



A Grapho-Stylistic Analysis of Paragraphing in E.D.M. Sibiya's Novels

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v6i10.1680>

Abstract

The aim of this article is to investigate the different types of paragraphs in E.D.M. Sibiya's novels, namely: *Kungasa Ngifile* (2002), *Ngidedele Ngife* (2006), and *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2010). While Sibiya uses different paragraphs for artistic effects in his novels, there seems to be no study, so far, that has been done to investigate this aspect of his works. Since the study is a grapho-stylistic analysis, this implies that the focus is on the stylistic significance of paragraphing as graphological feature in the analysed novels. The findings of the study will reveal that Sibiya uses descriptive paragraphs for, among other reasons, imagery purposes while rhetorical inquiry paragraphs are employed for the purpose of engaging readers when a text is read. It was also discovered, on the other hand, that the narrative and dialogue paragraphs are used as narrative techniques, which contribute to the overall narration in the novels. This analysis is done through linguistic stylistics, with Ngara's linguistic format as a base.

Keywords: *Paragraphing; Graphology; Linguistic Stylistics; Novel*

Introduction

Paragraphing refers to the process of dividing writing into paragraphs. The process of paragraphing assists authors to structure their content in a meaningful way. This is an important part of their writing as it creates coherence and flow when the work is read. Without paragraphing, writing becomes tedious with no direction. Explaining a paragraph, Soanes & Hawker (2006: 540) explain that this is part of a piece of writing which begins on a new line generally after a break. The first sentence is placed at the beginning of a new line (Allen *et al.*, 1996: 325).

Salakpi (2020: 21) highlights that a paragraph consists of a topic sentence, supporting sentence and concluding sentence. Even though this might be true, Serudu (1993: 180) argues that such a definition excludes one-sentence paragraphs. Elaborating on this, she says: "Writers use one-sentence paragraphs to state an idea which they need not develop or to lay stress on it". Serudu is essentially arguing that a

paragraph does not always have to be structured in the manner that Salakpi is proposing. Cuddon (2013: 511) recognises this in saying that a paragraph focuses mainly on the idea and that it may vary in length.

With the consideration of the scholarly insights above, a paragraph, in a nutshell, can be defined as a section of a piece of writing that is separated by a line and begins on a new line. It might consist of one or more sentences, dealing with a specific subject. The process of dividing these paragraphs is called 'paragraphing'. Paragraphs can be divided into different types in literature and these types may play different artistic roles. Sibiya structures paragraphs according to their variety and artistic significance in his novels and this section seeks to explore this aspect of his work, since it has been discovered that there is no study so far that has been conducted on this.

While textual analysis is selected as a qualitative research technique, the study leans on linguistic stylistics as a theoretical framework. Here, insights are drawn from Ngara's (1982) linguistic format. Even though this is the case, it should be noted that it is only the graphological level of this format that is prioritised in this paper. The analysed novels are: *Kungasa Ngifile* (2002), *Ngidedele Ngife* (2006), and *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2010).

Methodology

In this study, data is collected, organised, and interpreted through qualitative method as a research design. This design aims to approach the world to describe, understand and explain social phenomena. It attempts to do this by evaluating the experiences of individuals or groups, analysing interactions and communication, as well as the analysis of documents in the form of texts, images, film, music, to name a few (Flick, 2018: 1). Commenting on qualitative research method, Frey *et al*, in Chesebro & Borisoff (2007: 6), aver:

Qualitative data take the form of words rather than numbers. Qualitative data are analyzed and presented in the form of case studies, critiques, and sometimes verbal reports.... Qualitative data are analyzed most often by rhetorical critics and ethnographers.

The insights above indicate that qualitative research does not lean on numbers to collect, understand, and interpret data. This suggests that this approach is centered on extracting data using words rather than numbers. To do this, qualitative research relies on different techniques. These may include, for instance, observations, interviews, and document analysis. In this study, since the highlighted novels are primary sources, this implies that the study is done through textual analysis a qualitative research technique.

Theoretical Framework

Literature is written and understood through language. To have an understanding of the phenomenon of language, Ngara (1982: 10) argues that the reader needs to resort to the study of linguistics, which is shaped by elements such as grammatical structures, rhythm, sounds, lexical meanings, metre, language varieties, linguistic idiosyncrasies, and many more. There is thus an interdependent relationship between linguistics and stylistics. Language is understood through the study of linguistics, while stylistics, in turn, depends on language. Malinga (2002: 35) comments on linguistics and stylistics by remarking:

The relationship between linguistics and stylistics is an instrumental one and the student of style must have a sound knowledge of descriptive linguistics. He or she needs linguistics in applying the basic methods of stylistics.

Ngara's stylistic criticism is governed by his linguistic format, which he divides into two subsets, *viz.* linguistic features proper, and para-linguistic devices. The para-linguistic devices are argued to be features such as symbolism, myth, allusion, and allegory, which are analysed differently from normal linguistic descriptions. The linguistic proper features, on the other hand, are perceived from the following different levels:

- The *grammatical level*, which considers grammatical features such as syntax, types of sentence and the correlation of form and meaning.
- The *lexical level*, where focus is levelled to the author's choice of words. This may involve aspects like figures of speech – similes, metaphors, etc.
- The *level of tenor of discourse* refers to tone and the nature of formality and informality between the author and audience.
- The *phonological level* observes poetic patterns. This may include sounds like rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, parallelism, etc.
- The *graphological level*, involves writing techniques, such as punctuation, paragraphing, colour, shape, etc.

It was indicated above that, out of the listed levels above, it is only the graphological level that is observed in this study. Graphology focuses on studying features that are made by handwriting or even by a computer. This can be words, symbols, diagrams, pictures, etc. Hanif *et al.* (2015: 31) explain that graphology focuses on studying the language's writing system and rules pertaining to spelling. It may also include punctuation and paragraphing (Sharma, 2019: 13). Yeibo & Akerele (2014: 10) offer a comprehensive view by saying:

Graphology is a level of linguistic analysis which focuses on the layout of texts, the size or shape of words and any other feature that is graphical or orthographical. It is a fundamental and crucial way of paying close attention to visual images and diagrams in a text which help to encode, extend or modify its signification.

The views above highlight how broad graphology is. It covers a wide scope of written and visual features. In this paper, the focus is on paragraphing as a graphological feature. An attempt is made to investigate how paragraphing is used for stylistic effects (grapho-stylistic).

Analysis of Paragraphing in E.D.M. Sibiya's Novels

The analysis of paragraphing in E.D.M. Sibiya's novels, and how they are used for artistic effects, is done by observing the following types of paragraphs: descriptive paragraphs, rhetorical inquiry paragraphs, narrative paragraphs, and dialogue paragraphs.

• Descriptive Paragraphs

The word 'descriptive' is an adjective derived from the verb 'describe'. In simple terms, to describe is to give details to explain how something is like. With this understanding, a descriptive paragraph can be defined as one that gives details of how something is like. This may also include how what is referred to feels or smells (Sari & Wahyuni, 2018: 169). The use of imagery (Faisal & Suwandita, 2013: 242), adverbs, relatives, and adjectives is also evident in descriptive paragraphs. A descriptive paragraph essentially paints mental pictures in readers, as it appeals to their senses (Littel, 1981: 111).

Sibiya uses descriptive paragraphs to provide background information and/or to highlight the setting in his novels, as in the case of the below example in *Kungasa Ngifile* (2002), for instance:

Nelanga phandle walizwa sengathi lishisa kakhulu kunakuqala. Kanti-ke empeleni noma kwakusehlobo nje lalingakhiphi umkhovu etsheni. Nesihlahla sepentshisi esasikhona lapha

egcekeni kwaMhlungu sasikufakazela lokho, sinyakanyakaza siqatshulwa umoya owawudamane ushweza kancane. Utshani babuvunile ngeziluhlaza cwe nezimbali ziqhakazile.

(He felt like the temperature outside was too hot than usual. But then, even though it was summer, it was not very hot. Even the tree of peaches that was there attested to that, it was swerving sideways and glided along by the wind. The grass was very green, and the roses blossomed.)

(Sibiya, 2002: 8)

As indicated above, a descriptive paragraph provides details of how something is like and the paragraph above is an example of one. The author is describing Mhlungu and MaMemela's household in this part of the story. He is also describing the weather condition. By reading this paragraph, the reader can easily imagine that the household has blossoming roses, green grass, and a peach tree. The reader can also tell that the weather is hot.

The paragraph consists of adverbs, adjective, and the relative and these aid in making the paragraph to be more descriptive. For instance, the adverb 'kakhulu' (too much) in the sentence: "*Nelanga phandle walizwa sengathi lishisa kakhulu kunakuqala*" (He felt like the temperature was too hot than usual) is describing how hot the sun is. This is the same with the adverb 'kancane' (a little) in the statement: "... *sinyakanyakaza siqatshulwa umoya owawudamane ushweza kancane*" (... it was swerving sideways and glided along by wind), where the little gliding of the wind is described. On the other hand, the word 'ngeziluhlaza' (with green), in the statement: "*Utshani babuvunile ngeziluhlaza cwe...*" (The grass was very green), describes the nature of the grass while the adjective 'ziqhakazile' (they have blossomed) in "... *nezimbali ziqhakazile*" (... and the roses blossomed) describes how blossoming the roses are.

The use of a descriptive paragraph is also demonstrated in *Ngidedele Ngife* (2006) when the author describes the township of Nquthu in the following manner:

Idolobha iNquthu alikhulu kangako. Uma ufika ezipambanweni zomgwaqo ubona uqwembe oluluhlaza nolukhomba ukuthi indlela eqondayo ibheka eBabanango. Umgwaqo ojikela kwesobunxele ubheka eNondweni kanti ojikela kwesokudla ubheka eDandi. Isibhedlela sikhona nje lapho ezipambanweni zomgwaqo, ngakwesokudla. Phambi kwaso, ngaphesheya komgwaqo, kukhona isikhumulo samabhasi namatekisi kanti eceleni kwaso, uma weqa ezimpambanweni, kukhona izitolo namabhange.

(Nquthu is not a very big town. When you arrive at the road intersection, you see a green board that shows that the straight road heads to Babanango. The road that turns to the left heads to Nondweni while the one that turns to the right heads to Dandi. The hospital is there at the intersection, on the right. In front of it, across the road, there is a taxi rank and bus station. Next to it, when you pass the intersection, there are stores and banks.)

(Sibiya, 2006: 39)

The paragraph above is a description of the CJM Hospital surrounding areas in Nquthu. The description Sibiya provides above is an accurate and real one since he was born and bred in Nquthu. He is using a real-life description to build a story in fiction. This is the hospital Ndabayakhe is admitted in. To create a vivid image of this area, Sibiya uses a descriptive paragraph. He uses this paragraph to highlight a single aspect of the story's setting. The story in this novel takes place in the rural and urban areas of Nquthu and the paragraph above highlights the urban setting.

In *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2010), Sibiya describes the features of Madonsela and MaKhoza's house in the following way:

Impahla ekulesi sakhiwo izikhulumela ingabuziwe ukuthi ingeyemalini eshisiwe ngempela. Bheka nje ngoba ikhishi lakhona lisho ngesiqandisi sakhona esizikhumulayo, othi uma usondeza isandla ukusivula uzibuke ezibukweni eziyizivalo zakhona. Ikhabethe lakhona nalo liyamemezela, uma ulibukela kude awuqondi noma yipulangwe okukanye yinsimbi. Uma wenyuka ngezitebhisi ubheke ekamelweni likaMaKhoza noMadonsela, ukhenxa umlomo nje uqeda ukuvula umnyango. Umbhede wakhona ungathi yinkundla yebhola likanobhutshuzwayo. Uphakeme sengathi ubekwe phezu kwamatshe kanti cha, yindlela owakhiwe ngayo nje. Ifenisha yakuleli kamelo ungathi yonke yenziwe ngethambo nje elimhlophe qwa ...

(The furniture in this building makes it obvious that it is expensive. Look because the kitchen has a fridge that opens itself. You see yourself on its door mirror when you stretch your hand to open it. Even the cupboard is glamorous. When you look at it from a distance, you cannot tell if it is plank or steel. You are left amazed when you go up the stairs and see inside MaKhoza and Madonsela's bedroom. The bed is like a soccer stadium. It is high as if it has been put on top of stones, but this is not the case, it is just the way it is designed. It is as if the whole furniture of this bedroom has been made with a snow-white bone ...)

(Sibiya, 2010: 4)

Sibiya is describing the features of MaKhoza and Madonsela's house in this instance. This descriptive paragraph appears at the initial stages of the novel and the author is using it to provide background information and highlight the setting of the novel. By reading this paragraph, the reader can tell that this is a wealthy family. The description of the expensive furniture makes it clear and believable. The reader can also easily assume that this house is situated in an urban area.

The paragraph above also describes the kitchen and bedroom of MaKhoza and Madonsela's house. To try and paint mental pictures in readers' minds, the author uses imagery in some cases. For instance, in the statement: "*Ikhabethe lakhona nalo liyamemezela, uma ulibukela kude awuqondi noma yipulangwe okukanye yinsimbi*" (Even the cupboard is glamorous. When you look at it from a distance, you cannot tell if it is plank or steal), Sibiya uses personification to emphasise how glamorous the cupboard is. The word '*liyamemeza*' (it screams) is derived from the infinite noun '*ukumemeza*' (to scream). It is known for a fact that cupboards cannot scream. Screaming can only be done by human beings. Sibiya is using this expression to highlight the idea that, because of the class of the cupboard, it is difficult for it not to be recognised. This is the same case with screaming. If a person screams, he/she captures people's attention.

Sibiya also uses simile in the statement: "*Umbhede wakhona ungathi yinkundla yebhola likanobhutshuzwayo*" (The bed is like a soccer stadium) and the statement: "*Ifenisha yakuleli kamelo ungathi yonke yenziwe ngethambo nje elimhlophe qwa*" (It is as if the whole furniture of this bedroom has been made with a snow-white bone). In the first statement, MaKhoza and Madonsela's bedroom is likened to a soccer stadium. By reading this, the reader cannot help but imagine how big the bed is because stadiums are generally known for their big size. Not only is this statement a simile, but it is also hyperbolic. It is known for a fact that a bed cannot be as big as a soccer stadium. An exaggeration is made to emphasise the big size of the bed. The second statement also assists the reader to imagine how white the bedroom is, as it is likened to the whiteness of the bone.

Descriptive paragraphs are successfully used by Sibiyi to help readers form mental pictures when reading the novels. These paragraphs are also significant to the plot structure of the novels since they provide background information and highlight the setting of the novel at hand.

• Rhetorical Inquiry Paragraphs

The word ‘rhetorical’ is an adjective derived from the noun ‘rhetoric’. According to *MacMillan English Dictionary* (2002: 1217), the noun rhetoric refers to the art of persuading or influencing people through the spoken or written communication. The noun ‘inquiry’, on the other hand, refers to a question posed to get information. The phrase ‘rhetorical inquiry paragraphs’ is thus used here to refer to paragraphs that are dominated by questions that do not necessarily need answers. They are used for rhetoric effects.

Sibiyi uses rhetorical inquiry paragraphs to engage readers with the content so that they can think critically about the subject at hand. As the stories are told, these paragraphs make the narration to be interesting as they raise questions that make readers wonder and ponder on what is being communicated. This is clearly seen in the paragraph below, from *Kungasa Ngifile* (2002), for instance:

Umhluphe lo mzwangedwa uMaMemela. Akulula nakancane ukukhuluma iqiniso. Izwe lingathini uma lizwa ukuthi akaziphathanga kahle emzini? UMhlungu angamelwa inhliziyi enani ngoba enganampilo vele? USenzo yena angazibulala uma ezwa ukuthi kanti ungowakwaZondi? Angezibulale esezohlukana nesithandwa sakhe ngenxa yobuhlobo obufihlekile? Akwaziwa mbantshi kujiya. Izigameko zokuzibulala kwentsha ngenxa yothando zivamile ezweni. Umsakazo ungufakazi oqanda ikhanda. Pho yinto azoyithini le uMaMemela?

(This secret troubled MaMemela. It is not easy at all to tell the truth. What would the world say when it hears that she was unfaithful in her marriage? Would Mhlungu’s heart not stop as he is sickly already? Would Senzo kill himself when he hears that he is a Zondi? Would he not kill himself if he is going to separate with his girlfriend because of the unknown relationship/kinship with him? No one knows. Cases of children who commit suicide because of love affairs are typical in the world. The radio is a testator of this. What would MaMemela do with this?)

(Sibiyi, 2002: 63)

The rhetorical inquiry paragraph above highlights the complications that are a result of MaMemela’s unfaithfulness in her marriage. At this stage of the novel, these complications have not necessarily occurred, but they are being introduced by the series of rhetorical questions within the paragraph. Their use plays an important role in sparking the readers’ curiosity and interest. Readers are captivated to continue reading, to determine how the events will unfold. In their reading, these questions are also engaging them to think critically about the implications of MaMemela’s unfaithfulness in her marriage.

In *Ngidedele Ngife* (2010), Sibiyi uses a rhetorical inquiry paragraph in this manner:

Yinto azoyithini ngempela lena? Ungathi ubethi uzama ukuwuphebeza lo mcabango wengculazi, nakho-ke uMtshingothi useqamba ingoma ngaso lesi sifo! Ngakube uMtshingothi lona ubecabangeni nje bakithi aze aqambe ingoma enjena kodwa?

(What is he going to do with this indeed? He was trying to ignore his thoughts about HIV & AIDS, but here is Mtshingothi composing a song about this disease! But then what was Mtshingothi thinking by composing a song like this?)

(Sibiya, 2006: 18)

The paragraph above is mainly about enquiring hence it is made up of the questions: “*Yinto azoyithini ngempela lena?*” (What is he going to do with this?), “*Ngakube uMtshingothi lona ubecabangeni nje bakithi aze aqambe ingoma enjena kodwa?*” (But then what was Mtshingothi thinking by devising a song like this?). These questions do not need responses as they are rhetorical in nature. Sibiya is using them to try and put readers into Ndabayakhe’s shoes. Ndabayakhe has suspicions that he might be HIV positive and he is struggling to shake off those thoughts. While battling with these thoughts, he visits Mtshingothi who has just composed a song about HIV & AIDS. Ndabayakhe seems to be unsettled by this as the song rekindles the thoughts he is trying by all means to avoid. These questions thus highlight Ndabayakhe’s uneasiness.

In *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2010), to highlight some of the questions that are a result of Madonsela’s actions, Sibiya uses the following paragraph:

Osekuxaka manje yikho lokhu agcine esekwenze enganeni yakhe ayizalayo. Yindlela ambonga ngayo yini ekuziphatheni kwakhe angalaleli imizwa ngenkathi yena esekudingisweni? Ngabe kwakufanele alingise laba okwathi kungaboshwa abayeni babo ngenxa yezombusazwe babona ukuthi baqome ngoba bebona ukuthi abayeni babo ngeke babuye ekuboshweni? Kwaba njani-ke ekubuyeni kwabayeni babo? Akwehlukananga imindeni? Akubhidlikanga yini imishado? Bekuyoba nani-ke nje ukuba umyeni wakhe ubevele waqonywa uma esazibona eyinsizwa? Kungani ngempela eze wadlwengula ingane yabo? Kungani nje ngempela?

(What is confusing now is what he did to his child he gave birth to. Is this how he expresses gratitude to her for how she conducted herself while he was in exile? Was she supposed to imitate those who decided to cheat on their husbands when they got arrested due to politics, thinking that they would never come back? How was it like when their husbands returned? Were families not torn apart? Were marriages not destroyed? What would it have been if her husband just cheated if he saw himself as still a young man? Why did he really rape their child? Why really?)

(Sibiya, 2010: 9)

The paragraph above consists of more than five rhetorical questions. Sibiya poses these questions to critique Madonsela’s action of raping Khanyisile and the implications thereof. The author uses this paragraph to make his narration more interesting. The use of these questions plays a pivotal role in arousing readers’ interests. They keep readers captivated. It appears like the author is using these questions not to condone what Madonsela did. Sibiya’s position is clear in this paragraph. He is condemning the act. This does not come as a surprise because authors often use literature to teach or condemn the wrong behavior they observe in society. In this instance, Sibiya is condemning rape and infidelity.

It should also be mentioned that rhetorical inquiry paragraphs can also be credited for the emotional effect they create when the text is read, sometimes. This is the case with the paragraph above. One cannot help but sympathise with MaKhoza and her family because the questions describe the extent of the pain caused by Madonsela that the family is experiencing.

• Narrative Paragraphs

The word ‘narrative’ is an adjective derived from the verb ‘narrate’ and this means to ‘tell’. A narrative paragraph can therefore be recognised as one that tells a story. According to Littel (1981: 108), the art of telling, in general, is divided into events that are interrelated and told in a chronological order.

Madani & Wali (2020: 47) explain that a narrative paragraph is mostly told from the past tense form. This type of paragraph may also give account of experiences (Gusmiliana & Fitri, 2016: 174). When considering the definition of a 'narrative paragraph', the phrase 'chronological order' seems to be significant, and this is so because the act of telling is done sequentially or chronologically, which develops the plot of the story.

In Sibiyi's novels, narrative paragraphs are presented from the third person point of view. These paragraphs provide details of what is happening or what a character is doing. As such, they are marked by perpetual actions that are sequential. The paragraph below, in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2002), exemplifies this, for instance:

*UMaMemela **avuke** emva kwesikhashana uSenzo esecenta. **Abingelele**, **abuze** impilo bese **eqala** umsebenzi wakhe wosuku. Kufuquke izithatha zentuthu exhibeni. **Ugeza** isitsha ebesidlela kuso uSenzo ngenkulu intokozo. Sengathi ingashesha impela indaba yesichitho lena, kucabanga uMaMemela. Athi **angaqeda ukupheka**, **abheke** umthungo wakhe. **Uthunga** ijezi.*

(MaMemela woke up after a few moments when Senzo was doing gardening. She greeted, enquired about Senzo's well-being, and then started her work for the day. Smoke puffed out in the small hut. She is washing the dish Senzo was eating from with so much excitement. If only that curse can work quickly, MaMemela thought. After she finished cooking, she looked at her knitting. She is knitting a jersey.)

(Sibiyi, 2002: 69)

The excerpt above narrates on what MaMemela is doing. There is a lot she seems to be doing this morning and the use of the verbs highlighted in bold, indicate this. She wakes up in the morning and greets Senzo who is doing gardening. She then starts her work for the day by washing the dish Senzo ate from. After cooking, she looks at the jersey she is knitting. The paragraph is narrative as it narrates on what MaMemela is doing in a chronological order, from action to action. Essentially, it gives account of events in a sequential manner, and this is marked by the several verbs used.

The use of narrative paragraphs is also evident in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2006). An account of the events that take place when Ndabayakhe gets to the hospital is given by Sibiyi in the following paragraph:

***Sebehhalisile**, **bahlale**. **Bahlale**, **bahlale**, kodwa lutho ukufika udokotela. UPhilisiwe **azame** indlela yokuthi uNdabayakhe agcine engaphakathi lapho kubonelwa khona udokotela ukuze athole nokuphumula embhedeni njengoba udokotela engakafiki. Le ndawo iseduze nje kwekamelo leziguli.*

(After they have registered, they sat. They sat, they sat but the doctor did not arrive. Philisiwe tried a way for Ndabayakhe to end up going inside, where patients are treated, so that he could rest on the bed since the doctor had not arrived. This place is just near the patients' ward.)

(Sibiyi, 2006: 42)

The above paragraph gives details of what happens when Ndabayakhe gets to the hospital. These details are provided in a chronological order. As highlighted by the verbs in bold, he arrives at the hospital and gets registered. After that, they wait because the doctor has not yet arrived. Philisiwe, who is a nurse, then tries to find Ndabayakhe a better place in hospital where he can wait for the doctor. The

paragraph is essentially narrating on the different events that take place when Ndabayakhe gets to the hospital.

The use of narrative paragraphs is also of no exception in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2010), and the paragraph below qualifies this:

*Emva kwalokho kababange **besaxoxa** isikhathi eside. **Bathatha** imoto **babhekisa** emaphoyiseni. Lokhu kusenqulwini yekati nje **bashesh** **bafika**. **Balwethule**—ke udaba ezandleni zabomthetho. **Baphindela** emuva **sebexoxa** ezabo. Ngaso sonke isikhathi **babexoxa** ngokuthula nangekusasa eliqhakazile lezwe.*

(After that they did not talk for long. They took the car and went to the police. They arrived quickly. They reported the matter to the police. They went back, talking about their own matters. They were talking about peace and the bright future of the nation all the time.)

(Sibiya, 2010: 51)

Madonsela and Ndlovu are going to the police station to deliver the letter they received, as a lead to the investigation of the massacre of their fellow political party members. Just like in the previous two examples discussed above, the verbs in bold are integral in indicating the chronological order of events. After Madonsela receives the letter, they both decide to take a car and drive to the police station. It shows that the police station is not that far, as they quickly arrive and deliver the matter to the police. They then go back while talking about the political future of the nation. The paragraph is narrative in nature as it narrates on what happens, step by step.

As compared to descriptive and rhetorical inquiry paragraphs, narrative paragraphs are events based. As a result of this, they are used by authors to take the story to the different levels of the plot structure.

• Dialogue Paragraphs

Here, attention is paid to dialogue paragraphs. Baldick (2002: 16) explains dialogue as a conversational exchange between or among two or more characters in a narrative work. Zheltukhina *et al.* (2016: 7414), on other hand, highlight that a dialogue is interactive in nature, and it occurs between individuals within a communication process. Resane (2019: 301 - 302) expands on this by explaining the methods of dialogue, namely: bilateral and multilateral methods. Bilateral method involves interaction between two people while multilateral method covers the conversational exchange of three or more people. In this discussion, only bilateral dialogues will be observed since the analysed dialogues are between or among two individuals.

What is common about the scholarly insights above, when defining the concept of ‘dialogue’, is the sentiment that such an act is characterised by exchange of speech. Since this is the case, it means there must be people to facilitate this, and these are characters in the context to literature. Dialogue-based paragraphs are thus paragraphs that are made up of characters’ speeches. These paragraphs are marked by quotation marks to highlight these patterns of speech and they are presented in the form of separate paragraphs in literature, generally.

Apart from normal narration, authors also use characters to expand and advance their stories. This can be done through characters’ speech. The conversation between Zondi and MaMemela below, in *Kungasa Ngifile* (2002), is done through dialogue paragraphs as shown below:

“Lutho Zondi! Mina angiyiboni indlela eya phambili kule ndaba. Akukho okunye okungenziwa ngaphandle kokuthi siyeke nje kwaphela”.

“Angiyiboni inkinga enkulu mina Zanele. Kumele wena wazi izinsuku afika ngazo uma ebuya eDandi. Mina Ngizocupha ngaleza nsuku bese ngikwazi ukukubona”.

(“No Zondi! I do not see a way forward with this issue. There is nothing else that can be done except that we quit, that is all”.)

(“I do not see a major problem here, Zanele. You need to know the days in which he will arrive from Dandi. I will check those days so that I can see you”.)

(Sibiya, 2002: 29)

As a result of guilt, MaMemela is proposing a break-up with Zondi in the dialogue above. Zondi seems not to be happy about this. He is convincing MaMemela that they should continue with their infidelity and be careful. The speeches above are written as two separate paragraphs in the novel. The first paragraph captures MaMemela’s speech and the second one captures Zondi’s. The speeches are separated into different paragraphs for effective organisation and coherence. Readers do not get confused when they are reading because the speeches are structured into different paragraphs. The use of quotation marks in each paragraph also makes it convenient for readers to single out the speech patterns and paragraphs.

Still on the same note, a conversation between John and Khona, in *Ngidedele Ngife* (2006), highlights dialogue paragraphs:

“Ayikho into engingayizama uyazi nawe. Imali ikhona kodwa ngeke isisindise emaphoyiseni ngoba akuwona wonke avuma ukugwazelwa yizigebengu. Uyazi futhi ukuthi nogogo wakho usethembise amaphoyisa. Singalokotha sibuyele kuye? Ngeke!”

“Ngeke mina ngilale ehlathini, John! Kumele impela sibuyele kukhulu siyomncenga”.

(“You also know there is nothing I can try. There is money but it will not save us from the police because not all agree to be bribed by criminals. You also know that your grandmother vowed to call police officers on us. Can we risk and go back to her? No!”)

(“I will not sleep in the forest, John! We really have to go back to grandmother to beg her”.)

(Sibiya, 2006: 99)

The two paragraphs above depict John and Khona who are stranded in a forest. They are being hunted by police and are in hiding. Their conversation suggests that they are in a conflict; John wants them to remain in the forest to avoid the possibility of being caught by the police. Khona, on the other hand, is not convinced by this. She insists that they should go back to her grandmother but John objects this. This conversation is successfully captured through two sequential paragraphs, with the first capturing John’s speech and the second capturing Khona’s.

In *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2010), dialogue paragraphs are identified in a conversation between Khanyisile and MaKhoza below:

“Uyazi mntanami ukuthi ngiyakuthanda. Mina ngiyakubonisa njengomuntu omdala futhi obona izinto ezikude.”

“Uma ubungithanda, ubungamenzani umuntu ongidlwengulayo ukuba bekungeyena umyeni wakho womshado?”

(“You know that I love you, my child. I am advising you as an elderly person who also sees from a distance”.)

(“If you loved me, what would you do to someone who rapes me if it was not your husband”.)

(Sibiya, 2010: 44)

In this scenario, MaKhoza is trying to convince Khanyisile not to report Madonsela to the police. Khanyisile seems to be amazed and frustrated by this. She is asking what MaKhoza would have done if she (Khanyisile) was to be raped by someone who is not Madonsela. Just like in the two examples, the conversation above is presented through two earlier subsequent paragraphs. Each of the two paragraphs is a record of an individual character’s speech.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the different paragraphs evident in Sibiya’s novels. From this discussion, it was evident that Sibiya uses a variety of paragraphs, and they are all structured according to their functions. It is from their function that the stylistic nature of these paragraphs was determined. While descriptive paragraphs are used for creating mental pictures, and for the purpose of providing background and setting, rhetorical inquiry paragraphs were discovered to be artistically used for the purpose of engaging readers to think critically about the subject at hand. The role they play in sparking an emotional effect when the text is read was also singled out. To aid the narration process, the contribution made by both the narrative and dialogue paragraphs was highlighted.

Acknowledgements

The financial assistance of the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences, in collaboration with the South African Humanities Deans Association (SAHUDA) towards this research, is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to NIHSS and SAHUDA.

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