



A Corpus-Assisted Stylistic Analysis of as Long as the Lemon Trees Grow

Dewi Anggriani Farid², Ni Gusti Ayu Roselani²

^{1,2}Magister Linguistik, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-05-19 Revised: 2026-06-04 Accepted: 2026-09-25 Keywords: <i>As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow</i>, corpus-assisted stylistics; lexical patterns; trauma representation. DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.10697 Corresponding Author: Dewi Anggriani Farid dewianggrianifarid@mail.ugm.co.id Magister Linguistik, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia	<i>This study investigates the linguistic representation of trauma in <i>As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow</i> by Katouh (2022), a contemporary novel that portrays the traumatic experiences of civilians during the Syrian conflict. Using a corpus-assisted stylistic approach, the study examines recurring lexical patterns to explore how trauma is constructed through language. Drawing on Leech and Short's (2007) stylistic framework, the analysis focuses on nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs identified through frequency and concordance analyses using AntConc. The findings reveal dominant lexical patterns associated with medical or clinical, violence-related, psychological, and floral or nature-related semantic fields. These patterns represent trauma as a multidimensional experience characterized by bodily suffering, emotional distress, environmental destruction, and symbolic resilience. Concordance analysis further shows that seemingly ordinary words can acquire traumatic meanings in specific narrative contexts. The study demonstrates that Katouh's lexical choices portray trauma not only as loss and devastation but also as endurance, hope, and resilience. Overall, the findings highlight the value of corpus-assisted stylistic analysis for understanding trauma representation in contemporary conflict fiction.</i>

1. Introduction

Language use inherently involves choice, as speakers and writers select particular linguistic forms to express experiences, attitudes, and meanings. These linguistic choices demonstrate that language functions not merely as a neutral medium of communication but also as a resource for representing human experience. The words used to describe events, emotions, and perceptions may reflect how individuals interpret and construct reality (DeLap et al., 2025).

In literary works, such choices are shaped by the writer's perspective and artistic intentions, resulting in distinctive patterns of language use commonly referred to as style. Simpson (2004) defines style as characteristic patterns of language use in a particular context.

The study of these patterns and the principles underlying an author's linguistic choices is known as stylistics. As a linguistic approach to literary texts, stylistics examines features such as lexical choice, structural patterning, repetition, and textual organization to explain how meaning is constructed (Leech & Short, 2007; Widdowson, 2014).

Lexical choices play an important role in representing human experience, as they reflect how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to the world around them. Experiences marked by war, violence, displacement, and loss may be associated with particular patterns of word choice that convey emotional and psychological responses. In literary texts, such experiences are often represented through recurring linguistic patterns that shape readers' understanding of trauma. These representations are further influenced by the author's social background, personal knowledge, and perspective, which affect how reality is interpreted and expressed through language. This view is supported by Meyerhoff's (2010) argument that language style reflects an individual's personality, ways of thinking, and psychological as well as social condition.

One literary work that vividly portrays such experiences is *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* (2022) by Zoufa Katouh. The novel follows Salama, a young pharmacist living in war-torn Syria, as she struggles with loss, fear, displacement, and the psychological consequences of ongoing violence. The novel is particularly significant because its representation of trauma emerges from a narrative shaped by Katouh's Syrian background and engagement with the realities of the Syrian conflict. Drawing on what she has witnessed, learned, and experienced through her connection to Syria, Katouh presents trauma not only through scenes of destruction and suffering but also through themes of hope, love, and resilience. This combination makes the novel a valuable site for exploring how traumatic experiences are represented through language in contemporary conflict fiction.

To examine how such representations are linguistically constructed, the present study adopts Leech and Short's (2007) stylistic framework, which consists of lexical, grammatical, and contextual categories for the systematic analysis of meaning. The study focuses specifically on lexical categories, particularly nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs, as recurring lexical patterns can provide important evidence of how traumatic experience is represented across the narrative. A corpus-assisted stylistic approach enables the identification of dominant lexical categories through frequency analysis and the examination of contextual word use through concordance analysis using AntConc version 4.3.1. This approach enables words to be examined within their textual contexts. Accordingly, stylistic interpretation is supported by both quantitative textual evidence and close contextual examination.

Previous studies have demonstrated that stylistic analysis offers a robust framework for examining how trauma and psychological experience are linguistically represented in literary texts. Shoaib and Ali (2025) show that stylistic deviation in *The Silent Patient* reflects psychological disturbance, while Mahmood et al. (2021) reveal that trauma in *The Child in Time* is constructed through disrupted linguistic patterning that mirrors fragmented consciousness.

Similarly, Tarrayo (2021) demonstrates that emotional wounds are realized through marked lexical and structural choices that foreground psychological pain and loss. Extending trauma analysis to collective experience, Ahmed (2024) argues that repetitive stylistic patterns in Abdulrazak Gurnah's novels function as traces of unresolved memory, while

Gallardo (2025) shows through statistical stylistic analysis that representations of death and loss are strongly shaped by patterned linguistic choices. These studies confirm the value of stylistic analysis in revealing how recurring linguistic patterns construct trauma and psychological experience across literary discourse.

Recent corpus stylistic studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of corpus tools in revealing recurring linguistic patterns that support literary interpretation. Using AntConc, Hussain (2025) identifies lexical patterns in *The Tell-Tale Heart* that foreground psychological tension, while Alhamshary (2022) shows how lexical and grammatical patterns in *Mortal Designs* reflect ideological and social meanings. Comparative corpus studies, such as Liang and Chen (2023), further reveal how lexical richness and structural variation distinguish stylistic characteristics across novels. Similarly, corpus-based analyses by Zhang and Zhao (2026), Achili et al. (2025), and Moustafa (2022) demonstrate that frequency, concordance, and semantic patterning can systematically uncover thematic concerns, characterization, and emotional representation in literary texts. Collectively, these studies confirm that corpus stylistics provides empirical support for identifying patterned language use and offers a systematic basis for stylistic interpretation.

Despite these contributions, limited attention has been given to how recurring lexical patterns construct trauma in contemporary young adult fiction, particularly narratives inspired by the Syrian conflict. Furthermore, trauma is frequently examined as a thematic concern rather than as an experience linguistically constructed through patterned language use. To address this gap, the present study investigates how traumatic experience is represented in *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* through recurring lexical patterns. Accordingly, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What recurring lexical patterns are used to represent trauma in *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*?
2. How do these lexical patterns construct the representation of traumatic experience across the narrative?

2. Method

This study employs a corpus-assisted stylistic approach to examine how trauma is linguistically represented in *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* by Zoulfa Katouh (2022). The analysis combines quantitative corpus findings with qualitative stylistic interpretation based on Leech and Short's (2007) framework, focusing on lexical categories, particularly nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. The data consist of the full text of the novel, which was converted into plain text (.txt) format and compiled as a single corpus. Prior to analysis, non-narrative elements such as publication information and copyright pages were removed. The corpus contained 207,242 tokens and 7,240 types.

The analysis focuses specifically on nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs because these lexical categories contribute directly to meaning construction and trauma representation. Function words and other grammatical categories, as well as stylistic features such as metaphor, transitivity, speech presentation, collocation, and discourse structure, were excluded from the analysis.

Using AntConc version 4.3.1, frequency lists were generated to identify recurrent lexical items, which were subsequently examined through concordance analysis to investigate their contextual usage. Recurring lexical items were grouped into semantic categories based on concordance examination, including medical or clinical, violence-related, psychological, and

nature-related patterns. These categories were then interpreted stylistically to examine how lexical patterns contribute to the representation of trauma across the narrative.

3. Results

Lexical Choices as the Representation of Trauma

Lexical choices constitute one of the central levels of stylistic analysis, as it reflects the writer’s style of words to produce particular effects and construct meaning within a text. Following the lexical framework proposed by Leech and Short (2007), this analysis examines vocabulary both in general terms, such as semantic field and lexical distribution, and through specific word classes, namely nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. These lexical categories provide a systematic basis for identifying how recurring word choices contribute to the linguistic representation of trauma in *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. Table 1 presents the frequency and distribution of lexical categories in the Lemon Trees corpus.

Table 1. Frequency and Distribution of Lexical Categories in the Corpus

Lexical Category	Types	Tokens
Nouns	3629	20,596
Adjectives	1012	5,028
Verbs	3763	22,728
Adverbs	433	7,214

Table 1 shows the frequency and distribution of lexical categories examined in this study based on Leech and Short’s (2007) lexical classification. The table presents both types, referring to unique lexical items, and tokens, referring to their total occurrences in the novel. These figures do not represent the corpus as a whole, as other lexical categories outside the scope of this study, such as prepositions, conjunctions, determiners, and other function words, are excluded. Nevertheless, this distribution provides a quantitative basis for identifying recurring lexical patterns in the representation of trauma, which are further explained in the following analysis.

a) General

At the general level, according to Leech and Short (2007), attention is paid to whether the vocabulary is simple or complex, formal or informal, and whether it draws on particular registers, dialects, or semantic fields. Such choices are significant because they reveal how language is used not only to describe events, but also to shape perspective and encode experiential meaning. This study focuses on the lexical choices employed by the author to represent Salama’s traumatic experiences. Therefore, the findings presented in the table below are organized into several semantic fields that reflect different dimensions of trauma representation.

Table 2. Dominant Semantic Fields in the Representation of Trauma

No.	Semantic Fields	Most Frequent Types (Freq)	Representative Excerpts
1.	Medical/clinical	<i>hospital</i> (147), <i>pain</i> (77), <i>blood</i> (98), <i>patients</i> (48), <i>doctor</i> (31), <i>dead</i> (27), <i>Panadol</i> (26), <i>wound</i> (11), <i>heal</i> (9), <i>medicine</i> (7)	• <i>I need the hospital. I need it to forget my pain.</i> • <i>I pray the Panadol eases his pain.</i> • <i>A sudden respiratory failure, cardiac arrest, another patient vomiting blood and bile.</i>
2.	Violence-Related	<i>death</i> (50), <i>bomb</i> (28), <i>survive</i> (21), <i>died</i> (19), <i>attack</i> (14), <i>sniper</i> (13), <i>die</i> (12), <i>kill</i> (11), <i>tortured</i> (11), <i>shot</i> (9)	• <i>"Everyone is dying."</i> • <i>"Torture. Death. This is happening."</i> • <i>"Please let them kill us."</i>
3.	Psychological	<i>fear</i> (44), <i>broken</i> (33), <i>terror</i> (26), <i>scream</i> (23), <i>guilt</i> (22), <i>agony</i> (18), <i>horror</i> (15), <i>grief</i> (11), <i>anger</i> (9), <i>exhausted</i> (7)	• <i>"...fear and pain that have taken root in my soul."</i> • <i>"I can't take this guilt. I'm tired ... I want to scream."</i> • <i>His eyes are full of terror.</i>
4.	Floral/Nature	<i>daisies</i> (32), <i>petals</i> (16), <i>scent</i> (12), <i>jasmine</i> (9), <i>lavender</i> (6), <i>plant</i> (6), <i>bloodroot</i> (4), <i>lotus</i> (4), <i>lilacs</i> (4)	• <i>I stop myself from breaking down. Daisies. Daisies. Sweet-smelling daisies.</i> • <i>"Jasmine. Jasmine. Jasmine..." I murmur over and over until I swear I can smell them like I used to when Mama took me in her arms.</i>

As shown in Table 1, Katouh does not rely on a single lexical register; instead, the narrative moves between medical or clinical, violence-related, psychological, and floral or nature-related vocabularies to represent experiences of war and suffering. This lexical variation constructs trauma as a multidimensional condition encompassing bodily injury, emotional distress, environmental destruction, and symbolic refuge. The recurrence of medical and clinical lexical items such as *hospital* (147), *blood* (98), *pain* (77), and *patients* (48) reflects Katouh's stylistic tendency to frame experiences of conflict through the language of treatment, injury, and survival. In doing so, medical discourse provides a sense of structure and order within an otherwise unstable wartime environment.

The prominence of violence-related lexical items, including *death* (50), *bomb* (28), *survive* (21), and *sniper* (13), further foregrounds the pervasive presence of war throughout the narrative. Their repeated occurrence normalizes destruction as part of everyday experience and highlights how prolonged conflict reshapes ordinary perception. This external reality is complemented by psychological lexical items such as *fear* (44), *broken* (33), *terror* (26), *scream* (23), and *guilt* (22), which verbalize emotional fragmentation and reveal the lingering psychological consequences of violence. Together, these patterns show that

suffering is represented not only through physical danger but also through enduring emotional and cognitive strain.

In contrast to these dominant registers, floral and nature-related lexical items such as *lemon(s)* (47), *daisies* (32), *petals* (16), and *jasmine* (9) introduce moments of symbolic resistance to violence. Their recurrence creates a linguistic space associated with memory, continuity, and hope, temporarily distancing the narrative from scenes of destruction. The particularly high frequency of *lemon(s)* reinforces its significance beyond the title itself, functioning as a recurring symbol of endurance and renewal. The contrast between natural imagery and the surrounding lexicon of violence reflects Katouh's stylistic tendency to juxtapose devastation with resilience, representing trauma not solely as loss and suffering but also as an ongoing struggle to preserve hope and humanity.

b) Nouns

Following Leech and Short (2007), nouns are examined in terms of their concrete or abstract reference and the kinds of meanings they encode, including events, processes, perceptions, and psychological or moral qualities. In *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, trauma is primarily represented through the interplay of concrete and abstract nouns drawn from medical, violence-related, psychological, and nature-related semantic fields. This lexical pattern demonstrates how the author stylistically constructs trauma as both a tangible reality, marked by physical destruction and bodily suffering, and an internalized condition expressed through emotional and psychological disturbance.

Table 3. The 10 Most Frequent Concrete and Abstract Nouns

Concrete nouns	Freq	Abstract Nouns	Freq
<i>eyes</i>	446	<i>Life</i>	183
<i>head</i>	203	<i>time</i>	132
<i>hands</i>	172	<i>way</i>	120
<i>face</i>	171	<i>day</i>	105
<i>heart</i>	161	<i>words</i>	99
<i>voice</i>	151	<i>breath</i>	94
<i>hospital</i>	147	<i>pain</i>	77
<i>hair</i>	112	<i>mind</i>	75
<i>blood</i>	98	<i>death</i>	50
<i>boat</i>	94	<i>expression</i>	47

Table 3 shows that the most frequent nouns consist of both concrete and abstract lexical items, indicating that trauma is represented through physical, sensory, and psychological dimensions. Concrete nouns such as *eyes* (446), *head* (203), and *blood* (98) foreground bodily presence and material experience, while abstract nouns such as *life* (183), *time* (132), and *pain* (77) emphasize existential and emotional concerns. Although these nouns are common lexical items, their recurring contextual use reveals strong associations with war, suffering, fear, and survival.

Among the most frequent nouns, *eyes* and *life* were selected as representative examples because they are the most frequent concrete and abstract nouns, respectively, and illustrate how trauma is represented through both physical and psychological dimensions. The following concordance excerpts demonstrate how these common nouns acquire traumatic significance through their contextual use across the narrative.

Table 4. Concordance Lines of Concrete Nouns eyes

Left Context	Word	Right Context
...stops walking, but there's a wild desperation in his	eyes.	Like he's swallowing down the words and wants...
...the cracks in the hospital walls and I close my	eyes.	Unable to hold their pain in my heart without...
...like lead after what Khawf did yesterday. I rub my	eyes,	shutting out the tortured screams still ringing in my..
...with fraying edges. She's sad and skeleton-like, her	eyes	dim with despair and hunger. I looke away and...
...to try and sleep. With a newfound hope in their	eyes,	they skip to my room. I help, tugging the...
..everything you've been through, there's light in your	eyes.	You still laugh. So I can only imagine how...
...him?" "I'm obsessed with his movies." He straightens up,	eyes	Shining with excitement. "Me too! Studio Ghibli is my...

The concordance excerpts of *eyes* show how this common concrete noun acquires traumatic significance through its context. Phrases such as “wild desperation in his eyes” and faces “dim with despair and hunger” connect *eyes* to visible suffering, while expressions like “I close my eyes” and “I rub my eyes” suggest attempts to escape distress. In contrast, phrases such as “there’s light in your eyes” and “shining with excitement” introduce brief moments of hope. This contrast suggests that Katouh stylistically employs *eyes* as a recurring focal point through which emotional states are perceived and communicated. By repeatedly foregrounding visual perception, she represents trauma not only as a condition of physical and emotional suffering but also as an experience that coexists with hope and resilience.

Table 5. Concordance Lines of Abstract Nouns life

Left Context	Word	Right Context
I know I could easily love him. In a might	life	with the fantasies I orchestrated for myself, it would...
I feel the touch of it everywhere. In our might	life	where he and I are promised to each other,
...that I do. When I see these subtle signs of	life	on my way to the hospital, my heart ex literally became monochrome, alternating with a harsh red. While...
The ashy faces of the starving. Sometimes the skies. Our	“ Life	Is more than just survival, Salama,” she says. “I...
...sound of Layla sighing snaps me out pf my daydream.	life	can be salvaged. That we deserve to have happiness...
But meeting you, loving you... you made me realize how	life	and strength in Homs.” He nods toward the sun.
...looks at me, smiling. “There’s still beauty, Salama. Still		

The concordance excerpts of *life* show that this abstract noun is often connected to uncertainty, survival, and hope. Expressions such as “in a might life” and “in our might life” suggest imagined possibilities and alternative futures, while “our life literally became monochrome, alternating with a harsh red” reflects how war transforms life into something bleak and painful. In contrast, “Life is more than just survival” and references to beauty, happiness, and strength foreground moments of hope and resilience. This contrast suggests

that *life* functions as a key lexical resource for representing the tension between suffering and endurance. Through the repeated use of this noun, Katouh stylistically frames the Syrian conflict not only as a source of trauma and loss but also as a context in which individuals continue to seek purpose, connection, and hope.

c) Adjectives

Following Leech and Short (2007), adjectives are examined for their descriptive and evaluative functions in shaping textual meaning. In *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, the analysis focuses on physical and psychological adjectives to examine how descriptive patterns contribute to the representation of traumatic experience. The following Table 5 shows the most frequent physical and psychological adjectives in the corpus.

Table 6. Most Frequent Physical and Psychological Adjectives

Physical Adj.	Freq	Psychological Adj.	Freq
<i>old</i>	59	<i>able</i>	66
<i>deep</i>	57	<i>sure</i>	66
<i>small</i>	56	<i>okay</i>	64
<i>little</i>	55	<i>good</i>	61
<i>alive</i>	49	<i>fine</i>	58
<i>safe</i>	42	<i>sorry</i>	35
<i>blue</i>	40	<i>quiet</i>	32
<i>cold</i>	37	<i>happy</i>	25
<i>open</i>	36	<i>scared</i>	16
<i>long</i>	33	<i>tired</i>	14

Table 5 shows that both physical and psychological adjectives contribute to the representation of trauma in the novel. Physical adjectives such as *old* (59), *deep* (57), and *alive* (49) describe bodily and sensory conditions, while psychological adjectives such as *able* (66), *sure* (66), and *fine* (58) reflect mental and emotional states. Although these adjectives appear ordinary on their own, their repeated use in context reveals patterns of vulnerability, survival, and emotional strain.

Among the most frequent physical and psychological adjectives, *alive* was selected as a representative example because of its high frequency and its close association with the novel's recurring themes of survival, loss, and resilience. The following concordance excerpts illustrate how this seemingly ordinary adjective acquires traumatic significance through its contextual use across the narrative.

Table 7. Concordance Lines of Adjective *alive*

Left Context	Word	Right Context
...I need to hold Layla and remind myself she's	<i>alive.</i>	I want to scream. I want Mama. By the...
We still don't know whether Hamza and Baba are	<i>alive.</i>	I'd like to believe they've died. And...
...her." In this eye of the storm, his word come	<i>alive</i>	in my mind. I see us strolling around Berlin,
Salama, please. Don't be a martyr. Fight to stay	<i>alive.</i>	Her words fall like little stones at the bottom...
	<i>alive</i>	

...muscles contract when I swallow.		and more aware of my surroundings. I
The act makes me feel	–	could hear...
and beyond to survive. In knowing	<i>alive</i>	with Baby Salama. In knowing I'll see her...
she's in Heaven		
I choose to focus on a future where	<i>a</i>	Where I'm safe. I wake up with a...
I'm	<i>live.</i>	

The concordance excerpts of *alive* show its close association with uncertainty and the struggle to survive. Phrases such as “*Fight to stay alive*” and “*we still don't know whether Hamza and Baba are alive*” portray life as fragile and constantly threatened by war. At the same time, references to safety and imagined futures introduce moments of hope and perseverance. Through these contrasting contexts, Katouh repeatedly uses *alive* to foreground the uncertainty of survival in wartime, presenting trauma not only as the threat of death but also as the ongoing effort to preserve life and hope.

d) Verbs

Following Leech and Short (2007), verbs are examined in terms of their semantic role, process type, and transitivity. In *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, the analysis focuses on how verbal patterns contribute to the representation of traumatic experience through actions, processes, and states. This allows the study to examine how trauma is linguistically constructed as an unfolding experience rather than a fixed condition.

Table 8 shows the most frequent lexical verbs in the corpus, excluding auxiliary verbs in order to focus on semantically meaningful actions and processes that contribute to the representation of traumatic experience.

Table 8. 15 Most Frequent Verbs

Types	Freq
<i>know</i>	289
<i>see</i>	249
<i>says</i>	226
<i>have</i>	166
<i>say</i>	137
<i>know</i>	121
<i>go</i>	109
<i>need</i>	109
<i>going</i>	109
<i>want</i>	103
<i>get</i>	101
<i>make</i>	95
<i>let</i>	95
<i>take</i>	92
<i>say</i>	91

Table 8 shows the most frequent lexical verbs in the corpus, highlighting how verbal patterns contribute to the representation of traumatic experience through actions, perception, and mental processes. In terms of semantic role, process type, and transitivity, verbs such as *know* (289), *see* (249), and *need* (109) reflect mental and relational processes rather than direct physical action. This pattern emphasizes awareness, observation, and

urgency, showing trauma as an ongoing psychological and experiential condition rather than a fixed event.

Among the most frequent verbs, *see* was selected as a representative example because it reflects the novel's recurrent emphasis on visual perception as a means of experiencing and interpreting trauma. The following concordance excerpts illustrate how this frequently occurring verb acquires traumatic significance through its surrounding contexts.

Table 9. Concordance Lines of Verb *see*

Left Context	Word	Right Context
...know they're victims from a sniper attack when I	<i>see</i>	no dismembered limbs but blood fountaining out. And they'...
...live. "Am I going to die?" he asks,	<i>see</i>	no fear. Do all six-year-olds know what...
and I	<i>see</i>	your sacrifice and your kindness. I focus on the...
Because I see the love you have for me. I	<i>see</i>	more people murdered." His ears turn red and he...
I love my country and I don't want to	<i>see</i>	how this war has drastically changed her. Her face,...
...a tired smile appears on her lips, and I can	<i>see</i>	her insh'Allah when it's my time. That...
...in Heaven—alive with Baby Salama. In knowing I'll ...and how they'd rather die a thousand deaths than	<i>see</i>	me tortured like this. I think of Mama and...

The concordance excerpts of *see* show how this perceptual verb is closely linked to witnessing trauma. In contexts such as "*see no dismembered limbs but blood fountaining out*" and "*see how this war has drastically changed her*," *see* reflects direct observation of violence and its consequences. In other instances, expressions such as "*Because I see the love you have for me*" and "*I'll see her insh'Allah when it's my time*" connect perception to love, faith, and hope. These contrasting contexts suggest that *see* functions not only as a marker of traumatic witnessing but also as a means of interpreting emotional experience. The repeated use of this verb reflects Katouh's stylistic tendency to represent trauma through personal perception, foregrounding what characters witness, remember, and emotionally process throughout the narrative.

e) Adverbs

Following Leech and Short (2007), adverbs are examined in terms of their role in expressing degree, intensity, and stance. In *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, the analysis focuses on how adverbial patterns contribute to the representation of traumatic experience by modifying actions, perceptions, and emotional states.

Table 10. 15 Most Frequent Adverbs

Types	Freq
<i>so</i>	24
<i>back</i>	2
<i>away</i>	23
<i>here</i>	5
<i>now</i>	21
<i>still</i>	5
<i>just</i>	19
<i>then</i>	0
<i>even</i>	15
<i>too</i>	5
<i>never</i>	15
<i>again</i>	3
<i>only</i>	14
<i>slowly</i>	7
<i>always</i>	14
	5
	13
	5
	10
	9
	99
	81
	79
	63
	49

Table 10 shows that lexical adverbs frequently modify actions and perceptions related to movement, continuity, and emotional intensity. Adverbs such as *back* (235), *away* (215), and *here* (190) emphasize spatial positioning, while *now* (155), *still* (153), and *again* (81) reflect temporal persistence and recurrence. Meanwhile, forms such as *so* (242), *too* (109), and *never* (99) strengthen emotional intensity and evaluative stance. These patterns suggest that adverbs contribute to representing trauma as an ongoing and immediate experience.

Among the most frequent adverbs, *still* was selected as a representative example because of its high frequency and its recurring association with persistence, survival, and emotional continuity throughout the narrative. The following concordance excerpts illustrate how this common adverb acquires traumatic significance through its contextual use across the novel.

Table 11. Concordance Lines of Adverb *still*

Left Context	Word	Right Context
...say. But I continue. "I lost my family and you	<i>still</i>	have yours. I see it every day at the...
...few laughs and clutch that shred of innocence that's	<i>still</i>	alive and fighting, tucking it safely in my heart.
...used as a muscle relaxant. Peonies. Peonies. Poenies. My legs	<i>still</i>	can't carry me and I almost trip, but...
I get closer, I hear the faint screaming of those	<i>still</i>	trapped inside. It tears my heart in half. Their...
...in me not to fall into despair. Inside I'm	<i>still</i>	broken, haunted by a little girl I threatened to...
...to go sick with fear at those. And sometimes we	<i>still</i>	forget, the trauma coming back to us is the...
...yesterday. I rub my eyes, shutting out the tortured screams	<i>still</i>	ringing in my mind. My extraocular muscles ache from...

The concordance excerpts of *still* show its close association with persistence and unresolved trauma. Expressions such as "*still alive and fighting*" suggest endurance, while phrases like "*inside I'm still broken*" and "*the trauma coming back to us is still*" emphasize the continuing psychological impact of war. These recurring contexts indicate that *still* functions as a marker of emotional continuity, representing trauma as an experience that endures rather than fully disappears. Through the repeated use of this adverb, Katouh stylistically foregrounds the lasting effects of trauma and the persistence of memory throughout the narrative.

4. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that trauma in *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* is represented through a network of recurring lexical patterns spanning medical or clinical, violence-related, psychological, and nature-related semantic fields. Rather than relying on a single lexical register, Katouh combines multiple vocabularies to construct trauma as a multidimensional experience encompassing bodily injury, emotional distress, environmental destruction, and the ongoing struggle for survival. This finding supports the view that trauma is not represented solely through narrative events but also through patterned language use that shapes how suffering, loss, and resilience are perceived and interpreted by readers.

The analysis further highlights the stylistic significance of recurring lexical choices. Frequently occurring nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs do more than describe events; they contribute to the construction of a narrative perspective through which trauma is experienced and understood. Lexical items such as *eyes*, *life*, *alive*, *see*, and *still* repeatedly connect physical experience with emotional and psychological states, demonstrating how ordinary words can acquire traumatic significance through their contextual use. These findings support Leech and Short's (2007) argument that lexical choices play a central role in meaning construction and illustrate how stylistic analysis can reveal relationships between linguistic patterns and literary representation.

The identified lexical patterns may also be understood in relation to Katouh's social and educational background. As a Syrian-Canadian author, Katouh has stated that the novel was inspired by stories and realities associated with the Syrian conflict, reflecting her desire to

humanize experiences that are often reduced to statistics and political narratives. This proximity to the conflict may help explain the prominence of lexical patterns related to bodily suffering, fear, loss, and survival. Furthermore, Katouh's background in pharmaceutical sciences is reflected in the characterization of Salama, a pharmacy student who volunteers in a hospital during wartime. The recurrence of medical and clinical vocabulary therefore appears not only as a narrative feature but also as part of a stylistic orientation that foregrounds injury, treatment, and the struggle to preserve life amid conflict.

A particularly significant finding is the coexistence of traumatic and resilient lexical patterns throughout the novel. While medical, violence-related, and psychological vocabularies foreground suffering, fear, and loss, the recurrence of nature-related imagery introduces alternative meanings associated with hope, continuity, and renewal. The frequent appearance of lexical items such as *lemon(s)*, *daisies*, *petals*, and *jasmine* creates a symbolic counterpoint to the language of violence and destruction. This contrast reflects Katouh's stylistic tendency to represent trauma not solely as devastation but also as an ongoing effort to preserve humanity, connection, and meaning amid conflict. Consequently, trauma emerges as a dynamic experience characterized by both vulnerability and endurance rather than as a condition defined exclusively by suffering.

These findings also demonstrate the value of corpus-assisted stylistics for literary analysis. By combining frequency analysis with concordance examination, the study identifies recurring linguistic patterns while remaining sensitive to contextual meaning. The approach provides systematic evidence for examining how lexical choices contribute to narrative representation and shows how corpus methods can complement close reading in the study of trauma narratives and conflict literature. As such, the study contributes to corpus stylistics, literary stylistics, and trauma studies by illustrating how patterned language use shapes the representation of traumatic experience in contemporary fiction.

5. Conclusion

This study investigated how trauma is linguistically represented in *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* through a corpus-assisted stylistic analysis of recurring lexical patterns. The findings reveal that trauma is constructed through lexical choices drawn from medical or clinical, violence-related, psychological, and nature-related semantic fields, demonstrating that traumatic experience is represented as a multidimensional condition encompassing bodily suffering, emotional distress, environmental destruction, and resilience. Frequency and concordance analyses further show that ordinary lexical items can acquire traumatic significance through their contextual use across the narrative.

These patterns reflect Katouh's stylistic tendency to portray trauma not only as loss and devastation but also as an ongoing struggle to preserve hope, humanity, and meaning amid conflict. By combining corpus methods with stylistic interpretation, this study contributes to corpus stylistics, literary stylistics, and trauma studies, while demonstrating the value of corpus-assisted approaches for examining the linguistic representation of trauma in contemporary fiction.

6. References

- Achili, N., Rahil, F., & Rahil, H. (2025). A Corpus Stylistic Analysis of Jamaica Kincaid's "Lucy" (1990) Novel. *Aleph: Langues, médias et sociétés*, 12(1).
- Ahmed, S. (2024). Synthesizing stylistic repetition and repetition compulsion: Echoes of postcolonial trauma in Gurnah's selected novels. *Journal of Literary Stylistics*, 12(2), 45–61.
- Alhamshary, Y. A. (2020). A Corpus-Based Stylistic Analysis of Reem Bassiouney's Novel "Mortal Designs". 35–1(1)54, ناولح ءعماج بادآلا ءيلك ءلجم.
- Berhanu, K. (2009). *Stylistics and literary analysis*. Addis Ababa University Press.
- DeLap, M., Jones, R., & Turner, S. (2025). Language, emotion, and meaning-making in narratives of distress. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 54(1), 87–102.
- Gallardo, M. (2025). Faces of death: A statistical-stylistic analysis of selected 19th- and 20th-century poems. *Journal of Stylistic Studies*, 14(1), 66–84.
- Hussain, W. (2025). A Corpus Stylistic Analysis of the Tell-Tale Heart by Edgar Allan Poe. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4(2). Doi: 10.52622/joal.v4i2.337.
- Katouh, Z. (2022). *As Long as The Lemon Trees Grow*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Kirk, J., & Miller, M. L. (2010). *Reliability and validity in qualitative research*. Sage.
- Leech, G. N., & Short, M. (2007). *Style in fiction: A linguistic introduction to English fictional prose* (2nd ed.). Pearson Longman.
- Liang, M. & Chen, M. (2023). A Corpus-based Stylistic Study of Jane Eyre and Wide Sargasso Sea. *Lecture Notes on Language and Literature*, 6(14). DOI: 10.23977/langl.2023.061408
- Meyerhoff, M. (2010). *Introducing sociolinguistics*. Routledge.
- Moustafa, B. S. M. (2022). A comparative corpus stylistic analysis of thematization and characterization in Gordimer's *My Son's Story* and Coetzee's *Disgrace*. *Open Linguistics*, 8, pp. 46-64. <https://doi.org/10.1515/opli-2020-0183>
- Pennebaker, J. W. (2011). *The secret life of pronouns: What our words say about us*. Bloomsbury Press.
- Shoaib, M., & Ali, S. (2025). Stylistics exploration of the novel *The Silent Patient* through PTSD. *Journal of Literary Trauma Studies*, 8(1), 1–18.
- Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics: A resource book for students*. Routledge.
- Tarrayo, V. N. (2020). Wounds and words: A lexical and syntactic analysis of Casocot's "There are other things beside brightness and light". *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10(2), pp. 502-512. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v10i2.28594>.
- Widdowson, H. G. (2014). *Stylistics and the teaching of literature*. Routledge.
- Zhang, Y. & Zhao, C. (2026). Discovering mythorealism: A corpus stylistic analysis of Yan Lianke's novels in English. *PLoS One* 21(2): e0342696. <https://doi.org/10.1371/joussrnl.pone.0342696>