



ANALYZING SOCIAL PREJUDICE THROUGH LANGUAGE PARADIGM: THE SITUATION OF THE LGBTQIA+ MEMBERS

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ABSTRACT

Discrimination against LGBTQIA+ is gaining attention these days and is growing more prevalent. One method used in this act is through language where people use words against them. However, social prejudice has not received enough attention, and few to no studies focus on using language paradigm to analyze this aspect in public school context. Therefore, this small scale-research aimed to assess the social prejudice of LGBTQIA+ members through language paradigm. The participants of this research were 10 LGBTQIA+ members from Cabiao and San Antonio who experience social prejudice and insults.

The thematic analysis revealed that language is used as a tool to derogate, stereotype, exclude LGBTQIA+ members socially and make them feel insulted and underestimated. Social prejudice also affects their focus and performance in doing school activities, makes them withdraw from school and lose their self-esteem. The study also found out that the participants tend to isolate themselves from society. Social prejudice instills self-doubt, fear, and depression in the participants. The coping mechanisms of the participants are never minding bullies, proving themselves that they excel, motivating themselves, and isolating themselves.

The researcher recommended that the LGUs should focus also about the LGBTQIA+ community, provide programs that protect them from social prejudice that is becoming rampant in the society.

KEYWORDS: *discrimination, language paradigm, LGBTQIA+, social prejudice*

1. INTRODUCTION

Discrimination against the LGBTQIA+ community is still a widespread and deeply ingrained social problem that takes many different forms all over the world. Simply because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, members of the LGBTQIA+ community frequently experience discrimination, stigmatization, and exclusion on both an individual and institutional levels. The pursuit of equal chances and a life free from prejudice and fear can be hampered by discrimination that takes the form of discrimination in job practices, healthcare access, education, and day-to-day social interactions. Even though progress has been made in identifying and resolving these issues, the struggle for full acceptance, understanding, and equality for the LGBTQIA+ community continues to be a critical human rights issue, demanding ongoing advocacy and awareness.

United Nations (UN), through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) ensures that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." This means that there should be equality among all people, regardless of color, race and ethnic group, disabilities, sex, class, caste, creed, age, or sexual orientation. Furthermore, in the Philippine context, although there is no national law that has been passed to protect the LGBTQIA+ community against discrimination, several areas have enforced anti-discrimination ordinances that include sexual orientation and gender identity and expression among its protected categories (Manalastas, 2017).

Although two of 81 provinces, and 11 out of 1,637 cities and municipalities in the Philippines have started protecting the LGBTQIA+ community through their ordinances, it does not change the fact that 88.6% of Filipinos reside on areas without protection of against discrimination (Manalastas, 2017). This percentage includes the municipalities of San Antonio and Cabiao. The lack of programs that protect the LGBTQIA+ community in both municipalities against social prejudice prompted the researcher to deal with the analysis of social prejudice through language paradigm and its effect to the academic performance, social interaction, and mental health of the community members.

1.1 Social Prejudice Against the LGBTQIA+ Community

Research studies show that social prejudice against the LGBTQIA+ community still happens. For instance, one of the foci of Bionat's (2018) study was the analysis of forms of oppression and acts of discrimination experienced by parloristas. The data that was obtained demonstrated that the participants are aware of the discriminatory acts they experience, including social discrimination like being shut out of social situations or rejected from jobs, as well as verbal discrimination like being teased and catcalled. The participants narrate stories of being labeled "plagues of society," heckled for being gay, taunted by kids, referred to as thieves, harassed at school, and chastised for using the women's restroom in public places like shopping centers. Santos & De Jesus (2020) examined and characterized the various manifestations of bullying encountered by LGBTQIA+ college



students, encompassing verbal or written, physical, relational or social, and cyber forms. The study also delved into the adverse consequences of bullying. The analysis revealed that verbal/written bullying, manifested through persistent teasing, threats, intimidation, and name-calling, emerged as the most widespread form. Likewise, the study concluded that bullying had detrimental effects on these students, significantly impacting their emotional well-being and engendering feelings of unease, fear, and mistrust towards others.

Taragua (2020) delved into the challenges and matters concerning the academic well-being of LGBT students within a university setting. The research revealed the presence of identified issues and concerns related to academic bullying, primarily manifesting as verbal abuse, non-physical discrimination, and insensitivity towards others.

The primary goal of Amistad (2022) was to explore the real-life encounters of secondary school lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, seeking to comprehend and assign significance to these experiences. The study uncovered that these LGB individuals are cognizant of societal prejudice against them. Moreover, they face bullying and discrimination from both peers and educators, leading to feelings of isolation due to their gender identity throughout their secondary education.

Aperochio et al. (2023) studied the occurrence of racism using hate speech in the comments against the LGBTQIA+ community on Facebook as a platform. It was found out that aside from religion, gender and sexual orientation are widely used patterns in hate speech. Also, the findings reveal that the discursive components may play a significant role in shaping how individuals interact with LGBTQIA+ people and express hate speech.

Capurihan et al. (2023) focused on assessing the level of language paradigm of social prejudice and finding out the level of social exclusion of LGBTQI members in a Higher Education Institution (HEI). The study revealed that students experience significant verbal bullying, homophobia, gendered language, and social bias. Furthermore, the social exclusion of LGBTQI students is exceptionally high in terms of normativity, social stigma, and religion. Finally, the language paradigm of social discrimination impacts how LGBTQI members are treated socially at UMTC.

Montaño et al. (2023) investigated the dynamics of relationships among Filipino same-sex couples facing challenges of homophobia, heteronormativity, and discrimination through a

biographical narrative approach. The research unveiled the existence of homophobic perspectives leading to stigma, discrimination, and oppressive conditions for marginalized same-sex couples. Nevertheless, the study demonstrated that these couples were resilient in maintaining their relationships despite the adversities they faced.

Pocan (2023) examined discrimination experienced by selected LGBTQIA intercollegiate athletes from private and public higher education institutions in the Philippines. It was stated in the study that there is a high number of cases in terms of sexist behavior and verbal abuse.

The abovementioned studies focused about LGBTQIA+ members outside school context, in a private secondary school, and in HEIs. Furthermore, the studies mentioned focused on various areas of discrimination in general. These circumstances prompted the researcher to deal with a qualitative study which examined and analyzed the social prejudice encountered by the LGBTQIA+ members using language paradigm.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored to the Queer Theory and Linguistic Philosophy as its theoretical and philosophical foundations.

Queer theory, situated within the realm of gender studies, is an interdisciplinary field that challenges the normative classifications of gendered and sexualized identities, which function as fundamental organizing principles in society, social interactions, and social institutions. As proposed by Anderson (2007, as cited in Das, 2020), this theory seeks to undermine the hegemonic order by questioning and deconstructing traditional concepts of sexuality, gender identity, and norms. It challenges binary frameworks that categorize individuals strictly as either heterosexual or homosexual and as either male or female.

In the context of this research, Queer theory explores how linguistic structures contribute to the reinforcement of social prejudice against the LGBTQIA+ community. It scrutinizes language paradigms to unveil implicit biases, stereotypes, and heteronormative assumptions embedded in discourse. By deconstructing linguistic norms and highlighting the power dynamics inherent in language use, queer theory aims to foster a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of sexuality and gender identity, seeking to dismantle oppressive language practices that contribute to social prejudice against the LGBTQIA+ community.

1.3 Statement of Purpose

This study entitled “Analyzing Social Prejudice through Language Paradigm: The Situation of the LGBTQIA+ Members” aimed to analyze and examine the social prejudice against the LGBTQIA+ members of the municipalities of San Antonio and Cabaio through language paradigm.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. How may the language paradigm of social prejudice be described in terms of:
 - 1.1 Verbal Bullying; And
 - 1.2 Homophobia?
2. How may the language paradigm of social prejudice affect the LGBTQIA+ members in terms of:
 - 2.1 Academics;
 - 2.2 Social Interactions; And
 - 2.3 Mental Health?



3. How do the LGBTQIA+ members respond to the social prejudice?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Studying the situation of the LGBTQIA+ community is crucial for fostering a society that values inclusivity, diversity, equality, and gender celebration. By examining the challenges and discrimination faced by this community, people can identify and address systemic issues, advocate for policy changes, and promote social awareness. Understanding the unique experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals is essential for creating environments that embrace difference and respect human rights. Through research and analysis, the whole community, not just the LGBTQIA+ community can work towards dismantling stereotypes, combating prejudice, and building a more compassionate world that recognizes and celebrates the richness of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions within the LGBTQIA+ community.

In the context of this research, its battle cry is to promote understanding, inclusivity, positive change, and gender celebration in both the municipalities of San Antonio and Cabiao as there is little to no programs that reinforce the protection of LGBTQIA+ community.

2. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach. The meaning that an individual

gives to experiences that they personally go through is the main emphasis of qualitative research. By using this design, researchers hope to learn "what it is like" to be in a certain circumstance and how others, especially the participants, deal with it. The goal of qualitative research is to comprehend and explain the experiences that are discovered during the process of collecting data, rather than making any predictions about the information that participants provide (Willig, 2013)

2.2 Locale of the Study

This study was conducted in the municipality of San Antonio and Cabiao in Nueva Ecija. The researcher chose the said municipalities because of the little to no programs that reinforce the protection of LGBTQIA+ members.

2.3 Participants

The participants of the study were identified using a purposive sampling technique. According to Crossman (2020), purposive sampling is a type wherein the population's characteristics and the study's objective will be considered in selecting respondents. Further, this type of sampling will be applied to instances where proportionality in sampling is not the main concern. Though this kind of sampling technique is subjective, the researcher generated a qualifying criterion to provide justification of the selection of LGBTQIA+ participants: 1.) 18 years old and above; 2.) must be a resident of San Antonio or Cabiao; 3.) must be attending school; and 4.) must have encountered social discrimination and prejudice. Based on the researcher's criteria, ten participants could participate in the study.

Table 1
The Participants of the Study

| Code | Municipality | Educational Background | Gender Identity |
|------|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| P1 | Cabiao | College student | transgender |
| P2 | Cabiao | Senior High School student | transgender |
| P3 | Cabiao | College student | gay |
| P4 | Cabiao | College student | transgender |
| P5 | Cabiao | College student | bisexual |
| P6 | Cabiao | College student | bisexual |
| P7 | San Antonio | College student | bisexual |
| P8 | San Antonio | College student | queer |
| P9 | San Antonio | College student | gay |
| P10 | San Antonio | College student | transgender |

2.4 Data Gathering Instrument

A qualitative survey was used to gather necessary information from the participants. It is with the understanding that participants, although they have shared the same phenomenon, have different experiences in it. Specifically, this instrument was used to understand the experiences of LGBTQIA+ members. In any case that a participant cannot comprehend well the questions constructed in English, questions were translated in Filipino. Also, participants could answer in Tagalog. The qualitative survey underwent validation to ensure it matched the study's

objectives. It was validated by two (2) registered psychometricians and one (1) language major.

2.5 Research Procedures

This qualitative study utilized qualitative survey in analyzing the social prejudice encountered by the individuals who consider themselves as members of LGBTQIA+ community. The participants were gathered through a Facebook post and referral. They were informed that by proceeding with the data gathering, it is acknowledged that they consent to participate in this study



and have understood what is being requested as a participant. It has also been made aware that participation should be confidential and voluntary.

2.6 Data Analysis Technique

The research employed the thematic method of analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), known as the guidance framework, which includes stages such as familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up. This approach encompasses diverse perspectives from multiple research participants, highlighting both similarities and differences and often yielding unexpected findings. Thematic analysis is applied to discern patterns within and across the data concerning the lived experiences of participants, specifically

those belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community. It aims to comprehend their emotions and thoughts, aligning with the study's objectives (Clarke, Braun, & Hayfield, 2015).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data gathered, the language paradigm, effects of social prejudice, response to these social prejudice, and suggested topics are presented and discussed individually below.

3.1 Language Paradigm of Social Prejudice

The following tables show how language is used for verbal bullying and homophobia and brief descriptions for the themes generated.

Table 2
Language as a Tool for Verbal Bullying

| Theme | Description | Sample Response |
|------------------|---|--|
| Derogation | This explores the insidious use of hurtful language to demean and marginalize individuals, illustrating the power dynamics. | P1: <i>"Most people call me "bakla" ... they are using it as a derogatory term."</i> P3: <i>"They call me "bakla bakla bakla" when I'm around."</i> P4: <i>"... my subject teacher insults me by saying wala akong mararating sa buhay."</i> |
| Stereotyping | This explores the harmful deployment of prejudiced language to reinforce and perpetuate damaging stereotypes. | P5: <i>"Natatawag na bakla kahit bisexual ako dahil puro babae yung mga kasama ko."</i> P7: <i>"...people call me as a "tomby" in impolite ways without actually knowing the differences between lesbian and a bisexual."</i> |
| Social Exclusion | This explores how the deliberate use of hurtful language can alienate individuals, creating barriers to inclusion and fostering a divisive environment. | P6: <i>"They said that my gender is not good for them to have in their side."</i> P9: <i>"Being a member of a community which is labeled as 'society's outcast', I personally experienced bullied in accordance to how I display myself."</i> |

The provided table elucidates how language serves as a tool for derogation, stereotyping, and social exclusion directed towards members of the LGBTQIA+ community, illustrating the negative impact of linguistic expressions on their societal inclusion. Its implication underscores the pervasive and harmful impact of

linguistic expressions in perpetuating discrimination and marginalization within society. This is supported by Capurihan et al. (2023) who claimed that LGBTQIA+ members in a university experience verbal bullying which impacts them based on their conduct



Table 3
Language as a Tool for Homophobia

| Theme | Description | Sample Response |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Insult | This explores the deliberate use of homophobic language targeting individuals based on their sexual orientation, perpetuating harm, and fostering an environment of prejudice and hostility. | P1: "People would always use the words "bakla" and "bading" as their way to insult..." P10: "...they do name dropping like "raul" using deep voice mimicking the natural tone of my voice." |
| Underestimation | This explores how homophobic language is employed to belittle and undermine individuals. | P2: "...being called "salot", "bayot", "walang mararating sa buhay". P4: "...never kang tatanggapin sa langit dahil gawa ka ng demonyo." P7: "Sayang ka, ganda mo pa naman..." P9: "Bakla ka lang, wala kang mararating sa buhay." |

The table shows that language is used to insult and underestimate the LGTQIA+ members. Its implication lies in the reinforcement of discriminatory attitudes, fostering an environment of disrespect and undermining the value and capabilities of individuals within the community. The study of Baiocco (2018) also revealed that even in sports-related contexts, it is problematic and homophobic behaviors are present.

3.2 Effects of Social Prejudice and Insults

The following tables show how social prejudice and insults affect academics, social interactions, and mental health of the LGTQIA+ members and brief descriptions for the themes that were generated.

Table 4
Effects of Social Prejudice and Insults on Academics

| Theme | Description | Sample Response |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Focus and Performance | This explores how social prejudice and insults within an academe can detrimentally impact individuals' concentration, and overall academic achievement. | P2: "...it affects my ability to focus and perform well in activities." |
| Absence in school | This explores how social prejudice and insults can lead to the physical withdrawal of individuals from school. | P3: "It feels like I do not want to go to school anymore." |
| Self-esteem | This explores how social prejudice and insults can erode individuals' self-worth, fostering a sense of inadequacy and contributing to diminished confidence. | P5: "Naaapektuhan nito yung self-esteem bilang isang kasapi ng LGTQIA+ community." |

Based on the statements of the participants, the social prejudice and insults affect their focus, performance, and self-esteem in performing tasks. Also, these also cause them to be absent from school, affecting their academic record. Taragua (2020) also

pointed out that issues such as verbal assault, non-touching physical discrimination, and insensitivity affect the academic well-being of the LGTQIA+ members.



Table 5
Effects of Social Prejudice and Insults on Social Interactions

| Theme | Description | Sample Response |
|----------------|--|---|
| Self-isolation | This explores how social prejudice and insults can lead individuals to distance themselves from those who may perceive them as different, perpetuating a cycle of isolation. | P1: <i>"I would distance myself from unknown people to protect my peace."</i> P3: <i>"It feels like I don't wanna go out/leave the house anymore."</i> |

The table shows that because the LGBTQIA+ members experience discrimination, they tend to isolate themselves from others. This also implies that discrimination leads to their self-imposed isolation as a coping mechanism in response to the social

stigma and marginalization they experience. The study of Capurihan et al. (2023) also found out that university students experience social isolation due to the social prejudice and insults they encounter.

Table 6
Effects of Social Prejudice and Insults on Mental Health

| Theme | Description | Sample Response |
|------------|--|---|
| Self-doubt | This explores how social prejudice and insults can instill uncertainty and insecurity in individuals, undermining their confidence and reinforcing a cycle of self-questioning and diminished self-belief. | P2: <i>"...that is why I asked myself 'What's wrong with me?'"</i> |
| Fear | This explores how social prejudice and insults can instill a sense of apprehension and anxiety in individuals, creating a climate of fear. | P3: <i>"It's always giving me fear..."</i> |
| Depression | This explores how social Prejudice and insults can negatively impact individuals' mental health, fostering a sense of hopelessness, isolation, and inadequacy. | P10: <i>"When I was starting to Transition from male to female, a lot of people make fun of me because of what I look like. I feel depressed and I even question my existence..."</i> |

The table implies that the experience of social prejudice and insults has a profound and negative impact on the mental health of LGBTQIA+ individuals, potentially leading to the development of self-doubt, fear, and depression as psychological consequences of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. This also implies that social prejudice and insults can cause negative mental health outcomes, which according to, Perez & Hernandez (2021) can be linked to disapproval of gender nonconformity, regardless

of whether violence based on sexual orientation is present.

3.3. Response to Social Prejudice and Insults

The table below shows the responses and coping mechanisms of LGBTQIA+ members when they encounter social prejudice and insults.

Table 7
Reponses and Coping Mechanisms

| Theme | Description | Sample Response |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Never minding bullies | This explores the empowering strategy of disregarding and resiliently brushing off social prejudice and insults. | P7: <i>"...I don't let them get on my nerves..."</i> |
| Proving oneself | This explores the resilient and determined effort of individuals to overcome social prejudice and insults by highlighting their capabilities, challenging stereotypes, and affirming their worth in the face of adversity. | P9: <i>"...it gave me the idea to strive more and harder to show them that I am bigger than what they thought I am."</i> |



| | | |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Motivation | This explores how individuals, faced with discriminatory attitudes, channel adversity into personal drive, using it as a catalyst for self-improvement, resilience, and determination. | P7: "I use those terms to motivate myself so I would have higher grades..." |
| Distancing oneself | This explores how individuals, confronted with social prejudice and insults, may choose a self-protective strategy of emotional and social detachment to preserve their well-being and shield themselves from the Harmful effects of prejudi | P4 "...at kapag di ka nakakabuti sa kin, lalayan na kita for my peace of mind." |

The presented table provides insights into the ways LGBTQIA+ individuals respond to social prejudice and insults, demonstrating a range of coping strategies. Among these responses, some individuals choose to "never mind" the bullies, indicating a deliberate effort to ignore or disengage from the negativity. Additionally, others opt for "proving oneself," suggesting a desire to highlight their capabilities and worth in the face of discrimination. Moreover, "motivating themselves" implies a self-encouragement approach, involving affirmations or internal sources of empowerment. Lastly, "distancing themselves" reflects a strategy of creating emotional or physical separation from those perpetuating prejudice, emphasizing the importance of self-preservation and well-being in the face of adversity. In the study of Doan Van (2018), the bisexuals coping mechanisms against discrimination were social support, resilience, and identity-specific media consumption.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study analyzed social prejudice through language paradigm. Based on thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013), this research revealed that verbal bullying and homophobic language affect LGBTQIA+ members in terms of academic, social interaction, and mental health. The language is used as a tool to derogate, stereotype, socially exclude the LGBTQIA+ members and make them feel insulted and underestimated. Thus, this influences them to function well in the academe and in society and affects their mental health. Social prejudice affects their focus and performance in doing school activities, makes them withdraw from school and loses their self-esteem. The study also found out that the participants tend to isolate themselves from society. In terms of mental health, social prejudice instills self-doubt, fear, and depression in the participants. The coping mechanisms of the participants are never minding bullies, proving themselves that they excel, motivating themselves, and isolating themselves.

Finally, the researcher recommends the Local Government Units (LGUs) of San Antonio and Cabiao to give at least take a glance to the situation of the LGBTQIA+ community, provide programs and give emphasis to ordinances that protect them from social prejudice that is becoming rampant for they also play a vital role in community-building

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