

PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DEL ECUADOR

FACULTAD DE COMUNICACIÓN, LINGÜÍSTICA Y LITERATURA

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

**“SOCIAL PERCEPTION OF
MICROMACHISMOS IN LANGUAGE”**

MARÍA GRACIA ROSALES TERÁN

TUTOR: JANINE MATTS

JUNE, 2023

DEDICATION

*Dedico este trabajo a todas las mujeres que ya no están con nosotros,
y a todas las mujeres que día a día luchan contra la misoginia.*

A mí misma, por lograr todo lo que he hecho hasta ahora y por lo que he luchado.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Agradezco a Dios por guiarme y acompañarme durante mi camino.

A mi mamá, por recordarme siempre que soy “una niña de 10” y que puedo con todo.

A mi papá, por enseñarme a ser perseverante con mis metas y trabajar por lo que quiero.

A mi hermana, por apoyarme y estar siempre para calmarme y darme mi comida favorita.

A mi hermano, por hacerme reír y ayudarme a ver la vida desde una mejor perspectiva.

A mi familia, por apoyarme y estar siempre, especialmente a mi prima Meli y a mis abuelitos.

*A mi perrita Tita que siempre me acompaña y me da su cariño. Le agradezco por ser mi
mejor compañía. Ojalá pudiera saber que lo hago todo por ella.*

A Josue, por ser el mejor del mundo, y por apoyarme y motivarme a diario.

*A Nathy L., Meli, Marti, Naty U. y Nico, por ser las mejores amigas lingüistas que puedo
pedir, por todos los recuerdos y risas de estos años, y ojalá los próximos.*

A mis profes, por enseñarme tanto y hacerme enamorar de la carrera.

Y a Janine, por guiarme y también por ser una amiga aparte de profesora.

ABSTRACT

This research examines the phenomenon of *micromachismos*, which are subtle expressions of misogyny embedded in everyday language, with the aim of understanding their naturalization in everyday discourse. Through a mixed-methods approach, including the compilation of *micromachismos* from social media, surveys, and data analysis, this study investigates people's perceptions of these speech acts. Individuals' perception was obtained through a survey that included 15 phrases with *micromachismos*. The quantitative analysis reveals patterns and correlations between demographic variables and participants' responses, shedding light on the hidden interpretations of *micromachismos*. The qualitative analysis delves into the underlying beliefs and attitudes that shape these perceptions, offering a deeper understanding of the sociocultural context surrounding *micromachismos*. The findings highlight the need for language awareness and interventions to challenge these harmful speech acts. Ultimately, this research contributes to the dismantling of gender inequalities by exposing and addressing the naturalization of *micromachismos*, fostering awareness, and contributing to the broader efforts of creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

Keywords: *micromachismo*, gender stereotypes, misogyny, perception, and naturalization.

RESUMEN

Esta investigación examina el fenómeno conocido como micromachismos, que son expresiones sutiles de misoginia incorporada en el lenguaje, con el propósito de entender la naturalización en el discurso diario. A través de un enfoque de métodos mixtos, que incluye la compilación de micromachismos de las redes sociales, encuestas y análisis de datos, este estudio investiga la percepción de las personas sobre estos actos de habla. Se obtuvo esta percepción de los participantes a través de una encuesta que incluyó 15 frases con micromachismos. El análisis cuantitativo revela patrones y correlaciones entre las variables

demográficas y las respuestas de los participantes, sacando a luz las interpretaciones ocultas de los micromachismos. El análisis cualitativo profundiza en las creencias y actitudes implícitas que dan forma a estas percepciones, ofreciendo una comprensión más profunda del contexto sociocultural que rodea a los micromachismos. Los hallazgos resaltan la necesidad de conciencia e intervenciones sobre el lenguaje para desafiar estos actos de habla perjudiciales. Finalmente, esta investigación contribuye a desmantelar las desigualdades de género al exponer y abordar la naturalización de los micromachismos, fomentar la conciencia y contribuir a los esfuerzos más amplios para crear una sociedad más inclusiva y equitativa.

Palabras clave: micromachismo, estereotipos de género, misoginia, percepción, y naturalización.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6
OBJECTIVES	8
<i>General</i>	8
<i>Specific</i>	8
LITERATURE REVIEW	8
<i>Referential Framework</i>	8
<i>Theoretical Framework</i>	11
Linguistic Fields	11
Theories on Language, Politeness, and Power	12
Feminist Linguistics, Gender Attribution, Androcentrism, and Misogyny	12
<i>Micromachismos</i>	13
METHODOLOGY	13
<i>Compilation of Micromachismos</i>	14
<i>Population and Sample</i>	14
<i>Tools</i>	16
<i>Implementation of Surveys</i>	16
DATA ANALYSIS	17
CONCLUSIONS	27
RECOMMENDATIONS	29
REFERENCES	31
ANNEX	33

INTRODUCTION

Social media currently plays a significant role in the spread of news and opinions, and of course, users are engaged in reacting and answering to such media. This case intensifies when it comes to controversial topics, like feminism and gender inequality. One would believe that a post about ending violence against women could be taken positively by the public, and that everyone would be in favor. But reality is different.

According to Marina Casteñeda (2019), in her book *El Machismo Invisible* (The Invisible *Machismo*), every single woman has dealt with misogyny in her life, and it does not show up only in physical or social situations as believed. Misogyny can be found in a glance, in language, and even in silence. Some of these verbal acts are explicit, while others go under the radar and keep inequality and discrimination naturalized in everyday conversations (Castañeda, 2019). This social behavior has been having its own way for many years, with or without consciousness, and it goes from verbal acts to physical ones.

It is common to run into comments, especially on social media, that are not supportive, and it seems that instead of taking a step forward to end injustice and inequality, two steps back are taken. Such attempts to bring down feminism and take away the importance of the injustice that has been laid on women are seriously damaging the perception of the fight for equality. As Castañeda (2019) explains, some men are usually fighting to be protagonists of the moment, leaving out others' opinions, changing topics, and making it always about them. Nowadays, it is common to listen to feminist movements and phrases like "stop violence against women", and there's still a negative answer. This opposition and its accountability, which comes from all parts of the media, is important to consider. People may feel safe to share online misogynistic opinions that they might not feel comfortable sharing in person on a daily basis. Since there's no control or moderation, people feel entitled to discuss with anyone who has a different opinion. These interactions

sometimes hide and go unnoticed through the use of normalized misogynistic language, which is called *micromachismo*.

The main purpose of this research is to expose the naturalization of *micromachismos* in everyday life by understanding and analyzing people's perception when they listen or read phrases that perpetuate gender stereotypes or misogyny. Recognition will hopefully dismantle and stop this social behavior from the very root of discrimination against women.

Micromachismos are, after all, the tip of the iceberg of a bigger problem.

This social behavior concerns all generations. It's crucial to recognize the roots of the problem that could trigger other bigger issues. Discrimination starts in language, like hints to a much bigger problem, but it evolves and goes deeper, as the roots of domestic violence, rape and femicides. This study will be a warning sign for misogynist phrases that are also exposed in academic environments. As for the Linguistics' department, this research could trigger a deeper discourse analysis around discrimination in language in a bigger sample, or from different perspectives concerning the uses of language like diminutives and euphemisms, other points of view in pragmatics, etc.

I care deeply for this topic. As a young woman, I have been bearing the burden of living in a misogynist society for my entire life, as billions of other women have. The pursuit of gender equality in language has become my biggest motivation in Linguistics, and I intend to keep working more on it and from different perspectives in the future. I truly hope that this research will reach more of those who are interested in the matter, trigger more investigation and attention to the problem, or at least teach someone along the way. This naturalized discriminatory language is heard every day, and there must be an attempt to make it go away by educating everyone on how to avoid repeating this behavior.

OBJECTIVES

General

- To evaluate the naturalization of *micromachismos* in language by examining individuals' perception of phrases through surveys.

Specific

- To collect *micromachismos* derived from social media.
- To analyze individuals' perceptions of *micromachismos* through surveys and the gathering of their responses.
- To determine the level of sensitivity to *micromachismos* based on the survey's answers and the consideration of social variables.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this paper is to analyze *micromachismos*' naturalization in language by asking participants on surveys what is their perception of the phrases they read in order to identify how *micromachismos* go unnoticed, or in the case they are caught, examine what type of phrases slip away more than others. Before going into that, it is imperative to consider the previous investigation related to the topic that might give us an idea of where there are missing insights, and which theories and concepts can be relied on to understand the area of this research a little more.

Referential Framework

The research at hand presents a state of art that is rather recent considering that the focus on gendered bias and inequality in language is a topic that has been recently taken seriously in the last two decades. Some of the research that has taken over the topic, which will be discussed next, are concerned on how *micromachismos* and misogynist language find their way through everyday life without the proper recognition it should be getting.

The first research at hand, concerning *micromachismos* and discriminatory language against women, was held by Sanchez-Gey (2018) from the University of Sevilla, in which the objective of the article was to analyze *machismo* in Andalusian television after some controversy arose from a sketch on a TV show in 2017. The analysis was held through a structural methodology, where the author told what happened to the participants, who were professionals in the communication field, and handed them a survey with thirty questions regarding what they thought about the sketch. The results collected were a summary of the perception of participants on what happened, and their opinions on how, not only the sketch but also TV and media in general, there still is a deep perpetuation of gender inequality and stereotypes in social networks.

Another study held in the same university focused on an analysis of content from a semiotic point of view to interpret the social meaning of how men are perceived as heroes when they perform house chores. Suarez (2013) analyzes the discourse intention of two ad's that share a different idea from the stereotype they actually represent. For instance, one of them had *micromachismos* regarding the stereotype that mothers are the most capable to deal with house and family care. In the ad, the brand tries to promote an equal repartition of house chores between men and women, trying to change tasks they are not "made for", while singing in the background, "Pablo used the washing machine and didn't die... it's not a big deal. Doing laundry is so easy, even a man can do it now". The research found that these advertisements were ridiculing men doing house chores rather than creating awareness since the language and the symbols used perpetuated the idea of men doing laundry or other house tasks is an idea they cannot identify themselves with, making such chores more "women-like".

Going over the interpretation area in applied Linguistics, another research brings an interesting insight on how *micromachismos* are perceived and translated between languages.

This research held by Lillo (2018) looked for the change in meanings and equivalences between languages when interpreting speeches with *micromachismos*. The research's methodology was based on content analysis by giving professional interpreters two recorded speeches. After having the four participants' interpretations and asking them a couple of questions regarding their translation choices, the analysis was divided in categories such as intention, fidelity to the message, language differences, ambiguity, etc. What Lillo found after asking the interpreters why they translated things in a specific way, she noticed that most of the translation tried to be as faithful as possible to the original text, even though the interpreters sugar coated some parts in the target language and did notice subtle gendered discrimination.

Another research held by Mayor (2013) intended to collect comments and the perception from the participants' answers regarding controversial situations in relationships and how they used *micromachismos* in their interviews. Seven interviews were held, four with women and three with men, all of them with relationships. The interview used the example of the following situation: a woman has a profile photo of herself and receives friend requests from strangers, but her boyfriend would like her to change the photo to one they are together. The discourse was analyzed after asking the participants what were their thoughts on the situation used as an example. Mayor found on her investigation that most of the participants used phrases related to the stereotypes of women having to explain themselves to their couples and having to show off their "unavailable" status to everyone. Normalized misogynist discourse was used as well in order to put the blame on the woman in the relationship and to support the man in the example (Mayor, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

To understand this research, it is important to recall concepts and theories that will help to understand the context behind what is being analyzed and under what scope *micromachismos* will be studied.

Linguistic Fields.

If the research concerns language, there are some fields that need to be looked at in Linguistics that will come in handy to understand how language really works, specifically in this research. To begin with, pragmatics deals with the study of language from the perspective of its user, focusing on what they choose, constraints in language use while interacting in society, and the effects of their language choices on other individuals while communicating, unlike semantics which is a branch in Linguistics that focuses on the meaning in language, according to Crystal's Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics (2008). In other words, pragmatics is concerned with how meaning in expressions varies depending on an individual's social situation. The understanding of pragmatics is useful to the research since its intention is to analyze the perception of language that depends heavily on contexts and the communicative situation between speakers. Sociolinguistics is another branch of Linguistics that will help us understand this research better. This branch studies how language and society are related based on groups, attitudes towards language, varieties and patterns, communication roles, and more.

Discourse analysis focuses on the regularities in discourse through semantics, especially in spoken language, which might have a sociolinguistics perspective considering that speech can be influenced by function and purpose, according to Crystal (2008). Although it is relatively new, Critical Discourse Analysis goes deeper into that area since it is "a perspective which studies the relationship between discourse events and sociopolitical and cultural factors, especially the way discourse is ideologically influenced by and can itself

influence power relations in society” (Crystal, 2008). These branches in Linguistics will help us narrow down which areas are concerned with *micromachismos* in language.

Theories on Language, Politeness, and Power.

As George Yule mentions in his book *Pragmatics*, “a linguistic interaction is always a social interaction” (Yule, 1996). In other words, utterances in spoken or written language are always bound to the social situation they are in, so the background or context must be taken into consideration, as well as the relation between the ones involved in the interaction and social values which may vary depending on gender and power. One of the theories that comes in handy when analyzing language is the theory of politeness, which is concerned with how language goes hand in hand with social order, whether someone is agreeing with us, avoiding disagreement, being direct or indirect, etc. (Brown, 2005). As it will be seen in the research further on, politeness is related to more perspectives on how to analyze the intention of speech acts, even in some whose intention or message might not agree with ours, and the need of “softening” will rise (Brown et al, 1999).

Feminist Linguistics, Gender Attribution, Androcentrism, and Misogyny.

The word “feminism”, which according to Brunell and Burkett (2023), is “the belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes”. Therefore, feminist linguistics, or the feminist language reform, is a branch of Linguistics that intends to change how language is used to improve gender equality. One of the terms that is usually mentioned inside these areas of investigation is gender attribution, or also known as gender assumption. According to Kessler and McKenna in their book “*Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach*”, gender attribution refers to the process by which individuals assign gender to themselves and others based on observable cues. In other words, gender attribution is the process that categorizes individuals as either male or female based on societal norms and expectations related to appearance, behavior, and other gender-related biases (Kessler et al., 1985).

Going deeper into the common terminology related to this matter, androcentrism comes up, which is a term commonly used in relation to misogyny and *machismo*, as it might be visible in some of the used corpus for this research. According to Pilcher and Whelehan's dictionary of gender studies (2016), androcentrism is, from its etymological meanings, male-centeredness, which can be seen easily in the generic choices for language such as "mankind" instead of "humankind", and so on. Misogyny, according to the American Psychological Association (APA), although it is under the same scope, is the cultural attitude representing hatred for women, just because they are women (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2015).

Micromachismos.

To understand *micromachismos* better, it is crucial to first take a step back and look at the term from a macro level, to understand what *machismo*, or male chauvinism in English, is. According to Rojas and Morales (2020), *machismo* stands for the "stereotypical characteristics of control, hypermasculinity, and aggression", but with a focus in Latin American society.

Now, focusing on the most important definition of this research, the term *micromachismo* emerges. It is necessary to mention Luis Bonino, a psychotherapist whose investigation is focused on the problems of masculinity and gender-based violence and relations, and of course, the creator of the term *micromachismo* (Vithas, 2023).

Micromachismos are subtle or low intensity attitudes that men, and women too, adopt in their everyday life that are based on misogynist beliefs (Bonino, 2004). These speech acts go in a naturalized and almost invisible way on a daily basis.

METHODOLOGY

In order to accomplish the purpose of this research, the methodology will be divided into three steps: a compilation of *micromachismos* on social media, an implementation of

surveys and the tabulation of data, and an analysis of the previously answered surveys. Each of which will be described in the subsequent sections, as well as the population, sample, and the tools that were used. The demographic data, such as gender, age, relationship status, and education level, will be considered as independent variables, while the answers of the surveys will be the dependent variables.

Compilation of Micromachismos

In the interest of collecting phrases that included *micromachismos*, focused on social media that were looked for and found in posts regarding International Women's Day, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, news about missing women, daily posts about gender roles, and so on. The three social media platforms that were taken into consideration were Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok, leading to a compilation of 150 *micromachismos*. From this first compilation, 15 phrases were selected that were considered to be the most subtle or whose discrimination is elusive, and included those phrases in the survey. The list of phrases can be found in the annex as Table A1.

Population and Sample

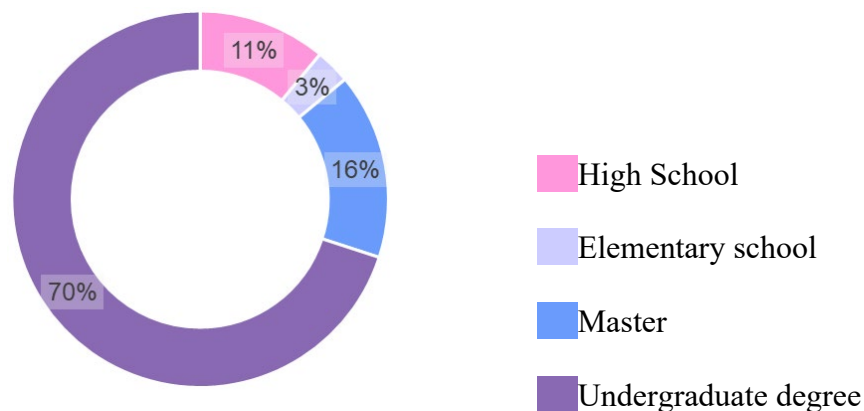
The focus group was equally divided by age and gender, between the ages of 18 to 30 years old and 45+ years old, men and women for each age group. The participants were also asked to state their level of studies, and marital status. Their nationality and geographical residence was not considered in the survey in order to limit the research to the previously mentioned variables. After compiling and organizing the age and gender groups, there were around 160 responses, in which mostly women from the ages between 18 to 30 years were exceeding the expected number of participants for their group. Therefore, 60 responses had to be taken out randomly in order to even the age and gender groups of participants. The reason behind this division of groups is to facilitate the analysis with independent variables that have

an equal influence on the answers of the survey, and to avoid a demographic bias in the conclusions.

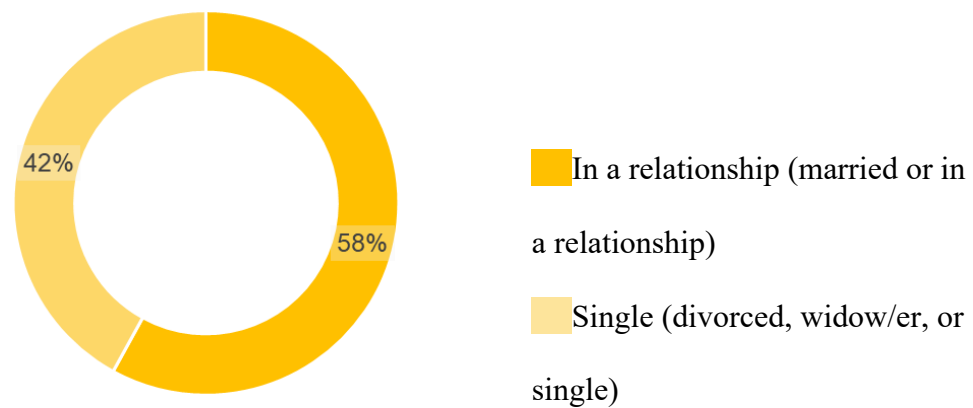
With this in mind, the final corpus for this research turned in a sample of 100 respondents, of which 50 were men and 50 were women. Out of each gender group, 25 were in the youngest age group (18 to 30 years old) and 25 were older than 45 years. Regarding the variable of educational level, 70% of the participants held an undergraduate degree, 16% had a master's degree, 3% had completed elementary school, and 11% had a high school level of education, as can be seen in Figure 1. The variable of education level was not considered at the moment of spreading the survey, which resulted in uneven groups.

Figure 1.

Respondents' Education Level Summary



For the marital status, respondents were asked to state if they were either in a relationship, married, single, divorced, or a widow/er, but the average was summed up and categorized into being in a relationship or single, with 58% of participants being in a relationship and 42% being single, as Figure 2 shows. This variable of relationship status was not considered at the moment of spreading the survey as well, but the results were still useful to see variations in the responses.

Figure 2.*Respondents' Relationship Status Summary****Tools***

Several tools were employed in this research to facilitate data collection and analysis. Firstly, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok served as the sources for compiling *micromachismos*. The search functions in these platforms allowed a targeted search for content related to the topics. Additionally, Google Forms was used to administer the survey to the participants. This online survey platform provided an efficient way to collect data through an organized format for questions and responses, and data storage as well. Excel was used for data tabulation and quantitative analysis, allowing for the calculation of frequencies, percentages, and correlations through the organization of variables, tables, graphs, and colors. Together, these tools provided the right support for data collection, organization, and analysis.

Implementation of Surveys

After choosing the 15 phrases that would be used, the creation of the survey and the selection of the focus group took place. The survey was created on Google Forms, and the link to fill it out was shared in social media. Also, it is important to mention that the surveys were written in Spanish since all of the respondents are *Quiteños*, or at least Spanish native speakers from Ecuador. For the purpose of analyzing the data, the questions will be in

English, but the link to the original survey which has all the phrases in their original language, Spanish, can be found in the annex.

After collecting the demographical data from the participants, such as their gender, age group, they were asked to read carefully each phrase with *micromachismos*, and answer the following questions:

- Who do you think said this phrase?
 - a) a woman
 - b) a man
- Rate from 1 to 10. How offensive do **you** think this phrase is? (1 being the least and 10 the most offensive)
- Rate from 1 to 10. How offensive do you think the **opposite gender** finds this phrase? (1 being the least and 10 the most offensive)
- Who is to blame in this phrase?
 - a) a woman
 - b) a man
 - c) no one is to blame

DATA ANALYSIS

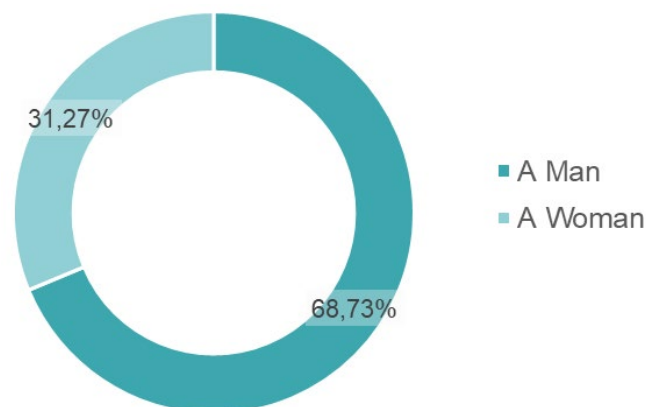
In the analysis of this research, a deductive approach will be employed, using quantitative data to infer patterns and correlations between variables. This will serve as a foundation for qualitative analysis. To do so, and by initially examining the quantitative data, the identification of statistical relationships and trends is possible, providing a comprehensive overview of participants' perceptions of phrases containing *micromachismos*. The analysis will begin with the general overview of the questions asked, and then the findings that stand out from each question throughout the phrases will be pointed out to find correlations between the social variables and the perception of such phrases.

It is imperative to mention that the variable of education level that was included with the demographic information of the participants will not be considered throughout the analysis. As mentioned in the methodology, the majority of participants had an undergraduate degree, which meant that the responses would already be influenced by this majority. Thus, there were no patterns or findings on the variable of education level whatsoever in any of the questions nor phrases of the survey.

The analysis will begin with the first question for the phrases in the survey, which was: “Who do you think said this phrase?”. What this question seeks to do is to determine participants' perceptions regarding the gender of the individual who would most likely utter the phrase, providing an insight in gender attribution. From the 15 phrases, 68,73% of the responses agreed that they were said by a man, as can be seen in Figure 3, which mostly represents the 12 phrases that were thought to be said by a man.

Figure 3.

Average of question number 1: “Who do you think said this phrase?”.



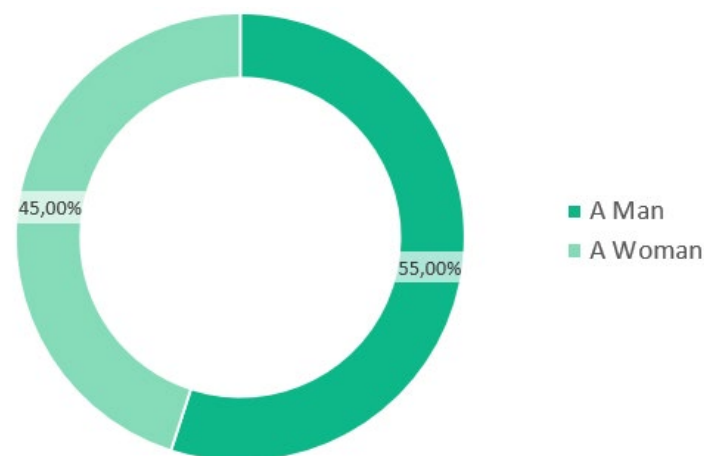
From this finding, it is important to consider that 5 out of the 10 phrases were said by a woman. The fact that participants got one correctly, in the case of phrase number 7 that will be discussed further on, provides an insight into which gender these phrases are attributed to. Thus, from this first question, it is understood that participants are more likely to attribute *micromachismos* or misogynist phrases to male speakers, which is not entirely accurate.

To this average, an exception was found in phrase 1: “They should teach martial arts to girls in schools so that they can learn how to defend themselves from a young age.”(W.P.), and phrase 12: “When a woman decides to start a new family, she should know that she carries a great responsibility and that includes maintaining a house.” (J.A.). For these two, the response average was a tie for the options “A man” and “A woman”, as Figure 4 indicates for both phrases since they shared the exact same average.

Figure 4.

Average of phrase number 1: “They should teach martial arts to girls...” and phrase 12:

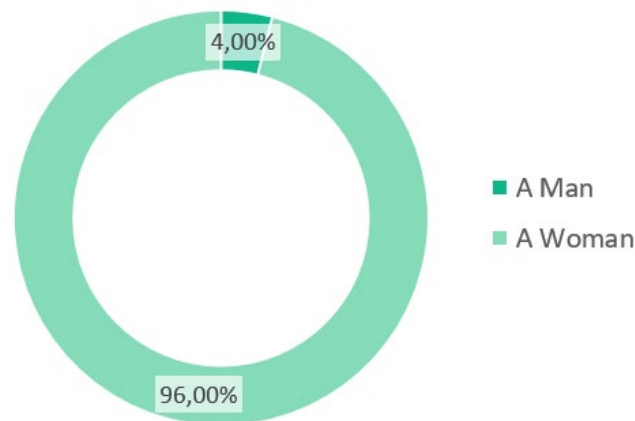
“When a woman decides to start a new family...” in question number 1: “Who do you think said this phrase?”.



On the other hand, phrase 7 (“I serve my dad his food and sometimes my brother.” (R.M.) was the only phrase in the survey in which almost all participants said that it was said by a woman, as shown in Figure 5. This phrase, as will be seen throughout the analysis, was the phrase that showed the most deviation from the survey.

Figure 5.

Average of phrase number 7: “I serve my dad his food...” in question number 1: “Who do you think said this phrase?”.

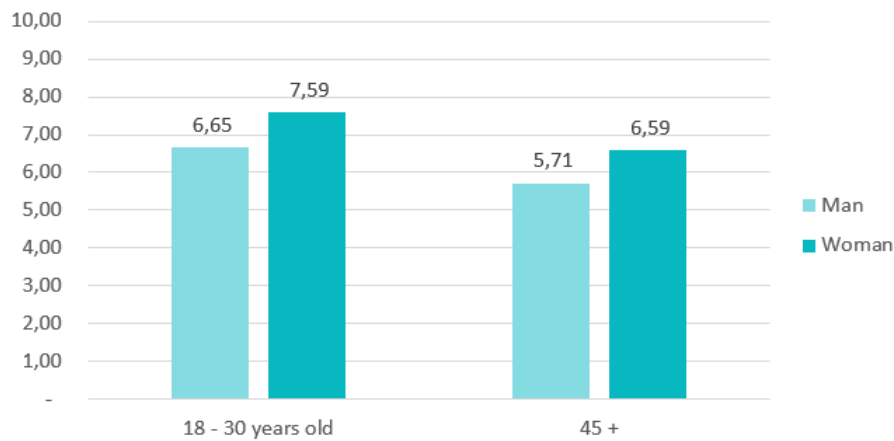


In this specific phrase, gender attribution is applied within gendered roles. As Kessler and McKenna explained (1985), this process of categorizing individuals based on stereotyped roles influences the gender we attribute them to. As seen in phrase number 7, the person that said the phrase mentions the act of serving men, their family members, a meal. For this reason, it can be understood that participants relate the role of a server, or the task of providing men a meal on the table, to a woman.

Question two and three, which deal with the rating of how offensive the participants consider the phrases to be for themselves and for the opposite gender, quantifies participants' subjective judgment of the level of offense associated with *micromachismos*. For the question regarding their personal rating, it could provide an insight of which phrases are overlooked and to which phrases they are more sensitive to. Concerning this second question, which was: “How offensive do **you** think this phrase is? (Rate from 1 to 10, 1 being the least and 10 the most offensive)”, it is clear that, overall, women find the phrases more offensive than men, as shown in Figure 6. It is important to mention from this same average, that the age group of 18 to 30 years old find the phrases more offensive than the eldest group of 45+ years old.

Figure 6.

*Average of question number 2: “How offensive do **you** think this phrase is?”.*

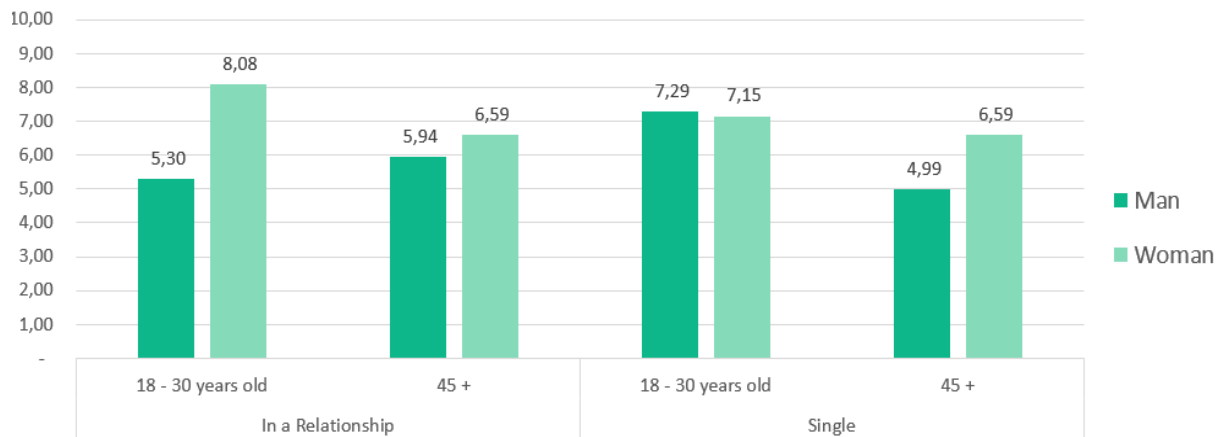


Something interesting that stands out from the average of the second question is the social variable of relationship status. Even though it was found that single young men found the phrases to be more offensive than their gender counterparts, men, overall, found the phrases to be less offensive, especially those who were old and single, as Figure 7 shows the variation between these groups. Their relationship status did not represent a heavy influence in the general answer.

For this question, the answers provided by the participants can essentially tell which type of phrases or topics are more or less accepted, and by whom. In this case, and as previously seen, women were more offended by the phrases, meaning that they are more aware of the offensiveness these phrases present, and/or that they are more sensitive to the use of subtle forms of misogyny, noticing hidden *micromachismos*.

Figure 7.

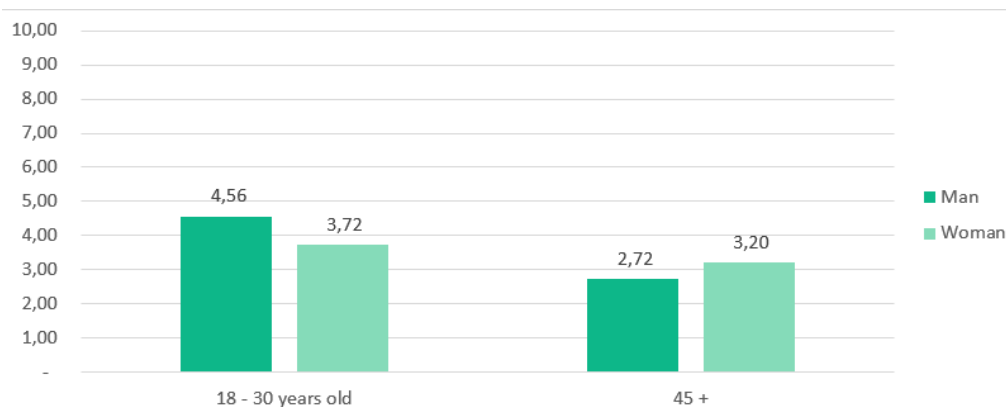
*Average of question number 2: “How offensive do **you** think this phrase is?” according to the relationship status variable.*



The only phrase that was an exception to young women finding the phrases more offensive was the first one, which was: “They should teach martial arts to girls in schools so that they can learn how to defend themselves from a young age.”, as Figure 8 indicates. This finding that stands out could provide a deeper insight on what men consider to be offensive.

Figure 8.

*Average of phrase number 1: “They should teach martial arts to girls...” in question number 2: “How offensive do **you** think this phrase is?”*

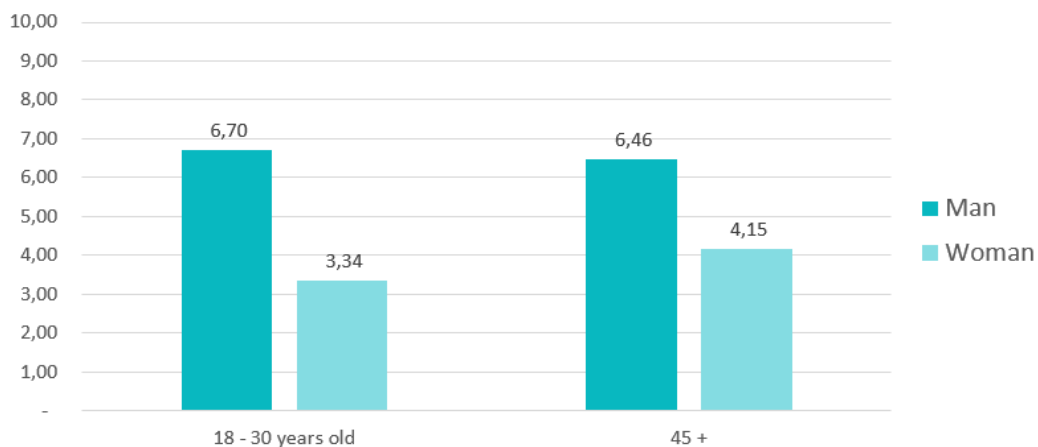


On the other hand, for the third question regarding what they thought the opposite gender would rate the phrase, the responses could suggest a potential discrepancy in understanding or empathy between genders, which will need to be compared with the previous question later on. For this question, which was: “How offensive do you think the **opposite gender** finds this phrase? (Rate from 1 to 10, 1 being the least and 10 the most offensive)”, the average needs to be seen inverted. In other words, and as can be seen in

Figure 9, the average response that women chose is the average they thought men would say, and vice versa. Thus, women believe that men would find the phrases on a low offense level, while men said that women would find the phrases to be quite more offensive.

Figure 9.

*Average of question number 3: “How offensive do you think the **opposite gender** finds this phrase?”.*



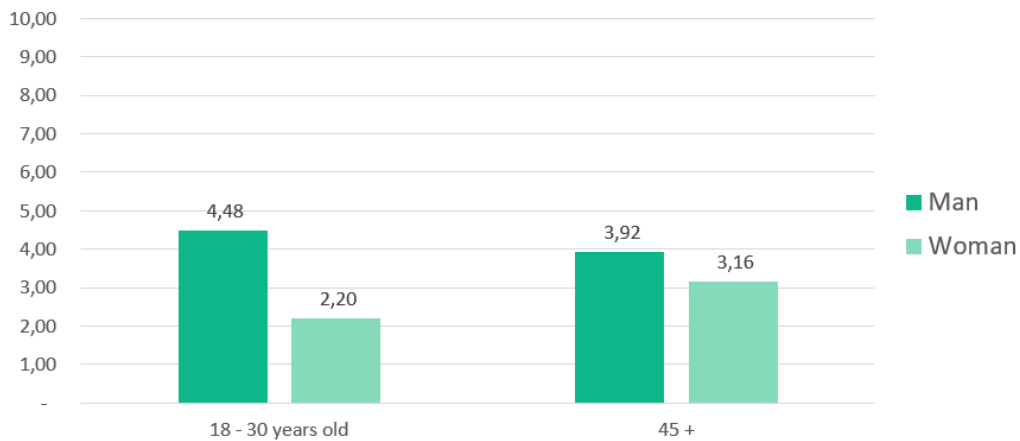
From Figure 9, it can be understood that men acknowledge the impact and the offensiveness these phrases represent for women. Also, comparing it to Figure 6, men not only acknowledge the stronger hold these phrases might have on women, but also acknowledge that they were still not offended as much as women. On the other hand, women believed that men found the phrases less offensive than what men actually did, suggesting that women think that men lack awareness or that they are less concerned with what is being said in the phrase.

What was interesting about this average were the three phrases that deviated from the general pattern, which were phrase 7: “I serve my dad his food and sometimes my brother.”, and phrase 10: “I clean up my things and my house because my mom isn't always home.” (W.). For phrase number 7, the average was low from the responses, as Figure 10 indicates, but the pattern in which men thought women found the phrase more offensive stayed. That is,

considering the average, that this specific phrase is more normalized and expected to go unaccounted for the stereotyped role it represents.

Figure 10.

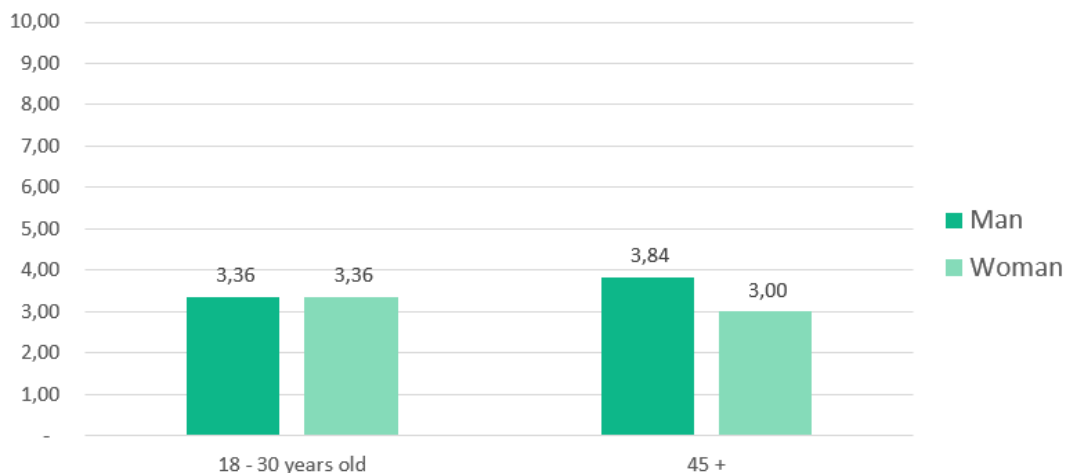
*Average of phrase number 7: “I serve my dad his food...” in question number 3: “How offensive do you think the **opposite gender** finds this phrase?”.*



On the other hand, phrase 10 did not comply with the average, since the responses on both gender groups were low for the age group of 18 to 30 years old, and for the older group the estimate was still low, as Figure 11 shows:

Figure 11.

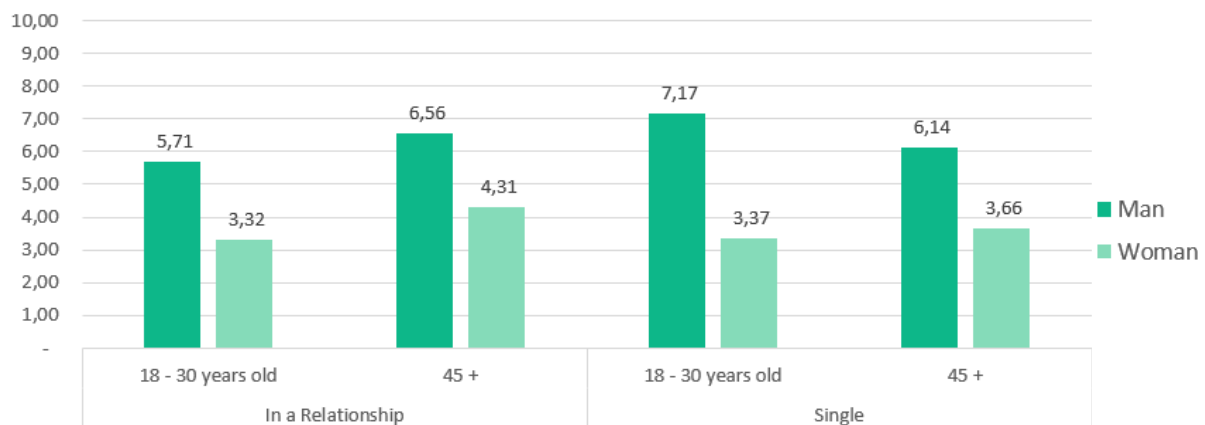
*Average of phrase 10: “I clean up my things...” in question number 3: “How offensive do you think the **opposite gender** finds this phrase?”.*



Focusing on the relationship status variable, it was found that single men from the age group of 18 to 30 years old thought the phrases to be more offensive for women, as can be seen in Figure 12. As mentioned before, this provides an insight on gender-related biases and stereotypes that both gender groups have for each other, as well as how their relationship status and age mark a difference in their perception.

Figure 12.

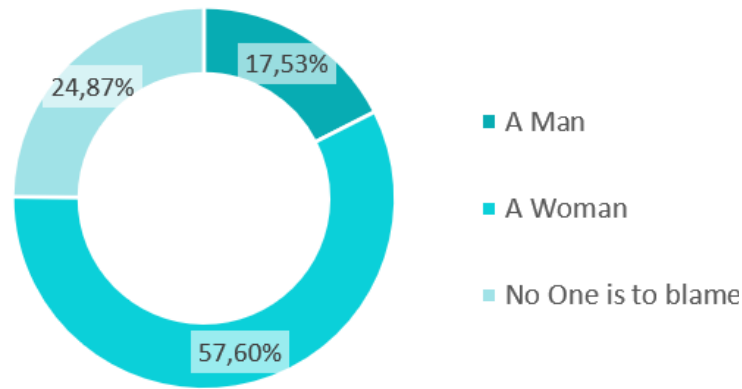
*Average of question number 3: “How offensive do you think the **opposite gender** finds this phrase?”, according to the relationship status variable.*



To finish, the fourth and last question was: “Who is to blame in this phrase?”. By asking participants to assign blame, question number 4 aims to understand participants' perceptions of responsibility and accountability within the context of *micromachismos*. In this case, the average shows that the majority of responses indicated that the phrases mostly blamed women for what it says, as can be shown in Figure 13. Since the average of this question shows only the overall response from the entire group of participants, Figure 14 and Figure 15 will show the average of each gender group. Since the question had three options, the graphs had to be divided in order to be better understood and visualized.

Figure 13.

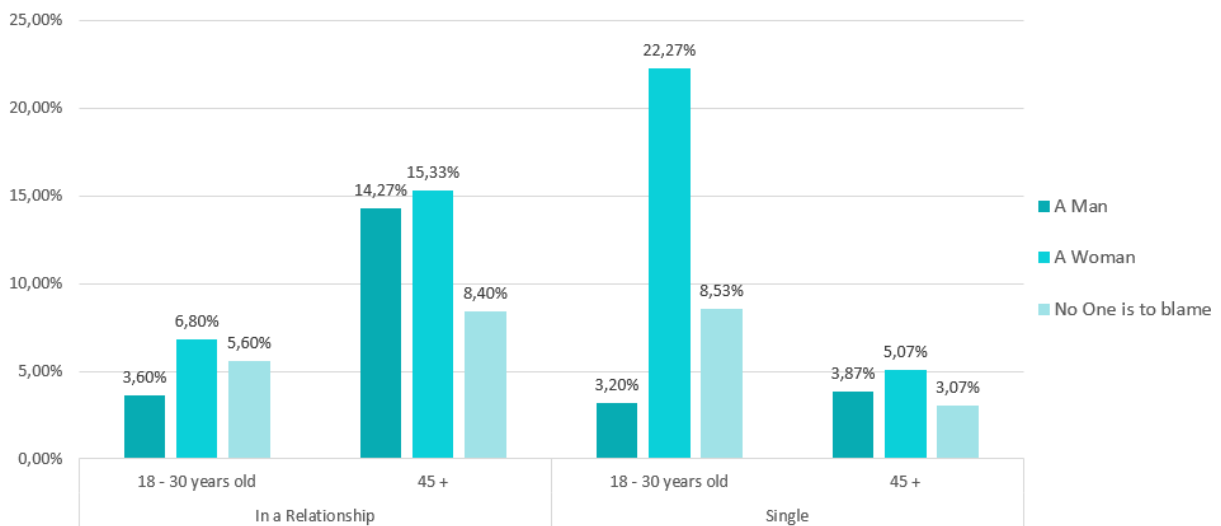
Average of question number 4: “Who is to blame in this phrase?”.



In the case of men, by summing up the percentages, almost half of the participants said that a woman was to blame in most of the phrases, but this half consisted mainly of single men between 18 to 30 years old, and also from the older age group. Although, the group of men that were 45+ years old did show more parity while choosing who to blame, as Figure 14 shows:

Figure 14.

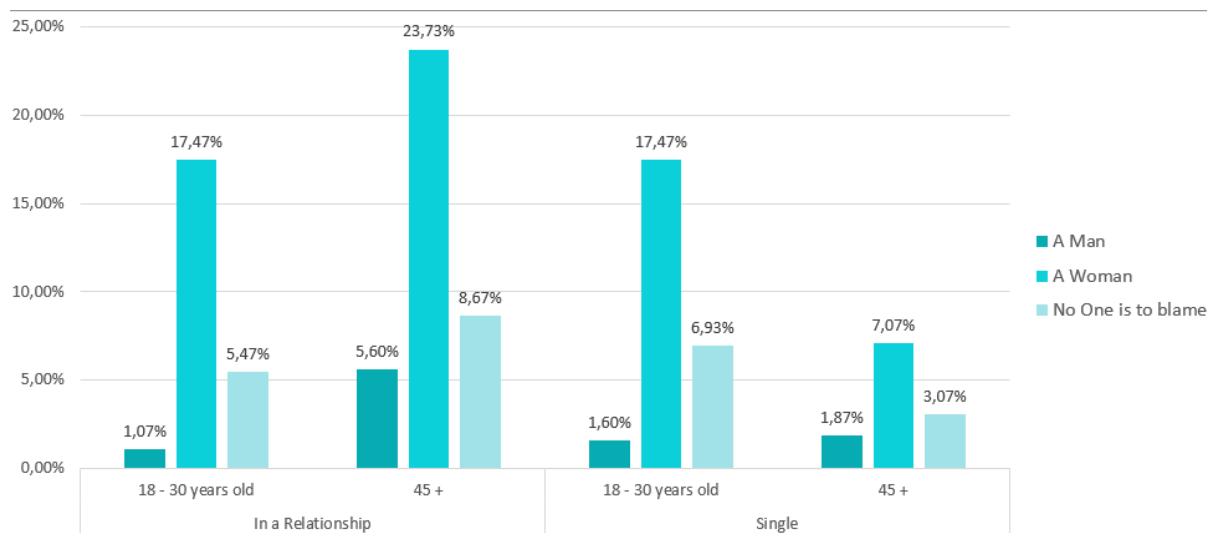
Average of question number 4: “Who is to blame in this phrase?” for men only.



Concerning women’s average for this question, by summing up the percentages as well, almost two-thirds of their responses said that the phrases were blaming women, as shown in Figure 15. What is even more interesting about their average, is that it stays the same around both age and relationships status groups. In other words, women found that the phrases blamed women, regardless of their groups.

Figure 15.

Average of question number 4: “Who is to blame in this phrase?” for women only.



Therefore, women are considered to be more responsible for what is mentioned in the phrases, even in phrases that do not specifically have an agent or a receiver of an action, showing an unequal distribution of responsibility. The fact that both men and women have similar responses represents the awareness that *micromachismos* and misogynist language blames women, regardless of the topic.

CONCLUSIONS

The perception of society regarding language and the meanings behind what we say in everyday life needs to be understood in order to comprehend relations of power, intentions, and even equality and the role we play in society. The research on *micromachismos* has provided valuable insights into the subtle forms of misogyny that spread in everyday language, contributing to the perpetuation of gender inequality. Through the compilation of *micromachismos* on social media and the implementation of surveys, people's perceptions of these phrases were analyzed in order to better understand their impact.

After having analyzed the responses from the conducted survey regarding *micromachismos*, some conclusions and patterns were found. For the first part of the survey, it was seen that participants attributed almost all of the phrases to male speakers, with the exception of one, highlighting how these phrases are thought to be said only/mostly by men. Since a third of the phrases were said by women, and only one of them was noticed correctly, this shows that participants relate misogynist behavior and speech acts to men, while phrase 7 was expected to fulfill the stereotyped role. This finding goes directly in hand with gender attribution, as it was visible that the phrases were attributed and recognized to the male gender according to social stereotypes (Kessler et al., 1985).

For the second part of the survey, which consisted of asking participants to rate the phrases according to their perception and what they thought the perception of the other gender was, it was easier to understand *micromachismos* offense level. Overall, and according to the data analyzed and the figures, women were more offended or/and aware of the discrimination within the phrases, and for them, *micromachismos* were less subtle. On the other hand, men did notice some level of offensiveness, but not as high as women did. Some phrases received higher ratings, meaning that the topics or the wording made them more alarming to the participants' eye. Other phrases that received lower ratings are probably more normalized and used in everyday life with less repercussions and attention. When it came to rate how offensive the phrase was for the opposite gender, interesting findings rose. As expected, women believed that their opposite gender would be less alert or offended by the phrases, and the opposite happened with men. This showed that men acknowledged that the phrases were probably more offensive than they admitted for themselves, and that women would agree less with what the phrases said. This reflects that empathy and the acknowledgement of the importance of these phrases needs to improve.

The last part of the analysis of the survey was concerning the blame in the phrases, in which women were held accountable for the majority of phrases, blaming them for situations, speech acts, and behaviors that intend to diminish their equality. Similar to Mayor's investigation (2013), the results of this research echoed those that were found on hers, since most of the misogynist phrases used by the participants related to the stereotypes of women had all the blame put on women as well, but with a focus on attitudes regarding *micromachismos* in gender roles inside relationship contexts.

The quantitative analysis of survey data allowed this research to identify patterns and correlations between variables such as age, gender, and relationship status, providing a better perspective on how individuals perceive and interpret *micromachismos*. These findings highlight the importance of language awareness and the need for intervention and education to challenge *micromachismos* in speech acts. This way, the objectives of this research were accomplished as to evaluating the perception of *micromachismos* by identifying the level of sensitivity to them and the patterns that were discovered from the surveys within the different social variables.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research' most important intention is to generate awareness and hopefully educate people about these phrases that are normalized in everyday life. The topic at hand is a great one to be held at campaigns and events regarding equality, language, and education. By increasing awareness and knowledge about *micromachismos*, people can better recognize and challenge these subtle forms of misogyny, as well as improving empathy between genders and encouraging others to point out and dismantle hidden forms of discrimination. As to the participants, the most important findings of this research will be shared on social media in

order to give them feedback and to better understand what the survey was for. This way, the research gives back information and education to society.

Some limitations regarding the extension of this paper and the time to conduct the research came to be some recommendations for the future. The corpus of 150 phrases had to be cut short in order to make the survey doable within a 10-minute timeframe, as well as leaving open questions behind. Open questions to collect opinions and comments could come in handy for future research to understand the choices of respondents. Moreover, a bigger research with a bigger sample could provide a better estimate of real populations to improve generalizations with more significant numbers.

There are always more areas in which this research could expand in Linguistics. Other terms like language socialization could come in handy in future research on how children acquire patterns of language and replicate the social order from adults based on language use. Other possible perspectives and scopes of research could be the use of morphological structures like diminutives within euphemisms in *micromachismos*, a deeper analysis of metaphors and comparisons used between gender biases, and even similar points of view but with different samples. For instance, this research could trigger a comparison of the perception of *micromachismos* between participants from different geographical places, between different languages, or with the use of phrases collected from different sources, such as newspapers, television, or books.

REFERENCES

- American Psychological Association. (2015). APA dictionary of psychology (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/14646-000>
- Bonino, L. (2004). Los Micromachismos. Revista La Cibeles. Vol 2(2004) . <https://www.mpdl.org/sites/default/files/micromachismos.pdf>
- Brown, P. (2005). Linguistic politeness. In Sociolinguistics: An international handbook of the science of language and society (pp. 1410-1416). Mouton de Gruyter.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1999). Politeness. Some universals in language usage. I: The discourse reader. Ed. by Adam Jaworski & Nikolas Coupland. Cambridge University Press.
- Brunell, L. and Burkett, E. (2023, March 9). Feminism. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/feminism>
- Castañeda (2019). El Machismo Invisible. Debolsillo. Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial, S.A. ISBN: 978-607-318-602-5
- Sáenz, C. (2022). “Ni una menos”, escribió Susana. Revista Replicante. <https://revistareplicante.com/ni-una-menos-escribio-susana/>
- Cambridge University Press (2022). Male Chauvinism. Cambridge Dictionary Online. Cambridge University Press. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/male-chauvinism>
- Crystal, D. (2008). A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics (6th Edition). Blackwell Publishing.
- Kessler, S, & McKenna, W. (1985). Gender: An ethnomethodological approach. University of Chicago Press.

- Lillo, D. (2018). *Ética, moral y ética profesional: Intervención del intérprete en discursos con micromachismo*. [Tesis de Licenciatura, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso]. http://opac.pucv.cl/pucv_txt/txt-4500/UCC4503_01.pdf
- Mayor, V. (2013) *Micromachismo en parejas jóvenes*. [Tesis de Licenciatura, Universidad de Sevilla]. <https://idus.us.es/bitstream/handle/11441/32781/TFG-52%20Micromachismo%20en%20parejas%20j%C3%B3venes.pdf>
- Pilcher, J., & Whelehan, I. (2016). *Key concepts in gender studies*. Sage.
- Rojas, O., & Morales, A. (2020). Machismo. *The Wiley Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*, 243–246. doi:10.1002/9781119547181.ch305
- Sánchez-Gey, N. (2017) *Los micromachismos en televisión y el papel de altavoz de las redes sociales. Reflexiones desde la investigación para avanzar en igualdad: VII Congreso Universitario Internacional Investigación y Género* (pp. 742-754). <https://idus.us.es/bitstream/handle/11441/80625/Pages%20from%20Actas%20VII%20Congreso%20I%2bG%202018-12.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Suárez, J. (2013) *El micromachismo en la publicidad. Nuevas estrategias para viejos estereotipos, “mi marido me ayuda” y “el elogio de la maternidad”*. [*Micromachismos in advertising. New strategies for old stereotypes, “my husband helps me” and “maternity's praise*]. Universidad de Sevilla. *Pensar la Publicidad*. Vol. 7(2)(2013) 239-251. http://dx.doi.org/10.5209/rev_PEPU.2013.v7.n2.46176
- Vithas. (2023) *Dr. Luis Bonino Méndez. Médico*. <https://vithas.es/medico/bonino-mendez-luis/>
- Yule, G., & Widdowson, H. G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.

ANNEX

Table A1.

Phrases used in the survey (translated to English, originally in Spanish).

<p>1. They should teach martial arts to girls in schools so that they can learn how to defend themselves from a young age. - W.P.</p>
<p>2. Rape is condemnable in little girls; they cannot defend themselves. But an adult woman allows it. - S.A.</p>
<p>3. Isn't there violence against women in Arab and Indian countries? There are no rights there. At least here they have the freedom to protest. - V.F.</p>
<p>4. It is about confusing and justifying the abuse that is supposedly carried out by one gender, when in reality there are two abusive genders. Who creates abusers? Who raises children in the home? - M.N.</p>
<p>5. If they organize for their marches and vandalize, why don't they organize to learn self-defense? They would get fitter and hotter. - J.P.</p>
<p>6. Even if the woman works, all the expenses are paid by the man, so it is okay for her to do the cleaning and everything in the house. - D.E</p>
<p>7. I serve my dad his food and sometimes my brother. - R.M.</p>
<p>8. It's not a world that men respect, women don't help by dressing with less clothes. - A.E.</p>
<p>9. Each one does one thing, the man works and the woman cooks, and both do it well. - A.F.</p>
<p>10. I clean up my things and my house because my mom isn't always home. - W.</p>
<p>11. If you were a woman of high value, you would already be married with children. -</p>

E.
12. When a woman decides to start a family, she should know that she carries a great responsibility and that includes maintaining a house. - J.A.
13. Women have more love for home care than men. It is in their nature to be more clean, tidy, and responsible. - R.E.
14. Women look and sound bad saying bad words... Something as beautiful as a woman speaking ugly looks horrible. - R.V.
15. There is constant danger when a woman is behind the wheel. - A.M

Link to the original survey in Spanish

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1nUoxElrrhTsyZDylKfEUU2AQTOBSLrfqhz8ngVUUCEc/edit>