A Critical Discourse Analysis Of Duty Free By Moni Mohsin

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Abstract

This study conducted a discourse analysis of the novel "Duty free" by the British-Pakistani novel writer Moni Mohsin. The novel "Duty free" employs a satirical take on the superficial life of the pseudo (elite) class of the Lahori/ Pakistani society through a perceptive social commentary, while intentionally using 'bad' English by making a lot of spelling and grammatical errors and including malapropism in abundance. It was also aimed at studying the use of code-switching and determining the frequency of malapropism presented in the novel by conducting an in-depth textual analysis of the language content from the novel. This study also intended to analyze the discourse used in the novel to create satire and humor. Norman Fairclough's three-dimension model or 3D Model for critical discourse analysis was used as both; a theoretical and a methodological framework. Data interpretation was performed according to context of its usage.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental source of communication in this world. The languages link the whole world together as everyone requires some form of communication, words/ language to express his/her feelings, thoughts and ideas. It includes both written and spoken communication. Spoken communication includes debates, speeches and daily conversations; and so on, while written communication includes books, novels, newspapers, report writing etc. Literature is also a considered as part of written communication. Literature (prose, poetry, and drama) is considered to be the embodiment of a standard language use. It is often said that the literature can provide the most authentic linguistic material of any language (Abdu M. Al-kadi, 2021). But if the novels are written in a language full of spelling, grammatical and structural errors, the reader can sometimes get confused and frustrated especially a non-native

speaker of the language with mediocre understanding of the said language.

This paper studies the discourse employed in the novel 'Duty free', as it is filled with a lot of 'intentional' spellings and grammatical mistakes and also there is abundant use of code-switching and malapropism in the novel. Moni Mohsin's American debut novel; published in 2011 as "Tender Hooks", discusses the shallow lifestyle of Pakistani pseudo elite society and their superficial issues in contrast with the terribly deteriorating situation of law and order (terrorism) prevalent in the city; Lahore, at that time. Moni Mohsin has intentionally used 'bad' English and code-switching is used as a strategy to heighten the true-essence of everyday lifestyle of the Lahori high society in an amusing fashion: malapropism is abundantly adopted with a lot of misspellings and many grammatical and syntactic mistakes, as a tool to create comic effect for its readers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Discourse

Fairclough (2001) reflects that discourse is 'interdisciplinary' (Fairclough, 2001); Van Leeuwen (1996) proposes that between discourse and social practices, there ought to be two types of relationship; firstly discourse as a form of action as what people do with / for each other and secondly discourse as a social practice in itself (Leeuwen, 1996). Foucault refers to discourse as a way of organizing knowledge, alongside forms of subjectivity, the social practices, and the power relations. "Discourse is not only the means of thinking and constructing meaning, but it also institutes an association between a body, the conscious, and the unconscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they strive to control (Weedon, 1997).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Yarmohammadi (1983) defines critical discourse analysis as "a type of discourse analysis which studies the unfair use of power, dominance and inequality that prevails in a social and political context through speech and writing" (Yarmohammadi, 1983). Norman Fairclough states "to investigate how such practices, events and texts transpire and are ideologically shaped by the power relations and the contests over power; and to explore how the opaqueness of these relationships between discourse and society in itself is a factor securing power and hegemony" (Fairclough, 1995).

Malapropism

Malapropism is when someone while speaking or writing, confuses one word with another word of similar sound and/or similar spelling with a rather different meaning. Malapropism can be funny because they give rise to irrational speeches (Stong, 1995). Crystal (2006) establishes that the slips/ errors in the phonological part of the brain are considered as the slips of tongue (Crystal, 2006). When malapropisms is employed in everyday language, it might be referred to as a "slip of the tongue" while speaking, a "slip of the pen" while writing. But malapropism are just tiny tricks of the mind where people replace one word with another word (usually one that does not fit at all) (Boulton, 2015).

Previous Studies on CDA

In the past Van Dijk's and Fairclough's approaches regarding CDA were used to from different perspectives to analyze different types of literary genres. Bilal (2012) analyzed 'The Gift of Magi' and to elaborate the relationships between language and ideology, used Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive model for Critical discourse analysis (Bilal, 2012). Chen Hua (2013) analyzed Jane Austen's novel Sense & Sensibility to examine the common-sense assumptions about gender, prevailing in British society that underlies the use of language and employed the conceptual framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (Hua, 2013). Awan and Yahya (2016) to uncover the hidden cultural ideologies especially those which distinguish east to west, conducted a critical discourse analysis of Novel Twilight in Delhi by Ahmad Ali (Awan, 2016). Khan and Qureshi (2018) analyzed two novels by Khaled Hosseini's 'The Kite Runner' and 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' to explore the categorical and stereotypical representation of the Pashtuns by employing Fairclough's model of CDA to reveal the use of linguistics/textual forms such as lexicalization, patterns of transitivity, active and passive, choice of mood, information focus, and use of cohesive devices (Khan, 2018). Bezar (2018) explored William Blake's poem, 'Ah! Sun-flower', by using Norman Fairclough's 3D model for CDA to explore the social structures of authority and unequal power relations at that time prevalent in the poet's society (Bezar, 2018). Hosseini and Sattari (2018); to understand the sociological elements and their interpretations; analyzed Naguib Mahfouz's 'The Beggar' and studied the effect of sociological context on a text and the processes which allow the creation of such a text by using Fairclough's CDA model (Hosseini, 2018).

Malapropism is an important linguistic phenomenon (figures of speech) used in literary works by the writers since a long time. In real life situations, the use of malapropism, wrong spellings and the use of grammatically and incorrect sentences can sometime be really frustrating and can create confusion among the readers/ listeners about the writer's/ speaker's intent in writing/ uttering those words especially for the non-native ones that are not fully aware of the said language.

After going through the previous researches conducted on CDA mainly by Bilal (2012), Chen Hua (2013), Awan and Yahya (2016), Khan and Qureshi (2018), Bezar (2018) etc. the researcher found the gap that there is no previous research with regards to CDA (critical discourse analysis) of this novel (Duty free by Moni Mohsin) has been conducted. There are other researches on critical discourse analysis of political speeches, advertisements and different kind of literature, but CDA approach for analysis of this novel 'Duty free' is not available.

This study aims at investigating the main function of code switching in the novel Duty free. It also focused on the instances malapropism are used by the writer in the novel.

This study is significant in a sense that there is no previous work with regards to CDA (critical discourse analysis) of this novel is available, so this research will help future researchers to understand the hidden social and discursive practices and ideologies represented in this novel by the writer, and will help future researchers to conduct an in depth analysis of the malapropism and code-switching used in this novel and to distinguish their different types employed in this novel.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs the qualitative approach as its research design. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define that, it (the qualitative research) is basically multi-method in its disposition that involves an interpretive, naturalistic attitude towards the matter under observation/ investigation. That indicates that the qualitative researchers observe things in their usual or natural settings while trying to interpret or decipher the said phenomena regarding the meaning that people convey to them (Denzin, 1994). The researcher employed the content analysis technique for a deep reading, understanding and the interpretation of the text from the novel. The content analysis technique happened to be particularly suitable to reveal the hidden meanings in the text and to make sense of the events and the experiences encountered by the characters in the novel (Duty free).

Theoretical Framework

Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA cited in "Language and Power" published, 1989. Fairclough suggests that all the three dimensions are interdependent and cannot be employed separately for individual analysis. As Fairclough's interdisciplinary approach towards research is the basis of this link between the social and discursive factors as "language is a form of social practice" (Fairclough, Language and Power, 1989).
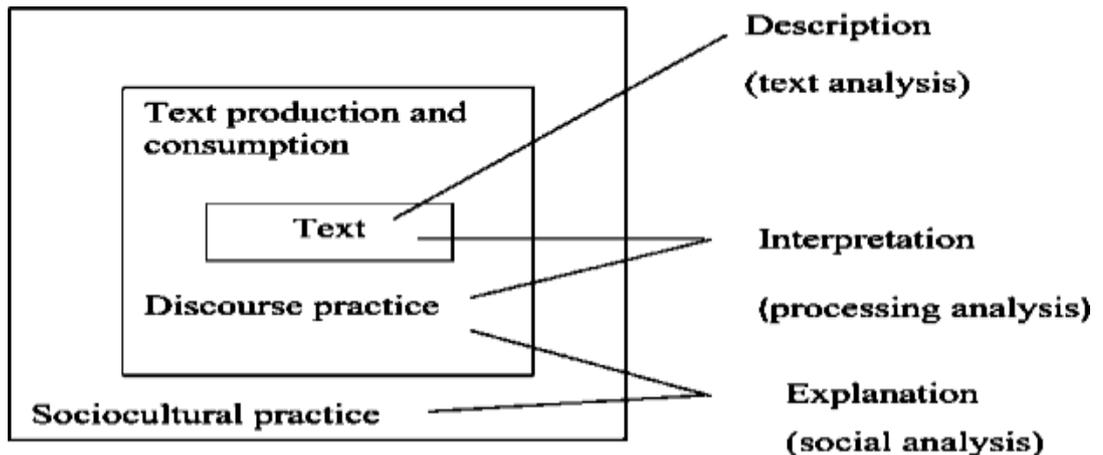

Figure no.1. Fairclough's 3D model for critical discourse analysis; (1st dimension = Inner layer, 2nd dimension = middle layer, 3rd dimension = outer layer). (Zahid Ahmed, 2017)

i. Text Production (linguistic properties)

Text Practice is descriptive (spoken or written including visual images or a combination of both); it also includes the description of the formal properties of the text produced.

ii. Description

The second dimension of Fairclough's model deals with the discourse practices. In this dimension, the process of text production and its interpretation process are analyzed and analyzed how this text relates to the society and its social norms and how it was produced, what does the author wants to say, what types of sentence structure is being used, how the message is being presented in the text. The ideologies, concepts, beliefs, action and interaction behind the production of text are interpreted and analyzed in this stage.

iii. Sociocultural Practices (language and society)

Social practice (a socio cultural practice) the explanation of the relationship between discourses, social and cultural reality, the power relationships, hegemonies and Ideologies.

Sampling

According to Cook (1990) novels, short stories and groans may be called discourse rightfully. The research sample for the study constitutes the novel 'Duty free' by the writer 'Moni Mohsin'. This novel was chosen due to its best seller position, in spite of having a lot code-switching, lots of grammatical and spelling mistakes and the unusually high use of malapropism. This unconventional linguistic behavior of the book is the focus of the study. The novel is easily available in bookstores in paperback form and is also available online free of cost for the readers.

Data Collection

Secondary data (novel) is used for this study. As the novel is easily available in bookstores in paperback form and is also available online free of cost for the readers. However the complete novel has not been analyzed but certain portions/ passages and phrases from the novel have been selected for the analysis. The primary reason for choosing the portions from the novel is that those phrases or passages highlight the use of language by women to manipulate a discourse that is prevalent in the society and the language use by the author.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The author has employed malapropism in her discourse in abundance, all done by the mai character (butterfly) of the novel. As she belongs to the elite class and by her own reasoning, do not like to use Urdu language much because of its low status in the society, as people who do not speak English are considered as 'low class' people by the pseudo elite class of Pakistan. Malapropism is mainly considered as 'the slips of tongues/ pens' but in the case of this novel, it is a case of lack of proper linguistic knowledge on the part of the main character. Numerous times the main character uses the words like oho, kyun g?? DVD wallah, Tandoor-wallahs., Waxing wali… this type or colloquial speech/ vernacular is pretty common in Pakistan as a lot of people use this type of language in their regular conversation. The mixing of Urdu and English is not unique as a substantial number of people who studied from private sector institutions in Pakistan use this type of discourse.

Actually the author has used 'the language' as a main strategy to incorporate humor in the story. The excessive use of malapropos and the misspellings make the novel an interesting read for a little while for the readers who have an above average command of both the Urdu and the English languages, to understand the proper co-text and the context of the discourse in the novel.

Discourse Analysis of the Selected Passages from the Novel

The novel is set in the backdrop of Lahore city and the year 2011, when the situation in Lahore was really critical in term of law and order and terrorism, the economy was failing and the overall situation in the country was quiet alarming. The main character in this novel happed to be the one responsible to find a suitable match for her cousin and all the drama that happens around her search for the perfect bride.

Description of the Main Features of the Text

The main features of the text are that there are a lot of misspellings in the text which are resulting from wrong phonetic realizations of words like 'illitred', 'baggroud' 'cummaytee', 'guvmunt', 'cellulight', 'trankillizer' etc. malapropism like 'Investigated' instead of invested, 'pheasant woman' instead of peasant women, 'coal' in place of 'kohl' 'buttocks injections' in place of Botox injections' 'polaroid' for 'paranoid' etc. their incorrect intonations, parsing in a humorous manner like 'con-cussion' 'a countant', neologism like 'khisskoing', 'fab parties-sharties', 'guards-shards', 'mingling shingling' fundos, beardosweirdos, literal translations of idioms and proverbs, Urdu phrases like "soon electricity is going to start coming", imitation of Urdu morphological patterns like 'hungry naked' (bhooky nangy), 'hundred hundred times', 'tiny tiny diamonds,' nice nice food on the table' 'our comings and goings are with nice nice people', 'Hai, I'm so depress, so depress that don't even ask', 'electricity never goes', and casual use code-switching like kami jora, designer jora, memsahib, haan, ji, uff, tou, na, faltu, phudda etc.

Analysis of the Selected Passages from the Novel

1. **Terms used to describe the high class status… "'new cream Prada shoes from Dubai'… 'new Tom Ford red lipstick'… a big house, servants, social life, status, cars, cupboards full of designer joras and jewelry, What else is happiness, haan?" (Mohsin, 2011)**

The author describes how the character in the novel is so self-absorbed in her issues relating her 'branded joras', 'bags', 'sarees' and 'shoes' that she is more concerned about her GTs (get-togethers) and 'kitty' to be limited due to the worsening situation of law and order and the threats of terrorism in the city/ country. This narrative/ discourse aptly depict the discursive social practices observed in the privileged upper/ elite class of our society who are only worried about their trivial issues like

imported designer brands but for the country they live in and always busy in showing off their privileges.

2. "Because price of sugar has gone so high and we can't afford." "So who's asked you to eat so much sugar? It's bad for your teeth. You should hear my dentist. He's forbidden Kulchoo from drinking sugary drinks. Coke tau is a total no-no. You know how many teaspoons of sugar it has? Ten. Ji haan. Ten. I'm telling you, you don't want to pay thousands and thousands to fill cavities. Besides, also, you'll get diebetees. And sugar puts on weight. Ask me, it's been a year and I'm still trying to get rid of those five pounds I put on from eating all those ice creams and chocolate cakes in America last year." (Mohsin, 2011)

The language used by the main character (butterfly) is used for maintaining hegemony above her servants and to intimidate them by trivializing their concerns (inflation and low affordability) and enhancing her not so important concerns like 'weight gain' and dental 'cavities' so that they do not demand a rise in their salaries, it is a true representation of the way members of the elite society tend to behave with regards to the issues related to middle/ lower class to exercise hegemony and to remain in control.

3. "He has a special relationship with the Russian ambassador's cook, na". "She texted back saying that she will tell to the Army Chief's best friend's wife's sister and when that happens we shouldn't say that she hadn't said." (Mohsin, 2011)

Here specifying the long distance relations by the author depicts how in the elite society, having a relationship with someone influential or someone noteworthy is quiet important as it shows one's hegemony and power among their peers to boat about one's connections with someone powerful in the society. It is important for the elites to have connection to show off as it shows one's importance among his/ her peers. Through this practice the people try to maintain their high status and to appear significant in front of the society.

4. "Aunty should make a shopping list of all the most illegible girls of Lahore and then do some window-shopping before making a shortlist and final purchase. Better is to go somewhere we can see five, six together. In bunches."

"Can't we go to a wedding where we can see nice stacks of them together?" (Mohsin, 2011)

The discourse used by the author in this passage shows the language used by the women in the Pakistani society how they think about the process of selecting/ choosing a girl/ daughter-in-law. A girl below their social status is considered not suitable but if the girl belongs to the higher status she is considered most suitable candidate. The girl is not perceived as a living breathing human being but as a commodity they need to get from the market as they check a product is working properly or not before buying same is the case while selecting a girl for their sons. The weddings are occasions considered as the main events for social meet ups and get-togethers, where you have to 'register' your presence timely to be in the social circle. Thus the women in our society have turned the marriage institution into a business. This is all because of the context associated with it by mainly the women, as women are the main authority in the wedding department, just like the process of selection of girl for the character 'Jahangir' (Jonkers) in the novel where all the responsibility was conferred upon the main character and the process is organized and executed by the women of his family, who want a 'fair', 'beautiful', 'rich', and 'old family type' girl for their divorced son.

CONCLUSION

In the end the researcher concludes that in this novel the writer has used a lot of misspellings, malapropism, code-switching (to create humor and satire) which defy the phenomenon of a proper standard language, and that is quiet confusing for many a readers. The intentional use of 'bad' English language by the author is important in a way to incorporate humor and satire to the basic theme of the novel but the abundant of misspellings and malapropism can distract the readers and take the attention away from the main theme of the novel and the reader stays focused on the grammatical n syntactical mistakes. Code-switching is basically used as a communicative strategy to depict the real essence of a Pakistani society and how such type of language use is common in this society. Still the language is a true depiction of the way 'the privileged elite/high' class in our society is engaged with their imported 'brands' and GTs (get-togethers) and consciously put effort in maintaining the class difference between the high and middle/ low social strata to maintain their power and hegemony and to remain blissfully unaware of the country's sufferings. The language used by the (author) main character helps in shaping the representation of language use by

the members of the elite society for maintaining hegemony and exercising power above her peers and the middle/ lower class and to intimidate them by trivializing their critical issues by representing their pseudo ideology to uphold their status and highlight their shallow/ superficial issues and put down the genuine issues face by the working class/ common people so that they remain content with their condition and do not demand change.

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