DISCOURSE AND RESISTANCE: AN IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF READERS' COMMENTS ON VICTIMS' NARRATIVES IN STELLA DIMOKO KORKUS' *DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DIARY - PART ONE*

Adetutu Aragbuwa,
George Adekunle Ojo[i]
Department of English & Literary Studies,
Ekiti State University,
Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Abstract

Scholars have researched resistance discourses across varied contexts; however, resistance discourses to domestic violence against women (DVAW) still remain under-researched in (critical) discourse analytical studies. In view of this paucity, the present paper seeks to explore women's discursive resistance to male oppression and power abuse in the domestic sphere by eliciting the discourse structures deployed by readers in their online feedback comments on victims' narratives of domestic violence (DV), culled from Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary – Part One*. This is with a view to analysing the commenters' ideological stances on DVAW. The data, which comprise one hundred and seventy-two (172) readers' comments, are subjected to qualitative analysis using some aspects of van Dijk's socio-cognitive ideological approach. The findings reveal that the readers' comments are replete with instances of discourse structures such as: polarisation; positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation (achieved via lexicalisation and implication); victimisation; evidentiality; number game; metaphor; and consensus. Functionally, these discourse structures underscore resistance ideologies; and illustrate some sub-ideologies of resistance, namely: the oppressed versus the oppressor; positive in-group presentation versus negative out-group presentation; the captive versus the captor; combativity; empathy; and solidarity. These findings establish that the commenters' discursive interactive patterns are dominantly controlled by women's growing resistance to male domination. The study thus foregrounds the potentiality of Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary* weblog as a site for promoting the movement for female discursive resistance to male oppression.

---

[i] Correspondence: email oyearagbuwa@gmail.com; george.ojo@eksu.edu.ng

Keywords: discourse, ideology, resistance, weblogging, domestic violence against women

1. Introduction

Domination and oppression, practices that challenge unfair socio-political systems, either violently or non-violently, usually trigger resistance (Eamonn, 2004; Chiluwa, 2012; Vinthagen & Lilja, 2007). Oppressed individuals or groups of people could muster sufficient courage to resist oppression whenever they feel "*overwhelmed by feelings of desperation or a sense of crushing hopelessness*" and an urgent desire for change (Scott, 2006, p. 538). Thus, the inability of the oppressed to further condone oppression or marginalisation from dominant powers is commonly the root cause of resistance and the social struggle for liberation. In essence, resistance is "*a common and permanent feature of social life*" in that power and resistance are "*often relational within networks of productive social interactions*" (Vinthagen & Lilja, 2007, p. 1). This notion of resistance has led to the emergence of resistance studies, an emerging but rapidly growing field of study, that focuses "*explicitly on exploring, theorising and discussing the concept of resistance … as a point of departure for studying power and social change*" (Törnberg, 2013, p. 5). Resistance studies, therefore, focus on "*how hierarchical discourses and power relations are produced, reproduced, and also challenged in ordinary speech and in everyday acts of resistance*" (Törnberg, 2013, p. 6).

Widespread social resistance to unequal power relations usually manifests through social, political, educational, corporate/organisational, and gender discourses (Chiluwa, 2012). Hence, the enactment of resistance is usually reinforced through discourse (Putnam, Grant, Michelson & Cutcher, 2005, p. 14). Scholars have researched resistance discourses across varied contexts. For instance, Chiluwa (2012) investigates the impact of Social Media Networks (SMN) in advocating socio-political resistance to political domination as well as in achieving social and political reforms as seen in the series of resistance waves and political upheavals that enveloped North Africa and the Arab world. Putnam, Grant, Michelson and Cutcher (2005) extend the studies on resistance discourses by investigating the contributions of discourse analysis to the study of the targets, practices, and consequences of organisational resistance. Their study reveals "*the complex, dynamic, and interconnected nature of resistance practices*", "*intended and unintended consequences of resistance*" and "*how acts of resistance target multiple organisational audiences simultaneously*" (Putnam et al., 2005, p. 6). Others like Knights and McCabe (2000) and Brown (2000) have likewise investigated dissent discourses on workers' resistance to corporate or organisational strategies and practices for private, personal or symbolic purposes.

Virtual resistance, known as online revolt or cyberwar, has also been researched in academia by scholars such as Ronfeldt and Arquilla (2001). In a similar vein, feminist scholars (e.g., McKenzie-Mohr & Lafrance, 2014; Alexandra, Jane & Janette, 2017) have explored women's discursive resistance to hegemonic discourses. Alexandra, Jane and

Janette (2017, p. 9 & 12) specifically study women's attempts to "*resist premarital sexuality, the virginity imperative*", the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) and all asymmetrical gender roles and expectations among migrant and refugee women recently resettled in Sydney, Australia, and Vancouver, Canada.

In spite of these aforementioned studies, resistance discourses still remain sparsely researched in (critical) discourse analytical studies, a view buttressed by Putnam, Grant, Michelson & Cutcher (2005) and Negm (2014). Negm (2014, p. 284), for instance, argues that the "*majority of studies in critical discourse analysis focus exclusively on one aspect of the language/power relation, language as a context for power and domination*", thereby neglecting "*discourse as a context for power resistance*". Negm (2015) further adds that although discourse is a context for power to be enacted and maintained as opined by proponents of CDA like Fairclough (1994), discourse can as well be a context for power to be challenged and resisted.

In view of this sparseness, efforts shall be made in this study to extend the literature on resistance discourses; specifically, women's discursive resistance to diverse forms of male oppression and the impact of their resistance in advocating gender equality in the domestic domain. The significance of the study thus lies in examining the ways in which the online commenters use resistance ideological narratives to contest DVAW.

2. Online Readers' Comments

The emergence of digital technologies has engendered social mediated networks (SMN) such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., which have all enhanced interactivity, collaboration and public deliberation among the online audience (Dimitra, Konstantinos & Venetia, 2012; Chiluwa, 2012). Through the creation of the readers' comment feature on SMN, the new technologies have boosted the audience's participation in public discourse, amplified public voices, and enhanced public debate (Henrich & Holmes, 2013; da Silva, 2015). The readers' comment feature has become the commonest audience participation genre used in SMN to create virtual "*discursive spaces*" where Internet users can become exposed to diverse and alternative viewpoints cum social experiences, as opposed to pre-digital traditional mode of writing letters to editors (Sunstein, 2007 as cited in Dimitra, Konstantinos &Venetia, 2012, p. 27; McCluskey & Hmielowski, 2012). This feature has thus created an avenue for commenters on SMN to agree or disagree with news/story contents, correct aspects of the news/stories they see as misinformation, provide additional information, and interact with other commenters to debate and negotiate ideas (Schuth *et al.*, 2007; Henrich & Holmes, 2013; da Silva, 2015).

As SMN is increasingly boosting audience participation, the "*blogosphere*", a frequently used term for "*the space created and occupied by weblogs*" is also expanding, and blogging activities are being fired up through the formation of several hosting weblog sites (Ó Baoill, 2004, p. 4; Chiluwa, 2012). Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary* weblog, our concern in this paper, provides an unprecedented interactive forum for public deliberation on domestic violence (DV), also known as family violence (FV), which

encapsulates all forms of violence that occur in the family which could result in physical, emotional or sexual harm to victims (Okemgbo, Omideyi & Odimegwu, 2002; Bartels, 2010). The prevalence of DV has made the phenomenon a pressing global issue.

Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary* weblog, known as *Domestic Violence Dairy (Part 1-4)*, is a platform that consists of entries posted anonymously by victims of DV and third parties or eyewitnesses who are privy to such incidents. The diary also creates a discursive space for readers' comments on the victims' narratives (Arawomo, 2016). The volume of entries and readers' comments on the platform reflects the importance attached to the phenomenon. Thus, online readers' comments have become *"a rich source of qualitative data that reflect public opinions and provide insight into how decisions are made and beliefs formed"* on current issues of public concern (Henrich & Holmes, 2013, p. 1). Nevertheless, readers' comments are non-representative of the overall opinions or beliefs of the entire population of any given society. However, the unlimited volume of comments any online platform attracts could be highly reflective of the views of a sizable number of the populace and also indicative of the importance of such issues on SMN (Henrich & Holmes, 2013).

Despite the richness of online readers' comments in the expression of public perceptions and their participant-driven nature in SMN, they have been sparsely used as data in gender-based discourse studies, most especially in studies related to women's discursive resistance to DV (Reich, 2011; Henrich & Holmes, 2013). This study seeks to fill this gap by critically exploring the discursive structures of resistance deployed by the commenters in their reactions to victims' narratives in Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary – Part One* via van Dijk's (2000, 2006) multidisciplinary socio-cognitive approach to ideology. The main objective of the study is to elicit the salient discourse structures in the readers' comments and analyse their ideological functions as resistance discourse in DVAW. This is with a view to understanding the role of Stella Dimoko Korkus' DV weblog genre in the promotion of women's discursive resistance to DVAW and its implication for mobilising collective social change towards ensuring gender equality in the domestic sphere.

3. Theoretical Base

Teun van Dijk's (2000, 2006) multidisciplinary socio-cognitive ideological theory describes the basic beliefs shared by specific social groups of people. The theory is a departure from the negative and vague traditional approaches to ideology that pervades the 20th Century (Eagleton, 1991; van Dijk, 2006). To van Dijk, ideology is dynamic in that it reflects *"the foundation of the social representations shared by a social group"*, and these social representations could be positively or negatively valued, or unvalued at all depending on those who evaluate them (van Dijk, 2006, p. 729). By implication, ideologies are not just associated with dominant and bad groups, they are also identified with dominated groups and good groups; as dominant groups have ideologies of power and dominance, so also dominated groups have ideologies of resistance and dissent.

Ideologies are basically identified with social groups or classes; this makes ideologies social (Abercrombie *et al.*, 1980; van Dijk, 1998, 2000, 2006). Ideologies are also not just social, they are as well cognitive since they are "*a special kind of social belief systems, stored in long-term memory*" and "*shared by the members of specific social groups, or ideological communities*" (van Dijk, 2006, p. 729). Therefore, any theory on ideology must account for its social and cognitive structures. These aforementioned fundamentals birthed van Dijk's multidisciplinary socio-cognitive theory on ideological discourse analysis. This theory relates ideological social representations to contextual discourse and social practices about specific events, which are then detailed, concretised and stabilised in the mental models of group members (van Dijk, 2006). According to van Dijk,

> "*these (ideologically biased) mental models, stored in episodic memory, are the mental constructs that control discourse, interaction, and other social practices. And conversely, it is through mental models that discourses are able to influence social representations and ideologies and reproduce these.*" (van Dijk, 2006, p. 730)

Thus, the social and cognitive properties of ideology "*control the individual discourses and other social practices of group members*" and also foster intragroup and intergroup relations (van Dijk, 2006, p. 730). Social and cognitive approaches to ideological discourse analysis need to be integrated because ideologies are "*socially shared cognitive resources*" which are fundamental for "*social practices, interaction and intra-and intergroup relations*" (ibid.).

Ideologies are categorised based on the discourse domains in which they function as social and cognitive models; thus, there are categories such as political, legal, religious, educational and gender ideologies (van Dijk, 2006, p. 731). This shows they are more explicitly expressed in discourses than in other social practices; that is, it is mostly in discourses that ideologies are concretely formulated, expressed, projected, propagated, reinforced and also challenged. This, therefore, shows the intertwined nature of discourse and ideology (Wodak & Meyer, 2001; van Dijk, 2006, p. 732). The relations between discourse and ideologies are commonly expressed through the integration of discourse structures and contextual structures; consequently, discourses must be properly contextualised to elicit ideologies (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992; van Dijk, 2006). Citing Gumperz (1982), van Dijk, (2006, p. 733) reveals that context links the ideologies of group participants to their discourses; hence, context is subjective and participant-driven.

According to this theory, ideologies are usually structurally polarised and categorised into ingroups and outgroups, which involve a combined strategy of positive ingroup-presentation and negative outgroup-presentation (van Dijk, 2006, p. 734). The theory basically revolves around the overall strategies called "the ideological square", summarised in these four tenets:

> "*Emphasise Our good things*
> *Emphasise Their bad things*

De-emphasise Our bad things
De-emphasise Their good things." (van Dijk, 2006, p. 734)

Inasmuch as these tenets could be applied to all forms of discourse, and to both positive and negative ideologies, it is considered a suitable theoretical base for the present study.

The ideological square of van Dijk (2000; 2006) is further categorised into more detailed discourse structures; some of which are: authority, burden (topos), categorisation, comparison, consensus, counterfactuals, evidentiality, example/illustration, generalisation, implication, lexicalisation, metaphor, negative other-presentation, norm expression, number game, polarisation, Us-Them categorisation, positive self-presentation, victimisation, etc. According to van Dijk, "*there are in principle hundreds of these categories*" (van Dijk, 2006, p. 735). However, only 10 (ten) out of these structures will be adopted in this study to examine the expression and reproduction of resistance ideologies in the readers' comments on victims' narratives in the DV diary. The selection is based on their relevance to the data. The adopted structures are: polarisation ("*the categorical division of people into ingroup (us) and outgroup (them)*" (van Dijk, 2006, p. 738); positive self-presentation (the strategy of portraying ingroups positively); negative other-presentation (the strategy of portraying outgroups negatively); lexicalisation (the use of specific lexical items underlying concepts and principles guiding a piece of discourse); implication (the strategy of leaving implicit viewpoints or claims that should be expressly stated); victimisation (the strategy of organising discourse in a binary style of the oppressor versus the oppressed); evidentiality (the presentation of evidence or proofs to support viewpoints or claims in an argument for the purpose of credibility); number game (the deployment of statistics or numbers to enhance objectivity); metaphor (the strategy of invoking a direct comparison between two or more persons or objects); and consensus (the strategy of seeking widespread agreement among ingroup members).

Each of these discourse structures will be elicited in concrete examples from the data set, and the structures will be examined in their order of importance. The main thrust of the study is to examine the discourse structures used in the readers' comments as well as their ideological functions in the projection of resistance ideologies to DVAW.

4. Methodology

The data consist of one hundred and seventy-two (172) readers' comments on victims' narratives on DV, which were retrieved from Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary Part One* (www.stelladimokorkus.com). The diary has four parts; however, the data for this study were purposively selected solely from part one of the diaries because it has the highest number of comments, two hundred and fifty-two (252). The comments were all posted in May, 2013. A careful examination of the data shows that only one hundred and seventy-two (172) posts are actual readers' reactions/comments to the victims'

narratives. Other posts are narratives from the victims themselves or third parties and such posts embody systematic recounts of past and current experiences on DV. It must be noted that most of the readers' comments are reactions to the first victim's lengthy narrative: the victim is given the pseudonym MSKAY. Although some of the readers' comments also reflect some of their personal experiences, such experiences are usually backgrounded by the commenters and merely provided as evidence to support their reactions or claims. Hence, such posts as well count as readers' comments. It must also be noted that the blogger's consent was duly sought before the data were retrieved.

To ensure fluid data reference in the data analysis, each comment was tagged RC (reader's comment), and the data were numerically numbered from RC 1 to RC 172. Also, quite a large number of the comments were written anonymously. In view of this, the names of commenters, as indicated in the posts, were included in the excerpts, and commenters whose names were not indicated were treated as anonymous or unknown. It is also worth mentioning that the readers' comments were retained in their original internet slangy form as exemplified in expressions such as "dis" for "this", "u" for "you", "d" for "the", etc. The data were subjected to a qualitative analysis using van Dijk's (2000, 2006) socio-cognitive approach to ideological discourse analysis.

5. Data Analysis

The main thrusts of the data analysis are: to identify discourse structures in Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary* using van Dijk's (2000, 2006) ideological square, and to show how various sub-ideologies of resistance are expressed in the elicited discourse structures. The succeeding sub-sections will examine each category of the discourse structures with one or two illustrations from the data set and then identify the ideological functions such a category may have in the expression of resistance ideologies.

5.1 Polarisation
This discourse structure entails the expression of "polarised cognitions" in which people are categorised into in-groups and out-groups on the basis of underlying social representations of the groups (van Dijk, 2006, p. 738). A close study of the readers' comments indicates that the actors in the comments are not described as individuals but polarised into two distinct groups on the basis of their attributes and relations. The two polarised groups are men and women, and the contextual domain of the discourse is that of marriage or intimate relationships. The polarised cognitive properties of the comments portray men as abusers and women as victims. Instances of this discourse structure can be seen in excerpts 1, 2 and 3:

> Excerpt 1: "*Dıs ıs terrıfyıng, … A husband could be dıs to d wıfe? And u saıd on a daıly basıs?*" … (Anonymous, RC 3)

Excerpt 2: *"Heartbreaking posts! WHAT women go through! Wow!!!!..."* To the MEN: *"When u abuse the love a woman has for you just because you feel she can't do without you, you will only end up teaching her how to survive without You*"… (Mz.Estella, RC 160).

Excerpt 3: *"How do you lose your temper to a point where you strip your own wife naked and drag her outside? what humiliation and disgrace can be worse than that? …"* (Angela, RC 134)

Excerpts 1 to 3 are readers' reactions to some victims' narratives in the diary. The polarised structure in the comments represents women as the ingroup who are being oppressed by men, the outgroup. This structure, therefore, expresses the sub-ideology of the oppressor versus the oppressed in the pursuance of resistance ideologies in the readers' comments. However, these ingroup/outgroup polarised structure and the oppressed versus the oppressor's ideological portrayal reverse the conventional ingroup-outgroup polarisation paradigm.

The ingroup/outgroup polarisation also has some sub-categories. Although men (the outgroup) are generally categorised as the oppressor, and women (the ingroup), are depicted as the oppressed, some comments however describe some sub-categories of "bad" ingroup and "good" outgroup. The bad ingroup sub-category depicts women who oppress men while the good outgroup portrays men who are victims of women's oppression, as seen in excerpts 4 and 5:

Excerpt 4: *"Pls is it only women that are being abused? My uncle is seriously being abused by d wife till date!!!! He is @ d verge of death as we speak, d wife stabbed him on d belly when he suspected he waz goin to leave her!!so I think domestic abuse is a two way thing."* (Anonymous, RC 64).

Excerpt 5: *"I too have been married for 16years. yes we have our querrels and moments when issues get heated up but surely nothing i could term abuse. My husband would never rise a hand at anyone not to talk of bitting a woman he cant even use derogatory words. na me they throw bad words frm all corners, he can talk and over stress the issue but never to strike me. even when we we have our moments i am the one who do all sort of stupid things like hold his shirt and really pushing him to limits BUT believe me its sound strange when i read and hear stories like those of MS-kay. When my kids misbave i wait for their daddy to go out b4 i bring out my kane. Bc if he is ard he wont allow it…"* (IBE, RC 82).

Excerpts 4 and 5 reverse the prevalent ingroup/outgroup polarised structure in the comments. Excerpt 4 portrays a wife-offender, which presupposes that there are bad ingroup members – women who oppress men; hence, some women are men's oppressors in cases of DV. In a similar vein, excerpt 5 gives the picture of a tolerant husband to project good outgroup members – men who are victims of women's oppression; therefore, not

all men are offenders in cases of DV, some are the real victims. This reversal indicates that the prevalent ingroup/outgroup polarised discourse structure and the oppressed/oppressor ideological structure in the readers' comments are not absolute. This thus presupposes the unbiasedness of the readers' comments.

5.2 Positive Self-Presentation and Negative Other-Presentation (Lexicalisation and Implication)

Positive self-presentation entails the strategy of portraying in-groups positively; and negative other-presentation, the strategy of portraying out-groups negatively. The ingroup and outgroup polarisation in the comments is implemented at the two levels of lexicalisation (the use of specific lexical items underlying concepts and principles guiding a piece of discourse) and implication (a discourse structure in which viewpoints or claims that should be expressly stated are left implicit).

The in-group members (the women-victims) are mostly implicitly portrayed in "*positive and empathic terms*" (van Dijk, 2000, p. 78). On the other hand, the out-group members (the male- offenders) are variably described using starkly negative lexical items. The readers' comments are replete with instances of the two layers of depiction as seen in excerpts 6 to 9:

Excerpt 6: "*… Men that abuse women are insecure bastards…*" (Unknown, RC 22)

Excerpt 7: "*there's no woman who can tell me she has never encountered one of these beasts before, they may not do it physically, but abuse u emotionally, psychologically even financially, they are beasts of no nation!*
d guy i wanted to marry was a serial beater… i had to run for my life… pls keep running tl u get to your destination, wife beaters are destiny destroyers!" (HYBunny, RC 5).

Excerpt 8: "*I wish i never married. men are just too wicked.*" (Anonymous, RC 63)

Excerpt 9: "*Amazing!!! … Have been more compelled to contribute because of the sheer eloquence that's been displayed by the troubled, yet intelligent individuals on board this forum. I doff my hats to all. Read about 100plus comments so far...and am impressed by the true display of emotions that's been delivered powerfully by strong minded females. I take this not for granted at all being a woman myself. While I may not have suffered DV directly, I think if we all had to relay derogatory remarks said to us by our men, and perhaps to pass them as a form of DV, then we'lld all qualify...*" (Daughter of Zion, RC 170).

In excerpts 6 to 9, stark negative nominal and adjectival expressions such as "beasts", "wicked insecure bastards", "wife beaters", and "destiny destroyers" are all used to represent the alleged male-offenders (outgroup). On the other hand, the women-victims are implicitly portrayed positively in excerpts 6, 7 and 8 while they are expressly portrayed positively in excerpt 9. In excerpt 9, women-victims are expressly described

positively by using the expressions "strong-minded females" and "intelligent individuals". Thus, positive in-group self-presentation manifests in the posts through implicit and explicit collective emphases on members' tolerance, intelligence and doggedness in the face of abuse while negative out-group other-presentation manifests via stark negative words. Thus, the sub-ideologies of positivity and negativity functionally run concurrently in the comments with a view to polarising good in-group and bad out-group as well as projecting the innocence of the abused and the malevolence of the alleged abusers. The polarisation thus pitches the two groups against each other in order to reinforce further resistance ideologies.

However, a close reading of the data further shows that the bad out-group also has a sub-category. A few comments categorise some good outgroup members by describing them positively as seen in excerpts 10 and 11:

> Excerpt 10: "*...sorry t disappoint u,i v neva been abused either physically, emotionally or oda wise… am 24 now wt 2kids n my hub respects me lyk a god…*" (Mummy Amanda, RC 7)

> Excerpt 11: "*I am not saying this to be disrespectful or to gloat, but after reading all this stories i am so grateful to God for my father, when i think of all the little things he does (eg wearing faded clothes or being super boring and never wanting to spend money on himself) and how we will harass him i am so mad because compared to all this stories am reading his fault are meaningless. Today i am going to go out and buy him a card.*" (Anonymous, RC 113)

Although the outgroup is extensively described in negative terms in the posts, a few comments, however, portray some outgroup members positively as seen in excerpts 10 and 11 above. Such depictions further create a polarisation between bad and good outgroup, and shows that not all outgroup members are abusers. This sub-category further reinforces the unbiasedness of some of the commenters.

5.3 Victimisation

Victimisation, the discourse structure of mapping discourse in a binary style of the victim versus the oppressor, is achieved in the readers' comments via empathic discursive iterability. By iterating good in-group versus bad out-group in the comments, the discursive structure of victimisation is emphatically reinforced, and the sub-ideologies of the oppressed versus the oppressor are further foregrounded. Instances of this can be seen in excerpts 12 to 15:

> Excerpt 12: "*Heartbreaking posts! WHAT women go through! ...*" (Mz. Estella, RC 160)

> Excerpt 13: "*Stella, God bless you for bringing up this topic. So many women are going through domestic violence but are too ashamed to talk about it…*" (Anonymous, RC 50)

Excerpt 14: "*there's no woman who can tell me she has never encountered one of these beasts before, they may not do it physically, but abuse u emotionally, psychologically even financially, they are beasts of no nation!...*" (Anonymous, RC 5)

Excerpt 15: "*You don't need to understand please, women undergoing DV live in perpetual fear of insecurity and helplessness...*" (Babino, RC 61)

The reiteration of the lexeme *women* in the three posts shows that women are the ones being discriminated against and not men. The nominal phrases *many women, no woman* and *women undergoing DV* in excerpts 13, 14 and 15, respectively, emphasise large-scale discrimination against women by men. The emphasis thus systematically represents women as the actual victims of DV while concurrently representing men as real threats to women's wellbeing in the domestic sphere. By empathising with the victims, the commenters not only identify with them, they also organise their posts in a binary structure of the positive in-group presentation and negative other-presentation which further foregrounds the sub-ideologies of the oppressor versus the oppressed as well as in-group positivity and out-group negativity.

5.4 Evidentiality and Number Game

Evidentiality represents the use of evidence or proofs to validate claims in an argument for the purpose of credibility while the number game also entails the deployment of statistics to augment objectivity. The most prevalent form of evidentiality in the comments is "third-party narratives", which are narrations by commenters privy to the DV experienced by a friend or a relative, and a few shared by commenters who are also victims. This discourse structure abounds in the data; a few instances are cited in excerpts 16-19:

Excerpt 16: "*Damn! I am literally shaking in my shoes, to think that one can endure such is beyond imagination! Ms Kay let me ask you, is your life worth your marriage?...*
My sister's husband is such a man, he was swindled of his millions by his cousin who he did business with & he changed into a bitter man, he got abusive, insults & psychological abuse & my sister dished it back to him… On day when she was 7months pregnant, he descended on her, know what she did?... she grabbed a wine bottle & held her ground …
He saw the dead look in her eyes, a woman willing to fight for her life & her unborn baby boy & had a second thought. After all said & done he has calmed down, changed & is now a loving man. He always said that that look in her eyes changed him, why? cos he saw A WOMAN WHO WAS NOT WILLING TO BE A VICTIM…" (Adriel, RC 31)

Excerpt 17: "*My question to abused women is dat dont they have brothers or male relatives?. The day my sister's husband laid his arms on her, that was d last time. I got to*

their house in a jiffy, wen d husband saw me coming, he ran into his car and ran away." (Anonymous, RC 72)

Excerpt 18: "*All these stories are enough to make one weep. I am so sorry our women are going thru this kinda violence and keeping quiet. PLEASE let them seek for help and get out.*
… I feel u jare. Had a friend who was being abused. I arranged for some street guys to look for the guy's trouble on d streets and deal wth him. O, they gave him a very sound beating. Sometimes, we need to do some underg's like that to give them a taste of their own medicine …" (Oluwatoyin, RC 79)

Excerpt 19: "*Stella, God bless you for bringing up this topic. So many women are going through domestic violence but are too ashamed to talk about it. My husband has beaten me about 5 times in our 17 years of marriage (blows, kicks, slaps, belt). The last time he tried it … my eldest daughter told him, the next time he lays a finger on me, she would make sure I leave with all of them (the kids).*
That was the last time he ever laid a finger on me. I think the shame that a child could say that to him really affected him…" (Anonymous, RC 50)

Excerpts 16 to 18 are comments laden with instances of incidents of DV the posters are privy to, and excerpt 19 reflects the use of a number game to reference the DV experience of the victim herself. In excerpt 19, the victim states the number of times (about 5) she has been assaulted and the time frame (17 years) of her marriage. References to such incidences do not only convey credibility, they also foreground the sub-ideology of negativity against the abusers. More importantly, a close reading of the above comments also shows various resistive attempts to DV. Excerpt 16 portrays the physical resistance of the victim to the assault and battery from her husband while excerpts 17, 18 and 19 share third-parties' attempts to resist DV against their loved ones. These aforementioned resistive attempts are thus imbued with the sub-ideology of combativity. Evidentiality in the comments, therefore, propagates the urgent need for victims of DV to become combative to liberate themselves from their alleged abusers. The propagation expressly portrays the sub-ideology of combativity in the resistance to DV and also foregrounds the notion that the victims' liberation lies in their or their loved ones' combative stance against all forms of abuse.

5.5 Metaphor

The metaphor refers to the discourse structure of invoking an express or implied comparison between two or more persons/objects. The data reveal that the posts are replete with the beast-metaphors that refer to the alleged abusers and symbolise their violent behavioural traits towards their spouses. Instances of such metaphors are cited in excerpts 20-22:

Excerpt 20: "*How do you lose your temper to a point where you strip your own wife naked and drag her outside? what humiliation and disgrace can be worse than that? How would u face those neighbours? How will she face those neighbours? Like seriously we are human beings and we should act as such. i think this beastly attitude is a function of ego, a whole me? Am a man, am the head, bla bla bla, then he turns into a bully. if your boss were to be a woman and she washes you down and insults you would dare hit her or even say a word? So y must the woman in the house be tortured for whatever reason?...*" (Angela, RC 134)

Excerpt 21: "*there's no woman who can tell me she has never encountered one of these beasts before, they may not do it physically, but abuse u emotionally, psychologically even financially, they are beasts of no nation!...*" (HYBunny, RC 5)

Excerpt 22: "*Get out of all these violent relationships jare. Domestic violence is on the increase because the women involved are indirectly encouraging the beasts they call husbands/partners…*" (Anonymous, RC 115)

Excerpt 23: "*Stella God bless you for this … I CELEBRATE EVERY WOMAN WHO HAVE FOUND A WAY TO STAND UP FOR HERSELF.EVERY OTHER PERSON SHOULD FIGHT BACK NOW BEFORE SHE ENDS UP DEAD.DONT LET THEM DECEIVE YOU. YOU WILL NOT STRAVE TO DEATH IF YOU ESCAPE THE PRISON.*" (Anonymous, RC 81)

The beast-metaphors represent negative other-presentation and depict the alleged abusers as threats, not just to their victims, but to the entire society. The metaphor also foregrounds the sub-ideology of combativity in that beasts are dangerous animals that are often combated with weapons. Implicitly, the metaphor suggests to victims of DV that they must see their alleged abusers as beasts that must be combated.

The prison-metaphor is used in excerpt 23 to symbolise marriage. The metaphor implicitly portrays the victims' marriages or intimate relationships as long-term confinement from which they must break free. The victims are represented as prisoners to their alleged abusers. The representation, thus, projects the sub-ideology of the captive versus the captor with a view to provoking empathy for the victims. These beast and prison metaphors are therefore negative and foreground the negative other-presentation of the abusers and their abusive traits.

5.6 Consensus
Consensus represents a discourse structure that seeks "*ingroup unification, cohesion and solidarity*" against negative others (van Dijk, 2000, p. 66). Consensus is achieved in the comments through the display of empathy and solidarity. By identifying with the DV experiences of the victims, the commenters consensually display the in-group information values that DVAW is heinous and must be collectively resisted. Instances abound in the data as seen in excerpt 24:

Excerpt 24: *"Hey Stella, I wanted to let you know yu've just earned my respect.*
We have a long way to go to get men to respect and VALUE women. Violence against
women should never be tolerated.
We must continue to speak so our voices may be heard…" (Anonymous, RC 30)

The use of the inclusive (plural) third person personal pronoun *We* in excerpt 24 portrays the in-group consensual resistance to abuses from the out-group. This display of in-group consensual resistance generates two basic sub-ideologies: empathy and solidarity. By empathising consensually with the women - victims of DV, the commenters create a bond of solidarity in the forum.

6. Conclusion

This study explores an ideological discourse analysis of readers' comments on women-victims of DV's narratives in Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary – Part One.* This is with a view to analysing the diverse discourse structures through which the commenters functionally use resistance ideological narratives to challenge DVAW. The study specifically elicits salient discourse structures in the readers' comments and then analyses their ideological functions as resistance discourses to DVAW using van Dijk's (2000, 2006) socio-cognitive approach.

Findings from the data analysis reveal that the readers' comments are discursively structured through these underlying analytical categories: polarisation; positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation (achieved via lexicalisation and implication); victimisation; evidentiality; number game; metaphor; and, consensus. Functionally, all these discourse structures, as deployed in the data, underscore the resistance ideologies; that is, the commenters' resistance to DVAW. However, each category functionally illustrates some subordinate ideologies of resistance, namely: the oppressed versus the oppressor; positive in-group presentation versus negative out-group presentation; the captive versus the captor; combativity; empathy; and, solidarity. Hence, the overall ideology of resistance that pervades the readers' comments can be further fragmented into the aforementioned subordinate ideologies.

Furthermore, the data analysis reveals that the overall polaristic nature of the comments, which diverges the oppressed from the oppressor, serves as the bedrock of the resistance ideological stances of the commenters. These ideological stances basically pitch the victims and the commenters against the alleged abusers, who the commenters extensively described negatively.

In sum, Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary blog* provides a robust avenue for the commenters to challenge the systems of domination that subsist in intimate relationships. Therefore, the DV diary can be seen as a discursive context of resistance to DVAW; a discursive site of struggle for liberation from male domination; and, a discursive platform of bonding against a common enemy – male domination.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Authors

Adetutu Aragbuwa is Lecturer I in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria. She holds a PhD in English Language from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Her areas of specialisation are discourse analysis, feminist critical discourse analysis and computer-mediated discourse analysis.

George Adekunle Ojo is an Associate Professor in the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Nigeria. He holds a PhD in English Language. His research areas are Phonetics, Phonology and Linguistics.

References

Abercrombie, N., Hill, S., & Turner, B. S. (1980). *The dominant ideology thesis*. G. Allen & Unwin.

Alexandra, J. H., Jane, M. U., & Janette, P. (2017). Regulation and resistance: Negotiation of premarital sexuality in the context of migrant and refugee women. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 00(00), 1–18. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2017.1336745

Arawomo, Y. K. (2016). Representation of gender-based violence in victims' narratives in Stella Dimoko Korkus' blog. (An Unpublished M. A. Thesis). Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

Bartels, L. (2010). Emerging issues in domestic/family violence research. *Research in Practice Report*, 10, 1-11. Australian Institute of Criminology www.aic.gov.au

Brown, A. D. (2000). Making sense of inquiry sensemaking. *Journal of Management Studies*, *37*, 45-75.

Chiluwa, I. (2012). Social media networks and the discourse of resistance: A sociolinguistic CDA of Biafra online discourses. *Discourse & Society*, 23(3), 217–244.

da Silva, M. T. (2015). What do users have to say about online news comments? Readers' accounts and expectations of public debate and online moderation: A case study. *Participations, Journal of Audience and Reception Studies*, 12(2), 32-44.

Dimitra, L. M., Konstantinos, V., & Venetia, P. (2012). "Their two cents worth": Exploring user agency in readers" comments in online news media. *Observatorio (OBS*) Journal*, 6(3), 021-047.

Duranti, A., & Goodwin, C. (Eds.). (1992). *Rethinking context: Language as an interactive phenomenon*. Cambridge University Press.

Eagleton, T. (1991). *Ideology. An introduction*. Verso.

Eamonn, C. (2004). *Power, discourse, and resistance: A genealogy of the Strangeways Prison Riot*. Ashgate Publishing.

Fairclough, N. (1994). *Discourse and social change*. G.U.P.

Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Language and social identity*. Cambridge University Press.

Henrich, N. & Holmes, B. (2013). Web news readers' comments: Towards developing a methodology for using on-line comments in social inquiry. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 5(1), 1-4.

Knights, D., & McCabe, D. (2000). Ain't misbehavin'? Opportunities for resistance under new forms of "quality" management. *Sociology*, 34, 421-436.

McCluskey, M. & Hmielowski, J. (2012). Opinion expression during social conflict: Comparing online reader comments and letters to the editor. *Journalism*, 13(3), 303-319.

McKenzie-Mohr, S., & Lafrance, M. N. E. (2014). *Women voicing resistance: Discursive and narrative explorations*. Routledge.

Negm, M. S. (2015). Resisting Power in Discourse. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 192, 284 – 289.

Ó Baoill, A. (2004). Conceptualizing the Weblog: Understanding What it is in order to imagine what it can be. *Interfacings: A Journal of Contemporary Media Studies*. http://www.comm.uiuc.edu/icr/interfacings

Okemgbo, C. N., Omideyi, A. K., & Odimegwu, C. O. (2002). Prevalence, patterns and correlates of domestic violence in selected Igbo communities of Imo State, Nigeria. *African Journal of Reproductive Health,* 6 (2), 101-114.

Putnam, L. L., Grant, D., Michelson, G., & Cutcher, L. (2005). Discourse and resistance: Targets, practices, and consequences. *Management Communication Quarterly 19(1)*, 5–18.

Reich, Z. (2011). User comments: The transformation of participatory space. In J.B. Singer, A. Hermida, D. Domingo, A. Heinonen, S. Paulussen, T. Quandt, Z. Reich, Z & M. Vujnonic (Eds), *Participatory journalism: Guarding open gates at online newspapers* (pp. 96–117). Wiley-Blackwell.

Ronfeldt, D. & Arquilla, J. (2001) Networks, netwars and the fight for the future. http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issues6_10/ronfeldt/index.html.

Schuth, A., Marx, M.&, de Rijke, M. (2007). Extracting the discussion structure in comments on news-articles. 9th ACM International Workshop on Web Information and Data Management (WIDM 2007) (pp. 97-104).

Scott, D. (2006). Eamonn Carrabine, Power, Discourse, and Resistance Book Review. *Theoretical Criminology* 10 (4), 536-539. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273072927

Stella, D. K. (2013-2017). Domestic Violence Diary 1-4. www.stelladimokorkus.com

Sunstein, Cass R. (2007). *Republic.com 2.0*. Princeton University Press.

Törnberg, A. (2013). Resistance Matter(s): Resistance Studies and the Material Turn. *RSN* (*Now Journal of Resistance Studies*) 1, 1-15. http://rsmag.nfshot.com/wp-content/uploads/Resistance-Matters-Anton...

van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: a multidisciplinary approach*. Sage.

van Dijk, T. A. (2000). Ideology and discourse. A multidisciplinary introduction. English version of an internet course for the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC). www.discourses.org

van Dijk, T. A. (2006). *Politics, ideology, and discourse. Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, Doi: 10.1016/BO-08-044854-2/00722-7. https://www.researchgate.net

Vinthagen, S., Lilja, M., (2007). "The State of Resistance Studies". In: *European Sociologists Association Conference*, Glasgow, Scotland.

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds). (2001). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. Sage.