



La revue *Aleph. langues, médias et sociétés* est approuvée par ERIHPLUS. Elle est classée à la catégorie B.

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	Submission	Publication numérique	Publication Asjp
	22-03-2023	26-11-2024	05-01-2025

Éditeur : Edile (Edition et diffusion de l'écrit scientifique)

Dépôt légal : 6109-2014

Edition numérique : <https://aleph.edinum.org>

Date de publication : 26 novembre 2024

ISSN : 2437-1076

(Edition ASJP) : <https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/PresentationRevue/226>

Date de publication : 05 janvier 2025

Pagination : 127-140.

ISSN : 2437-0274

Référence électronique

Nora Achili, Faiza Rahil et Hamza Rahil, « Corpus Stylistic Analysis of Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy », *Aleph* [En ligne], Vol 12 (1) | 2025, mis en ligne le 26 novembre 2024. URL : <https://aleph.edinum.org/13967>

Référence papier

Nora Achili, Faiza Rahil et Hamza Rahil, « Corpus Stylistic Analysis of Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy », *Aleph*, Vol 12 (1) | 2025, 127-140.

## Référence électronique

Leila Kerboubi, « La Sémiotique Urbaine et les Praxis Socio-Spatiales : Analyse des Narratives Féminines sur la Ville et la Rue en Période de Conflit dans l'Algérie des Années 1990 », Aleph [En ligne], | 2024, mis en ligne le 20 février 2024, consulté le 08 décembre 2024. URL : <https://aleph.edinum.org/10852>

# A Corpus Stylistic Analysis of Jamaica Kincaid's "Lucy" (1990) Novel

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## Analyse stylistique corpusculaire du roman «Lucy» (1990) de Jamaica Kincaid

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### Introduction

Corpus linguistics is an academic field that employs computational methods to analyze large amounts of naturally occurring linguistic data. In recent years, corpus-based research has been extensively conducted across diverse domains, including lexicography, grammatical analysis, and linguistic variation and change. The field originated in the 1950s and has been primarily driven by the increasing interest in real language use, which was greatly facilitated by technological advancements. As Tognini-Bonelli (2010, p. 15) points out, "It was not the linguistic climate but the technological one that stimulated the development of corpora."

As previously mentioned, corpus linguistics was grounded in lexicology (McCarthy & O'Keeffe, 2010), focusing on word lists and concordance principles based on increasingly larger texts or collections of smaller texts. Historically, this method can be traced back to the thirteenth century when clerics began indexing words and phrases. According to McCarthy and O'Keeffe (2010, p. 3), "Concordancing arose out of a practical need to specify for other biblical scholars, in alphabetical arrangement, the words contained in the Bible, along with citations of where and in what passages they occurred."

From the 1960s onwards, newer attempts involved larger and more varied compilations of texts, encompassing both written and spoken language (Francis & Kuc'era, 1964, for written language; Sinclair, 1963, for spoken language, as cited in Tognini-Bonelli, 2010). The proliferation of language corpora has led to a significant breakthrough at the methodological level, as corpus linguistics relies on computer counting, which is interpreted qualitatively. This controversial approach to data analysis challenges the traditional dichotomy of quantitative and qualitative paradigms in research by introducing a hybrid version of examination that currently prevails in linguistic studies. As Tognini-Bonelli asserts, "It is strange to imagine that simply having more data and better counting could trigger philosophical repositionings, but that is indeed what has happened" (2010, p. 18).

Given these assumptions, a central methodological consideration concerns the role of texts as the fundamental unit of analysis. Unlike the functionalist perspective, which views the text as a cohesive and meaningful entity (Halliday, 1994), corpus

linguistics prioritizes the frequency and recurrence of linguistic occurrences over their communicative importance. In corpus linguistics, the focus is on identifying significant elements, characterized by recurring patterns and co-selection. This emphasis underscores the importance of the frequency of occurrence in this field of study (Tognini-Bonelli, 2010, p. 19). Hence, the formalist approach becomes more prevalent, as the primary objective of corpus linguistics is to scrutinize a language sample and generalize its findings to the entire language. By examining language patterns relevant to the selected sample, one can gain insights into broader linguistic norms and distinctive characteristics.

## **1. Exploring Corpus Linguistics: A Literature Review and Methodological Overview**

### **1.1. Literature review**

John Sinclair is a renowned figure in corpus linguistics, largely due to his outstanding contributions to the field. Over the years, Sinclair's research on collocations, or the recurrent pairing of certain words, has been instrumental in shaping how language education and lexicography are approached. Remarkably innovative, Sinclair developed computational techniques for analyzing speech data, positioning himself as a leading expert. His work continues to significantly impact, with ongoing recognition in the field.

Michael Halliday (1994) is another influential figure who has made remarkable contributions to the field of corpus linguistics. His revolutionary research on grammar and language systems has earned him widespread acclaim. Halliday's work on Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) has been particularly significant in developing corpus-based methods for analyzing language structure. Alongside Sinclair, Halliday's pioneering efforts have propelled the study of corpus linguistics to new levels of sophistication and rigor.

In the same vein, Douglas Biber has made notable contributions to studying language variation and change (Biber, 1993; 1995; 2003). In most of his works, Biber discusses the use of corpora in language research and their potential benefits. He argues that diversified corpora, representative of the language being studied, can reveal patterns and variations in language use that more traditional methods of analysis may miss. Biber also examines similarities and differences in register variation across different languages and proposes a framework for assessing the representativeness of a corpus. His research underscores the importance of using representative corpora in language studies to ensure valid research findings.

Despite the manifold benefits of corpus-based approaches, the field faces several challenges. One of the most significant obstacles is related to the completeness and complexity of the datasets involved. Furthermore, utilizing computational techniques for speech analysis can be daunting for those without a background in computer science. Additionally, despite its utility, corpus linguistics has limited applicability in the field of literary studies. Most research in this domain focuses on linguistic and language-based phenomena, with fewer studies applying corpus-based techniques to literature. This

limitation stems from a general lack of understanding regarding the nature of corpus linguistics and its potential for analyzing literary texts.

The quantitative nature of corpus methods, combined with the perceived lack of interpretive depth in their analysis, may discourage some from using them in literary studies. Furthermore, there are few large and diverse literary corpora suitable for corpus-based analysis, which makes literary texts appear more unique and intricate than quantifiable. The development of specialized literary corpora remains an ongoing process, which limits the range of analyses that can be performed and complicates the derivation of reliable conclusions regarding the linguistic features of a given text or author's work.

Despite these limitations, corpus linguistics can provide valuable insights into the language used in literature. Through quantitative analysis of language usage patterns, corpus techniques can reveal writers' linguistic preferences and the stylistic effects they create. As the field of corpus linguistics expands, it is becoming increasingly useful for shedding light on the language of literature. Though still in its early stages, the potential of corpus linguistics to impact literary studies is vast and is likely to grow in the coming years.

## 1.2. Corpus Linguistics, Corpus Stylistics, and Literature

The significance of corpus linguistics as a method for analyzing literary works has increased in recent years. With advanced methodologies, it is now possible to quantify language usage and identify patterns that were previously unattainable. Researchers can examine vast quantities of text using corpora, leading to the discovery of patterns that may have remained concealed if only a single text or a few texts were analyzed. This approach enables a more in-depth and unbiased analysis of literary works.

In recent years, the use of corpora for stylistic analysis has gained traction, leading to the development of a new branch of computational linguistics known as corpus stylistics. This field involves using statistical and computational tools to examine various style-related elements, including word length, sentence structure, and lexical choice. Literary evaluation through corpus stylistic studies spans genres such as novels, plays, poetry, and short stories, exploring literary patterns across movements like modernism, postmodernism, feminism, and postfeminism.

In the 1990s, some of the first investigations into corpus stylistics were conducted, including works by McEnery and Wilson (1996), Hoey (1996), and Stubbs (1996, 2005). In recent decades, the field has expanded considerably, with numerous studies launched during this time. Research in corpus stylistics has focused on various topics, including metaphors, character development, point of view, and the development of time and space. A recent example of corpus stylistic research is Ju's (2023) study of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, which examined its lexical, phrase, syntax, and rhetorical features. The analysis revealed Fitzgerald's frequent use of past tense verbs, phrase collocations, syntactic deviations, and rhetorical devices to depict the characters of 1920s America and to account for the illusory nature of the **American Dream** and its eventual decay.

Similarly, Zhao (2012) explored the density and variety of parallelism in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, comparing it with other notable modernist novels. Attention was given to the specific lexical and syntactic structures that characterize Woolf's use of parallelism. The analysis revealed Woolf's extensive use of antithetical and synonymous lexical bundles, juxtaposed propositional phrases, -ing participles, and appositional structures. These elements allowed her to build the plot sequentially while enriching the novel's narrative with oppositions, synonyms, and rhetorical expressions. The findings underscore Woolf's ability to manipulate these linguistic resources to create an aesthetic balance between poetry and prose, as well as between reality and fiction.

In a similar vein, Archer and Gillings (2020) employed a corpus stylistic approach to analyze Shakespeare's five deceptive characters: Aaron, Tamora, Iago, Lady Macbeth, and Falstaff. The study focused on the linguistic features they use to convey lies and deception, revealing that deception-related elements tend to appear in clusters, with some variability depending on context. This variation, Shakespeare strategically employed, served specific dramatic purposes. Extended research, such as Fischer-Starcke's (2009) study of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, has assessed the frequency of collocations and colligation, revealing Austen's extensive use of these linguistic features to express family relations.

Further studies have explored keywords and key semantic domains in literary works. For instance, Culpeper (2002) used keyword lists to distinguish between the main characters in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* by comparing the play to a corpus of all Shakespeare's works. The results revealed the prominence of first-person pronouns in the dialogue, highlighting the characters' personal involvement. Similarly, Mahlberg and McIntyre (2011) conducted an analysis of keywords and key semantic domains in Ian Fleming's *Casino Royale*, identifying two distinct categories: fictional worlds and thematic signals, which were further classified as text-centered and reader-centered.

In his study, Sun (2020) explored the stylistic impact of high-frequency three-word clusters in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, analyzing five different types of clusters. The study revealed that speech clusters, particularly those involving negation, serve to underscore the tragic themes of disillusionment associated with the American Dream. These findings offer a fresh perspective on the novel, illustrating the potential of corpus linguistics to reveal new insights in literary analysis.

As technology advances and more sophisticated tools emerge, corpus stylistics continues to evolve, offering more refined methods for literary analysis. This field provides insights that traditional literary criticism often overlooks, highlighting the vast potential of corpus-based approaches for analyzing literature.

### 1.3. Method

This paper presents a corpus stylistics-based analysis of Jamaica Kincaid's novel *Lucy*. The study focuses on the novel's most frequent and salient themes, termed reference fields or semantic domains, as well as the grammar identified in the text using software tools. In this light, a systematic and quantitative approach is adopted to identify patterns and trends in themes and grammar that may not be immediately apparent

through traditional qualitative analysis methods. This is achieved by utilizing the Text Retrieval and OPinion Exploration System (TROPES), a software tool for natural language processing and text analysis. TROPES uses algorithms and machine learning techniques to analyze text data and identify patterns and relationships between words, phrases, and themes. This can include identifying the frequency of specific words and phrases, determining the sentiment of the text, and recognizing the presence of specific patterns, such as plot structures or literary tropes. Only the most frequent themes and grammatical units will be considered, based on their importance in generating meaning in the text, and taking into account the article's length limitations. Tables will support the analysis by presenting the findings.

A brief overview of the novel is provided before starting the literature review. This preliminary process helps set the stage for the subsequent analysis of the text, providing the reader with a deeper understanding of the thematic and linguistic structures of the novel. The novel *Lucy* explores issues of immigration, identity, and cultural appropriation. The protagonist is a young woman named Lucy from Antigua who travels to America to work as a nanny for a wealthy white family. In the story, Lucy experiences disgust and loneliness as she tries to adapt to the cultural differences between her homeland and America, grapples with her identity, and confronts the effects of colonialism's history, which she will ultimately reconcile.

## 2. Results and Discussion

This section is devoted to the data analysis and discussion of the results obtained from the study of *Lucy* using Tropes. The analysis begins by examining the major themes addressed in the novel, then moves on to scrutinize the most frequent grammatical units, namely verb types, pronouns, and adjectives found in the text. The table below shows that the major advantage of the system's corpus stylistic characteristics is that the subsets can be searched independently of one another.

As seen in Table 1 below, the most prominent theme is the deployment of time and its markers. Comparing quotations and non-quotations reveals that time references occur 383 times in the text. The term "time" is used as a discourse marker, and time markers play a vital role in character construction. As readers, we generally rely on time markers to establish a chronological frame of reference for the events depicted in the text. The presence of temporal information such as morning, day, night, future, past, and January, as well as the repetition of such markers, can indicate both certainty and confusion regarding time. Readers can easily connect the time period to Lucy's narrative.

The time elements—day, night, and past—may become deeply ingrained in the reader's temporal self-orientation. For instance, the word "now" is projected forward to a time in the future in "me happy now just to think of it the other my future. A gray blank", and "if I had had to draw a picture of my future then, it would have been a large gray patch surrounded by black". It appears that the events depicted have yet to happen. The interplay between present and past tense brings these events to immediate awareness, creating a conflation of past and present timelines.

Table 1. Themes in Jamaica Kincaid’s novel Lucy

Theme	Examples
1. Time (383)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning, day, night, future, past, and January</li> <li>• “Me happy now just to think of it, the other, my future. A gray blank.”</li> <li>• “If I had to draw a picture of my future then, it would have been a large gray patch surrounded by black.”</li> </ul>
2. Body (378)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mouth, feet, neck, hands, eyes, heart, stomach, head, throat, skin.</li> <li>• “As I opened my eyes...”</li> <li>• “I longed to see them dead at my feet.”</li> </ul>
3. Family (292)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I should regard them as my family and make myself at home.”</li> <li>• “I knew that such a thing would not be said to a member of their real family.”</li> </ul>
4. Feeling (258)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happiness, sadness, disappointment, fright, unhappiness, homesickness, surprise, rage, discontent, love.</li> <li>• “I only knew I felt a little like sadness, but heavier than that...”</li> </ul>
5. Housing (157)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I was only an unhappy woman living in a maid’s room, and I was not even the maid.” • “I always lived in a house, and my house did not have a refrigerator in it.”</li> <li>• “I was used to a small room, but this was a different sort of small room.”</li> </ul>
6. Woman (115)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “There was a girl being beaten by a man she could not see; on the other hand, there was a girl getting her throat cut by a man she could see.”</li> <li>• “I had known a girl, a schoolmate of mine, whose father had dealings with the devil.”</li> </ul>
7. Man (109)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I will make you fishers of men.”</li> <li>• “I was sucking the tongue of a boy named Tanner.”</li> <li>• “This was a nice trait in a man, and I made a note of it right away.”</li> </ul>
8. Mariah (181)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “This made Mariah laugh, but almost everything Lewis said made Mariah happy, and so she would laugh.”</li> <li>• “Mariah stood at the open window saying, ‘Catch her, Lewis, catch her!’”</li> <li>• “And I thought, ‘So Mariah is made to feel alive by some flowers bending in the breeze.’”</li> </ul>
9. Lucy (0)	//

## 2.1. Analysis of Themes and Motifs in *Lucy* by Jamaica Kincaid

The second key theme represented in the narrative concerns the use of body parts. References to the body appear 378 times in the text, accounting for both direct mentions and indirect allusions. The term “body” functions as a discursive marker, with body language playing a significant role in the creation and development of the character. When a word or phrase is quoted, it may point to specific textual goals; thus, it is necessary to consider the immediate context that allows for various interpretations. In this context, the primary lexical fields related to body parts include (mouth, feet, neck, hands, eyes, hearts, stomach, heads, throat). These elements are imbued with multiple symbolic meanings, and their interpretation heavily depends on the specific context of the narrative.

For example, the word “I” in the phrase “*as I opened my eyes*” connects the “I” and “eyes” to the idea of agency. The character has reached the ultimate goal of self-determination. When we read “eye” as something meaningful, it refers to the essence of being, and a crucial sense emerges: “I/eye” becomes the subject, not the object. Similarly, the statement “*I longed to see them dead at my feet*” emphasizes the relationship between “I” (the subject) and “foot” as an expression of power, where the foot becomes a symbol of submission or humility.

The term “stomach” clearly refers to a physical body part. However, except for “eye” and “skin,” the other body parts seem to refer to the physical dimension of the body. Yet, the ambiguity in sentences 2 and 6 about the possessor of “skin” and “eye” suggests that these body parts carry a deeper meaning beyond their simple physical reference. For “skin” and “eye,” one might infer that the character wishes to break from her homeland, with the metaphorical sense of homeland reflected in the color of the skin.

The third major theme in the narrative is that of family. The term “family” serves as a discursive marker, playing an important role in character development. Family is conceptualized as a spiritual value, representing love at home and in one’s homeland. In other words, family embodies the idea of making people happy and not leaving them in loneliness: “I should regard them as my family and make myself at home.” The word “family” is highlighted with its components, such as “I knew that such a thing would not be said to a member of their real family” or “my own family would not appear before me in one way or another,” underscoring the sense of loss and absence. The character seems to experience a disaster, a lack of family, where home is neither a place nor a truly comforting relationship. “I wondered what sort of parents I must have had” expresses this rupture, as if the character is in search of her origins, of a home that could never exist in her reality.

The idea of an “ideal home” is constructed around the following phrase: “the household in which I lived was made up of a husband, a wife, and four girl children.” This formulation evokes the image of a real family, with love, freedom, and equality. However, the use of “my own family” metaphorically refers to a home, a spatial and intimate world. Yet, the reality turns out to be disappointing for the character, who

asserts that "my own family would not appear before me in one way or another," thus highlighting a break from everything related to her familial past and homeland.

The analysis of emotions and their unfolding in the text also shows significant depth. The term "feeling" is used as a discursive marker to indicate the importance of emotions in the construction of the character. The text explores feelings such as joy, sadness, disappointment, fear, homesickness, surprise, rage, discontent, love, and mercy—common human experiences. The way the term "feeling" is used to describe the character's mental state reveals the internal mechanisms of Lucy's psyche.

The feeling of "homesickness" is particularly significant, whether due to geographical distance, the passage of time, or the material difference of "home." It heightens sensitivity to various kinds of loss. In examples such as "I only knew I felt a little like sadness but heavier than that...", the adjective "sad" is attributed to the abstract concept of "thoughts," which constitutes an interesting lexical deviation, reflecting the character's attempt to reinterpret her past memories, often associated with melancholy, in a new way.

In the discussion of the theme of home, the term "house" appears 157 times in the text, but its meaning extends beyond a mere physical shelter to denote a place of comfort, security, and family. The distinction between "house" and "home" is significant here. For example, "I was only an unhappy woman living in a maid's room, and I was not even the maid" evokes a physical space but also a lack of belonging, a "non-home." The word "room," as in "the room in which I lay was a small room just off the kitchen, the maid's room," connotes feelings of alienation and discomfort, contributing to the sense of never truly belonging to this place.

The theme of man and woman also manifests in the analysis of the terms "woman" and "man." The word "woman" is used to describe women in situations of physical and psychological violence, as in "there was a girl being beaten by a man she could not see," where the male element seems to be associated with domination and violence. On the other hand, the term "man" is used subversively to create female characters who, while exposed to male violence, exhibit a desirability that challenges patriarchal norms.

The spotlight on Lucy through her name in the title, but her absence in the narrative reference fields, highlights the ambiguity of her identity. The name "Lucy," which evokes both light and Lucifer, refers to a potential transformation—from a figure of shadow to one of light. This absence/presence underscores Lucy's quest for an identity that transcends the stereotypes and social expectations imposed on her gender and heritage.

Overall, this analysis of themes in *Lucy* by Jamaica Kincaid enhances the understanding of narrative constructions and linguistic representations in the novel. The text effectively explores the duality of identity, emotion, and exile, shedding light on the internal and external tensions of the character. The analysis could be further deepened by adopting additional theoretical perspectives (feminist, psychoanalytic, and postcolonial), especially in the discussion of Lucy's absence as a referenced character. Such an approach would enrich the interpretation of the themes of exile, identity, and the quest for self.

## 2.2. Linguistic Analysis of *Lucy* by Jamaica Kincaid: Language, Agency, and Identity

The linguistic analysis of *Lucy* by Jamaica Kincaid, focusing on the grammatical categories of verbs, adjectives, and modalities, offers insight into how language reflects the internal and external dynamics of the protagonist, Lucy. In this novel, the choice of verbs, pronouns, and adjectives goes beyond mere grammatical structure, acting as a reflection of the protagonist's emotional and psychological struggles, while also highlighting her perception of the world around her. The use of factive and reflexive verbs, alongside personal pronouns like "I," grants Lucy a certain agency while simultaneously emphasizing her passivity and emotional detachment from her environment. Subjective adjectives, often laden with negative connotations, underscore the themes of suffering, loneliness, and isolation that she faces, reinforcing the internal dissonance and marginalization that define her experience. Additionally, the modalities—particularly negation and time markers—reveal a fragmented worldview and a sense of resignation that pervades the narrative. This analysis demonstrates how Kincaid uses specific linguistic structures to express complex identity, psychological, and social issues, offering a window into the subtleties of the protagonist's lived experience.

Table 2. Verbs and Pronouns in Jamaica Kincaid's Novel *Lucy*

Verbs/Pronouns	Percentage (occurrence)
Factive	37.2 % (2777)
Stative	31.5 % (2350)
Reflexive	30.9 % (2304)
Performative	0.4 % (28)
I	47.5 % (2126)

In Kincaid's novel *Lucy*, verbs are frequently used with a human agent, and the pronoun 'I' (2126) often represents the subject-agent. For example, in the sentence, "I will make you fishers of men," the pronoun 'I', as though with its own power, becomes the subject-agent. Verbs such as talk (78), eat (30), and others that may include agency are used in the active form. Stative verbs are more frequent (2350), such as resemble, look, lie, feel, and see. The prevailing impression is that the female protagonist, Lucy, while highly aware of her surroundings, is distant and impotent in the face of her own power. This passive stance, emphasized by stative verbs, indicates her emotional and psychological detachment from her environment. In this novel, performative verbs are significantly less common (28). These verbs, which denote motion (such as come, do, go, leave, walk, grow, take), usually convey the idea of movement or action. Even some stative verbs often have meanings related to bodily location or posture, such as hold and stand.

Table 3. Grammar Word Category in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*

Adjectives	Percentage (occurrence)
Objective	61.3 % (1616)
Subjective	31.5 % (830)

The grammar word category is another crucial element in text analysis and understanding. In the most basic sense, this text includes two kinds of adjectives: objective (1616) and subjective (830), although the distinction is not always evident. Objective adjectives refer to physical or inherent features of an item or situation, such as red, yellow, white, black, or rose. On the other hand, subjective adjectives denote the female protagonist’s personal attitude toward an object or situation, or they evoke a specific image in the reader’s mind. Examples include hated, heavy, unhappy, cold, afraid, and alone. These emotional adjectives are predominantly negative, connected to themes of disempowerment, loneliness, and rough living. Adverbs and nouns also serve the same function, such as beautifully, awfully, carefully, and sadness. Furthermore, adjectives like cold, alone, bad, and strange emphasize strangeness or lack of definition, often with negative connotations. Some adjectives, such as cold, afraid, and alone, convey a sense of negativity (“not homely,” “feeling strange,” stressing the scene’s frightening emptiness). These adjectives contrast with a few terms that imply calmness, such as comfortable, good, or spring.

Table 4. Adjectives in Jamaica Kincaid’s Novel *Lucy*

Adjectives	Frequency	Percentages
Cold	20	
Alone	17	
Bad	15	
Strange	8	
Afraid	7	
Hated	5	
Heavy	5	
Unhappy	5	
Unusual	5	
Sad	5	

Regarding the use of modality, the most frequent type of modality in *Lucy* is modality markers of negation (747), followed by time markers (730), which reflect the temporal perspective of the speaker with respect to past, present, and future. Assertion modality markers (124) relate directly to the certainty of the occurrence of the event. For instance, “I could now look back at the winter” expresses a sense of retrospective certainty. Doubt modality markers (43) reflect the speaker’s ability to act, as in the example “I was reminded of how uncomfortable the new can make you feel.” Negation modality markers (747) convey the speaker’s certainty that a positive assertion is false. Examples include “I could not be the only person in the world” and “because the Devil cannot walk over water.”

Table 5. Modalities in Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy*

Modalities	Percentage (occurrence)
Time	24.2 % (730)
Place	14.3 % (432)
Manner	17.2 % (518)
Assertion	4.1 % (124)
Doubt	1.4 % (43)
Negation	24.8 % (747)

Negation is expressed with various negation markers. For instance, “I could not be the only person in the world” and “It would not be my last” express strong negations, while “must never stop” highlights an unavoidable negation, where the negative force applies not only to the verb would but also to must, indicating that it is inevitable that this is not the speaker’s last disappointment.

Overall, the analysis of Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy* reveals the writer’s use of certain linguistic patterns to reflect the protagonist’s post-feminist perspective and ambiguous positioning within the victim-victimizer archetype. The analysis also demonstrates how the study of literary texts provides valuable insights into linguistic and literary research. Through its examination of verbs, adjectives, and modalities, the analysis draws attention to the power of language in expressing the writer’s views, style, and worldview. Moreover, the use of linguistic software has proven to be an excellent tool

## Conclusion

This analysis of Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy*, based on a corpus, highlights the importance of applying computational text analysis in literary studies. By using a quantitative approach to examine patterns and frequencies in thematic occurrences, grammar, and linguistic choices, alternative readings emerge regarding an author’s narrative style, ideology, and characterization strategies. The frequency results reveal Kincaid’s post-feminist perspective through *Lucy*’s journey and metamorphosis toward female empowerment, breaking down the restrictive shackles of patriarchal norms.

More specifically, the use of a corpus-based tool helped uncover Kincaid’s attempt to depict an ambivalent female protagonist who vacillates between objectification and empowerment, impotence and self-agency. This ambivalence is evident in *Lucy*’s complex interactions with those around her and her struggle for autonomy. For example, in various passages, *Lucy* simultaneously rejects and seeks validation from others, demonstrating the tension between these dual forces. Furthermore, by emphasizing *Lucy*’s absence, the tool’s functionality strengthens her final presence as a diasporic heroine in this Bildungsroman. Although her identity remains fragmented and unresolved, *Lucy* persists with her performative and dynamic presence, embodying the contradictions of her postcolonial, feminist journey.

Corpus-based approaches play a crucial role in exploring the intricate relationship between language and literature, enabling scholars to detect patterns, trends, and nuances in language use, including vocabulary, syntax, and discourse markers. Through these techniques, researchers can unveil distinctive features of literary texts, analyze genres, and track linguistic changes over time. For instance, the frequent use of reflexive verbs, like “reflect” or “realize,” reveals *Lucy*’s internal struggle with her identity and her constant self-examination as she navigates the complexities of selfhood in a post-colonial context.

As demonstrated in Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy*, a corpus stylistic approach also provides valuable insights into the interpretation and meaning of the text. Analyzing linguistic patterns helps readers and researchers identify recurring themes and motifs, understand nuances in characters’ speech and thought processes, and evaluate the use of rhetorical

devices and figurative language. By focusing on lexical choices, like the recurrent use of adjectives such as "cold," "alone," and "strange," the analysis illustrates how Kincaid uses language to evoke a sense of alienation and disempowerment, themes that are central to Lucy's experience. Investing in corpus stylistic approaches provides fresh insights into interpretation and meaning by overcoming the subjectivity limitations associated with traditional methods. Corpus-based approaches contribute to a more objective understanding of the language used in literary texts by elucidating the inherent and distinctive attributes present within them.

This method entails a discerning exploration of the nuanced elements that differentiate one literary work from another, a thorough examination of the diverse genres that encompass a broad spectrum of creative expressions, and a meticulous observation of how language undergoes transformation over time. Such a scholarly endeavor not only reveals the richness and complexity inherent in literary expressions but also provides profound insights into the dynamic interplay between cultural shifts and linguistic evolution. The scholarly pursuit of understanding literature in this manner contributes to a deeper appreciation of the multifaceted dimensions of literary works and their significance in reflecting and shaping societal and linguistic dynamics.

By integrating computational tools into literary analysis, researchers can extend the boundaries of traditional literary criticism and reveal new dimensions of meaning in texts. This intersection of technology and literary studies has the potential to deepen our understanding of how language shapes narratives, characters, and themes, particularly in the works of authors like Kincaid, whose complex representations of identity and empowerment demand a multifaceted analytical approach.

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## Abstract

This study explores the potential of corpus stylistics in literary analysis by focusing on the thematic and grammatical features of Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy* (1990). The paper examines the first three chapters of the novel, utilizing computational tools to assess the frequency and distribution of various grammatical units. By applying feminist stylistic theory, this analysis reveals how Kincaid employs language to highlight Lucy’s evolution from an objectified figure, passive and defined by male gaze, to an active and desiring subject striving for self-empowerment. The study shows how the protagonist navigates both the victim and victimizer roles, demonstrating a complex post-feminist positioning. The use of corpus-based methods uncovers the subtleties of Lucy’s character and provides a more objective, data-driven perspective on feminist themes within the text.

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## Keywords

Corpus-based approach, Corpus stylistics, Feminist stylistics, Post-feminism, Caribbean literature

## مستخلص

تندرج هذه الدراسة ضمن أسلوبية المتون وتتمقق في الاستخدام الموضوعي والنحوي في رواية لوسي لجامايا كينكايد (1990) لتسليط الضوء على قيمة الأساليب المعتمدة على المتون الحسائي في تحليل النصوص الأدبية. على وجه التحديد، تتناول هذه الورقة الموضوعات الرئيسية وتكرار الوحدات النحوية في الفصول الثلاثة الأولى من العمل التي تشكل اختيارات المؤلف الأسلوبية. ومن خلال تقييم النتائج في ظل نظريات النقد الأدبي الأسلوبية النسوية، يكشف تحليل موضوعات ونحو السرد عن موقف الكاتبة من خلال كشف تحول لوسي من كونها باحثة عن الهوية الذاتية وكائنًا أبكًا لنظرة الذكور إلى شخصية ذات موضوع جنسي نشيط ورغبة يسعى لتحقيق أهدافه. علاوة على ذلك، يتم تصوير البطلة على أنها موضوع لرغبة الذكور وموضوع جنسي يبحث عن الحرية، وتحلل جانبي النموذج الأصلي للضحية والمعتدي.

## كلمات مفتاحية

المتون على القائم النهج، المتون، أسلوبية النسوية الأسلوبية، النسوية بعد، ما الكاريبي الأدب

## Résumé

Cette étude se concentre sur l'utilisation de la stylistique de corpus pour analyser les aspects thématiques et grammaticaux dans le roman *Lucy* (1990) de Jamaica Kincaid. En examinant les trois premiers chapitres du roman à travers des outils informatiques, l'analyse quantifie la fréquence et la répartition des unités grammaticales. En appliquant les théories de la stylistique féministe, cette étude montre comment Kincaid utilise la langue pour illustrer la métamorphose de Lucy, d'un être objectifié et passif sous le regard masculin, à un sujet sexuel actif, désirent s'autonomiser. L'étude met en lumière la manière dont la protagoniste navigue entre les rôles de victime et de bourreau, reflétant ainsi une position post-féministe complexe. L'utilisation des méthodes basées sur les corpus permet de révéler des subtilités du personnage de Lucy et fournit une perspective plus objective et fondée sur les données pour appréhender les thématiques féministes du texte.

## Mots-clés

Approche basée sur les corpus, Stylistique de corpus, Stylistique féministe, Post-féminisme ; Littérature caribéenne