

Representation of Women in Leila S. Chudori's Novel *Nadira*: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Norman Fairclough's Model

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Abstract

Urgency of this research is to critically examine the representation of women in Leila S. Chudori's novel *Nadira* through Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model in order to uncover underlying gender ideologies and power relations embedded in the text. This study examines the representation of women in *Nadira*, a novel by Leila S. Chudori, using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model. The analysis focuses on various formn of representation that appear through actions, events, states, and mental processes experienced by the female characters in the narrative. This research employes a descriptive qualitative method with reading and note-taking techniques to obtain relevant data from the text. The findings reveal that the representation of women in *Nadira* is constructed through lexical selection, metaphors, and narrative structures that highlight emotional struggles, power relations, and the psychological experiences of the characters. Through figurative language and vivid depictions of inner turmoil, the novel portrays women as individuals who confront social pressure, emotional instability, and processes of self-meaning. These findings affirm that language in literary works not only conveys stories but also constructs the positions and identities of women within their social contexts.

Keywords: *Women's Representation, Critical Discourse Analysis, Novel*

Introduction

Chudori depicts a woman's journey facing loss and her efforts to establish balance in her life after the death of her mother (Fitriani & Hidayani, 2024). The theme of loss is conveyed through the grieving process, which impacts family relationships and the emotional development of the main character. The places female figures at the center of the narrative, demonstrating their resilience in the face of psychological and social pressures (Muliawati et al., 2023). Beyond the narrative, the novel also captures the social dynamics of life, including work demands, professional relationships, and societal perceptions of grief, providing context for the characters' struggles (Sari et al., 2025; Sitio et al., 2026). *Nadira* presents the intersection of personal trauma, female empowerment, and the social realities that shape contemporary human experience (Lestari, 2022; Manulu et al., 2026).

In the novel *Nadira*, many elements relate to the concept of representation. This study discusses Norman Fairclough's framework for representation as an analytical tool (Sabir & Kanwal, 2018); Silvi et al., 2026. Text does not simply display the objects depicted but also defines the relationships between objects. Fairclough divides representation into three main elements to be analyzed, one of which is the element of representation itself. This approach seeks to examine how a person, group, action, and activity are depicted in the text. Pendekatan ini menekankan bahwa teks merupakan praktik sosial yang merepresentasikan realitas sekaligus membentuk relasi kekuasaan dan makna sosial dalam masyarakat (Pešić, 2022; Windarini & Hamdani, 2025; Hermawan & Hamdani, 2023; Rimang et al., 2024).

Nadira's novel also represents social interactions, highlighting the complexities and variations within society (Durmaz & Yogu, 2022). Through its social aspects, the novel explores conflicts, group dynamics, and the impact of social interactions on character development. Furthermore, literature can serve as a medium to convey moral messages and social awareness (Muliawati et al., 2023). The social elements in Nadira allow readers to understand human interaction and societal development, revealing values and truths relevant to everyday life (Dama & Hisasmaria, 2025).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), from Norman Fairclough's perspective, offers a way to understand how language is used in social practices and how discourse can reflect and shape power and ideology in society (Sari et al., 2025). However, previous studies have yet to provide a detailed analysis of how these discourses are presented to readers, particularly in Indonesian contemporary literature (Febriansyah et al., 2025). The media not only conveys information but also shapes public perspectives through word choice, perspective, and reporting (Lestari, 2022). This reveals a research gap regarding the specific analysis of female representation in Nadira using CDA (Permatasari et al., 2021).

Critical Discourse Analysis is conducted through three main dimensions, one of which is the text dimension (Rezeki, 2025). This dimension analyzes text structure, meaning, and implications in narrative contexts. Language in texts not only conveys information but also shapes ideological understanding (Fitriani & Hamdani, 2023; Sari et al., 2024; Kurniawan, 2022). Several previous studies have examined novels and female representation. The novel *Rumah di Seribu Ombak* by Erwin Ananda and found that social criticism is represented through vocabulary choices, grammatical structures, and text organization (Abidin et al., 2025).

Studied the novel *Masyitoh* by Ajip Rosyidi and found that female characters are depicted in complex and diverse ways, including physical, psychological, familial, and social aspects (Kurniadi et al., 2023; Nabila & Daulay, 2025). Despite these contributions, there remains a notable gap in the existing literature, particularly in studies that specifically examine Leila S. Chudori's *Nadira* through the combined lens of gender studies and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Previous research on Indonesian contemporary literature has largely focused on thematic interpretation or isolated linguistic analysis, with limited attention to how gender ideologies are constructed and reproduced through language using a critical discourse approach.

This absence of integrated analysis restricts a deeper understanding of how female representation is shaped within literary texts in relation to broader social and ideological structures. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the representation of women in *Nadira* using Norman Fairclough's CDA framework, with a particular focus on how language constructs female identity, negotiates social relations, and embeds ideological meanings within the narrative.

The novelty of this study lies in its dual focus, as it not only applies Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to an Indonesian contemporary literary work but also integrates a gender-based analytical perspective, an approach that remains relatively underexplored in existing literary studies. By combining these two analytical lenses, the study moves beyond conventional literary interpretation and provides a more critical examination of how language operates within literary texts to construct meaning, power, and identity. Specifically, this research highlights how female characters and their experiences are represented, negotiated, and positioned within social and ideological structures in Leila S. Chudori's *Nadira*. Furthermore, it reveals how linguistic choices in the novel contribute to shaping perceptions of femininity, agency, and social roles. In doing so, this study contributes

to the field of literary and discourse analysis by offering new insights into the intersection of language, gender, and ideology, while also enriching the understanding of how Indonesian contemporary literature reflects and constructs societal realities.

Method

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. Descriptive qualitative methods are considered appropriate for examining the conditions of the object of study, particularly when the goal is to provide a detailed and contextualized understanding of a phenomenon (Akhirah et al., 2023). In this study, the phenomenon is the representation of women in the novel *Nadira* by Leila S. Chudori. The research focuses on how female characters' identities, experiences, and social positions are constructed through language in the narrative (Akhirah et al., 2023). This approach allows the researcher to explore the depth of textual meaning while maintaining flexibility to interpret subtle nuances in the characters' actions, events, and psychological states.

The primary data source in this study is the text of the novel *Nadira* itself. The data consist of sentences, paragraphs, and expressions that reflect actions, events, situations, and mental processes of female characters. These textual elements were selected because they provide insight into how women are represented in terms of personal ideology, social roles, emotional experiences, and power relations. Supporting data were obtained from relevant literature on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and gender studies, which provide theoretical frameworks and analytical tools for interpreting the findings (Sari et al., 2025). In addition, the researcher referred to previous studies on women's representation in Indonesian contemporary literature to situate the analysis within a broader scholarly context (Muliawati et al., 2023).

Data collection was carried out using the reading and note-taking technique. The researcher carefully read the novel, identified passages relevant to women's representation, and recorded these passages in a structured note format. Each note includes the type of representation (action, event, situation, or mental process), the textual excerpt, and preliminary interpretations. This systematic recording ensures that all relevant data are captured for in-depth analysis (Akhirah et al., 2023). The process also involved repeated reading cycles to ensure saturation of data and to reduce the risk of overlooking significant passages (Lestari, 2022).

Data analysis was conducted in several stages, following Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA framework, which includes the text, discursive practice, and social practice dimensions. First, the textual dimension was analyzed to examine linguistic features, such as lexical choices, metaphors, grammatical structures, and narrative organization. Second, discursive practice was analyzed by examining how the text was produced, distributed, and interpreted, focusing on the communicative and interpretive processes within the novel.

Third, the social practice dimension was analyzed to understand how the language in the novel reflects and shapes societal ideologies, power relations, and cultural norms regarding women's roles and experiences (Sari et al., 2025). In addition, the analysis included contextualization of the novel within Indonesian contemporary society to identify implicit social assumptions and cultural norms embedded in the text (Muliawati et al., 2023). To ensure the validity of the research, triangulation was applied by comparing findings from different parts of the text, consulting secondary sources, and reviewing relevant CDA and gender studies literature (Muliawati et al., 2023). Member-checking was also conducted by discussing preliminary interpretations with experts in literary analysis and discourse studies.

This process reduces the risk of subjective bias and strengthens the credibility of the findings (Sari et al., 2025). Peer debriefing and iterative discussion of interpretations were conducted to further enhance analytical rigor (Lestari, 2022). Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study. Proper attribution was given to all sources, including the novel and theoretical references (Lestari, 2022). The analysis remained objective and respectful of the author's intellectual property and creative work. Confidentiality was not a concern because the study analyzed publicly available literary material; however, interpretations were presented responsibly and without distortion of the original text (Muliawati et al., 2023).

Overall, this methodological framework provides a comprehensive and systematic approach to examining women's representation in Nadira. By combining qualitative descriptive methods with Fairclough's CDA model and gender analysis, the study uncovers both the linguistic construction and the socio-cultural implications of female characters' experiences, actions, and identities. Furthermore, the inclusion of multiple analytical layers and triangulated data sources ensures that interpretations are well-founded and reflective of both textual details and broader social meanings (Sari et al., 2025).

Results

The representation of women in Leila S. Chudori's novel, *Nadira*, through Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, positions language as the primary means of constructing meaning and ideology. The four textual representations are: action, event, state, and mental process. The textual representations in *Nadira* are presented in the following section.

Action Representation

Representation of action is how an actor is portrayed as performing a specific action toward someone who causes something. Representation of action is demonstrated through Nadira's decisions to act and behave. The decision to remain silent and withdraw reflects inner conflict and her relationship with her environment. This action demonstrates Nadira's position as a subject grappling with her past and social pressures. The following is a representation of action found in the novel *Nadira*.

Data 1: "Suddenly, without realizing it, I was already gliding toward the bar. His (high) nose bridge must have been made of magnets, and my entire body was made of cheap metal willing to drag itself to embrace this magnet. And the magnet stared at me with just one sharp glance." (p.12)

Data 2: "Novena stirred the cappuccino, then sipped it slowly. Tara smiled at the cappuccino foam left on Novena's lips. She took a tissue and wiped the edges of Novena's lips. Novena felt her entire body tremble. Tara then sighed and stared at the black coffee in front of her. It was dark." (p. 230)

Representation of Events

The representation of events demonstrates that these events are not merely a series of incidents, but rather a construct of meaning that shapes the characters' experiences. Through memories, flashbacks, and emotional details, these events are subjectively represented to Nadira's understanding of her life. Thus, the events in this novel serve as a medium for expressing inner struggles, social relationships, and the process of character identity creation. Data related to the representation of events in *Nadira*'s novel include the following.

Data 1: "Bea dragged me along while whispering. Her cigarette smoke billowrd into my face. She whispered a name in my ear while giggling. Hearing her suggestion, I felt less enthusiastic." (p.10)

Data 2: "Nadira gasped. The sound of the firecracker this time was like hitting something hard. The subsequent explosion even shattered various glassware. Nadira's heart was pounding. In just a second, she was in front of her room." (p.116)

Representation of Situation

The representation of the situation through the social, emotional, and psychological situations of each character. These conditions not only serve as the story's backdrop, but are also shaped through word choice that emphasizes the feelings of loss, tension, and inner struggle experienced by Nadira. The depiction of these conditions plays a crucial role in creating a deeper understanding, as the situations experienced by the characters reflect the relationship between personal experiences and social context. The following data is found in the novel "Nadira" that refers to the representation of action.

Data 1: "He rejected Kirana. He wanted to swim in Panji's body. His scent filled my nostrils again. A mixture of citrus and paradise leaves. All my nerves were paralyzed by the swift, harsh, and effective attack. His fingers traced every inch of my body. I was paralyzed and immobile. And my beloved, the Prince, felt even further away..." (p. 177)

Data 2: "Uncle Chusnul suffers from diabetes, and the wound on his leg won't heal. It's constantly wet and gaping. I think Mrs. Suwandi's death has left a deep wound in her children." (p.242)

Representation of Mental Processes

The representation of mental processes demonstrates inner experiences through descriptions of thoughts, emotions, and self-awareness. Mental processes such as remembering, experiencing loss, and dealing with emotional turmoil serve as the primary means of expressing Nadira's psychological state. With its reflective narrative and subtle language, the novel not only conveys physical events but also highlights the subjective experiences of the characters. Thus, the representation of these mental processes plays a crucial role in creating depth within the characters while also leading readers to a deeper understanding of Nadira's conflicts and life journey. The data found in Nadira's novel relates to the representation of mental processes.

Data 1: "Since then, Nadira's face has never been the same as the one I knew. Her hair has become increasingly messy, her face wrinkled, and her cheeks are always streaked with tears, as if she never washed her face. The space under her desk has become a place where she hides all her sadness." (p.191)

Data 2: "Perhaps I will no longer seek answers. About Mother. About death. Or about separation. So many traces. So many fingerprints. Perhaps I will let the waves erase the traces on History that stretches like a blanket of sand."(p.294)

Discussion

Action representation is how to describe an actor to carry out a certain action to someone that causes something. The results found in data 1 reflect the female character as a spontaneous response that is not fully realized. The statement "without realizing it, I slid closer to the bar" shows that the action took place outside the character's rational thinking. The similes of

"magnets" and "ordinary metal" strengthen the position of female characters as those who are lured and trapped by the allure of male characters. The male character is shown with strength even though just appearing with "a sharp gaze" is enough to trigger a deep reaction (Erwin & Murtafi'ah, 2024; Suharyo et al., 2025).

In this case, the woman's behavior is described as passive and responsive, thus indicating injustice in power relations. The results of this research show that the use of language in this novel creates an image of women as subjects experiencing situations, this is in line with representation in the context of critical discourse analysis in Norman Fairclough's framework (Erwin & Murtafi'ah, 2024).

The quote in data 2 shows the results of the analysis that the sensory experience experienced by the Novena character through the activity of stirring and sipping cappuccino can give rise to a strong emotional reaction, reflected in the physical vibrations in his body. The simple relationship between Tara and Novena, especially when wiping foam on the lips, shows a deep connection between tactile stimulation and the individual's emotional involvement. For the visual difference between a cappuccino and dark black coffee indicates a change in inner mood from warmth to reflective calm. This shows that the experience of enjoying coffee is not neutral, but is rich in emotional meaning that is shaped by social and situational context (Megawati, 2021).

At the text level, word choices such as stirring, inhaling slowly, smiling, and rubbing indicate gentle actions rich in emotional meaning, while Novena's physical reaction which suggests that "her whole body is shaking" describes physical emotions. The visual transition from cappuccino to dark black coffee signals a shift in mood from the warmth of the relationship to a more reflective and depressed state (Megawati, 2021).

Event representation found 2 data with statements the quote "Bea dragged me while whispering" shows how actions and relationships between characters are framed through word choices that highlight the dominance of one party over another. The words "dragging me" do not simply describe physical movements, but form a representation that the narrator is in a less powerful position, following Bea's encouragement without enthusiasm. The cigarette smoke that "billed into my face" reinforces the image of an unequal relationship (Wibowo & Claretta, 2023). Fairclough emphasizes that analysis of the representation of events must pay attention to who the perpetrator is and how the action is viewed from a moral and social perspective (Wibowo & Claretta, 2023).

In this framework, characters who push and whisper are constructed as proactive actors in initiating events, while figures with unenthusiastic responses are seen as passive, as if just following the course of interaction without any resistance (Wibowo & Claretta, 2023). The second quote shows how a sudden and tense situation is represented through the choice of verbs and strong sensory descriptions. The reaction "Nadira gasped" shows that the firecracker sound incident is not just a background, but is constructed as a threat that disturbs the character's sense of security. The sound of firecrackers "hitting hard objects" and "like causing various glassware to break" creates a chaotic atmosphere, so that readers are directed to understand the sound as a physically and psychologically disturbing event (Ellya et al., 2023).

In Fairclough's context, this use of language signifies a practice of exposing the subject, where emotions and physical reactions as well as character take precedence as the dominant meaning in the text (Ellya et al., 2023; Magfira & Suhita, 2022). In the representation of the situation, there are 2 pieces of data depicting Nadira being shocked by the sound of firecrackers,

showing how the originally calm situation changed to a condition full of tension in a matter of seconds. Through the description of the sound of firecrackers "hitting hard objects" and "like causing glassware to break," the environmental situation is constructed as a space that is unstable, threatening, and can trigger automatic bodily responses (Abidin et al., 2025). This tension was visible in Nadira's physical reaction, which was "pounding" and immediately moved quickly towards her room (Abidin et al., 2025).

The quote that describes Uwak Chusnul's condition "suffers from diabetes, and the wound on his leg is not healing, is constantly wet and is increasingly gaping" shows how a person's physical condition is represented as a situation that is deteriorating and difficult to control. The description of a wound that is not dry and "gaping" is not just medical information, but establishes a situation that is gloomy, fragile, and full of uncertainty. This situation is reinforced by the statement regarding Suwandi's children who also felt emotional pain due to the death of their mother (Utomo, 2024). This emphasizes the relationship between the body, grief and family dynamics, which is related to Nadira's work highlighting the physical-psychological condition of characters as a representational aspect that carries the values of suffering and instability (Utomo, 2024; Isnaeni et al., 2025).

Mental process representations show how the inner experience is through descriptions of these thoughts, emotions, and consciousness. In this research, there were 2 data found. The quote "Nadira's face is never the same, her hair is messy, her cheeks have traces of tears, under her desk has become a place where she hides all her sadness" shows how to build a representation of mental processes through physical descriptions and daily behavior of characters. Changes in facial expressions, body gestures, and choice of place of refuge are concrete traces of inner turmoil that Nadira does not express directly (Gumelar & Hermawati, 2020).

The quote "Perhaps I will no longer look for answers about death, about separation" shows how the character's mental processes are depicted through reflective actions. In Nadira, this section shows the point when the narrator begins to accept the uncertainty that has been burdening him. The decision to "no longer seek answers" shows an internal process that moves from search to acceptance, a psychological transition through quiet and symbolic sentences (Azzah & Israhayu, 2024). This data shows the tendency of presenting the character's grief, loss and existential struggle through the choice of symbols that reflect the mental condition in progress (Azzah & Israhayu, 2024).

Conclusion

This research shows that the representation of women in the novel *Nadira* by Leila S. Chudori is formed through various linguistic devices that reflect the complexity of the female character's experiences. Action representation shows the position of women who are often placed as subjects who are vulnerable and easily affected by emotional relations. The representation of events shows that the characters' experiences do not stand as neutral events, but are instead constructed through word choices that mark tension, pressure, and instability. The situation representation depicts physical and psychological situations that frame the character's life as a space full of social and emotional burdens. The representation of mental processes appears through symbols, metaphors, and changes in behavior that reveal the character's inner struggle in dealing with trauma and loss. Overall, the research results confirm that Leila S. Chudori presents women not just as narrative figures, but as subjects who bring complex emotional and social experiences. Through Fairclough's approach, it can be seen that

language is the main medium in forming ideology, power relations and the image of women in texts. This research strengthens the understanding that literary works have an important role in depicting gender dynamics and reflecting the social conditions that surround women's lives.

However, this study has several limitations. The research focuses solely on a single novel, Nadira, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other literary works or contexts. Additionally, the analysis relies primarily on textual interpretation without incorporating readers' perspectives or author interviews, which could provide a more comprehensive understanding of women's representation. Therefore, future researchers are recommended to expand the scope by analyzing multiple novels, comparing representations across different authors or cultural contexts, and integrating qualitative methods such as interviews or surveys to triangulate the data and enrich the analysis of gender representation in contemporary Indonesian literature.

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