

A Critical Stylistic Study of Selected Iraqi Novels

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ABSTRACT

This study applies Critical Stylistics (CS), a branch of stylistics that combines linguistic analysis with critical theory to examine how language constructs meaning and ideology in texts. It analyzes two war novels, *The American Granddaughter* (2008) and *The Yellow Birds* (2012), within the framework of Jeffries' (2010) model. Four of Jeffries' tools are employed to uncover how the novelists encode and transmit ideological meanings. The aims are to identify the critical stylistic tools used in the novels, to determine which tools occur most frequently, and to examine how stylistic choices shape interpretation. Unlike previous studies that focus on single themes such as communication through letters, racism, or extremism, this research provides a broader analysis of the novels as whole texts. The study is guided by three hypotheses: the novels embody ideological positions, four critical stylistic tools are consistently identifiable, naming and describing, presenting action, event, and state, contrasting and equating, presentation of time, place, and society are the most recurrent, while presenting others' speech and thought appear less often. Ten extracts from each novel were analyzed qualitatively, and the findings are presented quantitatively. The results demonstrate that critical stylistic patterns play a central role in constructing ideology and guiding readers' interpretations. In *The American Granddaughter*, Zeina is considered both belonging and foreign; she reproduces ideological conflict via labels such as "traitor" or "granddaughter". Action is unequally distributed; Zeina is often passive, Iraqis are victimized, and Americans are active. *The Yellow Birds* constructs an ideological narrative centred on the traumatised American soldier, while largely quieting Iraqi subjectivity and depoliticising the causes of war. Naming practices foreground the individuality of American soldiers but remove the identities of Iraqis.

1. Introduction

This introduction includes different sections, which are the problem of the study that contains the questions that are raised in order to explain the research. Then the aims and hypotheses associated with the research question, and the study deals with procedures and limits, which are presented next.

1.1 The Problem of the Study

It is known that not all people live together in conformity. Groups of people in different societies may find themselves in different situations, where they are challenged by various structures, organizations, practices, attitudes, or ideologies present in those societies; for that, they are presented with different languages that are suitable for each other.

Analyzing novels and uncovering the ideologies behind their lines is not an easy task. It needs tools of analysis to help the researcher to extract the intended meaning. These tools are presented by critical stylistics. The study belongs to the field of critical stylistic approach. According to Jeffries (2014), CS is a group of textual conceptual functions that begin with Halliday's (1985) meta-functions of language and seek to establish some level of meaning between linguistic structure and function. More significantly, a set of tools to reveal hidden ideologies in texts been developed by CS.

The previous studies are adopted with one topic, 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.

So the current study seeks to fill the gap by addressing the following questions:

1. Recognize the ideologies that are embedded in the selected novels?
2. Jeffries' model is used to help the writers to pass their ideologies by using CS tools, stating them?

1.2 Aims of the Study

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

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

According to the aims that mentioned above, the research hypotheses different points:

1. The selected data, which are the novels that embody some ideologies.
2. Four critical stylistic tools are found in the selected novels .
3. Naming, and describing, presenting and equating, and others are the most recurrent tools that used in the novels, while the tool of Presenting other's speech and thought is less than the other tools that used.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Firstly, this study is about Critical Stylistic 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.

Secondly, this chapter is dealing with the concepts that are related to the subject. Style, stylistics, types of stylistics, Halliday's systemic functional linguistics, critical linguistics, critical discourse analysis, critical stylistics, the importance of CS, the differences between CDA and CS, which are considered as an introduction.

2.2 Critical Stylistic's Framework

In this section the researcher is tackling with the basic terms that are leading to Critical Stylistics.

2.2.1 Definitions of Style and stylistics.

Style and Stylistics are very closely connected terms, with each other. To get the meaning of stylistics ,firstly, need to look at the meaning of style. The understanding of the term style influences the characteristics given to stylistics as one of several linguistic disciplines. K .Wales in her work "A dictionary of stylistics" (1990), she represented a common characteristics of style. Although the term style is used very frequently in literary criticism and especially stylistics.

There are several extensive areas that it is used in: Style refers to the manner of expression in 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). In literature, style refers to the unique manner in which an author writes or tells a story or any event. It contains various elements, such as word choice (diction), sentence structure, tone and the use of figurative language, (Sebranek et al, 2006, p.11). Style in literature is defined as the way that the writer chooses to write. Style includes all the endless choices that a writer makes, using tools like word choices and sentence structure. All of these choices together create a voice for a piece of writing.' Voices' are as unique as the writers who create them and the stories they share, (Diane W., Amy A. 2023. Study.com).

After explaining the meaning of the word Style, turn to express what Stylistics means. Crystal (1992) defines Stylistics as the study of language use and how individuals or social groups make particular choices in different contexts. The discipline aims to understand the relationship between stylistics choices and their impact on meaning, (Dhaliwal, Manreet,2007, 392-397). In another opinion to Crystal (2008:460), he defines stylistics as a branch of Linguistics which studies the features of situationally distinctive uses of Language, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choice made by individual and social groups in their use of language (Kassim, 2026).

The first use of the term Stylistics was found in the Oxford English Dictionary only in 1882, which has the meaning of the science of literary style, the study of stylistics features. The origin of the word is related to the ancient times (Greek). Ancient rhetoric and poetics, which are considered to be the predecessors of Stylistics, treated style as a specific mode of expression, the proper adornment of thought, (Zhukovska, V. 2010).

Other scholars just like Chapman and Clark (2014:1) view Stylistics as an interdisciplinary field which applies methodological of Linguistics to the investigation of the way texts are produced, understood, and evaluated and in tackling theoretical questions connected with this. While Simpson (2014:4) states that stylistics can be thought about as conforming to the following three basic principles, which mean, stylistics analysis should be rigorous, retrievable and replicable.

Stylistics encompasses various forms of communication, including literary works, advertising, and political discourse, focusing on the choices made in Language use that contribute to style, (Marcello, G., et al, Cambridge. Com). In other words, Stylistics is a branch of Applied Linguistics focused on the study and interpretation of texts, particularly in terms of linguistic and tone style. It examines how authors or writers use language to create effects, linking literary criticism with Linguistics, (web1). So for that Stylistics means a branch of Linguistics which investigates the entire system of expressive resources available in a particular language (Kassim, 2025).

After the explanation of the terms "Style" and "Stylistics", and what they are meant, turn to the types of stylistics to identify the sorts that stylistics express in the analysis of the texts.

2.2.2 Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics

One of the most substantial theories is Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), that has attracted the most attention and has been frequently employed in the Literature on Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, (Wael, 2016).

Halliday (1970) maintains that "linguistics is not and will never be the whole of literary analysis and only the literary analyst –not the linguist – can determine the place of linguistics in literary study". Stylistics in his opinion is expected to fill the gap of linguistic approach and make the whole of literary study. Because of this reason, Halliday observes stylistics is generally thought of as the "only science of Literature".

2.3 Critical Stylistics

This section is divided into three parts: the first part explains historical background and definitions of critical stylistics; the second part shows the differences between CS and CDA; the third part is the importance and the relevance of CS in analyzing texts.

2.3.1 Historical Background and Definitions

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).

Critical Stylistics is the study of how linguistic choices in texts shape meaning and influence readers' perception of social, political, or ideological issues. It was developed by Lesley Jeffries to bridge the gap between stylistics and critical discourse analysis.

As demonstrated by Simpson (1993), it would appear that the text maker adopts specific techniques of certain readings and concealing some others while conducting linguistic analysis to grasp ideological perspectives, whether in literary writings or otherwise. In order to understand how these stylistic decisions affect the meaning of the relevant text, it is necessary to go underneath the surface of language.

However, 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. It also rests its framework on Halliday's idea of grammar as social semiotics and critical linguistics (Ibukun & Nimotalai, 2024).

According to Olaluwoye (2015), CS is a stylistic tool used in linguistic research that examines how social meanings are expressed through language. This method is credited to Jeffries (2007), who created it in an effort to learn more about:

A-Discourses which are related to dominance on female body in society.

B-Incorporation of these feminist ideologies into these dominating discourses

It deserves to be highlighted that CS is involved in combining both the primary text functions, which represent the real world through text words and text structures.

As stated by Jeffries (2010), there cannot be a comparable relationship between form and function. This is a critical question for some positive aspects of language, such as poetry writing and metaphor use in everyday life, as well as some negative aspects, such as manipulation and lying.

In this regard, the most important contribution of CS is the addition of the most extensive range of analytical toolkits. As a result, it appears to be a separate topic from CDA and might be subsumed under critical linguistics studies, because both critical stylistics and CDA work on discovering power relations and ideologies contained in discourses. In this context, it is stated that CS is unrelated to any political position. Actually, all texts are ideologically based, whether deliberately or unconsciously. However, CS is interested in uncovering embedded ideologies in texts and discourses using that set of analytical toolkits (Jeffries, 2010). In the view of Norgaard (2010), the concept is helpful in understanding the manner in which the social meanings are made clear through language (Osarhiaekhimen et al., 2025).

The goals of Critical stylistics are similar to Simpson's (1993). Critical stylistics is a framework that blends stylistics and critical linguistics (henceforth as CL). Its primary concern is the ideologies concealed in any text. Thus, the role of critical stylistics is to make readers aware of underlying ideologies. However, both CDA and CL evoked this stylistic trait. Even though CDA is frequently thought of as a general term for the two, CDA and CL have a close relationship (Norgaard, 2010).

2.4 The overview of key concepts

2.4.1 Ideology

Critical stylistics contends that all texts are ideologically influenced, be it consciously or unconsciously; in other words, it is invested in revealing and uncovering the covered ideologies in discourse and texts (Olatuwoye 2015: 88). It presents a set of analytical tools which enables the analyst to shine the light on hidden ideologies in texts in an objective manner.

The major accomplishment of critical stylistics is providing a more encompassing and methodical framework of an analytical tool (when compared to that of CDA)(ibid.). It is of fundamental importance to make it clear that all discourse analysts and linguists (stylisticians) view all discourse as ideologically-packed (Jeffries 2010:8). Therefore, it would not be exaggerated to state that this latter point is considered an inevitable fact of all discourse. This of course does not mean that, like it is taken in political circles and the mass media, that 'ideology' as a term is necessarily associated with politically motivated goals and self-centered intentions (ibid.).

At the same time, it is crucial to bear in mind that not all ideology is equal; evidently, some ideologies are of damaging potential, others could be moral or righteous, and others could be a matter of cultural confines (ibid.). The point to stress is that no discourse can be free of ideas, and thus of ideology. Therefore, one can maintain that ideologies are carried through language and are either explicitly or implicitly expressed.

Subramaniam (2008:40) states that the word 'ideology' is "indeterminate and tricky". He goes on to explain that this is related to what might be understood of it; either as very inclusive or as covering only certain elements (ibid.). He contends that the theoretical constructs which pertain to ideology and ultimately give it its outlook is what he calls "a shared or collective consciousness...a belief system" which attaches members of a particular community together (ibid.). Ideology comes in many forms, some of which are ideology as collective consciousness, ideology related to religion, and ideology as manifested by power and domination which involves the study of ideology as an instrument of domination in society (ibid.:40-41).

3. Research Design & Methodology

The researcher is dealing with different sections. These sections are consist of description and data collection and research design. The first section includes the meaning of methodology, the writers of the novels, and summary of novels. While the second section dealing with the design of the research, whether the novels are qualitative, quantitative or mixed between the two. Finally the model of analysis that adopted in critical stylistics.

3.1 Description & Data Collection

3.1.1 The Meaning of Methodology

Sreekumar's article (2023) about research methodology definition and examples, Sreekumar 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. It includes all the important aspects of research, including research design, data collection methods, data analysis methods, and the overall framework within which the research is conducted.

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. A research methodology is like a plan for carrying out research and helps keep researchers on track by limiting the scope of the research. Before writing a research methodology, aspects like research limitations and ethical concerns must be considered.

The research methodology section in a scientific paper describes the different methodological choices made, such as the data collection and analysis methods, and why these choices were selected. The reasons should explain why the methods chosen are the most appropriate to answer the research question, (ibid).

The following part is about the authors that wrote the novels. The two writers are the Iraqi writer Inaam Kachachi who wrote *The American Granddaughter*, and translated into English by Nariman Youssef. While the other writer is Kevin Powers who wrote the novel *"The Yellow Birds"*.

3.2 The Novels

The researcher is tackling with the story of the novels beginning with *"The American Granddaughter"*, then with *"The Yellow Birds"*.

Simon & Schuster (2025) wrote a summary about Inaam Kachachi's novel *"The American Granddaughter"* saying that in her award-winning novel, Inaam Kachachi portrays the dual tragedy of her native land: America's failure and the humiliation of Iraq.

3.2.1 The Yellow Birds

The cite of Litcharts.com in 2025 wrote a summary about *"The Yellow Birds"*. Describing the events that happened in this novel, which is set in the contemporary, twenty-first-century political world, Kevin Power's novel *The Yellow Birds* relates a soldier's experience before, during, and after the war in Iraq, revealing the physical and psychological impact of such an intense experience.

3.3 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. Textual meaning is the primary focus of critical stylistics, according to Halliday's Ideational Metafunctions. A language is a collection of related linguistic resources that enable speakers to communicate a specific meaning to one another, according to Halliday (1994). Jeffries contends that the stylistic choices concealed within a document dictate its meaning.

To uncover the text's underlying meaning, Jeffries and McIntyre (2010) offer a framework that combines aesthetic text analysis with CDA ideology awareness. In addition to a few new tools that Jeffries started, the tools that Lesley Jeffries presents are a compilation of tools from Fairclough (1989), Fowler (1991), and Simpson (1993). For that, 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 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 will all be covered in detail in the sections that follow.

3.3.1 Naming and Describing

The objects found in the world are describable in terms of language. English provides a variety of ways to refer to or name things. For instance, one may say Mr. Muhammad Sheyaa the Republic of Iraq President in 2025. Both of these referents have ideological goals. A number of linguists, including de Saussure (1974), Saeed (2016), Kroeger (2018), etc., have discussed the concept of reference. Reference is basically how people use language to describe things around them by using different expressions and sometimes there are two expressions, or more that refer to the same entity (Saeed, 2016), of the clause's main idea, and noun phrases occasionally contain assumed or presupposed ideas.

3.3.2 Representing Actions/Events/States

Representing actions, events, or states puts the emphasis on the verbal component of the clause, where the verb choice affects how readers and listeners interpret the information given (Jeffries, 2010a).

This textual-conceptual function is founded on the transitivity model presented by Simpson's (1993) interpretation of Halliday's transitivity system (Khuzaei, 2019). This tool is based on Simpson's transitivity model since it is understandable and generally practical. The transitivity of a sentence, according to Simpson, "shows how speakers encode in language their mental picture of reality and how they account for their experience of the world around them" (Jeffries, 2010, p:50).

3.3.3 Equating and Contrasting

According to Jeffries (2010a), equating and contrasting examines how texts present various entities as either equivalent to or opposed to one another. Equating is accomplished by relational mechanisms and the juxtaposition of noun phrases (Jeffries, 2014).

3.3.4 Exemplifying and Enumerating

The two ways of presenting lists in English are exemplifying and enumerating. Exemplification is clear when objects are used to exemplify a category without any pretense of comprehensiveness. Enumerating includes making exhaustive, itemized lists that are presented as complete (Jeffries, 2014).

3.3.5 Prioritising

Prioritising takes into account how the structure of a clause works to highlight certain information while putting other information in the background (Jeffries, 2014).

(i) Transformation

According to Tabbert (2016), the transformation process can be seen in the transformation of active sentences into passive in order to avoid taking responsibility or in the presentation of adjectival descriptions in noun phrases as pre-modifiers rather than as subject or object complements, which would subject them to debate. Jeffries (2010) indicates that Chomsky's (1957, 1964) work served as the foundation for transformation.

(ii) Implying and Assuming

Typically, speakers leave part of their intended meaning in the language they use to communicate. Because of this, assuming and implying are parts of the broader discipline of pragmatics, which focuses on questions of what is meant by language implicitly rather than explicitly (Jeffries, 2010).

1. Negating

Negating examines the portrayal of "non-existent versions of the world" through literature (Jeffries, 2010a, p. 106). It is a technique for creating imaginary worlds (particularly through narrative) to support.

2. Hypothesising

The process of constructing textual meaning through hypothesizing is crucial because it gives the reader or listener access to the author's point of view on the subject at hand. For instance, Fairclough (1989) notes that newspaper articles frequently convey data as categorical pronouncements devoid of modalities, presenting what may be hypotheses as truth (Jeffries, 2007).

3. Presenting Other's Speech and Thought

The analysis of how others are presented in voice, cognition, and writing examines how text creators use quotations from others. When interpreting the words and ideas of others, loyalty is a necessary consideration. For instance, intonation cannot be captured in a written speech presentation, and we can never directly access another person's ideas. Text producers can also be deceptive, when determining how directly to display speech and thinking quotations (Jeffries, 2010a).

(Jeffries Critical Stylistic Framework)

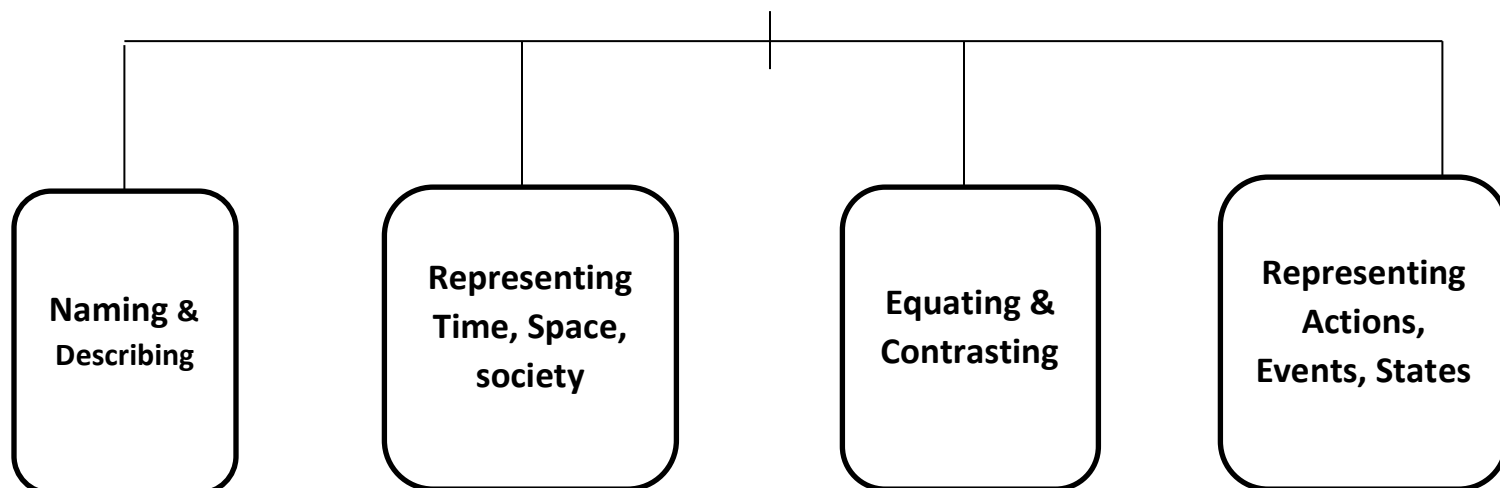


Figure 6. The Model of the Study.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion of the Analysis

The present chapter introduces the practical part of the study. This chapter shows how the data is collected, in addition to its main characteristics. And it mainly explains the procedure of analysis and analyzed the intended data based on the model. Moreover, this chapter presents the findings of the analysis and their discussion.

4.1 Data Selection and Collection

According to this chapter, this section explains how the data are selected and collected in the procedures that are presented, and also the criteria that will be mentioned.

4.2 Analytical Selected Extracts

The following extracts are analyzed according to Jeffries's model in critical stylistic method. The tools that selected are naming and describing, representing time, space, and society, equating and contrasting, and representing actions, events, and states. These extracts are twenty in number, the first ten are related to "The American Granddaughter", while the second ten are related to "The Yellow Birds".

Extract 1

"I was born in America, and I am American.
I speak with a Detroit accent, dream in English, and feel at home in its endless highways
But here—under the Baghdad sun—my voice changes.
My heart remembers dusty streets, the flowing Tigris, a grandmother's prayers.
They say Iraq is in my blood—and in that moment, I believe them."

- **The context of extract**

This extract said by Zeina, the protagonist—born in Detroit to Iraqi exiles, now in her early thirties—returns to Iraq after 15 years as an interpreter with the U.S. Army during the post-2003 occupation. Zeina Behnam, 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.

"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.

"Detroit accent," "English," "endless highways" — these noun phrases newscaster her American experience in specific landscapes, languages, and sounds.

"Baghdad sun," "dusty streets," "flowing Tigris," "grandmother's prayers" — when she changes to Iraqi descriptors, the nouns become physical and emotional, contrasting with the former neutral American ones.

"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.

"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.

"endless highways" — this adjective phrase emphasizes freedom and vastness in her American life. While the adjective phrase "Baghdad sun" represents — the adjective "Baghdad" re-grounds the scene in Iraq; "sun" evokes heat, exposure, authenticity.

"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.

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.

By applying Jeffries's model, the researcher sees how naming choices and descriptive detail work together to show Zeina's internal conflict—and ultimate understanding—between two identities. Through ideologically loaded nouns and modifiers, the passage illustrates how language not only conveys identity, but constructs and affirms it.

Extract 2

"The old man, clutching his misbaha, sat beneath the shade of a crumbling archway. His fingers moved with the quiet ritual of centuries, slipping each bead along the string as though marking prayers in time. A faint scent of rose water hovered around him—subtle, fragrant, carrying echoes of dusty mornings and ancient devotion. His eyes, soft but luminous, rested on the open Quran in his lap, each verse reflecting the weight of history and the endurance of faith. In that silent moment, the past and present converged at his fingertips."

• The context of extract

This quotation describes Zeina's grandfather, a central figure in her memories and one of the newscasters to her Iraqi legacy. The misbaha (prayer beads) and the scent of rose water are cultural and spiritual symbols, suggesting a serene, deep image of traditional Iraqi life. The grandfather is portrayed as a man of quiet faith and pride, someone who represents continuity, memory, and values in the core of a country torn by war and change.

• The Analysis of extract

This extract shows Lesley Jeffries' model of Naming and Describing in analysis. This tool offers the nouns and the noun phrases, adjectives and presuppositions to explain the meanings and the ideologies in the paragraph.

"The old man": The definite article "the" tied with "old man" presupposes a specific, known individual, suggesting that the speaker and the audience share a common understanding of who he is. The term "old man" not only denotes age but also indicates wisdom, experience, and perhaps a connection to tradition.

"misbaha": This Arabic term for prayer beads is culturally specific, indicating the old man's religious practices and his loyalty to Islamic traditions. The use of "misbaha" as a replacement for the English term "prayer beads" adds reality and grounds the character in his cultural context.

"faint scent of rose water": This descriptive noun phrase suggests sensory details that connect the old man to his cultural legacy. Rose water is commonly used in Middle Eastern rituals and daily life, proposing the old man's rootedness in his background and traditions.

"Quran": The mention of the Quran situates the old man's actions within the Islamic faith, emphasizing his religious dedication and the purity of his activities.

"faint": This adjective modifies "scent," signifying that the perfume is subtle and perhaps nostalgic. The choice of "faint" suggests a delicate, almost ethereal connection to the past, emphasizing the old man's age and the passage of time.

"old": As an adjective, "old" characterizes the man, potentially invoking notions of fragility or venerability. It sets him apart from younger, possibly more modern characters, underlining generational differences.

The phrase "with his misbaha and faint scent of rose water" presupposes that the old man's religious practices are visible and integral to his identity. It suggests that his faith is not only a private matter but also a public expression of his cultural and religious affiliations.

The act of sitting and reading the Quran presupposes a setting of contemplation and devotion. It implies that the old man engages in religious practices repeatedly, strengthening his role as a keeper of tradition and faith.

Through Jeffries's naming and describing, Kachachi transforms an apparently small, quiet scene into a powerful ideological statement. Naming is selective—objects of faith over everyday objects—while describing increases physical and emotional resonance. Together, they state that Iraq's spiritual heartbeat suffers, despite geopolitical confusion and displacement.

Extract 3

"My grandfather used to call me 'filfilah'—little pepper—because I was quick-tempered and sharp-tongued. Even as a child, I had a fiery spirit: when my playmates teased me, I snapped back before I even thought. He would smile, tousle my curls, and say, 'Don't let your pepper burn others, habibti.'"

- **The Context of Extract**

This quotation is spoken by the narrator, Zeina, and gives information about her character and her relationship with her grandfather. She reflects on her Iraqi tradition, her time growing up in America, and the family system that shaped her personality.

- **The Analysis of Extract**

Lesley Jeffries' model of "Naming and Describing" function from Critical Stylistics. This function examines how items and events are labelled and modified, particularly through the noun phrase, and adjectives.

The term "Filfilah" (Arabic for "Little Pepper") is a diminutive form of "filfil" (pepper), a noun that, used as a nickname, conveys connotations of strength and sharpness. This choice of noun captures the grandfather's perception of the narrator's personality—fiery and assertive. By selecting this specific noun, the grandfather not only names the narrator but also attributes certain characteristics to her, framing her identity through his perspective.

The adjectives "quick-tempered" and "sharp-tongued" work to qualify the noun "Filfilah," giving explicit descriptors that support with the connotations of the nickname. These modifiers suggest that the narrator's assertiveness was prominent enough to be remarked upon by her grandfather. The use of these adjectives in conjunction with the nickname reinforces the characterization of the narrator as someone with a strong, truthful personality.

Using Jeffries's Naming & Describing, this extract establishes how a simple nickname becomes a textual device that conveys character, culture, values, and ideology—through deliberate noun choice, modification, and embedded assumptions. A demonstrative, culturally rich name carries with it a worldview that uplifts candid expression and familial links.

Extract 4

"I was the bridge—Arabic on one side, English on the other. When I spoke to my grandmother, the words came to me in the soft rhythm of her accent, each syllable carrying memory, longing, belonging. But with the soldiers and the officers, I switched mid-sentence to clipped American English, distancing myself from my own people. In every encounter, I ushered language between two worlds—never entirely at home in either voice."

- **The Context of Extract**

This speech appears during a key moment of self-reflection when the narrator, Zeina, is thinking in her duple identity. It surfaces shortly after she returns to Iraq as a U.S. Army translator—poised literally and figuratively between two worlds.

- **The Analysis of Extract**

Lesley Jeffries' model of Equating and Contrasting tool emphasizes on how lexical and grammatical choices establish similarities or differences between items.

It positions Zeina not merely as bilingual, but as a literal connector. This frames her dual characteristics—linguistic, cultural, emotional—as integrally linked to her role.

The lines about soft Arabic with her grandmother versus clipped American English with soldiers further embody this opposition. This isn't just about language—it's about emotional and cultural distance.

The structure of this sentence forms an embedded double opposition: "Arabic on one side" vs. "English on the other" → sets up a clear separation, with the narrator physically and metaphorically between two forces.

This is a spatial metaphor (via "on one side... on the other"), but it actually records against cultural and linguistic identity. The structure reflects the psychological pressure of Zeina's identity: neither fully Arabic nor fully American, she exists in the in-between.

The metaphor "I was the bridge" equates the speaker to an object that connects two separate lands.

A bridge is inherently neutral—it doesn't relate to either side, yet it is essential road between them.

This positions Zeina not just as a passive viewer, but as an active participant in cross-cultural exchange—while also suggesting isolation, as bridges are not part of the sides they connect.

Jeffries' tool tells that "Arabic" and "English" are not just languages here—but they represent two worlds:

Arabic: her legacy, family, Iraq, emotional backgrounds.

English: her American childhood, military relationship, rational distance.

By employing them on opposing sides, the story underlines a deep internal battle: Zeina is not merely bilingual; she is ideologically role between two systems—East and West, occupation and native land, family and duty.

5. Discussion and Results

This analysis exposes that services a complex relationship of stylistic tools to position *The American Granddaughter* as a politically aware narrative rooted in diasporic division. The frequent use of naming, contrasting voices, and spatial temporal deixis constructs a covered identity for Zeina, and challenges the reader to see Iraq not as a passive victim of war, but as a place swarming with memory, loss, and fight.

The data comprises 25 thematically significant extracts tied from across the novel. The results are appeared throughout using Jeffries' tools:

5.1 Naming and Describing

From the total extracts analyzed 25, 14 (56%) importantly featured the stylistic tool of naming and describing, where lexical choices were used to guide character identity, political attitude, or emotional nearness. For instance, the character Zeina regularly refers to her grandmother as "Um Zeina" (Mother of Zeina), a choice that reflects both Arab naming traditions and a symbolic return to tradition. Iraqi places and people are described in emotive terms—"war-torn Baghdad", "martyr's

neighborhood", "honor-bound tribes"—illustrating a loaded, ideologically rich lexicon that places Iraq as a space of both shock and belonging.

Moreover, foreign (mainly American) army figures are often left unnamed or described impersonally (e.g., "the soldier", "the man with the gun"), signifying an planned distancing strategy. This contrast in naming frequency (named Iraqi figures: 72%, named American figures: 28%) points to the text's critique of U.S. participation while highlighting Iraqi subjectivity.

5.3 Representing Actions, Events, and States

All 25 extracts were examined for patterns of agency and voice. Active voice structures were central in passages involving Zeina's personal choices (e.g., choosing to return to Iraq), while passive voice happened in 9 of 25 extracts (36%)—mainly in acts of political strength or U.S. army operations (e.g., "The houses were searched", "Men were taken"). This distribution proposes that passivization is a stylistic strategy used to incompressible the agents of strength, thus indirectly critiquing foreign intervention.

Particularly, Zeina is the subject of active verbs in 15 of the extracts (60%), representing how the narrative cores her internal change and activity. In contrast, the grandmother and other Iraqi women are often represented through stative terms (e.g., "was waiting", "remained silent"), supporting a pressure between diasporic activity and homeland strength.

5.4 Equating and Contrasting

Jeffries' tool of equating and contrasting was recognized in 11 of the extracts (44%), most often through collocation and parallel structure. For instance, Zeina reflects: "I was American in speech, but Iraqi in memory"—a structure that equates cultural markers while highlighting du'ality. Another example occurs when the narrative contrasts the sterile exactness of the U.S. army base with the disordered familiarity of Baghdad's neighborhoods. Such comparisons invite readers to observe not just cultural differences, but a value-laden contrast between majestic occurrence and native flexibility. These binary contrasts often rely on semantic opposition (e.g., freedom vs. occupation, memory vs. removal), accounting for roughly 38% of the total metaphoric constructions.

5.5 Representing Time, Place, and Society

Of the 25 extracts, 18 (72%) contained temporal deixis, with phrases like "back when we fled", "now that I'm here", and "during the occupation" emphasizing narrative dislocation. These time references contribute to the diasporic awareness of the text.

As for place, Baghdad appears 21 times in the selected amount (84%), often described in fragmented yet poetic terms—"a body stitched together by hope and ruin". America, in contrast, is less often named (9 times, 36%) and usually showed through metonymic phrases like "the land of fast food and freedom", suggesting a critical distance. This spatial irregularity foregrounds the emotional significance of Iraq, despite Zeina's U.S. citizenship.

Social representation is mainly focused on women, leaders, and fighters, with army men comprising less than 20% of named characters. This tilted representation serves to reorient the narrative lens toward civilian life and feminine memory, rather than war vision.

Generally, Zeina considers as both belonging and foreign; reproduces ideological conflict via labels as "traitor" or "granddaughter." Fragmented time and symbolic place make emotional depth; society is cracked, increasing Zeina's estrangement. Oppositions (East/West, tradition/modernity) highlight Zeina's fragmented identity and critique both Iraqi and American ideologies. Action is unequally distributed; Zeina is often passive, Iraqis are victimized, and Americans are active, presentation of power dynamics and inner fight.

Table 2: Results for The American Granddaughter according to Jeffries Tools.

Jeffries Tools	Frequency (%)	Percent (%)
Naming and Describing	14	56%
Representing Actions/Events/States	9	36%
Equating and Contrasting	11	44%
Representing Time/Place/Society	18	72%

6. Conclusions

According to the first question, the novels have a specific embedded in "The American Granddaughter" by Inaam Kachachi are National Identity and Belonging, ideology of Power and Military Occupation, ideology of Gender and Patriarchy, ideology of Memory, Loss, and Cultural Displacement, the ideology of War. While the ideologies that are embedded in "The Yellow Birds" by Kevin Powers, about war, trauma, masculinity, nationalism, morality, and human vulnerability. Additionally, for the second question, the critical stylistic tools that used are four in number. These tools are created by Lesley Jeffries (2010). Jeffries model, which are naming and describing, contrasting and equating, time, space, and society representation, and representing actions, events, and states. These four tools are found in both novels, for that the second hypothesis is proved in this study. Finally, the last question, is dealing with the recurrent tools that applied in the two novels are, naming and describing, contrasting and equating, time, space, and society representation, and representing actions, events, and states. Naming means the process of giving the same referent more than one name. While describing.

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