

Gender Issues: Shifting Guilt and Responsibility in Media Discourse

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1. Introduction

While languages are usually defined as systems for communication, they are similarly vital tools for building, altering, and highlighting certain standards, arrogances and opinions that all together form the social authenticity we involve in. This detail points out the significance of discourses in affecting the social life, and therefore the whole world. Additional, as Berger (2016:4) states, taking the essentiality of discourses in social life construction into account, the significance of critical discourse analysis studies comes strong. Critical discourse analysis as a group of scholars appeared in the 1990s. The appearance was caused from a minor cycle discussion in Amsterdam in 1991. The innovators who first started the notion were Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen and Ruth Wodak, (Wodak and Meyer, 2009:3)

Critical discourse analysis has been presented as being considered via three chief principles. Those principles are: (i) critical discourse analysis approaches are problem-oriented which makes them continuously of an interdisciplinary nature, (ii) the chief objective of this field is to expose and de-mystify philosophies and power relations in discourses, and therefore (iii) critical discourse analysis challenges problematic social issues like issues of bias, discernment, cruelty, disparity etc.(ibid:2)

Suggesting that environments where men are the main group incentivize, accept and rebuild negative gender philosophies via discourses, shifting guilt and accountability against eastern women is precisely chosen to be examined on media discourses by a critical discourse analysis approach. The up-to-date study assumes that there are examples of obvious and others implied guilt and responsibility shifting for the errand of men on certain contents, which challenge social problems such as ferocity or national issues and other, on media and there are key factors that contribute to their incidence.

The current study is, consequently, going to response the following queries:

1. What are the key factors that donate to the shifting of guilt and responsibility onto women in the context of online comments?
2. How do cultural and historical standards form the online insights of women's behavior and their persecution in Eastern societies?

3. How does the philosophical putting of women in Eastern societies, predominantly with respect to patriarchal structures, contribute to victim-blaming attitudes on social media?
4. How do social media stages like YouTube amplify or alleviate traditional gender roles and biases, chiefly in relation to the portrayal of women as victims?

In order to settle or disconfirm the hypotheses of the study and to reach responses for the questions, the current study is going to do the subsequent: (i) arbitrarily choice controversial contents where gender is of a central emphasis and inspect the comments made through eastern people (ii) conduct a linguistic and ideological analyses on the selected comments, (iii) debate the diverse linguistic and thematic means used to start shifting ideologies, and (iv) converse ideologically , ethnically and historically the comments of women and men each group distinctly taking the contextual datum into consideration. These stages are going to be done following Fairclough's (2010) Three-Dimensional Approach, Halliday and Matthiessen (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics, and Wodak's (2011) Discourse-Historical Approach.

2. Aims of the Study

As can be inferred from the introduction, the first goal of this study is to classify the techniques in which guilt and responsibility are removed from one sexual category to another (precisely from males to females) in media dissertations.

Extra goals of the study comprise:

- (i) investigating the factors that donate to the shifting of guilt and responsibility onto women in the context of online commentaries,
- (ii) describing the national and historical standards that form online insights of women's conduct and their persecution in Eastern societies,
- (iii) highlighting how the philosophical positioning of women in Eastern societies, chiefly with respect to male-controlled structures, donates to victim-blaming insolences on social media, and
- (iv) examining the means through which social media stages like YouTube intensify or alleviate old-style gender roles and prejudices, mostly in relative to the depiction of women as victims.

3. Importance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its examination of how social media, predominantly stages like YouTube, preserve and strengthen old gender roles, victim-blaming arrogances, and national biases toward women in Eastern societies. The study proves how critical discourse analysis, as a linguistic field of study, talks and explores social issues that are of noteworthy interest not merely to academics but as well to non-scholars. The study highlights some of the naturalized ideologies that preserve the domination of women in Eastern societies, chiefly in relation to the shifting or accusing of guilt and accountability.

4. Limitations of the Study

The present study tackles nominated example of 40 YouTube comments strained from four short videos, each debating a distinct case of ferocity against women in diverse Eastern countries. The scope is deliberately narrowed to permit in-depth qualitative analysis. Though demographic details of commenters are unobtainable, the analysis emphasizes on the content and patterns of discourse itself.

5. Suggestion for Future Research

Taking the vital attention of this study and its limitations into consideration, the subsequent suggestion for future research is delivered:

1. Cross-Platform Comparative Study: one kind of future research could inspect how gendered guilt and responsibility are enclosed across diverse social media podiums (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok) to discover how podium nation and spectators affect discourse patterns.

Chapter One

An Overview of Critical Discourse Analysis as the Field of Study

This chapter is dedicated to debating everything about CDA and procedures a base for showing the study at hand. It starts with donating an impression of CDA as a field of study and describes what it is and its chief ideologies. Formerly, it presents some of the most essential keywords of the field, which have a straight relation to the study like philosophy, control, prejudice, judgment and intersexuality. The chapter similarly covers discourse and media as perceptions entrenched in CDA. It lastly sets the ground for the first part of the study model via offering some CDA methods, such as Fairclough's three-dimensional approach, Halliday and Hassan's systemic functional linguistics and Wodak's discourse-historical approach.

1.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The essential term in Critical Discourse Analysis is "critical." "Critical" is a word that has been explored in numerous means with regard to the usage of language and the dictatorship of control in societies. This makes it a concept particularly central to studies of influence, resistance, domination, and philosophy in numerous disciplines of language. Locke (2004) defines "critical" as a routine through which a situation, individual, or object is assessed in respect to a set of clear rules, standards, and ideologies. Critical, as Wodak (2001) assertions, is not employed in its bad sense in CDA. It is not just a matter of assessing; it is rather a matter of cautioning others to detect and consider disapprovingly when it comes to public issues, i.e., deprived of accepting things as taken for granted. Therefore, the term "critical" stands for cynicism rather than unconstructiveness, i.e., it thrusts a person to be a cynical reader or hearer.

Roger (2004:3) declares that within any serious study or method, the forecasters must simply aim to "disclose power dynamics and demonstrate inequalities embedded in society." As a result of the progression of serious studies, critical discourse analysis performs as a innovative field of study that accepts a perilous way. Van Dijk (2003)

says that CDA focuses on “how the mental deception of social groups affects social structures” and criticizes it.

In addition to the previously presented definitions, the following definitions offer influential and concise explanations of Critical Discourse Analysis as a field, which are presented in a list format for clarity and ease of reference:

1. Fairclough (1995:132) emphasizes that Critical Discourse Analysis is a kind of analytical study of discourses that mainly explores the means by which social power abuse, bias, dominance, discrimination and inequality are established, reproduced, enacted, and resisted through text and talk, specifically in the social and political genres and contexts.
2. Van Dijk (2001:352) asserts that critical discourse analysis is “a type of discourse analytical research that examines the way discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society.”

Wodak (2001:2) indicates that critical discourse analysis seeks to examine issues of social inequality in a critical mind as the issue is established, expressed, constructed, signalled, legitimized and constituted by language utilization.

3. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:60) argue that critical discourse analysis is “not a unified theory or methodology, but a shared perspective on doing research with the aim of critically investigating social inequality as it is expressed in discourse.”

1.2 Key Concepts in CDA

As mentioned earlier, CDA bases its theorizing, interpretations and analyses on a number of key concepts. Some of these concepts need to be explained, as they play a central role in this study as well. Those terms are:

1.2.1 Ideology

Ideology is a central notion in the studies of CDA. It is what CDA seeks to reveal and picture explicitly for various linguistic, social, political and other purposes. Ideology has been defined in various ways by different scholars. Alaghbary et al (2015:2) states that though the definitions vary in their focus, they all concentrate on similar concerns. He further explains why CDA sees ideology as a central concern stating that it is because languages are generally the green ground for establishing ideologies. That is, languages can never be free of ideologies. However, those ideologies are sometimes fair and others not. Van Dijk (2000:6), further, mentions the original definition stated by Destutt de Tracy, who is the one coined the term ideology first. Van Dijk (ibid) argues that ideologies refer to systems of beliefs and ideas shared by a political or social group or movement.

In CDA, accordingly, ideology refers to two kinds of beliefs and ideas. The first kind is the actual belief or idea about something, i.e., its natural system. The second kind is the falsified, made-up, or biased one (ibid). Fairclough (2003:28) states that:

Ideologies are representations of aspects of the world which contribute to establishing and maintaining relations of power, dominance and exploitation. They may be enacted in ways of interaction (and therefore in genres) and included in ways of being identities (and therefore styles). Analysis of texts... is an important aspect of ideological analysis and critique.

1.2.2 Power

Power is another key concept in the field of CDA, and specifically in studies of gender ideologies. It is a well-established fact that languages have power and are produced to serve power and powerful groups. This reveals that language obtains its power from the specific way it has been used in and for (Weiss and Wodak, 2003:14). Lather (1991:25) states that the structure of social and cultural power can be figured out from discourse, as they are constructed and established by language. Therefore, one of the main aims of CDA is to explicate the power abuse done by one group over another. Shifting responsibility and guilt is one example.

Thomas et al. (2004:10) define power as the ability of a language user to obtain control and make others submit to his/her will. It is to gain other people's obedience and compliance with regard to certain social, political, economic, or religious issues. He adds that the result of this is that power relations and war concern "two groups that underpin ideology."

1.2.3 Bias and Discrimination

McQuail (1992) indicates that the best way to define bias is to refer to its opposite meaning, i.e. objectivity. So, bias is the opposite act of being objective. As objectivity is the quality of being fair, accurate and realistic, bias is quite the opposite. It is the manner of being inaccurate and unrealistic for several reasons. Blair et al (2011) state that bias is, as Psychology confirms, "the negative evaluation of one group and its members relative to another."

Implicit bias is the association made against something or some individuals without awareness, i.e. automatically. It is to establish a negative view or reaction or action unconsciously (Dovidio and Gaertner, 2010). In simple words, the difference between explicit and implicit bias lies in whether an individual's conscious is aware or unaware of the action.

1.2.4 Intertextuality

Intertextuality was first coined in the late 1960s by Kristeva. She (1980:36-37) explained the construction and formation of texts as the "mosaic of citations," which means that a text is constructed from a set of other texts. Terminologically, the origin of the term intertextuality comes from the Latin word *intertexto*, which means to "intermingle while weaving" (ibid).

Intertextuality has been defined by many scholars. Starting with Kristeva, she (1980:80) discusses intertextuality in terms of words. She sees words as minimal

textual units that link literal meanings with cultural and historical ones. She later discusses intertextuality in terms of other units, such as texts, discourses, and genres. By this, she follows Bakhtin's concept of intertextuality, in which these three concepts (text, discourse, and genre) are the main elements of every dialogue, which itself is intertextually constructed.

According to the above explanations, a text can be defined as a written or spoken piece constructed from various other texts. In other words, a text is a set of quotations blended and clashed together. The property that helps these texts blend together smoothly is known as intertextuality (Barthes, 1977:164). Further, this discussion of intertextuality and texts makes texts appear as never original.

1.3 Discourse and Media Discourse

For CDA, discourses are not only written or spoken texts; they are also social practices. Saying that a discourse is a social practice reads that discourses are the grounds to exchange, reflect, and construct social realities. So, this claim correlates with the fact that discourses are homes for ideologies and power struggles. They establish power relations of inter various groups. O' Donnell and Henriksen (2002:89) assert that, on media specifically, social issues of all sorts are reflected and enacted in a discursive manner. They add that the discursiveness in the discourses has to do with the ideological reflection of the producer and the power they serve or controlled by. This makes discourses and specifically media discourses of a vital significance to CDA.

Dontcheva-Navratilova (2005:141) presents an idea that the term discourse reflects multiple meanings. Those are:

- (i) Discourse in its first sense refers to any stretch of oral speech (spoken) or written speech that has a unified structure and which communicate meaning and purpose.
- (ii) Discourse in its second sense refers to a "language in action". That is, it reflects a variety of a particular language.

Further, Fairclough (1992:63-64) suggests three main principles in relation to discourses as social practices:

- (i) The first principle states that a discourse is fundamental and constitutive. It contributes to the reflection and the formation of social realities and structures.
- (ii) The second principle asserts that a discourse can build and construct social identities and relationships.
- (iii) The third principle indicates that discourses contribute to trust and knowledge systems as they function in various ways, i.e. languages have many functions.

1.4 Selected CDA Approaches: Planning a Model

The study at hand will adopt an eclectic model that draws on three main approaches developed within the field of CDA. These approaches, along with key concepts such as intertextuality and others related to theorizing gender issues, will serve as the foundation for the analysis.

1.4.1 Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Approach

CDA has evolved into a widely applied framework for examining the interplay between language and power, particularly within socio-political contexts. While Norman Fairclough is considered a central figure in its development, it is crucial to recognize that CDA is shaped by a range of interdisciplinary influences.

Fairclough (1989; 1992; 2003; 2010) states that analyzing any communicative event requires consideration of three dimensions: (i) the text itself, (ii) its discursive practice, and (iii) its social practice. His approach includes three stages, each corresponding to one of these dimensions: (1) description (textual analysis), (2) interpretation (discursive practice), and (3) explanation (social practice).

1. Description (Textual Analysis):

The first stage of Fairclough's three-dimensional approach involves examining the linguistic elements of a text—its formal characteristics. This includes analyzing vocabulary choices, grammar, and structure. Vocabulary analysis focuses on lexical choices and the specific wording used in the text rather than their possible alternatives. Grammar analysis examines grammatical choices such as passivization, nominalization, and transitivity. Structural analysis may look at topics such as turn-taking and thematic choices (Fairclough, 1989:26).

2. Interpretation (Discursive Practice):

The second stage focuses on interpreting the relationship between the production and consumption of discourse and the discourse itself. Fairclough (1989:26) explains that “interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction, viewing the text as the product of a production process and a resource in the interpretation process.”

3. Explanation (Social Practice):

The third and final stage of analysis incorporates cultural, historical, and social contexts. Fairclough (1989:26) states that “explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context, with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation and their social effects.”

1.4.2 Halliday and Matthiessen's Systemic Functional Linguistic

Most of the leaders of CDA find that both (i) the tools that systemic functional linguistic theory present and (ii) the perspective that it adopts in dealing with the analysis of discourse strategies are highly useful in CDA studies. This is because SFL, just like CDA, treats discourse strategies (linguistic tools) as social acts employed for certain purposes. Yung and Harrison (2004:1) show that SFL and CDA share three main conceptions which make them perfectly able to work together in line. Both, in their theories, promote for the conception that all languages: (i) communicate historical and cultural relations, (ii) establish social relations and (iii) hold dialectical relations.

In this study, a number of linguistic tools (or discourse strategies) from SFL are going to be majorly examined. The tools selected are the ones used to establish the identities of the various participants in a discourse sample. Those tools are:

(1) Transitivity

Transitivity is the linguistic system that links the outside world to language. It is a system that works on the ideational or experiential meaning or function of the text (Ying, 2008:565). In other words as Halliday (1985:101) explains, language is a reflection of experience, reality, thought, and feelings.

(2) Mood

In SFL, the interpersonal function or meaning provides the researchers with information on the way the structure of a clause is formed and thus helps to understand the way interactions occurred among interlocutors (Halliday, 2014). So, analysing the structure of Mood, as well as modality that will be explained next, is useful to answer the question of: how is language structured to enable or create interactions? Further, mood choices are known to be determined by the social roles of the participants in various contexts.

(3) Modality

The examination of modality is established as an extension to that of mood, Halliday defines modality as the representation of the choices of language which lie in between the two polarities “yes” and “no”. This means that modality covers all the intermediate choices as well as the “various kinds of indeterminacy” (Halliday 1985: 85-86).

Table (2.2) : Modalization and Its Realizations
Adapted from Shukri (2015 :47) Which is Originally of Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:612).

Types of Modality		Domain of Manifestation			
		Clause (Mental/Verbal /Relational)	Modal Adjunct	Adjective	Modal Operator
Modalization	Probability	I guess / think / know / ...	Perhaps, probably, certainly	Possible, probable, certain	May, can, could, might
	Usuality		Sometimes, often, always, never	Usual, common	Will, would, should
Modulation	Inclination	I am willing / keen / eager ...	Definitely, absolutely, by all means	Willing to, anxious to, determined to	
	Obligation	I want ... you to ..		Allowed to, supposed to, require to	Must, should, ought to, have to

Lexical Choices

Lexical choices examination helps to interpret the ideational metafunction of a speech or text. Each lexical choice represents a speaker’s perspective on the topic being spoken about. Fairclough (1989:116) mentions that the wordings of a speaker reflects the social relationship that s/he is engaged in and also creates them. Van Dijk (2001:99) on the one hand discusses the effect of wordings on the audience or listener. He asserts that the choice a speaker makes influences “the opinions and attitudes of recipients”.

1.4.3 Wodak's Discourse-Historical approach

Ruth Wodak is another prominent figure in the field of CDA. She has introduced many studies on issues of discrimination, racism, prejudice, bias, etc. She has developed an approach of her own named the historical-discourse analysis approach. The point that distinguishes her approach from the others is the focus on the role of historical contexts in critical analysis Liu and Guo (2016:1079). Reisigl (2017:44) asserts that this approach, i.e. the discourse-historical approach (DHA), stands “for one of the most prominent critical approaches to the study of discourse”.

Wodak agrees with Fairclough (1989:3) on considering language as a form of social practice. However, she deals with the idea in a disguisable way. She emphasizes the need to include the historical contexts in the analysis both during interpretation and explanation (ibid:4). Doing so, DHA seeks to establish a systematic analysis of the dialectical relationship of the context to meaning-making information. Therefore, a specific focus is given to the development of relationships between texts and their contexts.

Chapter Two

Gender, Feminism, Stereotypes and Eastern Women and Society

This chapter covers the second central notion of this study, i.e., gender in the East. It begins by reviewing the literature related to gender, including its connection to language, media, and stereotypes. It then presents literature on feminism as the movement addressing gender issues.

2.1 Language and Gender

Human beings (both men and women) are the users of languages. This logically calls for a wider consideration of languages than a mere focus on their symbols and their structure. Linguistic studies need also to include a focus on user-oriented elements of language, such as gender issues. These sorts of focus are studied under the subfield of sociolinguistics. However, the focus on gender topics from a sociolinguistic perspective does not take the study so much away from CDA. CDA is an interdisciplinary field of study that drives most of its notions from many subfield of linguistics, of which sociolinguistics is one. Therefore, theories and literature from sociolinguistics in relation to gender are of central benefit to this CDA study too.

Closely related to this is the notion of indexicality, wherein language functions as a cue to social meanings and roles. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003:35) explain that gendered meanings are not fixed in words themselves but emerge from how those words are used in specific social interactions. For example, the use of diminutives (“sweetie,” “dear”) toward adult women in professional contexts implies a infantilization that reinforces unequal power dynamics.

2.2 Gendered Language

When researchers from the sociolinguistic field have first started studying gender issues, they have come up with the argument that the social role of each gender is directly determined by language use (ibid:8). Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) say that the kind of person that one gender can be is defined by the linguistic resources used by them and the ones used to describe them.

Feminists in the 1970s had shown worries on the same issue. They had started, for instance, movements to reject “sexist language” and its use. They based their attitude on the idea that social status of each gender is affected by the language forms attributed to them. However, Lakoff (1973) was against their view.

In a similar vein, Litosseliti (2006:48) argues that languages and discourses are homes for social themes, webs, explanations, identities and assumptions. To further ensure her argument, she also (ibid:49) refers to the theories of post-structuralists and social constructionists about how discourses build and reflect the way people from different groups see one another. Thus, these views support the fact of gendered language existence.

2.3 Gender Stereotypes

Stereotypes generally refer to a set of ideas or images widely held about a specific type of thing or person, which do not necessarily reflect reality (Oxford Dictionary, 2006:759). Sue et al. (2007:273) assert that stereotypes are intentionally or unintentionally established “verbal and environmental indignities” that imply negative, racial, insulting, or derogatory judgments and attitudes toward the targeted group.

Cook and Cusack (2010:9) define a stereotype as specific views and preconceptions generalized about a group of people, rather than others, for unfair reasons. Quebec (2013:326) also mentions that stereotypes are forms of prejudice that mostly attribute certain negative features, qualities, and characteristics to specific groups. They are often based on generalized assumptions, which are unfair in most cases. Falkowska (2015) states that the term stereotype encompasses generalized mental images that shape prejudiced opinions and attitudes, or biased critical views, about a group of people in society.

2.4 Gender and Media

As a part of the most significant shifts in the studies of gender and language, two main turns are documented as essential. Those two shifts, as identified by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003), are:

1. The discourse turn: refers to the shift from a mere search of correlations in the aspects of gender and language to a wider search that focuses on discourse and its significance for gender.
2. The performance turn: refers to the new theory of regarding gender as something people themselves do rather than something that they have. In other words, gender is no longer treated as an abstract thing; it is rather something done and produced. The production itself is mainly performed via discourses (Litosseliti 2006: 47).

2.5 Feminism and Islamic Feminism

Feminism refers to certain movements that group of people establish to address issues of gender inequality against women (Baber & Allen, 1996:55). Such movements are driven from the eager to collectively work and stand against gender oppression and discrimination. People belong to such movements and become feminists as a result of witnessing and being incentivized by certain experiences of oppression and bias against women (ibid).

Hawkesworth (2006:26) defines feminism as “a gamut of sociopolitical movements and ideologies that share a common goal to delineate, establish, and achieve political, economic, personal, and social equality of sexes”. Humm (2003) explains the development of feminism in terms of four waves. Those are:

- (1) The first feminist wave: this wave of feminism established in 1848 with a movement called women suffering”. The main focus of this movement was on the right of women in voting.
- (2) The second feminist wave: the second wave of feminism was called “women’s liberation movement”. It started after the Second World War. It was a kind of activity to get the life to its normality.
- (3) The third feminist wave: the third wave of feminism has been started since the 1990s. This third wave has come with specific detailed interests. It paved the way to widening the interests of these movements to cover even the smallest social changes in respect to gender inequality (Tong,2009) and (Rahmi,2015:39).

2.6 The East

The east, and specifically the Middle East, does not denote a geographical area with natural boundaries. It rather denotes political and social area where certain geographical areas such as Asia and others interconnect. Although people from diverse religions live in the Middle East, Islam is the most common religion that links people there. The society there has been in a state of flux and challenge for a lifelong over the style of social life should be practiced.

Moreover, the use of religion as a political and cultural force has further complicated discussions on gender. While Islam itself offers a range of interpretations regarding gender relations, political movements in some Middle Eastern countries have selectively emphasized certain scriptural elements to reinforce patriarchal norms. Mernissi (1991: 11) points out that these interpretations often stem more from political agendas than religious doctrine. The modern era has introduced new complexities. Education, migration, technology, and economic change have all played pivotal roles in shifting gender expectations.

Chapter Three Data Collection, Study Model and Methodology

This chapter lays the foundation for the next chapter. It provides explanations on the selected data and the criteria used in the selection process. It then outlines the study

model and presents the exact model to be adopted in the next analytical chapter. Finally, it explains the methodology of the study.

3.1 Data Collection

The data for the present study comprise user-generated comments by individuals from Eastern societies, posted in response to social media content addressing violent incidents involving women. The platform selected for data collection is YouTube, a globally dominant video-sharing service launched in 2005. Known for its vast reach and accessibility, YouTube enables users to upload, view, and interact with video content through likes, shares, and public commentary.

The selected stories, labeled as samples A through D, are as follows:

Sample A: Maryam Al-Rikabi – Victim of an acid attack (Iraq)

Sample B: Nayera Ashraf – Victim of a gruesome public murder (Egypt)

Sample C: Hayah Abdullah – Victim of prolonged domestic abuse (Egypt)

Sample D: Muthey and her daughter – Victims of familial abuse (Saudi Arabia)

3.2 The Study Model and Methodology

The analysis in this study is conducted using an eclectic model based on Fairclough's (2010) Three-Dimensional Approach, Halliday and Matthiessen (1985) Systemic Functional Linguistics, and Wodak's (2011) Discourse-Historical Approach. The eclectic model is structured as follows:

1. The textual analysis dimension of Fairclough's model is combined with a set of selected SFL tools to provide the study with a detailed analysis of the linguistic elements that shape the concept of shifting guilt and responsibility.
2. The two other dimensions of Fairclough's approach, namely discursive practice and social practice, are combined with Wodak's historical approach. Accordingly, the methodology for conducting the study is as follows:
 1. A theoretical framework is presented, covering the central concepts of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the selected models, gender-related concepts, and key sociocultural insights from Eastern societies.
 2. Data is collected from YouTube. Each data sample is contextualized, identifying both the background of the incident and the gender of the commenter.
 3. Textual analysis is carried out using the eclectic model, and relevant linguistic patterns and discursive strategies are identified.
 4. Elements of social practice are traced within the data, and the ideological themes embedded in the discourse are revealed—i.e., an ideological analysis is conducted.
 5. A historical and cultural discussion is provided to further contextualize the findings.
 6. The findings are presented in detail.
 7. Conclusions are drawn, summarizing the insights of the study.

Chapter Four Data Analysis, Discussion and Findings

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first presents a comprehensive textual analysis of the data, which forms the foundation for the subsequent

sections. The second section focuses on the ideological interpretations of the data. The third section provides cultural and historical analyses to support the study. Together, these sections contribute to presenting the findings in the fourth section of the chapter.

Textual Analysis

This section presents a detailed textual analysis of 40 comments. Each set of 10 comments is related to a separate story. The stories are presented ahead of the comments and their analysis. Additionally, the stories are given letter designations (A, B, C, D), and the comments are numbered with both the letter and a numeral (for instance, A.1, A.2, A.3). The stories and the analysis of the comments are as follows:

Each comment is analyzed in light of the linguistic and ideological tools described in the methodology. The analysis focuses particularly on how language is used to construct responsibility, shift blame, and reflect cultural attitudes towards women. Transitivity patterns reveal who is positioned as agent or victim, while modality and lexical choices uncover the degrees of certainty, judgment, or moral alignment expressed by commenters.

Sample A: Maryam Al-Rikabi: A Victim of Acid Attack – Iraq

Maryam al-Rikabi is a 16-year-old Iraqi girl who underwent a traumatic and terrifying experience when she was disfigured in an acid attack. The motive behind the attack was described as retaliation for rejection. The attacker, who was one of her friends, could not accept Maryam's refusal. Consequently, he decided to throw acid on her face while she was sleeping at home.

Comments and their analysis:

Comment A.1:

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
هاي نتيجة التلاعب بالمشاعر.. مادام جان يحبها مجانت لازم تبقي صديقته	hāi natījaṭ altālā'ub biālmashā'ir.. mādāma chān yhibhā mjant lāzim tabqa ṣadiqta	This is the result of playing with people's feelings. She shouldn't have remained his friend while he loved her

In the above comment, a transitivity analysis shows that the participants' roles are presented in a way that clearly serves to shift guilt and responsibility. Maryam is defined as the actor, and she is portrayed as the one who plays with men's feelings, which works to represent her as the guilty party.

Comment A.2:

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
اهلها السبب والحرية الزائدة	āhlhā alsābab wālhurīyā alzāyida	Her family is the reason, as well as excessive freedom/openness.

Linguistic analysis in Comment A.2 again provides clear clues about shifting guilt and responsibility. Transitivity analysis reveals that the way participants are structured, along with the processes and circumstances, all work against Maryam.

Sample B: Nayera Ashraf : A victim of gruesome murder- Egypt

Nayera Ashraf, a 21-year-old Egyptian college student, was brutally attacked in Egypt's northern city of Mansoura. She was beaten and stabbed multiple times by Adel, her colleague, who ultimately slit her throat, tragically ending her life.

Comments and Analysis:

Comment B.1 :

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
انا من الناس الي مالحب اتابع قضايا القتل لكن ذي القضية جدا شدتني احسن ان فيه دوافع لذلك	ana mina alnāsi alīā maḥb aṭab ‘ qaḍāyā alqatli lakinā dhī alqaḍāti jidaḥa shadaṭnī aḥsinā ana fihi dawāfi ‘a lidḥalika	I don't usually like to follow murder news, but this case has caught my attention. I feel there are motives behind it

In this comment, the commenter begins with a general statement about her preference to avoid following murder cases, but she admits that this particular case caught her attention. She attributes her engagement with the case to what she “feels,” implying that she does not want to immediately blame the attacker.

Comment B.2:

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
لابد فيه سبب للقتل	laḥd fih sabab liḥqatli	There must be a reason for the killing

Transitivity in this comment highlights a verbal process, i.e. an opinion about the killing and its reason. The commenter explicitly indicates that for a killing to happen, a reason is required.

Sample C: Hayah Abdullah : A victim of domestic abuse- Egypt

Hayah Abdullah is a 21-year-old Egyptian woman who went live on Facebook to plead for help, revealing that her husband had been beating her severely, causing serious injuries. Her videos garnered widespread sharing, sparking an online campaign to rescue her. In the video, she pleaded for help from her friends or relatives to intervene and stop her husband's abuse.

Comments and Analysis:

Comment C.1:

Slang Arabic	Transliteration	Translation
اكيد مواعدة عشيق ثاني دي مستحيل تكون بنت ناس او بنت اصول	aḳyd mawā‘ida ‘ashīq ṭḥany dī muṣṭahīl takawūn biṭn nās aḥw biṭna aṣwl	She is certainly dating a second lover. It's impossible that she is from a respected family or a girl with principles.

Using a verbal process and by means of a hypothetical statement, the commenter explains the things the husband would have been able to do if he were the abuser.

4.2 Ideological Analysis : Themes

This section examines how particular ideas, values, or beliefs are portrayed within texts and discourses on social media. More specifically, it examines ideologies of shifting guilt and responsibility onto women in YouTube comments.

These themes are as follows:

A. Victim-Blaming

Victim-Blaming is one of the most common themes of shifting guilt and responsibility onto Eastern women. Victim-blaming is the process whereby a victim woman is assigned responsibility for her victimization.

Direct Victim-Blaming:

Direct victim-blaming refers to directly assigning responsibility to a victim or holding the victim guilty for the harm and injustice she has experienced.

Indirect Victim-Blaming:

Indirect victim-blaming refers to the explicit or implicit shifting of responsibility onto someone close to the victim rather than the victim herself.

B. Moral Surveillance and the Policing of Female Autonomy

The ideological apparatus behind these online narratives also hinges on the policing of female behavior through moral surveillance. Women, especially those who navigate public or digital spaces, are constructed as subjects constantly under observation.

(C) Silencing and Epistemic Injustice

A final but critical ideological reason that emerges is the silencing of women and the dismissal of their lived experiences, a form of epistemic injustice. This occurs when a woman's testimony or voice is systematically discredited, ignored, or reinterpreted to serve dominant narratives.

4.2 Standard Gender Expectations:

The theme of standard gender expectations can be best defined as the societal roles, norms, and behaviors that are conventionally and traditionally allocated to women in Eastern societies based on the perceived identity of women there

4.3 Inherited Bias Against Women:

Inherited bias against women is unfortunately an apparent attitude in the comments analyzed. It is exposed in the comments where there are tendencies to directly or indirectly and implicitly or explicitly blame women or seek

justifications for the perpetrators without any logical reason, i.e., based on a hypothetical assumption or unjustified feeling.

4.4 Cultural and Historical Discussion

Historically, Eastern societies were shaped by patriarchal norms. As earlier mentioned in section 2.6, the patriarchal norm is a form of the dominant approach to gender. It, on the one hand, assigns men the primary positions of power and gives them the main authority. Women, on the other hand, are assigned roles centered around domesticity, housework, and caregiving. This cultural positioning of men and women has relegated women to subordinate roles. It, in turn, has limited her abilities and access in society.

4.5 Findings

The findings of this study, which focused on the shifting guilt and responsibility on women through social media comments, reflect deeply ingrained societal attitudes, gender biases, and cultural norms, particularly within Eastern societies. The detailed textual and ideological analysis of 40 YouTube comments reveals the following:

Prevalence of Victim-Blaming: A recurring and significant theme in the analyzed YouTube comments is victim-blaming. In 65% of the 40 comments, the victim is directly or indirectly held responsible for her victimization.

There were two primary forms of victim-blaming identified:

(i) **Direct Victim-Blaming:** In 40% of the comments, women were explicitly blamed for their actions, behaviors, or life choices, which were seen as triggering the harm. This includes comments that straightforwardly assign fault to the victim for being in the wrong place, having a certain appearance, or engaging in behavior perceived as inappropriate.

(ii) **Indirect Victim-Blaming:** In 25% of the comments, responsibility was shifted from the victim to her family, social media presence, or lifestyle choices. Often, these comments imply that exposure, expression, or even silence on digital platforms were provocative acts. In both forms, blame is redirected to women while perpetrators are excused, either by silence or by the assumption that their reaction was inevitable.

Chapter Five

Conclusions, Recommendations and References

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the study's findings, summarizing the key insights. It also offers recommendations based on the study's results, providing practical suggestions for future action or research. It finally lists the references used throughout the study, ensuring proper citation and acknowledgment of sources.

5.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings from the analysis of YouTube comments and the ideological and cultural discussions presented earlier, several key conclusions can be drawn:

1. **Entrenched patriarchal norms persist despite legal advancements:** The study confirms that despite the formal legal rights granted to women in Eastern societies, patriarchal norms continue to shape societal attitudes toward women. The findings indicate that social media platforms like YouTube reflect these persistent biases, with women still being blamed for incidents of victimization.
2. **Reinforcement of gendered expectations on women is evident:** The findings indicate that Eastern societies continue to impose rigid gender roles on women, expecting them to adhere to specific behavioral norms. Any deviation from these expectations—such as forming friendships with men, displaying independence, or expressing personal freedom—is perceived as an invitation for harm. Women are seen as responsible for the consequences of these transgressions, which reflects a deep-seated gender bias that needs to be addressed in social discourse.
3. **There seems to be a widespread impact of victim-blaming:** The findings emphasize that victim-blaming is deeply ingrained in the social fabric, with individuals holding victims accountable for the harm they face. This widespread tendency to shift guilt and responsibility onto women prevents any meaningful dialogue around the true causes of violence and perpetuates harmful stereotypes.
4. **Social media plays a significant role in reflecting and amplifying gender bias:** The findings demonstrate that social media serves as a platform where these entrenched gender norms and biases are reinforced, as seen in the YouTube comments analyzed. While social media is often celebrated for democratizing discourse, it also reveals and perpetuates gendered ideologies, exacerbating the social pressures women face in Eastern societies.
5. **There is an urgent need for re-examining cultural and religious norms:** The study reveals that many of the attitudes reflected in the comments contradict the principles of Islamic teachings, particularly in relation to Al-Qawamah (guardianship) and men's responsibility to prevent harm. While Al-Qawamah is rooted in care, protection, and moral responsibility, many commenters distort its meaning to justify control and blame.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is clear that both social media platforms and cultural practices must be addressed in efforts to combat shifting guilt and responsibility onto women. The recommendations include:

1. **Increasing awareness campaigns to challenge victim-blaming attitudes and educate the public on the harmful effects of these practices:**

Awareness campaigns must be strategically designed to target both the general public and specific social groups that frequently engage in victim-blaming.

2. **Promoting gender equality in both media portrayals and everyday interactions:**

Media has the power to influence perception and behavior. Therefore, media outlets must be encouraged, and where possible, regulated, to represent women in diverse, empowered, and accurate roles rather than reducing them to victims, seductresses, or moral scapegoats.

3. Encouraging re-examination of cultural and religious interpretations that justify gendered violence and inequality:

A critical recommendation arising from this study is the need to re-engage with cultural and religious discourses that have been historically misinterpreted or distorted.

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