

Women for Women: Discourse Analysis of Female's Political Discourse supporting women's Issues: A Case Study of Queen Rania's English Speeches

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is the area of discourse analysis. This study analyses the political discourse of Queen Rania of Jordan's English speeches. The data of the study consist of the English speeches the Queen delivered from 2016 to 2018. This study examines whether her speeches draw on the characteristics of the 'Feminine Style' of women's political discourse in qualitative and quantitative analysis. The paper concludes that women in the political arena prioritise women's issues and address them through using some rhetorical techniques such as storytelling in order to convince the audience to support them.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis; Political Discourse Analysis; Queen Rania of Jordan; Metaphor; the Feminine Style; Quantitative Analysis.

Introduction

Research by Campbell (1989), Dow and Tonn (1993), Blankenship and Robson (1995), and Amaireh (2013, 2017) has shown that females political leaders try to empower women and support their issues and rights in the political arena. For example, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and the First Lady Michelle Obama in their speeches during the "International Women of Courage Awards" ceremony at the State Department in Washington, D.C., in March 8, 2012, addressed the issues of women and tried to defend their rights publicly. For instance, Michelle Obama remarks:

And of course, I want to recognize most of all the ten Women of Courage that we're honoring here today. These women come from all different corners of the globe. They have taken very different journeys to this moment. But they are all here today because somewhere along the line, they decided they could no longer accept the world as it is. And they committed themselves to fighting for the world as they know it should be. They saw corruption, and they worked to expose it. They saw oppression, and they worked to end it. They saw violence, poverty, discrimination, and inequality -- and they decided to use their voices, and risk their lives, to do something about it.

She extensively speaks about women and defends their rights publicly, and asks for equality for females. She also narrates some stories of women who suffered from various problems such as narrating a story of a lady from Colombia who suffered many hardships such as kidnapping among other assaults, Mrs. Obama speaks:

And then there is Jineth Bedoya Lima, an investigative journalist in Colombia. Back in 2000, when she was writing about an arms struggling [sic] network, she was kidnapped, brutally assaulted for hours by those who wished to silence her (March 8, 2012).

Storytelling is considered one of the features of the 'feminine style' according to the studies conducted by Campbell (1989), Dow and Tonn (1993), Blankenship & Robson (1995) and Amaireh (2013, 2017).

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The Feminine Style

Blankenship & Robson (1995), though their investigation of females political discourse such as speeches, interviews, debates, and televised Congressional hearings of 45 female speakers, came to a conclusion that there is a 'feminine style' of women's political discourse and it includes five main features. For example, building political judgment on the basis of real experience. Appreciating the value of inclusivity as being part of the whole society and relating to the audience is a key point. Moreover, through their official positions, they work hard to empower others, especially women and prioritise their issues and discuss them in the political platforms. So, this study will investigate whether Queen Rania's political discourse is in line with these features of the 'feminine style', especially bringing females' issues to the forefront and support them.

Purpose of the Study

So this study tries to investigate whether Queen Rania's English speeches draw on the *'feminine style'* of advocating women's rights in the political podium. It will examine the metaphorical expressions that are used in her speeches to call the audience for action.

Significance of the Study

By analysing the language of a political leader from the Arab and Islamic World, the study is geared toward filling a gap in existing literature of *discourse analysis* and *political discourse analysis* in the Middle East which did not receive adequate investigation especially when it comes to female speakers in the political arena.

Moreover, the existing literature placed very little emphasis on quantitative analysis of corpus analysis of political language especially of female speakers. So the current study may pave the way for further investigation of quantitative analysis especially of those speakers from the Middle East.

Research Questions

Questions of the Study

The study will try to answer the following questions:

Do female political speakers support women's issues in the political arena?

Why is metaphorical language used in political speeches? What are the purposes behind using it?

Is storytelling used in Queen Rania's speeches, and why?

Limitations of the Study

The analysis examines Queen Rania's speeches in which she speaks only in English, the ones that she speaks in Arabic are not examined in this study, so there is no comparative analysis between the way she speaks in Arabic and English. The analysis is also limited to the speeches the Queen delivered over the period of three years from 2016 to 2018. Moreover, it is not a comparative study of the way she speaks with other political speakers. In addition to that, it focuses mainly on the metaphorical language the Queen uses in her speeches, other figures of speech are not highlighted in this study.

Data Collection

The data of the study consist of 19 English speeches delivered by Queen Rania in different countries around the world from 2016 to 2018: ten speeches in The United States of America, three speeches in Germany, and one speech each in Jordan, United Kingdom, China, Turkey, Bangladesh, and Italy. The corpus includes 16,880 tokens.

Methodology

This study analyses the English speeches of Queen Rania in qualitative and quantitative analysis in a corpus-based

study. For the quantitative analysis, the Antconc Software will be used in order to investigate the frequency of certain lexical items that are used to speak about women such as the singular form *woman* and the plural form *women*, and the singular lexical word *girl* and the plural form *girls*, the singular form *mother* and the plural form *mothers*. In addition to that, the collocation of these words will be investigated to examine which words collocate with these words related to females.

Literature Review

Searching the literature there is not an adequate number of studies which examined the figurative and rhetorical language used by political speakers. However, there are few ones that worth mentioning which tried to analyse political discourse. Key among them is the study of Agbo, Kadir, & Ijem (2018). They conducted a critical metaphor analysis of political discourse in Nigeria according to Charteris Black's (2004) framework of Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA). They investigated the implied power relations in socio-political contexts in a corpus-based study. The corpus includes the political speeches of Brigadier Sani Abacha in 1984 and 1993, General Ibrahim Babagida, in 1985 and 1993, and MK. Abiola in 1993 and 1994 and Goodluck Ebele Jonathan in 2013. The analysis shows that speakers use metaphors to accomplish power and exert authority over their audience. Moreover, the analysis reveals that speakers use metaphors in order to argue for their cases and to show the ideology. In addition to that, speakers use metaphors to initiate a bond with the audience and manipulate and dominate them in some cases to satisfy their personal interests.

Another prominent work on political discourse analysis is the work of Wang (2010) which conducted a critical discourse analysis of Barack Obama's presidential speeches. His analysis is based on Halliday's *Functional Linguistics* framework. He examined the speeches in terms of transitivity and modality, which sheds light on internal relations of language which serves the purpose of social interaction. The analysis shows that Obama used more simple words and short sentences, and he used an easy and colloquial language. This helps in shortening the distance between him and the audience and creating a bond with them. The transitivity analysis reveals that Obama emphasised the "process of doing" in which he highlighted the government's achievements and the future's plans. Employing transitivity, Obama tried to gain his people's confidence towards him and the government. The modality analysis reveals that the speaker used (modal verbs, tense, and the first-person pronoun) in order to make people understand and accept his ideas and thoughts easily and to convince the audience to accept and support his policies.

Another study that applied *critical discourse analysis* of political discourse is Sarfo & Krampa (2013). They also analysed Obama's speeches in a comparative study of his speeches and Bush's speeches on terrorism. They analysed six speeches from Bush and Obama. The framework is based on van Dijk's notion of *critical discourse analysis*. The analysis shows that both Bush and Obama portrayed terrorism in a negative way and anti-terrorism in a positive way by using highly emotive language. They mainly use nouns and verbs to project terrorism and anti-terrorism. They use various phrases to speak about these two notions such as verb phrases, noun phrases, adjective phrases, adverb phrases, and prepositional phrases. They also used various sentence types: simple sentence, compound, and complex. They both projected terrorism as an illegitimate activity and anti-terrorism as a legitimate practice. Their study has also shown that language is used to construct ideology and establish an imbalanced power relation between the two participants. Moreover, the analysis showed that the speakers carefully selected their words and expressions to reach the goals they want to achieve and to convince the audience.

Another study that also applied Critical Discourse Analysis is Chen (2018). He analysed Trump's inaugural speech based on Halliday's *Systemic Functional Grammar*. Like Wang (2010) he analysed modality and transitivity but also added the investigation of personal pronouns and coherence to examine the speaker's intentions and how the speaker tries to convince the audience to accept his ideas and thoughts and support him. The analysis shows that Trump used first-person pronouns and modality in order to create a bond with the audience. His words were simple and sentences were brief and he used the declarative mood.

Metaphorical language is extensively used in political language. Vestermark (2007) analyzed the metaphorical

language of America's political discourse according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980). She investigated the inaugural addresses of some American presidents such as: Ronald Reagan (1981), George H.W. Bush (1989), Bill Clinton (1993) and George, W. Bush (2001). She found that conceptual metaphors were used to personify America such as: THE WORLD AS A COMMUNITY, NATION AS A PERSON, and NATION ACTING HUMAN, among other conceptual metaphors. The uppercase is used to refer to conceptual metaphors.

Al-Ameedi & Ashammari (2020) is one of the few studies that investigated the discourse of females political language. They analysed the feminist language of Theresa May's speeches, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 2016-2019. They adopted the micro-macro ideological analysis following van Dijk's ideological discourse (1995) in order to investigate the hidden ideologies. For the macro analysis, they adopted Fairclough's social analysis (1989) because it reflects that feminism both influences and is influenced by society. The analysis is multi-dimensional; it investigated the lexical, syntactic, pragmatic, rhetorical, and social levels of May's choice of language. The analysis reveals that May reflected how women suffer daily in their homes and how men abuse them. She reflects her sympathy and cooperation with those oppressed women as there is a violation of their rights. She used the following lexical items "new laws, stronger powers, and new prevention measures" (p.39) to request a change in society's beliefs regarding women's rights. The analysis shows that the speaker used both the personal pronoun "I" and the inclusive pronoun "we" to emphasise her identity and to relate herself to the whole society to ask for cooperation to change the oppression against women. Moreover, she repeated certain expressions such as a "better society" to emphasise her points of creating self-identity for women. The paper concludes that language is an important tool for representing ideology. In addition to that, critical discourse analysis is a useful method for detecting bias and manipulation in language use, and for analysing texts to uncover the hidden ideologies.

Sivrić & Jurčić (2015) analysed females political discourse in a comparative study of males political discourse of American and Croatian politicians. They investigated gender-specific differences in language use, and the use of syntactic, semantic, pragmatic structures, lexical styles, and the rhetorical strategies employed by both males and females speakers.

Like Sarfo & Krampa (2013) and Chen (2018) they also applied critical discourse analysis. They also investigated whether these differences assist in constructing females political dominance in political discourse and whether gender influences the speaker's political subjectivity. They analysed three speeches by female politicians and three ones also for male politicians like: Jadranka Kosor, Hillary Clinton, Condoleezza Rice, Ivo Josipovic, George Bush, and Franjo Tudman.

The results revealed that there are no differences regarding the syntactic level; male and female speakers equally use strategies of word order, topicalisation, different tenses, personal, possessive, relative and indefinite pronouns that serve the purpose of the occasion. What is unique is the use of the inclusive pronoun 'we' which is employed to evoke a sense of commonality and rapport with the audience (Sivrić & Jurčić, 2015, p. 6). In terms of the semantic level, the analysis showed that females politicians tend to use more implied meanings. On the other hand, males speakers use more detailed descriptions. Moreover, the analysis revealed that males political discourse shows aggressiveness and using strong vocabularies claiming the right to fight enemies. Their political discourse is full of metaphors, overstatements, euphemism, rhetorical devices, frequent use of the pronoun I, problem-solving, and

heroic poetry. Surprisingly, females discourse shows some features of males discourse such as aggressiveness and using strong words. It shows some characteristics of a presidential style, and at the same time, it reveals features of intimacy, support, sympathy, and problem-solving. They concluded that the features of males and females political discourse overlap.

Searching the literature, I noticed that the vast majority of the studies followed the qualitative analysis and a limited number of them used quantitative analysis. In addition to that, most studies analysed the political discourse of males speakers. For this reason, this study comes to fill the gap in the literature of *discourse analysis*, especially of females discourse in the Middle East.

Analysis

Corpus- Based Analysis of Queen Rania's English Speeches

Queen Rania is an enthusiastic supporter of females' issues; she tries her best to defend women and girls' rights in her speeches around the world. For example in her remarks at HeForShe Impact Summit 2018 in New York, USA, she notes:

*That spirit rippled around the world, awakening **women** and men to the promise of new horizons. It even reached the shores of Jordan – and I'm so grateful it did.*

*It might seem a world away from New York, but as someone who travels between East and West, hearing **women's** stories, I can tell you: when it comes to the issue of **women's** empowerment, distances shrink and differences fade.*

*The stress of being a wife and **mother**, while holding down a job? We're on the same page.*

The frustration that male colleagues are often paid more for doing the exact same job? We're on the same page.

The disbelief that we must work twice as hard to get half the recognition? We're with you. Step by step. She for she.

*On top of these universal challenges, **women** in my region face another heart-breaking set of hurdles.*

*Through civil war and armed conflict, unemployment and forced displacement, Arab **women** are digging deep to hold their families together in the most testing conditions.*

*And, yet, they bridge that gap with a spirit of steel and a will to match. I'm so proud that amidst this instability, we've seen strides in **women's** health and education.*

Last month, I met an incredible group of Jordanian women changing the landscape of our labor force. In Arabic, "Sitatbyoot" means 'housewives'. It's also the name of an online platform that helps women working from home find jobs and market their skills. (September 26, 2018)

We can notice how much the Queen feels enthusiastic when she speaks about women; in some of her speeches like this one; she devotes the whole speech talking about women's issues and the right of equality and avoiding discrimination against them. In this speech she repeats the lexical item *women* 13 times in order to defend their rights and issues such as health and education, and tries her best to empower them by sharing some of their achievements. She addresses the issues of women in general and Arab and Jordanian women in particular, so repetition is intentionally used to convince the audience to support women's rights and to hammer home her ideas. We can also notice the collocation of the antonyms '*women and men*', here the Queen foregrounds the word *women*; she mentions *women* before *men*, although it is normally that the word *men* is mentioned before the word *women* such as in one piece of news in the BBC sports news headline "T20 World Cup 2020: England men and women's sides learn opponents".

The quantitative analysis of the lexical items related to females in the corpus shows that the Queen uses many lexical items such as the singular forms *woman* and *girl* and the plural forms *women* and *girls*. However, the singular form of the lexical item *mother* was used more than the plural form *mothers*. The table below shows the frequency of these items.

Table 1: The frequency of lexical items related to females in Queen Rania's speeches

Lexical item	Frequency
1. Girl	4
2. Girls	26
3. Woman	9
4. Women	51
5. Mother	8
6. Mothers	3

We can notice from the quantitative analysis that the Queen uses the plural forms *girls* and *women* more than the singular forms *girl* and *woman*. This is because she focuses on the general issues of women and girls more than the issues of certain girls and women in particular. On the other hand, the singular form *girl* or *woman* is used when the Queen wants to narrate a story of a certain girl or a woman to illustrate her point and to give real-life examples of females who suffer or make great achievements despite their limited resources or suffering. For example, at Let Girls Learn speech in NY, USA, she speaks:

*15 year old Fatima is a Syrian **girl** living in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan. Abandoning her home, her friends and everything she owned, she ran for her life. Losing several semesters of schooling, didn't break her spirit; instead, it made her hold on tighter to education. When she noticed that many **girls** in the refugee camp were dropping out of school to get married, Fatima went straight to their parents and gave them lessons on why it was crucial that they let their **girls** learn. (September 19, 2016)*

Similarly, she uses the singular form of the lexical item *woman* to emphasise the power of women even when they have a disability. For example, at her speech at the XIN Philanthropy Conference 2018 in Hangzhou, China, she notes:

*Or consider Rawan Barakat, **a blind woman** from my country who is building a library of Arabic language audiobooks for students of all abilities. (September 05, 2018)*

We can see the contrastive images the Queen creates in the speech between a woman of disability who offers help for learners of all abilities. On another occasion Queen Rania narrates a story of success of a female at Georgetown screening of Salam Neighbour in Washington DC, USA, she notes:

*We see **mothers** who can't find employment launching businesses of their own among them, **a woman** who literally weaves beautiful flowers from plastic bags. (April 14, 2016)*

She uses both the plural form *mothers* and the singular form *a woman* to highlight the hardships females face and their achievements facing those obstacles. At the World Bank Spring Meeting speech in Washington DC, the Queen uses the singular form *mother* to narrate a story she personally knows:

One mother, Um Qusai, fled Syria three years ago. Here is how she described her life: We came here to find that we have to start from scratch. Years of building our lives in Syria lost. And still, we wait. We're living on borrowed time. (April 15, 2016)

Storytelling is considered one of the features of the '*feminine style*' according to the studies conducted by Campbell (1989), Dow and Tonn (1993), Blankenship and Robson (1995), and Amaireh (2013, 2017). So the corpus of Queen Rania's speeches draws on the results of those studies. In addition, her attempt to highlight and prioritise women's issues to the forefront and discuss them in the political arena is a prominent feature of the '*feminine style*'.

Searching the collocations of words related to females in the corpus, it was found that she used the collocation '*women and girls*' six times in the speeches, not only that, she mentioned some women's names beside this collocation. For example, at Queen Rania's speech at We the Future in New York, USA, she remarks:

*And let us join in saying to Wafa, Yasmine, Siham, and **women and girls** everywhere:
You are not invisible. You are not just a number on a spreadsheet. You do count. (September 21, 2017)*

Another occasion in which the Queen uses the collocation of *women and girls* is in her speech at Let Girls Learn in NY, USA, she calls the audience for action to be united and work collaboratively as one team as what she describes as the 'reverse of domino effect' in which one woman helps others to rise and improve others' lives. She notes:

*So, let's pull together. Let's be the women or the girls -- who lift others up.
Like Fatima. Like Bushra. Like Michelle. (September 19, 2016)*

So instead of speaking about abstract ideas of collaboration and helping each other, she uses a metaphorical image that compares women to the pieces of the dominoes and she wants to create the opposite picture of the falling of the dominoes parts; she motivates women to stand up and help each other to improve and have a better life.

Another noticeable feature to talk about women and defend their right of freedom and equality is using *rhetorical questions* in which she does not intend to ask the audience or to seek an answer but instead to emphasise her points of view. For example, at the Vital Voices Global Leadership Awards in Washington DC, USA, she remarks:

*And, in America, what better symbol of that exists than your own Statue of Liberty?
So it might astonish you to learn that she was first conceived as an Arab woman. Not only that, she was modeled after a Muslim, Arab woman. (March 08, 2017)*

Moreover, she speaks metaphorically about women, she compares women in the Arab World to the lady who carries the torch of the Statue of Liberty in New York, they are trying to achieve their freedom but unfortunately, they face obstacles of struggle and insecurity in the region. She notes:

*Women across much of the Arab world are lifting the lamp of enlightenment high.
But their progress our progress is being held back by conflict and instability.*

The Queen tries to create a bond with the audience by employing this metaphorical image and relating to them by using a landmark the audience are familiar with.

Conclusion

This study illustrates the importance of a corpus-based study in investigating political language and analysing the characteristics of the 'feminine style' in the political arena in quantitative analysis, and this, in turn, helps analysts to support an argument or refute it based on the results. So, this corpus-based analysis supports previous studies that assert that there is a 'feminine style' of females political discourse through the investigation of the frequency of certain lexical items used in the corpus related to females. Moreover, a corpus-based study is very helpful in investigating the collocation of certain lexical items.

The corpus-based analysis of Queen Rania's speeches reveals that she is an ardent supporter of females' rights and issues in the political arena. She uses many lexical items to speak about females such as: *woman, women, girl, girls, mother, and mothers*.

She also uses the storytelling technique to defend women's issues. She narrates many stories of females who suffered a lot from many dilemmas and some success stories of females who made distinguished achievements despite hardships they faced in their life. This is part of the *feminine style*, in which females political leaders tell stories of some females to emphasise their ideas and persuade the audience of their viewpoints. In addition to that, the Queen uses figurative language such as metaphors to emphasise women's rights and defend them in the political arena. So, this supports previous studies such as Blankenship and Robson (1995) and Campbell (1989) of the common features of *feminine style* in females political discourse.

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النساء من أجل النساء: تحليل الخطاب النسوي السياسي الذي يدعم قضايا المرأة: دراسة حالة لخطابات جلالة الملكة رانيا العبدالله باللغة الإنجليزية

حنان عمايره *

ملخص

محور هذه الدراسة يكمن في مجال تحليل الخطاب. كما تحلل هذه الدراسة خطابات جلالة الملكة رانيا العبدالله ملكة الأردن. تتكون بيانات الدراسة من الخطابات الإنجليزية التي ألقتها الملكة في الفترة ما بين 2016 إلى 2018. تبحث هذه الدراسة فيما إذا كانت خطب الملكة رانيا العبدالله توظف خصائص "الأسلوب النسوي" في الخطاب السياسي للمرأة ضمن تحليل نوعي وكمي. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن المرأة في الساحة السياسية تعطي الأولوية لقضايا المرأة وتسلط الضوء عليها من خلال استخدام بعض التقنيات البلاغية مثل سرد القصص واستخدام اللغة المجازية لإقناع الجمهور بدعم تلك القضايا.

الكلمات الدالة: تحليل الخطاب، تحليل الخطاب السياسي، الملكة رانيا العبدالله ملكة الأردن، الاستعارة، الأسلوب النسوي، التحليل الكمي.

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