

Women's Discourse in Novel Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft: A Corpus-Based Qāsim Amīn Perspective

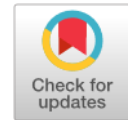
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ABSTRACT.

This article examines women's discourse in Nawāl as-Sa'dāwī's *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft* through corpus linguistics-based literary research and Qāsim Amīn's reformist perspective. The study responds to the limited integration of corpus evidence, textual quotation analysis, and Islamic reformist thought in Arabic literary criticism. It applies to an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design: the first stage produces quantitative corpus evidence, while the second stage provides qualitative interpretation through selected quotations from the novel. The corpus consists of 28,419 tokens and 9,327 types, with a vocabulary density of 0.328, a readability index of 9.818, and a mean sentence length of 29.1 words. Sixty-one quotations were selected through purposive sampling and categorized into six thematic fields. The findings show that women's discourse is constructed through profession and work, education, hijab, marriage, divorce, and socio-political participation. Profession and work form the dominant discourse with 33 quotations or 54.1%, followed by education and hijab with 10 quotations or 16.4% each, marriage with 5 quotations or 8.2%, divorce with 2 quotations or 3.3%, and socio-political participation with 1 quotation or 1.6%. Close reading of Arabic quotations shows that women are represented as rational, speaking, working, educated, and socially negotiated subjects. The study contributes to Arabic literary studies by demonstrating how corpus-based thematic distribution can guide Qāsim Amīn-based interpretation of women's discourse in modern Arabic fiction.

Keywords: *Women's discourse, Arabic literary corpus, Qāsim Amīn, Nawāl as-Sa'dāwī, Voyant Tools*

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern Arabic literature is a crucial discursive space for examining how women are constructed, negotiated, and contested within the relations among language, power, body, identity, and social change in contemporary Arab-Muslim societies (Hammad, 2019; Hartman, 2020). The Arabic novel does not merely function as an aesthetic form, but also as a cultural archive that records women's voices, experiences, and consciousness amid the pressures of tradition, modernity, coloniality, gender hierarchy, and patriarchy (Hammad, 2019; Niu, 2022). The issue of women is central to modern Arabic fiction because the female body, education, speech, mobility, and intellectual agency often become narrative sites in which social domination and demands for liberation confront one another (Hartman, 2020; Musgamy et al., 2020; Babakhani, 2024; Rather, 2025). The development of digital humanities has also encouraged Arabic literary studies to use corpus-based approaches to trace lexical frequency, concordance, and semantic relations more systematically (Rebora et al., 2021; Crosthwaite et al., 2023). Therefore, Nawāl as-Sa'dāwī's *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft* is significant because it presents women's discourse through the

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intersection of power, body, social space, marriage, work, and intellectual consciousness (al-Sa'dāwī, 1993; Hammad, 2019).

Previous studies have shown that as-Sa'dāwī's works are frequently approached through Arab feminism, critique of patriarchy, body politics, incarceration, and power relations in modern Egyptian society (Hammad, 2019; Addison, 2020; Hartman, 2020; Ghorbanpour & Sabbagh, 2024). Hammad (2019) demonstrates that modern Egyptian literature often connects women's bodies with war, oil, desire, morality, and social control, which is particularly relevant to *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft*. Hartman (2020) further argues that women's narratives in Arabic fiction are often shaped by masculine structures that determine who speaks, who is silenced, and how female experience is translated into narrative form. Recent studies on as-Sa'dāwī also emphasize women's memory, radical resistance, religious embodiment, and feminist ethics, but most of them still focus on *Woman at Point Zero* rather than *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft* (Khanna, 2020; Niu, 2022; Rather, 2025).

In Islamic reformist thought, Qāsim Amīn is relevant because his writings place women's education, rational capacity, and social participation at the center of reform (Amīn, 2005). Yousef (2022) shows that Amīn should not be read only as a symbolic advocate of women's emancipation, but also as a reformist thinker concerned with education, reason, morality, and Muslim modernity. Previous studies have largely examined as-Sa'dāwī's works through Arab feminism, patriarchal critique, body politics, and power relations in modern Egyptian society (Hammad, 2019; Addison, 2020; Hartman, 2020; Ghorbanpour & Sabbagh, 2024). However, women's discourse in *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft* has not been sufficiently analyzed through corpus-based lexical patterns and Qāsim Amīn's reformist perspective.

The novelty of this study lies in its operational use of corpus-based literary analysis to examine women's discourse in *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft* through Qāsim Amīn's reformist perspective. Rather than treating reason, speech, body, marriage, work, and education as separate topics, this study reads them as semantic and thematic fields associated with women's representation in the novel. The corpus analysis traces word frequency, vocabulary density, lexical context, and thematic distribution to show how women are constructed as rational, speaking, embodied, working, educated, and socially negotiated subjects. Corpus data are therefore not treated as mere statistics, but as textual evidence for interpreting the relation between language, ideology, and women's position in the narrative structure (Baker, 2006; Gillings et al., 2023).

Based on this background, the study aims to analyze women's discourse in *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft* through corpus linguistics-based literary research using Qāsim Amīn's perspective. The

main research question is: how is women's discourse constructed in *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft* from a corpus-based Qāsim Amīn perspective? By answering this question, the article seeks to strengthen modern Arabic literary studies through an integrative model that connects corpus data, Islamic reformist thought, and close textual interpretation of women's discourse.

2. METHOD

This study employs a corpus linguistics-based literary research method with an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. This design was chosen because the study first produces quantitative corpus data and then explains these data through qualitative interpretation. In an explanatory sequential design, quantitative findings are generated at the initial stage and subsequently interpreted through qualitative analysis to explain their textual and contextual meanings more deeply (Creswell & Clark, 2018). This procedure is appropriate for corpus-assisted literary research because corpus analysis provides measurable textual patterns, while close qualitative reading explains how those patterns operate within discourse and ideology (Baker, 2006; Gillings et al., 2023).

This investigation instrument uses the Voyant Tools application. Voyant Tools is an open-source online-based platform for digitally recorded text analysis developed by two professors of computational humanities (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016). The platform is done automatically for all calculations. This means that users have the advantage of selecting any interesting feature from the option icon without setting parameters to extract information. Such operations make the tool efficient for a wide range of users and analytical purposes. Since its release, the platform has been used in course teaching (Buzarna-Tihenea, 2020; Joubert, 2021), assessment reports (Hendrigan, 2019; Miller, 2018), and research projects (Hetenyi, 2019; Ming, 2018).

The material object of this study is Nawāl as-Sa'dāwī's novel *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft*, while the formal object is women's discourse as constructed through lexical patterns, narrative contexts, and thematic meanings. The research subject is the female figure in the novel, especially textual passages that represent women's experience, intellectual awareness, speech, work, veiling, marriage, divorce, and social participation. The study was conducted at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Yogyakarta, as the academic setting for collecting, organizing, and interpreting documentary data. Because the research uses published literary text, it does not involve human participants or field respondents.

Data were collected through close reading supported by systematic notetaking and corpus-based textual documentation. The researcher read the novel repeatedly, identified discourse units related to women, recorded Arabic quotations and their Indonesian translations, and organized

them into a coding sheet. The coding sheet included the data number, Arabic quotation, translation, narrative context, initial theme, corpus indicator, and relevance to Qāsim Amīn's concepts. Through purposive sampling, 61 quotations were selected because they explicitly represent women's discourse and correspond to the analytical categories developed in this study.

The first stage of analysis was quantitative and descriptive. The Arabic text of *Al-Ḥubb fi Zamān al-Naft* was processed using Voyant Tools to identify the number of tokens, number of types, vocabulary density or Type-Token Ratio, readability index, mean sentence length, lexical frequency, and word-cloud visualization (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016; McGowan, 2021). Type-Token Ratio is used in corpus and lexical diversity studies to describe the relation between the number of different word forms and the total number of tokens, although its interpretation must consider corpus size and textual context (Cohen K. Bretonnel et al., 2019; Rosillo-Rodes et al., 2024). In this study, the corpus consists of 28,419 tokens and 9,327 types, with vocabulary density or Type-Token Ratio of 0.328, readability index of 9.818, and mean sentence length of 29.1 words.

The 61 selected quotations were categorized into six thematic fields: profession and work, education, hijab, marriage, divorce, and socio-political participation. The frequency of each theme was converted into percentages by dividing the number of quotations in each category by the total number of quotations and multiplying the result by 100. In corpus-assisted discourse studies, frequency, lexical distribution, and thematic proportion function as indicators for identifying textual patterns, but their meanings must be explained through contextual interpretation (Baker, 2006; Gillings et al., 2023). Following summative content analysis, the study first counted and compared lexical and thematic occurrences, then interpreted them in relation to their narrative and ideological contexts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The second stage of analysis was qualitative and interpretative. Directed qualitative content analysis was applied because this technique allows an existing theory to guide the coding and interpretation of textual data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Assarroudi et al., 2018). In this study, Qāsim Amīn's reformist ideas functioned as the conceptual framework, especially women's rational capacity, access to education, freedom of expression, work, moral partnership in marriage, and social agency (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022). Qualitative coding and interpretive reading were also controlled through repeated familiarization with the text, coding review, and theme refinement (Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

No inferential statistical test was applied because this study does not examine causal or correlational relationships among variables. The quantitative analysis was limited to descriptive corpus statistics and frequency-based thematic distribution. The dominance of each theme was

determined by dividing the number of quotations in each category by the total 61 quotations and converting the result into percentages. Thus, numerical findings were not treated as independent conclusions, but as descriptive evidence that guided the qualitative interpretation of selected novel quotations through Qāsim Amīn's concepts of women's reason, education, speech, work, marriage, and social agency.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Corpus Profile and Lexical Overview



Figure 1. Corpus vocabulary data in the novel *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft*

Figure 1 shows that the text has a relatively complex narrative structure, characterized by varied vocabulary, long sentences, and a high frequency of functional words that organize relational meanings in Arabic prose. In this study, these numerical findings were treated as descriptive indicators, not as inferential statistics.



Figure 2. Word cloud of lexical items related to women's discourse in *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft*

Figure 2 visualizes lexical items related to women's discourse in the novel. The most visible words include *زواج* (marriage) and *عقل* (reason/mind). Qāsim Amīn argues that women's rational capacity, education, and social participation are essential to social reform (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022). In this light, the prominence of *عقل* and *فكرة* (idea/concept) in the corpus positions women within the semantic field of reason and intellectual subjectivity. The words *روح* (spirit) and *كلام* (speech/word) further suggest

women's inner experience and struggle for expression, while **زواج** marks marriage as a social institution where women's freedom, mobility, and status are negotiated.

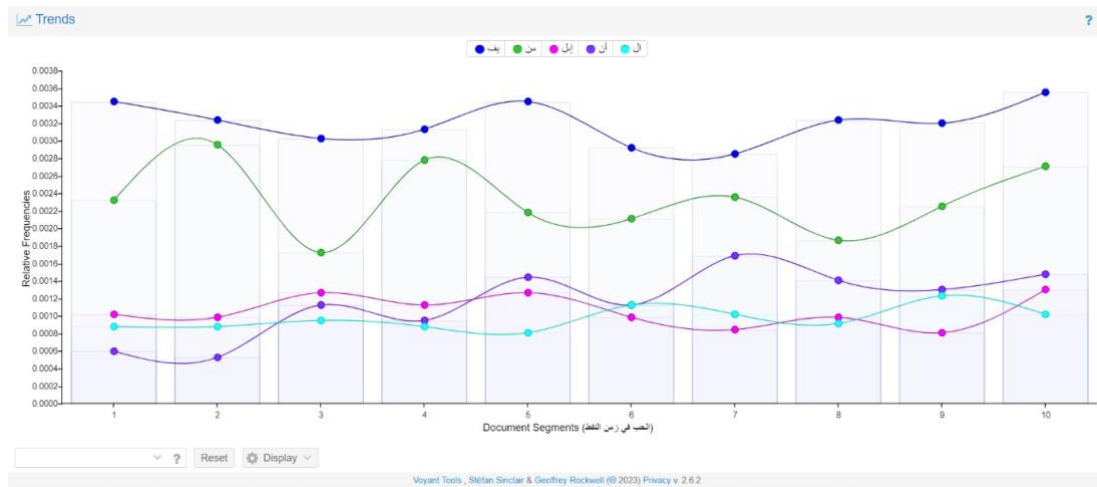


Figure 3. Relative frequency trends of selected words across narrative segments

Figure 3 shows that selected lexical items do not appear evenly across the novel but fluctuate through narrative segments. These changes indicate thematic movement in the text, suggesting that women's discourse develops through shifts from intellectual awareness to social constraint, and from personal experience to institutional critique. The trends strengthen the interpretation that the corpus does not merely contain isolated words about women but constructs a dynamic discourse in which women's identity is continuously formed by the relations among language, work, marriage, and social power.

3.2. Corpus-Based Interpretation of Women's Discourse

Figure 1 presents the corpus profile of Nawāl al-Sa'dāwī's *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft* as generated through Voyant Tools. The corpus consists of one document containing 28,419 tokens and 9,327 types. In corpus linguistics, tokens refer to the total number of word occurrences in a text, while types refer to the number of unique word forms (Baker, 2006; Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016). The vocabulary density or Type-Token Ratio is 0.328, which means that approximately 32.8% of the word forms in the corpus are unique. This value indicates that the novel has a relatively varied lexical profile, although Type-Token Ratio should be interpreted carefully because it is sensitive to corpus length; longer texts usually produce lower TTR values than shorter texts (Koizumi & In'nami, 2012). Therefore, in this study, vocabulary density is treated as a descriptive indicator of lexical variation rather than as an absolute measurement of literary quality.

The readability index of 9.818 indicates that the text has a moderate-to-complex level of readability. Readability measures are commonly used to estimate textual difficulty by considering

surface features such as sentence length, word complexity, and structural density (Crossley et al., 2022). However, in the context of an Arabic literary corpus, this score should not be interpreted mechanically as a fixed educational level, but rather as an indication that the novel requires readers to follow relatively complex lexical choices, long sentences, and layered narrative meanings. The average sentence length of 29.1 words further supports this interpretation. A high mean sentence length indicates that the novel tends to use syntactically dense sentences, which may contain extended description, narrative movement, and ideological reflection. Thus, the corpus profile suggests that *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft* is a linguistically complex literary text in which lexical variation, readability, and sentence structure contribute to the construction of women's discourse.

Figure 2 shows that women's discourse in *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft* is not constructed through a single lexical item, but through a network that links women with reason, soul, idea, speech, work, and marriage. The recurrent appearance of *امرأة* and *نساء* indicates that women form the semantic center of the novel, yet this centrality remains unstable because women are continuously confronted by social power that restricts body, voice, and mobility. This finding corresponds to Hartman's (2020) view that women's narratives in Arabic literature are often shaped by masculine structures that regulate voice and representation. At the same time, corpus-assisted discourse studies demonstrate that ideological meaning can be traced through repeated lexical patterns and semantic associations (Baker, 2006; Crosthwaite et al., 2023; Gillings et al., 2023). Thus, women's position in the novel is not incidental, but textually structured through lexical repetition with ideological significance.

The presence of *عقل* and *فكرة* is significant because Amīn views women's education and intellectual development as necessary foundations for social reform (Amīn, 2005). In this context, as-Sa'dāwī's novel does not merely represent women as bodies subjected to control, but also as minds that know, remember, evaluate, and interpret their social world. This tension indicates that the narrative both resonates with Amīn's emphasis on women's education and rational capacity (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022) and critiques the persistence of patriarchal structures that regulate women's speech, body, work, and mobility (Hammad, 2019; Hartman, 2020).

From Qāsim Amīn's perspective, *كلام* can be read as more than speech; it represents women's rational capacity and social agency. Amīn argues that women's education and intellectual development are necessary for social reform, while exclusion from knowledge and public recognition weakens both family and society (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022). Therefore, the

appearance of **كلام** in the corpus indicates women's struggle not only to speak, but also to be recognized as reasoning subjects within the social order.

The word **زواج** indicates that marriage functions as a discursive institution that determines the limits of women's freedom, especially in relation to body, mobility, husbandly authority, and the social position of wives. From Qāsim Amīn's perspective, marriage should be read as a moral and social institution that must recognize women's rational dignity and social justice (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022). Therefore, the lexical presence of **زواج** in the corpus indicates a discourse on marriage as a site where women's freedom, mobility, and recognition are negotiated. This interpretation is strengthened by studies showing that as-Sa'dāwī's fiction critiques patriarchal control over women's bodies and social positions (Hammad, 2019; Rather, 2025).

Overall, this word cloud provides an overview of how women's emancipation is explored in the novel *Al-Ḥubb fī Zaman An-Naft* through various aspects such as intellectual, spiritual, social and personal. It helps readers understand the main focus of the novel and the issues that often arise related to women and their emancipation.

Figure 3 presents the relative frequency trends of selected lexical items across ten document segments. The graph shows that the selected terms do not appear evenly throughout the novel; rather, their frequencies fluctuate across narrative segments. The dominant line indicates a consistently high lexical presence, while the other lines show lower but meaningful variations. This pattern suggests that women's discourse in *Al-Ḥubb fī Zaman al-Naft* develops dynamically through different narrative moments. In corpus-assisted discourse analysis, frequency patterns are not treated as final interpretations, but as textual indicators that guide closer qualitative reading of discourse, ideology, and narrative meaning (Baker, 2006; Gillings et al., 2023).

3.3. Textual Interpretation of Women's Discourse through Qāsim Amīn's Perspective

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Women's Discourse

Aspect	Frequency	Percentage
Profession and Work	33	54.1%
Education	10	16.4%
Hijab	10	16.4%
Marriage	5	8.2%
Divorce	2	3.3%
Social and Political Activity	1	1.6%

Tables 1 present the frequency-based thematic distribution of 61 selected quotations related to women's discourse in *Al-Ḥubb fī Zaman al-Naft*. The distribution shows that profession and work constitute the most dominant theme, with 33 quotations or 54.1% of the total data. This

dominance indicates that women's discourse in the novel is most frequently articulated through labor, productivity, economic agency, and the demand for recognition. In corpus-assisted discourse studies, frequency and thematic proportion are useful as descriptive indicators for identifying dominant textual patterns, although they must be followed by contextual interpretation rather than treated as independent conclusions (Baker, 2006; Gillings et al., 2023). Therefore, the high percentage of profession and work suggests that the novel strongly constructs women as productive subjects whose agency is negotiated through work and economic value.

Education and hijab appear as the second most frequent themes, each represented by 10 quotations or 16.4%. The education category indicates that women's discourse is closely connected to knowledge, intellectual formation, and rational awareness. This finding is relevant to Qāsim Amīn's reformist thought, which emphasizes women's education and intellectual development as essential foundations for social reform (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022). Meanwhile, the hijab category does not merely refer to clothing, but also to visibility, mobility, and social regulation. In this sense, hijab becomes a thematic field through which the novel represents women's presence and concealment within public and social spaces.

Marriage appears in 5 quotations or 8.2%, while divorce appears in 2 quotations or 3.3%. Although these themes are less frequent than work, education, and hijab, they remain analytically important because they show how women's dignity, freedom, and social position are negotiated within domestic institutions. From Qāsim Amīn's perspective, marriage should be understood as a moral and social institution that recognizes women's rational dignity and social justice (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022). Therefore, the presence of marriage and divorce in the data indicates that women's discourse in the novel also includes criticism of unequal domestic relations and the search for justice within family structures.

Social and political activity appears only once, representing 1.6% of the total data. This low frequency shows that women's public participation is marginal in the selected corpus, but it should not be dismissed as insignificant. In summative content analysis, both dominant and minor categories can carry interpretive value because frequency only indicates textual distribution, while meaning depends on contextual analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Thus, the limited presence of socio-political participation suggests that women's public agency is present but weakly represented. Overall, the thematic distribution demonstrates that women's discourse in *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft* is constructed through six interrelated fields: profession and work, education, hijab, marriage, divorce, and socio-political participation. These percentages function as descriptive evidence that

guides the qualitative interpretation of how women are represented as working, educated, visible or concealed, domestically negotiated, and socially positioned subjects.

The frequency-based distribution shows that professions and occupations are the most dominant themes in the selected data as shown in Table 1. This dominance is not only numerical but also reflected in the way the novel builds women's discourse. One of the selected quotes states:

“أنا أعمل وأستحق بعض الأجر”

"I work, and I deserve some wage; translation by the author" (al-Sa'dāwī, 1993).

This statement directly links women's labor with the demand for economic recognition. From Qāsim Amīn's perspective, women's social reform cannot be separated from their intellectual and practical capacity to participate meaningfully in social life (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022). Therefore, the quotation shows that women in the novel are not represented only as domestic subjects, but also as productive subjects who claim justice, wage, and recognition. The dominance of profession and work, 33 quotations or 54.1%, is therefore interpreted as a descriptive indication that women's agency in the novel is most strongly articulated through labor, productivity, and economic recognition.

The theme of education supports the construction of women as rational subjects. One quotation state:

“في المدرسة وهي طفلة عرفت أن النفط لا يوجد إلا في بطن الأرض”

"At school, as a child, she learned that oil exists only inside the earth; translation by the author" (al-Sa'dāwī, 1993).

The quotation shows that school becomes an early space where knowledge, memory, and awareness are formed. This finding is important because Amīn places women's education at the center of social reform and links women's intellectual development with the progress of family and society (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022). In this context, education in the novel does not function only as a biographical detail, but as a narrative sign of women's capacity to know, remember, and interpret the world. The 10 quotations or 16.4% in this category show that intellectual formation is a consistent, although not dominant, dimension of women's discourse.

The theme of hijab is related to visibility, mobility, and social control. One quotation state:

“طابور طويل من النسوة المختفيات تحت العباءات السوداء”

"a long line of women hidden under black cloaks; translation by the author" (al-Sa'dāwī, 1993).

This quotation represents women's bodies through the imagery of disappearance and concealment. Through Qāsim Amīn's reformist lens, the issue is not simply the garment itself, but the social condition that prevents women from appearing as rational and active subjects in society (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022). Thus, the quotation indicates that women's discourse in the novel includes the problem of visibility: women are present in social space, but their individuality and voice are symbolically hidden. The 10 quotations or 16.4% in this category show that hijab functions as a significant thematic field for interpreting women's visibility, mobility, and social regulation.

Marriage appears less frequently than profession and work, but it remains a crucial field of women's negotiation. One quotation state:

“قبل الخروج لابد من تصريح مكتوب من زوجها”

"before going out, she had to obtain written permission from her husband; translation by the author" (al-Sa'dāwī, 1993).

This quotation shows that marriage is constructed as an institution that regulates women's movement. From Amīn's perspective, marriage should be based on moral responsibility and recognition of women's dignity, not unilateral control (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022). Therefore, the quotation reveals the gap between the reformist ideal of marriage and the narrative reality of patriarchal authority in the novel. The 5 quotations or 8.2% in this category suggest that marriage is less frequent than work and education, but it remains a meaningful site where women's freedom and dignity are negotiated.

Divorce appears in only two quotations, but its low frequency does not make it insignificant. One quotation state:

“كان يمكن للرجل أن يخرج ولا يعود سبع سنين، ومن بعدها يحق للزوجة أن تتحرر منه”

"a man could leave and not return for seven years; after that, the wife had the right to free herself from him; translation by the author" (al-Sa'dāwī, 1993).

The quotation shows that divorce is narrated as a possibility of liberation from abandonment and unequal domestic relations. In this sense, divorce becomes part of women's discourse on dignity and legal consciousness. Through Qāsim Amīn's perspective, this theme can be read as a demand for justice within family institutions, especially when marriage no longer protects women's moral and social position (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022). The 2 quotations or 3.3% in this category show that divorce is a minor theme quantitatively, but it carries interpretive weight because it reveals women's effort to escape unequal domestic arrangements.

Although socio-political participation appears only once in the selected data, it still indicates that women's discourse is not limited to private or domestic space. Its marginal frequency suggests that women's public agency is present but weakly represented in the selected corpus. This minor theme must be read together with the dominant themes of work and education: women's public participation becomes possible when women are recognized as rational, educated, speaking, and economically productive subjects. Based on these textual interpretations, the numerical findings do not stand alone. The percentages identify dominant and minor thematic tendencies, while selected quotations explain how those tendencies operate in the novel. Thus, the discussion demonstrates that women's discourse in *Al-Ḥubb fī Zamān al-Naft* is constructed through the interaction between lexical patterns, thematic distribution, textual evidence, and Qāsim Amīn's reformist thought.

3.4. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the findings of this study show that Qāsim Amīn's reformist perspective remains productive for interpreting women's discourse in modern Arabic literature, especially when it is combined with corpus-based textual evidence. Amīn's thought on women's education, rational capacity, moral dignity, and social participation provides a conceptual lens for reading women not merely as narrative objects, but as rational and socially negotiated subjects (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022). In this study, such a perspective helps explain why lexical indicators such as **عقل، فكرة،** **كلام، و زواج** are not isolated words, but part of a broader semantic field through which women's agency, intellectual formation, economic recognition, and domestic position are constructed in the novel.

The use of corpus analysis also strengthens the theoretical contribution of the study because it allows women's discourse to be examined through measurable textual patterns before being interpreted qualitatively. Corpus-assisted discourse analysis does not replace close reading; rather, it provides a systematic entry point for identifying frequency, lexical repetition, distribution, and semantic association in a text (Baker, 2006; Gillings et al., 2023). In this article, the corpus profile, word-cloud visualization, relative frequency trends, and thematic distribution show how certain patterns of women's discourse appear across the novel. These patterns are then interpreted through selected Arabic quotations and Qāsim Amīn's reformist concepts. Therefore, the study demonstrates that corpus evidence and literary interpretation can work together: the corpus identifies textual tendencies, while close reading explains their ideological and narrative meanings.

The findings also expand women's studies in Arabic literature by showing that women's discourse in *Al-Hubb fi Zamān al-Naft* is constructed through six interrelated thematic fields: profession and work, education, hijab, marriage, divorce, and socio-political participation. These themes indicate that women's representation in the novel is not limited to bodily oppression or domestic conflict, but also involves labor, knowledge, visibility, mobility, legal awareness, and public agency. From Qāsim Amīn's perspective, these thematic fields are significant because the reform of society requires the recognition of women's intellectual and social capacities (Amīn, 2005; Yousef, 2022). The dominance of profession and work, for example, shows that women's agency in the novel is strongly connected to productivity and economic recognition, while the themes of education and hijab reveal the tension between intellectual formation and social control. Marriage and divorce further show that domestic institutions become important sites where women's dignity and freedom are negotiated.

This theoretical implication is important because it positions Qāsim Amīn's thought not as a static historical doctrine, but as an interpretive framework that can be reactivated in contemporary Arabic literary criticism. However, the novel also complicates Amīn's reformist ideal. While Amīn emphasizes education, reason, and moral reform as foundations for women's improvement, al-Sa'dāwī's narrative shows that women's rational capacity cannot develop fully when patriarchal structures continue to regulate speech, body, work, mobility, and marriage. Thus, the article does not simply apply Amīn's ideas to the novel but also uses the novel to reveal the limits of reformist discourse when social institutions continue to reproduce gendered control. This tension becomes one of the theoretical strengths of the study because it connects Islamic reformist thought, corpus-based evidence, and critical literary interpretation.

Practically, this research model can be used in Arabic literature teaching and literary research methodology. In the classroom, students can be trained to begin literary analysis by observing corpus indicators such as tokens, types, vocabulary density, word frequency, and thematic distribution. These indicators help students identify textual tendencies before moving to close reading. After that, selected quotations can be interpreted through relevant literary or intellectual frameworks, such as Qāsim Amīn's thought on women's education, speech, work, marriage, and social participation. This procedure encourages students to avoid purely impressionistic interpretation because their reading is supported by both quantitative textual evidence and qualitative analysis.

The model is also useful for developing digital literacy in Arabic literary studies. Tools such as Voyant Tools can help students and researchers visualize lexical patterns, compare word

distribution, and identify recurring terms within literary texts (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2016). Nevertheless, corpus tools should not be treated as instruments that automatically produce interpretation. Their function is to guide the researcher toward textual patterns that require further explanation. In this study, for example, the dominance of profession and work becomes meaningful only when connected to quotations about women's labor and economic recognition. Similarly, the presence of education, hijab, marriage, and divorce becomes analytically significant only when interpreted through narrative context and Qāsim Amīn's reformist perspective.

Practically, the study also offers a replicable procedure for future research on Arabic novels. Researchers can first establish a literary corpus, identify corpus profiles and lexical tendencies, classify relevant quotations into thematic categories, calculate frequency-based distribution, and then interpret selected textual evidence through a chosen theoretical framework. This procedure is particularly useful for studies that combine literary criticism, gender discourse, and digital humanities. It allows future researchers to compare the discourse of women across several novels by Nawāl al-Sa'dāwī or across broader Arabic literary corpora. Therefore, the practical contribution of this study lies in providing a methodological model that integrates corpus-based reading, thematic classification, and theory-driven interpretation.

Overall, the theoretical and practical implication of this study lies in demonstrating that women's discourse in modern Arabic fiction can be examined more rigorously when corpus analysis and close reading are used together. Corpus-based thematic distribution helps identify dominant and minor textual patterns, while Qāsim Amīn's reformist perspective provides a conceptual basis for interpreting women's rationality, education, speech, labor, marriage, and social agency. This integration contributes to Arabic literary studies by offering an analytical model that is systematic, textually grounded, theoretically informed, and applicable to both research and teaching.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that women's discourse in *Al-Ḥubb fi Zamān al-Naft* is constructed through six interrelated thematic fields: profession and work, education, hijab, marriage, divorce, and socio-political participation. The corpus-based distribution of 61 selected quotations shows that profession and work constitute the most dominant discourse, with 33 quotations or 54.1%, followed by education and hijab with 10 quotations or 16.4% each, marriage with 5 quotations or 8.2%, divorce with 2 quotations or 3.3%, and socio-political participation with 1 quotation or 1.6%. These percentages do not indicate statistical causality, but function as descriptive thematic tendencies that guide the qualitative interpretation of women's discourse in the novel. The

dominance of profession and work demonstrates that women's agency is most strongly articulated through labor, productivity, wage, and economic recognition, while education and hijab reveal the tension between intellectual formation and social visibility. Marriage and divorce, although less frequent, remain important because they expose the negotiation of women's dignity, mobility, and freedom within domestic institutions. Socio-political participation appears marginally, yet it still indicates the possibility of women's public agency beyond private and familial spaces.

The close reading of selected Arabic quotations confirms that numerical patterns become meaningful only when connected to narrative context and theoretical interpretation. The statement “أنا أعمل وأستحق بعض الأجر” represents women's demand for economic justice; the school-related quotation positions education as an early space of knowledge and rational formation; the image of women hidden under black cloaks reflects the symbolic concealment of women's visibility and voice; the requirement of written permission from the husband shows patriarchal regulation of women's mobility; and the divorce-related quotation presents liberation from abandonment and unequal domestic relations. Through Qāsim Amīn's reformist perspective, these findings show that women in the novel are not merely represented as objects of patriarchal control, but as rational, speaking, working, educated, and socially negotiated subjects. However, the novel also moves beyond Amīn's reformist ideal by showing that women's rational and social capacities cannot fully develop when structures of control continue to regulate their body, speech, work, movement, and domestic status.

The novelty of this study lies in integrating corpus-based thematic distribution with close textual interpretation and Qāsim Amīn's reformist thought. This integration enables women's discourse to be read not only through general feminist themes, but also through measurable lexical patterns, thematic frequency, Arabic textual evidence, and ideological interpretation. Theoretically, the study demonstrates that Qāsim Amīn's perspective remains productive for reading modern Arabic fiction when it is combined with corpus-assisted literary analysis. Practically, it offers a methodological model for Arabic literary studies by showing how corpus profile, word frequency, thematic categorization, and selected quotations can be used together to produce a more systematic and textually grounded interpretation. The limitation of this study lies in its focus on one novel and 61 selected quotations. Future research may compare several works by Nawāl as-Sa‘dāwī or expand the corpus to other Arabic novels by women writers in order to examine whether similar patterns of women's discourse appear across broader Arabic literary corpora.

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