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A Critical Discourse Analysis of a Selected Non-Governmental Organizations' Report on Violence against Women in Iraq

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Abstract
Violence against women stands as one of the most dominant human rights violations. There are no social, economic, or national boundaries when it comes to violence against women. It is estimated that one in three women in the world will experience physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives. Several non-governmental organizations' reports have addressed the problem of violence against women in Iraq. Thus; the current study provides a critical analysis of the discursive techniques that are employed in the non-governmental organizations' reports to show how Iraqi women are abused and subject to violence. Consequently; this study focuses on the linguistic and ideological underpinnings of a selected text on violence against women in Iraq. It attempts to show how language produces and maintains domination and abuse of power, engendering injustice, inequality, and ideological viewpoints. To answer this, the researchers draw upon van Dijk's (2011) socio-cognitive approach and (2000) ideological analysis. The findings of the study have revealed that the non-governmental organizations' report attempts to reflect the ideological position of the non-governmental organizations towards the Iraqi government, which declared its rejection of violence against women through its constitution and Panel Code. Despite this, the researchers have found that there is no actual adoption of these provisions in reality in its social context. Accordingly; the report has depended heavily on authority and evidentiality to show power relations and through the construction of reality based on societal perspectives. Using the linguistic and discoursal strategies employed in the analysis; the researchers have found that the report has materialized a negative attitude towards the government and society by referring to the power dominance which is exercised by social groups.
Keywords: critical discourse analysis, ideology, NGOs report, power relation, violence against women

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Introduction

Violence against Women (VAW) represents a violation of human rights and a global health problem. It involves physical, sexual, and psychological acts of violence that happen randomly or in long-term abuse. several documents have shown the prevalence of VAW across all geographic locations, nations, cultures, and economic groups. In all cases, it is presented as a manifestation of the inequality between men and women over history in which gender differences between the two have created cultural stereotypes and attitudes that enhanced a cycle of violence. Some surveys indicate that women in less developed countries suffer from higher rates of violence. This suggests that the economic state of Iraq plays an essential role in enhancing VAW (Blanchfield, Margesson & Seelke, 2009).

The effect of the economic state of the country on VAW is obvious in Iraq, where harsh socio-economic conditions resulted from economic sanctions (1990-2003) during Saddam Hussein's regime, and the US war in 2003 and its aftermath have affected women and gender relations severely, leading Iraqi women to be the main losers in Iraq's present and future, social and political map (Al-Ali, 2005). The US war in Iraq was followed by prolonged sectarian violence that has extravagant effects on women. In 2014 ISIL controlled some major cities. ISIL fighters have committed several violations of human rights, including flogging, killing, rape, and trafficking for sex. Within days, reliable stories of ISIL members abducting and raping women began to emerge. Iraqi women were immediately commanded to cover themselves and stay at home as part of ISIL's radical agenda (Davis, 2016). VAW, as a term, is frequently used to define a diverse range of acts. Killing, rape, and sexual abuse are examples of these crimes, as well as physical abuse, emotional assault, battering, harassment, sexual exploitation, genital mutilation, and sexual slavery (Crowell & Burgess, 1996).

Living in a patriarchal society, Iraqi women are so vulnerable to violence and lack physical, social, and economic support and protection. With all the conflicts that Iraq has been through, women live in tremendously challenging circumstances, which get worse with the death of the husband or male relative and the emotional and financial toll it takes (Iraq National Action Plan, 2014-2018).

In this case, Iraqi law should provide all the protection and support that women lack. Although the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 prohibits all kinds of violence, as stated in Article 29, "All forms of violence and abuse in the family, school, and society shall be prohibited," (p.13) still, the Iraqi Penal Code of 1969 is assumed to provide impunity for perpetrators of specific violations of women's rights including 'honor' crimes and rape. The Iraqi government has made specific essential steps to ensure women's rights, one of which is its assignment to international treaties concerned with women's issues, including CEDAW and ICESCR. Women's rights organizations, Iraq's Anti-Violence against Women Strategy (2013-2017), and the National Strategy on Advancement of Women in Iraq call for legislation on violence against women. Only the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has a law on violence against women.

Therefore, the current study scrutinises the Non-Governmental Organizations (henceforth, NGOs) report calling for the government to protect women's rights and terminate violence against them. However, in approaching this social problem, the researchers are concerned with how VAW

is represented in texts based on the writers' knowledge since "knowledge of real people in real communities is defined in terms of the beliefs that are generally accepted based on the knowledge standards or criteria of a community" (van Dijk, 2011, p.33).

Consequently, this study aims at providing a critical analysis of the discursive techniques that are employed by the NGOs report to show the violence against women in Iraq, which is not studied previously by scholars and researchers. Many researchers have focused on and scrutinized women's rights and violation of these rights concerning gender, media, and politics, such as Gungor and Prins (2010), Tranchese and Zollo (2013), Mosha (2013), Voller (2014), Källvik, (2018), Risdaneva (2018), Evianda, Ramli, and Harun (2019). Therefore, critical discourse analysis shows how language produces and reproduces domination and abuse of power, engendering injustice and inequality (van Dijk, 2001a). Thus, this study focuses on the language choices and ideological attitudes of the selected text on VAW through the adoption of van Dijk's (2011) socio-cognitive approach and van Dijk's (2000) model of ideological analysis. The study emphasises the importance of language in forming attitudes toward the problem of violence against women. Thus, an in-depth study about a serious problem can help to draw attention to other severe but underestimated social problems and to influence people's awareness, understanding and empathy.

The researchers attempt to answer the following questions:
1. What are the discourse topics that are highlighted to represent violence against women?
2. How does the selected text represent and construct women's identities through language use through using linguistic features, including grammar, lexicon, metaphor, rhetorical devices, evidentiality, modality, presupposition, implicature, and argumentation?
3. What are the ideological strategies that are employed in the selected text?
4. How are the participants' knowledge and attitudes reflected in the selected text?

Literature Review
In this section, the researchers have tended to give a brief review of the literature about VAW. Gungor and Prins (2010) studied the way equality between men and women is represented in prominent adult literacy textbooks in Turkey. The study examined the representation of gender roles and identities in visual images and reading texts. It is based on Gee (2005), Meyer (2001) and Rogers et al. (2005) analytical studies. The study adopted critical discourse analysis since it maintains that power inequalities between men and women are ideologically sustained and reproduced by textbooks.

A study that seeks to investigate VAW representation is done by Tranchese and Zollo (2013), in which they have conducted the British media. The study follows Fairclough's (2001) model along with Kress and van Leeuwen's (2008) theory of multimodality. The study examines how victims and perpetrators of rape are presented in the printed and broadcast media. This study analyses the recontextualization of rape incidents in two different media channels or news reports and across genres that use distinct verbal and visual elements.

By exploring the discursive construction of gender-related violence in Kiswahili novels, Mosha's (2013) research has centered on indirect exposure to violence against women. Since

novels in Tanzania represent an important medium of media and are especially important in the lives of young people, this research explored how novelists use dominant discourses of gender-based violence to interpret perpetrators and victims of violence. Using Foucauldian discourse research, a collection of 15 Kiswahili novels, written between 1975 and 2004, was studied to expose the tactics novelists use as they depict, replicate and often question prevailing discourses in their novels about violence against women.

A study that was conducted in Iraq is done by Voller (2014). It sought to reveal the gender-based violence in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and the legal attention which should be given to this subject. It stressed the practical measures that should be done to prohibit practices such as honor killings, female genital mutilation, and domestic violence. The position of transnational women's rights networks in the area is particularly addressed in this report. It highlighted the active strategy of these networks to tie their purpose to the KRG's effort to legitimize and establish its disputed hegemony over the territory of Kurdistan. In doing so, the paper discussed an underexplored topic in the Kurdistan Region's literature on women's rights movements and adds to the study of transnational activism as a source of normative reform.

Källvik (2018) has studied the representation, articulation and negotiation of sexual harassment and assaults in Swedish social media and in particular Twitter, focusing much on a campaign named #metoo that highlights how many people had experienced sexual harassment. The analysis was based on Fairclough's (2003) model and a feminist poststructural approach. Sexual violence was seen as a concept that is discursively created and thus, based on the particular moment, location and context in which it is generated, is often non-stable and always negotiable. Therefore, three themes were specified: boundaries, institutionalisation and tensions. They all promoted an intention of turning all the problems of sexual assault into a lack of employer responsibility and the working environment by presenting an image of sexual abuse as a complex concept without defined boundaries. Sexual abuse is often viewed in Sweden as both a brand-new problem and something that has already been a reality in the lives of many people.

Risdaneva (2018) has scrutinized the way women are presented in the news report of crimes of sexual violence against women. The study examines two newspapers that are from different cultures, the Jakarta Post and the Guardian. The Jakarta Post is an Indonesian newspaper whereas the Guardian is a British newspaper. The study uses the naming analysis of social actors as an analytical tool, which is a part of critical discourse analysis. Naming is a tool proposed by van Leeuwen (2003) to investigate how social roles are represented in specific contexts. This analysis investigated the choice of lexical items in representing the main news actors. The results of the research reveal that the selections of the naming categories employed by the newspapers are different.

A focus on psychological gender-based violence is given in the study of Negash, Demise and Fenta (2018). The study emphasises the way such kind of violence is represented through language in the Jimma Zone of Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia. Women, children, attorneys, gender consultants and police officers were identified in the region involved in the report. Using focus group conversations and main informant interviews, the required data for the analysis is gathered. Using CDA as an analytical approach, the researchers drew on Fairclough's

(2003) framework. The study has shown different forms of psychological gender based violence, including sexual harassment, using non-verbally provoking and molesting acts, distribution of inappropriate, insolent and obscene suggestive or evaluative remarks, and verbally intimidating and teasing girls and women with flirtatious actions.

Wolf's (2018) study, however, focused on anti-violence initiatives and their role in media. The study first identified the way different programs and formats represent identical (visual) narratives of cliched imagination on intimate partner abuse, although much of the issue stays concealed in its structural context. This confusion affected the comprehension of gender-based violence as a societal phenomenon. Women's anti-violence movement may help provide alternative appropriate representations and contrast with the 'malestream' representation of the subject. The study analysed the contributions of anti-violence initiatives that spread over Europe, Spain and Austria from 2007 to 2011. The study seeks to reveal how the collective accounts of male-to-female relationship conflict are shaped by anti-violence programs, highlighting examples of good practice and basic ideological principles.

In the description of women's position in Prohaba Daily News texts, Evianda, Ramli and Harun's (2019) have employed Mills and van Leeuwen (2008) model of critical discourse analysis as an analytical tool, focusing on investigating actor position, exclusion and inclusion. The research findings prove that women are described in both subject and object positions in Prohaba Daily News texts. In three reports, women were given as non-marginalized subjects, whereas in two news reports, women are given the position of the non-marginalized object. Regarding marginalization, by using exclusion and inclusion strategies, women in the marginalized object position are identified in eight news reports.

Another study was done by Hoppstadius (2019) which analysed the way women are presented from an intersectional perspective. The study conducted five Action Plans for combating men's violence against women. These Plans were adopted by the Swedish government as a way of protecting women subjected to violence. The study is based on Fairclough's (1992; 2010) framework. It showed that first, women are grouped into numerous categories which are likely to contribute to the perception that specific classes of women are victims of abuse. Second, in a heteronormative sense and a gender-equal context, women are described. This neglected non-heterosexual abuse. Third, both their duty and their lack of agency were emphasised by the definition of women as agents. Hoppstadius ends by suggesting that women should be taken into consideration along with their situation and needs, otherwise, they would be given inadequate help and support, which might put victims of violence in danger.

Theoretical Framework
Van Dijk's (2011) Socio-Cognitive Approach
Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach contends that the connection between discourse and society is mediated through cognition. This cognitive mediation has a role in grasping the link between social structures and discourse structures. Although these types of structures are different, they can be associated with the mental representation of language users as individuals and as social members (van Dijk, 2001). Thus, the socio-cognitive approach has a *Discourse-Cognition-Society* triangle. Each component will be described below.

Cognitive Component

Traditionally, 'cognition' was generally understood as being 'consciousness', which is both a vague and abstract term. Within the sociocognitive theory, cognition is said to include both 'model' in episodic memory (referring to personal knowledge and beliefs about specific circumstances, events, and experiences) and "systems of group knowledge, attitudes, norms, and ideologies, represented in 'semantics' or rather 'social' memory". Each cognitive system can be represented differently with particular discursive contents and structures. Likewise, mental and social uses require different cognitive strategies. Mental processes can be described at the macro-level of analysis, and can be reproduced, acquired, confirmed, or changed through the micro-level (van Dijk, 1991).

Cognitive structures involve the following points such as *memory* which is the space in which cognitive processes are located or stored. *Mental models* in which the personal memories are interpreted as personal, distinctive, individual mental models, preserved in Episodic Memory, after being processed in Working Memory. *Social cognition* means that cognition not only includes personal mental models, but there are also different socially shared cognitions. Individuals of the same community share generic and abstract knowledge of the world. (van Dijk, 2015). Therefore, van Dijk (2014) suggests distinguishing between 'personal' and 'social' cognition. Individuals produce and subjectively interpret discourse(s) through personal cognition, based on their "socially shared representations" (social cognition). Whereas personal cognition is understood as knowledge and mental models, social one is reflected in attitudes and ideologies. Social cognition is given in three forms that are crucial to the understanding of discourse. They are *knowledge* (personal, group, cultural), *attitudes,* and *ideologies* (Meyer, 2001).

Knowledge of the world is a prerequisite element to all cognitive processes "of perception, understanding, action, interaction, language use, communication, and discourse." In the interpretation of discourse, such knowledge is enabled and expressed in the comprehension of words, meanings of expressions, and overall meanings of discourse, and the creation of personal mental models. Conversely, this knowledge can be acquired and improved through comprehending discourse and forming mental models (van Dijk, 2018). At all levels of discourse, knowledge is expressed and communicated, for example, through stress placement or word order to structure topic and emphasis information in sentences, the expression of knowledge sources in evidential*,* the use of "implications, implicatures, presuppositions, argumentation, among many others" (van Dijk, 2015, p.68).

Regarding attitudes, they are fundamentally social, just as sociocultural knowledge is. In other words, they should not be interpreted as personal beliefs that are stored in mental models. Members of the social group share these attitudes, but each with their own "identity, actions, norms and values, relations to other groups and resources"(van Dijk, 2014, p.9). The relationship between social groups and their members is reflected in attitudes, as is the way that individuals use language to communicate their views on various social topics, situations, people, or groups. Group members' social activities are often shaped by certain attitudes, such as ethnic discrimination, which is often used to justify various kinds of segregation, and discriminatory speech (van Dijk, 2014).

In addition to attitudes, social cognition includes social knowledge, which refers to beliefs shared by all or most members of a given community, and ideologies which are the "basis of the social representations shared by members of a group" (van Dijk, 1998, p.8). Ideologies enable individuals, as community members, to arrange and act appropriately depending on social beliefs about what is the case, positive or negative, right or wrong, for them. Ideologies can also form the foundation of certain arguments for, and explanations for, specific social constructions or indeed shape a particular worldview in general. Ideologies serve the material and abstract interests of the group, mainly those of domination over other groups and resistance against the dominated groups, both of which have an essential role in developing ideologies. They function locally as given in everyday social practices and globally as the socially shared mental 'monitor' of social opposition, conflict, struggle, and discrimination (van Dijk, 1998).

Since they are socially shared beliefs, ideologies are not personal or private, however, they are not any kind of beliefs but more fundamental or axiomatic. They control and organize other socially shared beliefs. They are gradually acquired and modified over a lifetime or an extended period, and so need to be relatively constant. One does not become pacifist, feminist, racist, or communist suddenly, nor change a fundamental ideological stance in a matter of days (van Dijk, 2006a).

Ideologies are relevant to the study of discourse since "people acquire, express and reproduce their ideologies largely by text or talk." Discourse structures and social structures can be related through ideologies. Thus, properties of social relations like class, gender, or ethnicity, are regularly associated with discourse structures, such as structural units, levels, or discourse strategies embedded in the social, political, and cultural situations. Similarly, the relations between, on the one hand, social organizations, institutions, classes, occupations, contexts, power, or political decision-making, and, on the other hand, the systems of discourse (van Dijk, 1995).

Generally speaking, discourses are influenced by ideological polarization, which is a schema in which a group conflict is involved, and it stresses the opposition between the two groups or between Us and Them. In this way, groups create an ideological representation of themselves and others. Such representation is based on emphasising Our positive characteristics and emphasising Their negative ones. "Positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation seems to be a fundamental property of ideologies" (van Dijk, 1998, p.69). This strategy includes 'good' attributes of Our friends and allies and 'bad' attributes of enemies. Rhetorical devices may be used to enhance polarization, stressing the contrast between the features of 'us' and 'them' (van Dijk, 2006b).

Social Component
Explaining cognition entails that language users are, above all, members of social groups, institutions, and organizations, in addition to being unique individuals with their minds and experiences who use text and talk to interact and communicate with other participants. Hence, a social source for cognition and discursive interaction is needed, similar to the way the cognitive interface is needed to define and elucidate many properties of discourse (van Dijk, 2014).

It should be noted that discourse, society, and cognition are interrelated, and different aspects of discourse and cognition that are given above (like knowledge and ideology) are simultaneously social. Accordingly, society can be scrutinized at the level of communication and situations and the level of communities, social organizations, and institutions. Social structure and discourse are linked by social structure representations in the mind of social participants and constructing these social structures through discourse and communication between members as social actors. And though the macro concepts of power and dominance are the primary concern of the CDA, their real analysis is conducted at the micro level of discourse and social practices. (van Dijk, 2001b).

Discourse Component

Although it is essential to determine the nature of the cognitive and social elements of the theory, the crucial role of critical discourse analysts is the discourse element. CDA does not establish a specific theory of discourse structures, instead, it goes beyond typical structural theories of discourse. Critical discourse analysts identify and illustrate how discourse in society can be engaged in the (re)production of power abuse or against such dominance. This also includes a cognitive dimension which is essential to account for the role of knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies in such discursive dominance (van Dijk, 2015).

Described in this way, this approach is perfectly suitable for this study, since it concentrates on mental models concerning cognitive components such as ideology, knowledge, and attitudes and how they can influence discourse. Besides, the present research attempts to reveal the importance of ideology in discourse. Therefore, it tends to follow van Dijk's (2011) model in which he specified some of the discourse structures, such as topics, actor description, levels, details, the precision of description, evidentiality, metaphor, presupposition, implicature, lexicon rhetorical devices, and argumentation.

Van Dijk's (2000) Model of Ideology

The researchers adopt van Dijk's (2000) framework in which he illustrated the categories that are most important in any CDA study. Based on the theory of the ideological square that represents the ideological analysis that is followed in the current study. The theory of ideological square consists of four principles, as shown in the table.

Table 1. *Van Dijk's model (2000, p.44)*

	Us	Them
Emphasise	Emphasise positive things about Us.	Emphasise negative things about Them.
De-emphasise	De-emphasise negative things about Us.	De-emphasise positive things about Them.

This theory is essentially dependent on two core strategies, i.e. "say positive things about Us, say negative things about Them" van Dijk (2000, p. 44). These strategies are materialised through different discoursal moves like Compassion, Disclaimer, National self-glorification, Polarization, Vagueness, Humanitarianism, Authority, Categorization, Comparison, Counter-factual, Empathy,

Example, Explanation, Generalization, (il)legality, Number Game, and Victimization. Most of these strategies in this framework are selected since they are closely related to the data.

     Thus, the study combines these models to analyse the selected NGOs' reports in question. Figure (1) elucidates the theoretical framework adopted in the present study.
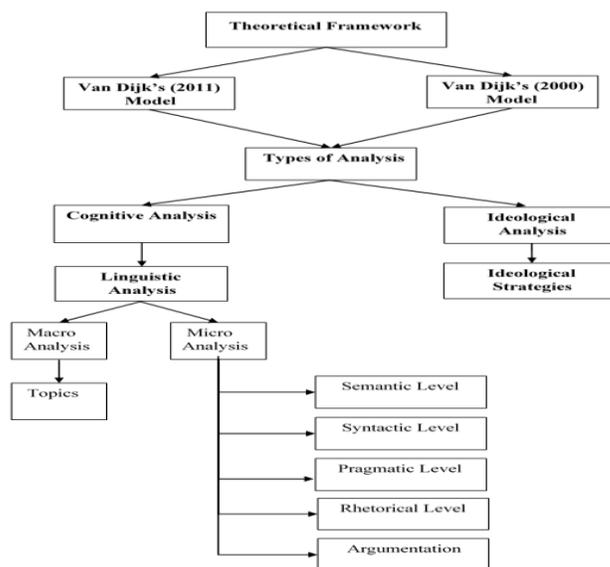

Figure 1. The theoretical framework of the study

As Figure one shows there are two types of analysis adopted. First, the cognitive analysis is done by following van Dijk's (2011) model and starting with linguistic analysis which is divided into *macro-analysis* and *micro-analysis*. The *macro-analysis* aims at revealing the discourse topics or themes. Moving to the *micro-analysis*, the study tries to illustrate the linguistic features of the data starting with the semantic level and syntactic one, then moving to pragmatic and rhetorical levels. Once this is done, the researchers are to follow the second model, van Dijk (2000), trying to uncover the most prominent ideologies followed by both sides by examining specific ideological strategies.

Methodology

    The present study follows a qualitative research method where the collected data is analysed to end up with naturalistic, interpretive rather than statistical outcomes (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Qualitative analysis is a way of studying and comprehending the meaning that individuals or communities attribute to a social or human problem. Inductive analysis of the data is done so that it moves from particulars to general themes, trying to explain the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014). What characterizes qualitative research is that it emphasises the process, interpretation, and meaning. The leading agent of data collection and analysis is the researcher, usually following an inductive process ending with a highly descriptive product (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Compared to quantitative analysis, qualitative research is concerned with context rather than statistical assumptions and estimates (Crosby & Salazar, 2020).

Due to this fact, qualitative researchers generally prefer purposeful sampling, which emphasises the in-depth understanding of particular cases that are information-rich. Purposeful sampling should be understood in terms of how many issues can be derived from the samples that are of great significance to the purpose of the research (Patton, 2015). Relevance, purpose, and having good information are given much more weight within purposeful sampling than being representative, which is a characteristic of random statistical sampling (Fletcher & Plakoyiannaki, 2011). Therefore, the current study depends on purposeful sampling.

Data Selection

The researchers chose a report entitled *Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination Against Women and Girls in Iraq* (2019). This report is submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women by various organizations such as the organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI), ASUDA, MADRE, Human Rights and Gender Justice (HRGJ) Clinic, City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law, Al-Taqwa Association, Awan Organization, and Baghdad Women Association. It can be accessed on the following official electronic website in the form of a word document https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/IRQ/INT_CEDAW_ICO_IRQ_33722_E.docThe report was submitted to CEDAW by various organizations. It addresses the different forms of violence that are prevalent in Iraq and reflects on the government's response to these forms.

Data Analysis and Findings

This section offers a thorough analysis of the NGO's report through the adopted framework. This framework is utilized to identify the macro-structures and micro-structures that are essential to revealing the ideological attitudes found in the selected text.

Discourse Topics

The analysed discourse includes several topics that address the central theme of the text, which is violence against women. The macro-propositions that define the entire text can be illustrated as follows:

1) Sexual and GBV, including honor killings, early marriages, and sex trafficking, is increasing in Iraq, and the government has failed to prevent or address them despite its obligations under CEDAW.
2) Crimes committed by ISIL based on gender are also highlighted, calls for transparent trials acknowledging these crimes, and demands pay attention to the rights of women fleeing ISIL.
3) NGOs are not allowed to provide shelters for women, and such shelters are illegal and legal shelters provided by the governments take a long process to accept victims.
4) Collaboration between the government and the NGOs is needed to provide enough space for victims' needs.
5) Women's legal identification is given based on the support of a male companion, putting much difficulty on widows with no death certificate for the father and rape victims.
6) Discrimination is experienced by women of disabilities and Afro-Iraqi women.

The reduction of these main macro-propositions might lead to a more global macro-proposition that summarizes what the whole discourse is about. It can be given as '*Different forms of violence*

are experienced by women in Iraq where most of these crimes are socially accepted and lack of enough legislation that helps to prevent them, besides biased legal provisions, regardless of Iraq's international human rights obligations under CEDAW.' This topic is structured from the six higher-level macro-propositions and utilizes the construction of macro-rule. Moreover, this topic gives information that is partly expressed in the title of the report.

Linguistic and Ideological analysis

Because of place constraints, some extracts from the texts are identified according to the four types of violence against women that the researchers have selected; therefore, the reader can access the whole text online on the website mentioned in the list of references. Thus, the linguistic and ideological analyses are based on van Dijk's (2011) model, amalgamated with the ideological analysis provided by van Dijk's (2000) model.

Extract 1

II. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Iraq
Honor Killings
Recent years have seen an increase in "honor" killings of women in Iraq as a result of a variety of factors including weakening institutions, an increase in violence from armed militias, and the reinforcement of tribal and religious norm….In 2017, 272 cases of "honor" crimes and 3,400 domestic violence cases were reported to the police and referred to courts. In the aftermath of the conflict with ISIL, many women are still at risk of "honor" killing as they return to their homes for perceived "dishonor" they bring to their families and communities.... Women in prominent positions such as politicians, journalists, doctors, and human rights defenders are also targeted for "honor" killings for defying gender roles and taking on active public positions…. In 2002, Law No 14 amended the Iraqi Penal Code, stating that the killing of women for reasons of "honor" is no longer a legal excuse that may lessen the punishment for purposes of the applications of Articles 128, 130, 131. (Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination Against Women and Girls in Iraq, 2019, p.1)

This extract is about sex and GBV, specifically about 'honor' killings. The extract starts with an *argumentation* about the increase of honor killings crimes where different factors are used as *arguments* to prove this standpoint so that it is viewed as a fact. These factors are "weakening institutions," "violence from armed militias," and "tribal and religious norms." These factors are not only used to prove the prevalence of 'honor' killings but also reinforce the already established *negative description* of the government. The *nominalization* utilized in the first sentence, "the reinforcement," helps in the negative description of the society since its religious and tribal norms are described as being 'reinforced' instead of intentionally followed. Furthermore, the word 'religious' is mistakenly used here because the majority of Iraqi society are Muslims, and Islam has declared that these crimes are prohibited in the Holy Quran as it says "whoever kills a believer deliberately, his reward is Jahannam (hell) where he shall remain forever, and Allah shall be angry with him and shall cast a curse upon him, and He has prepared for him a mighty punishment" (Surat Al-Nessa, 93 translated by Ali, 2003). Both the Holy Quran and the Hadith (the sayings of Mohammed) have not condoned these crimes.

Facts given about a topic can be asserted with *modality* as being possible, probable, or necessary (Van Dijk, 2011). Thus, the fact that honor killing cases are unreported is asserted as a probable situation where the adverb 'often' is used to suggest that. When the text mentions the difficulty of finding accurate statistics, *contrast* is used, which reveals much about the organization of the information in the writers' mental models. The first phrase is given as a fact, and hence, it is true that most cases go unreported, whereas the second phrase represents an opinion and therefore such estimates are not confirmed. In structuring a discourse, writers usually present certain *evidenc**e** for their views or claims. This can be seen in the way the report mentions the number of 'honor' killing cases in 2017 according to UN estimates which serve as evidence to prove that these crimes are frequent. The way honor killings are viewed is based on the international system of beliefs. Therefore, in describing women abused by ISIL, the phrase 'perceived "dishonor"' is used to criticize the system of beliefs in Iraqi society. The word ''perceived' suggests that it is not a fact or real dishonor but rather a misguided belief. Also, in the argumentation about the risk faced by victims of ISIL crimes, an *example* is used as an *argument* or proof for the threat experience by those victims. In addition to that, the phrase "unjustly incarcerated under false charges" can be related to the negative description of the government because it *implicates* that, arbitrary arrests can happen where free people are falsely judged and that law is unfairly applied.

Then, the extract reflects on the way the Iraqi Penal Code deals with these crimes, which is described as being discriminatory since it offers mitigated sentences by the use of the phrase "honourable motives". This sentence is structured in the form of *topic-comment*, where the comment or the information that is assumed to be new for the speaker is the mitigated sentences provided for killers. This helps to improve the impunity for VAW that is already suggested. The fact that the penal code is amended *implies* that it is applied in a wrong way, and thus, 'honor' killings are declared illegal. Two *nominalizations* are used 'the killing' and 'the punishment' drawing attention to the action and its consequences. Then, *contrast* is used between the amendment of the Penal Code and the wide interpretations of it. This helps to reinforce the government's failure in protecting women. It is further proved through the phrase 'a lack of legal protection against "honor" killings' which contributes to the negative description of the Iraqi government. Saying that honor killings are socially accepted refers much to the shared beliefs of Iraqi society which suggests that the action is described as being *permitted* due to social norms.

Different ideological strategies are used within this extract starting with *norm expression* which is utilized from the beginning since 'honor killings' are crimes that occur for social norms considerations. *Negative other-presentation* is maintained by revealing the government's inability to prevent 'honor' crims due to weak institutions and discriminatory laws. The writers also make use of *number game* to demonstrate the fact that honor crimes are prevailing by providing estimates done by the UN. This strategy also coincides with the ideological strategy of *authority* since the reference to estimates done by the UN serves to support the claims about increasing in 'honor' killings. *Generalization* is also used in mentioning women in high positions as being targeted for honor killings. With the employment of *illegality*, the report reinforces the fact that legal provisions are biased. Therefore, the report makes use of the Iraqi Penal Code to show where impunity can be granted to perpetrators of these crimes, on the base of what is called "honourable motives." The fact that there are no trials for perpetrators of such crimes and that women are left

in fear allude to *victimization* as a key ideological strategy. Women in these situations are described as victims with no social or legal support. This may relate to *empathy* as another strategy used by the writers in addressing women denied their human rights.

Extract 2

      Response by the government of Iraq

      Given the increase in "honor" killings in recent years it remains clear that the government has failed to adopt a strategy to eliminate the practice of "honor" killings. While we commend the government's recent steps to launch the National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women in Iraq in coordination with UNAMI and UNFPA, the lack of government will to pass much needed legislation to address gender-based violence, such as the pending Family Violence Protection Law, contravenes this national strategy.…This interpretation fails to acknowledge the culture of impunity created by allowing for mitigated sentencing when crimes are committed for so-called "honourable motives." Without tackling the underlying cultural norms and customs that permit "honor" killings, and impunity for "honor" killers, Articles 128, 130, 131, and 409 of the Iraqi Penal Code will continue to allow impunity for "honor" crimes committed against women. (Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination Against Women and Girls in Iraq, 2019, p.2)

In this extract, a *focused structure* is given from the beginning through the fronting in which important elements are placed initially unlike where they are normally found, thus making them more prominent (Altiner, 2018). This is seen in the placement of the verb 'given' at the beginning of the sentence which seeks to heavily stress the increase in 'honor' killing cases and the estimates given already. This focus on the high rates of these crimes is followed by an *active construction* showing the agency of the government and stressing their failure in eliminating this violence. The phrase "remains clear that the government has failed" continues to describe the government as having failed in an obvious way which contributes to its negative description. In mentioning the government's steps to protect women's rights, an *active sentence* is used "While we commend the government's recent steps" helping to establish a positive presentation of the NGOs since they are viewed as being neutral taking both, the positive and negative sides of the government's actions. Also, this extract *presupposes* knowledge about the government's attempts to launch national strategies to protect women's rights. However, these attempts are underestimated through the use of *contrast,* concentrating on the government's unwillingness to pass needed legislation. The fact that there is a contradiction in the government's actions alludes to a negative presentation of the government, describing it as fluctuating and not having a well-defined ideology or consistency in dealing with women's issues.

      The government's response to the Committee represents an *argumentation* upon whether the phrase "honourable motives" provides mitigated sentences or not. A *negative lexicalization* is used through the verb 'claims' which *implicates* uncertainty about the truth of what is said. It gives much about the way the NGOs view the government's claim as being misguided beliefs rather than a fact. The government's reply comes in the form of a *definition*, that is trying to define the phrase "honourable motives" as those motives that include both men and women. This is followed by a *contrast* where the government's words are tested with the fact that perpetrators of these crimes

are given mitigated sentences. Mentioning these sentences serve as an *argument* to prove the NGOs' standpoint.

Speaking ideologically, this writer makes use of what is called a *disclaimer* which is a positive self-presentation that is followed by a phrase focusing exclusively on negative other-presentation. This is illustrated in the second sentence of this extract which shows NGOs as being considerate in respecting the government's steps, then, shedding light on its failure in passing protective laws. Then, the *explanation* strategy plays an important role in the government's reply which also involves *generalization* concerning how "honourable motives" is given to include all of society. An *irony* is made concerning the contrast between the government's explanation and the application of Iraqi Penal Code articles.

Extract 3

Forced, Temporary, and Early Marriage

An estimated 24 percent of Iraqi girls marry before the age of 18, and a 2015 study of marriages in nine governorates across Iraq found that 33.9 percent of marriages were conducted outside the courts system, of which 22 percent involved girls younger than 14 years old. Forced, temporary, and early marriage has become a strategy of economic survival for many of Iraq's poor families living in a context of ongoing conflict and insecurity, who may decide to marry their daughters off early with the idea that this spares them from financial and security burdens….There has also reportedly been a resurgence of the practice of fasliyya, marrying a woman off to resolve a dispute, in Southern Iraq where 11 women were forced to marry in such an agreement in Basra in 2015. (Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination Against Women and Girls in Iraq, 2019, p.3)

This extract starts with estimates about early marriages in Iraq. These estimates serve as *evidence* to *implicate* the prevalence of these marriages. The phrase "*outside the courts' system*" *presupposes* the possibility of conducting marriages outside the court due to religious and social acceptance of them. Mentioning this fact is important to reveal early marriages since the court does not allow the marriage of people under 15 years old. *Negative lexicalization* is used in describing and mentioning the types of these marriages, starting with '*forced*' which suggests coercing women into an unwanted marriage. The word '*temporary*' refers to marriages conducted for a short period, and the word '*early*' refereeing to marriages at early ages. Negative lexicalization is also used concerning the state of the country as being in "*ongoing conflict and insecurity*" which may *imply* a negative description of the government as failing in providing peace and security to its citizens. The fact that girls got married for financial reasons is described, with the use of *modality*, as being a probable situation, that is, true in most cases. To further enhance the negative presentation of the country, comes the phrase "*Lack of access to education and economic opportunities*" in which marriage is seen as the only way for women to have financial support due to their inability to education or work. In the *argumentation* for the economic reasons behind early marriages, an estimate is given as *evidence* to prove this fact. It suggests that more than half of these marriages are done for the sake of having financial security. Trying to describe another kind of forced marriage, the report goes on to *define* what is called '*fasliyya.*' Such definition is part of the description and helps in emphasising the coercion experienced by women who marry in this

way. Then, another estimate done by the government is used to reveal the number of these marriages. This estimate is employed to give evidence of the high rate of these marriages.

This extract makes use of different ideological strategies, starting with *authority* which is manipulated through the use of estimates done by the UNICEF, thus, helping to give reliability, since the information exposed is based on international facts rather than beliefs. Speaking of early marriages suggests the use of *categorization* as an important strategy in which the topic focuses on people under the age of 14. *Burden* as an ideological strategy is also used in describing the way poor people think of their daughters and therefore, marriage is seen as the only way to get rid of such financial burden. On the contrary, the report makes use of *victimization*, since women are presented as victims that are forced into such marriages either by their families or by their inability to be educated or have financial security. To give more credibility to the facts that are given in this extract, the writer depends on estimates, and therefore, the *number game* functions as the main strategy.

Extract 4

> Response by the government of Iraq
>
> The Iraqi government notes in its report to the Committee that the Personal Status Code (1959) protects against forced and early marriages. However, the Personal Status Code allows youth as young as 15-years-old to marry with a judge's authorization. While forced marriages may be declared null and void under the Personal Status Code, this is only true if the marriage has not been consummated, providing further consequences for survivors of marital rape. As recently as January 2017 members of the Council of Representatives in Iraq submitted amendments to the Personal Status Code that would have lowered the age of marriage. This followed a similar unsuccessful attempt to amend the Personal Status Code in 2014 to set the legal age for marriage as nine for girls and allow for temporary marriages. Advocates fear that similar amendments may arise again in parliament. The Penal Code does not contain provisions that offer protection for women who decide to turn to the courts, leaving them vulnerable to further discrimination or attacks by members of their families or communities. (Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination Against Women and Girls in Iraq, 2019, p.4)

This text starts with reference to the government's response which is given in the *active construction*, drawing the focus on the agent and also presupposes the fact that a periodic report is submitted by the government to the Committee. the government's response concerning women from early marriages is followed by a *contrast* in which the court may allow the marriage of 15 years old person. This contradiction contributes to the negative description of the Iraqi Personal Status Law for allowing early marriages. In terms of *modality*, the marriage of 15 years old people is described as being permitted. The words 'null' and 'void' are both important in reflecting the way the government and the law protect women from forced marriages, however, this protection is conditioned on whether the marriage has been consummated or not. Therefore, the report shows that though the government has protected women from forced marriage, it has failed to protect them from marital rape. Yet, the report, in this way, ignores Article 40/4 of the same law which allows separation for both spouses if the marriage has been conducted outside the court and has been consummated. Article 41 gives further explanation of the way the two spouses can be

separated. This is followed by the *possibility* of lowering the age of marriage due to certain suggested amendments. Mentioning these suggested amendments in the parliament *presupposes* the acceptability of such marriages even by people of high education and who work in high positions. Such acceptability leads to show the government as one of the reasons behind the prevalence of early marriages and such description is taken a further step by mentioning another attempt to lower the age of marriage to nine.

A *negative description* of the Iraqi law continues by mentioning the fact that the Penal Code does not protect women who turn to the courts. The report stresses the idea that victims of such kinds of marriages are left with no legal protection. Such a negative description is further enhanced with the term 'vulnerable.' This is followed by the use of a *focused structure* in which the reason behind women's inability to have legal remedies is given first in the sentence, therefore focusing on the fact that many of these marriages are conducted outside the court. One can also notice the use of the phrase "unwanted marriage" as a *euphemism* instead of 'forced marriage' at the end of the extract.

The extract starts with using *illegality* as one of the main strategies in describing the way the government deals with early marriages which are declared as being illegal in the Iraqi Personal Code. However, the fact that a person 15 years old can marry with the court's authorization leads to a strategy of *legality*. Such explanation is given in terms of *disclaimer* since it mentions the good side of the law and then immediately focuses on its bad side. *Counterfactual* is given as an ideological strategy followed by the government in dealing with forced marriages since they are declared null and void only if the marriage is not consummated. The report depends heavily on *negative other-presentation*, this can be traced in the way members of parliament who suggest amendments to lower the age of marriage are presented. This strategy leads to polarization of the US and THEM. This strategy becomes clear in using the phrase "*Advocates fear that similar amendments may arise again in parliament*" in which advocates for women's rights represent the ingroup and the government (especially those who demand amendments) are seen as the outgroup. Manipulating *victimization* strategy, the report focuses extensively on women as being victims and unable to have legal rights that can protect them from these marriages. They get into unwanted marriages outside the courts which cannot be proved. This also suggests *empathy* as another strategy in viewing women as vulnerable to discrimination.

Extract 5
"II. Sexual Violence and Gender-Based Crimes Committed by ISIL (Articles 2, 3, 5, 6, & 15)
Background on ISIL Gender-Based Crimes: Rape, Torture and Murder Based on Prescribed Gender Roles
Under ISIL occupation in Iraq, women, girls, men and boys including LGBTIQ persons, and those otherwise perceived as stepping outside of traditional gender roles were targeted for violence on a staggering scale. ISIL fighters tortured women doctors and nurses who have not complied with rigid dress codes when doing so interfered with the performance of their medical duties. They have executed women who resisted forced marriage or who served as politicians. Men believed to be gay have been thrown off buildings. Women believed to be lesbians have been issued death warrants. ISIL has killed youth because of

their alternative forms of personal expression or refusal to join their militia, labeling them "faggots." Men who could not or would not grow beards were tortured. These crimes are evidence of systematic persecution of persons based on gender. (Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination Against Women and Girls in Iraq, 2019, p.6)

This extract, as its title suggests, is dedicated to crimes committed by ISIL. The extract starts with *fronting* the adverbial clause "Under ISIL occupation in Iraq" drawing attention to the time of occupation. This also *presupposes* knowledge about the ISIL occupation of certain governorates in Iraq. It states that people of all genders were targeted for violence. This type of violence is described as being cruel through the use of a "staggering scale." This is taken as *argumentation* for which different examples will be mentioned to prove and confirm. The first argument regards women doctors and nurses who were tortured. The use of the verb 'tortured' suggests an extremely negative presentation of ISIL and its domination over people's lives. The fact that women were tortured for not wearing rigid dresses *implicates* the conservative nature of this force. This brutality is further emphasised by the verb 'executed" which is mentioned in relation to women resisting forced marriages. ISIL here is viewed and conceptualized as a patriarchal community that rules by force and domination. ISIL crimes are viewed as being based on suspicions in dealing with LGBTIQ people. The use of the verb phrase 'believed to be' suggested that. The way they deal with boys refusing to join their militia is either by killing them or stigmatizing them with words of negative impressions. The extract gives a *precise description* of ISIL crimes emphasising its *negative other-presentation* and the way it is perceived by the NGOs. Speaking of modality which is deontic in this extract in referring to many things as *forbidden*, including the right to dress the way people like the right to marry, sexual rights, and other forms of personal expression.

A recurrent ideological strategy is that of *humanitarianism* which is present in every violation of human rights mentioned in the extract. This is manipulated through another strategy of *illustration* in which each crime mentioned represents an illustration of the human rights violation. Furthermore, each example of the crime depends heavily on *categorization*. Different categories are mentioned: men, women, boys, girls, doctors, nurses, and the LGBTIQ community. In addition to that, one cannot deny *victimization* which accompanies all the examples given about ISIL gender-based crimes.

Extract 6
ISIL employed sexual violence as a strategic weapon and "as a tactic of terror, a core element of their ideology and modus operandi." ISIL subjected Yazidi, Muslim, Christian and Turkmen women in Iraq to human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence. ISIL fighters executed at least 2,000 Yazidis, both men and women, and captured another 6,417. Yazidi women were subjected to imprisonment, organized rape, sexual slavery, sexual assault, torture, forced marriage, and forced labor. Women were forced to convert to Islam or risk being killed if they refused, and children were forced to take up arms and fight. Girls under 8 years old were allowed to remain with their mothers, while any girls older than 8 were removed from their families and held captive under ISIL control. Victims witnessed widespread killing and executions, were deprived of food, and beaten throughout their period of captivity. (Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination Against Women and Girls in Iraq, 2019, p.7)

This extract is concerned with sexual violence employed by ISIL. The extract starts by explaining the way ISIL employed sexual violence by using *metaphor* in which sexual violence is described as a 'strategic weapon' and 'tactic of terror.' This is done to emphasise the prevalence of sexual abuse in ISIL human rights violations. Using the verb 'subjected' illustrate ISIL's action in dealing with women of different religious backgrounds. They are mentioned precisely to shed light on the idea that women were abused not because of their religion but because of their gender. This is given as *argumentation* and is followed by evidence to demonstrate it. An estimate done by the UNAMI about executions and arrests of Yazidi people can serve as *evidence* to emphasise the violence. It helps to show that what is stated about violence is given in terms of facts rather than opinions or beliefs. In this way, violence experienced by Yazidi women has specified in which the writer mentions their exposure to different kinds of abuse, including: "imprisonment, organized rape, sexual slavery, sexual assault, torture, forced marriage, and forced labor."

To mention that women experienced coercion to change their religion and boys are forced to fight, illustrates much about ISIL ideology in dealing with people. They relied on force to make people do what they believe to be right. This negative view of ISIL continues to be a recurrent image by stressing their violence. Later on, girls' right to be with their mothers is described, in terms of *modalities*, as being either permitted for those under 8 or forbidden for those older than 8. Killings and executions are consistently repeated, but this time in relation to Yazidi captivates. *Evidentiality* is maintained by another estimate which is concerned with Yazidi people who were able to escape and those who are missing. The phrase "half still missing and unaccounted for" *implicates* the government's inability to respond to this violation even after the end of the occupation.

The text moves to speak of sexual enslavement which is described *metaphorically* as a 'hallmark policy.' The fact that women were sold *implicates* the way ISIL objectivizes women, treating them as unhuman who can be bought and sold. This abuse is described in detail by mentioning the prices for buying women according to their ages.

Ideologically, this extract manifests *humanitarianism* as an overall strategy since human rights are violated in different forms. The report consistently makes use of estimates done by an international organization, in this extract UNAMI, to suggest *authority*, that is, the given information is taken from a firm base and therefore they are fact. Women are *categorized* according to their ages. This is mentioned in relation to the way ISIL dealt with captive girls so that those who are older than 8 years are taken from their families to be a wife of an ISIL fighter. This categorization is also mentioned in illustrating the system of profit where women are bought and sold again. The two estimates provided about the number of Yazidi people who were captivated relate to the *number game* strategy. One may assume the use of financial *burden* as another strategy that ISIL held in dealing with women who were forced into sexual enslavement to get profit. Two strategies that are seen as prevailing in the extract are those of *negative other‑presentation* and *victimization*. ISIL is described negatively in mentioning its oppression of women and other crimes. This leads to viewing women as victims that were exposed to different human rights violations.

Extract 7

Response by the government of Iraq

Though the Iraqi government acknowledges the sexual and gender-based violence that some women faced under ISIL, particularly the targeting of Yazidi women, it has not acknowledged nor provided accountability for ISIL crimes amounting to gender-based persecution. Nor have they acknowledged such crimes committed against LGBTI persons. Without acknowledgement and accountability for the full range of crimes and the gender discriminatory basis on which many of them were committed, justice cannot be obtained for victims and communities cannot rebuild. The government of Iraq should acknowledge crimes committed by ISIL if it hopes to support its citizens in creating sustainable peace. (Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination Against Women and Girls in Iraq, 2019, p.9)

From the beginning, the writer makes use of *focus structure* by fronting the embedded clause first. This is mainly done to show a *contrast* between the two clauses in which the first one is given as an opinion respecting the government's movement, then contrasting it with the second clause which acknowledges the fact that the government has failed in dealing with ISIL gender-based oppression. The fact that the government did not acknowledge crimes committed against LGBT persons comes from the fact that Iraqi society, based on its shared beliefs, refuses to acknowledge people of gender minorities. The writer depends on international beliefs about human rights, giving no account to their religious and social denial of them. Later on, the writer relies on *nominalization* to draw attention to the way GBV should be addressed with both 'acknowledgment' and 'accountability.' Drawing on *modalities*, the writer tries to show the impossibility of obtaining justice for victims and the impossibility of building communities without addressing gender-based crimes.

It is noticed that the writer utilized a *disclaimer*, as an ideological strategy, from the beginning. The extract starts by mentioning the good point about the government's response to sexual and GBV encountered by some women, then focuses exclusively on the government's ignorance of other crimes. This also emphasizes the *negative other-presentation* since it reveals the crimes that the government has failed to acknowledge. The writer moves then to stress the need for justice to end gender discrimination. This employs *humanitarianism* as another important ideological strategy.

Discussion

Concerning the first question of the study, the analysis has shown that forms of violence, their prevalence in Iraq, and the government's failure to respond to violence stand as the main discourse topics that are expressed in the report. Regarding the second question, the analysis has shown that the report stresses the use of authority and evidentiality to show power relations. In addition, there is active construction that is used to shed light on the government's insufficiency in dealing with violence. Contrast is emphasized to draw attention to the difference between what is said about violence and what is there in reality. Concerning the third question, the report utilizes different ideological strategies that are all based on the polarization of Us and Them in which the report emphasizes the positive characteristics of the NGOs and the negative characteristics of the government. In relation to the last question, the analysis has revealed that the report has shown negative attitudes regarding the government and the governmental institutions including the legal

system of the country, arguing that a better understanding and getting access to the provisions stated to secure and protect Iraqi women's rights are worth mentioning.

Conclusion

The current study provides a critical discourse analysis of an NGOs' report tackling the controversial issue of violence against women in Iraq. The study adopted van Dijk's (2011; 2000) models of socio-cognitive approach and ideological model to examine the ideological attitudes hidden in the selected text under investigation. Therefore, the NGOs' report attempts to reflect the ideological position of the NGOs towards the Iraqi government which declared its rejection of the violence against women through its constitution and Panel Code. Despite this, the researchers found that there is no real adoption of these provisions in reality in its social context. Using the linguistic and discoursal strategies employed in the analysis, the researchers have found that the report has materialized a negative perspective towards the government and society through power dominance which is exercised by social groups and this is in line with van Dijk's (1993) view on the one hand. On the other hand, the report shows a victimized view toward Iraqi Women in such a patriarchal society in which social norms are dominated. Another point is that Iraqi women are subjected to much non-State violence such as ISIS in which they experienced many severe forms of violence. The researchers hope that such a study may raise the awareness of the Iraqi government to constitute a rule for protecting women's rights and to terminate violence against them as the one constituted in Kurdistan Iraq. In addition, the theoretical framework employed in this study can contribute to the existing literature in CDA research. Thus, the last conclusion shows that women's rights as stated in the Iraqi Constitution are marginalized and are not supported by the Panel Code. This literature has shown that the mass media plays the important role in the production of belief, and prejudice and the dominance of the social context tend to marginalize others and misinterpret an event.

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