

Linguistics of representation of resistance: A critical discourse analysis of the academic literature on the *Aragalaya*

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This qualitative study examines the academic literature on the *Aragalaya*, a series of protest campaigns rallied against the government from March to August in 2022. This research aims to answer the questions as to how the *Aragalaya* is represented in academic literature and what linguistic strategies are used in such representations. The analysis is based on the research publications published between 2022 and 2024, discussing the thematic scope of resistance within the *Aragalaya* by Sri Lankan and foreign scholars. The study utilized critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a research approach based on Norman Fairclough's and Theo Van Leeuwen's theoretical perspectives on the representation of social actors in discourses. The representation of resistance was analyzed through ideational, interpersonal and textual functions of the language used in research publications on the *Aragalaya*. The findings of the study demonstrated that the resistance within the *Aragalaya* was predominantly represented positively by academics, endorsing the ideological standpoint of the protestors. Key linguistic strategies used in such positive representations included the signification of the *Aragalaya* through the use of positive terms such as 'non-violent', 'peaceful', 'democratic', 'inclusive', 'artistic resistance movement', legitimization of the protestors' roles and functions through transitivity processes, collectivization of the protestors and academics, functionalization of protestors as guardians of democracy and the use of modality to critique the government's role in exacerbating the economic and political crisis. The study argues that the *Aragalaya* could potentially be a critical reference point of linguistic anthropology, since the *Aragalaya* has reshaped the discourses on resistance in Sri Lanka facilitating researchers to analyze them from a critical/creative perspective.

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