

Investigating the social agents' representation methods in Jalal Al-Ahmad's "Fall Valley" from the perspective of critical discourse analysis using (Van Leeuwen's) sociological-semantic components

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Abstract

Critical discourse analysis is an approach that considers language as a social practice in relation to factors such as power and ideology. According to this approach, the present study has tried to use sociological-semantic components to demonstrate how Jalal Al-Ahmad expressed his ideology through the representation of the characters of Fall Valley and how he portrayed the social agents of that period after Reza Shah's fall. In this short story, linguistic constructions are analyzed through the sociological-semantic components. So Van Leeuwen's modal is appropriate for analyzing the text and discovering the relationship between language and the author's ideology. The main question of this paper is whether the author has been able to reveal his hidden ideology through the representation of social agents? Research findings exhibit that this has happened and Al-Ahmad has expressed his ideology and views in the story by using the methods of suppression, backgrounding, activation, passivation, personification and impersonalization. Using the general strategy of "exclusion", he hides the identity of high-ranking officials of Pahlavi government and completely "ignores" them by "backgrounding". The "government" and the "army" have been activated in the discourse, and the "workers" and the "elites" have been passivated to highlight the oppression that has been inflicted upon them for his audience.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, Ideology, Sociological-semantic components, Van Leeuwen, Al-Ahmad

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1. Introduction

The main discussion in the present study is to examine the reflection of the discourse governing the working class of Reza Shah's era in the story of "Fall Valley". In this work, Al-Ahmad, using a general representation, shows the rulers of the Pahlavi regime as generally active in suppressing workers' protests. He also identifies each of them with a distinct identity through a special representation. This research seeks to answer these questions in the framework of critical discourse analysis approach: 1. How does Van Leeuwen's theoretical model help to analyze the representation of social actors in the story? 2. Has the author been able to reflect his ideology in the text by representing the actors? 3. How is the relationship between the discourse-oriented components and the ideology embedded in the text explained? The main hypothesis related to the above questions is that Al-Ahmad has been able to use the depiction of social actors in the story to express his ideology.

The results of the research related to the theory under study indicate that so far no research has been done on the subject of the present article, namely the sociological-semantic analysis of Al-Ahmad political stories and novels. Therefore, the present study examines this issue in order to compensate for the existing deficit in this field. Obviously, considering this point, the necessity and importance of such research is clear.

2. Literature Review

Regarding the theoretical background of the present study, several works were generally found in the fictional literature that have been criticized according to Van Leeuwen's model. Among these works, we can mention Pooshneh and Babak (2013) who, in their study, have found different ways of representing social activists in the story "Between Yesterday and Tomorrow" by Ebrahim Golestan. The main purpose of this study is to discover the relationship between intellectual-social (ideological)

perspectives with discourse-oriented structures in the story.

In their study, Saeidnia et al. (2014) have examined the novels of Suovashun and Sang-e Sabour from the perspective of critical discourse analysis and based on sociological-semantic components. The results of this study indicate that the authors of these novels have represented women as a second sex, weak and with lower social prestige than men.

Junidi and Khaghani (2015) in their article have represented social action in zane ziadi (story collection). Their research findings show that in this set, actions are more inactive and static that are pushed into the background of the audience's mind.

The subject of the research of Armi et al. (2017) is dedicated to the analysis of how gender relations are represented in the novel "Lullaby for a Dead Girl" by Hamid Reza Shahabadi. This research, in the framework of critical discourse analysis and using Van Leeuwen components, has analyzed and explained the role and identity of family members and their interpersonal relationships in the novel.

In their article, Hamidreza Akbari et al. (2019) examine the story of "Ab-e Bid" by Mohammad Bahman Beigi to determine how the author has used the representation of social actors to express his views. He also uses the component of changing time, at the same time as raising the issue of modern Iran, to reveal the faces of the people of a part of Iran who still live in a prehistoric way. The author of the article has thus challenged the policies of the Pahlavi government.

Although the present study is similar to some of these works in terms of methodology, including Junidi and Khaghani (2015), but specifically and in terms of the studied stories, a study that analyzes the political and ideological literature of Al-Ahmad with this method. Has not been found yet.

3. Methodology

The purpose of this research, with a descriptive-analytical approach, is to investigate the representation techniques of social actors using data collected from the story of Al-Ahmad. To achieve this goal, using a qualitative method, first thirty discourse-oriented sentences with political and social themes in the story were selected. These sentences were then analyzed based on Van Leeuwen's model in order to find the components of cognitive-semantic society. Although Van Leeuwen's theory lists 51 ways to represent social actors, the authors focus on only the most frequent components of the story, as not all of them appear in the selected sentences. Their findings show that the author has shown the actions of nomadic teachers to be effective through a mass display strategy.

4. Discussion

Van Leeuwen (2008, p. 52) divides the "exclusion" component in discourse into two types, "suppression" and "backgrounding". In the discourse of Al-Ahmad, we see on several occasions the "suppression" or extremist exclusion of the activists who are the main cause of the deplorable situation of the miners. These activists, who are in fact the rulers of the Pahlavi regime and the owners of the means of production; By substituting unknown faces, they are completely hidden in the author's discourse! It is obvious that the author has deliberately removed from his discourse the indications of the involvement of the Pahlavi authorities in these cases by removing those who are responsible for killing the freedom fighters. This form of "suppression" serves to marginalize the first person of the government, Reza Shah. The extreme omission of Reza Shah's name in the discourse occurs by using the method of "general naming" that is, bringing the title "state" instead of the title of king. In this way, Al-Ahmad has tried to present the image of the "state" as a general nature, hegemonic and totalitarian, in order to remove negative and extremist actions from the realm of the "king" by highlighting it.

The most prominent example of "backgrounding" in the discourse of the story is when describing an actor who is referred to as "Colonel D". Although this officer has little presence in the discourse and his function is limited to his brief meeting with the head of the mine, his actions are recognizable in all incidents, including raids on workers' homes and their arrest and execution. The action of "Colonel D" (exploring the valleys of the mines) initiates a bloody repression, while its action in this story is diminished by the producer of the discourse and marginalized through the background.

It is obvious that the main cause of the repression of the miners and the execution of the protagonist is the Pahlavi government and Reza Shah himself, while as mentioned before, no name of this person is mentioned in the discourse. The question here is whether the removal of Reza Shah's name from the discourse was due to political reasons and the suffocating atmosphere around the text? The definitive answer to this question seems difficult, because the author wrote this story in 1326, six years after the fall of Reza Shah, and therefore could have explicitly named him as the main person responsible for the Zirab mine accidents. But why does he remove Reza Shah's name from his discourse instead? Perhaps the concealment of Reza Shah's name was based on the assumption that the audience already knew the hidden actor.

In the process of "expression", the presence of actors in discourse is represented in the forms of "activation", "passivation", "Personalization" and "Impersonalization". In Al-Ahmad's discourse, we see the active depiction of gendarmerie officers; For example, Haidar Babakhanlu is mentioned several times in the discourse, and his actions (including the torture of miners in the field court) are prominently represented in all behavioral and speech processes. The linguistic manifestation of this method is the role of the actor as the subject in certain clauses. It seems that Al-Ahmad wanted to portray all the members of that organization in a negative light by actively portraying Babakhanlu as a member of the army. In the discourse under study, the "boss" and the "miners" are actors who are shown to be passive.

And they are represented as if they have escaped the attention of the country. It is possible that Al-Ahmad, with this kind of illustration, wanted to show the audience that the working class and the elite of Iranian society will always be ignored by politicians!

5. Conclusion

The authors of the present article sought to answer the question of how to use Van Leeuwen's strategies to analyze the representation of social actors in the story. The authors also sought to answer the question of whether the author was able to reflect his ideology in the text by representing the actors. Analysis of the research data, in addition to explaining the relationship between the discourse-oriented components and the ideology embedded in the text, showed that Al-Ahmad was able to use the representation of social actors in the story to express his ideology. His discourse shows that in representing the actors in the story, the author has used the strategy of expressing non-governmental actors in positive issues and removing them from negative issues, and vice versa, the same strategy in the case of government actors. Thus, statesmen are represented in the discourse as negative actors, and workers and miners as positive actors. In general, the author uses the method of "differentiation" to highlight the contradiction between these two groups, the "state" and the "working class". Using the method of "general naming", which uses the name "government" instead of mentioning the name of the king, the author has removed Reza Khan's name from the discourse of the story. The actors identified by their names in the author's discourse are all male and are portrayed formally, semi-formally, and informally. Al-Ahmad, by passively portraying the head of the mine, puts him in the spotlight to highlight the oppression that has been inflicted on him and the miners. In general, the representation of social actors in Al-Ahmad's discourse has been influenced by his socio-intellectual views and the power relations that govern the society of his time.