

Original Research Article

## Language, Gender, and Power in Contemporary Hausa Popular Verse: A Literary and Linguistic Analysis of Selected Songs by Ali Jita and Tijjani Gandu

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**Abstract:** This study examines the relationship between language, gender, and power in contemporary Hausa popular poetry through a literary and linguistic analysis of selected songs by Ali Jita and Tijjani Gandu. Contemporary Hausa popular songs, particularly those centered on marriage, love, and polygamous relationships, serve as significant cultural texts that reflect social values, gender roles, and power dynamics in Hausa society. The study focuses specifically on the representation of the *Uwargida* (senior wife) and *Amarya* (new bride), analyzing how language constructs their identities, roles, and positions of power within marital relationships. Employing literary analysis and sociolinguistic approaches, the research examines diction, praise expressions, metaphors, repetition, code-switching, and tone in the selected songs. The study investigates how linguistic choices reflect gender expectations such as beauty, loyalty, respect, authority, and romantic appeal. It also explores how power is constructed and negotiated through language, revealing that the senior wife is often associated with authority and domestic control while the new bride is linked to emotional and romantic influence. The study argues that contemporary Hausa popular poetry does not merely entertain but actively reflects and reinforces social ideologies about gender roles, marriage hierarchy, and power relations in Hausa society. This research contributes to Hausa literary studies, sociolinguistics, gender studies, and popular culture by demonstrating how language in popular poetry serves as a tool for expressing gender identity and negotiating power in polygamous marital settings.

**Keywords:** Hausa Songs, Language and Gender, Power Relations, Sociolinguistics, Polygamy, Marriage Discourse.

## INTRODUCTION

Language functions not merely as a means of communication but as a social tool for constructing identity, expressing relationships, and negotiating power. In many African societies, including Hausa society, language shapes gender roles, social hierarchies, and interpersonal dynamics, particularly within marriage and family life. Contemporary Hausa popular poetry, especially modern songs, has emerged as a key medium through which cultural values and gender relations are transmitted. These songs explore themes such as love, marriage, polygamy, jealousy, and wealth, using praise language, metaphors, and code-switching between Hausa and English to construct contrasting images of power and authority within relationships.

Among the prominent Hausa musicians addressing these themes are Ali Jita and Tijjani Gandu. Their songs *Uwargida Mai Capacity* and *Amarya Mai Capacity* portray the relationship between the senior wife (*Uwargida*) and the new bride (*Amarya*) in polygamous settings. While the senior wife is associated with authority, respect, and domestic control, the new bride embodies beauty, romance, and emotional influence. Despite the popularity of such songs and their influence on social attitudes, academic studies examining them through the lens of language, gender, and power remain

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limited. This study therefore analyzes language use, gender representation, and power relations in selected songs by Ali Jita and Tijjani Gandu, contributing to Hausa literary studies, sociolinguistics, gender studies, and popular culture by revealing how contemporary Hausa poetry serves as a site for constructing gender identity and negotiating power.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars in sociolinguistics and discourse studies have established that language transcends mere communication to function as a means of expressing social identity, gender relations, and power structures. According to Fairclough (2013), language constitutes a form of social practice, arguing that "discourse is shaped by power relations and ideological processes embedded in society" (p. 56). This perspective suggests that language reflects social hierarchies, authority structures, and relationships between individuals and groups. Similarly, Van Dijk (2015) explains that power is frequently exercised through discourse, with social groups using language to influence how people think and understand social reality. This implies that songs, poetry, and popular music can function as discursive spaces where power relations and social identities are constructed through language.

Research on language and gender has further demonstrated that language plays a crucial role in constructing gender identity and social roles. Lakoff (1975), in her foundational work, argued that women's language is often characterized by politeness, emotional expression, and less dominance, while men's language is associated with authority and confidence. Lakoff observed that "women's language reflects their subordinate social position and prescribed role in society" (p. 45). Expanding on this, Tannen (1994) explained that men and women use language differently because they pursue different communication goals: men typically use language to negotiate status, while women use language to build connection and intimacy. These insights prove valuable for analyzing romantic and marital songs where language may express love, jealousy, authority, submission, or emotional influence. Extending this line of inquiry to literary representations of marriage, Sani and Tsaure (2016) examined gender-based controversies in Northern Nigerian domestic settings, demonstrating how marital power dynamics and gender roles are discursively constructed in narrative forms. Similarly, Sani and Yahaya (2018) argued that educational status and marital structures are deeply intertwined with gender relations in Northern Nigeria, highlighting how language and social discourse around marriage reflect broader patterns of authority and submission. Tsaure (2017) further identified a significant lacuna between male and female Nigerian writers in their representation of gender roles, arguing that literary texts often unconsciously perpetuate stereotypical portrayals of masculinity and femininity. In a related development, Dahunsi, Agboola, and Solanke (2025) examined gender role reversal in Tracie Chima Utor Ezeajugh's play *Our Wives Have Gone Mad Again*, demonstrating that when women assume traditionally masculine roles within domestic spaces, it can lead to tensions that manifest as domestic violence, thus confirming that language in dramatic dialogue not only reflects but also actively constructs and contests gender power relations in marriage.

The concept of power in discourse has been extensively discussed by Foucault (1978), who argued that "power is present in all social relationships and is expressed through discourse, knowledge, and social interactions" (p. 93). Foucault famously stated that "power is everywhere because it comes from everywhere" (p. 93), meaning that power is not limited to political or economic domains but exists in everyday relationships such as marriage, family, and social interactions. In polygamous marriage settings, power may manifest in various forms, including domestic authority, romantic influence, economic control, and social respect. These forms of power are frequently expressed through language and discourse.

From a literary perspective, Eagleton (2008) argued that literature represents social realities and cultural ideologies, with literary texts reflecting the values and beliefs of a society. This view enables contemporary scholars to regard popular songs and music as forms of literature because they contain themes, poetic language, imagery, and social messages comparable to traditional poetry. Contemporary Hausa popular songs therefore function as cultural texts that reflect social values related to marriage, gender roles, love, jealousy, wealth, and polygamy.

### Research Gap

Although numerous studies have examined language and gender, discourse and power, and literature as a reflection of society, limited research has specifically investigated contemporary Hausa popular songs from the perspective of language, gender, and power particularly regarding the representation of *Uwargida* and *Amarya* in polygamous marriage contexts. This study intends to fill this gap by analyzing selected Hausa popular songs by *Ali Jita* and *Tijjani Gandu* using literary and linguistic approaches, demonstrating how language constructs gender roles and negotiates power relations in Hausa society.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, focusing on the interpretation and analysis of language, meaning, and social representation in contemporary Hausa popular songs. The research is based on textual analysis, treating

selected songs as literary and sociolinguistic data. The study employs a descriptive and analytical research design, enabling an in-depth examination of language use, gender representation, and power relations in the selected songs.

The data consists of two songs: *Uwargida Mai Capacity* by Ali Jita and *Amarya Mai Capacity* by Tijjani Gandu. These songs were purposively selected because they reflect themes of marriage, gender roles, and polygamous relationships in Hausa society.

Data were collected through documentary sources, including audio recordings and their transcriptions. Relevant stanzas and lyrical expressions were carefully selected based on their relevance to the study's focus on language, gender, and power. The study employs literary and linguistic analysis supported by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as proposed by Fairclough (1989, 2013). The analysis focuses on:

- 1) Language use (diction, metaphor, praise expressions, code-switching)
- 2) Gender representation (roles of *Uwargida* and *Amarya*)
- 3) Power relations (authority, emotional influence, social hierarchy)
- 4) Themes and literary devices

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored in Critical Discourse Analysis, developed by Fairclough (1989) in *Language and Power* and later expanded in *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (1995). This theory posits that language is a social practice and that discourse constructs power relations, social identities, and ideology in society. The theory is relevant to this study because it facilitates analysis of how language in contemporary Hausa popular songs constructs social relations, authority, and power between male and female characters, particularly in polygamous marriage settings.

The study is further supported by Language and Gender Theory, proposed by Lakoff (1975). The concept of power is also influenced by Foucault's (1978) theory of power, which explains that power exists in everyday social relationships and is expressed through discourse and social interaction.

### **Brief Background of Ali Jita**

Ali Jita, whose real name is Ali Isah, was born on July 15, 1983, in Gyadi-Gyadi, Kumbotso Local Government Area, Kano State, Nigeria. He is a prominent contemporary Hausa musician known for pioneering a modern musical style popularly referred to as "Ingausa" a style that blends Hausa and English in song lyrics. This style reflects modern urban Hausa culture and the influence of globalization on Hausa popular music.

Ali Jita is widely recognized for producing songs focused on love, marriage, women's beauty, lifestyle, and social relationships. Many of his songs bear female names or describe women's character, habits, beauty, and romantic relationships. His music is closely associated with Kannywood, the Hausa film industry, where many of his songs are featured in films and social events such as weddings and celebrations.

His popular song *Uwargida Mai Capacity*, currently trending, focuses on marital relationships, particularly the role and status of the *Uwargida* (senior wife) in polygamous marriage settings. The song employs praise language, romantic expressions, and code-switching between Hausa and English, making it a suitable text for literary and sociolinguistic analysis.

### **Brief Background of Tijjani Gandu**

Tijjani Gandu, whose real name is Tijjani Ahmad Hussaini, was born in 1982 in Gandun Albasa, Kano State, Nigeria. He is a contemporary Hausa musician known for songs addressing love, marriage, social life, and political themes. He gained wider recognition in 2011 through the Kannywood film industry with the song *Yar Maye* (a drug-using girl), which was featured in a film. This marked his rise in the Hausa music and film industry.

In 2019, Tijjani Gandu became more prominent in political music with his song *Abba Gida-Gida* (Abba in every home), associated with political campaigns in Kano State. Since then, he has become well known as a political musician associated with the Kwankwasiyya Movement and the NNPP political movement.

Beyond political songs, Tijjani Gandu also produces songs focused on love, marriage, women, and relationships within Hausa cultural settings. His trending song *Amarya Mai Capacity* focuses on the new bride (*Amarya*) and portrays themes of beauty, love, romance, and emotional influence within marriage. The song contains praise language and romantic expressions of gender roles, making it relevant for literary and sociolinguistic analysis.

**Background of the Songs**

The song *Uwargida Mai Capacity* by Ali Jita portrays the position and status of the first wife (*Uwargida*) in Hausa culture. In Hausa society, the *Uwargida* is the senior wife and the most respected woman in a polygamous household, holding a position that no other wife can easily equal. The song emphasizes the authority, respect, and social status associated with the senior wife.

The song's video was released on June 26, 2025, with a duration of four minutes and fifty-four seconds. The song gained wide acceptance, particularly among Hausa women in Northern Nigeria who occupy the position of senior wives. It generated extensive discussion and reactions on social media, where people debated the roles, status, and importance of the *Uwargida* in marriage.

On December 1, 2025, Tijjani Gandu released *Amarya Mai Capacity*, which many considered a response to Ali Jita's song. It was perceived as supporting and encouraging new brides (*Amarya*), particularly after Ali Jita's song appeared to emphasize the senior wife. Tijjani Gandu's song highlights the importance, value, and influence of the new bride in marriage. The song also became popular, with some believing it created a balance between the status of the *Uwargida* and the *Amarya*.

**Stanza-by-Stanza Analysis of *Uwargida Mai Capacity* by Ali Jita**

**Stanza 1**

Hausa Version	English Translation
To fito ki juya,	Come out and turn around,
Ba ki d'aura laya,	You did not use any chain,
Kin fi gane aya,	You rely on and understand Qur'anic verses,
Mai zuwa da niyya,	You entered marriage with sincere intention to serve your husband,
Ki yi ado ki sauya,	Dress up and transform yourself,
Ke ki ke da murya,	You are the one with voice,
Za su ba ki hanya,	They will give you way,
Kin iya ki koya.	You are knowledgeable and you teach others.

**Interpretation:**

This stanza praises the *Uwargida* as a morally upright, knowledgeable, respectful, and influential woman who relies on religious knowledge rather than charms, entered marriage with sincere intention, presents herself well, and holds authority and respect in the household and society.

**Key Literary Devices:**

- 1) Praise poetry structure
- 2) Religious allusion ("*Kin fi gane aya*" references Qur'anic verses)
- 3) Metaphors: "*Ke ki ke da murya*" (voice - authority), "*Za su ba ki hanya*" (way - respect)
- 4) Parallelism and repetition (*ke, ki, kin*)

**Key Linguistic Features:**

- 1) Repetition of second person feminine pronouns (*ke, ki, kin*) constructs identity
- 2) Vocabulary spans semantic fields of religion (*aya*), morality (*ba ki d'aura laya*), beauty (*ado*), authority (*murya*), respect (*hanya*), and knowledge (*koya*)

**Gender Representation:**

Aspect	Evidence
Pious Woman	<i>Kin fi gane aya</i>
Morally Upright	<i>Ba ki d'aura laya</i>
Loyal Wife	<i>Mai zuwa da niyya</i>
Beautiful Woman	<i>Ki yi ado ki sauya</i>
Authoritative Woman	<i>Ke ki ke da murya</i>
Respected Woman	<i>Za su ba ki hanya</i>
Educated Woman	<i>Kin iya ki koya</i>

**Power Relations:**

Type of Power	Evidence
Moral Power	<i>Ba ki daura laya</i>
Religious Power	<i>Kin fi gane aya</i>
Marital Power	<i>Mai zuwa da niyya</i>
Authority Power	<i>Ke ki ke da murya</i>
Social Power	<i>Za su ba ki hanya</i>
Knowledge Power	<i>Kin iya ki koyi</i>

**Stanza 2**

Hausa Version	English Translation
Wa ya taƙule ki?	Who has treated you in a way that hurts or goes against your feelings?
Wa ta fi ki kirki?	Who is more virtuous than you?
Wa ce ta sha gabanki?	Who has surpassed you?
Ke ki ke da zaki	You are the one who owns the lion
Dole ne a so ki	You must be loved
Dole ne a ganki	You must be recognized
Dole ne a bar ki	You must be respected
Dole ne a bi ki	You must be followed
An ci arzikinki	Your wealth has been enjoyed
Maigidan kawarki	Your husband is your close companion

**Interpretation:** The stanza presents the *Uwargida* as a woman who cannot be disrespected or emotionally harmed, is morally superior, and holds strong influence over her husband and society.

**Key Literary Devices:**

- 1) Rhetorical questions emphasizing that no one can challenge or mistreat her
- 2) Metaphor: "Zaki" (lion) represents the husband under her influence
- 3) Repetition: "Dole ne" shows the inevitability of respect and recognition

**Key Linguistic Features:**

- 1) Interrogatives used for praise and elevation
- 2) Modal expressions (*Dole ne*) construct obligation and authority
- 3) Vocabulary spans semantic fields of morality (*kirki*), power (*zaki*), love (*so ki*), recognition (*ganki*), respect (*bar ki*), leadership (*bi ki*), and wealth (*arzikinki*)

**Gender Representation:**

Aspect	Evidence
Moral Superiority	<i>Wa ta fi ki kirki?</i>
Emotional Inviolability	<i>Wa ya taƙule ki?</i>
Marital Authority	<i>Ke ki ke da zaki</i>
Social Recognition	<i>Dole ne a ganki</i>
Respect	<i>Dole ne a bar ki</i>
Leadership	<i>Dole ne a bi ki</i>
Economic Influence	<i>An ci arzikinki</i>

**Power Relations:**

Type of Power	Evidence
Emotional Power	<i>Wa ya taƙule ki</i>
Moral Power	<i>Wa ta fi ki kirki</i>
Marital/Husband Power	<i>Ke ki ke da zaki</i>
Social Power	<i>Dole ne a ganki</i>
Authority/Leadership Power	<i>Dole ne a bi ki</i>
Respect Power	<i>Dole ne a bar ki</i>
Economic Power	<i>An ci arzikinki</i>

**Stanza 3**

Hausa Version	English Translation
Uwargida mai capacity,	Senior wife with capacity,
Uwargida kin fi quality,	Senior wife, you have more quality,
Uwargida na da quantity,	The senior wife has quantity,
Ba mai taɓa maki identity,	No one can touch your identity,
Dole su gane reality,	They must accept the reality,
Uwargida ce security,	The senior wife is security,
Ta dauri ku ke da charity,	Since long ago, you have been generous,
Kyale duk liability,	Leave all liabilities,
Tun da kina da ability,	Since you have ability,
Ke ce ki ke da immunity.	You are the one who has immunity.

**Interpretation:** The stanza presents the *Uwargida* as a powerful and untouchable woman whose identity, status, and influence cannot be disturbed. She is experienced, protective, generous, capable, and secure in her position.

**Key Literary Devices:**

- 1) Code-Switching (Hausa and English words: capacity, quality, identity, reality, security, charity, liability, ability, immunity)
- 2) Metaphors: security, immunity represent protection and untouchable status
- 3) Repetition of "*Uwargida*" reinforces identity
- 4) Parallel structure builds her power step by step

**Key Linguistic Features:**

- 1) English lexical borrowing reflects modern Hausa discourse
- 2) Declarative constructions establish authority and certainty
- 3) Vocabulary spans semantic fields of power (*capacity/ability*), superiority (*quality*), experience (*quantity*), identity protection (*identity/immunity*), security (*security*), generosity (*charity*), and truth (*reality*)

**Gender Representation:**

Aspect	Evidence
Superior Woman	<i>Kin fi quality</i>
Experienced Woman	Quantity
Protected Identity	<i>Ba mai taɓa maki identity</i>
Protector	<i>Uwargida ce security</i>
Generous Woman	Charity
Capable Woman	Ability
Untouchable	Immunity

**Power Relations:**

Type of Power	Evidence
Identity Power	<i>Ba mai taɓa maki identity</i>
Social Power	Quality
Seniority Power	Quantity
Protective Power	Security
Economic/Support Power	Charity
Competence Power	Ability
Resistance Power	Immunity

**Stanza 4**

Hausa Version	English Translation
Uwargida sarauta Uwargida	The senior wife is royalty, the true senior wife
Uwargida sarautar cikin gida	The senior wife is the queen of the house

**Interpretation:** The stanza emphasizes that the *Uwargida* holds a royal, authoritative position in the home, functioning as the ruler and central figure within the domestic space.

**Key Literary Devices:**

- 1) Repetition of "*Uwargida*" reinforces identity and status
- 2) Metaphor: "*Sarauta*" (royalty) symbolizes authority, dignity, and power

**Key Linguistic Features:**

- 1) Nominal expressions: "*Sarauta*" (royalty/chieftaincy) functions as a title assigning noun, elevating the woman's status
- 2) Repetition as emphasis: The repeated use of "*Uwargida*" at the beginning and middle of the stanza creates an echo effect, reinforcing her identity
- 3) Possessive construction: "*Sarautar cikin gida*" (the royalty/authority of the house) uses the genitive linker "-r" to establish domain specific power
- 4) Lexical field of authority: Words like "*sarauta*" (royalty) and "*cikin gida*" (inside the house) belong to semantic fields of power and domestic governance
- 5) Pragmatic function: The stanza performs a legitimizing speech act it does not merely describe her as royalty but declares and establishes her as such within the discourse

**Gender Representation:**

Aspect	Evidence	Meaning
Royal Woman	<i>Sarauta</i>	She is like a queen
Recognized Identity	<i>Uwargida</i>	Her status is established
Domestic Ruler	<i>Sarautar cikin gida</i>	She governs the home

**Power Relations:**

Power Type	Evidence	Explanation
Authority Power	<i>Sarauta</i>	She holds royal authority
Domestic Power	<i>Cikin gida</i>	She controls the household
Identity Power	<i>Uwargida</i>	Her position is recognized

**Stanza 5**

Hausa Version	English Translation
Uwargida ran gida (x2)	The senior wife is the heart of the home (x2)
In babu ke ba gida	Without you, it is not truly a home
Sarauniya a ko'ina	You are a queen everywhere

**Interpretation:** The stanza presents the *Uwargida* as the central and indispensable figure in the household, suggesting that the home lacks meaning without her presence. She is also portrayed as a queen in all situations.

**Key Literary Devices:**

- 1) Metaphor: "*Ran gida*" (heart of the home) symbolizes importance and centrality
- 2) Repetition emphasizes her significance
- 3) Royal imagery: "*Sarauniya*" (queen) denotes authority and prestige

**Key Linguistic Features:**

- 1) Metaphorical noun phrase: "*Ran gida*" (heart of the home) uses "*ran*" (heart/soul) as a metaphor for essentiality and emotional core. In Hausa, "*ran*" also implies life force, suggesting her presence gives life to the home
- 2) Negative conditional construction: "*In babu ke ba gida*" (if you are not there, it is not a home) uses the negative conditional to establish existential dependence the home's very existence as a "home" depends on her
- 3) Universal quantifier: "*A ko'ina*" (everywhere) extends her queenship beyond the domestic space into all social contexts
- 4) Parallel structure: The two-line repetition of "*Uwargida ran gida*" followed by the conditional and the universal declaration creates a rhythmic progression from identity → condition → expansion
- 5) Semantic field of centrality and indispensability: "*Ran gida*" (heart of home), "*babu*" (without/absence), "*ba gida*" (not a home), "*sarauniya*" (queen), "*a ko'ina*" (everywhere)
- 6) Pragmatic function: The stanza performs an existential declaration it not only praises her but states that without her, the social unit (home) loses its fundamental identity

**Gender Representation:**

Aspect	Evidence	Meaning
Central Woman	<i>Ran gida</i>	She is the love of the home
Indispensable	<i>Babu ke ba gida</i>	Home is incomplete without her
Royal Woman	<i>Sarauniya</i>	She is like a queen

**Power Relations:**

Power Type	Evidence	Explanation
Emotional Power	<i>Ran gida</i>	She controls the emotional center of the home
Existential Power	<i>Babu ke ba gida</i>	Home depends on her existence
Authority Power	<i>Sarauniya</i>	She holds royal status
Social Power	<i>A ko'ina</i>	Her influence extends everywhere

**Stanza 6**

Hausa Version	English Translation
Wallahi ke sarauniya ce	By Allah, you are a queen
Ba za a samo kamar ki ba,	None is like you,
Girman da Rabbana ya ba ki	The greatness you have is from God
Ba wai mutum ne ya ba ki ba,	Not from any human,
Ke Uwargida adon gari ce	You, <i>Uwargida</i> , are the pride of the town
Kina cikin sahun gaba	Always at the forefront
Mai yi wa Allah mai yi wa Annabi	Whoever worships Allah and the Prophet
Ba za ya bata ranki ba	Will not hurt you

**Interpretation:** The stanza presents the *Uwargida* as a woman whose uniqueness, status, and divine-given greatness position her as socially, morally, and spiritually elevated, admired, and protected.

**Key Literary Devices:**

- 1) Oath/emphasis: "*Wallahi*"
- 2) Hyperbole: "*Ba za a samu kamar ki ba*" (none like you)
- 3) Symbolism/titles: "*Sarauniya*," "*Uwargida*," "*Adon gari*"

**Key Linguistic Features:**

- 1) Phonology: Repetition and rhythm (*ba...ba, ki...ki*) create musicality
- 2) Morphology: Feminine singular pronoun suffix "*ki*" (*kamarki, ba ki, ranki*)
- 3) Syntax: Declarative sentences with simple structure
- 4) Lexis: Religious terms (*Rabbana, Allah, Annabi*), honorific terms (*Sarauniya, Uwargida, Adon gari*)
- 5) Pragmatics: "*Wallahi*" signals emphasis, sincerity, and moral weight

**Gender Representation:**

Aspect	Evidence
Power/Leadership	<i>Kina cikin sahun gaba</i>
Socially Respected/admired	<i>Uwargida ce adon gari</i>
Morally Protected/virtuous	<i>Mai yi wa Allah, mai yi wa Annabi ba za ya bata ranki ba</i>

**Power Relations:**

Type of Power	Evidence	Meaning
Divine Power	<i>Girman da Rabbana ya ba ki</i>	Her greatness comes directly from God
Social Power	<i>Kina cikin sahun gaba</i>	She is socially prominent, leading her community
Moral Power	<i>Mai yi wa Allah, mai yi wa Annabi ba za ya bata ranki ba</i>	Whoever worships Allah and the Prophet will not hurt you
Symbolic/Cultural Power	<i>Sarauniya ce, adon gari</i>	A queen is the adornment of the town

**Stanza 7**

Hausa Version	English Translation
Kowane kaya ki sa ki juya,	Whatever outfit you wear and turn in,
Sun maki kyawo adon jiki,	Looks beautiful on you as body adornment,
Ki sanya leshi ki sa atamfa,	Whether you wear lace or Ankara,
Kina da sura ta arziki,	You have the appearance of wealth
A tara mata dubun dubunnai,	Even if thousands of women are gathered,
Uwargida ce adon biki,	The senior wife is the beauty of the occasion
Kama da dai wacce ba ta wacce,	Even if someone appears similar, they never become the same
Fada ta dai gun Jalla Rabbana,	The final judgment belongs to Allah.

**Interpretation:** The stanza portrays the *Uwargida* as naturally beautiful, elegant, and outstanding among other women. Her beauty and presence make her the center of attraction at social events, and her superiority is presented as undeniable.

**Key Literary Devices:**

- 1) Imagery: Clothing (*leshi, atamfa*) creates visual beauty
- 2) Hyperbole: Thousands of women (*dubun dubunnai*) exaggerate comparison
- 3) Metaphor: "*Adon biki*" (decoration of the event) positions her as the highlight
- 4) Religious reference: "*Jalla Rabbana*" strengthens truth claims

**Key Linguistic Features:**

- 1) Lexical choice (diction): The stanza uses aesthetic and evaluative vocabulary such as "*kyawo*" (beauty), "*adon jiki*" (body adornment), "*sura ta arziki*" (appearance of wealth), "*adon biki*" (decoration of the event). These lexical items construct the *Uwargida* as beautiful, elegant, and wealthy
- 2) Semantic intensification: Expressions like "*kowane kaya*" (any outfit) and "*dubun-dubunnai*" (thousands) function as intensifiers, showing that her beauty is universal and unmatched regardless of situation
- 3) Cultural lexicon: Words like "*leshi*" (lace) and "*atamfa*" (Ankara) reference specific fabrics familiar to Hausa audiences, grounding the praise in recognizable material culture
- 4) Syntactic structure: The stanza uses mainly declarative sentences, which express certainty and authority, not doubt. Example: "*Uwargida ce adon biki*" (The senior wife is the beauty of the occasion) a strong assertive statement
- 5) Parallelism: Structure across lines ("*Ki sa ki juya,*" "*Ki sanya leshi ki sa atamfa*") creates rhythm and emphasis, reinforcing her beauty and presence
- 6) Hyperbolic construction: "*A tara mata dubun-dubunnai*" (even if thousands of women are gathered) is a qualitative exaggeration used to emphasize her superiority among many women
- 7) Religious discourse marker: "*Jalla Rabbana*" (Allah the Almighty) brings divine authority into the discourse, making the claim of her superiority unquestionable
- 8) Pragmatic function: The language performs evaluation (she is beautiful), comparison (better than others), and assertion of truth (undeniable even before God)

**Gender Representation:**

Aspect	Evidence	Meaning
Beautiful Woman	<i>Kyau, adon jiki</i>	She is physically attractive
Wealthy Woman	<i>Sura ta arziki</i>	She reflects affluence
Social Centerpiece	<i>Adon biki</i>	She stands out among women
Divinely Validated	<i>Jalla Rabbana</i>	Her status is unquestionable

**Power Relations:**

Power Type	Evidence	Explanation
Beauty Power	<i>Kyau</i>	Attraction and admiration
Social Power	<i>Adon biki</i>	Dominates public gatherings
Economic Power	<i>Arziki</i>	Associated with wealth
Symbolic Power	<i>Dubun-dubunnai</i>	Superior among many
Religious Power	<i>Jalla Rabbana</i>	Legitimacy through divine reference

**Stanza 8**

Hausa Version	English Translation
Mai matsayi dai Uwargida ce	The woman of status is the senior wife
Abin da ta so shi za a yi,	Whatever she wants is what will be done,
Don maigida dai ya san da wannan	Even the husband knows this,
Komai ana duba ra'ayi,	Everything is done considering her opinion,
Ke Uwargida mai fada da izza	The senior wife speaks with dignity
A zuciya babu kwadayi	With no greed in your heart,
Ta share gona ta sanya taki	She clears the farm and applies fertilizer
A samu yalwa a ko'ina	So that abundance is achieved everywhere.

**Interpretation:** The stanza presents the *Uwargida* as a decision-maker and authority figure whose opinions guide the household. She is dignified, selfless, and productive, contributing to the prosperity of the family.

**Key Literary Devices:**

- 1) Metaphor: "Gona" (farm) represents the household; "taki" (fertilizer) represents effort/productivity
- 2) Imagery: Agricultural imagery represents growth and prosperity
- 3) Praise style: Highlights dignity (*Izza*) and selflessness (*Babu kwadāyi*)

**Key Linguistic Features:**

- 1) Declarative structures: "*Abin da ta so shi za a yi*" (whatever she wants is what will be done) expresses authority and certainty. The construction uses a relative clause ("*abin da ta so*") followed by an emphatic pronoun ("*shi*") and the future/passive "*za a yi*," creating a tone of absolute obedience
- 2) Lexical items: "*Matsayi*" (status/position), "*ra'ayi*" (opinion), "*izza*" (dignity), "*kwadāyi*" (greed) construct the semantic fields of status, influence, and morality
- 3) Husband's recognition: "*Don maigida dai ya san da wannan*" (even the husband knows this) explicitly situates her authority within the marital hierarchy, using "*maigida*" (household head/husband) to show that her power is acknowledged even by the nominal authority figure
- 4) Causative/result structure: "*Ta share gona*" (she clears the farm) "*ta sanya taki*" (she applies fertilizer) "*a samu yalwa*" (so that abundance is achieved) shows action leading to result (productivity, prosperity)
- 5) Negative moral qualifier: "*A zuciya babu kwadāyi*" (with no greed in your heart) uses "*babu*" (there is no) to negate greed, positioning selflessness as the foundation of her moral authority
- 6) Pragmatic function: The language emphasizes decision-making power, moral leadership, and productive capability. The agricultural metaphor transforms domestic labor into visible economic value

**Gender Representation:**

Aspect	Evidence	Meaning
Leader	<i>Abin da ta so shi za a yi</i>	She directs decisions
Influential Wife	<i>Ana duba ra'ayi</i>	Her opinion matters
Dignified Woman	<i>Izza</i>	She has honor
Selfless Woman	<i>Babu kwadāyi</i>	She is not greedy
Productive Woman	<i>Gona, taki</i>	She contributes to growth

**Power Relations:**

Power Type	Evidence	Explanation
Decision Power	<i>Abin da ta so za a yi</i>	She determines actions
Marital Power	<i>Maigida ya san da wannan</i>	Husband recognizes her authority
Advisory Power	<i>Ra'ayi</i>	Her opinion guides decisions
Moral Power	<i>Babu kwadāyi</i>	Integrity strengthens influence
Economic/Productive Power	<i>Gona/taki</i>	She creates prosperity

**Stanza 9**

Hausa Version	English Translation
Uwargida duniya ta amsa	The world has acknowledged the senior wife
Takenki shi ne sarauniya,	Your title is Queen,
'Ya'yan gida duk suna kasanki	All children of the household are under you
Uwa ga da ce uwar diya	You are a mother to son and daughter,
Idan batun kyau a kyale ki	When it comes to beauty, leave it
Don ko kin zarce Indiya	You have even surpassed India,
Ki sanya kwalli ki sanya gazal	Apply eyeliner and adorn yourself with jewelry
Girmanki shi ne ya dangana.	Your greatness is firmly established.

**Interpretation:** The stanza presents the *Uwargida* as a globally recognized queen, a unifying mother figure, and a woman of exceptional beauty and dignity.

**Key Literary Devices:**

- 1) Hyperbole: "*Duniya ta amsa*" (universal recognition)
- 2) Metaphor: "*Sarauniya*" (queen) denotes authority and status
- 3) Cultural comparison: "*Indiya*" (India as a high beauty standard)
- 4) Imagery: "*Kwalli*," "*gazal*" (adornment and elegance)

**Key Linguistic Features:**

- 1) Declarative sentences expressing certainty and authority: "*Takenki shi ne sarauniya*" (your title is queen) uses a direct equative sentence (X = Y) to assign her royal status without qualification
- 2) Title construction: "*Takenki shi ne sarauniya*" involves a noun phrase ("*takenki*" - your title) followed by an emphatic pronoun ("*shi ne*" it is) and the title ("*sarauniya*" - queen), explicitly naming and legitimizing her identity
- 3) Comparative structure: "*Kin zarce Indiya*" (you have surpassed India) uses the verb "*zarce*" (to surpass/exceed) with "*Indiya*" as the point of comparison, establishing superiority over an internationally recognized standard of beauty
- 4) Metaphorical extension of kinship terms: "*Ya'yan gida duk suna kasanki*" (all children of the household are under you) uses the kinship term "*'ya'ya*" (children) even for non-biological dependents, extending maternal authority over the entire household
- 5) Imperative as permission/endorsement: "*Ki sanya kwalli ki sanya gazal*" (apply eyeliner and adorn yourself with jewelry) uses the imperative mood not as a command but as an endorsement of her right to beautify herself
- 6) Lexical fields: The stanza draws on multiple semantic fields authority/title ("*sarauniya*," "*takenki*"), recognition ("*duniya ta amsa*"), motherhood ("*uwa*," "*'ya'ya*"), beauty ("*kyau*," "*kwalli*," "*gazal*"), superiority ("*zarce*"), and dignity ("*girma*")
- 7) Pragmatic function: The stanza performs recognition and identity construction discourse, presenting the *Uwargida* as a legitimized queen, caregiver, and symbol of beauty and dignity

**Gender Representation:**

Aspect	Evidence	Meaning
Queen	<i>Sarauniya, takenki</i>	She holds authority
Recognized Woman	<i>Duniya ta amsa</i>	Her status is accepted
Mother Figure	<i>Uwa ga da da diya</i>	She nurtures all
Beautiful Woman	<i>Kyau, kwalli</i>	She is attractive
Dignified Woman	<i>Girma</i>	She has honor

**Power Relations:**

Power Type	Evidence	Explanation
Social Power	<i>Duniya ta amsa</i>	Widely recognized
Authority Power	<i>Sarauniya</i>	Leadership position
Maternal Power	<i>Uwa</i>	Influence through care
Beauty Power	<i>Zarce/Indiya</i>	Superior attractiveness
Symbolic Power	<i>Girma</i>	Respect and prestige

**Stanza-by-Stanza Analysis of *Amarya Mai Capacity* by Tijjani Gandu**

**Stanza 1**

Hausa Version	English Translation
Ke ce sanyin idanuwa	You are the comfort/joy of eyes
Amarya mai capacity,	A bride with capacity,
Kin samu yabo da jinjina	You have received praise and admiration
Kina da dukan immunity,	You possess full immunity,
Ga mai haske gidan miji	You are the light that brightens your home
Modern for reality,	Modern in reality,
Ni gimbiya zan wa tambura	I, a princess, will praise you with songs
Amarya mai capacity.	Oh! bride with capacity.

**Interpretation:** The stanza presents the *Amarya* (bride) as a source of joy, beauty, and admiration who is modern, admired, and brings brightness to the home.

**Key Literary Devices:**

- 1) Metaphor: "*Sanyin idanuwa*" represents emotional comfort/joy
- 2) Imagery: "*Mai haske*" (light) symbolizes brightness and positivity
- 3) Code-switching: capacity, immunity, modern, reality
- 4) Praise style: Celebratory tone toward the bride

**Key Linguistic Features:**

- 1) Nominal expressions: "Capacity" and "immunity" are English loanwords adopted into Hausa discourse to construct identity through modern, globalized vocabulary. These terms connote capability and invulnerability

- 2) Positive lexical items: "*Yabo*" (praise), "*jinjina*" (admiration), "*haske*" (light/brightness) construct semantic fields of value and appreciation
- 3) Declarative structures: Sentences like "*Ke ce sanyin idanuwa*" (you are the comfort of eyes) use equative constructions (X = Y) to express certainty and praise
- 4) Second-person feminine address: The repeated "*ke*" (you, feminine singular) and "*kin*" (you have, feminine) directly address the bride, creating intimacy and focus
- 5) Code-switching as identity marker: The English words "modern," "reality," "capacity," and "immunity" reflect contemporary urban youth identity and globalization. This code-switching marks the bride as modern and sophisticated
- 6) Self-referential praise: "*Ni gimbiya zan wa tambura*" (I, a princess, will praise you with songs) introduces the singer as a "*gimbiya*" (princess), lending royal authority to the praise being offered
- 7) Vocative address: "*Amarya mai capacity*" (oh bride with capacity) at the end of the stanza functions as a direct apostrophe, calling out to the bride and emphasizing her title
- 8) Pragmatic function: The stanza performs praise and admiration discourse, constructing the *Amarya* as a modern, beautiful, and emotionally valued woman

**Gender Representation:**

Aspect	Evidence	Meaning
Attractive Woman	<i>Sanyin idanuwa</i>	She gives emotional joy
Praised Woman	<i>Yabo, jinjina</i>	She is admired
Modern Woman	<i>Modern</i>	She reflects modern identity
Valuable Woman	<i>Haske</i>	She brightens the home
Royal Woman	<i>Gimbiya</i>	She has elevated status

**Power Relations:**

Power Type	Evidence	Explanation
Emotional Power	<i>Sanyin idanuwa</i>	She gives happiness
Social Power	<i>Yabo, jinjina</i>	She is publicly admired
Symbolic Power	<i>Haske</i>	She brings light/value
Modernity Power	Modern	Power through modern identity

**Stanza 2**

Hausa Version	English Translation
Ki yo takunki lafiya	Live your life well
Ta Abba da Umma tarbiyya	With the good upbringing from your mother and father,
Za ki yi kwanan farin ciki,	And you will live in happiness,
Yau ba sauran bakin ciki,	Today, there is no more sorrow,
Albarka sun saka maki	Blessings have been bestowed upon you
Kina da dukan security.	You now have full security.

**Interpretation:** The stanza portrays the *Amarya* as a well raised woman whose upbringing leads to a life of happiness, blessings, and stability.

**Key Literary Devices:**

- 1) Moral emphasis: "*Tarbiyya*" highlights good upbringing
- 2) Contrast: "*Farin ciki*" vs. "*Bakin ciki*" (happiness vs. sorrow)
- 3) Religious tone: "*Albarka*" indicates divine favor
- 4) Code-switching: "Security" symbolizes protection

**Key Linguistic Features:**

- 1) Imperative form: "*Ki yo takunki lafiya*" (live your life well) uses the imperative mood with the feminine singular prefix "*ki*," functioning as an advisory or encouraging address rather than a command
- 2) Positive lexical items: "*Tarbiyya*" (good upbringing/manners), "*farin ciki*" (happiness), "*albarka*" (blessings) construct semantic fields of virtue, emotional well-being, and divine favor
- 3) Contrastive pairing: "*Farin ciki*" (happiness) is directly contrasted with "*bakin ciki*" (sorrow) using the negator "*ba sauran*" (no more), reinforcing emotional transformation from past difficulty to present joy
- 4) Religious discourse: "*Albarka*" (blessings) and the implicit invocation of divine favor locate the bride's happiness within a religious moral framework blessings come as a reward for good upbringing

- 5) Family grounding: "Ta Abba da *Umma tarbiyya*" (with the upbringing from father and mother) explicitly grounds the bride's virtue in proper family socialization, linking individual worth to collective family honor
- 6) Borrowed word: "Security" is an English loanword that, in this context, symbolizes modern concepts of safety, stability, and protection. Its use reflects contemporary Hausa discourse where English terms denote modernity and sophistication
- 7) Future certainty: "*Za ki yi kwanan farin ciki*" (you will live in happiness) uses the future marker "za" with the feminine singular "ki" to express not just possibility but certainty
- 8) Pragmatic function: The stanza performs advisory and blessing discourse, guiding the bride toward a morally grounded and happy life while also conferring divine and social approval upon her

**Gender Representation:**

Aspect	Evidence	Meaning
Well Trained Woman	<i>Tarbiyya</i>	She has good upbringing
Happy Woman	<i>Farin ciki</i>	She enjoys emotional fulfillment
Blessed Woman	<i>Albarka</i>	She is favored
Secure Woman	Security	She is protected

**Power Relations:**

Power Type	Evidence	Explanation
Moral Power	<i>Tarbiyya</i>	Upbringing shapes her role
Emotional Power	<i>Farin ciki</i>	She embodies happiness
Religious Power	<i>Albarka</i>	Blessings give her value
Security Power	Security	She has protection

**Stanza 3**

Hausa Version	English Translation
Yau ga ni bikinki ya yi kyau	Today, your wedding appears beautiful
Haske maganin duhu,	Light that drives away darkness,
In zara ta zo akwai wata	When she appears, it is like the moon has risen,
Sheda ta kwarai akai mata	She is widely recognized and endorsed
Mai halin loyalty	As a woman of good character.

**Interpretation:** The stanza presents the *Amarya* as a beautiful, radiant, and loyal woman whose presence brings light and admiration.

**Key Literary Devices:**

- 1) Metaphor: Light vs. darkness; moon represents beauty and brightness
- 2) Imagery: Visual brightness and attraction
- 3) Praise style: Celebration of loyalty

**Key Linguistic Features:**

- 1) Descriptive lexicon: "*Kyau*" (beauty), "*haske*" (light/brightness), "*maganin duhu*" (medicine/cure for darkness) construct the bride as a beautiful and illuminating presence
- 2) Symbolic comparative construction: "*In zara ta zo akwai wata*" (when she appears, it is like the moon has risen) uses a simile structure ("*in.. akwai*" when... there is) with "*wata*" (moon) as the symbol of beauty, radiance, and feminine grace. In Hausa poetic tradition, the moon is a classical symbol of feminine beauty
- 3) Contrastive imagery: "*Haske*" (light) versus "*duhu*" (darkness) sets up a binary opposition where the bride represents positivity, clarity, and joy, while darkness represents previous hardship or absence
- 4) Recognition/endorsement formula: "*Sheda ta kwarai akai mata*" (she is widely recognized and endorsed) uses "*sheda*" (testimony/witness) a term with legal and religious connotations to indicate that her value is not merely claimed but officially attested to by the community
- 5) Code-switched moral term: "Loyalty" is an English loanword that introduces a modern moral concept. In traditional Hausa discourse, fidelity might be expressed as "*amana*" (trustworthiness) or "*riƙon amana*" (keeping trust), but "loyalty" reflects contemporary relationship values
- 6) Character attribution formula: "*Mai halin loyalty*" (one who has the character of loyalty) uses the agentive prefix "*mai*" (one who possesses) followed by "*halin*" (character/temperament) to present loyalty as an inherent, defining trait
- 7) Pragmatic function: The stanza performs praise discourse, highlighting beauty, brightness, and loyalty as the bride's defining virtues

**Gender Representation:**

Aspect	Evidence
Beautiful Woman	<i>Kyau, haske</i>
Attractive Presence	<i>Wata</i>
Loyal Woman	Loyalty

**Power Relations:**

Power Type	Evidence
Beauty Power	<i>Haske</i>
Symbolic Power	<i>Wata</i>
Moral Power	Loyalty

**Stanza 4**

Hausa Version	English Translation
Shi ango murmushi yake	The groom smiles
Ya ga amarsu ya tsaya,	As he sees his bride and admires her
Kin zamto celebrity	You have become a celebrity
Aurenku a kai da quality,	Your marriage has quality,
Kauna ce responsibility	Love is a responsibility,
Princess mun ga unity	Princess, we have seen unity.

**Interpretation:** The stanza presents the *Amarya* as admired, valued, and central in a loving and united marriage.

**Key Literary Devices:**

- 1) Imagery: "*Murmushi*" (smile) represents happiness
- 2) Code-switching: celebrity, quality, responsibility, unity
- 3) Praise tone: Emphasizing love and admiration

**Key Linguistic Features:**

- 1) Third-person narrative opening: "*Shi ango murmushi yake*" (the groom smiles) shifts briefly to third-person narration about the groom before returning to direct address of the bride, creating a dialogic structure where the groom's reaction validates the bride's value
- 2) Resultative construction: "*Ya ga amarsu ya tsaya*" (he sees his bride and admires/stops) pairs perception ("ga" see) with resultant action ("*tsaya*" stop/admire), indicating that the groom is so struck by the bride's beauty that he pauses in admiration
- 3) Achievement verb: "*Kin zamto* celebrity" (you have become a celebrity) uses the verb "*zamto*" (to become/transform into) to indicate a change of state she has moved from being an ordinary woman to a public figure of admiration
- 4) Code-Switched value terms: "Celebrity," "quality," "responsibility," and "unity" are English loanwords that modernize the discourse about marriage. Their use reflects contemporary Hausa youth culture where English terms denote modernity, sophistication, and global awareness
- 5) Definitional statement about love: "*Kauna ce* responsibility" (love is a responsibility) makes a philosophical claim about the nature of love. The equative construction ("*Kauna ce* responsibility") presents this as a universal truth, not merely a personal opinion
- 6) Royal address: "Princess" (in English) combined with "*mun ga* unity" (we have seen unity) uses royal terminology to elevate the bride's status while also making a collective observation ("*mun ga*" we have seen) that positions the singer and audience as witnesses to the couple's harmonious union
- 7) Collective witness formula: "*Mun ga* unity" (we have seen unity) uses first-person plural ("mun" we) to suggest communal recognition and endorsement of the marriage's quality
- 8) Pragmatic function: The stanza performs celebratory and relational discourse, highlighting love, admiration, and unity while positioning the bride as a celebrity like figure deserving of public recognition

**Gender Representation:**

Aspect	Evidence
Admired Woman	Celebrity
Loved Woman	<i>Kauna</i>
Central Partner	Unity

**Power Relations:**

Power Type	Evidence
Emotional Power	<i>Murmushi</i>
Social Power	Celebrity
Relational Power	Unity

## FINDINGS

The study reveals several important findings regarding language, gender, and power in contemporary Hausa popular poetry:

**1. Distinct Forms of Female Power:**

Language constructs different forms of female power in the songs. The *Uwargida* is consistently linked to authority, experience, domestic control, and social respect. Conversely, the *Amarya* is associated with beauty, emotional influence, modern identity, and romantic appeal.

**2. Hierarchical and Relational Power:**

Power is shown as both hierarchical (the *Uwargida* holds institutional authority within the polygamous household) and relational (the *Amarya* exercises influence through emotional connection and modern values).

**3. Linguistic Strategies for Constructing Power:** Several linguistic devices are employed to construct power, including:

- a. Metaphors (e.g., "lion," "heart of the home," "queen," "moon")
- b. Code-switching (English terms like capacity, quality, immunity, security, celebrity)
- c. Repetition and parallelism (emphasizing status and authority)
- d. Religious references (legitimizing power through divine authority)
- e. Rhetorical questions (establishing unassailable status)

**4. Semantic Fields of Power:** The vocabulary in both songs clusters around distinct semantic fields:

- 1) For *Uwargida*: authority, seniority, protection, decision-making, domestic control
- 2) For *Amarya*: beauty, modernity, emotion, happiness, security

**5. Shifting Gender Ideologies:**

Contemporary Hausa popular poetry reflects shifting gender roles and values. While traditional hierarchies remain visible (the senior wife holds institutional authority), modern relational power (emotional influence, beauty, celebrity status) has gained prominence, particularly in representations of the new bride.

**6. Complementary Rather Than Competitive Representations:**

Although the two songs appear to present competing views of women's power in polygamous marriage, the analysis reveals that the representations are largely complementary. The *Uwargida* embodies stability, experience, and authority, while the *Amarya* embodies beauty, emotion, and modernity. Neither is presented as wholly superior; rather, each holds different forms of power within the marital structure.

**7. Audience Reception and Social Debate:**

The popularity of both songs and the extensive social media debate they generated indicate that discussions about gender roles, women's power, and polygamous marriage hierarchies remain highly relevant and contested in contemporary Hausa society.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that contemporary Hausa popular poetry, as exemplified by *Ali Jita's Uwargida Mai Capacity* and *Tijjani Gandu's Amarya Mai Capacity*, employs language as a sophisticated tool for constructing diverse forms of female power within polygamous marriage contexts. The *Uwargida* embodies authority, experience, domestic control, and social respect forms of power rooted in tradition, seniority, and institutional position within the household. Her power is legitimized through religious references, moral superiority, and social recognition. She is presented as indispensable, dignified, and protective. The *Amarya*, in contrast, reflects beauty, emotional influence, modernity, and relational value forms of power rooted in attraction, happiness, and contemporary social identities. Her power is expressed through imagery of light, beauty, and celebrity status. She is presented as a source of joy, admiration, and emotional fulfillment.

Crucially, these representations show a shift from purely traditional hierarchical power to more modern, relational forms of influence. Gender roles in contemporary Hausa society are therefore not static but dynamic and evolving. The language of popular poetry serves as a mirror of these changes while also actively shaping social attitudes and expectations. Ultimately, this study demonstrates that contemporary Hausa popular poetry is not merely entertainment but a significant

cultural discourse where gender identities, power relations, and social values are continuously constructed, negotiated, and contested.

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