

Stance-taking and the language of evaluation in the media discourse of the Western feminist writer Jessica Valenti: a study in Systemic Functional Linguistics

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Abstract:

The study investigates the phenomenon of stance-taking and the language of evaluation in the Western feminist media discourse of Jessica Valenti. This research is situated within the theoretical framework of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) introduced by Halliday (1978). The study adopts Martin & White's (2005) model of evaluation analysis. Data consists of three articles written by Valenti in a famous electronic newspaper (*The Guardian*). The study reveals that media discourse is more subjective than objective. Media language is attitudinal, ideologically loaded, stance-saturated and over-charged. Negativity is a significant feature in heated media discourse. Media language is a language of inciting, contraction, imposition and up-grading. Language is used strategically in order to achieve ideological aims and targets in media discourse.

Key words: Stance-taking, evaluation, Western Feminist discourse, dialogic contraction, dialogic expansion, media discourse, Gradability

1. Introduction:

This paper examines how stance-taking and the language of evaluation are linguistically realized in Western feminist media discourse. The study seeks to provide an insight into how the position of women and their relationship with men and the structure of the family are evaluated from a feminist perspective.

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The study tries to show the important role of the interpersonal function of language in the satisfaction of social as well as ideological needs of participants in communication. Media texts are seen as means of interaction between media writers and their readers. They interact with each other in order to exchange information and opinions, change attitudes and behaviors, and transmit socio-cultural values (Thompson, 2004, p. 45).

Feminism is a controversial movement that is widely represented on both national and international scales (Hannam, 2013, p. 2). The history of feminism in the West dates back to the mid-eighteenth century and the term itself is formally introduced in the late nineteenth century France where Hubertine Auclert, a French women's suffrage advocate, declares herself a feminist (Hannam, 2013, p. 6). Feminism is defined as "a cultural as well as a political" movement (Hannam, 2013, p. 2) with social objectives (Al-Ghanim, 2014, p. 147). It is also described as "a practical implementation movement" (Al-Ghanim, 2014, p. 147) and "a product and critique of modernity" (Scott, 2014, p. 157).

Feminists describe human societies as "male-oriented" societies (Benhabib, 1998, p. 88) where the "culture of male dominance" (Bayoumi, 2014, p. 95), "the Law of the Father" (Scott, 2014, p. 157), "male supremacy" and "patriarchy" (Hannam, 2013, p. 43) gather together in order to discriminate and oppress women. For feminists, the feminist discourse is "human" and the masculine discourse is "discriminatory and violent" (Bayoumi, 2014, p. 95). They present a universal image of a man as "a patriarchal ruse" and a universal image of a woman as an angelic victim (Scott, 2014, p. 158).

In general, feminists are against sex discrimination, gender inequalities, and the imbalance in power relations among men and women in education, voting, economic independence, civil rights of citizenship, property-owning, waged work, marriage and marriage responsibilities, and in public and private spheres of life (Hannam, 2013, p. 20- 24). Feminists are against the use of double

standards of morality in dealing with women and women's issues in comparison with men and men's issues (Hannam, 2013, p. 43). They focus on issues that are related to family life, marital violence, sexual harassment, child-raising, and domestic work (Hannam, 2013, p. 31; Bayoumi, 2014, p. 101). Feminists ask for humanity, equality and democratic and active citizenship (Landes, 1998, p. 4; Ortner, 1998, p. 21).

Feminism in the west seeks to question the traditional structure and the well-established ideological heritage that is associated with men-women relationship; to change the way women feel, think and interpret the world around them (Hannam, 2013, p. 2); and to improve people's awareness and perception towards the position and role of women in human societies (Al-Ghanim, 2014, p. 147; Hatem, 2014, p. 3). They believe that all forms of discrimination against women are socially constructed and so these are liable to change (Hannam, 2013, p. 3-4; Zaatari, 2014, p. 58).

Stance-taking and Evaluation are two important categories mentioned in literature with regard to the interpersonal features of discourse. Stance-taking is a broad and varied phenomenon that has attracted the attention of many scholars and researchers in linguistics and related disciplines during the initial few years of the twenty-first century (Englebretson, 2007, p. 1). It is an essential property of communication (Jaffe, 2009, p.3). It plays a vital role in our social life (Du Bois, 2007, p. 141). Stance is defined as a term for expressing our lexical and grammatical expressions of attitudes, personal feelings and assessments, value judgments, and commitment concerning the propositional content of a message (Biber and Finegan, 1989, p. 92; Biber et al., 1999, p. 966; Conrad and Biber, 2000, p. 57).

In stance-taking, people as human beings are involved in a process of evaluation. Evaluation is part and parcel of our daily interactions (Bednarek, 2006, p.4). It plays an important role in the perception, interpretation and categorization of different

phenomena among stance-takers (Bednarek, 2006, p.4). Bednarek (2006) highlights the importance of the concept of evaluation in the construction of the ideological and moral orientations among participants in discourse.

Media plays a great role in people's lives. It has been described by Bell (1991) as a "mirror" which reflects the cultural, social, political, economical and even psychological background in any society (p. 4). The linguistic analysis of media language offers the linguistic tools for decoding and understanding "media messages" (Bell, 1991, p. 3). Media presents its attitudes, opinions and perspectives interpreting, assessing and evaluating what is right and what is wrong; what is good and what is bad; what is desirable and what is undesirable and what is possible/ necessary and what is impossible/ unnecessary.

2. Methodology:

Data consists of three media texts tackling the issues under investigation. These texts are randomly selected from one of the most famous and widely visited electronic newspapers (*The Guardian*). The selection standard for texts depends on the issues being discussed in order to allow the possibility for covering several feminist issues in the study. For issues of reliability and validity, the selected articles are analyzed and then reanalyzed after two months in order to guarantee accuracy and reliability of analysis. Every article is divided into clauses, and irrelevant clauses (e.g. asides) are excluded. Clauses are classified according to the three systems of evaluation introduced by Martin and White (2005). Manual counting as a simple procedure for doing statistics is used. Percentages are provided for comparisons and contrasts among different linguistic tools identified in research.

3. Theoretical framework:

Appraisal theory is a system of interpersonal meanings (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 22). Three aspects of appraisal theory are proved to be important elements in the analysis of the language of evaluation (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 22). Martin & White (2005) present three major divisions of appraisal theory: evaluation (of attitudes), engagement and graduation. The system of attitude represents stances that are related to the emotions of writers or speakers; the system of engagement represents stances that are related to writers' or speakers' level of commitment or investment towards certain propositions. The system of graduation acts on both other systems: it serves to highlight or downgrade forms of evaluative meanings in context.

3.1. The system of attitude:

Attitudinal meanings play an important role in our life. They "tend to spread out and colour a phase of discourse as speakers and writers take up a stance" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 43). The system of attitude is divided into three basic kinds depending on what is being appraised:

- (i) Affect: people's feelings
- (ii) Judgment: people's character and behaviors
- (iii) Appreciation: the value of things (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 23).

3.2. The system of engagement:

The system of engagement focuses on how speakers or writers position themselves dialogically toward a value position (Martin & White, 2005, p. 97). It concerns with "those meanings which in various ways construe for the text a heteroglossic backdrop of prior utterances, alternative viewpoints and anticipated responses" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 97). Utterances are categorized as Monoglossic and Heteroglossic:

Monoglossic utterances: the use/ misuse of the speech act of assertion				
Heteroglossic	Dialogic contraction	Disclaim	Negation	e.g. no, not
			Counter-expectation devices	e.g. but, however
		Proclaim	Concur	e.g. rhetorical questions
			Pronounce	e.g. indeed
			Endorse	e.g. prove
	Dialogic expansion	Entertain	The use of modality and modal auxiliaries	
		Attribute	Acknowledge	Communicative verbs such as 'say'
			Distance	

3.3. Gradability:

Attitudinal meanings as well as propositional meanings are characterized with gradability. There are two types of gradability: up-scaling (e.g. *extremely*) and down-scaling (e.g. *somewhat*). Martin and White (2005) define the two types. In up-scaling, the writer or speaker expresses a strong commitment to a value position and thus strongly align the reader or listener with this value position (p. 152). In down-scaling, the writer or the speaker has "only a partial or an attenuated affiliation with the value position being referenced" (p. 153).

For Martin & White (2005), there are two kinds of resources for amplification: focus and force: the term *focus* refers to grading according to prototypicality (Martin & White, 2005, p. 137). Focus includes "resources for making something that is inherently non-gradable gradable" (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 41). These resources divide into two categories: 'sharpening' the focus (e.g. *real policeman*) or 'softening' the focus (e.g. *a sort of policeman*) of people and things.

The term *force* refers to grading according to intensity or amount (Martin and White, 2005, p. 135). It divides into two types: intensification and quantification. Intensification refers to the assesement of the degree of intensity of qualities (e.g. *slightly*

foolish, extremely foolish) and processes (e.g. *this slightly hindered us, this greatly hindered us*) including verbal modalities of likelihood, usuality, inclination and obligation (*it's very possible that, it's just possible that*). Quantification refers to the assesment of amount that is applied to entities. Modes of quantification involve scaling with respect to amount regarding size, weight, strength, and number (e.g. *a few miles, many miles*), extent (e.g. *small amount, large amount*), and proximity in time and space (e.g. *nearby mountain, distant mountain*).

4. Research Questions:

Therefore, attempts have been made to answer the following research questions:

- a) To what extent is media discourse replete with structures reflecting interpersonal meanings?
- b) How evaluation is linguistically expressed in Western feminist media discourse?
- c) How do media writers represent their presence in the selected texts? To what extent are they subjective or objective? How do they construct for themselves particular authorial identities in relation to others? How do they approve/ disapprove, enthuse/abhor, and applaud/ criticize? How do they align or dis/align themselves with actual and potential respondents in discourse? How do they construct for their texts intended or ideal audience?
- d) To what extent do they represent communities of shared feelings, attitudes, values and normative assessments?

5. Results:

Along the system of attitude, there is an extensive use of attitudinal meanings. Attitudinal clauses represent 65.6 % in text no. 1, 61.2 % in text no. 2 and, 66.7 % in text no. 3. Negative

attitudinal clauses represent 85.7 % in text no. 1, 72.2 % in text no. 2, and 84.8 % in text no. 3.

Along the system of engagement, Valenti makes use of the speech act of assertion in order to impose her stance on readers. She gives a closed space for other alternative views through the extensive use of Heteroglossic utterances. Heteroglossic utterances represent 60.6 % in text no. 1, 59.3 % in text no. 2 and 61 % in text no. 3. Valenti contracts rather than expand the space for other alternative views. Categories of dialogic contraction exceed categories of dialogic expansion. Categories of dialogic contraction represent 62.8 % in text no. 1, 53.1 % in text no. 2 and, 55.6 % in text no. 3. With regard to categories of dialogic contraction, disclaim exceeds proclaim in all texts under analysis. Categories of disclaim represent 66.7 % in text no. 1, 76.5 % in text no. 2 and 55 % in text no. 3. In disclaim, concession/ counter-expectation devices exceed negative devices. Valenti indirectly rather than directly contract and even reject other alternative views. Concession/ counter-expectation devices represent 61.1 % in text no. 1, 53.8 % in text no. 2, and 63.6 % in text no. 3. In proclaim, Valenti makes use of concurrence, pronouncement and endorsement devices as indirect strategies of dialogic contraction. Concurrence represents 55.6 % in text no. 1, pronouncement represents 75 % in text no. 2, and endorsement represents 44 % in text no. 3.

For categories of dialogic expansion, Valenti dominates her discourse by reading and investigating different phenomena with an extensive reference to other alternative stance in order to appear more objective than subjective. However, all instances of attribution are of the acknowledgement type where Valenti cites voices that confirm her points of view instead of defying them. Attribution devices exceed entertainment devices mainly in text no.1 and 3. Categories of attribution represent 68.8 % in text no. 1 and 62.5 % in text no. 3. Acknowledgment represents 90.9 % in text no. 1, 100 % in text no. 2 and 60 % in text no. 3.

Along the system of Gradability, up-scaling devices are extensively used in comparison with down-scaling devices. Up-grading devices represent 75 % in text no. 1, 92.9 % in text no. 2, and 94% in text no.3. Isolation devices are extensively used in all texts of analysis. They represent 88.9 % in text no. 1, 63.6 % in text no. 2 and 46 % in text no. 3. For quantification devices, amount represents 100 % in text no. 1, 66.7 % in text no. 2, and 75 % I text no. 3.

6. Analysis:

6.1. The system of attitude:

Along the system of attitude, negative adjectives of affect (unhappiness, insecurity and dissatisfaction), judgment and appreciation are employed to indicate the negative attitudes of Western feminist writers towards the position of women and women's issues in Western societies and culture. They discuss issues such as the position of men and women in Western societies, work life balance, unequal division of labor at home, child care and domestic parity with men, the clash between the public and private spheres of life, abortion and anti-abortion rhetoric, feminism, feminism and religion, feminism and law, and finally the anti-feminist backlash against feminism

Work life balance, unequal division of labor at home, child care and domestic parity are important themes in feminist discourse. Men are negatively judged by feminist writers and accused of being the main problem in the way of women's equality and progress. They are actually accused for creating such problems by reducing their role at home and leaving the whole burden on women's shoulders. Women in Western societies are associated with victimization, discrimination, dehumanization, objectification and inequality.

Examples:

e.g. We need them to take active responsibility for *their faults* (Valenti, text no. 2, line 1- 2).

[The system of attitude: negative judgment: social sanction: propriety: faults]

e.g. women are *victimized* in our society (Valenti, text no. 1, line 1).

[The system of attitude: negative judgments: social esteem: capacity: victims]

e.g. what else would you call a segment of the population who *are systematically discriminated against* in schools, work, and politics? How would you describe a population whose bodies *are objectified* to the point of *dehumanization*? Women *are harassed, attacked and sexually assaulted* with alarming regularity in America and around the world (Valenti, text No. 1, line 20- 33).

[The system of attitude: negative appreciation: valuation: discrimination; objectification; dehumanization; harassment; attack; sexually assault]

e.g. gendered domestic disparity is a *problem* that they created (Valenti, text no. 2, line 17- 18).

[The system of attitude: negative appreciation: valuation: problem]

Abortion represents a very crucial issue in feminist discourse. Western feminists call for giving women, who are unintentionally raped, sexually harassed or even have unwanted pregnancy, the chance to have a legal right of abortion at any month and they call for the establishment of medical clinics that are medically well-equipped to carry out such operation for free in order to save the life of those women. Western feminist writers adopt negative attitudes toward those sectors in society who are against abortion

and who ask for the human rights of the fetus. Those people are accused of discrimination against women in rape crises.

Examples:

e.g. *violent* anti-choice rhetoric ... anti-abortion *violence* (Valenti, text no. 3, line 1).

[The system of attitude: negative appreciation: reaction: quality: violent; violence]

e.g. pro-life *lies* (Valenti, text no. 3, line 2).

[The system of attitude: negative judgment: social sanction: veracity: liars]

e.g. anti-choice *extremists* (Valenti, text no. 3, line 8).

[The system of attitude: negative judgment: social sanction: propriety: extremists]

e.g. violent *fanatics* (Valenti, text no. 3, line 11).

[The system of attitude: negative judgment: social esteem: tenacity: fanatics]

e.g. the culture of *hate* against Planned Parenthood (Valenti, text no. 3, line 47).

[The system of attitude: negative appreciation: valuation: culture of hate]

e.g. language and culture of *misogyny* (Valenti, text no. 3, line 72).

[The system of attitude: negative appreciation: valuation: language and culture of misogyny]

Feminists make use of the expression of attitudinal meanings in order to charge addressees against anti-feminists. They judge them with the incapacity to understand and detect facts.

Examples:

e.g. the women against feminism meme may look more like a parody than anything of serious concern. Many of its participants show a *baffling level of ignorance* about what feminism actually is (Valenti, text no. 1, line 12- 15).

[The system of attitude: negative judgments: social esteem: capacity: ignorant]

6.2. The system of engagement:

6.2.1. Monoglossic utterances and the miss use of the speech act of assertion:

Along the system of engagement, monoglossic utterances in Valenti's discourse are linguistically expressed by the use of bare and categorical assertions (Martin & White, 2005, p. 98). An assertion is defined as "full telling of full knowledge" (Davies, 2006, p. 151). For Weiner (2007), an assertion is proper if and only if the asserted proposition is true in the real world (p. 190). For Martin and White (2005), monoglossic utterances are "single voiced" and "undialogised" (p.99). The readers and/or addresses are left no space but to accept and share the writers' and/ or speakers' value positions (Martin & White, 2005, p. 101)

Western feminist writers use declarative bare/ categorical assertions to portray the position of women in general as victims, sexually harassed, and attacked. Women in Western societies are portrayed as creatures of a second importance. They are discriminated against by religious establishments, economic institutions, and social standards and traditions. For Western feminist writers, women suffer from a culture of prejudice, discrimination, marginalization, control, and inequality. Men are portrayed as dominant creatures who are responsible for women's suffering and sense of inferiority.

Examples:

e.g. women *are victimized* in our society (Valenti, text no. 1, line 1).

e.g. Gender inequality is a problem men *created* (Valenti, text no. 2, line 1).

e.g. a culture that ... *allows* politicians and activists to make false representations about women's reproductive health (Valenti, text no. 3, line 20- 22).

e.g. it's about people against prejudice (Bates, text no. 2, line 80-81).

6.2.2. Negation:

Negation is employed as a linguistic marker of dialogic contraction. In the International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the term negation expresses the writer/speaker's tendency to deny or contradict a certain proposition (p. 10464). Jespersen (1917) indicates that "the chief use of a negative sentence is being to contradict and to point a contrast" (p. 4- 5). Negation is not "a truth-functional or semantic operator on propositions" (Horn, 1985, p. 121). Horn (1985) defines negation as "a device for objecting to a previous utterance on any grounds" (p. 121). For Horn (1985), negation is used in order to express "the speaker's unwillingness to assert a given proposition in a given way/or, more generally, the speaker's objection to the content or form ... associated with a given utterance" (p. 122).

Negation in the Western feminist discourse is expressed by the negative particle '*not*' and '*never*'. Valenti uses negation to object to the position of women in patriarchal societies where they are victimized and are seen only as care givers. She objects to the legal disapproval on abortion.

Examples:

e.g. women *didn't* choose to be the default care giver (Valenti, text no. 2, line 44).

e.g. The women who go to Planned Parenthood... *aren't* callous beasts (Valenti, text no. 3, line 55- 56).

6.2. 3. Concession/ counter/expectation devices:

Concession/ counter-expectation devices are classified into conjunctions with denials, conjunctions and connectives, adjuncts and comment adjuncts/ adverbials. Conjunctions and connectives are extensively used as concession/ counter-expectation devices. They are followed by adjuncts and then conjunctions with denial in the selected texts. Martin and White (2005) define the linguistic markers of concession/ counter-expectation devices as “formulations which represent the current proposition as replacing or supplanting, and thereby ‘countering’, a proposition which would have been expected in its place” (p. 120).

In the selected data concession/ counter-expectation devices are expressed by conjunctions and connectives (*however, despite of, although, though, nevertheless, nonetheless, otherwise, unless*), conjunctions with denials (e.g. *but, nothing.. but*) and, adjuncts (e.g. *still, yet, even, and only*).

There is an extensive use of the conjunction *but* (sometimes combined with negation) that is used to express the writers' concession/counter-expectation propositions. Schiffrin (1987) indicates that “*but* marks an upcoming unit as a **contrasting** action” (p. 152). The discourse coordinator *but* indicates a contrastive relationship between two propositions. For Schiffrin (1987), “Sometimes such relationships are transparent enough to be found in the semantic content of propositions, but others are buried within speakers' and hearers' culturally based world knowledge or implicit in their expectations about each other and each other's conduct” (p. 153).

The discourse coordinator *but* has other related pragmatic effects. It marks a “position and support” (p. 155); a “preferred conclusion” (p. 158); a “disagreement” (p. 177); and “a contrast in expectations” (p. 172). Schifffrin (1987) indicates that “speakers use *but* to present points which have been interrupted, misunderstood, and/or challenged” (p. 174).

Adjuncts also play an important role in the Western feminist discourse. Morley (2000) stresses the importance of the interpersonal functions of adjuncts in language analysis. Adjuncts highlight and emphasize a proposition (p. 105- 106).

Western feminist writers use concession and counter-expectation devices to express contrary to expectation propositions. The conjunction *but* is used to support the proposition that women are victims in patriarchal societies.

Adjuncts are also employed to stress, emphasize and highlight different aspects of public work where women's roles are intentionally reduced and discriminated against in comparison with men. Moreover adjuncts are used to stress and emphasize the issue of domestic violence and anti-choice rhetoric against abortion and its effect on women.

Examples:

e.g. *But* denying that women are a victimized class is simply wrong (Valenti, text no. 1, line 20).

e.g. Women *still* bear the largest burden of child care across the world (Valenti, text no. 2, line 3).

6.2.4. Concurrence and Concurrence devices:

Concurrence refers to the use of certain items and linguistic structures which build a presupposed relationship of agreement between the writers/ speakers and the readers/ addresses (Martin & White, 2005, p. 122). In the Western feminist discourse, rhetorical questions play an essential role in building such

presupposed agreement in relation to different topics of concern. Concurrence includes other items such as *of course* and *admittedly*.

Western feminist writers elicit an implicit agreement with readers that women are discriminated against in private and public spheres of life, that women are discriminated against by the judiciary which limits women's participation in the legal field, and that women are discriminated against in the medical field where abortion, that is essential for protecting desperate (e.g. raped) women and their children from dangers, is seen as illegal and inhuman.

Examples:

e.g. *What* else would *you* call a segment of the population who are systematically discriminated against in school, work and politics? (Valenti, text no. 1, line 30- 31).

e.g. *How* would you describe a population whose bodies are objectified to the point of dehumanization? (Valenti, text no. 1, line 31- 32).

e.g. *Do* we really think that there are no consequences to claiming that abortion is murder, or that Planned Parenthood is an organization of money-hungry monsters selling baby parts? (Valenti, text no. 3, line 23- 25).

e.g. *Of course* this interest in women's agency disappears when they're discussing abortion (Valenti, text no. 1, line 49- 50).

6.2.5. Pronouncement and pronouncement devices:

Pronouncement refers to those linguistic tools that indicate "authorial emphases" on a set of propositions (Martin & White, 2005, p. 127). In the Western feminist selected data, pronouncement is mainly expressed by intensifiers with clausal

scope such as *really* and *indeed*. Other linguistic items include *the fact that*, *in reality*, *the truth is*, *actually*, *surely*, and *it is obvious that*.

Western feminist writers emphasize that women in the Western world are discriminated against in private and public spheres of life and that feminism as a women's movement has many other demands than equality between men and women:

Examples:

e.g. *It's true*; child care, housework, balancing work and home life - these are issues that men absolutely need to care about and take action on (Valenti, text no. 2, line 15- 17).

e.g. While *it's true* that Planned Parenthood offers a variety of services (Valenti, text no. 3, line 59- 60).

e.g. We can all tell *the truth* about this attack (Valenti, text no. 3, line 79).

6.2.6. Endorsement and endorsement devices:

In the selected texts of analysis, endorsement devices are used in order to cite credible data and credible points of view. A plausible interpretation for the use of endorsement devices intensifies the tendency of media writers to present their arguments from a single perspective that is partial to their ideological stance rather than to the stance of facts and realities.

Examples:

e.g. academics *have pointed out* that men's participation is necessary for real change (Valenti, text no. 2, line 9- 10).

e.g. After the hearing, the *FBI warned that* increased attacks on abortion clinics were coming (Valenti, text no. 3, line 39- 40)

e.g. An FBI intelligence assessment report *noted*, "It is likely criminal or suspicious incidents will continue to be directed

against reproductive health care providers, their staff and facilities.” (Valenti, text no. 3, line 40- 42)

6.2.6. Entertainment and entertainment devices:

Categories of entertainment are mainly represented by modality that is followed by mental verbs and evidence/appearance-based postulations. Modality in the Western feminist discourse is expressed by modal auxiliaries (*will, would, can, could, may, might, should, need to, have to and must*), modal adjuncts (*probably and perhaps*), modal attributes (*likely*), mental verbs/ attribute projections (*I think and I believe*), and evidence/appearance based postulations (*seem and apparently*).

In the selected data modality plays a set of communicative functions. Though limited in the majority of the selected texts, modality and modal auxiliaries in particular give face for readers to share and participate in the process of evaluation. They are dealt with as active participants in interaction. Moreover, it embraces those who hold different and alternative views as participants in discourse.

Western feminist writers use modals such as *must* to express the necessity of putting an end to the anti-choice rhetoric. The modal *need* is employed in order to offer a suggested solution for gender inequalities. For Western feminist writers, men should participate in domestic work at home. They also use evidence/appearance based postulations (e.g. *seem and appear*) and mental verbs (e.g. *I think*) in order to mitigate criticism directed at anti-feminists.

Example:

e.g. We *must demand* that the violent radical language and lies about abortion stop (Valenti, text no. 3, line 61).

e.g. Men *need to get off* the bench and do something (Valenti, text no.2, line 16- 17).

e.g. *We need them to take* active responsibility for their faults (Valenti, text no. 2, line 1- 2).

e.g. I *think* you've mistaken us for the sexist (Valenti, text no. 1, line 1).

e.g. they *have to* help fix it (Valenti, text no. 2, line 2)

6.2.7. Attribution and attribution devices:

In the selected data, acknowledgment includes communicative verb processes (e.g. *say, tell, reveal, see* and *suggest*), verbs which reference mental processes (e.g. *believe*), formulations which involve nominalization of mental processes (e.g. *belief*), and adverbial adjuncts (e.g. *according to* and *in X's view*). Distance devices include reporting verbs such as *claim* and its noun form *claims*.

In the following examples, Western feminist writers use attribution to acknowledge Obama's concern with women and women's issues and also to quote a real evidence of the negative consequences of mentioning the word rape in front of women who are actually raped. They use attribution devices in order to distance themselves from the view that abortion has negative effects on women.

Examples:

e.g. and earlier this year in his State of the Union address, president Obama *said*: "It's time we stop treating child care as a side issue, or a woman's issue, and treat it like the national economic priority that it is for all of us" (Valenti, text no. 2, line 10- 13).

e.g. For years feminists *have argued that* work life balance and the unequal division of labor in the home and with children is a family issue (Valenti, text no. 2, line 24- 25).

e.g. The man arrested in the Planned Parenthood shooting allegedly *told* police ‘no more baby parts’ (Valenti, text no. 3, line 2- 3).

e.g. *claiming that* abortion is murder (Valenti, text no. 3, line 24-25).

6.3. Gradability:

Valenti tends to up-grade her evaluation of qualities, processes, amounts and different categories in discourse. Intensification has seven modes of analysis. Isolation has the majority of representation. As for isolation, comparatives and superlatives have items such as *more than*, *less than*, *the most* and *better than*, etc. Maximizers include items such as *ultimately*, *totally*, *completely* and *utterly*. Quantification has three modes of analysis. Amount has the majority of representation in most texts. Talking in numbers includes items such as *millions* and *thousands*. Talking in extent has items such as *widely*, *far* and *vast*. Talking in proximity includes *this year* and *recently* and *daily*.

Example:

e.g. *Many* of its participants show a baffling level of ignorance about what feminism *actually* is (Valenti, text number 1, line 14-15).

e.g. Women still bear *the largest* burden of child care across the world (Valent, text no. 2, line 3).

e.g. The culture of hate against Planned Parenthood... is *so* extreme (Valenti. Text no. 3, line 47- 49).

7. Discussion:

Along the system of attitude, it is fair to stress the huge effect played by attitudinal meanings in emotionally blocking all trials of reconciliation between feminist and anti-feminist advocates. Such attitudinally over-loaded language used in media discourse incites

rather than unite different directions and attitudes. And thus expressing attitudes in media discourse is purposeful. The extensive use of attitudinal meanings in media discourse is used as a strategy to influence and affect addressees to adopt positive and/or negative positions towards the different objects discussed in discourse. Heightening certain emotional responses, judgments and appreciations and suppressing other possible reactions leaves a restricted space for the addressees to hold other alternative evaluations as valid and justifiable (Jovanović-Krstić, 2005, p. 248). To put it another way, the extensive use of attitudinal meanings is attributed to the desirability of Valenti to use language effectively in order to position their readers attitudinally to adopt a predetermined set of evaluative meanings. This confirms Katz's (1989) view that "Attitudes were seen as a means for meeting some need of the individual" (p. XII). For Musgrove (1998), the word attitude has the same Latin root as aptitude where the two words refer to "the quality of being apt for a specific purpose" (p. 85). He adds that attitude is not only an expression of a 'state of mind' but also a "preparation for action" (p. 85). He also concludes that our attitudes do not only reflect our "disposition or stance *of* an object or event, but one's routine predisposition *toward* an object or event" (p. 85). In such a way, it is highly recommended that in carrying out the act of evaluation media writers be aware of the negative effects of the extensive use of attitudinal meanings in widening the gap between those who support feminism and those who reject their values and ideals. At least, they have to be balanced in their expressions of negative and positive attitudinal meanings in order to seem objective in their expression of media messages.

Along the system of engagement, it is fair to stress that language is intentionally manipulated to achieve certain communicative purposes in media discourse. Media language does not only transmit facts and information about the real world, but it also makes use of the linguistic system of a language in order to communicate opinions, beliefs and views that reflect a *possible*

representation of the world around us or part of an expected possible representation. The linguistic tools (lexical and structural) act as moulds chosen by language users to pour their ideological estimations and socio-cultural values.

In media discourse, the speech act of assertion is strategically used to convey other communicative functions. Linguistically, an assertion is defined as “full telling of full knowledge” (Davies, 2006, p. 151). According to Weiner (2007), an assertion is proper if and only if the asserted proposition is true in the real world (p. 190). Since language is used and even manipulated to fulfill certain communicative targets in the selected situational context, media writers violate the main rule of the speech act of assertion and use it in order to convey their ideological orientations towards different propositions involved in discourse. Instead of reflecting propositions that represent the real world, the speech act of assertion is used to echo the writers’ ideological assumptions and estimations. In other words, the use of the linguistic structure of the speech act of assertion shifts a proposition from a presupposed/ possible world into a truth value proposition that is supposed to represent the real world (see, Stalnaker, 1999, p. 79). In such a way, media writers direct their readers to adopt such propositions as facts that are not open for discussion or argument. Through the violation of the main rule of the speech act of assertion, media writers exclude those of other ideological orientations and dominate the whole interaction. They incite rather than reconcile different views among the opposing camps. So, assertions are liable to praise or criticism (Williamson, 1996, p. 489). Consequently, it is recommended that media writers make a careful use of the speech act of assertion and verify, if possible, the content of a proposition before asserting it because making assertions puts a responsibility on the part of media writers for the truth or at least knowledge of their assertions (see, Williamson, 1996, p. 522).

Media writers resort to the use of other linguistic structures other than monoglossic utterances in order to impose their

ideological orientations on their addressees. They make use of the linguistic tools of dialogic contraction in order to contract the space for other dialogic alternatives. One of these linguistic tools is the use of categories of disclaim (concession/ counter-expectation devices and negation) and categories of proclaim (e.g. rhetorical questions, emphatic words and results of verifiable studies).

Directness in contracting the space for other alternative views is used as a strategy of coercion. It is conveyed through the extensive use of categories of disclaim including concession/ counter-expectation devices and negation. Media writers dominate the whole scene of discourse and the whole process of interaction with other participants. Negation is used as a strategy of rejection and exclusion of other alternative stances, while concession/ counter-expectation devices are employed as direct means of countering expected propositions.

Other indirect strategies of imposition are reflected through the use of categories of proclaim that limit the scope for other alternative views and stances. Concur (e.g. rhetorical questions) is one of these strategies used by media writers in order to build a sense of a presupposed agreement with readers on a set of propositions. Such presupposed agreement is imposed on participants and they are expected to respond positively to these propositions. Pronounce is another strategy where media writers use a set of emphatic words to strengthen their authorial stance and leave a narrow space for doubt and uncertainty on the addressees' part. Media writers draw on concur devices (represented mainly by rhetorical questions) more than on endorsement devices because they seek to affect their readers emotionally by the extensive use of rhetorical questions than mentally by citing credible data of verifiable studies. Such interpretation adds to the whole image that the evaluations of media writers are true reflections of their ideological subjective stances.

The study affirms the proposition that categories of dialogic contraction and categories of dialogic expansion differ in their “intersubjective functionality” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 102). Though limited in representation, categories of dialogic expansion indicate a positive constructive dimension in media discourse where readers are seen as active participants in discourse. They are deprived from or restricted in diagnosing the problems but they are given the change to be involved as active interactants in determining the strategies that are to be taken to overcome these problems. Categories of entertain (e.g. modality) open a space for offering solutions that are related to the question of “what is the course of action that is to be taken in a certain context towards an issue of concern”. Modality is used as a strategy for offering solutions, expressing necessity, set obligations and/ or expressing other expectations towards an issue. Categories of dialogic expansion are also employed for mitigating criticism especially in the feminist criticism of the religious institution.

Media writers make a strategic use of the linguistic structure of attribution devices especially for those instances of the acknowledgment type. The inclusion of other non-authorial voices in discourse portrays a positive image of the authorial voice as an “informational fair trader” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 115). However, media writers in the selected texts of analysis seek to acknowledge non-authorial voices which confirm and support their authorial stances and distance non-authorial voices that are contradictory and inappropriate to their own authorial voices. To put it another way, attribution is intentionally used in order to convince readers of the main arguments and evaluations of the writers themselves. Thus, attribution of the distance type is restricted in media discourse. Attribution is also used to introduce a topic for comment and/ or criticism.

Along the system of graduation, Gradability is used as another tool for achieving strategic functions of communication. Media writers magnify propositional and attitudinal meanings through the linguistic devices of up-grading in order to have a direct and

strong effect on readers. Up-grading devices contract and even close the space for contradiction and difference. The writers' strong commitment to the expressed meanings and propositions turn the role of addresses into a passive role where they are expected to hold the same ideological orientations of writers. In conclusion, the linguistic analysis of Gradability adds to the negative effect of inciting rather than the positive pole of achieving reconciliation among contradictory and opposing receivers.

In conclusion, all these strategies are employed by media writers in order to attract more readers towards adopting similar ideological orientations. However, these strategies alienate those who adopt other contradictory ideological orientations and so a wide gap is created and the clash between opposing camps gets more and more heated.

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Appendices:

Appendix A: (Text no. 1).

Feminism makes women 'victims'? I think you've mistaken us for the sexists

Women *are* victimized in our society. #WomenAgainstFeminism doesn't change that terrible reality

An old canard about feminists is that, in addition to being hirsute bra-burners, we want to turn all women into "victims" – and thanks to "Women Against Feminism", this particular accusation has gained some moderately mainstream traction in recent weeks.

But feminism doesn't make women victims. Sexism does.

That inconvenient truth hasn't stopped conservatives and anti-feminists from using this supposed victimization to bash a movement that won women the rights to vote, have credit cards, not be legally raped by their husbands, use birth control and generally be considered people instead of property, among other things.

Admittedly, to those unfamiliar with stereotypes of the women's movement, the Women Against Feminism meme may look more like a parody than anything of serious concern. Many of its participants show a baffling level of ignorance about what feminism actually *is* – signs reading "I don't need feminism because my boyfriend treats me right" or "I like men looking at me" are cringe-inducing, for instance. And I'm skeptical of how many new "women's" Twitter accounts suddenly popped up in the days surrounding the meme's creation.

But all the cringing and skepticism in the world hasn't stopped the *idea* of "Women Against Feminism" from being taken seriously by at least some in the media.

The BBC kicked off a conversation about the "movement" by asking, "Has feminism become unnecessary and irrelevant?" The expected conservative hacks have come out, with the National Review Online bashing the "hostile" feminist responses and Rush Limbaugh saying "pictures of these babes" are "really, really great to see". And Cathy Young wrote at Time about the multiple disavowals of feminism that cited "I am not a victim" and called

the characterization of the movement as victimizing a “fair description”.

But denying that women are a victimized class is simply wrong. What else would *you* call a segment of the population who are systematically discriminated against in school, work and politics? How would you describe a population whose bodies are objectified to the point of dehumanization? Women are harassed, attacked and sexually assaulted with alarming regularity in America and around the world, and now even more of them live in states where, if pregnant, they can be refused medical attention or arrested for refusing C-sections.

People who are on the shit end of oppression are oppressed. Accurately describing this is not a matter of politics, but of truth.

But because we live in a culture that values independence and strength and negates the agency of victims – wrongly conflating victimhood with weakness instead of directing our opprobrium at those who victimize – the label will automatically have detractors. No one likes to be a victim, let alone conceive of themselves that way (no matter what George Will believes). But when women refuse to admit to *ourselves* that we’re systematically victimized, we give fuel to those on the political right who claim – despite all evidence to the contrary – that women are doing just fine.

Actually, the conservative rhetoric of late around rolling back women’s rights is mostly about women’s “independence”: we don’t *need* coverage for birth control, we *choose* the pay gap, we’re too *strong* for legal protections. (Of course this interest in women’s agency disappears when they’re discussing abortion, of which women are supposedly perpetual victims and in need of the most condescending laws on the books.)

If we’re unwilling to accept women’s factual status as victims in society, it makes it that much harder for society to accept those who hurt women as victimizers.

There’s a reason men like ESPN’s now temporarily-suspended Stephen A Smith say that women who are beaten need to “do your part” and avoid “elements of provocation”. As anti-violence educator and filmmaker Byron Hurt explained in *Ebony*, it’s

because “[t]his deflection never fails. Men create excuses for their abusive behavior and deny women’s victimhood.”

Clearly there are women – for a myriad of reasons – who don’t want to identify as victims or support the idea that women are victimized. Maybe there are even a lucky few who have never experienced discrimination. But as a college professor once told me, the existence of a few women who have lived their lives under an umbrella of privilege does not mean that it’s not raining on the rest of us.

Naming what is happening to women – that we are being oppressed, held back, and yes, victimized – is not weakness. It takes strength to tell uncomfortable truths.

Appendix B: (Text no. 2).

Gender inequality is a problem men created – now they have to help fix it

Men need to step up and actually help women out at home and at work. We need them to take active responsibility for their faults.

In the ongoing national conversation about work life balance and domestic parity between men and women, there’s a phrase that’s not quite as popular as “having it all” or “leaning in” but is important just the same: this is not just a women’s issue.

Sheryl Sandberg has encouraged men to get involved in advocating for women’s equality at work and at home, academics have pointed out that men’s participation is necessary for real change and earlier this year in his State of the Union address, President Obama said: “It’s time we stop treating child care as a side issue, or a women’s issue, and treat it like the national economic priority that it is for all of us.”

It’s true; child care, housework, balancing work and home life - these are issues that men absolutely need to care about and take action on. But not just because it benefits them to, or to do so as a favor to help women out. Men need to get off the bench and do something because gendered domestic disparity is a problem that they created. It’s only fair that men fix it.

This is one of those truths that’s tricky to say because feminists are so often working hard to make the movement’s messages

palatable. We don't want men to feel alienated and pointing a finger can feel counterproductive.

But repeating "this is not just a women's issue" over and over simply has not worked. For years feminists have argued that work life balance and the unequal division of labor in the home and with children is a family issue. Nothing has changed.

This isn't to say that men haven't gotten involved, many have. But we need more than men's grudging participation - we need them to take active responsibility. In the workplace, where they can do more to fight for equal pay and against discrimination, but also in the home.

Years ago, before we were married, my husband Andrew ran a reading group - it was comprised mostly of young progressive-minded men in their 20s. One day they were discussing an article about the disproportionate care labor women do, for kids and elders, and the group was all in agreement: this was unfair. They talked about legislation and policy changes that could help. But when Andrew asked how many of them expected their future partners to do the majority of child care, the room got silent - and then defensive.

All of these young men who considered themselves progressive and were willing to talk about political change, were completely unwilling to let go of the idea that their personal lives might be impacted in any way for the cause. I don't think this is an unusual attitude on either side of the aisle.

So yeah, maybe it's time we weren't so polite about this particular battle. The kind of change that these problems require - lasting change, change that's both systemic and personal - requires more than men's "support". Women didn't choose to make less money, bias does that. Women didn't choose to be the default care giver, socialization does that.

Women didn't create this problem. Men did that.

Appendix C: (Text no. 3).

Violent anti-choice rhetoric must end, or anti-abortion violence never will

The man arrested in the Planned Parenthood shooting allegedly told police ‘no more baby parts’. Can we stop pretending that pro-life lies don’t have an effect?

Words matter. When we dehumanize people – when we call them demons, monsters, and murderers – we make it easier for others to do them harm. Let’s not pretend that we don’t know that.

How we talk about abortion matters. We know it, and anti-choice extremists and politicians know it. Anti-abortion activists are not making WANTED posters or revealing doctor’s addresses for fun. They’re doing it to harass and intimidate, and they’re doing it knowing the long history of violent fanatics using their rhetoric to justify crimes against providers and clinics.

The shooting may be the most horrifically violent attack on a clinic in the country’s history, but it was far from the first. There have been four arson attacks against centers that provide abortions just since July, when David Daleiden and the euphemistically named Center for Medical Progress began releasing deceptively edited videos of Planned Parenthood employees discussing fetal tissue donation. Or, as anti-abortion activists and politicians have referred to it, “baby parts”.

The attack in Colorado, which left three people dead and nine wounded, was shocking, but it was also the predictable result of a culture that demonizes abortion, uses fantastical and false rhetoric about Planned Parenthood and allows politicians and activists to make false representations about women’s reproductive health.

Do we really think that there are no consequences to claiming that abortion is murder, or that Planned Parenthood is an organization of money-hungry monstersselling baby parts?

In August, US district judge William Orrick blocked the release of more videos from Daleiden citing the “history of violence” against abortion providers. When 32 lawyers from across the country petitioned California’s attorney general, Kamala Harris, to conduct her investigation into Daleiden quickly because of “a real threat to abortion provider safety”, they wrote about how doctors and staffers are stalked and receive death threats, and how this

targeted harassment led to the murders of eight doctors since 1993.

Planned Parenthood was cleared of any wrongdoing by every state that investigated it after the videos were released, yet its president, Cecile Richards, was still made to testify in front of the House this September in a sham of a hearing where Republicans grilled Richards on everything from musical acts at organizational events to her personal salary.

After the hearing, the FBI warned that increased attacks on abortion clinics were coming. An FBI intelligence assessment report noted, “It is likely criminal or suspicious incidents will continue to be directed against reproductive health care providers, their staff and facilities.”

Vicki Saporta, president of the National Abortion Federation, told a reporter just last month that, since the videos’ release, “the intensity and volume” of hate speech directed at clinics was “unprecedented”.

“People have also been calling clinics and making threats to murder all the doctors or to wipe out all the staff,” she said.

The culture of hate against Planned Parenthood – an organization that serves mostly low-income women and provides legal, safe medical services – is so extreme that some felt it entirely appropriate to express their glee over the shootings on Friday, claiming that the people hurt had it coming. And while the gunman was still in the building, Representative Adam Kinzinger, a Republican from Illinois, went on CNN to criticize the organization, saying, “We saw those barbaric videos, and that was something many of us have a legitimate concern about.”

Even those defending the organization fell into the trap of stigmatizing abortion, tweeting corrections at media organizations that called the Planned Parenthood in Colorado Springs an “abortion clinic” or noting that abortions are a small part of the organization’s work. While it’s true that Planned Parenthood offers a variety of services, I think it’s safe to say the attacker wasn’t there because he was angry about pap smears.

We must demand that the violent radical language and lies about abortion stop.

People disagree about the morality of abortion, but the doctors who provide them aren't evil: they are doing what they think is right and good for their patients. (That hasn't stopped some conservative media, even in the wake of this tragedy, from calling them "demonic.") The women who go to Planned Parenthood, whether for a checkup or an abortion, aren't callous beasts: they're people trying to do the best they can for their lives and families.

As we find out more about the shooter, people will claim – as they often do – that he was a lone wolf, that he was mentally unstable and that he is not at all representative of those who disagree with abortion. Republican politicians will eventually take great pains to condemn the shooter's attack, while ignoring all of the lies, language and culture of misogyny that contributes to this kind of violence.

Some people are already telling the truth, though. Vicki Cowart, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Rocky Mountains released a statement that eyewitnesses confirm the attacker "was motivated by opposition to safe and legal and abortion". The attorney general, Loretta Lynch, called the shooting a "crime against women" getting care at Planned Parenthood.

We can all tell the truth about this attack; we don't need a police press conference to confirm the shooter's motive. We know why this happened. Clinic workers who put their lives on the line every day know why this happened. Because of hate, because of lies, and because words matter.