# Feminism in Prophet Muhammad's discourse on women: A stylistic analysis

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## Abstract

Muslim women are stereotypically depicted in Western culture as passive victims of patriarchal oppression. However, a close analysis of the discourse of the Prophet of Islam (Muhammad, peace be upon him) refutes this claim. Prophet Muhammad's discourse on women underlies a pro-feminist ideology. Many theological studies have tackled the representation of women in Islam, but few linguistic studies have been conducted. The present study aims at conducting a feminist stylistic analysis of Prophet Muhamad's discourse on women to show that it is pro-feminist. The study is carried out within the framework of feminist stylistics that includes pragmatic and semantic components. The speech act theory, semantic field analysis and Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar are employed as gender-inscription devices. The study shows that the predominant idea in the Prophet's teachings is that women are independent dignified entities that should be given their rights and respected. The Prophet's presentation of women is always positive. His discourse on women constructs a new brand of femininity where they are projected as precious human beings, worth of protection and gentle treatment. At the same time, they are supportive partners to their male counterparts whose existence is necessary for a good life.

## 1. Introduction

The present study is motivated by the hate ideology against Arabs and Muslims that came again to the surface after the attack on Salman Rushdie in New York on 12 August 2022. It is true that this ideology that fiercely manifested itself after 9/11 attack never disappeared; yet it was a little bit culminated by that move of promoting interfaith dialogue and spreading the concept of religious pluralism and the practice of tolerance. Based on personal experience during a scholarship on the program of religious pluralism in the US, the researcher found out that the image of the status quo of Muslim women is distorted even among highly intellectual academics. They still believe that men are instructed in Islam to disrespect women and that Muslim women are generally weak, oppressed and in a constant need for empowerment.

As painful as that realization is Afghanistan's Taliban-led government decree that bans university education and work for aid groups (non-profitable organizations) for the country's women. Motivated by that painful realization and Taliban's decision, the researcher finds it a duty to enhance the efforts of Muslim theologians in the respect of correcting that image by trying to highlight the misconception at the level of linguistics in terms of language and gender. For that unfair misconception about women in Islam to be eliminated, there is a need for exerting efforts at all levels of discussion. The present study is but a step forward towards that goal. Analyzing feminism from a linguistic point of view adds to the understanding of the truth about the texts analyzed. Linguistic analysis not only focuses on the language usage, but also on cognitive ideologies underlying texts.

Many studies are conducted on the treatment of women in Islam in terms of theology in both Arabic (Bin Afifi, 1932; Ash-Sha'raawi, 2000; Al-Eid, 2012) and English (Khan, 1990; Engineer, 2008; Patoari, 2019; Al-Saudi, 2020). Admittedly also, many linguistic studies are conducted on language and gender in the Holy Quran (Zahedi, 2009; Ebadi, 2020; Kheiry et al., 2020), but the studies conducted on the Prophet's hadiths in this concern are few (up to the researcher's best knowledge). This fact is acknowledged by Mahmoud (2014) who states that as far as language and gender in Islam

are concerned, there has been little work undertaken. Studies are restricted, as she highlights, to analyzing Prophetic discourse on arranged marriage and its impact on some Muslim societies (Modood et al., 1994; Pichler, 2011), and recent works on language and gender that have focused on woman-to-woman interaction including conversational strategies and 'identity practices' (Bucholtz, 1999; Coates, 2011).

Indeed, in Islam, hadiths of the Prophet are the secondary source of Sharia (Islamic law) after the Qur'an. The Prophet's hadiths tackle all aspects of Muslim life. They refer not only to the words of the Prophet but also to his attitudes, behavior and advice. Following the Prophet's teachings and instructions is one of the fundamental pillars of a Muslim's faith. Before the advent of Islam, women were treated as mere slaves or commodities, not as an integral part of the society. However, the advent of Islam resulted in a revolution in the attitude towards women. The Prophet's instructions and teachings changed the social attitude of Arabs towards women so that they are no longer considered as slaves, but rather as partners. In his discourse on women, the prophet always has feminist concerns related to their physical and psychological well-being.

Despite that fact, some western studies, including books and research papers, highlight the treatment of women by men in Muslim societies within a framework of marginalization and oppression (as acknowledged by Ahmed, 1982, p. 522; Majid, 1998, p. 326-28; and Bullock, 2002, pp. xv-xvi). Such western books and research papers disseminate the idea that Muslim women are treated with inferiority by their husbands in nearly all Arab societies. Some western studies on female reverts to Islam implicate their having subordinate position in Islam (Van Nieuwkerk, 2006; Zebiri, 2014). In this respect, they usually allude to the social practices and tendencies against women in some Muslim societies that have nothing to do with Islam itself as a religion.

Furthermore, in the west, a claim of antagonistic dimensions between males and females is always related to Islam's feminist ideology. It is always postulated that Islam is a fiercely oppressive, patriarchal system of religious beliefs (Mernissi, 1991). However, an analysis of the Prophet's discourse on women in terms of the linguistic criteria the Westerners

themselves set as gender-inscription devices proves that this is an ungrounded claim. In his discourse on women, the Prophet always employs prestigious speech forms, positive lexical choices, and intimate friendly talk calling for respecting women and giving them their due rights; these are facts which invalidate claims of anti-feminist ideology.

## 2. Objectives of the study

The aim of the study is not to question that nature or the positivity of the instructions and representations manifested in such holy texts; rather the aim is to highlight that nature from language perspective to enable others to come to a better understanding of the issue under scrutiny. It aims at interpreting the features of the Prophetic discourse on women to explore the extent to which it handles the rights of women. Therefore, the study addresses the following questions:

1. What are the Prophet's linguistic practices in his discourse on women?
2. What are the main roles assigned to women and how are they represented?
3. What is the model of feminism underlying the Prophet's discourse on women?
4. What kind of ideology and gender identity does that model imply?

## 3. Corpus of the data

The material of the study includes 18 prophetic hadiths on women. They are collected from *Sahih Muslim*, *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Sunan Abi Dawud*, *Sunan an-Nasa'i* and *Sahih at-Tirmidhi*: the most reliable collections of hadith compiled by reliable hadith scholars. The selected hadiths are concerned with women in all cases: as a daughter, as a wife, and as a mother. They are all sound hadiths (i.e., accepted ones). The selected hadiths, their translation and their sources are attached in Appendix 1.

## 4. Methodology

The present study aims at investigating the way linguistic devices are employed in some of the Prophetic hadiths on women that convey male or female values. The analytical framework of the study is based on feminist

stylistics that is an inter-disciplinary approach including, as gender encoders, Halliday's system of transitivity (Systemic Functional Grammar), pragmatic speech act analysis, pragmatic implicatures, semantic field and schemata, and analysis of metaphor (Canning, 2014; Burke, 2014). These tools are valuable detectors of feminist ideologies since they help highlight aspects related to agency and empowerment that are pivotal tenets in feminism (Aguiar, 2018, p. 37).

## 4.1. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)

Halliday's functionalist approach has its origin in building upon Malinowski's (1923) work on the importance of situational context, and Firth's (1950) work "Personality in Language and Society". Halliday introduced the idea that language has three main roles or functions (metafunctions) that integrate to make meaning in his work *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1994). First, the Textual metafunction that has to do with expressing ideas and experiences. Second, the Interpersonal metafunction that is related to the establishment of social relationships. Third, the Ideational metafunction that has to do with the formal properties of language. All the three metafunctions can be explored independently to interpret a certain aspect of meaning in a text. They all, however, intersect to encode ideas and ideologies.

Each of these three metafunctions of language can be presented through particular grammatical features or models. One of the features of the textual metafunction is that of cohesion. Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. 20) are of the view that cohesion helps structure our perceptions of social relationships. They are concerned with the way in which sentences in a text are related together to make sense. Thus, a text may be internally organized by a series of cohesive devices such as conjunction, ellipsis, substitution and reference. Furthermore, cohesion can also be lexically realized through the repetition of certain words or collocations. In addition, Halliday and Hasan identify the relations between language and the "situational knowledge" (i.e., features of the speaker's and hearer's ideological environment) as another important source of cohesion.

Relatedly, Jeffries (2014, pp. 414-15) identifies exemplifying, prioritizing (i.e., foregrounding and backgrounding), and implication in pragmatics as

features of the textual function of a text. She believes that positioning of information may bear ideological implications.

As for the interpersonal metafunction, it offers a framework through which relationships are formulated and modulated. It is represented by choices of 'mood' and 'modality'. Mood has to do with the structure of the speech situation. It provides options in the form of the speaker's roles: the speaker may inform, question or command. Accordingly, the mood structure of any sentence is either *declarative*, *interrogative* or *imperative*, respectively (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.134). Modality, on the other hand, is related to the choice of modal verbs as linguistic means of constructing social realities (p. 147).

Of these three metafunctions, Halliday's system of transitivity is the most valuable detector of feminist ideology since it is concerned with *agency* that is the most pivotal tenet in feminism (Canning, 2014, p. 46).

### 4.1.1. Ideational metafunction: Transitivity System

One of the features of the ideational metafunction is that of transitivity. Halliday's system of transitivity focuses on the role of the participants and the processes (verb choices) associated with them, with the aim of reflecting attitudinal points of view. Burton (1982, p. 200) believes that transitivity framework can assist the analyst in finding out how messages are linguistically decoded and the ideological messages underlying them.

 Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 220) introduce a model based on three units:

   i.    A process (verb).
  ii.    The participants involved in the process.
 iii.    The circumstances associated with the process (such as adverbs and prepositions).

In addition, they identify six types of processes: behavioral, material, relational, mental, existential, and verbal.

### 4.1.1.1. Behavioral processes

Halliday (p.248) identifies behavioral processes as those which have to do with physiological and psychological behavior such as crying, smiling,

breathing, dreaming, etc. They require a Behaver and sometimes a Phenomenon. For example, "The little girl smiled".

### 4.1.1.2. Material processes

Halliday (p.180) identifies the material processes as those of doing. They are associated with an Actor/Agent (who does the action or causes something to someone, respectively), a Goal (the participant to whom the process is directed) or a Beneficiary (that benefits from the action). For example, "The lion caught the tourist" where 'the lion' is the Actor and 'the tourist' is the Goal.

### 4.1.1.3. Relational processes

These processes require two participants called Token/Carrier (the identified) and Value/Attribute (the identifier). This is the case with the sentence "I am the villain" where "I" is the Token and "the villain" is the Value (p.231). Halliday also argues that there are three relational processes: "possessive", "circumstantial", and "intensive" (p.280). The possessive process states that "x has y". The circumstantial process indicates that "x is at/on/in/with y". The intensive process refers to the description "x is y" (p.281). He further argues that the relational process is not restricted to the verbs (to be) and (to have); rather it also includes verbs like "stay, remain, comprise, equal, include, constitute, contain" (p.285). Other verbs like "occupy, surround, and stand" occasionally appear (p.285).

### 4.1.1.4. Mental processes

They are processes of sensing that include thinking (cognition), perception, and feeling. They require a Senser and a Phenomenon (p.197).

### 4.1.1.5. Existential processes

They denote that something exists and require one participant assigned the role of an Existent (p.256).

### 4.1.1.6. Verbal processes

They indicate oral talk and require a Sayer and a Receiver (the one to whom the saying is directed) (p.252).

Another dimension of the ideational meaning is that of lexical choices. Lexicalization in the present study is examined in the light of semantic fields and schemata analysis. A broad spectrum of the male/female values underlying the Prophet's discourse on women is brought to light when analyzing it in terms of semantic fields and schemata theory.

## 4.2. Semantic field and schemata theory

Tanner and Green (1998, p.29) suggest that words can be related in several different ways: by topic (e.g., furniture, clothes, family relationships, animals), by similarity of meaning or synonymy (e.g., gorilla, chimpanzee), in pairs (being opposites as hot/cold, or synonyms as rough/harsh), by hyponymy (superordinates), by activity or process (e.g., steps in making a cake), etc. These relations are identified as semantic/lexical fields. In other words, a semantic field refers to a set of related words that denote certain shared reality and a common semantic property (i.e., semantic components of words) (Brinton & Brinton 2010, p.144). Words in a semantic field are defined by the subject matter that allows them all to connect together, such as being body parts, diseases, colors, foods, kinship relations, etc. Thus, the term 'semantic field' deals with classification and organization of vocabulary in terms of meaning or ideas rather than topics (Nordquist, 2020).

Concerned also with the organization of related vocabulary, there emerged the schemata theory within Cognitive Stylistics (Emmott et.al., 2014, p. 368). Yet, whereas semantic fields are concerned with lexically interpreting data structure in a text, the emergent stylistic schemata cognitively interpret it. Within Cognitive Stylistics, a schema is sometimes referred to as a 'frame, 'script', 'scene', or 'scenario'. It is identified as a frame that contains default information which reinforces understanding. Words that are semantically related evoke the same general schematic 'scene' or 'frame'.

Words of the same semantic field represent a domain of vocabulary whose elements can be considered as a schematization of human attitudes and intentions. The main function of a frame is to organize vocabulary domains and to describe facts about relations between words and, consequently, to contribute to discourse interpretation. It provides explanations that go

beyond what a text literally says. A frame schematizes a certain situation in terms of the language used. Schema theory thus links events together to provide extra unstated information by interpreting stated information (Emmott, p. 270). More important, the findings of that link lead to the detection of positive/negative stereotypes and are, hence, "attitude schemata" (p. 273). Thus, a restaurant scene script would include information related to serving food, paying a bill, etc. (p. 269). Participants within that restaurant scene are assigned roles (e.g., customer, waiter, chef, etc.) that have significances.

In addition to Halliday's SFG, semantic field and schemata, the stylistic analytical framework of the present study includes pragmatic analysis in terms of speech act theory and implicature.

## 4.3. Speech act theory and implicature

Speech act theory aims to explain that an action can be performed through the utterance of certain words. The concept of a speech act dates back to the book of the language philosopher J. L. Austin which he introduced in 1962 under the title *How to do Things with Words*. According to Austin (1975, p.109), any utterance has three components: a "locutionary act" which is the utterance of the sentence with a certain specific sense and reference, an "illocutionary force" which is the real intention behind the utterance, and a "perlocutionary act" which is the effect or consequence of the utterance on its recipient. Such utterances that perform actions are called "performatives" by Austin (p.4).

More important is Austin's observation that the illocutionary force of an utterance is not always explicitly indicated through performative verbs as 'promise' or 'bet'. Rather, it is sometimes implicit in the utterance. For example, the sentence "There is a bull in the field" can be used as an act of 'warning', not just for giving information about the scenery (p.32).

Studying the same issue of speech acts, Searle (1979) classifies direct speech acts into the following five types:

1. Speech acts which have to do with the speaker's commitment to the truth of the expression, as the case with asserting, suggesting, concluding, etc., are **Assertives** (representatives) (p.12);

2. Speech acts in which the speaker attempts to make the hearer do something, just as in the case of requesting, ordering, advising, etc., are **Directives** (p.13);

3. Speech acts which commit the speaker to actions in the future, as the case with promising, vowing, offering, threatening, etc. are **Commissives** (p.14);

4. Speech acts which express psychological states or attitudes, as the case with thanking, apologizing, welcoming, etc., are **Expressives** (p.15); and

5. Speech acts which effect immediate change in state of affairs and whose success in communication depends on extra-linguistic factors, as the case with appointing, naming, dismissing, declaring war, christening, etc., are **Declaratives** (p.15).

An observation similar to that of Austin with regard to utterances which have implicit illocutionary forces was made later by Searle (1979, p. 31), but in terms of "direct" and "indirect" speech acts. Whereas the direct speech act is that which has only one explicit illocutionary force, the indirect one is that which has both explicit and implicit illocutionary forces. Inspired by Austin's theory of performativity, Butler (1990, p.185) suggests that gender is performative in nature in that gender identities are constructed and implicated through stylistic performances or acts peculiar to a certain gender.

Indirectness results in implicatures (i.e., implied meanings) which Hatim and Mason (1997, p.12) identify as being "additional meanings" resulting from flouting norms of communication. The phenomenon of implicature was introduced to Pragmatics by Grice (1975) as a meaning that a speaker implies by an utterance even though it is not literally expressed. Grice distinguishes between 'conversational implicatures' (p.50) which result from the speaker's flouting of general rules of conversation, and 'conventional' ones (p.44) which are more like connoted meanings associated with certain words, such as "therefore" (a logical consequence) or "but" (contrast). Furthermore, one of the indirect speech acts is the metaphorical usage of language (Ortony, 1993).

## 4.4. Metaphor

Aristotle is the first theorist who defined metaphor and introduced it to the history of western thought as a process based on comparing two seemingly unrelated concepts on the basis of a ground of analogy (Ortony, 1993, p.3). Robins (1989, p.63) explains that metaphor is generally a process of substitution and transference where the usage of a word is transferred from one domain to another. The word that is described is the *target domain* and the other one in terms of which the description is made is the *source domain* (Simpson, 2004, p.41). Accordingly, any metaphorical utterance has two distinct meanings: the 'sentence meaning' (i.e., that of the lexical items involved) and the 'speaker's utterance meaning' (i.e., the metaphorical intended meaning) (Searle 1993, p.93).

Providing a cognitive analysis of metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson (2003, p.4) introduced "conceptual metaphors" that are based on mental mapping. They define metaphor as a process of mapping between source and target domains. They also define that process of mapping as that of constructing a relation between source and target domains where language users understand an experience in terms of another. They suggest that the meaning of metaphor should not be constructed only in terms of being a figure of speech, rather it is a kind of mental mapping of how language users think of the metaphorical instances they encounter in terms of underlying concepts. Thus, in the case of the metaphorical expression "ARGUMENT IS WAR", the recipient's actual experience of an 'argument' will be constructed in terms of 'war' since both domains involve concepts as 'win or lose', 'defend', 'defeat', 'attack' and so on.

## 5. Literature review

## 5.1. Feminist stylistics: Historical perspectives

According to Burke (2014, p.1), the origin of stylistics goes back to the ancient classical world rhetoric. Yet, a modern type emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century at the hands of Roman Jakobson, Victor Shklovsky and Vladimir Propp who tried to make stylistics more scientific by analyzing what makes a text poetic rather than analyzing its poetic nature. This new development in stylistics turned it away from formalism to take it to functionalism where context is taken into consideration in

stylistic analysis (p.3).

Part of the development also has been adopting other approaches (cognitive, critical, pedagogical, pragmatic, corpus, multimodal, and gender) in stylistic analysis (Burke, 2014, p.2). Stylistics thus became a kind of discourse criticism in both linguistics and literature, and, consequently, stylistic methodology became both qualitative and quantitative (p.3). Accordingly, Montoro (2014, p.352) is of the view that stylistics has an interdisciplinary nature as it is receptive to impacts from both literary and linguistic criticism. The aim of doing stylistic analysis has become to examine the language of a text to detect its function and, in turn, interpret it (Simpson, 2004, p.2).

Furthermore, while it is true, as pointed out by Simpson (2004, p.2), that the preferred object of study in stylistics is literature, it has become inclusive to other forms of discourse such as advertising, journalism, casual conversation, etc. In addition, basic levels of language (graphology, phonology, phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse analysis, and pragmatics) have been identified as domains in modern contemporary stylistics for examining language as discourse (p.8). This integration of modern stylistics with other disciplines has resulted in the enrichment of stylistic methods and the appearance of sub-disciplines such as cognitive stylistics, feminist stylistics, and discourse stylistics among other sub-disciplines (p.2).

One of the developments within modern stylistics is the emergence of "functional stylistics" (Canning, 2014, p.4) that has been introduced as a kind of integration between the language forms of a certain production and its context of situation and ideological stance (the social, cultural and political). Functional stylistics is concerned with examining the impact of all these factors on a text production and reception. It utilizes Halliday's (1994) functionalist approach that is concerned with how messages are pragmatically decoded in texts (p.46).

Pragmatic devices have been also suggested as potential tools for gender detection in what was termed as "pragmatic stylistics" (Warner, 2014, p.362). Pragmatic concepts such as speech acts, implicatures, and politeness principles are thus regarded as tools that help understand the

contextualized use on the part of language producers and the perception process on the part of language recipients (pp.364-65).

More important, the aim of modern stylistic analysis is no longer just investigating the language of texts, rather it serves as a powerful method for detecting realities (i.e., ideologies) of a text as constructed through language (Burton, 1982, p.201). Burton suggests Halliday's transitivity system as a prominent effective stylistic analytical framework. She believes that feminist stylists should go beyond literary discourse to include other varieties of discourse and genres (political, social, pedagogical, etc.…). In agreement with Burton, Ryder (1999, p.1067) approves the utilization of the transitivity system, cognitive and semantic devices in detecting gender ideologies.

Out of all these revolutionary views of stylistics, there emerged 'feminist stylistics' as a sub-branch of stylistics concerned with how gender issues are linguistically encoded in a text (Montoro, 2014, p.346). The aim of a feminist stylistician when analyzing a text is to examine how issues related to gender are linguistically embodied. Feminist stylistics utilizes linguistic devices (grammatical and lexical) that are capable of providing an understanding of maleness and femaleness issues and of detecting gender ideologies (p.347). It is a clear example of that new move of utilizing stylistic analysis to detect gender biases against women (feminism). Stylistic analysis provides a kind of feminist framework in which feminist ideologies operate.

Indeed, as pointed out by Montoro (2014, p.347), the label 'feminist stylistics' has been originally coined by Mills (1995). She defines it as a form of analysis that uses linguistics to examine texts. She believes that agency, metaphor, and transitivity are linguistic means that can be utilized to reveal a particular feminist ideology.

According to Montoro (347-8), Mills (1995) proposes three different levels for analyzing texts: word, phrase/sentence, and discourse. Furthermore, she suggests that feminist stylistics should not only pay attention to text production, rather it should also pay attention to readership (i.e., investigating the way ideological gender meanings in a text are perceived).

Broadly speaking, there is no one specific model of stylistic analysis when it comes to identifying the specific devices of feminist stylistics; rather it is open to any methodological possibility that can highlight how gender issues are encoded in texts (Montoro, p. 347). The general rule is that any linguistic device that can act as gender-inscription can be integrated within feminist stylistics research. Accordingly, feminist stylisticians prefer various analytical frameworks. Some agree on mainly using SFG. Some others combine SFG with cognitive semantic tenets to account for gender representation.

Further extension in the application of stylistics has been associated with Koller's (2008) suggestion that multimodal discourses can be added to the interests of feminist stylistics (pp.415-16). He is particularly interested in analyzing gender issues in relation to colors. Like Burton, Ryder, and Mills, he believes that semiotic and cognitive semantic principles can be utilized for detecting gender ideologies.

There is indeed a distinction between linguistic feminism studies and language and gender studies. Whereas gender studies are concerned with differences of language use between men and women (i.e., linguistic variations), studies on linguistic feminism are concerned with presenting descriptive linguistic accounts of an ideological component related to feminism (Mills & Mullany, 2011, p.2). The purpose of feminist linguists, as identified by Mills (2006, p.221), is to investigate the vocabulary used to describe female characters and the features of the message constructed about women in a text.

## 5.2. Islamic feminism versus Western feminism

As proclaimed by Islamic feminists, Islam "encourages autonomy, agency, and psychological growth" (Kouta, 2022, p.59). Badran (1995, p.242) defines Islamic feminism as practicing or articulating discourse in terms of an Islamic umbrella derived from the instructions mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah which seek justice for women. Islamic feminism is summed up in the following Qur'anic verse identifying the relation between men and women as husbands and wives: "And of His signs is that He created for you, of yourselves, spouses, that you (may) find rest in them, and He has made between you amity and mercy. Surely in that are

indeed signs for a people who meditate" (Ar-Rum 30:21- Ghali's translation, 1988).

The Qur'anic discourse in relation to feminine issues is always positive. When it comes to the Islamic laws that have to do with women and gender-related regulations, Islam deeply cares about women's rights in the domains of marriage, family and inheritance (Al-Heeh, 2020, p.9). Many studies have highlighted the positive status of women in Islam where men and women are equal partners in social life (Barlas, 2006; Okon, 2013; Ullah et al., 2013; Eidan & Eidan, 2017).

In contrast to Islamic feminism whose principles are based on instructions of the noble Qur'an and the Sunnah, Western feminism has undergone four waves. Beasley (2005, p.8) points out that the first wave took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It was the outcome of liberalism that started to spread at that time. At that time, women did not have the right to vote, to have a property, or even to choose their partner in marriage. That situation of women stood in contrast to the liberal idea that all people have the right to be free in their actions without government intervention. Therefore, there appeared a movement whose concern was mainly calling for guaranteeing women's right to share in the political life by having the right to vote.

As for the second wave, Beasley (p.9) points out that it started in the 1960s and continued to the 90s. As in the first wave, the second called for giving women their political rights; yet, it demanded other rights as well. It called for total equality between men and women with regard to all rights, not only the political ones.

In contrast to the first and second waves, however, the third wave did not only call for equality between men and women; rather it was also concerned with women's independence and autonomy. It was more revolutionary than the previous two in the sense that it did not pay any attention to the collective sense of society, but to women as individuals (Beasley, p.7). More over-demanding even was the fourth wave whose main concern was gender equality in the literal sense of the word, not just as far as rights were concerned (Rampton, 2015, p.7).

As such, a brief comparison between Islamic feminism and that of the west shows that they stand in contrast to each other. Whereas the western version of feminism is based on exclusion of women's traits in favor of a call for absolute equality, the Islamic version is a moderate one that is based on giving women their rights but keeping and maintaining their womanist traits at the same time. Islam **considers** women as being the valve of safety that should not be punctured. Rather, they should be kept protected, dignified and respected.

## 6. Analysis and discussion

## 6.1. Halliday's transitivity

### 6.1.1. Ideational/Experiential metafunction

In terms of Halliday's transitivity system, the processes involved in the Prophet's selected hadiths are ideologically significant. They reflect a positive feminist stance and prove that women hold an important position in the Islamic community, as wives and mothers. In terms of Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) standards, the processes involved in the Prophet's hadiths are behavioral, relational, material and mental.

### 6.1.1.1. Behavioral processes:

**Table 1**: Behavioral processes in the Prophet's selected hadiths

| The Prophet's instructions | Behaver | Process: Behavioral | Range |
|---|---|---|---|
| "اسْتَوْصُوا بالنِّساءِ خَيْرًا" (ذكرت في حديثين). "Act kindly towards women" (mentioned in two hadiths). | The Arabic attached pronoun واو/واو الجماعة al-gamaa/ (masculine plural pronoun) that stands for المسلمين (Muslim men). | استوصوا Act kindly | النساء Women |
| "فَألْزَمْهَا" "Remain in your mother's service" | Jahimah (a Muslim man). | الزم Remain in service | The Arabic attached pronoun /-ها/ that refers to (أمك) (your mother) |
| "اتَّقوا اللهَ في النساء" "Fear Allah regarding women". | The Arabic attached pronoun واو/واو الجماعة al-gamaa/ (masculine plural pronoun) that | اتقوا الله Fear Allah | النساء Women |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | stands for المسلمين (Muslim men). | |
| "أَحَقُّ النَّاسِ بحُسْنِ صَحَابَتِي" "Has the greatest right with regard to kindness and attention". | رجلا جاء للنبى A man who came to the Prophet | Has the greatest right with regards to kindness and attention | أمك Your mother |
| "إنَّ لكمْ على نسائكمْ حقًّا ولنسائكِم عليكُم حقًّا" "Verily, you have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you". | (1) Your wives. (2) You (Muslim men). | Have rights | (1) You (Muslim men). (2) Your wives. |
| "ولا تُقَبِّحْ، ولا تَهجُرْ إلَّا في البَيْتِ". "Don't abuse (her), and do not abandon (her), except at home". | Muslim Men (husbands) | Don't abuse- Don't abandon. | Wives |
| "لِيَتَّخِذْ أَحَدُكُم زَوْجَةً مُؤْمِنَةً تُعِينُ أَحَدَكُمْ عَلَى أَمْرِ الآخِرَةِ". "Let every one of you have a believing wife who helps him with regard to the Hereafter". | Every one of you (Muslim men) | Have | A believing wife |

As clear from Table 1, men are always the behavers that are instructed by the Prophet to assume positive behavior towards women. Via imperative structures, the Prophet instructs them to 'act kindly towards women', 'fear Allah regarding women', 'remain in the service of mothers', 'give mothers their rights with regard to kindness and attention', 'not to abuse wives, and 'not to abandon wives'.

The fact that the behavior of 'abandoning' wives is conditioned only to being "at home" (an accompanying circumstance) implies the Prophet's keenness on not offending women.

A more significant command is that of the Prophet for Muslim men "ليتخذ أحدكم زوجة مؤمنة" ("let every one of you have a believing wife") where the Prophet exhorts men to marry women of piety who will help them with regard to the Hereafter, the fact which implies a virtuous woman as a source of prosperity on the Last Day.

Another ideological stylistic feature is the parallelism involved in the Prophet's statement "إن لكم على نسائكم حقا ولنسائكم عليكم حقا" ("Verily, you have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you"). This parallelism implies a belief in equality between men and women where both are assigned the same duties. In addition, the following significant relational processes are also involved in some hadiths.

### 6.1.1.2. Relational Processes:

**Table 2**: Relational processes in the Prophet's selected hadiths

| The Prophet's statement/phrase | Carrier | Process: Relational | Attribute |
|---|---|---|---|
| "خَيْرُ مَتَاعِ الدُّنْيَا المَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَة". "The most precious thing in the world is a virtuous woman (wife)". | A virtuous woman (wife) | unstated/ implied verb to be (are): intensive | the most precious thing in the world. |
| "ألا أخبِرُك بخيرٍ ما يكنِزُ المرءُ؟ المرأةُ الصَّالحةُ... . ". "Shall I not inform you about the best treasure a man can hoard? (It is) A virtuous wife". | A virtuous wife | is: intensive | the best treasure a man can hoard. |
| "أربعٌ من السعادةِ : المرأةُ الصالحةُ ... أربعٌ من الشَّقاءِ : ... والمرأةُ السوءُ ... .". "Four are from (the signs of) happiness (prosperity): a virtuous woman … (wife)…. Four are from (the signs of) misery: … an unrighteous woman (wife) …". | A virtuous woman (wife) /an unrighteous woman (wife). | is: intensive (implied) | from (the signs of) happiness (prosperity)/ from (the signs of) misery. |
| "والمَرْأَةُ في بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا رَاعِيَةٌ ومَسْئُولَةٌ عن رَعِيَّتِهَا". "A woman (wife) over her husband's house is a shepherd (guardian) and is responsible for her flock". | A woman (wife) | is: intensive | a shepherd (guardian) over her husband's house and is responsible for it. |
| "وخيارُكم خيارُكم لنسائِهم". "And the best of you are those | The best of you | are: intensive | those who are the best |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| who are the best to their wives". | | | to their wives. |
| "خَيْرُكم خَيْرُكم لأَهلِه". "The best of you is the one who is the best to his wife". | The best of you | is: intensive | the one who is the best to his wife. |
| "إنَّما النِّسَاءُ شَقَائِقُ الرِّجَالِ". "Indeed, women are the twin halves of men (counterparts)". | Women | are: intensive | the twin halves of men. |

Significant relational processes are employed in the Prophet's hadiths which further proves his positive feminist stance. The Prophet's perception of a virtuous wife is always positive. Thus, he perceives her as being "خير" the best "خير ما يكنز المرء" "the most precious thing in the world", "متاع الدنيا" treasure a man can hoard", "من السعادة" "from (the signs of) happiness (prosperity)", "فى بيت زوجها راعية ومسؤولة عن رعيتها" a shepherd (guardian) over her husband's house and is responsible for her flock", and "شقائق الرجال" "the twin halves of men". Whereas "المرأة الصالحة" "a virtuous woman (wife)" is represented by the Prophet as an exceptional source of joy, peacefulness of mind, success, and stability in life, "المرأة السوء" "an unrighteous woman (wife)" is "from the signs of misery" in life. Indeed, the correlation on the part of the Prophet between women and aspects of good life and society advancement implies a pro-feminist ideology. In addition, these processes mirror a philosophy of pathos that evokes a positive feeling towards future spouses.

Significantly enough, the sense of equality between men and women is further enhanced by modifying women as being "شقائق الرجال" "the twin halves of men" and attributing the woman as "فى بيت زوجها راعية" "a shepherd (guardian) over her husband's house". This sense of equality invalidates the claim of male-dominated Islamic society. The Prophet's society is not patriarchal or male-centered, rather it cares for women. These relations reveal an ideology of respecting women.

In addition, the following significant material processes are involved in the Prophet's hadiths.

*6.1.1.3. Material processes:*

**Table 3**: Material processes in the Prophet's selected hadiths

| The Prophet's statement/phrase | Actor | Process: Material (action-intention) | Goal | Circumstances |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| "أَن تُطعِمَها إذا طَعِمْتَ، وتَكسوَها إذا اكْتَسَيْتَ، ولا تَضرِب الوَجْهَ". "To feed her when you have your food, to give her clothes to wear when you wear clothes, not to slap the face". | Husbands | تطعم، تكسو، لا تضرب الوجه to feed, to give clothes, not to slap the face. | The Arabic attached pronoun /ها-/ 'her' (i.e., wives). | إذا طعمت، إذا اكتسيت When you have your food, when you wear your clothes. |
| "فعليكمَ رزقُهنَّ وكِسوتُهنَّ بالمعروف"ِ. "…you have to feed them and give them clothes in kindness". | Husbands | عليكم رزقهن وكسوتهن. to feed, to give clothes. | The Arabic attached pronoun /nuun an-neswa/ (feminine plural pronoun (i.e., wives) | بالمعروف in kindness |
| "لا تُنْكَحُ الأيِّمُ حتى تُسْتَأْمَرَ، ولا تُنْكَحُ البِكْرُ حتَّى تُسْتَأْذَن"ِ. "A matron should not be given in marriage except after consulting her; and a virgin should not be given in marriage except after her permission". | The actor is implied (her guardian) | لا تُنْكَحُ should not be given in marriage. | الأيِّم، البكر A matron- a virgin. | حتى تُسْتَأْمَرَ except after consulting her. حتَّى تُسْتَأْذَنَ except after her permission. |

As clear from Table 3, the language used is functionally *directive*. Prophet Muhammad instructs husbands to give their wives their materialistic rights of having food and clothes and of refraining from giving them a slap on the face. The repetition of the same instructions in two hadiths (among the selected material) is an act of foregrounding that emphasizes the importance of the act of giving women their rights.

 It is also indicative that in addition to the instructions given by the Prophet in two hadiths that are previously-referred to (in the table of behavioral

processes) to give women their rights in relation to kindness and attention (psychological non-materialistic aspects), the Prophet also instructs Muslim men in other two hadiths (in the table of material processes) to give women their rights with regard to food and clothing (materialistic aspects). The four hadiths can be hence regarded as being complementary to each other as they form a sum of total rights of women (materialistic and psychological).

More important, the fact that the acts of having 'food and clothes' in particular is associated with the circumstances "إذا طعمت" ''when you have your food'' and "إذا اكتسيت" ''when you wear clothes'' implies refutation of male-dominated society where man is prioritized in rights. The Prophet's positive feminist attitude is also implied from the ideological circumstance "بالمعروف" ''in kindness'' that is associated with the act of giving women their materialistic rights through which the Prophet urges good treatment of women.

Relatedly, other significant circumstances are those of "حتى تُسْتَأْمَرِ" '' except after consulting her'' and "حتى تُسْتَأْذَنَ" ''except after her permission'' that are associated with the marriage of a matron and a virgin. They imply the Prophet's concern about a lady's consent on marriage. They stand against the prevailing idea that arranged marriage in Muslim societies is a manifestation of coercive imposition on Muslim women against their self-determination. They also underlie the Prophet's concern about the psychological well-being and autonomy of women. In other words, women are empowered, not underestimated by the Prophet of Islam. That invalidates the claim that arranged marriage in Islam is "displacement of agency from the individual" (Aguiar, 2018, p.5) and is "antagonistic to women's agency" (p.34). Thus, the Prophet's instructions are given for men to provide women with their materialistic and psychological needs; the sum of which suggest a refutation of the establishment of need-thwarting environment for Muslim women. They rather imply realization of the needs of women.

*6.1.1.4. Mental processes:*

**Table 4**: Mental processes in the Prophet's selected hadiths

| The Prophet's statement/phrase | Senser | Process: Mental (emotive) | Phenomenon |
|---|---|---|---|
| "لَا يَفْرَكْ مُؤْمِنٌ مُؤْمِنَةً"<br>"A believing man must not hate a believing woman". | مؤمن<br>A believing man | لا يفرك<br>must not hate | مؤمنة<br>a believing woman |

In a negated imperative structure using the Arabic particle /laa/ (no) that is associated with the present simple tense to indicate prohibition and request to refrain from doing something (i.e., must not), the Prophet instructs Muslims not to experience the feeling of hatred towards their wives (mental emotive verb).

The Prophet's positive feminist stance and his woman-friendly discourse are further clarified at the level of ideational/experiential metafunction in terms of vocabulary or lexis.

### 6.1.1.5. Vocabulary/Lexis

As far as Halliday's experiential metafunction is concerned, the way women are represented by the Prophet implies a discourse supportive of women. Given the lexicalization of the selected hadiths, there is hardly any doubt about the Prophet's ideological feminist position. As highlighted above, the hadith's general lexicon involves repeated emotive positive terms for evaluating women and for representing them as equal to men. The pervasively repeated positive lexical presentation of women suggests stereotyping which is an ideological element.

An important lexical choice is the Arabic conjunctive /wa-/ "and" in the Prophet's statement "إن لكم على نسائكم حقاً ولنسائكم عليكم حقا" ("Verily, you have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you"). This is an *addition* marker used to coordinate both 'men' and 'women' together informing the idea of being partners. It emphasizes a relation of equality between both of them.

In a similar vein, the use of the same Arabic conjunctive in the Prophet's statement "الرجل فى أهله راع ومسؤول عن رعيته والمرأة فى بيت زوجها راعية ومسؤولة عن رعيتها" ("A man (husband) is a shepherd over his family and is responsible for his flock; a woman (wife) is a shepherd over her husband's

house and is responsible for her flock") is ideologically indicative as it implies a sense of inclusion of women as equally important partners to men in the Muslim society.

Indeed, the Prophet's lexical choices of "راعية" (a shepherd (guardian)) in association with women is of great ideological significance in itself. It underlies a belief in the capabilities of women as wives in making decisions and administrating their houses. It also sustains a rapport of equality and sameness among the spouses. That stands as a refutation of the stereotypical idea constantly propagated by the western media that Muslim women are human beings who are unable to make decisions by themselves or for themselves as they are always stuck at home under male dominant protection (Coates, 2001, p.111). Muslim women are not just receptive spectators, rather they are decision makers. The same significance is attached to the Prophet's lexical choice of "شقائق الرجال" ("the twin halves of men (counterparts)") that designates a belief in equality and refutes any claims of gender-biased or anti-feminist discourse.
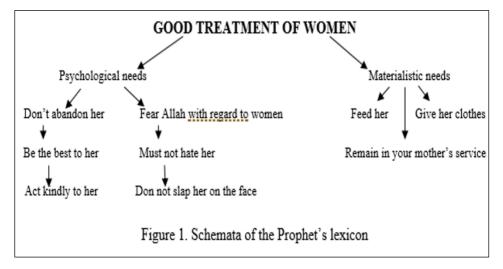
Further reinforcement of the Prophet's positive feminist ideology is revealed when conducting an analysis of his vocabulary in terms of semantic fields where all the details relate together to form a coherent whole.

### 6.1.1.6. Semantic field and schemata

A semantic field analysis of the Prophet's lexicon in the selected hadiths, conducted in a broad sense to include phrases and sentences, not just mere lexical items (lexemes), shows that they can all be clustered together under the most dominant conceptual domain of 'GOOD TREATMENT OF WOMEN". Instructions and descriptions of the Prophet include:

"لا يفرك، لا يهجر، اتقوا الله فى النساء، استوصوا بالنساء خيرا، أكرمها، أطعمها، تكسوها إذا اكتسيت، عليكم رزقهن وكسوتهن بالمعروف، لا تضرب الوجه ولا تقبح، خياركم خياركم لنسائهم، خيركم خيركم لأهله".

"must not hate (his wife), "do not abandon (your wife)", "fear Allah with regard to women", "act kindly towards women", "remain in her (your mother's) service", "feed her", "give her clothes to wear", "do not slap the face or abuse (her)", "the best of you are those who are the best to their

wives", and "the best of you is the one who is best to his wife". This conceptual relation can be more clarified in the following diagram:



**GOOD TREATMENT OF WOMEN**

Psychological needs

Don't abandon her  →  Fear Allah with regard to women

Be the best to her  →  Must not hate her

Act kindly to her  →  Don not slap her on the face

Materialistic needs

Feed her  |  Give her clothes

Remain in your mother's service

Figure 1. Schemata of the Prophet's lexicon

In like manner, other phrases and statements can be clustered together under the conceptual domain of "RESPECT OF WOMEN":

"خير متاع الدنيا، خير ما يكنز المرء، من السعادة (الزوجة الصالحة)، فى بيت زوجها راعية ومسؤولة عن رعيتها، شقائق الرجال، لنسائكم عليكم حقا، أحق الناس بحسن صحابتى (أمك)".

"the most precious thing in the world", "the best treasure a man can hoard", "from (the signs of) happiness (a virtuous wife)", "a shepherd (guardian) over her husband's house and is responsible for it", "the twin halves of men", "your wives have rights over you", and "has the greatest right with regard to kindness and attention (your mother)".

From the perspective of cognitive stylistics, these conceptual domains are scenes/frames/scripts evoked in the mind of the recipients that build large mental stores of information about "character constructs" (Emmott et. al., 2014, p.273) (i.e., about women in Islam and how men should treat them). For male recipients, these hadiths form a large "attitude schemata" related to themselves (how to behave with women) and to the Prophet's attitude to women (hence Islam's attitude to them in general). Accordingly, the sum of the conceptual data structure under scrutiny is a positive stereotyping or positive feminist attitude proving that Islam is not encouraging Muslim societies to be need-thwarting environments for

women, whether materialistically or psychologically. The abundance of the Prophet's positive representation in relation to women establishes a kind of stereotyping where they are constructed as a motivating force, not a source of threat.

### 6.1.2. Interpersonal metafunction

Another significant aspect underlying the Prophet's hadiths is their *mood* which is a component of interpersonal meaning. The interpersonal mood of the Prophet's hadiths varies between declarative and imperative sentences. Instructions of the Prophet with regard to women are given by both persuasion and intimidation techniques, the fact which reflects his keenness on making his people follow his instructions and adhere to them. Declarative sentences are sometimes employed by the Prophet in the context of encouraging and inducing his recipients to treat women well and give them their rights. At other times, the Prophet's instructions are given via imperative sentences so as to create the impression of obligation in the minds of the recipients. Both types of sentences, however, constitute a macro speech act of urging/ instructing/ guiding men to respect their wives and give them their rights.

In terms of Halliday's metafunctions, speech acts are interpersonal elements that reveal attitudes. Accordingly, it becomes clear that a general positive feminist attitude is at stake here. Given the fact that the Prophet is an authority for Muslims whose instructions must be followed, all the speech acts underlying his discourse on women will have the perlocutionary force of positioning men to respect women and treat them well. They are thus group norms and behavior codes which create a sort of unified pro-feminist ideology.

### 6.1.3. Textual metafunction

An important textual metafunction in the Prophet's discourse is that of *foregrounding* by repetition. Instructions of the Prophet are sometimes repeated in more than one situation using similar words, the fact which reflects his keenness on delivering the message to his followers and spreading awareness among them in a decisive way. In addition, this repetition creates an impression of factuality and habituality of the

descriptions and the patterns of behavior instructed by the Prophet. It also reflects a high degree of concern for women. The following are repeatedly foregrounded in the Prophet's Hadiths:

- Instructions to treat women well:
  - "اتقوا الله فى النساء" ("Fear Allah with regard to women")
  - "استوصوا بالنساء خيرا " ("Act kindly towards women");

- Description of the best men as those who are the best to their wives;
  - "خيارُكم خيارُكم لنسائهم" ("The best of you are those who are the best to their wives")
  - "خيركم خيركم لأهله" ("The best of you is the one who is best to his wife")

- Repetition of the word أمك (your mother) three times in an answer to a question from one of the Prophet's companions about who has the greatest right on him with regards to kindness and attention. Thus, women in Islam are given more prominence than men by the Prophet. He places the position of women as mothers as higher than men as fathers.

Furthermore, the Prophet's pro-feminist ideology is also manifested when further analyzing his discourse from a pragmatic view in terms of speech acts.

## 6.2. Speech acts and implicatures

The prophet's sentences underlie both direct and indirect speech acts. They are both illustrated in the following table:

**Table 6:** The speech acts underlying the Prophet 's selected hadiths

| Indirect speech acts | Direct speech acts |
|---|---|
| "إنَّ لكمْ على نسائِكم حقًّا ولنسائِكم عليكُم حقًّا". | "اسْتَوْصُوا بالنِّساءِ خَيْرًا". |
| "Verily, you have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you". Representative (assertive-descriptive)). | "Act kindly towards women": Directive (command). |

| | |
|---|---|
| "خَيْرُ مَتَاعِ الدُّنْيَا المَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحَة". | "اتَّقوا اللهَ في النساءِ". |
| "The most **precious thing** in the world is a virtuous woman (wife)": Representative (assertive-descriptive). | "Fear Allah with regard to women": Directive (command) |
| "... أُمُّكَ، قالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قالَ: ثُمَّ أُمُّكَ، قالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قالَ: ثُمَّ أُمُّكَ، قالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قالَ: ثُمَّ أَبُوكَ " | "فالْزَمْهَا" |
| "…Your mother." "Then who?" He replied, "Your mother." "Then who?" He replied, "Your mother." (when a man asked him about who deserves his company the best): Representative (assertive-informative). | "Then remain in her (your mother's) service": Directive (command). |
| "ألا أُخبِرُك بخيرٍ ما يكنِزُ المرءُ؟ المرأةُ الصَّالحةُ ... ". | "أن تُطعِمَها إذا طَعِمْتَ، وتَكسوَها إذا اكْتَسَيْتَ أن تطعمها إذا طعمت، وتكسوها إذا اكتسيت". |
| "Shall I not inform you about the best treasure a man can hoard? (It is ) A virtuous woman (wife) …": Representative (descriptive-informative). | "To feed her when you have your food, to give her clothes to wear when you wear clothes": Directive (command). |
| "أربعٌ من السعادةِ: المرأةُ الصالحةُ... ." | "لا تَضرِب الوَجْهَ، ولا تُقَبِّحْ، ولا تَهجُرْ". |
| "Four are from (the signs of) happiness (prosperity): a virtuous woman (wife),…": Representative (descriptive-informative). | "Do not slap the face, do not abuse (her) and do not abandon (her)…".: Directive (prohibitive). |
| "المَرْأَةُ في بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا رَاعِيَةٌ ومَسْئُوولَةٌ عن رَعِيَّتِهَا". | "لَا يَفْرَكُ مُؤْمِنٌ مُؤْمِنَةً...". |
| "… a woman (wife) is a shepherd (guardian) over her husband's house and is responsible for her flock": Representative (descriptive- informative). | "A believing man must not hate a believing woman": Directive (prohibitive). |
| "خَيْرُكم خَيْرُكم لأَهلِه". | "لا تُنْكَحُ الأَيِّمُ حتى تُسْتَأْمَرَ". |
| "The best of you is the one who is best to his wife": Representative (descriptive-informative). | "A matron should not be given in marriage except after consulting her": Directive (prohibitive). |
| " خِيَارُكُمْ خِيَارُكُمْ لِنِسائِهِمْ". | "ولا تُنْكَحُ البِكْرُ حتَّى تُسْتَأْذَنَ". |
| "The best of you are those who are the best to their wives": Representative | "… and a virgin should not be given in marriage except after her |

| (descriptive- informative). | permission": Directive (prohibitive). |
|---|---|
| "إِنَّمَا النِّسَاءُ شَقَائِقُ الرِّجَالِ". <br><br> "Women are the twin halves of men (counterparts)": Representative (descriptive-informative). | |
| "السَّاعِي علَى الأَرْمَلَةِ والمِسْكِينِ، كالْمُجاهِدِ في سَبيلِ اللَّهِ". <br><br> "The one who makes efforts to help a widow or a poor person is like a mujahid (warrior) in the path of Allah": Representative (descriptive-informative). | |

Analysis of the selected hadiths in terms of Searle's classification of speech acts shows that the Prophet's discourse on women can be rightly regarded as a macro-speech act aiming at spreading awareness among his followers of the rights of women. His discourse is sometimes presented in the structure of direct speech acts where Muslims are openly instructed to act in a certain good way towards women (feeding them, giving them clothes, acting kindly towards them, fearing Allah regarding them, etc.) or not to do prejudiced acts such as giving them to marriage without permission, slapping them on the face, hating them, etc.).

In addition, the Prophet's discourse involves declarative statements that perform other functions than that of giving information which is inherently assigned to them. The Prophet does not merely aim at informing his followers that women are " شقائق الرجال " ("the twin halve of men"), that every woman is "فى بيت زوجها راعية" ("a shepherd (guardian)) over her husband's house"), etc. Rather, all his utterances indicated in Table 6 perform the indirect functions of *stressing* equality between men and women, *advising* men to treat women well, and *asserting* the importance of treating women equally. Given the contextual factor of being said by the Prophet who is an authority for Muslims, all these declarative statements instantiate the locution of *having to do*. Furthermore, the perlocutionary force of the prophet's utterances will exceed his time to be a future-oriented force of *Being* (kind to wives and women in general) and of *Doing*

(kind material and psychological acts to women).

A special instantiation of the locution of *having to do* is associated with the Prophet's statement "وأنا خيركم لأهلى" ("and I am the best of you to my wives"). This declarative statement does not merely inform the recipients that the Prophet was the best to his wives, rather it performs the indirect speech act of stressing the meaning that this behavior towards women is the norm since it is done by the Prophet and that the otherwise is deviation from Islamic normativity.

Another significant indirect speech act underlies the Prophet's statement "من كان له امرأتان يميل لإحداهما على الأخرى، جاء يوم القيامة وأحد شقيه مائل" ("Whoever has two wives and is inclined to favor one of them over the other, he will come on the Day of Resurrection with half of his body leaning"). This declarative statement performs the indirect speech act of *prohibiting* men from doing injustice towards their wives and *urging* them to keep perfect balance between two wives. Having (for one reason or another as prescribed in Islam) to marry a second wife, a husband should treat them equally, or otherwise he will suffer on the Day of Judgment. Indeed, the severity of the punishment in itself implies that it is not recommended to marry two wives unless there is necessity.

Since the acts involved in the Prophet's hadiths, direct or indirect, have the same illocutionary force of directing men to treat women well, all the selected hadiths can be rightly regarded as a unitary framework operating to convey to the followers the cognitive view that women are such gentle honorable creatures that must be respected and given their rights. They are like awareness sessions on how to deal properly with women.

In terms of *coherence*, an important conversational implication is derived from two inter- and intra-sentential relations existing in the Prophet's hadith that is part of the Farewell Sermon:

1. An inter-sentential relation of *definition* between the Prophet's statement "إن لكم على نسائكم حقاً ولنسائكم عليكم حقا" ("Verily, you have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you") and the following sentence where this right is defined as being "لكم عليهن ("Your rights ألا يواطئن فرشكم أحدا تكرهونه، وعليهن ألا يأتين بفاحشة مبينة"

are that they are not to allow anyone whom you dislike to tread on your bedding (furniture) and they will not commit flagrant immorality").

2.  An intra-sentential relation of *condition and its result* in

"فإن فعلن فإن الله قد أذن لكم أن تعضلوهن وتهجروهن في المضاجع وتضريوهن ضرياً غير مبرح، فإن انتهين وأطعنكم، فعليكم رزقهن وكسوتهن بالمعروف".

("If they do so, then Allah gives you permission to abandon their beds and strike them without causing pain. But if they return to good conduct, then you have to feed them and give them clothes in kindness").

The fact that the Prophet conditioned providing women with their rights to some limits that that they should follow and observe implies that feminism in Islam is associated with moral boundaries. Islam is not against women's rights to develop their autonomy, yet that should take place within the boundaries of culture and religious identities. Feminism for the Prophet is not to act against norms, rather it is to empower women and give them their due autonomy and well-being within the boundaries of culture and religion.

Important resources of indirectness and implicated meanings in the Prophet's discourse are the rhetorical devices that are sometimes utilized. They are figures of speech that add to the prophetic pro-feminist ideology.

## 6.3. Figures of speech

In his discourse on women, the Prophet does not create male-dominated environment, rather he metaphorically conceptualizes women as strong honorable human beings within scenarios of balance of power. Thus, each woman (as a wife) is metaphorically identified as "a shepherd (guardian)", "the most precious thing in the world", and "the twin halves of men (counterparts)". These are nominal metaphors (Levinson, 1983, p.152) that construct similarity between two referents (a tenor and a vehicle) in a relation of identification where the characteristics of the vehicle are transferred to the tenor. Women are always involved in the Prophet's discourse as the tenor to whom the characteristics of "a guardian" (that of

responsibility), of "the most precious thing in the world" (that of being desired), and of "the twin halves of men" (that of equality) are transferred to them.

The ground of comparison in all these metaphors is a kind of equality, responsibility, and trust of efficiency and making correct decisions. The relation between a woman and her husband is not constructed by the Prophet in terms of power and domination, rather within a context of hegemony where a socio-economic equality is particularly implied. Through these metaphors, the Prophet constructs a kind of gender balance where women are given participatory linguistic roles. That again diminishes the impression of Muslim women being mere non-participatory actors or of being passive entities in the society.

In a similar vein, women are metaphorically presented by the Prophet as "قوارير" (glass vessels) with the ground of preciousness that deserves gentle treatment. When the Prophet's servant, Anjasha, was singing for camels with women on their backs, the Prophet instructs him to drive slowly so as not to harm the women. This metaphor underlies the Prophet's keenness on good treatment of women even in simple situations. It also produces the implicature of 'act kindly towards women'.

Furthermore, in terms of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory of conceptual metaphor, the Prophet's metaphoric statements evoke conceptual links between "A WOMAN" (as a source domain) and "SHEPHERD", "THE MOST PRECIOUS THING IN LIFE", "TWIN HALVES OF MEN", and "GLASS VESSELS" (as target domains). These mapped conceptual metaphors in turn evoke the following underlying concepts that can be said to be all subsumed in a relation of hyponymy into the conceptual metaphor AWOMAN IS BOTH GENTLE AND POWERFUL:

- A woman is a responsible guardian
- A woman is a respectable being
- A woman is a gentle being
- A woman is equal to man
- A woman is the source of happiness/sadness in life

This positive feminist ideology is further crystallized into the simile

utilized in the Prophet's hadith: الساعى على الأرملة والمسكين كالمجاهد فى سبيل الله" " (The one who makes efforts (to help) a widow or a poor person is like a mujahid (warrior) in the path of Allah). The fact that the Prophet positively likens the man who helps a widow to a warrior who will be rewarded implies a positive feminist ideology.

Another rhetorical tool utilized by the Prophet in his discourse on women is that of *contrast* that is involved in the Prophet's hadith:

"أربع من السعادة: المرأة الصالحة، والمسكن الواسع، والجار الصالح، والمركب الهنيء. أربع من الشقاوة: الجار السوء، والمرأة السوء، والمسكن الضيق، والمركب السوء".

("Four are from (the signs of) happiness (prosperity): a virtuous woman (wife), a wide house, a righteous neighbor, and a comfortable vehicle. Four are from (the signs of) misery: an unrighteous neighbor, an unrighteous woman (wife), a narrow house, and an uncomfortable vehicle"). In addition, the parallel structure in the hadith further implies the Prophet's belief that a woman really makes all the difference; if she is a good wife, life is good, but if she is not, life is miserable.

## 7. Conclusion

To conclude, stylistics as coined with feminism is an interdisciplinary term that utilizes various linguistic devices to detect ideologies. The stylistic features of Prophet Muhammad's discourse on women display them as important creatures that are exemplified as a source of joy, goodness, and stability. His lexical choices indicate prerequisites of self-determination and designate respect for the rights of women. Tracing the reference chain and the linguistic techniques constructed by the Prophet offers insights into how he perceives women. Women are embraced gently in the Prophetic hadiths. At the referential and evaluative level, the descriptive linguistic accounts of the Prophet's discourse on women always associate positive terms and attributes with them, the fact which sustains a positive attitude towards appreciating women.

From a pragmatic view, the study is built on speech act analysis that mirrors the Prophet's high degree of concern for women's welfare and well-being. As a girl under her parents' guardianship, she must be consulted for marriage approval/disapproval. As a wife, her role is totally

appreciated, and she is a precious creature that must be respected, honored, and protected. As a mother, men are ordered to remain in her service in appreciation of her efforts and she is elevated over a father. Under any circumstances, thus, no woman should be oppressed or marginalized according to the Prophet's instructions.

In addition, the Prophet's discourse underlines the concept of partnership to women's male counterparts and endorses a belief in women's capabilities and importance. The Prophet's lexicon stands against the assumption of eradication of women's agency in Islam. The discursive construction of women as equals is a general feature of the Prophet's discourse on women. His discourse is marked by total nullification of anti-feminist instructions. From a gender perspective, gender ideologies and oppressive practices are warned against by the Prophet whose discourse involves absence of gender bias and an advocacy of women's rights.

Interestingly enough, the Prophet's discourse on women constructs a new brand of femininity where they are projected as gentle and powerful beings at the same time. They are a source of taking care of their families and, at the same time, they should be cared for by men who should act as guardians expected to watch, protect and take care of them. This version of feminism stands in contrast to the modern one that calls for independence of women on the basis of a kind of equality that diminishes female identity. In brief, feminism in Islam is based on a kind of partnership that subsumes guardianship.

Furthermore, the fact that the discourse of the Prophet is generally a feminist statement issued many decades ago in relation to the importance of women's role makes it sound fair to consider him as a pioneer advocate of feminism and disclaims the opposite views. His discourse addresses aspects that are the trend of today. A feminist position undoubtedly evolves from the prophet's discourse on women decades ago.

Finally, the Prophet's instructions represent dynamics capable of challenging opposite unfair claims. Being such a great authority, his instructions also challenge some modernist, patriarchal frameworks that exist in some Muslim societies. Such societies need to re-evaluate their practices towards women and engage with the instructions underlying the

Prophet's hadiths. The Prophet's underlying agenda has been to bring about a change in the thinking of the people in favour of women's rights.

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## Appendix 1

The selected hadiths, their translation and their sources are represented in the following table. The translation is mainly based on the website *Sunnah.com* with minor modifications by the researcher.

| N0. | The hadith in Arabic | Translation | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | عن أبي هريرة - رضي الله عنه - أن النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - قال: " مَن كانَ يُؤْمِنُ باللَّهِ واليَومِ الآخِرِ فلا يُؤْذِي جارَهُ، واسْتَوْصُوا بالنِّساءِ خَيْرًا؛ فإنَّهُنَّ خُلِقْنَ مِن ضِلَعٍ، وإنَّ أعْوَجَ شَيءٍ في الضِّلَعِ أعْلاهُ، فإنْ ذَهَبْتَ تُقِيمُهُ كَسَرْتَهُ، وإنْ | Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, (peace be upon him) said: "He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm his neighbor; and should act kindly towards women for they were created from a rib, and the most crooked part of a rib is | Sahih Al-Bukhari |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | تَرَكْتَهُ لَمْ يَزَلْ أَعْوَجَ، فاسْتَوْصُوا بالنِّساءِ خَيْرَ". | its uppermost. If you attempt to straighten it; you will break it, and if you leave it, it will remain crooked; so act kindly towards women". | |
| 2 | عن أبي هريرة -رضي الله عنه- أنه جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إلى رَسولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عليه وسلَّمَ فَقالَ: يا رَسولَ اللَّهِ، مَن أحَقُّ النَّاسِ بحُسْنِ صَحَابَتِي؟ قالَ: أُمُّكَ، قالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قالَ: ثُمَّ أُمُّكَ، قالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قالَ: ثُمَّ أُمُّكَ، قالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ؟ قالَ: ثُمَّ أَبُوكَ. | Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "O Messenger of Allah, who has the greatest right on me with regard to kindness and attention?" He replied, "Your mother." He asked, "Then who?" He replied, "Your mother." He asked, "Then who?" He replied, "Your mother." He asked, "Then who?" He replied, "Your father." | Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim |
| 3 | عن معاوية بن جاهمة أن جاهمة جاء إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال: " إنِّي أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَغْزُوَ فَجِئْتُ أَسْتَشِيرُكَ ، قَالَ : " أَلَكَ وَالِدَةٌ ؟ " ، قَالَ : نَعَمْ ، قَالَ : " فَالْزَمْهَا ، فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ عِنْدَ رِجْلَيْهَا ". | Mu'awiya, the son of Jahima, reported that Jahima came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, "I want to join the fighting (in the cause of Allah) and I have come to seek your advice. He (the Prophet) asked, "Do you have a mother?". He (Jahima) replied, "Yes". He (the Prophet) said, "Then remain in her (your mother's) service, because Paradise is under her feet". | Sunan an-Nasa'i |
| 4 | عن عبد الله بن عمرو -رضي الله عنه- أن النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم- قال: "الدُّنْيا مَتَاعٌ، وَخَيْرُ مَتَاعِ الدُّنْيا المَرْأَةُ الصَّالِحة". | Abdullah ibn Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "The world (and all things in the world) is precious and the most precious thing in the world is a virtuous woman (wife)". | Sahih Muslim |
| 5 | عن حكيم بن معاوية القشيري عن أبيه قال "قُلْتُ: يا رَسولَ اللهِ، ما حَقُّ زَوْجِةِ أَحَدِنا عليه؟ قال: "أن تُطعِمَها إذا طَعِمْتَ، وتكْسوَها إذا اكْتَسَيْتَ ، ولا تَضرِبِ الوَجْهَ، ولا تُقَبِّحْ، ولا تَهجُرْ إلّا في البَيْتِ". | Hakim ibn Mu'awiya Al-Qushairi reported that his father said that he asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) "What are the rights that a wife has over her husband?" The Prophet replied, "To feed her when you have your food, to give her clothes to wear when you wear | |

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| | | clothes, not to slap the face, not to abuse (her), and not to abandon (her) except at home". |
| **6** | عن أبي هريرة -رضي الله عنه- أن النبي- صلى الله عليه وسلم- قال: "مَنْ كَانَ لَهُ امْرَأَتَانِ يَمِيلُ لِإِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَى جَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَحَدُ شِقَّيْهِ مَائِلٌ ". | Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Whoever has two wives and is inclined to favor one of them over the other, he will come on the Day of Resurrection with half of his body leaning". | Sahih At-Tirmidhi, Sunan Abi-Dawud, Sunan An-Nasa'i. |
| **7** | عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله- صلى الله عليه وسلم- قال: "لا تُنْكَحُ الأَيِّمُ حَتَّى تُسْتَأْمَرَ، ولا تُنْكَحُ البِكْرُ حَتَّى تُسْتَأْذَنَ. قالوا: يا رَسولَ اللَّهِ، وكيفَ إذْنُها؟ قالَ: أنْ تَسْكُتَ". | Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "A matron should not be given in marriage except after consulting her; and a virgin should not be given in marriage except after her permission". They (the people) asked, "O Allah's Messenger! How can we know her permission?" He said, "Her silence (indicates her permission)". | |
| **8** | عن ثوبان مولى النبي - صلَّى الله عليه وسلَّم - قال: يا رسولَ اللَّهِ أيَّ المالِ نتَّخِذُ فقالَ :" لِيتَّخِذْ أَحَدُكُمْ قَلْبًا شَاكِرًا وَلسَانًا ذَاكِرًا وَزَوْجَةً مُؤْمِنَةً تُعِينُ أَحَدَكُمْ عَلَى أَمْرِ الآخِرَةِ ". | Thawban, the Prophet's servant, reported that he said: "Oh, Messenger of Allah! What is the best property a man can have?" The Prophet replied, "Let every one of you have (as the best property) a remembering tongue (of Allah), a grateful heart and a believing wife who helps him with regard to the Hereafter". | Sahih Al-Bukhari |
| **9** | عن سعد بن أبي وقاص رضى الله عنه أن رسول الله- صلى الله عليه وسلم- قال:"أربعٌ من السعادةِ : المرأةُ الصالحةُ ، والمسكنُ الواسعُ ، والجارُ الصالحُ ، والمركبُ الهنيءُ . أربعٌ من الشَّقاءِ : الجارُ السوءُ ، والمرأةُ السوءُ ، والمركبُ السوءُ،  والمسكنُ الضَّيِّقُ". | Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, may Allah be pleased with him,  reported that the Messenger of Allah- peace be upon him- said: "Four are from (the signs of) happiness (prosperity): a virtuous woman (wife), a wide house, a righteous neighbor, and a comfortable vehicle. Four are from (the signs of) misery: an unrighteous neighbor, an unrighteous woman (wife), an | |

uncomfortable vehicle, and a narrow house".

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| 10 | عن عبد الله بن عمر أنه سمع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: "كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ ومَسْئُولٌ عن رَعِيَّتِهِ، والإِمَامُ رَاعٍ ومَسْئُولٌ عن رَعِيَّتِهِ، والرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ في أَهْلِهِ ومَسْئُولٌ عن رَعِيَّتِهِ، والمَرْأَةُ في بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا رَاعِيَةٌ ومَسْئُولَةٌ عن رَعِيَّتِهَا، والخَادِمُ في مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ رَاعٍ ومَسْئُولٌ عن رَعِيَّتِهِ". | Abdullah ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with both of them, reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say: "All of you are shepherds (guardians) and responsible for your flock (what is in your custody). The Imam is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock; a man (husband) is a shepherd over his family and is responsible for his flock; a woman (wife) over her husband's house is a shepherd and is responsible for her flock; and a servant is a shepherd over his master's property and is responsible for his flock". | |
| 11 | "أيها الناسُ إنَّ لكمْ على نسائِكم حقًّا ولنسائِكم عليكم حقًّا، لكمْ عليهنَّ ألاَّ يوطِئنَ فُرُشَكم أحدًا تكرهونهُ، وعليهنَّ ألا يأتينَ بفاحشةٍ مُبينةٍ، فإنْ فعلنَ فإنَّ اللهَ تعالى قد أَذِنَ لكمْ أن تهجُروهنَّ في المضاجع وتضريوهنَّ ضربًا غيرَ مُبرِّحٍ، فإنِ انتهَينَ فعليكم رزقُهنَّ وكسوتُهنَّ بالمعروفِ. واسْتَوْصُوا بالنِّساءِ خَيْرًا... . اتَّقوا اللهَ في النساء واسْتَوْصُوا بهنَّ خَيْرًا". | "O People! Verily, you have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you. Your rights are that they are not to allow anyone whom you dislike to tread on your bedding (furniture) and they will not commit flagrant immorality. If they do so, then Allah gives you permission to abandon their beds and strike them without causing pain. But if they return to good conduct, then you have to feed them and give them clothes in kindness. Act kindly towards women …. So, fear Allah regarding women and treat them well". | Sahih Al-Bukhari |
| 12 | عن أبي هريرة رضي الله تعالى عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال" :أَكملُ المؤمنينَ إيمانًا أحسَنُهم خُلقًا وخيارُكم خيارُكم لنسائِهم ." | Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "The most perfect among the believers is the one whose behavior is the most excellent; and the best of you are those who are the best to their wives". | |

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| **13** | عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله: "لَا يَفْرُكْ مُؤْمِنٌ مُؤْمِنَةً، إِنْ كَرِهَ مِنْهَا خُلُقًا رَضِيَ مِنْهَا آخَرَ". | Abu Hurayra, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: A believing man must not hate a believing woman. If he is displeased with one bad quality in her, let him (at the same time) be pleased with one that is good". | Sunan Abi-Dawud |
| **14** | عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله- صلى الله عليه وسلم: "السَّاعِي عَلَى الأَرْمَلَةِ والمِسْكِينِ، كالْمُجاهِدِ في سَبيلِ اللَّهِ". | Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet said: "The one who makes efforts to help a widow or a poor person is like a mujahid (warrior) in the path of Allah". | Sahih Al-Bukhari |
| **15** | عن أم المؤمنين عائشة رضي الله عنها أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "إنَّمَا النَّسَاءُ شَقَائِقُ الرِّجَالِ". | The mother of believers, 'A'isha, may Allah be pleased with her, reported that the Prophet - peace be upon him - said: "Indeed, women are the twin halves of men (counterparts)". | |
| **16** | عن ابن عباس - رضي الله عنهما - أن النبي- صلى الله عليه وسلم - قال لعمر- رضي الله عنه- " ألا أُخبِرُك بخيرِ ما يكنِزُ المرءُ؟ المرأةُ الصَّالحةُ إذا نظرَ إليها سرَّتْهُ، وإذا أمرَها أطاعَتْهُ، وإذا غابَ عنها حفِظَتْهُ". | Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with both of them, reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Umar, may Allah be pleased with him: "Shall I not inform you about the best treasure a man can hoard? (It is) A virtuous wife who pleases him whenever he looks at her, who obeys him when he commands her, and who guards herself when he is absent from her". | |
| **17** | عن عائشة أم المؤمنين رضي الله عنها أن النبي- صلى الله عليه وسلم- قال: "خَيرُكم خَيرُكم لأهلِه، وأنا خَيرُكم لأهلي". | The mother of believers, 'A'isha, may Allah be pleased with her, reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "The best of you is the one who is best to his wife, and I am the best of you to my wives". | Sahih at-Tirmidhi |

| 18 | عن أنس رضي الله عنه قال: كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في بعض أسفاره وغلام أسود يقال له أنجشة يحدو، فقال له رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "رُوَيْدَكَ سَوْقًا بالقَوَارِيرِ". | Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) was in one of his journeys with a black servant called Anjasha who was singing while driving camels. Then, the messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "Anjasha! Drive (the camels) slowly with the glass vessels (women on back of the camels)". | Sahih Muslim |