

# Gendered Language in Philippine Newspapers

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**Abstract.** Print media can influence public perceptions but may also reinforce gender bias through language. Numerous studies have underscored the persistence of linguistic sexism in print publications, highlighting how language choices can reinforce gender stereotypes and inequality. This study investigates gendered language in The Philippine Daily Inquirer, a leading newspaper in the Philippines, to highlight how sexist terms persist in modern print media. The study analyzed the May 2018 issue using quantitative and qualitative content analysis, focusing on terms influenced by Gender Schema Theory and Social Responsibility Theory. Five gendered terms with sexist undertones were identified: "policemen," "businessman," "countrymen," "gunmen," and "ombudsman," with "policemen" being the most common. These terms were grouped into three categories: Generic Masculine, Derogatory, and Pseudo-Masculine expressions, with Generic Masculine terms being the most prevalent. The findings show that print media continues to use sexist language, particularly through Generic Masculine terms. The study suggests a thorough content review in media outlets to remove sexist language and encourage gender-neutral alternatives.

**Keywords:** Gendered language; Print media; Sexist terms; Generic masculine; Content analysis.

## 1.0 Introduction

Sexism in print media remains a significant concern due to the language choices that can subtly influence readers' perceptions of gender roles. Newspapers and magazines, as primary sources of information, play a critical role in shaping public understanding of social norms (Shoemaker & Vos, 2023). Despite their importance, these media outlets often use language that perpetuates gender biases, potentially reinforcing harmful stereotypes. For instance, terms like "businessman" or "waitress" and the default use of male pronouns ("he," "him," "his") contribute to gendered language, which Prior (2017) defines as language biased toward one sex or social gender. This study investigates how gendered language in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, a widely circulated national newspaper, may reflect and perpetuate these biases.

Previous studies have highlighted the presence of linguistic sexism in media. Lundberg (2022) identified sexist language in British online newspapers, revealing the overuse of masculine pronouns and unequal name representations. Similarly, Perazzetti (2013) explored sexist language in media texts, emphasizing how gendered job titles and the disproportionate portrayal of men in certain professions can normalize gender inequalities. Despite these insights, there remains a need to examine how these issues manifest in the context of the Philippine print media. By focusing on the language used in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, this study seeks to fill this gap by critically analyzing how such language may affect readers' perceptions and reinforce societal gender stereotypes.

This study is grounded in two theoretical frameworks: Gender Schema Theory and Social Responsibility Theory. Gender Schema Theory (Bem, 1981) explains how individuals develop cognitive structures, or "schemas," that influence their understanding of gender roles, potentially reinforced by gendered language in media. Social Responsibility Theory (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947) highlights the media's duty to provide balanced, inclusive information. When the media fails to use neutral language, it perpetuates stereotypes and violates its responsibility to the public. Through this analysis, the study aims to demonstrate the impact of gendered language in reinforcing stereotypes and assess how this aligns with the media's role in promoting social responsibility.

Theoretically, the study provides empirical evidence supporting the claims of Gender Schema and Social Responsibility Theory in the context of print media. It demonstrates how these theories can be applied to understand the persistence of sexist language in modern publications. Moreover, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of linguistic sexism by identifying three distinct categories of sexist terms: Generic Masculine, Derogatory, and Pseudo-Masculine. This categorization offers a more comprehensive framework for analyzing and addressing gender bias in language.

Practically, the study raises awareness about the prevalence of sexist language in print media, prompting journalists, editors, and media companies to be more mindful of their language choices. It can also catalyze advocacy efforts to promote gender-neutral language in the media. Likewise, the findings can inform the development of guidelines and best practices for journalists and editors to avoid using sexist language. This can help to create a more inclusive and equitable media landscape. Therefore, the study's findings contribute to the field by providing empirical evidence to support existing theories, offering a more nuanced understanding of linguistic sexism, raising awareness about the issue, and informing practical guidelines for media practices.

## **2.0 Methodology**

### **2.1 Research Design**

In carrying out the research, descriptive content analysis was used to understand the material from newspaper articles, the primary data source. Content analysis is a research technique that makes replicable and valid inferences by interpreting and coding textual material. Qualitative data can be converted into quantitative data by systematically evaluating texts (e.g., documents, oral communication, and graphics) (Krippendorff, 2013). Through content analysis, the existence of gendered language in the print media is strictly analyzed and modified.

### **2.2 Sources of Data**

The researcher utilized the Philippine Daily Inquirer, a print newspaper, as the primary data source for this study. Four volumes, encompassing all sections and articles published within a week each, were selected from May 2018 for content analysis. A two-step fishbowl sampling method was employed to minimize bias and ensure randomness. First, the 12 months of the year were written on slips of paper, placed in a container, and then randomly drawn to determine the month of May. Second, to identify the specific dates within May, the days of the week were written on slips of paper, placed in a container, and randomly drawn. This process was repeated four times to select one date from each week of the month. This comprehensive sampling approach allowed for a representative selection of data from the Philippine Daily Inquirer, providing a solid foundation for analyzing the use of gendered language within the newspaper.

To ensure the study's validity, the researcher employed two complementary coding approaches: priori coding and emergent coding (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Krippendorff, 2013). Priori coding utilized a pre-established coding dictionary based on existing literature and theoretical constructs (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This provided a foundation for identifying relevant themes. On the other hand, Emergent coding allowed for identifying new themes and categories that emerged directly from the data through multiple readings and iterative analysis. Thus, texts are read several times to identify themes that emerge from the data. Particularly, before the analysis, the researcher determines the sexist terms based on previous knowledge, experience, literature, or theory, which is beneficial for the study. After the gendered languages were identified, their language usage was analyzed, and themes were developed. The themes emerged based on the language usage in the newspaper. The emergent themes were named as categories of the content analysis. Categories are established and generated based on the themes. The gathered terms and language usage were reviewed, modified, and continuously examined. Revisions

were made as necessary, and the categories were tightened to the point that it maximized the mutual exclusivity and exhaustiveness of the study.

The reliability of the study was ensured using the two principles of data collection, namely, the use of multiple sources of evidence and maintaining a chain of evidence. The purpose of multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2018) is to piece together the various observations made in the studies. The collected evidence must be assimilated with other studies examining the same phenomena. There may be biases within any study, including randomized controlled trials. Indeed, within any study, there may be biases due to study design, problems with the implementation, or interacting factors from other parts of the study, each of which needs to be considered when making any inferences. However, employing multiple sources of evidence allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation by incorporating diverse perspectives and data points (Denzin, 2017). This approach helped mitigate potential biases in any study design or data collection method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, gendered language was carefully drawn from a reliable source and was counterchecked in the other sources for a factual and truthful basis of information. Language usage was carefully analyzed based on the context and scope of the study. Maintaining a chain of evidence is a process for effectively collecting, handling, and preserving evidence. In this study, the content of the newspapers was carefully read and tallied by the researcher, one after the other, to countercheck and validate the number of occurrences and their language usage.

### 2.3 Data Gathering Procedure

In collecting the data for this study, the researcher underwent the following procedures: First, the researcher searched for the widely used newspaper in the Philippines. Second, the researcher took a cursory look at the newspaper content and ensured that the chosen material (newspaper) contained all the data needed for the study. Third, the researchers finally selected the newspaper (The Philippine Daily Inquirer). Fourth, the researcher began the study and analyzed and interpreted the results. Lastly, the researchers reviewed, verified, and refined the study for finality.

### 2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The data analyses in this study were done qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative analysis focused on how the gendered languages were used in the newspaper. At the same time, the quantitative method involved tallying the number of gendered languages being gathered. Following the sample of gendered language/terms identified in various kinds of literature, the researcher established the basis and restrictions for identifying the gendered language in the newspaper. The gendered language used in the newspaper was strictly analyzed and carefully understood based on the context and scope of the study. Alternative usage of the gendered language was provided and included in the analysis. The gathered data were presented in tables to show the language usage of the gendered language and its corresponding alternatives.

## 3.0 Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Sexist Terms In Philippine Newspapers

The analysis of four volumes from The Philippine Daily Inquirer identified five prevalent gendered terms: policemen/policeman, businessman/businessman, countrymen/gunmen, and ombudsman. While these terms may seem commonplace, they can perpetuate gender bias by assuming the masculine form as the default, referred to as sexist terms. To understand this bias further, we classified these terms based on their linguistic construction and usage.

**Table 1.** Sexist terms found in the newspaper and their sample language usage

| Gendered Language   | Section | Frequency | Sample Language Usage                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------|---------|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Policemen/Policeman | News    | 13        | All <u>policemen</u> are currently under restrictive custody at the QCPD headquarters in Camp policeman Karingal.                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Businessman         | News    | 1         | The smugglers have long cheated the government. The connivance of smugglers with some customs employees in bringing smuggled vehicles back to smugglers, disguised in legitimate auction proceedings has to stop as well to level the playing field for the legitimate <u>businessmen</u> ," Lapena said |
| Countrymen          | News    | 1         | A year after the Marawi siege, the government has yet to present a comprehensive plan on how it intends to rehabilitate the city and assist our <u>countrymen</u> there "Trillanes                                                                                                                       |

|                |         |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------|---------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ombudsman      | Opinion | 1  | said Can Ombudsman Opinion 1 a senior government official who speaks for the president to be so totally naïve?<br>Mr. Duterte's latest volley was in response to question as to what qualities he was looking for in the person who will succeed <u>ombudsman</u> Conchita Carpio Morales when she retires in July. |
| Gunmen/ Gunman | News    | 10 | After shooting De Jesus, the <u>gunman</u> casually walked toward Gil Puyat Avenue.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

Table 1 shows the different sexist terms in the newspaper and their sample language usage. Five terms were identified in the newspaper: policemen/policeman, gunmen/gunman, businessmen, countrymen, and ombudsman. The term "policemen/policeman" is the most frequently used, appearing thirteen (13) times, particularly in the "news" section. This is followed by the term "gunmen/gunman," which appears ten (10) times. The terms businessmen, ombudsman, and countrymen are rarely used.

It can also be observed that the "News" section of the newspaper contains the highest number of sexist terms compared to other sections. The news section covers a wide range of issues, including both local and international news. The content often focuses on social issues, particularly social security, during local elections. Other topics covered include gender violence, cases of rape, crimes, and other factual issues. As a result, the news section of the newspaper seems more prone to the use of sexist terms, which may be unconsciously written by journalists or editors (Ng, 2007). News articles typically begin with a summary of important events and continue to elaborate on them in subsequent paragraphs. The objective of the initial paragraphs is often to direct readers' attention toward the main subject.

Furthermore, Ng (2007), an Indian journalist and advocate of development journalism, believes journalists on the development desk should critically evaluate all development plans from national and local perspectives. On the other hand, a news report fulfills the minimum criteria for development journalism if it includes at least one of the following points: stresses the process rather than the event, maintains a critical perspective on development plans, emphasizes people's needs, presents a background for development issues, predicts future needs, considers the effect of plans on people, compares the development process to similar processes elsewhere, compares the plan with implemented results, critically surveys stories of success, and points out people's needs (Badii & Gandhi, 2001).

Additionally, the news is a representation in the sense of construction; it is not a value-free reflection of 'facts'...each form of linguistic expression in the text – wording, syntactic options, etc. – has its reason. There are always different ways of saying the same thing, and they are not random, accidental alternatives. Differences in expression carry ideological distinctions and, thus, differences in representation (Gunter, 2000). The news section of the newspaper includes content that interests people as it covers current ideas, events, problems, and other social issues. Based on the analysis of sexist language presented in the newspaper, three categories were identified based on their usage: Generic Masculine Expressions, Derogatory Expressions, and Pseudo-Masculine Expressions.

### 3.2 Generic Masculine Expressions

Generic masculine terms refer to all humans, using masculine terms such as man, brother, father, etc. The expressions sometimes refer to males and females but end with the word man. The study revealed that generic masculine words/expressions are the most used in the newspaper, occurring fifteen (15) times in the newspaper editions under review. Table 2 shows the generic masculine expressions in the newspaper and the alternatives being used. The term "policemen/ policeman" is the most often used word, and it occurred thirteen (13) times in the news content. The bias terms with the least number of occurrences are countrymen and businessman. The word is used generically in instances where the referent's gender is known and when it is not, irrespective of whether this referent is male or female. An example illustrating the first point is seen in:

*"Eleven policemen from the Quezon City police District (QCPD), including the station commander and the Station Drug Enforcement Unit (SDEU) head, were relieved from their posts on Friday after and arrested drug suspect accused them of extortion. QCPD director Chief Supt, Joselito Esquivel said he had relieved SDEU shift members PO2 Noel Sanchez, PO1's Edward Ramos, Michael Eric Ramirez, Ray John Rodriguez, Gaudencio Escoton Jr., Sepzon Suclad, John Ryan Rodriguez, Denis Eria and Leny Atma."*

**Table 2.** Generic masculine expressions in the newspaper and its gender-neutral alternative usage

| Gendered Language | Sentence used in the Newspaper with Generic Masculine Expressions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Sections of the Newspaper, date, page, Vol.                                                                                                                                                          | Gender Neutral Alternative Usage                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Policeman         | Eleven <u>policemen</u> from the Quezon City police District (QCPD)...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33                                                                                                                                                                 | Eleven <u>police officers</u> from the Quezon City police District (QCPD)...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                   | All <u>policemen</u> are currently under restrictive custody at the QCPD headquarters in Camp Karingal.<br>In a report reaching the Quezon City Police District seven of the nine <u>policemen</u> were arrested in an "entrapment operation"...nephew of Flexis Jefferey Soriano, 40, who said the accused <u>policemen</u> had demanded 200,000 in exchange the liberty of his uncle....<br>The complainant, accompanied by his lawyer claimed he "delivered" the 200,000 to the accused <u>policemen</u> ...<br>Ismael's wife, Rajah Bai was also hurt in the scuffle <u>policeman</u> later arrested four suspect. | News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33                                         | All <u>police officers</u> are currently under restrictive custody at the QCPD headquarters in Camp Karingal.<br>In a report reaching the Quezon City Police District seven of the nine <u>police officers</u> were arrested in an "entrapment operation"...nephew of Flexis Jefferey Soriano, 40, who said the accused <u>police officers</u> had demanded 200,000 in exchange the liberty of his uncle....<br>The complainant, accompanied by his lawyer claimed he "delivered" the 200,000 to the accused <u>police officers</u> ...<br>Ismael's wife, Rajah Bai was also hurt in the scuffle <u>police officer</u> later arrested four suspect. |
|                   | He again repeated his promise that he would not allow single <u>policeman</u> or soldier to go to jail...<br>"And to all of those criminals out there, to all those rogue <u>policemen</u> and all creating hell for us...<br>...was arrested after selling around P 200,000 worth of illegal drugs to undercover <u>policemen</u> on CG Road in Lupang Arenda, Barangay Sta. Ana.<br>investigators are looking into the possibility the Camp Crame-based <u>policemen</u> shot dead in Antipolo City...<br>The arresting <u>policemen</u> proceeded with the arrest...                                                | News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33 | He again repeated his promise that he would not allow single <u>police officer</u> or soldier to go to jail...<br>"And to all of those criminals out there, to all those rogue <u>police officers</u> and all creating hell for us...<br>...was arrested after selling around P 200,000 worth of illegal drugs to undercover <u>police officers</u> on CG Road in Lupang Arenda, Barangay Sta. Ana<br>Investigators are looking into the possibility the Camp Crame-based <u>police officer</u> shot dead in Antipolo City...<br>The arresting <u>police officers</u> proceeded with the arrest...                                                  |
|                   | The seven <u>policemen</u> had been assigned to the SDEU of Galas for seven months already, Esquivel said.<br>... said they were still verifying the affiliations and activities of the accused <u>policemen</u> ...<br>2 <u>policemen</u> moonlighting as driver axed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33                                         | The seven <u>police officers</u> the SDEU of Galas for seven months already, Esquivel said.<br>.....said they were still verifying the affiliations and activities of the accused <u>police officers</u> ...<br>2 <u>police officers</u> moonlighting as driver axed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Businessman       | ... proceedings has to stop as well to level the playing field for the legitimate <u>businessmen</u> ," Lapena said.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | News<br>May 15, 2018<br>p. A2, VOL. 33                                                                                                                                                               | ... proceedings has to stop as well to level the playing field for the legitimate <u>businesspersons</u> ," Lapena said.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Countrymen        | ...Or, it is his <u>countrymen</u> he considers so naïve that they will swallow anything he tells them.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | News<br>May 24, 2018<br>p. A6, VOL. 33                                                                                                                                                               | ...Or, it is his <u>compatriot</u> he considers so naïve that they will swallow anything he tells them.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

In this example, the term "policemen" is clearly shown even though there is a female involvement (referring to Leny Atma). The generic "man or men" will no doubt go a long way toward making it the sole preserve of men.

*"The smugglers have long cheated the government. The connivance of smugglers with some customs employees in bringing smuggled vehicles back to smugglers, disguised in legitimate auction proceedings has to stop as well to level the playing field for the legitimate businessmen," Lapeña said.*

Here, the term businessmen were not yet fully identified, though it was used to refer only to men.

*A year after the Marawi siege, the government has yet to present a comprehensive plan on how it intends to rehabilitate the city and assist our countrymen there "Trillanes said, Can a senior government official who speaks for the president be so totally naïve? Or, it is his countrymen he considers so naïve that they will swallow anything he tells them.*

In this example, the term countrymen could be generalized or refer only to men. This made an exception for the presence of women.

The result aligned with the foundational work of Tannen (1990) and subsequent explorations by Butler (2004), where she explores how language shapes communication and gender dynamics. She argues that the use of generic masculine terms, like "policemen" or "businessman," reinforces gender stereotypes and potentially marginalizes women. These sexist expressions make women invisible. It may contribute immensely to women's second or unimportant role in many societies. The established words and expressions have come to be seen as discriminating against -women. This may be because they are most likely based on male terminology.

### 3.3 Derogatory Expressions

This form of sexist language refers to language that undermines, derogates, or marginalizes women and men through adverse naming. It includes writing or saying unpleasant things about someone concerning their gender such that negative opinions can be formed about them. The only derogatory term in the newspaper (The Philippine Daily Inquirer) was "gunmen/ gunman," which appeared ten (10) times. Table 3 shows the Derogatory Expressions in the Newspapers and the alternatives being used. The only derogatory term found in the newspaper is the term gunmen/ gunman, which occurred ten (10) times in the news content of the newspaper. An example illustrating the first point is seen in:

*"Special Assistant to the President Christopher "Bong" Go has promised security and justice to the wife of slain broadcast journalist Edmund Sestoso who was shot dead by still unidentified gunmen on April 30 at Barangay Daro."*

**Table 3.** Derogatory expressions in the newspaper and its gender-neutral alternative usage

| Gendered Language | Sentence used in the Newspaper with Derogatory Expressions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Sections of the Newspaper, date, page, Vol.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Gender Neutral Alternative Usage                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gunmen / gunman   | ...Edmund Sestoso who was shot dead by still unidentified <u>gunmen</u> on April 30 at Barangay Daro.<br>...the <u>gunman</u> suddenly fired shots at De Jesus when he got out of the kitchen....<br><br>After shooting De Jesus, the <u>gunman</u> casually walked toward Gil Puyat Avenue.<br><br>Umayao said that before Shooting down De Jesus the <u>gunman</u> even went to the victim's house...<br>... the <u>gunman</u> on a red Kawasaki motor cycle shot at his vehicle along...<br><br>...400,000 had been raised for information leading to the arrest of <u>gunman</u> .<br><br>At the height of the siege Marohombsar - known as Abu Dar - escaped with dozens of Maute <u>gunmen</u> and has since been active in recruiting new members...<br>The five month campaign to retake Marawi City from the <u>gunmen</u> loyal to the Islamic State (IS)...<br>...a lone <u>gunman</u> on a motorbike in Antipolo City while on his way to Quiapo Church<br><br>Marke de Jesus, 37, died on the spot after he was shot thrice in the body by a lone <u>gunman</u> ... | News<br>May 5,2018<br>p.A7. VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5,2018<br>p.A7. VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5,2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5,2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 5,2018<br>p.A10, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 24, 2018<br>p. A4, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 24, 2016<br>p. A6, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 31, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33<br>News<br>May 31, 2018<br>p. A7, VOL.33 | ...Edmund Sestoso who was shot dead by still unidentified <u>gun shooter</u> on April 30 at Barangay Daro.<br>...the <u>gun shooter</u> suddenly fired shots at De Jesus when he got out of the kitchen.<br><br>After shooting De Jesus, the <u>gun shooter</u> casually walked toward Gil Puyat Avenue.<br><br>Umayao said that before shooting down De Jesus the <u>gun shooter</u> even went to the victim's house...<br>...the <u>gun shooter</u> on a red Kawasaki motor cycle shot at his vehicle along ...<br><br>... 400,000 had been raised for information leading to the arrest of <u>gun shooter</u> .<br><br>At the height of the siege Marohombsar - known as Abu Dar - escaped with dozens of Maute <u>gun shooter</u> and has since been active in recruiting new members ...<br>The five month campaign to retake Marawi City from the <u>gun shooter</u> loyal to the Islamic State (IS) ...<br>...a lone <u>gun shooter</u> on a motorbike in Antipolo City while on his way to Quiapo Church<br><br>Marke de Jesus, 37, died on the spot after he was shot thrice in the body by a lone <u>gun shooter</u> . |

In this example, the term gunmen being referred to was not yet identified, though it was called "gunmen," which generally refers to men. The use of these expressions is both uncalled for and misleading. This point is better appreciated considering the adjectives used in the expressions. They are unknown (gunmen) yet to be identified (gunmen). Thus, if they are unknown or yet to be identified, then people cannot authoritatively say that they are men, and it would be wrong and unjust to ascribe such criminal acts to men. Experience has shown that women are almost equally involved in crime as men. For example, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that women are the fastest-growing demographic group in prison (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2023). According to a Canadian Public Health Agency report, the rate of violent crimes doubled among male youth during the late 1980s and 1990s, while it almost tripled among female youth. Presently, based on the report of Bureau of Justice Statistics (2023) by the end of 2022, there were 87,800 women incarcerated in state or federal facilities, a rise of about 5% from 83,700 at the end of 2021.

According to Gostin, Vanchier, and Pope (2007), "The female prisoner population (in the US) has been rising at a faster rate than the male prisoner population. The overall increase since 1995 for male prisoners is 32 percent and for female prisoners, 53 percent". Moreover, Westmarland (2011) explored the historical and cultural factors that have contributed to the association of criminality with masculinity. It argues that the media often portrays crime in a way that reinforces this association, potentially leading to biased perceptions and law enforcement practices. Likewise, Schneider (2018) examined the various forms of gender bias within the criminal justice system, including the use of gendered language that can influence police investigations and public perceptions of crime. It highlights the importance of using gender-neutral language when referring to criminals to avoid perpetuating stereotypes and potential biases. On the other hand, Richie (2017) explores the intersection of race, gender, and the criminal justice system, emphasizing the increasing rates of incarceration among women, particularly women of color. It challenges the assumption that criminality is solely a male domain.

The social implication of referring to wanted criminals with masculine terms is that the police are constrained by the mindset that the culprits must be men. In their search for the suspects, they are ten times more likely to target men than women. This may be a false trail or red herring since all efforts and energy will be channeled into looking solely for men while the real culprits, who may be women, are at large.

### 3.4 Pseudo-Masculine Expressions

The term "pseudo-masculine" is an expression that seems to reflect a masculine undertone due to its semantic morphology. Only one Pseudo-Masculine term was found in the newspaper, and it was the term "ombudsman," which only occurred once in the newspaper's content.

**Table 4.** Pseudo-masculine expressions in the newspaper and its gender-neutral alternative usage

| Gendered Language | Sentences used in the Newspaper with Pseudo-Masculine Expressions                                                   | Sections of the Newspaper, date, page, Vol. | Gender Neutral Alternative Usage                                                                                                     |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ombudsman         | ...looking for in the person who will succeed <i>ombudsman</i><br>Conchita Carpio Morales when she retires in July. | Opinion<br>May 31,2018<br>p.A7. VOL.33      | ...looking for in the person who will Succeed <i>troubleshooter / regulator</i><br>Conchita Carpio Morales when she retires in July. |

Table 4 shows the Pseudo-Masculine Expressions found in the newspaper and their alternatives. The term "ombudsman" was used only once in the newspaper content, appearing in the "opinion" section. The usage was as follows:

*"Mr. Duterte's latest volley was in response to a question about the qualities he was looking for in the person who will succeed Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales when she retires in July."*

This example is controversial as to whether the term "ombudsman" (like terms like "human," "female," "woman," etc.) is sexist due to its morphology. Alternatives such as "Public Complaints Commission," "supervisory body," or "regulator" would be more appropriate and safer than "ombudsman." Alternatively, a female ombudsman might prefer to be called an "ombudswoman" (United Nations Multi-Lingual, 2015), with "trouble shooter" as a

neutral term between the two. According to Webster's Dictionary, a "trouble shooter" is an expert in resolving diplomatic or political disputes—a mediator of disputes at an impasse.

However, because "ombudsman" is frequently used by the media and political personalities, many consider it the proper term. In connection to this, Baron, N. S. (2016) highlights the importance of using gender-neutral language to avoid perpetuating implicit biases and to promote inclusivity. Baron argues that terms like "ombudsman" can be perceived as masculine by default and suggests alternatives like "ombudsperson" or simply "ombud" to be more inclusive. Moreover, the American Psychological Association (2021) provides practical recommendations for using inclusive language in writing and communication. It encourages using gender-neutral terms as the default option, especially when referring to individuals whose gender is unknown or irrelevant. Similarly, Baker, P. (2003) emphasizes that language choices can reinforce gender stereotypes and contribute to gender inequalities. He stresses the importance of using gender-neutral language to avoid perpetuating biases.

## 4.0 Conclusion

The study identified five gendered terms—policemen/policeman, businessman, countrymen, ombudsman, and gunmen/gunman—in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, which were categorized into Generic Masculine expressions, Derogatory expressions, and Pseudo-Masculine expressions. The frequent use of "policemen/policeman," especially in social issue reports, highlights a persistent bias towards masculine terms in the newspaper. This reflects broader societal gender inequalities, with traditional gender roles still strongly influencing media language. The findings suggest that while the number of gendered terms may be limited, their repeated usage perpetuates gender bias in print media. To address these issues, newspapers should thoroughly review their content to minimize gender-biased language and adopt more gender-sensitive terminology. Future research could explore sexist language in other media platforms, such as online news and live broadcasts, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how gender bias manifests across different forms of media.

## 5.0 Contribution of Authors

This is single-author research.

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## 7.0 Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest

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