



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section: Literature, Linguistics & Criticism

A stylistic journey through Basim Khandaqji's novel, *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* (2023)

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ABSTRACT

The world of novels knows no boundaries for inspiration, recreation, and sophistication. The deeper we delve, the more intellectually enriched we become. And the more intellectually enriched we become, the greater our appreciation for masterpieces that transcend eras, generations, and cultures, enduring symbols of human creativity, authenticity, and sensibility throughout the years. Bearing this in mind, the current article aims to explore what novelists should achieve to win a globally recognised award, and examines the literary work *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky*, the winning novel of the Booker Prize for Fiction 2024, as a model for novelists and researchers to consider. To achieve the intended aims, the author of this paper set a ten-item questionnaire and conducted a textual analysis of the novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky*. Regarding the sample that responded to the questionnaire, it comprised forty-seven participants. The findings indicate that factors such as unique theme, intriguing plot, distinct setting, engaging content, compelling character, eloquent language, insightful dialogue, and narrative voice amongst others, may if impressively employed, enable a novelist to win a prestigious prize. The paper concludes with recommendations for novelists and researchers to consider.

KEYWORDS: booker prize, creative writing, international award, novel, textual analysis

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Introduction

A novel is a literary work which needs to meet several requirements to be read, valued, and recognised. Elements such as characterisation, setting, plot, theme, language style, and point of view are integral components which have to be impressively manipulated so that the ultimate product is not only unique but also outstanding and significant across generations, eras, and countries.

Undoubtedly, it is the dream of many novelists worldwide to receive a prestigious award in appreciation of their literary works. With this in mind, the current paper aims to address several relevant points which would ensure the composition of a distinguished novel to remain immortal throughout different times and various places. The current paper, as such, is an attempt to penetrate into the world of novels, wandering and investigating. Thus, the author has selected the novel which won the Booker Prize for Arabic Fiction 2024, *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* by Basim Khandaqji, as a recent novel to evaluate. The award of the 2024 International Prize for Arabic Fiction was announced at a ceremony in Abu Dhabi and was received on Khandaqji's behalf by the novel's publisher Dar Al-Adab, Lebanon. As known, the Booker Prize is an annual esteemed award offered in recognition of the best work of fiction (Booker Prize Foundation, 2025). To date, the novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky*, has not been translated into English. However, it has been translated into Spanish and Italian.

The current paper is comprised of seven sections. Besides section 1, the introduction, section 2 is a literature review, offering a theoretical background for the study. Section 3 highlights the research questions and significance, section 4 sheds light on the study methodology, section 5 reports on the study findings, section 6 discusses the study findings in accordance with the research questions, and section 7 concludes the paper. The paper ends with a list of the references which the author used for in-text citations.

Literature Review

This section delineates several key points that pertain to the topic of this papers: the world of novels, types of novel analysis, and textual analysis of novels. Although textual analysis is among the main types of novel analysis, a sub-section is allocated to the discussion of textual analysis as it is the main type of analysis the author of this paper employed in the current study.

The World of Novels

The world of novels has no limit for beauty and creativity (Jacobs & Kinder, 2022). What does the novel refer to? As stated by many scholars (Genette, 1983; Hawthorn, 1986; Lodge, 1992; Rimmon-Kenan, 2002; Foster, 2005; Herman, 2010; Jannidis et al., 2010; Wood, 2018; Al-Alami, 2025), among others, a novel is a narrative of 40,000 words as a minimum, narrating a story which has to have six elements: setting, theme, characterisation, plot, point of view, and language style. A novel is usually composed in prose, depicting life issues, character types, and varied settings through the use of language (Short, 1996).

Highlighting novel elements, a novel's setting refers to both time and place. It is the total of references to physical and temporal artefacts which can be studied in relation to characters, plot, atmosphere, and tone of the novel (Mosely, 2019). Theme refers to a major issue or idea which is discussed throughout the story, tying things together like a continuous thread (Card, 2010). A theme is related to the genre of the work. Characterisation refers to how the novel's characters are physically described, what they normally do, and what the significance or impact of each is (DiBattista, 2010). The development of characters relies on what role each is allocated in the story. Presenting characters could be direct, describing him/her explicitly, or indirect, showing the reader what the character is like physically, mentally, socially and so on. As for a character's role, it could be a protagonist taking the good path in life, or an antagonist symbolising the wicked nature of a human. Regarding a character's type, it could be dynamic, undergoing changes in attitudes or personality throughout the novel; flat, undergoing no significant changes in the story; round, appearing in different situations with different faces as per the situation, static undergoing no personality changes; or stock (stereotype) following a set pattern in their path (Jannidis et al., 2010; James, 2014). Plot refers to the series of events that are narrated in the novel. A plot can be analysed considering issues such as historical events, personal impulses, and human values among others (Chambers, 2024). Point of view refers to the tone of the novel and the amount of information that the author reveals about the feelings and thoughts of each character, among other story aspects (McRae, 2008). Point of

view can be examined from the likely limited position of a first-person narrator to the much wider point of view of a third-person omniscient narrator (Simpson, 2010). Finally, the element language style refers to how language is manipulated in the novel, embodying the use of standard versus colloquial, poetic versus prosaic, simple versus advanced, literal versus metaphorical, and modern versus archaic diction, form, structure, and pattern (Elish, 2012; Al-Alami, 2024). Seen from an aesthetic point of view, using figures of speech such as simile and metaphor is expected to produce language that is linguistically elegant and eternally lofty (Lepore & Stone, 2012).

Taken in sum, to read, enjoy, and examine a novel, one ought to evaluate the elements of narration as used in the novel, among other aspects. Obviously, a novel narrated uniquely ensures the skilful utilisation of narrative elements.

Types of Novel Analysis

There are a variety of analyses which can be conducted while analysing a novel from different perspectives. Among the main approaches and theories are the formalist approach, stylistic approach, structural approach, deconstructive approach, ecocritical approach, historical approach, sociolinguistic approach, psychoanalytic approach, feminist theory, postcolonial theory, and reader-response theory, to mention a few (Watson, 2001; Moi, 2002; Waugh, 2006; Eagleton, 2008; Culler, 2011; Aljarelah, 2024). This part of the paper aims to briefly explain what each of the aforementioned approaches and theories refers to within the context of novel analysis.

To start with, the formalist approach examines the structure and style of the novel, focusing on literary devices and language forms (Culler, 2002). The stylistic approach explores the linguistic features such as those related to semantics, syntax, phonetics, and sound patterns, among other aspects (Leech & Mick, 1981; Alaghbary, 2022; Giovanelli & Harrison, 2022; Ibrahim, 2022). The structural approach highlights the underlying patterns and structures whilst relying on linguistic theories to comprehend the novel (Culler, 2002). The deconstructive approach proposes that the meaning as comprehended and interpreted by a reader is not necessarily stable and fixed (Derrida, 1978). The ecocritical approach focuses on the environment, nature, and human-nature relationship (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996). The historical approach studies the novel in light of its era, considering the novel's historical and political contexts (Brannigan, 1998). The sociolinguistic approach explores how language may vary across different characters, situations, and regions, taking into consideration degrees of formality, differences among cultures, and varieties of dialects (Simpson, 2004). The psychoanalytic approach analyses issues which can be related to the psychological aspects manifested in the novel, like emotions, dreams, and motivations (Holland, 1990). The feminist theory explains the relationships among language, gender, and literature, discussing the roles of female characters and the impact of gender on the story (Moi, 2002). The postcolonial theory is concerned with themes of conflict, revealing how colonialism impacts language (Ashcroft et al., 2002; Eagleton, 2011). Last but not least, the reader-response theory encourages critical reading of the novel, emphasising the role of readers' engagement with the novel and interpretations of the meaning from their perspectives and perceptions (Goodman, 1954; Fish, 1980).

To end with, there is no single approach or theory that a reader needs to keep applying throughout the reading journey of a novel. Depending on the reader's aim of analysis, the corresponding theory or approach can be applied. Additionally, combining different approaches while analysing novels would yield more fruitful outcomes, enriching our understanding and increasing our appreciation of the novel (Ohman & Rossi, 2024).

Textual Analysis of Novels

As highlighted earlier, the author conducted a textual analysis of the novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky*. Accordingly, this part of the paper is a brief explanation of what textual analysis means and entails.

Textual analysis of the novel is a detailed study of the language, literary devices, and overall style utilised in the novel (Tyson, 2014). It focuses on how the words, structures, and patterns construct meanings, mirror moods, depict characters, and reflect themes whilst at the same time exploring several related areas such as setting, point of view, and plot. This type of analysis is intrinsically-oriented, treating the novel as a self-contained entity independent of considerations like historical contexts and reader responses (Barry, 2020; Nünning & Nünning, 2020). Textual analysis of the novel involves different types of analyses; for example, stylistic, narrative, thematic, and semiotic. Stylistic analysis of the novel assesses the linguistic choices made by the author, like word choice, figurative language, syntactic patterns, and narrative voice. Narrative analysis is

concerned with analysing the elements of narration. Thematic analysis identifies motifs and messages within the novel. And semiotic analysis investigates the use of symbols, signs, and codes, which are of relevance and significance to the novel.

To conclude, the textual analysis of the novel is grounded in the text itself, emphasising a thorough reading of the novel closely. While analysing a novel textually, the reader needs to comprehend the context, examine the language, interpret the literary devices, identify the plot, study the characters, grasp the theme, visualise the setting, and recognise the narrative voice, amongst other related areas.

Research Questions and Significance

This research sought to arrive at appropriate answers to the two questions below.

Question One: What main points should a novelist take into consideration to win an international prize in recognition of their distinguished literary work?

Question Two: Why did the novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* win the Booker Prize for Arabic Fiction 2024? In so doing, the current study aimed to examine the novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* whilst employing a textual analysis. Throughout their writing journey, many novelists strive to target the peak. True it is, though, that to write a unique novel is worthy of every reader's aesthetic appreciation, amongst other positive outcomes, to attain the ultimate target remains an achievement of everlasting impact. The current study, therefore, is intended to explore the world of novels, examining the novel which won the Booker Prize for Arabic Fiction 2024. To the best knowledge of the author, the novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* has not been translated into English yet and has not been examined from the critics' perspectives as a research study. Consequently, the current paper is the first of its kind regarding the winning novel of the Booker Prize for Arabic Fiction 2024.

Study Methodology

This section presents the research methodology which the author utilised while implementing the study. The section, as such, encompasses research subjects, ethics, and methods of data collection.

Subjects

The current study comprised forty-seven participants: twenty-four of them are members of the Arabic book club and twenty-three are members of the English book club of which the author is also a member; both in Dubai. Table 1 below presents the demographic data of the Arabic book club's members and table 2 the demographic data of the English book club's members.

Table One: Demographic Data of the Subjects (Arabic Book Club)

Degree	Major	Gender
PhD	Linguistics, & Education	2 (female)
M.A.	Medicine, Journalism, Linguistics, Literature, & Education	6 (male & female)
B.A.	Linguistics, Literature, Education, Business, Computing, Law, Engineering, Biology, Psychology, Sociology, & Finance	14 (male & female)
Diploma	Computing, & Fine Arts	2 (female)

Table Two: Demographic Data of the Subjects (English Book Club)

Degree	Major	Gender
PhD	Linguistics	1 (female)
M.A.	Literature, Chemistry, Business, & Education	5 (female)

B.A.	Linguistics, Literature, Education, Dentistry, Business, Accounting, Engineering, Media, Mathematics, Computing, Geology, & Chemistry	16 (female)
Diploma	Education	1 (female)

Research Ethics

It is a requirement universally acknowledged that research ethics is the essence of quality outcomes and reliable findings. Commenting on the research this paper portrays, conforming to research ethics was highly emphasised. For instance, involving subjects entailed responding to the study's questionnaire which was based upon one's willingness to take part in the study. Moreover, respondents' data and responses were kept anonymous. Finally, conducting the study did not cause anyone the least harm, including all types of harm such as physical among others.

Methods of Data Collection

The author utilised a mixed-methods design, applying both quantitative and qualitative measures. Regarding the instruments the author employed while conducting the study, the author implemented two types; namely, a ten-item questionnaire including the values: Yes; No; Neutral; & Unsure, and a textual analysis of the novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky*. The questionnaire was intended to address the first research question on what main points a novelist should consider to win an international prize in recognition of their distinguished literary work, and the textual analysis as a study instrument was intended to address the second research question on why the novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* won the Booker Prize for Arabic Fiction 2024.

Table 3 below reveals the study's questionnaire. It should be noted that the statistical measure of calculating percentages per response was used upon the conclusion of responding to the questionnaire.

Table Three: The Questionnaire

Item	Yes	No	Neutral	Unsure
The theme should be unique.				
The plot should arouse the reader's curiosity throughout the novel.				
Main characters should be compelling, captivating, and inspiring.				
The narrator's point of view should be sympathetic, empathetic, and humanistic.				
The setting should be depicted sensorially, transparently, and thoroughly.				
The content should engage the reader emotionally, intellectually, and imaginatively.				
Language style needs to be manipulated accurately, appropriately, and sensibly.				
Inner thoughts should be reflected genuinely, concisely, and coherently.				
Dialogues should be constructed expressively, authentically, and impactfully.				
Figures of speech need to be employed eloquently, evocatively, and poetically.				

In terms of the second instrument, text analysis of the novel, it can be conducted as both quantitative and qualitative methods (Nünning & Nünning, 2020; Ibrahim, 2022; Jacobs & Kinder, 2022; Ohman & Rossi, 2024). As a quantitative method, the researcher needs to quantify certain elements of the novel such as counting the frequency of using specific words; phrases; or sentences, calculating narrative patterns and dialogue length, and using the techniques of corpus linguistics. As a qualitative method, the researcher needs to examine the structure, content, and language of the novel to comprehend the novel's explicit and implicit themes and messages, interpreting beyond-the-line meanings rather than quantifying numerically stated data. As for the

current study, the author adopted text analysis of the novel as a qualitative measure, exploring areas such as the novel's theme, language, characterisation, structure, setting, and plot critically whilst considering relevant approaches of use to analysing the novel textually.

In summary, this section sheds light on the study methodology, reflecting on the study's subjects, ethics, and methods of data collection. The next section portrays the findings of the study in relation to the instruments employed and questions addressed.

Study Findings

This section reports on the study findings, considering both the questionnaire and the text analysis. To begin with, table 4 and figure 1 below demonstrate the results as related to the category of Arabic book club's members.

Table 4: Subjects' Responses to the Questionnaire (Arabic Book Club)

Item	Yes	No	Neutral	Unsure
The theme should be unique.	92%	0%	8%	0%
The plot should arouse the reader's curiosity throughout the novel.	96%	0%	4%	0%
Main characters should be compelling, captivating, and inspiring.	94%	0%	6%	0%
The narrator's point of view should be sympathetic, empathetic, and humanistic.	88%	0%	12%	0%
The setting should be depicted sensorially, transparently, and thoroughly.	100%	0%	0%	0%
The content should engage the reader emotionally, intellectually, and imaginatively.	94%	0%	6%	0%
Language style needs to be manipulated accurately, appropriately, and sensibly.	100%	0%	0%	0%
Inner thoughts should be reflected genuinely, concisely, and coherently.	90%	0%	10%	0%
Dialogues should be constructed expressively, authentically, and impactfully.	96%	0%	4%	0%
Figures of speech need to be employed eloquently, evocatively, and poetically.	98%	0%	2%	0%

Figure 1: Subjects' Responses to the Questionnaire (Arabic Book Club)

As table 4 and figure 1 demonstrate, for item 1 on whether the theme should be unique, 92% of the respondents agreed while 8% indicated neutrality. Regarding item 2 on whether the plot should arouse the reader's curiosity throughout the novel, 96% of the respondent agreed while 4% indicated neutral responses. As for item 3 on whether main characters should be compelling; captivating; and inspiring, 94% of the respondents agreed while 6% reflected neutral responses. Concerning item 4 on whether the narrator's point of view should be sympathetic; empathetic; and humanistic, 88% of the respondents agreed while 12% were neutral. With reference to item 5 on whether the setting should be depicted sensorially; transparently; and thoroughly, all the respondents agreed. As regards item 6 on whether the content should engage the reader emotionally; intellectually; and imaginatively, 94% of the respondents agreed while 6% indicated neutrality. In relation to item 7 on whether language style needs to be manipulated accurately; appropriately; and sensibly, all the respondents indicated agreement. For item 8 on whether inner thoughts should be reflected genuinely; concisely; and coherently, 90% of the respondents agreed while 10% were neutral. With respect to item 9 on whether dialogues should be constructed expressively; authentically; and impactfully, 96% of the respondents agreed while 4% conveyed neutrality of opinion. Finally, in terms of item 10 on whether figures of speech need to be employed eloquently; evocatively; and poetically, 98% of the respondents agreed while 2% reflected neutrality of response.

Proceeding to the category of English book club's members, table 5 and figure 2 below demonstrate the results.

Table 5: Subjects' Responses to the Questionnaire (English Book Club)

Item	Yes	No	N e u - tral	Unsure
The theme should be unique.	96%	0%	4%	0%
The plot should arouse the reader's curiosity throughout the novel.	91%	0%	9%	0%
Main characters should be compelling, captivating, and inspiring.	91%	0%	9%	0%
The narrator's point of view should be sympathetic, empathetic, and humanistic.	87%	0%	13%	0%
The setting should be depicted sensorially, transparently, and thoroughly.	96%	0%	4%	0%
The content should engage the reader emotionally, intellectually, and imaginatively.	100%	0%	0%	0%
Language style needs to be manipulated accurately, appropriately, and sensibly.	100%	0%	0%	0%
Inner thoughts should be reflected genuinely, concisely, and coherently.	91%	0%	9%	0%
Dialogues should be constructed expressively, authentically, and impactfully.	96%	0%	4%	0%
Figures of speech need to be employed eloquently, evocatively, and poetically.	100%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 2: Subjects' Responses to the Questionnaire (English Book Club)

As table 5 and figure 2 demonstrate, for item 1 on whether the theme should be unique, 96% of the respondents agreed while 4% indicated neutrality. Regarding item 2 on whether the plot should arouse the reader's curiosity throughout the novel, 91% of the respondent agreed while 9% indicated neutral responses. As for item 3 on whether main characters should be compelling; captivating; and inspiring, 91% of the respondents agreed while 9% reflected neutral responses. Concerning item 4 on whether the narrator's point of view should be sympathetic; empathetic; and humanistic, 87% of the respondents agreed while 13% were neutral. With reference to item 5 on whether the setting should be depicted sensorially; transparently; and thoroughly, 96% of the respondents agreed while 4% disagreed. As regards item 6 on whether the content should engage the reader emotionally; intellectually; and imaginatively, all the respondents agreed. In relation to item 7 on whether language style needs to be manipulated accurately; appropriately; and sensibly, all the respondents indicated agreement. For item 8 on whether inner thoughts should be reflected genuinely; concisely; and coherently, 91% of the respondents agreed while 9% were neutral. With respect to item 9 on whether dialogues should be constructed expressively; authentically; and impactfully, 96% of the respondents agreed while 4% conveyed neutrality of opinion. Finally, in terms of item 10 on whether figures of speech need to be employed eloquently; evocatively, and poetically, 100% of the respondents agreed.

Textual Analysis of the Novel A Mask, the Colour of the Sky

Overview: Comprising seven chapters, *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* tells the story of a Palestinian archaeologist living in a refugee camp in the city of Ramallah, whose dream is to write a novel about Maryam Almajdaliyeh. Captivating the reader's interest and curiosity at every moment of reading, the development of events and characters throughout the story is not only skilful but also distinctive and impressive.

Title: The title *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* is symbolic. The reason why Khandaqji chose *the colour of the sky* may be specifically related to Nour, the main character about whom the story revolves, as he has blue eyes which signifies key points in the novel. It could symbolise the sky having no limits for one's dreams even at the worst of times. It may also symbolise a mask the outer surface of which is intended to reflect tranquillity, hence protecting its wearer from people's doubts and fears. Or it could refer to the blue colour of Ouer's identity card, which Nour uses as a mask hiding beneath it the story of an entire nation's sufferings. Whatever Khandaqji meant to symbolise through the title, it undoubtedly reflects creativity beyond words.

Setting: The story takes place in the current era, narrating a number of historical events transparently. Regarding the place of occurrence, the two countries where the story is set are Palestine and Israel. The author describes each place in such a way that the readers feel they not only know it, but also are living and experiencing it. For instance, how Jerusalem is depicted takes the reader on a journey through the old streets, hearing, seeing, and breathing in the vibrant atmosphere of the holy city.

Theme: The construct of the novel's theme is a unique combination of patriotism as a precious coin, love in the midst of darkness, oppression in an era of frustration, and determination born from a nothing-to-lose situation.

Characterisation: Compelling and inspiring, the novel's main character, Nour-who later hides himself beneath *the mask of Ouer*- is skilfully portrayed, alternating between Nour and Ouer. Moreover, the characters' physical appearance, personality traits, and personal mannerisms are engagingly presented, reflecting life characters and roles.

Plot: Intriguing and gripping, the plot is well crafted, tightly constructed, and cohesively sequenced.

Content: The content is affectively, intellectually, and mentally engaging from the moment the reader begins reading the novel to the very end. Throughout the story, Khandaqji highlights human nature and values. For example, once a person attains formerly unfamiliar authority and experiences previously unknown luxury, their history of struggle is often left behind a closed gate of the past. Further, how the novel ends is carefully thought out, affirming the magical power of patriotism, love, and suffering over all circumstances.

Point of View: The novel is narrated from the first-person point of view. However, the sixth chapter is narrated from the third-person point of view; a technique that is acceptable in novels where the narrator steps out of the situation, reflecting on people and events as authentic representations of life.

Language: The language of the novel is used with accuracy and precision. The diction reflects the culture, era, ideas, and emotions genuinely. Grammatical structures and syntactic patterns are employed while adhering to the standard forms of language. Colloquial language is avoided, and explanations of culture-bound words are provided when needed.

Figures of Speech: The novel includes several figures of speech such as simile; metaphor; rhythm; and alliteration, which are beautifully, touchingly, and melodiously deployed to create a sense of aesthetic appreciation on the part of readers.

Dialogues: Dialogues, whether in the form of internal thoughts or external conversations, are constructed insightfully and reflectively. An example is when Sana addresses Nour, saying: 'I know you were not lying; the look in your eyes revealed what ought to remain wordless.'

Discussion of Study Findings

This section discusses the study findings, whilst addressing both research questions and instruments. As stated earlier, the current study raised two questions and utilised two instruments. To answer the first research question on what main points a novelist should take into consideration to win an international prize in recognition of their distinguished literary work, the author set and distributed a questionnaire including ten items, which she thought, could be appropriate in relation to investigating the first research question. According to the findings, all the respondents agreed that language needs to be manipulated accurately, appropriately, and sensibly. Additionally, the vast majority of the respondents agreed that figures of speech should be employed eloquently; evocatively; & poetically, the setting should be depicted sensorially; transparently; & thoroughly, and the content should engage the reader emotionally; intellectually; & imaginatively. In addition, a high percentage of the responses agreed that the theme should be unique, the plot should arouse the reader's curiosity throughout the novel, main characters should be compelling; captivating; & inspiring, the narrator's point of view should be sympathetic; empathetic; & humanistic, inner thoughts should be reflected genuinely; concisely; & coherently, and dialogues should be constructed expressively; authentically; and impactfully.

To answer the second research question on why the novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* won the Booker Prize for Arabic Fiction 2024, the author applied a textual analysis of the novel, pinpointing a number of points which could reveal a comprehensive, logical answer. Based on the analysis, the author has realised that the novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* meets all the success requirements for it to have qualified for an international prize. Indeed, it is a masterpiece to read, enjoy, and appreciate.

Conclusion

To conclude, the current study aimed to highlight several key factors regarding what a novelist should consider for their novel to win a prestigious award. The study also aimed to explain why Khandaqji's novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* won the Booker Prize for Arabic Fiction 2024. Distributing a ten-item questionnaire and conducting a textual analysis of the novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky*, it has been concluded that factors such as unique theme, intriguing plot, distinct setting, engaging content, compelling character, eloquent language, insightful dialogue, and narrative voice, amongst others, could if impressively employed enable a novelist to win a prestigious prize. These, logically speaking, were among the main reasons why the novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* won the Booker Prize for Arabic Fiction 2024.

It should be remembered though that the current study is limited to a sample of forty-seven subjects and one type of novel analysis. For comprehensiveness purposes, future studies need to involve more subjects and utilise more analysis types. Relating the discussion to global readership, it is recommended that great literary works such as Khandaqji's *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* be translated into many languages. With reference to language acquisition, it is also recommended that distinguished literary works such as Khandaqji's *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* be taught.

On a final note, the world of novels knows no boundaries for inspiration, recreation, and sophistication. The deeper we delve, the more intellectually enriched we become. And the more intellectually enriched we become, the greater our appreciation for masterpieces that transcend eras, generations, and cultures, standing as symbols of human creativity, authenticity, and sensibility throughout the years!

Public Interest Statement

This study explores what novelists need to do in order to be awarded a prize of global recognition, and examines the reasons why the novel *A Mask, the Colour of the Sky* by Basim Khandaqji won the Booker Prize for Arabic Fiction 2024. Due to the scarce studies on these issues, this research paper is expected to add to the body of knowledge within the areas of fiction writing and award receipt.

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