Abstract

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"I was there. How did I become invisible?" OVERT SEXISM IN MEDIA: A LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS OF ANDROCENTRICITY IN EGYPTIAN PRINT MEDIA

Introduction: The linguistic behavior of a society is not only a reflection of the ideologies and beliefs of this society but also plays a significant role in moulding them. Media, on the other hand, has been proven to be one of the most persuasive methods that influences the social and political relations in a society. Hence came the overflow of studies in which linguists tried to analyse the language used in media in a wide spectrum of languages (Arabic: Mahfouz, Pasha, Samy Chinese: Marjorie, Fang Dutch: Van Dijk English: Bednarek, Fowler, Richardson, Fairclough French: Choi German: Wodak Hebrew: Kulka Italian: De Fina, Sabatini Japanese: Saito Spanish: Imbert, Delbene, Pardo, Strom Thai: Krom, Khanittanan ,among others). Linguistic sexism was defined as the language which discriminates against women by representing them negatively which seems to implicitly assume that activities primarily associated with women were necessarily trivial. This paper attempts to address linguistic sexism in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) in Egyptian print media, a topic that has not been given due attention in the burgeoning field of media discourse. Justification and Research Objectives: Any academic research in the field of gender studies should serve the purpose of embracing gender problems in a society, thus helping bring about some solutions to such issues. Taking that into account, this study gives a detailed description of various types of overt sexism in Egyptian print media, and suggests a less androcentic language to be used in the hope of ultimately redressing a form of injustice practiced against Egyptian women. This paper examines how women are discursively and linguistically represented in the Egyptian print media, represented in the leading Egyptian Arabic-language newspaper Al-Ahram. The study discusses front page articles in the period between June25th, 2013 and July 30th, 2013. Methodology: Using a qualitative and quantitative analysis, the researcher describes the various types of sexism found in the articles published during the above-mentioned period. In this section, the researcher mainly addresses two points: first, overt sexism on the lexico-grammatical level as represented in generic words, lexical choices, coordinate pairs and grammatical androcentricity. The second point to be addressed is a comparison between male-female visibility in these articles. The study then discusses the effects of the linguistic advantage given to men in the print media on Egyptian women in particular and Arab women in general. The paper ends by addressing the question of what should be done to redress such discriminatory forms of representation by proposing a form of MSA that is less gender-biased to be used in media outlets. Keywords: Linguistic feminism, media discourse, gender studies, sociolinguistics, Egyptian media, Arabic language