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# Androgynous Content: Gender-Inclusive Language in Qur'anic Arabic and Egyptian Arabic

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ANDROGYNOUS CONTENT: GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN QUR'ANIC  
ARABIC AND EGYPTIAN ARABIC

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

August 2015

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
School of Graduate Studies and Research  
Department of English

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

---

Sharon K. Deckert, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of English, Advisor

---

Gian Pagnucci, Ph.D.  
Distinguished University Professor

---

Waleed Farag, Ph.D.  
Professor of Computer Science

ACCEPTED

---

Randy L. Martin, Ph.D.  
Dean  
School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: Androgynous Content: Gender-Inclusive Language in Qur’anic Arabic and Egyptian Arabic

Author: Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Sharon K. Deckert

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Gian Pagnucci  
Dr. Waleed Farag

Nestled in a conceptual grid, the current linguistic study investigates gender-inclusive language in *Qur’anic Arabic* (QA), the Arabic variety of *the Qur’an*, the Book of Islam, and *Egyptian Arabic* (EA), the most ubiquitous variety of Arabic. As far as QA is concerned, the study seeks to offer an understanding of some controversial verses that have, in certain cases, been interpreted with a female-marginalizing patriarchal lens or with an extreme feminist lens, and, so, resulted in women’s subjugation in the case of the former and critiquing *the Qur’an* for not being fair to women, in the latter. The study presents linguistic evidence that disproves claims of patriarchally-driven interpretations or extreme feminist ones. Verse analysis via Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) unravels what the data is actually about and offers a refutation of views that might lie beyond the bounds of reason, or justice.

As far as EA is concerned, the study takes an action research turn. First, the study tries, via context-free data from EA, and contextualized EA data from numerous YouTube videos, to investigate the language change that some lexical items, like the nominal /Hadd/ “someone” underwent over the past decade or so; without any preceding language planning, a change in the form of novel ways of usage by EA users, especially within the Egyptian context. The study uses morphosyntax and semantic gender features to fathom this naturally-occurring change, then, pursues a more in-depth analysis of the data by using language engineering to maximize those lexical items’ potential to yield more gender-inclusive uses, especially on the level of their syn-

tax. Activating the semantic gender features of those items, paired with their grammatical gender features, allows for new further gender-inclusive techniques in constructions where those lexical items could occur.

The study also offers a new gender-inclusive EA epicene and looks at job titles from a CDA perspective.

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*For my sons, Muwahhid, and Rawhany.  
You guys are the hope and the dream.*

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

It was a blazing hot July day in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1996. The early morning sun had smacked the streets of the city, spreading his fervent beams in the cavities between lofty glass and marble-clad buildings. There was stillness in the air. Not a breeze to stir the tiniest grain of sand, feather or leaf. The moon could only be described by implication as an Other embedded in a binary opposition to the overwhelming sun, elbowed aside by his dominant *masculine* presence in the horizon.

I soaked myself in the chill of the air conditioner in my office at the Saudi Arabian Standards Organization, where I was working as a translator shortly after I had obtained my MA in translation and interpretation. Energized by the shots of cold gust falling upon me from the AC holes in the snow-white ceiling, I resumed translating a text I had been working on for a few days. Shortly, my eyes fell on a book I had purchased a couple of weeks before, *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grammar Handbook*, a hand palm-sized book I had bought just for its title, which appeared exotic to me at the time, as the 21<sup>st</sup> century had not yet set in. Due to its small size, I had laid the little book on top of a stack of hulky dictionaries which rested like titans in comparison to the little creature on my ivory-white desk.

I gazed at the Lilliputian dictionary for a couple of seconds. My hand reached out for it immediately, as if even before receiving a “check-that-out” signal from my mind. The little creature looked very unfamiliar to my hands; meager in volume but voluminous in content, a delight to the hand and the mind. *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grammar Handbook* was a thematically organized lexicon. In the list of the themes, there was a section entitled

“non-sexist language”. I checked out that section before any other. Brilliant! I thought as my eyes eagerly scanned a list of English gender-neutral<sup>1</sup> expressions highlighting linguistic equity laced with an emancipatory spirit. I was amazed at the devoted, intentional human effort that remolds certain aspects of language to fulfill a sociolinguistic need for equality, potentially induce social action and possibly make a change in the paradigm of relationships between men and women. Among the terms I stopped at were *fire fighter*, *flight attendant*, and *police officer*, to name just three.

With the restless mind of a practicing translator, I tormented myself day in, day out with the question I always ask myself each time I come across an English term for the first time: “How would that be translated into Arabic?” Thinking abundantly about *gender-inclusive* language and possible Arabic translations for some of the English terms in the little dictionary, I was ultimately able to come up with translations for several of the English gender-neutral expressions on the list. And so I soothed my restless mind for a while with a thin thread of hope in the possibility of accomplishing further gender-inclusiveness in Arabic. My affinity with gender-inclusive language, triggered by the little book, had already been established, and with it I had an inner feeling that I would someday revisit the topic of gender-inclusive language in Arabic, not only as a translator, but also as a linguist who aspires to disrupt predominant, presumably gender-biased, linguistic norms, and, in the process, possibly make some social change through language.

My linguistic disposition and desire to research gender-inclusive language (GIL) stayed dormant over a decade with my conviction that using GIL is a characterizing

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<sup>1</sup> The term *gender-neutral* is used to refer to lexical items in which grammatical and semantic features are gender-neutral, such as the English term *fire fighter*.

feature of what I would label as a society of justice. However, I remained impressed with what I saw in the little book as successful human intervention to achieve gender equality in English, raise individuals' awareness of the issue and influence the practice of speakers and writers. I desired, very much, to emulate this achievement with Arabic.

Independently, over a decade ago, I noticed a shift that could index a change towards further gender-inclusiveness in at least one form in *Egyptian Arabic*. I noticed that the lexical item /Hadd/ <sup>2</sup> ﺩ ﺍ “someone”, a noun according to Mohammad (1998)<sup>3</sup>, is now used in a syntactically new position in Egyptian Arabic. Normally, users of *Egyptian Arabic* would use /Hadd/ in subject position as in (1), as an object in statements like (2), and in a negative existential context as in (3):

(1) /Hadd fataH ?il-baab/

someone opened the-door

S V O

“Someone opened the door.”

(2) /?aHmad kallim Hadd fi -l-mawDuuʕ/

Ahmed addressed someone in the-subject

S V O

“Ahmed talked to someone about the subject.”

(3) /ma-Hadd-ijʃ fi-l-beet/

not someone in-the -house

Neg. S Pred.

---

<sup>2</sup> For an explanation of the transcription system used in the dissertation, see Appendix B.

<sup>3</sup> Mohammad (1998) looks at equative sentences in Palestinian Arabic. He refers to /Hada/, the counterpart of the Egyptian Arabic (EA) /Hadd/ as a noun and a negative polarity item.

“There is nobody in the house.”

In that intervening decade, I observed that /Hadd/ has come to be used in Egyptian Arabic as a gender-inclusive lexical item; an NP in predicate position for verbless copula sentences, as in (3) and (4), where the noun /Hadd/, which is grammatically masculine, agrees with either a masculine or feminine subject:

(4) /ʔaHmad Hadd muʔaddab/

Ahmed someone polite

nom. m. s. Adj. m

“Ahmed is a polite person.”

(5) /Munaa Hadd muʔaddab/

Mona someone polite

nom. m. s. Adj. m

“Mona is a polite person.”

It is worth noting that the adjectival form /muʔaddab/ مؤدب "polite", like /Hadd/ itself, is masculine; and although it refers directly to the grammatically masculine noun /Hadd/ in (5), it ultimately refers to the feminine proper noun, *Mona*.

The usage of the noun /Hadd/ as shown in the examples in (1-5) can be replaced in EA by the gendered items /ʔinsaana/ إنسان “male human” (m. sing.), /ʔinsaanaah/ إنسانة “female human” (f. sing.), /waaHid/ واحد “a male one” (m. sing.), and /waaHda/ واحدة “a female one” (f. sing.). However, Egyptian Arabic users have come to use /Hadd/ in such constructions, in contexts where either masculine or feminine forms might be expected if these other lexical items appeared.

Additionally, I have also noticed that masculine job titles in the current EA mass media discourse are sometimes used gender-inclusively, despite the existence of corresponding feminine forms. Some examples are /fannaan/ فنّان “male artist”, /waziir/ وزير “male minister”, and /ZaabiT/ ضابط<sup>4</sup> “male officer”, which are optionally used for both genders, in place of their counterpart feminine forms /fanaanah/ فنّانة “female artist”, /waziirah/ وزيرة “female minister”, and /ZaabTah/ ضابطة “female officer” respectively. The same practice of using masculine job titles gender-inclusively obtains in *Modern Standard Arabic*.

In 2007, I wrote a paper titled “Pristine Glass Ceiling: Gender-neutral Language in Egyptian Arabic”. The paper analyzed data from *Egyptian Arabic* and showed that EA has some gender-inclusive expressions. Based on the analysis of the data, I suggested some further gender-inclusive techniques. That paper was merely an initial study of gender-inclusive language in EA and a preliminary step for further research on GIL in Arabic; hence the current study.

Although on the surface this study focuses on linguistic details in and out of text, this dissertation is ultimately about the Other (symbolized in women) and the Self (symbolized in men). The study looks at gender-related linguistic patterns in two varieties of Arabic: *Qur’anic Arabic* (QA)<sup>5</sup> and *Egyptian Arabic* (EA). However, as I approach and analyze these patterns, I am guided by a framework that views a representation of the

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<sup>4</sup> Egyptian Arabic does not have a writing system. However, the writing system of Modern Standard Arabic, along with other numerical symbols, is used to write Egyptian Arabic utterances, especially in social media. Writers of Egyptian Arabic still adhere to the Modern Standard Arabic writing system when it comes to words like /ZaabiT/ ضابط. The ض is sometimes replaced by an initial ط as طابط for EA writing; both the ض and ط in the case of the word /ZaabiT/ are pronounced /Z/, despite the fact that ض sometimes retains its original MSA pronunciation in other written EA words.

<sup>5</sup> Although abbreviations of the Arabic varieties and other terms used in this dissertation are given, full terms are still also given in the first few pages to foster the reader’s familiarity with them. For a list of the abbreviations used in the dissertation, refer to Appendix “A”.

Other in these two varieties as symbolized in women, and a representation of the Self as symbolized in men.

For the sake of accuracy, in cases where masculine forms are generically used for genders, as is the case in the two Arabic varieties under investigation, the term “gender-inclusive” is used. This is due to the dominance of the grammatical masculine in those two varieties of Arabic, which still highlight masculinity of some terms that are actually gender-inclusive semantically, such as most job titles, and grammatically masculine terms like the terms /ʃaXS/ شخص “person”, /ʔil-waaHid/ الواحد "one", and /fardd/ فرد "individual", to name just three.

### **What Is Gender?**

Wharton (2012) defines “gender” as “a system of social practices” that creates and maintains a female-to-male continuum of gender distinctions on which relations of gender inequality are based (p.8). She also explains that “gender” is socially-constructed. Wharton’s definition highlights the imbalances that might arise from gender representation in language.

Holmes (2007) distinguishes between “Sex”, a biological construct referring to biological differences between males and females, and “Gender” as a social construct that carries “socially produced differences between being feminine and being masculine” (p.2). She adds that “Gender” has come to be associated with *Patriarchy*, a system in which males are dominant and women are subjugated. Language is one aspect of male dominance. In the case of *Qur’anic Arabic*, male interpreters of some verses have contributed to patriarchal readings of those verses. On the level of Egyptian Arabic, masculine forms are used gender-inclusively to refer to the genders.

Let me address here some concerns to social equity that many readers, particularly from a western or generally non-Arab background might come across. Whereas, in English, for example, most nouns and job titles are gender-neutral because they are both grammatically and semantically neutral, in Egyptian Arabic the situation is not the same since most nouns are by default in the masculine; grammatical masculine features are built in those nouns in their basic forms, before marking them with the feminine marker, and so, there is a strong possibility that the female other is done wrong by reference to them with these grammatically masculine nouns. This is shown clearly in job titles that are assumed by most Egyptian Arabic users to be semantically masculine due to their grammatical masculine features such as /duktoor/ "doctor" دكتور , /qaadii/ "judge" قاضي, and /yaamil/ "worker" عامل , especially when used with no gender-specification, and other terms such as /faXS/ شخص "person", /?il-waaHid/ الواحد "one", and /fardd/ فرد "individual" that are sometimes grasped by most users of EA as referring to a man, despite the fact that they are sometimes used gender-inclusively in the variety.

Language is ultimately a social practice and a symbolic system that conveys power issues. This power-related status of language could cause some individuals in the Egyptian society, where the concern of the current work lies, to suffer by it.

### **Grammatical Gender and Human Gender**

“Grammatical gender” (Degani, 2007) is closely related to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (Whorf, 1956) that proposes that the language we humans use shapes our world view and affects our thought. Specifically, because speakers of all varieties of Arabic denote a grammatical gender to every noun, animate or inanimate, this systematic grammatical gender on nouns became part of what users of Arabic perceive of those

nouns. Generally in Arabic, grammatical feminine is assigned by the feminine marker /taaʔ marbuuTah/ “ة-”, which distinguishes it from the masculine. As far as grammatical gender in Arabic is generally concerned, nouns are either masculine (without a feminine marker), or feminine (with the feminine marker), despite the fact that both types are not gendered opposites of one another. For example, the word مائدة /maaʔidah/ “table” does not have a masculine counter term \*مائد, \*/maaʔid/.

“Human gender” is also marked by cliticizing the /taaʔ marbuuTah/ “ة-” to masculine nouns in a process known in Arabic as تأنيث /taʔniiθ/ “feminization”. Some examples are مدرس /mudarris/ “male teacher”, دكتور /duktoor/ “male doctor”, and صديق /Sadiiq/ “male friend” which are feminized respectively into /mudarrisah/<sup>6</sup> مدرسة “female teacher” دكتورة /duktoorah/ “female doctor”, and صديقة /Sadiiqah/ “female friend”.

Some Arabic<sup>7</sup> masculine nouns, however, are not feminized by cliticizing the /taaʔ marbuuTah/ “ة-” as they do have independent terms of the feminine. Some examples from *Egyptian Arabic* are راجل /raagil/ “man”, and ست /sitt/ “woman”, كشاف /kaʃfaaf/ “boy scout”, مرشدة /murshidah/ “girl scout”, and ولد /walad/ “boy” and بنت /bint/ “girl”.

It is actually human gender that experiences discrimination, bias, and power as will be shown in the data analysis.

### **Dissertation Goals**

In this study I am specifically looking at how the two varieties of Arabic named earlier (QA, and EA) feature lexical, morphological and syntactic features in relation to grammatical or semantic Gender. Ultimately, as a step growing out of the study’s results

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<sup>6</sup> In isolation, /aʔa marbuuTa/ is pronounced /h/

<sup>7</sup> When used variety-free, reference to *Arabic* denotes a featural commonality in Arabic varieties in general.



and based on them, I will attempt to propose further inclusive morphosyntactic techniques for EA.

Basically, the following are this dissertation's goals (the first is general, and the other two address the two linguistic varieties under consideration):

1. I intend to further investigate how two of the most ubiquitous and significant varieties of Arabic (QA and EA) feature gender in their constructions. In analyzing the patterns I find in these two varieties, I am also critically reading the ideological background behind gendered language in the two varieties.
2. As one byproduct of the basic linguistic analysis of some representative QA verses, possible, linguistically grounded readings will be attempted, by which surface gender bias, against either gender, could be avoided, except in cases of gender-specific verses. I will explore the possibility that gender bias might be generated in QA solely by gendered interpretation of some *Qur'anic* verses that could have gender-inclusive reading if interpreted in the context of a more accurate, linguistically-based understanding of those verses. In so doing, I am going to examine how QA features gender in *Qur'anic* verses, and how some of those verses are treated as gender-biased, especially by male scholars and male translators of *the Qur'an*<sup>8</sup>. In the process of this work, I would like to examine the possibility that weakly founded interpretations/ translations could result in serious misunderstanding of those verses, which might result in further biased against the female other.

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<sup>8</sup> *The Qur'an* is used in this dissertation without a translated term for its Arabic attribute /ʔal-kariim/ which has been translated as “Holy”, “Sublime”, and “Noble” to name just three translations. Despite the heartfelt attempts of scholars to find an English term for /ʔal-kariim/, I hold that none of those translations accurately conveys the shades of meaning of the Arabic expression /ʔal-kariim/. Hence I refer to the book of Islam merely as *the Qur'an*.

3. Finally, I will examine how EA features gender inclusiveness, for instance further explaining the observations I cited above. Again, based on the analysis of the data and building on Ahmed (2007), I will examine the possibility of proposing further gender-inclusive techniques, especially on the morphosyntactic and syntactic levels.

### **Research Questions**

With the above research goals in mind, the current research addresses the following questions:

1. What gender-related morphological, semantic and syntactic features does each of the two Arabic varieties (QA, and EA) feature in relation to grammatical or semantic gender?
2. What linguistic analyses can be offered of each of the gender-related forms in the two varieties?
3. How might the available linguistic data from EA be used as a basis for possibly introducing further gender-inclusive techniques in this variety?

### **Research Assumptions**

The following assumptions can be drawn in connection with the above research questions:

1. Despite the conviction of some scholars that QA is gender-biased, the current study hypothesizes that QA has gender-inclusive verses which are sometimes overlooked by commentators, interpreters and translators of *the Qur'an*.
2. The study also proposes that EA already has gender-inclusive representations and features of gender-inclusiveness. The process by which those features

have already emerged could be furthered by proposing linguistic techniques based on the analysis of the data via effective research methodology. The preceding efforts of feminist linguists to assuage gender-bias in the English language might also be of help in this regard, as they provide precedents for proposals which are similar in spirit to those that will be developed in the present study.

### **Need for This Research**

Gender bias has commonly been associated with the two varieties analyzed in this study (Barlas, 2006; Farwaneh, 2005; Hussain, 2005). QA has been interpreted mostly by males who have often projected their patriarchal views on *Qur'anic* verses, or even by feminist scholars like Nawal Al-Saadawi (Malti-Douglas, 1995) and others, who look at some verses worded in masculine forms not as generically referring to all genders but as literally referring exclusively to males.

This study investigates gender neutrality in QA with a view to understanding why some *Qur'anic* verses have been (or have not been) interpreted as biased against females, and how the linguistic data in those verses could be analyzed to disclose a possibly embedded, unrevealed gender-inclusive reading.

EA is also in the gendered zone; its constructions are mostly in generic masculine forms. Most EA job titles are in masculine forms and assumed by EA users to be referring to males, despite the fact that Egyptian women have now joined almost all of the once male-dominated fields in Egypt. The only exception to this masculine conceptualization of job titles occurs when the job has been traditionally defined as peculiar to females,

such as */mumarriDah/* “nurse” and */daayah/* “midwife”<sup>9</sup>; only then is EA users’ attention directed to a female referent, although there are now a good number of male nurses in Egypt<sup>10</sup>. Thus, the relationships between the linguistic and the social aspects of gender in EA present patterns and problems worthy of attention and discussion.

Some speakers of EA may hold the conviction that there is no problem with using masculine forms generically. Those individuals might claim that EA does not exhibit any form of bias against women, since it already contains feminine markers for almost all masculine nouns and adjectives as well as feminine verb inflections. They may see the existence of feminine forms as a representation of gender equality in language, rather than gender-inequality as feminist linguists have long claimed. Similar claims were made before the movement for gendered language in English, where some proposed that the masculine generic was sufficient, and that the language had explicit markers for feminine forms. These arguments however, faltered in the light of research by feminist linguists (Lakoff, 1975; Spender, 1980; Tannen, 1994; Cameron, 1998 & 2008), and in particular, given the notion that special feminine forms are ‘marked’, and are thus seen as the ‘exception,’ singled out from the norm, while male forms are seen as a kind of natural default. It is now commonly accepted among linguists that marked forms represent a socially unequal position.

Most users of EA might not be aware of the injustice embedded in using masculine terms generically, especially in positions that do require a degree of attention and precision. They do not see that some individuals of the opposite sex are subjugated

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<sup>9</sup> The term */daayah/* is an obsolete term; not to state that the profession has completely disappeared from all of the Egyptian society, though. The job might still be there in certain Egyptian social pockets, especially in the countryside.

<sup>10</sup> A male nurse in Egypt, and presumably in other Arab countries, is referred to by the masculine form */mumarriD/* of the feminine form */mumarriDah/*. I discuss this observation in Chapter Five.

by the generic use of masculine forms in certain EA expressions and constructions like the term /duktoor/ دكتور “physician” that is almost always assumed to be a man.

Basically, looking at feminine markers as gender equalizers and not gender-discriminatory linguistic markers can be considered a superficial way of dealing with grammar as merely a set of conceptually vacant molds and rules for structuring language, with no ideological considerations. Such a narrow perspective on grammar looks at grammar rules not as reflecting the culture of a society, but as merely neutral prescriptions for how linguistic forms should be used; this view ignores questions such as whether the masculine is presented in the grammar as the predominant Self and the feminine as the marginalized Other. However, viewed through a more socially sensitive lens, the picture is very different. In this view, women are featured as an Other in the grammar, are objectified and portrayed as orbiting masculinity, which is in turn represented as central. Therefore, the evolutionary harbingers of gender-inclusiveness exhibited particularly in EA, which I have observed and referred to above, may seem to some individuals to be merely grammatical “errors” that need to be rectified in order to set EA back on the “correct” grammatical track. This perspective on gender-inclusiveness disregards what Gee (1999) referred to as another type of more profound and perhaps more important grammar. Gee explains that Discourse (with a capital ‘D’) represents ultra-grammatical rules, in which the cultural and conceptual dimensions of grammatical forms are considered as part of the reality that they encode.

Within the framework of Gee’s explanation, the current research problematizes the GIL grammatical status quo of EA by viewing it critically as a type of oppressive variety which generates oppressive Discourses.

## Two Arabic Varieties in Focus

The linguistic analyses in this dissertation use data from QA and EA exclusively. So, it is helpful to be acquainted with these varieties and explain the rationale behind their selection for investigation in the current study.

According to Gruendler (2006), Arabic belongs to the Semitic language family, a descendant of the Afro-Asiatic family<sup>11</sup>. Arabic exhibits Semitic features such as “emphatic” sounds, trilateral root morpheme structure and the related characteristic derivation of word structures, a highly integrated inflection system, apophony (stem alteration), an affixal verbal system, paratactic syntax (consisting of phrases and clauses used without conjunctions), and a lexicon of cognates (words with the same derivation) (Gruendler, 2006).

My selection of QA and EA for this study could generally be justified by the fact that each of these Arabic varieties holds central status in its domain of use, while at the same time the two are bound socially. The following is an account of each variety’s selection for investigation:

### **Qur’anic Arabic: Rationale**

QA is the Arabic variety of *the Qur’an*<sup>12</sup>, the book of the Islamic religion.

According to Islamic belief, QA is the exact verbatim form of the word of Allah (God in

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<sup>11</sup> Gruendler (2006) argues that the exact location of Arabic in the Semitic family is unresolved; proponents of a genetic language tree model assign it to the Central Semitic group, whereas supporters of language change locate it in the Southwest Semitic group. Based on McMahon (1994), the genetic tree model stemmed from *The Language Bioprogram Hypothesis* (Bickerton, 1984) which attributes creolization, first language acquisition, and language evolution to genetic factors. Aitchison (1991) explained that language change could be attributed to factors other than genetic. These include linguistic factors such as ease of articulation or social factors such as need and prestige, to name just two.

<sup>12</sup> Though I will transcribe ‘long a’ with two a’s elsewhere, I depart from this for *the Qur’an*, because the name of the holy book is most commonly represented as spelled here.

Islam) revealed to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). Kaye (1990) explains that *the Qur'an* is worded in a refined form of *Classical Arabic* (CA).

As its language represents the word of God in Islam, and *the Qur'an* represents a text that is fixed in time and not susceptible to change, QA will be described in the current study only in terms of how it features gender, and in terms of the implications for different interpretations of certain verses. QA has been chosen for its status as ancestor to Modern Standard Arabic, its cultural and religious importance, and the need to fill a gap in the scholarship on the representation of gender in *the Qur'an*.

### **Egyptian Arabic: Rationale**

EA is the language variety of everyday discourse in Egypt. Given the widespread use of EA through film and other media in all Arab countries, EA is viewed by non-Egyptian individuals as a lingua-franca, a life-saver in inter-dialectic Arabic discourse, a variety that speakers of Arabic have resorted to as their own home varieties have diverged into mutual unintelligibility, leading to the risk of miscommunication across dialects.

EA is also strongly related to Modern Standard Arabic; educated individuals sometimes use expressions and phrases from MSA in their EA verbal performance, perhaps because of MSA's religious and cultural prestige. In so doing, they maintain MSA's phonological features. This varietal amalgam is sometimes referred to, especially by Egyptian media people, as /ʔalluʔa –attaaltah/ "The Third Variety", highlighting its hybridity of MSA and EA. A considerable overlap between EA and MSA is manifested in the current study, for instance when it comes to job titles in EA.

In liturgical discourse, EA is preferred by some Egyptian Muslim preachers and scholars because of its intelligibility to uneducated Egyptians, its familiarity to educated

individuals, and its appeal to all. Soliman (2008) looked at code switching in religious discourse from Classical Arabic to Egyptian Arabic in Egypt. The study examined 10 recordings of religious sermons of renowned Muslim scholar and preacher, Amr Khalid. The study revealed that Egyptian Arabic is used on a large scale in Khalid's sermons, especially in the body of his sermons, as he habitually initiates and closes his sermons in Classical Arabic, the variety of the religious texts he often quotes. The same tradition of using Classical Arabic obtains when Khalid supplicates. Other than that, preference in Khalid's sermons is given to Egyptian Arabic. This, perhaps, is a good way to establish proximity with his audience and one good reasons behind his overwhelming popularity in Egypt.

### **Significance of the Study**

This dissertation is, to the best of my knowledge, the first dissertation to look at gender-inclusive language in Arabic linguistics. The study investigates gender inclusiveness in two Arabic varieties of status: QA and EA. The study is significant on each variety's level, as will be discussed in the following subsections.

### **Significance of the Study on the Level of Qur'anic Arabic**

*The Qur'an* has been interpreted mostly, if not exclusively, by male interpreters who have, in many cases, interpreted certain verses of the *Qur'anic* text from a patriarchal perspective. Such interpretation has helped spread patriarchal thought over centuries, despite the fact that Islam has given women rights which, in some cases, are regarded as a luxury from my perspective as a practicing Muslim man.

The current dissertation explores the exegesis of selected *Qur'anic* verses exclusively with regard to gender and basically from a linguistic perspective; that is, the



study focuses on how *the Qur'an* features gender. In so doing, the study looks at English translations of the meanings of *Qur'anic* verses with gender reference, or at Arabic interpretations of these verses, which may have inspired those translations. The translations themselves are typically presented to the non-Arab reader in a form that is loaded with implied concepts about gender, mostly derived from Arabic exegesis of the relevant *Qur'anic* verses.

I have observed that *the Qur'an* includes six types of reference: reference to males via masculine forms; reference to females via feminine forms; reference to mixed genders gender-inclusively via masculine forms, reference to the masculine by feminine forms, reference to the feminine by masculine forms, and reference to genders separately, in an equative fashion. The third type of reference, reference to mixed genders in the masculine, sometimes creates misunderstanding and confusion because verses with this type of inclusive reference may appear to be gender-biased, due to the traditional use of the masculine as gender-inclusive; however, it can be argued that the referential content of this type is androgynous. Most religious scholars do not clear the confusion which may occur by this type of reference as those verses are worded in masculine forms. A linguistic analysis of some verses of this reference type in terms of GIL may ultimately alleviate some tension in Muslim communities which may be rooted in a patriarchal reading of those verses. The analysis may also give a clearer vision to readers of *the Qur'an*, who could come to realize that masculine forms, as used in those verses, can be read as referring to genders inclusively.

As noted above, translations of the relevant *Qur'anic* texts have been subject to patriarchal interpretations with all their ideological ramifications. The current research,

thus, deals with the issue of how the translations (and certain interpretations) of *the Qur'an* reflect a view seen through a patriarchal lens. The study seeks to clarify the confusion which biased translation and analysis causes, and which may ultimately affect the views and attitudes, of individuals, both Muslims and non-Muslims.

### **Significance of the Study on the Level of Egyptian Arabic**

EA is a variety of Arabic spoken mainly in Cairo and its surrounding cities with some variation in an expanding circle containing governorates like Alexandria, Al-Sharqiyya, Al-Qaliyuubiyyah, Al-Daqahliyyah, Al-Gharbiyyah, Al-Fayyuum, Bani-Suef, Al-Minia, and the Suez Canal Region. The importance of EA lies in its strong presence in media discourse via Egyptian cinema and television production, media which are available in almost all Arab countries. Such transferability of EA across the Arab region has not only fostered familiarity with this variety among non-Egyptian Arabs, but has also played a pivotal role in spreading the variety across the Arab region.

EA's ubiquitous presence, whether used solely or as an optional, gap-filling variety in forms of discourse such as educational, religious, and political, renders the current study more significant. Highlighting gender-inclusiveness as a language style could help change EA speakers' attitudes formed by patriarchal culture; and the widespread use of EA across the Arab world could in turn affect attitudes and practice well beyond the borders of the variety's home terrain in Egypt.

The current work is, thus, of some value beyond simply being a linguistic study. As actionary research for Egyptian Arabic, the study seeks to achieve a satisfactory level of gender-justice in Egyptian Arabic, as one possible step toward a socially equitable society.

## **Audience of the Study**

The current study's intended audience is multi-faceted in accordance with the concepts which the dissertation addresses. Conceptually, this project, at its basis, addresses gender justice. Thus, men and women are targeted, both locally in Arab societies and internationally in outer social circles.

QA is used in this research in an attempt to prove that QA does not necessarily discriminate against women in the *Qur'an* text in ways that have been assumed in certain analyses or discussions. This claim is supported by the fact that in QA there are verses that are male-dominant and other verses that are female-dominant, but there are also a third type of verses that is gender-inclusive and not biased against women or men. As the research unfolds, two targeted types of specialized QA-related audience emerge: interpreters of *the Qur'an* and translators of *the Qur'an* into other languages. More broadly, Muslims and those interested in Islam and *the Qur'an* will potentially benefit from the results of this study.

On the level of EA, the current study targets men and women in Egypt, as well as indirectly in other Arab countries where EA is understood and perhaps spoken as a lingua franca among speakers of mixed Arabic dialects who might not be able to communicate by using their own varieties of Arabic.

Egyptian children might well be indirect beneficiaries of reforms that might ensue based on this study. Children acquire their primary discourse in their homes, from their parents. It is reasonable to assume that if parents are educated about the use of GIL and actually use it in their daily discourse with or in the hearing of their children, those children are likely to acquire gender-inclusive techniques, use those techniques, and

perhaps, unconsciously, acquire concepts of gender equality which could be subliminally transmitted via GIL in their own language.

### **About Me**

I am an Egyptian practicing Muslim man. As a scholar, I have been trained in both Egypt where I received my BA in English language and literature, and MA in translation and interpretation. For the Ph. D. degree, I have been trained in the United States of America. When I started the Ph. D. Program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, I devoted myself completely to my dissertation topic, wrote my Qualifying Portfolio's main manuscript about it, and always discussed it in classes, as well as with friends in gatherings.

I have always been interested in interpretations of *the Qur'an* and thought that interpreting it needs to be conducted with discretion as it directly affects other Muslims and shapes their world view. I came to this conviction after a long discussion I once had with a family member about Al-Kahf (The Cave), 46<sup>13</sup>. He argued that unless a Muslim has a male child, God is not really pleased with them. That of course did not make sense to me. I wished I had the tools back then to convince him that that was not the case. This is one of my arguments in Chapter Four in the current project.

### **Justifying Choice of the Translations Used in This Study**

I strongly hold the conviction that a translation of *the Qur'an* directly bears an interpretation thereof. Translators of the meanings of *the Qur'an* often consult some exegetic sources, or base their translation on a given ideology, like Laleh Bakhtiar who highlights feminist thought in *the Qur'an* in her translation. I, therefore, deal with the translations used in this study as two interpretive approaches of the verses they deal with.

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<sup>13</sup> I am dealilng with this verse in Chapter Four.

As the study has been conducted in an international research context, it targets an international audience, too, and so it was important to see what concepts and views are conveyed via the translations of *Qur'anic* verses which western audience might take for granted as actual interpretations of *Qur'anic* verses, despite the fact that some of those translations might be patriarchally driven, and thus project an inaccurate image about what the Book of Islam actually says.

I chose Sahih International as I found their translation mostly in agreement with me as a professional translator and interpreter. Also, knowing that their translation is the product of a team of translators made me think they had chances to brainstorm their ideas and sift through word selection in their translation. Additionally, knowing that they all were American females, made me think they might well consider women in their translation, impacted by their life experience within the American context.

Bakhtiar's translation was a suggestion of a professor, Dr. Jeanine Fontaine, IUP, who, upon discussing the topic of the study with her, brought Bakhtiar up. Bakhtiar's translation stands out for being one of the very few translations of *the Qur'an* by a single, female translator. Bakhtiar is also a feminist and she highlighted women's presence in verses as much as she could. She also used (f) as a feminine marker on verbs, nouns and adjectives, something which I did not see in other translation of *the Qur'an*.

### **Sahih International Team**

According to their website (2012), Sahih International is a team of formed in 1989 by three American women, Amatullah J. Bantley, Aminah Assami, and Mary M. Kennedy, who had converted to Islam and started their career as editors of Islamic literature at Daar Abul-Qasim of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Later they started to produce their

own material. In 1997 they produced their translation of the meanings of *the Qur'an* which received global acclaim and is regarded by many scholars as one of the most reliable and accurate translations of *the Qur'an*.

Interestingly, as I started this research, I opted for Sahih International for the accuracy of their translation, not knowing they were all women. The three women studied Arabic and edited Islamic books. Aminah Assami taught classes in Islam and its basic fiqh “philology” in KSA. The team’s expertise in English and Arabic language skills gained them a very impressive reputation. Their being of a western background made me interested in checking the impact of their western culture on their translation.

### **Lalih Bakhtiar**

Lalih Bakhtiar (2011) is of an Iranian- American descent. She studied Classical Arabic and various schools of Islamic laws like Hanafi, Maliki and Shafii<sup>14</sup>. She also studied the Jafari approach to understanding Islam.

Bakhtiar brags about yielding a translation of *the Qur'an* which pays a special attention to women’s presence in the holy book. She uses feminine markers to identify each verb, noun, or even adjective referring to women. This is particularly important as it is the masculine that is generally used as a gender-inclusive form in *Classical Arabic*, and, it follows, *Qur'anic Arabic* which is a very refined form thereof.

Bakhtiar also dealt with controversial verses in her translation like An-Nisaa (The Women) 34<sup>15</sup> which gives a Muslim man the right to discipline his spouse physically as a last resort in case of disobedience on her part. Bakhtiar adopted, unprecedentedly, a safer meaning of the verb /iDrib/ used to mean “beat” in other translation of *the Qur'an*. She

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<sup>14</sup> These schools of Islamic laws are Islamic doctrines bearing the attributive names of their founders.

<sup>15</sup> This verse and the views on it will be discussed in Chapter Four.

translated it as “go away”. Bkhtiar fosters her choice with Prophet Mohammad’s tradition and other verses from *the Qur’an*.

### **Dissertation Layout**

This dissertation falls into six chapters. Chapter One introduces the study, its significance, research questions and concepts. Chapter Two is a critical review of the related literature. The chapter deals with pertinent linguistic research from the perspective of social culture and social constructionism, along with other related theoretical frameworks such as feminism and prescriptivism as recently revisited by some scholars. The linguistic work presented in the chapter sheds light on *Qur’anic* scholarship and presents literature from EA, scant as it is on the topic of gender-inclusive language, along with literature from English as a leading language in feminist linguistic research with a plethora of literature in the area of gender-inclusive language. Although the theoretical frameworks reviewed in the chapter are not critical to the initial linguistic analysis conducted in this study, they provide insights into the ways I have chosen to interpret the results, expand on them, and provide suggestions for language reforms in my final chapter.

Chapter Three explains the methodology used in this research. In this chapter I justify why a qualitative approach to research is used in the study rather than a quantitative one. The chapter starts with an account of how the data was collected and classified. Then, light shifts to the methodology used in analyzing the data. The chapter also addresses the methods of data analysis, which include tools from critical discourse and morphosyntactic analysis. This third chapter also addresses my positionality as a researcher, especially with regards to bias in research.

Chapter Four looks at data from QA with the lens of CDA; in so doing views of scholars and translators are compared and analyzed. The chapter looks at how QA exhibits and highlights power relations between genders and attempts to unveil new levels of equality shrouded in the mist of patriarchal interpretations of *the Qur'an*. Chapter Five presents an analysis of data from EA and analyzes gender-inclusive constructions in EA, highlighting the novel uses of the lexical item /Hadd/ and EA job titles. The chapter also attempts to further the neutrality of some expressions and constructions by adopting semantic agreement as an approach. Chapter Six is the conclusion, in which a summary of the study is given and its findings reviewed. The chapter also addresses implications and suggestions for further research.



## CHAPTER II

### A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature that serves as background for the current study, which has a multitude of theoretical frameworks. Although the linguistic background could be covered in a relatively straightforward manner, it has been necessary for me to choose among the many conceptual frameworks available, the ones which could best provide grounding for the study. Some of the theoretical concepts I feel are relevant are drawn from two major theoretical approaches: social culture and cognitive culture. Based on Fine (1995), *social culture* is culture that appeared through the “sociological underbrush” of social movements, like *feminism* (p. 127). So, Social culture represents the amalgam of prominent concepts that prevailed throughout the 20th century and may continue to evolve and prevail in the 21st century. *Cognitive culture*, according to Zunshine (2010), is culture seen and practiced with the lens of cognitive science. It, thus, connotes “the incorporation of insights from cognitive science into the study of cultural practices” (p. 5). Jenkins (1999) also defined cognitive culture as the individual’s internal or cultural frame of reference, which reflects his/her cultural understanding, self-concept, concept of relationships, roles and procedures.

Social culture and cognitive culture are inextricably related; Wildavsky (1998) explained that separating the cognitive from the social when it comes to culture “has the unfortunate tendency of encouraging a view of culture as a mysterious and unexplained prime mover” (p.1). He argued further that the cognitive aspect of culture has the virtue of separating the behavior to be explained, gendered/gender-inclusive language in this case from the value system and belief system that are doing the explaining.

In connection to social culture I have used feminism and postcolonialism shown how they are interrelated as well, and reviewed pertinent linguistic data under each concept and connected that data to the current research. Within the framework of cognitive culture I have used the Sapir-Worf Hypothesis, Darwinism, and memetics to provide a possible interpretation of the role of language in shaping individuals' world view. I highlighted the connections between these concepts and this study.

I have also used prescriptivism from a new perspective, as has recently been revisited in the literature, in ways that distance it from its common “stigmatized” affinity to elitism.

The linguistic data reviewed in this literature review falls into any of the following three classes: a) linguistically analyzed data, b) conceptually framed data, and c) reformed/engineered data. The rationale behind this tertiary branching of the data review is that this study looks at “gender neutral language”, a term which comprises both the terms “gender neutral language” and “language”. Gender as a concept is sometimes represented in *Qur'anic Arabic* and *Egyptian Arabic* by data which may have conceptual interpretations that may be seen as representing either gender-bias or gender equality. Reviewing the conceptual background behind this kind of data may help in interpreting this data and provide *conceptual* guidelines for the gender-inclusive techniques that will be attempted based on the data analysis. Also, it is important, in grounding the present study, to review works on language reform data or linguistically engineered data (Elgin, 2000, UNESCO 1999, and Spivak 2006) as well as works that revisited the prescriptivist approach to language reform/engineering.

Linguistically, some of the research presented in this review projects analytic methods of describing gendered/gender-free language in Arabic and English. Feminist linguists had suggested further gender-inclusive techniques for English. Those techniques might be useful for this study, which also attempts to propose further gender-inclusive techniques for *Egyptian Arabic*.

Conceptually, this review presents data representing the likelihood of gender bias/neutrality in *Qu'anic Arabic* and *Egyptian Arabic* within two frameworks: social culture and cognitive culture. Due to the scantiness of literature data from *Egyptian Arabic*, this literature review also uses related data from English as a leading language variety in the area of gender-neutral language.

As the current research ultimately incorporates linguistic attempts to alleviate gender-bias from lexical items and constructions in *Egyptian Arabic*, providing a linguistic and theoretical ground for those attempts would be important. Some representative literature which provides a possible linguistic basis for introducing gender-inclusive mechanisms into a language is also reviewed. Finally, a particular narrow approach to prescriptivism<sup>16</sup>, as revisited in selected recent literature, appears to provide convenient framework for the proposed gender-inclusive techniques and language engineering attempts in this dissertation.

### **Method of Accessing Literature for Review**

I have checked major academic search engines such as EBSCO, JStor and Eric for pertinent research. I also accessed related academic works from journals as well as books.

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<sup>16</sup> A caveat is in order here. Linguistically unsupported “prescriptivist” positions have often been taken, with the best of intentions, by naïve writers operating solely from narrow social viewpoints, often in fact elitist in nature. The present study distances itself from such positions, and uses the term in a more progressive-minded sense, which will be explained later in this and later chapters.

Nevertheless, Arabic literature on the topic of gender-inclusive language is almost nonexistent, with the exception of a study I found serendipitously after thorough, desperate search (Pavlou and Potter, 1994), and my own 2007 paper in which I embarked on the topic from a purely linguistic perspective. Other than that, only a few Arabic works are indirectly related to this study. The scantiness of related literature on Arabic has led me to turn to pertinent literature on English as a leading language in the research area of gender-inclusive language.

### **Language/Linguistic Work, Socioculturally Viewed**

Despite the structural societal progress through which women started to play pivotal roles in Arab communities and gave them the right to assume certain positions which had been exclusively for men such as minister, police officer, and judge, women have been sidelined in the Discourses featuring EA as language varieties. Modern social culture in Arabic societies draws from various concepts that dominated social culture worldwide. But Arabic social culture also draws from the predominant religion in the region, Islam, whose teachings have influenced Arab social culture almost as much as Arab culture has reciprocally influenced the way Arab societies interpreted *the Qur'an*.

Arab social culture can, thus, be viewed from three perspectives: the feminist perspective which is used in this dissertation to describe how a variety like EA have been used to *sideline* women in Egyptian society, *Qur'anic* interpretation which is mostly based on the prevalent Arabic culture, and the symbolic power of language which is reflected on how speakers of EA use it as a tool to convey power through language and how such use does not actually represent the reality of women in society, especially after women had taken up most positions that were once exclusive for men.

## **Qur'anic Scholarship**

Male scholars have always shouldered the responsibility of interpreting *the Qur'an*. In the early Islamic *post-Qur'anic* revelation years, male scholars were prominent as interpreters of *the Qur'an*, especially Ibn Abbas, whom Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had prayed would be an erudite scholar and interpreter of *the Qur'an*. It is also fair to say that Muslim women, especially Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her), were not denied the right to providing scholarly advice to Muslims at the time and thereafter. Aisha (May Allah be pleased with her) was privileged by Prophet Muhammad's recommendation to all Muslims, "Take half your religion from this slight red-faced woman." However, Aa'ishah's contribution was mostly conveying the Sunnah, lifestyle and sayings, of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as she was his wife who lived with him longer than his other wives and so had an excellent background about his teachings. I have consulted the translation of Laleh Bakhtiar as a female voice that interpreted *the Qu'ran* via her translation thereof into English.

In attempting to fathom verses whose intent is not clear, *Qur'anic* scholars have adopted several exegetical approaches. According to Abdul-Raof (2012), *Qur'anic* exegetes since the Prophet Muhammad's time through the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have used nine approaches to *Qur'anic* exegesis: 1) *analytical* exegesis, in which all verses in a given *surah* are analyzed according to their arrangement; 2) *synoptic* exegesis, which gives the gist of the text verse by verse; 3) *legal* exegesis, which features jurisprudential topics such as fasting or Hajj etc.; 4) *allegorical* exegesis, which is concerned with allegorical interpretation of verses through explaining symbolic and figurative language etc.; 5) *comparative* exegesis, a comparative-contrastive approach which depends on

comparing exegetes' views on *Qur'anic* verses; 6) *thematic* exegesis whose focus is themes at the levels of word, verse and text, regardless of *suurah*<sup>17</sup> order; 7) *literary* exegesis, which was introduced in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries through the exegesis of scholars like Muhammad Mutwalli Al-Shaarawi, used in the current dissertation, and Imam Muhammad Abduh; 8) *stylistic* exegesis, a linguistic/ rhetorical approach which comprises syntactic, morphological, discourse and phonological analysis of lexical items within verses and/or *suurahs*; and 9) *scientific* exegesis, a form of thematic exegesis that focusses on the scientific aspects of a lexical item or verse.

Saeed (2006) explained that historically *the Qur'an* has been interpreted via linguistic analysis with the goal of interpreting the ethico-legal content of *Qur'anic* verses and determining the universal applicability of a practical ruling in *the Qur'an*. Saeed argues that the social and historical context of a ruling has typically been seen as irrelevant, a shortcoming that he proposes to remedy. He therefore offers an interpretation of *the Qur'an* in which he takes social and historical aspects into consideration and combines them with linguistic interpretation for a more comprehensive understanding of *the Qur'anic* text.

Relatedly, Barlas (2006) asked whether *the Qur'an* supports gender equality and explained that Muslim patriarchy was behind the narrow interpretations of *Qur'anic* verses which were always in favor of men. Al-Saadawi (Ahmad, 2012) also held the view that male scholars of all religions have interpreted scriptures from their own patriarchal perspective. A good example of patriarchal interpretation of a *Qur'anic* verse is the interpretation of verse no. 46 of Suurat Al-Kahf (The Cave):

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<sup>17</sup> The term "surah" "a *Qur'anic* chapter" is spelled as 'suurat' when followed by the name of the chapter as this is how it is pronounced in this case. Example, "Suurat Al-Baqarah".

Al-Kahf (The Cave), 46

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا ﴿٤٦﴾

Sahih International translation

“Wealth and children are [but] adornment of the worldly life. But the enduring good deeds are better to your Lord for reward and better for [one's] hope.

Bakhtiar translation

“Wealth and children are the adornment of this present life; but those things which endure are the ones who have acted in accord with morality; that is better with your lord, as a reward for good deeds and better for hopefulness.”

The above verse was interpreted by male scholars in several ways. For example, Ibn Kathiir did not analyze the word /ʔal- banuun/, grammatically meaning “male children” morphosyntactically or semantically. He only interpreted in detail the subsequent words /ʔal-baaqiyaat-u-SaaliHaat/ “the enduring good deeds” and explains what they might refer to. Al-Shaarawi, on the other hand, did not stop at the word /ʔal- banuun/ morphosyntactically but offered a significant semantic analysis of the term as referring to all genders by alluding to verse no. 58 of *Suurat An-Nahal* (The Bees)<sup>18</sup>:

An-Nahl (The Bees), 58

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾

Sahih International translation

“And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief.”

<sup>18</sup> The verse is a criticism of what a typical man from the pre-Islamic era would feel upon receiving the birth news of his female child.

Bakhtiar translation

*“When given good tidings to any of them of a female, his face stays as one that is clouded over and he chokes.”*

Based on this verse, Al- Shaarawi explained that a female child is no less in value than a male child. He explained that the Arabic nominal expression بشارة /biṣāarah/ “good tidings” from the passive verb used in the verse بُشِّرَ /buṣṣira/ “was brought good tidings” is always used to refer to something good and precious. According to the verse a non-Muslim man at the time adopting pre-Islamic thought would, still, receive the good tidings of having a female child with gloom and suppressed grief, just because of the baby’s sex.

Al-Qurtubi did not explain the word /ʔal-banuun/ but only referred to the possibility of pronouncing the subsequent word /zeenah/ “adornment” in the same verse as the dual plural term /zeenataa/ because it refers to both “wealth’ and “children”.

He also alluded to verses no. 14 and 15 of *Suurat At-Taghabun* (The Mutual Delusion):

At-Taghabun (The Mutual Delusion), 14

يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا  
لَكُمْ فَأَحْذَرُوهُمْ وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا وَتَصَفَّحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ  
اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

Sahih International translation

*“O you who have believed, indeed, among your wives and your children are enemies to you, so beware of them. But if you pardon and overlook and forgive - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*



Bakhtiar translation

*“O those who have believed! Truly there are among your wives and your children enemies for you, so beware of them. If you would pardon, overlook and forgive, then truly God is Forgiving, Compassionate.”*

At-Taghabun (The Mutual Delusion), 15

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

Sahih International translation

*“Your wealth and your children are but a trial, and Allah has with Him a great reward.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“Your wealth and your children are not but a test. God, with Him is a sublime compensation.”*

In *At-Taghabun* (The Mutual Delusion) 14 and 15, the term /ʔawlaadukum/, “your children,” is also grammatically masculine but semantically refers to both genders. However, Al-Qurtubi alluded to this verse just to explain that children can be a trial and even enemies to their parents.

The ninth century Muslim scholar Al-Tabari did not analyze the term /ʔal-banuun/ grammatically or semantically but explained that wives are regarded not as eternal blessings like /ʔal-baaqiyaat-u-SaaliHaat/ “the enduring good deeds” in Al-Kahf, 46.

Likewise, Al-Jalaalayin completely disregarded the term /ʔal-banuun/ grammatically and semantically, and only explaining what is meant by the subsequent term /ʔal-baaqiyaat-u-SaaliHaat/ “the enduring good deeds”. Thus, in several cases, we

see not so much an overtly male-dominant reading, but a reading that does not address gendered forms for their importance or significance in the text.

Relatedly, Saeed (2006) explained that cultural change could be accompanied by a change of laws. He uses abrogation<sup>19</sup> as an example of a concept that Muslim scholars did not pay much attention to in the beginning, but started to focus on later. The logical implication if abrogation was not taken seriously by Muslim scholars either in the formative or post formative periods of Islamic Law. Not until scholars like Ibn Il-Qayyim in the 14th century did scholars advocate that laws should change if the customs (culture) of the time changed. Saeed criticized textualists who call today for the implementation of rulings in *the Qur'an* and Sunnah despite the fact that many customs on which those rulings were based have already changed.

The above review of several interpretations by male scholars indicates that, with the exception of Al-Shaarawi, all other male scholars neglected to analyze the term /ʔal-banuun/ of *Al-Kahf* 46 linguistically. Al-Shaarawi's more considering explanation may be attributed to the fact that he started his scholarly career in the 20th century and might have been impacted by feminist thought and the women's rights movement.

### **Egyptian Arabic Scholarship**

Related literature on EA with regards to gender-inclusive language is also quite scant; I found only two studies as I was accessing the literature: Wilmsen (1999), a paper

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<sup>19</sup> Abrogation is *Allah's* (God in Islam) replacement of a *Qur'anic* verse or verses by (an) other verse or verses that are more explanatory, more detailed, or resolve an issue to a final condition. A good example is the verses that gradually prohibited drinking wine in Islam. Those verses are four, each one abrogated the other. First there was revealed verse 67 of Suurat An-Nahl (The Bees) as a reminder and a reproach to wine drinkers. Then was revealed verse 129 of Suurat Al-Baqarah (The Cow) which has an inquiry and its answer about wine drinking in Islam; then it was abrogated by verse 43 of An-Nisa'a (The Women) which asked Muslims not to pray in a drunk state. Then ultimately, there descended verse 90 of Al-Ma'ida (The Table) which abrogated Al-Ma'ida 90 by prohibiting wine drinking completely because of its association with Satan.

which is not directly about gender-inclusive language but on cross-addressing; and my study, Ahmed (2007) which provided the first step for this research. Limited as these studies are, they are focal in the analysis of gender-inclusive language in EA in the current study.

Wilmsen (1999) looked at reverse gender reference in Egyptian Arabic (EA). Although Wilmsen's study is not about GIL in EA, it is significant for the current research given the scarcity of related Arabic literature on GIL. In his introduction, Wilmsen presented several *Modern Standard Arabic* adjectives which have reverse gender reference. Wilmsen also found that cross-addressing is a common phenomenon in EA; this is a phenomenon where males prefer to use masculine proforms when discussing things related to their womenfolk in public so as to "preserve their reputations and identities" (p.208). He also noted that various circumlocutions are used to avoid mentioning a woman's name. Instead, words like /ʔil-gamaaʕa/ "the group" or /ʔil-beet/ "the house" are used to refer to the wife of an Egyptian man.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Wilmsen also noted that females use feminine forms and feminine proforms to refer to males especially when expressing intimacy. An interesting point which Wilmsen referred to is the use of masculine or feminine forms interchangeably by early poets in referring to a male or female beloved, which may have influenced the fluid pattern found among women today:

The pre-Islamic Arab poets had no compunctions about referring to the beloved in either the feminine or the masculine as the demands of meter or rhyme dictated...As the form developed in later Arabic love poetry, this ambisexuality

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<sup>20</sup> It would be demeaning if a woman uses these same expressions for men.

rigidified into a conventionalized exclusive reference to the beloved, male or female. This tradition persists today in modern love songs. (p.206)

Wilmsen's explanation on the generic use of masculine forms in referring to the beloved of either sex is particularly important for this study, as masculine forms are discussed as neutral, regardless of their grammatical form and function. Examples from MSA love poetry will also be given and discussed in the light of Wilmsen.

In an earlier paper (Ahmed, 2007), I examined how GIL is exhibited in EA and proposed, as a preliminary step to this research, gender-inclusive options for some gender-biased expressions and constructions. In that paper, I noted that EA makes frequent use of masculine forms to refer to both sexes. This can be shown in a variety of contexts: statements, interrogatives, directives and expressions of endearment, job titles and constructions with deictic articles.

My study found that EA exhibits GIL through the use of gender-inclusive lexical items such as the item /Hadd/ "someone" and the nominal expression /ʔil-waaHid/ "one" or by using masculine forms generically as neutral regardless of their grammatical function. In this dissertation, I will examine the possibility of approaching the problem of gender representation in Arabic from a different linguistic perspective than that which feminist linguists' adopted for English. The reason for doing so is that Arabic "varieties" and English are linguistically different, specifically when it comes to gender. More than English, Arabic has a more dominant representation of gender as it appears in nouns, pronouns, adjectives and verbs, which makes the whole gender-bias situation in Arabic considerably different from the gender-bias situation in English.

In my (2007) paper, I also highlighted the generic use of masculine forms in EA

songs in referring to the beloved whether male or female, and I offered a variety of suggestions for neutralizing some EA expressions and constructions which are gender-biased following the English model, the leading model in the field. The study found that not all the alternatives used in English would be applicable to EA. Some modifications had to be introduced in order for a given EA structure to construe and become acceptably gender-inclusive.

### **Theoretical Research**

Theoretically, linguistic research on gender-inclusive language has basically focused on gender equality and how it could be achieved in language. Feminist linguistics such as Spender (1980), Lakoff (1975, 2000), O' Barr and Atkins (1980) and Tannen (1994), to name just five, looked at gender-bias in the English language. They looked, for example, at the predominance of the masculine pronoun *he* as a generic form and argued that it highlights bias against females. And so, feminist linguists in general preferred the use of forms like the generic *they*, *he/she*, or *s/he*. Some other feminist linguists, like Cameron, would prefer using the feminine pronoun *she* generically.

### **Feminist Linguistics**

Feminist linguistics can be defined as the scientific study of language with view to alleviating gender bias in language. The linguistic endeavors of feminist linguists in the 20th century are taken into consideration in the current research as they represent pioneering linguistic efforts exerted to address gender-bias in the English language. The current study actually examines whether the same or similar gender-inclusive techniques could be applied to EA. The study also highlights areas of concern involved in applying some of those techniques, for instance by highlighting the pertinent socio-cultural factors

that may/may not allow a certain gender-inclusive technique or a gender switch to be used in EA.

**Feminist linguists.** Lakoff (1975) looked at “language and woman’s place” in a book by that title. She referred to some adjectives used neutrally by genders. These adjectives were “great”, “terrific”, “cool” and “neat”. Lakoff’s claims show that gender-inclusiveness could be considered from a broader perspective than gender-inclusive anaphoric usage, as she considered adjectival expressions, modals, and other features traditionally linked to women’s language use.

O’Barr and Atkins (1980) studied language variation and sex-related differences in an American courtroom. They examined women’s language in courtroom cases for 30 months. They examined female court witnesses. O’Barr and Atkins discovered that the differences supported by many scholars are not typically the result of being *a woman*, but of being *powerless*. . O’Barr and Atkins tried to highlight that a powerful position may actually be established via social standing or court-accorded status. The authors used the term *powerless language* rather than *gender-inclusive/neutral language*.

Bales (2002) explained that gendered language has three forms in English: the addition of a feminine suffix to an occupation to distinguish female workers as in *waitress*; the use of gender-specific nouns such as "mankind", and the use of gendered pronouns to make reference generically ("A doctor should not make *his* patients wait"). For each form of gendered language, the author provides suggested alternatives; these will also be considered in this dissertation for their possible applicability to MSA and EA.

On another front, Kiesling (2004) traced the birth and evolution of the ubiquitous gender-inclusive address term *dude*. According to Kiesling, *dude* etymologically rose in

the 1980s and has evolved prodigiously since then from a term used solely by men to address men into a gender-inclusive address term for a group of same or mixed gender.

Kiesling captured the rapid growth of *dude* from a limited scope of usage into a supra-referential gender-inclusive address term. He argued that *dude* spread into feminist thought which targets the deconstruction of masculinity, virility and heterosexism.

According to Kiesling, *dude* has successfully achieved such targets by appealing gender-inclusively to the American individual in a unisex fashion regardless of the regular male-female dichotomy.

Kiesling (2004) in his analysis of the gender-inclusive address term *dude*, adopted a bricolage of philosophical concepts and implications raised by the usage of the term *dude*. Kiesling's article interwove an array of pertinent concepts: *deconstructionism*, *gender*, *hegemonic masculinity*, *virility* and *heterosexism* which are all associated with the use of gender-inclusive language.

Curiously, in 2009 I conducted a pilot study on the address term *duette*, a backformation from the address term *dude*. Based on Kiesling (2004), the term *dudette* has almost been elbowed aside by *dude*. I was curious to test whether *dudette* might still be used, perhaps on a very limited scale. I interviewed four participants, two males and two females from a university in Western Pennsylvania, USA, and asked them to mention instances in which they heard the term *dudette* used and whether they would use it themselves. Out of the four participants, only one female participant said that her father sometimes calls her *dudette*; the other three explained that they no more hear the term in daily communication. All four participants explained that they would not use the term themselves, which is mostly in line with Kiesling. However, as a pilot study it cannot be

generalized, it yet calls for further more reliable investigation of *dudette*'s presence/absence from daily use, in connection to the currently ubiquitous *dude*.

In connection, Lakoff (2000) explained that by assuming an apolitical status, the “exnominated”<sup>21</sup> group achieves its political ends without having to justify itself. Using the postcolonial metaphor to describe gender bias in Arabic, it is plausible to assume that gender bias in MSA and EA remains the product of its makers; male grammarians as possible representatives of that group. Gender-bias in MSA and EA is *us*, the males, and as we males remain exnominated in the language discourse, we remain unnoticed.

Relatedly, Spender (1980) looked at the implicit male bias in language. She argued that because men had power they were in a position to construct male superiority, a myth that was fostered over the centuries by both men and women within the fabric of social organization until it has become part of our world view. Spender argued further that in order to make sense of our existence, we humans need to have rules and be selective as to the information needed, piecing it together and adding the interpretations to impose on it. Spender also explained that by having male as the norm, the female is regarded as a lower category as everything in society is categorized semantically as *plus/minus male*. GIL resonates with Spender's account, as it represents a type of information with neutral interpretation that could be used as a tool to alleviate bias against women in language, a change which might ultimately be reflected on our world view as well.

Elgin (2000) explained that in the field of gender studies, sexual gender is not necessarily a biological matter, but is partially the result of socialization. She moves beyond the traditional male/female dichotomy, in fact, stating that “If English is not willing to move to a genderless third-person pronoun, they (gender studies scholars)

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<sup>21</sup> This term means to be excluded from being given a name



would tell us, then it will have to find additional pronouns to refer to those human beings who insist that neither male nor female pronouns accurately name their gender.”, a step which she took herself, as will be reviewed later (p. 176).

Henzl and Turner (1987) discussed the concept of *androgyny*, which is also significant for the understanding of gender-inclusive language as a concept. The authors build their analysis on work by Lott, Spence and Helmreich (as cited in Henzl and Turner 1987) who maintained that conceptually, androgyny is based on an a priori conception of masculinity and femininity. The authors contended that the masculine- feminine dichotomy complicates gender research, as androgyny cannot be readily defined within such a dichotomy. Based on Henzl and Turner, gender-neutral language can therefore be considered an androgynous façade in which concepts of masculinity and femininity dissolve into a neutral form free of gender bias.

Bales (2002) discussed the state of affairs of gender-inclusive language in today's world. He explained that there is now more acceptance and expectation of such language. This is in line with the assumption made in this study that the Egyptian society has become prepared for the advent of such language, given the strong feminist movement going on in the Egyptian society. Bales argued further that gendered language now sounds parochial and out of date, especially when it comes to stereotypical assumptions about job titles and occupations. As one example relevant to this study, the Egyptian society currently has a good number of *policewomen* who need to be recognized via unbiased language since they have taken up a job which was always thought to be exclusively for men.

Eid (2002) looked at the obituaries in English, Turkish, and Egyptian newspapers. She addresses how Egyptian women were presented in the obituary at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She looks at Egyptian obituaries over the period of fifty years, 1938-1988, in the well-known Newspaper *Al-Ahram*. Eid argues that the obituaries of that year present a society without women. The study establishes a bias in favor of men; women have been denied “equal access to the public domain, even in death” (p.15). The study revealed that women at the time were referred to in the obituary in conjunction to her related males, with expressions such as /zawgatt/<sup>22</sup> “wife of”, /ʔibnatt/ “daughter of”, /ʔuxt/ “sister of”, /waalidatt/ mother of, /ʔammatt/ “aunt of”, /jaddatt/ “grandmother of”, and /ʔrmaalatt/ widow of...sometimes with the deceased woman’s name given and sometimes without it, depending on sociocultural factors; So women’s identity, unlike men’s, was made invisible by revealing it inclusively under men’s identity. The study also highlighted the exclusion of women from textbooks at some point and certain fields of employment such as the military. Eid also noticed that change had taken place: a dead woman in the eighties was now referred to by her own title rather than in conjunction to a related man of hers, especially if she was an educated, working woman.

Kniffka (2005) analyzed letters to the editor of an English Saudi Arabian newspaper written by Saudi women. She noticed that women who write to the editor do not disclose their identity. This was not the case with male writers to the editor. Kniffka also explained that a man may not disclose his identity if he is writing about an ethically or morally un-Islamic issue or a wrong-doing.

UNESCO (1999) issued a manual for the use of gender neutral language in

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<sup>22</sup> Doubling the last consonant in these words is associated with accusative case. Normally, these lexical items would be transcribed with a final /h/ marking the pronunciation of the final /taaʔ/ “s” in them when these words are used in isolation.

English. The manual includes lists of gender-biased expressions and constructions with degendered counterparts. The manual also contains an explanation of the technical lexical and syntactic degendering processes of each of the gender-biased entries listed. The techniques presented in the UNESCO manual are particularly significant as they could be tested with EA.

The manual suggested using the slashed form *he/she*, or *s/he* instead of using the masculine pronoun *he* gender-inclusively. The degendering techniques proposed in the manual include using the first person instead of the gender-inclusive use of the grammatically masculine expression *man* in “Man’s search for knowledge has led him to improve scientific methodology” which becomes “The search for knowledge has led *us* to improve scientific methodology.” and replacing *man* by gender-inclusive noun substitution as in “The use of experiments in psychology presupposes the mechanistic nature of man” which the manual degenders by noun substitution into “The use of experiments in psychology presupposes the mechanistic nature of the *human being*.”

***Feminist linguistic research on English pronouns.*** Goddard and Patterson (2000) are among many who have looked at the use of the generic masculine; one of the mainstream uses which feminist language reformers believed was sexist and had to be replaced by gender-inclusive forms. An important question they raised was “...why do male pronouns and other supposedly generic terms automatically invoke male cognitive models?” (p.77) The authors maintained that children learn such terms as sex-specific prior to their generic meaning. They concluded that sex-specific meaning is the prototype. The use of generic masculine forms is specifically significant for this research as it will be shown that QA and EA relies on masculine forms as neuters regardless of their gender-specific meaning. I will attempt to find linguistic ways to alleviate the

dominance of the generic masculine EA, despite the fact that EA, as a highly inflectional variety, is expected to allow me to do so on a very limited scale.

Curzan (2003) looked at the use of the generic masculine and asked: “Is there anything in the history of the English language that can help explain how the masculine form of the personal pronoun became the generic form?” (p.59) She examined the interplay of natural and grammatical gender in Old English and concludes that natural gender and grammatical gender are indistinguishable in that language, as most nouns referring to males are masculine and most nouns referring to females are feminine. She also found that some masculine nouns apply to both sexes and concludes that “the masculine continues on as the generic pronoun in reference to such nouns after the grammatical gender becomes obsolete.” (p.62) Curzan then shifted to investigate generic *man* and how it carries both a gendered and a generic meaning. She also looked at the generic *guys* used profusely in Modern English to refer to both sexes. Both the English generic *man* and *guys* have equivalents in MSA which will be dealt with in this research as well. Curzan’s analysis is important for this study as EA, MSA, and, in some cases, QA make use of masculine forms in referring to genders.

Livia (2001) explained that the use of generic *he* is not simple. Nor is it linguistically convenient. According to Livia, the choice of *he* to anaphorize *man* is not for linguistic convenience but rather for gender concord as the singular *they* is a preference in informal speech “where convenience might be said to outweigh elegance.” (p.135)

As early as the mid-1970s, Lakoff (1975) referred to the negative impact of the generic use of *he*. She contends that “the use of the neutral *he* with such frequency makes

women feel shut out, not a part of what is being described, an inferior species, or a nonexistent one.” (p.45) However, Lakoff (1975) also referred to the use of the neutral pronoun *their* which is “frowned upon by most authorities as inconsistent or illogical” and has gained ground only very slowly since Lakoff’s comment (p.44).

Among the more recent treatments of this subject, Pauwels (2008) also made reference to the use of generic *she*. She argued that “If the proposal to replace generic *he* with generic *she*, the problems are simply reversed from a linguistic equality perspective.” (p.202) Thus, the use of generic *she* entails the same problems associated with generic *he*. In EA, generic *he* is the mainstream. Introducing generic *she* into EA would not solve the problem as much as *marginalize* men.

Weedon (2007) defined feminism, a concept that was formed along with post-colonial discourse and powered by that discourse, as a politics targeting changing power relations between men and women in society. Relatedly, Weedon regarded the term ‘patriarchal’ as denoting “power relations in which women’s interests are subordinated to the interests of men.” (p.2) Weedon listed three types of feminism which are formed as to attitude to the patriarch: liberal feminism, socialist feminism, and radical feminism. Liberal feminism is about achieving complete equality between men and women in all spheres; socialist feminism is about transforming social systems in which females are on the periphery; radical feminism is about establishing a new social order in which females are not devalued or debased.

As the current research is linguistic in nature, socialist feminism is not the most suitable type of feminism for adoption, as it may imply promulgating the feminine as the norm in language represented as is the case in the prevalence of the feminine pronoun

“she” in English literature. The consequence of this turnover of the gender paradigm in language would result in the prevalence of the same problem the current research is trying to solve: the dominance of one gender over another, where it would be men this time that would be in the periphery and would have to fight for equality in language.

Radical feminism may also entail highlighting the female by overshadowing the male, which is not what the current research seeks to achieve through the analysis of the data and possibly the advocating of potentially new patterns based on gender equality.

Liberal feminism is, thus, the most suitable ideological paradigm for the current research. Liberal feminism, within a post-colonial metaphor that could explain GIL, generally advocates gender equality generally, and this definitely could entail equality in language.

Within the framework of liberal feminism, this research seeks to achieve gender equality through two approaches: 1) unbiased interpretation of QA verses that are semantically gender-inclusive and 2) showing where EA already has degendered forms, and checking the possibility of proposing further gender-inclusive techniques to EA, as much as the scope of each of these two Arabic varieties allows.

De Beauvoir (1953) explained how “man has succeeded in enslaving woman” dissipating her magic, rather than transforming it, within the constraints of domestic servitude (p. 187).

The enslaving process is manifested clearly in language. Language features both discourse which incorporates grammar, and Discourse, which includes the overshadowing ideologies which dictate certain attitudes and, it follows, behaviors, towards women as the sidelined other who does not really count, as they are

accommodated *benevolently* by males within the bigger male Self that dominates the discourse/Discourse.

Thus, in light of De Beauvoir, “women have never really been independent of man; they are an integral part of the group, which is governed by males and in which they have a subordinate place.” (p.597) Significantly, De Beauvoir argued that “If a caste is kept in a state of inferiority, no doubt it remains inferior; but liberty can break the circle” (p.728) Liberating woman can be achieved on the level of language, which influences human behavior and how they see the world and the individuals in it.

In this connection, feminism addresses the female *other* on the micro level. Al-Saadawi (Interview with Dabbour, 2013) explained that Arabic speaking communities sometimes use imperialist language, “We’re facing huge challenges, but the root of all these problems is colonialism”. (Abu Arif, 2010) Al-Saadawi argued that today’s gender issues are based on the colonial past, which resonates with the current dissertation’s concept that gender-bias in Arabic could be seen as a kind of “linguistic” colonialism. She also held that women are imprisoned in patriarchal language; she expounds the concept of a prison and imprisonment. To her, it is easier to grasp the concept of prison when one is physically imprisoned behind visible bars, as “the most dangerous shackles are the invisible ones, because they deceive people into believing they are free.” (Nawal Al-Saadawi, n.d.) Women could, thus, be said to be imprisoned behind the invisible bars of gender-biased language. Elhouda (2012) sheds light on Nawal Al-Saadawi’s feminist linguistic views, which would be regarded as beyond extreme by the conservative or mainstream Arab Muslim community and *Al-Azhar*, the biggest Islamic referential organization in Egypt and the Middle East. Al-Saadawi suggested that the pronoun

/huwa/ (He) referring to God in the *Qur'anic* surah ʔal-ʔikhlaas (The Sincerity) be changed into the feminine pronoun /hiya/ (She), just like extreme feminist linguists suggested for the *Biblical* “He”. The reason she provided for her suggestion is that God is a spirit and the Arabic term for spirit /ruuH/ is feminine and, therefore, reference to God should be in the feminine. Linguistic and conceptual refutation of Al-Saadawi’s pronoun shift suggestion will be given in the current study. In fact, Al-Saadawi also argued that God is neither feminine nor masculine since God, as she claims, is a spirit, not a physical entity, which necessarily entails, according to her, that God does not have a gender.

Spivak (1988) argued that allowing women to speak for themselves as a monolithic other vis-à-vis a monolithic “same system” does not break the patriarchal frame which governs social relations. The situation of women which Spivak described resembles women’s representation in EA. EA does have feminine markers; but the problem of women’s otherization in language still obtains, as the masculine is the generic framework of representation and assumption in both varieties and in the mind of their users. For example, the EA counterpart /ʔiTʔaalib gah/ “The student came.” presupposes that the gender of the student is *male*, although the same masculine noun is used generically in formal and informal usage to refer to genders as in the EA phrase /ʔism-i-Tʔaalib/ “Student’s name”. The answer to this problem would lie in an inclusive language in which “the subaltern” female subject is presented on equal footing with the *colonizing* Subject, males and their predominant representation in language.

### **Social Constructionism**

Burr (1995) explains that social constructionism is hard to define as it draws from the thought of scholars from various related theoretical frameworks; scholars who, thus,



tackled the term with family-resemblance to one another. She adds that social constructionism entails that the individual be ever suspicious of their assumptions about how the world view. She also maintains that social constructionism advocates that the individual take a critical stance toward the world and everything in it. This means that “the categories with which we as humans apprehend the world do not necessarily refer to real divisions. She argues that whereas many people would categorize music into classical and popular, thinking these are the only two major categories, this categorization itself might not actually be the reality. So is the case when it comes to categorizing people into short and tall, while this categorization, too, might not be quite accurate.

On language as a precondition for thought, Burr (2006) explains that we humans come to the world and find everything set for us to perceive; the conceptual frameworks have been set before we humans existed. This means that language reflects the way people think within their conceptual framework(s). Burr then shifts to discussing language as a form of social action. She argues that “When people talk to each other, the world gets constructed.” (p. 5) This statement relates to gender-biased language which sets up the barriers between genders based on gender-bias. It also relates to gender-inclusiveness in language which incorporates all genders inside the world barriers set up by language.

Relatedly, Dukelow (2010) highlighted Freire’s concept of social reality: “The realization that social reality is constructed and that we can understand how it is constructed and how it may be changed is the key moment when one moves from naïve, mythical view of the world to an analytical understanding” (p.125) She adds that political and intellectual elites are needed for the recognition of the intrinsic value of the voices of

the poor and oppressed. I hope the current work will lead to some recognition of women as the oppressed faction in an Arabic variety, EA.

Jule (2008) argued that gender is socially constructed and argues that gender is not binary like sex: "... [W]e are not masculine or feminine. Instead we are a combination of many characteristics that could be understood as either masculine or feminine depending on the context and our relationships with those involved." (p. 5) She argued further that it is possible to say that a person is more masculine or more feminine. For example, one may use expressions like *very manly* to describe a woman. Jule concludes that we act out our gender in a continuum of "masculine" and "feminine" characteristics. Jule's analysis of the term "gender" actually reflects the concept of gender-inclusive language as a language style for and about genders, the masculine gender and the feminine gender combined in a kind of gender continuum.

Spivak argued that the "ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant." (p 287) She raised the question: Can the subaltern speak? Spivak concurred with Derrida (as cited in Spivak, 1988) about the danger of appropriating the Other by assimilation; this again reflects women's problematic representation in MSA and EA by her assimilation in patriarchal language. Spivak disappointedly concluded that "The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with 'woman' as a pious item." (308) Woman can definitely be regarded as a subaltern in EA, as has been shown in the research problem section. In order for the female subaltern to speak on the level of language, EA specifically, woman should be re-presented as an established Subject vis-a'-vis the predominant male subject. Using the EA feminine pronoun /hiyya/ "she" and its anaphoric EA form /nafsahaa/ "herself" could be a step towards establishing the female

Subject in language in a virtuous way. However, it will be shown that even elbowing aside the long predominant Male Subject so that Female Subject is rendered predominant and ubiquitous in EA, would not result in a favorable outcome. There will still be a ferocious conflict between the two Selves, male and female, in EA. Elaboration on this problem, and a proposed answer, will be given in the current dissertation.

### **The Symbolic Power of Language**

Bourdieu (1982) argued that language's symbolic power constitutes the world given through utterances, makes people see and believe, and confirms or transforms individuals' vision of the world, action on the world and the world itself; it is a magical power that enables individuals' to obtain what is obtained without the use of physical force. He argues further:

This means that symbolic power does not reside in 'symbolic systems' in the form of 'illocutionary force' but that it is defined in and through a given relation between those who exercise power and those who submit to it... What creates the power of words and slogans, a power capable of maintaining and subverting the social order, is the belief in the legitimacy of words of those who utter them. And words alone cannot create this belief. (p. 170)

Although Bourdieu argues that words cannot make a change without the legitimacy of their utterers, his argument about symbolic power could be used to understand the symbolic power of gender-biased language. Gendered language is legitimized by those from genders who utter it. The males, because they take for granted that gendered language is not to be questioned and is a legitimate linguistic form of a male-dominant society. The females, as they are indoctrinated by gender-biased language

together with the social practices that foster it and render it an unquestionable norm to them. The fact that women have gained more rights in some patriarchal societies in the Arab region in recent decades could provide GIL as a concept and language style with some legitimacy drawn from actual social change that has taken place.

Spender (2008) made an argument based on Pauwels (2008) as she maintained that language users are "...reluctant to make changes which are decreed from above..." and it is interesting to note just how much effort has been expended on trying to coerce speakers into using he/man as generic terms." (p.23) It may be surprising that language users may feel coerced to adopt newly coined gender-inclusive expressions. However, one cannot generalize the American experience with degendered American English expression to the case of other language varieties like EA. In the Arabic-speaking context, public reaction can perhaps only be clearly seen once attempts at change are made.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) alluded to US feminists' coinage of the social title *Ms.* into the lexicon of address terms as an equivalent *Mr.*, a term that designates gender but not marital status. Eckert explains that such a step was significant, as women in western society were judged qualified, disqualified, included, or excluded on the basis of their marital status.

Kiesling (1997) argued that the concept of power is pivotal when it comes to men's talk, and that masculinity is understood not in as a contrast of femininity but within its framework of social prestige. In this respect, it is reasonable to assume that a project for gender-inclusive language might not be welcome by the males of society, as they might perceive it as a threat to their symbolic sociolinguistic power.

Lakoff (2000) argued that making meaning is a defining quality of humans and that it is more than just a cognitive activity, and that since “ so much of our cognitive capacity is achieved via language, control of language—the determination of what words mean, who can use what forms of language to what effects in which settings—is power.” (p.42)

### **Literature on Cognitive Culture and Related Linguistic Data**

Cognitive culture (CC) as defined by Jenkins (1999) is the individual’s internal or cultural frame of reference, which reflects his/her cultural understanding, self-concept, concept of relationships, roles and procedures. Although Jenkins does not highlight language per se as a factor in CC, his definition of the term is significant to the current study as, from a cognitively cultural perspective; it is relevant to gender as a concept that contributes to the formation of a person’s self-concept and how they conceptualize their attitudes toward the other gender.

The connection between language and CC can be described via the theory of linguistic relativity, or the Sapir- Whorf Hypothesis (henceforth SWH); a framework that has fluctuated between extremes of viability in linguistic circles. SWH has two major tenets: 1) linguistic determination of thought patterns (known as “the strong version”); and 2) linguistic influence on thought (known as “the weak version”). Due to the negative findings of research on SWH, the possibility of linguistic influences on thought was viewed by extreme skepticism (Clark, 1997; Devitt and Sterelny, 1987; Pinker, 1994). But the SWH impact of cognitive culture has always been in research.

Gentner and Goldin-Meadow (2003) stated that during that same period of skepticism about SWH, terms like *senior citizens*, *hearing impaired*, and *learning*

*disabled* were used rather than their older synonyms: *old, deaf, and dumb*, and the genderless term *chair* instead of the gendered term *chairman* which might reflect English speakers' awareness of the bias in the term *chairman*; such lexical activity could be viewed in the light of SWH, provided the changes were reflected in cognitive changes—in other words, the new linguistic forms contributed to the formation of new patterns and attitudes in speakers' minds and relationships. Gentner and Goldin-Meadow postulated that “insisting upon the word *chair* seems to reflect a folk belief that changing our language can contribute to changing our cognition.” (p. 6) With such language change which was in part toward gender-inclusiveness, Pinker (1989) refined his conception of SWH by stating that “Whorf was surely wrong when he said that one's language determines how one conceptualizes reality in general, a position that many claim is too strong to be properly attributed to Whorf. But he was probably correct in a much weaker sense: one's language does determine how one must conceptualize reality when one has to talk about it.” (p. 360) Pinker's new view of SWH gained ground with the Wenner-Gren Foundation Symposium in Jamaica in 1991 which rethought linguistic relativity. The symposium ultimately led to Slobin's “thinking for speaking” hypothesis (TSH): language influences thought when a person is thinking with the intent to use language (Gentner and Goldin-Meadow, 2003, p. 8). Gentner and Goldin-Meadow also questioned whether the language humans acquire shapes their World View, a point close to the classical SWH; the authors alluded to the affirmative school of looking at the classical SWH (Boroditsky, Schmidt, and Phillips, 2003) which argued that gender assignment, previously thought to be grammatical only, does affect how humans perceive objects.

Relatedly, TSH can be of importance as far as GIL is concerned. Adopting GIL as part of an individual's cognitive culture can be considered a type of *thinking with intent to use language*. Individuals might consider concepts of gender equality as they use GIL. Gentner and Goldin-Meadow (2003) commented that individuals feel that the term *chair* is the proper term as they seem to believe that the term *chairman* potentiates a gender-bias. Vygotsky (1962) argued that concept formation partially entails directing one's own mental processes by using words or signs. Gentner and Goldin-Meadow (2003) built on Vygotsky's view of concept formation through the aid of language, while also reminding their readers that the relationship between language and thought is particularly complex: "Whether language has an impact on thought depends, of course, on how we define language and how we define thought. But it also depends on what we take to be the criterion for 'having an impact on'." (p. 12)

Levinson (2003) argued against the concept of Simple Nativism (SN), which amalgamates the Chomskyan concept of "syntax innateness" and the concept of "language of thought" which, in turn, attributed the semantics to an innate "language of thought". SN's main tenet is that all major properties of language are "dictated by inbuilt mental apparatus" (p.26) Levinson argued that SN fails to acknowledge the role of culture in language evolution as SN attributes language structures to biological endowment; he highlighted Durham's (1991) view that the transference of both genetic and cultural information shapes human evolution.

Boroditsky, Schmidt, and Phillips (2003) argued for Slobin's TSH by explaining that thinking for speaking differs from one language to another as to English speakers, for example, grammatical gender agreement between the verb and the subject of the sentence

is not an issue to worry about. By contrast, Russian and Arabic speakers do have agreement between the verb and the subject which, according to Boroditsky et al, is an issue of concern to Russian speakers and entails that thinking-for-speaking for Russian speakers differs from the process for speakers of English.

Boroditsky et al also looked at how grammatical gender can affect meaning. They argue that “in order to efficiently learn the grammatical gender of a noun...people focus on some property of that noun’s referent that may pick it out as masculine or feminine.” For example, if the word “sun” is masculine in one language, such as English, one might envision the sun with stereotypically masculine properties such as “powerful” and “threatening” and in a language in which the sun is feminine, like Arabic, one might think of stereotypically feminine properties such as providing warmth and nourishment. The authors also alluded to a study (Konishi, 1993), in which German and Spanish speakers rated a set of nouns with regards to potency, a quality that they assumed would be highly associated with masculinity. Half of the nouns were grammatically masculine in German and feminine in Spanish, and the other feminine in German and Masculine in Spanish. Both speakers rated nouns that were grammatically masculine in their language to be more potent than those which were grammatically feminine in their languages although all those nouns had no biological gender (they included forms such as names of places, inanimate objects and abstract entities).

In connection, Boroditsky et al. questioned whether talking about inanimate objects as if they were masculine or feminine actually leads people to think of inanimate objects as having a gender; they asked further if the grammatical genders assigned to objects by a language could influence people’s mental representation of objects. To



investigate this, they experimented on a group of Spanish and German speakers of English by giving them English proper names for 24 objects, calling the objects masculine or feminine proper names like *Patrick* for apple. As predicted, the participants opted for object-name pairs which were consistent with the grammatical gender of the object name in their native language. The researchers attributed this outcome to grammatical gender, which makes different aspects of objects salient in the representation of those objects. For example, if the noun that names a toaster is masculine, its technological properties may become more salient; if the noun is feminine attributes like its warmth, domesticity and ability to provide nourishment may be highlighted. This idea was supported by the data, as German speakers describes keys, which are grammatically masculine in their language, as hard, heavy, jagged, metal, and useful, whereas Spanish speakers said keys were golden, intricate, little, lovely, and shiny. On the other hand, German speakers described bridges, which are grammatically feminine in German, as beautiful, elegant, fragile, pretty, and slender, whereas Spanish participants (whose language categorized them as masculine) thought they were big, dangerous, strong, and sturdy. The researchers concluded that people's thinking about objects could be influenced by the grammatical genders their first language assigns to those objects.

Elgin (2000) argued for “the weak version” of SWH. She alluded to Jack Vance's (1958) fictional work, *The Languages of Pao*, whose premise is that adults will benefit to do battle if they start out in childhood immersed in warrior language and that conversely, if raised without aggressive terms, a population may be unable to defend itself against invaders.

Elgin referred to language tightly related to sexual gender as an area in which we could see the effects of SWH. She alluded to feminists' revisions of the Judeo-Christian scriptures that use inclusive language and explained that such language sometimes does not sound familiar to its recipients. She attributed that unfamiliarity to "semantic contamination" which makes speakers of English accept an expression like "He's a dashing bachelor" but balk at "She's a dashing spinster" although those speakers are aware that "bachelor" and "spinster" differ in meaning by gender.

Elgin explained that pronouns carry powerful presuppositions about reality as speakers of a given language perceive it. She went on to say: "It matters to English speakers whether something being spoken or written about is animate or inanimate, human or nonhuman, one or more than one, male or female or neither." But it might not matter to users of EA in just the same way, given the predominant patriarchal culture which controls world view in communities using these two Arabic varieties. It is the premise of the current study that it is worth drawing the attention of speakers (or writers) of those two varieties to language bias as a concept.

Lakoff (2000) looked at the markedness of the feminine. She stated that "as society changes, perception changes; as perception changes, language changes with it." (p. 44) She also said that, traditionally, in the grammar of English "masculine" has been unmarked, "feminine" marked. She explains that generally, the female is inferred from sentences that refer to animal species using the masculine term, such as in "The tiger (not tigress) is endangered" (p.45). She noted that with domestic animals the case tends to be somewhat different; the names of males and females can be derived from one another as in duck: drake; and goose: gander. She explained further that feminine names of domestic

animals are occasionally used generically gender-wise as in *Cows eat grass*; *There are ducks on the pond*; and *Here comes a gaggle of geese*. She explained this pattern by noting that in those species the females are more numerous than the males. She also explained that in the human sphere marking can shift: “In my youth, when female doctors were a rarity (marked), it was almost obligatory to identify any such a “woman (or lady) doctor”, while their male counterparts were never ‘male (man or gentleman) doctors.’” (p. 45) Lakoff then alluded to human occupational categories. Feminists have noticed that the English word man in *policeman*; *fireman*; *chairman* indicated both “male” and “human being” which encouraged users of English to see “males” and “humans” as essentially the same and women as “not-fully-human”. Lakoff concluded that linguistic markedness is sometimes based on literal reality; sometimes on reality mediated by human perception; and sometimes based on psychological fact or social construct, as is the case with gender. She continues, saying that “once we accept the assignment of items to marked or unmarked categories, we lump all forms of markedness together as equally indicative of the way the world is.” (p.46)

Lakoff (2000) also argued that once a person identifies a frame and decided what is right and proper within it, that person becomes wedded to it and it becomes extremely difficult to reframe; “New perceptions don’t make sense, since they cannot be placed in a familiar frame. Within the frame, things are unmarked: normal, predictable, neutral, orderly, natural, and simple... Once a frame shifts, everything changes. We are in a way, brought back to infantile incompetence.” (p. 48)

Chabris and Simons (2010) explained how humans are deceived by our intuition when we focus our attention on one thing and thus fail to notice even very obvious

features of a scene. They cite their own, “Invisible Gorilla” experiment, in which viewers were shown a video that basically featured two teams of people walking around in quite random patterns passing a ball to one another. One team was dressed in white, the other in black. When viewers were asked to count the times the white team passes the ball, surprising numbers of participants completely miss a person dressed in a dark gorilla costume that walks quite visibly into the group, rubs its chest and walks out. Viewers whose focus was on counting the passes of the white team failed to see the gorilla. The gorilla can be a symbol of anything that escapes from our attention as we are focusing on something else. By analogy, as far as language is concerned, the “gorilla” in the Arabic varieties under investigation in the current dissertation could be the female Other that is not seen by some users of QA and EA who only see masculine referents in job titles, for example, or even in *Qur’anic* verses phrased in masculine forms like verse 46 of Surrat Al-Kahf (The cave), reviewed earlier in the social culture section.

Brooks (2012) cited several experiments in support of the SWH’s weak version. One experiment was conducted by Jonah Berger (as cited in Brooks, 2012) in which a group of voters who went to polling stations in schools were more likely to support tax increases channeled for education than voters who went to other voting places. This experiment provides little, yet considerable, evidence on the impact of sociolinguistic context on thought.

### **Evolutionary Then Actionary Language Change**

The current dissertation addresses gender-inclusive language from two perspectives: 1) evolutionary and 2) *actionary*. As mentioned above, I have observed a

language change in the Egyptian society geared toward the use of gender-inclusive language.

The evolutionary manifestations in the usage of gender-inclusive language in EA can be interpreted from a Darwinian perspective. Initially Schleicher (1983) dealt with language from a Darwinian perspective. He looked at language as an organism with three phases: *development*, *maturity*, and *decline*. Language change can, thus, be considered a kind of evolutionary development, where, expanding Darwin's (2005) paradigm of living species to incorporate non-animate creatures, language can be treated as a creature evolving and, as far as the current study is concerned, in ways that fulfil the need of its sociocultural context. The other perspective, the actionary, takes advantage of the evolution which has occurred and, fostered by metacognition on the significance of such evolution in the direction of gender-inclusive language, seeks to enhance it externally by deliberate intervention, i.e. suggesting further gender-inclusive techniques.

According to Charles Darwin (2005), the evolved product is best suited to its environmental surroundings. Thus evolution is instigated by an imperative which requires that a certain evolution occur to fulfill a certain need. An example from biology is how the short-necked giraffe evolved into the current long-necked giraffe. Ulrich Kutschera (as cited in LÖnnig, 2011) expounded Darwin's view that "The original short-necked forms comprised large, variable populations. Under the selection pressure of droughts and leaf shortages, those variations with longer necks and forelegs survived and reproduced preferentially. In this way, over the course of generations, these large mammals have arisen, being adapted to their special environment." (pp. 34-35)

The evolution of the short-necked giraffe into the long-necked giraffe was caused by natural selection to fulfill a certain compelling need for survival. Speaking metaphorically, the explanation for giraffe evolution could be used to explain the current language change exhibited in the use of gender-inclusive language on a limited scale in EA. It is reasonable to assume that such linguistic evolution was caused by a factor, similar to Darwin's natural selection, whereby speakers of a language develop a sense of the overall picture of a language variety, assess its viability and reflect ability of the concepts those individuals aspire to convey via language, and, therefore, choose what to use, what not to use in certain sociocultural contexts, and what is lacking in their language. They then move to compensate the latter by introducing certain adjustments in the use of certain language features to better address certain sociolinguistic and sociocultural needs.

Wildgen (2004) explained that "A theory of language evolution may focus primarily on biological processes, which include genetic, anatomic, and (basic) behavioral changes." (p.175) Wildgen's allusion to behavioral changes being accomplished via language resonates with the weak version of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis as well as the nature of the current research. Wildgen added to the idea of accomplishing change through language by arguing that

As social selection becomes more important because of higher population density and larger networks of exchange and communication, the selective pressure shifts from biological to the quality of socio-communicative networks and their consequences for overall fitness. The species *Homo-sapiens* gradually redefines its own environment, relative to which it is optimally adapted. This self-

referential fitness is a specific quality of human evolution, which gives more weight and impetus to cultural development. (175)

Favorably, Wildgen (2004) also referred to syntax being the “central human feature of language” and thus a theory which describes the evolution of human language should capture the selection criteria adopted by modern humans’ usage of specific lexical items would be more closely related to actual social realities (p.172).

As will be shown in the current research, QA, and EA already exhibit some manifestations of gender-inclusive language. The emerging evolutionary turn toward more gender-inclusiveness in EA in particular (See Chapter 1), exhibited in the morphology and syntax on a mini-scale as will be shown, might be at least partly the outcome of constant feminist pushing in patriarchal societies towards gender-equality. Also media individuals’ exposure to other cultures might have played a part in moving speakers of EA toward GIL. Egyptian Media individuals are exposed to other cultures in which gender-inclusive language is a prominent feature such as Anglo culture, where feminist endeavors to rid the English language of the hegemonic patriarch, the colonial male in language. Such evolutionary change is met in the current research with *actionary* measures which may widen the scope of GIL.

### **Prescriptivism Revisited**

As the current study involves expanding gender-inclusiveness EA by suggesting further gender-inclusive techniques, the study faces a binary dilemma: first, the dilemma of partially and implicitly adopting “prescriptivism,” an approach “frowned upon” in modern and contemporary linguistic circles. Second, the study highlights the principle of justice, a noble quest for humanity and a concept under which attempts to possibly

alleviate bias and power in EA deserve to be licensed linguistically. Therefore, it is necessary to review similar contemporary research that might have faced the same problem in order to see how those scholars approached the problem. It is also important to review literature on “prescriptivism” and see whether the term has been fossilized in its negative condition or it has evolved and acquired new connotations after decades of linguistic neglect and ostracism. Originally, linguists who have battled against prescriptivism have done so because that trend, going back centuries now, is profoundly *elitist*, and anti-egalitarian—as well as quite typically being ignorant of the nature of and patterns in language. Crystal (2006) alluded more than once to 18th century prescriptive grammarians who “adopted a normative stance about usage. They assumed that one variety of language-- the standard, as seen in formal written English-- was the only variety worth using, the norm for everyone.” (p. 110) However, some positive aspects of prescriptivism stemming from its connection to the principle of justice, or social and political need, are directly related to gender-inclusive language , which seeks to achieve justice in language, and have recently surfaced some of the literature. This justice and need related prescriptivism, which departs from elitism and rests on concepts of equality in language, is used in the current dissertation especially as the linguistic analysis of data gears the dissertation toward attempting some gender-inclusive techniques for EA.

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, linguistic research underwent a paradigmatic shift from prescriptivism to descriptivism. The early works of Bloomfield, Saussure, and Chomsky advocated descriptivism as an approach to the study of language. In fact, linguists for decades have opposed elitist trends in language that through prescriptive canons or rules, sought to preserve power in the hands of a relatively small number,



typically speakers of a standard variety with some arbitrary ‘rules’ such as ‘don’t end a sentence with a preposition,’ and don’t use ‘which’ in a restrictive relative clause’ (this second ‘rule’ has been widely ignored in the present text, as in the writings of many educated English-speaking writers for generations. These prescriptivists typically also fiercely resisted language change, clinging to disappearing distinctions (*lie/lay*, *affect/effect*) and outmoded forms (e.g. accusative *whom* in *Whom did you see in town yesterday?*).

Thus, ‘prescriptivism’ can be said to have earned the negative reputation that it acquired, through its support of a powerful elite, as well as its frequent mis-analysis of forms in language, and for valuing Latin-based rules over natural English patterns with only historically based patterns of power as backing. However, in the present study I would like to revive the term ‘prescriptivism,’ to refer to attempts to ‘prescribe’ that are very different from those normally associated with the term. Far from promoting elitism, the “prescriptions” I wish to support are meant at supporting equality in society. I do not mean the elitist and uninformed movements promulgated by people typically with no linguistic training or serious study of language patterns, but informed gender equality in language. Moreover, far from lacking a linguistic base, I propose to ground any proposals firmly in the patterns of the language varieties being studied. Finally, far from opposing language change, the ‘prescriptive’ position I take, embraces and promotes change. The present study, like the work of feminist linguists before it, is ‘prescriptive’ only in the neutral sense of advocating the use of certain forms in language—not in the negative sense of creating a new elite who engages in ‘otherizing’ those who are unaware or unable to absorb a set of esoteric ‘rules.’

The arduous and audacious linguistic endeavors by feminist linguists in the US in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to offer gender-inclusive techniques of the English language for ideological needs and necessities represent challenging “prescriptive” steps in this new sense. These linguists might be seen as working against the mainstream of contemporary descriptive trends in linguistic research, as they highlighted the need for recognizing women in language as part of recognizing them in society.

As noted above, the term “prescriptive” acquired negative connotations in linguistic circles in the last century. However, Cameron (1995) deconstructed the term in an attempt to show that descriptivism and prescriptivism could be seen as two faces of the same coin; she explained that there are implied prescriptive guidelines in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, which gives a description of the English language. Cameron sets forth to argue that Robert Hall’s book *Leave your language alone* (as cited in Cameron, 1995) is itself prescriptive by its title. Furthermore, Cameron criticizes Hall’s book for separating a language from its users. She went on to argue that “all attitudes to language and linguistic change are fundamentally ideological.” (p. 92) She alluded to Lakoff’s *Talking Power* (as cited in Cameron, 1995) in which Lakoff differentiates between spontaneous language changes which should be left alone and deliberate change via language engineering which, according to Lakoff, is far more dangerous. A good example is feminist linguists attempt to introduce the gender-neutral pronoun *co* (Bucholtz, 2004) Cameron gave positive examples of ideological human intervention in language, referring to the language planning project launched by the Hebrew Language Academy in Israel to revive a language that was once dead. She also refers to feminists’ attempts to produce

guidelines on non-sexist language, and to some workers who institute a ‘swear box’ for fining workers among them who might use bad language off guard.

Cameron also refuted the idea that language is a natural phenomenon existing apart from its users by concurring with Milroy (as cited in Cameron, 1995) in that language is a social practice and affecting it, she argues, is a social process. She argues further that prescriptivism is presented as the threatening Other, “the disfavored half of a binary opposition, ‘descriptive/prescriptive’; and this binarism sets the parameters of linguistics as a system.” (p.94) Additionally, Cameron alluded to Billig (as cited in Cameron, 1995) who argued that psychologists and sociologists assume that rules should essentially be followed, whereas they have another essential but neglected aspect: rules are made by and lead to argument.

Cameron sheds light on “language planning” as a less controversial term which is largely approved by linguists. Coulmas (2005) addressed language planning as involving “. . . making informed choices about language that counter quasi-natural, market driven developments that are expected to take place in the absence of any intervention.” (186) He explained that “the goal of a language policy is to perpetuate, establish or undo a language regime” (p.186). A project for gender-inclusive language can be considered an informed choice that attempts to alleviate language bias by proposing gender-inclusive techniques which may help promote healthy gender egalitarianism in society.

Since using the term “prescriptivism” would imply recycling the opposition she is deconstructing (between descriptive and prescriptive approaches), Cameron proposed the term “verbal hygiene” as a substitute for “prescriptivism”. Unlike “prescriptivism”, “verbal hygiene” is not trapped in a binary categorization of descriptive/prescriptive and

so it is an independent term which is not seen dichotomously.

Nevertheless, the term “verbal hygiene” does not seem to be the best alternative to the term *prescriptivism*. First of all, the term “hygiene” is associated with regulations and guidelines drawn from scientific research on how an object should be used. There are hygienic regulations for handling a microwave oven and food business operators. Those regulations provide optimal ways for using an object. The implication associated with hygienic regulations is that not following them might cause harm to one’s health. Language, regarded as a social activity per the above review of Cameron (1995), is a social activity and, therefore, cannot be gauged or standardized in a way to allow linguists to determine what is hygienic and what is not. Thus, there is still a need an even more accurate term, a “safer” alternative to “prescriptivism”, which is tainted with concepts of elitism; a new term that takes into consideration the social nature of language and its communicative binarity of verbal/non-verbal.

Bucholtz (2004) discussed how the question of gender and language is a prominent issue in American classes, as students are constantly being asked to use gender-neutral language in their writing. However, she seemed to be grieved that proposals for non-sexist language have not been met with the same warm welcome attitude Americans have had toward certain (sometimes unfounded) grammatical rules like avoiding to use prepositions at the end of sentences, a Latin-based proposal by John Dryden that was supported by prescriptivist grammarians (Crystal, 2006) . Bucholtz explained that some American scholars, members in the Linguistic Society of America have objected to the guidelines of gender-inclusive language as they appear to be *prescriptive* which is counter to linguistic *descriptivism*. As a matter of fact, I have

personally faced the same criticism from a panelist immediately after I presented my first academic work on gender-inclusive language. He commented on my use of the word “prescriptive” in describing some suggested gender-inclusive techniques saying: “Are you going to teach the people how to use language?” Another commented: “It is better not to mutilate the language this way.” So, there is a need for a term which puts things in perspective free of shades of meaning related to authoritative practices on how to use language. There is need for a term which empowers individuals as language users, so that they opt for GIL by conviction rather than indirect coercion via authoritative guidance.

Intrinsically, the current research is descriptive when it comes to the two Arabic varieties (QA and EA) and, tentatively speaking, the research has a verbally hygienic approach to only EA as the study seeks to introduce GIL ideologically into this variety. So, the study will also seek to find a more convenient alternative term to Cameron’s “verbal hygiene”.

MacKay (1980) highlighted the need for prescriptive grammar, as users of English will always want to know “the most acceptable words to communicate more effectively” (p. 444) He added that “English will continue to change and to give rise to new alternatives; therefore, prescriptive grammar will continue to be needed to determine the most useful alternative words and phrases for future speakers and writers.” (p.444) He also explained that since modern linguistics is concerned with descriptive grammar, prescriptive grammar has become a concern for psychology. He gives examples of how the American Psychological Association prescribes writing rules. MacKay (1980) looked at prescriptive *he*, which was traditionally taught as having either a male or a male /female antecedent.

Baxter (2005) argued that translators should use GIL in their translated texts. He refuted the old concept that translation necessity involves some manipulation on the part of the translator; in particular he argues that translators should not project their gender-based biases on translated texts. This concept is extremely important when it comes to translating the *Qur'anic* text, since such prejudices, whether intentional or unintentional, might affect the reader of the holy text and direct their understanding to semantically biased interpretations which the *Qur'anic* text that are not supported by a careful morphosyntactic analysis of the text.

Baxter also argued that when it comes to GIL, the term “prescriptivism” should not be understood as the opposite of descriptivism, but as a term of sociocultural and ideological needs. He concurred with Cameron (1988) that it is not so much about what the rules actually mean, but more about who has the right to make the rules and what social agenda the makers of the rules ascribe to and wish to enhance within society. He explained further:

Within the new conceptual framework of non-sexist language not as linguistic engineering *per se*, but rather the surface manifestation of a deeper social intervention agenda, this implies not merely asking questions about the prescriptivism of the non-sexist rules to be applied but also about the reasons behind them. In other words, the prescriptivist model proposed by the non-sexist language lobbies should not be perceived as being opposed to otherwise ‘natural’ non-prescriptive language usage, but rather actually challenges the view that such sexist language in general usage is in itself non-prescriptive and ‘natural’. (p.3)

Bourdieu (1982) referred to *heretical discourse* and how it must help to sever adherence to the world of common sense by publicly proclaiming a break with the ordinary order. He maintained that the effectiveness of heretical discourse lies in the dialectic between the authorizing and the authorized language and the dispositions of the group which authorizes itself to use it. He added that this dialectical process is accomplished "...in and through the labor of enunciation which is necessary in order to externalize the inwardness, to name the unnamed and to give the beginnings of objectification to pre-verbal and pre-reflexive dispositions and ineffable and unobservable experiences, through words which by their nature make them common and communicable, therefore meaningful and socially sanctioned." (p.129) GIL could be regarded as part of heretical discourse in line with Bourdieu's explanation of the term and its functioning. As far as GIL is concerned, women could be regarded as "unnamed" elements in biased language.

### **Previous Attempts at Language Reform**

**Examples from English.** Inspired by SWH, Elgin (2000) proposed La'adan, a language that she constructed herself and used in her novel *Native Tongue*. Elgin's goal behind La'adan was to "construct a language designed to express the perception of human women" (p. 202). The linguist women in the novel hypothesize that widespread use of La'adan would result in changing the novel's male-dominated culture. La'adan has features that claim to be universal, and the linguistically optimal features<sup>23</sup> of some

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<sup>23</sup> Elgin (2000) explained that from Navajo, for example, she borrowed its pejorative marker, a single phoneme ("lh") that gives a negative slant to a Navajo word. To bring the concept closer to English users, Elgin used the obsolete English morpheme "ge-" (pronounced "guh") and used it as La'adan's pejorative marker. This can be shown in sentences A & B below, with B having a negative attitude toward a Congressman:

- 1- "Let me tell you the story I heard today about my Congressman."
- 2- "Let me tell you the story I heard today about my geCongressman."

languages. The pronouns of La'adan make no gender distinction; a single pronoun includes both males and females.

Relatedly, mathematician Spivak (2006) constructed a set of English gender-neutral pronouns<sup>24</sup> which he used in his own books. The Spivak pronouns have also become popular in some games, especially the Nomic Game. The Spivak pronouns have the following advantages: a) It is not hard to figure out their meanings; b) Their usage does not need to be explained; c) They are shorter than other suggested pronouns; d) This shortness will make them more popularly adopted; and e) They sound like "he" and "she" in spoken English. As for the disadvantages of the Spivak pronouns, they are: a) They sound like cockney, especially calling someone "e"; b) "Eirs", and the other words, are awkward for users of English; and c) The leading "e" makes saying the words sound like gasping.

In his novel *Distress* (1995), Greg Egan also invented a set of gender-neutral pronouns<sup>25</sup> which he used within the scope of the novel to represent an asexual character. Egan also used his gender-neutral pronouns in his novel *Diaspora* (2010) to describe gender-neutral post-humans.

Bucholtz (2004) also referred to a degendering practice on the part of some feminists who tried to introduce entirely new gender-neutral pronouns such as *co*, which was not welcomed by American society. If anything, the implication here is that the process of introducing gender-inclusive techniques into a language is indeed challenging

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<sup>24</sup> The spivak gender-neutral pronouns are:

- E- subjective
- Em- objective
- Eir- possessive (adjective)
- Eirs- possessive (noun)
- Emself - reflexive

<sup>25</sup> The Egan pronouns were: - *ve* for he/she/it (subject), *ver* for he/she/it (object) and *vis* for his/her/its



and needs to be approached with linguistic dexterity and a high sense of what the audience (society) might or might not accept. It seems that gender-inclusive techniques could be more successful if the final product comes from the fabric of the language, not of a totally foreign matter. Perhaps that was why *co* was not welcome in English.

A more recent study conducted in Baltimore, Maryland has shown that natural change can sometimes occur, where conscious engineering may have failed. Stotko and Troyer (2007) announced the birth of a new gender-neutral pronoun *yo* in Baltimore, Maryland. The newly born epicene pronouns appears in sentences like “Yo handin’ out papers” meaning “She (the professor) is handing out papers” and “Peep yo!” meaning ‘Look at him’. The study revealed that participants, high school students, use *yo* as a gender-neutral third person pronoun. The study has also shown the new pronoun was spotted in other parts of America such as Washington D.C. and Atlanta. The authors predicted that, based on follow-up studies, *yo*, as an innovation in the African-American community, will enjoy a much larger popularity in the future.

But one cannot compare *co* with *yo*. The first is human-made whereas the other is a naturally produced item. The difference is huge and raises power issues. Could it be possible the American society rejected the pronoun *co* because it represented a higher sociolinguistic power which was trying to superimpose it on society—or because it lacked a place in the natural speech community dynamics that give rise to forms like *yo*?

**Arabic resistance to reform.** In *The Language Imperative* (2000), Suzette Elgin explained the attitude of Arab governments toward reforming the Arabic language, alluding to a story in the Wall Street Journal (“War of Words: Arabic Emerges as a Weapon in Mideast Struggles”) in which the author states that “the written language of

the Koran and the local dialects spoken in Arab countries have drifted far apart.” (p. 159)

The author of the article added that most Arab governments remain paralyzed when it comes to introducing reforms to *Modern Standard Arabic* for fear of being portrayed as tampering with the holy language of *the Qur'an*. Eligin is referring here to the common link between QA and MSA. Non-linguists sometimes establish a similar link between QA and EA, thinking that the latter must remain untouched because its bearing the umbrella term *Arabic*, with their unawareness of varietal categorization within *Arabic*.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The current dissertation is a textual analysis using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA seeks to capture the interrelationship between language, power, and ideology, and to highlight the practices behind texts in order to reveal their political and ideological aspects. (Machin and Mayr, 2012)

Relatedly, Fairclough (1989) explained that the aim of *critical language study* is to unveil connections between language, ideology, and power that are shrouded from people. Machin and Mayr (2012) also added that “the term ‘critical’ in *critical language study* means ‘denaturalizing’ the language to reveal the kinds of ideas, absences, and taken-for-granted assumptions in texts.” This will disclose power levels and interests buried in these texts.

CDA has multiple levels of analysis, the Meso-level, the Macro-level, and the Micro level. The Meso-level involves studying the text’s production and consumption. The Macro-level is concerned with intertextual understanding; trying to fathom the broad societal currents that are affecting the text under investigation. The Micro-level looks at the text’s syntactic, metaphoric structure, and rhetorical devices. With its several analytic tools, CDA is a powerful arsenal for fathoming texts both ideologically and linguistically.

#### **Hegemony**

Machin and Mayr (2012) defined *hegemony* as “a concept to describe the mechanism through which dominant groups in society (media, politicians, religious, and secular institutions) succeed in persuading subordinate groups to accept the former’s moral, political and cultural values.” (p. 220)

Hegemony is, by definition, related to power. CDA is concerned with *hegemony* as the persuasive influence of power. Gramsci (as cited in Machin and Mayr, 2012 ) described how dominant groups persuade subordinate groups to embrace the former's own moral, political, and cultural values as norms that they had rejected for being unjust or extreme. This process happens as part of the overall ideology of the powerful who present their ideas as 'natural' and 'common sense'.

In Chapter Four, I show how some male interpreters of *the Qur'an* have used *hegemony* to interpret certain verses in ways that make those verses appear as exclusively for or about males, thus excluding the female Other. I also show how some of those same verses could have a gender-inclusive reading.

In Chapter Five, I play a different role. After giving a morphosyntactic description of the data, I try to use morphosyntax, with a CDA lens, to explain how certain grammatically masculine lexical items of the data from EA could be deciphered as gender-inclusive based on their morphosyntactic properties, and in light of their semantic interpretation. As a by-product, I project gender-inclusion, as a target, onto the syntax of EA by proposing further gender-inclusive techniques to some EA constructions, using Steel's (1978) concept of semantic agreement, rather than grammatical agreement, as the determining factor in accessing the actual potential meaning of those constructions.

### **Methods of Data Collection and Analysis**

The data analyzed in this dissertation was collected from three different, reliable sources, according to each variety's nature and use in discourse.

- 1- Data representing *Qur'anic Arabic* (QA) was collected from *the Qur'anic* text. I looked at seventy nine verses, twenty six verses of which are listed

under the pertinent reference type for each as basic data. Other QA data (fifty two verses) come from supportive verses that explain, prove, or disprove the issues and claims made in the basic data.

- 2- Data representing *Egyptian Arabic* (EA) was collected from two sources:
  - a- YouTube videos that represent EA in daily use. I have looked at twenty eight videos with a total number of approximately 12 hours.
  - b- Data from EA, my *mother tongue*, via my knowledge and command of the variety as a speaker of high expertise thereof<sup>26</sup>. This data is used as supportive to the data extracted from the videos.

### **Collection of Data from Qur'anic Arabic**

*The Qur'an* is the sole source of data representing QA. Data from *the Qur'an* is static, as the source itself is fixed, being the scriptures of Islam. However, what varies is the interpretation of data from *the Qur'an* by religious scholars. I am going to see how data from QA is interpreted by exegetes, most of whom are males. I will analyze translations of the meanings of *the Qur'an* by Sahih International and Laleh Bakhtiar, whose translations are exegetic with relatively feminist lenses that well suite the current research. I am going to use the exegesis of *the Qur'an* by Ismail Ibn Amr Ibn Kathiir (700- 774 H.)<sup>27</sup>, and the exegesis of *the Qur'an* by Muhammad Mutwalli Al-Shaarawi (1911- 1998 G.). I have chosen Ibn Kathiir for the following reasons:

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<sup>26</sup> I was careful here not to use the term “native speaker” which has been deconstructed in research in ways that have made it problematic in use.

<sup>27</sup> “H.” stands for “Al- Hijra” meaning “emigration” in reference to Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) emigration from the City of Makkah to Al-Madiina Al-Munawwarah in the Arabian Peninsula, a historic Islamic event on which the Islamic calendar was constructed. I did not find a record of Ibn Kathiir’s dates of birth/death in correspondence to Gregorian calendar.

- a- Ibn Kathiir uses QA verses to support his interpretation of other *Qur'anic* verses.
- b- Ibn Kathiir also uses traditions of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as supportive explanatory texts to QA verses.
- c- Ibn Kathiir writes in a simple classical Arabic style which has gained him readership from educated Muslims who master MSA, a developed form of CA.

In connection, I have chosen Al-Shaarawi for the following reasons:

- a- Al-Shaarawi's interpretation is the first audio/audiovisual interpretation of *the Qur'an* which makes it accessible to grassroots people in the Arab region, the vast majority of whom are illiterate. An audio/audiovisual interpretation of *the Qur'an* makes it easier for them as a mixed-gender audience to perceive and perhaps form their world view, including how each gender constructs the other gender based on Al-Shaarawi's interpretation of *the Qur'an*.
- b- Al-Shaarawi's thorough morphological and grammatical analysis of *Qur'anic* verses are of assistance for data analysis from QA in this dissertation.
- c- Al-Shaarawi has a deep knowledge of his predecessor imminent Islamic scholars' views and exegeses, which he uses as a foundation for his own exegeses.
- d- Al-Shaarawi's use of EA to simplify and interpret QA meanings to an audience, a good number of which are illiterate. Al-Shaarawi's use of EA in his exegeses has also gained him a much larger audience than other interpreters of *the Qur'an*. This is significant for the current research as it is

important to see how a popular modern exegete of *the Qu'ran* like Al-Shaarawi interpreted *Qur'anic* verses formed in the grammatical masculine but that have a gender-inclusive reading.

As both Ibn Kathiir and Al-Shaarawi's interpretations are accessible in Arabic, I am going to translate into English the data from both sources that I will need to analyze in QA data analysis.

### **Collection of Data from Egyptian Arabic**

Data from EA is also naturally occurring data. I have collected data from YouTube videos posted in EA; those videos display the growing use of gender-inclusive language I referred to in the first chapter. I have a sample of twenty eight YouTube videos of approximately 12 hours in which famous people, especially actors, and ordinary people use gender-inclusive expressions. The videos are from talk shows in Egyptian Arabic by speakers of linguistic expertise of the variety who are captured while spontaneously using the lingo. The speakers are caught using some terms of reference in what I believe to be novel ways that could index a change in Egyptian Arabic. While so doing, they have never been stopped for grammatical correction, although their usage could well be regarded as ungrammatical by a linguist.

I used some of the videos for more than one example. I also used one facebook post with one of its comments as they both belong to EA and are of a significant relevance to the data extracted from the videos, as well as the claims I made in Chapter Five.

## **Analyzing the Data Using Critical Discourse Analysis**

As the study involves data from QA and EA molded investigated at word level, sentence level and, in some cases, paragraph level, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an effective tool for analyzing such data as it uses analytic techniques from systemic functional linguistics.

CDA is the most effective method for analyzing data from QA, and EA. CDA is an ideal tool for analyzing the data from an ideological perspective, as it is concerned with social injustices, attitudes and beliefs that constitute world view, all of which are areas that concern this research. CDA is concerned not only with text, but also with the texture of a text i.e. its form and organization (Fairclough, 1995). Critical discourse analysts are, thus, concerned with social and cultural phenomena which the texture of a text denotes. Those social and cultural phenomena are realized in textural properties of the text. The classic relation of form and content is significant for this study as this relation is represented in the text, its texture, and context that contribute to a text's potential interpretation. This might help explain cases in which gender-bias surfaces, especially via interpretations of some *Qur'anic* verses.

Relatedly, Halliday (1985) looks at grammar as a system, not merely as rules, within which grammatical and lexical features of text perform certain identifiable functions: 1) they draw and project the social world "field"; 2) they set up and perform social relations "tenor"; and 3) they create coherent and identifiable conventions as texts in particular media "mode". From Halliday (1985), I extracted a list of variables of significance to the investigation of QA data. I am specifically looking at lexicalization, transitivity, thematic structure, and the use of nominalization.



**Field, tenor, and mode.** In CDA, the three terms *field*, *tenor*, and *mode* work in tandem to yield an in-depth analysis of the text under study. The term *field* stands for the subject matter or topic. Identifying the topic entails answering questions like, “What is the subject matter?” “How is the subject matter specified via the language of the text?” and “How did it affect the language used in the text?”

*Tenor* represents the roles of participants in a given in-text interaction. As a domain, *tenor* seeks answers to questions like "Who are the participants in the interaction and what power levels do they have and exercise as agents?"

*Mode* is the medium of communication. It seeks to answer the question, “What is the linguistic and/or para-linguistic instruments used in the text?” This entails looking at the tools by which the meaning of the text is conveyed, whether written language (which in turn entails figures of speech and other rhetorical devices), pictorial elements and graphics and how all these language vehicles can shape the readers understanding of the text.

In connection, Kress (1989) added a range of extra descriptions of language functions. He argues that texts represent individuals’ views of the world, in correspondence to Halliday’s concept of “field”; they establish social relations or “reading positions,” a concept which corresponds to “tenor”; and these reading positions can interpolate readers by locating them in identifiable power relations to texts which can present the world to them with various lenses that might affect their world view. These concepts and terms will be of help in analyzing the conceptual texture of data from QA, and EA.

Morphosyntax, utilized with a CDA lens, is also used in this study for formal linguistic data analysis, which will help deconstruct words and sentences and figure out the embedded relations between lexical items at word and sentence levels with regards to construal. In the process, grammatical categories, morphological and syntactic/semantic features and markers will be used to describe the data. Morphosyntax will also be used to provide a foundation for proposing gender-inclusive terms and for attempting to alleviate some of the gender-biased expressions and constructions in EA.

As the analytic chapters of the dissertation are thematically divided, I am going to look for data that belongs to the study's data classification, into nominals and pronominals, adjectives, and verbs. A thematic division of the data should yield a more robust analysis thereof. It is through a thematic division of the data that linguistic disparity and change between data items belonging to the same category, be it nouns, pronouns, adjectives, or verbs, will be clearly viewed.

*Analysis of data from Qur'anic Arabic.* Some interpreters of *the Qur'an* have disregarded context in their interpretation of *Qur'anic* text, a problem which has led to complications manifested in conflicting views in understanding and interpreting *the Qur'an* in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for its universal cultural characteristics. Some religious voices still advocate vehemently contextualizing *Qur'anic* verses; a few others call desperately for decontextualizing verses of *the Qur'an* as a possible way of understanding and using Islamic teachings in a realistic, dynamic way. My analysis of data from QA will take texture and context into consideration. Texture and context are going to be considered as projected on the data. For example, analyzing the grammatically masculine term /ʔalbanuun/ in verse no. 46 of Suurat Al-Kahf (The Cave) while considering context

requires that the term be understood as a semantically gender-inclusive term. Many Muslims have always dealt with the pluralized noun /ʔalbanuun/ in this verse literally as referring to male children only which has caused considerable problems to women who gave birth or conceived only female children. Those women are sometimes held responsible by their husbands for conceiving only females and for being a potential source of Allah's dissatisfaction with the husband whose heavenly retribution on earth is perceived by most society as his being deprived of male children.

Thus, analysis of data from QA will combine both CDA and morphosyntax, as it is through morphosyntax that some concepts shrouded in the literal interpretation of the data will be disclosed. In order to aim for a full and careful analysis, I am going to classify the data into nominal and pronominals, adjectives and verbs.

I am also going to see how the data from QA is presented in English translations of the meanings of *the Qur'an*. In so doing, I will use two translations of the meanings of *the Qur'an*: Sahih International (2011), and Laleh Bakhtiar (2010). Sahih International draws its reliability as a translation of the meanings of *the Qur'an* from being the collaborative translation of a team of mixed-gender American Muslim translators, which is significant for the current study as their linguistic background is expected to have impacted their translation of *the Qur'an*, especially when it comes to GIL. Most translations of *the Qur'an* convey verse meaning(s) from a patriarchal perspective only, which narrows the perspective of *Qur'anic* verses and shroud *important* potential meanings in those verses in the mist of a patriarchal translation. Despite the many translations of the meaning of *the Qur'an* available in the website [www.quran.com](http://www.quran.com),

Sahih International is the official translation used in that site, and the main source which I will use to access data from *the Qur'an*.

I am also using Laleh Bakhtiar's translation of *the Qur'an* for her scrutiny of interpreting meanings of *the Qur'an*, especially those of some verses that might cause problems in society due to earlier problematic translations and/or interpretations of scholars who are mostly males. A good example is Bakhtiar's unprecedented translation of arguably the most controversial verse in *the Qur'an*: verse no. 34 of *Suurat A-Nnisa'a'a* "The Women" which is presented in other translations and/or interpretations of *the Qur'an* as licensing a Muslim man to use physical discipline with his spouse as a last resort. It is worth mentioning that the Sahih International team translated this verse, in the same way all their predecessors had done, which gives more credit to Bakhtiar's translation and calls for a scrutiny of her translation, as will be shown in the analysis of the data. In a nutshell, Bakhtiar's "pragmatic" translation of that verse offers the verse to western audience without the traditional "beat-them" expression (with the object pronouns "them" referring to dissident Muslim wives) which has long puzzled Muslim scholars and Arabic linguists.

***Analysis of data from Egyptian Arabic.*** I will consider the cases in which the Egyptian Arabic nominal expression /Hadd/ and similar EA items occur in constructions generated by EA speakers. I will also see whether my observations about /Hadd/ are now supported by more evidence from EA by checking whether the EA gender-inclusive noun /Hadd/ is having even more new usages and occurring in constructions other than the ones I referred to in the introduction.

I will also see how job titles are used gender-inclusively in EA, especially when it comes to jobs that once were exclusively taken up by one gender and now are careers by the other gender, such as nursing and the judicial corp. Additionally, I will look at whether a grammatically biased but semantically gender-inclusive term could affect the structure of sentences in which it occurs and direct it towards gender-inclusiveness.

Attempts to neutralize gender-biased expressions and structures

Based on these analyses, I will then attempt to propose further gender-inclusive techniques in the current study for EA (building on Ahmed 2007). Where possible, I will try to make use of the gender-inclusive techniques that have been used in English. Despite the fact that those techniques might not be suitable for Arabic, they will be of help as they may guide the attempted gender-inclusive techniques used in this study.

### **Researcher's Positionality and Potential Aspects of Bias**

Burr (1995) argues that objectivity in research is impossible, as researchers see the world from different perspectives and so they need to be aware of their positionality and involvement in their research.

I am an Egyptian practicing Muslim man, trained in Egypt for my BA and MA, then in the USA for my Ph. D. My identity as an Egyptian Muslim man is clearly shown in my analysis of the data. Given my academic background, the analysis I yield bears progressive thought that endeavors to promulgate better understanding of the *Qur'anic* verses I am looking at, and alleviate, as much as possible some power levels from the two Arabic varieties I am investigating; QA by unveiling more gender- inclusive interpretations that the *Qur'anic* text allows but have been shrouded in patriarchal

interpretations. With regards to EA, my analysis seeks to achieve more gender-inclusive options which could have positive aspects if adopted and used by individuals using EA.

### **Three Perspectives of Positionality**

My positionality in the current research could be described from three possible perspectives: feminism, feminist linguistics, and memetics<sup>28</sup>.

**The religious perspective.** From the perspective of QA, I am a Muslim man. Being a Muslim entails that I use the Islamic Discourse, most of which is taken from *the Qur'an*. I project my identity as a Muslim in my writing by practicing traditional written/spoken expression habits such as capitalizing words that refer to Allah, God in Islam, forms of reference to Him, as well as using the expression (pbuh), meaning *peace be upon him*, each and every time I cite the name of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Being a Muslim man as a broader category entails that I am a participant in the patriarchal Discourse and culture that has developed in Muslim communities, not because of Islam itself as much as because of the way Muslim men see Islam through the lens of their pre-Islamic culture. That lens of culture might render Muslim men unable to see that Islam empowered women in ways that women never had a chance to experience before Islam; and therefore, they may be led to sideline women despite the many verses, and Prophetic traditions which either call for equality or portray the Muslim women as more valued and privileged than their male Muslim counterparts.

So, I am acting differently as a Muslim scholar conducting research targeting women's *emancipation* from patriarchal interpretations of some *Qur'anic* verses; I am trying to see what a regular Muslim man from my patriarchal background cannot see the

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<sup>28</sup> For definitions of these terms, see Chapter Two.

female Other from his lofty tower of patriarchy, which enables a man to see only a single side of the world, that of his own gender alone.

In so doing, I am aware of the fact that women have surely had views of their own across the history of Islam. Perhaps they did not get a chance to verbalize those views because of certain restrictions on them by patriarchal culture. Very few are the women who were given that lofty chance. On top of those women is Lady Aa'ishah who learned the *Sunnah*<sup>29</sup> of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) himself and was strongly recommended by him (pbuh) as a reliable source of Islamic knowledge for Muslims.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Aa'ishah Abder-Rahmaan (aka Bint Ish-shaaTi'a) projected herself as a female Muslim scholar. She wrote multiple books on Islam, among which stands out her interpretation of *the Qur'an*. I was hoping to use Abder-Rahmaan's interpretation but all I found was her interpretation of the last thirty suuraahs "chapters" of *the Qur'an* which did not have any of the verses I looked at in my analysis of QA.

My consolation was the translations I am using in this dissertation, both of which are by female scholars and translators. These translations include certain interpretations from a feminine perspective in many cases. I analyzed those translations as mere interpretations in their own right, despite the fact that they remain short of the full meaning of the verses conveyed by the Arabic original.

**The feminist perspective.** From the feminist perspective, and as an Egyptian man with emancipatory views, targets and intentions (De Beauvoire, 1989), I am aware of the injustices which women experience in patriarchal EA Discourse. QA Discourse is excluded here as *the Qur'an* is the scriptures of Islam that represent the word of Allah to humans according to Islamic belief system. It is also significant to mention that the

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<sup>29</sup> The term *Sunnah* in Islam refers to whatever Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, did, or approved.

Arabic language had existed long before *the Qur'an* which means that *the Qur'an* is not the original source of bias in the Arabic language; rather *the Qur'an* was formed in the already existing Arabic mold with its syntactic and grammatical biases. Although this significant point may not free me of my personal bias towards *the Qur'an* as a Muslim, it is quite a valid point based on chronological evidence.

On the level of EA, I am an actual participant in the Discourse. I experience the Discourse almost on a daily basis and the injustices of gender-biased language runs through my head and I wonder, as always: “Is there anything that could be done about it?” Users of EA do not learn EA grammar; they acquire it as part of their L1 acquisition. Except for occasions of religious and/cultural formality. As EA speakers use their discourse, they do not, most probably, stop at the linguistic injustices in the two variety, except for the observations toward gender neutrality which I referred to in the introduction to the current dissertation, and which they use perhaps unaware of its value.

EA users are probably more sensitive to the Discourse they code on a daily basis, which includes sociocultural practices, but not to the extent when they become aware of language bias of their Discourse. Trapped in my realization of the bias in EA discourse/Discourse, I am seeking an outlet for women and men; for women as they need to be emancipated in language, and for men as they need to be emancipated from their patriarchal entrapment, the lofty palace that they reside in, unable to see the Other through its blurry glass-ceiling separating them from the male Other. And so, genders need linguistic emancipation.

**The memetic perspective.** By proposing GIL as a language style for users of EA, I can be regarded to be encouraging the birth/growth of a new meme, GIL, both as a



concept and a language style, in Arab culture. Dawkins (1976) proposes that memes are the *new replicators*, in much the same way biological genes replicate themselves. By means of human intervention, I will attempt to contribute to the replication of the *GIL meme* and the pertinent language-planning and language engineering efforts exerted by feminist linguists to neutralize English and make it as much a power-free language as possible. In playing this part, I see myself as what Suzan Blackmore (2000) describes by the term “a meme machine” coined earlier by Dawkins, (1976). Blackmore explains that meme machines, i.e. humans, copy the most successful people. The most successful people, to me as a researcher, are feminist linguists who have attempted to gender-neutralize English and who have been, at least to a certain degree, successful. I am in this dissertation imitating their efforts by trying to check the applicability of their techniques to the Arabic varieties under study.

### **Choice of Translations**

The translations used in the current research have been chosen in ways that serve the analysis of *Qur’anic* verses with a CDA lens. They are also considered as independent exegeses in their own right.

#### **Sahih International translation**

I chose the translation of the *Sahih International* team because of their rigorous translation which gave me the feeling that the translation team was an all-male team. Ironically, the team turned out to be an all-female one. Additionally, the team members being of an American background, developed my expectation that they might well consider women in their translation, impacted by their life experience within the

American context.

### **Laleh Bakhtiar translation**

Bakhtiar translation stands out for being one of the very few translations of *the Qur'an* by the solo effort of a female translator. Bakhtiar is also a feminist and she highlighted women's presence in verses as much as she could. She also used (f) as a feminine marker on verbs, nouns and adjectives, something which I did not see in other translation of *the Qur'an*.

Bakhtiar's translation also stands out for offering a very novel, *feminist* translation of verse 34 of Suurat An-Nisaa'a (The Women), which, as traditionally interpreted by male interpreters and translators of *the Qur'an*, licenses husbands to use corporal punishment to discipline their disobedient wives.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN QUR'ANIC ARABIC

In the current chapter, I investigate the genderization of nominal, pronominal, verbal, and adjectival expressions and constructions in *Qur'anic Arabic*. As noted earlier, *Qur'anic Arabic* is generally perceived, especially by non-linguists, as directly related to *Modern Standard Arabic*, which in turn is regarded by many speakers of local Arabic varieties as the source of many Arabic dialects currently in use in Arabic-using communities.

Traditionally, *the Qur'an* has mostly been interpreted and translated by male scholars who might not have taken gender-equality in QA as a significant cause to society. Readers of *the Qur'an* have become familiar with such “patriarchal” readings of the Qur'an, which curbed the scope of *the Qur'an's* potential to impact the life of Muslims as far as gender-equality is concerned. Hassan (2004) explained that “the familiar fails to surprise, for that is precisely the measure of its familiarity! And yet, a close look under the seemingly unruffled surface of the familiar will often reveal a depth of unsuspected complexity” (p. 15) This view resonates with Maqchin and Mayr (2012) who explained that the term ‘critical’ is central to CDA and means “‘denaturalising’ the language to reveal the kinds of ideas, absences and taken-for granted assumptions in texts. This will allow us to reveal the kinds of power interests buried in texts.” (p.5). The subsequent analysis seeks to reveal some of the “unfamiliar” complexity under the surface of familiar QA verses generally interpreted with a patriarchal lens.

This chapter looks at data from *Qur'anic* verses that raise issues of genderization, ideologically and/or morphosyntactically. The data is analyzed morphosyntactically first

then ideologically via CDA which is used to interpret the related ideological background of the data. For analyzing the data, I also used verses from *the Qur'an*, other than the ones in question, in what could be described as the equivalent of the Lutheran Approach to interpreting the Bible. This approach is quite common in *Qur'anic* exegeses given by various scholars across the ages if interpreting the book of Islam. Additionally, support is sought from the Sunnah (traditions) of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Occasionally, those verses from *the Qur'an* adopted to explain the data are used within the CDA analysis following each type of verses, with their English translations.

Examining the data morphosyntactically could lead to a better understanding of those verses and the ideological messages they potentially convey. Also, a morphosyntactic analysis of the data reveals issues of agreement/disagreement between the lexical items which helps in reading those verses thoroughly with the lens of CDA.

Van Dijk (2001) defines CDA as the study of “implicit” or “indirect meanings” in texts. These kinds of meanings are deduced without being explicitly expressed. Thus, he further explains that these meanings are not part of the text itself, but of the text’s mental model.

According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, humans’ world view is shaped for them by the language of their society. Accordingly, as Sapir (1929) explains “different languages will shape the world differently.” (p. 69) Relatedly, Maqchin and Mayr (2012) argued that “Since language shapes and maintains a society’s ideas and values, it can also serve to create, maintain and legitimize certain kinds of social practices. Looking at QA in terms of Sapir’s explanation, it is necessary to, first, highlight the fact that QA is not a language variety in the strict linguistic sense of the term; it is not used in everyday

communication by Muslims; rather it is an ideological variety that mostly shapes the mindset of Muslims, based in many cases on the perspective from which it is interpreted and presented to Muslims, and, it follows, shapes their world view.

Of all critical analyses of text, the most difficult is carrying out CDA on a text that the analyst agrees with (Maqchin and Mayr, p. 47) This is applicable to me as a Muslim scholar. In carrying out my analysis of the data, I will try to refute views of some scholars who hold that *the Qur'an* has elbowed aside the female other from social life or depowered females by further empowering males.

The verses I selected for analysis are some of the most controversial *Qur'anic* verses characterized by a common denominator: ideology in operation where, in some cases, such ideology is shrouded in patriarchal interpretation. The aim of the analysis is thus to 1) highlight levels of power in the selected verses from *the Qur'anic* text, and 2) reveal whether certain patriarchally interpreted verses are actually neutral in essence, particularly as CDA is itself an arsenal of interpretation.

### **Six Types of Qur'anic Reference to Gender**

As I have explained briefly in the introduction, *Qur'anic* verses with regards to genderization fall into six major types of reference repeated here for convenience:

Type 1: Reference to males with grammatically masculine forms [+M +m]<sup>30</sup>

Type 2: Reference to females by using grammatically feminine forms [+F+f]

Type 3: Reference to females and males genders by using masculine forms<sup>31</sup>

[+M+m/f]<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> [+M] grammatically masculine, [+m] semantically masculine, [+F] grammatically feminine, and [+f] semantically feminine. For a full list of abbreviations, see Appendix A.

<sup>31</sup> More verses of this type are analyzed as they occur naturally in the analysis itself.

Type 4: Reference to females by using masculine forms [+M+f]

Type 5: Reference to males by using feminine forms [+F+m]

Type 6: Reference to both males and females equatively [+F/M+m/f]

The data from QA will be analyzed via CDA in terms of the following checklist, extracted from Halliday's *Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985), which is also the core for Fairclough's key questions for text analysis (1989: 110-111). As far as data from QA is concerned, I looked at lexicalization, transitivity, thematic structure, and the use of nominalization.

These four focal aspects run through the analysis of verses in the current chapter to unveil levels of power in those verses. They are discussed upon occurrence in the verses.

### **Number of Verses Investigated in the Data Analysis**

Analysis of data from QA uses seventy nine verses, twenty six verses of which are listed under the pertinent reference type for each as basic data. Other QA data (fifty two verses) come from supportive verses that explain, prove, or disprove the issues and claims made in the basic data.

The number of basic data varies from verse type to another. For example, type three verses (reference to females and males genders by using masculine forms), uses more verses both as basic and supportive data than the other verse types. This could be

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<sup>32</sup> I wondered why I spontaneously initiated this format [+M+m/f] with [+M/m] followed by [+f]. This could be justified by the fact that although both terms start in Arabic with the letter /miim/ in “مذكر” /muḏakkār/ “masculine” and “مؤنث” /muʔnnaθ/ “feminine”, the masculine has an alphabetical second letter “ذ” /ḏaal/ that precedes the feminine term's second letter, “و” /waaw/. This could be a point for an apolitical justification beyond the use of [+M/m] first. However, as the format [+M/m+/f] might seem captured in a binary opposition, it is worthy of researching it via a separate paper, as an attempt to find out where the roots of this linguistic habit lie and its ideology.

attributed to the fact that the masculine is used gender-inclusively as the default form for all genders.

*Grammatical gender* is represented, only symbolically, by a number of verses (only two) in Type 5 as this type of reference does not exhibit relations of power to highlight.

### **Type 1: Reference to Males by Grammatically Masculine Forms**

#### **Introducing the Data**

These verses could be described as [+M +m] i.e. grammatically and semantically masculine. In this type of reference, I try to show that the + M feature could, in some cases, not only refer semantically to males (+m), but also to females inclusively, yielding a (+m/f) of this kind of reference and that such an inclusive interpretation has been shrouded by male interpreters of *the Qur'an*. This can be shown in the following data:

Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates) 23

مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَنْتَظِرُ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا ﴿٢٣﴾

Sahih International translation

“Among the believers are men true to what they promised Allah. Among them is he who has fulfilled his vow [to the death], and among them is he who awaits [his chance]. And they did not alter [the terms of their commitment] by any alteration “

Bakhtiar translation

“Among the ones who believe are men who are sincere in the contracts they have made with God; of them are some who satisfy by fulfilling their vow with death, and of them are some who watch and wait; and they have not substituted any substitution”

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ  
وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَأَلْصَقَتْ قَنِينَهُنَّ  
حَافِظَاتٌ لِلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ  
فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَأَضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنْ  
أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا  
كَبِيرًا

Sahih International translation

“Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand.”

Bakhtiar translation

“Men are supporters of wives because Good has given some of them an advantage over others and because they spend of their wealth. So the ones (f) who are in accord with morality are the ones (f) who are morally obligated, the ones (f) who guard the unseen of what God has kept safe. But those (f) whose resistance you fear, then admonish them (f) and abandon them (f) in their sleeping place then go away from them (f); and if they (f) obey you, surely look not for any way against them (f); truly God is Lofty, Great.”



An-Nisa'a (The Women) 129

وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا  
تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا  
وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٢٩﴾

Sahih International translation

“And you will never be able to be equal [in feeling] between wives, even if you should strive [to do so]. So do not incline completely [toward one] and leave another hanging. And if you amend [your affairs] and fear Allah - then indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful.”

Bakhtiar translation

“You shall never be able to be just between wives, even if you are eager; but incline not with total inclination away from her, forsaking her as if she be one who is in suspense; but if you make things right, and are Godfearing, then indeed He is Forgiving, Compassionate”

An-Nur (The Light) 30

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوْا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَٰلِكَ  
أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Sahih International translation

“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is acquainted with what they do.”

Bakhtiar translation

*“Tell the ones who believe to lower their sight and keep their private parts safe. That is purer for them, truly God is Aware of what they craft.”*

Another verse of this type, yet a more controversial one, is the following where the dual plural is used:

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 35

وَقُلْنَا يٰۤاٰدَمُ اسْكُنْ اَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ  
شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُوْنَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾

Sahih International translation

*“And We said, “O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“We said: O Adam! Inhabit the Garden, you and your spouse, and both of you eat freely from it wherever you both have willed, but come not near this tree so that you both not be among ones who are unjust.”*

Al-Baqara (The Cow) 37

فَلَقِيَ ۤاٰدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ۤكَلِمٰتٍ فَنَابَ عَلَيْهِ ۤاِنَّهٗ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

Sahih International translation

*“Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“Adam then had received words from his Lord and He turned to him in forgiveness; truly He, He is The Compassioned”*

### **Analysis of Reference Type 1 Verses**

Transitivity is a major factor in this type of verses and could be a source of interpretive restriction with regards to gender. The verses are basically formed in the masculine where men are depicted as agents. The question that could be raised is: Is there any room for including females within some verses of this first type?

Although the term رجال /rijaal-un/ “men” in Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates) 23 refers to males, it cannot be said to disregard Muslim females who have offered similar, if not more,<sup>33</sup> sacrifice and faithfulness for Allah. Ibn Kathiir’s interpretation of the verse reveals that the verse refers to two specific persons, Khuzaymata –bn Thaabit Al-ansarii and Anas-Ibn Innudhur, both of whom kept their covenant with Allah.

Al-Shaarawi offers a viewpoint which could help to better understand the verse’s field. He argues that the word “رجال” “men” in *the Qur’an* is associated with seriousness, determination, and steadfast faithfulness. Although this interpretation is patriarchally driven in its own right, it conjures up gender-inclusive transitivity by expanding the semantic domain of the term, as seriousness, determination, and steadfast faithfulness are also attributes that could be found in females as well. The repentant woman who returned to Prophet Muhammad asking to be stoned according to Islamic Law is one, good example.

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<sup>33</sup> A good example is reported in Sahih Muslim about a woman who became pregnant outside of marriage and came repentant to Prophet Muhammad asking him to apply the adultery Hadd (law) on her. Every time that woman was sent away by the Prophet on a maternal task, like giving birth, then weaning the baby, the woman came back in absolute failfulness to keep her covenant with Allah.

On the surface, the field of the verse is a bout men. Both Ibn Kathiir and Al-Shaarawi start their interpretation of the verse by saying that the verse refers to “a group of Muslims of true faith” who kept their promise to Allah; later they cite Anas-ibn Annudur as one of example as he had promise, after missing the Badr battle, to fight for Allah in an upcoming battle, which he did in Uhud.

Semantically, Al-Shaarawi highlights the word /rijaalun/ “men” as reflecting meanings of valor and strong will. Although Al-Shaarawi’s interpretation ultimately specifies male referents in the verse, his allusion to the generic nature of the verse also unveils a gender-neutral interpretation of lexical choice of the word /rijaal/ ‘men’; a reading that does not have to confine the verse to its original context, which allows for timeless applicability of the verse.

Commenting on the same verse, Khalid Al-Gindi (2010) highlighted the term /rijaalun/ “men” a (+M +m/f) and stressed that it should not be grasped as referring to Muslim men exclusively because there, too, are Muslim women who have the same qualities referred to in the verse.

**The controversy over An-Nisa’a (The Women) 34.** An-Nisa’a (The Women) 34 is one of the most controversial *Qur’anic* verses. The verse is loaded with power relations. It starts with a statement that men are in charge of women (Sahih International) which Bakhtiar translates as “Men are supporters of women”, highlighting that the a Muslim man’s responsibility for his wife is financially driven; other forms of emotional and psychological support follow under Bakhtiar’s choice of the term “supporters” in her translation of the noun /qawwamuun/ which still stands short as a translation as it does

not convey the constant repetitiveness achieved by doubling the vowel /w/ in the word /qawwaamuun/<sup>34</sup> of the act of support as is the case in the QA original.

Both Ibn Kathiir and Al-Shaarwai have a similar interpretation of the verse's initial statement. Ibn Kathiir states downright that men are more favored than women, a man is responsible for his wife, and a wife is always expected to obey her husband. Al-Shaarawi extends the power relations to include, not only the husband and the wife, but any man-woman relation within the family. He states that a father, for example, is responsible for his daughter(s), a brother for his sister(s) etc... and argues that this paradigm guarantees that women are not required to toil or provide for themselves as this is the responsibility of the man. Women's role is thus beneficiaries rather than acted-upon recipients. But for women to be beneficiaries is to be inactive participants according to feminist thought that seeks equality of action, while disregarding superiority of the beneficiaries, women. This resonates with Al-Shaarawi's views that a woman supported by a man financially has great prestige as she does not have to work to support herself. Al-Shaarawi also argues that the word /qawwaam/ "a constant supporter" means that a man is commanded by Allah to provide for wife, sister, or other females he is in charge of. Then he alludes to the next part of the verse which states that this kind of "responsibility right" given to a man is a form of preference to women over men as it is the man who has to toil and act as the breadwinner and provider for the woman, not the other way round.

Zainab Radwan (as cited in Angel Reda, 2013) explained that the meaning of the singular adjective /qawwaam/ in *Classical Arabic* is a person who takes care of another

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<sup>34</sup> I would add the adverb "constantly" before the prepositional phrase "in charge of" in the Sahih International translation or the adjective "constant" before the term "supporters" in the Bakhtiar translation.

emotionally and financially and that Allah does not favor a gender over the other; the bottom line is emotional and financial capability regardless of gender. That is why, according to her, the verse specifies this kind of fine preference to God by the partitive “some”, i.e. God prefers some of the men to some of the women and some of the women to some of the men based on how much they offer emotionally and financially as a support for the other gender. Radwan also highlighted Islamic society’s dire need and the necessity of freeing *Quranic* interpretation from the shackles of culturally-driven interpretations by focusing on *Qur’anic* text and analyzing it linguistically.

The next controversial part in the verse is the imperative form of the verb *واضربوهن* /wa-Drebuuhunna/ commonly translated as “strike them”. Muslim interpreters have either been too careful or too careless in their interpretation of this verse. For example, Ibn Kathiir explains that for a Muslim man to physically discipline his wife, he must be gentle as he is after a symbolic kind of discipline, rather than painful discipline. He alludes to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) saying: “Do not beat Allah’s female worshippers!” and “There is no good in a man who beats his wife.”

Sheik Al- Obaykaan (n.d.) passed a fatwa (a religion license) that allows a woman to beat her husband if he starts beating her. He even advocated that a beaten wife should learn a martial art, like karate or Judo etc..., to be able to defend herself because Prophet Muhammed (pbuh) was never reported to have beaten any of his wives.

The use of the imperative form in this verb has apparently been literally interpreted by the patriarchal lens. With the Prophet (pbuh) stressing that there is no good

is a man who resorts to beating his wife, and the example<sup>35</sup> he himself gave to Muslim men by not beating any of his wives. This evidence from the prophet's tradition and life, supported by verse 7 of Surah Al-Hashr (The Exile) calls for reconsidering the *Qur'an's* use of the imperative when it comes to exercising physical discipline on a wife.

Obligatory instructions are obligations that incur punishment by Allah if not fulfilled. There is no choice for a Muslim when it comes to those obligations like abstention from burying a newly born baby girl, as was the pre-Islamic habit of a man when his wife gives birth to a girl. But there is indeed no punishment for a man who refrains from exercising domestic violence on his wife. The matter here is not an order from God, but a last-resort option as it actually exists as the last of the imperative forms in the verse, a bar raised by a wife's attitude and mood might cause a man to lose his self-control; it is a worst case scenario if and only if all hell breaks loose. Optionality is, therefore, the purpose behind using the imperative in the verse. The use of the imperative in the verse is analogous with using the imperative to make a guest feel at home by saying: "The fridge is loaded with food and drinks, take whatever you like from it!"

In her translation of this verse, Lalih Bakhtiar altered the traditional meaning of the imperative verb /iDrebuuhunna/ completely by translating it as "abandon them", not "physically discipline them". In an interview (2011) Bakhtiar brags about her novel, power-alleviating translation of the controversial verb and says that she resorted to it as this is one of the meanings of the verb /yaDrib/ "to beat" in Classical Arabic; she wonders why translators choose a meaning that causes a human being, Muslim women,

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<sup>35</sup> Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is to Muslims an example to be followed per verse 7, Surrat Al-Hashr (The Exile) in which this clearly instructive part reads: وما آتاكم الرسول فخذوه وما نهاكم عنه فانتهوا  
"And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from." (Sahih International).

to suffer? Bakhtiar explains that the Prophet’s (pbuh) reaction to domestic unrest was “go away” and says that “going away” is what is expected of a Muslim man in a situation of domestic unrest as the Prophet (pbuh) is every Muslims role model. She asks why we Muslims do not follow the Sunnah<sup>36</sup> of the Prophet (pbuh) and understand it, i.e. the imperative verb /ʔiDrab/, to mean “abandon or go away”? She alludes to verse 231 of Suurat Al-Baqarah:

وَإِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَعْنَنَ أَجَلُهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ  
 سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَلَا تُنْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِنَعْنِدُوا وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ  
 فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوعًا وَادْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ  
 وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣١﴾

Sahih International translation

“And when<sup>37</sup> you divorce women and they have [nearly] fulfilled their term, either retain them according to acceptable terms or release them according to acceptable terms, and do not keep them, intending harm, to transgress [against them]. And whoever does that has certainly wronged himself. And do not take the verses of Allah in jest. And remember the favor of Allah upon you and what has been revealed to you of the Book and wisdom by which He instructs you. And fear Allah and know that Allah is Knowing of all things.”

<sup>36</sup> “Sunnah” is a Classical Arabic term meaning whatever Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, did, or approved.

<sup>37</sup> Translating /ʔiḏaa/ “if” the conditional in initial position in the original *Qur’anic* verse into “when” does alter the meaning; “if” means that divorce is a possibility, whereas “when” indicates that it is a step that is expected.



Bakhtiar translation

*“When you divorce wives, and they (f) are about to reach their (f) term, then hold them (f) back honorably or set them (f) free honorably; but hold them (f) not back by injuring them so that they commit aggression, and whoever commits that then indeed he does wrong to himself; and take not the Signs of God to yourselves in mockery; remember the divine blessings of God on you and what He sent forth to you of the Book and wisdom ; He admonishes you with it; and be God fearing of God and know that God in Knowing of everything.”*

Bakhtiar explained that Islam promises a woman experiencing divorce an honorable treatment and it makes no sense that a Muslim woman’s condition as a prospective divorced woman is better off than that of her being a wife, living under the threat of physical discipline, which makes divorce in the eye of a Muslim woman better than marriage. Bakhtiar also alluded to grammarian’s criticism of invalidity of her opinion based on the fact that the verb /Daraba/, used in the imperative in the verse, is a transitive verb and her interpretation thereof as meaning “go away from them” renders it intransitive. She argues that the prophet never stopped to check the grammatical transitivity of the verb in question and that he simply understood it as “go away from them” and this is what he did.

Bakhtiar, then, refers to a great divide in interpreting the term /nujuuz/ نشوز, which can be translated as “discordance”<sup>38</sup>, in Surat An-Nisaa, 34, and later in the same suurah in verse 128.

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<sup>38</sup> “discordance’ is my translation of the term /nujuuz/ which embeds within it connotations of playing off tune as the QAexpression suggests.

In An-Nisa'a (The Women), 34, the term /nujuuz/نشوز "discordance" is translated by male interpreters as "arrogance" (Sahih International) or "disobedience", according to Bakhtiar (2011), whereas the same term, /nujuuz/نشوز "discordance", is translated differently when it comes to An-Nisa'a 128 in which "discordant" males are discussed, where the translation takes a different turn with the males as shown in the translations of the verse below:

وَإِنْ أَمْرًا خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُوزًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا  
 أَنْ يُصَلِّحَا بَيْنَهُمَا صُلْحًا وَالصُّلْحُ خَيْرٌ وَأُحْضِرَتِ الْأَنفُسُ الشُّحَّ  
 وَإِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ  
 خَبِيرًا

Sahih International translation

*"And if a woman fears from her husband contempt or evasion, there is no sin upon them if they make terms of settlement between them - and settlement is best. And present in [human] souls is stinginess. But if you do good and fear Allah - then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted."*

Bakhtiar translation

*"If your wife fears resistance from her mate, or turning aside, no blame on either of them that they make things right between the two, that there be reconciliation; and reconciliation is better. Souls are prone to stinginess, but if you do good and are Godfearing, then truly God is aware of what you do."*

Sahih International translated the term /nujuuz/ "نشوز" in A-Nisa'a (The Women), 34 as "arrogance", and translated the same term in An-Nisa'a (The Women), 128, as "contempt". It was necessary to consult multiple other translations of the term by other

scholars to see how the same term has been treated in An-Nisa'a 34, and 128 to see if there is any bias involved. Table 1 shows translations of the term /nujuuz/ in 4:34 and 128 in several translations of the meanings of *the Qur'an*:

Table 1

*Sample Translations of the Term /nujuuz/ نشوز “discordance” in Suurat An-Nisa'a, 34 and 128*

Name of Translation of the meaning so <i>the Qur'an</i>	The term /nujuuz/ “نشوز” in An-Nisa'a, 34, referring to women	The term /nujuuz/ ”نشوز” in An-Nisa'a, 128, referring to men
Sahih International	arrogance	contempt
Muhsin Khan	ill-conduct	cruelty
Pickthal	rebellion	ill treatment
Yusuf Ali	disloyalty	cruelty
Shakir	desertion	ill-usage
Dr. Ghali	non-compliance	non- compliance
Bakhtiar	disobedience	disobedience

Per Table 1, it can be assumed that translation of the term /nujuuz/ in An-Nisa'a, 34, referring to women are mostly patriarchally-driven. With the exception of Dr. Ghali and Bakhtiar, all other translators of the term /nujuuz/ in the table assume that a married woman could, at some point, be arrogant, of ill-conduct, rebellious, disloyal to her husband, and able to desert him. Translations of the term /nujuuz/ in An-Nisa'a, 128, referring to men, reveal a different image of a married Muslim man; it can be expected of

him to treat his wife with contempt, and cruelty according to the translations of Muhsin Khan and Yusuf Ali.

Dr. Ghali and Bakhtiar's translations of the term achieve a level of gender-equality by using one term in their translation of the two verses, just like the QA original. All other translations of the term are either judgemental of the wife or portray her as of reactionary attitudes. They also show the husband as a generator of dominating and controlling actions which he utilizes to hegemonize his wife.

Most of the translations that describe a “discordant” married Muslim man depict the man as “agent” in ways that either portray him with negative, yet expected, attributes, and a married woman as the one who is always acted upon.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in one of his traditions refers to women by saying: “Women are split halves (equal partners)<sup>39</sup> of men; whoever honors them is an honorable man, and whoever treats them with contempt is contemptible man.” Obedience and compliance that a woman has to show is, as Yusuf Estes (2010) criticizes men for misunderstanding the instructions, are basically obedience and compliance to Allah, not to the man per se, by safeguarding her chastity and being a devout Muslim on whom the man is held responsible before Allah. Estes alludes to the fact that the prophet never ever spoke harshly to any of his women, let alone beat them. He also cites the prophet’s hadith in which he says: “The best of you are the best to their wives and I am the best to my wives.”

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<sup>39</sup> It is important here to highlight the fact that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) used a metaphor “split half” that he had used in another hadith (tradition) in which he says: “Avoid Hell fire even by a split half of a date.” (meaning a split half of a date, that you give to a needy person), reported in Sahih Al-Bukhaary and Sahih Muslim.

Significantly, Estes answers a Muslim woman's inquiry about whether a Muslim woman can treat her discordant husband in the same way by using the three options husband are given in An-Nisa'a, 34, (advice, forsaking in bed, and striking). The answer is, "It's not equal, but it's fair" meaning a woman cannot. But Estes also makes it clear that she can ask divorce any time and have it without having to go through the three options.

*Mathematical justice vs context-based justice.* The concept of justice is generally viewed with a "mathematical lens"; allotting equal shares of something to more than one individual. Justice in Islam has always been a source of criticism by those who view the world by worldly standards. As much as Estes' phrase "It's not equal, but it's fair" can be mind-boggling and does not make sense, the second half of it "but it's fair" does pose a how-come question. Could there ever be situations in which clear inequality is a way to achieve justice? Once on Facebook, I saw a post that I considered revolutionary for its powerful assumptions and mind-stirring ideas. The post had the Figure (1) below:

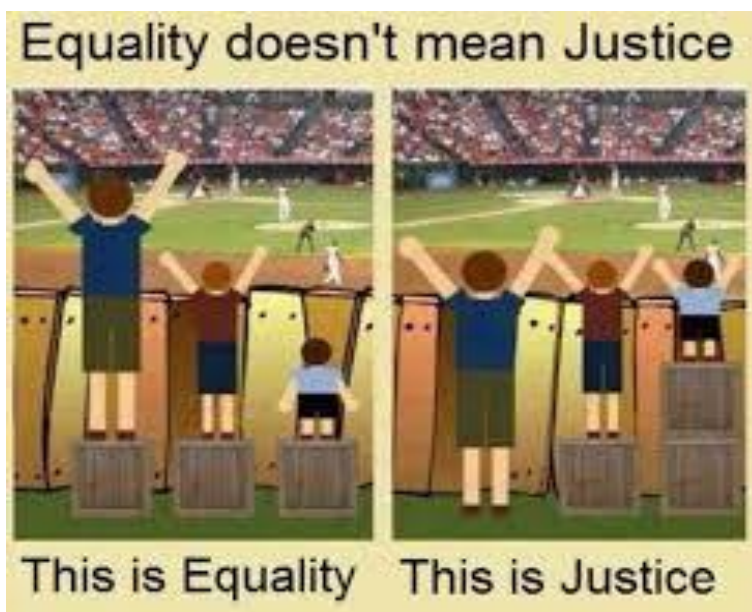


Figure 1. Equality doesn't mean justice.

The right picture in Figure 1 shows that achieving justice by allowing all three boys to watch the match necessitates that the shortest boy be given two boxes. The one on the left shows that giving all the boys one box is equal, yet does not achieve justice. Upon considering this picture, I immediately thought of Islamic perspective to justice in cases where men might seem to be more favored than women either because they are given more of something, or are being asked to do more of something else, whereas in reality a man's responsibilities in Islam are much greater than what appears to be the case on the surface. Even in our age in which women work on equal footing with men, a Muslim man is still solely in charge for providing for the family. A woman could choose to contribute to the family budget, but Islam guarantees that she can never be coerced by her husband into this kind of *financial* contribution. An-Nisa'a 34 is an example of contextualized justice; other verses pertaining to heritage in Islam include cases in which a woman inherits the same as the man, more than a man, or even inherits but the man does not. An-Nisa'a (The Women) 12 explains some of those cases.

An-Nisa'a (The Women) 12

﴿ وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمْ الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَنَّ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِينَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَلَهُنَّ الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتُمْ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ الثُّمْنُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ تُوصُونَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ رَجُلٌ يُورَثُ كَلَلَةً أَوْ امْرَأَةً وَلَهُ أَخٌ أَوْ أُخْتٌ فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ فَإِنْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فِي الثُّلُثِ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصَى بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ غَيْرِ مُضَارٍّ وَصِيَّةً مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

Sahih International translation

*“And for you is half of what your wives leave if they have no child. But if they have a child, for you is one fourth of what they leave, after any bequest they [may have] made or debt. And for the wives is one fourth if you leave no child. But if you leave a child, then for them is an eighth of what you leave, after any bequest you [may have] made or debt. And if a man or woman leaves neither ascendants nor descendants but has a brother or a sister, then for each one of them is a sixth. But if they are more than two, they share a third, after any bequest which was made or debt, as long as there is no detriment [caused]. [This is] an ordinance from Allah, and Allah is Knowing and Forbearing.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“For you is half of what your souses leave if they (f) have no child; but if they (f) have a child, then for you is a fourth of what they (f) leave after any bequest which they shall bequeath or any debt; and for them (f) a fourth of what you leave if you have no children and if you have children’ then for them (f) is an eight of what you leave after any bequest which you bequest which you bequeath or any debt; and if a man or a woman has no direct heirs, but indirect feirs, and has a brother or sister then for each one of them (f)<sup>40</sup> a sixth; but if there are more than that, then they are the ones who associate in a third after any bequest which one bequeaths or any debt without one who presses the heirs; this is the enjoiment from God; and God is Knowing, Forbearing.”*

Heritage in Islam, thus, depends on the context. Justice within the framework of Islam is not always achieved through equality; on the contrary, equality could be a source

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<sup>40</sup> In this underlined phrase, the dual plural in “of them”, “منهما”, literally meaning of the two, refers to either the brother or the sister, and so Bakhtuiar’s use of the feminine marker is not in place as it disregards the males.

of injustice in certain cases of heritage in Islam as equality in those cases would mean to disregard the context in which individuals have varying responsibilities of varying degrees. Significantly, the picture on the left well represents justice with the secular framework which is based on mathematical justice; the second one bases justice on pragmatic concepts, contexts that reflect reality and applicability of matters in ways that allot beneficiaries according to their responsibilities and duties. So, the first type of justice can be termed “mathematical justice”<sup>41</sup>; the second “contextualized justice”.

And so women in An-Nisa’a (The Women) 128 are asked to seek a settlement with their discordant husbands; husbands in the subsequent verse (An-Nisa’a) are reminded that they can never be fair to women, even if they pay attention to achieving justice between them and ultimately reminded that reaching a settlement with a discordant wife is a better option.

**The use of verbal process in type 1 verses.** Sometimes instructions and directives are given indirectly in *the Qur’an* through the use of *verbal process*. Suurahs An-Nur, 30, and Al-Baqarah 35, and 37 are examples of *the Qur’an’s* use of verbal process. An-Nur, 30 starts with the interactive /qull/ “Say” followed by the masculine plural noun /l-ilmu?miniin/ “to the believers” used gender-inclusively here as referring to both Muslim men and women. Gender-inclusiveness here stems from the fact that this verse carries instructions that are applicable to both men and women equally, without specific gender-based distinction based on things like physical or ideological. In Classical Arabic, it is a grammatical norm to use masculine forms gender-inclusively to refer to a group of a mixed gender, unless personal distinctive differences are highlighted.

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<sup>41</sup> I was aware not to use the term “logical justice” in order for the term not to fall into the logical-illogical binary opposition which would indicate that “illogical justice” is the *Qur’anic* opposite.



Al-Baqarah (The Cow), 35 also has a verbal process in which both genders, Adam and his spouse<sup>42</sup>, are addressed separately as a couple, and given instructions that they both should abide by. The Dual form is used in this verse, an indicator of recognizing both Adam and Eve as recipients of the instructions given in the verse.

Al-Baqarah (The Cow) 37 also describes a verbal process in a stative way. The source of the “words” is God and Adam is the receiver of the words. Receiving the words is followed directly by forgiving Adam for his sin. Here, feminist activist, Nawal Al-Saadawi (Malti-Douglas, 1995) argues that forgiveness in the verse was only for Adam as he was the sole recipient of God’s words. Although on the surface Al-Saadawi’s argument makes sense, it does ignore the fact that it was Adam who basically disobeyed Allah per verse 121 of Suurat Taha:

فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتَ لهُمَا سَوْءٌ لَّهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا  
 مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَىٰ ﴿١٢١﴾

Sahih International translation

*“And Adam and his wife ate of it, and their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to fasten over themselves from the leaves of Paradise. And Adam disobeyed his Lord and erred.”*

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<sup>42</sup> A caveat is required here: There is no mention in the Qur’an of the Biblical character “Eve”. Reference to Adam’s wife is always given by the term /zawj/, meaning “spouse”. This is compatible with Hassan (2013) whose theory justifies Darwinism and uses the term “Adam” as a gender neutral term referring to a group of evolved homo-sapiens from which one individual, Adam of the Abrahamic religions, was selected by God to be elevated to Heaven where the story of approaching the tree and eating from it took place. So, Adam in *the Qur’an* could be used gender-neutrally as referring to both male and/or female.

Bakhtiar translation

*“Then they both ate from that so their intimate parts were shown to them, and they took to stitching together for themselves tree leaves from the Garden. Adam rebelled against his Lord and he erred.”*

Viewed with Al-Saadawi’s lens, it is still plausible that Adam is the recipient of atonement because it was him who violated God’s rules as an initiator of the act. Eve’s role was an instigator, which still washes her hand clean of the sin. She can be said to have played a role similar to the Devil’s role which Satan “innocently” claims in Suurat Ibrahim, verse 22, to be an instigator, not a perpetrator of the sins committed by human beings who simply listen to Satan’s words and follow them to sin.

Additionally, Eve did not violate God’s instructions by action; she probably inspired Adam to sin but it was Adam who ultimately committed the sin. It makes perfect sense that Adam is addressed alone by God words that eventually granted him forgiveness. This is compatible with the Islamic rule of what counts as sin: a sin is counted as a sin if and only if it is carried out into action. “Sinful” ideas do not count as sins in Islam.

Relatedly, based on evidence from Hassan (2013) that relates Darwinianism to *the Qur’an*, Adam is a collective Arabic term meaning “convertible” or “adaptable”. According to Hassan (2013), the proper noun Adam refers collectively to a group of humans who were living on Earth, on whom God bestowed the mind. In light of this theory, it is plausible to think of repentance in Al-Baqarah (The Cow), 37, as accepted from

both Adam and Eve<sup>43</sup> because the noun Adam in that verse can be claimed, only based on Hassan (2013) to refer to “Adam-kind” as a whole.

### **Analysis Conclusion**

With the above analysis in mind, it becomes clear that reference type of the format (+M+m) could actually be reformatted in many cases as (+M+m/f). The analysis showed that there is room for a gender-inclusive interpretation of those verses which could result in alleviating the levels of power exercised by males toward females. A gender-inclusive interpretation of those verses also allows for the inclusion of women in acts that was always presented as exclusive for males.

### **Type 2: Reference to Females by Grammatically Feminine Forms (+F+f)**

#### **Introducing the Data**

Many of this verse type contains a verb process in which the Prophet (pbuh) is asked to convey a certain message to Muslim women. In my analysis of this type of reference verses, I will try to show that patriarchal interpretation of those verses has shaped the world view of Muslims, as well as non-Muslims, or all genders in ways that were not originally meant in Islam, way prescribed by patriarchal culture that de-powered women and further empowered men by exempting them from, for example, part of their household responsibilities while giving them other exclusive privileges via the interpretations of those verses.

Al-Ahzab (The Confederates), 33

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<sup>43</sup> Eve as a name of Adam’s spouse does not actually exist in *the Qur’an*. The term /zawj/ “spouse” is used instead.

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ  
 الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ  
 اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ  
 تَطْهِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾

Sahih International translation

“And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance. And establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification.”

Bakhtiar translation

“Settle down (f) in your (f) houses, and flaunt (f) not your (f) finery as one who flaunted one’s finery in the age of Ignorance; perform the formal prayer, and give the purifying alms, and obey God and His Messenger. God wants to cause disgrace to be put away from you, O People of the House, and purify you with a purification.”

An-Nur (The Light), 31

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا  
 يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِمَخْمَرِهِنَّ عَلَى  
 رُءُوسِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ  
 أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ  
 إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا  
 مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوْ  
 الطِّفْلِ الذَّيْبِ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ  
 بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا  
 أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

Sahih International translation

*“And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“Say to the ones who are female believers to lower their (f) sight, and keep their (f) private parts safe, and not show their (f) adornment, except what is manifest of it, and let them (f) draw their head covering over their bosoms and not show their (f) adornments except to their (f) husbands, or their (f) fathers, or the fathers of their (f) husbands, or their sons or the sons of their (f) brothers, or their (f) sisters, or their (f) women that their (f) hands possess, or males. The ones who have no sexual desire or children to whom nakedness of women has not been manifest; and let them (f) conceal their adornment. Turn to God altogether for forgiveness, O ones who believe, so that perhaps you would prosper.”*

Al-Baqara (The Cow), 36

فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا  
بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

Sahih International translation

“But Satan caused them to slip out of it and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been. And We said, “Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another, and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time.”

Bakhtiar translation

“Then Satan caused both of them to slide back from there and drove both of them out from that in which they were; We said: get down some of you are enemy to one another; and for you on the earth, an appointed time and sustenance for a while.”

An-Nisa'a (The Women), 3

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ  
وَتِلْكَثَ وَرُبْعًا ۚ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ  
أَلَّا تَعُولُوا ﴿٣﴾

Sahih International translation

“And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice].”

Bakhtiar translation

*“If you fear that you shall not be equitable with orphans, marry who seems good to you of the women, two, three or four; but if you fear you shall not be just, then one or what your right hands possess; that is likelier so that you shall not have injustice.”*

An-Nisa’a (The Women), 4

وَأَتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدُقَاتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً فَإِنْ طِبْنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِّنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُوهُ  
هَنِيئًا مَّرِيئًا

Sahih International translation

*“And give the women [upon marriage] their [bridal] gifts graciously. But if they give up willingly to you anything of it, then take it in satisfaction and ease.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“Give wives their marriage portion as a spontaneous gift, but if truly they (f) are pleased to offer anything of it to you on their own, consume it with wholesome appetite.”*

Al-Hujurat (The Chambers), 9

وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَت  
إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّى تَفِيءَ إِلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ  
فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ  
الْمُقْسِطِينَ

Sahih International translation

*“And if two factions among the believers should fight, then make settlement between the two. But if one of them oppresses the other, then fight against the one that oppresses until*

*it returns to the ordinance of Allah. And if it returns, then make settlement between them in justice and act justly. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.”*

*Bakhtiar translation*

*“If two sections among the ones who believe fight against each other, then make things right between them both; but if one of them is insolent against the other, then fight the one who is insolent until it changes its mind about the command of God. Then, if it changes its mind, make things right between them justly and equitably; truly God loves the ones who are equitable”*

### **Analysis of Reference Type 2 Verses**

In his interpretation of Al-Ahzab (The Confederates) 33, Ibn Kathiir explains that the verse bears guidelines to the wives of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) through the verse’s use of the impetrative verb forms. Those guidelines, Ibn Kathiir explains, are also intended for Muslim women to whom wives of the prophet are role models.

Al-Shaarawi explains that the verse starts with a verbal imperative for the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) as well as Muslim women to stay home most of the time. Al-Shaarawi maintains that the reason behind this command from Allah is that a wife who spends most of her time outside of her residence renders her unable to take care of the home and prepare herself for her husband’s arrival. He also adds that a husband might not really like to see his wife in a condition of unreadiness while doing some house work. Although Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) always helped his wives in household chores or other personal chores of his own, most, if not all, male interpreters of the verse made no reference to this beautiful, important and *significant* fact about the Prophet (pbuh). This



saved room for patriarchal culture to jump in and so many Muslims from all genders in Muslim communities resigned themselves to a state of dependence of females in what takes the form of “domestic servitude”, despite the fact that it was reported in Islamic literature that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) would always take care of himself and do his own chores like darning his garments, and milking his sheep, to mention just two examples although he had several wives that would happily do all that for him if he asked. With time, Muslims and people all around the world erroneously held the conviction that domestic servitude is associated with women.

An-Nur (The Light) 31 comes after An-Nur 30, discussed under the first type. This equational discourse between men and women portrays all genders as equal but also different from one another; each gender has its own discourse based on their role in social life.

Ibn Kathiir says about this verse that it was revealed as an honor to Muslim women of the time and a kind of distinctive superiority for them over non-Muslim women who would walk among men unveiled, in revealing clothes that would show their cleavages and their necks, let alone their hair.

Al-Shaarawi, on the other hand, alludes to the equational quality on verse level of this verse by saying that God has asked women to lower their gaze, just like he asked men and that he exceeded his command by specifying certain commands to women, conveyed by the use of verbal process in the imperative verb /qul/ “say”, where the addressee is Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Al-Shaarawi explained the meaning of /zeenah/ “adornment in the verse as whatever exceeds natural beauty, whether make-up, jewelry,

or inner garments; he specifically used the French word “décolletée”<sup>44</sup> transliterated into Arabic, which establishes proximity between him and his audience, women and reflects the fashion culture of the contemporary age as the word is derived from the realm of fashion that was absent in the days of Ibn-Kathir.

The verse also uses the singular gender-inclusive expression /ʔaTTifl/ “the child” followed by a plural masculine relative pronoun الذين /ʔallaḏiina/ “who”, which is a very peculiar way of using the plural relative pronoun, used gender-inclusively by default. Unlike Ibn-Kathir, Al-Sharaawy looked at that special use of a singular noun as the controller of the plural relative pronoun. He explained that using the singular here is a common property in Classical Arabic and gives three examples in which the words /qaaDii/ قاضي “a judge”, /qaadiyaan/ قاضيان “two judges”, and /quDaah/ قضاة “judges” are all used with the adjective /yadl/ عدل “fair”<sup>45</sup> which is one common trait among judges. So, the term /ʔaTTifl/ الطفل “the child” is used adjectivally in the same way as /yadl/ عدل to refer to children generically who share the common trait of being “child”. The QA use of singularity in this verse also resonates with verse 39, Suurat Al-Kahf “The Cave” in which the singular nominal expression /walada/ ولدا, literally meaning “a born male child”, is used as meaning “born children”<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Low cut from the neckline or strapless garment

<sup>45</sup> Adjectives in *Classical Arabic*, as well as other varieties thereof, are nominals; they accept plurality and definiteness.

<sup>46</sup>Verse 18, Al-Kahf (The Cave)

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ كَرَن  
 أَنَا أَقَلُّ مِنكَ مَا لَا وَوَلَدًا

Sahih International translation

“And why did you, when you entered your garden, not say, 'What Allah willed [has occurred]; there is no power except in Allah '? Although you see me less than you in wealth and children,

An-Nisa'a (The Women) 3 is a controversial one. The term /yataamaa/ "orphans" actually, by context, refers to its main field: female orphans chosen by their male supporters for marriage. The verse has an embedded sub-field about polygamy which happened to surface in meaning, casting aside the verse's major field which urges men to be merciful with little orphan women and highlighting polygamy as the default field. The Sahih International translation specified that the orphans referred to in the verse are female orphans. Bakhtiar, however, keeps the generic, gender-inclusive expression which renders the interpretation of the verse in need of a context. Keeping the gender-inclusive sense of the plural nominal expression /yataamaa/ "orphans" helps get male-orphans under the umbrella of the interpretation and, therefore, promises them justices once they are supported by female owners who might also look at them as future spouses.

Interestingly, Al-Shaarawi referred to the generic use of the term, /yataamaa/ "orphans". He explained using in masculine term, which is significant when it comes to this verse about women, that it is fair enough to stay away from orphans as they are weak particularly, Al-Shaarawi specifies, if they were females. He, then alludes to polygamy. He explained that the license given to a Muslim man to marry two, three, or four is not obligatory or necessitates that all should remarry.

It is also significant to explain here that this verse is always presented to the public as a bout license to polygamy is the main concern of the verse. After reading the interpretations of both Al-Shaarawi and Ibn Kathiir, it is reasonable to assume that the verse is about achieving justice to orphans by not considering them for marriage, rather consider other options. And the optionality of polygamy which the verse gives is hinged upon a Muslim man's fear of not being equitable to orphans. This is because the verse re-

highlights the concept of justice in the remaining part “But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one...” This verse is, thus, about justice basically and prioritizes justice over polygamy. Relatedly, verse, An-Nisa’a 129,<sup>47</sup> is a restrictive, stative verse which challenges men that they can never be fair among women, even if they pay special attention to achieving justice among them.

The use of the imperative in the verse is also not for command, as many Muslims and non-Muslims perceive. It is for optionality. The imperative is just used here as the default form, just like the imperative in An-Nisa’a, 34, discussed in Type 1 above.

Some feminist raise the question: why Muslims women are not given the same right to polyandry, same as men are given the right to polygamy. The question is posed depending on face-value conjecture and it only summarizes marriage as a means to pleasure. Life affairs in actuality might well be very different. Still, I allude to the picture on page (20). The bottom line is everybody gets to see the match, not have an equal number of boxes. With the number of women exceeding that of men in a country like Egypt, to name just one country, it makes more sense that the option of polygamy be still valid. Increasing number of unmarried women and divorced women is a serious social concern in Egypt which leaves an unmarried woman to two options, to put it with her

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<sup>47</sup> An-Nisa’a (The Women) 129

وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا  
تَوِيلُوا لَكُلِّ الْمَيْلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا  
وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٢٩﴾

Sahih International translation

“And you will never be able to be equal [in feeling] between wives, even if you should strive [to do so]. So do not incline completely [toward one] and leave another hanging. And if you amend [your affairs] and fear Allah - then indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful.”

condition physiologically, let alone on emotionally, psychologically and socially, or give vent to her needs by other means outside of marriage.

An-Nisaa, 4 empowers women to willingly donate to their husbands part of their dowry to their males, the husband and the father in particular, if and only if they are willing; no room for coercion on the part of the husband or father here. Ibn Kathir explained that some fathers would take away their daughter's wedding dowry against the daughters' will, so the verse actually forbids them from doing, unless their daughters choose to give their fathers of it.

Al-Shaarawi stresses that the wife must exercise her absolute, free will to give away part of her dowry to her needing father or husband who is financially responsible for her. If the wife does not consent to do so, the man, father or husband, cannot touch her marriage dowry.

However, it is important to mention that in many Muslim communities, due to high costs of living, women's dowry are spent by their fathers<sup>48</sup> on getting her furniture and other needed items for her home. This tradition happens often and because most girls are unaware of their God-given right to them, they do not question it.

**Disproving the claim that Al-Hujurat (The Chambers) 9 is grammatically ill-formed.** Al-Hujurat (The Chambers) 9 is a verse which I topped at in a webpage designed for finding errors in *the Qur'an*. The page referred to this verse as "evidence" on the claim that *the Qur'an* has "grammatical" errors. The analysis in the page alluded to the grammatical disagreement between the feminine dual-plural nominal expression

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<sup>48</sup> In some Muslim communities, the family of the bride participates in furnishing the home for the bride and the groom, despite the fact that in Islam, the husband alone is totally responsible for that. This altered mechanism is triggered by the bride's family, and traditionally by society, to help the husband who would otherwise have to pay exorbitant prices to get the home ready for him and his wife to start a life.

طائفان /Taaʔifataan/ “two sects” which, according to the claim in the page *must* be paired with a verb form in agreement with it in number and grammatical gender. The page proposed the feminine dual-plural verbal expression اقتتلنا /ʔiqatalataa/ “fought” (feminine dual-plural).

Ibn Kathiir made no reference in his exegesis of the verse to the subject-predicate disagreement. Interestingly, Al-Shaarawi does. He argues that the term طائفان /Taaʔifataan/ “two sects” is a dual feminine plural and, grammatical-genderly, was supposed to receive the verbal predicate اقتتلنا /ʔiqatalataa/ “fought” (feminine dual-plural) which agrees in gender and number with the subject طائفان /Taaʔifataan/ “two sects”. Al-Shaarawi explained that the nominal expression طائفة /Taaʔifah/ “a sect” (a singular feminine nominal) is a collective noun that is comprised of individuals and, therefore, it makes sense to refer to them in the plural by referring to the individuals of one sect.

Al-Shaarawi’s view is congruent with Steele’s (1978) concept of *semantic agreement*<sup>49</sup>. Steele’s differentiates between semantic and syntactic agreement. She argued that formal properties of agreement are known as *ad formam*, morphosyntactic, grammatical, or lexical. Semantic properties of agreement are known as *ad sensum*, notional, pragmatic, logical, referential agreement, or synesis. Agreement in Al- Hujurat (The Chambers) 9 is of the second type, referential or pragmatic agreement, which makes the verse structurally sound.

### **Analysis Conclusion**

In Type 2 reference analysis, I have shown that Islam did not really subjugate women as it is predominantly held. I have shown that patriarchal culture has played that

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<sup>49</sup> I use Steel’s Semantic Agreeent Theory in my analysis of data from Egyptian Arabic in Chapter Five.

part prepared for it by patriarchal interpretations of those verses, which sidelined women and associated them with negative acts like household chores, although Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the role model for Muslim men, would help with house hold chores, especially when it came to his personal chores.

I have also shown that Islam empowered women when it have them the right to donate part of their property. This in fact is the only way a Muslim can use the property of his living spouse.

Polygamy, a mishandled concept in Islamic communities due to patriarchal culture, was also a pivotal topic in the analysis. Commonly, Muslims and non-Muslims, regardless of their gender, hold the view that a Muslim man has been commanded by Allah to marry on his wife, whenever he can, up to four wives. I have shown that the main field of the verse 3 of An-Nisaa (The Women) in which the concept of polygamy occurred is basically *female orphans*, not *polygamy*. I have also explained that although the verbal imperative form is used when the verse shifts to giving men the option of marrying adult women, not young little orphan growing into womanhood, Muslims understood those verses, driven by patriarchal interpretation of the verses, as a downright command for a Muslim man to marry more than one. Furthermore, although the verse explains that a polygamous man is probably apprehensive of not being fair among his women, interpretations of the verse mostly disregard this important part which resonates with An-Nisaa'a 129<sup>50</sup> in which Allah addresses men stating that they will never be fair between their wives, even if they are heedful.

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*An-Nisaa (The Women), 129*

### Type 3: Reference to Genders by Masculine Forms

#### Introducing the Data

Those are grammatically-masculine but semantically-gender-inclusive) or [+M +m/f]<sup>51</sup>. In the following analysis of the data, I will show that although masculine forms are in many cases used gender-inclusively in QA, they are sometimes, due to patriarchal interpretation, dealt with as exclusively referring to males. The result was unmeasurable contribution to individuals who have had to suffer by such patriarchally-driven interpretation.

The following topics run through the analysis: The noun /ʔal-banuun/ “children” and its variants, evidence on the gender-inclusiveness of the term /banuun/ “children” in Al-Kahf (The Cave), 46, relative pronouns used gender-inclusively in QA, *the masculine singular relative pronoun /ʔallaḏii/, the relative pronoun /ʔllaḏii/ used analogously in Al-Baqarah, (The Cow) 17*, the gender-inclusive term /nafs/ “self”, the term /ʔimriʔ-un/ “one”, the term gender-inclusive term /ʔaHad/, and the linguistic dilemma of the verb /yalid/ used in reference to *Allah* in Al-Ikhlaas (The Sincerity) 3

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وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَقْدُوا لَوَائِبِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا  
تَمِيلُوا عَلَى الْإِمْتِلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ وَإِنْ تُصَلِحُوا  
وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾

*Sahih International translation*

“And you will never be able to be equal [in feeling] between wives, even if you should strive [to do so]. So do not incline completely [toward one] and leave another hanging. And if you amend [your affairs] and fear Allah - then indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful.”

*Bakhtiar translation*

“You shall never be able to be just betweenwives, even if you are eager; but incline not with total inclination away from her, forsaking her as if she be one who is in suspense; but if you make things right, and are Godfearing, then indeed He is Forgiving, Compassionate.”

<sup>51</sup> +M stands for “grammatically masculine”, +m/f stand for semantically masculine/feminine or gender-neutral. See Appendix B for a list of abbreviations



I am basically looking at the following data:

Al-Infitar (The Cleaving) 6

يَتَأْتِيهَا الْإِنْسَانُ مَا غَرَّكَ بِرَبِّكَ الْكَرِيمِ ﴿٦﴾

Sahih International translation

“O mankind, what has deceived you concerning your Lord, the Generous.

Bakhtiar translation

“O human being! What has deluded **you** as to **your** generous Lord”

Al-Hujuraatt (The Chambers) 6

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ مِّنْ بَنِيكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا  
بِجَهْلَةٍ فَتُصِحُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

Sahih International translation

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful.”

Bakhtiar translation

“O those who have believed! If one who disobeys draws near you with a tidings, be you clear so that you not light on a folk out of ignorance; then you would become ones who are remorseful for what they have accomplished.”

Al-Kaafiruun/ (The Disbelievers), 1

قُلْ يَتَأْتِيهَا الْكٰفِرُونَ ﴿١﴾

Sahih International translation

“Say, 'O disbelievers.'”

Bakhtiar translation

“Say: O you who are ungrateful!”

Al-Kahf (The Cave) 46

الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أَمَلًا ﴿٤٦﴾

Sahih International translation

“Wealth and children are [but] adornment of the worldly life. But the enduring good deeds are better to your Lord for reward and better for [one's] hope.”

Bakhtiar translation

“Wealth and children are the adornment of this present life; but those things which endure are the ones who have acted in accord with morality; that is better with **your** Lord, as a reward for good deeds are better for hopefulness.”

### **Analysis of Reference Type 3 Verses**

It is important to mention that in Classical Arabic, and it follows CA as a form thereof, masculine forms are used as the default generic forms. That is why in some verses of this Type 3, there is room for misinterpretation biased against the female other as will be shown in more controversial verses, especially those that directly affect the life of humans and daily interaction between them.

Al-Infitar (The Cleaving), 6, Al-Hujuraat (The Chambers), 6, and Al-Kafirun (The Disbelievers), 1, are examples of the use of overlexicalization represented in the double calling articles, /yaa/ and /ʔayuhaa/. Generally, in Classical Arabic of which QA is a very refined form, using the article /yaa/ is for drawing attention and acknowledging distance to the called, but not necessarily the caller<sup>52</sup> Al-Baqarah (The Cow), 186 states in the first person that God is in proximity to His worshippers<sup>53</sup>, in a verbless verbal process; the verb /qull/ “Say” is deleted from the second part of the conditional construction of the verse. In Al-Infitar (The Cleaving), 6, the double calling articles are used with the grammatically masculine, semantically gender-inclusive term, /ʔal-ʔinsaan/<sup>54</sup> The verse is a reproach to humans from God in the form of a question. Al-Shaarawi explained that reminding humans of their humanity by the double calling is also an indirect reminder to them that they should not be tempted by their Generosity of forgiveness of their Lord and go on committing sins. The whole question ends up as a rhetorical rebuttal of human’s insistence on sin.

Al-Hujurat (The Chambers), 6, has the masculine plural relative pronoun /ʔallathiina/ used generically between the double calling articles and the called, the believers of all genders. In the translation of this verse, Bakhtiar used the plural

<sup>52</sup> Al-Baqarah, (The Cow) 186

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

Sahih International translation

“And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided.”

<sup>53</sup> The term “worshippers” is a more accurate translation of the QA term يداع in Al-Baqarah, 186 “servants” as it connotes worship, not servitude.

<sup>54</sup> There is no feminine term for /ʔinsaan/ in CQ; however, in Arabic varieties like Modern Standard Arabic, and Egyptian Arabic, the term has the feminine form /ʔinsaanah/ which is currently less commonly used in EA as will be shown in Chapter 5 for ideological reasons.

demonstrative adjective /those/ probably to echo distance established by the double calling articles which also suggests that believers are not a majority, whereas Sahih International used the second person pronoun probably to highlight attention calling via the double calling articles. Both translations highlight the gender-inclusiveness of the generically-used masculine forms in the verse, especially the nominal expression /faasiqun/ “a disobedient person” which is translated into English as “a disobedient one” (Sahih International), and “one who disobeys” (Bakhtiar).

In Al-Kafiruun (The Disbelievers) 1, the same technique of attention drawing is used except that it is followed by an identified group of addressees, the nonbelievers, who are referred to in the same verse with the second person masculine pronoun /?antuym/ used gender-inclusively. The double calling items are buffered by the verbal process verb /qull/ which could be interpreted as a Godly rejection of those who do not believe in Him. Bakhtiar’s (2011) translation of the masculine term, /?al-kaafiruun/ as “ungrateful” really stands out. She explained that the most prominent meaning of the Arabic term /kaafir/ is being ungrateful and so translating the term as such changes it from becoming an exclusive term that excludes disbelievers from *the Qur’an* into an inclusive term that includes all people, believers and disbelievers as this, according to her, what *the Qur’an* is all about, inclusion of all humans. However, I hold the opinion that being ungrateful is not only an attribute of disbelievers because 1) not all believers that are grateful to God, 2) in Classical Arabic, the Arabic variety used in a very refined form in CQ, there are lexical items meaning “ungrateful” like /ghair mumtan/ غير ممتن , /ghair shaakir” غير شاكر which do not include shades of meaning of the term /kaafir/ كافر “a disbeliever”, and 3) the verse highlights the trait of being a disbeliever more than other traits and it

exclusively addresses those who disbelieve as a special group that need a special discourse which is specified in the remainder of the verse, and 4) the remaining verses of the surah connote that this group of “disbelievers” are believers in other Gods because the suurah reads in the subsequent verse:

Al-Kafiruun (The Disbelievers), 2

لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢﴾

Sahih International translation

*“I do not worship what you worship”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“I worship not what you worship”*

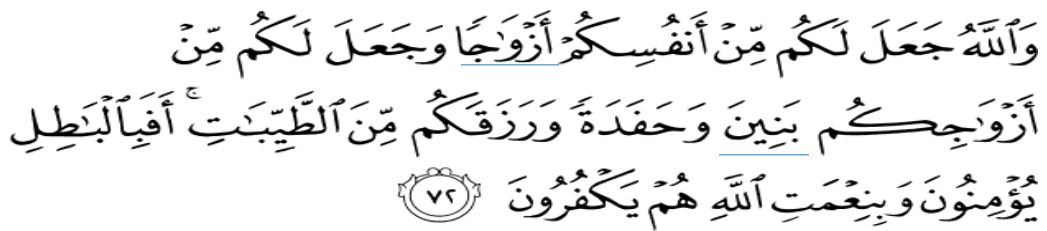
So, Bakhtiar’s translation of verse 2 of the same surrah states that those /kafiruun/ worship another God so it does not make much sense to still project them as “ungrateful” to the God of Islam, Allah.

**The noun /ʔal-banuun/ “children” and its variants.** Al-Kahf (The Cave) 46 is a highly controversial verse. To set the stage for discussing this verse, I would like to start with a story of a discussion I once had with a friend over the meaning of the masculine term /banuun/ in this verse, and whether God meant male children exclusively, or both male and female children, especially as that friend had three daughters and, typical of many Egyptian and Arab Muslims in general, he was hoping to have a boy and considered himself deprived of God’s adornment of this present life because he was denied that “male child. The discussion lasted about fifteen minutes and boiled down to “nothing”. I was unable, then, to convince him that /ʔal-banuun/ stands for all genders; nor was he able to convince me of his view which seemed not only weak, but also quite

unfair and not at all Godly. A good reason I now provide for my claim that the term /banuun/ refers to both males and females is that one of Islam’s major achievement is to forbid female child burial upon birth, a detestable tradition that was alluded to in the *Qur’an* more than once, probably the most prominent of which are At-Takwiir, (The Overthrowing), 8 and 9<sup>55</sup>.

Both translations of the Al-Kahf 46 are generic and suggests the neutrality of the term “children” despite the fact that the term is grammatically masculine.

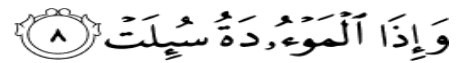
The term /baniin/<sup>56</sup>, a case variant of /ʔalbanuun/ occurred in Suurah An-Nahl 72:



Sahih International translation

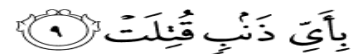
*“And Allah has made for you from yourselves mates and has made for you from your mates sons and grandchildren and has provided for you from the good things. Then in falsehood do they believe and in the favor of Allah they disbelieve?”*

<sup>55</sup>At-Takwiir, 8 and 9



Sahih International translation

*“And when the girl [who was] buried alive is asked”*



Sahih International translation

*“For what sin she was killed”*

<sup>56</sup> The Sahih International team also translated the same term as “sons” in Al-Imraan (The Imraans) 14,

Bakhtiar translation

“God has assigned to you mates of your own kind and has assigned you from your mates, children and has provided you with what is good. How then believe they in falsehood and are ungrateful for the divine blessings of God?”

In their translation of this verse, the Sahih International team was inconsistent about the term /baniin/; they translated it as “sons”<sup>57</sup> which obviously excludes the females. Bakhtiar did not fall into this linguistic trap; her translation is mostly gender-inclusive.

Ibn Kathiir did not comment on the word /ʔalbanuun/<sup>58</sup> being a gender-exclusive term.

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whereas Bakhtiar translated it as the neuter, “children”:

زَيْنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ  
الْمَقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ  
وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ  
حُسْنُ الْمَعَابِ ۝١٤

Sahih International translation

“Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire - of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return.”

<sup>57</sup> The term /baniin/ was also cited in accompaniment of “money” in the Qur’an in several other locations: in Al-Qalam (The Pen) 14, Ash-Shu’ara’a (The Poets) 88, and Al-Imran (The Imrans) 14. But it also occurred in other verses where it was paired with the feminine form /ʔal-banaat/ in which case it was right and the only option for both translators to translate it as sons. An exemplary verse is As-Saffaat (Those Who Set the Ranks) 149


فَأَسْتَفْتِهِمُ الرَّبُّ أَلِبنَاتٌ وَلَهُمُ البَنُونَ ۝١٤٩

Sahih International translation

“So inquire of them, [O Muhammad], “Does your Lord have daughters while they have sons? Using the interrogative is a CA means of sharp criticism on the disbelievers.”

Al-Shaarawi did not comment on the term gender-wise but focused on a man's distress if his wife is childless. Significantly, he alludes to An-Nahl (The Bees) 58 (See p. 120) and explains that if a man is happy with his female child, God will be pleased with him and might compensate him for the male he did not get by a loyal husband to his daughter and to him as a son in law.

As I mentioned in the introduction, Al-Kahf (The Cave) 46 was interpreted by male scholars in several ways. For example, Ibn Kathiir did not analyze the word /ʔal-banuun/, grammatically meaning “male children” morphosyntactically or semantically. He only interpreted in detail the subsequent words /ʔal-baaqiyaat-u-SaaliHaat/ “the enduring good deeds” and explains what they might refer to. Al-Shaarawi, on the other hand, did not stop at the word /ʔal-banuun/ morphosyntactically but offered a significant semantic analysis of the term as referring to all genders by alluding to verse 58 of Suurat An-NaHl (The Bees) which reads:


 وَإِذَا بَشَّرَ أَحَدَهُمْ بِالْأُنْثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهَهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ

Sahih International translation

*“And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief.”*

Bakhtiar translation

“When given good tidings to any of them of a female, his face stays as one that is clouded over and he chokes.

Based on this verse, Al-Shaarawi explained that a female child is no less in value than a male child. He further explains that the Arabic nominal expression بِشَارَةٌ



/bi'faarah/ “good tidings” from the passive verb used in the verse بُشِّرَ /buʃʃira/ “was brought good tidings” is always used to refer to something good and precious. Reference in the verse is to pre-Islamic men who would, still, receive the good tidings of having a female child with gloom and suppressed grief, just because of the baby’s sex.

At-Taghabun (The Mutual Dillusion), 14

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اِنَّ مِنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَاَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا  
لَّكُمْ فَاَحْذَرُوْهُمْ وَاِنْ تَعَفَّوْا وَتَصَفَّحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوْا فَاِنَّ  
اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

Sahih Internatinal translation

*“O you who have believed, indeed, among your wives and your children are enemies to you, so beware of them. But if you pardon and overlook and forgive - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“O those who have believed! Truly there are among your wives and your children enemies for you, so beware of them. If you would pardon, overlook and forgive, then truly God is Forgiving, Compassionate.”*

At-Taghabun (The Mutual Dillusion), 15

اِنَّمَا اَمْوَالِكُمْ وَاَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَاَللّٰهُ عِنْدَهُ اَجْرٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

Sahih International translation

*“Your wealth and your children are but a trial, and Allah has with Him a great reward.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“Your wealth and your children are not but a test. God, with Him is a sublime compensation.”*

In *At-Taghabun* 14 and 15, the term /ʔawlaadukum/, “your children,” is also grammatically masculine but semantically refers to all genders. However, Al-Qurtubi alluded to this verse just to explain that children can be a trial and even enemies to their parents.

The ninth century Muslim scholar Al-Tabari did not analyze the term /ʔal-banuun/ grammatically or semantically but explained that wives are regarded not as eternal blessings like /ʔal-baaqiyaat-u-SaaliHaat/ “the enduring good deeds” in the same verse of Al-Kahf (The Cave), 46.

Likewise, Al-Jalaalayin completely disregarded the term /ʔal-banuun/ grammatically and semantically, and only explaining what is meant by the subsequent term /ʔal-baaqiyaat-u-SaaliHaat/ “the enduring good deeds”. Thus, in several cases, we see not so much an overtly male-dominant reading, but a reading that does not address gendered forms for their importance or significance in the text.

The above review of several interpretations by male scholars indicates that, with the exception of Al-Shaarawi, all other male scholars neglected to analyze the term /ʔal-banuun/ of Al-Kahf 46 linguistically. Al-Shaarawi’s more considering explanation may be attributed to the fact that he started his scholarly career in the 20th century and might have been impacted by feminist thought and the women’s rights movement.

Sometimes the singular grammatically masculine term /walad/ is used to refer to both male and female children as in Suurat Al-Kahf (The Cave) 39, which resonates with

Al-Kahf (The Cave) 46:

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ تَرِنًا  
أَنَا أَقَلُّ مِنْكَ مَا لَا وَوَلَدًا ﴿٣٩﴾

Sahih International translation

*“And why did you, when you entered your garden, not say, ‘What Allah willed [has occurred]; there is no power except in Allah ’? Although you see me less than you in wealth and children.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“Would that when you enter your garden you had said: Had God willed! There is no strength but with God if you see I am less than you in wealth and children.”*

Another remarkable verse where the plural of the term /walad/ is used in QA is verse 17 of Surat Al-Waqi`ah, “The Inevitable”, which pictures how unaging children servers will circle the believers in Heaven

يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

Al-Waqi`ah (The Inevitable)

Sahih International translation

*“There will circulate among them young boys made eternal”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“Immortal children circle around them”*

Actually neither Ibn Kathiir, nor Al-Shaarawi discuss the term /wildaan/ genderswise. They only refer to their unaging nature. Only Bakhtiar highlights the

gender-inclusiveness of those /wildaan/ by translating the term into “children” which indicates that they could be of mixed gender, not only males exclusively.

***Evidence on the gender-inclusiveness of the term /banuun/ “children” in Al-Kahf (The Cave), 46.*** The term /ʔalbanuun/ in Al-Kahf (The Cave), 46 cannot mean male children for the following reasons:

- 1- In Classical Arabic, the variety of which QA is a very refined form, as well as in other varieties of Arabic, the masculine is the default form and it is used generically.
- 2- The term does not fall into the male/female dichotomy prevalent in other verses that deal with all genders equatively as is the case in Type 6 verses.
- 3- Islam actually combatted the habit of baby-girl burial, prominent with pre-Islamic male Arabs At-Takwiir (The Overthrowing) 8 and 9
- 4- Also *the Qur'an* specifies that the Creator gives whoever He chooses a male or a female as stated in Ash-Shuraa (The Consultation), 49 with no distinction between genders:

Ash-Shuraa (The Consultation) 49

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ يَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ  
إِنثًا وَيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ الذُّكُورَ ﴿٤٩﴾

Sahih International translation

*“To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He creates what he wills.*

*He gives to whom He wills female [children], and He gives to whom He wills males.*

Bakhtiar translation

*“To God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He will, He bestows females on whom He will, and bestows males on whom He will.”*

An-Nahl (The Bees) 58

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾

Sahih International translation

*“And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief.<sup>59</sup>”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“When given good tidings to any of them of a female, his face stays as one that is clouded over and he chokes.”*

In Verse 28 of Suurat Al-Anfaal (The Spoils of Water), /ʔawlaad/ أولاد literally meaning “boys” (a collective noun meaning born children) a synonym of /banuun/ البنون “male children” is used paired with /ʔamwaal/ أموال, the plural of مال /maal/ ”wealth” both of which occurred in Al-Kahf (The Cave) 46 (See p.123) In An-Nisa’a (The Women) 11, the collective, generic term, /ʔawlaad/ أولاد is broken down *biologically speaking* into /ḍakar/ الذكر “male” and /ʔunḥaa/ الأنثى “female”.

Al-Anfal (The Soils of Water) 28

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<sup>59</sup> The statement in in At-Takwir 58 is used as a reproach to male Arabs and their attitude upon receiving tidings of a baby girl.

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ  
عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

Sahih International translation

“And know that your properties and your children are but a trial and that Allah has with Him a great reward.”

Bakhtiar translation

“Know that your children are a test and that God, with Him is a sublime compensation.”

An-Nisa'a (The Women) 11

يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثِيَيْنِ فَإِنْ كُنَّ  
نِسَاءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا  
النِّصْفُ وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ  
وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَهُ آبَاؤُهُ فَلِأُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُ  
إِخْوَةٌ فَلِأُمِّهِ السُّدُسُ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ ءِ آبَاؤُكُمْ  
وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفَعًا فَرِيضَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ  
اللَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١١﴾

Sahih International translation

“Allah instructs you concerning your children: for the male, what is equal to the share of two females. But if there are [only] daughters, two or more, for them is two thirds of one’s estate. And if there is only one, for her is half. And for one’s parents, to each one of them is a sixth of his estate if he left children. But if he had no children and the parents [alone] inherit from him, then for his mother is one third. And if he had brothers [or

sisters], for his mother is a sixth, after any bequest he [may have] made or debt. Your parents or your children – you know not which of them are nearest to you in benefit. [These shares are] an obligation [imposed] by Allah. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Wise.”

Bakhtiar translation

“God enjoins you concerning your children; for the male, the like allotment of two females; and if there be more than two females, then for them two-thirds of what he leaves; but if she be alone, then for her is half; and for one’s parents, for each one of them a sixth of what he leaves if he has a child; but if he has no children, and his parents inherit, then a third to his mother; but if he has a brother then a sixth for his mother after any bequest he shall enjoin or any debt; your parents or your children, you are not informed which of them is nearer to you in profit; this is a duty to God; truly God has been Knowing, Wise.”

**Relative pronouns used gender-inclusively in Qur’anic Arabic.** The masculine relative pronoun /ʔallaḏii/, the feminine relative pronoun /ʔallatii/ and the gender-inclusiverelative pronouns /mann/. As is the case in Classical Arabic (CA) of which QA is a very refined form, the singular masculine relative pronoun /ʔallaḏii/ and its plural /ʔllaḏiina/ are used both as +M+m or +M+m/f (i.e. genderneutrally). The same is not applicable to the feminine relative pronoun /ʔallatii/ and its plural forms /ʔallaatii/ and /ʔallaʔii/; they are used exclusively for feminine referents, unless they are used in an analogy as will be shown in verse 92 of Surat An-Nahl (The Bees).

*The masculine singular relative pronoun /ʔallaḏii/.* The masculine relative pronoun is used gender-inclusively on many occasions in *the Qu’ran* as in the following verses:

Al-Layl (The Night), 16

الَّذِي كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى ﴿١٦﴾

Sahih International translation

“Who had denied and turned away.”

Bakhtiar translation

“Who have denied and turned away.”

Al-’A’la (The Most High), 12

الَّذِي يَصِلَى النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى ﴿١٢﴾

Sahih International translation

“[He] who will [enter and] burn in the greatest Fire”

Bakhtiar translation

“Even he who shall roast in the great fire”

Al-Ma’ida (The Table), 69

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّٰبِغُونَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ مَن ءَامَنُوا  
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ  
يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

Sahih International

“Indeed, those who have believed [in Prophet Muhammad] and those [before Him] who were Jews or Sabeans or Christians – those [among them] who believed in Allah and the



*Last Day and did righteousness – no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.*

Bakhtiar traslation

*“Truly those who have believed, those who became Jews, Sabaeans and Christians— whoever has believed in God and the Last Day, one who has acted in accord with mortality, then there is neither fear in them nor shall they feel remorse.”*

The Cow, Verse (275)

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ  
الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَحَلَّ  
اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَانْتَهَى فَلَهُ مَا  
سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا  
خَالِدُونَ

Sahih International translation

*“Those who consume interest cannot stand [on the Day of Resurrection] except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity. That is because they say, "Trade is [just] like interest." But Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest. So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allah. But whoever returns to [dealing in interest or usury] - those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“Those who consume usury shall not arise, except as one arises whom Satan has prostrated by touch; that is because they said: Truly trading is like usury; and God*

permitted trading and forbade usury; so who ever draws near an admonishment from his lord and refrains, for him is what is past; and his command is with God; but those who revert, those shall be the Companions of the Fire; they, ones who shall dwell in it forever!”

Al-Anaam (The Cattle), 160

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَىٰ  
إِلَّا أَمْثَلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

Sahih International translation

“Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed will have ten times the like thereof [to his credit], and whoever comes with an evil deed will not be recompensed except the like thereof; and they will not be wronged.”

Bakhtiar translation

“Whoever draws near with benevolence, then for him, ten times the like of it; and whoever draws near with an evil deed shall not be given recompense but with its like; and wrong shall not be done to them.”

Al-Baqarah (The Cow) 245

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا  
كَثِيرَةً وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْصُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٤٥﴾

Sahih International translation

“Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned”

Bakhtiar translation

*“Who is he who shall lend God a fair loan so that He shall multiply it for him manifold?*

*God seizes and extends and you shall be returned to Him.”*

An-Nahl (The Bees), 92

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّتِي نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَهَا مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ أَنْكَا  
نَتَّخِذُونَ أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ أُمَّةٌ هِيَ أَرْبَىٰ مِنْ  
أُمَّةٍ إِنَّمَا يَبْلُوكُمُ اللَّهُ بِهِ ۗ وَلِيُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ  
تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

Sahih International translation

*“And do not be like she who untwisted her spun thread after it was strong [by] taking your oaths as [means of] deceit between you because one community is more plentiful [in number or wealth] than another community. Allah only tries you thereby. And He will surely make clear to you on the Day of Resurrection that over which you used to differ.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“Be not like her who would break what she has spun after firming its fibers by taking your oaths in mutual deceit among yourselves as you are a community that is more numerous than another community; God tries you not but by this; and He shall make manifest to you on the Day of Resurrection above what you were at variance.”*

*The relative pronoun /Pllaḏii/ used analogously in Al-Baqarah, (The Cow) 17.*

Analogy is a prominent explanatory style in QA. It is used to better explain a certain concept and render it closer to the understanding of the audience.

Al-Baqarah (The Cow), 17

مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ  
اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

Sahih International translation

*“Their example is that of one who kindled a fire, but when it illuminated what was around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness [so] they could not see.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“Their parable is like a parable of him who lit a fire, then when it illuminated what was around him, God took away their light and left them in shadows where they perceive not”*

Neither Ibn Kathiir nor Al-Shaarawi stopped at gender-inclusiveness in their exegeses of the exemplary verses containing the masculine singular relative pronoun /ʔallaḏii/ (Al-Layl 16, Al-‘A’la 12, Al-Ma’idah 69, and Al-Baqarah 275). Ibn Kathiir focuses only on interpretation of the verses without focusing on the neutrality of the masculine relative pronouns used in the verses. Al-Shaarawi did not comment on the use of masculine relative pronouns in the verses and even jumped right to verb analysis in his interpretation of Al-Baqarah 275, skipping a generic interpretation of the pronoun /ʔallaḏiin-a/, which suggests that masculine relative pronouns would be used generically and females were included under the umbrella of the masculine in the case of QA verses with masculine relative pronouns, typically of Classical Arabic, unless the referent is specifically masculine as is the case in verse

The verses with the relative pronoun /mann/ exhibit gender-inclusiveness in several ways. In Al-Anaam 160, the relative pronoun /mann/, generally a singular

pronoun that takes a singular referent, is used with a plural masculine referent in /wa hum laa yuthlamuun/, which still makes it gender-inclusive in a sense as it definitely refers to all genders as is the case in Classical Arabic where the masculine is used to refer to genders in general.

The Sahih International team yielded a translation of the verse that conveyed the gender-inclusiveness understood from the original QA verse; they used the lexical item “whoever” and referred to it using a corresponding masculine referent as is the case in the verse.

Bakhtiar’s translation swerved from her gender-equality trajectory of her translation of the meanings of *the Qur’an*. In her translation of the verse, Bakhtiar refers to the gender-inclusive item “whoever” with the specifically masculine pronoun “he”. She, yet, finished her translation of the verse with the pronoun “them” which is the exact translation of the QA objective case pronoun /hum/ in the verse. In Al-Baqarah (The Cow), 245, however, both translators yield a masculine-gendered translation, whereas the verse uses the gender-neutral relative pronoun /mann/.

Ibn Kathiir refers to the gender-inclusiveness of the verse by stating that God urges His worshippers, generically, to spend in the name of Allah by loaning Him a goodly loan. Similarly, Al-Shaarawi uses gender-inclusive terms in explaining the reference to the gender-neutral /mann/ “who”; he uses terms like الإنسان human, and الإنسانية humanity.

Whereas masculine relative pronouns could refer to genders altogether as has been shown above, using a feminine relative pronoun to perform the same task does not exist in *the Qur’an*, based on the search I conducted. The only case I found was a case in

which the feminine singular pronoun /ʔallatii/ was used in a simile, in verse An-Nahl, 92, given above.

In Al-Baqarah (The Cow), 17, the masculine singular relative pronoun is also used in a similar simile.

**The grammatically feminine gender-inclusive term /nafs/. /nafs/** “self” is a gender-inclusive term which has the plural form /ʔanfus/. The following verses are examples of ways in which /nafs/ is used:

Surat Al-'An`ām (The Cattle), 98

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا  
الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾

Sahih International translation

“And it is He who produced you from one soul and [gave you] a place of dwelling and of storage. We have detailed the Signs for a people who understand.”

Bakhtiar translation

“It is He Who caused you to grow from a single soul, then a temporary stay and a repository; indeed We have explained distinctly the Signs for a folk who understand.”

Al-Baqarah (The Cow), 48

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَعَةٌ وَلَا  
يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

Sahih International translation

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided.”

Bakhtiar translation

“Be God fearing of the day when no soul shall give recompense for another soul at all, nor shall intercession be accepted from it, nor shall they be helped.”

Al-Imran (The Imrans), 185

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ  
الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ زُحَّحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا  
الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ ﴿١٨٥﴾

Sahih International translation

“Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your [full] compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained [his desire]. And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion.”

Bakhtiar translation

“Every soul is one that experiences death; then your compensation shall be paid in full on the Day of Resurrection; whoever is extracted from the fire, and is caused to enter The Garden, has indeed won a triumph; what is this present life, but the enjoyment of delusion?”

Ar-Ruum (The Romans), 21

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا  
وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ  
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

Sahih International translation

*“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“Among His Signs is that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may rest in them; He has made affection and mercy between you.”*

A post on Facebook interpreted Ar-Ruum, 21 as referring solely to women and cast responsibilities of being a shelter for their husbands without obliging the man with any responsibilities in this concern. The above translations does not take that concept of justice into consideration, even Bakhtiar However, In Al-Baqarah, 187, which is be dealt with under the sixth type of verses in the current chapter, there is evidence that a communion of marriage in Islam is based on complementary, equative framework between spouses.

The Sahih International translation of this verse is more gender-cautious as it translated the term /ʔazwaaʔan/ into mates, whereas Bakhtiar, gender-cautious in her translation as she is, still fell into the trap of the term’s misconception and translated it as “wives”. Al-Shaarawi had explained that a married person is a /zawj/ only as seen within a marriage framework. He also explained that the term /zawj/ is gender-neutral.



**The grammatically masculine term /ʔimriʔ-un/<sup>60</sup>.** The term /ʔimriʔ-un/ “one” or “person” is a grammatically and semantically masculine term (+ m, +M) used gender-neutrally although it has a feminine counterpart /ʔimraʔah/ which is used exclusively for female referents like /ʔiamraʔat fir yawun/ (Firaawn’s woman)

In QA, /ʔimriʔ-un/ is sometimes used to refer to males exclusively as in An-Nisa’a, 176:

An-Nisa’a, (The Women) 176

يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي الْكَلَالَةِ إِنَّ أَمْرًا هَلَاكٌ لَيْسَ لَهُ  
 وَلَدٌ وَلَهُ أُخْتٌ فَلَهَا نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ وَهُوَ يَرِثُهَا إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهَا  
 وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَتَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُمَا الثُّلَثَانِ مِمَّا تَرَكَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا إِخْوَةً رِجَالًا  
 وَنِسَاءً فَلِلَّذَكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَضِلُّوا  
 وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾

Sahih International translation

“They request from you a [legal] ruling. Say, “Allah gives you a ruling concerning one<sup>61</sup> having neither descendants nor ascendants [as heirs].” If a man dies, leaving no child but [only] a sister, she will have half of what he left. And he inherits from her if she [dies

<sup>60</sup> /ʔimriʔ-un/؛ امرؤُ؛ this is how the term is written in subjective case, the default case in *Classical Arabic* and *Modern Standard Arabic*. In Suurat Abasa “He Frowned” 37, the term is used after a preposition, in a genitive case and so it is written like this”إمرئ“. The verse is given here for convenience:

لِكُلِّ أَمْرٍ مِّنْهُمْ يَوْمَ ذِشَانَ يُغْنِيهِ ﴿٣٧﴾

Sahih International

“For every man, that Day, will be a matter adequate for him.”

<sup>61</sup> The term “one”, the translation of /ʔimriʔ-un / “امرؤ”, is gender-inclusive whereas in the verse the original term “إمرؤ” which is mostly used in QA as a gender-inclusive term, is used exclusively in the verse as referring to men. Bkhtiar was obviously aware of that fact in her translation of the verse.

*and] has no child. But if there are two sisters [or more], they will have two-thirds of what he left. If there are both brothers and sisters, the male will have the share of two females. Allah makes clear to you [His law], lest you go astray. And Allah is Knowing of all things.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“They ask you for advice; say: God pronounces to you about indirect heirs; if a man perishes and he has no child, but he has a sister, then for her is half of what he leaves; and he shall be one who is her inheritor if she has no children; and if there are two sisters then for them (f), two-thirds of he leaves; and if there are brothers and sisters, then the male shall have the same allotment as two females; God makes manifest to you so that you go not astray; God is Knowing of everything.”*

However, the same term is used gender-neutrally in a set of successive verses from Suurat Abasa (He Frowned), 34, 35, 36, and 37:

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ ۝ ٣٤

Sahih International translation

*“On the Day a man will flee from his brother”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“On that day a man shall run away from his brother”*

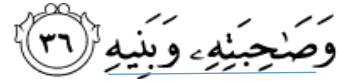
وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ ۝ ٣٥

Sahih International translation

*“And his mother and his father”*

Bahtiar translation

*“From his mother, his father”*

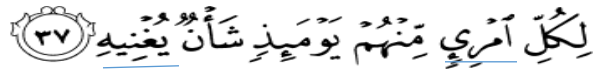


Sahih International translation

*“And his wife and his children,”*

Bakhiar translation

*“his companion wife and his children”*



Sahih International

*“For every man, that Day, will be a matter adequate for him.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“For every man of them on that Day, shall be a matter that shall preoccupy him.”*

Ibn Kathiir explains that the term /nafs waaHidah/ in Al-An'aam, 98 refers to Adam. Alsharawii explains that it refers to the oneness of creating Adam and Eve and their solidarity. He goes on to say that since God created Eve from Adam, Eve's life is directly connected to that of Adam, which is a strong reason for strong emotional bonds between the male and female genders.

Ibn Kathiir explained about Al-Baqarah, 48, that /nafs/ here refers to all genders as the verse means that nobody is going to be responsible for anybody but themselves. Al-Shawraawii s explained that both the /nafs/ terms are nor about gender specifically as

much as they are about offering sacrifice from one person, of either gender, to another on the Day of Judgment.

Ibn Kathiir explained that the term /nafs/ in Al-Imran, 185 refers to all creatures which means that it is generic and not specifically about human gender. Al-Shraawii, on the other hand, did not allude to the genericity of the term /nafs/. In the verse and dealt with it only as referring to humans, yet without alluding to gender issues, although of course, there is an under-reference to gender equality with regards to death. He also paid special attention to the metaphor of ‘tasting death’ which Sahih International kept in their translation but Bakhtiar replaced by the verb /experiences/ in hers

Despite the gender-neutrality of the term /ʔazwaajan/ whose singular is /zawj/, a totally gender neutral noun, Ibn Kathiir interpreted this verse as addressing males only, possibly because of the (+m) feature on the term /ʔazwaaj/. Al-Shaarawi disregarded the term's capacity to act gender-neutrally, like most masculine QA nouns, especially because the gender-neutral term /ʔazwaaj/ justifies treating the term /ʔanfusikum/ as a gender-neutral term, rather than referring exclusively to men.

Al-Shaarawi, on the other hand, as a Muslim scholar from the 20th century that witnessed a great upheaval toward women's emancipation, made reference to gender-equality. He started by stating the term /ʔanfusikum/ refers to males and females and from that trajectory he explained that there should not be such a thing as gender-inequality as the verse implies that all genders are absolutely equal and complement each other, each with properties that the other does not have as much.

Although Bakhtiar bears gender-equality in mind, she fell in the trap of the (+m) features of the term /ʔnfusikum/ and, therefore, translated the subsequent term,

/ʔazwaajan/ as “wives”, despite the gender-neutrality of the term. Sahih International’s translation was, yet, more heedful to that issue; they translated the term as “mates”, addressing its gender-neutrality. But since the verse is a nuptial one, it would even be more accurate to translate the term into “spouses”, as mates could also refer to an unmarried couple.

On the gender-neutrality of Abasa, 37, as well as its variant /ʔal-marʔ/ in Abasa 34, Ib kathiir referred to the term grammatically as a masculine term, but only alluded indirectly to its gender-neutral reference by quoting an interpretation of a person called *Qataadah* who highlights the gender-neutrality of the term as referring to everyone, male or female.

Al-Shaarawi also referred to the gender-neutrality of the term /ʔimriʔin/ in Abasa (He Frowned) 37. The term /ʔimriʔin/ is definitely gender-neutral as the three verses before it, Abasa, 34 includes the grammatically masculine term /ʔal-marʔ/, grammatically meaning, man, but could semantically refer to all genders. The term /ʔimriʔin/ in Abasa 37 also refers to male and female in 35 (to one’s parents), and 36 (to ones sons and wife). It is significant that, whereas the tree verses of Abasa, 34, 35, and 36 are in the masculine, grammatically and semantically, Abasa 37 comes forth with the (+M +m) term /ʔimriʔin/ referring to all of man’s relations before it; his mother, his father, his wife and children, highlightin the neutrality of the term and recasting semantic light on the potential neutrality of the (+m) term /ʔal-marʔ/ in Abasa, 34.

**The grammatically masculine gender-inclusive term /ʔaHad/.** The term /ʔaHad/ “a single one” is (+M+m/f) term which is used in several verses in the Qur’an. For example in

Al-Kahf (The Cave) 47

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَا فِيهَا مَنْهُمْ فَاحْشُرْهُمْ فَرِحُوا فَغَادَرُوا مَنْهُمْ  
أَحَدًا

Sahih International translation

“And [warn of] the Day when We will remove the mountains and you will see the earth prominent, and We will gather them and not leave behind from them anyone.”

Bakhtiar translation

“On a Day We shall set in motion the mountains, and you shall see the earth as what has departed; and We shall assemble them, and leave out none of them.”

Maryam (Mary) 26

فَكُلِّي وَأَشْرَبِي وَقَرِّي عَيْنًا فَإِمَّا تَرَيَنَّ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ أَحَدًا فَقُولِي إِنِّي  
نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنْسِيًّا

Sahih International translation

“So eat and drink and be contented. And if you see from among humanity anyone, say, 'Indeed, I have vowed to the Most Merciful abstention, so I will not speak today to [any] man.' ”

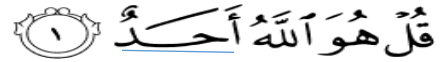
Bakhtiar translation

“So eat and drink and be refreshed; if **you** see any mortal, say: I have vowed a formal fast to The Merciful so I shall not speak to any man<sup>62</sup> this day.”

<sup>62</sup> The term “any man” can be interpreted as gender-specific. “a human” would be a more accurate translation of the Arabic إنسيًّا

*The term /ʔaHad/ referring to Allah.* Suurat Al-Ikhlaas is one of the most important suuraḥs in the Qur’an for its foundational value of belief in Islam. The surah is known as being equal to one third of the whole Qur’an because of its significance and conceptual weight. The first verse contains the item /ʔaHad/.

Al-Ikhlaas (The Sincerity) 1



Sahih International translation

“Say, “He is Allah, [who is] One,”

Bakhtiar translation

“Say: He is God, One,”

Al-Ikhlās, 1 is a pivotal verse in a pivotal verse in the Qur’an. Al-Ikhlās literally means “loyalty” to Allah, the Creator in Islam. Ibn Kathīr interpreted the verse briefly as referring to the One God, the Creator of the Universe, and did not stop at the term /ʔaHad/ per se, which could bear in its interpretation more than Allah’s Oneness.

Al-Shaarawi did deal with the verse very thoroughly, especially as far as its mode is concerned, and therefore focus in the present analysis of the verse heavily rests on Al-Shaarawi’s interpretation and takes it as a trajectory toward a more comprehensible interpretation of the verse enhanced with further linguistic evidence of what the term /ʔaHad/ could imply.

Al-Shaarawi stated that the verse starts with a verbal process which indicated that the conveyer’s role is minimized to being a vehicle that transfers the message. Al-Shaarawi also highlighted semantics of the term /ʔaHad/ vis-a’-vis the term /waaHid/

and explained that /ʔaHad/ implies that the referent is a single whole entity that does not consist of separable parts or could be broken down to parts; singularity is a key attribute to the Al-Mighty in *the Qur'an*. This singularity, according to Al-Shaarawi, accounts for why Allah does not have a child because for Him to have a child is to contradict the semantic singularity generated by /ʔaHad/. Al-Shaarawi uses the third verse to foster the concept of singularity embedded in /ʔaHad/.

Al-Ikhlaas (The Sincerity) 3

لَمْ يَكِدْ وَلَمْ يُوَلَدْ

Sahih International translation

*“He neither begets nor is<sup>63</sup> born,”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“He has neither procreated nor was He procreated.”*

Al-Shaarawi also explained that verse 3 of the suurah is adjectival of and is necessitated by the singularity of /ʔaHad/ . .

This view has been defied by Nawal Al-Saadawi who was asked to explain her claim that God is a “She” (Nour Elhouda, 2012) as, according to her, God is a spirit /ruuH/ and the Arabic term /ruuH/ is feminine. Evidence against Al-Saadawi’s claim is found in verse 29 of Al-hijr (The Rocky Tract) which reads:

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتَهُ، وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ، سَاجِدِينَ

Sahih International translation

*“And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall down to him in prostration.”*

<sup>63</sup> Although the verb “يولد” is formally in the present, semantically, however, it is in the past as it is negated by the present-to-past flipper article /lamm/. Thus, “was not born” is the actual meaning and of “لم يولد”.



Bakhtiar translation

“So when I have shaped him and have breathed into him of My Spirit, fall down before him.”

From Al-Hijr, 29 it becomes clear that the Spirit is captured in a genitive, partitive case which represents the Spirit as being part of a more inclusive Whole whose gender is not stated.

Extra evidence from the Qur’an on the Spirit being part of a Whole is also found in verse 12 of Al-Tahrim.

Al-Tahrim (The Prohibition), 12

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتِبَ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الْقَنَاتِ ۗ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَانِنِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

Sahih International translation

“And [the example of] Mary, the daughter of ‘Imran, who guarded her chastity, so We blew into [her garment] through Our angel, and she believed in the words of her Lord and His scriptures and was of the devoutly obedient.”

Bakhtiar translation

“Mary, the daughter of Imran, she guarded the virginity of her private parts so We breathed into it out of Our Spirit, and she established as true the words of her Lord and His Books, and she was among the ones who are morally obligated.”

***The linguistic dilemma of the verb /yalid/ in Al-Ikhlaas (The Sincerity)***

3. Reference to Allah in QA is always in the masculine most probably because it is the masculine is the default gender-neutral term in CQ. Nevertheless, Al-Ikhlās, 3 does

capture the gender dilemma when it comes to Deity in the verb /yalid/ literally meaning “to deliver a child” This verb has the default masculine marker /ya-/ attached to verbs in present and subjunctive forms, as well as verbs preceded with the past tense article /lam/ meaning “did not”, as in in Al-Ikhlās , 3. Semantically, the verb itself means to literally “give birth”, and so it is associated with women giving birth.

Relatedly, in Suuratt Maryiam “Mary”, Prophet Zakariyya wonders how he could have a child at his extreme old age:

قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَكَانَتِ امْرَأَتِي عَاقِرًا وَقَدْ  
بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا

Sahih International translation

“He said, “My Lord, how will I have a boy when my wife has been barren and I have reached extreme old age?”

Bakhtiar translation

“He said: My Lord! How shall I have a boy while my wife is a barren woman; and indeed I have advanced old age?”

As a male, Zakariyya did not use the first person form of the same verb /yalid/ used in Al-Ikhlās, 3, i.e. /ʔalid/. This verb is associated with women. This could account for the physical dilemma represented in using this verb in Al-Ikhlās (The Sincerity) 3 above, which renders the concept of God having a child a physical impossibility represented linguistically via the use of the masculine marker on the verb /yalid/ featuring that dilemma via word selection.

All in all, when it comes to Deity, gender remains an off-point topic in Islamic discourse as stating that God is a certain gender necessitates logically and by default that

its opposite gender also exists which can never be, at least within the bounds of reason.<sup>64</sup>

QA, despite its use of the masculine, *Qur'anic* use of the verb /yalid/ in Al-Ikhlās (The Sincerity) 3 embodies this conceptual dilemma and captures it in a semantic-morphosyntactic anomaly.

### **Analysis Conclusion**

In my analysis of Type 3 reference verses, labeled as [+M+m+f] I looked at some verses in which reference is generated gender-inclusively via masculine forms. I have shown that patrilineal culture has played a part in the interpretation of those verses by male scholars. The translators, being all women, have also shown varying degrees of awareness concerning women's inclusion in those masculine forms, despite the fact that, in some cases, few as they are, both the Sahih International team and Bakhtiar did not consider gender inclusion in those grammatically masculine forms.

I have also shown that the nominal term /ʔal-banuun/ “children” in Al-Hakf (The Cave) 46 cannot be referring to male children exclusively. I have also examined the variants of the term from several other supporting verses.

Additionally, I have investigated other masculine forms supportive to the main claim of the analysis of those verses representing Type 2 reference in *the Qur'an*.

### **Type 4: Reference to Females by Masculine Forms [+M+f]**

#### **Introducing the Data**

The exemplary data presented in this type of reference verses seem, on the surface, to be loaded with power issues, but, as will be shown, they are mostly applications of Classical Arabic grammar which allows referring to females in the

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<sup>64</sup> I strongly recommend that the term /ʔaHad/ in Al-Ikhlās (The Sincerity), 1 be translated as “A Single One” which highlights the concept of singularity discussed in the analysis of the verse and is compatible with the negated anomalous delivery metaphor in verse 2 of the surah.

masculine, a grammatical gender property which still percolated into *Modern Standard Arabic*, but not *Egyptian Arabic*.

Although reference to females using masculine forms in this type of reference might not seem to be power-related as verses of this type are examples of *grammatical gender* in QA, some of the verses, as will be shown, project a level of power, especially on the semantic level, that of God “Allah” as the Speaker to the wives of the Prophet (pbuh).

Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates), 30

يُنِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ مَن يَأْتِ مِنْكُنَّ بِفَحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ يُضَعَفْ لَهَا  
الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾

Sahih International translation

“O wives of the Prophet, whoever of you should commit a clear immorality - for her the punishment would be doubled two fold, and ever is that, for Allah easy.”

Bakhtiar translation

“O wives of the Prophet! Whoever of you (f) approaches glaring indecency her punishment shall be multiplied for her twofold. That is easy for God.”

Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates), 31

وَمَنْ يَقْنُتْ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا نُؤْتِهَا أَجْرَهَا  
مَرَّتَيْنِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾

Sahih International translation

“And whoever of you devoutly obeys Allah and His Messenger and does righteousness - We will give her her reward twice; and We have prepared for her a noble provision.”

Bakhtiar translation

*“Whoever of you (f) is morally obliged to God and His Messenger, ones(f) who have acted in accord with morality, We shall give her her compensation twice over. We have made ready a generous provision for her.”*

Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates), 32

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النِّبِيُّ لَسُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ ۚ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ  
بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا ﴿٣٢﴾

Sahih International translation

*“O wives of the Prophet, you are not like anyone among women. If you fear Allah, then do not be soft in speech [to men], lest he in whose heart is disease should covet, but speak with appropriate speech.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“O wives of the Prophet! You (f) are not like any other wives. If you are Godfearing, then be not soft in your saying so that he in whose heart is a sickness not be desirous, but say a saying of one who is moral.”*

Yuusuf, 30

﴿٣٠﴾ وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتَاهَا عَن نَّفْسِهِ ۗ  
قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا ۗ إِنَّا لَنَرَاهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

Sahih International translation

*“And women in the city said, ‘The wife of al-‘Azeez is seeking to seduce her slave boy; he has impassioned her with love. Indeed, we see her [to be] in clear error.’”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“The ladies in the city said: The wife of al-Aziz, sought to solicit her young male; indeed he captivated her longing, truly we consider her to be clearly wandering astray”*

Adh-Dhariyat (The Winnowing Winds) 29

فَأَقْبَلَتِ امْرَأَتُهُ فِي صَرَاقَةٍ فَصَكَتْ وَجْهَهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

Sahih International translation

*“And his wife approached with a cry [of alarm] and struck her face and said, “[I am] a barren old woman!”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“Then his wife came forward with a loud cry; she smote her face and said: I am an old barren woman!”*

#### Analysis of Reference Type 4

In Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates) 30 and 31, the verb /yaʔt/ is used after the gender-neutral<sup>65</sup> relative /mann/ من “whoever” to refer to the feminine noun /nisaaʔ

<sup>65</sup> It is important to explain that the relative pronoun /mann/ من “whoever” is actually *gender-neutral* in QA and in Arabic in general both grammatically and semantically. It can be used with feminine or a masculine verb. Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates), 31 is a good example. The verse uses both masculine and feminine Arabic verb forms with /mann/ من “whoever” respectively. Bakhtiar translation does not display this fact because she used the adverbial modifier “morally obliged”, without marking with (f) as she habitually does it and as it is her English translation of the Arabic verb, /yaqnat/ (+M), given that the English adverbial modifier follows the feminine marking of the subject in “of you” marked as (f), while in Arabic this adverbial modifier is originally a grammatically masculine verb.

Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates) 31

وَمَنْ يَقْنُتْ مِنكُنَّ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعَمَلْ صَالِحًا نُؤْتِهَا أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾

?a-nnabi/ “wives of the Prophet” then there is a semantic shift by using the prepositional phrase /la-ha/ “for her” in /yuDaayaf laha/ “is doubled for her”. In the next verse, the same usage occurs by using the masculine verb /yaqnatt/ after the demonstrative /mann/ followed by the prepositional phrase /minkunn/ “of you (f)” which, followed by the feminine verb /wa taymal SaaliHann/. Ibn Kathiir did not comment on this peculiar use of the masculine with a feminine referent.

Allah’s address to the wives of the prophet in verses 31, and 32 of Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates) does represent a level of power, that of God as the Speaker. However, it is presented in the form of punishing those of the wives who sin in doubles, where as those of the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) whom Allah addresses in Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates) are promised a doubled reward.

In his interpretation of Al-Ahzaab, 32, Al-Shaarawi, unlike Ibn Kathiir, paid special attention to the use of the grammatically masculine item /?aHad/ in the verse to refer to wives of the Prophet (pbuh). With a feminine counter term for /?aHad/, i.e. /?iHadaa/<sup>66</sup>, it might seem weird that the verse still used the grammatically masculine

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Bakhtiar translation

*“Whoever of you (f) is morally obliged to God and His Messenger, ones(f) who have acted in accord with morality, We shall give her her compensation twice over. We have made ready a generous provision for her.”*

<sup>66</sup> An example of /?iHdaa/ in a verse is:

Al-Qasas (The Stories) 27

قَالَ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ بِكَ وَإِنِّي نَمُنُّ بِكَ وَإِنِّي نَمُنُّ بِكَ وَإِنِّي نَمُنُّ بِكَ  
 جِئْتُكَ بِعَذَابٍ مُنْتَهَىٰ وَمَأْتِيكَ بِهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ  
 عَلَيْكَ سِتْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

item /ʔaHad/. He explains that in negative *Classical Arabic*<sup>67</sup> constructions, the term /ʔaHad/ is used semantically gender-neutrally.

In his interpretation of Yuusuf, 30, Ibn Kathiir was concerned with explaining and analyzing the story of Yuusuf and how the women of the city were captivated by his beauty. He did not yield any linguistic analysis per se. Al-Shaarawi looked at the word /niswatun/ “women”. He explained that it is a collective noun that does not have a singular form as the default singular is /ʔimraʔ-ah/, “woman”, and so the word is not treated as a real feminine word, based on views of Al-Aluusii, another scholar from the modern era, on the same verb which justifies the use of the masculine /qaala/ verb before the unreal feminine plural /niswatun/, “women”.

Neither Ibn Kathiir nor Al-Shaarawi commented on the use of the masculine adjective /ʔjuuz/ modifying the covert feminine noun /ʔimraʔah/ in Adh-Dhariyat (The Winnowing Winds), 29. There obviously seems to be no power issues in this peculiar use of a masculine adjective with a feminine noun. There is evidence from Arabic Grammar reference (Palmer, 1991; Ryding, 2005) that this is an authentic *Classical Arabic*

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Sahih International translation

*“He said, “Indeed, I wish to wed you one of these, my two daughters, on [the condition] that you serve me for eight years; but if you complete ten, it will be [as a favor] from you. And I do not wish to put you in difficulty. You will find me, if Allah wills, from among the righteous.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“He said: Truly I want to wed you to one of my two daughters, on the condition that you were to hire yourself to me for eight years; but if you fulfill ten years, then it shall be from you, for I want not to press you hard. For you shall find me, had God willed, one who is in accord with morality.”*

<sup>67</sup> The same case obtains in other varieties of Arabic.



Grammar rule that licenses using masculine adjectives regardless of the noun it modifies so long as the adjective has the signification of the subject as is the case in the verse.<sup>68</sup>

Relatedly, Bakhtiar's marking of the feminine refers unnecessarily to the subject "you" which is clearly feminine and so did not need extra marking as it already refers to the feminine noun "wives". It would behoove Bakhtiar to place the feminine marker following the verb "is" which needs to be highlighted per her approach to the translation of the meanings of *the Qur'an*.

### **Analysis Conclusion**

In the analysis of this reference type verses, I made the claim that although these verses might seem to be loaded with power issues due to their use of masculine forms to refer to the feminine, the verses do not really project power as they are mostly grammatically used. However, the address to the wives of the prophet in verses 31, and 32 of Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates) does represent a level of power, that of God as the Speaker. It is noted that power is represented equatively in these two verses: Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates) 31 with a promise of doubled punishment, and Al-Ahzaab, 32 with another promise of a doubled reward.

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<sup>68</sup> This grammar rule has been modified by the Academy of the Arabic Language (Albuhuuth, n. d.) which allowed the use of feminine forms of masculine adjectives used generically by cliticizing the feminine marker to the end of a masculine adjective with signification of the subject like /yajuuz/ "old" and /sabuur/ "patient", and /xaluuq/ yielding their feminine forms /sabuur/ and /xaluuq/.

## Type 5: Reference to the Masculine With Feminine Forms

### Introducing the Data

This type of genderized verses displays a state in which masculine nouns are introduced by feminine forms. Because the disagreement between masculine and feminine forms in this type of verses is triggered by grammatical gender only, the referents are not specifically power-affected by this feminine-for-masculine format, only two examples were enough to explain this QA tradition.

Al-Baqarah (The Cow) 253

﴿ تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ  
بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ ۖ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ  
بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۖ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مِنْ  
بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَكِنْ اٰخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ  
مَنْ كَفَرَ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلُوا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴾

Sahih International translation

*“Those messengers - some of them We caused to exceed others. Among them were those to whom Allah spoke, and He raised some of them in degree. And We gave Jesus, the Son of Mary, clear proofs, and We supported him with the Pure Spirit. If Allah had willed, those [generations] succeeding them would not have fought each other after the clear proofs had come to them. But they differed, and some of them believed and some of them disbelieved. And if Allah had willed, they would not have fought each other, but Allah does what He intends.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“These are the Messengers- We have given advantage to some of them over others. Of them are those to whom God spoke, while some of them He exalted in degree, and We gave Jesus son of Mary clear portents and confirmed him with the hallowed Spirit; and had God willed it, those after them would not have fought one another after the clear portents had drawn near to them, except they were at variance, and some of them have believed, and some of them are ones who are ungrateful; and had God willed, they would not have fought one another, but God accomplishes what He wants.”*

Al-Hujurat (The Chambers) 14

﴿قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ ءَأَمِنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا  
يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ  
أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

Sahih International translation

*“The bedouins say, "We have believed." Say, "You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], 'We have submitted,' for faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds of anything. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“The nomads have said: Awe have believed! Say to them: You believed not, instead say: We have submitted, for belief has not yet entered into your hearts; but if you obey God*

*and His Messenger, He shall not withhold any of your actions. Truly God is Forgiving, Compassionate.”*

### **Analysis of Reference Type 5 Verses**

Al-Shaarawi explained that disagreement between the nominal plural expression /ʔal-rusul/ and the feminine demonstrative feminine article before it is because the term refers to those /rusul/ “messengers” as representatives of their message which means both are *conceptually* the same. The term /risaalah/ “message is a feminine term and so the plural noun received a feminine demonstrative. He also added that the feminine demonstrative /tilka/ refers to an entity that is remote or inaccessible, which indicates those messengers’ high status. To Ibn Kathiir, however, the issue of disagreement between demonstrative and subject did not seem to be an important point as he did not tackle it. Nor did he tackle the disagreement between verb and subject in /ʔal- ʔayraab/ in Al-Hujurat (The Chambers), 14. Al-Shaarawi explained that the mismatch between subject and verb in is because the nominal expression /ʔal- ʔayraab/ has no singular, and so it is used as a collective noun which is treated as a feminine noun.

Typically, according to Arabic grammar rules (Palmer, 1991; Ryding, 2005), the two terms /ʔal-rusul/ “messengers” in Al-Baqarah (The Cow), 253 and /ʔal- ʔayraab/ in Al-Hujurat (The Chambers), 14 are broken plural nouns that accept a feminine demonstrative or verb.

### **Analysis Conclusion**

As has been shown in the analysis, reference to the masculine by feminine forms in this type of verses is basically related to the use of grammatical gender. The nominal expression /ʔarussul/ “messengers” الرسل “messengers”, used in Al-Baqarah (The Cow)

253, as Al-Shaarawi explained, has the singular masculine noun /rasuul/. According to Al-Shaarawi, the noun /rasuul/ رسول “a messenger” stand for his /risaalah/ رسالة “message” which is a masculine term in Arabic. This is justification that works for this example. The same rule might not obtain with other examples from Classical Arabic, the variety in which *the Qur'an* was revealed.

Al-Shaarawi also explained that the nominal expression /ʔal- ʔayraab/ has no singular, hence its use in the verse with a feminine singular. It seems that this kind of disagreement in gender and number in QA should be subjected to further research.

### **Type 6: Reference to Both Males and Females Equatively**

#### **Introducing the Data**

This type of verses represents instances of gender equality in CQ. The verses are exemplary of the use of structural opposition, nominalization, and metaphor in an equative fashion.

Al-Baqarah, (The Cow) 187

أَحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ  
وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنْكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ  
فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ فَالْآنَ بَشِّرُوهُنَّ وَأَبْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ  
اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ  
الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتُمُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى الْيَلِّ وَلَا تَبَشِّرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ  
عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ  
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ



Sahih International translation

*“It has been made permissible for you the night preceding fasting to go to your wives [for sexual relations]. They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them. Allah knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He accepted your repentance and forgave you. So now, have relations with them and seek that which Allah has decreed for you. And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]. Then complete the fast until the sunset. And do not have relations with them as long as you are staying for worship in the mosques. These are the limits [set by] Allah , so do not approach them. Thus does Allah make clear His ordinances to the people that they may become righteous.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“It is permitted for you on the night of formal fasting to have intercourse with your wives; they(f) are a garment for you and you are a garment for them(f); God knew that you had been dishonest to yourselves so He turned in forgiveness to you and pardoned you; so lie with them (f) and be looking for what God has prescribed for you; and eat and drink until the white thread become clear to you from the black thread at dawn; then fulfill the normal fast until night, and lie not with them (f)when you are ones who cleave to the places of prostration; these are the ordinances of God, keep well within them; thus God makes His Signs manifest to humanity so that perhaps they would be Godfearing.”*

Al-Baqarah (The Cow), 239<sup>69</sup>

الطَّلُقُ مَرَّتَانٍ فَإِمْسَاكٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ بِإِحْسَنٍ وَلَا يُحِلُّ  
لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَخَافَا أَلَّا يُقِيمَا  
حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ  
بِهِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ  
الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣٩﴾

Sahih International translation

“Divorce is twice. Then, either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment. And it is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them unless both fear that they will not be able to keep [within] the limits of Allah. But if you fear that they will not keep [within] the limits of Allah, then there is no blame upon either of them concerning that by which she ransoms herself. These are the limits of Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah - it is those who are the wrongdoers.

Bakhtiar translation

“Setting free may be said twice, then an honorable continuing to hold fast to them or letting them go with kindness; and it is not lawful for you that you take anything of what you have given them (f) unless they both fear that they both shall not perform within the ordinances of God, then no blame on either of them in what she offers as redemption for

<sup>69</sup> Although Al-Baqarah (The Cow) 239 addresses married men basically, it can still be regarded as “equative” with regards to its field, “divorce”, as some women married women may request to obtain the divorce liscence from their husbands which empowers them to divorce their husbands, in which case those wives are still expected to divorce their husbands with kindness. The nominalization phrase is definitely gender-neutral mode-wise and renders both men and women agents, despite the fact that the verse on the surface is solely for men.

that; these are the ordinances of God, so commit not aggression; and whoever violates the ordinances of God, then they, those are the ones who are unjust.”

Al- Ahzaab (The Confederates), 36

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ  
الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا ﴿٣٦﴾

Sahih International

“It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error.”

Bakhtiar translation

“It would not be for the one who is a male believer, and the one who is female believer, when God and His Messenger have decreed an affair that there should be any choice for them in their affair, and whoever rebels against God, and His Messenger, indeed he goes astray, clearly wandering astray.”

An-Nisa’a (The Women) 124

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ  
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا ﴿١٢٤﴾

Sahih International translation

“And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer - those will enter Paradise and will not be wronged, [even as much as] the speck on a date seed.”



Bakhtiar translation

*“Whoever be among the ones who act in accord with morality—whether male or female—and is one who believes, then those shall enter the Garden, and wrong shall not be done to them, even a speck on a date stone.”*

An-Nur (The Light), 2

الرَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَلِيَشْهَدَ عَذَابُهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Sahih International translation

*“The [unmarried] woman or [unmarried] man found guilty of sexual intercourse - lash each one of them with a hundred lashes, and do not be taken by pity for them in the religion of Allah, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a group of the believers witness their punishment?”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“Scourge the one who is an adulterer and the one who is an adultress; each one of them one hundred strokes and let not tenderness for them take you from the punishment of God, if you believe in God and the Laqst Day; and let witness be borne to their punishment by a section of the ones who believe.”*

### **Analysis of Reference Type 6 Verses**

Al-Baqarah (The Cow) 187 starts with a statement for married Muslim men licensing them to have sexual intercourse the night of fasting. Although the verse is grounded in the culture of the time in which the male almost always initiated the act of

intercourse, the mutual image that followed is very telling. The initial license statement is followed by an equative metaphor that explains mutuality in the act, and could be grasped to be an umbrella metaphor for the married life as a whole with an Islamic lens. The two translations are indeed too literal; Sahih International yielded “*They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them.*” and Bakhtiar, unnecessarily adding the feminine referent indicator after the subject and object pronouns that unambiguously refer to the wives, “*they (f) are a garment for you and you are a garment for them(f)*” As a translator myself, I would use the term “enclosure” instead of “clothing” and “a garment” for semantic reasons that trespass materialistic connotations to emotional ones. Ibn Kathiir treats women as mere recipients of the act, but also highlights the ultra-materialistic concepts in the metaphor. He cited Ibn Abbas who explained that the term /libaas-un lakum/ means a lodge for you; he also highlights the mutuality embedded in the metaphor. Al-Shaarawi, however, tackles the metaphor literally as referring to the man as the clothing for the woman and the woman as the clothing of the man.

Al-Baqarah (The Cow), 29 starts with a nominal, stative construction /?-TTalaahu marrataan/ “Divorce is twice” which Bakhtiar chose to translate as “setting free” which has string connotations of being in captivity and contradicts the embedded recommendation of living a peaceful, respectful life until divorce is conducted. Ibn Kathiir explained that this verse is restrictive on men because before Islam, a man would divorce his wife and return her without a limit.

Al-Shaarawi explained that although divorce in Islam is three times, a man can only have the right to two of them with the ability to offer to return his wife, a right that a

man no longer has with the third finalizing divorce, after which he cannot return his wife unless she marries another man first.

Using nominalization typically replaces verbs by nouns which can obscure agency and responsibility from action. But this is not applicable in the verse as the agent is already known, the husband. Nominalization in the verse is used as a rebuttal to the man for not holding on to the marriage or protecting his family. Using a noun also implies that divorce should happen very quietly without harming the wife. The verse specifically used the descriptive adverbial /ʔimsaakun bimayruuf aw tasriiHun biʔiHsaan/ translated by Sahih International and Bakhtiar respectively as “*in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment.*”, and “*then an honorable continuing to hold fast to them or letting them go with kindness*”, commands in the nominal given in a firm way to the man of a failed marriage as an indirect scold.

Ibn Kathiir mentioned that the verse is a restriction on men who would want to play with women through marriage and divorce. A man was reported to have told his wife that he would divorce her and before the elapse of her three month, he would renew her marriage, not necessarily with her consent, then divorce her again and again. So, in case a woman fears, senses, or experiences such playfulness with divorce from her husband, she can ask to transfer all of the divorce license to her, in which case she does not have to even relinquish her dowry; hence nominalization is accurate in the verse. Technically, the use of nominalization also makes the text more dense and compressed, which lowlights unnecessary events and highlights the process of divorce and makes it count it becomes a participant itself, rather than individuals involved in it.

In Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates) , 36, men and women are presented separately gender-wise and in the singular Both Ibn-Kathir and Al-Shaarawi highlight that the verse was revealed for a special occasion to two special Muslims, Abdulla Ibn Jahsh and his sister Zainab who both rejected Zaiyd Ibn Haritha's proposal to marry Zainab. The verse is contextualized and has a special occasion. However, at face value, it indicates that there is a religious rule being passed through it to all Muslims, in all times, which is also applicable as the verse could be taken as referring to *the Qur'an* and the Sunnah (traditions) of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), especially with the verse 7 of Suurat Al-Hashr (The Exile) in which Allah instructs all Muslims to do whatever the Prophet (pbuh) asks them to do, a referent to the Sunnah.

An-Nisa'a (The Women) 124 highlights concepts of equality and justice between men and women with regards to reward and how all genders can never be wronged in that. The two translations of the verse, as well as Al-Shaarawi's interpretation, highlighted the metaphor in /wala yuḏlamuuna naqiiraa/ which Sahih International and Bakhtiar translated respectively as "*those will enter Paradise and will not be wronged, [even as much as] the speck on a date seed.*" and "*those shall enter the Garden, and wrong shall not be done to them, even a speck on a date stone.*" All three used the contextualized concept of the term /naqiiraa/.<sup>70</sup>

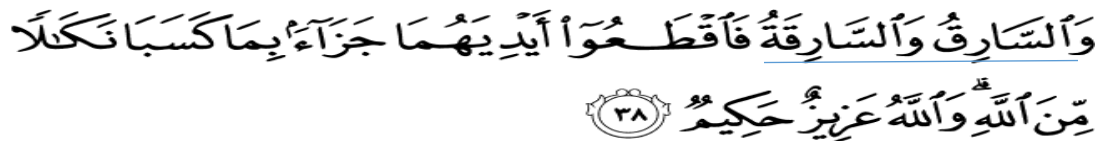
An-Nur (The Light) 2 tackles equal retribution for both men and women in case of adultery. Ibn Kathir numerates cases in which the act occurs as well as the difference between the punishment for a married and an unmarried person. Al-Shaarawi highlighted the fact that the masculine term in Arabic refers to the genders generically. He also added

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<sup>70</sup> The term /naqiira/ now has a new interpretation based on recent research by a Princeton physicist, Prof Harold Lumier (2002), it has been shown the atom fission disclosed a clicking sound inside the atom. This new concept of the term should be accommodated in new translations of the meanings of the Qur'an.

that the verse has a feminine term specified for women for the sake of clarity and dispersion of probable confusion. Then he shifted to why the verse was initiated by the masculine term /initiation with the feminine term /ʔa-zzaniyah/<sup>71</sup> الزانية “the adulterous female” and explained that it is because adultery is an act that is mostly initiated by a woman. He alludes to Al-Ma’idah (The Table), 38 which starts with a male form of the culprit

Al-Ma’idah (The Table), 38



Sahih International

*“[As for] the thief, the male and the female, amputate their hands in recompense for what they committed as a deterrent [punishment] from Allah. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.”*

Bakhtiar translation

*“As for the one who is a male thief, and the one who is a female thief, then sever their hands as recompense for what they have earned, an exemplary punishment from God; and God is Almighty, Wise.”*

*Al-Shaarawi accounts for /ʔa-ssaariq/ being in initial position in Al-Ma’idah, 38 by stating that most acts of theft is conducted by males. It is significant to assume that most acts of theft are conducted by men because most women at the time were house*

<sup>71</sup>In her translation of the verse, Bakhtiar broke free from the verse’s orderly citation of the feminine term first, perhaps on purpose, by using the masculine term “adulterer”, then “adulteress”.

wives and did not have the opportunities of today, and so it was the males that were the sole bread winners of the family and in times of destitute, they probably had stronger reasons to steal than the women of the time.

### **Analysis Conclusion**

Verses of this sixth type of reference represented equative reference to males and females. Reference to the genders in this type of verses took several forms: via nominalization, metaphor, or structural opposition. Sometimes, two of these three are combined. Nominalization turned out to be a common denominator; it is paired once with a metaphor as in Al-Baqarah, (The Cow) 187 and another with structural opposition as in the same suurah, verse 239 in which the agent is not stated but contextually predictable, the husband.

Interestingly, a woman's right to divorce has always been an Islamic right that was shrouded by patriarchal culture which portrayed divorce as a Muslim man's privilege. It was not until an Egyptian movie came out in the seventies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century bearing the name "I Want a Solution". The movie featured a woman trapped for a decade in a loveless marriage. Ultimately, her lawyer manages to divorce her by bringing to the judge's attention the story of a woman in the days of Prophet Muhammd (pbuh) who went to see the Prophet (pbuh) asking him to divorce her from her husband who was fine, except that she did not love him. The Prophet asked the woman to give her husband back his dowery and consider herself divorced.

Activating this Islamic law that gives Muslim women the right to divorce via the movie resulted in new law in Egypt. The law gave Muslim women the right to divorce

their husband if they return their dowries to them. Undisclosed agency in Al-Baqarah 239 leaves room for the female other to be represented by nominalization in the verse.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this Chapter, 6 reference types were discussed: Reference to males with grammatically masculine forms [+M +m], reference to females by using grammatically feminine forms [+F+f] reference to females and males genders by using masculine forms [+M+m/f] reference to females by using masculine forms [+M+f], reference to males by using feminine forms [+F+m], and reference to both males and females equatively [+F/M+m/f]

The analysis of reference Type 1 revealed that there is room for a more gender-inclusive interpretation of some verses of this type. Reference type of the format (+M+m) could actually be reformatted in many cases as (+M+m/f). The analysis shows that there is room for a gender-inclusive interpretation of those verses which could result in alleviating the levels of power exercised by males toward females. A gender-inclusive interpretation of those verses also allows for the inclusion of women in acts that was always presented as exclusive for males.

Through reference Type 2 analysis of verses, I have shown that patriarchal culture has been dominant in part due to patriarchal interpretations of those verses, which marginalized women and associated them with negative acts like household chores, although Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the role model for Muslim men, would help with house hold chores, especially when it came to his personal chores.

I have also shown that Islam empowered women when it gave them the right to donate part of their property. This in fact is the only way a Muslim can use the property of his living spouse.

Polygamy, a mishandled concept in Islamic communities due to patriarchal culture, was also a pivotal topic in the analysis. Commonly, Muslims and non-Muslims, regardless of their gender, hold the view that a Muslim man has been commanded by Allah to marry on his wife, whenever he can, up to four wives. I have shown that the main theme of the verse 3 of An-Nisaa (The Women) in which the concept of polygamy occurred is basically *female orphans*, not *polygamy*. I have also explained that although the verbal imperative form is used when the verse shifts to giving men the option of marrying adult women, not young little orphan growing into womanhood, Muslims understood those verses, driven by patriarchal interpretation of the verses, as a downright command for a Muslim man to marry more than one. Furthermore, although the verse explains that a polygamous man is probably apprehensive of not being fair among his women, interpretations of the verse mostly disregard this important part which resonates with An-Nisaa's 129 in which Allah addresses men stating that they will never be fair between their wives, even if they are heedful.

In my analysis of Type 3 reference verses, labeled as [+M+m+f] I looked at some verses in which reference is generated gender-inclusively via masculine forms. I have shown that patriarchal culture has played a part in the interpretation of those verses by male scholars. The translators, being all women, have also shown varying degrees of awareness concerning women's inclusion in those masculine forms, despite the fact that,



in some cases, few as they are, both the Sahih International team and Bakhtiar did not consider gender inclusion in those grammatically masculine forms.

I have also shown that the nominal term /ʔal-banuun/ “children” in *Al-Hakf (The Cave)* 46 cannot be referring to male children exclusively. I have also examined the variants of the term from several other supporting verses.

In the analysis of reference Type 4 verses, I made the claim that although these verses might seem to be loaded with power issues due to their use of feminine forms to refer to the masculine, the verses do not really project power as they are mostly grammatically used. However, the address to the wives of the prophet in verses 31, and 32 of *Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates)* does represent a level of power, that of God as the Speaker. It is noted that power is represented equatively in these two verses: *Al-Ahzaab (The Confederates)* 31 with a promise of doubled punishment, and *Al-Ahzaab*, 32 with another promise of a doubled reward.

As has been shown in the Type 5 verse analysis, reference to the masculine by feminine forms in this type of verses is basically related to the use of grammatical gender. The nominal expression /ʔarussul/ “messengers” الرسل “messengers”, used in *Al-Baqarah (The Cow)* 253, as *Al-Shaarawi* explained, has the singular masculine noun /rasuul/. According to *Al-Shaarawi*, the noun /rasuul/ رسول “a messenger” stand for his /risaalah/ رسالة “message” which is a masculine term in Arabic. This is justification that works for this example. The same rule might not obtain with other examples from Classical Arabic, the variety in which *the Qur’an* was revealed.

Al-Shaarawi also explained that the nominal expression /ʔal- ʔayraab/ has no singular, hence its use in the verse with a feminine singular. It seems that this kind of disagreement in gender and number in QA should be subjected to further research.

Verses of this sixth type of reference represented equative reference to males and females. Reference to the genders in this type of verses took several forms: via nominalization, metaphor, or structural opposition. Sometimes, two of these three are combined. Nominalization was a common denominator; it is paired once with a metaphor in Al-Baqarah, (The Cow) 187 and another with structural opposition in the same suurah, verse 239 in which the agent is not stated but contextually predictable, the husband.

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## CHAPTER V

### GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN EGYPTIAN ARABIC

Over a decade ago, I observed that the Egyptian Arabic (EA) item /Hadd/, meaning “person/someone”, started to be used in new ways. Egyptian Arabic speakers started to use the term in place of other gender-specific equivalents like /waaHid/ “a male person” and /waHdah/ a female person, or /ʔinsaan/ “a male human” and its feminine form /ʔinsaana/ commonly situated in certain constructions; all of those terms have been mostly replaced by the gender-inclusive item /Hadd/.

In this chapter, I examine this phenomenon, along with other pertinent issues. In so doing, I investigate data from multiple YouTube videos in which speakers of Egyptian Arabic use the term /Hadd/ in its gender-inclusive ways. I am going to analyze the data via CDA and morphosyntax in order to unravel levels of power, if any<sup>72</sup>, that might be at play behind EA users’ unfamiliar ways of using certain terms, like /Hadd/ for example, rather than the other more common ways of using those terms or other more commonly used terms in the past decade or so such as the terms /fakhS/ “person”, /ʔil-waaHid/<sup>73</sup> “one”, /fardd/ “individual”, and /ʔinsaan/ “human”. But I also look at these terms, especially as some of them are basically gender-inclusive despite my observation that they have been mostly replaced by /Hadd/. In my analysis I also look at other pertinent nominal gendered expressions, like job titles, and look at the power embedded in those titles.

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<sup>72</sup> As the data presented in this chapter are mostly single sentences, the main concern will not be about capturing power as much as spotting morphosyntactic change and behavior of the items investigated and how to potentially alleviate power from EA discourse in general.

<sup>73</sup> Although the term /ʔil-waaHid/ is gender-inclusive; it also refers to males exclusively if, and only if, it is used in masculine contexts, by males referring to males.

## **Gender-Inclusiveness Redefined in Terms of Egyptian Arabic**

EA inflects for gender on nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Many masculine lexical items in EA are used generically as gender-inclusive. Although those items are used to refer to genders inclusively, it is necessary to define what gender-inclusiveness is when it comes to a highly inflectional language variety gender-wise like EA. In EA most, if not all, human gender nouns and adjectives are already, in their base forms, inflected for the masculine. From that readily formed masculine base form the feminine is formed by cliticizing the feminine marker to nouns and adjectives, with the exception of very few items whose feminine forms are provided by completely different items, like /raagil/ راجل “man” and /sitt/ ست “woman” among a set of few others. And so, for the sake of accuracy, it is important to state that gender-inclusiveness in the case of EA is achieved whenever a grammatically masculine lexical item is semantically inclusive, even though it might sometimes have a grammatically feminine counter item. Semantic gender-inclusiveness reflects speakers’ needs for gender-inclusion in their language.

In EA, masculine forms are used as only (+M) to refer to grammatically masculine referents exclusively or (+m/f) to refer to the masculine grammatically but to all genders semantically. “M” is used here to mean grammatically masculine; “m” stands for “semantically masculine” (See Appendix A). Form categorization does not necessarily converge with semantic interpretation thereof. Haig (2012) alludes to a similar dichotomy between grammatical function and its actual interpretation in the sentence “Mike gave Steve a fatal blow”, in which Steve’s grammatical function is Beneficiary “despite not benefiting from the action semantically according to the definition of ‘benefit’ as ‘deriving some enhancement of one’s power’.” (p. 53) Using the

masculine generically in EA embeds, mostly, an understood feminine within its grammatical form.

Unlike *Qur'anic Arabic* and *Modern Standard Arabic*, the latter being the predominant formal variety of Arabic, there are no dual verbal forms or plural feminine forms in *Egyptian Arabic*. Grammatically masculine forms are used either as (+ m), i.e. semantically masculine, or as (+m/f), i.e. semantically gender-inclusive. Still, cross-genderization is there in Egyptian Arabic, especially in songs (Ahmed, 2007) and in the form of cross addressing (Wilmson, 1999).

With the above EA genderization status quo in mind, it is significant, and realistic, to define gender-inclusiveness in terms of EA as *semantically* gender-inclusiveness in the first place. An EA lexical item is, thus, considered gender-inclusive if, and only if it is semantically gender-inclusive, regardless of its grammatical gender specification. This is because gender-inclusiveness comes, in many cases, in EA as a byproduct with masculine lexical items. Thus, if a lexical item is (+ M +m) this means it is both grammatically and semantically masculine. But this is not the case if an EA lexical item is in isolation. A few examples are nominal expressions like: /raagil/ راجل “man”, /muhanddis/ مهندس “engineer”, and /duktoor/ دكتور “doctor”. In context, these masculine expressions can be used gender-inclusively, too as will be seen in the pertinent analysis of the data.

In context, these masculine nominals interact with ideology, as will be explained later in the chapter. This contextualization of those same three terms /raagil/, /muhanddis/, and /Tabiib/ can have a semantically gender-inclusive interpretation.

## The Layout of Data Analysis

EA data analysis is comprised of two parts: 1) Analysis and conceptualization of the data, and 2) Using the analyzed data to build an argument that linguistically justifies the proposition of specific further gender-inclusive and power alleviating techniques. Based on that argument, I also propose a gender-inclusive epicene, justifying it with linguistic and conceptual reasoning and evidence.

The first part of data description contains two types of data; EA data viewed as individual forms and EA data used in context. The purpose behind looking at EA data in isolation is to check the features and properties of each item, in preparation for looking at the same data in context, in order to ultimately capture the change I observed about the as used by speakers of EA.

The data analysis includes describing gender-inclusive terms in EA (the terms /faXSS/, /fardd/, /ʔinsaann/, and /ʔil-waaHidd/) then the term /Hadd/ and its usage possibilities which fall into the following subcategories: A- /Hadd/ referring to a masculine referent, B- /Hadd/ referring to a feminine referent C- /Hadd/ referring to inanimate collective nouns denoting people D- /Hadd/ used with a plural predicate E /Hadd/ used with the quantifiers like /kull/ “every”, /kaza/ “several”, and /ʔktar min/ “more than” F- /Hadd/ used with the definite article /ʔal-/, “-ال”, “the”, G /Hadd used with a +M+f referent.

The description and analysis lay the foundation for broadening the perspective of looking at the data and checking what it could offer in terms of proposing further gender-inclusive techniques supported by the target to achieve some justice in EA as much as it appears to be possible. A gender-inclusive epicene is also proposed.

I finalize the chapter by looking at job titles in Egyptian Arabic from a CDA perspective.

The data presented for analysis are nominals used in EA to refer to individuals. The terms used are all grammatically masculine terms. They only vary with regards to their other features such as whether they accept plurality or not, and if they do, how their plurals are formed, and whether they accept the feminine cilitic /taa marbuuTah/.

The data is presented in order of features as to which of the data items is congruent with the features of nominals in EA. Those features include genderization, number, and plurality. The analysis moves from items that have richer features to those ones with fewer features, where the analysis shifts from concrete to abstract, paving the way for deliberate intervention with the data that has fewer restrictive features, by taking advantage for the absence of certain features to propose other potentially possible options of using this data in ways that alleviate power and achieve as much gender-neutrality as possible.

Each of the items analyzed is first described in isolation, then in context. Then, ways to yield more gender-inclusive or gender-equitable are offered, depending on each item's capacity to fit in those constructions.

### **The Term /ʔinsaan/ “a human”**

#### **Introducing the Data**

Ten years ago or so, I observed that the grammatically masculine term /ʔinsaan/ was used to refer to males exclusively; its feminine form formed by adding the feminine marker /taaʔ marbiiTah/ to the masculine form /ʔinsaan/, forming the feminine term

/ʔinsaanaḥ/ which was used to refer to a female referent or by females to talk about themselves. One would hear sentences like (1) and (2):

(1) /AḤmad ʔinsaana/

FMS NMS

(2) /Munaa ʔinsaana/

FMS NFS

Nevertheless, in the past decade or so, it became not uncommon to hear the masculine term /ʔinsaana/ being used gender-inclusively, or even as referring to a female in sentences like:

(3) /ḥiyya bardu ʔinsaana biyḤis/

F Pro. NM VM

She also a human he-feels

“She is also a human (and) has feelings.”

In the data analysis section, I will try to see if the term /ʔinsaana/ has other features that could enable it to be used in more gender-inclusive ways.

### **Data Analysis**

Plurality-wise, the term /ʔinsaana/ does not have a morphologically-derived plural form from it; its plural is the collective semantic plural item /baḥar/ “humans”, or /naas/ “people” which are morphologically independent from the formation of the singular term /ʔinsaana/.

Examples of such uncommon, gender-inclusive use of the term will be shown in the analysis of the data in context. In sentence (4), actress Athar El-Hakiim (issa\_sawsan, 2013) refers to herself by saying:



(4) /ʔana ʔinsaana mustaqill/

1<sup>st</sup> GN S NMS Adj. MS

I human independent

“I am an independent human.”

In a video about the life of Lady Aa’ishah, Wife of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the presenter (AlHayat TV, 2013) says that she sympathizes with her because she is human:

(5) /ʔil-ʔamr dah biyxalli ʕinayyah tammaʕ li-ʔanna-ha ʔinsaana/

Pro. F S NMS

The matter this makes eyes-my water because-she human

“This matter makes my eyes water because she is a human.”

In another video, the same presenter (AlHayat TV, 2013) uses the feminine form /ʔinsaana/ as she describes American reporter Lara Logan reporting from Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt, and how she was assaulted by some men as soon as her camera battery went down. She says:

(6) /mashaahid bitwaDDaH mada taʔsiir haza<sup>74</sup>-l-ʔinfilaat ʕala nafsyyitt -l-ʔinsaana di/

NFS Deict.

scenes showing how impact this deviance on the psychology the-human this

“Scenes showing the impact of this deviance on the psychology of this human.”

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<sup>74</sup> /haza/ is a form of the Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic deictic /haðaa/. Egyptians commonly change the voiced interdental/dental fricative sound into /z/ for ease of articulation.

Also a Samira Saiid song is titled /kulilna ʔinsaana/ “We are all Humans:

(7) /kullinaa ʔinsaana/<sup>75</sup>

When asked about the most important quality she would want to be in her future spouse, actress Nabila Ebeid said:

(8) /yiHbbinii b-Sidq laʔin-anaa nabiilah -ʔbeed -il-ʔinsaana/

He loves me with-truth because I Nabila Ebeid the-human

VMS

1GNS

N (+M+f)

“He should love me truthfully because I am Nabila Ebeid the human.”

### **Analysis Conclusion**

In this section, I looked at the term /ʔinsaana/ which is used gender-inclusively, although there is a feminine counter term for it. The analysis shows that the term does not have a plural derived from the nominal /ʔinsaana/. The singular is used in cases where reference is to a group of individuals.

### **The Term /ʔil-waaHid/ “one”**

#### **Introducing the Data**

The term /ʔil-waaHid/ is a ubiquitous term in EA daily discourse. Men use it of course and women use it without stopping at its grammatical gender feature.

Out of context, /ʔil-waaHid/ is a definite masculine nominal term meaning “one”. Although the term is morphologically masculine, it is used semantically in EA as a gender-inclusive term that refers to the speaker as first person, or generically as a

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<sup>75</sup> The use of /ʔinsaana/ here resonates with the use of the term /ʔT-Tefl/ “the child” in QA (Suurat An-Nuur (The Light) 31) *الذين لم يطلعوا على عورات النساء* translated by Sahih International as “children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women.” in which the singular Arabic term child is used gender-neutrally and followed by the plural relative pronoun /ʔallaḏiin/.

reference term to the speaker as well as other referents. In EA, one might hear, from a male or a female, sentences like (9):

(9) /ʔil-waaHid ti3ib/

M          M V Past  
the-one      tired.

“One is tired.” Or, not literally, “I am tired.”

In the data analysis, the term /ʔil-waaHid/ is investigated in context. I claim that the term could even be used gender-neutrally in exclusively feminine contexts, despite the fact that there is a feminine term for it, the term /ʔil-waHda/.

### Data Analysis

The term /ʔil-waaHid/ accepts the feminine marker clitic /ة-/ “ta’ a marbuuTah” which yields the feminine counterpart term /ʔil-waHdah/<sup>76</sup>. Unlike /ʔil-waaHid/, the term /ʔil-waaHdah/ cannot be used gender-inclusively; it can still be used generically though, only as referring to females involved in one thing or having one more common state of affairs such as pregnancy, or even attitude of women towards men as in (10) below:

(10) /ʔil-waHda bi-t-Hibb tismay kilmah Hilwah min guuz-ha/

F          F          F                          M  
the-one      likes      to hear      a word      sweet      from      husband-her

“A woman likes to hear a sweet word from her husband.”

Exclusive use of the term /ʔil-waaHid/ by males is also possible. No morphological modification is required as the term is already masculine; it is only the context that

<sup>76</sup> The medial vowel sound in /ʔil-waHdah/ الواحدة is short, unlike /ʔil-waaHid/ الواحد which has a long medial vowel, despite the fact that both terms have a long medial orthographic vowel, /ʔalif/.

governs this kind of masculine exclusiveness. Sentence (11) describes the state of affairs of a man choosing a wife:

- (11) /ʔil-waaHid laazim yikhtaar il-bint illi yitgawwiz-ha bi-3naayah/  
NMS V NF R Pro VM  
The-one should choose the-girl that (he) marries-her with-care  
“A man should choose carefully the girl that he would marry.”

With regards to plurality, the term /ʔil-waaHid/ has no plural form, so its features are (+S, -Pl., +M, +m/f)

Dropping the definite article from the term /ʔil-waaHid/ produces the indefinite nominal term /waaHid/ which is used to refer to a male person; /waaHdah/, the feminine counterpart, is used to refer to a female person, as in (12), and (13) below:

- (12) /waaHid saʔal suʔaal/  
NMS VM Past N  
“A man asked a question”

- (13) /waaHdah saʔalit suʔaal/  
NFS VF Past N  
a female one asked (a) question  
“A woman asked a question”

The terms /waaHdah/, /ʔil-waaHid/, /waaHid/ do not have plural forms.

**The term /ʔil-waaHid/ in context.** In context, the term /ʔil-waaHid/ resonates with the description of its usage out of context. This is shown via several examples:

In [mtvlebanon](#) (2012), Egyptian actress Nabila Ebeid says as she describes herself but she is interrupted by the interviewer so she does not finish the sentence:

(14) /laama –l-waaHid min guwwa yikuun naqii/

NM. GN                                  VMS    Adj.MS

When    -the one    from    inside    be                pure

“When one is pure from inside...”

In a comment on an article about former actress Hanan Turk, who took the veil and gradually ended her acting career, a male commentator ([louay 7bebo](#), 2012) comments on another commentator’s comment who criticized the retiring actress for being “retarded” by wondering:

(15) /huwwa –l-waaHid lamma yituub l-illii Xala?uh        w yitHaggib yib?a    ragyii/

he                      the-one                      when                      he-repents    to-the One (who)    created-him & wears the veil    is                      retarded

M. GN    VMS+f        MPro+f    VMS+f    M+fAdj.S

“Is one retarded if he repents to his Creator and takes the veil?”

This is a significant example because it refers exclusively to females, yet the GN item /?il-WaHid/ is used by a male who could have used the feminine form of /?il-WaHid/.

The term /?il-WaHid/ has the definite article dropped when used with the quantifier /kul/ “every”. This is shown in the following example in ([Comedeyah](#), 2012)

(16) /kul                waaHid    ?aaqid    may bayduhum/

MS.+m+f    MS    GN Pl.

every one                sitting with themselves

“Everyone was sitting by themselves”

Here using the plural in the phrase /may bayDuhum/ “by themselves” in (16) with a singular referent /waaHid/ “one” is significant. Plurality in the phrase is in agreement with the pluralized progressive verb /ʔaayid/, which in turn, disagrees with the grammatical number of /waaHid/, yet agrees with it semantically as /waaHid/ paired with the quantifier /kul/ is (+m, +f). This semantic agreement between the subject and the verb licensed the speaker’s use of the plural referential phrase /may bayDuhum/.

### **Analysis Conclusion**

The term /ʔil-waaHid/ is a rather flexible term of reference in EA. Although the term does not have a plural, it still has a feminine counter term, /ʔil-waaHdah/ which is used exclusively in feminine contexts. However, the data analysis of the term /ʔil-waaHid/ in context showed that the term could still be used pervasively in what is commonly thought of as exclusively feminine contexts.

### **The Term /faXS/ “person”**

#### **Introducing the Data**

The term /faXS/ is also a ubiquitous term of reference in EA. Although the term /fakhS/ is grammatically masculine, like the terms /ʔil-waaHid/, /waaHid/, and /ʔinsaan/, it, unlike these terms does not accept the feminine marker /taaʔ marbuuTah/ and, therefore, has no feminine counter term. One cannot say a sentence like (17):

(17) \* /Muna \* faXSah Tayyibah/<sup>77</sup>

FNS      FNS      FNAdj.

Mona (a) person kind

Mona is a kind person.

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<sup>77</sup> The use of the double asterisk here is significant; the first asterisk signifies that the whole sentence is anomalous; the second signifies the nominal expression /fakhSah/ itself is anomalous as a lexical item.

The term /ʃaXS/ itself was not commonly used by EA speakers when they would refer to a female, perhaps due to its (+M) feature paired with its lack of a feminine counter term. However, as will be shown in the analysis of data in context, this unacceptability of the term /ʃaXS/ to have the feminine marker cliticized to it, thus forming the term \*/ʃaXSah/ has had a positive effect in the term’s use as there has been a shift toward using it gender-neutrally most probably because of such a restriction. The term /ʃaXS/ has the plural term /ʔaʃXaaS/ derived from the singular /ʃaXS/ by analogy to one of the EA plural-forming formats <sup>78</sup>

Although the term /ʃaXS/ is (+ M) grammatically, it is semantically (+m/+f). The term does not have a feminine corresponding term; there is no such a term as \*/ʃaXSSah/. Yet, the term accepts pluralization; it has the plural form /ʔaʃXaaSS/ which is (+Pl +M, +m, and +f).

Given its gender and number features, it is reasonable to claim that the term /ʃaXS/ could potentially be used in further gender-inclusive EA constructions.

### **Data Analysis**

Generally speaking, the term /ʃaXS/ is used to refer to a masculine referent. However, over the past decade or so, I observed that it is sometimes used to refer to a feminine referent. A woman can say about herself a sentence like (18):

(18) /ʔana ʃaXS musaalim giddann/

1<sup>st</sup> F S MS Adj. M S Adv.

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<sup>78</sup> Pluralization in EA follows certain pluralization formats from Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic. The plural form of the term /ʃaXS/ is /ʔaʃXaaS/ following the the mold format /ʔafʔaal/, like /magd/ “glory” which has the plural form /ʔamgaad/ “glories”.

I a person peaceful very

“I am a very peaceful person.”

Interestingly, there in EA is the grammatically feminine nominal expression /faXSiyah/ meaning “personality” which is (+F+m/f). In EA, one can hear sentences like (19):

(19) /ʔirraagil dah faXSiyah raaʔi3ah/

MS MS FS Adj. F

the-man this a personality wonderful

“This man is a wonderful personality.”

Sometimes the term /faXSiyah/ is used with a masculine/feminine pronominal clitic referring to and depending on the gender of the subject as in:

(20) /ʔirraagil dah faXSiyit-uh qawiyyah/

MS MS FS Adj. F

the-man this personality-his strong

“This man is a wonderful personality.”

(21) /ʔissitt dih faXSiyit-ha qawiyyah/

FS FS FS Adj. F

the-woman this personality-her strong

“This woman is a wonderful personality.”

**The term /faXS/ in context.** In context, the term /faXS/ reflects the above description. It is used gender-neutrally as in (22) where actress Raghdah (Nogoom Med, 2013) explains that she is a peaceful person:

(22) /ʔana faXS musaalim/



1<sup>st</sup> GN.S M.GN M Adj. S

I a person peaceful

“I am a peaceful person.”

In another context, singer Sherine (2014) speaks about Lebanese singer Haifa Wehbe saying:

(23) /hayifaa jaXS daʔuub ʕaawizz yingaH/

NF M. GN Adj. +M V +M S. VMS

Haifaa a person hard-working wants succeed

“Haifaa is a hard-working person who wants to succeed.”

The term “jaXS” in (22) and (23) is grammatically masculine. Semantically, the term is gender-inclusive and highlights gender equality by referring to as an individual whose gender is not an issue in the discourse.

*Power-alleviating techniques in constructions of the term /jaXS/. The term /jaXS/ is (+M+m/f). It does not have a feminine form, or accept the feminine /taa marbuuTah/ criticized to it. It is reasonable to assume that the term is actually (-F, -M), despite the fact that it is treated grammatically as a masculine term. Its masculine feature is metaphorical, like other masculine nouns in Classical Arabic, and Modern Standard Arabic, as well as some inanimate nouns such as /ʔal-kitaab/ and /ʔal-maaʔidah/ which are known in Classical Arabic grammar as the unreal masculine/feminine. But the term /jaXS/ is different than those inanimate names in that it refers to animate entities, humans who are affected semantically and ideologically by its unreal masculine form. The following examples show that the term does entail issues of injustice in its common usage*

in EA as a metaphorically masculine noun. For example, Raghdah could refer to herself by saying:

(24) /ʔana ʃaXS/

1<sup>st</sup> S.+f/m N+M+f/m

(25) \*/ʔana musaalim/

1<sup>st</sup> S. +f/m N+M, -f

The construction in (25) is ill-formed because of the grammatical disagreement between subject and predicate as the word /musaalim/ has the feminine form /musaalmah/<sup>79</sup> in EA which should be used in (25) to achieve semantic agreement. Semantic agreement is not achieved in (25) as the subject is in reality a female that is referred to by the +f embedded in the gender-neutrality of the 1s+f/m pronoun /ʔana/. However, because semantic agreement requires that the predicate of this subject /ʔana/, now with an activated +f, be +f as well, the construction crashes.

Singer Sherine, quoted in (23), could refer to Haifa using the following sentences (26) and (27), derived from (23):

(26) /hayifaa ʃaXS/

N+F N+M, +m/f

Hayfaa (is) (a) person

“Hayfaa is a person.”

(27) \*/hayifaa daʔuub/

N+F+f N+M, +m-f

“Hayfaa is a hard worker.”

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<sup>79</sup> The medial long vowel in /musaalmah/ is actually pronounced as a short vowel in EA.

Although the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun /ʔana/ in (25) is gender-inclusive both grammatically and semantically, the determinative factor is its being semantically gender-neutral. In (25), the term is used contextually as (+f) specifically, i.e. as having an exclusively semantic referent, Raghdah, which disagrees with the (+M, +m) of its predicate; hence the structure does not construe. The same is true when it comes to (27). To fix this disagreement of subject and object in (25) and (27), one must use a semantically feminine predicate, which yields the following structures after cliticizing the feminine marker to the predicates in both sentences:

(28) /ʔana      musaalim-ah/

N+F+f   N+M, +f

“I am peaceful.”

(29) /hayifaa   daʔuub-ah/

N+F+f   N+M, +f

“Haifa is a hard wordker.”

This argument raises the question, “What suggestive modification(s) could be introduced to the constructions in (25) and (27) to rid them of the power-related issues potentially resulting from using semantically masculine predicates referring to semantically feminine subjects?”

This problem could be solved if, and only if, the term /faXS/ is used as (+M/F, +m/+f).

This yields the constructions in (30) and (31):

(30)    ʔʔana      faXS            musaalm-ah/<sup>80</sup>

N+F+f   N+M, +m/f   N+M, +f

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<sup>80</sup> The question mark before the constructions in (13) and (14) denotes linguistic anomaly as people do not use these suggested constructions which are tentative suggestions based on the analysis of the subject and predicate and semantic agreement between them

I            a person        peaceful  
 “I am a peaceful person.”

(31)    /?hayfaa    jaXS            da?uub-ah/  
           N+F+f    N+M, +m/f    N+M, +f  
           Hayfaa   a person        hard working  
           “Hayfaa is a hardworking person.”

Semantic agreement is achieved in (30) and (31) between the subjects /?ana/ and “Haifa” in both sentences respectively and the predicates /musaalim-ah/ and /da?uub-ah/ respectively. So, the construction in (30) and (31) takes this form ((**subj.** + ((pred. /*subj.*) +*pred.*)) where the construction has two readings: 1) the subject has the predicate jaXS and (2) an embedded structure with the subject jaXS (+M+m/f)<sup>81</sup> and the predicate /musaalim-ah/. Writing off the medial predicate/ subject, i.e. the term /jaXS/, which is causing what can be called a semantic confusion because of its (+M, +m/f) features in it, leaves the constructions with the grammatically and semantically agreeable subject-predicate construction. The medial term /jaXS/ in (31) and (30) is merely a signifier of males privilege of vocabulary in EA. Deactivating /jaXS/’s (+M) feature, which I assume to be socially constructed as the term has no feminine form and rejects the feminine clitic, alleviates masculine dominance, and it follows, power from the constructions in (30) and (31).

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<sup>81</sup> /jaXS/ is (+M+m/f) which in effect means that the +M grammatical feature of /jaXS/ can be overlooked grammatically as there is no feminine counterpart to it (as in sentence (17)). In other words, /jaXS/ is grammatically +M+F; its +F features can be activated as needed. The term’s semantic features (+m./f) also qualify it for accepting a feminine predicate as in /jaXS musaalmah/, which justifies (30), and (31) as well-formed.

## Analysis Conclusion

The most probably socially-constructed +M feature on the term /faXS/ stands in the way of the term's potential to yield more-inclusive options of usage. Deactivating /faXS/'s (+M) feature helps the term function with its active semantic gender features, yielding constructions in which the masculine is less dominant, like (30), and (31).

### The Term /fardd/ "individual"

#### Introducing the Data

The reference term /fardd/ is used in *Modern Standard Arabic* expressions and phrases which are sometimes used in "formal" EA which uses MSA expressions within EA discourse for reasons of showing social prestige.

Although the term /fardd/ "individual" does not generally have a feminine counter term in EA, the term does have a feminine counter term /fardah/ that refers exclusively to inanimate things collocationally as in /fardit gazmah/ "a shoe" and /fardait kaawitsh/ "a tire". It is generally not acceptable to add the feminine marker /ta'a marbiiTah/ to the term.<sup>82</sup> Although the term is used in reality in contexts that refer to males, the term is still used gender-neutrally.

#### Data Analysis

**The term /fardd/ in context.** In Dream TV Egypt (2014) the speaker identifies a security male individual by the sentence:

(32) /da fard ?amn/

Dei. N+M +m/fS N

this an individual security

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<sup>82</sup> An exception is the feminine term /fardah/ which refers to an attractive female in a derogatory sexual way, highlighting a woman's physical features.

“This is a security individual.”

In another video (Masr El-Arabiyyah, n.d.), another speaker criticizes some security individuals for taking up too many work hours to improve their financial status. He describes a security person of this type by saying:

(33) /law Hadd yaTas f- wishshuh Haywaʔayuh/

NM+m/f VMS+m/f +M Agen

If anyone sneezed in-face-his will-he-make-fall-him

“If anyone sneezed in his face, he would make him fall.”

Also, Elbhaery (n.d.) uses the term in the masculine in (34):

(34) /fardd -il- ʔamn yala baab -il-gamya yisʔalnii feen -ilkarneeh/

NM+m/f

V+M+m/f

person the-security at door the-university asks me where –the-I-card

“The security individual at the university gate asks me where your I-card is”

Regardless of the fact that it is always a male security person who comes to mind because in most cases security is a job for males, the masculine verbal predicate /yisʔalnii/ used in grammatical agreement with the term /fardd/ does play a role in asserting the initial assumption of the grammatical masculine on the subject, the term /fardd/. A situation like this does not seem to be problematic to EA users, especially those who are unaware of the bias it holds against the females, let alone ignore the fact that some women do work as security personnel.

***The dual plural of /fardd/.*** The term /fardd/ accepts duality and plurality.

Duality in EA can be shown in the example from a video below:

(35) /feeh      ʔSaaba kibeerah miskuu      minha      fardeen/

There is a gang big      they-caught of which two individuals

Interestingly, further into the video (Al Nahar TV, 2013), it is stated that one of those two individuals is a woman, a fact that is concealed by the grammatical masculine features of the term /fardd/

The term /fardd/ has a feminine counter-term but it is either used derogatorily to refer to attractive women in slang EA, or to refer to things like /fardit gazma/ “a shoe”.

The term /fardd/ has the plural form /ʔafraad/, a gender-inclusive term. Grammatically, the term /ʔafraad/ is used with pluralized verb in still a gender-inclusive. However, the dual plural term /fardeen/ meaning “two persons” has a feminine dual /fardit-een/ except as it is either used derogatorily to refer to two attractive women, or for a pair of two things like /fardit-een gazama/ “a pair of shoes. Other than that, /fardit-een/ cannot be used for people in a discourse of politeness.

In constructions with a feminine subject, the term /fardd/ could be used, followed, as is not the current case, by a feminine adjective. A feminine adjective agrees with a feminine subject semantically<sup>83</sup>, regardless of /fardd/'s (+M) feature. One could possibly say:

(36) ʔ /Salma fard masʔuulah/

N F      Adj. F

Salma is a responsible individual.

(37) ʔ/fatmah fard mustaqillah/

Fatmah is an independent individual.

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<sup>83</sup> Semantic agreement is dealt with in detail under the item /Hadd/ (See p. 225).

## **Analysis Conclusion**

The term /fardd/ is used in “formal” EA to refer gender-inclusively to individuals. The term has a feminine form that is used either derogatorily to refer to an attractive woman, or to refer to an object. /fardd/ has a plural a gender-inclusive form, /ʔafraad/, which is used to refer to individuals collectively.

The term /fardd/ could yield further gender-inclusiveness by extending its usage to constructions of EA. In this case, the term’s (+f) feature is activated in constructions with a feminine referent so that the adjectival modifier following /fardd/ in a given construction agrees semantically with its referent.

## **The Term /Hadd/ “someone”**

### **Introducing the Data**

The term “Hadd” is a ubiquitous reference item in EA. First I look at the term in isolation, then in context. After that I propose more gender-inclusive techniques for the term.

/Hadd/ has been used in a more variety of usages over the past decade. This kind of change that overcome the term happened on its own, without any organized effort to deliberately spread the term’s new usages into EA. Commonly the term would be used alternately with the terms /jaXS/, /il-waahid/ and /fardd/ but started to gain more ground of usage than these terms. The subsequent analysis attempts to justify this usage change that the term has gone through.

To set the stage, it is necessary to look at the linguistic properties and grammatical features of the term and see whether they might have contributed to the current status of use ubiquity it has gained.



**Grammatical features of the term /Hadd/.** As far as gender is concerned, the term /Hadd/ is (+M, +m/f). Like the term /ʃaXS/, the term /Hadd/ does not have a feminine counter term; it does not accept to be feminized. One cannot say:

(38) \* /fiih \*Haddah bi-tXabbaTT/

PP NFS VFPres.

Unlike the term /ʃaXS/, though, /Hadd/ is characterized by its lack of a plural form; the term is completely incapable of being pluralized. So the basic features of /Hadd/ is that it is (+ singular, -Du, -Pl, +M, +m/f); it accepts the definite article /al- / and deictic article /da/. As a package, these properties have gained the term more flexibility of usage that the other terms do not have.

In the following analysis, I look at /Hadd/ from different angles that highlight the multiple usages it now has: /Hadd/ referring to a masculine referent, /Hadd/ referring to a feminine referent /Hadd/ referring to inanimate collective nouns denoting people /Hadd/ used with a plural predicate /Hadd/ used with the quantifiers like /kull/ “every”, /kaza/ “several”, and /ʔktar min/ “more than” /Hadd/ used with the definite article /ʔal-/, “-ال”, “the”, /Hadd used with a +M+f referent. The above given cases in which the term /Hadd/ is used are not all part of my observation of novel ways of using the term in the past decade or so; most of them have always existed and been used much less frequently than they are at present. These cases are highlighted here for linguistic description and a better vision of the term and its linguistic behavior in EA. I will be referring to novel uses of the term when I discuss them. The examples that follow highlight that behavior in context. They are also investigated for their potential to offer more gender-inclusive techniques.

## Data Analysis

**/Hadd/ denoting a masculine referent.** In (37), the lady in the interview says:

- (39) /guuzii        Hadd        bi-yishrab    sagaayir    bi-Treeʔah    ʕabiyyah/  
+M+m        +M+m    +M+m  
Husband-me    someone    smokes    cigarettes    in-a way    stupid  
“My husband is someone who smokes cigarettes in a stupid way.”

The following example captures /Hadd/ used with the nominal expression /guuzuh/ literally meaning “his husband”. The example was a criticism of a woman who liked to always be around her husband.

In (38) (Mtvlebanon, 2012) and (39) (Z1Media, 2014), actress Nabila Ebeid talks about what she wants her future husband to be like:

- (40) /ʔinnuh    ykuun    Hadd        ʔaaXud    bi-raʔyuh/  
+M+m    V+M+S    +M+m                    V+M+m/f  
that-he    be            someone    I –take    with-opinion-his  
“That he be someone I can act on his opinion.”

- (41) /ʔaHiss        Hadd        ʔalbuh        ʔalayyaa/  
+M+F+m+f    +M+m    N+M+m    PP  
I-feel        someone    heart-his    on-me

“I feel that he is someone who cares about me.”

In (38) and (39), reference is to a masculine both grammatically and semantically.

**/Hadd/ denoting a feminine referent.** The following examples from the data

display how the grammatically masculine item /Hadd/ could also be used to denote a feminine referent semantically based on the term's semantic potential for that extra feminine reference.

(42) /ʔana Hadd biTabiyty romansiyy-ah/

1<sup>st</sup> +M/F+m/f +M+m/f Adj. +F+f

I (am) someone with-nature-my romantic

“I am someone who is naturally romantic.”

(43) /fayruuH yiddii -iddoor l-Hadd gdeed yala-shaan ʔagraha ʔaʔal/

+M+m/f Adj. +M+m+f N-+F+f Pro.

“So, he gives the part to someone fresh because her rate is lower.”

(44) /Ha-ytaaʔii Hadd yandu fi il-yeela muTallaq/

+M+m/f N. +M+m/f

He'll find someone with-him in the-family divorced

“He'll find someone divorced in his family.”

(45) /yiHassisik ʔinnik ʔaham Had f-Hayaatuh/

+F+f +m/f

Makes-you-feel that-you the most important person in-life-his

“He makes you feel that you are the most important person in his life.”

In (40)-(43), Egyptian actress, Dalia El-Beheiry, uses the item /Hadd/ in various ways as referring to a feminine referent. In (40), she shifts from the common use of /Hadd/ which requires it to have a grammatically masculine adjective for the predicate /Hadd/. She uses a feminine adjective by cliticizing the feminine marker to the grammatically masculine item /Hadd/. She does so by following semantic agreement, not

grammatical agreement, between the subject first person +f+m pronoun /ʔana/ and the predicate /Hadd/ which, in turn, is +M+m+f and chooses to activate the semantic property of /Hadd/ and uses a feminine adjective to modify it. The speaker's choice to activate semantic agreement in this case is compatible with clause /ʔana rumansiyyah/ embedded in (40) which fulfils both grammatical and semantic agreement between subject and predicate.

In (41) the speaker is talking about a producer who signs up a fresh actress as an experienced one would charge more money for the same part for her experience in the acting domain. However, there seems to be less necessity to highlight the fact that a female actress is replaced by another female one; the speaker uses grammatical agreement only as it is guessable that she is referring to a female; issues of identity do not matter to an unnamed person, the substitute actress. She then uses a clause after the adverb of reason /alashaan/ "because" in which she uses the feminine referential phrase /ʔagraha/ "her rate" which is higher.

In (42) reference is to /Hadd/ "someone", meaning a family member /muTallaq/ who is divorced. Here she is referring to divorced women who are stigmatized by society due their divorce. However, she uses the grammatical masculine to refer to the semantic neuter /Hadd/. The context is about divorced women and the actress refers to herself as a metacognitive divorced woman by this example as well. But the fact that there are some men who are also divorced could justify the speaker's use of grammatical agreement in the example, especially as no identities of individuals are given away or specified.

The field of example (43) is clearly about women exclusively. She uses the complementizer /ʔin/ attaching to hit the subject pronominal clitic /-k/ where the overall

complementizer /ʔinnik/ is followed by the +f+m superlative /ʔaham/ “the most important” followed by the +M+m+f /Hadd/.

The following is an additional example from a caller in a radio talk show posted on YouTube. She talks about her husband saying:

- (46) /huwwa lissa leeh ʔlaaqah may Hadd huwwa kaan yiʔrafhaa/  
 3<sup>rd</sup> MS +M+m/f V+M+m Tr. +f Obj  
 he still has a relation with someone he was knowing  
 “He still in a relationship with someone he had known (her).”

The speaker here is talking about her husband who is still in contact with a woman he formerly knew. The speaker uses the +M+m/f /Hadd/ and refers to it by feminine verb /yiʔrafhaa/. Although she could use the masculine form of the referential verb she used, she used the feminine form in semantic agreement with the semantic (+f) feature on /Hadd/ as she really needs to convey to the audience, and she does that apparently unaware while sobbing, her feelings of jealousy, defeat, and bitterness.

In (47), actress Nabila Ebeid refers to memoirs written by a female writer:

- (47) /muzakirat kanit katabitha Hadd maʔdarsh ʔaʔuul il-ʔism katabit w aalit/  
 V. +F+f +M+m/f V+F+f V+F+f  
 memoirs were written someone I cannot say the-name she-wrote and said  
 “Memoirs written by someone, whose name I cannot disclose; she wrote and said...”

Here Nabila Ebeid uses a feminine referential verb /katabithaa/ to the grammatically masculine /Hadd/. It is also important to note that the parenthetical gender-inclusive phrase /maʔdarsh ʔaʔuul il-ʔism/ “I cannot give the name” which also resonates with the +m+f features of /Hadd/.

In (48), Nabila Ebeid talks about women having plastic surgery using the item Hadd:

(48) /lamma ʔabʔa shayfah Hadd masʔaluush/

AP+F M+m/f V. Tr. Neg.+M+m+f Obj.

when I am seeing someone I-not-ask-him

“When I see someone (who has had a plastic surgery) I don’t ask them.”

In (49), Nabila Ebeid used the masculine predicate makes more sense as it is compatible semantically with the neutrality of /Hadd/ which also refers to men who could also have the plastic surgery.

When asked about his several marriages, singer Medhat Saleh said:

(49) /ʔawwil Hadd -atgawwiztu -f-Hayaatii bannutah maSriyyah kaanit ismahaa nuurah/

+M+m/f V.Tr.Obj.+M+f N+F+f

The first person I-marry-him (is) a girl

“The first person I married in my life was an Egyptian girl; her name was Nora.”

Semantic agreement is highlighted in this example as the grammatically masculine /Hadd/ is referred to via its semantic +f feature which agrees semantically with the verb /atgawwizuh/ which, in turn, agrees grammatically only with /Hadd/, but not without affecting the meaning; we still understand it is referring to a girl.

Actress Ghada Abd El-Raaziq asks actor Mohamed Imam in (50):

(50) /Law yandak mushkilah w mitDaayiʔ titiSil bi-nunya ʔaktar Had/

PP N Adj. +M+m V.+M Prep.N +F+f +M+m/f

if have-you a problem and annoyed you-call with-Nunya the most-Hadd  
 “If you have a problem and (are) annoyed, (all you need to do is) you call Nunya the most.”

In (48) /Had/ refers to a feminine and it is also used with the quantifier /kul/.<sup>84</sup> In this example, the term /Hadd/ refers to Nunya semantically, not grammatically. /Hadd/ here would commonly be replaced by the feminine term /waHdah/ in which grammatical features, rather than semantic ones, establish agreement with the proper noun “Nunya”. But as this is part of the observation in the shift of using /Hadd/ gender-neutrally, the latter item /Hadd/, is used instead as the speaker’s mind is aware that it still does the job more inclusively of the male other semantically embedded in it.

Example (51) is a response from a Facebook friend of mine. We were trying to remember some of our early primary stage teachers when we got confused over the name of one teacher. Then my friend goes:

(51) /kaan feeh fiylann Hadd ismuh mis tahaadii laakin mish mutakkid kaanit  
 bitdarris ʔeeh/

	+M+m/f	N+M+m/f	N+F+f	V+F+f
V+F+f	was	there actually	someone his-name	Miss Tahady but (I) not sure
				was-she teaching what

“There was actually a person named Miss Tahady but I do not recall what she was teaching.”

After using /Hadd/ to confirm that there was a teacher called “Miss Tahady”, my friend used a feminine verb to refer to that teacher. Revealing the identity of the teacher justifies

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<sup>84</sup> Further examples on /Hadd/ with the quantifiers are given later in this chapter.

the user's reference to her with a subsequent feminine verb /kaanit bitdarris / “she was teaching”, especially as agent.

Additionally, comment I received under this pic below which I posted in Facebook was startling. The phrasing of the post is in (50) and the comment in (51),

Figure 2:



Figure 2. A Facebook post using the item /Hadd/.

(52) /amma tib?a zaylaan min Hadd w tkallimuh yaady ka?in mafiish Haaga ?iyraf  
?innak bada?t tikhsaruh/

“When you are angry with somebody and talk to them in a normal way as nothing happened, it means that you have started to lose him.”

(53) /dah yatawaqqaf yaleeha hiyya/

Prep-P+F



that depends on-her she

“That depends on her.”

The word /Hadd/ in the picture is associated in many people’s minds with a masculine referent and so the picture of a man always surfaces one’s mind upon coming across the term /Hadd/ in (52), due to the +M features of /Hadd/.

Surprisingly, a female participant posted a comment on the post, given in (53), in which she used a female referent of the item /Hadd/ which highlights the semantic agreement between /Hadd/ and the feminine.

**/Hadd/ referring to inanimate collective nouns signifying people.** This usage of the term is indeed striking.

(54) /niqab-tii        ʔawiil    Hadd -itawagaht<sup>85</sup> leeh/

Syndicate-my    the first one    I turned    to it

“My syndicate was the first body I turned to.”

In (54), Actress Athaar El-Hakiim stated in the video that her syndicate was the first /Hadd/ she turned to find an answer to her problem.

(55) /gatt    mubadaraat min    aktar min    Hadd/

came initiatives    from more than one person

“There were initiatives from more than one person”

In (55), the girl in the video stated that she received initiatives from more than one organization, used in the quote as /Hadd/, to combat street molestation

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<sup>85</sup> This form is from Modern Standard Arabic. Educated speakers of EA sometimes use expressions from MSA. The EA form of this verb is /ʔitwaggiht/

**/Hadd/ used with a plural predicate.** The presenter comments on the assault on Reporter Lara Logan in tahrir Square by saying:

(56) /ʔay Hadd yiymil Haagah zay kida Hayawanaat/  
 N Pred. +PI

anyone doing something like this (are) animals

“Anyone doing something like that is an animal.”

(57) /maafiish Hadd min i-ddakaatra yaarfiin/  
 Neg. NS NPred. + PI

none from the-doctors know

“None of the doctors know.”

Actress Sahar Ramy used (56) as she was answering an interviewer's question on the passing of her husband. Both (56) and (57) are examples on how /Hadd/ can occur with a plural predicate, which is not a common behavior of this lexical item.

**/Hadd/ used with the quantifiers /kul/ “every”, and /kaza/ “several”.** Well over a decade ago, one would hear the item /waaHid/ used in the following constructions, now it has been elbowed aside by /Hadd/:

(58) /baʔuul likul Hadd min -i-ssada ilabaaʔ w-i-ssayyidaat -ilʔummahaat/  
 +M+m/f +M+m Pl +F+f Pl

I'm saying to every one of the-respected fathers and-the-respected mothers

“I am telling every one of the respected fathers and the respected mothers.”

(59) /yirifnii kaza Hadd kibiir/  
 +M+m/f Adj. +M

Know-me several one big

“Several holders of key positions know me.”

(60) /Kaza Hadd fi-lmusalsal...biyis?aluunii/

+M S. V.+M/F+m+f Pl

Several one in-the-series ...ask me

“Several ones in the series.... ask me.”

The speakers in (58), (59), and (60) unexpectedly use /Hadd/ with a plural predicate.

**/Hadd/ used with the definite article /ʔal-/.** Normally, the definite article goes with the nominal expression /waaHid/; it now commonly used with /Hadd/

(61) /waldi mantaqamsh minni ʔadd ma huwwa Haawil yiwgay Hadd taanii fiyya la-

ʔin ʔana kunt ʔaʕla shee? Fi Hayaat –l-Hadd il-taanii illi huwwa maamaa/

the-one he mom

“My father did not take revenge on me, but he tried to hurt someone else through me

because to that person I was the dearest thing in her life, that was my mother

Actress Yusraa used the example in (59) is using /Hadd/ as gender-specific term.

Although the grammatical gender features of /Hadd/ might steer the hearer’s attention

to thinking of a male but as Yusraa discloses who that person was (her mother), the

hearer knows she was talking about her from the start. This is because semantic

agreement is established exactly with the revelation of who that person was.

**/Hadd/ used with a +M+f referent.** The example in (62) stands out because of its peculiar use in which /Hadd/ is used with a grammatically masculine, semantically feminine referent.

(62) /fiih Hadd byilza? my guuzuh f kul Hitta/

+M+m/f VS+M N+M+f

Anyone V+M

“Is there anybody who likes to stick around his spouse everywhere?”

Although the EA term /guuz/, which is a form of the QA and Classical Arabic term /zawj/, is used exclusively for males in EA as it has a feminine counter term for women, /miraat/ “wife”, the term /guuz/ was used in the (38) in which the presenter was talking about a wife. Altering the common EA feminine noun for “wife”, “miraat” was obviously caused by /Hadd/’s +F+m/+f features. The +f feature on /Hadd/ allowed the choice of the term /guuzuh/, but still /Hadd/’s +M feature had to be agreed to via the masculine pronominal clitic /-uh/.

***Furthering the capacity of /Hadd/ to offer more gender-inclusive options.***

The data on /Hadd/ analyzed above could be used as a basis for expanding /Hadd/’s capacity for further degendering techniques in EA. Although some of the data on /Hadd/ provided for analysis could be regarded by syntacticians and grammarians as speech errors as they contain disagreements between subject and predicate for example, among other practices that might be described by some scholars as errors that must be rectified, this same data seem of special value to the current research for the following reasons:

- a- They are not being rectified by the listeners as they were uttered. Not in a single example.
- b- They denote ways of expanding the usages of /Hadd/ as a gender-inclusive lexical item by addressing its semantic agreements with the genders of the clause.
- c- They are ideology-driven to contribute to alleviating power from EA.

The current analysis is based on Steele’s (1978) definition of agreement as “systematic covariance between a semantic or formal property of one element and a formal property

of another” Within the framework of agreement, the first element is the agreement controller, and the second is its target. Covariance between controller and target is characterized by features. Features are person, number, and gender, each with certain values. For person, the values are first, second, third; for number the values are singular or plural; and for gender the values are masculine, feminine, or neuter.

Audring (2009) explains that “Controller and target stand in an asymmetrical relation to each other. This asymmetry has a formal and a semantic side. On the semantic side, the information in the agreement marking is relevant to the controller, not the target.” (p.15) Audring used an explanatory example from Corbett (as cited in Audring, 2009): “Mary makes pancakes”, where the singularity of the verb pertains to the controller, not the event as the event could be repeated more than once as the simple present typically suggests. Accordingly, Moravisk (as cited in Audring, 2009) regarded agreement as a case of displaced information. Thus the number information on the controller “Mary” is displaced on the verb “makes”.

As far as the formal aspect is concerned, Audring argues that the controller determines the target’s feature specification. Thus, she concludes that “changing the controller is expected to have repercussions for the target, but not vice versa.” (p. 16) Audring also alluded to Steele’s distinction between semantic and syntactic agreement. She explains that an agreement target can display formal and semantic properties of its controller. Formal properties of agreement are known as *ad formam*, morphosyntactic, grammatical, or lexical. Semantic properties of agreement are known as *ad sensum*, notional, pragmatic, logical, referential agreement, or synesis.

Aurding also refers to the famous representative example given in (63) in which plural agreement with a collective noun:

(63) The committee were arriving

In (63), the auxiliary expresses the semantic plurality of the controller “the committee”, not its formal singularity.

Aurding explained that languages are different as to how they allow semantic agreement, yet there are no constraints on the variation of that linguistic behavior.

An example from EA is (64):

(64) /ʔinnaas gatt/

+N+Pl +V+S+F

the-people came-she<sup>86</sup>

“The people came.”

In (64) the semantic singularity of the controller as a group /ʔinnaas/ is expressed on the semantic singularity of the verb. The verb bears a feminine gender as the collective controller is semantically equivalent to the term /ʔil-magmuu3ah/ “the group” which is +F+f . Another possible way to rephrase (64) in EA is to say:

(65) /ʔinnaas gumm/

+N+Pl +V+Pl

the-people came-they

“The people came.”

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<sup>86</sup> “she” in the gloss stand for the unreal feminine feature of the singular verb /gatt/ which is used in the feminine form as the noun /ʔinnaas/ is a collective noun; it has no singular form. Egyptian Arabic might have inherited using the feminine in this case from Classical Arabic grammar. The rule also resonates with the *Qur’anic* verse 14, Surat Al-Hujuraat. (See p. 159)

In (65) the verb bears the formal features of the controller's number and gender, Pl+M, which suggests that the people are viewed as separate individuals, where the controller's formal plurality and its formal gender, the masculine, default gender is used.

*Adopting Steele's agreement account to introduce further gender-inclusive techniques to /Hadd/ constructions in EA.* The data encompassing /Hadd/ in the preceding analysis is significant in specifying the formal and semantic features of /Hadd/ specification of such properties is crucial for a project to further the gender-inclusive capacity of the term and making actual use of it in EA.

Formal properties of /Hadd/ based on the data: +M

Semantic properties of /Hadd/ based on the data: +m/f+S/Pl

The semantic properties of /Hadd/ could be used to broaden its usage in EA in ways that could yield more gender-inclusive readings of certain constructions that are used unnecessarily male-dominantly, just because of patriarchal culture, while disregarding reality in which all genders are represented on equal footing in the Egyptian society. Based on the several data examples in which /Hadd/ was used with plural verbs, it is reasonable to assume that /Hadd/, being +S/Pl, has +  $\emptyset$  semantic number features.

Let's look at /Hadd/'s +m/f. This semantically gender-inclusive feature could be used to license sentences in which a feminine verb is used with /Hadd/ as a controller in sentences like:

(66) /Hadd      gatt            w      ʔaalit in il-walad      yayyaan/

someone    came-she    and    said-she    the-boy (is) sick

-F-M+f/m    +F+f    +F+f

“Someone came and said the boy was sick”

(67) /Hadd                                  biyghʕannuu      fi-l- uudah/

-F-M+f/m+sing.+pl                  +F/M+Pl+m/f

someone                  are singing                  in-the-room

“Someone is singing in the room”

(68) /Hadd      btitkallim      fii ittilifoon/

-F-M+f/m      +F+f

someone is taking-she in the-telephone

“Someone is talking on the phone.”

The semantic + pl option on /Hadd/ can have significant gender-inclusive applications on EA. It can be used to referentially signify a gender-inclusive agent as in (69) below which configures a mini conversation between two people about A’s visit to the doctor:

(69) A: /ruHt      li-d-duktuur      imbaariH/

went-I to-the-doctor’s yesterday

“I went to the doctor’s yesterday”

B: /w      ʔaluulak                  ʔeeh/

V+Pl

and told-you-they what

“And what did they tell you?”

The doctor’s profession has been entrenched in the minds of EA users, and perhaps internationally, as having a male referent, even though there are many female doctors around, or even more female doctors in some places than male ones. Yet, the common



assumption people have as they hear the word /ʔid-duktoor/ is that it is always a male. This is partially because of the medical profession being exclusively for men in certain places and times in the Egypt, and due to the term's +M -F +m+f<sup>87</sup> values.

### **Analysis Conclusion**

For the purposes of gender-inclusive language, the item /Hadd/ is a linguistic treasure in EA. Unlike other reference items, /Hadd/ is peculiar in its grammatical and semantic properties. It is +M-F+m/f and can, based on Steele (1978), function as –M which makes it accept a feminine referential verb as in (66), or a plural verb as in (67).

/Hadd/'s -pl feature allows it to accept a +Pl referential verb, as in (69 B), which could be applied to other examples gender-inclusively.

### **Pronominal and Verbal Plurality in Egyptian Arabic**

Plurality in EA is a special feature. It is formed by adding the plural /waw alif/ on verb and the second person pronoun /ʔintuu/ and the third person plural pronoun /humma/ or by adding the plural marker /m/ on verbs. What is interesting about these markers is that they are apparently residual and reminiscent of Classical Arabic where they are masculine markers that have the feminine counterparts, /ʔantunna/ “You +Pl+F+f” and /hunna/ 3<sup>rd</sup> Pl+M. Verbs also in CA receive a gender marker and the feminine gender marker on CA verbs is the suffix -/na/ as in /An-nisaa qulna/ “The women said”.

In EA, however, those feminine markers, 2<sup>nd</sup> pl pronoun /ʔantunna/ and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pl pronoun are not used. Instead, EA uses only plural masculine markers /waw+

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<sup>87</sup> The term /ʔid-duktoor/ is configured as referring to a male doctor due to the fact that it is –F; it lacks the formal feminine marker. Despite advocating the use of feminized job titles as they are representative of equality, instances in which the term /ʔid-duktoor/ is used should be treated as referring to both genders, especially by cautious hearer that is aware of the term's generic usage as referring to both genders.

alif/ and /m/ on verbs gender-neutrally and the 2nd+M Pl and 3<sup>rd</sup> + M Pl pronouns /ʔintuu/ /humma/ respectively.

It is this gender-inclusive quality which EA has been blessed with that makes the verb /w-ʔaluulak/ in (66) B a gender-neutral one.

### **The Possibility of an Egyptian Arabic Epicene Pronoun**

There in EA is need for a gender-inclusive pronoun. Having a gender-inclusive pronoun with solve problems of bias occurring with reference to all individuals as males, sometimes contra reality. EA needs a pronoun that is -M-F +f+m+Pl. There has been attempts in English to introduce the gender-neutral pronoun “co” but apparently the attempt has not been widely used, only by residents of the Twin Oaks Intentional Community (Gender Neutral Pronoun Blog, 2014). Also there has been attempts to introduce into English sets of gender-inclusive pronouns but they have not been widely used. The most known of those sets are the Spivak Pronouns (Spivak, 2006), (See Chapter Two).

In Chapter Two, I alluded to the gender-inclusive pronoun “yo’ that has naturally spread across Washington D.C. and New York. I have also heard it often on campus in a university in western Pennsylvania. Considering “yo” as more successful gender-inclusive pronoun than the other ones, a distinctive feature is that it was apparently born naturally by the speakers, and was not suggested by humans. This spontaneity that brought “yo” to life is significant. It gives us a chance to examine that growing gender-inclusive pronoun. The first characteristic I noticed about “yo” is that it looks like “you” with which speakers of English are familiar. The second, it is even a shorter form of

“you”, which makes it easier to use, where easier is synonymous with “oxygen” for the epicene to survive.

I used “yo” as a model epicene in my search for an epicene for EA. I have also made use of the gender-inclusive property of plural pronouns in EA. I thought of the gender-inclusive EA pronoun /humma/ which is used for plural (+m+f) referents. /humma/ is a suitable contender for a project to find a gender-neutral pronoun. It starts with /h/ like /the singular masculine pronoun EA /huwwa/ and the singular feminine EA pronoun /hiyya/. However, /humma/’s length and its association with plurality can block its way from seeing the light as a gender-inclusive pronoun. Truncating the second the second syllable /-ma/ from /humma/ yields the form /hum/<sup>88</sup>.

The third person, +Pl +pl/sing, gender-inclusive epicene /hum/ is a backformation of the ubiquitous plural gender-inclusive pronoun, /humma/. To EA, /hum/ as a gender-inclusive pronoun just has more potential than /humma/. It is +M+F+m+f. Unlike /humma/ which is used only as a subject case marker in EA, /hum/ can still be used as a subject case marker<sup>89</sup>, as well as an object case marker, which is already its normal function in EA. To indicate gender-inclusiveness, the only option plausible is to use it with plural lexical forms, where as a controller, it would percolate its genderless value on verbs that carry this gender-inclusiveness via the gender-inclusive plural marker on EA verbs, /waw –ʔalif/.

Exaples are given in (67):

(67) A- /hum biyakluu/

V+Pl

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<sup>88</sup> In Classical Arabic, /hum/ is actually used as a3rd person masculine plural pronoun. Most EA users can use /hum/ in CA, which might make it easy for them to use /hum/ as an EA epicene.

<sup>89</sup> In Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, /hum/ is actually used as a subject/object case marker.

are eating

“They are eating.”

B- /hum kharagu my SuHab-hum/

Went out with friends-their

“They went out with their friends.”

It might be interesting for some EA users to endorse the proposed epicine pronoun /hum/ for the following reasons:

- 1- /hum/ is shorter than its original form /humma/
- 2- /hum/ can be used in subject position, in addition to its normal use in object position in EA, a position that /humma/ cannot claim. One cannot say:

\*/hum kharagu my SuHaab-humma/

subjective case

genitive case

“They went out with their friends.” or

\*/?na kallimt-humma/

objective case

“I talked to them”

- 3- Unlike /humma/ which is taken by EA users as a +M+m+f+pl, /hum/ is presented to EA users as +M+F+m+f+Pl-/+/pl which means that it can grammatically and semantically gender-inclusive and number-inclusive.

### **Job Titles in Egyptian Arabic**

Job titles in EA are basically in the masculine but undergo feminization by cliticizing the feminine marker /taa? marbuuTah/ to a masculine nominal used as a job title. Other than that, the image and the assumption is that a job title is a male (+M+m).

To cast conspiratorial views aside, this could be attributed to the fact that it was always the males of society that assumed certain, if not all jobs as family breadwinners. So, a doctor was always a man, so were /muhandis/ “engineer”, /mudarris/ “teacher”, /garsoon/ “a waiter”, /muHaamii/ “lawyer”, to name just four.<sup>90</sup>

With the change that took place in the Egyptian society after women had equal rights to education and some jobs previously occupied by males, EA started to adjust itself to that change. The only possible change that users of EA could perhaps do was add the feminine marker to masculine job titles, where masculine was the default form for job titles, as well as for almost all other nouns in general, not only because of reality, but also because of EA grammar in which many nouns are (+ M). So, a job title like / waziir/ “a minister” has the masculine gender inflected on it by default.

With the sociopolitical change that has taken place in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially after the July 23<sup>rd</sup> Revolution, women were given a chance to more education and job opportunities. So, there started to appear very successful women assuming jobs that had been exclusively for males such as /waziira/, mudiirah/, /safiira/ among many others. So, the change that happened on the linguistic scene for these job titles to match reality was to simply add the feminine marker to the end of masculine job titles. Then in recent years, about two decades or so back, there was a then inexplicable trend: women started to refer to their jobs using the masculine forms, a phenomenon that needed an explanation but hardly ever had one. It was really strange how an educated woman would not object to being referred to with a masculine job title.

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<sup>90</sup> In my initial paper on the topic (Ahmed, 2007), I recommended the use of the term /fardd/ “individual” or “person” instead of /ragul/ “man” in job titles that are no longer exclusively for males like /ragul ?amn/ “security person”, /ragul -iJfurTah/ “police man”.

Other job titles are exclusively feminine because they are only (+f), despite the fact that they could grammatically be modified gender-wise by dropping the feminine marker from them. Like /mumarriDah/ “a female nurse”, /raaqiSah/<sup>91</sup> “a belly dancer”, /faʕʕaalah/ “a female cleaner” and /xaddaamah/ “a female servant”. The sociopolitical change also afflicted those positions occupied exclusively by men. So, there started to appear “male nurses”, “male belly dancers”, “male cleaners”, and “male servants”<sup>92</sup> But EA ended having a rather complex linguistic situation when it comes to job titles: women can happily refer to themselves using masculine job titles but men do think it is demeaning to be referred to by feminine forms of their jobs.

### **Job-Title Envy: Why Female Users of EA Commonly Accept To Be Referred to by Masculine Job Titles**

In her analysis of memes, Blackmore (1999) explained that individuals tend to imitate the most successful people in society. Within the patriarchal framework in patriarchal societies, the most successful individuals are males. This condition was all man-made as Spender (1980; 2008) explained. Yet, most women still find it fine for them to have masculine properties implicitly ascribed to them via their job title. This is part of the memetic emulation process of the most successful people. It is strange that a similar situation has happened in English, where some women relinquish feminine forms of job titles and they are fine with masculine job titles. A good example is the job title “actor” which is now used in English for both male and female actors, in place of actor and

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<sup>91</sup> The term /raaqiSah/ is loaned from Modern Standard Arabic. Educated users of EA sometimes find it derogatory to use the slang term /raʔaaSah/.

<sup>92</sup> It is really worth of consideration how the change in job titles took place on the level of highly prestigious jobs now assumed by women, contra low prestige jobs taken up by some males, which shows that men had colonized the job market in the Egyptian community by occupying the best positions there had been

actresses. A woman's condition in this case could be described by her desire to have the I-wanna-be-like-you feel, which can also be described as "the job-title envy", to emulate Freud's infamous metaphor, "penis envy"<sup>93</sup>.

**The linguistic dilemma of the job title /mumarriDah/ "a female nurse"**. Just like the English term "nurse" conjures up a feminine image in English, the term /mumarriDah/ brings to the mind the image a female "nurse". A male-nurse in an Egyptian Arabic context would not accept to be referred to with a feminine job title. Within EA cultural and ideological framework, concepts like masculinity and virility must be kept intact, untilted, and safe. Imposing the feminine job title /mumarriDah/ on male nurses within an EA context lies beyond the boundaries of grammar; it resonates with questions of changing identity and raises questions of attitude and reaction all the time, which could be a source of torment to any man within the EA social context. Females who find it Ok to refer to them by masculine job titles do not have this kind of thorny self-discourse. This is because memetically, women are fine with becoming similar to males in certain things like assuming a man's job. To women, men are the ones in power and the most successful individuals in society. The opposite is not true. For example, for a male nurse within an EA context being called /mumarriDah/ *touches* the nerve of a male nurse's identity. An Egyptian context man's defense line against this linguistic change lurking for males taking up once-exclusive female jobs was really rigorous. The answer that superimposes itself to protect male identity in this case was twisting the term to be well suited for the males by dropping the final feminine marker from the job title /mumarriDah/ which has always associated with women, yielding the

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<sup>93</sup> In his (1908) article titled *On the Sexual Theories of Children*, Freud (as cited in DelVecchio, 2010) postulated that girls wish to have a penis like boys as a form of equality.

masculine counter term/ mumarriD/<sup>94</sup>. The benefit a male nurse receives from that reactionary lexical change will be sustaining the man's identity and keeping it aloof from the female Other with her associations of weakness, subordination, and dependability, to name just three.

**Justice lies one step behind on the Egyptian Arabic job title scene.** Although on the surface women's tendency and acceptance of being referred to with masculine job titles seems to be a good sign of equity, this situation ultimately reflects women's subordination in job titles. Even the memetic explanation behind such silent acceptance of women to be labelled with a masculine job titles does not seem to sustain a just, and honorable situation for women to present themselves shrouded in the grammatical masculine which still carries with (+M+m) per the long legacy of patriarchal dominance of jobs. It is important that individuals of a society based on social justice be aware of the power of language in shaping the world view of its individuals.

The previous pre-memetic stage in which masculine job titles were feminized as women assumed those once male-dominated jobs offers a more equitable option. All genders were represented in a fair way. None of the genders dominated language in the name of justice or imitating the most successful individuals.

Retrieving the job title situation in the pre-memetic stage is also compatible with the adamant masculinity of job titles that has proved powerful enough to coerce a change of rules by rejecting the feminine marker in the case of certain female-dominated jobs

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<sup>94</sup> A similar change that took place in the past seven years or so that suits men's identity in the EA gendred language scene was introduced undelebrately to the slang, perhaps derogatory, feminine term /muzzah/ "a sexy woman". When EA female users started to use the term to refer to a sexy man, they dropped the feminine marker from the term, yielding the masculine counter term, /muzz/ as a backformation.



that are now taken up by some males, like /mumarriD/ “a male nurse”, /raaqis/<sup>95</sup> “male dancer”, or/xaddaam/ “a male servant”.

### **Applicability of Gender-inclusive Language (GIL) in Egyptian Arabic**

The EA epicene pronoun /hum/ proposed in the current study as well as the other further gender-inclusive techniques engineered via activating semantic features into the syntax of EA are not expected to be accepted over night by EA users. A preliminary step might be necessary; educating users of EA on the importance of gender-inclusive language and its symbolic power to achieve some gender balance in language.

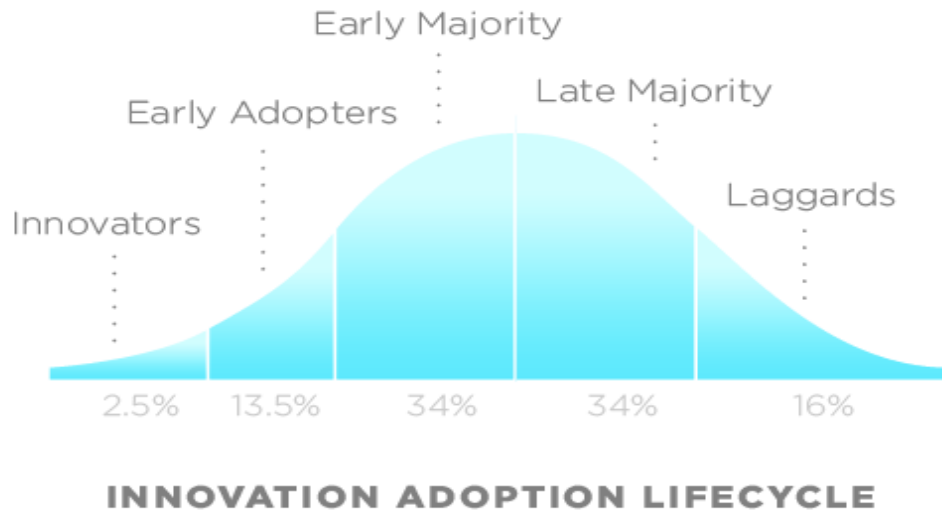
Daniel Everett (2012) highlights the concept that language is a tool that we humans use to construct our world view. He, thus, holds that language is an invention of the human mind, which is not in line with Chomskyan innateness hypothesis. The famous “Wug” experiment conducted by Jean Berko Gleason in 1958 addressed several factors related to children’s L1 acquisition in within English context like how to make a plural out of a singular noun, how to derive adjectives from verbs, and how to get the past of the verb. Cleanson concluded that children are endowed with an innate device for L1 acquisition. Yet, Gleason did not include gender as a factor in her experiment, so the “Wug” is a genderless creatures that can be assigned any gender. I wonder what gender children would choose to assign to the “Wug” if a follow-up study on wug gender was conducted.

Rogers Everett (2003) divided individuals as to their responses to novel ideas into five categories in what he called “Innovation Adoption Lifecycle” which consists of innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards as shown in Figure

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<sup>95</sup> Educated users of EA prefer to us this term which is loaned from Modern Standard Arabic. It is considered derogatory to use the slang EA term for this job which is /raʔʔaaS/.

(3) EA speakers' reactions to constructions with gender-inclusive language will surely vary and are worthy of further research.



*Figure 3.* Innovation adoption lifecycle.

Already I have used some of the syntactic techniques to further the use of /Hadd/ via gender-inclusive language in comments I made on Facebook. Surprisingly, and my comments were responded to without questioning whether the syntactic structures I used were well/ill formed. Initially, the theoretically valid further degendering techniques introduced in the current study are in line with Evertt's theory. Further research could be conducted to gauge levels of people's adoption of gender-inclusive language as a language style in Egyptian Arabic. Prior to such research, I am going to create a website for the project, and a Facebook page for training individuals who might be interested in how to acquire and use the further gender-inclusive techniques proposed by this project.

### **Chapter Summary**

The data presented for description and analysis in this chapter contained several grammatically- masculine terms that are used gender-inclusively despite the fact that

some of them have feminine counter-terms, or at least accept feminization by cliticizing the EA feminine marker.

Although the term /ʔinsaana/ does have the counter term /ʔinsaana/ but it, based on my personal observation, is now used gender-inclusively in most cases. However, as has been shown in a video about a reporter who has been raped (sentence 6), the feminine term /ʔinsaana/ was in place. The reason behind this could be that the feminine form /ʔinsana/ resonates with the victim's feeling as an assaulted female and better suits her status as a female victim than the gender-inclusive term /ʔinsaana/ which might still conjure up masculine qualities by the fact that it is a masculine term

The term /ʔil-waaHid/ has the feminine form /ʔilwaaHda/ which is also used in purely feminine contexts, like marriage, divorce, to name just two. Similarly, the term /ʔilwaaHid/ is also used in specifically male context; contexts that are related to masculinity, and virility. However, using the masculine term /ʔilwaaHid/ in a typically masculine context as in sentence 15 was really surprising. The speaker could have used the feminine form /ʔilwahda/ in a context about the Islamic head cover for women (aka, the hijab) but her use of the term /ʔilwaaHid/ connects with all genders on a humanist basis, which should grant the speaker more human support and a sense of being right in the eye of everybody in society, regardless of gender, as the bottom line in the context of sentence 15 is not gender as much as it is *personal freedom*.

The term /ʃaXS/ has no feminine counter-term. It is used gender-inclusively by EA users. However, its grammatical-gender surfaces on the structure it is used in and chooses a masculine verb, and adjectives. With this being the situation, room was given for linguistic intervention to make a little adaptive change based on the terms (+m/f) fea-

tures as shown, by allowing a feminine adjectival after /ʃaXS/ as proposed in (30) and (31), in agreement with the semantic properties of the subject, not the grammatical properties of the predicate head /ʃaXS/.

Unlike the term /ʃaXS/, the term /fardd/ has a feminine counter-term but it is either used derogatorily to refer to an attractive women, or to refer to things like /fardit gazma/ a shoe, for example. As a term used for humans politely, the term /fardd/ does not have a feminine term. This same property calls for a change as the term, being grammatically masculine, also chooses a masculine verb and adjective(s).

The term /fardd/ is used in “formal” EA to refer gender-inclusively to individuals. The term has a feminine form that is used either derogatorily to refer to an attractive woman, or to refer to an object. /fardd/ has a plural a gender-inclusive form, /ʔafraad/, which is used to refer to individuals collectively.

The term /fardd/ could yield further gender-inclusiveness by extending its usage to constructions of EA. In this case, the term’s (+f) feature is activated in constructions with a feminine referent so that the adjectival modifier following /fardd/ in a given construction agrees semantically with its referent.

For the purposes of gender-inclusive language, the item /Hadd/ is a linguistic treasure in EA. It occurred in multiple reference cases in the data; /Hadd/ referring to a masculine referent, /Hadd/ referring to a feminine referent /Hadd/ referring to inanimate collective nouns denoting people /Hadd/ used with a plural predicate /Hadd/ used with the quantifiers like /kull/ “every”, /kaza/ “several”, and /ʔktar min/ “more than” /Hadd/ used with the definite article /ʔal-/ , “-ال”, “the”, /Hadd used with a +M+f referent. Unlike other reference items, /Hadd/ is peculiar in its grammatical and semantic

properties. It is +M-F+m/f and can, based on Steele (1978), function as –M which makes it accept a feminine referential verb as in (65), or set of verbs as in (63).

/Hadd/'s -pl feature allows it to accept a +Pl referential verb, as in (66 B), which could be applied to other examples gender-inclusively.

The chapter also examined the possibility of proposing a new epecine pronoun to EA users and proposed the gender-inclusive pronoun /hum/, a backformation from the EA plural pronoun /humma/ which is used semantically to refer to genders. Unlike /humma/ which is taken by EA users as a +M+m+f+pl, /hum/ is presented to EA users as +M+F+m+f+Pl-/ +pl which means that it can grammatically and semantically gender-inclusive and number-inclusive.

The chapter also dealt with job titles and referred to power issues embedded in some job titles such as the feminine job /mumarriDha/ which male nurses would not accept as it is in the feminine form.

The chapter also presented some reflection on the applicability of gender-inclusive Language in EA.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study was triggered by questions on how *Qur'anic* Arabic and Egyptian Arabic exhibit gender-neutrality and the possibilities for Egyptian Arabic to accept further gender-inclusive techniques that could ultimately be used as a language style.

Ideologically, many users of Egyptian Arabic generally hold that it is a variety of Arabic that is closely related to Modern Standard Arabic, which, in turn, is a form of Classical Arabic, of which QA is a very refined form (Kaye, 1990). Such a conviction has resigned many users of EA, and presumably of other Arabic varieties especially Modern Standard Arabic, to a state of belief in the ideological affinity of EA to QA as the official variety of Islamic scriptures, *the Qur'an*. It was necessary to examine *Qur'anic* Arabic in order to see how *the Qur'an* sets power levels between men and women in an Islamic society. Looking at power relations between males and females as represented in *the Qur'an* was also necessary as a lot of the concepts that govern Islamic societies at present are derived from *the Qur'an* itself.

Collecting data from QA had to take a structured form. In my attempt to categorize the data, I found that verses of *the Qur'an* with regards to gender fall into six categories in which masculine and feminine forms are used typically and atypically (cross-genderly). CDA was used as a method of analysis of *Qur'anic* data. CDA is a strong arsenal for looking at power relations and it did help the research access power issues shrouded in the mist of patriarchal interpretations of *the Qur'an*.

## Two Exegetes of the Qur'an From Different Eras

The research adopted two of the most renowned interpretations, Ibn Kathiir's interpretation as a representative of the old school of interpreters, and Al-Shaarawi's interpretation which represent the modern school of interpreters. It was expected to see a change between the two schools by looking at a representative from it. Meanwhile, the research also adopted two very different translations of the *Qur'anic* text, Sahih International and Lalih Bakhtuar. Sahih International is a team of American translators who embraced Islam and yielded a translation that was expected to meet concepts of gender equality, as well as neutrality in some cases. Lalih Bakhtiar's translation basically stands out for being an experience by a feminist to translate *Qur'anic* verses, which gives the book a new perspective.

By looking at Ibn Kathiir's interpretation of the QA verses on gender, the study revealed that, as a representative of the early school of *Qur'anic* interpreters, focused mainly on males in his interpretation of most verses in phrased in the masculine. That was not an unexpected finding. Ibn Kathiir stands for a typical patriarchal society, and except for verses that actually address women or speaks about women's affairs, one would not expect from Ibn Kathiir to highlight concepts of gender-neutrality embedded in the generic use of masculine forms. It was clear that he depended on people's assumptions that the masculine is the default form referring to all genders in many verses. This might have rendered casting light on the female other via indirect reference in those verses not an issue to the man.

Genderwise, Al-Shaarawi, also an interpreter from a patriarchal, but contemporary society, did not yield ideologically identical interpretations of power-based

verses to those readings of Ibn Kathiir's. This could probably be attributed to the fact that Al-Shaarawi emerged in an era of women's emancipation, and high pitched allusions to gender-equality. He appeared in an age of women's movement in Egypt, and several other Arab countries, which tried vehemently to memetically emulate western feminist efforts to emancipate women from the shackles of their patriarchal societies. That might explain why Al-Shaarawi was cautious to leave room for women in his interpretation of *Qur'anic* verses phrased in the masculine.

### **The Translators' Perspectives**

Translations of the *Qur'anic* verses also enfold, at least indirectly, interpretations of those verses. With regards to the two translations of the *Qur'anic* text adopted in this study, Sahih International, as a western team of female translators, was expected to project western concepts of gender-equality in their interpretation, especially when it comes to verses that cannot be referring to males only although they are molded in masculine forms. However, I honestly felt the team did not have gender-equality as an issue of importance, if at all an issue. What the team yielded as gender-inclusive or equal seemed to have happened serendipitously and that was frequently given away by inconsistency.

Bakhtiar projected herself as adopting a new perspective of translating *Qur'anic* verses. She had gender-equality as her trajectory. In so doing, she paid special attention to gender-specifics with regards to the use of the feminine, which she always marked on pertinent lexical heads (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) with an (f) that she placed after each of those heads to mark a feminine referent. That alone was a major step in sifting the female other from the plethora of lexical heads presented in the mostly gender-inclusive



lexical heads in the English translation. Highlighting the feminine in this way also reveals issues of gender-based power relations.

Despite being on the alert for gender signals in *the Qur'an*, Bakhtiar also fell in the trap of inconsistency, but not to the extent when inconsistency becomes explicit, as is the case with Sahih International. She is caught using the masculine in verses that do refer to all genders as in Surat Abasa, verses 34, 35, 36, and 37 (See p. 137)

Another major contribution of Bakhtiar to translations of *the Qur'an* was her awareness of power-relations in *the Qur'an* as a concept. She fought to find an interpretation of the verb /iDribuuhunna/ meaning “physically discipline them” in An-Nisa’a. 34 and despite the fact that her effort was not well received, partly because she ended up giving an interpretation of the highly controversial verse that looked like what her critics believed was not what Allah intended to convey exactly, she did yield a thought stirring interpretation.

Looking at Bakhtiar’s translation critically inspired me with an intermediary interpretation of the controversial verse no. 34, Surat An-Nisaa by using traditions of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) to interpret the verse in ways that could be more acceptable.

### **On Refuting Al-Saadawi’s Views on Surat Al-Ikhlās (The Sincerity)**

Examining the *Qur’anic* verses under analysis, it was important to deal with the ideas of some frowned upon scholars like feminist Egyptian scholar, Nawal Al-Saadawi. Al-Saadawi received death threats perhaps more than refutations of her ideas. She is always looked down upon and accused of atheism by her critics. It was a chance for me to look into her thought and refute some of her unfamiliar, even shocking, ideas

pertaining to gender-(in)equality, as well as ideas that are hard-core feminist which she seemed to have extracted from extremist western thought, especially her overboard suggestion to use the feminine pronoun /Hiya/ In reference to the Almighty, Allah.

### **Dichotomizing Justice**

In the study, I proposed two concepts related to justice, *mathematical justice* and *contextual justice*. The study found from the data analysis that justice in *the Qur'an* is context-based. Context-based justices might seem irrational at first, but it is actual and is based on surrounding conditions and circumstances of individuals. The picture I used on page (101) clearly explains the difference between equality (*mathematical justice*), and actual, context-based, justice. Equality is mostly grasped as synonymous with justice, but the study revealed that they are not necessarily the same and can be very different concepts. This dichotomy of justice into mathematical and context-based could be used to account for *Qur'anic* instructions with regards to men and women's allotments based on what their contexts are. It could also be used to respond critically to the discourse of some secularists who maintain that *the Qur'an* was not revealed to be applied in all ages by highlighting another concept related to mathematical vis-a'-vis context-based justice as it is the individuals who can now decide which concept to use based on their contexts. For example, if a woman is working, it makes sense that she contributes to the budget of the home, just like the man, which truly makes her equal to him. *Contextual justice* can be used when it comes to input based on calculating every body's contribution based on their income.

The study also offered more significant interpretations of some controversial *Qur'anic* verses that were interpreted patriarchally, perhaps unintentionally. The purpose

of reading certain controversial verses via CDA was to fathom why things the way they are and unravel benefits hidden in the text that could alleviate the suffering of individuals, like women who might think that God is dissatisfied with them and so He gives them female children only, or women who might think Islam is about favoring males always while not favoring females at all, or even men who might think that corporal punishment is taken lightly in Islam and that polygamy has no conditions or restrictions.

The current study looked at Egyptian Arabic based on some evolutionary observations I had made about the item /Hadd/. I captured the item in novel uses in a decade or so precedent to the study, which could index a change in the variety. As far as EA is concerned, the research swerved from its being descriptive solely in dealing with data from CQ, to an extra trajectory that is actionary in essence. This switched the part of the study on CA into action research by checking the possibilities of introducing further degendering techniques into Egyptian Arabic. Such techniques attempted to alleviate power levels from EA, as a patriarchal variety of Arabic characterized by what could be described as colonization language by the males.

Linguistic colonization does not necessarily imply a conspiracy, especially as EA does not have an official writing system, although its users often write it in social media, for example, using inconsistent symbols. However, male colonization of EA arises in instances when users of EA marginalize the female other and assume that a doctor is always a man, a nurse is always a woman.

As these two job titles specifically represent the dilemma of male dominance in language, the study paid was careful to address them in ways that would alleviate male

dominance in the case of the term/duktoor/ and highlighting it in the case of the other, where masculinization of a feminine of the job title “mumarriDah” by dropping the feminine marker from the noun is challenged, even rejected by the patriarchal ideology.

With other job titles, the study revealed that keeping feminine markers on job titles does signify gender balance in job representation, in line with equality rather than inequality as each gender is represented as a separate identity. The study also looked at using masculine job titles for both and considered it a form of memetic imitation of the most successful people, men (Blackmore, 1999).

From this perspective of using the gender-inclusive plural verb, it is plausible to submit that using a feminine verb, or even a feminine pronoun, is not recommended as it would still sustain gender bias in language by marginalizing the males. This is in line with some feminist linguists like Spender (1980), Lakoff (1975; 2000), and Tannen (1994) who advocated the use of forms like the generic *they*, *he/she*, or *s/he*, despite the fact that some feminist linguists, like Cameron, use *she* all the time perhaps to compensate the female other for male’s colonization of language, but I as a man, am not for proposing the use of feminine forms while casting aside male forms as doing so will definitely result in the marginalization of men and should, in the long run, generate a sense of bias against males who will have to rise and claim their right to linguistic justice; the same type of gender-bias will most likely obtain. To avoid this problematic, one needs to think gender- neutrally, rather than not genderedly. Thinking neutrally is the optimal form of living in language. It guarantees, at least theoretically, that at Point Zero, all genders are represented equally. Point Zero is the point of zero everything;

representation, power and conflict. It is living in nothingness, living the what-is not of Shakespeare's Macbeth. Point Zero is the point of nonexistence, while still living.

Prudently, I provided a caveat explaining that the “prescriptive” intervention in this research into EA data should not be considered linguistically unsupported elitist “prescriptive” “prescriptivist” positions. The present study distances itself from such positions as it only attempts to find an answer to what could be considered the “dilemma” of this study, having to go against mainstream solely descriptive linguistic research positions to being prescriptive merely to achieve as much justice as this study could offer to EA. This means that the study used the term “prescriptive” in a more progressive-minded sense and for justifiable reasons of achieving some linguistic justice in EA

### **Linguistic Convenience**

Cameron (1995) had suggested to use the term *verbal hygiene* instead of prescriptivism which is trapped in a binary opposition in which the first term “descriptivism” is always the positive and the second the negative. As I stated in the introduction, the term *verbal hygiene* has connotations of pending harm if *verbal hygiene* is not followed; it also signifies a higher linguistic authority telling people what is best for them to say. I, therefore, propose another term which is more empowering to the common individual, *linguistic convenience*. This term is about context and the individual as the determiner of the right context in which they should use gender-inclusive language. The term *linguistic convenience* comprehensively addresses the fact that on social media, some EA users, aware as they might be of the absence of a writing system for the variety, try to write it using numerical symbols as well as borrowing from the writing system of *Modern Standard Arabic*. Referring to this activity as *linguistic* is more precise than

using the term *verbal*, which confines its signified to spoken language. Gender-inclusiveness might seem odd in certain contexts that are all-male, or all-female and which do not require the use of gender-inclusive expressions. Also, it is expected that individuals would respond more positively to options that they are involved in, rather than set for them from above. So, the term verbal convenience is more likely to yield more positive responses on the part of individuals. A study could be conducted to verify that matter and see which of the two terms is more appealing to the common person who might be, as Spender (2008) indicated, more reluctant to respond to decrees from above.

Relatedly, Spender (2008) also maintained that it may be surprising that language users may feel coerced to adopt newly coined gender-inclusive expressions. However, one cannot generalize the American experience with degendered American English expression to the case of other language varieties like EA. In the *Egyptian Arabic* context, public reaction can perhaps only be clearly seen once attempts at change are made. This study is suggesting a gender-inclusive pronoun, /hum/. This pronoun exists in *Classical Arabic* as a masculine plural pronoun and has the feminine counter pronoun, /hunna/. In EA, the masculine plural /humma/, with a doubled medial consonant, is used as the default plural pronoun since it does not have a feminine counter form in EA. EA users generally use it gender-neutrally for plural masculine/feminine nouns and pronouns. I have proposed to widen the scope of /humma/ after shortening it into /hum/ so that it becomes identical with its objective case form and introduce it to Egyptian speakers as a gender-inclusive singular/plural-subject/object pronoun to be used with the gender-neutral plural verbs and adjectives. I was cautious not to coin a totally new gender-inclusive pronoun as doing so might result in utter rejection on the part of EA users. Already, the

coined English gender-neutral pronoun “co” did not survive, although another naturally developed one, “yo” did. The pronoun /hum/ is familiar to EA users and chances of its survival are decent and worthy of further research.

In furthering the novel uses of using the item /Hadd/ which I had observed, referred to in the introduction and elaborated via EA contextualized data analysis in Chapter Five, the study also proposed further gender-inclusive techniques to the ubiquitous item /Hadd/ by considering it (+m, +pl, +M/F). Reasons for installing these syntactic features on /Hadd/ were explained in the chapter. I have endeavored to propose gender-inclusive techniques of verbal and adjectival predicates in constructions containing /Hadd/. An additional important actionary step the study took on the syntactic level was to shift the course of a given construction from the gender-biased, masculine track to the unbiased gender-inclusive track by using the gender-inclusive plural form of EA verbs and the masculine plural which EA has probably inherited from Classical Arabic without a feminine counter form. This is also useful in constructions with gender-inclusive nouns like /faXS/, /fardd/ that are used as a masculine by default, despite the fact that they do not have feminine counter forms. Verbs referring to masculine job titles can also be used in this plural gender-inclusive form, especially when the person in a certain job with a masculine name is a woman.

Some implications of the actionary steps taken in this research are compatible with the view that we humans make the language we need to view the world with. Attempts made in this study to install extra features on the EA item /Hadd/, for example, and other items lacking a feminine and/or a plural form could well be in line with Everett’s view that we use language as a tool to serve our needs, reshape and develop our

world view. In this study, these gender-inclusive techniques are used as an attempt to alleviate power from EA. Theoretically, they sound plausible and logical. Further research could indicate whether EA users will accept gender-inclusive language as a language style and whether they see them as viable and effective in changing negative attitudes of some males toward the female other. This might require publicizing via social and mass media and give EA users time to use these techniques prior to studying individuals' response(s) and attitudes toward gender-inclusive language.

### **Language Is a Verb**

Based on my initial observations of the linguistic evolution of the use of /Hadd/ in EA, and the human intervention exercised in the current work to further the ungendered use of this ubiquitous lexical item, it would be accurate to modify language by the metaphor, "Language is a verb". I describe language with verbality as being a verb signifies constant change, whether evolutionary, or actionary, which is the case with language. This comes forth as a wake-up call to some scholars who might hold the conviction that Arabic with its varieties in use does not change or evolve, or because Arabic is the language of *the Qu'r'an*, other varieties thereof do not and should not change.

### **How to Use This Work in Social Action**

This study lies beyond being a linguistic one; it transcends the boundaries of linguistic research to the scene of social action. I, therefore, propose the following recommendations in order for the study to reach its intended beneficiaries on the level of *Qur'anic Arabic* and *Egyptian Arabic*. As far as QA is concerned, the views on gender-



justice in *the Qur'an* generated by the study and refutations of some unfair views could see the light via:

- a- Publishing a book in Arabic for the Arabic audience and another in English for the international audience of Muslims or individuals who might be interested in finding out about gender-equality in *the Qur'an*.
- b- Spreading the views which the study has unveiled to the audience via social media by using them as facebook posts. That alone could stir rich discussions because of the unfamiliarity of some of the audience with these views.
- c- Discussing these views and gender-justice in *the Qur'an* in the media

As far as EA is concerned, social action could be achieved by incepting gender-inclusive language as a meme into sociolinguistic pockets of the study's intended audience via:

- a- Writing a book in Arabic about in which the further gender-inclusive techniques proposed by the study are presented to users of EA.
- b- Since EA is a variety of adoption of many learners of Arabic who are cognizant of its significance and ubiquity, writing an educative book to this international audience would also be of interest to them, especially as most of this international audience are from contexts that highlight the importance of gender-inclusive language for social justice.
- c- Setting up a facebook page to facilitate the acquisition and practice of the gender-inclusive techniques proposed by the study. This page could be bilingual for a broader audience.

- d- Talking about gender-inclusive language in EA in the media and educating the public about it.
- e- Rewriting some TV drama scripts and/or film scripts using gender-inclusive language, a step I expect to expedite the acquisition of GIL and foster familiarity with it.

As much as this study is actionary when it comes to EA in particular, further actionary research on other varieties of Arabic could still be conducted. This study is ultimately a stone creating some cognitive ripples in the motionless sea of sociolinguistic injustice in Egyptian Arabic.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Abbreviations Used in the Study

Adj. Adjective

Adv. Adverb

AP active participle

CA Classical Arabic

CDA Critical Discourse Analysis

Dei. Deictic

Du. Dual

EA Egyptian Arabic

F (grammatically) Feminine

f (semantically) feminine

GIL gender-inclusive language

M (grammatically) Masculine

m (semantically) masculine

MSA Modern Standard Arabic

Obj. Object

N Noun

Neg. Negative

P. Preposition

PP Prepositional phrase

Pl. Plural

Pred. Predicate

Pres. Present

Pro. Pronoun

QA Qur'anic Arabic

R Relative

S Singular

TSH Thinking for Speaking Hypothesis

V Verb

? Odd

(\*) ill-formed

## Appendix B

### Arabic IPA Symbols Used in the Study

#### *Fricatives:*

/θ/: voiceless interdental/dental fricative

/j/: voiced alveo-palatal fricative

/ħ/: voiceless pharyngeal fricative\*

/x/: voiceless velar fricative

/ð/: voiced interdental/dental fricative

/z/: voiced alveolar fricative

/s/: voiceless alveolar fricative

/ʃ/: voiceless palato-alveolar fricative

/S/: voiceless alveolar fricative emphatic

/Z/: voiced interdental/dental fricative emphatic

/ʕ/● voiced pharyngeal fricative

/ɣ/: voiced velar fricative

/f/: voiceless labio-dental fricative

#### *Approximants:*

/l/: voiced oral lateral approximant

/l/: voiced oral lateral approximant emphatic

/y/: voiced oral palatal approximant

/w/: voiced oral bilabial approximant

/h/: voiceless glottal fricative

/f/: voiceless oral labio-dental fricative

*Trills:*

/r/: voiced alveolar trill

*Stops:*

/m/: voiced bilabial nasal stop

/n /: voiced alveolar nasal stop

/q/: voiceless uvular stop

/k/: voiceless velar stop

/ʔ/: voiceless glottal stop

/b/: voiced oral bilabial stop

/b/: voiced bilabial stop

/t /: voiceless alveolar stop

/g/: a voiced uvular stop

/d/: voiced alveolar stop

/D/: voiced alveolar stop emphatic

/T/: voiceless alveolar stop emphatic

*Short vowels:*

/a/, /a/●: low front unrounded lax

/u/: high back rounded lax

/i/: high front unrounded lax

/e/: mid front unrounded lax

*Long vowels:*

/aa/ and /aa/●●: low front unrounded lax

/uu/: high back rounded tense

/ii/: high front unrounded tense

/ee/: mid front unrounded tense

● According to the Journal of Arabic Linguistic Tradition (JALT), in current phonetic practice, the Arabic pharyngeals ( ح and ع ) are considered epiglottal and so are represented by the symbols /ʕ/, /H/ respectively rather than /ʕ/, /ħ/ and

●● /a/ and /aa/ are pronounced as deep (back) vowels following any of these seven consonants /x/, /S/, /D/, /T/, /Z/, /y/, and /q/. , whereas /aa/ and /a/ are pronounced as light (front) vowels following any of the remaining consonants, according to Alhawary (2011).