




Critical discourse analysis: Power exercise and resistance in selected texts

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Abstract

Language has a significant role in the representation of power relationships in discourse. The concept of “power” is a highly contested and debated topic in social sciences and humanities, studies of critical discourse analysis. The aim of the study is to analyse the concept of power through the use of linguistic devices in three different levels namely: text as a whole, sentence level, word level. The study employed a fully qualitative research design to collect the data from the “A thousand splendid suns” novel written by Khaled Hosseini. The theory of Critical Discourse Analysis and the theoretical framework of Thomas Huckin (1997) will be used as a mean to analyse the selected quotes of the novel to analyse the concept of power between characters. The findings showed that there are several types included in the novel namely: superiority of men, rich people, and government and, good values. The study revealed that power depends on the relationships between the individuals of society. The reasons behind the abuse of power are related to ideological, social and political and gender differences. This study contributes to the limited number of studies of analysing the concept of power in the literary works.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; CDA; power; Huckin framework; textual Analysis; novel

1. Introduction

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is focusing on the concept that the application of language is merely not just a medium of communication, but instead, it is a study that attempts to analyse language as social behaviour to determine how power may be transferred via language used in political or social speeches (Bustan & Alakrash, 2020; Elaf & Hussien, 2020). Implementing CDA as a literary criticism methodology may assist researchers in seeing literary works from a fresh perspective, providing chances for analysing the hidden units of the language in terms of social and political dimensions (Billig, 2008). There are various definitions of discourse. Discourse is frequently implemented in the field of linguistics as a reference to the discourse patterns and use of language, dialects, and accepted claims in diverse communities (Fairclough, 2013).

It is the study of individuals who reside in remote places, and use similar language practices. Analysis, on the other hand, is the means of analysing things by deconstructing each part of them (Van Leeuwen, 2015). To combine the terms, discourse analysis is essentially the linguistic analysis of interconnected speech and writing (Strauss & Feiz, 2014).

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The application of language in a social environment is the primary emphasis of the study of discourse analysis. One of the most important functions of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to provide an explanation for the connections between discourse and social power (Aljarallah, 2017). In particular, this analysis ought to be described and explained in the way the dominant groups' or institutions' texts and speech practice replicate or legitimise power abuse (Rahimi & Sahragard, 2007). This writing would give focus on the essential facet of discursively mediated dominance and inequality, particularly variations of availability to language, within the context of the explanation of discursively mediated dominance and inequality (Van Dijk, 1993).

Power is a characteristic of social units, organisations, or institutions (T. Huckin, Andrus & Clary-Lemon, 2012). In this sense, the part that would be highlighted is mainly on social power, rather than individual power, since power is based on system privileges that could be accessed to appraised social resources such as money, employment, reputation, or, perhaps, favourable accessibility of basic discourse and interaction (Huckin, 1997).

The power exerted by one group or an organisation (or could also be by the members) on the functioning and/or thoughts of (the members of) other groups, thereby restricting the autonomy of the rest of groups or shaping their beliefs, views, or ideologies, is characterised as social power (Huckin, 2002). Social dominance and power are regularly organised and institutionalised to facilitate greater significant control and regular mechanisms of power transmission (McGregor, 2003). Power can be 'transmitted' and be confined to a certain communal sphere or range, mainly in regard to politics, the media, the rule of law, education, or commercial businesses, leading to more distinct 'institutions' of power and privileged groups that govern those institutions (Sikka, 2012). Dominance is defined as a kind of social exploitation of power, lawfully legal or ethically unlawful employment of authority over others in a particular interest, which frequently results in social inequality (Van Dijk, 1993). Dominance is rarely permanent; in that, it is frequently progressive and might even be sufficed with scepticism or counter-power from controlled groups in varying degrees (Fairclough, 2015). The idea of 'manipulation' must be examined before applying CDA to literary works. Manipulation in a dominant social structure refers to the belief that those that possessed a greater degree of power authority may readily impose unlawful effects on others that are placed in a lower position of power and influence via discourse (Van Dijk, 2006). Hosseini weaves past events into the narrative chronology to depict the evolving lives of Afghan civilians, particularly among women.

1.1 Research Questions

1. How the author employed the concept of power through language choice in the text as a whole?
2. How the author employed the concept of power through the language choice at the sentence level?
3. How the author employed the concept of power through the language choice at the word level?

Above are the relevant research issues since the emphasis is on analysing the language utilised in the discourse. The researcher examined the language strategies adopted by the author in order to illustrate power. Language is seen as the primary weapon for exercising power in a particular society.

2. Literature Review

In one study conducted by (Bilal, 2012), he employed M.A.K Holliday's systemic functional linguistic to evaluate the short narrative "Thank You, MAM". In his study, he employs three functions of language, which are the ideational function, interpersonal function, and textual function. In his

analysis, he had selected the criteria of cohesion coherence, intentionality acceptability, formative, situationally and intertextuality as part of the criteria for the analysis of his study. He believed that every television show would promote their particular ideologies to the viewers. Through his study, he had detailed the relationship between language use and ideology by choosing the Socio-Cognitive model by Van Dijk. He then proceeded to analyse the short story titled 'The Gift of the Magi' by O. Henry and granted a total of five models to complete his analysis, which is narrative, report descriptive, report descriptive, information and arguments. Awan & Yahya (2016) examined the critical discourse of Ahmad Ali's novel "Twilight in Delhi." Awan & Perveen (2015) examined the feminism-related poetry of Sylvia Plath and Perveen Sahakir and found that the two poetesses give a major highlight on women's liberation.

Paziraie (2012) employed a study that focused on the hybrid method of a qualitative-quantitative analysis, corpus-based descriptive and applied eclectic approach to discourse analysis at the micro and macro levels for her study. She examined the way novel objects grow individually at the micro and macro levels, using a corpus-based, descriptive, and eclectic perspective. These ideas were presented by Hatch (1992) and Farahzad (2008). When addressing the topic of translation, she adds that it is mostly a shift of form. The form may be genuine words, clauses, sentences, or paraphrases of words, either vocalised or written texts. She claims that discourse analysis may be conducted in a range of social science areas, and this would include the Linguistics area of study. As a result, discourse analysis could be used to scrutinize and break down texts, which is particularly known to be significant in the world of translation. As a result, the translator employs discourse analysis as one kind of appropriate methodology to evaluate source texts in order to assess the essence of the translated texts and obtain a thorough grasp of the ideas and target texts.

Hua (2013) investigated women's use of language at the lexical level in the novel "Sense and Sensibility" using the critical discourse analysis conceptual framework. She assessed British society's prevalent views on gender inequality. The research was conducted by investigating the rational thoughts people had on gender presumptions that persisted in the common culture in the United Kingdom. The study also underpinned the use of language in Jane Austen's novel "Sense & Sensibility". She uses the work to analyse gender speech inequality that arises in the culture among men and women in the UK. Her work is limited to only the analysis at the lexical level. She offers a quick background to the author of the novel, Jane Austen, as well as a quick explanation of the novel "Sense & Sensibility" in her study. She examines nouns, adverbs, foul language, intensifiers, and diminutives in her parameter optimisation. She additionally contributes to Lakkof's study and the inventory of women's study of linguistic features. She notices a significant difference in the language used portrayed by men and women, which were then being linked to their socioeconomic groups, such as political preferences, economics, literature, and psychology (Chen Hua, 2013).

Du Toit (2004) did a study on the way power connections are expressed in Shakespeare's plays using a mixture of Bakhtin and Foucault theories. The research discovered that power dynamics are very prominent in Shakespeare's plays.

These features are component of the narrative of the communication between various protagonists, which every one of them has entrance to various modes of power based on their role among these platforms; it can be denoted that power frequently takes place in the view of the story among people in various ways, as well as among members of groups of diverse social structures.

This implies that power is interconnected and therefore is not possible to exist in a blankness. Members of one group of society's activities may impact or be impacted by members of different groups of society who discover a presence in Shakespeare's plays. (Malik & Murtaza (2013) performed research utilizing Huckin's analytic tools of CDA to demonstrate the way the writer altered

the text to achieve his goals. The research's goal was to determine the function of linguistic techniques in the formation of *The Kite Runner's* view of reality. The research's findings suggest that there is a meticulous use of linguistic strategies underlying the perceived text of *The Kite Runner*. The extensive research of the novel's language at macro-micro levels demonstrated that linguistic devices possessed an important part in linguistic manipulation (Ramatjanovna, 2019; Sangia, 2018). These language strategies proved to be an effective tool for influencing the reader's cognitive and knowledge base. The efficient use of language devices is critical in achieving individual and collective goals, as well as engaging in public discussions and agreements.

Kiren and Awan (2017) examined the feminist issue among women regarding their role in education and their status in society through the lens of Jane Austen's classic "Pride and Prejudice," which discusses the role and issues of women in the respective society. The study found that upper-class women are virtually revered as delicate goddesses in her culture, and the wedding is a beautiful courting, which could be considered as one of the essential aspects of British culture (Agustina, 2012).

3. Model of Critical Discourse Analysis

The following strategies are used to perform this study at the macro level: a. Genre: Several aspects to consider in regards to the text genre are: the way particular words may assist the writer or the novelist, and most importantly, things that could have been expressed but was kept aside and why (Huckin, 1997). Huckin (2002) combines CDA and genre analysis to discover textual silences – or the absence of significant details from a text. His approach for discovering such silences entails first developing a very extensive selection of approximately 40 subheadings that may arise within the targeted genre from a corpus of targeted texts and academic papers and afterwards assessing the occurrence of those themes in selected works. b. Framing: Framing would look at the way the whole context of the text is being portrayed, as well as the writer's viewpoint (perspective, slant). The preceding linguistic methods will be used to assess the framing of the texts: i. Foregrounding and Backgrounding: Both approaches are being implemented to investigate the way they have been employed to accentuate or de-emphasise particular topics in the text under consideration. ii. Presupposition: This approach is adopted to investigate the way the writer manipulated the reader's thoughts and delivered them in manners that they are embraced with no doubt. iii. Omission: Analysing omission is vital to every critical discourse analysis since it always reveals the writer or producers' objectives.

Analysing Sentence by Sentence: Following a study of the genre and framing of the text, the current study will move on to the sentence level, as described below: a. Topicalisation: This is a kind of sentence-level forefront. This form of study was carried out in order to determine the purpose of the writer's choice to include anything in the topic position. This linguistic device is used to draw readers' attention to particular bits of message that are further significant compared to others, such as a sentence topic, which is "what the statement is intended to." b. Presupposition: It may also be implemented via sentence structure. c. Transitivity: or (the agent-patient relations in sentences), the agent-patient interactions are particularly crucial to discover since they may frequently reveal the text's intentional power connections. This involves directing inquiries such as, who is the agent? What is being done to whom? Who is taking the initiative? Who are the passive recipients? (Huckin, 1997). It is also critical to notice the deletion or absence of agents, which is frequently accomplished via nominalization and the application of passive verbs.

Word and phrase-level: The following strategies are used to carry out the study at the word-phrase levels: a. Connotations: CDA of the text is performed on the level of individual words to assess the connotations that they would hold. Connotations are generated through the repeated use of a word or

phrase in a certain setting, which may also be expressed via the use of metaphors. b. Metaphor: Anything or can be anyone that is characterised by mentioning another object that may be contrasted without the use of function words "like" and "as" (Richard & Platt, 1992). c. Register: This form of study is used to determine the text's formality or informality. It would also emphasise its intricacy and topic matter. Figure 1 charted as the methodological framework of the study.

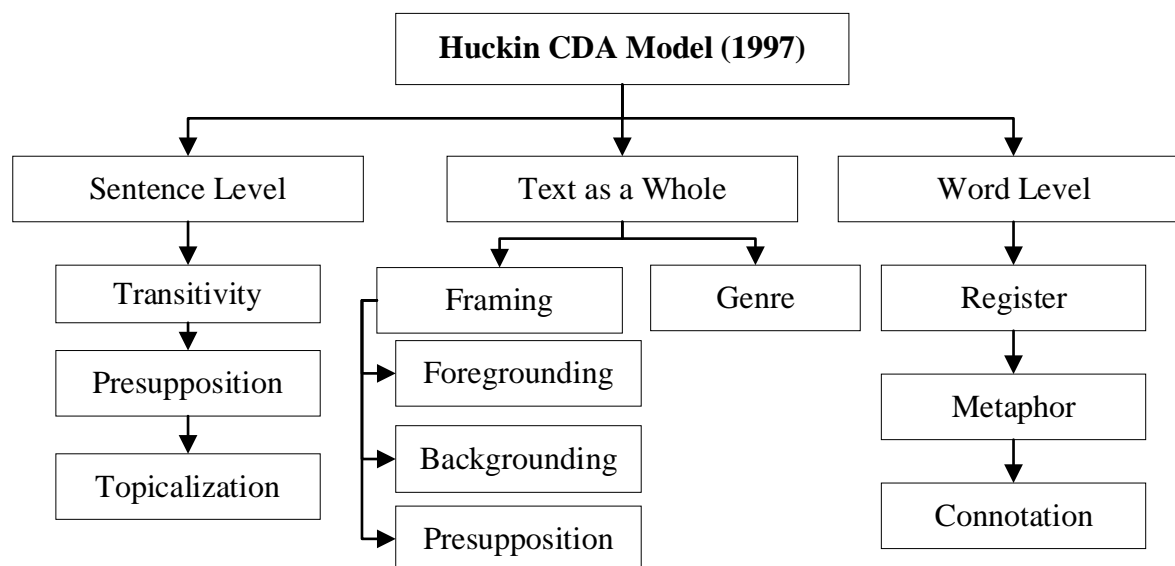


Figure 1. Methodological Framework

4. Methodology

Critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and socio-semiotics are the three forms of discourse analysis (CDA) presented by Thomas Huckin. CDA is defined by Huckin (1997) to be a "very context-sensitive, democratic framework that addresses ethically perspective on social problems with the goal of changing the society." As a result, elements like expressions, perception, and context have a significant impact on language. Anytime language is examined, it is important to remember to consider the culture and environment in which it occurs. According to Thomas Huckin's article Critical Discourse Analysis in 2002, by concentrating on language and the rest of the aspects of the discursive practice, CDA analysts want to demonstrate how the highest powers in a social structure constructed perceptions of events that favour and satisfactory for the preferences of those equal influences, and by revealing those practices, CDA researchers hope to endorse the perpetrators of the mistreatment. According to Huckin (2002), the primary goal of CDA is to grasp the way individuals are influenced by public discourse and therefore vulnerable to abuses of power, as well as to demonstrate the way public discourse routinely favours the agenda of strong forces against those of lesser privileged. Huckins' (1997) CDA analytical tools are used, and the study is carried out on the following levels: 1. Text framing: Foregrounding and Backgrounding, Deletion, and Presupposition. 2. Sentence Level: Topicalization, Deletion, and Presupposition 3. Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives, and Metaphors.

5. Analysis of Text as a whole

5.1. Framing

The tool that is used to limit the sense in order to provide a specific explanation for the listener or the reader. The frame is "central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning" (Gamson and

Modigliani, 1987: 143). It gives meaning to the incidents, so it is a way of convincing, and it has some effects on politics, society, and behaviour.

5.2. *Presupposition*

Presupposing is used in the structure of a specific reality. The purpose of presupposition is to assure the agreeing of the reader without any hesitance (Huckin, 1997).

Mariam wanted to study at school, so she demanded Nana to allow her to go to school. Nana refused the idea of going to school because she thinks that girls do not get any benefit from studying at school. Also, she believes that Mariam does not have the ability to study at school. She commented:

"What's the sense schooling a girl like you? It's like shining a spittoon. And you'll learn nothing of value in those schools. There is only one, only one skill a woman like you and me needs in life... "Only one skill. And it's this: tahamul. Endure."

Assuming that school is not beneficial for girls according to Nana's point of view. Her presuming is influenced by the society which is controlled by men. For instance, Afghanistan has thought for many years that learning at school for women is not beneficial, and women should be concerned with their duties at home. Thus, it is normal that women are not concerned with education and they should bear the difficulties of life. Likewise, Nana thinks that women should also bear the troubles that they face in their life.

5.3. *Omission*

Deletion is used to put specific points out of the text. It is a strong feature of writing texts. When some items are deleted from the text, the reader will not get them and will not be understood (Huckin, 1997). The unapparent features of the characters of the novel will be studied. One of the characters is Laila who is a pretty and clever girl, and she is the second hero in the novel. The character of Laila is contrasted with the character Mariam. Laila has good relations with her father, friends, and Tariq who has been her friend since she was a child. She was obliged to agree to get married to Rasheed in order not to be discovered that she is pregnant with Tariq's child. She accepted to get married to him in order to escape from people's gossips and not to be called harami. Mariam did not show the truth to Rasheed about the real father of Aziza. Laila's father is Hakeem. He is an enlightened man, and he is a teacher. His death was because of an explosion which led to the death of Laila's mother "Fariba" too. Although Laila's father did not declare that he is a communist, his concepts about the importance of equality between women and men in every side of life reflect his interest in communism. He motivated his daughter to study and to be an enlightened person. The purpose of the existence of the character of Hakeem is to highlight the importance of educating girls. Hakeem represents a group of men who motivate their daughters to study within a society where men control everything like the Afghan society who is against equality between men and women in every side of life.

5.4. *Foregrounding and Backgrounding*

The technique of foregrounding and backgrounding was used by Hosseini to concentrate on the strength of the text. There are some instances of foregrounding and backgrounding in the novel in the following sentences.

Laila was injured, and her parents died because of a bombing in Kabul. Mariam and Rasheed took care of Laila. When Laila got better, Rasheed talked to Mariam:

"We need to legitimize this situation. People will talk. It looks dishonourable, an unmarried young woman living here. It's bad for my reputation. And hers. And yours, I might add." Later after Mariam

argued back with him Rasheed replied, "It's not your decision. It's hers and mine." (Hosseini, 2007: 208)

The previous extraction represents the male dominance in the society, and how to mean has the power to express his point of view freely while women do not have the ability to do anything without having the green light of men. Rasheed told his wife "Mariam" what he would do. This reflects the dominance of men within the patriarchal society where women do not have space to express their thoughts. Therefore, the previous extraction foregrounds the dominance of the husband and backgrounds society in Afghanistan (Agnello et al., 2009).

5.4.1 Genre

It refers to the literary style in which the structure of the story is written. It also reflects the hidden features of the literary work. Novels have two literary genres:

5.4.1.1 Historical genre

— One day, the father of Laila reported some important news in April 1988. "They signed a treaty Within nine months, there won't be any more Soviets in Afghanistan".

— After the fall of the Soviet Union, many Mujahideen conquered several cities in Afghanistan, and the Afghan Democratic party did not control the government after 1989.

5.4.1.2 Tragic Fiction

— Rasheed's abused Mariam and Laila, so they tried to escape, but they were arrested by police. They were returned to Rasheed who treated them violently and deprived them form water for three days, and he was about to kill Aziza who is still an infant. Aziz cried "Aishee" (Hosseini, 2007: 263) when she felt hungry. As a result, Mariam and Laila exposed to domestic violence.

— The father of Mariam and his wives obliged Mariam to get married to Rasheed who is 45 years while she is 15 years. Her father and his wife wanted to make Mariam leave them since she is a harami and orphan.

5.5. Analysis of Word Level

5.5.1 Register

The author of the novel used the Farsi register to explain the nature of the environment of Afghan society. Using this way of narration makes the reader be aware of the features of life in Afghan society and increase the informal style (Huckin, 1997). A lot of Farsi words were used in the novel, and many of them return to Arabic and Persian languages. However, it is possible to understand the text depending on the context. Some words in Kurdish and Persian words were used in the novel but with different meanings.

5.5.2 Metaphor

— There is a metaphor when the courage of Commander Massoud is compared with the courage of the lion. The courage of Massoud helped him to face risks and not show any feeling of fear. As a result, the courage of Massoud is compared to the courage of the lion as in the following sentences:

"...that Commander Massoud himself, the Lion of Panjshir, God bless him, would oversee their burial" (Hosseini, 140).

— One of the main features of politics is having power. A president usually has the power to dominate the government and the parliament of the country. However, when someone is described as a puppet, this means that he or she does not have any right to decide their affairs (Erawati, 2013: 42), For example, "Najibullah is the Soviet's puppet president" (Hosseini, 150). Najibullah is a president

who is compared to a puppet because he does not have any power to control the government. The Soviet Union controlled the government behind the president.

— Mariam was described metaphorically as an old robust Russian car by Rasheed; in contrast, Laila was described beautifully as a Benz. He hurt the psychology of Mariam by describing her badly because he thinks he has the power to evaluate his wives.

5.5.3 Connotation

5.5.3.1. Modern

To distinguish between the social and cultural values in the richest and poorest societies, the author mentioned the terms "modern" and "connotation". The term "modern" means new concepts and principles in which there is equality between men and women. Equality between men and women is called a modern thing so that it occurs now. Limiting the freedom of men and women is related to the past years. On the other hand, some people in Afghanistan are not concerned with this freedom till now because they are still connected with old conventions.

"These women were what was the word Rasheed had used? "Modern." Yes, modern Afghan women married to modern Afghan men who did not mind that their wives walked among strangers with makeup on their faces and nothing on their heads."

5.5.3.2. Melee

This word is used to refer to the hospital which is not ordered. It means that people are involved in a conflict or argument because the hospital is not well-ordered.

5.6. Analysis of Sentence Level

5.6.1 Transitivity

Transitivity refers to the relationship between the agent and the patient in a sentence. The agent always has the power while the patient is weak and cannot do anything. When Rasheed hit Mariam and Laila because they tried to escape to Pakistan. Rasheed reflects the powerful part because he is a male, so he is the agent while his wives are females. Therefore, they represent weakness and they are the patients.

"There was blood on his hands, blood on Mariam's face, her hair, down her neck and back."

Also, Rasheed was about to kill Laila because she sat down in front of strange people without wearing a burka. Again, Rasheed is the agent and Laila is the patient.

"He was still on top of Laila, his eyes wide and crazy, his hands wrapped around her neck"

When Aziza was a child, she was in tears, and Rasheed did not like to hear her voice. Thus, Rasheed is the agent while Aziza is the patient.

"Sometimes, I swear, sometimes I want to put that thing in a box and let her float down Kabul River. Like baby Moses."

5.6.2 Presupposition

The writer used this tool to make his ideas more complete and not questioned.

"Now Mariam dreaded the sound of him coming home in the evening. The key rattling, the creak of the door- there were sounds that set her heart racing ". (Hosseini, 2007: 98).

When Mariam lost her child "Aziza", she was very sad. Her Husband "Rasheed" did not look at her for a long period of time in order to hurt her psychology. The value of women is related to their ability to get pregnant a male while Mariam's child was a female, so that does not have any value in society.

When Mariam wore a burka, this presupposes that Mariam is weak and does not have any control. She is under the control of Rasheed.

"She practised walking around her room in it and kept stepping on the hem and stumbling. The loss of peripheral vision was unnerving, and she did not like the suffocating way the pleated cloth kept pressing against her mouth."

5.6.3 Topicalization

It is a grammatical form of a sentence, and it is used to convey information. For instance, the word "blood" refers to the cruelty of Rasheed who hit his wife "Mariam" because she tried to escape with Laila.

"There was blood on Laila's hands, blood flowing from the open gash on Rasheed's cheek, blood down his neck, on his shirt."

Moreover, another example of topicalization is when Rasheed bought a television for Zalmai. He prevented Aziza from using it because she is a female; however, he permitted his son Zalmai to sue it because he is a male.

"Rasheed scowled, snatched her wrist and set it on the table, not gently at all."

"This hospital no longer treats women," the guard barked."

Also, the hospital is an instance of topicalization. Women were treated badly during the time of the Taliban. Women were considered inferior beings, so they were not taken care of when they were ill in hospital.

6. Conclusion

The text may provide many kinds of power: It may represent the superiority of men, rich people, government and, good values. Power depends on the relationships between the individuals of society. The reasons behind the abuse of power are related to ideological, social, political and gender differences. The linguistic tools have a significant influence on the success of the novel. Thus, the tools of the language have an important function in dominating the ideas and the actions of the people. These linguistic tools help to save the link the ideas related to the power relationship between the reader and the writer of the novel.

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