Discourse Analysis: A Comparative Case Study of Two Literary Works of English and Persian Female Writers from Socio-Cognitive Perspective

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Abstract

Language as the sole mean of communication has always been a tool for power abuse by authorities and other media owners through various channels and tribunes worldwide to divide people based on ethnicity and nation-state; this has become a widespread phenomenon in the present age and has led to a cultural and moral separation among people across the globe. Accordingly, due to the political incidents over the last decades between Iran and most Western countries, people living in Western countries are misguided by biased language manipulation and interpretations by authorities. As a multi-disciplinary research, the present study attempted to provide a realistic and scientific viewpoint toward language manipulation by adopting Discourse Analysis (DA) methodology. Two well-known literary works written by female authors were chosen to be analyzed, namely, *A Room of One's Own* and *Suvashun*. Halliday's (1985) framework was utilized to probe the subject matter and extract explicit and implicit ideational concepts. Results have indicated similarities and differences in the feminine discourses in the research samples. The current study's findings shall benefit intellectual and academic individuals in particular and the whole society at large.

Key Words: Discourse Analysis (DA), Halliday (1985), Literary Work, Perception

Introduction

Nowadays, political events and speeches broadly discuss the notion of a nation-state. This concept has brought together diverse and heterogeneous people in distinct territories of power and reach of national institutions with the political imperative for its citizens to identify with 'their' nation, 'its' people, traditions, worldviews, and relations of alliances and enemies. Different nations go to great lengths to provide pre-packaged news reports for their people. Today, presidential speeches, parliamentary debates, party conferences, and small group communications are represented in media; that is to say, politicians are one of the most common sources of language abuse (Sherwani, 2011). Sometimes, this can lead to violence, which justifies the color/religion-based discrimination and the negative reinforcement for destructive behaviors; this can be done in several ways, for instance, by using the discourse of legitimation when addressing political issues (Maghlouth, 2017). Consequently, language became the prime marker of national homogeneity and a source of national identity. As Udeze et al. (2017) argues, this point has led many to focus on the relationship between reality and representation, fact and fiction (p.13). Since the language and literature of each country are an essential part of that nation's culture, a review of language and literature is inevitable. This issue can motivate linguists to become more and more familiar

with the culture of various countries and explore how close they are from standpoints of language, culture, and social life; this challenge demands more attention from academic society.

Bonvillain (2020) states that "cultural meaning and models form a unique worldview, providing an understanding of the world as it is thought to be and a blueprint for how one ought to behave. Reality is not absolute or abstract; it is lived within familiar contexts of social behavior and cultural meaning" (p.43). As Fairclough and Wodak (1997) argue, discursive practices may have significant ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social class, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through how they represent and position things (p.258). Also syntactic morphological similarities and differences between languages can be pivotal to understand features of the languages (Khabazian, 2023) and their discourse. On the other hand, the mainstream media commonly focus selectively on female entrepreneurs' clothing, appearance, age, and social or cultural activities rather than their career (van Dijk, 2015); and, when they are covered, women's career activities tend to be portrayed as 'following the concerns of traditionally white, middle-class femininity' and occurring in 'domestic workplaces' (Alsayed, 2020). Lomotey and Chachu (2020) believe that critical Discourse analysis has mainly become a central approach within the field of feminist linguistic studies. It has provided a research scope for investigating society's perceptions of women and men. Many cultures' remarkable variety of proverbs offers appropriate channels for such research.

Due to the political conflicts between most Western countries and Iran, in the last decades, we have witnessed a knowledge gap in culture-related challenges among people. As a result, we need more subtle and detailed views of language and culture, which in case of this study are writings of Iranian and British female novelists. Consequently, to get precise knowledge, we shall look into the language and cultural issues of these countries based on the works of their representative authors to get the information from a reliable resource, someone whose intellectual property is so vast that it encompasses all aspects of language to indicate the degree to which they are affected by cultural, social, and other contextual factors. This study attempts to analyze two representative literary works of East and West, namely, "A Room of One's Own" and "Suvashun," from a socio-cognitive perspective, and it was hoped that by conducting a comparative analysis, we could establish credible arguments concerning socio-cognitive aspects of language. The study's primary purpose is to explore how particular language forms associate with particular social meanings and identities by utilizing Discourse Analysis (DA) as the research methodology. Since this is descriptive and qualitative research, we are not discussing a hypothesis. This study was an endeavor to answer the following research question:

RQ: Are there any similarities and differences between the feminine discourses used to represent worldview within the studied two literary works of Virginia Woolf and Simin Daneshvar in 'A Room of One's Own" and "Suvashun, respectively, and what are they?

Method

Design of the Study

The study at hand adopts a qualitative methodology. The research data of the study were extracted by direct and manual analysis of the representative volumes, choosing the ones that

demonstrate and cover similar issues of the community in two different contexts. The initial data for this study was qualitative (textual), which was collected through the analysis of two volumes of the representative authors, namely, "A Room of One's Own" and "Suvashun". These are the volumes dealing with similar issues, and the characters of each author behave in a different style, characterized by the writer as an ideal representation of the social class. In addition, to increase the reliability of the current study, the selected writers have chosen from prominent academic writers carefully to ensure that they cover almost the same issues and periods. DA as a (qualitative) research tool helped analyze and answer ethnographic and phenomenological research question. The Current study has acquired two observational case studies, which are the study of a real-world case without performing an intervention. Therefore, descriptive data analysis has been acquired to reach study objectives. It was hoped that by providing descriptive statistics and numerals, we could deliver credible arguments that might shed light on socio-cognitive aspects of literary works among other media outlets.

Research Sample

In the present study, two female novelists` writings were selected from two nations: "A Room of One`s Own" by Virginia Woolf (an English writer considered one of the most important modernist 20th-century authors) and Suvashun" by Simin Daneshvar (an Iranian novelist, fiction writer, and translator born in 1921). Research sample was chosen based on their composers` activities and accomplishments throughout their academic careers, which encompasses different cultures, societal norms, and expectations from the standpoint of expert female writers; as a results, the initial data for this study is in textual form. In addition to their efforts to indicate social inequalities, both writers have been working on feminism. Woolf is considered a pioneer of feminism globally, and Daneshvar is a founder of feminism in Iran whose works were translated into several languages around the globe. Woolf became a prominent personality in the English literary spectrum in the years between the two World Wars. On the other side, Daneshvar's books dealt with the lives of ordinary Iranians, especially those of women, and through the lens of recent political and social events in Iran at the time. Purposive (or judgment) sampling method has been utilized for the present research, which suggests choosing "representative" samples (in this case, literary works) with much the same characteristics to suit research needs (having comparable items). In this way, we have chosen female writers to see how each expresses the culture and conditions of two different contexts.

Assessments and Measures

This study used the qualitative method in the data analysis stage. Further, by adopting Critical Thinking as a part of the qualitative methodology for content analysis, which is textual, descriptive analysis was possible. This study dealt with various concepts of thoughts and ideologies for descriptive data analysis. In line with the purpose of this study which regards socio-cognitive aspect of literary works, Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework was used to probe the subject matter.

Procedure

This study sheds light on how clauses are organized in literary texts to convey the desired meaning and provides insight into how language enters the reverie field; consequently, the unit of analysis is the clause level. We analyzed and documented the literary work of two Eastern and Western female writers --"A Room of One's Own" by Virginia Woolf and "Suvashun" by Simin Daneshvar in Farsi--to get an idea about how women are portrayed and to shed light on the women writers, who have not been studied in such detailed contexts. Halliday's (1985) SFL framework was applied to analyze how some categories were attributed more power even within literary volumes across various media outlets. In this study, we took contextual explanations one small step further. The structures and syntax choices in literary works are expressed in ways that can be related to grammar. As a result, the researcher has taken the time to look at the effects of lexico-grammatical analysis on the volumes from time to time since there are many different types of meta-functions.

However, the frequency and percentage of each modal verb type, tenses, and personal pronouns in each volume determined the authors' attitude toward these topics, thoughts, or the ideology of the author revealed by a critical reader. Halliday's (1985) SFL framework provides a series of different meta-functions to create ideas, represent and manipulate language, and follow the axiom of who does what to whom in what circumstances (Halliday, 1985). Each sentence in the text was parsed and broken down into structural elements. Additionally, from the transitivity perspective, Simpson (1994) also suggests that "a clause represents a process." For data gathering, first, the researcher started reading texts and code wherever needed in line with Halliday's SFL notion.

Both of the volumes under examination were printed and reviewed in the original languages they were written (Suvashun in Persian and Room for One's Own in English). Both books were reviewed twice. First, a more survey type of reading has been applied to get more familiar with the data. In the second review, the analyst read the text cautiously and coded wherever necessary. The next step was rearranging many codes into categories based on Halliday's framework. After transforming and arranging data, the immediate next step was to organize data. After assigning codes to data, we began to build on the patterns to gain in-depth insight into the data that helped make informed decisions. Eventually, final results were obtained by analyzing each author's volume one at a time and then by adopting the method of comparison of means on codes and comparing them with each other.

Results

In this section, findings of the present research are provided. In order to answer the research question, Halliday`s (1985) SFL concepts` interpersonal analysis was applied to the text including modality, tense, and personal pronoun analysis. This study attempted to answer the following research question:

RQ: Are there any similarities and differences between the feminine discourses used to represent world-view within the studied two literary works of Virginia Woolf and Simin Daneshvar in 'A Room of One's Own" and "Suvashun, respectively, and what are they?

Interpersonal Analysis

As Warford and White (2012) points out, "The interpersonal function embodies all uses of language to express social and personal relations; this includes how the speaker enters a speech situation and performs a speech act (p.313)." Modality and mood are often used to express interpersonal function. Mood shows what role the speaker selects in the speech situation and what role he assigns to the addressee. If the speaker selects the imperative mood, he assumes the role of one giving commands and puts the addressee in the role of one expected to obey orders (for example, it is rainy outside, open the windows). Further, modality refers to a speaker's attitudes or opinion about the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence. It also extends to their attitude towards the situation or event described by a sentence. For interpersonal analysis, we will examine modality, tense, and personal pronouns in the following sections.

Modality Analysis

	Low permission/obligation	Median permission/obligation	High permission/obligation
Positive	Can, may, could, might, dare	Will, would, should, shall	Must, ought to, need, has/had to
Negative	Needn't, doesn't/didn't , +need to, have to	Won't, wouldn't, shouldn't, isn't/wasn't to	Mustn't, oughtn't to, can't couldn't, mayn't, hasn't/hadn't to
Persian Equivalents Positive	شاید, باید, نمیتواند,میتواند احتمالا	باید شود /خواهد شد	حتما /باید
Negative	نباید/ نمیکند/ نکرد	نیست , نباید بشود ,نخواهد شد نبود ,	/ شاید/ نمیتوانست//نباید نتواند نتوانست

Table 1. MODAL VERBS

Sample Volume	Total Number	Low permission/obligation		Median permission/obligation		High permission/obligation	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A Room of One`s Own	1,206	316	26.20	335	27.77	555	46.10
Suvashun	1,578	420	26.62	481	30.48	677	42.90

Table 2. MODALITY ANALYSIS OF SAMPLES

Based on the results of modality analysis as provided in Table 2, modal verb usage in "A Room of One's Own" and "Suvashun" is significantly identical in that in both of the volumes, High permission/obligation modality is the most frequent type of modal verbs followed by median and low permission/obligations. Accordingly, in both study samples, we see high permission/obligation modal verbs as the most frequent modal verb type in "A Room of One's

Own" (n=555, p=46.1) and "Suvashun" (n=677, p=42.9). Additionally, medium permission/obligation modal verbs rank second in "A Room of One's Own" (n=335, p=27.77) and "Suvashun" (n=481, p=30.48). Regarding low permission/obligation modality, there is no considerable difference (if any) between "A Room of One's Own" (n=316, p=26.20) and "Suvashun" (n=420, p=26.62). Building upon these, Woolf and Daneshvar have demonstrated considerable similarity in modality in "A Room of One's Own" and "Suvashun." Consequently, like Woolf, Daneshvar has certainty in her writing, revealing high authority among Iranian women of the time as there is an authoritative female character named "Zari" (the protagonist), who takes care of many people in different respects and is a highly valued society member.

Tense Analysis

Tense is the time of a clause. Halliday (1994) argues that the central tenses are past, present, and future. As the second part of the data analysis, Table 3 provides frequency of each tense found in research samples.

Sample Volume	Present		Simple Past	Simple Future	Total No.
	Simple	Perfect			
A Room of One`s Own	714 (54.85%)	310 (23.80%)	172 (13.21%)	106 (8.14%)	1302
Suvashun	1403 (56.64%)	466 (18.81%)	254 (10.25%)	354 (14.30%)	2477

Table 3. Results of the tense analysis

Based on the statistics obtained from tens analysis, it is evident that the simple present tense is most frequently used in "A Room of One`s Own" (n=714, p=54.85) and "Suvashun" (n=1403, p=56.64). Present perfect ranks second in "A Room of One`s Own" (n=310, p=23.80) and for "Suvashun" (n=466, p=18.81). In "A Room of One`s Own", simple past ranks third with an average percentage of 13.21% (n=172), followed by simple future (n=106, p=8.14). On the other side, the use of simple past is slightly less than present perfect and ranks fourth in "Suvashun", in which simple future (14.30%) and simple past (10.25%) are the less frequent tenses found in "Suvashun", respectively. It is natural that simple present tense ranks with top priority since the addresses present the domestic and worldwide situations ranging from political, economic, and cultural fields. The use of the tense facilitated the creation of a close relationship between the writers and their audience and the easy identification and acceptance of the validity of the assertions in the samples.

Personal Pronouns Analysis

As the third and final part of the data treatment, personal pronouns used in research samples are gathered and provided in Table 4.

Personal Pronouns		A Room of One`s Own	Suvashun
First Person	I (me)	517	٣٣
	We (us)	100	١٤٣
Second Person	You (you)	168	٢٢٠

Third Person	He (him)	103	٢١٦
	She (her)	307	٤١٨
	It (it)	٤٠٤	٢٠٣
	They (them)	168	٢١٧
Possessive			
	My (mine)	182	٤٣
	Our (ours)	0	١٨
	Your (yours)	0	٠
	His (his)	108	٥٧
	Her (hers)	190	٢٦٣
	Its (its)	52	٤٤
	Their (theirs)	131	١٠٣

Table 4. PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Drawing on the findings of Table 4 concerning personal pronoun analysis, there are significant similarities and differences between study samples. Regarding first-person pronouns, I (me) pronoun usage is considerably higher in "A Room of One's Own" (n=517) compared to "Suvashun" (n=33), which is also the most significant difference in personal pronoun analysis. Additionally, the first person pronoun we (us) usage is found to be relatively more in "Suvashun" (n=143) compared to "A Room of One's Own" (n=100). The second-person personal pronoun "you" has not been used with a remarkable difference, taking the longer length of the "Suvashun" (i.e., 307 pages) into consideration as opposed to "A Room of One's Own" (i.e., 114 pages). However, in terms of third person pronouns, even though he (him) and it (it) pronouns significantly differ between the volumes, she (her) and they (them) pronouns are used with lesser frequency difference. On the other side, the possessive pronoun my (mine) is considerably more frequent in "A Room of One's Own" (n=182) and "Suvashun" (n=43). Nonetheless, our (ours) and your (yours) possessive pronoun utilization did not differ considerably across research samples. His (his) and her (hers) pronouns` frequency is also notably different between the two volumes. Eventually, its (its) and their (theirs) pronouns` frequency is relatively similar between the two literary works.

Discussion

The present study endeavored to analyze two literary works "A Room of One`s Own" and "Suvashun" by adopting Halliday`s (1985) SFL framework to answer the posed research question. Accordingly, in line with the purpose of this study, Interpersonal analysis was performed and results have indicated considerable similarities in terms of modality and tense analysis. However, volumes differed significantly in terms of certain pronouns found in the text in addition to some similarities. In a parallel study, Bilal (2012) used M.A.K Holliday's SFL theoretical framework to analyze the short story 'Thank You, MAM.' In contrast to this study which analyzed the data only in interpersonal terms, three functions of language, namely ideational function, interpersonal function, and textual function, are used in his analysis. The findings revealed the characters' hidden selves, bringing out their intentions behind the utterances, which may appear difficult to grasp for a reader, which is the underlying logic behind the conduct of the study at hand as well. Further, Chiedu (2015) endeavored to investigate the discourse properties of selected literary texts against the backdrop of linguistic changes, which is the definitive stamp of literary discourse. The results indicate that the writer/poet deliberately uses the language the way he does to deliver his message

promptly, as seen in the literary texts analyzed in this research. In another women-versus-women language examination, Ochulor (2018) indicated that women's languages are never neutral but embody ideologies and power relations. Using the DA methodology, this study examined some excerpts from a Nigerian film titled A Little Lie to underscore some systems of bias and subjugation in some women's language. The analysis of the women's language use showed evidence of superiority/inferiority and domination of some individuals similar to this study.

Identical to the purpose of the present study, Kiren and Ghafoor (2017) evaluated the topic of feminism regarding education and the position of women in society in light of Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," in which the role and concerns of women are discussed. Results show that in this novel, almost always upper-class women are treated as soft gods like a mother (God) of nature, the God of marriage, and the wedding is an elegant affair, one of the most meaningful aspects of British culture and society. In another study based on Jane Austen's novels, Hua (2013) used the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) conceptual framework to examine the common sense assumptions about gender that prevailed in British society that underlie the use of language in the novel "Sense and Sensibility." She discusses gender discourse discrimination among men and women in British society, tracing it from the novel. Her analysis is only founded on the lexical level. Her practical analysis analyzes adjective adverbs, swear words, intensifiers, and diminutives. She finds a big difference between the language used by men and women, which can be due to their social background, e.g., politics, economics, literature, and psychology (Hua, 2013).

Moreover, in a women-versus-men language study, Shahrgard and Davatgarzadeh's (2010) analysis of the language portrayal of male and female social actors and the creation of gender identities in the Interchange Third Edition reveals very diverse outcomes regarding the representation of women. Van Leeuwen's (1996) framework and Halliday's transitivity model are employed as analytic models (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Males were shown as more prominent, successful, energetic, autonomous, outspoken, and aggressive than females, according to the findings of this study. In line with a subsidiary aim of the current study, efforts have been made to move women from the margins to the forefront; this is against the traditional values that exclude the value of women in society, arguing that women are as crucial and essential as men to the community's functionality.

Conclusion

In the current study, by adopting DA, the re/production of discourse was investigated to pinpoint similarities and differences between the feminine discourses used to represent worldview within the studied two literary works of Virginia Woolf and Simin Daneshvar in 'A Room of One's Own" and "Suvashun, respectively. In other words, the objective was to see the impact of cultural and environmental factors on composers' feminine discourse. Ultimately, the final goal of the current study was to contribute to filling the gap of cultural knowledge misconceptions between Iranian and British novelists as presenters of Eastern and Western parts of the world.

Modality enables the speaker or writer to take a high, moderate, or low stance regarding the issue. High modality creates the impression that the speaker is assured of what they are saying, whereas low modality indicates uncertainty. Moreover, modality refers to a speaker's or writer's perspective on the world. Using modal words and phrases, a speaker or writer can indicate

certainty, possibility, willingness, duty, necessity, and capacity to different degrees. Based on the outcomes of this study, both of the composer have used high permission modal verbs indicating elevated authority in their writing.

On the other hand, regarding tense analysis, the simple future tense is primarily used to show the planned or expected things in the future. The tense helped the writers to lay out their desired condition, which enhanced women's access to public facilities in the case of A Room of One's Own and modernized Iran in Suvashun. In this way, the government's objectives are shown, and at the same time, the audience's confidence is built by the prospect of the beauty and prosperity of future life. It is a natural result because the primary ideology behind both volumes is to change the current circumstance for good. Simple past and present perfect tenses refer to past actions or things; this means that their respect for the past is displayed and can also make their plans reasoning and fully grounded. Both volumes depicted significant similarities in regarding tense analysis.

Drawing on personal pronoun analysis results, the first person "I″ is used more frequently in "A Room of One's Own." Using the first person pronoun "we" is to shorten the distance between the speaker and the audience, regardless of their disparity in age, social status, profession, and others. It may include both the speaker and the listener in the same arena, thus making the audience feel close to the speaker's points. However, Woolf narrates her story from a first-person viewpoint, contrary to Daneshvar, who adopts third-person narration. Further, Woolf used the pronoun "My (mine)" more frequently compared to Suvashun, which means she is possessive and tends to have what we might call "things," referring to the basic demands of women in that time. Nonetheless, Woolf has used the pronoun "His" twice more than Daneshvar, in which it must be mentioned that the "His" pronoun was mostly limited to some particular paragraphs in "Suvashun". The rest of the pronouns are used primarily equitably (considering the longer length of the Suvashun) except the pronoun "It," which is repeated twice times in "A Room of One's Own.

However, every research has limitations and delimitations; the present study is no exception. Due to the time limitations, we have narrowed our research scope to be detailed and time-efficient. The following section provides the limitations and delimitations of this study. The current study adopted DA instructions on two representative literary works to expand and relate the notions of context, cognition, perception, and production. Due to the time and space considerations, ideational and textual analysis of Halliday's (1985) SFL notion were excluded. Additionally, the results of this study may differ from other authors` volumes as the corpus of the study. Furthermore, although the author tried his best to select the most relatable volumes regarding the date published, central theme, and genre, there are still 20 years between the release dates, which may affect the results' reliability. Nonetheless, as the data was gathered directly from the research sample and no intervention was performed to eliminate the possibility of biased analysis. By adopting the passive data collection method, common pitfalls of the active data gathering methods (e.g., surveys and interviews), including personal and social desirability and bias, were abolished. In addition, the data for this study was collected from credible sources to increase the reliability of the findings.

The present study can benefit researchers interested in discourse studies to develop their vision for further studies. Although this study analyzed the feminine discourse in literary works, a comparative study of male and female writers can provide valuable insights using Halliday's SFL as the theoretical framework. Additionally, future studies can establish their analysis of other forms of artistic activities, such as cinema. This study only considered literary works` analysis, while numerous other potential study subjects are to be investigated, such as newspaper headings, TV and radio shows, and news. Additionally, the existing research only analyzed the writings of female authors, and male writers were excluded in line with the purpose of the study. Such research and analysis may assist readers and audiences to read and listen analytically, critically, and responsibly by revealing biases, animosities, and divisions in the various media outlets; this might be crucial for mutual comprehension, respect, and a more harmonious world. New study opportunities have emerged for academics interested in discourse-oriented research in various fields, including history, politics, intellectual thinking, and literary creativity.

Acknowledgments

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