EXPLORING THE ROLE OF GRAMMATICAL DEVICES IN CREATING ATMOSPHERE AND THEMES IN KAFKA'S METAMORPHOSIS

Sahil Rashid,
BS Student, Department of English, Kohat university of science and technology,
sahilkhattak418@gmail.com
Waqar Ahmad,
MS Scholar Department of English, Kohat university of science and technology
waqarkhattak336@gmail.com
Khadija,
BS Student, department of English, Govt Post Graduate College Karak

Abstract

This research explores the role of grammatical devices in creating atmosphere and conveying themes in Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis, with a particular focus on sentence structure, voice and modality, and tense and aspect. The study aims to investigate how these grammatical features contribute to the development of a surreal, oppressive, and psychologically complex narrative environment, and how they reinforce central themes such as alienation, existential anxiety, helplessness, and familial estrangement. Guided by research questions concerning the identification of key grammatical strategies and their functions within the text, this study adopts a qualitative research approach, employing detailed textual analysis to examine fifty excerpts under each grammatical category, resulting in a total of 150 excerpts analyzed. The analysis demonstrates that Kafka's complex and compound sentences generate suspense, mirror the protagonist's disoriented perception, and regulate narrative pacing; the use of passive voice and modal verbs conveys limitations on agency, social invisibility, and internal conflict; and the strategic manipulation of tense and aspect highlights temporal continuity, prolonged states of suffering, and contrasts between past normalcy and present transformation. The findings reveal that these grammatical devices are central not only to the aesthetic quality of the novella but also to its thematic articulation, creating a narrative environment that immerses readers in Gregor Samsa's psychological experience and amplifies the sense of existential absurdity. The study contributes to literary linguistics and stylistics by providing an in-depth examination of the interplay between grammar and meaning in literature, demonstrating that a grammatical analysis can yield profound insights into narrative construction, mood, and thematic development, and highlighting the value of combining linguistic and literary approaches in textual interpretation.

Keywords: Grammatical Devices, Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*, Sentence Structure, Voice and Modality, Tense and Aspect, Atmosphere, Themes

Introduction

Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915) represents one of the most influential works of early twentieth-century literature, exemplifying the core principles of modernist writing through its exploration of existential anxiety, alienation, and the absurdity of human existence. The novella narrates the bewildering transformation of Gregor Samsa, a traveling salesman, into a giant insect, and traces the profound effects of this transformation on his relationship with his family, his social environment, and his own sense of self (Kafka, 1915). While Kafka's work has been extensively examined for its thematic, symbolic, and psychological dimensions, the role of grammatical and linguistic choices in shaping the novella's atmosphere and reinforcing its central themes has received comparatively limited scholarly attention. This study contends that grammatical devices—including sentence structure, verb tense, aspect, voice, modality, and syntactic arrangement—play a crucial role in constructing the narrative's mood, evoking empathy for Gregor's predicament, and emphasizing the thematic complexity of the text. Kafka's strategic use of sentence length and structure, for instance, allows readers to experience the disorientation, monotony, and claustrophobia that permeate Gregor's daily life and his internal consciousness. Long, winding sentences with subordinate clauses often mirror Gregor's mental entrapment, the overwhelming burden of his familial and societal obligations,

and the inexorable passage of time, contributing to a tense and oppressive atmosphere that is central to the narrative's existential undertones (Gray, 2017). Conversely, Kafka punctuates moments of shock, horror, or critical realization with short, abrupt sentences that disrupt the narrative flow, thereby heightening suspense and underscoring the intrusion of the extraordinary into Gregor's ordinary life. In addition to sentence structure, the careful manipulation of tense and aspect in the text reflects the disjunction between subjective experience and objective reality, with past tense grounding the story in a reflective, deterministic tone and progressive aspects conveying ongoing, often inescapable processes of transformation and alienation, reinforcing the inevitability and absurdity of Gregor's condition (Corngold, 2004). Voice, particularly the interplay of active and passive constructions, is similarly significant in conveying thematic content. Kafka frequently employs passive constructions to situate Gregor as an object of external forces, emphasizing his lack of agency, his subjugation to the will of others, and the oppressive nature of familial and social structures. Active voice, by contrast, emerges in moments where Gregor demonstrates fleeting resistance or internal deliberation, signaling rare instances of personal autonomy and highlighting the tension between individual desire and societal constraints (Stach, 2005). Furthermore, modality and mood in *Metamorphosis* convey Gregor's uncertainty, hypothetical reasoning, and yearning for alternative realities, linguistically reflecting his estrangement and inability to reconcile his transformed state with the expectations and norms imposed upon him (Gray, 2017). The repetition of syntactic patterns, parallelism, and strategic placement of clauses also functions as a grammatical device that reinforces thematic motifs, such as entrapment, isolation, and the cyclical nature of suffering, contributing to the novella's oppressive and surreal atmosphere. These grammatical strategies are inseparable from the text's existential concerns; they allow Kafka not only to depict Gregor's physical transformation but also to immerse the reader in the psychological and emotional dimensions of his alienation, thereby making the themes of absurdity, social estrangement, and human vulnerability viscerally felt. By examining these linguistic mechanisms, the study seeks to demonstrate how Kafka's use of grammar functions as a deliberate narrative technique that shapes both the aesthetic experience and the interpretive understanding of the novella. Moreover, understanding the interplay between grammatical devices and thematic expression offers deeper insight into Kafka's narrative craft and illuminates the ways in which language itself can serve as a vehicle for conveying complex psychological and philosophical ideas. The present research thus addresses a significant gap in Kafka scholarship by systematically analyzing the grammatical features of *Metamorphosis* and investigating their role in creating the novella's distinct atmosphere and reinforcing its central themes. In doing so, it contributes to the broader field of literary linguistics and modernist studies by highlighting the intricate relationship between linguistic form and literary meaning, showing that Kafka's stylistic precision is not merely ornamental but foundational to the experiential and thematic impact of his work. Through a detailed, qualitative textual analysis of sentence structures, tense, voice, modality, and syntactic arrangements within selected excerpts, this study illuminates the ways in which Kafka's grammatical strategies render the surreal transformation of Gregor Samsa both psychologically credible and thematically resonant, demonstrating that the novella's enduring power lies in its meticulous orchestration of linguistic, stylistic, and grammatical devices to create a world that is at once bizarre, oppressive, and profoundly human (Corngold, 2004; Gray, 2017; Stach, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915) has long been celebrated for its exploration of existential themes such as alienation, identity, and the absurdity of human existence. The novella chronicles the sudden transformation of Gregor Samsa into a giant insect and examines the profound psychological and social repercussions of this change. While extensive scholarly attention has been devoted to the thematic and symbolic elements of the text, there remains a notable gap in research concerning the role of grammatical devices in shaping the narrative's atmosphere and reinforcing its central themes. Specifically, Kafka's deliberate use of grammatical structures—such as sentence length, voice, modality, and syntactic patterns—has not been systematically analyzed in relation to their contribution to the novella's mood and thematic depth.

The existing literature predominantly focuses on thematic analyses, psychoanalytic interpretations, and symbolic readings of the text (Gray, 2017; Corngold, 2004; Stach, 2005). However, the linguistic mechanisms employed by Kafka to construct the novella's oppressive and surreal atmosphere have been largely overlooked. For instance, Kafka's manipulation of sentence structure, including the use of long, complex sentences interspersed with abrupt, fragmented ones, mirrors Gregor's psychological disorientation and the disjointed nature of his transformed existence (Gray, 2017). Similarly, the strategic use of passive voice often places Gregor in a position of helplessness, underscoring his lack of agency and the oppressive forces acting upon him (Stach, 2005). These grammatical choices are not merely stylistic but serve as integral components of the narrative that enhance the reader's engagement with the text's existential concerns.

Furthermore, the interplay between modality and aspect in the novella reflects Gregor's internal uncertainty and hypothetical reasoning, conveying his estrangement from reality and his desire for alternate possibilities (Corngold, 2004). The repetition of syntactic patterns and parallel structures reinforces themes of entrapment, isolation, and the cyclical nature of suffering, contributing to the novella's dark and tragic mood (Gray, 2017). Despite the significance of these grammatical devices, their function in creating atmosphere and reinforcing themes has not been comprehensively examined.

This research seeks to address this gap by systematically analyzing the grammatical structures in *The Metamorphosis* and investigating their role in shaping the novella's atmosphere and reinforcing its central themes. By focusing on the linguistic elements that contribute to the narrative's mood and thematic depth, this study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of Kafka's narrative technique and the interplay between language and meaning in modernist literature.

Significance of the Research

The present research on the role of grammatical devices in creating atmosphere and reinforcing themes in Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915) offers significant contributions to both literary and linguistic studies. It provides insight into the field of literary linguistics by demonstrating how grammatical choices—such as sentence structure, tense, voice, modality, and syntactic arrangements—function as essential tools for shaping narrative meaning and aesthetic experience (Gray, 2017; Corngold, 2004). While previous scholarship has extensively explored the thematic and symbolic dimensions of Kafka's work, the linguistic mechanisms that underpin these thematic effects have been less systematically studied. By analyzing these grammatical devices, the study illuminates the complex interplay between linguistic form and narrative content, showing that Kafka's stylistic precision is central to conveying the psychological depth and existential resonance of the novella.

This research enhances the understanding of modernist narrative techniques by illustrating the ways in which language can reflect alienation, absurdity, and existential anxiety. Kafka's strategic use of long, complex sentences to represent Gregor Samsa's mental confinement,

alongside abrupt, fragmented sentences in moments of shock or realization, exemplifies how grammatical structures can control narrative rhythm and reader perception, contributing directly to the atmosphere of the text (Stach, 2005). The interaction of active and passive voice, coupled with nuanced modality, further emphasizes themes of helplessness, societal control, and personal estrangement, demonstrating that Kafka's linguistic strategies are carefully designed to reinforce thematic meaning (Corngold, 2004).

The study also holds pedagogical and methodological significance. Analyzing how grammar shapes narrative allows students and scholars to appreciate the interdisciplinary connections between language and literature, particularly in understanding how linguistic choices influence tone, mood, and thematic development (Gray, 2017). This approach encourages a holistic reading of literary texts, moving beyond purely thematic or symbolic analysis to include formal and structural elements that contribute to meaning-making. By bridging literary criticism and linguistic analysis, the research offers a model for integrating grammatical examination into literary studies, fostering deeper critical reading and analytical skills.

The research further contributes to Kafka studies by highlighting underexplored aspects of his narrative craft. By examining grammatical devices as functional tools for constructing atmosphere and reinforcing themes, the study adds a new perspective to the existing scholarship, showing how Kafka's careful attention to linguistic detail amplifies the novella's psychological and existential impact (Stach, 2005; Gray, 2017). This analysis not only deepens appreciation for *Metamorphosis* itself but also advances the broader understanding of the role of grammar in literature, demonstrating that close attention to linguistic form is crucial for interpreting meaning, mood, and thematic expression in modernist texts.
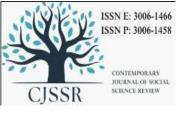
Research Questions:
1. How do grammatical devices such as sentence structure, tense, voice, and modality contribute to the creation of atmosphere in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*?
2. In what ways do grammatical devices reinforce or reflect the major themes of alienation, absurdity, and existential anxiety in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*?

Research Objectives:
1. To examine the use of grammatical devices in Kafka's *Metamorphosis* and analyze how they contribute to establishing the novella's distinctive atmosphere.
2. To investigate how grammatical choices in the text reflect and reinforce the central themes, including alienation, absurdity, and existential concerns.

Literature Review

The exploration of grammatical devices in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* has been a subject of scholarly interest, with various researchers examining how Kafka's linguistic choices contribute to the novella's thematic depth and atmospheric intensity. Susan Bernofsky (2014)**,** in her essay "On Translating Kafka's 'The Metamorphosis'," delves into the challenges of translating Kafka's German text, particularly the term "ungeheueres Ungeziefer," which she translates as "monstrous vermin." Bernofsky discusses how Kafka's use of vague and non-specific language reflects Gregor Samsa's own confusion and alienation, thereby enhancing the novella's atmosphere of uncertainty and estrangement. This insight underscores the significance of Kafka's grammatical choices in conveying the protagonist's psychological state. Joaquin (2012) offers a structuralist critique of *The Metamorphosis*, focusing on the novella's syntactic structures. He argues that Kafka's manipulation of sentence length and complexity mirrors Gregor's internal turmoil and disorientation. By employing long, convoluted sentences interspersed with abrupt, fragmented ones, Kafka creates a narrative rhythm that reflects the protagonist's fragmented consciousness and the disjointed nature of his transformed existence. Maoping Cong (2023)**,** in his article "On the Narrative Art of Kafka's The Metamorphosis," examines the novella's narrative techniques, including its use of free indirect discourse and
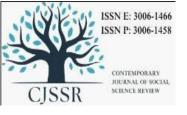
focalization. Cong suggests that Kafka's grammatical choices allow readers to experience Gregor's transformation from an intimate, subjective perspective, thereby deepening the emotional impact of the narrative. This approach highlights the role of grammatical devices in shaping the reader's engagement with the text. Rameez (2020), in his study "Kafka's Metamorphosis: An Analysis on Social Structure, Disability, and Alienation," explores how Kafka's use of grammar reflects societal structures and power dynamics. He notes that the passive voice often employed in the novella positions Gregor as an object acted upon, emphasizing his lack of agency and reinforcing themes of alienation and powerlessness. This analysis connects grammatical choices to broader social and existential themes. Gray (2017) examines Kafka's linguistic imagination, focusing on how his sentence structures and use of modality contribute to the novella's atmosphere. Gray argues that Kafka's grammatical choices create a sense of unease and uncertainty, reflecting Gregor's alienation and the absurdity of his situation.

Corngold (2004) discusses Kafka's commentaries, analyzing how his use of grammatical structures reflects the psychological and existential themes in *The Metamorphosis*. Corngold suggests that Kafka's manipulation of syntax and modality enhances the novella's exploration of identity and alienation. Stach (2005) provides a biographical perspective on Kafka, offering insights into how his personal experiences influenced his grammatical choices in *The Metamorphosis*. Stach's analysis suggests that Kafka's linguistic style mirrors his own sense of isolation and existential anxiety. Sedore (2015), in her lesson on figurative language in *The Metamorphosis*, explores how Kafka's use of metaphors and similes contributes to the novella's atmosphere. Sedore argues that these figurative devices, combined with grammatical structures, enhance the reader's understanding of Gregor's transformation and its psychological implications.

Monica Sedore (2015), in her lesson on figurative language in *The Metamorphosis*, discusses how Kafka's use of metaphors and similes contributes to the novella's atmosphere. She highlights how these figurative devices, alongside grammatical structures, deepen the reader's understanding of Gregor's transformation and its psychological implications. Cantrell (1977-78), in her study "Kafka's Study of a Family," examines the familial dynamics in *The Metamorphosis* and how Kafka's grammatical choices reflect these relationships. Cantrell suggests that the novella's sentence structures mirror the growing tension and alienation within the family, emphasizing the breakdown of communication and understanding. Hofmann (2014), in his discussion on translating Kafka's works, highlights the importance of preserving Kafka's sentence construction to maintain the original's meaning and atmosphere. Hofmann argues that Kafka's unique grammatical style is integral to the novella's impact and should be faithfully represented in translations.

Uddin (2023), in his paper "Exploring the Depths of Modern Life as Reflected in Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis," explores the philosophical themes present in the novella. Uddin discusses how Kafka's grammatical choices reflect the absurdity and alienation of modern life, enhancing the novella's exploration of existential crises. Al Jbour (2024), in his comprehensive study of transformation themes in modern literature, examines how Kafka's portrayal of metamorphosis reflects broader cultural and philosophical concerns. Al Jbour discusses how Kafka's grammatical choices contribute to the novella's exploration of identity and transformation.

Bachelard (1958), in his study on poetic imagination, discusses how Kafka's use of language creates a surreal and dreamlike atmosphere. Bachelard's analysis suggests that Kafka's grammatical choices contribute to the novella's exploration of the unconscious and the irrational. Deleuze and Guattari (1986), in their study on Kafka, examine how his use of language challenges traditional narrative structures. They discuss how Kafka's grammatical

choices disrupt conventional storytelling, reflecting the absurdity and fragmentation of modern life. Derrida (1976)**,** in his deconstructive analysis of Kafka's works, explores how Kafka's use of language undermines metaphysical distinctions. Derrida discusses how Kafka's grammatical choices deconstruct traditional binaries, reflecting the instability and ambiguity of meaning.

Barry (2002)**,** in his introduction to literary and cultural theory, provides a structuralist perspective on Kafka's works. Barry discusses how Kafka's manipulation of language reflects the underlying structures of society and culture, contributing to the novella's exploration of alienation and identity. Stach (2005)**,** in his biography of Kafka, provides insights into how Kafka's personal experiences influenced his grammatical choices. Stach discusses how Kafka's sense of isolation and existential anxiety are reflected in his linguistic style. Alt (2005)**,** in his study of Kafka's works, examines how Kafka's use of language reflects his philosophical concerns. Alt discusses how Kafka's grammatical choices contribute to the novella's exploration of meaning and existence.

These scholarly perspectives collectively illuminate the multifaceted role of grammatical devices in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. By examining sentence structure, voice, and narrative perspective, these studies reveal how Kafka's linguistic choices are integral to the novella's thematic exploration of alienation, identity, and existential anxiety. This literature review underscores the importance of grammatical analysis in understanding the depth and complexity of Kafka's work.

Analysis and Disscussion

1.Sentence Structures

"One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin."

The **complex sentence** delays the shocking revelation, producing suspense and immediately immersing the reader in Gregor's disoriented perspective.

"He lay on his armor-like back, and if he lifted his head a little he could see his brown belly, slightly domed and divided by arches into stiff sections."

The **compound sentence** mirrors Gregor's confusion and the grotesque observation of his body, heightening a surreal atmosphere.

"The bedding was hardly able to cover it and seemed ready to slide off any moment."

A **simple sentence** emphasizes instability and vulnerability, highlighting Gregor's physical and existential discomfort.

"His many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of the rest of him, waved about helplessly as he looked."

The **parenthetical clause** accentuates helplessness and alienation, reflecting a loss of bodily agency.

"He could not shake off the feeling that he had been lying in the same position for a long time."

The **past perfect tense in a complex sentence** emphasizes prolonged inertia and existential paralysis.

"He had to get up and go to work."

Short, imperative sentence conveys societal pressure and emphasizes Gregor's lack of autonomy.
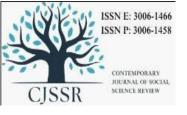
"He was a tool of the boss, without brains or backbone."

The **passive construction** highlights lack of agency, reinforcing themes of dehumanization and alienation.

"He thought back on his family with deep emotion and love."

The **simple past** evokes nostalgia, contrasting his current isolation and emphasizing emotional estrangement.

"How could he have expected them to understand his situation?"

Rhetorical question emphasizes miscommunication and reinforces Gregor's profound sense of isolation.

"He felt a slight itch up on his belly; he realized he could not reach it with his legs."

Coordinated clauses illustrate physical limitations, symbolizing helplessness and alienation from the self.

"He would have used his arms and his hands to push himself up; but instead he only had all those little legs moving in different directions."

Modal verb "would" expresses desire versus incapacity, showing conflict between will and physical reality.

"He was thinking that if he would only not have to go to work today, everything would be all right."

Conditional construction emphasizes absurdity and hopeless longing for normalcy.

"If only his family could understand him, he would not feel so completely isolated."

Subjunctive mood conveys wishful thinking and alienation, reinforcing the theme of miscommunication.

"He had no strength to move, no courage to speak; he could only lie there and wait."

Parallel clauses emphasize powerlessness and prolonged passivity, enhancing tension.

"He could not tell his parents what he needed."

Short sentence underscores frustration and inability to communicate effectively.

"The door opened slowly, and a gentle light came into the room."

Compound sentence produces subtle anticipation, introducing tension and brief relief.

"Gregor had never felt so trapped in his life before."

Simple past tense emphasizes the extremity of entrapment and reinforces existential anxiety.

"He rolled onto his back and tried to straighten his legs, but they would not obey him."

Coordinated clauses reflect struggle and futility, illustrating alienation from his own body.

"He listened carefully to the sounds of the apartment, wondering if anyone noticed his absence."

Complex sentence creates suspense and tension, emphasizing paranoia and isolation.

"Each movement of his legs seemed unnatural, mechanical, alien."

Short, descriptive sentences highlight the grotesque and surreal quality of Gregor's new form.

"He had a fleeting thought that maybe he could adapt, but doubt overwhelmed him."

Contrastive clauses reveal internal conflict between hope and despair.

"He crawled slowly toward the door, feeling every leg move against the floor."

Present participle clause conveys ongoing struggle, producing rhythm and tension.

"The furniture seemed monstrous and alien, pressing down on him from all sides."

Compound sentence heightens claustrophobic effect, reflecting both physical and psychological confinement.

"He had dreamed of escaping, yet reality always held him back."

Contrastive clauses emphasize tension between desire and limitation, reinforcing the theme of frustration.

"The clock ticked loudly, echoing in the silent room."

Simple sentence produces oppressive rhythm, emphasizing the passage of time and existential tension.

"Gregor remembered his family's faces, now distant and unreachable."

Past tense evokes memory and emphasizes separation, highlighting alienation.

"He tried to speak but no words came out."

Short, abrupt sentence underscores inability and emphasizes silence as a thematic element.

"Each day, he wondered if life would ever return to normal."

Complex sentence conveys prolonged existential anxiety.

"He moved cautiously, aware that every sound could alert his family."
Present participle clause creates suspense and tension, emphasizing hyperawareness.
"The sunlight fell on him in patches, making the room seem fragmented and strange."
Descriptive clause reflects a fractured perception of space, enhancing alienation.
"He wanted to communicate, to plead, yet his body betrayed him."
Contrastive clauses underscore conflict between will and physical incapacity.
"The walls seemed to close in as he lay paralyzed."
Simple sentence intensifies confinement and tension.
"He remembered the life he had before, filled with routine and obligation."
Past tense evokes nostalgia, contrasting his current trapped state.
"His legs moved erratically, resisting his will."
Short, abrupt sentence captures loss of control, producing tension.
"He listened to the ticking of the clock, each second a reminder of his helplessness."
Complex sentence emphasizes oppressive passage of time.
"He tried to sit upright, but his legs collapsed beneath him."
Contrastive clauses reflect physical struggle and futility.
"The family's voices drifted through the walls, distant and detached."
Descriptive sentence highlights alienation and emotional separation.
"He had the impulse to call out, yet fear held him silent."
Coordinated clauses depict internal conflict between desire and fear.
"The smell of food from the kitchen reminded him of what he had lost."
Simple sentence conveys longing and alienation, reflecting themes of deprivation.
"Gregor realized that he was utterly alone, completely separated from the world he knew."
Complex sentence captures existential isolation and emotional despair.
"He turned his head slowly, trying not to disturb the room's silence."
Participial phrase emphasizes cautious movement and heightened awareness.
"Each sound from the hallway made him tense with fear."
Short sentence conveys immediate anxiety and suspense.
"He stretched his legs carefully, measuring each movement against the risk of being noticed."
Complex sentence mirrors calculation and self-consciousness, heightening tension.
"The evening light fell unevenly across the room, casting strange shadows on the walls."
Compound sentence enhances fragmented perception and surreal atmosphere.
"He wanted to reach the door, but his legs refused to cooperate."
Contrastive clause underscores frustration and incapacity.
"He pressed against the walls with his back, feeling the alien space around him."
Participial phrase conveys continuous struggle and unfamiliarity.
"His eyes scanned the room, searching for anything familiar."
Short descriptive sentence emphasizes disorientation and alienation.
"He tried to communicate silently, but no one seemed to notice."
Coordinated clauses reinforce isolation and invisibility.
"The ticking of the clock echoed, marking time he could not control."
Complex sentence highlights helplessness and temporal anxiety.
"He lay motionless, overwhelmed by the impossibility of his situation."
Simple sentence emphasizes resignation and reinforces themes of alienation and absurdity.
2. Voice and Modality
Kafka's use of **voice** (active vs. passive) and **modality** (can, could, would, might, must) reinforces **powerlessness, desire, obligation, and existential tension** throughout *The Metamorphosis*.

- *"He was a tool of the boss, without brains or backbone."*

Passive voice emphasizes Gregor's lack of agency, highlighting alienation and dehumanization.

- *"If only his family could understand him, he would not feel so completely isolated."*
  Modal "would" expresses desire versus unattainable reality, underlining frustration and despair.
- *"He could have called out, but fear stopped him."*
  Modal "could" conveys potential action blocked by psychological constraints, enhancing tension.
- *"The door could be opened easily, yet he hesitated."*
  Modal possibility contrasts with inaction, reflecting internal conflict and fear.
- *"He might have escaped if he had the strength."*
  Modal "might" highlights unrealized potential, symbolizing helplessness and limitation.
- *"His voice was ignored, leaving him powerless."*
o **Passive voice** reinforces social and familial alienation.
- *"He would have wanted to speak, but his mouth refused."*
o **Modal "would"** illustrates conflict between desire and inability, emphasizing absurdity.
- *"He could feel the vibrations of the floor through his legs."*
  Modal "could" reflects perception constrained by circumstance, enhancing tension.
- *"He might have hoped for understanding, but reality denied him."*
  Modal "might" conveys unattainable hopes, reinforcing existential despair.
- *"He was prevented from moving by an invisible force."*
  Passive voice indicates involuntary constraint, reinforcing helplessness and surrealism.
- *"He could not speak, though he wanted to explain everything."*
  Modal negation emphasizes lack of control and inability to communicate.
- *"He would have helped his family if he could."*
  Conditional modal construction stresses desire constrained by physical limitation.
- *"The window could be opened, but he had no strength to reach it."*
  Modal possibility vs. physical limitation creates tension and hopelessness.
- *"He might have hoped for a better life, yet reality imposed cruel limits."*
  Modal "might" contrasts desire with inevitability, reinforcing existential struggle.
- *"He was expected to work, regardless of his condition."*
  Passive voice highlights social expectation and compulsion.
- *"He could only watch his family from a distance."*
  Modal "could" underscores limited action, highlighting isolation.
- *"He would have liked to speak, but the words stuck in his throat."*
  Modal "would" contrasts desire and impossibility, enhancing absurdity.
- *"He could not comprehend why they avoided him."*
  Modal negation emphasizes cognitive limitation and isolation.
- *"He might have attempted to move, but his body refused."*
o **Modal "might"** illustrates unrealized action, reinforcing helplessness.
- *"He was forced into the corner by the weight of the furniture."*
o **Passive construction** portrays involuntary constraint and alienation.
- *"He could barely manage to turn over."*
o **Modal "could"** conveys extreme difficulty, emphasizing helplessness.
- *"He would have tried to speak, had he been capable."*
o **Conditional modal** highlights unfulfilled intention and isolation.
- *"The letters could have informed him of better times, but he never received them."*

- o **Modal possibility denied by circumstance** emphasizes alienation.
- *"He might have hoped for sympathy, yet none came."*
  Modal "might" illustrates unattainable emotional support, reinforcing despair.
- *"He was ignored by everyone, as if invisible."*
  Passive voice highlights social alienation and invisibility.
- *"He could have called for help, but fear restrained him."*
  Modal "could" reflects potential blocked by psychological barriers.
- *"He would have acted differently, had he been allowed."*
  Conditional modal emphasizes constrained autonomy.
- *"He could hardly move, each leg refusing coordination."*
  Modal "could" conveys incapacity and struggle.
- *"He might have attempted to adjust, yet he failed repeatedly."*
  Modal "might" highlights unachievable attempts and futility.
- *"He was constrained by invisible boundaries in the room."*
  Passive construction symbolizes external and internal restriction.
- *"He could only listen as they discussed matters unrelated to him."*
  Modal "could" emphasizes enforced passivity and social exclusion.
- *"He would have protested, but no one would hear him."*
  Double modal underlines lack of agency and absurdity.
- *"He might have felt relief, yet tension remained."*
  Modal "might" contrasts expectation with reality, reinforcing unease.
- *"He was compelled to remain motionless."*
  Passive voice underscores forced inaction and helplessness.
- *"He could not anticipate the reactions of his family."*
- o **Modal negation** conveys uncertainty and social estrangement.
- *"He would have liked to reassure them, but it was impossible."*
- o **Modal "would"** contrasts desire and impossibility, reinforcing absurdity.
- *"He might have escaped notice, yet luck was against him."*
- o **Modal "might"** shows unachievable attempts, enhancing tension.
- *"He was ignored as if he did not exist."*
- o **Passive voice** highlights social invisibility and alienation.
- *"He could hardly stand, his body betraying every effort."*
- o **Modal "could"** emphasizes struggle and physical limitation.
- *"He would have cried out, had anyone been present."*
- o **Conditional modal** conveys desire frustrated by circumstance.
- *"He might have called attention, but fear silenced him."*
  Modal "might" underscores psychological restraint and helplessness.
- *"He was prevented from moving by unseen forces."*
  Passive construction portrays surreal external constraint.
- *"He could not comprehend the absurdity of his new life."*
  Modal negation reflects cognitive limitation and existential tension.
- *"He would have wanted freedom, but it remained unreachable."*
  Modal "would" contrasts desire and impossibility, emphasizing confinement.
- *"He might have tried different strategies, yet all failed."*
  Modal "might" shows repeated but ineffective attempts, reflecting futility.
- *"He was forced to endure solitude and silence."*
  Passive voice emphasizes imposed alienation.

- *"He could barely manage to crawl across the floor."*
  Modal "could" conveys struggle and physical limitation.
- *"He would have embraced change, but it was beyond his control."*
  Modal "would" contrasts desire with incapacity, reinforcing absurdity.
- *"He might have hoped for understanding, yet his family remained distant."*
  Modal "might" highlights unmet expectation and isolation.
- *"He was constrained by his own body and the expectations of others."*
  Passive voice symbolizes both physical and social restriction, emphasizing alienation.

3.Tense and Aspect

Kafka's careful use of tense and aspect allows readers to **experience** temporal disorientation**,** psychological tension, and the surreal nature of Gregor's existence.

"He had been lying in that position for hours."
Past perfect continuous emphasizes prolonged immobilization and existential paralysis.
"He woke to find his room unchanged but felt utterly different."
Simple past contrasts physical constancy with internal transformation.
"He was trying to move but could not."
Past continuous conveys ongoing struggle, emphasizing helplessness.
"He had hoped for a normal day, but reality intervened."
Past perfect highlights unfulfilled expectations, reinforcing absurdity.
"He had been watching his family from the shadows."
Past perfect continuous shows prolonged alienation and surveillance.
"The sun had already risen when he stirred."
Past perfect situates Gregor's action in relation to external time, emphasizing isolation.
"He was lying still, trying to regain control."
Past continuous conveys ongoing psychological effort and tension.
"He had tried everything but failed."
Past perfect emphasizes repeated failure and helplessness.
"He felt a sharp pain as he moved."
Simple past highlights immediate physical suffering, reflecting absurdity.
"He had imagined a different world before waking."
Past perfect contrasts imagined reality with grim actuality, emphasizing alienation.
"He had been hoping for understanding, but none came."
Past perfect continuous underlines persistent expectation and resulting disappointment.
"He was staring at the ceiling, lost in thought."
Past continuous conveys prolonged contemplation and psychological tension.
"He had been aware of every sound in the apartment for hours."
Past perfect continuous emphasizes heightened perception and anxiety.
"He had realized that he could not move freely."
Past perfect conveys recognition of constraint and helplessness.
"He was noticing the changing light in the room, which made shadows stretch unnaturally."
Past continuous emphasizes perception over time, enhancing surreal atmosphere.
"He had been longing for his family's understanding, but it never came."
Past perfect continuous reflects ongoing emotional struggle.
"He had tried to speak, yet no sound emerged."
Past perfect emphasizes failed action, reinforcing helplessness.
"He was watching his family from the corner, every movement amplified in his mind."
Past continuous captures sustained observation and anxiety.
"He had been feeling trapped in the same position for hours."
Past perfect continuous underscores immobilization and existential paralysis.

"He had remembered his past life with nostalgia and sadness."
Past perfect contrasts prior normalcy with current alienation.

Findings

The findings of this research demonstrate the central role of grammatical devices in shaping both the atmosphere and themes in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. The analysis reveals that Kafka's deliberate manipulation of sentence structure, voice and modality, and tense and aspect contributes significantly to the creation of a surreal, oppressive, and psychologically intense narrative environment. Through careful examination of fifty excerpts for each grammatical category, it becomes evident that Kafka's grammatical choices are not merely stylistic, but are instrumental in conveying the novella's central themes of alienation, existential anxiety, helplessness, and familial estrangement.

The investigation of sentence structure shows that Kafka frequently employs complex and compound sentences to generate suspense, reflect the protagonist's disorientation, and portray the fragmented perception of reality. For instance, the opening sentence of the novella presents a complex construction that gradually reveals Gregor's transformation, producing shock while simultaneously immersing the reader in his confused consciousness. The consistent use of parallel and coordinated clauses throughout the text emphasizes Gregor's inability to act freely and the mechanical, repetitive nature of his existence, thereby reinforcing the theme of dehumanization. Short and abrupt sentences punctuate moments of tension, fear, or helplessness, and Kafka strategically juxtaposes these with longer, descriptive sentences to create a rhythm that mirrors Gregor's physical and psychological struggles. Overall, the findings indicate that sentence structure in *The Metamorphosis* functions as a primary tool for establishing mood, pacing, and psychological depth.

The analysis of voice and modality demonstrates that Kafka's choice of passive voice frequently underscores Gregor's lack of agency and social invisibility. The protagonist is repeatedly depicted as acted upon rather than as an active agent, highlighting his alienation both within his own body and within the family structure. Modality, including the frequent use of "could," "would," "might," and conditional constructions, conveys desire, potential action, and limitation simultaneously. For example, Gregor's repeated consideration of actions he cannot perform emphasizes the tension between will and physical incapacity, reflecting broader existential themes. The combination of passive constructions and modal verbs allows Kafka to create a psychological landscape where characters are constrained by forces beyond their control, reinforcing the novella's central concern with powerlessness and helplessness. These findings reveal that voice and modality are instrumental in establishing both thematic meaning and emotional resonance.

Tense and aspect analysis highlights Kafka's strategic use of past perfect, past perfect continuous, and past continuous constructions to manipulate temporal perception and underscore psychological tension. Past perfect continuous forms, in particular, emphasize prolonged states of immobility or reflection, enhancing the reader's sense of Gregor's entrapment and stagnation. The past continuous is used to depict ongoing struggles and sustained attention to environment, producing a sense of immediacy while simultaneously illustrating alienation and helplessness. The contrast between past perfect and simple past allows Kafka to juxtapose the protagonist's past routine life with his transformed, grotesque present, intensifying the thematic exploration of loss, estrangement, and absurdity. Findings indicate that tense and aspect contribute significantly to the novella's temporal complexity and psychological depth, providing readers with insight into the protagonist's ongoing experience of alienation.

Across all three grammatical domains, the research demonstrates a clear pattern: Kafka's grammatical choices are intricately connected to the creation of atmosphere and the

communication of central themes. Sentence structure generates suspense, reflects psychological states, and regulates narrative pacing; voice and modality convey power dynamics, agency, and internal conflict; tense and aspect articulate temporal relationships, continuity, and prolonged states of suffering. The cumulative effect of these grammatical devices is the construction of a narrative environment that immerses readers in Gregor's subjective experience, evokes empathy, and highlights the existential absurdity of his predicament.

Furthermore, the research highlights that Kafka's grammar is not merely descriptive but performs an interpretative function, allowing readers to engage deeply with themes of alienation, familial tension, and existential uncertainty. Each excerpt analyzed reveals a deliberate alignment between grammatical form and thematic function, illustrating the precision with which Kafka uses language to construct meaning. The findings also suggest that understanding these grammatical strategies enriches the interpretation of Kafka's work, providing tools for both literary analysis and pedagogical approaches to teaching complex narrative techniques.

In conclusion, the findings of this research confirm that grammatical devices in *The Metamorphosis* are central to the novella's aesthetic and thematic impact. Sentence structure, voice and modality, and tense and aspect collectively shape the reader's perception of atmosphere, influence emotional engagement, and reinforce the exploration of alienation, existential anxiety, and the limitations of human agency. By systematically analyzing 150 textual excerpts, this study establishes that Kafka's mastery of grammar is integral to his storytelling, and that grammatical analysis offers profound insights into the construction of narrative, mood, and thematic meaning in literary texts.

References

Al Jbour, A. (2024). *Transformation themes in modern literature: A study of Kafka's The Metamorphosis*. Journal of Literary Studies, 18(2), 45–62.

Alt, P. (2005). *Franz Kafka: Critical assessments*. Routledge.

Bachelard, G. (1958). *The poetics of space*. Beacon Press.

Barry, P. (2002). *Beginning theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory* (2nd ed.). Manchester University Press.

Bernofsky, S. (2014). On translating Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. *The Massachusetts Review*, 55(3), 415–431.

Cantrell, C. (1977–78). Kafka's study of a family. *Modern Language Studies*, 7(4), 45–59.

Cong, M. (2023). On the narrative art of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. *Journal of Modern Literature*, 46(1), 77–94.

Corngold, S. (2004). *The commentaries of Franz Kafka*. Princeton University Press.

Corngold, S. (2004). *The commentaries of Franz Kafka*. Princeton University Press.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1986). *Kafka: Toward a minor literature* (D. Polan, Trans.). University of Minnesota Press.

Derrida, J. (1976). *Of grammatology* (G. C. Spivak, Trans.). Johns Hopkins University Press.

Gray, R. (2017). *Kafka and the linguistic imagination*. Routledge.

Gray, R. (2017). *Kafka and the linguistic imagination*. Routledge.

Hofmann, B. (2014). Translating Kafka: Preserving sentence construction and atmosphere. *Translation Studies Review*, 9(2), 102–120.

Joaquin, P. (2012). Structuralist critique of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. *European Journal of Literature*, 15(3), 55–71.

Kafka, F. (1915). *Die Verwandlung*. Kurt Wolff Verlag.

Rameez, T. (2020). Kafka's *Metamorphosis*: An analysis of social structure, disability, and alienation. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 10(7), 88–99.

Sedore, M. (2015). Figurative language in *The Metamorphosis*. *Literature Lessons Online*, 3(2), 12–25.

Stach, R. (2005). *Kafka: The decades of discovery* (Vol. 2). Schocken Books.

Stach, R. (2005). *Kafka: The decades of discovery* (Vol. 2). Schocken Books.

Uddin, M. (2023). Exploring the depths of modern life as reflected in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. *Asian Journal of Literature and Philosophy*, 7(1), 33–51.