A Relevance-theoretical Approach to Italicization in Edgar Allan Poe’s The Tell-Tale Heart and The Black Cat

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ABSTRACT

Style is idiosyncratic; each author possesses stylistic features and techniques associated to his writings in particular. Edgar Allan Poe for instance, employs italicization in two of his corpora: The Tell-Tale Heart and The Black Cat. The use of italicization as a redundantly foregrounded feature constitutes the core of the present study. We are spurred to investigate the writer’s intention behind such an ostension, as well as its interpretation by the reader. Hence, to approach the texts under study, Wilson and Sperber’s Relevance Theory provides a framework within which we can account for the author’s fashioning of the language vis-a-vis the receptor’s perception and cognitive processing. The first chapter in this study affords an elaboration for related key terms such as: Literary Deviation, Foregrounding, and Italicization; in addition to the main concepts in Relevance Theory including Stimulus, Ostension, and Mutual Cognitive Environment. The second chapter depicts the analysis of a set of extracts with the use of this theory; and the third chapter considers suggested pedagogical implications emanating from the findings of the theory application. At last, we sum up with the conclusions. Our ultimate enterprise is to account for the writer’s purposeful manipulation of language, to highlight the efficiency of Relevance Theory as a pragmatic analytical instrument, and to put our results at the service of pedagogy for a better apprehension and appreciation of literary corpora.

Keywords: Poe, foregrounding, Italicization, pragmatic purpose, Relevance Theory
ملخص

ما يميز كل كاتب عن غيره هو خصائص الأسلوب التي ينفرد بها كل واحد، لذلك تسعى هذه المذكرة إلى دراسة أسلوب الشاعر، و الناقد، و المحرر، وكاتب القصص القصيرة: إدغار آلان بو (Edgar allan Poe) في إثين من مؤلفاته: القط الأسود (The Black Cat) والقلب الواشي (The Tell-Tale Heart) بشكل متكرر و في أكثر من موضع، و بناء على اعتقادنا فإن هذا الاستعمال ليس إعتباطيا أو محض صدفة و إنما هو متمعد و مقصود.

يمكننا القول أن لائحة الكاتب خلف توظيف هكذا أسلوب كتابي تأثيرا معينا على القارئ حين إدراكه لهذه النية، ومنه تعتبر نظرية الملائمة الإطار العلمي المناسب لهذه الدراسة حيث أن طبيعة النظرية تسند بالتطرق إلى الآلية التي يؤثر بها المتكلم على سامعه، و كذا إلى الآلية التي يتجاوب بها هذا الأخير لتمل هذا التأثير.

تتكون هذه الدراسة من ثلاثة فصول حيث خصص الفصل الأول لطرح تعريف بعض المصطلحات والمفاهيم ذات صلة بهذا البحث عموما و بنظرية الملائمة بشكل خاص، و تم تخصيص الفصل الثاني لتقديم تحليل للنص باستعمال أحكام النظرية. أما الفصل الثالث فهو مخصص لتقديم مجموعة من الأنشطة البيداغوجية المقترحة والمصممة بهدف التحسين من مستوى الطالب الدارس للغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية. و من ثم تأتي الخلاصة في الأخير لتتحتم بالنتائج المتحصل عليها.

من خلال هذا البحث نصبنا للوصول إلى فهم أعمق و تقدير أحسن للنصوص التي تمت دراستها. كما نهدف إلى الاستفادة من نتائج هذه الدراسة في تعليم و تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

كلمات مفتاحية: بو، النتوء، الكتابة بالخط المائل، غرض براغماتي، نظرية الملائمة.
To my father may his soul rest in peace,

and

To my mother may God reward her.
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My heartfelt thanks and appreciation go first to those I’m blessed to have: my dear mother, sister, brothers, sisters in law, and fiancé for the support they have been offering me.

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List of Abbreviations

CA: Contextual Assumption
CI: Contextual Implication
E: Explicature
MCE: Mutual Cognitive Environment
P: Passage
RT: Relevance Theory
S: Sentence
The BC: The Black Cat
The TTH: The Tell-Tale Heart
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION
The Literature cycle commences when the author is influenced or rather provoked by his surrounding; this surrounding encompasses the different elements or beings such as society on its small and large scales. When affected, the author expresses himself through forging literature which would in its turn have an impact on its readers. The process of reading a literary text is not as uncomplicated as it might appear; in fact it is a profound complex activity in which the reader delves into the text encountering, exploring and fathoming its two principle components: form and content. Form is determined by content; it is manipulated and set in a manner to effectively convey and serve the content. This way of manipulating varies from a literary man to another, and this variation is responsible for generating what is identified as style.

Thus, style is complementary to themes and characterization; style is the garment in which content is enveloped and it is therefore idiosyncratic. Each man of literature has certain features which are peculiar to his production. Stylistics is the field of study that is concerned with analyzing any given kind of style of any given text; its eventual purpose is producing a fairly objective accurate interpretation to –in our case– the literary text. The accuracy is gained by approaching the text per se. i.e., its linguistic components, characteristics and aspects.

The current study is concerned with the style of Edgar Allan Poe (henceforth Poe). The latter is a short story writer, poet, and a literary critic as well. Poe is a 19th century American Romanticist whose production is regarded as the precursor for the detective story genre and even for the emergence of the science-fiction genre. However Poe is not totally a positively acclaimed for author; the controversy surrounding him is infinite and immortal. His readers’ viewpoints widely oppose and the critical attention granted to his style is not that sufficient in a way which creates indecisiveness when it comes to a sharp judgment of his literary style\(^1\). Thus, a well known author with such a defamed biography and a mixed critical reception has certainly spurred inquiry and produced the spark for investigation for us as readers and students of literature.

Poe’s literary production involves over thirty tales, more than fifty poems, besides a sole novel and a play. The work which is most associated to Poe and which has brought him an immediate acclaim\(^2\) is the poem entitled *The Raven*\(^3\). But we rather tend to work on his

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1 - (Zimmerman, B. 2005: xiii)
2 - (Leer (ed.) 2008: xxviii)
3 - (Barger 2008: 19).
prose. Amongst his tales, we have opted for two of them to conduct the study on; The Tell-Tale Heart and The Black Cat. Both of the gothic tales were published in the same year (1843), and they are very short in length. These short stories are closely related and they have many points in common. We could have selected only one of them for the research; but because they are twinned with each other, and for the sake of representativeness we have sought for the two.

The Tell-Tale Heart (henceforth The TTH) and The Black Cat (henceforth The BC) are included among the few works upon which Poe’s contemporary popularity relies. And they could be regarded as a fertile space that might provide some rich wide range of opportunities for any analyst. They can be approached and analyzed in terms of their themes and their narratological aspects too. Still, we have considered that the rhetorical side is of a crucial importance and a great significance as well. Therefore, our attention is deflected towards investigating italicization in the earlier mentioned works. In The TTH and The BC, Edgar distinguishes certain words by putting them in italics. The italicized words’ letters lean to the right in comparison to the surrounding ordinary straight writing. This kind of literary deviation is what Leech identifies as the graphological type which can be visually noticed.

The italicization might be of a word in its own, or of a large part within a sentence. And it is used with all parts of speech: verbs, pronouns, nouns, determiners, adverbs and adjectives. It is recurrent throughout the pair of narratives; the reiteration makes those italicized words stand out in relief, therefore distinguishably foregrounded in reference to the background resulting in making it a stylistic feature. The occurrence of the deviation and its recurrence are – supposedly- made by the writer deliberately for a communicative purpose. Hence, our credence is that providing an interpretation and pointing out the significance of such a deviation would lead to a better apprehension and perception of the targeted horror stories.

Hence, the legitimate reaction to the problematic of Edgar Allan Poe’s use of italics is to draw the following enquiries:

- Is this italicization intentional?
- When does Poe italicize?
- Why does he italicize? What is his pragmatic purpose?
- What is the effect of italicization on the reader? What is the reader’s reaction?
- How does the reader process italicization?

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4- (Quinn 1998: 394).
5- (Sova 2007: vii)
Could italicization be at the service of the genre (the short story genre)?

Could italicization be instrumental in implicit characterization?

The use of italics does not flow in a systematic manner, and their employment is not restrained only to a certain part of speech. Poe pays a good deal of attention to the graphological manifestations; italicization is not the only graphological deviation in the corpora. When reading we encounter partial and complete capitalization of words, and an unconventional punctuation. Besides, the reiteration proves that the deviation is not unintentional; conventionally, a writer is not expected to shift several times from straight writing form to the italicized one with no purpose held in more than a corpus. Without forgetting that this author is not a mere literary man but a literary critic also, which means that he cannot be a style ignoramus and unaware when applying such a deviation.

The primary function of italics is the same function as underlining which is emphasizing. Both of the stories are but a confession of a murderer for a crime he has committed, but the narrator bears treats of madness and unreliability. Sometimes Poe italicizes a word because he predicts that the reader would not believe what the personage (the narrator) is telling, so he italicizes with the purpose of accentuating his account for the story. And there is another occasion when the italicization takes place, it is when the writer wants to introduce a thesis statement-like. He sets forward the word in italics, when proceeding reading one finds that the emphasized word is the point and the main idea to be developed. Grafting to that, the italicization covers the expressions which communicate the character’s peak of agitation and anxiety in some cases or his deep depression in other ones.

We also hypothesize that the italics are related to the view point affair; they indicate and denote the very matter upon which the character and the reader disagree, because the reader’s expectation for a situation contrasts entirely with that of the character; and the narrator’s scheme does not go in accordance with that of the reader. This opposition is stressed through italicization. And since the work is a narrative, it is composed of a sequence of some successively linked events which sometimes results in a successiveness of a linked italicized diction.

As noted earlier, the deviation appears to be intentional; ergo, it is purposeful. The author we are concerned with regards the short story genre as being more effective than the

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6. We hope to open up an avenue of investigation (punctuation and capitalization).

7. (Hamilton 1918: 5).
novel, for it enjoys unity and as called by him totality of effect and conveys truth\textsuperscript{8}. He produces concentrated minimal stories that are self-containing and in which he installs all the needed instruments for a richer delivery with the emphasis on conveying it. Italicization is among the means used to build up the whole, its richness and to accomplish its delivery.

Whenever the reader encounters italics, he slows down the reading process and lends extra attention to the text in hand, because he does not expect to find words in italics, and is not familiar with their reiteration throughout the work. Thence, italics are utilized as a foregrounded feature so as to grab the reader’s maximum amount of attention.

Furthermore, as a consequence of the redundancy of italics, we hypothesize that the reader is led to make a connection between the italicized words and any other element; be it an endophoric, or an exophoric one. The attempt of the reader to find any elements to link the italicization will offer clues so as to arrive at an interpretation for the use of italics. The reader might find that the italicization is connected to the context of the text, and therefore can always perceive it and approach it with reference to the text.

We have mentioned in a preceding hypothesis that the italicization might participate in the building of the short story as a whole. As we have also mentioned in another one that the italicization is occasionally used to express and transmit the narrator’s peak of agitation and anxiety. Hence, if the first hypotheses were confirmed then this would affirm that the italicization is at the service of the short story genre. And if the second hypothesis were confirmed as well, then that would confirm that the italicization is instrumental in implicit characterization.

On the quest to provide answers for the earlier posed questions, we have to opt for a theoretical framework which takes into consideration both poles of the communicative event: the encoder with his intention, and the decoder with his recognition of that intention. Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson’s Relevance Theory (henceforward RT) seems to be an approach which lends itself to our study.

RT (Sperber & Wilson 1985, 1995, 1998, 2002) is a cognitive psychological theory which came as a reaction to the classical code model\textsuperscript{9}. It develops one of the Gricean essential principles: the expression and recognition of intentions. According to the principle of relevance, the communicator provides evidence of his intention to convey a certain meaning,

\textsuperscript{8}-(Murray (ed.) 2004: 1123)
\textsuperscript{9}-“…”According to the code model, a communicator encodes her intended message into a signal, which is decoded by the audience using an identical copy of the code.” (Wilson and Sperber 2002).
and the communicatee on his turn infers the meaning on the basis of the evidence provided. The hearer is guided toward the speaker’s meaning through the expectations of relevance that are automatically raised by any utterance. Those expectations are sufficiently precise and predictable to accomplish the guiding mission.

Put differently, the context is taken into account during the communication process; the hearer does not process utterances separately from their surrounding context as being a code to which he uses an identical copy in order to decode. The selfsame utterance might hold a new significance when put in a specific context. When linking this to our study, we find that we can make use of the context to perceive the italicization; the context in this case is the text.

Our selection of Edgar Allan Poe as a writer, and The Tell-Tale Heart together with The Black Cat as corpora to study is based on certain reasons.

Firstly, we have by coincidence read The Black Cat in an earlier time. The copy demonstrated italics, and among the primarily raised impressions was that of a pure rudimentary inquisitiveness, the inquisitiveness to unearth significance and interpretation to that italicization. This was boosted when we have discovered that The Black Cat is not the only corpus: The Tell-Tale Heart is an identical twin case as well.

Secondly, we firmly believe that providing an interpretation for the use of the graphological deviation as a part, will help to reach a better apprehension of the corpora as a whole.

Thirdly, form and content are complementary aspects within a literary work. The former is the delivery-guarantor for the latter. Poe pays a good deal of effort to ensure the delivery of the content; hence, we intend to highlight the writer’s powerful stylistic techniques in communicating content through form.

The present study will be comprised of three chapters organized as follows: Chapter one provides an elaborative literature review and demonstration of the various terms that are related to this study; terms such as Literary Deviation, Foregrounding, and Italicization. Besides, it introduces the pillar theoretical concepts within RT; concepts such as the Cognitive Principle, the Communicative Principle, the Ostensive-Inferential Communication, Mutual Cognitive Environment, Implicature, and Explicature. Chapter two is devoted to the corpora analysis. It encompasses the analysis of some representative passages with the use of a Relevance-theoretical framework. And the last chapter draws a few pedagogical implications in the light of our application of Relevance Theory on Poe’s use of italics.
Finally, we expect that applying a pragmatic/inferential theory such as RT to approach a literary text will help in deciphering the coded inquiries in this study. Moreover, we believe that solving those inquiries will surely lead to a better apprehension and appreciation of the two literary corpora.
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1. Introduction

Starting from the basis that literature is taken as a means through which a writer expresses his mind and communicates his ideas, we treat a literary text as a communicative context or a setting that includes participants. The participants in the case of literature are the writer (encoder) and the reader (decoder). The former expresses his intention and the latter recognizes that intention. Relevance Theory provides an inferential approach to pragmatics, where the expression and recognition of intentions is taken into account. In this chapter we endeavor to provide an illustrated elaboration for both the key terms and RT’s concepts which are related to this study. Our analysis does not require the selection of all the composing elements within Relevance Theory, therefore we are to introduce only the aspects which are of relevance.

2. Definition of Terms

2.1. The Levels of Stylistic Analysis

In Style in Fiction (2007), Leech and Short suggest a classification of the three linguistic levels: the semantic, the syntactic and the graphological level. These levels provide a scientific framework for any stylistic study. Figure 1 indicates how the encoder’s message breaks down into the same levels upon which the decoder’s comprehension is built (the diagram is restricted to written language).

![Figure 1: The Linguistic Levels](image)

Hence, our study of style is concerned the third level: the graphological one, and which is ranged within the column of language realization. Leech modifies the traditional
division of language with reference to its inadequacy by introducing a tripartite model instead. The division is illustrated in Figure 2 below (Leech 1969: 37).

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Figure 2: Leech’s Division of Language

2.2. The Graphological Deviation

The graphological variation is considered as “a relatively minor and superficial part of style” (Leech and Short 2007: 105). This deviation includes “matters as spelling, capitalisation, hyphenation, italicisation and paragraphing” (ibid). Conventionally, syntax determines the rules for the use of such matters, still they “become noticeably expressive only when a writer makes a graphological choice which is to some degree marked or unconventional, such as a deliberate misspelling.” (ibid).

The intentional unconventional employment of the graphological variation is called the graphological deviation. Generally speaking, a linguistic deviation occurs when the author makes use of his literary license and intentionally transgresses the conventional rules of language in order to achieve certain effects. Leech introduces the different types of Linguistic Deviation on the basis of the typology model shown in Figure 2 (See Leech 1969, Types of Deviation). The graphological deviation can take many forms, such as capitalization, punctuation and italicization. The latter is the concern of our study.

Adding to that, linguistic deviation can be placed in a wider aesthetic context; it can be connected to the general principle of Foregrounding (ibid) (this term will be dealt with in section 2.4).

2.3. Italicization

To italicize is to print or write in italic type (Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary). Italics are the “printing of the sloping kind of typeface” (Concise Oxford English Dictionary). The Italian printer Aldus Manutius the Elder is the one attributed to be the

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1. The traditional method in breaking down language components divides it into: form and meaning.
2. It presupposes some explanation on the part of the reader. (Leech 1969: 58-59)
inventor of the italic typeface, his type cutter: Francesco Griffo, was responsible for the first italic typeface in 1500.

Italics serve for certain usages:

1- To emphasize. In spoken language, the speaker can denote the points of emphasis through the medium of intonation and stress. Similarly, in written language the writer can use italics to indicate the points of emphasis. For instance: The works that are written by Russians authors in English language are considered a part of English Literature;

2- To set off a title, word, or passage from the context. Example: The Sunday Telegraph has conservative political views;

3- For foreign or unfamiliar words and phrases, as well as for technical terms. When one writes a text in English and inserts an Italian or a Latin word while writing, he is supposed to italicize that foreign word. For example: A. What do we call a spider in Italian? B. We call it ragno.

4- For names of vehicles, aircrafts, ships, and trains. For example: Titanic sank in the North Atlantic Ocean in 1912.

2.4. Foregrounding

It is a term introduced in Russian Formalism. “Foregrounding or motivated deviation from linguistic, or other socially accepted norms, has been claimed to be a basic principle of aesthetic communication” (Leech 2013). “To "foreground" is to bring something into the highest prominence, to make it dominant in perception.”. According to Russian Formalists such as Victor Shklovsky, “The primary aim of literature is thus foregrounding its linguistic medium...is to estrange or defamiliarize; that is, by disrupting the modes of ordinary linguistic discourse, literature "makes strange" the world of everyday perception and renews the reader's lost capacity for fresh sensation” (A glossary of Literary Terms 1999: 103). Moreover, “The aesthetic value or purpose of art, embodied in the devices, consists in creating in readers or viewers a heightened awareness, making them see things anew”.

https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_I.html. (Last accessed 31/05/2015)
(Hamilton 1918: 5)
Thus, foregrounding is to differently put forward a certain element in a way that it appears unusual in comparison with its surrounding (as shown in Figure 3), or in comparison to the conventions. It “invites an act of imaginative interpretation by the reader. When an abnormality comes to our attention, we try to make sense of it” (Leech 2013: 61). Foregrounding is then used to achieve Defamiliarization. The latter is the art’s capability to defy the “deadening effect of habit and convention by investing the familiar with strangeness and thereby deautomatizing perception.” (Glossary of Literary Theory). When the reader encounters an unfamiliar usage, he is then defamiliarized. This technique functions to avoid the automatic perception. It effects the reader and results in “the slowing down and the increased difficulty (impeding) of the process of reading and comprehending and an awareness of the artistic procedures (devices) causing them.” (Leech 2013: 61).

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9 - The labeling is mine, the picture is named the odd one out by koellakind. (Available at: http://www.deviantart.com/art/the-odd-one-out-32921912). (Last accessed: 18/03/2015).
10 - The labeling is mine, the picture is under the heading of: These make me uncomfortable. (Available at: http://9gag.com/gag/uy0egPW/these-make-me-uncomfortable). (Last accessed: 20/03/2015)
3. Relevance Theory

3.1. General Background

Relevance Theory (henceforth RT) is an inferential model to pragmatics. “Relevance theory may be seen as an attempt to work out in detail one of Grice’s central claims:…the expression and recognition of intentions” (Wilson & Sperber 2004:249). RT is based on two principles of relevance: the Cognitive Principle and the Communicative Principle (ibid).

3.2. Cognitive Principle

An assumption “…is relevant in a context if and only if it has some contextual effect in that context” (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 121). An assumption is relevant in a context if it has “…a substantial contextual effect, at a low processing cost.” (ibid: 116, highlighting mine). The cognitive principle encompasses the Contextual Effects as well as the Processing Efforts.

3.2.1. Contextual Effects

Language users are expected to employ language with awareness; whenever there is a communication held, the participants have a context to include them. The context guides them to speak relevantly; the speaker is driven to produce an utterance that is related to his current situation and context in a way which will keep the hearer attentive in order to eventually derive a deduction and make sense of the utterance (Bensalah 2013: 27). The lack of relevance will result in the failure of communication.

A single utterance generates various contextual assumptions. The assumption is the extracted piece of information from the articulated utterance by the hearer (ibid). The relevant assumption to a certain context is the one which “has some contextual effect in that context.” (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 122). If the assumption does not have a contextual effect, it is then irrelevant. The contextual effect is the eventually deduced information and which comes as an outcome of the premise “a premise is the use of interconnected new and old items of information” (Sperber and Wilson in Bensalah 2013: 29). There are different possible contextual effects:

a- **Contextual Strengthening**: the new information provides further evidence that confirms old assumptions, and as a result strengthens them.

b- **Contextual Weakening/Contextual Deletion**: the new information provides further evidence that goes against the old assumptions in a way that it might weaken or delete them.

c- **Contextual Implication**: the new information provides the derivation of contextual implications.
a. Contextual Implication

The following is a conversation between Sara and her cousin Tarek:

[Context 1: Sara is inviting Tarek to eat French fries with her]

a- Sara: come and eat with me.
b- Tarek: I’m on a diet these days.

When taking the example of a basic conversation, the answer of (b) might not be very direct and straight as expected. (a), then, needs to make the connection, and to use the available premises in order to draw relevant assumptions and to ultimately reach an effect (a contextual implication). In the case of the contextual implication, the new information neither strengthens nor weakens or deletes previous assumptions, but it rather leads to the derivation of a contextual implication.

**Premise 1**：“I’m on a diet these days.”

**Premise 2**: Dieting requires consuming low-calorie food

**Premise 3**: Chips are high-calorie food

**Premise 4**: Tarek should not eat chips

**Deduction 1**: Tarek will not eat chips with Sara because he is dieting.

**Figure 5: Contextual Implication**

There is always prior information and new instant information that together lead to understanding. In context (1), Tarek assumes that Sara already knows about what should and should not be eaten when dieting. The mental process that will take place afterwards in Sara’s mind is relating this old information with the new information (Tarek is on a diet) so that she deduces that Tarek should not eat chips and he, therefore, will not eat with her. The prior
knowledge is the background which is supposed to be known and mutually shared by (a) and (b) (See section 3.5) and it is put as the first contextual assumption to which the new contextual assumption is added to achieve the contextual implication. Sperber and Wilson refer to the shared background knowledge as Mutual Cognitive Environment (see Wilson and Sperber in Bensalah 2013: 61).

a. **Contextual Strengthening**

Taking into consideration context (1), let us suggest a follow-up context which encompasses Sara, Sara’s mother, and Tarek.

[Context 2: Sara’s mother offers Tarek a glass of cola]

a- Sara’s mother: Would you like a glass of cola?  
b- Tarek: I would like to, but I cannot.

![Diagram of Contextual Strengthening]

**Premise 1:** Sara’s mother offers Tarek a glass of cola  
**Premise 2:** cola is a high-calorie drink  
**Premise 3:** High-calorie food is to be avoided when dieting  
**Premise 4:** Tarek is on a diet  
**Premise 5:** Tarek should not eat high-calorie food  
**Premise 6:** Tarek says, “I would like to, but I cannot”  
**Premise 7:** Tarek refuses the offer.  
**Deduction:** Tarek refuses the offer because he is dieting

---

**Figure 6: Contextual Strengthening**
In this context Sara will make a reference to (b) in context (1). In context (2), (b) will confirm the deduction from context (1). Tarek’s refusal to the invitation is logical and expected, and it is therefore a confirmation for Sara’s deduction in context (1), i.e., that he is on a diet, and that he is not supposed to consume high-calorie food.

c. Contextual Weakening

To exemplify for the Contextual Weakening, we will make a slight modification to context (2).

[Context 3: Sara’s mother offers Tarek a glass of cola]

   c- Sara’s mother: Would you like a glass of cola?
   d- Tarek: Yes please, I would like to.

Premise 1: Sara’s mother offers Tarek a glass of cola

Premise 2: cola is a high-calorie drink

Premise 3: High-calorie food is to be avoided when dieting

Premise 4: Tarek is on a diet

Premise 5: Tarek should not eat high-calorie food

Premise 6: Tarek says, “Yes please, I would like to”

Premise 7: Tarek accepts the offer.

Deduction: Tarek accepts the offer though he is dieting!

Figure 7: Contextual Weakening
In this context Sara will make a reference to (b) in context (1). In context (3), (d) will weaken the deduction from context (1). Tarek’s acceptance of the offer is confusing. In the current context we will obtain a contradictory contextual implication, and a contextual weakening for Sara’s deduction in context (1).

### 3.2.2. Processing Efforts

“…an assumption is relevant or (more relevant than any other) if its process in a context requires small processing effort and produces large contextual effects.” (ibid: 34, highlighting mine). i.e., the lower the processing effort is, the higher relevance is realized. (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 124)

When juxtaposing “small” with “large”, the first idea which comes to one’s mind is the element of economy. Because,

“Contextual Effects are brought about by mental processes. Mental processes, like all biological processes, involve a certain effort, a certain expenditure of energy.” (ibid).

The following is a context through which we can illustrate for the dichotomy of: effort vs. effect.

**[Context 5: Sara wants to go to the municipality, she asks Tarek to give her the location. There are three possible ways in which Tarek can inform her about that: (a), (b), and (c)]**

  a- It is in Jerusalem Avenue, facing the local library.
  b- It is 2000 meters from here.
  c- Take the main road then turn right, after that you go straight. When you get to the cross road turn left, keep moving till you find a library. The municipality is opposite to the library.

The legitimate step currently is to make relevance assessment, and decide which of the three replies is the most relevant for Sara. Hence, the most relevant is the one that requires the least effort from Sara to create an effect. The assessment goes as follows:

- Answer (a) is the reply which gives a direct instruction for the municipality’s location. The answer is a clear statement which would help Sara to generate an assumption and to eventually know the location with a low effort from her part.

- Answer (b) gives the location in terms of distance from their present position. The reply is a bit fuzzy and it is not that precise for Sara (2000 m. east or west?). Besides, it requires her to make some calculations; still she might not get a certain result. Eventually Sara might end up asking another person about the location because Tarek’s answer is not that satisfactory for her.
- Answer (c) demands a big deal of concentration and memorizing from Sara. The instructions given by Tarek are zigzagged and they might lead Sara to lose the rope and to eventually be demotivated to resume with him.

According to the above given explanation, the most relevant answer for Sara -that requires the least effort and results in the greatest effect- is answer (a).

### 3.3. The Communicative Principle

#### 3.3.1. Ostensive Stimulus

“Information processing involves effort; it will only be undertaken in the expectation of some reward. There is thus no point in drawing someone’s attention to a phenomenon unless it will seem relevant enough to him to be worth his attention.” (ibid: 49, highlighting mine).

Taking into account the aspect of intentionality in human communication, the act of drawing someone’s attention, i.e., “showing someone something” (ibid) is what Sperber and Wilson refer to as the Ostensive Stimulus or Ostension. The ostension is the “behavior which makes manifest an intention to make something manifest.” (ibid). “An act of ostension carries a guarantee of relevance” (Wilson and Sperber 1995: 50); this fact “makes manifest the intention behind the ostension.” (ibid).

Hence, there is a Stimulus whose function is “to attract an audience’s attention to the communicator’s meaning.” (Bensalah 2013: 38). A stimulus is identified as so: “when it is recognised as a phenomenon designed to achieve cognitive effects” (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 150).

#### 3.3.2. Optimal Relevance

The ostensive stimulus provided by the encoder will be of optimal relevance to the audience if, and only if:

- It is relevant enough to be worth the audience’s processing effort. And it is a matter of expectation; when there is an ostension the audience by default expect the ostensive stimulus to be relevant and to be therefore worth processing. (Sperber and Wilson).
- It is the most relevant one compatible with communicator’s abilities and preferences. The audience does not only expect the stimulus to be relevant, they even choose the most appropriate interpretation which the speaker might have intended to satisfy the hearer’s expectations. on the other hand, the speaker is limited by his abilities to provide relevant information, and to formulate it in the best possible way (Sperber & Wilson 2002: 23) and preferences in particular her goal of getting the hearer to draw not just some relevant conclusion, but a specifically intended one (ibid).
3.3.3. Ostensive-Inferential Communication

In some cases, the two poles of communication do not pay much attention to the ostensive stimulus itself. The communicator might not mind whether his intention has been perceived by the communicatee or not. And the same might happen for the communicatee who might not pay much attention to the ostension made by the communicator. However, generally speaking, “recognizing the intention behind the ostension is necessary for efficient information processing: someone who fails to recognize this intention may fail to notice relevant information” (Wilson and Sperber 1995: 50).

The terms: ostensive communication, inferential communication, and ostensive-inferential communication are the same and they can be used interchangeably. Besides, ostension and ostensive-inferential communication are the same too; but the former is taken from the perspective of the communicator, the latter from the audience’s perspective. (ibid: 54).

Inferential communication

“consists in making manifest to an audience one’s intention to make manifest a basic layer information. It can therefore be described in terms of an informative and a communicative intention” (ibid, highlighting mine).

a. The Informative Intention

The ostension points out the speaker’s intention to inform about a matter. The informative intention is the deliberate intention to inform the audience of something. (Bensalah 2013: 40). “The informative intention alters the audience’s cognitive environment.” (ibid: 42, highlighting mine). Let us consider the following context:

[Context 6: Sara comes to visit Tarek; as soon as she takes a seat, she starts feeling that the room is a bit hot. She has an intention to inform him that the room is a bit hot. There are two possible ways in which she can realize that]

a- She starts fanning with her hand.
b- She states: “it is hot in here!”

If Sara’s intention was to inform Tarek about the temperature in the room; (a) is an ostensive behavior through which Tarek might -as might not- perceive her intention appropriately. (a) makes manifest to Tarek that the room is hot. While (b) overtly communicates Sara’s informative intention as it makes mutual manifestness to both Sara and Tarek that Sara has an intention to inform him that the room is hot.
b. The Communicative Intention

It is more than having the intention to inform the audience of something, it is having the intention to inform them of one’s informative intention (Wilson and Sperber 2002: 255). “the communicative intention alters the mutual cognitive environment of the hearer and speaker” (Sperber and Wilson in Bensalah 2013: 42, highlighting mine). In (6b) Sara overtly states that the room is hot, the mutual manifestation in this case makes of Sara’s intention a communicative one.

All in all, the ostensive stimulus made by the speaker to either make manifestation to the hearer, or make mutual manifestation to both of the speaker and the hearer.

3.3.4. Ostensive- inferential Model of Communication

There are two contrasting models of linguistic communication: the classical model of communication (the code model), and the inferential model. According to the former, the communicator’s message is encoded by “means of a signal\(^{11}\) that the hearer then decodes” (Sperber and Origgi: 1), “Sentences of a language are just complex signals that encode messages.” (ibid). According to the latter, linguistic pragmatics objects that for the communication to be realized there should be contextual information which will eventually help one to retrieve the possible implicatures for an utterance (ibid). Put differently, when relying on mere decoding, a single utterance (an utterance out of its context) might generate an unlimited range of possible meanings.

Thus, the inferential model- of which RT offers an explicit and radical version- is based on identifying the speaker’s meaning as a process that “relies on both this linguistic meaning and on the context” (ibid: 2). “a communicator provides evidence of her intention to convey a certain meaning, which is inferred by the audience on the basis of the evidence provided” (Wilson and Sperber 2002: 249).

“In Sperber and Wilson’s OIMC\(^{12}\), communication is based on the use of ostensive and inferential mechanisms” (Bensalah 2013: 43).

Moreover,

“In the case of non-verbal communication, the communicator engages in ostensive behavior and the audience in inferential behaviour. In the case of verbal communication, Sperber and Wilson argue that humans can communicate in two different ways:

---

\(^{11}\) - “Sentences of a language are just complex signals that encode messages.” (Sperber and Origgi: 1)

\(^{12}\) - Ostensive- inferential Model of Communication.
either by coding and decoding or by ostension and inference” (Sperber and Wilson in Bensalah 2013).

And as a result, communication processing includes two types: that which is based on coding and decoding, besides the other which is based on ostension and inference. (ibid) (see Bensalah 2013: 43-44 for further clarification).

3.4. Implicatures vs. explicature
  a. Implicatures

  “An ‘implicature’ is any other propositional form communicated by an utterance; its content consists of wholly pragmatically inferred matter” (Sperber & Wilson in Carston: 9). This concept “is a theoretical construct first introduced by Grice (1967, 1989)” (Bensalah 2013: 57). The implicature is then defined as that which is implicitly communicated without being explicitly said by the speaker.

  b. Explicature

  Sperber and Wilson define an explicature “as an ‘explicit’ assumption communicated by an utterance” (ibid: 58). Hence an explicature is what is explicitly said by the speaker. “An ‘explicature’ is a propositional form communicated by an utterance which is pragmatically constructed on the basis of the propositional schema or template (logical form) that the utterance encodes” (Sperber & Wilson in Carston: 9). For an illustration, let us consider the following context.

  [Context 7: Sara’s husband is going out, she indirectly tells him to buy milk]

  a- Sara: we run out of milk.

  Explicitly speaking, (7a) shows that Sara is informing her husband that they have no more milk at home. Implicitly speaking, Sara is asking her husband to buy milk as he goes out.

3.5. Mutual Cognitive Environment

  Sperber and Wilson define the individual’s Cognitive Environment as the “set of facts [or, more generally, assumptions] that are manifest to him” (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 39 underlining mine). Being manifest means being perceptible or inferable. Hence, the Mutual Cognitive Environment (henceforth MCE), is the set of facts that are mutually manifest in a certain environment. Mutual knowledge is the “knowledge which is not only shared by both participants, but known to be shared, and known to be known to be shared, and known to be known to be known to be shared, and so on ad infinitum.” (Sperber and Wilson in Bensalah 2013: 61)
According to the notion of MCE, the communicator is the one who is exclusively responsible for the success and efficiency of human communication process; he is supposed to avoid misunderstanding by entertaining strong intuitions about the hearer’s accessible assumptions, and therefore fashion his utterances manifestly intending his hearer to supply appropriate Contextual Assumption. Unlike the hearer whose only task in this process is to “…use whatever code and contextual information come most easily to hand” (ibid: 62 underlining mine).

In RT, a context is not only a physical environment but even a psychological construct, a subset of the assumptions about the world (those assumptions are what affect the interpretation of an utterance). It is not restricted to information about the immediate physical environment, it also surpasses to expectations about the future, scientific hypotheses or religious beliefs, general cultural assumptions, etc (Sperber and Wilson 1995:15-16).

However, individuals –even within the same linguistic community– may not have the same assumption about the world because of the idiosyncrasy of their life history. Consequently, we might encounter two people constructing different representations and interpretations of the same witnessed physical event. (ibid: 16)

In addition to that, assumptions and facts can be measured in terms of the degree of their manifestenss. Some facts can be more/less manifest in comparison to others; because, “when the phenomenon is noticed, some assumptions about it are standardly more accessible than others”. (ibid: 40). To exemplify, we adopt Sperber and Wilson’s instance of the doorbell ringing: when the doorbell rings it is strongly manifest the there is someone at the door, less strongly that that person is tall enough to reach the bell, and even less strongly is that the bell has not been stolen.

Having a MCE makes a difference and effects the individual’s perception and interpretation in a certain situation. This is illustrated in the following example.

Two American female-colleagues go for a business journey to Japan. At the end of their first workday, their Japanese host takes them to a restaurant for dinner. However, they notice that there is no “Ladies First” gesture from his part whether at their entering to, or leaving from the restaurant. We’ll suppose that audience1: the first woman (A1) knows the fact that there is no “Ladies First” in the Japanese culture, while audience 2: the second woman (A2) does not.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience 1</th>
<th>Audience 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She knows about the Japanese culture</td>
<td>She does not know about the Japanese culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information available in A1 MCE</strong></td>
<td><strong>Information available in A2 MCE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[CA1]: “The host does not wait for the ladies to enter or leave first”</td>
<td>[CA1]: “The host does not wait for the ladies to enter or leave first”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[CA2]: The host should wait and let the ladies go first. (according to her culture)</td>
<td>[CA2]: The host should wait and let the ladies go first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[CA3]: But according to his culture, men do not wait for women to go first.</td>
<td>[CA3]: The host is not behaving as he should be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[CA4]: The host is behaving according to his culture.</td>
<td>[CI]: The host is not treating them appropriately and respectfully as he should.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[CI]: The host is behaving according to his culture where men do wait for women to go first.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The host does not wait for the ladies to enter or leave first” is **relevant**

**Effect:** A1 is aware that the host is behaving according to his culture.

“The host does not wait for the ladies to enter or leave first” is **not optimally relevant**

**Effect:** A2 believes she is not being treated respectfully.

---

**Figure 8: The Effect of MCE**

### 3.6. Ostension in Pragmatics, Foregrounding in Stylistics

As a speaker (A) chooses to affect the audience (B) and guides him towards recognizing A’s intention, a literary man might choose certain means to affect his reader as well. As the ostension serves as a tool to affect an audience, **foregrounded stylistic features** are tools to affect readers as well (Bensalah 2013:75).

For a text’s feature to be exemplified as a **stylistic feature**, it should be **redundant** (Spitzer in Bensalah 2013: 75). When redundant, it functions to **achieve cognitive effects**, which makes it a **stimulus** (Sperber and Wilson in Bensalah 2013: 75). Besides,
“since any stimulus that makes manifest an intention to make something manifest is called an ostension [...] and since a foregrounded feature is a stylistic tool that orients the reader’s interpretation of the text (to make ‘something’ manifest to the reader), the foregrounded stylistic feature is but an ostension.” (Bensalah 2013: 75).

Coming to our study, Poe employs italicization as an ostensively foregrounded stylistic device. It is brought into prominence through redundancy in a way it becomes a stimulus through which cognitive effects can be achieved.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter we have endeavored to elaborately introduce the key terms such as: Foregrounding, Graphological Deviation, and Italicization. As we have also provided a literature review of the principal concepts in RT including: The Cognitive Principle, The Communicative Principle, Implicature vs. Explicature, Mutual Cognitive Environment. And we concluded that RT would be an effective instrument to approach the concerned corpora.
CHAPTER TWO
CORPUS ANALYSIS
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4. Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 42
1. Introduction

As Sperber and Wilson’s RT is the theoretical framework for this study, we will endeavor to see its application on Poe’s The BC and The TTH with the aim of achieving an elaboration and an interpretation of the writer’s stylistic technique: the use of italics in the aforementioned mentioned corpora. The application will tackle and bring about the way in which the reader’s interpretation of the literary text goes in accordance and goes effected by the writer’s intention behind language manipulation.

2. Methodology

Italicization is one of the stylistic features which the reader would encounter and be interrupted by when reading The TTH or The BC. Poe reiterates the use of italics all through for various significant pragmatic purposes. In our attempt to elaborate on those pragmatic purposes, we have selected a pair of representative passages from both of the works wherein italicization is sufficiently redundant.

In what follows, we will provide –as much as possible– an accurate tracking to the reader’s reading and processing of those passages in terms of the Contextual Assumptions [CA], the Contextual Implication [CI] (when a CI is an Implicature, it will be in bold), the Mutual Cognitive Environment [MCE], and the Explicatures [E]. The inferential processing is to be followed by a commentary in order to account for it. The highlighted (in bold) text in the passages denotes italics.

By the end of this section, we will –to some extent– reach a confirmation, modification or rejection of the different previously suggested hypotheses.

3. Italicization

3.1. Passage 1

“I smiled,—for what had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search—search well. I led them, at length, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues....” (The TTH: 196).

3.2. (P1) Inferential Processing

(S1) I smiled,—for what had I to fear?
[CA1] I smiled,—for what had I to fear?
[MCE1] The narrator has just finished the labor. He concealed the corpse of the old man under the flooring after having dismembered it, and erased all possible traces for any kind of suspicion.
At this point, there are three police officers who came to his house with the purpose of searching premises because suspicion of foul play had been aroused.

[C11] The narrator smiles because he has nothing to fear.

[C12] The narrator feels happy and satisfied, because he has well erased all evidence for any kind of suspicion of foul play.

[C13] The rhetorical question that proceeds the dash (he does not actually ask a question; the purpose of the rhetorical question is not to obtain an answer in return) justifies the reason behind smiling as well as accentuates that reason. His reason is that he has nothing to fear.

[C14] “what” is put in italics so that it holds more load and emphasis. It serves as a reference to the narrator’s deed (the murder). It takes the reader backward leading him towards rethinking the whole preceding action as well as profoundly considering his present reaction.

[C15] The narrator is very certain about having no reason for fear while having three police officers in his house for a check.

[MCE2] An ordinary person ought to be afraid and anxious if he is receiving police officers in his house after having committed a murder.

[C16] Against the tradition, the narrator feels comfortable and does not find any reason to feel afraid though he has just committed a murder and there are three police officers visiting him. He even self-confidently poses a rhetorical question wondering about what might be the reason for fear.

[E1] The narrator smiles because he is certain that he has no reason to feel afraid.

(S2) I bade the gentlemen welcome.

[CA2] I bade the gentlemen welcome.

[MCE3] A neighbor reported to the police office that a shriek came out of the narrator’s house. Thus, the police office deputed three officers for a check.

[C17] Reference disambiguation: the gentlemen are the three police officers who came to the narrator’s home.

[C18] The narrator behaves very naturally and welcomes the officers; he feels comfortable and is not anxious at all to have police officers at his house.

[C19] He behaves naturally: as if he has nothing to fear.

[E2] The narrator welcomes the police officers.

(S3) The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream.

[CA3] The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream.

[C110] The narrator tells the officers that the shriek which has been heard by the neighbor was made by him.

[C111] The sentence structure (“I said” is posited in the middle interrupting the reported speech) steers the reader’s attention towards the matter of the narrator’s certainty, comfort and boldness.

[MCE4] It is learned in an earlier stage in the story that the narrator keeps sneaking into the old man’s room while he is asleep for seven successive nights. Each night he opens the door very carefully and makes a sufficient opening for his head and then undoes the closed lantern so that only a single ray falls upon the old man’s “vulture eye”1. In the eighth night, when he (the narrator) leaped into the murdered man’s room to kill him, the old man has shrieked out of terror.

[C112] The shriek that has been heard by the neighbor was made by the old man.

---

1. The narrator in The TTH has a trouble with one of the old man’s eyes because it is a pale blue eye with a film over it, and whenever the eye falls upon the narrator, his blood runs cold. He calls it the “evil eye” or the “vulture eye”. The vulture eye is the reason the narrator has killed the old man.
The narrator is not telling the truth, he claims that the shriek was his own in a dream while it was the old man’s in a moment of extreme terror.

**E3** The narrator lies by claiming that the shriek which has been heard is his own in a dream.

(S4) The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country.

[CA4] The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country.

[CI14] The narrator tells the officers that the old man is not at home.

[CI15] The sentence structure parallels that of [CA2], it portrays the narrator’s certainty, comfort and boldness.

[MCE5] From the beginning of the narrative, the reader is informed that the old man lives and is in the same house with the narrator. And when the police officers came for a check, the old man has already been murdered and buried by the narrator under the flooring of his chamber.

[CI16] The narrator is lying to the officers concerning the whereabouts of the old man.

[CI17] The narrator is – again – not telling the truth; he is trying to mislead the officers in order to deflect away any kind of suspicion.

**E4** The narrator proceeds the concealment of his crime and mentions while talking to the officers that the old man is absent in the country.

(S5) I took my visitors all over the house.

[CA5] I took my visitors all over the house.

[CI18] The narrator shows the police officers the whole house.

[MCE6] The officers have been deputed by the police office to go search premises.

[CI19] The narrator takes the officers all over the house in order to show them and make them believe that there is no suspicion-appealing matter.

[CI20] He friendlily refers to the police officers by “visitors”.

[CI21] The narrator behaves in a comfortable manner.

**E5** The narrator takes the police officers to see all parts of the house.

(S6) I bade them search—search well.

[CA6] I bade them search—search well.

[CI22] The narrator asks the officers to well search.

[CI23] The dash indicates the introduction of an important additional clarifying piece of information.

[CI24] The narrator does not only ask the officers to search but to search well.

[MCE7] It is an unexpected move that a murderer asks the police officers to search well for evidence.

[MCE8] At the beginning of the current paragraph the narrator states that he has nothing to fear.

[CI25] Unlike the narrator does not only behave naturally but he behaves with a heightened self-confidence, as if he really has nothing to fear. Hence he does not only ask them to search but to search well.

[CI26] “well” is italicized so that it is given an extra emphasis.

[CI27] The extra emphasis gets the reader puzzled, because it expresses the flagrant over self-confidence and boldness the narrator possesses.

[CE6] The narrator asks the officers to search well in the house for any kind of evidence.

(S7) I led them, at length, to his chamber.

[CA7] I led them, at length, to his chamber.
A while after, the narrator takes the officers to see the old man’s chamber.
The narrator behaves very naturally, he asks the officers to search well the house, and he shows them the whole house.
The narrator shows the police officers the different parts of the house: even the murdered man’s chamber.
“his” is put in italics in order to emphasize and confirm that the chamber he takes the officers to is the old man’s chamber and no one else’s.
The reader knows that this narrator is not an ordinary person. This narrator does not behave in a predictable or reasonable way.
The narrator keeps behaving in a way which emphasizes his over self-confidence and boldness.

**The narrator takes the officers to the old man’s chamber.**

*S8* *I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed.*

*I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed.*

The narrator shows the officers that the treasures of the old man are secure and undisturbed.

*MCE11* If someone’s possessions seem to be secure and undisturbed, that is then a sign of security and hence the absence of evidence to suspect foul play.

The narrator shows the officers that there is no reason for suspicion.

The narrator steadily works on convincing the officers of his innocence as well as of the absence of any reasons for suspicion.

**The narrator shows the police officers the possessions of the old man as being secure and undisturbed.**

*S9* *In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues.*

*In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues.*

The narrator feels very confident to the extent that he brings chairs into the old man’s room and asks the officers have seats there.

*MCE12* The police officers move around the house with the narrator, he takes them at length to the old man’s room and shows them that his treasures are secure and undisturbed.

The narrator feels extremely confident; it was not sufficient for him to only bring them (the officers) into the murdered man’s chamber and show them how that his treasures are intact, but even went beyond that to bring chairs into that room and ask them to be seated.

The narrator’s self-confidence keeps augmenting and this is expressed through his successive reactions.

“When” is italicized, it adds accentuation to the puzzling fact that the narrator desired them to rest from their fatigues in the old man’s room and not in any other room in the house.

*“here” is italicized, it magnifies the feeling of discomfort for the reader. It leads him towards perceiving and considering the narrator’s reaction twice instead of once.

**The narrator is very self-confident that he brings chairs into the old man’s room and offers the officer to rest.**
The narrator strongly believes that he is a sane person, and that his actions are but right and logical. He therefore does whatever in order to convince himself, the officers and eventually the reader of what he strongly believes in (though he is just a deluded person).

3.3. (P1) Commentary

In the processing of (S1), the reader is automatically recalls [MCE1] in order to find a clarification and a contextualization for [CA1] which results in generating: [CI1] and [CI2]. The second part of the sentence following the dash is an interrogative independent clause introducing a rhetorical question that results in realizing a stronger effect [CI3]. [CI4] and [CI5] represent the outcome of italicization; putting “what” in italics helps making word/effort economy with the benefit of reaching a greater effect. Italicization serves to boost the reader’s whole perception of the [CA1] leading him towards obtaining [MCE2] which is an encyclopedic background that brings about [CI6]. [CI6] exposes a part of the narrator’s personality, character and psychology: the narrator is too much bold, self-confident and comfortable).

In (S2), the narrator refers to the police officers using “gentlemen”. The reader recalls [MCE3] to disambiguate this referent in [CI7]. As soon as the disambiguation is achieved, the reader premises the confusing matter, which is that the narrator is unexpectedly using a friendly way to refer to the officers and therefore engenders [CI8]. Eventually [CI9] comes to confirm [E1] and works as a contextual strengthening which affirms that the narrator is very self-confident and comfortable.

The structure of (S3) subsequently comes to imply and shed light on the narrator’s character as being anxiety-free [CI11], even though he is not speaking the truth when telling the officers that the shriek was made by him in a dream [E3]. (S4) is a sequel to the previous sentence and is parallel to it in terms of structure. Besides, both of the assumptions are produced with the same intention; the narrator’s intention to skillfully delude the officers by telling them lies with total self-assurance [CI16], [CI17]. Hence, (S3) and (S4) in their turn strengthen the idea of the narrator’s questionable character.

Reaching to (S5), the reader makes connection between: the narrator showing the officers the whole house [CI18] and the fact that the officers have come to search premises [MCE6] to arrive at [CI19] suggesting that the narrator actually aims at proving the absence of any suspicion-appealing clue. On the other hand, the narrator –again– refers to the police officers...
in a friendly way describing them as mere visitors [CI20] and treating them accordingly [CI21].

(S6) is composed of two clauses that are divided by a dash. The last word in the first clause is the same word introducing the second clause, which forms an anadiplosis\(^2\). The second clause is an additional clarifying piece of information that adds precision to [CI23] and [CI24]; the narrator goes exigent that the officers search well. The precision of the manner and the extent of searching next to [MCE7] and [MCE8] build up [CI25]. [CI26] and [CI27] present the way in which italicization supplements the previously reached implication. Without forgetting that [MCE7] is what magnifies the effect of italics.

The implications inferred in [CA7] are but some other confirmations of the previous extracted ones concerning the narrator’s character. The reader starts from [MCE9], which conveys that the narrator has shown the visitors the whole house, and goes to form [CI29]. Then the italicized “his” serves as an effect-booster [CI30], it amplifies the focus given by the reader, and as a result, the reader recalls the fact that this narrator is not an ordinary person [MCE10]. The reader deduces [CI31] asserting that the narrator continues behaving in a manner depicting him as a creature with a pure sense of absolute arrogance.

[CA8] provokes the reader’s encyclopedic knowledge [If someone’s possessions seem to be secure and undisturbed, that is then a sign of security and hence the absence of evidence to suspect foul play] [MCE11]. The latter generates both CI’s [33-34] implying that the narrator intentionally and with full awareness follows the right procedure to convince the officers of his innocence.

[CA9] is no exception from the previous contextual assumptions in which the narrator’s behavior confounds the reader’s parameters of logic and expectations and in which italicization amplifies as well as stresses the impact of that defamiliarization\(^3\) [CI38], [CI39]. [CI36] is initiated on the basis of [MCE12]. [CI36] demonstrates how the narrator’s series of reactions mirrors his state of mind and ergo transmits the ascendency of his feeling of self-confidence and boldness.

\(^2\) “Repeating the last word of a clause at the beginning of the next clause”. Available at: https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_A.html (Last Accessed: 01/06/2015)
\(^3\) The word “defamiliarization” in this case is used in its literal meaning, with no reference to the term in Russian Formalism.
The sentence structure and the word choice all together with the italicization collaborate to reach the main implicature of the different assumptions in this passage [CI40]: The narrator strongly believes that he is a sane person, and that his deeds are but right and reasonable. Hence he does whatever in order to convince himself, the officers and ultimately the reader of what he strongly believes in.

The narrator wants -by hook or by crook- to convince himself and to convey the idea of being a well-balanced fellow. For this purpose, he expresses over self-confidence as a psychological defense mechanism. By precision, he italicizes the words that have reference to the aspect upon which the story teller and the reader have contradicting view-points, so as to astonish the reader and get him persuaded. Besides, he italicizes the points that have reference to the narrator’s sources of anxiety (what, his, here, etc.).

3.4. Passage 2

“No doubt I now grew very pale;—but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased—and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound—much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton.” (The TTH: 196).

3.5. (P2) Inferential Processing

(S1) “No doubt I now grew very pale;—[...] and with a heightened voice.”

[CA1] No doubt I now grew very pale;—

[MCE1] Back in reading, the narrator (the pronoun ‘I’ refers to the narrator- the personage who commits actions as well as reports for them) has just committed a murder; then, three officers have come to search premises because a neighbor told them that he heard a shriek. The narrator sits with the officers in the room of the murdered old man where he starts fancying a ringing within his ears and his head starts aching which makes him go pale. Now the ringing increases (and he discovers it to be not only within his ears) (The TTH: 196).

[CI1] The narrator at this stage feels a great deal of discomfort.

[CI2] The narrator feels a great deal of discomfort because the ringing continues and increases, because he discovers that the ringing is not only in his ears but it is real.

[MCE2] The employment of the intensifier “very” serves to indicate a higher degree of paleness (not only pale but very pale).

[CI3] The narrator was already pale but now he is even paler than before.

[E1] The narrator has become even paler than before;—

[CI4] The dash introduces important information.

[CA2] but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice.

[CI5] But expresses concession: although the narrator is very pale, he talks more fluently and with a more heightened voice.

[MCE3] what is known and logical is that people’s state of mind affects and influences the way they speak.
He is very pale and uncomfortable; still this does not affect his way of speaking and he speaks very fluently.

The narrator attempts to control himself and not be affected by the sound.

The narrator becomes paler, still he talks more fluently and with a heightened voice.

Yet the sound increased—and what could I do?

The ringing the narrator hears increases, and he feels powerless because he can do nothing to stop it.

Yet the sound increased—and what could I do?

The sound which the narrator hears in this case is given the same description that was given earlier to the sound he heard when he was sneaking in to the old man’s room trying to spot the light on his ‘evil eye’.

The sound which the narrator keeps hearing is the beating of the old man’s heart.

The sound which the narrator keeps hearing is the same as the one he heard earlier because of extreme anxiety.

The sound which the narrator hears keeps increasing and he cannot help it. The sound is the same which the watch makes when enveloped in cotton and it is in fact the heartbeat of the old man.

The narrator keeps hearing the heartbeat of the old man though he has killed him;

The sound chases him and drives him mad.

The narrator behaves in a mad manner while resisting and claiming his sanity, consequently he reaps the result of his deeds.

3.6. (P2) Commentary

Passage (1) is extracted from The TTH; it includes three sentences (S1), (S2), and (S3). The first and the latter encompass (a) word(s) put in italics. In the processing of (S1), the reader encounters the use of the adverb ‘now’ in [CA1] which automatically takes him back to check the previous events that have lead to the ‘now’ point, i.e. the preceding paragraph. The preceding paragraph (§16) affords an [MCE1] that helps the reader make a connection and realize the effect which the italicized adverb ‘very’ adds as denoting and juxtaposing the degree of paleness between earlier and now. Earlier, he was pale because of the headache as well as because of the fancied ringing within his ears; but now, the ringing increases, it becomes more distinct, and turns out to be not only within his ears.
As the [E1] puts forward the state of mind of the narrator, it is followed by the dash that prepares the reader for the coming concessive clause. The latter (the concessive clause) shows the narrator’s behavior which does not correspond to his state of mind. The narrator speaks more fluently despite the fact that he is uncomfortable and pale. This is boosted by encyclopedic background [MCE3] which provides the information concerning the interrelation between one’s state of mind and his way of speaking.

(S2) leads to [CI7] implying that the narrator is helpless and can do nothing to stop or get rid of the ringing. Reaching (S3) and considering the italicized part of the sentence, the [MCE4] takes the reader retrospectively to page 195 where the very same expression: “a low, dull, quick sound—much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton” is used to describe the sound that came to his ears when he snuck into the old man’s room the night he committed the murder.

The narrator is a psychologically disturbed person who steadily acts in a way which leads him towards assured self-destruction; however, he firmly believes in his sanity and sagacity. His actions are contradictory and irrelevant to his claims. Over the course of narrative, one learns and gradually becomes more certain that the narrator is a stubborn personage who predicts his reader’s reaction for the actions he takes, and this is the point being confirmed in this passage. The story–teller consistently resists the idea of his insanity and insists on proclaiming his sanity. Likewise, passage (2) demonstrates the previously tackled idea (sanity proclaiming). In this passage, the narrator resists the increasing sound he hears and the paleness he feels as well, and against all odds speaks fluently and comfortably.

Hence, the writer’s intended effect is the one reached in [CI11]; each person is to sow the seeds of his actions, and his actions are to chase him. And that is the case in regard to the narrator.

3.7. Passage 3

“I married early, and was happy to find in my wife a disposition not uncongenial with my own. Observing my partiality for domestic pets, she lost no opportunity of procuring those of the most agreeable kind. We had birds, gold-fish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and a cat. This latter was a remarkably large and beautiful animal, entirely black, and sagacious to an astonishing degree...” (The BC: 230).
3.8. (P3) Inferential Processing

(S1) *I married early, and was happy to find in my wife a disposition not ungenial with my own.*

[CA1] I married early,

[MCE1] The narrator is telling about himself, he talked about his infancy and then about his manhood.

[CI1] The narrator tells that he got married at an early age.

[E1] **The narrator tells that he married early.**

[CA2] and was happy to find in my wife a disposition not ungenial with my own.

[MCE2] In the previous paragraph, the story teller talks about himself; about his disposition as an infant, and then as an adult. He tells about his heart-tenderness especially towards animals- when he was an infant, and how this tenderness has grown with him when he became a man.

[CI2] The narrator was happy that he and his wife have a disposition in common.

[CI3] The narrator was happy to find that his wife possesses heart-tenderness towards animals just like him.

[E2] **The narrator was glad that his wife’s disposition matches his own.**

(S2) *Observing my partiality for domestic pets, she lost no opportunity of procuring those of the most agreeable kind.*

[CA3] Observing my partiality for domestic pets, she lost no opportunity of procuring those of the most agreeable kind.

[MCE3] As told earlier, the narrator’s wife loves pets just like her husband does.

[CI4] Whenever possible, the narrator’s wife brings some of the most agreeable kinds of pets because she noticed that her husband likes them.

[E3] **The wife notices her husband’s fondness for pets; hence, she procures some of the most agreeable kinds whenever possible.**

(S3) *We had birds, gold-fish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and a cat.*

[CA4] We had birds, gold-fish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and a cat.

[MCE4] The narrator and his wife share the love for animals. And the narrator’s wife brings some of the most pleasant kinds of pets whenever there is chance.

[CI5] The narrator and his wife had many kinds of pets including: birds, gold-fish, a dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and a cat.

[CI6] The word at the end of the pet-list “cat” is italicized.

[CI7] there is an emphasis put on this word. And therefore, there is something particular about it.

[E4] **The narrator and his wife had birds, gold-fish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and a cat.**

(S4) *This latter was a remarkably large and beautiful animal, entirely black, and sagacious to an astonishing degree.*

[CA5] This latter was a remarkably large and beautiful animal, entirely black, and sagacious to an astonishing degree.

[CI8] Reference disambiguation: *this latter* refers to the cat; the last pet on the previously given pet-list.

[MCE5] The word “cat” is italicized in the preceding sentence within the previous paragraph.

[CI9] The stress is put on “cat” to denote it as important and as a thesis statement-like of this short story, in order to require and grasp the reader’s attention.

[CI10] The cat is the subject matter which will be developed over the course of the story.
The narrator starts by describing the cat as being remarkably large and beautiful, entirely black, and sagacious to an astonishing degree.

The cat is remarkably large and beautiful, entirely black, and sagacious to an astonishing degree.

The word “cat” -as being italicized- is differentiated from the other animals on the list, and therefore is the subject matter of the narrative.

3.9. (P3) Commentary

The passage that we have chosen for analysis consists of four sentences. On processing (S1), the reader appeals to [MCE1] so as to start contextualizing [CA1]. Moving to [CA2], the reader recovers [MCE2]: the narrator introduces himself earlier and tells about his character and his penchant for pets, and in this assumption he continues adding his impression about his wife’s character which matches his [CI2], [CI3], [E3]. And when processing (S2), the reader proceeds just as with (S1), he recovers [MCE3] to arrive at [CI4] and [E3].

There is a list of pets in (S3), the last word: cat is in italics [CI6], [CI7]. This stimulates the reader to be more attentive for the coming (S4). In [CA5], the reference disambiguation pulls the reader right back to the last item in the preceding assumption: “cat”, the reader then recalls that this word has been accentuated through italicization [MCE5]. As a result, the reader makes a connection between the previously italicized word and the current assumption then comes to deduce [CI9], [CI10] and [CI11]. From the previous implications the reader uses his hunch and presumably reaches the implicature that there is something particular about ‘this cat’ and it is then the subject matter of this narrative [CI12]. [CI10] comes as a contextual confirmation for [CI7] supporting the presumption provided by the former.

Throughout the reading process, one finds that the italicization functions as a gluing element that keeps the parts of the narrative together and therefore keeps the reader attached to the narrative as being a whole unit. Italics in this case do not take the reader backward to relate the italics to a matter that has occurred earlier, but instead prepare and alarm him to a pending aspect.

3.10. Passage 4

“And now was I indeed wretched beyond the wretchedness of mere Humanity. And a brute beast—whose fellow I had contemptuously destroyed—a brute beast to work out for me—for me a man, fashioned in the image of the High God—so much of insufferable woe! Alas! neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more!...”. (THE BC: 235).
3.11. (P4) Inferential Processing

(S1) And now was I indeed wretched beyond the wretchedness of mere Humanity.
[CA1] And now was I indeed wretched beyond the wretchedness of mere Humanity.
[CI1] The narrator talks about the present time: “now”, this leads the reader to make a connection between this point “now” and its background; what comes before it.
[MCE1] As previously told, the story teller is being dogged by (continuously followed by) a black cat which he has found and brought home. At the beginning when the narrator brought the cat, he had a partiality for it. Nonetheless, this feeling changed to the converse and now the narrator possesses a huge feeling of detestation for this cat. Consequently the narrator – extremely- longs to rid himself of this “beast” and “destroy it with a blow” (234). However, he is refrained from doing so: 1-by the memory of the former crime (his killing to the first cat he had before), and 2- because he absolutely dreads this cat.
[CI2] The cat is a source of annoyance for the narrator; hence he has a strong longing to get rid of it.
[CI3] The narrator is refrained from getting rid of the cat, and this puts him under too much pressure and makes him feel wretched.
[CI4] The narrator feels extremely miserable, to the extent that he describes this misery as not of the kind which ordinary human beings might experience.
[E1] The narrator is now wretched beyond the wretchedness of mere humanity.

(S2) And a brute beast— whose fellow I had contemptuously destroyed… the image of the High God— so much of insufferable woe!
[CA2] And a brute beast—
[CI5] The narrator introduces an animal qualified as a brute beast.
[MCE2] At the beginning of the narrative, the narrator mentions that he has pets which he loves. Among those pets there is a black cat called Pluto. When reading further, the narrator starts referring to Pluto or to the other (second) cat he brings home using: “the beast” or “the brute”.
[CI6] Reference disambiguation: the narrator uses “a brute beast” to refer to the other black cat which he has brought home.
[CI7] “a brute beast” is emphatically italicized so as to attract the reader’s extra attention to the importance of what is being told and to prepare him for what is coming, and to enhance suspense. Besides, it expresses and reflects the narrator’s extreme nervousness at the time being.
[CI8] The dash introduces a follow up detailing piece of information.
[CA3] whose fellow I had contemptuously destroyed—
[MCE3] The narrator informs the readers about Pluto. Then he tells that he has killed it by hanging it to a limb of a tree after having taken off one of his eyes.
[CI9] The narrator talks about his butchering of Pluto.
[CI10] The narrator speaks about the second cat with reference to Pluto. He regards them the same: (fellows).
[CI11] The narrator is able to destroy this cat just like he has destroyed its fellow.
[CI12] The dash indicates the end of the additional piece of information.
[CA4] a brute beast to work out for me—
[CI13] the narrator speaks of the second brute beast and not Pluto.
[MCE4] In this sentence, the narrator starts speaking about the brute beast; however he pauses for an additional bit of information. And in this clause he resumes speaking about it.
[CI14] The writer resumes his talking about the cat.
“a brute beast” is italicized as well which takes the reader back to the previously italicized “a brute beast”, and at the same time retains his eagerness and guarantees his readiness for that which is to come.

The narrator is about to tell the reader about something which the black cat is causing him.

“me” is italicized: me is an objective pronoun; it is the object of the clause whose subject is a brute beast. The italicization points out the subject and the object as two poles put oppositely.

The dash introduces another important detailing piece of information.

The narrator –again– pauses for another addition.

for me a man, fashioned in the image of the High God—

At the beginning of this sentence, the story teller commences talking about the cat; then, he pauses to add a piece of information concerning it. He resumes afterward, then pauses another time to add another piece of information concerning himself.

The narrator regards himself as a man fashioned in the image of the High God.

The narrator hints at his own capabilities through stating his killing of this cat’s fellow.

The narrator believes that he owns an elevated pre- eminent power and position.

He juxtaposes his sublime powers with the impotence of this cat.

The dash indicates the end of the second additional information.

so much of insufferable woe!

the narrator intends to inform the reader about what the cat is causing him, but this is interrupted twice with a detailing bit of information.

The narrator proceeds talking about what the cat is causing him.

The cat is causing the narrator so much of insufferable woe.

The feeling of extreme sadness which the cat is causing the narrator is unbearable.

This sentence is an exclamatory one (!). The narrator exclaims to transmit his perplexity, anxiety and surprise at the manner in which the situation is reversed.

The brute beast-whose fellow the narrator has destroyed-, is causing the narrator- who is fashioned in the image of a High God- a good deal of unbearable woe!

Alas! neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more!

Alas!

The narrator feels sad, wretched and sorry, and the cat is causing him insufferable woe.

The narrator feels sorry for himself and for the state in which he is stuck.

The narrator feels sorry.

neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more!

The narrator feels sad, wretched and sorry, and the cat is causing him insufferable woe.

The narrator feels sorry for himself and for the state in which he is stuck.

The narrator feels sorry.

neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more!

The narrator feels sad, wretched and sorry, and the cat is causing him insufferable woe.

The narrator feels sorry for himself and for the state in which he is stuck.

The narrator feels sorry.

neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more!

The narrator feels sad, wretched and sorry, and the cat is causing him insufferable woe.

The narrator feels sorry for himself and for the state in which he is stuck.

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neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more!

The narrator feels sad, wretched and sorry, and the cat is causing him insufferable woe.

The narrator feels sorry for himself and for the state in which he is stuck.

The narrator feels sorry.

neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more!

The narrator feels sad, wretched and sorry, and the cat is causing him insufferable woe.

The narrator feels sorry for himself and for the state in which he is stuck.

The narrator feels sorry.

neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more!

The narrator feels sad, wretched and sorry, and the cat is causing him insufferable woe.

The narrator feels sorry for himself and for the state in which he is stuck.

The narrator feels sorry.

neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more!

The narrator feels sad, wretched and sorry, and the cat is causing him insufferable woe.

The narrator feels sorry for himself and for the state in which he is stuck.

The narrator feels sorry.

neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more!

The narrator feels sad, wretched and sorry, and the cat is causing him insufferable woe.

The narrator feels sorry for himself and for the state in which he is stuck.

The narrator feels sorry.

neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of Rest any more!

The narrator feels sad, wretched and sorry, and the cat is causing him insufferable woe.
3.12. (P4) Commentary

When processing (S1), the reader encounters the time indicator “now” [CI1]; this provokes his background knowledge [MCE1] to retrieve the related details which take place before the present time point. Yoking the [MCE] to the [CI], the reader then infers that the cat is a source of annoyance for narrator which causes him to long for getting rid of it [CI2]. However the narrator becomes severely miserable because he is restrained from killing the cat [CI3] and [CI4].

(S2) is divided into several CAs. On the processing of [CA1], the reader goes to [MCE2] to achieve reference disambiguation. “a brute beast” refers to the second black cat [CI6]. The use of italics and the employing of the dash ensure gaining the reader’s efficient attention to proceed with the rest of the sentence [CI7], [CI8]. The reader will pass to [CA3] ready and prepared [CI7], [CI8]. In this clause the narrator deviates to add a detail. The detail that is recalled from [MCE3] helps the reader deduce that the narrator is referring to his crime in order to implicate that he wants to destroy this cat too [CI9], [CI10] and [CI11]. [CI12] indicates the end of the additional piece of information and therefore takes the reader back to resuming with [CA4], and basing on [MCE4] the reader initiates [CI14].

In this assumption, the italicization clearly affects the reader; “a brute beast” leads the reader to relate it to the previously italicized “a brute beast” [CI15] in the beginning of (S2) and therefore to well link the portions of the sentence. On the other hand, the italicized “me” functions similarly; it shows the subject-object juxtaposition and opposition [CI17]. The dash indicates another pause for a significant addition [CI18] and [CI19]. With no interruption the reader continues to [CA5] where he retrieves [MCE5] and then engenders that the narrator regards himself as a man fashioned in the image of the High God [CI20]. The latter, when supplemented by the data that the narrator hinted at his capabilities via avowing his butchering of Pluto [MCE6], both of [CI21] and [CI22] are implied.

In [CA7] within (S3), the reader infers that the narrator feels sad for himself and for the state in which he is stuck [CI28] on the ground of [MCE8]. The reader then launches that the story teller feels sorry [E3], and carries on to the next [CA]. [CI29] and [CI30] imply that the narrator sinking in a lasting deep depression and anxiety because of the cat, both of the implications constitute a contextual strengthening for the previous [E]. The punctuation mark in
its turn translates the narrator’s mournfulness. And at this stage the reader extracts [CI31]: The narrator has found himself in a hellish bottomless pit of torture because of his previous cruel inhuman deeds and foolish philosophy. Consequently he no more knows rest again.

In this passage, the narrator is not in a very calm state of mind, he is obviously thoughtful, agitated, nervous, mournful and sorry. He wants to express and transmit his thoughts and concerns to the reader and to guarantee that delivery, he uses italicization. The italicization keeps the parts of the sentence linked to one another that the reader never loses the track of thoughts.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have attempted to apply a Relevance Theoretical approach to Poe’s stylistic feature namely italicization, in his The Tell-Tale Heart and The Black Cat. The use of italics in the corpora is not haphazard; it is used in accordance with the writer’s pragmatic purposes. The italicization serves as an ostensive stimulus which puts forward the author’s communicative intention to communicate his informative intention to the reader. We have found that the different cases in which Poe employs italics go as follows:

The character (narrator) in both of the corpora is –clearly– an agitated person who suffers psychological instability. His account for the story is automatically not trustable, and his actions or reactions are not acceptable. Ergo, the emphasis is put on the aspects upon which the reader’s viewpoint (being a normal person) is contradicted with that of the narrator’s, and this has the purpose of gaining the reader’s attention and belief.

As mentioned earlier, the narrator suffers psychological disturbance. And the italicization does not only portray his view-point, but his psychological state as well. The italics reflect, show and even magnify the moments in which the narrator is at the peak of agitation, nervousness or anxiety.

Poe –being a writer who believes in the unity of the short story as a genre– italicizes with the intention of either taking the reader backward within the narrative or preparing him for the subsequent events. This ensures an improved grasping and perception to the text from the reader’s part.
The three cases in which the writer italicizes do not forcibly go separately. The reader might encounter an occurrence of italicization that does not limit itself to one case; the reader might encounter a situation in where the occurrence of the italicization can be justified with reference to two cases instead of one.

Relevance Theory is a suitable tool which enables us to approach the corpora and tackle the two constituting parts of the communicative operation: the language-encoder and the language-decoder. We are allowed to bring about the writer’s intention behind the language manipulation (the graphological deviation), as well as to elaborately show the impact of that deviation on the reader through tracking the reader’s cognitive processing of the deviation. When Relevance Theory exposes the complex cognitive reactive process performed by a reader encountering such a language manipulation, it does –then–points out the writer’s remarkable skillfulness to put language at the service of his intention, need and purpose.
CHAPTER THREE
PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATION
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1. Introduction

To launch a research with the aim of investigating hypotheses, solving problems, and testing the validity of instruments is certainly satisfactory and fruitful for the researcher. However, he can target what is further than that through ensuring the outcome of his study to remain not confined within sheer pages. The value of the research lies in its transmission of the acquired knowledge, and the fruits of any research are intended to transcend, reaching out to the community. By the same token, we believe in the necessity of transferring the results of our research, modest they might be, into pedagogical/classroom context so as to ultimately serve and meet the EFL learner’s needs.

Thence, this chapter suggests some activities which have been set in the light of our application of Relevance Theory on Poe’s use of italics. The activities are restricted within TEFL reading and writing types of practice, and they are meant to target students of literature of an intermediate level. For the realization, the teacher can utilize handouts, photocopiable material, or projection (the two former ones for the extracts and the table, and the latter for the chart and the figures).

2. The Activities

2.1. Activity One: What Do You See??

This activity is a warm-up activity. The intended objective is to introduce italics to the students and then show how that italicization can be visually recognized. One does not have actually to read to know that a text is italicized, merely looking is enough to realize that a text is in italics. Depicting the way in which italics can be visually recognized, denotes the way they are foregrounded, and thus are a visual stimulus for the reader.

In this activity, the teachers may lead a class discussion around italicization. The set of the questions below are some of the ideas that can be debated so as to introduce the topic and pave the way to the subsequent activities.

- Examine the following figures.
- What do you notice?
- What is this type of writing called?
- Do you use it in your writing? Why?
- Do you know the significance?
- Do you know its rules of its usage?
The English alphabet:
A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.
A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.
A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.
A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.
A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.

The English alphabet:
A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.
A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.
A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.
A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.
A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.

Figure 1: Italicized vs. Non-Italicized.

Figure 2: Hello!! Can You See Me?

2.2. Activity Two: What Is Italicization for?

The aim behind this activity is to familiarize the students with the use of italics. They are given a set of everyday English sentences containing italics, from which they have to extract and deduce the rules for using italics. And then obtain a completed chart as in figure 3.

- The teacher might ask the learners to read the sentences below, to pay a special attention to the italicized words, and then deduce the reason why they are in italics:
- Jeremy’s grandfather had a Mustang.
- She defines *ambiguity* as the ability of a word to mean more than one thing at the same time.
- Selsable keeps telling me that he is not that handsome, yet there is a certain *je ne sais quoi* about him.
- Tarek told Sara that he does not care about what *people* think of him.
- George Jones—the journalist– is one of the founders of the *New-York Daily Times*.
- *Late Show with David Letterman* was one of Khawla’s favorite television shows.
- The *ion* an atom or small group of atoms which has an electrical charge.
- Sally Ride is the youngest American astronaut who has traveled to space on the space shuttle *Challenger* in 1983.

➤ A chart summarizing the rules for italicization:

![Figure 3: The Use of Italics](image)

**2.3. Activity Three: Read and Match!**

At this juncture, the students are already familiar with italics and the rules of their normal usage. In the present activity, the teacher distributes a table containing several short extracts from different literary works in opposition to the four cases of italicization. The students have to read the passages—all of which encompass italics—and then match each passage in accordance with the italicization case by putting a cross in the relevant column.
This activity aims at gently transferring the students’ knowledge from simple non-literary sentences into literary excerpts.

- To facilitate the matching task, we have numbered the cases as the following:
  - Case 1: to add emphasis.
  - Case 2: to set off a title, a word, or a passage from the context.
  - Case 3: to denote names of vehicles, aircrafts, ships, and trains.
  - Case 4: to distinguish technical terms + foreign or unfamiliar words and phrases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The passages</th>
<th>Case1</th>
<th>Case 2</th>
<th>Case 3</th>
<th>Case4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“…There is Sikandar Khan, Nur Ali Beg, and Farrukh Shah—all heads of <em>kafilas</em> [caravans]—who deal there’ said the Flower” (Kim: 50)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“‘Oah! I knew it was broken, and so, I think, that was what I thought—and it <em>was</em> broken”’ (ibid: 158)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He stared intently at the incomplete phrase: <em>In no case shall the said Bernard Bodley be</em>…and thought how strange it was that…” (Counterparts: 99)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The proprietor sprawled on the counter reading the <em>Herald</em> and yawning.” (A Painful Case: 129)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“‘Tom, I <em>will not</em> bear it—I <em>will</em> scream’, said Maggie, at the first movement of the sword. ‘You’ll hurt yourself; you’ll cut your head off!’” (The Mill on the Floss: 192)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The principle of the <em>vis inertiæ</em>, for example, seems to be identical in physics and metaphysics.” (The Purloined Letter: 261)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I felt that I must scream or die!–and now–again!–hark! louder! louder! louder! <em>louder!</em>”. (The Tell-Tale Heart: 197)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!–no, no! They heard!–they suspected–they <em>knew!</em>–they were making a mockery of my horror!” (ibid)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the students complete the table, they discover and note that some passages (passage 7 and 8) match none of the four cases, i.e. some passages do not submit to the rules. At this point, the teacher proceeds by posing some other queries, which can guide their focus towards the transgression made and its significance.

He can ask them to make an attempt to detect the writer’s intention and pragmatic purpose behind italicizing, and furthermore, to capture and recognize the significance of such a graphological deviation (ostension). Eventually the students will be familiar with one of the types of literary deviations: the graphological deviation.

2.4. Activity Four: How Often?

The previous activity has introduced the learners to the application as well as the violation of the norms of italicization usage. It offers a minute space for them to practice, and the current activity permits them to practice italicization usage even on a larger scale.

The sample below is an extended extract taken from Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice. The teacher may instruct his students to read the passage, highlight the italics, tell about their frequency (recurrent or not), and then to carefully and profoundly examine the italicized words in order to approximately identify a justification for its usage.

Requiring the students to tell about the redundancy of italics will reveal whether the italicization is reiterated and therefore it is a stylistic feature within that work.
"We are not in a way to know what Mr. Bingley likes," said her mother resentfully, "since we are not to visit."

"But you forget, mamma," said Elizabeth, "that we shall meet him at the assemblies, and that Mrs. Long promised to introduce him."

"I do not believe Mrs. Long will do any such thing. She has two nieces of her own. She is a selfish, hypocritical woman, and I have no opinion of her."

"No more have I," said Mr. Bennet; "and I am glad to find that you do not depend on her serving you."

Mrs. Bennet deigned not to make any reply, but, unable to contain herself, began scolding one of her daughters.

"Don't keep coughing so, Kitty, for Heaven's sake! Have a little compassion on my nerves. You tear them to pieces."

"Kitty has no discretion in her coughs," said her father; "she times them ill."

"I do not cough for my own amusement," replied Kitty fretfully. "When is your next ball to be, Lizzy?"

"To-morrow fortnight."

"Aye, so it is," cried her mother, "and Mrs. Long does not come back till the day before; so it will be impossible for her to introduce him, for she will not know him herself."

"Then, my dear, you may have the advantage of your friend, and introduce Mr. Bingley to her."

"Impossible, Mr. Bennet, impossible, when I am not acquainted with him myself; how can you be so teasing?"

"I honour your circumspection. A fortnight's acquaintance is certainly very little. One cannot know what a man really is by the end of a fortnight. But if we do not venture somebody else will; and after all, Mrs. Long and her daughters must stand their chance; and, therefore, as she will think it an act of kindness, if you decline the office, I will take it on myself."

The girls stared at their father. Mrs. Bennet said only, "Nonsense, nonsense!"

"What can be the meaning of that emphatic exclamation?" cried he. "Do you consider the forms of introduction, and the stress that is laid on them, as nonsense? I cannot quite agree with you there. What say you, Mary? For you are a young lady of deep reflection, I know, and read great books and make extracts." (Chapter II: 7)
2.5. Activity Five: Read It Aloud!

![Figure 4: Read It Aloud!]()

The target of this activity is to draw the learners’ attention to the encoder’s manipulation of the language to serve his communicative needs and the contextual exigencies. Our hope is to train the learners in identifying the **ostension** brought to evidence through the violation of the conventional rules, and in recognizing this manifest ostension as the encoder’s **informative intention**.

Reading the text loudly will demonstrate the significance and effect of italics. In the following passage for instance, the italics are used to transmit the personage’s fury, stress, agitation or/and despair; thence the intonation and the pitch of the reader will denote it very accurately and clearly.

Why *would* they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observation of the men—but the noise steadily increased. Oh God! what *could* I do? I foamed—I raved—I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew *louder*—*louder*—**louder**! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!—no, no! They heard!—they suspected!—they *knew*!—they were making a mockery of my horror!—this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die!—and now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder! *louder*!— *The Tell-Tale Heart*: 197)
2.6. Activity Six: How Does It Sound Without Italics?

In this activity the students will be given two similar passages. In the first italics are kept, and in the second they are removed. At this point, the students are required to read, compare and then tell the difference between the two passages. Eventually the students will be aware of the effect achieved and gained through italicization in contrast to the effectless non italicized one.

---hung it *because* I knew that it had loved me, and *because* I felt it had given me no reason of offence;---hung it *because* I knew that in so doing I was committing a sin—a deadly sin that would so jeopardize my immortal soul... ([The Black Cat: 232](#)).

---hung it because I knew that it had loved me, and because I felt it had given me no reason of offence;---hung it because I knew that in so doing I was committing a sin—a deadly sin that would so jeopardize my immortal soul... (ibid).

2.7. Activity Seven: Use It in Your Writing...

This is a wrap up activity. It comes lastly to give an opportunity for the students to practice and make use of their acquired knowledge along the preceding activities in relation to italicization.

In the present activity the students are supplied with ideas for creative writing where they will write a very short story. The short story is supposed to include italicized words. The students might respect the rules and use italics according to the norms, as they might consider it a piece of literature where they are free to break them.
We may suggested the following topics:

Write a very short story in which your character notices that a stranger is following her. She pretends not to notice. The stranger follows her home and watches her go inside. Then when he leaves, your character turns the tables and starts to follow him.\textsuperscript{vii}

At the airport, a stranger offers your character money to carry a mysterious package onto the plane. The stranger assures your character that it's nothing illegal and points out that it has already been through the security check. Your character has serious doubts, but needs the money, and therefore agrees.

3. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have humbly endeavored to design seven activities with reference to RT’s framework. And since we hold that a better interpretation and perception of a literary text depends on the way the text is read, our ultimate goal is to provide techniques to enhance the reading and writing strategies of the EFL/ESL learner.

The activities tackle some of the main concepts within RT’s framework such as: stimulus, ostension, informative intention, intention and recognition of intention, effect, and context.

The first activity is a warm-up activity which is commissioned to introduce italicization for the students and therefore puts forward the notion of stimulus. The second one aims at teaching the rules of the usage of italics, by doing so, the students will be aware of the conventional use of italics, and will be thence prepared for the subsequent one. \textit{Read and Match} activity shows the employment vs. the transgression of the italicization rules and the way transgression is an ostensive stimulus that denotes the notion of intentions vs. recognition of the intentions. The How Often activity focuses on redundancy as a foregrounding aspect, while The \textit{Read It Aloud} one demonstrates the notions of context, ostension and informative intention. The activity \textit{How Does It Sounds} foregrounds the effect of italicization by comparing the italicized and the non-italicized versions of the same text. The final activity is a creative writing activity where the students are expected to write a very short story with the utilization of italics.
We conclude that RT’s inferential model can be effective and helpful when employed to enhance both of the reading and the writing skills and strategies, and therefore the learning process in EFL/ESL classes.
Notes to Chapter Three

i http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/italics.htm [Last accessed 28/05/2015]
v Available at http://www.wikihow.com/Read-out-Loud-Without-Tiring-Your-Voice [Last accessed 30/05/2015]
vi Available at http://outservemag.com/2011/08/sound-off/ [Last Accessed 30/05/2015]
GENERAL CONCLUSION
Content seems to be the aspect which grasps the attention of researchers most, nevertheless, form is another aspect which we could not relegate. Edgar Allan Poe’s style has features which have intrigued us as readers and furthermore as researchers. Poe recurrently utilizes italics in both of his corpora: The Tell-Tale Heart and The Black Cat. This would leave one wondering about several matters among which is the author’s intention behind such a graphological deviation; and even more, its significance and impact on the receptor.

The nature of the inquiries that have been raised in this research has led us to seek a Relevance-theoretic framework as a tool to approach the literary texts under study. We have then analyzed a set of representative excerpts using RT’s perspective.

The analysis has directly answered the question posed concerning the reader’s processing of italicization; the four passages collaboratively give a full illustrative image of the manner in which the reader’s cognition deals with and responds to the italicization. In addition to that, the analysis provided confirmations for other hypotheses which we have set.

The analysis has confirmed that Poe uses italics to accentuate the mad narrator’s account for the story so as to assure the reader’s following. The italics can be used for the sake of emphasis in the conventional cases when having ordinary narrator/writer, however, the narrator in the present corpora is not an ordinary one.

Moreover, he uses it to set a to-be developed item; a thesis statement-like. The italics serve to prepare the reader for the pending aspect, and as the reader proceeds reading, he will have a reference to the previously italicized word and then gets a deduction/confirmation that it is the subject matter of the story.

Besides, the character’s peak of agitation, anxiety and/or deep depression are magnified and transmitted through italics. The expressions which are said by the narrator in his darkest moments of extreme terror are distinguished through italicization.

The narrator dealt with possesses a disordered personality and suffers from psychological instability; hence, this story teller’s world view is not similar to that of a sane person’s. The italics are used to denote the aspects upon which the sane reader’s point of view does not correspond to that of the insane narrator’s.

Basing on the analysis, italics function as a gluing element that keeps the parts of the narrative together for the reason that they might either take the reader retrospectively to previous stages or events within the narrative, as they might prepare him for forthcoming aspects. Creating a network of connection between the various parts of the short stories gives
birth to a whole, complete and self-containing work which insures the reader’s full involvement and absorbability in the text.

Foregrounding is a technique to achieve defamiliarization (see chapter one). Defamiliarization causes an impediment of the reading process and therefore deepens the reader’s awareness and comprehension of the text. Italicization is a redundantly foregrounded stylistic feature in the two works which affects the reader by appealing for an extra attention and concentration from his part.

The supporting of the last hypothesis depends on the confirmation of other hypotheses. Affirming the hypotheses for the questions: When does Poe italicize? And why does he italicize? Automatically sets the final hypothesis as correct. Thence, since the italicization serves to transmit the narrator’s peak of agitation and anxiety; and since it functions to put forth a whole, complete and self-containing work, then it is at the service of both: the short story genre and the psychology of the character as well.

Lastly, we go back to the first hypothesis which is concerned with the writer’s intentionality of the use of italics. The latter has been inherently confirmed as a result of depicting the reiteration of the italics as a foregrounded stylistic technique which is not used purposelessly, but rather to achieve certain pragmatic purposes.

In this study we have investigated hypotheses, we have solved the problematic, as we have as well tested the validity of RT’s findings on our corpora. At that juncture we could but modestly consider transferring the results of this research into pedagogical/classroom context. The motive of making use of the research’s results is our belief that they ought not to remain within sheer pages but rather to serve society and meet the EFL/ESL learner’s needs.

The chapter we have devoted for the pedagogical implication comprises of several activities which are set in the light of our application of Relevance Theory on Poe’s use of italics. The targeted students are of intermediate level in literature. And the ultimate goal is to provide techniques to enhance the reading and the writing strategies of the EFL/ESL learner.

The activities tackle the cornerstone concepts within RT, such as: stimulus in the Warm up activity; Ostension and the expression and recognition of intentions in Read and Match; Context, ostension, and informative intention in How Often.

All in all, novels come to supply writers with a large space where to express themselves, and account for incidents and events elaborately in minute details. However, Poe seems to be skillful enough to author a short story and yet maintain the same privileges that
are associated with the novel genre. The Tell-Tale Heart and The Black Cat are characterized as condensed and concentrated pieces of literature, and italicization is one of the means which the writer uses to accomplish such a realization.
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APPENDIX 1: The Tell-Tale Heart

1. Italicized Passages in The Tell-Tale Heart

- “TRUE!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad?”(193)
- “But you should have seen me.”(193)
- “Never, before that night, had I felt the extent of my own powers of my sagacity.”(194)
- “All in vain; because Death, in approaching him, had stalked with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim.”(194)
- “And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel—although he neither saw nor heard—to feel the presence of my head within the room.”(194)
- “I knew that sound well, too.”(195)
- “The old man’s terror must have been extreme!”(195)
- “I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye—not even his—could have detected anything wrong.”(196)
- “I went down to open it with a light heart,—for what had I now to fear?”(196)
- “I smiled,—for what had I to fear?”(196)
- “I bade them search—search well.”(196)
- “I led them, at length, to his chamber.”(196)
- “In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.”(196)
- “My manner had convinced them.”(196)
- “I found that the noise was not within my ears.”(196)
- “No doubt I now grew very pale;—but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice.”(196)
- “It was a low, dull, quick sound—much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton.”(196)
- “Why would they not be gone?”(197)
- “Oh God! what could I do?”(197)
- “It grew louder—louder—louder!”(197)
- “They heard!—they suspected!—they knew!—they were making a mockery of my horror!—this I thought, and this I think.”(197)
- “I felt that I must scream or die!—and now—again!— hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!”(197)
APPENDIX 2: The Black Cat

1. Italicized Passages in The Black Cat

- “There is something in the unselfish and self-sacrificing love of a brute, which goes directly to the heart of him who has had frequent occasion to test the paltry friendship and gossamer fidelity of mere Man.”(230)
- “We had birds, gold-fish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and a cat.”(230)
- “Not that she was ever serious upon this point—and I mention the matter at all for no better reason than that it happens, just now, to be remembered.”(231)
- “Who has not, a hundred times, found himself committing a vile or a stupid action, for no other reason than because he knows he should not?”(232)
- “Have we not a perpetual inclination, in the teeth of our best judgment, to violate that which is Law, merely because we understand it to be such?”(232)
- “It was this unfathomable longing of the soul to vex itself—to offer violence to its own nature—to do wrong for the wrong’s sake only—that urged me to continue and finally to consummate the injury I had inflicted upon the unoffending brute.”(232)
- “One morning, in cold blood, I slipped a noose about its neck and hung it to the limb of a tree;—hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes, and with the bitterest remorse at my heart;—hung it because I knew that it had loved me, and because I felt it had given me no reason of offence;—hung it because I knew that in so doing I was committing a sin—a deadly sin that would so jeopardize my immortal soul as to place it—if such a thing were possible—even beyond the reach of the infinite mercy of the Most Merciful and Most Terrible God.”(323)
- “I approached and saw, as if graven in bas-relief upon the white surface, the figure of a gigantic cat”(233)
- “At such times, although I longed to destroy it with a blow, I was yet withheld from so doing, partly by a memory of my former crime, but chiefly—let me confess it at once—by absolute dread of the beast.”(235)
- “It was now the representation of an object that I shudder to name—and for this, above all, I loathed, and dreaded, and would have rid myself of the monster had I dared—it was now, I say, the image of a hideous—of a ghastly thing—of the GALLows!—oh, mournful and terrible engine of Horror and of Crime—of Agony and of Death!”(235)
- “And a brute beast—whose fellow I had contemptuously destroyed—a brute beast to work out for me—for me, a man fashioned in the image of the High God—so much of insufferable woe! Alas! Neither by day nor by night knew I the blessing of rest any more!”(235)
- “During the former the creature left me no moment alone, and in the latter I started hourly from dreams of unutterable fear to find the hot breath of the thing upon my face, and its vast weight—an incarnate nightmare that I had no power to shake off—incumbent eternally upon my heart!”(235)
- “It did not make its appearance during the night; and thus for one night, at least, since its introduction into the house, I soundly and tranquilly slept; aye, slept even with the burden of murder upon my soul.”(237)
- “By the bye, gentlemen, this—this is a very well-constructed house,'[in the rabid desire to say something easily, I scarcely knew what I uttered at all,]—"I may say an excellently well-constructed house.”(237)