

**RESEARCH PAPER****Linguistic Sexism at Word Level in Ali's *The Book of Saladin*: A Feminist Stylistic Perspective****¹Behzad Anwar*, ²Asma Iqbal Kayani, ³Anila Iram**

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***Corresponding Author:** behzad.anwar@uog.edu.pk**ABSTRACT**

This paper is an investigation into the use of sexist language in Tariq Ali's novel *The Book of Saladin* (TBOS) by using feminist stylistics word level model. Following a qualitative content analysis, the researchers collected the relevant examples through close reading method and the data have been collected in the form of words. The discussion and analysis of the data show the different aspects related to word level like generic pronouns, naming and semantic derogation of women. The findings of the study reveal that Ali (1998) has exhibited a biased attitude towards the representation of women in his writing where they are either eliminated from the linguistic landscape through the use of masculine pronouns as generic terms or they are just the nameless creatures introduced in relation to men in their lives. Moreover, their representation is mitigated when most prestigious jobs are allotted to men and they are also semantically derogated by the derogatory terms used for them at word level. The researchers have found the toolkit of feminist stylistics as relevant and useful to unravel linguistic sexism that is incorporated in literary texts.

KEYWORDS

Feminist Stylistics, Generic Pronouns, Linguistic Sexism, Naming, Semantic Derogation

Introduction

Studies into the relationship between language and gender are grounded in the contributions made by Lakoff (1975). According to Coates (2015) the main and basic point of such studies was to critically see and question the idea that "man" has been viewed as the norm throughout the history. This supremacy of the man set as the norm was challenged and questioned in earlier 1900s by women who struggled to keep their names after marriage (Pauwels, 1998). Another area of interest and combat was that of the speech of both these genders as claimed by McConnell-Ginet (1988) where studies were conducted to see how and why the speech of women and men differ. The later years observed an interest in linguistic sexism (Weatherall 2002) i.e., how women and men are characterized and represented through the use of language. This use of language when shows a biased attitude of the language users is considered the sexist use of language.

The most appropriate definition of sexism related to the aim of the present study is given by Vetterling-Braggins (1981 cited in Mills 1995, p. 83) "a statement is sexist if its use constitutes, promotes or exploits an unfair or irrelevant or impertinent distinction between the sexes". Different languages exhibit a use of sexism though in different forms as claimed by Pauwels (1998). In the English language, a number of features and forms are criticized for being sexist. For example, the use of generic pronoun "he" when used to refer to both the sexes is considered sexist use of language by Mills (1995). Likewise, the masculine terms like "spokesman" and "chairman" are also the examples of sexist use of language as quoted by Mills (1995, p. 87). This sexist use of language results in gender inequality as the use of language controls the perception of the world according to the theory called Linguistic determinism. In order to end gender discrimination, it is important to highlight the gender linguistic sexism. Mills (1995), too, asserts that gender needs to be exposed as it is presented

in the texts. And for the purpose, she lays stress on carrying out a textual analysis of the texts to identify and fight against gender discrimination. She further argues that the sexist society with the sexist structures needs to be exposed and changed by exposing linguistic sexism (Mills 2008, p. 159).

This study investigates the sexist use of language by utilizing Mills's (1995) toolkit covering three features of language use at word level: the use of generic pronouns, naming and semantic derogation of women. The data have been collected from Tariq Ali's novel *The Book of Saladin* which is a biographical novel. The novel presents an account of Salahuddin Ayyubi, a Kurdish Muslim sultan of Syria and Egypt. Replete with different historical events, the novel is set in different settings like Cairo, Damascus and Jerusalem. The main focus of the novel is the Sultan, the people around him and the planning and battles that he undergoes. But running with these, we find a description of a number of women and men characters as well. The events of the novel are narrated through a Jewish scribe Ibn Yakub to whom the memoir is dictated by the Sultan during his meetings with Sultan on daily basis. The same scribe is also given an access to the wives of the Sultan and the other women of the harem. Through this dictation to scribe and through his interaction and description of these different characters and events, we get a vivid picture of the society of that time and, no doubt, that of the women and men of that time as well.

Literature Review

The interdependent relationship between language and society is viewed differently by different linguists with reference to linguistic sexism. Some believe that "language determines the way the world is perceived by the language-users" (Mills 1995, p. 84) and that the "sexist language influences society to be more sexist" (Weatherall 2002, p. 4) while the others think that language is only one factor in how we construct the world (Pauwels, 1998). Hence, it can be claimed that language constructs the so called realities of the sexist societies. Spender (1980) argues that our sexist worldviews are the result of our sexist language usage. She further asserts that the groups in power i.e., men construct and build the reality which works in their favor. According to Holmes (2008), the sociolinguists in most of the cases consider that language affects our world-view and consequently how the language users view and treat gender. These ideas maintain sexism as an important area of debate under the subject of gender and language. The distinction between genders, mostly, results in discrimination against women as Cameron (1992) suggests that sexist structures of language use make women suffer. Linguistic sexism is condemned by the linguists and feminist both when certain words used for women carry negative meaning with them. The use of language when it relegates women to negative and marginal position is condemned by Weatherall (2002) as well when he shows his concern that how sexist language "in different ways diminishes women and make them invisible" (p.76).

These were the feminists who laid stress on the need to analyze and highlight the use of sexist language to end gender discrimination in sexist societies. With a focus on the English language usage and sexist structures, they declared it as "a language with sexist structures" (Holmes 2008, p. 318). With the development in studies based on feminist literary criticism, a new field of study named feminist stylistics emerged in the late 1960s. Feminist stylistics by drawing insights from Leech and Short's (2007) stylistics approaches and critical linguistics ideas as proposed by Hodge and Kress (1988) provides a method to analyze how gender is represented in texts. Considering the inadequacy of other approaches to study literary texts from gender perspective, Mills (1995) proposes a detailed framework with a comprehensive toolkit to discover gender differences in any text. Her model covers an analysis of language at three levels namely: word level, sentence/phrase level and discourse level. Mills (2005) lays stress on developing and understanding of the theoretical aspects of sexism before deciding that the language use in a particular text is sexist or not. For the purpose, the analysis of words is carried out within its cotext and context from a feminist perspective. These choices of words hint at the attitude and psyche of the writer towards gender depiction. Nayef (2016), too, claims that these choices by the writers are not random or accidental. Instead these are used to convey a particular ideology and belief

of the language user regarding a particular gender. Mills (1995) suggests looking at the use of generic nouns and pronouns, marked forms, paired terms, items with semantic derogation of women and naming practices. For the present study, the researchers have utilized only three features of language use under word level aspect: the use of generic pronouns, naming and semantic derogation of women.

The use of masculine pronouns like 'he' and 'his' to refer to human beings in general, according to feminists, is sexist. When such masculine pronouns are used to refer to both the genders, these are called generic forms. But when these pronouns are used to refer to male gender, then these are sex-specific pronouns. According to Mills, generic forms "perpetuate a view of the male as a norm or universal and the female as deviant or individual" (1995, p. 87). For example, 'He' is generic pronoun when it refers to all human beings including both males and females. But the fact is that whenever the readers see masculine pronoun 'he' used in a sentence, the image of a male is visualized. Hence, the use of this pronoun is confusing for the readers. The ambiguity in the meaning of this generic word use is also highlighted by Weatherall (2002) who while referring to different studies (MacKay and Fulkerson, 1979; Moulton, Robinson and Elias 1978) claims that such words are interpreted as describing a man. Feminists suggest neutral language as it is confusing to decide either these terms are used generically or as masculine terms to refer to male only (Doyle 1995).

The linguistic sexism is also visible in naming practices where the women are either given no names or their names are derived from male names. Feminists claim that a language becomes sexist when it names the world from masculine point of view and according to the stereotypical beliefs and attitudes in relation to sexes (Mills, 2005). For example, the lack of vocabulary for female sexual organs to be used inoffensively in public hints at the idea that they are invisible and passive. The difference in the address forms used for men and women is another aspect that is highlighted by Mills (1995) to show discrimination against women. Moreover, Mills (1995) claims that the pregnancy is also described through slang terms like 'to get someone pregnant', 'to get someone in the family way' or 'to put a bun in the oven' which assert that female is passive while something is done to her by an active male. Mills (1995) also highlights how in English some gender-specific pair words show a biased attitude towards women where the terms which are female-specific have become derogatory. Cameron (1992) also asserted that how through a presentation of male as positive and female as negative, "the male chauvinism are encoded into language" (p.13). Mills (1995) quotes examples like master/mistress, lord/lady and courtier/courtesan where the female associated terms show a semantic deterioration or derogation representing women as negative characters.

Material and Methods

In accordance with the aim of this study, the researchers have used qualitative content analysis method to collect, examine and interpret the data. Qualitative research relies on subjective interpretation based on the classification and codification of the identified patterns and themes (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). The source of the data is an English novel, *The Book of Saladin* (1998) composed by Tariq Ali, a British-Pakistani writer. The data are collected in the form of words through close reading, a technique proposed by Greenham (2018). The data are selected based on purposive sampling technique. In order to see the sexist use of language at word level, the researchers selected only those linguistic items which fall under selected three features of language use at word level i.e., generic pronouns, naming and items with semantic derogation of women. The data are presented and discussed in the form of words and sentences under the separate sections with relevant examples from the text quoted where needed to support the discussion. Figure 1 presents a brief overview of the way the current study was carried out from theoretical underpinnings to the practical steps taken to answer the set research questions.

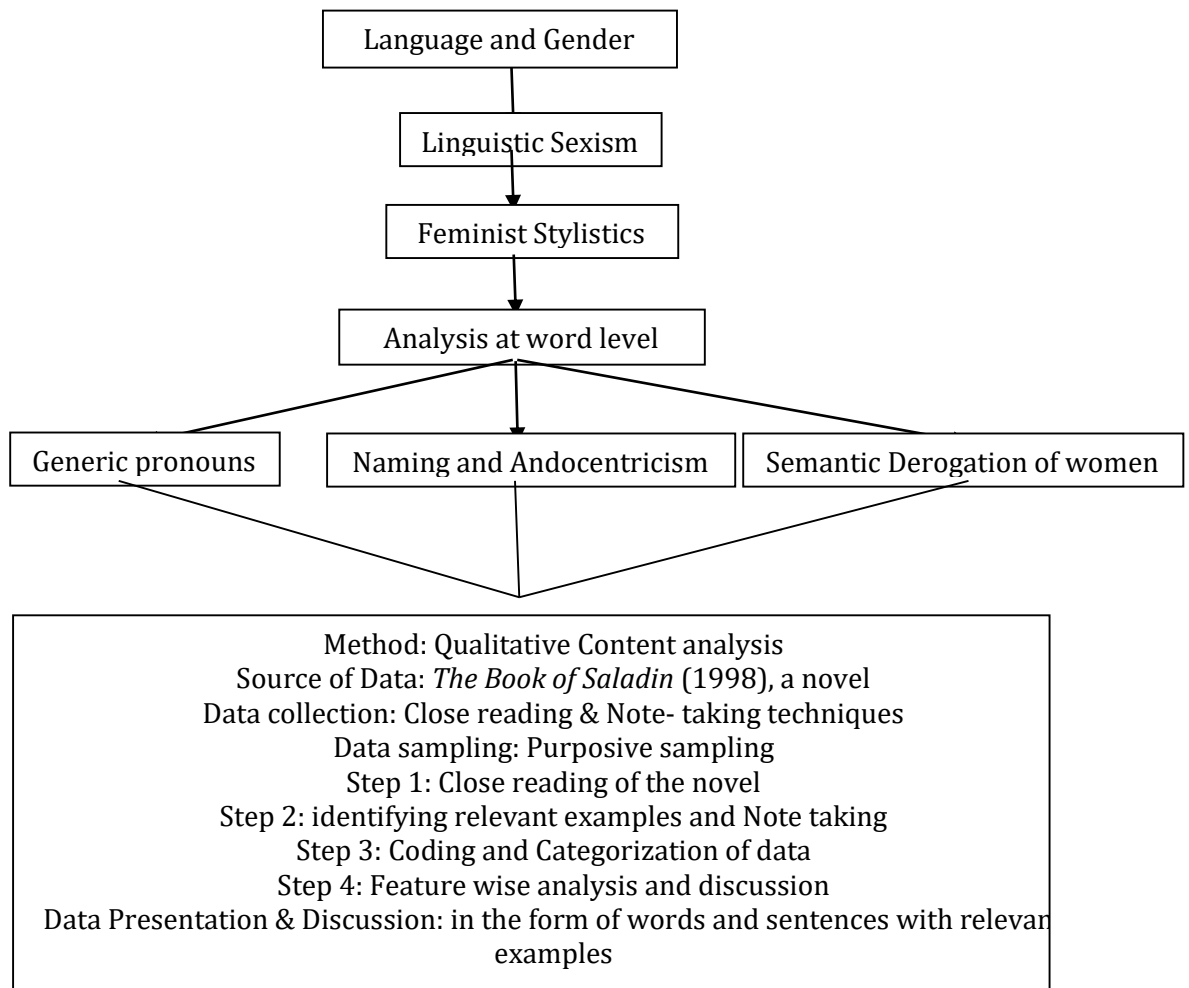


Figure 1: Step-wise lay out of the research process and methodology

Results and Discussion

The data retrieved through close reading have revealed the sexist attitude of Ali towards gender depiction. This section presents the data analysis with a discussion of this sexist attitude of the writer in accordance with research questions. Section 4.1 presents an analysis of the use of generic pronouns in the text. Section 4.2 discusses how the women are mostly unnamed in the text and how they are described in relation to men in their respective lives. This section also discusses the use of naming for male and female sexual organs in the text. Section 4.3 brings into the light how Ali has used some contrasting pair terms for women and men which result in semantic derogation of women.

Generic Pronouns

The focus of the present section is to analyze the use of pronouns by Ali (1998) in his novel *The Book of Saladin*. The data have provided with three instances where Ali (1998) has used masculine pronoun 'he' to refer to human beings in general where he appears to be sexist.

1. **He** who rules, makes the rules.
2. Life is a trade in which there are gains and losses. **He** who does good earns good, and **he** who does evil earns evil.
3. Happy is the one who has experienced the torments, tempests and passions of everyday life, for only **he** can truly enjoy the fragile and tender delights of love.

The pronoun 'he', grammatically, is used to refer to a singular male person, but in the sentences above (1-3) it is applicable to both male and female gender. Hence the

pronoun 'he' in these sentences carry a general reference i.e. to both the male and the female gender. It can be noticed through an analysis of these pronouns that Ali (1998) by using this male generic pronoun 'he', makes women invisible by excluding them from linguistic surface. But Ali (1998) cannot be called a sexist on the basis of only these three examples. The data have revealed instances where he has used neutral pronouns like 'one' when referring to both the genders and the humanity in general. Ali's use of this pronoun instead of generic pronoun 'he' makes his text free of gender bias. For example, in sentence 4, he could have used generic noun 'man' and generic pronoun 'his' instead of 'one' and 'one's' as a way to favor male gender. But the use of neutral pronoun 'one' makes his language free of gender bias. Likewise, in sentences 5 –18 the neutral term 'one' is used to refer to human beings in general. This use of 'one' or 'one's' helps Ali (1998) to write in gender free language.

4. Only when peace prevails can **one** afford the luxury of being left alone with **one's** own thoughts.
5. **No one** dared to ask the cause of such a public display.
6. Their size made **one** tremble in admiration and awe.
7. But **one** must never underestimate al-Fadil.
8. The more **one** exerts oneself, the less tired **one** gets.
9. Treat Shawar as **one** would a juicy date on a long march through the desert.
10. In a state of heightened emotions, **one** sees and hears imaginary things related to the subject of the emotions.
11. **One** must learn to eat and dress like them.
12. Anger is never a good emotion when **one** is determining a higher strategy.
13. Because **one** is sleeping lightly, the memory is clearer.
14. The loss of a close friend, with whom **one** shared everything and in whom **one** had complete trust, is a far greater blow.
15. When **one** is cut off from what is happening in the world beyond the citadel?
16. Imagine that **one** can cure the pain of the present by reliving **one's** childhood and youth.
17. How else can **one** explain the degeneration that has taken place in Baghdad?
18. People in such a state rarely follow **anyone's** advice and can even become resentful if **one** says something that they do not wish to hear.

Sentences 19 and 20 are the examples where term 'one' appears to be sex specific. Analyzing this term in the context of its occurrence, it can be noted that in sentence 19, 'one' is referring to a male. The reason for this inference is the use of term 'exquisite treasure' referring to a woman. Stereotypically, the female is compared to a treasure which is a possession of man and no man can be angry for long with such a treasure i.e. female. This interpretation leads the readers to understand this use of 'one' in this sentence to be referring to a male.

19. **One** could not be angry for long with such an exquisite treasure.
20. Her face flowed like a freshwater spring, radiating goodness and tempting **one** to down and drink its refreshing waters.

Likewise, sentence 20 presents female face as a freshwater spring, which, no doubt, is to be drunk and enjoyed by a male. Hence, the pronoun 'one' carries with it male reference. In the above two examples it can be noted that how 'one' can be used in a sexist way when it is meant to designate male gender.

Data have given the examples where Ali (1998) has used neutral pronoun 'one' with nouns free from gender bias. Instead of using 'When a man is sad', Ali has used 'When one is sad' in Sentence 21. This use of generic term 'one' includes both male and female, thus making the style of the writer bias free. The noun 'traveller' in the same sentence is again not referring to any particular gender but it is inclusive of both male and female. Similarly, sentence 22 also exhibits Ali's use of gender free language where pronoun 'one' and noun 'storyteller' both refer to humanity in general.

21. When **one** is sad, the sound of the lute is like the noise of water to a thirsty traveller in the desert.
22. If **one** had told him a story several years ago [...] he would immediately point out the discrepancies between the two version to the great embarrassment of the story-teller.

Mills (1995) also asserts that these pronouns are used in a sexist way when referring to stereotypical job positions occupied by males and females. Through a close reading of the text, a number of terms referring to human professions and occupations are identified. These identified terms are then searched in AntConc concordance program to collect all occurrences of these terms. A manual analysis has given following instances where the use of pronouns indicates which profession is attached to which gender. The position of secretary, though stereotypically attached to females, is given to males in the text. The reason behind this is the time period shown in the novel where the Sultans used to have male secretaries. There was no concept of a female secretary during that time of political upheavals and war like situations. Thus in following examples, we find 'he' to be sex specific where it refers to males only.

23. His own secretary was too engaged in intrigues of various sorts. **He** could not be fully trusted.
24. The secretary bowed **his** head.
25. The secretary was shaken by this unexpected question. **His** drooping eyelids lifted.
26. the secretary was surprised [...] **He** parried the question with a joke.
27. The secretary did not reply, but permitted **himself** a smile.
28. But in reality the secretary had confessed to me that **he** feared the Sultan.

Other than secretary, the terms 'student' and 'teacher' when used in the text are used to refer to male. In sentence 29, while giving a description of a play, the role of Kadi is played by a male student. Likewise, the use of term 'teacher' is noted referring to males always. Hence, the males are shown belonging to the profession of honor and prestige.

29. The student acting the part of the Kadi [...] and then pronounced **his** judgement.
30. One day the teacher of holy texts grabbed my hand, and put it between **his** legs.
31. The teacher, muttering the name of Allah [...] In **his** presence she slapped my face.
32. She was registering a set of complaints against me with our great teacher knowing how much influence and respect **he** commanded in our household.

Some other occupations shown in the text occupied by men are those of messenger, scholar, poet, cook and singer. Messengers are always men who are either travelling or carrying messages from one party to another (examples 33-36). Again the text presents no woman scholar but only men scholars who are great and known for their work (sentences 37 and 38). Data reveal no example where a female is occupying these jobs with the exception of being a singer.

33. A messenger, with Shadhi trailing behind **him**.

34. One day a messenger reached us from Cairo. **He** was a spy.
35. He shouted for a messenger and sent **him** with a note.
36. A messenger arrived from the palace. **He** brought with him a large basket of fruits.
37. So **he** published four thousand hadith and was regarded as a scholar.
38. Our great scholar shows **his** confidence in my abilities.

The domain of poets is also reserved for males as in the sentences given below. The masculine pronoun 'him' in sentence 39 refers back to poet authenticating the person to be male. Likewise, in sentence 40 again the use of masculine pronoun 'his' announces the gender of the poet i.e. male.

39. Ilmas was really a poet. I still don't understand what devil possessed **him**.
40. Those under forty years of age wanted the poet released. The rest demanded **his** execution.

One interesting finding is the use of the term 'cook', a profession related to cooking and mostly attached to females. We find this job, in the text, attached to males as well. In sentence 41 the gender of the cook is made clear through masculine pronouns 'he' and 'him'.

41. **He** never mistreated or abused me and, since **he** was a good cook, I forgave **him** the unpleasant smell.

On the basis of above discussion, it can be said that text presents men actively and in possession of different occupations. However, the term singer appears to be in use with male and female both. In sentence 42, the singer is identified as a male singer by looking at highlighted pronouns and his name as well. It is interesting to note that the term 'singer' when used to refer to females; it shows typical state of affairs. Female singers stereotypically are understood to be a point of attraction for men and a desired object for them. Sentence 43, presents such a female singer who is desired by the Sultan but due to certain circumstances he had to let her go. Likewise, sentence 44 presents a female singer typically having her own story to tell to others.

42. That pretty boy with curly hair. The singer. [...] I think **his** name is al-Murtada.
43. I expressed surprise that he had let the singer go so easily. He had obviously left **her** with regret.
44. I took my leave of the great singer, who invited me to visit **her** again so that **she** could tell me **her** story.

This analysis related to pronouns and professions has highlighted the idea that most prestigious occupations in the sense of learning and wisdom are reserved for men. The women are attached to the profession of singing i.e. just to provide pleasure to others. Thus, sexist ideology is found at work in this text as far as the use of pronouns in relation to professions is concerned. This presentation is classifying certain professions as either belonging to males or females. The data have revealed that gender-specific pronouns are used to depict human beings from stereotypically male and female working domains.

Naming and Androcentrism

Mills supports Cameron's (1990) view that languages are sexist particularly because "they represent or 'name' the world from a masculine viewpoint and in accordance with stereotypical beliefs about the sexes" (as cited in Mills, 1995, p. 103). The first names of men and women are also interesting to see how some women's names are derived from male names. The names of two main female characters of the novel under study are Jamila and Halima. Both these women's names are derived from two Muslim male names Jamil and Halim respectively. This shows how the names of the males are the norm and how female names are derived from these male names.

Other than this naming scheme, an important thing is noted that some women, when introduced in the novel are mentioned with reference to their relationship to men. These females have been given no identity through their names but they are described through a mention of their relation to men. Sentence 45 mentions two women, one the mother and the other a wife. Instead of being mentioned through their names, they are presented in relation to Kamil, a male character. Such a nameless mention puts the women at a derogatory position and sets the male as a norm.

45. **Kamil's mother and his oldest wife** were shocked by Halima's behavior.

Likewise, in examples 46-49, where Sultan is giving an account of his past, the unnamed females again appear. Sentence 46 introduces Sultan's mother while Sentences 47, 48 and 49 introduce another female, Sultan's grandmother, whose name is never mentioned throughout the novel.

46. One day I heard **my mother** shouting at him.

47. My **grandmother** had some very similar to these.

48. My **grandmother**.

49. My **grandmother** had a legendary.

Other than being introduced through her relationship to her son and grandson, woman is also described in relation to her brother. Sentence 50 is an example where 'Sayed al-Bukhari', a man, is introduced with his name and fame but the female 'young sister' is not given any name. She is just mentioned as a relation to the man. In example 51, again we find the name of husband as 'Keukburi' but the sister of the narrator is not given any name. She is introduced as a woman to whom Keukburi has married.

50. She is the **younger sister** of Sayed al-Bukhari, one of our most respected and venerable sheikhs.

51. Keukburi must not know till we arrive. You know he is married to my **younger sister**.

This pattern of introducing females through their male relatives puts the women at a derogatory position thus entailing that the females with no names have no individual identity.

Other than naming, the second important aspect is related to how females and males are addressed in the text. Data give a few examples where women are being addressed as compared to that of men. It is interesting to note that these are the men who are addressed most of the time in the novel. Sentences 52-60 are the instances where a male is addressed either by another male or a female. Here two things are important to note. Firstly, a male is always addressed by his title or his position and secondly, the adjectives that these terms take with them are always positive. The image of men that we get from these examples is that they are great, learned, brave, trustworthy and good. Thus the language used for men is presenting them positively.

52. That is my story, **O great Sultan**.

53. I have given you a very short version, **O learned scribe**.

54. If anyone should be punished, **O merciful Sultan**.

55. What in your opinion, **O brave knight**?

56. **O learned scribe**.

57. You see, **O trusted scribe**, the reason for my speed.

58. **My good scribe**.

59. Do not expect any good news from there, **My Lord**.

60. And you, **my friend**, be careful.

As compared to address forms used for men, the data have revealed only four instances (sentences 61-65) where females are addressed and that too puts them in a marginal position. For example, in sentence 61, Jamila is addressed with title 'sultana'. This title is a diminutive form of word 'Sultan' used to refer to men in authority. This title, though apparently, is meant to give her respect, is in fact putting her in a marginal position where Sultana means a concubine of the Sultan which really she is, as given in the text. Sentences 62-65 are the instances where Ibn Yakub addresses his wife, Rachel. In example 62, he is addressing her by calling her a 'woman', i.e. a derogatory term when used to address a wife with an immoral character.

61. In your place I would have done exactly the same, **O Sultana**.

62. Speak the truth **woman!**

In sentences 63 and 64 Ibn Yakub addresses Rachel as 'My very dear wife' and 'my dearest Rachel' respectively. The use of pronoun 'my' in both the examples hints at how the woman belongs to man. However, in 64 and 65 the name of wife "Rachel" is mentioned but it is noteworthy that females are not addressed with their job titles or for their qualities related to their esteem and respect.

63. **My very dear Wife.**

64. As you know, **my dearest Rachel.**

65. **My dearest Rachel.**

66. **Amjad!**I heard her shout. You **disgusting whore.**

In sentence 66, we find Jamila, a female character, addressing a eunuch, a castrated man employed as harem guard, by his first name 'Amjad'. She calls him 'a disgusting whore' i.e. a prostitute. By calling him a 'whore' she shows how contemptuous this man is. This analysis of address terms as used in the text has shown that Ali (1998) has presented men positively and active, while women are shown passive.

Another area showing women's dependent position as discussed by the feminists is the lack of vocabulary for female sexual organs. The text under analysis is analyzed to find out this phenomenon not only in relation to women's organs but those of the men as well to get a true picture of the language use. A close reading of the text has provided the researchers with instances where Ali (1998) has mentioned the sexual organs of both the male and female, either covertly or overtly. However, the number and nature of such instances differ for men and women characters. The data have revealed 21 instances where male sexual organs are mentioned while only 5 instances are found referring to female sexual organs. First discussing the mention of female organs, example 67 refers to female sexual organs covertly i.e., '*cracks and crevices of the girl*' Cracks and crevices carrying the meaning of little openings refer to female sexual organ. The girl is presented as a sexual object explored by a male. This sexist use of language puts the female in a passive position where she, with her cracks and crevices is open for exploration. While the male is shown active who is engaged in the act of exploring her sexual organs. Ali's use of euphemistic language is also visible in this sentence where the taboo subject of sex is euphemized. Instead of using disagreeable terms like 'intercourse' or 'having sex with', Ali (1998) uses the concept of 'exploring the cracks and crevices of the girl' which though conveys the meaning in full but makes the statement less offensive and socially acceptable.

67. Instead, he is exploring the **cracks and crevices** of the girl with red hair.

68. I was dreaming of conquering **the citadel** that lay hidden under that perfumed forest of hair between her legs.

Likewise, in example 68 the term '*citadel*' is used to refer to female sexual organ. Citadel means a fortress, a building that is typically built on high ground to be used for

defense against an attack. Thus naming the female sexual organ 'citadel' means that how this spot is attacked by men. The term 'conquering' refers to men's active position while women are placed again in a passive position, the receiver of men's actions. Other than this covert mention of female sexual organs, data have given examples where such organs are mentioned overtly.

The analysis of terms used for female sexual organs has revealed that female sexual organs are not mentioned directly and if mentioned, are meant to highlight their sexual function only. In comparison to six instances of female sexual organs, data reveal 22 examples of the use of male sexual organs. Like females, males' organs, too, are mentioned overtly and covertly both. The men's sexual organs are named as: "*the offending organ*" (TBOS, p.42), "*it between his legs*" (TBOS, p.45), '*private parts*' (TBOS, p.31).

The euphemistic use of male sexual organ is also found with reference to eunuch, Amjad, a castrated human male, whose organ is referred to as 'palm-tree', (TBOS, p. 291). At another occasion, when Jamila is offended with Amjad, she in her disgust denounces him by referring to his organ as 'it' (TBOS, p. 297). Two more terms have been used to refer to male sexual organs are 'Sultan' (TBOS, p. 78) and 'sap' (TBOS, p.167). Other than this implicit reference to male sexual organs, the data show examples where male sexual part is explicitly mentioned. It is noteworthy that this male sexual organ is also mentioned in relation to jokes and humor used in lighter mood during normal conversation. Thus, confirming the idea that male terms for sexual organs appear less offensive as compared to those of the females.

The analysis of words used for sexual organs in the text has provided the researchers with some insights about the nature of language used by Ali (1998) in TBOS. Firstly, Ali mentions sexual body parts of both the genders but with different frequency where the mention of male sexual organs outnumbers that of the female sexual organs. Secondly, female sexual organs are used to highlight their sexual function mostly but the male organs are not only described with reference to sexual activity but also in terms of humor and other functions.

Other than the mention of female sexual organs, the euphemistic terms used to refer to 'pregnancy' in the text also present women in a static and passive position. Pregnancy on the part of women is presented as a state rather than an action. Examples from the text show the writer's choice of words to refer to pregnancy. In 69 and 70, euphemistic term '*heavy with child*' is used to refer to pregnancy. This term '*heavy*' carries with it a distracting or negative feeling. Moreover, the instance 70 shows how a male makes a female heavy with child, thus rendering male to be active while a female to be a passive recipient.

69. She was **heavy with their child**.
70. I used to dream that he would **make me heavy with his child**.
71. He told me he found her repulsive, but that did not prevent him **planting his seed in her**.

Similarly, in 71, pregnancy is shown as a result of male's action where '*planting his seed in her*' relegates the female to a passive position again. Thus, strengthening Mills's (1995) claim that the system of knowledge produced, denies the role of the female in a given process to be active, important or even existing at all. In contrast to this active role of the male, the terms referring to pregnancy used for females are more passive; for example, '*child in her belly*' (TBOS, p.47), '*carrying the Sultan's child*' (TBOS, p.115), '*I was with child*' (TBOS, p.118), '*expecting a child*' (TBOS, p.123) and '*in her stomach*' (TBOS, p.53), where females are presented through a description of a state rather than an action.

4.1 Semantic Derogation of Women

Mills utilizes Schultz's (1990) concept of the semantic derogation of women: that is, that once a word becomes associated with women, "it will begin to lose any positive quality that it originally had" (Mills, 1995, p. 116). Gender specific terms in pairs carry negative sexual connotations for women. Mills (1995) through a pairing of terms referring to men

and women indicates how terms for women like “spinster”, “courtesan,” “mistress,” and “hostess” are derogatory and carry sexual connotations. An analysis of gender-specific terms appearing in the selected novel is done to find out writer’s attitude towards gender. Starting with an analysis of contrasting pair words, the data reveal following terms appearing in contrasting pairs, where one is male-specific and the other is female-specific.

Male	Female
Courtier	Courtesan
Master	Mistress
Lord	Lady
Prince	Princess

In order to understand the connotation each term carries with it, the context in which these terms appear is important for consideration. The analysis shows that the terms used for males carry positive meanings while the terms used for females mostly carry negative sexual meanings. Terms referring to male are signifying men’s authority or the respect and trust they deserve, but the pairing terms when used to refer to females carry sexual connotations with them. For example, the term ‘*courtier*’ in 72 is used in positive sense where it refers to a male attendant present in the Sultan’s court while its pairing term ‘*courtesan*’ as given in example 73 carries derogatory meanings with it. The term ‘*courtesan*’ was, once, used to refer to a woman of a royal or noble court. But this term as used in the text under study refers to a prostitute or a mistress i.e. relegating the woman to a derogatory position.

- 72. He was a great **courtier**.
- 73. Salah al-Din became a Sultan. Zubayda remained a **courtesan**. [...] it was the **courtesans** that made the most faithful wives.

Another pair appeared in the text is that of *master/mistress*. The word master has retained its meaning of ‘a male in authority’ or ‘an owner’ or ‘a man who has people working for him’. The pairing term mistress was used originally as a feminine counterpart to ‘master’ but with the passage of time, derogatory meaning is attached to this term. Examples 74–77 taken from the text, show how the term master is used to refer to a male who is in authority. Examples 78 and 79 show the use of ‘mistress’ with its original meaning referring to a woman who is in a position of authority or the one who has a control over a household but in example 80, the term “mistress” carries a sexual meaning where it is referring to a woman who is open for sexual relationships.

- 74. He saw his **master** punish the dead body of his friend.
- 75. The **master** caught sight of her and bent her to his will.
- 76. It was Nejeah who supplied his **master** with both opium and false reports.
- 77. At this point I showed him a copy of the letter his **master** had sent to the Franj
- 78. If my **mistress** had decided my fate, I would have married the water-carrier’s boy.
- 79. I would not carry tales to the **mistress**.
- 80. The young Salah al-Din is abandoned by his **mistress** for an older man.

The contrasting pair prince/princess is also important to note how the terms used to refer to women start carrying other meanings than that of their original ones. In 81, the term "prince" is used to refer to a male who is a real prince of a certain locality but in 82 and 83, the term "princess" is used for a female who is not actually a princess of any state or region but this term is used to highlight the physical beauty of female or to show feeling of love and respect for a female.

81. His father was the **prince** of Shayzar.
82. a fairy **princess** from the Caucasus.
83. Welcome back, **Princess**.

The pair *lord and lady* originally associated with members of esteemed authority and nobility is another pair found in the text. It is noted that the term 'lord' preserves its original meaning but the term "lady" is not used exclusively for women of high rank. Instead 'lady' is used to address any adult female or to refer to any female. The term lord as used in 84 and 85 shows how this term is used to refer to a male who is in authority while the term lady in 86-88 is used to refer to any female with respect while in 89 and 90 this term is used to address a female.

84. Do not expect any good news from there, **My Lord**.
85. He saved my life and became my **lord** and master.
86. Their mother was a ferocious **lady**.
87. Salah al-Din's first wife, Najma, was a noble but ugly **lady**.
88. What used to interest both her and the **Lady** Halima was my inability to enjoy the delights of the bedchamber.
89. I am not sure, **Lady**. I am not sure.
90. **Lady** Halima, if someone else had told me that you had undergone such a complete change I would have laughed in their face.

The examples discussed above reveal that these gender specific terms in pairs show sexist attitude towards women. The terms associated with women deviate from original positive meanings and tend to carry negative meanings with them. Terms like "mistress" and "courtesan" are derogatory and carry sexual connotations with them. Hence, the data support Mills's claim that once "a word becomes associated with women; it will begin to lose any positive quality that it originally had" (1995, p.116).

Conclusion

With an aim to investigate linguistic sexism at the level of word in selected novel by using the toolkit provided by feminist stylistics, the researchers have analyzed a total number of 90 collected examples falling under different features. The analysis was performed at word level three features: generic pronouns, naming and semantic derogation of women. Based on the findings and discussion of the data, the researchers have reached at this conclusion that Ali (1998) has exhibited a biased attitude towards the representation of female in his novel *The Book of Saladin* (1998) as far as the word level analysis of all the three selected features are concerned. A total number of 44 instances of language use from the text are discussed under generic pronoun discussion section. It is concluded that generic 'he' is used to represent human beings in general which sets male term as the norm. However, the instances where Ali (1998) uses "one" as a neutral pronoun show how he tries to write in a sexist free language. But the examples where prestigious jobs are reserved for men using masculine pronoun "he" and "him" show his biased attitude again. The discussion and findings related to naming with 27 examples in the text also show Ali as a sexist writer. The unnamed women are described in relation to men in their lives. The use of maximum linguistic items for male sexual organs again shows how women are eliminated from linguistic landscape. Moreover, the women are also shown passive and acted upon creatures

when they are described through sexual activity or pregnancy related matters while the man are shown active and dominating. The linguistic items selected under semantic derogation of women showed 19 examples where the terms used for men carry positive meanings while the terms associated with women are derogatory. The study has proved that the use of language at word level in the selected text is sexist. Hence, proving Mills and Mullany (2011) claim that the negative portrayal of the women is the result of how language is used in a stereotypical gendered way.

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