



Legitimation in Discourse: The Case of Women Subjected to Violence

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Abstract

This article attempts to analyze the discourse of women subjected to marital violence. In this regard, we will analyze how these women legitimize their discourse through evaluation as a narrative component and as a strategy that aims to establish a mode of argumentation that victimizes them and demonizes the violent husbands. The site from which the data is extracted is a TV talk show “Qesset Nnass” (The story of people) on the Moroccan TV channel Medi 1 TV. Specifically, we will be concerned with the ways women articulate propositions through moral legitimation to send messages that can only be decoded by reference to the cultural variable of language. The stories scrutinized are significant in that they foreground the extreme suffering women are subject to within a patriarchal society that leaves no room for acceptable alternatives at the economic, legal, and social levels.

Keywords: : Critical Discourse Analysis, Moral Evaluation, Patriarchy, Narratives, Talk Shows

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1. Introduction

In the present article we attempt to analyze the discourse of Moroccan women subjected to violence in a TV show called “qesset nnass” (the story of people) within the framework of critical discourse analysis as it constitutes a useful method in analyzing the role of mass media in constructing and representing social identities and relations. Specifically, we will deal with the media texts produced by these women as narratives in order to answer the question of how women discursively evaluate their experience, and how they legitimize their practice by using moral evaluation as a discursive tactic.

To achieve this goal, we will start by laying out the semantic macrostructures of the main texts under study as they constitute the key messages that are most easily stored and retrieved by the text user, and are therefore a useful starting point for analysis (van Dijk, 2009a). These semantic macrostructures constitute core messages that we can easily comprehend and retrieve; thus, they offer an invaluable chance to have access to the cognitive scripts that are established in discourse.

After this textual description, we will adopt Labov’s (1972) six part structure of narratives, a structure that narratives commonly adopt to organize human thoughts and experiences and which enables us to characterize the schemas and scripts exploited by

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speakers/writers to represent the world. The rationale is to focus on one of these components, namely the one called evaluation. We will analyze the ways women articulate propositions to send messages that can be decoded only by reference to the cultural system.

Finally, in line with Van Leeuwen (2007), who posits that discourses legitimate and deligitimate social practices, we will tackle the issue of how the show establishes legitimation through a consideration of how the women who suffer from marital violence argue in order to persuade by having recourse to moral evaluation as a strategy.

We have chosen the program “Qesset nness” from Medi I TV as a site of analysis of the discourse of two women (Habiba and Ouafae), who have experienced different forms of marital violence. Our choice of television is motivated by its wide viewership as nearly all households in cities and in the countryside possess a TV set. In terms of access to the programs chosen, these latter, which were aired in the last years, are streamed on the internet and saved there.

2. CDA as a Framework for Investigation and a Method

Our method, which is CDA, is also our conceptual framework. As a theory, Van Dijk defines critical discourse analysis as a field that sets as an object the study and analysis of texts to disclose the sources of power, dominance, and inequality at the level of discourse (1998a). Specifically, it inspects the way these sources are managed to be kept unchanged and reproduced in their social, political and historical environments. Similarly, Fairclough defines it as an analysis which attempts to explore in a systematic way relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes in order to examine how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power, and to see how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (1993, p. 135).

Jørgensen and Phillips have posited that five characteristics are approved by all critical analysts:

1) Social and cultural processes and structures have a partial non-discursive character: some social phenomena have a non-linguistic discursive character, at the same time as social practices constitute social change and cultural reproduction in a broader sense.

2) Discourses are both constructive and constitutive (they reflect structural processes, and they simultaneously contribute to their shaping). Discourses and the other social dimensions stand in a dialectical relationship.

3) An empirical analysis within its social context is necessary.

4) Discourses function in an ideological way, and social practices contribute to unequal power relationships between different social groups.

5) Critical research acknowledges its implication in the very object one studies, and that research carries political implications (2002, pp. 260-64).

The systematic approach of Van Dijk (1988, 1991, 1993) focuses more on a ‘top-

down' relationship, although he states that the micro-macro relations are both descending and ascending, and emphasizes everyday routines of textual production as well as the everyday practices of textual consumption. Fairclough, on the other hand, highlights more the ways in which social relationships and identities emerge in, and through discourse, and underscores the conflictual character of the meaning-making activities associated with both the production and the reception of media discourse (Jørgensen and Phillips, 1999, pp. 103-04).

The explicit emphasis on social domination and social inequality also encompasses discourse research in gender (Van Dijk, 2001). Scholars in this field have tried to understand how the enactment and perpetuation of male dominance and female resistance operate. It was found that the significant changes in women's condition in the last decades did not eradicate discursive gender domination which still persists, despite the fact that it may have taken more subtle and indirect forms (Jahnsen, 2004).

As a method, on the other hand, in analyzing the corpus of the media texts, we start with a narrow textual analysis of the data to identify the key participants in the texts, and the way in which their actions are constructed. The textual analysis handles the way in which some linguistic features of the texts construct the key participants and their actions. This analysis of key participants and their actions leads to narratives emergence. Accordingly, the analysis takes a step further in describing the way in which narratives construct and index social practices related to women who are subjected to violence. The subsequent stage of analysis studies the way in which the media texts under investigation includes evaluation as a narrative component in order to establish a legitimation for social practices. The overall structure of this study is couched in an integrated approach where the text-interaction-context mode of analysis is combined with an investigation of social cognition.

Text

In our method, text analysis tackles the issue of the linguistic tools utilized by the speaker. Generally, these linguistic features can enclose both explicit and implicit signals; can be consciously and unconsciously controlled by the speaker; the linguistic choices made by speakers are context-bound and shows how the language user adapts her discourse to her social environment in a way that is socially acceptable. Van Dijk (2009a) outlines a typical sociocognitive analysis where a number of linguistic indicators which help us understand the authors' cognitive models and the possible ways that the text will construct the audiences' cognitive models have been made explicit, which included choice of words, allusions, vagueness, ideological presuppositions, polarizations, metaphors, and omissions. In *Language and Power*, Fairclough (1989) emphasizes the *experiential*, *relational* and *expressive* values of vocabulary, grammar and textual structures of texts. For the author, whereas *experiential* values explain the way in which the text producer's experience of the world is represented; the *relational* values highlights the social relationships that played through the text in the discourse; and the *expressive* values highlights the text producer's evaluation of the reality to which the text relates. It should be noted that these values depend on each other, and features of the text can incorporate any combination of these values.

In what follows, we will expose the macrostructures in the texts that feature in Qeset Nnass. Van Dijk (2009a) has given the useful advice to proceed by starting CDA with an analysis of the semantic macrostructures in a text because they provide an overall picture

of the global meanings, and the themes of a text. For this reason, an exhibition of the semantic macrostructures in the media texts to find the key themes is a necessary research step. Below we provide summaries of the stories we have selected for analysis. We should make it clear that our translation of the macrostructures below and the evaluative remarks in the evaluation section from Moroccan Arabic into English follows a literal translation in context in order to keep meaning as close as possible to the source text. This methodological step has compelled us to sacrifice style in favor of content.

Show one:

Title: I live in violence²

Habiba

She was married for thirteen years after she left school. After the wedding, her husband's father died and she was accused of being cursed. His family began beating her because of this death and her husband used to finish the job. The husband used to work and send her money, but his mother and sisters used to take it and even water and electricity were cut off in the room where she lived because she could not pay the bills. They used to close the door to prevent her from getting. she had to wait for her kid to come and open it. All her body was wounded. She resorted to the police station where the husband said he would not repeat his acts and wrote a commitment not to act violently, but later he started to beat her again.

His family turned him against her. After renting a house for her and her four kids, he used to batter her savagely and used to leave her there with no support; only neighbors used to break the lock to save her from him. She could not go to her family because they did not want her kids as they were poor. She started to beg near a mosque days after her child birth. His family did not want her because she used to complain when they beat her. He used to beat her in front of her seven year old daughter and ten year old kid who used to leave the house to avoid watching his father's cruel treatment. He took the kids after he tortured her. She became used to beating. she wanted to stay with him because she was used to him and because she wanted to stay with her kids.

Show two³

My husband beats me in front of my kids

Ouafae

She married him out of love but he didn't share this love with her. She needed love because her mother was divorced, but he wanted just her salary as she was a secretary of the minister. After marriage, He took her salary and problems with his family started to

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbJzIMk6o5c>

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAnt-XuwRmQ>

appear, a thing that led them to rent a house. When she was pregnant, he didn't want to have a baby, she refused to abort, though.

In 1993 he broke her nose; she complained, but in vain. Her handicapped kids used to beg him not to beat her. He was a monster. They couldn't even eat if he didn't give them their share of the food. Concerning her son, her husband insisted on taking him to see the horses in summer and it was too hot for the handicapped kid. Against her will, he took him in one of the hottest days of summer; as a result, he had fever and died. Her daughter also died in a psychiatrist hospital twenty five days after her attempt to commit suicide. She used to beg her to get divorced. While she was being battered, his family used to laugh and enjoy the scene!

Before death, her daughter told her that her dad was an evil man and that he wanted to marry her and have a kid from her (from his daughter!). They were living in two different places in the house that she gave him as a property under his threat. One day she got into his room where she found messages from his girlfriends copied from the phone and written on a piece of paper.

Once he battered her, but she forgave him in the police station because he threatened her daughters. Despite all these things, she loved him although he applied for divorce. Her handicapped daughter begged him once for twenty dirhams to eat, but he slapped her on the face and bought credit units for his phone instead!

An analysis of the semantic macrostructures in the above texts shows that the theme of injustice is present. Below, we provide the key themes that are recurrent in all the stories dealing with violence against women from which we selected only two stories⁴:

- After a period of marriage, the husband starts beating the wife and disappears.
- In some cases, the husband runs away with kids.
- The woman is often fired from the house to find herself without necessities.
- Some women are unable to see their kids.
- These women complain to the authorities, but no solutions are provided.
- Their families urge them to be patient and return back to the violent husband.
- Most of the time, women are beaten by the husband and his family or the husband beats the wife but the family just watches the violent scenes.
- Although some husbands are called by the police, they do not abstain from committing violence.
- Many women try to find the husband who escapes with kids, but in vain.
- Many women want to return back to their husbands in spite of the violence committed against them either because they want to be with their kids or because they love their violent husbands!
- Some husbands take their wives' salary or their money and start to be violent.
- Husbands exercise violence even on pregnant women and handicapped kids.

⁴ We have analyzed a sample of twelve women, but for space constraints we have included only two women in this article.

- Many violent husbands are addicted to drugs and alcohol and they batter the wives and the kids for no apparent reason.
- The wife suffers from severe conditions of depression as a result of bad treatment, a situation that pushes many to attempt to commit suicide.
- The impact on the kids ranges from suicide and homelessness to rape.
- Many other women get married without papers at an early age and find themselves with kids begging in the streets after being beaten.
- Families refuse to take care of their daughters' kids.

The stories we have summarized point towards a recurrent structure that is found in all these experiences and which we can apply to the majority of the stories narrated on TV. Unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, experience with divorced parents are common denominators that characterize the condition of the majority of women who experience violence after marriage. These pre-conditions often intermingle with two types of triggering factors: internal and external factors. Internal factors have to do with the addiction of the husband (drugs and alcohol) and external factors concern either the low possibilities of the husband to exercise a decent job or his reliance on his wife's money in some cases. These two types of factors trigger violent behavior, which itself leads the wife to leave the house or stay in the same house but without any financial support from the absent husband. This helplessness and lack of income to support herself and her kids obliges the wife to have recourse to the authorities (the police and/or the court); these latter are unable to provide any satisfactory solutions because the law is either unfair to women (e.g. there is no theft between husband and wife in the Moroccan law) or because it is hard to apply (the case of women who have to search for the husband in the whole country), and sometimes because the police are corrupt. Sometimes, with this lack of viable solutions, women are obliged to return back to the same conditions to find themselves in a vicious circle again and again. What is worse is that sometimes women are obliged to experience violence for the sake of being together with their kids or because they say they can bear anything because they love their violent husbands!

Discourse practice and context

Concerning the second and the third elements in our method, namely discursive practice in texts and context, Fairclough (1992) clarifies the point that the production and consumption of discourse are both social and cognitive in nature as they exhibit cognitive practices that are deeply anchored in internalized social practices and schematic conventions; that is why we need to discover the way in which genres, discourses and styles come in concert to create social meanings so as account for these social and cognitive processes. In this respect, dealing with narratives as discourse will help us scrutinize the ways in which the text producers represent the world (Fairclough, 2003).

The discourse practice we emphasize zooms on questions related to the evaluative remarks produced and the signification of their features in terms of social practices and conventions, and their indication in terms of the main scripts and schemas used to represent women who experienced violence. The bottom line is that narratives constitute a particular kind of discourse production that helps identify the way in which discourse is used as a cognitive model.

On another level, the sociocultural analytical tier has to do with the social practices

that are reflected in the sample of texts chosen for analysis. We are especially interested in unveiling the way in which ideological positions are established and reflected with respect to women subjected to violence. Following the lines of Van Leeuwen's (2007) theory of legitimation, we will check how the texts legitimate social practices related to women subjected to violence. As a reminder, Van Leeuwen argues that discourses not only represent what happens, but also evaluate and justify social actions i.e. the focus is on the nature of the social practices and conventions that the texts construct and reflect, and on whether these social practices are legitimated and how.

All in all, our method and analysis of the media texts are heavily based on Fairclough's three dimensional concept of text-interaction-context, together with a sociocognitive approach which takes into account the cognitive dimensions of language. Part of our sociocognitive endeavor, we use narratives as a reference point. Specifically, we submit narratives to analysis as they construct and legitimate ideas about women in general and women who have experienced violence in Morocco.

Next, we will explore the structure of the narrative in the show; specifically, we will match these texts onto Labov's (1972) six parts structure. Toolan explains that our choices of stories, and the way we tell them indicate "whom we identify with, who we distance ourselves from; what we approve of and what we abhor; ... and how we wish to update and reinforce, in our minds, our views of the world" (p. 248). Labov's (1972) six part narrative structure consists of an abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, result and coda. In what follows, these components are briefly explained.

The Abstract

The abstract foretells the story to follow and outlines a shortened format of the narrative, but never constitutes an exact replica of the whole story. An abstract summarizes the narrative, but it doesn't replace it (Labov, 1972). As a rule of thumb, this part is located in the introduction read by the presenter. In this sense, the introduction acts as an abstract, outlining the major plot of the narrative.

The Orientation

The orientation, which contains information relevant to the time, the place, and the persons involved in the story, and the background information, usually occurs at the beginning of the narrative. The who, when, where and what of the narrative constitute its orientation as the entities presented as participants in a text's representation of events together with the processes in which they are involved are necessary ingredients of the stories (Labov, 1972). Toolan posits that in any narrative, some groups tend to be agentive while others tend to "be the affected" (1988, p. 238). This is obvious in the orientation of Qesset Nnass where the violent husbands are the major agents, and the women subject to violence are the ones who are affected.

The Complication

The complication is an event or a series of events that are unexpected, dangerous, or unusual. In narratives, the complication, which may be a result of the action of an agent, or may be caused by external circumstances, leads to immediate action. Narrative clauses are independent, temporally ordered and follow a basic syntactic pattern and the most striking feature is their "simple auxiliary structure" (Labov, 1972, p. 377).

The Resolution

As a solution to the problem, or what Labov (1972) describes as the “complication”, some actions are presented as resolutions. The resolution signals the end of narrative action (p. 363). In our case, the resolutions introduce new laws that may help in the case of women under scrutiny. They also include a suite of initiatives related to achieving the goals of ameliorating the current situation of women.

The Coda

The coda completes the narrative and provides a deictic shift from then to now (Muller, 2012). The coda is the place where the narrator informs us that the story is done (Labov, 1972). The coda of the show provides a final statement to assure the audience that change is not only legitimate; it is a human necessity.

The Evaluation

The evaluation may involve a temporary suspension from the telling of the story proper and heighten the audience’s interest at any time during the narrative. It provides information about the point of the story (Labov, 1972). In other words, opinions on the events of the story, alternative outcomes, or adding credibility to the story on the part of the narrator are evaluative options up the narrator’s sleeves in case they are needed to make the story more persuasive. As far as this narrative component is concerned, the answer to the question “So what?” is key because the narrator finds it necessary to stop telling the story “what’s going on”, suspending narrative action and interrupting the sequence of temporally ordered clauses of the core narrative’s complicating action, in order to make a point. In the text below, evaluative remarks are underlined and stories are italicized.⁵ In the subsequent analysis, we will focus on this last element due to the insights it provides about the women in the show and their difficult situation.

3. Analysis

3.1. Habiba

She was married to her brother’s neighbor for thirteen years after she left school. She was never happy in her life. “I will never forgive him or his family. I will tell everything,” she said.

This is an interesting introductory remark as it is a clear evaluative tactic that aims to show the amount of despair the lady suffers from and the high eagerness she has to start telling her story as if this show would solve all her problems. The only explanation we can seek at this point has probably to do with the confessional nature of the show that may be seen as a show that leads to a form of psychotherapeutic alleviation.

His father liked her when he saw her in a bus station.

The above evaluative observation may also constitute an explanation of why marriages fail in Morocco, a failure that may be largely attributed to the modality of marriages itself as in the Moroccan tradition and in the majority of cases, parents choose partners for their sons.

⁵ We have translated women’s speech from Moroccan Arabic into English.
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He was nice and his family too. After the wedding, her husband's father died after two days and she was accused of being cursed. His sisters used to beat her for that. They told him not to bring her home since their father died because of her. His family started beating her because of this death. He used to be at work and she was being "eaten" by his mother and sisters. One sister died and the other was still alive. He used to come to finish the job.

This is a typical scenario of underdeveloped countries discourse in action that shows the irrationality of the judgments many people hold in third world countries. Attributing the death of the father to a newly married woman is totally unfounded and resorting to beating the wife as a result of this death is absurd. Additionally, thinking that one of his sisters died just because she was against her is as absurd as thinking that the father died because of the coming of a new bride; in other words, the lady uses an argument that she discarded in the first place, namely, an argument based on paranormal superstitious ideas that she suffered from in the first place. Finally, being beaten by a group of women refers us back intertextually (in texts related to other stories in the show) to the argument that in patriarchal societies we do not have partners; we have clans (the wife versus the husband with his family).

He worked and sent money but his mother and sisters used to take it and even water and electricity were cut off in the room where she lived with them because she could not pay the bills. They used to close the door and when she complained on the phone, he repeated the same words, "go to your room and wait till I come." She had to wait for her kid, who is four or five years old to come to open it for her!

We have here a narrative of suffering and victimization that are easily linked to the previous chains of the story. What do you expect from a family who is sure their father died because of the bride?

All her body was wounded. "If you take me to the hospital now you will find that my head is sore with "tfershikh" (hard beating)," she said. She resorted to the police but the husband said he would not repeat his acts, so she forgave him. He wrote a commitment, but he started committing violence again.

We easily notice that the home which is supposed to harbor the wife and her kids has turned into a detention center where all forms of physical abuse are allowed. Through a physical description (and the agreement of the show host), we realize the savage treatment women are submitted to in the domestic sphere and we realize too how far from democracy we are as a similar confession on a European TV will definitely lead to the beginning of a criminal investigation. Instead, all we saw in the show is the sarcastic laughter of the audience in the studio because of the details the woman mentioned and because of the word "tferchikh" which means heavy battering, a word that we actually use when we split the head of a sheep into two. No wonder, the title of this episode on you tube was "13 YEARS OF TTFERCHICK".

His family turned him against her. His mother insulted her and he didn't give her a chance to explain. After renting a house for her and her four kids, he

extremely battered her and left her there with nothing. Only neighbors interfered as he used to squeeze her head against the floor and the wall. She asked the show host to see her head and said she had two broken ribs too. She said, “I tell him to give me to eat and to give me clothes; he beats me instead, and I tell him to stay and live with me; he beats me instead.”

In terms of external evaluation, which mainly refers to departing from the main syntax of the narrative to use a special syntactic mechanism to have a wider effect on the audience, the woman exploits repetition to contrast two situations: one that shows her normal and legitimate requests and the other one shows the result of the request which is beating. The rhetorical effect is similar to a song of pain where the singer tells poems about a sad situation. Similar patterns are used by Moroccans in funerals where they sing sad lyrics that reflect their deep sorrow.

She could not go to her family as they didn't want her kids because they were poor. She went to an association but she did not want to stay there for more than three months. He came to her and lived with her again but he left her again in hunger even in “I3id” (a religious ceremony). He bought sheep and dessert and went to his parents' house alone. She started to beg near the mosque days after her child birth. His family did not want her because she used to complain when they beat her. They told her not to complain even when they beat her.

“Suffer in silence” is the title of this evaluation. Under the patriarchal system of the Moroccan family, talking and divulging the truth of what happens at home when the husband is absent has heavy consequences on the wife and because the husband has a tendency to believe and adhere to the story of his family, the destiny of the wife who dares talk is homelessness and eventually begging. The only option left to the woman is her family, but even her relative are reluctant to receive her with her kids because of poverty, a thing that leaves her no alternative except the street.

She said, “When he beat me , my son used to watch him. When he saw him doing that, he left to his grandma's house. After a period, my husband left for good and took the kids leaving me very sick. I made a huge effort to come here to talk to you.”

This is a very important remark that marks the gravity of beating the mother in front of the kids. This has deep effects on generations of kids who grow troubled and violent too. Who knows? The percentage of women subject to violence may be seen from this angle: 50 percent of husbands beat their wives in Morocco because their mothers were beaten in a similar way! It makes sense, doesn't it?

“Isn't the mother necessary for kids ?” she said.

The above statement is a rhetorical question that waits for an answer from the general public. Obviously the answer is yes but the husband should be here to answer this question. One of the problems of the show resides in the absence of the husband to talk for himself and answer questions.

“He tells me to be patient; to bear hunger and beating? God has granted me strength. He beats me and I can support! I am used to him! I can’t get away from him!” she said.

The embedded evaluation in this extract reveals a contradictory series of propositions that are very hard to understand and accept by a westerner because a woman who suffers that much normally should file for divorce and not confess on a TV show that she is made to bear all these forms of suffering and that she is even stuck on him. We have the right as an audience to assume that she is mentally deranged and that she is in dire need of therapy. A look at the following proposition may elucidate the real reason, though.

“He told me, ‘If you don’t want this, go and ask for divorce,’ but I can’t because if I do I will not see my kids,” she concluded.

3.2. Ouafae

She married him out of love but he didn’t share that love with her. She needed love because her mother was divorced and her father was married to another woman; that’s why she needed affection, but all he wanted from her is the salary.

The woman stops the narrative to make a point and adds that he wanted her salary, which is a comparative statement that contrasts her love with his materialistic ends.

At first, he was reluctant to marry. When they did, he took her salary and problems with his family started to appear, a thing that led them to rent a house. When she was pregnant, he didn’t like to have a baby, although she was happy and told him, “I was looking forward to telling you that I will have a baby from you.”

This embedded evaluation (she quotes herself) is meant to show her eagerness that she immediately contrasts with his quote: “why are you pregnant? We don’t need kids now”, which is another form of embedded evaluation as the narrator uses another person’s quote back in time to make a point. The point in question in this context is revealing as it raises questions about the antagonist’s plans: what is the rationale behind this marriage in the first place if the husband does not love her and is against the idea of having kids?

His family thought she was infertile, but she was young and naïve although people thought she was smart.

Here she displays the discrepancy between her reality and the allegation of the family in order to undermine the legitimacy of their claim.

In 1993 he broke her nose; she was bathing in blood and he pulled her hair to put her under the water tap. He told her, “I am above the law.”

We have another embedded evaluation (by quoting him again) to underscore the fact that the law she may resort to is not acknowledged by the violent husband leaving her no option other than bearing the consequences of physical abuse.

She complained but in vain! Her handicapped kid used to pull himself against the floor to beg him not to beat her. He was such a monster that they couldn't even eat if he didn't give them their share of the food.

This last evaluative remark is crucial to the understanding of the dilemma the woman lives as she narrates a segment where the husband doesn't even exclude a disabled child from his rude behavior and the final picture of not allowing them to eat as they please is a revealing closing that summarizes everything. The use of the word "monster" to qualify him is a nominative strategy adopted by the woman to undermine the legitimacy of the violent husband.

Concerning her son, he insisted on taking him to see the horses. Against her will, he took him in one of the hottest days of summer; as a result, he had fever and died. He did that just to kill her too.

This external evaluation where she stops to address the audience is meant to tell us that his intentions are seemingly right but she is his wife and she knows him better than we do. That is to say, taking a kid to see horses is seemingly a normal activity on the part of the husband, but his real intention is criminal as she supposes that this type of fathers can sacrifice his handicapped kid just to harm the troubled wife.

Her daughter too died in a psychiatrist hospital after twenty five days of her attempt to commit suicide. She used to beg her to get divorced. She used to tell me, "You have to get divorced; my father is evil".

Quoting her deceased daughter as an embedded method of evaluation, when coupled with what she said about his killing of the kid, serves the purpose of finishing the narrative plot by pointing to the fact that this father is undoubtedly a criminal, a quality agreed upon also by a daughter who normally should try to find a compromise between her parents. Her reply to this daughter, couched in a direct quotation, "*how do you want me to get divorced? How do you want me to protect myself from him as I am like a cat and he is like a thunderbolt.*" is also evaluatively embedded and formed in a rhetorical question answered by two contrastive statements using a simile and a referential strategy to stick the label of thunderbolt to him in an attempt to win our sympathy.

While she was battered, his family used to laugh and enjoy the scene!

Mixing two extreme and contrasting situations in one context, a scene of violence and another one of enjoyment serves the purpose of reporting the general mood of the house and providing a rationalization of why she says that "*When he used to be absent, it was like a celebration for us.*" Referring to these two states, enjoyment because of violence and enjoyment because of the father's absence, entails that we have two clans in dispute and not just a protagonist and an antagonist (the wife and the husband): the wife and the kids, and the father's family. By detailing the picture in this way, the legacy of the man as a member of his family is totally ruined.

Before death, her daughter used to tell her that her dad is an evil man and that he wanted to marry her and have a kid from her (from his daughter!?)

_Moving back into time, so characteristic of explicatives in embedded evaluation, is used in this *context* to reinforce her position of someone trying to fully delegitimize her adversary by attacking his integrity as a father, and as a normal human being who thinks and behaves naturally. Indeed, the argument advanced is not only shocking; it is deranging! The woman, who knows the danger of the previous comment and who knows that it is hard for her to convince us as a Moroccan audience with the rightness of her claim, has resorted to religion by adopting a ritual utterance: *“I can swear in the mosque.”* The ethical side of the husband is totally damaged with what she said about him. She confirms this allegation by pointing to another proof that she found after 35 days.

She said that because they were living in two different places in the house that she gave him as a property under his menace. One day she got into his room where she found messages from his girlfriends copied from the phone and written on a piece of paper. She said, “Then I understood why my daughter told me he is mean”.

In other words, the woman has been engaged in a process of delegitimation where she introduces fact after fact to finalize the ultimate picture of a deviant and obsessed man!

“ I still love him!” she concluded.

It is hard to find a reason for this evaluative remark not only because it contradicts all previous statements, but because she demonized him and because she said later that he applied for divorce. This may be explained in psychological terms as the woman has lived all types of traumatism and she surely needs therapy. The narrator finishes her story by telling us that before coming to the show, she went to the police station to inform them about the show in order to avoid any misbehavior from her husband if he happened to watch TV. This final statement serves the purpose of holding all Moroccan viewers responsible and witnesses. Turning a domestic affair into a public concern is actually one of the features of the show

4. Moral legitimization

Van Leeuwen’s (2007) taxonomy of legitimization contains four categories: authorization, moral evaluation, rationalization and mythopoesis. These categories are used by the speaker separately or in combination to legitimize the speaker’s position and delegitimize his opponents’.

Authorization, the first category, refers to legitimization which is achieved via “reference to the authority of tradition, custom, law and of persons in whom institutional authority of some kind is vested” (van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 92). Moral evaluation has to do with legitimization via “reference to value systems” (Van Leeuwen 92), and refers to moral values and the ideology assimilated by a particular group of individuals. Rationalization refers “to the goals and uses of institutionalized social action, and to the knowledge society has constructed to endow them with cognitive validity” (Van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 91). This category justifies decisions “by reference to their goals, uses and effects” (Van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 91). It is usually couched in a cause-effect relationship. Finally, mythopoesis refers to “legitimation conveyed through narratives whose outcomes rewards legitimate actions and punish non-legitimate actions” (Van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 92) whose potential is to provide a comprehensible explanation, or an illustration of, often, a very complex argumentation.

We will limit our analysis to the second category, moral evaluation, in the discourse of women subjected to violence. As we said above, this form of legitimation refers to the value system of a community and is primarily exercised by means of discursive representation of the set of moral values and ideology held by a particular group of individuals, and linguistically via lemmas referring to them (Van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 92).

Habiba foregrounded the general basis of her decisions by resorting to patience as the ultimate solution and by moralizing her attitudes which are determined by different factors like the fact that she has kids and by a rejection of divorce, which is negatively portrayed in a conservative society like the Moroccan one. In the Moroccan legal system, it would be very hard to bear its consequences as she would lose her kids because as a result of being jobless, it would be hard for her to keep them with her. Hence reference to values and providing a moral basis to justify her behavior is clear in this discursive context.

Habiba is also an important case of study as she unveils the deeply rooted phenomenon of superstition in Morocco, a thing that affects deeply women as she ascribes her failure in making her marriage a successful enterprise to the value system prevailing in her community and which sometimes undermines the mutual understanding of a given couple. As we mentioned before, her husband's father died right away after the wedding and she was accused of being cursed because Moroccans establish a strong link between a catastrophe and the coming of a bride and hold the woman responsible of all the misfortunes of the world.

The story of Ouafae is also interesting as the woman uses this legitimation technique of moralization to address the ethical character of her husband's behavior who writes messages to his girlfriends. The point she wants to transmit revolves around the moral question of adultery to undermine her husband's legitimacy. Coupled with the sensitive narrative segment about her handicapped daughter who was slapped by him for a futile reason, the narrative becomes emotionally loaded with affective elements that question the integrity of the husband, which finally aims to convince the audience in the studio and outside that she was extremely mistreated. The whole argumentation process here manipulates pathos to persuade us with the rightness of her view point and the wrongness of the husband within a system of values where they occupy two extreme positions: the victim and the "monster". The method of persuasion applied is heavily based on emotional elements that serve the aim of criticizing previous practices.

The Moroccan solution of patience to avoid divorce as a traditional black spot that should be discarded as an option is a common denominator between the ladies present in the show where reference to values as a moral basis is key to the legitimation/delegitimation process of persuasion. The legitimation process we described leads us to think about whether the image conveyed by the Moroccan media is specific only to Morocco. It has been found that "Third World" women in many cases feature as being sexually oppressed, subject to a diversity of situations including male violence, the familial system, religious codes and the economic system. The media has created a "Third World Woman" with a condensed life based on her femininity and her "Third World" trait (ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, under-developed, victimized...) (Mohanty, 2006, p. 400; Sakr, 2000, pp. 36-38). Mohanty summarizes the whole situation of this third world woman as the operation of power through a "process of discursive homogenization and systematization of the oppression of women in the third world" (Mohanty, 2006, p. 398).

To understand why women display the same negative image, we have to know that women in the third world in general (including Morocco) are caught in the web of a patriarchal society where men tend to be perceived as naturally superior, stronger and more rational whereas women are viewed as naturally weaker, intellectually and rationally inferior, emotionally unstable and incapable of being involved in politics (Lerner, 1993, p. 4). For Bhasin (1993), patriarchy is perceived as a network where women experience discrimination, subordination, violence, exploitation and oppression by men (3). Additionally, men control women's reproductive power, their sexuality, their mobility and their economic resources (pp. 6-9).

Patriarchy, which has traditionally been characterized as the 'rule of the father' in a family dominated by men, is a social and ideological construct which considers men, as patriarchs. It is also as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. It is simply a social system dominated by men and inherited from father to son; in its broader sense, it is a system in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women and which extends beyond the household to society in general (Ray, 2011; Walby, 1989). Within this patriarchal framework, the women in the show try to legitimate their practices, but without transgressing the borders of the patriarchal domain.

The way women are trying to legitimize their position shows their low level education, which also contributes to the negative image they sell to the audience. It should be noted that in a sample of 12 women subjected to marital violence that featured in the show, only one woman (Ouafae is literate and has a job); the others are illiterate, jobless and have rural origins. This is a reflection of the general situation in Morocco. The Department of Statistics in 2010 disseminated results which unambiguously show that the illiteracy rate in Morocco was 48 percent and the rate of female illiteracy in rural areas is even shockingly high: 63 percent, while in urban areas it has dropped to 49 percent (Ennaji, 2011; Sadiqi, 2011). Sadiqi (2003b) has found that the majority of women who are aged 40 and up are illiterate. She also posits that the general situation is characterized by the fact that the great majority of illiterate people in Morocco are women, and the pools of women that are still illiterate are older and frequently rural. Ennaji (2008a) holds that the vast array of programs financed by world organizations did not manage to decrease poverty particularly among women. Women look poorer than men, an observation which has to do with the inequality of the sexes in addition to the fact that it is hard for woman to find a job in Morocco.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, the different attempts on the part of the women subjected to violence in the Moroccan talk show to legitimize their positions (of a victim) to gain sympathy show that these women argue within webs of a network of patriarchy where the elements of power are not beneficial for them. Within this system, there are many factors that make them helpless, but we think that illiteracy and poverty come at the top of the list. Integrating these two factors within the general cultural context of patriarchy, we find that women in Morocco, as a result of total subordination, suffer from one of the highest rates of gender based violence.

The women who participated in the show have attempted to convince the audience through a direct appeal to emotions. We can easily deduce that this form of appeal is meant to evoke a sense of fear in the psyche of the audience to encode the implicit code that action is legitimized as a necessary precaution to avert the consequence the speaker

is proposing. The stories dramatize the “other’s” action in a discursive struggle to appeal to fear responses that prepares the final ground to afford the necessary building block towards the ultimate representation of the adversary. All in all, both the evaluation element present in the narratives we have exposed and moral evaluation as a discursive strategy point towards the fragile situation of Moroccan women who are caught within a web of power that is more beneficial for men leaving them no options at the economic, social and legal levels.

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