

Feminism on social media: Generalized misogyny

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Abstract. The following study focuses on one of the major aspects which is the portrayal of misogyny and gender discrimination on social media and its influence on societies' perceptions and gender relations. In as much as power relations in speech are picturesquely framed with theories developed by Robin Lakoff and Deborah Tannen the study employs verbal constructions of gender disparity. These problems are aggravated with the dawn of the digital age that instantly transmits information and shares various content; social networks thus increase the use of sexist speech and cyberbullying. Combining the instinct to investigate and the imaginative capacity to construct a speculation on the reality, social networking uncovered the misery of a huge number of manhandled ladies with the hashtag #metoo, and simultaneously, kept an aggressive system of male privilege alive to torment more unfortunate ladies through distributed abuse. This is where the study resonates with its importance of making a deliberate attempt at a shift in current language practices towards altering the existing cultural and social inequalities when it comes to the gender aspects as well as online harassment.

1 Introduction

Misogyny and gender discrimination prevail in society to a large extent and continue to function based on largely facilitated platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The effect of these platforms cannot be overlooked because they are the great places that host the languages, so they evolve into aspects that reflect the societal attitudes toward men and women.

The digital communication evolution rate tremendously increased. It intensified consumerism and, therefore, forced more attention on feminist researchers. Language, in general, has most certainly supported patriarchy in the past, as many offensive words relate to the subject of gender and are found to be used in everyday conversation. Social media has catalyzed these issues to strike in no time, providing the whole world with a platform where bad ideas are globally spread. Social media's inherent ability to go viral accentuates the proliferation of misogynistic speech, creating conditions where gender has the space to propagate malicious acts unhindered by checks and balances.

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According to Li, Ademiluyi, Ge, and Park, academic surveys prove the potential of web-based language with its visible, verifiable influence on public perception, set cultural standards, and mental health [1]. Several cases observe that women and marginalized genders, especially those in media, are the most targeted in online harassment, which contains derogatory terms of gender and even a chance of receiving life threats. Criticizing, engaging in personal attacks, and suspected digital threats from trolling are all issues that inhibit women from altogether participating in public discourse, thus widening the gap in the sphere of politics, academia, and business, among others.

2 Literature Review

The discussion on how language assists gender imbalances employs several theories reflected by the early works of scholars such as Robin Lakoff and Deborah Tannen. In her seminal book, Lakoff argues that language, in essence, is a mirror of the power relations in society, and the dominance of men is often demonstrated in these power relations, particularly concerning women [2]. According to her, the verbal constructions are shaped and directed through the same patterns and standards of gender norms, which in turn works to the detriment of women in conversations. According to Donaldson and Preston, in *Embracing Lakoff's Basement*, Tannen moves on by showing specific conversational patterns of male and female verbal communication styles, which may lead to misconceptions and stereotypical choices [3].

With the emergence of the digital age, seeing how Media Ecology Theory was relevant became more familiar. This theoretical model indicates that the environment where media are present can be a source to define and express modes of human perception and behavior. Among other platforms, social media is a significant place for depicting the reproducing and aggravating of stereotypical gender prejudices. According to Mattioli, Roberts, Steinberger, and Brown, social media does a double dose, not only by projecting but also by elevating sexist language patterns so that demeaning words and expressions of gender become more popular and visible [4].

Nowadays, the gender imbalance is being taken into consideration, with a lot of scientific realizations being carried across the globe showing the various forms of digital gender bias. More often than not, women serve as the targets of gender-related defamatory remarks, as supported by statistics on harassment in the online space.

As one of the main critical discourse analytical tools, CDA provides a very productive standpoint for studying inequality and ideology in linguistic practice. Conformation to such a strategical approach uncovers how language is employed as an instrument of digital oppression by the use of coordinated malicious attacks frequently directed at women with the aid of highly gendered abuse. According to the theory that feminism has decentralized, the points of view of marginalized groups, such as women, should be considered with great importance in society's analysis of structures and power hierarchy processes. According to Fontanella, Chulvi, Ignazzi, Sarra, and Tontodimamma, researching misogyny online starts by listing women as social beings who can contribute to how linguistic sexism gets manifested and how it gets tackled [5].

3 Gendered language plan original and a new

Language has been a tool for mirroring society's values since ancient times, often reproducing patriarchal views [6]. It has always been that an abundance of words constantly changes the connotations of terms and phrases considering gender. For instance, the very word "guys" is used frequently to talk to mixed-gender groups, which appear masculine. According to

Anupam Joya Sharma and Malavika Ambale Subramanyam, The historical roots of "guy" used to refer only to men, but then came the global recognition of the term, underscoring how language could develop and still bear its historical prejudices [7].

The word gendering process is commonly done secretly and reflects hitherto very entrenched patterns of social structures [8]. Unsurprisingly, how people address each other manifests such biases. Take, for instance, those professions or roles established as activities for the men alone [9]. However, even if women are getting into these fields now, people often use male-centric terminology. For instance, "chairman" or "fireman", which persist despite the apparent availability of gender-neutral alternatives, do "chairperson" or "firefighter", referring to the same meaning, show that deeply rooted patriarchal values are present in that language.

Gender-marked language does not stop with expert titles having different gender prefixes; it soaks in people's daily lives and expressions. These expressions like "man up" or "throwing like a girl" are examples that show that language/words can support and endorse gender stereotypes regarding roles and capabilities. Because of such expressions, the perception is that masculinity is all about strength and competence in society. In contrast, femininity is perceived in the same culture as the opposite, characterized by weakness and ineptitude [10]. Thus, these lingual prejudices influence society's concept of social gender divisions that lead to an entity's self-concept and perception of others.

The swear words and the demeaning insults serve as the primary evidence of language biases against gender [11]. The most abusive slang and offensive expressions relate to women; the insults are more brutal when someone uses them on them. A rude language like "bitches", "sluts", and "whores" is an instrument of women's suppression. Instead of the accolade, it is an attempt to control female behavior in society. For instance, "bastard" and "asshole" among the insults directed at men do not share much of a gendered connotation or historical legitimacy of their usage while being directed at another gender. It could be thus argued that this very distortion depicts the existing imbalanced social hierarchy.

The evolution of language is another characteristic people can see, which also has strong resistance against any form of change, particularly with the words that are culturally well accepted to introduce gender-neutral language frequently become hindered due to people's unwillingness or intentionally impudent treatment of these changes as too much political correctness [11]. On the other hand, these activities require them to realize as well as to appreciate the fact that it is vital to achieve equality and avoid the reinforcement of gender stereotypes. Consider, for instance, a decision to use "they" instead of "he or she" as a singular pronoun, a step that is very thoughtful and respectful to those individuals who do not align themselves with the male or female binary. However, the ongoing discussion about its correctness remains.

Characterization of gender in narrative and historical texts lets us see that these biases are still firmly grounded [12]. Most female characters are drawn to the extent of the novel's gender constructions, and they can be seen as passive or confessional roles [4]. Through the manipulation of language, the characters may appear reduced, thus subtly recognizing their submissive roles. While modern feminist criticism aims to dig out and retrieve hidden biases, new perceptions about why these biases affect people's views of society are offered. Still, as this happens, the concern is that the listeners may choose to take sides – in doubting or believing what these environments hold in them.

4 Gendered slurs, in additionally to unnecessary vulgarity, one has to change the view on peers and even friends because one starts to put them in a category

Swear words and other expletives have for centuries been vehicles for the expression of the intensity of emotions [13]. However, a great many of those sayings are imbued with gender biases in a way that helps to reinforce and entrench community sexism. The use of female swearing often does not reinforce appropriate social values and reinforces the stereotype of women [14]. One example is the use of the words “bitch” and “motherfucker” which can be interpreted as one of the bases for this gender-based discrimination arising from issues related to culture and power.

The word “bitch” is a blatant illustration of swearing that is targeted at female gender and is used to humiliate women. Initially, a “bitch” was the word used to refer to a female dog [15]. Later, it became a way to address women who said something, were commented on as complex, or were considered running the show. By making this change, it is understood that society is capable of punishing women who do not meet gender-limited standards. According to Sharma et al., when galvanizing women with phrases like that, society looks to determine and limit their behavior and discourage them from being strong and instead taking submissive roles [16].

Social media has increasingly been the platform for the rise of these cases. Due to its enormous scope and nameless users, social media channels have become the appropriate haven for this type of language [17]. Online harassers just use intimidating language to address issues against women, which has resulted in making digital spaces where females are insecure and do not participate. According to Jung Yong Woo and Oh Hyun Taek, The gender-specific slang commonly accepted in this milieu, in the end, continues tarnishing the images of women, and this adds to the culture of gender violence and discrimination [18].

The fact that sexist swear words reflect the traditional society in which dominance is associated with manhood. In contrast, subordination is associated with femininity is an example of sexism throughout the whole society. Men have a wrong view of themselves when words such as “bitches” and “motherfuckers” are used to dominate and force others since these words are perceived to make males, who are bold and assertive, happy. At the same time, the females who try to stand out are seen as rebels. According to Thorleifsson, this leads to the further transmission of a culture in which violence and discrimination against girls have become integral [19].

5 Case study: The probability of discovering sexism in the form of words or statements on Twitter

The classroom of Twitter is a remarkable example of a situation for comprehending whether misogyny is every day, aside from interpreting its implications on modern digital communication [20]. Emphasis on briefness and immediate responses, which the platform brings forth not infrequently, superimposes bullying and disgusting talks on women, which makes the situation more hostile, reducing gender equality.

The #MeToo campaign shows how such a trend works. According to Ailwood, Loney-Howes, Seuffert, and Sharp, #First off, this hashtag was a way for these survivors to put out there their stories and make those rapists and their videos accountable for what they had done [21]. Even though expressions of sympathy and encouragement took a significant leap, abuse, misogyny, and maneuvers to silence women were also significantly reported.

Sentiment analysis of tweets tagged with the MeToo keyword opposed the discussions acutely. An apparent gender clash polarizes the audience as some respond with an encouraging and supportive tone. In contrast, others include the use of slang and malevolent threats to undermine and bully those women in the movement. This catch-22 plays a part in the persistent misogyny in digital spaces that not only fosters online harassment but keeps it alive.

The poisonous atmosphere also reaches the so-called fan culture on Twitter, which is not the only high-profile case [22]. Some women activists, journalists, and others usually risk their careers, safety, and freedom when they become the subject of a concentrated attack meant to remove them from public view. According to Whiting, Pickens, Sagers, Pettyjohn, and Davies, the anonymity brought about by Twitter allows offenders to attack women without being accountable, which in turn makes the victims of the abuse fearful, anxious, and powerless [23].

The mental harm of a battered member of a woman is great, so many people self-censor or even quit the platform to protect their mental health [24]. Not only silencing but also marginalizing women's expression is an act itself as well as the reinforcement of the existing power GAP, which is the idea of feminist movements.

6 The semiotics backup in understanding the language sexes

Semiotics, the science of signs and symbols, constitutes a worldview of gender language through which people can interpret societal immanence and language's role in shaping societal norms [25]. Cultural studies explain how significance is invented and presented through symbols to demystify the concealed patterns that maintain sexism and polysemantic quality.

Language frequently borrows a two-tone formula, the newest one being adjectives like masculine or feminine or the old ones like the titles that describe the gender roles and behaviors, and prescribing these as well. Before using the words "he" and "she", it was implicitly assumed that the only identities were male and female, excluding non-binary identities. According to Marinucci, Mazzuca, and Gangemi, deconstruction of linguistic categories using semiotic research proves to be the key to understanding the cultural stereotypes these categories are associated with and shedding light on how they create entrenched gender perceptions in society [25].

Explorations and decipher such binary classifications from a semiotics perspective and concurrently reveal one's cultural biases [26]. For example, the abundance of male forms in generic terms that represent and emphasize the former dominance of men's experiences; thus, excluding women and non-binary individuals is probably the consequence of the modern vocabulary. According to Liu, semiotics assists people in seeing how networking maintains gender disparity by printing social power inequalities while other people communicate in everyday life [27].

7 Conclusion

The current extension of the reach of Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram has greatly accelerated the process of misogyny and gender discrimination. Language, in its historical sense as a societal microcosm, also sustains patriarchal arrangements within discourse and in the digital vernacular. The findings of other theoreticians including Lakoff and Tannen on the topic imply that gender inequalities are reflected in verbal communication and that the media environment of social networks only intensifies this problem. Cyberbullying, particularly against women and minorities, only deepens the division in such spheres as public debate, state administration, science, and commerce. Sexism in language reflects biases of women and men in society; the use of abusive names and professional descriptions enshrined in societies. Social media is as much an agent of protest as it is of sexual misconduct, and the #MeToo movement is a pertinent example to illustrate both aspects. The cultural representation provides evidence of the oppression of gender in language as it presents the subordination of one sex by another through semiotics. To overcome these

considerations, it is necessary to focus on the confrontation of these language norms by improving the digital language climate, which contributes to gender discrimination.

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