مجلة الدراسات المستدامة
P-ISSN(Print) : 2663-2284
E-ISSN(online): 2663-7413
السنة (٨) المجلد (٨) العدد (٤) تشرين الأول . لسنة ٢٠٢٦م - ١٤٤٨ هـ

# Child Labor Representation in the Discourse of Global North Organizations: A Critical Stylistic Analysis

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## Abstract

Child labour has become a major social, educational and rights-based concern affecting the development, safety, education and childhood of children.In this regard, the present study aims to investigate how child labour is represented by global North organisations. In trying to explore the way some organisations create child labour through linguistic and stylistic choices, it also aims to uncover the ideological meanings behind their language. The study adopts Jeffries' (2010) Critical Stylistics model as an analytical framework to achieve these objectives. The analysis is based on a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative interpretation with quantitative frequency analysis. The data comprises chosen English press releases from three Global North organizations: UNICEF, Save the Children, and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). The study concentrates on nine textual-conceptual tools: Naming and Describing, Representing Actions/Events/States, Equating and Contrasting, Exemplifying and Enumerating, Prioritizing, Implying and Assuming, Negating, Hypothesizing, and Presenting Others' Speech and Thought. The study comes up with the following conclusions:(i) The analysis demonstrates how Global North organizations convey child labor as a situation of risk, deprivation, and violation of rights by portraying children as vulnerable victims and rights-bearing individuals in need of protection. (ii) The discourse fosters a rescue-oriented ideology by emphasizing education, protection, and institutional intervention as appropriate responses to child labor while portraying child labor as incompatible with proper childhood.

**Keywords: (**Child labor, Global North, Representation, Critical Stylistic, Victims).

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# تمثيل عمالة الأطفال في خطاب منظمات الشمال العالمي: تحليل أسلوبي نقدي

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## الملخّص

أصبحَ عملُ الأطفال قضيةً اجتماعية وتربوية وحقوقية رئيسة تؤثّر في نموّ الأطفال وسلامتهم وتعليمهم وطفولتهم. وفي هذا السياق، تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى استقصاء الكيفية التي يُمثَّل بها عملُ الأطفال في خطاب منظمات الشمال العالمي. ومن خلال محاولة الكشف عن الطريقة التي تُنشئ بها بعض المنظمات مفهوم عمل الأطفال عبر اختياراتها اللغوية والأسلوبية، تهدف الدراسة أيضًا إلى إظهار المعاني الأيديولوجية الكامنة وراء لغتها. ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف، تعتمد الدراسة أنموذج جيفريز (Jeffries, 2010) في الأسلوبية النقدية بوصفه إطارًا تحليليًا. ويستند التحليل إلى منهج مختلط يجمع بين التفسير النوعي وتحليل التكرارات الكمي. وتتكون بيانات الدراسة من بيانات صحفية إنجليزية مختارة صادرة عن ثلاث منظمات من الشمال العالمي، وهي: اليونيسف، ومنظمة إنقاذ الطفل، ولجنة الإنقاذ الدولية. ويركّز التحليل على تسع أدوات نصية–مفهومية، وهي: التسمية والوصف، وتمثيل الأفعال/الأحداث/الوقائع ، والمساواة والمقابلة، والتمثيل والتعداد، والتقديم والتأخير، والإيحاء والافتراض، والنفي، والافتراض الاحتمالي، وعرض خطاب الآخرين وأفكارهم. وتوصّلت الدراسة إلى النتائج الآتية:

(أولًا) يبيّن التحليل كيف تُشيّد منظمات الشمال العالمي عمالة الأطفال بوصفها حالة من الخطر والحرمان وانتهاك الحقوق، وذلك من خلال تمثيل الأطفال بوصفهم ضحايا ضعفاء وذواتٍ حاملةً للحقوق تحتاج إلى الحماية.

(ثانيًا) يعزّز الخطاب أيديولوجيا ذات توجّه إنقاذي من خلال إبراز التعليم والحماية والتدخل المؤسسي بوصفها استجابات ضرورية لعمالة الأطفال، في حين يُقدَّم عمل الأطفال بوصفه أمرًا غير منسجم مع مفهوم الطفولة السليمة.

الكلمات المفتاحية:(عمالة الأطفال، الشمال العالمي، التمثيل، الأسلوبية النقدية، الضحايا).

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The Problem

Global organizations predominantly characterize child labor as a humanitarian, educational, and rights-based issue. However, the problem extends beyond the mere occurrence of child labor; it also encomasses the way it is constructed through language. Organizations like UNICEF, Save the Children, and IRC employ particular linguistic choices to depict children, poverty, education, protection, and institutional responsibility. While child labor has been examined from social, legal, and economic viewpoints , there has been insufficient focus on the stylistic and ideological representations by organizations in the Global North Therefore, the current study examines how selected tools from Jeffries's Critical Stylistics model reveal the representation of child labor as a condition of danger, deprivation, and lost childhood. It also investigates how children are portrayed as vulnerable victims, rights-bearing subjects, or limited agents within organizational discourse. Therefore, the current study aims to answer the questions:

1. How do Global North organizations use language and critical stylistic strategies to construct the representation of child labor in their discourse?
2. What dominant ideological meanings are embedded in the representation of child labor in Global North organizations' discourse?

3. How do selected tools from Jeffries's Critical Stylistics model contribute to constructing child labor as a humanitarian, educational, and rights-based issue?

4. How are children represented in Global North organizations' discourse: as passive victims, rights-bearing subjects, or agents with voice?

**1.2 The Aims**

The current study aims to:

1. Examine the stylistic and linguistic features used by Global North organizations to represent child labor.

2. Analyze how rescue-oriented discourse is constructed through selected tools from Jeffries's Critical Stylistics model.

3. Investigate how UNICEF, Save the Children, and IRC represent child labor as a humanitarian, educational, and rights-based problem.

4. Explore how children are linguistically portrayed as vulnerable victims, rights-bearing subjects, and, in some cases, as voices within institutional discourse.

**1.3 The Hypotheses**

Based on the questions and the aims that have been above-mentioned, the current study hypothesizes that:

1. Global North organizations predominantly construct child labor through a rescue-oriented discourse that emphasizes children's vulnerability, deprivation, and need for protection.

2. Linguistic features like Naming and Describing, Representing Actions/Events/States, Prioritizing, Implying and Assuming, and Negating play a major role in constructing child labor as a serious humanitarian and rights-based problem.

3. Children are represented mainly as affected participants or victims of poverty, exploitation, conflict, and institutional failure, especially through passive constructions and negative lexical choices.
4. Although Global North discourse mainly foregrounds children's vulnerability, it may also include limited forms of children's voice and agency through direct speech, reported speech, and rights-based expressions.

**1.4 The Procedures**

This study will contain the following steps:
1. Conducting a detailed theoretical background on the study's theory and concept.
2.Creating an analytical model based on Jeffries' (2010) Critical Stylistics, with nine tools and subcategories.
3. Purposefully selecting samples from the discourse Global North Organizations 2022 and 2025 to serve as study data.
4.Using a mixed approach for the analysis.
5.Quantitative analysis and statistical discussion of the data to identify the frequency of stylistic tools.
6.Concluding the study, making recommendations and suggestions for further study.

**1.5 The Limits**

The study is limited to a critical stylistic approach that investigates the concept of child labor representation linguistically in selected three English press releases from Global North organizations namely, UNICEF, Save the Children and The International Rescue Committee (IRC). Furthermore, the study is analyzed according to the adapted model based on Jeffries' (2010) Critical Stylistics framework, concentrating on nine textual-conceptual tools.

### 1.6 The Value

The research is anticipated to be beneficial for individuals engaged in Critical Stylistics, discourse analysis, and child labor studies. Applying Jeffries' (2010) model within the discourse of Global North organizations clarifies the representation of child labor through specific linguistic and stylistic choices. Additionally, it offers practical insights into how organizations construct child labor as a humanitarian, educational, and rights-based issue, and how such discourse may influence public perception of children as vulnerable victims, rights-bearing subjects, or voices in need of protection and support.

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Style and Stylistics: Definitions

The term "style" originates from the Greek and Latin terms "stilus," denoting a little stick utilized by the Romans for writing on wax tablets. The term "style" is currently employed interchangeably and has become ambiguous (Tayeva & Orazbekova, 2020). Verdonk (2002) and Finch (2003) characterize style as the distinctive application of language to achieve particular objectives. Diverse choices may yield varied forms and effects. Van Gelderen and Strazny (2005, p. 1043) assert that definitions of style vary significantly, encompassing concepts such as "a choice of linguistic means," "deviation from a norm," "recurrence of linguistic form," and "comparison."

Stylistics is a branch of macrolinguistics that examines and analyzes the style of a writer or individual. It relates to both spoken language and literary and non-literary texts (Baldick, 2001; Hashim, 2018). Simpson (2004) characterizes stylistics as a text analysis methodology that is exclusively dependent on language. Due to diverse forms, patterns, and levels of linguistic structures, stylists regard language as highly significant. These linguistic structures are a crucial indicator of

the text's intent. Davies (2007) also highlights Widdowson's concept of stylistics (1975), a discipline that merges literature and language. Consequently, stylistics addresses both literary and non-literary genres, helping readers in understanding their content and revealing underlying structures.Thus, the stylist prioritizes the effect of a certain text over its attachment to English or any other dialect of the language. Leech (2008) asserts that stylistics bridges the gap between linguistic and literary studies. Stylistics is a scientific discipline that connects with other fields. It has expanded beyond just linguistic expressions to include pragmatics and other linguistic fields (Jamal & Jasim, 2024).

### 2.2 Critical Stylistics: An Overview

Critical stylistics is a linguistic approach that examines the social implications inherent in language. In 2007, Lesley Jeffries developed and enhanced this linguistic methodology to examine social discourses surrounding the female body and the ways in which language both facilitates and constrains women's life experiences. "Critical stylistics" examines the fundamental functions of texts in constructing reality and the level to which written works impact the world. The language and structure of the works themselves illustrate this. “When Jeffries attempted to explain how language may limit and dominate women in their lives in 2010, the term “critical stylistics” was born out of the study of the feminine body in women's magazines”. (Tabbert, 2016).

### 2.3 Framework of Critical Stylistics

According to Jefferies (2010), the following ten instruments can be used to expose the linguistic aspects of critical stylistics:

#### 2.3.1 Naming and Describing

This tool investigates how entities are described to form them positively or negatively. Jeffries (2007, p. 63) states that names employed to refer to “one of the potentially most influential choices

any writer makes". This tool operates at three distinct linguistic levels: nominalization, noun modification, and choice of nouns. Noun choice refers to how a text producer identifies someone or something directly. For instance, the choice between "boss" and "manager" may denote a certain ideology. Noun modification involves constructing modifiers with noun phrases (in pre- and postpositions) to produce additional information that carries specific ideological potentials, for instance, "The honest child". Nominalization is the process of transforming an action or process into a noun; for example, the verb "add" becomes "addition" and "defend" becomes "defense."

**2.3.2 Representing Actions/Events /States**

The verb used to define an activity determines if it is an action, event, or state within a sentence. Jeffries (2010) believes that the ideological effect of each alternative may be shaped by the recipients' perceptions of the context. Simpson's (1993) adaption of Halliday's transitivity model supports the foundation of this textual-conceptual function. Transitivity methods are employed to identify this tool. Examples encompass material verbs (e.g., move), mental verbs (e.g., feel), among others (Jeffries, 2010).

**2.3.3 Equating and Contrasting**

Despite the fact that many linguists believe there are no identical synonyms, and even near-synonyms are not genuinely comparable, Jeffries (2010) describes equating as the employment of synonyms. Each one has its own implications. Contrast is defined by Jefferies (2010) as the utilization of opposition. According to Tabbert (2016, p. 103), opposition encompasses both widely recognized "binary opposites" such as black and white and textually generated opposition between apparently independent concepts. Jeffries (2010) observes in

her book "The Power of English" that there are numerous types of equating and contrasting, which can be simply stated as follows:

1. **Types of equivalence:** encompass, first, intensive relational terms, including become, seem, is, believe, formed, to be, cause, and so forth. Secondly, appositional equivalence occurs when two noun phrases refer to the same entities, such as "Mr. Smith," the doctor, who is my sibling. Third, parallel structures employ the same linguistic patterns, such as "easy go, easy come." Lastly, metaphorical equivalence is the use of metaphorical meaning in texts to convey ideological significance, as evidenced by the phrase "Time is a thief."
2. **Types of contrasting:** Initially, negated phrases including not, no, and similar expressions. Secondly, employ transitional phrases such as "turn into" and "from" to. Third, employ comparative phrases such as "more or less." Fourth, employ replacement terms such as "rather than," "instead of," and similar expressions. Fifth, concessive conjunctions such as despite, yet, and others. Sixth, explicit phrases such as "by contrast to" and "as opposite to." Seventh, the application of parallelism. For example, he likes and she likes. Finally, there are contrastive phrases, like the conjunction "but."

**2.3.4 Exemplifying and Enumerating**

Enumerating and exemplifying are two interrelated and overlapping textual strategies that are grammatically conflicting and require the listener or reader to utilize pragmatic inference. In the English language, there are standards that differentiate certain lists as more comprehensive than others. In certain instances, explicit enumeration and exemplification markers may be beneficial in facilitating this distinction. Each of the three categories of lists; two-part, three-part, and four-part has its own ideological implications and applications.

This tool comprises terms like "one list," "two lists," "three lists," and the phrase "for example" (Jeffries, 2010).

**2.3.5 Prioritizing**

One aspect of textual meaning that skillfully interacts with decontextualized systematic language structure and its use in context is the organization of information in main or subordinate structures. To put it in another way, information structure, transformation, and subordination are the three main subcategories of this instrument, which focuses on syntactic structures or elements that contribute to ideological content or meaning (Jeffries, 2010a).

**2.3.6 Implying and Assuming**

Jeffries (2010) asserts that pragmatics focuses on the implicit rather than explicit meanings of language. Language is a strong instrument because it may project naturalized beliefs and impact others' worldviews through implicature and assumption. More precisely, this tool is related to pragmatics, particularly existential and logical presuppositions and implicature.

**2.3.7 Negating**

Jeffries (2010) argues that negation may yield an argument that diverges entirely from the one supported by the text in the minds of readers. This tool functions on three levels: syntactic, lexical, and morphological. It also entails the creation of non-existent worlds, as exemplified by prefixes such as (not, un, dis, etc.).

**2.3.8 Hypothesizing**

This tool addresses the application of modality, namely epistemic, deontic, and boulomaic modalities. For example, may, must, probably, and required. This textual-conceptual tool examines the role of modality in the ideology of the text, considering the hypothetical scenarios it produces. This indicates that the imagined event or process

is mainly hypothetical, irrespective of the text producer's assessment of the legitimacy or suitability of a particular course of action (Jeffries, 2010).

**2.3.9 Presenting Speech and Thought of Others**

This tool is focused on conveying others' perspectives by utilising quote marks to refer to their direct and indirect speeches. Furthermore, this textual-conceptual function concerns how authors mention other persons, which may entail editing and highlighting specific ideological meanings (Jefferies, 2010, p. 130).

**2.3.10 Presenting Time, Space, and Society**

This instrument is focused on the textual processes that generate certain social world variables in which human participants operate, as well as the most basic time and space features of a text world. Despite the fact that there are numerous methods of demonstrating the verbal realizations of time, place, and the human interactions that constitute society, there is a single language design that conceptually includes them all. (Jefferies, 2010, pp. 148_149).

**2.4 Representation**

Representation is a central concept in critical and cultural studies, especially in understanding how social issues such as child labour are linguistically constructed. Hall (2013) defines representation as the use of language, signs, and images to produce and exchange meaning within culture. In this sense, representation is not a simple reflection of reality; rather, it is a process through which meaning is produced, circulated, and understood by members of society. Likewise, Hall (1997) defines representation as "the production of meaning through language" (p. 16), and points out that language is a representational system where individuals understand and convey knowledge about the world.

According to Fairclough (1995), linguistic representations do not reflect the reality in a neutral way. Rather, they represent certain perspectives, assumptions and ideologies. Therefore, language plays an active role in shaping the understanding of reality, including what is perceived as natural, possible, or desirable. Representation is, then, not just mimetic but it is interpretive and constructive. It is influenced by the social positions, interests and ideologies of the discourse producers. This perception is significant to the current research since child labour is not merely defined in organizational language but also formed by certain linguistic choices.

### 2.4.1 Hall's Approaches to Representation

Hall (1997) names three principle approaches to representation: the reflective approach, intentional approach and the constructionist approach.

- The reflective approach presupposes that meaning already exists in the world and that language merely reflects it. Words, according to this view, acts like mirrors that represent the true meaning of objects, people, or events. Hall (1997) explains that, meaning is believed to lie in the object or event itself, while language reflects that meaning.
- The intentional approach states that meaning is created by the speaker or writer. Language, in this view, conveys the subjective meaning intended by the producer of the text. Therefore, words mean what the author intends them to mean. As Hall (1997) observes, this approach has emphasized individual intention in the formation of meaning.
- The constructionist approach differs from both previous approaches. It claims that the meaning is neither fixed in objects nor determined solely by individual intent. Rather, meaning is created by the use of language, signs, concepts and collective cultural codes. Hall (1997)

states that social actors use the conceptual and linguistic systems of their culture to construct meaning and communicate it to others. This method highlights the social and cultural essence of meaning-making and proves that representation is constructed by means of discourse rather than simply found in reality.

The present study adopts the constructionist approach because it is the most relevant to the analysis of child labour representation in global organizations' discourse. From this perspective, global organizations do not simply report child labour as an objective reality; rather, they construct it through specific linguistic and stylistic choices. These choices may foreground certain causes, consequences, actors, and responsibilities while backgrounding or omitting others.

The present study adopts the constructionist approach because it is the most relevant to the analysis of child labour representation in global organizations' discourse. In this sense, global organizations do not merely report child labour as an objective reality, but they construct the issue by using certain linguistic and stylistic choices. Such choices can foreground some reasons, outcomes, actors, and responsibilities and background or neglect others.

Siapera (2010) also supports this opinion by stating that representations, whether linguistic, visual or multimodal are influenced by larger discursive constructions. In linguistic research, representation can be discuss by means of textual elements, including lexical choices, transitivity, modality, evaluation, and information structure. Such features reveal how meanings are produced, legitimised, or challenged within discourse.

## 2.5 Child Labor

### 2.5.1 Definition of Child Labor

To begin, child labor is described as work that deprives children of their youth and dignity, restricts their access to education and skill development, and occurs in conditions that are detrimental to their health and growth (Chitra C,2018). Child labour occurs when children aged 5 to 14 work on family farms, in factories, or outside the house for a wage. According to Grant (1983), "Child labor is the employment of children when they are too young to work on wages or when they are employed for jobs unsuitable or unsafe" . Similarly, Folk (1987) defines child labor as "any work by children that interferes with their full physical development, their opportunities for a desirable education, or their needed recreation". However, child labor is the exploitation of children's energies and potential at work rather than providing them with adequate educational opportunities.

Additionally, the most comprehensive concept related to the measurement of child labor is children in productive activities, which refers to children who are involved in any activity that falls within the general production boundary as defined in the System of National Accounts (SNA). In fact, the term "child labor" is relative, and it is defined differently in various cultures and societies (Dessy, Sylvain, and Stéphane, 2001). Not all work performed by children should be categorized as child labor that should be targeted for elimination.The participation of children or adolescents above the minimum age for admission to employment in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling, is generally regarded as being something positive. This involves activities like helping in a family enterprise or earning an extra income outside of school time and during school vacations. Such activities facilitate

children's growth and development and enhance their parental welfare; they supply children with skills and experience, preparing them to become useful members of society in future . (ILO, 2024)

Moreover, "Child labour is defined as work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and interferes with their schooling"(UNICEF, 2023). The ILO (2021) defines child labour as any employment that robs children of their youth, potential, or dignity, and adversely affects their physical and mental development. It relates to labor that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally risky and detrimental to children; and/or affects their education by: depriving them the chance to attend school; forcing them to abandon school unintentionally; or requiring the combination of school attendance with extremely rigorous and ongoing work.(ILO, 2024) Similarly, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) identifies child labour as any work that poses risks to children's well-being, interferes with their education or deprives them of opportunities for schooling (Gatsinzi & Hilson, 2022).

Furthermore, child labor is also described as "the employment of a child in a business or industry especially in violation of state or federal statutes prohibiting the employment of children under a specified age." This definition explains the legal and regulatory aspects of child labor, emphasizing that it involves work which violates the existing laws that prohibit the exploitation of children (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Thus, while these definitions clarify the meaning and scope of child labour, it is equally important to distinguish it from child work, which may not necessarily be harmful to children's development or education.

**2.5.2Reasons for Child Labour**

The persistence and spread of child labour can be attributed to a combination of overlapping economic, social, educational, and legal

problems that affect children and their families. The main reason is poverty, meaning poor financial situation. Poverty is a major factor contributing to the spread of child labor (SUCL, as cited in Nam, 2013, p. 527). In many developing countries (or Global South), the economic level is low, and governments do not have enough financial support to cover citizens' basic needs. Each family feels helpless and needs the essentials for a decent life, so they try to earn enough money. Parents often believe that they cannot send their children to school because education takes many years and costs a lot. Many children in rural areas look forward to urban life and want to work, as they do not wish to remain in villages. Therefore, poor families send their children to work to earn a small income and cover daily expenses (Becker, 1997). The absence of decent work opportunities for adults and children above the minimum age for work older youth exacerbates the problem.(ILO,2024)

The second reason is traditional cultural norms and bad education. Parents' level of education determines their view of the value of children within the family. For example, some parents in Guatemala believe that hard work from an early age is the best way to raise a hardworking adult and that working children are beneficial to their families (Tauson, as cited in Nam, 2013). Moreover, the educational system is not thorough in many areas, as some schools require high fees. Even if primary schooling is required, enforcement is frequently weak. Economic necessity and societal norms may cause families to prioritize short-term earnings above long-term educational gains. Children who work in child labor are more likely to miss school, perform badly, repeat grades, and quit out early, restricting their future chances.(ILO,2024)

The third reason is a weak legal system. In both developing and developed countries, many factories are not controlled by labor laws. Law enforcement authorities often neglect their duties, leading to an increase in the number of child laborers. In addition, educational laws also face problems, as basic education is neglected in some regions. In conclusion, these reasons together lead to the worsening and spread of child labor in many countries. Beyond its causes and prevalence, child labour has a range of educational, physical, and social effects on children's lives.

**2.5.3Types of Child Labor**

Child laborers engage in several types of work that carry risks and hazards. These workers are vulnerable to physical pain and injury, especially when exposed to health dangers (Levison & Murray, 2005). The ITUC (2008) states that child labor appears in several forms. At certain occasions, it is readily apparent; at other occasions, it remains hidden. This is a list of several types of child labor, encompassing both the most widespread forms and the worst forms. Nevertheless, this is not a complete list of all existing form.

- **Domestic work**: Common and occasionally regarded allowable, it occurs within the household environment or outside it. When domestic labor occurs outside the home, children—predominantly girls—are subjected to extensive working hours, deprived of educational opportunities, and isolated from their families and peers.
- **Agricultural work**: Numerous child laborers are engaged in agriculture. They frequently work on the family farm or collectively with the entire family for an employer.
- **Work in industries**: This labor may be regular or casual, legal or illegal, as part of the family or by the child on his own for an employer. It includes carpet weaving, gemstone polishing, making clothes,

chemicals, glassware, fireworks, matches or a range of other products. These tasks subject children to hazardous chemicals that may result in poisoning, respiratory and skin diseases, exposure to radiant heat, fire and explosions, as well as damage to eyesight and hearing, cuts, burns, and even death.

- **Work in mines and quarries**: Child labor exists in small-scale mining operations throughout numerous countries. They labor extensive hours without sufficient protection and training. Child miners endure physical pressure, exhaustion, and illnesses of the muscular and skeletal systems.
- **Slavery and forced labor**: It is predominantly located in rural regions. It is often associated with the subjection of ethnic minorities and native peoples. Children are frequently forced into armed conflicts, either to serve as soldiers or to work for military forces.
- **Prostitution and child trafficking**: It is one of the most harmful forms of child labor. Children confront significant threats, ranging from moral degeneration to sexually transmitted diseases and even death.
- **Work in the informal economy**: This involves a variety of activities such as shoe cleaning, begging, pushing rickshaws, selling newspapers, and collecting trash. Some types are quite visible, while others are hidden from public view. Activities are generally carried out on the streets, although they can also include home duties. Although child labor appears in many forms, particular attention must be given to its worst forms because of the serious risks they pose to children's health, safety, and dignity.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Data Collection and Description

In the process of data analysis, nine selected extracts were purposefully chosen. Nine extracts are taken from three Global North Organizations

which are: UNICEF, Save the Children and The International Rescue Committee (IRC). However, "Global North" term is a way of talking about big inequalities in wealth, power, voice and living standards in the world, not simply about geography. It update older labels like "First/Third World" or "developed/developing" countries. Generally, it's good to mention that Global North denotes richer, industrialized countries with higher incomes, strong state institutions, and large service and high-tech sectors e.g., most of Europe, North America, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, parts of East Asia (Müller, M.,2018). The present study adopts a mixed method to investigate three press releases span the years (2022-2025) as follows:

1. The first text is UNICEF's press release: "Despite progress, child labour still affects 138 million children globally – ILO, UNICEF". (2025)
2. The second text is Save the Children's text: "Two thirds of children surveyed in South Sudan engaged in child labor: New report". (2025)
3. The third text is IRC's press release: "High child labor rates in Iraq continue to disrupt children's education, childhood and basic rights, the IRC warns". (2022)

Therefore, the decision to focus on organisational discourse is due to its role in representing child labour as a social, legal, humanitarian, and developmental issue. Such discourse does not only provide information about child labour, but also constructs particular views of children, families, poverty, education, protection, agency, and institutional responsibility.

**3.2 Methods of Analysis**

Mixed methods research integrates the advantages of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to attain a more thorough comprehension of the data. Creswell (2009) defines mixed method research as "research

in which the researcher collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry." The qualitative analysis combined with the quantitative trends can help researchers interpret the patterns that emerge from the statistical analysis, the underlying meanings, and the contextual nuances. As Börnyei (2007, p. 45) notes, this integration can help "words to illuminate numbers and vice versa" and create a deeper and more balanced understanding of research results.

**3.3 Model of Analysis**

The current study will be conducted using an adapted model related to CS. The researcher selects nine tools from Jeffries' (2010) Critical Stylistics framework, Naming and Describing, Representing Actions/Events/States, Equating and Contrasting, Exemplifying and Enumerating, Prioritizing, Implying and Assuming, Negating, Hypothesizing and Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of Others as they have a strong relevance to the study that focused on representing child labor in Global North organizations discourse. Such tools are especially effective in demonstrating how linguistic choices shape the image of children, labor, protection, agency, poverty and institutional responsibility.

**4. Results Analysis and Discussion**

The quantitative analysis of the Global North organizations' discourse reveals a total of 358 critical stylistic occurrences, spread across the nine tools of Jeffries' model. The most frequent tool is Naming and Describing with 81 instances, representing 22.63% of the whole data. The outcome indicates lexical choices and noun modifications are heavily used to depict child labour, childhood, education, danger, exploitation and vulnerability in the selected organizations. The

frequency of this tool shows that the discourses of Global North organisations create the issue in the first instance through labels and descriptive expressions that lead the reader to view child labour as harmful, risky and incompatible with proper childhood.

The second most common tool is Representing Actions / Events / States, which is used 78 times (21.79%). The high percentage reflects the influence of the discourse on selection of processing option, particularly in material, relational and passive constructions. These structures represent, among others, a child as a effected participant, and institutions, families or wider conditions as actors, causes or responsible agents. This demonstrates that child labour is typically portrayed as a situation of suffering, deprivation, denial and exclusion in the Global North rather than a field of agency.

Implying and Assuming is the third most common tool, with 46 incidences and 12.85%. This finding suggests that presuppositions and implicatures are significant. The texts tend to presuppose children rights, appropriate childhood, access to education and validity of protection structures. They also suggest that child labor is the abuse of the normal way of childhood and that intervention is necessary. Ideologically, the discourse not only articulates the problem, but constructs it through hidden assumptions and implied meanings that make rescue-oriented interpretations seem natural and acceptable.

The next tool, Exemplifying and Enumerating, has 36 instances and 10.06% and prioritising has 33 instances, which is 9.22%. The rate of exemplification and enumeration indicates that the organizations frequently utilise lists and examples to make child labor visible and concrete. In such a strategy, they introduce the kinds of labor, types of harm, domains of work and domains of deprivation in a thorough and convincing manner. Simultaneously, the use of prioritising suggests

that the texts are well-organised in order to foreground certain meanings more than others, particularly the threat to children, the lack of education, and the necessity of intervention. The combination of these two tools enhances the clarity and emotive power of the discourse.

Comparatively, Negating is repeated 28 times and 7.82%, and Equating and Contrasting is repeated 22 times and 6.15%. Negating assists the organizations to deny child labor as a normal state of childhood and convey absence, denial or failure.On the other hand, Equating and Contrasting is used to oppose school/labor, safety/exploitation, progress/failure, or childhood/ work. Despite the fact that these tools are not the most common, yet they still play a clear role in the ideological construction of child labor as a something inappropriate, harmful and contrary to normal childhood.

The least frequent tools are Hypothesizing with 19 instances and 5.31%, and Presenting Others' Speech and Thought with 15 instances and 4.19%. The limited use of hypothesizing shows that the organizations represent child labor mainly as a real and urgent issue, not as a hypothetical one. Although Presenting Others' Speech and Thought has a lower percentage than the other tools, its 15 occurrences are still significant for this type of organizational discourse. However, these voices mostly belong to institutional leaders and prominent figures rather than children themselves. Ideologically, this implies that Global North organisations tend to talk about children instead of letting children speak on their own behalf, which strengthens their status as passive victims rather than as active agents.

At the level of individual organizations, table (no. 4) shows some differences. The frequency of UNICEF (Org.1) was the highest, 131 cases, and 119 cases were recorded by Save the Children (Org.2) and

IRC (Org.3) respectively. The most common tools used in the discourse of UNICEF are Representing Actions / Events / States (29 cases, 22.14%), Naming and Describing (28 cases, 21.37%), which indicates a significant emphasis on process representation and lexical framing. In Save the Children's discourse, Naming and Describing is highest with 26 cases (21.85%), followed by Representing Actions / Events / States with 24 cases (20.17%), while Implying and Assuming is also relatively high at 20 cases (16.81%). In IRC's discourse, Naming and Describing is again the highest with 27 cases (25.00%), followed by Representing Actions / Events / States with 25 cases (23.15%), while Negating reaches 13 cases (12.04%), a noticeably higher percentage than in the other two organizations. Such differences indicate that there is a variation in style, and they also demonstrate that all three organizations rely predominantly on naming, description, and process representation in their structuring of child labor in the discourse.

In general, the Global North organizational discourse is dominated by the tools that name, describe, classify, and represent children in terms of danger, deprivation, and vulnerability. The most frequent tools are those that help to build a rescue-oriented discourse, especially Naming and Describing, Representing Actions / Events / States, and Implying and Assuming. This implies that the chosen organizations not only frame the issue of child labor as a social problem, but also establish it linguistically as a violation of childhood, education, safety and rights. Consequently, these results reinforce the central argument of the present study which states that Global North organizations tend to represent children as vulnerable victims who require protection, intervention, and rescue.

مجلة الدراسات المستدامة
P-ISSN(Print) : 2663-2284
E-ISSN(online): 2663-7413
السنة (٨) المجلد (٨) العدد (٤) تشرين الأول . لسنة ٢٠٢٦م - ١٤٤٨ هـ

Table 1: The Overall Frequency and Percentage of Critical Stylistic Analysis of Child Labor Representation in the Discourse of Global North Organizations

| | Org.1 | | Org.2 | | Org.3 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Tools** | **Total** | **%** | **Total** | **%** | **Total** | **%** | **Total** | **%** |
| Naming and Describing | 28 | 21.37% | 26 | 21.85% | 27 | 25% | 81 | 22.63% |
| Representing Actions / Events / States | 29 | 22.14% | 24 | 20.17% | 25 | 23.13% | 78 | 21.79% |
| Equating and Contrasting | 7 | 5.34% | 9 | 7.56% | 6 | 5.56% | 22 | 6.15% |
| Exemplifying and Enumerating | 15 | 11.45% | 11 | 9.24% | 10 | 9.26% | 36 | 10.06% |
| Prioritizing | 14 | 10.69% | 12 | 10.08% | 7 | 6.48% | 33 | 9.22% |
| Implying and Assuming | 16 | 12.21% | 20 | 16.81% | 10 | 9.26% | 46 | 12.58% |
| Negating | 8 | 6.11% | 7 | 5.88% | 13 | 12.04% | 28 | 7.82% |
| Hypothesizing | 10 | 7.63% | 5 | 4.20% | 4 | 3.70% | 19 | 5.31% |
| Presenting Others' Speech and Thought | 4 | 2.05% | 5 | 4.20% | 6 | 5.56% | 15 | 4.19% |
| Total | 131 | 100% | 119 | 100% | 108 | 100% | 358 | 100% |

## Conclusion

The current study has analyzed the discourses of child labor adopted by Global North organizations using a Critical Stylistics model by Jeffries (2010). The discussion of the chosen texts by UNICEF, Save the Children, and the IRC reveals that the issue of child labor is primarily framed as a humanitarian, educational, and rights-based one. The organizations employ linguistics choices to portray children as the

vulnerable subjects whose education, safety, childhood and fundamental rights are endangered by poverty, exploitation, conflict, and failure of the institutions.

The results show that the most prevalent tools are Naming and Describing Representing Actions/Events/States. This implies that Global North Organizations have been extremely dependent on the use of negative lexical choices , noun modification, and the process structure to portray child labor as harmful, dangerous, and incompatible to proper childhood. Children are also foregrounded by passive structures as affected participants, while the agents of the suffering are often backgrounded. Other tools, including Implying and Assuming, Prioritizing, and Negating, reinforce the rescue-oriented discourse even more, as they introduce the education, protection, and safe childhood as natural rights and child labor as an unacceptable condition.

In general, the research finds that Global North organizations do not simply document the issue of child labor as a social fact; on the contrary, they ideologically construct it through language . Their discussion primarily identifies children as a victim and rights-bearing subject who requires protection and institutional intervention. Therefore, Critical Stylistics and proves useful in unveiling the way in which organizational discourse influences the way people perceive the issue of child labor, its reasons, and the types of intervention that are required to address it.

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**Appendix**

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