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RESEARCH PAPER

Analyzing the Differences in Use of Language by Men and Women on Social Media

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ABSTRACT

The 21st Century showed change in communication modes that have shifted from face-to-face interaction to digital approaches like online conversation on Social Media. Thus, literacy on Facebook represents linguistic differences that distinguish men from women and their own cultural norms, beliefs, and values from others. Social Media has different types i.e. Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, Line etc. The present study focuses on one type of social media that is use of Facebook by men and women. Data is derived from 'statuses' of Facebook users which includes expression of their moods, eating habits, studies, celebrations. Data is analyzed qualitatively. Findings reveal linguistic differences which highlight gender discrimination and cultural differences. This paper hopes to enrich knowledge on highlighting gender and cultural differences and motivates other researchers to conduct further studies in this area by including other activities like politics, work, sports, and news etc.

Keywords: Cultural Identity, Facebook, Gender Patterns, Sociolinguistics

Introduction

Facebook, a social networking service was launched on February 4, 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. It is accessed by desktops, laptops, tablet computers, and smart phones over the internet and mobile networks. Facebook is a tool for social communication. There are more than 500 million Facebook users. People use listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills on Facebook to communicate with other people. Thus, social communication on Facebook also reveals the fact that even on Facebook, one is not human being rather 'man' or 'woman.'

Literature Review

The relationship between language and gender is a very interesting topic. Graddol and Swann, in their book *Gender Voices* (1989) asserted that language represents one's personal and social identity. Gibbons (1999) sees language as a tool to maintain social relations. The term 'Gender' has been presented in various ways. Coates (1993) described the term 'Gender' as 'socially constructed category.' Crystal (2001) talked about linguistic revolution on Facebook. Matheson (2005) and Muzaffar, Chohdhry, Afzal, (2019) claimed that through the use of social media, people communicate with one another. Litosseliti (2006) talked about different issues like gender which are observed through language use. Coley (2006) categorized cyber communities in three types: (a) Social networks (Facebook), (b) Chat system (Instant Messaging), (c) Personal websites (news) etc. Siibak (2007) talked about the fact that female represent their cultural identity as they use profile pictures of hands, dresses etc. Raacke (2008) claimed that men and women use Facebook for social communication purposes. Facebook is a tool to meet with new people. (Baron, 2008).

Stylistics includes textual analysis to know the structure and function of particular language. (Simpson, 1997). There are different approaches for analysis such as Chomsky's 'Generative grammar', Halliday's 'Systemic Linguistics', Searle's 'Speech acts', and Courtyard's 'Discourse analysis.' (Mills, 1995). Feminist Stylistics is a particular way of analysis language in feminist perspectives. Many feminist linguists such as Deborah Cameron, Jennifer Coates, and Sara Mills are famous for their notable works. Sara Mills is a prominent writer who worked on 'Sexist Language' in her books 'Feminist Stylistics' (1995) and 'Language and Sexism' (2008). Sara Mills described 'Sexist Language' which showed differences between men and women's language.

Framework

This research project employs Sara Mills's framework in conducting the analysis of language on social media i.e. facebook. Stylistics analysis is a neutral form of analysis. It deals with different aspects of language.

Sara mills' model in 'Feminist Stylistics' deals with issues of gender representation in language. She talks about the fact that women's speech is seen as a deviation from the norm (male). Men and women's writings represent gender. Men's texts are mostly taken as formal and meanings are considered simple and thoughtful while female sentences on the other hand are considered complex and difficult to understand. Women writings show their experiences. Sara Mills's model analyzed language at word, phrase/sentence, and discourse level.

Analysis at the word level

Sara Mills described the theory of 'Linguistic Determinism' that reveals the idea that language shapes world view. This section concentrates on forms in language which show language of men as normal and of women as deviant. Linguistic forms describe male as unmarked and female as marked category. This level analyzes lexical items to show gender differences. Word choices include 'Generic Pronoun', 'Generic Nouns', 'Women as marked form' (Men as norm, women as deviation from norm), 'Naming', 'Semantic derogation of women', 'metaphors for women' etc. Women use more adjectives than men. They use rising intonations and intensifiers (e.g., just, so) in their speech more than men. They use 'Polite markers' and put more focus on emphatic stress which differentiate their speech from men.

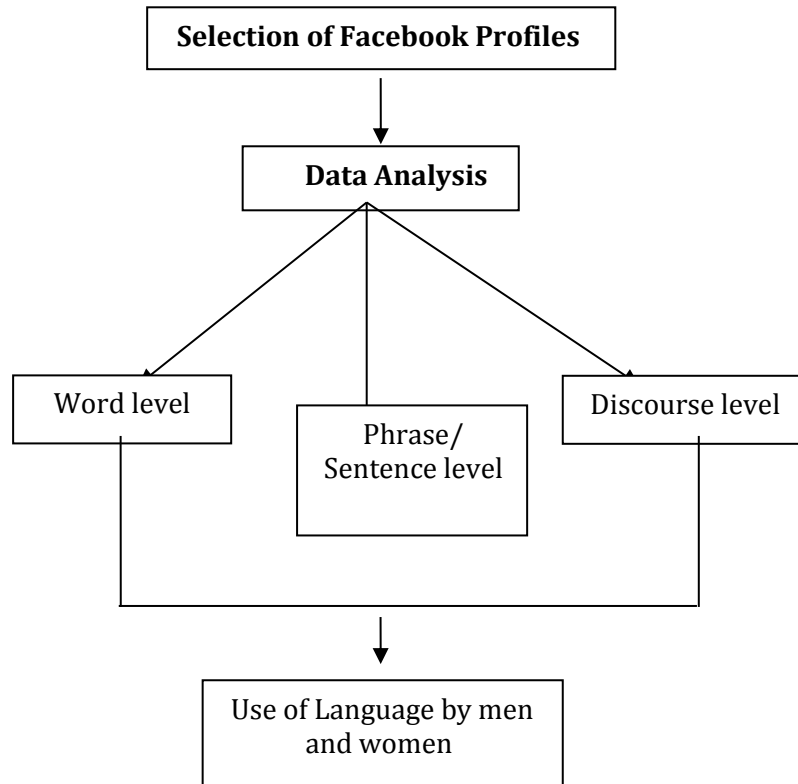
Analysis at the phrase/sentence level

This level focuses on the language use beyond the level of word. In this level, phrases and sentences are analyzed and relationship of phrases/sentences with co-text, context, usage and background knowledge is examined. This level of analysis includes 'Ready-made phrases', 'presupposition', 'inference', 'metaphors', 'jokes/humors', and 'transitivity choice.' It has been observed that women use interrogative (questioning) technique in their sentences. They use form of tag questions while men use declarative and imperative form of sentences more than women.

Material action is further categorized into material action intention and material process intention.

Analysis at the discourse level

At this level, there is focus on larger structures of discourse above the level of sentence. This level focuses on the way how the text is constructed and what type of meanings it conveys. This level is concerned with patterns and ideology of text. Hence the focus is on gendered frameworks. This level focuses on 'Characterization (roles)', 'fragmentation', 'focalization', and 'schemata' (Mills, 1995). The following flowchart highlights the steps followed in this research paper.

Flowchart

The qualitative research design has been used to investigate this problem. The population of the present study comprises facebook profiles of B.Z.U students.

The population strength is 54 out of which 18 students have been selected from random sampling.

Results and Discussion**Data Analysis**

This includes linguistic analysis of language used by men and women. In this chapter, the researcher has taken the 'Statuses' of facebook users in four areas of social activity. These areas include 'Eating Habits', 'Moods' and 'Celebrations'.

Men and Women language representing 'Eating Habits'

Eating habits are those habits which reveal information about eating stuff, manners, ways and timings etc. Eating is the basic necessity of all human beings but the way we eat, the way we show our liking and disliking for particular things vary from person to person. Eating habits also reveal one's culture in which he/she practices these things. Language is a powerful tool through which people communicate with each other. So, language also reveals information about eating habits. Facebook is a social website where millions of people maintain social relationships with each other.

Analysis of Men's language

Example 1: Dawood Ali was eating pizza with family at Pizza.com. 🍕

Analysis at the word level

This level analyzes words which the subject has used for giving his status on facebook. First of all, the subject has used noun (common noun) that claims his own personal

identity. There is the use of verb 'Past Continuous Tense' in the status. 'Pizza' is again noun and an object, a thing to eat.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

This level analyzes the status of subject 1 at the sentence level. Here, at this level, the status is seen in the form of declarative sentence in which the subject is simply giving information about his activity.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status at this level determines power in hands of man. The status shows that the subject has power to control his family. His family goes with the subject outside the home for eating purposes only when the subject wants to go. Here, the subject is the main character who performs the role of going outside and eating pizza at Pizza.com

Example 2: Haseeb was at Almaida Multan. It was a good dinner with friends. 

Analysis at the word level


This level analyzes words which the subject has used for giving his status on facebook. First of all, the subject 'Haseeb' has used his own name that is noun. It shows his own personal identity. He is a male member of society.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

This level analyzes the status of subject 1 at the sentence level. Here, at this level, the status is seen in the form of declarative sentence in which the subject is simply giving information about his activity.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status at this level determines power in hands of man in society. His meeting with friends reveals his good nature. This status represents 'Man' as a whole to do a certain process. At this level, it is also analyzed that people like hoteling very much. Eating at home is the natural process.

Example 3 Syed Qaseem was eating pizza at Pizza.com (Late night pizza) 

Analysis at the word level

This level does analysis at the word level in which the subject has given status on facebook. First of all, the subject has used his own name *Syed Qaseem*. 'Pizza' is again noun and an object, a good thing to eat.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

Status is seen in the form of declarative sentence. This status assumes the fact that the subject is an active and brave member of family and he is lively person. He enjoys life and likes to eat modern/fast foods.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status determines authority in hands of man. The status shows that the subject has control over himself. He is an independent man who does whatever he wants. He goes outside the home for eating purposes only when he wants to go. This status represents 'Man' as a whole to do a certain process

Analysis of women's language

Example 4: Yummy Daal Chawal made by me at sweet home 😊 (as is approved by others 😊) / (Gorgeous lunch with family 😊) 

Analysis at the word level

This level analyzes words which the subject 'girl' has used for giving her status on facebook. First of all, the subject hasn't used her own name in her status. Her action (cooking) shows her identity as one member of family.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

Status is seen in the form of 'passive sentence' in which the subject is simply giving information about her activity that she made cooking and enjoyed with family. So, the intended meanings of this status at the sentence level reveal girl's close attachment with her family and this status represents her as a nice family girl.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status shows women in society as they are expected to work at home. The status shows that the subject has obeyed her family tradition and job as a house girl to prepare lunch for family. Her family enjoys lunch and appreciates her act of making lunch. This status also shows the fact that although women do well at home but their actions are based on reactions of others.

Example 5: Lunch at MGM. We enjoyed farewell party. Last function, we would remember with lots of memories ❤️👉👈👉👈

Analysis at the word level

The subject 'girl' has talked in a pleasant mood to highlight the action done in academic context. She has used 'we' to show her unity with her friends. Her action (doing lunch) shows her identity as student.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

This level analyzes the status of subject 'girl' at the sentence level. Here, at this level, the status is seen in the form of 'active sentence' in which the subject is simply giving information about her activity that she did lunch and enjoyed with friends. **Analysis at the Discourse level**

Example 6: Today I made chicken Biryani  **for my 4 year sweet son** ❤️ (Feeling love)

Analysis at the word level

This level analyzes words which the subject 'girl' has used for giving her status on facebook. First of all, the subject hasn't used her own name in her status instead she gave name of place 'MGM'. Her action (doing lunch) shows her identity as student. There is the use of 'Past Indefinite Tense' in the status. She has used 'nouns', 'adjectives', and prepositions (at, with) in her status.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

This level analyzes the status of subject 'girl' at the sentence level. Here, at this level, the status is seen in the form of 'active sentence' in which the subject is simply giving information about her activity that she did lunch and enjoyed with friends. This status

assumes the fact that the subject is a student and she is a good girl as she attends all the activities held by her academic institution.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status at this level determines the activities of women and their emotional attachment with her relations as they are expected to be good students. The status shows that the subject has obeyed to her education department and did attend farewell party.

Men and Women's language representing 'Celebrations'

Celebrations mean to celebrate different events for example marriages, birthdays, weddings etc. Celebrations are important part of our lives. These celebrations reveal our cultural identity as people living in different areas of world use different ways to celebrate different events. Similarly, men and women use different linguistic items to talk about different events. Men and women post statuses on facebook differently.

Analysis of Men's language

Example 7: Jahangir Khan celebrated Nikah ceremony of his beloved brother at Ni



Hao.

Analysis at the word level

This level analyzes the words which the subject '*Jahangir Khan*' has used for giving his status on facebook. First of all, the subject has used his own name '*Jahangir Khan*' that is categorized as noun (common noun) and use of noun claims his own personal identity that he is the brother and a male member of society.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

Status is seen in the form of declarative sentence in which the subject is simply giving information about his activity that he has celebrated some event with his family. This status assumes the fact that the subject is an active member of family and he is very close to his family. He enjoys life and all functions.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status at this level determines important life event. Here, the subject is the main character who performs the role of good brother. This status represents 'Man' as a whole to do a certain process. Marriage is a religious ceremony. Every man and woman is allowed to marry at a certain age. But people enjoy their marriages in different ways. Some celebrate at home while some arrange different places to increase their happiness.

Example 8: Fahad Khan attended annual sports gala with friends at Punjab College. #Best Day 😊

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

Status is seen in the form of declarative sentence in which the subject 'Ali' is simply giving information about his activity that he has celebrated some event with his friends. This status assumes the fact that the subject is an active member of family and he is very close to his friends. He enjoys life and all events happening everywhere. He likes social gatherings therefore he attends College function.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status at this level determines important college event. The status shows that the subject has attended the function with his friends and enjoyed it a lot. He goes to college to celebrate sports gala function with friends. Here, the subject is the good student who takes interest in all activities. This status represents 'Man' as a whole to do a certain process.

Example 9: Feeling happy at Nikah ceremony.



Analysis at the word level

This level analyzes the words which the subject has used for giving his status on facebook. First of all, the subject has not used his own name instead he has mentioned his emotional state of being happy. There is the use of gerund in the sentence. 'Nikah ceremony' is categorized as noun and an event to celebrate. 'At' is preposition.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

Status is seen in the form of verb phrase in which the subject is simply giving information about his activity that he has celebrated some event as well as he is expressing his feeling for that event. He enjoys life with zeal and zest.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status at this level determines important life event. The status shows that the subject has attended his own function and enjoyed it a lot. Here, the subject is the main character who performs the role of married person. This status represents 'Man' as a whole to do a certain process. Marriage is a religious ceremony. Every man and woman is allowed to marry at a certain age.

Analysis of Women's language

Example 10: Engagement ceremony of best friend

Many many congrts dear! Best of luck for future life. Be ready for a workshop where husband works and wife shop hahahahaha 😄🙏😄🙏

Analysis at the word level

This level analyzes the words which the subject girl has used for giving her status on facebook. Her participation in event represents her as good social person. The subject has used small statements in this status. She mentions event in phrase form then she prays for future of her friend.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

This level analyzes the status of subject 1 at the phrase/sentence level. Here, at this level, the status is seen in the form of brief statements in which the subject is simply giving information about her activity of attending engagement ceremony of friend.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status at this level determines important life event especially for girls. Marriage for girls is the most important event of life. When a girl borns she receives the very first statement about her good luck that may God bless her in life with good husband and may God bless her fate with lots of happiness.

Example 11: chaman checked in to Bundu Khan with family. Thank you Zeeshan bhai for birthday treat 😊:)

Analysis at the word level

Status includes the use of 'Past Indefinite Tense.' 'Birthday treat event' was celebrated in Bundu Khan and is categorized as noun. The status shows nouns in abundance.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

Status is seen in the form of simple sentence in which the subject is simply giving information about her activity that she has celebrated birthday event of her brother as well as she is expressing her feeling for that event that she is happy with her brother. The status also shows material action process as the subject 'chaman' checked into restaurant with family.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status at this level determines important social gathering that is of family. The event is birthday celebration. Subject 'chaman' celebrated birthday event with family. The status shows power relations as women are considered thankful to what men give to them. Here the subject is happy because her brother gave her birthday treat. She is thankful to him for his good conduct with her.

Example 12: Spots gala with friends at Punjab Group of Colleges for Girls Multan.

#Best Day ❤️❤️ Hot Hot Day 🏠🌃😄🙌

Analysis at the word level

This level analyzes the words which the subject girl has used for giving her status on facebook profile. First of all, the subject has mentioned name of institute where she enjoyed sports gala function. 'Sports Gala' is the name of sports and games event and is again noun. 'At' is preposition and 'Punjab College' is again noun as well as the name of place.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

This level analyzes the status of subject 3 at the phrase/sentence level. Here, at this level, the status is seen in the form of chunks in which the subject is simply giving information about her activity that she has attended sports gala event with her friends and enjoyed a lot. She enjoys life and all events happening everywhere.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status at this level determines important college event. The status shows that the subject has attended the function with her friends and enjoyed it a lot. Here, the subject is the good student who takes interest in all activities. This status represents girl's active participation in academic context.

Men and Women's language representing 'Moods'

Moods are the expressions of faces which human beings make on different occasions. Different situations happen to all human beings and people react differently on every event or occasion. There are different types of moods such as happy, sad, sick, naughty, hungry etc. All types of moods reveal the condition of people's hearts that how they are feeling or what type of feeling they feel at a certain time. Men and women's language reveal differences through linguistic choices. They also show variation in expressing their moods. It has been seen that women become too much emotional at some times while men remain normal. So, here mood analysis has been done to show variation.

Analysis of Men's language

Example 13: Imran Khan is going park with friends today. *feeling naughty 😏

Analysis at the word level

This level analyzes words which the subject has used for giving his status on his facebook profile. First of all, the subject has used his own name '*Imran Khan*' that is categorized as noun that claims his own personal/self identity that he is a male member of society. 'Park' is a noun and is name of place where people go for enjoyment.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

The intended meanings of this status at the sentence level reveal his close attachment with his friends and this status represents him as a modern man. He is not traditional or conservative sort of man.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status at this level determines power in hands of man. Man can do whatever he wants. He can go wherever he desires for entertainment. The status shows that the subject has power and authority. Here, the subject is the main character who performs the role of going outside and Visiting Park.

Example 14: was feeling optimistic.

India wants to isolate us in world but she doesn't know that we have borrowed money from the half world.

Analysis at the word level

This level analyzes words which the subject has used for giving his status on his facebook profile. First of all, the subject has used his own name '*Imran Khan*' that is categorized as noun (common noun) and use of noun claims his own personal/self identity that he is a male member of society. Next, he has mentioned the name of another country 'India' as a rival. India is again noun and proper noun.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

This level analyzes the status of subject 2 at the phrase/sentence level. Here, at this level, the status is seen in the form of declarative sentence (present indefinite tense) in which the subject is simply giving information about activities of his own land and another land. This status assumes the fact that the subject is optimistic.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status at this level determines power in hands of countries. This status on one hand shows the contended mood of subject but on the other hand it represents the situation of our own country. India and Pakistan consider one another enemies and this is the thing which every inhabitant of India and Pakistan knows.

Example 16: Missing 😞😞😞

In these terrible conditions we need General Raheel.

Analysis at the word level

This level analyzes words which the subject has used for giving his status on his facebook profile. First of all, the subject has used the name of person to whom he wants to

lead his country. This name is categorized as noun (common noun) and use of noun claims great identity of army chief who is necessary for betterment of country.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

Status is seen in the form of declarative sentence (present indefinite tense) in which the subject is simply giving information about good characteristics of General Raheel and in his reign the good condition of country.

Analysis at the Discourse level

This level analyzes words which the subject has used for giving her status on her facebook profile. The subject has represented her mood that she is feeling sad on the last day of college.

Example 17: Feeling love  with internet.

Maine Amii sy Pocha: Tarap kise kehtay hain? 

Amii Jan uthi Aur Wifi Band krnya 

Boli Lay Beta!!!Ab Mehsos kar      

Example 17 shows status representing mood by a girl on her facebook profile. The analysis of this status shows her love with internet. This status shows a type of writing in which subject has shown her love for internet that she can't remain without it. Ideology of this status reveals the importance of internet for younger generation, who can't remain live without it.

Analysis at the word level

This level analyzes words which the subject has used for giving her status on her facebook profile. The status is in Urdu language but the subject has written it in text messaging way in which English language spellings are used to write message in Urdu.

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

Status is seen in the form of narrative story in which she and her mother are involved in interpersonal relationship. Subject asks about particular type of feeling from her mother and her mother gives her reply and practically feels her that phenomenon.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status at this level determines the modern trend of society. Internet is present in every house these days. Every human being uses it to achieve certain purposes. Internet has its own merits and demerits but in younger generation its demerits are seen in large sense. Most students remain busy on internet.

Example 8: Feeling free and excited. Freedom is when our Exams are Over 

Analysis at the word level

This level analyzes the words which the subject girl has used for giving her status on her facebook profile. First of all, the subject has mentioned her feeling that shows her happy mood. Next she has mentioned the word 'Freedom' that is abstract noun then she made use of other word classes like nouns (exams), helping verb (is, are).

Analysis at the Phrase/Sentence level

This level analyzes the status of subject at the phrase/sentence level. Here, at this level, the status is seen in the form of chunk and simple statement in which the subject is simply giving information about her activity that she is feeling relax because her exams are over.

Analysis at the Discourse level

The status at this level determines important college event that is of giving exams. The status shows that the subject has given exams due to compulsion but she is not happy with system of taking exams. Therefore when her exams finished, she felt happiness and freedom. Here, the subject is the good student who takes interest in all activities but doesn't like examination system very much. This status represents girl's good mood on ending examinations.

Conclusions

Men and Women's use of language on facebook highlight linguistics as well as cultural differences. This research project employed Sara Mills's framework of 'Feminist Stylistics' to analyze the statuses of both men and women in four perspectives. Analysis of all the statuses reveal the fact that both men and women use different linguistic items and by using these, they also represent their identity as male or female member of society. Both men and women show their cultural identity. Statuses about eating habits reveal the fact that men like to eat with family or friends outside the home, whereas women like to do cooking at home. Men show power and authority to eat everywhere whereas women need approval for such activities. Statuses about celebrations reveal the fact that men are more likely to go elsewhere for celebrating different social gatherings whereas women enjoy at home or they are hardly allowed to attend functions in academic context. Moods represent the emotional state of both men and women. Men enjoy each and every event with happy and contented mood. Women get too much emotional even at very small matters. Statuses about studies show men as powerful participants either they are students or teachers. Women show humble attitude in every position. They are mostly polite in every position. Men use pronouns such as 'I' and they call others as 'You' to maintain power relations. Women use 'we' to show solidarity. Men use direct asking of anything whereas women use indirect ways. Men use imperative forms more than women. Women often ask tag questions than men. Men directly share facts while women represent another person's conformation in their talk. Men talk in simple manner and sometimes use impolite words. Women use polite form of words for example, thanks, please etc. this paper also focuses on the cultural differences. Men can go outside at night while women are not allowed. They are kept busy in home matters. Men easily give their names in their statuses while women sometimes do so when they are with family or any other reliable persons. Men mostly talk about social matters while women take great interest in family matters and relationships.

This study has analyzed the statuses of facebook profiles and has seen the linguistic differences which show men and women separate linguistic and cultural identity. This is a valuable site for future researchers to conduct further study in this area by analyzing other activities such as sports, news, politics etc. Research can also be conducted by using Multimodal Critical Discourse analysis because both men and women make use of images with their statuses on their facebook profile.

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