
Power and Gender Issues in Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride*: A Critical Discourse

Analysis

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Abstract

*This critical discourse study explores power and gender issues discursively constructed in Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride*. The study aims to examine gender issues in the tribal patriarchal social system in Pakistan. The novel understudy critically explored the abuse of power in a patriarchal society. Lazar's concept of Feminist critical discourse analysis and Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis has been chosen to examine the main issues faced by women in remote areas of Pakistan. Fairclough's (1989) model has been adopted as a method for the analysis of the selected excerpts taken from the text of the novel. The analysis of the text has been made on the ground to explore women's marginalization, patriarchal hegemony, and power exercise in Pakistan's remote areas.*

Keywords: Abuse of Patriarchal Power, Feminist Discourse Analysis, Fairclough's Three Dimensional Model (1989), Gender Issues, *The Pakistani Bride*, Women Marginalization.

Introduction

This research paper is a critical exploration of gender and power issues discursively depicted, reproduced, and communicated in Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *The Pakistani Bride*. It is a critical discourse study of the situations in which these issues are shaped in the novel. Gender, power, and women's marginalization are the main issues Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to deal with. In this regard, Van Dijk (2002) asserts that "**sexism can be defined as the domination of male over women**" (p.). Again, he says that gender discrimination is the main cause of this domination. *The Pakistani Bride* deals with the subjugation of women in the remote areas of Pakistan. It brings forth the different forms of women suppression in Pakistani society and depicts undefined as well as unfixed social status of women in Tribal society. Sidhwa (1983) represents different kinds of social restrictions that the women face in daily routines in tribal areas. Moreover, she asserts that women have to face a set of ambiguous, unlimited, and changing rules and regulations. *The Pakistani Bride* has been written in 1983. It depicts the patriarchal dominance in the remote mountain areas of Pakistan where women are treated inhumanly. They are considered inferior creatures that have no right to live, their lives in their way. Apart from *The Pakistani Bride* Sidhwa also presented her most influential two novels on social struggle and power resistance. *The Crow Eater* (1978), *Ice Candy-Man* (1988), and *The American Brat* (1993) are all the discourses on injustices and suppression of women facing in modern society. These discourses bring the feminist power of authoritative sense dealing with subjugated characters (Zaitoon and Carol), are helpless, pretty, and young figures in modern social chains. In this regard, Kumar's (1991) arguments prescribed that such a feminist tone challenges the old tradition of gender power. This narrative power explores a new social system that resolves the factual problems facing by women in society. The discursive power of Sidhwa's narration shows that women are treated as secondary creatures in the modern world. This critical narration of feminist voice differentiates sex, power, gender, and their importance in the modern world. Fazia Afzal recalled *The Pakistani Bride* as "a challenge to the patriarchal culture and values of Indian Pakistani society" (Ross 1991: p.74).

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The Pakistani Bride

The Pakistani Bride shows the influence of Charles Dickens, V.S. Naipaul, and Tolstoy among others. The heroine (Zaitoon) is an ailing and lonely child as compared to Pip (Great Expectation) in the sub-continent during the time of partition. Sidhwa herself was restricted due to the religious retains in-home and focused only on reading as in one the interview she says, "From the age of eleven to eighteen, I read non-stop because I did not go to school. I had nothing to do except reading... which did turn me, into a writer. I must have read *The Pickwick Papers* four times... Tolstoy influenced my work... and Naipaul was good, to begin with" (Interviewed by Feroza Jussanwall 1996).

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) is a new critical study in socio-linguistic. This approach was developed by Lazar (2005) in poststructuralist and modern feminism dealing with the basic issues to understand the complex relationship of gender and power structure in the particular social system. FCDA deals with differences of sexism of gender, oppression of women, and pompous between man and woman. It also focuses on the examination of a different form of dominance, power, and gender trouble discursively presented and constructed in exercise. Lazar and Kramarae (2011) presented the relationship of two forms of gender classified as men and women, given subordinate position to women in the social order. This modern trend of subjugation is targeted by the Feminist Critical Discourse experts to gain the influential balance for women in the modern text. The same struggle is observed by the narrative technique of Sidhwa in "*The Pakistani Bride*".

Research Questions

- How gender discrimination is discursively presented in Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride*?
- To what extent does gender inequality hinder the social advancement of women?

The present study provides answers to the following questions with the procedure of Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional model in critical discourse analysis.

Literature review

The novel is shaped by the feminist tone of narrative discourses, presented the themes of power and patriarchal social system. Power and gender issues are discussed through Feministic Voice in tribal society during the time of partition in the sub-continent (1947). Sidhwa shows the tribal society and patriarchal hegemony where women can't accept the old concept of hegemonic power and stand to revolt. Zaitoon is a leading orphan character, married in Kohistani tribal society is unset and revolt against the hegemonic power and abuse. She revolted against the concept of women in tribal society and challenges the tradition as, "a challenge to the patriarchal culture and values of Indian Pakistani society" (Ross: p. 74). The character of Zaitoon is the representative of women in tribal society and the feminist movement which shaped radical feminism. Zaitoon is a representative character of exploited and degraded women in tribal society.

Moreover, women are considered as a territory to be conquered in tribal areas. The male characters in the novel are shaped as abusive of power, dominance, and sabotage of women's rights. Sakhi (husband of Zaitoon) is searching for a trivial reason to beat and abuse his new bride as "You are my woman! I will teach you to obey me." (TPB: p.172). These two lines show the inferior status of women in the tribal social system. Ahmad (2013) comments, that woman in tribal society are considered as territories which are conquered by the traditional way of the social system.

Sidhwa destructively narrated the situation through a foreigner's eyesight. She presented the fate of Zaitoon and Carol which are victimized and exploited by the male gender. Carol is the second hereon of TPB, she is a civilized woman belong to the upper class, married to a Pakistani army man, due to social custom and tradition she is unset and discriminated against by the hegemonic power and abusive language. Ramzan and Khan (2020) explained about Daro Shahzad (Hero of Mohsin Hamid's *Mouth Smock*) who is victimized due to the powerlessness in Pakistani society, the same is the case with the character of Carol in Pakistani society.

Critical discourse analysis is a study of power relations. Van Dijk (1998) defines Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that it is the critical judgment to reveal a discursive chain of dominance, power, and inequality. *The Pakistani Bride* (1983) is based on the issues of power and dominance of gender.

Methodology

Written or spoken words created a language that languages have a specific meaning in the social context and for the understanding of these meanings in the social context, linguists take a helping

hand from critical discourse analysis (CDA). Fairclough's (1989) Critical Discourse Analysis is chosen for the current study to analyze different pages taken from Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride*. Critical discourse analysis is mainly concern with the hidden meaning and demonstration of power exercise, injustices, and inequality in the text.

Similarly, Fowler (1977) defines critical discourse analysis that it is the connection between language structure and social structure. For this purpose, language is used as a discourse to reach and obtain the basic issues in a social context. Some of the pinpoint objectives are mentioned as:

- To investigate the importance of language in social relationships of power.
- To investigate the importance of language and the construction of meaning in a social context.
- To explore the bias relationship of language in a social context.
- To bring out how ideologies develop in a literary text and how they explain the social problems.

Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1989)

Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1989) is applied to the selected text. In the field of critical discourse analysis, this model has three main approaches to analyze a text i.e. Description, interpretation, and explanation.

Description

In this stage, a text is taken as a discourse. It is mainly concern with the textual features of discourse, highlighting different aspects of words and values concern with the descriptive and relational values of text. This level is mainly focused on the formal use of text, vocabulary, grammar, the figure of speech, words meaning, punctuation, and so on.

Interpretation

This phase is concerned with the explanation of the discourse production and the sources of text. It is associated with the authoritative power, characters that produce the discourse. Fairclough (1989) defines that these stages as a concern with the indirect relationship between society and discourse.

Explanation

In this phase, the discourse is studied and evaluated in that specific situation which is the actual cause of discourse formation. Different lenses are used with the variety to explore the basic issue in a text with a particular social context. In this phase two dimensions are used:

- Emphasis on structure or power relation.
- Social structure and struggle.

Moreover, Fairclough's (1989) tenth questions are applied to the selected data.

Data Analysis

The present study is delimited to four extracts/paragraphs taken from Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride*. The main subject of the present study is power and gender issues. The extracts have been chosen from the research thesis (my own) with the subject of "Gender Issues". The primary data for the current study is the text of the novel, "The Pakistani Bride". Other data is collected from the thesis (my own) and other research articles, journals, and research papers. Moreover, the selected paragraphs are analyzed, explained with the procedure of Fairclough's (1989) procedure in critical discourse analysis.

Analysis

The analysis of the related paragraphs is presented in a three-dimension way i.e. description, interpretation, and explanation as presented by Fairclough (1989).

Representation of patriarchal hegemony and hypocrisy in Discourse

The discourse takes place on the commodity and selling of Zaitoon's fate. The conversation is between Zaitoon's father Qasim and Mariam (maid) on the subject of Zaitoon's marriage. The dialogue shows Qasim's hypocrisy and patriarchal hegemony on account of selling Zaitoon. On one hand, he has arranged marriage and on the other hand, he played the role of father. The excerpt linguistically constructs the hegemonic and hypocrite role of Qasim.

Excerpt 1

"1. "Is it because that Pathan offered you five hundred rupees- some measly maize and a few goats?"
2. "Is that why you are selling her like a greedy merchant?" 3. "I will give you that, and more,' she said with contempt." 4. "Nikka will! How much more do you want?" 5. "We will buy it'." (Sidhwa, 1983: p.94)

Description

The subject of the excerpt is patriarchal hegemony and the hypocritical nature of Zaitoon's father. Experimental and expressive values of vocabulary are used as described in Fairclough's (1989) model. The construction and meaning-making of interrogative sentences further construct real situations in a social context. The frequent uses of signs of interrogations have linguistic significance in the construction of a patriarchal atmosphere. Words, phrases like "it is because", "Pathan", "rupees", "some measly maize" and a few goats" in sentence 1, "selling her", "greedy merchant" in sentence 2, "I will give you that" in sentence 3, "much more", "you want" in sentence 4 and "we will buy it" in sentence 5 are linguistically significant in meaning-making in a social context. Modes of the sentence are cleared by the use of interrogation (permission), (complaint/prohibition) (Q.5 of the framework: Fairclough 1989). The selling of Zaitoon is compared with "a greedy merchant" by the authoritative power. The pronouns used are "you" in sentence 1 and again in the sentence "you" which stands for Qasim (representing the arranged marriage of Zaitoon). Means of reference are used by "that" in sentence 1 which indicates Qasim's father Misri Khan who is dealing to buy Zaitoon for Qasim. Moreover, in the same sentence the universal pronoun "you" is used for Qasim. Simile has been used for Qasim's character in comparison with a merchant. The adjectives are used as "some", "few" in sentence 1, "more" in sentence 3, and "much" in sentence 4 (Q.6 of the framework). The functions of sentences are made interrogative by the frequent use of auxiliary verbs (function/intonation). The sign of interrogation (!) is used in sentence 4 for declaration/assertion for futurity with the help of the auxiliary verb "will" (Q.6 of the framework). The neutral pronoun "it" is used for Zaitoon in sentence 5 (Q.6 of the framework). Linguistically the sentences are making a foreground for the subject of a hegemonic power in a social context.

Interpretation and Explanation

The understudy paragraph is a conflict and clash on the subject of Zaitoon's commodity to tribal areas. Qasim is dealing with a Pathan (Misri Khan) while Mariam's defense to retain this dealing. The resistance of Mariam towards the Kohistani tribal area's social environment and Sakhi's uneducated and brutal behavior leads to Qasim's linguistic choices for his defense in selling Zaitoon to the tribal remote areas. The word "Pathan" in sentence 1 is not only used for Misri Khan but linguistically constructs the identity of tribal areas and represents Pathan society. It represents the hegemonic nature of Qasim and Misri Khan not only in their homes but also outside their homes. The adjectives of numbers in the same sentence represent the price in selling Zaitoon's fate. In exchange for women, the price is "some measly maize and a few goats". The metaphorical expression reveals Qasim's identity as a Pathan selling and buying their women in tribal areas. Mariam again interrogative nature resists him that "I will give you that and more". The logical connector "that" (anaphoric) stands for Zaitoon's price, mention in sentence 1 by the discourse producer. In the same sentence, the noun "contempt" is used in negation and for the resistance by Mariam. Mariam's choices of words construct the hypocrisy of Qasim's character as a father. On one side he claimed his daughter and on the other side he is selling her fate "like a greedy merchant". The voice of Mariam is passive (declaration/ assertion) inside interrogation marks. The pronoun "how" declares that Mariam is struggling to save Zaitoon from gender suppression, on the same page Qasim is representing the identity of Pathan's culture and tradition to arrange the marriage of a woman. Even in the last sentence, Mariam is ready to buy Zaitoon's fate in sentence 5. Words, phrases, and vocabulary showed Pathans and their tribal way of life. The linguistic analysis makes it clear that Qasim (representative of Pathan tribal areas) is using power in a hegemonic manner to arrange Zaitoon's marriage.

"1. *"Is it because that Pathan offered you five hundred rupees- some measly maize and a few goats?"*
2. *"Is that why you are selling her like a greedy merchant?"* 3. *"I will give you that, and more, ' she said with contempt."* 4. *"Nikka will! How much more do you want?"* 5. *"We will buy it."*" (Sidhwa, 1983: p.94)

Discursive Representation of Women's Marginalization and Power Exercise in Tribal Society

The fictional conversation takes place between Sakhi and his wife Zaitoon. The dialogue shows the inhuman treatment of women in tribal society. The uni-voices sentences show that Sakhi's character is a brutal and uncivilized creature representing a tribal culture and the treatment of women in tribal society.

Excerpt 2

"1. You whore' he hissed. 2. His fury is so intense she thought he would kill her. 3. He cleared his throat and spat full in her face. 4. You dirty, black little bitch, waving at those pigs...gripping her...5. Waving at that shit-eating swine. 6. You wanted him to stop and fuck you, didn't you?" (TPB p.185)

Description

This extract contains a different type of vocabulary, grammar, and communicative values as prescribed in Fairclough's (1989) model. The paragraph shows Sakhi as an active speaker (uni-voice) whereas Zaitoon is a silent listener and passive speaker. Words, phrases, and expressions are used like, "you whore" in sentence 1 is used for Zaitoon, the pronoun "you" is a second personal pronoun that indicates Zaitoon's character in comparison with the noun "whore". The pronoun "you" is used for Zaitoon, and "he" is used for Sakhi (Zaitoon's husband). Pronouns are used like "you" and "he" in sentence 1, "his", "she", "he", and "her" in sentence 2 indicates the passive tone of the author construction of discourse. "he", "his" and "her" in sentence 3, "you", "her" in sentence 4, "you", "him", "you" and "you" in sentence 6. Moreover, phrases and expressions are used as "you whore", "she thought", "his throat", "spat in her face", "you dirty", "black little bitch", "gripping her", "shit-eating swine" and "fuck you".(Q. 1 of the framework). The modality "would" in sentence 2 indicates Zaitoon's life is at risk by the hand of Sakhi. Verbs are used like "hissed" in sentence 1, cleared" and "spat full" in sentence 3, "waving" and "gripping" in sentence 4 and waving", "shit-eating" in sentence 5. The use of "whore" in sentence 1 attributive and metaphorically used showing Zaitoon's character (a type of process of initiation of the sentence). (Q.4 of the framework) Moreover, the phrase "his furry so intense" shows Sakhi's serious mood towards Zaitoon's action and the clause indirectly leads in an anaphoric way to the object as a response. The verb "cleared" in sentence 3 is used for Sakhi's preparation to do the action. The relational words, phrases, and expressions are used like "his fury so intense", "he would kill her" in sentence 2, "his throat and spat full" in sentence 3, "you dirty", "black little bitch" "pigs" in sentence 4, "shit-eating swine in sentence 5, "to stop and fuck you" in sentence 6 brings out the ideological construction of male dominance over the women in literary discourse. Similarly, the common noun "dirty" is used for Zaitoon's bad character in ideological discourse. The noun phrase "black little bitch" is used metaphorically for Zaitoon in sentence 4. In the same sentence, the word "pigs" is used for the British soldier, in comparison with the compound noun "shit-eating". The possessive pronouns are used like "his", "her" in sentence 2, "his" and "her" in sentence 3, "her" in sentence 4. The possessive pronoun "his" is used for Sakhi and "her" is used for Zaitoon. "His" is used actively while "her" is used passively considered the sentence structure (Q. 5 of the framework). The universal pronoun "you" in sentences 4 and 6 are used for Zaitoon, ideologically the pronoun "you" discursively constructs the representation of women in tribal society. A sign of exclamation in sentence 6 is used instead of a sign of interrogation with a question tag.

Interpretation and Explanation

The above discourse is a fictional conversation of Sakhi on the topic of Zaitoon's shaking hand to the foreigner soldier. This conversation leads to the brutal manner of Sakhi's action and beating of Zaitoon. The character of Sakhi constructs the role of the traditional patriarchal husband and reveals dominance and power in a patriarchal society. The discourse producer put demerits in Sakhi's character and constructs him with a narrow-minded tribal Pathan, in the same manner, Zaitoon is a well-nourished girl representing civilized nature and broad-minded women. She is not accustomed to the tribal codes and tradition while she shaking hands with the passer-by soldiers. Her husband is a powerful man and showing masculinity, and a supporter of his family honor. The word "whore" in sentence 1 is used for Zaitoon due to her shaking hand to the foreign soldier. She is unaware of the traditional way of life and codes of the tribal social system. The universal pronoun "you" in this sentence is symbolic and shows the representation of women in common. The same in sentence 2, "his fury" reveals Sakhi's severe rage for Zaitoon which leads to "killed her" by name of honor and tradition. The same sentence "would kill her" represents a severe form of subjugation and women suppression in tribal society. The authoritative expression imagining the killing of Zaitoon by the hand of her husband as Sidhwa uses the modal verb "would" in sentence 2. Moreover, Zaitoon herself "thought" that her husband "would kill her" but she is unaware of the reason why he is killing her. Again in sentence 3, Sakhi continues his action, the verb "cleared" shows his activity to be continued while beating his wife by the name of honor using power and "spat on her face". Zaitoon in a passive

manner is victimized and abused by Sakhi while "spat on face" is the extreme use of abuse in tribal society, but unfortunately she is unaware while he "spat on her face". The expression of Sakhi is extended further when he called Zaitoon "you dirty" and "black little bitch" in sentence 4. The word "dirty" gives the expression and meaning of women in tribal society. The word "bitch" is commonly used for women in tribal society, and it the extreme form of gender discrimination and use of power. The word "pig" in the same sentence metaphorically use for the soldier. Sakhi compares soldiers with "pigs". The representation of "pigs" shows Homi K. Baba's concept of "otherness". The compound noun "shit-eating swine" indicates the extreme form of hate and contemptible position of soldiers. In the last sentence, the word "fuck" represents Sakhi's tone and abusive language. The conversation shows the picture of the operation, degradation of women, victimization, subjugation, and selling of women in tribal society.

Discursive Construction of Honor Killing

After the arranged marriage Zaitoon is upset in the tribal society and decided to run away for crucial and brutal life. The excerpt is based on the murder of Zaitoon after a severe beating. Zaitoon is killed by the name of honor in the tribal society. Qasim promised the youth to kill Zaitoon to restore their honor and shame in society. Their interactions, reactions, and body language towards Zaitoon construct an extreme form of gender power and gender discrimination in tribal society.

Excerpt 3

1 "But Yunus Khan blocked his path." 2. How? 3. "He demanded?" 4. "Where is the body?" 5. "I have buried her." 6. "The girl was dead." 7. "Misri Khan's massive shoulders straightened." 8. "He thrust his chest forward and his head rose high." 9. "It was as if a breeze had cleared the poisonous air suffocating them..." (TPB: p.244)

Description

The above excerpt is a fictional conversation on Zaitoon's killing. The conversation between Yunus Khan and Misri Khan constructs power abuse and gender discrimination based on honor killing. Ideologically, different words, grammar, and vocabulary present extreme use of power and gender differences. Various phrases, vocabulary, and words bears power as described in Fairclough (1989) theoretical framework like "blocked his path" in sentence 1, "he demanded" in sentence 3, "where is the body?", "buried" in sentence 5, "dead" in sentence 6 "massive shoulders" in sentence 7, and "poisonous air" in sentence 9. Simile has been used in sentence 9 (Q. 4 of the framework). The excerpt contains interrogative sentence as sentence 3, 4, and 5 for the identification and confirmation of Zaitoon's killing. The personal pronoun "I" in sentence 5 is used for Sakhi (Zaitoon's husband). Attributions are used in sentence 9 in figurative language as "breeze" and "poisonous air" (Q. 5 of the framework). Modes of the sentence are interrogative having sign of interrogations as sentence 2, 3 and 4 (Q.6 of the framework). The rational words "body" "buried" and "dead" are used for the Zaitoon. The pronoun "he" and "his" are used for Misri Khan. The figurative use of hyperbole "poisonous air" indicates the subject of gender issues concern power exercise and abuse of language.

Interpretation and Explanation

The excerpt is a fictional conversation between Sakhi's brother Yunus Khan and Misri Khan on the death of Zaitoon. The conversation takes place after the murder of Zaitoon about the discovery of the dead body. In the foreground, Misri Khan has kept his promise with the youth for Zaitoon's killing to restore their shame and honor in the village. The excerpt shows the extreme form of physical punishment of women after arranged marriage. In sentence 1, Sakhi's brother Yunus Khan "blocked" the way of Misri Khan to win the first happy announcement of Zaitoon's murder. But Misri Khan Inquiries about the terrible situation that "how" it occurred. Misri Khan continues his investigation about Zaitoon's dead body. But again Misri Khan "demanded" and gives stress about the confirmation of the dead body. He is interested in the murder of Zaitoon and to confirm where she is dead (Misri Khan promised the youth of the village that he will kill Zaitoon in the name of honor and to restore the shame of youth). But Yunus Khan conforms to it that the "girl is dead" by the hands of their youth and elders. The conversation shows extreme use of power exercise in sentence 5 when Yunus Khan confirms that "the body" is "buried". The expression "The girl was dead" the noun "girl" is referred to as Zaitoon. The ideological construction reveals the emancipation of Zaitoon from the hardships is renamed the violation of traditional patriarchal codes in tribal society. She is killed due to the patriarchal social violation in tribal society. The expression "Misri Khan massive shoulders" constructs an extreme form of power abuse and the restoration of shame in tribal society. The worst

result of this escape leads to murder. The expression “he thrust his chest forward” and “his head rose high” constructs the ideology of honor killing in tribal society. The sentence shows Misri Khan's happy mood due to honor and shame restoration. He raises “his head” once again after Zaitoon's killing among the villagers. The discourse producer shows the death of Zaitoon in figurative language in the last sentence. The discourse producer shows the ideological manner that after Zaitoon's killing, the whole family and villagers are happy by throwing the unbearable burden from their shoulders. In a social context, it constructs the idea that male members in tribal life are not satisfied until they have killed the escaped women to restore their shame.

Conclusion

It is concluded from the critical analysis of the above excerpt that the women characters failed in tribal lifestyle due to gender and power exercise of male dominance. They have to pass marginalized and suppressed life under the powerful shadows of supreme patriarchy in tribal life. Zaitoon, as an orphan child and the baby of partition completely failed because of patriarchal culture and dependency of a male in tribal life. The novelist through language use constructs gender differences and power exercise which leads to gender discrimination. The male characters are based on powerful linguistic tools while the women characters have passive language. The women's characters are not confident and have no self-values and thus they remain static un-productive and un-sufficient in the entire novel.

It is recommended for the other researchers that they may conduct full-length research on the novel through the historical perspective of Indo-Pak history and riots during partition as well as feminist perspectives.

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