Linguistic Sexism in T.V. Drama: A Linguistic Analysis of Verbal Violence against Women in the Egyptian Sitcom Al-Kabeer Awi

Heba Nayef

Abstract

This paper attempts to shed light on sexism in Egyptian comic T.V. series as represented in the sitcom Al-Kabeer Awi (The Big Boss). Through employing a qualitative and quantitative analysis of four episodes (13 scenes), the study investigates the way language is manipulated and used to disparage women in this sitcom. Adopting the theoretical framework of feminist CDA, this paper employs three tools of analysis; namely, lexical choices and titles, transitivity, and collocations. The data showed that in the (13) scenes subject to analysis, the majority of names and titles used by Al-Kabeer, the main male character, to address Hadeyya, the main female character, were either disparaging words or direct insults. It was also shown that such insults were used as a source of humor. Moreover, lexical collocations used in association with Hadeyya were shown to be largely negative. The analysis also revealed that she was only praised in terms of sexual attributes. The study shows that such type of women representation and linguistic sexism in T.V. in general, and sitcoms in particular, cannot be regarded as benign source of humor but it can actually provide a fertile soil to grow ideologies of gender inequality and masculine hegemony

Keywords: Linguistic sexism, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, gender studies, Egyptian sitcoms, sexist humor

Introduction

The topic of women representation in media in general, and television in particular, has been extensively studied in several academic disciplines, each focusing on a different angle of research. Some scholars addressed the topic to document a social phenomenon; others did so with the purpose of eliminating a type of social injustice. To this latter category belongs research conducted by advocates of feminism in diverse academic disciplines. Women representation in television in general, and T.V. drama in particular, drew the attention of many scholars throughout the world (Buonanno, 2014; Elasmar, Hasegawa & Brain, 1999; Holbert, Shah & Kwak, 2003; Lacalle & Gómez, 2016; Seggar & Wheeler 1973; Stafford, 2004, among others).

Arab feminist scholars were not alienated from this. Thus, we have seen several studies addressing this topic: From Egypt, Al-Hadiddy (1977), AbdelQader (1982), Faheem (1998), Fouad (2007), Mohamed (2014), Heikal, (2014); from Kuwait, Al-Arada (2013); and from Syria, Al-Omar (2003). On the other hand, feminist linguists dedicated their work to studying the way language is used to portray women negatively. Works of feminist linguists from different linguistic disciplines, including sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, pragmatics and linguistic anthropology tackled this issue. The majority of these works were conducted in languages other than Arabic (See Nayef & El-Nashar 2015) Some attempts were made by Arab feminist linguists to study linguistic sexism in Arab countries.

1 Humanities Department, College of Language and Communication, Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Egypt. hrayef@gmail.com
Yet, there has been a paucity of research in linguistic sexism in T.V drama to investigate the way language is used and manipulated to draw a certain 'mental image' for viewers. Such mental image not only reflects the ideology of masculine superiority that governs and controls societies but reproduces and sediments it as well, thus depicting such negative image of women. Hence comes the significance of this study which aims at shedding some light on how language is used through the discursive mode of humor and the media means of sitcoms to disparage women and represent them negatively in Egyptian sitcoms, represented in the sitcom Al-Kabeer Awy (The Big Boss). The choice of sitcoms to be the genre under investigation is due to its powerful effect in tolerating sexism as will be elaborated in Section 2.2 below.

This genre of T.V drama was introduced on the Egyptian Television in the 1980s. All the series, however, were either American or British and failed to enjoy popularity among viewers until 2006 when the first Egyptian sitcoms 'ragil we sit sitaat' ('A man and six women') and 'Tamer we Shawkeya' were introduced. Like western sitcoms in their beginnings, most of the successful Egyptian sitcoms featured leading male characters. 

Al-Kabeer Awy, the subject of our research, is a popular sitcom that has been running for five seasons till now. Aired for the first time in 2010, the sitcom comically addresses relationships among family members. The characters of both 'Al-kabeer' and 'Hadeyya', represented by Egyptian comedians Ahmad Mekky and Donia Ghanem respectively, are some mock mimic of the famous ‘Atrees’ and ‘Fouada’ characters who appeared in the movie ‘shei’ min l-khouf (‘A little bit of fear’) produced in 1969, starring the two then renowned movie icons Mahmoud Morsi and Shadia. It is worth noting here that since the events of the sitcom take place in an imaginary village located in Upper Egypt, namely, El-Mazaryta, Hadeyya in Al-Kabeer Awy, like Fou’ada in shei’ min l-khouf represents women in Upper Egypt. Hence, the term ‘Egyptian Women’ in the following discussion is meant to refer to women in Upper Egypt. The following section is a brief discussion of the theoretical framework of the study.

2. Theoretical Background

Sexism in sitcoms can have quite a strong discriminatory effect as it both uses the effective medium of television and the readily accepted discursive mode of humor through which it is conveyed. In investigating the effects of linguistic sexism in sitcoms, the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was found to be most suitable for the discussion.

In the coming section, I will briefly elaborate on these three points; namely, CDA as the theoretical framework, the influence of television as a medium for disseminating ideologies and establishing acceptable social behavior, and the negative effects of sexist humor on tolerating sexist behavior.

2.1 Feminist CDA

Feminist linguistics employs diverse approaches to conducting their studies. Christie (2000) introduced ‘feminist pragmatics’; Kitzinger (2000) investigated ‘feminist conversation analysis’; McElhinny (2003) and Mullany (2007) drew attention to ‘feminist sociolinguistics’ and Lazar (2005b) developed ‘feminist critical discourse analysis’ (For more details, see Mills and Mullany 2011). It is this latter approach that was chosen for this study. As an analytical research discipline, "CDA is mainly concerned with the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context," (van Dijk 2001). Employing various linguistic tools of analysis at all levels of discourse, feminist linguists used CDA to closely examine various texts and talk in their pursuit to understand the way those discursive tools are used to maintain the status quo of masculine superiority and social inequality. As Mills and Mullany (2011) argue, CDA has proved to be particularly fruitful for feminist linguistic analysis, especially when analyzing texts from the mass media and spoken language data, which is what this study is about.

2.2 Television and sitcom genre

Since its inception, Television has established itself as a powerful social medium and a site of culture formation disseminating “social values and behavioral expectations” (Yates, 1997). As Kottak (1990) puts it, the importance of television is in its ubiquity for “it is not used selectively, but rather by practically all the people, all the time. It crosses demographic boundaries - presenting to diverse classes, races, sexes and nationalities a common set of symbols, vocabularies, information and shared experiences.”
From here comes its very powerful effect in regimenting ideologies and beliefs, and establishing accepted social norms and behaviours. Egypt was the first Arab country to introduce the Television service in 1960. Since that time, it has emerged as a cultural force disseminating various messages, lessons of "acceptable behavior, establishing role-expectation and shaping and reflecting social norms and ideologies" (Yates, 1997). On the other hand, sitcoms are among the most effective tools of disseminating ideologies and establishing social norms. By definition, a sitcom is "a setting and a group of characters providing the opportunity for a comic narrative, usually resolved in 25-30 minutes" (Stafford, 2004). In addition, the sitcom genre entails that it is safe and a family show. Such dependence on humor, as will be further elaborated in the following section, combined with the appeal of sitcoms to young viewers and children lend such genres their powerful impact, given its easy accessibility through television or the Internet.

2.3 Sexist humor

Freud (1960) regards humor as a substitution mechanism that enables a person to turn one's socially tabooed aggressive impulses to acceptable ones and consequently there will be no need to suppress them. Over the last twenty years, there has been a surge of research in both the fields of sociology and psychology on the negative direct and indirect effects of sexist humor. It was found that sexist humor affects the ways that men think about women and perceive discrimination against them (Ford, 2000; Ford, Wentzel, & Lorion, 2001; Ryan & Kanjorski, 1998). It was also found that it affects men's willingness to engage in subtle sexist behavior as it promotes the behavioral release of prejudice against women (Ford, Boxer, Armstrong, & Edel, 2008). Exposure to sexist humor was found to increase approval or tolerance of sex discrimination because it dampens men's critical sensitivities to sexism and interprets sexist behaviors and expressions as non-sexist. Thus, discrimination can be more easily rationalized as not inappropriate (Ford, 2000). Such studies show the serious effects sexist humor may have on social relations and roles, especially in a patriarchal society like that of Egypt, hence the need to investigate such phenomenon.

3. Methodology and Research Questions

This study employs qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis to investigate linguistic sexism in Egyptian comic T.V. series as represented in the sitcom Al-Kabeer Awy (The Big Boss). The details of data collection and sampling as well as the research question posed by the study are discussed in the subsections below.

3.1 Data collection and sampling

The first step of data collection and sampling was to retrieve the sitcom from the web utilizing YouTube application and using search terms 'Al-Kabeer Awy episodes'. For the purpose of this study, four episodes out of the 45 episodes featuring Hadyya, the female heroine, were chosen. These were episode 1 & 2 season I, episode 1 season II and episode 1 season III. These episodes were carefully chosen for more than one reason. First, each one of them constitutes the opening episode of each season with an additional episode in season I being the first season to introduce the two characters Al-kabeer and Hadyya. Moreover, these episodes include scenes that reflect diverse situations that involve Hadyya and Al-kabeer. For example, a scene in which Hadyya tries to solve a family matter (Scenes 3, 4 & 5); another that depicts Hadyya trying to unravel an espionage case (Scenes, 8 & 9); a scene that shows Hadyya meddling with police investigations (Scene 10), and scenes that tackle the intimate relation between Al-Kabeer and Hadyya (Scenes 9, 11&12). The episodes were classified into scenes and the transcript of each scene was retrieved manually by the researcher. The transcript of the chosen scenes was then analyzed in light of the tools described in Section 3.3 below. All translations were made by the researcher.

3.2 Research question

The study aims at shedding some light on how language is used through the discursive mode of humor and the media means of sitcoms to disparage women and represent them negatively. Thus, it addresses the following overarching question:

How is language used in the sitcom to promote tolerance and acceptance of verbal violence against women? Attempting to answer that question, I have conducted a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data to filter the scenes that contain verbal or nominal choices that denote verbal violence against women employing the tools of analysis mentioned in Section 3.3 below.
3.3 Tools of Analysis

The paper runs a qualitative and a quantitative analysis of four episodes that involve Hadeyya, the main female character, and Al-Kabeer, the main male character. In the attempt to answer the research question mentioned above, three tools of analysis will be employed; namely, naming, lexical choices and titles, transitivity, and collocations. The following section briefly introduces these categories.

3.3.1 Naming, Lexical Choices and Titles

The act of choosing one lexical item over another, or addressing one person with a title rather than the other, is a process that is neither random nor accidental (Fowler, 1991). It is the product of certain group ideologies and both reflects and reproduces these ideologies and beliefs as well. In this paper, the data are examined using this tool which analyzes the connotations of the lexical choices used by Al-Kabeer in relation to Hadeyya in an attempt to discern gender roles and ideologies as represented in the data subject to analysis.

3.3.2 Transitivity

The data are analyzed in terms of transitivity to find out what type of processes and roles are associated with Egyptian women, represented by Hadeyya in the sitcom.

The data are examined in line with Halliday's approach (1994), to identify the Agent (an actor or sayer, etc.), the Goal (who is acted upon), and the Processes (doing or saying). In other words, this tool of analysis will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What do Upper Egyptian women, as represented by Hadeyya, do?
2. What is being done to Upper Egyptian women, as represented by Hadeyya?
3. What do Upper Egyptian women, as represented by Hadeyya, say?
4. What is being said to and of Upper Egyptian women, as represented by Hadeyya?

3.3.3 Collocations

This tool of analysis serves the purpose of identifying the connotations of the words that collocate with Hadeyya, as representing Upper Egyptian women, in the sitcom. Conclusion will be drawn as to the mental images such words create.

3.4 Language Variations

In Al-KabeerAwy, several language variations are used by diverse characters. In the thirteen scenes under investigation, two main variations of Arabic are used: Upper Egyptian ‘Sa’idi’ Colloquial Arabic (SCA) and Colloquial Cairene Arabic (CCA). SCA is the variety of Egyptian Arabic spoken by the inhabitants of the Nile Valley between Giza and Aswan. Its usage is more concentrated in the rural areas among people with little education. Some of the highly educated Upper Egyptians tend to use a mixture of both SCA and CCA (For further discussion on language variations in Egypt, see Woidich, 1994, 1996; Khalafallah 1969 and Habash, Eskander, & Hawwari, 2012). There are also two variations of English used: Standard American English with American accent and English with an Upper Egyptian accent, what I choose to term “Sa’idi” English (SE). The latter is commonly used in T.V drama and cinema to produce comic effect. Both Al-Kabeer and Hadeyya switch codes between SCA and SE. This act of unexpected code switching between the two language variations and the use of English with the Upper Egyptian accent is employed as a source of comedy in the scenes. It is worth noting that in the English translation of the extracts mentioned in Section 4 below, the words that were originally uttered in English will be italicized to set them apart from the Arabic words.

4. Findings

As mentioned earlier, the data subject to analysis are four episodes from different seasons; namely, episodes 1 & 2 season I, episode 1 season II, and episode 1 season III. This yielded (13) scenes in which either Hadeyya was an active participant or there was a reference to her or to women in general. Following is the discussion of the scenes.
4.1 Episode I (season I)

Episode I (season I) has two scenes that involve reference to women by Al-Kabeer, with only scene (2) featuring Hadeyya getting into a light-hearted argument with Al-Kabeer:

4.1.1 Scene (1)

This scene occurred in Episode 1 season I

This is a short scene that lasts only 52 seconds from 7.51 min. till 8.43 min. It is the first scene in which there is reference to women in the episode. In the first part of the scene, Al-Kabeer enters the house with Fazza and Ashraf–his assistants. He finds a group of women all dressed in black in the hall gathering and crying. After shouting at them, he kicks them all out.

In this scene, Al-Kabeer utters 21 words in reference to the women gathering in his house. Up to 10 of these words can be classified as derogatory to women in the sense that they contain explicit disparaging words that portray women negatively such as 'ﻏﻮرو' ('get lost'), 'وﻟﯿﮫ' ('broad'), 'ﺑﺠﺮة' ('a cow'), 'ﺑﻮﻣﺔ' ('owl') as will be discussed in the extract (1) below.

Extract (1)

Al-Kabeer: What is wrong with these (low-class) women bewailing like owls? Could it be the anniversary of my mother's death today?

Fazza': May she rest in peace. We're so far away from your mom's anniversary!

Al-Kabeer: Hey, broad, you get lost! What is that? Go you, cow, each one of you!

In this extract, Al-Kabeer refers to these women using derogatory language. They are a bunch of ﻟﻨﺴﺎوﯾﻦ ('low-class women'). Addressing them, he uses the two derogatory nominals وﻟﯿﮫ ('broad') and ﺑﺠﺮه ('cow'). He does not use the terms ﺗﻌﯿﻂ ('shed tears') or ﺗﺒﻜﻰ ('weep') but rather ﺗﻨﻮح ('bewail') with its negative connotation. He used the metaphor ﻷﻟﺒﻮم اﻟﻠﻰ ﻋّﻢ اﻟﻨﺴﺎوﯾﻨ (like owls') in reference to these women. In Egyptian culture, owls are associated with bad omen. In addition, he uses the imperative ﻏﻮروا اﻣﺸﻮا ('get lost!') with its degrading connotation, ordering women to leave.

Women are doers of nothing more than crying and escaping. They are not sayers; rather, they are recipients of an order they follow. In this scene, not a single woman utters any word but they run away in fear.

4.1.2 Scene 2

This scene is slightly longer than scene 1. It lasts 1.12 minutes, starting at 8.43 till 9.55. It marks the first introduction of Hadeyya. In this comic scene, Al-Kabeer enters the bedroom to find Hadeyya playing a PlayStation boxing game. She immediately tries to hide the joystick behind her back, anticipating that he will snatch it from her hand. The scene sets the power relation between the two protagonists. Al-Kabeer has the upper hand and is the master while the more clever Hadeyya, as shown from the dialogue that she helps him win games and successfully pass levels, is the more submissive party who accepts verbal and physical abuse. This is illustrated in extracts (2, 3 & 4) below.

Extract (2)

Hadeyya: Do you think you want to beat me? (addressing the virtual player)

Al-Kabeer: The joystick, the joystick, Hadeyya

Hadeyya: Why? What on earth have I done?

Al-Kabeer: (Pinching her ear)
Extract (3)

**Al-Kabeer**: What's your problem? Games are absolutely above your station, woman.

**Hadeyya**: Oh, Really? Super Mario bears evidence, ha. Wasn't it I who helped you surpass the monster of the last level?

**Al-Kabeer**: The one with a fin?

**Hadeyya**: No, the one with four arms.

**Al-Kabeer**: Just keep meddling cluelessly and you'll get screwed.

The scene involves 137 words with 72 uttered by Al-Kabeer and 60 by Haddeya. Of the Al-Kabeer's total, 22 words are found to be derogatory to Haddeya. Haddeya's defensive use of the exclamatory mode of discourse (Why? What on earth have I done?) establish the power relation between these two characters. The fact that he pinches her ear while talking serves to add to the comedy of the whole situation as the whole argument is about PlayStation games. This lightens the effect of such words of direct insult as "Just keep meddling cluelessly and you'll get screwed" in (3) and "women who keep bewailing like owls" and "cow" in (4).

It is worth noting that in this episode that lasts 20.22 minutes, Haddeya appears for 1.12 min. only while Al-Kabeer over ridingly appears in 16.05 mins.

4.2 Episode 2 (season I)

Episode 2 (season I) has four scenes in which Haddeya appears in scenes 3, 4, 5, 6 with a duration of 9.49 mins. of the 20-minute episode.

4.2.1 Scene (3)

The scene lasts 3.45 minutes, starting at 2.03 min. till 5.48 min. In this scene, Haddeya is introduced to Johnny, Al-Kabeer's long lost brother who was taken to the United States of America to live all his life with their American mother. Johnny comes to claim his inheritance and Haddeya welcomes him with trills in expression of her joy. In this scene, Haddeya is more composed and shows more self-control than Al-Kabeer. Yet, she accepts a series of verbal abuse and threats from Al-Kabeer, and again her language is characterized by apology and submission. This is illustrated in the following extracts:
Extract (5)

Hadeyya: You're most welcome at your home, Mr. Johnny.
Al-Kabeer: Stop it, you foolish! My father is being tortured in his grave and you are trilling like a beast. What should people say about me?
Hadeyya: Just never mind, dear. I never meant it, I swear. It was just the joy of your brother's comeback that made me forget. I'm so sorry, Kabeer.

Extract (6)

Hadeyya: What! Lemonade! What is that? I ordered them to prepare dinner.
Al-Kabeer: You listen up! Stupidity is the last thing I need. I'll bury them.

Al-Kabeer calls Hadeyya 'foolish' and likens her behavior to that of 'a beast' in (5) and accuses her of being 'stupid' in (6). He threatens to kill her if she opens her mouth, using the phrase 'I'll bury them' in (6). Note the use of the phrase 'bury' in (5) and 'kill' in (6), which reflects the little value of the victim.

On the other hand, Hadeyya not only accepts this abuse but repeatedly apologizes using words like 'I never meant it', 'please forgive me', 'I owe you an excuse'. She calls him 'boss', showing endearment, respect - and fear as well.

Extract (7)

Johnny: You shut up your mouth. I didn't address you with one word. I mean we bring the two countries, one country and another country, (together).
Hadeyya: He means, may God protect your status, that the two were brought together in a 'melting pot'. He says 'countries'!
Johnny: Exactly. Besides your awesome style, you are intelligent as well.
Al-Kabeer: (Angrily) My patience is wearing damn thin in here. (hitting the ground furiously)
Johnny: Calm down, bro., chill.

In extract (7), beautiful and witty Hadeyya is being praised by her brother-in-law, Johnny, which angers Al Kabeer. This reflects the presupposed ideology that women may be respected and praised by any man but not the husband. The power relation that governs the husband and wife is that of 'domineering' and 'dominated'.

Thus, while Johnny, with his western culture background, praises Hadeyya as stylish and intelligent, Al-Kabeer's reaction is that of anger. This witty side of Hadeyya is further shown in the same scene when she tries to stop Al-Kabeer from taking foolish actions when he threatens to kill Johnny who threatens him back by his American citizenship. Hadeyya winks to Al-Kabeer who does not get it so she, for the first time, uses the phrase 'I'll make you understand', which carries a sense of superiority on her part (See extract 8 below).
Extract (8)

Al-Kabeer: (Threatening to kill Johnny). I’ll shoot you.
Hadeyya: Don’t you forget that I’m an American citizen and with one phone call, I can turn it upside down.
Hadeyya: Calm down, folks, you’re brothers after all. Get the folks to get some rest in the guest room, and so shall we (winking to Al-Kabeer) in our room coz we’re tired after a long day.
Al-Kabeer: Why are you winking at me?
Hadeyya (incensed): I’ll make you understand, sober up!

4.2.2 Scene (4)

This is a short scene (1.49 minutes) in which Hadeyya tries to explain to Al-Kabeer the danger of antagonizing an American citizen, in reference to his brother Johnny, and the threat of a nuclear war. She suggests a way out of the whole situation by giving Johnny little money and telling him it is all his due inheritance. This scene marks a linguistic change in Hadeyya’s discourse. She speaks longer (79 words) against (45) for Al-Kabeer. She uses ‘(no)’ two times, though it is not in defiance of an order, but as a correction of an explanation. She uses إهداء (calm down) in extract (9) and شوف (Look!) in extract (10) below in order to talk sense to Al-Kabeer. It is worth noting that in (10), Hadeyya, for the first time, uses the plural first person pronoun ﻷنا (we) to include herself with Al-Kabeer in a move of inclusion that is rare in her speech. She also praises him for understanding her point with the phrase ﻷن شوو فوك (‘touché!’ or ‘well-said’) . On the other hand, he praises her by laughingly calling her ﯾو ﻷكبيرو (‘a cow’) in (10).

Extract (9)

Al-Kabeer: Here we are upstairs. What do you want?
Hadeyya: Calm down, boss, and think of it rationally. He can turn it upside down, as he said. He’s American, American.

Extract (10)

Hadeyya: Look, Kabeer: If we finish him off now, what will happen?
Al-Kabeer: We’ll be better off.
Hadeyya: No, at all, of course. This will turn the United Nations against us, and they do not bide time; they hit nuclear directly.
Al-Kabeer: Nuclear! What should I do know? Leave him to take half of the inheritance?
Hadeyya: No. Not half. How could he know how much Al-Kabeer the senior’s (Al-Kabeer’s father) inheritance was?
Al-Kabeer: Do you mean I give him his handout and then drive him out?
Hadeyya: Well-said. Thus, he doesn’t hurt us nor do we hurt him.
Al-Kabeer: You, cow.
4.2.3 Scenes (5 & 6)

Scene (5) is the only scene subject to analysis in which Hadeyya does not get either verbally or physically abused. In this short scene (2.36 minutes), she utters (21) words only as she interferes in the end to defuse the situation between Al-Kabeer and Johnny (Extract 11). She uses the word ﺼﻔﺢ ('wise up') which is not common in the way she addresses Al-Kabeer:

**Extract (11)**

Hadeyya: Nuclear, Kabeer!
Al-Kabeer: Whatever it could be!
Hadeyya: Wise up, boss. It will bring us havoc, yes havoc. They will stop sending us corn flakes. And he'll take his right back through the court anyway.

Yet in scene (12), Al-Kabeer is back to his habit of insulting her only for posing a question. In the scene, Al-Kabeer suggests to hire a serial killer to get rid of his brother who not only claims the money but after having it seeks the post of the village mayor. When Hadeyya asks the simple question of how he will get in touch with the serial killer whom he describes as scoring better in killing than Hitler, he rebukes her and calls her ﻫﺘﯿﺮه ('fool') in Extract (12) below - the third time in the episode.

**Extract (12)**

Hadeyya: And how could you possibly reach this guy, Kabeer?
Al-Kabeer: I'm the boss, fool. Abuleil was no more than one of my apprentices.

Thus, in three of the four scenes, Hadeyya is both verbally and physically abused by Al-Kabeer and she, along with the rest of characters, readily accepts this as normal. For Al-Kabeer, she is ﺑﮭﯿﻤﮫ ('a beast), ﺑﺠﺮه ('a cow') and ﻫﺘﯿﺮه ('a fool).

4.3 Episode (1) season II

This episode contains four scenes involving Hadeyya, three of which bring Hadeyya and Al-Kabeer together. These are the scenes subject to analysis (Scenes 7, 8, 9). The fourth is a comic scene that involves Hadeyya with intelligence officers. The episode, which lasts 25.26 minutes, is a mock imitation of the famous Arabic-language T.V. espionage series 'Dumu' fi 'uyoon waqiha' ('Tears in Ugly Eyes') which was broadcast in the 1980s and whose main actor is called Gumaa El-Shawwan. The episode makes fun of the conspiracy theory in which any foreigner is deemed to be a spy.

4.3.1 Scene (7)

In this scene, Al-Kabeer is watching the sexy singer Hayfa Wahby on television. When Hadeyya enters, he switches the channel to watch a cooking program. Hadeyya pleads with him to let her watch the espionage thriller Gumaa El-Shawwan (calling the thriller by the protagonist's name) but he refuses. The scene lasts 2.22 minutes. Hadeyya appears in 0.25 sec. and leaves in 1.54 min. This is one of the rare scenes in which Hadeyya talks longer than Al-Kabeer. The dialogue between them lasts for 1.29 minutes with a total of 188 words (116 for Hadeyya and 72 for Al-Kabeer).
Extract (13)

Hadeyya: Please, Kabeer, tune to dawama (Lit. 'whirl', but she means nel 'Nile') Drama channel.
Al-Kabeer: What? Can't you see me watch T.V.?
Hadeyya: Please forgive me. I beg you, boss, the series must be on by now.
Al-Kabeer: What series?
Hadeyya: Mr. Gumaa El-Shawwan series.
Al-Kabeer: The one dealing with spies?
Hadeyya: Yes, it is, Kabeer.
Al-Kabeer: Damn it, girl! You've already watched it 300 times before.

Extract (14)

Al-Kabeer: Hey, Hey. I don't need such nuisance while watching this program.
Hadeyya: This is a cooking program, boss. Do you enter the kitchen in the first place?
Al-Kabeer: Today, he will reveal the croissant paste secret.
Hadeyya: OK, I beg you, Kabeer, this episode and no more.

Extract (15)

Al-Kabeer: Oh, my goodness! Don't you damn know every bit of the episode? So, why do you want to watch it?
Hadeyya: I like it so much, Kabeer.
Al-Kabeer: No, no series means no series.
Hadeyya: This is absolutely unfair.
Al-Kabeer: Subject is damn closed. Get lost! Get lost! Prepare something for us to damn eat.
Hadeyya: O.K.

In this scene, as in previous ones, Al-Kabeer does not address Hadeyya in her name; rather, he gives her the name بت (lit. 'girl', but here more of a 'broad') with the degrading deletion of the medial consonant 'نـ' (originally should be بت) (Extract 13). In contrast, she addresses him with his name أى (Oh, Kabeer) (8) times three of which were accompanied by the word 'please', or أى (please) as shown in extracts (13 & 14). Al-Kabeer, on the other hand, dismisses her with phrases like خين (Hey, Hey, I don't need such nuisance), in (14) and المانى (subject is damn closed) (Get lost! Get lost!) in (15).

Like other scenes, this scene reflects and inculcates the ideology of accepted masculine hegemony. Al-Kabeer is the decision maker and he is the one who puts an end to the conversation, as shown in extract (15). His use of the phrases جرحى جمدها جمدها جمدها (subject is damn closed) and لع مفتش تمثلية بعين مفتش تمثلية (No. no series means no series.). He also uses words with negative connotations when addressing her such as ذمن (damned), خرت (nuissance), انجلبلى يالانجلبلى (get lost! get lost!), تغير (broad) and لع (No).

There is another mention of other females when Al-Kabeer refers to the singer Hayfa using the word 'الشوقى (dancing' voluptuously) in (16). Here, the singer is not seen in light of her voice but of her body, presented as a sex object.
4.3.2 Scene (8)

This scene lasts for 3.18 minutes (starting 2.22 till 5.40). This is one of the scenes in which Hadeyya talks longer in her dialogue with Al-Kabeer. Of the (199) words exchanged by the two, Hadeyya utters (152) words as compared to Al-Kabeer’s (47) words. Hadeyya’s endeavor to convince Al-Kabeer that Thomas, the American friend of his brother Johnny, is a spy accounts for the larger number of words uttered by her. The scene opens with Al-Kabeer and Hadeyya having dinner while Thomas enters to ask Al-Kabeer some questions about the conditions of workers in his estate. When Thomas leaves, Hadeyya convinces Al-Kabeer that Thomas is a spy, quoting the famous ‘Gomaa Al-Shawari’ and ‘Rafat Al-Hagri’, yet another iconic Arabic-language espionage series.

Though this scene does not have a point of difference or argument between Al-Kabeer and Hadeyya, it still contains forms of linguistic abuse when Al-Kabeer addresses Hadeyya. Al-Kabeer uses the derogatory form of the word بت(’girl’ with the deletion of ‘n’ when addressing Hadeyya. So, یا بیت(’you, girl’) is used two times and یا بیت(’you, broad’) once. He never calls her by her first name even though she calls him یا بیت(’Kabeer; meaning ‘boss’) 4 times. Moreover, the scene opens with a statement that reflects the expected type of interaction between a man and his wife as he orders her to pass the salad to him with phrase یا بیت(’fetch me some salad, girl’) with a commanding tone and no use of any form of politeness (See extract 17 below).

Extract (17)

Al-Kabeer: Fetch me some salad, girl.
Al-Kabeer: Series are an obsession to you, broad. Detective Korombo, and the like.
Al-Kabeer: a viewpoint after all, girl.

4.3.3 Scene (9)

This 2.28-minute scene (starting at 8.52 till 11.20) marks another discursive change in the relation between Hadeyya and Al-Kabeer. The scene starts with Al-Kabeer watching a sexy singer and, on seeing Hadeyya coming, he switches the channel, cursing his luck. Hadeyya shows him pictures taken by Thomas whom she is convinced is a spy. Hadeyya argues with Al-Kabeer on the necessity of reporting this to the Egyptian intelligence. Reluctant, Al-Kabeer fears the involvement of his brother, Johnny, who is a friend of Thomas - another mock imitation of scenes in the espionage series ‘Gomaa Al-Shawari’.

The dialogue between Hadeyya and Al-Kabeer is made up of (207) words, (114) of which were uttered by Al-Kabeer and (93) by Hadeyya. This scene differs from other scenes in that it is only the scene Al-Kabeer calls Hadeyya by her name twice (Extract 18 below) and uses a phrase that marks his appreciation of her opinion یا بیت(’(What do you think?) and یا بیت(’What should we do now?’) (Extracts 18&19). Only in this scene does Hadeyya guides, corrects and defies Al-Kabeer. She says to him یا بیت(’Don’t be afraid, Kabeer’) (Extract 18), tells him یا بیت(’Wrong’) and accuses him of not being patriotic or what? (’Kabeer, haven’t I told you?’) (Extract 19). This is meant, in a comic way, to be the only case in which the wife might defy her husband when it comes to state security matters. In spite of such detected discursive differences in this scene, Hadeyya’s habit of calling her husband یا بیت(’boss’) remains unchanged.

This scene, however, contains phrases of verbal abuse against Hadeyya. Al-Kabeer uses the derogatory form بت(’girl’) two times and accuses her of talking nonsense (’Girl, have you flipped?’). (Extract 18) - a jibe to which she does not show any sign of objection.
Extract (18)

Hadeyya: I found that he left them on the table downstairs. I took them and saw them. I found out that he took a photo of every part of the town: lands, mosques, houses, etc.

Al-Kabeer: Seems you're right after all, girl. This boy, Thomas, will turn out to be a spy or what.

Hadeyya: Haven't I told you, Kabeer?

Al-Kabeer: What should we do now?

Hadeyya: We should tip him off.

Al-Kabeer: To whom?

Hadeyya: The Egyptian Intelligence Service.

Al-Kabeer: Have you flipped, girl?

Hadeyya: Don't be afraid, Kabeer. You go and tell them everything, and they'll handle it.

Extract (19)

Al-Kabeer: Don't know, Hadeyya. I'm concerned about such tip-off.

Hadeyya: Should we know that he's a spy and leave'em? Hey, Kabeer, aren't you patriotic or what?

Al-Kabeer: Of course, I am. But, frankly, I'm afraid that my brother, Johnny, is involved with this Thomas. I have an idea. What do you think if I ask him first? I tell Johnny, are you involved with Thomas or not? What do you think?

Hadeyya: Wrong, Kabeer. If you do this, you will be forewarning them that you know everything. Then they will conceal all evidence and run away. You go and tip them off, and then we'll see your brother Johnny's issue.

4.4 Episode I (Season III)

The third season of Al-Kabeer was aired in 2013. It marked the introduction of another long-lost brother of Al-Kabeer, Hazloum. In episode (1) of this season, there are (4) scenes that involve Hadeyya and Al-Kabeer along with other characters (Scenes 10, 11, 12 &13). The episode marks the first time there are hints of the type of dialogue that takes place between Hadeyya and Al-Kabeer concerning their intimate relation. This occurs in scenes (10, 12& 13) that will be discussed below.

4.4.1 Scene (10)

Scene (10) lasts 2.38 minutes (starts at 4.28 min. till 7.06 min.). It opens with Al-Kabeer shouting for Hadeyya as their two crying toddlers whom he failed to calm down in the previous scene. Hadeyya is crying as she is watching a Turkish soap opera, very popular in Egypt at this time. The dialogue between Al-Kabeer and Hadeyya is composed of (322) words, (200) for Al-Kabeer and (122) for Hadeyya.

In this scene, Al-Kabeer continues to insult Hadeyya and she continues to accept it as normal. Thus, we find him, at the opening of the scene, calling her ‘(a cow)’ and she answers by ‘(What’s wrong, Kabeer?)’, using the apologetic word ‘(please forgive me)’ pleading with him to let her watch a T.V. episode (Extract 20). He also uses phrases denoting violence such as ‘(may your joints get broken’, or ‘may you burn in hell)’ and ‘(move it!)’ (Extract 21).
He mocks her when she asks about the reason the kids are crying by saying 'They've lost all their money in the Stock Market. Are we kidding, girl!' (Extract 21). Even when he is flirting with her hinting to a prospective intimate meeting between them, he still refers to her as 'girl' (4 times in the scene). His verbal flirtation is no more than likening her to a time wasting activity, which is جزيرة لب (Roughly 'as delicious as nibbling nuts', or 'luscious') (Extract 22). Hadeyya uses words denoting obedience and submission (‘O K’, said disapprovingly) (2 times). Once again, she uses his name that shows superiority (‘Oh, Kabeer’ or ‘boss’) (3 times). It is worth noting that only in this flirtatious mode that Al-Kabeer apologizes to Hadeyya for any action he does, as he uses the phrase لاموامده (‘I’m sorry’) to apologize for using the phone when they are supposed to go up to their room (Extract 22).

Extract (20)

Al-Kabeer: Hey, you, Cow.
Hadeyya: Yes, Kabeer; What is it?
Al-Kabeer: Hey, Hey, Hey. Are you weeping?
Hadeyya: Your kids are weeping, too.
Al-Kabeer: Are we in the weeping season or what?
Hadeyya: Forgive me, Kabeer; I'm just watching the series.

Extract (21)

Al-Kabeer: Oh, You're neglecting your kids crying upstairs and you're watching Turkish series!
Hadeyya: Why are they crying?
Al-Kabeer: Normal, like all kids in the world. They've lost their money in the Stock Market. Are we kidding, girl? They've wetted their pants.
Hadeyya: What? Number 1 or Number 2?
Al-Kabeer: Number 1 and Number 2.
Hadeyya: OK, I'll go up to them during the break.
Al-Kabeer: May you burn in hell. How incredibly indifferent you are! Come on, move it!
Hadeyya (disapprovingly): OK.
4.4.2 Scene (11)

This is a scene that involves five characters: Al-Kabeer, Hadeyya, Hazl'oum (Al-Kabeer's brother), a police officer, and Ashraf (Al-Kabeer's Assistant). The police officer comes to investigate the robbery that occurred in Al-Kabeer's storehouse. Hadeyya answers on behalf of Al-Kabeer creating a comic effect and Hazl'oum smashes the police officer's car to add to the comedy of the situation.

This scene reflects how Hadeyya is referred to by Al-Kabeer as 'my wife'; lit. 'the group', a nomenclature used by ultra-conservative, low-educated husbands to hide their wives' names), by the police officer as ('ma'am'; Lit. 'Her excellency Hazl'oum, or 'pilgrim', again used more to hide a wife's name than to show respect for her)(Extract 23) and by Hazl'oum as('Ms. Hadeyya) (Extract 24). Hadeyya interferes in the dialogue between Al-Kabeer and the police officer more than once, preventing Al-Kabeer from answering in (23) and giving opposite answers than those of his. So, when he answers with a 'yes' she says 'no' in (24). She also tells the police officer how to proceed with the investigation. Al-Kabeer's only reaction is to introduce he (24) as('Ms. Haja') (Extract 24).

Extract (23)

Police officer: Tell me, Kabeer: Don't you suspect a certain person that stole the silo?
Al-Kabeer: Maybe.
Hadeyya: Who will he suspect, sir?
Police officer: The whole town is our folk.
Al-Kabeer: My wife.
Police officer: O.K. How do you do, ma'am?

Extract (24)

Police officer: Don't you have enemies or was there somebody you had a problem with before?
Al-Kabeer: Yes, three years ago.
Hadeyya: No, there wasn't. Do we still have to doubt or not? In all cases, you will take the DNA of the whole town and match it with the DNA you will find in the silo. Then, you will catch the perpetrators.
Police officer: What is this DNT, Kabeer?
Al-Kabeer: Such talk is in CNmzarra (name of Al-Kabeer's town). Are we kidding? Be with me and ignore her.

......
Hadeyya: Most welcome, Hazl'oum
Hazl'oum: Thanks, Ms. Hadeyya. Any Lunch?

4.4.3 Scenes (12 & 13)

These two scenes show Al-Kabeer and Hadeyya eating and flirting in the privacy of their bedroom. In scene (12), both Al-Kabeer and Hadeyya are seen openly flirting, singing and dancing. It is one of the rare scenes in which Al-Kabeer makes advances to his wife, uttering explicit flirtatious words. Al-Kabeer uses the masculine form of the second person pronoun and verb (you'; in the masculine form) as well as the masculine, rather than the feminine, internal vowing of the verb (Lit. 'win the admiration of') when addressing Hadeyya (Lit. 'You're so sexy') in (25).
Replacing feminine pronouns and internal vowelings with masculine pronouns and internal vowelings is a common linguistic practice in Arab-speaking cultures, especially used in flirtatious modes of discourse. Even in this flirtatious discourse, Al-Kabeer uses the derogatory nominals ('girl') (2 times) and 'broad' (2 times) in addressing Hadeyya, and only once does he use her first name. In this scene, Hadeyya praises Al-Kabeer's virility ('You're the man!') (in 26). It is worth noting that Al-Kabeer switches mode the minute he hears Hadeyya calling him. He uses the nominal 'girl' and the verb 'come and talk to me...'. "Al-Kabeer: Don't you like it?"

Extract (26)

Hadeyya: Please, Kabeer; close the subject. We shouldn’t waste the night talking about this pathetic Hazl’oum.

Al-Kabeer: Can't agree more. But what wonderful makeup you're wearing?

Hadeyya: What do you think of the 'décor' I'm making?

Al-Kabeer: You, broad. Haven't i told you before to stop watching Amir Shihab's (fashion) program?

Hadeyya: Don't you like it?

Al-Kabeer: How do I not like it? You're so sexy!...

Hadeyya: (Singing) "and come and talk to me...", Kabeer; "and come and talk to me."

Extract (25)

Hadeyya: Please, Kabeer; close the subject. We shouldn’t waste the night talking about this pathetic Hazl’oum.

Al-Kabeer: Can't agree more. But what wonderful makeup you're wearing?

Hadeyya: What do you think of the 'décor' I'm making?

Al-Kabeer: You, broad. Haven't i told you before to stop watching Amir Shihab's (fashion) program?

Hadeyya: Don't you like it?

Al-Kabeer: How do I not like it? You're so sexy!

Hadeyya: (Singing) "and come and talk to me...", Kabeer; "and come and talk to me."

Scene 13 is a continuation of scene (12) after the short interruption by Hazl’oum. In this scene, Al-Kabeer objects to Hadeyya wearing black and complains of being turned off by Hazl’oum’s interruptions. Hadeyya tries to get him back to the mood (eat something and you’ll be back to your mood) in (27) below. When he realizes that his stolen money will be back, he dumps her and orders her to sleep (Sleep, girl. Sleep Hazl’oum), using both the pejorative ‘girl’ and her first name Hadeyya. Al-Kabeer continues to use both the pejorative ‘girl’ and her first name (2 times) when addressing her. It is worth noting that in these two scenes, in which Al-Kabeer flirts with Hadeyya, he uses her first name, Hadeyya, (4 times), exceeding the total number of times in all other 11 scenes discussed in this study.
Extract (27)

Al-Kabeer: (Singing) Oh, my soul mate... Hey, Hadeyya, why are you dressed in black?
Hadeyya: What is it, Kabeer? Weren't you who told me to cover myself?
Al-Kabeer: I told you to cover yourself, but I never told you that we would visit the graveyard. It's even ominous.
Hadeyya: OK.
Al-Kabeer: This boy's (i.e. Hazl'oum) turned me off.
Hadeyya: Never mind, Kabeer, come and eat something and you'll be back to your mood. Shall I bring you some soup for a start?
Al-Kabeer: Give me any appetizer.
Hadeyya: OK. Take this pigeon.
Al-Kabeer: (Right before beginning to eat, there's a knock at the door).
I'll kill'em, Hadeyya, I'll kill'em.
Hazl'oum tells him that the police have located the thieves' whereabouts.
Al-Kabeer: Good news! Sleep, girl, sleep, Hadeyya.

5. Summary of findings

In this section, I will briefly discuss the results of the analysis in four points; namely: The most salient names and titles used by Al-Kabeer to address Hadeyya (Figure 1); the percentage of Positive/Neutral/Negative Names and titles used by Al-Kabeer to address Hadeyya (Figure 2); Words used by Al-Kabeer Collocating with Hadeyya (Table 1) and the types of verbal processes used by Hadeyya (Figure 3).

The analysis has shown that as far as names and titles used by Al-Kabeer to address Hadeyya in the four episodes subject to analysis are concerned, the derogatory word 'بتي' (girl) with the deletion of the medial consonant /n/ (girl) was the one most commonly used, scoring 34%. Al-Kabeer called her by her first name in 17% only of the times. Derogatory words such as 'هتحره' (foolish) and 'محرمة' (woman) accounted for more than half of the names and titles used by Al-Kabeer when addressing his wife (54%). Direct insult words such as 'بجرة' (cow) and 'هتيرة' (untidy) constituted (20%) (See Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Names & titles used by Al-Kabeer to address Hadeyya

![Pie chart showing the distribution of names and titles used by Al-Kabeer to address Hadeyya.]

- %34 (Girl)
- %9 (Broad)
- %3 (Hadeyya)
- %11 (Cow)
- %3 (Foolish)
- %17 (Woman)
- %17 (The group)
- %3 (Naughty girl)
In general, Al-Kabeer's mode of address to Hadeyya can be categorized in terms of positive (6%), neutral (14%) and negative (80%) (See Figure 2). It has been noticed here that the staggeringly high negative mode of address was detected even though in the 13 scenes under investigation there were only (3) scenes that contained argument between Al-Kabeer and Hadeyya that could have been a reason behind such negative epithets. This leads us to the conclusion that Al-Kabeer addressed his wife negatively even if he was not instigated to do so.

Figure 2: Positive/Neutral/Negative Names and titles used by Al-Kabeer to address Hadeyya

As for the words frequently collocating with Hadeyya in Al-Kabeer's discourse, it was found that they mostly carry a negative collocation, such as طﻒﺢ ('damn eat'), غﺒﺎوه ('stupidity'), ﻓﺘﻰ ('meddling clueless'), ﻦﯿﻠﮫ ('damned'),.enum. The positively collocative words were only mentioned in association with her sexy character in flirting scenes (See Table 1 below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words with Positive Collocations</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Words with Negative Collocations</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>لعﻄة</td>
<td>Invitingly stylish</td>
<td>جﺎﻣﻮﺳﺔ</td>
<td>Buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ﺟﺰﺟﺰة لب</td>
<td>Luscious, scrumptious</td>
<td>ﺑﮭﯿﻤﺔ</td>
<td>beast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ﺷﺠﺎوه</td>
<td>Naughty girl</td>
<td>ﻏﺒﺎوه</td>
<td>Stupid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ﺴﺠﻮﻋﯿﮫ</td>
<td>nuisance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>طﻔﺢ</td>
<td>different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>مﺮار</td>
<td>bitterness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ﻓﺘﻰ</td>
<td>Meddling cluelessly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ﻦﯿﻠﮫ</td>
<td>damned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ﻣﺠﺎن</td>
<td>Crazy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yet, in spite of Al-Kabeer's linguistically abusive style in addressing Hadeyya, the data revealed that she, on the other hand, was more opposing than agreeing, more objecting than consenting, more in the giving end of advice than in the receiving end, more rebellious than submissive. Her verbal processes fall more into the categories of giving advice and objecting (53%) than those of apologizing, appealing, asking for advice, praising and consenting (47%) (See Figure 3 below).
6. Conclusion

The paper is one of a series of papers that attempts to shed light on linguistic sexism and the way language is used to disparage women and represent them negatively. For this purpose, the genre of sitcoms and the discursive mode of humor were chosen. I ran a qualitative and quantitative analysis of four episodes (13 scenes) of The Egyptian sitcom *Alkabeer Awy* that represent three seasons that were aired in 2010, 2011, and 2012 respectively. The theoretical framework of feminist CDA was employed with three tools of analysis: naming, lexical choices and titles, transitivity, and collocations.

The data showed that in the (13) scenes subject to analysis, the use of disparaging words or direct insults to refer to Hadeyya was utilized as a source of humor even in situations that included no argument between Hadeyya and Al-Kabeer. Thus, she was called by her first name in (3) scenes only. This constituted (17%) of the names given to her, the majority of which fall under the category of not only sexist words but direct insults as well. The data also revealed a high percentage of verbal abuse practised by Al-Kabeer against Hadeyya. Words used in collocation with Hadeyya were shown to be largely negative. It was also shown that she was only praised in terms of sexual attributes in the three flirting scenes. On the other hand, the data revealed that Hadeyya, the clearly cleverer of the two, accepted direct insults from Al-Kabeer and even apologized when insulted even though there was no reason for apology (17%). It was also shown that she was more objecting (26%) than consenting against her will (9%), and more giving advice (28%) than asking for advice (6%).

It has been emphasized that Hadeyya’s acceptance of verbal abuse, direct insults and disparaging words as the normal way of discourse between a man and his wife combined with the use of such verbal abuse as a source of humor may have serious impact on tolerating and accepting prejudices against women. As it was shown by several studies, sexist humor, such as the one subject to analysis, creates a context in which men with sexist attitudes can defend the gender status quo (Ford 2013).
It was also shown in studies conducted in the fields of psychology and sociology that sexist humor has serious negative effects that may mount to tolerating rape and physical violence against women. Based on all the above, I can conclude that in a patriarchal society such as Egypt, when this level of highly prejudiced language is presented to a variety of audience through the vital medium of television in the humor mode, it is expected to denigrate the image of women and their role in the society, especially in rural areas. Such sitcoms are not a benign source of amusement but rather very harmful one that provides a safe soil to grow sexist prejudices and justify the dogma of masculine superiority.

7. Bibliography


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