

تحليل الخطاب النقدي للابتزاز في رواية "الفتاة المفقودة"
(Gone Girl) للكاتبة جيليان فلين

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Critical Discourse Analysis of Blackmail in Gillian Flynn's Gone Girl

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ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة موضوع الابتزاز الأدبي من خلال مقتطفات مختارة رئيسية من رواية "Gone Girl" للكاتبة فليين (Flynn)، وذلك باعتماد "تحليل الخطاب النقدي (Critical Discourse Analysis) كإطار لتحليل وتفسير الأحداث الخطابية. لقد أصبح الابتزاز في وقتنا الحاضر ظاهرة شائعة في شتى المجالات؛ وعادةً لا يُعبر عن هذه الظاهرة بشكل مباشر، بل تعتمد على عناصر لغوية محددة تستوجب التحليل لتأكيد طبيعتها كفعل ابتزاز. ويهدف تحليل المكون اللغوي إلى توضيح المعنى الذي يشكل جوهر إشكالية هذه الدراسة. وفي حين تناولت العديد من الدراسات الأكاديمية موضوعات الزواج والسلطة والانتقام والحقيقة في الرواية، إلا أن القليل منها اعتمد منهج تحليل الخطاب النقدي لفحص المظاهر الخطابية للابتزاز فيها. لقد أغفلت الدراسات السابقة أهمية العناصر اللغوية - مثل الحوار والنقد والتشكيل وغيرها من التقنيات - في إبراز أهمية الاستراتيجيات الخطابية في رواية "Gone Girl". وتتمثل إشكالية هذا البحث في كيفية

استخدام الشخصيات - وتحديدًا "إيمي" و"نيك" - لأساليب جديدة وفريدة في الابتزاز؛ إذ تستغل "إيمي" ضحاياها وتوظف كافة الأطر المؤسسية والاجتماعية للتأثير على زوجها "نيك"، مستخدمة ما يمكن وصفه بابتزاز قانوني أو مُشرعن عبر استغلال مذكرات ملفقة ووسائل الإعلام والسياسات العامة. وعلى عكس الابتزاز التقليدي، تعمل استراتيجيات الخداع والتلاعب في الرواية على إخفاء حقيقتها ودعم سلطة المرأة في المجتمع الحديث. وتتبنى الدراسة منهج فيركلو (Fairclough) لتحليل الخطاب النقدي (2003)؛ سعياً للكشف عن الجوانب الخفية للابتزاز الذي يمارسه كل من "إيمي" و"نيك". كما تهدف الدراسة إلى: أولاً، تحديد الآليات النصية مثل القواعد والمفردات والتماسك النصي؛ وثانياً، استكشاف الممارسات الخطابية للابتزاز وكيفية تشكيلها للهوية الشخصية وانعكاسها عليها؛ وثالثاً، الكشف عن الممارسات الاجتماعية التي تعزز الأيديولوجيات المجتمعية في الرواية أو تؤثر فيها. وقد أظهرت الدراسة كيف تشكل العناصر اللغوية مفهوم الابتزاز وتخضعه للتحليل والتدقيق، كما اعتمدت المنهج النوعي (الكيفي) كإطار أساسي لجمع البيانات.

ABSTRACT

This work studies the literary theme of blackmail in two main selected extracts of Flynn's *Gone Girl*, by adopting Critical Discourse Analysis as a framework for analyzing and interpreting discursive events. Nowadays, blackmail becomes a common phenomenon in all fields. This phenomenon is usually not expressed directly, but it depends on specific linguistic components that should be analyzed to affirm its nature as a blackmail. The analysis of the linguistic component is to clarify the meaning that forms the problem of this study. While much academic work has studied the novel's themes of marriage, power, revenge, and truth, few studies adopt a Critical discourse Analysis to examine the discursive occurrences of blackmail in the novel. Previously, studies have neglected the significance of linguistic elements such as dialogue, critique, shaping, and other techniques in showing the importance of the discursive strategies in *Gone Girl*. However, the problem of this research can be represented in terms of how the characters use a new and unique ways of blackmailing which are used by Amy and Nick in the novel. Amy exploits her victims by using all institutional and social settings to affect her husband, Nick. She employs a legal or legitimated blackmail to exploits her victims by using faked diaries, media and policy. Unlike traditional blackmail, the deceptive and manipulative strategies of blackmail in the novel hide her truth and support women authority in modern society. The study adopts Fairclough's Critical Discourse



Analysis Approach (2003) since it aims to discover the hidden perspectives of blackmail that are used by Amy and Nick in the novel. In addition, it also aims at: first, identifying the textual mechanisms such as grammar, vocabulary, and coherence; second, exploring the discursive practices of the blackmail and how it shapes and reflects the personal identity; and third, uncovering the social practices that reinforce or influence the societal ideologies in the novel. The study demonstrated how linguistic elements shape and scrutinize the concept of blackmail. Also, it employs qualitative analysis as the primary design for data collection.

Introduction

Language is considered an effective instrument for shaping and governing identities, social connections, and ideologies. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a theoretical discipline concerns with examining literary and social norms such as illegal and discrimination aspects. Also, CDA analyzes how speech effects and reflects social and power relations. However, CAD has intercate with other fields and ambiguity of analytical domains that shed light on the difficulty of understanding by the researchers (Trudgill, 2000). According to Fairclough (1992), CDA considers as discursive and analytical method that has been designed to investigate the frequently unclear relations of determination and collaboration between three dimensions: textual, discursive, and social practices.

Gillian Flynn's novel, *Gone Girl*, was published in June 2012. Sadism and romance are present in the novel. There is an extremely intricate issue in this novel. The first section of this novel is titled "Boy Loses Girl," while the second section is titled "Boy Meets Girl." The final section is titled "Boy Gets Girl Back." Different issues arise in each component. The first section describes the encounter between a boy (Nick) and a girl (Amy), the reasons for the girl's fear of the boy, the boy's deception, and the boy's eventual loss of the girl. The second section describes the encounter between the boy and the girl, the girl's true identity, and the girl's thoughts. Lastly, the final section explains the process of the girl returning to the boy, the reasons for her return, and the process by which she did so (Situmorang, Arianto, 2022, P.2). Therefore, Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* is a critical literary work that deals with various thematic concepts such as truth, deception, revenge, and marriage. One of the Flynn's *Gone Girl* literary themes is blackmail, is a general and negative phenomenon around several aspects of life that shapes and reflects the power and personal identities.

Blackmail appears threatening and evil, while primarily being a criminal operation. In most modern nations and countries, blackmail is classified as a crime, alongside murder, theft, and rape. However, including the (admittedly) criminal act of blackmail alongside crimes such as murder is deceptive in one respect. (Block & Anderson, 2000, p. 541). Blackmail is the request of money or other valuables accompanied by a threat, usually to reveal information that the victim wants to remain hidden. It must be distinctly differentiated from extortion. They are often conflated due to both, including a monetary demand linked with a threat. Even so, this threat of blackmail belongs to the lawful use of free speech or gossip, but extortion is illegal. It contains the threat to injure, murder, or otherwise harm personal and/or property rights. In extortion, the monetary demand is frequently associated with threats of murder, kidnapping, or destruction (Block & Anderson, 2000, p.121-122).

Despite extensive sociological, psychological, pragmatic, and stylistic analysis of Flynn's *Gone Girl*, there is a lack of academic studies that have been given to the linguistic and discursive strategies of blackmail within the novel. Many previous studies have studied *Gone Girl* concepts from thematic framework while this present study focuses on studying the issue of blackmail as discursive and linguistic factor. Particularly, the ways in which the blackmail is constructed and used through language remain understudied. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing how blackmail is linguistically and socially constructed and employed in *Gone Girl*. This study adopts Fairclough's three-dimensional model as a primary and analytical theory of data analysis. The problem can be represented in the issue of the blackmail and how it can be impacted by the linguistic and social features.

This study focuses On Norman Fairclough Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model (2003) to critically analyze how the concept of the blackmail is employed in *Gone Girl*, so the study aims at the following:

1. To identify and analyze the linguistic features that are employed in the extracts to represent the concept of blackmail.
2. To explore how the discursive and social practices portray the broader social relations, power dynamics and ideologies in the extracts selected to reflect the representation of blackmail.

In addition, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1.What are the linguistic or textual structures that are identified in the novel ?
2. How do the discursive and social practices reflect and influence power dynamics, ideologies and social relations in the extracts to represent the concept of blackmail?



Literature review

Critical Discourse Analysis: An overview

During the 1960s, an attractive field developed that concentrated on the analysis of language use, the meanings expressed by speakers in social interactions, and ensuing behaviors arising from language use in certain contexts. (Fairclough, 2003). Ultimately, DA underwent significant development, although at a certain period, it was profoundly shaped by academics, especially contemporary experts in sociology, philosophy, and other social sciences. Their studies contributed to the segmentation of language analysis into discrete components, particularly context, text, and society. According to Wodak and Meyer (2001), assert that this evolution fosters the establishment of critical linguistics (CL). According to Fairclough (1989), critical linguistics relies on Halliday's systematic functional linguistics due to the belief in an extensive connection between language and social structures. In 1980s, group of CDA was created to support the development between CDA and CL. This group includes primary scholars such as Fairclough, Wodak, Van Dijk, and others. According to Wodak and Meyer (2008), add that cultural relations require multiple methods because of its connections. According to Kadhim (2023,p.4) The methods of CDA are shaped from the philosophy of language and interconnection, Therefore, CDA is a interdisciplinary framework applies multiple methods. Fairclough defines CDA as 'critical' as it examines and criticizes the link between features of texts and social processes as depicted by ideologies and power relations .(Rahim, 2024,p.4).

Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough and Wodak (1997:271-279), add there are several principles of CDA:

1. CDA is concerned with the linguistic features of cultural and social processes and institutions in addition to language and its applications.
2. According to CDA, power relations are discursive. It examines the discursive and linguistic framework of modern cultural power and social relationships.
3. Discourse serves an essential purpose in the structuring of culture and society by facilitating dynamic interaction.
4. Discourse has a significant part to maintain the ideological behaviours. Consequently, certain ideologies influence speech and it is not considered neutral. Ideologies have an important function in shaping and depicting a society that perpetuates unequal power dynamics, exploitation, and domination.



5. Discourse has a historical dimension. This indicates that "discourse cannot be generated without context" and "discourse cannot be comprehended without context" .

6. A mediated interaction exists between text and society. CDA is described as "establishing connections between social and cultural structures and processes, on one hand, and textual attributes, on the other" .

7. DA has both explanatory and interpretive characteristics. CDA aims to transcend textual analysis and go into the realms of interpretation and explanation. According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997:278), assert that speech is authentic in several ways via critical speech analysis (CDA), based on the audience and the volume of information presented. They assert that CDA may analyze a text's contradictions to illustrate how diverse interpretations have distinct consequences for social behavior.

8. Discourse is considered as a type of social activity. Also, CDA aims to reveal hidden power dynamics and focusing specifically on the interplay between discourse and social power.

According to Paltridge and Hyland (2012:186), suggest that the aim of CDA to DA is to reveal the hidden perspectives. Discourse is influenced by social, political, and economic factors (Rogers, 2011:6). Many scholars like Fairclough (1989:88), suggest that the principal objective of CDA is not to enhance a particular disciplinary theory or discourse.

CDA aims to clarify the interplay between text, discourse practices and social practices, CDA intends to create results that have seen distinctive in social, cultural, political, and economic contexts. (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 280).

Unlike Fairclough, Paltridge (2006), add four CDA principles:

1. Discourse generates and reveal social and political factors.
2. Discourse examines and sets up power dynamics.
3. Discourse depicts and enhances social relations.
4. Discourse is referred to the method in which the ideologies are interacted and shaped.

Fundamental Concepts of Critical Discourse Analysis:

Discourse

Discourse, as stated by Van Dijk (1998), refers to language in application or execution. Texts, conversely, are abstract theoretical constructs including nouns, sentences, and several other components. Furthermore, according to Weiss and Wodak (2003), highlighted that language influences the formation of representations of reality, which are not just reflections but actively participate in its development. According to Matheson (2005), suggests that discourse constitutes "part of a network of



power and identity relations" rather than being only a text that is "anything else." Furthermore, discourse analysis needs to be seen as "an aspect of the persistent bias, prejudice, and societal struggle for power through recognition, instead of only an examination of the discourse's concealed significance." Discourse conversely pertains to the application of these patterns with the use of common language. Thus, discourse operates "beyond the domains of grammar and semantics to clarify occurrences in diverse social, political, and cultural contexts when these linguistic forms are employed" (Simpson & Mayr, 2009, p. 5).

Similarly, Gee (2005) differentiates two essential meanings of the word "discourse" by using a capital "D" and a lowercase "d." He used the term "discourse" with a lowercase "d" to signify the language in use, seen as an action influenced by specific contexts, rather than a collection of materials or instruments from a closed system. The terms "how to do things with words" and "how language is employed on site to enact activities and identities" are crucial for comprehending the concept in this context. (Gee, 2005, p. 7).

Ideology

The word "ideology" as defined by Van Dijk (2006a), often lacks of explanation while a variety of books and articles have been created to clarify the notion of ideology. According to Mayr (2008), defined two important categories that sustain the ideological understanding. The first type of ideology is characterized as an integration of ideas, behaviors, and ideologies. According to Van Dijk (1998a, p. 313), described ideology as the connection between the essential attributes such as aspirations and aims of social groups and the collective social cognitions of their members. According to Simpson and Mayr (2009), ideology is connected to individuals' perceptions of power and also it illustrates the coherence of a person's ideas, attitudes, and values with the broader social and political frameworks of their society. Variety of political ideas and social habits influence daily speech whether spoken or written. Therefore, studying discourse linguistically is crucial for examining many ideologies that are incorporated in Flynn's *Gone Girl* and the causes for their integration.

Ideology is important for understanding the idea of power since it reflects and defines power through the cognitive mechanisms that it is used. Ideologies are beliefs and principles maintained by certain organizations. Also, the texts can be formed by groups with particular agendas due to their thoughts that reflect social reality. It may serve as an instrument used by dominant members to maintain their authority or it might



function as an effective strategy used by any individual in political struggle .(Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity, 1998, p. 7).

Power

The main purpose of CDA is to identify the bases of authority and social power. Power is characterized as the dominant ability to regulate the production and distribution of texts within certain social settings and addresses the biases among individuals involved in discursive events. According to Wodak (1989), CDA adopts perpectives of the most marginalized individuals and examines those in positions of power particularly those who responsible for addressing these factors. The term of "dominance" belongs to the exploitation of power by those in leadership positions. CDA primarily examines violations of wide domains such as laws, regulations, democracy, equality, and justice. However, Van Dijk (1993), clarifies that dominance constitutes the exertion of social power by organizations or groups which lead to inequalities across political, social, economic, ethnic, or gender domains. This reproduction process may include several speech patterns related to power relations which include the acceptance, employment, representation, legitimation, rejection, elimination, or denial of dominance whether it is explicit or implicit.

Definition of Blackmail

According to Langford (2002, p. 273), blackmail as "the action of demanding something by using a threat to expose some secret knowledge which the victim wants to keep secret." Similarly, Kareem (2021, p. 8270) adds that "blackmail is a form of cybercrime that is carried out using information networks, for different purposes such as theft and fraud." Jeremy Waldron argues that blackmailers who solicit money to maintain silence over immoral actions are participant in such evils. George Fletcher contends that blackmail is unethical and rightly forbidden, since it establishes ties of dominance (Altman, 1993 ,p . 1654).

Types of Blackmail

According to Abdul-Hameed (2025,p.105), mentioned three significant types of blackmail that are corresponded with the current research:

Blackmailing women: It is the most prevalent and known form of extortion, as women are often perceived as prime targets by blackmailers, particularly men. Many women accidentally share damaging photographs or videos which may be considered inappropriate and these documents can be stolen or deleted. Such media serve as instruments for coercing and blackmailing women into submitting to the demands of the criminals whether those demands are financial, emotional, or ethical, or to harm their reputations.



Blackmailing men: The blackmailer cultivates ties and limitations with the target, often a businessman, famous individual or successful person. The blackmailer extorts him by threatening to disclose revealing information to get compensation or to impose damage at his employment if he is unable to comply with the demands, irrespective of their propriety.

Blackmailing legal persons: Another form of extortion targets large corporations, governmental agencies, and institutions by influencing their systems or using the blackmailer's professional role to acquire secret information pertaining to these persons. This final category is regarded as one of the most dangerous forms of extortion against national goals and secret data, particularly when directed at military or political entities.

Cybre Blackmail

According to Z A Kamil (2025,p. 26), stated that cyber blackmail is one of the most common and repeated obstacles in modern technology and information security crime .therefore it is not considered new crime .Moreover, this type of blackmail consists of several types:

Financial blackmail

Mekkawi (2022, p. 62) defines financial blackmail as an "attempt to gain money through coercion to take advantage of a situation of weakness". Hanoon and Hameed (2021) explain that it is a sort of extortion when an individual (the extortionist) obtains financial profits from another by threatening to show harmful or embarrassing information about them. Abdul Kareem (2021) suggests that in financial blackmail, the blackmailer's objective is monetary gain, which is demanded from the victim as a condition for excluding information about the victim's private details.

Sextortion blackmail

Sextortion is a damaging kind of cyber blackmail when the blackmailer demands sexual benefits from the victim as a condition for avoiding the public display of their photos and sexual material. Mullin (2018, para. 1) maintains that webcam blackmail, or sextortion, is a kind of cyber blackmail whereby the perpetrator employs a "fake identity" to connect with victims on various social media platforms, then coerces them into performing acts in front of the camera. The criminal threatens to provide the video recording to the victim's colleagues and relatives if the compensation is not paid.

Beneficial blackmail

Beneficial blackmail may be used to accomplish a socially or ethically advantageous goal, as opposed to traditional blackmail, which aims to exploit the victim for the blackmailer's own benefit. Islami et al. (2021)

emphasize that this kind of cyber extortion develops among political personalities when they are coerced into accepting requests under the fear of revealing sensitive or compromising information or private photos in order to damage their reputations. The blackmailers aim to exploit their victims for personal benefit.

Emotional Blackmail

According to Forward and Frazier (2019), characterize emotional blackmail as a manipulative strategy that operates an individual to act by motivating the feelings of fear, obligation and guilt (FOG). Emotional blackmail is a manipulation of the victims' emotions particularly targeting those who have experienced behaviours of isolation. Also, they constantly challenge their views and needs that allowing the blackmailer to manipulate and threat their emotions for example "If you ever cease to love me, I will take my own life" thus constructing threats provide desired result. In addition, Pawelec and Lukasiewicz (2012, p. 312), state that emotional blackmail is a manipulative strategy that influences an individual's experiences usually in personal relationships. The impact of the blackmailer's implication is based on the partner's collaboration with their demands. This manipulation is based on a full understanding of the other person's goals, dreams, limitations, and needs. The emotional blackmail pattern comprises a sequence of behaviours: the blackmailer's request, the victim's challenges, the blackmailer's stress, the blackmailer's threats, the victim's approval, and a further recurrence. The blackmailer contributes to the partner's perplexity by creating feelings of commitment, remorse, and apprehension. Numerous victims of emotional blackmail remain undetected, experiencing their suffering in isolation.

Method

This current study applies a qualitative research design as the primary instrument of data analysis that emphasizes on how the linguistic elements form the depiction of blackmail in *Gone Girl*. The purposive sampling method was employed to select (2) primary extracts of blackmail from the novel that clarify social relations and power dynamics. The study adopts Fairclough's (2003) three-dimensional CDA model that consist of: textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice to discover how language and discursive strategies constructs and represents the concept of blackmail in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*.

The qualitative analysis is more appropriate for this research since it provides a more profound comprehension and investigation of the chosen data. Van der Merwe (cited in Garbers, 1996) maintains that qualitative research is a method centered on theoretical construction and the attainment of more thorough knowledge. According to Denzin and



Lincoln (1994), describe qualitative analysis as the examination of things in their natural environments to comprehend or interpret events based on the meanings attributed to them by persons.

Participants

This research attempts to analyze the concept of blackmail in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* 2012. Also .it adopts critical discourse analysis approach ,especially Fairclough's three-dimensional model of analysis. Flynn's *Gone Girl* consists of various manipulative and deceptive strategies that are used by the characters to discover and reflect social relations and ideologies in modern society. Moreover, Flynn adds how Amy and Nick use the concept of blackmail in legitimated way to achieve their goals.

Instrument

This present study focuses on the documentary instrument as the major source of data collection that emphasizing on the original and authentic text of Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* (2012). This is done by selecting two extracts of blackmail in *Gone Girl* from journal website (ICRRD) <https://icrrd.com/public/media/15-05-2021-082725Gone-Girl-Gillian-Flynn.pdf>. The process of data collection was directly extracted from the original novel text, offering a credible and stable source for examining the concept of blackmail through adopting critical discourse analysis as the primary interdisciplinary approach. Moreover, the depictions of the social relations, ideologies, power dynamics and language strategies in *Gone Girl* have been explored through accurate and repeated reading. Also, the main objective of the study is to investigate and uncover the discursive and linguistic events of blackmail in the analysis of *Gone Girl*. Furthermore, the successful procedure for providing well examination that ensure and sustain the textual analysis of data has been achieved with much academic feedback and knowledge.

CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to linguistics. Fairclough's (2003) three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis provides an organized method for examining texts, discourse practices, and sociocultural practices in the novel *Gone Girl* by Flynn. Using this paradigm, the research examines critically the linguistic and discursive techniques used in *Gone Girl* to portray the theme of blackmail. Qualitative analysis of the language phenomena being studied is carried out to achieve the study's goals and primary function.

Fairclough (2003) adds that such type of method is significant for examining the primary three dimensions text, discourse and social practice which reflects the ideological and power relationships in *Gone Girl*. Also, Fairclough's model refers that is possible to analyze how the

discourse of blackmail in *Gone Girl* generates and enhances power dynamics. This present research used CDA to illustrate the hidden ideologies in *Gone Girl* particularly with regard to the language used to depict the characters' employment of blackmail in the novel. The textual analysis of blackmail in *Gone Girl* is based on Fairclough's (2003) model which consists of three dimensions:

1-Textual Analysis (Description), It includes the linguistic concepts of the text like descriptive terms, modality, syntactic structures, vocabulary and grammar which are the primary factors of this level. Also, it focuses on the linguistic skills that are used by both Amy and Nick in the novel which portray their personal identities, authority, and power dynamics.

2-Discursive Practice (Interpretation stage), the main objective of this level is to analyze how language of blackmail is produced and distributed within the text. Moreover, this research uses discursive technique analysis to explore how the novel represents the concept of blackmail in order to show how dominant cultural norms are portrayed.

3-Social Practice (Explanation), this type of analysis directs the text into broader social and public factors. It explores the ways in which Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* effectively embodies and reflects modern social relations.

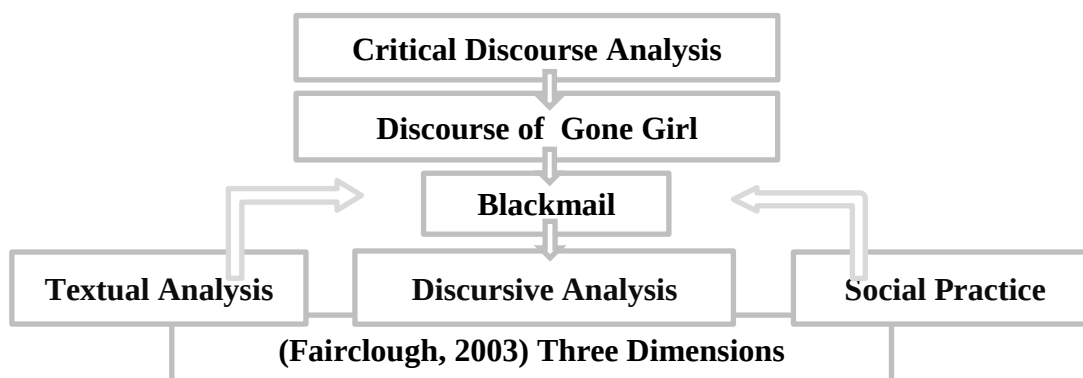


Figure 1. Fairclough's three dimensional model of CDA uses as a primary analytical framework for the blackmail in *Gone Girl*.

This approach aims to investigate the issue of blackmail in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* text. Fairclough's three analytical dimensions are applied to analyze the concept of blackmail:

1. Textual analysis highlights on the linguistic structures that are used in the novel to express power, deception, control and struggle. Also, these features include modality vocabulary, pronouns, grammar and cohesion.

2. Discursive practice emphasizes on the procedures of creating meanings and how they reveal the personal ideologies that are demonstrated in the



novel. However, it intends to explain how the text of blackmail is produced and distributed in the novel.

3. Social practice focuses on how the discourse of blackmail supports and reflects the broader social and ideological aspects of the modern society. By applying these three dimensions in logical manner to the extracts of blackmail, the analysis provides more comprehensive understanding of how language shapes and depicts personal relations. Therefore, it highlights how the social and ideological processes are affected by the language and text of the novel. The CDA model is more useful for such literary work which demonstrates how the language in literary discourse discloses and develops social and power relations.

Procedures

This research consists of accurate and arranged list of procedures to explore and analyze two extracts of blackmail in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*. These procedures are as follows:

1. Introducing the theoretical framework of analysis and its main concepts such as discourse, ideology and power.
2. Selecting Fairclough's three-dimensional model as an instrument of analysis which contains of text, discourse and social practices.
3. Defining the concept of blackmail and its main types.
4. Determining the original copy of Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* novel (2012).
5. Reading the text repeatedly to fully understand the main events of the novel such as characters, themes, settings.
6. Identifying two extracts of blackmail in the novel as data collection.

Extract No.1. The Fake Diary and Antifreeze Poisoning:

Policeman: "She writes here that the drinks were impossibly sweet and describes what she thinks is an allergic reaction: My heart was racing, my tongue was slugged, stuck to the bottom of my mouth... My fingernails were light blue... My lips were blue. ...

'The diary isn't a pretty picture of you, Nick,' she continued... 'Abuse—you pushed her around. Stress—you were quick to anger. Sexual relations that bordered on rape. She was very frightened of you at the end there... She says she wanted [the gun] because she was afraid of you. Here's her last entry: This man might kill me.'" (Flynn, 2012, p. 378).

This excerpt illustrates how the textual creation of Amy Dunne's fake diary serves as a sophisticated act of language manipulation and coercion. According to Fairclough's first dimension, it sheds light on the linguistic features such as vocabulary, modality and pronouns etc. This extract employs highly emotional language centered on linguistic choices that convey anxiety, threat, and victimhood e.g. "my heart was racing, my



fingernails were light blue, this man might kill me". Such type of statements reflect Amy's creative manipulation to represent herself as the harmed female victim and Nick as the violent husband. The use of modality "might" produces uncertainty while maintaining a perception of integrity which linguistically enhances the credibility of her discourses. However, the syntactic structures of the diaries are clear and direct which reflect the linguistic style and promoting contact with the intended audience such as the police, the media and the public. Amy's use of deixis like "this man, my husband" portrays Nick as a distant and reduced whose identity is mediated by her perspective. The diary's literary coherence has achieved through sequential structure and uniform pronouns that masks its artificial nature and every lexical selection functions as a rhetorical instrument. Moreover, at this stage, language serves as an instrument of exploitation and coercion where the written words perform the illocutionary actions of accusation and punishment. Amy uses emotional and logical modality to construct a plausible narrative victim that linguistically situates Nick as a potential threat before the occurrence of any crime. Fairclough's textual analysis clarifies how Flynn employs ideological manipulation within the complexities of syntax and vocabulary that has created a language of violent femininity that functions as blackmail through narrative fabrication.

At discursive stage, the production, distribution, and interpretation of texts within particular institutional and intertextual settings are the main topics of Fairclough's (2003) discursive level. Amy's fabricated diary is a well crafted discursive object, created with the specific purpose of diffusion and analysis by legal and media entities. The diary serves not as a private record but as a performative account. It prepares its audience and strategically shapes interpretative contexts beforehand. Amy employs intertextual borrowing by referencing well-known cultural narratives: the battered wife, the powerless woman and the love betrayal that prevail in modern criminal and media discussions. She guarantees that institutional interpreters like reporters and police officers who will imitate her framing without question by connecting her language creation with these traditional narratives. Amy's diary functions as a literary instrument which achieves control over the interpretative process of legal blackmail. The diary functions as both a declaration and proof, enabling Amy to surpass personal dialogue and expand power structures. At this dimension, blackmail is facilitated by textual creation and interpretation. Amy hasn't only controlled on the content but also its reception, converting speech into a tool for social exploitation.



At social practice, Fairclough's concept implies the connection of linguistic and discursive characteristics to broader ideological and sociocultural dynamics. The fabricated diary segment of *Gone Girl* examines and rejects the societal fabrication of gendered manipulation, the economic development of feminine suffering, and the exploitation of media perspectives. Amy's tendency to manipulate the narrative of domestic violence reveals that patriarchal structures naturally promote her deception. She depends on the social belief that women are trustworthy narrators of pain while men are often viewed as potential killers. This ideological foundation enables her fabricated text to serve as reliable proof that clarify the interdependent link between speech, gender ideology, and social belief.

Additionally, Amy's discourse of blackmail creates more general concerns about modern society. Her diary represents both personal story and strategic device within a media and society that exploits female suffering for entertainment. Amy's language exploits patriarchal beliefs and institutions to display dominance over her husband. Amy's strength emerges from adopting patriarchal techniques of dominance, deception, and control. Consequently, Fairclough's third dimension describes blackmail not as an individual act but as a social practice that is embedded in ideological tensions which is related to gender, truth, and representation. In *Gone Girl*, the issue of blackmail reflects the social and power dynamics.

Extract No 2. Nick's Emotional Submission:

Nick: "I wanted to kill her... but we weren't alone, we were in front of cameras... The cameras were blasting us... So I did the right thing, I held her to me and howled her name right back: 'Amy! My God! My God!... my arms wrapped tight around her'". (Flynn, 2012, p. 408).

According to the textual dimension, this extract creates a strong contrast between the words used to describe violence and performance. As stated by Nick e.g. "I wanted to kill her, I did the right thing, I held her to me and howled her name, such type of statements reflects an aggressive conjunction that indicates restriction when used between clauses. Also, the textual analysis reveals how evaluative lexis and modality contribute to the construction of social meaning. Moreover, the phrase of "did the right thing" conveys attraction to the level of an ethical obligation. However, the repetition of phrases "my God, my God", indicate an emotive punctuation and the brief phrases reflect the concept of manipulation by making the speaker seem authentic while really implying their approval.

Analyzing Nick's conduct through a discursive lens reveals how controlling relationships maintain dominant narratives through their public performances. By "howling" in front of the cameras, he turns an act of forced conversation and a public display of emotion into something he has not intended it to be. As part of a controlled story about marriage and separation, Nick's forced love becomes part of the language exchange that Fairclough emphasizes at the discursive level. Instead of being entirely original, his speaking actions are a direct result of Amy's discursive narrative. Nick interprets Amy instead of himself, bringing together production and interpretation. Discursive activity exposes blackmail as dialogic punishment. Nick's acceptance reveals how media ideology and control shape male identity on a social level.

According to Fairclough's social practice model, Nick's forced speech is part of larger frameworks that pertain to public morality and gender performance. In her criticism, Flynn takes aim at the gender norm that women should dictate the emotional narrative and males should be emotionally transparent. By making these extracted claims, Nick exposes the ideological use of language. By repeating the oppressive system, Nick's speech becomes a social inference that is in line with Fairclough's notion that language generates domination. In *Gone Girl*, control is achieved not through violence but through speech and Nick's abandonment contributes to a process of linguistic, emotional, and social blackmail.

Results

This study attempts to examine and analyze two extracts of blackmail in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* by applying Fairclough's three dimensional model of analysis. The research concluded the following results:

First, *Gone Girl* is one of the famous American novels that is written by Gillian Flynn in 2012 which it sheds light on the highly using of linguistic features by Amy. Second, at discursive level, Flynn extends the use of various discursive events to produce and distribute the text of blackmail in the novel. Third, at social dimension, the novel provides wide image about the social relations, ideologies and power dynamics.

Table (1)

Extract No	Who (Perpetrator)	Whose to (Target)	Type of blackmail	Key Scene
1	Amy	Nick	Legal & Emotional	Amy's fake diary used to frame Nick as killer.



2	Nick	Amy	Beneficial & Emotional	Nick's affection under Amy's control to survive his life.
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Discussion

The study reveals the highly using of linguistic and discursive instruments that Amy and Nick apply to demonstrate the concept of blackmail in Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl*. The findings show that both Amy and Nick employ the deceptive and manipulative techniques to represent the elements of power and control identity by using social and ideological domains such as media, police, fake diaries and fabricated legal documentations. In addition, the findings depicts the little and lack use of linguistic strategies by Nick to construct the element of blackmail in the novel. Nick's language reveals his weak and hesitant personality that depends on the emotional and passionate narratives to represent the concept of blackmail against Amy. This diagram also consists of five columns where: the first specifies the extract number of blackmail ,the second comprises the person who uses the element of blackmail in the novel, the third contains the person who is impacted by the blackmailer (the target) , the fourth clarifies the type of blackmail that has been used during the novel's events and finally the fifth one refers to the scene or the original event that related to the blackmail.

Blackmail is presented in *Gone Girl* not only as an individual act of coercion but also as a discursive process through which identity, power, and ideology are linguistically discussed. This is shown by the findings that have been collected from the two extracts that were conducted for analysis. The use of Fairclough's (2003) three-dimensional model sheds light on the manner in which Amy and Nick function as characters that not only contrast with one another, but also complement one another inside a single framework of manipulative discourse.

Conclusion

Through Fairclough's textual analysis, Amy's language characterized by its accuracy, emotional imitation, and narrative consistency. Using emotive language (such as "my heart was racing" and "this man might kill me") and modal verbs (such as "might" and "would"), she maintains authorial control while also faking threats in her diary entries and fake admissions. Emotional speech is transformed into a controlling device as a result of this linguistic deception. Ideology and language form are inseparable as shown by Amy's manipulation of modality and assessment which results in the construction of a plausible victim identity. Linguistic control, emotional intensity, and narrative



authorship are the three characteristics that define Amy's blackmail on the level of the text. She applies modal verbs, sensory imagery, and first-person narrative to establish an authoritative language of victimization that is capable of convincing institutional readers.

Amy's and Nick's use of blackmail at the discursive practice appears to be different from one another in terms of their connection to production and interpretation. Blackmailing Amy is a purposeful and systemic kind of violence. The diary, the deceptive pregnancy evidence, and the rape narrative are all examples of texts that she creates that predict the reading practices of entities. Her speech is intended to be distributed across the many interdiscursive systems, including the police, the media, and the general people themselves. Consequently, Amy can transform her personal revenge into a cohesive discourse of power, ensuring that her story emerges as the most persuasive interpretation of the facts. She demonstrates Fairclough's idea of interdiscursivity to the fullest extent possible by integrating several genres such as home admission, medical reports, and police statements in order to produce a hybrid text that ensures institutional legitimacy.

At social practice, the distinction between Amy and Nick's use of blackmail reflects larger ideological systems about gender and power. Amy's manipulations have been established on her comprehension of the ways in which patriarchal society gives the narrative of female suffering an advantaged position. Her constructed victimization emphasizes how social principles are maintained by language and can be modified to perpetuate power relations in different ways. Amy's blackmail is systemic. She manipulates not just people but also the ideological structure that determines perception and judgment. She conducts this by using a variety of strategies.

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