

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Discourse analysis on online gender-based humor: Markers of normalization, tolerance, and lens of inequality

Jason V. Chavez^{1*}, Rosalina T. Del Prado²

¹Zamboanga Peninsula Polytechnic State University, Zamboanga City 7000, Philippines

²Western Mindanao State University, Zamboanga City 7000, Philippines

Abstract: Language is one of the most powerful means through which sexism and gender discrimination are perpetrated and reproduced (Menegatti and Rubini, 2017). The study examined the contrarian features of gender-based online humor in relation to the mainstreaming of gender and development (GAD). Discourse analysis was used as a method in examining discourse markers of online gender-based humor in terms of defaulting jokes as normal, tolerating sexist jokes, and perceiving that inequality in gender is reality. Fourteen (14) participants who are persons in power or authority, persons based on their educational attainment, persons based on their gender roles, and persons from different generational classifications participated in the study which utilized online gender-based-mapper, one-on-one interviews, and FGD-oriented instruments for the extraction and analysis of the research. After the analysis, it was revealed that the normalization of online gender jokes was prevalent in social media. Normalization proceeds as a way of life in making things light in the conversation and making these conversations intending to have enjoyment and entertainment. For tolerating sexist jokes, it appears that the actors in the online set-up manifest the markers for tolerance through “negligence” which seems to be alarming language production and language distribution to as many social media players.

Keywords: discourse analysis; markers; online gender-based humor; normalization; tolerance; equality

*Corresponding author: Jason Villota Chavez, Zamboanga Peninsula Polytechnic State University, Zamboanga City 7000, Philippines; jasonchavez615@gmail.com

Received: January 14, 2023; **Accepted:** April 13, 2023; **Available online:** May 10, 2023

Citation: Chavez JV and Prado RTD (2023) Discourse analysis on online gender-based humor: Markers of normalization, tolerance, and lens of inequality. *Forum for Linguistic Studies* 5(1): 55–71. DOI: 10.18063/fls.v5i1.1530

1. Introduction

“You act like a girl” “Huwag kang babakla-bakla” are humor expressions intended to lighten a conversation or to describe a person’s trait or action. These are very common in social media as humors unconsciously or consciously destroying and slowing down the campaign for gender and development (GAD) mainstreaming. Language is one of the most potent tools for perpetrating and perpetuating sexism and gender discrimination (Menegatti and Rubini, 2017).

This study used discourse analysis to uncover how online gender-based humor expands in bigger discourse markers in terms of defaulting jokes as normal, tolerating sexist jokes, and perceiving that

inequality in gender is reality. The most appropriate attempt to deconstruct the salient contributions of social media humor expressions is to use discourse analysis based on the GAD mainstreaming advocacies to bring perceptions, experience, knowledge, and interests of both men and women to bear on policymaking, planning, and decision-making. Discourse analysis was utilized as a method for studying various sign systems in social media, such as textual and visual parts of humors, by various individual profiles. Examining how language functions and meaning is formed in various social circumstances is what discourse analysis entails (Hassan, 2022).

Input for GAD is essential for including men's and women's perspectives and experiences in policy formation, economic, and societal sectors, ensuring that men and women benefit equally, and inequality is avoided (OSAGI, 2002). This study on the discourse markers of gender-based humors in social media analyzes the social contexts of humors that reflect the culture, traditions, or perceptions of people. Discourse markers are the characteristics of gender-based humors with the influence of persons' biases to gender. Hence, discourse markers are input for GAD that reflect social contexts and conditions.

Gender-based humor has been common across the community which does not literally target gender roles neither femininity nor authoritarian power. Tagging, likes, annotations, sharing, hyperlinks, and other communicative resources that are only available in social media are increasing participation of people to cyber web activities and events (KhosraviNik and Esposito, 2018). The goal of these humor-driven expressions using cyber web communicative tools is to encourage interaction between gender groupings. Gender-based humor unifies gender difference and creates universal respect. However, the question arises as to whether the humor is cruel, emotionally discriminatory, and normalizes unequal comedy expressions, particularly among the numerous characters who interact on social media.

Recognizing the prevalence of non-humorous laughter, laughter would be most detected within non-humorous social interactions, when it is used as a tension-relieving strategy (Provine, 2000). This implies that humor emerges from the conflict between what is expected and what happens in reality (Taylor, 2022). Gender stereotypes and biases, according to the incongruity theory, can be leveraged to produce humor by defying expectations (Andrew, 2022). A joke that plays on the stereotype of a woman being awful at driving, for example, can be perceived as "funny" since it contradicts the assumed norm of males being better drivers than women.

Based on Critique of Judgement, Immanuel Kant made a clear explanation on how incongruity become foundation of humor. He argues "... in everything that is to excite a lively laugh there must be something absurd (in which the understanding, therefore, can find no satisfaction). Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing" (Garrett, n.d.: 2). Specifically, according to Schopenhauer (1818, I, Sec. 13), humor emerges from a lack of reasoning for a matter of thought. Schopenhauer also emphasized that the element of randomness of a statement that is "the greater and more unexpected ... this incongruity is, the more violent will be his laughter".

The incongruity theory of humor, as articulated by Kant and Schopenhauer, provides an essential instance of the subject of persons' humor (Alkiviadou, 2022). Concentrating on the humorous subject leaves an oddity in the analysis of humor, because there are numerous types of incongruous

ideas that do not elicit amusement (Mahapatra and Srivastava, 2013). A more thorough formulation of the incongruity theory might incorporate the pleasurable reaction to humorous objects.

In the grand scheme of things, the democratic process of debating, opining, and arguing has resulted in a rise in sexist hate speech. Context complicates the expression of values and attitudes since various conditions permit the expression of some values and attitudes while prohibiting the expression of others (Menegatti and Rubini, 2017; Elias and Gurbanova, 2018). Indeed, the Internet has broken down communication barriers by enabling us to freely convey thoughts, beliefs, and whole lives (DiMaggio, 2001; Kopetz and Steiner, 2022).

The proliferation of sexist jokes and hate speech on social media has become a major topic of worry due to its extensive distribution and impact on individuals and cyber-communities. Discourse analysis was the best approach for comprehending the complicated delivery of these undertones.

The goal of this research was to look at the hidden linguistic discourse cues in comedy jackets. By mapping out all the contexts and purposes of these online comments and conversations, this research attempted to uncover the same context of these markers in order to understand language dynamics of online gender-based humor.

2. Research objectives

This study investigated the discourse markers and message patterns of these online expressions and how it affects the GAD mainstreaming campaigns. The subsequent goal was to yield a mechanism in deconstructing the gender-based biases of the humors through language teaching.

- 1) Map out the common discriminatory gender-based humor expressions in social media in terms of
 - a. Posts
 - b. Commentaries
- 2) Determine the discourse markers of the online gender-based humors in terms of:
 - a. Defaulting jokes as normal
 - b. Tolerating sexist jokes
 - c. Perceiving that inequality in gender is reality

3. Research design

The goal of this exploratory research is to explore the issue in gender-based humor prevalent in social media and categorizing these expressions into discourse markers. It has been stated that “exploratory research is the preliminary research that serves as the foundation for more conclusive research” (Saunders et al., 2012; Singh, 2007). This is a qualitative study that employs discourse analysis as the approach for utilizing social components of communication and the ways people use language to achieve certain effects required in changing what has been perceived. Discourse analysis assesses how people interact, the range of discrimination and how the virtual community reacts

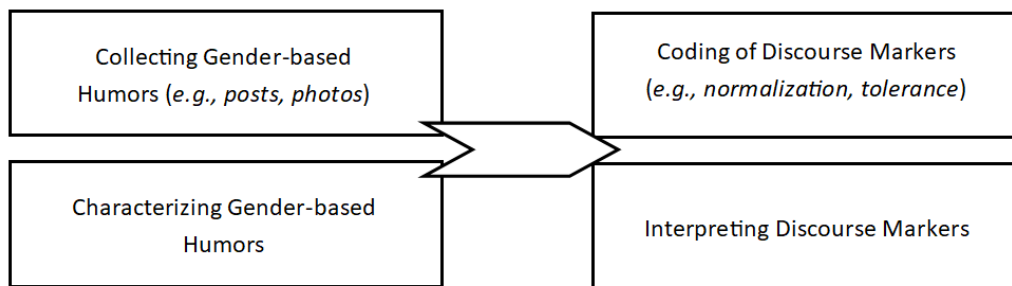


Figure 1. Research framework.

in this context. This further conceptualizes contrarian languages which confront the GAD campaign matter.

Following this design, the researcher collected samples of gender-based humor shared and posted in social media. The gender-based humor were closely characterized as “humors that focus on social status of genders presenting potential discrimination in social media”. Some of the characteristics of these gender-based humors were suppression against one gender (e.g., being gay is a sin), sociocultural representation (e.g., girls should not go to school because they are meant to do household chores), and gender bias (e.g., men are better than women). Sharing humors in social media is becoming a phenomenon—and these also become gateway for gender discrimination (Elias and Gurbanova, 2018). Hence, before conducting the interview, the researcher collected such gender-based humors and then presented to participants to determine the discourse markers. Collecting and presenting these to the participants provided scope of the characteristics of humors in social media, and further frame the discourse markers.

Certainly, this study aimed to describe the discourse markers in the perceptions of the users of social media. In words, the discourse markers were framed based on the perceptions of the people interpreting these gender-based expressions. Discourse markers were the characteristics and perceived social condition that are present in gender-based humor. Such analysis is necessary in differentiating humors and discrimination. Marking the contexts of gender-based humor is the fundamental of GAD advocating, policy development, professional training, psychology, and human behavior.

4. Research locale

This study was conducted in Zamboanga City. The city is considered an urban area and one of the biggest economies in Mindanao region of the Philippines which is considered to have a high interaction and engagements in social media. The respondents are also living within the city. The entire assessment, data gathering, interview, and FGD took place in Zamboanga City setting.

5. Population and sampling technique

The participants of this study were the social media users who spend a minimum of four hours a day online. They were coming from the different orientations and profile to deeply represent the sources of humor expressions online. Purposive sampling is a sampling approach used by qualitative researchers to identify individuals who can provide specific information about the topic under inquiry. It is very subjective, with the qualitative researcher determining the qualifying criteria that

each participant must meet to be selected for the research study (Campbell, 2020).

Because of the nature of the research design and aims and objectives, purposive sampling may be beneficial when just a small number of people are available to function as primary data sources. Purposive sampling examines how to construct a sample population (e.g., homosexuals), even if it is not statistically representative of the broader population under consideration, that is why discourse analysis was used. Purposive sampling enables information from the data gathered. This allows researchers to emphasize the substantial effect of gender-based humor as contrarian language to GAD.

6. Research participants

There were fourteen (14) participants for this study who were exposed by at least four hours daily and actively using the social media for communication or for commentaries and conversations.

7. Research instrument

The instruments used in this study were based on the objectives presented beforehand. The study utilized online gender-based-mapper, one-on-one interview, and FGD-oriented instruments to cover the extraction and analysis of the research. All participants were invited to the interviews and FGD, informed of the purpose of the study, oriented on their rights and privileges as participants, assured of the confidentiality of the information extracted, and sought for permission on dissemination activities of the researcher.

1) *Online gender-based humor expressions mapper*: to determine common discriminatory gender-based humor expressions in social media in terms of posts, commentaries, and conversations. The researcher asked permission from the participants that he will be allowed to monitor and do inventory posts related to humors. These were done through screenshots or copying and transcribing.

Table 1. Participants' profile

| Profile | Participants | Number of participants |
|--|---|------------------------|
| 1. Person in power or authority | One person as head of a government office and one as head of a private office | 2 |
| 2. Persons with different educational attainment | One individual with college degree and one individual with no college degree | 2 |
| 3. Persons from different gender roles | One lesbian, one gay man, one heterosexual female, and one heterosexual males | 4 |
| 4. Persons from different generation (Age) | One adult and one millennial | 2 |
| 5. Language teachers | | 2 |
| 6. GAD point persons | | 2 |
| Total | | 14 |

a. *Person in power or authority*: i. anyone who is holding a public office (e.g., department head, government official), he/she has to be in current position for more than 5 years; ii. anyone who is in a private institution and in a public institution having a high authority to a certain department or office.

b. *Educational attainment*: i. one who had been and graduated in higher education; ii. one who had (or not) finished either high school, or elementary.

c. *Gender roles*: i. anyone from any ages (not specified) who consider themselves as a member of any gender-based groups.

d. *Generational classification*: i. two from the adult bracket (1979 and beyond), and two from the millennial bracket (1980 onwards).

Table 2. Online humor-mapper and discourse marker validators flow of questions

| Discourse markers | Interview set question 1 | Interview set question 2 | Interview set question 3 |
|---|---|---|--|
| Defaulting jokes as normal | From these jokes (present exhibit of humor texts), are there gender brands being labeled? Identify and explain. | Are jokes or humors online normal? Why? | Are these jokes and labeling or pertaining to specific gender fair or unbiased/unprejudiced? |
| Tolerating sexist jokes | | Should these jokes and humors be considered just part of our lives? | Are these jokes offensive to the gender it pertains to? |
| Perceiving that inequality in gender is reality | | Should they be tolerated? | Why? |

ing in a word document. This takes place by the assessment of the extent of gender-based humor, how people react to it according to genders, how the marginalized people react to it, the presence of tolerating behaviors, and recurrence of acts throughout time. Identification marks of these materials were removed in the process of the research and in the dissemination activities of the researcher.

2) *Online humor-mapper and discourse marker validators*: to determine the discourse markers of the online gender-based humors in terms of defaulting jokes as normal, tolerating sexist jokes, and perceiving that inequality in gender is reality. This was a one-on-one in-depth semi-structured interview to all participants to validate the discourse markers found in their social media activities. There were two extractions of data in this part. The first is to categorize the discourse markers from the inventory of humor posts, commentaries, and conversations from the social media account of the participants. The second extraction of data took place through one-on-one interview of the respondents to validate and analyze their humor posts, commentaries, and conversations in social media. The researcher recorded the important points that the respondents said and expressed during these interviews for coding the discourse markers.

8. Data collection procedure

The study used inventory monitoring, interview, and focus group discussion (FGD) as the methods to gather in depth information from the participants as well as their humor expressions in the social media in terms of statements, commentaries, and conversations. The monitoring-inventory of humor expressions covered their activities in the social media from November 2021 and twelve (12) months earlier. There were incidental conversations which were gathered through other activities like chatting which can be extracted through interviews and FGD.

Based on preliminary findings, a discussion was held for language teachers, activists, and directors of GAD offices to discuss how language education may deconstruct discourses in online gender-based comedy to mainstream gender and development. Focus group discussion (FGD) on discourse marker dominant effects which was used to assess the impact of dominant discourse markers of online gender-based humor on the mainstreaming campaign of gender and development to be participated by language instructors, activists, and heads of GAD offices. Ethics clearance was secured from the Zamboanga City Medical Center Ethics Board before the conduct of the research project.

In the process of data gathering, the participants were provided a collection of gender-based

humor collected during the inventory period. The participants were given 10 minutes to assess the gender-based humors and determine its contexts. The participants were guided to reflect on how the gender-based humor is becoming a phenomenon even with the gender-based advocacies present in schools, academic institution and organizations, mainstream media, and governmental offices. Questions were asked on defaulting jokes as normal, tolerating sexist jokes, and perceiving gender inequality a reality. The participants were also asked regarding the implications of the humor to the GAD mainstreaming in community.

The narrative data from social media users from different demographics presents the discourse markers of gender-based humor. Emerging themes were the characteristics that were not foreseen to be present but are equally essential to GAD advocating.

9. Data analysis

Semi-structured interviews and FGDs became the validators of these discourse markers to understand deeply the origin and contexts in constructing and using the humor. Coding and thematic approach were used to identify the routes of the objectives as well as to unveil potential emerging themes from the very process of data extraction and data analysis. Thematic analysis is a potent analytical method for qualitative research as it is a flexible qualitative data analysis method taking a versatile direction of inductive or deductive information-extraction (Kiger and Varpio, 2020).

10. Results

10.1. Research objective 1: Common discriminatory gender-based humor expressions in social media in terms

The following gender-based humor materials were gathered from the posts of the research participants from November 2022 and twelve (12) months earlier. These were gathered through thematic coding and were segregated based on their type of gender-based discrimination, biases, and other contrarian languages to GAD.

Table 3. Inventory of gender-based humor with their dominant themes or messages (posts)

| Posts (themes/messages) | Target sector | N |
|---|---------------|----|
| Women as being hard to understand, overacting, and unreasonable | women | 14 |
| Women being objectified based on body | women | 12 |
| Women are dependent, weak, and soft | women | 9 |
| Women are good content for entertainment | women | 8 |
| Women are controlled by their physiology (e.g., periods, moods, and anger issues) | women | 8 |
| Women are less productive, low performance, and less skilled | women | 7 |
| Women are shallow, physical, and sexual | women | 6 |
| Women are over privileged, and should have less rights | women | 6 |
| Same sex with less privilege, and less rights (no to marriage) | LGBT | 4 |
| Gays are weak and soft qualities | LGBT | 2 |
| Being gay is a joke or bad | LGBT | 4 |
| Gender orientation is a joke | genders | 1 |

Table 3 showed that gender-based humor from fourteen (14) participants for the last 12 months starting from November 2021 with the content on women as being hard to understand, overacting, and unreasonable comprise the highest frequency posted and commented in the online. It is followed by women being objectified based on their body, being portrayed as weak, dependent, as well as being the subject of entertainment on the online jokes. Furthermore, the LGBT community is also portrayed with different characterization in gender-based humor online including language content pertaining to their lesser rights compared to other genders, being weak and being easy topics for funny conversations.

10.2 Research objective 2: Discourse markers of the online gender-based humor

Typically, humor has been regarded as a universal human activity that practically everyone engages in on a daily basis in a range of social settings. Simultaneously, there are substantial cultural influences on how humor is used and when laughter is appropriate. Language advocates, on the other hand, have a negative attitude toward humor, especially when it comes to gender. The purpose of this marker was to determine the dimensions of gender-based humor and expressiveness. The markers are the expression’s structure and how it’s presented through social media.

Table 4 presents the discourse markers for the gender-based expressions in social media. Gender-based humor was collected to describe the discourse markers. It is important to note that gender-based expressions were presented to the participants, and they were asked to pick some expressions that appear most in their social media feed. The humor, using the proposition of the incongruity theory, is conflicting expressions of human thoughts and social reality. This study labelled different discourse markers, i.e., defaulting jokes as normal, tolerating sexist jokes, perceiving inequality as a reality.

Tolerating sexist jokes was described as the “*inability of people to control the sexist labelling and catalyzing its spread through social media*”. In contrast, defaulting sexist jokes as normal was “*the supporting catalyst for sexist labelling*”. Notably, these two discourse markers were major

Table 4. Inventory of gender-based humor based on discourse markers

| Expressions (themes/messages) | Marker | N |
|--|------------------------------------|----|
| Women don’t have the rights. | Perceiving inequality as a reality | 12 |
| Sexist jokes are just normal. | Defaulting jokes as normal | 12 |
| I’m not sexist. Sexism is wrong. And being wrong is for women. | Tolerating sexist jokes | 9 |
| Philippine presidency is not a job for women. | Tolerating sexist jokes | 5 |
| Women are just meant for household chores. | Tolerating sexist jokes | 5 |
| Sexism is just normal and those who react negatively are bleeding bad or hurt. | Defaulting jokes as normal | 3 |
| Girls are too hysterical and overreacting. | Emerging theme | 3 |
| Women are not committed to their words and deserve to receive low wages. | Tolerating sexist jokes | 3 |
| When a woman says no, she really means to say yes. | Tolerating sexist jokes | 2 |
| Women are meant only for reproduction and shall not take part politically. | Perceiving inequality as a reality | 2 |
| Women are putting less effort to their work. | Emerging theme | 2 |
| Women are reckless in driving. | Perceiving inequality as a reality | 1 |

contributors of discriminatory expressions in social media. It was also observed that these discourse markers shared basic thematic interpretations. Defaulting jokes as normal resulted from “*one’s attitude towards social norms and gender*”. Hence, it served its independent concept of discriminatory expression.

Major purpose of bringing these themes as the subject was to describe its capacity to mask up its expression into a more socially acceptable context. For instance, for “*when a woman says no, she really means to say yes*”, this is Swedish proverb describing women as subordinates in making decisions. Insensitivity was the most prominent emerging theme for the participants. Oftentimes, participants label these expressions as insensitive and discriminatory while seeing people reacting on them and sharing the posts. However, these emerging themes did not share any similarities on the delimited discourse markers described above.

10.2.1. Defaulting jokes as normal

Normalization was the prevalent marker in the testimonies from the research. There are layers of markers based on definitions and based on tagging that pursues the description and elaboration about gender-based humor online.

In the level of definition, markers for gender-based humor online include “it is normal” or “it is part of our lives”. Normalization proceeds as a way of life in making things light in the conversation and making these conversations intending to have enjoyment and entertainment.

In the case of the younger generation, normal for them means that they can share, receive, and comments on posts about gender-based humor to display their common attitudes towards gender-based humor such as the liberality, perceptions, and social relationship. The males, for instance, are more frequently depicted in media texts as logical subjects who are thought to be more active, while the females are portrayed as helpless or victim characters who are perceived to be very passive and more emotional. Menegatti and Rubini (2017) found these assumptions to be based on how the projection of a certain gender is frequented in jokes online and become normal in the views of the males and potentially by the majority of the population who are not corrected for what should be GAD-fair characterizations.

“Normal lang sir for me. Dipende sa extent ng jokes. Like sa friends, if someone made by powerful or may influence. A joke, but they can be not appropriate so they are not normal. Dipende sa tao or the target audience...”

“It’s normal for me. It depends on the extent of the jokes. Like among friends, if someone made by power or influence. A joke, but they can not be appropriate so they are not normal. It depends on the person or the target audience.”

“Today’s generation po, it is normal in creating memes in social media. It is not a normal thing if it offends opposite gender or third genders...”

“Today’s generation, it is normal creating memes in social media. It is not a normal thing if it offends opposite gender or third genders.”

“I guess it’s normal. But I think iba-iba ang pananaw ng tao. Biases. Purely purely normal, not hitting below the belt is acceptable...”

“I guess it’s normal. But I [also] think people differ to their perspectives. Purely, purely normal... [for some] hitting below the belt is acceptable...”

10.2.2. Tolerating sexist jokes

Beyond the layers of markers for normalization on gender-based humor, markers for tolerating sexist jokes took a deeper route on how the gender-based humor proceeds among the populace.

It appears that the actors in the online set-up manifest the markers for tolerance through “negligence” which seems to be alarming language production and language distribution to as many social media players. Evident markers from the “negligent” feature are narrated as “humor can be part of human life as it adds spice”, or “for entertainment value”. These types of tolerance are not really revealed unless analyzed from the point of view of people who pass on and receive gender-based humor online.

As the different profiles play around the gender-based humor in the social media, the actions become common and normal and thus, transition into tolerance because not many cares about its implicit meanings and effects to GAD advocacies. As this study digs in, it revealed the intricacies of hurting the causes of GAD specifically that these “potential negligence” reinforces tolerance to sexism or discrimination on women and LGBT.

“May mga memes na hindi equal and equal. Like for example, ‘enough about women’s right, time to discuss about women’s wrong’. Ito bastos sa women pero sa aming mga guys, joke lang to...”

“There are memes that are equal and [not] equal. For example, ‘enough about women’s right, time to discuss about women’s wrong’. This is harsh for women but for us guys, it’s just a joke.”

“For me it can be a part of our lives. Memes jokes can prevent anxieties. It has huge impacts sa lives natin...”

“For me it can be a part of our lives. Memes jokes can prevent anxieties [pertaining to entertainment value]. It has huge impacts to our lives.”

“If it is normal nalang na nakaka-offend sa ibang tao. We tend to offend them...”

“If it is normal offending other people, [then] we tend to offend them.”

10.2.3. Perceiving inequality in gender as a reality

Perceptions on gender-based humor vary from the many lenses of the actors online. There are generalizations on the perceived inequality and there are exceptions on these perceptions based on the opinions of the actors online. The most apparent language used was “labelling of weakness of gender”, prominently referring to women and LGBT. For instances on women, “women drivers, no survivors”, indicated a representation of weakness that pinpoints to women over other genders. Peters et al. (2015) illustrate the difference of women over the other genders in the context of sexism as it causes more problems by attempting to expound on gender inequity by saying that men and women are basically different (Peters et al., 2015).

“In my own opinion, offensive siya kasi more on, it talks about hindi siya equal. Nag-stereotype siya ng gender. Hindi siya makakatulong ng mainstreaming...”

“In my opinion, it’s offensive because it’s more on... it talks about inequality. It is stereotyping the gender. It cannot help in [gender & development] mainstreaming.”

“Mostly just like dito sa period ng babae. Yung capabilities ng babae...”

“Mostly just like about menstruation. The capabilities of the woman.”

“For me it’s not equal. It shows inequality. They are labelling words or movements pertaining to men only. If women do it, parang ang ending hindi mag-su-succeed pag women ang gagawa...”

“For me it’s not equal. It shows inequality. They are labelling words or movements pertaining to men only. If women do it, it will not succeed.”

“The jokes tend to focus on the weaknesses of the gender. Sort of normal but these tend to look at them as lesser gender...”

“As for me, there are genders being labelled. Women drivers, no survivors. Good for people think [it] as joke. Some people tend to understand it as an insult. Guys, gays, ‘I am a gay’ joke.”

10.3. Emerging themes of discourse markers (regulation and control)

To some extent, the markers for normalization, tolerance, and perceived inequality on gender-based humor were clearly nuanced based on the accounts of the research participants’ experience and online situations. Beyond these nuances are clear indicators that normalizing gender-based humor with discretionary language (both explicitly and implicitly) has to be put in check because of its potential harms. Markers tagging gender-based humor as somewhat “sexist” and “discriminatory” to certain genders have to be “regulated” and “controlled” in the sharing space of the online world. This is the same observation by Gagliardone (2014), where online expressions in the online contexts have not been regulated compared to the offline and other types of social interaction with censorship. Brown (1970, 1975) dates back the language of segregation and control of women in the workplace as attempts to control language of discriminations based on gender particularly on women.

For now, tolerating the gender-based humor with sexism undertones might be acceptable to other groups but should be “moderated” because the use of these languages can influence other people and change their perspectives. The “moderated” marker responds to the idea of not making people become insensitive to the very idea of discriminating and hurting certain genders (women or LGBT).

“Nowadays I think with the societal norms, it becomes normalized. Normal in a moderated way...”

“Normal in a sense na there are people who are used to it, less regulations. Less insensitive...”

“Normal in a sense that there are people who are used to it, less regulations, less sensitive...”

“I think ano...With the existing advocacy there is already an awareness and a correction. Re-

spond mechanism. People look at it as normal. Nagkakaroon ng reaction effect yung society that it's not good to discriminate or joke..."

"I think, with the existing advocacy, there is already an awareness and at the same time correction. Respond Mechanism. People took it normal. It has reaction effect for society that it's not good to discriminate or joke..."

11. Discussions

11.1. Defaulting jokes as normal

There are layers of conversations that dissect the markers of normalization on gender-based humor online. There are remnants of hesitation as to whether gender-based humor should be normalized or not normalized. Beckman et al. (2013) aligned their finding where traditions on certain groups tolerate patterns of online remarks. Implicit markers include the "context of the delivered joke", "how it affects people", and "how an individual reacts". These covert bases go straight to the psyche of the owner and the recipients of the jokes online. In some instances, normalizing jokes and the reverse were aligned with how "harsh", "insensitive", and "hurtful" a certain joke is.

The normal attributes of the gender-based humor online consider the themes of the joke, such as gender roles and character. Ford et al. (2013) explain why some sectors in the social media justify societal sexism and normalize it. The mobility of the "normal" marker for gender-based humor seem to be "acceptable" if the group or sector accepts it as part of a common practice like to peers or friends or part of a tradition of that particular sets of people like to a family. This is very true to what Martin and Ford (2018) affirmed that humor is seen as "genuine" in many human civilizations, to certain people, certain sets of groups, indicating that gender-based humor has a better chance of "normalization". Intercultural identities jokes can be normalized based on cultural differences, as what is offensive to others may be normal to other culture (Jiang et al., 2019).

The implication of normalization goes back to the idea that there are lesser actions to forward GAD mainstreaming because people think this type of gender-based jokes are normal. This is where GAD campaign can capitalize by providing cues and classification as to which language of the humor is normal and should be articulated appropriately based on the aspired mainstreaming (Hall and Bucholtz, 2012).

11.2. Tolerating sexist jokes

The gender-based humor can be marked as "offensive for others" or the "offense is tolerated" depending on which group of people (age or position in society), such as in the case of slut-shaming as found by Ayuningtyas and Kariko (2018) where jokes on ridiculing women as sluts seemed to be tolerated which is extended even to the LGBT in using expressions such as faggots (Baider, 2018). Generally, there is a space for tolerance because these jokes are loaded with entertainment value rather than an attack on the GAD sectors (women and LGBT). In fact, they are willing to forgo the offensive feature of the humor because the humor itself is a therapy for those with anxiety. Labov (1972) cleared this complexity explaining that the target purpose of a certain language use, no matter how other groups view it and for as long as the group accepts its purpose, may be considered as a tolerated community speech practice. The tolerance expands to misogynistic patterns of remarks as networked by users online (Banet-Weiser and Miltner, 2016). There might be other implications or

underlying message to these languages but for as long as the other purpose weighs more importantly against the other purpose, then the language is tolerated.

To be more specific, tolerating was determined especially among adolescents for perceiving gender-based humor against women (specified) as “offensive for females” but a “joke for males”. The path of tolerating gender-based humor in social media was dependent to the situation, target people, and the message. Elias and Gurbanova (2018) demonstrated how there can be camouflage on how the meanings or interpretation of jokes to some groups. In the case of men or women, for Bill and Naus (1992), how humor is interpreted in diverse sexist incidents among gender roles. Sexist jokes are used to discriminate against people based on their gender orientation, identity, and roles and they are sometimes camouflaged as comedy or jokes those others might overlook. To some extent, even some of the populace are willing to accept and tolerate language of sexism (Cole, 2015). Sexist language choices in everyday conversation reinforce gender stereotypes of men as competent and women as communal tolerating sexism and other discriminatory cues from the gender-based humor were markers for negligence, laxity, and in discrete form rather than mere acceptance, and normalization of language. Drakett et al. (2018) testify on their findings how women are perceived weak and tolerated memes that portray them as the slower gender in the disguise of humor language (Eisenhart and Johnstone, 2008). In fact, this discourse markers extend the manifestations of inequality to language of hostility, hate and biases (KhosraviNik and Esposito, 2018; Kopytowska, 2017).

As a dangerous precedence, the implication proceeds to undermining the aspirations of GAD because the sexism component is bypassed by the acts of tolerance, thereby slowing down the campaign of GAD. There should then be techniques on how to reverse the psyche of tolerance of players in the online space (Doherty, 2014) by analyzing dominant language markers and tag them as sexist and may be anti-mainstreaming of GAD.

11.3. Perceiving inequality in gender as a reality

Perceived inequalities have shared common traits and manifestations with “normalization” and “tolerating” discourse markers indicating the message, audience, and extent of the gender-based humor. Perceived inequality, however, was firm to the language and expression of the gender-based humor. “Labelling what a person can do” is just a surface marker for inequality, as beyond it comes the perceived inequality was evidenced by “realistic manifestations”, “gender comparison” and “looking lesser to someone”. For clear discourse markers, perceived inequality was provisional to representation, portrayal, and delineation of someone. Bergvall (2014), in deeper power dynamics language and sex, discussed the use of language to produce and maintain power and prestige where inequality is a must to actualize through language patterns which gender is more powerful and prestigious. The discourse markers from this study occupy the truth about gender stereotypes and inequality among genders (Elias and Gurbanova, 2018).

The markers on women inferiority reflect on how inequality gets in the beginning of forced acceptance of women. Agassi (1977, 1988, 1989) manifested this inequality on certain memes in the workplace such as who performs better. Rowland and Klein (1996) mirror the idea of inequality on a radical feminist theory of gender inequality as women are taught from birth to accept heterosexuality as a given, forcing them to internalize their inferior status. These findings intensified the inequality as Blumberg (1984) visualizes the context of gender stratification and women’s discontent

even in the arena of discourses on online humor.

11.4. Emerging themes of discourse markers (regulation and control)

Boundaries for using gender-based humor should be in placed through control and regulation. Markers on regulation and control specifically suggest “awareness and correction” on gender-based humor with heavy loads of discrimination and sexism. Attardo (1993) found this not impossible to do because humor has mechanisms and criteria to evaluate. The society now, in active sets of mechanism acknowledge that many gender-based humor is dangerous to the campaign of GAD as the extent of the language use of the gender-based humor can break the success of GAD advocacies. In a high prejudice setting, Cantor and Zillmann (1973) tied up the effect of exposure to disparagement humor on tolerance of subsequently encountered discriminatory events. The theory contributes to the literature on prejudice and discrimination by delineating the processes by which disparagement humor creates a normative climate of tolerance of discrimination if there is no censorship and control.

There was a segment of the population who are less negligent to actualizing discrimination and sexism. This is particularly present on dialects where some humor is already a part of their patterns in dialect conversation even if it is sexist (Bortoni-Ricardo, 1985). Conscious actions had been done to curb the effects of gender-based humor with potential damage to certain genders, through “respond mechanisms” as many actors in the online space were concerned on the extent of the emotional and psychological effects of the gender-based humor. Emerging trends for these perspectives (in protecting and upholding GAD campaigns) are anchored on regulation, response, and actions to be done in protecting the marginalized groups.

12. Conclusion

Given that gender-based humor has complex discourse features, multiple message patterns, and communication traits, the gender-based humor online can fall in the mould of normalization which can hurt the gender spectrum of gender and development campaigns because the very markers of these jokes are accepted by some sectors because of its prevailing tolerance. What is clear though is that there is a represented belief that the gender-based humor online has clear markers for sexism, bias, and discrimination to both women and LGBT. There is in fact a reality that inequality has become a part of the social media space because of the perceived normalized jokes and tolerance of sexist humor. It is then a sound view that there should be control and regulation from these discourse markers as espoused by the extracted narratives of the study to specifically on the idea of awareness and correction about the consequences of gender-based humor online.

13. Recommendation

1) *Library of online gender-based humor*: develop a comprehensive gender-based humor map-pers to inventory its discourse markers using the algorithm of social media and analyze its engagements through digital meters like appreciation levels, distribution methods, and profile-targeting mechanism to further analyze the numerical gauges to plan for a specific GAD campaign mechanism that is data and digital-based.

2) *Manual for language derivatives of gender-based humor*: classify and categorize language components of gender-based humor in terms of level of normalization, tolerating sexist jokes, and

perceived inequality in reality, authorial profiles, recipient profiles, and distributor profiles. It is also a pragmatic step to attribute the language markers of humor based on cultural, traditional, and family practices as well as its communicative features such as appeal, relatability, and simplicity.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Agassi JB (1977) The unequal occupational distribution of women in Israel. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 2(4): 888–894. DOI: 10.1086/493418
- Agassi JB (1988) The design of working time and the status of women. In: Agassi JB and Heycock S (eds.) *The Redesign of Working Time: Promise or Threat*. Berlin: Sigma, pp.249–255.
- Agassi JB (1989) Theories of gender equality: Lessons from the Israeli Kibbutz. *Gender & Society*, 3(2): 160–186. DOI: 10.1177/089124389003002002
- Alkiviadou N (2022) Ain't that funny?. *The European Journal of Humour Research*, 10(1): 50–61.
- Andrew C (2022) Gender bias and creative idea evaluation. Bachelor's Thesis, The University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, TX, United States.
- Attardo S (1993) Violation of conversational maxims and cooperation: The case of jokes. *Journal of Pragmatics* 19(6): 537–558. DOI: 10.1016/0378-2166(93)90111-2
- Ayuningtyas P and Kariko AAT (2018) The slut-shaming phenomenon in social media: A case study on female English literature students of Binus University. In: Kerr T, Ndimande B, der Putten JV (eds.) *Urban Studies: Border and Mobility*. London and New York: Routledge, pp.347–352.
- Baider F (2018) “Go to hell fucking faggots, may you die!” framing the LGBT subject in online comments. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* 14(1): 69–92. DOI: 10.1515/lpp-2018-0004
- Banet-Weiser S and Miltner KM (2016) #MasculinitySoFragile: Culture, structure, and networked misogyny. *Feminist Media Studies* 16(1): 171–174. DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2016.1120490
- Beckman L, Hagquist C, and Hellström L (2013) Discrepant gender patterns for cyberbullying and traditional bullying—An analysis of Swedish adolescent data. *Computers in Human Behavior* 29(5): 1896–1903. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2013.03.010
- Bergvall V (2014) *Rethinking Language and Gender Research: Theory and Practice*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Bill B and Naus P (1992) The role of humor in the interpretation of sexist incidents. *Sex Roles* 27: 645–664. DOI: 10.1007/BF02651095
- Blumberg RL (1984) A general theory of gender stratification. *Sociological Theory* 2: 23–101. DOI: 10.2307/223343
- Bortoni-Ricardo SM (1985) The urbanization of rural dialect speakers. A sociolinguistic study in Brazil. *Cambridge Studies in Linguistics London* 1–265.
- Brown JK (1970) A note on the division of labor by sex. *American Anthropologist* 72(5): 1073–1078. DOI: 10.1525/aa.1970.72.5.02a00070
- Brown JK (1975) Iroquois women: An ethnographic note. In: Reiter RR (ed.) *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. New York: Monthly Review Press, pp.235–251.
- Campbell S, Greenwood M, Prior S, et al. (2020) Purposive sampling: Complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of Research in Nursing* 25(8): 652–661. DOI: 10.1177/1744987120927206
- Cantor JR and Zillman D (1973) Resentment toward victimized protagonists and severity of misfortunes they suffer as factors in humor appreciation. *Journal of Experimental Research in Personality* 6(4): 321–329.
- Cole KK (2015) “It’s like she’s eager to be verbally abused”: Twitter, trolls, and (en) gendering disciplinary rhetoric.

- ric. *Feminist Media Studies* 15(2): 356–358. DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2015.1008750
- DiMaggio P, Hargittai E, Neuman WR, and Robinson JP (2001) Social implications of the Internet. *Annual Review of Sociology* 27(1): 307–336.
- Doherty M (2014) *Gender Mainstreaming in Development Programming* [online]. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/02/gender-mainstreaming-issues>
- Drakett J, Rickett B, Day K, and Milnes K (2018) Old jokes, new media—Online sexism and constructions of gender in internet memes. *Feminism and Psychology* 28(1): 109–127. DOI: 10.1177/0959353517727560
- Eisenhart C and Johnstone B (2008) Discourse analysis and rhetorical studies. In: Johnstone B and Eisenhart C (eds.) *Rhetoric in Detail: Discourse Analyses of Rhetorical Talk and Text*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp.3–21.
- Elias S and Gurbanova N (2018) Relocating gender stereotypes online: Critical analysis of sexist hate speech in selected social media. In: Kwary DA, Petru T, and Sartini NW (eds.) *Proceedings of the International Conference on Language Phenomena in Multimodal Communication (KLUA 2018)*, Surabaya, Indonesia, 17–19 July, 2018, pp.272–277. Dordrecht: Atlantis Press. DOI: 10.2991/klua-18.2018.40
- Ford TE, Woodzicka JA, Triplett SR, and Kochersberger AO (2013) Sexist humor and beliefs that justify societal sexism. *Current Research in Social Psychology* 21(7): 64–81.
- Gagliardone I (2014) *Mapping and Analysing Hate Speech Online* [online]. Available at: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2601792> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2601792>
- Garrett E (n.d.) *How Humor Works—A Clear Proposal for a Classic Question* [online]. Available at: <https://philpapers.org/archive/SBHHW.pdf>
- Hall K and Bucholtz M (eds.) (2012) *Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Hassan M (2022) *Discourse Analysis—Methods, Types and Examples* [online]. Available at: <https://researchmethod.net/discourse-analysis/>
- Jiang T, Li H, and Hou Y (2019) Cultural differences in humor perception, usage, and implications. *Frontiers in Psychology* 10: 123. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00123
- KhosraviNik M and Esposito E (2018) Online hate, digital discourse and critique: Exploring digitally-mediated discursive practices of gender-based hostility. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics* 14(1): 45–68. DOI: 10.1515/lpp-2018-0003
- Kiger ME and Varpio L (2020) Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131. *Medical Teacher* 42(8): 846–854. DOI: 10.1080/0142159X.2020.1755030
- Kopetz H and Steiner W (2022) Internet of things. In: *Real-Time Systems: Design Principles for Distributed Embedded Applications*. Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, pp.325–341.
- Kopytowska M (2017) Discourses of hate and radicalism in action. In: *Contemporary Discourses of Hate and Radicalism across Space and Genres*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins B.V., pp.1–12.
- Labov W (1972) *Sociolinguistic Patterns (No. 4)*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Mahapatra A and Srivastava J (2013) Incongruity versus incongruity resolution. In: *2013 International Conference on Social Computing*, Alexandria, VA, USA, 08–14 September 2013, pp.25–32. New York: IEEE.
- Martin RA and Ford T (2018) *The Psychology of Humor: An Integrative Approach*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Academic Press.
- Menegatti M and Rubini M (2017) Gender bias and sexism in language. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*. DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.470
- Peters N, Holmgreen L, and Oswald D (2015) It’s just a joke: Reactions to and justifications for gender role stereotypes in advertisements. *Psychological Research* 20(3): 160–168.
- Provine RR (2000) The science of laughter. *Psychology Today* 33(6): 58–62.
- Rowland R and Klein R (1996) Radical feminism: History, politics, action. In: Bell D and Klein R (eds.) *Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed*. Melbourne: Spinifex. pp.9–37.

- Saunders M, Lewis P, and Thornhill A (2014) *Research Methods for Business Students (6th edn., Greek Language Edition)*. London: Pearson Education Limited.
- Singh K (2007) *Quantitative Social Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, pp.64.
- Taylor Z (2022) “(It) shouldn’t be funny but you can’t help but laugh”: Black Twitter, # TweetLikeThe1600s, and Black humor online. *Social Media + Society* 8(2): 1–9. DOI: 10.1177/20563051221107631
- Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) (2002) *Gender Mainstreaming: An Overview* [online]. Available at: <https://www.peacewomen.org/node/90256>