



WHAT DO MEMES TELL US ABOUT THE IMAGE OF ARAB MODERN WOMEN: A CYBER PRAGMATICS ANALYSIS OF MEMES IN A PROMINENT ARABIC INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT

Resty Syahrotul Aini^{[1]*}, Delami^[2], Awliya Rahmi^[3], Arif Rahmatul Aji^[4], Nurul Amin bin Mustafa^[5]

^[1] ^[2] ^[3] Imam Bonjol State Islamic University, Padang, Indonesia

^[1] Arabic Language and Literature Researchers Association “Lisaniya Adabiya”,
Padang, Indonesia

^[4] Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt

^[5] Selangor Islamic University, Selangor, Malaysia

HISTORY ABSTRACT

Received
23/2/2025

Revised
24/4/2025

Accepted
24/4/2025

Published
24/4/2025

KEYWORDS

Meme,
Arab modern
women,
Cyber
pragmatics,
Presupposition,
Instagram

Diverse studies over the portrayal of women in memes have led to narratives and opposition against women, typically expressed by both feminists and anti-feminists. Despite numerous prior studies, the elaboration of Arabic memes remains significantly restricted. This study seeks to elucidate the image of contemporary Arab women as shown in memes. A qualitative descriptive study utilised memes from the prominent Arabic Instagram account @mzajeat.lady as the data source. Presupposition category analysis employing a cyberpragmatics approach was used to examine the representations of women within the pragmatic meanings of each meme. According to the presupposition types, contemporary Arab women are more physically and intellectually empowered, allowing them to break free from masculinity. Arab women may function without men due to psychological stability. Self-actualisation allows women to achieve their goals and pursue different activities. They are confident and can choose their marriages. The findings indicate a substantial transformation in the perception of contemporary Arab women. Meme, as conveyed on social media, represents liberation from the constraints of patriarchal culture that is often oppressive and confining. The findings significantly contribute to altering the preconceptions and stigmas historically associated with them. Furthermore, these findings advance the discourse of feminism on social media by introducing new and previously unexamined data on Arab memes.

Citation in APA Style: Aini, R.S., Delami, Rahmi, A., Aji, A.R. bin Mustafa, N.A. (2025). What do memes tell us about the image of Arab modern Women: A cyberpragmatics analysis of memes in a prominent Arabic Instagram account. *Diwan: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra Arab*, 17(1). 67-84. <https://doi.org/10.15548/diwan.v17i1.1851>

* Corresponding author. Email: restysyahrotulaini@lisaniyaadabiya.id

Available online at: <https://rjfahuinib.org/index.php/diwan>

Copyright © 2025 by the Authors. This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).



INTRODUCTION

The issue of women in memes as a genre of digital humour has become an object of attention for many researchers in recent years (Azizi et al., 2019). Memes as a form of entertainment, social criticism, and certain cultural expressions have become common communication models amidst the massive development of technology and social media worldwide (Petrova, 2021; Valensise et al., 2022). As a multimodal phenomenon that combines lingual and visual dimensions, social issues such as gender, race, and class are processed to build discourse among users on various platforms (Kanai, 2016; Locke et al., 2018). Although gender issues in memes are related to the representation of men and women (Mahfouz, 2021; Gbadegesin, 2020), the dynamics of studies in recent years have shown a high interest in the representation of women. Based on the author's research, studies on women and memes in the last ten years can be classified into the dimensions of Islamic discourse, violence and sexual harassment, and the confrontation of feminist movements vis-à-vis anti-feminists.

In the context of Islamic discourse, several studies on the image of women in memes analyse the visualisation of women in memes of the Qur'an and hadith (Al-Jauhari et al., 2023; Nadia, 2022; Mukaromah, 2020). Several verses of the Qur'an that are used as meme content; Al-Ahzab [33]:33, Al-Nisa' [4]:76, and Yusuf [12]:28, construct the meaning of pious women who are associated with being in a beautiful, comfortable, and luxurious home (Al-Jauhari et al., 2023; Nadia, 2022). Several virtual ethnographic and netnographic studies of hadith memes show a contrasting narrative between ideologies supporting the discourse of women's restrictions and gender equality in public spaces (Mukaromah, 2020; Miski, 2021). As a form of dominant religious discourse on social media, Hadith memes are exploited to represent women that are wrong and irrelevant to the contemporary context (Miski, 2021). Women's bodies are constructed as religious sexual objects to convey Islamic teachings and defend conservative, radical, and anarchic Islamic ideologies (Sunaryanto & Rizal, 2023, 2024). Most of the Qur'an and hadith memes that are oriented towards the domination of women are considered distorted and violate the essence of the hadith itself (Miski, 2021). One of the impacts of this subjective representation is the emergence of resistance from Islamic women in constructing memes that are more representative and pro-women (Ali, 2020; Mukaromah, 2020).

In the context of patriarchal domination and hegemony, women's content in memes often represents sexual violence that positions women as sexual objects and male dominance. Several researchers have criticised technological facilitation as a medium for cybersexism that spreads misogynistic narratives and harassment in memes (Fersini et al., 2019; Hidayat & Immerry, 2020). The humour genre in technological features such as memes has unknowingly accommodated the construction of hegemonic gender identity, where masculinity is infiltrated through humour wrapped in irony and jokes, so that it is easily accepted by consumers (Andreasen, 2021; Drakett et al., 2018). At its most dangerous point, memes as a humorous discursive medium trivialize sexual violence, where content of women being raped is spread as a joke by internet users (Andreasen, 2021). This situation increasingly normalizes the representation of women as sexual objects in digital spaces. As a reflection of symbolic violence constructed by stereotypes, gender bias, and mental structures, women's bodies, which are synonymous with beauty, are increasingly being commodified through memes (Hidayat & Immerry, 2020). Unwittingly, women's bodies, which are used as the main target of

consumption, lead meme consumers to the dangers of ideological, even religious, gender exploitation (Octavita & Zaimar, 2018; Sunaryanto & Rizal, 2023, 2024).

Patriarchal hegemony in memes displays an ironic reality, where the media that is expected to improve women's quality and role in public spaces instead emphasizes women's position as objects of male domination (Astuti, 2018; Hidayat & Immerry, 2020). Memes as a form of humorous discourse contribute greatly to constructing the social hierarchy of women as the second sex class and the inferior "Others" through various radical sexist rhetoric (Chang, 2022). A large-scale analysis of memes distributed in English, German, Spanish, and Mandarin found a hegemonic pattern that constructs the social stratification of men as the dominant ethnic group and women as marginalized minorities (Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2018). Women who are framed in negative discourse on memes experience various stigmatisations towards their bodies, where the physiological experiences they experience become the content of jokes in everyday life (Drakett et al., 2018; Tomlinson, 2021). This reality further emphasises that the construction of gender in memes has become online humour that maintains the status quo with the strong potential to ignore and exclude women (Drakett et al., 2018; Harlow et al., 2020).

The popularity of memes as digital humour content ultimately forms a space for confrontation between feminist ideas and anti-feminism. From an anti-feminist perspective, feminist memes are nothing more than expressions of a totalitarian Neo-Marxist ideology that spreads hatred of men and tends to be misandrist (Ringrose & Lawrence, 2018; Svatoňová, 2020). Meanwhile, from a feminist perspective, harsh criticism has been spread against memes containing misogynistic narratives that are detrimental to women (Kumari, 2021). The spread of the hashtags #distractinglysexy and #ViajoSola as transnational mobilization through memes is one form of digital activism that has succeeded in challenging patriarchal narratives (Clark, 2016; Brantner et al., 2020; Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán, 2016). In the wave of the feminist movement, memes are modified and filled with logical women's discourse and contribute to the public space (Brantner et al., 2020; Mukaromah, 2020). The feminist movement, through memes that position patriarchy as the main enemy, has succeeded in advocating and covering up intersectional injustices that discriminate against women's lives (Hill & Allen, 2021; Octavita & Zaimar, 2018). As a long-term movement, several reviewers have proposed digital feminism as one of the curricula that must be taught in schools (Guillard, 2016; Retallack et al., 2016; Kim & Ringrose, 2018).

Although the above literature review has presented studies at the global level, the author notes that studies on women's issues in Arabic memes are still very limited. One study in the Arabic data locus was conducted by Azizi et al. (2019), who analyzed it from an implicature perspective. The lack of studies on the phenomenon of Arabic memes is a substantial gap that needs to be answered through research. This is because the social status of women in Arab culture is distinctive compared to other cultures. Women in Arab culture have long been depicted as living in restraint and restrictions in public spaces (Melki & Mallat, 2016; Van Geel, 2016). This stereotype is challenging for the author to test through data from memes produced and distributed on Arabic social media. Moreover, in almost the last decade, there has been an ideological shift that has impacted the social role of Arab women after Saudi Arabian modernism as set by Muhammad bin Salman through Saudi Vision 2030 (Ainurrofiq & Khasanah, 2024; Lala, 2024; Ali & Gawarir, 2022). This current reality makes this study even more important in observing the representation of women in the construction of modern Arabia as reflected through memes.

Based on the arguments above, this study provides new findings on the portrait of modern Arab women in memes that previous studies have not accommodated. In addition, the contribution of this study is also emphasized in presenting the image of contemporary Arab women, to observe the impact of cultural shifts when compared to previous portraits of traditional women. To observe the image of modern Arab women, the presupposition category framework is used through a cyber-pragmatic approach. By the characteristics of memes as humour, pragmatic analysis is considered suitable for investigating the image of women, most of which are not conveyed directly. Therefore, presupposition, as one of the features of pragmatic analysis, will reveal the hidden and implied pragmatic meanings in memes. By referring to this analysis, this study aims to map the types of presuppositions in memes to give deeper meaning to the image of modern Arab women depicted in the meme.

METHOD

This descriptive qualitative research utilizes data in linguistic features or speech and image contexts of memes that describe social representations of modern women. The data source is obtained from the Instagram account @mzajeat.lady, which is accessed from https://instagram.com/mzajeat.lady?utm_medium=copy_link, and includes as many as 61 memes from December 2020 to March 2021. Social phenomena in the lives of modern women are widely represented in cyberspace, one of which is memes. These representations show a certain image for women because their assumptions about the speech and context of the photos in memes shape the public's views. Therefore, George Yule's presuppositional perspective reveals the beliefs that influence the construction of a certain image for women.

The data in this study were collected using the free listening method through 5 stages. First, the data search stage on the @mzajeat.lady Instagram account. Second, the data was listened to select Arabic memes representing women from December 2020 to March 2021. Third, the data was taken using the screen capture method. Fourth, the general data was classified based on presupposition types written by Yule (1996) and saved in Portable Document Format. Fifth, the data was tabulated by separating the text of the speech from the context of the image and coded as an identity per data point. After these stages, the data were analyzed using George Yule's perspective presupposition types. In this case, presupposition as an assumption or shared knowledge behind the speech contains six types: existential, factual, lexical, structural, non-factive, and counter-factual presuppositions, each containing keywords. After that, the analysis is carried out by identifying the representation of modern women in each type by connecting the text of the speech, the context of the image, and harmonising it with the commensurate method to connect it with outside the text to expose the context and test the validity of the presuppositions presented.

RESULT

The results show six presupposition types as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Types of Presupposition in the Data Source

No	Types of Presupposition	Frequency	Percentage
1	Lexical Presupposition	20	32%
2	Existential presupposition	17	27%
3	Factive Presupposition	11	17%

4	Structural Presupposition	7	11%
5	Non-factive presupposition	7	11%
6	Counter-factual Presupposition	1	2%

Lexical Presupposition

The lexical presupposition indicates the existence of a conventional narrative that requires the interpretation of other meanings by implication. Figures 1 and 1 show the existence of lexical presuppositions.



Figure 1. Lexical Presupposition
 Source: Data D.D/22.PL

Figure 2. Lexical Presupposition
 Source: Data D.D/5.PL

Excerpt in
 Figure 1

"قد لا ينام البعض بسبب كلمة قالها أحدهم
 =أنا بالليل بعد ما أحدهم قالي 500 كلمة.

"Some people do not fall asleep because of a word someone said."

=I fell asleep at night after someone said 500 words to me.

Excerpt in
 Figure 2

لا تنتظري شيئاً من أحد... كوني قوية وشجعي نفسك للوصول لأحلامك وبعدها
 أشكري الله فقط على ماوصلتني إليه

Do not expect anything from anyone... Be strong, encourage yourself to reach your dreams, and thank God for your achievements.

Figure 1 shows a meme participant context of a cartoon figure named Jerry sleeping at night. This character can sleep while being distracted by others' speech. Contrast this with the sentence that some people don't sleep, only a word. In a contrastive statement, the explanation of those who sleep while hearing numerous people's speech is implied. After all, one word can keep some awake. Women's voices are listened to more online today. Women are more emotional and distracted by others' remarks, according to the stereotype. In contrast, this meme shows women who aren't easily misled by modern narratives. This applies to Arab women who visit the West without fear of hostile tales and view jokes negatively when shopping. Meanwhile, the

context of the meme in Figure 2 depicts a woman's hand driving a car, meaning the narrative underneath is addressed to women. The lexical presupposition in this meme is shown by the presence of prohibition and imperative sentences through the words *تنظري* 'hope' and *كوني قوية* 'be strong' as lingual markers. Women shouldn't expect anything from anyone, which implies that they used to depend on others, especially in the image, on driving. Saudi Arabia is the only country that does not allow women to drive and relies on men. The prohibition to no longer rely empowers women. Since 2017, Saudi Arabia has permitted women to drive. The next sentence says women have accomplished their ambitions since they can work without male drivers.

Existential Presupposition

Existential presupposition is found through noun phrases, so someone assumes the existence of women through the depiction. As seen in Figures 3 and 4 below.



Figure 3. Existential Presupposition
Source: Data D.D/3.PE



Figure 4. Existential Presupposition
Source: Data D.D/1.PE

Excerpt in Figure 3 هذا النوع من البذلات الرسمية، قادر على إظهارك بمظهر سيدة الأعمال المليونيرة الجذابة.

This type of tuxedo can make you look like an attractive millionaire businesswoman.

Excerpt in Figure 4 مستعدة تهورين وتقصيه
You are ready to go overboard and cut him off..

The context in Figure 3 shows a woman wearing a tuxedo. The words *البذلات الرسمية* 'tuxedo' and *سيدة الأعمال المليونيرة* 'businesswoman' in the meme indicate a presupposition of women's existence. There is a depiction of objects in the form of formal clothing that women use for official occasions. Tuxedos are associated with refinement and formality throughout, including Arabia. Tuxedos symbolize affluence or professionalism. This meme assumes that the lady is empowered by uttering the sign of empowerment (tuxedo/businessman). Modern women are scared of their dresses. Thus, tuxedos were

invented as unisex apparel to empower them physically and intellectually. In addition to showing noun entities through clothing, existential presuppositions are demonstrated through women's hair as seen in Figure 4. The context of the phrase *مستعدة تهورين وتقصيه* 'you are ready to go overboard and cut him off' in the meme with a picture of a woman with short hair promotes that cutting hair is a reckless and daring activity for women. The marker through the possessive phrase *تهورين وتقصيه* 'to go overboard and cut him off' shows the existential presumption that the activity of cutting hair determines the existence of women's mentality. According to the possessive expression, a woman is not brave if she does not trim her hair. Thus, this meme suggests that society controls women's lives. Many women think cutting their hair is a sacrifice since they can modernise and lose their naturalness. Short-haired ladies also meet the expanding market and can be sold.

Factive Presupposition

Factive presupposition arises from verbs that imply reality or facts, namely "knowing" and "spending". Verbs that recognize these facts are the main markers of active presupposition. The findings of the factive presuppositions can be seen in Figures 5 and 6.



Figure 5. Factive Presupposition
 Source: Data D.D/29.PF



Figure 6. Factive Presupposition
 Source: Data D.F/46.PF

Excerpt in Figure 5
 عندما اكتشفت الأميرة ديانا أنها تعرضت للخيانة، خرجت في زي مذهل لتبدو جميلة، دون أن تسمح لرجل أن يكسر قلبها.
When Princess Diana discovered she had been betrayed, she wore a stunning outfit to look beautiful, without letting a man break her heart.

Excerpt in Figure 6
 أنا أصرف كل أموالي على الطعام والملابس، ولا أزال جائعة ولا أجد ما ارتديه!
I spend all my money on food and clothes, and I am still hungry and cannot find anything to wear!

The speech context in Figure 5 depicts Princess Diana wearing an elegant black dress called *The Revenge Dress*. She wore this dress as a revenge right when her husband, Prince Charles, announced his relationship with his new lover in 1994. The data contains a factive presupposition because Princess Diana's sentiment to look better than her husband's lover emphasises that Prince Charles has betrayed her. This is highlighted by the active verb marker اكتشفت 'knowing', which indicates that the act of betrayal is factual. The meme's context depicts Prince Charles' treachery and Princess Diana's empowerment as an iconic modern woman. By appearance, she survives mental intimidation from treachery. They portrayed Princess Diana as a feminist who could defy masculine psychological coercion. Furthermore, the context of the meme in Figure 6 depicts a woman crying in front of her friend because she feels that she has no clothes or food, even though she has spent her money on these needs. In speech, the factive presupposition is marked by the verb أصرّف 'spend'. With the activity of women spending, the active presupposition is that women have money to fulfil their needs. Thus, this meme depicts modern women as autonomous and self-sufficient. Dissatisfaction with basic needs like food and clothing, ولا ازال جائعة ولا أجد ما ارتديه, acknowledges her empowerment. Her existence as a working lady can be reflected in her new clothes and other necessities. Therefore, she keeps updating them.

Structural Presupposition

Structural presupposition is already present in the utterance, so it is clear and can be understood easily because of the particular sentence structure. This type can be identified in the following Figures 7 and 8.



Figure 7. Structural Presupposition
 Source: Data D.F/55.PS



Figure 8. Structural Presupposition
 Source: Data D.M/61.PS

Excerpt in
 Figure 7

هل نستطيع أن نقول أن ابنة نادين نجيم نسخة عن أمها؟
 Can we say that Nadine Njeim's daughter is a clone of her mother?

Excerpt in

بتخلصي المسلسل بالسرعه دي ازاي؟!

Figure 8

:أنا=

How do you end the show so quickly?
=me:

The context of a meme in Figure 7 is seen in the image of an adult woman named Nadine Njiem and a child. Nadine Njiem is a prestigious woman and was elected Miss Lebanon in 2007. The picture next to her is Nadine Njiem's biological daughter. The sentence in the meme that asks whether Nadine Njiem looks like her daughter contains a structural presupposition with the lingual marker *ابنة نادين نجيم نسجة عن أمها* 'Nadine Njeim's daughter is a clone of her mother'. The assumption is that her daughter is near Nadine Njiem. Despite Njiem's daughter's lack of experience, this meme argues that a small group (family) of women can achieve equal success. This meme shows that modern women can adapt to dynamic changes. This meme is especially popular in Arab countries because Nadine Njiem and her daughter are there. Family supports women's empowerment, making it more open. In addition to rhetorical sentences, the interrogative sentence "why" reports on a woman's activities based on structure (Figure 8). Despite doing chores, this meme shows a woman watching an Arabic serial on her phone. The istifham phrase *ازاي* 'how' indicates a structural presupposition. A woman wonders how her friend finished the series with assignments. The inquiry is rhetorical to indicate astonishment. The sentence arrangement implies that a woman can work many jobs. This image of a woman is not her multitasking abilities, as study shows no gender effect. Instead, it shows that women are culturally trustworthy and have the physical and mental strength to work in numerous professions. Socially, women can work while breastfeeding, which can be physically and psychologically taxing.

Non-Factive Presupposition

Non-factive presuppositions are assumptions that are not true. Several non-factive presuppositions were found in Figures 9 and 10. The context of the meme in Figure 9 shows a woman crying at night. When associated with the speech, the woman expects her worries to stop and wants to feel calm as usual. The non-factive presupposition is characterised by the use of the word *أريد* 'I want', which assumes that her feeling relaxed and not worried is not true. This is because the marker shows that the situation has not yet happened, and there is no real truth. This meme shows that women are also vulnerable to having a psychological condition of anxiety and worry, even overthinking, which interferes with the fulfilment of their crucial needs, such as sleep. This is reflected in the fact that women workers, homemakers, and even female students are more vulnerable to stress, even compared to men. This research shows that their gender has a greater social burden, especially in the modern era, with a larger social space.

Meanwhile, the context of a meme in Figure 10 is where the speaker's friend sets the criteria for the man who becomes her lover, but in reality, this is not by what is desired, and the image of the man is represented by a picture of a small child in Figure 10. The verb *أريد* marks the non-factive presupposition 'I want' that the woman in the meme wants to have a lover who is tall, brown-skinned, and has a bushy beard. Therefore, because she still wants it, the lover she gets is not by these criteria. In reality, modern women tend to set certain criteria for their partners. This is because they have

been given greater space to improve themselves, which causes them to be confident, and cyberspace also contributes to the existence of these criteria. Women often choose partners who do not match their criteria; the trend of setting criteria is still one of the reasons for women to show their quality standards.



Figure 9. Non-Factive Presupposition
Source: Data D.D/12.PNF



Figure 10. Non-Factive Presupposition
Source: Data D.D/24.PNF

Excerpt in Figure 9 أريد أن يتوقف كل هذا القلق، أن يعود عقلي هادئاً كما كان.
I want all this anxiety to stop; I want my mind to be as calm as before.

Excerpt in Figure 10 صديقتي كلما تحدثت عن فارس أحلامها قالت: "أريده طويل وأسمر ولحيته كثيفة"...
وها هي النتيجة
Whenever my friend talks about her dream man, she says: "I want him to be tall, dark, and have a bushy beard"...
And here is the result:

Counterfactual Presupposition

Counterfactual presuppositions are not only untrue but contrary to the truth. This presupposition on the data contains contradictory situations experienced by women in their daily lives in modern society. This can be identified in the following Figure 11. The context of the meme in Figure 11 shows a woman's intention to adjust her sleep by going to bed early, but the picture shows that she is still playing with her cellphone. In this case, the speaker clarifies her situation that she has not slept early because she is still playing with her cellphone with the utterance *I am at 4 am*. In this meme, a counterfactual presupposition is found through the lingual marker *I have to go to bed early to adjust my sleep* in opposition to the truth that he is still playing with his cell phone until 4 am, which shows he did not go to bed early. This meme shows that in a more modern situation with cellphones, women can be distracted, affecting the quality of their character in social life. On the other hand, women's freedom to use cellphones

also symbolizes freedom from patriarchal culture. This is because some countries stipulate that women are restricted from using cellphones. After all, it can distract them from domestic responsibilities.



Excerpt in
Figure 11

...أنا لازم أنام بدري عشان اضبط نومي
= أنا الساعة 4 الفجر:

*I have to go to bed early to regulate my sleep...
=I'm at 4 am:*

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings in the types of presuppositions that have been presented, the image of modern Arab women is found as individuals who have independence, physical health, and intellectual brilliance. Women's expressions in memes show the existence of a culture of life that is free from the hegemony and intimidation of restrictive masculinity and patriarchy. Psychologically, although data shows that women are a gender that experiences psychological vulnerability, most memes show women who can work and free themselves from dependence on men have a balanced psychological condition. In their various activities, women also get adequate space for actualisation, such as driving a car, going to college, and having a career in multiple fields of work, to achieve their life achievements. In the context of domestic life, modern Arab women are portrayed as self-confident in determining their life partners, so they are free from the dominance of men who make domestic roles commonplace in the household. The research findings show a significant shift in the image of modern Arab women when compared to traditional Arab women.

The dominance of lexical and existential presuppositions in data sources indicates a tendency to use them because they are considered easier to convey implied meanings concisely (Ghafoory & Miran, 2022; Renaldo, 2021; Aini et al., 2024). Lexical presuppositions rely on certain words or phrases that provoke audience understanding without lengthy explanations, making them effective for quick communication (Laurent et al., 2021). These presuppositions also enhance humour and irony, which are essential

elements of memes. Likewise, existential presuppositions assume the existence of certain objects, individuals, or concepts, which helps create relevant and culturally relevant content. Since Instagram is a rapidly growing visual platform with short texts and images, these presuppositions allow memes to convey messages effectively without stating them explicitly, making them interesting and easy to interpret. On the other hand, counterfactual presuppositions are rare due to their complexity and the need for deeper contextual understanding. This type of presupposition assumes a situation contrary to reality, requiring the audience to think critically and imagine alternative scenarios.

Light humour, irony, and relatable life situations make most memes simpler to understand. Counterfactual presuppositions may demand more explanation on platforms that value short, direct content. They can transmit philosophical or contemplative ideas, but are scarce in amusing and easily digested memes like those in the data source. The findings' presuppositions help describe current Arab women's culture, including social dynamics, gender expectations, and daily life. The study found that numerous lexical and existential presuppositions have implicit meanings that mirror Arab women's reality, such as beauty standards, household roles, and freedom of expression. One of the study's results showed that Arab women driving cars is relevant to the study ([Kristyafajar et al., 2024](#); [Zulifan, 2021](#)), which shows that women can drive cars and work outside the home. This is because Arab people have decided to lift the driver's tire for women as depicted in this study. This is a form of representation of contemporary culture that leads to changes in the modernisation of women.

On the other hand, there are still obstacles related to regulations that allow women to drive cars. Among them are studies ([Prakoso & Priyoyudanto, 2024](#); [Sholihah et al., 2023](#)) that state that Arab women are still considered taboo in driving cars. The ban on driving for women in Saudi Arabia is based on religious and cultural reasons. From a spiritual perspective, Saudi Arabia prohibits women from driving cars because it is considered to violate Islamic traditions and values ([Abdurrohman et al., 2023](#); [Prakoso & Priyoyudanto, 2024](#)). Meanwhile, from a cultural perspective, women are still often used as symbols of disobedience and sin. In addition, men in Saudi Arabia still believe that allowing women to drive will weaken traditional values such as gender segregation. Moreover, this social stigma is based on the words of a great Saudi scientist who said that women are not smart enough to drive cars ([Sholihah et al., 2023](#)). This is because they are still carried away by conventional ideology and have difficulty understanding moderate ideology.

Contemporary culture that has changed the representation of Arab women into two sides can be suspected as the influence of ideological changes since the time of Muhammad bin Salman (MBS). Thus, the narrative in the meme is a representative initiation to describe the visuals and representation of Arab women in the latest regulations. Among these policies are that women are not allowed to wear the hijab, burqa, and niqab; allowed to go to the cinema; women are allowed to drive vehicles; giving women the freedom to choose education according to their talents; and women have the right to vote and be elected in the world of politics ([Ramadhan & Shofwan, 2019](#); [Sholihah et al., 2023](#)). This policy was born because MBS believes that women are important in the country's development, and restrictions on them are no longer relevant today. However, although this policy has received support, there has been criticism from human rights groups highlighting the arrest of female activists who previously fought for these rights ([Putri et al., 2021](#)). Overall, MBS's policies reflect a significant transformation in Saudi Arabian culture, increasingly opening space for women in public

and economic life. However, there are still challenges in its implementation and social acceptance (Ramadhan & Shofwan, 2019).

Compared to several previous studies on the image of women in memes, the findings strengthen the study's results, which revealed the existence of a feminist resistance narrative through memes. In line with the study of Kumari (2021), the data found is a critique of misogynistic narratives that corner women, as experienced by Arab women before. The physical strength, psychological balance, and intellectual tendencies that characterise the research findings strengthen the results of the studies of Brantner et al. (2020), Clark et al. (2016), and Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán (2016), which revealed the digital activism of female scientists through hashtag movements on social media. Most of the research data showing women's ability to achieve and contribute to social life aligns with the findings of Brantner et al. (2020) and Mukaromah (2020). Based on these facts, the memes of women on the Instagram account @mzajeat.lady can be categorized as a form of feminist digital activism. Through this activism, modern Arab women construct new identities that contrast with the patriarchal patterns of previous times. As Ali (2020) and Mukaromah (2020) state, this movement aims to re-present women's image in the public sphere.

In line with the facts above, the findings of this study contradict several studies that conclude that memes are a means of representing male dominance over women, the appearance of women as objects of sexual violence, and the commodification of women in various social sectors. This study refutes the findings of Fersini et al. (2019) and Hidayat et al. (2020) regarding cybersexism packaged in the form of humour. Through the image of empowered women, the findings of this study refute the results of the studies of Andreasen (2021) and Drakett et al. (2018), which state that memes are instruments of gender hegemony that construct male superiority on the one hand, and female inferiority on the other. The findings of this study also contradict the results of studies that reveal the artificialization of women's bodies as a material for commodification, as stated by Hidayat & Immerry (2020). The revelation of the image of women who are independent and do not depend on men is also in contrast to the results of studies by Octavita & Zaimar (2018) and Sunaryanto & Rizal (2023, 2024), which revealed gender exploitation in memes with ideological and religious motives.

The research findings that reveal narratives of women's optimism and self-confidence raise the quality of meme publications on social media as an instrument of women's empowerment. This finding contradicts the results of studies by Astuti (2018) and Hidayat & Immerry (2020), which state that content supporting patriarchal hegemony shows a negative contribution of social media to women's empowerment. Gbadegesin (2020) states that humorous memes that empower women reflect an ideology that aims to reorient women's images through social media. In this ideology, social media functions as a platform for self-affirmation and challenges the hegemony of masculinity. Thus, returning to the big question stated in the study's title, memes as a source of data for this study have emphasized the image of modern Arab women who are inclusive and confident. Modern women who are the antithesis of traditional gender ideology are ready to contribute to broader social life.

CONCLUSION

Practically, the study that indicated lexical presupposition is the most prominent presupposition suggests that meme comedy relies significantly on inferred meanings to amuse audiences, especially women. Humour is built on inferred meaning, which

occasionally contradicts explicit meaning, as shown by account followers who employ laughing emoticons. Only one data point contains counterfactual presuppositions. Memes in the account tend to show women's lives as they are rather than address falsehoods. Thus, lexical presuppositions are more common since they better show women's distinctiveness and traits in humour. Based on data presupposition classification, Arab women's memes portray women as positive, inclusive, and autonomous. Women are physically, psychologically, and cognitively empowered to depend less on males. Arab women now have a modern image that contrasts traditional women's limitations. Although new in contributing to the Arab social media treasury, this study has limitations. Data from one Instagram account is homogeneous, which limits it. The descriptive study of linguistic and visual evidence also constrains meme meaning. Still, the survey cannot be expanded to address other questions. This limitation allows for more research on memes and modern Arab women. It's intriguing to see how Saudi Arabian modernism and Vision 2030 affect Arab women's social media images. This study will enrich the Arab digital debate. A corpus technique can also generate vast amounts of data. This method helps capture events in a larger space. This study will improve data representation and strengthen findings.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This article is extracted from the author's undergraduate thesis in the Arabic Language and Literature Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, State Islamic University of Imam Bonjol. The final version of this article is the result of the author's work through intensive guidance in the Academic Writing Course held by the Arabic Language and Literature Researchers Association "Lisaniya Adabiya".

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The first author is responsible for the research design, data collection, analysis, and the preparation of the initial draft of the article. The second and third authors provide theoretical guidance, critical analysis, and significant contributions to preparing the discussion and final revision of the manuscript. The fourth and fifth authors contributed to interpreting the data and proofreading the final manuscript.

REFERENCES

- Abdurrohman, M. A., Ahrori, M. H., & Pangastuti, R. (2023). Ulama dan politik di Arab Saudi: *Al-Mikraj: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora*, 4(1), 768–778. <https://doi.org/10.37680/almikraj.v4i1.4118>
- Aini, R. S., Wahyudi, D., & Shina, S.I. (2024). Representation of women in beauty advertisement: Presupposition analysis on PondsArabia Instagram account. *Lisaniya Adabiya: Studies in Language and Literature*, 1(1), 53–69. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.lisaniyaadabiya.id/index.php/lasill/article/view/7>
- Ainurrofiq, F., & Khasanah, N. (2024). From domestic to public: The construction of women's empowerment discourse in Saudi Arabia's vision 2030. *Akademika : Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 29(1), 101. <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v29i1.7755>
- Al-Jauhari, K. A., Zahiyah, S. D., Musyaffa', D. A., Aisyi, N. M., & Fatikasari, L. (2023). Konstruksi Wanita Salihah Dalam Tafsir Visual: Analisis Kritis Terhadap Meme QS. Al-Ahzab: 33. *Jurnal Ilmu Agama: Mengkaji Doktrin, Pemikiran, Dan Fenomena*

- Agama*, 24(1), 84–97. <https://doi.org/10.19109/jia.v24i1.16347>
- Ali, I. (2020). Muslim women meme-ing citizenship in the era of War on Terror militarism. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 106(3), 334–340. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2020.1785629>
- Ali & Gawarir (2022). *Lived experiences of women in leadership positions in the public sector in Saudi Arabia post-promulgation of vision 2030*. Doctoral Thesis. University of Brighton. Retrieved from <https://research.brighton.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/lived-experiences-of-women-in-leadership-positions-in-the-public>
- Andreasen, M. B. (2021). ‘Rapeable’ and ‘unrapeable’ women: the portrayal of sexual violence in Internet memes about #MeToo. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 30(1), 102–113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2020.1833185>
- Astuti, Y. D. (2018). Kontruksi perempuan dalam media baru: Analisis semiotik meme ibu-ibu naik motor di media sosial. *PALASTREN Jurnal Studi Gender*, 10(2), 225. <https://doi.org/10.21043/palastren.v10i2.2679>
- Azizi, Y., Triana, H. W., & Arwemi. (2019). Analisis Implikatur dalam Meme Populer pada Akun Instagram Remaja Arab. *Diwan: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra Arab*, 11(2), 911–928. <https://doi.org/10.37108/diwan.v11i2.477>
- Brantner, C., Lobinger, K., & Stehling, M. (2020). Memes against sexism? A multi-method analysis of the feminist protest hashtag #distractinglysexy and its resonance in the mainstream news media. *Convergence*, 26(3), 674–696. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856519827804>
- Chang, W. (2022). The monstrous-feminine in the incel imagination: Investigating the representation of women as “femoids” on /r/Braincels. *Feminist Media Studies*, 22(2), 254–270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2020.1804976>
- Clark, R. (2016) ‘Hope in a hashtag’: The discursive activism of #WhyIStayed. *Feminist Media Studies* 16(5): 788–804. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2016.1138235>
- Laurent, C.d.S, Glăveanu, V. P., & Literat, I. (2021). Internet memes as partial stories: Identifying political narratives in coronavirus memes. *Social Media and Society*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305121988932>
- Drakett, J., Rickett, B., Day, K., & Milnes, K. (2018). Old jokes, new media -online sexism and constructions of gender in internet memes. *Feminism and Psychology*, 28(1), 109–127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353517727560>
- Fersini, E., Gasparini, F., & Corchs, S. (2019). Detecting sexist meme on the web: A study on textual and visual cues. *2019 8th International Conference on Affective Computing and Intelligent Interaction Workshops and Demos, ACIIW 2019*, 226–231. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ACIIW.2019.8925199>
- Gbadegesin, O.V. (2020). Gender ideology and identity in humorous social media memes. *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 35(3). 529-546. <https://doi.org/10.1093/llc/fqz039>
- Ghafoory, D. sayfuddin, & Miran, L. D. (2022). The realization of presupposition triggers in the types of presupposition in articles by non-native English writers. *Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities*, 29(10-2). 64–95. <https://doi.org/10.25130/jtuh.29.10.2.2022.25>
- Guillard, Julianne. 2016. “Is Feminism Trending? Pedagogical Approaches to Countering (Sl)activism.” *Gender and Education* 28 (5): 609–626. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2015.1123227>
- Harlow, S., Rowlett, J. T., & Huse, L. K. (2020). ‘Kim Davis be like ...’: a feminist critique of gender humor in online political memes. *Information Communication and Society*,

- 23(7), 1057–1073. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2018.1550524>
- Hidayat, H. N., & Immerry, T. (2020). Pelecehan Terhadap Perempuan Dalam Meme. *Kafa'ah: Journal of Gender Studies*, 10(2), 131. <https://doi.org/10.15548/jk.v10i2.330>
- Hill, R. L., & Allen, K. (2021). 'Smash the patriarchy': the changing meanings and work of 'patriarchy' online. *Feminist Theory*, 22(2), 165–189. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700120988643>
- Kanai, A. (2016). Sociality and Classification: Reading Gender, Race, and Class in a Humorous Meme. *Social Media and Society*, 2(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305116672884>
- Kim, C., & Ringrose, J. (2018). "Stumbling upon feminism" teenage girls' forays into digital and school-based feminisms. *Girlhood Studies*, 11(2), 46–62. <https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2018.110205>
- Kristyafajar, C.A.S.P., Clarissa, A., Ramadhan, M.N., & Adillah, M. D., & Nisfiani, S. (2024). Keterlibatan perempuan di tengah politik maskulin dalam perspektif politik global studi kasus: gulf women in Saudi Arabia. *Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan Dan Administrasi Publik*, 2(1), 110–118. Retrieved from <https://journal.wiyatapublisher.or.id/index.php/kybernology/article/view/99>
- Kumari, S. (2021). Meme culture and social media as gendered spaces of dissent and dominance. *Journal of Visual Literacy*, 40(3-4), 215-232. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1051144X.2021.1974775>
- Lala, I. (2024) Women driving in Saudi Arabia: Female perceptions five years after lifting of the ban. *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15570274.2024.2429275>
- Locke, A., Lawthom, R., & Lyons, A. (2018). Social media platforms as complex and contradictory spaces for feminisms: Visibility, opportunity, power, resistance and activism. *Feminism and Psychology*, 28(1), 3–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353517753973>
- Mahfouz, I. (2021). A Multimodal analysis of gender representation in "men vs. women memes". *Textual Turnings: An International Peer-Reviewed Journal in English Studies*, 3(1), 101–121. <https://doi.org/10.21608/ttaip.2021.211518>
- Melki, J. P., & Mallat, S. E. (2016). Block her entry, keep her down and push her out: Gender discrimination and women journalists in the Arab world. *Journalism Studies*, 17(1), 57–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2014.962919>
- Miski. (2021). Amplification of Islamic doctrines in hadith memes prohibition of women travels without a mahram on Indonesian social media. *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis*, 22(1), 230-254. <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.2021.2201-11>
- Mukaromah. (2020) – Wacana Kesetaraan Gender dalam Meme Hadis: Studi Etnografi Virtual pada Akun Instagram mubadalah.id. *Mutawatir: Jurnal Keilmuan Tafsir Hadis*, 10(2), 292-320. <https://doi.org/10.15642/mutawatir.2020.10.2.292-320>
- Nadia, M. A. (2022). Mitos perempuan dalam meme Al-Qur'an: Kajian semiotika media sosial. *Nun: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara*, 8(2), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v8i2.425>
- Nissenbaum, A., & Shifman, L. (2018). Meme templates as expressive repertoires in a globalizing world: A cross-linguistic study. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 23(5), 294–310. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmy016>
- Octavita, R.A.I.O. & Zaimar, Y.S. (2018). Semiotic analysis of satire meme connecting women's identity in Brillio Net. *Scope: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 3(1), 38-45. <https://doi.org/10.30998/scope.v3i1.3004>

- Petrova, Y. (2021). Meme language, its impact on digital culture and collective thinking. *E3S Web of Conferences*, 273. 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202127311026>
- Piñeiro-Otero, T., & Martínez-Rolán, X. (2016). Los memes en el activismo feminista en la red. #vIajosola como ejemplo de movilización transnacional. *Cuadernos.Info*, 39, 17–37. <https://doi.org/10.7764/cdi.39.1040>
- Prakoso, M.D. & Priyoyudanto, F. (2024). Peran gender dalam masyarakat Arab pra-Islam. *Morfologi: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, Bahasa, Sastra Dan Budaya*, 2(2), 109–121. <https://doi.org/10.61132/morfologi.v2i2.446>
- Putri, M. S., Windiani, R., & Paramasatya, S. (2021). Liberalisasi ekonomi Arab Saudi dalam saudi vision 2030. *Journal of International Relations*, 7(3), 123–130. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14710/jirud.v7i3.31216>
- Ramadhan, B.R., & Shofwan, I. (2019). Keputusan hukum pembolehan mengemudi bagi perempuan Saudi Arabia ditinjau dalam perspektif maqashid as-syari'ah. *Journal of Islamic World and Politics*, 3(1). 466-481. <https://doi.org/10.18196/jiwp.3126>
- Renaldo, Z. A. (2021). Presupposition and ideology: A critical discourse analysis of Joe Biden's inaugural speech. *Project (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 4(3), 497-503. <https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v4i3.p497-503>
- Retallack, H., Ringrose, J., & Lawrence, E. (2016). 'Fuck your body image': teen girls' twitter and instagram feminism in and around school. In *Learning Bodies: The Body in Youth and Childhood Studies*, ed. Coffey, J., Budgeon, S., Cahill, H. 85–103. Singapore: Springer. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-10-0306-6_6
- Ringrose, J., & Lawrence, E. (2018). Remixing misandry, manspreading, and dick pics: networked feminist humour on Tumblr. *Feminist Media Studies*, 18(4), 686–704. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2018.1450351>
- Sholihah, N., Ummah, A. K., Wargadinata, W., & Jannah, H. (2023). Transformation of the roles of Saudi Arabian women post-implementation of the “saudi vision 2030” in the perspective of modernism. *Jurnal Center of Middle Eastern Studies (CMES)*, 16(2), 201. <https://doi.org/10.20961/cm.es.16.2.69354>
- Sunaryanto, & Rizal, S. (2023). Dakwah digital melalui meme visualisasi perempuan dalam perspektif semiotika. *Jurnal Kopis: Kajian Penelitian Dan Pemikiran Komunikasi Penyiaran Islam*, 5(2), 75–95. Retrieved from <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/69127>
- Sunaryanto, S., & Rizal, S. (2024). Representasi mitos dan ideologi dalam meme visualisasi cadar di internet: Perspektif semiotika. *Jurnal Desain*, 11(2), 335. <https://doi.org/10.30998/jd.v11i2.17671>
- Svatoňová, E. (2020). Where Have All the Normal Men and Women Gone? *Conjunctions*, 7(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.7146/tjcp.v7i1.119853>
- Tomlinson, M. K. (2021). Moody and monstrous menstruators: the Semiotics of the menstrual meme on social media. *Social Semiotics*, 31(3), 421–439. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2021.1930858>
- Valensise, C. M., Serra, A., Galeazzi, A., Etta, G., Cinelli, M., & Quattrociocchi, W. (2021). Entropy and complexity unveil the landscape of memes evolution. *Scientific Reports*, 11(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-99468-6>
- Van Geel, A. (2016). Separate or together? Women-only public spaces and participation of Saudi women in the public domain in Saudi Arabia. *Contemporary Islam*, 10(3), 357–378. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-015-0350-2>
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatic*. Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/pragmatics0000yule/page/140/mode/2up>

Zulifan, M. (2021). Reposisi identitas sosial perempuan Saudi pasca terbitnya visi Saudi 2030. *Nady Al-Adab: Jurnal Bahasa Arab*, 18(2), 111–122. <https://doi.org/10.20956/jna.v19i2.23510>

AUTHORS' SHORT BIODATA

Resty Syahrotul Aini is a student in the Arabic Language and Literature Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, State Islamic University of Imam Bonjol, Padang, Indonesia and a researcher in the Arabic Language and Literature Researchers Association "Lisaniya Adabiya", Padang, Indonesia. Her research covers the field of Arabic language and literature studies, especially pragmatics. Email: restysyahrotulaini@lisaniyaadabiya.id.

Delami is a lecturer in the Arabic Language and Literature Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, State Islamic University of Imam Bonjol, Padang, Indonesia. His researches cover the fields of linguistics, especially macrolinguistics. Email: delami@uinib.ac.id.

Awliya Rahmi is a lecturer in the Arabic Language and Literature Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, State Islamic University of Imam Bonjol, Padang, Indonesia. His researches cover the fields of linguistics, especially pragmatics. Email: awliyahrahmi@uinib.ac.id.

Arif Rahmatul Aji is a Master's Student majoring in Rhetoric and Literary Criticism at Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. He often contributes to interpreting research related to Rhetoric and Literary Criticism. Email: arifrahmatulaji@gmail.com.

Nurul Amin bin Mustafa is a Master's student in the Arabic for Specific Purpose Program, Postgraduate School, Faculty of Islamic Civilisation Studies, Selangor Islamic University, Selangor, Malaysia. His research covers the field of translations and Qur'anic science. Email: aminmustafa602@gmail.com.