

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of Ambivalent Sexism in Selected American and British Proverbs About Women

Ali Shimal Gzar

ali.gzar2207m@ircoedu.uobaghdad.edu.iq

Supervised by: Asst. Prof. Bushra Ni'ma Rashid (PhD)

bosh1969bosh@yahoo.com

Department of English, University of Baghdad- College of Education Ibn-Rushd for Human Sciences, Iraq

Abstract

Ambivalent sexism reflects the gendered identity of men and women in the American and British proverbs. The main targeted entity that is portrayed as weak and dependent on men is women. Women's degradation has been a developing area in feminist critical discourse analysis and the critical theory of linguistics. This paper has applied the theoretical framework of feminist theory to represent male chauvinism in English proverbs. Qualitative and quantitative research methods are used to overcome any drawbacks of adopting one method. Moreover, Fairclough's (1989/1992) model of power and dominance, Lazar (2007/2014) model of feminist criticism, and Glick and Fisk's (1996/1997) theory of ambivalent sexism have been adapted to criticize the way women are perceived in proverbs and to emancipate women from the traditional gender roles. The interpretation of the frequencies and percentages has shown that males are the controlling group whether from the appearance, social roles, the inherent nature or biological sex and women as wives. This identification and seeking to equate women with men throughout feminist critical discourse analysis have not been tackled before in the American and British culture from the gender-based analysis perspective.

Keywords: Ambivalent sexism, gender, theoretical framework, proverbs, feminist critical discourse analysis.

تحليل الخطاب النقدي النسوي للتمييز الجنسي في أمثال أمريكية وبريطانية مختارة عن النساء
علي شمال كزار

جامعة بغداد - كلية التربية ابن رشد - قسم اللغة الانكليزية - العراق

ali.gzar2207m@ircoedu.uobaghdad.edu.iq

إ.د. بشرى نعمة راشد

bosh1969bosh@yahoo.com

جامعة بغداد - كلية التربية ابن رشد - قسم اللغة الانكليزية

المخلص

يعكس التحيز الجنسي المتناقض الهوية الجنسانية للرجال والنساء في الأمثال الأمريكية والبريطانية. والكيان المستهدف الرئيسي الذي يصور على أنه ضعيف ويعتمد على الرجل هو المرأة. كان تدهور المرأة مجالا متطورا في تحليل الخطاب النقدي النسوي والنظرية النقدية لعلم اللغة. طبقت هذه الورقة الإطار النظري للنظرية النسوية لتمثيل الشوفينية الذكورية في الأمثال الإنجليزية. تستخدم طرق البحث النوعي والكمي للتغلب على أي عيوب في اعتماد طريقة واحدة. علاوة على ذلك ، تم تكييف نموذج

فيركلاف (1992/1989) للسلطة والهيمنة ، ونموذج لازار (2014/2007) للنقد النسوي ، ونظرية جليك وفيسك (1997/1996) للتحيز الجنسي المتناقض لانتقاد الطريقة التي ينظر بها إلى النساء في الأمثال ولتحرير النساء من الأدوار التقليدية للجنسين. وقد أظهر تفسير الترددات والنسب المؤيعة أن الذكور هم المجموعة المسيطرة سواء من المظهر أو الأدوار الاجتماعية أو الطبيعة المتأصلة أو الجنس البيولوجي والنساء كزوجات. لم يتم تناول هذا التعريف والسعي إلى مساواة النساء بالرجال من خلال تحليل الخطاب النقدي النسوي من قبل في الثقافة الأمريكية والبريطانية من منظور التحليل القائم على النوع الاجتماعية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحيز الجنسي، النوع الاجتماعي، الإطار النظري، الأمثال، تحليل الخطاب النقدي النسوي

1. Introduction

Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis are frequently utilized interchangeably. According to Wodak and Meyer (2001,p.1), “Critical Discourse Analysis regards language as social practice and takes into consideration the context of language use to be crucial.” Furthermore, critical discourse analysis emphasized the connection between language and power. Also, nowadays critical discourse analysis refers to the critical approaches of linguistics that consider the discursive practice of texts to be the fundamental unit of communication. In other words, critical discourse analysis is essentially concerned with analyzing such kind of terms: power, dominance, control and ideology in language.

Critical discourse analysis is not only concentrated on aspects of texts as spoken or written to be the target of investigation or inquiry, but also it takes into account a fully “critical” account of discourse as social processes and also the social structure in which the individuals or groups create meanings in their use of texts. Thus, power, history, and ideology are three concepts that are inseparable of critical discourse analysis.

Crystal (2008, p.148) claims that “critical discourse analysis is a branch of critical linguistics which studies the relation between discourse events and the sociopolitical and cultural factors.” Critical approaches to discourse include the interpretation and analysis of discourse as history, cognition, power and dominance such as women’s degradation as a social and cultural concept in the critical analysis of language throughout English proverbs and how the latter can represent the traditions and wisdom of any society. Proverbs represent the cultural, social and folkloric features of the nations. They also indicate the traditions, norms, beliefs and values of any society. They often contain misconceptions or misogynistic and derogatory views about women whether in the American and the British culture or all around the world. As they are perceived as generalizations, they include prejudices and misconceptions about male-based society since men are to be the dominant and controller, whereas women are to be controlled and subordinated.

2. Literature Review

This section is devoted to the theoretical perspective of this study. It starts with the essential concepts of texts and contexts, next it highlights a general overview of discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis and some major approaches of the field in relation to the conception of gender and the English proverbs about women.

2.1 Text and Context

Halliday and Hasan (1976, as cited in Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p.3), state that "When people speak or write, they produce text". The term "text" refers to any instance of language, in any medium, that makes sense to someone who knows the language. Van Dijk (1997) claims that the term text is employed to represent the conceptual framework that underlies the concept commonly referred to as discourse. It is essential to keep in mind that the morpho-syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic levels all play a role in the operation of the grammatical text on the one hand, and that pragmatics plays a role on the other.

Van Dijk (2008, p.17) suggests that "Contexts as mental models consist of schemas of shared, culturally based, conventional categories, which allow fast interpretations of unique, ongoing communicative events." In other words, context is a mental construct that has the form of mental model, stored in the episodic memory, this type of memory is a long-term memory which individuals store their personal traditions and experiences. The notion of context models refers to the cognitive representations of the communicative situation's structures that are discursively significant for a participant. The context models are responsible for regulating the pragmatic aspect of speech, while event models are responsible for regulating the semantic aspect. Formal functional analysis breaks away from the idea that speech/text and context should be cohesively understood (Fairclough as cited in Mutasher, 2023, p.113).

To conclude, *backgrounding* is one of the additional properties of context. By definition, context is what happens before, during, or after the main event of a speech, dialogue, or talk. In conversation, when someone refers to something, that thing is looked at and turned into a figure instead of a ground. However, the meaning of a statement is reached by putting it in the right context. Context is what makes a difference when someone tries to be understood or when someone tries to make himself understood in a certain situation, (Linell, 1998).

2.2 Discourse Analysis: A Historical Background

In a broad sense, discourse analysis (DA) is the study of language in the context of communication and/or communication in the context of language. To give a more specific explanation of this kind of term, one usually has to talk about language in use, language above or beyond the sentence, language meaning in interaction, and language in cultural and situational context. Different linguists will stress different ideas on this list based on their beliefs and ties, such as functionalism, structuralism, social interactionism, and so on, (Coulthard, 1977). Discourse analysis is referred to as the study of how sentences in spoken and written language form a larger meaningful unit like paragraphs, conversational , and interview, (Jebur, 2019).

It is worth mentioning that DA is perceived as a discipline to the analysis of language that pays attention to the characteristics of the text with reference to social and cultural context. Paltridge (2010, p.1) states that “Discourse analysis examines patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used.” Discourse analysis (DA) refers to the examination of linguistic patterns that are seen across multiple texts. The analysis acknowledges the relationship between language and the social and cultural environments in which it is employed.

The study of language use, discourse and gender mostly uses qualitative methods; most of them rely on the analytical frameworks which are outlined in DA. In the study of discourse, four approaches focus on gender as a cultural practice. First, the anthropological approach, which concentrates on the cultural reproductions. Second, the sociocultural approach that pays attention to social actions. Third, the critical analysis of discourse that emphasizes on text, and the historical approach tradition that concentrates on the diachronic development of discourse, (Bucholtz, 2011).

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

The year 1970 has witnessed the emergence of the field discourse and text analysis that have recognized the role of language in constituting the relation between language and power in society. Before that time, a great attention was paid to the formal description of linguistic rules and concentrated on the grammatical competence of speakers, which separated the syntactic structure from the real language use, (Chomsky, 1959 as cited in Wodak & Meyer 2001). “Discourse analysis is a broad and interdisciplinary field that involves closely examining how language is used within the context of its use in order to reveal the complex mechanisms by which language is used to produce societal meanings and identities,” (Gee, 2014, as cited in Adil, 2023, p. 296)

Meanwhile, *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA) emerges in 1990s, which includes a group of scholars, following a symposium in Amsterdam, in January 1991. Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen, and Ruth Wodak spent time together by chance and with the assistance of the University of Amsterdam. Two days were spent together and got the amazing opportunity to discuss discourse analysis ideas and approaches, specifically CDA, (Wodak and Mayer, 2001).

Critical Linguistics and CDA concentrate not only on text (spoken or written), but also on the topic of research. A critical analysis of discourse that integrates social processes and structure, which is composed of text production—is part of the theoretical and practical study of discourse. As a result, discourse is the result of people engaging in social practices and interacting with one another within social structures. Gender, power, hierarchy, and social factors are all considered significant topics in CDA. Thus, linguistics, sociolinguistics, text linguistics, semantics, pragmatics, and rhetoric are the foundational fields of critical linguistics and CDA, (Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

Wodak (1997, as cited in Paltridge, 2012) describes a number of principles for CDA, these comprise the following :

1. Discourse contributes to the construction and reflection of social and political concerns.
2. Discourse is the locus of power's negotiation and performance.
3. Discourse serves to both reveal and perpetuate existing social structures.
4. Ideologies are generated and mirrored in linguistic practices.

2.4 Fairclough's (1989/1992) Three-Dimensional Framework

Fairclough (1989/1992) presents his three-dimensional framework to describe and analyze discourse and text from a critical point of view. Fairclough's approach is considered as the core analytical process in CDA because he was the first to create an analytical framework that submitted guidelines for the future development of CDA. Fairclough (1992) claims that his approach helps the less-educated become more conscious of the dominant and oppressive ideas held by society's elites by revealing the implicit connections between language, ideology, and power. As he explains in (1989), his raising of consciousness and awareness primarily led to the creation and provision of instruments for the dominated people to reject and oppose the control of the dominant group. His approach comprises from three stages:

1. Description: The first phase of this approach involves doing a textual analysis of the vocabulary description or 'discourse fragment', including both spoken and visual texts. This step, referred to by Fairclough as the 'selected' stage, enables the researcher to carefully choose linguistic components that they deem relevant to their specific data.

2. Interpretation: The exploration of the process of production (writing, speaking, and designing) and consumption (reading, listening, and viewing) of texts, i.e., the discursive practice level which includes the relation between text and interaction as follows:

1. Situational Context: The time and place are provided of the production of text.
2. Inter-textual context means the different participants of the discourse.
3. *Explanation:* The third stage is about the level of sociocultural practice, which is shown by the "power behind discourse" beliefs that are hidden behind the whole process and control how power is used in discourse. At this stage, critical analysis is meant to show how ideological patterns and sociocultural practices are made. Therefore, the contextual analysis involves "the situational context" (questions about time and place) and the "intertextual context" (looking for other texts or information about or from producers and their product) are central to the process of interpretation," (Janks, 1997, p. 37).

2.5 Ambivalent Sexism Theory

Dictionaries and researchers with an interest in sexism may discuss the effects of sexism on society in general and on women in particular, but they can tackle it from a variety of angles. Although the term 'sexism' has many different meanings,

the most widely used definition is “the practices whereby someone foregrounds gender when it is not the most salient feature,” (Mills, 1998, p.16).

This term seems reasonable at first glance, but it might start a debate because it treats sexism as if it were a simple case of mistaken identity. However, many people think sexism is more than just a mistake. Thus, sexism is equated with institutionalized forms of racism and discriminatory discourse. The study of sexism and other forms of discriminatory language has a new theoretical framework, called *Ambivalent Sexism Theory* (AST).

Therefore, this study is mainly interested in critically analyzing American and British proverbs about women, from a feminist critical perspectives. Before clarifying the components of AST with its sub-components, it is very crucial to explicate what these components are. AST has three shared components which represent the core of AST. It is stressing that each component reflects a set of beliefs in which patriarchy, prejudice, antipathy and ambivalence are inherent. These components explain and justify sexuality, gender imbalances, and social power:

1. **Paternalism:** This refers to the intergroup relations in a society (i.e., the relation between the dominant and the subordinate groups). Though the relation between men and women, the master and his slave, or father and his son, there is a kind of affection to be existed in this type of sexism, this comes to what is known as ‘benevolent sexism.’ Paternalism has two types of ambivalence: Hostile and benevolent sexism. The former refers to ‘*dominative*’ relation that emphasizes the fact that women are awkward and men have the authority upon them. However, the latter refers to an ‘*protective paternalism*’ that highlights the gender-traditional roles. For instance, women’s job is as mothers, wives or sisters, so it is the men’s responsibility to protect them, (Jackman, 1994).
2. **Gender Differentiation:** This type of ambivalent sexism indicates the traditional gender roles in the community as men and women as well as the natural gender relations between them. This type consists of two categories, i.e., ‘competitive’ and ‘complementary.’ *Competitive gender differentiation* stands for the cognition that men manage society because of their physical entity and also their authority so women are seen as inferior to such a thing. On the contrary, *complementary gender differentiation*, this occurs merely when women possess favorable properties, such as a wife so as to gain respect and to be well-treated.
3. **Heterosexuality:** male-dominance, power relations, and competition or cooperation between men and women has led to heterosexuality. This type also has ‘hostile’ and ‘benevolent sexism,’ on the one hand, heterosexual hostility that women are symbolized as sexual objects who should satisfy men and take care good of him. On the other hand, ‘intimate heterosexuality’ which emphasizes that men require a girlfriend or wife to accomplish a state of affection and harmony.

2.6 Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) is an analytical framework that examines the intricate and multifaceted processes by which gendered norms and power relations are constructed, sustained, negotiated, and contested through discourse within specific communities and discursive environments. The primary aim of FCDA is to challenge discourses that reproduce gendered social structures that restrict the potential of individuals as human beings. This approach places a strong emphasis on fostering social justice and advocating for reform, (Lazar, 2007).

The FCDA offers a feminist critique of the gendered hierarchies that are reinforced through language and other forms of communication. This critique is seen as an essential component of a revolutionary movement towards emancipation, (Lazar, 2008). This perspective provides a framework for analyzing the hierarchical treatment of women, considering both internal and external factors. The relationship is likely to get worse and possibly become cruel when there are elements of intimidation, compression, isolation, and other behaviors meant to maintain fear, oppression, and authority, (2018, Kamal).

Obviously, it is not adequate to merely apply existing CDA frameworks to the analysis of gender in the case of FCDA. A difference can be made between the use of CDA for the purpose of gender analysis and the practice of FCDA. In contrary to CDA, FCDA is driven by critical feminist policy and research, and is shaped by a "*feminist political imagination*" (Lazar, 2014, p. 182). The patriarchal social order is divided into three pivotal elements to constituent FCDA model of analysis, as follows:

2.6.1 Feminist Analytical Activism

FCDA is a theoretical framework rooted on radical feminism that aims to critically examine and disrupt the existing gender hierarchy. The primary objective of this initiative is to promote gender equality by means of analytical action. Aggression of men, physical violence, and rude and offensive male-derived power are key concerns of feminism; therefore, a revolutionary refusal at any time and place need to be produced and enacted by women. For instance, domestic violence is one of the influential scale of violence against women.

2.6.2 Gender as Ideological Structure

Gender is a sociocultural construct that promotes the simple categorization of individuals into male and female, where power dynamics are unequally distributed, and resulted in the oppression of certain genders. Sexual orientation offers a significant role in shaping and regulating the identities and behaviors of individuals.

2.6.3 The Complexity of Gender and Power Relations

FCDA takes into account that women encounter varied gender and sexism restrictions across different contexts and ages. Gender hierarchies interact with other power systems, including age, socioeconomic status, sexuality, ethnicity, location, and others. Gender imbalance is conceptualized and experienced

differently by women globally. The societal framework of patriarchy interacts with ideologies like corporatism and consumerism, (Lazar, 2008).

2.7 Gender and Proverbs

The term '*gender*' is often used to denote the behavioral, linguistic, and cognitive characteristics shown by individuals. There is a prevailing belief among individuals that their gender identification has the potential to undergo changes during the course of their lives. Individuals often exhibit variations in their speech and behavior across various contexts. Furthermore, it is essential that gender identification be not used as a basis for evaluating individuals' speech patterns or prescribing their behavior in social contexts (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015).

In recent years, the concept of gender has undergone a linguistic and social expansion, shifting from a focus on binary oppositions (based on two actors or agents) and broad statements about the differences in behavior between men and women to one that considers a more complex definition or concept about a specific subset of men or women in a wide range of contexts. Feminist linguistics reconstructed gender as a social practice manifested in a critical discursive flow (Mills & Mullany, 2003), rather than a notion with positive or negative impacts on the person. This is what Eckert and McConnell (2003, page 305) assert:

“Gender is not a part of one’s essence, what one is, but an achievement, what one does, gender is a set of practices, through which people construct and claim identities, not simply a system of categorizing people.”

In the context of ambivalent sexism, it is crucial to analyze the ideas of gender identity, power, and ideology. Discrimination manifests in several forms within the context of CDA, including linguistic, ideological, and power-based manifestations of supremacy. This study addresses the aforementioned topics and explores the impact of gender on the behavior, communication patterns, and leadership positions assumed by individuals of both male and female genders within their respective societies.

In this study, the connection between proverbs and gender is very trustworthy since proverbs about women examine how gender (male and female) and sex (biological gender) is viewed by the American and the British society in particular, and representing all cultures in general. In the present study, proverbs exhibit the status of women. They are symbolized and perceived as dependent on men including even the way they behave and live. Men, on the other hand, are portrayed as dominant and independent, (Zhang, 2018).

Zheng (2018) argues that proverbs are indicative of the social customs and cultural values within a given civilization. Belfatmi (2013) adds that proverbs are an integral component of a particular society or culture, serving as a reflection of various aspects such as traditions, customs, democratic principles, equality, and the role of gender. In his scholarly article entitled "*Contrastive Studies on Proverbs*," Kanat Syzdykov posits that proverbs possess the ability to creatively encapsulate all facets of life, social encounters, cognitive and moral principles, as well as aesthetic values within a particular speech group, (Syzdykov, 2013).

4. Methodology

In order to accomplish the study's objectives, this section intends to give an explanation of the approaches used in the data analysis process. Furthermore, the study design, data collection and description model, and analysis model all aid in identifying and acquainting the reader with the aspects and attributes of the research methodology.

4.1 Data Selection and Description

Depending on the study topics and type of data the researcher has obtained, documenting is the method that is most often used to collect data. Four proverbs—one each from American and British English—have been chosen to symbolize the data and to correspond with the study's objectives and questions. Proverbs are made up of many linguistic and cultural components that are worth looking at. These language pieces, known as proverbs, function as both overt and covert expressions of social norms, practices, and beliefs.

4.2 Research Design

The primary objective of research design is to establish the framework to investigate a research problem in a manner that generates a convincing, reliable, and practically valuable argument, which is considered credible by the intended audience. In the current study, mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) is used to analyze the chosen data, which consists of American and British proverbs. This approach is motivated by the desire to mitigate the drawbacks inherent in each type of data by exploiting the strengths of the other. By combining qualitative and quantitative data, the analysis process can be enhanced.

4.3 The Model of Analysis

A thorough and eclectic analytical framework is proposed to accomplish the study's objectives and validate or refute its hypotheses. It is primarily based on Kerschen's (1998) English women proverbial discourse, Fairclough's (1984/1999) power and dominance, Glick and Fisk's (1996/1997) Ambivalent Sexism Theory, and Lazar's (2008/2014) FCDA. The interrelated mechanisms of these notions allow for an analysis of gender inequality, power relations, and ambivalent sexism in American and British proverbs about women.

5. Analysis of the Data

This section concentrates on three sections: The first one analyzes the American proverbs, whereas the second one analyzes the British proverbs, and lastly the third section compares between the two analyses in terms of tables, interpreting the frequencies and percentages of each data. The data selected and analyzed portray women's appearance in both cultures.

5.1 Analyzing the American Proverbs

American proverbs frequently emphasize the growing significance of women's physical attractiveness. However, the relative importance placed on women's well-being is not equivalent with that accorded to proverbs. Indeed, the prevailing attitude in English written representations frequently portrays women as possessions of men.

1. "Never pick women or horses by candlelight." (Mieder, 1992, p. 197)

-Critical Discourse Analysis**-Text Analysis**

The first step in Fairclough's three-dimensional framework is description of discourse, as far as this proverb is concerned. This framework is "selective" which means, it is appropriate to begin with any stage. The most important linguistic components are utilized to critically assess the proverbs and what they mean in the written or spoken discourse. The word 'Never' is utilized to warn men against choosing women when there is insufficient light or darkness in order not to be fooled by false attraction. Moreover, in the second phrase 'women or horses', there is a clear warning in this text about associating women with animals and assuming that women and horses are of equal significance and are chosen for the same purpose. While in the third phrase 'by candlelight', this phrase emphasizes on the importance of women's outer fit.

-Discursive Practice

The second stage in the model being used is the emphasis on *the context of the text*. With regard to the context of the proverb at hand, it is first documented in the second half of the sixteen century; its significance is that the inadequate lightness may give people and especially men false judgment in choosing a woman to be a girlfriend or a wife. Therefore, people are deceptively attracted to women. However, if the contextual features were said in a nightclub or in a bright place, men would be wise to choose the right girl.

-Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

It indicates *gender as ideological structure* since masculine dominance is quite apparent which is based on ideology distributed between males and females, that is based on inequal gender relations. Women should be carefully chosen as girlfriend, a wife, or even a maiden in spite of men's social class.

-Ambivalent Sexism Theory

It shows *heterosexual hostility*, which reflects the fact that women are viewed as just sexual belongings, so they must be beautiful to keep them around. The mixing of power and control of men is explicit whereas women are dependent on men because they are perceived as only providing care for their husbands, child raising, and teaching children when they get back from school.

2. "A man is as old as he feels, and a woman is as old as she looks" (Ridout & Witting, 1983, p.115).

-Critical Discourse Analysis**-Text Analysis**

The selective stage, which is descriptive and formal, makes it clear to divide this proverb into two parts. The textual analysis shows that there are two sentences separated by a comma. This proverb makes use of comparison by stating or mentioning the syntactic structure of comparison adjectives, i.e., as adj as to express the importance of women's appearance compared to men. There are two clauses used in this proverb to show comparison: First, a man as old as he feels, and second, a woman as old as she looks. In other words, each one of them contains the form as + adjective + as, which accounts for a complement in the form

of a comparative. The use of the two comparative forms here simply suggests that a man is what he feels whereas a woman is how she looks like. This is what concerns the textual analysis or vocabulary.

-Discursive Practice

This proverb was first published in the latter half of the nineteenth century (1871), and it was particularly popular in the United States of America. The context of the text of this proverb is physically portrayed (time and location). A man is as old as he feels; a man of thirty may feel as if he is a man of twenty on a good day, and a man of forty may feel as if he is a man of fifty on a terrible day.

-Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

It is *feminist analytical activism* since women, in this proverb, seek to challenge the degradation and dominance of the controlling group by criticizing discourse to emancipate women from the traditional and patriarchal social order.

-Ambivalent Sexism Theory

The *dominant paternalism* is observable due to the fact that males have a perception of women as being beneath them, and their evaluation of a woman or wife is primarily based on her attractiveness and charisma, while disregarding other qualities and the principle of humanitarian equality. On the other hand, men are evaluated by society based on their inner selves, regardless of whether they are happy or unhappy. If a man in his fifties is happy, for instance, he can have the impression that he is twenty years old. As they become older, women will lose their youthful attractiveness that is just fleeting.

3. “*All the women look the same after the sun goes down*” (Kerschen, 1998, p.36).

-Critical Discourse Analysis

-Text Analysis

The formal and syntactic analysis, which is predicted in the first stage, is selected. The premodifier all involves an indication to women in general, more importantly; proverbs are said in every place around the world. Therefore, the concept of a proverb has a universal consensus and sometimes has the same interpretation. So, all refers to the sameness of the concept of femininity as opposed to masculinity. Regardless of whether they are white, black, slim, overweight, short, or tall, women seem the same after the sun goes down.

-Discursive Practice

The force of utterance claims to be ‘sexual inequality.’ The coherence of the text implies that men’s important target is beauty and appearance of women as well as women’s attractive features. So, whether women are black or white what is taken into account for men is women’s sexual desires. This saying is a proverb transformation. It has an intertextuality of the older expression, “all women and cats are black in darkness,” (Mieder, 1992, 362).

-Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

Differences in sexual orientation may be used to determine whether feminist ideology is explicitly identified as an ideological system. The FCDA is built on the notion of male-female distinctions based on gender; however, women are revolting

against this mentality because they see it as a kind of exploitation. Based on the natural aspect of sex, it is *gender as ideological structure*.

-Ambivalent Sexism Theory

The tendency of regarding women as merely as sex objects clearly view the third item of AST, i.e., *heterosexual hostility*.

4. "A man without ambition is like a woman without looks." (Ridout & Witting, 1983, p. 45)

-Critical Discourse Analysis

-Text Analysis

Syntactically analyzing this saying, it begins with the phrase 'a man' followed by the prepositional phrase without ambition to specify the kind of men indicated in this proverb. Then, those women have not good- looking appearance or beauty are equated with men who have not ambition. The other prepositional phrase 'without looks' works as post modifier for the phrase 'a woman.' The copula verb (i.e., to be) shows the relationship between women's look and men's ambition are interconnected. Men need to work hard to achieve success, whereas women only have a nice look to give to the world; this is a critical viewpoint that has been used to deliver a derogatory features about women.

-Discursive Practice

In the folkloristic lore of proverbs, women have not ambition as opposed to men. In this proverb, there is an intertextual reference to one of the remarkable women who is named Cleopatra, though the cultural and social commonplaces remain males' trait, (Al-Malki et al, 2012). Therefore, this saying spreads universally to become a proverbial expression. The intertextual-context that refers to the participants who use this proverb is shown in text production and interpretation.

-Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

It is *complexity of gender and power relations*. In this proverb, patriarchy dominates traditions, beliefs, and gender imbalances across time and place in the society. Gender and sexism represent various forms, so, a man's ambition, courage, and strength equal, on the other side, a woman's outer fit. Therefore, if a man does not have these qualities, he resembles a woman without charming outlook.

-Ambivalent Sexism Theory

It is specifically *competitive gender differentiation*, women have nothing since ancient times, only her appearance matters. Such a sexual and dominating relationship controls societies since proverbs are universal. HS views describe women as are negative since women are imagined in limited position in the society.

4.2 Analyzing the British Proverbs

According to Mieder (2004), the wisdom that is expressed in proverbs is quite similar from one culture to another. As a result, women's appearance in the British proverbs is not too much different from the American ones. There is a nuance different that is the American people tend to use more sexist language or terminologies concerning women's outer fit, whereas the British ones, concerning women's appearance, have physical attraction and use more formal language to describe women's beauty.

1. “*Old women now-a-days are not much thought of.*” (Speake , 2007 , p. 285)

-Critical Discourse Analysis

-Text Analysis

The textual analysis is highly predictable in this text formally and/or syntactically. It consists of one utterance. The phrase “old women” comprises from premodifier ‘old’ and a noun ‘woman.’ This phrase identifies the subject of the text being talked about, that is, women. The word ‘nowadays’ indicates the kind of proverbs which is called anti-proverb (modern one) which is essentially recorded in the American culture, and after that, it has become available among the folk.

-Discursive Practice

Stating the *situational context* of this proverb, it was recorded in 1979 and specifically in Britain. It is used in situations where old women do not have a unique physical attraction and beautiful complexion because they are no longer useful and beautiful.

-Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

Complexity of gender and power interactions is the term that describes proverb. There are differences among women depending on the interaction hierarchies that they experience, despite the fact that all women experience gender and sexual attitudes in various locations and at different times. In other words, power relations and sexual constraints are met by age, sociocultural, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and location. In this proverb, women are recognized according to age in which young women are favored upon old ones.

-Ambivalent Sexism Theory

Competitive gender differentiation firstly differentiates between the young and the old woman in relation to age and secondly, women are looked as the inferior group. HS is vividly portrayed because women are previously judged with regard to negative attitudes whether they are physical or sexual, beauty accounts very much in this perspective.

2. “*Boys seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses.*” (Manser, 2004, p. 32)

-Critical Discourse Analysis

-Text Analysis

Words, phrases, and clauses are all components of the text that constitutes the proverb that is being discussed here. The combination of a set of situated meaning, which includes unexpressed ideologies, power, class, and gender, and is referred to as social practice, is the second component that is included in the analysis of discourse.

-Discursive Practice

The situational and inter-textual context stage is the second stage of the paradigm that is currently being worked upon. The journalist Dorothy Parker (1893–1967) was the first person to use this proverb in a verse news article, (Manser, 2007).

-Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

This is what is meant by the phrase ‘*gender as ideological structure*,’ which is synonymous with ‘*gender hegemony*.’ An ideology that is produced from unequal

power relations and domination between men and women is represented and practiced by this proverb, which is a social representation of ideology.

-Ambivalent Sexism Theory

The proverb represents gender differentiation (*competitive gender differentiation*) because women are seen as inferior whereas men are the dominating and controller in the community. With reference to sexism as a multifaceted concept, this proverb also contains one facet of sexism which is *hegemonic masculinity*, the state that the society is managed by males whether especially the issue of gender dynamics and the equivalence between men and women.

3. “*The more women look in their glass, the less they look to their house*”
(Speake, 2007, p.134)

-Critical Discourse Analysis

-Text Analysis

In this proverb, the microanalysis of the syntactic structure is a key aspect of the social relations and social identities that are hidden beyond the written text. The proverb at hand is coherent since it has corrected arrangements of grammatical words and phrases. Next, analyzing it word by word, it consists of the form of comparative adjectives. The phrase “the more ... the less” is used to judge and evaluate the achievement of somebody in certain type of crafts. The first part provides listeners with a communicative speech act that women are interested in their appearance, focusing on their outer fit neglecting their house, households and children.

-Discursive Practice

Establishing the context, this proverb was first recorded in 1640 as a British proverb. It was said by George Herbert, (Manser, 2007). This proverb is used in a context in which finding the best dressing and clothing is more than taking care of women’s household activities. In the first step of the model, the meaning of the utterance-type is comprehended. Inferring the speaker’s intention is a component of analyzing and investigating language in use, and this is the quality that differentiates formal analysis of the discursive flow from functional analysis of the flow of the discourse.

-Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

From a feminist perspective, gender is created socially by making differences between men and women. This reproduction is based on domination and subordination, successively. This saying has the quality of the “*sex naturalness*” that is socially constructed. The division of femininity and masculinity is created by society; the meaning of gender structure is based on the idea of the two genders, which seems commonsensical and natural. Hence, it is *gender as ideological structure*.

-Ambivalent Sexism Theory

Competitive Gender Differentiation has a pivotal role in this proverb because it creates the desire to dominate women. They are perceived as incompetent as men are since women cannot manage social and political roles such as men. Gender differentiation expresses a backlash against feminism because it does not only

show women as inferior human being, but also, it establishes the dominance and power relations between men and women.

4. *“Women are wacky, women are vain: they'd rather be pretty than have a good brain.”* (Mieder, 1992, p.669)

-Critical Discourse Analysis

-Text Analysis

Much of the ideological and social facets are explored in “texts” which is manifested in linguistic forms such as the implied “out of sight” gender imbalances in this proverb. The description stage is fundamental to select the critical linguistic, and lexical items in the proverb at hand. To begin with, the lexicalization or wording is “selective” as the most suitable to discourse analysis (written and spoken). Women, in this regard, is symbolized as “wacky” means foolish, empty and silly who resemble a clown in a circus whose job is unusual in pleasing or exciting people ,and people make fun of them. “Vain” is another word that presents women as useless and their social role is only passive objects.

-Discursive Practice

With conjunction to the context of this proverb, it is documented in the eighteenth century and the participants are men in a nightclub. From the situational and intertextual context, the predominant perspective is that this proverb, which discusses the issue of women’s degradation, is hegemonic as far as power and authority of men are concerned. In addition to offering punishments for women who want to rub elbows with males, cultural schemas are the typical stereotypes that have been around historically.

-Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

This proverb's '*complexity of gender as power interactions*' reflects multiple different modalities, including the following: The practice of characterizing women as illogical, worthless, and foolish is referred to as '*oppression of women*'. This is said to be both an ideology and social practice. This prejudice throughout this component of the model is an overt representation of patriarchal society, despite the fact that there is an obvious feminist movement against the denigration of women, from the perspective of a feminist analytic perspective.

-Ambivalent Sexism Theory

This proverb assumes a superior male figure which is an element of ambivalence. This component demonstrates women as not fully competent, establishing the necessity for superiority of men for social roles, and this leads to the aspect of patriarchy. These gender dynamics reflect, construct, and constituent a social right for “*male structural power.*” In other words, men only have the chance and traits to govern the important institutions. This creates the misogynistic and derogatory look at women. Moreover, *dominative concept of paternalism* views the strength of men as twice its natural size.

5. Discussion of the Results

Figure: 1

Quantity Distribution of Percentage and Frequencies

No.	Critical Discourse Analysis	Frequency	Percentage
1	Text Analysis	4	%40
2	Discursive Practice	4	%40
	Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis	16	%80
1	Feminist Analytic Activism	2	%25
2	Gender as Ideological Structure	3	%37.5
3	Complexity of Gender and Power Relations	3	%37.5
	Ambivalent Sexism Theory	8	%100
	Dominative Paternalism	2	%25
	Competitive Gender	4	%40
	Heterosexual Hostility	2	%25
		8	%90

This table provides clarification and interpretation of the results discussion from the perspective of the research questions and data analysis. Text analysis identifies four instances in each of the proverbs from the United States and the United Kingdom, accounting for 40% of the total. This item is used to interpret and investigate the social issues—such as gender, social inequality, and power—that are concealed by the proverbs' coherent devices, language, grammatical structure, and text structure throughout the analysis.

Discursive practice item (4) happens for both American and British cultures, with a percentage of 40% for both. No proverbial analysis is performed without taking into account this idea since it relates to the actual context or the recontextualized context. Context has been viewed in terms of speech actions, coherence, and intertextuality through the embedded activities in discourse. When it comes to FCDA, feminist analytical activism happens twice, accounting for a percentage of 25%. When comparing the two cultures' approaches to this particular FCDA item, women in America do not gradually break free from the conventions of a society that is dominated by males.

Gender is an ideological structure that registers three times with a proportion of 37.5%. Women are biased against positive gender relations because of the biological character of "sex" and the societal norm of ideological discrimination against men and women. The intricacy of gender and power dynamics then registers three times with a proportion of 37.5%; power dynamics are taken into account, particularly in the workplace. Historical and cultural contingent analysis has resulted from the recognition of gender sexism and the differences in culture between "men" and "women." Women should stay at home and be pregnant, while men can work wherever and in any kind of social capacity.

Finally, pertaining to ambivalent sexism, dominative paternalism occurs (2) times with percentage of (25%), the relation between men and women are symbolized as the one between the father and his son.

According to American proverbs, women are inferior and dependent on men since they lack their competence. One term for this is "sexual ambivalences." In contrast, British society is more progressive in that it grants women the freedom to pursue education and employment, however these opportunities are limited to particular, lower-paying jobs. Next, there is a four-times competitive gender differential with a percentage of 40%. Women's social identities are portrayed as weak, while men's are powerful and capable, as a result of this item's physical disparities between men and women based on social distinctions. Finally, heterosexual hostility, which registers twice with a proportion of 25%, has addressed the dehumanization of women in relation to sexual assault by portraying them as objects of sex. Because women are seen as a threat in romantic relationships and can push men into illicit relationships, American proverbs employ this item more frequently than British ones.

6. Conclusion

This section serves to represent the conclusions, depending on the hypotheses and research questions:

Text analysis has addressed the details of the discourse fragments' microanalysis from a critical standpoint. It is claimed that a variety of social activities and representations can emerge from the language fragments. For instance, by comparing women with objects, animas, and the like through the use of certain discourse elements, such as a woman, cat, and chimney to symbolize them as nobody, women have been regarded as dominated, subordinate, and weak.

During this phase, CDA is implemented by examining the proverbial discourse of English women in order to create a critical, social, and sociocultural image of women in both British and American culture. The analysis demonstrates that feminist analytical activism is acknowledged in line with feminist CDA's objectives, which are to challenge and rival the social, political, and economic responsibilities that men and women play in society.

The movement has lately succeeded in America and Europe, opening the door for women to be treated equally with men in all spheres of life, including social studies like the humanities. Thus, feminism has questioned and altered the unfavorable perceptions and criticisms of women. In order to treat women fairly and favorably, this has led to criticism of the male-based culture. When analyzing and interpreting men's control and power toward women, which constitute a wide range of ambivalences, the data analysis indicates that the American proverbs contain less competitive gender differentiation and more dominating paternalism and heterosexual hostility.

These concluding remarks show that the American culture expresses their emotion and feelings when talking about women negatively, they use paternalism as when a father speaks to his son.

Reference

- Alba, L. J. (2005). Discourse analysis for university students. Universidad Nacional De Education A Distancia.
- Al-Muslhi, A. (2023). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Hate Speech directed towards Iraqi TV Series' Performers on Social Media. Alustath Journal for Social Siences. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36473/ujhss.v62i4.2295>
- Bell, A. & Garrett, P. (1998). Approaches to media discourse. Blackwell Publishers.
- Coulthard, M. (2011). An introduction to discourse analysis. Longman.
- Crystal, D. (2008). A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics. Blackwell.
- Dijk, V. (2015). Ideological Discourse Analysis. Cambridge University Press
- Dijk, V. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis . Discourse & society, 4(2), 249-283. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926593004002006>
- Fairclough, N. (1995). Media Discourse. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). Analyzing discourse : textual analysis for social research. Routledge.
- Fasold, R. W. (1990). Introduction to sociolinguistics. Vol.2 The sociolinguistics of language. Blackwell, Various Printings.
- Jebur, I. (2019) A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Language of Persuasion Used in the Election Campaigns by American Parliaments. Al-Ustath Journal for Human and Social Sciences, 2019, Volume 58, Issue 4, Pages 33-46-
<https://www.iasj.net/iasj/article/173381>
- Kamal, Sh. (2018). The Spousal Abuse of Women in Susan Glaspell's Trifles. Al-Ustath Journal for Humanities. Vol. 224 No. 1 (2018). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36473/ujhss.v224i1.251>
- Mutasher, Maha. (2023). Review Study in Discourse Analysis and Appraisal Theory in Selected Prison Letters by Antonio Gramsci and other Scholars. AL-Ustath Journal for Humanities. <https://www.iasj.net/iasj/article/282995>
- Paltridge, B. (2021). Discourse Analysis : an introduction. Bloomsbury.
- Ridout, R. and Witting, C. (1983). English proverbs Explained. Beirut Press
- Speake, J., & Simpson, J. A. (2015). Oxford dictionary of proverbs. Oxford University Press.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2001a). Methods of critical discourse analysis. Sage.
- Zheng, X. (2018). The Analysis of Sexism in English Proverbs. Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 9(2), pp. 352-357.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0902.17>