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DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES AND RESISTANCE IDEOLOGIES IN VICTIMS' NARRATIVES IN STELLA DIMOKO KORKUS' *DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DIARY 1-4*: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This paper explores victims' narratives in Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary 1-4* by means of critical discourse analysis. The study specifically explores the discursive strategies deployed in the victims' narratives and analyses their ideological functions as resistant discourse against domestic violence (henceforth, DV). The data comprise fifteen (15) purposively selected narratives relayed by victims of DV in Stella Dimoko Korkus' weblog. The weblog was purposively selected because of its thematic global collection of narratives from victims of DV. The work employs van Dijk's ideological square approach to critical discourse analysis as theoretical framework. Findings from the analysis reveal that the victims, by means of diverse discursive strategies, advertently create polarisation structures and cognitions that represent themselves (the victims) as the dominated group, and their abusers as the dominant group. The study, therefore, foregrounds the role of Stella Dimoko Korkus' Domestic Violence Diary weblog in the instantiation of victims' resistance against DV. The significance of Stella Dimoko Korkus' Domestic Violence Diary as discourse of resistance against DV and of solidarity with women-victims of DV is thus illustrated.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Critical Discourse Analysis, ideology, weblog, Stella Dimoko Korkus's *Domestic Violence Diary 1-4*, and victims' narratives

1. Introduction

Domestic Violence (henceforth, DV) is a global phenomenon which encapsulates the deliberate and cyclical abuse of one partner by another in intimate relationships such as dating, marriage, cohabitation or within the family (UNFPA, 2005; Aihie, 2009; Adebayo, 2014). According to Ganley (1999: 16), it is “a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviours, including physical, sexual, and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion, that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners.” Significantly, men, women, boys, and girls could be victims of these behaviours (United Nations, 1993). Victims of DV are often subjected to traumatic experiences such as battery, rape, emotional torture, economic abuse, linguistic violence, acid baths, threats, amongst others, which could be fatal or nonfatal. Hence, such victims can be classified as a group being discriminated against on the basis of their gender or sexuality. Inasmuch as the critical discourse analytical approach critiques all forms of discrimination, it thus serves as a suitable framework to exploring the discourses of victims of DV in this treatise.

Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, CDA), also known as Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), is a multidisciplinary and multidirectional approach to the study of the discursive subtleties that pervade the enactment, reproduction, legitimation as well as resistance of power abuse, discrimination and inequality through text and talk in diverse social and/or political contexts (van Dijk, 2001, 2015; Wodak, 2009). It is an offshoot of critical linguistics and semiotic theories, and it is keenly interested in the relations of discourse, dominance, power, and social disparities (Benke, 2000; Anthonissen, 2001; Wodak, 2001).

This approach focuses not just on the formal description of discourse structures but seeks to expose “social-power abuse and inequality” with the primary goal of challenging such (van Dijk, 2015: 466). The exposure often uncovers what appears implicit in “relations of discursively enacted dominance or their underlying ideologies” (van Dijk, 1995: 18). The criticalness of CDA is geared towards ensuring researcher’s objectiveness to the data, maintaining explicit political stance in the analysis of the data, and embedding the data in the appropriate socio-cognitive local and global contexts to enhance results application (van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2001). CDA is thus critical due to its “problem-oriented objectives” (van Dijk, 2001: 96), and “social responsibilities” (98); hence, its viability as the theoretical base of this study.

Scholarship on critical discourse studies on gender, politics, racism, social welfare, media, etc. abound in diverse fields of research (e.g., Fairclough, 2000; Wodak & Meyer,

2001; Chilton, 2004). However, critical discourse studies on resistant discourses of oppressed groups remain largely under-researched. This dearth in CDA research is also noted by van Dijk (2015: 479) when making reference to Huspek (2009) that “discourses of resistance and dissent” by victims of domination and power abuse have been sparsely researched. The present study thus seeks to fill this gap. Although CDA is much more interested in political discourse (Chilton, 2004; van Dijk, 2015), it is not restricted to it. Therefore, this work examines the discursive strategies in the victims' narratives in Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary 1-4* and also explores their ideological functions as women-victims' discursive resistance against overt and covert toxic masculine habits and practices being carried out daily at the domestic domain (which have resulted in Domestic Violence).

This study is motivated by the need to examine the instantiation of resistant ideologies in the victims' narratives in Stella Dimoko Korkus' DV Diary blog. The examination of resistant ideologies in the diary becomes germane because they are rooted in the personal life-experiences of women-victims of DV, a specific oppressed group in the society. Thus, the role of weblog genre in the instantiation of victims' resistance against power abuse in intimate relationships is the focus of this study. The significance of Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary* weblog as a discourse of resistance against DV and of solidarity with women-victims of DV is therefore underscored.

2. Weblog, an Emergent Genre

Weblogs, otherwise known as “blogs” are emergent and interactive computer-mediated genre that provide avenues for online expressions of personal reflections, talents and creativities, in simple and accessible text-based format (Blood, 2000; Oravec, 2003; Wijnia, 2004; Herring, Scheidt, Bonus & Wright, 2004; Yus, 2007). Blogs have some basic generic features: they are text-based; they are dated entries chronologically organised in reverse sequence; they contain links to websites of interest; and provide commentaries on links (Blood, 2000; Herring, *et al.*, 2004; Miller & Shepherd, 2004; Ó Baoill, 2004). According to Oravec (2003: 226), developers of weblogs are called “bloggers”, their accumulation of entries are known as the “blogosphere”, and the chronological assemblage of their entries are called “posts”. Thus, Danah (2006: 1) conceptualises the act of blogging as “a diverse set of practices that result in the production of diverse content on top of a medium that we call blogs.”

Blood (2000) identifies three types of weblogs: filter blogs which provide relevant information on issues external to the personal life of the blogger; personal journals or diaries (Jurida, 2013; Arawomo, 2016) that provide personal information about the life of the blogger; and notebooks known as long essays that could either provide information about the blogger's life or matters external to the blogger. In expanding Blood's (2000) study, Herring et al. (2004) find that notebooks are rare in weblogs while personal journals or blogs are the commonest type of weblogs, followed by filter blogs. Although Greive, Biber, Friginal and Nekrasova. (2010) distinguish between personal versus thematic blog types, they also conclude that personal blogs are the most frequently used blog type. Therefore, blog type distinctions often concentrate on filter and personal blogs (Eldursi, 2013).

In the last decade, weblogs have created a wide array of veritable modes for discussing diverse issues across the globe. Topics such as politics, racism, sports, entertainment, technology, arts and culture, gender-related issues, etc. have been thematised in many blogs. Stella Dimoko Korkus, a female Nigerian blogger features diverse posts ranging from fashion, entertainment, news, gossip to women-related issues on her blog (Arawomo, 2016). Recently on her blog, she created an interactive platform, tagged "Domestic Violence Dairy (Part 1-4)", for victims of DV to anonymously share their experiences with the general public. This diary blog also opens up space (via readers' comments) to the general public to air their views on DV. Although the platform is generically labelled "Domestic Violence Dairy", most of the victims who shared their experiences are females.

Studies on DV abound in academia; most of these studies have explored its etiologies, types, effects, prevalence, and patterns (Okemgbo, Omideyi & Odimegwu, 2002; Aihie, 2009; Tilbrook, Allan & Dear, 2010; Galić, 2016). Others have investigated its health impacts on victims (Ganley, 1999; Chhabra, 2018); its impacts on children's psychological development (Volpe, 1996; UNICEF, 2006; Adebayo, 2013); as well as its legal dimensions and implications (Falana, 2013; Klein, 2015). In language-based studies, scholars have examined media representations of DV (Sutherland, McCormack, Pirkis, Easteal, Holland & Vaughan, 2015; Lloyd & Ramon, 2016); linguistic violence (Adetunji, 2010; McFarlane, 2012); the language of DV and sexual assault within the context of the criminal justice system (Easteal, Bartels & Bradford, 2012); and the reading and phonological awareness skills in children exposed to DV (Blackburn, 2008). However, victims' experiential narratives on DV have remained largely underexplored in linguistic theories and computer-mediated contexts. Although Arawomo (2016) investigates the

linguistic choices of DV victims in encoding their personal experiences in Stella Dimoko Korkus' blog, her analytical approach (feminist critical discourse analysis) is feminist and thus gender-centric. This thus necessitates the need to explore victims' narratives on DV using critical discourse analysis, a non-feminist and non-gender-centric approach. Auspiciously, Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary 1-4* provides suitable language data on DV victims' personal experiences. In sum, this study seeks to explore discursive strategies in the victims' narratives and their ideological functions as resistant discourse to DV.

3. Ideology in Discourse, Cognition and Society

The term "ideology" has been popularly seen as a highly flexible notion with definitional diversities, which Gerring (1997: 957) labels "semantic promiscuity". Scholars have made distinctions between ideologies characterised by shared social belief systems (Eagleton, 1991; Freedon, 1996; van Dijk 2006), "social polarisation between ingroup and outgroup" usually viewed as pejorative or negative ideologies (van Dijk, 2000: 7), and "positive or oppositional ideologies" commonly viewed as ideologies of resistance against domination (van Dijk, 2006: 729; van Dijk, 2000: 8). Despite the innumerable debates on ideology and the immense scholarly books written on its relevance in diverse fields, the notion remains controversial (van Dijk, 2000). In view of its semantic promiscuity, the ideological paradigm in this study has been narrowed down to van Dijk's (2000) multidisciplinary approach as it relates to discourse, social cognitions and society. To link ideologies with discourses and social cognitions at the levels of groups, group relations, social situations and interactions, van Dijk provides this multidisciplinary socio-cognitive working definition of ideology:

... ideologies are the fundamental beliefs that form the basis of the social representations of a group. They are represented in social memory as some kind of 'group schema' that defines the identity of a group. The fundamental propositions that fill this schema monitor the acquisition of group knowledge and attitudes, as hence indirectly the personal models group members form about social events. These mental models are the representations that control social practices, including the production and comprehension of discourse (van Dijk, 2000: 86).

Inasmuch as ideology is a function of the relation between the actual uses of language and their socio-cognitive contexts to produce certain rhetorical effects, then ideology is discursive (comprising discursive and non-discursive features), cognitive and social (Eagleton, 1991; Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk 2000; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Ideologies “derive not so much from the intentions of the ideologists (their values and beliefs), but rather from the linguistic norms in which they are embedded” (Gerring, 1997: 967); and Eagleton (1991: 11) posits that they are the means through “which men and women fight out their social and political battles at the level of signs, meanings and representations”. By implication, ideologies control the day-to-day texts, talks, and verbal interactions of members of any group and also influence their social cognitions (van Dijk, 2001; Chilwa, 2012).

These three conceptual categories of ideology – discourse, social cognitions and society are – to a large extent, intertwined. Discourse serves as the socio-cognitive groundwork in the daily expression and reproduction of ideologies in the society in that ideologies are discursively expressed and formulated in discourse. That is, discourses convey ideologies and make them noticeable. Hence, discourse is the kernel that links social cognitions and social representations with ideologies. On the other hand, ideological mental models control discourse which influences social representations (van Dijk, 1995, 2000, 2006; Ajiboye, 2013). In the words of van Dijk (2000: 88), a “theory of ideology without a theory of discourse is therefore fundamentally incomplete” since the cognitive and social properties of ideologies are controlled at the level of discourse.

Critical studies of ideologies in discourse thus enhance evaluations on the socio-cognitive influences of discourse structures in the expression, reproduction and legitimisation of domination and power abuse by dominant groups (van Dijk, 2006), as well as in the acceptance of or resistance against domination by dominated groups. Both dominant and dominated groups could be controlled by ideologies. The intertwining of all these concepts have led to van Dijk’s multidisciplinary socio-cognitive model of CDA.

4. The Socio-cognitive Model of CDA

This theory is founded on the postulation that ideology is not just social, it is also cognitive. The theory thus integrates the cognitive and social properties cum functions of ideology. Since ideologies are socially shared, a theory of ideology that lacks a socio-cognitive paradigm about “the nature and functions of socially shared ideas” is theoretically inadequate (van Dijk, 2006: 731). The socio-cognitive properties and functions of

ideologies are usually studied in terms of discourse structures and context structures that relate language use to specific discourse situations (van Dijk, 2006). Ideological variations of fundamental context models are usually found in discourses at the levels of meaning (semantics), form or structure (rhetoric), style, argumentation, and interaction (van Dijk 2000: 43-75).

Ideologies are often found in discourse polarisation that reflects conflicting group categorisations into ingroups and outgroups usually found in the typical pronoun pair *us* and *them* (van Dijk, 2000, 2006). Ideological discourse often embodies discourse strategies, outlined below:

- Emphasize Our good things
- Emphasize Their bad things
- De-emphasize Our bad things
- De-emphasize Their good things (van Dijk, 2006: 734).

van Dijk labels these discourse strategies the “ideological square” (van Dijk, 2000: 44). These general “positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation” characterise the ways we represent not only ingroups and outgroups in situations of group conflicts, but also how we portray ourselves and others (van Dijk, 2000: 44).

Van Dijk further splits the above discursive strategies into twenty-seven (27) to show diverse ways the ideological square could be expressed in discourse (van Dijk, 2000, 2006; Ajiboye, 2013). Due to space constraint, only eighteen (18) of these discursive strategies were elicited from the data in this study. These are: *topicalisation* (embodies the essential information of any given piece of discourse); *actor description* (refers to the ways discourse actors are portrayed – individually, collectively, negatively, positively or neutrally); *situation description* (refers to the description of actions, situations and experiences surrounding events in order to understand the causes and consequences pertaining to such events); *level or degree of description* (refers to language user's choice to describe an event abstractly, generally, specifically); *synonymy* (refers to a semantic relation of total or partial sameness in meaning of propositions); *example and illustration* (these functionally seek to provide proofs or concrete evidence in support of an argument).

Other discursive strategies are: *lexicalisation* (the expression of concepts and beliefs using specialised lexical items); *polarisation* (the categorical division of people into ingroup (US) and outgroup (THEM)); *positive self-presentation and negative other-*

presentation (these depict the overall strategies of portraying ingroup members positively and outgroup members negatively); *victimisation* (refers to the semantic strategy of systematically representing real victims in situation descriptions of events); *argumentation* (a situation in which a participant tries to make his or her standpoint more credible and acceptable); *evidentiality* (consists of a written or spoken evidence for establishing the validity of an argument); *topoi* (refers to the use of self-evident premises in support of an argument); *authority* (refers to the mentioning of morally superior authorities to support an argument or a proposition); *euphemism* (refers to “a semantic move of mitigation” van Dijk (2000: 68)); *metaphor* (refers to the invocation of a direct similarity between two objects); and *number games* (a semantic strategy where number and statistics are deployed to enhance credibility and objectivity in argumentation).

Since the ideological square is applicable to all texts, talks and verbal interactions, as well as all levels and variations of discourse structures (van Dijk, 2000: 44), the above theoretical discussion provides suitable analytical categories that will enhance a detailed analysis on how resistance against DV is expressed by discourse. Ideology covers the legitimisation of domination as well as the resistance against it. This shows that power is not only used negatively, but also positively. To resist power abuse, the dominated must also exert some power. The study therefore examines the discursive strategies deployed in the victims’ narratives and explores their ideological functions as resistant discourse against DV.

5. Methodology

The data for this study comprise victims’ narratives of their experiences on DV. The data were retrieved from Stella Dimoko Korkus’ blog’s archives (www.stelladimokorkus.com), titled *Domestic Violence Diary 1-4*. The diary has over one hundred stories shared by victims and witnesses of DV, with a large number of readers’ comments, which indicates that the topic is of a global concern. However, only fifteen (15) narratives from the victims were purposively selected for analysis in this paper. This selection was based on those victims that anonymously relayed their experiences themselves. The consent of the blogger was sought before the data were retrieved.

To enhance smooth data reference and analysis, the anonymous names used by the selected victims in the blogs were retained, and their narratives were grouped into Narrative 1-15 as highlighted below:

Narrative 1 MSKay TEXT 1
Narrative 2 Ayi
Narrative 3 TRUST NO MAN
Narrative 4 Depressed wife
Narrative 5 BL
Narrative 6 Egotamobus
Narrative 7 MSPEE
Narrative 8 Eva
Narrative 9 HYBunny
Narrative 10 Jummy

Narrative 11 ADA
Narrative 12 YOYO
Narrative 13 Dee
Narrative 14 NERO
Narrative 15 BABINO

The data were qualitatively analysed using critical discourse analysis as espoused in van Dijk's (2006) ideological square. Since CDA primarily focuses on domination, power abuse and resistance, the theoretical framework presents suitable analytical paradigms to investigate the ideological discursive strategies deployed by the victims in their narratives.

6. Data Analysis

A detailed and systematic analysis of discursive strategies in the victims' narratives and their ideological functions as resistant discourse is presented in this section. Eighteen ideological discursive strategies proposed by van Dijk (2000, 2006) have been adopted for the analysis. The strategies are grouped for explanation by relation, and in the order of importance (with appropriate examples cited from the data) to illustrate the ideological-based functions of discursive strategies in the narratives.

6.1 Topicalisation and Number Games

Topicalisation entails the discursive strategy of projecting the most important information in a discourse. The topic of a discourse could take the form of a title or a descriptive heading; it could also be in the form of abstract themes that characterise the purpose of a whole discourse. On the other hand, number game is a discursive strategy in which numbers and statistics are deployed to enhance credibility and objectivity in topicalisation or argumentation.

Although the diary is tagged Domestic Violence, a close reading of the data shows that all the narrations of the victims could be rendered in just a single thematic proposition: “Domestic Violence/Abuse is Cyclic”. The women-victims’ narratives depict cycles of abuses; hence, the narratives are experiences resulting from repetitive improper treatments of women from their intimate partners. This presupposes that an abuse that occurred just once in an intimate relationship would not be concretely classified as DV; the repetitiveness of the abuses thus marks them as such. Instances of the cyclical nature of DV are replete in the discourse structures of the data; three of these are cited in excerpts 1-3:

Excerpt 1: In 19 Years of marriage I have been abused more than I have been loved.....I have been beaten and slapped so many times, I feel like that very stubborn child whose mother is determined to flog him into his senses...I consistently go through various forms of disciplinary actions... I'm punished for every "wrong word", "wrong smile, wrong action" to the extent that everything I do now is WRONG. (Narrative 1)

Excerpt 2: I tried to put the whole thing in concise because this is what started over 19 years ago but I kept believing God that he's gonna change for good but rather the worst happened...Once it starts, it never gets better (Narrative 7)

Excerpt 3: I can't even begin to talk about my experience in the hands of my killer husband. married him for 12 years. lost one of my kids when he was trying to defend me from my husband. he wanted to hit me with an iron rod, my son tried to shield me, the iron landed on his head, he slumped and died. did my husband change? No! (Narrative 8)

In excerpts 1, 2 and 3, the victims have been subjected to DV for 19, 19 and 12 years, respectively. The numbers of years the victims have been subjected to domestic abuse are projected in the victims’ narratives primarily to foreground the fact that DV is cyclic, and thus real. As spelt out in the excerpts, once domestic abuse starts, it never stops. Findings from the data also show that two other abstract themes that implicitly characterise the narratives can be expressed by these words: change and resistance. The cyclical nature of

DV as topicalised in the narratives depict that abusers do not change; hence, the urgent need for victims to put up resistance against it.

Topicalisation in the victims' narratives is thus achieved via abstract themes and number games that foreground the persistent nature of domestic abuse women-victims are subjected to. The ideological thrust of this is that the women-victims share the social cognitions that DV is both cyclic and advertent, and must therefore be resisted.

6.2 Actor Description, Polarisation, Positive Self-Presentation and Negative Other-Presentation

These four ideological discursive strategies are intertwined. Actor description depicts the manner discourse actors are represented – individually, collectively, negatively or positively. The representation of discourse actors in ideological discourse is usually about US and THEM. Hence, actor description usually dovetails into discourse actors' polarisation into ingroup (US) and outgroup (THEM), a polarisation that embodies positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation.

Findings from the data reveal that actors are described as individuals and groups, and also by their role to other people. Thus, the descriptions have resulted in a divisional polarisation strategy of “I/me versus he”; “us/we versus our husband” as seen in excerpts 4, 5 and 6:

Excerpt 4: ... And nija is full of "us". We married but single ladies... Who pretend that our husbands are "busy" making money... We r single and pretending ... We look sound walk and talk married... WE ARE NOT ... (Narrative 1)

Excerpt 5: ... he punched me all over and kicked me in the stomach. I almost died. I couldn't shout, I couldn't call for help... (Narrative 4)

Excerpt 6: ... I don't remember what led to the first fight but it was shortly after the wedding/pregnancy during the fight, he kicked me in the stomach and I ended up in the emergency. I was so scared... (Narrative 6)

The actor descriptions are evident via the pronominal distinctions and nominal group identified above. The women-victims identify and describe themselves individually in each

narrative via the use of the first-person pronouns in the subjective and objective cases, *I* and *me*. By using *I* and *me* repetitively in their narratives (excerpts 5 and 6), the victims lend credence to their stories. Their abusers are described using the third person pronoun “he” to show that they are male. Also, actor descriptions are further elaborated via the use of “us/we versus our husband” (excerpt 4) in which by implication, the actors are described as groups – wives and husbands. Thus, the victims are categorised as “I/me/we/us ingroup” while their offenders are classified as “he/our husband outgroup”.

Apparently, with the above actor descriptions coupled with the thematisation of resistant ideologies in the diary, there is a reversal of the typical ingroup-outgroup polarisation. The oppressed (the victims) now constitute the ingroup members while their oppressors (the abusers) are now the outgroup members. This reversal is done to undo positive self-presentation and negative other presentation which largely control all discourses of power abuse. Thus in a bid to resist male oppression, these women-victims create polarisation cognitions that describe their own people as victims and their male-abusers as oppressors. This polarisation is rhetorically enhanced in a clear contrast in which opposing behavioural traits are attributed to ingroups and outgroups as seen in excerpts 7 to 12:

Excerpt 7: ... I'm tired of alluding to a 'mr' that no longer exists... A 'mr' that has gone his own way and has not looked at my side.... As in.... U know ... NO Sex for more than 10 years... So today I become who I am.... I'm a being a lovely... Bubbly Beautiful mum, girl, babe... (Narrative 1)

Excerpt 8: ... I Grew up in a decent home ... As a very beautiful young girl (as people said) ...When this guy came my way, I thought i had eventually gotten ... We dated for 11 months before getting engaged traditionally...One day, whilst we were talking about me furthering my studies... he picked offense and gave me the worst beating of my life... (Narrative 7)

Excerpt 9: ... i can easily be described as confident, easy going, intelligent, i was pretty, a lawyer and no one could take away wit and charm from describing me...i went ahead and started the long distance relationship... Then the mental torture and abuse started for real....

He would call me all sorts of horrible names, call me and my single friends old women who dont want to settle down. sometimes call us prostitutes... (Narrative 13)

Excerpt 10: ... Na wa oh! Was with my ex for 8 years and I still remember the beating like yesterday. This oloshi oloriburuku guy (excuse my language) turned himself into a lion for no reason!!! Went from name calling to pushing then slapping and finally blows. (Narrative 3)

Excerpt 11: ... I can't even begin to talk about my experience in the hands of my killer husband. (Narrative 8)

Excerpt 12: ... 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...wife beaters are destiny destroyers! (Narrative 9)

The above excerpts (Excerpts 7-12) reveal that the polarisations of the actors in ingroup and outgroup binary are imbued with ideologically inclined attributions of positive self-presentations and negative other presentations. The women-victims describe themselves as ingroup members in positive terms (see excerpts 7, 8 and 9), while their abusers are extensively described in absolutely negative terms in all the excerpts. The ingroup members describe themselves using adjectival expressions that denote endearment, confidence, integrity, peace and goodness such as “lovely... Beautiful mum”, “decent”, intelligent, “easy going”, and “confident”, and describe their abusers using negative terms, demeaning adjectives such as “killer husband”, “beasts”, “serial beater”, “oloshi oloriburuku guy” (derogatory Yoruba terms). Thus, ingroup representation is influenced by positive self-presentation, and outgroup representation, influenced by negative other-presentation.

Ideologically, the victims' narratives are characterised by collective resistance against domestic violence against women (DVAW), in which the victims (the oppressed) emphasise the positive characteristics of their own group and simultaneously emphasise

the offensive traits of their abusers, the outgroup. By emphasising the stark malevolence of their abusers (the outgroup), the polarisation makes the victims' narratives confrontational. Hence, the Diary could be seen as a confrontational discourse imbued with resistant ideologies against DVAW.

6.3 Situation Description, Degree of Description and Examples/Illustrations

The victims' narratives are characterised by stories that describe the situations surrounding their experiences, how they met their partners and the gradual translation of their love affairs from bliss to abuse. To show the degree and intensity of abuses experienced, the victims use specific and detailed examples or illustrations. Below are three characteristic instances:

Excerpt 13: ... I'll have slept for an hour then ill feel his heavy body on min trying to force his way in. Can I sleep, I'm tired, I'm not even wet ure going to hurt me. He wldnt listen he will force his way ask me to enjoy it and roll off after coming. Sleep for abt 30 mins. This time my back is turned to him crying he will lift up my nightie, if I'm wearing pant he will tear it and penetrate doggy, if he doesn't hear me moan in pain he will push harder till I start screaming and crying. I'll be hitting him and trying to run he will go after me and always overpowers me... (Narrative 2)

Excerpt 14: ... One day we went for his friend's party and when one of his friends talked to me all of 10 mins, he went into a jealous rage, poured the drink on the guy's head and stormed off, i apologised, chased after him and i jumped into the car, he sped off, going over speed bumps, screaming and shouting, abusing me, punching his windscreen, banging on the steering... (Narrative 13)

Excerpt 15: ... mine was that I was even beaten by him n his sisters. He will use his words to run me down. he hits me even not minding tht I was holding my baby, de pains was just too much for me... (Narrative 10)

The excerpts (13-15) above show specific instances of abuses experienced by the victims, and thus present the situation descriptions in detailed and coherent “episodic event models” (van Dijk, 2000: 70). These episodic models achieved via concrete examples/illustrations are ideological in that they provide empirical evidence of male oppression against women, contribute more to negative other presentation of the abusers, and further enhance resistant ideologies against DVAW.

6.4 Argumentation, Evidentiality and Authority

The victims' narratives subtly have argumentative structures in which the victims are seen trying to make their stories or standpoints more credible and acceptable with a view to provoking empathy and solidarity. By using substantial evidence, the victims prove the authenticity of their experiences. Some evidence used could be seen in the concrete examples provided in excerpts 13-15. Other pieces of evidence are provided through references to authority institutions, specifically the police force and lawyers, as seen in excerpts 17-19:

Excerpt 16: ... On that note I decided to take my case to the Nigeria police... I had my Lawyer with me taking notes ... And then the DPO reluctantly asked me to speak....and I spoke... then I proceeded to slowly take out my FALSE TOOTH....the one that fell out....the one I must wear everyday before my make upbefore my mask.....and I told them.....no....ordered them to LOOK...(Narrative 1)

Excerpt 17: ... I went straight to the police station, filed a report, went to court and got a restraining order. That was how my abuse ended... (Narrative 3)

Excerpt 18: ... I called the cops and he was arrested... (Narrative 6)

References to the involvement of authority institutions in excerpts 16 to 18 further convey the reliability and credibility of the victims' narratives. Also in excerpt 16, the victim's display of her “toothless state” validates the authenticity of her abuse and helps in shaping the value judgements of the audience. More importantly, the evidence cited emphasise

more negative other-presentation with a view to amplifying the ideology of resistance of victims against DVAW.

6.5 Victimisation

The polarised structure of the victims' narratives into the binary I-he or us/we-them pair of ingroup and outgroup seeks to represent ingroup members as the real victims of DV. That is, by representing outgroup members negatively as abusers, ingroup members are implicitly portrayed as the abused, the victimised. This is the dichotomy the victims' narratives seek to create. In excerpts 19 and 20 below:

Excerpt 19: ... he punched me all over and kicked me in the stomach. I almost died. I couldn't shout, I couldn't call for help...My husband has stripped me off the little confidence I had left, he refuses me working saying the kids are still small, he refused me having a house help saying they are all witches. he doesn't give me pocket money or anything... Now, to outsiders he is that calm, quiet, loved by all man... (Narrative 4)

Excerpt 20: ...My uncle and brother called him the "husband" type when they met him. He was (and still is) quiet around others. Another one of my uncles refers to him as a "the pastor" because of his demeanor. We got married a year after we met and I became pregnant immediately... he kicked me in the stomach and I ended up in the emergency... He wanted to sleep with my friends, and he wanted me to procure them for him. Stupid me so he wouldn't leave me, I made one such arrangement. In our house, in our guest room, while I was taking care of the babies...The saddest part is everyone thinks he's just the best person ever... (Narrative 6)

The narrators subtly use antithesis to underscore the contrast in the appealing, pleasant demeanours of their abusers and their abusive traits at the domestic scene; that is, abusers' behavioural traits at the domestic level contrast with their outward look to the extent that their victims are often disbelieved whenever they attempt to speak about the abuses they

are being subjected to. It would be so hard for a woman-victim of DV to convince outsiders that her husband, who appears so calm and quiet to the public, is indeed an abuser at home.

The antithetical posture taken in the two excerpts emphasises negative other presentation by subtly presupposing that abusers are crafty. And their craftiness masks their true characters or abusive traits thereby discrediting any claims of unfair treatment the abused may want to lay against them. Thus, the victims' narratives are replete with these antithetical instances to show that they are in fact being victimised by their supposedly "calm, quiet, loved by all..." male partners (Narrative 4).

6.6 Lexicalisation and Synonymy

Lexicalisation denotes the expression of concepts and beliefs via deliberate choice of lexical items. Findings from the data reveal that the victims in their narrations variably express similar meanings via different words. By implication, the victims' narratives are replete with the semantic relation of synonymy (sameness of meanings of words), both partial and absolute. The confrontational nature of the victims' discourse has typically resulted in stark negative expressions denoting male abusers and positive expressions characterising the abused. This has therefore foregrounded further the overall ideological strategies of negative other-presentation and positive self-presentation at the level of lexicalisation.

Thus, there are positive adjectival expressions such as "lovely, beautiful mum, very intelligent, loveable lady, loving, fun loving, trusting (Narrative 1); "very beautiful" (Narrative 7); "very beautiful lady" (Narrative 8); "confident, easy going intelligent" (Narrative 13) characterising the victims. Significantly, the adverb of degree "very" in some of the highlighted expressions is an intensifying device used by the victims to amplify positive self-presentation. On the other hand, negative nominal and adjectival expressions such as: "an abuser", "a kolomental" (Nigerian Pidgin word that denotes an insane person) (Narrative 15); "a beast" (Narrative 14); "wife beaters" (Narratives 3 and 9); "killer husband", "a very jealous and insecure man" (Narrative 8); "serial beater" (Narrative 10); "moron, bastard, idiot, fool", "this *oloshi oloriburuku* guy" (this evil man) (Narrative 3) characterise the abusers with a view to amplifying their negative presentation.

The lexical contrasts portrayed above primarily set an ideological dichotomy between the good nature of women-victims of DV and the wicked character of their abusers. This ideological dichotomy creates the consensus in the victims' narratives that

the harsh treatments meted out to them by their abusers are unwarranted; and thus, reinforces the heinousness of male hegemony. The ideological dichotomy created at the lexical domain is not only confrontational, it is also militant.

6.7 Metaphor

The victims' narratives are replete with many metaphorical expressions that are representative or symbolic of resistant ideologies. Few instances are cited in excerpts 21-24:

Excerpt 21: ... Today I choose to come out... I choose to come out of that cupboard today... I,m tired of stigmas... And nija is full of "us". We look sound walk and talk married... WE ARE NOT ... (Narrative 1)

Excerpt 22: ... Was with my ex for 8 years ... I am waiting for the day I will hear that the bastard is in Lagos!!! I will pay correct money to abokis to strip him waist down wherever they see him and use koboko to flog the hell out of him. Abeg nobody should insult me, I just want the idiot to have a dose of his own medicine... (Narrative 3)

Excerpt 23: It's very interesting coming across this wonderful blog of yours exposing what I call a killer disease that kills most women and they die untimely in the name of being submissive in marriage. I'm a victim and I have been seeking how to express what I went through for 19 years until I came across your blog... (Narrative 7)

Excerpt 24: My first bfy could be described as beast or sometimes he calls himself that... (Narrative 15)

The use of “cupboard” in excerpt 21 symbolises “prison”. In the excerpt, an implied comparison between marriage and a cupboard (a prison) is invoked. By saying that she has chosen to “come out of that prison”, the victim expresses her determination to set herself free from the prison cell of marriage to which she has been confined. Her determination for freedom depicts her resistant against DV. Also, the co-text in the excerpt further presupposes that married women experiencing DV are trapped in the prison cell of

marriage from which they must escape. Likewise, the nominal group “a dose of his own medicine” in excerpt 22 is also metaphoric in that DV is compared to doses of bad medicine. The comparison further strengthens the cyclic nature of domestic abuse and presupposes the victim's resistance to and militancy against it. The victim's earnest desire to become combative with her former husband implies that women-victims of DV are often vindictive, thereby making DV a complex phenomenon that often ends in mutual combats. The nominal expressions “a killer husband” and “beast” in excerpts 23 and 24, respectively, invoke and amplify the gravity of male oppression against women. The two metaphorical expressions draw comparison between the abusers and a threatening or dangerous person/animal. The direct comparison ideologically enhances negative other presentation of the victims' abusers and projects the abusers as threats to women, and to the larger society. This presupposes that DV is beastly and must be resisted. Thus, the metaphors used in the victims' narratives are mostly negative, resistant and militant, and thus categorised as ideological discursive strategies of negative other description.

6.8 Euphemism

Euphemism, a semantic strategy of mitigation is less dominant in the victims' narratives. Very few instances of the strategy can be elicited from the victims' narratives; one of such is cited in excerpt 25:

Excerpt 25: ... I'll have slept for an hour then ill feel his heavy body on min trying to force his way in ... I'm not even wet ure going to hurt me. He wldnt listen he will force his way ask me to enjoy it and roll off after coming... (Narrative 2)

The to-infinitive “to force his way in” in excerpt 25 is an attempt to mitigate the act of rape the abuser persistently subjected the victim to. The mitigation is however ideologically constructive in that it positions the rapist and the victim in an unequal power relation. The rapist is represented as more powerful and domineering while the victim is positioned as weak and slavish. This unequal polarised power relation enhances further the broader discursive framework of the strategies of positive self-presentation, negative other-presentation and victimisation. The enhancement amplifies the resistance ideologies.

6.9 Abuse (Topos)

In the victims' narratives, the main topos is that of domestic abuse of women. This topos is dominant in the narratives; however, the abuses experienced by the victims are of different types. Hence, the abuse topos is diverse in the victims' discourse as spelt out in excerpts 26 to 32:

Excerpt 26: ... A 'mr' that has gone his own way and has not looked at my side....
As in.... U know ... NO Sex for more than 10 years... (Narrative 1)

Excerpt 27: ... My husband has stripped me off the little confidence I had left,
he refuses me working saying the kids are still small... he doesn't
give me pocket money or anything. (Narrative 4)

Excerpt 28: ... he's so stingy to a fault (Narrative 5)

Excerpt 29: ... He stopped making love to me for 3yrs and used to cook his own
food... he gave me beating that I will never forget (Narrative 7)

Excerpt 30: ... He would plug electric iron and burn my buttocks and any part
of my body... lots of bruises, burns all over me. (Narrative 8)

Excerpt 31: ... mine was that I was even beaten by him n his sisters. He will use
his words to run me down. he hits me even not minding tht I was
holding my baby (Narrative 10)

Excerpt 32: ... Then the mental torture and abuse started for real. i He would call
me all sorts of horrible names... i found myself feeling inadequate
and my confidence waning. (Narrative 13)

As seen in the excerpts above, the victims were subjected to domestic abuse that ranges from sexual deprivation (excerpts 26 and 29), physical abuse and battery (excerpts 29, 30 and 31); rape (excerpt 25), emotional and psychological abuse (excerpt 27, 29 and 32), verbal abuse (excerpts 31 and 32) to financial abuse (excerpt 27 and 28). The diversity of

the abuse topos in the victims' narratives strengthens victims' negative other-presentation and victims' resistance ideologies against DVAW.

7. Conclusion

The discursive strategies and their ideological functions analysed above show the reality of DVAW and women's growing resistance to it. They portray the ways in which the victims' narrative discourse portrays resistance ideologies to DVAW through the polarisation of "I/me and he; Us/we vs. Them" and the strategies of positive self-presentation and negative other presentation. The analyses have provided insights on the various ideological discursive strategies and structures deployed by the victims to reverse the typical ingroup-outgroup polarisation. The women-victims now project themselves as the ingroup members while their abusers are categorised as the outgroup members in order to undo positive self-presentations and negative other presentations that are mostly dominant in discourses of power abuse.

Thus, in their bid to emphasise and resist male oppression, the women-victims create polarisation structures and cognitions that represent their own people as the dominated group, and their abusers as the dominant group. In sum, Stella Dimoko Korkus' *Domestic Violence Diary 1-4* is not just discursive, but also ideological. It can be construed as a positive, oppositional, and resistant discourse against DV.

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