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RESEARCH ARTICLE

English Limericks and Iraqi Abuthiyahs: A Contrastive Stylistic Study

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Abstract

Systematic designs are used to feature poems to elicit cognitive, emotional, and evaluative processes. Short rhyming poems are 'limericks' and 'abuthiyahs'. A limerick is a humorous poem of five lines with the rhyming scheme AABBA. The first, second, and fifth lines rhyme the same for verbal rhythm; the third and fourth are shorter and have separate rhyme and rhythm. Iraqi abuthiyahs are popular poems composed of four lines: AAAB; the first three have the same anagrams, and the fourth ends with the letters (ya 'ي' and haa 'هه'). The study's objective is to make meaning explicit through conducting a contrastive stylistic analysis and investigating poetic devices as they are recognized in 10 English limericks and 10 Iraqi abuthiyahs. This form of poetry is mainly associated with Edward Lear; therefore, the examples of limerick under stylistic investigation will be selected from his collection *The Book of Nonsense* (1846). For the same rationale, the Arabic examples are selected from Al-Kadhimi's *Abuthiyat of Jaber Al-Kadhimi* (2006). The method of analysis is qualitative-quantitative with Leech and Short's (1969) model adopted. The results show that Limericks are funny, lighthearted, and have rhyme schemes, alliteration, and homographic puns. In a hilarious way, they depict fictitious characters in current events. The abuthiyahs communicate emotion with simple phrases, and grammar. Both poets employ cohesive strategies to link poems, but they are in different contexts and natures. In conclusion, both poets employ different linguistic strategies to enhance their poems for satire and emotional expressiveness.

Keywords: Limericks, Abuthiyahs, rhyme, anagrams, figurative language.

1. Review of Literature

1.1 English Limericks

Cuddon (1999) states that a limerick is "a form of verse, usually humorous and frequently rude, in five lines, predominantly anapestic" (p. 458). It is a comic and nonsensical short poem of five lines, each consisting of three anapests (i.e., unstressed, unstressed, stressed). Though its origin is unknown, it is thought that the name is drawn from the Irish city of Limerick.

During the 1830s, limericks were written but remained unpublished and unpopularized until February 1846. Edward Lear first presented them in his book *The Book of Nonsense* to include 109 limericks in the first part and 103 in its second part. Lear (1812–1888) is commonly

regarded as the father of the contemporary limerick, and it is on this basis people have dubbed his work Learics. Although Lear wrote a great deal of this poetry in his collection of nonsense verses (1812–1888), he did not use the term limerick (Parrott, 1983). Shakespeare, H. G. Wells, Lewis Carroll, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Tennyson, Rudyard Kipling, Ogden Nash, T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, and James Joyce, among others, all had a go at limericks. This is a quotation from Shakespeare's *Othello* (1890), Act II, Scene III:

- (1) "And let me the canakin clink, clink,
 And let me the canakin clink,
 A soldier's a man,
 A life's but a span,
 Why then let a soldier drink" (P: 97).

Legman collected 1.700 limericks in the first volume of *The Limerick* (1953), and then added 2.000 limericks in the second volume, *The New Limerick* (1977). Legman (1988) argues that the true limerick is "a folk form always obscene ... a periodic fad, and the object of magazine contests, rarely rising above mediocrity" (P:67). In terms of folklore, a limerick is basically transgressive, and one of its functions is to transgress taboo. Jones (2013) gives this example:

- (2) "There was a young man from Japan,
 Whose limericks never would scan,
 And when they asked why,
 He said, I do try!

But when I get to the last line, I try to fit in as many words as I can" (P 305).

Another type of parodies, deliberately broken rhyme scheme, is shown by W.S. Gilbert ([cited in](#) Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature, 1995):

- (3) "There was an old man of St. Bees,
 Who was stung in the arm by a wasp,
 When asked, "Does it hurt?"
 He replied, "No, it doesn't,
 I'm so glad it wasn't a hornet" (p. 638).

Clarke, the comedian, parodied Lear's style (Paterson 2018):

- (4) "There was an old man with a beard,
 A funny old man with a beard.
He had a big beard.
A great big old beard,
 That amusing old man with a beard" (P: 144).

1.

However, Henry (2001) contends that internet jokes cannot utilize limerick poetry to their full potential since such poems inherently have a silly nature without any dignified history to

ridicule. He said that limericks have a naughty nature that fits perfectly with jokey. In Henry's view, the following anonymous verses are 'typical' of modern-day limericks:

- (5) "The limerick packs laughs anatomical,
 Into space that is quite economical.
 But the good ones I've seen,
 So seldom are clean,
 And the clean ones so seldom are comical."

1.2 Iraqi Abuthiyahs

Al-Karbasi (1997) states that 'Abuthiyah' is a type of folk poetry that probably emerged in the first century. It is common, particularly in the south of Iraq, and composed of four verses; the first three are in one anagram, and the fourth ends with the letters (ya 'ي' and haa 'ه'). There are different narrations attributed to the origin of the word "Abuthiyah." It is said to be a structure of two words: 'أبو,' which in colloquial Arabic means 'friend,' and 'ذبية' is derived from 'أذية' (harm or pain), since the organizer of these verses may suffer from harm and distress, trying to influence the souls of others with what harms them. Some historians attributed the name 'Abuthiyah' to 'Badiyah' (desert), but Al-Karbasy disagrees with them since this type of poetry is not used by the people of the desert, and perhaps there is a confusion between abuthiyah and 'Atabbah' (another form of poetry), since they are close to rhyme. The word abuthiyah is also referred to as a Greek (apodhia), and the Nabataeans transmitted it from other arts to Iraq and Greece, pronouncing it "Abuthah." The English say epodes; the French say pes epodes, which are Quads in Greece.

The Iraqi historian Al-Amiri (1989) says in his book *The Rural Singers and the Phases of Iraqi Abuthiyah* that abuthiyah is formed of two stanzas of four verses. Each stanza consists of three verses in alliteration, uniting in pronunciation but differing in meaning, and the fourth verse rhymes differently with (ya 'ي' and haa 'ه'). But Al-Karbasi (1997) adds that an abuthiyah is an art form of Iraqi folk literature composed of only a single stanza with four verses; rarely is a poem composed of it. In his collection, *The Book of Abuthiyah*, he describes Jaber Al-Kadhimi as the father of this art and the one who composed this example:

- (6) " مِنْ أَخْدُودِكَ بَنَاتِ الْعُصَيْنِ وَرَدْنُ min akhdoodk banat alghsin wirdan
 تَرَفٍ وَنُسُومِكِ آغْلَهُ الْمُحِبِّ وَرَدْنُ tarif winsumak aelah almuhib wirdan
 أُرِيدُ أَعْصِرْ عَيْبَ شِفْوَتِكَ وَرَدْنُ areed aesir einab shifitak wirdan
 أَحْمَدُ نَارِكِ أَلْتَسْتَعِرُ بِيَّهْ 'akhamud narak altistieir biah

As a specific Iraqi culture, verses of abuthiyah are written in a colloquial accent and may be difficult to translate. The above verses' poet flirts with the cheeks of his sweetheart and describes her as cute with delicate senses so that he feels comfortable when her breezes blow on him. He moves to describe her lips, which look like grapes when they are squeezed to drink.

This is all that can extinguish the fire that caused his body to burn. Al-Karbasi (Ibid.) explains that the strength of the popular poet lies in his ability to compose an abuthiyah, and this fact made Al-Abadi, a great Iraqi poet, astonished when he noticed the vast amount of abuthiyah, describing it as ‘An Encyclopedia of Abuthiyah,’ and that there are only ten parts for praising Imam Hussein (PBUH).

Al-Khazreji (2014) explains that the four verses in this type of poem constitute a short story in which there is a beginning and an end, and two types are recognized: المطلقة (absolute) when composed of the poet’s inspiration, and the second is termed المولدة (generated), reflecting another poet’s imagination. He gives this example:

- (7) "صُفِّه كَلْبِي عَلَى الْمَحْبُوبِ مِنْ خَالٍ" sufah galby ealaa almahboob minkhal
 عَمِيَّتْ وَعَيْبٌ إِفْرَزْنَ خَالَ مِنْ خَالٍ eimayt weayb afirzan khal min khal
 تَحِبُّ النَّاسَ إِلْبُوجْنَةَ مِنْ خَالٍ tihib alnnas 'ilbwajnah min khal
 إِشْلُونْ أَنَّهُ وَلَجِبْهَهُ الْخَالَ هَيْئَهُ" 'ishloon anah wlahibhah alkhal hiah

The poet of these verses suffers the agony of love, resembling his heart with a sieve that has many holes. These holes cause him pain and misery. He becomes blind, unable to recognize people around him. In the third and fourth verses, he moves to another image, saying that people like those who have moles in their cheeks, picturing the beauty of the mole in the cheek of his beloved.

This art is the most popular folklore that shows ingenuity, strength of the preamble, and sensuous sensitivity. It is composed to express love, wisdom, enthusiasm, complaint, praise, and eulogy. It is the closest art to feelings and gentle souls. Al-Kadhimi (2006) wrote about 1000 abuthiyahs and collected them in his book *Abuthiyat of Jaber Al-Kadhimi*. The examples under stylistic investigation will be selected from this collection.

2. Stylistic Prospective

Stylistics, according to Short (1996) is "an approach to the analysis of (literary) texts using linguistic description" (P.1). Generally speaking, style is described as the way language is spoken, written, or performed (Leech, 1969). For Crystal (1969), style is an individual’s linguistic preferences and expressive choices; it denotes ‘saying the right thing in the most effective way’ (p. 220). This is reinforced by Ellis (2015), in which he describes style as a dualistic term that distinguishes between aspects of language use.

Applied linguistics as a subfield includes stylistics, which deals with the choices of speakers and writers from a linguistic perspective. Literary stylistics is central to the linguistic study of literature, and in some cases, literary stylistics is distinguished from linguistic stylistics (analyzing literary texts, as opposed to linguistic structures) (Diller, 1998). Both literary

analysis and the linguistic theory govern it. Wales (2014) stresses that a stylistic study seeks to discover how texts operate by linking aspects of form to their interpretative importance. Riffaterre (1959) opposes the notion that style is the way of deviation from linguistic norms only, stating that deviation is not the only determining factor of stylistic choice.

According to Al-Janabi and Al-Marsumi (2021), the style is of great importance in communication, especially in literature. Al-Marsumi (2017) asserts that poetic language is a unique linguistic tool to make communication in terms of phonetic, syntactic, and formal structures.

2.1 Leech's Linguistic and Stylistic Categories

In his work, Leech (2013) recognizes four linguistic functions necessary for the analysis of speech figures, namely, grammatical, phonological, semantic, and orthographic. The differentiation between these categories is quite difficult to do based on the level of abstraction. Leech and Short (1969) suggest a checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories for text analysis. The framework allows stylistic analysis to be carried out systematically as it makes linguistic patterns associated to textual meaning and coherence:

- Lexical Categories: Studies how words get patterned in contexts, in particular, with respect to content words (i.e., nouns, verbs, and adjectives).
- Grammatical categories: Analyzes sentence structures, phrases, and clauses and identify their internal structure.
- Figures of speech: Investigates stylistic features such as alliteration, assonance, rhyme, anaphora, and parallelism in terms of stylistics, finding foregrounding, and not following the laws of linguistic norm.
- Context and Cohesion: Context is related to external textual relations, while cohesion is concerned with the internal text in which one part of a text is connected to the other.

3. Research Method

The present study applies stylistic analysis on the selected limericks and abuthiyahs using the stylistic model put forward by Leech and Short (1969) to find out the stylistic devices used in the limericks and Abuthiyahs. The dataset contains 10 limericks of Edward Lear's *The Book of Nonsense* (1846) and 10 abuthiyahs of Al-Kadhimi's *Abuthiyat of Jaber Al-Kadhimi* (2006). For a thorough analysis, the study made use of a qualitative-quantitative approach in order to combine descriptive and statistical techniques to study the linguistic and stylistic features in the selected texts.

4. Data Analysis

Edward Lear's limericks are one-stanza, ridiculous pieces with playful exaggeration and their own rhythm. They make use of internal rhyme, puns, alliteration, assonance, and onomatopoeia to improve their music. They have a song-like structure with the refrain. The first line of a

limerick starts with a character and location in an AABBA rhyme scheme (e.g., "An Old Person of Buda," or "An Old Man of Cape Horn"). The twisting of metrical structure and verbal stress is often done in order to produce a whimsical and amusing effect.

In contrast, Al-Kadhimi's abuthiyahs are Iraqi folkloric poetry that depict profound emotions and personal pain. Each dialect poem has one stanza, each verse is 4 lines, and the first three are rhymed and the last verse ends with *ya* 'ي' and *haa* 'هه'. The poet uses the word 'Hisjah' to indicate desire, regret, and sadness. Abuthiyah themes are censure, anguish, eulogy, praise, and excitement. The abuthiyahs are transliterated with the purpose of making them accessible to non-Arabic readers, facilitating linguistic and stylistic analysis, preserving phonetic features, and ensuring a consistent contrastive comparison to English limericks. The following stanzas provide selected limericks and abuthiyahs for study.

Limericks

1. "There was an Old Derry down Derry,
Who loved to see little folks merry;
So he made them a Book,
And with laughter they shook,
At the fun of that Derry down Derry!"
2. "There was a Young Lady whose bonnet,
Came untied when the birds sate upon it;
But she said, "I don't care!
All the birds in the air
Are welcome to sit on my bonnet!"
3. "There was an Old Person of Buda,
Whose conduct grew ruder and ruder;
Till at last, with a hammer,
They silenced his clamour,
By smashing that Person of Buda"
4. "There was a Young Lady whose nose,
Was so long that it reached to her toes;
So she hired an Old Lady,
Whose conduct was steady,
To carry that wonderful nose."
5. "There was an Old Man of Cape Horn,
Who wished he had never been born;
So he sat on a chair,
Till he died of despair,
That dolorous Man of Cape Horn."

6. "There was an Old Lady whose folly,
Induced her to sit in a holly;
Whereon by a thorn,
Her dress being torn,
She quickly became melancholy."
7. "There was an Old Man in a pew,
Whose waistcoat was spotted with blue;
But he tore it in pieces,
To give to his nieces,—
That cheerful Old Man in a pew."
8. "There was an Old Man who said, "Hush!
I perceive a young bird in this bush!"
When they said—"Is it small?"
He replied—"Not at all!
It is four times as big as the bush!"
9. "There was an Old Man, who said, "Well!
Will NOBODY answer this bell?
I have pulled day and night,
Till my hair has grown white,
But nobody answers this bell!"
10. "There was an Old Man of the South,
Who had an immoderate mouth;
But in swallowing a dish,
That was quite full of fish,
He was choked, that Old Man of the South."

Abuthiyahs

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. حَبِيبِ الْغُلْبِ لَيْكَ أُرْبِي وَنَاجِيكَ
أَكْفُ كُلِّ خَطَرٍ عَنْ دَرْبِكَ وَنَاجِيكَ
لَوْنَتُكَ طِحْتُ بِسِنِّ إِندَه وَنَاجِيكَ
أُدُوسِ الْأَجَلِ وَاسْحَاكَ عَالْمِيَّه | habib algalub laik 'arbi wanajik
akuf kl khatar ean darbak wanajik
lawanak tihit bas 'iindah wanajik
'adoos al'ajal washag ealminiah |
| 2. يَجْرَحِي اشْغَدُ أَشِدَّتْكَ وَالْأَفْلَاكُ
أَنَّهُ أَدْرِي ابْهِيَمَه وَمُضْيِعِ وَالْأَفْلَاكُ
نُجُومِ اللَّيْلِ إِذَا تَشْهَدُ وَالْأَفْلَاكُ
تِرَانِي الْمَمَيَّتِ إِجْجِرِ الْمَيَّتَه | yajarhy eshgd 'ashidnnak walafalak
'anh 'adry ebhamah wimdhaye walafalak
nujoom 'allil 'itha tishhad walafalak
tirany almmayit 'ibhijr almanih |
| 3. تَعَالِ إِجْلِمِ أَرْضَه بُهَائِي بِسِنِّ مُرْ
أَجِيبِ الْبَدْرِ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكَ بِسِنِّ مُرْ
صِرْتَلْكَ شَهْدَ أَيْشِ تُصِيرُ بِسِنِّ مُرْ
مَرَارِ الْهَجْرِ نَارَه تُهَيِّجُ بِيَّه | taeal bhilim ardhah bhay bas mur
'ajeeb albadir bein eydak bas mur
siritlak shahad laish tseer bas mur
marar alhajir narah theej biyah |

4. "سَلِيمِ الطَّبْعِ بَيْنَ الْمُهَجِّ يُرْبَهُ
عَلَيْهِ النَّظَرُ مِنْ كُلِّ كَيْتُرٍ يُرْبَهُ
صَدِيقِ الْعُمُرِ وَكُنْتُ الشَّدِيدِ يُرْبِ
تَحَذَّرُ كَبُلًا لَا يَنْخُبُطُ مَائِهِ"
- saleem alttabue bein almuhaj yurbah
ealayh alnnadhar min kul kitur yurbah
sidij aleumur wakt alshshidad yurbah
tihaththar gabul la yinkhubut mayyah
5. "كَتَبْتَ كِتَابًا وَالْمَدْمَعُ مَحَالَهُ
سِوَى الْمَحْبُوبِ بَعِيُونِي مَحَالَهُ
تَظُنُّ أُنْسَاكَ يَا وِلْفِي مَحَالَهُ
أَظَلُّ بِهَوَاكَ هَايِمًا لِلْمُنْيَةِ"
- kitabt ktab walmadmae mahalah
siwa almahboub bieyuni mahalah
tidhin ansak ya wilfy mahalah
adh al bihwak hayim lilminiyah
6. "مَا تَدْرِي عَلَيْكَ الْجَفْنُ يَارَبِ
مِنْ هَجْرِكَ دَلِيلِ الْمُحِبِّ يَارَبِ
شِلْتُ أَيْدِي وَدَعَيْتُ وَصِحْتُ يَارَبِ
رَجَعَلِي حَبِيبِ الْكَلْبِ لِيَّهِ"
- ma tidri ealiyk aljifin yarab
min hajrak daleel almuhib yarab
shilt eydi wdaeyt wsihit yarab
rajjieliy habib algalub liyah
7. "خَذُّ مِنِّي زِمَانِي إِشْرَادُ مَارَادُ
صَوْنِي وَلَعْنِدِ إِحْسَائِي مَارَادُ
شَانِي إِطْرِيحِ الرَّاحِ مَارَادُ
فَوَگَاهَا وَتِلُومِ النَّاسِ بِيَّهِ"
- khith minny zimany 'ishrad marad
sawwabni wlaeind 'ihshay marad
mashshany 'iibtarij alrrah marad
fogaha wtiloom alnnas biyah
8. "جَيْتُكَ مَرَّةً أَدَبَ خَطُواتِ مَرْحَبِ
مَا مَرَّرَهُ تَحِينِ وَتُكُولِ مَرْحَبِ
إِخْلَفَ بِالشَّيْطَرِ بِالسَّيْفِ مَرْحَبِ
تِرْجَعَلِي وَتِرْجَعِ الرُّوحِ لِيَّهِ"
- jetak marrah athib khatwat marhab
ma marrah tihin witgool marhib
'ihlif balshshitar balssayf marhab
tirjaeli wtiraje alrrooh liyah
9. "أَلَيْشَ النَّاسُ مَا تَلْزَمُ عَدْلَهَا
كُلِّ مَوْهوبِ تَعْتَبِرُهُ عَدْلَهَا
طَيِّبِ الدَّاتِ لِلْعُوجِ عَدْلَهَا
شَيْنِ الدَّاتِ مَذْمُومِ السَّجِيَّةِ"
- leish alnnas ma tilzam eadilha
kil mawhoob taetabrah eadilha
tayb alththat lilewjah eadilha
shayn alththat mathmoom alsajiah
9. "كُلِّ جَلْمُودٍ مِنْ وَنِي وَوَلْفَانِ
حَيْلِي طَاخَ لَا أَعْكَدُ وَوَلْفَانِ
لَا فِلْتَانِ يَنْفَعْنِي وَوَلْفَانِ
أَنْطِي الْخَيْرِ يَنْطُونِي الْأَدْيَةِ"
- kil jalmood min wanny walaflan
heali tah la aegud walaflan
la filtan yinfaeni walaflan
anti alkhayr yintoony alathiyah

4.1 Analysis and Results Discussion

The discussion of the four categories may include some overlapping. Consequently, the semantic category is not listed separately. Leech and Short (1969) clarify that "there is no harm in mixing categories in this way. It is also in the nature of things that categories will overlap so that the same feature may well be noted under different headings" (P.62). Furthermore, Leech (1969) says that these categories are found and can be analyzed in poetry but not in every poem. This paper focuses on the stylistic devices when recognized in both poem types.

4.1 Lexical Categories

At this level, content words will be shown. These include words categorized in the open class that carry the principal meaning in a language: nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs, as in tables (1) for limericks and (2) for abuthiyahs.

Table 1: Occurrence of the Content Words in Limericks

Categories of Content Words				
No.	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
1	Derry (4)	was = be (13)	old (11)	there (10)
2	Folk	see	little	down
3	Book	made	young (3)	when (2)
4	Laughter	shook	untied	quickly
5	Fun	came	welcome	Whereon
6	lady (3)	sate	ruder (2)	never
7	bonnet (2)	said (4)	last	well
8	birds (3)	care	long	quite
9	Air	sit (2)	steady	
10	person (2)	grew	wonderful	
11	Buda (2)	silenced	dolorous	
12	conduct (2)	reached	cheerful	
13	Hammer	hired	blue	
14	Clamour	carry	small	
15	Smashing	wished	big	
16	lady (3)	been	four	
17	Nose	born	white	
18	Toes	sat	immoderate	
19	man (8)	died	full	
20	cape (2)	induced	choked	
21	horn (2)	torn		
22	Chair	became		
23	Despair	spotted		
24	Folly	tore		
25	Holly	give		
26	Thorn	hush		
27	Dress	perceive		
28	melancholy	is = be (2)		
29	pew (2)	answer (2)		
30	waistcoat	pulled		
31	Pieces	grown		
32	Nieces	had = have		
33	bush (2)	love		
34	Times			
35	nobody (2)			
36	bell (2)			
37	Day			

38	Night			
39	Hair			
40	south (2)			
41	Mouth			
42	Dish			
43	Fish			
44	swallowing			

Table 2: Occurrence of the Content Words in Abuthiyahs

Categories of Content Words				
No.	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
1	habib (2)	'arbi	mddaye	bein (2)
2	algalub (2)	najik	almmayit	gabul
3	Khatar	akuf	mur	laeind
4	Darbak	tihit	saleem	kul
5	al'ajal	'iindah	hayim	fogaha
6	alminiyah (3)	'adoos	mahalah	
7	Jarhi	'ashidunak	yarab	
8	Hamah	alafalak	marad	
9	alafalak (2)	'adri	marahab	
10	Nujoom	tishhad	mawhoob	
11	'allil	tirany	tayb	
12	Hijr	taeal	shayn	
13	Hilim	Ardhah	mathmoom	
14	Albadir	mur	eawjah	
15	Eydak	'ajeeb		
16	Shahad	siritluk		
17	Marar	tseer		
18	alhajir (2)	theej		
19	Narah	yurbah (3)		
20	Alttabue	Tihaththar		
21	Almuhaj	Yinkhubut		
22	Alnadhar	kitabt		
23	Kitur	mahalah (2)		
24	Sidij	tidhin		
25	Aleumur	'ansak		
26	Wakt	'adhala		
27	alshshidad	tidri		
28	Mayyah	yarab		
29	Ktab	shilt		
30	almadmae	daeyt		
31	almahboob	sihit		
32	Eyuni	rajjieliy		
33	Wilfy	khidh		
34	Bihwak	ishrad		

35	Aljifn	marad (2)		
36	Daleel	sawwabni		
37	Almuhib	mashani		
38	Eydi	tiloom		
39	Yarab	jetak		
40	Zimany	athib		
41	'ihshay	tihin		
42	'ibtarij	tagool		
43	Alrrah	'ihlif (2)		
44	alanas (2)	shitar		
45	marrah (3)	tirjaili		
46	Khatwat	tiraje		
47	Miniyah	tilzam		
48	Alssayf	tactabrah		
49	Marhab	eadilha		
50	Alrrooh	walaflan (2)		
51	Eadilha	tah		
52	Alththat	aegud		
53	Alssajiah	yinfaeni		
54	Jilmood	anti		
55	Wanny	yintoony		
56	Heali			
57	Filtan			
58	Walaflan			
59	Alathiyah			

Table 3: Frequencies of the Content Words in Limericks and Abuthiyahs

Poem Types	Nouns	%	Verbs	%	Adjectives	%	Adverbs	%	No. of content words
Limericks	70	40.6	50	29.0	34	19.7	18	10.4	172
Abuthiyahs	69	46.3	62	41.6	14	9.3	4	2.6	149

As shown in the Table 3, the total number of content words in limericks under investigation is 162, whereas in abuthiyahs, it is 149.

General

In limericks, there is one stanza of five verses; each verse is about 5-8 words. Most of the vocabulary used is simple, informal, countable, specific and descriptive representing names of persons, places or things symbolizing the characters of stories, like “Old Derry down Derry” or “Old Person of Buda” in limericks (1) and (3), respectively. On the other side, abuthiyahs are also formed of one stanza but of four verses. In each verse, there are 4-6 words; most of which are difficult, complex, colloquial, descriptive and emotive. A large number of compound words with specific suffixation are included since the selected type of poetry is of a specific nature,

inspired by Iraqi folklore, and written in the poet's own dialect. The best example may be in Abuthiyah (2), where the repeated word 'والافلاك' ending each of the first two verses is formed of the three sentence elements (subject, verb, and object) and preceded by the conjunction 'و' (and) to give the meaning of the word. In the first verse, 'والافلاك' means 'انا أَلَف (ك)' (I tie you), whereas the second cannot be separated since it is idiomatic and means (I lost a thousand) (Al-Karbasi: 2012). In fact, it was difficult to categorize such examples of content words, and hence, they are classified on the basis of meaning as a whole.

Nouns

As Table 3 reveals, nouns in the two types of poems occupy the highest frequencies: 43.2 and 46.3, respectively. This might be as a result of Lear's striking worldview, which is unique to Limerick. He includes and repeats lots of nouns and insists on mentioning the geographical location of his characters, which adds more humor to his stories. This can also be the reason why the occurrence of concrete nouns (58, 82.8) is higher than that of abstract nouns (12, 17.1%). In abuthiyahs, (35, 50.7%) is the frequency of occurrence of the concrete nouns, and (43, 49.2%) is that of the abstract nouns. This is a satisfying result of such emotional poems. The word "الناس" (people) is classified as a collective noun, and many concrete nouns in the abuthiyahs show no specific gender, such as "حبيب" (lover or beloved) or "صديق" (friend).

Adjectives

The frequency of adjective occurrence in limericks scores (34, 19.7%), including physical adjectives: "old, young", color: "white, blue" and evaluative: "immoderate and dolorous". A gradable adjective is also found: "ruder". Edward Lear was known as a landscape painter who was brilliantly capable of describing his objects, adding beauty to the whole scene. In abuthiyahs, fewer adjectives are scored (14, 9.2%). Though Al-Kadhimi's poems are emotive, he enriches his themes with a pragmatic sense. The selected samples contain some psychological adjectives like "مضيع" (lost), "طيب" (kind), and "سليم" (healthy).

Verbs

Verb frequency in limericks is (50, 29.0%). Using verbs falls under the following categories: stative (35, 70%), dynamic (15, 30%), transitive (17, 34%), intransitive (33, 66%), and linking verbs (4, 8%). The poet narrates stories and describes events; hence, it may be justifiable to use the above frequencies of verb classes. All the verbs are in the past tense, and only two of them are in the passive voice: 'was spotted' and 'was chocked' in limericks (7) and (10), respectively.

On the other side, some verbs of the abuthiyahs are simple with explicit subject, like: (تشهد witness) in abuthiyah (2) or implicit subject, like: (تصير become) in abuthiyah (1). Others are compound of either the verb and real subject (the poet himself in many examples), like: (أربي 'I look at' of أرب + 'subject') in abuthiyah (1) or the verb, subject, and object, like: (أشدنك I tie you) in abuthiyah (2) and (ناجيك I come to you) in abuthiyah (1) verse (3). This is due to the complexity of the Arabic sentence structure. Most of the verbs are dynamic and transitive.

Adverbs

This category scores the lowest frequencies in the two types: (18. 10.4 %) in limericks and (8. 2.6 %) in abuthiyahs. The fewer occurrences may be due to the selection of both types, and this may be obvious in limericks where the majority of the verbs are stative. It is worth noting in limericks that the adverb of place 'there' in the first verse of each limerick is mostly repeated to indicate their narrative style. Other adverbs are of time: 'when', frequency 'never' and manner 'well and quickly'.

4.2 Grammatical Categories

In all his poems, Lear follows a strict scheme, starting with declarative, complex sentences with non-defining relative clauses. First verses usually begin with 'There was, followed by premodified nouns, and end with subordinate clauses:

- "There was an Old Derry down Derry,
Who loved to see little folks merry;"
- "There was a Young Lady whose bonnet,
Came untied when the birds sate upon it;"

- "There was an Old Person of Buda,
- Whose conduct grew ruder and ruder;"

The selected samples include sentences with explicit (i.e., verbal), suffixal and non-verbal negation:

- "He replied—"Not at all!"
- "Came *untied* when the birds sate upon it;"
- "Will *NOBODY* answer this bell?"

Due to his narrative style, Lear includes indirect speech in his poems:

- "But she said, "*I don't care!*"
- "There was an Old Man who said, "*Hush!*
I perceive a young bird in this bush!"
- "When they said—"Is it small?"
He replied—"Not at all!"

In addition, adverbial phrases at the beginning of some examples are noticed:

- "*Till at last*, with a hammer,
They silenced his clamour,
By smashing that Person of Buda"
- "*Whereon* by a thorn,
Her dress being torn"

Whereas limericks are anecdotes, abuthiyahs are emotive poems where cohesive devices between the verses of one poem may not be found. They are structured differently, either as simple, coordinated, or subordinated sentences. Simple structures are usually found in the fourth verse of abuthiyah. Examples may illustrate, respectively:

- " رَجَعْلِي حَبِيبِ الْكَلْبِ لِيَّهْ " Bring my sweetheart to me.
- " كَتَبْتُ اَكْتَابَ وَالْمَدْمَعُ مَحَالَهْ " I wrote a letter *but* tears erased it.
- " تَظُنُّ اَنْسَاكَ يَا وَلِيْفِي مَحَالَهْ " It will be impossible that I forget you, my beloved.

Verbal negation lies in some verses with the particles (ما or لا 'not') in: abuthiyah (6) and (9) verse (1), abuthiyah (4) verse (4), abuthiyah (7) verse (3), abuthiyah (8) verse (2), and abuthiyah (10) verse (2) and (3). The only example of implicit negation is:

- "سوى المَحْبُوبِ بِعُيُونِي مَحَالَهْ" (No one is beautiful but my beloved.)

Furthermore, in Lear's limericks, a graphological deviation is apparent where the poet capitalizes all the letters of the word 'NOBODY' in limerick (9), giving it specific importance.

Another deviation is the capitalization the first words starting each verse though not forming a sentence start. In addition, names of characters with their preceding adjectives are capitalized. Lear introduces his characters in such a deviation and focuses on their important features:

- "There was a *Young Lady* whose nose."
- "There was an *Old Man* of the *South*."
- "There was a *Young Lady* whose nose."

Though the Arabic language has no rules of capitalization, the graphological deviation of abuthiyahs is most likely a result of the colloquial dialect the poet uses. Thus, the language used does not follow the rules of writing. Furthermore, some compound expressions are not found in standard Arabic and may resemble grammatical units. Accordingly, each verse includes 3–4 deviated forms:

- "صَدِيحُ الْعُمْرِ وَكَتِ الشَّدِيدِ يَرْبُهُ" (A lifelong friend stands in time of hardship)

The word صديق is taken from صديق (friend), وقت from وقت (time), الشَّدِيد from الشَّدَائِد (time of hardship), and يربه from جربه (try him out).

4.3 Figures of Speech

4.3.1 Grammatical Deviation

Rohmann (2006) states that "in Lear's limericks, there are two stereotypical deviations from the prototype of a narrative circle: the first is a lack of narrative dynamics because of an initial state that does not develop all; the second is incoherence because of the substitution of narrative causality by chance or a mere juxtaposition of unconnected events (P: 140)". In addition, Lear intentionally shows repetition in the first verse of all limericks when it starts with 'There was' as part of his anecdotic style and to add more fun to the stories. A similar repetition in the first and last verses of words, like 'bonnet' in limerick (2), or phrases, like 'Derry down Derry' and 'Man of Cape Horn' in (1) and (5), respectively.

It is remarkable that there are some anaphoric relative pronouns (who and whose) in the first sentence of each limerick. Anaphora is a backward reference, or the use of a word or an expression depending upon an antecedent expression, which is usually contrasted with cataphora (forward reference), when the use of an expression depends upon a postcedent expression. Cataphora is also used in Lear's limerick (3) to add a state of excitement to the humorous stories:

- "Till at last, with a hammer,
They silenced his clamour,
By smashing *that Person of Buda*."
- "So he sat on a chair,
Till he died of despair,
That dolorous *Man of Cape Horn*."

- "But he tore it in pieces,
To give to his nieces,—
That cheerful *Old Man in a pew*."

Hyperbole is a poetic device showing an extreme exaggeration of the ideas the poet intends to emphasize. Hyperbolic statements are found in limericks (8) and (9):

- "It is four times as big as the bush!" (Referring to the 'young bird')
- "I have pulled day and night,"
- "Till my hair has grown white,"

Parallelism is another stylistic device where similar structural components (phrases or clauses) are used to make a text easier to process. Writers, especially poets, employ this device to achieve rhythm and order. Parallelism is clear in the first verses of each Limerick. Lear tries to make his poems more memorable when he intentionally uses the same balanced sentences:

- "There was a Young Lady whose bonnet,
Came ..."
- "There was an Old Person of Buda,
Whose conduct grew..."
- "There was an Old Lady whose folly,
Induced her ..."

On the other side, abuthiyahs show similar poetic devices. *Repetition* of the same word is noticed in each poem where the first three verses end with exactly the same word, though meaning and grammatical structures are different. Abuthiyah (9) says:

- a. "أَيْشُ النَّاسِ مَا تَلَزَمَ عَدْلَهُ" (why do people not stick to their fairness?)
 - b. "كُلُّ مَوْهُوبٍ تَعْتَبِرُهُ عَدْلُهَا" (Every gifted person is considered their enemy)
 - c. "طَيِّبِ الدَّائِثِ لِلْعُوجِ عَدْلُهَا" (The good-hearted straightens the crooked)
- شَيْنِ الدَّائِثِ مُذْمُومِ السَّجِيئِهِ" (The flaw is reprehensible)

The compound word (عدلها) is a clear example of repetition, though (a), (b), and (c) implies different meanings and structures. The word عدل + ها means (its justice), (its enemy), and (to modify it), respectively. Al-Kadhimi shows his poetic versatility when he uses his specific dialect to compose exactly the same vocabulary in one anagram, uniting in pronunciation and differing in meaning.

Anaphoric uses are noticed in many verses, though they mostly occur as a part of compounding, whereas no *cataphoric* expressions are found in the selected samples since the construction of such poems mainly depends on the unity of the subject that the poet wants to express, discarding the linkage of verses. These are examples of anaphora (Abuthiyahs 1 and 4, respectively):

- "حَبِيبُ الْكَلْبِ لَيْكَ أَرْبِي وَنَاجِيكَ" (My beloved, I long for you and converse you)
- أَكْفُ كُلَّ خَطَرٍ عَن دَرَبِكَ وَنَاجِيكَ (I keep the danger away from you)
- لَوْ نَزَّكَ طَحَّحْتُ بِسِ إِئْدَةَ وَنَاجِيكَ" (If you fall, call me and I'll come to you)
- "سَلِيمُ الطَّنْعِ بَيْنَ الْمُهْجِ يُرْبِيهِ" (The pure-hearted is seen among the hearts)
- عَلَيْهِ النَّظَرُ مِنْ كُلِّ كَثْرٍ يُرْبِيهِ" (He is protected wherever he goes)

The Arabic pronouns انك (you), ت (you), and ك (you) underlined in the third verse of the first example have the antecedent reference حبيب الكلب (sweetheart/ beloved), and in the second example, the underlined pronouns (أ you) refer to سليم الطبع (the one who has good attitudes). Al-Kadhimi successfully shows his thoughtfulness and the sobriety of his poems by using *hyperbolic* expressions, such as these:

- "أَنَّهُ أَدْرِي أَنهِيْمَهُ وَمُضْنِيْعٍ وَالْأَفْلَاقِ" (I am lost, drifting in stars) (Abuthiyah 2)
- "أَطَّلُ بِهَوَاكَ هَائِمًا لِلْمَنِيَّةِ" (I remain lost in your love until fate's end) (Abuthiyah 5)

In the first example, the expression والافلاك (I lost a thousand) is an overstatement where the poet expresses that his love made him lose many (thousand) of his things. In the second, he promises his beloved that he will be a wanderer until death.

Parallelism also occurs in Al-Kadhimi's abuthiyahs as part of his intense sensation and real poetic genius:

- "إِخْلَفَ بِالشَّيْطَرِ بِالسَّيْفِ مَرْحَبٌ" (I swear by the person who halved Marheb) (Abuthiyah 8)
- "شَلَّتْ أَيْدِي وَدَعَيْتِ وَصَحَّتْ يَارَبُ" (I raised my hand and prayed to God in a loud voice) (Abuthiyah 6)

4.3.2 Phonological Deviation

4.3.2.1 Rhyme

A rhyme scheme is a pattern where there is a correspondence of sounds, usually at the end of lines. It can be 'typical' when words sound the same at the last syllable, 'internal' when words rhyme in the same line, or outside-in rhymes when the poet rhymes the end of a line with the start of the next. Lear's limericks show typical rhyming as he enriches all his poems with this musical device, adding predictable pleasure to his audience. As mentioned before, a limerick pattern is AABBA, where the first, second, and fifth rhyme the same and are different from the third and fourth, which show the same rhyme. These are good examples:

- "There was an Old Lady whose *folly*,
Induced her to sit in a *holly*;
Whereon by a *thorn*,
Her dress being *torn*,
She quickly became *melancholy*."
- "There was an Old Man who said, "*Hush!*"
I perceive a young bird in this *bush!*"

When they said—"Is it *small*?"

He replied—"Not at *all*!"

It is four times as big as the *bush*!"

Abuthiyahs also show the same typical rhyme schemes but are formed in the AAAB pattern. Al-Kadhimi sparkly singles out his ending rhymes, which, unlike limericks, are mainly composed of grammatical structures:

- "جَيْتَكَ مَرَّةً اذْبَ خَطَوَاتِ مَرْحَبٍ" (Once, I came and greeted you) (Abuthiyah 8)
- ما مَرَّهَ تَحِينٌ وَتُكْوَلُ مَرْحَبٍ (Not any time you welcomed me)
- إِخْلَفَ بِالشَّيْطَرِ بِالسَّيْفِ مَرْحَبٍ (I swear by the person who halved Marheb)
- تَرْجِعْ لِي وَتَرْجِعِ الرُّوحَ لِيَّهَ" (Return and bring back my soul to me)
- "كُلُّ جَلْمُودٍ مِنْ وَئِي وَلَفْلَانٍ" (Every boulder of my pain is for someone) (Abuthiyah 10)
- حَيْلِي طَاخَ لَا أَعْكَذُ وَلَفْلَانٍ (I'm exhausted, and I can't tie anything to anyone)
- لَا فِلْتَانٌ يَنْفَعُنِي وَلَفْلَانٍ (No one saves me)
- أَنْطِي الْخَيْرَ يَنْطُونِي الْأَذْيَهَ" (I give goodness, and they give me harm)

4.3.2.2 Alliteration

As an effective method of linking neighboring words, alliteration is a conspicuous recurrence of the same initial consonant sounds. Lear tries to create rhythm and draw attention to particular parts when alliterating words in his limericks:

- "There was an Old Derry down Derry
- Till he died of despair,
- That dolorous Man of Cape Horn."

In abuthiyahs, alliteration recurs to add luster to Al-Kadhimi's verses:

- ما مَرَّهَ تَحِينٌ وَتُكْوَلُ مَرْحَبٍ
- تَرْجِعْ لِي وَتَرْجِعِ الرُّوحَ لِيَّهَ" (Abuthiyah 8)
- يَجْرَحِي إِشْكَدُ إِشْدَنْكَ وَالْأَفْلَاكُ (O, my wounds, many times I've bounded them, yet slipped away)
- أَذُوسِ الْأَجَلِ وَإِسْحَاكَ عَالَمِيَّهَ (I step on fate and press towards destiny) ((Abuthiyah 2)

Though alliteration in the above lines is obvious, in the third verse, there is repetition of two initial sounds of the successive words اشكد (many times) and اشدتك (tie). In addition, the word علمنيه (destiny), in the fourth verse is colloquially compounded of (المنية and على); hence, the 'أ' sound is underlined to be part of the alliterated pattern.

4.3.2.3 Pun

Pun is defined by Crystal (1969) as "a play on words... using words in an amusing and tricky manner, make a pun (P: 408)". It is a form of word or expression suggesting multiple meanings that may cause ambiguity to create a rhetorical or humorous effect. It is also called paronomasia (Alexander, 1997). Puns can be a result of metonymic, metaphorical, homophonic, or homographic use of words in language. In fact, only homographic examples are noted in the selected limericks (i.e., words spelled and pronounced alike but having different meanings):

"There was an Old Man of *Cape Horn*,
So he made them a *Book*"

In the first example, the words 'Cape' and 'Horn' may describe that old man putting a horn-like cape on his head since Lear, in most of his limericks, tries to make fun of the characters he introduces; hence, he may intentionally omit the indefinite article 'the' to pun his text. In the second, 'Old Derry' may either make a book for them where he wrote their humors or booked them somewhere to have fun.

Homographic use of words is frequent in abuthiyahs. It is part of its rhetorical structure. Al-Kakhimi marvelously includes such puns at the end of the first three verses in each poem. To explain their meaning, one needs good knowledge of this specific dialect and a thorough understanding of each verse separately:

- "تَعَالُ إِنِّجَلْمُ أَرْضَنَه بُهَآي بِسْ مُرْ" (come in my dreams; I will be content with this) (Abuthiyah 3)

أَجِبِبِ الْبَبِزْ نَبِينِ أَيِدِيكَ بَسْ مُرْ (I bring the moon to your hands, just command me)

- صِرْتَلْكَ شَهْدُ لَيْشِ تُصَيِّرِ بَسْ مُرْ (I became honey for you; why do you turn into bitterness)

The first word مر is 'to come', the second is 'to command' and the third is 'bitterness'.

4.4 Cohesion and Context

4.4.1 Cohesion

Leech (1981) explains the significant use of cohesive devices in writing, saying that "the units must be implicitly or explicitly bound together; they must not be just a random collection of sentences ...it is not always an important aspect of literary style (P: 196)". In fiction, Leech states that cohesion can be a background for style markers. However, lexical and grammatical cohesive devices are clearly noticed in limericks as well as in abuthiyahs since they make the language sound more natural. Lear uses examples of collocational expressions, like 'Young Lady', 'Old Man', and 'day and night'. On the other hand, expressions like: 'حبيب الكلب' (sweetheart) and 'صديق العمر' (friend of life) occur in the abuthiyahs.

Grammatical devices are frequent in both types, so many examples of coordinating conjunctions and linking adverbials are effectively used to add natural flow and great rhythm to both limericks and abuthiyahs. In the latter, the devices used are represented by the occurrence of the conjunction 'و' (and) and also the adverbial فوكاها (furthermore). The most obvious examples of both types are:

- "But he tore it in pieces,"
- "When they said—"Is it small?""
- "أُدوس الأَجَلَ وَاسْحَكْ عَالَمِيَّه" (I step on fate and press towards destiny) (Abuthiyah 1)
- "فَوَكَّاهَا وَتَلْوَمُ النَّاسَ بِئِه" (Above it all, people blame me) (Abuthiyah 7)

It is worth mentioning that certain cohesive devices are used implicitly or as a part of compound structures:

- تَرْجَعِي وَتَرْجِعُ الرُّوحَ لِيَّه (Abuthiyah 8)
- لا فلتانُ ينفَعُنِي ولأفان (Neither... nor) (Abuthiyah 10)

4.4.2 Context

Limericks of Lear are simple humorous images intended for a limited audience, mainly children, for entertainment; hence, the context is a form of indirect speech introduced by the fictional characters he chooses for each story, following the same satiric style in all his limericks. Unlike Lear, Al-Kadhimi emotively writes direct messages using the first singular pronoun 'I' in his speech. In most of the selected parts, a strong connection is realized between the poet and his addressee, his beloved.

5. Conclusion

The paper has been an attempt to realize the characteristics of two different-cultured poems so as to arrive at the conclusion that, though abuthiyahs are written in a specific dialect, i.e., Iraqi colloquial, a stylistic analysis is equally conducted as the one by which limericks are analyzed to achieve the same purpose. The stylistic devices used to investigate the two types of poems help in better understanding the nature and style of the poems and eliciting meanings that show their significance in literature. Interestingly enough, Lear presents individual images through which each limerick has its own story of a peculiar character in reference to a city. In short, Lear's nonsense limericks may deliver "messages of tolerance" to the world around them in the form of joy and excitement to enrich his readers with masterpieces of popular poetry. The stylistic devices employed to analyze his verses facilitate the way readers interpret the difficulties that may come as a result of using his own dialect. In fact, he exploits some intentional efforts to show his creative ability in using language.

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