DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FEMALE IDENTITY IN POLITICAL PROPAGANDA

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Abstract

During the election campaigns, politicians spend great effort to gain votes by means of trying to legitimate themselves, delegitimate their rivals and arouse strong emotions in the audience by means of using covert ideological, religious and cultural connotations. Prior to the General Elections in Turkey on June 12th , political parties published their election statements in which their pledges concerning economy, domestic and foreign politics as well as social reforms were declared. Women issues have become a demanding subject in the agenda of Turkish society and politics as the oppression of women have become a front –page matter in the media recently. Being aware of the potential of the women voters awaiting solutions to their problems, politicians made various promises in their statements. In this study, it is aimed to explore the representation of women in the statements of three leading political parties the Justice and Development Party(AKP), the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) via Critical Discourse Analysis. It is also within the scope of this study to find out the highlighted points in the election statements which will reveal the problems of the women in the current Turkish society.The analysis puts forth that the representation of women in party statements reproduce the patriarchal ideology while the party statements are aimed at changing the status quo for women.

Keywords: 2011 General Elections, Critical Discourse Analysis, Women Issues.

1. INTRODUCTION

As Glick and Fiske (2000, 366) state 'categorization' is an indispensable constituent of human nature which makes our lives easier and simpler. Instead of dealing with the things and concepts again and again as if they were new and unique, thanks to categorization we can respond to the situations around us more swiftly. Of all the other high-level identity markers such as ethnicity and religion, 'gender' is the most basic and prominent grouping for classifying and labelling human beings. Throughout the positioning process of the Self/the Other, people first of all recall the cultural connotations of gender which are engraved in their individual and collective memory by the patriarchal ideology. The physically stronger of the two genders manage to suppress the weaker one by means of establishing his material, linguistic and cultural sovereignty. The first known examples related to humiliation of women can be traced back to the Ancient Greece as Aristotle claimed females by virtue lack of qualities and should be regarded as afflicted with natural defectiveness (de Beauvoir, 1997). The philosopher St. Thomas argued that woman is imperfect man (Bressler, 1994,109). These negative framing about females have been fortified with the representations of Adam and Eve in holy books. Eve who can be considered as the prototype of all second-sex people is portrayed as a creation out of Adam's rib as well as a seductive sinner. In her frequently quoted book 'The Second Sex', the French scholar and author Simone de Beauvoir (1972, 295) argues that 'One is not born, but rather, becomes a woman'. Via the Self/the Other dichotomy, de Beauvoir explains the secondary status of women in the androcentric culture in which the male locates himself in the core whearas the female is positioned at the periphery of the social order as the nonsignificant Other.

For a considerably long time, prior and subsequent to Freud, female identity has been defined by lacking the qualities man possesses such as phallus, reason and power. As Ortner states (1997, 17) women are identified with something every culture degrades and considers as being a lower order of existence. This androcentric mindset defines and predestines the social status of a newborn baby. Throughout the socialization process, social control mechanisms strictly make both genders internalize the gender roles granted by the society. The concept of femaleness in comparison to the maleness is enlivened and reinforced by discourse which shapes society as well as being nourished by it. Discourse, ideology, society and language are interdependent on one another. That is to say, discourse production is within the limits of commonly shared linguistic structures as well as the cognitive and conceptual dimension it provides to its

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users (Çotuksöken, 2002,166). Women's subordinate status in the material world regulated and governed by men finds its reflection in the phallogocentric linguistic domain. Living in the discourse ontology of males, females have no choice rather than adopting the streotypical discursive structures about themselves.

Mey (2001,115-116) points out that language always reflects 'the conditions of the community at large':

' ……..in all such institutions and bodies, certain human agreements and customs have been legalized and this legalization has found its symbolic representation in language'. In other words, the suppresion of women is normalized by language. The highly androcentric nature of Turkish reinforces the segregetion and subjugation of women with the frequent use of negatively connotated idioms i.e 'saçı uzun aklı kısa', hanım hanımcık', 'erkek Fatma', 'elinin hamuruyla erkek işine karışma', 'eksik etek'. The privilige of being male is also characterized in generic terms such as 'insanoğlu' (mankind), 'bilimadamı' (science man). Besides, terms related to sexual intercourse underline the superiority of men such as 'men do' while 'women are done'. Turkish women seem to be sieged by the physical male power as well as its symbolic extension in language. However, for the sake of being politically correct people nowadays seek implicit ways while they are verbalizing the insidous patriarch. Only an in-depth analysis of the produced discourses can reveal the value and belief system of a specific society. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which will be the methodology in this study offers a toolkit for decoding power-relations and ideological assumptions in a discourse. CDA defines 'discourse' as language in use in any kind of social practice. This perspective indicates a mutual relationship between a specific discursive event and the situation, institution and the social strata around it. The discursive event is not only shaped by the situation but it also contributes to its formation. In Wodak's words, who is one of the eminent scholars in Critical Discourse Analysis, 'discourse is socially constituted, as well as socially conditioned- it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes transforming it' (Wodak, 1996, 17). A detailed analysis of the linguistic structure such as lexical relations, transitivity and modality will reveal discursive strategies which are at the disposal of ideology and power struggles.

While the first, the second and the third wave feminist movements seem to alleviate the oppression of women and make amendments in their social status in Western countries, the women of the Eastern world are still subject to degradation in every field of human rights and liberties (Berktay, 2003). Although the foundation of the secular Republic aimed at bringing an egalitarian order, Turkish society with its dominating Islamic roots and patriarchal order have allowed only some liberties for women. Although the 80s witnessed considerably strong feminist movements in Turkey (Şimşek, 2000), the oppression and humiliation of women are still visible in the field of human rights. The increasing number of criminal acts committed towards women such as honour killings, husbands' torturing or murdering wives have eventually become a front-page issue in the national agenda. The official statistics given by the Istanbul Bar Association (2011) have shown that the rate of 'murder of women' has increased 1400 % in the last seven years. A national research on domestic violence carried out by the General Directorate of the Satus of Women (2008) has shown that every 4 women out of 10 are exposed to domestic violence. The Turkish state has been awaited for a long time to legislate new laws to protect the lives and rights of female citizens. So as to improve the conditions for Turkish women, prospective male saviours came into the political scene prior to the 2011 General Elections. In their election rallies and statements, politicians who were dominantly male made various promises to gain the votes of female citizens. This study aims at analysing the parts addressing the female citizens in the election statements of three leading political parties which are the Justice and Development Party (the JDP), the Republican People's Party(the RPP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (the MNP) . There are three research questions in this study: 1. How does each political party address female voters? Which issues are underlined and promised to be dealt with? 2. What kind of presuppositions are used by each political party? What kind of implications can be understood about the current position of Turkish women? 3. How is the argumentative nature of party discourse established by the discursive strategies and linguistic devices? In order to provide a well built floor for the analysis, it is aimed to explore the theoretical background of the study by discussing Feminist Theory and Political Discourse Analysis subsequently in the next section.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Feminist Theory: Perspectives On The Nature Of 'The Second Sex'

Feminist theory has a multidimensional structure yet its fundemental aim is to raise consciousness of women who have been members of the oppressed social cast by being exposed to systematic injustice both in private and public. Feminist scholars also intend to prove that social injustice is not derived from biology but culture (Bressler, 1994). Besides awakening women to the unfair social web around them, it is also within the scope of the Feminist Theory to organize women to fight for better and equal conditions (Berktay, 2003, 88). Now that Feminism's goal is to change the devaluing view of women as 'nonsignificant Other', feminists question the conventional discourse structures not only in the literary, political and media texts but also in the educational, medical and legal encounters. Seeing that sex/gender, patriarchal ideology and discourse are the key concepts in the feminist studies, these terms will be explored in detail in the following part.

The British sociologist Giddens (1989, 158) defines 'sex' as 'biological or anatomical differences between men and women', whereas 'gender' 'concerns the psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females'. The biological difference in the chromosomes thus genitals defines what social roles and positions are going to be attached. Those having phallus naturally start life with advantages while lacking don't. The postmodernist philosopher Butler (1990, 32) argues that 'sex' wouldn't be as important as it is today if there weren't any social, political and economic gender arrangements in the ontology of society. Butler also defines 'gender' with a new term 'performative' in which a routine of repeated acts are seen as the constituent of that identity. She notes that: 'Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a rigid regulatory frame, which congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a 'natural' kind of being' (Butler, 1990,33). With regard to this theory, males can be associated with being independent and out of the house while females are identified with children and house. As Benhabib (1997) states the gender-sex system provides people with a framework through which societies and cultures maintain the reproduction of embodied individuals. By means of this grid, a boy will learn he was born to be right, strong, smart while a girl learns her future role of being nurturant, submissive. This grid forces us to internalize the confined image of women as housewives, caretakers and mothers with their reproduction skills, relative physical strength and tenderness whereas the vision of men are equipped with being independent, strong and firm rulemakers.

If it hadn't been for patriarchy, feminist theory might not have emerged at all. Patriarchy which can be defined as the rule of male has been in the reign for a considerably long time. Feminist scholars claim that patriarchal ideology direct men and women to act in certain behavioural patterns and have certain life expectations. Even though the modernization process has covered the overt implications of patriarchy, any female or male stepping outside their role frames is disapproved and outcasted in various subtle ways. Especially in close-knit societies like Turkey where social pressure is prevalent, only a limited group of women in big cities enjoy new liberties. In terms of Dunbar (in Morgan 1970, 536) 'All men are our policemen, and no organised police force is necessary at this time to keep us in our places. All men enjoy supremacy and take advantage of it to a greater or lesser degree depending on their position in the masculine hierarchy of power'. The notion of acceptable and unacceptable female behaviour expected by society has tamed women. Most of the societies having androcentric tendencies use various settings such as family, school and courtrooms to reflect and reproduce the reign of the patriarch. The power of dominant groups may be integrated in laws, rules, norms, habits and even a quite general consensus, and thus take the form of what Gramsci called 'hegemony'(Gramsci, 1971). Millet (1977) proposes a new commentary for the socialization process.

Sexual politics obtains consent through the 'socialisation' of both sexes to basic patriarchal polities with regard to temparement, role and status. As to status, a pervasive assent to the prejudice of male superiority guarantees superior status in the male, inferior in the female. The first item, temparement, involves the formation of human personality along stereotyped lines of sex category ('masculine' and 'feminine'), based on the needs and values of the dominant group and dictated by what its members cherish in themselves and find convenient in subordinates: aggression, intelligence, force and efficacy in the male: passivity, ignorance, docility, 'virtue' and ineffectuality in the female. This is complemented by a second factor, sex role, which decrees a consonant and highly elaborate code of conduct, gesture and attitude for each sex. (Millet, 1977, 26)

Despite the liberties introduced by the new Republic, the standard Turkish family seems to preserve the conventional familial structure in which women and their bodies are victimised by psychological and physical subordination. Women's dependence on men for finance and social standing have silenced them against various types of violence they are exposed to. A division between private and public is crucial for the patriarchal societies in which private is reserved for the women while public is alloted for men. While the

tendency to percieve women as household objects seems to fade away in modern Turkey, women are still at disadvantage both in private and public spheres of life. Berktay (2003, 109) states that 'While the Western model has taken women out of the private sphere, it also has added new burdens on the shoulders of women'. A working woman has to equip herself with superpowers of taking care of the house, children, being attractive for her husband as well as being successful in her job. Since men are naturally seen as breadwinners, working women are still held responsible for domestic affairs.

As aforementioned, male dominance gets concrete in the linguistic and discursive dimension. The dominant patriarchal ideology tames women via language. The Feminists conceive language as 'symbolical reflection of androcentric structures' (Günther and Kotthoff in Wodak, 1997, 9). It is one of the means of patriarchal society to discriminate, disregard and incapacitate women. In their view, the language system already reflects the patriarchal structure of Western societies. ' The language system was analyzed as regards the treatment of women, and language was exposed as a means of legitimizing male structures with the intention above all, of extracting women from being subsumed under general and male categories. Together with the language system, linguistic behaviour was made into the object for analysis of the new research discipline and the issue of gender –specific differences was investigated in styles of communication (Gunther and Kothoff in Wodak, 1997, 10). Briefly, the gender differences are constructed and kept alive in language. The importance of language and discourse for gender studies will be studied in detail in the next section under the heading of 'Critical Discourse Analysis'.

2.2 POLITICS AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

2.2.1 Discourse and Politics

Far from being a mere tool of reflecting and representing physical reality, language is indeed the battlefield of interlocutors in which they try to express themselves, inform and persuade one another. Discourse which has a suprasegmental structure can be simply defined as language in use. Discourse and society have reciprocal effect on the formation and continuation of each other. Society provides the necessary background for discourse production. On the other hand, as Wodak and Reisigl (2001, 385) explain discursive practices are socially constitutive in several ways. First of all, as in the case of gender, ethnicity and nation, discourses enable the construction of collective subjects. Secondly, discourse ensures the maintenance and preservation of social status quo. Adversely though, discourse can be the one and only medium which leads to social change and sometimes can lead to the destruction of the social status quo. For an elaborate analysis of discourse, it should be kept in mind that no discourse can be independent of the context, ideology and speaker/writer intentions. While the surface structure of discourse comprises of linguistic choices, the semantic texture is intervowen by the contextual data, ideological assumptions and rhetorical acts. Discourse can be thought as a linguistic process in which readers/hearers set up discourse worlds which are marked with deictic signs of space, time, modality and relationships among them (Chilton, 2004, 138). By putting stres on the relation between discourse and context, Eggins (2004, 7) claims that texts carry the aspects of the context in which they were produced. With a close-up look at the discourse, 'Who said what to whom when where and with what purpose' can be answered easily. Malinowski (in Eggins, 2004, 88) argues that language can only become comprehensible when evaluated within the context. The contextual implications also help us to make assumptions about the events backgrounding the discourse production.

Dominant ideology of a society echoes itself in the produced discourses. Here the notion of ideology needs a concise definition. Ideology is comprised of the basic social cognitions that reflect the main aims, interests and values of the dominant group (Pilcher and Wheelan, 2004, 76). Ideology, which is one of the forces behind the throne of the discourse, seeks to justify current conditions around by portraying them as natural. Ideology normalizes the practice of any kind of injustice and inequality. For this study, the patriarchal ideology in Turkey naturalizes the subjugation of women. The portrayal of women as mindless consumers, illogical and emotionally weak creatures are regulated by the patriarchal ideology which comes apparent in TV dramas, advertisements and news. Eggins (2004, 11) states that no text can be free of ideology as language is the most effective tool for the circulation of ideology. In other words, language is employed to encode particular opinions and values which are in favour of the dominant group. The commanding group is generally the one that controls the flow of information in the society. Althusser (1984) argues that there is an unavoidable cooperation between ideology and state; the Repressive State Apparatuses (instruments of actual coercion such as law, police and army) and Ideological State Apparatuses (education, family, legislation, politics, communication and culture) work hand in hand to domesticate and discipline the citizens. Yet, the Ideological State Apparatuses seem to be the most frequently

used tool in democratic societies of today. As a nation-state, the Turkish state has a male nature and it inevitably adopts the patriarchal ideology.

Foucault's analysis of discursive formations conceives of discourse as an effect of power inscribed in all social relations (Pilcher and Wheelan, 2004, 78). While even in friendly talks and discussions power struggles can be seen in covert ways, political discourse with the aim of manipulation and consalidation of self-position, consent production is the arena of power battles. According to Hague et al (1998, 3-4) 'Politics involves reconciling effects through discussion and persuasion. Communication is therefore central to politics'. In other words, politics has linguistic, discursive and communicative dimension. Power which is the pivotal point of politics is no longer exercised with arms and soldiers but rather practised in more subtle ways. Politicians do not coerce the public into admitting their views but they use more implicit ways for manufacturing public consent. Discourse is the most delicate instrument for persuading the public. In the art of politics, a politician can hold the power as long as he/she keeps being a good orator. The reality can be more different and severe than the represented one. However, since the majority of public do not have access to the truth, they have no choice but to believe in the politicians. In other words, power and discourse are in the hands of the political elite who have unlimited access to information and can control the discourse flow. Besides coining the term 'Newspeak' in '1984', George Orwell (1969) explains in '*Politics and the English Language*' that the nature of the political discourse is manipulative and the political speech is generally the defense of the indefensible before public.

Only in and through language politicians persuade the public, justify their acts and delegitimate the acts or discourses of their rivals. Politicians are aware of the fact that influencing people's mind mean influencing their actions(van Dijk, 2001, 355). For achieving mind control, politicians benefit from the representations in the collective consciousness of that society. These representations are made up of socially and culturally shared knowledge about things and situations(van Dijk, 2008). For instance, in order to justify the expenditures for arms and weapons, politicians generally benefit from the 'enemy' representation in the social cognition. Chilton argues (2004,5):

'It is shared perceptions of values that defines political associations. And the human endowment for language has the function of 'indicating'-i.e, signifying, communicating –what is deemed, according to such perceptions, to be advantageous or not, by implication to the group, and what is deemed right or wrong within that group'.

Political discourse may be set up on the religious, nationalistic, racist or sexist ideological foundations of the society. No matter what their ideological background is, every politician has to employ discursive strategies and rhetorical acts to gain public compliance. Political discourse has rhetorical nature in which politicians intend to convince audience and provoke them into an immediate or future course of action (Richardson, 2007, 156). Rhetorical acts with perlocutionary aim at stimulating certain behavioural patterns in the audience. The process of putting ideas into words and communicating them involves simultaneous signalling of the speaker's purposes and wishes along the message (Sornig, 1989, 95). Politicians from different ideological backgrounds have certain views about the social reality. While transmitting their versions of reality, politicians attempt to shape the opinions of the receivers in the way they want.

2.2.2 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In the previous sections, it is argued that ideology and power plays are hidden under the cloak of any produced discourse. It is obvious that discourse is embedded in society, culture and thus delicately linked to all forms of power, power abuse and social inequality. Prejudices and ideologies are daily reproduced and reinforced by political and media discourse. For instance, the sexist discourse about women drivers is regenerated by advertisements, TV shows and jokes in Turkey. Politics with its persuasive and manipulative nature is one of the fields where power struggles and ideology are in the charge. Critical Discourse Analysis suggests reading between the lines of the surface structure and looking at the big picture. The core of Critical Discourse Analysis is the sytematic and explicit analysis of the various structures and strategies of different levels of text and talk (Van Dijk, 2008). Critical Discourse Analysis pays attention to underlying semantic structures and make implications, presuppositions, connections and strategies explicit. In order to get an understanding of the processes behind discourse production and comprehension, lexical and syntactical structures as well as discursive strategies are examined carefully. It shouldn't be forgotten that there is only one aim in political discourse which is gaining approval. Politicians may attempt to achieve this via positive self-representation, negative Other representation and in/out group categorization. Lexical and grammatical structures are both at the disposal of the politicians in their road to impression formation and consent manufacture.

Every linguistic choice carries a significant value for the intentions of the speaker or the writer. While producing discourse in accordance with their ideological backgrounds, the speaker/writer deliberately make choices among words, use metaphors and metonymies. Words convey the imprint of society and value judgements (Richardson, 2007, 47). The users may name groups or people in different ways. As referring to people in prison, some people identify them as 'victims of fate' while some classify them as ' hunches on the society'. Reisgl and Wodak (2001) called naming options 'referential strategies' which intentionally describe an individual (or a group) as one thing or as another and serve many different psychological, social or political purposes. The deliberate choice of the words in a text frames the understanding of the text and serves to the ideological intentions of the producer. In the process of in/out group disctinction, self-glorification and negative Other representation, the use of pronouns 'we, I and they' have great significance. Pronouns are used to make the interpreters conceptualise group identity, coalitions, parties as insiders or outsiders. The use of nominalizations, active /passive voice also enable the discourse producer to realize his/her intentions. The examples given below will reveal how linguistic structures serve to the intentions of the dsicourse producers.

1. <u>The jealous husband</u> imprisoned the woman in the house.

2. <u>The woman</u> was imprisoned in the house

3. <u>The imprisonment of the woman</u> in the house caused public reaction.

While the agent of the action in the first sentence is given explicitly, in the other two sentences thanks to passive voice and nominalization the doer of the action remains unknown. Unless the recipient search for further information, only the patient and the nature of the action will be remembered. The agent of the action who is responsible for the 'imprisonment' is trivialized while the first sentence with its active voice foregrounds the doer of the crime. Nominalization has two major advantages which are rhetorical organization and lexical density. By nominalizing actions and logical relations, the text can be depersonalized and organized in terms of ideas, reasons and causes (Eggins, 2004, 95). Conjunctions also contribute to the cohesion of the text and they reveal the logical relations aimed to be established by the producer (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, 538). The logical relations shown by the conjunctions provide an insight to the intentions of the producer. While producing discourse as Enunciation Theory suggested the Self is here and now, but moreover it is also the origin of the epistemic truth and deontic right. Modality manifests judgements, comment and attitude in text and talk. Simpson (1993, 47) stated that ' modality refers broadly to a speaker's attitude towards, or opinion about, the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence. It also extends to their attitude towards the situation or event described by a sentence'. The use of these in a text not only indicates a relation between form and content but also underlines the one between content and function. As mentioned above, modality has two forms which are truth and obligation. Politicians frequently use truth modals such as will, must, have to, should, certainly when they want to stimulate emotions. The last but not the least constituent of Critical Discourse Analysis is about the presuppositions in a given text. The meaning of a text is not always gathered from the existent linguistic structures; texts have hidden or presupposed meanings. A presupposition is a covert claim embedded within the explicit meaning of a text or utterance (Richardson, 2007, 62).

3. ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTION STATEMENTS

The Systemic Functional Linguistics asserts that every text has a purpose and function in its cultural context which is callled 'genre' (Eggins, 2004, 55). As soon as the readers have identified the purpose of a text, they will apply to the cognitive guide in their minds for discovering 'how to read the text'. Every genre has different structural and realizational patterns. When reading narratives the readers all know that there will be orientation, complication and resolution. In the case of election statements, the readers will at least know that there will be promissary acts for future as well as self-glorification and Other denigration. The pragmatic motivation behind the election statements is vote-getting so a critical reading of them will help the readers to acknowledge the persuasive acts.

Political statements can't be evaluated out of their context. They are not only grammatical and lexical outputs yet they operate within the framework of history and society. Moreover, political statements are in dialogic relation with the other texts and utterances (Bakthin, 1981). As it will be seen in the next section, the promises given to the female voters by three political parties were created as response to the ills in the Turkish society. A nationwide research 'Violence Against Women in Turkey' carried out by Altınay and Arat (2007) reveals that every one women out of three has been subject to physical violence. The rate of women who have been exposed to their husbands' violence in their lifetime is 39 % all over Turkey. 78 % of the divorced or seperated women have been liable to physical violence. As the level of education and income rises, the proportion of domestic violence against women decreases. The Turkish Psychiatric Association

(2011) declares that gender roles reflect the power relations and legalizes the rule of men over women. The gaps in the legislation system and state's ignoring the violence against women in both private and public spheres have provided the continuation of the systemic violence. Ayşe Paşalı who was tortured and murdered by her ex-husband in 2010 has become the symbol of violence against women in Turkey. Her ex-husband's constant threats enforced her to seek legal protection which was denied by the police as she had been divorced. The report 'Status of Women' in Turkey published by the General Directorate of the Status of Women in 2011 shows that women's employment problem has aggravated in the last 20 years. Although women made up the 49,8 % of the population in 2011,   prior to the elections, the number of female representatives was forty-eight   while there were four hundred- ninety four male representatives in the Turkish parliament. In the light of all this dreary statistics, women issues have become significant for the election propoganda.

In this part of the study, ten sentences from each political party statements will be studied via Critical Discourse Analysis. The length and the linguistic orientations of the statements differ from party to party. The JDP which had been the leading party before the 2011 Elections not only gave promises to the female voters but also underlined the actions they had taken so far. On the other hand, the RPP and the NMP's parts only consist of promises. Moreover, the RPP has the longest section with fifty-five promises while there are twelve promises in the NMP and fifteen in the JDP's election statements. So as to make a balanced analysis, ten promises addressing female voters have been randomly selected from each political party's election statement books. The election statements can be reached from the official websites of the political parties. While translating each promise from Turkish to English, it is aimed to preserve the originality of expression in the native language.

Before starting the analysis, it is a must to explore the nature of 'promises' as special linguistic acts. Although there are many ways of making promises in any language but it is the context which decides if a statement can be counted as a promise or not (Searle, 1969, 52). In his classification of the speech acts, Searle grouped 'promises' as commissives. Commissives operate a change in the world by means of creating an obligation; however, this obligation is created for the speaker, not for the hearer (Mey, 2001, 120). From Searle's (1969, 57) list of the necessary conditions for a succesful promise, there are three conditions which have importance for this study. First of all, a promise points actions to be realized by the speaker in the future. Secondly, when someone makes a promise, it must be in favour of the promisee. Finally, the promiser undertakes the responsibility of realizing the promised act. The promiser knows that breaking the promise may cause losing face.

3.1.1 THE ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTION STATEMENTS OF THE JDP

The JDP (Justice and Development Party), which is a conservative right-wing party, had been ruling Turkey for nine years prior to the 2011 General Elections. The JDP had 28 women representatives in the parliament then. The party prepared one hundred-sixty paged election statement book which can be found on the official website. The parts addressing the women in the special section 'Women' (page 92–95) was placed in the 'Strong Society' chapter. In this section, there are also parts addressing ' the Family', 'the Disabled', 'the Old' and 'the Children in need of protection'. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that throughout the whole book there is no special part addressing the man. It is evident that 'women' are placed in the disadvantaged group who are believed to be weak and incompetent.

1. The number of women in the decision making mechanisms initially the proportion of female representatives in the parliament will be **increased**. **2.** With reference to women's dignity, **we** will **create** wider employment opportunities for <u>our mistreated women who are staying in physically modern guest houses</u> **so** <u>they can be self-sufficient and hold on to life</u>. **3.We** will **provide** <u>single mothers with Studio Houses where they can maintain a secure and healthy life without seperating from their children</u> besides every kind of social support. **4.Our determination** in the direction of women's getting to the position they deserve in the social life will **continue** <u>by means of</u> **providing** equality of opportunity in education. **5. We** will **increase** the rate of the girls' passage to secondary education. **6.** In the next term, we will **support** <u>women enterpreneurs</u> with a special program **7.**The ratio of <u>working women</u> which was % 27,7 in 2010 will be **increased** to % 35 in 2023. **8.** (…….)For this reason, in order to **ensure** <u>working women's</u> remaining in <u>the registered employment</u>, **we** will **give** <u>childcare and education incentive</u> to women who are sending their children to nursery. **9.**Thus, **we** will both **increase** employment of women and **support** pre-school education. **10.We** will **discriminate** <u>women enterpreneurs</u> positively with the ratio of % 10 in support programs.

The use of passive voice in the first sentence has cast doubt on the 'agency' of the action. The reader isn't provided with information about the prospective performer(s) of the action. The verb '*increase*' not only entails the scarcity of women in key positions but also suggests that there is male domination in the decison

making mechanisms and parliament. The inclusion of the subject pronoun *'we'* in the second sentence draws the frontiers of the party as an agent. Richardson (2007, 58) underlines that analysis should ideally combine a discussion of what the text represents and excludes. In other words, meaning is created through relations of presence and absence. The adjective pronoun *'our'* also include the 'mistreated women' in the borders of the group *'We'*. Nevertheless, the adjective 'mistreated' and adjective clause *'who are staying in physically modern guest houses'* put these women in a subclassification within the space of the party. The exclusion of the doer of the mistreatment against women inevitably implied that there is a deliberate action to hide the actor(s). The cause-effect conjunction *'so'* triggers the logical connection between the victory of the party and women's getting self-sufficient and strong. In the third sentence, the suggestion of locating *'single mothers'* in the *'Studio Houses'* automatically invokes the question of spatialization of these women according to party politics. Mothers without men in their lives are offered to have a protected refuge where they will be safe from the threat of danger. Here, the nature of the threat is not explicated yet from the contextual background it is obvious that the biggest menace is the ex-husbands. The party undertakes the role of safeguarding these women from the male threat by keeping them in the party-approved spheres. In the fourth sentence, the linkage between the previous deeds of the party and their future actions is presupposed with the verb *'continue'*. Positive image-making is realized with the linguistic units 'our determination', *'will'* and *'continue'*. The phrase 'by means of' not only simplifies the comprehension of the methods for getting the deserved positions but also hints voting for this party will open the closed gates for women. The recipients of the actions in the fifth *'the girls'* and the sixth sentences 'women enterpreneurs' inescapably evoke the idea that male domination is naturalized in education and business life. The phrases 'boy's schooling problem' or 'men enterpreneurs' are never used in this sense as male has been accepted as the norm in the patriarchal ideology of Turkey. The seventh and eighth sentences introduce the term *'working women'* which refers to the women earning their own money. Hence, the category of housewives who work at home but have no contribution to the national economy is out of classification for the party politics. It is understood that the labour of women only have value as long as they supply financial contribution to the national budget. In the eighth and ninth sentences, the matter of childcare is depicted as the problem of working mothers while the father factor is ignored. This idea is the natural extension of identification of women with children in the patriarchal ideology. The verb 'discriminate' in the last sentence is value-laden in the field of power relations since only the strong have the right to discriminate. Here, the strength of the party is foregrounded while it is implied that female recipients can benefit from this authority. The verbs *'create', 'provide', 'support' and 'ensure'* indicate that the party positions itself as the 'origin of the desirable social improvement'. On the other hand, the employment of the verbs *'increase'* and *'continue'* in positively connotated sentences puts emphasis on the necessity of party's being re-elected. When it comes to modality, the modal *'will'* both manifests the visionary nature of the statements as well as highlighting the determination of the party.

3.1.2 THE ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTION STATEMENTS OF THE RPP

The RPP (Republican People's Party), which is a left wing party, had been the second major party prior to the 2011 General Elections. The RPP had ten women representatives in the Turkish Parliament before the Elections. The party prepared seventy pages election statement book which can be found on the official website. Unlike the other two parties, the election statements of the RPP addressing the women issues were dispersed throughout the election statement book. No special section was alloted for women issues yet they were discussed in the common sections where issues related to economy, employment, democracy and human rights are dealt. Not confining women issues into one specific section indicates the egalitarian policies of the party.

1. In the New Constitution in parallelism to the Clause 5 'Annihilation of Every Kind of Discrimination Against Women Contract', **we** will **assign** the state to change cultural patterns concerning one gender's superiority or inferiority. **2.We** will **struggle with** discrimination against women in education, work life, politics and civilian life. **3.We** will **make** necessary legal regulations for the strong realization of representation of women in politics, public service, justice and civilian society. **4.**By improving caretaking services of the children, the old and the sick, **we** will **remove** the obstacles before women's participation to the work life. **5.We** will **register** the fields where women work densely such as agricultural sector, home and housechores and make new insurance programs which include these. **6.We** will **work** for preventing violence against women, protecting the victims of violence and supporting them to set a living in which they won't be subject to violence again. **7.We** will **stop** the caretaking mentality which restrains women's working, confining them to home and hasn't got social security. **8.We** will **create** opportunities such as summer schools, evening schools, vocational courses and distant training for any women who had to give up their education so they can complete their education. **9. We** will **provide** the use of equal criterion in

employment and promotion. **10.** <u>Our main target</u> **is** <u>women's getting stronger in family and society</u>. **We** will **give** the supports in the Family Insurance Scheme directly <u>to the women</u>, **we** will **deposit** money into <u>their bank accounts</u>.

The entire text above consists of sentences in active voice in which the political party acts as the agent of the promised actions. Agency is marked with the pronoun *'We'* which refers to the institutionalized nature of the party as a Subject. Throughout the whole text the modal *'will'* is used to refer future and decisiveness of the party for solving the problems. In the first sentence, *'The State'* is personified and given the role of a sentient being which can cause intentional changes. The principle of equality is sought in the first sentence in which neither the dominance of men nor women is aimed at. The reference to the new Constitution entails the shortcomings and handicaps of the old one for women. Moreover, the mentioning of the Constitution positions the promises within a legal and concretized context. The areas of problem for women are specified in the second sentence; here the use of '*struggle with*' indicates these problems are considered as the enemies of the party. The perpetuator of the discrimination against women is excluded and the segregation against women is embodied as a villain to be defeated. While all three parties define employment, education and politics as the problem areas for women, the RPP adds a new one to the list which is '*the civilian life*'. The emphasis on 'civilian' in the second and third sentences manifests that the party is aware of women's subjugation in every aspect of the private and public sphere. The reference to *'legal regulations'* in the third sentence once more underlines the efforts of the party to legalize its promises. In the fourth sentence, the children, the old and the sick are depicted as the bars in front of women that refrain women getting from private to the public sphere. The verb *'register'* in the fifth sentence goes paralel to the reification and legalization aims in the first and the third sentences. Agriculture and house are shown as the natural habitats of female workforce which isn't financially appreciated. The division of space in the fourth and fifth sentences naturally stimulates the idea that other places belong to men where their labour is financially valued. In the sixth sentence, the performer of the violence is shadowed and unidentified. Here, the party undertakes the role of a benefactor who shields women against violence. The word *'again'* in the same sentence implies that violence can become a recurrent part of their lives. There is personification in the seventh sentence in which *'mentality'* is given human traits, this obscures the real entities behind the prevention of women's working and limitation of their space. The 'caretaking mentality' is shown as the scapegoat. The party stands as an originator of opportunities in the eighth sentence. The ninth sentence implies that different standards are applied to women and men in employment and promotion. Although there is no conjunction use between the first and second parts of the tenth statement, the sequence indicates a cause-effect relationship. The weak and inferior status of women is associated with not having financial power. The use of verb *'be'* in 3rd person singular in' *Our target is…..'* form indicates certainty and eternity of truth formulations about the Self and the task. The weak position of women in the family and society is explained in terms of their finacial deprivation. The identification of social status with financial power is an outcome of capitalist ideology. In the entire text, material verbs such as *'assign, struggle with, make, remove, register, work for, stop, create, provide'* are used. These verbs all refer to the concrete and tangible actions. This proves the action- orientedness and dynamic nature of promises.

3.1.3 THE ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTION STATEMENTS OF THE NMP

The NMP (Nationalist Movement Party), which is a nationalist conservative party, had been the major third party prior to the 2011 General Elections. The NMP had only two women representatives in The Turkish Parliament prior to the Elections. The party prepared two hundred- five paged election statement book which can be found on the official website. The election statements of the NMP addressing women issues were given place on the pages between 151–152. Women issues are discussed within the section titled 'Family, Women and Children' which shows that party ideology has the conceptualization of women in the private sphere. Likewise the JDP, there is no specific section alloted to men in the election statement book of the NMP.

1. The education level of women will be **risen**; their social status will be **fortified** via **making them get** <u>more active roles in the process of development, worklife and decision making mechanisms</u>. **2.** In order to **terminate** the antidemocratic prosecutions which are against human rights and preventing female students from taking the advantage of opportunities and chances in higher education, the headscarf issue will be **solved**. **3.**By means of improving the employment potential of women, their falling into background in the workforce market will be **prevented** and negative discrimination against women in worklife will be **ended**. **4.**By **making** <u>non-working housewives</u> **gain** vocational skills, their contribution to family budget and national economy will be **provided**. **5.** In the event of not having their own insurance, salary or income, regardless of age <u>unmarried daughters and divorced or widow women</u> will be grouped as dependants on

their parents so they will be enabled to make use of their health benefits. **6.** The cultural, social, psychological and economic factors which lead to women's liability to violence will be **abolished**, non-governmental organizations and media will **be made to act** sensitively about this case.**7.** Every kind of outdated prosecution which tarnishes women's respectability, restrains their fundemental rights and freedoms, triggering their abuses by keeping them in the background in society will be **ended**. **8.**Every kind of factual and juridical discrimination practised against women will be terminated. **9.** Women who have been subject to violence, abuse and harassment will be **provided** legal support in their search of justice. **10.** Our party **stands against** any kind of factual and juridical discrimination against women besides abuse of women, **our party** also **considers** the necessity of protecting of children against any sort of rights violation including their families.

While addressing female electors, the constant use of passive voice veils the identity of the agent. This kind of usage makes the text sound more formal and scientific. The tone is more distant when compared with the tones of the other two parties. While passive voice conceals the doer, the authority and power of the agent on the patients are quite obvious. The use of passive and causative in the first sentence indicates that women are depicted as dummy objects who don't have the consciousness capacity to improve their education level and social status. The use of the causative *'make somebody do something'* in the first, fourth and sixth sentences reinforces the authoritarian and centralist nature of the party. Although the party political discourse aims for better conditions for women, it maintains the mental representation of weak women who are in need of male help and guidance to improve themselves. The verbs *'terminate'* and *'solve'* in the second sentence emphasize the existence of an ongoing problem in the society and the party in power is criticized. In the third sentence, the clause *'….their falling into background in the workforce market will be ended'* entails that the male counterparts retain the control of the positions in the front rows. Interestingly, with the phrase *'non working housewives'*, their labour spent on the housechores is ignored. Moreover, it is implied that their labour can only be appreciated only in terms of their contribution to the family budget and national economy. The classifications *'unmarried daughters and divorced or widow women'* in the fifth sentence underlines the conservative categorization of women by means of their sexual relations with males. The grouping of females as virgin girls, married women and widow is a prevalent attitude in the Turkish society. Having a conventional basis, the party discourse also reproduces this distinction. The factors behind women's low status are classified psychologically, culturally, socially and economically in the sixth sentence but the real force behind this subjugation is kept latent. As in the second and third sentences where *'end'* and *'terminate'* are used, the use of the same verbs in the seventh and eighth sentences points to the unity of action and determination in party politics to transform the society. No subject pronoun is used to draw the lines between in-group and out-group. Only in the tenth sentence, the possessive adjective 'our' is used twice to indicate to whom these promises and standpoints belong. Simple Present use in the last sentence emphasized the stability of the party view and politics in the area of women issues. Although the promises are addressed to women, the second clause of the last sentence *'..our party also considers the necessity of protecting of children against any sort of rights violation including their families.'* refers to the children who are seen as natural extensions of women.

4. CONCLUSION

As it can be seen in the Analysis part, all three parties focus on the same problem areas which are 'discrimination in education and worklife' and 'violence in the private and public spheres'. The performers of these crimes against women are intentionally hidden or deleted with passive sentences or other clause structures. Violence and discrimination are depicted as if they were naturally happening. The effort to cloak the identity of the performers of violence and discrimination may originate from two reasons. First of all, direct accusation of men may cause resentment and loss of vote. Secondly, these all three parties are male dominated who may not want to tarnish their male companions. Material verb processes which show discernible and concrete actions are used in all three party statements. Mental verb process 'consider' in the tenth sentence of the NMP text and existential verb process 'is' in the last sentence of the RPP text are used only once. There is no verbal process use in three texts. The preference of material verb processes underline that all three parties are determined to carry out visible changes in favour of women. The choice of verbs change from party to party as a result of their political intentions. While the ruling party tends to use verbs which show consistent and positive change such as 'increase, continue', the RPP prefers to use verbs like 'struggle with, remove' to refer to the problems unsolved by the ruling party. The JDP prefers temporalizing the process while the RPP chooses spatialization by embodying violence and discrimination as obstacles on the way. On the other hand, the NMP has a more direct and sharp tone about the existent problems with 'end, terminate and abolish'. This party conceptualizes the problems of violence and discrimination in

temporal axis which have been going on for some time. All three parties have a common perspective about the low status of women, they all consider women as *'mistreated, prevented and discriminated victims of society'*. The women are located as passive recipients of the violent attitudes of unidentified social actors as well as the promisees of party discourse. While both the promisers and the performers of violence are males, the women in the middle of this flow are conceptualized as inactive Objects. The treatment of women as weak and incapacitated beings in need of male guidance for getting free of male violence echoes the dominant patriarchal ideology of the Turkish society. Critical Discourse Analysis not only aim at deciphering the dominat ideology and power relations inscribed in discourse but also intends to raise consciousness to the manipulation, injustice and inequality. The analysis of the election statements in this study intends to underline the importance of reading the deep structure of texts.

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