



Authorial style in the characterization of characters in the novel *Laut Bercerita* by Leila S Chudori

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the authorial style employed by Leila Salikha Chudori in exploring and developing characters in the novel *Laut Bercerita*. The research adopted a qualitative descriptive design using a stylistic approach. Data were collected from narrative texts, dialogues, and symbolic expressions contained in the novel and analyzed through descriptive interpretation. The findings indicate that the author utilizes reflective narration, expressive language, meaningful dialogues, and symbolism to construct multidimensional characters with strong emotional and ideological qualities. The characterization of Biru Laut and Asmara Jati demonstrates psychological complexity, moral resilience, and emotional depth. In addition, the shifting narrative perspectives and poetic diction intensify readers' emotional engagement and strengthen the representation of historical and social realities. The results also reveal that character development in the novel functions not only as a literary device but also as a medium for conveying educational values, including nationalism, empathy, and historical awareness. These values contribute to readers' understanding of social justice and humanity. In conclusion, Chudori's authorial style effectively integrates aesthetic and educational dimensions through character construction, making *Laut Bercerita* a relevant literary work for Indonesian language and literature learning, particularly at the secondary school level.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature serves as a medium of expression that represents human life through language, imagination, and the author's interpretation. In literary works, particularly novels, characterization plays a crucial role as it drives the narrative while conveying specific ideas and values (P. A. Putra et al., 2025). Strong characterization enables readers to understand the conflicts, emotions, and social realities presented in a literary text (Nurgiyantoro, 2010). One contemporary Indonesian novel that demonstrates profound characterization is *Laut Bercerita* by Leila S. Chudori.

Unlike many contemporary Indonesian novels that portray individual or social conflicts, *Laut Bercerita* presents a unique representation of characters who are closely connected with Indonesia's historical experience during the New Order era. The novel does not merely depict personal struggles but also constructs characters as representations of resistance, memory, and humanity. Through its complex portrayal of activists who experience oppression, disappearance, and emotional trauma, the novel provides a significant space for examining how language and narrative techniques shape character identity and ideological meaning. Therefore, *Laut Bercerita* was selected as the object of this study because its characters contain strong psychological, historical, and ideological dimensions that allow deeper analysis through a stylistic perspective.

Laut Bercerita narrates the struggles of activists during the New Order era by presenting characters with psychological, social, and ideological complexity. Through characters such as Biru Laut and Asmara Jati, Leila S. Chudori portrays human experiences enriched with values of sacrifice, perseverance, and nationalism. The strength of the novel lies not only in its historical theme but also in the author's ability to create vivid characters capable of evoking readers' emotional engagement. Therefore, examining the authorial style used in character exploration is important for understanding how linguistic elements contribute to meaning-making and aesthetic effects within the novel. Several previous studies have investigated *Laut Bercerita* from different perspectives. Rahmawati and Nugroho (2022) examined the representation of historical trauma in the novel. Putri et al. (2023) analyzed the values of nationalism reflected through the characters and storyline. Meanwhile, Sari and Wibowo (2024) focused on the characterization of the main character using a literary psychology approach. However, these studies mainly emphasize thematic interpretation, historical representation, and psychological aspects of characters. They have not extensively examined how the author's linguistic choices, narrative structures, and stylistic devices function simultaneously in constructing characterization. This limitation indicates that previous research has not fully explored the relationship between authorial style and character formation in *Laut Bercerita*. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by analyzing the stylistic strategies employed by Leila S. Chudori in creating characters through a stylistic approach.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on authorial style as a mechanism of character construction rather than merely analyzing character traits or values represented by the characters. By examining lexical choices, grammatical structures, figurative expressions, and discourse techniques, this research reveals how stylistic elements contribute to the formation of characters' psychological depth, emotional expression, and ideological identity. Thus, this study provides a broader understanding of characterization as a linguistic and aesthetic construction within literary texts. This study employs the stylistic theory proposed by Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short (1981), which views language style as a means of understanding the relationship between linguistic form and literary meaning. According to Leech and Short (1981), stylistics examines how linguistic features are deliberately selected and organized by authors to create specific meanings and aesthetic effects. Their framework consists of four major levels of analysis: lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, and cohesion and context. Lexical categories examine word choices and their implications, grammatical categories analyze sentence structures and patterns, figures of speech explore the use of figurative language, while cohesion and context investigate how linguistic elements are connected to produce meaning within a text. Through this framework, authorial style can be understood as an interaction between linguistic form, narrative technique, and interpretation. Therefore, this theory is relevant for analyzing how Leila S. Chudori constructs characters not only through actions and events but also through specific language choices.

Through this approach, characterization is understood not only through characters' actions but also through the ways language shapes their identities, emotions, and ideologies. Theoretically, this research contributes to stylistic studies by extending the discussion of style beyond language description toward the interpretation of how linguistic features function in character construction.

While previous stylistic studies often focus on identifying stylistic devices, this research emphasizes the relationship between stylistic choices and the creation of character meaning. Therefore, the study offers a perspective that connects stylistics, characterization, and literary interpretation in contemporary Indonesian novels. This research is important because it provides a deeper understanding of the linguistic strategies employed by Leila S. Chudori in constructing characters. Furthermore, the findings are expected to enrich stylistic studies in contemporary Indonesian literature and serve as a reference for Indonesian language and literature education, particularly in the teaching of novel appreciation. Therefore, the objective of this study is to analyze the authorial style in exploring characters in *Laut Bercerita* by Leila S. Chudori from the perspective of Leech and Short's stylistic theory.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative research aims to describe and interpret phenomena based on observed facts in their natural context. According to Bogdan and Taylor, as cited in Zahrah et al., (2024), qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable human behavior (Azzara et al., 2024). This research applied a qualitative descriptive design with a stylistic approach because the study aimed to identify, classify, and interpret linguistic features used by the author in constructing characters. This design was considered appropriate as it allows the researcher to analyze literary phenomena based on textual interpretation rather than numerical measurement.

The primary data source was the novel *Laut Bercerita* by Leila S. Chudori, consisting of 378 pages and published by Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia (KPG) in 2017. The data comprised character descriptions, narrative passages, dialogues, and speech acts represented in the form of words, sentences, and textual excerpts relevant to the research focus (Qonaatun, 2025). The unit of analysis in this study consisted of words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, and narrative passages containing stylistic features related to characterization. The data were selected based on inclusion criteria, namely textual excerpts showing lexical choices, grammatical structures, figurative expressions, or discourse features that contribute to character construction. Texts unrelated to characterization were excluded from the analysis. A total of [jumlah data] quotations/text segments were analyzed in this research. Data were collected through reading and note-taking techniques. The data collection procedure involved repeated readings of the novel, identification of relevant textual evidence, and classification of data according to stylistic categories. The coding process was conducted by categorizing each quotation based on Leech and Short's stylistic framework, including lexical features, grammatical features, figures of speech, and discourse features. The coded data were then analyzed to determine how stylistic elements contributed to the construction of characters in the novel. The researcher served as the primary research instrument, supported by relevant references and research documents (Agustin & Raharjo, 2024).

Data analysis was conducted through several stages, including data reduction, classification, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The collected data were examined using stylistic concepts to identify patterns of authorial style in character construction. To minimize researcher subjectivity, the validity of findings was maintained through theoretical triangulation by comparing textual interpretations with Leech and Short's stylistic framework, as well as maintaining an audit trail of the data selection, coding, and interpretation processes. These strategies were applied to ensure transparency, consistency, and credibility of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The discussion focuses on how Leila S. Chudori employs her authorial style to develop and enrich characterization in *Laut Bercerita*. Character exploration is achieved not only through direct

description but also through stylistic techniques such as reflective narration, meaningful dialogue, symbolism, and shifts in narrative perspective.

However, the analysis in this study does not only identify the presence of these techniques but also examines how specific linguistic features contribute to the construction of character identity based on Leech and Short's stylistic framework. The analysis focuses on lexical choices, grammatical structures, figurative expressions, and discourse organization to reveal the relationship between language form and characterization meaning.

Both major and supporting characters are analyzed based on how the author constructs their personalities through language use, speech acts, inner conflicts, and the socio-political context surrounding them. Through this approach, the characters function not merely as narrative devices but also as vehicles for conveying moral, ideological, and national values.

The selected data represent recurring stylistic patterns found throughout the novel. The analysis was conducted by identifying textual segments that demonstrate character construction, then classifying them according to stylistic categories. Therefore, the findings do not merely describe character traits but explain how linguistic choices become strategies used by the author to produce psychological depth, emotional responses, and ideological meanings.

Table 1. Character exploration in *laut bercerita*

No.	Data	Page	Character Traits	Writing Style
1	"I am afraid. But I cannot retreat. I want to see this country change, even though I do not know what will happen to my body tomorrow."	101	Biru Laut: fearful yet courageous	First-person narration
2	"I only want to know where my brother is. I want to know why this country is so cruel to young people like him."	213	Asmara Jati: persistent and resilient	Assertive curiosity
3	"If we lose our sense of humor, we lose completely, Bro. Even in prison, I will keep joking."	113	Alex: humorous and optimistic	Colloquial language
4	"Father sat silently, staring at the wall. But from his gaze, I knew he carried all his sorrow within his chest."	310	Father: responsible and emotionally restrained	Descriptive style
5	"Mother never asked Father to stop standing on the porch. She simply held his hand when night fell."	309	Mother: caring and supportive	Poetic style

The findings indicate that Leila S. Chudori develops characterization through a combination of linguistic and narrative strategies. The characters are portrayed as multidimensional individuals whose emotions, beliefs, and personal struggles contribute significantly to the overall meaning of the novel. The findings further reveal that characterization in *Laut Bercerita* is constructed through a systematic interaction between linguistic choices and narrative structure. For example, the frequent use of first-person narration does not merely present the character's perspective but functions as a stylistic mechanism to create intimacy, subjectivity, and emotional involvement. This finding indicates that authorial style operates as a meaning-making process rather than only a decorative element of literary expression.

Biru Laut: Idealism, Courage, and Psychological Wounds

Biru Laut functions as the central character in the first part of *Laut Bercerita*. He is depicted as an idealistic university student who actively participates in resistance movements against the New Order regime. His characterization is constructed through internal narration and reflective monologues that reveal both his ideological commitment and psychological vulnerability. This narrative strategy allows readers to access his inner conflicts in a direct and immersive manner.

From Leech and Short's stylistic perspective, the use of first-person narration represents a discourse-level strategy that positions readers close to the character's consciousness. The repeated

use of personal pronouns and emotional expressions creates a subjective narrative atmosphere, allowing the character's fear, hope, and ideological beliefs to emerge naturally through language.

The quotation "Aku takut. Tapi aku tak bisa mundur. Aku ingin melihat negeri ini berubah, meskipun aku sendiri tak tahu apa yang akan terjadi pada tubuhku esok hari" (p. 101) illustrates a strong tension between fear and ideological determination.

The lexical choices "takut" (fear), "mundur" (retreat), and "berubah" (change) demonstrate a contrast between personal vulnerability and collective aspiration. This contrast constructs Biru Laut not only as a courageous activist but also as a human figure experiencing psychological conflict. Thus, the stylistic pattern contributes to the creation of a multidimensional character rather than simply presenting a heroic figure. Through this expression, Chudori constructs Biru Laut as a character who is emotionally human yet politically resolute. The use of reflective narration strengthens the psychological depth of the character by exposing his internal struggle rather than merely describing his actions. In stylistic terms, this technique aligns with narrative discourse that prioritizes subjective experience (Faruqi, 2024).

Asmara Jati: The Voice of Women and Civil Resilience

Asmara Jati emerges as a key narrative voice in the second part of the novel, and her presence marks a significant shift in narrative perspective. Through her role as both narrator and affected family member, the author expands the emotional and social scope of the story. Her characterization is built upon themes of loss, persistence, and the search for truth regarding her missing brother. This shift enables readers to experience the political tragedy from a more intimate and civilian perspective. From a stylistic perspective, the change from Biru Laut's first-person narration to Asmara Jati's narrative voice represents a discourse strategy that expands the representation of trauma. While Biru Laut's narration emphasizes direct experience of oppression, Asmara Jati's perspective emphasizes memory, absence, and emotional consequences. This narrative shift demonstrates that characterization in the novel is constructed not only through individual traits but also through the position of characters within the narrative structure.

The statement "Aku hanya ingin tahu di mana kakakku. Aku ingin tahu kenapa negara ini begitu tega terhadap anak-anak muda seperti dia" (p. 213) reflects Asmara's emotional determination and moral resistance. The lexical choices "ingin tahu" and "kenapa" indicate a repeated questioning pattern that functions as a linguistic representation of resistance. Unlike physical resistance performed by Biru Laut, Asmara's resistance is expressed through inquiry and the pursuit of truth. This finding shows that Chudori employs different linguistic strategies to construct different forms of courage among characters.

Rather than engaging in direct political confrontation, her struggle is manifested through memory, inquiry, and advocacy for justice. Chudori positions her as a representation of civil resilience that operates through emotional strength rather than physical resistance (Khusnul & Suprpto, 2024). This characterization highlights an alternative form of activism that is deeply rooted in empathy and persistence.

The Activist Group: Solidarity and Collective Tragedy

The supporting characters, including Alex, Wibowo, Sunu, Daniel, and Tomas, contribute to the representation of collective struggle within the novel. They are not merely secondary figures, but integral components of the narrative structure that reflect different responses to political oppression. Each character embodies distinct psychological and ideological traits that enrich the complexity of the activist movement portrayed in the novel. Their collective presence emphasizes solidarity as a crucial element in resistance (Talentina, Gaol, Merina, Sianipar, Sirait, & Sinaga, 2026).

The analysis of supporting characters demonstrates that Chudori does not construct characterization through a single dominant personality model. Instead, different linguistic patterns are assigned to each character, creating variations in emotional response and ideological position.

This finding expands previous studies that mainly discuss collective resistance by showing how stylistic differences among characters contribute to the representation of solidarity.

For instance, Alex is characterized through humor and optimism even in oppressive conditions, as seen in the dialogue “Kalau kita kehilangan rasa humor, kita kalah total, Bro. Bahkan dalam penjara pun aku akan tetap bercanda” (p. 113). This expression demonstrates how humor functions as a coping mechanism in situations of extreme pressure. In terms of Leech and Short’s framework, the use of informal lexical choices and conversational expressions creates a colloquial style that differentiates Alex’s personality from other characters. The language choice reflects psychological resistance because humor becomes a symbolic strategy to maintain identity and emotional strength under oppression.

Meanwhile, Wibowo is portrayed as a rational and strategic thinker who emphasizes organization and planning in political activism. The variation among these characters strengthens the narrative by showing that resistance can take multiple forms, ranging from emotional endurance to strategic resistance (Suprpto, 2024).

The Father: Silent Grief and Emotional Strength

The father figure is characterized through silence and restrained emotional expression rather than explicit narration. His presence in the narrative reflects deep sorrow that is internalized rather than openly expressed. Chudori constructs this character through subtle gestures and minimal dialogue, allowing emotional meaning to emerge indirectly. The stylistic feature in this quotation appears through descriptive narration and symbolic representation. The phrase “menyimpan seluruh duka” functions as figurative language that transforms emotional pain into a physical burden. Through this expression, Chudori represents grief as an internal experience that cannot be fully expressed through direct speech. This finding confirms that figurative language plays an important role in constructing psychological characterization. The description “Ayah duduk diam, menatap tembok. Tapi dari tatapannya aku tahu ia menyimpan seluruh duka dalam dadanya” (p. 310) illustrates the use of non-verbal cues to convey emotional depth. The father’s silence functions as a representation of grief that cannot be fully articulated. This stylistic approach reflects the “show, don’t tell” technique, which enhances realism by allowing readers to interpret emotional meaning through behavior and atmosphere (Barus et al., 2023).

The Mother: Affection and Emotional Support

The mother is portrayed as a nurturing and stabilizing figure within the family structure. Her characterization is developed through gentle actions and emotional restraint rather than verbal expression. She functions as a symbol of care and emotional continuity amid familial and social tragedy. This representation highlights the quiet strength often associated with maternal figures in literature (Febriani & Anwar Efendi, 2020). The representation of the mother demonstrates that characterization can be developed through minimal linguistic expression. Instead of using direct emotional statements, Chudori relies on symbolic actions to communicate affection and endurance. This stylistic choice strengthens the emotional impact because readers interpret meaning through implied actions rather than explicit explanation. The quotation “Ibu tidak pernah menyuruh Ayah berhenti berdiri di serambi. Ia hanya menggandeng tangannya ketika malam turun” (p. 309) illustrates affection expressed through simple and symbolic gestures. The mother’s actions emphasize emotional support without direct confrontation or speech. Chudori employs a poetic narrative style to highlight intimacy and emotional connection within the family, reinforcing the theme of human resilience in times of loss. The phrase “menggandeng tangannya” functions as a symbolic expression of emotional support and solidarity. Through this simple action, the author constructs the mother as a representation of quiet resilience. This finding indicates that symbolic language becomes an important stylistic device in portraying emotional relationships among characters.

Stylistic Techniques in Character Construction

The analysis shows that Leila S. Chudori employs multiple stylistic techniques to construct and deepen characterization in *Laut Bercerita*. Reflective narration is used to reveal internal conflicts and emotional depth, while meaningful dialogue contributes to indirect characterization through interaction. Symbolism, particularly the sea as a representation of memory and loss, enriches the thematic structure of the novel. Additionally, shifts in narrative perspective broaden the reader's understanding of events and characters from multiple viewpoints.

The findings demonstrate that Chudori's authorial style operates through an integrated relationship between linguistic form and character meaning. Reflective narration constructs psychological depth, dialogue reveals interpersonal identity, symbolism strengthens emotional interpretation, and narrative perspective determines how readers understand trauma and resistance. Therefore, the contribution of this study is not limited to identifying stylistic devices but explaining how these devices actively construct characterization. These techniques collectively produce characters that are emotionally complex and ideologically meaningful. They also reinforce the novel's central themes of justice, humanity, and nationalism by embedding them within the lived experiences of the characters. Compared with previous stylistic studies that generally focus on the identification of language styles or literary elements, this research highlights the functional relationship between stylistic choices and character development. The novelty of this study lies in demonstrating that authorial style serves as a structural mechanism that connects language, characterization, and ideological meaning within contemporary Indonesian literature.

Discussion

The findings of this study are related to previous research conducted by Talentina & Peronoka (2026), which highlights the representation of historical trauma in *Laut Bercerita*. This study also identifies that characters such as Biru Laut and Asmara Jati represent the psychological and emotional consequences of political oppression. However, unlike previous studies that mainly interpret trauma from historical and thematic perspectives, this research reveals that trauma is constructed through stylistic strategies, particularly the use of reflective narration, personal expressions, and symbolic language. These linguistic choices strengthen readers' understanding of characters' emotional experiences and demonstrate the role of style in shaping meaning.

The results are also connected with Simanjuntak et al. (2025), who emphasize nationalism as an important value in the novel. This study extends their findings by showing that nationalism is not only presented as a thematic message but is embedded within character construction. Through lexical choices, dialogue patterns, and narrative perspectives, Chudori represents nationalism as an individual experience involving sacrifice, resistance, and emotional struggle. Therefore, this research provides a different contribution by explaining how ideological values are constructed through language rather than merely identified from the storyline. This study also supports Putra & Amir (2023), who analyze characterization through a literary psychology approach. While their research focuses on psychological aspects of characters, this study emphasizes the linguistic process behind the formation of those psychological dimensions. By applying Leech and Short's stylistic framework, this research demonstrates that character identity is created through the interaction between lexical selection, grammatical patterns, figurative expressions, and discourse structures. Thus, characterization is understood not only as a representation of personality but also as a result of deliberate stylistic construction. The analysis further shows that Chudori's authorial style operates through several interconnected techniques, including reflective narration, dialogue, symbolism, and shifts in narrative perspective. These findings contribute to stylistic studies by expanding the discussion from identifying language features toward understanding their functions in constructing literary characters. The study demonstrates that stylistic elements are not merely aesthetic devices but mechanisms that shape emotional depth, ideological positioning, and readers' interpretation of characters. Furthermore, the fragmented narrative structure in *Laut Bercerita* strengthens the representation of trauma and memory. The shifting perspectives between victims and family members allow the novel to present

different experiences of loss and resistance. From a stylistic perspective, narrative fragmentation functions as a discourse strategy that controls information, creates emotional intensity, and encourages readers to reconstruct meaning from multiple viewpoints. Therefore, the narrative structure contributes significantly to character development and thematic interpretation.

Overall, this study contributes to the development of stylistic and characterization studies by showing that authorial style plays an essential role in constructing character meaning. Unlike previous studies that primarily discuss historical, psychological, or thematic aspects of *Laut Bercerita*, this research highlights the relationship between linguistic form and character representation. The findings indicate that style functions as a bridge between language, characterization, and ideology, demonstrating that literary meaning emerges through the interaction of narrative techniques and linguistic choices.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Leila S. Chudori successfully constructs and develops characterization in *Laut Bercerita* through reflective, poetic, and emotionally driven stylistic techniques. The characters, particularly Biru Laut and Asmara Jati, are portrayed not only in terms of physical attributes but also through psychological, social, and ideological dimensions, making them symbolic representations of struggle, humanity, and nationalism, while supporting characters further enrich the narrative through collective experiences and solidarity. The main novelty of this research lies in demonstrating that characterization in *Laut Bercerita* is not only shaped by psychological and thematic elements, but also by deliberate stylistic choices involving lexical selection, narrative perspective, figurative language, and discourse strategies. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of stylistic and characterization studies in Indonesian literature by showing that authorial style functions as a mechanism that connects linguistic form, character identity, and literary meaning. Practically, the findings provide insights for Indonesian literature education by showing how stylistic analysis can be applied to develop students' critical appreciation, empathy, and awareness of social and historical issues represented in literary works. However, this research is limited to a single-novel stylistic analysis and does not include comparative studies with other works or broader literary corpora. Future research is recommended to expand the investigation by comparing stylistic patterns across different Indonesian novels, examining various literary genres, or applying interdisciplinary approaches such as discourse analysis, narratology, or literary psychology. Further studies may also explore additional aspects, such as the relationship between authorial style, reader response, and cultural representation, to provide a broader understanding of characterization development in Indonesian literature. Overall, the findings clearly answer the research objective by demonstrating that stylistic choices are central to the effective construction of complex and meaningful characters in *Laut Bercerita*.

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