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Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Passages from the Novel "The War that Saved my Life"

Abstract

This study uses Critical Discourse Analysis to examine selected excerpts from Kimberly Brubaker Bradley's book, The War That Saved My Life. This study investigates the role of language in establishing and maintaining power dynamics, social hierarchies, and concepts within the narrative, utilising theoretical frameworks developed by Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, and Ruth Wodak. The research focusses on five significant works that illuminate themes of power dynamics and abuse, disability and identity, control mechanisms, social exclusion, and internalised oppression. Analysing these passages at the micro (textual), meso (discursive practice), and macro (social practice) levels demonstrates how the protagonist Ada's experiences reflect broader societal attitudes towards disability in pre-WWII Britain. The findings demonstrate how Ada cultivates resistance strategies through alternative discourses, so constructing and sustaining power hierarchies using linguistic features such as dehumanising labels, possessive language, and contrastive structures. This study elucidates how literary works may illuminate the interplay between language, power, and social injustice.
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تحليل الخطاب النقدي لمقاطع مختارة من ا لرواية" الحرب التي انقذت حياتي".

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الملخص

تستخدم هذه الدراسة تحليل الخطاب النقدي لفحص مقتطفات مختارة من كتاب كيمبرلي بروباكر برادلي، "الحرب التي أنقذت حياتي". تبحث هذه الدراسة في دور اللغة في إرساء ديناميكيات القوة والتسلسلات الهرمية الاجتماعية والمفاهيم داخل السرد والحفاظ عليها، مستخدمةً الأطر النظرية التي طورها نورمان فيركلو (Norman Fairclough) ، وتيون أ. فان ديك (Teun A. van Dijk)، و روث ووداك (Ruth Wodak.) يركز البحث على خمسة أعمال مهمة تُسلّط الضوء على موضوعات ديناميكيات القوة والإساءة، والهوية، وآليات التحكم، والإقصاء الاجتماعي، والقمع الداخلي. يُظهر تحليل هذه المقاطع على المستويات الجزئية (النصية)، والوسيطة (الممارسة الخطابية)، والكبرى (الممارسة الاجتماعية) كيف تعكس تجارب بطلة الرواية آدا المواقف المجتمعية الأوسع تجاه الإعاقة في بريطانيا ما قبل الحرب العالمية الثانية. تُظهر النتائج كيف تُنمّي آدا استراتيجيات المقاومة من خلال خطابات بديلة، وبالتالي بناء تسلسلات هرمية للقوة والحفاظ عليها باستخدام سمات لغوية مثل التسميات اللاإنسانية، واللغة التملكية، والهياكل المتناقضة. تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على كيفية قدرة الأعمال الأدبية على تسليط الضوء على التفاعل بين اللغة والسلطة والظلم الاجتماعي.

الكلمات المفتاحية/ تحليل الخطاب النقدي, ديناميكيات القوة, الإعاقة , الهوية, ادب الاطفال

1.Introduction

Literature has always served as a powerful instrument for analysing and reflecting societal realities, power structures, and human experiences. Through narrative fiction, authors construct words that, while imaginary, often mirror and critique the societal processes and injustices present. Set against the context of World War II Britain, Kimberly Brubaker Bradley's 2015 novel "The War That Saved My Life" presents a compelling narrative addressing themes of disability, abuse, identity, and empowerment. The tale is on Ada, a little crippled girl who has been severely mistreated and secluded by her mother, and her journey towards self-discovery and liberation when she escapes London during the wartime evacuation of children.

This research uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine select passages from Bradley's work, focusing on how language constructs and sustains concepts, social hierarchies, and power dynamics within the narrative. Critical Discourse Analysis provides a valuable framework for examining how language, utilised in both speech and writing, reflects, reinforces, and at times challenges existing social power structures. The study aims to elucidate the intricate interplay among language, power, and social inequality, particularly in relation to disability and childhood within a historical framework, through an examination of the linguistic components, discursive practices, and broader social contexts presented in the novel.

This study is significant as it enhances our comprehension of how literary works may serve as platforms for examining and critiquing social disparities. It also demonstrates how narrative fiction may be both mirror and contest dominant discourses on marginalised identities by employing CDA on a contemporary children's story that addresses historical issues of disability and abuse to integrate literary analysis with social critique. This study elucidates how language may serve as both a tool of oppression and a potential source of empowerment and resistance for marginalised individuals.

The book's location in World War II Britain adds complexity by situating the protagonist's emotional struggles against a broader historical context of conflict, displacement, and societal transformation. The title *The War That Saved My Life*—implies a paradoxical connection between devastation and liberation, prompting readers to contemplate how broader societal turmoil can sometimes offer opportunities for personal freedom from oppressive circumstances.   This study examines how Bradley's narrative establishes a connection between personal and political liberation through language and discourse utilising Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

2.Research Objective

The primary objective of this research is to conduct a critical discourse analysis of selected excerpts from Kimberly Brubaker Bradley's "The War That Saved My Life" to examine how language constructs, maintains, and occasionally challenges notions of disability and infancy, social hierarchies, and power dynamics. This study aims to:

1. Identify and analyse the discursive strategies and linguistic features utilised in the selected texts to illustrate the interplay between power dynamics, disability, and identity.

2. Employ Fairclough's three-dimensional model to examine the operational dynamics of these discursive representations at the micro (textual), meso (discursive practice), and macro (social practice) levels.

3. Analyse how the protagonist's experiences, as depicted via language, mirror broader societal conceptions of disabilities and vulnerable children in pre-war Britain.

4. Analyse how the narrative constructs alternatives for empowerment and resistance through various discourses that contest established power structures.

5. Facilitate understanding of how critical discourse analysis may utilise literary works as platforms for examining and critiquing social injustices. This study tries to demonstrate the necessity of employing critical discourse analysis in literary works to reveal the complex relationships among language, power, and social injustice. Through language and discourse, Bradley's book will engage with and contest historical and contemporary societal issues, therefore providing insights into its compelling tale.

3.Methodology

The study examines select passages from "The War That Saved My Life" utilising Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its primary analytical

framework.Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is particularly suitable for this study as it provides a framework to investigate how language mirrors and reinforces concepts, social hierarchies, and power dynamics (Fairclough, 2013; van Dijk, 2015; Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

4.Theoretical Background: Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s as an interdisciplinary approach to studying language as a social practice, examines how discourse reflects, constructs, and sustains power relations, social hierarchies, and ideologies. This contrasts with traditional linguistic analysis, which often focusses solely on the formal characteristics of language (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2015). This section provides an introduction of the theoretical foundations of Critical Discourse Analysis, emphasising the three primary methodologies that underpin this study.

5.Historical Development of CDA

Critical discourse analysis, which sprang from "critical linguistics" established at the University of East Anglia by Roger Fowler and colleagues in the 1970s, has its roots in "critical linguistics" (Fowler et al., 1979). It emerged in response to the limited focus on social hierarchy and power by traditional sociolinguistics (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) integrates concepts from several theoretical frameworks, such as critical theory, social theory, and linguistic theory, drawing upon the works of thinkers like Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Jürgen Habermas, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu (Fairclough, 2013).

The essence of CDA is the concept that language actively constructs reality rather than merely reflects it. Fairclough and Wodak (1997:258) assert that "discourse is both socially constitutive and socially conditioned". Consequently, language serves as a crucial medium for the formation and

propagation of power dynamics and concepts, since social structures both shape and are influenced by it, this made it the main concern for many researchers to understand the relation between power and language (Al-Manaseer &Lafta ,2024:672).

6.Key Theoretical Approaches in CDA

1. Tri-Dimensional Structure for Fairclough

In his foundational works "Language and Power" (1989) and "Critical Discourse Analysis" (1995), Norman Fairclough's methodology for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) delineates discourse as operating at three interconnected levels:

a) Micro-level dimension highlights the linguistic elements of conversation, specifically vocabulary, grammar, coherence, and text structure. Fairclough asserts that these literary strategies embody and reinforce certain ideological positions rather than remains impartial (1995).

b) Discursive practice—meso-level—examines the processes of book creation, circulation, and consumption. It considers the institutional contexts that shape speech, as well as the interaction between texts—intertextuality—and other discourses—interdiscursivity—(Fairclough, 2013).

c) Macro-level social practice contextualises speech within broader social systems and power dynamics. This examines how language reflects and contributes to social injustices, as well as its potential to either reinforce or challenge established beliefs (Fairclough, 1995, 2013). Fairclough's method underscores the dialectical interaction across these three dimensions, indicating that a comprehensive analysis must consider the interplay between textual components, discursive practices, and social structures, as they mutually influence one another.

2. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach

Teun A. van Dijk's approach to CDA incorporates a cognitive dimension into the analysis of social structures and discourse. Van Dijk (2015, 2016) argues that cognition, particularly mental models and social representations that assist individuals in constructing and comprehending texts, mediates the relationship between discourse and society.

2.1 The essential elements of van Dijk's technique include:

a) Mental models are cognitive representations of events, situations, and experiences that influence individuals' comprehension and production of language (van Dijk, 2016).

b) Social cognition encompasses the shared information, attitudes, ideas, norms, and values possessed by members of a social group, which subsequently impact their discourse (van Dijk, 2015).

c) situation models are individualised representations of the relevant characteristics of a communication situation that influence the production and comprehension of speech (van Dijk, 2008).

Van Dijk's approach is particularly effective for understanding the mechanisms of power and dominance through language, influencing individuals' mental frameworks and social cognition, both individually and collectively.   As he argues, "If we want to know what ideologies actually look like, how they work, and how they are created, changed and reproduced, we need to look closely at their discursive manifestations" (van Dijk, 1998:6).

3. Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach

Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical approach underscores the necessity of historical context in understanding discourse. Wodak and Reisigl (2001) assert that examining the historical context of discourse and the broader social, political, and cultural environments in which it operates helps enhance comprehension.

3.1 The essential features of Wodak's plan include:

a) Analysing the evolution of discursive practices and situating speech within its historical context enhances comprehension (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016).

b) Triangulation involves utilising many methods, data sources, and theoretical perspectives to provide a comprehensive understanding of speech (Wodak & Meyer, 2016).

c) This concept delineates the specific social sphere—such as political legislation, the formation of public opinion, or education—within which speech operates (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

Wodak's technique is particularly relevant for analysing how past discursive practices continue to influence contemporary representations and attitudes, as well as the historical evolution of discourses around marginalised groups, including those with disabilities.

7.Key Concepts in CDA

Across the many theoretical stances, CDA is centered on a few core concepts:

1. Critical Discourse Analysis examines how language reflects, reinforces, and even challenges social power dynamics. It particularly concerns how marginalised groups may resist through alternative discourses and how dominant groups employ discourse to maintain their dominance (van Dijk, 2015).

2. The CDA perceives ideology as a framework of ideas, values, and beliefs embraced by members of a social group that serves to rationalise certain social arrangements. Discourse is seen as a primary method for expressing and reproducing ideas (Fairclough, 2013).

3. Utilising Gramsci's concept, Critical Discourse Analysis examines how prevailing groups secure consensus for their authority primarily via the promotion of their viewpoint as "common sense" or natural (Fairclough, 1995).

4. Intertextuality and interdiscursivity are concepts concerning the interaction of texts with other texts and discourses, therefore incorporating and modifying elements from them. Critical Discourse Analysis examines

how these interactions either perpetuate or alter power dynamics (Fairclough, 2013).

5. CDA examines the portrayal of social actors, events, and phenomena in language, along with how these representations reinforce and reflect particular ideological positions (van Leeuwen, 2008).

8.Application to Literary Analysis

Despite the fact that Critical Discourse interpretation (CDA) has traditionally been applied to non-fictional resources such as political speeches, media coverage, and institutional records, its significance for the interpretation of literary texts is gaining recognition (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010; Leech & Short, 2007). Literary discourse, as to other forms of communication, both reflects and influences certain worldviews, potentially reinforcing or challenging dominant beliefs.

This research utilises Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how Kimberly Brubaker Bradley's "The War That Saved My Life" employs language to portray power dynamics, disability, and identity. Analysing the linguistic components, discursive tactics, and social contexts shown in the book enhances our comprehension of how literary expression reflects and critiques social injustices and power dynamics.

The theoretical frameworks of Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak offer complementary perspectives for this investigation.Fairclough's three-dimensional framework enables the examination of the interplay between social structures, discursive practices, and literary components within the novel. Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach elucidates the influence of characters' social cognition and mental models on their speech and actions. Wodak's discourse-historical method enables us to contextualise the representation of disability and power in the novel within the historical framework of pre-WWII Britain. This research aims to demonstrate how Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) may illuminate the complex relationships among language, power, and social injustice as reflected in literary discourse, by applying these theoretical perspectives to selected passages from *The War That Saved My Life.*

8.1 Discussion: Analysis from the Novel

This section provides a critical discourse analysis of five selected passages from Kimberly Brubaker Bradley's book "The War That Saved My Life," focussing on how language influences and maintains power dynamics, social hierarchies, and perceptions of disability and childhood. The research underscores the complex interplay of language, power, and social injustice as illustrated in the narrative through the theoretical frameworks of Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak.

Passage 1: Power Dynamics and Abuse

The initial chapter illustrates Ada's relationship with her mother, emphasising the abusive power dynamics underlying their connection:

> Ada! Get back from that window!" Mam's voice, shouting. Mam's arm, grabbing mine, yanking me so I toppled off my chair and fell hard to the floor. "I was only saying hello to Stephen White." I knew better than to talk back, but sometimes my mouth was faster than my brain. I'd become a fighter, that summer. Mam smacked me. Hard. My head snapped back against the chair leg and for a moment I saw stars. "Don't you be talkin' to nobody!" Mam said. "I let you look out that window out a' the kindness of my heart, but I'll board it over if you go stickin' your nose out, much less talkin' to anyone!" (Bradley, 2015: 3)

This chapter employs many linguistic tactics at the micro-level of textual analysis to establish and reinforce the power imbalance between Ada and her mother. The mother's discourse is characterised by urgent sentences ("Get back from that window!"), which function as direct commands, so affirming her role as the authoritative figure entitled to govern Ada's conduct. The violence-oriented verbs—"shouting," "grabbing," "yanking," "toppled," "fell," "smacked"—linguistically encapsulate the physical violence occurring, creating a semantic field of physical abuse. According to Jeffries (2010:45), this collection of potent verbs may "construct a specific perspective of the world through patterns of language choices" , so engendering a realm of cruelty and tyranny.

The mother's discourse also utilises linguistic markers indicative of a lower social class ("a," "talkin'," "stickin'"), so situating the interaction within a specific socioeconomic context. Fairclough (1995:73) asserts that "variations in accent and vocabulary are not simply variations in the 'expression' of social disparities; they contribute to the formation of social disparities". Consequently, these linguistic indicators imbue the power dynamics within the passage with a class dimension, so contributing to the construction of the mother's identity and social standing.

The mother's caustic remark, "out a' the kindness of my heart," is particularly significant since it reveals manipulation through feigned generosity. Van Dijk (2006"126) refers to this rhetorical strategy as "positive self-presentation", which serves to rationalise the mother's dominating conduct and obscures abuse as care. The mother's threat of escalation—"I'll board it over"—demonstrates her capacity to further limit Ada's already restricted independence, using language as a means of control and intimidation.

At the meso-level of discursive practice, the text reiterates speech patterns typical in abusive relationships where control is maintained via physical abuse and intimidation. Ada's internal reflection, "I knew better than to talk back," demonstrates her comprehension of the communicative norms established by her mother—an awareness of what Fairclough (2013) refers to as "orders of discourse" that dictate who is permitted to speak, when, and in what manner. The statement "I'd become a fighter, that summer" indicates a shift in Ada's identity and suggests the emergence of resistance to the established power dynamic, pointing to what Wodak and Meyer (2016:5) describe as the "dialectical relationship between particular discursive events and the situations, institutions and social structures in which they are embedded" .

The essay addresses broader societal issues of domestic abuse and power imbalances within family structures in pre-war Britain from a macro perspective of social practice.   The mother's concerns around Ada's interactions with others ("Don't you be talkin' to nobody!") highlight broader cultural stigma surrounding disability, which aligns with Siebers' (2008) concept of the "ideal of ability," portraying disability as a humiliating condition to be hidden.   This chapter illustrates Fairclough's (1995:73) assertion that "language connects with the social through being the primary domain of ideology, and through being both a site of, and a stake in, struggles for power", thereby associating personal experiences of abuse with broader social attitudes and structures.

Passage 2: Disability and Identity

The second passage explores how disability is constructed as a marker of identity and a justification for differential treatment:

Jamie's out there," I mumbled.

"And why shouldn't he be?" Mam said. "He ain't a cripple. Not like you."

I clamped my lips over what I might have said next, and shook my head to clear it. Then I saw the smear of blood on the floor. Oh, mercy. I hadn't cleaned it all up from this afternoon. If Mam saw it, she'd put two and two together, fast. Then I'd be in the soup for sure. I slid over until my bottom covered the bloodstain, and I curled my bad foot beneath me. (Bradley, 2015:4)

This chapter employs contrastive linguistic signs to establish a binary opposition between Jamie and Ada over disability.   "And why shouldn't he be?" the mother enquired rhetorically; then she added, "He is not disabled."   Not like you creates a distinct linguistic divide that illustrates the social disparity being enforced.   By characterising an

individual by their condition rather than their actions, the derogatory term "cripple" functions as what van Leeuwen (2008) describes as "identification"—which reduces Ada to her disability.

The succinct yet impactful phrase "Not like you" vocally and physically isolates Ada, exemplifying what Fairclough (1995) refers to as "overwording," characterised by an excessive use of almost synonymous phrases. Ada conceals her ideas ("clamped my lips") and physical evidence (bleeding, "bad foot"), so emphasising the dual operation of tyranny at both discursive and material levels. The book establishes a connection between physical hiding and linguistic concealment.

At the meso-level, the text illustrates how the familial environment influences and internalises disability discourse. Ada has internalised the imperative to obscure both her thoughts and physical condition, so exemplifying what Foucault (1977) characterises as the internalisation of disciplinary power—where external control transforms into self-regulation. As van Dijk (2015) characterises a "elite" who governs access to valued social resources—in this instance, the liberty to travel and participate in public spaces—the mother perpetuates discriminatory societal discourse around disability.

Ada's self-censorship ("clamped my lips over what I might have said next") illustrates her knowledge of prohibited discourse, so exemplifying what Butler (1997) characterises as "foreclosed speech"—communication that is deemed unfeasible within specific power structures. This awareness reflects van Dijk's (2016) concept of "context models"—cognitive representations of relevant components of a communication scenario that influence comprehension and speech output.

Macro-wise, the statement reflects historical perceptions of disability as a source of humiliation to be concealed. Davis (2013:8) states that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, individuals with

disabilities were frequently concealed by their families, institutionalised, or shown as 'freaks' .The chapter demonstrates how ableist language creates and maintains social hierarchies, so exemplifying how disability becomes what Goffman (1963) designates as a "master status," overshadowing other aspects of identity.

The bloodstain symbolises Ada's concealed efforts for autonomy, reflecting societal limits imposed on those with disabilities during this historical period. Garland-Thomson (2017:32) asserts, "The cultural logic of ableism defines disability as a diminished state of being human" a logic that is both mirrored and sustained through the terminology used in this chapter.

Passage 3: Power and Control

The third passage illustrates the psychological dimensions of power and control, as well as the emergence of resistance:

> I see that look in your eyes, my girl," she said. "Don't start
> thinking you can cross me. You're lucky I put up with you
> as it is. You've no idea how much worse things can be."
> I had poured myself a mug of tea too. I took a deep swallow,
> and felt the hot liquid scald a trail clear down to my gut.
> Mam wasn't kidding. But then, neither was I.
> There are all kinds of wars. (Bradley, 2015:5)

This line illustrates Fairclough's (2013) concept of "relational values" in language—grammatical attributes that establish, maintain, or alter social relationships—by employing possessive language ("my girl") at the micro-level, which suggests ownership rather than affection.   The threat disguised in seemingly innocuous language—"You're fortunate I tolerate you"—reframes abuse as forbearance, creating what van Dijk

(2006) termed a "ideological square," wherein positive self-representation and negative other-representation serve to legitimise power imbalances.

In "Don't start thinking you can cross me," the modal verb "can" emphasises the impossibility of defiance, so exemplifying what Fairclough (1989) refers to as "categorical modality"—assertions framed as facts rather than opinions—which serves to normalise power dynamics.   The symbolic language of tea that "scalds a trail" illustrates the intense nature of the conflict, so emphasising what Lakoff and Johnson (2003) describe as conceptual metaphors that structure our comprehension of abstract concepts through more concrete domains.

The last concise and unambiguous declaration, "There are all kinds of wars," functions as both a symbolic representation of the mother-daughter relationship and a portentous warning. This passage, in its simplicity and position, underscores the connection between political and personal struggle that will emerge throughout the book, so creating what Jeffries (2010:19) refers to as a "textual equivalent of foregrounding"

The essay elucidates how threats are produced and comprehended within the context of the abusive relationship at the meso-level.   Ada's internal response to her mother's authoritarian address exemplifies what Fairclough (1995) characterises as "creativity"the capacity to alter established discourse conventions.   The novel enables the reader to recognise the inequity of the power dynamic, so creating what Kress (1989) refers to as a "ideal reader" who aligns with Ada's perspective rather than her mother's.

The battle metaphor offers a novel interpretive framework that recontextualises personal struggle, so exemplifying what Fairclough (2013) refers to as "interdiscursivity"—the integration of many discourses inside a text.   This interdiscursivity, through juxtaposition, connects the

narrative of domestic violence with the war narrative, so producing new meanings.

The essay elucidates how abusers maintain control through psychological manipulation and intimidation. According to Stark (2007), "coercive control" operates not just through physical violence but also through "the microregulation of everyday behaviours associated with stereotypical female roles" (p. 5). This section illustrates what Scott (1990) refers to as "hidden transcripts"—discourses constructed by subordinate groups away from the scrutiny of power holders—demonstrating how marginalised individuals may cultivate internal resistance prior to engaging in external opposition.

The battle metaphor illustrates how Wodak's discourse-historical technique underscores the necessity of situating discourse within its historical context, so connecting individual conflict to the broader historical framework of World battle II (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016). This linkage suggests that, as a recurring theme throughout the book, personal freedom may be linked to broader societal transformations.

Passage 4: Social Exclusion and Imprisonment

The fourth passage explicitly addresses the relationship between disability, shame, and confinement:

> You're nobbut a disgrace!" she screamed. "A monster, with
> that ugly foot! You think I want the world seeing my
> shame?" She threatened to board over my window if I went
> downstairs again. That was always her threat to me.My
> right foot was small and twisted, so that the bottom pointed
> skyward, all the toes in the air, and what should have been
> the top touched the ground. The ankle didn't work right, of

course, and it hurt whenever I put weight on it, so for most
of my life I never did. I was good at crawling. I didn't
protest staying in one room so long as it held both Jamie
and me. (Bradley, 2015: 20-21)

This narrative employs dehumanising language—"disgrace," "monster," "ugly," "shame"—creating a semantic environment of stigma that linguistically constructs Ada's disability as abject and repugnant.   The dialectal term "nobbut" signifies regional or class affiliation, hence situating the speech within a certain socio-cultural context. The possessive phrasing "my shame" indicates the mother's perception of Ada's disability as a reflection of herself, so emphasising what Fairclough (1989) refers to as "expressive values" in language—elements that convey the speaker's evaluation of reality.

Fowler (1991) characterises "linguistic contrast" as the outcome of a comprehensive, factual depiction of the foot, juxtaposed with emotive, subjective naming, therefore emphasising the distinction between physical reality and social construction.   The normalisation of confinement"That was always her threat to me"—suggests repetition and regularity, therefore establishing what van Dijk (2016) refers to as "event models" that influence the perception and recollection of events.

The conditional acceptance "I didn't protest... as long as it included both Jamie and me"—demonstrates adaptation to confinement, therefore emphasising what Fairclough (2013) characterises as "nnaturalization" he process by which ideological representations are perceived as common sense or natural.

The chapter demonstrates the formation of internalised stigmatising language at the meso level.   Ada's pragmatic description of her disability

juxtaposes her mother's emotional repudiation, resulting in what Fairclough (1995) terms "discourseal heterogeneity"—the coexistence of many potentially conflicting discourses inside a text. The book critiques society responses to disability by revisiting the medical paradigm, particularly with physical impairment, to illustrate the complex interplay between impairment and social factors in the perception of disability, as noted by Shakespeare (2006).

Ada's acquiescence to captivity underscores the manner in which oppressive language shapes expectations and conduct, so exemplifying what Foucault (1977) denotes as "docile bodies"—individuals who have internalised disciplinary norms and modified their behaviour accordingly. However, the stipulation she imposes for this acceptance—pertaining to her brother—indicates the necessity of human connection in mitigating the repercussions of tyranny.

The statement broadly reflects historical views of disability as a source of familial shame. Garland-Thomson (2017:17) notes that "the disabled body has historically been positioned as an icon of deviance" , frequently resulting in concealment or institutionalisation. Oliver (1990) articulates the "social oppression theory" of disability, positing that disability is a type of social oppression rather than merely a medical illness, by demonstrating how physical differences serve as a basis for social exclusion and confinement.

This section illustrates the confluence of disability, class, and power in the formation of marginalised identities, as defined by Crenshaw (1991) in her concept of "intersectionality," which describes the interplay and compounding effects of several forms of oppression. This illustrates how architectural and spatial configurations—restricted to a single room—reinforce social hierarchies, so emphasising what Siebers (2008) describes

as the "materiality of disability," which pertains to the design of physical places that marginalise those with disabilities.

Passage 5: Internalized Oppression

The fifth passage explores the theme of internalized oppression and the potential for breaking cycles of abuse:

> I untied him as quickly as I could. I felt like a monster. He
> had a red mark on his wrist from where I'd pulled the
> string too tight. I won't do it again," I said. "I promise. I'll
> never do that again." Still, his tears flowed. I understood.
> In all my life I'd never hurt Jamie. I'd never hit him, not
> once.Now I'd become like Mam. (Bradley, 2015: 24)

This chapter illustrates the mother's terminology—"monster"—demonstrating Ada's internalisation of the derogatory label previously used to her. Bakhtin (1981) characterises "dialogism" as the phenomenon wherein words respond to previous statements and anticipate subsequent ones, exemplified by this linguistic resonance. The repeated phrases—"I won't do it again," "I promise," "I'll never do that again" underscore desperation and exemplify what Leech and Short (2007) refer to as "parallelism," hence amplifying emotional resonance.

The difference between "In all my life I'd never hurt Jamie" and "Now I'd become like Mam" exemplifies what Jeffries (2010) describes as "opposition" in text—the creation of binary contrasts that inform meaning. The last remark, "Now I'd become like Mam," acts as a powerful revelation that emphasises the most significant content through "end-focus."

The book illustrates how cycles of abuse can be perpetuated throughout generations at the meso-level. Ada exemplifies what Fairclough (2013) refers to as "critical language awareness"the capacity to discern the functioning of language within power dynamics—by recognising that she

employs the discourse methods of her oppressor.   The novel positions the reader to adopt particular ideological perspectives by facilitating an understanding of the cycle of abuse while eliciting sympathy for Ada's shame over her actions.

Jamie's silent tears constitute a powerful critique that transcends verbal expression, exemplifying what van Leeuwen (2008) describes as "non-verbal communication," which may be equally significant as verbal communication in the construction of meaning.   This stillness generates what Fairclough (1995) characterises as a "significant absence"—that which holds significance precisely due to its absence.

The paragraph illustrates the pervasive nature of oppressive attitudes that are taught and imitated in social contexts.   Bourdieu (1991) posits that individuals internalise social systems as "habits," which are dispositions that generate actions and perceptions, potentially facilitating the dissemination of repressive tendencies.   This section illustrates what Herman (1997) describes as "traumatic reenactment," the tendency of trauma survivors to replicate aspects of their traumatic experiences, emphasising the psychological repercussions of abuse on victims who may exhibit analogous actions.

Ada's self-awareness and remorse suggest opportunities for societal reform by indicating the potential to break the cycle.   The initial step in transforming speech is recognising our formation, as asserted by Butler (1997).   This section so delineates what Fairclough (2013) describes as a "criticism with positive implications"an analysis that identifies faults while also suggesting developmental remedies.

Conclusion

Excerpts from Kimberly Brubaker Bradley's "The War That Saved My Life" have been utilised in this critical discourse analysis to illustrate how language constructs and maintains power dynamics, social hierarchies, and

perceptions of disability and childhood in pre-WWII Britain.   This study, utilising theoretical frameworks from Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, and Ruth Wodak, has revealed the complex interplay of language aspects, discursive practices, and broader social structures that shape the experiences and identity of the protagonist, Ada.

The investigation yielded some significant outcomes.   Initially, at the micro-level of textual analysis, the book employs specific linguistic devices—such as imperative language, dehumanising labels, and contrastive structures—that establish and reinforce power hierarchies between Ada and her abusive mother.   These linguistic choices are not only aesthetic; they are deeply intertwined with the narrative's influence on ideology and power dynamics.

Secondly, the study illustrates how Ada negotiates, assimilates, and occasionally contests restrictive language at the meso-level of discursive practice.   Her growing awareness of the speech standards imposed by her mother and her emerging ability to contest these limitations demonstrate the potential for resistance, even within constrained circumstances.   This outcome aligns with Fairclough's (2013) notion that speech is both a stake in power disputes and a locus of power.

Third, at the macro level of social practice, the passages reflect broader societal patterns associated with disability, class, and familial power dynamics in wartime Britain.   The mother's treatment of Ada's disability as a source of shame that must be concealed from public scrutiny illustrates historical views of disability as a kind of deviance.   The context of World War II in the narrative implies a connection between political and personal freedom, hence facilitating Ada's liberation.

Employing van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach, it is evident how social cognition pertaining to disability and power influences the mental models of both Ada's mother and Ada herself.   Ada cultivates a conflicting mental

model that questions the mother's cognitive framework, which perceives disability as degrading and rationalizes control. This cognitive element adds complexity to our understanding of how power operates through language by influencing individuals' perceptions and responses to their social environment.

Wodak's discourse-historical method emphasizes the influence of past discursive practices on contemporary representations and attitudes, while also illustrating the evolution of discourses around disability across time, so contextualizing these passages within their historical framework. The figurative statement "There are all kinds of wars" underscores the significance of the historical context in comprehending how the impending conflict fosters Ada's personal autonomy.

This study contributes to the expanding body of research employing critical discourse analysis on literary texts, demonstrating that such works serve as valuable platforms for examining how language constructs and maintains power dynamics, particularly concerning marginalized identities such as disability. Analyzing the construction of power, disability, and identity via language in Bradley's book enhances our comprehension of the complex interplay between discourse, social institutions, and individual experience—dynamics that continue to influence our responses to difference and inequality in contemporary society.

The findings of this study have significant implications for future research and applications in the sector. They advocate for the use of critical discourse analysis to children's and young adult literature to reveal the ideological assumptions embedded in texts that shape young readers' perceptions of social inequalities and power dynamics. Secondly, they emphasize the necessity of considering historical context when assessing literary representations of disability and other marginalized groups.Third,

they highlight how literary works may interrogate dominant narratives on disability and other forms of social difference, as well as mirror them.

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