

An Analysis of Power Discourse and Ideology in Yahyā Yakhlef's Short Story *Tuffāḥ al-Majānīn* Based on Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

Ali Akbar Mohseni :Associate Professor, Department of Arabic Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.
Shiva Sdaeghi, (corresponding author): Assistant Professor, Department of Arabic Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Foreign Languages, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran. Email: shsadeghi@pnu.ac.ir

Introduction

This study examines the short story *Tuffāḥ al-Majānīn* (“The Madmen’s Apples”) by the Palestinian writer Yahya Yakhlef through the analytical lens of Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The story, written during a period marked by political turmoil, social suppression, and the intensification of everyday resistance, offers a fertile ground for exploring how language constructs and negotiates ideological meanings within a conflict-ridden context. CDA emphasizes the dialectical relationship between linguistic choices and social structures; therefore, Yakhlef’s narrative becomes an ideal site for observing how discourse reflects and shapes collective memory, resistance culture, and the lived reality of Palestinians under occupation.

The importance of this research lies in the fact that although Yakhlef’s works have been studied from literary and thematic angles, there remains a notable gap in systematic linguistic-discursive analysis, especially based on Fairclough’s tripartite model of description, interpretation, and explanation. By situating the narrative within its socio-historical background, the present study aims to uncover how power relations, ideological struggles, and social identities are reproduced or challenged through Yakhlef’s stylistic and discursive strategies.

The theoretical foundations draw on Fairclough’s CDA, intertextuality studies, and sociocognitive perspectives proposed by van Dijk. Additionally, this study relies on related scholarship in Arabic and Persian, including research on discourse of resistance, stylistics of place in Yakhlef’s narratives, and general works on discourse analysis in Arabic literature.

Through this multi-layered approach, the study intends to show that *Tuffāḥ al-Majānīn* is not merely a literary representation of Palestinian suffering but an active participant in meaning-making, identity formation, and ideological contestation.

Methodology

This research adopts Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional model, which investigates discourse at three interrelated levels:

Description (Textual Analysis):

This level focuses on linguistic features such as vocabulary selection, transitivity patterns, syntactic structures, textual organization, and the semantic fields constructed through the opposition of violence and resistance. Special attention is given to agent representation, nominalization, repetition, modality, and evaluative adjectives that encode ideological stances.

Here, the study explores how the text is produced, distributed, and consumed within the Palestinian socio-political environment of the 1980s. Intertextual and interdiscursive references—such as structural violence, collective resistance, martyrdom motifs, and depictions of fear and solidarity—are examined to show how readers activate mental models shaped by shared cultural and political memories.

At this level, the research identifies how the discourse contributes to reproducing or resisting dominant ideological structures. The analysis shows how certain religious and cultural meanings become naturalized, how symbolic representations of dependence and fear reflect lived realities under occupation, and how collective actions depicted in the narrative challenge hegemonic power.

The corpus of the study consists solely of the short story *Tuffāh al-Majānīn* (1982). Analytical categories are derived from Fairclough's works (1989–2003) and are supplemented with van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to ideology and knowledge structures. The research is qualitative, descriptive-analytical, and interpretive, relying on textual evidence and contextual data from Palestinian history and resistance literature.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the descriptive level reveals that Yakhlaf employs strategic lexical contrasts—particularly between brutality and steadfastness—to construct a dual semantic field that mirrors the tension between oppression and resistance. The high frequency of declarative structures and the deliberate distribution of agentive roles highlight the uneven power relationship between institutional forces and marginalized individuals. Transitivity analysis shows that oppressive actors are often represented as active agents of violence, while Palestinian characters frequently appear as resilient subjects, victims, or collective actors engaging in symbolic resistance.

Interpretive findings indicate that these linguistic patterns cannot be understood independently of the historical context. The story resonates with intertextual echoes of the First Intifada, structural poverty, displacement, and the deep-seated culture of *sumūd* (steadfastness). Readers familiar with Palestinian history interpret these textual cues in ways that reinforce communal identity and shared cultural memory. The narrative thus functions as a discursive space where collective trauma and national resistance converge.

At the explanatory level, the study demonstrates that the story not only reflects social realities but also contributes to ideological reproduction and transformation. Yakhlaf naturalizes certain culturally grounded meanings—such as sacrifice, communal solidarity, and faith—making them appear self-evident. Simultaneously, the narrative challenges institutional power by exposing its mechanisms of fear, control, and violence. The symbolic representation of apples—associated with both madness and resilience—serves as a metaphor for the paradoxical condition of Palestinians: oppressed yet resistant, fragile yet unbreakable.

The findings confirm that Yakhlaf's discourse aligns with the broader tradition of Palestinian resistance literature, yet it stands out in its narrative economy, symbolic density, and sophisticated deployment of discursive strategies that blend realism with allegory.

Conclusion

The study concludes that *Tuffāḥ al-Majānīn* is a powerful example of how literary discourse can operate simultaneously as a reflection of social conditions and as an instrument of ideological critique. Through its interplay of linguistic choices, intertextual references, and symbolic representations, the story reveals deep structures of domination while also foregrounding the possibilities of resistance and collective agency.

Applying Fairclough's three-dimensional model demonstrates that the narrative engages in the social construction of meaning and actively participates in processes of hegemony formation. The story's discursive practices reinforce cultural identity, challenge oppressive structures, and contribute to the ongoing dialogue about Palestinian memory, resilience, and liberation.

This extended abstract underscores the importance of CDA in literary studies and highlights the need for further research on Arabic resistance narratives from linguistically grounded perspectives.

References

- Abd al-Qadir, M. (2012). Text linguistics and discourse analysis. Algeria: Dar al-Kitab al-Jami'i. {In Arabic}
- Aghagolzadeh, F. (2007). Critical discourse analysis and literature. *Adab-Pazhouhi*, 1, 1–20. {In Persian}
- Ammar, A. (2010). Critical discourse analysis: Theories and approaches. Cairo: Alam al-Kutub. {In Arabic}
- Astīha, A. (2008). Resistant literature. Damascus: Palestine Foundation for Culture. {In Arabic}
- Dadadi, E., et al. (2016). Discursive and social practice in the novel “*Madār-e Sefr Darajeh*” based on Fairclough's model of discourse analysis. *Naqd-e Adabi*, 5(18), 25–49. {In Persian}
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. Longman.

- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power* (2nd ed.). Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analyzing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. Routledge.
- Haddadi, E., et al. (2016). Discursive and social behavior in fiction based on Fairclough's discourse analysis model. *Naqd-e Adabi*, 5(18), 25–49. {In Persian}
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. (2014). *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Jørgensen, M., & Phillips, L. (2010). *Theory and method in discourse analysis* (H. Jalili, Trans.). Tehran: Nashr-e Nei. {In Persian}
- Lazăr, M. (2005). Feminist critical discourse analysis: Gender, power and ideology in discourse. In M. Lazar (Ed.), *Feminist critical discourse analysis* (pp. 1–28). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lotfipoursaadi, K. (2010). An introduction to speech analysis. *Linguistics*, 9, 9–39. {In Persian}
- Majid Al-Rubaie, A. R. (1992). Yahya Yakhlaf writes the Palestinian novel that was never written. *Al-Adab*, 40(11), 74–76. {In Arabic}
- Mazini, M. (2005). *Discourse analysis: Principles and procedures*. Amman: Dar Al-Shorouq. {In Arabic}
- Pahshazanos, A., & Jafari, R. (2015). Critical discourse analysis of Ziyad Ibn Abih's sermon "Al-Khutbah Al-Batra" based on Fairclough's model. *Pajouheshnameh Naqd-e Adabi*, 6(11), 41–65. {In Persian}
- Paltridge, B. (2016). *An introduction to discourse analysis* (H. Hemmati, Trans.). Tehran: Neveseh-e Parsi. {In Persian}
- Safadi, A. A. (2006). *The poetics of place in Yahya Yakhlaf's novels* (Master's thesis). University of Jordan. {In Arabic}
- Saraj, A. (2015). *Feminine discourse: The evolution of feminine discourse in the works of Iranian women writers*. Tehran: Roshangaran and Women's Studies. {In Persian}
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. SAGE.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Discourse and power*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (2014). *Discourse and knowledge: A sociocognitive approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Yakhlef, Y. (1982). *Tuffāḥ al-Majānīn [The Madmen's Apples]*. Beirut: Dar al-Haqa'iq. {In Arabic}
- Yarmohammadi, L. (2004). *Conventional and critical discourse analysis*. Tehran: Hermes. {In Persian}