

**"A Critical Stylistic Study of Inaam
Kachachi's The American
Granddaughter and Kevin Powers'
The Yellow Birds"**

**Asst.Lecturer
Noor Muneer Maki**

**Asst. Prof.
Suzanne Abdulhady Kadhim
University of Kufa- College of Arts**



"A Critical Stylistic Study of Inaam Kachachi's The American Granddaughter and Kevin Powers' The Yellow Birds"

"دراسة أسلوبية نقدية لرواية الحفيدة الأمريكية لأنعام كجح جي ورواية الطيور الصفراء
لكيفن باورز"

Asst.Lecturer
Noor Muneer Maki
noor.almusawi@student.uokufa

المدرس المساعد
نور منير مكي

Asst. Prof.
Suzanne Abdulhady Kadhim
University of Kufa- College of Arts
susan.hussein@uokufa.edu.iq

الاستاذ المساعد الدكتور
سوزان عبدالهادي كاظم
جامعة الكوفة - كلية الاداب

Abstract

This paper discusses the critical stylistic tools for two novels, The American Granddaughter(2008), and The Yellow Birds(2012). This study based on Jeffries' Model(2010) in analyzing texts, she adopted this model using ten tools to criticize texts in a stylistic way. It aims to identifying the critical stylistic tools that help the writers pass their ideology . Figuring out the critical stylistic tools in the novels, and the most frequent one. To examine how stylistic choices create meaning and affect interpretation. The previous studies are specified with one subject, such as, "communication through letters", "racism", and

"extremism" that are analyzed in critical stylistic tools; but the current study is not limited or specified with single matter but deals with the whole in a critical stylistic study. In analyzing using Jeffries's model of analysis texts. According to these tools, that are used in analyzing the novels. The research has three hypothesis, the selected data embody some ideologies. All ten critical stylistics tools are available to the selected novels. Revealing an ideology demands some tools , so the writers use some critical stylistic tools in their writings like naming, describing, presenting and others. From each novel, the researcher selected ten extracts analyzed

qualitatively. The researcher focuses on naming and describing tool, representing time, space, and society ,and representation tool of actions, events, and states, and the last tool that used is equating and contrasting.

جيفريز في تحليل النصوص، وفقاً لهذه الأدوات، التي تُستخدم في تحليل الروايات. يقوم البحث على ثلاث فرضيات، تُجسد البيانات المختارة بعض الأيديولوجيات. تتوفر جميع الأدوات الأسلوبية النقدية العشر في الروايات المختارة. يتطلب الكشف عن الأيديولوجية بعض الأدوات، لذا يستخدم الكُتاب بعض الأدوات الأسلوبية النقدية في كتاباتهم، مثل التسمية والوصف والعرض وغيرها. اختار الباحث من كل رواية عشرة مقتطفات، وحللها تحليلاً نوعياً. ركز الباحث على أداة التسمية والوصف، وأداة تمثيل الزمان والمكان والمجتمع، وأداة تمثيل الأفعال والأحداث والحالات، والأداة الأخيرة المستخدمة هي الموازنة والمقارنة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسلوبية، اللغويات النقدية، الأسلوبية النقدية، ونموذج جيفريز.

1.1 Introduction

This study is about Critical Stylistics Analysis for selected Novels, the Iraqi novel "The American Granddaughter "by Inaam Kachachi, and the American novel "The Yellow Birds "by Kevin Powers these are analyzed according to Jeffries' model tools in analyzing texts. There are different expressions that related to the study; firstly, Style refers to the manner of expression in

Key words: stylistics, critical linguistics, critical stylistics, and Jeffries' model.

المستخلص:

تناقش هذه الورقة البحثية الأدوات الأسلوبية النقدية لروايتين، "الحفيدة الأمريكية" (٢٠٠٨)، و"الطيور الصفراء" (٢٠١٢). اعتمدت هذه الدراسة على نموذج جيفريز (٢٠١٠) في تحليل النصوص، حيث اعتمدت على عشر أدوات لنقد النصوص بأسلوب أسلوبية. تهدف الدراسة إلى تحديد الأدوات الأسلوبية النقدية التي تساعد الكُتاب على إيصال أفكارهم، وتحديد الأدوات الأسلوبية النقدية في الروايات، وأكثرها شيوعاً، ودراسة كيفية مساهمة الخيارات الأسلوبية في خلق المعنى وتأثيرها على التفسير. تناولت الدراسات السابقة موضوعاً واحداً، مثل "التواصل عبر الرسائل" و"العنصرية" و"التطرف"، والتي تم تحليلها باستخدام الأدوات الأسلوبية النقدية؛ أما الدراسة الحالية، فلا تقتصر على موضوع واحد، بل تتناول كل شيء من منظور أسلوبية نقدي. وتستخدم نموذج

writing and speaking, just as there is a manner of doing things. There are different styles in different situations (e.g. comic vs. turgid); also that the same activity can produce stylistics variation (for example, there is no two persons will have the same style in plying or writing or speaking anything in their lives. So Style can be defined as variation in language use, whether literary or non-literary. (Miššiková, G. 2003).

Secondly, Crystal (1992) defines Stylistics as the study of language use and how individuals or social groups make particular choices in different contexts. Thirdly, Stylistics classified to general (or linguistic) stylistics and literary stylistics. There are different types of stylistics which are explaining the techniques that the paper or research or the texts or any work written with. These types are general stylistics, computational stylistics, textualist stylistics, linguo_stylistics, and interpretative stylistics, (Tallin, Harju, et al, 2025).

The fourth point is the goals, Stylistics analysis has two fundamental goals: the first is to assist readers in developing meaningful interpretations of the text, and the second is to broaden readers' knowledge and awareness of language in general. These goals will assist students read and understand literature while improving their language skills (Sharma, 2019).

The fifth one is critical linguistics. The expression "Critical Linguistics" (henceforth CL) was first used in the late 1970s, The main idea of CL is that language is a social process that "encodes ideological patterns or discursive structures which mediate representations of the world in language," i.e., how language is used to represent the world (Malmkjaer, 1991). While critical discourse analysis (CDA) is viewed as a theory

that encompasses various approaches and views for examining the link between discourse and social context, as noted by Weiss and Wodak (2003). Discourse is an instance of social practice, and discourse analysis is the "analysis of how texts work within sociocultural practice." As a result, CDA is a multidisciplinary approach in which power plays a significant role (Fairclough, 1995, p. 7). It is mostly attributed to Lesley Jeffries' work, which expands on CDA work by employing various ways of analysis to reveal linkages among language, power, and ideology (Fairclough, 1989).

On the other hand, the research contains the concept of critical stylistics, which is the most important term in the study. Widdowson's (1998) expresses that critical stylistics seeks to answer the question "what is the text doing" by employing a variety of language analytic approaches to discover the ideologies that underpin literary and nonliterary works. Critical stylistics is a framework that blends stylistics and critical linguistics. , critical stylistics is essential for uncovering the power dynamics in language use, fostering critical thinking, and enhancing both literary appreciation and linguistic competence.

There are several contrasts between CS and CDA, which developed as a response to CDA: first one, CDA has been criticized for dropping a clear, thorough, and comprehensive linguistic toolset of analysis, while CS offers a more systemic, comprehensive set of linguistic tools by merging the techniques of stylistics, CL, and CDA (Jeffries, 2010). Second, CDA is criticized for providing a "partial" or "subjective" assessment of texts, emphasizing certain characteristics while ignoring others (Widdowson, 2004). As a result, Jeffries' CS framework withstands personal biases and informs objectivity by generating textually grounded interpretations. Third one, The use of the word "critical" in CDA is meant to suggest a socialist, most likely Marxist, approach to language analysis. Contrarily, in CS, the term "critical" designates a method for identifying ideology in any text (Jeffries, 2014a).

1.2 Aims of the Study

This thesis aims to the following points:

1. Identifying the critical stylistic tools that help the writers pass their ideology .
2. Figuring out the critical stylistic tools in the novels, and the most frequent one.

3. To examine how stylistic choices create meaning and affect interpretation.

1.3 Research Questions

The present study produces the following questions:

1. What are the ideologies that are embedded in the novels?
2. What are the critical stylistic tools that help the writers pass their ideologies?
3. What is the most recurrent tool used by the writers throughout the novels?

1.4 Previous Studies

Critical Stylistics has been studied for many years. Different universities have studied this topic in different way by the researchers. Now these are some studies from different universities.

1- Al-Shemmary, I. (2020). A Critical Stylistic Analysis of Equivocation in Selected Sermons.

The researcher in this dissertation investigates equivocation in some selected sermons . The study aims at finding out the linguistic structure of the sermons, exploring the ideology behind the texts analyzed, identifying the stylistic tools used by breaches in the selected data, and the function of equivocation . The researcher has come to some

conclusions . The most obvious of which is that American preachers utilize the same fases to achieve the preaching process but with frequencies of use of stylistic tools. So, the study focuses on religious sermons.

2- Abed, S. (2024). A Critical Stylistic Analysis of Racism in Selected English Movie.

This study scrutinizes racism as an influential phenomenon in two African American English movies. It is investigating racism in the selected movies that has not been conducted, particularly from a critical stylistic perspective. Thus, the present study attempts to bridge this gap by identifying motivations and levels of racism and their manifestations in the data under scrutiny. The study develops a model consisting of three layers for the analysis. The first layer incorporates the motivations for racism, and the second layer includes the levels of racism. In the third layer, the data are analyzed linguistically using the core tools of Jeffries' (2022) model of critical stylistics.

- To provide a comprehensive understanding, it may be beneficial to highlight the distinctions between the present study and the previous ones that have been referenced. The previous studies are varied, all of them considered as a literary data, but some of them are poems, or novels, articles and also newspapers and movies. Each one of these literary works is differ in the tools of critical stylistics that the researchers use in analyzing texts to reveal the hidden ideologies.
- The current study using Lesley Jeffries' model (2010) in analyzing texts from the two novels. The researcher focusing on four tools of the ten tools, that are adopted in critical stylistics analysis. These tools are naming and describing, representing time, space, and society, also, equating and contrasting, and representing actions, events, and states.

2.1 Research Methodology

Sreekumar(2023) defines methodology in research as a tool that describes the techniques and procedures used to identify and analyze information regarding a specific research topic. It is a process by which researchers design their study so that they can achieve their objectives using the selected research instruments. Research methodology is a structured and scientific approach used to collect, analyze, and interpret quantitative or qualitative data to answer research questions or test hypotheses.

2.2 The Authors

This study consist of two authors according related to the two novels. The American Granddaughter written by Inaam Kachachi, and The Yellow Birds written by Kevin Powers. Firstly, Inaam Kachachi is an Iraqi journalist, author, and documentarist born in Baghdad in 1952. She studied journalism at Baghdad University and worked in Iraqi press and radio before moving to Paris in 1979 to complete a PhD at the Sorbonne. She currently lives in Paris and serves as a correspondent for the London-based

newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat and Kol Al-Usra magazine in Sharjah, UAE (web source1). Secondly, Kevin Powers is an American novelist, poet, and Iraq War veteran whose literary work draws deeply from his personal experiences in combat. Born in 1980 in Richmond, Virginia, Powers enlisted in the U.S. Army at 17 and served as a machine gunner in Mosul and Tal Afar, Iraq, from February 2004 to March 2005. After his honorable discharge, he pursued higher education, earning a bachelor's degree in English from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2008 and an MFA in poetry from the University of Texas at Austin, where he was a Michener Fellow. (web source4).

2.3 Research Design

According to Creswell (2014), a research design is a strategy or plan that researchers employ to respond to the research questions that are supported by their philosophies, methodologies, and procedures. Advanced research designs include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies.

On the one hand, qualitative research is "the study of things in their natural

settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.2). Quantitative research, on the other hand, is seen as the application of statistical methods that are “based on numerical measurements of specific aspects of phenomena...[and] are easily replicable by other researchers” (King et al., 1994, pp. 3-4). Meanwhile, mixed-method research is defined as combining variance and process approaches by not depending on particular characteristics of the data or methods used but rather on a distinction between “two ways of thinking” on the phenomenon under study. “This is the distinction between thinking of the world in terms of variables and correlations and in terms of events and processes”. This distinction also significantly impacts “the research questions, data collected, and analysis methods used” (Maxwell, 2010, p. 477).

2.3 The Model of the Research

Lesley Jeffries founded the field of Critical Stylistics in 2010, inspiration from three major fields: critical

discourse analysis, functional linguistics, and critical linguistics. Jeffries aims to give the reader a precise set of analytical instruments to employ while doing a critical analysis of texts in order to discover or expose the texts' underlying ideologies (Jeffries, 2010).

The crucial stylistic tools of Jeffries are naming and describing, representing actions, states, and events, equating and contrasting, exemplifying and listing, prioritizing, assuming and implying, negating, hypothesizing, space, time, and society representation, and speech representation.

In this study, the researcher will use four tools of Jeffries' tools in analyzing texts. These are naming and describing, representing actions, states, and events, equating and contrasting, and space, time, and society representation.

2.4 Data of Analysis

In this section, the researcher will analyze two extracts, one from each novel. The first quotation the researcher uses the Naming and Describing tool, while the second quotation, the researcher uses the

Time, Space, and Society
Representation.

Extract 1

“I was born in America, I am American. But they say Iraq is in my blood.”

- The context of extract

This extract said by Zeina Behnam, the narrator, is an Iraqi-American woman, she worked as a translator for the USA Army in Iraq. When she returns to Iraq with the Army, she landing in Tikrit and then traveling to Mosul and Baghdad, she feels so torn and her feelings are different. She feels a sense of belonging to America, but she also reconnecting with her grandmother Rahma, she hears her maternal family say, “Iraq is in my blood.” This line just like a struggle between her identities.

- The Analysis of extract

In analyzing this extract, the researcher uses Jeffries' tool of Naming and Describing, to explain how words are labelled and characterised, often via noun phrases. This method is particularly useful for analysing identity and belonging, as it states how language

choices reflect and shape perceptions of self and other.

First step, is selecting the nouns for stating names in the extracts, second step, is identifying the adjectives and adjectival modifiers ,and the last step, is explaining presuppositions and ideological effects of the extract.

1. Noun Choices and Nominalisation

"America" and **"American"** : Zeina identifies with the nation-state of the United States via these expressions, which are politically and culturally used. The use of "American" as a noun and adjective reflects a formal, legal identity.

"Iraq": This term presents a geographical and cultural reference. By naming Iraq, the speaker informs a connection to a place with a distinct identity, which contrasts with the American identity.

"blood": This metaphor suggests an innate biological connection to Iraq, suggesting that the speaker's legacy is rooted there. The use of “blood” evokes concepts of origins and lineage, which are often associated with race and cultural tradition.

2. Adjectival Modifiers and Ideological Implications

"American": As an adjective, it relates to national identity. However, in the context of the sentence, it also serves to contrast with the subsequent reference to Iraq, highlighting the duality of the speaker's identity.

"in my blood": This phrase represents adjectivally to describe the depth of the speaker's connection to Iraq. It suggests that their Iraqi legacy is not just a matter of cultural affiliation but is deep-rooted and essential to their being.

3. Presuppositions and Ideological Effects

The phrase "they say" presents an element of external perception, indicating that others recognize the speaker's Iraqi tradition. This suggests that the speaker's identity is not solely self-defined but is also shaped by how others perceive them.

The convergence between "American" and "Iraqi" creates stress between national identities, reflecting the complexities of relationship in a globalized world.

Extract 2

"I was only a week removed from the war, and unbeknownst to me at the time, my memories would seem closer the farther I got from the circumstances that gave birth to them" (p. 51).

- The context of extract

This extract said by Bartle who is a soldier recently returned to civilian life—but his identity remains entangled with combat. The passage captures a paradox: the farther he moves physically from war, the nearer his memories move emotionally and mentally. It's a special moment discovering how trauma transcends place and time and it is deeply embedded in the human psyche.

This event occurs suddenly a week after John Bartle's return from his arrangement in Iraq. He's back in the U.S.— He crossed Germany on his way home - but is still haunted by his war experiences.

- The Analysis of Extract

According to Lesley Jeffries' model in analyzing texts, the researcher

uses the tool of representing time, space, and society.

1. Reference to Time

“a week removed from the war” gives the speaker a **deictic time-frame**: he's no longer in combat, but his thoughts in his minds and emotions geographically remains anchored to it.

The phrase “**the farther I got from the circumstances**” uses as a reference to space as a metaphor to convey distance in time. It suggests that physical withdrawal intensifies memory's presence, a technique Jeffries identifies as embedding the meaning of time through spatial deixis.

2. Spatial Metaphor for Psychological Distance

Jeffries recognizes that the words of space often model temporal or emotional distance. The narrator’s “**getting farther**” increases not just chronology but also his emotional trajectory — a classic use of deictic shifting .

The movement of space into emotional weight gives a sense of

irony: though physically removed, the trauma remains “closer.”

3. Reference to Society & Identity in Transition

The speaker’s shift from “at war” to “post-war civilian” is more than chronological: it refers to a **change in social identity** — a soldier to someone carrying memories that define him.

Jeffries emphasizes how deictic terms encode social roles within a text. The extract shows how the speaker’s “**I**”, week-removed yet memory-bound, remains socially anchored to the time of war that he has.

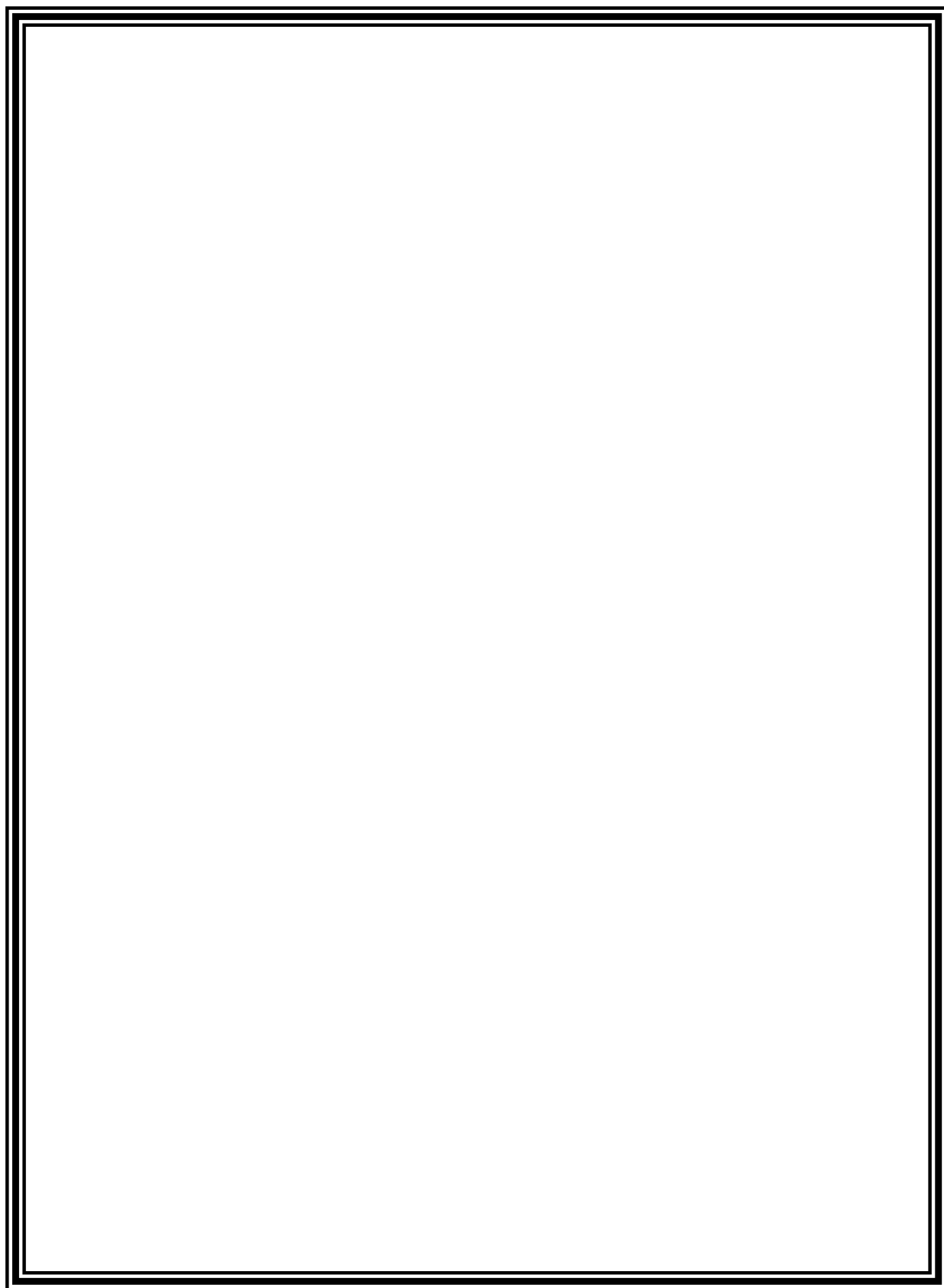
2.5 Conclusion

Critical Stylistic study deals with how texts are analyzed in a critical stylistic way by using a specific model to criticize. The model that is adopted by Lesley Jeffries' model (2010). The tools that used in this study are naming and describing, which is the dominant one, representing time, space, and society, also actions, events, and states representation, and equating and contrasting.

References

- (<https://www.theguardian.com/gnm-press-office/kevin-powers-wins-guardian-first-book-award>)" November 30, 2012. Retrieved December 22,2012
- Abed, S. (2024). A Critical Stylistic Analysis of Racism in Selected English Movie.
- Al-Shemmery, I. (2020). A Critical Stylistic Analysis of Equivocation in Selected Sermons.
- Creswell, J. (2014). Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches. Sage.
- Crystal, D. (1992) A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (1994). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In N.K Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp.1-18). USA: Sage publications
- Fairclough, N. (1989). Language and Power. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). Critical discourse analysis: The Critical Study of language. Longman.
- <https://arabicfiction.org/en/inaam-kachachi>
- Jeffries, L. (2010). Critical Stylistics: The Power of English. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jeffries, L. (2014a). Critical Stylistics. In M. Burkner (ed.). the Routledge handbook of stylistics. Routledge.
- King, G., Keohane, R., & Verba, S. (1994). Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research. USA: Princeton University Press.
- Malmkjaer, K. (1991). In K. Malmkjaer (Ed.). the Routledge Linguistics encyclopedia. 1st ed, pp.77-81. Routledge.
- Maxwell, J. (2010). Using numbers in qualitative research. Qualitative Inquiry. 16(6),475-482. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410364740>.
- Miššiková, G. (2003). Linguistic Stylistics.
- Sharma, P. (2010). Stylistic Study in Literature and Language. Arademic Journal of Literature and Language.
- Sreekumar, D. (2023). An Article on "Research Methodology? Definition, Types, and Examples."
- Tallinn, Hatju maakond, Estonia,10145. (2025). An Essay about Essay Writing. Study Moose. Com
- Wales, G. & Wodak, R. (Eds). (2003). CDA Theory and Interdisciplinarity. Basingstoke. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Widdowson, H. (2004). Text, context, pretext: Critical issues in discourse analysis. Blackwell.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1998). The theory and practice of critical discourse analysis. Applied Linguistics, 19(1), 136-151

"A Critical Stylistic Study of Inaam Kachachi's The American Granddaughter and Kevin Powers'.....



الدراسات باللغة الإنكليزية