Gender Stereotypes in Humor: Analyzing the Construction of Female Identity in Jokes

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the construction of female gender identity through the lens of gender-based jokes, focusing on how humor perpetuates and reinforces stereotypes. The study categorizes jokes into six distinct traits—objectification, pun, exaggeration, acquisitiveness, talkativeness, and being brainless or illogical—highlighting the negative attributes commonly associated with women. Utilizing Fairclough's model of discourse analysis, the research delves into the lexical choices, institutionalized practices, and social implications of these jokes. The analysis reveals that jokes, particularly in the context of Pakistani society, contribute to the harmful portrayal of women as illogical, superficial, and insignificant. The study emphasizes the urgent need to address these stereotypes, as they play a significant role in shaping societal perceptions and maintaining gender inequality. Data was collected through SMS messages in Rawalpindi during April 2013, offering a localized yet insightful perspective on the broader issue of gender representation in humor and media.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

1.1.1. Language as a Form of Image-Making

Language and its usage in society have always been of great interest for linguists. For this reason, linguists have been working on a new field of study called sociolinguistics since the second half of the twentieth century. Sociolinguistics can be seen as "the study of language in relation to society" (Hudson, 2000). This relationship of language and society brings into light various factors such as how language is used by individuals, what specific linguistic items are used for what purposes, functions of language, individual and social speech patterns and a number of other features.

Language is a communicative phenomenon that can be interpreted at various levels by the people. It is a form of a message that encodes a meaning which is decoded by the receiver. It can be seen as a powerful tool in today's world where the arrangement of words can change the perceptions of masses by constructing images at various levels including personal and social. In other words, language can be taken as the form of image-making (Goddard, 2001). These images construct our views about the world around us.

The study of language is a science that brings into account a number of factors. For this reason, it can be established that a word cannot be studied in isolation from its surroundings. It is always studied in relation to other words and socio-cultural phenomenon that makes up its context. It is this idea of context that helps one to understand the meaning between the lines and also to make sense how people use language to think together (Mercer, Words and Minds, 2000). Context refers to the situation of the language usage that can be social, historical, socio-economic or psychological.

James Paul Gee, an American linguist has explained various approaches to the linguistic analysis. One of these approaches – the descriptive approach – include study of the content of language, themes or issues being discussed in writing or in spoken. Here, the main focus is on grammar and structures of the language. Gee, further, elaborates that,

> In language there are important connections among saying (informing), doing (action), and being (identity). If I say anything to you, you cannot understand it fully if you do not know what I am trying to do and who I am trying to be saying it. To understand anything fully, you need to know who is saying it and what the person saying it is trying to do. (Gee, 2010:2)

In general, it can be said that language is the key to our world, our relationships, communication and interactions.

1.1.2. Identity and Gender

Language as a tool is very significant as it establishes the identity of an individual. The term 'identity' can, thus, be defined as the essential traits of an individual or an institution. These features enable us to distinguish an individual or an institution from the others. According to *Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology* (2001) 'identity' is essentially an individual's mental representation of who he/she is. However, identity can be seen at two levels; the personal which refers to how we see ourselves and the social as how others view us. Deng (1995) has defined this phenomenon of identity as 'it is the way individuals and groups define them-selves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture' (Deng 1995, 1). This implies that the identity of person is established through various factors that include the personal and the social standing of an individual. Wendt (1994) has defined social identities as,

> The sets of meanings that an actor attributes to itself while taking the perspective of others, that is, as a social object. ... [Social identities are] at once cognitive schemas that enable an actor to determine `who I am/we are' in a situation and positions in a social role structure of shared understandings and expectations' (Wendt 1994, 395).

Here, if analyzed at broader level, language shapes the gender identity also. The terms gender and sex are slightly different as gender is a social construct and sex refers to the physiological aspects of the individual. Gender refers to socially constructed roles and relationships, attitudes, behaviors, values and influence that society attributes to two sexes on different basis.

1.1.3. Jokes

A joke is a humorous comment or remark that intends to stimulate laughter and present stereotyped characters, who act out in a humorous way. It can also be satire which is biased and extreme. They have element of pun at the expense of a person, a social group or a community. Gender based jokes aim at targeting the gender and stereotypes. The function of these gender based jokes is to establish female and male identities in a particular way.

Every culture has its own collection of jokes. Stereotypes play an important role in forming the perception of people about something. At one level, stereotypes seem true but people always exaggerate stereotypes and these negative stereotypes always convey a message.

In today's world, jokes are circulated among people through SMS. A wide variety of jokes – highlighting the various socio-political issues – are sent and received daily. According to Korhenen (2003), SMS are the easiest way to send notes to other people. These messages can be in the form of greetings, congratulations, invitations, or jokes. Kramsch (1998) says that print technology and writing technology has not only changed the medium of language use, but also changed the thinking and talking about culture. It has affected peoples' mode of expressions and emotions.

1.3. Research Question

The research question for this study is,

- How is the female gender identity constructed in jokes?

1.4. Objectives

This research focuses on the analysis of the female gender identity construction in jokes. This study has the following objectives:

- To analyze the traits associated with female identity
- To study the implied meanings and the aspect of exaggeration in jokes
- To explore the various aspects of ridicule in jokes

1.5. Significance

For this study, a sample of jokes has been selected to analyze how the female gender identity is constructed through these funny messages. Jokes, through the funny use of the language, create an image or identity in the mind of the receivers indirectly, on the deeper level. This study aims to explore the female identity constructions in jokes that propagate an idea with the wit. Words are images and these images present ideas which are shaped and reshaped by the use of language. The importance of a spoken and a written word cannot be denied in constructing the thinking processes at individual and social levels. This research has highlighted the factor as how the jokes construct female identity.

1.6. Delimitations

For this research paper, a sample of twenty jokes has been selected to study the construction of female identity through jokes due to the time constraint. Also, these jokes are studied from the aspect of image-construction only in keeping with the objectives of the study because these jokes, seemingly funny, create an impact – an image – in the minds of the readers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Jokes

The Oxford dictionary defines the term *joke* as 'something done or said to excite laughter or a trick played on a person' (Fowler, 1998:424). This refers to the fact that anything done or said to generate laughter, be it of one line or one paragraph is a joke. These jokes are created by exaggerating the situations or personal traits of a person.

When jokes are told or circulated, they much contribute to relax people and make them laugh. According to Eysenck and Wilson (1976:461), 'the jokes we tell and laugh loudest at give clues as to our central preoccupations, needs and frustrations. It is, therefore, possible to use humor as the indirect means of assessing personality'. The pop psychology of jokes was explored in late 20th century by Michael Billig and other critics who started discussing the mindsets and cognitive responses of people towards humor and found that it is cathartic in function.

Crystal (1998:17) cites that 'jokes are often formulaic' with various types of target such as doctor, elephant or gender. The joke is then based on two forms (often similar) and two meanings. According to Blake (2007:80) puns may 'involve one particular form with more than one meaning,' i.e., polysemy. Jokes can be based on a narrative structure with three parallel stories, in which the third one contains the (unexpected) punch-line.

Humor is an integral part of human history. It can lighten what can otherwise be dull, tense or tedious situation. It generates amusement and laughter. Recent studies show that jokes are dynamic where the characteristics of the joke teller and the audience interact with the embedded meaning of the joke (Ungar, Jan-Feb 1997). This embedded meaning conveys an image or a message.

2.2. Gender Identities

The philosopher Judith Butler proposes that we need to look into the differences that exist in genders rather than looking at what are the gender differences. He further argues that,

> Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pre-given sex…gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which sexed-nature or a natural sex is produced and established as pre-discursive prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts.   (Butler, 1990:7)

According to Butler, if we argue that differences found in the speech behavior of people can only be explained through gender then certain questions remained unanswered including how gender is constructed. The actual question here is to know why gender differences are being constructed and how categories such as "woman" are being are created. However, if behaviors, in general, do not conform to masculinity or femininity, they are considered incomprehensible and illogical.

While living in the society, the individual mind-sets are conditioned to behave in a certain way that transform a girl and boy into a female and a male with different 'qualities,

behavioral patterns, roles, relationships, rights and expectations (Kendall, 2012). This distinction between sex and gender is found in all societies and all cultures.

This socially-conditioned behavior can apparently be seen when the blue color is chosen for boys and pink for the girls, where boys should be masculine while girls need to be delicate, also boys are cheered to be outgoing and girls are encouraged to be domestic. These gender roles are dynamic and keep changing, depending on how receptive people are to the changing times. In modern times, the trends have changed where women can be seen as outgoing and professionally-sound by keeping in with the 'lady-like behaviors'.

Gender categories are taught and created in societies in an observable process of constructing individuals' gender identities. In this process, the parents and others give gender appropriate names, clothes, toys to their children; they use different linguistic styles with boys and girls and teach boys to be aggressive, competitive and tough and girls to be caring and loving (Owen, 2011).

2.2 Traditional Gender Roles
2.2.1 Patriarchy

The traditional system of our society is based on the domination of males. Here, it is important to define the term patriarchy. Cranny Francis et al in the book *Gender Studies Terms and Debates* has defined *patriarchy* as a social system in which structural differences in privilege, power and authority are invested in masculinity and the cultural, economic or social position of men (Cranny Francis, 2003).

In her landmark work *Women: The Longest Revolution*, later expanded and produced as *Women's Estate* (1971), Juliet Mitchell examined patriarchy in terms of Marxist categories of production and private property as well as psychoanalytic theories of gender (Habib, 2007).

Traditionally, men are the symbols of power and women are seen as the submissive beings within the society. The traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective and decisive; they cast down women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing and submissive

(Tyson, 2006). These gender roles have been used very successfully to justify inequities, which still occur today, such as excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision-making positions, paying men higher wages as compared to women for the same job. This attitude compels women to follow the traditional stereotypical roles and convince women that they are not fit for careers such as mathematics and engineering.

This patriarchal mindset of the society tells woman what they can do and what they cannot. In many cultures even today, the woman has a career and a family. It means she looks great in the office and over the breakfast table; she never looks so tired even after work to prepare dinner, clean house, attend to all her children's need and please her husband in bed. It refers to the situation that has not been changed even today where women are still bound by the traditional gender roles at home which they have to fulfill along with their careers.

2.2.2 Gender Appropriateness/Social Constructionism

This relates to the attitudes and the expectations that assign behavior patterns, traits, attributes or roles considered appropriate to a particular gender. There is a difference between sex and gender. Sex refers to the biological aspects of a human as whether a human is a girl or a boy. Gender is the socially constructed identities associated with the males and the females. Masculinity is associated with males and females have all the feminine traits. Every society has its own norms that transform a girl and boy into female and a male with different traits as Bhasin articulates the socially-accepted gender roles in these words,

> Boys are encouraged to be tough, outgoing, girls are encouraged to be home
> bound. There is nothing in the girl's body that stops them from them from
> wearing shorts, or climbing trees or riding bicycles and there is nothing in the
> boy's body that stops them from playing with dolls, looking after younger siblings
> or helping with looking or cleaning the house. (Bahsin, 2000)

This social process of gender appropriateness starts at the time of child's birth and stays with a human till the end of his life. Since childhood, female are seen as delicate where as male are seen as a strong and courageous beings. The girls and boys both are given different toys and

2512

both are educated about their different capabilities through this process of gender constructed roles. Both are treated in a different way at homes where their personalities are molded, they are trained about their different roles through canalization, verbal appellations and exposure.

2.2.3 Double Standards

Throughout the history, women were not only deprived of basic human rights including education and the female right to vote but they also had to struggle against the male ideology condemning them to virtual silence and obedience. However, women gave voice to their rights in the 2oth century. One of the most important factors for the suppression of female in any society of the world is the use of different standards or instruments to measure issues related to males and females. For example, a male in the process of career making is not burdened with the household responsibilities whereas a female has no escape from her household – she is supposed to take care of everything of her family along with her career.

2.2.4 Objectification

Another important issue is related to the female identity where women are seen as the objects of beauty and pleasure. This process of objectification refers to the treatment of woman as an object. In literature and media today – the females are presented as a model of beauty where their physical appearance and features are highlighted and their feelings are presented very insignificantly.

The process of objectification is of great interest to the feminists. According to Martha Nussbaum (1995:257), there are seven characteristics involved in treating a human being as an object which are given as below.

- Instrumentality which refers to the treatment of a person as a tool.
- Denial of autonomy refers to the treatment of a person as lacking in autonomy and self-determination.
- Inertness is the treatment of a person as lacking in agency and activity.
- Fungibility suggests the treatment of a person as interchangeable with other objects.
- Violability refers to the treatment of a person as lacking in boundary-integrity.

2513

- Ownership is the treatment of a person as something that is owned by another (can be bought or sold).

- Denial of subjectivity is the treatment of a person as something whose experiences and feelings need not be taken into account.

Later, some more features were added to the Nussbaum's phenomenon of objectification by the critic, Rae Langton (2009: 228–229), which are;

- Reduction to body refers to the treatment of a person as identified with their body, or body parts.

- Reduction to appearance is the treatment of a person primarily in terms of how they look, or how they appear to the senses.

- Silencing is the treatment of a person as if they are silent, lacking the capacity to speak.

The phenomenon of objectification is of great significance as it explains how women are treated as object for various reasons. However, Martha Nussbaum has challenged the recent ideas and disagrees to the fact that objectification is always negative; for Nussbaum, in certain context; it can be taken as neutral or even positive (Papadaki, 2012). The objectification of women is not a natural phenomenon but rather it's the part of the process of gender construction.

2.3. Language and Gender

Language is a tool that opens up new worlds to us, be it written or spoken. While creating these new worlds, it also shapes the ideas and identities of people in one way or the other. Identity is a multifaceted term in a way that a number of factors contribute to its construction such as gender, age, education, language, religion and citizenship. Identity, as a broader term, can be seen as biological, personal and social construct. Llamas & Watt (2010) have emphasized that language not only "reflects" who we are but it is 'what we are' or 'who we are'. Here, it is important to note that identity and language, both factors are dynamic in nature. Joseph (2004) asserts that language establishes identity due to its ability to "abstract the world of experience into words".

The study of language and gender is interesting and significant as it encompasses various aspects. Here, it is important to understand that gender is always best understood in culture. Both genders have differences in language which were first explained by Deborah Tannen. She explored how the conversational style associated with each gender can lead to miscommunications and difficulties in achieving one's goal. She highlighted six major differences between the conversational styles of men and women including status vs. support, independence vs. intimacy, advice vs. understanding, information vs. feelings, orders vs. proposals and conflict vs. compromise (Tannen, 1990).

Sally McConnell-Ginet in her article, *What's in a name? Social Lebelling and Gender practices*, asserts that various social labeling practices are the part of gendered identities. She has signified it with the help of example where if it's said 'He's a dork', so here, the speaker is socially labeling the male incompetence whereas in case of a female 'She's total airhead', refers to brainlessness of the female (McConnell-Ginet, 2003). In both the cases, genders are negatively categorized.

Robin Lakoff argues that language reflects the stereotypes. There are lexical differences in the way we talk about men with power versus women with power. Furthermore, men and women are expected to behave differently in terms of language where men are direct and women re indirect. Here comes the aspect of gender-identity construction, as Lakoff puts it, that if women speak indirectly then they are said to be manipulative, and if directly then they are taken as bitches (Lakoff, 2003). Denial of expressive power to women is a political act.

A number of misconceptions also contribute to determine gender-based identities. One of these factors is that women talk a lot. However, Spender (1980) studied that generally men hold the floor 80% of the time. Also, men interrupt more and try to dominate the conversations (Lakoff, 2003).

Gender stereotypes are closely linked with gender ideologies. Various critics including Cameron and Talbot (2003), have asserted that the interactional styles of males and females lead to their traditional roles. For instance, the soft-nurturing style is the female characteristic as the

females are delicate. Mary Talbot has characterized male and female language patterns as follows.

Male Patterns	Female Patterns
Problem-Solving	Sympathy
Report	Rapport
Lecturing	Listening
Public	Private
Status	Connection
Oppositional	Supportive
Independence	Intimacy

Table.2.1. Male and Female Conversation Patterns (Talbot, 2003)

According to Talbot, the female patterns remind us of the role of women in society and the womanhood in general whereas the male patterns of conversation refers to male power and privilege (Talbot, 2003). This is how the process of identity construction through language use takes place in a society.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study is qualitative in nature. Qualitative approaches are processes that "involve the collection of extensive narrative data in order to gain insights into phenomena of interest; data analysis includes the coding of the data and production of a verbal synthesis" (Gay, 2005). The underlying principle for the use of qualitative inquiry is the research based belief that "the behavior is significantly influenced by the environment in which it occurs" (Gay, 2005)

3.2. Tools

In the present study, the theoretical framework presented by Norman Fairclough has been used for the data analysis. This theory by Fairclough is three fold that discusses:

a. Discourse as Text: Description of data, analysis of vocabulary items and cohesion in the text. Further within the description of the text, the phenomenon of objectification will be studied based on the features proposed by Nussbaum and Langton. As all the features are not applicable on the selected data so only these features will be analyzed.
    - Violability
    - Reduction to appearance
    - Instrumentality
b. Discourse as Discursive-Practice: Analysis of coherence and institutionalized practices conveyed by the use of language, how discourse is produced and the time and place of discourse.
c. Discourse as Social Practice: Study of the social practices and re-contextualization.

3.3. Sample

A sample of 20 gender-based jokes has been selected through SMS to see how female gender identity is constructed through the use of discourse and images. The usage of language, exaggeration and pun establish the identities of females in a particular way in these jokes. These jokes through SMS have been collected in the month of April' 2013.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

The data for the current study has been collected through SMS in the month of April'2013 in Rawalpindi. The model presented by Fairclough has been used to see the lexical choices, institutionalized practices and social practices. At the first level, the text would be analyzed. An important emphasis will be laid on the use of objectification, vocabulary, exaggeration and rhetorical figures. At the second level, discourse would be studied as a discursive practice where institutionalized practices will be analyzed. At the third level, the social aspect of the discourse will be studied as how the female identities are established in the society (Fairclough, 2000).

4. ANALYSIS

4.1. Discourse as text – Construction of Female Gender Identity in Jokes

Jokes are significant to study as they present the whole phenomenon of how images are constructed indirectly. For females in these gender-specific jokes, a particular kind of language has been used. Through the use of language, specific attributes have been given to the females. The techniques of pun and exaggeration are employed to present the stereotypical roles of females in a sarcastic way.

Representation of Females	Attributes
Objectification	A product and an investment
Pun	Pun on words such as 'Miss', 'Stress' (Mistress); and'Dying' (Hair dying)
Exaggeration	Wife is a queen of devils; wife is a problem; and wife is suspicious.
Acquisitive	Desire for car and money
Talkative	Talk relentlessly
Brainless or illogical	Arguments with no points

Table.4.1. Construction of female Gender Identity in Jokes

4.1.1. Objectification

There are three jokes which are categorized under the category of objectification. It is the process where women are presented or treated as objects (Papadaki, 2012). In Joke 1, the female identity has been objectified as a newspaper; where the man wants to have a new newspaper every day. The feature of violability has been used here. In Joke 2, the female identity has been presented as the product, where the product doesn't meet the requirements of the husband with poor performance and the replacement is demanded. The husband gets the reply from the smart moth-in-law in the same coins where she informs him that the warranty has ended and the company isn't producing new products. This joke is very significant as it established the fact that men talk about women and machines in the same way. The wife is objectified here and the feature of instrumentality has been used which refers to the treatment of a person as a tool (Nussbaum, 1995:207)

In Joke 3, the businessman takes his 'fat' wife as an investment that doubled. Here, woman is objectified, as the adjective used here for her is of 'a fat wife'. The woman, in this joke, is reduced to appearance which means the treatment of a person primarily in terms of how they look, or how they appear to the senses (Langton, 2009:228-229). These are the stereotypical images portrayed here in this category.

Objectification	Representation of Females
Violability	As a newspaper
Instrumentality	As a product
Reduction to Appearance	As a fat wife

Table.4.1.1. Objectification of females in jokes.

4.1.2. Pun

In the second category, laughter and fun is evoked through the use of pun. Pun refers to the play on words or an idea. Redfern (1986:6) uses pun as 'a convenient tag for a whole variety

of rhetorical devices which play on words' and states 'a pun is language on vacation' and also 'the pun is a verbal practical joke'.

Six jokes are categorized with the characteristic feature of pun. In the Joke 4, there are two friends talking and there is play on words 'good' and 'bad'. Here, the phenomenon of objectification is also being done simultaneously as the friend who gets married refers to his wife as 'ugly'. Then, his friend reply's 'that's bad!', but the husband says that it is good as the wife is rich. This play on word continues there until the husband at last says that the wife bought him a house and the house burnt down but it was good because the wife was in the house. It refers to the fact that the husband is happy as he finally got rid of his wife. Through pun, the wife has been shown as an 'ugly' object and the husband is happy as he is free in the end.

In the same category, Joke 5 simply describes pun on the noun 'mistress' where a wife is described as 'Miss' for an hour and 'Stress' for 23 hours for her husband. These nouns portrayed the female gender identity negatively. In Joke 6, a husband calls her wife and asks her what she is doing. The wife replies 'I am dying…' and the husband becomes happy and pretends to be caring and ask her how he would live without her. The wife says, 'you idiot! I'm dying my hair' and the husband gets angry with the English language. Both the techniques of pun and objectification have been used. Here, again wife is presented as an object which is violable. Violability refers to the treatment of a person as lacking in boundary-integrity (Nussbaum, 1995:207).

In Joke 7, a man asks devil if he can call his wife and when the man asks devil how much to pay, the devil replies that 'hell to hell is free'. Here, again wife is portrayed as an object that can makes a man's life worse. In Joke 8, the wife asks her husband to buy her something that goes from 0 to 80 in 5 seconds and the husband buys her the weighing machine. Here both the techniques of pun and objectification are successfully employed. Indirectly, it's established that the wife is fat and the usage of the feature of reduction to appearance can be noticed as well. In Joke 9, the metaphors of liver and kidney have been used for the husband and the wife. If one kidney fails, the liver can manage with the other one but a kidney cannot manage without a liver. The technique of pun is used on the nouns 'kidney' and 'liver'.

Pun	Word Choice
Play on adjectives	'Good', 'Bad'
Play on nouns	'Mistress', 'Hell', 'Liver', 'Kidney'
Play on verb	'Dying'

Table.4.1.2. Pun on words for portrayal of females.

4.1.3. Exaggeration

The next category is of the jokes which incite laughter through exaggeration. It means to enlarge, increase, or represent something beyond normal bounds so that it becomes ridiculous and its faults can be seen. There are three jokes included in this category. In Joke 10, a line is mentioned that is written on the husband's t-shirt which says that 'all girls are devil but my wife is queen………..of them'. There is a significant gap between the word 'queen' and the phrase 'of them'. It is an exaggerated situation where at first glance a reader would think that may be the husband is referring to his wife as a queen until he reads the words after the gap which makes the joke complete. In Joke 11, the encoder says that 'My wife and I were happy for 20 years. Then we met'. Here, the implied meaning is this that the husband and wife were happy in their lives till the time of their wedding. It is again an exaggerated statement. In Joke 12, the wife asks her husband that why he carries her picture all the time and he says that whenever he faces a difficult situation, he just sees the picture of his wife and asks himself if there can be any other problem greater than this! In all these exaggerated jokes, the technique of pun can also be found where wife is portrayed as a 'problem' that affects the life of a man adversely.

Exaggeration	Representation of Females
Wife is a problem	Wife as a queen of devils
Wife is a problem	Wife and husband were happy for 20 years then they met
Wife makes life worse	Wife is the problem

Table.4.1.3. The use of the technique of exaggeration in jokes.

4.1.4. Acquisitive

Acquisitive refers to the phenomenon of being excessively interested in acquiring money or material things. There are three jokes that lie in this category. In Joke 13, the husband sends her wife a message to do certain errands for him. Without waiting for his wife's reply, he sends her another message, telling her about his promotion and the new car. At that the wife texts back, 'OMG really?' and the Husband replies, 'No I just wanted to make sure you got my first message'. Here, wife is portrayed as acquisitive who is fond of money and car. In Joke 14, an interviewer questions the millionaire as who does he owe his success? And the answer comes that he owes it to his wife as he was a billionaire before marrying her. Again wife is shown as an acquisitive woman who is fond of money and who is a spendthrift. In Joke 15, the metaphor of virus has been used for women who scan the pockets of their husbands and download their problems in the lives of their husbands. Again women are shown as acquisitive and are also objectified here. This process of portraying of women as acquisitive is also part of the gendered-constructed identities.

Acquisitive	Representation of Females
Interested in car and money	Desire for material things
Scan pockets of husband	Objectified as a virus

Table.4.1.4. Portrayal of females as acquisitive in jokes.

4.1.5. Talkative

Generally, it is believed that women talk more than men. There are three jokes that fall in this category of the females being 'talkative'. In Joke 16, the wife complains to the doctor that her husband talks while he's asleep. The doctor suggests her to give more chances to her husband to speak while he's awake. In Joke 17, the man wants divorce as his wife didn't speak to him for 6 months and the lawyer warns him that wives like these are difficult to find. In Joke 18, a man says to his friend that his wife can talk on 'any subject' and the other says that his wife doesn't even need a 'subject'. These all jokes are the exaggeration of stereotypical notions associated with females. Stereotypes fixed and oversimplified generalizations about groups or classes of people. These gender stereotypes construct specific identities of gender in a society.

2522

Talkative	Representation of Females
Talk more than men	Women don't let their husbands' talk Women can talk without a subject

Table.4.1.5. Females talk more than men.

4.1.6. Brainless or Illogical

The last category is associated with the stereotypical notions that women are 'brainless' and 'illogical'. In Joke 19, the wife sets 'BRAIN' as the FB password and the computer replies, it's too short. There is pun and exaggeration both in this joke. In Joke 20, the question is asked 'what's the difference between woman's argument and the knife', and the answer comes 'a knife has a point'. This implies that women are illogical in their arguments. The results for this category are depicted below.

Attributes	Representation of Females
Brainless	Brain – too short
Illogical	Arguments lack point

Table.4.1.6. Representation of females as brainless and illogical.

4.2. Discourse as a Discursive Practice

SMS, in the modern world are considered as the part of everyone's life. Everyday billions of SMS are sent across the globe with 3.6 billion users. It's the form of active data communication. Through these messages jokes, information, invitations, and pictures are shared. It can be seen as a form of media through which communication is taking place on daily basis. Any messages when sent and spread through this media, it creates a specific image in the minds of the readers.

Whenever it is intended to create humor through media, the gender-based issues always best serve the purpose. However, be it any kind of media, print or electronic, women are mostly portrayed in their stereotypical roles. Women are objectified for glamour and amusement. Sometimes, they are presented as brainless-meek creatures that are dependent on the male members of the society for their sustenance.

2523

A recent UNESCO report describes the litany of common images of women in the media as the glamorous sex kitten, the sainted mother, the devious witch, the hard-faced corporate and political climber. The report, released in 2009, states that, at the current rate of progress on stereotyping women; it will take another 75 years to achieve gender equality in the media. (Portrayal of women in the popular media, 2009)

This unrealistic portrayal of woman has given rise to the phenomenon of gendered-identities where lady-like behavior is expected from women without understanding any of their problems. The creation of humor through gendered identities has further illuminated the violability of females. In the selected sample of jokes, all these aspects have been highlighted. However, the realistic portrayal of women through depiction of their feelings and emotions can help the society to improve their lens.

4.3. Discourse as a Social Practice

Gender is a social construct where society approves the behavior of the sexes in specific aspects. Due to this very reason, men and women are mostly seen as stereotype. Women are objectified, taken as the delicate-sex with no thinking abilities at all which are dependent on men for their survival. In the same manner, these jokes highlight the stereotypical representation of females which is the cause of amusement at one level and food for thought at another level.

Even in the present times, the concept of females is associated with lady-like attributes. For men, wives are a responsibility whom they should take care of in terms of food, money and safety. Men are given the dominant position as Pakistani society is basically a patriarchal society. Here, women are not independent but dependent on the male members for material needs. Also, in some cases, women are not given due importance as to what they want or what are their feelings. The basic decision power lies with the man. However, women are respected due the rights bestowed on women by Islam.

Considering the current study and the husband-wife relationship, certain things are expected from a woman, which include taking care of her house, husband and kids. However, this prevalent concept that wife gets fat after marriage is always over-stated. Men also demean

2524

women by assuming that women are illogical. These stereotypes and incorrect notions need to be addressed and sorted out in order to lessen the objectification of females at various levels

5. CONCLUSION

Jokes evoke laughter but they certainly communicate a message to the target audience. Gender-based joke and the portrayal of women in this regard are particularly significant. The study focused on the representation of women in jokes and as a result six categories of jokes were established that included attributes of women as in objectification of women, pun, exaggeration, acquisitive, talkative and brainless or illogical. These categories highlight that how gender-based images are constructed.

At the next level, the discourse is analyzed as the discursive practice. Here, representation of females in media has been focused which is stereotypical. Women in media are objectified for the reasons of pleasure and amusement. For this very reason, media isn't brought any positive change in this regard.

In Pakistani society, when it comes to humor then gender-based issues are a way to incite laughter. Wives are over-stated as fat, illogical beings that are good for nothing. These stereotypes need to be addressed as they are adding their bit to negative female gender identity construction.

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