

## THE DISCOURSE OF EXISTENTIALISM: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF FREEDOM, RESPONSIBILITY, AND BAD FAITH IN SARTRE'S *NO EXIT*

### 1. Muhammad Aasim,

PhD Scholar & Lecturer in English Department of English, Kohat University of Science & Technology, [maasim@kust.edu.pk](mailto:maasim@kust.edu.pk)

### 2. Dr. Said Imran,

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kohat University of Science & Technology, [saidimran@kust.edu.pk](mailto:saidimran@kust.edu.pk) (Corresponding author)

### 3. Dr. Syed Sabih Ul Hassan

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kohat University of Science & Technology, [Syed.hassan@kust.edu.pk](mailto:Syed.hassan@kust.edu.pk)

### Abstract

*This research looks at No Exit (1944) by Jean-Paul Sartre from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), especially using the model offered by Norman Fairclough. The analysis includes how language in No Exit existentialistically captures themes of freedom, responsibility, and bad faith, focusing on the relations of power and the social structures on which they are built. All of these existential concepts are vital to Sartre's philosophy, which are framed within the interactions of the three characters Garcin, Inez, and Estelle that are confined in a room and made to face the ramifications of their actions. This study seeks to use CDA to interrogate the ability of the characters' dialogues to mask deeper social and ideological manifestations that underlie the speech acts since language is fundamentally a tool of not only communication but also control and self-deception. This study seeks to understand language and communication in the context of the social relations and power structures that exists around them. The study examines how the dialogues of No Exit reflect the fundamental linguistic and rhetorical properties of speech acts connected with the theme of bad faith while exploring the construct of the power framework within the characters' hierarchical social relations. It analyzes how the character's grapple with issues of liberty and responsibility, using language as their primary means of mediating the conflict. The research analyzes about the dove tailing of the character's language and bad faith self-deception, denial and other phenomena exposing self-ideology. Focusing on discourse, power, and existential philosophy, this study broadens the mechanisms of how Sartre's existential themes are exercised through characters' language. This research helps the reader to better understand No Exit by showing that Sartre's philosophy is not only an idea, but something that is built and sustained through the speech of the characters. Through CDA, it illustrates how language is used as a tool for existential self-deception and power relations in society. This study adds on what other researchers have done on Sartre by uniting existential philosophy with discourse analysis, adding and intersectional sociological and existential perspective of human freedom, responsibility, and identity.*

**Key Terms:** Power dynamics, Self-deception, Identity, Discursive practices, Ideological forces

### 1.1 Introduction

Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit* (1944), one of the key texts of existentialist literature, explores profound human experiences through the psychological and philosophical dilemmas of its characters. The play focuses on three individuals Garcin, Inez, and Estelle who find themselves locked in a room together for eternity, facing the consequences of their actions without the possibility of escape. The confined setting symbolizes not just a physical imprisonment but a deeper, more existential state of being where the characters are confronted with the harsh realities of their own freedom, responsibility, and self-deception. Central to Sartre's philosophy, *No Exit* engages with existentialist themes that are at the heart

of his broader worldview: freedom, responsibility, and bad faith. Sartre presents a world in which individuals are condemned to be free, meaning that they must take responsibility for their actions in a universe that offers no external moral guidelines or meaning. Yet, these existential concepts are intertwined with notions of social relations, guilt, and the influence of others on the self. Although Sartre's exploration of these existential themes in *No Exit* has been widely analyzed within philosophical frameworks, much of the scholarly attention has focused on their abstract, conceptual aspects (Gee, 2014).

Even with freedom, responsibility, and bad faith remaining some of the crucial themes of concern in the play, it is evident how little attention has been given to the role of language in articulating and articulating these concepts. Nevertheless, language transcends from being merely a medium of communication in Sartre's play. It is an important instrument through which the Ideas of existence are expressed, contested, and maintained. In *No Exit*, conversations serve not only as manifestations of characters' internal psychological conditions but as an arena in which social power, self-subjugation, and existential conditions are acted and uttered. This work argues that the analysis of Sartre's *No Exit* conducted within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has the potential to reveal more profound social and ideological structures influencing the characters' dialogues. CDA is an approach which cuts across boundaries of discipline and considers how language used as a social practice is influenced by and also influences relations of power, structures of society, and the agency of people (Fairclough, 1995). It addresses the phenomenon of language use as a means of controlling social practices by showing how one's discourse can account for a dominant one context (Fairclough, 1989).

Similar to the other characters in *No Exit*, Garcin speaks dialogues that act as self-inflicted punishments as well as desperate efforts at existential complexities. The dialogues reveal how identities, self-relations, and actions are constructed through power. *No Exit* brings to light the processes of self-empowerment and self-subjugation that people perform to each power and the nuanced ways in which different styles of speech give rise to identities and alter one's self-view. In *No Exit*, the characters' struggle is existential, but their relationships to each other as well as to power complicate the interactions. Freedom is always a restriction because of the Others who are constantly present to assess their deeds. Contrary to what is conventional, Sartre shows the man to whom everyone is a gaze lends freedom with responsibility. There are no escapes or shelters. The character uses speech to claim and disclaim responsibility, to manipulate and to hide their emotions. For every character, the battle over freedom and responsibility is channeled through their relationships, which, in substance, constitutes an existential conflict at (Wodak, 2001).

The need of the characters to seek approval from one another and aim at controlling each other's views of themselves demonstrate the social aspect of Existentialism. The play reflects on certain themes of self-deception, Sartre's term for bad faith which refers to not acknowledging one's freedom and responsibilities, and these are equally present in their discourses {(Sartre, 1943)}. They all adopt some forms of deceptive self-identity to escape truth of confined existence. Each of them attempts to evade the weight of their freedom and responsibility by constructing false selves or justifying their wrong doings. Inez's degrading

attitude is but a protection against her fear of ethics, Garcin neglects to recognize that his death stemmed from cowardice, and Estelle distracts herself from her guilt through her beauty and craving for validation. Their blame-shifting, excuse-making speech serves as a reminder of their testimonial manipulation that freely delivers them from any recognition of reality which enables them to eliminate direct engagement with their existence. In this particular context, the analysis seeks to understand, from a CDA perspective, how character's speech acts, rhetorical practices, and social interactions reflect and perpetuate the claimed existence of freedom, responsibility, and bad faith (van Dijk, 1993).

In its core, *No Exit* provides a nuanced yet compelling commentary about language functions in regards to achieving singular social freedom. Each characters' monologue symbolizes how they strive for their own autonomy, evade responsibility and engage in self-deception, all stemming from the multi-leveled self-governing system climaxed by power relations. The distinct dialogues do not only mirror the internal existential struggles of the characters, but also serves to mediate the way the characters relate to responsive social forces. This power approach not only expands the range of self-governable actions perceivable from inaction, but explains the ideologies behind the character's actions and perception. The work of Sartre is filled with a fierce concern for individual autonomy and responsibility. The work Jose's Fairclough reminds us however, that these concepts are socially framed and socially controlled, as *No Exit* depicts. Jose Fairclough reminds us that, unlike Sartre's world where individuals walk away as free agents at face of society, the social environment character's move into is overbearing with roles and relations which they have to contend with, eager to make sense of their doings.

The analysis adds to the understanding of the intricacies pertaining to Sartre's existential philosophy by looking into how these concepts are not only developed on abstract planes, but are also manifest through the actions and speeches of the characters themselves. Moreover, the research shows how *No Exit* serves as a lens to critique the social frameworks which govern collective personal identity as well as the social existence of the self. While Sartre attends to the individual's struggle with their freedom, he also addresses, albeit through the sideline, the social phenomena that regulates single individual's life. The characters in *No Exit* are trapped by their own existential problems, but are also ensnared in the interrelations and power relations that exist within their group. To some extent, their self-deceit, blame, manipulation, and strategy of blaming others are all means of avoiding the social and personal consequences of their behavior. This research seeks to add to the scope of literature which examines the existential themes of language in *No Exit* by bringing to light how Sartre's work navigates the intersection of personal and social life (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

*No Exit* also be analyzed with regard to its existential themes in the language of the character. This analysis demonstrates how Critical Discourse Analysis interprets language as a tool of self-deception and existential manipulation. It shows that Sartre's philosophy is performed and enacted through the interactions and relations of power among the characters and is wholly executed as more than just a discourse. This study provides an understanding of the interplay between discourse and existential philosophy which extends the critique of *No Exit*

beyond personal freedom to the social constraints embedded identity and existence. In so doing, this research examines the intricate relationships among discourse, power, and existential philosophy as well as give deeper insight into the different aspects of the human condition that Sartre examines.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The work of Jean-Paul Sartre is fascinating in its regard to existentialist philosophy. In his existential play “No exit”, Sartre tackles concepts such as freedom, and responsibility, alongside something he calls “bad faith”. Similar to other Sartre’s works, this play features a protagonist and a supporting cast that is confined to a setting, which in this case is a room. As with most of his plays, there is no active plot or story, but rather a judgement of the past by the characters, existing in a state of eternal action. The theatric portrayal of these existential themes is particularly interesting, for the simplest of portrayals suggest the presence of a far richer narrative which for one reason or the other has not received adequate attention. Further, a Socratic discourse on the play reveals new ontological questions that are rooted in the portrayal of language and social power and the human’s ability to deceive. This is particularly interesting since his work is centered around the concept of existentialism and the human being’s responsibility to themselves and other, and as the fundamental issue of power relations within a society. Exploring this question using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) might prove to be more beneficial than expected. This research seeks serves to reveal the power structures and ideologies hiding underneath the discussed language and actions within Sartre’s “No Exit”. More precisely, what kinds of freedom, responsibility, and bad faith the characters strive to express.

In examining these aspects, this research seeks to uncover the complex relationships that exist between existential philosophy and the discursive practices that surround a particular Sartre’s play with the intention of enriching comprehension of Sartre’s ideas and their inscribing into a language. This study intends to show, via CDA, that language functions not only as a carrier of existential themes, but it is also an arena where social power relations and self-deception are constructed and sustained (Fairclough, 1995).

### 1.3 Research Questions

1. How does language in *No Exit* reflect the existential themes of freedom and responsibility, and what role do power relations play in their construction, from a CDA perspective?
2. How do the discursive strategies in *No Exit* reinforce bad faith and self-deception, and what ideologies do these strategies reflect, according to CDA?

### 1.4 Research Objectives

1. To analyze language in *No Exit* constructs and communicates the existential concepts of freedom and responsibility within the power dynamics, using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).
2. To explore how discursive practices in *No Exit* perpetuate bad faith and self-deception, identifying the ideologies embedded in these linguistic choices through CDA.

### **1.5 Rationale of the Research**

Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit* is still well-respected among existentialist thinkers and deals with aspects like freedom, responsibility, and self-deception. Scholars have largely analyzed these themes philosophically, forgetting to analyse the language and discourse strategies used to communicate these ideas. This study is predicated on the assumption that language is not simply an instrument for communication; believed to be an arena wherein power relations, self-deceptive tendencies, and existential battles are staged and negotiated. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a theory that can be used to understand how these themes are portrayed in the characters' speech, since it helps to understand how speech and language depict and create reality. CDA comprising Fairclough's (1995) framework looks at discourse as a social practice to understand how power relations and ideologies of societies are produced and reproduced. In Sartre's *No Exit*, speech is not only a system of expressing one's mental states, but a way of exercising one's freedom, taking responsibility, and self-deceiving in the relationships with other people. Using CDA, this research seeks to reveal the systems of power that are engendered in the characters' discourse in terms of their interactions and the ideological structures contained in it (Wodak, 2001). This study attempts to fill existing gaps in knowledge by illustrating the role of linguistic forms in Sartre's play as part of the broader existential motifs and deepening the understanding of Sartre's critique of human existence.

### **1.6 Significance of the Research**

This research is of great value within the realms of existential philosophy, literary analysis, and the study of criticism. The first point focuses on the first application of CDA in Sartre's *No Exit* which combines Sohn's philosophical intertextuality and linguistic analysis. This application not only broaden the perception of the Sartre's existential themes, but also provides new ways of looking at how these themes are present in the characters' discursive practices. Particularly, it provides how the language of the play defines and reinforces the notions of freedom, responsibility, self-deception, and bad faith. As for the second point, this means that this study adds to the emerging literature on the application of discourse analysis to literary works, in this case showing how language creates an image of an existential problem and serves as a means for social control. This study seeks to analyze the words of the characters of Sartre's plays: to illustrate how their speech is saturated with power, identity, and ideology and in so doing, expose the social context of the personal and existential conflicts presented in the play. This is crucial for grasping why existential themes embody much more than philosophical ideas; they are also products of social and linguistic constructions. Moreover, they also offer important insights for scholars interested in literature as well as philosophy. For philosophers, it elucidates how Sartrean Existentialism is more than a theoretical position; it is also a position that is taken through speech acts. For literary scholars and critics, the research seeks to provide a different interpretation of *No Exit*, when attention is paid to the Account of the Arguments of Sartre's dialog within the context of surrounding world politics. In as much as the researcher seeks to show how language creates and frames bad faith, responsibility, and freedom in terms of power, the research also engages contemporary debates on the power of social structures in philosophical texts. This research attempts to approach Sartre's *No Exit* from a different angle, merging existentialism

and CDA to focus on the concepts of freedom, responsibility, and bad faith, and the roles of language in both creating and expressing the human condition.

## 2.Literature Reviews

A lot of research has been done on the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in various fields and how it reveals societal structures and ideologies and how they are constructed, maintained, or resisted. In the aforementioned realm, CDA has been used to examine the speeches of various political figures, notably American presidents. Gill, et al, (2025) used corpus-based multidimensional analysis to examine the linguistic features of Trump's and Biden's inaugural speeches. The findings reveal contrasting rhetorical styles, with Trump focusing on information and persuasion, while Biden emphasizes unity, emotional resonance, and inclusive rhetoric. Raza et al. (2024) point out that Biden highlighted unity and resilience, contrasting with Trump's focus on collective agency and policy critique. Imran et al. (2024) suggest that Biden employed polarizing language and topicalization strategies to strengthen his leadership image and critique past administrations. These findings align with previous research, such as that by Imran et al. (2024), and Raza et al. (2024), highlighting the role of linguistic and multimodal techniques in understanding political rhetoric in inaugural speeches.

Work by Deghat (2008), Mazith (2009), Benoit and Henson (2009), and Easter (2008), for example, provide analysis of and insight into the techniques employed in these presidential addresses. These efforts seek to understand the processes through which language serves to shape public perception, power relations, and serve nationalism, thus capturing the wider social and political context of public discourse. Within the context of language education, there are more and more research efforts being done on how language learning text books are used to codify social identities and ideologies. Mohasel Bashough (2003), Davatgarzadeh (2007), and Asgharzadeh (2009) have interrogated issues of critical pedagogy and language textbook construction. These studies claim that textbooks do not just convey knowledge, but rather serve as instruments that reflect and perpetuate established social and normative conditions. They analyze how learners probably view some concepts like identity, culture, and power and the social and political consequences of these views through the representation in these texts.

Journalism as a means of public participation serves as one of the areas of critical discourse analysis because an ideology is bound to be present in any media text. Khosravi Nik (2000) Yarmohammadi and Rashidi (2003) and Galasinski and Marley (1997) evaluation research deals with media linguistics and the selection of words in regard to ideology in the media. These scholars show how language in journalism can either make visible or obscure the power relations and the political ideologies which shape media reporting. Their research opens the eyes of journalists to the need and relevance of knowing the concealed ideological effects of journalism language, which have far-reaching impacts on public opinion and the social order. Literary works and children's literature especially have also been multifaceted in critical discourse analysis in relation to gender, age, and class. CDA in literature usually looks at the issue of representation or the social construction of the various categories Foziyeh's (2004) study in particular investigates how some discourse structure in children's and adult stories construct age ideology, which children are taught to think of older people in the society. In gender relations, CDA has for the most part been feminism driven.

In particular, other scholars like Norouzi (2006) and Smith (2002) Hobson (2003) concentrate on how fictional literary works and non-fiction prose deal with gender focusing on the suppression and marginalization of women.

The investigations presented above suggest concluding that oppression as a phenomenon is language based and therefore requires close examination of social structures that promote discrimination against women. Moreover, class is provided as another variable necessary for analysis in CDA, which has received attention in the sociological literature. Collins (1999) critically reviewed Huspek and showed how discourse is a vehicle for class relations and power. Collins asserts that such framed representations can also be critiqued and that such critique contributes to a theory of linguistics which seeks to eradicate inequality. Cary and Mutua (2010) Fairclough's model of CDA in the sociologies of Australia, United States, and Kenya. Their study illustrates how CDA captures the essence of the phenomena around a specific concept like the phenomenon of language in the making of social order and social order in diverse cultures and politics of surrounding region. The non-material motives of discourse have been, as one of the dimensions of CDA, represented by specialists in psychology. Zahoor (2015) studied the psychological and emotional and social consequences such as the nuclear attack on Nagasaki, and the September 11 attacks. This study investigates the claims made about these events and how they have altered the public's perceptions as well as the societal's collective memory, with special focus on socio-linguistics and its impacts on trauma and crisis.

At last, Noor et al. (2015) had applied CDA on different religious and spiritual texts examining the interpersonal metafunctions in the Last Address of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). They analyzed the clauses of the address and how these clauses are used to project the various social roles and relationships. By analyzing the interpersonal components of the speech, their study provides an additional dimension on social discourses, social actions, and social identities in religion.

The study entitled, *The Discourse of Existentialism: A CDA Study of Freedom, Responsibility, and Bad Faith in Sartre's No Exit*, implements Critical Discourse Analysis on Sartre's play, *No Exit*. This study attempts to uncover the major existential ideas of freedom, responsibility, and bad faith, exploring how they are represented through discourse in the dialogues of the play. The goal of the Critical Discourse Analysis is to show how the language used in *No Exit* helps to perpetuate and construct Sartre's existential philosophy, particularly the paradox of individual liberty and the self-imposed or sociocultural borders that fetter it.

The characters imprisoned in a single room for eternity creates a microcosm for the existential conflict itself. The character's dialogue encapsulates Sartre's theory on the multitude of ways in which a person can manage their individual freedom and the accompanying burden of responsibility or decide to fall into self-deception restricting their freedom to evade the anxiety that colludes with it. This essay detailed in my investigation attempts to decode how these issues manifest themselves in the interactions of the characters paying close attention to the verbal choices that speak to the existential problems. The research broadens the scope of how people different aspects of Sartre's philosophy contained

in the play are defined through its language and how the language guards as well as creates the experience of freedom, responsibility, and self-deception among the characters.

With the application of CDA to my study, I analyze the social power relations and the socio-psychological mechanisms progressive in the relationships of the characters. This research seeks to show that Sartre's existentialism is not only a philosophical view, but also something that is concretely lived and experienced, and expressed through speech in forms that address the more overarching issues of identity, choice and the weight of freedom. In this research, I attempt to show how existential themes are deeply embedded in the discourse of *No Exit* and how they mirror the bigger existential issues that still dominate today's society.

### **3. Methodology**

This research utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with the intention of understanding the way language captures existential notions such as freedom, responsibility, and bad faith in Sartre's *No Exit*, as well as the power relations underlying the construction of such themes. It pursues a qualitative, interpretative design, treating the play's dialogues as the main source of data for the analysis.

#### **3.1 Data Collection**

The data for this analysis is the complete translation of the book "*No Exit*," chiefly the conversations among the three characters Garcin, Inez and Estelle. Dialogues have been chosen on the basis of their relevance to the themes of freedom, responsibility, and 'bad faith' as well as their exhibitions of power among characters

#### **3.2 Textual Analysis**

The analysis was done concentrating on the text itself, especially on the choice of words, phrases, syntax, speech parts, and other strategies employed by the characters in conversation. This assists them in supplying and shaping language concerning action and interaction in the existential themes and in the dialogues, how power is exercised in the discourse.

#### **3.3 Framework of the Research**

This research focuses on *No Exit* by Jean-Paul Sartre from the perspective of language through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) utilising Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1989) of discourse.

## **4. Analysis and Discussion**

Jean-Paul Sartre's play *No Exit* (*Huis Clos* in French) exemplifies the notions of freedom, responsibility, and self-deception under the umbrella of existential philosophy in the context of drama. Applying Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model to study the language within the play provides insights into how Sartre elaborates existential power relations and how the characters' discursive tactics serve to propagate self-deception or bad faith ideologies. Fairclough's model breaks the discourse down into three levels – the text (linguistic features), the discursive practice (how the text was written and how it is interpreted), and the social practice (the broader society). This examination reveals how the play's philosophical issues of concern are addressed through the interplay of all three levels.

Fairclough's CDA model enables us to deconstruct the relationship between language, power and ideology. The dialogue between the characters is where existential themes such as freedom and responsibility are played out. Here, Sartre employs language to convey the



struggle of existential freedom and the denial of responsibility, which happen to be the primary tenets of his philosophy. We focus on the characters' constructions of language with regard to the social practices of the discourse, denial and self-deception, and consider how these behaviors challenge social norms and attitudes towards agency and responsibility.

Sartre's character's fight with each other to define the significance of their memories, their life and the so-called freedom. Following Fairclough's CDA model, these discursive choices also embody a power relation, but at the level of identity construction. The exacerbated actions in These interactions reveal the asymmetry of power that shapes the identity of the characters and define the core of real struggle. Everyday speech acts embody existential ideas such as free will and responsibility. Take, for instance, Garcin's dialogue where he tries to freeora the paradox of freedom and the deathly void it entails. Thus, in Act I Garcin states:

*"I was a coward, I was a coward, I ran away. But I'm free now, aren't I?"*

This quote is key because it illustrates Garcin's tension with the existential notion of freedom. He accepts his previous actions, but chooses not to accept full responsibility because he believes his cowardice was forced on him. The statement "I was a coward" serves as self-blame, but the way Garcin constructs his inquiry into freedom when he asks, "Am I free now?" suggests that he is not wholly accountable. To Fairclough, this discourse is an example of a constructed reality in which Garcin bears no responsibility for his actions. This stems from well-known bad faith tactics typical of Sartre's philosophy in which people deceive themselves not to feel anxious or burdened by the freedom they possess. The relations of power between Garcin, Inez and Estelle are an equally important part of the discourse. The characters wield language to exercise control over their fate, evade responsibility, and manipulate others. The more direct and aggressive of the three, Inez, is the one who most frequently uses her speech to dominate people. For instance, in Act II she says quite bluntly:

*"You're in hell, and you're never going to leave it. There is no way out. You'll just sit here forever, looking at each other."*

The harsh and matter-of-fact tone Inez uses depicts how she has accepted their dire situation, unlike Garcin or Estelle, who would rather justify or refute it. This act can be defined as power, where one compels the rest to accept the reality as they perceive it. This reveals how Inez exploits language to construct and maintain an illusion that she is in control of the rest and ensures they pay for the outcome of their freedom. With regard to the speech ideology, No Exit shows how language can be utilized to foster bad faith and evasion of duty. For Sartre, self-deception through the avoidance of acknowledging the freedom one possesses and the responsibilities that accompany it is termed our 'bad faith'. The unending usage of language to evade confronting their existential reality clearly illustrates this theory. Garcin, for example, repeatedly uses language that externalizes responsibility. In Act II, he says:

*"I had no choice. I was afraid, and that's why I ran away. I didn't choose to run away, it was just the only thing I could do."*

This statement is an explicit instance of Garcin appropriating the use of language to escape from accepting responsibility for his actions. Garcin places the onus on other actors by saying that "decided for him," which means that he fear princely caused him to externalize and avoid

responsibility. Within Fairclough's CDA framework, this form of discourse is a caricature of ideological reproduction. It reflects the belief which sows into the fabric of his society which makes it easy for individuals to disassociate themselves from their actions, thus fostering self-deception. In this instance, Garcin's discourse is consistent with an ideology that uses fear, circumstance or any external aid to justify the removal of blame from one's self.

Estelle's discourse exhibits a similar form of self-deception. She claims that the premeditated actions she refers to, most notably the blinding of her offspring, were not things that she had control over. In Act II, she claims:

*"I had no choice. I was in love with another man, and I had to do what he wanted. It wasn't my fault. But what does that matter now?"*

Estelle's unwillingness to take blame for her actions is considered an example of bad faith. She creates a story or a narrative which strips her off her decision making and puts the blame on external forces. This feature of character is truly self-deceptive and demonstrates how the play critiques social ideologies which allow people to shirk justification for their actions. A critical discourse analysis (CDA) of Estelle's speech enables us to understand how her language promotes sociocultural ideologies that excuse personal accountability, especially regarding women, and to gender relations.

Inez, as the group's most vocal member, serves as the ideological antagonist of the group. She openly addresses the other members' attempts to sidestep responsibility. For instance, during Act III, she says the following to Estelle:

*"You're a liar, Estelle. You say you want to be loved, but you refuse to take responsibility for your actions. You want to be seen as pure, but you're not. You're just like the rest of us."*

In this instance, Inez openly challenges Estelle's self-delusion, confronting her desire for external approval. From a CDA perspective, this is language in use and it can be termed as an ideological critique of social practices that enable people to escape accepting the adverse impacts of their behavior. Inez's confronting of Estelle's lies compels Inez's peers to come to terms with their own existential realities as well.

In terms of social practice, *No Exit* examines the ideologies of society that seek to render freedom and responsibility as non-existent or hidden. As such, *No Exit* demonstrates how people's language and strategies of discourse are not mere personal preferences but are deeply rooted within the matrix of culture and society that tend to absolve people of accountability and self-consciousness. These forms of discourse can be captured through Fairclough's CDA model as giving voice to ideological structures which reproduce discourse as part of the social institutions.

For instance, the social power relations in the group parallel the existing social structures and relations, especially gender and moral relations. Garcin's construction of self-needing to be perceived as courageous forms around a social order that celebrates and respects heroism at the expense of authenticity and true self. Estelle, on the other hand, is led to emphasize beauty and social recognition, which makes her build a false self to run away from the recollection of her deeds.

Inez, the most vocal character, takes an ideological position in the group as a deviant. Her utterances challenge other people's responsibility-dodging behaviors head-on. So, for instance, in Act III, she states:

*"You're a liar, Estelle. You say you want to be loved, but you refuse to take responsibility for your actions. You want to be seen as pure, but you're not. You're just like the rest of us."*

In this scenario, Inez bluntly dismantles Estelle's self-deceit, thereby confronting Estelle's need for social acceptance. From a CDA perspective, Inez's discourse is an emancipatory critique of the social structures that make it possible for people to not take responsibility for the effects of their actions. By bringing Estelle's deception to light, Inez compels the others to engage with their reality.

With Fairclough's CDA, we can also investigate how the characters' discursive practices reinforce the existentialist notion of self-deception and bad faith. In *No Exit*, language is more than a means through which individuals construct their identities; it also serves as a vehicle for ideology and counter-ideology.

In Sartre's existentialist philosophy, bad faith is the act of pretending to be someone one is not in order to escape the burden of dealing with freedom. Each of Garcin, Estelle and Inez exhibit different forms of self-deception. Empathizing Estelle's external gratification, Garcin shifts blame, while Inez brutally confronting the issue. These discursive strategies are perfect examples of how one maintains a state of being self-deceptive while providing the means to liberate themselves.

Inez vocalises the truth directly, and this gets confronted by the self-deceit of the three characters. In the end, when the three characters comprehend reality, the fight is real. The deception they restrict themselves with is not something that Inez is willing to contend with. Inez, instead, breaks their self-deception and lets the usage of language compel them to their reality. She attempts to drown them in the truth of their later decisions.

Applying CDA analysis to the work of Sartre's *No Exit* brings to light how language captures existing concepts such as freedom, self-responsibility, and self-deception. Textual analysis of discourses evident in the novel provides the lens through which the characters' discursive strategies are analyzed in relation to existentialist frameworks. For the case in point, the disjuncture between freedom and responsibility. At the level of discursive practice one encounters reproduction of negatively defined ideologies self-deception and bad faith The quickest form of resignation borne out of social manipulation. Through the ideological practices set within the play, the audience is shown how people purposely disregard responsibility for self-induced trauma. In short, Fairclough's CDA model helps us to comprehend the intent of Sartre in showing the language of a society that suffers from the fear of freedom, and the impending anxiety that is inextricably accompanied by the said freedom.

## 5. Conclusion

Sartre's play *No Exit* captures the attention in a special way when viewed through the lens of Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model. Norman's model helps us capture how the play interprets basic existential concepts such as freedom, self-deception,

responsibility, etc. Language becomes a quintessential aspect of societal relations, personal responsibility, and individual freedom throughout adding in their self-illustration confront. With the characters' exchanges and the power relations that emerge within their speech, he exposes the self-undermining practices of humans who attempt to evade personal responsibility through self-deceitful and bad faith discursive practices. Dealing with Fairclough's CDA model, we looked at how linguistic features, discursive practices, social ideologies, and existential themes are interconnected. We witness how language does not only serve to communicate but is also a source of conflict over its meaning or control at the textual level. Every character interprets language uniquely in order to navigate their lived reality. Take, for instance, Garcin extreme self-blame accompanied by efforts to shift the blame onto others argues Sartre's idea of Bad Faith. Through his dialogues, Garcin conveys the tension between freedom and responsibility, where Sartre demonstrates the lengths to which one goes to avoid the existential reality of making decisions can take. Inez's manner of speech, however, is fully responsible language which makes other characters' bear witness to their actions, emphasizing the play's existentialism in its judgment of those who try to run away from their actions. The stark opposition of Inez's candidness towards their situation to the discursive dodging of it employed by the rest of the characters illustrates the suffocating reality. Understanding how *No Exit* sustains bad faith ideologies rests heavily on the characters' discursive practices. According to Fairclough, discourse is not simply a way of speaking, but a practice which is situated within and is molded by a greater ideological structure. Garcin, Estelle, and even Inez's language all reflect the social expectation which demands avoidance of responsibility for one's actions through the repeated externalization of responsibility or apologizing for actions taken in the past. This denial of responsibility, as described by Sartre, helps to relieve existential torment. Often, repetition of the reasons for blame makes it easier to execute freedom of blame placed onto a choice outside of one's self. Their avoidance of confronting the choice they made mirrors a cultural norm that distances oneself from responsibility in a situation. By studying these discursive phenomena, things become clearer in how the ideologies of self-delusion and self-avoidance are constructed and reproduced in the play. According to CDA perspectives, the issue of agency and responsibility denial through repeated speech acts by the characters invokes critique on social structures that support such ideologies. For example, Garcin's need to be viewed as courageous and Estelle's obsession with beauty and validation, as well as Inez's criticism of these actions, shed light on the ideological constellation that informs personal identities and choices. Here, Sartre examines how people's interactions with one another are affected by societal constructions, norms, and expectations related to gender and morality. As a result, Garcin, who seeks to escape his cowardice by blaming outside forces, embodies the male ideal of bravery and heroism, which is much more comfortable than honest acceptance of one's obligations. The other extreme is represented by Estelle, who is the social ideal of validation seeking beauty, making it impossible for her to accept the dire consequences of her actions. Inez's position in this hierarchy of power is very important; she cannot be constrained by existing social order and claims to speak for the so-called marginalized, using words to reveal that these other characters are simply self-deluding. In social practice, No

Exit reveals deeper ideological dynamics at play, including the interrelations between norms of culture related to morality, gender, as well as the agency and action of individuals. The characters' discourse is a reflection of personal struggle with freedom and responsibility and critique of the entire social structure that creates such struggles. The socio-political concern is far graver than what appears to be on the surface. Such constructs, be it Inez, show how the society accomplishes its goals of control through the use of language as a social phenomenon alongside meeting basic communication needs. As the character who is least deceived as to their plight, Inez disrupts all of these ideological structures to compel the rest to see their inaction and all that follows it. Her dialogue reveals the complexities of self-deceit that the characters rationalize towards the new socially constructed real world and the extent to which social control prevents them from accept reality.

In the end, interpreting *No Exit* using Fairclough's CDA framework lets us appreciate how language is used by Sartre to convey existentialist philosophies such as freedom, responsibility, bad faith, and the social structures that mediate these concepts. It is in the characters' discursive strategies that Sartre condemns the human weakness of shifting responsibility and the anxiety that accompanies freedom. By detailing discourses of this nature, we see how Sartre makes it clear as to how difficult it is to live authentically alongside a society that technologically encourages self-deceit and the externalization of personal responsibility. From the perspective of CDA, we understand that language goes far beyond serving as a means for establishing personal identity; it is also a powerful vehicle for reinforcing or subverting the ideologies that dictate our decisions and actions. As elaborated, *No Exit* criticizes the issue of self-deception really well and even the philosophies which support it. With the application of Fairclough's CDA model, Sartre's analysis of freedom paired with responsibility emerges as something beyond merely philosophical inquiry but as sociological critique. The characters' discursive practices portray the complex processes through which people manipulate language in terms of power and identity and illustrate the burden of existential freedom. It is as though this analysis captures the heart of the play's existential concerns along with the discourse which sets the stage for one's understanding of freedom, responsibility, and self-deception.

## References

- Benoit, W. and Henson, J. (2009). President Bush's image repair discourse on Hurricane Katrina. *Public Relations Review*, 35(1): 40- 46.
- Cary, L.J., & Mutua, K. (2010). *Postcolonial Narratives: Discourse and Epistemological Spaces*
- Chouliarakis, L., & Fairclough, N. (1999). *Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking critical discourse analysis*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Collins, C. (1999). The pragmatics of emancipation: A critical review of the work of Michael Huspek. *Pragmatics*, 25(6): 791-817.
- Davatzgarzadeh, G. (2007). The representation of social actors in *Interchange Third Edition Series*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Shiraz: Shiraz University.
- Deghat, S. (2009). Critical discourse analysis of 2008 presidential campaign speech of democratic candidates with respect to their gender and race. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Shiraz: Shiraz University.
- Easter, M. (2008). Freedom in speech: Freedom and liberty in U.S. presidential campaign discourse, 1952–2004. *Poetics*, 36(4): 265-286

- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1993). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power (2nd ed.)*. Pearson Education.
- Foucault, M. (2002). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge.
- Fouziyeh, F. (2004). The comparison of critical discourse analysis of children and adult's short stories. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Shiraz: Shiraz University.
- Galasiski, S and Marley, C. (1998). *Agency in foreign news: a linguistic complement of a content analytical study*. Uk: University of Wolverhampton.
- Gee, J. P. (2014). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method (4th ed.)*. Routledge.
- Gill, A., Raza, S., & Ishtiaq, M. (2025). CORPUS-BASED GENRE ANALYSIS OF DONALD TRUMP AND JOE BIDEN'S INAUGURAL SPEECHES. *JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL (JALT)*, 8(1), 813–814.  
<https://jalt.com.pk/index.php/jalt/article/view/392>
- Hobson, H. (2003). A discussion of representation of masculinity and femininity in baden- powell's 1919 handbooks for scouts and guides using the frameworks of theo van leeuwen, within the tradition of critical discourse analysis.
- Imran, S., Raza, S., & Saeed, Z. (2024, September 16). *Critical Discourse Analysis of Discursive Strategies Utilized in President Joe Biden's Inaugural Speech*.  
<https://www.ijssa.com/index.php/ijssa/article/view/468>
- Kamalu, I. & Tamunobelega, I. (2013). Linguistic Expression of Religious Identity and Ideology in Selected Postcolonial Nigerian Literature. *Canadian Social Science* 9(4). 78-84
- Khosravi Nik, M. (2000). The relationship between ideological structures and discursive structure of editorials and commentaries in a selected sample of iranian daily newspapers; a critical discourse perspective. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Shiraz: Shiraz University.
- Mazid, B. (2009). date-palms, language and the power of knowledge: an analysis of a fable from Kalila and Dimna. *Pragmatics*, 41(12): 2515-2534
- Mohasel Bashough, M. (2003). A critical and functional discourse analysis of elt textbooks a need for emancipation. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Tehran: Alzahra University.
- Norouzi, F. (2006). The representation of women characteristics in narrative; texts case study on novel 'Dancers'. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Shiraz: Shiraz University.
- Rashidi, N., Khormaei, A., & Zarei, M. (2014). The critical discourse analysis of the representation of women and men in Bozorg Alavi's short stories. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 5(3), 126-133.
- Raza, D. S. I., & Hassan, S. S. U. (2024). CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES UTILIZED IN DONALD TRUMP'S INAUGURAL SPEECH. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT)*, 7(4), 99-120.  
<https://jalt.com.pk/index.php/jalt/article/view/166>
- Raza, S., Imran, S., & Shah, S. A. A. (2024c, April 1). *Critical Discourse Analysis of Discursive Strategies Utilized in Donald Trump and Joe Biden's Inaugural Speeches*.  
<https://ojs.mrj.com.pk/index.php/MRJ/article/view/328>
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1993). *Elite discourse and racism*. Sage Publications.
- Wodak, R. (2001). *The discourse-historical approach*. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 63–94). Sage Publications.
- Zahoor, A. (2015). Kamila Shamsie's Novel "Burnt Shadows": A Discourse of Traumatic displacement: Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK