



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Exploring the Historical Legacy in I AM Malala: A Socio-Political  
Memoir of Self and Othering**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to investigate the social construction of ideology through the use of words choices in the selected text. It is important to view how socio-political and socio-religious ideologies help in shaping and building identity, and how the author has presented her ideological stance through complementary strategy of 'us vs. them', by attributing positive qualities to the author's in-group, and describing 'others' highlighting negative attributes in them. By employing van Dijk's 'socio-cognitive' (1998) model the study also looks at how social actors and discourse participants are represented, and what are their roles in her identity building process. The findings suggest that the discursive strategies are used by the author to portray herself positively and others negatively

**Introduction**

'I Am Malala' is narrative in the form of autobiography, and the narratives are considered of paramount importance by researchers like Schiffrin, 1996; De Fina, 2003; Georgakopoulou, 2007; as a tool for the articulation of identities. This study provides an insight on the ideological construction. So the major focus of always remains onto 'critically analyze those who are in power, those who are responsible, and those who have the means to deal with social problems' (van Dijk 1986). There must be some underlying factors which are needed to be examined for a better understanding.

The basic emphasis in this study is on representation of us versus them phenomenon, and how this polarization is used to present the ideology of the author. The main purpose of the study is to reveal the ideological construction of the social world/events through selected linguistic choices that may go unnoticed by the common readers who lack critical eye. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to look at ways in which the author has portrayed her identity.

Several discursive structures and discursive strategies are found in the text which became the implicit voices and which are more obvious than Malala's own voice, and this implicitly in the text make the things complex. Our early observations suggest that discursive strategy of 'us and them' is represented through group formation such as in-group relates to 'us' and out group leads to 'them' formation. These groups are further formed on the description of social actors as ideologies are capable of determining the ways actors are described in the text.

### **Literature Review**

Ideology performs many social functions as that of maintaining and controlling power in the society and serving social cognition of a group. Groups are organized on the basis of social conflicts, social relations, resistance and domination in the society and this might establish polarization of in-groups and out-groups (Abrams & Hogg, 1990).

There are many forms of ideologies that are categorized in this way of polarizations such as nationalist and racist ideologies, the basic purpose of this categorization is to separate people in their relevant groups on the basis of their particular interests such as white vs. black is a typical example of this polarization, our people vs. foreigners is also come under the heading of in- and out-group (Elias & Scotson, 1965). Lauk (2002) argues that ideologies become the imitation of certain elements such as social, political, economic and cultural interests of different groups. Whereas, Van Dijk (1998) argues that ideologies become the foundation for the people behavior in the group. This notion implies that group ideologies can serve as the foundation for social identities based on the phenomenon of us vs. them. Group ideologies particularly depend on resources they have or in most cases they don't have, basically conflict arises due to any of the deprivations in resources, clash in norms or beliefs etc. because "ideologies act as systems that are at the basis of the socio-political cognitions of groups" (Lau & Sears, 1986; Rosenberg, 1988). Sanz Sabido (2009) discusses the ways of news reporting showing the polarized group formation mainly to distinguish Muslims with the negative attributes.

Damien (2011) looks at the representation of group ideology based on positive self representation and negative other representation.

## **Material and Methods**

This is a qualitative research; data collected from the book is presented in form of extracts. This memoir is not just mere representation of her struggle in life in fact many other issues of significant importance has been discussed to substantiate her view point of identity. Everything has been described from her own point of view neglecting some core evidences and presented things painted in color of her own desire, so it's significant to locate the true identity representation by applying certain tools for the analysis to make explicit what is implicit without any prejudices, focusing on the concrete facts and figures found in the study under investigation.

## **Theoretical framework**

In order to answer the above research questions, we have adopted the socio-cognitive approach along with other discourse strategies.

## **Socio-cognitive Model for the Analysis**

This model allows us to do in-depth analysis as a general strategy of positive self-presentation (boasting) and negative other-presentation (derogation). This strategy may function at all levels, generally in such a way, that our good things are emphasized and our bad things de-emphasized.

Van Dijk (2007/8) also suggests representation of social actors how they are represented in a text. For this purpose he (ibid) introduced an ideological square which is comprised of two main actors, us (the majority group) and them (minority groups, in four scenarios:

- i. emphasizing the positive aspects of us
- ii. focusing on the negative aspects of them
- iii. de-emphasizing the positive aspects of them, and
- iv. de-emphasizing the negative aspects of us (Van Dijk, 2007).

In case of this research US is the Malala's in-group, to whom she may conforms her ideological stances and Them is the representation of others 'out-group' and analysis will be done by analyzing the word choices as the word choices give us the real meaning of the text as it is has a relation with semantic aspect such as different lexicons, word choices and formation of particular sentences Further analysis is done at two levels macro structure and micro structure. Macro structure deals at syntactic or sentence level (van Dijk, 1998) and remaining details are dealt under micro analysis of the text as micro structure represents the minutest details of elements of text that is significant to reflect the complete view of particular discourse.

For micro analysis of the text three major things will be focused. First is the syntax which deals with the semantic aspect of the text at sentence level. For example, the active or passive form of the sentence is used to hide or emphasize the action. Further, polarization of groups is analyzed through the use of pronominal pair of 'us' and 'them' (van Dijk, 2000). It is the way in which the speaker creates the polarization between in-group and out-group society (Dijk, 2002/06).

These are the strategies for the analysis of polarizations in the data under investigation. There are several social actions in the text which are misrepresented for some hidden purposes as van Leeuwen (in Wodak & Mayer, 2009) sees these discourse practices as transformation or recontextualizations of social practice. Leeuwen (2009) divides these transformations in three types first is deletion, second is substitution and the third one is addition.

## Results and Discussion

### Building Identity with Use of Pronoun 'We'

In the book, use of pronoun 'we' is very significant as she presented herself in terms of 'we' mostly than use of pronoun 'I'. The first step in the analysis of self-presentation in the data is the explanation of what 'we' refers to. We are going to present several examples from the text that show her identity constructed with this ideologically manifested 'we' and who comes in this circle of inclusive 'we'.

The first evidence of this pronoun 'we' is depicted in these lines

**Text 1** *"We arrived in the narrow mud lane off Haji Baba Road in our usual procession of brightly painted rickshaws...."* (Yousafzae, 2013 p.8)

She is talking about her arrival at school on that particular day when she was shot. Here 'we' includes her friends and school mates on the way to school in a van and this depiction of 'we' with friends continued as she described further *"As we skipped through, we cast off our head-scarves like winds..."* (Yousafzae, 2013 p. 8)

**Text 2** *"We had been getting threats all year"* (Yousafzae, 2013 p.9).

### Description of the context

She was working for the rights of women education and became spokes person of girl's right of education in her valley Swat. She was under threat by Taliban who were against female education and considered it non Islamic that's why Malala and her father became the target of their rivalry so here this 'we' include Malala and her father Zia- uddin.

**Text 3** *"We Pashtuns see this as an auspicious sign"* (Yousafzae, 2013 p.13)

### **Description of the context**

In the first chapter she stated that her arrival was not a happy thing for her tribe 'the Pushtuns'. In this line she is broadening the circle of 'we' by adding herself into her clan. She belongs to a Pashtun tribe; Pashtuns are an ethnic group with populations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. She describes her clan Pashtuns, which are the proud people of many tribes living both in Pakistan and Afghanistan "*We live as we have for centuries by a code called Pashtunwali, which obliges us to give hospitality to all guests*"(p. 13) so she is a proud Pashtun and confirmed her strong roots in her tribe. She keeps on telling positive qualities of Pashtuns, that they are hospitable, like to have and give honor to others, so much fond of fighting even between the families but they stand united against the outsiders. This is the positive presentation of herself and her tribe.

**Text 4** "*We lived in the most beautiful place in all the world*". (Yousafzae, 2013 p.13)

### **Description of the context**

In this line she uses the pronoun 'we' to combine all the persons which further become the part of her presentation as she is talking about her valley Swat, where her friends, father and people of her tribe are the residents so this circle of 'we' encompasses all the people she wants to have in her group the 'in group' of Malala.

**Text 5** "*We Yousafzai (which some people spell Yusufzai or Yousufzai) are originally from Kandahar and are one of the biggest Pashtun tribes, spread across Pakistan and Afghanistan*". (Yousafzae 2013, p.17)

"*So I was born a proud daughter of Pakistan, though like all Swatis I thought of myself first as Swati and then Pashtun, before Pakistani*". (Yousafzae 2013, p.18)

### **Description of the context**

She kept on presenting herself as a proud member of her clan as she narrowed down her circle of identity by telling more about her tribe, and presented herself as a Swati and Pashtun first instead of Pakistani. So, here focus is on telling her ethnicity first than her nationality as depicted from above lines, her presentation of first person plural 'we' keep on going in the whole text along with first person possessives like 'our' which make a clear view of herself belongs to 'in-group', which includes her family, friends and people of her tribe, rest are the outsiders and form an 'out-group'.

### **Analysis of Linguistic Features**

This presentation of 'we' is not a common thing in narratives or autobiographies; she made her view point through voices of several people, mostly she presented view points of her father, her friends and people around her to whom she referred as 'we' it is shown in the examples above how she used this first person plural to construct her identity so this is evident when she is expressing her views these are not only of the Malala's alone, but the people that come in her circle, the in-group of Malala.

### **Personalization of herself by using pronoun 'I'**

It's not always the case that she used plural pronoun 'we' but at times she used 'I' referring to herself as depicted in example below,

**Text 6** *"BY THE AGE of seven I was used to being top of my class. I was the one who would help other pupils who had difficulties. 'Malala is a genius girl,' my class fellows would say. I was also known for participating in everything - badminton, drama, cricket, art, even singing, though I wasn't much good. So when a new girl named Malka-e-Noor joined our class, I didn't think anything of it. ...but I knew I could beat her on content. So when we did the end-of-year exams and Malka-e-Noor came first, I was shocked. At home I cried and cried and had to be comforted by my mother". (Yousafzae 2013, P.39)*

### **Description of the context**

This is quiet personal portrayal of herself how she grew, as a genius student, competed with her fellows in the class and how she worked hard to maintain her position. All this embodies her personal view of life, nothing has been said which needs other voices than her own personal feelings and emotions as depicted in the example above, so she referred herself with pronoun 'I'. This made one thing apparent about presentation of her when she talks about herself alone she uses the pronoun 'I' and when she needs other voices to strengthen her view point she talks in terms of 'we'. This point gain more strength with the following example as such depiction of her feelings,

**Text 7** *"Though I had been born in a city, I shared my father's love of nature. I loved the rich soil, the greenness of the plants, the crops, the buffaloes and the yellow butterflies that fluttered about me as I walked". ( Yousafzae 2013, p.36)*

### **Analysis of the Linguistic Features**

It is obvious from the above discussion that presenting her in terms of 'We' is the strategy of representation of those voices which share the same idea and background of her owns. And 'I' is the representation of her personal feelings what she personally feels on certain life events.

So, the use of pronouns to present her identity is of strategic importance in political discourse because “pronouns may function communicatively to reveal various aspects of the speaker's attitudes and social standing” (Wilson1990:46).

### **Ethnic Roots of Identity**

Malala Yousafzae belongs to Swat valley, which was a princely state before it merged in Pakistan. And she remained nostalgic for her history of valley, instead of her country, where she was born in 1997, this strengthen her strong ethnic roots in portrayal of her identity.

**Text 8** *“We think of Jehanzeb’s reign as a golden period in our history”.* (Yousafzae, 2013 p. 18)

### **Description of the text**

Miangul Jahan Zeb (1908-1987) was the last Wali of Swat valley. He remained in power till the administration of Pakistan took control of the valley after it was merged in Pakistan on 28 July, 1969 when Yahya khan announced the complete integration of different states like Swat, Chitral and Dir into Pakistan. And his reign was considered more beneficial than others by Malala and here ‘we think’ can easily be interpreted as voice of all people includes in Malal’s in-group which has been discussed already.

Same sense of nostalgia and little bit of regret is also shown in the excerpt given below,

**Text 9** *“On Pakistan’s fiftieth anniversary on 14 August 1997 there were parades and commemorations throughout the country. However, my father and his friends said there was nothing to celebrate as Swat had only suffered since it had merged with Pakistan. They wore black armbands to protest, saying the celebrations were for nothing, and were arrested. They had to pay a fine they could not afford”* (yosafzae,2013 p.33)

### **Description of the context**

This excerpt clearly shows what her father thinks about Pakistan, they didn’t view this country beneficial towards them. As a matter of fact, the situation was not worse in Swat only, as presented here there were several other princely states which merged into Pakistan after its independence. If Swat valley had suffered other would have suffered too, and not only the princely state but whole of the remaining country but Malala’s fathers and his friends recorded their protest on that very day of Pakistan creation.

## Depiction of Social Actors

Identity description phenomena is achieved yet through the representation of pronoun categorization, use of inclusive 'we' and judgments given on personal liking and dis-liking. Now the next thing of importance is the representations of certain social actors as described in the methodology section that what are the functions of these actors in description of social phenomena as viewed by van Dijk (1998) identity used typical methods of positive self -presentation and negative other-presentation, and it's called a fundamental property of ideologies.

## Negative Description of Social Actors

Taliban are the major social actor in Malala's book *"I AM MALALA' the girl who stood up for education and was shot by Taliban"* as the title suggests Malala was shot by Taliban, she described them as,

**Text 10** *"These were strange-looking men with long straggly hair and beards and camouflage vests over their shalwar kamiz, which they wore with the trousers well above the ankle. They had jogging shoes or cheap plastic sandals on their feet, and sometimes stockings over their heads with holes for their eyes, and they blew their noses dirtily into the ends of their turbans. They wore black badges which said SHARIAT YA SHAHADAT - SHARIA LAW OR MARTYRDOM - and sometimes black turbans, so people called them Tor Patki or the Black-Turbaned Brigade. They looked so dark and dirty that my father's friend described them as 'people deprived of baths and barbers'". (Yousafzae, 2013 p.59)*

We can clearly see the negative description in the excerpt given above; physical features are emphasized again for negative description of the social actors.

- **"With long straggly hair and beards",**
- **"Or cheap plastic sandals on their feet"**
- **"They blew their noses dirtily into the ends of their turbans".**
- **"They looked so dark and dirty"**

Negative adjectives like straggly hair and breads, cheap plastic sandals, way of their behaving is also depicted and there is over all negative description as dark and dirty.

**Text 11** *"They didn't call themselves Taliban to start with and didn't look like the Afghan Taliban we'd seen in pictures with their turbans and black-rimmed eyes". (Yousafzae, 2013 p. 59)*

These examples have shown us the ways in which Taliban are depicted. This depiction is negative mostly on the basis of their physical attributes.

**Text 12** *“Mullah FM made jokes about the army. Fazlullah denounced Pakistani government officials as ‘infidels’ and said they were opposed to bringing in sharia law. His name was Ghulamullah and he called himself a mufti, which means he is an Islamic scholar and authority on Islamic law, though my father complains that anyone with a turban can call themselves a maulana or mufti”.* (Yousafzae 2013, p. 49)

The other very important representation given here is of the word ‘**mufti, or mullah**’ as

- **One-eyed mullah**
- **Mullah F**

when she referred them as one eyed mullah and fm mullah that’s derogatory, a technique use to deemphasize the qualities of others and also as a source to give negative description of social actors other than ‘us’.

**Text 13** *“...It seemed to us that the Taliban arrived in the night just like vampires”.* (Yousafzae, 2013 p.59)

The negative description of the social actors continues in the lines quoted above and here they are termed as vampires, vampires are imaginary creation living dead people, they need human blood for their existence. Representation of social actors is not confined only to Taliban but another important social actor which is being presented in negative terms is Pakistan army.

**Text 14** *“They told people that what was happening in Swat was not about Islam. My father said the Taliban presence in Swat was not possible without the support of some in the army and the bureaucracy”.* (Yousafzae 2013, p.73)

‘My father said’, is a voice other than Malala’s voice that is very much evident in the whole book as many things of great importance has been said by her father, these lines suggest that Taliban are getting support from the inside of army or administration.

### **Description of the context**

During Taliban control over the valley, school remained closed and it was difficult for the owners to pay school staff salary and other bills, Malala asked General Abbas to help in this situation

In spite of being courteous and thankful towards Pakistan army, Malala never acknowledged the positive side of army but presenting only the negative one.

**Text 15** *“Over a hundred soldiers had been killed in the military operation and 900 injured, and they wanted to show themselves as heroes. But though their*

*sacrifice was supposed to have restored government control, we were still waiting for the rule of law". (Yousafzae 2013, pg. 104)*

The same negative depiction is also seen in the lines quoted above, intensity has deepened as she herself giving the statistics that hundred soldiers have lost their lives and 900 injured still they don't have any right to show their selves as heroes, and still **they wanted to show themselves** as heroes and in Malala's words they are not the heroes , this is height of negative depiction of others, in an article written by Trofimov (2014) he described the state of army as "the price ordinary Pakistani soldiers pay in the struggle against Taliban fighters is real and high. Since Pakistan's army began moving into the tribal areas along the Afghan border to confront the Pakistani Taliban in 2004, more than 4,000 Pakistani soldiers have been killed and more than 13,000 injured, according to military statistics". It's a heavy toll and Pakistan has never lost such numbers of soldiers in any of the war before.

**Text 16 "Our military and ISI are very powerful and most people did not like to voice these things publicly, but my father and many of his friends were not scared. 'What you are doing is against our people and against Pakistan,' he would say. 'Don't support Talibanisation, it's inhuman. We are told that Swat is being sacrificed for the sake of Pakistan, but no one and nothing should be sacrificed for the state. A state is like a mother, and a mother never deserts or cheats her children." (Yousafzae 2013 p. 73)**

Malala claims again here that army is supporting talibanization in the state and they have plan to sacrifice Swat for the sake of country, but I have already discussed the role played by army and their sufferings, loses and death toll faced by them. First battle of swat ended in the peace talk that was for strategic reasons, but when army saw insurgencies again in the valley they took the second step to fight second battle in Swat also known as Operation Rah-e-Rast, which was fought between the Pakistan army and Taliban militants for the sake of Swat's control. At the end of war, Mingora the main city of Swat valley was recaptured and 168 army people lost their lives 454 wounded and 2088 militants killed in the battle. This clearly depict that land is not sacrificed for the sake of anything but many precious lives have been sacrificed for the sake of the land.

**Text 17 "Our army, which already had a lot of strange side businesses, like factories making cornflakes and fertilisers, had started producing soap operas. People across Pakistan were glued to a series on prime-time TV called Beyond the Call of Duty, which was supposed to consist of real-life stories of soldiers battling militants in Swat". (Yousafzae 2013, p .104)**

In these lines strange side businesses of the army highlighted, word 'strange' gives the negative sense as army is not supposed to do such businesses. From all these examples we can conclude that Taliban and army both social actors are presented negatively in the text, as they are not in accordance with her ideology.

She has her own in-group of people to whom she praised and presented positively and rest came in the out-group referred negatively.

### **Findings**

A social practice can be political, historical or religious in nature. The main focus was on the identity construction phenomenon, how the identity of the author is constructed, represented and enacted in the text? Identity is constructed through several linguistics means, firstly through the categorization of pronouns, 'we' and 'I'. Malala frequently used the pronoun 'we' for the depiction of her thoughts mostly that of political in nature, she described certain events by using this 'we', as we include the voice of her father, her family and friends and people of her tribe. It is viewed that she used pronoun 'we' to include other people in her in-group, the group of people to whom she conformed her views either religious, or historical. Pronoun 'I' is also used but only for the personal depiction of her inner thoughts, feelings and emotions. Her ideological views are based on other thoughts than her own. She identified herself as the member of her tribe 'Yousafzae' and more importantly her identity roots are more strongly connected with her ethnicity than her nationality. Her identity is also constructed through the use of polarization us versus them phenomenon. Us is Malala's in-group which include people of her family and those who came in the inclusive circle of 'we' rest are the outsiders and become 'them' group. Us group is represented positively while others are represented negatively, by using certain negative adjectives and derogatory remarks. The next thing of focus was the representation of social actors, mainly Taliban and Pakistan army, Taliban are depicted negatively mostly by emphasizing their physical attributes and army is also represented in negative terms with the use of metaphoric expressions, irony, and the misrepresentation of facts only to give their overall negative picture. But in the depiction of army as social participants she presented General Musharraf differently as his ideological views are similar to those of Malala Yousafzae, so any person who comes in the ideological circle, becomes part of her in-group and she describes that person or that group positively. Hence, she loves her ethnic roots more than her nationality and her thoughts and ideologies depend mostly on her father views and those who come in the inclusive circle of 'we'.

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Malala, a self-proclaimed social activist, has become an icon worldwide, not just because of her story, but, first and foremost, thanks to a carefully planned propaganda campaign by the media and the published work itself, which recreates traumatic events both at a personal and at a national level. The memoir's title is problematic: *I Am Malala. The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*, by Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb. The fact that there is a co-author makes the reader think of its reliability (Smith & Watson, 2010: 17). She cannot have witnessed all the historical events that she mentions. However, the success of her narrative might be comparable to that of other controversial activists (Canby, 1999: 28-33). Because *I Am Malala* is a memoir, a work of nonfiction, it's difficult and not entirely appropriate to compare it to works of literature. Nevertheless, the book is clearly related to other memoirs about periods of crisis. One such memoir is *The Diary of Anne Frank*, first published in 1947. Key Facts about *I Am Malala*. Full Title: *I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban*. Where Written: Birmingham, United Kingdom. When Published: October 2013. Literary Period: Contemporary Non-fiction, Political Memoir. Genre: Memoir. Setting: Pakistan (various cities), United Kingdom (Birmingham). Climax: Malala is shot. *I AM MALALA* will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world. ...more. Get A Copy. Amazon. This is more than a simple memoir. Malala doesn't just talk about herself—her past, her present and her future. She talks about what is around her; the world that surrounds her, and she points out what is right and what is wrong Malala refused to believe girls should be denied an education. The narrative explores this dream and fosters the growth from a dilapidated building into a successful initiative with over one thousand pupils attending annually. With the rise of the Taliban in neighbouring Afghanistan and the eventual American invasion of that country, the region's stability weakened and Pakistan found itself pulled in two directions. 19th century was the period of strong Western political and commercial domination in Southeast Asia. Thousands of Malay manuscripts as well as other historical artefacts of Malay culture were collected and studied.[38] The use of Latin script began to expand in the fields of administration and education whereby the influence of English and Dutch literatures and languages started to penetrate and spread gradually into the Malay language. Writing has its unique place in the history of self-awareness and the nationalist struggle in Indonesia and Malaysia.