A Discoursal Analysis of Gender Differences in Selected English TV Interviews

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Abstract

This study aims at discussing how gender differences might affect communication among people. For this purpose, several TV interviews are selected and examined on the discourse level. Developing a model of analysis ,is found that certain linguistics have been used by male speakers ,whereas different aspects have been utilized my female speakers like deictic expressions and lexical items of emotion and delicacy .

Key words: Gender , discourse , critical discourse analysis ,sex, context .

1.0 Introduction

The study of language and gender has increasingly become the study of discourse and gender. Gender can be understood as a discourse as it is an integral part of social life that is produced through everyday language and talk. The interdisciplinary investigation of discourse is a mutual area of language and gender. Despite that, all the titles are formed as an insight to discourse analysis, their dimensions are so different in which it is not easy to show a single treatment of discourse analysis as a tool for the study of gender and language (Holmes and Meyerhof, 2003:44-5).

Defining discourse is a subject of dispute, some define it as language in context, and others present it as a social situation. The study of language and gender relies on the second definition. Speer (2005:2) groups feminist research on gender and language into four traditions: sexist language, interactional sociolinguistics, the ethnography of communication and the critical discursive approaches. A discourse approach to gender and language

aims to accommodate ideas of individual agency and gender as multiple and shaped in part by language. This represents gender as variable, social and individual. Gender is something one does rather than has.

Eckert and Ginet(2003,3) argue that the study of language and gender is the study of how men and women speak and spoken of. Gender is, after all, a system of meaning-a way of construing notions of male and female, and language is the means through which one can maintain old meanings and resist new ones. The main concern is how people get their ideas on the table and their proposals taken up. Gender in language

structures is not only participation in certain kinds *of* speech activities and genres, but also conversational dynamics.

Weatherall (2002:1) refers to the fact that language not only reflects women's social position but can be used to challenge it. Gender can be understood as an essential characteristic of an individual's psyche; it is viewed as a social construct that is produced by language and discourse. Discourse is used in a linguistic sense to refer to language beyond that of words or to a broad system of meaning. Gender according to discourse is constructed, on the one hand as talk and texts, on the other hand, as a social meaning to understand the world in which gender stereotypes is reflected in language in use as a kind of research that is dependent on discourse. The study of texts and talk in interaction becomes prime sites for examining gender, since language does not merely mirror social beliefs about gender or reflect the nature of gender identity. Rather, it is through language (and discourse) that gender is produced and gains its significance as a social category.

Early gender and language works focus on how a single word could be considered as gendered or not. Later works tackle the analysis of texts in

gendered ways as in comic strips, children's literature, women's magazines and political speeches. Gendered discourse can be represented in the contexts of the media of women. Females are not depicted as being weak and dependent; rather, they are strong and central to the social action. The most important type of language use for the production of gender is in mundane conversation. Few studies adopt everyday interactions. The use of the term discourse refers to the power of language to shape thoughts and guide behavior. Gender differences in language are not so much a description of how women and men speak but a discourse that has material consequences. Gender discourses and ways of talking of gender can be thought of as producing power relations between men and women. A social orientation of gender and discourse offers a radical sex\gender distinction, in which gender cultural beliefs cannot be separated from biological knowledge. The important point here is that biology is not separated from the social contexts (ibid.).

Wodak (1997:5) introduces discourse as the units and forms of speech of interaction, which can be part of everyday linguistic behavior. Discourse requires the presence of the interlocutors (speaker and listener) in face-to-face interaction. Van Dijk(1985:6)presents the fact that discourse should be understood as action when he claims "I understood discourse….both as a specific form of language use, and as a specific form of social situation. Discourse is thus not separable from other forms of social practice".

Discourse is genderized when messages about gender categorizations are superimposed on the basic content of the discourse which does not always depend on linguistic conventions but may include matters as journalistic norms to mention the no default sex in some fields. Genderizing discursive practices can involve particular linguistic resources-gendered pronouns,

grammatical gender agreement, genderizing affixes and other gender-marked lexical items.

Gender is at the center of most social orders. Ideologies associated with linguistic varieties can generally be expected to interact in a variety of ways with gender stereotypes. This interaction may be varied as the linguistic and gender situations themselves(Eckert and Ginet,2003:254-9).

Describing discourse as a social practice implies a relationship between a particular discursive event and a situation. Discourse is socially constituted and conditioned. It constitutes situations, objects of knowledge and the relationships of people and groups of people. The study of discourse structure can be restricted to the study of combinations in bounded texts, such as the analysis of turn taking in a single exchange, or the use of connectives to create coherence among sentences. This includes the study of gender in groups of different texts in which language is a resource that can be drawn on creatively to perform different aspects of the social identity at different points (ibid.).

1.1 Social Interaction and Discourse Analysis

Language as a social interaction is the formulation that best unites the different approaches to discourse. Each approach somehow incorporates this insight into its specific method and concepts. Speech act theory focuses upon the linguistic actions that one performs toward another person – the actions that initiate or continue the interaction. The cooperative principle, so crucial to Gricean pragmatics, is a principle applicable to human interaction: it is this assumption that governs the way people interpret one another's meaning during interaction with one another (Schiffirin, 1994:414-415).

Bhatia (2004:163) presents analyses of broader social structures to explore imbrications between discourse and social practices in which the

focus is on the social structure, social change and social identities. The investigation is based on the model that provides a four – part multidimensional analytical perspective, which can be represented in the following diagram,
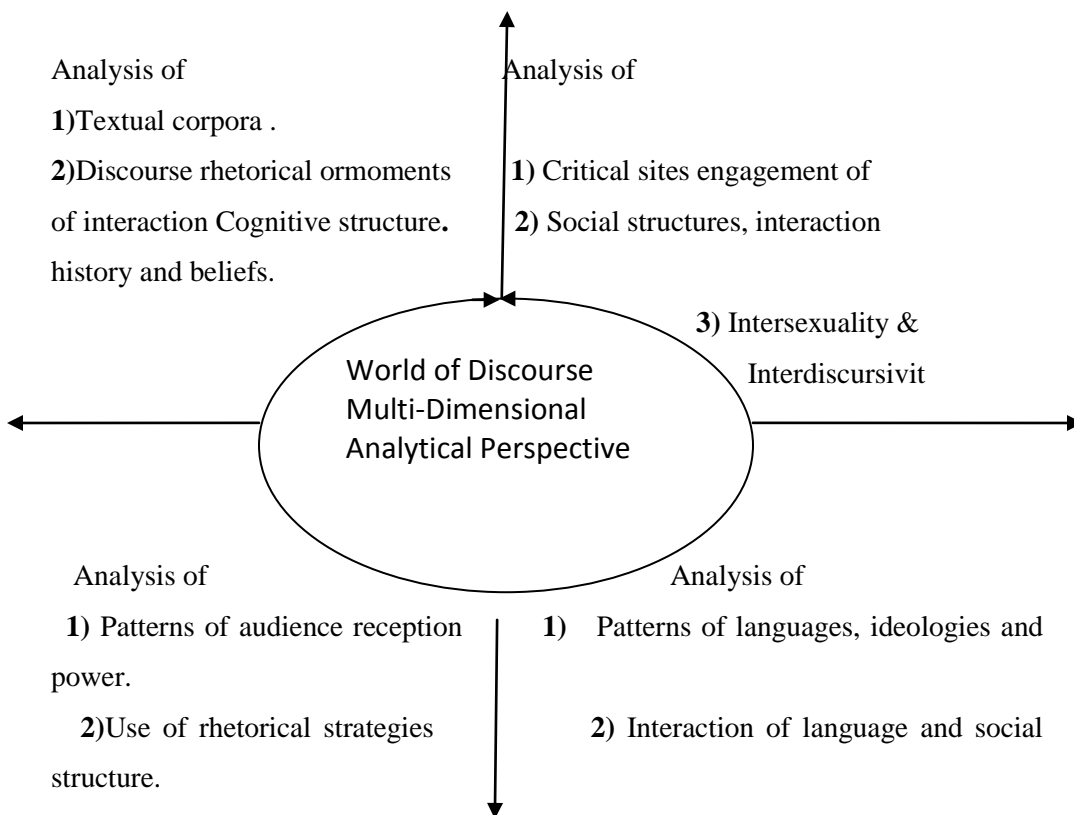
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World of Discourse
Multi-Dimensional
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Analysis of

1) Patterns of audience reception power.

2)Use of rhetorical strategies structure.

Analysis of

1)   Patterns of languages, ideologies and

2) Interaction of language and social

Diagram 1.World of Discourse Multidimensional Analytical Perspective. Adopted from Bhatia (2004:163)

Each approach to discourse views language as a social interaction in which the consequence is to focus on the process in doing discourse. To be more specific, i.e. social interaction is a process whereby one person has an effect on another. To be involved in social interaction is to be involved in an interchange in which the activities are directed to other people and other's activities are directed to the interlocutors (ibid.).

Discourse analysis views language as an activity embedded in social interaction. Ochs (1988:15) deplores this fact when he says,

Activity mediates linguistic and sociocultural knowledge and activity impact one   another and the activity most pertinent to the understanding of discourse as interactive activity that is directed to another interactant and has a potential for affecting that other interactant. Thus, interactive activity mediates linguistic and sociocultural knowledge.

One of the important terms that is used to refer to the social situation of language use in general, or to the specific situation of a given text or talk in particular is the setting, participants and the social consequences. These properties influence the speech interaction; this influence may well exist but remain implicit in the discourse, and hence it may not be noticeable to the analyst. Context is classically defined as the relevant environment of language use that may feature many types of properties of social situations at various levels, which may influence the production, the structure and the comprehension of the discourse, whether or not the participants are always aware of them, or the analysts are able to observe or detect them (Van Dijk,2009 :5-10).

Contexts are not objective social properties of the situation, but a subjective definition of the situation. This is compatible with the notion of relevance: something is relevant to someone, i.e. a context is what defined to be relevant in the social situation by the participants themselves. Today, most work on gender and discourse emphasizes the broader situational or contextual dimension of language use and variation, Gender realizations tend to be avoided because there may be more differences between men and women of the same profession. This means that instead of isolated social variables and broad generalizations, much current work on gender tends to

focus on more complex context structures, and the interdependence of context dimensions. It is precisely for this reason that sociolinguistics also needs a more sophisticated context theory, and a theory of how context influences text and talk – and its variations (ibid.).

1.1.1 Gender Differences and Similarities

Tannen (1994:3)puts the concept of gender differences and similarities as,

> Entering the arena of research on gender is like stepping into a maelstrom. What it means to be female or male, what it is like to talk to someone of the other (or the same) sex, are questions whose answers touch people where they live, and when a nerve is touched, people howl. Thus, gender differences\similarities affect communication.

In a similar manner, one cannot escape one's ideological frame of reference when researching how sex differences might affect communication between people. Crawford (1995:32) puts it this way,

> Sex differences findings can never enter the scientific discourse neutrally. Rather, they are interpreted within the context of deeply held beliefs about women's and men's natures. Researchers cannot avoid being influenced by the sociocultural discourse or gender, because facts about gender differences have no meaning outside that discourse.

Several studies adopt the view that similarities rather than differences characterize men and women. But even when such similarities are granted, authors often remain eager to explore and elaborate on gender differences

more than similarities. The debate regarding gender differences versus similarities is a contested one (ibid.).

   The differences in language use that are often identified between men and women are largely a product of different modes of socialization that arise within enduring sociocultural boundaries and structural contrasts. Men and women have internalized different norms for interaction within the sexes, in much the same way as the members of different cultures, living in the same social space, have different norms for interaction and often misunderstood one another accordingly (Wodak,1997:144).

      Many research figures can be cited in the gender and language field as making different statements about whether the evidence has showed gender differences as reliable and important or whether they are minimal and trivial. Topics that covered this principle include the content of conversation, language use and the use of interruptions. The result will be that women and men speech styles are more similar than they are different. This is confirmed by Weatherall(2002:59) in a kind of question to maintain rather than challenge women's position in society. She writes,

   What exactly is it about gender in general or gender and language use
   in particular, that makes the research for definitive answers about
   differences between women and men so popular and yet so futile ?A
   simple reason for the issue is that it reinforces gender differences over
   gender similarities to facilitate sex stereotypes that maintain.

1.1.2 Sex vs. Gender

The social role theory of sex differences is developed to the evolvement of gender roles. Evolutionary psychology attributes the origin of differences between men and women to sexual selection. The social basis of gender and the differential role give greater power to men than to women that result in

the development of dominant behavior in men and subordinate behavior in women (Seginer,2009:93-4).

Some scholars hold that gender is partially composed of one's biological sex, but it also entails the psychological, social and cultural features and characteristics that are strongly associated with the biological categories of male and female. Gender refers to the cultural understanding and explanations that people have for sex. Other scholars argue that gender refers to women and women's attitudes and behaviors while others define sex as the biological distinctions between men and women. They present gender as social, psychological and cultural differentiations between men and women. According to Canary, Emmers-Sommer and Faulkner (1997:6-7), gender is something evoked, created and sustained day by day through interaction among family members as it is something that one does and something one thinks with, both as a set of social practices and as a system of cultural meanings.

Though old studies refer to gender as a grammatical marker, still recent descriptions of language do not always make it clear whether gender is to be considered apart from sex. Van Herk (2012:86) makes a sharp distinction between gender and sex, He refers to gender as a socially constructed identity, rather than a biological category in which grammatical gender plays a role in the construction of social gender, while sex refers to the biological distinctions of males and females.

1.2 Critical Discourse Analysis and gender

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a developing field, which grows out of systemic functional linguistics. It is interpreted differently by analysts from different standpoints.CDA is primarily motivated by pressing social issues, in pursuit of better understanding through discourse analysis. It deepens the understanding of the nature of social power and dominance. In

this course, the influence of the social context on language variation and discourse is defined in terms of objective social variables, such as gender, ethnicity or age. A critical (feminist) discourse analysis by definition then cannot remain descriptive and neutral, since the interests guiding it aim to uncover or make social processes that can perpetuate inequality, manipulation and (sex) discrimination (Wodak,2009:14).

   CDA explores the connections between the use of language and the social and political contexts in which it occurs. It explores gender issues, cultural differences and the way these are both constructed or reflected in texts. It also investigates ways in which language constructs and is constructed by social relationships. A critical analysis may include a detailed textual analysis and move towards an explanation and interpretation of the analysis. It might proceed to deconstruct and challenge the text being examined. Critical perspective on gender identity also has an emancipator aim. The word "critical" is meant in a specific way, not just being critical in the ordinary sense, but examining something in order (Talbot,2010:125).

    CDA is useful for feminists. It can be employed in explorations of social construction of gender. Numerous branches of critical enquiry into language and discourse issues are explicitly feminist. These critical perspectives differ in method and in theoretical emphasis but they share the important insight that gender is not static but actively constructed. Some studies of gender construction place their emphasis on gender as performance. People do not have pre-fixed and stable gender identities, they perform them continuously. Critical perspectives share both avoidance of gender polarization and a perception of gender identity as dynamic (Wodak, 2009:15).

    Most approaches in CDA define the influence of the social context on language variation and discourse analysis in terms of objective social variables such as gender, class, race and age. No such direct influence exists

because social structures and discourse structures cannot be related directly and need the mediation of an interface (ibid.).

Wodak and Chilton (2005:68) conclude that CDA aims to elucidate the discoursal moment of social processes, practices and change in its dialectical relations with other moments. It develops its theory, method and agenda (object and research) through dialogue aimed at (a) coherent integration of discourse and discourse analysis (including detailed textual analysis) within social theories and methods of research, (b) development of its own theory of discourse and methods of text analysis to refer to the social reality of discourse.

Conclusions

1. A social distinction of gender and discourse proposes a radical sex\gender difference. Gender culurural principles cannot be detached from biological knowledge.

2. Critical discourse analysis is practical for femininists .It can be utilized in explorations of social construction of gender.

3. Gender refers to women and women's behaviors and actions, while sex is the biological distinction between men and women.

4. The differences in language use that are often presented between men and women are largely a product of diverse styles of socializations that occur within enduring sociocultural borders and structural contrast.

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تحليل خطابي لاختلافات الجنس في المقابلات
الانجليزية المتلفزة

أ. د. منذر منهل محمد

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المستخلص:

تعد اللغة ظاهرة اجتماعية توظف لإشْباع حاجاتِ التواصل. وبما أن الناسَ يوظفون اللغةَ في التفاعل الاجتماعي كوسيلة اتصال ويجسدون هويّاتَ معيّنة. إذن فاللغة لها دور اجتماعي كبير في حياةِ مستخدميها. إن تعقيدات عملية التواصل هذه تصل إلى ما وراء استخدام اللغة وتركيبها، وفي أعماق العلاقات البشرية المتبادلة قضايا متعلقة بالقوانين العملية والديناميكيات الاجتماعية للمتحاورين.

أن الاستنتاجات والفرضيات حول الجنس واللغةِ لا يمكن أن تستخلص بشكل كاف مِنْ ملاحظات انفرادية حول دراسات إحصائية مستقلة ومنفصلة. إن تحليل ألْخطابة والمحادثة هي الأدواتَ الأكثر فاعلية في بلوغ الهدفِ لاستبيان اختلافات لغويه مستندة على الجنسِ.

يهدف البحث الى تبيان   الخصائص التداولية والدلالية التي تُميّزُ لغة الرجل عن المرأة   ومحاولة اكتشاف نقاطِ التشابهِ أو الاختلاف، بسبب اختلافات الجنس، التي توجد في لغةِ الرجل والمرأة في المقابلاتِ الإنجليزيةِ.

لقد بنيت الدراسة على فرضي تين: الأولى هي أن لغة النِساء تختلف تماماً عن لغة الرجال. أما الفرضية الثانية فهي أن النِساء تميل إلى استعمال العبارات والمصطلحاتِ المعجميةِ التي تعبر عن درجة عالية مِنْ التَأَدّبِ، العاطفة والمؤانسة .

تستعرض الدراسة السماتِ النظريةِ ذات الصلة بالعلاقة ما بين الخطابة والجنس   مع عرضا شاملا للدراساتِ الأدبية المتَعلّقة بالتفاعل الاجتماعي وأيضا التحليل النقدي للخطابة،نظريةِ العمل الخطابي وتحليل المحادثةِ   والتفاعل الاجتماعي والمحادثة بالإضافة إلى تَسْليط الضوء على لغةِ النِساء وارتباطها بالمظاهر التفاعلية لتوظيف اللغةِ.

وبعد اعتماد التحليل النصّي والموضوعي (التداولي) توَصلتَ الدراسةُ إلى الاستنتاجات التالية: (1)لا تختلف لغة النِساء تماما عن لغةِ الرجالِ. (2) لغة النساء مشابهة للتي للرجالِ في بعض المظاهر التفاعلية.(3)تم إثبات بان النِساء هن أكثر تعبيرا،أكثر لطفا و أكثر قدره على الحديث من الرجال.

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