



Critical Discourse Analysis in the Narratives of Women under Domestic Violence Based on Van Leeuwen's Social Actors (2008)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a new approach in the field of Discourse Analysis that examines the relationship between language and thought and discovers the hidden ideology behind the texts. In Critical Discourse Analysis, language has two layers, the superficial and the underlying. At the superficial layer, the discursive structures and features are explored while, at the underlying layer, the ideology and worldview of that discourse's producer are discovered. Discursive features depict social actors. Social actors are all people who are present in a discourse. They are represented in different ways in the discourse with the help of socio-semantic features. In CDA, it is believed that most texts are ideological and that events are reported from a particular perspective. As a result, adopting this approach, the dominant ideologies in different texts can be re-examined. In this research, an attempt has been made to study one of the most important issues using CDA. The problem is domestic violence against women, and the method used to investigate is the model of social actors of Van Leeuwen (2008).

Domestic violence has recently received more formal attention in Iran. Domestic violence is one of the most common types of gender-based violence, which includes physical, psychological, verbal, sexual, economic, and social harassment. Women and girls are the most affected by domestic violence. Violence against women has devastating consequences, especially at the family level. Therefore, paying attention to this issue and examining it from different dimensions can be helpful. This study tries to analyze the narratives of women who have experienced various forms of domestic violence, using a completely linguistic model. In other words, by examining the discursive features in these narratives, this study explores the ideologies of the producers of these texts and also examines the tools and strategies that these women use to persuade or influence their audience.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

In CDA, there are several patterns for examining texts. The model used in this study is Van Leeuwen's social actors (2008). Van Leeuwen's analysis is based on socio-semantic discursive features, because he believes that these features provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the text than purely linguistic components.

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The data of this study include fifty direct narratives gathered from women who have experienced domestic violence. The narratives in question were taken from the Telegram channel under the title *Campaign against Domestic Violence*. The campaign collects stories of women who were victims of domestic violence, with the aim of helping pass a constitution to protect women who are victims of domestic violence. Of the 456 narratives in the campaign, 153 were narrated directly by the abused women themselves, of which 50 were randomly selected and analyzed by Social Actors model of Van Leeuwen (2008). In these narratives, only the representation of the main actors of violence, including the abused woman and the violent people, was examined, and examining the actors who played a minor role in the perpetration or tolerance of violence was refrained. In addition to the actors who are explicitly represented and named, the main actors who are represented by null pronouns (PRO) have also been analyzed, because Persian is a Pro-drop language and subjects of many actions are represented by a null pronoun.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis showed that the use of Exclusion feature was very limited compared to Inclusion feature. This may indicate that the actors are prominently represented. In general, abused women use more socio-semantic discursive features to represent violent individuals. The difference in the use of some features to represent violent people and victims of violence is significant. The Exclusion, Relational Identification, Activation, and Negative Appraisal features are used to a much greater extent to represent the violent individuals; and the Passivation, Somatization, and Genericization are used to a much greater extent to represent the abused individuals.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of types of Exclusion regarding violent and abused people in the narratives.

Types of Exclusion	Violent People		Abused People	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Suppression	12	30	0	0
Backgrounding	28	70	6	100
Total	40	100	6	100

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of types of Inclusion regarding violent and abused people in the narratives.

Types of Inclusion	Violent People		Abused People	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Activation	66	28/94	39	13/36
Activation (Using PRO)	62	27/19	62	21/23
Subjection	16	7/02	101	34/59
Beneficialization	1	0/43	1	0/34
Subjection (using PRO)	0	0	14	4/80
Negative Appraisal	15	6/58	13	4/45
Positive Appraisal	3	1/32	1	0/34
Relational Identification	44	19/30	14	4/80
Symbolization	2	0/88	0	0
Indetermination	3	1/32	1	0/34
Somatization	0	0	16	5/48

Instrumentalization	3	1/32	1	0/34
Genericization	2	0/88	10	3/42
Abstraction	0	0	2	0/68
Aggregation	1	0/43	4	1/37
Individualization	0	0	1	0/34
Collectivation	3	1/32	0	0
Association	4	1/75	5	1/72
Differentiation	3	1/32	8	2/74
Total	228	100	292	100

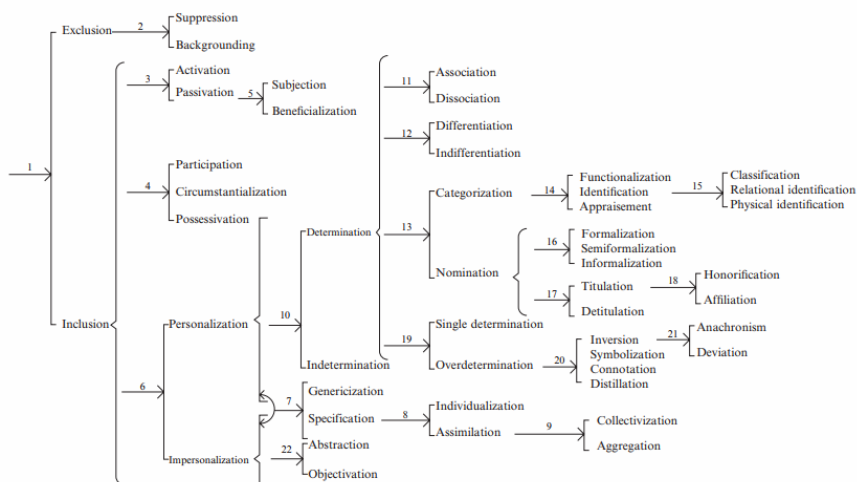


Figure 1. Social Actor Network (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 52)

4. CONCLUSION

The results showed that this type and the use of the features may indicate that abused women consider a lower status for themselves. Thus, in addition to violent people, these victims themselves may be to some extent blamable for tolerating violence. And also, the victims of violence do not place much negative value on their family members, even if they are violent. Finally, the top-down view toward women that exist in society is also present in women's speech and, consequently, in their ideology. In order to change the ideology of society and to break harmful and discriminatory traditions, it is necessary for women to have a positive attitude toward themselves first, so that other members of society have an equal and positive attitude towards them.

Keywords: Social actors representation, Discursive features, Domestic violence, Abused, Violent.