

A Stylistic Study of Situational Elements in Selected American Creeds

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ABSTRACT

The study is intended to stylistically analyze a sample of three American military creeds. The study hypothesizes that American military creeds have their own stylistic properties which make them distinct texts, and that the stylistic devices employed in military creeds vary in terms of their frequencies and functions. The study also hypothesizes that military creeds are situationally based, and that the employed stylistic devices have a complementary role. They all contribute together to fulfill the creeds' aims and convey their intended messages. To achieve the aims of the study, and verify its hypotheses, two types of procedure are followed: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part consists of presenting a theoretical framework of style and stylistics including their historical background, types, approaches, models of analysis, etc. Another theoretical framework is also presented about military discourse and creeds including their historical background, terminology, features, etc. On the other hand, the practical part consists of selecting a sample of three military creeds and analyzing them in the light of Crystal and Davy's (1969) model which accounts for situational elements. The adopted model consists of five dimensions: individuality, discourse, status, modality, and singularity. The results of analysis show that military creeds have their own distinctive stylistic features. The results also show that the stylistic devices characterizing military creeds have a complementary role in that they all contribute together to achieve the creeds' aims and convey their intended messages.

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1. Introduction

Style is explanatory. It emphasizes the elements added to the message transmitted through linguistic structure without changing meaning. Thus, it can be said that language has the power of expression and style provides confirmation (Ekkis, 1977, p.163, cited in Hejal, 2006). From a linguistic point of view, Thornborrow and Wareing (1998, p. 2) confirmed that style is the selection of certain linguistic forms or features over possible ones. Linguistic style, then, has to do with the way of speaking and scouting; "how speakers use the resource of language variation to make meaning in social encounters" (Coupland, 2007; Sukmawaty et al., 2022). Semantically, style is a category of meaning that goes beyond the content of what is said to the particular way something is said. In other words, not what you say, but how you say it makes sense (Young, 2011; Rahman, 2018). On the other hand, Charteris-Black (2014, p.30) demonstrates that:

"style has a broad range of meaning that have largely positive associations in a wide range of creative ideas of human activity such as art, architecture, fashion, literature and leadership as well as in language use".

Charteris-Black also confirms that style is "a complex interaction between choice and social meaning, and between the speaker mode and other means of communication. It is the semiotic effect attained by individual features of delivery and style that convey socially shared meanings" (Ibid, p.31). Bradford (1997, p.1) described stylistics as "an elusive and slipping topic, every contribution to the vast, multifaceted discipline of literary studies will involve an engagement with style".

According to Verdonk (2002, p.3) stylistics can be defined as the analysis of distinctive expression in language and the description of its purpose and effect. Simpson refers to stylistics as a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language (Simpson, 2004, p.2; Rahman et al., 2023). For Lintao (2013, p.36), stylistics

as a linguistic approach associated to literature. It focuses on patterns that make up linguistic features which in turn help to establish a literary interpretation and illustrate why particular kinds of meaning are conceivable for analysis.

Hussein's (2013) *A stylistic Analysis of Linguistic foregrounding in William Faulkner's Novel "As I lay dying"* This study is intended to look at how the concepts of linguistic foregrounding and deviance, are used in English Literature. It also aims at identifying and evaluating language abbreviations that result in foregrounding in William Faulkner's novel (*As I lay dying*) at various linguistic levels (Wisam, 2013, p. 2; Andini, 2017).

The researcher adopts the following procedures: examining both style and stylistics in English to develop a model for stylistic analysis, and introducing a theoretical assessment of the relevant literature on the topic of linguistic foregrounding and linguistic deviance in English literature. Also, determining the specific types of linguistic deviation that can be used to study the selected texts (Ibid, p.3).

The study results show that William Faulkner uses stylistic markers to identify his style from other writers such as deviations that cause foregrounding. In this novel, the types of linguistic deviations are adjusted to reflect the class position of the characters, i.e. to display dialect properties of the American south. As a result, they play a vital role in determining the characters' social and cultural status in this work. It has also been concluded that the most noticeable feature of these abbreviations is their widespread meaning that they exist throughout (*As I lay Dying*). Faulkner is relentless in his use of language at all levels (Ibid, p.78).

Dawood's (2018) *"A stylistic Analysis of Children's Songs in English and Arabic"*. A contrastive Analysis. This study is intended to investigate the stylistic techniques that are used in children's songs in English and Arabic and identify the most commonly used device. It also aims to identify the stylistic features most commonly shared by both English and Arabic (Zahraa, 2018, p.2). The study introduces many issues like defining children's language in terms of their linguistic traits, defining style and stylistics, as well as offering models of stylistic evaluation. The study adopts an eclectic model based on Leech and Short (2007); Short (1996); Thornborrow and Wareing (1998) to analyze the data.

The results of the data analysis reveal that there are various parallels and differences between stylistic analyses of children's songs in English and Arabic. Based on the similarities and contrasts between English and Arabic, a comparative analysis of the two languages yields a variety of linguistic merits in children's songs. English has a higher percentage of content terms, whereas Arabic has a higher percentage of functional words. Both languages utilize nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs in descending order (Ibid, p.133).

a. Stylistics: Historical Background

Modern stylistics is the offspring of rhetoric as it is believed by scholars like Barry (2002, p.2) and (Hough, 1969, p.1). Stylistics originally comes from ancient Greece 'rhetoric' (derived from the Greek *techne rhetorike*) which was taught by ancient Greeks that is the skill of creating speech. They also taught 'poetics' or the aesthetic development of language as well as how it articulated and uttered. They taught 'dialectics' which is the study and discussion of persuasive techniques (Nnadi, 2010, pp.9, 10). Plato was credited with the first two subjects, while Socrates was credited with the third. Missikova (2003, p.10) points out that the three old sources halt any additional stylistic evolution "poetics established the current field of literary criticism, whereas Rhetoric and Dialectics transformed in to stylistics".

"The modern study of style i.e. stylistics, has its roots in classical rhetoric: the ancient art of persuasive speech which has always had a close affinity with literature, probably because it was regarded as a persuasive discourse, too. Classical rhetoric was a perspective in that it provided guidance as to how to be persuasive, whereas modern stylistics is descriptive in that it seeks to point out the linguistics features that can be associated with particular effects" (Hough, 1969, p.4).

Stylistics has grown in importance in modern linguistics from its origins in classical rhetoric and its development as a field of literary studies. Between 1910 and 1930, stylistics began as a type of language research with the help of Russian Formalist like Jacobson and others (Varshney, 1980, pp. 336-338).

b. Style as a Persuasive Effect

The linguistic style of a particular writer in a particular field encodes the interaction between both the reader and the writer. (Halmari and Vertaneen, 2005). As an example, advertisement writers tend to use specific techniques like color or pictures in order to stimulate the buying desire of the intended reader (Nordhielm, 2003, p.91). "Writers normally make their style conform to the social function and formal conventions of a particular text types, or genre" (Verdonk, 2002, p. 8). Book publishers use a special style in order to give the reader an idea about the content of the books. The

support to persuasive techniques comes from rhetorical structure that are found in the text (Ibid). In addition, news editorials always try to strengthen readers' positions on contentious political matters relying on readers' ideology (El Baff et. al., 2018 cited in El Baff et.al.2020).

c. Style and Genre

Genres are diverse types of texts that are classified based on both formal and functional characteristics (Jucker and Tavitsainen, 2013, cited in Stockwell and Whiteley, 2014, p.103). Stylistics may make use of its overlap with other disciplines like dialectology (Winter, 1964, cited in Enkvist, 2016). In stylolinguistic description, several notions are quite valuable in literary studies; therefore, there is a pertinent connection between Genre and Style. If genre is defined culturally as a traditional way of communication, then it can be considered as a bunch of contextual features which is usually related to a particular style type of language. If a genre is defined according to linguistic function, then (genre style) like colloquial conversation or journalism turn into function style. This necessitates the establishment of links between contextual features which we call language functions and traditional genres (Enkvist, 2016). According to Halliday and Mathiessen (2004, cited in Stockwell and Witeley, 2014, p.108), "genre acts as one of the three levels of analysis of communication. The other two are register and lexico-grammar".

d. Style and Context

Style is not rooted in a vacuum, its creation, purpose, and effect are all firmly rooted in the specific context in which reader and writer play their unique roles. Verdonk makes a distinction between two kinds of context: (1) linguistic context: which means the linguistic factors that surround a text such as typography, words or sounds that are related to explaining the rest of linguistic elements, and (2) Non-linguistic context which is a far more complicated concept, because it might contain any text-external characteristics that influence a text's style and language. It is a matter of fact that choices of expression (whether conscious or unconscious) that generate a special style are always constrained by contextual conditions in which author and readers (or speakers and listeners are involved in different ways (Verdonk, 2002, pp 6-7).

e. Stylistics as an Inter-discipline

Widdowson (1975, p.3) is the first to refer to stylistics as an inter-discipline defining it as "the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation. Following the same line, Short (1996, p.1) described stylistics as "an approach to the analysis of literary text using linguistic description". It is a fact that all practitioners of stylistics do not agree with the idea that stylistics should be shown as being associated with only one text-type. All stylisticians agree that stylistics has developed from linguistics (Jefferies and MCIntyre, 2010).

Leech assimilates stylistics to a bridge which connects two disciplines: linguistics and literature. Based on this, Leech states that stylistics is an inter-discipline, a discipline by its own but which is enlightened by other disciplines' discernments (Leech, 2008, p.2; cited in Jeffries and MCIntyre, 2010).

f. Principles of Stylistics

Most, if not all, stylistics operates by specific principles that can be stated as follows:

1. Stylistics is heavily text- based (text in its broader sense is whether it is written or spoken " product" of discourse as it is defined by Fairclough (1992, cited in Jefferies and MCIntyre, 2010, p. 21).
2. Rigour. As a scientific principle, rigour represents how the research is done and written so that the rest of scholars can see the stability and clearness of the work done, even if they do not share the same findings.
3. Empiricism. This requires that all assertions should be made by experience or observation (inductive), which leads to the fact that no predicted results are allowed.
4. Falsifiability. It means that all claims must be explicit enough for other researchers to contest them, either by replicating the original work or applying the findings to fresh data.

According to Simpson (2014, pp.3,4), there are two other conventions followed by stylistic analysis: retrievability, and replicability. The first means that stylistic analysis employs a set of terms and norms that are distinguishable and agreed upon by a wide range of stylistic scholars. On the other hand, replicability: means that stylistic analysis shows how inferences are arrived at, so that one can test them out for himself if he wants to (Simpson,2014 [2004], pp.3,4, cited in Gibbons and Witeley, 2018, pp.11).

g. On the Style of English Military Discourse

The advent of new weaponry, military equipment, the creation of new battle strategies, or the organization of armed forces can all lead to the invention of new terminology. Concerning military jargon, it is worth knowing about the existence of a rather considerable proportion of casual vocabularies which is extremely important. A kind of fundamental portion of such a lexicon is a collection of entirely colloquial and expressive words, this kind is called slang. Military slang can be used in a wide variety of situations because it influences every area of serviceman's life, together with the formalized vocabulary. The mentioned areas comprise military notions, weapons, military equipment and property categories. The requirement for specifically concise explanations for phenomena and items of extremely military service, contrary to common opinion, is the basis for such a high frequency of military slang (Odiljonovich, 2021, p.24).

For Howard (1956, p.188), military slang has a general function because it can help develop ties among st soldiers from various social backgrounds. The vast majority of people face difficulty with understanding military slang or regard it as incomprehensible (especially throughout the era of its introduction and transition to broader range of applications. So, it can be said that military slang has an emotional undertone to it. The great majority of words and phrases have a more or less pronounced familiarized color belonging to them. When we talk about the army of US or the UK, we realize that these countries have thousands of units, new weapons and equipment that are added every day. Each branch is given a distinct substance that will be used to complete various tasks. Military institutions frequently create names for weaponry to make them easier to recall, because the names are affected by particular associations. As a result, the amount of slang in the military lexicon grows, which makes it extensively utilized by the whole world's armed forces (Dzhonovich, 2014, p. 45).

2. Methodology

a. The Adopted Model

The model adopted in the present study is based on Crystal and Davy's (1969) model which account for situational elements. The diagram below illustrates the elements of the adopted model:

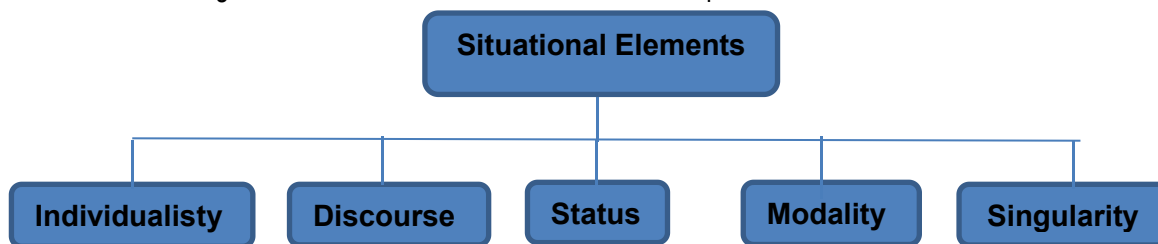


Figure 1. The Adopted Model

b. Situational Elements

he quantity of constraints impacting language use varies from one occasion to another. Some can be predicted clearly, but others are more ambiguous. The linguist looks at the extra -linguistic context to see whether any situational factors could account for constraints on the stylistically significant features. So, it is not an exaggeration to infer that a particular aspect or aspects of the context have a conditioning effect on the feature in question, and the concept of situation “ has been set up to describe the kinds of Conditioning influence” (Crystal and Davy,1969, pp.60-64).

Situational constraints have the following dimensions:

1. Individuality. This dimension deals with the characteristics of speech or writing habits that are relatively lasting and which occur in unconscious utterances. Those characteristics identify someone as a unique individual and set him apart from other speakers of the same language or dialect. The term individuality is used in a broad sense to encompass both at a psychological and physical individual Characteristics like ‘pet’ words or phrases, voice quality, or hand writing (Ibid, p.66).

2. Discourse. Within this dimension, Crystal and Davy differentiate between speech and writing. Crystal and Davy differentiate between speech and writing in terms of medium. Speech is a rather ephemeral kind of linguistic variability and implies some form of individual contact.

Contrastively, writing is durable; it reasonably does not require personal contact. It also adopts the nature of the participation as the main difference between monologue and dialogue. Monologue is identified as an utterance with no

expectation of response. By Contrast, dialogue is defined as an utterance with rotatory participants. It is uttered between two or more people, generally but not always two (Ibid, p.69).

3. Status. A set of factors is included within this dimension. Those are related to interactions between persons from different social positions. They are also intuitively linked to concepts like kinship relationships, politeness, informality, formality, business relationships and general hierarchical relationships. (Ibid, pp.73-74).

4. Modality. The suitability of form to the subject matter is a factor in modality. It defines the linguistic characteristics related to the specific aim of an utterance and have caused the user to choose one feature or group of traits over another. Ultimately, the user wants to create a standardized spoken or written structure for his language (Ibid, p.74).

5. Singularity. This dimension illustrates how a user makes his utterance contain distinctive linguistic features that have specific impact within the context of some standard variation. For example, a poet may deliberately choose to develop a linguistic originality in his or her poetry as an example of personal expression (Ibid, p.76).

3. Result and Discussion

a. Analysis of Creed No.1 “The NCO Creed”

1) About the Creed

The abbreviation (NCO) used in the title of the creed stands for “Non-Commissioned Officer”. This creed has existed for a long time in a variety of formats. Sergeants can still remember reading the creed on the day of their NCO Corps induction. Earle Brigham remembers writing three letters on a piece of plain white paper during one brainstorming session with NCO. They started to construct the creed from those three letters. To provide noncommissioned officers with a “yardstick by which to measure themselves”, a creed was developed. The creed was eventually authorized and started to be printed in 1974 on the inside cover of the particular texts given to the students enrolled in the noncommissioned officer courses at Fort Benning. The creed was distributed throughout the Army and submitted higher for approval, but it took 11 years for an official army publication to establish it. Even after numerous revisions, the creed still starts each paragraph with those three letters: NCO. The new generation of noncommissioned officers continues to get guidance from it and have their values reinforced (ausa.org/history-nco-creed).

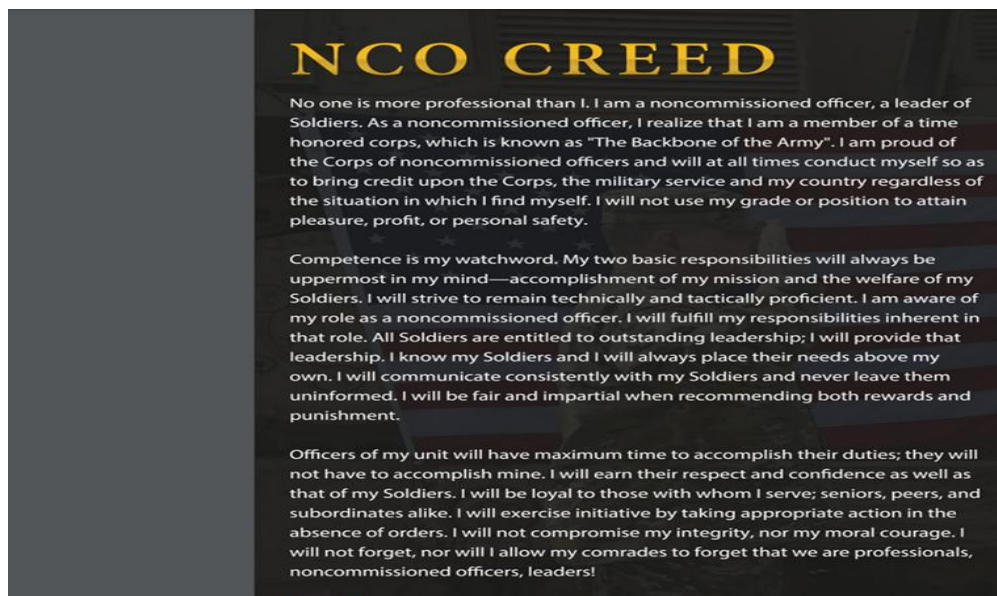


Figure 2. Military Creed no. 1

2) Situational Level

At the situational level, the formality of the text is enhanced by using common nouns such as Army. The modal verb (will) occurs (17) times which indicates the writer’s ideology “a variety of model structures which make ‘explicit’ announcement of beliefs” (Fowler, 1986, p.132 as cited in Carter and Simpson, 1989, p.94). It is clear that the writer confirms his future intentions and commitments toward his country through this modal.

The repeated use of the pronoun (I) and the possessive adjective (my) in addition to one use of the possessive pronoun (mine) reflects the writer's singularity. He uses the pronoun (I) (21) times, and (my) (20) times which reveals his pride of his identity in this type of armed forces.

The discourse in this creed is a written one, and since there is no other participant in this creed, so it is a monologue. The writer uses this kind of discourse because the creed is not directed to a particular person; instead it is a public document. Table (1) below summarizes frequency and the percentage of the situational elements in Creed no.1.

Table 1. frequency and percentage of the situational elements in Creed no.1

Situational Level					
Formality		Modality		Singularity	
F	%	F	%	F	%
56	48.70	17	14.78	42	36.52
Total of (F) 115				Total of % 100	

Table (1) shows that formality has the highest frequency as it is shown (65) times recording (48.70%), singularity comes second as it revealed (42) times recording (36.52%), while modality comes last as it occurs (17) recording (14.78).

b. Analysis of Creed No.2 The Airman's Creed

1) About the Creed

This creed was written by General T. Michael Moseley in 2007. In his letter, he states that reinvigorating the warrior mentality in each Airman of Total Force was one of his "top priorities". The creed's goals are therefore to strengthen the development of a warrior ethos among its Airmen, and to provide them a concrete declaration of ideas. The Air Force's dedication to helping and defending the country is reflected in The Airman's Creed, which also expresses pride in the role of air, space, and cyberspace power. The Air Force's history serves as fuel for the doctrine, and in Moseley's words, "the war fighting-focused culture, conviction, character, ethic, mindset, spirit and soul we foster in all Airmen". The creed, which replaced every other creed had been using (the NCO Creed, the Chief's Creed, the First Sergeant's Creed, etc.), has not been without debate. https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/Airman%27s_Creed. See

The Airman's Creed

**I am an American Airman.
I am a Warrior.
I have answered my Nation's call.**

**I am an American Airman.
My mission is to Fly, Fight, and Win.
I am faithful to a Proud Heritage,
A Tradition of Honor,
And a Legacy of Valor.**

**I am an American Airman.
Guardian of Freedom and Justice,
My Nation's Sword and Shield,
Its Sentry and Avenger.
I defend my Country with my Life.**

**I am an American Airman.
Wingman, Leader, Warrior.
I will never leave an Airman behind,
I will never falter,
And I will not fail.**

Figure 3. Military Creed no. 2

2) Situational Elements

At situational level, the formality of the text is consolidated by using common nouns such as Nation. The writer of the creed expresses his ideology by using the modal verb (will) (3) times in the last paragraph of the creed. The noticeable thing is that he uses will in negative forms twice by the adverb (never) and once by the adverb (not). By this way, the writer tries to deny doing the following actions: (leaving) because of his loyalty to his colleague, (faltering) because he will always be careful and straight, and (failing) because he has no other choice but to win.

The writer repeats the pronoun (I) (11) times and the possessive adjective (my) (5) times. Through this frequent use, he reveals his identity, singularity, and his nation. Throughout the whole creed, the writer shows his pride in his country, nation, and his heritage. Because the airman works and fights in a unique environment, so he considers himself a unique, different, and distinctive warrior.

This written creed is a monologue as it is not assigned to someone in particular. The writer is the only participant in this creed. This kind of discourse is used in such a genre because it is a common military document. Table (2) below summarizes frequency and the percentage of the situational elements in Creed no.2

Table 2. Frequencies and Percentages of situational elements in Creed no.2

Situational Level						
Formality		Modality		Singularity		
F	%	F	%	F	%	
26	57.78	3	6.67	16	35.55	
Total of (F)				45	Total of %	100

Table (2) shows that formality has the highest frequency because the text is a public document. The writer demonstrates the text formality (26) times forming (57.77%). The writer's singularity is shown (16) times forming (35.55%), while modality appears (3) times forming (6.66%) by which the writer performs his promises.

c. Analysis of Creed No.3 "Army Civilian Corps Creed"

1) About the Creed

The mission and responsibilities of the Army Civilian are outlined in the Civilian Corps Creed. When the Army Civilian Corps was created in 2006 by the Secretary of the Army and Army Chief of Staff, the creed was formulated. With this, 230-year history of duty as a crucial part of the overall Army force organization was formalized. Army civilians have assumed an increasingly important leadership role since its creation. The Army Civilian Corps Creed has undergone revision in May 30, 2019 to add a new leadership function to the solidity and sustainability roles that Army Civilians currently conduct continuously. [https:// www.army. mil/ standto/archive/2020/01/03](https://www.army.mil/standto/archive/2020/01/03).

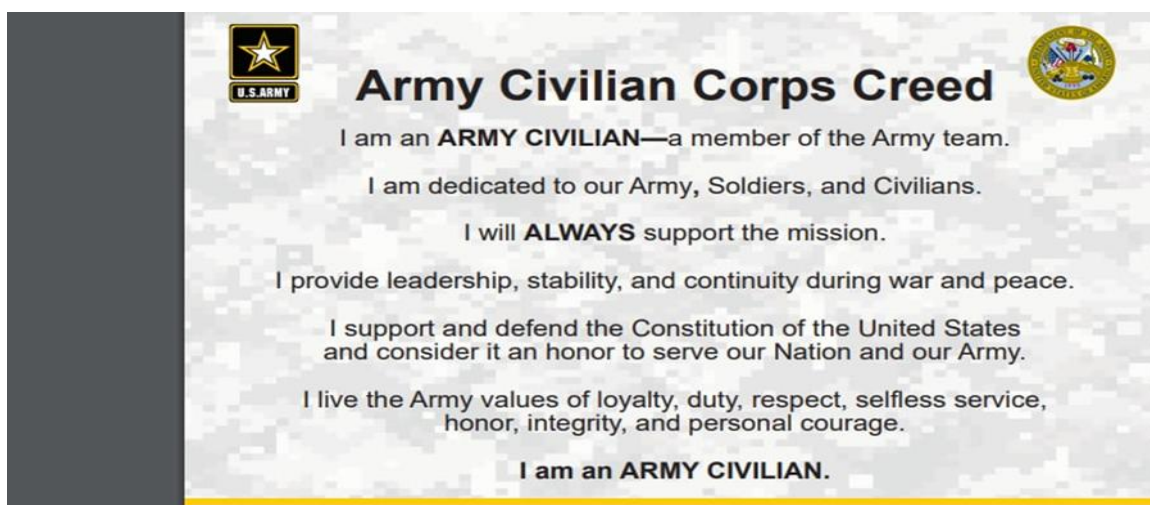


Figure 4. Military Creed no. 3

2) Situational Level

Using common nouns such as duty provides the text with formality. The modal verb (will) appears only once in the creed in the sentence; "I will ALWAYS support the mission". This infrequent use of this modal verb can be due to the writer's attention to express his identity, his position in the army, and his duty toward his country in the present time.

All the sentences of this creed start with the pronoun (I) which occurs (7) times. This reveals the writer's intention to express himself and his identity confidently. The pronoun (I) indicates the writer's singularity. The type of discourse utilized in this creed is a written one, at the same time, it is a monologue. The writer depends on these kinds of discourse because the text is not assigned to specific people. Instead, it is a public document. Table (3) below summarizes frequency and the percentage of the situational elements in Creed no.3

Table 3. Frequencies and Percentages of situational elements in Creed no.3

Situational Level					
Formality		Modality		Singularity	
F	%	F	%	F	%
28	77.78	1	2.78	7	19.44
Total of (F) 36				Total of % 100	

Table (3) shows that the writer reveals the text formality (28) times forming (77.77%) because formality is required for such a public document. The writer's singularity is shown (7) times forming (19.44%), while modality occurs only once recording (2.77%) as the writer shows his future ideology.

Table (4) summarizes the main results of analyzing the selected texts:

Table 4. Frequency & percentage of situational elements in the whole creeds

Creeds' No.	Situational Level					
	Formality		Modality		Singularity	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	56	48.70	17	17.78	42	36.52
2	26	57.77	3	6.67	16	35.55
3	28	77.78	1	2.78	7	19.44
Total	110	56.12	21	10.71	65	33.16

As Table (4) shows, formality is the most frequent feature characterizing the selected American creeds. It occurs (110) times forming (56.12%) of the total number of situational elements of the whole data. The predominance of formality is justifiable in that the creeds are public documents. Singularity comes second as it is shown (65) times making up (33.16%) of the total number of situational elements of the whole data. By singularity, the writer reveals his confidence and pride in himself. Modality comes last as it appears (21) forming (10.71%) of the whole data. With modality, the writer expresses his ideology.

4. Conclusion

American MCs have their own generic distinctive situational elements that are used by the writers to convey the intended message of the creeds. Furthermore, almost all the situational elements listed in the levels of analysis in the adopted model can be found in the selected MCs, yet they differ in their degree of frequency.

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