

Frenchism in the Short Story 'The Red-Headed League' and 'The Final Problem' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

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Abstract

Popular literary work, such as detective story, is an interesting phenomenon in literature since so many people like to read this kind of literary work. Popular literature in general has certain pattern called as formula. In this research, short stories written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in *The Best of Sherlock Holmes* become the research object. Two of them, 'The Red-Headed League' and 'The Final Problems' are chosen for showing uniqueness compared to the other eighteen titles with the massive use of French or other French-related terms. This phenomenon invites further research interest on what the author's intention and purpose in using French and other French-related things. The language aspect is included in the discussion field of Sociology of Literature, because language is basically created from social dynamic process. Thus, Alan Swingewood's Sociology of Literature approach which views literature as a mirror of age is considered to be appropriate for this research model. The analysis results of French construction and its related things through fictional characters in the short story show the author's expression who wants to describe the France atmosphere, the Britain-France relations, and their triumphs in the spheres of literature and economy.

Keywords: popular literature, detective story, French, French-related things, sociology of literature

Abstrak

Karya sastra populer misalnya cerita detektif menjadi fenomena menarik dalam khasanah kesusasteraan karena banyaknya orang yang menggemari jenis karya sastra ini. Karya sastra populer pada umumnya memiliki pola tertentu yang disebut formula. Pada penelitian ini, cerita pendek karya Sir Arthur Conan Doyle dalam The Best of Sherlock Holmes menjadi objek penelitian. Dua di antaranya yaitu 'The Red-Headed League' dan 'The Final Problem' dipilih karena menunjukkan keunikan tersendiri dibandingkan delapan belas judul lainnya dengan penggunaan bahasa Prancis atau istilah lain yang terkait dengan Prancis yang begitu massive. Fenomena ini mengundang minat penelitian lebih lanjut tentang apa maksud dan tujuan pengarang menggunakan bahasa Prancis dan hal-hal yang terkait dengan Prancis tersebut. Aspek bahasa termasuk dalam bidang pembahasan Sosiologi Sastra, karena bahasa pada dasarnya terbentuk dari proses dinamika sosial. Dengan demikian, pendekatan Sosiologi Sastra Alan Swingewood yang memandang karya sastra sebagai cermin zaman dinilai sesuai untuk model penelitian ini. Hasil analisis terhadap konstruksi Bahasa Prancis dan hal terkait melalui tokoh-tokoh rekaan di dalam cerita pendek menunjukkan ekspresi pengarang yang ingin menggambarkan suasana Prancis, persahabatan Inggris-Prancis, dan kejayaan kedua negara dalam bidang sastra dan ekonomi.

Kata kunci: sastra populer, cerita detektif, bahasa Prancis, hal-hal yang berhubungan dengan Prancis, sosiologi sastra

INTRODUCTION

Among noted characteristics of popular literary works, those are, having a large and various reader segmentations (Ashley, 1989:2) and having certain pattern called as the story formula that is relatively standard (Cawelti, 1976:6). One of the types of popular literary work is detective story

(Cawelti, 1976:6). The detective stories being the research objects in this paper are 'The Red-Headed League' and 'The Final Problem' written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. 'The Red-Headed League' has the story formula that can be concluded as the same as any other short story titles in the detective story collection *The Best of Sherlock*

Holmes (Doyle, 2004). The formula can be shown below.

- a. Clients visit Sherlock Holmes' apartment in Baker Street and explain the case
- b. Holmes assisted by his friend, dr. Watson, investigate the case that mostly occurred in or around London, Great Britain, and other European countries
- c. There is progress in the reported case that invites the readers' tension and curiosity
- d. Holmes successfully identifies the culprit and pursues him
- e. The culprit is at last caught and given punishment

However, the formula of 'The Final Problem' in this case is an exception. This short story and 'The Empty House' are the titles that have different story formula compared to other 18 titles in the short story collection. Here it is the formula of 'The Final Problem'.

- a. For 3 months Sherlock Holmes intensively investigates Professor Moriarty
- b. Meanwhile, Holmes helps French government to investigate a case
- c. dr. Watson, Holmes' close friend, is shocked by the presence of Holmes at his house who is found to be thinner presently
- d. Holmes admits that he is being hunted by Professor Moriarty and his men to be killed because he is considered to endanger the criminal gang
- e. Holmes requests dr. Watson to leave England for mainland Europe
- f. Professor Moriarty keeps hunting Holmes
- g. Professor Moriarty and Holmes are involved in one on one duel on the slope of Reichenbach water fall and both disappear mysteriously apparently fall into the cliff
- h. dr. Watson thinks both of them died

The interesting aspect in 'The Red-Headed League' and 'The Final Problem' is the author's idea construction that is found to be French-related. The French-related in this context means to express anything about France, in particular, the use of French by the author. The writer is using the term Frenchism to be understood as someone's expressions and/or actions referring to French-related things. In more specific definition, the suffix -ism in this context means a feature of language of the type mentioned just like -ism in 'Americanism' for example (Hornby, 2015:797). Therefore, the analysis on Frenchism as constructed by the author in 'The Red-Headed League' and 'The Final Problem' will cover its methods and aims.

METHODOLOGY

The research method of this paper is qualitative. It is thought to be appropriate for the object of this research that is a short story collection entitled *The Best of Sherlock Holmes* written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. This book contains 20 short stories which two of them; 'The Red-Headed League' and 'The Final Problem' being the research object of this paper.

The basis of choosing 'The Red-Headed League' and 'The Final Problem' is because of their distinct characteristics from other titles. The immense use of French and other French-related things need to be analysed further. They are, by the author, constructed through the characters in both short stories. To get the meaning and purpose, the writer read them carefully, identify any French-related terms and things, and group them according to the related short story intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Based on the thorough reading the writer finds that the language use, in this context English and French, reflects the meaning and purpose of the short stories. In relation to this, language is a social creation that becomes the medium of literature (Wellek and Warren, 1956:94). In language anything related to sociology,

philosophy, religion, and many more cannot be resisted and will be usually found (Damono, 2009:96). So it is no wonder that "Nor can it be doubted that some kind of social picture can be abstracted from literature." (Wellek and Warren, 1956:102). These statements show that there is natural relations between literature and social aspects. Along with the research development on social aspects in literature, the term sociology of literature has emerged which is then interpreted as an approach to literary works by considering social aspects (Damono, 2009:1). Since the objects of this research are short stories, the writer will focus on conducting analysis on its social aspects especially the language to find the meaning and purpose. It is in line with a sociology of literature approach which views documentary aspects in literature as the mirror of age (Laurenson dan Swingewood, 1972:13-17).

THE AUTHOR'S METHOD IN CONSTRUCTING FRENCHISM IN 'THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE'

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle constructs Frenchism through his fictional characters in 'The Red-Headed League.' The characters meant are John Clay alias Vincent Spaulding, Merryweather, and Sherlock Holmes. The Frenchism construction through those characters will be explained in more detailed in the following paragraphs.

JOHN CLAY, ALIAS VINCENT SPAULDING

Clay, to be the truth, is one of the most wanted criminals searched by the London police department Scotland Yard. To carry out a bank robbery successfully, he pretends to be a helper in a private pawnshop owned by Jabez Wilson and deceives his master using pseudo-name Vincent Spaulding. The Frenchism constructed by the author in Clay is known from the use of his first name 'Vincent'

that is an old French name (ohbabynames.com). Although he is a high-level fugitive, noble blood is flowing in himself. Moreover, he is educated and brainy.

His name is Vincent Spaulding, and he's not such a youth either. It's hard to say his age. I should not wish a smarter assistant, Mr Holmes; and I know very well that he could better himself, and earn twice what I am able to give him. But after all, if he is satisfied, why should I put ideas in his head?' (p. 32)
'John Clay, the murderer, thief, smasher and forger. He's a young man, Mr Merryweather, but he is at the head of his profession, and I would rather have my bracelets on him than on any criminal in London. He's a remarkable man, is young John Clay. His grandfather was a royal duke, and he himself has been to Eton and Oxford. His brain is as cunning as his fingers, and though we meet signs of him at every turn, we never know where to find the man himself. He'll crack a crib in Scotland one week, and be raising money to build an orphanage in Cornwall the next. I've been on his track for years, and have never set eyes on him yet.' (p. 44)

Due to the facts above the police are overwhelmed in dealing with this fugitive. Even though he has been monitored for years, he is still very difficult to catch. His intelligence in planning the crime and the neat execution are so hard for the police and Holmes to detect.

The selection of Clay's first pseudo-name that sounds 'so French' certainly it is done not without reason except as a method to build Frenchism construction. Moreover, the above quotation explains the author's way to 'conceal' Clay/Vincent's character who is in truth a fugitive with positive traits labelling, for instance, having noble blood, intelligent-educated, and generous. It is done to show all Clay/Vincent's positive sides as compared to the negative, so that his evil characters become as if 'nothing' after being juxtaposed with his good qualities.

MERRYWEATHER

Merryweather is the president director of the Bank of London City. He explains information to Sherlock Holmes about the bank's bunker content that becomes the target of Clay and his partner Archie.

'It is our French gold,' whispered the director. We have had several warnings that an attempt might be made upon it,'

'Your French gold?'

'Yes. We had occasion some months ago to strengthen our resources, and borrowed, for that purpose, thirty thousand napoleons from the Bank of France. It has become known that still lying in our cellar. The crate upon which I sit contains two thousand napoleons packed between layers of lead foil. Our reserve of bullion is much larger at present than is usually kept in a single branch office, and the directors have had misgivings upon the subject.' (p. 45)

The author, through Merryweather, reinforces Frenchism construction that on this occasion is constructed in the banking cooperation between the Bank of London City and The Bank of France. Let alone, Merryweather fluently calls the franc, France currency, with 'napoleon.' It shows the author's appreciation to the great figure in French history.

SHERLOCK HOLMES

Holmes is the noted character being the author's tool in asserting Frenchism construction.

He shrugged his shoulders. 'Well, perhaps, after all, it is of some little use,' he remarked.

'L'homme c'est rien-loeuvre c'est tout, as Gustave Flaubert wrote to George Sand.' (p. 49)

When dr. Watson praises Holmes who has at last proven to be able to detect and defeat Clay's wicked plan, he is so humble by saying a French phrase *'l'homme c'est rien-loeuvre c'est tout'* that means 'the author is not so important, the important thing is that his work.' (based on correspondence with a professional translator named Yogas Ardiansyah). In this context, 'who reveals

the Clay's case is not really matter, the important thing is ultimately it is solved.'

THE AUTHOR'S METHOD IN CONSTRUCTING FRENCHISM IN 'THE FINAL PROBLEM'

Unlike before, this time in 'The Final Problem' Sir Arthur Conan Doyle constructs most Frenchism more implicitly through actions of the two main characters Sherlock Holmes and dr. Watson. The following is the explanation.

SHERLOCK HOLMES

Holmes admits to his friend, dr. Watson, that he wants to take a break from his investigation routine.

'... Between ourselves, the recent cases in which I have been of assistance to the royal family of Scandinavia, and to the French republic, have left me in such a position that I could continue to live in the quiet fashion which is most congenial to me,...' (p. 233)

This confession can be interpreted that Holmes who previously has intended to rest from investigation business is forced to be in a position being unable to resist the assistance request to solve complicated case that befalls an aristocrat Scandinavian family and the government of France republic.

The Frenchism that implicitly contained in Holmes' confession lies in the sides asking for help, one of them is the French republic government. As individual who has natural talent in deduction science, Holmes becomes a person who firmly holds his principle not only in his investigation methods, but also other things. The same happened as he convinces himself to be free from case investigation business to live more peaceful, he should have done it. In other words, he will only change his former plan if something urgent occurred. On this occasion, the assistance requests comes from the French republic. How France, as constructed by the author, is so special for Holmes until he needs to carry out the

investigation by himself and resolves the case.

The next Frenchism found in Holmes' action is when he tells dr. Watson about his opponent Professor James Moriarty.

'He is the Napoleon of crime, Watson.' (p. 234)

Holmes juxtaposes Professor Moriarty's qualities with the great French figure Napoleon Bonaparte. So, what really makes Professor Moriarty deserves to be called 'the Napoleon of crime?' The following is what Holmes says to his best friend.

'Aye, there's the genius and the wonder of the thing!' he cried.

'The man pervades London, and no one has heard of him. That's what puts him on a pinnacle in the records of crime. ...' (p. 233)

Moriarty, as Holmes says, is a genius who controls London and no one ever identifies his identity.

'His career has been an extraordinary one. He is a man of good birth and excellent education, endowed by nature with a phenomenal mathematical faculty. At the age of twenty-one he wrote a treatise upon the Binomial Theorem, which has had a European vogue. On the strength of it, he won the mathematical chair at one of our smaller universities, and had, to all appearances, a most brilliant career before him. ...' (p. 233)

Professor Moriarty has outstanding talent in Mathematics. The proof of his genius, as Holmes says, is Binomial Theory that becomes the reference for mathematicians throughout Europe.

Unfortunately, something that is unfortunate for Holmes is Professor Moriarty in fact makes use of the strengths he possesses to mobilize crimes across England. It is because at the same time he has traits which drives him to commit crimes.

'... But the man had hereditary tendencies of the most diabolical kind. A criminal strain ran in his blood, which, instead of being modified, was increased and rendered infinitely more dangerous by his extraordinary

mental powers. (p. 233)

'As you are aware, Watson, there is no one who knows the higher criminal world of London so well as I do. For years past I have continually been conscious of some power behind the malefactor, some deep organizing power which forever stands in the way of the law, and throws its shield over the wrongdoer. Again and again in cases of the most varying sorts – forgery cases, robberies, murders – I have felt the presence of this force, and I have deduced its action in many of those undiscovered crimes in which I have not been personally consulted. For years I have endeavoured to break through the veil which shrouded it, and at last the time came when I seized my thread and followed it, until it led me, after a thousand cunning windings, to ex- Professor Moriarty of mathematical celebrity. (p. 233-234)

The crime organization led by Professor Moriarty has been for years involved in various crimes like fraud, theft, and murder. From some solved and unsolved cases, Holmes realizes that there has been great power being the source of all those crimes until his conclusion is drawn to Professor Moriarty.

Holmes again explains his strongest opponent along with his loyal men's capacity.

'... He is the organiser of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city. He is a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker. He has a brain of the first order. He sits motionless, like a spider in the centre of its web, but that web has a thousand radiations, and he knows well every quiver of each of them. He does little himself. He only plans. But his agents are numerous and splendidly organized. Is there a crime to be done – a paper to be abstracted, we will say, a house to be rifled, a man to be removed – the word is passed to the professor, the matter is organized and carried out. The agent may be caught. In that case money is found for his bail or his defence. But the central power which uses the agent is never caught – never so much as suspected. ...' (p. 234)

So it goes without saying if Holmes devotes all his best ability in revealing this crime organization.

'... This was the organization which I deduced, Watson, and which I devoted my whole energy to exposing and breaking up.' (p. 234)

Even Holmes believes that the success in revealing and catching Professor Moriarty and his organization, as told by dr. Watson, will mark Holmes' greatest success in his profession.

... Again and again he recurred to the fact that if he could be assured that society was freed from Professor Moriarty, he would cheerfully bring his own career to a conclusion. (p. 242-243).

In this way, the author through Holmes explains Professor Moriarty's character, so it is not surprising that Holmes calls him as 'the Napoleon of crime.' It is part of the Frenchism constructed by the author.

Next, another Frenchism can be identified at the time Holmes asks for dr. Watson's assistant to accompany him going to mainland of Europe in order to avoid Professor Moriarty and his men's pursuit.

'Then it makes it the easier for me to propose that you should come away with me for a week on to the continent.' (p. 232)

What Holmes means when saying 'the continent' is several European countries as mentioned below.

'Well, then we must make a cross-country journey to Newhaven, and so over to Dieppe. Moriarty will again do what I should do. He will get on to Paris, mark down our luggage, and wait for two days at the depot. In the meantime we shall treat ourselves to a couple of carpet bags, encourage the manufacturers of the countries through which we travel, and make our way at our leisure into Switzerland, via Luxemburg and Basle.' (p. 241)

Holmes mentions places that are planned to be his trip route with dr. Watson those are Newhaven, Dieppe, Paris, Switzerland, Luxemburg, and Basle.

This time the author constructs

Frenchism through places/locations /setting described by Holmes such as Dieppe, Paris, and Strasbourg (in France), Basle and Geneva (in Switzerland), Brussels (in Belgium), and Luxemburg. After analysing these places, the writer finds the truth that they have similar mother language that is French (Hornby, 1995). Therefore, the Frenchism is at last discovered after observing the setting and characteristics that one of which is the people's language.

There is still one more Frenchism constructed by the author through Sherlock Holmes.

'... It would have been a coup de maitre had he deduced what I would deduce and acted accordingly.' (p. 241)

On this occasion, Frenchism construction is found in Holmes' utterance '*coup de maitre*' which more or less means 'clever opposition.' In this context, Holmes is being hunted by Professor Moriarty. Holmes praises Professor Moriarty's detection method as the brilliant one.

dr. WATSON

dr. Watson besides present in the story, he also acts as the narrator of Sherlock Holmes' detective story. He often accompanies Holmes wherever he goes to investigate a case. Therefore, he becomes an eye witness who experiences Holmes' investigation. Through dr. Watson the author constructs Frenchism with narration done by this character. The following is the Frenchism construction done by the author through this close friend of Sherlock Holmes.

At the initial story of 'The Final Problem' since dr. Watson gets married, he becomes less often accompanying his best friend investigating important cases. Until one day he learns that Holmes is being in France upon the French republic government's request for assistance.

It may be remembered that after my marriage, and my subsequent start in private practice, the very intimate relations which had existed

between Holmes and myself became to some extent modified. He still came to me from time to time when he desired a companion in his investigations, but these occasions grew more and more seldom, until I find that in the year 1890 there were only three cases of which I retain any record. During the winter of that year and the early spring of 1891, I saw in the papers that he had been by the French government upon a matter of supreme importance, and I received two notes from Holmes, dated from Norbonne and from Nimes, from which I gathered that his stay in France was likely to be a long one. (p. 231)

The author begins constructing Frenchism through dr. Watson when he tells Holmes who is still handling the French government's case and the length of his stay there. The Frenchism construction is clearly seen from a letter sent by Holmes to dr. Watson that is written in two cities located in southern part of France they are Norbonne and Nimes.

dr. Watson, as the narrator, explains to readers situation in Strasbourg when he is asked by Holmes to return home in London to begin his private practice that has for some days been closed as regards Holmes' invitation. However, dr. Watson thinks he should accompany his best friend after all.

'... We sat in the Strasbourg salle a manger arguing the question for half an hour,...' (p. 242)

'Salle a manger' means dining room. dr. Watson and Holmes are at this time being in Strasbourg, France for a short break and have a meal before continuing on to Geneva Switzerland. The author in this case constructs Frenchism through two things they are the setting Strasbourg in France and the term 'salle a manger.'

Similar to the Frenchism construction in Sherlock Holmes previously, the author again uses the setting method as a way to construct Frenchism. The journey of Holmes and dr. Watson crossing cities in some European countries is the high risk one, because Professor Moriarty and his

men keeps on monitoring their tracks from one place to other places. dr. Watson senses Holmes' anxiety to everyone who sees them. Here it is what he said.

For a charming week we wandered up the Valley of the Rhone, and then, branching off at Leuk, we made our way over the Gemmi Pass, still deep in snow, and so, by way of Interlaken, to Meiringen. It was a lovely trip, the dainty green of the spring below, the virgin white of the winter above; but it was clear to me that never for one instant did Holmes forget the shadow which lay across him. In the homely Alpine villages or in the lonely mountain passes, I could still tell, by his quick glancing eyes and his sharp scrutiny of every face that passed us, that he was well convinced that, walk where we would, we could not walk ourselves clear of the danger which was dogging our footsteps. (p. 242)

What Holmes worries is found to be true when terror starts to happen from unexpected directions as narrated by dr. Watson below.

Once, I remember, as we passed over the Gemmi, and walked along the border of the melancholy Daubensee, a large rock which had been dislodge from the ridge upon our right clattered down and roared into the lake behind us. In an instant Holmes had raced up on to the ridge, and, standing upon a lofty pinnacle, craned his neck in every direction. It was in vain that our guide assured him that a fall of stones was a common chance in the springtime at that spot. He said nothing, but he smiled at me with the air of a man who sees the fulfillment of that which he had expected. (p. 242)

When a good attention is given, that quotation describes the terror is about to be sensed by Holmes at the time he and dr. Watson enters Gemmi and Daunbansee. It means Holmes and dr. Watson position has been identified by Professor Moriarty, though he is still left behind. But as explained earlier, Professor Moriarty's loyal followers are scattered throughout Europe.

Then on the 3rd of May Holmes and dr. Watson arrives at the area of Meiringen.

They meet an Englishman who informs a lot about natural conditions around Meiringen.

It was upon the 3rd of May that we reached the little Village of Meiringen, where we put up at the Englischer Hof, then kept by Peter Steiler the elder. Our landlord was an intelligent man, and spoke excellent English, having served for three years as waiter at the Grosvenor Hotel in London. At his advice, upon the afternoon of the 4th we set off together with the intention of crossing the hills and spending the night at the hamlet of Rosenlani. We had strict injunctions, however, on no account to pass the fall of Reichenbach, which is about halfway up the hill, without making a small detour to see it. (p. 243)

Upon the information of Peter Steiler, Holmes and dr. Watson are asked to be careful mainly in the area of Reichenbach waterfall. But when Holmes and dr. Watson go around the location to monitor situation all of a sudden a letter comes asking them to immediately return to hotel because there is an Englishwoman who is sick and needed some help from a British doctor.

'... We had turned to do so when we saw a Swiss lad come running along it with a letter in his hand. It bore the mark of the hotel which we had just left, and was addressed to me by the landlord. It appeared that within a very few minutes of our leaving, an English lady had arrived who was in the last stage of consumption. She had wintered at Davos Platz, and was journeying now to join her friends at Lucerne, when a sudden haemorrhage had overtaken her. ...' (p. 244)

In this way all quotations containing Frenchism are presented. The author reconstructs them through setting such as Rhone Valley (in France), Leuk, Gemmi, Interlaken, Meiringen, Daubensee, Rosenlani, the highlands of Davos, and Lucerne (in Switzerland). As explained before besides absolutely France, Switzerland is also a country with the same mother language that is French.

CONCLUSION

Based on the Frenchism construction as explained before, the author's aims can be concluded as follows. First, to show the author's life experience when visiting Paris (sherlockholmesonline.org). Secondly, as a way to strengthen diplomatic relations between Britain and France. It should be noted that approximately three decades after the short stories were written in 1891 (wikipedia.org), the World War I broke out. Both countries continued to cooperate with each other in the same ally together with Russia against another ally consisted of Germany, Austro-Hungary, and Italy. The third, to depict Britain and France that both are great countries outstanding in the sphere of intellectuality, economy, and literature. It can be revealed from the author's method in constructing Frenchism through three characters in 'The Red- Headed League' as the representation of those three aspects previously mentioned, for instance, intellectuality was represented by John Clay/Vincent Spaulding, economic advance is portrayed through Merryweather's expressions about mutual partnership between the Bank of London City and the Bank of France, while the progress in literature was shown by Holmes when commented on dr. Watson's compliment by borrowing a French novelist's expression, who is well known for his fictional character named Madame Bovary, Gustave Flaubert (online- literature.com) in a letter sent to the most popular French female novelist in the 19th century, George Sand (amybrown.net), that written *'l'homme c'est rien-oeuvre c'est tout.'*

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