# Language Codes, Topic Preferences and Identity Construction: The Case of Gendered Language on Social Media

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**Abstract**

This study on exploring the use of gendered language on social media is a qualitative-quantitative analysis of the male and female differences in the language codes, topic preferences, and identity construction. In-depth understanding of the gendered use of language in Facebook was investigated with a purposive sampling of 90 status updates taken from the posts of respondents who are enrolled in one of the premier public high schools in Cagayan Valley.

Anchored on Thematic Analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006), the language codes, topic preferences and gender-based identity construction were explored. Findings reveal that both male and female who are active users of Facebook are multilingual whenever they go online. The discussion on the variety of topics speaks of the diversity of the interest of those involved in the communication platform. The interactivity that Facebook provides makes it a medium through which people define themselves by sharing what is going on in their lives or how they are feeling. This makes Facebook a forum where extension of a person's real-life identity radiates. Moreover, the use of language by male and female are influenced by their social network in Facebook. Through Facebook status updates, male and female do not only express their emotions but also share details about their daily life activities as to what they were doing or what was going on in their lives at that moment. Thus, trainings and seminars among students and teachers on upholding preservation of culture and language must be part of the curriculum to promote youth empowerment, gender fair language and awareness of cyber-bullying, are hereby recommended to develop communicative competence leading to deeper understanding of one another.

**Keywords:** Gendered Language, Language Codes, Identity Construction

## 1. Introduction

Language and its dynamics on the internet are an area of great interest to many researchers from the field of linguistics, media sciences, psychology and sociology. Ranger (2007) contends that as the focus shifts from technology to people and purpose, the role of language becomes central. 'If the internet is a revolution, then there is likely to be a linguistic revolution'.

Language is one of the most powerful means through which sexism and gender discrimination are perpetrated and reproduced. Although the use of gender-fair linguistic expressions can effectively prevent these negative consequences and promote gender equality, there are even more implicit forms of gender bias in language that are difficult to suppress. By choosing terms at different levels of abstraction, people can affect the attributions of the receiver in a way that is consistent with their stereotypical beliefs. In order

to reduce gender bias, it is necessary to change people's linguistic habits by making them aware of the beneficial effects of gender-fair expressions.

In the Philippines, concern about the use of sexist language is part of community's increased awareness that the perceived meanings of some words have changed in response to the changing roles of men and women in the society. As quoted by Sumadsad and Tuazon (2016), women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female (Gumba, 2013). Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. It is, first and foremost, a human right. Empowering women is also an indispensable tool for advancing development and reducing poverty (Burridge et. al., 2015). Gender equality is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development (Haack, K., 2014).

The Department of Education in the Philippines adheres to the Gender- responsive Basic Education Policy in line with its Gender and Development (GAD) mandate as stipulated in the 1987 Philippine Constitution and Republic Act (RA) No. 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women. In this paper, the researcher did not only look into the structure of language used by male and female, but the findings of this study will also bridge the gap among cultures and communities since language used, intention of the speakers and interaction in a social context were also considered. Furthermore, it is also important to note that the researcher presented the actual posts of the respondents through illustration to see their expressions, use of emoticon and how the respondents write their posts. Through these, results of the study can contribute to the formation of the society. Thus, the current study was conceived.

**Research Questions**

Generally, this study aims to explore the use of gendered language on Facebook by the senior high school students.

Specifically, it aims to satisfy the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the Facebook users in terms of:
1.1 Year started using FB
1.2 Frequency of Using FB
1.3 Number of Times of Posting on FB; and
1.4 Number of Hours of Exposure to FB.
2. How does gendered language differ among respondents in terms of:
2.1 Language Codes
2.2 Topic Preferences; and
2.3 Identity Construction

## 2. Methodology

**Research Design**

This study employed the combination of qualitative and quantitative method of research. The quantitative part of the study was used to determine the profile variables of the respondents such as year started in using Facebook, frequency of using Facebook, number of times in posting on Facebook and number of hours of exposure to Facebook.

On the other hand, the qualitative part was considered in the analysis on how the uses of gendered language differ. Thematic analysis by Braun and Clare (2006) was used to determine the language codes, topic preferences and gender- based identity construction of the active users of Facebook. The language codes refer to the language used by the respondents when they go online whereas topic preferences are

determined by the most commonly discussed area of the respondents in their Facebook status updates. The gender-based identity construction of the respondents was determined based on the language codes and topic preferences of the respondents.

Ethnomethodologic was also used in that it points out the sociological analysis which examined how individuals use everyday conversation where she used her Facebook friends as potential participants. In addition, quantitative research design was also used to determine the frequency of use and the most common communicative function that emerged from the analysis of the Facebook status updates of the respondents.

Lastly, descriptive analysis was used in examining important points in the interview to elicit the language codes, topic preferences, use of language and communicative function of language that emerged in the respondents' Facebook status updates.

## Research Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The respondents of this study were the Senior High School students in one of the Public Schools in Northern Philippines.

Seven classes from which 50 students comprise each class were subjected for identifying the active users of Facebook. Out of 350 initial respondents, 30 Facebook friends who are the researcher's students were selected wherein the profiles were selected purposively out of which half were male and half were female or at least they presented themselves in this way. Moreover, the researcher chose only the hardcore or active FB users. She identified hardcore or active FB users by floating a questionnaire to the respondents. The questionnaire was patterned from the study of Korpijaakko (2015) and was also used by Angoluan (2016) in her study *(See questionnaire on the appendices)*. To Korpojaakko (2015) and Angoluan (2016), active Facebook users are those who log onto Facebook 8 hours a day or more, spend 3 hours or more a day in Facebook and post status updates 8 times a day or more. Also, in a similar study conducted by Sad, A. W. A. (2021), he defined heavy or light users of Facebook by determining their years of experience on using Facebook and time spent on Facebook.

Thereafter, the researcher gathered the corpus of her study on the wall posts of the 30 respondents where 15 of them are male and 15 of them are female. She purposively selected 3 Facebook status updates of the respondents to elicit information on language use.

Since the methodology of this study was partly ethnomethodologic which means a method of sociological analysis that examines how individuals use everyday conversation, she used her Facebook friends as potential participants.

## Ethical Consideration

For ethical considerations, the researcher reminded the participants that they could ask her to delete data she collected any time and to hide their identity. Likewise, the names of the respondents or any information that would identify them were concealed.

## Research Instruments

In this study, the researcher used a questionnaire adopted from Korpijaako (2015) and later used by Angoluan (2016) to elicit data on the respondents' profile variables such as year started in using Facebook, frequency of using Facebook, number of times in posting on Facebook and number of hours of exposure to Facebook. The respondents' Facebook status updates were the corpus of the study.

Thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke, 2006 was used as a basis to determine the language codes, topic preferences and gender- based identity construction.

## 3. Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis of Data

### Facebook Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the Facebook accounts of the respondents were investigated through the year they started using Facebook, frequency of using Facebook, number of times of posting on Facebook and time spent on Facebook.

First, it shows the Facebook profile of the 15 male and 15 female respondents in terms of the year they have started using Facebook.

As gleaned on the table, among the 15 male respondents, 5 or 33.33 percent of them started using Facebook in 2011, 3 or 20 percent of the male respondents started using Facebook in 2012 and 2013, 2 or 13.33 percent of them started using Facebook in 2010 and 1 or 6.67 percent of the male respondents started using Facebook in 2009 and 2014.

The table also presents the Facebook profile of the 15 female respondents in terms of the year they have started using Facebook. It reveals that 5 or 3.33 percent of the female respondents started using Facebook in 2010, 4 or 26.67 percent of them started using in 2013, 2 or 13.33 percent of the female respondents started using Facebook 2009 and 2012, and 1 or 6.67 percent of them female respondents started using Facebook in 2011 and 2014.

The data reveal that majority of the male respondents started using Facebook in 2011 and majority of the female respondents engaged in using Facebook in 2010.

In the question "How often do you log onto Facebook?" Table 1 also reveals that 5 or 33.33 percent of the male respondents answered always on and logging onto Facebook 10 hours a day or more, 4 or 26. 67 percent of them answered 8-9 hours a day while 1 or 6.67 percent of the male respondents' log onto Facebook 6-7 hours a day.

The table also shows that 8 or 53. 33 percent of the female respondents answered always on, followed by 4 or 26.67 percent answered 8-9 hours a day. Next is 2 or 13.33 percent of the female respondents answered 10 hours a day or more and 1 or 6.67 percent of them answered 6-7 hours a day.

The findings imply that both male and female respondents are active users of Facebook since the data show that they are "always on." This means that they are always connected with their social network.

In the question, "How many times do you post on Facebook a day?", table 1 again presents the number of times the respondents post on Facebook. 9 or 60.00 percent of the male respondents answered they post on Facebook 8-10 times a day, 4 or 26.67 percent of them answered they post on Facebook more than 10 times a day, 2 or 13.33 percent of the male respondents answered they post on Facebook 5-7 times a day and none answered that answered they post on Facebook less than 4 times a day.

The table also shows the number of times the female respondents post on Facebook per day. It can be gleaned that 5 or 33.33 percent of the female respondents answered they post on Facebook 8-10 times a day, 4 or 2.67 percent answered they post on Facebook more than 10 times a day and 5-7 times a day. Lastly, 2 or 6.67 percent of the female respondents answered that they post on Facebook less than 4 times a day.

Looking into the data gathered, findings reveal that majority of both male and female respondents are considered active users since they post status updates on Facebook 8-10 times a day.

Table 1 also reveals the time spent on Facebook by the male and female respondents. In the question, "How much time do you spend on Facebook per day?", most Male respondents with 13 or 86. 67 percent answered that they are exposed to FB more than 3 hours while 2 or 13.33 percent responded that they are exposed to Facebook 1-2 hours a day.

It can also be gleaned on the table below that 10 or 66.67 percent of the female respondents replied that they are exposed to FB more than 3 hours while 5 or 33.33 percent answered that they are exposed to Facebook 1-2 hours a day. It is noted that both male and female respondents are not exposed to Facebook less than 1 hour a day.

Based on the data presented, it reveals that both male and female are active users of Facebook since majority of them spend more than 3 hours a day in Facebook.

**Table 1. The Profile Variables of Facebook Users**

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| **Year started in using Facebook of Male** | | |
| 2011 | 5 | 33.33% |
| 2012 | 3 | 20.00% |
| 2013 | 3 | 20.00% |
| 2010 | 2 | 13.33% |
| 2009 | 1 | 6.67% |
| 2014 | 1 | 6.67% |
| **Year started using Facebook of Female** | | |
| 2010 | 5 | 33.33% |
| 2013 | 4 | 26.67% |
| 2009 | 2 | 13.33% |
| 2012 | 2 | 13.33% |
| 2011 | 1 | 6.67% |
| 2014 | 1 | 6.67% |
| **Frequency on logging onto Facebook of Male** | | |
| Always On | 5 | 33.33% |
| 10+ hours a day | 5 | 33.33% |
| 8-9 hours a day | 4 | 26.67% |
| 6-7 hours a day | 1 | 6.67% |
| **Frequency on logging onto Facebook of Female** | | |
| Always On | 8 | 53.33% |
| 10+ hours a day | 2 | 13.33% |
| 8-9 hours a day | 4 | 26.67% |
| 6-7 hours a day | 1 | 6.67% |
| **Frequency on posting on Facebook of Male** | | |
| 8-10 times a day | 9 | 60.00% |
| More than 10 times a day | 4 | 26.67% |
| 5-7 times a day | 2 | 13.33% |

| Less than 4 times a day | 0 | 0.00% |
|---|---|---|
| **Frequency on posting on Facebook of Female** | | |
| 8-10 times a day | 5 | 33.33% |
| More than 10 times a day | 5 | 26.67% |
| 5-7 times a day | 4 | 26.67% |
| Less than 4 times a day | 2 | 13.33% |
| **Time spent on Facebook of Male** | | |
| More than 3 hours | 13 | 86.67% |
| 1-2 hours | 2 | 13.33% |
| Less than 1 hour | 0 | 0.00% |
| **Time spent on Facebook of Female** | | |
| Less than 1 hour | 10 | 66.67% |
| 1-2 hours | 5 | 33.33% |
| More than 3 hours | 0 | 0.00% |

**Language Codes used by Male and Female in Facebook Posts**

The next problem of this study calls for the identification of the language codes used by the respondents in their Facebook status updates whenever they express their ideas, opinions and emotions. In this context, language codes refer to the language used by the respondents when they go online.

Table 2 shows the language codes of male respondents. It reveals that there are four codes being used by the male respondents: English, Ibanag, Mixed (a combination English and Filipino language) and mixed (a combination English and Ibanag language).

It can be gleaned on the data that 57.8 percent of the male respondents' status updates use the English language. When asked about why the respondents use English in posting the Facebook status updates, one participant mentioned that his post can be read more easily if he uses the English language. Another responded that his Facebook friends are also using English whenever they post that is why he also uses English every time he posts. Another participant said that he is more confident in using English because his grammar and spelling are automatically checked by the application that he is using.

T: It has been noticed that you are using the English language in posting your status updates. Why do you use the English language in posting?

S1: mas madali po kasing mabasa pag English eh. (*Our post can be read more easily if we use the English language.*)

S2: My fb friends are also using English whenever they post that's why I also use English every time I post. (*My fb friends are also using English whenever they post that's why I also use English every time I post.*)

S3: Mas confident ako pag English kasi naman, may auto correct yung app diba po so alam kong tama ung grammar at spelling ko. (*I am more confident in using English because my grammar and spelling are automatically checked by the application that I am using.*)

The fact that the English language is considered as the international language, the language being used by the majority, its use in social networking sites is expected so that users could connect to a larger audience,

thus widening their circles.

According to Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, people learn the language through their exposure to input or reading texts. A person, having an access to considerable amount of comprehensible input, is likely to correctly acquire and produce the language. Considering that in this study, male respondents must be flooded with significant amount of input by reading through different means like the Facebook status updates, where English is widely used. Through these interactions, Facebook made the language learning and acquisition even more convenient through various connections and communication opportunities online. Furthermore, it also interesting to note that this finding of Euabarometer (2011) that English is by far the most frequently used language, other than respondents' vernacular when they go online.

The table also reveals that mixed (a combination of two languages: English and Filipino) is next to English as the commonly used code. Of the 45 Facebook status updates of the male respondents, 14 or 31. 11% are expressed in a mixed language: English and Filipino.

The table also shows that the use of Ibanag (6.7%) ranked last. This happens since Facebook is treated by the respondents as non- scholar, casual and calming platform where they could use their first language to reach out to their friends in their own culture.

Lastly, the table also reveals that mixed (a combination of two languages: English and Ibanag) is next to English as the commonly used code. Of the 45 Facebook status updates of the male respondents, 2 or 44. 44% are expressed in a mixed language: English and Ibanag.

The study of Eurobarometer (2011) found that English is frequently used language when they go online, however, the Ibanag language, the native language of the respondents, is still being used when they go online specifically in Facebook.

From the examples gathered in this study, Ibanag is used when the users want to express their judgements, when the message is directed to someone, and when the message is for themselves.

**Table 2. Language Codes of Male Respondents**

| Language Codes | | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| | English | 26 | 57.8% |
| | Mixed (English and Filipino) | 14 | 31.11% |
| | Ibanag | 3 | 6.7% |
| | Mixed (English and Ibanag) | 2 | 4.44% |
| | Total | 45 | 100.0% |

Table 3 presents the language codes used by the female respondents when they go online. The data shows that there are 3 codes being used by the female respondents: English, mixed (a combination of two languages: English and Filipino) and Filipino.

The data reveals that mixed (57.8%), a combination of two languages: English and Filipino is the commonly used language codes in Facebook status updates of the female respondents.

It is not surprising that the news feed of the Facebook users is flooded with messages expressed in mixed languages because as L1 put it, code- mixing is common among bilinguals. Since the Ibanags are known to be multilingual as perceived by many because of the presence of vowels and consonants sounds in their

language based on the International Phonetic Alphabet, the presence of two languages in a string of utterance in the data is but normal.

In this study, the respondents often code-switch when they feel tired or angry. For example, one respondent said that when the speaker is in a good mood, the appropriate word or expression in their second language is easily identified. However, if the speaker is distracted in any way, they may find it difficult to grasp the correct word. Another respondent also said that she uses a combination of two languages so she can tell exactly what she wants and make her statement clear.

T: It has been noticed that you are using the mixed language in posting your status updates. Why do you use a combination of two languages: English and Filipino) in posting?

S1: It is easier for me to express my emotions when I use TagLish in posting especially when I feel tired or angry because I can easily choose appropriate word or expression.

S2: Mas madaling mag express pag Taglish po. *(I could easily express myself using Tagalog and English).*

S3: I use a combination of two languages so I can tell exactly what I want and make my statement clear.

This supports the claim of Johansson (2013) that since they are being able to speak more than one language, bilinguals can code-switch and uses their languages as resources to find better ways to convey meaning.

There are also personal and social reasons for code-switching in that one's choice of words can represent an expression of their personality. Allatson (2007) suggests factors that can lead to code-switching as location, class, gender and age. In addition, the relationship between the speakers can be associated that the formal or informal nature of the conversation and the social status of the speakers can also be factors (Allatson, 2007).

The table also reveals that English (40%) is next to mixed (a combination of two languages: English and Filipino) as the commonly used language codes in Facebook status updates of the female respondents. Of the 45 status updates, 18 are expressed in English.

Lastly, the data gathered show that the respondents also use their national (2.2%) language. This indicates that even though the respondents are more exposed to a combination of two languages, there are still times that they use their other second language which is Filipino when they update their statuses in Facebook because of its impact to the readers. Moreover, they can also express themselves well using their national language since it is the language that they use in their daily conversation with their friends and family.

**Table 3. Language Codes of Female Respondents**

| Language Codes | | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Mixed | 26 | 57.8% |
| | English | 18 | 40.0% |
| | Filipino | 1 | 2.2% |
| | Total | 45 | 100.0% |

**Common Themes of the Topics Discussed on Facebook**

Of the 45 Facebook posts of male respondents, 5 topics were noted by the researcher to be the most commonly talked over by the male respondents: emotions, relationships, referential, religion and school-related matters.

As can be gleaned on the data gathered, the topic of emotions (42.2%) is the most evident in the Facebook

posts of the male respondents. These topics express the conscious reactions on experiences, ideas, feelings and situations which are then channeled to the social network whether consciously or unconsciously done. This act of going online implies that respondents are quite open to the idea of public display of emotion or the expression of sentiments in public. According to one respondent, people go online because of several reasons: the feeling that nobody is there to listen to them, they just want to solicit sympathy from the public, or they just want to. Moreover, another respondent explained that Facebook in general, is now considered as a "friend" who accompanies someone in his or her solitude. Lastly, one respondent thought that it makes someone more courageous in terms of expressing such emotions.

Based on the data gathered and in the informal interview, the findings of this study negate the claim of Eschholz, Rosa and Clark (1990), who established that men could practically talk about anything except personal feelings. It can be implied that men nowadays are open to the idea of public display of emotion and rreaction to different feelings and situations.

In this study, the researcher also identified topics on relationships (35.6%). Specifically, these are messages addressed to their girlfriend, family members and friends. These data are not that surprising to be observed from the posts since the respondents, who are at the peak of their younger years are expected to be more expressive of sharing their feelings towards other people. Thus, Facebook is used as one of the channels of said aggressiveness.

Referential (11.1%) messages are also evident in the Facebook posts of the male respondents. Referential is a communicative function that is used to describe or talk about facts, things, actions, events, or people in the environment (Jakobson, 1960). This finding implies that the male respondents inform the public of their latest whereabouts and give general information about their wishes, ideas, and opinions when they are on Facebook.

Next to referential is the topic of religion or faith (6.7%). The researcher noted from the posts that some of the male respondents channel their expression of thanks to the Supreme Being to the social network. The said behaviour is normal since the Philippines is hailed as the only Christian nation in Asia (CEMANES, 2010). Often, expression of hope, guidance and praises are read in the respondents' posts.

Lastly, the table reveals that the respondents also discuss school- related topics (4.4%). Based on the data, it shows that there is a meager percentage of the said topic. It implies that the male respondents use Facebook as a platform for them to relax and amuse themselves. After all, most of their time is allotted for the discussion of school- related concerns. That is why rarely that academic- related concern is seen in their newsfeed. If they post, school- related topics are meant to push their classmates to study more, accomplish requirements, beat schedules, and to make requests.

**Table 4. Topic Preferences of Male Respondents**

| Topic Preferences | | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Emotions | 19 | 42.2% |
| | Relationships | 16 | 35.6% |
| | Referential | 5 | 11.1% |
| | Religion | 3 | 6.7% |
| | School-Related Matters | 2 | 4.4% |
| | Total | 45 | 100.0% |

Table 5 presents the topic preferences of the female respondents. Of the 45 Facebook status updates, 3 topics were noted by the researcher to be the most commonly talked over by the female respondents: relationships, emotions and referential.

Contrary to the most commonly discussed topic of the male respondents which is on emotions, topics on relationships (53.3%) are identified as the most evident in the Facebook status updates of the female respondents. This finding implies that female respondents are more open on informing the public about their messages on their loved ones. The researcher noted that there are messages addressed to their friends, boyfriends and family. It is not surprising that the researcher also noted that there are messages directed to their enemies since Facebook already serves as their outlet whenever they want to express their feelings or thoughts to other people. From the interview conducted, one respondent mentioned that it is more exciting to talk about her relationship with other people like friends and family instead of herself because others might have negative things to say about her. Another relayed that she feels bored when she talks about herself. Nowadays, it seems natural for women to talk about other people rather talking about themselves. Another even explained that it is actually women's way of establishing rapport with others. It makes women feel like they are "in" if that is the topic.

T: Why do you love to talk more about your relationships instead of discussing your latest whereabouts including giving general information.?

S1: Mas exciting po kasi pag usapan ang relationship sa ibang tao like friends and family kesa po sa sarili. Pag po kasi sarili mo ang ibibida, hindi po maganda ang tingin ng ibang tao sayo. (*It is more exciting to talk about your relationship with other people like friends and family instead of yourself because others might have negative things to say about you.*)

S2: Boring po kasi pag ganun saka parang nature na ng mga babae ngayon ang mas pag usapan ang ibang tao kesa pag usapan ang mga sarili, (We *feel bored when we talk about ourselves. Nowadays, it seems natural for women to talk about other people rather talking about themselves.*)

S3: It's actually women's way of establishing rapport with others. Like in ka pag ganun ang topic. (*It's actually women's way of establishing rapport with others. It makes us feel like we are "in" if that is the topic.*)

The result of this supports Tannen's (1990) Genderlect theory which argues that women engage in communication to build and maintain relationships with others. Also, Holmes (1991) emphasizes that women tend to talk about their feelings and their relationship.

Next to topic on relationships as the most commonly discussed topic of female respondents, topic on emotions (22.2%) ranked second. Conventional wisdom leads us to believe that women are more emotional than men, or at least are more emotionally expressive (Kring & Gordon 1998). This conventional wisdom has been supported by the results of many academic research papers indicating that women are indeed the more emotionally expressive of the genders. Furthermore, Tannen's Genderlect theory suggests that the style of women in communicating is the rapport talk. This means that Women express emotions, share personal feelings, relate stories, and listen empathically.

Lastly, referential (22.2%) messages were noted to be the least discussed topic of the female respondents. As mentioned in this study, referential is a communicative function that is used to describe or talk about facts, things, actions, events, or people in the environment (Jakobson, 1960). The result of this study is surprising since women, in the Philippine context, are used to be known as talkative- they love to share their latest whereabouts and give general information about their wishes, ideas, and opinions. Also, the result does not support Jones (1990) in his claim that, "women are not only sharing information, but are

asking each other". It should be noted however that Female respondents would love to talk more about their relationships instead of discussing their latest whereabouts including giving general information.

### Table 5. Topic Preferences of Female Respondents

| Topic Preferences | | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Relationships | 24 | 53.3% |
| | Emotions | 11 | 24.4% |
| | Referential | 10 | 22.2% |
| | Total | 45 | 100.0% |

**Gender- based Identity Construction in Facebook**

Social identity, in this paper, refers to the way language users portray themselves as real people through interactions in chats or posts. Also, it allows them to represent and negotiate their social presence with other participants in a virtual community (Guaman, 2012), that is "the ability to portray oneself as real person" and to perceive the same in the other members of the group (Palloff and Pratt, 2007). Hill (2009) asserts that 'attention needs to be paid in the ways in which individuals present, construct, their identities (online)'.

Overall, four themes emerged in the analyses on the language codes and topics discussed by the male respondents: ability to use the English language, sense of nationalism, sense of unreservedness and religiosity. Moreover, the language used by both male and female respondents signal three social identities: use of English as marker of second language user, group affiliation, and patriotic sense.

**Ability to use the English Language**. It can be gleaned that the male respondents favor more the English language than the other languages. Such preference is due to their ability to use the said language which is attributed to the use of English in the country- the country's second language.

**Sense of Nationalism**. The male respondents, despite their ability to use the English language, still use their national and/or mother tongue in posting their updates on their Facebook accounts. This act shows that they value said languages, and somehow, it speaks of their attitude of being proud of their identity as Filipinos/ Ibanags.

**Sense of Openness**. Male respondents are open and fond of disclosing some of their activities, memories and experiences. In this context, Facebook is used as the respondents' personal journal and as an extension of their real world. This practice was noticed on the topics discussed in their post.

**Religiosity.** The male respondents are perceived to be God- fearing. Their posts suggest that they believe in God. After all, Filipinos are known to be religious people, and they belong to various religious groups. Meanwhile, there are three distinct identities of the female respondents based on the language codes and topic discussed in their posts: adaptability, expressiveness, and fervidness in fostering interpersonal relationships.

**Adaptability.** The female respondents are perceived to be adaptable of various situations. It can be inferred that the respondents code mix so that they could blend in the culture and the nature of the Facebook users. In fact, according to Durano (2009), codeswitching is a result of language adaptation in different situations. Using the mix language, the female respondents could identify themselves as part of the majority- students who use a more informal language. Thus, this gives them more chances to have "friends" or to engage casual conversations with anybody. Filipinos can adjust effortlessly to a new

ironment

ironment or different conditions. They are capable of being modified to suit different conditions or a different purpose (Cemanes, 2010).

**Expressiveness.** Furthermore, female Facebook users also communicate expressiveness by voicing out their emotions in Facebook as manifested in the usual topics discussed (emotions and relationships).

**Socialness.** The female respondents, likewise, value relationships which is fostered through their socialness or by performing social tasks such as opening, maintaining and closing a communication channel.

## 4. Conclusion

In the light of the findings, this study concludes that male and female have differences as far as the use of language in Facebook is concerned. Both male and female who are active users of Facebook are multilingual whenever they go online. The discussion on the variety of topics speaks of the diversity of the interest of those involved in the communication platform. The interactivity that Facebook provides makes it a medium through which people define themselves by sharing what is going on in their lives or how they are feeling, so this makes this forum an extension of a person's real-life identity.

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