

Moroccan female leaders between femininity and masculinity: A case study of Nabila Mounib (the first female leader of a political party)

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Abstract

*Women are 'intruders' in the political world, they often find themselves at odds with a world that has established its values and rules according to men's ways of doing things. When women enter politics, their socially constructed gender clashes with the tough world of politics. Often the feminine style collides with doing political leadership, a leadership that requires toughness, assertiveness and even violence. Women are socially constructed to behave in the complete opposite of this values. The first Moroccan female leader was elected as the head of her political party, *Partie Socialiste Unifié [PSU]*, in 2012. Nabila Mounib was faced with the dilemma of how she is going to lead a political party as a female in a patriarchal and conservative society. Should she lead using her feminine leadership style or should she adapt the masculine style that seems to conform with the political world? This paper attempts to explore her leadership style using Feminist Critical discourse analysis FCDA with a focus on the following linguistic features: interruption, hedges and tag questions, and the I vs We.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Politics has been a men's world for ages. Although things have been changing recently still, women represent a minority in the political world except in some Scandinavian countries. Hoogensen remarks that up to 2000, Swedish women had 42.7 percent of parliamentary seats. As for Finland, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland, the parliamentary representation ranged between 35 to 37 percent, while Netherlands had 36 percent (Henley, 2019). Statistics also prove that women's representation in politics is increasing in different countries, and in the Nordic nations it reached 40 percent of women are in political leadership positions (Hollihan, 2005). Rwanda took the lead in 2020, ranking first in the world with 1.3% of women in single and lower houses of parliament (Union, 2020). The Arab world is ranked the second-lowest in the Gender Empowerment Measure according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (Rowaida Al Maaitah, 2011). Data from 2009 shows that the United Arab Emirates has the largest number of female ministers, followed by Jordan and Morocco (Pinto, 2011). However, research shows that only 11% of leadership positions are occupied by women in worldwide political parties (čičkarić, 2015). In other words, women are still a minority in decision-making positions.

In Morocco, since 2011, there has been a decrease in women's political participation under the government of the PJD (Party de Justice et Development) as the leading party of the precedent government. The conservative background of the party was reflected when the party appointed the first veiled woman as a minister of a stereotypically 'feminine' ministry which is that of Family, Solidarity, Equality and Social Development. In their book *Moroccan Feminisms: new perspectives*, Ennaji, Fatima Sadiqi and Karen Vintges noticed a decline in women's political participation in the Moroccan government under the Islamic party PJD. However, they remarked that 'more women have joined parliament through the quota system for women and youth...' (Moha Ennaji, Fatima Sadiqi and Karen Vintges, 2016, p. 4). As of 2016, 81 women in Parliament represented 1% -- nearing the world average" (Ennaji, 2016, p. 6). The situation has drastically changed for women, from 30 seats out of 325 in 2007 to 60 out of 395 seats in 2011 (Ennaji, 2016). And though more women joined the government after the amendments in 2012, they only occupied positions equivalent to Deputy Ministers: "Soumiya Benkhaldoun became "Ministre Déléguée" for Higher Education, and three liberal unveiled women took the reins of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Mines and Environment, respectively, but they were all "Ministres Déléguée", which is equivalent to Deputy Ministers. By contrast, the governments before the Arab Spring included a total of seven women ministers from 2007 to 2011." (Moha Ennaji, Fatima Sadiqi and Karen Vintges, 2016). One should also not neglect the fact that the position of Deputy Minister is secondary and inferior to a minister because they are just representatives of the ministers, and therefore they are subordinate and dependent on the male ministers

With the current government (2021), which the National Rally of Independents leads, it seems that the government has 19 men and 5 women ministers, with only one as a minister delegate. Remarkably, almost all the women of these governments occupy strong and strategic ministries that were assigned to men up to this date only. Nadia Fath El Alaoui occupies the Ministry of Economy and Finance. Fatima Zahra Mansouri is the minister of National Planning, Urban Planning, Housing and Urban Policy. Fatima Zahra Amour is the minister of Tourism, Handicrafts and Social Economy. Leila Ben Ali is the minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development. Awatif Hayar is the minister of Solidarity, Social Inclusion and the Family. Last but not least is Ghita Mezour, the minister delegate to the Prime Minister in charge of Digital Transition and Administration Reform.

Although there is a drastic change in how women gain access to politics worldwide, women still have to face various glass ceilings. Since men occupied the political world, they established the norms and rules for this domain. Politics is still considered, up to this date, a masculine field *par excellence*. Women entering politics are often seen as intruders and outsiders in the field. And now that women are gaining access to politics, they face the dilemma of how they should lead. Should they lead according to the established norms, characterized by a masculine leadership style? Or should they bring their femininity into their leadership style? Or should they combine both? Many studies that followed Lakoff's famous article *Women's Language* argue that women use a feminine communicative style in language, including Zimmerman and West (West, 1973) and Tannen (1994), among others, while many recent studies show that although women use power and the 'masculine' style more often in the workplace, for example, women are still pressured to combine this 'masculine style' with a more 'feminine style' (Holmes, 2005).

Moreover, other studies demonstrate that many complicated factors interplay when analysing subjects' powerfulness or powerlessness (Baxter, 2003). In this article, I chose to analyze the leadership style of Nabila Mounib as she is the first woman in Morocco to lead a political party in light of the mentioned literature. I am going to use FDA as a general framework to analyze her leadership style. Does it conform to the masculine style? Can we say it's a feminine style? Or does it combine both?

Nabila Mounib is one of the most prominent leaders currently in Morocco. She is famous for being the first woman ever to lead a political party in the country, and she is also known for her bold stances and discourse. She gained a lot of popularity in the 2016 elections because of her severe criticism and opposition to the government. She has been leading the PSU party since 2012, and she won a second term in 2018 as the party's secretary general. Currently, she has been granted a seat in the parliament in the 2021 elections. She is also a university professor of biology at Hassan II University in Casablanca.

I am going to start my paper by discussing how the notion of leadership changed over time. Then I will sketch the methodology adopted in this article. Last but not least, I am going to analyze the data collected in the light of FCDA with a focus on interruption, hedges and tag questions, and the I vs the We. Finally, I am going to give some reflections and implications about the findings.

2. LEADERSHIP BETWEEN OLD AND CONTEMPORARY DEFINITIONS

R.A.W. Rhodes and Paul 'T Hart argue that there are so many definitions of leadership, and there is no agreement on one definition or even how to study leadership (Rhodes, 2014). They further add that leader-centred analysis was prominent in the United States, which then does not consider the social interaction with the followers (Rhodes, 2014) as well as the cultural context in which the leader himself/ herself was brought up. Some of the most prominent leadership scholars have highlighted leadership characteristics and direct personal experience: "empathy, intuition, creativity, courage, morality, judgment" (Rhodes, 2014, p. 10). These characteristics can hardly be scientifically measured, thus laying the dilemma of defining leadership.

In an attempt to give leadership a definition, Nannerl O. Keohane has referred to the importance of the notion of violence as a key root for political leadership in the philosophy of Machiavelli, Plato and Weber (O.Keohane, 2014). However, in *The Republic*, Plato considered that women could also be practitioners of political leadership (O.Keohane, 2014). Another key characteristic for political leadership for these philosophers is deception (ibid), a term that embodies power and authority at its very core and thus is attributed to maleness. O. Keohane discusses Cicero's view stating that "the ideal system is one in which the people are wise enough to *choose* superior men for public office" (O.Keohane, 2014, p. 4). For Machiavelli, in *The Prince*, he emphasizes on the importance of the innate abilities of the rulers, in addition to "qualities such as courage, decisiveness, good judgment, and ruthlessness- but also luck (*fortuna*)" (O.Keohane, 2014). Machiavelli stresses on the importance of being "virtuous (generous, merciful, honest, trustworthy) but the ruler can disregard all of these qualities whenever his power is threatened (ibid). Note that the very title Machiavelli has chosen, '*The Prince*', has clearly eliminated women from the category of rulers. Also, the notions 'generous' and 'merciful' are usually attributed to femaleness, and his willingness to give them up to deceit to save the ruler's power indicates the fragility of these characteristics in leadership.

For Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'the best system is one in which 'the wisest govern the multitude, so long as it is certain that they will govern for its advantage and not for their own will' (O.Keohane, 2014, p. 6). As O. Keohane himself has analyzed, what Rousseau was referring it as 'to rule by a small number of wise men rather than a monarch, believing that monarchs will inevitably abuse their power' (ibid). Again, it is men only who can possess such a skill as wisdom. O. Keohane quotes Max Weber defining leadership as "the decisive psychological quality of a politician: his ability to let realities work upon him with inner concentration and calmness. Hence his *distance* to things and men' and even distance towards himself" (O.Keohane, 2014, p. 9). Note that the use of 'his' and 'him' attributes leadership unquestionably to men. As for Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, he asserts that "professional revolutionists' are essential to making a successful revolution, a 'stable organization of leaders

to maintain continuity' (ibid). Without the "dozen" of tried and talented leaders... professionally trained, schooled by long experience and working in perfect harmony, no class in modern society is capable of conducting a determined struggle'" (ibid). The very term 'revolutionists' embodies in itself the idea of violence and the use of aggressive power, and throughout history, women have been attributed characteristics of 'passivity' and 'pacifism'. Thus, we might conclude that this definition of Lenin excluded women from the 'revolutionists' necessary to lead the struggle against capitalism.

From these definitions, we can see that leadership is often defined in terms of masculinity, and thus femininity does not suit its frame. Holmes also noted that leaders are usually characterized by having authority, aggressiveness, competitiveness, confidence, decisiveness etc. (Holmes, 2006). In this way, Laura Sjoberg asserts that political leadership "privilege masculine characteristics and devalue feminine ones, rendering women unqualified by default because they are associated with those devalued feminine characteristics" (Sjoberg, 2014, p. 1). She adds that:

both females and femininity remain neglected in our concepts of what it means to be a political leader. Our gendered narratives about political leadership 'reinforce the belief, widely held...by both men and women, that military and foreign policy-making are arenas of policy-making least appropriate for women' and limit both women's access and influence of femininity in politics (Sjoberg, 2014, p. 2).

She further highlights that certain traits are attributed to women like: passive, sympathetic, pure, dependent, emotional, caring, and soft. While on the other hand, men are seen as strong, powerful, autonomous, authoritative, rational, and aggressive (ibid). Sjoberg sees that the association of defining 'good' leadership with masculine traits overlaps significantly with what it 'means to be a good man (as a man)' (Sjoberg, 2014, p. 4). She concludes that this is why 'many women who seek political office emphasize their masculine characteristics' (ibid). Like Margaret Thatcher said to the *Daily Mirror* on March 1, 1980, "I don't notice that I 'am a woman: I regard myself as 'Prime Minister'" (Boxer, 2015, p. 22). The fact that she was called the Iron Lady indicates that as a woman leader, she utilized masculine traits in her leadership style to succeed in her political career.

Janet Holmes highlights that leadership is a "gendered concept" and that until recently, leadership is still associated with masculinity (Holmes, 2006). Valerie Stead and Carole Elliott also observe that the lack of research on female leadership proves that leadership is a male activity (Elliott, 2009). However, they noted a shift from defining leadership in individualistic terms to a definition that sees it as a 'process in social activity (Elliott, 2009, p. 16). Postheroic models have been seen as alternatives to the traditional approaches to leadership in the sense that these models have three characteristics, according to Fletcher (2004): Practice that is shared and distributed, Social process that involves interactions, and Learning from the outcomes (Elliott, 2009). However, these postheroic models did not entirely overcome the binary opposition of masculine vs feminine traits in leadership. They argue that up to 2009, 'the image of the leader continues to be male' (Elliott, 2009, p. 22). They also noted that leadership is characterized by "the experiences of western, white men that inform leadership research" (Elliott, 2009, p. 23).

These researchers theorize that "leadership is a socially constructed process" (Elliott, 2009, p. 24). They state that:

Therefore, leadership as a social process is one in which the identity and practice of the leader are always relational, drawing from and interacting with her social context. It moves us away from earlier leadership images and conceptions, which to a greater or

lesser extent, relied on the notion that a leader's traits, skills, and style could explain organizational success or failure (ibid).

This could explain the fact that recently more political women celebrate their femininity while practicing their leadership rather than opting for masculine traits that would guarantee more power and success. The authors add, "Other characteristics labelled feminine that is now deemed significant to encourage organisational change include co-operation, openness and a caring orientation. These qualities have been associated with women... and some researchers have presented them as a superior way of enacting leadership" (Elliott, 2009, p. 25). This celebration of femininity is evident in the leadership style of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first elected female head of state in Africa. She was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2011 for her effort to promote peace in Liberia (Boxer, 2015). She was nicknamed the 'Iron Lady' and 'Ma Ellen, and 'Ma' refers to mature women in some African cultures (Boxer, 2015). She is often depicted in the media as a mother and a grandmother, and she takes pride in these qualities: "Can a 67-year-old grandmother fix all this? Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf, ... argues that she can, in part because she is a 67-year-old grandmother" (Boxer, 2015, p. 328).

Thus, the postheroic approach proposes models that see leadership as a "more egalitarian, relational and distributed notion of leadership suggest that power is enacted 'within', not 'over', others" ... The skills and approaches needed to enact 'power with' leadership- 'such as fluid expertise, the willingness to show, and acknowledge interdependence'... are, rightly or otherwise, more commonly associated with powerlessness and femininity" (Elliott, 2009, p. 28). Stead and Elliott view that leadership can be developed and that it "is a matter of nurture rather than nature" (Elliott, 2009, p. 30). Hence, if leadership is seen as a skill that can be developed, then it should also be contextual because it should consider culture, race, ethnicity, gender even history and geographical contexts.

The authors explain two main approaches to leadership development: "attending to the individual by taking a human capital approach and attending to the social by taking a social capital approach" (Elliott, 2009, pp. 30-31). Thus, it is not only about how subjects identify with their gender while practising leadership but also how society expects them to react and behave accordingly. Thus, the women leaders themselves should reflect on their own experiences and discuss how they use their gender in their leadership and how the official institutions expect them to behave accordingly. The fact that gender is a social construction has affected definitions of leadership. Stead and Elliott claim that leadership research is shifting from viewing leadership as an individualistic and isolated activity from the social, cultural and political contexts. Rather, the new perspective sees it as a dynamic development constructed and shaped by social practices, including gender, race and class (Elliott, 2009). Thus, women's experiences as gendered subjects can change the view and definition of leadership.

Leadership is indeed an individual activity; however, this individual is shaped by culture, education, race, personal experiences, and gender as well. Leadership is a dynamic activity that is affected by how the individual negotiates his/her race, gender, social class...etc. Gender as well is no longer seen as a fixed trait residing in biology; rather, it is a social and cultural construction that can be challenged and negotiated. Women's leadership should not be seen as inferior or less powerful than men, but rather just different.

3. METHODOLOGY

Leadership is a social practice that requires a critical feminist approach, especially if the case under study is a woman in a leadership position. The case under study is purposefully selected as Nabila Mounib is the first phenomenon of its kind in the history of the country. Feminist critical discourse analysis will be used to make sense of the three linguistic features selected mainly: Interruption, hedges, tag questions, and I vs We. Since feminist CDA like CDA is open to and celebrates interdisciplinary research (M.Lazar, 2005), I have borrowed Interruption

from conversation analysis, especially the work of Zimmerman and West and Deborah Tannen to investigate the powerfulness/powerlessness of this leader. What Janet Holmes calls “pragmatic particles” (Holmes, 1990) is concerned with linguistic features identified by Robin Lackoff in her early work in *Language and Women’s place*. The focus here will be on hedges and tag questions only as some of the identified linguistic strategies or, more precisely, facilitative devices associated with women (Holmes, 2006). This is chosen to make sense of this leader's femininity/masculinity dichotomy. Last but not least, the I vs We pronouns are adapted from Norman Fairclough’s model to reveal the leadership style of this leader in terms of *power with* and *power over*.

Data is selectively collected from one video on YouTube where the leader has a full interview with two men. The video lasts one hour and 31 minutes, and 38 seconds. The author transcribes the data in a verbatim manner to provide a complete context for the data analysis. Isabela Fairclough and Norman Fairclough support the idea of contextualization when they put forward that discourse is related to the “social use of language in social contexts” (Fairclough, 2012). In addition, Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly emphasize on the importance of context in analyzing any political phenomena (Tilly, 2006).

Michelle L. Mazar emphasizes that there is a turn towards language and discourse in social scientific research as a site of struggle (M.Lazar, 2005). She further highlights the mission of analysts using feminist critical discourse analysis is “critiquing discourses which sustain patriarchal social order: that is relations of power that systematically privilege men as a social group and disadvantage, exclude and disempower women as a social group” (M.Lazar, 2005, p. 5). Deborah Tannen adds that dominance and subordination (thus powerfulness/powerlessness) are constructed in interactional conversations (Tannen D., 1994). Feminism conceptualizes gender as an ideological (Marxist sense) structure that categorizes people into two categories: men and women, who are attributed social traits, respectively (M.Lazar, 2005). This framework approaches gender ideology from Gramsci’s theory of hegemony in the sense that this ideology is seen by most as natural and acceptable (M.Lazar, 2005). The effects of this hegemony and power can be seen mostly in texts and everyday life (M.Lazar, 2005) and this is why textual data is one of the main tools of analysis for most CDA.

In sum, the aim of feminist CDA “is on how gender ideology and gendered relations of power are (re)produced, negotiated and contested in representations of social practices, in social relationships between people, and in people’s social and personal identities in texts and talk” (M.Lazar, 2005, p. 11). Underlying this framework there is the principle of ‘gender relationality’ which necessitates a focus on two types of relationships (M.Lazar, 2005). But for the purpose of this study is focused only on “the discursive *co-constructions* of ways of doing and being a woman and a man in particular communities of practice” (M.Lazar, 2005, p. 12). (see Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet on the concept of Communities of Practice).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1.Interruption

The idea that women are less powerful in speech than men is very popular in feminist scholarship. Many research proved that women use a powerless speech demonstrated by using hedges, tag questions, yielding to interruptions, etc. Christopher Karpowitz and Tali Mendelberg also conclude in their book *The Silent Sex* that women are “often disadvantaged in speech participation, while men are never disadvantaged.” (Mendelberg, 2014, p. 155). However, there is many recent research that proves the complete opposite.

Zimmerman and West distinguish between overlaps and interruptions by arguing that overlaps happen when a speaker starts to speak “at or very close to a possible transition place” (West, 1973, p. 114) of the other speaker. At the same time, interruption can be defined as “violations of the turn-taking system rules” indicated by the existence or hint of a unit type

which is a signal that anticipates when the transition will take place (West, 1973). Zimmerman and West's work remain, up to this date, influential in the studies of gender and language as it reports that in cross-sex conversation, men interrupt women by 96%, thus denying them equal status in interactions (West, 1973). Donna Jo Napoli found similar results and argues that men interrupt women more than vice versa, and this is due to power differences rather than sex differences (Napoli, 2003). Interruption is a powerful mechanism that belittles the importance of what women say, thus giving a higher value to the speech of men.

On the other hand, another influential researcher Deborah Tannen argues that linguistic strategies, including interruption, could have different and even opposing effects, that is, power or solidarity (Tannen D. , 1994). She states that evidence of domination in a conversation can also suggest an attempt to build rapport and solidarity (Tannen D. , 1994). While she does not deny the fact that such linguistic features can reveal dominance and powerlessness, she rather advocates that such features can have multiple meanings depending on the context, conversational style of speakers and the interaction strategies of each participant (Tannen D. , 1994). For her interruption is almost the same as overlap depending on the speakers themselves in the sense that only if a speaker gives in to overlaps there is domination (Tannen D. , 1994). In other words, interruption occurs only if one speaker starts speaking and the other stops. If the other speaker does not stop then interruption did not happen (Tannen D. , 1994). She distinguishes between "high involvement" style in which overlaps and interruptions do not disturb the flow of the conversation rather they show involvement; and "high considerateness" style in which overlaps cause disruptions and interruptions (Tannen D. , 1994). In short, she advocates for the idea that at least in casual conversations among friends, most instances of overlaps have cooperative intent though the effect might be obstructive (Tannen D. , 1994). Thus, what is considered an overlap in Zimmerman and West's understanding can be interpreted as an interruption in Tannen's theory.

Indeed measuring interruption is still very controversial. West and Zimmerman's model proposes that interruptions as "incursions that are initiated more than two syllables away from the initial or terminal boundary of a unit-type." (as cited in Dina, G.Okamoto, 2002, p.40). Though this model is influential it remains mechanical and fails to consider the sociocultural factors that influence the conversation. Stephan Murray also criticizes this model as merely "counting the number of syllables where simultaneous speech occurs in conversation cannot determine what is or is not an interruption" (as cited in Dina, G.Okamoto, 2002). He adds that contextual cues are essential in interpreting interruptions (ibid). He bases his model on Basso's (1974) which puts "completion right" as central in the analysis of an interruption. This completion right can be influenced by how l. How often the speaker spoke, the points she/he made, "whether the speaker or others have special claims to be heard (such as defending against attack, answering questions posed to him or her, or having special expertise on the topic), and subsequent repairs to previous violations." (ibid). This paper adopts Murray's model when it comes to interruption. At the sam. At the same time, an overlap is seen from West and Zimmerman's point of view as those moments where there is a simultaneous talk characterized by a minimal response like *yeah* and *Hmm* or when the two speakers agree on or say the same thing simultaneously. An overlap is different from an interruption because the former has a supportive or facilitative sense (as cited in Dina, G. Okamoto, 2002).

Bearing in mind all these aspects when it comes to investigating interruption, the context under which this research is taking place is not that of conversation analysis but rather a political interview. The latter is a genre in political discourse where there is a power struggle over who is taking the floor since the interviewer needs to control the time and the direction of the interview, and the interviewee needs to sell her/his agenda to the audience. This view is supported by (Nurseitova *et al.*2013). Therefore, the analysis will take into consideration many factors in determining the interruption based on Murray's model as well as others, including

the intention of the interviewers, which is determined by the way they stop the interviewee to change the topic, to ask a question, to give the floor to another speaker or to challenge her.

My data shows that Nabila Mounib was interrupted more by 64% (see Figure 1) while she did the interruption 51 times (see Figure 1) translated to 27%. This findings support West and Zimmerman's and many other researcher and also debunks Tannen's idea that interruption can have "solidarity" purposes. Overlaps happened about just 16 times translated to 9% which is not statistically significant. Interestingly, the interruptions that occurred were done by two men as the interview was conducted by two journalists. Thus, statistically speaking each men interrupted 60 times while she did the interruption 51 times. This is an almost equal number that suggests that she is also as powerful as the men who interviewed her.

	Interruptions by the interviewer(s)	Interruptions by Nabila Mounib	Overlaps
Occurrences	120	51	16

Figure 1: Occurrences of interruptions and overlaps in the discourse of Nabila Mounib

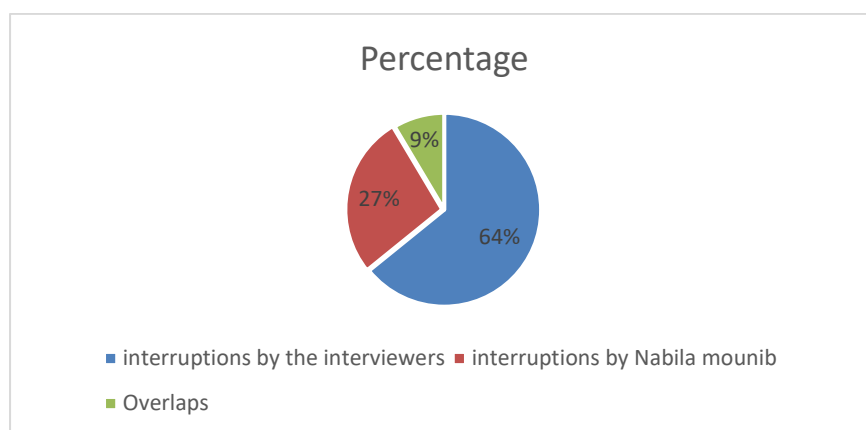


Figure 2: Percentage of interruptions and overlaps in the discourse of Nabila Mounib.

It is not surprising to find such results in a traditional and conservative society that is still resisting seeing women pervading the political fields. It is crucial to bear in mind that Mounib is the first model who is breaking the glass ceiling in a society that still associated politics with men not women. As Sadiqi notes, this has roots in the Islamic notion of *al-jamaa'ah* which means a community or a group of men that makes the fundamental grounds of ruling in the Arab-Muslim culture (Sadiqi, 2003). Although Morocco is somehow modern and respects women's right, there is still a negative attitude towards female leaders as they venture men's status quo (Sadiqi, 2003). Furthermore, the stereotype that women are subordinates while men are leaders is "deeply rooted in the Moroccan culture" (Sadiqi, 2003, p. 125). There is also the famous *hadith* or prophet's saying, "those who entrust power [mulk] to a woman will never know prosperity". Knowing the history and culture of this country demystifies the power of religion in people's minds.

Interestingly however and if we go back to Tannen's definition of interruption, that is interruption does not happen unless the first speaker stops, I noticed in my data that Mounib resisted the interruptions majority of the time by 80%. This is looked at by counting three words and above before an interruption occurred.

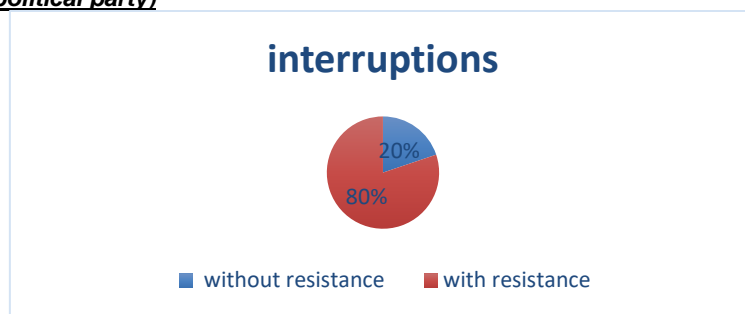


Figure 3: interruptions without resistance vs interruptions with resistance

Thus, in 80% of interruptions that happened she did not yield in immediately instead she carried on (minimum 3 words) talking and resisting giving in to the interruption. What this suggests is that being interrupted does not indeed always correspond to powerlessness. The way speakers give in to interruption is also an overlooked factor that should be analyzed. As Foucault remarked: ‘Where there is power, there is resistance’ (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). Resistance is weapons of the weak to quote James C. Scott, and it’s high time to consider it when analyzing interruptions in future research.

4.2.Hedges and tag questions

Tag questions and hedges are probably the most researched linguistic features in the gender and language scholarship. This is thanks to Lakoff’s famous book *Language and Women’s Place*, which hypothesized that certain speech patterns like tag questions and hedges mark the powerlessness of women’s language. Tag questions come between direct questions and statements to declare a statement but that statement lacks confidence and this is more a characteristic of women’s language according Lackoff (Lackoff, 2004). While hedges like ‘y’know’, ‘kinda’, ‘well’ and so on indicate that the speaker “is uncertain about what he (or she) is saying” and that this is women’s language to assert themselves as feminine (Lackoff, 2004, p. 213).

Although several studies support Lackoff’s theory, many others show inconclusive and even contradictory results (H.Foster, 1997). John A.Dixon and Don H.Foster criticize Lackoff’s interpretations of these linguistic features and suggest that these features can have diverse meanings in different sociolinguistic contexts (H.Foster, 1997). In this regard, Janet Holmes investigates the usage of these hedges and concludes that “women’s language” is rather “sensitive and caring rather than deficient” (as cited in H.Foster,1997, p.91).

John A.Dixon and Don H.Foster adopted Holmes’ model and distinguished between confident and unconfident forms of the hedge *you know* (H.Foster, 1997). One of the functions of this hedge is “implying shared knowledge” and expressing “certainty in the accuracy of a given statement” (H.Foster, 1997, pp. 95-96).

My data supports their findings in the sense that all the seven hedges *you know* that occurred in the text (line 37/ 156/180/195/314/347/378) implied both “shared knowledge” and certainty or confidence in the leader’s statements. Extract 1 and 2 are an examples of how you know was used to share the common knowledge that the left was strong in the recent past (Extract 1), and the ‘certainty’ that her party was always fighting within the institutions and in the streets (Extract 2).

Extract 1:

36-المحاور: {لانكم مستطعتوش} وهذا واقع تجدرو فالمجتمع توصلو الخطاب {ديالكم للناس}
 37-ن.م: {لا سمحلي} لا بالأمس القريب {وانتم تتعرفو لا}

38-المحاور: {علماء الآخرين يقتعون}
 39-ن.م: اليسار كان متجذرا فالمجتمع وتياخذ مواقف شجاعة {قتليك هذا اليسار}

36- Interviewer: {because you couldn't} and this a fact spread your roots in society and communicate your discourse {to the people}

37- Nabila Mounib: {no excuse me} no the near yesterday {and you know}

38: Interviewer: { knowing that others convince}

39:Mounib: the left was deeply rooted in society and takes bold stances {I told you this left}

Extract 2:

101-ن.م: {لا مكابنش ارتباك الأخ يوسف انا غادي نفسر ليك لا لا ماكاين لا تيه ولا والو} هادشي محاولة مغالطة الناس احنا دائما كنا نشارك فالانتخابات لأنه اختارنا خط النضال الديمقراطي وشاركنا فأحلك الحقب لي مر منها المغرب وكان عندنا واحد الوقت برلمان ملي كان كلشي ساكت مخلوع ماكانش ايت يدر واستطاع ان يطرح سؤال تزممارت داخل قبة البرلمان ملي كان كلشي ساكت مخلوع ماكانش تيقدر يتحرك وكنا ننشركو فالجماعات وبالمناسبة راه احنا ننسيرو واحد العدد ديال الجماعات احسن تسيير جات المحطة الاستثنائية ديال 2011 مع الحراك الشعبي لي عرفاتو المنطقة المغاربية والعربية احنا كنا فالشارع انتما نتعرفو النضال الديمقراطي تيقول خصك تناضل فالشارع ومن داخل المؤسسات واحنا دائما كنا داخل المؤسسات فالشارع متواجدون أينما وجدت قضية مشروعة {نتلقنا فالشارع}

101- N.M: {there is no confusion brother Youssef I will explain to you no no there is no bewilderment and nothing} this is an attempt to deceive people we always participated in the elections because we chose the path of democratic fight and we participated in the darkest times that Morocco has been through and we had at that time one parliamentarian who is the comrade Mojahid Bensaid Ait Idar and he could raise the question of *Tazmamart* when everybody was silent and scared they couldn't move and we participated in the *Jamaaat* and by the way we run a number of *Jamaat* the best way the exceptional event of 2011 with the Populaire movement that was known in the Maghreb and Arab region we were in the streets you know the democratic struggle says that you need to fight in the streets and from within the institutions and we were always inside the institutions and in the streets always there whenever there is a legitimate cause {you find us in the streets}

The same meaning can be found in line 180/ 195/314/ 347/ 378. Additionally, this is confirmed by the fact in almost none of these examples there was a pause or a stammer which might indicate imprecision (H.Foster, 1997), except in Extract 1 where she was interrupted. Similar to the findings of John A.Dixon and Don H.Foster (H.Foster, 1997), this study does not support the “dominance” theory that advocates for the idea that powerfulness and powerlessness reflect gender differences. This is further supported by the fact that the hedge ‘sort of’ and tag questions are nonexistent in the data. The data does not support the ‘difference’ theory either in the sense that the findings do not suggest that this leader uses a feminine style and therefore does not conform to the idea of ‘women’s language’. Judith Baxter elaborates and explains that “ a key principle of difference theory is that the language of males and females, as signified by their speech style is different but equal: it is geared towards achieving different but equally important ends.” (Baxter, 2010, p. 58).

4.3.The I vs the We

I incorporated this linguistic feature to reveal the leadership style of this leader in terms of ‘power with’ and ‘power over’. Fairclough rather used the I vs the you, but here I adapted it

and used instead the ‘we’ which can suggest collectiveness or its absence in her discourse. I focused on clear articulations of the ‘I’ *أنا* in both classical Arabic and Moroccan *Darijaa*, and also a clear articulations of the ‘we’ in both classical Arabic ‘نحن’ and *Darijaa* ‘أحنا’. This precision is deliberately taken because in many Arabic verbs the subject we is imbedded when the verb is conjugated. For example the equivalent of ‘I want’ is ‘أريد’ in classical Arabic and ‘بغيت’ in *Darijaa*, thus the subject pronoun is often part of the verb itself.

In my analysis, I distinguished between exclusive ‘we’ when Mounib talks about her party or the left in general. Then the inclusive ‘we’ refers to Morocco in general. I also categorized an ambiguous ‘we’ where it is unclear who is referred to.

My data shows that the exclusive ‘we’ predominates by an occurrence 115 times in the text. This suggests that she uses a ‘power-with’ and is preoccupied with representing her party and political orientation. Helen E. Fisher contends that in modern history, leadership attempts to deviate from the orthodox authoritarian model (Fisher, 2005). Leadership in its old sense presents an issue to democracy in that the old definition requires a hierarchy, and democracy has an egalitarian ethos (Rhodes, 2014). Thus, using a collective discourse does not indicate a lack of power, as one might assume. Rather it is a prerequisite in modern leadership to ensure the practice of egalitarian democracy.

Furthermore, Kay E. Payne explains how “power with” is essential in democracy in the sense that a large number of people should hold this power balance power differences among authorities and the citizens to give leaders “power with” the group and not “power over” the group (Payne, 2001). Thus, modern leadership now sees traits traditionally attributed to ‘femininity’, such as collaboration, empathy and teamwork as prerequisites in a democratic leadership. Note that these same traits were the reason why women were excluded from the domain under the pretense that these traits weaken the ‘individualistic’ leadership. Valerie Stead and Carole Elliot add that “Paying attention to women’s narrations of their experience reveals how their developing aspirations emerge from their social and community context, suggesting leadership to be a process that is dynamic and emerging from collective rather than individual concern” (Elliott, 2009, p. 120).

	The ‘I’	The exclusive ‘we’	The inclusive ‘we’	The ambiguous ‘we’
Occurrences	65	115	52	19

Figure 4: occurrences of the ‘I’ and the ‘we’.

The occurrence of the ‘I’ represents more than a half of the exclusive ‘we’ by an occurrence of 65 times, while the inclusive ‘we’ occurred less than a half of the occurrence of the exclusive ‘we’. What this might suggest is that this leader is more preoccupied with representing her party first (115 times), then her herself (65 times), and lastly the Moroccan people. The orientation of her party is dominant at the expense of her individuality and gender identity. Like most politicians, she advocates for and promotes the values and principles of what her party stands for. Research suggests that “what influences speech style most if not the gender of the speaker so much as the culture of the institution: women entering male-dominated

occupations and institutions most often adopt the style of speaking which is already established as the institutional norm” (Shaw, 2016, p. 11). Therefore, she is here doing the politics of her party and affiliation, not her gender and neither the Moroccan people.

5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, the questions asked in this research article do have clear cut answers. The fact that Mounib was interrupted more often indicates that she lacks power. But this is debunked by the other fact that she resisted the interruptions by 80%, as well as the fact that ‘confident’ hedges are predominant, in addition to the absence of tag questions. This suggests that her style to a more or less extent is a ‘masculine’ style. On the other hand, the predominance of the inclusive ‘we’ suggests that she uses ‘power with’ which is a feminine characteristic *par excellence*. Considering all the above mentioned indicators we might conclude that she combines both the feminine as well as the masculine style in her leadership. As David Gergen stated, successful leaders should combine feminine as well as masculine qualities (Hollihan, 2005). Women more than men face this marking just because they are women. Before women entered politics, there was no research that tried to understand or analyze the leadership styles of these men politicians in these lights. Only when women invaded the masculine field, questions started raising questions about the effectiveness of either style. Holmes puts forward that female leaders have a very narrow scope of socially acceptable behavior which combines both the feminine and the masculine styles (Holmes, 2006). The famous saying “damned if they do, damned if they don’t” best illustrates this dilemma.

One of the major limitation of this research is the fact that the findings cannot be generalized because what applies to this leader does not necessarily hold true for another. In other words, women are different across cultures, ethnicities, social class, education and so on. By definition Nabila Mounib holds a powerful political leadership position which makes it problematic to both assume that she lacks or has power. Judith Baxter also contends that the category ‘women’ is highly problematic in a way that it is risky to generalize what ‘women’ are (Baxter, 2010). In addition, assuming that there is a feminine leadership style and a masculine one perpetuates gender stereotypes. Baxter again highlights this dilemma by arguing that “polarising male and female speech styles can lead to stereotyping which is limiting for both women and men” (Baxter, 2010, p. 52).

Another limitation is the issue of how to measure interruptions. Both the models discussed above pose several problems when used in research. Whatever model is chosen, the findings would be still not one hundred percent accurate. Moreover, interruption as a linguistic feature proved to be also a contested idea in the sense that different scholars interpret it differently. Another factor that seems to be overlooked so far is resistance. When we measure interruption, we unquestionably attribute it to power mechanisms and we neglect resistance as a factor that can reverse how this interruption is interpreted. Okamoto and Smith-Lovin support this idea by putting forward that “the perceptions of interruptions is highly contextual and depends on subtle cultural features that are not yet clearly understood” (Dina G. Okamoto, 2002, p. 52). Further research is needed to broaden the scope in analyzing and understanding interruption in new contexts such as political discourse.

Last but not least, the dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity is always present in research but highly acknowledged in discourse analysis. Interpretation in social sciences is and will always be subjective to an extent in a sense that the researchers use his/her background knowledge to make sense of the data. Michal Meyer admits that objectivity is hard to attain in discourse analysis (Meyer, 2001). Teun A. van Dijk also shares the same thought arguing that critical discourse analysis is biased and it’s even “proud of it” (Dijk, 2001).

This paper aimed at opening the discussion and using a case study to make sense of what is a 'feminine' and a 'masculine' leadership style. It is still obscure how to define and measure each one, but most importantly it is still ambiguous how to draw the line between the two styles specially when it comes to understanding women's leadership.

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