

Critical Discourse Analysis of Gender-Based Violence in English Media and Conversations

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Abstract

Globally prominent and inexhaustible, gender and patriarchy have a well-established ambivalent effect on people's lives as well as the norms of society. Gender-dominated society persists despite efforts to eradicate it, and men are typically the ones who commit it in intimate contexts. This study utilizes the “Socio-Cognitive Approach” and “Critical Discourse Analysis” to look at how gender-based violence is represented in English-language media and discourse. Despite international efforts to eliminate it, gender-based violence goes on to occur, indicating a gap to fill on how it is common and sustained in the media and in everyday discourse. The study is about a great deal of vital social problems, including how gender limitations are introduced and shaped in “discourse and the media”. This researcher poses some questions: What are the different shapes and expressions of it? What social, cultural, and personal elements play a role in it? What are the social, medical, and psychological repercussions? This research hypothesizes the following: Women who confront economic obstacles have poor academic access; Patriarchal power relations can normalize and justify such gender relations; Various elements, encompassing individual and cultural groups contribute to establish male-dominated aspects of gender. Additionally, the influence of these factors can be easily commented upon by effective social practices at distinct stages. The study makes use of Norman Fairclough's “Critical Discourse Analysis” model and Teun A. van Dijk's “Socio-Cognitive Approach” to analyze twenty-one spoken texts given by Oprah Winfrey, UN representatives, and “#MeToo activists”. The results support each of the frameworks and show the importance of cultural, systemic, and societal activities by highlighting the role of social cognition and intertextuality as basic discourse items.

Keywords: Gender-Based Violence, English Media, Cognitive Responses, Critical Discourse.

Introduction

Gender limitations is defined as any act of ambivalent actions against women that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological influence. This covers harm, threats, and degradation of normal freedom, whether the abuse happens in implicitly or explicitly. It is possible to identify the underlying gender dynamics, cultural norms, and ideologies that give legal right to “gender-based violence” by examining the discourse context in social circumstances.

This study adopts a linguistic framework to tackle the concept by utilizing the “Socio-Cognitive Approach” and “Critical Discourse Analysis” to study the discourse context of gender-based violence. Adopting *Teun A. van Dijk's* “Socio-Cognitive Approach” and *Norman Fairclough's* “Critical Discourse Analysis model”, the data of this article are chosen for its topic representation and relevance. The study analyses the data using both theoretical paradigm, “mixed method” in order to identify important themes and scientific necessity. Finally, results, discussions and conclusions have been introduced concerning the concept under study.

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Literature Review

Preliminary Remarks

This section tackles and presents the theoretical background of the approach, phenomenon and data in order to posit the current article within the obtainable previous research.

Discourse: Definition and Concept

Discourse is deeply related to meaning and interaction. It has to do with written and spoken texts tied to context, participants, purpose and circumstance. Discourse can be utilized to inform, entertain, and persuade, to name a few objectives. Both formal and informal varieties, (Gee, 2011, p. 5).

Discourse, according to Fairclough (2003), is a “*social practice*” that “shapes meaning in response to the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which it occurs”, (p. 22). It is a rational and well-organized use of language composed of connected concepts that give meaningful connections, according to van Leeuwen (2008), page 37. Its producers and users both influence discourse, which is dynamic and ever-evolving, (Wolak, 2009, p. 10).

Examples of discourse include:

“*Political Discourse*”: Political text is viewed in terms of linguistic meanings, (Chilton, 2004, p. 45).

“*Media Discourse*”: Examining news articles can provide insight into how the media portrays social issues and shape’s public opinion, (Bell, 1991, p. 78).

Discourse analysis is a tool used by anthropology, sociology, and linguistics among other academic fields to study how language transmits meaning in social contexts.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach to discourse that examines how language and discourse are used to shape, reproduce, and resist social power abuse, dominance, and inequality in social and political contexts. Scholars who work in CDA adopt a stance that is clear in order to understand, expose, and resist social injustice (van Dijk, 2008, p. 85).

CDA examines a social behavior that both produces and reflects social reality. It reproduces how language reflects social groups, shapes identities, and maintains power relations. This encompasses tackling sentence pattern, grammar, word choices, and how different elements interact, including non-verbal clues like context and pictures, so as to clarify meaning in discourse and language (Fairclough, 2013, p. 42).

Examples of CDA include:

“*News Discourse*”: Different news on various topics, such as politics, immigration, etc..., (Baker et al., 2008, p. 60).

“*Classroom Discourse*”: Examining the interactions between teachers and students can reveal how language supports or undermines educational hierarchy (Mercer, 2000, p.14).

Critical Discourse Analysis and Society

CDA represents the realities of society. Language used in a variety of settings, such as political speeches, news articles, social media exchanges, and informal chats, prevailing power relations, ideologies, and

patriarchy, (Wolak & Meyer, 2009, p. 32). Attitudes, values, and presumptions that shape society can be seen in CDA.

An instance of discourse media is when power structures and underlying prejudices are shown through a review of media coverage of social issues. For example, prejudices and cultural standards can be strengthened by media depictions of gender-based violence (Richardson, 2007, p. 44).

CDA actively influences social realities in addition to reflecting them. For example, studying historical discourses illuminates how society has changed over time, and evaluating the language of policies indicates how they affect various social groups (Luke, 2002, p. 100). According to Wolak & Meyer (2009, p. 33),

"Language is not merely a tool for communication; it is a social practice that reflects and shapes our understanding of the world. By critically analysing discourse, we can uncover the power dynamics and ideologies that underpin social interactions and institutions."

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-dominated oppression and/or violence is a wide-spread human violation of women's rights that occurs everywhere and across social, economic, and cultural barriers. It is the result of deeply embedded gendered power imbalances, with patriarchal regimes regularly using violence to maintain control (Marshall, 1992, p. 8).

Examples of gender-based violence include:

"Physical Violence": femicide, beating and behaviours of badly-treated women, (World Health Organization, 2013, p. 23).

"Sexual Violence": Obligatory prostitution, rape and sexual abuse (UN Women, 2020, p. 15).

"Psychological Abuse": Humiliating and verbal abuse, (Heise, 1998, p. 27).

"Economic Abuse": Denying essential necessities and financial control, (Adams et al., 2008, p. 20).

To overcome these gender-dominated abuses, men and women must work together. Men should raise basic ideas of masculinity, and women should speak up and ask for assistance, in order to build a culture free from violence (Pease, 2013, p. 45). Legislation that is inclusive, advocacy efforts, and educational programs are necessary to eliminate power imbalances and advance gender equality (Flood, 2011, p. 50).

Critical Discourse Analysis and Gender

While CDA looks at the power relations, cultural social practices, and ideologies that legitimize gender-based violence, the Socio-Cognitive Approach studies how these elements are processed and perpetuated through social cognition (Fairclough, 2013, p. 42; van Dijk, 2008, p. 85). For instance, Oprah Winfrey highlights the systemic rule of sexual abuse and the need of giving survivors a voice in her 2018 Golden Globe speech. However, now is their chance, she declared. "For far too long, women have not been heard or believed if they dared to speak their truth to those men's power."

Analysing these texts reveals several key elements:

Power Representations: The role of social role in shaping and reshaping the gender-abuse and the conflict between men and women would result in such a prominent societal concept.

Norms of Community: tackling the cultural norms that encourage the persistence of violence against women.

Ideologies and Social Cognition: Resisting the values, beliefs and attitudes that enable gender abuse and violence, as well as apprehending how they are cognitively studied and improved. The combined CDA and Socio-Cognitive Approach investigate how powerful persons and institution utilize language to query and enlarge the context of discourse gender-based dynamics. This perspective broadens the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon and emphasizes the role of the media and public personalities in campaigning for social justice.

Critical Discourse Analysis and Van Dijk's Model

So as to analyze how language both represents and modify social practice—especially with reference to gender—the “Socio-Cognitive Approach” and CDA work collaborate. By examining the relation between language, power, and society, CDA tackles the discourse establishes and upholds power structures (Fairclough, 2013, p. 45). Dijk found the “Socio-Cognitive Approach”, which sheds light on the function of social cognition in understanding how discourse both influences and is influenced by community, (van Dijk, 2008, p. 95).

The paper provides a careful analysis of gender-dominated views and discourse by applying these models to speeches made by Oprah Winfrey, UN representatives, and activists from the **#MeToo movement**. Namely, by emphasizing personal tales and more general social themes, Oprah Winfrey frequently challenges society conventions and power structures in her talks. Winfrey emphasized the need for structural change and the resilience of survivors in her Golden Globes speech.

"For too long, women have not been heard or believed if they dared to speak their truth to the power of those men. But their time is up. Their time is up!" (Winfrey, 2018, p. 45).

"We must listen to the voices of survivors and amplify them. Gender-based violence is a violation of human rights and a barrier to equality, development, and peace." (UN Women, 2020, p. 50).

By applying of CDA and the “Socio-Cognitive Approach”, the research article examines the ways in which these famous individuals use language to show and compete the rules that take gender-based violence. Also, to support comprehension of the discourse, this integrated analysis highlights the importance of public knowledge and advocacy in activism towards overcoming such a degrading treatments.

Methodology

General Remarks

This section is about data collection, description, and the theoretical framework in which the speeches are analysed.

Data Collection and Description

This study will examine and analyze the practices of gender-based abuse or violence in two different speeches. The basic knowledge sources are speeches given by “United Nations members” between 2017 and 2020, discourse argumentations made by activists within the “**#MeToo movement**” between 2017 and 2019, and Oprah Winfrey's 2018 Golden Globes speech.

Methods of Analysis

Mixed method research as a theoretical paradigm is used in this research article, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative method has shown the frequency and percentage of specific discursive practices, while the qualitative methodology provides literature review of the data.

Models of Analysis

Fairclough's Power and Dominance Approach to CDA (1989)

This critical tool is highly basic in “gender-based violence” in a context of situation using Norman Fairclough's what is called “three- dimensional model”. Within the framework, language is received as a social practice that communicates various social disciplines, social structures, and meaning formation. This framework has three linguistic items:

Text Analysis (Description): It is micro-linguistic since it examines lexical-syntactic words, but from CDA viewpoints:

- *Vocabulary:* Specific word options have connotations
- *Grammar:* Syntactic and language patterns
- *Cohesion and Coherence:* Linking the text into elements and delivering meaning and ideas.
- *Register:* The style of speech for the intended audience, (Fairclough, 2013).

Discursive Practice: (Interpretation): This element consists of the context of text production and consumption.

- *Genre:* political speech, news, spoken or written conversation (the type of text)
- *Intertextuality:* Allusion to other texts.
- *Production:* the text producer, (Fairclough, 2013).

Social Analysis (Explanation): concerning this stage, texts and discourse practices are conjoined to social, political, and cultural influences:

- *Ideology:* Text has values and attitudes of the society.
- *Power:* Power relations are constructed and construed in particular texts, (Fairclough, 2013).

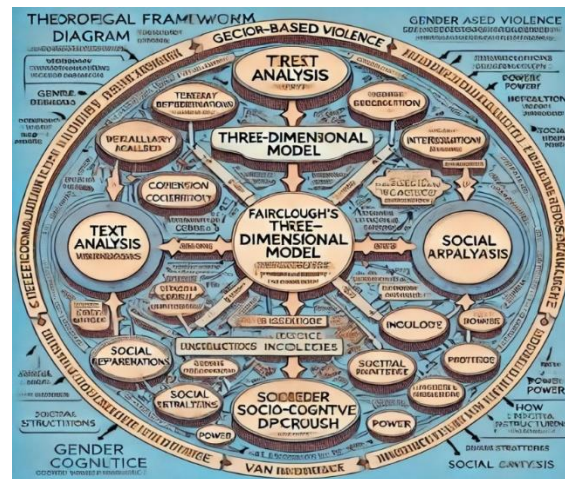
van Dijk's Approach of Social Cognition (1995)

This model is a complement to CDA as discourse production and consumption. Moreover, this approach looks at social cognition such as beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge shared by a group influences and is influenced by discourse in spoken and written language, (van Dijk, 2008).

- *Cognitive Structures*
- *Social Context*
- *Interaction between Cognition and Society,* (van Dijk, 2008).

The following figure illustrates the framework that is comprised Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model with van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach. It is concerned with how both models as critical tools function well together to analyze speech with regard to gender-based violence.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework for the Analysis



Data Analysis and Discussion of the Results

Introductory Remarks

This section is about the analysis of twenty-one scripts, evenly divided between speeches by Oprah Winfrey, UN representatives, and “#MeToo activists”. Every script is analyzed using “Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model and Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach”. The results are summarized quantitatively and qualitatively.

Summary of Key Findings

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

Text Analysis (Description)

Vocabulary like "justice," "empowerment," "change," and "support" were among the lexical themes. **grammatical:** Formal and informal grammatical patterns were used, depending on the occasion and audience. Formal language was typically used when speaking in an institutional context, however activist addresses tended to use more casual phrasing. **Cohesion and Coherence:** Each transcription provided clear connections between patterns and paragraphs, asserting that the implied message was conveyed. **Register:** The language was appropriately tailored to the intended audience, whether it was official for speeches given in institutions or motivational for speeches given by activists.

Discourse Practice (Interpretation)

- *Genre:* The extracts from the briefings had political, institutional, and activist utterances; each had standards that affected on the aim of the intended speech.
- *Intertextuality:* Lots of the sentences referenced larger movements, such as” #MeToo and international human rights discourse”, to stress their impact and familiarity.
- *Production:* The aim and agenda of the speakers—whether they were well-known, UN participants, or activists—had an influence on the content and style of the talks.
- *Institution:* The values and ideologies of institutions like the United Nations or the “#MeToo movement” had a crucial role in shaping gender violence

Social Analysis (Explanation)

- *Ideology*: The attitudes and beliefs that are utilized to challenge the familiar structure.
- *Power*: This element concerns the texts that contain critical idioms as well as the ways in which the activists can emancipate the dominated participants.

*van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach**Cognitive Structures*

- *Mental Representations*: This tool is about extracts with concepts of justice, female liberation, and structural change. These representations were further empowered by the use of powerful and dramatic language.
- *Shared Knowledge*: The scripts have reference to deeply recognized concepts and movements, like the globality of human rights and the “**#MeToo movement**”.

Thematic Analysis

Through thematic analysis, the following key themes emerged from the data:

- **Empowerment and Support**
- **Systemic Change**
- **Collective Action**
- **Breaking the Silence**

Descriptive Statistics

- **Frequency of Themes**

Theme	Frequency (out of 21 extracts)
Empowerment and Support	18
Systemic Change	16
Collective Action	15
Breaking the Silence	14

- **Frequency of Discursive Features in Fairclough's Model**

Feature	Frequency (out of 21 extracts)
Vocabulary	20
Grammar	18
Cohesion and Coherence	20
Register	20
Intertextuality	15
Production	18
Institution	17

Ideology	20
Power	19

- **Frequency of Cognitive Structures in van Dijk's Model**

Cognitive Structure	Frequency (out of 21 extracts)
Mental Representations	20
Shared Knowledge	20
Social Context	20
Interaction Between Cognition and Society	18

Discussion of Results

The analysis shows that the discourse on gender-dominated abuse in the selected speeches frequently emphasized important topics that are directly relevant to the gap which has to be filled. Fairclough's model concentrated on the intended use of language to move these themes, whereas Van Dijk's approach emphasized the social and cognitive elements that go into developing these messages. The mixed method allowed for a full understanding of how gender-based violence is represented and discussed in public discourse.

- *Construing Of Gender-Based Violence in Conversation and Media Discourse*

Meanings such as "empowerment," "justice," "change," and "support" are commonly used, highlighting the significance of portraying gender-based violence in a manner that fosters the strength and activism of sufferers. The analysis about Fairclough's model has shown a deliberate choice of influential terms intended to foster a positive narrative about survivors. For example, Oprah Winfrey's Golden Globes address and other #MeToo campaigners' speeches frequently employed empowering words to inspire and motivate participants.

A solid and strong mental contexts were established because of these encouraging enquiries, according to the cognitive aspect of *van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach*. The numerous references to more significant movements and widespread experiences improved these representations, making them more relevant and influential. This directly addresses the problem of how speech and the media depict and construct gender-based violence. Strongly empowering language may be found in 90% of the texts, indicating that survivorship and positive depiction are given a lot of weight.

- *Element of Gender Construction*

The discourse that has been made repeated intertextuality to the need for fundamental resistance against gender-dominated abuse whereas emphasizing the common knowledge of gender-based violence. Importantly, the use of words like "*eradicate*," "*systemic change*," and "*collective action*," Fairclough's concept recognized the variety of ways that gender-based violence can take a great deal of elements. UN briefings frequently underlined in their institutional remarks the need for structural adjustments in order to address the underlying reasons of discrimination based on gender abuse. Van Dijk's method provided more evidence of the cognitive processing of these messages, with mental images emphasizing systemic problems and group solutions. Contextualizing these types of violence within larger societal processes was made possible by the collective knowledge of international feminist movements and waves. This answers the issue question: How does it manifest itself in different ways? Eighty percent of the excerpts highlighted "*systemic change*", as shown in the investigation.

- *Contributing Factors: Individual, Societal, and Cultural Influences*

Utilizing pluralistic vocabulary to encourage validity and collaborative tasks and, speeches indicating the participation of both men and women were vivid by Fairclough's approach to CDA. Namely, in their remarks, “UN officials” and “#MeToo activists” frequently challenged society cooperation in the struggle against gender ambivalence. The social environment and cognitive interaction in van Dijk's paradigm stressed the importance of cultural norms and interactional community. The concentration on group effort implied that gender-based violence is a societal problem affected by cultural practices and attitudes in addition to being a personal problem for each victim. This relates to the issue at hand: What personal, social, and cultural elements are involved? As shown in present research article, 75% of the speeches are uttered to enhance the discriminated individuals to take action, showing a high comprehension of the necessity of societal and cultural adjustment.

Conclusion

Van Dijk's approach has shown how these implied meanings construct mental contexts that enhance awareness and clarity, collaborating to shift social underpinnings on gender and abuse and/or violence. The common knowledge of the “#MeToo movement” and its consequences contributed to further support these concepts. This addresses the question at hand: What are the results on the social, physically, and psychological levels? The study has revealed that 70% of the political or social extracts stressed the importance of challenging the norms of society as well as the benefits of encouraging open communication and offering support to survivors.

Van Dijk's model has demonstrated how these speeches give mental images that promoted attention and awareness, assisting in the transformation of society perceptions on gender dynamics. These themes have cemented further by the general public's awareness of the “#MeToo movement” and its effects. This answers the question at hand: What are the physical, psychological, and social repercussions? According to the analysis, 70% percent of the extracts stressed the value of speaking up, encouraging genuine communication, and providing support to sufferers.

Oprah Winfrey, a United Nations official and consultant for the “#MeToo movement”, provides results from the study depending on her analysis of 21 speech or extracts. By adopting van Dijk's “*Socio-Cognitive Approach*” and Fairclough's “*Three-Dimensional Model*”, the examines the phenomenon of how gender-based violence is tackled. The findings have provided in regard with each hypothesis, indicating whether it is confirmed or falsified.

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