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Masculine Hegemony through Humor in Pakistan: A Linguistic Study

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to examine Pakistani jokes shared on social media that promote masculine hegemony through humor, specifically focusing on sexist jokes made at the expense of Pakistani women. The study aims to investigate how these jokes promote gender inequity and strengthen male dominance in Pakistan's patriarchal society. By subtly conveying prejudice and unfavorable opinions, jokes can influence readers' unconscious prejudices (Allport, 1954; Freud, 2004). The paper investigates how language is used to support sexist sentiments and is divided into four sections that examine how women are portrayed in language, in public and private settings, and as sexual objects. The study employs Foucault's social aspect of discourse (1970) and Van Dijk's (2003) critical discourse analysis.

Key Words: Masculine, Hegemony, Gender Stereotyping, Sexist Internet Jokes, Pakistani Women

Introduction

The current study explores gender stereotyping as a social representation practice, using jokes as a subordinate discourse mode. The stereotyped representations of women are examined in this paper. It also looks at how language is employed and manipulated in Pakistani patriarchal society to uphold the status quo of gender inequity and masculine hegemony.

Gender stereotyping refers to the categorization and classification of social groups based only on their sex. Members of this group are characterized by particular behaviors and behavioral traits, such as the usual portrayal of women as gossips who never stop talking while males are rational, assertive, and silent (Graddol, 1989). The majority of studies on this approach have been produced by various linguistic feminists, including Cameron (1985, 2008), Hall (1997), Ida & Tuty (2023), MacDonald (1995), Mills (2008), Sunderland (2006, 2007), and Talbot (1998), among others. However, their research has primarily focused on western white middle-class women. On the other hand, the current article discusses linguistic gender stereotypes of Pakistani women as they are portrayed in online humor. Moreover, one can locate such gender stereotyping in various modes of discourse at both institutional and individual levels.

Women are stereotyped negatively in sexist jokes, perpetuating damaging stereotypes, while men positioned as the societal norm (Crawford, 2003; Horisk, 2024). This is no laughing matter— but discrimination and sexism are covertly marketed (Flouli & Athanasiades, 2023; Woodzicka & Ford, 2010). Individuals talk their way out of it by playing down insulting comments as "just jokes," so sexist feelings go unchecked. It is very important to realize the effect of this type of humor because opinions are generated through jokes, biases are confirmed, and gender equality is eroded.

Sexist humor yields unfavorable consequences as they affirm adverse gender norms and propagate disparity. These consequences empirically demonstrate to yield increased acceptance of prevailing gender differences and social devaluation of women (Ciaffoni et al., 2025; Ford, 2000; Ford et al., 2008, 2013). More seriously, sexist jokes are associated with greater acceptance of sexual violence, and research has found greater self-report rape willingness among male participants who have been exposed to sexist jokes (Weber et al. 2023). By dubbing discrimination a joke, patriarchal assumptions are legitimized, and they are considered harmless or even positive. This subtle yet potent language serves to enforce gender disadvantage, maintaining the status quo in unremarked ways. Becoming acquainted

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with these dynamics could be of central importance to deconstructing institutionalized prejudice and building a more just society.

This study examines stereotypically representation of women in Pakistani internet jokes informally through qualitative and quantitative approaches for a closer examination. Employing Van Dijk's critical discourse approach (2003), the study examines the ways in which jokes perpetuate certain social norms by making them appear natural, unavoidable, or challengeable. Language is a very handy tool that can impact what we believe as true with regard to ideas, actions, and social norms. One such typical tactic is presenting some views as "common sense" or as "the way things are." It naturalizes here the beliefs, makes them inevitable, or even invulnerable and presents them as all the more legitimate without further question.

Foucault (1970) transformed our understanding of discourse by deconstructing it to us that knowledge and language are never ever neutral. Rather, they are constructed in the context of power relationships and social contexts. For Foucault, discourse is more a creator of reality—it creates reality by determining what ideas, beliefs, and words become dominant and suppress or silence others. Foucault exercised power not just to act through violence or repression but also through language and discourse. In contrast to classical understandings where power resides with individuals or institutions, Foucault claims that power is generated within society itself—within common speech, cultural rituals, and conventional knowledge.

Foucault's discourse theory shows how discourse and knowledge construct the world—and how it performs power relations. With the analysis of social groups' and institutions' discursive practice, Foucault demonstrates the intimate association of power and knowledge, how they perform their domination on society's norms and its perception. This current study thus investigates underlying meaning in using patriarchal discourse.

This study adopted a methodical three-step procedure to research gendered jokes, in this case, woman-targeting jokes, within Pakistani society. This step achieved a variety of data that provided common stereotypes and patterns of woman jokes within Pakistani society. After the jokes were gathered, they were methodically classified in relation to common themes, including marriage relationships, mother-in-law relationships, and social roles. Classification enabled observation of the dominant stories of the jokes. The final step was to analyze the jokes based on Van Dijk's ideological discourse strategies (2003). It assisted in bringing out unconscious prejudices, stereotypes, and power relations present in the jokes and demonstrating how humor subverts or reinforces gender ideologies. Having gone through this process in a systematic manner, the research provides significant information about the ways in which jokes subvert or reinforces gender norms in Pakistani society.

Literature Review

Humor has always been an integral part of human communication, an effective means of establishing relationships, easing tension, and conveying emotions (Dean & Gregory, 2004; Kargupta et al., 2023). Laughter is never innocuous, though—it can also reinforce social relations of domination and subordination. In patriarchal societies such as Pakistan, humor is employed to sustain masculine dominance (Anthony et al., 2023; Salam, 2020). Despite its expression in jokes, sarcasm, or teasing, linguistic humor can also support gender norms and masculine hegemony obliquely (or overtly). In this article, we investigate the social roles and linguistic properties of humor in Pakistan and explore how it contributes to maintaining masculine hegemony. By analyzing stereotypical comedic frames, we uncover the processes through which humor captures and reproduces social relations of power.

Traditional gender roles remain strongly entrenched in society in Pakistan (Fakhar, et.al., 2024). Men are inherently the leaders, while women ought to be submissive and caring (England et al., 2011). Power disparity is maintained by a number of social mechanisms including humor, among them. Ali et al. (2011) research shows the way in which masculinity is ingrained in Pakistani culture, and men hold most of the positions of power. Women are steered into obedience and loyalty roles instead. One of the most insidious but potent ways in which these norms get legitimized is by humor and jokes, with stereotypes being reinforced in the name of "jokes."

Joke is not only laughter—but it is also an instrument of social control and persuasion. Scholarly research by scholars such as Al-Zubaidi (2019), Bitterly (2022), Rashad & Azher (2018), and Sanauddin (2015) describes how, in Pakistan, jokes tend to be used to reinforce patriarchal dominance. Jokes that are harmless enough can be utilized to reassert offending stereotypes, belittle women, and affirm traditional gender hierarchies (Finn & Laaboudi, 2025; Leskinen et al., 2015). Women-trolling jokes help to sustain a society where gender disparities continue to exist. Shah et al.'s (2022) study has found that discrimination is justified through this sort of humor, and it is difficult to combat deeply rooted prejudices. There are some linguistic characteristics of Pakistani humor that impact its effect, as cited by Sultana et al. (2020).

Whether as stereotype, sarcasm, or hyperbolic wordplay, such elements make jokes remembered—and sometimes hurt. Identifying such trends can help explain the power of humor to shape social attitudes. Humor can rip apart, but it can also rip apart stereotypes and lead to positive change. Encouraging jokes that uplift, rather than exclude, can assist society toward greater respect and inclusiveness in dialogue. Recognizing the positioning of humor in gender interactions is important for the promotion of equality. Through analyzing its impacts, we can strive towards a culture where laughter brings people together and not tear them apart.

Humor is a strong social weapon, one that is commonly laced with sarcasm and irony, observes Haider and Al-Abbas (2022). Pakistani jokes often utilize these weapons to subversively mock people or societal conventions. Another aspect of Pakistani humor, however, involves the usage of profanity and sexual innuendo—usually targeted at women, being perpetually based on negative stereotypes and objectification.

Though humor has positive functions—tension release, emotional release, and solidarity—jokes can be used as weapons to control dominance relationships. Cameron (2008) and authors like Dean & Gregory (2004), Crawford (2003), Finn & Laaboudi (2025), Ford, et al. (2013), and Foucault (1978) mention how jokes are used to reproduce patriarchal power and traditional gender roles. In employing joke as a medium of social control, hegemonic groups impose masculine hegemony, perpetuating inequality in the name of humor. It is important to understand these dynamics to be able to create more respectful and inclusive comedies in Pakistani society.

In Pakistan, humor is frequently charged as a social control mechanism, supporting patriarchal beliefs and male supremacy. Male dominance and patriarchal values are perpetuated and gender stereotypes sustained in jokes using sarcasm, irony, obscenity, and sex innuendo. Jokes are not only amusement but are used to create attitudes and rationalize inequality. Humor is a covert yet efficient means of maintaining traditional gender hierarchies by ridiculing women or presenting them in submissive roles.

Methodology

The objective of the present research is to explore the role of jokes in sustaining hegemonic masculinity in Pakistan. The research assesses stereotypical representations of women in Pakistani jokes through qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. Analytical techniques borrowed from Van Dijk's ideological procedures of discourse (Van Dijk, 2003) and Foucault's social dimension of discourse (1970) are utilized by the research. The first part of the data gathering and sampling procedure was surfing the web for "jokes about women, Pakistani women, wives, moms, mothers-in-law, and working women.

Sampling Procedure

Data were collected from two sources: (1) Facebook, a social media site using the Urdu language, and (2) social media groups. A purposive sampling process (Andrade, 2021) was used in the selection of frequently posted jokes posted via Facebook, and a random sampling process was used for analyzing selected jokes from social media groups. Nine jokes were chosen to be analyzed.

Discourse analysis method was used in identifying linguistic features of the jokes that perpetuate masculine hegemony. Application of gendered terms, stereotypical and negative representation of female characters, application of stereotype, and topics and themes covered were the four benchmarks applied in identifying linguistic features.

Analysis

Women and Language as is Represented as Chatterbox

Q: Is Google male or female?

A: *Female, because it doesn't let you finish a sentence before making a suggestion.*

The gender stereotype in the joke is that women are assumed to be talkative and interrupt others. The comparison of women to Google suggests women are similar to an intrusive element that interrupts and speaks over others. The continuation of bad images of women goes on suggesting women are bad listeners, do not let people finish a sentence, which perpetuates negative gender stereotypes about women. All in all, the joke is negative gender stereotypical and in-app-ropriate. In order to promote greater gender equality and respect for everyone irrespective of gender, one has to be sensitive and resist such preconceptions (Lakoff, 1975).

In the above example, women are stereotyped as chatterboxes because of the way they speak. One of the stereotypes that portray women as chatterboxes has the tendency to depict women as chatty and equate them with jokes. Because of the common application of the stereotype "talkative women and quiet males" (Bem, 1993). This analogy to Google that yields many dividends on a single keyword implies that stereotypes of women have been constructed in the guise of humor or jokes.

At the social discursive level, even though the joke would be amusing to others, there is a necessity of naming the underlying negative gender stereotype being driven. It suggests that women tend to be generally talkative, interruptive, and in the inclination of providing unwarranted advice. This humor about gender stereotyping solidifies gender stereotypes and has a tendency of excluding women from society.

Also, this kind of joke is not appropriate in the workplace, in school, or in any professional environment since it is likely to be viewed as sexist and derogatory. These jokes are likely to offend a woman and make her feel hostile or upset if she is already discriminated against or being harassed. A seemingly harmless joke at face value, a casual joke is just an attempt to lighten up the situation or break the ice. But what if that humor does reinforce gender stereotypes? Gradually, those "harmless" jokes add nuance to the exclusion of women and make negative stereotypes more concrete.

Wife Represented as Burden

A man's wife died. Her burial was due after a few hours.

His friend wiped his tears and asked, "Do you need something?"

Man: "Bring me your laptop."

Friend: "Why?"

Man: "Facebook per status 'single' karna hai."

The joke assumes that the man was not glad to rid himself of his wife because she was troublesome to him. In assuming that men are glad to get rid of women and women are troublesome, it also reinforces gender stereotypes.

The joke rests on a misinterpretation of the term "single." The man is not overtly declaring himself to be single here but mentioning because his wife died, then he is single now himself. The joke is insensitive and insulting because it assumes married women as burdens to be looked after only when they are being used by men. The joke is also perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes and negative attitudes towards women.

In the social use of language, the joke seems to be trivializing a sensitive and vital issue, the man's wife having died. Such jokes would qualify as insensitive and inappropriate since they are downplaying the loss and the grief that the man is facing. In addition, the joke is also reinforcing negative gender stereotypes of men grieving shortly after they have lost their wife and finding themselves a new girlfriend. This also supports that men are emotionally insensitive and do not care about relationships as much as women.

Furthermore, the joke suggests that Facebook and other social networking sites are larger than the bereavement process and the emotional health of the man. Social media dominates our lives so much—determining how we

communicate, crave approval, and even deal with emotions. But some jokes belittle actual suffering, as if focus online is more significant than actual emotional healing. This joke is not only tone-deaf—it's disrespectful to mourners. Grief is intimate and mocking it makes the pain others suffer lessened. Worse, it promotes negative stereotypes with the implication that people respond better on the internet than to genuine emotional comfort.

Women Physical Appearance Stereotypes

Unsuccessful businessman to his very fat wife: "You are my only investment in life that has doubled."

The joke relies on the assumption that a woman's worth is measured by her outward appearance, i.e., her weight. The fact that the man used the term "investment" tells us that he does not regard his wife as an equal or a partner but as a means of raising his own worth. Furthermore, the fact that the husband equates the daughter to an investment suggests that he values his wife less for who she is as a person than for her value in increasing his wealth or social standing.

The joke also validates the cultural ideal of masculine hegemony, or that men are presumed to be in positions of power in society and are entitled to enforce gender expectations and norms. The man's comment here is objectifying and degrading, reducing his wife to less of a number on a scale than to a complex human with many varied features. The humor serves to perpetuate the notion that men may judge and regulate this part of their girlfriends' lives and that women's physical attractiveness is their sole greatest source of value. His own humor serves to perpetuate destructive gender stereotypes of women and men's control over women in society (Lutz, 1990).

In the social function of speech, the joke in question reinforces unhealthy and negative body weight stereotypes and stereotypes against women. It employs fat phobia, weight or obesity discrimination or prejudice, as a tool for attempting to make people laugh. Such humor reaffirms that being overweight is bad and it is okay to mock individuals based on their weight. Also, the punchline reduces the wife to an object by diminishing her worth to appearance and comparing her to an investment. This is in favor of the idea that women are objects and ought to be possessed, and their worth based on how they look.

Humor is an extremely significant part of social conversation, and also an effective tool in defense against dangerous beliefs and behavior. Discrimination humor and stereotypical humor, though, are dangerous for individuals and groups.

Women as Cruel Wife (Private Life)

A man reaches MaCDonald at 0200 in the morning during pouring rain and orders two Big Macs.

The sales person asks, "are you married?"

The man replies, "Crazy, how a mother can send her child in such stormy weather. It is just wives who do such thing?"

Analysis

This joke is typical of the perpetuation of masculinity in humor since it upholds traditional gender stereotypes. It pictures the wife as mean, refusing to give her child a mere hamburger throughout the storm. These portrayals subtly uphold the stereotype that women should put family work above all else, confirming that their first and only obligation is to make sacrifices for their families. By casting wife in this stereotypical role, the joke reinforces patriarchal gender roles and positions women as should-be considerate caregivers without personal motivations.

These jokes are able to make harmful stereotypes permissible, and thus, it is very important to recognize and address such narratives in our everyday interactions. Humor is a great weapon, but used to perpetuate stereotypes, it is better than bad. This joke stereotypes wives as being less maternal than mothers and robs fathers of the chance to get involved in parental responsibilities. Not only is humor of this sort objectionable, but it sustains negative gender roles that are harmful to men and women alike.

Humor can be an effective tool—but it is not always harmless. Jokes might look harmless at first glance, but they tend to solidify negative social norms, especially in the area of gender roles. The above example is not only insensitive but also reinforces outmoded stereotypes that downplay motherhood and establish gender inequality.

Women Represented as Fighter and Problematic

A man came home very late at night after a party. His wife yelled: "How would you feel if you don't see me for two days?"

The man couldn't believe his luck: "That would be great!"

Monday passed and he didn't see her. . . . Tuesday and Wednesday passed too. . . . On Thursday his swelling became better and now he could see her from the corner of one eye.

Analysis

It should be noted that much of comedy helps reinforce hierarchical orders and negative stereotyping. In this joke, the woman is framed as a nagging nuisance who simply makes life harder for itself and the man. The joke reinforces the stereotype that women are emotional and irrational and that women are burdens to men. When a person answers a question indifferently or rudely, one sends an offensive message—particularly when questions of gender power are on the line. The man's reaction here is not merely rude; it is evasive. Instead of answering the woman seriously to her concerns, he evades her and uses her absence as an alibi for pushing forward his agenda. The major problem is when the man's "swelling" recedes, and he is able to approach the woman again.

It implies that the man prefers the woman's looks and is attracted to her only when she is sexually accessible. The joke reinforces negative gender stereotypes and that men need to dominate women. These power relations need to be enjoyed and how humor can reinforce them. At face value, this joke is a harmless, flip remark about a husband being able to get some quiet when his wife is out. But closer scrutiny reveals disturbing overtones—encouraging sexist gender roles and unhealthy attitudes toward marriage. This joke relies on sexist and derogatory stereotypes from the past about women as needful and overemotional. The setup for the wife's question—"How would you feel if you did not see me for two days?"—portrays insecurity and need for reassurance that is endless and is therefore perpetuating the old bad stereotype of women as demanding or clingy in affairs. Domestic violence is a serious problem that happens to millions globally, yet some jokes continue to downplay the trauma and suffering survivors experience.

The sentence "On Thursday, his swelling became better, and now he could see her from the corner of one eye" conveys that a man physically attacked his wife in such a way that she had to move towards safety. This kind of humor is actually disturbing—it trivializes abuse and downplays actual suffering for victims. Domestic abuse is never funny. Rather than make fun of such a grave topic, we can try to educate people, understand survivors, and encourage healthy relationships. Humor tends to express deeper cultural sentiments—and some marriage jokes aren't. Consider the typical punchline where a husband "wins" by controlling his wife. It's a joke on the surface, but beneath the surface it upholds the belief that marriage is war of wills and not a union.

In this joke, a man is happy if his wife departs instead of being unhappy, indicating that he views her as a nuisance and not his loving partner. Such humor indirectly sanctions resentment and control, and not the sharing of mutual love and respect.

Wife Has Been Compared to an Animal like Dog

A man visited a marriage counselor and said, "When we were first married, I would come home from the office, my wife would bring my slippers and our cute little dog would run around barking. Now after ten years it's all different, I come home, the dog brings the slippers and my wife runs around barking."

"Why complain?" said the counselor. "You're still getting the same service."

Analysis

This joke reduces women to the level of a pet and also reinforces the negative stereotype that they nag and are controlling. It implies that the lady is no longer a good wife but a thorn in the flesh to be endured because her conduct has grown so vile and beastly. The joke is also used in order to perpetuate the idea that a man's needs and wants always take precedence and that it is a woman's responsibility to wait on and obey her husband regardless of what he does.

In addition, the punch line constructs the marriage counselor as one who advocates disrespect for women and even encourages the man to continue in assuming and accepting the same. The idea that men are entitled to some privileges and those women's feelings and needs take a secondary status is perpetuated by this. In essence, the joke reestablishes unsafe assumptions regarding women and reminds one of unequal power dynamics in relationships, even though it may have appeared harmless or even comical to others.

The joke trivializes gender roles and dominance in marriage. In the joke, the husband is disrespected and emasculated because the wife has assumed traditionally masculine roles, while the man is left with a traditionally feminine role. The counselor's argument, under the premise of the joke, is that since the man is receiving the same level of service, he should just be satisfied with the situation as it is.

This joke is mirroring the deeply rooted gender stereotypes in Pakistani society that perpetuate conservative principles of men as the sole breadwinners and women performing domestic work. It is more than a joke and a signifier of a larger social debate within which male dominance in relationships is something one does not go about questioning—questioning that at times is perceived to be a challenge to manhood.

Even though this joke is entertaining to some, it belittles the work of women in relationships and reiterates gender roles that are no longer acceptable. In turning the wife's act into a basis for complaint, it implies that men should be entitled to special treatments simply because they are men. Other than the fact that it is funny, the hidden message is that work that women do in the home is less valuable than work that men do outside the home—a negative stereotyping that devalues domestic and caring work. While jokes like these are harmless enough on the surface, they reinforce damaging norms constraining both men and women. Delegitimizing such stereotypes assists in creating a more equitable society in which all work is equal.

Women (Wife) Represented as Greedy

A couple was on a cruise. They were standing on the deck when a wave came up and washed the man overboard. They searched for days and couldn't find him, so the captain sent the wife back to shore, telling her, "I would notify you as soon as we find something."

After two weeks the wife got a fax from the boat: "We found your husband's dead body. We also found an oyster attached with his body and in it was a pearl worth \$50,000. Please advise."

The wife faxed back: "Send me the pearl and re-bait the trap."

Analysis

The wife's reaction to hearing about the death of her husband is not grief or one of mourning, but a simple curiosity about how much the pearl is worth, which is perpetuating the stereotype that women are greedy and selfish. It reinforces the fact that women are self-centered and materialistic, and also reinforces the fact that women are driven by material rewards.

And, too, the joke demeans the husband to the status of an object and discounts the grief of his loss by mentioning that the worth of the pearl he wore is the only measure of his worth. This perpetuates the negative stereotype that women only acknowledge men as being able to give material possessions and not as multi-dimensional human beings with personalities and emotions. Overall, the joke perpetuates negative gender stereotypes that have no basis in women's life. The effect of these jokes must be taken into account, and each time negative stereotypes are brought up, they must be refuted.

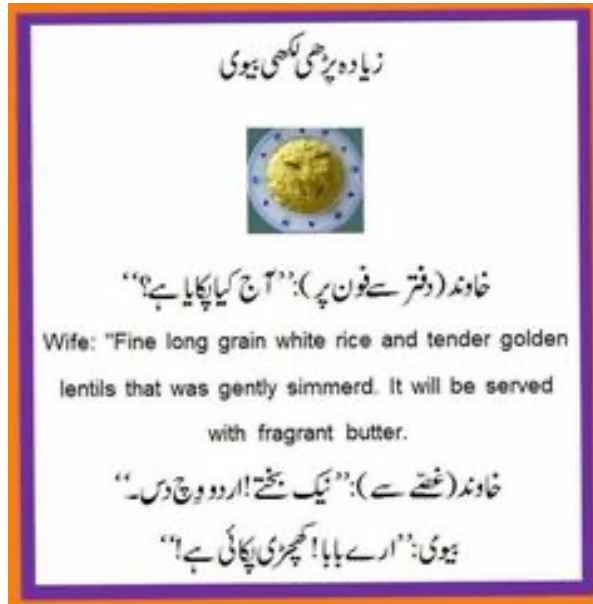
In social discourse theory, the joke in question is a dark humor, in that it is a comedy genre that involves taboo, offensive, or morbid subject matter, and irony, sarcasm, and cynicism for it to be funny. The joke does, however, also involve one having to pay attention to some disturbing aspects of societal discourse. To lose a loved one is never something one would want to joke about. Yet, some jokes—like the one about a wife valuing a pearl more than her

late husband—can be deeply hurtful and offensive. Many jokes rely on outdated stereotypes, and one common trope portrays wives as cold, calculating individuals who value money over human life.

This kind of humor does not only amuse—it reinforces harmful gender stereotypes. By presenting women as less sympathetic or too materialistic, such jokes reinforce the negative assumption that women are less compassionate than men. Humor can unite us, brighten our day, and bond us—but let us remember that jokes can also perpetuate harmful stereotypes or sting people. While laughter is valuable, we must exercise caution on how words impact others, especially when discussing relationships and sensitive issues.

Women in Higher Studies are Misrepresented

Image 1



English Translation: wife called wife from his office and asked what have you cooked today?

The wife replied a long sentence in English

The husband responded in anger, tell me in Urdu.

The wife replied in Urdu then "Ary baba Kichri pakaye hy".

Analysis

The quoted joke is based on the perception that women who study higher are attitude-prone or snooty. Education is a relevant plus point for any gender, and therefore such a discrimination is both unjust and false. The joke also suggests that educated women would not be capable of cooking regional or traditional dishes. As there is no connection between an individual's educational attainment and their culinary skills, the above myth is not valid either.

The request of the husband for the wife to reply in Urdu but for herself alone accomplishes nothing but to further solidify the restrictive and narrow belief that Urdu alone is the sought-after or desired language to use. In essence, the joke promotes restrictive social norms and unwanted assumptions regarding women and their abilities. Dispelling and removal of such myths are vital as is promoting inclusivity and gender equality (Oduor, 2022).

This joke would appear to reflect gender and power relations in the household in accordance with social discourse analysis. The husband is the dominant character in the joke who insists on his wife doing what he desires. He is maybe exercising some cultural or linguistic dominance in the household, where there is more prestige linked with Urdu as the language, since he grows annoyed when his wife uses English. In addition, the joke also advances the stereotype that men are expected to be breadwinners and work outside their homes while women are doing domestic work such as cooking. By inquiring from his wife what he had for dinner that day, the husband is upholding the typical gender roles.

When the wife replies in English and Urdu, she is not simply speaking, she is performing her agency and identity. This adaptive speech shows she is not bounded by cultural or linguistic boundaries, exploring boldly through several modes of speech.

While some might enjoy such humor, let us examine the ways in which jokes can be used to perpetuate stereotypes and tip the balance of relationships. It begins with equality—recognizing the role that language and culture play in our

communities and our families. Through the promotion of respectful dialogue and linguistic diversity, we can strive for improved, more balanced relationships

Image 2



English Translation: *The brought a chew gum and handed over to wife to eat*

The wife asked to husband, why didn't you buy for yourself?

The husband replied I can remain silence without chew gum.

The joke relies on an archaic stereotype—that men must be stoic and quiet, and women talk too much. Not only is this perpetuating negative gender stereotypes, but it also disregards the fact that individuals communicate in various ways irrespective of what their gender is.

This joke toasted a chilling stereotype—that any husband has the right to silence his wife for no reason at all except that he cannot bear to hear her. Deep in its heart, it reinforces the misguided and archaic assumption that men have the right to dictate what their mates say and that women's speech is of no importance or nuisance. Moreover, the joke reduces the overall woman to nothing more than a handy tool for her husband. Rather than portraying her as an independent agent with her own will, feelings, and thoughts, it portrays her as a convenience tool for him. Humor can bring people together—not make someone a joke. This joke does do that, however, by reducing the woman to an object, a tool of convenience for her husband and not an independent agent with her own needs and wants. Joke is powerful—it can break stereotypes or build them. By selecting jokes that honor equality, respect for one another, and equal partnership, we encourage healthier concepts regarding gender roles. In discourse social aspect, humor typically engages representations of beliefs in society, but some jokes are based on outdated gender stereotypes—particularly regarding communication within relationships.

One of the most common tropes is women nag or talk too much, and men are shut down or emotionally unavailable. Harmless enough, perhaps, but such jokes perpetuate unhealthy stereotypes that don't occur in healthy relationships. Healthy relationships are built upon honest, open communication—yet there are some jokes that imply that evading difficult conversations is the secret to bliss. One of these jokes is that it's possible to replace real conversation with chewing gum, depicting communication as a piece of nonsense to be disposed of instead of an essential part of closeness. This type of humor might look senseless, but it provokes a perilous attitude.

When people do not talk, resentment accumulates, misunderstandings are stocked up, and battles get more powerful. Eventually, such a lack of responsibility can destroy trust and even result in break-ups. Humor can connect, but humor based on negative stereotypes about relationships can prove more harmful than helpful. If humor supports negative thought about communication between partners, it serves to destabilize trust, respect, and understanding. Even though these jokes might sound lighthearted and harmless, they spread the message that there is no way to communicate effectively—or maybe even something amusing about it. Healthy relationships actually hinge on honest, transparent communication, not mocking jokes.

Discussion and Conclusion

Recent studies on language show how Pakistani humor still maintains masculine dominance and strengthens patriarchal sentiments. Examining the comedy language and common jokes of the period, the researchers proved that humor is a subtle yet powerful means to sustain gender inequality. The findings corroborate earlier studies by Rozek (2015) and Oduor (2022), which have proven humor to be bent on maintaining male dominance. Humor is a potent social tool—it unites people, relaxes tension, and validates bonds. Not all jokes are harmless fun, though. A great number of jokes reinforce harmful gender stereotypes, promoting sexist and misogynistic values that invalidate equality. Research indicates the ways in which humor frequently pokes fun at women, objectifying them as objects of male fantasy in insulting and objectifying language (Sunderland, 2006; Mills, 2008; Rashad & Azher, 2018; Haider & Al-Abbas, 2022). But women are not alone in being victims of this—men who resist conventional gender roles are the subject of ridicule in these jokes, too. Humor is generally thought to be light and kindly, but research has uncovered its darker function in reinforcing gender power relations.

Research indicates that men utilize humor to create superiority and dominance in open spaces, which may make women uncomfortable inserting themselves into the conversation or even be secure (Butler, 1990; Khan & Raza, 2021). Recent research displays how humor is utilized in the maintenance of race and class social orders. Racial and religious minority jokes usually sustain dominant group hegemony by upholding stereotypes and perpetuating discrimination. Likewise, lower-class ridicule jokes legitimize economic inequality by keeping class lines intact (Nayef & El-Nashar, 2014). New studies uncover a sobering truth: the words we use most often can support systemic inequality and oppressive systems. This work enlightens us as to how language, even subconsciously, enforces gender bias and other discriminations and insists on greater awareness and action.

Language is not merely a means of communication—it constructs perceptions, reaffirms stereotypes, and perpetuates negative power relationships. From popular slang to institutional language, what we say can be a counterforce or a force of upholding inequality.

It also implies an action to resist patriarchal assumptions and norms and work towards a just and equitable society. Building an inclusive society begins with developing gender-sensitive pedagogy and communication that elicits a sense of being noticed and valued in everyone. Inclusive communication enables us to deconstruct stereotypes and empower marginalized groups—above all, women and other vulnerable groups—to participate assertively in the public arena. Studies (Al-Rawi et al., 2021) emphasize the need to have safe spaces where one can express themselves freely without discrimination. These spaces encourage participation, amplify diverse perspectives, and drive meaningful societal change.

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