



## Cross-Cultural Identity Conflict in British and Iraqi Feminist Fiction: A Discourse-Analytical Study

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### 1. Abstract

This study analyses the themes of identity and conflict in British and Iraqi feminist writing, emphasising how these texts confront the intricacies of gender, nationality, and cultural expectations. This examination examines how female protagonists in these works manage the conflict between individual aspirations and society's expectations. The study emphasises how British and Iraqi feminist writers depict identity struggles, mirroring larger socio-political concerns and illustrating how literature functions as a medium for examining female resistance and self-definition. This analysis elucidates the common and distinct obstacles encountered by women in British and Iraqi novels through comparative discourse.

### Keywords:

Identity Conflict ,British Feminist Novels ,Iraqi Feminist Novels ,Critical Discourse ,Cultural Expectations,Societal Norms ,Feminist Resistance.

### ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة تحليل موضوعات الهوية والصراع في الكتابة النسوية البريطانية والعراقية، مع التركيز على الكيفية التي تُواجه بها هذه السرديات تعقيدات النوع الاجتماعي والهوية الوطنية والتوقعات الثقافية. وتبحث الدراسة في كيفية تعامل الشخصيات النسوية الرئيسية مع الصراع بين الطموحات الفردية والضغوط الاجتماعية المفروضة عليهن. كما تُبرز الكيفية التي تصوّر بها الكاتبات النسويات في بريطانيا والعراق صراعات الهوية، بما يعكس قضايا اجتماعية وسياسية أوسع، ويُظهر دور الأدب كوسيط لتحليل مقاومة المرأة وإعادة تشكيل ذاتها. وتوضّح هذه المقارنة الخطابية أوجه التشابه والاختلاف في التحديات التي تواجهها النساء في الروايتين البريطانية والعراقية.

### الكلمات المفتاحية:

-صراع الهوية، الروايات النسوية البريطانية، الروايات النسوية العراقية، الخطاب النقدي، التوقعات الثقافية، المعايير المجتمعية، المقاومة النسوية.

### 1.1 Background to the Study



Various sources have provided numerous definitions of CDA. Each scholar provides a distinct definition based on the objectives of the analysis they establish for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Fairclough (1993) asserts that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is neither a theory nor a method; rather, it constitutes a form of discourse analysis that seeks to systematically examine often obscure causal relationships between (a) discursive practices, events, and texts, and (b) broader social and cultural structures, relations, and processes. It aims to investigate how such practices, events, and texts emerge from and are ideologically shaped by power relations and struggles for power, and to analyse how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society serves to maintain power and hegemony—Mullany, L., & Mills, S. (2011), p. 135.

Fairclough emphasises CDA as a power dimension, whereas van Dijk calls for CDA as a research direction in several books and papers. According to Van Dijk (2001, p. 352), critical discourse analysis (CDA) is “a sort of discourse analytic study that analyses the way social power abuse, domination, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and contested via text and speaking in the social and political context.

Meyer (2001, p. 14) contends that “CDA should not be regarded as a singular method but as an approach that materialises at multiple levels.” Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is neither a school nor a paradigm; it is recognised as a dynamic field of linguistic inquiry that integrates linguistics, semiotics, discourse analysis, and both micro and macro analytical levels, focusing on the power relations evident within texts (Luke, 2002).

Wodak says CDA uncovers opaque “structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (2001, p. 2). CDA also seeks to critically examine how speech expresses, signals, and constitutes social inequality (van Dijk, 1993; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Richardson (2007, p. 27) says CDA “aims at illustrating a relationship between the text and its social conditions, ideologies and power-relations”. CDA also focuses on social and political concerns, not only on speech structures outside those settings, according to Van Dijk. According to 2015, p. 466, “CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power abuse (dominance) in society”.

## 1.2 Problem Statement



Many language fields examine CDA. Numerous researchers study it. Many researchers are interested in FCDA, a new field. This focus stems from the necessity to combine power and ideology in discourse about gendered social systems. This research seeks to identify the power relations between the East and the West. According to Benwell and Stokoe (2006), identity research uses CDA. Awan and Yahya (2016) recommend CDA for investigating cultural variations and their impact on society, status, and identity (of women).

This research examines two feminist novels, one British and one Iraqi, by analysing key language elements that may differentiate women's and men's discourses. This analysis will examine the portrayal of identity and the roles of women and men in society, comparing the similarities and differences across the two culturally distinct books. Individuals living in diverse cultural contexts often encounter multifaceted challenges that affect their personal and social lives and their identities.

Since Lakoff's research in the 1970s, women's language has received significant attention, yet some studies analyse only one language's lexicon (Hua, 2013). Structural and lexical studies also compare women's and men's language use. However, they are not critical and are restricted to structural and/or lexical analysis. For this reason, the researcher presents a CDA study with textual and social analyses to explore power relations and identities, uncovering similarities and contrasts between women and men across discourses from various cultures.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

The research seeks to accomplish the following goals:

1. To study the feminist novels' use of gendered language, including their structural, lexical, and textual aspects and techniques.
2. To learn about gender roles in society by analysing the two works from a sociological perspective.
3. To examine the similarities and contrasts between the male and female discourses of the British and Iraqi civilisations.

### 1.4 What is a Feminist Novel?

General literature is crucial to feminist movements, as it transmits ideas and promotes change. It depicts society, individuals, and their actions. It also explains social inequality. Literature may transform people's thoughts, beliefs,



and perspectives. 2015 (Vervondel). Irvine (2008, p. 5) said that “novels deal in thick detail with history, social issues, personal problems, and a myriad of other aspects of the world college students inhabit”. Feminist novels have certain common traits but no defined definition. An author’s gender does not determine whether a book is feminist. Women novelists are not all feminist. Men can write feminist books and non-feminist ones. Despite their small number, “feminist men” also advocate for gender equality. They include English philosopher, political economist, and feminist John Stuart Mill (Vervondel, 2015).

The portrayal of women is only one of many key topics discussed in feminist literary criticism, which focuses on feminist literature. “Theses on the Feminist Novel” by Roxane Gay lays forth some concepts for what a feminist book could include. The book that sheds light on the female predicament and/or provides an imperative for change is one in which women’s issues and femininity serve as the central themes, according to Gay (2014). Feminist literature delves into the complexities of womanhood through the lens of a particular historical period and cultural milieu. It delves into the tales that make us who we are and the topic of identity. (pages 45–46).

Not all books that focus on women’s lives are considered feminist novels, even if it is their main preoccupation. The protagonists and narrators of feminist literature are almost invariably female characters. Ideas that seek to alter or explain gender norms are often associated with feminist literature. Just as the portrayal of women is a feminist issue, so is the demand for reproductive rights and employment equality. From a feminist point of view, the most crucial factors are power dynamics, the making of femininity, and women’s empowerment. In most societies, gender roles and hierarchies serve to actualise power dynamics and the formation of femininity. There is a strong connection between feminism and these characters in a feminist book. A person’s identity is multidimensional, and intersectionality addresses these dimensions. According to Vervondel (2015), the field examines several facets of women’s experiences related to gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and sexuality.

Gay (2014) asserts that novels should focus on women from a specific period and location. Women do not share identical experiences, and gender is not the only factor influencing identity or social disparity. One must analyse the many factors that distinguish and define women’s identities while addressing them from a feminist viewpoint.

## 2. Introduction



This chapter provides an overview of CDA, including its background, goals, definitions, scope, and primary methods. Next, we will examine feminism through its many definitions and categories. Also included is a brief overview of feminist novels, what they are, and how to examine and connect novels using critical discourse analysis (CDA). This chapter concludes by introducing the concepts of FCDA, identity, and its types, and by reviewing the relevant literature.

## 2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis and Feminism

Michelle M. Lazar proposes Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, a new CDA branch. It is a subfield of CDA that combines feminism with CDA. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis combines CDA with feminist problems to explain power, ideology, and identity on the path to hierarchically gendered social regimes (Lazar, 2007). The FCDA book by Lazar aims to provide a “shared forum” for feminist critical discourse analysts to promote gender equality. She wants to build a community that empowers women and changes unfair societal norms. Feminist psychology, pragmatics, etc., study feminism. Recently, CDA frameworks have needed to contain a “feminist” designation, notably in the early 1990s.

“But why a feminist CDA?” is a reasonable question to ask. In addition to its significant political position, Critical Discourse Analysis is a renowned field for addressing social injustice and inequality. In response to the question posed above, three primary grounds are advanced. To begin, although certain studies of gender have taken a critical feminist stance toward gender relations, this is not always the case in gender-focused CDA studies. Secondly, some feminists have qualms about Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and its domain. These feminists argue that CDA is dominated by heterosexual white males who do not acknowledge the impact of other feminists. Thirdly, feminist Critical Discourse analysts would benefit from a central location to gather and disseminate their findings, rather than their current global dispersion (Lazar, 2005).

FCDA focuses on “critiquing discourses which sustain a patriarchal social order – relations of power that systematically privilege men as a social group, and disadvantage, exclude, and disempower women as a social group” (Lazar, 2007, p. 145). Considering social justice and gender relations, FCDA is an acceptable contribution to gender and language, which has been shockingly peripheral at times. Lazar (2005) states that FCDA aims to show how speech and social environment use “power relations” and “gendered assumptions”. Women and CDA academics collaborate well. Participants comprehend and develop their



social behaviours through gender. Studies of women focus on gender structure, whereas feminist studies take a critical approach. Feminists see gender as a two-group ideology: submissive women and dominating men (Lazar, 2007).

According to Lazar (2007), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) not only explores social injustice and structural inequality, but also examines social practices and discourse structures through the analysis of contextualised language use. For this reason, membership in both the CDA and feminism may result in the production of a robust and potent political criticism for action.

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis explores gender and language relations, investigating the enactments of power by men and women in the public domain. These are fundamental themes that include sexism, victimisation, liberation, and the production of identity. This would not only help explain male supremacy at certain levels, but also help grasp gender as a dynamic construct (Tenorio, 2011). Approaches to difference and dominance are considered important because they examine whether men's and women's ways of communicating differ.

## **2.2 Analysis of the British Novel “Blonde Roots”**

### **2.2.1 Textual Analysis**

The lexical analysis of language, represented by vocabulary; the structural analysis of language, represented by grammar; and the micro-level, provided by two discursive techniques, are covered at this level.

#### **2.2.2 vocabulary**

At this level, the book is analysed lexically through the use of ideologically contentious terms (expletives, adverbs of frequency, and adjectives), as well as formality and overwording.

##### **2.2.2.1 Ideological Contested Words**

Using “adjectives, adverbs of frequency, and expletives,” this research presents ideologically significant terms. Men do not employ “extravagant” (empty) adjectives like “kind,” “beautiful,” and “adorable” as often as women do, according to studies that focused on women's language. By comparing the utterances of the male and female characters in the book, we learn that the female characters utilise more ostentatious adjectives.

These adjectives are: “beautiful”, “bright”, “amazing”, “dreamy”, “humble”, “lovely”, “wonderful”, “kind”, “pretty”, “funny”, “honest”,



“successful”, “romantic”, “trustworthy”, “sexy”, “passionate”, “fearless”, “cute”, and “divine”. These adjectives add positive value and make the description more favourable. Although these adjectives are used to convey a positive tone in the description, they are considered vague in meaning.

#### 2.2.2.2 Overwording

In English culture, religious references are clarified by mentioning “God” and “Christ,” particularly for Christian people. In this novel, “God(s)” or “Gahd” (by Island language) is mentioned (23 times) by women and (3 times) by men. In comparison, “Christ” is mentioned by women (3 times) and “Jesus” is mentioned (twice) by women and (once) by a man.

Moreover, the word “Lord” is used to refer to “Gahd” on the one hand and to “Christ” on the other. It is repeated (10 times) by women and (twice) by a man.

- “All ting brite an boot-i-fal, All creetyur grate an small, All ting wize an wunda-ful, De **lord Gahd** made dem all.” (p. 162)
- “Ndeweale has instrukshun on where Maroon will meet yu. It tek two nite and a day, so **pray** to de **gahds** nobuddy notice yu missin an if so, dey keep schtum. (p. 216)
- 

“Heavenly fadder” is another religiously-referenced phrase that both men and women use; it also alludes to “Christ”.

The phrase “In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost,” or in the local vernacular, “In de name of de Fadder a de Son a de Holee Gost,” may also be categorised as a religious allusion. Doris, a woman, says it once, and the priest of the church, a male, states it once. Terms such as “pray” (-er)(-ig), “worship,” and “Ameen” are consistently used in a religious context. Christian individuals attend church on Sundays to venerate and express gratitude to God and Christ for their gifts, while also imploring them to preserve these blessings and bestow further ones. They convene with the church priest to read the Bible, pray, sing, and recite the words of God.

#### **-In de name of de Fadder an de Son an de Holee Gost.**

O mi **Gahd**, I glad to be here in dis place at mass an I iz verree sorree to sin against yu an by de help oyur grace I will nyot sin again.

Dear **Jesu**, have mercee on all de poor peepals who hav neva heard yur name.

I love yu above all tings. **Aaah-mi!**



The second one is the color reference. The work delves into the conflict between white and black characters. As a pair, these hues stand for bigotry. Africans represent authority, riches, and control, whereas Europeans represent purity, innocence, and simplicity.

Without a care in the world for the wriggling of us unfortunate hostages caught between their legs, two guys rowed out to sea, their muscles working overtime as four oars chopped up the waves. I saw that the peculiar black males who had commandeered our cargo on the shore were these. Dissimilar to me. People like me? People were born into one of two races, and in the community I was going to become part of, my skin colour—rather than my intelligence or other personal qualities—would determine my destiny (page 69).

### 2.2.2.3 Formality

A casual manner characterises the work. Doris, the protagonist, narrates chapters one and three, while Bwana, Doris's master, narrates chapter two. The book depicts African-European conflict. Europeans in Africa speak informal Island language. The author breaks grammatical norms to attain a goal. For instance, she spells "Aphrika" instead of "Africa" and "Aphrikan" instead of "African". "Europa" instead of "Europe", "Amarika" instead of "America", "Kanada" instead of "Canada", "whyte" instead of "white", "blak" instead of "black" and "bestest" instead of "best".

- "The **blak** men inspected our bodies, our mouths, our limbs, and we were soon loaded facedown into the yawls." (p. 59)
- "I recognised the accent of the **Amarikan** South, which had vowels so drawn out they went to sleep before the end of a word." (p. 137)
- The novel also employs features of informal language like using contracted words (isn't, aren't, I'm, here's...etc.), abbreviations ("KKK" for Kaga Konata Katamba and "GA" for Great Ambossa), ellipsis "He was supposed to offer poor relief, but rarely did" (p. 20), short sentence structure (one word sentence "Fungi", "Triumphant"), first and second person pronouns (I, we, you), and slang expressions (shit, damn, wanna, Pa, Mam).

### 2.2.3 Grammar

Throughout the book, modes and modality serve as linguistic tools for analysing the structural differences between the male and female protagonists' talks. By analysing the novel's dialogue, the researcher may deduce the gender-



specific modes used by men and women, as well as the viewpoints and power dynamics conveyed via these forms.

### 2.2.3.1 Modes

A discussion of declarative, interrogative, and imperative modes follows. We choose four talks to look at to find out what kinds of modes each gender uses. First, we will provide a brief overview of each discussion before diving into the analysis.

#### **Conversation B1:**

This dialogue occurs between Doris, the narrator (sometimes referred to as Omo), and her youthful mistress, “Little Miracle.” Upon discovering Doris’s betrayal, Little Miracle invites her for a stroll, leading to a chat between them. This dialogue occurs among individuals of the same gender, differing social rank, and ethnicity.

#### **Conversation B2:**

This dialogue occurs between the sisters Doris and Sharon. After being abducted, both individuals are enslaved by Africans. Doris perceives her sister as the favored servant and dominatrix of her employer, “Bwana.”

#### **Conversation B3:**

Doris and her conductor are having this chat. Doris is able to gain freedom once she receives a message with escape directions. She reaches the designated meeting spot for her conductor, who will lead her to the final destination of her voyage. They are both once enslaved people and belong to the same social class and race.

#### **Conversation B4:**

Doris and her second master, “Nonso,” are having a chat. Even when she manages to get away, her captors catch up with her and send her to labor the sugarcane fields all night long. At this establishment, Nonso serves as boss; he is a heavy drinker and gambler who prioritises satisfying his own needs above business.

### 2.2.3.2 modality



This level analyses language semantics. As indicated, relational modality expresses one speaker's power to others. This type expresses obligation, necessity, inclination, promise, and threat using various modal operators based on context. The second expresses participants' authority on the proposition's veracity. Commonly expresses usuality, likelihood, probability, and incapacity. Both kinds' modal operators overlap in meaning, depending on context and circumstance. The book uses "would", "could", "will", "can", "should", "must" and "have to". Words like verbs, adverbs, and adjectives may also indicate modality, and their meanings (purposes) determine their kinds. Also seen are verbs like "seem", "know", "think"; adverbs like "always", "just", "never", "probably"; and adjectives like "sure", "supposed". Women are passive listeners in most talks. The study reveals participant opinions and power interactions.

### 2.3. Social Analysis

At this stage, we examine rhetoric in light of ideology and power. Discussing speech in light of its social setting (social world) is its stated goal. Because it is believed to convey an individual's beliefs, values, and attitudes, language is associated with the social component. When evaluating women's language, linguists and academics consider social elements such as status, sex, and the gender system. This research appears to be a good fit for the social analysis as it is about feminist literature, and power is a part of feminism. This level will examine the portrayal of power and related issues such as the collision of individual, multiple, and societal identities, prejudice, abuse, and sexuality.

#### 2.3.1 Theme of the Clash of Identity

The struggle for European identity amid forced migration to Africa is a metaphor for the collision of civilisations. Feeling like outsiders in a world full of strangers, they battle depression and isolation. Doris, our protagonist, is not content and continues to seek her true selfhood. At the same time, she and the other Europeans have identity difficulties as a result of being forcibly rechristened. The many forms of identification and their presentation provide light on the process of identity development. Examining individual, many, and societal identities helps to clarify the analysis.

#### 2.3.2 Personal Identity



A person's self-presentation and characterisation are important to the concept of personal identity. "Doris," the novel's protagonist and narrator, pretends to be a white working-class lady from Europe. As a cabbage peasant, she and her family make their home in a modest dwelling. In her introduction, she says:

I AM PROUD TO DECLARE that I come from a long line of cabbage farmers. My people were honest peasants who worked the land and never turned to theft even when it snowed in summer or rained all winter so that the crops miscarried in their pods and turned to mulch.

We weren't landowners, oh no, we were serfs, the bottom link in the agricultural food chain, although no actual chains clinked on the ground when we walked around. Nor were we property, exactly, but our roots went deep into the soil because when the land changed hands through death, marriage or even war, so did we, and so tied we remained, for generation upon generation. (p. 20).

She paints a favorable picture of her family. Being a part of a group of "honest" individuals who "never turned to theft" is something she takes great pride in. To make ends meet, working-class families never stop working. They are not really free, but they are not enslaved either. Doris despises their current lifestyle and longs to become a famous entrepreneur so she can run her own company. That is, women should be content with their roles as homemakers and mothers, fulfilling their assigned tasks and obligations. Regrettably, her abduction and subsequent enslavement prevented her from doing it.

I'd already decided on my career path. I was going to become one of those rare silk-trading women, like that young Margaret Roper from the village at Duddingley who went off on the back of a cart and came back in her own carriage. Like her I'd be apprenticed for seven years; then I'd run my own business. First I had to persuade Pa to persuade Percy to let me go. I knew Pa would scoff at the idea of one of his silly daughters becoming a proper businesswoman (p. 24).

## 2.4 Analysis of the Iraqi Novel "Beyond Love"

### 2.4.1 Textual Analysis

At this tier, we have the manually processed lexical (quantitative-qualitative) investigation of language. The following: micro-level, vocabulary, and grammar—present the textual analysis. Grammar provides a structural analysis through the examination of modes and modality; at the micro-level, discursive strategies of generalisation and norm and value violation are involved; and at the



macro-level, ideologically contested words, overwording, and formality are features of vocabulary analysis.

## Vocabulary

The examination of this level is concerned with the lexical elements of the book given by ideological contentious words (i.e., adjectives, adverbs of frequency and expletives), overwording and formality.

### 2.4.1.1 Ideological contested words

Ideologically significant words help reveal the author's identity and position on the subject matter. Research on women's speech began with Robin Lakoff's 1975 book "Language and Woman's Place" and her early observations of female speakers. Researchers evaluate Lakoff's findings in several subsequent investigations. The use of intensifiers like "so" and "very" and adjectives like "lovely," "adorable," and "divine" is more common among women than males, according to Lakoff (2004) and Pan (2011). Because women are often more courteous and indirect while communicating, they avoid using expletives like "shit," "fuck," and "damn" that males use more frequently. So, one's language (behavior) reveals their beliefs.

### 2.4.1.2 Overwording

This characteristic shows that words have near-synonyms, meaning they all refer to the same thing. The book makes a religious allusion through the use of the word "الله" (Allah) or "God," the phrase "القرآن الكريم" (Holy Qur'an), and a few passages from it. Notable people and places referenced include "Imam Ali" and "Moosa al-Kadhim," as well as the sacred cities of Karbala and Najaf. This kind of religious allusion is present in speeches by both men and women, but women are more likely to use it than men.

The reference of the name of "الله" or "يا إلهي" (Allah) or (God) comes in different contexts while speaking, that is, swearing "والله"، willing something to happen "ان شاء الله"، praising "الحمد لله"، regret "استغفر الله". The mention of this reference is repeated (27 times) by women and (5 times) by men. In the following example, the narrator, Huda, was reading Nadia's diaries. She was writing her father's reaction when she was about to be born. The word "الله" is used three times by Nadia (a woman) and one time by her father (a man).



“He was deeply anxious while he held the hand of the fat midwife, who carried her leather tool bag in her other hand. He thought that perhaps **God** was punishing him ... because of his constant prayers to **God** to give him a male child. ... But it wouldn't take him long to ask **God's** forgiveness, say-ing, “Praise be to **God**. No one is praised for an affliction except him.” (p. 26).

The reference of “القران الكريم” (Holy Qur'an) is repeated three times (by a woman character). Going to Amman, Huda misses her grandmother so much. She imagines herself in her grandmother's room and starts describing what there is as in:

قرب راسها منضدة صغيرة من خشب الصاج ذات ادراج ثلاثة, على سطح المنضدة نسخة من القران .. جدتي تقرأ وتكتب, وهذا شيء غريب, جيلها وكثير من الجيل الذي جاء بعدها لا يعرف القراءة.. (39) جدتي انها ختمت القران في التاسعة من العمر تقول

On top of a small wooden table near the bed was a copy of the **Holy Qur'an**. My grandmother was educated and literate, which was uncommon because women of her generation and even the generation that came right after hers were usually illiterate. She said she completed the Qur'an when she was nine (p. 32).

A verse of al Qur'an is also mentioned (by a man) to give condolences and support to others who have lost their beloved ones, as shown below:

(58) قل لن يصيبنا الا ما كتب الله لنا "توقف السائق ملتفتا إليها:

The driver stopped and turned to her: “Say nothing will happen to us except what Allah has decreed for us.” (p. 52)

Other words that have religious reference in the novel are “الامام علي” “Imam Ali”, “ابا الحسنين” “father of the Hassanayn”, “الامام الكاظم” “Imam al-Kadhim” or “موسى الكاظم” “Moosa al-Kadhim, “مدن الائمة” “Karbala and Najaf... the holy places”, “ارض الاولياء” “the Land of Holy Men”, “الزهراء ام” “al-Zahra the mother of the Hassanayn”, “زكريا” “Zakariyya” and “الياس” “Elias”, “سورة الفلق” “the saint”, “الولي الصالح” “Abu al-Jawadayn”, “ابو الجوادين” “Elias”, “sura of the dawn”. Iraqi people and Muslims in general always insert religious words and references in their speech because such reference gives them comfort, support, help and satisfaction.

- لا تخافي.. استعيني بالزهراء, أم الحسنين.. لا تتشجي)... (أطمئني.. سيأتي المولود عند الفجر (34) “Don't be worried. Seek the help of al-Zahra, the mother of the Hassanayn.

Don't clench. [...] Don't worry, the baby is coming at dawn, and dawn is soon, God willing” (p. 27).



The second major overwording reference is the reference to “exile”. Words like "غربة", "منفى", "تشرّد", "مهاجرين", "لاجئين", "نازحين" are all reference to the same thing. Some Iraqi people prefer exile to their country and try to find excuses, legal or not, to flee their country, which brings continuous war, misery and death. The word “غربة” is mentioned (40 times), “هاجر/مهاجرين/هجرة” is mentioned (9 times), “منافي/منفى” is repeated (4 times), “تشرّد” is found (4 times), “لاجئين” is repeated (7 times), “نازحين” is found (once). The novel explores people’s lives inside and outside Iraq (exile). They flee the horrors of their country to Arabic or foreign countries.

I met the Canadian and obtained the international number. I was hoping you would share this latest exile ... News from the homeland arrives with the new immigrants, but it is so scarce. Despite its scarcity, it reveals many absent and concealed truths ... I’m putting myself together to pass into my exile. (p. 6869)

#### 2.4.1.3 Formality

Although the novel is written in the Standard Arabic language, sometimes the Iraqi dialect is also used as in:

(80) - "شدعوة ... كلش غالى .. شوية نزل من السعر"

“Everything is so expensive. You have to bring the price down” (p. 2).

(13) - "شوفى. إنها ناصعة البياض ولم تلوّث بالأحمر" ..

“Look”, she said. “it is white like snow” (p. 7).

(40) - "فهي ما زالت تسمى الوسادة) لوله( والكرسي) سمكلى(وصيدلية البيت) صندوقة)" ..

“She used to have difficulties with modern names, still calling the pillow lulah, the chair sakmali, and the medicine cabinet sandagja” (p. 33).

(133) .. " ((-)) اسم الله يمه ((...)) اسم الله يمه ((عبارة لا يقولها الا العراقيون" ..

God save you!”... 'God save you.' It’s an expression only Iraqis say” (p. 124).

Accordingly, the work employs a variety of formal and informal linguistic styles as needed. Women are the only ones whose voices (turns) produce the Iraqi accent. Also, people of the same social class and around the same age use this casual style of speech. There are conversations throughout the book involving many characters, and the writers have made an effort to make them as real and believable as possible. So, conversations do not come off as stuffy. Also, typical of more casual writing styles, the novel’s voice is first-person narrative. To make her point clearer and more relatable to her audience, the writer uses a mix of official and casual language.



#### 2.4.2.1 Grammar

On this level, we can only look to the novel's forms and modalities to determine how the male and female characters express themselves verbally, in attitude, belief, speculation, and power. We may do that by analysing specific talks. This study will only look at four conversations: one that is cross-gender but same-status; one that is same-status but cross-gender; and one that is same-status but cross-gender. The goal in selecting these discussions is to examine how men and women of various socioeconomic classes behave and think when interacting with one another. Notably, there is no need to repeatedly reiterate the same information to prevent duplication since the other left discussions in the book serve the same functions (in terms of modes and modality).

#### 2.4.2.2 Modes

Statement, interrogative, and imperative tenses are the three main categories of sentence structure. The same is true in Arabic as well. The purpose of selecting four conversations for study is to determine the modes utilised by each gender. Here, after a brief introduction, you will find the analysis for each chat.

**Conversation D1:** The narrator, Huda, is having a chat with her government-employed neighbor, who seems to be a fan of the previous president. A lady from a lower socioeconomic level and a woman from a better one are having this talk.

**Conversation D2:** The narrator, Huda, is having a chat with Mother Khadija, an old acquaintance and coworker of hers. In terms of social status and gender, they are identical. They crossed paths in Amman after leaving their home nation of Jordan, where they had previously worked at the Factory of Hope.

**Conversation D3:** Huda talks to one of the soldiers she encounters in Amman, Moosa. This is between persons of various genders and socioeconomic positions.

**Conversation D4:** This chat is between Huda's friend Nadia and government followers. Though short and indirect, it is the only one involving characters of various genders and statuses, as much of the story is a flashback.

### 3. Conclusion

This research examined feminist novels by women in Iraq and Britain and how they depicted struggles with female identity, with an emphasis on how cultural, social, and political factors influenced the stories. This study used critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine how story structure and language convey the nuances of female identity within different social norms. Iraqi novels emphasise the conflict between individual aspirations and group cultural



expectations, made worse by political and economic unpredictability, in contrast to British novels that portray an environment of individuality and postmodern feminist principles. By comparing the two works, we can see how feminist authors in both settings deal with the challenge of finding one's own identity and agency.

### 3.1 Findings

1. **Intersection of Culture and Gender:** Though the forms of conflict vary, feminist novels by Iraqis and Brits alike show how gender and cultural expectations intertwine. The emotional problems of female protagonists balancing conventional and progressive roles are common in British literature. In contrast, in Iraqi fiction, the friction between individual ambitions and limiting cultural conventions is more prominent.
2. **The Role of Political Context:** War, occupation, and oppression all affect women's capacity to stand up for themselves, and Iraqi feminist literature often sets this struggle amid a tumultuous political backdrop. Though they address political issues, British feminist novels often place the protagonist's fight for identity more in the social and individual spheres than in the backdrop of a national catastrophe.
3. **Agency and Resistance:** Both types of books show women's strength and resistance in culturally distinct ways. British books depict female protagonists seeking self-exploration and professional freedom. In contrast, Iraqi novels convey subtle opposition through family bonds, religious interpretations, and communal cohesion.
4. **Language as a Tool of Resistance:** CDA shows that British and Iraqi feminist literature undermine patriarchal discourse by stressing female viewpoints, suppressed voices, and rewriting male-dominated narratives. This language helps female characters recover agency and question norms.

### 3.2 Recommendations

1. **Further Comparative Studies:** To investigate how comparable or dissimilar identity crises emerge in diverse socio-political contexts, future studies may extend the scope by comparing feminist novels from other areas, for example, other African or Middle Eastern nations.
2. **Exploration of Intersectionality:** Intersectional studies examining how sexuality, class, religion, and race complicate feminist discourse in books written in Iraq and Britain should be considered by scholars.



3. **Inclusion of Contemporary Voices:** The dynamic character of feminist discourse calls for a reevaluation of older works to incorporate newer voices, particularly those of younger Iraqi and British authors. In light of global concerns such as migration, economic inequality, and digital feminism, this addition may provide fresh viewpoints on conflict and identity.
4. **Educational and Cross-Cultural Dialogues:** Incorporating feminist literature from Iraq and the United Kingdom into school curriculum will encourage students to consider feminist theory from a variety of angles and help them see the inherent cultural uniqueness in the universal struggle for self-determination.

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