Speech Acts and Gender Representations in Philippine TV Commercials

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Abstract
This study identified the speech act classifications used and gender representations shown in selected Philippine TV commercials from 2016 to 2018. An analysis on how speech act reinforces gender was also done. Descriptive-qualitative method was used in gathering data. Meanwhile, purposive sampling was utilized in determining the participants. There were a total of 41 student-respondents who answered the researcher-made questionnaire. Moreover, there were 13 members of the focus group discussion (FGD) who analyzed the top three (3) Philippine TV commercials transcribed in the questionnaires. The respondents and members of the FGD were the selected teachers and students from the different schools in the City of Sorsogon. Content analysis and focus group discussion were done for further interpretation of the commercials. Findings showed that the speech acts used in selected Philippine TV commercials based from Searle's five classifications of speech acts are assertive, directive and expressive. In addition, The Philippine TV commercials show women's stereotypical role as the gender that does the chores. Further, the speech acts used in the top three (3) Philippine TV commercials with respect to the gender theories of Deborah Tannen; Difference Theory and Genderlect Theory, reinforced the gender of the endorsers by helping them express themselves — how they establish meaningful connections with others through conversations or how they simply engage in communication. With regard to the relationship of speech acts to gender, the result of the study showed that the speech acts reinforce gender but could be an avenue for gender stereotyping because of the improper use of such.

Keywords: Speech acts, gender representations, Philippine TV commercials

1. Introduction

Language is as complex as culture and it can be described in many ways [1].As emphasized by Austin [2],it does not simply exist; it is used to accomplish things. Moreover, Can and Dutta [3]added that it plays a vital role in human existence as it is used in almost all facets of society: education, business, research, government, health, leisure, and ordinary social interactions.

Further, pragmatics in contemporary linguistics begins to get the attention of researchers and experts. This field tends to examine the function of speech or language function rather than form or structure. Moreover, pragmatics is the study of speaker's meaning and contextual meaning. According to Yule [4], this gives way to what we call "speech act". Speech Acts simply mean "actions performed via utterances". Speech acts are the concept discussed in the Speech Act Theory. Speech Act Theory of Searle [5] is one of the language theories that can be used to understand the linguistic culture of a society. This theory as strengthened by Austin [2] suggests that any speech act can be classified into three types: Locutionary Act, Illocutionary Act, and Perlocutionary Act. Locutionary act is the meaningful utterance; the illocutionary act is the speaker's intended meaning; and the perlocutionary act is the effect upon the listener. Moreover, Searle [6] classified the speech acts (Illocutionary Acts) into five (5) categories: directives, assertives, commissives, expressives, and declarations.

Speech acts can be found in written discourse or texts, documents, scripts of movies, journals, research documents, advertisements, abstracts, sources, books, and magazines. One of them is advertisement — print advertisement or television commercial which involves not only creating believable dialogues, but also indicating the actions and expressions of the advertiser. When the speaker performs the utterances, the speaker can realize in direct speech act and indirect speech act the explicit and implicit meaning of a particular utterance. There are many utterances in commercials and the viewers only pay attention to the product and do not observe the meaning of speech act which is delivered by the advertiser.

Advertising through television commercial is a method of influencing sales by sending a sponsored and paid message through mass media to a mass of potential buyers. However, for it to be effective, Kangira [7] said that it should have "carefully designed messages that aimed at eliciting specific behavior changes in people.

In the Philippines, as stated in the Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies [8] television is the most important and influential advertising medium which has the widest audience, with 96% of households in Metro Manila owning television sets. Moreover, Nielsen [9] found out that the residents in Metro Manila spent an average of 3.7 hours a day watching television which translates into over 60,000 television commercials watched per year, suggesting that these commercials have an influence on individuals.

In addition, Filipinos are one of the populations that trust advertising the most. A survey of 47 countries ranked Filipinos and Brazilians first in their trust of advertising Nielsen [10]. Trust in advertising may also play a role in the possible effects of advertisements. Specifically, most of these television commercials represent gender roles and use particular language in a particular context and are said to have influence on individuals – the way they think, the way they behave, and the way they portray gender roles based on the representations they see in television commercials. That is why, it is very important that their contents must be analyzed.

In connection with this, the Gender Equality Committee of the Philippines headed by Secretary Sonny Coloma was tasked to formulate three (3) documents, namely, Gender Equality

Guide, Code of Ethics for Media and Guidelines to Protect Women from Discrimination in Media and Film. These documents will be integrated in the government and non-government media-related organizations to ensure that women's needs, issues and concerns in all forms of media, communication, information dissemination, and advertising are appropriately presented.

Furthermore, the Department of Education also commits to integrate the principles of gender equality, gender equity, gender sensitivity, non-discrimination, and human-rights in the provision and governance of basic education through its DepEd Order No. 32 s. 2017 otherwise known as Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy [11].

This is in line with the Philippine Constitution in 1987 which states that:

"The Philippines is committed under international and national laws to integrate gender equality into the principles, goals, and processes of Philippine education."

This gives way to the implementation of "Gender and Development" program. This program was more strengthened by the findings of the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) in 2016 [12] which states that:

"Gender biases and stereotypes remain and are still embedded in the curricula, instructional methods, materials, and learning media… Women and girls continue to be vulnerable to sexual harassment and violence inside schools."

It is in these perspectives that the researcher deemed it necessary to conduct a study that analyzes the gender representations not just evident in the classroom setting but also in a larger scale which includes the use of media particularly television — since the programs and commercials in such influence the students' views in life and the development of their language as well. The researcher believes that through the conduct of the study, gender and language awareness will be more observed in the different walks of human life.

Objectives Of The Study

This study aimed to identify the speech acts classifications used in selected Philippine Television (TV) commercials; analyze how gender is represented in these commercials; how do speech acts reinforce gender; and develop an innovative classroom-based module to better facilitate timely and relevant topics on integrating gender equality.

2. Research Methods

This study is a qualitative-descriptive type of research. This study dealt with the speech acts used and the representations of gender in selected Philippine TV commercials. A selection of TV commercials was done to analyze the speech act classifications as well as the gender portrayals on such. The commercials were selected by the identified 41 grade 11 students of Panlayaan Technical Vocational School for the school year 2018-2019.

The data collected through the researcher-made questionnaire is used as the primary data. After the identification of the top three (3) commercials from all the TV commercials transcribed in the result of the survey, content analysis was utilized in the study for the critical analysis of the speech acts used and gender representations on the said commercials.

For the purpose of validating the data from the content analysis made by the researcher, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted. The researcher has established the group with 13

members for the intention of soliciting their ideas, opinions and analysis of the selected TV commercials. A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Interview Schedule was used to run the discussion.

3. Data Analysis

The data gathered from the survey questionnaire and focus group discussion were tabulated, analyzed, interpreted and recorded. The top three (3) Philippine TV commercials selected by the student-respondents were treated and analyzed with the use of content analysis and a validation through the conduct of a focus group discussion (FGD).

The interpretation of data in content analysis was guided by Searle's Speech Act Theory [5] Tannen's Difference Theory [13] and Genderlect Theory [14] and the use of multimodal texts. Searle's Speech Act Theory helped in determining the utterances or speech acts used by the endorsers in selected Philippine TV commercials. Moreover, Tannen's gender theories; Difference Theory and Genderlect Theory aided the discussion on the difference of men and women with respect to their portrayal in the television commercials.

Further, the discussions were more reinforced by the use of the multimodal texts. These multimodal texts are the combination of two or more modes such as written language, visual (still and moving image), audio, gestural, and spatial meaning [15]. These modes particularly the linguistic or vocabulary, audio (pitch and tone of the endorser's voice) and gestural – especially the facial expressions and body language of the endorsers were given more emphasis. These concepts were vital in the discussion of gender and utterances. Through these, the content analysis of the Philippine TV commercials was made more in-depth.

4. Results and Discussion

The speech acts used in selected Philippine TV commercials

The speech acts can be found in print advertisements or television commercials. It involves not only creating believable dialogues, but also indicating the actions and expressions of the endorsers. The following commercials used speech acts to endorse their product.

Table 1: Speech Acts in Selected Philippine TV Commercials

TV Commercials	Searle's Classification of Speech Acts					Total Number Of Speech Acts per Commercial	Percentage
	Assertive	Directive	Commissive	Expressive	Declaration		
Joy Purong Patak	2	4	0	1	0	7	36%

Attack							
Magic Flakes Cheese	1	3	0	2	0	6	32%
Malou Bear Brand Fortified Powdered Milk Drink	6	0	0	0	0	6	32%
Total Number Of Utterances per Illocutionary Speech Acts	9	7	0	3	0	19	
Percentage	47%	37 %	0%	16%	0%	100%	100%

Table 1 shows that majority of the utterances used are in the category of assertive with nine (9) or 47% while smaller percentages go to directive with seven (7) or37%andexpressivewith three (3) or 16% respectively. Moreover, this emphasizes that the dominant speech act used among the three commercials is assertive. However, there are no commissive and declaration type of speech acts used in the selected Philippine TV commercials presented.

In terms of the number of speech acts used, commercial no.1 has the highest number of illocutionary speech acts with seven (7) or 36% followed by commercial no.2 and commercial no.3 with six (6) or 32%. This reflects that commercial no.1 – Joy Purong Patak Attack challenge used the most number of speech acts in endorsing the product. Meanwhile, commercial no.2 and commercial no.3 used the same number of speech acts. However, in commercial no.2, the speech acts used did not talk much about the product being endorsed and in commercial no.3, only a few speech acts are used to endorse the product and the rest are about the characters.

The illocutionary acts assertive, directive and expressive are persuasive devices in addressing the advertisers' intended meaning to the target audience. These speech acts according to Apalla, San Juan and Maxilom [16]appeal to suggest an intention for the listener or viewer to buy an advertised product. Moreover, Cotea [17] said that speech acts can contribute to the success of the advertisers in persuading. Persuasive discourse is defined by Robin Lakoff [18] as the nonreciprocal attempt or intention of one party to change the behavior, feelings, intentions, or viewpoint of another by communicative means. Advertising is an obvious example of persuasive discourse; however, persuasion may also occur in conversation.

Gender representations in selected Philippine TV commercials

Television commercials often reflect gender stereotypes. How men and women are represented in media affects gender equality in general [19] (UNESCO, 2012). The selected top three (3) Philippine TV commercials show the different gender roles as well as portrayals.

Among the three (3) commercials presented, Joy Dishwashing Liquid shows the stereotype image of women to most likely appear in home settings and be the product users. Moreover, in Magic Flakes Cheese, a negative image of women being "easy to get" is reflected. Lastly, in Bear Brand Fortified Powdered Milk Drink, the empowerment of women is successfully portrayed. It also deviated from the typical image of women to be home makers or parents whereas men will be most likely to be portrayed as professionals or workers.

The reinforcement of speech acts to gender

Commercials, for it to be effective, should have carefully designed messages that aimed at eliciting specific behavior changes in people of different gender [7]. In the top three (3) Philippine TV commercials, the different behavior and responses of the different gender are seen with respect to the speech acts used.

The speech acts used in the commercials with respect to the gender theories of Deborah Tannen reinforce the gender of the endorsers by helping them to express themselves — how they establish meaningful connections with others through conversations or how they simply engage in communication. Further, the speech acts help the characters portray their roles to advertise their products by means of using these utterances contextually.

GETCHA: Gender Equality, Teach to Change, A classroom-based learning instruction on the use of Gender-Fair Language

The result of the content analysis conducted revealed that gender stereotyping is still seen in Philippine TV commercials. These stereotypes go along with the improper use of utterances and language in different contexts. Thus, a proposed module on the conduct of a classroom-based learning instruction on the use of a gender-fair language was developed by the researcher and may be utilized by the teachers to incorporate gender and language in classroom instruction along with the integration of the principles of gender equality, gender equity, gender sensitivity, non-discrimination, and human-rights in the provision and governance of basic education through its DepEd Order No. 32 s. 2017 otherwise known as Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy.

Further, the development of a classroom-based learning instruction serves as a basis to aid the teacher/facilitator in the holistic approach of student learning experience about the use of gender-fair language. This study aims to make use of an instructional device based on texts, tasks, activities, games and modules designed to develop and enrich the student's skills and knowledge about gender and language, in particular. Each session is presented with several discussions and activities or games that may enhance their competence in dealing with the different concepts on how to use gender-fair language.

Furthermore, several experimental studies on teaching through games were found to be effective in determining learning acquisition among students. These findings encourage teachers to improve teaching strategies by integrating varied activities such as games to foster a more meaningful teaching and learning process.

Meanwhile, the cover of the proposed module shows the symbols of two genders and the pride flag which represents the LGBTQ community. These representations as emphasized

reinforce the concept of the material which is the use of gender-fair language. It was made colorful and provided with a catchy title for it to be motivating and user-friendly.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the results of the analysis, the speech acts used in selected Philippine TV commercials does not include commissive and declaration. As a conclusion, the advertisers believe that these speech acts are not effective in persuading the viewers to buy a particular product.

Moreover, although different media and groups advocate women empowerment and gender equality, gender stereotyping and inequality are still seen in Philippine TV commercials.

Further, it was revealed that even though speech acts reinforce gender, it could still be an avenue for gender stereotyping because of the improper use of such.

In view of these, an innovative module entitled **"GETCHA: Gender Equality, Teach to Change" a Classroom-Based Learning Instruction on the use of Gender-Fair Language** was developed to better facilitate timely and relevant topics on integrating gender equality.

The findings above have several implications. First, advertisers should include speech acts especially assertive, directive and expressive for the commercials to be effective. Second, the appropriateness of the speech acts to the theme of the commercial should be taken into account so that the commercials can persuade the viewers to buy the endorsed product. Third, an extensive review of the gender representations among the TV commercials should be done by the MTRCB to avoid the repetitive presentations of gender stereotyping. Fourth, parents should guide their children when watching television including commercials. They should reiterate to the young ones most especially, that not all the images and characterization in television are perfect representation of what a gender is. Fifth, the teachers should integrate the use of gender-fair language in carrying out their discussions in all subjects. Further, they may use this to incorporate the principles of gender equality, equity, sensitivity, non-discrimination and human rights in their lessons. Sixth, the module can be utilized by other implementers of gender and development program. And lastly, the module may be validated by experts so that it can be printed, published and mass produced if found effective in order to enhance the implementation of the program.

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