FRAMING ON TWITTER: HOW SAUDI ARABIANS INTERTEXTUALLY FRAME THE
WOMEN2DRIVE CAMPAIGN

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ABSTRACT

This study uses Twitter posts as a new domain to explore the intersection of framing and intertextuality in computer-mediated communication. My dataset consists of Twitter posts by Saudi women activists in support of women’s right to drive in Saudi Arabia and by men clerics who oppose women driving. I identified intertextuality as a primary means by which both groups frame the driving issue and align with their community. I find that there is evidence that both women activists and men clerics utilize local texts to create a shared repertoire of “prior texts” to justify their positions on the driving issue while aligning with the government’s regulations. I analyze their use of hashtags related to women driving as an intertextual means to position themselves within the larger conversation. Additionally, while men use only Arabic in their tweets, women occasionally use English in their posts and hashtags, framing the Women2Drive campaign within international contexts and signaling group membership with each other and the multilingual community. Men, on the other hand, framed the campaign as a conspiracy against the Saudi moral and political system, warning of societal consequences and attributing responsibility to Western sources. In addition to highlighting the discursive means through which users frame the campaign, such a contrastive approach attempts to understand how social hierarchies of power and gender operate in an online context.
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Introduction

“In the 21st century, the revolution may not be televised – but it likely will be tweeted, blogged, texted and organized on Facebook.” Catherine O’Donnell

Social media has transformed the way people circulate news and discuss it, particularly in countries with anti-free speech policies. Studies in social media communication and political discourse attribute Twitter’s popularity among social activists and protesters to its “real-time” property that allows live reporting of events. The micro-blogging social media site has experienced exponential growth in the Middle East, particularly after its interface became available in Arabic in March 2012. Despite its length constraint--allowing messages of no more than 140 characters-- it has been used expansively as a circulation tool to spread information and raise social awareness in times of socio-political crisis. For instance, Twitter--unlike traditional media outlets--appeared to be more reliable to share information about the 2011 Egyptian uprising and the users of social media recognize it as a ‘revolution’ from early stages (Hamdy and Gomaa, 2012; Weiss et al., 2013).

In Saudi Arabia, the present and future utility of social media to break socio-cultural taboos and demand social change appears particularly strong. Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world that does not allow women to drive. Consequently, women activists in Saudi Arabia have been demanding their right to drive since the 1990s. Most recently, Saudi women activists used Twitter to organize the Women2Drive campaign, publicize its message and encourage others to support and participate in it. Opponents of women driving also utilized Twitter to express their antagonistic viewpoints and reinforce religious justifications behind the ban. In

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order to understand the opinions espoused by the two sides, I focus on the two major social actors in this debate: women activists who support women driving and arranged the driving campaign, and men Islamic clerics, who oppose women’s right to drive and call to reinforce the driving prohibition.

Such a contrastive approach will not only highlight the disparities in the discursive strategies employed by the two communities; it also attempts to understand how social hierarchies of power and gender operate in an online context. I choose to analyze the discourse of women activists and men clerics in particular because they represent the two antagonistic poles in the Saudi women driving controversy. Men clerics are the power-holders in this context; they espouse the traditional Islamic conventions and aim to reinforce the cultural norm. Women activists are the challengers; they revolt against the Saudi norm and demand social and political change. As far as women’s role is concerned, my research attempts to highlight the contrast between Saudi women’s marginalized role within the socio-political system that aims to maintain their dependence on their male guardians and their active role on social media that shows agency and autonomy in their demands for change.

In order to achieve that, I employ a theoretical framework of framing and intertextuality, which draws upon Gordon’s (2008, 2009) concept of “framing as intertextuality in interaction.” While her framework analyzes spoken interactions among family members, my study aims to expand its applicability to computer-mediated communication (CMC) contexts. I use her framework to explore how users in my dataset discursively frame the Women2Drive campaign through intertextual means of referencing prior texts and evoking shared experiences. This approach highlights the role of intertextuality in creating a shared repertoire of “prior texts,” while capturing its instrumentality in framing.
Background

The *Women2Drive* Campaign

While there are many forms of gender inequality in Saudi Arabia, the ban on women driving stands as one of the most pervasive limitations placed upon Saudi women. Unlike any other Arab-Islamic country, Saudi Arabia adheres to *Wahhabism*, a strict brand of Sunni Islam, which requires the veiling of women, an absolute segregation of the sexes, and prohibiting women from driving. Women in Saudi Arabia began demanding social reform in the 1990s, including calling for their right to drive. As a result, the religious police enforced even stricter regulations, formalizing a driving prohibition that was previously unofficial. In response, women activists arranged a driving protest that took place on November 6, 1990, where 47 women rallied in Riyadh streets. These women were imprisoned for a day and suffered from other penalties; their passports were confiscated and some lost their government jobs.

Other demands followed more than a decade later. In September 2007, two women activists submitted a petition with over 1,000 signatures to King Abdullah asking for women’s right to drive. Later, in 2008 during International Women’s Day, a woman activist filmed herself driving and posted the video on YouTube. In 2011, a group of women started the *Women2Drive* social media campaign to support women’s right to drive, which involved some women driving and filming themselves to encourage others to follow. These actions garnered local and international media attention leading to more strictly enforced rules banning women from driving.

Most recently, in an attempt to have the ban lifted and challenge the country’s practice of banning women driving, Saudi women activists arranged for a campaign to take place on October 26, 2013 calling for women to get behind the steering wheel and drive individually. This
has reignited public discussion of women driving and gained increased attention in both social media and mainstream print media. The campaign was arranged entirely through social media using Facebook and Twitter to reach out to women and encourage them to participate. The Saudi government, represented by the Ministry of the Interior, issued a cautionary statement prior to the scheduled campaign to notify women activists about their violation of the law. Local and international public media outlets reported the statement by the Interior Ministry spokesman (General Mansour al-Turki). Social media users, especially on Twitter, have circulated the statement and commented on it. In the analysis section, I illustrate examples from the responses to the statement that appeared in my dataset.

It is important to point out that the opposition towards women’s driving has been justified from many aspects by men and women. The most recurrent argument is whether it is a political or social matter; many suggest that it is a religious matter to protect women’s virtue. Women who are against driving also agree on the destructive consequences driving could cause to women. The ban has been debated for the past two decades and it still continues. However, with the advent of technology, this debate is now broadcast openly for public discussion and scholarly examination. This campaign, along with the previous ones, demonstrates the functionality of Twitter in facilitating collectivist movements calling for change. In the following section, I elaborate on Twitter’s functional layout and other operational features that enabled Saudi users to utilize it as a medium of expression.

Twitter’s Technical Features

Capturing the technical features of Twitter’s environment is crucial to our understanding the online context in which communication takes place. With over 200 million active users, Twitter is increasingly gaining popularity worldwide among Internet users. Twitter’s availability
in 33 different languages is indicative of the medium’s rising popularity and acceptance, as international users access the site from computers, mobile phones, or other tablet devices using their native language. Twitter’s unique platform allows for real-time observation of collective reactions as they pertain to social issues. This micro-blogging site allows users to post typed messages containing 140 characters or less (including letters, numbers, punctuation marks, and spaces). This constraint distinguishes Twitter from other online blogs, forums, or social network sites. Despite its length constraint, social activists frequently use it as a tool to spread information and raise social awareness about sociopolitical issues. In addition to broadcasting typed messages, Twitter users can also publicize links to external articles, photographs, and other websites. These links appear as part of the tweet—the instantly publicized text update—and they are shortened to be within the 140 character limit. Those tweets appear in the user’s timeline, along with other tweets from accounts they have chosen to follow. In order to read a tweet, the user has to be following the sender. For others to read the user’s tweet, they have to be following their account. The following is a screenshot of a tweet taken from my women activists’ dataset.

This tweet contains a hyperlink (“emirates247.com/videos/virals/”) that was preceded by a description of its content (“Saudi films himself teaching daughter driving”), followed by a reference to the campaign’s account “@Oct26Driving” and the hashtag “#Women2Drive.” Through Twitter, users can make their messages “searchable” by using hashtags to label their message. Twitter users can precede a word or phrase by a hash or pound sign (#) and use it to
categorize the tweet under a specific topic. Other users can then read about this specific topic by using the keyword used in the hashtag. In the example above, ‘#Women2Drive’ was used at the end of the tweet to identify the topic of the tweet and connect with others who are writing about the same topic. This distinguishes Twitter from other social media networks because of its “searchable talk” (Zappavigna, 2012) where users mark their posts so that other users can find it and bond over its meaning and values. According to Zappavigna, this kind of connection established through the use of hashtags contributes to publicizing the cause and publicly declaring support for it. It also increases the chance of others (non-followers) to read the Twitter post and retweet it. Retweeting refers to re-posting someone else’s tweet; it could be done by either directly retweeting the original content without adding anything to it, or by editing the content and quoting the original source with the retweeter’s own words. Both hashtags and retweets are Twitter-specific features that distinguish it from other social media sites.

**Relevant Literature**

**Framing**

The theory of framing is generally attributed to anthropologist Gregory Bateson’s (1972) “A Theory of Play and Fantasy,” which originated from his observations of monkeys’ playing and fighting behavior during a visit to the zoo. He noticed that a monkey’s nip of another could mean either ‘play’ or ‘fight’ depending on what he calls the “metamessage” of the communication, which serves as a tool to help the receiver interpret the message (i.e. “this is play” or “this is fight”). Frames, according to Bateson, contribute to sense making and are largely psychological. Later on sociologist Erving Goffman’s (1974) *Frame Analysis* elaborated on the concept of framing to investigate everyday human experience. Unlike Bateson, frames for Goffman construct social experiences and they are primarily situational. When interlocutors
engage in a conversation, they share the same frame by establishing the situation and interacting accordingly. Thus a mother-daughter experience differs at home from when they are in class if the mother happens to be the teacher; it is framed differently, and both participants would engage in the situation differently.

The idea that Twitter users frame the driving campaign by orienting themselves to sets of pre-established cultural notions is central to my analysis. Tannen’s (1993) notion of frames as “structures of expectation” based on speakers’ previous knowledge and experience reveals the intertextual nature of framing in discourse. Her analysis of Greek and American subjects describing the events and people in a movie suggests that the subjects construct their narratives based on culturally determined concepts that are revealed through the linguistic devices they use. I find some of these linguistic devices to be recurrent in my dataset and I examine them to determine how users discursively reveal their expectations of frames.

Tannen and Wallat (1993) show how multiple frames can be at work by analyzing a pediatric examination. The authors carry out an analysis of video-recorded conversations taking place during the examination and show how the doctor operates within different frames as she examines the child patient, provides consultation to the patient’s mother, and explains the medical situation by addressing staff members who are the future audience of the video. The study shows how in each interaction there is more than one frame at work, and how these frames are defined by shared meaning between the participants, which highlights the role of intertextuality in understanding how frames operate. This multiplicity of frames reflects the flexibility of social situations, which are best examined through the lens of intertextuality.

Drawing upon Cynthia Gordon’s (2008, 2009) concept of “framing as intertextuality in interaction,” my study highlights the instrumentality of intertextuality in framing by applying her
framework to written online contexts. While her exploration of the intersection between framing and intertextuality was based on family conversations, my analysis expands its scope to written online contexts, attesting to its validity across different mediums and discourse communities. In *Making Meanings, Creating Family* (2009), Gordon examines frames and intertextuality among family members in interaction. She also examines the lamination of frames in family discourse by discussing overlapping and embedded frames, whereby the speakers function in more than one frame simultaneously and accomplish different communicative goals in each. This study also illustrates the layered nature of frames and highlights the role of intertextuality in framing, a central concept in my analysis of Twitter discourse. Additionally, Gordon’s study examines the role of contextualization cues in examining family frames and how they impact the frame shifting in verbal interactions. In my analysis of Twitter discourse, I find that the lack of auditory and visual contextualization cues in social media does not impede the framing mechanism; non-standard spelling and punctuation as well as the use of Twitter hashtags compensate for it.

**Intertextuality**

My study’s theoretical framework draws upon the conception that language is best interpreted in accordance with its sociocultural context. Analyzing the intertextual basis of utterances is necessary to understand their sociocultural functionality and implications. Bakhtin’s (1981) and Voloshinov’s (1973) notion of *dialogicality*, which Kristeva (1980) later called *intertextuality*, underlies the idea that all texts are shaped and reshaped by other texts. Tannen (2005) defines intertextuality as “the insights that meaning in language results from a complex of relationships linking items within a discourse and linking current to prior instances of language” (9). Intertextuality involves connecting texts across different time periods and sociocultural situations by incorporating *prior text* (Becker 1995) into new contexts. My examination of
Twitter hashtags as intertextuality in Twitter’s discourse draws upon Bauman's (2004) notion of intertextuality in which he highlights “the relational orientation of a text to other texts” (4). This relational aspect of texts becomes necessary for the interpretation of Twitter hashtags that connect and circulate several voices across different topics and users.

Texts consist of myriad intertextual references composed of lexical items and referring terms that are taken from one context and placed into another. The ubiquitous nature of intertextuality and its significance in meaning-making is exemplified in Norrick’s (1989) definition of intertextuality, which, according to him, “occurs any time one text suggests or requires reference to some other identifiable text or stretch of discourse, spoken or written” (117). His definition of intertextuality reflects Bakhtin’s (1986) notion that texts are shaped by previous texts they are “responding” to and later texts they “anticipate.” Such interconnectedness of texts is created through a process of recontextualisation of prior text that, according to Becker (1994), reshapes prior texts into coherent new contexts. As I will illustrate in my analysis, the posts in my dataset are filled with intertextual references that reference external figures or include culturally recognizable forms and content. These intertextual references involve *decontextualizing* previous utterances—lifting them from their earlier context—and *recontextualizing* them in new contexts (Bauman and Briggs 1990). My analysis will show how the recontextualization of lexical items in new contexts transmits aspects of the earlier discourse into the new context.

**Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis provides an appropriate theoretical framework for the examination of the *Women2Drive* online discourse, particularly considering the hierarchical power relations between men and women, and conservatives and liberals, in Saudi Arabian
society. Norman Fairclough’s focus in CDA and its intersection with intertextuality underlies my analysis of discourse as a social practice. He argues that the productivity of intertextuality in its ability to reflect and transform previous texts into new ones “is socially limited and constrained, and conditional upon relations of power” (Fairclough, 1992: 270). He suggests that the concept of intertextuality needs to be supplemented with a theory of power relations and accounts for how these power relations shape social structures and discursive practices. CDA accounts for language use as a “social practice” that considers discourse as “socially consequential” of events, and it also “gives rise to important issues of power” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258). The aim of CDA is to explore the manifestation of power and ideology in language and to “shed light on the discursive aspects of societal disparities and inequalities” (Wodak and Meyer, 2009: 32).

Language in this sense can be tied to social practice, especially as it helps maintain the “status quo” of social hierarchies of power.

Carragee and Roefs (2004) argue that the body of literature on framing media and journalism has overlooked the connection between framing and socio-political power. Framing research, according to them, needs to link framing to political and social questions concerning power asymmetry, which ultimately provides a better understanding of the relationship between social movements and the news media. One way of approaching this focus is through exploring the connection between media frames and ideological hegemony, “the process by which ruling elites secure consent to the established political order through the production and diffusion of meaning and values” (pp. 221-222). Along these lines, my analysis aims to examine how certain voices of authority are foregrounded while others are suppressed, and how online discourse reflects sociopolitical and ideological hierarchies of power while reproducing unequal power relations between social classes—in this case, men and women.
Grassroots Media

Researchers from journalism and information science disciplines have often looked at how social activists use social media to mobilize and spread awareness concerning sociopolitical issues. For instance, social media has often been credited with triggering political debates that led to the Arab Spring. According to a social media report that analyzed over 3 million tweets, gigabytes of YouTube content and thousands of blog posts, “[p]eople who shared interest in democracy built extensive social networks and organized political action. Social media became a critical part of the toolkit for greater freedom” (Philip Howard, as cited by O’Donnell 2011).

Hamdy and Gomaa (2012) examined media framing of the Egyptian uprising on January and February 2011. Their dataset consisted of Arabic language content during the peak of the protests that included news stories, opinion columns, blog posts, Twitter and Facebook posts. They found that the protest was framed in strikingly different ways, particularly between newspapers and social media. Social media, according to their study, was the most reflective and reliable source for information. They state that “[i]t became evident that social media (despite a 5-day shutdown of Egypt’s Internet access) functioned as a news and analysis source for many Egyptians in the absence of dependable mainstream sources” (203).

Yuce et al. (2013) examined trends in online sentiment and cyber-collective action in the Women2Drive campaign, focusing on how online individual action can transform into collective action--defined as “all activity involving two or more individuals contributing to a collective effort on the basis of mutual interests and the possibility of benefits from coordinate action” (333). Their dataset consists of female Muslim bloggers’ postings--all in English--from 23 different countries during 2007 and 2012. Their sentiment analysis focused on individual blogger sentiments and found increasing positive support and awareness from these English blogs.
However, they observed decreased positive emotions in the followers of these blogs, who turned out to be from male commenters who are against the driving campaign.

In another study, Yuce et al. (2014) used Twitter hashtags to examine the evolution of collective action in the Women2Drive movement. Unlike their previous study of female Muslim blogs, this study included Arabic content as well as English. They analyzed about 70,000 tweets from 116 countries and identified cross-cultural associations with the hashtags’ language choice. Arabic hashtags were used more frequently and they are associated with “local factors.” These factors include Arabic content that addresses claims that have circulated, such as the effect of driving on women’s ovaries. English hashtags, on the other hand, are associated with international contexts, and were used to help promote support from transnational communities and organizations.

Computer-Mediated Communication

Linguistic features of computer-mediated communication vary based on a number of factors including “the language and script used, the mode of CMC employed, the context of the interaction, and other use- and user-related factors” (Bieswanger 2013: 464). My examination of the Women2Drive Twitter posts takes into account both Twitter-specific features, including length constraints, purpose of communication, and hashtag use, as well as macro-linguistic factors that influence the language variation among women activists and men Islamic clerics. These factors include the underlying causes of the campaign, its direct and indirect stakeholders and its sociopolitical objectives. Such contextual consideration of the analyzed discourse enlightens our understanding of the role of intertextuality in framing within CMC activities.

Linguistic studies in CMC have frequently addressed the relationship between the use of non-standard forms and gender-related factors. Studies of gender-related differences in CMC
suggest that women, more than men, use emoticons. For example, Baron (2008:67) examined instant messaging among American college students and found that “females were far more likely to use emoticons than males.” Similarly, Wolf (2000) found that females use emoticons more than males and that males’ use is higher in mixed-gender newsgroups than in single-gender groups. Females are also more likely to use innovative and conventional writing systems. Herring and Zelenkaukaite (2008) suggest that females are more likely to use non-standard punctuation that deviates from the standard written structure. They analysed SMS texts posted to interactive television programs by female and male writers and found that females are more likely to use non-standard spellings. The authors suggest that such use of non-standard spelling serves to “symbolize feminine qualities of emotionality, sociability, and playfulness” (26). In the same manner, Tseliga (2007) found that non-standard punctuation, such as multiple punctuation marks, has been “associated with playfulness and informality in the CMC context” (121).

Relatedly, Herring (2010) suggests that the prevalence of gender disparities in online contexts is reflective of the way men and women communicate verbally in face-to-face interactions. Taking into account the gendered power dynamics in Saudi society, I anticipate finding recognizable differences in both linguistic features of each community and their online contributions. Herring’s (1994) observation of men’s postings show that “men are more likely than women to represent themselves as experts” (3), where their contributions are characterized by being assertive and influential. Similarly, Herring and Nix (1997) found that men are more likely to be responsive to women online and commented more frequently and assertively on women-related topics.

Previous studies have examined the impact of the absence of conventional paralinguistic cues, including auditory and gestural communication channels, in online communication. Crystal
(2001) suggests that technological factors in text messages, including limited space and screen size, impacts the structural properties of language use in communication. As a result, new linguistic conventions, such as non-standard spelling and punctuation, have developed to compensate for the lack of context cues (Murray, 1988). Bieswanger (2013) states that “the absence of several communication channels, such as the auditory and the gestural, in text-based CMC is a force that has shaped certain of its linguistic features” (463). In addition to representing paralinguistic cues, these CMC linguistic features serve to indicate the user’s position and frame the content of their communication in a comparable way to how framing is constructed in face-to-face interaction. Considering Georgakopoulou’s (2011) description of frames as “linguistically signaled and realized by a variety of contextualization cues” (11), many micro-linguistic features in Twitter, such as hashtags and non-standard spelling and punctuation, can be seen as contextual cues through which users frame their online conversation.

The Study

The Data

The dataset for this study consists of Twitter posts published in response to the Women2Drive campaign that took place on October 26, 2013. I collected a sample of Twitter posts about the Women2Drive campaign starting October 23 – October 27. For this study, I extracted the highly circulated posts that generated the largest number of responses and re-tweets. Based on these highly circulated tweets, I generated a list of accounts that were influential during the campaign from the larger dataset. The influence measures that were deployed for this selection were: (1) follower count—the number of followers each individual has, which indicates the popularity of that user, (2) retweet influence—the number of retweets
containing one’s name, which indicates the ability of that user to generate content with pass-
along value, (3) mention influence—the number of mentions containing one’s Twitter name,
which indicates the user’s ability to engage others in a conversation. Based on these parameters,
I chose to examine 10 publicly available Twitter accounts of users in two different discourse
communities: First, the *challengers*: Saudi women activists who challenged the driving
prohibition by organizing the campaign and participating in the driving act. The second group is
the *power-holders*: Saudi men clerics who espouse Islamic rulings and cultural conventions that
aim to reinforce the driving prohibition. I selected five publicly available accounts from the
women’s community and five publicly available accounts from the men’s. The participants are
all Saudi Arabians and over the age of 25.

I collected Twitter posts from their public accounts using Twitter’s *advanced search*
option; I specified the parameters for the Twitter search for each account to restrict results based
on their location (Saudi Arabia) and time-frame (Oct. 23 – 27), and focused on tweets about the
driving campaign by specifying keywords and hashtags related to the topic. This time-bound,
single-topic sample provides an informative ‘critical discourse moment’ (Gamson 1992) that is
representative of the larger Twitter dataset. It also provides important information about
representative members of both sides participating in the sociopolitical debate concerning
women’s rights in Saudi Arabia. The campaign has gained increased attention from members of
both sides who engaged in the discussion to either encourage the campaign and advocate for
women’s equality or contest the movement and lambaste its supporters. In my analysis, I treat
the two communities collectively without specifying the names or any identifying information
about these individuals.
The Methodology

My primary empirical question is about the frames the two communities reveal about the driving campaign on Twitter and the intertextual means through which they construct these frames. I divided my analysis into three sections: first, I describe the main frames I’ve established as representative of men’s and women’s framing of Women2Drive. To investigate this, I followed Squire’s (2014) method of coding the “discursive domain” of each tweet. She defines the discursive domain of a tweet as “the context and set of cultural references within which the tweet’s context is rendered interpretable” (51). The first part of this section focuses on men’s two recurrent frames: (1) framing the campaign as a ‘foreign conspiracy’ that intends to disturb the peace and unity of the society by Westernizing women and (2) their justification of the ban based on the ‘harm prevention’ Islamic principle. I identified these frames based on patterns I observed in the data. My methodology is largely qualitative in that I provide examples of individual tweets to highlight the accomplishment of these frames.

I then examine women’s recurrent frames, highlighting the role of language choice in orienting their posts to certain audiences. Through comparing women’s English and Arabic tweets, I find that women’s tweets are primarily calls for action addressed to an international community. Their Arabic tweets, on the other hand, are largely reactive in that they respond to circulating claims about the campaign and the Interior Ministry’s statement about the campaign, which was issued in close time proximity to the campaign. I chose to focus on the women’s posts about the statement due to the large amount of tweets commenting on the statement and interpreting its content. I call this frame ‘interpretive ratification’ based on the interpretive nature of women’s recurrent tweets about the Ministry’s statement. In their tweets, women extrapolate certain parts of the statement and interpret them as an implicit permission for women to drive
while responding to other parts that call the campaign a ‘protest’—something forbidden in Saudi law—by defending it as an individual act that does not involve protesting. While doing so, women maintain their alignment with the government’s regulations by acknowledging the legitimacy of the laws the statement addressed and confirming that they will abide by them.

In the second section, I demonstrate the linguistic features through which users structure their frames. First, I examine words and phrases that the men and women in my dataset use to describe the driving campaign. I show how these referring terms contribute to the framing of the Women2Drive campaign. Second, I illustrate how hashtags are used to construct these frames. I do so by counting the number of hashtags and the frequency of their use by each community. I then analyze their usage and situate the functions of hashtags in discourse within the larger CMC literature on Twitter hashtags. Ultimately, I argue that hashtags on Twitter become an intextual means through which users index their points of view and align with other users. Finally, I introduce other linguistic features by which users in my dataset construct their frames intertextually. These features and the analysis framework follow Tannen’s (1993) study design, where she listed ‘evidence of expectations’ to account for frames when the participants in her study described the material in a film. These features were negatives and evaluative language. Other discursive features that I found to contribute to framing include: presupposition, hyperbole, lexicalization and polarization. I draw these features from Tahir’s (2013) study of Muslim othering in the Washington Post. In this final section section, I define each linguistic feature listed above and provide examples from my dataset.
Framing of Women2Drive

In this section, I illustrate how men and women in my dataset frame the driving campaign. First, I illustrate how men framed the Women2Drive campaign as a Western conspiracy that aims to corrupt Saudi women and divide Saudi society. They accomplish this through referring to the campaign as a “protest” and highlighting foreign support of the campaign. In the second part of this section, I examine how women frame the campaign by reacting to the “protest” claim and foregrounding its peaceful approach. Both discourse communities utilize local texts and culturally familiar experiences to frame the campaign and orient their messages towards the government’s rules.

The Men Clerics

The “Foreign Conspiracy” Frame

The idea that the women driving campaign is an external conspiracy that aims to interfere with interior affairs and corrupt women is one of the most recurrent themes in the men’s Twitter posts. This is clear from the words and phrases men used to describe the driving campaign and the hashtags they frequently use. Men in my dataset referred to the campaign as an “incitement” (تحرير) over 22 times; these also included references to women activists as inciters (مثيرون) where the West is the alleged source of this incitement. They also used the word “conspiracy” (مؤامرة) almost 21 times, mostly associated with a Westernization conspiracy. The men’s framing of the campaign is also indicated intertextually in the use of the hashtag #Women_Driving_Gate_to_Westernization (قيادة المرأة بوابة التغيير), one of the most frequently used hashtags among men’s dataset.

The men’s general assumption is that this foreign conspiracy targets women to achieve a hidden agenda of dividing Saudi society by liberating Saudi women. The source of conspiracy is
the West, mostly the U.S., and *Women2Drive* is frequently described as a step towards Westernization. The following example mentions the Ministry’s cautionary statement, and it explicitly refers to the campaign as a “conspiracy” twice.

(1)

صدر البيان الرسمي بنع من نزاعة القيادة، حاول الليمانيون التثبيس على مقتضاك ان فشلا، فشكرا لكل من ساهم في إدال الموامرة

The official statement was issued to ban the driving conspiracy, so the liberals tried to manipulate the statement’s message but they failed, so thank you for those who contributed to debunking the conspiracy.

The repetition of the word “conspiracy” twice in the same post shows the deliberate choice of describing the campaign as such, especially given Twitter’s limited space. The word ‘conspiracy’ here is repeated to refer to the government’s reaction to the campaign: “banning the driving conspiracy” and “debunking the conspiracy.” This contributes to associating the government with the assumption that the campaign is a conspiracy. Furthermore, describing supporters of women’s rights to drive as “liberals” connotes Western ideologies, which intensifies the foreign conspiracy frame. The use of the definite article “the” in “the conspiracy” indicates a presupposition that describing the campaign as a conspiracy has already been established. Additionally, the user aligns with the government by expressing gratefulness for their role in revealing the truth about the campaign in “thank you for those who contributed to debunking the conspiracy.”

While in this example the source and objective of this conspiracy is not clear, other Twitter posts by men clerics explicitly state the Westernization agenda of the *Women2Drive* campaign. Some of these posts use the Arabic hashtag which literally translates to “#Women_Driving_Gate_to_Westernation”: 
The idea that the campaign comes from “the outside” is recurrent in the men’s dataset. This idea contributes to affirming the power and authority of men over women’s social action. By saying that support comes from outside, the men indicate that women are incapable of making changes by themselves and that they are dependent on external help. This ultimately undermines women’s efforts and patronizes their role in society. It also frames the campaign as a foreign attempt to interfere with internal matters, which contributes to popularizing the idea that the campaign aims to undermine the country’s stability. The following post illustrates this point more clearly by mentioning a hashtag created by the opponents of women driving ("No_to_Women_Driving"). Here the author refers to Hillary Clinton’s public support of Saudi women’s right to drive back in 2011 after over 22,000 Saudi women signed a petition to ask for her public support.

To all supporters of the hashtag #No_to_Women_Driving, trust that this driving incitement by those people comes because of Hillary Clinton’s promise to support them. Those who take the crow as their guide will lose.
The final part of the post “those who take the crow as their guide will lose” is an Arabic proverb that refers to the act of being misguided by following an unreliable source. In this case, the crow refers to Hillary Clinton who, according to opinions circulated by Islamic clerics, contributed to encouraging women to rebel and demand their right to drive. This use of a culturally familiar proverb contextualizes the tweet within local contexts, which strengthens the impact of the post’s content. The metaphorical use of the Arabic proverb shows how the user draws upon a reservoir of culturally familiar concepts to construct the ‘foreign conspiracy’ frame, thus revealing the interconnectedness between framing and intertextuality.

Additionally, the user here alienates supporters of women driving by using vague descriptive phrases such as “those people,” which does not indicate the gender of its reference in its Arabic version. This contributes to masking the identity of women supporters and distancing them from the men’s group membership. Such referential vagueness creates a sense of uncertainty about the meaning of the message while characterizing women in a way that excludes them through negative lexicalization in “those people”. Also describing the campaign as “this driving incitement” implies a provocation of malicious action, connoting a negative image of the campaign and its supporters. Clearly, women here are represented as out-group members, and the campaign itself, by being associated with Clinton, is framed as an external conspiracy.

Other users reveal the foreign conspiracy frame through questioning the motivations and resources of the campaign. The following user explicitly states that the source of the women driving campaign is the U.S.:

(4)

انطلاق الدعوة لقيادة المرأة السعودية من أمريكا محل نقطة استفهام؟!!!

Starting the call for #Saudi_Women_Driving from the U.S. raises many questions?!!!
The use of a question mark and multiple exclamation points reveals a non-standard punctuation form that’s uncommon in the men’s dataset. While the women would occasionally use emoticons and ellipsis, the majority of the men’s tweets use standard Arabic and abide by standard spelling and punctuation. Crystal (2001:89) suggests that “[e]mphasis and attitude can result in exaggerated or random use of punctuation.” Multiple punctuation marks are also associated with arguments and expression of extreme emotions in online communication as proposed by Luginbuhl (2003) in his study of Internet Relay chat rooms.

The user in the above post raises a question about the source of campaign: “Starting the call for #Saudi_Women_Driving from the U.S. raises many questions?!!!”, which indicates an implied presupposition that the campaign did, in fact, start in the U.S. This becomes suspicious and raises questions about the legitimacy and agenda of the campaign among men clerics. Many other posts follow this pattern of suggesting an ulterior motive of the campaign. The following post states that explicitly, with the aim to raise awareness about the Westernization agenda of the campaign.

(5)

Opsadah almanara liasti mutala’ah bihawqah midhale, bil midhale midhale biyad tamrihr bii haymeh min mishawrakhir alamad #FiQHA almanaray bayya’a eltaghrif

Women driving is not a demand for a legitimate right, it is a Westernization project meant to be part of other corruption projects #Women_Driving_Gate_to_Westernization

The use of negation is associated with expectations that are not met (Tannen 1993). This is clear in the post where the user states that the campaign is “not a demand for a legitimate right,” implying the general point of view espoused by women about their legitimate right to drive. The
user suggests that the campaign is meant to corrupt women by Westernizing them, framing *Women2Drive* as a foreign conspiracy with a corrupting agenda.

In addition to describing the campaign as a conspiracy and questioning its source, clerics reveal the foreign conspiracy frame by trivializing the need for Saudi women to drive. This is done through mentioning other societal issues concerning Muslim women in war zones and contrasting the severity of their situation to Saudi women’s situation. In doing so, they also accuse human rights organizations of being selective of the issues they choose to get involved with. To illustrate, the following are examples from two different users:

(6)

Human rights organizations didn’t care about women in #Syria or women in #Burma, but they only cared about #Saudi_Women_Driving?!!

(7)

Liberals around the world are concerned about women driving, and they’re never concerned about the thousands of women imprisoned by the Syrian dictator, a lot of them are pregnant while their kids get slaughtered with knives!

These examples further exemplify the framing of the *Women2Drive* campaign as a foreign conspiracy with ulterior motives. In this case, the users did not explicitly say that it is a conspiracy; however, they frame it as a foreign conspiracy by highlighting the selectiveness of “human rights organizations” (example 6) and “Liberals around the world” (example 7). Human rights organizations are generally stigmatized among Muslim clerics as anti-Islamic, betraying Islamic principles and values for the purpose of enforcing Western values among Muslims (Mayer 1991). This creates an association between human rights organizations and the notion of
Westernization, which is clear in example 6. The user in this example accuses these organizations of overlooking other serious issues concerning Muslim women (in Syria and Burma), and only caring about Saudi women. The idea here is that human rights organizations are intentionally targeting Saudi Arabia because of its resistance to the pressures of Westernization.

Example 7 states that “they’re never concerned about the thousands of women imprisoned by the Syrian dictator …” where “they” refers to non-Saudi supporters of the campaign. By associating supporters with Western ideologies of liberalism and human rights, the users frame the campaign as a Western plot threatening the stability of Saudi society. By specifying women of Syria and Burma in both posts, these users suggest that “human rights organizations” and “liberals around the world” are targeting Saudi women in particular to serve malicious motives. This characterized the campaign as a deliberate attempt by foreign sources to interfere and ultimately reinforces the clerics’ position against the driving campaign.

Analyzing the men clerics’ posts within their cultural and religious context is essential to understand the posts’ associations and functionality. It is important to understand the framework from which Islamic clerics operate in order to interpret their justifications of the driving ban. The notion that Western organizations are behind the driving campaign and aim to corrupt Saudi women and to threaten the stability of Saudi society underlies the antagonistic positions those clerics take. The depiction of the presupposed foreign conspiracy as deliberate interference with national affairs becomes a recurrent theme among the men clerics where they argue for it using culturally familiar intertextual references.
The “Harm Prevention” Frame

In addition to framing the campaign as a Western conspiracy, the men clerics utilized an Islamic principle as a religious reason for prohibiting women driving. Within this Islamic principle, the men clerics highlight the harmful outcomes of the driving campaign, which include liberating women and Westernizing the society. Islamic scholars have derived this principle from the study of the Quran and hadith—short narratives about Prophet Muhammad's sayings, actions and behavior. The principle's phrasing in Arabic translates into “warding off corruption takes precedence over bringing benefits,” which basically means that when deciding on doing something, if the negatives of doing something outweigh the positives, then you should avoid it. This principle became an Islamic maxim that scholars and clerics use to issue rulings concerning modern issues that were not discussed in the Quran and Prophet Muhammad's hadith. One of these current social issues is women driving, where there is no text in the Quran or hadith that states its religious prohibition.

When using this Islamic principle as a religious justification for the ban, men claim superior knowledge of what becomes beneficial or harmful for society. In this way, they position themselves in a higher status than women by evaluating societal issues and predicting their consequences. The assumption here is that the men clerics know what is beneficial for the society at large, and for women in particular. Therefore, they are in a higher position to issue mandates according to what they view as beneficial or harmful. I call this the ‘harm-prevention’ frame based on the principle the men clerics utilize to make their justification.

In this section, I illustrate how men incorporated this Islamic principle directly and sometimes indirectly in their tweets. The foreign conspiracy frame still overlaps with the harm-prevention frame since both frames convey possible threats to the Islamic and national
conventions, as suggested by the Islamic clerics. While many of these posts explicitly mention the ‘harm-prevention’ principle, others implicitly indicate it through highlighting the negative consequences of women driving or indicating possible threats to the society. These show the harm-prevention frame through evaluative language, using descriptive words and adjectives of the destructive consequences of the driving act.

The following post explicitly uses this Islamic maxim to justify the prohibition of women driving. The user lists other religiously forbidden behavior in Islamic teachings, and ends the post with the hashtag #No_to_Women_Driving:

(8)

Guided by the “warding off corruption” maxim, alcohol was forbidden, gazing was forbidden, unlawful privacy was forbidden, traveling to non-Muslim regions was forbidden, and we declare it for “warding off corruption” #No_to_Women_Driving

The user references other actions that were forbidden because they fall under the ‘warding off corruption’ principle. Other users’ familiarity with these forbidden matters and the ‘warding off corruption’ principle is required in order to understand why women driving falls under this category. Additionally, the user assumes others’ agreement with the justifications behind these other things, including forbidding traveling to non-Muslim countries. Some extremists prohibit traveling to non-Muslim countries if there was no urgent need to travel. Listing women driving under the same category as these other rulings illustrates the religious orientation of this prohibition. Through extending the “warding off corruption” principle to Women2Drive, the user affirms the necessity of maintaining cultural norms and religious conventions.
Furthermore, he vaguely uses the collective “we” in “we declare it,” where it is not clear whether he is referring to himself and his fellow clerics or to opponents of women driving in general. Another user utilized a similar strategy where there’s an implied dialogue between “us” versus “them.” In this example, “we” is mentioned twice, demanding that women respond to the clerics’ claim that the corruptive consequences of women driving outweigh their benefits.

(9)

No_to_Women_Driving
We continue telling you #Liberals and tails of the West’s buttock [blind followers of the West], respond to the corruptive consequences we’ve mentioned concerning women driving, which are realistic and applicable

The user here frames Women2Drive as a foreign conspiracy with the aim of Westernizing Muslim women. He shows that by referring to women activists using the Arabic metaphor (“أذناب الغرب”), “tails attached to the West’s buttock” which loosely translates to “blind followers of the West”. The Arabic phrasing is used in a derogatory way to imply that someone is following another mindlessly. The metaphor intensifies the framing of the campaign by dehumanizing the West in suggesting that liberals are their tails and they only follow them mindlessly. This hyperbolic description of women activists does not only aim to degrade women, it also undermines their agency in creating social change. The indexical associations of the metaphor demonstrate the intertextual nature of framing in discourse.

The following example illustrates a case where the user referred to a specific woman activist by name:
Manal al-Sharif is one of the women who has been recruited to rebel against the Saudi government, she was imprisoned for a couple of days and her tears never stopped, so they pitied her and let her go, unfortunately her tears turned out to be crocodile tears.

This is one of many examples where clerics presuppose unverified information; here it is that Manal al-Sharif works for foreign agencies. The user declares that the social activist is “recruited to rebel” against the government and then describes her tears when she was imprisoned. However, there is nothing in his other tweets that mentions the source of this information or elaborates on this accusation. This post, like many others, is based on the clerics’ own assumptions since no official evidence exists of the activist’s involvement with foreign influence. Such subjective inference of events is clear in the evaluative metaphor the user ends the story with: “they turned out to be crocodile tears.” This tweet is based on false or unverified information. The tears here also contribute to presenting women as weak and undermining their agency. The user undermines the role of women activists by also claiming that Manal al-Sharif was recruited by an external source, showing their incapability of thinking and organizing the campaign by themselves. This tweet falls under the ‘harm prevention’ frame because of the cautionary tone concerning the rebelling action of Manal al-Sharif. By claiming that she is “one of the women who has been recruited to rebel against the Saudi government,” the user presupposes that there are other women who also fall under the alleged rebelling threat.

Another example that incorporates the foreign conspiracy frame with the harm-prevention frame was posted on the day of the campaign, October 26. This user refers to the
‘warding off corruption’ Islamic principle while framing the campaign as a corrupting attempt from the West:

Sedition or driving?
It becomes suspicious when the West talks about women driving under the pretext of human rights which uncovers its contradiction to the principle that warding off corruption takes precedence over bringing benefits.

As mentioned earlier, human rights organizations are usually associated with Western ideologies that presumably aim to change Islamic conventions (Mayer 1991). This is another presupposition the men clerics generally hold. The user assumes that the West is responsible for the campaign based on its media coverage as a call for an individual and social right. The Western media’s news coverage of the campaign sparked suspicion and negative reactions among clerics in my dataset. By posing the question at the outset of the tweet “Sedition or driving?” the user questions the motives behind the campaign by suggesting that it’s not just for driving. The user seems to answer the question after by suggesting that the West’s media interest in the Women2Drive campaign is “suspicious.” This suspicion about the sources and motivations of the campaign is also clear in another cleric’s tweet, where he explicitly mentions the word “conspiracy”:

#Ministry_Bans_Women_Driving It is necessary to clarify the truth and long term goals of this conspiracy and that the issue is not just #Women_Driving, the purpose is bigger than this.
The user starts the post with the hashtag (#Ministry_Bans_Women_Driving), which was popular among men clerics after the Interior Ministry’s cautionary statement addressing women drivers. The declaration of the ban in the hashtag frames the post from the outset as opposing the campaign. Additionally, the negative statement “the issue is not just #Women_Driving” places the campaign’s purpose for women’s right to drive as an unmet expectation and the use of “not just” intensifies the effect. While the Westernization agenda is not explicitly stated, the fact that he described the campaign as a “conspiracy” suggests its harmful agenda. This, in turn, contributes to foregrounding the destructive consequences of the campaign vaguely stated in “the purpose is bigger than this,” which places this post under the harm-prevention frame.

So far, I showed how the men presented their assumptions about Women2Drive as carrying more harm than benefit using the ‘harm-prevention’ Islamic principle. As such, they reaffirm their superior role in society as men Islamic clerics, while reinforcing conventional ideologies and resisting societal change. The following post uses multiple hashtags, including “#Women_Driving_Gate_to_Westernization,” which was mentioned earlier as an explicit indication of the Western conspiracy frame.

(13)

Devastating accidents will be the responsibility of the campaign’s supporters! And evil provokers
#Women_Driving
#Driving_26October
#Women_Driving_Gate_to_Westernization
The use of the future tense in “accidents will be” reveals the prediction framework men clerics utilize to show the negative consequences of the driving campaign. In a declarative structure, the user states that there will be “devastating accidents” resulting from the campaign. The nature of these accidents is not clear. They could be car accidents or ‘accidents’ of cultural impact given the hashtag “#Women_Driving_Gate_to_Westernization,” indicating their negative impact in changing society. Unlike women in my dataset, who generalize “men” as the antagonistic side of the argument, this example shows the specificity of mentioning the “campaign’s supporters” in particular to refer to women activists. This contributes to positioning men clerics and other opponents (men and women) of the driving campaign as the majority, while marginalizing supporters of the campaign as the minority. Even when referencing ‘women’ in a collective way, men clerics specify their connection to the driving campaign, which distinguishes them from other women who are actually against the driving campaign. The following example illustrates this point:

(14)

لو سمح للنساء بالانضمام في 26 أكتوبر فنحن نذهب إلى الفوضى كما ذكرت وزارة الداخلية #قيادة_المرأة_السعودية

If those women are allowed to rally on October 26, it will escalate into chaos and disorder as mentioned by the Interior Ministry #Saudi_Women_Driving

The user here does not refer to “women” in a general sense; he specifies their connection to the campaign “those women” and describes their action as “rallying”. The hashtag #Saudi_Women_Driving, along with the fact that protesting and rallying are prohibited by Saudi law, makes it clear that the user is referring to women activists who organized the driving campaign. Additionally, the user here frames the campaign as a harmful act by predicting its consequences using the words “chaos” and “disorder”. He reinforces his point of view by citing
the Ministry’s statement where the word “rally” was used. While the statement didn’t mention the driving ban, it explicitly states the prohibition of protesting or rallying. This reinforces the user’s frame of harm-prevention while orienting the message towards the government’s regulations. Such orientation is also clear in other posts where men foreground their obligation to prevent harmful consequences. These posts appear as a local call for action addressing other Saudi citizens and appealing to their nationalism.

(15)

We’re watching the devastating events happening in some of the Arabic and Islamic regions, every loyal Saudi should do his best to prevent harm and sedition from our beloved country #Saudi

The harm-prevention frame is exemplified in the user’s call for other Saudis “to prevent harm and sedition.” This frame is presented as a collective action involving “every loyal Saudi”. By using the adjectives “loyal” and “beloved” in “our beloved country,” the user creates an in-group membership that excludes those who want to cause harm. While the driving campaign was not explicitly named here, the timing of the post (one day after the campaign) and the user’s surrounding tweets suggest its relevance to the campaign. The user here reinforces the necessity of maintaining stability and resisting external influence appealing to other’s sense of patriotism. The hashtag “#Saudi” further highlights this nationalistic cause.

The use of the plural “we” and “our” contributes to the exclusionary approach observed in the men cleric’s dataset. It is not clear whom the pronouns “we” and “our” refer to; however, the adjective “loyal” in “every loyal Saudi” makes the exclusiveness of this membership clear. In other words, the user seems to suggest that loyal Saudis are those who abide by the ‘harm-
prevention’ principle and stand against women’s right to drive. This exclusionary approach of
categorizing ‘us versus them’ is clear in the pronoun choice of the following post. The user cites
a quotation from a prominent Saudi Islamic cleric (Muhammad ibn al Uthaymeen).

What’s required from us is to dedicate our efforts to block this sweeping torrent that
aims for women’s equality with men, when in reality their aim is to destroy her morality
and corrupt the family structure. Ibn al Uthaymeen

As mentioned in the previous section, hyperbole is part of the men clerics’ portrayal of
the Women2Drive movement. In this example, comparing the campaign to a “sweeping torrent”
is an exaggerated way to describe the women’s campaign. The metaphorical image of “sweeping
torrent” implies destructive consequences that need to be prevented. This is one of many
examples where men clerics in my dataset use strong terms to reinforce the metaphor of ‘foreign
attack/ conspiracy’ and the need to prevent it.

This post provides warnings, predictions and recommendations, all encapsulated in one
quote. The user’s endorsement of the quotation is implied given the fact that the whole post
consists of the quote, without any commentary by the user indicating his disapproval of women
driving. In doing so, the user employs polarized vocabulary in the use of the pronouns “us,”
“our” and “their.” This polarization strategy underlies the characterization of the campaign as a
negative entity that aims to “destroy” and “corrupt” the unity of Saudi society. Citing religious
scholars who do not support women’s right to drive is one of the recurrent strategies the men use to indicate their points of view. By citing a religious figure, the user suggests a religious metamessage that justifies the driving prohibition based on ethical reasons. It also evokes culturally recognizable texts and narratives that seem to enhance his credibility among others and strengthen the validity of the ‘harm prevention’ frame. These evoked prior contexts demonstrate the intertextual connection between contemporary texts concerning the issue of women driving and prior religious and cultural contexts, which underly the framing of the women driving campaign among men clerics.

**Women Activists**

The framing of the *Women2Drive* campaign is inherently intertextual. It draws on the audience’s familiarity with the referenced figures/events, and their fluency in the language used. These frames are influenced by the users’ choice of language—Arabic or English—and the sociopolitical implications these languages carry in Saudi society. While the men clerics in my dataset only used Arabic in their posts, the women used both English and Arabic. Their English tweets—comprising 15 percent of their overall posts—were widely circulated, ‘retweeted’ and ‘favorited’ by other Twitter members. More than half of those English tweets contained links to external news articles from English media sources reporting on the driving campaign. I will first illustrate women’s language choice by conducting a thematic analysis of their English tweets, highlighting how their choice of English reveals their target audience and contributes to the ‘international outreach’ frame. I will then examine the women’s Arabic tweets by focusing on the linguistic strategies the women used to respond to the men clerics’ justifications and the government’s cautionary statement. Their choice of Arabic and their tweets’ interpretive nature
contribute to the ‘evaluative ratification’ frame that orients their message to the government while highlighting the legitimacy of their demands and the campaign’s peaceful approach.

Language Choice and the “International Outreach” Frame

Choice of language plays a crucial role in indicating users’ expectations about the medium and its audience. It also contributes to framing the message through orienting it to certain audiences—Arabic-speaking or English-speaking. In a bilingual context like Saudi Arabia, language choice becomes a crucial element in indexing the author’s position and framing the meaning of the message. Where there is an absence of conventional paralinguistic cues, language choice becomes an essential component of framing on Twitter. Language choice, according to Tagg and Seargeant (2013), constitutes a functional component of audience design strategies in multilingual contexts. They define the form of audience design that exists in social media networks as “the ways in which users tailor their posts to the expectations of their readership” (162), which parallels speakers’ audience design strategies in un-mediated conversations.

The choice of English in the women activists’ tweets carries framing significance for several reasons. First, the status and function of the English language in a primarily Arabic context triggers intertextual associations about the nature of the women’s issue and the campaign. Second, the striking difference between their use of English and the men’s exclusive use of Arabic highlights each group’s language ideologies and their positions towards women driving. Third, as I will illustrate through examples from women’s posts, there are certain thematic associations of the choice of the English language over Arabic, which proves to be relevant to the framing of the issue to the outside (non-Arabic speaking) world and to structure their posts within international outreach contexts.
The instances where women used English instead of Arabic varied in their content and purpose, but they mostly fall in one of four categories. I will list the four categories with representative examples from the dataset. These categories are identified based on content analysis of the women’s English tweets and their recurrent themes.

First are tweets about local breaking news concerning Saudi officials’ reactions to the driving campaign. These include posts reporting arrests of women who participated in the campaign (example 1) or news stories on local reactions of political or religious authorities (example 2 and 3). These tweets were in the form of links to articles in media sources. The following examples, taken from several women activists in my dataset, illustrate this category.

(1) 13 women stopped by police today! Ages 22-44 & cars confiscated for it! Only for being Female While Driving #FWD http://sabq.org/MNGfde

(2) Saudi Arabia issues warning as protest nears http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/e41b65d5ae674f9184c0bf1889963b6b/ML--Saudi-Women-Driving … via @therepublicnews #Women2Drive #قيادة_26اكتوبر

(3) Saudi clerics decry bid by female drivers http://b.globe.com/162tf9p via @BostonGlobe #Women2Drive #قيادة_26اكتوبر

Second are tweets that refer to news from international news agencies that covered the driving campaign and demonstrated international involvement. Some of these instances include links to multimedia resources, photos or videos (example 4) or link the tweet to news articles (example 5), while others contained text only (example 6).
They just mentioned #women2drive in the International NYT in Conversation event #Cool #Dubai… http://instagram.com/p/f-b5krTG82/


Turn on your TV: In ten minutes CNN reports on the women driving ban.

Third, there were tweets that demonstrate women’s support for each other and show their active participation in the driving campaign. These included tweets reporting on other Saudi women’s driving with links to videos depicting women while driving their cars. Others (example encourage women to continue driving their cars even after October 26.

May Al Sawyan drove in Riyadh today! http://youtu.be/GN0vnhPX2hc مي الصوياين تقود في الرياض اليوم #قيادة_26اكتوبر

Saudi films himself teaching daughter driving http://www.emirates247.com/videos/virals/saudi-films-himself-teaching-daughter-driving-2013-10-21-1.525074 … @Oct26Driving #Women2Drive

Oct 26 is symbolic, women drove before, they'll drive on & they'll drive after. Always individually & in all the major cities.

Finally, women activists referenced locally well-known individuals by name and/or Twitter usernames in order to either show appreciation for their support or to report news related to the driving campaign. Unlike the women drivers referenced in the previous category, the women featured here are well-known Saudi social activists. The use of recognizable names by
women contributes to encouraging other women who initially expressed doubts about the responsiveness of women to the campaign. There were circulating tweets, mostly by opponents of women driving, indicating that women were afraid to participate and that the women activists exaggerate women’s involvement in the campaign. Consequently, the English tweets in this category highlight women’s active participation in the campaign and some are intended to debunk these recycled rumors about women’s lack of responsiveness towards the campaign.

(10) @kalthami supporting Saudi women drivers. Thank you :) #oct26driving #women2drive via @speedsisterfilm

(11) Latifa Al Eirri drove her car just now in Riyadh & says everything was fine & all those horror stories we were told are a mirage

(12) According to @LoujainHathloul some women drove themselves to work today!

These posts portray the campaign’s success by responding to circulated claims about the lack of responsiveness to the campaign and suggesting the success and involvement of prominent women in the campaign. Tannen’s (2009) definition of intertextuality as “how the meaning of current discourse results from its relationship to prior discourse,” is clear in these posts. Other users’ familiarity with the referenced figures (e.g. @Kalthami, Latifa Al Erriri, @LoujainHathloul) is necessary in order to grasp what women activists are doing in those tweets. Additionally, to understand the reactive nature of these tweets, one needs to be familiar with the controversial narrative surrounding the campaign and the false claims that circulated at the time. In example 11, “[she] says everything was fine & all those horror stories we were told are a mirage” requires contextual knowledge of “all those horror stories.” The fact that this post
was in English, even though the referenced figure (Laifa Al Eirri) is a Saudi Arabian woman, presupposes an expectation that the international audience would be familiar with her and would appreciate her involvement in the campaign. The use of “we” in “we were told” also requires some knowledge about the user as a social activist who identifies herself as a member the campaign.

While in this example the user did not use any hashtags, other posts’ frequent use of English hashtags, indicates their international outreach approach. In a study that analyzed over 70,000 tweets and hashtags related to the Women2Drive movement, Arabic tweets were found to be more likely linked to local topics and events, while English content and hashtags are associated with international contexts. The purpose of English use in these posts, according to the study, is to “promote transnational and inter-organizational support from various organizations such as human rights and women’s rights, viz., Women2Drive Campaign.” (Yuce et al. 2014: 419). This finding correlates directly with the English tweets in my dataset, where women used English to publicize society’s receptiveness to the campaign and portray the challenges women participants faced as a result.

The fact that those tweets and their hashtags were in English indicate that they are addressed to a wider audience beyond language and regional barriers. They contribute to publicizing the impact of the campaign to an international audience, which frames the Women2Drive campaign within international outreach contexts for social justice and gender equality. Hashtag circulation in different languages is associated with “drawing local collective action in the transnational Twittersphere network …which contribute to transnational support for localized movements” (Yuce et al. 2014: 415). For example, the use of hashtags in the Egyptian revolution contributed to the growth of activism groups and the empowerment of specific
activists who hold an influential role in orienting the uprising’s discourse (Bruns et. al 2013). The fact that the women activists in my dataset are the ones who organized the Twitter campaign underlies their ‘international outreach’ expectation of the two most frequently used hashtags: #Driving_26October and #Women2Drive.

As I have shown so far, women take a more inclusive position, where they tweet in multiple languages (including French), and target their posts towards both the Saudi community and the international one. The following example by a woman activist illustrates the use of multiple languages, where she refers to an imaginary date (November 31) that women activists set in order to show the wider scope of the driving campaign. November 31, not a real date in the calendar, was chosen to indicate that the driving campaign should not be limited to one day (i.e. October 26).

(13)

26 October - ﻋد ﺍ ﻻ ﻱا ﻷ أو ﻛ ﻣدا 
Je soutiens la conduite des femmes.
I support women driving.
#Nov31Driving

The user here addresses both national and international communities. By mentioning both hashtags #Nov31Drive and ﻋد ﺍ ﻻ ﻱا ﻷ أو ﻛ ﻣدا 26 أكتوبر (#Driving_26October”), she targets other Saudi women while framing the post within international contexts. She addresses the national community by first using Arabic to express her support of the campaign. Expressing support of the campaign in English and French indicates the transnational scope of this post, targeting not only Arabic-speaking users of Twitter, but also native speakers of languages other than Arabic (in this case English and French).
Language choice, according to Jaffe (2009), contributes to the positioning of the speaker within the desired social identity and contributes to their cultural membership. In the post above, the order of these multi-lingual statements carries significance concerning their target audience. The user in the tweet placed the Arabic statement first, followed by French and then English. The user aligns with the local community by using Arabic in the first statement and by also using an Arabic hashtag. This use of Arabic contributes to her alignment with the local culture and creates a sense of in-group membership. It also reveals the post’s inclusive outreach to a wider community, including the local one.

The utilization of foreign languages does not only indicate the international reach of the post, it also implies the user’s projected identity and their self positioning, particularly their level of education, progressiveness and open-mindedness. In a study about Saudi Arabians’ English-Arabic code-switching, Alsbiai (2010) examined code-switching in relation to gender among Saudi bilinguals. The study found that women, more than men, interjected English words and phrases in their speech. These English elements in women’s speech, according to the study, become a prestige marker where women show their knowledge and fluency in a foreign language. While I am not testing this hypothesis in Twitter discourse, the use of foreign languages among women in my dataset indicates their multi-cultural awareness and their awareness of Twitter as a medium and its target audience. The following examples illustrate this point more clearly, where the user here refers to the American Civil Rights Movement:

(14) "‘Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that.’
- Martin Luther King Jr."

(15) I want to see #TheButler again.. wish I can take all Saudi women with me
The use of English in these tweets contributes to both framing the campaign within international outreach contexts and positioning the user as a knowledgeable individual. This is emphasized in her reference to the American Civil Rights Movement, by quoting Martin Luther King Jr. in the first example and referencing The Butler--a movie about an African American butler in the White House which chronicles the Civil Rights Movement and includes a number of civil rights historical figures. The user in this case recontextualizes well-known references associated with civil rights and minority groups into the context of women driving. In doing so, the author frames the Women2Drive campaign within inequality and social injustice frames. By voicing a figure from the African-American Civil Rights Movement (i.e. Martin Luther King Jr.), the author echoes injustices against minority groups and frames the driving prohibition as one of them. The framing of the Women2Drive campaign, therefore, becomes associated with other civil rights movements and their revolutionary nature. Another post by a different user carries similar frames by the use of the hashtag “#FWD Female While Driving” in reporting the arrest of women drivers who participated in the campaign.

(16)
13 women stopped by police today! Ages 22-44 & cars confiscated for it! Only for being Female While Driving #FWD http://sabq.org/MNGfde

“Female While Driving” echoes “Driving While Black” which is a word play on “Driving While Intoxicated,” a crime punished by U.S. law. The phrase “Driving While Black” is used in contemporary American vernacular to refer to racial profiling against African American drivers, where the claim is that they are pulled over by police because of their race. Aside from the “driving” connection between the two phrases, the phrase suggests social inequality similar to being “Female While Driving.” The user could also be referring to the
original phrase “Driving While Intoxicated,” which in this context compares the crime of driving while intoxicated with its equivalent in the Saudi law where being a female driver is punishable. The intertextual ties between those references reveal the multilayered nature of framing, which in both cases portray a framing of the women driving issue within social justice contexts.

The “Evaluative Ratification” Frame

Women’s Arabic tweets included content addressing other Saudi Twitter members, men and women. First, there were tweets directly addressed to women who support the driving campaign and are interested in participating. Those were in the form of instructions to other women about the campaign’s guidelines. Each participant in my dataset tweeted a minimum of three times about the campaign’s structure and instructions. They also posted tweets with cautionary remarks to only drive individually (not in groups). This is because any collective action demanding change is considered a protest, and protesting is completely prohibited in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, women activists repeatedly tweeted about the importance of avoiding groups and driving individually.

Arabic is also used by women activists to address governmental reactions, including the statements issued by the Ministry of Interior’s spokesman, Mansour Al-Turki, three days before the campaign, cautioning women about the consequences of their driving act. The vaguely worded statement sparked contradictory reactions from both communities, who interpreted its content as a support for their position. The following is a translation of the original statement.  

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2 The translation is taken from the Saudi Press Agency. I edited the original translation for language clarity purposes. Original translation was retrieved from http://www.spa.gov.sa/English/readsinglenews.php?id=1160529&content_id=&scroll=1
The security spokesperson of the Ministry of Interior issued a statement on rumors exchanged over social networks and some media outlets calling for congregations and rallies under an alleged day of female driving. The laws of the Kingdom prohibit activities disturbing the public peace and opening venues to sedition which only serve the senseless, the ill-intentioned, intruders, and opportunity hunters. The Ministry of Interior assures all that the concerned bodies will fully and firmly enforce the laws against violators. At the same time, the Ministry values what many citizens have voiced concerning for the importance of keeping the peace, stability, and avoidance of what leads to disunity and stratification of society.

The statement did not explicitly state the prohibition of driving, which led women activists to interpret it as an implicit permission for women to drive. Women, however, expressed concern about the Ministry's description of the campaign as “congregations and rallies”; as a result, their tweets emphasized that the campaign does not call for protesting, only individual driving.

Among women activists in my dataset, there were 46 tweets mentioning the statement. Only one of those tweets used English. Given that Arabic is the only official language in Saudi Arabia, the users’ utilization of Arabic to address the government demonstrates the women’s awareness of their audience. Some of these posts mentioned the Ministry’s statement by criticizing and questioning the message of the statement. The first example was posted one day before the campaign (October 25) and the second one was posted on the same day the statement was issued (October 23). Both posts express women’s disappointment at the Ministry’s failure to understand that the campaign is not a protest and that women are not trying to defy governmental rules that prohibit protesting.
It would be better for women not to participate in the campaign tomorrow on Saturday due to the Ministry’s inability to distinguish between protests and women’s right to exercise an individual right. #Driving31November

I am surprised by the Ministry’s statement about #Driving_26October, the campaign is clear from day one, no protesting, no rallying, do your chores and get them over with. Specifying a day is only symbolic! #FedUp

Both examples affirm the campaign’s peaceful approach to social change by obeying the no-protests law. The users demonstrate their awareness of national law and their abidance by it through negating the Ministry’s claim that Women2Drive is a protest. The use of negative statements in “women should not participate” and “no protesting, no rallying” contributes to reaffirming women’s framing of the campaign as a peaceful exercise of women’s right to drive, not a protest intended to challenge or defy the government’s ban. The users in both examples recontextualize the Ministry’s cautionary remarks by mentioning the words “protesting” and “rallying” in the negative sense to reaffirm their abidance by the law while aligning with the government.

Other women in my dataset mentioned the Ministry’s statement by interpreting its content as supportive of the campaign. Adjectives, according to Tannen (1993), “nearly always represent an interpretive or evaluative process on the part of the speaker” (36). The following example illustrates the evaluative process on the part of women activists towards the statement. This is a recurrent pattern found among the women, where they use adjectives and adverbs to interpret and evaluate the Ministry’s statement in support of their demands to drive. This kind of
interpretation involves adding information that was not mentioned in the original statement. The following example illustrates an instance where the woman activist comments on the statement by specifying the punishment for women drivers, which was not mentioned in the original statement.

The statement by Maj. Gen Al-Turki to the CNN is clear, the woman driver is only issued a ticket and thank you #Driving_26October #Driving31October

The word “only” implies that there is an expectation for more than what is indicated by the statement. The user states the consequences of the driving act as the woman driver is “only issued a ticket,” clarifying what was falsely circulated at that time that the punishment is to jail the woman driver and her male legal guardian. Issuing a ticket, compared to jail, is more lenient, and in that sense the woman interprets it as a first step to lift the ban and accept women drivers. The original statement, however, did not mention “issuing a ticket” as a punishment. It vaguely referred to the consequences as “the concerned bodies will fully and firmly enforce the laws against violators.” The woman in this case foregrounds the fact that “only [violators] women drivers” will be punished, and added information about the kind of punishment: “issued a ticket.” By addressing the consequences and mentioning the statement, the woman shows an alignment with the government’s regulations, while interpreting the statement in accordance with the demands of the campaign.

Posts interpreting the statement as an explicit approval of Women2Drive are frequent among the women activists. These interpretations appear to be motivated by the women’s own expectations about reactions of the society and other women activists. By stating the relatively
lenient penalties the Ministry stated, the women activists also contribute to encouraging other women drivers to participate in the campaign. The following post derives its content from the statement by cautioning other women “do not rally”.

(20)

The Interior Ministry cautioned only against gathering in rallies, not driving individually. Dear woman, proceed with your driving to do your chores and do not rally.

The word “rally” indicates the woman’s awareness of the Ministry’s statement, which included cautionary remarks about “congregations and rallies under the pretext of an alleged day of female driving.” By posting that, the user acknowledges governmental rules against rallying and protesting, which is also accomplished by the directive verb “do not rally” after asking women to drive individually. This contributes to framing the campaign as a peaceful movement while responding to antagonistic points of view portraying the campaign as a protest.

Many other posts show women’s interpretation of the statement as an implicit gesture from the government to allow driving. For example, some women expressed their gratitude to the Ministry’s implicit “support” through the cautionary statement against the act of protesting. They presuppose the Ministry’s support based on the fact that the statement did not explicitly say that it is banned for women to get behind the wheel, and that only the act of protesting is prohibited.

(21)

Thank you Interior Ministry.. you blocked the road in front of those who claim the campaign is a protest and shut them up #Driving_26October
Ministry of the interior publishes its statement, it will enforce law against protesting or any attempt to unsettle national security, which means protecting women [Link to the statement]
#Driving_26October

This ‘thankful’ attitude women take towards the ministry for its remarks indicates their interpretation of the statement and demonstrates their framing of the driving campaign. The first example (21) presupposes that the Ministry has issued the statement in order to end the circulated claims that women are protesting against the ban. The second example (22) starts with reporting the statement and suggesting that the arrest of women drivers, and not the driving of women, is considered as an attempt to “unsettle national security.” The post ends with “which means protecting women,” an explicit inference interpreting the statement as a declaration to protect women. Although the women might not believe that the ministry’s statement is really supportive of the campaign, they use this interpretive strategy to respond to it and declare the legitimacy of their demands.

There are other instances where women showed this interpretation process to frame the statement as a support for the campaign. The user in the following example describes the statement as an “initial declaration to allow driving”:

We should celebrate the Ministry’s statement as I see it as an initial declaration to allow driving, especially that it didn’t mention the driving prohibition
The same idea is operating in the following example, where the user refers to the widely circulated claim that the driving prohibition is a social, not political, matter. According to this claim, the main reason for the driving prohibition is that Saudi society is not ready to accept a change in driving laws and allow women to drive. This post responds to the claim by referring to the statement and arguing that the government is in fact responsible for changing the law against women drivers.

(24)

According to the Interior Ministry, it’s the only institution that can ban women from driving, and not society. This invalidates the argument that driving is a social matter.

The use of the word ‘only’ reveals the expectation that other users are aware of the government’s responsibility for the driving prohibition. Also the use of the negative in “not society” alludes to that expectation as well. The woman responds to prior events that are locally familiar to Saudis in the last statement, “this invalidates the argument that driving is a social matter.” Her response to previously circulated claims that driving is a social matter shows an intertextual reference that contributes to orienting her message to the government’s regulations while aligning with other women activists.

Women’s use of Arabic indicates their awareness of the target audience, which consists of Arabic-speaking users. The fact that they frequently mention social and political references without explaining them seems to indicate that they are specifically targeting a Saudi audience familiar with these references. The following illustrates an example where the same user reported
on the statement once in Arabic and then in English. The English tweet was the only post I found in the dataset mentioning the statement in English.

   English tweet: The English version of the Interior Ministry is even more explicit in its support for the Oct 26th Campaign. [Hyperlink]

   Arabic tweet: We should celebrate the Ministry’s statement as I see it as an initial declaration to allow driving, especially that it didn’t mention the driving prohibition.

Both the Arabic and the English tweets include the user’s interpretation of the statement. By using the adjective “explicit” in her English tweet, the user is evaluating the level of governmental “support” for the campaign. Her comparison of the English translation to the Arabic version in “even more explicit” indicates a presupposition that the Arabic version was in fact supportive of the campaign. She also mentions the name of the campaign “October 26th”, something she did not do in the Arabic tweet. The Arabic tweet, as I mentioned before, includes interpretive naming of the statement without actually referring to what that statement is about. She presupposes the Arabic audience’s awareness of the statement’s content and purpose, without declaring it as she did in the English tweet. This clearly shows that her Arabic tweet is intended for a local Arabic audience who already have heard about the statement. The user’s audience awareness is highlighted in the English tweet, where she specifies the name of the campaign and adds a hyperlink to the English version of the statement.

   By declaring the government’s support for the campaign, the user interprets the statement as supporting Women2Drive in both English and Arabic. This reveals the ‘evaluative ratification’ frame recurrent among women activists in my dataset. Within this frame, the women evaluate the content of the statement as a positive remark on the campaign by acknowledging the government’s rules against protesting and ratifying them through emphasizing the ‘individual’
approach of the campaign. This frame is intertextually structured by referencing the statement and recontextualizing its content, thus revealing the intricate relationship between framing and intertextuality.

The Tweets of Men and Women

Overview

Within the timeframe selected for the data collection (October 23 – October 27), women activists in my dataset posted more Twitter posts than men. This is understandable considering the nature of the event where women are the direct stakeholders of the driving campaign. The driving issue opened up an active conversation among the five women activists where they collectively posted 212 tweets—excluding retweets and replies—within the five day collection period. The five men clerics, on the other hand, posted 82 tweets within the same timeframe. The women used both Arabic and English in their tweets; they tweeted 85 percent of the time in Arabic and 15 percent in English. More than half of the women’s English tweets included links to external articles from English media sources. The men, on the other hand, tweeted only in Arabic; there were no instances of English use among the men’s tweets.

The idea that Twitter users frame the driving campaign by orienting themselves to sets of pre-established cultural notions is central to my analysis. Tannen’s (1993) notion of frames as “structures of expectation” based on speakers’ previous knowledge and experience reveals the intertextual nature of framing in discourse. Users on Twitter function within specific frames in order to accomplish specific communicative goals. One of these communicative goals is to indicate their position towards the driving issue and justify it through contributing to the Twitter conversation. Through their posts, users reveal their framing of the campaign, and their expectations about the medium and its audience. These frames and expectations are discursively
accomplished through using certain language strategies that contribute to expressing the users’ points of view.

I have so far illustrated the recurrent frames constructed by each community. The men clerics in my dataset reveal two overarching frames to describe the Women2Drive campaign. First is the ‘foreign conspiracy’ frame where Western meddling with interior social affairs is highlighted. Second, they foreground the ‘harm-prevention’ frame where they highlight the negative consequences of women driving as the cause of the prohibition. Women activists, on the other hand, highlight the social outreach frame by constructing their posts as a ‘call for action’ where they orient their messages to a wider, multinational community. The other frame women highlight is what I call the ‘evaluative ratification’ frame through which women respond to governmental cautionary remarks by orienting their messages towards governmental laws. In this section, I illustrate how men and women use referring terms, hashtags, and other linguistic features as an intertextual means to frame the driving campaign.

Referring Terms

Referring terms in media discourse carry traces of the contexts from which they emerge. These terms demonstrate Bakhtin’s notions about word choice: “[n]o living word relates to its object in a single way” (276) and “all words and forms are populated by intentions.” (293). As such, the men and women in my dataset described the driving campaign using words and phrases that reveal their frames of the campaign. In order to capture the recurrent trends in the way both communities framed the driving campaign, I counted the words/phrases mentioned by users to describe or refer to the campaign. Table 3 shows who and what were the terms used to refer to the campaign. While there are other words/phrases used to refer to the driving campaign, these were the most frequently used ones.
Table 3. Referring terms used to describe Women2Drive among the two communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referring term</th>
<th>Men Clerics</th>
<th>Women Activists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conspiracy- Westernization Project</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instigation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Driving Issue</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for corruption - Incitement</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Right/ Peaceful Act</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both men and women took an evaluative approach to describe the campaign and express their points of view towards it. Referring terms such as “campaign” and “women driving issue” were primarily used by women, who also described the campaign in an evaluative way as an “individual right” and “peaceful act”. For instance, the following woman activist described the campaign as “peaceful” and used the phrase “our right” to describe the driving act, both of which were counted among the ‘individual right/ peaceful act’ category used by women. The woman activist here talks about Muslim Imams who addressed women activists at Friday prayers sermons.

I’m disappointed by every Imam who overlooked the Islamic nation’s concerns and focused on our right to drive as a conspiracy, even though our demands were peaceful: we didn’t rally or protest.

By describing the campaign as “our right” and “peaceful,” the women activists frame the campaign as a civil right and the driving act as a peaceful one. This frame is intensified by the fact that she responds to circulating claims by negating the accusations in “we didn’t rally or
protest.” By specifically referencing these two terms, which were mentioned in the Ministry’s statement, the woman demonstrates an intertextual means by which she uses shared knowledge to resist men clerics’ accusations and affirm the campaign’s peaceful approach, thus revealing the role of intertextuality in framing the Women2Drive campaign.

The evaluative process by which users refer to the campaign can also be seen in the way men clerics refer to the Women2Drive campaign as a “conspiracy” and a “call for corruption.” In addition to the context in which these referring terms occur, the person who produces them determines their value and legitimacy. As Bourdieu (1991) points out, “[w]hat creates the power of words and slogans, a power capable of maintaining or subverting the social order, is the belief in the legitimacy of words and of those who utter them” (170). The following examples demonstrate the functionality of referring terms in framing the driving campaign by men clerics. Both examples report a statement, one from a political authority (Prince Naif) and the other from a religious authority (Ibn Uthaymeen) who use evaluative referring terms to describe the harmful consequences of women driving.

الأمير نايف رحمه الله لنسمح بقيادة المرأة دعاة الفساد لا يرون حرية الوصول لها #قيادة_المرأة

Prince Naif, may his soul rest in peace, said we won’t allow women to drive. Those corruption instigators don’t want her freedom, they only want the freedom to get to her #Women_Driving

ابن عثيمين

What’s required from us is to dedicate our efforts to block this sweeping torrent that aims for women’s equality with men, when in reality their aim is to destroy her morality and corrupt the family. Ibn Uthaimin
The antagonistic frames of the men clerics are reflected in their reference to the women activists who organized the driving campaign as “corruption instigators.” Additionally, the description of the objective of the campaign as “to destroy her [Saudi women’s] morality and corrupt the family” reflects the Islamic maxim “warding off corruption takes precedence over bringing benefits” upon which Islamic scholars issue rulings regarding current issues. This, in turn, contributes to reinforcing conventional norms in a society that strictly follows Islamic ideologies, strengthening men clerics’ argument through intertextual references to culturally familiar concepts. The men’s and women’s mutual access to this shared reservoir of prior texts strengthens the men clerics’ argument and reinforces their frames for the driving campaign.

Hashtags as Intertextuality

In addition to referring terms, hashtags on Twitter become an essential element through which users in both communities frame the driving campaign. Hashtags generally prompt users’ interaction with other members of the site and enable visibility of the posted message to a larger audience. The term used in the hashtag becomes searchable, linking it to other similar messages that included the hashtag, and connects Twitter members to each other based on their similar communicated topics. The fact that these hashtags are created by the users themselves, and are not pre-constructed by Twitter, allows for greater flexibility in phrasing the tag and promoting a wider range of topics (Page 2012). Within the Women2Drive movement, hashtags like #Driving_26October and #Women2Drive, provided a running commentary platform where users on both sides of the driving debate participate. The fact that residents of Saudi Arabia are highly active on Twitter boosted the online initiative and increased the number of hashtags associated with it.
I consider hashtags as one of the intertextual means by which users frame the driving campaign. In fact, the notion of intertextuality underlies the functionality of hashtags. Based on Bazerman’s (2004) definition of intertextuality as “[t]he explicit and implicit relations that a text or utterance has to prior, contemporary and potential future texts” (86), hashtags represent an explicit link between the content of the post, the topic of the hashtag, and other posts that used the hashtag. Referencing the hashtag’s topic and linking it to the larger conversation exemplifies an intertextual means by which Twitter users in my dataset frame the Women2Drive campaign. Hashtags, according to Page (2012), “exhibit many characteristics associated with participatory culture” (154). They also contribute to what Zappavigna (2012) calls “searchable talk” that distinguishes Twitter from other means of online communication. She identifies it as a “change in social relations” where we, as Twitter users, make our talk searchable by others “in effect so that we can bond around particular values” (1).

Hashtags contribute to creating a collaborative environment where users participate in enriching the content of the hashtag and signal their position towards the hashtag’s topic. Prior knowledge of the topic and the functionality of hashtags are required in order to effectively communicate and participate in the discussion. This exemplifies the underlying intertextual nature of hashtags.

In my dataset, users’ choice of hashtags and their phrasing represents one of the most explicit features through which they reveal their framing of the campaign and their audience expectations. The two participating groups (women activists and men clerics) utilized hashtags in strikingly different ways. First, the frequency of using hashtags varied; women used hashtags 160 times and men used hashtags 99 times. Whereas men only used Arabic hashtags, women used English hashtags 31 times. Women used 46 different hashtags (i.e. different words and
phrases), whereas men used 18 hashtags. While women had a bigger total number of hashtags than Islamic scholars, 160 and 99 respectively, the men clerics on average used more hashtags. Men in general used hashtags 112.5 percent of the time. Women, on the other hand, used hashtags 75.47 percent of time. Table 2 illustrates the overall number of tweets and hashtags used by both communities.

Table 2: Total number of hashtags and tweets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men Clerics</th>
<th>Women Activists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Tweets</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Hashtags</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average of hashtags used</td>
<td>1.253</td>
<td>0.754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median of hashtags used</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.754</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that the men utilized more hashtags than the women, combined with their exclusive use of Arabic, carries significance with regard to framing and alignment concerning the women driving campaign. The men display active participation through their use of hashtags, which are exclusively Arabic; this in turn reveals their alignment to the local community by orienting their messages to an Arabic-speaking, local audience. This ultimately contributes to the discursive methods through which the men frame the driving campaign as a foreign conspiracy and a social threat. Additionally, the hashtags used by the men indicate these frames. Table 4 demonstrates the hashtags most frequently used by both communities which construct their frames for the Women2Drive campaign.
Table 4. Hashtags most frequently used by the two communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women Activists</th>
<th>Men Clerics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hashtag</td>
<td>Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#قيادة_26اكتوبر</td>
<td>#Driving_26October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Women2Drive</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#قيادة_31نوفمبر</td>
<td>#Driving31November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Oct26Driving</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#التغريدة السابقة</td>
<td>#Previous_Tweet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The users in both communities utilized hashtags in different ways to demonstrate their framing of the driving campaign. Women activists collectively use the hashtags “#قيادة_26اكتوبر” (#Driving_26October) and #Women2Drive in order to refer to the driving movement. The hashtag phrasing is available in both Arabic and English, and women users made use of both or either versions. Men, however, use other Arabic hashtags that do not state the name of the driving movement “Women2Drive.” Men’s hashtags are all in Arabic, and as shown in table 4, the two most used hashtags are “#قيادة_المرأة_السعودية” (#Saudi_Women_Driving) used 16 times and “#قيادة_المرأة_السعودية_التورم” (#No_to_WomenDriving) used 15 times. These hashtags, along with “#قيادة_المرأة_السعودية_التورم” (#Women_Driving_Gate_to_Westernization), used 12 times, structure the men’s framing of the driving campaign in which they overwhelmingly framed the driving campaign as a foreign conspiracy where the West is claimed to meddle with Saudi interior affairs.

These hashtags used by men clerics clearly reflect their stance towards the campaign and its participants. Women, on the other hand, never used hashtags that explicitly oppose the
campaign, and mostly used hashtags that reference the campaign’s name, either #Driving_26October or #Women2Drive. Referring to the campaign by its name—something men in my dataset never did—shows an acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the campaign as an organized entity. The women’s most frequently circulated hashtag is “#ﻠ掴ﺍﺩﺓـ٢٦٠ GIRktOR” (#Driving_26October.) The fact that it’s in Arabic and that it was used 66 times show both its intention to address a local, Arabic-speaking audience and to also align with the local community. This in turn reflects the women’s framing of the campaign within social justice contexts and their alignment with the local community. The women’s second most frequently circulated hashtag is in English, #Women2Drive, which demonstrates their framing of the driving campaign within international contexts to reach a wider transnational audience.

Furthermore, women’s use of hashtags shows creativity and more familiarity with Twitter’s technical features. The hashtag #PreviousTweet is one indication of that; it reflects women’s awareness of the medium and how to use it. Due to Twitter’s space limitation, the hashtag #PreviousTweet or #PT is frequently used to link one tweet with the previous one, indicating that the current tweet is a continuation of the previous one. The fact that only women used it shows their media-consciousness, which reflects their active participation in and awareness of social media. The hashtag #ﻠ掴ﺍﺩﺓـ٣١١١٠٠ #Driving31November was the third most frequently used hashtag among women. While the date November 31 is nonexistent in the calendar, women activists intentionally use it to indicate the continuity of the driving act, beyond October 26, which reflects women’s creativity and sophistication in using social media. The fact that this hashtag carries political implications is reinforced by the fact that the men never used it.
Other Linguistic Evidence of Frames

In this section, I present the linguistic features that enabled users in both communities to discursively construct these frames. These include use of negatives, hyperbole, polarization, generalization, and evaluative language. These distinguish how users in the two groups frame the campaign and align with the government’s regulations.

Negatives

Given the argumentative nature of the topic discussed in my dataset, numerous posts included negative statements. According to Tannen (1993), “a negative statement is made only when its affirmative was expected” (44). Men and women in my dataset used negatives to structure their points of view and intensify their frames. In the men’s dataset, statements like “the issue is not #Women_Driving, the objective is larger than this” and “women driving is not a legitimate right” are frequently incorporated in men’s posts. The use of the negative serves to reinforce men’s point of view about the campaign as a corrupting plot and a foreign conspiracy.

Women, on the other hand, use negative statements to respond to circulating claims about the illegitimacy of the campaign. The accusation that the campaign is a “protest” is one of the main claims women activists respond to using negative statements. Some examples of these negative segments are: “once again, the campaign did not call for protesting” and “no rallies or protests.” The negative statements by women contribute to debunking what they regard as false accusations by opponents of women driving through indicating their acknowledgement of others’ expectations while invalidating them.

Presupposition

Presupposition is defined by Richardson (2007) as “implicit claims inherent in the explicit meaning of a text or utterance which are taken for granted” (63). Being “taken for
“granted” is one of the main empirical properties of presupposition revealed through the intertextual connections of the utterance with the presupposed entity. As Yule (2010) suggests, these presuppositions are not a property of the lexical structure per se; they are a property of the speaker or writer, and the context within which they operate. The assumption that the producer of the presupposed statement is the one who indicates the intended meaning is essential for my analysis. It becomes clear that certain lexical items can be indicative of the speaker’s presuppositions. For instance, according to Tannen (1993), the word “just” reveals “the assumption that others might expect more” (25). This parallels the use of “just” by users in my dataset where they assume others’ agreement with the statement, as in the following example:

#Ministry_Bans_Women_Driving It is necessary to clarify the truth and long term goals of this conspiracy and that the issue is not just #Women_Driving, the purpose is bigger than this.

In this case, the user negates the ‘just’ statement by assuming that others might think that the campaign is “just” about women driving, undermining others’ assumption by using ‘just’ while assuming that they did not think further about its underlying agenda.

In my analysis of women’s ‘evaluative ratification’ frame, I demonstrated how women’s presuppositions about the content of the Ministry’s cautionary statement reveal their interpretive approach to the statement while aligning with the government. The statement did not include explicit mention of prohibiting driving; it only warned women about the legal consequences of breaking the law by protesting. Consequently, women frequently posted for the purpose of minimizing the legal repercussions of driving as in “the statement by Maj. Gen Al-Turki to the CNN is clear, the woman driver is only issued a ticket.” Typically, the legal consequences for
women driving in Saudi would be to charge the woman driver and her male legal guardian by either prison time or other punishment. However, the post above mentions that the charges are only limited to the woman driver herself, and it indicates the nature of the punishment: “issued a ticket.” Therefore, by using “only” the user indicates the presupposition that there are other consequences resulting from defying the law and driving. Other users’ knowledge and familiarity of the Saudi law and the charges against women drivers is required in order to interpret the message of the post.

Another example from the women’s dataset illustrates the user’s assumption that the Arabic version of the statement supports women drivers by comparing it to the English version: “the English version of the Interior Ministry is even more explicit in its support for the Oct 26th Campaign.” This shows a recurrent pattern where women take it for granted that the government’s statement is not against the driving campaign. There is an implied presupposition in the woman’s post that the Arabic version of the Ministry’s statement is in fact supportive of the campaign. Clearly, tracing the intertextual basis of these posts helps us understand the framing of the driving campaign in the women’s posts.

Evaluative Language

The referring words used to describe the *Women2Drive* campaign discussed earlier in the Referring Terms section exemplifies the extent to which the men clerics utilize evaluative language in their Twitter posts. Adjectives such as “مفسد” (corrupting) and “مششو” (suspicious) are used by men to describe the campaign and its supporters, which indicate the evaluative process on the part of the men clerics.

Women driving is not a demand for a legitimate right, it is a *Westernization project* meant to be part of other corrupting projects #Women_Driving_Gate_to_Westernization Sedition or driving?
It becomes **suspicious** when the West talks about women driving under the pretext of human rights which uncovers its contradiction to the principle that warding off corruption takes precedence over bringing benefits.

The underlined descriptive words and phrase contribute to framing the campaign as a “foreign conspiracy.” Tannen (1993) refers to *interpretive naming* as “the process by which a noun is used for a character or object which represents more information” than what is actually presented. Men in their posts often referred to the campaign as a “conspiracy” or “Westernization project,” even though there is no substantial evidence of Western involvement in the campaign. This process of interpretive naming reflects men’s underlying expectations about the campaign while lexically capturing the structure of frames.

*Inferences* are another way through which users structure frames by assuming that something is true and basing that on personal observations and background knowledge. Tannen (1993) illustrates that “speakers state inferences as categorically as they state things they actually saw” (47). The women’s interpretation of the Ministry’s statement, for example, is a clear example where they inferred the meaning from their own expectations and understanding. The women’s acknowledgement of the rules against protesting combined with the fact that there were no explicit prohibitions against driving stated in the Ministry’s statement contribute to their assumption that the cautionary remarks are actually against protesting, not driving. As I illustrated in the ‘interpretive ratification’ frame, prior knowledge and shared experiences underlie women’s inferences of the statement which carries framing significance.

**Hyperbole**

*Hyperbole*—“a device for deliberate exaggeration of meaning” (Tahir 2013: 746)—is one of the primary linguistic devices through which users in both communities structure their frames. By describing an event or a group of people in exaggerated terms, users reveal their frames or
expectations of the driving movement. In the following example, the campaign is compared to an “invasion” attack:

The protest calling for women to drive is a rebellion against our leader and an invasion of our houses from the back, its motivation to impose demands and its objective is to divide a unified society!!

The Arabic idiom, “إِنْتَانِ لَنَبِيَّاتٌ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا” literally translated to “invading our houses from the back,” implies betrayal and manipulation, close in meaning to the English idiom “stabbing someone in the back.” This exaggerated image of the Women2Drive campaign shows the role of hyperbole in structuring frames, which reveals the users’ viewpoint. His position is intensified by describing the campaign as a “protest” and “rebellion,” and using negative lexicalization through verbs associated with the attack metaphor like, “invade”, “impose” and “divide.” Describing the campaign as a betrayal and manipulation contributes to the men’s “foreign conspiracy” frame.

The solidarity of the women’s group membership is further emphasized using hyperbole. There is a recurrent pattern observed in the women’s dataset where they attribute outgroup properties to men in general, even though there are men who support women driving. This gender-based attack is particularly clear in the women’s tweets about a sexual harassment incident that coincided with the driving campaign. The incident occurred outside of a shopping mall in the Eastern region of Saudi Arabia where a group of women were harassed by some men. The public’s reaction to the incident on Twitter was divided: some blamed the women for not dressing modestly and covering up while others blamed the government for not providing strict laws against sexual harassment. The women activists in my dataset tweeted about the fact that the men who harassed the women, did not get punished for what they did; instead, the women
were blamed for not covering up. The following tweets were posted on the same day of the harassment incident:

Damn the man who gets irritated by a woman who drives while the harassment of women doesn’t bother him

#Men_Harass_Girls_in_WesternRegion Just an advice, keep the pepper spray with you all the time. It doesn’t matter how covered up you are, the problem is in the man not you

Dear women who are against me, take my advice concerning carrying pepper spray, I only want what’s good for you. Regardless of how covered your body is, the animal will remain an animal

The women activists who tweeted these examples categorize the incident as men vs. women, where men are characterized as having outgroup properties. Such a strategy is referred to as polarization, which according to Tahir (2013) occurs when groups categorize their members with good characteristics and the other members with bad characteristics. This is achieved through a process of lexicalization, defined as “selection of words for negative representation of the other” (Tahir 2013: 247). An exaggerated lexicalization is clear in the third example where men are described as “animals.”
Conclusion

In this study, I analyzed Twitter discourse in order to explore the intricate relationship between intertextuality and framing in an online context. My dataset consists of tweets sent within the timeframe October 23 – October 27, 2013 in response to the Women2Drive campaign on October 26 calling for Saudi women’s right to drive. I examine tweets sent by members of two discourse communities that reacted strongly to the driving campaign: women social activists who support the campaign and men Muslim clerics who represent the views of the campaign’s opponents. Through content analysis, I identified four recurrent frames through which the women and men in my dataset describe the campaign. In order to capture the discursive means through which users structure these frames, I first analyzed their use of hashtags as an intertextual means to position them within the larger conversation. I then identified negative lexicalization, evaluative language, hyperbole, negative statements, and presupposition as the main linguistic features through which users portray their frames of the campaign.

My study draws upon Gordon’s (2008, 2009) concept of “framing as intertextuality in interaction” by applying her framework to written online contexts. While her exploration of the intersection between framing and intertextuality was of family conversations, my analysis built on her framework and expanded its scope to written online contexts, attesting to its validity across different mediums and discourse communities. My study found that users in both groups draw upon prior experiences and shared ideologies in order to frame the campaign in their Twitter posts. Through using local texts and culturally recognizable concepts, members of both communities align with the government’s regulations concerning protests while creating a sense of in-group membership.
I also found that while the men only use Arabic in their tweets, the women occasionally use English in their posts and hashtags, placing the Women2Drive campaign within international contexts and signalling group membership with each other and the transnational community. Through thematic analysis of their English tweets, I found that the women demonstrate awareness of the audience and the medium by publicizing the campaign to a wider audience. On the other hand, the men’s exclusive use of Arabic helps them maintain the status quo and orient their messages to the local community. This contributes to the men’s framing of the campaign as a foreign conspiracy against the Saudi ethical and political system, while warning of societal consequences of the campaign, which ultimately aims to reinforce conventional ideologies and cultural norms.

The utility of taking an intertextual approach to the study of Twitter discourse lies not only in its explanatory power to understand the framing of Women2Drive by the women activists and Muslim clerics, it also illuminates our understanding of how larger societal issues are negotiated and contextualized within online communities. Additionally, a focus on intertextuality in data like Twitter posts and hashtags contributes to our understanding of Twitter as an online genre. Twitter discourse is a new domain to explore for further understanding of social media’s appeal in times of sociopolitical crisis and its role in achieving social justice.

This wealth of publicly available content can be illuminating for both the theoretical as well as the ideological aspects of sociolinguistic research. My study initially aims to understand how social movement activists and their opponents construct their messages through the discursive foundations of framing and intertextuality. Through analyzing tweets posted by women activists and comparing them with tweets by men clerics, framing strategies and certain linguistic features become clearer and more prominent. While this comparative approach
contributes to highlighting the differences between the two discourse communities, it also facilitates our understanding of the similar intertextual approaches taken by the two communities to frame their contrasting positions. They both draw from a repertoire of shared prior experiences and public ideologies that evoke culturally recognizable forms and associations. Taking into account Becker’s claim that “the most public prior texts-the most widespread in a community-can be seen as defining that community” (1994: 166), my study’s intertextual approach contributes to our understanding of how social hierarchies of power and gender operate in the framing of the driving campaign in an online context, thus demonstrating the interconnectedness of framing and intertextuality.
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