



## A CORPUS-BASED STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE LORD OF THE ICE MOON BY MICHAEL CARROLL

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### Abstract

This study applies corpus-based stylistic analysis to *The Lord of the Ice Moon* by Michael Carroll, a contemporary science fiction novel that combines speculative world-building with character-driven narrative. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of corpus linguistics and corpus stylistics, as advanced by scholars such as Sinclair and Biber, the research integrates quantitative computational methods with qualitative literary interpretation to uncover the distinctive linguistic and stylistic features of the text. A specialized corpus was constructed from the full text of the novel and analysed using AntConc 4.2.0 and python-based tools to examine word frequency distributions, keyword prominence, collocational patterns, and concordance lines. The findings were benchmarked against a reference corpus of general fiction to identify linguistically marked features unique to Carroll's text. The analysis reveals a high frequency of lexemes clustered around the semantic fields of power, conflict, environment, and emotion, which directly reflect the novel's dominant thematic concerns. Distinctive collocational patterns were found to play a significant role in character portrayal and the construction of the novel's icy, hostile setting. Furthermore, recurring lexical clusters were identified as key mechanisms for building narrative tension and sustaining thematic coherence across the text. The study demonstrates that corpus-based methodologies offer an empirically grounded complement to traditional literary criticism, enabling scholars to move beyond impressionistic readings toward data-supported stylistic interpretations. The findings affirm the broader applicability of corpus stylistics as a rigorous analytical tool within literary studies, digital humanities, and genre-based linguistic research, with relevance to the study of science fiction and fantasy literature.

**Keywords:** *Corpus Linguistics, Corpus Stylistics, Literary Analysis, Michael Carroll, Science Fiction, The Lord of the Ice Moon.*

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## 1. Introduction

Corpus stylistics has gained prominence as an interdisciplinary approach that integrates quantitative linguistic analysis with qualitative literary interpretation. Rooted in the foundational work of Sinclair (1991), which emphasizes the importance of collocation and patterned language, and further developed by Biber et al. (1998), corpus linguistics provides systematic tools for examining linguistic regularities in texts. Subsequent contributions by McEnery and Hardie (2012) highlight the methodological robustness of corpus-based approaches in analyzing discourse, while Semino and Short (2004) demonstrate their applicability to literary texts, particularly in uncovering patterns of narration, speech, and thought presentation. More recent studies, such as Matt Davies and Cheng (2021), further emphasize advances in constructing and comparing literary corpora.

Despite these developments, contemporary science fiction remains underexplored within corpus stylistics, particularly in relation to how linguistic patterns construct characterization and narrative environments. This study addresses this gap by applying a corpus-based stylistic analysis to *The Lord of the Ice Moon* by Michael Carroll, a novel that combines speculative world-building with character-driven narrative.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how recurring stylistic features contribute to meaning-making in the text through empirical linguistic analysis. Specifically, the study examines how linguistic patterns shape characterization, construct a hostile setting, and sustain narrative tension and thematic continuity.

The significance of the study lies in its contribution to both corpus linguistics and literary studies. By providing a data-driven analysis of a contemporary science fiction text, the research demonstrates the applicability of corpus stylistics beyond traditional literary genres and supports the argument, advanced by Brezina (2018), that statistical methods enhance interpretative rigor in textual analysis. Furthermore, it contributes to digital humanities by integrating computational tools with close reading.

The objectives of the study are to

1. Identify the recurring stylistic choices in *The Lord of the Ice Moon* and examine how they contribute to character construction within the novel's hostile setting; and
2. Analyze how stylistic features sustain narrative tension and maintain thematic continuity throughout the text.

Through this approach, the study aims to demonstrate that literary meaning is not only interpretive but also systematically encoded in linguistic patterns.

Research questions of the study are

1. What are the recurring stylistic choices in *The Lord of the Ice Moon*, and how do they contribute to character construction within the novel's hostile setting?
2. How do stylistic features contribute to the development of narrative tension and the maintenance of thematic continuity throughout the text?

## 2. Literature Review

Corpus stylistics has emerged as a powerful interdisciplinary approach that combines the empirical strengths of corpus linguistics with the interpretative focus of literary analysis. It is grounded in the premise that meaning in texts is not solely derived from subjective interpretation but is systematically encoded through recurring linguistic patterns. The foundational work of Sinclair (1991) established the importance of collocation and concordance in understanding language, arguing that words derive meaning from their habitual co-occurrence rather than from isolated usage. This perspective shifted linguistic and stylistic analysis toward pattern-based approaches, laying the groundwork for corpus stylistics as a discipline.

Building on Sinclair's work, Biber et al. (1998) introduced a multidimensional approach to corpus linguistics, demonstrating that frequency distributions and co-occurring linguistic features can reveal functional variations across different registers and genres. Their work highlights how quantitative analysis can uncover underlying discourse structures, making it highly relevant for stylistic investigation. Similarly, McEnery and Hardie (2012) emphasized the methodological rigor of corpus linguistics, particularly the integration of computational tools for analysing large datasets. They argue that corpus-based methods provide replicable and objective insights into language use, which can significantly enhance literary analysis by moving beyond impressionistic readings.

Within the field of literary studies, corpus stylistics has been effectively applied to examine narrative techniques, characterization, and thematic development. Semino and Short (2004) conducted a seminal study on speech and thought presentation, demonstrating how corpus methods can systematically identify patterns in narrative discourse. Their work shows that linguistic features such as reporting verbs, pronouns, and syntactic structures play a crucial role in shaping narrative perspective and character representation. This approach highlights the importance of integrating linguistic evidence into literary interpretation, particularly in understanding how authors construct fictional worlds and characters.

Culpeper (2009) further advanced the field by applying keyness analysis to literary texts, specifically examining character talk in Shakespearean drama. His study demonstrates that keywords and frequent lexical patterns can be used to distinguish character identities and roles within a narrative. By identifying statistically significant lexical items, Culpeper (2009) shows how corpus methods can provide objective evidence for characterisation, reinforcing the idea that stylistic features are systematically patterned rather than randomly distributed. This approach is particularly relevant for studies that aim to explore how language contributes to character construction in fiction.

Another important contribution to corpus stylistics is the concept of semantic prosody introduced by Louw (1993). Semantic prosody refers to the evaluative meaning

that arises from the consistent collocation of a word with particular semantic environments. For example, a word may acquire positive or negative connotations depending on the words it frequently co-occurs with. This concept is highly relevant to literary analysis, as it enables researchers to identify underlying attitudes, tones, and thematic associations within a text. By examining collocational patterns, researchers can uncover subtle layers of meaning that may not be immediately apparent through traditional close reading.

In addition to these theoretical contributions, methodological advancements have played a crucial role in the development of corpus stylistics. Rayson and Garside (2000) introduced frequency profiling techniques that allow researchers to compare corpora and identify keywords using statistical measures such as log-likelihood. This method enables the identification of distinctive lexical items that characterize a particular text or genre. Similarly, Dunning (1993) proposed statistical methods for identifying significant patterns in language, particularly in cases of rare events, while Church and Hanks (1990) developed measures such as mutual information (MI) to analyse word associations and collocations. These statistical tools provide a robust framework for identifying meaningful patterns in textual data, making corpus stylistic analysis more precise and reliable.

More recent developments in corpus stylistics have focused on expanding its scope and addressing methodological challenges. Davies and Cheng (2021) discuss the complexities involved in constructing and comparing literary corpora, particularly issues related to representativeness, text selection, and comparability. Their work highlights the importance of carefully designed corpora in ensuring the validity of stylistic analysis. Similarly, Pechenick et al. (2022) explore the use of large-scale corpora to analyse literary evolution, demonstrating how computational methods can reveal long-term trends and patterns in literary production. These studies reflect a growing interest in applying corpus-based approaches to a wider range of literary contexts, including contemporary and genre-specific texts. Brezina (2018) further contributes to the field by providing a comprehensive guide to statistical methods in corpus linguistics, emphasizing the importance of methodological transparency and accuracy. His work underscores the role of statistical analysis in validating linguistic findings and ensuring that interpretations are supported by empirical evidence. Additionally, Blythe and Hasselgård (2020) extend corpus stylistics beyond traditional literary texts by focusing on variation and stylistic patterning across different types of discourse. Their study demonstrates that corpus methods can be applied not only to canonical literature but also to a wide range of textual forms, highlighting the versatility of corpus stylistics as an analytical framework.

Despite these significant contributions, there remains a noticeable gap in the application of corpus stylistics to contemporary science fiction. Much of the existing research has focused on canonical literary texts, such as Shakespearean drama or classic prose fiction,

with relatively limited attention given to modern genre fiction. Science fiction, in particular, presents unique stylistic challenges and opportunities, as it often involves complex world-building, speculative settings, and the representation of non-human entities such as aliens. These features require specialized linguistic strategies that have not been extensively explored through corpus-based methods.

Furthermore, while previous studies have examined individual stylistic features such as keyness, collocation, or speech presentation, relatively few have adopted a comprehensive, multidimensional approach that integrates multiple corpus techniques within a single analysis. For instance, the combined examination of frequency patterns, semantic fields, collocational structures, modality, and narrative progression can provide a more holistic understanding of how meaning is constructed in a literary text. The lack of such integrated studies limits our understanding of how different stylistic features interact to produce complex narrative effects, such as characterization, tension, and thematic coherence.

Another important gap lies in the analysis of how linguistic patterns simultaneously construct both characterization and setting, particularly in hostile or speculative environments. While studies such as Semino and Short (2004) and Culpeper (2009) have focused on character representation, and others have examined thematic or narrative structures, few have explored the interaction between character and environment as mediated through language. In science fiction, this interaction is especially significant, as characters are often defined in relation to unfamiliar or extreme environments, such as alien planets or hostile ecosystems.

Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by applying a comprehensive corpus stylistic analysis to *The Lord of the Ice Moon* by Michael Carroll. By integrating multiple analytical techniques, including frequency analysis, keyword identification, collocation, semantic field analysis, and modality, the study aims to provide a detailed account of how recurring linguistic patterns contribute to characterization, narrative tension, and thematic continuity. In doing so, it extends the application of corpus stylistics to contemporary science fiction and demonstrates the value of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in literary analysis.

### 3. Methodology

A specialized corpus was constructed from the full narrative text of *Lords of the Ice Moons* (Chapters 1–40, excluding the scientific appendices in Part II). The corpus comprises 73,545 words and 74,950 total tokens across 7,354 sentences. Analysis was conducted using AntConc 4.2.0 and Python-based corpus tools examining word frequency distributions, type-token ratios, semantic field membership, collocational patterns, n-gram frequencies, modality markers, and character co-occurrence across narrative thirds.

Table 1: Overview of Corpus Frequencies

Corpus Metric	Value
Total Word Tokens	74,950
Unique Word Types	7,776
Total Sentences	7,354
Average Sentence Length	10.12 words
Type-Token Ratio (raw)	0.1037
Mean Segmental TTR (1000- word chunks)	0.4710
Dialogue Proportion	45.6% (33,539 words)
Narration Proportion	54.4% (40,006 words)
Novel Chapters Analysed	40 chapters

This study adopts a corpus-based stylistic approach to analyse *The Lord of the Ice Moon* by Michael Carroll, combining quantitative corpus techniques with qualitative literary interpretation. The analysis focuses on word frequency, keyword analysis, collocation, and concordance lines. Frequency lists were generated to identify high-occurrence lexical items, while keyword analysis was conducted by following frequency profiling methods. Additionally, semantic field analysis was employed to group lexical items into thematic categories such as power, conflict, environment, and emotion. Concordance analysis was used to interpret these patterns in context, enabling qualitative insights into characterization, narrative tension, and thematic development. This integrated methodology ensures a systematic and empirically grounded stylistic analysis of the text.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

##### 4.1. RQ1: What are the recurring stylistic choices in *The Lord of the Ice Moon*, and how do they contribute to character construction within the novel's hostile setting?

###### 4.1.1. Overview of Stylistic Patterning

The corpus evidence demonstrates that *The Lord of the Ice Moon* is shaped by systematic recurring stylistic choices, particularly in: lexical repetition (character names, thematic keywords), semantic field clustering, collocational patterning, and dialogue-heavy structure

According to Douglas Biber et al. (1998), frequent linguistic patterns reflect functional dimensions of discourse, meaning that repetition is not redundancy but a marker of communicative and stylistic purpose. Similarly, John Sinclair (1991) argues that meaning is constructed through collocation and repeated co-selection of words, rather than isolated vocabulary.

#### 4.1.2. Character Construction through Lexical Repetition

Table 2: Key Character Frequencies

Character	Frequency	Stylistic Function
Gwen	671	Central focalization
Tony	296	Action-oriented support
Rhodes	228	Authority/conflict
Kyv	130	Alien emergence

The extremely high frequency of “Gwen” (671 occurrences) establishes a strong focalized narrative perspective, confirming that characterization is constructed through lexical prominence and repetition. This aligns with Culpeper (2009), who demonstrates that keyness and frequency patterns are central to character construction, especially in dialogue-driven texts. Gwen’s repeated presence linguistically encodes: psychological centrality, narrative authority, and reader alignment

In contrast, Rhodes’ frequency combined with collocates like “*colonel*” and “*sir*” constructs him as a figure of institutional power, supporting Michael Stubbs-aligned views that lexical clusters encode social roles and hierarchies.

#### 4.1.3. Semantic Fields and Character–Environment Interaction

Table 3: Dominant Semantic Fields

Semantic Field	Frequency	Character Function
Journey & Movement	547	Exploration identity
Science & Technology	394	Rational/analytical traits
Power & Control	366	Authority conflict
Emotion & Psychology	187	Internal states
Ice & Cold	155	Environmental pressure

The interaction between character-related fields (emotion, power) and environmental fields (ice, water, cold) reveals that characterization is contextually embedded within setting.

Following Tony McEnery & Andrew Hardie (2012), semantic field analysis allows identification of discourse domains shaping meaning. In this case characters are constructed as explorers (Journey field), scientists (Science & Technology field) and agents within hierarchical systems (Power & Control field). At the same time, the Ice & Cold field (155 occurrences) situates characters in a hostile environment, reinforcing their vulnerability, resilience and adaptive behavior.

#### 4.1.4. Collocational Patterns and Character Meaning

Table 4: Key Collocations

Node Word	Collocates	Stylistic Effect
Power	plants, our	Dual meaning (energy + authority)
Naiads	are, were, have	Observational construction
Water	under, through, trouble	Danger framing

Collocation analysis, following Church and Hanks (1990), reveals patterned associative meanings that extend beyond individual lexical items. For instance, the node “power” frequently co-occurs with both technological and authoritative lexis, suggesting that characters are positioned simultaneously within scientific and political domains. Similarly, the collocation of “Naiads” with stative verbs such as “are” and “were” constructs these entities as objects of perception rather than active agents, thereby reinforcing an anthropocentric narrative perspective. In addition, the recurrent pairing of “water” with “danger” encodes the environment not as a passive backdrop but as an active force shaping character decisions. This pattern aligns with Louw’s (1993) concept of semantic prosody, which posits that repeated collocational environments imbue lexical items with evaluative meaning; in this case, cumulatively constructing the setting as implicitly threatening.

#### 4.1.5. Dialogue and Stylistic Realization of Character

The corpus shows 45.6% dialogue with high-frequency clusters: “*Gwen said*”, “*I don’t*”, “*need to*” This aligns with Elena Semino & Mick Short (2004), who emphasize that speech presentation is central to characterization. Moreover dialogue contributes to immediacy of character voice as epistemic uncertainty (“*I don’t*”) and urgency (“*need to*”). Thus, characters are constructed not only descriptively but performativity through speech.

#### 4.1.6. Hostile Setting as a Stylistic Construct

Table 5: Environmental Lexis

Category	Examples	Function
Cold/Dark	ice, cold, dark	Hostility
Depth	deep, ocean	Vastness
Danger	trouble, under	Threat

The repetition of environmental lexemes creates what Rayson and Garside (2000) describe as frequency-based distinctiveness, marking the text against general fiction. Characters are therefore constructed in opposition to the environment Gwen as resilient

observer, Tony as active responder and Rhodes as controlling authority. The hostile setting is not passive; it functions as a stylistic pressure shaping character identity.

#### **4.1.7. Stylistic Choices and Character Construction**

Drawing on Brezina (2018), statistical patterns in corpus data reveal systematic stylistic design rather than random variation. The study shows that characterization emerges through a range of interconnected stylistic mechanisms. Firstly, lexical repetition establishes narrative centrality, particularly through the frequent occurrence of the protagonist Gwen, which reinforces her dominant role in the narrative. Secondly, semantic field patterns contribute to role construction, positioning characters as scientists, explorers, or authority figures within the discourse. Thirdly, collocational patterns encode ideological meanings, as words associated with power, danger, and alienness shape how characters and situations are interpreted. In addition, dialogue plays a crucial role in creating psychological realism and immediacy, allowing characters to express uncertainty, emotion, and interaction dynamically. Finally, environmental lexis, especially related to ice, cold, and hostile surroundings, exerts external pressure on characters, influencing their behavior and identity. Together, these stylistic features demonstrate that characterization is not explicitly stated but emerges through systematic linguistic patterning.

The recurring stylistic choices in *The Lord of the Ice Moon* construct characterization through a dynamic interaction between language, environment, and narrative function. Characters are not isolated entities but are linguistically shaped by repeated lexical prominence, thematic semantic fields, collocational meaning patterns and dialogic expression.

Simultaneously, the hostile icy setting is encoded through dense environmental lexis, which positions characters in a constant state of negotiation with danger, uncertainty, and discovery. In line with corpus stylistic theory (Sinclair 1991; Biber et al. 1998), the findings confirm that characterization is an emergent property of patterned language use, rather than purely interpretive reading.

### **4.2. RQ2: How do stylistic features contribute to the development of narrative tension and the maintenance of thematic continuity throughout the text?**

#### **4.2.1. Stylistic Patterning and Narrative Function**

The corpus analysis demonstrates that narrative tension and thematic continuity in *The Lord of the Ice Moon* are not incidental but are systematically constructed through recurring stylistic features, including: lexical clusters and n-grams, modality and epistemic markers, semantic field repetition, sentence structure and dialogue patterns.

According to Douglas Biber et al. (1998), recurrent linguistic patterns serve specific discourse functions, while McEnery and Hardie (2012) argue that such patterns create textual cohesion and progression. In this novel, these features collectively sustain both tension (dynamic progression) and continuity (thematic stability).

**4.2.2. Lexical Clusters and Narrative Tension**

Table 6: Key Lexical Clusters

Cluster	Frequency	Function
the naiads	84	Central thematic anchor
the ice	72	Environmental tension
need to	50	Urgency marker
of course	42	Natural dialogue
i don't	33	Uncertainty marker

The repeated use of clusters such as “need to” (50) and “I don’t” (33) plays a crucial role in building narrative tension. As “*need to*” encodes urgency and obligation and “*I don’t*” signals uncertainty and incomplete knowledge. This supports John Sinclair (1991), who emphasizes that meaning emerges from repeated phraseology rather than isolated words. These clusters create a persistent sense of instability, essential for tension in a first-contact narrative.

**4.2.3. Modality and Epistemic Uncertainty**

Table 7: Modal Distribution

Category	Frequency	Key Markers	Function
Hedging	571	could, might, maybe	Uncertainty
Certainty	269	will, must	Control/assertion
Obligation	267	need, should	Urgency

The dominance of hedging markers (571) over certainty markers establishes an epistemically uncertain narrative world, where knowledge remains provisional and incomplete. Drawing on modal theory associated with corpus-based insights from Brezina (2018), the high frequency of hedging plays a crucial stylistic role in shaping narrative tension. Such markers delay resolution, sustain suspense, and reflect the characters’ limited understanding of their environment and situation. For instance, the frequent use of “*could*” (222 occurrences) signals possibility rather than certainty, while expressions like “*might*” and “*maybe*” further reinforce ambiguity and doubt. This persistent uncertainty aligns with the conventions of first-contact science fiction, where the unknown and the unpredictable are central to the narrative. Consequently, uncertainty itself becomes a key driver of tension, keeping both characters and readers in a continuous state of anticipation and cognitive engagement.

#### 4.2.4. Semantic Fields and Thematic Continuity

Table 8: Recurring Semantic Fields

Semantic Field	Frequency	Role
Journey & Movement	547	Structural progression
Science & Technology	394	Rational framework
Power & Control	366	Conflict continuity
Alienness & Discovery	323	Core theme
Ice & Environment	155	Setting continuity

The repetition of these semantic fields ensures thematic continuity across the narrative, contributing to a cohesive textual identity. As noted by Davies and Cheng (2021), stable thematic domains within a corpus play a crucial role in maintaining coherence and consistency. In this novel, the “Journey and Movement” field supports ongoing plot progression by foregrounding exploration and spatial transition, while the “science and technology” field anchors the narrative in a framework of realism and scientific plausibility. At the same time, the “Alienness and discovery” field sustains the thematic focus on first contact, ensuring that the central speculative premise remains prominent throughout the text. Therefore, thematic continuity is achieved not merely through repetition, but through structured and systematic semantic patterning that reinforces key narrative concerns across different stages of the novel.

#### 4.2.5. Collocation and Thematic Reinforcement

Table 9: Collocational Meaning Patterns

Node Word	Collocates	Narrative Effect
Ice	moons, lords	Thematic repetition
Water	under, trouble	Danger framing
Power	plants, our	Dual thematic role
Naiads	are, were	Observational tone

Following Church and Hanks (1990), collocations reveal associative meaning networks that extend beyond isolated lexical items and contribute to broader discourse effects. These patterns generate tension through danger-associated collocates such as “water” and “trouble,” while also establishing continuity through repeated thematic pairings like “ice” and “moons,” which reinforce the text’s cohesive imagery. Additionally, Louw (1993) emphasizes the role of semantic prosody, whereby recurrent collocational patterns encode evaluative meaning. In this case, environmental terms consistently exhibit negative prosody, cumulatively constructing the setting as hostile and reinforcing an atmosphere of threat.

#### 4.2.6. Narrative Structuring through Character Distribution

Table 10: Character Emergence across Narrative Thirds

Phase	Key Feature	Tension Effect
Early	Human conflict (Rhodes, Gwen)	Initial tension
Middle	Expansion (Tony, Taina)	Rising action
Late	Naiads emergence	Climax

The delayed emergence of Naiads, marked by a surge in the final third of the narrative, functions as a deliberate stylistic strategy that postpones resolution, escalates suspense, and aligns with a classical narrative structure in which key revelations are deferred until the climax. This distributional pattern is not incidental but systematically encoded through the temporal spacing of lexical items. As argued by Pechenick et al. (2022), large-scale corpus patterns can reveal narrative evolution by tracking how lexical distributions shift over the course of a text. In this case, the gradual increase in alien-related lexis operates to sustain tension, guiding the reader toward a climactic convergence where the narrative's central conflict is ultimately foregrounded.

#### 4.2.7. Sentence Structure and Narrative Pace

Table 11: Sentence Distribution

Type	Percentage	Effect
Short (<8 words)	42.7%	Rapid pacing
Medium	50.1%	Narrative flow
Long	7.1%	Reflection moments

The dominance of short and medium-length sentences contributes significantly to fast pacing, heightened tension, and overall readability, enabling the narrative to maintain a dynamic and accessible flow. This syntactic pattern, when combined with the substantial proportion of dialogue (45.6%), produces a strong sense of dramatic immediacy. As argued by Semino and Short (2004), such stylistic features foreground the immediacy of events and interactions, thereby sustaining reader engagement and intensifying emotional involvement throughout the narrative.

#### 4.2.8. Lexical Repetition as Thematic Cohesion

The repetition of key lexical items such as “ice” (98), “power” (121), and “naiads” (115) ensures that central themes remain continuously activated throughout the text, reinforcing their salience in the reader's cognitive processing. Such patterned recurrence is not merely redundant but functionally significant, as it contributes to both thematic prominence and textual cohesion. As argued by Scott (1997) and Rayson and Garside (2000), keyword repetition serves to distinguish thematic focus while structuring discourse in a coherent and interpretable manner. At the same time, variation within these repeated

patterns allows for narrative progression, preventing monotony while enabling semantic development. Thus, repetition operates as a mechanism of continuity, whereas controlled variation within repetition facilitates narrative development.

Drawing on Brezina (2018), statistical regularities in corpus data was interpreted as evidence of systematic stylistic design rather than random distribution. In this framework, narrative tension is sustained through a combination of linguistic strategies, including epistemic uncertainty marked by hedging expressions, the use of urgency markers such as “need to,” delayed revelation exemplified by the late emergence of Naiads, and rapid pacing achieved through short sentences and frequent dialogue. At the same time, thematic continuity is maintained through the repetition of semantic fields, the persistence of stable lexical clusters, consistent collocational patterns, and the recurrence of environmental and scientific lexis. Together, these features demonstrate how micro-level linguistic choices aggregate into macro-level narrative effects, reinforcing both tension and coherence across the text.

The analysis demonstrates that stylistic features in *The Lord of the Ice Moon* function as mechanisms of narrative control, simultaneously sustaining tension and ensuring thematic coherence. This is achieved through high-frequency hedging and modality, which introduce epistemic uncertainty; recurring lexical clusters that reinforce thematic salience; structured repetition of semantic fields that maintain conceptual continuity; and collocational meaning patterns that encode evaluative associations. Together, these linguistic strategies produce a narrative that is both dynamically suspenseful and thematically unified. In line with corpus stylistics theory (Sinclair, 1991; Biber et al., 1998), these findings confirm that narrative tension and continuity are not merely interpretive constructs but are systematically encoded through patterned language use.

## 5. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated the effectiveness of corpus stylistics in uncovering the linguistic patterns that shape characterization, narrative tension, and thematic continuity in *The Lord of the Ice Moon*. By integrating quantitative corpus methods with qualitative literary analysis, the research moves beyond impressionistic interpretation toward a more systematic and evidence-based understanding of style. In line with the frameworks proposed by Sinclair (1991) and Douglas Biber et al. (1998), the findings confirm that meaning is constructed through recurring lexical, semantic, and collocational patterns.

The analysis shows that characterization is achieved through lexical prominence, semantic field associations, and dialogic structures, while the hostile setting is constructed through dense environmental lexis. At the same time, narrative tension is sustained through hedging, modality, and delayed lexical revelation, and thematic continuity is maintained through repeated semantic domains and keyword patterns.

Overall, the study highlights the value of corpus stylistics as a rigorous analytical tool in literary studies and demonstrates its particular relevance for analysing contemporary science fiction, where language plays a crucial role in shaping speculative worlds and narrative experience.

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