



Abdeljalil Mortad's Reception of Stylistics

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Abstract:

Modern Western stylistics, with their diverse orientations, have secured a prominent presence within Algerian scholarship through processes of introduction, translation, and practice. This engagement has extended beyond mere appropriation to include the critical evaluation of stylistics and the proposition of alternatives, particularly at the level of its operative terminological system. Among the Algerian scholars who have ascribed considerable attention to stylistics in their writings is Abdeljalil Mortad. By relying on description, analysis, and the deduction of findings, this study seeks to examine works that address stylistics in terms of their conceptual grounding, definition, and application while endeavouring to respond to the following problem: how did Abdeljalil Mortad receive and engage with modern Western stylistics?

Keywords: *stylistics, linguistic stylistics, structural stylistics, Abdeljalil Mortad*

La réception de la stylistique par Abdeljalil Mortad

Résumé :

La stylistique occidentale moderne, avec ses diverses orientations, s'est imposée dans le monde universitaire algérien à travers des processus d'introduction, de traduction et de pratique. Cet engagement a dépassé le simple cadre de l'appropriation pour inclure l'évaluation critique de la stylistique et la proposition d'alternatives, en particulier au niveau de son système terminologique opérationnel. Parmi les universitaires algériens qui ont accordé une attention considérable à la stylistique dans leurs écrits figure Abdeljalil Mortad. En s'appuyant sur la description, l'analyse et la déduction des résultats, cette étude vise à examiner les travaux qui traitent de la stylistique en termes de fondement conceptuel, de définition et d'application, tout en s'efforçant de répondre à la question suivante : comment Abdeljalil Mortad a-t-il reçu et abordé la stylistique occidentale moderne ?

Mots clés : stylistique, stylistique linguistique, stylistique structurelle, Abdeljalil Mortad



Introduction

Scholars working within the fields of modern linguistic studies, literary criticism, and rhetoric strikingly employ the terms "style" and "stylistics." The first of these, "style," demonstrates a breadth of usage and variance in meaning across different disciplines, as well as within a single field, from one scholar to another and across distinct historical periods. In contrast, the degree of divergence is considerably less in the case of the second term, "stylistics," which is generally confined to the domain of literary studies, to which it has been intrinsically linked and whose emergence belongs to the modern era.

Modern Western stylistics, with their various orientations, have established a significant presence in Algerian scholarship through processes of introduction, translation, and practice. This engagement has further extended to the evaluation of stylistics and the proposal of alternatives, particularly at the level of its instrumental terminological system. Among those scholars who have devoted serious attention to stylistics in their writings is the Algerian researcher Abdeljalil Mortad. Our study will be confined to three of his works: *In the World of Text and Reading*, *Linguistic Stylistics*, and finally, *The Linguistic Structure in the Epistle of the Lizard* by al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī.

1. The Problem of Defining Stylistics

Arab scholars engaged in stylistic studies received the term "stylistics" from various Western sources, and their translations of this term and its related concepts diverged

accordingly. The majority of these translations oscillated between two renderings: "the science of style" and "stylistics." As one scholar has observed, the study of style began to shift in a different direction when it approached the field of linguistic studies to the extent that it acquired a distinctive designation within European languages: in German, *Stylistik*; in French, *Stylistique*; and in English, *Stylistics*. Some researchers translated this into Arabic as علم الأسلوب ("the science of style"), whereas others rendered it as الأسلوبية ("stylistics"), with a number of them preferring the latter.

In his introduction to his translation of Pierre Guiraud's *Stylistics*, Mundhir 'Ayyāshī defined the term أسلوبية ("stylistics"), beginning from its importance and affirming the difficulty of delimiting its boundaries and grasping the essence of its concept. He states, "Stylistics today is the study of language; it is also the study of the human being who is transformed by language; it is, moreover, the study of the creative work, as well as the study of its own creative operation within the artistic work. Since it is thus defined, we can understand why it resists codification and systematisation, as was once the case with rhetoric. Equally, we can recognise that it seizes upon fleeting moments captured through a composition immortalised by writing, as well as upon transient moments embodied in works that have been definitively accomplished."

Pierre Guiraud defines stylistics while affirming their inheritance from rhetoric, grounding their position in a diachronic examination of the concept and the dynamics of its formation. He writes, "We may say that stylistics is a modern rhetoric in a twofold form: it is the science of expression, and it is the critique of individual styles.



However, this definition emerged only gradually, just as the new science of style was slow in determining both its objectives and its methodologies. Novalis was the first to employ this term, and for him, stylistics was indistinguishable from rhetoric. Later, in 1837, Hielang would regard it as a rhetorical science, and if we consider the Latin books of stylistics, we shall see that they were nothing more than manuals of rules and examples. Forcester, in 1846, similarly viewed it in this manner."

This French linguist traces the relationship between the words "style" and "stylistics," endeavoring to understand the latter on the basis of the former and articulating his terminological conception of stylistics: "Style is defined, within its limits, as the distinctive quality of an act of expression, and we might conceive 'general stylistics' as a study of the relations between form and the ensemble of communicative causes [...]. Stylistics, as we conceive it and as we have described it in this book, remains a study of linguistic expression. If we return the word 'style' to its original definition, it means the manner of expressing thought by means of language." In his work, Guiraud thus embraces the idea that stylistics are the heir of ancient rhetoric, revitalised in the classical age, where it was transformed into what we know as stylistics: "Rhetoric, as to its place and its limits, is the stylistics of the ancients; it is the science of style."

Jamīl Hamdawi, in his book *Currents in Stylistics*, condenses the concept in a brief yet focused manner, drawing upon the definitions of his predecessors without explicitly citing them. He writes, "Stylistics [*Stylistique*] is the scientific study of style in its diverse linguistic, structural,

semiotic, and hermeneutical manifestations. It is also a modern branch of linguistics alongside poetics, semiotics, and pragmatics and is concerned with describing style in terms of structure, meaning, and intentionality. Stylistics, therefore, examines style in its phonetic, phonological, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic dimensions. It is thus preoccupied with uncovering the characteristics of both literary and nonliterary styles, inventorying their distinctive properties, and identifying their individual features. Stylistics also engages with literary genres and the modalities of text composition, ultimately in pursuit of literariness.”

Ṣāliḥ Faḍl, in his book *The Science of Style: Its Principles and Procedures*, acknowledged that the term *‘ilm al-uslūb* (“the science of style”) is synonymous with *al-uslūbiyya* (“stylistics”), a position that many contemporary Arab scholars have followed. In the introduction to the aforementioned work, he states, “These few pages aim, with intent and clarity, to illuminate a branch of the human sciences still in its youth, one that has not yet received in the Arabic language the care and attention it deserves; for, despite the apparent authenticity of its roots in our culture at first glance, and despite the availability of outwards reasons for its growth among us, its role as legitimate heir to the aged rhetoric which, having reached senescence, was condemned by the development of modern arts and letters to barrenness derives from diverse lineages. It descends from two youthful parents: modern linguistics (or *al-lisāniyyah*, if we wish to assign to it a term more compatible with its maternal role in engendering stylistics), on the one hand, and aesthetics, which exercised the paternal role in its earliest stages, on the other.”



2. The Subject and Function of Stylistics

Nabil Rāghib, in his *Encyclopaedia of Literary Theories*, attempts to define stylistics by delineating their function. He writes, "Stylistics began as a literary theory derived from linguistics, even though linguists had insisted on distancing their science from the field of literary criticism. However, they later returned to it, employing their tools and linguistic methodologies in the study of the literary text. This is what is now understood as stylistic theory, which places the science of style in the hands of the critic as a preliminary step to assist him in understanding literary work as objectively as possible. [...] Stylistics applies linguistic research methods to the literary text, particularly in what are known as levels of analysis." The author of the encyclopaedia emphasises here the study of the distinctive expressive potential of the writer's work.

Jamīl Hamdawi, in his study *Currents in Stylistics*, devoted a specific section to the subject matter of stylistics. He writes, "The subject of stylistics is style in general; however, stylistics also raises other topics for discussion, analysis, and investigation, among which are: writing and composition; enunciation; the binary of denotation and connotation; the binary of explicitness and suggestion; the binary of coherence and cohesion; the question of deviation; the issue of aesthetic distance in its relation to the postponement of the horizon of expectation; the issue of generic classification and literary taxonomy in light of stylistic and formal criteria; the concern with literariness; the study of the poetic function and the tracing of rhetorical figures; the study of speech act theory; and attention to the duality of word and meaning, or signifier and signified."

Notably, Hamdawi expands the domains of stylistic inquiry, moving beyond the dictum of Buffon and those who drew upon his legacy in textual criticism towards reception theory and pragmatic approaches.

Scholars relied upon what Ṣalāḥ Faḍl presented in his aforementioned study, wherein he distinguished two orientations within the science of style. The first is the science of style, which examines the relationship between form and thought in general, corresponding perhaps to ancient rhetoric. The second is the science of individual style, which, in reality, is a critique of style through the study of the relationship between expression and the individual or collective subject that generates and employs it. From this perspective, it is a generative study rather than an evaluative or normative study. [...] The science of the style of expression remains within the limits of language itself and does not transcend its facts. In contrast, the science of individual style investigates this same expression in relation to the speakers who employ it. It is thus evident that the first orientation is grounded in description and inference, with its domain being semantics and the study of meaning; the second orientation is generative, situated within literary criticism, and aims to uncover the motivations and causes underlying linguistic structures.

ʿAbd al-Salām al-Masaddī, in expanding upon the subject of stylistics, emphasised the fluidity of its conceptual boundaries, which vary according to the intellectual assumption of the one defining it. Each stylistic orientation determines the object of stylistics, and sometimes even within the same orientation, every scholar may set distinct contours and scopes for its study. He elucidates the subject of stylistics as conceived by its founder, Charles Bally:



"Stylistics seeks to trace the imprints of emotive charge in discourse in general or what J. Mounin calls the 'deformation' that discourse inflicts upon the hearer in a kind of contagion. It thus concerns itself with the affective dimension of linguistic phenomena, focusing on probing the affective density with which the speaker invests in his discourse through its marked usage. Accordingly, Bally defined stylistics as concerned with phenomena of verbal expression and with the effects of speech phenomena on sensibility. The essence of stylistics, in Bally's view, lies in the expressive resources of language that foreground affective, volitional, aesthetic, and even social and psychological distinctions. It is, therefore, first revealed in ordinary, spontaneous language use before it manifests in artistic work."

Al-Masaddī further reviews several definitions of stylistics that closely relate it to linguistics. He begins, for instance, with Arrivai, who maintains that "stylistics is the description of the literary text according to methods derived from linguistics." Dolat, likewise, affirms, "Stylistics is to be defined as a linguistic method." Rivardièrè's definition, moreover, establishes the subject of stylistics while explicitly linking it to linguistics: "Rivardièrè defines stylistics as a science aimed at uncovering those distinctive elements through which the author is able to shape and at times to control the receptive perception of the reader, and through which he can also impose upon the receiver his own viewpoint in comprehension and interpretation. Ultimately, then, stylistics is a form of linguistics concerned with the phenomenon of directing the mind toward a particular understanding and specialised perception."

3. Abdeljalil Mortad's Reception of Stylistics

Modern Western stylistics, with their diverse orientations, achieved a notable presence within Algerian scholarship through its processes of introduction, translation, and application. This engagement even extended to the critical evaluation of stylistics and the proposal of alternatives, particularly at the level of its operative terminological system. Among those scholars who devoted sustained attention to this methodological approach in their writings is the Algerian researcher Abdeljalil Mortad. Our investigation will be confined to three of his works: *In the World of Text and Reading*, *Linguistic Stylistics*, and *The Linguistic Structure in the Epistle of the Lizard* by al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī. This sequence of works dictated the methodological order in the reading and analysis undertaken here.

3.1 The grounding of Arabic stylistics

In his book *In the World of Text and Reading*, Abdeljalil Mortad devoted the seventh and final chapter to stylistic reading, entitling it *Reading between Normativity and Stylistics*. He commenced the discussion by posing the question of the nature of normativity, confining his answer to Georges Mounin's definition of normativity as "an attitude toward speech, called normative [*normatif*] when it rests upon an ideal norm [*idéale*] and a fixed convention [*figé*] that refuses new forms produced by an uncontrollable evolution in language." Mortad observes that normativity relies upon sociolinguistic standards that are far removed from linguistic standards.

He then turns to early Arabic normativity, restricting himself to three poetic examples, each consisting of a single verse, followed by a report attributed to 'Umar ibn al-



Khaṭṭāb. Mortad interprets these instances as early linguistic-critical readings provoked by the phenomenon of departing from familiar and established norms. Such readings, he argues, reflect a perception of the text, whether presented in written or oral form, as a unified system, in which every component contributes to the overall interaction or cumulative construction that builds from the zero point to the conclusion of the sentence or text. From this perspective, writers may or may not have been conscious of the systematic quality of their practice.

What is particularly striking in Mortad's view is his acknowledgement that such traditional linguistic-critical readings "correspond to what has come, in the course of this century, to be called 'style' and 'stylistics.' Even the strict normative rules that were devised for Arabic indicate a comprehensive reading that integrates grammar, morphology, prosody, phonology, and rhetoric." In this affirmation lies Mortad's insistence on the originality of stylistic reading or its equivalent in the heritage of Arabic critical scholarship.

Abdeljalil Mortad then proceeded to discuss the early indications of normativity corruption before turning to the conflict between normativity and occasional deviations from it. He then presented a model of early normative reading, as affirmed by Ibn Qutaybah in *The Poets and Poetry*, concerning the issue of expression and meaning. Mortada dates the beginning of the revolt against normativity to the outset of the second Islamic century.

The subsequent section, which Mortad entitled *Qur'anic Readings as the First Arabic Stylistics*, stands as an explicit assertion of the awareness among the ancients of what we

today call stylistics, or its equivalent. He establishes that their entry into this mode of reading, which was later theoretically founded in the West during the modern era, demonstrates the capacity of the classical Arabic linguistic tradition to interpret language through language. Mortad regards this normative exegesis as "the ultimate achievement of contemporary linguistic theories, which have come to designate it 'immanence,' since Saussure adopted this principle."

Mortad discussed normativity as conceived by both Arabs and Westerners and then proceeded to consider the relationship between normativity and innovation. In doing so, he sought a concept that would differentiate between *style* and *stylistics* under the heading "*Style or Stylistics*." He reiterated the intimate relationship between stylistics and rhetoric, underscoring the frequent conflation of the two. He declared, "Stylistics is a contemporary rhetoric in its twofold form: it is the science of expression and the critique of individual styles." His statement reveals three crucial implications: first, the inheritance of rhetoric by stylistics, with the latter having taken the place of the former; second, the association of stylistics with expressive stylistics; and third, its fusion with individual stylistics.

Mortad here repeats, although without attribution, what Pierre Guiraud had previously affirmed in his *Stylistics*: "We may say that stylistics is a modern rhetoric in its twofold form: it is the science of expression and the critique of individual styles. This definition emerged only gradually, just as the new science of style was late in identifying its aims and methodologies."

Mortad then reviewed the stylistics of Charles Bally, the *functional stylistics* of Trotsky, structuralist stylistics as



developed by Jakobson and Michael Riffaterre, and finally Georges Mounin's threefold classification of stylistics according to its historical evolution: ancient rhetoric, hereditary stylistics, and descriptive stylistics.

From the foregoing, it becomes clear that Mortad insists upon three essential conclusions: that stylistics was born from linguistics; that early Arabic critical readings practised a form of stylistics insofar as they interpreted language through language; and that stylistics inherited from, and constituted a continuation of, ancient rhetoric, thereby assuming the position of modern rhetoric.

3.2 Introducing Modern Western Stylistics

One of the first points that arrests the reader's attention in Abdeljalil Mortad's study, *Linguistic Stylistics*, is his addition of the term "stylistics" to "linguistics," which contrasts with Ulrich Bauschl's study, entitled *Linguistic Stylistics*, which Khalid Mahmoud Juma'a translated as الأسلوبية اللسانية ("linguistic stylistics"). In Mortad's work, linguistics is the primary discipline, with stylistics as its subsidiary. In contrast, in Bauschl's study, stylistics is the primary discipline, with linguistics positioned as its subsidiary in singular form.

The book notably lacks a preface or introduction, a common feature in many of Mortad's works, wherein he might have explained the rationale behind his choice of title. Mortad divided his book into thirteen sections, which, in our view, he numbered without naming each section or chapter.

He begins with structuralism and the rules of linguistic analysis, followed by an examination of the linguistic system. Thereafter, he addresses the text, both as known and

unknown, and then the linguistic system at the level of the text. Michel Arrivé and literary semiotics succeeded this. The sixth section, titled *Linguistic Stylistics*, is followed by the eighth section, which concerns language and style. The eighth section also addresses the components of literary work and literary work through the lens of the utterance. The tenth section is dedicated to enunciation, then the study of speech connectors, then the section on inferential relations, and finally, *linguistic temporal placement*.

Notably, the absence of an introduction or preface is a recurrent feature in much of Mortad's oeuvre.

Notably, the book's main title—linguistic stylistics—appears as the title of the sixth chapter, reminiscent of the practice of ancient authors, who named the whole work after one of its parts. For this study, we limit ourselves to examining the sixth chapter, along with the subsequent chapter, entitled '*Language and Style*,' owing to their relevance to our inquiry.

The author begins his chapter by defining style from a general linguistic perspective, surveying definitions offered by modern linguists as presented in *Dictionnaire de la linguistique* by John de Beaugrande and others, as well as in *Dictionnaire de didactique des langues* (translated as *Dictionary of Language Teaching Methods*), edited by Daniel Coste and Robert Galisson.

He then proceeds from defining style to defining stylistics, opening with a discussion of the distinctions between the two terms. He states, "Returning to linguistically reliable sources, we find that stylistics is not style; as style encompasses styles, so stylistics encompasses stylistics. While the former is an original and more universal phenomenon and is more closely connected to language



itself its techniques, embellishments, ornaments, rules, and rhetoric, the latter pertains strictly to speech and its performance. In simple linguistic terms, style is associated with ideal linguistic competence, whereas stylistics is closely linked to performance or individual, emotional speech.”

The scholar does not merely reproduce these sources but endeavours to analyse, critique, and question their content; for example, he asks: “Assuming the certainty of the linguistic perspective outlined above, can we describe every oral linguistic utterance as stylistics, while categorising all other written genres as mere manifestations of style? It is indisputable that adopting such a stance leads to a complicated process of classification owing to the absence of artistic and aesthetic criteria, which encompass both genres.”

He concludes by endorsing Georges Mounin’s definition of stylistics in his *Keys to Linguistics (Clés pour la linguistique)*, where Mounin asserts that stylistics “must be the scientific study of literary linguistic techniques, whereby an utterance merits special attention when it additionally fulfils a poetic or literary function, or more broadly, an aesthetic function, beyond its ordinary communicative role.”

Mortad reiterated what he had previously posited in his book concerning the evolution of stylistic studies, relying on Mounin’s triadic classification of this development into ancient rhetoric, hereditary stylistics, and descriptive stylistics. Although Mortad sought to reformulate the essence of these three directions in comparison with his earlier work, *in the World of Text and Reading*, the core remains the same, with some sentences repeated verbatim.

Mortad proceeds to define stylistics as per Charles Bally, offering simplified examples illustrating the realisation of

ideas in language during emotional states. He then discusses the “stylistics of unexpected utterances,” highlighting his view on whether stylistics belong to language or to discourse. His perspective leans more decisively towards certainty than conjecture: stylistics comprises communicative acts transmitted from a speaker to a receiver or exchanges occurring between individuals in unexpected linguistic forms.

Seeking to dispel any ambiguity surrounding this claim, Mortad presents a model drawn from the *Mu‘allaqat* of Imru‘ al-Qays, entitling the analysis *Style and Stylistics in the Mu‘allaqa of al-Marqūsi*.

He locates the essence of stylistics in deviation from the conventional and its abandonment, responding to critics of Imru‘ al-Qays who reproached him for violating established norms by speaking in the style of the Bedouins and failing to respect the elevated status of his station as prince. Mortad counters: “Indeed, this is precisely stylistics; because, in our conception, stylistics does not simply mean producing new rhetoric, or altering what cannot be altered, or omitting what cannot be omitted, or shortening the long vowel and lengthening the short, or codifying what should not be codified; rather, it is deviation from trivial styles and the speaker’s expression of his immediate position, not his social status.”

From this example, Mortad concludes that if one were to draw a pedagogical distinction between style and stylistics, one could affirm that style is a predictable linguistic phenomenon, whereas stylistics is an unpredictable discourse phenomenon.

He concurs with Charles Bally on the latent nature of stylistics within an integrative context where the unexpected



signals a departure from conventional rhetorical tools. Mortad quotes Bally: “Here, we fully agree with Charles Bally, who called for the investigation of emotionally significant units that are collectively accepted by language users, rather than searching for the conceptual or cognitive meaning of units; otherwise, we find ourselves revolving within the orbit of style.”

This section, therefore, emphasises stylistics as an affective, communicative phenomenon that defies predictability and transcends conventional linguistic norms.

The inclusion of *linguistic stylistics* within Abdeljalil Mortad's definition of modern Western stylistics is confirmed by his tracing of Western stylistic trends among Spitzer, Bally, and Jakobson. Mortad carefully follows the differences among these theorists, acknowledging the difficulty of reaching consensus on a unified term for stylistics to the extent of conceptual contradictions. He notes the influence of Bally, the founder of stylistics, by his mentor Saussure. Although Saussure's thought clearly marks the origin, Mortad relies on Bernard Pottier's work, which states, “From the foregoing, it becomes evident to us that stylistics is plural – *stylistiques* – and by this we do not mean the individual, exceptional stylistics of the speaker, for that would lead us to talk about style in its horizontal, rhetorical, and aesthetic ambiguities, but rather, a defined set of stylistics which their theorists whether positivists, idealists, grammarians, rhetoricians, or linguists claim to be scientific.”

Mortad then offers Riffaterre's structuralist definition of stylistics, followed by Riffaterre's concepts of style and the “archillecteur” or ideal reader, along with the notion of the

stylistic context (*le contexte stylistique*). He acknowledges Riffaterre's recognition of contradictions in the terminology used for these two concepts, alongside Riffaterre's attempt to distance himself as far as possible from Saussurean linguistics, a shadow Mortad deems still pursues the field, particularly with respect to bipolar terms and other dichotomies. In his criticism of these issues, Mortad noted that stylistics are a phenomenon within the broader category of subordinate linguistic phenomena.

Mortad then traces the historicity of the emergence of stylistics, considering the advent of its terminology and the evolution of its concept. He reviews five levels of stylistic study, as identified by Bally, beginning with general stylistics; then, the stylistic sources of language in general and in particular; second, individual stylistics or the expressive system of an isolated individual; second, the stylistics of the writer or the speech of the orator; and, finally, the stylistics of spoken discourse. He follows this with an outline of the emergence of what he terms "substylistics": phonological stylistics, comparative stylistics, and contrastive stylistics. Mortad highlights the importance of the lexical and syntactic levels in conveying a linguistic message and provides illustrative examples for these levels as well as for the phonological level.

In defining structuralist stylistics, Mortad addresses the new linguistic vision and the connection between structuralist stylistics and the linguistic system, emphasising that stylistics has deep historical roots and is not a recent invention. He critically reflects on previous discussions, conceding: "The linguistic ideas that emerged modestly at the end of the previous century and persist today are dry concepts lacking scientific fertility and a new linguistic



revolution that would supersede classical stylistics. These classical stylistics are clearer and more comprehensive than any new form of stylistics; however, much of them may be applied textually and practically, merely attempting to supply procedural tools that, while they do not deny God's grace, I find myself able to manage without. The old, strong rhetorical tools resist being entirely replaced."

Mortad then considers the function of stylistics as conceived by Riffaterre in his discourse on media stylistics and the text, where the reader occupies the central role. The goal of stylistics, accordingly, is "to diagnose the reader's response to the text and to identify the source of these emotional reactions within the form of the text." He explains that stylistics is essentially the study of the ideal reader (*archillecteur*), understood as the sum of all readers (*des somme de tous les lecteurs*), the one endowed with a high degree of culture, attuned to the few units with which the author has equipped his text. Mortad also notes Riffaterre's conceptualisation of the text as a "bundle of effects" (*effet*).

His seventh chapter focuses specifically on language and style, endeavoring to answer the question of language through a definition of style, which he considers an intrinsic feature. Mortad further examines the relationship between style, stylisation, language, and style itself, leading to a discussion of three types of style and their locus, drawing upon the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences du langage*. He compares the perspectives of Roland Barthes and Pierre Guiraud on the concept of style, citing Buffon's famous statement. Notably, Mortad does not merely adopt the Arabic translations of this statement from previous Arab translators but also produces his own version, which is

consistent with his practice in all his translations. He noted that “knowledge, facts, and discoveries were easily removed, transformed, and made to succeed in becoming a work of art by more skilled hands; all these things lie outside the human being, for style is the man himself. Style, therefore, cannot be erased, transferred, or distorted.”

Mortad concludes this chapter with a discussion of the concept of style according to the idealist school.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the Algerian researcher Abdeljalil Mortad, in the chapter dedicated to linguistic stylistics and the subsequent one, did not merely introduce the Arab reader to the principles, trends, and concepts of this stylistics, as well as its prominent procedural tools developed by its pioneers and founders an effort that deserves commendation and praise, reflecting Mortad’s extensive familiarity with this field of linguistic studies but further advanced to critique and analyse these views, illustrating them to simplify and clarify, thus removing ambiguity. He went beyond this to translate key statements from prominent stylisticians and authors of specialised dictionaries in linguistics and stylistics, translating their terminology and employing coinage extensively, thereby enriching the terminological system of this linguistic-stylistic domain.

3.3 The Practice of Structuralist Stylistics

In his book *The Linguistic Structure in the Epistle of the Lizard* by al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī, specifically in the second chapter entitled *The Stylistic Structure of the Epistle of the Lizard*, Abdeljalil Mortad offers a stylistic reading of the epistle by the Algerian author al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī. He begins the first section by defining stylistics in terms of



stylistic structure, reviewing the concept from the perspective of its founder Charles Bally, the failure to develop a Saussurean stylistic theory, questioning whether it is stylistic or stylistic in plural, focusing on descriptive stylistics, and delineating the fields of stylistics, culminating with Riffaterre's structuralist stylistics and Foorming's call to separate language from literary work. Mortad then questions the reasons for the disappearance of literary essays from Algerian newspapers, adopting the premise that al-Risāla al-Ḍabb (the Epistle of the Lizard) functions as a literary journalistic essay.

In the second section, which spans no more than two pages and is entitled *The Stylistics of the Epistle of the Lizard*, Mortad defines the literary identity of the epistle as follows: "If we have judged the identity of the manuscript (the Epistle of the Lizard) as the product of refined literary linguistics, situated within the domain of literary proposals and disputations, then our emphasis on rhetoric and pragmatics designates it as a linguistic subject. From this primary standpoint, our text is closed, specified in time and space, or structurally bounded, and rejects any extraneous material or referent to be considered in stylistic study from a linguistic perspective."

This framing underscores Mortad's rigorous linguistic approach in treating the text as a firmly delimited linguistic artifact.

The actual practice of stylistics begins with the final section entitled *Stylistic Phenomena in the Epistle of the Lizard*, which the researcher opens with the heading *First Analysis*, followed by *a structural descriptive stylistic phenomenon*. This is succeeded by seven successive analyses in which the text

is divided into seven units that Mortad analyses descriptively and stylistically. He acknowledges the difficulty of rigorously adhering to procedural methods: "Here, we encounter two contrasting models in al-Ibrāhīmī's work, but it is difficult for us, at least at this juncture, to count as descriptive stylistics anything more than what constitutes a contemporary, widespread expression in modern Arabic. Descriptive stylistics does not ask, 'Why did so-and-so write thus?' but rather, 'How does so-and-so write thus?' Even this latter question, however, was often addressed by classical rhetoric."

He concludes this chapter by admitting that some experts may view his descriptive stylistic practice as departing from a strictly analytical and descriptive stylistic method owing to its synchronisation of present commitment with historical depth. Mortad comments: "One might say that what we discuss has no connection with any descriptive or even hereditary stylistics. In reality, however, we are firmly committed to the view that it is impossible to separate what is contemporary partially or entirely from what is historical. Consequently, it is difficult, indeed impossible, to envisage descriptive stylistics independent of a normative background."

Mortad further emphasises in his aforementioned book that methodologies themselves ought to undergo critical reading, dedicating Chapter Four to the title "*When al-Ibrāhīmī's Memory Overflows*." He writes, "It is absurdly laughable to speak of a fixed method for reception, since every reception is in itself a method. It follows then that methodologies must themselves be subject to readings, and for each reception, there exist many methodologies, which may succeed or fail, thereby causing others to fail or succeed



[...]. Furthermore, the authority of the text is absolute, yet criticism cannot escape its inherent self-referential closure, even if it wishes. We remain steadfast in our approach, which some might consider savoury irony mockingly enjoyed before its inviolable sanctity, unmatched except by its surface form.”

Whether Mortad’s stylistic analyses strictly adhere to the procedures of descriptive stylistics as viewed by Western theorists or transcend them, his linguistic stylistic analyses unmistakably bear his personal imprint, demonstrating a notable ability to exploit stylistics and enrich al-Ibrāhīmī’s text with critical insight.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the Algerian researcher Abdeljalil Mortad did not limit himself to introducing the Arab reader to the principles, trends, concepts, and primary procedural tools of stylistics as developed by its pioneers and founders, an endeavour deserving of recognition and praise, reflective of Mortad’s extensive mastery of this field of linguistic studies. Instead, he went further by engaging in critical commentary, analysis, and exemplification to simplify and clarify these ideas, thereby dispelling ambiguity. Moreover, he translated key statements from leading stylisticians and authors of specialised dictionaries in linguistics and stylistics, translating their terminology and extensively employing neologisms to enrich the terminological system of this linguistic–stylistic domain. Finally, Mortad advanced

the practical application of stylistic analysis, making the method subordinate to the text itself.

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13. Ibid., pp. 48–49.



14. Ibid., p. 49.
15. 'Abd al-Jalīl Murtaḍā, *In the World of Text and Reading*, Dīwān al-Maṭbū'āt al-Jāmi'iyya, Algiers, 2007, p. 183.
16. Ibid., p. 186.
17. Ibid., p. 186.
18. Ibn Qutayba, *Poetry and Poets*, p. [page not specified].
19. 'Abd al-Jalīl Murtaḍā, *In the World of Text and Reading*, p. 198.
20. Ibid., p. 205.
21. Pierre Guiraud, *Stylistics*, p. 9.
22. 'Abd al-Jalīl Murtaḍā, *Linguistic Stylistics*, Dār Hūmah, Algiers, 2nd ed., 2016, p. 105.
23. Ibid., p. 105.
24. Ibid., pp. 106–107. Reference to Georges Mounin, *Clés pour la linguistique*, p. 15.
25. Ibid., p. 105.
26. A critique attributed to Imru' al-Qays in the lines:
27. لنا غم تسوقها غزار كان قرون جلتها العصي
28. فتملاً بيتنا أقطا وسمنا وحسبك من غنى شيع وري
29. قول أعرابي متلفع في شملته لا تجاوز همته ما حوته خيمته
30. 'Abd al-Jalīl Murtaḍā, *Linguistic Stylistics*, p. 112.
31. Ibid., p. 112.
32. Ibid., p. 115.
33. Ibid., p. 118.
34. Ibid., p. 125.
35. Ibid., p. 142.
36. Ibid., p. 143.
37. Shukrī 'Iyād, *The Concept of Style Between Critical Heritage and Attempts at Renewal*, p. 53; 'Abd al-Salām al-Masaddī, *Style and Stylistics*, pp. 66–67; Ṣalāh Faḍl, *The Science of Style: Its Principles and Procedures*, pp. 95–96.

38. ‘Abd al-Jalīl Murtaḍā, *Linguistic Stylistics*, p. 153.
39. ‘Abd al-Jalīl Murtaḍā, *The Linguistic Structure in the Epistle of the Lizard* by al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī, Dār Hūmah, Algiers, 2014, p. 62.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 117.