



Woman in Culture and Arts

The Gender Expressions of Language in the Poems of Maram Al-Masri with an Emphasis on the Theory of Robin Lakoff

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

Language is a fundamental component of stylistics. Gender and its compatibility with the language of the literary text are among the most significant subjects of language analysis. The analysis of classical Arabic literature indicates that the language and gender expressions in these poems are primarily masculine, rendering it impossible to accurately identify female gender expressions. Nevertheless, Arabic poetry began to deviate from masculine dominance, and the unique voice of women in literature was acknowledged, in conjunction with the intellectual and literary transformations of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the introduction of feminist ideas in Arab literature. Maram Al-Masri, a contemporary Arab poet, has effectively captured the emotions, thoughts, and personal and social issues of contemporary Arab women in her poetry by employing innovative writing techniques and feminine language.

The linguistics of gender is one of the branches of the sociology of language that assesses the impact of the creator's gender on the content of their own work. According to certain researchers, there is a distinction between masculine and female language.

Robin Lakoff in the discipline of gender linguistics, was the first theorist to present her perspective on the patterns of female speech in discourse. In her opinion, the distinction between male and female language is more apparent in speech than in writing. Lakoff's theory posits that the intellectual systems of women and men are distinct, and these distinctions also influence the poetic language of women. Lakoff's theory of language and gender is an appropriate paradigm for analyzing literary works from the sociological perspective of language, as it concentrates on the functions of language and gender in literature. It is possible to assert that Lakoff's fundamental viewpoint is predicated on the fact that the linguistic structures of male and female writers exhibit distinct characteristics. This article evaluates Maram Al-Masri's poems by utilizing Lakoff's theory of language and gender to evaluate the author's success in constructing a language that is appropriate for her gender and the impact of her gender on her poetic language.

The current research, which employs a descriptive-analytical approach, examines the various facets of language in Maram Al-Masri's poems. It examines the language's characteristics at two levels: lexical (such as feminine vocabulary, maternal vocabulary, and lexical taboo-breaking) and syntactic (such as interrogative, exclamatory, and emphatic sentences).

Research Questions are: What are the most important social and cultural contexts for women's writing according to Maram Al-Masri? What is the balance between gender and language in Maram al-Masri's poems? Which category has the largest range of vocabulary in Maram al-Masri's poems?

There seems to be a balance between gender and language in Maram al-Masri's poems in terms of syntax and vocabulary. In Maram Al-Masri's poems, words expressing deep feelings and specific female emotions are the most extensive. When the poet seeks to highlight the dominance of the patriarchal society over women's thought and language, the alignment between language and gender in the poems diminishes.

Keywords:

Gender,
Maram al-Masri,
Language,
Robin Lakoff,
Syntax,
Vocabulary.

Methodology

The present study utilizes a descriptive-analytical approach, with a particular focus on Robin Lakoff's theory of language and gender, in recognition of the significance of theory-driven critiques and the examination of the linguistic characteristics of contemporary poets. Lakoff's theory posits the existence of a unique women's style and language that are defined by feminine characteristics, which are indicative of the absence of traditional male authority. Consequently, she emphasizes the distinctions between the language of males and women. Based on this theory, despite the fact that a writer may endeavor to emulate the style and linguistic structure of the opposite gender in their work, the gender-specific signs of their own language are invariably retrievable in their work, even if the ordinary reader initially finds it difficult to identify these signs. By presenting samples of Maram Al-Masri's poetry, this study examines the language of these poems at the lexical level (feminine vocabulary, maternal vocabulary, and lexical taboo-breaking) and the syntactic-rhetorical level (interrogative sentences, exclamatory sentences, emphatic sentences), and evaluates gender manifestations at both levels.

Result

Maram Al-Masri's poetry is characterized by a proclivity for simplicity in writing, the use of language, vocabulary, and terms with gender connotations, as well as the extensive use of sensory vocabulary and the minimal use of non-sensory words. These findings suggest that these are among the most significant gender characteristics.

Conclusion

Maram Al-Masri's poetry is evidently reflective of the gender manifestations of language upon examination. In general, the poet's feminine perspective is explicitly expressed through the primarily gendered vocabulary employed in her poems. In other words, it can be inferred that Maram Al-Masri's poetic language has developed in response to emotion. The tendency toward simplicity in writing, the use of gender-representative language, vocabulary, and expressions, as well as the extensive use of sensory vocabulary and minimal use of non-sensory words, are among the most important gendered features of the language in her poems.

These findings also indicate that Maram Al-Masri has effectively implemented a language that is compatible with the gender of the characters in her poems in numerous ways. However, she maintains a moderate feminist perspective and, rather than engaging in a debate with men, endeavors to dissuade them from their common misconceptions about women and feminine identity, and advocates for a shift in their attitudes toward women. The absence of old and unfamiliar terms is another notable aspect of Maram Al-Masri's poetry vocabulary. In addition, the author's temperament and deliberate intention to emphasize the dominance of a patriarchal society over women's thoughts and language are frequently the reasons for the absence of congruence between language and gender, particularly in the female characters found in her poems.

The prevalence of gender manifestations in Maram al-Masri's poetic language is evident from a syntactic and rhetorical perspective. The poet utilizes rhetorical techniques and secondary meanings, such as negation, denial, and reproach, to communicate her critical feminine thinking to the audience, thereby emphasizing her profound feminine insight.

Conflict of Interest

This article has no conflict of interest.

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