

**Egyptian Journal of Linguistics and Translation****'EJLT'**

ISSN: 2314-6699

<https://ejlt.journals.ekb.eg/>

Volume 13, Issue 1

July 2024

Peer-reviewed Journal

Sohag University Publishing Center

**The Power of Gossip in Conceptualizing Status and Identity in
Ahmed Mourad's *Vertigo*: A Sociolinguistic Study**

Abstract

The study explores gossip as a linguistic device and a narrative element within the emerging contemporary modern Egyptian literary discourse; namely "*Vertigo*"; a novel written by Ahmed Mourad (2007). This study demonstrates the function of gossip for representing social structures, identity formation, and power dynamics within the storyline. The study aims at identifying the most frequent types of gossip used in the novel, examining the linguistic features of gossip, including its tone, style, and register, and analyzing how gossip, as a linguistic device, functions to conceptualize status and identity in "*Vertigo*". Through qualitative textual analysis, recurrent thematic patterns were identified to elucidate the impact of gossip on character development and narrative progression within the novel. The study employs Deborah Jones' (1980) *Types of Gossip*, Foster's (2004) *Functions of Gossip*, Lakoff's (1975) *Linguistic Features of Gossip*, and Dell Hymes' (1972) *SPEAKING Model* to analyze the varied dynamics. The study has found that gossip, as a linguistic device and a narrative element, has its capacity to both unify and fragment social groups. It functions as a mechanism for character development, plot progression, and the construction of social representations. Furthermore, it operates as an informal linguistic mode of social control, facilitating the establishment of status and the exertion of power. Also, the study has revealed that gossip has intersections with gender and class, either supporting or eroding the social structures.

Keywords: Gossip, *Vertigo*, Status and Identity, Linguistic devices, Power conflicts

**Lamis Hassan Elbana
Mohamed Ibrahim**
Assistant Lecturer in
Linguistics - Department
of English - Faculty of
Languages - Luxor
University

Bahaa M. Mazid
Professor of Linguistics
and Translation –
Department of English -
Faculty of Languages -
Sohag University

**Ahmed Mahmoud
Ahmed Mahmoud Abu-
hassoub**
Lecturer in Linguistics and
Translation – Department
of English - Faculty of
Languages - Sohag
University

**Egyptian Journal of Linguistics and Translation****'EJLT'**

Online ISSN: 2314-6699

<https://ejlt.journals.ekb.eg/>

Volume 13, Issue 1

July 2024

Peer-reviewed Journal

Sohag University Publishing Center

قوة النميمة في تشكيل المكانة والهوية في رواية "فيرتيجو" لأحمد مراد: دراسة لغوية اجتماعية

مستخلص الدراسة

لميس حسن البنا محمد ابراهيم
مدرس مساعد اللغويات – قسم
اللغة الانجليزية – كلية الالسن
– جامعة الأقصر

بهاء الدين محمد مزيد
استاذ اللغويات والترجمة
قسم اللغة الانجليزية – كلية
الالسن – جامعة سوهاج

أحمد محمود أحمد محمود
أبوحسوب
مدرس اللغويات والترجمة –
قسم اللغة الانجليزية – كلية
الالسن – جامعة سوهاج

تتناول هذه الدراسة النميمة بوصفها أداة لغوية وعنصرًا سرديًا داخل الخطاب الأدبي المصري المعاصر الناشئ، مع التركيز على رواية فيرتيجو لأحمد مراد (٢٠٠٧). وتوضح الدراسة دور النميمة في تمثيل البنى الاجتماعية، وتشكيل الهوية، ورصد ديناميكيات القوة داخل الحكمة السردية. وتهدف إلى تحديد أكثر أنواع النميمة شيوعًا في الرواية، ودراسة خصائصها اللغوية، بما في ذلك النبيرة أو النغمة والأسلوب والسجل اللغوي، بالإضافة إلى تحليل كيفية توظيف النميمة كأداة لغوية في تشكيل المكانة والهوية داخل النص. من خلال التحليل النوعي للنص، تم جمع الموضوعات المتكررة بهدف إظهار تأثير النميمة على الشخصيات وتسلسل الأحداث في الرواية. وتعتمد الدراسة على تصنيف دييورا جونز (١٩٨٠) لأنواع النميمة، ووظائفها وفقًا لفوستر (٢٠٠٤)، والسمات اللغوية للنميمة لدى لاكوف (١٩٧٥)، بالإضافة إلى نموذج SPEAKING لدل هايمز (١٩٧٢) لتحليل الديناميكيات المختلفة. وقد كشفت الدراسة أن النميمة، بوصفها أداة لغوية وعنصرًا سرديًا، أظهرت قدرتها على توحيد المجموعات الاجتماعية أو تفكيكها، كما لعبت دورًا أساسيًا في تطور الشخصيات، وفي تقدم وتطور الحكمة والاحداث، وبناء الروابط والعلاقات الاجتماعية. علاوة على ذلك، عملت النميمة كآلية غير رسمية للتحكم الاجتماعي، مما ساهم في ترسيخ المكانة الاجتماعية وممارسة السلطة. كما أظهرت الدراسة تداخلات النميمة مع قضايا النوع والطبقة الاجتماعية، حيث يمكن أن تدعم أو تقوض البنى الاجتماعية القائمة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: النميمة، فيرتيجو، المكانة والهوية، الأدوات اللغوية، صراعات السلطة.

The Power of Gossip in Conceptualizing Status and Identity in Ahmed Mourad's

***Vertigo*: A Sociolinguistic Study**

1- Introduction

Gossip serves as a traditional form of payback within social circles, acting as the core of contemporary Egyptian literary discourse. As it is spoken, it may shape complex relationships that develop and link with broader social forces. It is more than mere uncontrolled rumor and idle repetition, emerging ever more clearly as an essential thread in the fabric of narrative development. *Vertigo* displays the action of gossip as forming identities and includes attitudes in its engagement by negotiating with complexities of human relationships through multi-layered plotlines and deep character development.

Vertigo, focusing on modern Cairo, presents the melodrama of urban life witnessed in an individual's capture within a politically conflict zone and a socially unwelcoming nation. The tragic aspect of life has been modified by the connection of hidden agendas, rumors, and whispered truths, depicting the reality where gossip can unite and divide. Mourad's (2007) narrative immortalizes the essence of modern-day Egyptian society, where sharing something, not necessarily fact, but gossip is essential as a marker of power and negotiation of social distance. The study primarily confirms the multifaceted role gossip plays in the novel, in addition to analyzing *Vertigo*. This common discourse serves as an effective means to probe larger thematic issues on identity, cultural articulation, and acts of resistance. Ultimately, it is a very rich portrait of social life that emerges from the new Egypt.

¹ This paper is extracted from the PhD titled *Employing Gossip in Moriarty's "Big Little Lies" and Mourad's "Vertigo": A Literary Sociolinguistic Study* - Sohag University. It is modified and edited to be published as an academic paper.

1.1 Context of the Study

The study was carried out in the present socio-political scenario in Egypt, wherein gossip is the most powerful tool in shaping social networks along cultural narratives. The study, through the analysis of *Vertigo* by Ahmed Mourad (2007), investigates how gossip operates as a linguistic device in order to mirror a kind of societal values, struggles with identity, and power play. The current study aims at a gossip representation in this novel relative to modern society in Egypt taking into consideration its intersections with male and female society-gender, class, and political structural context. Drawing on secondary sources, the study locates *Vertigo* in the broader framework of Egyptian literary discourse and sociolinguistic fields. This demonstrates the dual function of gossip as both a tool of social control and a medium for societal critique. Such contextual background lays the foundation for how Mourad's representation of gossip fits into patterns of real-world communication and cultural expressions in Egypt today.

Vertigo was written by Ahmed Mourad and published by Dar Merit in 2007. Born in Cairo in 1978, Mourad, a writer, photographer, and graphic designer, graduated from Lycée El Horeyaa before pursuing cinematography at the Higher Institute of Cinema. His 2001 graduation was followed by recognition for his short films, including *The Wanderers*, *The Three Papers*, and *On the Seventh Day*, which received awards at international film festivals. Mourad's *Vertigo*, subsequently translated into English, French, and Italian, presents a narrative exploring the nature of corruption and the perceived decline of the Egyptian ruling class. Employing a blend of realistic, social, and crime fiction discourses, *Vertigo* constructs a complex and organic portrayal, referencing prominent figures within Egyptian politics and society. The narrative commences at the Vertigo bar in Garden City, overlooking the Royal Meridian Hotel's tower. Ahmed Kamal, a wedding photographer, arrives following a reception at the Grand Hyatt Hotel to meet his friend, musician Hossam Mounir. Their

conversation, centered on themes of happiness and ambition, is interrupted by the arrival and subsequent departure of Mohyee Zanon and Hisham Fathi, prominent media figures, accompanied by Mr. Murjan, the bar supervisor. The scene is then dramatically altered by the arrival of three individuals at the elevator entrance. Following a brief exchange, a violent altercation ensues, resulting in the massacre of the individuals present, with the exception of Mohyee Zanon, who sustains a minor injury and receives a clandestine message. Ahmed Kamal, concealed on a nearby balcony, documents the events photographically before fleeing the scene. This initial incident serves as the central narrative catalyst for the novel.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The study explores ways of employing gossip in *Vertigo* using concepts such as rumor dissemination and scandal-mongering, while also gives discernible features that offer insights into societal dynamics and human communicative practices. While often seen as harmless, gossip can influence character actions, societal interactions, and power structures. The research explores its role in shaping relationships, reinforcing or challenging social norms, and reflecting broader cultural dynamics within the novel.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study aims to

- Identify the frequent types of gossip used in *Vertigo*.
- Examine the linguistic features of gossip, including its tone, style, and register.
- Analyze how gossip functions to conceptualize status and identity in *Vertigo*.

1.4 Questions of the Study

- * What are the most frequent types of gossip used in *Vertigo*?
- * What are the linguistic features of gossip, including its tone, style, and register?
- * How does gossip function to conceptualize status and identity in *Vertigo*?

1.5. Scope of the Study

The study explores the effect of gossip on the social-communicative features as reflected in *Vertigo*. It seeks to examine the function of gossip in shaping character development, driving plot progression, and mediating social interactions throughout the novel. The study examines types, functions, and linguistic features of gossip with special reference to the major characters instrumental in speech interactions in *Vertigo*.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The study examines the representation of gossip in *Vertigo*, focusing on its functions and the predominant types within the novel. Gossip plays a significant role in shaping status and identity of the narrative and character dynamics in *Vertigo*. It serves as a tool for character development and reveals underlying themes such as social status, power relations, and deception. By examining how characters engage in gossip, readers can gain insight into their motivations and the societal norms at play. The importance of this study, also, emerges from its contribution to sociolinguistic studies with particular reference to study gossip in the Egyptian narratives, an area that has not adequate academic endeavours. Gossip, as a linguistic device, in the world of literature becomes one part of an analysis to shape characters, advance the plot while also reflecting social constructs. It enables readers to understand more fully, indeed, how gossip works as a mode of communication, power negotiation, and social distance in modern Egyptian literary discourse.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

Gossip, within the confines of academic discourse, means the act of sharing evaluative information about absent third parties and acts as a tool for social bonding, cultural transmission, and social regulation (Foster, 2004). Gossip can either become a positive or negative entity depending on its purpose and context. Positive gossip indeed encourages trust and shared values and fosters group cohesion (Foster, 2004). In contrast, negative gossip is promising in reputation drama and rumor-making and serves exclusionary and manipulation purposes (Eder & Enke, 1991). Jones (1980) categorized gossip into four types: house talk,

which involves the exchange of domestic information; scandal, which judges moral transgressions; bitching, which expresses frustration in a supportive environment; and chatting, which builds social connections. According to Foster (2004), gossip serves several important functions, including informing, entertaining, having an effect on social norms, and creating group cohesion. On the other hand, Lakoff (1975) explored the linguistic aspects of gossip, using hedging, indirect speech, and intensifiers to realize its primary rhetorical effects of polite persuasion. Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING model serves as a guide on how to analyze gossip as a structured speech event with its participants, setting, purpose, and communicative norms. All these concepts show how gossip is not only a social force unifying people but also a means of controlling society, thus influencing interpersonal relationships and power dynamics.

Gossip is the transfer of evaluative information about absent third parties, developing social connections, and keeping group membership (Foster, 2004, p. 78). Gossip serves as a tool of in-formal communication, influencing relationships, group identity, and the power hierarchy. Gossip may be positive or negative depending on the intention and outcome. Positive gossip fosters trust, strengthens social relationships, and reinforces common values and norms to produce a feeling of belonging in a group. In contrast, malicious gossip can ruin reputations, undermine trust, and lead to social exclusion through stigmatization of the group member who deviates from norms (Eder & Enke, 1991, p. 36).

Gossip serves several key social functions. It first plays the role of social bonding and cultural transmission by spreading information that supports group norms and values, hence ensuring uniformity in social organizations and shared beliefs (DiFonzo & Bordia, 2007, p. 18; Foster, 2004, p. 81). As such, gossip is a potent tool in maintaining collective identity. Second, it is an informal type of social control, regulating action by publicly labelling norm violations, which might deter individuals from engaging in socially unacceptable behaviour (Schoeman, 1994, p. 80). By being a means to articulate moral requirements and sanction deviation, gossip places social discipline on individuals. Third, gossip is a social learning tool by which people learn unmanifested social expectations and more effectively coordinate interpersonal relations (Gabriels & Backer, 2016, p. 684). Through gossip, individuals learn about right and wrong behaviour without experiencing it, thus speeding up their integration into social groups.

Jones (1980) identified four primary types of gossip, each serving a specific purpose. House talk deals with matters of the home and family, typically affirming shared experiences

between family or household members. Scandal has to do with ethical transgressions, operating as a warning against conduct that offends social expectations. Bitching allows individuals, particularly subordinates, to release frustration and sympathy with others who have similar issues. Conversation is a form of casual, relationship-facilitating communication that enhances interpersonal bonding and maintains social solidarity.

Linguistically, gossip makes use of implicit communication techniques to achieve its aim. It utilizes hedging, indirect speech, and intensifiers to couch opinions in socially approved terms as well as to shape the perceptions of listeners (Lakoff, 1975, p. 53). These linguistic resources allow gossipers to tread the fine line between information sharing and politeness. Further, gossip can also be treated as an ordered speech event using Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING model for its analysis, in which setting, participants, ends (purpose), act sequence, key (tone), instrumentalities (mode of speaking), norms, and genre are taken into consideration (p. 65). This framework depicts how social context, norms of communication, and cultural duty shape gossip.

By examining the intersection of gossip with cultural studies, both as a sociolinguistic phenomenon in lived experience and as a narrative device in literary discourse, this study aims to develop a critical understanding of gossip within Ahmed Mourad's *Vertigo*. This analysis will further explore the implications of gossip regarding the construction of identity, the dynamics of power relations, and the formation of cultural identity within contemporary Egyptian society.

Fine and Ellis (2010) highlight the prominent social functions of gossip in relation to building relations and community solidarity. They argue that gossip is not simply casual conversation, but a way of social bonding, cultural transmission, and reinforcing group norms. In gossip, individuals reinforce their bonds by sharing shared knowledge and experience, and they pass on cultural values and social norms. It helps in maintaining communities by facilitating conformity to the group norms and distinguishing between in-group and out-group conduct. Positive or negative gossip reflects and reinforces common values of a group, functioning as a social regulator and as a creator of group solidarity. This study debunks the idea of gossip being purely harmful, recognizing its utilization in strengthening social bonds and sustaining cultural continuity. This perspective is crucial when analyzing how characters in *Vertigo*, employ gossip as a mechanism to interact among themselves, either to form bonds or to assert social status.

Knapp and Hall (2010) further explained gossip's role in social regulation, i.e., to preserve norms and expectations in society. In *Vertigo*, gossip acts to reveal power structures, behaviors, and pressures faced by the characters. This dimension of the theoretical framework further enables a consideration of how gossip serves to both empower and marginalize within the narrative. This approach would also bring into consideration feminist frameworks, particularly with regard to questions of gender in gossip. Scholars such as Campbell (2017) have pointed out that women use gossip for empowerment and as a means of resistance against gender inequality. This approach is particularly pertinent to the study of female characters in *Vertigo*, who use gossip to negotiate their identities and social positions, often bending or breaking societal expectations.

2 Literature Review

The talk of gossip has been a subject of significant concern to sociolinguistics and cultural studies. In literary discourse, gossip is not only a narrative device, but it is also a representation of the sociological system, and social strife. According to Baumeister, Zhang, and Vohs (2004), gossip serves a critical yet overlooked cultural learning function. The authors argue that people can indirectly learn important information about others through gossip, influencing how they act and make decisions. Stories spread through gossip about what someone did "right" or "wrong" serve as examples for others to follow or avoid, demonstrating the potential social rewards or punishments associated with different behaviours.

In their study of gossip across diverse cultures, Knapp and Hall (2010) mention how gossip serves to regulate societies by establishing community standards for appropriate behaviour (p. 112). Thus, it has conferred regulatory functions as in Ahmed Mourad's (2007) *Vertigo*, in which information transference between characters uncovers the hidden power structures and social hierarchies within the society. The characters move in a society where accumulating gossip is the only means to either promotion or condemnation from the other, which tests the fragility of social relationships in a society going through transition. More recent attention has been devoted to the intersection of gossip with gender and identity issues, which has also constituted an important area of study. Such for instance, Campbell (2017) considers the complex function of gossip as a tool of empowerment and resistance for women, particularly in contexts where patriarchal power and traditional norms limit their authority. According to Campbell's study, women use gossip as a strategy for asserting themselves and turning the tables when formal institutions of power are not available to them.

By gossiping, women can assert agency and make room for themselves in spaces controlled by men. Gossip in this sense is a form of social resistance whereby women can reclaim their narratives, discuss their experiences, and collectively resist societal demands. Campbell points out that gossip is not just idle chatter but a conscious and intentional practice. Women, by gossiping, can share knowledge, bond with others, and, most critically, challenge restrictions on their freedom. The study shows how gossip can help women violate male authority or condemn the restrictions brought about by traditional gender norms. Through involvement in off-stage conversation not bound by the polite public sphere, women can reinterpret their experience and reassert their definition of themselves.

Campbell's work is particularly relevant to Ahmed Mourad's *Vertigo*, a novel where women use gossip within the realm of a man-centered society. This literary discourse confirms the social nature of gossip, which has multiple meanings, ranging from social bonding to social regulation and empowerment. However, gossip, especially in *Vertigo*, has not adequately been studied. It is a major linguistic device in contemporary Egyptian narrative and in sociolinguistic studies, most notably in Mourad's (2007) *Vertigo*. The need for studying gossip in *Vertigo* appears in the complexity of its use which raises further questions about its role in reflecting and shaping cultural identities against the backdrop of societal change.

The study of gossip in Ahmed Mourad's *Vertigo* fills a significant gap in existing research, as previous studies, such as those by Baumeister et al. (2004), Knapp and Hall (2010), and Campbell (2017), primarily focus on gossip's role in social bonding, regulation, and empowerment within broader societal contexts, but often overlook its specific application in literary discourse and its complex intersections with power dynamics. While these texts have analyzed gossip's regulatory functions, its function in cultural learning, and its potential for resistance, none of them explore the concept of gossip in the multi-faceted way that it functions within the specific socio-political context of *Vertigo*. In Mourad's novel, gossip is not only a social process but also a means of uncovering and negotiating power relations in an evolving society. The *Vertigo* characters are involved in a world where gossip is a key factor in social rise or fall, underlining the mobility and volatility of social relationships. Unlike the more general discussions of gossip in previous studies, Mourad's work brings a unique literary perspective to the discussion by illustrating how gossip in a male-dominated society is deeply tied to gender, identity, and social stratification. By focusing on gossip in *Vertigo*, this study fills the gap in research by offering a close reading of its distinctive role in

representing and constructing cultural identities in times of societal change, which has not been sufficiently explored in earlier sociolinguistic and cultural studies.

3. Methodology

The study uses qualitative textual analysis to explore the role of gossip in the narrative of *Vertigo* in which gossip intersects with character development and general social structure. Data collection includes identifying talks that contain gossip, almost from the major dialogues in the novel. Themes are coded within the study to serve in explaining the examples of gossip with respect to social bonding, power structures, identity formation, and cultural critique.

The study applies Deborah Jones' (1980) *Types of Gossip* in classifying gossip types such as house talk, scandal, bitching, and chatting, highlighting their impact on character relationships and plot progression. Moreover, Foster's (2004) *Functions of Gossip* are used in determining gossip purposes, including social bonding, reinforcing norms, exerting power, and spreading information or misinformation. In addition, Lakoff's (1975) *Linguistic Features of Gossip* are used to examine the language used in gossip, focusing on elements such as intensifiers, hedges, and tag questions to understand its persuasive effects. Finally, the SPEAKING model of Dell Hymes supplies a sociolinguistic framework for analyzing those factors in the gossip context such as setting, participants, act sequence, and norms.

4. Exploration of Gossip in *Vertigo*: A Sociolinguistic Perspective.

Gossip is more than a causal conversation in Ahmed Mourad's *Vertigo*; it's a live currency through which the lives and decisions of the characters are shaped. Set amidst corrupt Cairo, gossip acts as a trigger and reflects the disorder of the society in the novel. In this world of sparkling nightclubs, Ahmed works as a photographer, shooting secret affairs, betrayals, and power struggles. There is a wealth of gossip around these characters. For Ahmed, the gossip will break many uncomfortable truths on his friend's murder and bring to light the criminal links and unethical dealings of wealthy businessmen. This information is

critical to his search for justice, but it also places him in grave danger as authorities work to prevent the distribution of such information. Gossip is a tool for increasing tension and mistrust between characters, as rumors and half-truths create paranoia and fear. It is cleared through the following scenarios.

4.1 Situation 1: Hossam and Ahmed Discussing Hossam's Impending Decision

حسام: مش عارف... باين عليا هاعمل حاجة مجنونة يا احمد . . . حسام : معجبة إيه يا خويا؟ شوية ؟ يا ابني دي بتموت فيا . أحمد : يا دكر... (Mourad, 2007, pp.17-18).

In this scene from Ahmed Mourad's *Vertigo*, the conversation between Hossam and Ahmed is a vivid illustration of the multifaceted nature of gossip, effectively embodying Deborah Jones'(1980) Types of Gossip, Foster's (2004) Functions of Gossip, Lakoff's (1975) Linguistic Features of Gossip, and Dell Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model. Initially, Hossam's statement, "باين عليا هاعمل حاجة مجنونة يا احمد...مش عارف" (I do not know ... it looks like I am going to do something crazy, Ahmed), exemplifies house talk as a type of gossip that involves sharing personal, everyday matters to foster intimacy and connection. These admissions have presented an emotional and intimate moment for Hossam and Ahmed. So, the conversation turns into chatting when Hossam probes, "معجبة إيه يا خويا؟ شوية؟" ('Fancies me? A little?! My friend, she adores me.'), and keeps the mood light.

The conversation then shifts to bitching when Hossam speaks of his emotional stress and says, "يا ابني دي بتموت فيا". This is a judgmental comment and a venting one; beneath the surface, it discloses tension and personal problems. This goes in line with the way gossip can be an outlet. The combination of house talk, and bitching finds its perfect match with Deborah Jones's (1980) categorization and stands out to be the dynamic part of this conversation.

There is just what Foster (2004), again, mentions as the Functions of Gossip: the talking acts in more than one way. Among the gossip details are Hossam's inner turmoil and

motivations, which allow Ahmed to see Hossam's emotional balance and the powers at play as a function of providing information. Besides, the gossip enhances their friendship through mutual support and understanding: by coming out, Hossam calls Ahmed to witness and extend sympathy and reassurance, thus deepening their friendship. Moreover, the interaction gives entertainment in the way he demands the drama. In the exchange of banter, he lightens things up with the playful exclamation "يا دكر," which is Arabic for "Oh man, you are impressive!" thereby defusing the gravity of the moment and making it a more appealing and relatable exchange. It is a good one that adds a touch of humor to lighten the atmosphere and balance Hossam's intense moment, showing that he enjoyed Ahmed talking to him.

In line with Lakoff's (1975) theory about language features in gossip, one of the most significant factors is that the conversation is about emotion or persuasive factors. For example, Hossam's saying, "باين عليا هاعمل حاجة مجنونة يا احمد" (it looks like I'm going to do something crazy, Ahmed). It isn't necessarily a question, but it still invites Ahmed to respond, in a sense, to confirm Hossam's emotion. Hossam's sayings have intensifiers, such as "هاعمل" (I'm going to do something crazy) and "دي بتموت فيا" (she adores me), and these actually say a lot about how strong Hossam's feelings about his situation and options are. What's particularly interesting is Hossam's use of strong, emphasized stress in a word such as "بتموت" (adores), and that's a big part of saying how frustrated Hossam is about it all. That use of empty adjectives such as "مجنونة" (crazy) also creates a level of vagueness, not getting into detail about what Hossam actually feels, and that's a sign of gossip, it's not about detail, but about emotion, and that's why it's such an effective tool for shaping the way that people view things.

This conversation applies Dell Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model to provide appropriate expression for the situation. Setting: a place within a room or a quiet café where friends can comfortably talk about something private. The participants' area, a dynamic

interaction between Hossam and Ahmed, is often framed as Hossam leading the talk concerning internal tensions. At the same time, Ahmed responds with playful but supportive increments, showing their relationship mutually of empathy and jokes. The Ends that were reached shared the feelings of both friends on private matters, support, and tremendous relating together afterward. The acts performed were descriptive, evaluative, and conversational, to some degree: Hossam describes how he feels, evaluates his relationship with Christina, and engages Ahmed in a conversation, looking for affirmation and support. The Key operates along the spectrum between serious and playful, a characteristic feature of a deep-rooted friendship between friends. The Instrumentality is that of conversational and colloquial Arabic; in fact, a practical, relaxed interaction is precisely what this facilitated. Norms expect, from them, some confidentiality, depth of respect, and supportive urges that provide fertile ground and ventilate rich opinions and emotions free from restraint within their trusted friendships. Lastly, the Genre of the conversation is informal gossip combined with personal storytelling, serving both informational and emotional functions by making the interaction engaging while deepening the emotional connection between the friends.

Consequently, Mourad utilizes these theories to depict how gossip functions as both a tool for information sharing and a means of strengthening interpersonal bonds. By blending house talk with chatting and bitching, and employing Lakoff's (1975) linguistic features, such as intensifiers and emphatic stress, the conversation between Hossam and Ahmed illustrates the complex role of gossip in expressing emotions, navigating personal challenges, and reinforcing friendships. Moreover, through Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model, the analysis reveals the structured social dynamics and cultural nuances that underpin their interaction. Therefore, Mourad's portrayal underscores the power of gossip in shaping relationships, influencing perceptions, and fostering social bonds while highlighting its capacity to provide emotional relief and entertainment within the narrative of *Vertigo*. The conversation

demonstrates how gossip presents power dynamics and character identity. Hossam's exaggerated sentences, "I'm going to do something crazy" and "she adores me," show his craving for approval and demonstrate his struggle with personal power. Ahmed, however, reinforces his role as a supportive source, gaining emotional validation through joking remarks. It captures how gossip involves not only information exchange but negotiating power and the shaping of social identities within relational contexts. Each conversational exchange deepens the reader's insight into the characters' motivations, emotional landscapes, and the intricate dynamics of their friendship, making *Vertigo* a rich tapestry of human interaction and social commentary.

4.2 Situation 2: Hossam and Ahmed Discussing a Perfume Gift and His Partner's Background

حسام: طب إنت عارف اول امبارح جاييالي حنة بيرفيوم ... حسام : البت كويسة وزى القمر وبعدين دي روسية بس من الفلاحين بتوعهم زي عندنا بالضبط ، يعني خام (Mourad, 2007, p.18)

In this scene from Ahmed Mourad's *Vertigo*, the interaction between Hossam and Ahmed exemplifies the intricate dynamics of male friendship through the lens of gossip, effectively incorporating Deborah Jones'(1980) types of Gossip, Foster's (2004) Functions of Gossip, Lakoff's (1975) Linguistic Features of Gossip, and Dell Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model. The first line of Hossam's statement, " إنت عارف اول امبارح جاييالي حنة بيرفيوم " (Guess what? The day before yesterday, she brought me a bottle of perfume."), exemplifies house talk: a kind of gossip, sharing some private details, to develop intimacy among house members. These words reflect Hossam's background, offering Ahmed an idea about his relationship. The conversation quickly shifts to chatting because, according to Hossam, "The girl is nice and as beautiful as the moon. She's Russian, but from the countryside, just like us, she's genuine." This shift renders the dialogue casual and lively, the very definition of casual conversation that remains light yet personal.

It introduces an ordinary class conversation, though it also introduces a type of bitching by labeling Hossam's lover as "خام," raising questions about the tone of stereotype and class prejudice. This critique reflects societal perceptions and personal biases, adding depth to their exchange. Foster's (2004) Functions of Gossip are evident as the conversation serves multiple purposes: it acts as an information conduit by sharing details about Hossam's relationship and informing Ahmed about his personal life and emotional state. It also enhances friendship through the interaction between the involved togetherness and understanding. Such interactions let loose, playful dialogue; for instance, Ahmed jokingly pointed out, "يا ابني عشان ريحك وحشة" (Because you smell bad), adding an element of fun to Hossam's serious disclosures by relief and lightness. Utilizing Lakoff's (1975) Linguistic Features of Gossip, the dialogue employs many intensifiers and emphatic stress. Hossam employs the phrase, "زي القمر" (gorgeous) as an intensifier to show his admiration for his partner, while Ahmed's sense of irony in "يا ابني" (Man!) takes the form of playful critique. The use of lexical hedges is subtle yet present, as when Hossam labels his partner "خام" (genuine naive), rendering it ambiguous and allowing him to provide a modulated exposition of his feelings and social opinions. These linguistic features heighten the emotional and persuasive effects of their gossip, thus rendering it more convincing and agreeable.

Exploring this conversation using Dell Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model allows for a more detailed insight into it: The Setting has to be informal and intimate, most probably in an environment where friends feel free to share intimate matters, such as in a café or a private gathering. With Hossam and Ahmed involved, the Participants are involved in a balanced exchange, initiated by Hossam introducing his personal views. Ahmed then proceeds moderately to offer him a touch of humor, empathy, and gentle heart in their exchanges, reflecting their mutual respect and understanding. The Ends are personal sharing, personal affirmation, and promoting friendship in this open form of communication. Using its other

linguistic actions, descriptive and evaluative, Hossam describes his partner and evaluates her background. At the same time, Ahmed is engaged in light conversation, all of which provides relief from the seriousness of the talk and sticks them closer together.

The key is across the register of a heartwarming feeling to jokes and playful banter, bearing the complexity of their partnership. Instrumentality is also reflected in how they speak conversational and informal Arabic, allowing for a flow of genuine and informal interaction that feels personal and real. The Norms regulating their interaction exemplify the sociocultural pressure to mutual aid, shared life, and the ability to exchange views and feelings positively and constructively. Finally, the Genre of the discussion is informal gossip with personal narration, fulfilling informational and affective functions by creating an exciting interaction and thus strengthening the emotional relationship between the friends.

Combining the language of housewifely conversation with house talk, and with just a hint of bitching, and using Lakoff's (1975) linguistic devices (intensifier and lexical hedge), the discourse between Hossam and Ahmed can be used to characterize the role of gossiping in the expression of emotions and the management of interpersonal relationships and friendship bonds. In addition, according to Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model, the analysis elucidates the socially regulated sequences and cultural involvement in this interaction. In this conversation, Hossam and Ahmed use gossip to reveal and negotiate power dynamics and their identities. Hossam's description of his partner as "خام" (genuine) allows him to define her within a familiar social context, asserting control over her image. His use of "زي القمر" (gorgeous) highlights his emotional attachment. Ahmed, with his playful criticism "يا ابني عشان ريحتك وحشة" (Because you smell bad), reasserts his positive yet playful role as a friend. The interaction shows how gossip allows both characters to negotiate power and social roles, reflecting their identities and reasserting friendship. As such, Mourad's representation highlights the multidimensionality of gossip as a communicative device that

empowers the expression of affect, the building of connections, and the negotiation among personal and cultural identities in the narrative of *Vertigo*. This method enriches the reader's perception of the characters' motives, emotional range, and the complex relationship they share in their friendship, and thus, *Vertigo* is a moving target in human relations and social criticism.

4.3 Situation 3: Mohyee and Hesham Discussing the Young Man on the Balcony

محبي: شفت الولد الفنان اللي واقف في البلكونة ده؟ . . . محبي: المسامح كريم يا هشام بقه هو مليار جنيه دول حاجة
(Mourad, 2007, pp. 31-32).

The dialogue between Mohyee and Hesham illustrates how gossip is complicated by the use of Deborah Jones' (1980) types of Gossip, Foster's (2004) Functions of Gossip, Lakoff's (1975) Linguistic Features of Gossip, and Dell Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model. First, Mohyee starts a conversation by saying, "شفت الولد الفنان اللي واقف في البلكونة ده؟" (Did you see that young artist standing out on the balcony?), which aligns with Jones's (1980) types of Gossip as chatting. This kind encompasses light, nonspecific remarks on observing things, which are meant to involve the participants in informal conversations. Mohyee's admiring tone highlights his considerate view of the boy, creating a context for a positive relationship.

However, Hesham's responses diverge the discussion to the world of bitching, i.e., When he states, "ولا فنان ولا حاجة ده حتة مصوراتي بتاع أفراح" "he is not an artist, he is just a wedding photographer." Hesham undermines Mohyee's admiration by minimizing the young man's worth despite his apparent talent and wealth.

Using Foster's (2004) Functions of Gossip, the discourse achieves several goals. Above all, it gives information about the boy, which explains his subjective value and his place in society. Mohyee's admiration and Hesham's comments also create a bond between the characters by providing them with platforms to state their views and prejudices, leading to a mutual understanding of the position. In the statement, when Mohyee comments that "يا هشام

"بقي هو مليار جنيه دول حاجة", "What is a billion pounds after all?", the fun wager on how much a billion pounds may be spent introduces a level of fun, exciting, and dynamic interaction even though serious underlying tensions are involved.

From the vantage point of Lakoff's (1975) Linguistic Features of Gossip, the discourse is laden with the informal register and hyperbola. Mohyee uses intensifiers like "عبقريّة فذة" (exceptional genius) to emphasize his high regard for the young man's talents. At the same time, Hesham employs emphatic stress in phrases such as "ده كل الموضوع إنه زي القمر" (The whole point, he is so attractive) to downplay the young man's value. The tag question "مش عارف إنت عاجبك فيه إيه؟" ("I cannot understand, what do you like about him?") implicitly challenges Mohyee's opinion, introducing a critical undertone. Additionally, the intensifier underlying the "billion-pound bet" is used to increase the sensational nature of their gossip.

However, structural properties of interaction analyses based on Dell Hymes (1972) are SPEAKING Model. The setting is informal, developing within a social context where friends feel free to express private views. Participants, Mohyee as the fan and Hesham as the reviewer, are embodiments of opposing views on talent and success and more salient social disputes. The Ends include the communication of observations and judgments and the maintenance of social bonds through joint discourse. The Acts show stages of generalizations to individual appraisals and culminate in a hyperbolic gamble, representing a journey from chat to more marked, opinionated discussions.

In the dialogue, the level of praise and disbelief fluctuates between idealizing and criticizing, reflecting on the multidimensionality of their friendship, alternating between light-hearted teasing and dark, serious appraisals. Instrumentality can also be seen in their acquisition of informal Egyptian Arabic, facilitating a spontaneous, natural, and effective communicative space. Norms of how they should behave in their interaction emphasize the social expectation of mutual respect in the face of such differing views while simultaneously

allowing for expressing oneself within the Context of friendship. Finally, the Genre of the talk is unrestrained gossip, combining personal narration with evaluative comment to produce a mixed description of their relationship and society's opinions about achievement and ability.

As a result, these theories of discourse show how gossip acts not only as a vehicle for information exchanges but also as the reinforcement of interpersonal relations. Integrating gossip with scandal and Lakoff's (1975) linguistic devices, e.g., intensifiers, the discourse between Mohyee and Hesham emerges as a source of disentanglement of male friendships and the implications of culturally normative values.

In addition, as per Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model, the analysis delivers the reasons for the highly organized social systems and the cultures underpinning their interaction. Such conversation uses gossip to define their identity and status of power. Mohyee is a supporter of the young artist, marketing him as a figure of talent, which points out his desire to claim success. Hesham, however, devalues the worth of the artist, boasting of his critical nature and describing himself as more cultured. This conversation highlights how gossip allows the two characters to lay claim to their identities and validate their social standing through opinions of other individuals. As a result, Mourad's representation highlights the complex function of gossip as a means of stating subjective views, establishing status relations between individuals, and attitudinal manifestations of cultural stereotypes in *Vertigo*. In this layered architecture, the reader is afforded insight into the motivations or emotional states of a character and the rich and intricate relation between their friendship and, thereby, a deep engagement with the understanding of human interaction and social commentary.

4.4 Situation 4: Hesham and Mohyee Discussing Business News and Legal Troubles

هشام: أخبار البيزنس إيه معاك يا باشا؟ محيي: هتسمع أخبار كويسة قريب، إنت أخبار القضية بتاعتك إيه؟
 ظهر علي هشام عدم الارتياح للسؤال: إن شاء الله خير ... إحنا أخبارنا أفضع من نجوم السينما . لو واحد عطس في
 القاهرة يقولوا في أسوان يرحمكم الله (Mourad, 2007, pp.32-33).

The scene from Ahmed Mourad's *Vertigo*, describes the effects of Hesham and Mohyee, which reveal the multifaceted nature of gossip according to the models of Deborah Jones (1980) in "Types of Gossip," of Foster (2004) on "Functions of Gossip" and on Lakoff's (1975) "Linguistic Features of Gossip," and on Dell Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model. Hesham starts the dialogue by saying, "أخبار البيزنس إيه معاك يا باشا؟" (How is the business, Boss?), which aligns with Jones's (1980) type of Gossip as house talk. This kind of gossip includes exchanging personal and professional information casually, fostering closeness and shared concern. As Mohyee responds, "هتسمع أخبار كويسة قريب، إنت أخبار القضية" (You will hear good news soon, what about your case?) the conversation shifts to chatting, in which they both talk about their own but seemingly insignificant personal data, their mutual friendship and trustworthiness.

This is achieved by presenting the legal issues of the indictment against Hesham and presenting information about the alleged fraud, in which an actress is planted to give Mohyee and the reader a sense of the kind of problems at the source. In particular, through the use of the expressive power of intensifiers, the novel at the same time provides the audience with not only humorous control through which it is entertained but also through Hesham's wit, i.e., and "إحنا أخبارنا أفضع من نجوم السينما" (Our news is worse even than film stars), and through its critical consideration of his attitude toward life values. This combination of weighty disclosure with humor improves friendship by sharing both burdens and relieving the tension.

Based on Lakoff's (1975) Linguistic Features of Gossip, the conversation is full of informal register. Hesham uses intensifiers, e.g., 'أفضع' (worse), as part of his rhetorical persona and the seriousness of his legal problem. Moreover, his rhetorical question, "إنت عارف" (you aware of the headlines?), functions as a tag question requesting Mohyee's agreement and his understanding of media images. The employment of intensifiers can be

very clearly observed in a sentence such as, "إحنا أخبارنا أفضع من نجوم السينما" (Our news is worse even than movie stars), where emphasis on negative overstatement is used to present how terrible their status is, as the utterances in which positive information is exaggerated to the point of becoming social gossip are also examined, as well as the expressive dimension of gossip.

When using Dell Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model to analyze this interaction, an integrative description of the structure and development of the conversation is obtained. The setting is informal, i.e., likely occurring where personal and work-related information is shared freely, without reservation. The Participants, Hesham as the concerned individual and Mohyee as the supportive friend, engage in a balanced exchange, with Hesham revealing personal challenges and Mohyee responding with curiosity and empathy. The Ends of the conversation include sharing updates, seeking support, and managing personal reputations through strategic disclosure. The Acts transitioned from casual inquiries about business to the revelation of legal troubles and manipulative tactics, culminating in Hesham's humorous attempt to reduce tension with exaggerated statements. The Key or tone moves between seriousness and humor, reflecting the dual nature of their friendship where serious topics are balanced with playful conversation.

Instrumentality is reflected in their use of vernacular Egyptian Arabic that allows for a direct and natural conversational flow and makes the interaction more convincing and accessible. Norms about interactions between them stress reciprocity, discretion, and the practical, sensitive use of humor with a view to the need to engage and maintain composure and resilience within challenging socials. Finally, the genre of the dialogue is informal gossip, which not only helps to extend the intimacy between the gossipers and to build up their bond but also is a means of achieving character insight, which exposes more hidden layers of their personalities and criticisms of society.

By employing Lakoff's (1975) linguistic constructs, notably intensifiers, the dialogue between Hesham and Mohyee illustrates the intricate function of gossip in mediating vulnerability, upholding reputational integrity, and constructing the relationship among individuals and their sociocultural context. Further, following Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model, the discourse unveils the rationalized social frameworks and the cultural variations that inform their interaction.

In this conversation, Hesham and Mohyee use gossip to talk about personal and legal issues. The conversation gives deep information regarding their characters and the power dynamic between them. Hesham uses sarcasm and exaggeration to manage his legal trouble, playing the victim of popular opinion, and Mohyee reassures him. The dialogue switches between lighthearted joking and severe revelation, employing language to find its way around vulnerability and declare social status. The gossip is what establishes closeness between the two, while also demonstrating their contrasting reactions to societal pressure.

Accordingly, Mourad's perspective is tied to the concept of gossip as a paradigm of social interaction, which, through expressed emotions, regenerates social ties and its laws in the text of *Vertigo*. This construction, in turn, helps the reader understand the depth of the protagonist's motivations, feelings, and the complex nature of their friendship. Hence, it presents a powerful critique of human interactions, human interaction, and social criticism.

4.5 Situation 5: Adel and Safwan Discussing the Boss's Displeasure and Strategic Maneuvering

عادل بعدما رشف قهوته بهدوء : الباشا الكبير مش مبسوط يا صفوان ... عادل: حادثة أولاد ذوات ، زي كريم السويسي اللي قتل مراته وانتحر. . حاجة نتقفل القضية فيها قبل ما نتفتح ... البلد تتقلب يومين والناس تنسي لأن التحقيق إتقفل ، ممكن كمان إشاعة علي قهوة في ميدان رمسيس تلف مصر في ساعة زمن في القطر (Mourad, 2007, p.47) .

At this point in Ahmed Mourad's *Vertigo*, Adel and Safwan engage in a discussion that

offers, a layered way, present characteristics of gossip as described by Deborah Jones' (1980) types of gossip, Foster's (2004) Functions of gossip, Lakoff's (1975) Linguistic characteristics of gossip as well as Dell Hymes' (1972) the SPEAKING Model. Adel initiates the conversation, "الباشا الكبير مش مبسوط يا صفوان" (The big boss is not pleased, Safwan), a kind of house talk, similar to Jones' (1980) description. That kind of gossip is about the spread of personal and professional matters in an informal context, during a climate of solidarity and shared fear. By informing Safwan about the boss's displeasure, Adel initiates a conversation that is both personal and strategic, reflecting the close-knit dynamics of their professional relationship.

Each time the conversation moves forward, Adel addresses the problem by referring to the "حادثة أولاد ذوات" (The incident of the privileged children), comparing it to "كريم السويسي اللي قتل مراته وانتحر" (Karim El-Swisi who killed his wife and committed suicide). This shift leads to bitching, a category also defined by Jones (1980), in which Adel criticizes and shows a negative attitude toward the Hisham's actions and their consequences. The use of such contemptuous analogies helps to undermine Hisham's reputation and point out his shortcomings, reinforcing the negative image of his personality in both his social and political context.

The conversation gives us a perspective on the current crisis, asserts control over the communication of the crisis, and entertains through its conspiratorial and dramatic style. Additionally, the exchange enhances the friendship between Adel and Safwan by fostering a sense of unity and shared responsibility as they collaborate to protect their interests and maintain the boss's reputation.

From Lakoff's (1975) perspective on the Linguistic Features of Gossip, the dialogue is rich with intensifiers and emphatic stress. Adel's use of phrases like "زودها أوي" (He went so far) and "الناس ما بتصدق" (People desire to believe anything) amplifies the severity of the

situation and the urgency of their actions. These linguistic choices heighten the emotional intensity of the conversation, persuading and motivating Safwan to adhere to the proposed plan. The absence of lexical hedges indicates Adel's confidence and determination, while the strategic use of colloquial language facilitates a natural and relatable dialogue, making the conversation both authentic and impactful.

In order to protect the boss's personal image and eliminate sources of threat by shaping the narrative of Hisham's conduct, the acts covered include the description of the problem, the criticism of Hisham, and the development of a tactical plan to cope with the aftermath. The tone/key of spoken dialogue is serious and implicit, suggesting the sensitivity of the matter and the urgency required.

The Instrumentalities comprise the use of everyday Egyptian Arabic, which enables a direct and unmediated flow of information, i.e., the communication is clear. Norms of interaction highlight the closed and hierarchically structured power relationship, where trustworthiness and privacy play key roles. This reflects the prevalent socio-political scenario in which Adel and Safwan operate, setting an example of discretion and strategic thinking. Finally, the genre of talk is a frame of directive speech, a mixture of gossipy talk and political scheming to produce an informative and persuasive story.

By blending house talk and bitching with Lakoff's (1975) linguistic devices of intensifiers and emphatic stress, the interaction between Adel and Safwan reveals how power and control can be manipulated in corrupt systems. Specifically, by applying Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model, the analysis shows how the social work and the cultural identities underlying their dynamic are organized.

Gossip in this scene becomes a mechanism through which Adel and Safwan establish power and shape their identities. Adel uses gossip to get his way in the situation and assert control of the story related to the upset of the boss, positioning himself as a dominant

authority within the command chain. By linking the scandal to a film scene, Adel manages the crisis and distances himself from danger. Safwan also agrees with Adel, and hence their shared knowledge and interest is to protect their ranks. Both characters reveal their roles in the corrupt system and travel through their personal and professional selves in regards to power, secrecy, and influence.

Hence, Mourad's rendering highlights the complex process of gossip as a communicative instrument for expressing emotions, building strategic relationships, and managing the individual and political instruments of self-construction, as narrated in *Vertigo*. This multi-layered model opens up a new level of involvement for the reader in understanding the character's thought processes, their exposure to ethical dilemmas, and the social and political consequences that gossip can impose on the layout of the social and political landscapes.

5. Results and Discussion

The contribution of gossip in *Vertigo* is intensely investigated in this study by analyzing its types, features, and functions so that it can be appraised for its effect on status, plot advancement, and social relationships. Although gossip is usually considered idle talk, it shows through the evidence that it is a strong sociolinguistic device that creates relationships, builds social structures, and reveals more extensive cultural and societal dynamics. Using Deborah Jones' (1980) classification, the study identifies three dominant forms of gossip in the novel: house talk, chatting, and bitching. With regards to house talk, this could foster intimacy and create social ties through informal conversations while chatting, boasts of casual bonding and exchange of information.

The type of bitching on the other hand present judgmental and critical commentaries which stir up interpersonal conflict, and forms a crucial part of characters and plot development. Each type of gossip adds to the emotions and conflicts depicted in a given

story, thereby performing functions beyond mere talk. Using Lakoff's (1975) Linguistic Features of Gossip, the study explains how gossip intensifiers, empty adjectives, and tag questions contribute to its persuasive force and emotional engagement. Intensification communicates emotion and strengthens opinion; the ambiguous effect of some adjectives makes the same gossip flexible with meaning. Tag questions promote participation in shaping collective representations, thereby increasing the chances of the story being spread as a rumor. These linguistic strategies demonstrate how gossip functions as a mechanism for shaping opinions, manipulating relationships, and reinforcing power structures in *Vertigo*.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the study applies Dell Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model to analyze how gossip operates in different social contexts throughout the novel. These findings demonstrate that gossip in *Vertigo* has a tendency to be context-specific, depending on the situations, participants, as well as social norms that govern the interaction. Gossip occupies high-end parties and street corners. However, there are differences according to where the gossip is happening. In public, the characters are cautious and calculated, but free and direct with a disclaimer when in private. Some of the "participants" include close friends, business partners, and people in power, showing how information interplay depends on trust, status, and secrecy that grease the wheels of the whole process. High-status gossips will twist the tale they want others to hear about, whereas their low-status counterparts will twist it for the sake of resistance or survival.

The ends of gossip vary immensely; as such, it has become an instrument for social bonding, social reputation management, social maneuvering, or personal vengeance. Elite characters use gossip to maintain power, while marginalized figures expose corruption or challenge authority through it.

The act sequence of gossip typically follows a predictable pattern, beginning as casual conversation before escalating into character assassination, rumor-spreading, or information

control. Most influential gossip, the study finds, is within chats where it is embedded so casually that it loses its sound. The emotional tone of gossip changes according to context- from fun joke and merry banter to serious accusation and sly deception. Gossip used for entertainment is framed as harmless conversation, while gossip used for social critique carries a more cautious, coded, or confrontational tone. The study also highlights the instrumentalities of gossip, showing that it is communicated through spoken dialogue, coded language, indirect references, and implicit gestures. Characters often use ambiguous phrasing to protect themselves from direct blame while ensuring their message spreads. Finally, the study identifies that gossip in *Vertigo* takes multiple genres, including casual storytelling, warnings, accusations, political rumors, and revenge-driven gossip. These genres shape how gossip is received, with political gossip fueling paranoia and character-driven gossip strengthening or destroying reputations

Overall, the findings from applying Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING Model reveal that gossip in *Vertigo* is not random or meaningless but rather a strategic, socially regulated tool used to navigate power structures, reinforce social hierarchies, and negotiate identity. The results show that who speaks, where they speak, and how they frame their words all determine the impact of gossip in the novel.

6. Conclusion

Gossip plays very fundamental linguistic functions in *Vertigo* considering the fact that it empowers status of the characters, creates events for the plot itself and guides characters' actions. It functions as a means of social control, prescribing action and expecting affirmation or even undermining expectations within the context of social behavior. Most importantly, it also shows power struggles and marginalization, exposing the deeper socio-political concerns of contemporary Egyptian society. Far from merely contributing to literary discourse, this study enhances linguistic and sociocultural studies in its application of theories of established

gossip to Arab literary discourse. Gossip, then, constitutes a major narrative and linguistic device in *Vertigo*, affecting the unfolding of plot events together with characters' intervention. As shown by this study, gossip also slants the scales of social control, normalizing conduct and constituting or dismantling social expectations. More importantly, it leaves a record of power plays and marginalization, thus exposing the greater socio-political concerns within contemporary Egyptian society.

This study contributes to the linguistic and sociocultural investigations as it determines how gossip can be used and applied to Arabic literary discourse. It demonstrates that gossip is more than entertainment; it is a powerful linguistic means of status negotiation, social resistance, and cultural expression. The study also broadens the scope of Egyptian literary discourse analysis by examining gossip as a tool that reflects and shapes real-world social structures and identities.

By analyzing the types, functions, and linguistic features of gossip, the study brings out how it influences character interaction, drives plot development, and reflects Egyptian society. Gossip in *Vertigo* does not only work as a narrative device; it is a tool of 'rationality', exposure of social inequalities, and negation of dominant structures. From the research perspective, the study views gossip as a very important phenomenon not only in literature but also in sociolinguistics because it shows how gossip behaves in very complex ways in terms of communication, identity construction, and cultural critique. Moreover, studying gossip in "Vertigo" is a mirror of societal values and a force that actively shapes human relationships and social structures.

7. Recommendation for Further Research

Other studies may explore the effect of gossip on the social interactions in another piece of literary work exploring the Egyptian society. Also, the effect of gossip on constructing political context in *Vertigo* may need to be studied. Furthermore, other studies

would be expanded to include other works by Ahmed Mourad. This would allow for a comparative analysis of how gossip functions across his narratives, revealing potential patterns and variations in its usage. Additionally, a study of Conducting a more focused analysis on the gendered dimensions of gossip in "Vertigo" or other relevant works.

References

- Baumeister, R. F., Zhang, L., & Vohs, K. D. (2004). Gossip as cultural learning: Its origins and implications. *Review of General Psychology*, 8(2), 111–121. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.8.2.111>
- Campbell, R. (2017). Gossip and power: The role of women in social dynamics. *Gender Studies Journal*. 12(1), 50-65.
- DiFonzo, N., & Bordia, P. (2007). *Rumor psychology: Social and organizational approaches*. American Psychological Association.
- Eder, D., & Enke, J. L. (1991). *The structure of gossip: Opportunities and constraints on collective expression among adolescents*. *American Sociological Review*, 56(4), 494–508. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2096270>
- Fine, G. A., & Ellis, H. (2010). Gossip, group culture, and the social construction of reality. *Sociological Perspectives*. 53(2), 243-268.
- Foster, E. K. (2004). Gender-as-culture hypothesis: An intercultural analysis of male/female language differences. *Review of General Psychology* (pp. 78–99).
- Gabriels, K., & Backer, C. J. (2016). Virtual gossip: A sociolinguistic analysis of online discussions. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 20(5), 682–702. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12192>
- Hymes, D. (1972). Models of the interaction of language and social life. In J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.). *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication* (pp. 35-71). Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Jones, D. (1980). Gossip: Notes on women's oral culture. *Women's Studies International Quarterly*. 3, 193–198.
- Knapp, M. L., & Hall, K. (2010). *Nonverbal communication in human interaction* (7th ed.). Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Lakoff, R. (1975). *Language and women's place*. Harper & Row.
- Mourad, A. (2007). *Vertigo* [Arabic edition]. Dar Merit.
- Rosnow, R. L., & Fine, G. A. (1976). *Rumor and gossip: The social psychology of hearsay*. Elsevier.
- Schoeman, F. (1994). Gossip and privacy. *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 22(2), 80–99.
- Yerkovich, S. (1979). Rumor and gossip: The social psychology of hearsay. *The Journal of American Folklore*. 92(364), 237-241. <https://doi.org/10.2307/539397>