Discursive Positioning of Intimate Partners: A Structural-Relational Approach to Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

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Research Article

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Abstract

Purpose: This study is about the discursive positioning of intimate partners: A structural-relational approach to intimate partner violence. The study attempts to uncover the story lines of the IPV narratives, the social force of the discursive acts of the narratives, the enacted positions, and the (de) legitimization of rights and duties of the positions of the referents in the narratives.

Method: the study adopts the random sampling method in which two IPV narrative were randomly selected from one pseudo named male and female victims. The narratives were in the form of documented transcripts which is in line with Harre and Van lagenhoove (1999) accounting positioning that allows a retrospect study of social actors positioning of this kind. The study also adopted the Halliday's transitivity process to substantiate the positioning works in the narrative and the mechanism with which these acts are tied to the social structure.

Results: The findings of the study revealed that the declarations of the narratives indicates the evaluative and normative underlying judgment on the deontic powers to say and do something in the moral space of intimate partner relations.

Conclusion: a socio-constructionist study of this nature reveals the relationship between the narrative referents point of view about actions, point of actions and line of life as regards the moralities of social behaviour in the moral space of intimate partner relationship and how it triggers tendencies for IPV.

Introduction

Intimate partner violence, henceforth (IPV), is a social issue widely studied by scholars in the behavioral sciences because of its prevalence and its implicit use for coercion, control and maintenance of power among intimate partners (Deshong, 2010). Benebo, Schumann, & Vaezghasem (2018) reveal that "IPV has also drawn attention of researchers because of the challenge it poses to public health and safety of life of the abused, most especially the female partner" (p.3). Although, there have been several researches on IPV, Orr (2007) believes that an adequate research on IPV must include a study of the socio-psychological aspects of IPV which include the intentions, thinking and attitude of social actors toward the act. The study of the phenomenon of IPV from the discursive positioning point of view provides the framework that unravels intentions and attitudes of the actors/referents in the discursive declarations of IPV narratives based on the understanding that discursive declarations reveal certain sense of normative and evaluative judgments guiding actions of social actors within the moral space of intimate relationship. The normative judgments point out the underlying assumptions of deontic powers of rights, duties, entitlements and personality display of legitimacy and moral acceptability of behaviour while evaluative judgments point to the judgment about the fulfillment of moral rights and duties assumed by the speaker or assigned to others. The socio-constructionists believe that man is socio-culturally constrained to perceive realities in a certain normative sense in terms of what is the morally acceptable ways of doing and saying things. Therefore, the causes of psychological phenomena such as

frustrations, hostility, aggression, and possibly violence can be likened to a case of a mismatch between normative and evaluative perceptions or interpretations of moralities or legitimacy of doings and sayings reflected in the deontic declarations. This implies that a clear understanding of what rights and duties are claimed, assigned, resisted and negotiated by intimate partners can help unravel the cause of the intimate partner violence as a case in point of the positioning works of intimate partners. Harre (2010) reveals that humans and linguistic declarations constitute a most effective and appropriate referential grid for explaining the meaning-making nuances or affordances of every day human endeavors. Hamsphere 1965 study (as cited in Harre, 2010) highlights the need to study human behaviour from linguistic declarations or personal life stories by reiterating that:

human's have agentive capacities to initiate change, humans control the manner and goal of their behaviour, humans are aware of things other than themselves, humans are aware or conscious of their awareness of things around them, and can express such awareness linguistically in narratives.(p.55).

It is believed that any linguistic declarations can activate certain distribution of rights and duties and judgments about the legitimacy, successfulness of adopted rights and assigned duties to say or do something within a moral space or story line. This underscores the importance of what Harre(2010) called "science of moralities" in studying human behaviour. The word "moral" is synonymous to "moral normativity" which embodies moral rights, duties and judgments about what is right or wrong in sayings and doings of humans in a moral space. Bronkman (cited in Harre, 2010) argues for the use of moral normativity as an adequate referential grid or parameter for the study of socio-psychological phenomena such as attitudes, thinking, reasoning, agency and personality dispositions to human events. Harre (2010) identified four (4) mediating concepts that will help in understanding how human behaviors are shaped by the nuances of moralities. These are; deontic power, moral orders, strategic fields (story lines) and positions. Harre (2010) reveals that Searle's deontic powers consist of rights, duties, obligations, requirements, permissions, authorizations, entitlements, and so on. Linguistic declarations or deontic speech acts can serve as platform from which social structure or moral order of social behaviour is discerned. This is in tandem with the claim in Austin's speech act that words are resources for doing or saying things rather than representing things, thus sufficing to say that deontic powers are created by specific illocutionary speech acts called "declarations". For instance, the declaration "this house is mine" suggest "a status function" that implicates certain sets of rights and duties for speaker and others. The speaker's rights include right to live in the house, furnish or decorate it as he or she wants as well as duties of paying the mortgage fee or clearing it. At the same time, the declaration implicates certain allocation of deontic powers to other peoples such as; visitors can only stay overnight on the permission or invitation of the owner and they have no right to take anything away from the house except on the permission or consent of the owner. In recent times, scholarship in the social sciences have focused on establishing the relation between point of view, point of action and line of life and also the link between agency and structure in the social realm. Such scholarly efforts are geared towards to revealing humans as powerful agents of social change and how the social structure or moral order shapes the way and manner humans go about exhibiting their agentive capacities of (re)creating social realities. Harre (2010) expresses the opinion that in the event that linguistic declarations precedes the human mind or thinking,

it becomes imperative that a student of the mind focuses on discerning the properties of the human mind from the properties of linguistic declarations or speech acts. This is in line with the foundational principles of socio-constructionism that the properties of the human mind can be inferred from the properties of linguistic declarations and that mature speakers of a language can shape the mind of younger speakers through linguistic declarations in a process called indoctrination. For Harre (2010), humans are one of the basic constituents of the social universe because they are the only specie that shows intentionality and acts in non casual way. Harre (2010) views on social psychology are predicated on the assumptions that:

psychological phenomena are discernible from linguistic declarations, the affordances of individual thinking patterns or meaning-making systems are realizable in interpersonal discursive acts and the production of psychological phenomena such as attitudes, opinion, emotions, decisions, and personality display depends on social actors discursive skills, the relative moral standing in the community and the story lines that unfold (p.57).

Harre (2010) believes that:

Human behaviors can be understood clearly when emphasize is placed on understanding the intent or meanings behind an individual's actions. These intents of action are drawn from the thought systems of humans and are realized linguistically in words in the form of the performance of social tasks like command, reprimand, congratulations, encouragement and interpersonal factual reports (p.65).

Contrary to the positivist psychologist view that human behavior is influenced environmentally, Harre scholarly idea agrees with the anthropomorphic perspectives of man that he has the capacity to be actively involved in the creation of world realities around him and in doing so, exhibit the trait of being a plan- making and self-monitoring agent. Therefore, the positioning of intimate partners in IPV narratives or personal stories of their life experience are shaped by moral constraints from moral space of intimate and family relationships, socio-cultural and religious norms and the positioning of the social actors which has the capacity of creating moral orders of social behavior and responses to realities. A study of this kind will help in understanding the underlying orientations or motives behind the actions of the partners, whether it is oriented towards defensive mechanism, coercion and control and preservation of public social value. This study adopts a structural-relational approach to the study of IPV in agreement with Warren & Moghaddam (2018) opinion that the normative systems regulate human behaviour in social interaction and that speech acts have the capacity of producing versions of social realities in different context of use. In other to reveal the gender driven motive behind IPV, this study looks at how men and women negotiate agency in terms of adoption of rights and duties to say or do something and the evaluative judgments about the successful exercise or fulfillment of adopted or assigned rights and duties in the competing discourse of victimization, hegemonic masculinity and common understandings of domestic violence (Durfee, 2011). The study is also an attempt to deconstruct the unequal distribution of rights and duties to public performances within a moral space. Owing to the importance of language to socio-cultural understandings and in the raising of awareness, the need for this study is strongly

justified on the ground that it seeks to linguistically address how discursive positioning works of referents in IPV narratives foreground gender- specific violence acts as a result of the understanding of the social actors about what social behavior is permissible within the moral space of public performance. In agreement with Towns and Adams (2018) postulation, this study will in turn present to the victims, human rights advocates and others, the linguistic and socio-cultural resources that will facilitate mobilization of actions aimed at achieving socio-cultural and political change.

Statement of Problem

Despite the increase in the severity and perpetuation of IPV, adequate attention has not been giving to the study of the underlying motivations or intents behind the acts. The discursive positioning works of social actors in linguistic declarations uncovers how the social actor's interpretations of what moral rights and duties they can legitimately claim and how their evaluation of failure or success in the discharge of moral rights and duties shape their norms of behaviour in the moral space of intimate relationship. Positioning theory becomes relevant for this study because its tenets synchronizes with the tenets of micro sociologies which points out that social actors are actively involved in the (re)creation of social realities and that linguistic declarations can constitute a platform for the realizations of various forms of personhood based on the discursive intent and understanding of the permissible deontic powers in the moral space of human behavior. Social actors locate themselves and others in a specific way in discourse. Therefore, any location of selves and others in a discourse implicates an act of (de)legitimization of actions carried out by the social actors. The legitimization of actions also occurs by the attribution of rights and duties to actors in a specific context while de-legitimization of actions occurs when such rights and duties are withheld in a specific context. Also, actors can also be (de)legitimized when positioned as having successfully or unsuccessfully carried out an assigned rights or duties. Therefore, a mismatch between the normative judgments on legitimate claim of deontic powers to act or say something or evaluative judgments on others legitimate claim of deontic power to act or something directly translates to misunderstanding on the interpretations of legitimate claim to deontic powers to say or do something with regards to committing an act of intimate partner violence.

Aims of the Study

The aims of the study are focused on identifying;

1. What are the story lines of the IPV narratives
2. What social force of the discursive acts was used to portray the storylines of the IPV narratives?
3. What are the narrative positions of the narrative referents?
4. How do the narrative positions (de)legitimate the rights and duties of gender performances of the IPV narratives?

Theoretical Framework

Positioning theory was originally developed from poststructuralist gender studies done by Hallway(1984) and was adopted as a relational approach to the study of social interaction and other social issues like gender, identity, and race by Davies and Harre (1990) and has been further developed and has undergone several refinements. This study subscribes to the tenets of positioning triangle because of its effectiveness in revealing how mismatch in the interpretations of legitimate claim to deontic powers of acting and the subsequent unequal distribution in deontic power can trigger acts of violence or conflicts among intimate partners. It is believed that social interaction is guided by elements of morality in assessing the fulfillment of expected norms of behavior within a social context (Lawson, 2016). People's various positioning works instantiate different alignment with interest, values, beliefs and groups. Ivanic (as cited in Lawson, 2016) believes that tension or conflicts may be instantiated between social actors when there is mismatch in what people understand or beliefs to be their legitimate deontic power to act or say something within a moral space (normative judgments) and the understanding of what deontic powers others have to say or do something in a moral space (evaluative judgments).

Review Of Related Literatures

Gender Movements and Intimate Partner Violence Narratives

Jones (2004) affirms scholarship in human subjectivities have adopted different approaches such as the liberal humanistic approach which emphasizes individual freedom of actions, the poststructuralist which emphasize socially constrained human actions, the feminist approach which emphasize gender constrained subjectivities and the gendered-neutral which emphasize de-gendering subjectivities. Abrams (2016) reveals the feminist stance that the IPV of men is likely to have the underlying intention to coerce and control their female partner while women indulge in IPV to resist acts of violence and intimidation from male partners. Alger (2016) opines that the IPV narratives of female narrators attempts to showcase women as the victimized and damaged, resilient, protective,vengeful and seeking for reprisal while the male IPV narratives tries to showcase men as endurers of pain, chivalristic, patient managers of crazy women and prioritizing parenthood as against husband hood and self-critical of physical competence.

Gendered Assumptions, Social Structure and IPV

Orr (2007) stressed that gender is important in the study of IPV because it is one of the basic organizing principles for relationships, institutions, culture and for the distribution of resources in the society. Orr (2007) also notes that these norms of behavioral expectations does not only create gender differences but assign unequal values and privileges to male and female humans. More so, gendered analyses of IPV help in establishing a contextualized or nuanced understanding of the dynamism, processes and meanings of domestic violence as a purposeful pattern of behavior. Venalainen (2019) reveals that some of underlying motivations for male partner's inactions in IPV situation is to avert shame. Venalainen (2019) also reveal that the positioning of male partners in IPV narratives reveal certain ideological positioning of men as having the inclination to act based on the gendered assumption that they have access to right of size and strength advantage over women and that women are likely to commit

psychological violence than physical violence because they are aware of their disadvantaged physical strength position and fear of losing out. Edin and Nilsson (as cited in Venalainen, 2019) also reveals that male partner positioning in IPV situations is also guided by the common belief that any man who responds with violence to a woman breaks the norm of honorable masculinity and accordingly loses his identity as a real man or ability of impulse control. Ravin (as cited in Venalainen, 2019) reveals that the ideals of hegemonic masculinity guide the subject positions that men take up in IPV situations which include positions of not having the confidence to talk about their experiences for fear of societal rejections, psychological abuse or denigration of any kind, and finally any challenge to their masculinity and societal perception that men are supposed to be self reliant, stoic and in-charge in the family.

Discursive Positioning and Gender Violence in IPV

Ofreneo and Montiel (2010) study how the distribution of rights and duties among same-sex intimate partners breeds violence. The finding of the study reveals that violence ensued only when the initiator of the violence claimed the position of innocence and assigned the position of guilt to the receiver of the violence. Paivinen (2016) examines gendered positioning in therapeutic conversations or practices, especially as it concerns IPV consultation. In adopting positioning theory as its theoretical model, the study reveal that practitioners and their clients draw from predominant cultural discourses in constructing gender in the therapeutic conversations and there is an unequal distribution of local moral order of rights and duties. Jarnkist (2018) studies how parents exposed to IPV position themselves in relation to child care unit social services in Sweden on one hand and to their partners on the other hand with a view to unraveling how their positioning works reveal their strategies of response to intervention organizations. The results of the study reveal that their response strategies largely influence their positioning work in relation to the organization and their partners and that the strategies of interface with intervention organization changes with change in positioning works. Aragbuwa (2021) undertakes a critical discourse analysis of the narratives of victims of IPV in Stella Dimoko's domestic violence dairy. The study adopts Van Dijk's ideological square framework in analyzing the discursive strategies in the collection of stories. The finding of the study reveal that the victims creates polarization structures and cognition of "we in-group" as the victims and the dominated group and the "them out-group" as the perpetrators and the dominant group, thus showcasing the diary as a veritable resource for resistance discourse. Adjei (2015) examines how cultural and familial value orientations influence the agency and positioning of abused women using positioning theory frameworks. The findings of the study reveal that women's agency, identity and entrapment in abusive relationship are largely influenced by social affiliation, familial and cultural value orientation.

Sources Of Data And Methodology

This is a qualitative study that involves a purposive, randomly selected interview script samples of narratives of IPV experience from one pseudo named female and male victims, displayed on the website of Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria(DVRCV). The effectiveness of the use of documented transcripts of interview of IPV victims is further validated in Harre and Van Langenhooove (1999) claim

that accounting positioning gives the leeway for the use of talk about talk such as interview transcripts as a retrospect source of data in accounting for positioning of social actors in lived stories of this nature. The analyses of the data was guided by the research objectives which highlighted the social force of the discursive acts (the intent of the declarations of the narrator), the story lines of the narratives (the going-on/purpose/goal of the declarations), the adopted and assigned position of the narrators and referents in the declarations and finally the rights and duties associated with the adopted or assigned positions and the judgments about what rights and duties are appropriate for each referents in the various storylines of intimate partner violence narratives.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The result of the analysis will be analyzed and discussed based on the aims of study.

Katherine's Narrative

Story Line 1: The declarations in line 1 is about the storyline of physical assault.

Social Force of the Discursive Acts- the discursive intents of the declaration in line 1, is an accusation against the male partner's use of right physical size advantage to enforce discipline and the flagrant disregard of her right to human self dignity. The intent in lines 2 and 3 is also an accusation against the male partner's use of right of familial authority to enforce control and infringe on her right to freedom of association. The discursive intents in lines 4 and 5 is an accusation against the male partner's use of right of verbal authority as the decision maker and right to command obedience from other family members which legitimates him to use verbal means of control such as blame shifting and threat to instill fear, control and discipline.

Narrative Positions- in line 1, the male partner is positioned as the victimizer/ assaulter in the story line of physical assault. This is further substantiated by the narrative realizations of the male referent in the Actor- agent position of the material process of slap, kick, hit, push, and throw things at while the female partner is positioned as the victimized/assaulted , as substantiated by the realizations of the female referent in the goal-sufferer position. Lines 2 and 3 show the male referent as the position of the controller/control freak as substantiated by the male referent occupying the Sayer slot of the verbal process of telling the female partner who to associate with and also the actor/agent slot on the material process of act of isolating the female referent (goal) of the material process of act of isolation. Lines 4 and 5 indicate that male referent adopts the blamer and the issuer of verbal threat position. This is further substantiated by the male referent appearance in the Sayer slot of the verbal process of blaming and issuance of verbal threat while the female referent takes up the blamed and the threatened position as buttressed by her occupation of the goal position of the verbal process.

(De) Legitimization of Adopted Rights and Assigned Duties

In line 1, in story line of the physical assault, the actions of the male referents is delegitimized for his use of the right of physical size advantage as a means of coercion and control, to the neglect of the

fulfillment of his moral duty to protect her right of human self dignity. In lines 2 and 3, which has the story line of restriction to the freedom of association, the male referent controlling behavior is delegitimized for his normative judgment that he has legitimate right to issue instruction, command respect and make decision in the family and that every other members of the family are obligated to fulfill the moral duty of obedience to him as appropriated in the moral space of familial authority. The female referent makes the evaluative judgments that in carrying out his right to familial authority, the male partner failed in civil duty to respect her civil right of freedom of association. In lines 4 and 5, which has the story line of verbal attack/threat, the male referents use normative claim to right of verbal control through blame shifting and threat was delegitimized because it infringes on the female partner's right to innocence until proven guilty, and right to security of life.

Story Line 2: The deontic declarations in lines 6, 7, 8, and 9 falls under a single story line of my experience during the endurance/entrapment period.

Social Force of the Discursive Acts: The underlying intent of the declarations in line 6, 7, 8, and 9 is an attempt by the female partner to win the sympathy and positive appraisal of the audience.

Narrative Positions: In line 6,7, 8, and 9, the female partner takes up the agentive position as the patient pacifist/endurer and hider of the IPV situation and also takes up the non-agentive position as the bearer of blame, an emotional and low-self esteemed person, while also being positioned as the target of the agentive action of isolation of the male partner. The male partner is positioned as capable of doing harm if not appeased as reflected in the appearance of the male referent in the client slot of the transitivity material process of "coping with" where the female referent appear as the Actor making material effort to deal successfully with the actions of the male partner.

(De) Legitimization of Adopted Rights and Assigned Duties

In line 6, the female partner legitimized her action by interpreting her agentive effort of coping or enduring the male partner's behavior as a fulfillment of moral duty of an ideal woman to patiently bear the ill behavior of her male partner and do all to please him (Client) and delegitimizes the normative claim of male partners to the right family authority and disciplinarian which legitimizes his use of forceful physical means. In line 7, she legitimizes the rationale or moral expectations that demand that women fulfill her duty as submissive wives to be unwilling to challenge her male partner under the normative judgment that is right that her male partner legitimate right to verbal authority and command of unalloyed obedience. In line 8, the declarations legitimize the female partner right to be emotionally involved in situations without any negative public scrutiny. This right of emotional expression can be used as a resource for commanding as an emotional blackmail against the man. In line 9, in her normative judgment, she delegitimizes her male partner's exercise of rights of family authority against her right to freedom of association or movement and she makes the evaluative judgment that he has failed to fulfill the duty to honor her right of freedom of association.

Story Line 3: Lines 10-11 deal with the Story line of how I ran out of patience of enduring abuse

Social Force of the Discursive Act: The declarations in line 10 and 11 foreground the female partner's intent to justify her loss of patience and subsequent proactive response as against her passive response in the previous story line of enduring/managing the male partner's misbehavior.

Narrative Positions- the female referent takes up the position of the defender/protector of children against domestic violence and assumes that her subsequent agentive position of reading up literatures for self development and contacting of external advisory body where all a consequence of acting to stand up against the violent aggression of her male partner (the violent/Aggressor) . That is why in the material transitivity processes of line 10 and 11, the male referent appeared in the actor/agent slot of the material processes of violence and kill, foregrounding him as the aggressor while the female referent appear in the actor/agent slot of the material processes of contacting friends and reading literatures, foregrounding her as non-violent and passive agent. She also positions the external contacts as beneficial to her realizing self-realization as witnessed in her realization in the Senser slot of the mental process of realizing and seeing the true nature of reality.

(De) Legitimization of Adopted Rights and Assigned Duties

In line 10, in her normative judgment, the female partner delegitimizes the male partner's exercise of family authority that legitimates his right to enforce discipline at home using physical means and makes an evaluative judgment that he fails to fulfill the parental duty to protect the children against violence. Because of her partner's failure to fulfill his duty as a parent, she takes up the legitimate right and duty to defend her children from violence. In line 11, in her normative judgment, she legitimizes her action as an exercise of right to seek for external advice or counsel in the event of domestic violence while also making the evaluative judgment that legitimizes the action of the external consultancies as a fulfillment of moral duty of providing services that will benefit her.

Story Line 4: the story line in line 12, 13 and 14 is on How I Benefitted from external support/Counseling unit.

Social Force of Discursive Acts- it is a positive commendation of the services or activities of external support bodies like Domestic violence center and family court in a bid to encourage people to subscribe to or patronize their services.

Narrative Positions- In line 12, the services of the domestic violence center women were positioned as helpful and the female referent as the beneficiary of their helpful services. This explains why the women in domestic violence center were positioned as Actors/Agents and the female referents as Client/Beneficiary in the material process of "Help". In line 13, the family court was positioned as sensitive and supportive body on the ground that they correctly appraised the conditions of the female referent as a difficult or hellish situation and their services were highly commended as responsible for a turning point in her life in that they did not only take a passive step but also took agentive/Proactive step by ordering the male referents to restrain from having contact with the children. Likewise in line 14, friends and family members were positioned as wonderful people to commend how beneficial their

services are to her. This explains why they are attributed with the attribute of “wonderful people” in the attributive process.

(De) Legitimization of Adopted Rights and Assigned Duties

In line 12, the female referent legitimizes the services of the women of domestic violence centre based on the evaluative judgment that they have fulfilled the duty of providing helpful support to her as a client recovery support. Also, in line 13, the female referent legitimizes the services of the family court based on the evaluative judgment that they have fulfilled the expected duty of providing justice by ordering the male partner to restrain from contacting the children. This is because in her normative judgment, his right of parental access to the children ceases the moment he turned violent to the children and therefore, the judgment of the court for her is right. In line 14, in her evaluative judgment, the female referents adjudged her friends and family to have fulfilled expected duty of providing support and counsel.

Story Line 5: line 14, 15, 16 and 17, is located within the story line of “My advice to abused women”

Social Force of the Discursive Acts: reveals that the declarations under the story line of “my advice to abused women” intends to provide encouraging or helpful advice to other abused women.

Narrative Positions: In line 14, the female referent positions herself as a (willing helper) and positions others as (capable decision maker). This is further substantiated by the appearance of the female referent in the Actor/Agent slot of the material process of “helping” and appearance of other referents in the Actor/Agent slot of the material process of “doing”. In line 15, the female referent position other referents as (lacking the capacity) to change the male partner and (innocent) of any offense which warrants her right to exit the abusive relationship. In line 16, the female referent positions external support group like domestic violence centre and other contact support group as “Expert” in the provision of recovery services that benefits victims of domestic violence.

(De) Legitimization of Adopted Rights and Assigned Duties

In her evaluative judgment in line 14, the female partner legitimizes her behavior as a willingness to fulfill the expected duty of providing help or solidarity support to other women. In line, she makes the normative judgment that legitimizes women’s exercise of right to make decision affecting their life. In spite the allegiance of love, they are not bounded to remain in an abusive relationship where the male partner is assumed to have failed to fulfill his duty of protecting the female partner from violence and the fact that she is not guilty committing offense that may have triggered violence from her partner. In her evaluative judgment in line 16, she legitimizes the duty of external people to intervene in the family crises and also the right a woman subjected to domestic abuse has to reach out for external intervention from outside group for helpful advice as expert.

DAVID'S NARRATIVE

Story Line : the story line is about my wife’s Ill treatment.

Social Force of the Discursive Acts: indicates the underlying intent of accusing his wife.

Narrative Positions: In line 1, the female partner is positioned as the blamer while the male partner is positioned as the blamed. This explains why the female partner appears in the sayer slot of the verbal process of blaming the male partner (the target) of the blame. In line 2, the female partner is positioned as disrespectful while the male partner is positioned as the disrespected. This is why the female referent is placed as the actor/agent of the material process of belittling the male partner (the goal/sufferer). In line 3, the female partner is positioned as a hot-tempered attacker/aggressor while the male partner is positioned as the sufferer of attack/aggression. Thus explaining why the female partner takes the actor/agent position of the material process of hitting the male partner (Goal/Target) in the circumstances of being angry. The male partner accepts the third other positioning of his partner as an incapable/inactive husband. This is further substantiated by the appearance of the female partner as the actor/agent of the material process of hitting the man (goal) and the male partner's appearances in the senser slot of the mental process of thinking that he deserves the assault from his wife because of her acting as a sayer in verbal process of saying that he does not fit to occupies the actor/agent slot of not acting as a capable husband. The aggression the male partner suffered is also showcased by the appearance of the female partner in the actor/agent slot of the material process of forcing the male partner (the goal) into sex for her (beneficiary) own benefit so that he can occupy the actor/agent slot of the material process of becoming a good husband for her (Client). In line 5, the male partner is positioned as a selfless parent because he appears as the actor/agent in the material process of not leaving the relationship for the sake of the children. In line 6, the male partner is positioned as an informant and his mother as the confidante. This explains why the male partner occupies the sayer slot of the verbal process of telling his secret to his mother (the receiver) while the mother appear in the sayer slot of verbal process of querying/probing what he (the male referent) is doing to make her behave such way. This resulted in the male referent occupying the senser slot of the mental process of feeling abandoned. In line 7, the female partner is positioned as the proposer of the break up while the male partner is positioned as the cause of the break up by everyone. This explains why the female partner appears in the sayer slot of the verbal process of making a verbal proposal of wanting a break up while everyone appears in the sayer slot of the verbal process of saying the male partner is at fault. Line 8, shows the male partner been positioned as a keeper of secret. In line 9 and 10, the male partner is positioned as a responsible parent and unsure of his of his husband capability. This explains why in line 9, the male partner appear as the senser of the mental process knowing that the need of the children is for him to take up the actor/agent role of the material process of being involved in their day-to-day care. In line 11, the male partner positions as unsure of his capacity as a husband which is indicative of why the male referent appears in the senser slot of the mental process of doubting his husband qualities. In line 12, the female partner is positioned by the male partner as an unfaithful partner. Thus explaining why he assumes the senser slot of the mental process of thinking that she acts as the actor/agent of the material process of giving up and leaving the marriage because she is acting in the actor/agent role of the material process of sleeping with other men. In line 13, the female partner is positioned as an inconsiderate/disrespectful partner. This

is substantiated by the appearance of the female partner as the actor/agent of the material process of taking everything from the house without considering the male partner.

(De) Legitimization of Adopted Rights and Assigned Duties:

In line 1, the male partner makes an evaluative judgment that delegitimizes his female partner's action as a failure to fulfill the moral duty of assuming blame for mistakes while in line 2, the male partner makes the evaluative judgment that delegitimizes the female partner's action as a failure of fulfilling the moral duty of a woman to respect her husband. In line 3, the male partner makes the nominative judgment that delegitimizes the female partner's action as an exercise of moral right of physical size advantage and verbal assessment which she does not have normative access to. In line 4, the male partner makes the evaluative judgment that delegitimizes the female partner's action of forcing him to have sex with her as a failure to fulfill the moral duty of respecting his normative right to consensual sex. In line 5, the male partner makes the normative judgment that legitimizes his act of staying put in an abusive relationship based on the recognition of the children's right to parental care and makes the evaluative judgment that legitimizes his act as a fulfillment of the expected moral duty of parents to see to the well being of their children above their personal need. In line 6, he makes the evaluative judgment that delegitimizes his mother's act as a failure in the fulfillment of the moral duty expected from a confidant by an informant not to be critical of the informant and on this note. In line 7, the male partner makes the evaluative judgment that delegitimizes the act of his wife asking out of the marriage, as a failure to honor the moral duty expected of couples to stay committed to their religious marital vow of sticking together through good and bad times and also makes the evaluative judgment that everyone act of putting the blame on him for the breakup is failure of the moral duty of fair hearing before judgment or criticism. In line 8, he makes the normative judgment that legitimizes the counselor's right of access to private information in the moral space of counseling and the evaluative judgment that his act of disclosure of his private information is a fulfillment of his moral duty as the counseled/informant to share private information with the counselor/confidante. In line 9 & 10, the male partner makes the evaluative judgment which legitimizes his reason for staying put in the abusive relationship in order to fulfill the parental moral duty of being sensitive to the need of the children. In line 12, the male partner makes the evaluative judgment that delegitimizes his female partner's act of giving up and leaving her marital home, as a failure to fulfill the marital moral duty of faithfulness to the union. In line 13, he also makes the evaluative that delegitimizes his female partner's act of taking things out of the house as a failure in moral duty to accord him his right as the family authority and decision maker of the house.

Story Line: the story in lines 14-16 is about my how I survived the abusive experience

Social Force of the Discursive Acts: shows an underlying intent to justify his actions

Narrative Positions: In line 14, the male partner positions as a selfless parent which is indicative of why he appears as the senser in the mental process of thinking of the kids more than himself as the only action that mattered to him at the moment. In line 15, the counselor is positioned as (the helper) who acts to help to the male partner (the helped). That explains why the counselor appears as the carrier of good

attribute on the ground that she takes up the actor/agent role of the material process of helping him become a senser of the mental process of knowing the nature of the abusive behavior of former partner in bed. In line 16, the male partner positions himself as (being naïve) in the relationship to justify why he acted in a passive actor/agent role of the material process of living in naivety rather than the expected active agent role of being in control.

(De) Legitimization of Adopted Rights and Assigned Duties: In line 14, the male referent makes the normative judgment that legitimizes his action of not exercising the moral right of exiting an abusive relationship based on the evaluative judgment that she is acting to fulfill the parental moral duty looking out for the children's well-being. In line 15, the male referent makes the evaluative judgment that legitimizes the services of the counselor as a fulfillment of the expected moral duty to provide counseling help. In line 16, the male referent makes the normative judgment which exonerates him for his failure to exercise his moral right of family authority and control.

Story Line: the story line in line 17 is about advice to other abused men.

Social Force of the Discursive Acts: the intent of the declarations in line 17 is an advice.

Narrative Positions: the male referent is positioned as a lover of children and not in support of divorce as a means of avoiding domestic abuse. This explains why the male referent occupies the sayer slot of the verbal process of not saying to someone to leave an abusive relationship because of the challenges of abandoning parental moral duty and breach of the moral right of the children to receive parental care. The male referent is also identified in the identifying relational process with the identifier of having the lover of the children as the only positive thing in the relationship.

(De) Legitimization of Adopted Rights and Assigned Duties: the male partner makes the normative judgment that legitimizes her action of not exercising her right to exit an abusive relationship because of the evaluative judgment that delegitimizes exercise of right to exit abusive relationship to the detriment of fulfilling parental moral duty of caring for the children whom he thinks has the moral right to be cared for.

Summary Of Analyses And Conclusion

The analyses reveal that the narrative referents made declarations in their narratives that implicates the gender assumption of deontic powers to say or do something in a moral space of intimate partner relationship, the (de) legitimization of deontic powers to say or do, and the story lines of the declarations that implicate several underlying discursive intents and enactment of narrative positions which point to the underlying adoption of rights, assignment of duty and judgment about the fulfillment of rights and duties and the legitimacy of rights and duties.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest Note: there is no conflict of interest

Appendix

Katherine's story

I lived in a violent marriage for years. I was very naive at first and really didn't know people like him existed.

[1]He-{Actor} would kick me-{Goal/Target}, slap me-{Goal/Target}, push {me}, trip me over, throw things at me, stand on my feet, yell abuse, call me names like 'social cripple', the list goes on and on, but he never punched me. In fact he would say to people that he couldn't stand 'wife bashers'.

[2]He-{Sayer} would tell me-{Target/Receiver} that he didn't want the children to play with so and so children because they were a bad influence. -{Verbiage}

[3]He-{Actor} tried to isolate us-{Goal} from all those who loved us and new people we met would go through character assassinations by him. Life was continuous hell, fear and horror and

[4]he-{Sayer} always blamed the children or me-{Target/Receiver} for his violence-{Verbiage}. Things got a lot worse towards the end.

[5]He-{Sayer} would threaten to run us-{Target/Receiver} all off the road in the car and kill us-{Verbiage}. The violence became a daily occurrence if not several episodes a day.

How I coped-my

[6]Basically I-{Actor} coped by trying to keep him-{Client} happy so he-{Actor} wouldn't do these things to us-{Target/Goal}-{Target/Goal}.

[7]I-{Senser} believed for a long time that it was my fault or the children's-{Phenomenon}.

[8] I-{Actor} cried a lot when he wasn't home-{Circumstance}. I-{Senser} lost all my belief in myself-{Phenomenon}.

[9] I-{Goal/Target} was totally isolated and-{Sayer} spoke to no one about what was happening-{Verbiage}.

I-{Senser} don't think I really did cope-{Phenomenon} except to-{Actor} hide it from the world-{Goal} and from myself-{Goal}.

How the situation changed-

[10]When-{Circumstance} his-{Actor} violence became much worse and was being directed at the children-{Goal} I-{Actor} changed. I-{Actor} began to read about self esteem and positive affirmations.

[11] I-{Actor} contacted a friend I used to know who worked in a Woman's Centre-{Goal} and-{Sayer} speaking to her-{Target} made me-{Senser} realize we were not alone-{Phenomenon}. Finally I-{Senser}

began to see the reality of what was happening-{Phenomenon}. When we left I-{Senser} believed he-{Actor} was going to kill us-{Phenomenon}.

What helped me

[12]The Domestic Violence Center women-{Actor} have helped me {Beneficiary} so very much-{Circumstance}. The support and understanding and sharing of experiences. Counseling and I-{Actor} have done some violence recovery and self confidence courses-{Goal}.

[13] When the Family Court-{Senser} recognized what hell we went through-{Phenomenon} and -{they /Sayer }ordered absolute no contact for him-{Reciever} with my children-{Verbiage}, was a big turning point in my healing.

[14] Good friends and family have been wonderful as well.

What I would say to others- my advice to other abused women

[14] If I-{Actor} could come and help you leave I would but it is you-{Actor} who has to do it.

[15] Leaving permanently is the only thing that will change the situation. You-{Actor} can't make him-{Goal} better no matter how much you love him-{Circumstance}. It is NOT your fault-{Possessor}, it is his-{Possessor}. You-{Carrier} are a wonderful person-{attribute} and deserve so much better.

[16] You are not alone; there are many people-{Senser} who know what you are going through-{Phenomenon}. {You/Actor}Reach out to people-{Goal} and contact support groups like those who own this website-{Goal},

they-{Carrier }are the experts-{Attribute}

[17] {You/Senser}-Most of all believe in yourself and know you are strong-{Phenomenon}.

David's story-my wife's maltreatment

I was a single dad with children and remarried. What an idiot I was. I should have spotted the warning signs.

[1] Whenever anything went wrong, she-{Sayer}'d blame me-{Reciever}. Anyway, it turned into a living nightmare within a year of being married.

[2]She-{Actor} took every opportunity to belittle me-{Goal}.

[3] When in a temper-{Circumstance}, she-{Actor} often hit me-{Goal} but never on the face-{Circumstance}.

{Senser}-I thought I deserved it because I was withdrawn and a bad husband{Phenomenon} – that's what she-{Sayer} kept saying.

[4] She-{Actor} forced me to have sex to become a good husband-{Goal} for her-{Client}.

[5] I-{Actor} couldn't leave-{Goal} because that would have meant leaving my children-{Circumstance}.

[6] I-{Sayer} tried to tell my mother- {Reciever}but what little I told her, then she-{Sayer} said, "What are you doing to make her behave that way?-{Verbiage}" I-{Senser} felt abandoned by everyone except the kids-{Phenomenon}.

[7] After several years my wife-{Sayer} said she was leaving-{Verbiage}. Everyone-{Sayer} said the breakup was my fault-{Verbaige}.

[8] I{Sayer} never told anyone what really happened-{Verbaige}. Years later I-{Sayer} finally had the courage to tell a counselor-{Reciever} that I went to because of depression after I lost my job-{Circumstance}. I had no close friends by then.

How I coped

[09]I-{Senser} knew that my children needed me-{Phenomenon} even though I-{Senser} felt pretty useless-{Phenomenon}. That's the only thing that got me through and eventually made me-{Senser} realise that it was not all my fault-{Phenomenon}.

[10] I-{Actor} had always been involved with their day to day care-{Goal} and that gave me a purpose.

Their love-{Actor} gave me-{Recipient} strength-{Goal}.

[11] {Senser}-But the doubt about my husband qualities still lingers and will probably never go away-{Phenomenon}. I haven't dated since then.

How the situation changed- decision to move on

[12] She-{Actor} gave up on me-{Goal} and left. I-{Senser} think she had been sleeping with other men-{Phenomenon} and-{She/Senser} decided I wasn't worth the trouble any more{Phenomenon}.

[13] She-{Actor} took almost everything from the house-{Goal} but I-{Senser} didn't care at the time. I-{Senser} was just glad it was over-{Phenomenon}. It was the worst time of my life.

What helped me to get stronger

[14]If I-{Senser} didn't have to think of the kids more than myself, I-{Senser} don't know what I would have done-{Phenomenon}. I might not even be here now.

[15]The counselor-{Carrier} was good-{Attribute} because she-{Actor} helped-{Beneficiary}me-{Senser} see that it was abuse-{Phenomenon}. She-{Sayer} used the word 'rape-{Verbiage}' and I={Senser} now know that's what it was like in the bedroom-{Phenomenon}.

[16]It's amazing but I didn't think of it that way before. I-{Actor} was living in a naive cloud-{Circumstance} and had no words to describe my confusion and terror.

What I would say to someone who is being abused-

Apart from 'I understand' I don't know. [17]There are so many confused thoughts especially the nagging feeling that somehow you are the one to blame, the mad person. It's no good{Sayer} saying to someone you have to leave because there are so many other things to consider – like children, money, lawyers, etc. The only positive thing-{Identifier/Value} is the love I have for my kids and them for me-{Identified/Token}.

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