LEGITIMATION AND PERCEPTION IN MOROCCAN WOMEN DISCOURSE

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Abstract:
The objective of this article is to scrutinize how the discourse of Moroccan women subjected to marital violence in a Moroccan talk show was perceived by the online commentators and the way media impacted the different perceptions negatively at the national level. To reach our objective, we covered all the shows that dealt with marital violence in a Moroccan talk show (Qesset Nnas “the story of people”) in a Moroccan TV channel (Medi 1 TV) from September 4, 2013 to October 2, 2015 and all the comments written by the Moroccan online audience in the channel’s website and in YouTube. All the negative comments collected were classified according to the themes they displayed and explained with the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, which studies the relationship between all parties of the discourse and focuses on the political, social and economic conditions that affect the comments by paying close attention to notions like power, language and social constructs.

Keywords: Discourse Perception, Women, Violence, Media, Negative Attitudes

Introduction
In this article, we will attempt to study how the women subjected to marital violence (WSMV) who expressed themselves on a Moroccan national TV program called “Qesset Nnas” (The story of people) on Medi 1 TV (a Moroccan TV station) were perceived by the online Moroccan audience. These two elements (representation (on TV) and perception (in the Internet)) will be dealt with within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 352).

Our overall objective within this framework is to scrutinize how the discourse of WSMV was perceived by the Moroccan audience and how TV and the Internet played a pivotal role in delegitimizing women’s discourse. For us, linking representation on TV with online perception is of paramount importance as it is pivotal to the accumulation of research on the crippling phenomenon of violence against women and the prevalence of negative attitudes among the Moroccan population (males and females) in total harmony with the spirit of CDA, where the focus is on “relations between discourse, power, dominance and social inequality” (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 249).

1. Discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis
Since the emergence of discourse analysis, many trends and movements have been developed. Fairclough (2003) referred to two types of approaches, namely a textually oriented one and an approach to discourse analysis that has more of a social theoretical direction although he admitted the complementary nature of the two views as a linguistic analysis is vital for a social analysis counterpart and vice versa. The same view is shared by Cameron and
Kullik (2003), who assume that language in use that is studied textually should be embedded in its social and cultural context.

Within the second approach, which is representative of a social constructivist view of discourse, all discourse analysts agree that discourse as a social construction of reality treats texts as communicative units which are embedded in social and cultural practices and the texts themselves undergo a dialectical operation as they shape and are shaped by these practices (Paltridge, 2006, p. 9).

In this respect, the scope of discourse analysis encompasses knowledge about language beyond the word, the phrase, the clause, and the sentence to embrace patterns of language across texts, and the relationship between language and the social and cultural setting where it is implemented. It also covers the various ways in which language presents different views of the world and different conceptualizations. The use of language under the influence of relationships between participants, the effects the use of language has upon social identities and relations, in addition to how views of the world and identities are constructed through the use of discourse constitute its basic ingredients. All these elements are examined in both spoken and written texts (Paltridge, 2006, p. 2). In other words, discourse analysis, as a sub-field of linguistics, studies the ways sentences and utterances go together to make texts and interactions, and how those texts and interactions fit into our social world. For this author, discourse analysis is not just the study of language, but a way of looking at language that focuses on how people use it in real life to do things like joking, arguing, persuading etc., and a way of showing that they are certain kinds of people or belong to certain groups (Rodney, 2012, p. 2). In a nutshell, four main assumptions underlie this vision of language. The first assumption holds that language is ambiguous in the sense that meaning, which is always vague, is based on our interpretation of the encoded message. Second, language is embedded in the world that produces it. Third, Language is part and parcel of our identity and our social group membership. Finally, language is most of the time combined with paralinguistic and other extra features (Rodney, 2012, p. 2).

The social context of language is essential for a thorough understanding of how people communicate as the meaning changes considerably according to who is saying an utterance, when and where it is said, and to whom it is said. That is the reason why discourse is closely linked to situated language; this situatedness, in turn, manifests itself in four different ways: within the material world (interpretation is governed by the physical setting of the utterance), according to relationships (the identity of participants, the degree of intimacy, their power over us, etc....), according to its relation to history (what happened before and what will happen in the future), and according to intertextuality (the relational network of a given utterance or text with other texts) (Rodney, 2012, p. 3). Linguistic performance in the traditional sense is not enough to display our identity and the perception of the other of us. There are many factors that help us exhibit our social identity. These include our manners of dressing, our paralinguistic behavior, our daily interaction, and other factors that determine our social identity exposure. For example, Gee (2005) argues that the way we expose ourselves and what we are doing involves more than just language as it involves valuing and talking in appropriate ways with appropriate ‘props’, at appropriate times in appropriate places. From this angle, discourse is interpreted as the socially situated identities that we enact and recognize in the different settings that we interact in. To perform different identities in different contexts, we use different styles of language that we adopt to enact and recognize these identities; in other words, we use different social languages (Gee, 2005).

Whereas former studies of the relationship between language and identity were based on a variationist perspective as they scrutinized the relationship between social variables such as
social class in terms of variation in the use of linguistic variables, more recent publications have adopted a cultural view of language and identity, which they see as an entity in constant process (Swann et al 2004, pp. 14-1 cited in Paltridge, 2006, p. 39). The information a person gives off about himself and his identity depends on the context, occasion and purpose of discourse and also on the space and place of the interaction as a lot of what happens in the field of identity is done by others, not by oneself (Paltridge, 2006). In some cases this identity may only be temporary (Blommaert, 2005, p. 25). Equally, not every identity will have the same range or scope nor be the same across time and space (Blommaert, 2005, p. 211). Identity, then, is not just a matter of using language in a way that reflects a particular identity; it is rather a socially-constructed self that people constantly form and reform in their interactions with each other. This leads to different ways of doing identity with different people in different situations (Paltridge, 2006, p. 42).

Among the difficulties scholars face in their attempt to define discourse analysis is to delimit and circumscribe the scope of the discipline due to its recent history as an autonomous field of inquiry and due to its multidisciplinary nature. To introduce it, we will take two definitions: the one by Reed (1997, p. 16), who defines it as a “framework with which the analyst approaches a text and explicates what it says and how it has been said, in addition to what has been understood and how it has been understood.”, and the one of Brown and Yule (1983, ix), who conceptualize it as an account of how “humans use language to communicate and, in particular, how addressers construct linguistic messages for addressees and how addressees work on linguistic message in order to interpret them.”. Both definitions take into account not only the speaker/writer, but also the hearer /reader in the communicative process. Discourse analysts acknowledge the basic fact that communication is a personal event since people instill meaning (implied by the act itself or by the words used) into the communicative act (Bechtold, n.d., p. 7). All in all, discourse analysis aims to understand how language produces a meaning intended by the speaker and understood by the listener within the framework of his acquired understanding of the situation of the speech event. According to discourse analysis, the relationship between the intended meaning and its interpretations is not always symmetrical; that is why discourse analysis is mainly interested in multiple interpretations by the receiver (Reed, 1997, p. 26).

In the light of the above understanding of discourse, van Dijk (1998) defines CDA as a field that sets as an object the study and analysis of texts to disclose the sources of power, dominance, and inequality at the level of discourse. Specifically, it inspects the way these sources are managed to be kept unchanged and reproduced in their social, political and historical environments. Similarly, Fairclough (1993) defines CDA as discourse analysis which aims at discovering the relationships between discursive practices, events and texts and the larger social/cultural context to identify “ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power” (p. 135).

We can say that CDA aims at spotting the prominent textual features of a text to decode the ideologies implicit within the representations and grammatical structure of the discourse. It is multidisciplinary in that it seeks to unravel the nature of social power and dominance by making explicit the intricate relationships between text, talk, social cognition, power, society and culture (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 253). Being a cross-discipline approach within applied Linguistics, and a relatively new branch of Discourse Analysis, it emanated from research within various disciplines in the 1960’s and early 1970’s ranging from linguistics, semiotics, to psychology, anthropology and sociology in addition to the social theories of Foucault, Bourdieu, and Habermas as well as the linguistic theories of Halliday (Burns, 2001, p. 138; McCarthy, 2006, p. 5). The main difference between discourse analysis and CDA relates to the fact that
the former studies relationships between language and its contexts of use whereas the latter tackles issues of language, power and ideology within the discourse of texts (McCarthy, 2006, p. 5; Coffin, 2001, p. 99). Fowler (1981, p. 25 cited in Jaworski and Coupland, 2006, p. 27) states that:

“[To be critical within CDA means to produce] a careful analytic interrogation of the ideological categories, and the roles and institutions and so on, through which a society constitutes and maintains itself and the consciousness of its members...All knowledge, all objects, are constructs: criticism analyses the processes of construction and, acknowledges the artificial quality of the categories concerned, offers the possibility that we might profitably conceive the world in some alternative way.”

CDA attempts to stress how language is used within texts to construct specific ideological positions that entail unequal relations of power; in this way, CDA focuses on the linguistic dimensions of language, and at the same time maintains a strong political agenda in reference to how the language is used (Coffin, 2001, p. 99).

In this critical approach, texts are not neutral and ‘all texts are critical sites for the negotiation of power and ideology (Burns, 2001, p. 138).’ Fairclough (1989, pp. 10-11 cited in Coffin, 2001, p. 100) states:

“The relationship between social action and text is mediated by interaction: that is the nature of the interaction, how texts are produced and interpreted, depends upon the social action in which they are embedded; and the nature of the text, its formal and stylistic properties on the one hand depends upon and constitutes “traces” of its process of production, and on the other hand constitutes “cues” for its interpretation.”

CDA is a really helpful tool for understanding the relationships within language because of its Hallyidayan view of language where language is inseparable from its socio-linguistic context, its mediation of ideology and its relation to power structures within society (Orphin, 2005, pp. 37-38). A characterization of the linguistic mechanisms through which ideology is constructed gives CDA an invaluable resource to crystallize the hidden methodology an author adopts in discourse to enclose representations of the world, consciously or unconsciously. Chuliaraki and Fairclough (1999) hypothesize that a CDA of a communicative interaction aims to depict that the components of the interaction are systematically tied to what is going on socially. This social relation takes place, partly or wholly, semiotically or linguistically (p. 113).

CDA is concerned with three analytical focuses in dissecting any communicative event (interaction): text (e.g. a news segment), discourse practice (the production and consumption operation), and sociocultural practice (social and cultural environment leading to the communicative event) (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 57; Chuliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 113). The dimension of discourse practice, the medium between the other two dimensions, distinguishes between Fairclough's and van Dijk's model. Van Dijk attributes social cognition and mental models a mediating function between discourse and the social; Fairclough grants this mission to discourse production and consumption-- (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 59).

Fairclough’s (1989, 1992, 1995b) model of discourse, then, relies on the above three dimensions: the text, which deals with the linguistic aspects of the text as different grammatical and lexical elements highlight different representations, identities and interaction positions; discourse practice as production and consumption, which forms a medium that bridges the text and sociocultural practices where it is couched; and finally sociocultural practice, which is the global social context.

Linking this to media, Fairclough (1995) in ‘Media discourse’ attempted to examine concrete media discourses so as to show the critical character of and the empirical basis in
concrete studies; thus, a level of ‘social practice’ was incorporated in his analysis of communicative events in line with his general view where an analytical distinction between discourse as a vehicle of representation and discourse as a means of enacting social relations and social interaction, the so-called communicative level of discourse is made clear. The first dimension is semantic, whereas the second is concretely communicative as the dimension of concrete communication is perceived as a species of social interaction.

2. Gender discourse in Media

The relationship between the term discourse and gender can be seen from two different but interrelated angles. Its uses in formalist and poststructuralist senses assume two views of gender as a social construction. In the first sense, gender is considered built in the ways it is manifested in texts, and in the second sense, which is of interest to us, gender as a concept is itself constructed socially and this shows and stresses how language use perpetuates stereotypes (Weatherall, 2002, p. 76).

Locating gender in language use has enabled research to go beyond dealing with gender patterns and structures in language towards studying the construction of gender in discourse or the discursive articulation of gender issues in different contexts. The new vision of gender entails the fact that gender bias trespasses the use of negative words for women to embrace how particular discursive constructs disadvantage them (Weatherall, 2002, pp. 76-77).

Feminists argue that media content projects existing ideological power relations that operate incessantly on a social and cultural level as power relations at a social, cultural, economic and political level are the source of all biased gender representations. Women’s studies aim at understanding social, cultural, economic, and political patterns and relating them to mainstream ideology and theoretical bases of relevance to the study of gender, in addition to exploring women’s place and context. Within this endeavor, they highlight women’s issues especially the ones pertaining to the media (Pillay, 1998). Generally, the way media represents women has led to the emergence of feminist media criticism which in turn led to an accumulation of research that contributed to unveiling the decisive role media play in reproducing the values that perpetuate gender inequality (Mendes & Carter, 2008, pp. 1701-1706). Feminist scholars like Jaddou and Williams (1981) and Rakow (1986) attempt to shed light on the use of feminist and gender theory to scrutinize the different experiences women undergo within patriarchal structures (Steeves, 1987, p. 96). Their findings, together with the developments in discourse and gender studies, have constituted a platform for subsequent gender studies in communication, starting from the 1970s. Here, the portrayal of men’s and women’s roles and the way of their contribution to distinct forms of masculinity and femininity has been at the heart of this investigation (Mendes & Carter, 2008, pp. 1701-1702).

3. The Method

We focused on one talk show from a Moroccan TV station (Medi 1 TV), namely Qesset Nnass (the story of people), which dealt with different social and personal issues on a thematic basis. Specifically, we covered the shows that dealt with marital violence from the period that started from September 4, 2013 to October 2, 2015. We have chosen this show because of its wide viewership in and outside Morocco, and because it is easy to access the shows that are saved on both Medi 1TV website or in Youtube. We have also chosen this program because it was the only one that dealt with violence against women in Morocco.

The analysis of the media texts we adopt will be heavily based on Fairclough’s three dimensional concept of text-interaction-context, together with a sociocognitive approach which takes into account the cognitive dimensions of language. Part of our sociocognitive endeavor,
we will use narrative as a reference point. We have incorporated this notion of “narrative”, which was mentioned by Van Dick and Fairclough, but without formalizing its role in discourse, because its adoption affords an opportunity for the construction of the world of human experience. The term “narrative” is abundant in the research literature (e.g. Fowler, 1991; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Juswik, 2012; Luke, 1997b; Macmillan, 2002; Ozga, 2000; Stack, 2007; Thomas, 2005a; Warmington & Murphy, 2004, 2007). In our analysis we will link Bruner’s (1991) treatment of this notion, with Van Dijk’s (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983) conception that consists of dealing with narratives as macrostructures that act as cognitive models that mediate society and discourse.

We have adopted CDA as a theoretical and methodological framework. In analyzing the corpus of media texts, we started with a narrow textual analysis across the data to identify the key participants in the texts and their respective actions. This analysis of key participants and their actions led to narratives emergence. Accordingly, the analysis takes a step further in describing how narrative builds social practices related to women who have been subject to violence. Due to space constraints, we will focus only on the semantic macrostructures prevalent in the discourse of WSMV to spot the main propositions articulated by these women. The purpose is to identify the common propositions that unite their discourse in order to find the main unifying structure of the discourse of this category. The subsequent stage of analysis studies the way in which the media texts under investigation establish a legitimation for social practices. It should be noted that semantic macrostructures are key to complex information processing as the language user is enabled to understand discourse through macrostructures that allow him to organize complex information and package it into a manageable schema because although he does not manage to process every proposition in isolation, at the end he succeeds to figure out the main information needed to comprehend any piece of discourse (Van Dijk, 2009b). In our model, these macrostructures are part of the first level of CDA, and thus form the input to the audience.

To deal with the level of discursive practice, the second tier in CDA, we focused on the segment of interpretation engendered in the comments posted online by the Moroccan audience. This element of discursive practice, namely consumption or reception, will be dealt with by analyzing the audience’s comments on women’s discourse in Youtube and Medi I TV website. To achieve this objective, we collected a body of data from the above online sites, data that consisted of all the comments that were made on the shows that focused on marital violence against women. It will be shown that the different comments contained opinions that discursively condemned these women and thus they were used as a tool to measure Moroccans perception of the image of WSMV in Moroccan TV shows. This quantitative approach that we combined with a qualitative approach manifested in our treatment of the texts submitted for analysis constitutes a novel way in dealing with discourse issues in CDA as we have been able to answer the major criticism of this model and which accuses CD Analysts of being subjective because they come out with findings and conclusions that suit their ideological positions because quantifying the audience’s responses to the discourse of women in a dialogic manner has given us a chance to detach ourselves from the phenomenon we are dissecting thanks to the scientific character of quantitative analyses.

We will integrate the third level which is the sociocultural analytical tier with the level of discursive practice in order to unveil the way in which ideological positions are established and reflected in the media texts with respect to WSMV. Our rationale is to identify how the texts strengthen and consolidate ideologies and social practices related to violence against women, which helps in the understanding of the ideological and material effects of the discourses. Particularly, attention is devoted to how the representative texts normalize social practices.
Integrating the two tiers in one package will give us a chance to see how the different actors produce and receive, legitimize and delegitimize within the sociocultural context where they live.

The population investigated consisted of 217 subjects (113 women, 79 men, and 25 subjects whom we could not identify as neither their names nor their pictures suggested their gender) who posted comments on the shows in Youtube and Med1 TV websites. We classified the comments according to whether they held positive or negative attitudes toward the women present in the shows. Then, we sorted out all the comments according to the themes they display (comments may include more than one theme). Due to space constraints, we will focus only on negative attitudes.

4. Results, findings and discussion

We found that the 217 comments expressed by the population (164 positive comments and 53 negative comments) contained 256 different views (201 for and 55 against women). These comments were translated from Moroccan Arabic or Standard Arabic into English (only one comment was posted in English).

As mentioned above, it was found that 164 subjects (75, 57 %) held a positive attitude towards the WSMV in the shows whereas 53 people (24, 43 %) held a negative attitude. After we excluded unidentified people from the data, we found that from the sample of men and women (192), 149 subjects (77, 60 %) were supportive while 43 (22, 40 %) held a negative view about WSMV. Concerning the category of the population studied, we found that 85 out of 113 women (75, 22 %) backed up the women in their comments whereas 28 women criticized them in a way or in another. Surprisingly, 64 men out of 79 (81, 01 %) wrote favorable comments about the WSMV and 15 men expressed negative opinions (18, 99 %).

4.1. The text

In order to enable the reader to understand the comments and put them in their context, we have to provide the key themes that are recurrent in the episodes dealing with WSMV which summarize the macrostructures present in the texts that feature in Qesset Nnass. It should be remembered that Van Dijk (2009a) has given the useful advice to proceed by starting CDA with an analysis of the semantic macrostructures in a text because they provide an overall picture of the global meanings and the themes of a text. For this reason, a general exposition of the semantic macrostructures in the media texts to find the key themes with respect to the conditions of WSMV is a necessary research step; in other words, the global themes will tell us about the common features that unite the different discourses of WSMV that stand in an intertextual relationship between each other and render them one discourse due to the continuities that characterize the narratives. Due to space constraints, we will only provide a summary of macrostructures that we have formulated as a master structure where we can fit all the stories narrated about the violence committed against women in the show and which represents the first level in CDA, namely the text:

- After a period of marriage, the husband begins to beat his wife and then vanishes.
- In some circumstances, the husband abandons his children and flees.
- Sometimes, the wife is fired from the house without basic essentials.
- Some mothers are denied access to their children.
- Their family advises them to be patient and return to their violent husbands.
- Most of the time, women are beaten by their husbands and their families, or the husband beats the wife while the rest of the family stands by and watches.
Despite the fact that some husbands are arrested by the police, they do not stop committing violence again.

- Many women try to track down their husbands who have fled with their children, but in vain.
- Despite the violence, many women desire to return to their husbands, either because they like to be with their children or because they love their violent husbands!
- Husbands assault pregnant women and children with disabilities.
- Many violent husbands abuse their wives because they are addicted to drugs and alcohol.
- For no apparent reason, the husband abandons his wife and children.
- Women suffer from severe depression as a result of poor treatment, a situation that leads to suicide.
- The consequences on children include suicide, homelessness, and rape.
- Many other women marry without legal documents at a young age and end up in trouble.

4.2. Discursive practice and social context

Our research is shaped by the assumption that the intricate relationship between media and the audience is complex and significant in the sense that media constitute a platform where women seek to legitimize their position and delegitimize the position of the wrongdoers and a platform for Moroccans to express their attitudes and opinions about these women. Hence, we had a chance to test whether the women in the show succeeded or failed to persuade. This methodological step has enabled us to circumscribe the relation between media and the public opinion in a manner that can make it possible to see how mutual and direct this relation can be. Although supportive subjects outnumbered people who held negative attitudes towards WSMV, we have to understand the rationale behind this discursive practice and explain it in the light of the themes we will expose.

4.2.1. Blaming women for their passivity and for having children in a violent context

People who criticized the women in the show mainly focused on the passivity of the guests (32, 72%). They could not stand how submissive and passive they were. It is clear that the audience was disgusted by the behavior of the women in the show. The various remarks referred to the different manifestations of this passivity, which we can summarize as the following:

- Commentators did not understand why women accepted to live in a violent environment and did not show any reaction to physical abuse.
- They thought that girls should study and work in order to be autonomous and avoid being at the mercy of their husbands.
- They did not digest the fact that women tolerated violence by justifying their passivity and stating that they avoided being divorced because of their children.
- The audience thought that it was paradoxical to live with a man who mistreated even his children.
- Many thought that women were adults, so they could protect themselves; hence, the father was not the only guilty person.
- They did not accept the fact that these women made the same error by living with other violent men and having children again.
- Finally, the audience was puzzled by the statements of women who declared that they loved their violent husbands.

The following comments illustrated the above opinions:

“Women are beaten savagely by men and they want to continue to live with them! Are we living in the Stone Age?”
“Girls should study and work in order to be autonomous and not to put themselves at the mercy of their violent husbands.”

“I don’t understand this. The woman said her husband broke her nose, killed her son and daughter, but she says she doesn’t want to be divorced because of her other children. What a paradox! What do you expect from a man who mistreated even his children? Even her handicapped daughter told her to get away from him. She is stuck on him at the expense of her children.”

“She is eighteen years old. She can protect herself and her father is not the only guilty person.”

“This woman gives wrong information. She keeps making the same error by living with another man and having children again.”

“She cries but we should know that she repeated the same mistake.”

“I don’t get it. He beats her and she is crazy about him. This is not love. I did my best to analyze her personality, but I couldn’t understand her.”

As far as criticizing the women because they either gave birth to children in a violent context or because they were submissive because of their children, 10, 90% of the commentators held that women should abstain from reproduction in contexts of violence which would just worsen their situations. Thus, the commentators held WSMV responsible for what happened to them and they further thought that coming to the show to complain had no sense because nobody forced them to stay with the husbands they criticized and had many children with.

The same theme of passivity was recurrent in other comments, but it was coupled with the deliberate decision of having children in a context of violence that was not favorable for raising a family. Many comments showed the degree of bitterness receptors felt about the issue as they thought that marriage, as a social institution, is not only about having children. For them, women should think twice before deciding to get married and be very careful before having children. Comments also pointed to the mistake of having more than one child in a violent environment because women did not learn from their mistakes, and complained afterwards.

“Marriage is not about having children. You have to be patient before and see how your life will look like and understand the personality of your husband, and then you can decide to have children.”

“Since God blessed her with a twin, why did she have another child? People should learn from their mistakes and think twice before complaining later.”

It is clear that the subjects studied were totally engrossed in the show so much so that they gave their opinions in a very realistic way. However, to put these opinions in their framework, patriarchy as one of them, we should know that these women are Moroccan women who are caught in the web of power relations.

In the case of women passivity and reproduction in a violent context, we should be aware that the Moroccan context does not favor agency at all because this latter depends on education, social class and culture. When illiteracy and poverty are coupled with a cultural setting where women are not decision makers, the result is what we have seen so far since the chance to be a decision maker for these women is thin or inexistent. On the other hand, giving birth to children is also a result of both a lack of education in general and a lack of sexual education specifically and also a direct product of a conservative culture that considers the woman as a recipient whose main job is to reproduce. Another explanation lies in the cultural fact that stipulates that women should have children if they want their marriage to continue.

We can locate the different pieces of criticism within the patriarchal system that yields such a type of extreme discourse and where gender socialization is considered to be one of the primary influences of behavior. It is clear from the comments that Moroccan men and women
are socialized from birth into gender specific roles based on social definitions of masculinity and femininity (Kilmartin, 2000) where the socialization into sex roles puts men in positions of social, legal, economic, religious, and political power and women in positions of subservience to men (Belknap, 2001). In this respect, femininity attributes are seen as weaker or lesser than those of men (see Kilmartin, 2000).

4.2.2. Accusing women of being liars, scandalous, and accountable

Many commentators (21, 81%) thought that WSMV were wrong in as far as their complaints were concerned and saw them as liars, women who looked for a scandal (9,09%), or as women who deserved what happened to them (18, 18%). The comments revolved around the following propositions.
- For the audience, women were illogical in their statements, lied, contradicted themselves, or tried to stick everything to their fathers.
- They also perceived their cases as “scandalous” because they were responsible for what happened to them; hence, for the audience they were victims of their own behavior.
- For others, these women hid the truth; consequently, they should be held responsible for what happened to them.
- Many Moroccans believed that these women deserved beating because, with their behavior, they humiliated all women.
- Others believed that some women deserved beating because they did not want to say the truth as they knew what they did.
- Many men thought that when women do not get married, they become oppressed unmarried women, and when they get married, they create problems for their husbands.
- Finally, for others, women deserved this violent behavior.

Some of the comments gathered illustrate these common points of views.

“Nonsense! The woman contradicts herself.”

“It seems to me that she lies and tries to stick everything to her father.”

“I feel pity for her, but I think she lies because her speech is contradictory.”

“They gave her 40 million to abandon her child and she refused, but now she wants to give the child she is pregnant with to someone else! This is a contradiction. Besides, she looks old for a sixteen year old girl.”

“What a scandal!”

“You deserve beating. You brought humiliation to all women.”

“The first woman deserves beating. She didn’t want to say the truth because she knows what she did.”

“We know that you, women, do things!”

“When you don’t get married, you are oppressed unmarried women, and when you get married, you make problems for your husbands.”

“This is the result of getting married without your parents’ consent. Look at what parent’s disobedience leads to.”

The majority of comments in this category shows that people react because of some underlying assumptions they have about gender and because of this wrong conception, we are faced with stereotypical judgments. As an example, one of the comments we mentioned before (“We know that you, women, do things!”) reflects a general social attitude about gender and gender behavior.

We also identify stereotypes because they are couched in the prevailing ideology at the social level and they are inherent in the social system of thinking (Hall, 1997). Within the conceptual framework of otherness, Hilton and Von Hippel (1994) refer to what they call out-
group members which are not only considered as having less desirable features than in-group members, but they are seen as more homogeneous as well, a finding consolidated by the different propositions we surveyed like the ones referring to women as being “scandalous” because they were responsible for what happened to them and were victims of their own behavior.

Stereotypes draw their raison d’être from people’s ability to identify them and link them with particular groups (Hilton and Von Hippel, 1994). Stereotypes are additionally reinforced by a sustained exploitation in media content. The general understanding is that gender-based stereotypes ensue from patriarchal ideologies operating in society as many of them ensue from prior conceptions of gender roles in a particular society. Comment which held women responsible because they got married without the consent of the father reflects the general patriarchal Moroccan context where discursive practice operates.

Generally, the show we have analyzed shows that the media leads to perceptions that characterize men as being ambitious, hardworking, responsible, and reliable, a characterization that links them with high-level professional positions in contrast with women who are tied to a subordinate position. These roles grant a private sphere to women as a natural place due to their inherent traits while men would be a natural part of a more active context like the one that gives him the ability to support the role of a provider and worker. One commentators wrote, “her husband beats her because she comes late from work; she is a women and her natural place is the house!” Comments like the latter refer us to Maas and Arcuri (1996), who describe a stereotype as a form of thought process created in our own mind. For them, it is an oversimplification, or categorization, of a certain group’s traits and behavior, an oversimplification that we try to link with previous experiences with people belonging to the same group. Since language is culturally shared, “it provides an ideal means of collectively defining and preserving stereotypic beliefs” (p. 194).

Gamble (2006) observes that “the stereotype can be seen as an ideological discursive strategy which demarcates an us/them binarity which functions to reinforce the dominant discourse” (p. 323). She further makes the point that patriarchy often uses stereotypes in order to differentiate between the characteristics of women and men. In this way, patriarchy sets the limits between what is stereotypically feminine and masculine (p. 323). Being scandalous, a liar, a woman who deserves what is happening to her all fit in the above characterization and shows that in patriarchal societies, people’s perception of women is limited by those cultural representations that we take for granted without further questioning.

Sticking labels that are stereotypically constructed without trying to understand the essence of the problem WSMV have is expected from commentators. For example, instead of attempting to understand why women are passive (e.g. they are denied basic rights when it comes to education, economic empowerment, etc…), prefabricated and readymade judgments are given to attack a really fragile category of our society. In one sentence, a simple look at the comments makes the reader feel a masculine interpretation of social order.

4. 2. 3. Other comments
In other comments (7, 27 %), the audience criticized Muslims as they thought that violence is permitted in this religion, or criticized the media for handling the issue either because of the way the program treated the problem or because they thought that the program would increase this sort of problems.

“Men are similar. They follow the words of Allah!”

“National Geographic Morocco. They treat us like animals.”
“This program is a source of problems. They think they solve problems; in fact, they make them worse.”

“In Morocco: illiteracy + ignorance+ Lack of infrastructure = this result.”

“Can we have a program about the husbands who are subjected to violence?”

“Why does the show host talk about the man like this although she doesn’t know him?”

Galtung included cultural violence in the personal-structural-cultural nexus which ‘preaches, teaches, admonishes, eggs on, and dulls us into seeing exploitation and/or repression as normal and natural, or into not seeing them (particularly -not exploitation) at all’ (1990, p. 295). This may also act as an explanation of the comments surveyed so far which condemn the victim and idealize the aggressor. Two of the comments we listed (“Can we have a program about the husbands who are subjected to violence?”, and “Why does the show host talk about the man like this although she doesn’t know him?” illustrate the case.

Conclusion
In our investigation of how media represent WSMV in Morocco, it has been found that by turning domestic issues into public ones that are subject to debate and critique, the media play an essential role in shaping the public perception. We have undertaken an in-depth study of the way in which the image of Moroccan women is constructed in the media (TV and the Internet) and perceived by the Moroccan audience in the Internet. Taking the latter as a site for the study of perceptions has been one of the strong points in our analysis as we have detached ourselves from the phenomenon under study and thus we have overcome one of the main criticisms directed against CDA, namely the involvement of the researcher in the results reached through projecting his ideological agenda on the subject under study.

To check whether the women investigated were successful in convincing the audience, we accessed the net to see the different responses of Moroccans. It was found that the WSMV were successful since 75, 57 % of the comments were positive whereas only 24, 43 % were negative. At the level of gender, 75, 22 % of women supported the WSMV in their comments, whereas 24, 78 % seemed to criticize them. We did not anticipate that 81, 01 % of men would be supportive to the WSMV and that only 18, 99 % would be critical. As our analysis revolved around the analysis of negative attitudes, we classified the different comments into themes which are: blaming women for their passivity and for having children in a violent context, accusing women of being liars, scandalous, and accountable, in addition to other subthemes.

Our emphasis on language and sociocultural processes has been a salient feature of the present article as we have adhered to the general cause of CDA that adopts a critical handling of social problems to highlight hidden power relationships. Among the recommendations we may make, we would strongly recommend that the government devises more inhibiting laws against husbands who commit violence in the domestic sphere and make the laws, which are abundant, easier to implement. Besides, more efforts should be done to reduce poverty and illiteracy by innovating new programs and calque others from countries which have been able to reduce these two phenomena. Economic empowerment and total equity with men is also a key issue that has to be addressed if any progress is to be made in Morocco. At the academic level, it would be a good idea if future research tackles other forms of violence as narratives in the media from a CDA perspective by keeping with the plea made by other CDA researchers that action research may be a source of solutions at different levels.

References


