

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Paternalistic Authority in Hamid Khan's Short Story 'Broken Image'

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: February 17, 2021</p> <p>Accepted: April 25, 2021</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords : CDA, Discourse, Discourse and Society, Hamid Khan, Paternalistic Authority.</p> <p>DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.5032903</p>	<p><i>'Broken Image' is a story by Hamid Khan about an orphan Zahid, a young student who is very poor and sensitive at the same time. This paper shows as to how the story constructs paternalistic authority in the shape of a step-mother in various discourses. Through the story, the text (discourse) producer exposes the two extremes of our society – those who can easily fulfill their desires and those who cannot. The main objective of the study is to explore as to how a stepmother exercises her authority having constructed by the author in the text/discourse. Moreover, the paper uses Fairclough's (2001) Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for analyzing the data. CDA is a suitable method for analyzing social, economical as well as political issues in the society depicted in a literary text. The paper adds to the already available information on such themes. It will help the budding researchers to use it as a guiding force for analyzing local voices embodied in Pakistani literature in English.</i></p>

Introduction

This study aims at exploring paternalistic authority in the short story *Broken Image* from the perspective of Fairclough's (2001) approach to CDA. Hamid Khan's *Broken Image* discursively depicts paternalistic power/dominance and poverty of the society of Pakistan, where the poor can only long for fulfilling their aspirations.

Hamid Khan has been a devoted fellow both to literary and academic pursuits. He has a vast worldly experience as he is a retired civil servant. This vast experience and his literary genius have got together and given shape to a true reformer of the society. This he does indirectly and with dexterity. His two poetic volumes, *Velvet of Loss*, and *Pale Leaf (Three Voices)*, and short stories have made him a versatile writer who excels both in poetry and prose. In both the cases his style is not verbose. His short sentences and lines take us to visit our world with keen observation as we are taken aback by his choice of words graphology. His terse and stenographic style never lets one get bore rather one can enjoy both the word play and hidden messages. It is these qualities that his works have been analyzed from stylistic as well CDA perspectives.

Fairclough (1992) views discourse as social proceedings being constructed by an individual in social context. In other words, discourse is concerned with language in context in which thought and power play an important role. This kind of power through discourse basically shapes social reality. In this regard, Fairclough views discourse as a meaning making phenomenon.

In addition, discourse is a systematic investigation of communication patterns, language and structure. Parker (1992) defines discourse as the collection of meaningful and orderly text. He further asserts that it is a central element of language where authority and suppression play a pivotal role.

The concept of discourse is communal and multi-lingual. It means that it is not the creation or property of an individual or a particular class but the creation of a multiplicity of people. It is the production of sense from person to person. Harris (1997) asserts that community, as a whole, distributes the understanding and knowledge of exacting subject in circumstances which is significant for that subject. Fairclough (2001) considers discourse as a kind of "social process", and a part of society which cannot be distinguished from it. Discourse, both, in written and spoken language is a type of social practice (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). In this connection, Elsharkawy (2017, p. 11) cites Riesigl and Wodak (2000), discourse is a "way of signifying a particular domain of social practice from a particular perspective."

Wodak (2007) puts that social processes are mainly shaped by discourse and discourse itself is shaped by them. The relationship between social structures as well as events is reliant upon social performances which are articulated to build social grounds and institutions (Fairclough, 2001). In this background, discourse can be viewed as a specific type of social structure that creates social processes within social framework or network.

CDA is a multi-disciplinary and problem-oriented approach of analysis and interpretation of discourse. It is a critical perspective on doing research and focuses on social issues and problems, and specifically on the role of discourse in the reproduction or construction of domination and abuse of power. It examines and explores these social problems in the best interests of dominated groups of society. "It takes the experiences and opinions of members of such groups seriously, and supports their struggle against inequality" (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). Fairclough's (2001) approach mainly focuses on linguistic elements used in a text and to analyze the hidden meanings in the system of social relationships and its hidden effects on this system.

Fairclough's approach to CDA focuses primarily on power relationships and inequalities in producing social issues as well as particularly, on discursive aspects of power relationships and inequalities (Fairclough, 2010, Reisigl, 2013; Machin and Mayr, 2012; Wodak, 2009).

Literature Review

As far as the story under study is concerned, the writer exposes the two extremes of our society – those who can easily fulfill their desire and those who can only long for fulfilling their aspirations due to poverty. One thing is very positive in the story. It is the attitude of the wealthier friend who helps Zahid come out of every difficulty, and who is not a person that would remind Zahid the extension of the helping hand towards his friend in need.

On the other hand, there is Zahid who represents those poor students who are egoists but are helpless. Such people try their level best not to be dependent on others but remain so being penniless. This story is deviant structurally from normal short stories as it contains only two characters that are friends and really want to strengthen their friendship in their own peculiar way.

In a similar study, Ramzan and Abdul Karim Khan (2020) explore power relationships in Pashtun society in Hamid Khan's short story *Badmash*. They conclude that the story portrays the realistically the Pashtun society of Pakistan where the powerful rule and have control over the less powerful. The researchers used CDA as methodology for analyzing the text to explore all the social evils constructed in the story under study.

The current study is also following the same line of enquiry though here the center of attention is paternalistic authority. Thompson (2013) asserts that Paternalism is generally considered as violation of the individual freedom of a person or class of persons. He further puts that the "discursive use of the term *paternalism* is almost exclusively negative, employed to diminish specific policies or practices by presenting them in opposition to individual freedom" (Para 1).

Similarly, Hurston's (1937) *Their Eyes were Watching God* constructs the patriarchal authority and dominance through the marriage Joe and Jain. In this novel, the text producer showed through Joe's position of power, which gives him the privilege to treat Jain as merely toy to his power (Kelly and Lillios, 2012). Likewise, Jean Rhys' works mainly represent suppression and marginalization of women by male characters, the resistance of women to these suppressions and the politics of power of the colonizers (Qawas, 2008).

Again, Silver (2015) relates a criminal investigation of a real story related to Mumbulo family where a step-daughter was burnt by her step-mother in 1930. This story constructs the wicked, cruel and selfish nature of a step-mother, Edna towards her eleven years old step-daughter, Hilda. Hilda dies after four hours having critical burns on her face and body. The researcher cites Laythe's (2002) statement that in the police investigation the cause of her kill was the pan of gasoline Hilda had been using to clean but it was actually the step-mother who deliberately ignited the fire.

Thus, like *Broken Image*, the theme of paternalistic authority, especially the dirty role of the step-mother, is embodied in literature of diverse societies.

Methodology

The method of enquiry for the study is based on CDA. CDA analyses texts both textually and linguistically. The important proponents of CDA such as Fairclough, Wodak, Kress, van Dijk and van Leeuwen present the major approaches of CDA, and share the common areas of interest such as dominance, inequality and authority. The analysts of CDA mainly deal with those features which contribute to the fabric of "discourse in which dominant ideologies are adopted or challenged, and in which competing and contradictory ideologies coexist" (Hidalgo Tenorio, 2011).

Moreover, CDA encompasses several general tenets and uses a great variety of tools. It is primarily concerned with identifying social and political inequalities that exist in a society (Atkins, 2002). Atkins give great importance to Fairclough's (1989) three terms; experiential, expressive and relational, to be understood. He asserts that to look at the experiential value of text, CDA attempts to show the experience of social or natural world of the producer of a text which are shown in a text. He elaborates that by assessing the formal values of the text, an individual's views of the world can be identified. He quotes Fairclough's (1989) words in explaining expressive value of a text and says that "expressive value provides an insight into the producer's evaluation of the bit of reality it relates to" (p. 5). Similarly, he explains Fairclough's third dimension and says that relational values may identify the perceived social relationship between the text producer and its recipient.

This study follows Fairclough's (2001) framework of CDA. He provides us ten questions and sub questions (see pp. 110-12) through which a researcher can critically analyze and interpret the text under study. It is a critical analysis from the perspective of Fairclough's (2001) three dimension model (TDM). This qualitative

research applies Fairclough framework of CDA. His three dimensional model provides helpful tools for the analysis of the selected text.

Data Analysis and Discussion

This part of the study deals with the analysis and interpretation of the selected text (discourse) to explore the social issues constructed in it. CDA's basic concern is to explore the hidden meaning in the text and analyze the given text in its social as well as textual contexts.

Discursive Construction of Inner Thoughts

The extract below discursively represents the inner feelings and thoughts of Zahid. He felt unhappy because one of his friends was coming to him to go to the bazaar. As he had no money to afford the expanses, so he felt very bad and disturbed.

Excerpt 1

"1. And today is a real bad day' he was scared to think over it. 2. One of his friends was coming and he was supposed to go with him outside; the very sound of the word made him disgusted. 3. In a furious action he jerked his head, waved his hands in the air trying to clear the unseen mist before his eyes". (Broken Image, pp.63-64)

Discussion

This excerpt represents the deprived and haunted thoughts of the orphan. The text producer constructed the portrait of Zahid as a pauper who is in need of some money to spend on his friend visiting him. He feels a lot of discomfort from the thought of having no money to visit the bazaar and spend some time with his friend.

Description, Interpretation and Explanation

The excerpt contains three complex narrative sentences. The first sentence is compound and declarative. The second and third sentences are complex sentences having their main, subordinate and coordinated clauses.

The ideologically important and loaded words, sentences, expression and phrases are: the collocation of two words '**bad day**' and the word '**scared**' in sentence 1, the subordinate clause '**and the very sound of the word made him disgusted**' in sentence 2 and the expression '**trying to clear the unseen mist before his eyes**' in sentence 3. Sentence 1 is compound having two clauses. The clauses are joined together with the help of comma "," which acts as logical connector in the context of the text.

Similarly, there are used some pronouns to demonstrate the participants in the event or action constructed in the text. These pronouns are: the third person pronoun '**he**' occurred three times in sentences 1, 2 and 3, the possessive pronoun '**his**' occurred three times in sentences 2 and 3, the objective possessive pronoun '**him**' occurred in the coordinate and subordinate clauses of sentence 2. All the above pronouns are used exclusively to refer to none outside the text. The pronoun used as means to refer to inside or outside the text is the demonstrative pronoun '**it**' used in the first sentence and obscures the agency.

The only conjunction '**and**' is used as logical connector for the purpose to connect words, phrases, clauses or sentences. Here, the producer of the text also used some punctuation marks such as commas, colons as logical connectors in the selected text (discourse).

The adjectival phrase '**bad day**' discursively represents the feelings of Zahid about the coming of his friend to him because he had no money to afford the visit outside and to host his friend. It is custom in the society depicted in the story that when someone or a friend visits to his friend then the new comer is considered to be the guest while the second one is considered to be the host. Here, the producer of the text wants to represent the bad conditions of Zahid who is unable to afford his friend's visit to him because he had no money to spend on the friend. The subordinate clause '**the very sound....disgusted**' in sentence 2, again, constructs Zahid's inner feelings and thoughts, and his misery due to hearing the very sound of the utterance of the word 'to go outside', because he was not able to tolerate his friend's visit to him. It was not the thing that he did not want to see his friend but he was unable to give his friend due respect and host him because of having no money. This means disrespect of the guest in the social context of the society.

The adjectival phrase '**furious action**' is used as collocation of two words which attributes some quality to noun or pronoun. The producer of the text used some linguistics choices to convey his message. Through the use of this phrase, the producer wants to discursively represent the inner conflict in the mind of Zahid. The expression, '**the unseen mist before his eyes**' in the subordinate clause of sentence 3 constructs the utmost disgust and disappointment from the situation created in the discourse. The producer of the text used oximoron in the use of the adjectival phrase 'unseen mist' here. The producer has given an attributive quality to the mist which has no physical existence but only can be felt, though it is normally not possible. This, in turn, aggravates the severity of the situation.

The selected excerpt discursively constructs the thoughts and inner feeling of Zahid. He is totally disgusted and broken from the thought of having no money in his pocket to visit to the bazaar with his friend and to enjoy some time. He considers himself as helpless and penniless because his stepmother treated him as her enemy. She was not ready to consider Zahid as the son of her husband and a part of their house.

Construction of Paternalistic Authority

The text producer's portrait of the stepmother is culturally woven to Pashtun society where the stepmother has become idiomatic and is called as *Meru*, the very term spills venom in the local context.

Passage 2

"1...he couldn't ask his step-mother--- a traditional one. 2. She knew her role and was a right species of her type. 3. She was really awful towards him.... 4. They were beyond each other's understanding. 5. And asking her for money would be the most horrible thing in the world".

(Broken Image, p.64).

Discussion

The story constructs through various linguistic choices the traditional approach of the step-mother towards their stepchildren. No doubt, this does not mean that this approach can be generalized through and through. Good ladies are there who are God-fearing and take step-children for their own, but the majority cases are not so. Here, the producer of the text has used various verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns that attest the projection of the atrocities by the hands of stepmother towards the stepchild. The character of the step-mother is a criticism on the malpractice in the society on part of stepmothers who are generally not sincere with the children of their husbands.

Description, Interpretation and Explanation

The selected passage contains five lines and has some experiential, grammatical and expressive values in the use of language. The language used, here, is formal as it is not between two un-equals but declarative which narrates a simple story of an orphan.

Pronouns used as participants in the passage are, 'he' and the possessive pronoun 'his' in sentence in sentence 1, the third person pronoun 'she' in sentences 2 and 3, the possessive case pronoun 'her' (occurred two times) in sentence 2 and 5 (occurred one time), the objective pronoun 'him' in sentence 3, the demonstrative pronoun 'they' in sentence 4 and 'each other's' in same sentence. All these pronouns are used exclusively and act as participants predominated the relationships in the text.

The mode of the sentences used in the selected passage is a declarative mode. There are used some modal helping verbs (auxiliaries) in the selected text which is mostly used predicatively. The modal auxiliary 'would be' is a predictive modal verb which predicts about an event to be occurred in future. The modal auxiliary 'couldn't' is used for constructing impossibility of an action in the context of the text. The agency is unclear in the use of grammatical structures in the explanatory clause 'a traditional one' in sentence 1, the expression 'and was a right species of her type' in sentence 2 and the expression 'be the most horrible thing in the world' in sentence 5.

The word 'stepmother' in sentence first is an ideologically significant word, which gives the impression of dominance and control over the boy's thoughts and mind. The text producer constructed the image of the stepmother as that of a monster. As we see the boy could not dare to ask her for some money, even he was in great need of money, because he knew that it will create a horrible situation in the family if he dared to ask her. The introductory phrase 'a traditional one' constructs the notion about the stepmothers as having same attitude and authority in the domestic life.

Sentence 2 has a logical connector, which connected the two clauses of the same sentence. The expression 'and was a right species of her type' in the same sentence constructs the cruel and bad nature of the stepmother towards Zahid (the orphan) whose mother was died and he was living with his father and the stepmother. She has been declared as 'a right species of her type' to show that every stepmother has the same attitude and treatment towards their stepchildren in the society depicted in the story. The society named stepmother as *Meru*, which means venom in our local context.

Similarly, the word 'they' in sentence 4 is a demonstrative pronoun used exclusively. The producer of the text intends both the stepmother and the stepson as they have created no understanding between them due to the harsh attitude of the stepmother.

Sentence 5 starts from the conjunction 'and' which acts as a logical connector to connect the two sentences. Through this sentence, the producer of the text discursively constructed the authoritative influence of the stepmother on the mind and thoughts of the boy. He considers his asking for money from his stepmother as it will prove a horrible thing in the world for him.

Conclusion

This study is significant in that it reaffirms the cruel nature of step-mothers and highlights it for the common reader which, in turn, will lead to reforming the society at broader level. Next, this study contributes to the idea of giving importance to local voices as local voices carry our own problems and issues. Though, here the basic message is projected on social level but it can also be tested on psychological level which will turn the text into more interesting aspects of human mind and behavior. Moreover, the study also broadens the research horizon for the fresh and budding researchers who can use such studies as guiding forces. It is equally important for the teachers of literature.

Author's contributions:

¹Abdul Karim Khan: Abstract, introduction and conclusion

²Muhammad Ramzan: Data analysis and review the paper

³Ahmad Naeem: Discussion

⁴Asad Ullah: Literature review

⁵Shah Nawaz Khan: data collection, proof reading

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