New Media and the Reality of Abla Fahita's Tweets: Is She a Fictitious Character or a Secret Agent?

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ABSTRACT

Social Media along with linguistic utilization play an inevitable role in commenting on and communicating socio-economic and political ideologies to wide range of audiences. The study seeks to infer how social media plays an important role in representing and investigating the ideologies of social groups. The answer to this question is sought in the critical analysis of a famous twitter account called *Abla Fahita* or 'Auntie Fahita'. The study seeks to explore how Abla Fahita's tweets are linguistically structured, what ideological implications are disseminated and who Abla Fahita is, purpose. The ideological implication of the analysis is determined through a linguistic description of the tweets which are targeted to a large number of audiences.

Keywords: ideology; new media; Critical Discourse Analysis; social networks; social media; Twitter; linguistic choices

الإعلام الجديد وحقيقة تغريدات أبلة فهيتا:

هل هي شخصية خيالية أم عميل سري؟

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الأكاديمية العربية للعلوم والتكنولوجيا والنقل البحري

مصر – القاهرة

المستخلص:

تلعب وسائل التواصل الإجتماعي و الاستخدامات اللغوية دوراً مهما في التعليق على الأيديولوجيات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والسياسية والتواصل مع نطاق واسع من الجماهير. تسعى الدراسة إلى اكتشاف دور وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في تمثيل أيديولوجيات اطياف المجتمع و يتم الإجابة على هذه الاشكالية من خلال التحليل النقدي لحساب تويتر شهير يسمى أبلة فاهيتا. وتسعى الدراسة إلى اكتشاف دور تغريدات ابلة فاهيتا لغويا، وما هي آثار الأيديولوجيات التي يتم نشرها، و ما هي حقيقه أبلة فاهيتاو ذلك من خلال وصف لغوي للتغريدات التي تستهدف عدد كبير من الجماهير.

الكلمات المفتاحية: إيديولوجي؛ الإعلام الجديد؛ تحليل الخطاب النقدي؛ شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي

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1   INTRODUCTION

Media plays an important role in affecting and influencing people's attitudes, affects and judgments. How the world is depicted is the essence of the communicative modes utilized in the different media forms. Newspaper, television and radio were the most, if not the only, mediated tools used as sources of information. Recent technological advances introduce new media forms whose digital discursive practices make it inevitable for discourse analysts to study so as to uncover how language is used to express ideologies and maintain power relations between different types of participants. The purpose of this study is to uncover the role of social media in forming, reflecting and disseminating ideologies to large amount of audiences.

2   CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: POWER AND IDEOLOGY

The approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is aimed at analyzing language in terms of any social interaction. CDA seeks to determine social and power relations as well as common and conflicting ideologies among social members (Fairclough, 1995; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 2001; Mayr, 2008).

Discursive practices vary according to the objectives of language users and the effect intended to be

communicated by the social members. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (2001) argue that such discursive practices can be political, economical, mediated or any other domain. CDA is concerned with two main variables, namely, power and ideology.

Power is described by Wang (2006) "…as the ability to control and constrain others; as the capacity to achieve one's aim; as the freedom to achieve one's goals and as the competence to impose one's will on others" (p.531). Power in this sense is not physical power. It is the use of linguistic capabilities and potentials that enable social members and groups to communicate and accept the different forms of power. The power of discourse is indisputable. Discourse has an influential persuasive power affecting social members through its linguistic codes.

Ideology is another concept that lies in the realms of CDA. According to van Dijk (1997a), 'ideology' is " …the mental representation that forms the basis of social cognition, that is of the shared knowledge and attitudes of a group... . [A]t a very general level of thought, they tell people what their 'position' is, and what to think about social issues" (p.29).

Researchers agree that 'ideology' cannot be satisfactorily theorized without conjoining it to a philosophy of language (Gardiner, 1992, p. 8). Gardiner refers to the writings of Bakhtin who considers ideology as "a semiotic phenomenon that needs to be understood with its concrete instantiation in forms of oral or written discourse" (Gardiner, 1992, p. 77).

van Dijk (1997a) perceives discourse as the appropriate medium to communicate ideologies in society; thus, it enables some dominant groups to reproduce power and domination over some other groups. However, as van Dijk (n.d.) argues, ideologies are not limited to groups that

are related by dominance, power or struggle. He points also to professional ideologies, institutional ideologies, and ideologies of many other groups in society.

van Dijk (1997a) describes some of the features of ideologies. He, first, claims that ideologies are inherently social, not personal or individual, and they are shared by the members of groups. Second, ideologies coordinate social interaction with members of other groups. Further more, van Dijk states that ideologies.

> …feature representations of criteria of membership and group access (Who are we? Who belongs to us?), typical actions and aims (What do we do, and why?), norms and values (What is good and bad for us?), relative social position to other groups (Where are we?), as well as the special social resources of the group (What do we have?) (p. 26).

According to van Dijk (2006a), ideology operates through four strategies, which he calls the 'ideology square'. These strategies are represented as follows:
Emphasize *Our* good things
Emphasize *Their* bad things
De-emphasize *Our* bad things
De-emphasize *Their* good things

Ideology square is a theory proposed by van Dijk and is described as a useful tool for analyzing discourse at both a micro and a macro-level. This means that all positive meanings are always associated with the in-group of the

speaker trying to evaluate their own actions, norms and values. Conversely, all negative attributes are ascribed to the out-group trying to attack them, highlighting their defaults and their negative attributes.

3 SOCIAL NETWORKS AND DIGITAL DISCOURSE

Digital discourse, as a type of new media discourse, has many forms, such as emails, social networks, online chats, mobile texting, etc. each one has its own features which vary from the other from different perspectives such as time, scale of distribution, and size of included message.

The tremendous use of internet as a medium of communication facilitates the spread of all the obvious and hidden communicative practices. Internet communication does not only rely on the technology and the technical configuration of its structure. Rather internet users exploit all the surrounding circumstances and employ it in their internet uses. Being one of the most used medium of exchanging information, Facebook and, Twitter for example, represent the trend in the information conveyance. The language use, as played with, is the point of strength that users make use of.

No wonder that social networks have widely opened the door for social media to practice its role in influencing others. A well known definition of social networks can be encapsulated in what Boyd and Ellison (2008) describe as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with who they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (p.211).

The use of social networks varies from users, or a group of users, to another. Albarran (2013) provides a classification for social networking according to the needs of its users. Abarran's classification involves popular sites, such as Facebook and My Space that allow users to create personal profiles and pages to share their own networks. It also includes professional networking sites such as Google$^+$ and LinkedIn. Also, 'community/microblogging' such as twitter is one type of social networks in addition to social tagging which help organize content. In addition, image sites, video sites, social news or gaming sites are regarded as classifications that, according to Albarran, help functioning in different fields according to he needs of their users.

Social media has benefited from the proliferation of the social networks. Albarran (2013) defines social media as "…technologies or applications that people use in developing and maintaining their social networking sites." (p.2)

The use of social networks goes beyond exchanging information to creating lives that are different from the reality of the internet users. Accounts, pages and profiles have established virtual communities, a term initially invented by Rheingold (1985) who defines it as "social aggregations that emerge from the Net"(p.348).

It can be asserted that these communities have been exploited to achieve the intents of their founders. Majewski and Usoro (2012), for example, state that these communities, if succeeded, can be independent and can affect the world-view of the internet users and social institutions as well. Emergent communities that span the boundaries of an organization are likely conduits of external and innovative views into the organization (Majewski and Usoro, 2012, p.349).

3.1 Social media: a Source of Information Glut

Social media has been used recently as a source of information and news especially the socio-political ones. In fact, social media is moving towards replacing the traditional news media to the extent that "traditional news media are still primarily using social media as a delivery system for news and are not fully embracing the social aspect of social media" (Standley, 2013, 143). Standley ascribes such shift to the ability of social media users to interact with each other and "create and maintain two-way relationships between groups and people" (p.143).

Politics is not an exception. Using social networks in exchanging information has become a trend in today's life. According to Parmelee and Bichard (2012) social networks have invaded all aspects of life among which are politics. Users are found to be interested in those online practices especially when those practices involve "political efficacy, trust in government, past voting behaviour, likelihood of voting, party registration, strength of ideology and political ideology" (Parmelee and Bichard, 2012, p.117).

Two representations of the social media practices are Facebook and Twitter which stretch their effect to instigate ambiguous statements that enclose controversial issues while appearing to be light, ironic and sarcastic commentaries on the socio-economic status of the society. The seriousness of such informative 'capsules' reveals the fact that direct messages do not invoke the people effectively. After the unrest that hits the globe, people are difficult to affect and influence by direct one-to-one messages. Direct messages that were sent in the past fail to achieve their intents nowadays. It is the digital era that plays its role now especially when hidden ideologies embark.

There is no wonder that technology has influenced the way we communicate. Communication in this sense involves

more than exchanging information. Rather, the technological inventions build several types of discourses that reflect our cultures, our world views, and our power relations.

But to what extent does the mediated language match the reality we are living in? The answer to this question lies in what Denton (2006) assumes about the nature of the language that should be used in media. "After all the news media are supposed to be 'neutral', 'objective', 'non-biased' in perspective"(p.4).

Denton (2006) claims that it is language that shapes the human communication, performing a number of functions. "Language serves as the agent of social integration; as the means of cultural socialization; as the vehicle for social interaction; as the channel for the transmission of values and as the glue that bond people ideas and society together" (Denton, 2006, p.4). The creativity in the use of language has become a vital issue for the transmission of information. Language use becomes a matter of symbols coded by the sender and decoded by the receiver. Such exchange takes place between the social groups who agree or disagree with the content of the transmitted messages. Rourke and Rodrigues (2006) claim that "the sharing of these symbols enable individuals to create communities with other like-minded symbol-users, in this way, humans are physical beings that exist in symbolic communities of their own creation"(p.104).

Language as Denton (2006) argues is a creative process that can be used differently by users to create different realties from the perspective of the senders. "[Language] does not reflect an objective reality but creates a reality by organizing meaningful perception abstracts from the complex world. Language becomes a mediating force that actively shapes one's interpretations of the environment" (Denton, 2006, p.4)

Geoffey and Fuller (2012) pinpoint the important role played by the involvement of computers in all aspects of life, one of which is politics and economy. Symbol manipulation, as Geoffey and Fuller argue, should be observed more than any other linguistic manipulations. Direct messages do not effectively achieve their goals especially within the era of complex social networks. Professional language users tend to make use of symbolic insinuations so as to affect the ideological beliefs of their audience. The power of the symbolic use of language lies in the fact that one can indirectly attack, mock, or even abuse others without being caught. The use of symbolism requires a proof for action to establish guilt.

The importance of the symbolic use of language also reflects the representation of the world as seen by language producers. They understand their reality or choose to give it specific attributes and characteristics then attempt to convince the audience with such characterization. The use of symbols in media langue has an effective role in revealing or concealing one's perception of the world according to their Hidden ideologies perceived by language users.

3.2   Twitter in Egypt: a Politician in Disguise

In the last five years, the Egyptian situation can be seen as directly affected by the technological revolution. El-Manzalawy (2012) argues "The number of the users of the internet in the Arab countries is increasing. It is not expected to decrease." (p.132). Even in the time of chaos and disorder, Egypt, as other Arab countries, is considered a conservative country whose peaceful people have awareness and connection to the Arab traditions. This has made any infiltration an impossible task without the intervention of modern technology.

One example of social media is 'Twitter'. Twitter has become an online gathering or following spot as well as a tool used by professional users to maintain a number of political practices (Parmelee and Bichard , 2012). The fast paced proliferation of twitter has taken place the moment it was founded in 2006. Since then, it has spread in many aspects of life impinging on almost all the socio-economic constituents of our communities. Fraia and Missaglia (2014) say "…twitter … is now the principle social media platform used to create conversational flow about politics, diplomatic, or journalistic issues" (p.69). This "mass-mediatization", as named by Fraia and Missaglia (2014), has not stopped at certain groups and included others. On the contrary, old people educated, young illiterates, women, men or even school boys are 'tweeters'. Though many of these tweets do not gain much popularity, people are so much influenced with a large number of these posts especially when they are propagated by leaders who share the same ideological background.

Parmelee and Bichard (2012) go to claim "Political tweeting raises many questions for those who study political communication. For example, to what degree do political tweets influence followers' political views and behavior?.... It is also important to know the degree to which political leaders use twitter to interact with followers, rather than to merely broadcast to them" (p. 2). However the direct messages sent by political leaders have their impact decreased especially when the communities have divided into groups: in-groups and out-groups.

Twitter, as is the case with the different forms of social media, has opened the way to more freedom without having the minimum degree of control. Different uses have been utilized either positively or negatively. Social mobilization has easily been employed touching many

aspects of life such as economy, politics, education, etc. Twitter has also facilitated the argument and counter-arguments between the youth who see themselves as oppressed, and the older people such as politicians, business men or top management. Not only this, twitter is seen to invade the traditional religious calls to the extent that it reaches religious figures who seek to follow this high technological wave.

The leap in the use of twitter in Egypt took place after the 25th of January Revolution where it became one of the mostly used sources for information especially among those who have common ideologies. Tweets are effectively used at that time for mobilization. After the 25th of January incidents, the situation in Egypt has changed dramatically especially when the community is divided into two contesting groups. Khamis (2013) "… the post-revolutionary phase in Egypt is characterized by heated "cyber-wars" between the different political players, each of who is trying to increase its visibility and to widen it base of popular support"(p.197). A day after another directness of messages fades. Social media players become more professional in disguising in order not to reveal their hidden ideologies. The use of twitter assisted in such process. In fact, Twitter has removed the thin line between what is true and what is false and between what is funny and what is critical. That is why describing the Egyptian situation requires a deep contextualized analysis.

As Murthy (2013) says "The social, political and economic context of any mediated social communication needs to be carefully interpreted to pass normative judgments on that social communication itself." (p.129) The Egyptian situation is not an exception and needs that consideration especially when the new media lurks in the Egyptian corners.

3.3 WHO IS ABLA FAHITA?

Abla Fahita is a puppet, created in 2010, characterizing an Egyptian widow and a mother of two: a girl-puppet 'Karkura', and a boy-puppet 'Buudy'. She is a hyper-acting house wife who indirectly criticizes and comments on the running situations in Egypt. Before the 25th of January revolution, Abla Fahita did not gain so much popularity. It only spread after the emergence of the program presenter 'Bassem Yousf'. Its booming success has lead to the making of a TV Program carrying her name.

The vagueness of the real motivation behind the character or its creators has increased the mystery behind Abla Fahita's existence and her posts that filled that virtual world with critical views about the surrounding contexts. Due to its bald socio-economic and political involvement, the character has been accused of having hidden agendas and ideologies involved in the Egyptian unrest in various places at different times. Abla Fahita's voice projects indirect negative critiques to the situation in Egypt.

Abla Fahita's tweets are analysed linguistically and ideologically for the sake of deciding whether the accusation of being a symbolic character with hidden agendas is valid, or it is just a fictitious character that reviews the Egyptian socio-economic statuses with no intention to disrupt the internal situation in Egypt.

4 METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study carries out a content analysis of the tweets posted by Abla Fahita. This methodology is specially chosen because of its suitability to the current research. Neuendorf (2002) describes content analysis as "the primary message-centered methodology" (p. 9). The study proceeds with four

steps to reach answers for the raised questions: (1) Collecting tweets with socio-economic and political backgrounds. The data is collected from the beginning of Abla Fahita's twitter account, in 2011 account till April 2015; (2) grouping posts according to their related themes; (3) critically analyzing and tracing the linguistic choices reflecting the ideological stream of each group of tweets; (4) tracking the volume of presence of audience to measure the degree and the influence of these tweets and the ideologies they bear. The results are then interpreted with the conceptualizations of the CDA approach to power and ideology and the role of new media and language in configuring the minds of the targeted audience.

4.1 Research Questions

In the current analysis, the study seeks to make inference about and what the intended illocutionary forces of her tweets are, what ideological stand does she take and finally who Abla Fahita really is. The analysis seeks to uncover her hidden ideologies by addressing three questions:

> **RQ1**: *What are the linguistic tools used by Abla Fahita to craft her tweets and to achieve her intents?*

This question will be answered by linguistically analyzing the tweets highlighting the prominent linguistic strategies used in crafting the tweets.

> **RQ2:** *What are the ideologies propagated in the Tweets?*

This question is answered by analyzing the ideologies embedded in the tweets through the theoretical frameworks of ideology square. After analyzing RQ1 and RQ2, the study will seek to uncover the reality of Abla Fahita and the degree of her influence on the targeted audience.

> **RQ3:** *Who is Abla Fahita, what is the degree of her popularity?*

Answering these three research questions, we aim at understanding the practices of such kind of tweets and the degree of the success or the failure of achieving its intents.

5   RESULTS

Capitalized on a sum of 114 tweets, the analysis results in classifying the socio-economic main themes posted by Abla Fahita into three main categories. The following chart shows how these themes are classified in terms of their frequency.
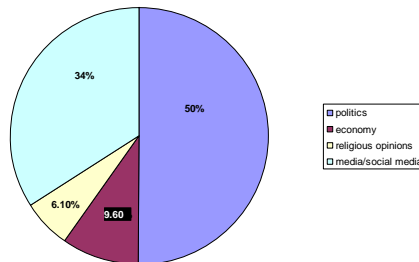

Figure 1-Distribution of Themes in the Corpus

5.1   *Political critiques*

It can be inferred from the chart above that Abla Fahita's mostly posted tweets are frequently targeted to critically assess the political situation in Egypt. A percentage reaching 50 % of the current corpus is found to have political implications. Most of these tweets, if not all, embrace negative attacks to the way that the government handles the political incidences in Egypt.

During the time span of the study, most of the posted tweets comment on the context of the Egyptian elections that took place in 2012. The Egyptian people accepted the success of Morsi, the Muslim Brothers (MB) member, with

anticipation to the consecutive policies adopted by MBs leaders.

5.1.1 Gendered Language

Gendered linguistic choice is clear in examples (1-2). The following tweet, for instance, reflects how Abla Fahita views the role of an MB female politician. Adopting the Islamist ideologies, MB Women's role is restricted to tasks related to house, cooking, etc. The first person narratives in بقول 'I am telling…' implies that Abla Fahita disapproves such type of ideologies. In the following tweets, Abla Fahita is talking to a second person commenting on a political action or figure.

1. بقول لمرمر باكينامت لو مسكت التعاون الدولي يبقى عسولة.. هتجبلنا بئة الكاري الاصلي من الهند و تصدر لهم هي تيربونات و كارينا بكم (24-4-2013)

- *I am telling Marmar if Pakinam chaired the International Organization for Cooperation she will be cute.. She will get us original curry from India and export them Turbones and Carina sleeved shirts,.*

Abla Fahita is criticizing the female politician Pakinam El Sharqawy, the President Councilor of Political Affairs of the ousted President Mohamed Morsi. Using lexis of feminine attributes, Abla Fahita is mocking an Islamist female politician describing her as a housewife and prompting the idea of domesticity. Abla Fahita mocks El Sharkawy by saying that if she heads the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, she will excel in importing 'curry' and exporting 'turbans' and feminine shirts. In this 74-retweeted post, Abla Fahita criticizes the female character that adopts Islamist ideological background claiming that such ideologies hinder her success as a politician.

Criticizing the performance of the government, Abla Fahita's tweets include lexical items that are again oriented

to food and cooking. The following tweet refers to the preparation of 'scallop' and sending it to the Minister of Culture.

2. عايزة ابعت لوزير الثقافة طبق #اسكالوب باليه(1-6-2014)

- *I want to send the Minister of Culture a plate of #scallop_ballet.*

In example (2), the choice of the word 'Ballet' phonologically resembles the loan form 'panée (fried chicken). The purpose of the post is to mock the MB's negative comments on the Art of Ballet which is practiced in Egypt in the ruling period of the Islamists. During that period, Islamist officials made a critical call to abandon such artistic practices as they are, according to the MBs, religiously inappropriate. The mocking image is retweeted 80 times with a moderate acceptance of its content.

5.1.2 Dialogue Format

The tweets (3-4) are presented in a second person narrative voice, where Abla Fahita is engaged in a dialogue with her children Karkura and Karoline. Example (3) adds more mocking attitude to the failure of the political policies related to the Ethiopian-Egyptian negotiations about 'Nahda Dam' and its impact on the River Nile. In tweet (3), Karkura, Abla Fahita's daughter, is asking her mother to get barrels and buckets to save some water.

3. كركورة فكريني الصبح يا ماما ننزل نجيب فنطاسين و جركل علشان نحوش ميه لحسن بكرة النيل يقطع و مانلائيش نشطف بودي # بكرة بلا نيلة(28-5-2013)

- *Karkura, remind me to get down and get two tanks and a bucket to save water as the River Nile will be cut off and we would not be able to clean Buudy. #Tomorrow_Damn_it.*

The post, with its 278 retweets, succeeds to project the problem and the fear of decreasing proportion of water in the River Nile. The idea of motherhood is associated with the critique of the governmental attitude with the crisis which may cause Egypt to lose a large portion of water. Again domesticity accompanies political critique to the governmental measures towards solving this international problem. According to Abla Fahita, loosing water will have only one bad impact on the mother that is the incapability of cleaning Buudy, her baby boy. This dialogical format draws on a type of discourse with which almost all female characters are familiar.

The following example tackles the issue of the failure of the MBs to address the Egyptian political needs. The context in which the two tweets (3) and (4) are posted can be summarized in the hatred of large percentage of the Egyptians to the MBs. The number of retweets of example (4) is 141, and the comments following the tweet support the calls of ending the Islamist ruling period in a huge demonstration initiated by Tamarod Movement.

4. متنمردين # معلشي يا كارولينا اصطبري ليوم تلاتين (2013-6-5)

- *Be Patient, Carolina, till the30th#naughtiness*

The previous tweet is a clear call for mobilization with reference to the Egyptian people who are waiting till the day of the demonstration, 30th of June 2013. Interestingly, the tweet ends with a hash tag with a word-play. The word تمرد which positively connotes with 'rebellion', i.e. a wake against tyrance and injustice, is slightly modified orthographically into تنمرد which carries negative implication of coercion that will cause the beholder to lose good things by their odious attitude.

5.1.3 Symbolism

Symbolism is clearly developed in examples (5-9). The indirect reference to Turkey, a country which is said to have hidden agendas towards Egypt, is represented in a number of lexical items accompanied with the third person bound pronominal reference (هـم-) 'their'.

5. انا ماعونتش طايقة لا مهندهم و لا قهوتهم و لا ملبنهم. # قطيعة
اسطنبولي (19-7-2013)

- *I don't like their Muhannad, their coffee nor their sweets any more. #Istanbul_relations_dispatched.*

The tweet includes references to the most prominent attributes of Turkey. 'Muhannad' is a famous TV series hero, 'Coffee' is their famous caffeinated 'Turkish Coffee', and 'Malban' is the famous Turkish sweets. The tweet ends with a hash tag signifying rupturing relations with Turkey. The hash tag includes the word 'rapture' accompanied by the word اسطنبولي which is a brand of cheese type in Egypt resembling the name Istanbul, the capital of Turkey. Semantically, the word قطيعه has two meanings. One meaning implies a colloquial idiomatic expression signifying 'Damn!', the second denotative meaning is 'dispatching' or 'cutting relations'. The 160 retweets of the post spot the unacceptance of the Egyptian people to the Turkish policies of supporting the Islamists.

A similar use of the root قطع 'cut' is utilized in the following tweet. The tweet embraces an indirect reference to MB-sponsored 'Rabea sit-in' that was triggered in Egypt as a response to the 30th June revolution. The tweet refers to the four finger-hand sign of Rabea protesters.

6. رابعه# ..يقطعه الإبهام (12-11-2013)

- *Be it cursed/ cut, the thumb #Rabea*

Abla Fahita's political and ideological position is vaguely expressed in this tweet. The word يقطعه has two meanings, either 'cursed' or 'cut'. The tweet can signify one of two

implications. On one hand, it can show that Abla Fahita is supporting the protests if the meaning signifies that thumb is to be extirpated, hence Rabea's four-finger icon is maintained. On the other hand, the tweet can be interpreted as criticizing such protests if the intended implication is that of cursing Rabea's icons. The two implications make Abla Fahita's political attitude and ideological beliefs obscure.

Examples (7) and (8) discuss the same theme, i.e. the accusation of Abla Fahita as being a secret agent carrying and calling for hidden agenda that would disrupt the Egyptian national security.

7. بقيت خايفه أتكرع يقولوا شفرة... #الارهاب_يهده (24-1-2014)

- *I am afraid of burping so that they say it's a code.#Damn_it_terrorism*

The word 'burp' in Arabic has a shocking yet humorous implication on the Egyptian audience. This is reflected in the 680 retweets of the post. The tweet implicitly intends to exaggerate its jesting presence that represents a threat to the security of Egypt. The hash tag then throws the blame on terrorism that causes everyone to doubt innocent people.

The following example also mocks the accusation of a puppet as being a secret agent without giving her a respecting title Abla or 'Auntie'. The tweet mocks the seriousness of such accusation. The hash tag is a parody of the title of the movie امرأه هزت عرش مصر 'A Woman Disrupted the Egyptian Throne' which also narrates a story of a famous Egyptian agent. The lexical item امرأه 'Woman' is substituted with the name Fahita and it becomes 'Fahita disrupted the Egyptian Throne'.

8. جاسوسه كده من غير ابله؟#فاهيتا_هزت_عرش_مصر (24-11-2013)

Such comparison is made to scoff at those interpretations of her tweets as secret messages disguised in the form of funny tweets. Abla Fahita is wondering if her accusation has such

strength to affect the Egyptian throne or, analogically, the Egyptian presidency.

The 30th of June Revolution erupted and MBs were overthrown. Before his downfall, Morsi was given a chance to adjust the situation and absorb the people's anger by giving a speech to call for early presidential elections. His refusal to step down was clear in that final speech where he over repeated the word 'Legitimacy' tens of times. The following tweet mocks his linguistic repertoire and his refusal to give up his presidency despite the calls to step-down.

9. مرعوبة يجيب سيرت ديليسبس الخطبة الجايه ..# هيكمل مشوار _عبد
    الناصر(2013-5-4)

- *I am terrified he would mention de Lesseps in the next speech# he_will_complete_Abelnaser's_road*

The previous tweet ridicules his discursive attitude resembling him to the late president Gamal Abdel Naser who inserted a secret word '*de Lesseps*' in his speech as a starting point to nationalize Suez Canal. The image here projects Morsi's unpopularity and his linguistic incompetence comparing them with the most popular Egyptian president who is characterized of his eloquence.

5.1.4 Semantic Relations

Using lexical items that are interrelated is one of the linguistic techniques used by Abla Fahita in her tweets. Some semantic relations found in the tweets are exemplified in example (10-12).

The two examples refer to the election period after the 30th June revolution that was held between Hamdeen Sabahi and Abdel Fatah El-Sisi. The first example utilizes the homonymy صوت which means either 'voice' or 'vote'.

10. صوتي مش طالع.. #هنصوت_سكوت (2014-5-23)

- *My voice/vote is not out# silence we are voting/screaming*

The tweet is posted at the electoral silence period. The hash tag 'silence 'we are voting/screaming' is motivated by an ambiguous intention, either giving a vote or refraining the elections, as implied in the verb 'scream'. The first person reference صوتي'my voice' implies that Abla Fahita is not going to vote. The tweet can be interpreted as an indirect call to refrain the election after ousting MBs regime. The number of retweets, again, reflects the unacceptance of the Egyptian people to these calls which, according to their comment, are seen to be disapproved.

The following example signifies the result of the elections where Sabahi has lost the elections and a call for him to wait for four more years to the coming elections. The example ends with a hash tag with a word-play where the Arabic word اشطر 'cleverer' is a derivation of the word شاطر 'clever'. Interestingly the word is a homophone where the Arabic name شاطر is the name of the MB excluded presidential candidate who sought to nominate himself in 2012 elections.

11. *غيرك_اشطر# ..معلشي يا حمدينا هما أربع سنينا (29-5-2014)*

- *Sorry for you Hamdeen, it is just four years #You_could_be_cleverer.*

The example utilizes the derivational form اشطر 'cleverer' from the real name الشاطر which is the name of the MB leader Khairat el Shater. The 2nd person tweet directs the implication to the presidential candidate Hamdeen in an indirect implication that both nominees, EL-Shater and Hamdeen, belong to the same political group. The word معلشي 'sorry for you', also implies that Abla Fahita is not happy for the election of El-Sissi and that she feels sorry for Hamdeen's loss and is calling him to wait for the coming elections.

In the following post, Abla Fahita is mocking the participation of some female actresses in the committee of modifying the constitution after the ousting of Morsi and the ruling of Adly Mansour the Transitional President of Egypt.

12. هي سميرة محسن مرحتشي لجنة الخمسين النهارده؟ ولا سميرة
صدقي؟ طب ميار الببلاوي؟ # ممثل عني (25-9-2013)

- *Didn't Samira Mohsen get to the 50's Committee today? Neither did Samira Sedqi? Nor did Mayar El-Beblawy.#Represents_me*

The name Samira Mohsen, a famous actress, is analogized with the name of Samira Sedqy and ironically compared with another third actress, Mayar Elbibalwy. The comic analogy is depicted from the homonymy ممثل which can denote either an 'actor' or a 'representative', member of the parliament'. This tweet implies disapproving of the structure of the constitution committee which is said to have abandoned professional political figures. The tweets disapprove of the inclusion of female actresses who, according to Abla Fahita, are not supposed to practice politics or participate in other socio-economic practices. The post seems to have failed to influence its followers as it is retweeted only 26 times which mark the unpopularity of the ideology hidden in its structure.

5.2 Media Commentaries

The prevailing effect of Abla Fahita has caused her unpreceded renowned propaganda in all types of media and social media. This opens the way for the tweet writer to provide critical views about media-related issues. The reference to media issues comes second in terms of frequency after the political tweets. A percentage of 34 % of Abla Fahita tweets are directed to commentaries on media related topics.

5.2.1 Ideological Propagation

To gain popularity, Abla Fahita has sought to acclaim media success. The following tweets carry media related propositions. Tweets (13-14) show how Abla Fahita is bragging about her fame and her influence on her audience:

13. في نص أرنب ماشي ورايا.. #الفانات _والفيس (25-10-2013)

- *There is half a rabbit following me. #fans_and Facebook*

The metaphorical use of the word ارنب 'rabbit' connotes million. In this tweet, Abla Fahita is claiming to have half a million fans. The phrase ماشي ورايا means 'following me'. This tweet shows that Abla Fahita is so powerful that she can influence the Egyptian people with her ideologies.

14. مش ملاحئة حتي أهوي الباروكة.. #يهدها _الشهرة (15-10-2014)

- *I have no time loosing the wig. #damn_it_publicity*

Tweet (14) has the same insinuation, i.e. Abla Fahita is so busy, so powerful and so influential. Such kind of tweets represents a marketing strategy for Abla Fahita's ideas and ideologies.

The following example shows clear sympathy with Basem Yousef, the famous sarcastic program presenter, whose program is banned from broadcasting due to his anti-government political insinuations. The 622 retweets reflect how the audience agrees with Abla Fahita's ideological attitude of being uncomfortable banning measures related to media freedom.

15. ماتكشرشي يا باسم.. #مايستهلوشي (2-6-2014)

- *Don't frown, Basem.# They_don't_deserve.*

The success of Abla Fahita is ascribed to the success of Basem Yousef and vice versa. So it is not strange that Abla Fahita shows her sympathy with him. In the previous tweets Abla Fahita is standing for Basem Yousef who has anti-governmental ideologies. Bassem Yousef is known to attack the Egyptian Army and the government after the 30th of June

revolution. On the contrary, Abla Fahita, as will be seen in the following examples, opposed other celebrities who support the army and the government.

Example (16) mocks Okasha and Dardeer, the two famous TV presenters, who are pro-government. The definite pronoun (الـ) prefixed to the proper noun Okasha and the suffixation of the third person pronoun (ته) to Dardeer change the two proper names into 'inanimate' nouns. According to Abla Fahita, Okasha possesses not only the TV station but also the presenters in his channel. Every one in Okasha's TV station is supposed to speak the same ideology. The tweet implies that although the two presenters are criticizing the current educational system, the two are, still, influenced by this system.

16. العكاشة ودرديرته بيقولوا إن منظومة التعليم طلعت عقول جاهله
كلم_العكاشة_تلهيك# ..ومحتاجة إعادة تأهيل(2014-10-15)

- *The Okasha and his Dardeer say that the educational system uncovers ignorant minds needing qualification.*

Unlike Basem Yousef, Tawfiq Okasha is popular among rural and uneducated people due to his simple language that he uses to address these low standard people. The 116 retweets of this post may signify that some people see Okasha as a person who stands in the face of those who want to disrupt Egypt. The comments following the tweets reflect how people are divided into two groups, i.e. pro/anti Okasha.

The next example criticizes the famous actress Asaar El-Hakim who has been one of the guests of a candid camera TV program where there is a disguised person in a shark is acted to threaten the guests.

17. آثار_مش_حكيمة# ..طِمعت في القرش هبشها (2014-6-21)

- *She coveted the shark, it attacks her.# Asaar_not_wise.*

The tweet implies that the actress is trying to make use of the trick by suing the program to get as much compensation as she can. Also the word قرش is a homonymy where it means

'penny' as well as a 'shark'. The tweet could imply 'gluttonous for every penny'. The hash tag uses a word play of her family name حكيم *'Hakeem'* whose denotative meaning is 'wise'. So according to the hash tag مش حكيمه , the actress Asaar is not wise. The multiple uses of homonyms indicate the indirectness of Abla Fahita in communicating her intentions.

5.3 Critique of Economic Status

The economic situation occupies a number of Abla Fahita's tweets with a percentage more than 9 % of Abla Fahita tweets. Criticizing the economic situation in Egypt may be reflected in topics such as electricity blackout, fuel shortage, unemployment and investments. Assertingly, different studies pointed to the economic situations in Egypt in the time of MBs presidency. According to international Polls, Khalifa (2015) reviews such economic situations that endorse the "…feelings of despair on any possibility of a significant change in their living standards in the conditions of the country" (p.168). Khalifa also points to the improvement of the economic situation after the presidency of El-Sissi.

5.3.1 Intertextuality

The following tweets reflect sarcastic thematic references to the economic situation in Egypt in the presidency of El Sissi. At that time, Egypt faces a problem of fuel shortage where cars stop at very long rows to fill up their tanks.

18. وفروا فلوس البنزين واقعدوا في البيت.. والزيارات والتعليم والشغل والمشاوير والجواز والخناقات والغزا يتعمل كله علي الويبه. #الفيرتيوال_هو_الحل (6-6-2014)

- *Save the fuel costs and stay home.. visits, education, work, quarrels and food can be done by the web# the virtual is the solution*

On the face of it, example (18) represents a piece of advice to the Egyptian people to overcome the fuel shortage and lean to virtual life instead of the real life. Deeply the intention of the tweet is to mock and criticize such economic situation and the lack of fuel in the time of current presidency. The tweet directs the followers to an economic problem. That is, the situation will affect social relations, education, outings, marriage etc. The hash tag at the end of the tweet is an example of how Abla Fahita utilizes intertextuality in her tweets. The hash tag assimilates the slogan of MBs الاسلام هو الحل 'Islam is the solution' by replacing the lexis 'Islam' with 'virtual'. The hash tag can indirectly reflect her political tendency which supports the MBs.

Examples (19-20) tackle two economic problems, namely, power shortage and employment. In example (19), Abla Fahita mocks the project of generating electricity by charcoal. This project was proposed at that time to overcome the problem of regular blackouts.

19. مش عارفه أتسرح يهده_قطع_النور# ..إنا بقول أجيب سيشوار بالفحم.
(20-2-2014)

The previous example projects a picture about the shortage of power supply in a way that Abala Fahita is thinking of getting a hair dryer that works with charcoal to overcome the blackout.

5.3.2 Analogy

Example (20) discusses the problem of unemployment. Analogically, unemployed people are compared to dead people who do nothing in life. The use of the image of the

dead husband as an unemployed also may denote that males are useless and do no beneficial tasks in their life.

20. بفكر استغل المرحوم واعمل بيه مشروع بدل ماهو ميت كده ومابيعملشي حاجه.. #لا_للبطالة (21-9-2014)

- *I am thinking of exploiting my late husband in a project to make use of him as a substitute of being dead body doing nothing. #no_for_unemployment.*

The previous example assimilates unemployed people with dead bodies. The example also projects husband-wife uncontained relationship. In all her tweets, Abla Fahita is expressing her happiness because her husband died and that she is a widow. Ideologically, Abla Fahita may be happy because of unemployment the way she is happy because her husband is dead.

Another analogy utilized in example (21) where women are compared to a good investment. At the time of the tweet, there was a huge presidential-led summit encouraging investments in Egypt. It was one of the measures taken within the context of encouraging investments in the time post 30th June revolution in the ruling period of EL-Sissi. Nevertheless, Abla Fahita is seen to provide an impeded discouragement to businessmen to invest in Egypt.

21. الست الواعية ماتستثمرشي غير في نفسها. #إنتي_المؤتمر (14-3-2015)

- *A smart woman doesn't invest but in herself. #you_are_the_summit.*

Although the economic situation encounters prominent improvements, oppositions are counter-arguing. According to The World Bank MENA Economic Brief Egypt after El Sissi's election has witnessed positive improvements on the economic level. "A series of political and economic reform initiatives may have helped restore confidence in the egyptian economy, leading to a growth rebound due to an increase in investment, tourism and remittance

revenue"(MENA Economic Brief, p.6, 2015). This report, among others, supports the government call for investment in Egypt. Despite the fact that these calls increased after the International Economic summit held in 2015, Abla Fahita is seen to criticize it and mock the investment issue saying that the best investment would be in her bodily appearance. The post gained 334 retweets which marks the influential role of its impeded ideology.

5.4   Critique to Religious Opinions

The ruling period of the MB has witnessed a flood of religious advisory opinions by specialists and non-specialists. Some of such religious opinions are criticized by the Egyptian people who are originally known of their moderate liberty which is controlled by conservative traditions. Abla Fahita is seen, in her tweets, to have criticized these opinions which are delivered by MB religious leaders. Interestingly, the number of retweets in such type of tweets is reduced to small number of followers. Despite the fact that reference to religious men is a critical issue in Arab societies, a number of tweets have been delivered in a sarcastic mode to condemn the Islamists of their irrational fanaticism.

The following tweet ridicules the slogan of the MB Party which claims that   الاسلام هو الحل   'Islam is the solution'. In this tweet, Abla Fahita is seen to replace the word 'Islam' with 'loose clothing'. The implied intention lies in criticizing the view that our problems will be solved if women wear loose clothes not tight ones.

22. انا طول عمري بقول الواسع هو الحل...   (2014-8-11)

- *In my whole life I say loose clothing is the solution.*

Although wearing loose clothes is an essential part of the female Muslim life, obliging women to wear them is an unaccepted issue. Islamists have repeatedly propagated that

restrictive actions will be taken if women do not adhere to their regulations. Another hidden meaning can be inferred from the tweet above; repeating the MB slogan may implicitly signify the adoption of their policies, and that could be proved by the phrase 'In my whole life' which means the deep rooting of this ideology in Abla Fahita's mind.

The following example mocks one of the advisory opinions announced by one of the MB religious figures who claimed that music is *haram* 'ill-gotten' even if its built-in the fabric of newly produced underwear that plays music.

23. تقى كان نفسها في البانتيهات اللي بتطلع مزيكا بس الشيخ الفضائي قلها المزيكا حرام فراحت جابت بانتي بصوت نونوة القطة و حجزت بانتي بصوت عو الديب (1-6-2013)

- *Toqa wished to have pants with built-in music but the Sheikh said music is Haram so she got one with cat's miaow and reserved another one with wolf's howling*

5.4.1 Religious Jargon

Like the previous tweet, small number of retweets, 38, is undertaken. In this example, the little girl is named *Toqa* which is translated 'Pious'. The following tweet criticizes the increase of the mediated use of religious to prompt marketing in TV shops. Religious jargon is clear in examples (24-25). Religious lexical items are used such as زبيبة'prayer mark', الفردوس paradise , جهنم Gehennam/Hell, اعذاب'after life agony'.

24. جبت من الزبيبة تيليشوب طقم ملايات الفردوس او مخدات بتغني، خامته حنينه و حلوة بس الخدودية الشمال معلقة على انشودة عصافير جهنم # عذاب_السرير (1-6-2013)

- *I bought from the 'Prayer-mark Teleshop' as set of bed sheets named 'paradise' and soft singing pillows but he 'left one' is repeating the song of Hell birds#bed_agony.*

The association of these features with such kind of TV marketing may reflect the feeling towards such MB group and their religious opinions. The same little girl تقى *Toqa* is used in the following tweet. Toqa is a symbol of a religious virtuous belief who judges the messages of the tweets from a righteous religious perspective.

Using religious jargon again, the following example narrates an actual incident in the MB Rabea protests. A religious man said that protesting with the MB has more religious reward and is more appreciated by God than going to 'Mekka' and standing on 'Arafat', the religious ritual of 'Hajj'.

25. تقى سمعت الشيخ بيقول وقفه رابعه ثوابها اكتر من وقفة عرفات..
(29-6-2013) مرعوبة يكونو هيرموا الجمرات على الدوبلكس

- *Toqa heard the Sheikh saying that Standing in Rabea has more rewards than Arafat stand.# I am afraid they would throw stones on the Duplex*

In this example Abla Fahita is ridiculing that opinion commenting that she is afraid that her newly broadcasted program 'Duplex' will be thrown by 'Gamarat', 'Hajj' ritual where stones are thrown on a symbolic 'statue of Satan' . In this tweet, Abla Fahita is comparing herself to Satin. She claims her refusal to the MB religious strict ideologies which are regarded by large percentage of Egyptians as extreme fanaticism and illogical ideological point of view. The tweet has gained huge popularity with 407 retweets, which reveals the dejected attitude of the Egyptian people to those irrational opinions.

In such examples Abla Fahita is seen to stand against what is known as 'a political religious regime'. The above tweets reflect how MBs are seeing themselves and their leader as having God-like charisma. All their political opinions are supposed to be accepted by the people because they are Godly rules. If we observe the date on which the

tweets are posted, we will notice they all approach 30th of June, 2013, the revolution day. The religious tweets gained their strength from the successful mobilization of Anti-islamists that succeeded to put an end to their president.

The previous analysis focuses on the linguistic and textual choices of that female symbolic character. The selected tweets presuppose liberation calls adopted by women who see them subjugated by the control of men in all the social practices, i.e. politics, economy, religion.

The analysis of the tweets seeks to investigate the different ways that Abla Fahita, as a woman, sees and perceives the world and what ideological implications result of her representations of the world -view. It can be said that tweets posted by Abla Fahita reflect the linguistic features which cue the relationship between such fictitious character and all the surrounding social practices. The constructed and perpetuated stereotypes found in the tweets are represented in the analysis of the tweets.

Abla Fahita's success can be assumed by the victorious success of her TV. In a poll carried out by The Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research (Baseera), Abla Fahita is seen to have more than 8 million viewers. Regardless of those who agree or do not agree to her ideological implications, Abla Fahita is seen to have an influential role on its viewership.

6 CONCLUSION

The study of Abla Fahita's tweets highlights the importance of analyzing the linguistic strategies adopted by the writer of the tweets to stand on the embedded ideologies that are intended to be communicated to large number of audiences. Answering **RQ1** the study pinpoints several linguistic tools such as the utilization of the 1st person and

2nd person narrative voices implying an embedded dialogue. The purpose of such linguistic employments is to maintain relations between Abla Fahita and her fans.

Symbolism is an important aspect found in the discursive practice of Abla Fahita. Activists, politicians, and other language users rely on symbolism to convey meanings that could not be sent without indirect reference to specific referents. Using symbolic references, Tweet senders propel insinuations and signals to the recipients who are supposed to interpret the message indirectly. Tweet writers use symbolism so as to depict an image which may appear to be different from the reality while adopting and believing in that reality heart and mind. There are several reasons why such writers use projecting symbols in their discourse.

Semantic relations and the propagation of various meanings with out direct reference to the intended message are clear in the analysis of tweets. Hyponymy, polysymy and other sense relations are used to refer to involuntarily actions reflecting Abla Fahita's inner feelings.

Intertextuality and analogy in the tweets are not involuntarily posted neither are they used for just literary stylistic purposes. Hidden intentions lurk in the mind of the sender targeting to achieve specific purposes and reflecting particular ideologies through drawing comparisons and references to previous types of discourse.

Abla Fahita is characterized as an Egyptian widow who has been oppressed by her late husband and to whom she carries no intimate loving feelings. The character of Abla Fahita is intended to depict a group living in Egyptian society. The tweets posted by Abla Fahita bear either obvious or hidden insinuations. Audiences react with the posts making a number of run-on commentaries on all the social practices whether political, economic or even societal. Such commentaries reflect the degree of the influence of

such tweets on their audience. The analysis of the tweets reveals that these tweets are not just comic statements made without intentions. These tweets are linguistically crafted. They represent conscious actions of highly qualified political group.

RQ2 is answered by highlighting the dominating ideologies in the tweets. Bearing targeted ideologies, the tweets sometimes direct their messages to attack one social group (such as Muslim Brothers or the Egyptian Army). Also, the statements inside the tweets classify the Egyptian society into rivalry groups (in and out groups). The tweets attract the in-groups and witness their shared ideologies, meanwhile provoke the out-groups and infer their ideological inclination. After reading Abla Fahita's tweets one becomes oriented with the political situation in Egypt. Some people are sustaining the 25th of January Revolution and are supporting the MB regime mean while the other group is cursing that revolution while supporting the 30th of June Revolution that overthrew the MBs and their leaders. The issue here is that Abla Fahita's ideological position is not clearly expresses. She plays all tunes to simultaneously contain and provoke the different social groups in Egypt.

Succeeding to attract such huge number of audience, Abla Fahita's account represents an indirect unofficial poll that enables politics players to infer and deduce the ideological system prevailing, thus making decision based upon their presupposition. **RQ3** is answered through the highlighting the number of retweets made by her followers. The propagation of Abla Fahita's tweets is ascribed to the choice of a female character to play her role. The female character is seen by lots of people as ideologically marginalized. Although the puppeteer is a man, the female appearance of the puppet is seen to have attracted large population to see how a two-child widow views the world

and how she constructs her ideologies according to the given situations around her. This gives Abla Fahita the authoritarian power to stretch its impact and practice powerful influence over a large number of audience, or 'Fans', as she labels them. Thanks to the millions of followers, Abla Fahita gained huge success among social network users since 2011 (Osman, 2015). Presumably, Abla Fahita is a fictitious character; she intends to be an agent and not a secret one.

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