



Article : Discourse Analysis of African-American and Dalit Women's selected works / biographies : A Comparative Study

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Abstract :

Discourse Analysis grew out of work in different disciplines in the 1960s and early 1970s, including linguistics, psychology, anthropology and sociology. Thus this research aims at analyzing the discourses in the texts/ biographies of marginalized writers. The conversations of the characters with the people in the text reveal/ show the respect and concern by the upper class/ white people. A Dalit woman or the African-American woman has to face insults/ humiliation at home and in the society also. By writing these novels the writers have exposed the lives of the exploited characters which are full of suffering and humiliation.

Keywords : linguistics Analysis, Discourse Analysis, biographies, Comparative Literature.

Introduction :

The present study aims at comparing the African-American and Dalit women's selected works. It is an attempt through discourse analysis to discover the strategies of language use and the linguistic exchanges employed by the writers to reveal the characters, their personalities, relations, class distinctions as well as their feelings and emotions. According to Gabriele Griffin. 'Discourse analysis is different from textual analysis. Language is not only used to make simple statements but rather transmitting all communicative events' (Van Dijk 2001:98) whether there be, for instance, readings of novels, plays, poetry, a notice on a billboard, a conversation, or an interview- constitute particular way of talking about and understanding the world / or an aspect of the world, both on the part of the producer. (the writer, the speaker) and on the part of the consumer (the reader, the audience). Through-language one expresses the feelings and emotions of understanding the world. It is obvious that the British discourse analysts were greatly influenced by MAK Halliday's functional approach to language. (Halliday, 1973) which in turn has connections with the Prague school of Linguists. Halliday's framework emphasizes

the social functions of language and the thematic and informational structure of speech and writing. American discourse analysis examines types of speech events such as story telling, greeting, rituals and verbal duels in different cultural and social settings(cf. Gumperz and Hymes , 1972). Thus this research aims at analyzing the discourses in the texts/ biographies of marginalized writers. The conversations of the characters with the people in the text reveal/ show the respect and concern by the upper class/ white people.

Aims and Objectives:

To examine the highly marked conversational pieces extracted from the selected texts of Dalit and African-American women writers. (Shantabai Kamble, Baby Kamble and Toni Morrison and Alice Walker) respectively. Explain the discourse/ conversation analysis behind selected pieces of conversations in above books.

Significance of the Study:

The present research is helpful to undergraduate students in English language departments throughout the world. Therefore the famous works/ texts (award winning, Nobel Prize) of Baby Kamble, Shantabai Kamble, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker are selected for this research. The study will show the difference between a man and a woman, urban women and rural women. There is a vast difference between working and non working women. In this way, there is a difference between Dalit man and a Dalit woman. Difference is also seen in an urban Dalit woman and rural Dalit woman. There is a vast difference between Dalit working woman and Dalit non -working woman. This difference is seen not only in Maharashtra but also all over the country and the world at large. The Blacks and slaves face a similar problem like the Dalits in India.

Thus the research will be helpful / contribute to literature students and language students. It can be considered as an additional reference from which they can obtain / acquire information regarding the characters in the texts. The roles and positions of the characters, their style of speech used by the writer to embody/ convey the ideas and lessons he wants to impart to his readers and audience. Besides, the study is also significant for graduate and postgraduate students working on discourse analysis as the analyzed conversations will be tangible with illustrative examples and conversations.

Methodology :

It created interest to study this topic. Different methodologies are concerned with the prospective one brings to the research work. A conventional reading of texts require a range of methods and skills..

To fulfill the précised aim and objectives the following methodology is adopted Phase I : In this phase , preparation study and related reference articles (review of literature) will be done . In the same phase basic books on discourse analysis, language study and books on African – American and Dalit women writers will be procured / collected.Phase II : In this phase the Primary data : the books by African – American and Dalit women writers is studied. Phase III : In this phase selected excerpts from the paragraphs are analysed. For the present research the textual analysis for the further observations and document study analysed.

In *The Colour Purple* , we come to know that Celie becomes pregnant and gives birth to a dead child. She lives her life in humiliation and disgust. In this novel the expression mode is through letter writing. Celie informs her sister Nettie about her life. Shug Avery shares Celie’s feelings for Nettie. The discourse analysis of these sentences can be done (on Pg.173) while writing a letter to Nettie, Celie expresses her fear of not seeing / meeting Nettie. She curses God. She wrote “Yeah, I say, and he give me a lynched daddy, a crazy mama, a lowdown dog of a step pa and a sister. I probably won’t ever see again. Any how, I say, the God I been praying and writing to is a man ... Trifling, forgetful and lowdown.

The characters are poor, powerless and dream of a change, respect God and expect God to help them in their sufferings and pain.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola is pregnant. Boys talk about her pg.148

“Did you hear about that girl ?”

What ? pregnant ? ...

Who ? I don’t know all these little old boys ...

“Cholly ? Her daddy ?”

“Uh- huh”

“Lord. Have mercy. That dirty nigger.”

From this conversation readers understand that the characters bear insult and pain quietly. Even if the neighbors sympathize some make fun of them which is more humiliating. To get rid of this humiliation, Pecola dreams of having blue eyes which she thinks will reduce this suffering. Girls having white skin are appreciated by Pecola’s mother. This shows how by the colour of skin people respect women.

In *The Kaleidoscopic Story of My Life*, a situation in which Shantabai's mother shouts at Dattu's teacher for beating him and making him sit on a stallion.

The situation in both the Dalit texts show how Dalits were treated inhumanly by upper class people.

In *The Prison We Broke* writer talks about the superstitions and blind beliefs of the Dalits. How small children who fell ill were treated. When new borns and their mothers fell ill they would think that the mothers were possessed of evil and their relatives (parents) offered oil, gur (jaggery) and rice to get rid of the evil. They thought that the Goddesses were not happy with the families.

Conclusion:

The discourse analysis of the text will expose us to the kind of discourse carried out by the characters. The characters in both the African American and Dalit women writers are women who face poverty, pain suffering insult and superstitious beliefs which make their life more difficult to live. The characters share their problems, intentions and beliefs with their friends or neighbors. This nature of sharing is same in both the African and Dalit writers. By writing these novels the writers have exposed the lives of the exploited characters which are full of suffering and humiliation. Through discourse analysis we understand that very less communication takes place between the employer and the employee also.

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