

Feminine Representation and Social Death in Child Marriage Humanitarian Discourse: A Gender-Based Social Actor Analysis

Mohamed Mazen Galal and Amal A. E. Gami

Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Suez University, Suez, Egypt

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Amal A. E. Gami, Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Suez University

Abstract

Child marriage is considered by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to be a form of modern slavery. Thus, studying how victims of child marriage are represented in UNICEF discourse is crucial for uncovering to what extent it succeeds in achieving its aims, reflecting reality, and highlighting the causes of such phenomenon. This gender-based analysis study uses Critical Discourse Analysis and Van Leeuwen's (2008) social actor representation framework to analyze the social actor strategies employed by UNICEF in its 2021 child marriage report. Králová's (2015) conceptual framework of social death is also used to show how modern slavery victims are represented as socially dead. The analysis concludes that UNICEF discourse excludes the masculine social actors who are in charge of marrying young girls off. Instead, it activates the feminine identities; hence, focusing only on the victims while neglecting the social actors responsible for the practice of child marriage. Moreover, the activation strategies identified support the view that victims of child marriage are represented as socially dead.

Keywords: (social actor analysis; UNICEF reports; child marriage; social death; feminine representations)

الملخص

يُعتبر زواج الأطفال، وفقاً لمنظمة الأمم المتحدة للطفولة (اليونيسف)، شكلاً من أشكال العبودية الحديثة. وبالتالي، فإن دراسة كيفية تمثيل ضحايا زواج الأطفال في خطاب اليونيسف تُعد أمراً بالغ الأهمية للكشف عن مدى نجاح المنظمة في تحقيق أهدافها، وعكس الواقع، وتسليط الضوء على أسباب هذه الظاهرة. تعتمد هذه الدراسة القائمة على تحليل النوع الاجتماعي على التحليل النقدي للخطاب وإطار تمثيل الفاعلين الاجتماعيين الذي وضعه فان ليوين (2008) لتحليل استراتيجيات تمثيل الفاعلين الاجتماعيين التي استخدمتها اليونيسف في تقريرها عن زواج الأطفال لعام 2021. كما يتم استخدام الإطار المفاهيمي "الموت الاجتماعي" لكارلوتا (2015) لإظهار كيفية تمثيل ضحايا العبودية الحديثة على أنهم أموات اجتماعياً. توصل التحليل إلى أن خطاب اليونيسف يستبعد الفاعلين الاجتماعيين الذكور الذين يتحملون مسؤولية تزويج الفتيات الصغيرات. وبدلاً من ذلك، يتم تفعيل الهويات الأنثوية، مما يركز فقط على الضحايا مع إهمال الفاعلين الاجتماعيين المسؤولين عن ممارسة زواج الأطفال. علاوة على ذلك، تدعم استراتيجيات التفعيل المحددة الرأي القائل بأن ضحايا زواج الأطفال يتم تمثيلهم كأموات اجتماعياً.

الكلمات المفتاحية: (تحليل الفاعلين الاجتماعيين؛ تقارير اليونيسف؛ زواج الأطفال؛ الموت الاجتماعي؛ التمثيلات الأنثوية)

Feminine Representation and Social Death in Child Marriage Humanitarian Discourse: A Gender-Based Social Actor Analysis

Mohamed Mazen Galal and Amal A. E. Gami

Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Suez University, Suez, Egypt

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Amal A.

E. Gami, Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Suez University

1. Introduction

The United Nations (UN) is an international organization that seeks solutions to common problems around the world. It is concerned with issues such as achieving world peace, human rights, humanitarian aid, sustainable development and climate and the like. Among the human rights issues is the case of forced marriage. Forced marriage is defined as “a marriage in which one and/or both parties have not personally expressed their full and free consent to the union” (UN, 2024). Child marriage is one form of forced marriage in which females are the most affected parties. According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), one of every five girls are formally married or in an informal union before reaching the age of 18, and 10 percent of girls are married before age 15. Moreover, back in 2012, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon simply defined child marriage as “a violation of human right” and expected that by 2020, “142 million innocent young girls worldwide will be separated from their friends and family, deprived of an education and put in harm’s way because of child marriage” (UN, 2012). Ki-moon also adds that “this harmful practice” must come to an end to “let girls be girls, not brides.”

Child and forced marriage is said to affect women more than men. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), “[C]hild and forced marriage (CFM) is a human rights violation and a harmful practice that disproportionately affects women and girls globally, preventing them from living their lives free from all forms of violence” (OHCHR, 2024). Moreover, based on the International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free and International Organization for Migration (IOM)’s Global Estimates of Modern Slavery (2022), the prevalence of forced marriage is higher for females than males across different regions of the world. As a result, CFM threatens the lives and freedom of girls and makes them vulnerable to violence.

Being subjected to modern slavery through forced marriage more than men, women are at the heart of the global and world’s interest to end

gender inequality. Accordingly, the study at hand focuses on how young girls and men are represented as social actors by UN agencies within the context of child marriage from a critical discourse analysis viewpoint. Contributing to the field of CDA by examining how UNICEF's discourse on child marriage represents victims, particularly focusing on gender-based social actor strategies, this study adds an important dimension to understanding power dynamics and victim portrayal in critical discourse studies.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 CDA and social actor analysis

Through a gender-based analysis, the present study employs the analytical framework of Van Leeuwen's social actors and its 'sociosemantic' inventory of labels and functions. The 'sociosemantic' element in Van Leeuwen's framework (2008, p. 24) suggests that meanings are to be treated in terms of cultural aspects for "meanings belong to culture rather than to language." Additionally, Van Leeuwen's 'sociosemantic' inventory considers both the formal as well as the semantic aspects of meaning, thus, overcoming the lack of bi-uniqueness of language. For example, Van Leeuwen (2008, p.23-24) argues that agency as a sociological concept doesn't always realized by linguistic agency, which is by the grammatical role of 'agent.' Instead, Van Leeuwen (2008) claims that agency can be realized also by possessive pronoun (e.g. "our intake of migrants") or by a prepositional phrase with 'from' (e.g. "People of Asian descent say they received a sudden cold-shoulder from neighbours and co-workers").

Van Leeuwen (2008) presents a system network of a number categories and subcategories that reveal the principal ways in which social actors can be represented in discourse (See Figure 1 below). The social actor network is divided into two main categories; these are exclusion and inclusion. That is, the representation either include or exclude its social actors. Van Leeuwen (2008) states that "[R]epresentations include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended." This implies that writers in their representation of social actors related to some social practices choose either inclusion or exclusion for some reasons related to the readers. Van Leeuwen (2008, p. 28) adds that some exclusions may be "innocent" details which readers are assumed to know, or which are irrelevant. Other instances of exclusions may serve specific purposes which in turn may have some interpretations in critical discourse analysis. Moreover, the boundaries of inclusion strategies are said to be blurred, not rigid. The

reason is that, some representational effects, claims Van Leeuwen (2008, p. 53), may be achieved through combining two different, yet related, strategies of social actor representations. This provides the analyst with the flexibility needed in interpreting hidden ideologies and considering the nature of the contexts. And the naming of the categories only help in the complexity and depth of CDA analyses. That is why, the categories within the network are useful only for making explicit how social actors are represented in discourse. For example, social actors can be represented as being both classified and functionalized (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 53).

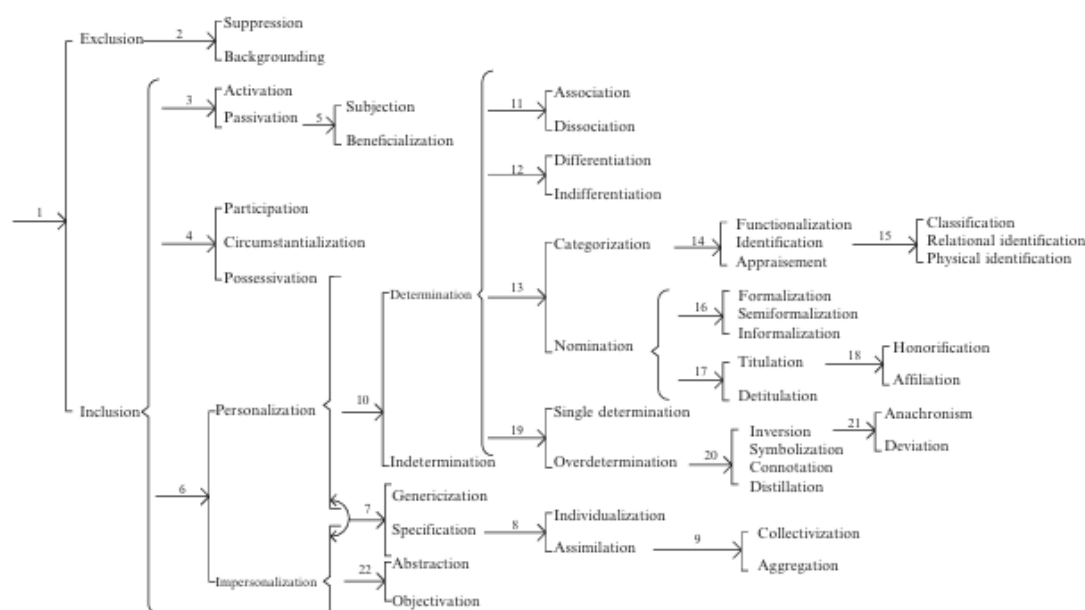


Figure 1. Social Actor Network (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 52)

Exclusion

Van Leeuwen (2008) differentiates between *exclusions* that leave no trace of the social actors and their activities in the representation and those that do leave a trace. According to van Leeuwen (2008), sometimes the relevant actions are included in the representation while some or all of the actors involved in them are excluded. In such cases, the *exclusion* leaves a trace in the representation comprising two strategies. These are either *suppression* or *backgrounding*. *Suppression* is when there is no relevance to the social actors in question anywhere in the text. It can linguistically be realized through the following:

- passive agent deletion (e.g. “concerns are being expressed”)
- nonfinite clauses which function as a grammatical participant (e.g. “to maintain this policy is hard”)
- “beneficiaries” or the social actors who benefit from an action deletion

- nominalizations and process nouns use

As for *backgrounding*, Van Leeuwen (2008) argues that it can be realized the same way as *suppression* through simple ellipses in nonfinite clauses with -ing and -ed participles, in infinitival clauses with to, and in paratactic clauses. However, the difference between both strategies is that, in the case of *backgrounding*, the social actors involved are to be found elsewhere in the text.

Activation/Passivation

Van Leeuwen (2008) differentiates between two inclusion strategies which can reallocate roles and rearrange the social relations between social actors these are *activation* and *passivation*. On the one hand, *activation* is when social actors are represented as the “active, dynamic forces in an activity;” while on the other hand, *passivation* is when they are assigned a passive role through being represented as “undergoing” the activity, or as being “at the receiving end of it” (p.33). Linguistically, *activation* strategies can be realized by

- the grammatical participant roles, transitivity structures in which activated social actors are coded as actor in material processes, behavior in behavioral processes, sayer in mental processes, sayers in verbal processes or assigner in relational processes (*Participation*)
- prepositional circumstantials with by or from (“People of Asian descent suddenly received a cold-shoulder from neighbours and co-workers.”) (*Circumstantialization*)
- premodification (e.g., “public” in “public support”) or postmodification (e.g., “of Asians” in “the influx of Asians”) of nominalizations and process nouns and the use of possessive pronouns to activate (“our intake”) (*Possessivation*)

Moreover, *passivation* is divided into *subjection* and *beneficialization* which the passivated social actor can be subjected or beneficialized, respectively. On the one hand, subjected social actors are treated as objects in the representation, while on the other hand, beneficialized social actors form a third party which benefit either positively or negatively from the action. As for the linguistic realizations of *passivation*, *subjection* can be realized by:

- “participation” when the passivated social actor is goal in a material process,
- phenomenon in a mental process,
- carrier in an effective attributive process

- “circumstantialization” through a prepositional phrase with, for instance, against
- “possessivation,” usually in the form of a prepositional phrase with *of* postmodifying a nominalization or process noun (“An intake of some 54,000 skilled immigrants is expected this year”).
- adjectival premodification (“racial tolerance” in which people of different races are passivated)

Likewise, *beneficialization* may be realized by

- participation, in which case the beneficialized participant is recipient or client in relation to a material process, or receiver in relation to a verbal process

Aggregation

Another category in Van Leeuwen’s (2008) framework to represent social actors in discourse is called *aggregation*. It is one of the two major kinds of *assimilation* in which social actors are referred to as groups and realized by plurality as opposed to *individualization* in which they are referred to as individuals and are realized by singularity *aggregation*. *Aggregation* quantifies groups of participants, treating them as statistics. According to Van Leeuwen (2008) “[it] is often used to regulate practice and to manufacture consensus opinion, even though it presents itself as merely recording facts” (p.37). *Aggregation* is realized by

- the presence of definite or indefinite quantifiers which either function as the numerative or as the head of the nominal group (i.e. “a number of critics” or “forty percent of Australians”).

Differentiation

Differentiation explicitly differentiates an individual social actor or group of social actors from a similar actor or group. Accordingly, differences between the “self” and the “other,” or between “us” and “them” can be made.

Nomination

In this category, van Leeuwen (2008) social actors who are represented in terms of their unique identity. *Nomination* is linguistically realized by

- proper nouns which can be formal (surname only, with or without honorifics), semiformal (given name and surname), or informal (given name only)
- “name obscuration” when letters or numbers replace names (e.g., “Mr. X”) so that nomination can be signified while the name is, at the same time, withheld.
- items that refer to a social actor who occupies a certain rank or fulfills a certain function (e.g., “the Little Boy”)

- vocatives which do not occur with a possessive pronoun, except in contexts of special endearment as in the case of English (e.g., “my Cathy”)
- items other than proper nouns which refers to an only social actor occupying a certain rank or fulfills a certain function (as in stories of young children when a character is referred to as “the Little Boy” or “the Giant)
- forms of honorification, the addition of standard titles or ranks (e.g., “Dr.”), or forms of affiliations, the addition of personal or kinship relation terms (e.g., “Auntie Barbara”)

Adopting Van Leeuwen’s (2008) framework, a wide range of researchers investigate the representation of social actors in different contexts including studying the representation of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers (KhosraviNik, 2009; 2010 (KhosraviNik et al., 2012; Ammar & Murgia, 2022), religious or ethnic groups (Wahab, 2022) and women versus men in gender inequalities studies. For example, some studies investigate how women are still seen as unequal to men in household work, workplace or relationships. Tomczak-Boczko (2023) studies how Mexicans represent in their discourse the perpetrators of violent acts towards women, men and children. The findings prove that even though men are the ones who are responsible for the violent acts towards women and children, there are a number of extracts made by male informants in which a woman is an agent and a man is a patient in order to blame her for his aggression. Besides, a number of researchers focus on studying gender representation in educational systems including educational textbooks. Some researchers conclude a sexist attitude in favor of male actors in school textbooks (Javani & Tahriri, 2018; Torre-Sierra & Guichot-Reina, 2022); while others conclude that school textbooks display bias between women and men in terms of some activities roles in which men had the upper hand (Nazimi & Hatifi, 2023). Even in cinema industry, Bezerra (2020) investigates the cinematic representation of women as social actors in the movie *Sex and the City* (2008). One of the main findings of this study is that the movie depicts that women’s agency is represented mainly “in their private/social spheres in interaction with only other familiar men/women” (p.16). The study also concludes that womanhood is represented as “rooted in regulatory practices of body weight, age [and] appearance” (p. 23).

However, other researchers find that in some other contexts women’s representations as social actors prove women are gaining much power and are being treated as equal to men. Bahrudin and Bakar (2022)

investigate the representation of social actors in women's slogans at the 2019 Women's March on International Women's Day. They conclude that the use of these social actor representation strategies highlights three main narratives in the feminist discourse surrounding the march: 1) us vs. them via solidarity and incrimination, 2) generalization of harmful actions against women, and 3) the resistance and reclamation of power by women. Also, in studying women representation in business media, Power et al. (2020) conclude that current leading business magazines pay more attention to what women do than to what they might be said to be or to how they appear.

2.2 Modern slavery and social death

The concept of social death has been linked to slavery both socially (Patterson, 1982; Brown, 2009; Archer, 2013) and cognitively (Gami, 2019). Socially, it is examined through the master-slave dynamic, human trafficking, and the possibility of social life after social death. Cognitively, it is explored through the self-perception of ex-slave females via conceptual metaphors. Králová (2015) broadens social death to various contexts, defining it as the loss of social identity, which renders individuals as "non-persons" (deprived of social roles), "homo sacer" (lacking legal and social protection), or "ex-humans" (stripped of identity and economic function). She also highlights social death through loss of social connections and bodily integrity, which may result from unemployment, widowhood, aging, or physical violence, reflecting Patterson's (1982) notion of "naked force."

As for the present study, the main aim is to investigate how females are represented by the United Nations (UN) and human rights agencies and groups in contexts of child marriage. More precisely, the present study aims at investigating which options are chosen in the 2021 UNICEF report entitled *Towards Ending Child Marriage: Global Trends and Profiles of Progress* in the representation of young women and whether do such representations may reflect them as socially dead. Accordingly, the research questions can be formulated as follows:

- (1) How are female, male and gender-neutral identities represented as social actors in the 2021 UNICEF child marriage report? And what implications are revealed through patterns of such representations and their frequencies?
- (2) To what extent do representations of female identities as social actors in the 2021 UNICEF child marriage report reflect being socially dead persons?

- (3) What implications does a gender-based social actor analysis have concerning the way UN organizations like UNICEF address child marriage as a social practice in their discourses?

3. Methodology and procedures

The present study proposes qualitative and quantitative analyses of the representation of social actors in the 2021 *Towards Ending Child Marriage: Global Trends and Profiles of Progress* report developed by UNICEF, a permanent part of the United Nations System. Originally known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, UNICEF was created by the United Nations General Assembly on 11 December 1946. Its main aim was to provide emergency food and healthcare to children and mothers in countries that had been devastated by World War II. It was not before 1950 that UNICEF's mandate was extended to help children and women in developing countries all over the world (United Nations, n. d.). It is said that one of the prioritized human rights issues of UNICEF is the issue of child marriage. In 2016, UNICEF, along with UNFPA, has launched the Global Program to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage. The program has set a 15-year plan to end child marriage focusing efforts in 12 countries worldwide. These include Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia (UNICEF USA, 2023). The report under investigation is divided into seven main parts preceded by some key messages as well as some stories of girls who were able to escape child marriage. First, there is the introduction. It previews the topic of the report which is child marriage, the aim of the report, the importance of understanding the factors that cause child marriage, and the nature of the analysis. The second part entitled 'global and regional overview' presents statistics and figures that show the distribution of child marriage as a phenomenon around the world. The third part entitled 'understanding trends' previews the factors that may drive progress in reducing child marriage. The fourth section of the report presents the profiles of progress in different regions of the world. The fifth section deals with possible solutions towards ending child marriage. The last two parts of the report includes some technical notes and the references used. Van Leeuwen's (2008) framework is deployed for analyzing the representation of women/girls as social actors related to child marriage as a practice. However, in order to grasp a whole, unified picture of the interpretation of the findings, the representations of men/boys and other related social institutions involved in the practice of child/forced marriage are also analyzed.

The procedure for data analysis can be summarized in the following steps. First, the two main distinctions in Van Leeuwen's (2008) framework depend on whether the social actors of certain social practices depicted are included or excluded in the discourse under investigation. Thus, the discursive strategies of *exclusion/inclusion* in representing females, males and others concerning the issue of child marriage are detected. However, for the sake of the aims of the study, some inclusion strategies are the focus of the analysis: *activation, passivation, nomination, aggregation, and differentiation*. Second, the frequency of the use of every strategy detected in representing females, males and others as social actors in the report is computed manually by the authors. Finally, an interpretation of the results related to the strategies identified and their frequencies is given in the light of the concept of social death.

4. Analysis and findings

The data analysis shows that there are some differences in the frequencies of the social actor representation (SAR) strategies used. As illustrated in Table 1 below, only 20 (30%) out of a total of 74 strategies are dedicated to *exclusion* and 47 (70%) to *inclusion*. Another observed distinction is that the feminine strategies (FSAR) are way more than the masculine (MSAR) and unspecified gendered (UNSG) combined. Out of the 47 *inclusion* strategies, 37 (79%) FSARs are used as opposed to only 1 instance of MSAR and 9 instances of UNSG.

Table 1 Numbers of social actor representation strategies and their frequencies in the data

Strategy	FSAR	MSAR	UNSG
1 Exclusion/Total: 20 (30%) <u>Inclusion Strategies/Total: 47 (70%)</u>	-	-	-
2 Activation (Total: 19)	13	1	5
3 Passivation (Total: 14)	10	-	4
4 Nomination (Total: 8)	8	-	-
5 Differentiation (Total: 2)	2	-	-
6 Aggregation (Total: 4)	4	-	-
Total	37 (79%)	1 (2%)	9 (19%)

4.1 Exclusion

As illustrated in Table 1, *exclusion* strategy is identified 20 times in the report. Most of the examples show how UNICEF writers tend to exclude the social actors who are responsible for the practice of child marriage and the violation of children's human rights. For example, the writers define child marriage as "a harmful practice detrimental to girls' well being and in violation of their rights." This definition is the very first sentence in the report. Through defining it as "a harmful practice" the

writers do not mentioned in the text who actually does it, who ‘detriments’ the girls’ well-being or who ‘violates’ their rights (see Appendix A, lines 1-2). Likewise, moving along with the report, specifically in lines 46-47 (Appendix A), the writers in trying to suggest a solution for the crisis of child marriage use gerundive nominalizations as in “understanding,” “reducing,” and “ending” suggesting that the social actor who is responsible for these practices is also excluded from the text. The writers don’t mention who is responsible for understanding what causes child marriage or who has the ability to end such practice.

In addition to that, the social actors who are supposed to provide work opportunities in the formal sectors for girls are excluded from the text. For instance, the use of nominalizations in “[O]pportunities for girls are fundamental to success” (see Appendix A, line 6) shows that the social actor involved in ‘saving opportunities’ for girls to be successful is not mentioned. One would ask the question ‘who would give girls opportunities to be successful?’ Also, in the context of labor force participation and its relation to child marriage, the writers of the report exclude the social actor who ‘force women to take risky and unappealing jobs to ensure they can satisfy their household’s basic needs (see Appendix A, lines 82-83).

Again, in the context of education and its impact in reducing child marriage, *exclusion* strategy is used in the report through the use of nominalizations. For instance, in discussing the role of education in reducing child marriage, the writers of the report exclude the social actor related to the social practices of “keeping girls in school”, ‘deciding to remove them from school,” and “marrying [them] off” (see Appendix A, lines 53-55). Additionally, the report writers exclude the social actor who is responsible for ‘perceiving’ the value of education at the household level and the one who is responsible for ‘making’ labor market opportunities available for the girls (see Appendix A, lines 56-58).

At the legal level, the writers also mention some of the legislative practices in reducing child marriage without mentioning the social actors involved (see Appendix A, lines 97-98). In this example, the use of the nominalization ‘establishing’ excludes the social actors who are related to the legal practice of setting the minimum age for marriage at 18.

4.2 Activation

Activation is another SAR strategy identified in the report. Out of a total number of 54 *inclusion* strategies identified in the data, 19 instances are dedicated to *activation*. The analysis of the data shows that some *activation* strategies that are used to represent women are those which

activate them in terms of some mental processes. For example, within the stories of women who managed to escape their fate of marrying young, the report writers activate Kushma Kumari in terms of the mental processes of “seeing” and “dreaming” (see Appendix A, lines 9-11). Here, Kushma is activated through *participation* as a senser in the mental process of “seeing” and is also activated in terms of being represented as a senser of the mental process of “dreaming.” In another example, Tseganesh Dansa who also was able to escape child marriage is activated through representing her as a senser in the perspective mental process of “wants” (see Appendix A, lines 15-16). Tseganesh wants to go to the university and wants to make her parents proud of her. This reflects the fact that escaping child marriage enables women to want and dream of a successful future through education; the thing that will make their parents proud.

Other female social actors are activated through *participation*. For example, Rima Bera, another female who has escaped marrying young, is represented as active social actor in terms of the material processes such as ‘facing’ threats from the community and “preventing child marriages” as well as in terms of the verbal process of “reporting on” child marriage (see Appendix A, lines 17-18). However, Rima’s community, an unspecified-gendered social actor, is activated in terms of the verb “threatening” through the use of prepositional circumstantials with *from* (*Circumstantialization*). Similarly, Moriom Banu is activated in terms of the material processes of “standing up against child marriage” and “supporting the right to education for girls in her community” (see Appendix A, lines 21-23).

Nonetheless, there is one example for activating females in terms of negative material processes which may lead to them being married in a young age (see Appendix A, lines 79-81). In this example, women are represented as active agents in the material processes of “work outside the formal economy” and “household work” as well as in the affection mental process of ‘caring for’ the house. Thus, women are also activated in material processes in terms of “vulnerable” and “informal” employment leading to the increased chances of dropping out of school; hence, marrying young.

In addition to that, the *activation* of a masculine social actor is identified only once in the data. Halima, one of the girls who have managed to avoid marrying young and whose name has been changed for safety, is activated in relation to the verb “escaped.” Halima “escaped being married off by her father” (see Appendix A, lines 24-27). In other words, Halima escaped being ‘passivated’ in terms of being married off by her

father. At the same time, Halima's father is activated in relation to the verb 'marry off' his daughter; emphasizing his responsibility for this practice. This reflects one aspect of the patriarchal society with reference to the practice of child marriage especially after the need to change her name.

Moreover, *activation* is identified in the data to represent unspecified-gendered social actors. The parents of the girls are activated in terms of "marrying their children off" due to living in extreme poor conditions (see Appendix A, lines 69-71) and in terms of being sensors of the perspective mental process of "unwillingness" to delay marriage for their daughters depriving them of "attaining" a higher level of education (see Appendix A, lines 72-74).

4.3 Passivation

Another SAR strategy identified in the data is *passivation*. As illustrated in Table 1 above, out of a total number of 14 instances of *passivation*, 10 instances of FSARs and 4 instances of UNSGs are identified. The FSAR *passivation* strategy shows how girls are represented as undergoing an action or at the receiving end of it. They are represented as the ones who are at the receiving end of the practice of child marriage; girls are not the agents of the practice of marrying them off. For example, "650 million girls and women" are being affected by such practice till now (see Appendix A, lines 3-5). In another example, as a result of *exclusion* strategy, girls are represented as passivated social actors as the ones who get affected by the practice of child marriage. The use of "deleterious consequences" implies that such consequences are caused by some excluded agents in which "millions of girls" are assigned a passive role through being represented as being at the receiving end of them (see Appendix A, lines 35-36).

Additionally, girls and women are represented as passivated social actors through the use of nominalizations which imply the feature 'feminine' (see Appendix A, lines 37-40). In this example, the use of nominalizations such as "early pregnancies," "maternal and child mortality," and "the disempowerment of married girls" whose meanings include the feature "feminine" suggests that the practice of child marriage has an excluded social actor/agent and that "females" are passivated and only represented as undergoing the activities related to child marriage.

Moreover, the passivated UNSG social actors are identified in the data 4 times. Such social actors are 'parents,' 'children,' 'the most vulnerable,' and 'the world.' In lines 15-16 Appendix A, Tseganesh's parents who have been activated in terms of 'supporting' their daughter and 'making

sure she didn't get married at a young age' are passivated in terms of being a phenomenon in the material process 'make proud.' Juxtaposing positions, Tseganesh is at the same time represented as active in the mental process "want" after being passivated in terms of being supported and not being married at a young age by her parents and as a carrier in an attribution mode of a relational process of being "happy." Likewise, 'the world' is represented as a receiver in the verbal process related to the verb "to tell" (see Appendix A, lines 28-31). In this example, the writers include a quote of a girl named Ahed as an example of the girls who have managed to escape child marriage. In Ahed's quote, 'the world' is passivated as she represents it as the receiver of the verbal process of telling whereas the verbiage is the message she 'wants' to tell. Ahed's message includes how she perceives that the "girls" have rights that must be enjoyed.

In other examples, 'children' and 'the most vulnerable' are UNSG social actors who have been passivated in the practice of child marriage. On the one hand, 'children' are represented as passivated social actors in which they have no role in their being married (see Appendix a, lines 65-66). On the other hand, the "most vulnerable" people among the population are represented as passivated in terms of being "socially protected." At the same time, the social actors related to 'providing social protection' for them are excluded and aren't mentioned (see Appendix a, lines 67-68).

4.4 Nomination

Nomination is another SAR strategy that is identified in the data. There are 8 instances of *nomination* all of which are dedicated to FSARs. All 8 instances are included in a pre-introduction part of the report. The *nomination* examples introduce stories of girls who were able to avoid early marriage and whose stories work as reminders of how freedom can affect them pursuing their ambitions and dreams. The report represents these girls in terms of their unique identities through *semiformalization* and *informalization nomination* (see Appendix A, lines 9-32).

4.5 Differentiation

Differentiation in the data is identified twice. In the first example, there is a distinction between 'free girls' and other girls (see Appendix A, lines 19-20). This example is included in the pre-introduction section of the report. It introduces the story of the Brahmanbaria team cheerleaders. The cheerleaders are activated in terms of 'empowering' other girls through sports to end child marriage in which they are passivated in terms of being at the goal of the process. Accordingly, it is a *differentiation* between the activated social actors vs. the passivated ones.

Again, the other *differentiation* example is comprised in Ahed's quote included in the pre-introduction part of the report (see Appendix A, lines 28-31). Here in this utterance, Ahed is differentiating between the collectivized social actors "the world" which is represented as a passivated social actor in terms of being a receiver in the verbal process of the verb "tell" and "we girls." In so doing, Ahed is also representing the girls as opposed to the rest of the world to which she belongs as collectivized social actors through the use of the first-person plural pronoun "we." This gives a sense of assertion that "the girls" are one group that is represented as opposed to another group which happens to be 'the rest of the world.' In other words, by identifying the first plural pronoun "we" as "girls" it is implied that the other group in which Ahed is making a distinction is a masculine one.

4.6 Aggregation

Aggregation occurs 4 times in the data. All 4 instances represent feminine social actors. *Aggregation* here is used by the report writers to represent 'females' as quantity or statistics. All examples of *aggregation* represent women as victims to the actions of some excluded agents. There is an instance that quantifies them as "a large proportion" for emphasizing that the majority of women have "worked in unappealing jobs and pulling out of the labour market as their households become more affluent" (see Appendix A, lines 84-90) without mentioning who is responsible for this. Another example quantifies girls as "an estimated 21 million girls," and "approximately 12 million" for showing the difficult circumstances that they face that make them become pregnant or give birth (see Appendix A, lines 95-96). Also, girls are quantified as "7.5 million" for revealing a shocking reality about girls who marry illegally each year (see Appendix A, lines 99-100).

5. Discussion

Based on the results of this study, it is indicated that *inclusion* strategies are more identified than *exclusion* strategy in the data. Out of a total number of 67 identified strategies, 47 instances (70%) are dedicated to *inclusion* as opposed to 20 instances (30%) of *exclusion*. However, excluding some social actors from a UN discourse about ending child marriage, may add to the interpretation of data analysis. Moreover, concerning *inclusion* strategies, FSAR is more frequent than both MSAR and UNSG. Out of a total number of 47 instances of *inclusion* strategies identified, 37 (79%) instances are dedicated to representing feminine social actors as opposed to only one instance representing masculine

social actors and 9 (19%) instances representing unspecified-gendered social actors.

5.1 Exclusion: backgrounding versus suppression

According to Van Leeuwen's (2008) social actor framework, *exclusion* has two kinds: *suppression* and *backgrounding*. On the one hand, suppressed social actors are those that aren't found anywhere in the text. On the other hand, backgrounded social actors are to be found elsewhere in the text. The results might suggest that the excluded social actors are backgrounded; hence, are to be found elsewhere in the text. For instance, there are three examples of *activation* that support the assumption that the excluded social actors related to child marriage are backgrounded. The first is the only identified masculine activated social actor which is the father of Halima, one of the girls who managed to escape "being married off by her father" (see Appendix A, lines 24-27). The second is the social actor "parents" which is activated in terms of "marrying their children off" due to living in extreme poor conditions (see Appendix A, lines 69-71) or in terms of sensors of the perspective mental process of "unwillingness" to delay marriage for their daughters depriving them of "attaining" a higher level of education (see Appendix A, lines 72-74). The third activated social actor that suggests backgrounded excluded social actors is 'Rima's community' (see Appendix A, lines 17-18), an unspecified-gendered social actor which is activated in terms of the verb "threatening" through the use of prepositional circumstantials with *from* (*Circumstantialization*). Here, the report writers include the social actors "father," "parents" and the collectivized social actor "the community" as activated in relation to the practice of child marriage. Thus, the excluded social actors related to child marriage are backgrounded for they are activated elsewhere in the text.

5.2 Feminine, masculine and unspecified-gendered social actor representation

The data analysis reveals that there are differences in the social actor strategies used by the UNICEF writers based on gender. From the number of the strategies used and their frequencies, it is observed that UNICEF report writers focus more on representing girls and women as the social actors involved in child marriage than representing masculine or gender neutral social actors. As mentioned above, the instances of representing girls and women outnumber the ones representing male or unspecified social actors combined.

It is also observed that the writers choose to represent feminine social actors in a way that makes a distinction between those who are free and have managed to escape marrying young and those who are still

subjective to the practice. On the one hand, free girls, those who have been able to escape being married in a young age, are represented in the data as active agents of some mental and material processes and as nominated through *semiformalization* and *informalization*. First, free girls are represented as activated social actors in terms of mental processes such as “seeing,” “dreaming,” and “wanting.” Such mental processes reflect the girls’ agency, freedom and ability to ‘see,’ ‘dream’ and ‘want,’ things enslaved girls can’t do. Second, other female social actors are activated in terms of some material and verbal processes that require some action. These include the material processes of ‘facing threats,’ and ‘preventing,’ and the verbal process of ‘reporting on’ child marriage. Thus, the report writers choose to represent free women as enjoying their free will, their power and their ability to face threats from the community to end child marriage. These are representations that are dedicated only to the girls who have managed to escape child marriage and whose stories are included in the report to give support and inspiration for other girls who are subjected to child marriage. Third, 8 instances of *nomination* are identified in the report exclusively for representing free girls. By choosing this strategy, the report writers are emphasizing the power and ability of these active social actors and are familiarizing the girls who might be subjected to child marriage with them. This may give young girls the power to face child marriage and the impression that escaping it is possible and easy for those ordinary, nominated girls are just like them. On the other hand, girls who may have been suffering from child marriage are represented as passivated social actors who undergo an action or at the receiving end of it. For example, it shows that out of a total number of 14 instances of passivation, 10 instances are identified as related to the girls who are at the receiving end of the practice of child marriage. In other words, all 10 *passivation* examples that are identified in the report are related to the girls in the context of being subjected to child marriage; hence, representing the girls as having no free will, no power of their own, nor the ability to act against their enslavement. Moreover, *differentiation* is used by the report writers to make a distinction between free girls and other girls. The included story of the Brahmanbaria team cheerleaders, as shown in example 7 in the previous section, reveals a distinction between “girls” who need to be empowered to end child marriage and the girl members of the Brahmanbaria team who are empowering them; a distinction between powerful girls and weak ones.

As for the representation of the masculine figure in the report, the findings of the study reveals only one example. A male figure in the data is identified as an activated social actor in relation to the process of marrying his daughter off. Although it is an only instance that is identified in the data that activates a father in terms of marrying off his girl, this example reveals who is responsible for the practice of child marriage in the most general way. This assumption is justified if one considers the 20 instances of *exclusion* in the data. All 20 instances exclude the social actor related to child marriage. Nonetheless, directly activating a masculine figure in relation to the practice of marrying his daughter young *backgrounds* a masculine social actor. In addition to that, a *differentiation* example identified in the data where it makes a distinction between “we girls” and “the world,” gives a hint on a masculine social actor in relation to child marriage.

The unspecified-gender representation in the data include the social actors “parents,” “community,” “the world,” “families,” “children,” and “the most vulnerable.” Both ‘children’ and ‘the most vulnerable’ are represented in the report as passivated social actors in relation to child marriage, however, implying the reference ‘girls.’ Moreover, throughout the report, the social actor “the parents” and “the families” of the enslaved girls through child marriage are activated in terms of ‘marrying off’ their children (see lines 69-71 & 65-66, Appendix A). Also “the parents” are passivated in terms of being, for example, a phenomenon in mental processes of girls who managed to escape being enslaved (see lines 15-16, Appendix A). Thus, it may be argued that “parents” as the social actors involved in the practice of child marriage are either activated when presented as being the most powerful social actor or passivated when presented as being no longer in charge. Additionally, the “community” is a gender-neutral social actor in which it is represented as involved in the practice of child marriage (see Appendix A lines 17-18). Actually, the community of one of the girls who managed to escape marrying young is activated in terms of giving her “threats.” It is thus represented as one of the reasons of child marriage. However, no parts in the report is dedicated to discuss the features of such communities.

5.3 Implications for the concept of social death in the data

From a sociological viewpoint, child marriage is considered as a form of modern slavery. However, the literature lacks studies that relate child marriage to slavery or the concept of social death. Thus, the present study examines the extent to which the representations of girls and women related to the practice of child marriage reflect them as socially dead. The findings of the study reveal that UNICEF writers represent girls as

socially dead in the context of child marriage. This can be seen in using strategies such as *passivation*, *exclusion*, *nomination*, and *aggregation* in which they correspond to the concepts of Králová's (2015) framework of social death.

First, the results of the study reveal that not only does *passivation* as chosen by the report writers represent enslaved "girls" through child marriage as the passivated social actors; the goal of material processes or at the receiving end of the practice of child marriage, but also it represents them as socially dead. For example, in lines 37-40 in Appendix A, the use of nominalizations such as "early pregnancies," "intimate partner violence," "maternal and child mortality" and "increased rates of sexually transmitted infections" suggests that the passivated girls are represented as socially dead in terms of the concept 'naked force' in which they lose control over their bodies or 'homo-sacer' in which they are deprived of their right to have legal or social protection. Likewise, in lines 54-55, Appendix A, represented as passivated social actors in relation to being removed from school and married off, girls are pictured as socially dead for having no control over their bodies and no will of their own.

Moreover, the findings of the study reveal that enslaved girls through child marriage are represented as 'non-persons' for they are "removed from the natural social setting and [are] deprived of [their] social roles" (Králová, 2015: 24). Represented as passivated social actors in terms of being 'married off' by their fathers or the community, girls who are subjected to child marriage are represented as being socially dead over losing their social identity.

Second, the use of *exclusion* in a report about child marriage reflects women as socially dead. For example, lines 82-83 (Appendix A) mirror how girls are socially dead through marriage. In this example, the social actor responsible for providing "decent work and social protection" for "women" is excluded through passive agent deletion. Nonetheless, it also represents those women in terms of being "ex-humans" as they suffer from economic failure for they are forced to take "risky and unappealing jobs to ensure they can satisfy their household's basic needs."

Third, *nomination* is also used in the report to represent girls as socially dead. The report writers, in lines 24-27 Appendix A, nominate one of the girls by the name of Halima. However, they actually falsely nominate her through giving her a wrong name to hide her identity in order to stay safe. This fear for female lives reflects life in a male society in which females may pay their lives over a word. That is why girls are in need to conceal

their identity to be able to talk freely about their experience of being married off young by their fathers.

Finally, through *aggregation*, girls subjected to child marriage are represented as socially dead. The 4 *aggregation* examples identified in the data reveal that girls suffering from child marriage are represented as mere numbers or statistics. As a result, deprived of their sense of worth, enslaved girls through child marriage are socially dead.

5.4 Implications for the way UN organizations address child marriage in their discourse

One of the main aims of the present study is to reveal the implications a gender-based social actor analysis has concerning the way UN organizations address child marriage in their discourse. The results show that, through the choices they have made regarding representing the social actors related to child marriage, they have ignored- intentionally or non-intentionally- to directly represent who exactly causes child marriage, what the real societal and cultural causes of the practice are, and who are simply in charge. The report under investigation discusses what drives progress in reducing child marriage as well as the risk factors that may affect such progress. These risk factors include the links between child marriage and poverty, access to education, women's access to the labor market and the legislation of laws. It also presents the profiles of progress in different regions of the world. These include Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Armenia, Eswatini, Maldives, Rwanda, and Tunisia. Nonetheless, neither do the report writers directly include the social actors responsible for the practice of child marriage nor do they include in their discussion the nature of the social systems of the countries in which they present their progress of reducing child marriage.

For example, the data analysis shows that in discussing what child marriage is and how understanding the risk factors helps in reducing the practice, the report writers haven't mentioned the social actors involved. All 20 instances of *exclusion* identified in the data reveal that the social actors responsible for the practice of child marriage are not mentioned although they are referred to elsewhere in the text and pushed into the background. Additionally, although the report writers state that "child marriage was the norm in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and India, with the majority of girls marrying before the age of 18" (United Nations Children's Fund, [UNICEF], 2021, p. 30), they haven't discussed the nature of the social systems that govern the social relations in these societies. As a matter of fact, most of the regions the report is presenting as examples of countries which are fighting child marriage are patriarchal or Arab societies in which male dominance prevails. As discussed above,

mentioned; hence activated, elsewhere in the text that the social actors involved in child marriage are the girls' fathers and parents, it is implied that the nature of the social systems that govern societies suffering from child marriage are parenting and patriarchy.

Parenting as a social system is implied in the data analysis as a system that governs family relations within societies that suffer from child marriage. The gender-neutral social actors "parents" are activated in the data in terms of "marrying their children off" due to living in extremely poor conditions (see Appendix A, lines 69-71) and in terms of sensors of the perspective mental process of "unwillingness" to delay marriage for their daughters (see Appendix A, lines 72-74). The question now is whether parenting as a social system can be equated with patriarchy in the countries that suffer from child marriage and which are included in the report under investigation. It may be argued that 'parenting' as a social system in countries suffering from child marriage and gender inequality takes the form of a nuclear family which is

a family unit consisting only of a father, mother, and children ... Within this family structure, the male is often the breadwinner and the head of the household while the female is the homemaker and operates within a subordinate role to the husband. This particular family unit tends to be patriarchal in structure. (Williams, 2011, p. 1026)

From this discussion so far it can be concluded that the answer to the previous question would be 'yes, parenting equates with patriarchy when it comes to the social systems that govern societies suffering from child marriage.' According to World Economic Forum (2022), patriarchy is said to be the social system of most of the countries that suffer from child marriage. It is defined as "a kind of society in which men and women participate [with] male privilege by being *male dominated*, *male identified*, and *male centered*" (Johnson, 2005, p. 5). Although, patriarchy is shown from the use of two of the social actor representation strategies which are *activation* (see Appendix A, lines 24-27) and *differentiation* (see Appendix A, lines 28-31) as discussed previously in the analysis section, the report doesn't include any reference to it as one of the main causes of child marriage. In other words, instead of 'including' masculine figures for showing how girls become enslaved through child marriage, the report writers choose to exclude them through using, for example, nominalizations, passive agent deletion or nonfinite clauses.

6- Conclusion

As child marriage - a form of modern slavery - becomes at the heart of the world's interest in general and the United Nations in particular, it is important to study the representation of social actors involved in such practice in the discourses about ending it. It is also important to examine which social actors are included or excluded from discussions about presenting child marriage as a problem and ending it worldwide. By investigating which options are chosen in the 2021 UNICEF report about ending child marriage, this study established that there are distinctions between masculine, gender-neutral, free feminine, and enslaved feminine social actors. First, masculine figures are represented indirectly in the data as the social actors responsible for the practice of child marriage by being excluded and pushed into the background. Second, throughout the report, there is a distinction between representing free girls who have managed to escape child marriage and girls who are in the situation of being subjected to child marriage. The findings support that child marriage is an inherently passivated practice. For example, while the girls who are suffering from child marriage are represented as passivated social actors who undergo an action or are at the receiving end of it, free girls or those who have managed to escape child marriage are represented as active agents reflecting their agency, freedom, and power. Third, unspecified-gender social actors are represented in the data and are included in a way that supports the view that in reporting about child marriage, UNICEF writers neglect to directly include masculine figures as the ones who are responsible for such practice and tend to focus only on female victims. Additionally, the data analysis reveals that the representation of feminine social actors reflects that child marriage victims as socially dead. This suggests that the report's writers, instead of focusing on the reasons behind child marriage such as discussing the role of masculinity, parenting and patriarchy, focus on the position of femininity in child marriage. Future research into social actor representation in humanitarian discourse should focus on different human rights issues such as arbitrary detention, forced disappearance, gender-based violence genocide, and the like, to examine which figures are excluded and which are included in the discussion and which linguistic forms are used in representing them.

Acknowledgements

Not applicable

Declaration of conflicting interest

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in [UNICEF Data] at <https://data.unicef.org/resources/towards-ending-child-marriage/>

References

- Archer, M. S. (2013). Trafficking in human beings: Modern slavery –a sociological approach. In W. Arber, J. J. Llach & M. S. Sorondo (Eds.), *Trafficking in human beings: Modern slavery* (pp. 52-73). Pontifical Academy of Sciences.
- Ammar, M. & Murgia, P. (2022). Shaping the migrant: semantic strategies to portray inward and outward migrants as social actors in the Arab press. *Discourse & Communication*, 16(5), 485-503. DOI: 10.1177/17504813221099192.
- Bahrudin, H. & Bakar, K. A. (2022). Us vs. them: representation of social actors in women's March MY protest signs. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 18(Special Issue 1), 313-329. <https://www.jlls.org/index.php/jlls/article/view/3473>
- Bezerra, F. A. S. (2020). Multimodal critical discourse analysis of the cinematic representation of women as social actors. *DELTA*, 36(1), 1-28. DOI: 10.1590/1678-460X2020360403.
- Brown, V. (2009). Social death and political life in the study of slavery. *American Historical Review*, 114(5), 1231-1249. <https://scholar.harvard.edu/sites/scholar.harvard.edu/files/vbrown/files/brown-socialdeath.pdf>
- De la Torre-Sierra A. M. & Guichot-Reina V. (2022). The influence of school textbooks on the configuration of gender identity: A study on the unequal representation of women and men in the school discourse during the Spanish democracy. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 117, Article 103810. DOI: 10.1016/j.tate.2022.103810.
- Gami, A. (2019). *Conceptual metaphors in modern slave narratives: A cognitive-linguistic approach* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation], Suez University.
- Javani, T. F. & Tahriri A. (2018). The representation of male and female social actors in prospect EFL series of Iranian junior high school: A CDA perspective. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*, 6(4), 15-23. <https://www.eltsjournal.org/archive/value6%20issue4/3-6-4-18.pdf>
- Johnson, A. G. (2005). *The Gender Knot: Unraveling our Patriarchal Legacy*. Temple University Press.
- KhosraviNik, M. (2009). The representation of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in British newspapers during the Balkan conflict (1999) and the British general election (2005). *Discourse & Society*, 20(4), 477-498. DOI: 10.1177/0957926509104024.
- KhosraviNik, M. (2010). The representation of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in the British newspapers: a critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 8(3), 1-29. DOI: 10.1075/jlp.9.1.01kho.
- KhosraviNik, M., Krzyz'anski, M. & Wodak, R. (2012). Dynamics of representation in discourse: immigrants in the British press. In M. Messer, R. Schroeder & R. Wodak (Eds.), *Migrations: Interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 283-295). Springer.
- Králová, J. (2015). What is social death?. *Contemporary Social Science: Journal of the Academy of Social Sciences*, 10(3), 235-248. DOI: 10.1080/21582041.2015.1114407.
- Nazimi, S. Z. & Hatifi, K. (2023). Critical discourse analysis of gender representation in grade seven English language subject in the ministry of education in

- Afghanistan. *Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities*, 3(2), 151-157. DOI: 10.55544/ijrah.3.2.26.
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2024). *Child and forced marriage*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/women/child-and-forced-marriage-including-humanitarian-settings>
- Patterson, H. O. (1982). *Slavery and social death: A comparative study*. Harvard University Press.
- Power, K., Rak, L. & Kim, M. (2020). Women in business media: a critical discourse analysis of representations of women in Forbes, Fortune and Bloomberg BusinessWeek, 2015-2017. *CADAAD*, 11(2), 1-26. <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/journals/cadaad/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Vol11.2-1-Power-Rak-Kim.pdf>
- Tomczak-Boczek, J. (2023). If not a 'macho', then who did it? Social actors and the violence of Mexico. *Discourse & Society*, 34(4), 485-501. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09579265221137194>
- United Nations Children's Fund. (2021). *Towards Ending Child Marriage: Global trends and profiles of progress*, Division of data, analytics, planning and monitoring, New York, UNICEF.
- UNICEF USA. (2023). *Ending child marriage*. <https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/child-protection/end-child-marriage>
- United Nations. (2012). *UN remarks*. <https://www.un.org/exhibits/page/un-remarks-9>
- United Nations. (n. d.). *Creative Community Outreach Initiative (CCOI)*. <https://www.un.org/en/ccoi/unicef-united-nations-childrens-fund>
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and practice: New tools for critical discourse analysis*. Oxford University Press.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (1996). The representation of social actors. In C. R. Caldas-Coulthard & M. Coulthard (Eds.), *Texts and practices: Readings in CDA* (pp. 32-70). Routledge.
- Wahab, J. S. A. (2022). The representation of Muslims in CNN talk shows: a critical discourse analysis. *British Journal of Translation, Linguistics and Literature*, 2, 49-63. DOI: 10.54848/bjtl
- Walk Free. (2024). *Making modern slavery socially unacceptable*. <https://www.walkfree.org/>
- Williams, S. A. S. (2011). Nuclear family. In S. Goldstein & J. A. Naglieri (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of child behavior and development* (pp. 1026-1027). Springer.
- World Economic Forum. (2022). *Global gender gap report*. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2023>.

**Appendix A
Examples for Data Analysis**

Example	Line
Child marriage is a harmful practice detrimental to girls' well being and in violation of their rights	1 2
It is becoming less common. Still, it affects 650 million girls and women around the world, and global progress is not fast enough to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of eliminating child marriage by 2030	3 4 5
Opportunities for girls are fundamental to success.	6
Child marriage becomes a less attractive option when productive alternatives are available to girls	7 8
Kushma Kumari did not see child marriage and child labour as rights violations until she joined the Child Reporters Programme. Kushma was one of the reporters selected to anchor the Child Reporters YouTube series. She dreams of becoming a doctor and working in the Indian Army.	9 10 11
"I'm not ready to get married yet. I'm interested in the idea and I even have a suitor. But first I prefer to dedicate myself to my future and my dreams of owning my own business. I want to open a boutique where women can buy textiles and clothes." Azima	12 13 14
Tseganesh Dansa wants to go to university and make her parents proud. She is happy that her parents support her education and made sure she didn't get married at a young age.	15 16
Rima Bera is high-spirited enough to face threats from her community for reporting on and preventing child marriages. She looks forward to continuing her good work.	17 18
The Brahmanbaria team cheers after winning the Championship Football Tournament, part of a series of initiatives to empower girls through sports and to end child marriage	19 20
Moriom Banu has been standing up against child marriage and supporting the right to education for girls in her community. Here she shares her experiences with other young activists and solution providers during an interactive session.	21 22 23
Halima [name changed to protect her identity] escaped being married off by her father. Together with six other girls, she sought refuge at a police station. Through community dialogues, her father has now become an advocate against child marriage and has signed an agreement to keep his daughters in school.	24 25 26 27
"I want to tell the world that we girls are capable of doing many things that you thought we couldn't. ... We have the right to work and to education, the right to be protected from violence, the right to vote, the right to be protected from early marriage and the right of choice when it comes to choosing the right partner." Ahed	28 29 30 31

Bira is a volunteer who is creating awareness on the dangers of child marriage in her village.	32
Child marriage is widely recognized as a violation of human rights and a hindrance to national development.	33 34
The practice can have lasting deleterious consequences on the health, well-being and rights of millions of girls.	35 36
In fact, evidence suggests that it is closely associated with lower educational attainment, early pregnancies, intimate partner violence, maternal and child mortality, increased rates of sexually transmitted infections, intergenerational poverty, and the disempowerment of married girls.	37 38 39 40
In committing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the international community has vowed to end the practice of child marriage by 2030.	41 42
In the Middle East and North Africa, substantial progress in reducing the prevalence of child marriage has been made over the past 25 years, but within the last decade, progress appears to have slowed.	43 44 45
Understanding the breadth and depth of the factors that trigger child marriage or prevent its occurrence is important to further reducing and ultimately ending this harmful practice.	46 47
The relationship between child marriage and labour force participation is also complex. The availability of any type of work for women is not sufficient to reduce child marriage, particularly if most of the work is in the informal sector. Rather, it is the availability of more stable, often skilled work in the formal sector that is correlated with a reduction in child marriage, likely because it provides a more promising pathway for girls.	48 49 50 51 52
Keeping girls in school is often cited as one of the best ways to prevent child marriage.	53
Decisions about removing a girl from school and marrying her off at a young age are often made at the same time.	54 55
It has been established that increases in the perceived value of education at the household level (thus reducing the risk of early marriage and taking girls out of school) are more likely when labour market opportunities are available.	56 57 58
Finally, while it is well known that setting the minimum age at marriage at or above 18 can make a crucial difference in progress against child marriage, the existence of loopholes, the absence of sanctions and the fact that many marriages may still occur illegally weaken the effectiveness of legislation as a driver of change.	59 60 61 62
Harmful practices are often a feature of poor economic development, which is well known to produce a cascade of social risks for children.	63 64
Typically, limited wealth is a decisive factor in encouraging families to marry their children off at a young age.	65 66

Feminine Representation and Social Death in Child Marriage Humanitarian Discourse: A Gender-Based Social Actor Analysis

Still, the benefits of economic growth are often experienced unevenly across populations, reinforcing the need for social protection to ensure that the most vulnerable are reached.

Poverty levels remain high relative to other regions, however, with more than 40 per cent of the population living in extreme poverty, circumstances that often drive parents to marry off their daughters during childhood.

In many countries, schooling and marriage are viewed as incompatible activities: Girls are often forced to leave school upon marriage, and many parents are unwilling to delay marriage so their daughters can attain a higher level of education.

Evidence suggests that improved employment opportunities may raise the cost of dropping out of school, in addition to allowing young women to build an economic base to lift themselves and future generations out of poverty, addressing two of the primary drivers of early marriage.

Women tend to work outside the formal economy since they are disproportionately responsible for care and household work. They often have less time to devote to a job outside the home, making informal and often vulnerable employment a more accessible option.

In the absence of decent work and social protection, women are often forced to take risky and unappealing jobs to ensure they can satisfy their household's basic needs.

While female labour force participation is declining globally, on average, an increase in the quality of work has been observed across all regions, with a shift towards wage and salaried jobs. These trends may reflect two opposing forces. First, a large proportion of women at the bottom of the income distribution, who previously worked in unappealing jobs, are pulling out of the labour market as their households become more affluent. Second, educated women are increasingly accessing more lucrative jobs. These jobs reward higher educational attainment and are associated with delayed marriage.

Delaying childbearing is a crucial starting point for improving maternal health, as well as improving women's lives more broadly, including delaying the age at marriage. Early pregnancy is one of the main drivers of child marriage in countries where premarital sex is common.

Every year, an estimated 21 million girls aged 15 to 19 years become pregnant in low- and middle-income regions, and approximately 12 million of them give birth.

Establishing legislation that sets a minimum age for marriage at 18 is recognized as essential to eliminating child marriage.

Even after accounting for exceptions to the legal age at marriage with parental or judicial consent, a global study found that 7.5 million girls marry illegally each year.