

Critical Discourse Analysis of ‘People’s Son’ Story: A Micro- and Macro-Levels Analysis

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Abstract

The present study has been carried out with the aim of critically analyzing a written discourse which is a story of an eminent Iranian writer, Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1948), entitled “People’s Son”. The story is recalling of a woman’s memory of leaving her three-year-old son in the street since his new husband did not accept to foster him because the child was her ex-husband’s son. To macro-level critical discourse analysis Hatch’s (1992) framework called theme utilized. Likewise, for the sake of micro-level critical discourse analysis the framework of cohesive devices introduced by Halliday and Hasan (1976), Farshidvard’s (1984) stylistic devices, and Shafaie’s (1984) synthetic patterns were applied.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, micro-level framework, macro-level framework, cohesive devices, stylistic devices, synthetic patterns

INTRODUCTION

“People build identities and activities not just through language, but by using language together with other “stuff” that isn’t language” like the form of dressing, Gee (2010, p. 28) defines the phenomenon of “discourse”. It means that discourse is language plus stuff. Bloor and Bloor (2007) assert discourse is human interaction through any means, verbal and non-verbal; is spoken interaction only; or it stands for the whole communicative event. In Widdowson’s (2004, p. 8) view, discourse “is the pragmatic process of meaning negotiation”, and text is its product. He says that text can be written or spoken, and must be described in linguistic terms and in terms of their intended meaning. Discourse analysis is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used. The goal of discourse analysis as Brown and Yule (1984) put, is to investigate of what the language is used for. It grew out of work in different disciplines in the 1960s and early 1970s, including linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology and sociology. Discourse analysts study language in use: written texts of all kinds, and spoken data, from conversation to highly institutionalized forms of talk (Tenorio, 2011).

Yule (1996, p. 83) briefly clarifies the activity of discourse analysis. He claims that:

“[it] covers an extremely wide range of activities, from the narrowly focused investigation of how words such as “oh” or “well” are used in casual talk, to the study of dominant ideology in a culture as represented, for example, in its educational or political practices.”

When discourse analysis is restricted to linguistic issues, it emphasizes on the record of spoken and written language scraps used in contexts of use for the purpose of intention, Yule (1996) asserts. The linguists approach two forms of discourse analysis: descriptive and critical. Gee (2010) says that the linguists’ aim for the former is how language works in order to understand it. However, their intention for the latter is to find how language works plus offering deep explanations. In addition, he says that they want to intervene in social problems or political issues in the world. He asserts that “they want to apply their work to the world in some fashion” (p. 9). Genc and Boda (2006, p. 135) state that “critical thinking about the analysis of situations/texts is as ancient as mankind or philosophy itself.” Van Dijk (2008, p.352) defines the phenomenon of critical discourse analysis as following:

“Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context.”

Critical discourse analysis can be done in micro- and macro-level of analysis. Lyons (1981) asserts that micro-level of analysis focuses on phonemics, morphology and syntax. On the other hand, macro-level analysis has bearing on the relationship between language and all the meta-language features of communicative behavior. In light of the micro- and macro-level of analysis, critical discourse analysis, theoretically, bridge the well-known gap between these two approaches, which is of course a distinction that is a sociological construct in its own right (Alexander et al. 1987). In this paper the writer will approach the micro- and macro-level critical discourse analysis frameworks to analyze a written text (a story) jotted down by Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1948).

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The critical discourse analysis at micro-level paved its way since Halliday and Hassan (1976) introduced different types of cohesive devices. Shafaie (1984) applied a model for analyzing synthetic patterns of sentences. And Farshidvard (1984) utilized stylistic devices to analyze the texts, in micro-level analysis. Hatch’s (1992) framework was a revolution in critical discourse analysis, particularly in written texts such as proses, stories and narratives. Her framework was a macro-level tool for analyzing the texts critically. Though there are too many studies carried out in the scope of micro- and macro-level analysis of written texts such as stories, poems, newspaper articles, academic materials etc. For the sake of being concise, merely some works done in the field will be introduced.

In their study, Jabeen, Mehmood, and Iqbal (2013) analyzed the linguistic devices introduced by Halliday and Hassan (1976) i.e. ellipsis, substitution and reference which

were illustrated on selected one act play "The Bear". Finally, they find that each of the elements however, has identifiable functions which contribute to the effective meaning of the story. It can therefore be concluded that these elements trigger and play important roles in passing the intention of the writer across.

Fahim and Eftekhar Paziraie's (2012) study mainly focused on transmission of post colonialism throughout translation, with particular emphasis on literary translation. For this purpose, the researchers employed the discourse analysis model in both micro- and macro-levels proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976), and Hatch (1992), respectively to delve into probable differences of endophoric references, conjunctions, and reiterations on one hand, and characters on the other, in the two Persian translations of "Heart of Darkness". To carry out this qualitative, quantitative, descriptive corpus-based research, two translations of the English novel done by two different Persian translators were examined. The results clearly showed that the frequency use of characters at macro-level, and endophoric references, conjunctions, and reiterations as grammatical and lexical cohesive devices at micro-level have visibly affected the translation products.

Eftekhar Paziraie (2012) carried out a study mainly focused on translation analysis at micro-level. In order to do that, the researcher applied the framework of Farshidvard (1984) and that of Shafaie (1984) to analyze the stylistic devices and synthetic patterns, respectively in the Persian novella "The Blind Owl" written by Sadegh Hedayat (1937) and English translations of that, done by Iraj Bashiri (1937) and D.P. Costello (1957). By this study, the researcher aimed at, first, finding the probable differences and similarities between the two English translations in terms of elements in each model, and second, finding out which translator has saved Sadegh Hedayat's style more. The results showed that the frequency of stylistic devices and synthetic patterns use have obviously influenced the translation products, in turn, making a considerable difference between the two English translations; therefore, both hypotheses were rejected at the end.

Rahimian and Momeni (2003) carried out a discourse analysis at both macro- and micro-levels on a story of Jalal Al-e Ahmad entitled "The School Principal". They used Hatch (1992), Farshidvard (1984), Shafaei (1984) and Halliday and Hassan's (1976) frameworks. They found that in the story different kinds of reference cohesive device used more than others by the writer. They claim that the story has a great cohesion. In the scope of synthetic patterns, they found that compound and active sentences were more than simple and passive ones. Analysis of synthetic patterns of the story showed that colloquial proses and description were the most patterns the writer applied.

Shahbazi (2000) carried out a discourse analysis at macro-level on madrigal Sa'di's sonnets and found that the reference cohesive device in his sonnets is absent, but lexical cohesion is the most used cohesive device.

Noormohammadi (1989) by using Halliday and Hassan's (1976) framework analyzed some English and Persian written texts, and then contrasted the results. He found that English texts use cohesive devices less than Persian ones.

MICRO- VS MICRO-LEVEL CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

Discourses are viewed as communicative events, which encompass certain beliefs, ideologies, identities, politics, and the like (Chilton and Schäffner, 2002). Since communication is obviously something beyond simply transferring a message from the sender to the receiver; discourse analysts frequently speak of interpretative work (Wodak and Cilla, 2006). According to Van Dijk (1985), discourse analysis has become a new cross-disciplinary field of analysis since the early 1970s. It is of interests to disciplines such as anthropology, and sociolinguistics, artificial intelligence, cognitive science, philosophy of language, and text linguistics.

Fairclough (1994) asserts that critical discourse analysis aims at revealing the ideological and political investments behind the supposed abstract linguistic representations. More recently critical genre analysis can also examine how lexical or grammatical choices may display the ideological commitments of different genre producers or may normalize the power of particular groups over other (Wodak, 2011). Nowadays the modern discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary approach, operating at two micro- and macro-levels, incorporating both linguistic and social analysis. Though Fairclough (1989) introduces a three-dimensional framework for studying discourse at three levels of micro, meso and macro. Meso-level is an intermediary level between micro-and macro-levels. The emphasis of the present study is not on meso-level.

Lyons (1981) asserts that micro-level analysis studies the linguistic structures of the discourse without paying attention to language acquisition, language functions, language and culture interaction, and physiological and psychological settings intervening in language behavior. Also Fairclough (2003) says that the micro-level of critical discourse analysis looks at the actual articulations of the text, and the linguistic features and devices to depict the given idea.

As Ifversen (2003) says, macro-level is where many texts are studied in order to make wide-ranging claims about a certain period or a certain society. Macro-level approaches tend to involve the study of language and ideology in society (Traynor, 2006). The starting point is a concern with the role of power and knowledge in society, identifying patterns of language, demonstrating how they constitute aspects of society and establishing how and why the language available to us sets limits on what it is (and is not) possible to think, say and do (Shaw & Bailey, 2009). At the macro-level, the analyst considers intertextual relationships, trying to understand the broad, societal currents that are influencing the text being studied (Fairclough, 1989).

In order to fulfil micro-level analysis Halliday and Hassan's (1976) cohesive devices, Farshidvard's (1984) stylistic devices, and Shafae's (1984) synthetic patterns are applied. Also, at the macro-level Hatch's (1992) framework named theme is utilized. The frameworks introduced as following.

Micro-Level Critical Discourse Analysis Frameworks

Halliday and Hassan's (1976) cohesive devices

Halliday and Hassan (1976) count five cohesive devices as adhesive tools for texts: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion. They assert that these explicit clues make a text a text, and also cohesion creates interdependency in text. The terms will be defined as followings (examples are taken from Sanders and Maat, 2006):

- a) Reference: It simply refers to the relationship between two linguistic expressions. In the textual sense, though, reference occurs when the reader/listener has to retrieve the identity of what is being talked about by referring to another expression in the same context.

e.g.: *John lives near the park. He often goes there.*

- b) Substitution operates as a linguistic link at the lexico-grammatical level. Substitution is used when a speaker or writer wishes to avoid the repetition of a lexical item and draw on one of the grammatical resources of the language to replace the item.

e.g.: *Danny loves strawberry ice-creams. He has one every day.*

- c) Ellipsis (zero substitution) is the omission of elements normally required by the grammar which the speaker/writer assumes are obvious from the context and therefore need not be raised. If substitution is replacing one word with another, ellipsis is the absence of that word, something left unsaid. Ellipsis requires retrieving specific information that can be found in the preceding text.

e.g.: *All the children had an ice-cream today. Eva chose strawberry. (Ice-cream is omitted in the second sentence.)*

- d) Conjunctions are not principally devices for reaching out into the preceding (or following) text, but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse. They are linguistic elements used by the speaker/writer to ease the interpretation of the text, frequently by signaling a relationship between segments of the discourse.

e.g.: *Eva walked into town, because she wanted an ice-cream.*

- e) Lexical cohesion differs from the other cohesive elements in text in that it is non-grammatical. Lexical cohesion refers to the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary. It could be said that it covers any instance in which the use of a lexical item recalls the sense of an earlier one.

e.g.: *It was hot. Danny was lining up for an ice-cream.*

Osisanwo (2005) classified the above devices into two major categories: “grammatical and lexical devices”. The following tables show the dichotomy.

Table 1. Grammatical cohesive devices

Grammatical Devices			
Reference	Substitution	Ellipsis	Conjunction
Nominal	Anaphora Cataphora	Nominal	Coordinating Conj.
Verbal		Verbal	Subordinating Conj.
Verb+Object		Clausal	Compound Adv.
Verb+Adv			Continuatives

Table 2. Lexical cohesive devices

Lexical devices	
Reiteration	Collocation
	Complimentaries
	Converses
Repetition	Antony
Superordinate/Hyponym	Part/whole
Synonym or Near Synonym	Part/part
	Co-hyponyms
	Links

Shafaie's (1984) model

Shafaie (1984) introduces a model for analyzing synthetic patterns of sentences. He counts 11 patterns and asserts that sentences are types of these patterns. The below table depicts those patterns.

Table 3. Synthetic patterns

N.	Type	Example
1	simple	Joe waits for the train.
2	compound	Joe waited for the train, but the train was late.
3	assertive	Waiting for the train is agonizing.
4	imperative	Joe! Wait for the train!
5	exclamation	What a fast train!
6	interrogative	Who does wait for the train?
7	conditional	If the train gets fast, joe won't wait for a long time.
8	active	Joe buys the train ticket.
9	passive	The train ticket is bought by Joe.
10	nominal	The train is fast.
11	verbal	The train arrived at the station.

Farshidvard's (1984) model

Farshidvard (1984, p. 564) asserts that “each poet or writer’s style, like color and smell exist in a flower or fruit, separates his text in terms of content and exterior cues from other literary works. It means that the writer’s thoughts exist in his work as well as language and interpretation.” He introduces stylistic devices including description,

simile, slang, and colloquial prose to identify the stylistic pattern of the given discourse. Table 4 shows the types and examples.

Table 4. Stylistic devices

N.	Type	Example
1	description	The street was so crowded and noisy.
2	simile	Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get.
3	slang	That dinner was <i>delish</i> .
4	colloquial prose	Whassup?

Macro-Level Critical Discourse Analysis Framework

Hatch's (1992) framework

Hatch (1992) introduces a framework for analyzing texts actually stories and narratives in a macro-level of analysis, the "theme". Theme framework focuses on the story elements and by considering them identifies each element role in the story. The framework consists of 6 elements as the followings:

- a) Time of occurrence such as last night, today etc.
- b) Place of occurrence like school or street.
- c) Characters and their roles through describing them.
- d) The goal of the story to which the writer or the main character of the story wants to obtain.
- e) Statement of the problem which will be stated in the story and before ending the story it shows itself exactly.
- f) Problem-solving in which the writer wants to solve the major problem stated in the story before. This element prepares the story to conclude (Hatch, 1992, pp. 165-166).

She states that a "climax" of the story is the time that story and all of its events achieve the main goal. She also asserts that a conclusion is a bridge between introduction and end of the story.

ANALYZING THE STORY

Before analyzing the text, it was necessary to have a bird's-eye view on Jalal Al-e Ahmad to briefly introduce him and his own style of writing. He is one of the great writers in contemporary era of Persian literature (1923 - 1969). His proeses are concise, compact, challenging, clear, sensitive, adventurous, and critical. He reflects the realities of the society in the language of satire and irony, however in his specific and unique style. He uses a vernacular form of language to be more effective on all social groups of the society. Most of his works provide an atmosphere for the readers in which they envision the writer is sitting face to their face and is telling the story. Although his works are

apprehensible for almost everyone reading them, because of the unique style he applies, few readers may be confused since they cannot understand the beginning and the end of the phrases. Hence, they have to read some phrases more than one time to realize the meaning the writer was about to convey, and also to make relationship between such phrases to previous and next ones.

The "People's son" is a short story published in a book entitled "Sitar" in 1948. Sitar, Al-e Ahmad's (1948) third published work, is a complex of thirteen short stories narrating the inferior situation of Iranian poor people, and their poverty and failure in the society and also in their own lives.

The Theme of the Story

Before critically analyze the text it is necessary to have a brief glance at the story. It was written in Persian, but for the sake of being relevance to English I translate the story utterances. The perspective of the story is first person singular (a divorced woman) who tells the story using sentences in past tense. This story is like a memory of an event, and actually is.

For the summary of the story it can be said that this story is about to describe a divorced woman's problems while she has a son of her ex-husband and now she is married to a man who does not accept her son as an adopted child. He forces her to get away the son from his home. The only thing that triggered her mind is that she should leave the son in the street. Thus she did this unfair work.

The language of the story is a vernacular and colloquial one without many proverbs, and as said above in past tense. The woman asks herself a lot of questions. These questions signal that she is blaming herself for her unfair work. For instance, she asks herself:

"I knew that it was possible to deliver the child to nursery or other places. But how did they accept my child? How can I be sure that they don't detain me and save my face and name me and my son in thousand manners? How?"

"میدانستم میشود بچه را بشیرخوارگاه گذاشت یا بخراب شده دیگری سپرد. ولی از کجا که بچه مرا قبول میکردند؟ از کجا می‌توانستم حتم داشته باشم که معظلم نکنند و آبرویم را نبرند و هزار اسم روی خودم و بچه‌ام نگذارند؟ از کجا؟"

Her son speaks using lovely sweet utterances. For example he pronounces /s/ sound instead of /ʃ/: (کیسمیس) /kɪsmɪs/ instead of (کیشمیش) /kɪʃmɪʃ/ (currant) or /l/ instead of /r/: (مادل) /mɑ:dæl/ instead of (مادر) /mɑ:dær/ (mother).

For the sake of critical discourse analysis, the text will be analyzed by using the following elements of Hatch's (1992) framework:

Time of the story is in Pahlavi's Kingdom. And the exact time of occurrence of the events is in night, its tomorrow morning and afternoon.

The place of the story is Tehran near Shah Street and Shah Square. The main place that the writer describes is the street that the woman asks her son to cross and buy some currant for himself.

The main character (the story teller) is a woman whom divorced and married again, but his new husband refuses her son who is about 3. The other characters are her mother, her son, her husband, her ex-husband, a taxi driver, a bus driver, and her neighbors. The role of her husband and neighbors is to blame her. The main character will be analyzed clearly later. In addition, the writer never mentioned the name of any characters in the story.

The goal of the story is to describe the women's occasion and their weakened rights in a third world society i.e. Iran in Pahlavi's Kingdom era. It wants to show the impoverished status of some widows in the society of that time. Furthermore, the writer wants to show the patriarchy of men.

Problem stated in this story is the conflict between a mother's emotions about her son, and her stress about economic issues. She is a widow and her new husband does not allow her to care her son. He wants her to leave the son in the street, and then return to his home. The problem of this story has not been solved. Although the woman left her son in the street, she blamed herself for doing this unfair work. The climax of the story is when she left her son in the street and rapidly escaped.

Cohesive Devices of the Story

The story is written in Persian and the cohesive devices in it must be analyzed regarding to Persian structural rules. The story consists of 2193 words and 235 sentences. The following table depicts the statistical cohesive devices used in the text.

Table 5. Cohesive devices of the story

Devices	N.	Percent
References	299	48.70
Substitution	0	0
Ellipsis	18	2.93
Conjunction	98	15.96
Lexical Cohesion	199	32.41
Total	614	100

The following figure depicts the percentage of cohesive devices used in the story.

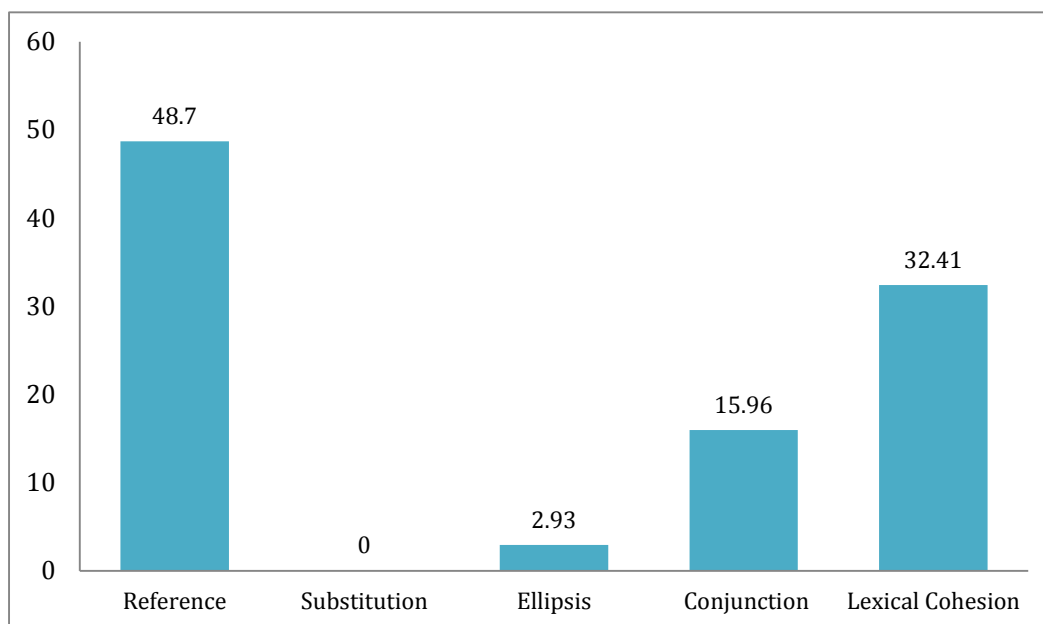


Figure 1. Percentage of cohesive devices

The above results show that reference devices used more than other ones.

Synthetic Patterns

By analyzing the story applying synthetic patterns introduced by Shafaei (1984) the following results obtained. Table 6 demonstrates the frequency and percentage of different types of the patterns.

Table 6. Synthetic patterns of the story

N.	Type	Frequency
1	simple	116
2	compound	119
3	assertive	190
4	imperative	15
5	exclamation	6
6	interrogative	20
7	conditional	4
8	active	235
9	passive	0
10	nominal	34
11	verbal	201

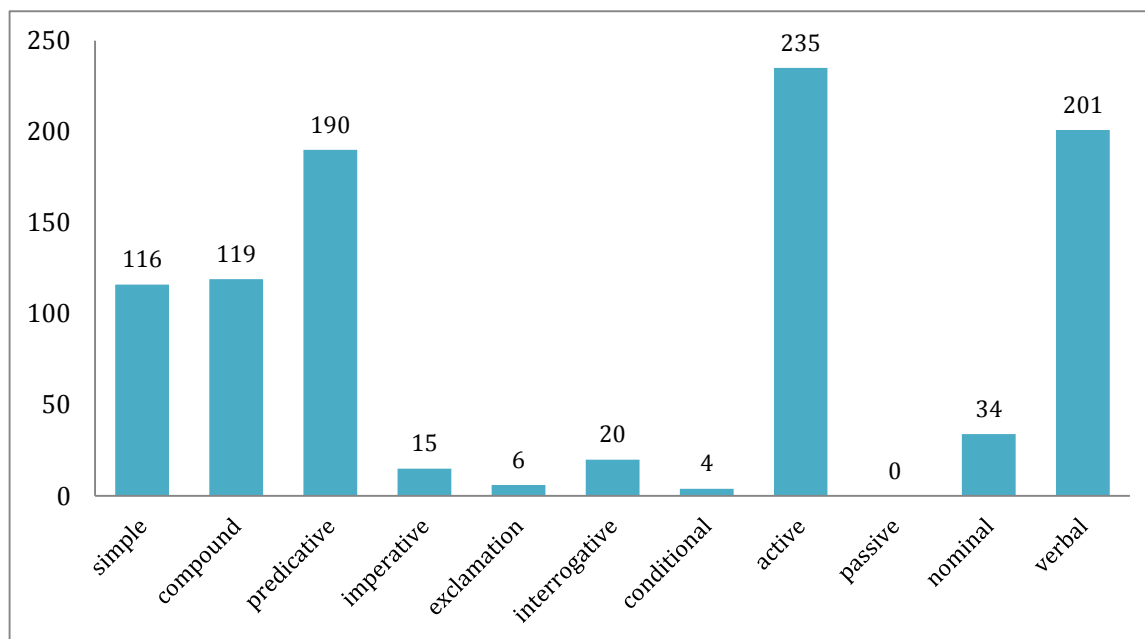


Figure 2. Frequency of synthetic patterns of the story

Table 7. Simple and compound sentences of the story

N.	Type	Frequency	Percentage
1	simple	116	49.36
2	compound	119	50.64
	Total	235	100

Table 7 shows that compound sentences used more in the story. It means that as in vernacular, colloquial and routine conversations or making sentences by ordinary people compound sentences used more, in the story which is a speech of an ordinary woman the compound sentences are more.

Table 8. Assertive, imperative, exclamation, interrogative, and conditional sentences of the story

N.	Type	Frequency	Percentage
3	assertive	190	80.85
4	imperative	15	6.38
5	exclamation	6	2.55
6	interrogative	20	8.52
7	conditional	4	1.70
	Total	235	100

As the above table depicts assertive sentences used more by the story teller. Also the conditional ones used least. It means that the speech of the story is simple, since the teller is a woman who is not at the high level of the literacy and social status, but low. All the exclamation sentences used by the woman are of that time she blamed her work, leaving her son in the street.

Table 9. Active and passive sentences of the story

N.	Type	Frequency	Percentage
1	active	235	100
2	passive	0	0
Total		235	100

Table 9 says that the story teller used just active sentences for the sake of simplicity. It means that an ordinary woman does not speak sophisticatedly.

Table 10. Nominal and verbal sentences of the story

N.	Type	Frequency	Percentage
1	Nominal	34	14.47
2	Verbal	201	85.53
Total		235	100

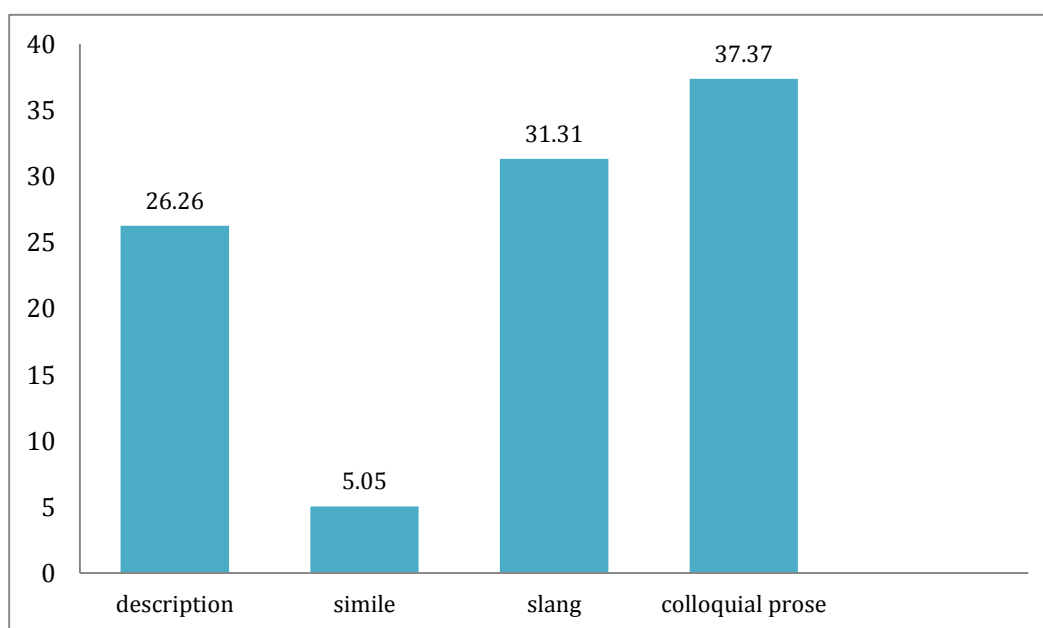
The high percentage of verbal sentences means that the story teller focused on the acts done through the story not expressing the nouns, persons, things etc.

Stylistic Devices

After analyzing the text using Farshidvard's (1984) stylistic devices the following results obtained. Table 11 displays the frequency and percentage of the devices whom Al-e Ahmad (1948) applied in his story to shape it.

Table 11. Stylistic devices of the story

N.	Type	Frequency	Percentage
1	description	26	26.26
2	simile	5	5.05
3	slang	31	31.31
4	colloquial prose	37	37.37
Total		99	100

**Figure 3.** Percentage of stylistic devices of the story

As the above table illustrates colloquial prose with the percentage of 37.37% among the four stylistic devices is the device applied more in the text. Slang with 31.31% is the second device used more in the story.

CONCLUSION

The study and analysis of actual language in use is the goal of text and discourse analysis. Halliday (1994), one of the linguists credited with the development of systemic linguistics and functional grammar, defines text as any authentic stretch of written or spoken language. As Demo (2001) asserts, discourse analysis is the examination of language use by members of a speech community. It involves looking at both language form and language functions and includes the study of both spoken interaction and written texts. Luke (2002, pp.100, 102) argued, critical discourse analysis requires the overlay of "social theoretic discourses for explaining and explicating the social contexts, concomitants, contingencies and consequences of any given text or discourse", accompanied by "a principled and transparent shunting back and forth" between the micro-and macro-levels analysis.

In the scope of critical discourse analysis two main frameworks applied i.e. micro- and macro-levels analysis. The former pays its attention to the language and its components, say, linguistic items such as syntactic patterns. Otherwise, the latter focuses on the relationship between language and ideology in society. In this article I analyzed a story titled "People's Son" written by Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1948) in micro- and macro-levels of analysis based upon Halliday and Hassan's (1976) cohesive devices, Shafaei's (1984) synthetic patterns, and Farshidvard's (1984) stylistic devices (micro-level), and Hatch's (1992) framework (macro-level).

Applying Hatch's (1992) framework, analysis determined that the main character is a woman who divorced and her new husband does not accept her son whom is her ex-husband's son. The language used by the character is vernacular and simple. The characters are not described, and the story commences without any introduction. The events occur in Shah Street (in Tehran) and in an afternoon in Pahlavi's Kingdom age. The goal of the writer is to give a view about that era's women and also their rights and occasion. The problem is a fight between a mother's emotions about her dear son and her husband's patriarchy.

The analysis of cohesive devices introduced by Halliday and Hassan (1976) showed that the story contained 235 sentences (2193 words) in which almost all of them uttered by the story teller (the main character) in past sentences. The most used cohesive device is reference i.e. 48.7% of all the cohesive devices applied by the story teller.

By utilizing Shafaei's (1984) synthetic patterns, the analyzer found that the following patterns used more than others in frequency: compound (N=119), assertive (N=190), active (N=235), and verbal (N=201). The high frequency of these patterns and zero frequency of passive sentence show that the language of the story is simple and very close to people's ordinary language in communication i.e. vernacular or colloquial.

Total Farshidvard's (1984) stylistic devices applied in the text was 99 (N=99). Among the stylistic devices colloquial prose and slang with the sum of 68.68% were the most devices applied in the story. It shows that the story teller is a person who is a member of mid- or low-class of the society, because these people use slang and colloquial conversation in their communication. This high usage of colloquial prose and slang by Al-e Ahmad is one of his own stylistic model. This unique style of writing makes his works simple, and eventually apprehensible for almost everyone who reads them.

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