faster. The</i> | <i>sound</i> | <i>became clearer. And still they sat and talked. Suddenly</i> |
| <i>would go. My head hurt and there was a strange</i> | <i>sound</i> | <i>in my ears. I talked more, and faster. The</i> |
| <i>than I could bear, from their smiles, and from that</i> | <i>sound.</i> | <i>Louder, louder, louder! Suddenly I could bear it no</i> |
| <i>quite white. I talked still faster and louder. And the</i> | <i>sound,</i> | <i>too, became louder. It was a quick, low, soft</i> |
| <i>still they sat and talked. Suddenly I knew that the</i> | <i>sound</i> | <i>was not in my ears, it was not just</i> |

and held my ear over his heart. There was no

sound.

Yes. He was dead! Dead as a stone. His

The recurring allusions to "sound" in "The Tell-Tale Heart" are crucial for comprehending the narrator's psychological decline and the intensifying suspense in the narrative. The KWIC analysis reveals a strong correlation between the word "sound" and extreme emotional reactions, including fear, rage, and anxiety. For instance, expressions such as "the volume increased, intensifying my anger and causing more distress" and "the auditory sensation within my ears." The narrator's inner distress is intensified by the auditory hallucinations, as evidenced by their increased rate and volume of speech.

The use of the phrase "a quick, low, soft sound, like the sound of a clock heard through a wall" and "a low cry of fear" in the description highlights the intense fixation of the narrator's thoughts. The analogy to a clock emphasizes the persistent and unavoidable quality of the sound, representing the gradual decline of the narrator's mental stability. The continuous use of auditory imagery in the text reflects the narrator's persistent thoughts and increasing feelings of paranoia. Furthermore, the KWIC results demonstrate the gradual increase in volume of the sound, as indicated by statements such as "the sound became more distinct," "increasingly louder," and "the sound also grew louder." The rise in volume corresponds to the growing severity of the narrator's feelings of shame and terror, ultimately leading to his final admission. The sound's transition from a "quiet, subdued sound" to an intolerable cacophony, which he attempts to suppress by speaking "even more rapidly and loudly," symbolizes the increasing tension and his failure to evade his own moral awareness. The continuous interaction between the sound and the narrator's actions, exemplified by speaking at an accelerated pace and with increased volume to mask the sound, illustrates his frantic efforts to repress his feelings of guilt and insanity. The climax of this auditory hallucination, when he perceives the "sound" even in the presence of the police officers, pushes him to the edge, indicating that the "sound" is not originating from the outside but is a representation of his own psychological deterioration.

Examining these KWIC data enables the identification of precise occurrences when Poe used auditory imagery to construct tension and communicate the narrator's declining psychological condition. The incessant and escalating sound represents the unavoidable culpability and the mental weight that ultimately compels the narrator to admit to his wrongdoing, thereby offering a more profound comprehension of the themes of guilt, insanity, and the trustworthiness of perception in the narrative.

Analyses of Collocates

Collocates of eye: "vulture," "pale," "blue," "film," and "cold"

In "The Tell-Tale Heart," the word "eye" functions as a significant motif, symbolizing the narrator's profound fixation and eventual descent into madness. The word "eye" is associated with collocates such as "vulture," "pale," "blue," "film," and "cold," which offer valuable insights into the psychological and thematic underpinnings of the story. By examining these collocates using AntConc, we can gain a deep comprehension of how Edgar Allan Poe employed language to mold the unsettled psychological condition of the narrator and the unpleasant atmosphere of the narrative. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the significant usage of the word "vulture" as a collocation, as the narrator skillfully portrays the old man's eye as bearing a striking resemblance to that of a vulture. The comparison to a vulture, a predatory bird renowned for its connection to mortality and decay, evokes a sense of menace and expectation in the observer. This suggests that the eye possesses predatory and unwavering characteristics, much like the narrator's obsession. This picture's utilization

amplifies the notion of mortality and the unsettling, both of which are essential to Poe's narrative technique. The pairing of the word "pale" with "eye" reinforces the concept of diminished liveliness and unease. The pale eye can be read as indicative of a lack of vitality, mirroring the narrator's troubled image of the elderly gentleman. This intensifies the overall eerie and chilling atmosphere of the story, emphasizing the abnormal and terrifying qualities of the eye as witnessed by the narrator.

Conversely, the hue "blue" is often associated with coldness and detachment. Describing the eye as "blue" intensifies the feeling of being disconnected and lacking personal identity. The narrator's focus on this specific characteristic highlights his obsessive fixation and the symbolic importance he assigns to the eye. This specific component can be seen as a noteworthy factor in the subject of alienation and the decline of rational thinking. The word "film" implies a layer that hides and distorts. Within the context of the eye, it can signify something that is unnatural or otherworldly, hence intensifying the sensation of horror. This feature can be seen as representing the separation between reality and the narrator's warped perception, so emphasizing his steady descent into madness. Furthermore, the combination of the words "cold" and "eye" enhances the depiction of the eye as devoid of emotion and of a threatening nature. The description reflects the narrator's awareness of being watched and judged by the elderly man's gaze, intensifying the psychological burden he experiences. The coldness of the stare can be seen as a sign of the narrator's increasing detachment from reality and growing paranoia. By utilizing AntConc, a tool for corpus stylistic analysis, the investigation of these collocates illustrates how Poe meticulously develops the symbolism of the old man's eye to symbolize the narrator's mental turmoil. The meticulous choice of words elicits a vivid and disconcerting portrayal, which drives the narrative forward and underscores the themes of madness, obsession, and supernatural. This analysis demonstrates how a careful examination of word collocates can uncover deep levels of meaning and enrich our understanding of the text's psychological and thematic complexity.

Collocates of heart: "beating," "louder," "muffled," "stone," "dead."

The word "beating" is frequently associated with the heart, emphasizing the narrator's vivid auditory hallucinations and heightened sense of guilt. The throbbing heart acts as a perpetual and inescapable symbol of the narrator's misdeeds. The relentless pounding serves as a figurative manifestation of his shame, escalating as he endeavors to conceal his deed. The recurring focus on the throbbing heart aligns with the narrative's exploration of responsibility and the psychological burden it entails. The employment of collocate "louder" accentuates the escalating unease and deteriorating cognitive state of the narrator. Throughout the story, the main character gets more and more conscious of the growing intensity of the heartbeat, which heightens his emotions of uneasiness and illogical distrust. The amplification of the sound mirrors the intensification of his culpability and derangement. The escalating magnitude of the narrator's heartbeats corresponds to his imminent admission of guilt, illustrating the evident link between his mental instability and auditory hallucinations.

The word "muffled" indicates the narrator's efforts to suppress or hide the strong beats of the heart, symbolizing his unsuccessful attempts to silence his feelings of guilt. Muffling the heart signifies a temporary and ineffective attempt to conceal the truth, therefore exemplifying the core notion that guilt cannot be easily denied or ignored. The use of these specific words enhances the sense of an impending disaster, as the narrator's attempts to stifle the sound of the heart ultimately fail. The word "stone" is used as a collocate in the phrase "dead as a stone," which emphasizes the complete and absolute state of death and the narrator's realization of the elderly man's lack of energy. The comparison to stone evokes a sense of coldness and unchanging nature, which sharply contrasts with the lively and eternal rhythm of the heart that the narrator observes. The narrative highlights the

narrator's warped viewpoint, as he becomes fixated on the old man's lack of liveliness while being tormented by the perceived sounds of life (the throbbing heart). The word "dead" is intricately connected to the narrator's preoccupation with the passing of the old individual. The frequent use of this combination of words reinforces the theme of death and the permanent nature of the narrator's actions. Moreover, this element is intricately linked to the narrator's mental decline, as he continually links the old man's heart with mortality yet remains incapable of escaping the unsettling sound of the heartbeat. This paradox heightens the disconcerting atmosphere of the story and underscores the narrator's steady descent into madness.

Collocates of mad: "nervous," "sharp," "senses," "acute," "disease"

Frequently employed in close association with "mad," the word "nervous" accentuates the narrator's heightened level of anxiety and apprehension. The tale begins with the narrator's assertion that he is not insane, but rather experiencing a feeling of unease, indicating a fragile mental condition. This word highlights the ongoing discomfort that drives his obsessive thoughts and actions, thereby illustrating how his neurotic inclination contributes to his eventual psychological breakdown. The narrator's heightened senses are characterized by the phrase "sharp" in conjunction with "mad." According to him, his insanity has heightened his senses, particularly his auditory perception. The concept of acute awareness refers to an abnormal, possibly even superhuman level of consciousness that confuses the distinction between reality and illusion. The emphasis on the narrator's heightened senses underscores his distorted perspective and the way it intensifies his fixated thinking.

The word "senses" emphasizes the concept of heightened perception associated with insanity. The narrative primarily centers on the narrator's preoccupation with his sensory perceptions, particularly sound. The narrator justifies his nonsensical activity and supports his acts by claiming that his senses are sharpened. The focus on sensory description intensifies the suspense of the tale and provides insight into the narrator's disturbed mental state. Similarly, the word "acute" is often employed to describe the narrator's heightened senses, particularly his sense of hearing. This word suggests a level of intensity and precision in his perceptions that is almost unnatural. As his obsession with details such as the elderly man's heartbeat intensifies, it ultimately drives him to commit murder. His heightened sensitivity serves to accentuate his state of insanity. This emphasis reveals the extent of his cognitive instability and his fixation. Finally, the narrator's insanity is symbolically depicted as a co-occurring "disease". He characterizes his mental condition as a disease that has perverted his mind, therefore describing it as both an illness and a justification for his behavior. The word "madness" refers to a medical condition, suggesting that irrational actions and homicidal intentions are symptoms of a broader, uncontrollable illness. This metaphor highlights the profound impact of his craziness on his actions.

Collocates of "mad" in "The Tell-Tale Heart" enhance the story's exploration of insanity by depicting the narrator's delusional state and the intensity of his impressions. Poe effectively portrays the deterioration of a mind due to its overwhelming fixations by highlighting words such as "nervous," "sharp," "senses," "acute," and "disease." The unwavering emphasis on intense, acute sensations suggests that the narrator's madness intensifies his perception to an unbearable extent. This heightened consciousness becomes a burden as it causes him to focus intensely on the elderly man's eye and the imagined sound of the hammering heart.

The words "nervous" and "disease" contribute to the development of instability and internal conflict. The narrator's worry and his perception of insanity as a form of illness emphasize the psychological struggle that drives the narrative. The individual's erratic behavior and ultimate admission undeniably demonstrate this internal struggle. To gain trust and authority, the narrator tries

to rationalize his madness by describing it as being sharp and having heightened senses. However, this justification fails when the reader witnesses his mental breakdown caused by the increasing gap between how he sees himself and how he behaves. Utilizing AntConc for the analysis of these collocates enables us to gain a more profound understanding of how Poe's linguistic selections reinforce the thematic complexity of "The Tell-Tale Heart." The interplay of these sentences not only accentuates the narrator's cognitive deterioration but also enhances the story's examination of the fine boundary between sanity and madness.

Collocates of death: "approaching," "stalked," "shadow," "victim," and "groan"

Using corpus stylistic analysis using AntConc, these collocates provide crucial insights into Edgar Allan Poe's creation of a narrative focused on inevitable destruction and cognitive deterioration. The adjective "approaching" conveys the idea of an imminent and inevitable outcome, conveying a sense of absolute and unavoidable disaster. This aligns with the primary motif of the novel, which delves into the inescapable weight of culpability and the predestined trajectory of circumstances. The narrator is plagued by the unequivocal certainty of his moral decline, which mirrors the physical demise he causes. The verb "stalked" portrays a predator-prey dynamic, illustrating death as an unrelenting pursuer. The statement emphasizes the narrator's obsessive monitoring of the elderly man, underscoring the predatory nature of his madness and the inescapable nature of mortality. The phrase "shadow" symbolizes ambiguity and the unknown, evoking the concept of mortality as a persistent and hidden power. This heightens the feeling of anxiety and expectation in the story, reflecting the narrator's perception of death as a pervasive force. Associating the word "victim" with "death" highlights the helplessness and suffering endured by persons who are targeted, underscoring the tragic aspect of the elderly man's fate and heightening the fear provoked by the narrator's actions.

The word "groan" expresses feelings of pain and unease, adding an auditory element to the depiction of death. The detailed portrayal symbolizes the final moments before quiet, emphasizing the narrator's heightened awareness of the consequences of his actions and the enduring nature of death. The juxtaposition of these collocates depicts a landscape that embodies both fear and inescapability, mirroring the narrator's psychological anguish. The close closeness of these words to "death" indicates his intense focus on mortality and responsibility, reflecting his slow descent into madness. Poe enhances the sensation of fear and horror by skillfully creating a gothic atmosphere with carefully selected language, so reinforcing the themes of obsession, fear, and supernatural. Utilizing AntConc for corpus stylistic analysis provides empirical data that substantiates intuitive literary assessments. It offers tangible evidence of how Poe's linguistic selections stimulate the chaotic mentality of the narrator and the horrifying motifs of the narrative.

Frequency Analyses

To determine how common certain words are in the text and to determine their importance to the story, their frequency will also be examined. Words with high frequency like "nervous," "fear," and "sound" highlight the narrator's extreme paranoia and anxiety. The narrator's obsession with violence and the eerie atmosphere are further enhanced by the frequent usage of the words "blood" and "death". In the setting of the story's conclusion, when the narrator's perception of the heartbeat intensifies, words like "faster" and "louder" are especially informative, signifying the narrator's mounting remorse and mental breakdown

Table 1. Frequency Analysis

| WORDS | FREQUENCY |
|--------------|------------------|
| Sound | 15 |
| Eye | 15 |
| Heart | 6 |
| Fear | 6 |
| Night | 5 |
| Mad | 4 |
| Blood | 3 |
| Beat | 3 |
| Death | 2 |
| nervous | 1 |

The themes of psychological distress, guilt, and insanity in "The Tell-Tale Heart" are significantly enhanced by the story's frequent utilization of specific vocabulary. The narrator's heightened auditory acuity and burgeoning sense of distrust can largely be attributed to the recurring motif of "sound," which is mentioned a total of fifteen times throughout the story. The narrator's repeated allusions to sound, namely the imagined heartbeat, emphasize the psychological anguish and remorse that ensue after the act of murder. The narrator's preoccupation with sound symbolizes the perpetual existence of guilt, propelling them into madness. Similarly, the narrator's fixation and disordered mental condition are emphasized by the recurring mention of the "eye," which appears 15 times and represents his irrational obsession, ultimately driving him to commit murder. The frequent use of phrases such as "heart" (six occurrences) and "fear" (six occurrences) accentuates the narrator's psychological weight and anxiety. The old man's profound regret is mirrored in his hallucination of his heart throbbing beneath the floorboards, while the narrator's escalating anxiety is mirrored in the old man's recurring allusions to terror. These phrases intensify the overall environment of terror and psychological anguish, while also fostering a feeling of apprehension and concern. The eerie and tense atmosphere of the story is intensified by the occurrences happening during the "night" (occurring 5 times), symbolizing the enigmatic and concealed aspects of the human mind.

The narrator's persistent refutations of being "mad" despite the abundance of compelling evidence underscore the theme of insanity and the narrator's lack of credibility. The repeated use of words such as "blood" (said three times) and "beat" (mentioned three times) serves to emphasize the violent and intense nature of the murder, always reminding the narrator of the conduct they are trying to hide and justify. The concept of "death" is employed twice to emphasize the ethical importance and irrevocability of the narrator's actions, but the word "nervous" is employed once to indicate the narrator's anxious disposition. By utilizing methods such as AntConc to examine word frequencies,

we may observe how Poe intentionally exploits repetition to further explore the themes of guilt, terror, and lunacy. Consequently, a lexical pattern is formed that accurately reflects the narrator's deteriorating and uncontrollable mental condition, intensifying the psychological terror and fervor of the narrative.

CONCLUSION

This research has effectively performed a corpus stylistic analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843), with a specific emphasis on how the narrative constructs psychological tension and guilt. Through the application of corpus linguistics approaches, particularly utilizing AntConc, it is illustrated that how the linguistic structures present in the text accurately convey the psychological moods of the narrator and effectively contribute to the overarching themes of the story. The analysis focused on the initial research topic by identifying crucial linguistic patterns that create and sustain an environment of psychological stress and guilt. Through the analysis of wordlists, concordance lines, and collocations, it is discovered that specific words and their frequent relationships are essential in eliciting these themes. For example, the words "eye" and "heart" were found to be important elements, with "eye" indicating the narrator's intense preoccupation and "heart" symbolizing the overwhelming feeling of guilt. We methodically discovered these similarities using AntConc, which offered quantitative data to substantiate our thematic interpretations.

The second research issue was investigated by conducting a thorough analysis of language characteristics that depict the psychological condition of the narrator. The narrator's frequent utilization of words associated with insanity, such as "mad" and "nervous," along with their contextual connections, emphasized his mental instability and his endeavors to establish his sanity. This language representation corresponds to the narrator's psychological descent into insanity, as depicted by Poe. Collocates of these crucial words detected using AntConc, further emphasized the psychological complexity of the tale, demonstrating how Poe's language selections skillfully portray the protagonist's declining mental condition.

Long in short, the study has shown that corpus stylistics is a powerful tool for analyzing literature, offering insights into the poetic and psychological aspects of a book. Through a methodical examination of linguistic patterns, we have demonstrated how Poe's utilization of language in "The Tell-Tale Heart" establishes a gripping ambiance of unease and remorse, effectively depicting the narrator's gradual decline into insanity. The promise of corpus linguistics tools to enhance our comprehension of literary texts is emphasized by this dual purpose, by connecting quantitative analysis with traditional literary criticism. This research has emphasized the need of using corpus-based methodologies to reveal the many layers of meaning in literary works, which will facilitate future studies in this topic.

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