

Sexist Language in the Written Discourse of Pre-Service English Teachers: A Content and Linguistic Analysis

Diana Rose V. Mariano

Central Graduate School
Isabela State University – Echague Campus
dianarosevaldez13@gmail.com

Robin V. Guillermo

College of Education
Isabela State University – Echague Campus

Article Details:

Received: 12 April 2026
Revised: 19 April 2026
Accepted: 20 April 2026
Published: 27 May 2026
Corresponding Email:
dianarosevaldez13@gmail.com

Recommended Citation:

Mariano, D. R. V., Guillermo, R. V. (2026). Sexist Language in the Written Discourse of Pre-Service English Teachers: A Content and Linguistic Analysis. *The International Review of Multidisciplinary Research*. 1 (6), 167-179.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20327379>

Index Terms:

sexism, GFL, content & linguistic analysis, pre-service English teachers, feminist stylistics, mixed methods

Abstract. Language is a crucial tool that influences and shapes social attitudes and reinforces sex and gender ideologies particularly in education settings, however sexism and gender inequality were still prevalent in academics and educational contexts. This study examined the prevalence and patterns of sexist language on the written discourse of pre-service English teachers (PSET). A mixed method design was employed, involving 142 participants enrolled in an English teacher education program. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency, percentage, and average, while qualitative data were examined through content and linguistic analysis guided by Gender Fair Language Theory (GFL) and Feminist Stylistics. Findings revealed that sexist language was mostly prevalent in discourse level, clause/sentence level, then word level, where female-dominant and heteronormative expressions and patterns were observed and evident. Results were analyzed according to sex, gender orientation, year level, and linguistics-related courses taken which revealed that sexist language persisted regardless of one's profile. The study emphasized the persistence of gender-biased language even among future English educators reinforcing the need for strengthened gender-inclusive language instructional interventions and policies in (English) teacher education programs to promote GFL, egalitarianism, 5th SDG, linguistic equity, and social awareness.

Introduction

The world is biased in many ways and in many aspects. People have specific standards that affect the process of shaping society. Human beings tend to form and impose ideologies to discriminate and prejudice others due to different races, colors, beliefs, and principles, thinking that the other party is far more supreme. Aside from what is mentioned, one of the most challenging problems is sexism. It is an act of differentiating two sexes based on their sex imposing that one (male/man) is perceived as superior to the other (female/woman). The occurrence of sexism begins when people are unfairly treated because of their sex, being female, and having feminine features and abilities. Additionally, sexism occurs when, culturally, men are seen as stronger while women are weak. This is a display of stereotyping.

In Congo, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Nigeria, sexism and gender inequality were widespread social problems and challenges. Women were suppressed, devalued, and demeaned by heterogenous and archetypal mindset to the point where women's lives were taken. Nevertheless, the rest of the world is embracing the abilities of women to lead and hold economic areas, politics, and businesses such as in Canada, USA, Barbados, Bosnia, Iceland, Mexico, Peru, and Philippines proving that women's inferiority was a result of one's cultural perspectives. On the other hand, men were also discriminated against and prejudiced when they chose to be househusbands or when they even show emotions which was a sign of weakness. They were stigmatized to act tough and stoic whose roles must be leaders and providers. Moreover, third genders (LGBTQIA+) community experienced distasteful treatment from society, misrepresentation, and disconnectedness.

Language had been utilized and weaponized to deliver such actions, and English was universally one of the languages. English is internationally considered a universal language since it is the tool used for international communications and businesses; however, English has terms that when used to describe and determine gender were derogatory, sexualizing, and demeaning such as *weak*, *disgrace*, and *incapable*. To help minimize and prevent these real societal issues, efforts, and interventions are coined and founded such as Gender-Fair Language, Feminist Stylistics, 5th UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), Magna Carta for Women, Gender and Development (GAD), SOGIE Bill, and gender-responsive curricula. English language is a medium of communication, teaching, and learning in educational institutions in the Philippines promoting inclusivity and respect however, teachers were challenged in promoting and implementing gender-sensitive classrooms disbarring DepEd's and CHED's goal for celebrating all genders. It is argued that the College of Education can help in implementing GFL to have an inclusive community and the psychological well-being of future educators must be sustained (Orteza, et al., 2024) to handle future teaching practices regarding gender. PSET are the future educators who would have number of chances to apply gender equality in their future teaching strategies and practices to avoid unawareness of sexism and egalitarianism.

Upon investigation, seminars were implemented. Studies were conducted showing sexism exists in teaching and learning aspects, as a result, the mechanisms were initiated and implemented to achieve gender equality in different sectors of the Philippines, especially in education, but without application and strict compliance of these initiatives in teaching and learning processes, it could come to waste.

Moreover, none of the current published studies focused on the three levels of sexism across the written discourse of PSET. The modern world called for fair intercultural communication and a gender-fair environment that prompted this study to investigate fairness in English writing as it is much more structured, and communicators use language where they portray their thoughts and perceptions in this certain skill.

Hence, the proposed study aimed to investigate the prevalence of sexism by analyzing the content and linguistic context of written discourse, specifically essays, of the pre-service English teachers in a local milieu as they are future educators who have a wide array of knowledge in the target language and skill. Additionally, they have future opportunities to strictly implement interventions.

Statement of the Problem

Language can be weaponized to devalue, demean, and derogate individuals may it be at home, school, workplaces, and even public places. English language is one of the important mediums in teaching and learning process aside from it being an international and universal form of communication in which an individual must observe cautions by practicing and applying gender fair language which may begin in the four corners of future teachers. Studies showed evidence of sexism in teaching and learning aspects but none of these emphasized on three levels and offering guidelines for promoting GFL. Only few studies have HEI students as respondents, only basic education participants. Hence, the study aimed to investigate the prevalence of sexism by analyzing the content and linguistic context of written discourse, specifically essays, of PSET in the local milieu as they are the future educators who have wide array of knowledge in the target language and skill. Additionally, they have future opportunities to strictly implement interventions.

Research Questions

The study investigated the usage of sexist language in the written discourse composed by the pre-service English teachers through linguistic and content analysis. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the participants in terms of:
 - a. Sex;
 - b. Gender Orientation;
 - c. Year level; and
 - d. Linguistics Related Courses Taken?
2. What sexist language is used by the pre-service English teachers in their written discourse in terms of:
 - a. Word level;
 - b. Clause/sentence level; and
 - c. Discourse level
3. How prevalent is the sexist language used in the written discourse of pre-service English teachers based on their profile?
4. What list of guideline/s on usage of sexist language can be derived from the results?

Scope and Limitation

The current study limits itself on investigating occurrences of sexism only in the written discourse of pre-service English teachers from three non-sectarian HEIs (S.Y. 2025-2026) in a single region—Cauayan City, Isabela. No spoken data were added and should not focus on neologisms. Descriptive mixed method design and content and linguistic analysis were used in reporting demographic profile and occurrences of sexism in three levels of sexism by Mills. Due to the nature of the study and data gathering, inferential problems were encountered but it did not claim inferential generalization beyond the participating pre-service English teachers. The findings aimed to provide analytical insights rather than population-level conclusions.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the Gender Fair Language Theory of the European Parliament (1980s) and Feminist Stylistics of Sara Mills (1995) which both emphasizing the possibility of reducing sexist language in written discourse. The GFL theory lists guides and recommendations through feminization and neutralization of language in written texts where common issues of sexism are evident while Feminist Stylistics provided feminist perspective in three levels – word, clause/sentence, and discourse – focusing on words that can be gender-specific. Applied on this study, the language structure of the essays of pre-service English teachers must adhere to the guidelines and three levels of sexism shall assist the researcher in exploring, investigating, and analyzing the usage of sexist language in this current endeavor.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study presents the process and interconnection between the salient variables involving sexism across the written discourse of pre-service English teachers. It is composed of the following:

Independent Variables (inner circle): Variables of the study based on the data collected from the three different HEIs – Isabela Colleges, Inc., Isabela State University – Cauayan, and University of Perpetual Help System – Cauayan.

Dependent Variables (three outer circles): The study utilized the three levels of sexism in exploring, investigating, and analyzing the themes, patterns, and elements found across the written discourse, essays.

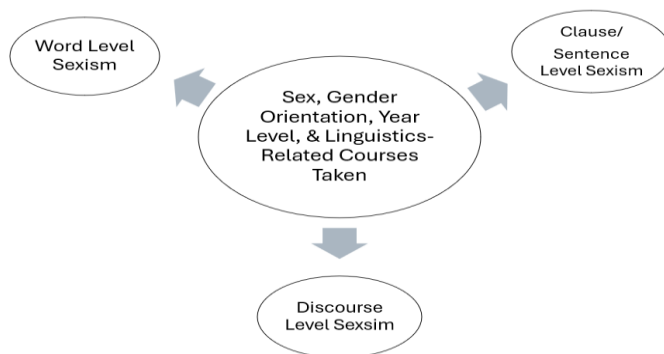


Figure 1. The Independent Variables (Sex, Gender Orientation, Year Level, and Linguistics-Related Courses Taken) and the Dependent Variables (Level of Word, Clause/Sentence, Discourse) of the Study.

Through these and the findings, the researcher created a guidebook for reducing the sexism in language across written discourse of pre-service English teachers. This guidebook will be recommended to the three HEIs of the study.

Assumptions of the Study

From the theories mentioned above, the following assumptions are made and shall be proven at the end of the study.

Gender-Fair Language Theory

1. The language used in the essays shall not be biased, discriminatory, demeaning, even derogatory, mean, prejudiced, or stereotype;
2. Non-sexist and gender-inclusive language must be evident in the discourse;
3. Generic use of masculine gender, he/his, himself, etc is avoided; and

- Names of professions, functions, and use of titles are gender-fair.

Feminist Stylistics

- Feminist Stylistics assumes that the participants' perceptions and ideologies may or may not be reflected in how language is used in writing their essays;
- The essay discourse must display non-sexist language;
- Words used in the essay are gender-specific;
- Statements are gender-inflected; and
- There are larger structures of the essays that are considered as gendered.

Methodology

Research Design

This current endeavour used a mixed method approach by combining quantitative-qualitative descriptive design to have an extensive comprehension of the research. The quantitative method was utilized to statistically analyzed the profile (sex, gender orientation, year level, and linguistic-related courses taken) of the participants and the number of sexism occurrences evident in their essay discourse were counted and measured quantitatively through frequency and percentage, enriching validity and reality. While qualitative design, coded and categorized the data by similarity of themes and patterns, interpret and understand their meaning and context at three levels of sexism (word, clause/sentence, and discourse levels). Thereby, the usage of mixed method was the most applicable design for the study since it has been seen as reliable in providing extensive understanding of sexism in language.

Population and Sampling

The subjects of the study originally involved 180 pre-service English teachers to cater a nonresponse adjustment through Cochran's formula with 95% confidence level $Z=1.96$, a margin error of $E=0.05$, and a conservative estimated proportion $p=0.50$, the initial required sample size for an infinite population is $n_0=384.16$. Applying the finite population correction for $N=225$ yields an adjusted sample size of $n\approx 142.18$. Therefore, the recommended sample size is 143 participants. However, due to inferential problems encountered, total of 142 subjects participated in the study. Nevertheless, the said final number still offered significant data, and the incorporation of qualitative analysis still adequately strengthened internal validity by specifying contextual analysis.

Simple random sampling was used to determine the participants for data saturation needed for the study. The participants came from the four-year levels of students S.Y. 2025-2026 who had their major subjects related to the study such as grammar, sociolinguistics, and criticism.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at the non-sectarian colleges, and private and public HEIs in the City of Cauayan, Isabela namely Isabela Colleges, Inc., Isabela State University – Cauayan, and University of Perpetual Help Systems Cauayan these institutions have been offering educational courses for more than a decade now and continuously producing professional teachers at the secondary level majoring in English.

Research Instruments

A self-made questionnaire served as the data-gathering tool for this study. The instrument was formulated in a such a way that surely generated language sexism in three levels (word, clause/sentence, and discourse) evident across the essay discourse of the participants. The research instrument prompts were circling around essay writing about the roles, representations, and challenges of men, women, and LGBTQIA++ members in society (most importantly at school, home, workspace, and public places) which participants have the freedom to include timely social issues to present their argument while related images were displayed to assist them formulate their ideas. Finally, the self-made questionnaire underwent reviews and content validations by three experts in English Language Teaching having highest educational attainment of doctorate and masters, who assisted the researcher improved the questionnaire.

Data Collection

The data were collected from the written discourse of pre-service English teachers elicited through the questionnaire. The researcher secured Letter of Permission to Conduct from the graduate school duly signed, sought approval from the Deans of the HEIs, and secured approval to conduct the study. Participants were oriented regarding the Informed Consent Forms

then instruments were distributed. The validated questionnaire was collected and grouped according to year level. Participants were coded (IC-PSET1-1, etc) for them to stay anonymous. Outputs were placed in a safe space for confidential and ethical purposes. Finally, questionnaires were transcribed using two software named Image to Text and CamScanner. Soft copies were stored in Google Drive in case of lost.

Data Analysis

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze written data and describe the results. The quantitative method focused on the participants' background such as sex, gender orientation, year level, and linguistics-related courses taken, using counting and percentage. The qualitative method examined the written texts to identify patterns, themes, and meanings related to sexist language that cannot be quantified. It is important to note that data saturation was applied by repeatedly reviewing the texts and further analysis stopped when no new forms or patterns of sexist language appeared to avoid non-redundant data and only meaningful ones. After validation of results with the experts, the researcher developed a research-based guidebook using the findings of the study.

Treatment of the Data

To treat the data collected from the written discourse, content and linguistic analysis were utilized to examine the sexist language in the participants' essays. Content Analysis was used to quantify, identify, label, and count all sexist expressions, which were then categorized based on Gender-Fair language guidelines and selected features of Feminist Stylistics. Categorization in general included gender hierarchies, power hierarchies, gendered roles, and slurs. Linguistic Analysis was employed to interpret how word choice (word level), sentence construction (clause/sentence level), and overall (discourse level) meaning reflected sexism, gender presuppositions, and representations of gendered roles, using GFL and Feminist Stylistics as analytical frameworks.

Ethical Considerations

The research tool was carefully reviewed and approved, and several ethical safeguards were applied. The ethical considerations mainly involved participant privacy, consent, and emotional safety. Since the study involved and asked about sex and gender – topics that participants may find personal or sensitive – it carried a task of discomfort. To address this, the researcher ensured informed consent, allowed anonymity, and respected participants' right to withdraw, and protected all personal data. These actions helped prevent harm, protected participants' identities, and followed ethical research standards and privacy laws. The paper including the self-made questionnaire and Informed Consent Form underwent Institutional Research Ethics Board of the school the researcher was affiliated.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results and discussion with tabular presentation, analysis and interpretation of the gathered data.

Participants of the Study

The subjects of the study came from the three different HEIs of the local milieu. The profile of the respondents included sex, gender orientation, year level, and linguistic-related courses taken. Originally, the sample size was 180, however, due to encountered inferential problems, the adjusted sample size became 142. Although it may affect the generalizability and interpretive consistency, it was noted that mixed methods were designed to have sampling constraints (Gamage, 2025). Still, the adjusted sampling provided the researcher adequate data to offer meaningful patterns and insights.

District	Population	Sample Size	Percentage	Sample Size (after adjustment)	Percentage
Isabela Colleges	74	60	33.33%	43	30.28%
University of Perpetual Help System – Cauayan	85	60	33.33%	33	23.24%
Isabela State University - Cauayan	66	60	33.33%	66	46.48%
Total	225	180	100.00	142	100.00

Table 1. Proportional allocation of pre-service English Teachers After Adjustment

Year Level

Third year were more than the rest of the levels which tell that most of the participants had enough linguistic competence needed for the study. In addition, year level is an essential category employed for coding and analysis.

Year level presents the amount of exposure and linguistics competence the participants already had which was significant differentiator in interpreting sexist language usage, linguistic patterns, content choices (Pregoner, 2024; Costa, 2024).

Year Level	Frequency	Percent
1 st	39	27.46
2 nd	36	25.35
3 rd	40	28.17
4 th	27	19.01
	142	100

Table 2. Year Level (n = 142)

Sex and Gender Orientation

Teaching profession is a female dominated field which was reflected in the table below of the population as also supported by Custodio, Morales, & Miranda (2025) while LGBTQ members also showed interest in teaching. This situation for both genders was stereotyped into a perception that teaching, nurturing, and caring were feminized. This proved that only women and feminized genders were the lone individuals who have mastered such skills.

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	16	11.27
Female	86	60.56
Gender Orientation		
LGBTQ	22	15.49
Fluid	18	12.68

Table 3. Sex and Gender Orientation (n = 142)

Linguistic-related Course Taken

Table 4 listed all the subjects the participants have taken that made them qualified for the current study which may have influenced them their linguistic competence, word and content choices, sociolinguistic knowledge and application in the essay discourse that they have written. However, these may not significantly emphasize gender-fair language awareness (Remigio and Talosa, 2021) across their written discourse.

	Frequency	Percent
Introduction to Linguistics	142	100
Local Language Studies	142	100
Purposive Communication	142	100
Language, Culture, & Society	142	100
Structure of English	142	100
Principles and Theories of Language Acquisition and Learning	142	100
Teaching and Assessment of Macroskills	142	100
Language Programs and Policies in Multilingual Societies	103	72.54
Technical Writing	67	47.18
Teaching and Assessment of Grammar	67	47.18
Language Learning Materials Development	27	19.01
Translation and Editing of Texts	27	19.01
Stylistics and Discourse Analysis	27	19.01

Table 4. Linguistic-related Courses Taken

Word Level Analysis

Upon analyzing the data, it had revealed the following patterns evident on the written discourse of the participants such as *Stereotype Modifiers*, *Gendered Job Roles/Titles*, *Pronoun Alternative Misuse*, *Generic Masculine Pronouns*, and *LGBTQIA/Fluid Slurs*.

Stereotype Modifiers

Repeated negative patterns showed non-parallel treatment towards women and other genders. Those terms were neither compliment nor respectful. Cameron (2020) had uncovered similar terms referring that these words were insulting which contrasts with the idea of Safe Space Act (RA 11313) where it promotes safe, gender sensitive, and respectful environment for everyone at home, school, workplace, and public places preventing gender-based sexual harassments. One shall observe the language usage and practice friendly gender reform.

Category	Frequency
Weak/Fragile/ Delicate/ Vulnerable	9
Incapable/Incompetent/Inability/Lacks	5
Submissive/ Subordinate	4
Neglected/Set aside/ Inappropriate/ Unimportant	4
Disgrace	2
Emotional	2
Woman	2
Disgusting	2
Downgrade	1
Masculine	1
Unacceptable	1
Unholy	1

Table 5. Stereotype Modifiers

Gendered Job Roles/Titles

Job roles/titles were affected on ow participants perceived gender roles, often aligning men with traditional domestic and social responsibilities such as *provider and leader* while women were perceived as *housewives and follower* which can either be positive or limiting. The use of gender-neutral language should be widely known and used in variety of fields (Requinala, Folloso, Almazan, & Paderan, 2022).

Category	Frequency
Provider/Breadwinner	7
Caregiver/ Caretaker/Housekeeper	5
Protector/Head/Leader/Driver (Decider)	5
Domestic	3
Follower	2
Housewife	2
Driver	1
Laborer	1

Table 6. Gendered Job Roles/Titles

Pronoun Alternative Misuse

Pronoun alternative misuse was repeated across the essay discourse. For example, "... that if **his** (company manager) secretary is part of LGBTQ community, **he/she (they)** might harass **him**", and "...that makes a person hide **its (their)** true identity or even limit **him/herself (themselves)**..." which showing the use of gendered or binary pronouns and limited attempts at language neutrality. Although some participants used paired pronouns (e.g., he/she) similar to the approach discussed by Paterson (2020), critics argued that this strategy is insufficient to address gender inequality in discourse. The repeated misuse of pronouns suggests that despite participants' familiarity with grammar, errors persist. Addressing this gap is essential for effectively integrating gender-inclusive language into the curriculum and promoting egalitarian practices.

Category	Frequency
He	4
She	3
His	1
Him	1
Her	1
Sir	1
Ma'am	1
Herself	1
Its	1

Table 7. Pronoun Alternative Misuse

Generic Masculine Pronouns

This section showed a lower frequency of masculine gender pronouns in the written discourse, suggesting that participants were aware of binary pronouns and made efforts to observe GIL. In contrast, students often accept sexist language as part of cultural and societal norm which were heavy influenced by thoughts and attitudes (Talosa and Malenab-Temporal, 2018). Common gender or generic pronouns can refer to males and females, but most of the time these are often interpreted as male by default. Generic pronouns he/his/him were used in sentences to generally refer to both genders, whether knowing the gender or not - that if **his (company manager)** secretary is part of LGBTQ community, **he/she** might harass **him**, and asking what **he** would want to be approached - Sir or Ma'am..."

Category	Frequency
He	1
His	1
Him	1

Table 8. Generic Masculine Pronoun

LGBTQIA/Fluid Slurs

Slurs are pejorative and othering terms against LGBTQ individuals such as *salot*, *manyak*, and *bakla* appeared in the discourse. Although less frequent (Table 9), these instances still convey negative perceptions and contradict the intent of the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313) to promote respectful and gender-sensitive environments.

Category	Frequency
LGBTQ/Fluid Slurs	
Salot	1
Bakla	1
Manyak	1

Table 9. LGBTQIA/Fluid Slurs

Clause/Sentence Level Analysis

Clauses and sentences can be sexist when associated with words meant to connote negative perceptions with the intention to degrade one gender over the others – may it be direct or indirect. To illustrate, “*Women do most of the household chores*” and “*women to stay at home or do most of the caring tasks*”. Thus, when people encounter the noun phrases household chores and caring tasks, it is blueprinted that it is a responsibility of women and not of the other genders. This idea is supported by a news article from ABS-CBN (2026) written during Women’s month narrated that according to Social Weather Stations (SWS, 2026), 4 in 5 Filipinos think that the role of women is to look after her home and family.

Naturalized Gender Hierarchy

Naturalized gender hierarchy occur when one gender claims and was given certain position higher than the others which normalizing men having the upper position such as leaders/deciders whereas women are subordinate/followers. This contrasts the Oxfam Philippines (2021) evaluation that showed women’s empowerment programs significantly improved Filipino women’s control over household finances, reproductive decisions, and community participation.

Stereotyping and Devaluation of Femininity

Clause/sentence patterns under qualifying women lies under stereotyping and devaluation of femininity. Describing women as not capable of doing man’s tasks were evident in the following adjective phrases such as *cannot do that because you’re a woman*, *hindi kaya ng mga babae*, *lacks ability*, and *not as equal or capable as men*. These phrases were clearly limiting femininity, treating it as liability whereas men were linked to competence, resolve, and rational (Casil-Batang, 2021). This concludes the idea that feminine adjective phrases frame women as diminished, less capable.

Policing Gender Expression and Emotion

Policing gender expressions and emotion are enforcement of societal norms and regulations that a person with a perceived gender should and must act in a certain way. Considering this situation, when a man cries, it signals femininity because only female cries and when a woman shows masculinity, they are to be called as *tomboy*. Furthermore, LGBTQ members were described as (AdjP) “*salot ng Lipunan*”, (VP) *beaten up*, and (MVP) *should not make mistake*. This may mean that third genders must be impeccable or else they get hurt physically and emotionally. Evidently, each person is compelled to act, behave, and represent themselves based on their sexual identities and sexual representations. Same goes with Paderan Alrajafi, and Eryon’s analysis (2023) where it was mentioned that verb phrases related to emotional expression frequently seen as negative and diminishing attributes of men. In this sense, language became a disciplinary tool that polices how an individual may exist in public space.

Linguistic Othering and Misrepresentation

Labeling, marking, and framing gender groups figuratively are one way to be sexist and gender unfair against people. Apparently, language had been used to separate one gender from another. To illustrate, the phrase (AdjPP) “*like a normal people*” was used to depict that being included in third genders is somehow not normal (*We (LGBTQ) can also do whatever we want like a normal people*). This may mean that male and female are the conventional characterization of gender. These patterns were evident in the language utilized by the participants which invalidate non-binary LGBTQ identities by assessing them based on male-female binaries positioning LGBTQ community as incompatible with societal norms and erases them symbolically (Gamboa and Lee, 2024) suggesting that they have no legitimate space and they are outside on what is considered “normal” (Campoy and Potoy, 2025).

LGBTQ Stigma and Exclusion

Language has also been used to marginalize LGBTQ individuals through stigmatizing labels such as “*salot ng Lipunan*”, “*less favored*”, and “*not accepted*”. These terms reflect and depict exclusion, reinforce heteronormativity, and LGBTQ identities as morally inferior or socially unacceptable. Such language continues to marginalize LGBTQ and gender-fluid individuals, reinforcing stigma, fear of self-expression, and unequal treatment (Campoy & Potoy, 2025).

Structural and Institutional Inequalities

Thematically, women are linked to phrases such as (VP) *should be caring and patient*, (PP) *seen in jobs like teaching or nursing*, (GP/PP) *staying at home*, (VP) *do most of the caring tasks and do the household chores*. This may imply that women can only do nurturing-related tasks and jobs (educating, mentoring, tending, cultivating, and fostering) which devalues other skills that they may have, and it restricts their social roles leading to undervaluing other genders that they can only

perform any but nurturing. These adjectives were frequently attached to women (Aquino & Aquino, 2024) while verb phrases (VP) such as *are more likely [favored] to men, got the position immediately, should be in the workplace, men often earn more*, and adjective phrases (AdjP) such as *mas alam ng lalaki, seen as stronger, more capable, and more deserving of important roles or recognition* implying that men are more qualified which was supported by Dayaday, Nalayog, and Custodio (2025) that men dominates leadership and decision-making positions but contradicting the objective of Magna Carta for Women.

Discourse Analysis

In this part, the third level of sexism by Sara Mills, the discourse level, was used and interpreted with the data gathered by the researcher. The overall macro-structures and features across the written discourse (essay) were coded, analyzed, categorized, and interpreted. The codes (patterns/themes) had been considered and repeatedly featured across the discourse.

Gendered Roles

Writers consistently assigned domestic, nurturing roles to women, while leadership, decision-making, and financial roles to men. These patterns reflect historical and cultural gender norms still evident today. After multiples of examining and investigating the sexist patterns across all the essays, repeated patterns of gendered roles and its comparison are rooted in historical, cultural, and subjective (shared personal experience) ideals and perceptions. The discourse featured and highlighted gendered role identifiers. Seemingly, these gendered roles were weaponized descriptors to discriminate and limit one's capabilities grounded with their chosen identity. This type of patterns was influenced on how gender roles were assigned, identified, and described in pre-colonial where women are for subtle easy domestic jobs. It is believed by far that conventional and unconventional thinking goes a long way between and among genders were greatly influenced like Talosa and Malenab-Temporal (2018) who believed that thoughts, attitudes, and perceptions influence language which were also factors in discourse-level sexism.

Body/Appearance Focus

Body and Appearance Focus where language often targeted how women and LGBTQ+ individuals dressed and carried themselves. Body-policing terms (e.g., vulgar, sexy, inappropriate) indexed moral judgment and victim blaming. Participants were able to utilize language elements to isolate each gender's body and appearance biases including clothing and behavior that are sexist and showed gender mockery and inequality. This is in contrast to Safe Space Act or Bawal Bastos Act (RA 11313) states that an environment must be safe, sensitive, and respectful preventing gender-based sexual harassment which was clearly not observed across all written discourse. Language has crucial impact to attitudes, perceptions, and thoughts, making linguistic sensitivity necessary (Talosa, & Malenab-Temporal, 2018). This concluded that language shall not be weaponized to negatively describe body/appearance forms because it contradicts the idea of gender-inclusive/fair language and egalitarianism.

Power Hierarchies

Power Hierarchies (DL-PWR) where men consistently appeared as decision-makers, leaders, and default authorities in homes, workplaces, and institutions. Women and LGBTQ+ members were framed as subordinate or less capable. Good opportunities seemed to automatically print to men and other genders were the second options. This could mean that their gender has the authority and power to belittle those who were "thought" below them. Although women were more represented across the written discourse, the patterns employed to them reinforced stereotypes, gendered roles, and devaluing women which resulting to masculinizing roles, focus, representations, and characterizations. Clearly, gender hierarchy in language exists silencing and shaming women. To avoid these perceptions among students, there should be support from every agency to put programs into actions (Gabato, P.M., et al., 2022).

Prevalence of Sexism in the Written Discourse of PSET

Sexist language use is not significantly reduced by sex, gender orientation, year level, or completion of linguistics-related courses. This indicated that sexist linguistic patterns are socially internalized rather than academically corrected. This is demonstrating the relevance of Gender-Fair Language Theory and Feminist Stylistics in exposing systemic bias patterns (Talosa and Malenab-Temporal, 2020; Remigio and Talosa, 2021). Although the Philippines consistently ranked 20th of 148 countries in gender equality, closing gaps in education, health, and economic participation (Philippine Commission on Women, 2025), gender inequality remains, this time in written communication. Overall, sexism remains prevalent regardless of demographic profile and academic exposure, confirming that gendered ideologies persist strongly within the writing practices of future educators.

Guidebook for Reducing Sexist Language

Upon investigation on the three levels of sexism – word, clause/sentence, and discourse – based on the demographic profile, across the written discourse of PSETs, various themes and patterns were revealed to be promoting stereotype, stigma, misrepresentation, and unfair treatment. Thereby, practical and research-based guidelines had been derived to equip future educators, writers, and institutions in creating and, most importantly, strict implementation of gender-inclusive, fair, and respectful community.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusions

The findings indicated that the language used in the essays displayed biased, discriminatory, demeaning, even derogatory, mean, prejudiced, and stereotype to all gender profiles most especially in the discourse and clause/sentence levels. Feminist Stylistics assumed that the participants' background profile, perceptions, and ideologies were reflected in how language was used. Thus, sexism and gendered patterns and themes were prevalent regardless of how aware participants are. Although non-sexist language and gender-inclusive language were used and observed, most of the written discourse did not follow the principles of Gender-Fair Language Theory and Feminist Stylistics.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations/suggestions are recommended by the researcher. Widen the study to education fields of different HEIs, application and employment of gender inclusive and gender-responsive teaching and learning process and inclusion to curriculum. Moreover, a follow-up study on sexist language related to GAD and Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy across HEIs and Basic Education considering participants' awareness.

Acknowledgement

The researcher would like to thank the following individuals who have contributed significantly in any way possible.

To her adviser, Dr. Robin V. Guillermo, who have guided her with patience, understanding, wisdom, and knowledge from the beginning to the completion of this study. He committedly conveyed constant mentoring and investing time and effort.

To her panel members chaired by Dr. Hilda A. Manzolim, Dr. Rodel B. Guzman, and Dr. Pauline Grace Casil-Batang, for their suggestions, support, and assistance that helped improve her paper.

To the Dean of Central Graduate School, Dr. Florenda B. Temanel, for her kindness, knowledge, and understanding for the success of this journey.

To Ms. Joy Mary Paddayuman and Dr. Marissa Prudencio, for their support, time, and effort that had helped improve the paper.

She would like to express her gratitude to Deans, Dr. Donabel A. Dumelod, Dr. Glenn A. Galingana, Dr. Maritess S. Viernes, and the students from Isabela State University – Cauayan, University of Perpetual Help System – Cauayan, and Isabela Colleges, Inc., respectively, for their support, willing participation, consideration.

To her husband, Neuver G. Mariano Jr, for his unconditional love, support and unmatched persuasiveness. To her father-in-law, Neuver Mariano, for his promised financial support.

To her family who served as her inspiration and for their additional support and motivation.

Above all, to almighty God, for giving the extended time prayed for, wisdom, patience, confidence, strength, and guidance to successfully materialize her paper.

The Researcher

Funding

This research received no external funding from any public, commercial, or not-for-profit funding agency, and no organization provided financial support for the conduct of the study, authorship, or publication of this article.

Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

References

- Aquino, L. H. and Aquino, C. J. 2024. Morphological and Syntactic Characteristics of Adjectives in Philippine English: A Corpus-Based Description. In Proceedings of the 38th Pacific Asia Conference on Language, Information and Computation, pages 1458-1467, Tokyo, Japan. Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. DOI: 10.1145/3697968.3697988. <https://aclanthology.org/2024.paclac-1.144.pdf>.
- Cameron, D. 2020. Language: A Feminist Guide. Feminist Blog. WordPress.com. <https://debuk.wordpress.com/>
- Campoy, A. C., & Potoy, M. H. S. (2025). Exploring gendered language use in Filipino social media discourse: Implications for communication and identity construction. International Journal of Advanced Research. Article DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/21798 DOI URL: <https://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/21798>
- Casil Batang, P. G. P. (2021). Exploring gender stereotypes in 21st century Philippine narratives. International Journal of Arts and Social Education. doi:10.1023/A:1013064418674. <https://www.ijase.org/index.php/ijase/article/download/52/47> [ijase.org]
- Costa, J. (2024). Mixed methods in educational large-scale studies: Integrating qualitative perspectives into secondary data analysis. Education Sciences, 14(12), 1347. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14121347>
- Custodio, Z. U., Morales, M. M., & Miranda, P. A. (2025). An inquiry into the gendered division of labor among female Filipino teachers' households. PRISMA: Gender and Education e-Journal, 2(1). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56278/3xdgd627>. <https://ejournalprisma.com/index.php/ojs/article/download/109/14/564>
- Dayaday, D. G. P., Nalayog, C. S., and Custodio, A. M., 2025. Bridging the Divide: A Policy Brief Addressing Gender Inequality in the Philippine Workforce (RePEc:bcp:journl:v:9:y:2025:i:3s:p:4182-4189). DOI:10.47772/IJRISS.2025.903SEDU0295 <<https://ideas.repec.org/a/bcp/journl/v9y2025i3sp4182-4189.html>>
- Gabato, P. M. & Lucero, J. N. & Vargas, D. (2021). Gender Roles Of University Officials in The Implementation of Gender and Development Programs. SSRN Electronic Journal. DOI:10.2139/ssrn.3784686
- Gamboa, L. C., & Lee, M. (2024). Filipino Benchmarks for Measuring Sexist and Homophobic Bias in Multilingual Language Models from Southeast Asia. ArXiv. DOI: 10.48550/arXiv.2412.07303. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2412.07303>
- Mills, S. 1995. Feminist Stylistics. First published 1995 by Routledge 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005. ISBN 0-203-40873-X Master e-book ISBN.
- Orteza, Jessa & Piedad, Ann & Caparas, Shienna Marie & Cantalejo, Michaela. (2024). Gender-fair language and the psychological well-being of English pre-service teachers at the University of Cabuyao. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.26629.36327.
- Paderan, M. P., Alrajafi, G., and Eryon, E. 2023. Contrasting gender bias languages in Philippines and U.S. online news articles: A corpus-based study. Journal of English Education and Linguistics. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36269/sigeh.v3i1.1477>
- Paterson, L.L., 2020, Non-sexist Language Policy and the Rise (and Fall?) of Combined Pronouns in British and American Written English. Sage Journal. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0075424220938949>
- Pregoner, J. D. (2024). Research Approaches in Education: A Comparison of Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods (July 22, 2024). IMCC Journal of Science, Volume 4, Issue 2, December 2024, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5111007> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5111007>
- Remigio, M. T. R., & Talosa, A. D. (2021). Student's general attitude in gender-inclusive language. International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE), 10(3), 864-870. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v10i3.21573>

- Requinala, K. V., Foloso, J., Almazan, R. R., & Paderan, M. P. (2022). Contrasting gender bias languages in Philippines and U.S Online NEWS ARTICLES: A corpus-based study. *Journal of English Education and Linguistics*, 3. DOI: 85-94. 10.56874/jeel.v3i1.816.
- Samman, E., 2019. Oxfam Pilipinas. (2019). Understanding norms around the gendered division of labour in the Philippines. Oxfam Digital Repository. <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620888/cs-philippines-social-norms-fgds-281019-en.pdf>
- Social Weather Stations, 2026. SWS: 83 pct of Filipinos say a woman's role is to look after home, family. ABS-CBN News. <https://www.abs-cbn.com/news/nation/2026/3/5/sws-83-pct-of-filipinos-say-a-woman-s-role-is-to-look-after-home-family-0934>
- Talosa, A. D., & Malenab-Temporal, C. (2018). Content Analysis of Sexist Language Occurrence on Written Discourse of Junior Pre-Service Teachers. *TESOL International Journal*, 13(4), 96-103. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1244139.pdf>
- Vonk, J. 2021. Oxfam GB. (2021). Women's empowerment in the Philippines. DOI 10.21201/2020.6935

Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.