

## The Stylistics of Bias: Analyzing Ideological Slants in Social Narratives

Rasha Tareq Awad Al-Zubaidi (PH.D. ).

English Department / College of Arts/ University of Mustansiriyah

Email : [rashatariq@uomustansiriya.edu.iq](mailto:rashatariq@uomustansiriya.edu.iq)

Baghdad -Iraq

### المستخلص:

تقدم هذه الدراسة تحليلاً لغوياً أسلوبياً مفصلاً لرواية لامع للكاتبة رافين ليلاني، مع التركيز على كيفية استخدام الرواية للغة لتناول وانتقاد التحيزات النظامية المرتبطة بالعرق والجنس والطبقة الاجتماعية. تشمل التحليلات الاختيارات اللفظية والهيكل النحوية وأسلوب السرد والتفاعلات الاجتماعية والمواقف الإيديولوجية للكشف عن الطريقة التي تتناول بها الرواية تصوير التفاوتات الاجتماعية وتحديها.

تكشف النتائج أن لامع تستخدم مصطلحات لغوية محددة لتسليط الضوء على تهميش إيدي والاتجاه الاجتماعي لتقليل إنجازاتها، مما يعزز التسلسلات الهرمية العرقية والاجتماعية. تعكس البنية النحوية المتقطعة والتباين بين الصوت السلبي والفعل المضطرب في هوية إيدي وتعقيدات التفاعل في بيئة متحيزة، مما يوضح الأثر الأوسع للتعبس النظامي على الرؤية والوكالة. يوفر المنظور السردي من الدرجة الأولى استكشافاً عميقاً لتجارب إيدي الداخلية مع العنصرية والتمييز الجنسي، ويعزز بالسرد غير المباشر الذي يدمج بين الرؤى الشخصية والنقد الاجتماعي الأوسع. تكشف التفاعلات الاجتماعية في الرواية عن تحيزات دقيقة من خلال الملاحظات غير المباشرة والتلميحات، مما يظهر تردداً في مواجهة القضايا النظامية بشكل مباشر. وتتنقد المواقف الإيديولوجية للرواية كيف تفضل الهياكل الاجتماعية مجموعات معينة بينما تهمش أخرى.

في الختام، تستخدم رواية لامع بمهارة هذه الاستراتيجيات اللغوية لكشف والتصدي للتعبسات الراسخة، مقدمة نقداً دقيقاً للظلم النظامي. يكشف استخدام الرواية المتقدم للغة عن طبيعة التفاوتات العرقية والجنسية والاجتماعية، ويقدم رؤى قيمة حول آلياتها وآثارها. تسلط هذه التحليلات الضوء على أهمية الأعمال الأدبية في تحدي وتأمل التحيزات والظلم الاجتماعي.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الأسلوبية المتحيزة، الميول الإيديولوجية، العرق والجنس والطبقة الاجتماعية، المنظور السردى

### Abstract

The study aims at providing an analysis of Luster by Raven Leilani in order to examine how language is used in the novel in order to look at and challenge racism, sexism, and classism. It analyses the textual features of the novel as a work of language which comprises lexical and syntactic choice, narrational and discursive processes and structures, interactions

and subject positions to identify how the novel engages with and contests social-political oppression.

The present study reveals that Luster uses some lexical signs to portray the erasure of Edie and the way identity of successful black woman is erased by the society and thus erased out from the relations of power. The use of the fragmented syntax and the shift between the passive and the active voice makes the reader concentrate on the loss of Edie's identity and the problems she encounters in the context of the oppressive social system which shows how oppression erases agency of the oppressed. The first-personal mode of the novel enables Edie to describe the experience of oppression on the basis of race and gender; the free indirect discourse is used to present the character's point of view and to criticize the society .

As it has been mentioned above, the novel shows social interactions as microaggression and indirect remarks, which indicate people's reluctance to address system oppression. The novel is also a political one and shows how one group can be oppressed while the other is favored.

In conclusion, one can claim that the above mentioned linguistic strategies are employed by the author in a rather effective manner in order to unmask and problematize the prejudice that underpins the fictional world and, consequently, the real world. It is thus possible to consider the novel as a text which reveals how race, gender and class oppression operate and are omnipresent in the society. It is in such a light that this analysis makes it clear that literature plays an important role in revealing and challenging prejudices and prejudice-related inequalities in society.

**Keywords:** Stylistic Bias, Ideological Slants , Race, Gender and class, Narrative Perspective

## 1. Introduction

In "Luster," Raven Leilani's first novel, the author offers the reader a deep view of the modern society problems and the main character's life, Edie. The novel is based in contemporary America and explores the relationships between race, gender and class and how these affect people's lives. Edie, a twenty-something Black woman with the added complexities of having to deal with the stress of her job and identity and her race, exists in a society that is still prejudiced and discriminative. Leilani's novel not only answers for Edie's problematic but also presents an analysis of the various social factors that shape her existence. Luster's language, the point of view, and the characters are all significant in the representation of the biases based on race, gender, and class. Leilani uses these elements to portray and challenge the

stereotyping that is inherent in the ordinary existence and organizational systems. For example, the way Edie's relationships and her inner conflicts are depicted by the author brings attention to the racism and the misogyny within the society, and the novel's portrayal of the class relations and the economic inequalities contributes to the critique of the class prejudice as well.

This study is to understand the ways in which these stylistic features in "Luster" construct and perpetuate race, gender, and class bias. More precisely, this paper aims at exploring how Leilani's choices in the lexical and stylistic means and in the choice of the narrative perspective affect the representation of those biases and the readers' perception of the character. Through analyzing how these elements inform the novel's representation of identity and social relations the work will contribute to understanding the role of literature in addressing modern social concerns. To achieve these objectives, the research will address the following questions: In what ways do the particularities of the style of "Luster" address and challenge race, gender, and class prejudices? How do these stylistic features affect the reader's perception of the protagonist and the events that are taking place as well as social problems? In the light of these stylistic features of "Luster", this study will pave the way for understanding how Leilani offers a critique on social inequalities and how identity and power operate in literature.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Understanding Stylistics and Bias

Stylistics is one of the most critical sub-disciplines of stylistics, which aims at the analysis of the language and the processes, through which texts create meaning. According to Simpson (2004), stylistics is the analysis of language in literature where syntactic, lexical and phonological features are examined in as far as they affect the meaning of the text. This approach makes it possible to show how the authors create and develop the plots, characterize the characters and address the themes by the language they employ. As a discipline, stylistics is of particular value when it comes to the study of bias in literature, since it offers a way of addressing the question of how language may mirror as well as endorse bigotry. Fowler (1996) has noted, however, that bias is not always explicit, but may be inherent in the structure of the text, in the choice of the perspectival position, the characters, and even the style and presentation. For example, a story that is taken further to narrate from the domination of one group will only have the characters from the other groups as being oppressed or having certain vivid images painted on them. The ways in which the prejudices about race, gender, and class are portrayed in "Luster" are partly owing to the actions of the main character Leilani and the use of the first-person narrative. In the

opinion of Toolan (1998), the use of first-person narratives makes the audience more connected to the protagonist, yet, the reader's view is limited and s/he may focus on the concept of otherness. It is here that the reader gets to understand how systemic racism and sexism function through Edie's perspective – the reader is able to see and hear for herself what Edie is going through and what she observes in the world around her, which in turn makes the reader understand the impact of systematic oppressions on Edie's life. This, for example, is where Leilani's stylistic devices come into play: the fragmentation of the plot also shows how unstable and fragile Edie's life is. According to Jeffries (2010), fragmentariness of the plot corresponds with the experience of those characters who are marginalized in society and thus give the readers a sense of characters' psychological and social disintegration. This fragmentation, however, not only reflects Edie's subjective experience but also indicates the structures that shape her subjectivity in 'Luster'.

## 2.2 Ideological Slants

Ideological slants are the inherent biases and perspectives that shape a text's portrayal of social issues, characters, and events. These slants reflect the dominant ideologies of the time, as well as the personal beliefs of the author. According to Eagleton (1991), ideology in literature refers to the ways in which texts reproduce or challenge the values and assumptions of a particular culture. This is often done subtly through narrative structure, character development, and language use. Ideological slants are not always overt; they can be deeply embedded in the underlying assumptions that guide the narrative, influencing how readers interpret the text.

For instance, in novels where the protagonist belongs to a marginalized group, the ideological slant might reveal biases about race, gender, or class through the ways these characters are portrayed. Even sympathetic portrayals can carry implicit biases if they conform to stereotypical narratives or fail to fully challenge the status quo. As Althusser (1971) argues, literature can function as an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), subtly perpetuating dominant ideologies by shaping the reader's worldview. In this sense, even works that seem to critique societal norms may, through their ideological slants, reinforce certain hegemonic ideas.

In "Luster," the ideological slant is apparent in the way the narrative engages with issues of race, gender, and class. Leilani's portrayal of Edie's relationships, particularly with the white family she becomes involved with, reflects the complex power dynamics that are shaped by these factors. The ideological slant of the novel critiques the myth of the American Dream, revealing how access to social mobility and personal fulfillment is often restricted by race and class. As Belsey (1980)

notes, ideological slants in literature often reveal the contradictions within dominant ideologies, particularly when they fail to account for the lived realities of marginalized individuals.

Additionally, ideological slants can manifest in the ways narratives handle identity and agency. In "Luster," Edie's struggle for autonomy and self-definition is complicated by the societal expectations imposed on her as a Black woman. The ideological slant of the novel critiques these expectations, highlighting the limitations they place on her ability to navigate her social and professional life. According to Barthes (1977), texts can be seen as sites of ideological contestation, where different discourses about identity and power are negotiated. "Luster" embodies this contestation by exploring the tensions between individual agency and the societal forces that seek to define and limit that agency.

Moreover, ideological slants are not fixed; they can be multifaceted and contradictory, reflecting the complexity of social realities. In "Luster," for example, the narrative simultaneously critiques and embodies certain societal biases. While the novel exposes the racial and gendered dynamics that restrict Edie's life, it also engages with these dynamics in ways that may not fully escape the constraints of societal ideologies. This reflects what Bakhtin (1981) describes as the dialogic nature of literature, where competing voices and ideologies interact within the text, creating a space for both reinforcement and critique of dominant ideas.

Thus, the concept of ideological slants in literature provides a framework for analyzing how texts engage with social power structures. By examining the ideological slants in "Luster," this study will explore how the novel reflects and critiques the biases embedded in social narratives, revealing the complex interplay between identity, power, and ideology in contemporary fiction.

### 3. Methodology

The study utilizes linguistic stylistics to analyze the linguistic manifestation of racism, sexism and classism in the novel "Luster" by Raven Leilani. This type of stylistics is interested in the features of language in a text – lexis, syntax, point of view, discourse – as a means of showing how language shapes and critiques culture. This approach will enable a close scrutiny of the manner in which the language of the novel makes a social commentary.

#### 3.1 Selection of Novel

The novel 'Luster' can be discussed as one of the most appropriate texts concerning the linguistic stylistic analysis as it implication of complex modern social problems combined with unique narrative perspective. The theme of race, gender, and class is explored in the work of Raven

Leilani not only on the level of the topic, but also on the level of language. This way the language, the dialogues and the approach to the construction of the story of the novel are all excellent resources in order to perform an exploration as for how the existent biased and the ideological slants accomplish the task to be examined (Jeffries, 2010), and. Thus, the modern identity of the text alongside with the concept of intersectionality makes “Luster” an ideal foreground for analyzing how language contributes and maintains biases (Crenshaw, 1991).

### 3.2 Analytical Approach

This study uses a multifaceted linguistic stylistic analysis, focusing on several key components: The areas are lexical density, syntactic complexity, narrative text, pragmatic features and discourse organization. All these levels of language will be analyzed to see to what extent prejudice is employed in the text and how it regulates the reader’s perception of the race, gender and class relations.

#### 3.2.1 Lexical Choices

It can be seen that Leilani’s language use is therefore determined by social prejudices. Some specific words which Leilani uses have relation with race, gender and even class. For example, the colloquial language in “Luster” exposes Edie’s inferiority to the other characters in the novel at some moments more than at others. Simpson (2004) has stressed that lexical choices in fiction cannot be neutral; they are always political and reflect the political stance of the characters, as well as the author. It is thus through the identification of semantic fields in “Luster” that this study will examine how meaning is situated and mobilized in language and how it contributes to the establishment and maintenance of power relations. Specific attention will be paid to the so-called racial language, which is the language where apparently non-racial concepts are endowed with a racial meaning in a specific context. For instance, during the movie, the characters use words to address Edie’s looks or actions and such terms are racialized; this is the show that the characters hold implicit biases. This is in agreement with Fowler (1991) who pointed out that language is a social tool which is employed in constructing and deconstructing social realities; and that the lexical choices are indicative of the ideologies of the speaker.

#### 3.2.2 Syntax and Sentence Structure

The way that the syntax of 'Luster' works to convey bias and influence the reader's view of social relations cannot be overstated. Leilani's writing style with the use of the complex and fragmented sentences is also an indication of the fragmented life of the protagonist, Edie. In the opinion of Leech and Short (2007) the structure of a sentence can shift the pace and focus of the narrative, either drawing the reader's attention to some part of the text, or steering it away from others. Luster is also characterized by many short sentences and often non-chronological structure which is supposed to emulate the mess of Edie's life as a black woman in the white world.

This analysis will also look at the use of passive and active voice in order to bring attention or avoid attention to agency when it comes to racial and gender oppression. For instance, passive constructions might be used to diffuse the accountability of characters who sustain prejudice while active constructions can be used to emphasize the action of characters fighting prejudice (Fowler, 1996). Through the analysis of these syntactic choices, this paper will investigate how they help the novel to challenge social injustice.

### 3.2.3 Narrative Discourse and Point of View

In "Luster" the narrative style is first person, this makes the reader privy to Edie's inner most thoughts and feelings. This is the most important narrative strategy to explain how bias works on the individual level. Leilani can use the first person point of view to show how systemic bias affects the mind as Edie's narration often shows the effects of racism and sexism (Toolan, 2001). Free indirect discourse also plays a major role in undermining the distinction between the narrator's voice and the protagonist's interior monologue, as well as the relationship between individual perception and social analysis.

This research evaluates how the elements of narrative discourse in the movie "Luster" help the audience to comprehend bias. Leilani achieves this by placing the reader in Edie's mind hence making one feel the effects of bias not just as a social issue. In Genette (1980) notes that there is a way in which narrative voice can alter the reader's viewpoint and thereby determine how they view the ideological meaning of the text. Using the case of "Luster", the narrator's voice will be discussed in detail in order to show how it captures and comments on the prejudices of Edie's society.

### 3.2.4 Social Interaction

Analyzing the way language functions in social interactions is crucial to understanding how prejudice works in "Luster." Leilani's speech turns out to contain many implicatures and



presuppositions, which are types of pragmatic indicators of prejudice. For example, Edie's interactions with other white people are filled with microaggressions that are covert and can be verbal, non-verbal or even omission. These forms of bias are especially useful in analysing how racism and sexism work in the context of daily interactions (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The present study will apply the theory of pragmatics in an effort to analyze the manner in which power relations and prejudice are conveyed in the film "Luster." Speech act theory and politeness theory will be used to analyze the manner in which the characters in the film manage face threatening acts such as challenging power relations and social norms and also the way in which they navigate the This analysis will therefore be concerned with the pragmatic aspects of dialogue and, as such, it will demonstrate how social biases are embodied and reproduced in linguistic practices that work in the background of discourse.

### 3.2.5 Ideological Positioning

The method that be used in this work showing underlying view of the author so as to decode how 'Luster' constructs and deconstructs the norm. Fairclough (1992) has identified some discursive features of a particular work which are ideological and these include the manner in which events of the work have been ordered and the manner in which sections of the work have been clustered into topics. Linguistic features are going to be employed in the following study in order to describe the manner in which the discourses applied in "Luster" are employed to describe the race, gender and class relations in the novel. This means grasping how the novel is inflected in such a way as to unravel the operations of power and domination. For example, the novel contains the interpersonal relationships between the characters as well as the social themes, and by means of this, it provides the discursive position on the individual and systemic prejudice. Thus, through the analysis of these discourse structures this research will be able to show how the 'Luster' delivers its critique of social inequality within the contemporary ideological speech.

## 4.Data Analysis

### 4.1 Lexical Choices

**Example Quote 1:** "I was the only Black person in the room, a constant reminder that I didn't belong."

**Analysis:**



- Lexical Choices: The concept of the ‘constant reminder’ implies a process of constant enforcement of the understanding of race differences. Only emphasizes Edie’s loneliness in a white environment.
- Stylistic Bias: This way of describing Edie’s presence as a ‘reminder’ of her otherness resonates with the racist logic that defaults to whiteness. This use of language highlights the stress and exclusion she has to endure arising from the racism that is endemic in the society.

**Example Quote 2:** “Everyone seemed to have their own version of what I should be, all of them completely wrong.”

**Analysis:**

- Lexical Choices: The word ‘version’ also has a connotation that people have some certain stereotype of who Edie is supposed to be. The word ‘completely’ underlines the gap between what they anticipated and who she really is.
- Stylistic Bias: These turn of phrases show how biases influence others’ view of Edie and reduce her to a stereotype that people expect her to fit into. It depresses how prejudices from the outside world shape and confine her character.

**Example Quote 3:** “They call it ‘affirmative action,’ but it always feels like they’re saying I’m only here because of my race.”

**Analysis:**

- Lexical Choices: Here, the notion of ‘Affirmative action’ is also painted in a negative light and the audience is made to have a negative perception about it. The phrase ‘only here because of my race’ shows that, according to Edie, she is not respected in the organization for what she has achieved.
- Stylistic Bias: This language is typical of the prejudices that exist when attempts are made to redress racial imbalances and which portray such efforts as preferential treatment. It would explain how the oppression erases the gains of the oppressed people in the society.

## 4.2 Syntax and Sentence Structure

**Example Quote 1:** “I try to blend in, but I always feel like a splash of color in a sea of gray.”

**Analysis:**

- Syntax: The simile “a splash of color in a sea of gray” emphasizes the fact that Edie is unique in the world of gray. There, the syntax captures her feeling of being an alien.
- Stylistic Bias: This syntactic choice reveals how people of color such as Edie are isolated in white spaces, a kind of prejudice that treats them as foreign and therefore excluded from such environments. It also captures her feeling of uneasiness and loneliness.

**Example Quote 2:** “Sometimes they talk about me like I’m not even there, their voices drifting over my head.”

**Analysis:**

- Syntax: The phrase ‘drifting over my head’ is also fairly neutered, and somewhat befits the fact that Edie is overlooked. This makes her to appear as if she has no control over these interactions that are happening.
- Stylistic Bias: The use of passive constructions and the image of voices that drift similarly reveal how power relations operate within the novel and observe how Edie’s voice and the events which occur within the novel are erased.

**Example Quote 3:** “Every comment, every glance, it builds up, until I’m bursting with the weight of their unspoken judgments.”

**Analysis:**

- Syntax: It creates a sense of growing anxiety and the pressure of ‘every word, every look’. It can also be seen on how the interactions influence on Edie in the mentioned particular sentence.
- Stylistic Bias: This structural accumulation shows how microaggressions and biases accumulate and thus how much prejudice functions and harms Edie. It shows the ways in which power operates in people’s day-to-day existence and is reiterated in their everyday practices.

### 4.3 Narrative Discourse

**Example Quote 1:** “I can’t help but wonder if they see me as a reflection of their own guilt, a reminder of their privilege.”

**Analysis:**

- Perspective: First-person point of view gives the reader a close-up look at the main character’s internal voice and doubt. Through this choice of narrative, it is depicted how she may feel that other people may stereotype her.

- Stylistic Bias: The narrative discourse showcases how Edie believes that she is being employed to point to other people's complicity and privilege, which is a perfect example of how the systemic prejudice translates into individuals' lives. This type of narrative approach enriches the reader's perception of her emotional and psychological reactions to these prejudices.

**Example Quote 2:** "When they ask me about my life, it feels like they're more interested in my struggle than in who I am."

**Analysis:**

- Perspective: The first person narration amplifies Edie's feeling of being defined by her problems instead of her complexity. It shows the gap between the reality of her life and the world's view of her.
- Stylistic Bias: This is a clear narrative strategy that shows how people's interest in her suffering is, in fact, an erasure of her personhood, her victories, and her complexity.

**Example Quote 3:** "I hear their questions, their genuine curiosity, but all I can think about is how they never ask me about my successes, only my suffering."

**Analysis:**

- Perspective: This is especially seen through the employment of the first person narrative point of view through which the reader is able to experience the world from Edie's point of view. Still, it annoys her when the audience does not inquire about her achievements but asks her questions about suffering.
- Stylistic Bias: Through such a technique as the use of the narrator's point of view it can be seen how others notice that Edie is in pain and not that she is successful, thus making her into a woman in pain and erasing all the other aspects of her character.

#### 4.4 Social Interaction

**Example Quote 1:** "'I'm sure you're used to this,' she says, her voice dripping with pity that I can't escape."

**Analysis:**

- Pragmatic Cues: The phrase 'used to this' is also prejudiced for assuming about Edie's exposure and 'pity' is degrading. This example demonstrates the fact that pity is an excellent way of perpetuating stereotyping of other people.

- Stylistic Bias: This approach is not without bias because pity is used in this case to explain the life of Edie as full of mishaps when in fact she is a very decisive character. It proves that even the positive comments can also contribute to the further enhancement of the prejudice.

**Example Quote 2:** “‘You’re so resilient,’ he says, as if my entire life is just a series of trials to be admired.”

**Analysis:**

- Pragmatic Cues: The compliment ‘You’re so resilient’ reduces Edie to a woman of few strengths and many challenges, a character who must contend with the multiple hardships of her life, which makes her seem rather one-dimensional.
- Stylistic Bias: This quote illustrates how ‘resilience’ is used to validate and celebrate Edie while erasing the conditions of her existence. It is intolerance that reduces her to a dependent figure rather than a full-fledged person with all the rights it entails.

**Example Quote 3:** “They nod along as if they understand, but their silence speaks volumes about what they don’t want to confront.”

**Analysis:**

- Pragmatic Cues: The “silence” and nodding are examples of people not wanting to face the truth. From the non-verbal cues of the characters, Edie’s concerns are being unspoken and in effect ignored.
- Stylistic Bias: This is in agreement with the notion that biases are sustained through non-interaction and denial as depicted by their silence. It depicts the unwillingness to tackle root causes and people’s willingness to stay indifferent.

#### 4.5 Ideological Positioning

**Example Quote 1:** “The world is designed for people like them, and I’m just trying to find a space where I don’t feel like I’m intruding.”

**Analysis:**

- Discourse Structures: This is an ideological critique of how the power relations of society are ordained in favor of ‘people like them’ and the struggle that Edie has to do.

- Stylistic Bias: Of course, the bias is structural because the world was created in such a way that Edie cannot win. It also portrays a criticism of how these forms of ordering create and reinforce the dynamics of power relations that privilege some and marginalize others and hence exclude those who do not conform to the supposed norms.

**Example Quote 2:** “They live in a bubble where their privilege is invisible, while I navigate a world where it’s a constant, glaring reality.”

**Analysis:**

- Discourse Structures: This contrast between the ‘bubble’ and the ‘constant, glaring reality’ shows how privilege and oppression are conceived in different ways.
- Stylistic Bias: This quote is an evidence of the fact that there are people who do not recognize their privilege and this is quite the opposite of those for whom privilege is an obvious hurdle. It is a theoretical critique of power and oppression and their functioning and continuity.

**Example Quote 3:** “Every interaction is a reminder of the roles we are assigned, and I’m just trying to rewrite mine in a world that doesn’t want me to.”

**Analysis:**

- Discourse Structures: The other misunderstanding of social norms and prejudice is the belief in ‘roles assigned to us’. The question of how one can transform one’s position therefore highlights the tension between the subject’s capacity to act and the structure’s capacity to control that action.
- Stylistic Bias: This is so because social roles are assigned on the basis of prejudice and prejudice does not permit one to alter his or her self-conception. It provides a particular onto political/epistemological analysis of how power relations restrict people’s ability to act autonomously.

## 5. Conclusion

The study of stylistic devices in the novel *Luster* by Raven Leilani raises the appreciation of the ways in which language is used to depict and even ridicule the discrimination on the basis of colour, gender and class. The study also shows how Leilani use language to support and challenge power relations in society and hence the work gives a rich analysis of the impact of prejudice on the self and society. By the way, *Luster* explains the role of language in the construction and reproduction of the sociopolitical regime of power. Edie is portrayed as a ‘near white Negro’ or ‘nigger’ and the

novel uses several other words that underline her position of an outsider in the white community. For instance, terms like ‘constant reminder’ and ‘only’ show how Edie is aware of her blackness and her ‘otherness’. This choice of language not only highlights the prejudices that she suffers from but also satirizes the fact that such prejudice is a part of people’s thinking and behavior. Skills used to refer to concepts like affirmative action are used to finesse Edie’s success, which is a symptom of a culture that seeks to discount success among marginalized people as racially determined rather than earned.

Consequently, the analysis of the novel’s syntactic structures indicates that the effects of systemic oppression are even further apparent. The fragmented and compound-complex are the types of sentences that are used frequently in the narrative style in order to show the confusion and the chaos in Edie’s life, the effects of the prejudice on the mental health of the main character. This is not unusual for Edie, who is a woman of colour, living in a white world. There is one more way in which biases affect or reveal the agency in the novel, and that is through the use of passive and active voice by the authors. Although the passive construction makes it possible to avoid the politicization of the biases’ maintenance, the active voice can reveal the fight of the oppressed characters. This syntactic manipulation reflects relations of power and bias that people have, as well as the impact of these relations on people’s self-identification and identification of others. Due to the selection of the narrative perspective in *Luster*, it is possible to watch the internal fight of Edie with prejudice at different levels of representation. Consequently, the author is able to expose and make the readers understand the impact of racism and sexism through the experience of the character. In this manner the author is able to show why prejudice is present as the reader gets to be privy to the person’s thoughts. Also, the free indirect discourse is problematic in terms of identity, as the narrator’s voice merges with the voice of the protagonist, Edie, and, thus, the reader gets a rather intricate view of the character and her perceptions of herself as well as the world. This makes the critique of bias more realistic, and so it feels as though the problems raised are more authentic.

Other social relations in the novel also show how prejudices are conveyed through passive, or implicit, discrimination. They are indirect remarks and microaggressions that model the Racism and Sexism that Edie endures, therefore, revealing the more covert manner in which prejudice exists in society. The passive-aggressive behavior of silence and non-verbal communication indicates a cultural tendency to stay silent on issues of race and power. This avoidance preserves the existent power relations and prevents change to occur, which is depicted by some characters who would rather not touch these topics at all. The politics of *Luster* are those of the opposition to the systemic oppression and marginalization of people of color. The novel’s discourse structures how society’s roles and hierarchies work to the advantage of some and the detriment of others. Through the contrast of scenes of luxury and scenes of neglect, *Luster* explains how prejudice is structural and

how it is written into the social contract. This critique illustrates the problem of negotiating with power relations and might be read as an extended reflection on the cultural logic of power.

Analyzing the data is to state that the linguistic analysis of Luster is helpful in understanding to what extent stylistic features reflect and resist oppression. In this way, the language, the plot and the characters of the novel describe how racism, sexism and classism permeate the society. However, more can be done in the analysis of these stylistic features and examine the connection of these with culture and history and compare this work to other works of the same theme. This would have provided a more specifics of where precisely Luster can be located and is useful for understanding present debates about prejudice and portrayal in works. This research also pays attention to the linguistic analysis that can reveal the underlying meaning in Luster and how the stylistics could reflect and challenge the social injustice power relations.

## References

- Althusser, L. (1971). *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Monthly Review Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. University of Texas Press.
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Image, Music, Text*. Fontana Press.
- Belsey, C. (1980). *Critical Practice*. Methuen.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge University Press.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color*. Stanford Law Review.
- Eagleton, T. (1991). *Ideology: An Introduction*. Verso.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Longman.
- Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. Routledge.
- Fowler, R. (1996). *Linguistic Criticism* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Fowler, R. (1996). *Linguistic Criticism* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Genette, G. (1980). *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Cornell University Press.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). *Logic and Conversation*. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and Semantics: Vol. 3. Speech Acts* (pp. 41-58). Academic Press.
- Jeffries, L. (2010). *Critical Stylistics: The Power of English*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jeffries, L. (2010). *Critical Stylistics: The Power of English*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Leech, G., & Short, M. (2007). *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Mills, S. (1997). *Discourse*. Routledge.
- Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students*. Routledge.
- Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students*. Routledge.
- Toolan, M. (1998). *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Toolan, M. (2001). *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction* (2nd ed.). Routledge.