

# Critical Discourse Analysis of Media Presupposition in Reinforcing Ideology: The Case of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia

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## Abstract

*The aim of this study is to uncover how a particular kind of institution is reinforcing its ideology through journalist's fair or unfair presupposition of information/knowledge, which is done by using Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia as its case. To this end, the study reveals the possible ideological goal does such presupposition attempt to achieve. The study focuses on a set of media discourses regarding the role and contribution of the hospital in curing obstetric fistula patients. In order to realize the stated objectives, the study adheres critical discourse analysis as the main methodological tool, Van Dijk socio-cognitive theory, presupposition and relevance theory, and theory of privacy as the theoretical frameworks. The analysis indicates that there is a consciously or unconsciously unfair presupposition of journalists which might lead audiences to invest in too much processing effort for the amount of cognitive effect they wish to achieve so that the institution would underpin its ideology.*

**Key Words:** *critical discourse analysis, media presupposition, discursive construction, relevance, fair/unfair presupposition, reinforcing ideology*

## 1. Introduction

Media are an important discourse domain to which Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been applied. For this reason, media discourse interests different discourse analysts to have a study on it. This is because of the undeniable power of media. Thus, people hear more language from the media than they do from direct conversation (Bell, 1991), and also they talk a lot, about what they read, see, and hear on the mass media, and the Internet (Lull, 2000) (Lee, 2007, p.16). However, how the media represent the world and events is often controversial. To this respect as how the media covers particular kinds of issues is often subtle, and that can be elaborated in different ways. Due to its sensitiveness, all those media discourses could be elaborated in different manner based on their perception. In the case of this study, the discourse about Hamlin fistula Ethiopia commitment for the reduction of fistula, has sometimes gained an increasing attention in the media; many journalists and authors talk and write about it. The question, however, is the way such discourses are presented by the media.

Media have had a lot of saying about the contribution of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia. However, how they presented is a worth mentioning question as it might have a fairly/unfairly presupposition of information/knowledge. What matter is; journalist covers only the role and contribution that Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia is playing for curing obstetric fistula patients? What is behind there has to be known. Referring to Jorgensen Aand Phillips (2002), "analysis of discursive practice focuses on how authors of texts draw on already existing discourses and genres to create a text, and on how receivers of texts also apply available discourses and genres in the consumption and interpretation of the texts" (p. 69).

In addition, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia is studied for the very reason that, since media had had a lot of appraisals about the role that the hospital is playing for curing obstetric fistula patients, investigating those increasing discourses would show the other way round of undisclosed outcomes. Because, as Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p.258) argued “discourse is socially constitutive and conditioned...constitutive in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo and it contributes to transforming it”. Thus, whenever a particular discourse is set out, once own media have to take care of the outcomes and achievable ideology.

Accordingly, the study has tried to answer the following research questions: what knowledge has the media presupposed in their discursive construction of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia? How is this knowledge presented in the media texts under consideration? What ideological goals does such presupposition attempt to achieve?

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### **2.1 Van Dijk Socio-Cognitive Theory**

It is vivid that, socio cognitive is a combination of two terms. Those are: social and cognition. Cognition can be defined as a set of functions of the mind, such as thought, perception, and representation (Van Dijk, 1995, p.64). He proposes that, it is the socio cognition (i.e. social cognition and personal cognition) that mediates between society and discourse.

According to Van Dijk (2003, p.89): social cognition is the system of mental structures and operations that are acquired, used or changed in social context by social actors and shared by the members of social groups, organizations and cultures. This system consists of several subsystems, such as knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies, norms and values, and the ways these are affected and brought to bear in discourse and other social practices.

Socio-cognitive model of Van Dijk (1995) examines the ways in which such cognitive phenomena are related to the structures of discourse, verbal interaction, communicative events, and situations, as well as societal structures, such as those of domination and social inequality (p.64).

Van Dijk brought up this model for a reason that: “CDA should not limit itself to a study of the relationship between discourse and social structure, such as racism and other forms of power abuse. But that language use and discourse always presuppose the intervening mental models, goals and general social representations (knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms, values) of the language users.” In other words, the study of discourse triangulates between society/culture/situation, cognition, and discourse (Wodak and Meyer, 2008, p.14). Here the most important point is the presupposition, as this study will set out separately later.

Additionally, he brought up this model because, in the previous work of CDA what takes much more emphasis is relating linguistic analysis with socio cultural analysis and the issue that are to do with cognition in the production and comprehension of discourse have not received enough attention. He argues that, discourse processing and social cognition are mutually dependent properties of discourse.

Mentioned in Bekalu (2006), Van Dijk (2001) argues that analysis addressing, discourse in relation to social structure cannot be rewarding without consideration of the individual's cognitive aspects of discourse processing.

Since one of the focuses of this study is about presupposition of information by journalists, it is important to understand the way in which they presuppose knowledge of their audience before they publish or broadcast the information. Regarding this, Van Dijk (2005) state that, in producing and presenting a given article or documentary program; the journalists is always engaged in an attempt to modify the audience's knowledge in some ways. Thus, this will help them to know or at least make assumptions as to the extent of their audience's knowledge on the issues they are proceeding.

For us to have a clear understanding of the theory of knowledge, Van Dijk (2005, p.73) mentions about six criteria along which knowledge can be typologically characterized. Those are:

- (1) Scope: personal, interpersonal, group, organization, nation and culture.
- (2) Specificity: more or less general or specific knowledge.
- (3) Concreteness: more or less abstract or concrete knowledge.
- (4) Reality: more or less fictional or knowledge about the real world.
- (5) Objects: the objects of knowledge: people, animal, things, nature, etc.
- (6) Firmness: more or less sure knowledge.

These and other combined elements could help us in classifying a given piece of knowledge as Van Dijk added up on.

As Bekalu (2006) cited, Van Dijk (2005) points out that knowledge has a specific status as a cognitive device, which he calls the K-device which would targeted to help speakers and hearers to calculate which piece of knowledge to assert, refer to, or presuppose during communication. In combination with other categories of the context model, such as participants' intentions, the kinds of people speakers are addressing including the nature of the interaction, the institutional setting, etc. (the term K-device will be discussed later)

This study targeted to strengthen cognitive aspects of discourse comprehension, which as previously mentioned is the relatively neglected aspect of CDA. That is, it will address the types of knowledge presupposed by journalists for associated ideological reasons. It tries examining this by using Van Dijk typology of knowledge that has to form part of the audience's prior knowledge in the course of processing discourse as well as the highly psychological theory of pragmatics. That is theory of relevance what is called RT, which is discussed below.

## **2.2 Presupposition and Relevance Theory**

These two theories are outlined together for a reason that they are interrelated to each other. For instance, since a presupposing is connected to cognitive aspects of human mind, it is sometimes hard to put it in examination, but we can indeed treat it using K- devices and relevance theory. Let's see them below one by one.

### 2.2.1 Theory of Presupposition

There are a lot of arguments about when the term presupposition has originated from. For instance, in Bekalu (2006), Kadmon (2001, p.10) notes that the term first appeared in the work of the German philosopher Gottlob Frege (1892) in his writings on the nature of reference and referring expressions and it is stated as a discourse or pragmatic notion (Norrick, 2001). However, Renkema (1993) argued that the term has its origin in the philosophy of logic, where it is used to denote special types of implicit information.

It is apparent that, individuals can have a reason for stating or arguing something, which might happen due to background knowledge of their own. You presume something before stating, that is called presupposition in CDA. Moreover, those statements can be portrayed like how someone perceives something and why? That is an ideology, which is followed due to some other factors for the sake of socio cultural, political, or institutional goals. In other words, it is virtually impossible to utter or write a single sentence of any consequence without some kind of assumption and without the use of presupposition (Bekalu, 2006, p.153).

Presupposition is an inherent property of human language use. As Keenan (2000) points that presupposition of a sentence are the conditions that the world must meet in order for the sentence to make literal sense. However, there is a need of some clarification by critical discourse analysts on the difference between the term presupposition and, discourse presupposition. For instance, Bekalu (2006, p.152) points out that, the former refers to all the piece of knowledge that language users must assume in order for what they say to make literal sense. While discourse presupposition is the piece of information that are taken for granted in a given discourse, which is the focus of this study that is because they are assumed to be significant in terms of the readers spending time in processing effort and the institution intention of achieving their ideological goals at the expense of journalists.

In a particular kind of discourse, it is common to observe that journalists presuppose different kinds of knowledge. For instance, as Van Dijk (2001) described the possible knowledge that the journalists presuppose are knowledge about specific or general properties of events and knowledge about historical and political structures. On the other hand, it can be the institutional agenda or some socio cultural aspects of the people, which is the focus of this study.

In Van Dijk, concerns of the presupposition of knowledge, which he calls K- device strategies, which is the special knowledge-management function or which he calls a specific status of knowledge as a cognitive device. As stated in Bekalu (2006, p.152), Van Dijk (2005) indicated, how this K-strategy is employed in the management of presupposed knowledge stated as follows:-

(a) If the recipients are believed to be members of my own epistemic community (culture, country, group, etc), presuppose all socially shared knowledge of this epistemic community to be known by these recipients. (b) If the recipients are believed to be members of another epistemic community, then activate knowledge about that other community. If such knowledge fails, assume that knowledge may be the same

or similar to that of your own community. When in doubt ask or show ignorance. (c) If I have just acquired new knowledge, e.g. about specific events, it is probably not socially shared throughout the community, and hence not to be presupposed to be known to the recipients unless these recipients are known to have used the same source of information (e.g. the media). (d) Interpersonal knowledge by definition may presuppose to be known by the recipients with whom it was shared. In doubt, it should be referred to. (e) Personal knowledge is not assumed to be shared by recipients, and should hence not be presupposed.

Why K- device is important here is because it helps us to speculate about the possible influence of other elements of the speakers or writers context model, such as his or her intentions and also it helps us to know a speakers or writers use of presuppositions for ideological reasons (Bekalu, 2006, p.154). Because, the journalists may not simply be guided by K- device but may instead be deliberately engaged in achieving ideological goals in presupposing some piece of information that are vital for the audience ease of understanding. Moreover, he added, this presupposition could be fair, honest or non- controversial one based on common knowledge and agreement of observable facts. In contrast, they could be fake or controversial which the writers or speakers for the purpose of propaganda, deceit, or manipulation of others use.

The thing that Bekalu emphasized on is the K- device speed in deciding what to assert, remind or presuppose also depends on the medium (text or talks) speakers use to get their message across. So it would be logical to expect slower speed involving deliberate actions of achieving ideological goals in situations where the journalists is aiming to do when one is producing a specific kinds of documentary programs or articles.

### **2.2.2 Theory of Relevance**

It is a very important theory for treating presupposition of some information's; especially, with reference to this study, and, it helps the researcher to deal with the journalist's presupposition of their documentary program.

Cited in Bekalu (2006) work; Sperber and Wilson (1995) in an article outlining the implications of the theory for pragmatics they put the central claim of the theory of like: "The central claim of relevance theory is that the expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are precise enough, and predictable enough, to guide the hearer towards the speakers meaning. The aim is to explain in cognitively realistic terms what these expectations of relevance amount to, and how they might contribute to an empirically plausible account of comprehension" (p.154)

They outline two principles of RT: cognitive and communicative principles, which are closely related to one another. However, for the focus of this study, the particular emphasis is on the Cognitive principles of Relevance in accounting for the appropriateness of pre- suppositions made by journalists in news reports. According to the Cognitive Principle of Relevance, utterances raise expectations of relevance not because speakers are expected to obey a Co-operative Principle, maxims, or some other specifically communicative conventions, as claimed by Grice (1975) in Bekalu (2006), but because the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition,

which communicators may exploit. They further argued that an input of any kind (e.g. a sight, a sound, or an utterance) is relevant to an individual when it connects with background information that he or she has available to yield conclusions of significance to him or her.

In here, it is important to know that an input is relevant to an individual when it's processing the available assumptions which would help the researcher to come up with the positive cognitive effects. As Bekalu (2006) states: by a positive cognitive effect, the authors mean a true conclusion that an individual arrives at something worth having. False conclusions are not worth having; they are cognitive effects, but not positive ones.

In addition, as indicated in Bekalu, Sperber and Wilson "the most important type of cognitive effect achieved by processing an input in a context is a contextual implication, a conclusion deducible from the input and the context together, but from neither input nor context alone".

In any communicative situation, according to the Cognitive Principle, the greater the processing effort required, the less relevant the input will be; hence, relevance can be assessed in terms of cognitive effects and processing efforts. Following these claims, the theorists conclude by asserting that human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance.

How RT could be an important element for treating presupposition of some kind of information. As Bekalu (2006) points out, it's because RT centre's on the natural tendency of human beings to maximize relevance, and claims that an input or a stimulus conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance. It then states that an ostensive stimulus (for example, in the documentary program putted in this study) is optimally relevant to an audience if and only if (1) it is sufficiently relevant to be worth the audience's processing effort, and (2) it is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

It's common that journalists presuppose some kind of information consciously or unconsciously that lead audience to may not easily access or activate with the information just broadcasted or published and thus require them to apply more processing efforts.

Therefore, relevance theory can be used for labeling whether the broadcasted presuppositions of information's are 'fair' or 'unfair'.

### **2.3 Theory of Privacy**

Concerning privacy, Sissela Bok is an influential contributor of the issues, which he saw in the context of an investigation of secrecy. In his view, cited in Belsey & Chadwick (2003, p.81) secrecy can be a means to or a form of privacy, if privacy is the condition of being protected from unwanted access to others. Secrecy, however, although its use by an individual could be widespread, requires a specific object that which is concealed.

In his way of looking at it, privacy is more general, it is more like a way of life, a

necessary (not sufficient) condition, for the suggestion is that it is a psychological requirement for a satisfactory life.

Additionally, as he stated: privacy meets a need; it offers the self-protection against vulnerability by providing comfort and control and by strengthening the sense of identity. According to this theory cited in (Belsey & Chadwick, 2003, p.81):

Privacy does not imply that there is something to hide, and certainly not that it hides a shameful secret. Privacy simply recognizes the importance of not handing over the power to control one's own life to someone else. It thus relates itself to such concepts as self-fulfillment and self-respect, personal dignity and security, autonomy and identity, and in general the integrity and immunity of the person, and it differentiates itself from the consequences of its negation: feeling of defenselessness and nakedness, fear and embarrassment, bewilderment, distress and emotional upset.

Privacy is one of the elements that can be taken in to account as a media discourse besides the commonly taken discourses such as inequality, racism, conflict, and others.

One of the central issues in the ethics of journalism is privacy and alleged invasion of privacy by the media. We live in a society that values personal privacy and are concerned about intrusions in to privacy from whatever source including the media (Belsey & Chadwick, 2003, p.77).

There are invasion of privacy that can legitimately claim the protection of privacy and there can legitimately claimed too. For instance, scandalous behavior cannot legitimately claim the protection of privacy like politician who has his/her secret love nest exposed in the press is not the victim of an invasion of privacy. It is because all aspects of the exercise of power must be open to the public. In this study, obstetric fistula patients have the right to privacy and can legitimately claims the protection of privacy as well. It is needed here to deal with rights as a way of indicating the protection due to individuals and their interests.

Privacy as a big agenda of the day has entrenched in international codes and conventions. Like as cited in Belsey & Chadwick (2003, p.78) article 12 of the Universal Declaration of the Rights stated that:

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his/her privacy, family, home, or correspondence, or to attacks up on his/her honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Additionally, article 12 of the Universal Declaration of the Rights, mentions three overlapping areas where individual rights have come under threat. These are: (1) Surveillance by private or more likely state security organizations, including the compiling of secret dossiers on people through the use of illegal or illegitimate methods such as phone-tapping, bugging. (2) Unauthorized access to private or confidential data, often held in computer files, such as financial and tax affairs, social-security status, medical records, criminal records. (3) Invasions of privacy by the press, first,

by the physical intrusion of reporters into someone's personal life and private space, and second, by the splashing of that person's name, picture and story across screens or the pages of the tabloids, often with the utmost insensitivity or vulgarity.

Again as stated by Belsey & Chadwick (2003, p.83): there are three types of privacy, hence areas of personal life where the protection of privacy might be sought. These are: (1) Bodily or physical privacy: this provides a space in which the body can exist, function and move, free from physical intrusions like the too close proximity of other people or bodily contact and touching, and free from observational intrusions of eyes and cameras (and the senses and sensors). (2) Mental or communicational privacy: this allows a person to be alone with their thoughts and feelings, wishes and desires, to keep written or electronic records of them and to communicate them to select other people, free from eavesdropping, intrusion and other forms of psychological invasion. (3) Informational privacy: this provides protection for personal information, which is legitimately held in the files of public and private organizations, and prevents the disclosure of such information to third parties.

Some other and very important point, which has to be raised in relation to the issues of privacy, is consent. Why this study wants to incorporate consent is that, there are controversies on the way for a journalist to write or publish stories about persons with or without consent. In other word, it is hard to conclude that, journalists ought to write or broadcast only about some agenda of persons who have given their consent. Because, there are moments by which journalists required to publicize some information without individuals consent. For instance, in cases involving criminality, corruption, hypocrisy, and unethical behavior, consent is not needed (Belsey & Chadwick, 2003, p.89). However, in all other cases, those concerning ordinary people who find themselves thrust into the public eye, or family members who are innocent of any relevant involvement, consent should be a requirement.

More over, in relation to keeping the privacy of patients, Moynihan (2000) states that: (1) Patients who are drugged or otherwise unable to consent should not be asked to go on the record, unless a substitute decision-maker grants that consent. Stories should be held until such time as consent can be verified. (2) Patients should be offered the opportunity to speak without attribution or to be blurred or silhouetted in video or photos, if what they reveal could compromise their safety or ability to be healed. And, (3) If journalists want to shoot hospital conditions outside the patient's room or care area, they should get the consent of the other patients or blur or otherwise de-identify them to protect their privacy. The impact of the published story on the subsequent care of the patient should also be considered.

## **2.4 Designed for the Study**

Since CDA is not a monopolistic method for it is a collection of different theories for the study of discourse, it is crucial to explain and understand how all the theories are working and how they are being applied.

Having this in mind, this study will try to outline the types of knowledge presupposed in the given discourses of the documentary film. Besides, whether or not they are fairly or unfairly presupposed with respect to some references such as privacy



of individuals as Belsey and Chadwick (2003) outlined, and why and how invading the privacy of patients are used for. This presupposed information could be treated using K- devices and relevance theory. Thus, this study indebted to use Bekalu's (2006) frameworks which draws on relevance theory discussed in Sperber and Wilson (1995) and Van Dijk (2005) typology of knowledge, both of which have a psychological contents since they are related to cognitive aspects of some own.

### **3. Methodology**

This study employed CDA both as a theory and method. Therefore, here, the main methodological approach is CDA, which will be used to collect and analyze the media discourse of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia in order to achieve the objective set out. The rationale for its espousal is that the thesis deals with a critical discourse analysis on media discourse of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia and attempts to get the underpinning ideological goals of the institution through a fairly or unfairly presupposition of information by journalists. In this study, critical discourse analysis is employed as a tool to examine a set of media discourses produced concerning on Hamlin fistula Ethiopia. Most of the discourses emphasize on the role and contribution of the hospital. CDA has been adopted as a research methodology in a variety of disciplines such as media and communication studies and cultural studies. Studies focused on using CDA as a research methodology have increased in recent years (see Rogers 2004, Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, Fairclough 1994). It refers to the study of a diverse body of knowledge; it is an approach to deconstructing the written or spoken language attached to a given type of social practice (Baridici, 2012). According to Rogers (2004), CDA is different from other discourse analysis methods because it includes not only a description and interpretation of discourse in context, but also offers an explanation of why and how discourses work.

#### **3.1 The Data Sources (Background)**

Angel Entertainment Corporation is a Canadian based television production company that produces compelling and entertaining dramatic feature films and television shows for the international market. It is the owner of 'A Walk to Beautiful' documentary program, which is produced and distributed by themselves in 2007. In 2007, it premiered in film festivals and was chosen for the International Documentary Association Best Feature Documentary Film of the Year award. The following year, the film opened in theaters in the United States in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. A 52-minute version of A Walk to Beautiful that premiered on NOVA on PBS on May 13, 2008 won the 2009 Emmy Award in the Outstanding Informational Programming (Long Form) category on September 21, 2009 at the News and Documentary Emmy Awards ceremony on September 21, 2009 at Rose Hall, Lincoln Center in New York City.

#### **3.2 Analytical Techniques**

There are a number of research approaches under the level of critical discourse analysis. All of them widely vary, but coming up with an important consequence for the outcome of the research. For instance, as Wodak (1999, p.11) argues, CDA analysis is not a homogeneous theory with a set of clear and defined tools but rather

a research program with many facets and numerous different theoretical and methodological approaches. Therefore, there are no standard approaches to analyzing media discourses, but rather a variety of ways how to proceed.

In addition, as stated by Phillips and Jorgensen (2002, p.1), there is no clear consensus as to how to analyze discourses and different perspectives offer their own suggestions. Accordingly, this thesis work intended to use a critical discourse analysis approach that incorporates different analytical tools which all are stated to come up with the targeted outcomes. That is, attempting to get the underpinning ideological goals of the hospital through a fairly or unfairly presupposition of information by journalists.

I indebted to use the analytical style of Bekalu (2006)- a work that draws up on different authors who have contributed to the field of critical analysis of media discourses namely, Sperber and Wilson (1995,1986) and Van Dijk's (2001, 2005) Typology of Knowledge. All these have a high psychological content. Accordingly, in critically analysis of the discourses, this study has gone through the analytical techniques presented below:

**First**, the study tried to discover the type of knowledge that the journalists have presupposed, as outlined presupposed information or knowledge. This describes the previously existed knowledge or assumption of the journalists starting from the *intro* of a film or *lead* sentences of an article.

**Second**, then examining the *body* of the media discourse and listing the *different piece of information presupposed* linguistically and pragmatically preceded and compared them with the information outlined as *new piece of information or knowledge*. This new piece of information describes what the institution has said and done that has provided by the media (i.e. in the documentary film).

**Third**, now stating the above presupposed information and the new piece of information would help us to see and consider the issue of *fairness or unfairness of the presupposition* made in the specified documentary film. This means that, it helps us to outline whether the presupposition made in the media output are fair or unfair. Or in other words, as Bekalu (2006) stated, based on RT terms, we can make a sort of cost-benefit analysis, taking the amount of processing effort that the audience is most likely to require to invest with regard to the cognitive effects she or he is likely to achieve. Thus, if the media output leads the listener or reader in too much processing effort, one can say that the presupposed information is unfair.

**Fourth**, the study tried to take a look at the *detailed linguistic items* (phrases and words which might be used in the lead sentence up to the end) of the media outputs in terms of the likelihood of audiences increased processing effort. Here, hegemony of the media can be a worth examining concept because there might be recursive use of phrases that led audiences to look into only one focal point of view.

**Fifth**, finally but more importantly, the study emphasized on the *ideological goals* that the institution achieve based on the above views- through a fairly or unfairly

presupposition of information by journalists as well as in viewing on the hegemony of the media and a detail view of linguistic items.

## 4. Analysis

### 4.1 Synopsis of the Film (“A Walk to Beautiful”)

A Walk to Beautiful tells the stories of five women in Ethiopia who are ostracized by their family and villages due to their suffering from obstetric fistula, a serious medical condition caused by failed childbirth under conditions of insurmountable poverty and inadequate health care. Mostly, as the documentary reveals, besides a failed childbirth, early marriage is one of the causes of obstetric fistula in women. These women live in isolation with a sense of loneliness and shame due to rejection by their own society. Each of these five women choose to reclaim their lives by taking the long and exhausting journey to the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital (the present Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia) so as to receive the medical treatment available only there.

That is the contribution that Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital is playing in curing these heart touching women. Upon arriving at the hospital, the women are treated free of charge, resulting in new beginnings. The film also shows what the medication processes and how the patients are treated in the hospital. Not every patient can be cured, but each woman takes her own journey toward becoming independent and productive member of her communities once again. For instances, a 17 years old woman called ‘Wubete’ can’t be cured. That means even if the doctors tried to make a plastic surgery that goes into her bladder to act as a plug, one couldn’t deny the fact that she is still suffering from incontinence of urine. Unfortunately, she will live with this suffering forever.

### 4.2 Analysis of the Film

First of all, let’s try to expose the type of knowledge that the authors of this film presupposed. Right from the start of the film, it says, “The following program contains mature subject matter. Viewers discretion is advised.” If we begin with the *intro*, the author presupposes that there are women who are living hiding away from others in a small village of Ethiopia due to some problems, which are not mentioned yet, that make audiences to struggle with the sense and expend a considerable amount of cognitive effort. It is done by setting the tone of the whole film (i.e. exposing the hidden women living in under-nourished condition) and creates some kind of curiosity in the viewers mind to make them want to set up a sort of conflict, problem or unusual situation that will keep the audience mesmerized to the story eager to know. That is, they tried to set up the questions that the rest of the film will answer (i.e. for instance they have not mentioned yet about why this women are living here hidden and shunned).

The *body* in the film, which is the main gut of the story, provides details, either to support the opening statement or to outline the conflict and the resolution. Here, there are doctors like the co-founder of Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital Dr. Hamlin Catherine explaining about how these heart touching women are suffering and how they are treated in the hospital, Dr. Ambaye, a fistula surgeon in the hospital, ex-

plains the experience of Ethiopian women under nourishment, and what they are expected to do and be. This is, as put out in the film they are trying to support the presupposed information in a cause and effect of the conditions happen to them.

Hence, it is important to examine the middle (body) of the documentary and list the different pieces of *information presupposed linguistically* and compare them with the new pieces of information as indicated in analytical technique as ‘*new information*’ just provided by the film. Doing so help us to critically look at whether the presupposition was made fairly or unfairly. Besides, it consequently helped the researcher to find out the way in which the discourses are used in underpinning the ideological goals of the institution through a fairly or unfairly presupposition of information by journalists at the end. As a result, the study implies the hegemony of the media too.

**Table 1- Pieces of Information/knowledge; ‘Presupposed’ Vs. ‘New’**

Presupposed information/knowledge	New information/knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are women who are living in under nourishment, absolute poverty living with no hope</li> <li>- Fistula is a hidden epidemic or a silent epidemic</li> <li>- There is no near road construction for women to come to the hospital</li> <li>- Nobody knows their suffering</li> <li>- The main cause for fistula is lack of good obstetric service</li> <li>- Fistula patients are suffering not physical but also psychological &amp; social trauma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital is curing a number of obstetric fistula patients</li> <li>- Obstetric fistula patients don't know the existence of the hospital</li> <li>- The hospital is welcoming the patients in a mind-blowing manner</li> <li>- The hospital is building a five outreach centers for women</li> </ul>

All the pieces of presupposed information describe what the author assumed right before dealing with the subject and show what exists out there. As it can be viewed apparently through the two lists of information and the overall thematic structure of the discourse, the author of the documentary has set out to tell to the audience about the effort that the hospital is offering in curing obstetric fistula patients. In that way, the author holds the assumption that, the target audience didn't know about what obstetric fistula is in detail and the effort that the hospital is doing right there in curing obstetric fistula patients. That is why the journalist is beginning to grab the attention of the audience by not revealing about obstetric fistula starting from the intro and targeting to tell in the body as it has been done that way. Therefore, the author expected the audience, as they don't know that much about the contribution what the hospital is doing in treating obstetric fistula patients.

Now, let's look at the issue of *fairness or unfairness of the presupposition* made in the documentary film. As it is already stated in chapter two of this thesis work, the method employed to identify whether the presupposition is fair or not is through RT terms. That is through the amount of processing effort that the audience exerted in

achieving the cognitive effects. For instance, if the processing effort is high, we can say that the information is unfairly presupposed. In other hand, if it is low, one could definitely say the presupposition is a fair one. Thus, upon investigating that, it is good to critically look at the information taken for granted in the documentary film. Since the author assumes that the audience didn't know about what obstetric fistula is and the contribution that the hospital is investing in alleviating these problems, the documentary tries to slightly inform the audience about the issues at hands, which are introducing something about the causes and effects of obstetric fistula. While the root causes are not revealed for, mentioning them would most probably be an indicative element for measures to be taken in preventing obstetric fistula. Therefore, depending on this assumption, we could probably say that the presupposition is likely unfair one.

For instance, as it is mentioned in the film on an interview with Dr. Ambaye, the main cause of fistula is lack of obstetric fistula services. What about childbirth injuries, what about early marriage, what about female genital circumcision, what about cultural domination, what about high illiteracy (lack of appropriate knowledge about the sickness and treatment), absolute poverty, poor economic conditions which in fact would be the root cause of fistula didn't mentioned yet in? Since these all equivalently contribute in causing the problem, a due attention should have been rendered.

In addition, as it is indicated in the list of presupposed information Dr. Ambaye said that obstetric fistula is a hidden epidemic or silent epidemic. In here, a specific audience might be in confusion that how could obstetric fistula be a hidden epidemic; because epidemic means a wide spread of an infectious disease in a community in a particular time. Nevertheless, indeed, obstetric fistula is not a transmitted infectious disease. Therefore, the researcher as a critical discourse analyst found out that this idea would enforce audiences to invest too much processing effort in an attempt to grasp it, which they may not have encountered before. This is one of the indications of unfair presupposition of journalists. Thus, this indicates the presupposition that the journalist made is unfair enough.

The whole documentary is made for the audience to understand only what the hospital is doing out there in curing and treating obstetric fistula patients. However, we can still say that there is a slight outlining way of what and why the issue would make the audience not to struggle with the sense and extent a considerable amount of cognitive effort.

A critical discourse analyst could pick out some more important presupposition of knowledge about the subject matter. That is presuming that fistula patients are illiterate besides psychological injury, we could take their pictures without their consent. As it is stated in the literature, Moynihan (2000): (1) Patients who are drugged or otherwise unable to consent should not be asked to go on the record, unless a substitute decision- maker grants that consent. Stories should be held until such time as consent can be verified. (2) Patients should be offered the opportunity to speak

without attribution or to be blurred or silhouetted in video or photos, if what they reveal could compromise their safety or ability to be healed. And, (3) If journalists want to shoot hospital conditions outside the patient's room or care area, they should get the consent of the other patients or blur or otherwise de-identify them to protect their privacy. The impact of the published story on the subsequent care of the patient should also be considered.

However, in critically viewing the discourse, one can see all these invasion of privacy through unfairly presupposition of knowledge. For instance, we can identify some evidence that there are women who are trying to hide themselves from camera. This is an indication of the shot, which has been done in and out of the hospital without their consent. This is an absolute invasion of privacy resulted from unfair presupposition of knowledge. In addition, as a critical discourse analyst as why this is the way it is, it is a worth mentioning question to be raised. There is an ideological underpinning in here too.

Based on the step that the researcher stated previously in the analytical techniques, the researcher will come up with a certain *ideological stance of the hospital* not to declare the above root cause of obstetric fistula and for declaring obstetric fistula as a hidden epidemic. In addition to this, there is also an observable enforcing the ideology of the hospital at the extent of journalists' invasion of the privacy of the obstetric fistula patients.

It is important to give emphasis, as a critical discourse analyst, on the *recursive uses of a word* in the documentary film as well. That is curing fistula patients. In most parts of the film, curing is the most repeatedly raised word, which are a reflection of *the hegemony* and *the power* of the hospital in the documentary film.

Indicated in the previous chapter, hegemony is a concept consists of a social and a cognitive dimension. As van Dijk (1998) observes, the minds of the dominated can be influenced in such a way that they accept dominance and act in the interest of the powerful out of their own free will. So that, in the recursive use of words such as curing will lead audiences to lose their perception of absolute prevention of fistula and emphasize only curing. This can be reflected as the power of the hospital in maintaining its *ideology*, which comes up later consequently. This is because one couldn't deny the fact that prevention is much better than cure.

In addition, here the researcher raised hegemony of the film that would most probably lead the concerned body on the issue. For instance, it may lead the government to be dependent on the performance of the hospital. Moreover, the government not to take serious measures concerning obstetric fistula, particularly, creating awareness at the grass root level, increasing the literacy rate, improving the living standard, and banning harmful traditional practices.

As it is promised above to come up with a certain *ideological stance* of the hospital for not declaring childbirth injuries, early marriage, female genital circumcision, cultural domination, high illiteracy (lack of appropriate knowledge about the sickness and treatment), absolute poverty, poor economic conditions as a root cause and

for declaring obstetric fistula as a hidden epidemic. Moreover, to come up again with the targeted ideological underpinning of the institution as a result of journalists invasion of the privacy of the obstetric fistula patients; this study tried to answer any advanced ideological standpoints behind the producers' application of unfair presupposition. And/or as stated above, the way in which these fairly or unfairly presupposed knowledge is used in underpinning the ideological goals of the institution.

To begin with the first one, as a critical discourse analysis, this study explored that 'they didn't state those factors as root causes is because to preserve themselves in curing these heart touching fistula patients. Unless and otherwise, if they specify the responsible body i.e. the government, their survival would be in question.

The proceeding of the 16<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian studies (2009) strengthens this argument. It depicts that the minimum age for marriage, 18 years, corresponds with provisions in the Revised Penal Code, Article 627 that penalizes the sexual abuse of children with imprisonment from 13 to 25 years for a man guilty of sexual abuse with a child below the age of thirteen. Further, 15 years of imprisonment when the child is between the age of thirteen and eighteen. Thus, the government expects people, especially the hospital, to report on when they observe obstetric fistula patient due to early marriage or rape. As the proceeding explored, in Bahir Dar Fistula Hospital, there are about a registered 464 patients arrived to the hospital per year. Of these, 400 were fistula cases resulted from early marriage, rape and obstructed labor as well. Nevertheless, the thing is, it is explored that the hospital didn't report those fistula cases caused by early marriage and rape to the government though it is genuinely needed to enforce the stated prevailing laws.

Therefore, having this in mind and the discourses reflected in the documentary film; this thesis critically found out that: 'the main goal of the hospital is maintaining its power- curing heart breaking obstetric fistula patients'. That means, for the hospital, 'curing is better than prevention' of obstetric fistula. Of course, it is a fact that prevention is much better than curing. Since the documentary shows, among the five obstetric fistula patients, a women aged 17 cannot be cured. Instead, she will live with this suffering forever. Because of this reason, prevention mechanism couldn't come even into question as a measurement for eradicating obstetric fistula than curing.

In addition, in relation to declaring obstetric fistula as a hidden epidemic and invading the privacy of these heartbreaking patients, presupposition seems to have been used to achieve other ideological goals. As it is mentioned above, it is presumed that fistula patients are illiterate besides they are psychologically injured so that we could take their pictures without their consent. This is an unfair use of presupposed knowledge. Hence, because of this unfair presupposition of knowledge, which leads the producers to invade the privacy of fistula patients, is used to foster the ideological goals of the institution. Thus, this is done for the sake of fund raising from an international organization at the expense of invading the privacy of the patients.

For instance, this argument is strengthened in Dr. Hamlin's own book, *Hospital by the River*. The book states: "... at about this time, late 1992, a BBC film crew arrived to make a documentary about the hospital. In England, Gordon Williams had used

his influence and convinced the BBC that our work would be a worthwhile subject. We owe him an enormous debt of gratitude. This documentary, and later a second one, raised an astonishing amount of money...”

Besides the observed discourses and the presupposition, this is one of the implications that Hamlin Fistula Hospital targets at raising funds with any expense of including invading the privacy of patients. One could say that the fund raising is done for their own medication (i.e. obstetric fistula patients), but this study struggles that way of fund raising. It should not be like that; at least their consent has to be there.

## **5. Conclusion**

The media discourses made on Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia are critically analyzed based on the outlined analytical technique using in a systematic mode. For instance, indicating did it; first, the presupposed information/knowledge of journalists, then by distinguishing it with the new information stated in the documentary. On the way, this presupposed and new information of journalists helped to know whether it is presupposed fairly or unfairly. This consequently assisted the researcher to explore the ideological underpinnings that the institution can achieve through conscious/unconscious presupposed knowledge of the journalists. Furthermore, viewing detailed linguistic items (phrases and words) helped to extract the hegemony of the media in advance.

Consequently, based on the analysis the study demonstrated that there were a consciously or unconsciously ‘unfairly’ presupposed information/knowledge of journalists that lead audiences to invest in too much processing effort for the amount of cognitive effect they wish to achieve. In a way, this would help Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia to reinforce its ideological goals as a result.

Moreover, in critical analysis of the discourses, the study scrutinized that the targeted audiences of the documentary program is foreign audiences who didn’t know Ethiopia very well. As subsequently this study found out, this documentary program is extracting our shameful scare of obstetric fistula patients to the outside world, which would consequently helped the institution to underpin its ideological goals that was fund rising. That was done at the expense of a consciously or unconsciously presupposed information/knowledge of journalists.

As a result, what this study implies can be taken, the researcher believes, as a cautionary remark for media i.e.: the journalists’ presupposition of information/knowledge could lead audiences to invest in too much processing effort which would consequently help a particular institution to underpin its ideology.

## **Notes**

1. A documentary film called “A Walk to Beautiful” is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3w-fOmovijc>



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