

DRIVING RESTRICTION ON SAUDI WOMEN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MODALITY BETWEEN AL-JAZIRAH AND BBC ARABIC REPORTS

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Abstract

In a society mostly dominated by man, Saudi women faced many restrictions compared to man as they have legally been barred from doing many things by themselves or at least without a male guardian. One of these restrictions is car driving, which was supported by the Islamic pronouncement (fatwa) made by the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia. Over the last twenty years, there are a lot of struggles recorded by the mass media between the group demanding more rights for Saudi women and the conservative preserving the fundamental of Saudi's culture based on strict Islamic teaching. Hence, this paper examines the way modern standard Arabic online news of Al-Jazirah (AJ) of Saudi Arabia and BBC Arabic (BBCA) of United Kingdom portrayed the restriction of car driving on Saudi women. This paper aims to analyse the ways that language is exploited in BBCA and AJ to report on struggles around the driving restriction on Saudi women, particularly in the used of modality as one of discourse construction strategy utilised by the news outlets. Therefore, the paper will examine the corpus data consists of online news articles published by BBCA and AJ between 2010 and 2014 using corpus data mining software 'AntConc 3.1'. The quantitative result of corpus data then will be analysed using a qualitative approach based on the textual-oriented Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Fairclough and media discourse of Ruth Wodak. The result shows that the two news outlets have a different way of portraying the restriction of driving on Saudi women according to their political agendas and ideologies. Hence, reveal that the two online news outlets have taken different side around the news discourse of driving restriction on the Saudi women.

Keywords: Saudi women, Driving, Online news, Arabic, CDA, Corpus.

INTRODUCTION

In Arab society, the men domination can be seen in various fields, while women's participation is still left behind compared to men. Saudi Arabia, which widely considered

by many as the most practising Islamic teaching country in the world due to the location of two holy Islamic cities Mecca and Medina, Saudi women are often portrayed as wearing hijab (veil), being mother and wife. Their daily activities and social involvement are still limited to family matters, women affairs and house cores, unlike men who actively participated in various activities. Thus, all these bring negative stereotypes in labelling Saudi women by the Western media. Hence, this study focuses on the representation of Saudi women in the media with special attention to the Arabic online news coverage around the restriction of driving on Saudi women. The two well established Modern Standard Arabic online news outlets have been selected for this study namely al-Jazirah of Saudi Arabia (AJ) and BBC Arabic of the United Kingdom (BBCA).

Briefly, both news is Arabic online news operated from two different countries. BBCA based in London and has an operational office in Cairo, Egypt is known as pro-West. It was created in 1936 under the arm of British Broadcast Cooperation (BBC) World Service to broadcast British views to the Arab world in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA Region). While, AJ (literally means peninsular) is daily broadsheet news published in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and it very well-known as conservative and pro-Islamic, as well as pro-Saudi government. Since its foundation in 1960, the circulation of AJ has reached many Arab and European countries. With the benefit from the rapid development of communication technology, the access for online news from both news outlets has reached millions of readers every day through open access of the respective official online news portal. AJ official news portal can be accessed at www.al-jazirah.com, while BBCA online news is found at www.bbc.com/arabic.

Al-Jazirah is known as Saudi Arabia's modern standard Arabic online news provider which covered all aspects of Saudi's economic, politic, social as well as culture and belief both locally and internationally. The government of Saudi Arabia also has its law and restrictions which should follow by Saudi people. While BBC Arabic is known as British news and it wanted to show British/Western view to the readers which broadcasting in London. In BBCA, it reports on Saudi women more on controversies issues. For example, Saudi women wearing hijab, the control of male guardian, driving ban and so on.

Thus, it is essential to examine the way modern standard Arabic online news of BBC Arabic (BBCA) of United Kingdom and Al-Jazirah (AJ) of Saudi Arabia represent Saudi women around the issue of driving restriction. The topic of 'driving' has been chosen as it has been restricted towards Saudi women making a lot of issues and debates. The restriction was furthermore backed by the 'fatwa' issued by Saudi Islamic scholars to support the decision which prevents women from driving cars. This fatwa then has been exploited by both the supporter and the opposer of the driving restriction to support their argument.

Hence, resulting in the issue to become more complicated as it involved the value of Islamic teaching and local Saudi custom and culture. All this has been reported by the mass media particularly by the two online news outlets AJ and BBCA. The main aim of this study is to discover how Saudi women and the restriction in driving been reported by BBC Arabic and Al-Jazirah in 2010, 2012 and 2014. This study analyses the ways that language is exploited in both news of BBCA and Al-Jazirah to portray Saudi women being banned from driving car.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Looking at the literature on this topic, studies investigating linguistic representations of women have tended to be contrastive by mainly comparing women's representations

against those of men. One significant finding they all seem to have in common is that MAN (man, men, he, him) far outnumbers WOMAN (woman, women, she, her) in both spoken and written language corpora data (Biber et al., 1999; Kjellmer, 1986; Romaine, 2001). Beyond frequencies, researchers have documented a host of sexist linguistic asymmetries in English corpora. Romaine for instance (Romaine, 2001: 170) listed out several examples of sexist linguistic asymmetries in English Corpora such as terms like career woman but not career man and referring to an adult female as a girl but rarely referring to an adult male as a boy (Sigley & Holmes, 2002: 145). Sexist language is also applied to Arabic which also has a specific gender grammar use separating between masculine and feminine as been pointed out for example by Sadiqi's (2003: 128-146) in his analysis of lexical, structural and discursive sexism in Moroccan Arabic.

Focusing on collocation with man and woman in the British National Corpus (BNC), Pearce (2008) found that adjectives characterised women by their physical appearance, while men were characterised by their physical strength. Furthermore, in the subject position, a woman was found to collocate with verbs predicating women as emotionally intemperate (e.g. cry, weep) and verbally annoying (e.g. nag, wail). Despite these reassuring trends, as well as increased awareness and codification of gender equality in the language since the 1980's, the overall picture emerging from the abovementioned studies of British, American and New Zealand English suggests that sexist discourses have not gone away (Sunderland, 2004: 201; 2006: 40). More recent media studies have been critical of the continued stereotyping and marginalisation of women in news discourse (Downing, 1980: 128; Tuchman, 1978: 8).

Most of these misrepresentations are echoed in applied linguistic research on the discursive construction of women in news discourse which remains sparse to this day. Rare examples include Fowler (1991) who examined gender discrimination in a range of British newspaper articles covering the events of New Year's Eve in 1985. He found that women, in contrast to men, were often categorised by familial status (e.g. wife and mother of two) and over-lexicalised regarding physical and sexual attributes. Women were also underrepresented in professional and political success (p. 105). Another early study was carried out by Caldas-Coulthard (1993) which combined CDA with corpus linguistics (CL) to analyse 200 hard news articles from three British broadsheets over ten days.

More recently, Shameer (2016) mentioned that the media had played the greatest role in raising women's issues by highlighting their representation in society. It does show that media is the best medium to convey the message to the audience about women's achievement, contribution, participation and representation. It is undeniable that the social media nowadays brings up our society together in bringing upon major biological, physiological and sociological illnesses upon many young ladies today due to the unrealistic norms of today ideal body and beauty standards, according to Lauren Dascalo (2016).

Looking specificity into Arab women, Rubin (2007) made an argument regarding the 2005 Freedom Home report. He argued that Arab women progress is developing slowly compared to the other women in the rest of the world. According to the report, "16 Arab nations on a scale between one and five in several categories related to women's right and non-discrimination" making overall the highest score was Tunisia receiving an average rating of 3.24, while 1.26 which is considered the lowest was Saudi Arabia.

In a more recent study by Maurice Odine (2013) shows that the issue surrounding Arab women often get less coverage by the media. For Arab women themselves, they

wanted to address on socio-economic, cultural and political inequality which has been long suffered by them. However, these issues do not receive the main concern from the media. Unfortunately, media use its power to manipulate the stories appropriately. The similar case happened to Arab women in Egypt where the media have for a long time neglected it. The previous research on women and media in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa which consist of Arab countries), shows media reported most of stereotyping women on a negative side. In contrast, women involved in social and politic which is considered the high interest portrayed in a positive way had been included in the studies by Akharbach and Rerhaye (1992), Baron (1994), Khiabany and Sreberny (2004). Based on the findings from the Cairo-based New Woman's Research Center (2002) conducted research on a large-scale content analysis of 18 Egyptian series aired regionally during Ramadhan. The researchers take the result indicated "500 episodes included violence against women with 43% of women characters subjected to violence and 13 per cent killed". The case is one of the issue stressed out by people to show the failure of Arab media in enhancing justice for women. The Arab media also fails to raise the public concern on women's oppression which supposed to be in line with the efforts to emphasise the significant role of the press in the Arab society (Raad, 2004).

According to Reem Obeidat (2002), she highly agreed the role of media is beyond the expectation of just reporting on events and society to more than that as the primary role in changing the portrayal of women and influencing in the way people manage their properties and interests. In other words, media nowadays plays the greatest role in influencing how people generate their knowledge, attitudes, positions and practices.

Amel al-Ariqi (2009) conducted a case study Al-Jazeera news on Middle Eastern Women in the Media: A Battle Against Stereotypes. She pointed out that the media plays a vital role especially for the empowerment of women. Since the issues in the Middle East widely get coverage by the news agencies, therefore, there is no reason for the representation of Middle Eastern women could be the main agenda highlighting by the news media. In her book on title 'Women and Media in the Middle East: power through self-expression', Naomi Sakr revealed that since the early 1990s, media interest in the Middle East shows a dramatic change in highlighting on women's issues which began exactly prior to September 11th, 2001 and automatically making the voice of women's right have been heard. Another study by Naomi Sakr found the lack representation of Middle Eastern women was depend on media which they did not make a broad coverage of women as their primary concern.

It is noticeable that Saudi Arabia represents a unique, though significant, the case among Arab countries. Housing the two most holy sites for Muslims (Mecca and Medina), Saudi Arabia is symbolically the global centre of attention when it comes to Islamic issues. However, the case of women in Saudi Arabia is genuinely distinctive as this area has been the most impenetrable to outside influences (Ahmed, 1992). While the roles of women in other Arab countries have witnessed major strides toward more participation, women's development in Saudi Arabia has been relatively slower.

As a result, the common stereotypes of Saudi women are they cannot drive cars, are required to wear the headscarf covering their hair and, even are expected to cover their faces. While they have gained increased access to education and few genders segregated job opportunities, their representation in the labour force participation rate was barely over 10 per cent in 2002 (Arab Human Development Report, 2002). However, the lack of female involvement in the work arena cannot be solely attributed to the role of traditional ulama'.

The prevailing cultural norms, which are sometimes of tribal have put pressures on women's ability to involve themselves in the economic activities in Saudi Arabia. Sometimes the traditionalist Islamic scholar's strict understanding could be perceived as merely putting a religious impression on various long-standing traditions and practices.

In the study of women and media in Saudi Arabia on changes and contradictions, Naomi Sakr (2009) found in her observation that both men and women in Saudi Arabia, especially outside the ruling elites and patronage networks, are worked hard to raise the concern about their need. In another study, Soraya Altorki wrote in her book "Women in Saudi Arabia: Ideology and Behaviour Among the Elite" Highlight the exchange between ideology, behaviour, and religious doctrines in changing the role of women in Saudi Arabia. Altorki emphasises that none of these three elements happen independently of each other and therefore limit and complement each other at the same time. The agent of change according to her is the individual, who acts in this own self-interest, can change certain norms but not others.

While Usher (2011) concluded a report in Saudi Arabia prepared by Kamal Subhi. The purpose of the report is to restrict the ban on women driving, as he said by allowing women to drive would cause other crimes such as prostitution, pornography, homosexuality and divorce. This conservation action suggestion, however, will bring little changes for the women's equality. Thus, male domination becomes controlled temperament, while women's seclusion becomes conditional segregation, and these changes were triggered by an increasing tendency of men and women to think pragmatically about changing realities. Throughout her book, Altorki does provide a compelling argument that change is occurring within Saudi society. This shift is affecting women and men equally. However, men remain the ultimate agents of this change. Despite this, Altorki does not provide a full account of the role of the state is enforcing or relaxing certain norms.

More specifically on the topic of this article, it is found that Saudi Arabia is the only country which prohibited women from driving cars from the 1960s up until June 2018. Although the restriction was fundamentally based on the local custom of Saudi Arabia, it was strongly backed by the fatwas from the Saudi prominent Islamic scholars. On top of these fatwas is the fatwa by the former Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia Sheikh Abdullah Ibn Baz. In Ibn Baz's fatwa, women are not allowed to drive because it can lead to sinful acts such as free interactions between man and woman (Ibn Baz: 1990). The Ibn Baz's fatwa on the restriction of driving on women received massive support from another senior Saudi's Islamic scholar. Among them Sheikh Muhammad Soleh al-Uthaimin (2009) who also support the decision to ban women from driving vehicles as it will disclose women from doing many things which against the teaching of Islam. Hence, women are not allowed to drive cars. Furthermore, Sheikh Soleh Fawzan (2013) in his fatwa emphasised that allowing women to drive cars is contradicts with the nature of women which known for their qualities of gentle, soft and kind.

On the opposite side of the restriction, emerged a group of Saudi women who work hard to fight for their right. The first attempt to challenge the restriction was held on 6th November 1990, as 47 of Saudi women drove their cars in Riyadh to show their protest. Almost 20 years later with the rapid development in the communication technology, women activists particularly Manal al-Sharif started her campaign calling for the right for women to drive. Inspired by the so-called 'The Arab Spring' Manal's campaign was done through YouTube and Facebook. In addition, the women activists have fully utilised the

online news portals to spread their messages calling for solidarity from other women in every part of the world. Ultimately, on 26 September 2017, The Saudi ruler, King Salman issued a royal decree to lift the ban by allowing Saudi women to drive. Hence the new guidelines regarding the right for women to drive cars to be created and implemented by June 2018.

METHODOLOGY

Corpus Linguistics (CL) And Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

This research employs both qualitative and quantitative methods. The researcher combines Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL) to investigate discourse around Saudi women on the restrictions of driving in Arabic online news of AJ and BBCA. In Critical Discourse Analysis, the study applies two approaches of Discourse Textual Oriented (DTO) (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995) and Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) (Wodak, 1996). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research which studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social context of inequality (van Dijk, 2006).

CDA is commonly blamed for the lack of supporting data and tend to bias toward a specific direction in the analysis. Hence, CL can offer quantitative data to support the qualitative analysis from CDA approaches. The approach of CDA received tremendous attention among researchers and scholars in linguistics and language studies, as well as other social science disciplines. Corpus Linguistics (CL) become widely used in modern linguistics study. According to Biber (1998: 4), corpus-based research depends on both quantitative and qualitative techniques. CL may provide with the statistical figure in detail about certain linguistic features and variants in the texts. However, qualitative functional interpretation is also an essential step in any corpus-based analysis.

Corpus methodologies have massive potential for use in discourse studies and CDA in particular. Corpus collects great examples of 'real life' language use which can be used to support the researcher's argument (McEnery & Wilson, 1996: 1). Furthermore, Corpus analysis software not only demonstrates the non-obvious linguistic elements in a single text but also expose 'hidden thoughts' beyond the researcher's expectation (Partington, 2003: 7). Meanwhile, Hunston (2002) observes that Corpus investigation is useful for the critical linguist because the observed frequent repetitions help the researchers to identify and make explicit descriptions of texts.

Thus, the study utilises the combination of CDA and CL to analyse the corpus data of online news articles on the restriction of driving on Saudi women. There is a lot of linguistics element involved in conveying the discourses around the issue of driving restriction. However, this study only focuses on the strategic use of modality which can be seen as evidence to reveal the hidden agenda around the discourses of driving restriction on Saudi women. The analysis will first present the quantitative data before moving into more detail qualitative analysis of online news extracts. The quantitative data analysis will present the statistical result that gives a general overview of the usage of modality in the corpus data. While the quantitative analysis will present critical discourse analysis aims to reveal the hidden agenda which supports the ideology of each online news institution as a result of strategic used of modality by the two online news outlets.

Modality

Modality is known as a concept of writers and speaker's evaluation towards languages that involved a degree of belief of the speaker's expression to a particular proposition. In short, modality brings the signal of what speakers or writers say and write. In the linguistic aspect, modality involved three different perspectives known as modal categories of philosophical, semantic and linguistic.

Epistemic modality, for instance, is "one major type of modality refers to belief and logical and the status of the proposition of the speaker's commitment towards what they believe" (Palmer, 1986: 54-5). Typically, the commitment is often relating to a shred of evidence which derived from a situational source of information for the speaker's utterance. The form of the situational signal coming from speaker perceives as such, and the reflection of a judgement of what writer say is taken by evidence.

From a linguistic perspective, "similar to aspect tense, number, gender and others, modality is treated as a semantic term that known as a grammatical category" (Palmer, 1980: 1). Furthermore, in another linguistic point of view, semantic categories such as tense, aspect and mood also refer by linguists when discussing modality from the linguistic side (cf, Lyons, 1977; Palmer, 1986; Huddleston, 1984).

RESULT ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, Corpus data of Arabic news online of BBCA and AJ in 2010, 2012 and 2014 have been highlighted around the topic of Saudi women and the restrictions of driving. Saudi women as the main focus have been analysed around the issue of a driving ban which can be manually gathered in different semantic categories according to the contextual of the original news texts from the wordlist frequency results and with the assist of concordance line in searching for Arabic modal categories known as 'modality'.

As a result, different categories of modality related to Saudi women and driving ban in the Arabic news online discourses of BBC Arabic (BBCA) and Al-Jazirah (AJ) have been identified in various types namely epistemic, deontic, evaluative, boulomaic, alethic and temporal. All these types of modality are highly being portrayed surrounding Saudi women in both BBCA and AJ in 2010, 2012 and 2014 including news reported in 2011 and 2013 which also related to the driving restrictions surrounding Saudi women.

However, all categories of modality as mentioned above have been highlighted by AJ, but some of the modality types reported by BBCA. BBCA, on the other hand, used more epistemic modality of certainty such as *إن* and temporal modality, for instance, *كان* (male) also including *كانت* (female) and *تزال* as well as only a few of other modalities.

Thus, the analysis in this study will begin by highlighting the highest frequency of Arabic modality mainly on driving issue surrounding Saudi women in the Arabic news online discourses of AJ and BBCA before going deep into the most modality used in Al-Jazirah. It is worth to note that, all these modality categories are not only being highlighted by AJ but also been emphasised in BBC Arabic news corpora data.

Corpus Procedure Of Modality

Before the analysis goes into further details, first the study will demonstrate the process of gathering Arabic modality on Saudi women and the restrictions of driving ban. The study employs Corpus analysis techniques of wordlist and concordance in order to search for the most frequent modality around Saudi women and driving ban in the Arabic news online articles of BBCA and AJ. The purpose of the wordlist, therefore, is not only to look at the frequent words, but it also can discover the most significant Arabic modality surrounding

Saudi women in the online news discourse. Concordance, on the other hand, is used to verify the most selected modality used by looking at the context of the words in sentences and assisted the researcher in understanding the meaning of selected topic words.

Thus, in this process, the study applied both Corpus techniques of wordlist and concordance to identify the most prominent modality of Saudi women which locate at different positions in a long wordlist result by referring to concordance to verify the frequency results. According to Michael Barlow (2004), "He defines wordlists and concordances as transformations of text, giving the analyst the opportunity to view different perspectives on a text".

Frequency Result (Wordlist) Of Modality Categories In Arabic

In this analysis, the researcher refers to Anghlescu's classification of modal categories purposely in Arabic which she sketches the modal categories based on Resher (1986) and later used by Perkins (1983). Besides, Anghlescu builds her theoretical framework for the study of modality in Standard Arabic (SA) which has been written in her article of 'Modalities and Grammaticalization in Arabic' (1999). Anghlescu claims in her finding that "Arabic modalities are used as the category of words known as al-nawasikh النواسخ. The following table shows Anghlescu's classification of six modal categories in Arabic based on her description:

| No | Modality | Modal Meaning | Examples |
|----|------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Epistemic | certainty | إن/الثابت |
| | | doubt | كاد/من المشكوك فيه |
| | | anticipation | من المحتمل |
| 2 | Deontic | obligation | يجب/لا بدّ |
| | | permission | يمكن |
| | | interdiction | يمنع |
| 3 | Evaluative | evaluation | يحسن/نعم/يئس |
| 4 | Boulomaic | expressive | ليت/من المؤسف |
| 5 | Alethic | necessity | لا بدّ/من الضروري |
| | | possibility | يمكن/من الممكن |
| 6 | Temporal | time indicator | كان/أصبح/ما زال |
| | | adverbial | طالما/قلّما |

Analysis Procedure

The first step taken in this process of Corpus procedure is by looking at the wordlist frequency result of six types of modality namely: epistemic, deontic, evaluative, boulomaic, alethic and temporal from corpora data of BBCA and AJ Arabic news online articles. In the wordlist, there are rank and frequency of each word types. To begin with, the study looks at BBCA 1,826 word types and 6,982-word types of AJ. According to the frequency list of BBCA and AJ, it can be noticed that the result of each news shows considerably different and has been sorted from highest to lowest, as can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2 below:

BBC Arabic (BBCA)

| No | Modality | Modal Meaning | Arabic Example | Frequency |
|----|------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Epistemic | certainty | إن | 18 |
| 2 | Temporal | time indicator (M) | كان | 4 |
| | | time indicator (F) | كانت | 2 |
| | | | تزال | 3 |
| 3 | Deontic | obligation | يجب | 1 |
| | | | من المفترض | 1 |
| | | permission | يمكن | 1 |
| | | interdiction | يمنع | 2 |
| 4 | Evaluative | evaluation | نعم | 1 |

Table 1: Frequency list (wordlist) of Arabic modality in BBCA

In BBCA, there are only four kinds of modality namely epistemic, deontic evaluative and temporal. The highest frequency is on epistemic modality which scored at 18 used of إن. It then follows by the temporal modality of time indicator consist of both male and female signs which dominated by male (masculine) at 4 and female (feminine) half at 2. The deontic modality scored at the third highest place at 5 with the different modal meaning of obligation, permission and interdiction. The lowest frequency at only 1 is on the evaluative modality of evaluation with the use of نعم.

Al-Jazirah (AJ)

| No | Modality | Modal Meaning | Arabic Example | Frequency |
|----|-----------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1 | Temporal | time indicator (M) | كان | 15 |
| | | time indicator (F) | كانت | 17 |
| | | time indicator (M) | أصبح | 6 |
| | | time indicator (F) | أصبحت | 5 |
| | | time indicator | زال | 5 |
| | | adverbial | طالما | 4 |
| 2 | Epistemic | certainty | إن | 37 |
| | | | ثابت | 2 |
| 3 | Deontic | obligation | يجب | 6 |
| | | | يجوز | 2 |
| | | | لا بدّ | 3 |
| | | permission | يمكن | 14 |
| | | interdiction | يمنع | 3 |

| | | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|-------------|---|
| 4 | Evaluative | evaluation | نعم | 4 |
| 5 | Alethic | necessity | من الضروري | 1 |
| | | non-necessity | غير الضروري | 1 |
| 6 | Boulomaic | expressive | ليت | 1 |

Table 2: Frequency list (wordlist) of Arabic modality in AJ

In contrast, the difference between AJ and BBCA, there are other two kinds of the modality of alethic and boulomaic. AJ shows the highest frequency of 52 was the modality of temporal with different time indicator of both female and male signs, and adverbial. The second hits frequency at rank 39 was the epistemic modality of certainty, the used of *إن* indicated at 37 and *ثابت* at only 2. The third place of hits frequency was on the deontic modality of obligation, permission and interdiction at 28. It then follows by evaluative, the used of *نعم* at 4 and follows by alethic at 2 and only 1 of boulamaic modality.

Qualitative Critical Analysis

Moving from the qualitative side, the paper will present a critical qualitative analysis by focusing on the online news texts from AJ and BBCA. The analysis will discover how the online news outlets have strategically utilised the modality to portray the restriction of driving on Saudis women in the online news discourse. Hence, promoting the reader's perception into a certain way which means (either supporting the restriction or against it). Ultimate, the analysis will reveal the online news outlets ideology towards the issue of driving restriction on Saudis women. In this critical qualitative analysis, the focus will be on the strategic utilisation of five modalities namely *يمنع* (prevent/prohibit), *يمكن* (can), *ينبغي* (should), *ما زال* (still) and *يجب* (should be). The selection of these five modalities was based on the reasons that they have significantly occurred in the corpus data, and they were utilised differently by the two news outlets.

1) *يمنع* (prevent/prohibit)

In the comparison between the online news texts of AJ and BBCA, it is found that the two outlets utilised the modality of preventing differently of deontic 'prevent' which refer to the meaning of interdiction differently. In the most occasion, AJ utilised 'prevent' with denial (negative) which means 'nothing to prevent' or 'does not prevent'. Hence, indicated that there is 'nothing to prevent' or 'does not prohibit' Saudi women from driving. For instance:

25/12/2010

(1)

فسيجيب بأنه لا يوجد ما **يمنع** من ذلك شرعاً لكن قد يكون من مصلحة الأمة عدم جوازه سداً للذرائع التي ربما أفضت لحرام.

*(If a student goes to ask him about women driving a car), he will say that there is nothing to **prevent** it from doing so, but it may be in the interest of the nation that it is not permissible to do so prohibiting from doing something leads to sinful actions.*

(2)

ويبدأ الناس بالتساؤل عن سبب منع نساء المدينة وصدور فتاوى بخصوص قيادتهن للسيارات بينما نساء البادية لم يمنعهن أحد ولم يصدر بحقهن فتوى.

People start asking why women in the city were **prevented** from driving cars and issued fatwas regarding their driving. While the women from the rural area no one is **prohibiting** them from driving and no fatwa was directed on them.

On the other hand, BBC utilised the modality of 'prevent' in the opposite direction of AJ. In the most occasion, BBC strategically used 'prevent' without denial (negative) to provide a meaning that Saudi women were 'totally prevent' or 'fully prohibited' from driving a car. For instance:

30/11/2010

(3)

ويُمنع على المرأة قيادة السيارة في السعودية كما تخضع لما يسمى نظام "ولي الأمر".

Women are **prohibited** from driving in Saudi Arabia and are subject to the so-called "guardian" system.

13/12/2012

(4)

وتعد السعودية البلد الوحيد في العالم الذي يمنع النساء من قيادة السيارات.

Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world that **prevents** women from driving cars.

(5)

23/2/2012

كما أن السلطات تمتنع عن منحها رخصة لقيادة السيارات ما جعل بعض السعوديات ينظمن العام الماضي حملة للسماح للمرأة بقيادة السيارات في السعودية.

The authorities also **refused** to grant a license to drive cars, making some Saudi women organise a campaign last year to allow women to drive in Saudi Arabia.

Thus, it was evidence that BBC strategically utilised the modality of منع(prevent/prohibit) to portrayed the restriction of driving on Saudis women negatively. This is being done by portraying that the Saudi women are prevented from driving a car. Hence, indicated that the restriction was being carried out by force without any exemption, or special consideration based on a certain condition such as in emergency cases.

On the other hand, AJ utilised the same modality of 'prevent' differently. In the AJ's online news articles, the modality of 'prevent' was strategically used to soften the restriction of driving on Saudi women. In another word, AJ strategically used the modality of 'prevent' to portray that the restriction was not being forced in total as some exemption can be given based on the situation. Therefore, AJ mentioned that the Badia women were not prohibited from driving and the Islamic sharia law is not prohibited women from driving. Instead, the restriction was based on the 'public interest' to 'prevent more harm' which might happen if the restriction is not being carried out.

Thus, the news extracts from AJ and BBCA revealed that AJ had utilised the modality of 'prevent' to portray the restriction positively by highlighting that the restriction was not implemented without exemption. Moreover, AJ also highlighted on the specific reason for the implementation of the restriction which aims not only to clear the misunderstanding surrounding the restriction but also provide positive representation on the enforcement of the decision to disallowed women from driving cars.

2) ينبغي (should)

The modality of ينبغي (should) also one of deontic modality which carries the meaning of obligation. However, it was not carrying the meaning of obligation by force, but it is more toward a call for something important. Hence, it is an obligation for doing it. Although, the modality of 'should' does not record a significant number of occurrences in the corpus data for both AJ and BBCA. The qualitative analysis revealed that AJ strategically utilised the modality to positively portrayed the driving restriction on Saudi women. For instance, AJ reported:

25/12/2010

(6)

مع استمرار حظر قيادة المرأة للسيارة، ينبغي علينا أن نفكر بديل واعي.

*With the continued ban on women driving, we **should** think of a conscious alternative.*

In this news extract, AJ strategically utilised the modality of 'should' to call upon the readers for finding a practical alternative for the restriction rather than calling into the heated debate on the enforcement of the driving ban on Saudi women. Thus, AJ tried to divert the focus on the negative side of the restriction to the call for finding a better solution for Saudi women when they need to be in the road without having to drive the car by themselves.

3) يمكن (can)

يمكن is the modality of alethic which provide a meaning of possibility. Similar to the use of modality of 'prevent' the two online news outlets utilised the modality 'can' differently in portraying the driving restriction on Saudi women. In the most occasion, AJ utilised the modality of 'can' to provide positive connotation of the restriction. Hence, the modality of 'may' has been strategically utilised by the outlet to indicate a possibility for the change in restricting women from driving a car in Saudi. For instance, AJ reported:

27/2/2014

(7)

ونظراً لتغير معطيات هذا الوقت فهل يعيد علماءنا الأفاضل النظر في موضوع تحريم قيادة المرأة للسيارة باعتبار أن ذلك أصبح أمراً ملحاً تفرضه المصلحة العامة ويمكن أن يتم إقراره بحسب ضوابط شرعية لتقوم المرأة بدورها في توصيل أبنائها وخدمة نفسها.

*In view of the changes in the recent time, does our distinguished scholar reconsider the issue of the prohibition of women driving because it has become an urgent matter imposed by the public interest and **can** be adopted according to legitimate regulations for women to drive their children around and serve themselves (instead of having to ride limousines or hire a driver)?*

In another example, the same modality has been used to promote the possibility that the majority of Saudi support the call for allowing women to drive cars, for example:

27/2/2014

(8)

يمكن القول إن نسبة كبيرة من المجتمع السعودي تؤيد قيادة المرأة السيارة فغالبية المجتمع السعودي مع قيادة المرأة للسيارات.

It can be said that a large percentage of Saudi society supports the women to drive cars and the majority of Saudi society with the call to allow women were driving cars.

In contrast, the BBC utilised the modality of 'can' in negative order. For example, BBC reported quoting from the Guardian:

28/4/2012

(9)

وتقتبس الغارديان مقطعا من مقال لنسرين مالك نشر في الغارديان الاسبوع الماضي تقول فيه "نعم، في السعودية لا يمكن للنساء قيادة السيارة، ولكن الرجال لا يمكنهم انتخاب حكومتهم.

The Guardian cited an article by Nesreen Malik published in the newspaper last week which says: "Yes, in Saudi Arabia, women cannot drive, but men cannot elect their government,".

In this news extract, the modality 'can' has been attached with the denial 'y' which provides a meaning that in Saudi, women cannot drive a car, as the man cannot elect their government. Hence, the news focuses on the restriction enforced on Saudi women rather than promoting the possibility that the restriction might be changed or can be changed. Thus, it revealed that BBC is focusing on the negative side of the restriction by highlighting the limitation enforced on Saudi women and their men as well. While AJ gives more attention to the possibility of the restriction can be changed in the future.

4) ما زال (still)

The modality of ما زال is a temporal modality which carries the indication of time. Hence, the modality of 'still' indicates that the matter is continuing to happen without a significant change. From the corpus data, both AJ and BBCA used the same strategy in using the modality of 'still'. Thus, both outlets utilised the modality of 'still' to portray that the restriction of driving on Saudi women is ongoing even though many efforts campaign has been carried out to lift the restriction. However, these efforts still not resulting with any significant change to the restriction of car driving (at least during the date of publication of the corpus data from 2010 to 2014). This can be seen from the following examples of news extract. For example:

23/11/2012

(10)

ومن بين هذه القضايا تحريم قيادة المرأة للسيارة، التي مازال السعوديون يتحدثون فيها، ويتفقون ويختلفون حولها منذ ما يقرب من ربع قرن، وما تزال لم يُبت فيها.

*Among these issues is the prohibition of women driving a car, where Saudis still speak on that agree and disagree around the topic since a quarter of a century ago; it is **still** pending.*

الأثنين 16 صفر 1436

(11)

لمعارضتي قيادة المرأة السعودية للسيارة ثلاث حجج قديمة وثابتة (منها): يصرون على أن قيادة المرأة ليست أهم حقوقها، بل لا يزال المشوار طويلاً أمامها لنيل حقوق أهم وأكثر إلحاحاً .

*The opponents of Saudi women's leadership have three old and consistent arguments, (one of them) they insist that the driving car for a woman is not the most important rights for her, but it is **still** a long way for women to get more essential rights and more urgent compared to the of driving cars.*

23/11/2014

(12)

قيادة المرأة للسيارة المعضلة السعودية الكبرى التي ما زالت تتجاذبها أطراف ومحاور عدة بين مؤيد وممانع، ومتفرج وطامح، ولا نعرف حقيقة مصدر المنع على وجه الدقة حتى الآن، وما أسبابه .

*The issue of Women's right to drive car is a big dilemma in Saudi, which is **still** attracted many parties and groups between supporters and opponents, and spectators and promoters. We do not know the real reason which leads to the prevention and its causes in details.*

1/12/2010

(13)

زال

ولكن مراسلنا يقول إن دعاة حقوق النساء في العالم لن يكفيهم الإجراء الأخير حيث لا تزال المرأة ممنوعة من قيادة السيارات في المملكة كما أهنن لا يتمتعن بأي منصب سياسي أو رسمي في الحكومة.

*However, our correspondent says women's rights advocates in the world will not be able to do so because women are **still** barred from driving in the kingdom and have no political or official position in government.*

13/12/2012

(14)

ورغم محاولات الناشطات السعوديات لإحداث بعض التغيير العام الماضي، لا تزال المرأة محرومة من قيادة السيارات في المملكة، ولا تزال تحتاج لموافقة ولي أمرها الذكر (سواء كان زوجها أو والدها أو شقيقها) للقيام بأعمال بسيطة مثل العمل أو السفر.

*Despite Saudi women's attempts to make some changes last year, women are **still** barred from driving in Saudi Arabia and still need the consent of their male guardian (whether her husband, father or brother) to do simple work or travel.*

5) يجب (must)

BBC strategically utilised the modality of deontic which carries the meaning of obligation to launch a counter-hegemony discourse against the restriction of driving for Saudi women. For example:

30/11/2010

(15)

طعن أحد علماء الدين الكبار في السعودية في صحة قرار يحظر على النساء قيادة السيارات قائلاً إنه يجب السماح للنساء بمزيد من المشاركة الاجتماعية في المملكة.

*A senior Saudi cleric has challenged a ruling banning women from driving cars, saying women **must** be allowed more social participation in the kingdom.*

In this example, BBC strategically reported on the voice of Saudi Senior Islamic scholar who challenged the restriction of driving on Saudi women. This opposing voice furthermore has been given a stronger tone and firm connotation through the utilisation of deontic modality of 'must be' which provide a connotation of strong obligation. Hence, the outlet had exploit view from one of Saudi Senior Islamic scholar to launch counter-hegemony discourse against the dominant view of fatwa which supports the ruling of banning Saudi women from driving cars.

AJ, on the other hand, utilised the deontic modality of must in a slightly different way. Instead of using the modality of 'must' to launch a counter-hegemony discourse against the ruling of banning women from driving as done by BBC, AJ strategically utilised the same modality to preserve the hegemony. For example:

(16)

هذا الإنجاز النسائي السعودي بقيادة (قطار البنات) يجب عدم ربطه بالقضية الجدلية الأوسع في المجتمع السعودي حول (قيادة المرأة للسيارة).

*This Saudi women's achievement to drive the so-called "Girls Train" **must** not be linked to the broader related issue among Saudi society particularly on the issue of "Women's Car Driving".*

It is observed that the modality of 'must be' was strategically being used to strongly obligate any attempt to link the success of driving 'girls only train' by a Saudi woman with the campaign to allow Saudi women to drive cars. Hence, the modality of 'must be' was utilised to provide a robust obligate connotation. Thus, preserving the hegemony of the ruling for disallowing women from driving cars despite Saudi women have successfully shown their capability in driving train.

Similarly, the same modality of 'must be' was also being utilised to preserve the hegemony. Hence, strongly support the restriction of driving on Saudi women. AJ reported, for example:

(17)

يجب ألا ننساق خلف مثل هذه الأخبار والتحقيقات الصحفية المثيرة، وألا يتم تداولها على أساس أن لها علاقة بخبر انطلاق قطار البنات وقدرتهن على النجاح في التعامل مع الآلة المتحركة أيا كانت (سيارة.. قطار.. طائرة)!.
*We **must** not be dragged behind such exciting news and investigative reports. We should not be dealing with the issue on the basis that they have to do with the story of the girls' train and their (women) ability to succeed in dealing with the moving machine (car, train, plane).*

*We **must** not be dragged behind such exciting news and investigative reports. We should not be dealing with the issue on the basis that they have to do with the story of the girls' train and their (women) ability to succeed in dealing with the moving machine (car, train, plane).*

In this example, the deontic modality of 'must be' was strategically utilised to provide a strong obligation preventing the readers from being trapped into media speculation which

aims to create the opposing discourse to challenge the ruling which bans Saudi women from driving cars.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the Corpus data of Arabic news online from BBCA and AJ of 2010 until 2014 has shown that the two prominent modern standard Arabic online news outlets have significantly utilised modality in reporting the restriction of driving on Saudi women. The statistical analysis reveals that the two outlets have strategically utilised different type of modality in the corpus data namely: epistemic, deontic, evaluative, boulomaic, alethic and temporal. Although the frequency of each type of modality is slightly different from each of these two news outlets, the modality of epistemic which carries the meaning of certainty and the modality of temporal (referring to time) received the highest frequencies compared to other types of modality in the Corpus data. Based on the quantitative findings, further Critical Discourse Analysis of the topic of driving restriction highlighted many interesting results on the strategic used of modalities to report on Saudi women driving restriction. Hence, showed the significant differences between the two news outlets of BBCA and AJ in portraying the event. Thus, BBCA and AJ have taken different side of the driving restriction issue.

In short, the driving ban among Saudi women caused many debates, not only among the Saudi's including the traditionalist Muslim scholars and feminist movements, but also received various responses from the international communities mainly the spectators from other countries. BBCA, in one hand, was keen to report on the Saudi's decision to ban their women from driving. BBCA also highlighted other restrictions forced on Saudi women particularly those related to the 'male-guardian' rules, which make the issue more complicated. On the other hand, AJ not only backed the decision on disallowing women from driving by providing reasons based on the traditional value of Islamic teaching and the fundamental cultural practised by Saudi's society in protecting their women from any harm.

However, in several occasion, AJ also provides reports calling for a review of the restriction in soft tone base on the current needs and changes without making any serious challenge to the hegemony discourses which support the different practices between men and women in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the modality has been strategically utilised in the construction of Arabic online news discourse by BBCA and AJ.

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