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# A Rewiew on Gendered Discources in the New Media: 8 March 2016 Example of "Ekşisözlük"

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#### Abstract

It can be said that new media applications have many positive features, but also cause some social problems. In addition to positive features such as the democratization of communication, ease of access to information, increased interaction of active users, some problems such as privacy, security, sharing of personal data and social media addiction have been encountered. Another of these problems is the sharing of racist, sexist and violent hate speech circulated by new media applications in an online and public environment. One of the platforms in which such discourses emerge is Ekşisözlük. In this study, the topics and comments that have been opened in International Women's Day on March 8, 2016 in Ekşisözlük are examined with content analysis method and the research findings are interpreted.

**Keywords:** New Media, Gendered Discources, World Women's Day, Ekşisözlük.



#### 1. Introduction

New media has many advantages over the traditional media. Interaction and having multiple voices are major subjects amongst these advantages. In this context, one of the important subjects about the concept of new media is that the users comments which are made freely and without any restraint. With the change of internet by new technologies from a structure that is strict, firm and providing one sided information flow and not allowing any contribution, to a structure that allows sharing of users' comments, contents, ideas and thoughts, new understandings of many fields emerged on a professional level. These new technologies, by removing the one-way communication that was imposed by the traditional media, helped the creation of the social media that internet users actively take role.

In Turkey the oldest example of the new media is Eksisozluk. Eksisozluk, were designed in the year 1999 when there was nothing about the concept of social media and in international context the equals of present time were nonexistent. This was the first of the websites in the World that allowed users to create content and interact with each other. By being released before the phenomenons known as Facebook (2004), Twitter (2006) or etc. and even though emergence of many social media websites it still preserves its' popularity. Still eksisozluk is one of the most visited websites over Turkey and the world. At eksisozluk in the year of 2017, 208 million unique identities viewed over 4,6 billion pages (eksisozluk.com, 2017). Authors in the website are the people who are inside of the society and had needs for sharing their concerns about public events. In addition to this their use of sincere and heartfelt language enables them to create content that are far from being monotonous.

Eksisozluk is a platform which the users of it share their thought without being under the effect of any restraint or social norms. Because of the structure of Eksisozluk users identities are anonymous. Therefore authors, being aware of their identities are kept hidden, can share their thoughts without fear. Because of traditional media's policy about not including contradictory or diversified thoughts for various reasons, people have the opportunity to spread their word to public in social environments of this genre. But democratisation of communication by the ways of new media does not mean contents are democratic. Therefore sexist and slangy statements made about women sometimes draw attention.

In Turkey almost everyday there are new about women that are subjected by violence. As a community, our reaction to this violence is disputable. The main frightening fact is that the individuals that should have a common mind and build the social structure, are becoming insensible. We might say that the one of the main reasons behind this insensibility is media. News about violence inflicted upon women that we see everyday on traditional media, making society perceive these news as a "Typical state of Turkey." The normalization of violence inflicted upon women can sometimes cause this violence to be legitimated in public eyes.

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Alongside the media opinion leaders that people needed in social structure, by their statements consciously or unconsciously constitute to dangers of normalization process. Differentiated from the traditional media, in the new media that the people can create their own contents, statements made by politicians, academicians and other popular individuals that present their remarks on the subject of violence inflicted upon women, are widely seen and disputed by everyone. Main purpose of this study is to analyze the sexist statements that had their places in one of Turkey's most important agents on new media; Eksisozluk.

Eksisozluk, born as a platform that has formed with the users' contents and live on likewise. Some of Eksisozluk users as projection of Turkish society, partakes in the statements that go with the violence inflicted upon women. Some others are stating that hate speeches are unacceptable. In this study on 8th of March 2016, International Women's Day, topics and comments written under them will be studied by the way of content analysis, and findings will be interpreted.

#### 2. Aim of This Research

Parallel to the developments in Turkey and world, with amenities supplied by communication technologies many users can state their opinions and ideas to the masses by the social media environment. Users can reach politicians, local or globally popular people easily and spread their opinions and ideas that reside within social media.

This study aims to examine both positive and negative statements that were written 8th of March 2016, International Women's Day, in one of the main social media instruments in Turkey, Eksisozluk. Main reason for choosing the date as 8th of March, on the day of International Women's Day, is for visioning of the increase in the number of the topics that written that day and possibility of a dispute that has a wider extent. In this context we will try to reveal, in Eksisozluk on International Women's Day, which amongst the entries are most favoured and what kind of inputs are interacted most. Reaching these aims is intended by the answers that will be given to the questions below.

- Is there any sexist statements against women in Eksisozluk?
- If so, is it the majority of the statements?
- Which of the entries are most favoured; entries that defends the women rights or the ones that contains sexist statements?
- If there are sexist statements, what is violence levels of these statements?
- Is the genders stated of the writing authors?



# 2.1. Significance of the Study

This study by emphasizing the importance of new media is to show, how and on what grade users in Eksisozluk, one of the significant components of new media, use sexist statements against the women.

# 2.2. Limitations of The Study

As in all of the studies there are some limitations in this study. In this study, while examining the statements directed to women, only the entries that are written on 8th of March, 2016 are taken into account. Therefore after this date, tracking and constant controlling of the changes that made are not possible on a time basis and abundance of entries, for being able to analyze all is very time-consuming, and this is one of the limitations of the study. Moreover by the nature of Eksisozluk, it is not possible to determine the genders of the authors, and this causes to not know the authors these mansplaining statements. But these circumstances assumed to have no effect on the conclusion of the study.

#### 2.3. Literature Search

On a study conducted, on the subject of hate speeches made to the women in new media and Eksisozluk, both native and extrinsic sources were found.

Vardal (2015), mentions in the study named "Nefret Söylemi ve Yeni Medya" (Hate Speech and The New Media) by emergence on another dimension of humiliation and hate speech towards women, violence inflicted upon women raise in Turkey day by day. New media in this state, even though sometimes recreating the violence and humiliation towards women, it also creates an opportunity to contents about arising awareness about the aforementioned violence.

Aslantürk and Turgut (2015) in a study they conducted, writing about when anonymity the new media provides is taken into consideration, it is ambiguous to know genders of those who constitute on mansplaining statements and at the same time technologies of new media leads to the opportunity of individualised publicity. They stated that new media is more of a constitution on an individual basis rather than a political one.

Öztekin (2015) in the study named "Yeni Medya'da Nefret Söylemi: Ekşisözlük Örneği" (Hate Speech In New Media: Case Of Ekşisözlük) write about the supervising mechanisms of administration of the website to prevent hate speeches. In the study, it is stated that hate speeches can't be qualified as freedom of speech's extent. It is also stated supervising mechanisms are proceeding on the direction of users' complaints and expecting a satirical attitude from individuals that constantly crosses paths with hate speeches in everyday life and became numb by it, is meaningless. For a solution, raise awareness about hate speeches amongst the users of new media.

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Gürel and Yakın (2007) in their study named "Ekşi Sözlük: Post-modern Elektronik Kültür" (Eksi Sözlük: Postmodern Electronic Culture) state the open nature of Eksisozluk is parallel to obligation of all writings in the website must be low-case letters. In this context, without allowing the capitals in the website, it is stated that they are trying to create an equality between the author and the reader.

Binark (2010) in the study named "Nefret Söyleminin Yeni Medya Ortamında Dolaşıma Girmesi ve Türetilmesi (Circulation and Production of Hate Speech in the New Media)" states that homophobic, transphobic, sexist, enemy of the foreigner, racist, discriminatory hate speeches in the new media environment produced over discoursive practices in daily life and get into the circulation by traditional media are more likely to go viral and become ordinary because of the qualities of new media. Because of it, it emphasizes discriminative statements get accepted and by seeing different identities as foreigners these acts are turn into hate crimes.

Fidaner (2010), while stating that nowadays, the ways that hate speeches going viral, is closely relevant to new media's daily communication fabrics, it also states, on contrary to gazette, radio, television and even mobile phones, new media by creating interactive public areas letting the hate speeches live and recreation of it.

## 2.4. Content of Study

It is planned this study to consist three sections. There will be informations on the first two sections of the study, and in the third one, there will be findings about the main subject of the study.

*On First Section* below the headline "Concept of New Media and Eksisozluk", definition and development of new media will be included with the informations about Eksisozluk.

*On second section*, under the headline named "Social Gender Equality and Hate Speeches Aimed at Women" concepts like social gender equality and hate speeches will be defined and their relationships with the media will be examined.

*On third section,* in the content of the headline named "Interpretations and Entries Made on the Day 8th March 2016" 8th of March in the year 2016 there will be an examination of popularized entries about women. Right after with the help of the found material, there will be a interpretation as a conclusion.

#### 3. Concept of New Media and Eksisozluk

The year 2017 according to "Internet and Social Media User Statistics" amongst 80 million inhabitants that live in Turkey, 48 million people use internet and same 48 million actively have accounts on social medias. Users of social media on a mobile phone are 48 million as indicated. (wearesocial.com, 2018).

We might say that developments of communication technologies started to change society's structure. With the opportunities created by new communication technologies



people had great advantages about reaching information and moreover they found new areas for sharing their thoughts and ideas freely.

Concept of new media's definition is contrary on traditional media's. Accordingly it has its meaning by the deficiencies of the traditional media. So, in other words, as all advertisements might say, new media is a form that is free from the former's (traditional media) faults, brand new and perfected, and it is the lates product (Özgül, 2015: 83).

By developing technologies and ideas emerged Web 2.0, a system that creates a suitable environment making users active by allowing them to create contents. By this contents created, shared, interpreted and by social networking sites (facebook, twitter), blogs, forum sites, glossary sites (eksisozluk), video and photograph networking sites (Intsagram, Youtube) that allows users interacting each other are shaped by the users themselves. In this context, contrary to the traditional media that is not built by society, there introduced a media that is shaped by society. Audience was playing a passive role that only enables them to consume the message given in traditional media. By new media's liberation of traditional media's one sided communication reign, individuals are not passive audience anymore.

While old media by the contents that created for their own benefits, tells society where, when and what they should talk, new media on the contrary, independent from place or time allowing users to interact. Thereby information, as seen as the most valuable capital, can be created and used by everyone and that means communication's democratisation. (Alankus, 2005:36).

Despite these optimistic ideas, it should not be forgotten just as traditional media, new media is used by the individuals that form society. These individuals can use new communication tools for democratisizing aims, but also they can use them for more oppression, suppression, or violence.

In our day, mobile phones, computers, gaming consoles, in short term all technological devices that use internet, that found its widespread practices in almost every area in our daily life, transformed daily life customs, with an ever increasing usage because of some social needs, that become a part of the body, can be categorised under the headline of new media. New media has the opportunity to transfer considerable amount of information and users to show feedback, because of its multimedia formality, interaction ability, hypertextuality, digitality qualities. (Binark, 2007: 21). Especially new media that evolved with Web 2.0, differentiated from traditional media and Web 1.0, allows users to create content and making them as producers of media. With these developments new media became more popularised, became more participant. Social media applications that are based upon the foundation of Web 2.0, by courtesy of "network effect", has ever increasing numbers of users and trackers. One of these social media tools is the Eksisozluk.



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Eksisozluk, is a website that allows registered authors to comment on every type of word or concept and shows qualities of a contender glossary site. Sedat Kapanoğlu, a computer programmer known by his nickname "ssg", created it on 15th February 1999.

We should begin with stating eksisozluk was designed before any social media concept or by international meaning before any equals was ever programmed. It has the quality of being the first site that allows users to create content, interact with each other. It has emerged before there was not any phenomenon in the world like facebook, twitter and in our days, even though many social media environments emerged it still has its popularity. Still Eksisozluk both in Turkey and World is one of the most visited sites. According to Eksisozluk statistics in the year 2017, 208 million unique individuals viewed over 4,6 billion pages. (Eksisozluk.com, 2017).

Eksisozluk's most important quality is working on participation foundation. It can be described as a ever developing and ever updating place by contributions of the registered authors. Glossary that has qualities of being a participant, works based upon foundation enables individuals, that are registered to system named "authors", stating their ideas and viewpoints; is not restricted by any concept, allows authors to act relatively free and creative, letting information stream out of encyclopaedic knowledges, being open to authors' personal opinions and ideas and is giving opportunity to show diversity of views, and by these qualifications being diversified.

Alongside authors being individuals that come from society and needs to share their concerns about social events, their use of language that is sincere and heartfelt, enables to create content that are far from being monotonous. By this way, readers, can always achieve up to date information and fictionalise their sense of life more colourfully. It is one of the successes of Eksisozluk that information is becoming intriguing by the participation of users. With their motto being "Holy Information Source" imprinted upon the minds of all, Eksisozluk even though their libertarian statements, it still has an authoritarian administration system. Founder of Eksisozluk, ssg, with the power over authors and entries, recruit authors or kick them out of Eksisozluk as he wishes to. When Eksisozluk's structure and operation observed, it can be seen that there is a intense hierarchy and administration mechanism. (Gürel, Yakın, 2007: 205).

#### 3. 1. Social Gender Equality and Hate Speeches Aimed at Women

Social gender equality, by the laws, described as men and women being treated equal, and in society and family structures, both women and men benefit from resources, opportunities and services. (WHO, 1998).

Women exposed to social gender discrimination, sees inequalities about having rights in political, legal, social and economic areas and about using these rights in order to gain sources like land or capital. In social gender, equality described as the qualification that treats women and men equal and unerring. (Üner, 2008: 8).



People born with a gender and they learn their roles defined by their genders by interacting their social and cultural environments. Social gender is a concept that differs with time, culture and geography. When individuals start to grow, they learn their roles that they require to have and when they are fulfilling these roles, they act with their value judgments imposed by the social and cultural structures. For as much as it is needed to play these roles along to feel sense of belonging and not to be expelled. (Kahraman, 2010: 30).

Discrimination of gender starts in the family structures. With cultural values, girls and boys guided differently and this leads to existence of men and women that approves social gender inequality. Without even not born, starting with the preferences for baby girls to have pink and baby boys to have blue, it continues on by creating more unnatural distinctions. These created unnatural distinctions creates differences between men and women's participation to life. While female gender is stuck in specific places like houses without expressing themselves, male gender can express themselves almost in every public area. Roles and expectations imposed upon women by society, restrains their ability to decide in areas like education, marriage and employment that can affect their life and their ability to apply their decisions. (Akın, 2007:8).

Media, alongside its function to change society's judgments on a positive aspect, by their news and interpretations it can provide the continuation of current social judgments and unnatural distinctions. On this view, media has a important potential about putting news into display by treating men and women equally and by this way allow women to advance. (Adaçay, 2014:30)

Even though various civil society initiatives are supported by the media, it is hard to say that these efforts serve their purpose correctly. Discrimination that is seen in the contribution to social life by the women, is recreated by the stereotypical roles in the media while media that feeds upon society, leads to continuation of discrimination by their broadcasts that normalizes these stereotypical roles.

New media, with produced news and interprations, recreating social judgments, hardening the image of traditional woman. Media is reducing women to "body" and taking advantage of it. Different women lives and attitudes are not represented in media, female gender mostly being stuck in male-dominant roles, usually seems as a person that is oriented with house, and identity of women is built within their husband and children. There are many broadcasts cementing male dominance, representing women as a subject of violence or betrayal, as a sexual meta, as a more consumer than producer. Even though they achieve great successes women rarely takes place in media with their jobs or skills and even when they do it is more of their personal lives appearances and families, not with their achievements. (Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü, 2008).

Media and Society are reciprocally dependent by supporting each other. It can't be said that media equals society but media is one of the most important tools to create public opinion. Media takes its sources from the society and feeds upon it. On the other hand



society providing media raw materials along with keeping social subjects drawn to the public by the media on their agenda or ignoring them. Political figures, from which system they might come, value communication tools to impress public view. (Kışlalı, 1997:330)

According to agenda building model media determines society's agenda. But the important detail here is the media not telling to people what to think, rather telling people which subject they should think on. Political agenda, public agenda and media agenda are in a relationship with each other. Hence the numerical magnitude of subjects that are included in traditional media's agenda, increases as the society's agenda.

# 3.3. Interpretations and Entries Made on the Day 8th March 2016

Eksisozluk, is a platform that users can state their ideas without any oppression or social norms. Because of the users' anonymity authors know they can't be subject to any accusation, and because of this knowledge they can make interpretations bravely. Because of traditional media's attitude of not including different and unusual ideas with various reasons, individuals fulfil selves in these kind of social media environments and by creating contents they have the equal opportunity to transfer their messages to public view. But democratisation of communication by the ways of new media does not mean contents are democratic. Therefore sexist and slangy statements made about women sometimes draw attention. As a result Eksisozluk users are parts of this society just as the traditional media administrators. Even though there are many statements that can be described as being edge, by average their statements are close to traditional media. Slangy and swearing words in sexist interpretations made about women is one of the problems, too. Even though traditional media features sexist statements towards women, it does so without insulting them.

On the day 8th March 2016, administration of Eksisozluk stated that they want to incorporate 2524 female rookie authors that has been waiting for approval for the last month before 8 March 2014, in their "8 March 2016 women author intake" entry. They requested other authors to state their views and suggestions about this subject. In this study, it is analyzed contents under this subject.

#### 4. Method of the Study

In this study, before all else, on the day of 8th March 2016, headlines and interpretations made about women made in Eksisozluk will be analyzed. There are 38 headlines and 626 entries in the first section when searched for "woman" and "women" in Eksisozluk with content analysis application on the day 22.11.2016. It is seen that "8 March 2016 women author intake", and "world women's day" headlines were the most speculated. These most speculated headlines are examined one by one. On the second part of analysis, interpretations made under these headlines will be examined. Interpretations made are divided in 5 categories. Contents are categorised as those which have insults, swearwords, etc. towards women (-2), those which has negative qualities without any

insults (-1), those which have neither positive nor negative contents (0), those which have positive contents (+1) and those which have over positive contents

**Table 1:** When The Words "Women" and "Women's" Were Searched For in Ekşisözlük on 8 March 2016.

Title	<b>Typed Content of number</b>		
8 mart 2016 Women Author	253		
World Women's Day	97		

Bibliography: https://eksisozluk.com (Date Accessed: 23.11.2016)

 Table 2: Sample Comments on the Headline "8 March 2016 Women Author Intake"

Category	Sample Contents
-2	"for god's sake what on earth mentality just because they have boobs prioritize them I can not understand. I have a beauty spot on my left ball myself! Why the fuck did you stall me as a noob writer for the whole 2 years?
-1	"it's a very sensible decision. Even more sensible is to shoo the on hand male users. So, there will be a great balance and a female power will overtake the situation. Start from yourself the shooing Kanzuk. After that you can take yourself to a beef wrap."
0	"(also see: diego stop for god's sake in the first place the things are complicated."
1	"this is an action I support as a woman writer. 2500 chick-writers can bring a new breath in here. I think things will calm down a bit.
2	"everywhere despised women! At least here they get what they deserve. In the end reacting to this means to shut down the all communication ways. There is no sensible explanation to resist the incoming steps towards us. Let's give them a positive credit for and we shall ask fort he rest? Yeah."

Bibliography: https://eksisozluk (Date Accessed: 23.11.2016).



# 5. Findings of the Study

According to informations taken from the Eksisozluk website, by the 8 March 2016 while there was 42.367 male authors, there was 22.233 female authors. Eksisozluk in order to increase female author amount incorporates women rookies that wait actively for a month since 2013. On the day 8 March 2016, under the headline "8 March 2016 Women Author Intake", a content is shared that informs users about this subject.

# 5.1. Foundings under the Headline "8 March Women Write Intake"

Within the extent of this study under the headline "8 March 2016 women author intake" there were 253 entries in total. These entries are categorized as seen in the method of the study in Table 3.

**Table 3:** The Categorization of Content Under the Heading "8 March 2016 Women Author Intake"

Category	Comment of number	Rate(%)		
-2	27	10,6		
-1	103	40,7		
0	54	21,3		
+1	54	21,3		
+2	15	6		
Total	253	100		

**Bibliography:** https://eksisozluk (Date Accessed: 23.11.2016).

When data in Table 3 is examined, it can be said that more than half of the contents include negative statements. When those which have positive attitude towards taking female authors were 27,3 percent, those which have neither positive nor negative attitudes, were 21,3 percent.

Under the aforementioned headline, there 6 entries that "favored" over 20. These entries' categories are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4:** The Categorization Of More Than 20 Fascinating Contents in the Heading "8th March 2016 Woman Author Intake"

Category	Comment of number	Rate(%)
-2	0	0
-1	5	83,3
0	0	0
+1	1	16,3
+2	0	0
Total	6	100

Bibliography: https://eksisozluk.com (Dated Accessed: 23.11.2016).

When examined, under the headline, 5 of the 6 entries that are favored more than 20 has a negative attitude towards female author incorporation, and only one is positive towards it.

Under related headline, in 89 of the 253 entries gender was not specified, and the genders were known. Genders of authors are stated in Table 5.

**Table 5:** March 8, 2016 Women Writers "Gender of Authors Who Share Content in the Title".

Women		Man		Undefinite		Total	
Number	Rate	Number	Rate(%)	Number	Rate(%)	Number	Rate(%)
38	15	126	49,8	89	35,2	253	100

**Bibliography:** https://eksisozluk.com (Date Accessed: 23.11.2016).

Under related headline, authors which has entries under, are almost half of the males and it is seen that females only consists 15 percent of the authors. 35,2% did not state their genders in their entries.

# 5.2. Foundings under the Headline "World Women's Day"

Within the extent of this study under the headline "world women's day "the contents created in 8 March 2016, are examined. These entries are categorised by the way that shown in the method of study, in Table 6.

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Comment of Category Rate (%) number -2 13 13,4 -1 35 36 0 15 15,4 +122 22,6 +212 12,3 99.7 97 Total

**Table 6:** "World Women's Day" Categorization of Content Entered on March 8,2016.

Bibliography: https://eksisozluk.com (Date Accessed: 23.11.2016).

Just as the other headline that had examined before, under "dünya kadınlar günü" headline, negative entries are the majority. As seen in the other headings examined, it is seen that the negative comments made in the title of "world women's day" are proportionally higher. On the day of International Women's Day, there were just 33 percent of the entries that are positive contents. Almost half of the authors made negative statements about women. In related headline, genders of entry sharing peoples found and can be seen at Table 7.

**Table 7:** World Women's Day "In The Title of the Authors Who Shared the Content on March 8, 2016.

Wor	Women Man		Undefinite		Total		
Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Number	Number	Rate
28	28,8	38	39,1	31	31,9	97	99,8

**Bibliography:** https://eksisozluk.com (Date Accessed: 23.11.2016).

In the related headline 31,9 percent did not state their genders, and others created content with stating 28,8% of them are women and 39,1% are men.

### 6. Consclusion and Recommendations

The new media has provided new channels of communication through which users can freely express opinions and suggestions. Thanks to these changes in communication technologies, they have been able to communicate their opinions more quickly and effectively to large masses. These developments, which facilitate access to information



and interaction with knowledge, manifest themselves positively or negatively. For example, the new media can be used as a quick and effective tool for bringing masses of people who need social sensitivity together, while at the same time causing hate speech to be reproduced. Ekşisözlük one of Turkey's most visited social media platforms, most Internet users are hit by the eye as a tool used to find information about the topics on the agenda. It is a medium where many different contents about any social, political or magazinic issue on the agenda meet because it is hosted by every person.

When we look at the contents of Ekşisözlük on World Women's Day on March 8, 2016 within the scope of the study, it is seen that the negative comments about women are more positive than the positive comments. If we consider Eksi Sözlük as a platform where the common sense of the Turkish community meets, it can be seen that more negative comments normal. Considering that male authors in Eksisözlük are approximately twice as many as women, we can also evaluate negative comments from this framework. If we consider Eksisözlük as a platform where the common sense of the Turkish community meets, it can be seen that more negative comments are normal. Eksisözlük has more or less hate speech for every group like other social media platforms. These discourses are also criticized by sensitive authors and call other writers to block authors who perform this hate speech. While the dictionary management gives the right to work to reduce hate speech towards women, their discourse can not be accepted within the scope of freedom of thought and it is necessary to apply more stricter sanctions to authors reaching the crime they are writing. It is also necessary to take a clearer attitude towards negative opinions by making more voices of authors who do not accept hate speech for women. The importance of "Media Literacy" education is increasing day by day with the reason that media channels dominate every aspect of our lives. The work done in this regard in our country should be expanded more widely. By studying social media and studies on social effects, society should be more aware of this issue.



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