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## Language as an Agent of Change: Promoting Gender Fairness

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**Abstract.** This research explores the complex dynamics of gendered language usage in an effort to provide guidance for language-based initiatives that advance gender equality. The study includes a number of goals, such as determining how frequently gendered words are used, analyzing inclusive language policies' effectiveness and presence, learning about respondents' opinions about gendered language, and finding barriers to the adoption of gender-inclusive terminology. The researcher used a Likert scale to analyze the findings after conducting a quantitative survey with 118 students from the City College of Calamba's Arts and Sciences Department. The results show that respondents were mostly in agreement with the negative effects of gendered language in media and advertising, as well as the difficulties in promoting gender-neutral language, especially in media sources. , the study proposes an advocacy project, "Language for Equality: Promoting Gender Fairness," aiming to raise awareness and encourage the use of gender-fair language to combat discrimination and foster gender equality within the college community. This research contributes valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on language as a catalyst for transformative societal change. Limitations, however, include the possible influence of social desirability bias and the distinctive characteristics of the sample. Comprehensive qualitative inquiries, cross-cultural and longitudinal studies, mixed-methods approaches, and evaluations of suggested solutions are among the study directions for the future. It is recommended that media professionals compare educational resources and inclusive language training programs to improve their understanding of gendered language hurdles and practical solutions.

**Keywords.** gender - fair language, gender equality, gendered language, inclusive language

### Introduction

In the rich fabric of societal evolution, language is an influential factor capable of shaping perceptions, upsetting norms, and, most significantly, increasing the struggle for gender equality. Language, being the primary means of human expression, has a significant impact on not just how we communicate but also on the outlines of our society's expectations and standards. The awareness that language is not a passive medium but an active agent—a catalyst for change and a vital actor in the road toward gender equity—is at the heart of this study. This aims to dive into the important impact language plays in promoting a more fair and inclusive society.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2023, it goes beyond political correctness to communicate with gender awareness and to use terminology that is inclusive of all genders. People's realities are shaped by language and pictures, which both

strongly reflect and have an impact on attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions. In addition to promoting social change and aiding in the achievement of gender equality and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, gender-inclusive communication can assist lessen gender stereotypes.

Language is more than just a means of communication; it reflects our values, beliefs, and social systems. Our choice of words, phrases, and tales all contribute to the complicated fabric of our cultural identity. Language emerges as a powerful instrument in the dynamic conversation on gender equality, with the ability to either perpetuate outdated preconceptions or usher in radical change.

Language is important in achieving gender equality because it influences how we perceive and approach gender inequalities. Language serves as a mirror and shaper of society standards, from job titles that represent equality to the subtle subtleties inherent in everyday discussions. The research hopes to understand how linguistic choices contribute to or challenge prevalent views of gender fairness as we unravel the complexities of language usage.

Gender-fair language, also known as gender-neutral or inclusive language, is a type of communication that seeks to reduce gender prejudice and promote gender equality. It entails employing language that is sensitive to and inclusive of all genders, as well as avoiding gender stereotypes or preconceptions. The objective is to establish a language environment that reflects and respects gender identity variation while not reinforcing traditional gender standards. (Rodriguez and Rodriguez, 2019)

Gender-neutral language challenges and dismantles established gender norms and prejudices. It advocates for people, regardless of gender, to have equal chances and recognition. This recognizes and respects the multiplicity of gender identities that exist outside of the binary concept of male and female. It incorporates and acknowledges the experiences of those who identify differently than standard gender norms. Inclusive language promotes a sense of belonging and inclusion, resulting in situations that welcome persons of various gender identities. This is especially crucial in educational, work, and public settings.

Gender inequality remains a persistent issue in cultures across the world, and language, as a strong instrument for communication, plays an essential role in developing and sustaining uneven gender standards. Despite growing awareness of the need for gender equality, there is still a huge gap in understanding how language may be an effective agent of change in advancing gender equality. The problem is worsened by persisting problems such as linguistic transformation resistance, a lack of understanding of inclusive language practices, and a lack of defined rules for gender-fair communication.

Previous study conducted by Sczesny et. al. 2016 has shown that GFL (Gender – Fair Language) has the ability to significantly reduce gender stereotyping and prejudice. However, because a body of existing data is mostly focused on experimental paradigms with various types of assessments, future research should focus on people's actual language usage in everyday life (e.g., in discussions, in the classroom, on social media, or in organizational communication). Furthermore, further research into the dynamics of GFL usage and its effects from a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural perspective will be beneficial. The readiness of speakers to use GFL in everyday life is essential for benefiting from the influence of GFL on the (linguistic and social) treatment of women and men in society. However, using GFL requires a coordinated effort before it may become habitual. Education and policymaking can help to facilitate these processes. GFL will contribute even more to the reduction of gender stereotyping and discrimination when used consistently over a longer period of time, and especially when supported by well-informed issues and discussions.

This research endeavor intends to give insights that can educate and guide programs for advancing equality for women through language by an in-depth investigation of linguistic patterns, perspectives, and challenges. This study was aimed to accomplish several important objectives. Firstly, it aimed to assess the frequency of gendered terms in respondents' language use, giving insight on their prevalence in communication. Furthermore, the study sought to assess the presence and efficacy of inclusive language policies among the targeted population, offering insights into the then-current condition of linguistic inclusiveness frameworks. The study attempted to investigate respondents' views of gendered language in order to capture individuals' personal experiences and knowledge. Simultaneously, the study sought to identify and analyze structural, societal, and human hurdles to the broad use of gender-neutral terminology. Finally, by summarizing the findings, the study attempted to suggest practical and contextually appropriate ways for advancing gender equality via language, therefore making a significant contribution.

### **Literature Review**

This section reviews the relevant literature and research in order to have a better understanding of how language may act as a catalyst for good change in promoting gender equality.

Eliminating sex and gender discrimination starts with language, because the systematic use of gender-biased terminology impacts attitudes and expectations, and may, in the reader's or listener's mind, confine women to the background or assist perpetuate a stereotypical image of women's and men's responsibilities. There are a variety of strategies that can be used to accurately express gender relationships, such as avoiding, to the greatest extent possible, the use of language that refers explicitly or implicitly to only one gender and ensuring the use of gender-sensitive and inclusive language through inclusionary alternatives and according to the characteristics of each language.

### **The Role of Language in Social Constructionism**

According to the idea of social constructionism of Vinney 2019, a large portion of what we take to be true is predicated on common assumptions and that people acquire their understanding of the world within social contexts. Many of the things we take for granted and think are part of the objective world are, in fact, products of social construction and may change as society does, according to social constructionist theory.

In alignment with the social constructionist perspective, the generation of knowledge and meaning is attributed to societal influence. Social constructionists contend that commonly accepted notions of gender, race, class, and disability, which often appear as inherent or universally valid, are, in fact, socially constructed. As a consequence, these perceptions do not faithfully mirror an objective reality. Social constructions emerge within specific cultural and organizational contexts and achieve prominence across distinct historical periods. The evolution of these social conceptions is intricately tied to the political and economic circumstances of the past, present, and future. Therefore, these constructs are not static but continually subject to transformation based on the evolving socio-political and economic landscape.

Many of us take social change for granted or don't even fully comprehend the idea. There is never a civilization that stays the same. There is constant change. We acknowledge that change is a given and that the tale must conclude there. Dunfey 2023 defined social change as the result of modifications to interpersonal connections and interactions that alter social structures and cultural norms. These alterations take place gradually and frequently have

significant long-term effects on society. Social movements for women's rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, workers' rights, and civil rights have produced well-known instances of this kind of transformation, to mention a few. These social change movements have resulted in changes to institutions, relationships, and cultural norms.

Vygotsky 1978 believed that language and culture were fundamental to human intellectual growth as well as to how people observed the outside world. Because they can impose culturally determined sense and meaning on the outside world, humans are able to overcome the inherent restrictions of their perceptual field. Humans perceive, communicate, and comprehend the world through the frames provided by language and culture.

Furthermore, Burr 2015 explained that the process of social constructionism revolves around language. It makes the case that language and its usage shape people's perceptions of the world and have actual effects, rather than just describing it. According to philosopher Wittgenstein, language is made up of several smaller, more basic language games that social interaction uses to give words their unique, contextual meaning. Language is the primary medium through which the individual is constructed, according to structuralism and poststructuralism.

Language as an agent of social change refers to the transformative power of language in influencing and shaping societal attitudes, behaviors, and structures. It recognizes that language is not merely a tool for communication but plays a dynamic role in constructing and reflecting social realities. This concept is rooted in the idea that changes in language can contribute to broader shifts in cultural norms, values, and power dynamics. Language, through its use in various forms such as literature, media, and everyday discourse, has the capacity to challenge existing social norms, promote inclusivity, and advocate for justice. Language has a strong influence on how we view the world. This includes the vocabulary we use to refer to gender. Many languages are classified as gendered, while others are classified as genderless or neutral. According to certain research, civilizations that speak gendered languages also have more gender inequality, whereas cultures that speak genderless and neutral languages, such as Finnish, have higher gender equality. (Briggs, 2022)

According to Culinovic 2020, language is what makes us human. Since language is so innate, infants learn it during the first three years of life only by being exposed to it. We seldom give it any thought, yet we let it define who we are. However, language is an effective tool for expressing social views. We discuss "freedom of speech." When we discuss "white" and "black" speech, we use words to divide; however, when we discuss "the language of acceptance," we use language to bring people together. The premise is that we learn concepts and ideas through language. These in turn influence our behavior, whether for the better or worse. They become intrinsically linked to our sense of self.

Language has a tremendous impact on thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes, and hence plays an important role in creating gender knowledge and consciousness. Furthermore, language generates categories for cognition, since words may form or destroy a relationship in particular and society in general. Boundaries exist when words and phrases discredit, dismiss, or stereotype individuals of either sex, or when they draw unnecessary attention to gender. (D. Talosa & Malenab-Temporal, Ph.D., 2018) Linguistic forms that refer to people have an influence on their mental representations: when male generics are employed, women are cognitively underrepresented, whereas feminine-masculine word combinations are connected with a larger cognitive inclusion of women. (Horvath, L. et.al. 2015)

The research asserts that language, as a social construct, profoundly affects and sustains cultural norms, particularly in respect to gender. This is in line with the social

constructionist approach presented by Vinney (2019). The theoretical foundation emphasizes that widely held beliefs about gender are the result of social construction, stressing that these conceptions do not accurately reflect an objective reality. This acknowledgement encompasses more inclusive social categories such as disability, racism, and class. According to the study, social constructs change throughout time as a result of political and economic conditions in various cultural and organizational contexts. A deeper understanding of language as a change agent is provided by further viewpoints from Vygotsky (1978), Burr (2015), Dunfey (2023), and Culinovic (2020), which highlight the dynamic, transformational, and significant role that language plays in influencing society attitudes, behaviors, and structures. It is acknowledged that language has the ability to question societal norms, encourage inclusion, and fight for justice—especially when it comes to gender—when it comes to its transformational potential. The research emphasized that language is not just a tool for communication but also a dynamic force that creates and reflects social realities, acknowledging the complex relationship between language, culture, and human perception.

### **Gendered Language**

With its all-encompassing role in people's lives and society, language is seen as a tool for creating gender prejudice or sexism. Many languages, including English, are said to contain linguistic features that reflect gender disparity. It also adheres to the notion that language discreetly reproduces societal imbalances of status and power in favor of males, as proven by a number of situations in which feminine phrases are typically derived from matching masculine terms. Masculine versions, such as the word woman, are derived from the term men. The usage of generic masculine nouns and pronouns like man and he to represent both genders in relation to people and a nonspecific person is a more common example of linguistic sexism in press communication. (Vizcarra-Garcia, 2021)

As a result, sexist language is defined as the circumstance in which people take care to demonstrate gender-fairness in their language but nevertheless appear to establish biased perceptions in which they correlate non-sexist statements with either a masculine or a feminine gender. Language that is sexist excludes, trivializes, or lowers any gender.

Moreover, Remigio and Talosa 2021 findings emphasized that language has a critical role in shaping language use and gender perceptions. Women's images are impacted not just by what is said or not said about them, but also by how it is conveyed. Language sexism is not an isolated social practice. When seen in the context of a patriarchal society and the gender ideology it creates, it appears as a fundamental and critical issue in need of correction.

These proved that the majority of students have a good attitude toward gender-inclusive language. Furthermore, there was no significant difference in students' attitudes when categorized by sex, indicating that attitudes are neutral in either sex. Looking through the lens of education, it is worth noting that another study on the successful tactics used by instructors in propagating gender-inclusive language in the language classroom should be done. In this environment, teachers must critically select, modify, and use the most appropriate instructional materials, as well as pick gender inclusive approaches, tactics, or techniques in course design.

The study's findings align with previous research, including Vizcarra-Garcia's (2021) investigation on the role language plays in sustaining gender bias and sexism. The study admits that gender differences are reflected in numerous languages, including English, and that these subtle social inequities in favor of men are perpetuated. This is consistent with the central claim of the study, which holds that language is a dynamic force that has the power to either uphold or undermine established social norms. The notion of sexist language is characterized by its

exclusionary, trivializing, or demeaning words towards any gender. This definition aligns with the study focus on the transformative ability of language to shape gender views. Furthermore, the study's main subject is supported by Remigio and Talosa's (2021) findings, which highlight the crucial role that language plays in influencing gender views. The call for further investigation into successful tactics used by instructors in promoting gender-inclusive language in the educational context supports the research's focus on language as a means of societal change and the importance of intentional language use in educational settings. The research on attitudes toward gender-inclusive language among students, revealing a generally positive stance with no significant differences based on gender, contributes valuable insights to the broader discussion on fostering inclusivity through language. Overall, these connections underscore the relevance and urgency of exploring language as a potent agent for promoting gender fairness in various societal domains.

### **Inclusive Language or Gender – Fair Language**

Linguistic equality is referred to in a variety of ways, including gender neutral language, gender inclusive language, non-sexist language, and antisexist language. Various nomenclatures have been developed; however, all of these words are interchangeable. Gender inclusive language, in general, refers to the use of linguistic features such as nouns and pronouns that reflect both genders without alienating the feminine being. Many regulations and studies concerning gender-inclusive language have been implemented.

Sczesny et al., 2016 revealed that the goal of gender-fair language (GFL) is to reduce gender stereotypes and prejudice. To create languages gender-neutral and to treat men and women similarly, two main tactics have been used: neutralization and feminization. For example, neutralization is done by replacing male-masculine forms (policeman) with gender-unmarked forms (police officer), whereas feminization relies on the employment of feminine forms to make female referents evident (i.e., the applicant... he or she rather than the applicant... he). Their study gives a critical analysis of how GFL contributes to the elimination of gender stereotyping and discrimination by combining studies on (1) language structures, (2) language policies, and (3) individual language behavior. The assessment serves as a foundation for future study and scientifically based policymaking.

To summarize, previous research has shown that GFL has the ability to significantly contribute to the decrease of gender stereotyping and prejudice. However, because the collection of available data is mostly focused on experimental paradigms with various types of assessments, future study should focus on people's real language usage in everyday life. Furthermore, additional research into the dynamics of GFL usage and its impacts from a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural viewpoint will be beneficial. The readiness of speakers to utilize GFL in everyday life is critical for profiting from the influence of GFL on the treatment of women and men in society. However, using GFL requires a concerted effort before it may become habitual. These processes can be aided by education and legislation. GFL will contribute even more to the reduction of gender stereotyping and discrimination when used consistently over a longer period of time, and especially when supported by well-informed controversies and discussions.

On the other hand, Vergoossen et al., 2020 discovered that gender-fair language strategies often face resistance. Negative opinions against various gender-fair changes, such as the substitution of the masculine generic he with the paired form he/she, non-sexist language rules, and the adoption of a gender-neutral pronoun, have been reported. The adoption of the gender-neutral pronoun hen into Swedish has been heavily criticized. In contrast to previous

gender-fair language changes that made women more visible, this reform tries to make persons with non-binary identities apparent in pronoun use while decreasing dichotomous gender views. Critical arguments against using *hen* were broadly similar to those against using paired forms. Four common patterns of aversion to gender-fair language were captured: (a) maintaining the linguistic status quo, (b) belittling the topic and its proponents, (c) sexism and cisgenderism, and (d) gender-fair language being bothersome in conversation.

Formanowicz & Sczesny, 2014 emphasized that the fight for gender equality is supported by initiatives to develop gender-neutral vocabulary. This entails the use of gender-appropriate forms (feminine for females and masculine for males) in languages having grammatical gender. In the current study, the results of a mixed method approach—a corpus analysis, a survey, and an experiment—provide consistent evidence that feminine forms are still uncommon in women's self-reference in Polish and that female psychologists continue to employ masculine titles. Furthermore, a qualitative study investigates why women prefer masculine work names over feminine job titles. By incorporating data from the two-stage design, we are able to identify and comprehend the barriers to achieving social change using language.

The study is consistent with the wider discussion on language equity, which includes concepts such as gender-neutral, gender-inclusive, non-sexist, and anti-sexist language. The study of gender-fair language (GFL) by Sczesny et al. (2016) offers a theoretical framework, highlighting its objective to lessen bias and gender stereotypes through strategies including feminization and neutralization, which resonates with the research's focus on transformative language usage. Although GFL has the potential to greatly reduce gender stereotyping, resistance is acknowledged in the study, as demonstrated by Vergoossen et al. (2020), which is consistent with the investigation of barriers to the adoption of gender-fair language. Formanowicz & Sczesny's (2014) insights deepen the connection by emphasizing the efforts to create gender-neutral language in support of the battle for gender equality. This summary captures the essence of the study on language as a dynamic agent for advancing gender equity, highlighting the significance of consistent language use in challenging stereotypes, increasing inclusion, and contributing to social reform.

### **Methodology**

118 legitimate students who were enrolled at City College of Calamba were used as respondents of the study. These students were deliberately selected from the Arts and Sciences Department, and they were enrolled in the Gender and Society course, where the researcher served as their professor. The researcher's decision to include all 118 of her students in the population ensures a full representation of viewpoints within the study's framework and offers a detailed summary of the insights gained from the Gender and Society course

**Table A**  
**Respondents of the Study**

<b>SECTIONS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</b>
I-PSY3	36
I-PSY4	36
I-PSY5	36
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>118</b>

The researchers utilized the quantitative methodology by devising a survey questionnaire devised by the researcher based on her readings from books, periodicals and some unpublished materials regarding the topic. The research instrument went through various stages of review and scrutiny before its finalization. The items were meticulously analyzed and investigated in terms of whether they would yield information of the variables the researcher supposed to measure. The questionnaires were pre-tested by five (5) professors to test its validity before giving them out to the respondents of the research using google form. The questionnaire was composed of two parts.

The first part was intended to gather the respondents' current state of language use in terms of the frequency of gendered terms, inclusive language policies and perception on awareness. The second part was utilized to determine the barriers that hinders the promotion of gender – fair language.

The simple mean and four – point Likert Scale were used to interpret the data with the aid of the scales and description below:

**Table B**  
**Four - point Likert Scale**

<b>Weight</b>	<b>Ranges</b>	<b>Qualitative Description</b>
4	3.26 – 4.00	Always/ Strongly Agree
3	2.51– 3.25	Frequently/ Agree
2	1.76 – 2.50	Occasionally/ Disagree
1	1.00 – 1.75	Rarely/ Strongly Disagree

The researchers developed their thoughts and interpretations using generative AI in a collaborative manner. First, the researchers feed the generative AI model with initial notions, draft passages, or interpretations. To improve the overall effectiveness and clarity of the researchers' communication, the AI uses a large amount of training data to generate new perspectives, polish language, and suggest improvements. Additionally, generative AI suggests connections, additional insights, or alternative viewpoints based on its training data when enhancing interpretations or trying to understand context. In this collaborative approach, the researchers stay actively involved in evaluating and improving the AI's recommendations, ensuring that the data generated aligns with the researchers' objectives and contributes significantly to the research endeavor.

### **Results and Discussion**

The succeeding paragraphs discusses the findings of this research:

#### **1. Current State of Language Use**

The first objective of the study is to determine the respondents' current state of language use in terms of frequency of gendered terms, inclusive language policies and perceptions on awareness. Results of a conducted inquiry on these matters are shown in the following tables.

#### **In Terms of Frequency of Gendered Terms**

Table 1.1 presents the weighted mean and interpretation on the perceptions of the respondents on the current state of language use in terms of frequency of gendered terms. From

the perceptions of the respondents, the indicator stating that gendered language in advertising and entertainment has a significant impact on societal perceptions got the highest mean of 3.44 with the interpretation always and the indicator stating that gendered language in job titles reflects historical norms and is not a cause for concern got the lowest mean of 2.86 with the interpretation frequently.

The general mean of 3.19, with the interpretation "frequently," suggests an overall strong consensus among respondents across all indicators. They tend to strongly agree that gendered language plays a significant role in various aspects such as societal perceptions, comfort in conversations, online discussions, and reinforcement of traditional gender roles.

**Table 1.1**  
**Current State of Language Use in Terms of Frequency of Gendered Terms**

Indicators	$\bar{X}$	Interpretation
1. Gendered language in job titles reflects historical norms and is not a cause for concern.	2.86	Frequently
2. Gendered language in advertising and entertainment has a significant impact on societal perceptions.	3.44	Always
3. I think conversations using gendered language are generally more familiar and comfortable.	3.14	Frequently
4. Online discussions frequently highlight and challenge the use of gendered language.	3.23	Frequently
5. Gendered language reinforces traditional gender roles in society	3.29	Always
<b>General Mean</b>	<b>3.19</b>	Frequently

This reveals that respondents strongly agree that gendered language in advertising and entertainment has a significant impact on societal perceptions and respondents are less inclined to agree strongly with the idea that gendered language in job titles is reflective of historical norms and is not a cause for concern. The respondents seem to place more importance on the impact of gendered language in advertising and entertainment on societal perceptions compared to the historical norms associated with gendered language in job titles. The interpretation of "always" for the former suggests a strong consensus on its significant impact, while the interpretation of "frequently" for the latter implies a somewhat less consistent agreement among respondents on its historical and non-concerning nature.

The finding highlights the heightened awareness among respondents regarding the substantial impact of gendered language in advertising and entertainment on societal perceptions. This practical insight is crucial for stakeholders in these industries, urging them to critically evaluate language choices in content creation. The less consistent agreement among respondents on the historical and non-concerning nature of gendered language in job titles indicates an area where targeted interventions may be necessary. Practically, this suggests the need for organizations and policymakers to address and reshape language use in professional contexts, ensuring it aligns with contemporary expectations of gender equality.

These findings align with Bui's 2021 study, underscoring the significance of language selection in the advertising sector, where attention to linguistic choices is crucial for elevating the overall quality of advertisements. Bui's emphasis on the growing standards and impact of

language in advertising further reinforces the importance of sociolinguistic research on gendered language, recognizing its profound influence on societal development.

### **In Terms of Inclusive Language Policies**

Table 1.2 presents the weighted mean and interpretation on the perceptions of the respondents on the current state of language use in terms of inclusive language policies. From the perceptions of the respondents, the indicator stating that educational materials in my school incorporate guidelines for gender-neutral language got a highest mean of 3.31 with the interpretation strongly agree and the indicator stating that media outlets in my region adhere to explicit guidelines for using inclusive language in their content got the lowest mean of 2.99 with interpretation agree.

The general mean of 3.15, with the interpretation "agree," indicates an overall strong consensus among respondents across all indicators. They tend to strongly agree that various aspects of their environment, including educational materials, online platforms, national-level documents, and community organizations, demonstrate a commitment to inclusive language practices. The only exception is the perception of media outlets in the region, where respondents, on average, tend to disagree about adherence to explicit guidelines for inclusive language.

**Table 1.2**  
**Current State of Language Use in Terms of Inclusive Language Policies**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b><math>\bar{X}</math></b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1. Educational materials in my school incorporate guidelines for gender-neutral language.	3.31	Strongly Agree
2. Online platforms I engage with have policies addressing gendered language and promoting inclusivity.	3.17	Agree
3. Legal and policy documents at the national level include provisions for gender-fair language.	3.10	Agree
4. Media outlets in my region adhere to explicit guidelines for using inclusive language in their content.	2.99	Agree
5. Community organizations I am familiar with have established and enforced inclusive language practices.	3.17	Agree
<b>General Mean</b>	<b>3.15</b>	Agree

This reveals that respondents seem to perceive a stronger commitment to inclusive language in educational materials within their school compared to the adherence of media outlets in their region to explicit guidelines for inclusive language. The interpretation "strongly agree" for the former indicates a robust consensus, while the interpretation "agree" for the latter suggests a less favorable perception of the inclusivity practices in regional media outlets.

The results suggest that educational institutions have a greater degree of success when it comes to fostering an inclusive linguistic commitment than do local media sources. This useful information is important for curriculum designers, educators, and legislators because it emphasizes how important it is to keep working to incorporate inclusive language into

educational materials. It also emphasizes how urgent it is for media companies to completely reevaluate their content production procedures. In order to close the gap, media professionals must participate in focused training programs that guarantee everyone understands and follows clear rules about inclusive language. Additionally, there is a need to raise understanding among media organizations regarding the significant influence language choices have on a range of the public.

In support of these findings, Lindqvist et al.'s 2019 study emphasizes the importance of gender-inclusive language tactics, advocating for approaches that go beyond conventional terminology. The study underscores the significance of employing purposefully generated gender-neutral pronouns and avoiding traditional language structures to enhance inclusivity in language policies. Lindqvist et al.'s insights contribute to the broader understanding of effective gender-inclusive language strategies, aligning with the observed disparities in perceptions between educational and media contexts within the current study.

### **In Terms of Perceptions of Awareness**

Table 1.3 presents the weighted mean and interpretation on the perceptions of the respondents on the current state of language use in terms of perceptions on awareness. From the perceptions of the respondents, the indicator stating that gendered language in advertising has a significant impact on shaping societal perceptions got the highest mean of 3.51 with interpretation strongly agree and the indicator stating that the use of gender-specific pronouns in professional settings reinforces traditional gender roles got a lowest mean of 3.33 with the interpretation strongly agree.

The general mean of 3.44, with the interpretation "strongly agree," indicates an overall strong consensus among respondents across all indicators. They strongly agree that various aspects of language use, including gender-specific pronouns, advertising language, conversations, media and entertainment language, and legal and policy language, have a significant impact on reinforcing traditional gender roles, influencing societal perceptions, perpetuating stereotypes, shaping cultural norms, and reinforcing inequality.

**Table 1.3**  
**Current State of Language Use in Terms of Perceptions on Awareness**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b><math>\bar{X}</math></b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1. The use of gender-specific pronouns in professional settings reinforces traditional gender roles.	3.33	Strongly Agree
2. Gendered language in advertising has a significant impact on shaping societal perceptions.	3.51	Strongly Agree
3. Conversations using gendered language often contribute to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.	3.39	Strongly Agree
4. The language used in media and entertainment plays a crucial role in influencing cultural norms.	3.54	Strongly Agree
5. The absence of gender-neutral language in legal and policy documents reinforces inequality.	3.42	Strongly Agree
<b>General Mean</b>	<b>3.44</b>	Strongly Agree

The data revealed that respondents generally hold strong views on both indicators, believing that gendered language in advertising significantly shapes societal perceptions and

that the use of gender-specific pronouns in professional settings reinforces traditional gender roles. The small difference in means between the two indicators suggests that respondents, on average, perceive both aspects as having a substantial impact, with the interpretation "strongly agree" indicating a high level of consensus on these perceptions.

These findings have important implications for hiring, recruiting, and managing organizational professionals who are dedicated to promoting gender equality. Given the significant impact that gendered language in advertising has on public views, it is necessary upon advertisers to carefully consider the language they use in their advertisements. This emphasizes how important it is to create strategies that address prejudices and promote inclusive representations. The recognition of the way in which gender-specific pronouns reinforce conventional gender norms necessitates, at the same time, a comprehensive review of communication methods in organizations. Developing thorough rules for gender-inclusive language in internal communications, job ads, and other professional documents might be a practical start towards addressing these results. These theoretical findings may be effectively translated into practical methods by implementing staff training programs that highlight the critical role that language plays in building workplace culture. This will promote workplaces that value gender equality and inclusion.

These are aligned with Hodel et al.'s 2017 study, which emphasizes that language used in job advertisements is intricately linked to linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic factors, contributing to the perpetuation of gender inequalities and stereotypes. The congruence between the current study's results and Hodel et al.'s findings underscores the broader impact of language, both in advertising and professional settings, on perpetuating or challenging societal gender norms.

## **2. Challenges hindering the Adoption of Gender Fair Language**

The next concern of the study is to determine the barriers hindering the adoption of gender fair language. Results of analyses done are presented in the table below.

Table 2 presents the weighted mean and interpretation on the perceptions of the respondents on the barriers hindering the adoption of gender fair language. From the perceptions of the respondents, both the indicators stating that inconsistent use of gender-fair language across different settings and industries makes promotion challenging and societal and cultural norms significantly impede the acceptance of gender-fair language got the highest mean of 3.45 with interpretation strongly agree. While, the indicator stating that resistance from influential figures in media and entertainment industries pose challenges to the normalization of gender-fair language and the indicator stating that limited resources and funding dedicated to awareness campaigns for gender-fair language hinder their effectiveness got the lowest mean of 3.34 with interpretation strongly agree.

The general mean of 3.40, with the interpretation "strongly agree," indicates an overall strong consensus among respondents across all indicators. They strongly agree that various challenges, including lack of public understanding, resistance from influential figures, absence of inclusive education, limited resources, lack of representation, globalized media influence, limited public awareness, restricted vocabulary, inconsistent usage, and societal norms, hinder the adoption of gender-fair language.

**Table 2**  
**Perceptions on the Challenges hindering the Adoption of Gender Fair Language**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b><math>\bar{X}</math></b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1. The lack of understanding among the general public about the need for gender-fair language is a significant hurdle.	3.44	Strongly Agree
2. Resistance from influential figures in media and entertainment industries poses challenges to the normalization of gender-fair language.	3.34	Strongly Agree
3. The absence of inclusive language education in formal curricula makes it challenging to instill awareness from an early age.	3.44	Strongly Agree
4. Limited resources and funding dedicated to awareness campaigns for gender-fair language hinder their effectiveness.	3.34	Strongly Agree
5. The lack of representation of diverse gender identities in language discussions impedes progress in promoting inclusivity.	3.37	Strongly Agree
6. The influence of globalized media with diverse linguistic norms makes it challenging to establish a universal standard for gender-fair language.	3.35	Strongly Agree
7. Limited public awareness about inclusive language practices poses challenges to widespread adoption.	3.39	Strongly Agree
8. Limited vocabulary or linguistic options presents difficulties in adopting gender-fair language.	3.38	Strongly Agree
9. Inconsistent use of gender-fair language across different settings and industries makes promotion challenging.	3.45	Strongly Agree
10. Societal and cultural norms significantly impede the acceptance of gender-fair language.	3.45	Strongly Agree
<b>General Mean</b>	<b>3.40</b>	Strongly Agree

This revealed that respondents perceive both inconsistent usage of gender-fair language and societal/cultural norms as significant barriers to its adoption, with a strong consensus indicated by the "strongly agree" interpretation. While resistance from influential figures and limited resources have slightly lower means, they still reflect a robust consensus among respondents that these factors pose significant challenges to the normalization and promotion of gender-fair language.

This aligns with the research conducted by Popic and Gorjanc in 2018, which delved into the endeavors to employ gender-inclusive language in the Slovenian cultural environment over the past two decades. Their findings reveal notable progress in areas such as standardized nomenclature for vocations and positive shifts in discussions concerning the rights of the LGBTQ+ community and other marginalized groups. However, the study sheds light on persistent challenges, particularly within Slovene studies. Traditionalist views on gender,

notably in key figures, are highlighted, with manipulative acts employed to perpetuate traditionalist doctrines. Additionally, methodological issues, characterized by regressive quasi-structuralist approaches, further complicate efforts in adopting gender-inclusive language. This connection between the present study and Popic and Gorjanc's research emphasizes the shared recognition of challenges in promoting gender-fair language, providing a broader perspective on the complexities involved in language transformation within cultural contexts.

Furthermore, the insights from Koeser et al.'s 2014 study similarly underscores the efficacy of arguments advocating gender-equal language in driving speakers to adopt gender-equal phrasing. This discovery holds particular significance in the broader context of establishing gender equality in language, providing a novel perspective on the potential impact of persuasive language arguments in influencing linguistic choices. The parallels between this study and Koeser et al.'s research emphasize the consistent recognition of challenges and potential strategies in promoting gender-fair language use, contributing to the evolving discourse on language and gender equality.

This alignment emphasizes how important it is to use focused techniques to get across methodological obstacles, established traditional viewpoints, and deceptive practices. It draws attention to the challenges and offers a way forward for getting over resistance and promoting a broader acceptance of gender-neutral language. To put it practically, groups and activists working to advance inclusive language can use arguments for persuasive language as a practical means of influencing language preferences and advancing the cause of gender equality in communication practices.

### **3. The Proposed Advocacy Project to Promote Gender Equality Using Language**

Based on the findings of the study, the following advocacy project to promote gender equality using language is proposed by the proponent of the study. An Advocacy Project to Promote Gender Equality Using Language is an initiative focused on raising awareness and fostering positive changes in language use to contribute to gender equality. The project aims to address and rectify the impact of gendered language on societal perceptions and behaviors.

The proposed Advocacy Project to Promote Gender Equality Using Language carries significant theoretical implications in the realm of sociolinguistics and gender studies. By focusing on the transformative power of language in shaping societal perceptions, attitudes, and norms, the project aligns with theoretical frameworks emphasizing the dynamic interplay between language and social constructs. It contributes to the evolving discourse on the role of language in reinforcing or challenging gender stereotypes and inequalities. The project's emphasis on fostering a language environment that goes beyond conventional norms aligns with theoretical perspectives calling for a reevaluation of linguistic structures to enhance inclusivity.

<b>Name of Project</b>	"Language for Equality: Promoting Gender Fairness"
<b>Describe in ONE sentence your project</b>	This project aims to raise awareness and encourage the use of gender-fair language to eliminate discrimination and promote gender equality in City College of Calamba.
<b>Overall Goal</b>	The overall goal of the project is to foster a more inclusive and equitable society by encouraging the adoption of gender-fair language, reducing gender-based discrimination and stereotypes.

<p><b>Objectives</b> Set SMART Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Specific</li> <li>● Measurable</li> <li>● Achievable</li> <li>● Realistic</li> <li>● and Time bound</li> </ul>	<p>Specific: Raise awareness about the importance of gender-fair language. Measurable: Reach at least 1,000 people through workshops, seminars, and online campaigns. Achievable: Organize a series of webinars and workshops on gender-fair language. Realistic: Collaborate with the Gender and Development Office and of the offices to promote gender-fair language. Time-bound: Complete the project within 1 month</p>
<p><b>Duration of project</b> (Can be for one day or a weekend or a week, or a up to 1 month)</p>	<p>Approximately 1 month</p>
<p><b>Resources &amp; Allies</b> (Things like venue, camera etc. ALLIES ARE people who can help you implement this project)</p>	<p><b>Resources:</b> Venue for workshops and seminars. Audiovisual equipment for webinars. Promotional materials (posters, brochures). Social media platforms for online campaigns. <b>Allies:</b> Local schools and universities for partnership. Gender equality organizations for support. Language experts and educators for guidance.</p>
<p><b>Risks</b> Name potential risks and how you can possibly overcome it</p>	<p><b>1. Lack of Engagement:</b> Potential risk of low participation or interest. Mitigation: Utilize engaging content, collaborate with educational institutions, and create online campaigns to reach a wider audience. <b>2. Resistance to Change:</b> Some people may resist using gender-fair language. Mitigation: Develop persuasive and educational materials to explain the benefits and importance of gender-fair language. <b>3. Budget Constraints:</b> Running workshops and campaigns can be expensive. Mitigation: Seek funding from local grants, NGOs, or corporate sponsors.</p>
<p><b>Activities in Chronological Order</b> (What you will do first, next etc.)</p>	<p><b>Activities in Chronological Order:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research and gather data on gender-fair language practices in the local context.</li> <li>2. Plan and design promotional materials.</li> <li>3. Secure a venue and equipment for workshops and seminars.</li> <li>4. Partner with local schools and universities for collaboration.</li> <li>5. Create and launch an online awareness campaign.</li> <li>6. Conduct a series of workshops and webinars.</li> <li>7. Collect and analyze feedback from participants.</li> <li>8. Adjust strategies based on feedback and monitor progress.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Budget</b></p>	<p>The budget for this project will depend on various factors, including the scale of workshops and campaigns, venue costs, and promotional materials.</p>

Estimated cost: Php 50,000
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### **Conclusion**

The results of this study shed light on a deeper awareness of views and issues associated with gendered language use. Respondents significantly agree that gendered language in advertising and media has a significant influence on social beliefs, and they also agree that educational materials are progressing toward gender-neutral language integration. However, difficulties exist, particularly in media outlets where adherence to stated requirements for inclusive language is hampered. Inconsistent usage, cultural standards, and restricted vocabulary were highlighted as important hurdles to the adoption of gender-fair language in the study. To solve these issues, it is suggested that advocates campaign for greater diversity in media content, promoting adherence to stated criteria. Furthermore, the researcher also proposes an advocacy project, "Language for Equality: Promoting Gender Fairness," aiming to raise awareness and encourage the use of gender-fair language to combat discrimination and foster gender equality within the college community.

The study's theoretical contributions are found in the way it clarifies complex viewpoints and issues related to gendered language use, providing insightful information that enhances a body of current knowledge. The recognition by participants of the significant influence of gendered language in advertising and media on social ideas advances our knowledge of the function of media in creating perceptions. The acknowledgement of advancements in educational materials pertaining to the inclusion of gender-neutral terminology indicates a favorable trend that is consistent with the current conversation about inclusivity. The hurdles that have been found, including restricted vocabulary, inconsistent usage, cultural effects, and difficulty for media outlets to comply with inclusive language regulations, enhance our comprehension of the real-world obstacles impeding the broad adoption of gender-neutral language. Advocating for diversity in media content and initiating an awareness initiative titled "Language for Equality: Promoting Gender Fairness" are two suggested solutions that provide concrete measures to tackle these issues. This study, therefore, not only unveils contemporary views on gendered language but also contributes to theoretical frameworks by highlighting pragmatic hurdles and proposing strategies for fostering gender fairness through language use, enriching the broader discourse on language and gender equality within the academic community and beyond.

### **Limitations and Future Research Recommendations**

The specificity of the sample and environment may provide challenges to generalization, thus it's important to use caution when interpreting the results. Participants' social desirability bias may have an impact on how accurately attitudes and actions pertaining to gendered language are recorded. Further study might benefit from a more in-depth qualitative investigation that explores individual experiences. Suggestions for future research include cross-cultural and longitudinal investigations, a mixed-methods strategy, careful examination of media material for instances of gendered language use, and evaluations of suggested remedies including diversity advocacy and awareness campaigns. Furthermore, comparing and contrasting instructional materials and inclusive language training courses for media workers might help us better understand gendered language barriers and useful approaches.

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