

A Corpus Study of Cyberbullying Metaphors Used on Social Media: Employing Conceptual Metaphor Theory

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Abstract—This study delves into the theoretical analysis of metaphors employed by male and female users on Facebook to cyberbully five Arab female celebrities. Employing Conceptual Metaphor theory, the investigation focuses on two primary facets: women's appearance and behaviors. The study compiles and scrutinizes two corpora—715 metaphors provided by male commenters and 140 metaphors provided by female commenters. The metaphors are collected from comments written on the official Facebook pages of these celebrities in January 2021. The source domains concerning appearance are categorized into: ANIMALS, CARS, REPULSIVE OBJECTS, FOOD, MALES, PRODUCTS, and FRIGHTENING OBJECTS. Conversely, there are two source domains that depict clothes: HOUSEHOLD ITEMS and PLACES. Behaviors-related source domains are grouped into: ANIMALS, LOOSE/PUBLICLY EXPOSED OBJECTS, LOW, and SICK. Upon comparing frequencies, it is observed that the source domains MALES and ANIMALS are more frequently utilized by males in metaphors depicting appearance, whereas the source domain REPULSIVE OBJECTS is more prevalent in females' comments. The study also reveals that, in alignment with the objectification theory, males tend to view females as objects of sex. Males focus on describing the uncovered parts of celebrities' bodies and they conceptualize the open clothes, that show females' sexual attraction, as open places.

Index Terms—cyberbullying, females, CMT, celebrity, gender

I. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid evolution of social media from a communicative tool to a powerful tool for business, it is unsurprising that influencers, such as celebrities, increasingly use social media to interact with their audience by sharing videos and photos of their life events. Although the audience may be addicted to celebrities and referred to as celebrity worshippers (McCutcheon et al., 2002), celebrities may also be subjected to cyberbullying because the audience hate them (Ouvrein et al., 2018; Hermes & Stoete, 2019) and provide negative derogatory descriptions of them (Claessens & Van den Bulck, 2014; Qamar et al., 2020). Cyberbullying is defined as “The use of communication technology (e.g., mobile, internet etc.) to deliberately harm others through hostile behavior such as sending text messages and posting nasty comments on the internet” (Khawar & Malik, 2016, p. 24). Pyzalski (2012) identified celebrities' cyber aggression as one of the six categories of cyber aggression (peer, vulnerable, groups, random, school staff and celebrity). He explained that in this category, adolescents post indirect tough aggressive comments on famous people such as celebrities and sport players. Johansson (2006, 2008) argues that the audience express their hatred and hostility toward celebrities because they feel that they live in a distanced world that is full of fantasy and is incomparable to their lives. Cyberbullying is primarily reported on social media platforms because users can conceal their true identities and create fake accounts (Vogels, 2021).

Online cyberbullying against influential female celebrities in different fields is covered in news articles. In his article in *Mail Online*, Bracchi (2013) reports cases of two women (an MP and a feminist campaigner) who were victims of online abuse and insults such as *bi*ch* and *dumb*. The article metaphorically refers to the abusing comments as *bait*s and the abused celebrities as *fish*. McNally (2015) sheds light on cases of cyberspace violence against visible women in the public sphere in different professions (a journalist, a video game developer, a columnist, a TV personality, and a feminist writer), focusing on the impact of this violence on women and how they deal with it. A recent article in *People magazine* Yagoda (2022) stressed that female celebrities are constantly cyberbullied for their physical appearance and race. Metaphorical expressions like *giraffe*, *big bird*, *brownie*, *curry*, and *hot dog nose* are used to describe celebrities' physical appearances.

As stated by Gadavani and Saengpranga (2021) cyberbullying differs from one culture to another, so it is important to study different types of cyberbullying language across cultures. Since cyberbullying against Arab celebrities is an emergent area of study, this paper is meant to contribute to filling this gap by providing a corpus-based analysis of the

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metaphorical expressions employed by Facebook users to cyberbully famous Arab female celebrities. Additionally, it is noted that previous studies on the depiction of people are mostly done through monitored tasks that have limits in time, number of participants, and the data collected (De Klerk, 1992; James, 1998; Talebinejad & Dastjerdi, 2005; Sommer & Sommer, 2011; Al-Harashseh & Al-Rousan, 2020; among others). However, data in this study is naturalistic and it reflects a wide range of linguistic expressions used by a wide range of Arab Facebook users which make it a rich source for metaphors that reflect different cultural backgrounds.

In view of this, the current study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the conceptual metaphors employed by Facebook users to cyberbully Arab female celebrities?
2. Are there any differences in the use of conceptual metaphors between female and male users? If yes, what are they?
3. Are there any dialect specific expressions? If yes, what are they?
4. What are the pragmatic and communicative functions that these metaphors convey in light of Conceptual Metaphor Theory?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cyberbullying metaphors serve as a productive resource for conceptualizing women negatively. A large body of research has been conducted to investigate animal metaphors that provide negative depictions of women. Palmatier (1995) states some animal metaphors which give negative representations of women: an overweight woman is depicted as a cow, an elephant, a beached whale, chubby (chub is a fish), or a pig. A woman who does not follow the social values is referred to as a bi*ch. A woman who seeks sexual pleasure is conceptualized as a cat in the heat while an unattractive old woman is referred to an old bat. Furthermore, a woman who interferes in others' concerns is an old hen and a bad-tempered woman is a vixen or a wildcat.

Similarly, Allan and Burrige (2006) mention some taboos used to refer to women: a cruel woman is a cat, an unpleasant dirty woman is a bi*ch, an overweight woman is a cow or sow, and an unworthy woman is a mouse. Rodríguez (2009) compares between animal metaphors depicting women in Spanish and English and concludes that the depictions of females as dogs and cats convey similar meanings in both languages: dogs refer to ugly women while cats refer to prostitutes. Haslam et al. (2011) confirm that the degree of offensiveness of animal metaphors depends on the context and that animal metaphors are seen more insulting when addressing females by strangers (i.e. out-group members). The study also demonstrates that the use of metaphorical expressions in which the person is explicitly perceived as an animal is more offensive than using indirect descriptions such as similes. Sacher (2012, p. 19) reports types of animal metaphors used in different languages as insults to mothers. Some examples are: "Ibn il-labwa! 'Son of a lioness!' (Arabic), Ta mère est une vache. 'Your mother is a cow' (French), Saubua! 'Son of a pig!' (German), and Ullu ke pathe! 'You are born of an owl!' (Hindi)". Focusing on animal metaphors describing women in Romanian and Serbian languages, Kilyeni and Silaški (2015) conclude that the expressions snake, hen, turkey, goat, cow, sow and goose are employed to provide negative depictions of women in Serbian while bitch, whale, sow, cow, turkey, snake, and jenny are used by Romanians to describe women negatively.

Apart from animal metaphors, researchers examine other negative images of women in different cultures. De Klerk (1992, p. 282) mentions negative descriptions of women such as "sword, tanks, green, bus, bags, and witches". Kövecses (2006) demonstrates that American women are often portrayed in American slang as commodities (e.g. "piece of dry goods", p. 153), food (e.g. "black meat", p. 156), objects, products, servants, and witches. In the western Balkans, women are often compared to cheap cars, and their body parts are described as being in poor condition, like those of a car that has been in an accident. According to this language, women's bodies are cars owned by men and are referred to as low-cost cars. Additionally, women's breasts are referred to as airbags, and their fronts are compared to car fronts (Bračić & Stamatović, 2017). Yu (2021) identifies common source domains used to depict leftover females in Chinese culture: FIGHTER, HUNTER, TRAVELER, FOOD (e.g. "spoiled food", p. 259), and COMMODITIES (e.g. "an expired product being left on the shelf", p. 258).

Metaphorical expressions cyberbullying female celebrities, however, received little scholarly attention. Williamson (2010) states that Britney Spears, a famous American celebrity, is described as broken and a trash after shaving her hair while Kerry Katona, a famous British celebrity, is depicted as "chav" a newly emerging British abuse term that refers to an uncivilized person belonging to the working class (p. 119). Adopting the objectification theory, Qamar et al. (2020) finds out that Pakistani female celebrities on Facebook are conceptualized as instruments and objects owned by others.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since the introduction of Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), an extensive body of research that studies metaphor as a conceptual cognitive tool has been conducted. A metaphor is defined as "the cognitive mechanism whereby one experiential domain is partially 'mapped', i.e., projected, onto a different experiential domain, so that the second domain is partially understood in terms of the first one" (Barcelona, 2003, p. 3). For instance, the metaphorical expression *time is money* is reflected in different linguistic expressions in English. English speakers use expressions like "*You're wasting my time*" and "*This gadget will save you hours*" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 7). In

CMT, the target (abstract) domain is better understood in terms of another (concrete) source domain through systematic structured mappings. The perception of metaphors differs from one culture to another because they reflect the values, knowledge and mental images in a speech community (Kövecses, 2005, 2010). The conceptualization of time in English and Hungarian illustrates this point. “The idea that English expresses with the words *spending your time* is expressed in Hungarian as *filling your time*” (Kövecses, 2010, p. 198).

Besides CMT, the study adopts sexual objectification theory as a framework to shed light on how men view women as sexual objects. A woman is sexually objectified “when her sexual parts or sexual functions are separated out from the rest of her personality and reduced to the status of mere instruments” (Bartky, 1990, p. 26). As the definition suggests, objectified women are judged depending on their physical attractions that fulfil men’s sexual desires rather than their personalities (Heflick et al., 2011). Evidence for objectification of female celebrities is reported in a study by Heflick and Goldenberg (2009) who found out that participants focus on body parts of female celebrities (Sarah Palin and Angelina Jolie) and paid less attention to their personal traits, such as competence and agency.

IV. CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

In this section, we will describe the procedures of compiling the two corpora used in this study. The data were collected from Facebook comments on images of famous female celebrities in the Arab world. To determine which Arab female celebrities should be included in the study, we consulted “The Celebrity List: Arab Music Stars 2021” published by *Forbes Middle East* magazine. In this magazine, celebrities are arranged according to the alphabetical order of the first name or stage name in English. The first five female celebrities whose followers are more than 10 million were selected (to examine the number of followers, the official Facebook pages of these celebrities were visited in July 2023). Names of celebrities, as they appear in the list, and number of followers were as follows: Ahlam (10 million followers), Angham (3.8 million followers) (not included), Assala Nasri (20 million followers), Carole Samaha (11 million followers), Elissa (24 million followers), and Haifa Wehbe (13 million followers).

Textual comments on the photos uploaded in January 2021 on the Facebook official pages of the five selected celebrities were extracted in excel sheets using ExportComments application and then data was categorized manually depending on the source domains (details about this procedure are below). Only Arabic cyberbullying texts were included (texts in other languages, tagged people, and Emojis are excluded). Names of commenters and names of female celebrities were hidden for privacy purposes (unless celebrities’ names are directly stated in the comments). As the comments are shared with the public, no consent was needed to collect the data. Metaphors that are profane were excluded from the study. The discussion section includes source domains for which the percentages provided by male and/or female commenters are above 2%. Two specialized corpora were built for this study. The first corpus consists of 715 metaphorical comments written by male Facebookers, whereas the second consists of 140 metaphorical comments written by female Facebookers. The difference in size is due to the fact that the comments are written on public posts and females are more concerned about their privacy on social media (Hoy & Milne, 2013; Deniz, 2020). Examining the Facebook profiles of commenters reveals that there were a large number of fake profiles. Facebook defines a fake profile as “a profile where someone is pretending to be something or someone that doesn't exist”. To distinguish between fake and real profiles, the researchers depended on public written interactions to guarantee that the owner is identified and addressed by others. Thus, comments written by Facebookers whose accounts were fake or locked (locked accounts are accounts in which the owners do not share posts or photos with the public) were excluded.

Interactions on Facebook profiles were also fruitful in identifying the gender of profiles’ owners since the Arabic grammatical system is highly marked for gender. Therefore, accounts in which interactions did not help identify the gender were not included in the corpus. The profile pictures did not yield accurate results in identifying the gender of the commenters as many commenters use photos of others or non-human photos. Similarly, names of profile owners do not always tell if the owner is male or female since some Facebookers use gender ambiguous names like *ʔalʔawra:q ʔalmubaʕθara* ‘scattered papers’ and others use gender-neutral names such as Islam and Nour. Facebook pages that belong to business accounts are not included because the commenter’s identity is unknown.

To determine if there are any dialect-specific expressions, the researchers thoroughly examined each metaphorical expression in the corpora. Several sources of information were used to identify the dialect, including the “About” section of the profile, where the profile owner states his origin, dialects used, and any posts, pictures, videos, comments, etc. in which the profile owner clearly states from where he is, such as ‘proud of my country...Iraq is the best’. To provide accurate transliteration of comments, the researchers checked the commenters’ origins and found out that they are from Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. Comments written by one of Levantine dialects (Palestinian Jordanian, Lebanese, or Syrian) are transliterated in the urban Jordanian Arabic (UJA) spoken by the researchers. Noting that all the expressions used in the examples by speakers of one of Levantine dialects are used in (UJA) and bearing in mind that transliteration is not one of the main concerns of this study and slight differences between dialects in pronunciation do not affect the results or the analysis of data. Examples written in Egyptian Arabic (EA) were transliterated by the one of the researchers who is a native speaker of (EA) as well. For examples written in Iraqi Arabic, three native speakers of Iraqi were consulted. Since Egyptian and Iraqi dialects differ from Levantine dialects in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation, Egyptian and Iraqi comments, unlike other comments, were identified during data analysis.

The five-step procedure developed by Steen (2007) was implemented in this study. This procedure involves a bottom-up approach to extract conceptual metaphors from linguistic evidence. In metaphorical expressions, context dependent meanings are different from the literal meanings found in dictionaries. Below is an illustrative example:

(1) *xarba:na wus'a:jra řazu:z*

Lit. You are damaged and you become old
'You are an ugly old woman'.

To decide if the contextual meanings of the lexical units are different from the literal meanings, the researchers depended on their intuitions as native speakers of Arabic and the judgments of ten Arabic native speakers (5 males and 5 females). In this example, the contextual and the literal meanings of the lexical items are the same except for the expression *xarba:na* 'spoiled' which conveys a metaphorical meaning. The meaning of a product/commodity is inferred from the expression *xarba:na* 'spoiled' which is used to describe products as in *issaya:ra xarba:na* 'the car broke down'.

V. RESULTS

A total number of (855) metaphorical expressions (715 by male commenters and 140 by female commenters) were identified and classified into two broad categories: source domains depicting cyberbullied physical appearances and source domains depicting cyberbullied behaviors. The source domains for which the percentages provided by male and/or female commenters are above 2% are discussed in this section. Table 1 shows the frequencies and percentages of the source domains used by male and female Facebookers for the metaphors involving cyberbullying of appearance.

TABLE 1
THE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF SOURCE DOMAINS DEPICTING CYBERBULLIED APPEARANCES OF ARAB FEMALE CELEBRITIES

Source domains depicting physical appearances					
	Source domains	Male commenters		Female commenters	
		frequency	Percentage	frequency	percentage
1	ANIMALS	82	11.4	10	7.1
2	CARS	28	3.9	1	0.7
3	FOOD	66	9.1	20	14.4
4	FRIGHTENING OBJECTS	42	5.8	12	8.6
5	MALES	93	13	3	2.2
6	PRODUCTS	48	6.7	7	5
7	REPULSIVE OBJECTS	57	7.9	25	18
Source domains depicting clothes					
	Source domains	Male commenters		Female commenters	
		frequency	Percentage	frequency	Percentage
8	HOUSEHOLD ITEMS	33	4.6	6	4.3
9	PLACES	37	5.1	0	0

According to Table 1, the most frequent source domain used by males is MALES 93 (13%) whereas the most frequent source domain used by females is REPULSIVE OBJECTS 25 (18%). Additionally, the source domains ANIMALS and CARS are more frequent in comments provided by males. On the other hand, the source domains FOOD and FRIGHTENING OBJECTS are more frequent in females' comments. As for describing the outfit, the source domain PLACES is exclusively used by male Facebook users. Focusing on portraying the revealing clothes and the uncovered parts of women's bodies supports the objectification theory as it indicates that men view women as objects of sexual desire. Moreover, a look into the source domains (1-7) in table 1 reveals that five source domains focus on conceptualizing women as sex object (CARS, FOOD, PRODUCTS, FRIGHTENING OBJECTS, and REPULSIVE OBJECTS). Such images of women show that, although Arab female celebrities are powerful influencers, Facebook users objectify and humiliate them as they evaluate them depending on their sexual attraction.

Table 2 presents the source domains provided by male and female commenters involving cyberbullying of behaviors.

TABLE 2
THE FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF SOURCE DOMAINS DEPICTING CYBERBULLIED BEHAVIORS OF ARAB FEMALE CELEBRITIES

Metaphors depicting misbehaviors					
Source domains for which the percentages are above 2% for comments provided by males and females (arranged alphabetically)					
	Source domains	Male commenters		Female commenters	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	ANIMALS	37	5.1	10	7.1
2	LOOSE/PUBLICLY EXPOSED OBJECTS	38	5.3	9	6.5
3	LOW	27	3.8	4	2.9
4	SICK/ IDIOTS	35	4.9	9	6.5

As shown in Table 2, the number of the source domains depicting cyberbullied behaviors is less than the number of source domains depicting cyberbullied appearances (Table 1). This result provides another support for the objectification theory as it demonstrates that Facebook users paid more attention to the description of celebrities based on their physical appearances while they paid less attention to their personal traits. According to Table 2, the most frequent source domain

provided by males is LOOSE/PUBLICLY EXPOSED OBJECTS 38 (5.3%) while the most frequent source domain used by females is ANIMALS 10 (7.1%).

VI. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis that highlights the pragmatic and communicative functions of the metaphorical expressions is presented in this section. The metaphors are categorized into two broad categories: Metaphors that are used in cyberbullying of appearance (physical appearance and outfit) and metaphors that are used in cyberbullying of behaviors.

There are seven types of metaphors that cyberbully celebrities' physical appearance. The first type is animals metaphors. This conceptualization consists of three mappings (subtypes). The first mapping is 'overweight women are big animals'. Overweight women are often portrayed as big animals such as cows/buffalos, as in (2). Here the commenter depends on similarities in size to create the metaphorical expressions. The second mapping is 'ugly women are animals' as in (3) in which the celebrity is referred to as a monkey. The third mapping is 'body parts of women like legs, lips, and faces are body parts of animals. In (4), the lips are referred to as lips of a camel.

(2) *mafa?alla t?u:l ba?ara ho:landijja*

lit. God willing you say a Dutch cow

'God! You are a cow'.

(A male commenter)

(3) *?a?hla fi l-warda ?a?izrik ja ?irda*

Lit. The most beautiful thing is the flower on your leg, you monkey.

'The most beautiful thing is the flower on your leg, you dog'.

(A male commenter)

(4) *fafa:ti:r l-zamal*

lit. lips of a camel

'Ugly lips'

(A male commenter)

The second type of metaphors is cars metaphors. There are two identified conceptual mappings related to the source domain CARS. The first one is 'women are cars' as in (5) in which the celebrity is referred to as a car owned by men. In this example, the objectification of women is apparent as the celebrity is described as a car (i.e. an object) that men trade in. Additionally, this example cyberbullies the plastic surgical repairs that celebrities undergo and compare them to cars' repairs. The portrayal of female celebrities as taxis in (6) is due to similarities in colors as both the taxi and the celebrity's dress are yellow¹. The second conceptual mapping is 'body parts of women are body parts of cars'. In (7), a woman's mouth is referred to as a car's sunroof (Here there is similarity in size. The celebrity's mouth is as big as a car's sunroof).

(5) Speaker A: *iss?r wil-fa?hs⁶ law sama?t?*

lit. The price and the condition report, please?

'The price and the condition report, please?'

Speaker B: *iffas⁶i wil-mato:r mad⁶ru:b l-bu:z mad⁶ru:b wum?addal ?ind docto:r hma:r*

ja?ni talatmijja watalati:n

The chassis and the motor are damaged. The front part of the car is damaged and fixed by a donkey doctor. It means 330.

Her body is ugly and the surgical repair of her ugly mouth is performed by a stupid doctor. The price is 330.'

(A male commenter)

(6) *salama:t ?e:f fi le:f ?addik ?as⁶far lo:nik walla ?addamti tiftiyli taksi ?uzra?*

lit. Get well soon. What's wrong with you? Why your body is yellow? Is this your color or you applied to work as a taxi?

'Your yellow dress is ugly. It is like the taxi's color'.

(A male commenter)

(7) *tumha ?ad fathit sa?f issajja:ra*

lit. Her mouth is as big as the car's sunroof.

'Her mouth is very big'.

(A male commenter)

The third type of metaphors is repulsive objects metaphors. Here there are two subtypes. First, 'women are repulsive objects'. According to (8), female celebrities who have been subjected to cyberbullying are viewed as repulsive objects. The second subtype is 'body parts of women are repulsive objects'. Both male and female commenters use the expression *ya? (yuck)* to convey their negative sentiments as in (9) in which the celebrity's lips are seen as repulsive.

¹ The photo is available at the following link:

https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=268051481346203&set=pb.100044240598934.-2207520000&locale=ar_AR

(8) *muʔrifa walla*

lit. You are repulsive, I swear.
'You are really repulsive'.

(A male commenter)

(9) *le:fiftik he:k jaʕ*

lit. Why your lips are like this, yuck!
'Why your lips are like this, yuck!'

(A female commenter)

The fourth type of metaphors is food metaphors which reduces women to sexual objects and conceptualize LUST as HUNGER and THE OBJECT OF LUST (i.e. WOMEN) as FOOD. Most, though not all, of the food items are unappealing. Two mappings are found. The First mapping is 'women are food' as in (10) in which the celebrity is referred to as an old piece of bread. It is worth noting that Arabic salad varieties hold negative connotations in Arabic culture². Male Facebook users refer to cyberbullied female celebrities as different types of salads to belittle them and indicate that they are not as attractive as other famous sexy celebrities, as in (11). The second mapping is 'a woman's body is meat'. In (12) the celebrity's old body is referred to as expired meat. In the source domain FOOD, the role of color in the production of metaphor is apparent³. A cyberbullied yellow dress is conceptualized as yolk as in (13) whereas a cyberbullied green dress is seen as Jew's mallow as in (14).

(10) *xubza ja:bsa*

lit. A hard piece of bread
'She is old and not tasty'.

(A male commenter)

(11) *la tsawwi nafsik zo:rzi:na ja tabbu:la*

lit. Do not make yourself Georgina, Taboulah
'Do not behave like Georgina Rodríguez. You are beneath notice'.

(A male commenter)

(12) *lahm zama:n intahat muddit s'ala:hi:tu waʔin ka:n bilbarra:d*

lit. Expired meat from a long time, even if it is in the fridge.
'Your body is old and ugly even if you take care of yourself'.

(A male commenter)

(13) *s'afa:r l-be:dʕ*

Lit. yolk
'Your yellow dress is ugly'.

(A female commenter)

(14) *karo:l bil-mlu:xijja*

lit. Carol cooked with Jew's mallow
'Your green dress is ugly'.

(A male commenter)

Male metaphors is the fifth type of metaphors. In certain cultural contexts, female Arab celebrities are sometimes portrayed as men. Here, the commenters focus is on the lack of feminine qualities that make celebrities attractive. Four mappings are related to the source domain MEN. The first mapping is 'women have masculine physical characteristics'. In (15), the celebrity's shoe size is portrayed as equivalent to that of a man. The second mapping is 'women are dressed in masculine clothing'. In (16), the commenter directly states that the celebrity wears sport set for men. The third mapping is 'women are addressed using male names'. Some names that appeared in the corpus are Jafar, Azouz, Abo Jasim (used in Iraq), and even Michael Jackson. In (17), the commenter calls the celebrity, Jafar. The last mapping is 'women work in male-dominated industries'. These industries include electricians, dealers, wrestlers, and football players, especially players with dark skin. In (18), the celebrity is conceptualized as an electrician.

(15) *nimrit ʔizirha itne:n wuxamsi:n*

Lit. The size of her leg is 52.
'The size of her shoes is very big like men's shoes. It is 52'.

(A male commenter)

(16) *badlit me:ssi*

lit. Messi's suit
'A masculine suit'

(A male commenter)

²The phrase *haja:ti min ye:rik salat'a* "my life without you is worthless" is commonly used as a compliment on social media as clear in the links below:
<https://twitter.com/kindabhj/status/1071133330555457539>
<https://twitter.com/xQueenEllx/status/736557007046627329?lang=ar-x-fm>
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=377385446534436>

³Conceptualizations of a cyberbullied yellow dress include: *kurkum* 'turmeric', *xardal* 'mustard', *mo:z mʕaffin* 'rotten banana' (unappealing food), *jo:rbat ʕadas* 'lentil soup', *mzajta* 'oily', *ʔahla:m bil-ka:ri* (lit. Ahlam cooked with curry), *lajmu:n* 'lemon', *l-kastar* 'custard', etc.

(17) *imsaḥi l-mikja:ʒ jal-bu:ma wufu:fi btirzaʕi zaʕfar*

Lit. Remove the makeup you owl and see you will be Jafar again.

'Remove the makeup, you toad and see how you will look masculine again'.

(A male commenter)

(18) *ʔabu ʕabdo: l-kahrabzi*

lit. Abo Abdo, the electrician

'a mannish woman'.

(A male commenter)

The sixth type of metaphors is products/commodities metaphors. Two mappings are related to the source domain PRODUCTS. The first one is 'women are products/commodities'. In (19), the celebrity's body is conceptualized as an expired product to indicate that her beauty and sexual attraction decline with age. Examples in this section provide further evidence for women sexual objectification. The portrayal of female celebrities as sexual objects can be also attributed to the growing prevalence of cosmetic surgeries that promote the idea of normalized bodies. As argued by Heyes & Jones (2009) cosmetic surgeries are tools of medicine that contribute to the representation of women as commodities. This is clear in (20), in which the commenter indirectly states that the celebrity needs to undergo plastic surgeries. The second mapping is 'body parts of women are products/commodities'. In (21), Facebook users condemn the exposure of celebrities' bodies by referring to their body parts that are visible through their clothing as 'for sale'.

(19) *s'a:jra iksbajar*

lit. You became expired

'You are old and unsexy'.

(A male commenter)

(20) *xarba:na maʕ curo:na biddik taʕdi:l*

lit. You are ruined with Corona. You need a repair.

'You lost your beauty after Corona. You need to undergo plastic surgeries.'

(A male commenter)

(21) *fxa:d lil-be:ʕ*

Lit. Thighs for sale

'She sells her body for sex'.

(A male commenter)

The last type of metaphors is frightening objects metaphors. Arab female celebrities subjected to cyberbullying are depicted as evil spirits (e.g. ghoul), a nightmare (this is used particularly to cyberbully Ahlam as her name in Arabic means 'dreams'). In (22), the celebrity is conceptualized as *l-buʕbuʕ* (the bogeyman: an imaginary spirit used to frighten children).

(22) *lamman l-ʔat'a:l jiyalbu:ni baḥki:lhum biddi ʔaʕi:bilkum l-buʕbuʕ jaʕni ʔinti*

lit. When kids trouble me I tell them I will bring to you the bogeyman which means you.

'When the kids make troubles, I tell them I will bring to you the bogeyman, you!!'

(A female commenter)

As for the description of celebrities' outfits, there are two main types of metaphors. First, household items metaphors. Besides describing their outfit as an outfit of men that lacks feminine styles, Facebookers describe celebrities' clothes as household items such as curtains, towels, and tablecloths. Such descriptions indicate that the clothes are unattractive and are of low quality because their prices are as low as the prices of household items. In (23), the commenter sarcastically depicts the dress the celebrity wears as nice curtains. The second type is places metaphors. This metaphor is used only by male commenters. As stated earlier, it demonstrates that men see women as sexual objects as they focus on depicting their clothes that show the uncovered parts of their bodies. There are two (mappings) subtypes of this metaphorical expression. The first mapping is 'open clothes are open places'. Male commenters refer to the open clothes as open shops, windows, doors, and balconies. In (24), the dress is described as an open shop where body parts (conceptualized as goods) are sold. The second one is 'To make revealing clothes modest is to close open places'. Male Facebook users condemn female celebrities for appearing in public wearing revealing clothes and hence they ask them to wear modest fashion styles that suit the conservative societies in the Arab World. Turning revealing clothes into modest outfits is conceptualized as closing an open place such as a window or a door. In (25), the commenter refers to making a revealing dress modest as closing the window of the manwar⁵.

(23) *ḥilwa hal-bara:di ha:j*

lit. These curtains are nice.

'Wow! nice curtains'.

(A male commenter)

(24) *ha:da ba:b rizi? hara:m jitsakkar*

Lit. It is a living door. It is prohibited to close.

'She wears a hot open dress and sells her body for sex'.

(A male commenter)

(25) *nifsi tiʔfili fibba:k l-manwar*

Lit. I hope you close the window of the manwar.

"I hope that your dress will be modest and less revealing".

(An Egyptian male commenter)

Moving to the metaphors that cyberbully the behaviors of Arab female celebrities, analysis of data revealed that there are four main types. The first type is animals metaphors. There are four mappings (subtypes) of this metaphor. The first mapping is 'women who behave in stupid socially unacceptable manners are animals'. Facebookers use the source domain ANIMAL, with its general sense, and the source domains DOG, DONKEY and COW to focus on stupid socially unacceptable behaviors of female celebrities, especially appearing in public in sexy revealing outfit. In (26), the celebrity is described as a dog and the commenter tells her to cover the exposed parts of her body. The second mapping is 'a poisonous woman is a snake'. In (27), the celebrity is depicted as *ʔafʕa* 'snake'. By wearing clothes that show her skin, the celebrity poisons the ideas of the young generation who likes to imitate and follow celebrities' life styles. The celebrity's appearance is described as *laʕi:n* 'cursed' since it is against the social norms of the Arabic and Islamic culture. The third mapping is 'a savage woman is a savage animal'. In (28), the celebrity is viewed as an animal that behaves in a savage way. The fourth mapping is 'a seductive woman is a lioness'. This depiction is exclusively used by Egyptians. They use the animal metaphor *labwa* 'lioness' to refer to sexy females who run after men and try to seduce them. The article titled *ʔassabab ʔal-xafi wara:ʔ iʕtiba;r labwa lafð'an x:arizan fi muʕtamaʕa:tina* 'The reason behind considering lioness an offensive word in our societies' in the Egyptian newspaper, Al-Arab Al-Youm clarifies this conceptualization. It states that this behavior of women is similar to how lionesses behave after the defeat of the old king of lions. The lioness allows the new kings to sleep with her as a sign of obedience. In (29), the celebrity is depicted as a seductive woman who runs after men.

(26) *ityat'i ja kalba*

lit. Cover your body, dog.

'Cover your body, dog'.

(A male commenter)

(27) *ma haða iffakl il-laʕi:n ʔafʕa*

lit. What is this evil appearance? A snake

'What an evil appearance!'

(A female commenter)

(28) *bto:kli baniʔa:dmi:n*

lit. Do you eat human beings?

'Do you eat human beings?'

(A male commenter)

(29) *danti bint labwa baʔa wuʕajza titrawwaʔi*

Lit. You are a lioness girl and you want to be in a good mood.

'You are a vamp who run after men'.

(An Egyptian male commenter)

The second type of metaphors describes women who are open to seducing men and engaging in multiple sexual encounters. These women are objectified as loose/publicly exposed objects. Two mappings are found here. The first mapping describes the celebrities as loose/publicly exposed objects as in (30). This portrayal, which gives a sense of not being held or attached together, has led to the creation of other metaphorical phrases such as the use of "*limmi nafsik*" "behave in a moral way" by Egyptians, as in (31). Speakers of Levantine dialects depict loose women as publicly exposed objects. In (32), the commenter condemns the celebrity's revealing clothes that expose her seductive body. The second mapping is celebrities' uncovered body parts are loose /publicly exposed objects. In (33) the commenter asks the celebrity to cover her thighs. In (34) the commenter asks the female celebrity to cover her breasts.

(30) *bitiʕmili e: ja sa:jba*

lit. What are you doing a loose woman.

'What are you doing? You are a loose woman.'

(An Egyptian male commenter)

(31) *la kida o:var s'ara:ha ja wilijja itlammi*

lit. No, this is over really woman collect yourself.

No, this is over. Behave in a moral way, you loose woman.

(An Egyptian male commenter)

(32) *ru:hi ind'abbi juʕs'uf ʕumrik...*

Go and hide yourself. It bombs your life.

'Behave in a moral way and cover your body. Damin!'

(A male commenter)

(33) *limmi fxa:dik...*

lit. Gather your thighs...

'Cover your thighs...'

(An Egyptian male commenter)

- (34) *dʿubbi sʿadrik*
lit. Hide your breasts
'Cover your breasts'.

(A male commenter)

The third type of metaphors is women are low metaphors. This metaphorical expression has two mappings. First, 'low women have low social status'. Celebrities, in certain cases, are referred to with names that are typically associated with lower social classes or savage women, such as the name "Rabha" in (35). Additionally in (36), the commenter sarcastically uses the name of a western celebrity who is perceived as poor to refer to an Arab female celebrity, emphasizing the idea that the celebrity is attempting to imitate the western celebrity's style but falling short. The results also show that female celebrities are often portrayed as unsophisticated by likening them to shepherds, which is considered a low-status occupation in Arab culture, as in (37). The second mapping is 'low women are down'. In (38), the commenter condemns the celebrity because of her low morals:

- (35) *biṭṭanni wuṭisʿrfi:ha fi ṣamalijja:t tazmi:l ja rabḥa*
lit. You sing and spend it on plastic surgeries.
'You spend the money you gain from singing on plastic surgeries.'

(A male commenter)

- (36) *ziniḥir lu:bi:z l-yala:ba*
lit. Jennifer Lopez of the poor.
'Her attempt to imitate Jennifer Lopez failed'.

(A male commenter)

- (37) *ra:jha ṣarraṣi*
lit. She is going to sheep herding.
'She lacks good taste'.

(A male commenter)

- (38) *.nizlit min ṣe:ni xalasʿ*
lit. She fell from my eyes.
'I look down on her'.

(A male commenter)

The last type is 'women are sick/ idiots metaphors. Some commenters perceive the targeted celebrities as being mentally ill or unintelligent as in (39), where the celebrity is depicted as disabled. Example (40) makes reference to an Egyptian idiomatic expression known as "issara:ja" (also referred to as "issara:ja iisʿsʿafra") which means 'psychiatric hospital'.

- (39) *xaʿs naʿs l-ṣa:ha ha:j laḍinha daḍiman tintiqid issu:riji:n*
lit. Mentioning the text of this handicapped because she always criticizes the Syrians.
'Especially this stupid because she always criticizes Syrians.'

(A male commenter)

- (40) *tʿalaṣti min gama:ṣit issara:ja*
lit. You appear to be from the group of yellow brigade.
'It appears that you are crazy'.

(An Egyptian male commenter)

VII. CONCLUSION

The aim of this research paper was to examine the metaphors used by male and female individuals who engage in cyberbullying against Arab female celebrities. Two main categories of cyberbullying metaphors were identified: those depicting celebrities' appearances and those depicting their misbehaviors. The research found out that the source domains MALES, and ANIMALS are more frequently used by male commenters and the source domain REPULSIVE OBJECT is more frequent in comments provided by females. Additionally, it was evident that male commenters make reference to the uncovered parts of women's bodies and depict their open clothes as open places. This indicates that they portray female celebrities as sexual objects that fulfil their sexual desires. The study also highlighted the role that colors play in the creation of new and creative metaphors. Furthermore, the study concluded that for women to appear in public in revealing clothes is not acceptable in the Arab World since it is against the social costumes and values.

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