

# The News Coverage of Saudi Women Driving Restriction: A Comparative Analysis of Modality in Al-Jazirah News Reports of Restriction and Post Restriction Era

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**Abstract:** *Compared to other Arab and Muslim country, Saudi Arabia is known for its culture and customs which biased towards men rather than women. Saudi women are restricted from doing various things independently or without a male guardian. One of these restrictions imposed on Saudi women is car driving until the ban was lifted in 2018. Over the last twenty years, there are a lot of struggles recorded by the mass media between the group demanding more rights for Saudi women and the conservative preserving the fundamental of Saudi's culture based on strict Islamic teaching. Hence, this paper examines the way modern standard Arabic online news of Al-Jazirah (AJ) of Saudi Arabia portrayed the restriction of car driving on Saudi women during both eras of the restriction of driving and during the time when the restriction has been lifted. This paper also aims to analyse the ways that language is exploited in AJ to report on struggles around the driving restriction on Saudi women, particularly in the used of modality as one of discourse construction strategy utilised by the news outlet. Therefore, the paper will compare the corpus data consisting of online news articles published by AJ between 2010 and 2014 which represent the restriction era (labelled as CD 01 sub-corpus data), with the articles in 2018 (CD 02 sub-corpus data) when the ban has been lifted using corpus data mining software 'AntConc' for the Windows 11 system version 4.3.1 (2024). The quantitative result of corpus data then will be analysed using a qualitative approach based on the textual-oriented Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Fairclough and media discourse of Ruth Wodak. The result shows that AJ news outlet in the pre and post periods has a significant difference around the news discourse in the use of modal adverbs portraying the restriction of driving on Saudi women.*

**Keywords:** Saudi Women, Driving, Online News, Pre&Post, Arabic, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Linguistic Corpus

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## 1. Introduction

Saudi Arabia widely considered by many as the most practicing Islamic teaching country in the world due to the location of two holy Islamic cities Mecca and Medina. In Arab society, the men domination can be seen in various fields, while women's participation is still left behind compared to men. Saudi women are often portrayed as wearing hijab (veil), being mother and wife. Their daily activities and social involvement are still limited to family matters, women affairs and house cores, unlike men who actively participated in various

activities. Thus, all these bring negative stereotypes in labelling Saudi women by the Western media. Hence, this study focuses on the representation of Saudi women in the media with special attention to the Arabic online news coverage around the restriction of driving on Saudi women. The well-established Modern Standard Arabic online news outlet has been selected for this study namely al-Jazirah (AJ) of Saudi Arabia.

Al-Jazirah (literally means peninsular) is daily broadsheet news published in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and it is very well-known as conservative and pro-Islamic, as well as pro-Saudi government. Since its foundation in 1960, the circulation of AJ has reached many Arab and European countries. With the benefit from the rapid development of communication technology, the access for online news has reached millions of readers every day through open access of the respective official online news portal. AJ official news portal can be accessed at [www.al-jazirah.com](http://www.al-jazirah.com). AJ is also known as Saudi Arabia's modern standard Arabic online news provider which covered all aspects of Saudi's economic, politic, social as well as culture and belief both locally and internationally. The government of Saudi Arabia also has its law and restrictions which should follow by Saudi people.

Thus, it is essential to examine the way modern standard Arabic online news of al-Jazirah (AJ) of Saudi Arabia represent Saudi women around the issue of driving restriction. The topic of 'driving' has been chosen as it has been restricted towards Saudi women making a lot of issues and debates. Other Arab and Muslim countries in contrast allow women to drive. The restriction was furthermore backed by the 'fatwa' issued by Saudi Islamic scholars to support the decision which prevents women from driving cars until 2018. This fatwa then has been exploited by both the supporter and the opposer of the driving restriction to support their argument. Hence, resulting in the issue to become more complicated as it involved the value of Islamic teaching as well as local Saudi custom and culture. All this has been reported by the mass media, particularly by AJ which is one of the most prominent news agencies in Saudi Arabia. The main aim of this study is to discover how Saudi women and the restriction in driving have been reported by al-Jazirah during the restriction implementation between of 2010 and 2014 compared with post year of 2018. Although the restriction of driving has been long implemented before 2010 in Saudi Arabia, but within these years of (2010 – 2014) the issue has grabbed a lot of attention and sparked a lot of debate in the internet, which resulted in local Saudi media to back the Saudi government decision. This study analyses the ways that language is exploited in al-Jazirah to portray Saudi women being banned from driving car.

## 2. Literature Review

Looking at the literature on this topic, studies investigating linguistic representations of women have tended to be contrastive by mainly comparing women's representations against those of men. One significant finding they all seem to have in common is that MAN (man, men, he, him) far outnumbers WOMAN (woman, women, she, her) in both spoken and written language corpora data (Biber et al., 1999; Kjellmer, 1986; Romaine, 2001). Beyond frequencies, researchers have documented a host of sexist linguistic asymmetries in English corpora. Romaine for instance (Romaine, 2001: 170) listed out several examples of sexist linguistic asymmetries in English Corpora such as terms like career woman but not career man and referring to an adult female as a girl but rarely referring to an adult male as a boy (Sigley & Holmes, 2002: 145). Sexist language is also applied to Arabic which also has a specific gender grammar use separating between masculine and feminine as been pointed out for example by Sadiqi's (2003: 128-146) in his analysis of lexical, structural and discursive sexism in Moroccan Arabic.

Focusing on collocation with man and woman in the British National Corpus (BNC), Pearce (2008) found that adjectives characterised women by their physical appearance, while men were characterised by their physical strength. Furthermore, in the subject position, a woman was found to collocate with verbs predicating women as emotionally intemperate (e.g. cry, weep) and verbally annoying (e.g. nag, wail).

Despite these reassuring trends, as well as increased awareness and codification of gender equality in the language since the 1980's, the overall picture emerging from the abovementioned studies of British, American and New Zealand English suggests that sexist discourses have not gone away (Sunderland, 2004: 201; 2006: 40). Media studies have been critical of the continued stereotyping and marginalisation of women in news discourse (Downing, 1980: 128; Tuchman, 1978: 8).

Most of these misrepresentations are echoed in applied linguistic research on the discursive construction of women in news discourse which remains sparse to this day. Rare examples include Fowler (1991) who examined gender discrimination in a range of British newspaper articles covering the events of New Year's Eve in 1985. He found that women, in contrast to men, were often categorised by familial status (e.g. wife and mother of two) and overlexicalised regarding physical and sexual attributes. Women were also underrepresented in professional and political success (p. 105). Another early study was carried out by Caldas-Coulthard (1993) which combined CDA with corpus linguistics (CL) to analyse 200 hard news articles from three British broadsheets over ten days.

Shameer (2016) mentioned that the media had played the greatest role in raising women's issues by highlighting their representation in society. It does show that media is the best medium to convey the message to the audience about women's achievement, contribution, participation and representation. It is undeniable that the social media nowadays brings up our society together in bringing upon major biological, physiological and sociological illnesses upon many young ladies today due to the unrealistic norms of today ideal body and beauty standards (Lauren Dascalo, 2016).

Looking specifically into Arab women, Rubin (2007) made an argument regarding the 2005 Freedom Home report. He argued that Arab women progress is developing slowly compared to the other women in the rest of the world. According to the report, "16 Arab nations on a scale between one and five in several categories related to women's right and non-discrimination" making overall the highest score was Tunisia receiving an average rating of 3.24, while 1.26 which is considered the lowest was Saudi Arabia.

The issue surrounding Arab women often get less coverage by the media. For Arab women themselves, they wanted to address on socio-economic, cultural and political inequality which has been long suffered by them. However, these issues do not receive the main concern from the media. Unfortunately, media use its power to manipulate the stories appropriately. The similar case happened to Arab women in Egypt where the media have for a long time neglected it (Maurice Odine, 2013).

The previous research on women and media in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa which consist of Arab countries), shows media reported most of stereotyping women on a negative side. In contrast, women involved in social and politic which is considered the high interest portrayed in a positive way had been included in the studies by Akharbach and Rerhaye (1992), Baron (1994), Khiabany and Sreberny (2004). Based on the findings from the Cairo-

based New Woman's Research Center (2002) conducted research on a large-scale content analysis of 18 Egyptian series aired regionally during Ramadhan. The researchers take the result indicated "500 episodes included violence against women with 43% of women characters subjected to violence and 13 per cent killed". The case is one of the issues stressed out by people to show the failure of Arab media in enhancing justice for women. The Arab media also fails to raise the public concern on women's oppression which supposed to be in line with the efforts to emphasise the significant role of the press in the Arab society (Raad, 2004).

According to Reem Obeidat (2002), she highly agreed the role of media is beyond the expectation of just reporting on events and society to more than that as the primary role in changing the portrayal of women and influencing in the way people manage their properties and interests. In other words, media nowadays plays the greatest role in influencing how people generate their knowledge, attitudes, positions and practices.

Amel al-Ariqi (2009) conducted a case study Al-Jazeera news on Middle Eastern Women in the Media: A Battle Against Stereotypes. She pointed out that the media plays a vital role especially for the empowerment of women. Since the issues in the Middle East widely get coverage by the news agencies, therefore, there is no reason for the representation of Middle Eastern women could be the main agenda highlighting by the news media. In her book on title 'Women and Media in the Middle East: power through self-expression', Naomi Sakr revealed that since the early 1990s, media interest in the Middle East shows a dramatic change in highlighting on women's issues which began exactly prior to September 11th, 2001, and automatically making the voice of women's right have been heard. Another study by Naomi Sakr found the lack representation of Middle Eastern women was depend on media which they did not make a broad coverage of women as their primary concern.

It is noticeable that Saudi Arabia represents a unique, though significant, the case among Arab countries. Housing the two most holy sites for Muslims (Mecca and Medina), Saudi Arabia is symbolically the global centre of attention when it comes to Islamic issues. However, the case of women in Saudi Arabia is genuinely distinctive as this area has been the most impenetrable to outside influences (Ahmed, 1992). While the roles of women in other Arab countries have witnessed major strides toward more participation, women's development in Saudi Arabia has been relatively slower.

As a result, the common stereotypes of Saudi women are they cannot drive cars, are required to wear the headscarf covering their hair and even are expected to cover their faces. While they have gained increased access to education and few genders segregated job opportunities, their representation in the labour force participation rate was barely over 10 per cent in 2002 (Arab Human Development Report, 2002). However, the lack of female involvement in the work arena cannot be solely attributed to the role of traditional ulama'. The prevailing cultural norms, which are sometimes of tribal have put pressures on women's ability to involve themselves in the economic activities in Saudi Arabia. Sometimes the traditionalist Islamic scholar's strict understanding could be perceived as merely putting a religious impression on various long-standing traditions and practices.

In the study of women and media in Saudi Arabia on changes and contradictions, Naomi Sakr (2009) found in her observation that both men and women in Saudi Arabia, especially outside the ruling elites and patronage networks, are worked hard to raise the concern about their need. In another study, Soraya Altorki wrote in her book "Women in Saudi Arabia: Ideology and Behaviour Among the Elite" Highlight the exchange between ideology, behaviour, and

religious doctrines in changing the role of women in Saudi Arabia. Altorki emphasises that none of these three elements happen independently of each other and therefore limit and complement each other at the same time. The agent of change according to her is the individual, who acts in this own self-interest, can change certain norms but not others.

While Usher (2011) concluded a report in Saudi Arabia prepared by Kamal Subhi. The purpose of the report is to restrict the ban on women driving, as he said by allowing women to drive would cause other crimes such as prostitution, pornography, homosexuality and divorce. This conservation action suggestion, however, will bring little changes for the women's equality. Thus, male domination becomes controlled temperament, while women's seclusion becomes conditional segregation, and these changes were triggered by an increasing tendency of men and women to think pragmatically about changing realities. Throughout her book, Altorki does provide a compelling argument that change is occurring within Saudi society. This shift is affecting women and men equally. However, men remain the ultimate agents of this change. Despite this, Altorki does not provide a full account of the role of the state is enforcing or relaxing certain norms.

More specifically on the topic of this article, it is found that Saudi Arabia is the only country which prohibited women from driving cars from the 1960s up until June 2018. Although the restriction was fundamentally based on the local custom of Saudi Arabia, it was strongly backed by the fatwas from the Saudi prominent Islamic scholars. On top of these fatwas is the fatwa by the former Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia Sheikh Abdullah Ibn Baz. In Ibn Baz's fatwa, women are not allowed to drive because it can lead to sinful acts such as free interactions between man and woman (Ibn Baz: 1990). The Ibn Baz's fatwa on the restriction of driving on women received massive support from another senior Saudi's Islamic scholar. Among them Sheikh Muhammad Soleh al-Uthaimin (2009) who also support the decision to ban women from driving vehicles as it will disclose women from doing many things which against the teaching of Islam. Hence, women are not allowed to drive cars. Furthermore, Sheikh Soleh Fawzan (2013) in his fatwa emphasised that allowing women to drive cars is contradicts with the nature of women which known for their qualities of gentle, soft and kind.

On the opposite side of the restriction, emerged a group of Saudi women who work hard to fight for their right. The first attempt to challenge the restriction was held on 6th November 1990, as 47 of Saudi women drove their cars in Riyadh to show their protest. Almost 20 years later with the rapid development in the communication technology, women activists particularly Manal al-Sharif started her campaign calling for the right for women to drive. Inspired by the so-called 'The Arab Spring' Manal's campaign was done through YouTube and Facebook. In addition, the women activists have fully utilised the online news portals to spread their messages calling for solidarity from other women in every part of the world. Ultimately, on 26 September 2017, The Saudi ruler, King Salman issued a royal decree to lift the ban by allowing Saudi women to drive. Hence, the new guidelines regarding the right for women to drive cars to be created and implemented by June 2018. However, Manal al-Sharif (2018) claims that the guardianship law is the biggest barrier to women's advancement in Saudi Arabia and not the inability in the issue of Saudi women driving a car.

Traditionally, Saudi women have been dependent on male relatives in issue of driving as they were banned to drive until 2018. On June 24, 2018, to be exact was recorded in Saudi's history the lifting of Saudi women's driving ban. Although, more than a year after that released, the image of women driving in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia remains a novelty (Bashraheel, 2009; Jiffry, 2012).



In accordance with the Vision 2030 goals for economic and social reform in the kingdom including the Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman's allowing women to drive a car. The impact of a projected 3 million female drivers in the kingdom by 2030, however, will not only potentially "empower women" and "change the employment landscape of the country," but also may result in a host of unintended consequences enabled by enhancing women's access to capital, mobility and autonomy (Ghazanfar Ali Khan, 2018).

### 3. Methodology

#### **Corpus Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

This research employs both qualitative and quantitative methods. The researcher combines Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL) to investigate discourse around Saudi women on the restrictions of driving in Arabic online news of AJ and BBCA. In Critical Discourse Analysis, the study applies two approaches of Discourse Textual Oriented (DTO) (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995) and Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) (Wodak, 1996). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research which studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social context of inequality (van Dijk, 2006).

CDA is commonly blamed for the lack of supporting data and tends to bias toward a specific direction in the analysis. Hence, CL can offer quantitative data to support the qualitative analysis from CDA approaches. The approach of CDA received tremendous attention among researchers and scholars in linguistics and language studies, as well as other social science disciplines. Corpus Linguistics (CL) has become widely used in modern linguistics study. According to Biber (1998: 4), corpus-based research depends on both quantitative and qualitative techniques. CL may provide statistical figures in detail about certain linguistic features and variants in the texts. However, qualitative functional interpretation is also an essential step in any corpus-based analysis.

Corpus methodologies have massive potential for use in discourse studies and CDA in particular. Corpus collects great examples of 'real life' language use which can be used to support the researcher's argument (McEnery & Wilson, 1996: 1). Furthermore, Corpus analysis software not only demonstrates the non-obvious linguistic elements in a single text but also expose 'hidden thoughts' beyond the researcher's expectation (Partington, 2003: 7). Meanwhile, Hunston (2002) observes that Corpus investigation is useful for the critical linguist because the observed frequent repetitions help the researchers to identify and make explicit descriptions of texts.

Thus, the study utilises the combination of CDA and CL to analyse the corpus data of online news articles on the restriction of driving on Saudi women. There are a lot of linguistics elements involved in conveying the discourses around the issue of driving restriction. However, this study only focuses on the strategic use of modality which can be seen as evidence to reveal the hidden agenda around the discourses of driving restriction on Saudi women. The analysis will first present the quantitative data before moving into more detail qualitative analysis of online news extracts. The quantitative data analysis will present the statistical result that gives a general overview of the usage of modality in the corpus data. While the quantitative analysis will present critical discourse analysis aims to reveal the hidden agenda which supports the ideology of the online news institution as a result of strategic used of modality by al-Jazirah online news outlet.

## Modality

Modality is known as a concept of writers and speaker's evaluation towards languages that involved a degree of belief of the speaker's expression to a particular proposition. In short, modality brings the signal of what speakers or writers say and write. In the linguistic aspect, modality involved three different perspectives known as modal categories of philosophical, semantic and linguistic.

Epistemic modality, for instance, is "one major type of modality refers to belief and logical and the status of the proposition of the speaker's commitment towards what they believe" (Palmer, 1986: 54-5). Typically, the commitment is often relating to a shred of evidence which derived from a situational source of information for the speaker's utterance. The form of the situational signal coming from speaker perceives as such, and the reflection of a judgement of what writer say is taken by evidence.

From a linguistic perspective, "similar to aspect tense, number, gender and others, modality is treated as a semantic term that is known as a grammatical category" (Palmer, 1980: 1). Furthermore, in another linguistic point of view, semantic categories such as tense, aspect and mood are also referred to by linguists when discussing modality from the linguistic side (cf, Lyons, 1977; Palmer, 1986; Huddleston, 1984).

## 4. Result Analysis and Discussion

In this study, Corpus data of Arabic news online of al-Jazirah surrounding the topic of Saudi women car driving have been categorised into two different group of sub-corpus data; First the news articles from 2010 to 2014 (CD 01) which represent the corpus data during the driving restriction, and the Second sub-corpus (CD 02) data consists of news article dated from June 2018 onwards (up until the end of December 2018) which represent the corpus data of post driving restriction. Saudi women as the main focus have been analysed around the issue of a driving ban which can be manually gathered in different semantic categories according to the contextual of the original news texts from the wordlist frequency results and with the assist of concordance line in searching for Arabic modal categories known as 'modality'.

As a result, different categories of modality related to Saudi women and driving ban in al-Jazirah (AJ) have been identified in various types namely epistemic, deontic, evaluative, boulomaic, alethic and temporal. All these types of modalities are highly being portrayed surrounding Saudi women in both sub-corpus data of during the restriction and post driving restriction era which also related to the driving restrictions surrounding Saudi women until the lifting of the driving ban in June 2018.

However, despite this similarity in general overview of modality occurrences in the corpus data, all categories of modality as mentioned above have been highlighted in the First sub-corpus data of during restriction (CD 01), but some of the modality types has only emerged in the news reported in June 2018 right after the lifting of driving restriction on Saudi women. In (CD 02), on the other hand, used more epistemic modality of certainty such as *إن* and temporal modality, for instance *كان*, (male) also including *كانت* (female) and *تزال* as well as only a few of other modalities has been observed in the corpus data.

Thus, the analysis in this study will begin by highlighting the highest frequency of Arabic modality mainly on driving issue surrounding Saudi women in the Arabic news online discourses of AJ in (CD 01) of during the restriction period before going more deeper into the

most modality used in (CD 02) of post driving restriction era. It is worth to note that, all these modality categories are being highlighted by AJ news corpora data.

### Corpus procedure of Modality

Before the analysis goes into further details, first the study will demonstrate the process of gathering Arabic modality on Saudi women and the restrictions of driving ban in the two set of sub-corpus data of CD 01 and CD 02. The study employs Corpus analysis techniques of wordlist and concordance in order to search for the most frequent modality around Saudi women and driving ban in the Arabic news online articles of AJ. The purpose of the wordlist, therefore, is not only to look at the frequent words, but it also can discover the most significant Arabic modality surrounding Saudi women in the online news discourse. Concordance, on the other hand, is used to verify the most selected modality used by looking at the context of the words in sentences and assisted the researcher in understanding the meaning of selected topic words.

Thus, in this process, the study applied both Corpus techniques of wordlist and concordance to identify the most prominent modality of Saudi women which locate at different positions in a long wordlist result by referring to concordance to verify the frequency results. According to Michael Barlow (2004), "He defines wordlists and concordances as transformations of text, giving the analyst the opportunity to view different perspectives on a text".

### Frequency result (Wordlist) of modality categories in Arabic

In this analysis, the researcher refers to Anghlescu's classification of modal categories purposely in Arabic which she sketches the modal categories based on Resher (1986) and later used by Perkins (1983). Besides, Anghlescu builds her theoretical framework for the study of modality in Standard Arabic (SA) which has been written in her article of '*Modalities and Grammaticalization in Arabic*' (1999). Anghlescu claims in her finding that "Arabic modalities are used as the category of words known as *al-nawasikh* النواسخ. The following table shows Anghlescu's classification of six modal categories in Arabic based on her description:

No.	Modality	Modal Meaning	Examples
1	Epistemic	certainty	إن/الثابت
		doubt	كاد/من المشكوك فيه
		anticipation	من المحتمل
2	Deontic	obligation	يجب/لا بد
		permission	يمكن
		interdiction	يمنع
3	Evaluative	evaluation	يحسن/نعم/ينس
4	Boulomaic	expressive	ليت/من المؤسف
5	Alethic	necessity	لا بد/من الضروري
		possibility	يمكن/من الممكن
6	Temporal	time indicator	كان/أصبح/ما زال
		adverbial	طالما/قلما

### Analysis Procedure

The first step taken in this process of Corpus procedure is by looking at the wordlist frequency result of six types of modality namely: epistemic, deontic, evaluative, boulomaic, alethic and temporal from corpora data of AJ labelled as CD 01 in which contains the corpus data of news articles during the driving restriction. In the wordlist, there are rank and frequency of each word



type. To begin with, the study looks at AJ 6,982-word types. According to the frequency list of AJ, it can be noticed that the result of AJ news shows considerably different compared to the post-year of 2018 and has been sorted from highest to lowest, as can be seen in **Table 1** and **Table 2** below:

**Table 1: Frequency list (wordlist) of Arabic modality in AJ: CD 01 Sub-Corpus Data**

No.	Modality	Modal Meaning	Arabic Example	Frequency
1	Temporal	time indicator (M)	كان	15
		time indicator (F)	كانت	17
		time indicator (M)	أصبح	6
		time indicator (F)	أصبحت	5
		time indicator	زال	5
		adverbial	طالما	4
2	Epistemic	certainty	إن	37
			ثابت	2
3	Deontic	obligation	يجب	6
			يجوز	2
			لا بد	3
		permission	يمكن	14
		interdiction	يمنع	3
4	Evaluative	evaluation	نعم	4
5	Alethic	necessity	من الضروري	1
		non-necessity	غير الضروري	1
6	Boulomaic	expressive	ليت	1

\*(M)- Male, (F)- Female

**Table 2: Frequency list (wordlist) of Arabic modality in AJ: Cd 02 Sub-Corpus Data**

No.	Modality	Modal Meaning	Arabic Example	Frequency
1	Temporal	time indicator (M)	كان	19
		time indicator (F)	كانت	6
			لا تكون	1
			لا يكون	1
		time indicator (M)	أصبح	4
		time indicator (F)	أصبحت	1
		time indicator	لا زال	1
			ما زالت (F)	1
			ما زال (M)	1
		adverbial	طالما	-
2	Epistemic	certainty	إن	16
			ثابت (M)	-
			ثابتة (F)	1
			تثبت	1
			ما ثبت	1
			يثبت	1
3	Deontic	obligation	يجب	10
			يجوز	3
			لا يجوز	2
			لا بد	-

		permission	يمكن لا يمكن	5 1
			السماح لا نسمح	19 1
		interdiction	يمنع	-
			لا: - يسعني - منتجات خاصة للسيدات - تتناول - نخلط بين الصواب والخطأ - مرحلة سابقة بمرحلة واقعية - تصور للمجتمعات - تخرج - نترك - يخفى - يعتبر - يخالف - يفقه في ثقافة وعادات - يعكس - ثقافته - للمرأة - يتخيلون بعد سيطرتهم - شك	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
4	Evaluative	evaluation	نعم	-
5	Alethic	necessity	من الضروري	-
		non-necessity	غير الضروري (أمر) ضروري	- 2
6	Boulomaic	expressive	ليت	-

\*(M)- Male, (F)- Female

The corpus data shows the use of modality in the news article for both periods of pre driving restriction and post driving restriction. Due to the differences in term of corpus data size for both period it is noticed the big different in term of frequencies result shows in the previous tables. It is also affected the variety of modalities found in the corpus data particularly for the sub data of post driving restrictions. Nevertheless, it is noticeable that the sub corpus data of post driving restrictions contains a significant number of modalities utilisation which indicates the importance of modalities in the news writing in particular.

In general, the pre driving modalities focused on the reasoning of driving restrictions on Saudi women and encouraging them to obey the rule due to many reasons such as religion, social, economic as well as for their own comfort and safety. It is found that most of the time the modality has been used in the narrative of social and religion to provide strong argument on the issue of driving ban of Saudi women. The same narrative also been used when the driving ban has been lifted up in 2018. Hence once again reasoning through the lens of religion and social have been used to emphasise that driving is beneficial to Saudi women for their own comfort and safety. Hence, the modalities have been strategically utilised in the news report when the ban has been lifted up to highlight the significant achievement by the Saudi's society and their women in particular.

Looking more specifically in the corpus data, it is found that, the modalities of obligation, permission and certainty were among the most frequent category of modalities occurred in the data during the driving restriction period. It is used to focus on delivering the strong messages of prohibiting any attempt to break the rule set by the authorities and it is vitally contradicted

with the social norms. The same categories also set the greatest number of occurrences in the corpus data of post driving restrictions, although the way it has been used has change dramatically.

During post driving restrictions, these sub-categories of modalities have been used in providing the joy of having opportunities for women to drive cars by their own. In other occasion, the modalities have been used to answer doubt among some member of society on the permission for women to drive a car. In this regard, reasoning through the lens of religion and social have been cautiously and strategically used to justify the need for the ban to be lifted. Moreover, the news reports also highlight comments from many Saudi women themselves about their experience of car driving during the early days of lifting the ban. Many have expressed their relieve and grateful for the ban has been lifted stating many benefits for themselves when they have allowed to drive.

## 5. Conclusion

All in all, the Corpus data of Arabic news online from AJ during the driving restriction and post restriction era have shown that the news outlet has significantly utilised modality in reporting the issues surrounding restriction of driving on Saudi women. The statistical analysis reveals that the outlet has strategically utilised different type of modality in the corpus data namely: epistemic, deontic, evaluative, boulomaic, alethic and temporal. Although the frequency of each type of modality is slightly different from each period of time, the modality of epistemic which carries the meaning of certainty, and the modality of temporal (referring to time) received the highest frequencies compared to other types of modalities in the Corpus data. Based on the quantitative findings, further Critical Discourse Analysis of the topic of driving restriction highlighted many interesting results on the strategic used of modalities to report on Saudi women driving restriction during the restriction era and immediately when the ban has been lifted in June 2018. As one of the most prominent news outlets in Saudi Arabia during the restriction era, AJ strongly backed the decision on disallowing women from driving by providing reasons based on the traditional value of Islamic teaching and the fundamental cultural practised by Saudi's society in protecting their women from any harm. When the restriction was over in 2018, the outlet once again provided positive reports on the decision by proving much positives feedback of the benefit for women to drive car by their own for both the Saudi women and the Saudi society in general. Hence, it is noticed how the news outlet has changed its tone when the government has changed their decision, and the news outlet swiftly provided positive narratives to back the 'new' regulation set by the ruler. All these have been strategically being carried out by using one of the useful and important linguistics features of modality which function very well to build a new discourse in line with the new law and policy towards women in Saudi Arabia.

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