

Social gender inequality: A critical discourse analysis

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Abstract

Language as a social practice shapes the identities of social actors. Furthermore, language can create imbalanced power relationships among them. The relationship between men and women in Iraq is imbalanced as the man manipulates the woman. Thus, a submissive identity is imposed on the woman, and her voice is silenced. Our community claims that the issue of gender inequality originated in, or is supported by Islam. By applying critical discourse analysis (CDA) techniques, this study aims to linguistically investigate whether Islam discriminates between men and women or not and will explore how power relationships are related to gender discourse in the Qur'an, which is the main component that reflects and reinforces the social structure and ideologies of Muslims life. The researcher will argue that religion can be misused to impose gender inequality by the patriarchal society and its traditional culture, where the norms empower the man to control the woman. That is, gender discrimination is the result of socialization. This study will argue that the issue of gender inequality did not originate from the Qur'an as it is made interpreted by our community.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, gender inequality, Qur'an, men and women, Iraq.

Introduction

The term gender refers to the social roles, rights and responsibilities of men and women, in particular it refers to "the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men" (Dumas, 2020: 25). Gender inequality refers to the social practice of discrimination between men and women, essentially seeing them as in unequal positions, considering certain behaviours and actions as appropriate for only one of them, and creating a state of inequality between them (Usta et al., 2016). Gender inequality is a social practice of inequality that happens when one side is more powerful, given more recognition than the other.

This practice can be found in almost all countries, though to different degrees. Iraq is experiencing this problem even more than before, it has returned to more traditional type of patriarchy. Women have become less 'free' in recent times due to the many successive wars the country passed through, specifically the war against ISIS, sustaining this negative culture, disseminated by the media. Combat accentuates divisions (though with some exceptions) ISIS might have very strong gender divisions – or male orientated with certain expectations of women as subordinates. Women are treated differently to men as prisoners. Moreover, ISIS unmodernised and refuses liberties to women such as economic independence.

The cultural structure of Iraq is constituted in a way that endorses male superiority. The man is given the leadership and more prominent roles that form the essence of life, while women are given only subordinate roles; and are allocated an inferior position based on gender. Thus, an imbalanced power relationship is sustained. However, Iraqi men value this culture

and are not willing to change their discriminatory role, claiming that this cultural orientation is a responsibility that is religiously and morally imposed upon them. Allah says: 'O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may 'get to' know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware' (Al Hujurat, 13).

The possibility that giving a woman a role with equivalent power might actually help in the development of the nation is completely neglected. 'Women in Iraq have endured many years of repression, as a result of a strong conservative culture, economic sanctions and armed conflicts. Iraqi women today suffer from insufficient educational opportunities and healthcare and limited access to the labour market, as well as high levels of violence and inequality' (Vilaro & Bittar, (2018: 4).

The awareness of the fact that equality was attributed to both men and women by Allah can mitigate the problem, and indicates that this problem can be dealt with by resocialization. Appropriate social reorientation could facilitate greater equality between genders and it is necessary to be ideologically oriented as well to the belief that women deserve greater equality. This awareness can be achieved by applying critical analysis to the discourse of gender, highlighting the way this problem is shaped and promoted, as well as its consequences. If cultural reorientation takes place, the issue of gender inequality can possibly be solved.

To emphasise the necessity of equality between men and women, Allah tends to use certain events or stories that can create affinity among readers, hence equality is called on by the use or choice of certain vocabulary. Words that can morally touch the feeling of the reader are effectively used to drive them to the actual intended message, creating them differently, and therefore direct them to the importance of equality, coloured by that distinction between them. Persuasion blended with commentaries is used in the discourse of the Qur'an to kindly impact the man's feeling, attitude and action towards the woman.

Statement Of The Problem

Gender inequality has been inculcated in people by the Iraqi society. It has been, intentionally or unintentionally, sustained, based on the claim that this issue is a sacred rule founded by Islam. As the issue is religiously promoted and established, it is taken for granted, and cannot be violated or resisted easily. Furthermore, very few scholars, if any, have shed light on the issue in Iraq and tried to find a remedy to solve it. The way men and women are treated and the specification of roles assigned to them promotes disparity. Gender inequality can have a negative impact on the development of Iraq as the capacity of women is not being invested in social structures like education, business and leadership. Some women have the potential and motivation to participate in building the country. Depriving them of their opportunities to help in the process of developing the nation and the participation in leadership prevents them from doing their best. Feeling underestimated and wronged can have a negative influence on the mental health and balance of the community. Consequently, the development and stability of Iraq is slowed down.

Objectives

This research aims to:

1. shed light on roots of the issue of gender inequality, investigating whether religion had been misused to serve the interests of the dominant forces,

2. challenge and mitigate gender inequality linguistically by critical discourse analysis (CDA henceforth) of verses from the Qur'an,
3. resist the issue of inequality with awareness. People who are aware can play a decisive role in solving this issue,
4. highlight the fact that gender inequality is at the basis of the social patriarchal structure, abusing power relationship between male and female and violating the balance of creation,
5. attract attention to the issue of gender inequality and its negative impact on the development of Iraq,
6. create the awareness of the importance of language in determining our relationships,
7. call for equal treatment of women and participation in the process of building the nation must be advocated.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this project is that gender inequality is the outcome of socialization sustained by the patriarchal structure of society, based on the claim that this is attributed to the belief of Islam. By increasing awareness of the issue, of the way gender discrimination and inequality are linguistically reproduced and promoted, can reduce the gap between the men and women. People who have this awareness, knowing that they are given equal rights and responsibilities by Allah, can achieve equality. The main and only criterion stated in the Qur'an that is used to judge and differentiate between men and women is work, as in 'Whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will surely bless them with a good life, and We will certainly reward them according to the best of their deeds.' (an Nahl, 97). This can highlight the necessity of the integration of women in leadership and building the nation. Resocialization and cultural reorientation can be achieved by increasing awareness that is inculcated by critical discourse analysis of the issue. Islam is not against women as it calls for equality between men and women.

Importance of the study

It is important to study gender inequality because it impacts the mental health, balance and development of the country. Recognising and treating this issue is a basic foundation for any society to move forward, enlightening the reader that equal treatment of men and women is a holy rule.

Data

There is no doubt that the Noble Qur'an is the first pillar on which Islamic Sharia is relied upon. In order to understand the issue of inequality, we must return to it, understand the reasons for revelation, and the historical context in which the verses were sent down. The language of the Qur'an functions as the main source of laws that reflects and reinforces the social structure and ideologies of Muslims life. Thus, I will analyse this language and try to identify evidence of gender inequality in order to examine this claim. Thus, verses from the Qur'an (an electronic copy translated by Dr. Mustafa Khattab, the Clear Qur'an) that address the men and women were randomly chosen to be critically analysed in order to find out how Islam treats women. The CDA techniques, Naming of social actors including Individualisation and Collectivisation and Specification and Genericisation, will be applied in this study. The data includes the following verses: (An Nisa, 7), (Al Ahzab, 35), (Al A'raf, 189), (Al Hujurat, 13), (Ghafir, 40), (Al Tawba, 71), (Al Imran, 195), (An Nisa, 124), (An Nisa, 32), (an Nahl, 97), (An Nisa, 1), (Al Imran, 195), (Al Hajj, 5), (Al Najim, 45), (Luqman, 14), (58 -59 Al Nahl) and (Al Maidah, 75) out of sixty verses equated men and women with complete equality, in

capacity, responsibility, assignment, reward and punishment.

Gender inequality

Islam established a state based on justice and equality. However, Islam was turned into an oppressor of slaves and women for centuries, though it had begun with revolutionary teachings to support them and restore their humanity. Al-Alawi (1997: 9) asserted that 'the driving force of history and its sanctities is not belief and religion, but rather the political and social conflict'. Successive rulers adopted thinkers to reformulate the Islamic ideology in a way that suits their interests, legitimacy and hegemony, and justify their control over society. Islam became an ideological 'justification' and religious legitimacy for their domination (Abu Zaid, 2004).

Some texts were extracted from the original speeches or writings and out of their general context, and circulated as sacred texts that practiced discrimination and violence against women over fifteen centuries. Many thinkers have elaborated on the issue of generalizing from some temporary worldly rulings, isolating these rulings from historical events and context, and hence interpreting texts without looking at their specific causes and motives. A great number of jurisprudence books made understanding Islamic religion almost impossible for people. Therefore, jurists' religious rulings and interpretations began to raise to the level of the sacred. Al Rahbi (2014: 12) states that 'all practices of violence and discrimination against women have been shrouded in the sacred, by thousands of religious scholars and jurists, making the mere talk of any abolition of discrimination against women an adventure fraught with dangers that may lead to ostracism and exclusion, and the accusation of apostasy and infidelity, and even the shedding of their blood'. Moreover, their rulings are applied to the masses of Muslims without controversy or discussion even if they conflict with the Qur'an, and no one dares to doubt them. Any issue related to the developments of life is governed by jurisprudential texts, not the Holy Qur'an, which is the origin and main source of guidance. Article 3 of the Syrian Constitution, for example, states that "Islamic jurisprudence is a main source of legislation," and jurisprudence means human rulings, which, with the passage of time have become sacred texts that cannot be changed.

Furthermore, acquisition of social beliefs can take place through observation and imitation of the behaviour of others (Bandura, 1977). A negative gendered behaviour may be encouraged if it is approved, or uncriticised (Macmillan & Kruttschnitt, 2005). Araji (2000) states that societal dominant beliefs and norms sustain a patriarchal structure where women are underestimated. Gender discrimination is not seen as an issue by the Iraqi people; that it is 'naturalised' and therefore tolerated even by those who are disadvantaged by it. Women are believed to be the possession of men (Douki, et al., 2003). For men, the patriarchal system achieves order; maintaining his power over woman (Ruxton, 2004). Normally, man has to manipulate all aspects of the woman's life as the only sacred authority. This belief is naturalized, according to Ruxton, holiness is attributed to the belief because it is reinforced by Islam as a necessity for a balanced life (Ruxton, 2004).

Scholars showed that gender inequality is common in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) (Usta et al., 2007; Arrabyee, 2008; Maziak & Asfar, 2003). These scholars assert that men dominate and controls over women (Anderson, 1997). According to the patriarchal tribal system based on sexuality and social class, men in Iraq are given power over women (Araji, 2000). Gender inequality has emerged from social custom and practice from tribal system. Very

few scholars have addressed this issue (Usta et al., 2016), which has a negative impact on the physical and mental health of woman (Haj-Yahia, 1999) and can lead to tension between men and women (Nazir, 2005). Yet some scholars like Kaplan et al, argue recently that the patriarchal structure of Arab culture sustains discrimination between men and women (2011), based on gender and is inherited over generations (Elsanousi & Anami, 2004). Gender inequality has emerged from social custom and practice from the ruling tribal system. This structure is translated into beliefs, values, and behaviours that manipulate our life (Shaffer, 2005). This process of discrimination starts in the family, and is then transferred to school and community. This culture impacts the way we think and behave.

In the nineteenth century, some thinkers call to implement reason and thought in their writing to advance the nation. Research of issues like inequality should not be limited to religious scholars in a country where the majority of its population adheres to the Islamic religion, and the Arab Islamic civilization is the source of the basic prevalent culture, which governs the way of life of their societies.' Al Rahbi (2014) demonstrated that most of the rulings concern women, such as inadequacy to leadership, are not based on the Qur'an and are not the right interpretations of the events.

Methods of research: Critical Discourse Analysis

The approach that can be followed to interpret the discourse of gender in the Holy Qur'an must not contradict to the essence of the faith based on justice. It is not possible to accept interpretations that contradict the sacred text, reason and logic. It must also adopt the historical contextual reading approach that depends on understanding the meaning from a broad perspective of the concerned issue. That is, religious or social customs that preceded Islam must also be taken into consideration. It is also possible to distinguish between what Islam fully or partially accepts with the suggestion of the importance of its development.

Scholars like Muhammad Abduh and Qasim Amin have encouraged the rational interpretation of Islam, using reason in understanding religion, science and civilization" (Abu Zayd, 1997). When studied the discourse of women's rulings within the historical context, Al-Taher Haddad asserts that changing conditions necessarily requires changing the rulings (Abu Zayd, 1997). Abu Zayd called for a "new reading." Based on one main condition of the interpretations that is justice, and conformity to the current situation, and the essence of Islam.

The aim of this study is to use this analysis to show how gender inequality is reinforced by language use in Iraq. Thus, the most suitable approach to study the issue of gender inequality is critical discourse analysis (CDA) which is a linguistic investigation of discourse that aims to reveal the role of language in the reproduction of social structures. Van Dijk (1993b) states that power relationships are achieved by controlling the context of a discourse situation through language. CDA can explain, analyse and reveal hidden ideologies (through constructions like presuppositions and implications) linguistically blended in discourse (verbal and non-verbal). CDA goes beyond the mere description of discourse within the context in which it grows (van Dijk, 1993a). CDA can identify various linguistic features that legitimize the abuse of power through embedded ideology. Some of these features can be related to the organization and context of the discourse in ways that situate the audience in a certain desired situation where they and the context in which they try to express their right of speech are manipulated and restricted. For example, speakers may be silenced by hiding critical aspects of a certain culture introduced in discourse using lexicalization or transitivity, or by affecting the audience's

emotions to create uncertainty. In the patriarchal cultural context in Iraq, the roles of participants are restricted; men control the main roles and decisions even in conversation; important social roles are limited to men due to the imbalance in access to resources. That is, the men's power limits women's roles and reinforces her lack of access to sources. Patriarchal power is increased in Iraqi society due to eastern social, cultural, and moral traditions that over decades has diminished the woman into being submissive receivers of man's decisions, which are taken for granted. The framework of CDA and its approach to language as a social practice that constitutes cultural ideologies provides the tools for analysing the discourse of gender, and sexuality as a socially constituted practice within discourse.

Van Dijk (1996) believes that CDA can reveal embedded ideologies that can change power relationships and achieve dominance. Manipulation can be achieved through linguistic strategies of: 'access' to resources. That is, choose the social actors and direct them towards the intended direction that serve the interests of a certain institution. In other words, impacting the attitude of the social actors can change them into active agents within certain circumstances to achieve the intended interests like the role of media in shaping sectarian identities (Hassoon, 2019). The contextual circumstances of a communicative event are the main factors in deciding the kind of language in use. The language of the Qur'an addressing the concerned issue will be semantically analysed in this article, within its context to explore the orientation of Islam towards gender inequality.

Observation of the linguistic performance of social actors in a communicative event, will be undertaken in this study, with reference through analysis of verses from the Qur'an in order to discern how language can reshape social structure. This process of observation will be followed by semantic analyses of language, by investigating encoded meaning that may imply gendered bias. Furthermore, CDA can show how social actors are addressed, forming power relationships. Thus, this study is a textual analysis of the linguistic production of the social event, its social actors, and their cultural contexts. As Kress notes (1990: 90–1), social and cultural organization can be investigated through language in use, reaching encoded meanings of the message, in order to reveal how a certain culture is shaped and how it can be challenged. The investigation of the language of the Qur'an can show equal power relationships based on gender are maintained. That is, the Qur'an linguistically does not promote gender inequality so it is in the misuse of its language that such divisions are reinforced. The following analysis can show how a communicative event can be a means to constitute social and cultural values.

The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) Techniques applied in this study

With the aim of showing that the Qur'an does not necessarily promote gender inequality, the following is an explanation of the techniques that are applied in this study to establish how equality between men and women and their integrative relationship are stated in the Qur'an and what criteria it uses to judge each of them. The linguistic analysis of the data of this study applies these CDA techniques in order to find out how the Qur'an addresses 'man' and 'woman'. The way Qur'an represents 'man' and 'woman' can show whether the case of gender inequality is established by Islam or not. If Qur'an does not support gender discrimination, then the Iraqi community characterized by the patriarchal social structure that support the manipulation of man over woman, to whom the imbalanced power relationship between them can be attributed.

Lexicalization

The technique of LEXICALISATION refers to the choice of lexical items used in communicating a certain discourse. This technique discursively participates in forming groups,

indicating type of relationship which exists between them. That is shaped by choice of lexical items, which is depended on the writer's position and aim (Van Dijk, 2004). In discourse, the intended meaning and message can be influenced by the choice of the words that can articulate the exact intention. Hence, interpreting the right meaning can result in the desired impact on the reader. That is, words that connote unity and solidarity, as in: 'O humanity! Be mindful of your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and from it He created its mate, and through both.....' (An Nisa, 1) can position the readers in a situation that is completely different from words that implicate divisions such as 'Whenever one of them is given the good news of a baby girl, his face grows gloomy, as he suppresses his rage. He hides himself from the people

(58 -59 Al Nahl). Consequently, the desired intention of the writer is sustained within the reading process.

Richardson (2007) prioritizes the examination of the vocabulary used in communicating discourse, stating that words lexically have connotations and denotations. A word has a primary literal meaning in its ability to communicate objects, concepts, social actions and relations. Through vocabulary, a culture can be imparted and inculcated (Billig, 2008). LEXICALISATION analysis can reveal the implicit ideologies and attitude of Islam towards women.

Overlexicalisation is the repetition of certain words in discourse more than others. Particular lexical items are repeatedly used in a certain discourse to unveil a certain aspect of reality (Teo, 2000). This technique can achieve 'overcompleteness' by overpersuasion, which is an ideological tool that refers to the excessive description and emphasis of a controversial problem. It can only show the writer's anxiety towards that issue (Machin and Mayr, 2012). Thus, deviations from the conventional writing rules must be questioned as this strategy can often indicate ideological implication. As the analysis of lexical items heavily used represent and reflect an important aspect of reality. That is, religion is used to legislate discrimination of women.

Naming of Social Actors

In discourse, naming of social actors is related to the way they are represented and positioned (Machin and Mayr, 2012). Different features, roles, and identities of the same person can be employed to characterize them differently (Richardson, 2007). Again, this action is linguistically achieved through the choice of certain terms not others. NAMING OF SOCIAL ACTORS is significant to the identification, classification and particularization of social actors for a certain purpose that may be: psychological, social or political, and to particularise a social actor (Van Leeuwen, 1996).

The writer includes values and activities within the linguistic choices used to characterise a 'person', presenting them either as neutral or distinctive in order to realise moral, social and psychological interests (Reisgil and Wodak, 2001 quoted in Machin and Mayr, 2012). That is, these linguistic choices help to implicitly define the nature of men and women, and consequences of this intended reading on the reader. Berger (1966) states that the reader's feeling, attitude and action towards the characterized social actors can be influenced and changed. Through language, social actors can be included or excluded for certain purposes as they are characterized as 'equal', 'different' or as 'victim' of the action (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996).

Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996) categorisation of social actors was employed in this study to find out how 'man' and 'woman' are represented as social actors in the verses of

Qur'an. The category of NAMING OF SOCIAL ACTORS can be divided into:

Individualisation and Collectivisation

Individualisation is a technique to achieve a certain type of relationship (positive, neutral or negative) among social actors and between them and readers, according to the writer's goal. That is, this technique can bring readers closer to social actors, changing their feelings and attitudes towards them either positively or negatively. Writers can single out a social actor as an individual or as a member of a group; individualising and collectivising social actors in texts can reveal kind of relationship between them.

Specification and Genericisation

Social actors can be identified differently according to the writer's intention; specification can identify a certain social actor assigned them a certain identity, whereas generic terms can be used to categorize a group of people as a certain type or function (Machin and Mayr, 2012). Specification takes three types: 'Classification' referring to people by their societal structure, 'relational' specifying people through their personal relationships, and 'physical' representing people by their physical characteristics. In discourse, writers differently categorize and divide people according to their presupposition.

Data Analysis

This section is an analysis of the verses of Qur'an that address 'men and women'. The analysis is an application of the CDA techniques of (Over)Lexicalization, Naming of social actors including Individualisation and Collectivisation and Specification and Genericisation to some verses of Qur'an that address 'men and women'.

The following example can illustrate and justify the 'social' context rather than the alleged religious source, the Qur'an, in which the process of socializing gender inequality occurs, showing Allah's message to condemn one of the practices of discrimination against woman. In pre-Islamic society, a woman was deprived of many of her rights, subjected to injustice and oppression; not only were her human rights were denied but her money was extorted from her, and she was deprived of her inheritance. Following her divorce or the death of the husband, she was unable to marry a husband she would like; but the claim of this article is that these are practices that Islam rejected. It confirms the fact that many Arab men were pessimistic about the birth of a female. This can show that the Qur'an aims to address and condemn man's power abuse, the imbalanced relationship between men and women and allocation of roles, showing that they are equal and what is happening is wrong.

Whenever one of them is given the good news of a baby girl, his face grows gloomy, as he suppresses his rage. He hides himself from the people because of the bad news he has received. Should he keep her in disgrace, or bury her 'alive' in the ground? Evil indeed is their judgment! (58 -59 Al Nahl)

The individualization 'one of them' is collectivized and genericized by the foregrounded use of 'whenever' before it indicates that men are naturalising the same wrong attitude towards woman indicated by the lexical item 'a baby girl'. Whereas the individualization of 'man' and collectivization of 'people' in 'He hides himself from the people' is where socialization occurs. These lexical items show the imbalanced relationship between man and society. This shows that the patriarchal structure of the society was imposed on man and controlled his life, freedom and

even personal affairs. These lexical techniques show the power of the society that cannot be resisted by the individual. Allah judges and criticizes the socialization of gender inequality that is indicated by the word 'judgment', the plight of the woman is emphasized by foregrounding the lexical item 'evil', in 'evil indeed is their judgment! This example clearly shows that discrimination does not exist in the language of Qur'an, as Allah treats all men and women as equal and one group and He is against the disparity and inequality between them, though confirming the differences in the binary system that is normal, integrative and necessary for the continuity of life.

In response, Allah gives us the best example of a woman, 'Mary', who is honoured for her chastity with being a 'mother'. Motherhood is focused on in the Qur'an showing that woman is distinguished from man through this distinctive special role that is necessary for the continuity of life, estimating her value. Thus, she is singled out with honour, care and attention in many verses, as in the following example:

The Messiah, son of Mary, was no more than a messenger. 'Many' messengers had 'come and' gone before him. His mother was a woman of truth. They both ate food. See how We make the signs clear to them, yet see how they are deluded 'from the truth'! (Al Maidah, 75)

The individualization of 'The Messiah, son of Mary', 'a messenger' and 'Mary', his mother 'a woman of truth', collectivized by 'They both ate food', indicating equality. That is, the woman is not less than the man, neither in terms of honour, nor in terms of assignment or responsibility. The individualization of 'The Messiah', 'a messenger', Mary's son 'son of Mary', emphasizes the miracle that she gave birth to a "man", without having a husband "man" is indeed a message that a woman is equal to man, indicating that it is Allah's will to create men and women as a binary system. The fact that only deeds, indicated by describing Mary as 'a woman of truth', can privilege one individual over the other, whatever sex, age, race, ethnicity, and other features that distinguish human beings, emphasizing the importance of good work.

As we can see naming positions the social actors, 'The Messiah, son of Mary', 'a messenger' and 'Mary', his mother 'a woman of truth', collectivized by 'They both ate food' in a position implying the type of relationship between them. This technique can assign them the values assigned to them creating a coherent relationship. That is, this technique can construct reality reflecting the interests of Allah. Consequently, it is a crucial technique in the Qur'an to shed a positive light their identities, men and women, to emphasise their equality. These names can impact the reader's perception of facts.

In the following verse, the being of woman overemphasizes her value and role in life, that she is individualized 'mothers' after being collectivized by the lexical item 'parents', which also serves the function of reminding the reader that men and women form an integrative dual system. The need for respect and the differences between the generations is emphasised not the difference between genders.

And We have commanded people to 'honour' their parents. Their mothers bore them through hardship upon hardship, and their weaning takes two years. So be grateful to Me and your parents. To Me is the final return. (Luqman, 14)

The same notion of equality and complementarity is repeated in:

And He created the pairs—males and females’ (Al Najim, 45)

In this example, collectivization ‘the pairs’ confirms the idea of complementarity and equality between men and women, stressing that pure Islam was keen on not discriminating between them. The physical specification of humans ‘males and females’ emphasises that Islam does not prefer one gender over another though they are not biologically similar.

The genericization of men and women by the lexical item ‘humanity’ in the following example, asserts that the decision of equality between men and women is the origin of creation. It is stated that men and women are made of one essence and one element, which is earth ‘dust’. Moreover, all people descend from one father (man) and one mother (woman). Equality between them includes elements of humanity; no one has more humanity than anyone else. There is no preference for one over the other because of his or her human element and first creation. They pass through the same stages of growth. Taking into account the physical, psychological and social differences between men and women, each of them is given rights and duties. Equality is declared in human value and in matters of penal responsibility in this world and the hereafter.

‘O humanity! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then ‘know that’ We did create you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then ‘developed you into’ a clinging clot ‘of blood’, then a lump of flesh—fully formed or unformed—in order to demonstrate ‘Our power’ to you. ‘Then’ We settle whatever ‘embryo’ We will in the womb for an appointed term, then bring you forth as infants, so that you may reach your prime. Some of you ‘may’ die ‘young’, while others are left to reach the most feeble stage of life so that they may know nothing after having known much. And you see the earth lifeless, but as soon as We send down rain upon it, it begins to stir ‘to life’ and swell, producing every type of pleasant plant.’ (Al Hajj, 5)

Again, the fact that complementarity ‘Both are equal’, though sexually different ‘male or female’, does not mean dissonance, stated clearly in the lexical items ‘any of you’ in this verse. The Holy Qur’an confirms that the world is not correct except with this dual nature, and this close overlap. On the other hand, the fact that the woman is equal to the man in terms of reward, punishment and penalty for work in life and afterlife is only a confirmation of the message that the complementarity of the dual system of life does mean equality between the main dual constituents of the universe.

So their Lord responded to them: “I will never deny any of you—male or female—the reward of your deeds. Both are equal in reward. Those who migrated or were expelled from their homes, and were persecuted for My sake and fought and ‘some’ were martyred—I will certainly forgive their sins and admit them into Gardens under which rivers flow, as a reward from Allah. And with Allah is the finest reward!” (Al Imran, 195)

It is true also that Islam granted woman rights that suit the nature of each, it is true also that the principle of the race’s unity has expanded the principle of the unity of the human race has expanded in this regard to establish that the differences between human beings, whether in livelihood, sources of income, ages, colours, races, rights or duties, aim towards the

Reconstruction of the universe in a framework of coexistence, implied by ‘through both’ ‘countless men and women’. While cooperation and integration, which is clear without ambiguity or doubt in many of the noble Qur’anic verses, as in the following verse highlighted by the lexical items ‘a single soul’ and ‘its mate’. ‘Humanity’, is an example of the employment of gene-cisatation to emphasize equality between men and women.

O humanity! Be mindful of your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and from it He created its mate, and through both He spread countless men and women. And be mindful of Allah—in Whose Name you appeal to one another—and ‘honour’ family ties. Surely Allah is ever Watchful over you. (An Nisa, 1)

A vivid announcement of the equality between men and women achieved through implicit collectivization within individualization is created by ‘Whoever’ and ‘whether male or female’. Regardless of being different, the only criterion to judge any of them is work, a vivid message reflected in ‘Whoever does good’. Whoever does righteousness, while they are believers, Allah will reward them with a good life according to their deeds.

‘Whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will surely bless them with a good life, and We will certainly reward them according to the best of their deeds.’ (an Nahl, 97)

In order to persuade the reader with the message that men and women are equal, ‘equally’, is presented differently by placing man in the same situation as woman, comparing himself to others, so he can feel what she feels, lexically created by the words ‘some of you over others’. That is, if you do not accept it for yourself, then do not do it to others. Allah knows well. He is just and will reward each of you ‘Men’ and ‘women’ ‘equally’ according to ‘their deeds’.

And do not crave what Allah has given some of you over others. Men will be rewarded according to their deeds and women ‘equally’ according to theirs. Rather, ask Allah for His bounties. Surely Allah has ‘perfect’ knowledge of all things. (An Nisa, 32)

Those who do good’—‘whether male or female’

But those who do good—whether male or female—and have faith will enter Paradise and will never be wronged ‘even as much as’ the speck on a date stone. (An Nisa, 124)

Any of you’—‘male or female’ ‘reward of your deeds’. ‘Both are equal’

The lexical item ‘believers’ shows the importance of work as the only criterion that differentiates between human beings, embedding equality between men and women as there is no difference between all people. The lexical item ‘both’ collectivizes the individualized ‘men and women’, as ‘guardians of one another’ to show complementarity and equality at the same time. Just as Islam equates men and women in civil rights, women have the right to own property, sign into contracts, keep their name and family name as well as other rights. There is equality in some political rights between men and women, as the Holy Qur’an acknowledges.

The believers, both men and women, are guardians of one another. They encourage good and forbid evil, establish prayer and pay alms-tax, and obey Allah and His Messenger. It is they who will be shown Allah’s mercy. Surely Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (Al Tawba, 71)

Islam has given man freedom and restricted it with virtue so that he does not deviate, with justice so that he does not deviate and with truth so that he does not slip with his desires, and with goodness and altruism so that selfishness does not overwhelm him, and distance from harm so that evil instincts do not pervade him, and women are like men, have to perform the legal duties while being praised if they respond to the command of Allah, and take the right path.

Again, the same message that we are all equal but our deeds can decide who is better than the other and who is the best, is repeated in many verses, where woman is singled out, addressing her rights one by one as well as her responsibilities and duties. That is, Allah Almighty enumerated the places of equality between men and women in the Holy Qur'an, as in the following:

Whoever does an evil deed will only be paid back with its equivalent. And whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a believer, they will enter Paradise, where they will be provided for without limit. (Ghafir, 40)

O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may 'get to' know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware. (Al Hujurat, 13)

He is the One Who created you from a single soul, then from it made its spouse so he may find comfort in her. After he had been united with her, she carried a light burden that developed gradually." (Al A'raf, 189)

Surely 'for' Muslim men and women, believing men and women, devout men and women, truthful men and women, patient men and women, humble men and women, charitable men and women, fasting men and women, men and women who guard their chastity, and men and women who remember Allah often—for 'all of' them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward. (Al Ahzab, 35)

For men there is a share in what their parents and close relatives leave, and for women there is a share in what their parents and close relatives leave—whether it is little or much. 'These are' obligatory shares. (An Nisa, 7)

Woman is honoured with a full chapter (An Nisa) and another one named (Mariam) Which means Mary. The Qur'an mentions women like Hajir, Saba, and Sara for their good deeds.

Results and discussions

In this study, the linguistic analysis of the language of Qur'an has shown that notions of difference in sexuality and physical structure are not part of the holy discourse. By contrast, the data has revealed that the evaluation of men and women as equal contradicts the social and cultural beliefs about gender inequality. That is the issue of equality is not approached in the Qur'an. The lexical patterns which have been observed in the language of Qur'an in discussing the notion of gender equality show an emphasis on equality between man and women through lexicalisation and the naming of social actors. A heavy repetition of the same lexical items that stress the ideology of equation, complementarity and solidarity is observed. The findings are explained in the following points:

1. The language of Qur'an lexically confirms that woman is wronged by the society 'the good news of a baby girl' and that the issue of gender inequality is established by socialization 'hides himself from the people'.
2. Qur'an condemns the action of gender inequality 'Evil indeed is their judgment! (58 - 59 Al Nahl).
3. Qur'an announces clearly and emphasises the call for equality between men and women through lexicalization and naming of social actors 'equal' (Al Imran, 195), 'equally' (An Nisa, 32) 'a single soul' (Al a'araf, 189) , 'we did create you from dust' (Al Haj, 5), (Al Maidah, 75), (Al Najim, 45), 'whether male or female', explaining that they both are from the same father and mother, from the same soul, from dust and pass through the same stages of growth and they face the same judgment according to their deeds.
4. Geneticisation lexically exemplified such as 'humanity' (Al Haj, 5), repeated in (An Nisa, 1), (Al Hujurat, 13) express the same central theme of the data analysed, which is equality.
5. The difference between men and women is not denied, instead, this distinction is emphasised as an asset that brings about peace, solidarity and continuity of life as in: 'a single soul from it made its spouse so he may find comfort in her...united' (Al a'araf, 189), 'through both He spread countless men and women' (An Nisa, 1), 'guardians of one another' (al Tawba, 71), 'the pairs' (Al Najim, 45).
6. Motherhood is emphasised as a unique feature of woman, as mothers are singled out of parents, adding more emphasis to the importance of their distinctive role in the balance and continuity of life. 'his mother' (Al Maidah, 75), 'their mothers' (Luqman, 14).
7. Specification that classifies men and women according to physical and class features are not available. Relational specification is used to show complementarity 'male and female'.
8. Only deeds can create a difference between man and a woman; both men and women are represented by their deeds. Naming expressed by superlative degree is used to show how a person is privileged over another by their deeds as in: 'the most noble, the most righteous' (Al Hujurat, 13). The language of Qur'an shows how 'work' is a decisive factor in deciding who is better than the other if not equal. 'a woman of truth' (Al Maidah, 75), 'whether male or female' (Ghafir, 40), 'whoever does good' (An Nahl, 97), 'whoever does an evil deed' (Ghafir, 40), 'their deeds' (An Nisa, 32), 'those who do good' (An Nisa, 124), 'the reward of your deeds' (A Imran, 195), 'encourage good and forbid evil' (Al Tawba, 71).
9. The Qur'an's discourse of gender creates a gender ideology that depends on polarity ideals that is able to delude and challenge the prevalent ideology of gender inequality.

Power relationships that reflect solidarity and integrity are indicated through vocabulary; however, an integrative distinction between men and women that gain their meaning from other words which form a network of meaning, and complementary polarization is created in Qur'an discourse of gender. Words such as 'man' and 'woman', for example can be introduced to distinguish between different concepts, but if only one of these distinctive terms of mankind is used, it implies separation, without needing to mention the other. That is, the use of 'man' alone connotes the meaning of its opposite concept. The use of these two words together 'man' and 'woman' to describe a group implies that this group must behave in the manner expected of a unit. The repetitive use of these terms in Qur'an is ideological, showing solidarity and complementarity. Through using these same contrastive structural

concepts, participants are implicitly positioned into a binary system without which humankind cannot survive. None of them is evaluated with any explicit statement of 'good' or 'bad', 'necessary' or 'unnecessary' or 'important' or 'unimportant'. Lexical items can also imply certain actions, and information about motives, values and consequences of their actions. By contrast, they can overemphasize the strength, success and power of their complementarities, as in the following examples, where they are positively described as 'humanity', 'humankind', overemphasizing the weakness of their separation, using universals and generic descriptions.

To emphasise the necessity of equality between men and women, Allah tends to use certain events or stories that can create an affinity among readers, hence they are called upon by the use or choice of certain vocabulary. Words that can morally touch the feelings of the reader are effectively used to drive the reader to the actual intended message. The language of Qur'an portrays social actors in solidarity with each other, that is, it creates inclusion which simplify the fact of creation enabling the manipulation of an interpretation of it.

The data also deduce that, for Iraqi community members, ideologies of gender and sexuality are interdependent. This ideology, indicating how they view and practise sexuality, constituted by their daily life. A heterosexual view sustains the discrimination of gender roles and rights. Sexuality and appearance are determinant in representing woman; a completely different view from that is in the language of Qur'an. This study asserts that the ideological production and reproduction of gender are mainly practised by society. Man has been granted more access to available resources, and thus can control and influence more a range of woman's life activities.

In Iraq, gender inequality is an outcome of the socialization process that is hidden in the patriarchal existing social and cultural traditions. However, how these traditions impact man's behaviour and how he thinks about these issues today can be changed by awareness that can be created through reconsideration. Because of many years of conflict in Iraq, specifically the war against ISIS since 2014, achieving gender equity cannot be easy and simple. To make this change, it is necessary to study practical feminist activities and the patterns of gender relations in the different sectors of life --health, education, economy, workplace, culture and religion -- and keep them under surveillance. An analysis of the data under investigation can help identify the progress that can be achieved towards gender equity and whether equity can be achieved through resocialization and cultural reorientation. The emancipation and integration of women can help in the development of the nation. The Iraqi women, due to their victimization based on gender, have no or little role in the development and stabilization of the nation.

Conclusions

All the unfair circulated opinions against women, which spread about Islam the idea of hostility to women, came from interpretations and doctrinal texts that gained more power than the strength of the original text (the Holy Qur'an), sustained by socialization. The political factors and the immediate circumstances are the first factors in consecrating them, so that their sanctity has become superior to the sanctity of the Qur'an. The Islamic religion raised the status of reason and science, and gave the right to all Muslims to think in matters of their religion, the right to think and ijtihad is not restricted to a certain elite of thinkers (Al Kawakibi, 1982). The early jurists themselves did not limit the right to ijtihad to themselves, Abu Hanifa said, 'you should not take my words without evidence,' and Al-Shafi'i says, 'My opinion is right and may

be wrong, and the opinion of others is wrong and may be right' (Al Rahbi, 2016: 25).

Discrimination against women is not consistent with the basic teachings of the Islamic religion. Many jurists have relied on texts that express temporary judgment, or describe a situation related to the call of Islam at that time. Religion was used as a means to suppress and oppress women, and to practice discrimination and violence against them. Any change today in favour of women in the personal status law is answered with a sacred sentence, which cannot be discussed and this is against Islamic Sharia.

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