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"From Souk to Screen": The Remediation of Gendered Paremiology and Digital Folklore in Modern Morocco

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Geographic Scope: Urban Wazzane, Digital Moroccan Social Media Spaces, and Translocal Networks

Theoretical Framework: Critical Digital Discourse Analysis (CDDA), Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA), and Remediation Theory

ABSTRACT
While traditional paremiology has historically been anchored in face-to-face oral interactions within physical spaces like the rural Souk or urban Darb, contemporary Moroccan society is undergoing a profound structural shift as oral traditions migrate onto digital platforms. This article investigates a novel sociolinguistic phenomenon: the digital remediation, memification, and multimodal reframing of traditional Moroccan gender proverbs across platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram. Moving beyond the physical confines of Wazzane and Douar Bni Ziyad, this study examines how youth digital creators leverage traditional idioms about ***L-Nsā*** *(women) and* ***R-Rjel*** *(men) to construct, mock, or subvert gender norms through digital humor, split-screen reaction videos, and viral memes. Utilizing* ***Critical Digital Discourse Analysis (CDDA)*** *and* ***Multimodal CDA****, the findings reveal a dual ideological friction: while digital algorithms frequently incentivize the weaponization of archaic proverbs to reinforce digital misogyny and backlash, they simultaneously provide marginalized voices with powerful multimodal tools for parodic subversion, democratic re-signification, and feminist resistance.*

Keywords: *Critical Digital Discourse Analysis, Digital Folklore, Remediation, Jbali Proverbs, Gender, Morocco, TikTok.*

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I. INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL MOTIVATION

Scholarship on Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) folklore has traditionally positioned proverbs (*L-Klām l-Ma'tur*) as fixed, oral artifacts anchored in face-to-face community spaces (Westermarck, 1926; Sadiqi, 2003). However, the rapid expansion of mobile internet connectivity, smartphone penetration, and social media platforms across Morocco has precipitated a fundamental paradigm shift. Traditional idioms concerning ***L-Nsā*** (women) and ***R-Rjel*** (men)—once recited by village elders in rural markets or neighborhood quarters—now circulate across borderless digital ecosystems, undergoing what Bolter and Grusin (1999) term **remediation**: the representation of one medium in another.

This article moves beyond physical, localized ethnography to tackle a pressing new socio-discursive issue: **How are traditional Moroccan gender proverbs digitally remediated, memified, and contested on contemporary social media platforms, and what are the ideological implications of this shift for digital gender politics?**

By examining a curated corpus of viral TikTok videos, Instagram reels, and Facebook commentary threads originating from Moroccan content creators (including urban centers like Wazzane and rural migrants in diaspora networks), this study applies **Critical Digital Discourse Analysis (CDDA)** (García-Gómez, 2021; KhosraviNik, 2014) to uncover how digital affordances transform the pragmatic function, ideological weight, and reception of traditional folklore.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CDDA AND DIGITAL REMEDIATION

To analyze how proverbs operate within algorithmic environments, this study integrates three complementary frameworks:

1. **Critical Digital Discourse Analysis (CDDA):** Developed by KhosraviNik (2014), CDDA adapts classical Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992) to account for the unique technological features of digital spaces—such as hyper-textuality, interactivity, algorithmic sorting, and user-generated archiving.

2. **Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA):** Drawing upon Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), MCDA recognizes that digital proverbs are rarely communicated through text alone; instead, they are embedded within complex semiotic assemblages combining Jbali Arabic voiceovers, background music, facial expressions, visual filters, and split-screen video reactions.

   Remediation Theory: Explaining how oral folklore is repurposed for digital consumption, shifting its authority from generational elderhood to viral algorithmic popularity.

III. METHODOLOGY

The empirical data for this article comprises a digitally generated corpus collected between January 2025 and June 2026. Utilizing digital ethnography and purposive social media sampling:

- **Corpus Scope:** A dataset of 120 viral TikTok and Instagram video posts featuring traditional Moroccan proverbs about gender (*L-Nsā* and *R-Rjel*), identified through snowball hashtag tracking (e.g., #الشعب_المغربي, #الرجال, #النساء, #الأمثال_المغربية).

- **Multimodal Transcription:** Videos were transcribed and coded using MAXQDA 2024, capturing both verbal Jbali Arabic utterances and non-verbal semiotic modes (visual editing, caption typography, audios, and comment section polarization).

- **Ethical Considerations:** All usernames and personal identifiers of public creators are anonymized, focusing strictly on public discursive patterns and digital folklore trends.

IV. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS: DIGITAL REMEDIATION AND DUAL IDEOLOGICAL FRICTION

The analysis reveals that when traditional proverbs migrate from physical spaces to digital platforms, they undergo a sharp ideological polarization. This tension manifests across two primary digital genres: **Algorithmic Traditionalism** and **Parodic Subversion**.

4.1 Algorithmic Traditionalism: Weaponizing Archival Proverbs

In the first cluster of data, digital creators—predominantly young adult males operating within male-sphere digital enclaves—utilize traditional proverbs about female cunning (*Kayd*) or domestic containment to generate algorithmic engagement through controversy.

Consider a viral TikTok post (*Data Clip: MOR-DIG-042*) featuring an archival proverb regarding female unreliability, overlaid with dramatic trap music and a satirical visual filter:

Tier 1 (Original Jbali Dialect Audio):

كيد النساء عظيم.

Tier 2 (Phonetic Transliteration):

Kayd n-nsā ʿaẓīm.

Tier 3 (Literal Gloss):

Literal: The cunning of women is immense.

Digital Multimodal Realization: The creator flashes bold red Arabic typography across the screen, nodding gravely in synchronization with a looped bass drop, inviting male followers in the comment section to share personal anecdotes validating the proverb.

CDDA & MCDA Critical Analysis:

- **Technological Affordance:** The algorithmic architecture of TikTok rewards polarizing, nostalgic content. By remediating ancient proverbs into short-form entertainment, creators strip the proverb of its original community-regulatory function and transform it into a translocal commodity designed for viral outrage and gender polarization.

- **Ideological Effect:** This digital traditionalism revitalizes essentialist tropes under the guise of harmless online humor, naturalizing patriarchal ideology for a digitally native youth audience.

4.2 Parodic Subversion: Feminist Remixes and Split-Screen Irony

Conversely, a robust counter-discourse has emerged where young female creators (*Group C* digital actors) actively subvert traditional proverbs using multimodal remixing, split-screen reaction duets, and ironic juxtaposition.

Examine *Data Clip: MOR-DIG-089*, a viral TikTok "Duet" video responding to a traditional proverb enforcing male economic guardianship (*Qawama*):

Original Audio Dueted:

الراجل ساري، و إلا طاح طاحت الدار (*R-rāǧel s-sāri, w-ila ṭāḥ ṭāḥet d-dār* / "The man is the main pillar; if he falls, the house collapses").

Remix / Subversive Response:

The responding female creator appears on the split screen sipping coffee in a modern home office, pauses the video with a tap on her screen, rolls her eyes, and delivers a deadpan Jbali voiceover: *"Hād s-sāri rāh t-qrib t-koun f-ih tanasol f-l-mas'ouliya"* ("This pillar is about to experience structural delegation of responsibilities").

CDDA & MCDA Critical Analysis:

- **Multimodal Subversion:** The creator weaponizes facial mimicry (eye-rolling), modern spatial positioning (professional office vs. traditional domestic space), and metalinguistic commentary to dismantle architectural metaphors of male indispensability.

- **Democratic Re-signification:** Unlike physical community spaces where elders held monopoly over proverbial interpretation, digital platforms empower youth to talk back to folklore in real time, transforming passive archival inheritance into an active site of feminist digital resistance.

V. DISCUSSION: THE SOCIO-POLITICAL STAKES OF DIGITAL FOLKLORE

The migration of Moroccan gender paremiology from *Souk* to screen highlights a critical evolution in MENA sociolinguistics. While physical proverbs in Wazzane and Bni Ziyad relied on face-to-face community sanction, digital proverbs operate within attention economies.

The findings demonstrate that digital remediation does not erase patriarchy; rather, it *hyper-amplifies* it while simultaneously offering marginalized voices unprecedented tools for counter-discursive intervention. Algorithms act as ideological amplifiers—rewarding both digital misogyny and progressive feminist parody. Consequently, digital folklore serves as a vital barometer for the broader cultural negotiations surrounding gender, modernity, and democratization in contemporary Morocco.

VI. CONCLUSION

This article has explored the digital remediation of Moroccan proverbs concerning ***L-Nsā*** and ***R-Rjel*** across modern social media ecosystems. Utilizing CDDA and multimodal analysis, the study uncovered a dual ideological friction: traditional idioms are simultaneously weaponized to reinforce digital traditionalism and creatively subverted through parodic memes by contemporary youth. Future research must continue to investigate how emerging generative AI tools and cross-platform vernaculars reshape the future of North African oral art.

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