



## Woman in Culture and Arts

### Identifying and Analyzing the Discourses of Modern Education and Training of Women in the Context of the first Pahlavi Modernization (1921-1941)

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article type:</b> Research Article</p> <p><b>Article history:</b> Received: 8 June 2024 Received in revised form: 2 February 2024 Accepted: 13 September 2025 Published online: 2 October 2025</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>Discourse, Discourse Analysis, First Pahlavi Period, Modernization, Women's Education.</i></p>	<p><b>Introduction</b> The first Pahlavi dynasty, with its project of repressing religious traditions, affected the social space and brought about changes in the public life of Iranian women. "A change that was influenced by the large-scale policies that were designed to socialize women by promoting literacy, culture, and modernization" (Ayandeh Magazine, No.1, 1927:8). Therefore, women were afforded the opportunity to participate in a diverse array of social activities. They regarded development and educational awareness as a critical factor in their social presence, as they were required to relinquish their traditional and previous social positions more than men and adapt to the new era. In this regard, they engaged in a dialogue in their social relationships against the traditional mentality that dominated society, which accentuated the absence of women in society, in accordance with the first Pahlavi project, which had a gender equality orientation. They challenged the traditional mentality. Despite the ideologically-driven reactions and cultural seduction that sought to maintain women's marginalization from social changes, they were able to transition from the margins to the center of the changes and influence women's discourses from a woman's perspective.</p> <p><b>Methodology</b> Methodologically, this research is structured in two steps. Step 1: Discourse identification and discovery: The qualitative content analysis method was employed to select specific sections of the text from 14 documents as (1) instances; (2) Sub-discourses (thematization) were derived from the instances; and (3) a group of sub-discourses was conceptualized as a discourse. Step 2: Discourse analysis: Laclau and Mouffe (2014) were determined to be suitable for discourse analysis on the basis of their belief that "a set of propositions that have historical and context-based frameworks can be considered for the analysis of discourse formation" and that "every action and phenomenon within a discourse system can be made meaningful and understandable" (Torfing, 1999: 12). The discourses that were identified were analyzed in four stages in accordance with this method: The following topics have been examined: (1) the semantic system of the discourses, (2) the theory of discourse community, (3) semantic conflicts and the attainment of social transformations, and (4) the relationship between text, meaning, and social practices in the exclusion, highlighting, and othering of a discourse.</p> <p><b>Results</b> This article answers the question: "What discourses exist in the field of women's education</p>

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during the early Pahlavi period - the ability to identify and analyze them?" In the first step, by examining 14 documents, (a) 39 semantic units (instances) were selected; (b) 35 small discourses and (c) 4 discourses were identified. In the second step, according to the discourse analysis method of Laclau and Mouffe, the following results were obtained.

### Conclusion

1. The discourse of sovereignty and the discourses of women are founded on the central signifier, floating signifiers, and the establishment of independent moments. However, they have congruently collaborated in the delegitimization, marginalization, and distinction of the traditional mentality in order to affirm their legitimacy.

2. The discourse of sovereignty, in opposition to and in opposition to the discourse of tradition, associated the issue of women's education with the law of disclosing the veil. Therefore, in order to preserve their signifiers' prominence and preserve hegemony (the absence of women's social presence), the upholders of tradition implemented institutional resistance against this legislation. In a sense, they attempted to marginalize the semantic system of education for girls, which was contingent upon their presence in educational environments without a hijab, in response to the presence of uncovered women. This was achieved by protesting, demonstrating, and requiring women to remain at home. Conversely, the discourse of sovereignty, which was characterized by a series of communicated-mandatory programs that required women to attend educational environments and celebrations without a hijab, established a level playing field for women's social presence. The discourse of sovereignty's symbolic power compelled modernist women to employ it in accordance with their right to citizenship and to develop discourses that (greedily) contradicted the traditional mentality of "the lack of necessity of women's presence in society."

3. The mentality of individuals in traditional society was influenced by the hegemony of "women's social presence" in women's discourses and the discourse of sovereignty, which was achieved through sermons, the publication of articles in newspapers and practices, activity in women's centers, the operation of mixed schools by women, the establishment of educational restrictions for veiled women, and other means. This mentality posited that any change in the status of Iranian women would inevitably be practical through the educational system, as Iranian women strongly demand the establishment of schools and an increase in their level of knowledge. Therefore, in order to address the social presence of women who were not wearing veils, they were compelled to compose protest letters, revolt, and be placed under house arrest. In this manner, the discourse of tradition against the dominant discourse and the discourses of women has evolved into a discourse of resistance, establishing a hegemony of "the lack of necessity of women's social presence" against the hegemony of "the necessity of women's social presence." This resulted in the establishment of a violent atmosphere in which, on the one hand, there were women who voluntarily accepted to uncover the veil, and on the other hand, there were women who believed in and adhered to traditional values, who considered their social presence synonymous with identitylessness and believed that maintaining their identity was associated with a lack of social presence.

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