Actor Description of the Protagonists Violet and Klaus in Lemony Snickets' Series of Unfortunate Events : A Critical Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT :*The way by which actors are described in discourse through depending on our ideologies and how we perceive them. It gives a detailed description of the entities (position, person, thing) of discourse. The research aims at exploring the ideological perspectives of presenting the orphans through the "Us versus Them" mentality. The data is limited to (4) extracts from the selected novels. These novels are "The Bad Beginning" and "The End" that are derived from "Lemony Snickets' A Series of Unfortunate Events". These extracts are derived from the two selected novels which are written by the author Daniel Handler. The analysis involves two orphans: Violet is the eldest sister with 14 years old and Klaus is the middle with 12 years old. The model analysis involves van Dijk's (2006, 2008) Socio-cognitive approachand ideological square was adopted. The study concluded that Violet and Klaus use strategy of actor description for the purpose of focusing on the self-representation through employing the personal pronouns "we' and 'I" as well as using certain expressions many times for the purpose of adopting their personal identity in the selected extracts of both novels.*

KEYWORDS: *Actor description, personal, discourse*

INTRODUCTION

Parental absence due to death, divorce, or distance, is a common theme in children's literature. Children who lose their parents, one of them or both, grow up outside the traditional nuclear family which makes their childhood a rich material for children literature holding great values and sympathy for both adults and children. So, despite the challenges and heightened vulnerability to social, psychological and emotional issues connected with living an orphan life, Orphan's language and behavior have received great

attention in children's literature such as short stories, dramas, and novels. Famous literary works, specifically novels, tackling orphans' early childhood; still can be remembered by the population as in "Anne of Green Gables" for Montgomery (1908), "Island of the Blue Dolphins" for O'Dell (1960), "The Secret Garden" for Burnett (1983), and "Harry Potter series" for Rowling (1987) and more recently Handler's Lemony "Snicket's series of unfortunate events" to investigate the concept of actor description, the following questions are set:

1.How children represent their personal identity in the novels through the strategy of actor description?
2. Why children focus on using the personal pronouns "I", "we", "us" through interact with others?

ORPHANS IN LITERATURE

Pearson (1991) elaborates the nature of orphans' life indicating that "many orphans live in what appear to be intact families, but the children are not cherished, nurtured, or guided and do not feel emotionally or physically safe". Such sufferings are always portrayed through orphans' stories which are "works of children's literature that either feature orphaned children as protagonists or that examine orphans and child abandonment from the perspective of a young child" (Burns, 2008). Since children's literature first appeared, orphan stories have been a common subject for authors to explore. The use of orphan in text dates back to the birth of literature, with instance of abandoned children appearing in the mythic and literary traditions of many different cultures (Burns, 2008), involving mythological orphan and orphan in fairy tale as well as other folklore. The orphan story gained attraction in children's literature by the Victorian era because of many other writers wrote about issues dealt with orphans, such as, Charlotte Brontë who wrote the novel "Jane Eyre" and The Orphan Master's Son by Adam Johnson.

They formulate different identities reflected through their belonging to society. These can best be investigated through Trajfel &Turner (1979) model. Tajfel and Turner (1979) define social identity theory as "that part of personal's self-concept which infers from his/her knowledge of his/her membership of a social group together with the social and value importance linked to that membership." For Hogg, et al. (1995: 259), "The basic notion is that a social category (e.g., political affiliation, nationality, sports team) into which one falls, and to which one that feels one belongs, provides a definition of who one is in terms of the defining features of the category … People have a storage of these discrete category memberships…" (Hogg et al. 1995:259).

Critical Discourse Analysis: Definitions
Discourse analysis (henceforth, DA) is a collection of multidisciplinary methods that can be applied in a variety of studies to study a wide range of social domains (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Critical discourse analysis (henceforth, CDA) designates a method of

discourse analysis that views language as a social practice and is concerned with the ways in which ideologies and power structures are expressed via language (Baker &Ellece, 2011). For Wodak (1995), CDA deals with examining systemic relationships of dominance, prejudice, power, and control as they appear in language. This approach intends to critically examine how language use or discourse expresses, signals, constitutes, legitimizes, and other aspects of social inequality (Wodak, 1995). Moreover, CDA is interested in how elite groups use language to assert their authority in society and the links between language use and dominance (Taylor, 2013). Additionally, significant advancements in sociolinguistics, philosophy, politics, and psychology coincide with CDA (Van Dijk, 2008). As for approaches of CDA, they are explained as follows:

Wadak's Discourse-Historical Approach: It relates to the socio-philosophy of critical theory (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). It considers the dialectical connections between interaction and the environment in which it occurred. The situational setting affects discourse, and discourse affects social interaction. This approach intends to simplify analysis of statements that contain implicit bias and help uncover concealed allusion by utilizing utterances' repertoires (Stefan et al., 2000).

Faiclough's Dialectical-Relational Approach: Fairclough discovered that these methodologies do not take a critical view of discourse (Fairclough, 2003). He claims that the traditional categorization of linguistics and other social science fields led to the establishment of the CDA. Because of its emphasis on aspects of social life and how they relate to language use, Fairclough's method, which is primarily based on the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics, has a significant impact on CDA studies (Fairclough, 2000). There is a contentious relationship between social structure and discourse. Language frames the social structure at the same time that social structure is framed by language to connect linguistically directed discourse analysis to social and political perspectives on language.

Teun van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach: According to van Dijk, CD is more of a study than an analysis. According to him, CDA is a viewpoint that incorporates a variety of theories (van Dijk, 2015: 48). Van Dijk (2002) sets several recommendations concerning elements pertinent to each social group's micro-level. He lists other features as being related to the macro-level of the same group, such as power, dominance, and inequality, while referring to these as language uses, discourses, verbal exchanges, and communication (vanDijk, 2015).

Van Dijk (2001) focuses on social cognition as the intermediary between text and society. Van Dijk (1998) also says that the process of understanding and production in the context of any communicative action is what is meant by cognition. "Socially shared representations of societal arrangements, groups, and relations, as well as mental operations such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, inferencing, and learning" are described as social cognitions (Van Dijk, 1993). Ideologies are seen as the fundamental unit of social representation of a group and are used to define social power. Van Dijk

further contends that "groups have (more or less) power if they are able to (more or less) control the acts and minds of members of other groups" (Van Dijk, 2003). Thus, the three domains of analysis included in van Dijk's methodology are discourse, cognitive, and social. Texts serve as the foundation for discourse analysis, which examines them from a lexical, semantic, syntactic, and rhetorical perspective. The social dimension is a context-based study in which the entire social structure is explored, whereas the cognitive dimension ties between social and textual dimensions to analyze the use of discourses in changing thinking (van Dijk, 2015). However, in order to conduct an integrated analysis, the three dimensions are necessary (van Dijk, 2015: 133). Ideology is given particular prominence because it should be a part of every dialogue. It crosses disciplinary boundaries and has to do with society and cognition. The social strength of the group is also supposed to govern ideology (van Dijk, 2002).

Van Dijk makes a distinction between an individual's memory and the collective memory with regard to cognition. The social memory, on the other hand, entails the beliefs, attitudes, and cultural traditions that are shared by the members' group, as opposed to the individual memory, which consists of the particular knowledge that is fashioned via the person's experiences that are acquired during his lifetime (van Dijk, 1998). Van Dijk (2005) also suggested macro and micro levels of analysis (Ismail et al., 2019). Language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication occur at the micro level of the social system. Power, dominance, and inequality amongst social groups are typically studied at the macro level (Schiffrin et al., 2001). The well-known "gap" between micro and macro techniques must therefore be conceptually closed by CDA, which is of course a sociological notion in and of itself.

METHODOLOGY

Four extracts from the two famous novels: "The Bad Beginning" and "The End". Both novels date back to the writer Handler. Two extracts from each novel were chosen to be investigated and analyzed using the eclectic model. According to Shank (2002, p.5), a qualitative approach is "a type of systematic empirical analysis into meaning." Shank defines systematic as "planned, ordered, and public." By empirical, he indicates that this type of research is grounded in reality. The model used in this research is based on van Dijk's SCA Ideological Square (2006-2008).

ANALYSIS OF DISCUSSION

**Violet's selected extracts / "A Series of Unfortunate Events, 'The Bad Beginning"
Extract (1):**

> "Thank you so much for helping us out today," Violet said, as she and her siblings walked home with Justice Strauss. "I don't know what we would have done without you."…"I can't tell you how much we appreciate this,"(Violet said, carefully. With their kind parents dead and Count Olaf treating them so abominably, the three children were not used to kindness from adults, and weren't sure if they were expected to do anything back. Tomorrow, before we use your library again, Klaus and I would be more than happy to do household chores for you. Sunny isn't really old enough to work, but I'm sure we could find some way she could help you."

In this extract, Violet expresses her appreciation for the judge Strauss using the personal pronoun "us" (three times), "we" (seven times) and "us" (four times) in "thank you so much for helping us"," perhaps Justice Strauss could adopt us", "…what we could have done without you..", "how much we appreciate this.", "before we use your library…", "we could fine some way…", to refer to herself as well as her siblings (Klaus, Sunny). Later, she used the personal pronoun "I" (eight times) in "I don't know…" , "I can't tell..", "I would be more happy…", "I'm sure we could fins away…", "I wish our parents' money…" , These utterances show that Violet thinks mentally by herself as a responsible person who thinks about others, justify, express their feelings and talk instead of them. She keeps her personal identity through emphasizing positive self-representation. Later, Violet uses the personal pronouns "we" and "our" to represent in-groupness and positive self -representation to maintain a social identity.

Moreover, Violet uses other personal pronouns including "they, their and them" to refer to her siblings (Klaus and Sunny) as in " with their kind parents dead… , " Count Olaf treating them…", ".. were not sure if they were expected…",. Violet keeps her personal identity by using out-groupness and talking about the children separately from her belonging to them. She keeps personal identity through emphasizing positive US self-representation and emphasizing THEM negative self-representation. Another description is given to Violet and her siblings is represented through the utterance "the three children" which is repeated to show that Violet who separates herself from the other children is still an orphan like them and they face the same fortune. This represents positive US self-representation and in-groupness to maintain social identity. Finally, the use of the personal pronoun "she" (nine times) to refer twice to Sunny and seven times to Justice Strauss. The author uses the name 'Violet' three times pointing out that Strauss cared about her and here he emphasizes positive self-representation to keep the personal identity. Then, he represented her feelings through the expression "Violet felt more comforted" indicating that she is the one who is leading the children through referring to her name first puting emphasis upon Violet's personal identity through showing the positive self-representation and in-groupness which is required to achieve social satisfaction.

Violet provides details of what happened to the children preparing the mind for their situation and why their feelings have changed after meeting Justice Strauss. She mentions the name of the judge Justice Strauss (four times) and Count Olaf (three times) to show the difference in treatment. The purpose is to maintain Violet's social identity since Violet intends to be socially accepted and achieve social satisfaction. Actor description involves the references to others as in "her siblings (once), you (twice) , your library (once) , Klaus, Sunny, adults" . These descriptions of others stand for the information provided by Violet about her and her siblings and their relationships with the people who influenced their life.

Violet's selected extract from "A Series of Unfortunate Events, The End"

Extract (2):

"You orphans thought you could escape me, but at last you're in my clutches!", said Olaf. "Yes, Olaf," Violet agreed wearily. The eldest Baudelaire did not bother to point out that as they were all alone in the middle of the ocean, it was just as accurate to say that Olaf was in the Baudelaires' clutches as it was to say they were in his. Sighing, she gazed up at the tall mast of the boat, where a tattered sail drooped limply in the still air. For some time, Violet had been trying to invent a way for the boat to move even when there wasn't any wind, but the only mechanical materials on board were a pair of enormous spatulas from the Hotel Denouement's rooftop sunbathing salon. (ch1: p.10-11)

Within this strategy, Violet expresses her self-representation using the personal pronoun "us" (once) "*The storm did it for us*", "**we**" (twelve times) in *"Which direction do you think we should go?", "We don't want to get lost", "Even if we had a compass, we don't know where we are or where we are going. We might as well head in any direction at all", "Then I vote we head west," "If we're going to be walking for a while, we don't want the sun in our eyes", "We could find anything here," "I guess we didn't need to throw him overboard"*. These utterances observe that Violet thinks conceptually by herself as a responsible person who thinks about others, justify, express their emotions and talk instead of them. She also keeps her personal identity through focusing positive self-representation. Later, Violet uses the personal pronouns "we" and "us" to represent in-groupness and positive self -representation to maintain a social identity.

Additionally, Violet utilizes other personal pronouns involving "they, their and them" referring to her siblings (Klaus and Sunny) as in "*they were all alone in the middle of the ocean*, " *the Baudelaires had walked only a few steps before they saw this was so*". Violet keeps her personal identity by using out-groupness and talking about the children separately from her belonging to them. She keeps personal identity through emphasizing positive US self-representation and emphasizing THEM negative self-representation. Consequently, the personal pronoun "she" (eight times) is also used to refer to Sunny

(five times) and three times to Violet. The author uses Violet's name from time to time for emphasizing upon her personality as a child who suffered as well in the utterance "*Violet agreed wearily*", "*Violet had been trying to invent a way for the boat to move even when there wasn't any wind*". The author uses the name 'Violet' (eight times) emphasizing positive self-representation to keep the personal identity. The author also puts emphasis upon Violet's personal identity through showing the positive self-representation and in-groupness which is required to achieve social satisfaction.

Actor description involves the references to others as in "her siblings (twice), you (four times), Klaus, Sunny, adults". These descriptions of others represent the information provided by Violet about her, her siblings and their relationships with the people who influenced their life. Moreover, actor description can be noted from the use of time and place adverbials as in "a while", "in the middle of the ocean", "in my clutches, stand for the importance of time and place and their influence upon the children who suffered and wish that their suffering would finish earlier. These descriptions show how Violet thinks of time and place.

Klaus' selected extracts "A Series of Unfortunate Events, The Bad Beginning" Extract (3):

Klaus Baudelaire, the middle child, and the only boy, liked to examine creatures in tidepools. Klaus was a little older than twelve and wore glasses, which made him look intelligent. He was intelligent. The Baudelaire parents had an enormous library in their mansion, a room filled with thousands of books on nearly every subject. Being only twelve, Klaus of course had not read all of the books in the Baudelaire library, but he had read a great many of them and had retained a lot of the information from his readings. He knew how to tell an alligator from a crocodile. He knew who killed Julius Caesar. And he knew much about the tiny, slimy animals found at Briny Beach, which he was examining now.

Within this strategy, Klaus expresses his self-representation using the personal pronoun "I" (once). He also keeps his personal identity through focusing positive self-representation. Later, Klaus uses the personal pronouns "we" and "us" to represent in-groupness and positive self -representation to maintain a social identity. Additionally, Klaus utilizes other personal pronouns involving "they, their and them" referring to his siblings (Klaus and Sunny) as in *"The Baudelaire parents had an enormous library in their mansion*", "*but he had read a great many of them and had retained a lot of the information from his readings*". Klaus keeps his personal identity by using out-groupness and talking about the children separately from her belonging to them. He keeps personal identity through emphasizing positive US self-representation and emphasizing THEM negative self-representation.

Another description can be found in author's usage of the personal pronoun "he" (sixteen times) referring to Klaus as shown in these utterances: *"but he had read a great many", "He knew how to tell an alligator from a crocodile", "He was intelligent", "He knew who killed Julius Caesar", "And he knew much about the tiny", "which he was examining now"*. The author uses the pronoun for emphasizing upon his personality as a child who

suffered. He also emphasize positive self-representation to keep the personal identity showing the positive self-representation and in-groupness which is required to achieve social satisfaction.

Moreover, actor description can be noted from the use of time and place adverbials as in "*in tide-pools*", " *in their mansion* ", " *in the Baudelaire library* ", " *now* ", " *at Briny Beach* " representing the importance of time and place and their influence upon the children who suffered and wish that their suffering would finish earlier. These descriptions show how Klaus thinks of time and place. They represent personal identity and in-groupness in which Klaus wishes that he can indulge in the society and feel accepted through achieving her dreams.

Klaus' selected extract from "A Series of Unfortunate Events, The End"
Extract (4):

> At the moment, Klaus was examining his notes on V.F.D. and the schism, which was an enormous fight involving all of its members and had something to do with a sugar bowl. The middle Baudelaire did not know what the sugar bowl contained, nor did he know the precise whereabouts of one of the organization's bravest agents, a woman named Kit Snicket. The children had met Kit only once before she headed out to sea herself, planning to meet up with the Quagmire triplets, three friends the Baudelaires had not seen in quite some time who were traveling in a self-sustaining hot air mobile home. Klaus was hoping the notes in his commonplace book would help him figure out exactly where they might be, if he studied them long enough. (p.11).

Within this strategy, Klaus expresses his self-representation using the personal pronoun "I" (six times) *"I think we're on a coastal shelf,",*. This utterance observes that Klaus thinks conceptually by himself as a responsible one who thinks about other and expresses his emotions and talk instead of them. He also keeps his personal identity through focusing positive self-representation. Then, Klaus employs the personal pronouns "we" (twice); *"I think we're on a coastal shelf,"* to stand for in-groupness and positive self -representation in order to maintain a social identity.

Additionally, Klaus utilizes other personal pronouns involving "they, their and them" referring to his siblings (Klaus and Sunny) as in " *where they might be, if he studied them long enough*","*but he had read a great many of them and had retained a lot of the information from his readings*", " *if he studied them long enough*". Klaus also keeps his personal identity by using out-groupness and talking about his siblings. Thus, he keeps personal identity through emphasizing positive US self-representation and emphasizing THEM negative self-representation. Another description can be found in author's usage is the personal pronoun "he" (sixteen times) referring to Klaus as shown in these utterances: *" nor did he know the precise whereabouts of one of the organization's bravest agents"," if he studied them long enough*". The author uses this pronoun for emphasizing upon Klaus personality as a child who suffered. He also emphasize positive self-representation to keep the personal identity showing the positive self-representation and in-groupness which is required to achieve social satisfaction.

Consequently, actor description can be noted from the use of time and place adverbials as in ""*At the moment", " once before", " quite some time", " hot air mobile home", " where*" represent the importance of time and place and their influence upon the children who suffered and wish that their suffering would finish earlier. These descriptions show how Klaus thinks of time and place. Additionally, the author uses the name Klaus (five times) for the purpose of emphasis. Hence, these descriptions represent personal identity and in-groupness in which Klaus wishes that he can indulge in the society and feel accepted through achieving her dreams.

CONCLUSIONS

Human cognition and concrete knowledge of words emerge not only from derivable experiences of reality, but also from verbal interaction inside texts. Actor description can be influenced by employing linguistic categories inside speech to mold meaning for the achievement of societal goals. The data under study represents meaning within the relationship of discourse within the audience for the purpose of highlighting the most notable linguistic image utilised by the text's writers facilitating not only the nominees' perceived societal value, but also shaping individual interaction with society via such perceived social value as articulated by representation of social actor and action. Thus, self-representation is embodied rules and frameworks that all characters use inside conversation, whether consciously or unconsciously not only to communicate, but also to convey meaning. Finally, Violet and Klaus use strategy of actor description for the purpose of focusing on the self-representation through employing the personal pronouns "we' and 'I" as well as using certain expressions many times in the selected extracts of both novels.

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وصف الشخصية للبطلين فيوليت وكلاوس في سلسلة الأحداث المؤسفة ليموني سنيكتس "البداية السيئة"
و"النهاية": تحليل نقدي للخطاب

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الملخص
الطريقة التي يتم بها وصف الفاعلين في الخطاب من خلال الاعتماد على أيديولوجياتنا وكيفية إدراكنا لهم. وهي تعطي وصفا تفصيليا لكيانات الخطاب (الموقف، الشخص، الشيء). يهدف البحث إلى استكشاف وجهات النظر الأيديولوجية في تقديم الأيتام من خلال عقلية "نحن مقابل هم". تقتصر البيانات على (4) مقتطفات من الروايات المختارة. هاتان الروايتين هما "البداية السيئة" و"النهاية" المأخوذتان من "سلسلة الأحداث المؤسفة" لليموني سنيكتس. هذه المقتطفات مستمدة من الروايتين المختارتين للكاتب دانييل هاندلر. يشمل التحليل يتيمين: فيوليت هي الأخت الكبرى وعمرها 14 عامًا وكلاوس في الوسط وعمرها 12 عامًا. يتضمن تحليل النموذج منهج فان دايك (2006، 2008) المعرفي الاجتماعي وتم اعتماد المربع الأيديولوجي. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن فيوليت وكلاوس يستخدمان استراتيجية وصف الممثل لغرض التركيز على تمثيل الذات من خلال توظيف الضمائر الشخصية "نحن" و"أنا" وكذلك استخدام تعبيرات معينة عدة مرات لغرض تبني هويتهما الشخصية. في المقتطفات المختارة من الروايتين.
الكلمات المفتاحية: وصف الفاعل، الشخصية، الخطاب